

Old Richmond Neighborhoods

by Mary Wingfield Scott



4/6/2018

Cover design: Jack Amos, Inc.

Editorial Notes

Recent Changes

Created pages for Luther Libby House and Pohlig Box Factory with linked buttons from Libby Hill and Church Hill.

Added photos from Historic Richmond.

Changed all footnotes from referencing page number that are no longer relevant to chapter names or hyperlinks.

Each page now has buttons at the bottom that will take you directly to the table of contents, index, previous page and next page.

Jack Amos has now come up with a new cover design.

Goals, Ideas and Thinking Outside the History Box

I have filled the book with notes in red where we need descriptions or modern photographs.

My first priority on this book is to create an accurate and more

useful copy of Winkie's book, and then enhance it with modern photographs, website links, and anything else we can do to bring this book into the modern era.

The book is a rather dull history of the architecture, but in looking over the text I see names of people like Keesey Boubee, Bojangles, Extra Billy, Blind Tom, Tom Thumb and I'm thinking the book could come alive and be much more interesting with photos and accounts of them

Perhaps we should have Google Earth links in this for the location of each building. Clicking on these would take you to Google Earth or a mapping app on your iPad.

If you see a typo or something that might need changing, please try to describe where it is in the book by house, paragraph beginning with..., and line number. I am changing the book on a daily basis so using the page numbers in the book will be helpful for about one day and then will create problem for me to locate the errors.

This book tells the history of the Richmond up to 1950 when the book was printed, but there is a lot that has happened since then, and that's an important part of the history as well.

In thinking about this, I'm reminded that Mary Wingfield Scott and Elizabeth Bocoock were both of the 'never ask permission' frame of mind, and when they got their minds on something, woe betide anyone who got in their way. I'm made of the same stuff so I have no reservations

about making these books more interesting by adding things like this. I'm intrigued with the idea of adding a voice recording the the famous 'De Sun Do Move' sermon of John Jasper in Old Richmond Neighborhoods. I think it will make the history come alive.

I also plan to add Winkie's voice recordings of Diddie, Dumps and Tot and Uncle Remus to the book Winkie, as well as a short movie clip of her at a family reunion.

I hope everyone will see the possibilities here and will take the time to review this for errors and to offer suggestions for words and descriptions. There must be a lot more photographs out there that I haven't seen yet.

Please send any comments or suggestions to me by email, and please share this book with anyone you think might be interest in this.

Thanks to everyone for your interest and help on all this. This is just one of those things that should be done, and when we finish, Winkie's books will be available to the world. When finished, we plan to have the books available on the websites for the Valentine Richmond History Center, Library of Virginia, Historic Richmond Foundation, Preservation Virginia, and anyone else who is interested. These books should be in circulation on the Internet long after we are all gone.

Thanks again, and I look forward to getting feedback from any and all of you.

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Introduction

WHEN *OLD RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOODS* was published in 1950 there were only a limited number of photographs that could be included in the book due to availability and the limitations of printing a book.

No such limitations exist for this digital copy of the book, so we have included a large number of additional photographs, some old and also many more recent ones. The original book was the history up to that time, but the history of these buildings now includes all that has happened since then and including these gives a fuller and more interesting look at the history over a much greater span of time.

Also included are links to websites, and within the book itself so you can quickly search and find things.



MARY WINGFIELD SCOTT was born in Richmond on July 30, 1895, went to school at “Miss Jennie’s,” grew up in the city’s traditions, and loved its familiar atmosphere—the old red brick and gray stucco, the white porches and shaded streets—which it retained until after the World War. The era of Progress and More Smokestacks, in the 1920’s, accomplished for the residential part of old Richmond what the Evaculation Fire of 1865 had for the business district. After studying at Bryn Mawr and Banard and

receiving her Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, she returned to Richmond and with increasing indignation watched the old houses of her childhood disappearing one by one. Gradually she made saving them an avocation. Since 1930 she has been photographing Richmond houses, collecting notes on their history, lecturing and writing articles about them. Her organization of the William Byrd Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities in 1935 mobilized other interested men and women and at once resulted in the purchase and restoration of the Craig House, one of the few eighteenth-century dwellings left in Richmond.

In *Houses of Old Richmond*, published in 1941 Miss Scott describes many buildings that have been replaced by filling stations, but she also includes a large number that are still standing, a challenge to the energy and imagination of present-day Richmonders to save and utilize them.

Miss Scott published *Old Richmond Neighborhoods* in 1950. These books are still the bibles of Richmond architectural history. She was instrumental in the preservation of Linden Row, Oregon Hill and Church Hill, and she has been an inspiration for generations of preservationists who have followed in her footsteps.

While recovering from a stroke that left her paralyzed on the right side, she wrote an autobiography as therapy and distributed this to friends and family. She died on August 9, 1983.

In 2011 her family created a book *Winkie* which was privately published which was based on her autobiography and articles published about her. Find this at [www.rosegill.com/Mary Wingfield Scott](http://www.rosegill.com/Mary_Wingfield_Scott).

Now, *Houses of Old Richmond*, *Old Richmond Neighborhoods*, and *Winkie* are available as digital books available as free downloads from the websites of the Valentine Richmond History Center,

Preservation Virginia, Historic Richmond Foundation and as many other library and historical societies that choose to keep these books available to the public long into the future.

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Foreword

THE GENESIS of this book was a series of six articles on old neighborhoods written for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* in the fall of 1942. A few months later an exhibit at the Valentine Museum showed a larger number of old sections in connection with the city-plan then in process of adoption. During this exhibit, the writer began conducting a series of walking-tours to older sections of town, and has continued them almost without interruption every spring and fall since that time.

While the number of neighborhoods covered has been greatly extended since the original six, the articles, exhibit and walks have all been confined to the study of houses, churches, stores and factories still standing, little or no attempt being made to discuss those that were gone. As more and more old buildings are torn down or disguised by alterations, the time seems propitious to make some permanent record of the various parts of early Richmond before every trace of their appearance even in the first years of the twentieth century has passed out of mind.

Like most old cities, Richmond developed as an aggregation of neighborhoods. Some of these—for instance the Court End, Grace and Franklin streets and Church Hill—had a long and varied evolution. Others—like Oregon Hill, French Garden and Navy hills—were built up during a short period with fairly homogeneous houses. Some have been taken over by business so that few of their early buildings remain, while others have stayed backwaters and have kept a large proportion of their old houses. Unfortunately it is the neighborhoods with the handsomest and architecturally

most interesting buildings which have suffered most from the encroachments of business. The smaller the houses, the more modest the neighborhood, the more chance it has had of retaining its original appearance.

In this book we have not included all the neighborhoods that made up ante-bellum Richmond. We might have added Broad Street, Rocketts, the factories and warehouses of East Cary and the former town of Manchester, now South Richmond. Our choice has been governed partly by space and time, partly by an attempt to select sections in which a relatively large number of old buildings was still to be seen, though strict adherence to this latter consideration would eliminate both Council Chamber Hill and Grace Street.

The choice of houses described has been guided by two considerations: to avoid detailed comment on those already included in the author's *Houses of Old Richmond*, and to discuss chiefly buildings of which photographs were available. Some will be disappointed not to find here such landmarks as the Van Lew or John Marshall houses, the Westmoreland Club or the Old Stone House. It must be borne in mind that this volume is a history not of old houses but of neighborhoods. Where stress is laid on an individual building, one not studied in *Houses of Old Richmond* has been preferred.

Without the collection of over five hundred photographs purchased by the Valentine Museum in 1945 from Heustis B. Cook, this book in its present form would have been almost impossible, since these excellent pictures reveal far more satisfactorily than any written comment the character of scores of buildings long since demolished. Mr. Cook's photographs are supplemented by a number

of others from the large collection of negatives given the Museum by the heirs of the late W. Palmer Gray. While Mr. Gray's photographs are later in date than Mr. Cook's, he was more aware of the picturesque value of unpretentious streets and houses in little-known parts of Richmond. Other collections drawn on to a lesser degree are those of the late Robert A. Lancaster and Edythe Beveridge, of Max Freydeck and of Ellen Guigon, all given to the Valentine Museum, a few from the Historic American Buildings Survey in the Library of Congress, and many given or loaned by individuals whose family once owned the houses depicted. Photographs of such sections as "Jackson Ward," Church or Union hills have been completed by those of the author, purely documentary in quality, which are used only because no more skilled photographer has been sufficiently interested in those neighborhoods to record them.

Thanks are most gratefully offered to the Richmonders who have combed old trunks and drawers for pictures, to friends who have read and criticized portions of this book, to the courteous assistance of those at the City Hall, the Department of Public Works, the Building Inspector's office, and the Virginia State Library and Archives and the Valentine Museum. Particularly are thanks due to Mr. D. F. La Prade, Mr. Julien Bossieux and Mrs. Ralph T. Catterall.

A Wave of Change

Historic Tax Credits, Historic Districts and a Move Back into the City

TELL THE Story here of the impact of historic tax credits and the impact on the preservation and adaptive reuse of old buildings, such as the tobacco warehouses, the brewery, etc.

And also talk about the impact of Historic Districts and the change these have brought about.

Talk about people moving back to live in the downtown section of the city, in apartments created from old tobacco warehouses, etc.

Announcing

OLD RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOODS

A FULLY ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF
FAMILIAR RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOODS

By MARY WINGFIELD SCOTT

To those who love Richmond as it is and was, this book is indispensable. Written in a vigorous, pungent style, it is cram-full of facts about places and people, with now and then an apt summary of an area: "If Shockoe Creek neighborhood is Richmond's cradle, the old Court End is its heart." To those born since 1900, the city portrayed is as unknown as Troy.

The general arrangement of the book is geographical, moving from east to west, thence north. In each chapter one neighborhood of relatively limited size is treated historically, the various stages of its development being illustrated by old buildings still standing or by well-known structures that survive in photographs or good descriptions.

And what delightful details of life as well as architecture the hundreds of old pictures reveal! The author considers her own photographs purely documentary in quality. Her modesty is a candle to her merit.

“Unfortunately it is the neighborhoods with the handsomest and architecturally most interesting buildings that have suffered most from the encroachments of business,” Miss Scott observes, and “the smaller the houses and the more modest the neighborhood the more chance it has of retaining its original appearance.” But we can be grateful that at least here all these houses, the great, the small, the remaining, and demolished, are preserved for a more appreciative generation than ours has proved to be.

It takes no prophetic vision to foresee that OLD RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOODS will take its place as a collector’s item with Mary Wingfield Scott’s earlier book, HOUSES OF OLD RICHMOND; and that some day Richmond will acknowledge its debt to this indefatigable researcher, this gifted historian, this courageous citizen, who has dedicated her days to arousing it to the waste of destroying the visible remains of an irreplaceable past.

— NATALIE BLANTON

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After Publication Price: \$7.50

I. East End

IN WRITING about a city, the question inevitably presents itself: shall we follow a geographical or a historical order? Either approach has its drawbacks; in order to see the historical or architectural evolution of the remaining buildings, one would be forced to leap miles from one to another in widely separated parts of town. On the other hand, if a book or pamphlet is simply a series of practicable “walks,” it is difficult to relate to each other buildings adjacent in space but perhaps seventy-five years apart in date. *In Houses of Old Richmond* we chose the historical approach. In the present volume a compromise has been attempted. The general arrangement of the book is geographical, moving from east to west and thence north. Within each chapter, one neighborhood of relatively limited size is treated historically, the various stages of its development illustrated by buildings still standing or by well-known structures that survive in photographs or good descriptions.

For convenience and clarity we divide the neighborhoods treated in these pages into three groups: The East End, Central Richmond, and the so-called Jackson Ward, that is, the large section

between Broad Street and Bacon Quarter Branch. In this first part we shall consider the neighborhoods east of Shockoe Creek—Shed Town, Church Hill, Libby Hill, Union Hill, Venable Street and the large valley running near the bank of James River from Sixteenth to Twenty-ninth streets and extending north along Shockoe Creek. If space and time had permitted we might have added to these Rocketts, the factory district south of Main, and the hills north of Venable Street.

Shed Town

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THE ORIGIN of the name “Shed Town” had been forgotten even in Mordecai’s time. The author of *Richmond in By-Gone Days* attempts, more humorously than otherwise, to explain it either by the simple character of the early houses there or by a legend that its first inhabitants were shad-fishers! One correspondent of this writer suggests that the name may have come from the sheds of early brickmakers. The fact that George Winston had a brickyard there in the late eighteenth century coupled with the circumstance that four out of the twenty-six people listed in the directory of 1819 as living in “shed town” were classified as brickmakers or bricklayers lends some plausibility to this suggestion. Another possible explanation is that before the death of the first Col. Richard Adams, when much of the land north and east of Church Hill still belonged to him, its vacant fields were occupied by squatters, the temporary character of whose abodes gave rise to the nickname. That it stuck long after substantial homes replaced the early “sheds” is evident not only from its use in the Henrico County land books right down to the present century but from the fact that a man who grew up on Union Hill in the ’eighties used it as unconsciously as he used the more widely known term, “Butchertown.”

According to the addresses of the people listed in 1819 as residents of Shed Town, the suburb seems to have reached from Twenty-ninth to Thirty-second and from K (Clay) to O streets. While it is hard to determine just where Shed Town ends and Church and Union hills begin, our boundaries will be guided largely by the “lay of the land.” In this chapter we include the extensive



*Fig. 3. 707-1/2 North Thirteenth Street
Built between 1815 and 1820*

plateau north and east of Church and Union hills.

Richard Adams and his heirs wisely laid off these vast spaces according to the street-plan of Richmond proper. With the exception of a few blocks, the neighborhood has never been closely built up, and many houses that were once there are gone. Only about four are left from the early years of the nineteenth century. To date these accurately is impossible, since this section, like all of Richmond that lies east of Eighteenth and north of Broad was only incorporated into the city in 1867, and in the land books of Henrico County, improvements were not noted before 1820. The nearest approach to the date of an early house in either Shed Town or the northern part of Church Hill is to say that it was built between the year when the land was bought for some small sum and 1820.

Of the four houses in this category still standing, two are small



*Fig. 1. Pleasants House
East side of Thirty-second near Leigh
Built soon after 1787, Demolished about 1900*

dwelling such as we might expect from the occupations of the brickmakers, carpenters, etc., listed as living in Shed Town in the 1819 directory. 827 North Thirty-second, built by Philip Haley, a shoemaker, is a two-story house now spoiled by a modern porch and large window-panes. Its only striking feature is the brownish color of the brick, a color that we find not only in early houses like those of John Marshall and of the Snyder family¹, but also in later buildings in this Shed Town section. Recent owners have removed interesting interior trim. In the early 1800's the taste for attractive doors, mantels or stairs was indulged even in unassuming homes. Less spoiled by alterations is 707½ North Thirtieth, so small that one would take it for an outbuilding of some larger house if an insurance policy of 1820 did not describe it as a dwelling (fig. 3).



*Fig. 4 Larus House
425 North Thirty-second Street
Built probably in 1854*

More ambitious than either of these two little houses is one built by William McEnery at 510 North Twenty-ninth. McEnery died in 1825, but his widow lived here as late as 1860. From the early 'seventies until 1916 it was the home of Henry Metzger's family. Even with the later verandah, this McEnery-Metzger house is an attractive and dignified building.

Before 1787 Richard Adams divided a farm called "Spring Garden" into lots. Several blocks were sold to George Winston, who built a house near the present southeast corner of Thirty-second and Leigh ([fig. 1](#)). West of it was Winston's brickyard. In 1809 his home, called "Cedar Hill," or "Cedar Grove," became the property of Samuel Pleasants, printer to the Commonwealth and publisher of the *Virginia Argus*. Though Pleasants died five years later, the

house remained the home of his sons as late as 1885. It is hard to recognize in the tumble-down wreck shown in our illustration the “large, well-constructed dwelling” with its laundry, kitchen, dairy, two-story brick office, coach-house, barn and stable and ice-house that Samuel Pleasants purchased.²

The Pleasants house is gone. A block away from it stood a similar dwelling built in the early 1800’s probably by James Yarbrough. In 1854 this was demolished or removed by Pleasant C. Larus, who in 1839 had married Sarah Yarbrough. On its site Larus built a substantial house, in which his family was still living when he died in 1888.³ The lovely trees and good condition of the property compensate somewhat for a modern verandah and the loss of a quaint outbuilding which stood until a few years ago behind the dwelling-house (fig. 4).

Northeast of the Spring Garden tract was the large farm of George Blakey. Here sometime prior to 1819 he built a house which is still standing, though undoubtedly much altered (fig. 2). An inventory taken after Blakey’s death in 1824 gives a list not only of the stock and machinery of the farm but of the contents of each room in the house. Many plats show the family graveyard, now cut away by a road, and the earthworks that ran close beside it. This house, called, “Pleasant Oaks,” remained in the Blakey family until 1853, though by then the two hundred acres that once surrounded it had been reduced to seventeen.

Considerably later in date than the Blakey house is one built in 1834 at what is now 615 North Twenty-ninth by a free Negro named Agnes or Polly Dungy. For at least thirty years after the Civil War it was occupied by a colored man, John Clark. An interesting



*Fig. 2. Blakey House
3600 P Street
Built before 1820*

fact that emerges from the study of old land books is that apparently no prejudice existed against a free Negro's living anywhere he could afford to build or rent. He lived where other laborers, barbers and blacksmiths built or rented homes. Hence we shall find houses built by free Negroes in sections as scattered as East Main, South Belvidere, Union Hill, French Garden Hill and the northern part of so-called Jackson Ward. Nor did the bitterness caused by Abolitionist agitation alter this state of affairs, as many of these houses were built during the tense 1850's.

Most of the houses in Shed Town, whether early or late, were of modest size (both the McEnery and Blakey houses, as we have seen, have been altered). An exception is 3213-15 N Street, built in 1843 by Richard Malone. This is a handsome step-gabled brick house, very "citified" even today by comparison with its small neighbors (fig. 5). Large enough to have been made into a double house, it has had two curious additions: an elaborate scroll-saw porch, recently subdued



*Fig. 5. Malone House
3213-15 N Street
Built 1843*

to more commonplace lines, and an astonishing construction in the rear which was probably built to contain bathrooms, but looks like nothing so much as a grain-elevator!

Contemporary with the Malone mansion are two little pairs of double houses built at 2813-19 M Street in 1846 by Hiram Oliver, who put up small houses to rent here and there in Shed Town, on Union and Church hills. No two of them are alike, and most of them are attractive—a far cry from the mass-production of modern real-estate developers.

The remaining old houses in this section date from the 'fifties. All are small, low, rather informal buildings suited to a modest suburb. The tiniest and certainly the most picturesque is 3116 M ([fig. 10](#)). The lean-tos on either side have led one humorist to dub this cottage “Westover-in-a-peanut-shell.” 2917 M, less



*Fig. 10. 3116 M Street
Built 1858*

attractive especially since street-improvements have sheared away its entrance, has a certain interest because the owner, William Catlin, had a family graveyard in the rear which was still there as late as 1881. One of the most surprising revelations of early deeds is the number of these family graveyards, many of them in far more central parts of Richmond than Shed Town. At one time there were such enclosures near the southwest corner of Franklin and Fourth, the northwest corner of Broad and Fifth and the southwest corner of Broad and Eighth streets!

In the late 'fifties and early 'sixties quite a development of small houses sprang up near the old McEnery-Metzger house, that is, between Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth, Clay and Leigh. James Gunn built the most attractive of them, the raised-cottage still standing at 601 North Thirtieth.⁴ 500 North Twenty-ninth was built by James



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 8 Peay House
500 North Twenty-ninth Street
Built 1860*

H. Peay, a shoemaker whose son, James H. Peay, Jr., was Richmond's second superintendent of schools. Mrs. Peay lived in this house as late as 1892. The Peay house is typical of many built just before and during the Civil War (fig. 8). It is almost square, two stories high, with a flat roof. While this particular house is quite attractive, a flat roof on a low-ceilinged dwelling in the climate of Richmond is far less practical than the steep A-roofs common in earlier days.

Diagonally across from the Peay house are several small frame dwellings built in the early 'sixties, most of which have been spoiled by the recent epidemic of asbestos siding. The most appealing was the one at Thirtieth and Clay which from 1870 until 1941 was the home of the Picot family (fig. 9). A fine wisteria vine formerly added to the charm of this modest home.

Houses further west, on Twenty-sixth or Twenty-seventh, many



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 9. Picot House
2919 East Clay Street
Built 1862*

of which were built in the 1850's, might be grouped with Shed Town, with Union Hill or with Church Hill, since they were on the border-line where the three sections meet. Many of them are still standing, though most are spoiled by scroll-saw verandahs, pebble-dash stucco, or large window-panes. Exceptions are the two Richardson houses at Twenty-seventh and M, built in the 1940's.⁵ Fortunately no one bothered to "improve" the rear of old buildings, so we illustrate the back of 701 North Twenty-seventh with its quaint kitchen and the low shuttered porches of the wing, both features typical of this whole east end of Richmond (fig. 6).

Some of these West-Shed-Town or East-Union-Hill dwellings were for many decades occupied by the same family. For instance, 700 North Twenty-eighth, built in 1856 by John W. Hughes, remained the home of his family until 1901. 413 North Twenty-eighth was that of the McCoull family from 1878 to 1909. 625 North Twenty-



*Fig. 6. 701 North Twenty-seventh Street
Built 1855*

sixth, built in 1856 by H. A. Atkinson, was occupied by him until the early 'eighties. J. W. Fergusson built 501 North Twenty-sixth in 1844, and occupied it for nearly thirty years; after that it was for fifty years the home of J. T. Montgomery. 701 North Twenty-seventh was the home of William Folkes from 1859 to the middle 'eighties, and for twenty years afterward that of Mrs. B. W. Anderson and her daughters.

In the 'fifties the former Shed Town was really an eastern extension of Union Hill, with the difference that the houses were less crowded together and a slightly more substantial class of citizen lived there. Where Union Hill was a centre for mechanics, most of whom rented their homes, Shed Town was rather the neighborhood of small tradesmen, most of whom owned their homes. From the beginning to the present time, it has been a purely residence neighborhood, with few stores, even small ones, and practically no public buildings. The 1819 directory lists one tavern, kept by Archer Meanly, on Thirtieth between Leigh and M. Insurance policies



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 7. Springfield Hall
700 North Twenty-sixth Street
Built 1850*

show that this was just south of the quaint 707½ North Thirtieth that we illustrate. The churches there today are all Negro churches, built in relatively recent times. One building of a public character that survives is Springfield Hall, headquarters of the Springfield Lodge, Sons of Temperance, which was erected at Twenty-sixth and M about 1850. Just after the Civil War the Society of Friends used this as its meeting-house. Now used as a Negro church, it is an interesting building, with the gable with small steps characteristic of the 'fifties (fig. 7).

In the last ten years Shed Town has rapidly changed to a Negro section, though Thirty-second and Chimborazo Boulevard, largely built up with modern houses on the site of earlier farms, are still

white. Negroes who for decades had occupied the northeast part of the plateau have simply moved further south and west. Many houses are well restored and kept up, and the wide streets, small buildings with ample space for more, the total lack of the shut-in ghetto character of Jackson Ward, make the conversion of the whole region to a Negro development seem logical.

Notes

1. See below [Samuel Snyder](#) and [John Marshall](#).
2. *Virginia Argus*, Dec. 29, 1806, Feb. 4 and Nov. 25, 1808.
3. A grandson of Mr. Larus who clarified the date of the Yarbrough house is sure that the Larus house was built in the 1840's, but 1854 is the date indicated by the Henrico land books. However, the land books have been known to err.
4. *Houses of Old Richmond*, Two Raised Cottages
5. *Ibid.*, Richardson Houses

Libby Hill

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A NEIGHBORHOOD SO small that it can almost be seen standing still is the southeastern spur of Church Hill. Even before 1796 there were houses on this bold bluff. Among the first to take advantage of the site was George W. Smith, who had married one of the daughters of the first Richard Adams. Elected Governor of Virginia in 1811, Smith perished in the Theatre Fire three weeks after his inauguration. A few years later, his house, a frame building at the southeast corner of Twenty-seventh and Franklin, was purchased by David Ross, one of the Scottish merchants engaged in many enterprises in and around Richmond. Ross was a pioneer in two industries that were to mean much in the city's business development—milling and coal-mining. Property which he owned just east of the Governor's Mansion gave Ross Street its name. He died two years after buying Governor Smith's former home, but his descendants owned the house, enlarged and surrounded with outbuildings, as late as 1871. In 1895 it was pulled down with not even a photograph of it to be found.

Hardly more fortunate was the house built in 1803 near the northeast corner of Franklin and Twenty-eighth by Elizabeth Griffin Adams, maiden sister of Mrs. Smith. Originally a one-story brick house, it was enlarged in 1828 and again in 1839, with a two-story addition facing Franklin Street. In the distant view of Libby Hill which we reproduce, this building, on the extreme left, looks like a dormered house of the 'forties ([fig. 11](#)). In 1830 it became the home of Col. George Mayo Carrington, whose widow lived there until 1893. Miss Elizabeth W. Weddell, whose childhood was spent there,



Fig. 11. Libby Hill

vividly recalls both the material setting and the life at “Aunt Sue Carrington’s.” The only staircase was in the earlier house, which formed a rear wing of the larger building. The large and beautiful yard was a happy hunting-ground for the Weddell children. In one of the outbuildings lived an ancient colored couple, former retainers of the Carrington family. “Aunt Sue,” blind for many years, was deeply and sternly religious. Her one weakness was fear of thunderstorms: when one came, she would assemble the entire household including servants and terrified children in the library for prayers. Though she was the chief support of Third Presbyterian Church, her loyalty to her husband’s memory made her also the custodian of the Communion vessels of St. John’s, which were always kept at her house.

The oldest building left today on Libby Hill is just across



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 12. Gentry-Stokes-Crew House
2718 East Franklin Street
Built 1839*

Are Fig. 12 and 13 reversed?

Twenty-eighth from the site of the Carrington house. Like its vanished neighbor, this property has seldom changed hands and has undergone many alterations (fig. 12). Built in 1839 by John Gentry, it became in 1854 the home of A. Y. Stokes, prominent Richmond merchant, who lived there until 1868. From then until the present time, it has been the home of Peter J. Crew and of his family. The original building was a one-story brick house, wide and shallow.



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 13. Hancock House
11 1/2 North Twenty-ninth Street
Built 1867*

Are Fig. 12 and 13 reversed?

The Stokeses added a second story and a wing with shuttered porch. Since the Civil War another wing has been added and the small entrance-porch changed to a verandah. We have been unable to ascertain when the picturesque servants' building on the rear of the lot was erected.

In 1850 the land east of the present park was sold off in lots by the heirs of Curtis Carter. Two houses were built in that year, both of which are still standing. The one at the corner of Main and Twenty-ninth built by Luther Libby is the more attractive of the two, even though its stepped gable has been replaced by a cumbersome mansard roof. In the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties this was the residence of Lemuel Powers, commission merchant.

Luther Libby House

The very large brick house at the other end of the block, built in the same year as the Libby-Powers house, is chiefly associated with the family of Edmond A. Saunders, who lived there in the 'seventies and 'eighties. Diagonally across from it formerly stood another big brick house built a couple of years later in the east end of the Carrington yard by Williamson Allen ([fig. 11, right to left](#)).

In 1851 Captain Charles Dimmock, a member of the City Council, made the statesmanlike proposal that the City establish parks in various residence-sections. Within a few months the sites for four such "squares" were purchased. One of these was the block bounded by Main, Franklin, Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth. At first called "the Eastern Square," then Jefferson and still later Marshall Park, this was the nucleus of the present Libby Hill Park. As early as 1865, in spite of its official name, it was referred to as Libby Hill. The impression that the name Libby has made on Richmond is one of the curious ironies of history. Luther Libby occupied the home he had built less than fifteen years, yet his name is unalterably attached to the park in front of it. For less than five years he rented as a ship-chandler's warehouse a building on Cary belonging to the Enders family, but the fact that his sign was hanging above the door when it was taken over as a prison for Federal soldiers gave this building nationwide notoriety as the detested Libby Prison.

Just before the Civil War, the block on Twenty-ninth just north of the park was developed with unpretentious frame houses, of which three or four are still standing. In the two blocks on Main east of the Libby house are two dwellings of the same period. The more attractive is now a double house, 3017-19, built in 1858 by Hiram W. Tyler. Captain Tyler lived there until he built a brick

house west of it in 1872, after which his earlier home became that of Thomas Cunningham. The frame house occupies a commanding position at the eastern extremity of Libby Hill, though the view is rather spoiled by the City Gas Works in the valley below.

In the summer after the Surrender, a camp of Negro infantry occupied the heights of Libby Hill. A writer in the *Whig* mourns nostalgically:

This beautiful spot . . . acts as a ventilator to Church Hill. Over its summits blow the breezes which old father James imports from the ocean, and from it the eyes take in a grand sweep of country. Here, in days gone by, ladies, and children with their *mammies*, used to assemble in happy groups to enjoy the freshness of the morning and the coolness of the evening air. Now a camp of U. S. colored infantry covers the face of the hill. *Tempora inutantur et nos mutamur in illis.* (August 1, 1865.)

Shortly after the War at least three houses were built in the neighborhood the Tyler house already mentioned, one at Main and Thirtieth built by Dr. Frederick H. Langstedt, and one now numbered 11½ North Twenty-ninth which was built in 1868 by William Hancock (fig. 13). This latter is an unusually attractive house for the period, and is adorned with one of the most beautiful iron verandahs in Richmond.

In the early 'nineties when our photograph of Libby Hill was probably taken, it is evident that scarcely any buildings other than those we have named had been added to the neighborhood. At one time it was proposed to erect a monument to General Lee

on these heights. When a location at the other end of town was preferred, the fine site above the one-time Confederate Navy Yard remained in the public mind as suitable for some memorial to the Lost Cause. In 1888 the City Council voted \$5,000 for a monument to the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors, but it was not until 1894 that with funds added from other sources the lofty shaft modelled on Pompey's Column in Rome was actually erected. This event probably was responsible for much new building on Libby Hill, when the yards of the Carrington house and of other old dwellings were filled with rows of small houses. Only a magnolia here and there recalls the vanished gardens. The magnificent site defies alteration, but with the growth of the trees and changed character of the buildings, Libby Hill is quite different in appearance from the airy spaces of our photograph. Though few of its buildings other than the Stokes-Crew house have much charm, the neighborhood has nevertheless a combination of remoteness and intimacy, and would, like Gamble's Hill, lend itself to a revival as a popular place to live.

Church Hill

page 29

ALTHOUGH THE TERM Church Hill is loosely used to denote all the eastern end of Richmond, it is properly the area around St. John's Church, and is bounded roughly by Franklin, Twentieth and Twenty-seventh streets and Jefferson Avenue. The equally widespread misconception that Church Hill is the oldest part of Richmond is due partly to the large number of ante-bellum buildings still standing there and partly to the fact that St. John's is in all probability the oldest building in the city.

When St. John's was erected in 1741 on the hill then called Indian Town, it was, like countless other Virginia churches, in the country, although Col. Byrd's gift of the two lots was unquestionably connected with his plans for the town he had laid off at "Shacco's" four years earlier. People accustomed to drive or ride several miles for semi-occasional services would have thought nothing of climbing the hill from their homes down near the river-bank, where all the activities of the pre-Revolutionary village were centered.

The part of St. John's that dates from this early time is the present transept, the church then facing east and west as a church traditionally should. In 1772 it was enlarged by the addition of forty feet on the site of the present nave. On March 20, 1775, the Virginia Convention, not daring to meet in the capital city of Williamsburg, assembled in the village of Richmond, choosing for its place of meeting the only building larger than a dwelling. More than the presence of such giants as Washington, Jefferson, Mason and Wythe, the burning words of Patrick Henry on that day changed this modest frame church into one of the shrines of freedom for the

whole world.

By 1880 the building had attained approximately its present size and appearance, though the belfry erected in 1830 has been twice replaced, and earlier casual names—“the Church,” “the Old Church,” “the Church on Richmond Hill”¹—had been succeeded by “St. John’s Church.” In 1835 the little brick building at Grace and Twenty-fourth was put up to be used as a Sunday School and often as a day-school. Meanwhile, around the church lay Richmond’s only graveyard other than the family enclosures dotted about the city and suburbs. By 1800 St. John’s was filling up, and the City bought the two lots facing Broad Street, so that the graveyard covered the whole square. The imposing brick wall around it has collapsed and been rebuilt more than once, generally as a result of street-grading. In the shaded two acres lie many outstanding Richmonders: Col. Edward Carrington, Col. Robert Gamble, Dr. James McClurg, Joseph Gallego, Geddes Winston (who might dispute with Treasurer Ambler the sobriquet of “father-in-law of early Richmond”), John Enders, John Warrock, many of the Ege family, and several rectors of the church, including Parson Buchanan, who is buried beneath the altar. Among those buried in unmarked graves were Chancellor Wythe and Elizabeth Arnold Poe to whom a memorial has been placed in recent years.

During the first century of its existence, the congregation of the old church was small. In the early 1800’s it was only opened three times a year, for Communion Services on Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday, to which sometimes as few as half a dozen people came. However, in the boom year 1818, when people had begun to build on Church Hill, a new brick church to replace St. John’s was



*Fig. 20. Marshall-Winston-Andrews House
2606 East Franklin Street
Built before 1792, Demolished 1903*

actually begun on Twenty-third Street near the corner of Broad. But like the fortunes of that intoxicated era, it came to nothing, and no Episcopal church has ever replaced or supplemented St. John's on the eastern heights of Richmond. Though a succession of strong rectors in the years after the Civil War greatly increased the congregation, St. John's has never been a large parish like some of the younger uptown churches.

For the first few decades after it was built, the church had, so far as we know, only one neighbor, Isaac Coles, who in 1769 sold ten quarter-squares to the first Richard Adams. Probably about 1788 Col. Adams built his own house² a block west of the churchyard, on the heights overlooking James River. Meanwhile he was acquiring land not only on Church Hill but on Union Hill to the north and far out into Shed Town. As his many children grew up, he gave each one an acre or more for a home. We have already mentioned two of these establishments in the chapter on Libby Hill. Closer to the family hearth was Dr. John Adams, who about 1801 built the house later enlarged and beautified by John Van Lew³, and made famous by the latter's daughter, Elizabeth Van Lew. William Marshall, brother of the Chief Justice, who had married Alice Adams, built on Franklin diagonally across from his brother-in-law, George W. Smith.⁴ His fine brick mansion was later the home of George Winston and then of Samuel Andrews (fig. 20). After her husband's death, Mrs. Andrews married Hugh Raleigh, who with his two step-daughters was killed in 1852 in a steam-boat explosion. At that time these horrible accidents were comparable in frequency and in the indignation they aroused to the air-crashes of today.

About 1817 Samuel G. Adams erected a large brick house at the northwest corner of Broad and Twenty-second. Close to it he built a glass-factory. On this corner was opened in 1854 Bellevue Hospital, the first private hospital in Richmond. Used for Confederate soldiers, it was replaced after the Civil War by Bellevue School, which was removed in the present century to the site of the Adams-Van Lew mansion. An old Richmonder who attended the earlier Bellevue remembers digging up bits of glass from Samuel Adams'



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*Fig. 19. Ann Carrington House
2306 East Grace Street
Built between 1810 and 1816*

factory in the hillside behind the school-building.

The only Adams house still standing is that of Samuel and John's sister, Ann Adams Carrington. Her marriage to Col. Mayo Carrington was the first of several marriages connecting the Adams and Carrington families. Sometime between 1810 and 1816 Dr. John Adams gave the house now numbered 2306 East Grace to his widowed sister, who lived there until her death in 1820 (fig. 19). Since then, oddly enough, it has seldom been occupied by its



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*Fig. 24. Carrington Row
2307-11 East Broad Street
Built 1818*

owner. In the 'thirties, 'forties and 'fifties it was the home of Micajah Bates, City Surveyor, to whom we owe some of the most interesting plats of Richmond property. In 1888 the house was purchased by St. John's Church as a rectory for the Reverend Lewis W. Burton, who afterwards became the first Bishop of Lexington (Kentucky). It served as a rectory until 1904, and for the next four decades was used as a parish-house. In 1944 the William Byrd Branch bought it for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and is now (1950) in process of restoring it. Relieved of its ugly verandah and a wing in the rear, the Ann Carrington house is an interesting example of early nineteenth-century architecture, the



*Fig. 14. Adams or Picket Cemetery
Marshall Street near Twenty-third
Abolished 1892*

most noticeable features being the big chimneys, bow front and cornice of bricks set at a diagonal to the wall with molded bricks above them.

Just east of Mrs. Carrington her son Littlebury built his home, which disappeared in the 'fifties, not long after its master had committed suicide in one of the outbuildings. Behind these two houses, on Broad Street, three of the Carrington brothers built in 1818 three houses long called Carrington's Row (fig. 24). Though disfigured by pebble-dash stucco and long windows, these are still three of the handsomest houses of old Richmond, and the earliest "row" that is left complete. With their fine pilastered façades, inset rectangular panels and bold roof-line, they are reminiscent of the Cunningham-Archer house, and show what the White House of



*Fig. 18. 316 North Twenty-seventh Street
Built before 1814*

the Confederacy must have looked like before the third story was added.

But we are going ahead of our story. Up to 1809 Church Hill was still largely an Adams settlement, the sons and daughters clustered near the paternal home. The family graveyard was nearby, at what is now Marshall and Twenty-third (fig. 14). The fate of this little enclosure, which with the adjoining Pickett graveyard was the last one remaining in the heart of town, is typical of many such all over

Virginia. By the 1850's the Adams family was scattered, the resting-place of its founders neglected. The two enclosures had become a hang-out for "gangs of negroes that regularly assemble there to pitch cents."⁵ Our photograph, made probably not long before all the bodies were removed to Hollywood in 1892, shows the deplorable condition into which it had fallen.

The first Richard Adams died in 1802. During the following decade his children began to sell off lots for building. The earliest houses of certain date still standing are 2501-3 East Grace, a little brick pair built by Dr. Adams in 1809 to sell or rent.⁶ Of the same period is the home of Anthony Turner at Twenty-sixth and Franklin.⁷ Similar to this without the advantage of its commanding position is 2302 East Grace, built before 1816 by Hilary Baker who later became the first treasurer of the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad. Here in 1818 his sister, Eliza Louisa, was married to John Van Lew. When it is remembered that both of Miss Lizzie Van Lew's parents were Northerners, the Bakers' father having been Mayor of Philadelphia, her devotion to the Union cause was not such an aberration as her fellow-Richmonders imagined. The Baker, Turner and Ann Carrington houses are alike in having enormous pairs of chimneys on the western end of the house.

Attractive if less imposing is 316 North Twenty-seventh ([fig. 18](#)). One unaltered window betrays its early date. Hardly more than an out-building in size but full of charm is 2608 East Marshall, always called the Snyder house, though that family never owned it. However, Samuel Snyder, a house-painter, was living there as early as 1852 and J. D. Snyder as recently as 1923, which must be a record of tenancy. At present it is the Sunday School building of the Third



*Fig. 23. 2608 East Marshall Street
Built before 1814*

Christian Church next door. (fig. 23)

Out toward Shed Town a handful of early buildings are still standing. At Twenty-seventh and Clay is the home of James Parkinson, built before 1819 and as late as the 1890's the home of Parkinson's daughter, Mrs. James Riddick (fig. 21). North of it at 509 North Twenty-seventh is a similar house of the same date built by Bartholomew Graves, a bricklayer, and Parkinson's brother-in-law. The detail of this house, both within and without, is more delicate, or perhaps less altered than that of the Parkinson house. These two



*Fig. 21. Parkinson House
501 North Twenty-seventh Street
Built 1818*

and the two houses just mentioned previously are alike in having very steep gabled roofs. Earlier than the Graves and Parkinson houses is 407 North Twenty-seventh ([fig. 15](#)). Even before it was covered in 1949 with asbestos siding, this dwelling had been greatly altered, but early insurance policies allow us to visualize it as it was when built in or before 1812 by Charles Wills a two-story frame house with a high central unit and lower wings on either side. At the corner south of it Wills built a couple of years later a small brick grocery-store, probably the oldest shop now standing in Richmond ([fig. 16](#)).

Records and photographs exist of several interesting early houses that formerly stood on Church Hill. We are fortunate in



*Fig. 15. Wills House
407 North Twenty-seventh Street
Built before 1813*

finding a photograph of the one built by Thomas Williamson at the northwest corner of Twenty-eighth and Grace (fig. 17). For three or four years this was the home of the painter James Warrell, at the time when he was founding the Virginia Museum.⁸ In appearance it was quite different from its contemporaries that we have mentioned. Where they were (with the exception of Wills' home) relatively narrow, with steep roofs, this one, generally called the King house from the family that lived there in the late 'seventies and 'eighties, was broad, with chimneys at each end, the slope of the roof masked by a balustrade.

Only insurance policies record another unusual house, one built in 1813 by Walter Shelton on the north side of Broad between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth. For many decades it belonged



*Fig. 16. Wills Store
401 North Twenty-seventh Street
Built before 1813-15*

to the family of William A. Boswell. This house had a three-sided bay in the rear, and is the only example we have discovered on Church Hill of that architectural feature which we shall have occasion to refer to in neighborhoods further west.

Neither photograph nor insurance-drawing records the Winston or Crenshaw house that occupied a large lot at the southwest corner of Twenty-eighth and Broad. The first owner, James Winston, was a son of that George Winston whom we have already encountered on Libby Hill and in Shed Town, and who is said to have built a house for each of his children. After James Winston's death, his mansion



*Fig. 17. 2710 East Grace Street
Built 1809, Demolished 1902*

was bought by Joseph H. Crenshaw. From 1817 until its demolition in 1888 it was owned by only these two families. A plaque in the pavement marks the site of the house, recalling that it was here that General Joseph E. Johnston was brought wounded from the Battle of Seven Pines to be nursed back to health.⁹

During the stagnant years from 1819 until about 1836 a good many houses were added to Church Hill, of which a surprising number are still standing. The earliest is probably one built just across Twenty-second from Samuel Adams' house by John Quarles, a carpenter, described in his obituary as "highly esteemed as a worthy and careful member of society." His descendants, named Parkinson and Andrews, lived there as recently as 1914. Older residents of



Palmer Gray

Fig. 22. Broad Street between Twenty-second and Twenty-third Streets

Church Hill recall with glee how one of them, threatened with a foreclosure, sat on the doorstep with a shot-gun on his knees and defied anyone to bid on his family home. In spite of the loss of its porch and a disfiguring advertisement on the west gable, this long, thin house is full of character (fig. 22).

On the block east of it is a pair of houses, 2316-18 East Broad, built in 1826 by George Winston, who had been constructing houses in various parts of Richmond since the early 1790's. For sixty years the easternmost of these two was owned and occupied by the family of R. H. Whitlock. There have been several unrelated families of Whitlocks in Richmond, one of them Jewish. This family of R. H. Whitlock were Quakers, and one-time neighbors remembered old Mrs. Whitlock dressed in the Quaker habit.

Slightly later than the Winston-Whitlock pair are three frame cottages built between 1830 and 1838 by John Morris at 2500 and



*Fig. 25. Malone Houses
2301-7 East Franklin Street
Built 1827*

2506-8 East Grace and at 207 North Twenty-fifth, of which the first and the last are the earliest and the least altered.¹⁰

Undoubtedly the most attractive house dating from these stagnant years is 2702 East Grace, built in 1829, and from 1835 to 1929 the home of Andrew Ellett and of his kinsfolk.¹¹ As this house has been very little altered, it is worth examining as typical of most of those dating from this era. The general shape is similar to earlier dwellings such as those of Anthony Turner and Hilary Baker: steep A-roof, sometimes with dormers and sometimes without, hall and small entrance porch on one side, paired chimneys at one end only. An important difference is that the chimneys are built into the wall of the house, instead of forming the massive buttress that is a striking feature of the Baker, Turner and Ann Carrington houses.



*Fig. 26. White-Taylor House
2717 East Grace Street
Built 1839*

Similar to the Ellett house is 405 North Twenty-seventh, built in 1835 for William Slater. This, however, differs from the others in having triple windows on both floors.¹²

The most remarkable ensemble of houses of this period found anywhere in Richmond stands on the lower slopes of Church Hill, on the south side of Franklin opposite the vanished garden of the Van Lew house (fig. 25). Among six dwellings dating from 1827, the four nearest Twenty-third Street were built for James Malone by his brick-maker son-in-law, John B. Brown, whose initials, with the date, 1827, appear high up on the western gable-end. The most attractive house in the row is 2309, built by that same William C. Allen who built the Andrew Ellett house. The lamentable condition of the whole block, rented to a low grade of Negro tenant, is the



*Fig. 27. Cow-house of White-Taylor House
Demolished about 1940*

more regrettable since so few groups of houses as old as these remain in Richmond, and none of them date from the period when hardly a dozen houses a year were being put up. The delicate stairways and trim that one catches a glimpse of through sagging doors strengthens the conviction that no block would, from an artistic point of view, be more rewarding to restore.

As business began to revive with the coming of the railroads and the accompanying expansion of the iron industry, several houses were added to Church Hill. Probably one of the most luxurious was



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 28. Whitlock House
316 North Twenty-fourth Street
Built 1840*

the White-Taylor house, 2717 East Grace, built in 1839 (figs. 26 and 27). In 1859 Philip K. White, who had built it and lived there two decades, advertised it for sale, pointing out such elegant features as solid mahogany doors, marble mantels, and grates with “large images on each side which gives them a very handsome finish.”¹³ For thirty years it was the home of George Watt Taylor, who added the third story. A curious tale recalled by several old Church Hill residents is that two children, one a child of Mr. Taylor, were struck by lightning and killed in the yard of this house. Formerly there were a number of outbuildings, including a dairy and two cow-



*Fig. 29. Alfriend House
319 North Twenty-fourth Street
Built 1842*

houses, one of which was torn down only a few years ago, the last of these cow-houses to disappear.

During the 'forties Church Hill continued to fill up with residences. Two attractive ones dating from 1840 are 2109 East Franklin, built by Charles McGinness,¹⁴ and 316 North Twenty-fourth, erected evidently as an investment by Richard H. Whitlock just back of his own home. The simple lines of this frame dwelling suggest the Craig house, though the latter is half a century older. Oddly enough, the house is still owned and occupied by Whitlocks,

though of a different family from that of the builder (fig. 28).

Just across the street is a brick house with a striking stepped-gable. This was built two years later than the Whitlock house by Thomas Alfriend, secretary of the Virginia Fire and Marine Insurance Co. (fig. 29). The house has a stoop with an elaborate canopy that is characteristic of Richmond houses of the 'fifties, though it was used two decades earlier in other cities, such as Baltimore. A more thorough comparative study of the architecture of Eastern cities than has thus far been made would, we believe, bear out the observation that Richmond was a laggard in the adoption of new styles.

Gables similar to that on the Alfriend house are found on two houses built by Mrs. Van Lew in the block just east of her own mansion. One of them, 2403 East Grace, is still in its original condition, a handsome Greek Revival house, but 2407, the porch of which has been altered, has attracted far more interest since the late J. H. Whitty stated that Elmira Shelton was living here when she bade Poe farewell in September, 1849. The only substantiation we can find for this claim is that in 1852 she was certainly living in one of the three houses then standing in this block.¹⁵

Houses built in the 'forties and 'fifties had far less ground around them than those dating from the first two decades of the nineteenth century. This we shall find characteristic of all neighborhoods save Fifth Street, Franklin and Grace. There was a tendency to build pairs of houses. Either these were investments, or two friends or partners built them at the same time as residences. Such are the six just east of the Quarles house on Broad Street, built in the late 'forties by several different people (fig. 22). If most of the houses



*Fig. 31. Rear view of 2600 block,
East Franklin Street
Built in late 1850's*

had not been altered by verandahs and large window-panes, the blocks on Broad between Twenty-second and Twenty-fourth would be two of the most attractive in town, as they are certainly two of the most interesting.

Just east of Twenty-third, William Catlin in 1845 built the house now numbered 2304. Five years later he built one at the corner, better located and less altered than the earlier house.¹⁶ Of similar Greek Revival pattern, its coarse interior trim showing its late date, is the charming house at the southeast corner of Grace and Twenty-eighth, built in 1852 and for over forty years the home of the Bodeker family.¹⁷ The Greek Revival impulse was slowly dying out, and many substantial houses of the 'fifties mingle lip-service to Classic models with some strange new features. A block that is

as remarkable an ensemble as the 2300 block on Franklin is that bounded by Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh on the same street. On the north side two houses were built west of the former Winston or Andrews home, and on the south side four out of the original five large brick residences are still standing. One might say five are there, as the enormous pile built in 1857 by John L. Liggon is really two houses, the eastern half entered by one of the most curious and delicate cast-iron porches that we have ever noticed. This house is said to have been a hospital during the Civil War. All of these houses have Classic entrance-porches, but with the exception of the Smith house, 2617,¹⁸ which formerly had a stepped-gable, all have the low, squat outlines and nearly flat roofs that in the 'fifties were replacing the sharp A-roofs or stepped gables of earlier buildings. The greatest charm of this row is the back porches, two-story or three-story structures, commanding a magnificent view over the wooded banks of the James River, and themselves imposing when seen from lower Main Street (fig. 31).

Until just before the Civil War nearly all the houses built on Church Hill were of brick. Among the exceptions are the cunning frame cottage 2502-4 East Leigh (1849), recently spoiled by asbestos siding, 510 North Twenty-fifth, built in 1853 by Pleasant Jones, a free Negro, and 219 North Twenty-ninth (1851), which for nearly half a century was the home of Mrs. Susan Reed, "relict" of David Reed.¹⁹ Here for at least thirty-five years Mrs. Reed presided over what one of her former pupils, the late Alexander W. Weddell, described as "a real dame-school."

In spite of the steady increase of houses, up to 1849 the hill had only one church, St. John's, which as we have seen was but



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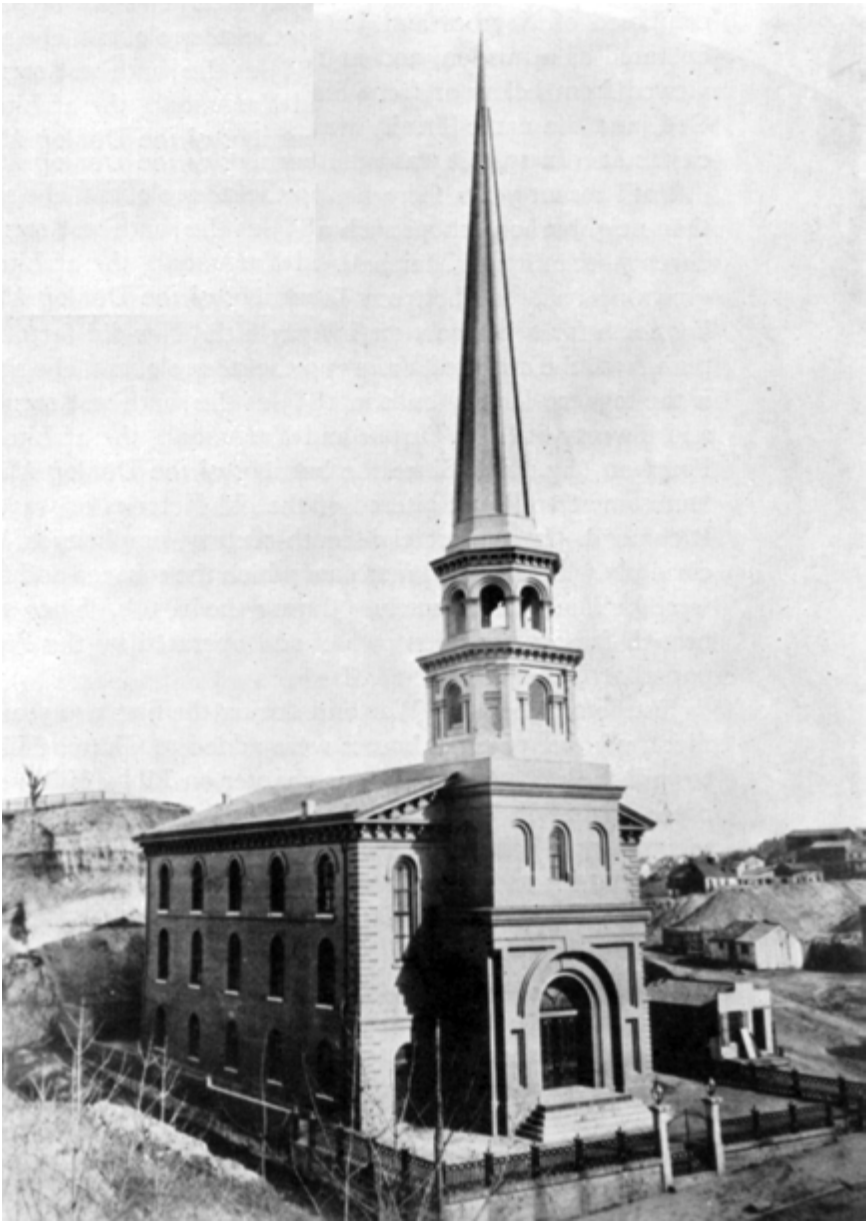
*Fig. 33. Leigh Street Baptist Church
Twenty-fifth and Leigh Streets
Built 1853*

indifferently well attended. This is the more difficult to explain as the people settling there, though not wealthy, were eminently substantial. In 1849 Third Presbyterian, formerly located in

Rocketts, moved up the hill and built at Broad and Twenty-fifth. Twenty years later the excavation of the ill-starred Chesapeake and Ohio tunnel so undermined the building that it was condemned and was succeeded by one still standing at the corner of Broad and Twenty-sixth.²⁰

In 1853 the handsome church known as Leigh Street Baptist was erected at Twenty-fifth and Leigh (fig. 33). The architect of this finely proportioned Classic building, one of the most beautiful churches in Richmond, was Samuel Sloan of Philadelphia. The church was to have had a steeple, fortunately never added. The rich iron stair-rail leading to the portico seems to have been made by Asa Snyder. Concerning the building itself, we can only join a writer in the *Dispatch* who said at the time it was first used for service, "We do not know of a handsomer church of its size in the city."²¹ Strategically placed at the junction of Church and Union hills and Shed Town, Leigh Street has always had a flourishing congregation. Among its pastors have been such well-known men as Reuben Ford (the first pastor), John Pollard, M. Ashby Jones and J. J. Wicker. In 1911 the addition of a large Sunday School building to the south rather spoiled the outlines of the church. As it is now almost surrounded by Negroes moving south and west from Shed Town, the building will probably soon be occupied by a colored congregation.

In 1859 the Roman Catholics built St. Patrick's Church on Twenty-fifth, just across from the side of St. John's. This is a pseudo-Gothic building without special distinction, the most pleasing feature being a charming iron rail whose sharp curve follows the steep rise of the steps. A large parochial school was established soon



*Fig. 34. Trinity Methodist Church (second building)
Twentieth and Broad Streets
Built 1860*

Old Photo



*Fig. 32. Yarbrough-Pohlig Factory
Built 1853*

after in an old frame house at Twenty-fifth and Franklin. This has been superseded by a modern brick building at Twenty-sixth and Grace.

In 1859 the congregation of Trinity Methodist Church near Council Chamber Hill decided to move. The strength of the east-end contingent is evidenced by the split that took place, part of the congregation deciding to build at Tenth and Broad, and part choosing the lower slopes of Church Hill, at Twentieth and Broad. The latter church, which carried on the name Trinity, was designed by Albert L. West in what contemporary accounts call “Italian style.” It was opened for services in 1861, but the lovely spire was only completed in 1873 (fig. 34). In the present century this fine old church has had a struggling existence. Methodists on Church Hill attended Union Station or recently-built churches further east.

The population of Shockoe Valley was chiefly composed of Negroes and Jews. For a number of years Trinity was operated as a mission, and in 1945 the building, a landmark whether viewed from below or from Shockoe Hill, was sold to the Church of God, and the name Trinity was carried to a new location west of the city limits. In 1947 it was again sold, this time to a Negro congregation.

Until recent years there has been no business on Church Hill other than neighborhood shops such as the very early one we have noticed at Twenty-seventh and Marshall. A small business neighborhood has now grown up on Broad between Twenty-fourth and Twenty-sixth, expanding north for two blocks on Twenty-fifth. Nor did factories attempt to push from the crowded Valley up the steep slopes. The single exception is the tobacco factory built in 1853 at the southwest corner of Franklin and Twenty-fifth by Turpin and Yarbrough, the architect being John Freeman (fig. 32). Since the burning of the Dunlop Mills, this is the handsomest and least altered of the old factories or warehouses left in Richmond. Its almost eighteenth-century simplicity of line contrasts curiously with the florid mansions which the tobacco and flour magnates were building for themselves during the 1850's. Since 1909 the Yarbrough factory has been owned and operated by the Pohlig Brothers' paperbox factory.

Just before the Civil War and during the first two years of that conflict a number of small houses were added to Church Hill, particularly toward the eastern end. In our chapter on Libby Hill we have already noted several on Twenty-ninth. Further north on that street we might mention 314, a frame house built in 1860 by James H. Lester and occupied by his family as late as 1909. Mrs.



*Fig. 30. Silas Johnson House
323 North Twenty-fourth Street
Built 1861 or '62*

Emma Price, Mr. Lester's daughter, recalls that her father, returning from the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia full of enthusiasm for modern conveniences, installed one of the first steam furnaces in Richmond. He put it in the parlor, and the pipes, which ran all around above the floors, were delightful to sit on in cold weather!

A brick house of this same period that had an even longer association with one family is 323 North Twenty-fourth ([fig. 30](#)). In 1862 it was bought by Silas L. Johnson, a lumber-dealer, whose granddaughter still owns it. The family lived there as late as 1919. Architecturally, this house belongs in the same category as the Peay

house in Shed Town, but the uncompromising square-box character is enlivened by a picturesque shuttered wing in the rear.

An attractive pair of medium-sized houses are those built in 1862 at the northeast corner of Twenty-eighth and Grace. The corner house was for nearly thirty years the home of John R. Currie and of his family. More pretentious homes dating from the late 'fifties and early 'sixties are 2519 East Grace, built in 1861 by George A. Ainslie, carriage-maker and father of Mayor Ainslie, who occupied it until the early 'eighties, 2517 East Grace, built in 1857 by Augustus B. Clarke, hardware merchant, who lived there until 1892, and 2521 East Franklin (1858) which for nearly thirty years was the home of William W. Davies, one of the best-known photographers of the late nineteenth century.

By far the most imposing house of this period is a much older building at Twenty-second and Grace, which was greatly enlarged and altered in appearance in 1859. Built shortly before 1810, it is represented with almost photographic accuracy in the well-known print of Richmond from Church Hill. To the attractive one-story dwelling William Taylor added a second story, a cupola and porches overlooking the river. During the Civil War it was occupied by the family of R. A. Wilkins, a Mississippi sugar-planter, who, returning to Virginia to educate his children, was overtaken and ruined by the War. The description by one of his sons of the effects of that disaster on a wealthy family reduced to destitution is a document as revealing of the South's tragedy as any we have ever seen.²² In 1866 Bishop McGill purchased the house from Mr. Wilkins, and after being rented for a number of years, it was incorporated into the grounds of Monte Maria Convent, where thus far it has escaped the

fate of the more significant Adams house.

None of these buildings erected just before or during the Civil War shows a trace of Classic influence. That the taste for Greek columns still lingered in Richmond is evidenced, however, by the houses built in 1861 by Miles Turpin and his partner William J. Yarbrough at 2209 and 2215 East Broad, both of which hark back to the low, four-square houses with Classic entrance porches that came into vogue about 1850. The iron fence with pineapple posts around the Yarbrough house disappeared several years ago, probably going to arm Japan, but the less interesting one around the Turpin house is distinguished by one of the most charming strapwork gates in Richmond, the date 1861 being interlaced with its delicate curves.

In this connection we might comment that there is very little cast-iron on Church Hill despite the many houses erected there in the 'fifties. Three of the most charming porches are found on houses built just after the War—on the rectory of St. Patrick's next door to the church on Twenty-fifth, and on 2308-10 East Grace, built in 1869 on the site of Littlebury Carrington's house.

Since the War, Church Hill has continued to grow, generally by houses filling up the big yards of earlier dwellings. Though the name Adams disappeared from Richmond before the 1852 directory, so far as descendants of Richard Adams were concerned, and the last trace of Carringtons from that region vanished with the death in 1893 of "Aunt Sue," many fine and loyal old families clung to Church Hill at least down into the 'nineties. A moving picture of the decline of the neighborhood may be read in Ellen Glasgow's *Romance of a Plain Man*. During the present century, the hill has gradually sunk to a near-slum condition. Old houses, still charming to look at, are

occupied by three or more families where they were built for one. A beautiful iron verandah does not prevent the “Black Maria” from dashing up to carry off some brawling drunkard, or to transfer half a dozen children living in two rooms to the City Home.

Superficially seen by one strolling along its shaded streets, Church Hill is still by far the most attractive of Richmond’s old neighborhoods. The proportion of ante-bellum houses to those of recent date is higher than in any section of comparable size. Since the destruction of the Adams and Van Lew houses, no one of them is of the first order, architecturally or historically. But the effect of the ensemble of commanding heights, lovely trees, picturesque buildings, the beautiful churchyard surrounding St. John’s, the incomparable interest of the ancient church itself, the perfect spire of old Trinity—all these things give Church Hill a charm that we shall find in no other Richmond neighborhood today.²³

Notes

1. The name “Richmond Hill” was often used in place of Church Hill: we find it in newspapers as early as 1806 and as late as 1852.
2. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Richard Adams House
3. *Ibid.*, Adams-Van Lew House
4. The Marshall or Winston house may well have dated from 1788, the year of William Marshall’s marriage.
5. *Dispatch*, Sept. 28, 1858.
6. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Brick Double Houses
7. *Ibid.*, Anthony Turner House
8. See [Virginia Museum](#) in Court End.
9. A large house on the lower slope of Church Hill was built in 1818 by the Rev. John Holt Rice. Generally called the Greaner house, this is discussed in *Houses of Old Richmond*, John Holt Rice House
10. *Ibid.*, John Morris Cottages In 1947 the house on Twenty-fifth was sheathed in asbestos siding.
11. *Ibid.*, Andrew Ellet Houses

12. *Ibid.*, Slater House
13. *Enquirer*, April 5, 1859.
14. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, McGinness House
15. Advertisement in *Dispatch*, Oct. 1, 1852. Cf. 1852 directory.
16. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Catlin and Bodeker Houses
17. *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*
18. *Ibid.*, Three Step-Gable Greek Revival Houses
19. Badly burned in 1868, Mrs. Reed's house was evidently repaired along its original lines (*Whig*, July 28, 1868).
20. See Blanton, *Making of a Downtown Church*, pp. 35-36, also *Whig*, Dec. 25, 1849 for a slightly amended date.
21. *Dispatch*, Sept. 3 and Dec. 22, 1853.
22. Benjamin H. Wilkins, *War Boy* (Tullahoma, Tenn., 1938. Privately printed).
23. In the spring of 1948 the Yarbrough house and a small church that in recent years had been built in its yard were purchased by a Negro congregation. What effect this will have on Church Hill and particularly on St. John's Church, a block away, is yet to be seen.

Luther Libby House

Luther Libby House for sale in Richmond

BY CAROL HAZARD

Richmond Times-Dispatch Richmond Times-Dispatch
Nov 7, 2013

The Luther Libby House, in a prime location in Church Hill and for whom Libby Hill Park is named, has come on the market for the first time in 40 years.

“We love the house. We love the community. It’s a fabulous place to live,” said Mary Corley.

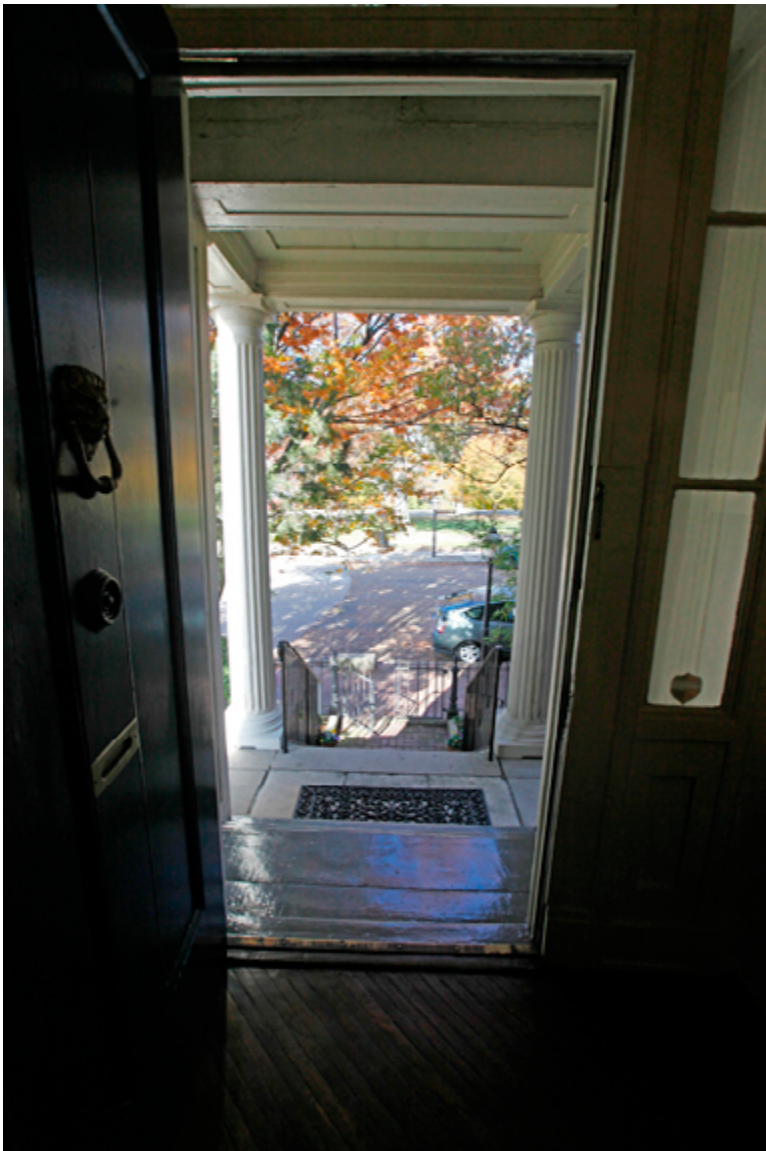
She and her husband, Karl Corley, reared their two children in this Greek Revival house that has a classical entrance porch and



Mary and Karl Corley in front of the Luther Libby House, their home for the 40 years, in the Church Hill area of Richmond

stands a stately three stories at Libby Terrace and North 29th Street.

The Corleys, retired educators from what was called the Medical College of Virginia, are selling the house to move to a Hanover



BOB BROWN/TIMESDISPATCH

Looking out the front door of the Luther Libby House



BOB BROWN/TIMES DISPATCH

On a landing of the three-story staircase.

County retirement community with fewer steps and less upkeep.

The house, built in 1851 overlooks a square with a monument dedicated to Confederate soldiers and sailors and panoramic views of Richmond and the James River.

From this vantage point, William Byrd II noticed a view similar to Richmond upon Thames, a London borough, and gave the city of Richmond its name in 1737.

Historians say Gen. Robert E. Lee stood on the steps of the Luther Libby House to deliver news about the devastating effects of the loss of the Weldon Railroad during the Siege of Petersburg in 1864.

The Corleys were living in Church Hill when the house came on the market in 1973. A boardinghouse, the Luther Libby House was in the process of being turned into apartments, Mary Corley recalled.

“Our first child was born and we were looking for a bigger house,” she said, adding how she was always drawn to this structure. “I had fallen in love with mansard roofs.”

The Corleys lived in the dining room while they repurposed the house into a single-family home and had new plumbing, electrical and heating systems installed.

One project involved scraping off layers of paint on a fireplace surround. They thought they would run into slate but instead discovered black marble with white veining.

The 5,688-square-foot house has several fireplaces, including one with a stamped metal front in the master suite.

Historic features include wide moldings, paneled wood doors, 11-foot ceilings, original wood floors on the upper floors, huge



Lincrusta wall covering, a cardboard treated with linseed oil pocket doors, curved eyebrow windows on the third floor and Lincrusta — an embossed wall covering.

Cast-iron fencing encloses the front yard. A brick patio connects the main house with a two-story, brick carriage house. A granite block on the front sidewalk was once used as a steppingstone to get on and off horse-drawn carriages.

In about 1900, the kitchen and slave quarters were connected to the main house and the carriage house was built.

The property overlooks what was once the Port of Richmond, where Luther Libby and business partner R.O. Haskins ran a ship chandlery and grocery.

After the Richmond dock was built, enabling vessels to get closer



BOB BROWN/TIMES-DISPATCH

Dining and Living Room



BOB BROWN/TIMES-DISPATCH

Former slaves quarters turned into a cozy den



BOB BROWN/TIMES-DISPATCH

The house offers panoramic views of Richmond and overlooks a square with a monument dedicated to Confederate soldiers and sailors.

to the business center, Libby parted ways with Haskins, brought his son into the business and leased a warehouse at 20th and Dock streets in 1861. It proved to be his undoing.

The Civil War broke out and, after the First Battle of Bull Run, also known as First Manassas, the Confederate Army took possession of the warehouse to house prisoners. Libby left so quickly that no one removed a “Libby & Son” sign, and the building came to be known as Libby Prison.

The prison gained an infamous reputation for harsh conditions, overcrowding and a high mortality rate.

Libby and his family left Richmond and rented a farm in Henrico County along the James River. They were captured by the Yankees in 1864. His wife and children were released, but Libby was thrown in prison and later shipped to a Boston prison. Released in broken health, reportedly from tuberculosis, he died in 1871.

Other residents of the Luther Libby House at 1 N. 29th St. included Lemuel Powers (1873-1898) of L. Powers & Co., commission merchants; F.W. Cunningham (1898-1907), a city tax collector and singer; and J.H. Nolde (1909-1932) of the Nolde Bros. Bakery.

For untold years in recent history, neighbors gathered in the square near the house to sing Christmas carols as part of a candlelit walk.

“The community spirit is wonderful,” Mary Corley said.



St. Patrick's School



St. Patrick's School was founded as a girls academy in the aftermath of the Civil War, and moved to 2600 E. Grace St. in 1914, next to St. Patrick's church which owned the school. Now St. Patrick's Place condominiums, it was converted to luxury apartments by Stanley Shield, LLC in another of its spectacular historic restorations.













Pohlig Building



Pohlig Box Factory

Lee Brouer

In 1853 Turpin & Yarborough Tobacco Company constructed parts of this building as a tobacco factory, one of five tobacco factories in Richmond at the time. Upon the outbreak of the American Civil War the building was leased and used by the Confederate Troops of the State of Alabama as a military hospital. A staff of three surgeons managed the care of over 3,700 wounded soldiers until the hospital closed on Halloween night 1863. In 1865 the Turpin & Yarborough Tobacco Company resumed operations until the sale of the property in 1909. Pohlig Bros. Inc. converted the site to a paper box factory that remained in continuous operation until relocating in 1992. After a decade of various uses the site was developed and renovated by Stanley Shield LLC into residential units and retail space in Richmond's most spectacular historic renovation.



Lee Brauer



Lee Brauer



Lee Brauer

Union Hill

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THOUGH SELDOM SEPARATED in the public mind from Church Hill, Union Hill is quite different in location and in the date and character of its old buildings. In 1853 a mile drive was necessary to get from Leigh Street Baptist to Asbury Methodist, three blocks away. Even after Twenty-fifth was filled in and graded, until Jefferson Avenue was laid off in 1882, a deep gully running from Twentieth and Broad to Twenty-fifth and M separated Union and Church hills. North of this ravine was a high ridge that levelled off toward the east to the plateau once occupied by Shed Town. Union Hill is bounded by Jefferson Avenue, the cliffs overlooking Shockoe Valley and Venable Street. The eastern limits are much more indefinite. Even in the 'fifties, houses from Twenty-fifth to Thirtieth were variously described as being on Church Hill, on Union Hill or in Shed Town.

As its name and the irregular terrain suggest, Union Hill is probably a combination of several hills, smoothed into one by a certain amount of grading. Under the present viaduct, at what would be the corner of Marshall and Twentieth, rose Doing's Hill, occupied after 1813 by a house where Joshua Doing, at one time manager of the Union Hotel, lived in the 'thirties and 'forties. This is no doubt the bare elevation that appears immediately behind Trinity Methodist Church in our photograph.¹

In the early nineteenth century both Doing's Hill and the higher one north of it were referred to as Adams' Hill. The first use of the term Union Hill that we have found occurs in 1817.² Like the rest of the heights east of Shockoe Valley, the land belonged



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 38. First building of Asbury Chapel
later Union Station Methodist Church
812 North Twenty-fifth Street
Probably built 1843*

to the first Richard Adams. In 1805 John Adams and Benjamin Mosby laid off the western end of the present Union Hill in lots, but

only along Venable Street was this developed for building. As late as 1845 most of this section still belonged to various Adams heirs. That some building had already been done here is apparent from the founding in 1843 of a Methodist church, then called Union Hill Chapel, and later Asbury Chapel. Probably most of the small congregation, however, lived on Venable. The first building was a made-over carriage-house on Twenty-fifth between N and O Streets. Recalling the many fine brick churches that have vanished, one can only marvel that this modest frame building, which has been used since shortly after the Civil War by a Negro congregation, should still be standing (fig. 38).

In 1854 the greatly increased congregation of Asbury Chapel moved to the corner of Twenty-fourth and N, having changed its name to Union Station, the word “station” being the old Methodist term for a chapel or church. Its second house of worship, erected under the “superintendency” of Samuel Freeman, was not unlike old First Baptist, except that it was not stuccoed, even the pair of columns in the porch being of unstuccoed brick (fig. 37). The dignity and simplicity of the design makes one regret its replacement in 1893 by the present edifice. Since the neighborhood is rapidly becoming a Negro section, the congregation is planning to move soon to Patterson Avenue.

We have dwelt at some length on this church because it was so much the centre of life on Union Hill. About 1845 small tradespeople and mechanics began to build on the streets then called Mosby, Scott and Adams, pushing on east to Twenty-fifth and beyond in the 'fifties, as more of the Adams land was divided into lots. Most of the houses were small, a large portion of them



*Fig. 37. Union Station Methodist Church (second building)
Southwest corner Twenty-fourth and N Streets
Built 1854, Demolished 1893*

frame. The few large houses overlooked Shockoe Valley, which must have been a magnificent location until the view was spoiled by the multiplication of railroad tracks. These heights are generally called “Striker’s Hill,” a corruption from Strecker. One of the earliest houses to be built there was the home of Dr. Otto Strecker, druggist (fig. 35). From 1886 until 1912 Burghard Hassel lived there and for a good part of this time seems to have had at this same place the headquarters of the two German newspapers which he edited. The rambling frame house, evidently added to after it was built, must at one time have had a charming terraced garden, to judge by the Atlas of 1876.



*Fig. 35. Strecker-Hassel House
1904 Pleasants Street
Built 1844, Demolished 1925*

Across Pleasants Street, formerly called Strecker's Alley, there still stands a fine brick house built four years after the Strecker-Hassel house by Daniel von Groning, whose widow lived there until the early 'eighties (fig. 36). As one crosses the viaduct, this house, with one behind it built by Albert G. Stubbs,³ forms one of the most striking ensembles of old Richmond buildings. South of these houses formerly stood another large one, built in 1853 by Albert Lybrock, the architect, and in later years the home first of the Hoffbauer family and afterwards of the Benno Hemrichs (fig. 40).

The remaining hundred-odd ante-bellum houses still standing on Union Hill were the unpretentious dwellings of tailors, carpenters,



Fig. 36. Von Groning House
1901 Pleasants Street
Built 1847

painters and mechanics. Many were built as investments by such men as Elijah Baker, Frederick Brauer, George W. Barker, Joseph Augustine, Robert Alvis, Daniel von Groning or Jesse Talbott. Others were made possible by the Building Fund associations, of which the earliest in Richmond was the Richmond Building and Loan Fund Association, chartered in 1852. A writer in the *Dispatch* in 1856 says:

The Improvements now making on Church and Union Hills are of a very interesting character, and show with what facility our laboring classes can secure comfortable houses, by the aid of Building Fund Associations. We understand that a large number of the pretty cottages erected on Union Hill, have been put up by the aid of



Old Photo

*Fig. 40. Lybrock-Heinrich House
504 Mosby Street
Built 1853, Demolished 1910*

Building Fund Associations, and that many more will be built during the fall months. Lots in this section of the suburbs are cheap, but will increase in value whenever the corporate limits are extended (July 31, 1856.)

As in other sections where much of the property was rented, houses changed hands and occupants frequently, though there are exceptions to this generalization. Thomas Wood, a coach-painter, bought 529 Mosby Street in 1854 and lived there until 1896. Joseph Jackson, boot and shoemaker, built 600 Pickett in 1853, and his widow was living there in 1892. John A. Hancock lived from 1860

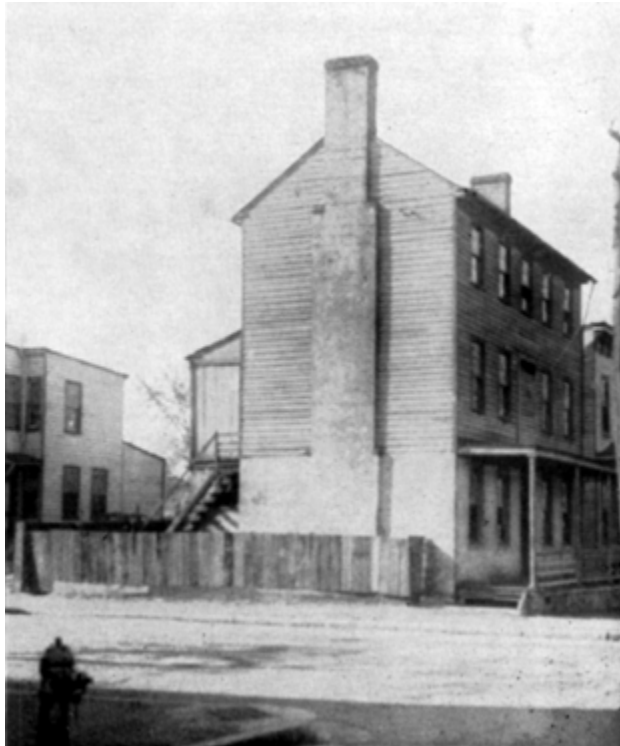


Fig. 39. 721 North Twenty-third Street
Built 1845, Altered 1943

until 1903 at 813 North Twenty-third, which his daughter still owns. S. M. Buchanan, a carpenter, built 911 North Twenty-fourth in 1860, and lived there until 1899. One of the longest tenures was that of Joseph Woodson, a free Negro, who bought 616 Pickett in 1852 and was living there forty years later. Probably the longest occupancy of one house is that of 725 North Twenty-fourth, built in 1854 by Daniel Weisiger, and still the home of his granddaughters, the Misses Hasker.

Concerning the character of the first dwellers on Union Hill, an enthusiastic description in the *Dispatch* is quoted in *Houses of Old*



*Fig. 41. 703 North Twenty-third Street
Built between 1846 and 1848*

Richmond (see “Oliver House”).

We reproduce photographs of a few of the more picturesque houses on Union Hill. Though one of the most striking, 721 North Twenty-third (fig. 39) has in recent years been completely spoiled by the removal of the top story, on the whole houses in this section have been less altered than those in more prosperous parts of town. Until the invasion of asbestos siding, the chief change was the substitution of large window-panes for small ones. Probably the one-story cottages are the most appealing of the individual houses (figs. 41, 42 and 44).⁴ Most of the other buildings are two-story dwellings, with either scroll-saw verandahs or the more attractive small porches with square wooden pillars. Most of them have A-roofs, but many have the flat roof and square shape characteristic of the



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 42. 805-7 Jessamine Street
Built 1846-4748*

years just before the Civil War (fig. 45). Several have the long wing with shuttered porch that is found fairly often all over the east end of Richmond.

At the time when it was built up, Union Hill was a suburb. When it was taken into the city in 1867, it was necessary to change some of the street-names which duplicated those in older parts of the city. Thus Adams became Pickett and Byrd, Burton. Although the cross-streets from Twenty-second on east continue those of Church Hill, those interrupted by Jefferson Park have kept their old names—Pickett and Mosby. One charm of Union Hill is the irregularity which the hilly terrain has given its curving and often narrow streets. Only in recent years have M (formerly Short Street) and Leigh been cut through at all. Pleasants Street winds and jumps; Jessamine comes to an end a block south of Venable—incidentally one of the quaintest blocks imaginable. A thoroughfare variously



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 44. 601 Pickett Street
Built 1854*

called Union, Concurrence and Concordance has been suppressed altogether. Only Twenty-fifth is a broad, straight through-street, and in spite of many attractive houses, it lacks the charm of the streets west of it.

Another picturesque feature of this neighborhood that is also due to the terrain is the amount of street-grading necessary, which has skied a large number of houses on Mosby, Pleasants and M Streets. Their lower stories, originally brick basements, are bared to the elements, and their far-away porches are reached by precipitous stairs (fig. 43).

Taken as a whole, Union Hill is a delightful section to wander about in. A sketchy knowledge of its beginnings suffices to make



*Fig. 45. 801 North Twenty-fourth Street
Built 1855*

any visitor with a rudimentary appreciation of old buildings enjoy the atmosphere of its peaceful streets, its shaded brick sidewalks and its modest but for the most part tasteful houses.

Up to the last few years it has been the only neighborhood save Oregon Hill and the eastern part of Sydney still occupied by white people of modest means. Now Negroes have taken over Twenty-fifth and part of Twenty-fourth, and it seems probable that in a very few years Union Hill will be altogether a colored neighborhood.

Notes

1. [Fig. 34](#)
2. *Compiler*, May 1, 1817.
3. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Stubbs House
4. 601 Pickett has recently been spoiled by asbestos siding.



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 43. 507-11 Mosby Street
Built 1854*

Venable Street

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AS EARLY AS 1817 Venable Street had acquired its name from Abram B. Venable, who owned the land on the north side of the street between Eighteenth and Twenty-first. Venable, first president of the Bank of Virginia, perished in the Theatre Fire of 1811. The street that has perpetuated his name climbs the north edge of Union Hill between Seventeenth and Twenty-fifth, where it loses both its name and character as Q Street.

Perhaps because it was not entirely in the hands of the Adams family, perhaps because the street was “the main road to the country from Adams’ Valley,” to quote a deed of 1814, it was developed much earlier than the heights to the south of it. The south side was first laid off in lots in 1805 by John Adams and Benjamin Mosby, but only one house, 1801 Venable, remains from that period (fig. 46). Altered and dilapidated as it is, this is one of the most curious houses in town. From the time it was built, sometime between 1805 and 1810, it formed an obtuse angle, following the irregular intersection of Venable with Eighteenth, or, as it was then called, Ferry Street. Early plats show its odd shape, and also that east of it were a well, a pond, and the wooden tannery of Henry Mettert, who lived long in the house, and operated the Adams’ Valley Tannery.

Another old house that was standing until a few years ago was the attractive dwelling of George Howard, which was built between 1817 and 1819 and never left the hands of his descendants until it was demolished.¹

Next to the Mettert house in age, the earliest building now remaining on Venable is the home of Adam Miller, No. 2410, built



*Fig. 46. Mettert House
1801 Venable Street
Built between 1805 and 1811*

perhaps in 1825. It has been altered so much that there is little besides the extremely small windows to suggest its age. Also considerably changed but still attractive are two houses, 2223 and 2225, built probably in 1839 by Mrs. Nancy Mettert, widow of Henry. Both are of brick, long and shallow in shape, two stories high, a type of house that was carried down from the early nineteenth century into the 'forties, particularly on the outskirts of town.

The other ante-bellum houses still standing on Venable date from the 'forties or 'fifties. Several are cottages or of cottage type, suitable to the informality of what was still an isolated road. The smallest is the one-story double cottage at 1704-6 (fig. 49), built in 1845 by Edward McSorley who then owned the fine store, now vanished, at the corner of Seventeenth and Venable. A larger cottage



*Fig. 49. 1704-6 Venable Street
Built 1845*

at 2427 Venable was built in 1840 by Alexander M. Tomlinson, whose widow lived there as late as 1892 (fig. 47). Tomlinson's will, dated 1865, refers to this as his "homestead," a term quite often encountered in the Union Hill section. As picturesque as this Tomlinson house is a little one just off Venable on one-block-long McCance Street (fig. 48). This dilapidated building was put up in 1842 by a free Negro shoemaker, William Griffin, and, small as it is, the two halves have, oddly enough, belonged to two different owners ever since 1850.

More ambitious in size but similar in shape and general appearance is 1814-16 Venable, built in 1844 by Nancy Hawkes. Like many old frame houses in other parts of town, this one has recently been spoiled by asbestos siding. Probably the same fate



Ellen Guignon

*Fig. 47. Tomlinson House
2427 Venable Street
Built 1840*

will befall a contemporary house of the same type built by William Matthews at 1817 Venable. Shortly after building his own home Matthews put up two brick houses west of him and two frame houses which are still standing to the east. One of the latter still belongs to



*Fig. 48. 516-18 McCance Street
Built 1842*

a member of his family.

Until it was gutted by fire in 1949, 1851 Venable, at the intersection with the important Mechanicsville Turnpike, was an attractive building. Erected in 1848 or '50, this belonged from 1870 to 1912 to the Hord family, who had a grocery there. The fact that



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 50. Elijah Baker House
2239-41 Venable Street
Built 1850*

this house and several others sit high above the pavement may be due to street-grading, the present steep but smooth ascent of Venable having probably been at an earlier date a series of irregular bumps or shelves.

Contemporary with this one is the brick house of Elijah Baker (fig. 50). Though it was built in 1850, it resembles the double houses erected before the depression of 1819.² Baker's house has an arrangement of porch and entrance that we have not encountered elsewhere in Richmond. The two-story portico instead of being in the rear, is on the west end of the house, and just below it is the rather elaborately carved entrance door. This unusual arrangement

is probably due to the fact that Baker carried on his business at his home. As late as 1885 he was making “Baker’s Bitters,” one of the many patent medicines extensively advertised in old Richmond newspapers.

Elijah Baker was the son-in-law of Mrs. Nancy Mettert. Like the Metterts, Howards, Cullingworths, Matthews and Brauers, he developed other property near his home. As we have seen, a few of the dwellings of these Venable Street families are still standing: the others have been replaced by nondescript rows of modern houses, or by warehouses or stores. Among the vanished houses are those of George Howard, William Cullingworth, which stood on the south side between Tulip and Pink Streets, and of John Brauer, built in 1836 but now represented only by a great hole at the corner of Twenty-first.

The men who built up this road were tanners, butchers, coachmakers, painters, carpenters—good solid citizens who owned their homes and developed rental property near enough for them to keep an eye on it and choose their own neighbors. Many of them were among the founders of Union Station Methodist Church, which as we have seen was first located in a former carriage-house on Cullingworth’s land. In pre-Civil War days there was no church on Venable Street itself: several that are there now are of recent construction.

It is ironic that a street once inhabited by so many self-respecting citizens who lived for decades in the same houses should now be in a state of flux. About half Negro and half white, the western part entirely given over to colored people, dwellings side by side with stores or warehouses, Venable would defy any attempt to zone it

as a particular kind of neighborhood. Every time one climbs the steep hill one expects to find that some picturesque house has been replaced by an undistinguished grocery or merely by a vacant lot. Its narrowness, the sharp ascent and the interesting dwellings still left there make it one of the most picturesque streets in Richmond and at the same time one of the most depressing, since it is hard to see what future it has in store for it other than as a street of small shops catering to the area north of it and to the dwellers on Union Hill.

Notes

1. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Howard House
2. *Ibid.*, Brick Double Houses

The Valley Where Richmond Began

page 63

THE TOWN that William Byrd laid off in 1737 stretched along the banks of the James River, between the present Eighteenth and Twenty-fifth streets. While the western boundary was optimistically extended to First Street as early as 1769, roads are less easy to accomplish than an annexation on paper, and it was not until the site of the new State Capitol had been chosen in 1780 that much building was done past the then not inconsiderable barrier of Shockoe Creek. Until that time both business and dwellings were concentrated on “the main street” east of the creek.

Though the only building of even possibly pre-Revolutionary date that has survived to recent times is of stone, we have every reason to believe that most of them were of wood, particularly before the disastrous fire of 1787. That they were small is evident from the number crowded together on one block, a state of affairs that persisted down into the 1800’s by which time most of the stores and houses along Main were brick. How exceptional stone was is evident from the fact that as early as 1789 the Ege house was called “the Stone house.” This quaint building, now called “the Old Stone house” or the “Poe Shrine,” while of undetermined date, is without doubt the oldest dwelling now standing in Richmond, as interesting to students of architecture as it is to those primarily attracted by the relics of Edgar Allan Poe that have been collected there.¹

A photograph has been preserved of a gambrel-roofed house that was probably built shortly after the Revolution (fig. 51). Early insurance policies show that there were many houses with this sort of roof in the 1790’s, but unlike any others we have heard



*Fig. 51. 3 North Eighteenth Street
Probably built before 1783, Demolished about 1912*

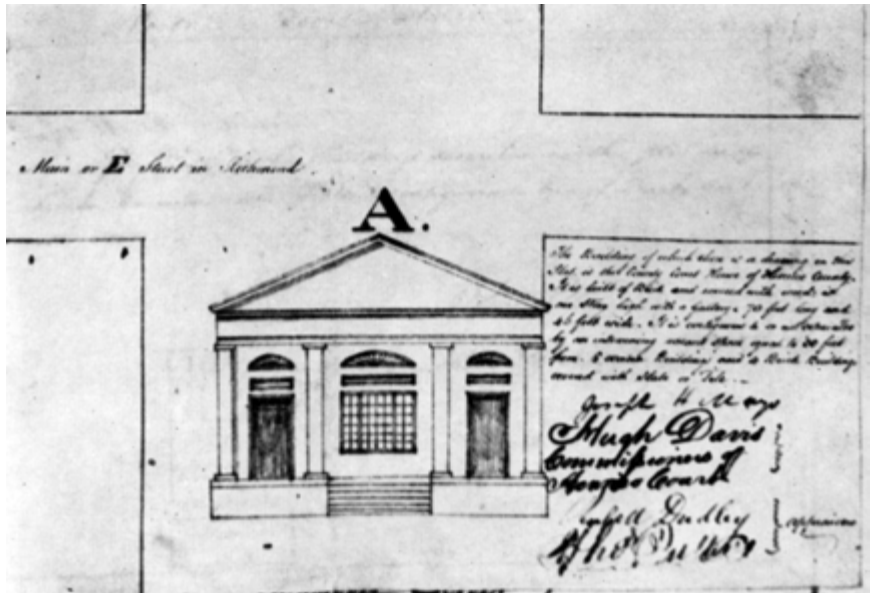


Fig. 52. Henrico Court House (second building)
 Twenty-second and Main Streets
 Built 1825, Partially burned 1865, Demolished 1896

of in Richmond, this one was three stories in height, the lowest floor of brick. That this is due to street-grading seems unlikely, as Eighteenth Street could hardly have been other than flat this close to the river. The second Jacob Ege lived there in the early 1800's. Two blocks north of this, at Eighteenth and Grace, there stood until 1902 another very early gambrel-roofed cottage where Adam Craig, clerk of various courts, had his office. Here Andrew Stevenson, a Richmonder who became a member of Congress and later minister to Great Britain, studied law.

Just east of this, Craig built probably about 1787 what we believe to be the second oldest dwelling now standing in Richmond. Here his daughter Jane Stith was presumably born in 1793 and here she



Fig. 53. Masons' Hall
 1805 East Franklin Street
 Built 1787

certainly lived until her marriage to Robert Stanard. Her fame as the inspiration of Poe’s lyric “To Helen” contributed more than any other factor toward interesting people all over the world in the restoration of this old house, which now belongs to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.²

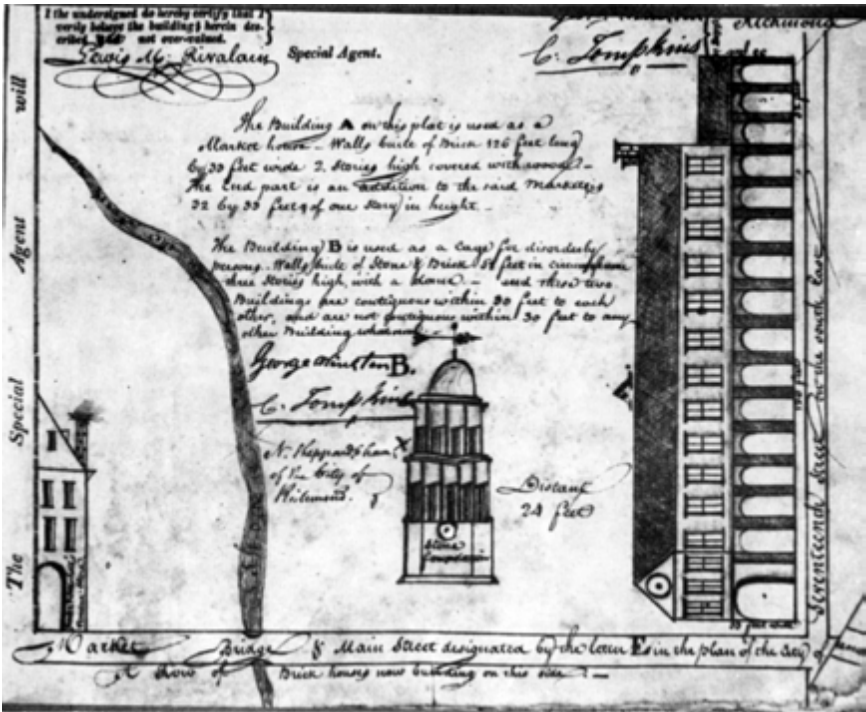
All traces of the early stores and inns of this section have vanished. Two of the earliest inns were the City Tavern and the Bird-in-the-Hand. The former, kept by Gabriel Galt, was a frame building at Nineteenth and Main. After having been “degraded to a workshop,” it burned in 1858.³ The nickname “Bird in Hand,”

often applied to this whole part of Main Street, stems, no doubt, from the tavern that stood as early as 1781 at the northwest corner of Twenty-fifth and Main.

Most of the activity of the little town centered in this neighborhood. Probably the earliest public building was Henrico Courthouse, which, since it was transferred from Varina to Richmond, has always been near the corner of Twenty-second and Main. In 1782 when Richmond was incorporated as a city, the Common Hall agreed to meet in the courthouse. This building was replaced in 1825 by a more imposing one adorned with a portico with four Doric columns (fig. 52). In the Evacuation Fire the courthouse was badly damaged but was repaired⁴ and served until 1896 when it was torn down and the present Henrico Courthouse erected.

In 1787 the Masons built a fine hall which has proved more lasting than the various courthouse buildings. The oldest Masonic structure in continuous use in the United States, it bears the name of its first Grand Master, Edmund Randolph. Marshall, Washington and Lafayette were among the distinguished men who were members of this lodge. When there were few places large enough for public gatherings, it was rented or loaned for diverse and extraordinary activities: lantern-shows, lectures on electricity, tight-rope acrobats and a hospital during the War of 1812. If we may trust the first insurance policy, the present Classic entrance is a later addition (fig. 53).

As early as the 1780's a market was established on the site of the present one now called "First Market," "the Old Market" or the "Seventeenth Street Market." At first it was only a wooden



Annual Policy of 1814

Fig. 54. First Market and Cage
Seventeenth and Main Streets
Built 1794, Cage demolished 1827, Market replaced 1854

shed supported on locust-posts. Between it and Shockoe Creek was a green bank where women washed the clothes. In 1794 a brick building (fig. 54) replaced the primitive shed. Above it was a hall, which after the destruction of Quesnay’s Academy was used as a theatre.⁵ Before the erection of Mills’ City Hall, the Council had its meeting-room there.⁶ West of the market, as shown in the insurance-drawing, stood the “Cage,” or lock-up, of which institution and its unwilling tenants Mordecai gives a picturesque account.⁷ In 1854 a more commodious market was built.⁸ This also had a hall on the second floor which was often used for political

meetings. The present “Old” or First Market dates only from 1913, and the oldest of the stores surrounding it goes back only to the 1830’s, but the location and atmosphere of the market are among the few things that have remained relatively static in a city that has changed practically everything that could be changed.

Before the end of the eighteenth century two places of worship had been built in this neighborhood. One was a little building, said to have been thirty-five by forty feet⁹, which was erected by the Methodists in 1798 at the northeast corner of Nineteenth and Franklin. A tablet on the tobacco factory now at that corner records that Bishop Francis Asbury there preached his last sermon. This was on March 24, 1816. The “old chapel” was used for at least five years longer, later became a bakery, and was probably burned in 1848.

Practically contemporary with the first Methodist meeting-house was one built at the northeast corner of Nineteenth and Cary by the Society of Friends, of whom there were then a surprising number in and around Richmond. Their earliest building was of brick, with a graveyard just north of it. The meeting-house was used until 1860 and torn down six years later, and the graveyard was broken up in 1872, when the bodies were moved to Hollywood. In 1853 a writer in the *Dispatch* described the rude building with its unpainted interior set in a graveyard without stones but covered with eglantine—an oasis in the desert of factories and warehouses.¹⁰

The memory of the not inconsiderable number of German and Dutch Jews who lived in this section in the eighteenth century is still perpetuated by a tiny graveyard on the south side of Franklin near Twentieth. The deed to this plot is dated “in the year of the world five thousand five hundred and fifty-two and of the Christian Ara



Matthew Brady

*Fig. 73. William H. Grant Factory
1900 East Franklin Street
Built 1853*

(sic) seventeen hundred and ninety-one.”¹¹ The title is conveyed to Isaiah Isaacs, part of the plot being reserved for his burial and that of his kindred and for his partner Jacob I. Cohen and his kindred. In 1817 it was abandoned, most of the bodies being transferred to the new Hebrew Cemetery at the north end of Fourth Street. For many years it was used as a coal-yard, with billboards in front, and carts, lumber and trash within. When it was restored in 1909, only four great stone slabs in one corner were left. The first time this writer saw it, twenty years later, these were sheltered by a large and graceful willow, which has since disappeared.

Among the neighbors of Adam Craig were many outstanding



*Fig. 55. Union Row
1902-12 East Main Street
Built 1817-18, Demolished 1913*

citizens of the little town. Col. David Lambert lived on Eighteenth just north of the Methodist chapel. Part of his frame house may be seen in Brady's photograph of the Grant tobacco factory (fig. 73). Dr. Andrew Leiper lived around the corner on Franklin.

A romantic story of eighteenth-century Richmond concerns the family of Mrs. Jane Allegré, whose home was near the northwest corner of Eighteenth and Franklin. Albert Gallatin, the young Swiss who between 1783 and 1789 spent a part of each year in Richmond, boarded at Mrs. Allegré's. In May, 1789 he eloped with the younger daughter of the family, Sophia, a "mantua maker" like her mother. Their happiness was brief, for Sophia died within a few months at their home, "Friendship Hill," in Pennsylvania. One wonders



Ellen Gaignon

*Fig. 58. 2216-18 East Main Street
Built 1816*

whether the mother ever relented after reading the touching letter Sophia wrote her at the time of her runaway marriage.¹²

Although, as we shall see, business had begun to move west of Shockoe Creek as early as 1785,¹³ the lower part of Main was still a very active centre of trade. In the boom years between 1814 and 1819 it was almost entirely rebuilt. Probably this was to a large extent

a case of brick stores replacing more primitive wooden buildings. From the photographs we reproduce, it is evident that these shops with living-quarters above were handsome and substantial buildings. Even when a row was built by several different people, the harmonious effect of the whole indicates that the various owners worked with an understanding of each others' plans rather than with the rivalry that prompts most store-owners of today to try only to eclipse their neighbors.

Of the fine group called Union Row that stood just west of the Old Stone House, two buildings were erected by Martin Turner, two by Thomas Cowles, two by John Enders and one by William H. Hubbard (fig. 55). Parts of two similar rows are still standing just west of Twenty-third and Main, though the attic-floors have been removed. These buildings have attracted considerable attention, due to the fact that the late J. H. Whitty claimed that Elizabeth Arnold Poe died in an outbuilding in the rear of 2220 East Main Street. Mrs. Moscoe Huntley and Mrs. Ralph T. Catterall successfully proved that this little building was not in existence in 1811.¹⁴ The pair of houses at the corner, while never an inn as Mr. Whitty claimed, date from 1814, and the two west of them, formerly three, from 1816. The later pair is less altered than the earlier ones: there are fine keystones above the windows and doors, and belt-courses separate the stories of the buildings (fig. 58). They also have the arched entrance to the rear common on such rows. A similar arch in the corner pair opened on Twenty-third; bricked up, it inspired the absurd idea that it had been the drive into an inn-yard. A second glance should have made it obvious that even a riderless horse would have had trouble in crowding through it.



*Fig. 57. 1909 East Main Street
Built 1817, Demolished 1949*

*1913 East Main Street
Built 1810, Demolished 1928*

An old store that has just been demolished was 1909 East Main, one of several built on this block by Dr. John Adams ([fig. 57](#)). The two great names associated with the development of East Main during the boom years are those of Dr. Adams and of John Enders. At the southeast corner of Nineteenth and Main Dr. Adams erected a handsome building which he hoped would be taken by the new Bank of the United States ([fig. 60](#)). Actually, when first built, it was occupied by Peck and Lay as a china store. Its bold recessed arches, not only on the front but on the gable-end, gave it a spaciousness and dignity combined with restraint that link it to the taste of the eighteenth century.

On the corner just west of it Dr. Adams at the same time built the Union Hotel ([fig. 56](#)). Both buildings were designed by Otis Manson, the first professional architect to live in Richmond. The



*Fig. 60. 1901-3 East Main Street
Built 1817, Demolished 1913*

variety of his ideas may be imagined from the contrast between these adjacent buildings—the quiet, almost delicate lines of the hotel having a feminine quality compared to the sturdier design of the building intended for a bank. Certain details of the hotel lead one to wonder whether Manson did not also design the Enders mansion, 1909 East Main and the store furthest east in Union Row, which belonged to Hubbard. In all these buildings one observes a generous use of triple windows, and between floors long rectangular inset panels. Altered and deteriorated as 1909 was, one could see that this made a handsome and original façade.

The Union Hotel, which was the first Richmond hostelry to rise above the primitive level of inns and taverns, had an interesting subsequent history. In 1838 the building was leased by the Medical College when it moved from Hampden-Sydney to Richmond, and



*Fig. 56. Union Hotel
Southwest corner Nineteenth and Main
Built 1817, Demolished 1911*

both classrooms and hospital were located there until the completion of the Egyptian Building in 1845. It was reopened as a hotel, though by then it must have been too far downtown to attract a high class of traveller. The change of name to United States Hotel and frequent changes of manager did not suffice to offset this handicap. During the Civil War it served as a Confederate hospital. In the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties a second institution of learning had its cradle there. Richmond Theological Seminary, a Baptist school for training Negro ministers, which had opened in 1867 in Lumpkin's slave-jail, in 1870 moved to the former Union Hotel. From these beginnings developed the Union University of today. After serving for a decade as the headquarters of the Richmond Methodist Mission, Dr. Adams' fine structure was torn down, its



*Fig. 59. Enders House
Built 1819, Demolished probably in 1909*

beauty protecting it no more than the unusual and varied roles it had played in Richmond history.

Dr. Adams lost a great deal of money in the depression of 1819, and died in 1825. John Enders, on the other hand, continued to develop lower Main Street and the streets nearby for another quarter of a century. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he never moved uptown, but went on living among the many factories and

warehouses that he built. He had married a daughter of Samuel Ege, and the Ege-Enders connection might be called the tutelary genii of the Shockoe Creek section as the Adams family was of Church Hill or the Amblers of the Court End. In 1819 John Enders built a fine house at the southeast corner of Twentieth and Main (fig. 59). Contrary to a popular impression, even among his descendants, he apparently did not build this for himself, as it was rented as late as 1829. In the partition of his immense holdings in 1854, his residence there for probably twenty-five years made his heirs refer to it as “the old mansion.” On the same lot were his office and tobacco-factory, the two latter facing Twentieth. This arrangement and the character of the house itself, large enough for a big family and intended to be used as both store and dwelling, hence, like most buildings on East Main, extending to the pavement, was probably typical of the homes of many merchants of Richmond in the early 1800’s. Only one such building is still standing, the house of Richard Whitlock at 1523 East Cary, built seven years before “the old mansion” of John Enders.

During “the flush times” and the years immediately preceding, a number of dwellings were built on Grace and Franklin, on Eighteenth and Nineteenth, though few are still standing. Otis Manson lived for several years at the southwest corner of Nineteenth and Franklin in a house built by Samuel White in 1810. Both that and the one that formerly stood at 220 North Eighteenth, of which we fortunately have a photograph, dated from a few years before the boom (fig. 61). This latter dwelling, built by Joshua West, a coachmaker, on what was then called Ferry Street, from Coutts’ ferry, was of a form often seen, especially in the country, in early nineteenth century



Heurits B. Cook

*Fig. 61. 220 North Eighteenth Street
Built 1809, Demolished 1925*

buildings—long and shallow, with either no windows in the gable-ends, or with only two tiny openings flanking each chimney.

Two residences dating from the flush times are still standing on Nineteenth Street, albeit in deplorable condition. 113 North Nineteenth, built in 1817 by John H. Strobria, “in the modern style and of the best materials,”¹⁵ has an ugly verandah in place of the earlier small porch, but the doorway and some of the interior trim are lovely. No. 112, built in 1816 by Sterling J. Crump is in even more lamentable shape. To the original two-story house the third story and graceful if ruined iron verandah were added in the 'fifties. In recent years the overdoors characteristic of the period when it was built have rotted away, and only the stairway, reminiscent of the earlier one in the nearby Craig house, gives a hint of its original

charm. During the 'forties 112 was the home of John A. Lancaster, first president of the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad. It is a curious coincidence that Lancaster's grandson, Dr. Dabney S. Lancaster, now president of Longwood College, married the great-granddaughter of Sterling Crump, hence their children are doubly connected with this house. At the corner of Grace, just north of his home, Crump in 1819 built a picturesque pair of brick houses which are still standing.¹⁶

Two religious edifices were added to this section before 1819. Dr. John Holt Rice had started a Presbyterian church in 1812 on the south side of Main between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth, but the number of dwellings being built nearer to the Market probably led him to sell this property and in 1816 to erect a new building on the south side of Grace between Seventeenth and Eighteenth. Popularly known as the Pineapple Church from an ornament on it, this was sold in 1829 to the Episcopalians, who named it Christ Church. In April, 1856, it burned, and though the congregation continued to hold services in the Sunday School room and planned to rebuild, evidently the neighborhood was by then not considered a hopeful field, and Christ Church was eventually rebuilt after the Civil War on Buchanan Street. The present building is on Venable, but may well be soon abandoned, as that street is now predominantly colored. Christ Church congregation has been almost as migratory as that of First Presbyterian, in whose second building it began life.

Prior to May, 1808, the Jews worshipped in one room of a house near the southwest corner of Nineteenth and Grace, rather mysteriously descibed as having under it "a set of Vaults, originally intended as a wine cellar."¹⁷ In 1810 a synagogue was built near



*Fig. 62. Seabrook's Warehouse
Built 1810, Demolished 1910*

the northwest corner of Nineteenth and Cary. This is said to have collapsed when the foundations of the Union Hotel were being dug.¹⁸ Until 1856 there was no Jewish place of worship in the Shockoe Creek neighborhood.

Though the section north of Main was largely given over to dwellings, other buildings, some used for very odoriferous purposes, were scattered among them, particularly in the vicinity of the Old Market. At the southwest corner of Franklin and Eighteenth Richard Whitlock built, probably in 1817, a factory which is still standing, though the front has been altered. In 1821 this was rented to a brewery, and for two decades, beginning in 1837, it was a soap and candle manufactory.

Opposite the Pineapple Church on Grace, the City owned a square that was used as a parade-ground for the Richmond Light Infantry Blues. In 1810 John Seabrook erected a warehouse there that became one of those designated for the legal inspection of tobacco (fig. 62). All during the War, Seabrook's Warehouse was

used as a hospital. The site is now occupied by a playground, still known as Seabrook's.

During the early 1800's building was going on far north of this point in what was called Adams' Valley or Adams' Mill Valley. At the junction of Seventeenth and Fourteenth, Richard Adams, who owned a large tract in this section, as early as 1788 had a mill, afterwards called Carrington's Mill, which was in operation at least as late as 1865. A canal led from this mill, running just west of Seventeenth, or as it was called, Valley Street. A pond connected with the mill bore the unsavory title of Death Pond. Between soap-factories, mill-ponds, tanneries and universally primitive plumbing, this whole area of Richmond in the first quarter of the nineteenth century must have been trying from an olfactory angle. No wonder so many people moved up to the airier heights of Church or Shockoe hills.

Many small houses were, however, built along Valley Street as far as twelve blocks north of Main. A pair of brick houses, numbers 628-30,¹⁹ dating from 1818, is still standing, albeit in miserable condition. Another similar pair was demolished in 1949 (fig. 63). Almost contemporary with them were two stores that until a few years ago flanked the intersection of Venable and Seventeenth—a strategic junction at the time they were built. The one on the northeast corner has been torn down (fig. 64), but the one on the southeast corner, built in 1820 and for eighty years operated as a grocery store by John Hagan and his family, though much altered is still standing.

The only ante-bellum church in Adams' valley, so far as we know, was Wesley Chapel, started about 1849 on the west side of



*Fig. 63. 1200 North Seventeenth Street
Built 1818, Demolished 1949*

Seventeenth just north of Carrington Street. This chapel served through the 'fifties, and was probably the building on the same site used by a Negro congregation in the 'seventies.

The first use we have found of the name “Butchertown” applied to this section occurs in a deed of 1811.²⁰ It seems probable that slaughterhouses and tanneries were located here before they sought the heights north of Venable or the northern end of Brook Avenue. Mettert’s tannery, as we have seen, was at Venable and Eighteenth before 1810, and mention of a slaughterhouse near that is found as early as 1800.²¹ For more than a century Butchertown has been considered a tough neighborhood. Both before and after the Civil War, fearful rock-battles raged between the young roughs from this valley, known as “Butcher Cats,” and the “Hill Cats,” scions of leading families on Shockoe Hill. At present, Seventeenth Street is



*Fig. 64. 601 North Seventeenth Street
Built 1816, Demolished 1943*

a race-track to the modern sections north of Bacon Quarter Branch. The few remaining houses are in poor condition, occupied by a low class of Negro. Many bare spaces show where dwellings have been demolished, while warehouses and filling-stations replace other old buildings. This depressing neighborhood offers no prospect of saving its interesting old houses.

Throughout the whole Shockoe Creek section, few houses remain from the stagnant period between 1819 and 1836. The most interesting is 2418 East Main, built in 1829 by John Lewis, a free Negro (fig. 65). Though in wretched condition, this little building, practically unchanged, probably shows what store-windows were like just before granite-fronts were introduced into Richmond. Where the second-story windows follow the early nineteenth-



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 65. Lewis House
2418 East Main Street
Built 1829*

century pattern of nine panes in the lower sash and six in the upper, the first-floor windows flanking the central door are a good deal broader though not square and have a total of nine larger panes. The tall outbuilding behind this house is almost as big as the house itself, and even more picturesque.

During the 'forties many stores were built on Main and in the Market area, and many residences were added to Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Grace and Franklin. Often these buildings replaced



*Fig. 71. 1725-31 East Main Street
1725-29 built 1841, 1731 built 1845
All except corner house demolished 1917*

wooden structures that had burned. The Indian Queen Tavern at the northeast corner of Twenty-third and Main had been destroyed by fire in 1821. In 1840 Joseph Woodson built a small step-gabled brick building, now used as a store, on the corner, and in the rear, facing Twenty-third, an attractive dwelling, also with a step-gable. The following year fire destroyed a good many shops and small houses at the southwest corner of Main and Eighteenth. During the next three years were erected the four handsome stores shown in our photograph (fig. 71) of which only the corner building is still standing.²²

Superficially these resembled Union Row, but a closer examination of our photograph shows that while the big step-gables made them more imposing than the earlier buildings, they lacked the delicate detail, the belt-courses, keystones and triple windows that enhanced the charm and variety of the earlier row.



Fig. 67. Southeast corner Nineteenth and Grace Streets

Among many residences dating from the 'forties is a pair at the southeast corner of Nineteenth and Grace, shown in our view of Nineteenth Street ([fig. 67](#)), and a similar pair at 1809-11 East Grace, both unusual in using Classic detail on frame buildings. At 107-9-11 North Nineteenth are three brick houses similar to the wooden ones. The brick dwellings were erected by the Talbott family. The condition of all these buildings is distressing.

Along Eighteenth during the 1840's fine brick houses were built between Grace and Broad, less pretentious frame dwellings farther north where the street rises toward Venable. The most picturesque house on Eighteenth is slightly earlier—No. 321, the remaining half of a double cottage built probably in 1837. Still farther north are three two-story frame houses, 529, 531 and 539, which were built in 1842, two of them by the Talbott brothers. Charles and James



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 66. Otey House
320 North Nineteenth Street
Built 1841*

Talbott evidently put as much zest into multiplying new houses as into creating the young iron industry of Richmond.

Probably the most attractive dwellings dating from the 'forties are two located side by side on Nineteenth between Broad and Marshall. Architecturally they are so different that it is hard to believe they are only four years apart in date. The home of Cornelius Crew, 310 North Nineteenth, is a rather free adaptation of Classic Revival style,²³ while 320, built by John Otey, saddlemaker, whose

family lived there for forty years, suggests the Andrew Ellett house and others of the stagnant period (fig. 66). The Crew house, in excellent condition, has been spoiled by the widening of the entrance-porch, while the Otey house, unaltered, is a mere shell. Both of them, on the edge of a steep ravine filled with a tangle of underbrush, trash and moving-vans, cowering under the great iron stride of the Marshall Street Viaduct, are extremely picturesque.

At a very early date stores, dwellings and even factories had crowded into the two narrow streets on either side of the Market, passageways often called East and West Market streets. On the block between Grace and Franklin Thomas Maule's soap-factory dated back to 1802. In 1843 this was purchased by Cornelius Crew, who had been operating it for Mrs. Maule since 1834 or earlier. In 1853-54 Crew erected on this site three buildings that look like ordinary three-story shops. Until 1911 one or more of these buildings housed P. J. Crew and Co., soap and candle-makers—an extraordinary record of more than a century that the same enterprise had been conducted at the same location. North of the Crew factory are several three-story brick stores also dating from the 'fifties. On the block between Main and Franklin, too, a few ante-bellum shops are still standing. The oldest, 3 North Seventeenth, dating from 1833, is too much altered to offer a great deal of interest, but the little two-story shops numbered 23-25-27, built in 1853, are instructive since at least one of them has kept its early square, small-paned windows. All of these replaced older stores, many of which were frame.

The land west of the Market, which was part of the Adams-Carrington estate, seems to have been developed later. In 1849



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 70. Scotts Drug Store
1617 East Franklin Street
Built 1852*

two stores were built at the northwest corner of Franklin and Seventeenth. These have the shallow stepped-gables often seen on buildings of the 'fifties. The one next the corner, which still has its granite front though large panes have replaced the original small ones, was for thirty years or more the grocery of John M. Higgins, whose family was long associated with one of the houses in Morson's Row on Governor Street.²⁴ Just across Franklin from these is Scott's Drug Store, which for length of continuous operation deserves to be mentioned along with the Maule-Crew soap-factory (fig. 70). Built in 1852, by 1857 it was being run by John H. Garlick. Dr. Garlick's young clerk, William H. Scott, later bought both the business and



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 69. Dill Factory
Northwest corner of Twenty-first and Franklin Streets
Built 1854, Upper stories removed 1941*

the building. The latter still belongs to his estate, and the business still carries the name, Scott's Drug Store. Fifty years ago, when this writer's father operated the Richmond Iron Works at Fifteenth and Broad, Scott's Drug Store was the sort of informal club-house for men working in "the Bottom" that Blair's Drug Store was for those near Ninth and Broad.

The 'fifties were the greatest years of factory-expansion prior to the Civil War. In 1853 alone five tobacco-factories were erected. Among factories of that decade still standing is 9-11 North Twenty-second, built in 1855 by John H. Greaner, and from 1866 to 1903 used as a tobacco-factory by James B. Pace. Both of the Grant brothers built tobacco-factories on Nineteenth. After a fire in 1936, the top story was removed from James Grant's factory at 12 North Nineteenth, spoiling its character. That of William H. Grant, however, at the northeast corner of Franklin and Nineteenth, is a handsome and striking building (fig. 73). A small plaque in the gable-end informs us that Samuel Freeman was its architect. The wing on Nineteenth, added in 1877, is, happily, harmonious with the original building. More imposing than any of these was the tobacco-factory built in 1854 at Twenty-first and Franklin, and used for over half a century by the tobacco company founded by Joseph G. Dill (fig. 69). Since the upper stories were removed following a fire some years ago, this building is now quite devoid of interest.

From the early 1800's up to 1851 John Enders continued to multiply factories and warehouses in the vicinity of his own home. One of these, 20-26 North Twentieth, built in 1849, is still standing. With General J. B. Harvie, Enders was instrumental in building the Richmond Dock, and conceived the not unreasonable idea that many warehouses would be needed to hold the goods from vessels tied up there. In the early 'fifties he built fourteen warehouses between Cary and the docks. According to his grandson's account,²⁵ he went over one morning, as was his custom, to supervise work on these buildings, and fell through a hatch. The fall proved fatal, and his body was brought back to "the old mansion" before the



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 68. 116-24 North Twentieth Street
Built 1848-51*

breakfast things had been cleared from the table. One block of the warehouses was burned shortly after his death, supposedly by his slaves, who were angry because his will had not freed them. The others proved largely superfluous for ship-loading, and one of them was rented to the ship-chandler Luther Libby and became one of the best-hated buildings in America.

Highly industrialized as this whole neighborhood had become in the decade before the Civil War, dwellings were built on the streets north of Main right on down to 1860. Among the most substantial were the homes of James and Charles Talbott,²⁶ at Nineteenth and Broad and Nineteenth and Grace respectively. Charles Talbott's house is late Greek Revival, similar to the Yarbrough and Turpin houses on Church Hill. James' home, built

like his brother's in 1850, had been so altered by a mansard roof, even before an addition was put on, that it is hard to say what style of building it originally was. Just north of Broad on Nineteenth the indefatigable brothers in 1853-54 built six small houses called in contemporary advertisements Elm Tree Row. The elm has long since disappeared, but its very name gives one an inkling of why people went on building in a location that still had charm in spite of nearby industries.

A row that has retained more of its original appearance is the one on Twentieth between Franklin and Grace (fig. 68). The five cunning little houses left there date from between 1848 and 1851. A particularly charming iron verandah on the corner house was put on after the War: the others still have their Greek Revival porches. The history of one of these houses, 118 North Twentieth, gives an interesting glimpse of the effect on prices of war-time crowding plus the depreciation of Confederate money. When it was brand-new, this house sold for \$2,400. Late in 1862 it brought \$6,200, and by February, 1865, William H. Scott, the druggist, paid \$62,000 for it! Dr. Scott's family lived there until the early 'eighties and his estate owned it up to a few years ago. On the hill to the east of it, then unbroken by Twenty-first Street, he opened what his son believes to have been the first public playground in Richmond.²⁷

On the eve of the War, one of the most imposing houses in this section, 205 North Nineteenth, was built (fig. 72). Architecturally it is an interesting example of the complete disappearance of Classic detail. A square brick mansion with a flat roof, it is similar in shape to many unpretentious frame houses scattered all over town. For ornament it depends on a very elaborate iron verandah and a



*Fig. 72. Pace-King House
205 North Nineteenth Street
Built 1860*

magnificent iron fence with wheel-gates. Two interesting citizens lived there: in the 'sixties and early 'seventies James B. Pace, whose factory was a few blocks away, and during the 'eighties and 'nineties Mrs. Jane King, who had the unique distinction among Richmond women of running a large ice business. When electric refrigeration was undreamed of and ice had to be brought by boat from Maine, Mrs. King's occupation demanded energy and resourcefulness. That she succeeded in it besides raising a family, somewhat upsets the popular notion of the Victorian clinging vine.

After the War, only small and uninteresting dwellings were built in the Shockoe Creek area. With transportation growing easier, few people cared enough about staying near their factories to put up with the smells, smoke and greater heat of the valley. Houses

decayed, stores on Main, neglected, seemed out of date. Most of them were replaced by smaller stores with none of the beauty or distinction of those they had superseded.

In the directories of the 'nineties one finds among those who had stores on Main or in the Old Market many Italian and a few Jewish names. Only on North Eighteenth were there Negroes. In the early 1900's many Eastern European Jews began to move into the area and buy property there, both stores and dwellings. That there were Polish Jews there as early as 1856 is evidenced by the opening of a Polish synagogue on East Main in that year. During the past twenty-five years these have been crowded out by Negroes. At present the racial pattern is somewhat as follows: Negroes in a good many houses on East Main, on all of Twentieth, on Eighteenth north of Grace and on part of Nineteenth. The remaining whites, largely Eastern European Jews, operate stores in the Market, on Main and on the two blocks of Eighteenth now given over to business. Like most of their race, they are law-abiding and ambitious, and move their homes out of this neighborhood as soon as possible, even when they still operate stores there. The Negroes are of a rough class given at their most harmless to "playing the numbers," and at their worst to stabbing and shooting affrays.

Few old stores or factories remain on Main and none on Cary. Many interesting buildings photographed in 1912 were gone two years later. Nonetheless, the sum total of pre-Civil War buildings in this area is still very large, about eighty including those in "Butchertown." This fact, combined with the presence there of three out of the five oldest buildings in the city—the Craig house, the Old Stone house and the Masons' Hall—make it, even for

one unacquainted with its vanished buildings, one of the most interesting sections of Richmond, and at the same time one of its most woe-begone, whether from the material or the human point of view.

Notes

1. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, The Old Stone House
2. *Ibid.*, The Craig House
3. Mordecai, 2nd ed., 47
4. *Dispatch*, Mar. 22, 1867.
5. Mordecai, 2nd ed., p. 211.
6. Minutes of the Common Hall, vol. 5, p. 156.
7. 2nd ed., pp. 29-30.
8. For a good picture of this, set Blanton, *Making of a Downtown Church*, p. 164.
9. Christian, Richmond, p. 51.
10. June 15, 1853.
11. Deed Book 1, p. 568.
12. Henry Adams, *Life of Albert Gallatin* (Philadelphia, 1879), p. 72.
13. See [Shockoe Creek](#) in East Main Street.
14. A. H. Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1941), pp. 732 ff.
15. *Compiler*, April 29, 1819.
16. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Brick Double Houses
17. *Enquirer*, Aug. 7, 1807.
18. Ezekiel, *History of the Jews in Richmond*, p. 240.
19. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Brick Double Houses
20. Richmond Deed Book 6, p. 380 and Land Book for 1811.
21. Henrico Deed Book 6, p. 50.
22. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, McCurdy House
23. *Ibid.*, Cornelius Crew House
24. *Ibid.*, Morson Row
25. Letter from W. Palmer Gray to E. V. Valentine, quoting Mr. Gray's uncle, Col. W. H. Palmer (Valentine Museum). The newspaper account says that the accident occurred at 3 P.M. (*Times*, Oct. 21, 1851).
26. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Charles Talbot House
27. Conversation with the Reverend John Garlick Scott.

II. Centre of Town

page 89

IN THIS SECOND GROUP of old neighborhoods we include those lying west of Shockoe Creek and with the exception of the Court End, south of Broad Street. Topographically, this means Shockoe Hill, the outlying spurs of Gamble's and Oregon hills and the long obliterated Council Chamber Hill, and the large plateau stretching southwest that is still often referred to as Sydney. With the exception of Council Chamber and Oregon hills, it is the part of town most familiar to the average Richmonder. Here the city and state government is still carried on; here most of the city's business is transacted. Here prior to the First World War nearly all white Richmonders lived. Here during the nineteenth century were the handsomest residences and churches as well as practically all of the stores, hotels and public buildings.

Since the activities carried on there were the core of Richmond's expansion from a small town into a big city, this is naturally the section that has suffered the greatest changes. Beginning with the Evacuation Fire of 1865 which swept away the business-section on Main and all that lay between it and James River, business has

not only rebuilt its habitations many times, but is rapidly engulfing what was up to the middle 1920's the principal residence section. The fine old houses and big yards of Grace Street were replaced twenty years ago by stores or filling-stations, and Franklin Street is rapidly following the same pattern. The residences and churches of the Court End will before long all be swallowed by the expansion of government buildings, schools and the Medical College. Planless concentration of the city's daily activities has destroyed what would make it historically and artistically attractive to visitors, creating at the same time a traffic problem that will soon divide this area between stores and office-buildings and space-wasting small parking-lots.

To those born since 1900 the following pages will picture a city as unknown to them as Troy. Except for a few separated buildings utilized as museums, hospitals, etc., only in such outskirts as Gamble's or Oregon Hill, near First and Main, and, miraculously, on South Fifth, does enough remain to give them an inkling of the beauty and charm that the past quarter of a century has swept away.

The Court End

page 91

THE VISITOR to Richmond with only a few hours to see the city almost invariably devotes them to the Capitol and the section around it. For if Shockoe Creek neighborhood is Richmond's cradle, the old Court End is its heart. Here Jefferson's peerless Capitol dominates its beautiful setting: here is the modest home of Virginia's governors. Almost within sight of each other are five old churches. A few blocks away are the home of John Marshall and four early nineteenth century houses. One of them, the Wickham house, is surpassingly beautiful, another is of unique historic interest as the White House of the Confederacy. Within a stone's throw of the latter is the Egyptian Building of the Medical College, one of the most curious architectural monuments in this country.

Yet with all that remains of the Court End, how much more has been swept away: the City Hall designed by Robert Mills, Sycamore Church, the Woman's College and countless old residences, among them those of Jaquelin Ambler, Edmund Randolph, Samuel Myers, Alexander McRae and Jaquelin Harvie.

When in 1780 it was decided to place the new Capitol on Shockoe Hill, west of the previous centre of Richmond's life, nothing was more logical than that people moving to town or those building new homes should choose the plateau north and west of the large square set aside for the State's buildings. Here until after the Civil War many of the leading citizens of Richmond lived. Here legislators, visitors having business with the government and mere transients filled the early inns and the later boarding-houses and hotels. Here the City administration settled near that of the State.

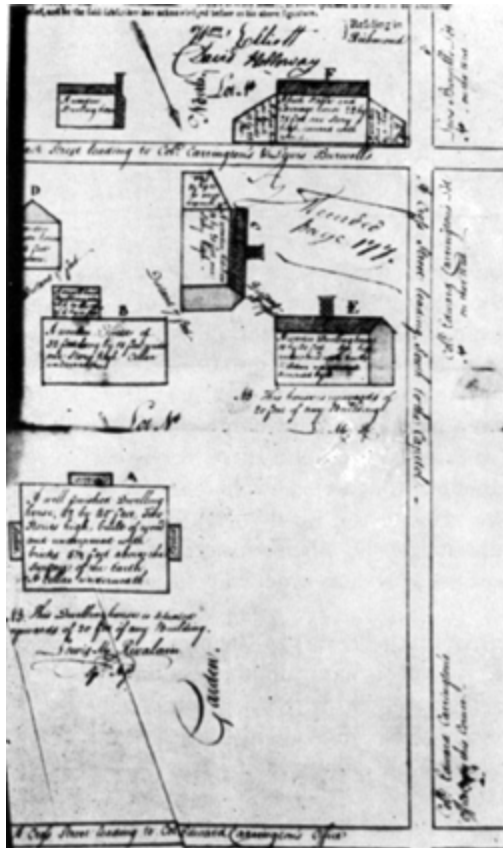


Fig. 74. Harvie-Wickham House
Tenth between Marshall and Clay
Built before 1795, Demolished about 1852
(A typical town-plantation of the post Revolutionary period)

Here eight ante-bellum churches were erected.

Aside from the exceptional number of public buildings, the development of the Court End was typical of old sections that remained popular over a long period. Eighteenth century houses were mostly of frame, surrounded by outbuildings, and occupying often as much as a two-acre city block. Early nineteenth century houses,

invariably brick, were handsomer, and were still accompanied by many outbuildings, though the lots were rarely more than a quarter of a square. In the 'forties and 'fifties most of the wooden houses gave place to three-story brick dwellings, some of them forming rows, many with lots no wider than the house. By then the stable and kitchen were generally the only outbuildings.

In the 1780's and 1790's the cluster of frame structures deemed indispensable to a gentleman's home included a dwelling-house, small even by today's standards, outdoor kitchen, office, stable and carriage-house, servants' quarters, smokehouse, dairy, laundry, well-house and "necessary," the polite euphemism for outside plumbing. Among these miniature plantations were the home of Colonel Edward Carrington at the southeast corner of Eleventh and Clay, that of Colonel John Harvie on Tenth between Marshall and Clay (fig. 74), Edmund Randolph's modest house at the southwest corner of Broad and Tenth, and two belonging to John Hopkins, Commissioner of Loans—his own home at the northwest corner of Broad and Seventh, and one that he rented to John A. Chevallié on the site of the WRVA Theatre. This latter is the only one of these early wooden houses still standing. Besides having been moved to Madison and Grace, it has been so altered that one has little notion of its original appearance and no idea of its outbuildings.¹

The last house of this early group that remained standing in anything like its original condition was the picturesque one which until 1921 occupied the northeast corner of Broad and Eleventh, known for some unexplained reason as "the Green corner." For about three decades prior to his death in 1836, this had been the home of Charles Copland. Although it had the shape shown in our



Heurich B. Cook

*Fig. 75. Copland House
1101 East Broad Street
Built before 1796, Demolished 1921*

photograph as early as 1796, the house was probably a composite, the one-story cottage facing Eleventh being the older part, to which the two-story house facing Broad had been added (fig. 75).

A handsomer house was that of Jaquelin Ambler, Treasurer of Virginia, which stood near the southwest corner of Tenth and Clay, and according to the insurance policies was frame with a brick north-end which included the two chimneys (fig. 76).² Built sometime between 1784 and 1796, it was occupied until 1857 by George Fisher, who had married one of Ambler's daughters. For thirty years before it was torn down it was the home of Samuel C. Greenhow, Treasurer of the City in the 'seventies and 'eighties.



*Fig. 76. Jaquelin Ambler House
408 North Tenth Street*

Built between 1784 and 1796, Demolished 1894

Even before the Civil War, the square Ambler had once occupied was filled with substantial three-story houses, several of which are still standing, though his own home disappeared more than fifty years ago.

Ambler's children settled close to the paternal roof in the early days of the Court End. For twenty-two years Daniel Call, who had married one daughter, lived in the house at Ninth and Broad that we have described as later being moved to Madison and Grace. Another daughter had married Colonel Edward Carrington, whose home was at Eleventh and Clay. A third son-in-law, George Fisher, occupied Ambler's own house, as we have said, until just before the Civil War. Both Fisher and Call are buried in Shockoe Cemetery close beside the most famous of Ambler's sons-in-law, John Marshall.



*Fig. 77. Swan Tavern
812-14 East Broad Street
Built probably in 1780's, Demolished 1904*

When Marshall in 1789-92 built his own home at what is now Ninth and Marshall streets, he was evidently inspired by that of his father-in-law. Although in the Ambler house the disposition of the chimneys was different, the proportions, the roof-line, the position of the porches, even the rather haphazard arrangement of the rooms as recalled by a member of the Greenhow family, corresponded with features of the Marshall house that continue to puzzle students of architecture.³

A fifth member of Jaquelin Ambler's family who evidently wanted to live nearby was his nephew John Ambler. From 1807 on he occupied a curious shaped house, part brick and part wood, which had been built a decade earlier by Lewis Burwell at the northwest corner of Clay and Twelfth. Here Ambler's widow lived until her

death in 1846. The house was pulled down two years afterwards.

Among these eighteenth century houses, only one is left in the Court End, the home of John Marshall. Its sole surviving contemporary is the Capitol, designed by Thomas Jefferson and erected under the supervision of Richmond builders, chief among them being Samuel Dobie. Though opened for use in 1788, the building was far from completed. For many years it was unstuccoed and had a flat roof. Even after these defects were remedied, Jefferson's design and the commanding location of Virginia's Capitol were little appreciated. This is evidenced by constant criticism on the part of writers, and finally by the addition in 1906 of fat little wings which gave the Legislature needed space but permanently impaired the beauty of the building.⁴

A market built in 1793 at Broad and Twelfth was not a success. Apparently the residents of the Court End preferred to carry their provisions up the steep hill from the Old Market. So far as we know, the only business that crept into this section before 1800 was that connected with the Legislature and the courts. Taverns were immediately needed for visitors to town, especially for the legislators, and two famous ones were built within a stone's throw of Capitol Square. The Swan was a typical eighteenth-century inn, two-story frame with a long verandah in front, wings in the rear and half-a-dozen outbuildings sprawling over the block between Eighth and Ninth on Broad (fig. 77). Built in the late 1780's, it sheltered at various periods such famous people as Thomas Jefferson, Edgar Allan Poe and the actor Joseph Jefferson. In spite of many renovations and changes of name, it could not compete with the modern hotels that began to spring up in the 'forties, and the survival of the building,



Heurth B. Cook

Fig. 78. Capital Square
St. Pauls Church St. Peter's Church St. Claire Hotel
Washington Monument

even in dilapidated condition, down to 1904 is surprising.

About contemporary with the Swan was a brick inn erected



Hearts E. Cook

Fig. 95. Ford's Hotel (from Capitol Square)

Built before 1800, Enlarged 1831 and later, Demolished about 1912

as a residence probably in 1785 by Major Andrew Dunscombe at the northwest corner of Ninth and Grace. First used as a tavern in 1797 by Parke Goodall and called “Goodall’s” or the Indian Queen, it later was given various names—the Washington Tavern, the Monumental, the Central, and, finally, the St. Claire, under which name it had been operated for three decades when it was torn down to make way for the Hotel Richmond. In our view from Capitol Square, the little hotel is seen on the corner with a verandah on two sides, while behind it is the four-story addition erected in the ‘fifties by James Lyons (fig. 78).

In the early 1800’s a few stores began to appear on the lower end of Broad Street, then often called “the main street, Shockoe Hill.” William Fulcher built at the southwest corner of Ninth a row



*Fig. 80. First Baptist, later African Baptist Church
Broad and College Streets
Built 1802, Demolished 1876*

of stores and dwellings, in one of which Aaron Burr is said to have been imprisoned during part of his trial. The mistaken idea that this building is still standing is due to an error in Waithall's *Hidden Things Brought to Light* together with a careless reading of Mordecai.⁵ Fortunately, a very circumstantial account in the *Times* of December

17, 1851, leaves no doubt that Burr's prison was pulled down at that period and the present corner store, now greatly altered, built on its site.

At the southeast corner of Broad and Eleventh stood Southgate's Buildings, which contained both stores and a boarding-house. In 1831 James McKildoe altered and enlarged this to make the Powhatan House, the most popular hotel in town before the opening of the Exchange. Here Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and other politicians stayed in the 1840's⁶ (fig. 95). From the 'seventies until 1909, as Ford's Hotel, it was again one of the leading hostelryes of Richmond.

The earliest place of worship erected in the Court End was the First Baptist Church at the northeast corner of Broad and College streets.⁷ The small brick building was added to until it became cruciform in shape (fig. 80). Being the largest auditorium available, it was used for many secular events, among them the Constitutional Convention of 1829-30. When in 1841 the white Baptists withdrew from the far more numerous colored members of the congregation, the old church was sold to the Negroes. Since it was illegal for the latter to assemble except under the guidance of a white preacher, Dr. Robert Ryland, first president of Richmond College, remained pastor of the African Church, as it was called, until after the Civil War. During this time the building was used not only as a church but for the most engaging variety of events: political meetings, concerts by Ole Bull, Adelina Patti (aged eight) and "Blind Tom," memorial exercises for Andrew Jackson and midget shows. In 1876 the old structure was replaced by the present imposing church of stuccoed brick.



Old Photo

<p><i>Fig. 79. Samuel Myers House</i> 229 Governor Street Built probably 1800</p>	<p><i>G. A. Myers House</i> 227 Governor Street Built 1849</p>
<p><i>Both Demolished 1900</i></p>	

Many of the handsome residences added to the Court End in the first two decades of the nineteenth century have already been treated in detail in *Houses of Old Richmond*. These include the homes of Edmund Randolph and Alexander McRae, the Hayes-McCance and Harvie-Purcell houses, two built by Dr. John Brockenbrough, two by John Wickham, the Governor’s Mansion and the last home of Judge Spencer Roane.⁸ Some of these replaced frame houses which the owners either rented out or demolished. Randolph rented his home on Broad Street and between 1800 and 1802 built a fine and original mansion facing Capitol Square. John Wickham



Old Photo

*Fig. 84. Pelouze House
720 East Marshall Street
Built 1810, Demolished 1935*

was living in Col. Harvie's former home on Tenth when in 1807 he caused a scandal by entertaining both Aaron Burr and his judge, Chief Justice Marshall. In 1812 he built at Eleventh and Clay one of the handsomest houses in Richmond. Wickham not only owned this whole square, but had a stable-lot across Clay, where in that same year he started another brick dwelling that later became the home of his son-in-law, Benjamin Watkins Leigh.

Of these early nineteenth century houses only six remain—the two built by Wickham, those built by Brockenbrough, the Roane house and the Governor's Mansion. A number of others of the period deserve mention in these pages. The earliest was built in 1800 by Samuel Myers on Governor Street near Broad. Son of the great silversmith Myer Myers, Samuel had come to Richmond with two



*Fig. 85. William C. Williams House
410 North Eighth Street
Built 1810, Demolished 1936*

of his brothers in the 1790's, and remained a prominent merchant of his adopted city until his death in 1838. His house originally had in the rear one of the earliest of the three-sided bays mistakenly called "octagons" and a wooden office in the yard. In 1850 the property was bought by Judge William W. Crump, whose family lived there until the house was torn down. It had been considerably altered by the Crumps, so that photographs show it more or less like a Greek Revival building until one notices the beautiful early cornices over the windows ([fig. 79](#)).

No photograph has ever been found of the house which Judge Philip Norbonne Nicholas built in 1804 at the southwest corner of Clay and Twelfth. The only other family to live there was that



*Fig. 81. 1206-10 East Broad Street
Built 1819, Demolished 1935*

of George T. Booker, who bought it in 1850. The house was torn down in 1887. The mansion generally called the Pelouze house at the northwest corner of Eighth and Marshall was built by George Pickett, and during the 'twenties and 'thirties was the home of Daniel Call, prominent lawyer and author of *Call's Reports*. Originally a two-storied house, it had been spoiled by a mansard roof after its acquisition in 1882 by the Pelouze family (fig. 84).

Just behind it, facing Eighth, was a house of the same date that had retained far more of its original appearance (fig. 85). This so-called Belvin house was built by William C. Williams, whose widow lived there until her death in 1842. The family of John A. Belvin

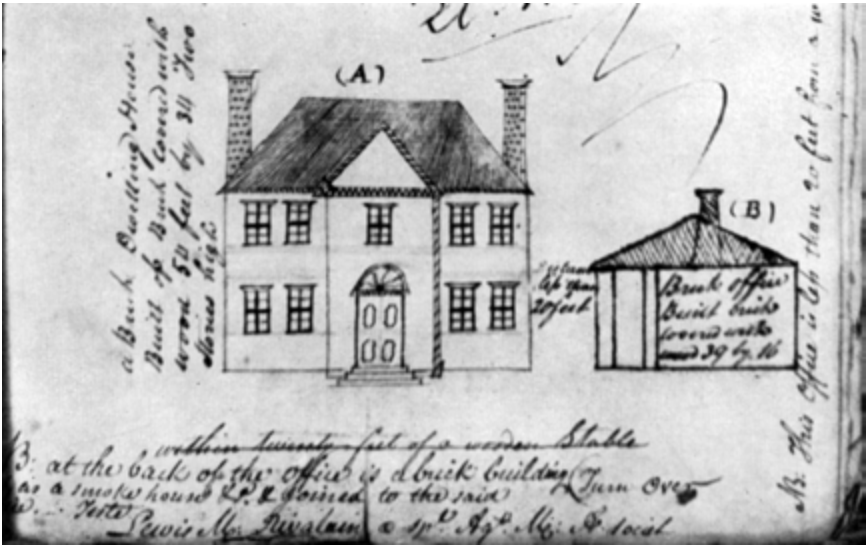


Fig. 82. Hay-Stanard House
 112 North Ninth Street
 Built 1804, Demolished 1927

occupied it for about twenty years, beginning in 1862. A broad two-story mansion, both its lines and the small porch suggesting the Wickham house, it was notable for the unusual interior trim. Mr. Thomas Waterman, who bought the woodwork of the drawing-room, considers this to have been one of the most remarkable rooms in America.

On East Broad were three houses of a very different type from those we have hitherto cited (fig. 81). These were built by Benjamin Stetson in 1819. The little one in the foreground of our photograph was hardly more than a large outbuilding, but the pair east of it were typical city-houses, narrow and flush with the pavement. Many such dwellings dating from the early nineteenth century may still be found in Georgetown and Baltimore, Philadelphia and Boston, but



*Fig. 83. Hay-Stanard House
110 North Ninth Street*

with the disappearance of these two, the last examples in Richmond vanished.

Two interesting houses on the edge of the Court End were the Hay-Stanard house on Ninth near Franklin and the “Shot Tower,” 811 East Grace. The former was built by the well-known lawyer George Hay, who married as his second wife a daughter of President Monroe. In 1812 it was bought by Robert Stanard, and it was here that Edgar Poe came to play with his little friend Robert Craig Stanard and fell under the enchantment of Robert’s beautiful



*Fig. 86. The Monumental Church
Broad between Twelfth and College Streets
Built 1814*

mother, the former Jane Craig. Ezekiel describes the house as

... one of the last old-style mansions in that section, with winding stairs, and mantels, the shelves of which were at least six feet above the floor. A favorite joke of his (i.e., Dr. Beale's, a later owner) when introduced to some new acquaintance, consisted in inviting him to spend a social evening and rest his feet on the mantel while he smoked.⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century the house had been so altered that only our very early photograph, together with the insurance-drawing, gives any idea of its original distinction (figs. 82 and 83). At the time it was built it had two stories, but the grading

of the rugged Ninth Street hill increased these to three.

A more striking witness to the sharp drop from Grace to Franklin on this block was 811 East Grace, built about 1819 by William W. Hening, compiler of Hening's *Statutes*. From early times this house was dubbed the Sky Parlour, or more often the Shot Tower—not that it was ever anything but a residence, but having three stories on Grace and five in the rear, it suggested the shot towers common at that period. In the 'fifties this was the last home of Michael B. Poitiaux.

Though there was no church save First Baptist in the Court End before 1814, this hub of political and social life seldom lacked a theatre. The first in the neighborhood was housed in a building erected in 1786 for an American French Academy. This stood on Twelfth just north of Broad. M. Quesnay de Beaurepaire's high bid for culture died an early death, but the name "Academy Square" or "Theatre Square" stuck to the long block bounded by Broad, Marshall, Twelfth and College streets. The Academy building, where in 1788 Virginia ratified the Constitution of the United States, was used as a theatre until it burned. After that, various buildings served as temporary theatres up to January, 1806, when a second theatre was erected in Academy Square. On the night of December 26, 1811, as has often been recounted, this playhouse was burned with the loss of over seventy lives. The stunned citizens decided that a church on the site would be a fitting memorial of this tragedy, and Robert Mills, the distinguished South Carolina architect, was called to design it. The Monumental Church, completed in 1814, is still one of the most interesting buildings in Richmond, on account of both its history and its original design—an octagon covered with a low



Old Photo

*Fig. 87. Mills' City Hall
Capital Street at Eleventh
Built 1816, Demolished 1874*

dome (fig. 86). The massive portico that sheltered the monument bearing a list of names of those who died in the fire gave the building a dignity that no previous church-building in Richmond had aspired to. From an architectural point of view it is just as well that Mills' intention of adding a spire was never carried out. Although after a vote it was made an Episcopal church, the fact that every part of the little community—Presbyterians, Roman Catholics and Jews, as well as Episcopalians contributed to its construction and that the first rector, Rt. Rev. Richard Channing Moore, was also Bishop of Virginia, gave the Monumental in its early years more nearly the character of a cathedral of the whole city than any church has ever



*Fig. 88. Bell Tower
Built 1824*

had in Richmond's history. Though Richmond was pushing rapidly westward even before the Monumental was built, this church far down the hillside sufficed for the Episcopalians of Shockoe Hill until St. James' was completed nearly a quarter of a century later.

In 1814 the Common Hall voted to build a courthouse for the Hustings Court, and selected for it the lot at Eleventh and Capitol just east of Edmund Randolph's octagon house. Mills was evidently in Richmond, as he not only drew a plan but advertized for bricks.¹⁰ However, the plan was not adopted nor was work really begun for another two years.¹¹ After the building was completed, the Mayor's office was set up there and the Common Hall held its meetings in what was henceforth called the City Hall (fig. 87). Its imposing

portico and low dome made it rather similar to the Monumental, and small as it was by comparison with the present City Hall, Mills' building was more of an adornment to the city and more harmonious with Jefferson's Capitol across the street. After the Capitol disaster of 1870, the City Fathers evidently feared that any old building must be dangerous, and Mills' City Hall was torn down. It is chilly comfort that the wreckers found it so solidly constructed that they had great difficulty in demolishing it!

Another contemporary building was the Virginia Museum, located in the southeastern part of Capitol Square, facing Twelfth Street. Erected in 1817 by Richard Lorton and the painter, James Warrell, it was a large brick building, ninety-one by fifty feet. In spite of its having accumulated over twenty thousand objects within four years,¹² the Museum, like many cultural undertakings in Richmond, had a struggling existence. By 1837 the former Museum was being used as the city's post-office. Ten years later the building for the General Court was erected on the site of the Museum. This courthouse was burned in the Evacuation Fire.

Despite the pall of stagnation that lay on the city for fifteen years after the depression of 1819, a number of interesting buildings were added to the Court End during that time. Most curious among them was the brick Bell Tower in the Capitol Square, which replaced a wooden belltower and guard-house (fig. 88). The bell was constantly in use: not only were the hours rung, by hand prior to 1870 and after that by electricity,¹³ but it served as an alarm for the fires that at certain periods seem to have been almost a daily occurrence and that the papers with monotonous regularity blamed on some never-caught incendiary. On Sunday, April 21, 1861,



*Fig. 89. Sycamore Meeting House
Eleventh Street north of Broad
Built 1832, Demolished 1896*

the bell rang frantically to report the Federal gunboat “Pawnee” approaching the city, and again on February 7, 1864, it sounded the alarm for the very real threat of Dahlgren’s Raid. In 1933, the old Bell Tower was restored and again supplied with a bell, the early one having long since cracked and disappeared.

Within ten years after the construction of the Bell Tower, two churches were erected in the Court End. Old Sycamore, which stood on Eleventh north of Broad, had special interest as the first Richmond building of the Disciples of Christ, a group which a few years before had seceded from the Baptists, under the leadership of Alexander Campbell (fig. 89). After 1872, when the congregation moved to a large new church at Seventh and Grace, Old Sycamore was used by the Virginia Court of Appeals until it was torn down. The

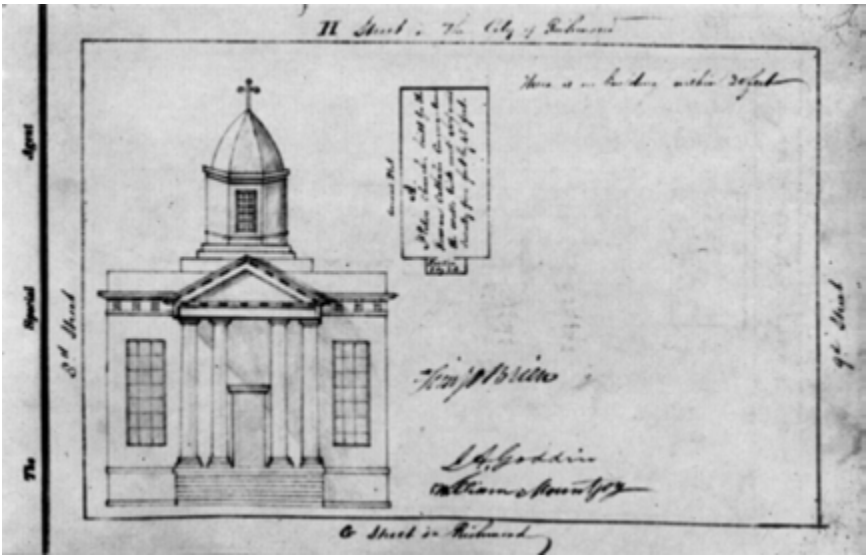


Fig. 90. St. Peter's Church
Grace and Eighth Streets
Built before 1834

building was simple, with no other ornament than its pedimented façade. Elsewhere in Richmond we shall find several churches of this period that followed the same unadorned, functional pattern.¹⁴

St. Peter's, with its four-columned portico and its bell-tower was a building of considerably more pretension (fig. 90). It supplanted a frame chapel on Fourth which the Roman Catholics had for nearly a decade used as a place of worship.¹⁵ From 1841 to 1906 St. Peter's was the cathedral of the Richmond diocese. Most Rev. John McGill, the first resident bishop, shared with the first priest, Father Timothy O'Brien, a house facing Eighth Street which was torn down in 1855 to permit the enlargement of the church toward the north.

In 1803 the Virginia Legislature authorized the establishment in Richmond of a free school or Academy, for which a site was



*Fig. 93. Eustace-Grant House
407 North Twelfth Street
Built before 1826, Demolished 1893*

chosen on the hills north of the Poorhouse and beyond Bacon Quarter Branch. Probably because of its remote location, this was never a success, and in 1817 City Council transferred the funds to the Lancastrian School then being started at Fifteenth and Marshall.¹⁶ In 1834 the project of an Academy was again taken up, and a building was erected in the more central location of Marshall and Tenth. In spite of such distinguished teachers as Dr. Socrates Maupin, William Burke and Col. Claudius Crozet, this third attempt at public education also failed. In 1851 the school was abandoned and the building given over to an Athenaeum, which we might call



*Fig. 92. Myers Double House
1220-22 East Broad Street
Built 1834, Demolished 1929*

an effort at adult education. The Virginia Historical Society had its headquarters there, the Richmond Library Association moved its books to the building, and countless lectures took place at the Athenaeum. Among the most distinguished speakers were the novelists G. P. R. James and Thackeray. The latter gave two series of talks on eighteenth-century literature during his visits to Richmond in 1853 and 1856. But this experiment in public education also collapsed, and the Academy was torn down in 1858.

The only handsome dwellings built during the stagnant period in the Court End were those of John H. Eustace and of Joseph Allen. Allen's mansion, built in 1836 at the northeast corner of Twelfth and Broad, was torn down in 1887, and no photograph of it has thus far



*Fig. 91. 311-13 College Street
Built about 1827*

come to light. Eustace's home, 407 North Twelfth, became in 1852 that of James H. Grant, the tobacconist, whose family occupied it until it was replaced by Ruffner (now John Smith) School (fig. 93).

Of this same period was a double house built in 1834 by Samuel Myers just west of the Monumental Church (fig. 92). Gustavus A. Myers lived here before his own house on Governor was built, and Miss Catherine Myers conducted a primary school here in the 'forties. In spite of the diaphragm-wall, this pair of houses lacked the charm of Stetson's pair to the west of them.¹⁷ An older style was disappearing, and the new Greek Revival had not yet found itself.

Two smaller dwellings from this stagnant age deserve mention. One of them, 311-13 College Street, is still standing (fig. 91). This



*Fig. 94. Wisham House
804 East Clay Street
Built 1823, Demolished 1936*

little cottage, probably built in 1827 by Ira Tichenor, a carriage-maker, is more interesting for its architecture than for its meagre history. The only person of any note that we can identify with it was the druggist, J. B. Wood, father of Dr. Judd Wood, the benefactor of the Medical College and of First Baptist Church. The Woods never owned it, but lived there in the 1850's. The tiny house is unique in Richmond in that it has a frame front and back and brick gable-ends.



Robert A. Lancaster

*Fig. 100. Bruce-Lancaster House
1112 East Clay Street
Built 1848, Demolished 1910*

The small chimneys indicate a later date than its quaint appearance leads people to attribute to it. It is a house with personality, and whatever its age, it is a pity that its ruinous condition makes one fear that it will soon tumble into the ravine behind it.

The other building, 804 East Clay, torn down for the construction of the John Marshall drill-ground, had greater historical interest (fig. 94). Built by Maria Wisaham, daughter of one of Richmond's early merchants, who occupied it for ten years, it was rented in 1851 and possibly earlier to the mother and sister of Hugh Pleasants, a fact that makes the tradition that Poe lived there in 1848 with Pleasants more plausible than most of the tales associating Poe with Richmond buildings.

By 1835 business began to "pick up" and the great period of



Palmer Grey

*Fig. 96. 1200 block on East Broad Street
(Houses on right built in 1840's, Demolished 1937)*

Greek Revival building began. This added to the Court End several individual houses, three rows, two splendid churches, and the Egyptian Building of the Medical College. The earliest house of this period, built in 1839 by William Beers at the corner of Broad and College, is still attractive in spite of an added third story.¹⁸ The only handsome house was one built in 1848 by Mrs. Elvira Bruce on the site of the Burwell-Ambler house (fig. 100). This mansion was designed by Henry Exall.¹⁹ With its generous lot, fine proportions and the frieze-windows uncommon in Richmond, it resembled the Westmoreland Club, a decade older. Only the Corinthian columns of the entrance-porch suggest a later date than Robert Stanard's mansion. Occupied by Alexander Stephens, vice-president of the



*Fig. 98. 1227 East Broad Street
Built 1840, Demolished 1937*

Confederacy, during his brief stays in Richmond, in the 'eighties the Bruce house was the home of John A. Lancaster and his large family, and in the 'nineties it became the headquarters of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. It had been greatly altered before it passed from the scene altogether in a fire in December, 1910.

Among other vanished houses of the 'forties were four that stood on Broad where the State Highway Building now is (figs. 96



Heath B. Cook

*Fig. 99. 800 block East Marshall
Built 1847-48, Demolished 1907-8*

and 98). Erected between 1845 and 1849, they were the homes of such well-known people as James Allen, partner of Isaac Davenport, of Captain Joseph Myers (nephew of Samuel Myers), and of John Dooley, hat-and-cap maker and father of Major James Dooley. By the time they were demolished they were in such lamentable condition that one could scarcely mourn the passing of their Classic porticoes and graceful stair-rails.

Contemporary houses that survive are the heavy but historically significant Maupin-Maury house, 1105 East Clay,²⁰ and the home of James Caskie, 1101 East Clay, now ruined by a store-front. Both were built on the site of Col. Edward Carrington's house.

Along Twelfth between Broad and Marshall were six houses once as beautiful as Linden Row. These were built between 1848 and 1854 by three men—Joseph Myers, Dr. Charles S. Mills and



*Fig. 97. St. Paul's Church
Ninth and Grace Streets
Built 1845*

Joel Watkins. Here until 1936 lived Miss Adle Mills, granddaughter of Nicholas Mills and of Claudius Crozet. Fortunately she did not live to see shop-fronts replace the Classic entrance-porches of her father's fine row.

Perhaps two similar rows in the Court End were happier to be torn down in unspoiled beauty. The three houses on Capitol Street erected in 1845 by Jaquelin P. Taylor were replaced by the

new State Library.²¹ A longer row on Marshall between Eighth and Ninth disappeared when John Marshall High School was built (fig. 99). No. 808, the largest of these houses, deserves special mention as the home during the 'fifties, 'sixties and 'seventies of F. W. Hanewinkel, remembered as the founder of the Episcopal Church Home. Subsequently his house was used as headquarters by the Jefferson Club, which no doubt added the rear annex shown in our photograph.

Three public buildings of exceptional interest which date from the 'forties are still standing. These are old First Baptist, built in 1841 at Broad and Twelfth, St. Paul's Church (fig. 97) and the Egyptian Building, both dating from 1845 and both designed by Thomas S. Stewart of Philadelphia. The architect of First Baptist was also a Philadelphian, Thomas U. Walter. Both churches are variants of Greek Revival. Richmond conservatism evidently demanded steeples, even on Greek temples. None is included in Stewart's design for St. Luke's (now St. Luke and the Epiphany), the Philadelphia church on which St. Paul's is closely modeled. The architect complied reluctantly with the Richmond congregation's insistence on a steeple, but withdrew his objections when he saw its slim beauty.²² However, we cannot believe that Walter, architect of the matchless Girard College, was ever reconciled to the monstrous little wooden bell-tower that topped old First Baptist. The only advantage that accrued to this building from the congregation's moving in 1928 to a west-end site and selling the old church to the Medical College of Virginia was the removal of this eyesore from a severe and beautiful building.

St. Paul's has received so much attention as the Church of the

Confederacy, where the pews of Lee and Davis are pointed out and both are memorialized by fitting windows that too little heed has been given to its architectural beauty. Equally satisfying are the proportions of the whole, the fine portico, with Corinthian columns richer than the Doric façade of First Baptist, the magnificent ceiling and lavish yet harmonious use of Greek motifs in the ceiling, on the columns, both interior and exterior, on the balcony, on the cast-iron fence and even on the pew-ends.

That the little-known architect was a man of talent is evident not only from his daring use of the suspension-arch in supporting the long galleries of St. Paul's,²³ but from his unusual design for the Egyptian Building of the Medical College. While other builders used Egyptian motifs, though to a far lesser extent than Greek, we have found no record of any other complete re-creation of an Egyptian temple in the United States. The commanding location of the building on the brow of the steep hill overlooking Shockoe Valley gives an admirable chance to enjoy its fine and satisfying proportions. Unfortunately, the interior of the building, not less interesting than the exterior, has been lost forever through a recent "restoration."

No visual record has come to light of another building of the 'forties. This was Beth Ahaba Synagogue, built in 1848 on the east side of Eleventh between Marshall and Clay. The congregation was composed of German Jews who had separated themselves from Beth Shalome. The building was replaced in 1880 by one which is still standing, though it was handed over in 1904 to the congregation of Sir Moses Montefiore.

The break with Classic models that occurred in the 1850's is

nowhere more vividly illustrated than by two churches added to the Court End in that decade. First Presbyterian, or rather the fourth building occupied by that congregation, was built in 1853 at the northeast corner of Tenth and Capitol Streets. This was a stuccoed structure, called in contemporary accounts Byzantine, though it had a high steeple. The architect was another Philadelphian, John McArthur, Jr., who later was to design Philadelphia's monstrous City Hall. According to contemporary descriptions, every material used in it was an imitation of some other material—from the capitals that imitated bronze to the pseudo-vaulted ceiling.²⁴ When the congregation moved again after thirty years, they took the church with them. The City wished to erect the new City Hall on this whole block, and part of the contract of sale was that the church was to be moved to the corner of Madison and Grace. There it still is, though the spire is gone and the restless congregation has made a sixth move, this time to Westhampton.

Equally remote from classic influence was Broad Street Methodist, built two years before the War from the design of the Richmond architect, Albert L. West. This church is almost a twin of Trinity Methodist²⁵ and the steeple that Broad Street now sorely lacks may be replaced in imagination by a glance across the valley to the slope of Church Hill, where one sees the spire of the former Trinity, fortunately thus far spared. These two Methodist churches were not inspired by any ascertainable formula of the past. Their most striking features are the rhythmic rows of round-arched windows and the way the spires, placed over the entrance-porch, commanded the building. One feels a certain amateurishness in the architect on observing, in the case of Trinity, that the spire is too



*Fig. 101. Richmond Female Institute
Tenth and Marshall Streets
Built 1854, Demolished 1924*

high for the small size of the church. This disproportion was probably less marked in Broad Street, partly on account of its location on a flat street. Both within and without it is a pleasing and dignified building, completely free of Classic derivation.

Since the early nineteenth century, schools had been numerous in the Court End. We have already discussed the Richmond Academy. Several different schools at various times occupied Edmund Randolph's house. The Rev. Henry Keeling, a Baptist minister, conducted a school just east of the African Church. Far more ambitious than any of these was the Richmond Female Institute, built on the site of the frame house of John Harvie ([fig. 101](#)). Designed by Thomas A. Tefft of Providence, it was along the lines of what was then conceived to be an Italian villa. The

first president was the Rev. Basil Manly. This institution, under Baptist auspices, was prepared to take two hundred and fifty pupils, and had both preparatory and collegiate departments, as well as a “department of ornamental branches.” However far all of this was from present college standards, the Woman’s College, as it was later called, undoubtedly enjoyed priority in the region of Richmond in attempting higher education for women.

The school was soon to claim another sort of priority—that of raising the first Confederate flag to fly in the city. This was on March 14, 1861. Dr. Charles H. Winston, who had succeeded President Manly two years before, promptly had it taken down, but “the determined young ladies” put it up again the next day!²⁶ During the Civil War the big building was used as a hospital for officers, the school being first moved to the Brockenbrough-Caskie house and later closed for three years. In 1914 the Woman’s College was merged with the University of Richmond and the former building, after being used for various purposes for another decade, was replaced by the present Mechanics’ Institute building.

The architecture of the other buildings of the ’fifties was equally different from the tasteful early nineteenth-century homes. It is true that some followed the Classic designs of the ’forties. Among the new houses in this older style were the Valentine mansion at Ninth and Capitol and the step-gabled house of James Kinniard that until 1949 was still standing on Twelfth.²⁷ A comparison of the houses built by the two Donnans at Twelfth and Marshall in 1854 and 1856²⁸ shows the new competing with the conservative in buildings of this decade. A happy blend of old and new was the mansion of William H. Hubbard,²⁹ built in 1856 between the



*Fig. 102. Davis-Stokes House
1007 East Marshall Street
Built before 1860, Demolished 1936*

second First Baptist Church and Copland's quaint frame dwelling. Before the two houses were replaced by a parking-lot and a corner confectionery, this block on Broad gave an interesting sample of at least three of the four phases through which the Court End had passed.

Two other large houses slightly later in date than the Hubbard

house retained far less Classic influence. One of them is still standing, 1008 East Clay, built in 1857 by William H. Grant.³⁰ The other, 1007 East Marshall, was built in 1860 by Solomon Davis, Negro trader, or, in popular parlance, “speculator.” From 1868 through the ’eighties it was the home of A. Y. Stokes (fig. 102). A beautiful feature of this otherwise monstrous building was the rich iron balcony on the east side. Where this little jewel was made or how it came to be adorned with medallions of Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and Henry Clay, set in exquisite vine-tendrils, is a puzzle yet unsolved. The only clue is its resemblance to the large two-story verandah on the Wetter house in Savannah. This balcony now belongs to Mr. Albert W. Pollard.

Immediately west of the Davis-Stokes house, on the site of the Academy, was one of several rows erected in the decade just before the War. Another was Morson’s Row, still standing on Governor Street.³¹ The Marshall Street row, notable only for its cast-iron ornament, has a single survivor, 1005, associated for many decades with the Moses Millhiser family.

The Millhiser and Stokes houses and the Putney houses across Marshall suggest the subject of cast-iron, of which the Court End still possesses unusually representative examples. The earliest as well as one of the most beautiful is the fence of spears and fasces which surrounds the Capitol Square. This dates from 1818. Across Ninth Street is the no less fine fence around St. Paul’s, made in Richmond in 1845 by F. J. Barnes. Dating from the same year is the curious fence with mummy-cases for posts that surrounds the Egyptian Building. The fact that each of these two harmonizes with the detail of the building is due to the fact that they were designed

by the architect, who as a Philadelphian would have been more iron-conscious than Richmond was in the 'forties.

Most of Richmond's cast-iron dates from the 'fifties and 'seventies. Both Putney houses have fine iron: the rich two-story balcony on the Stephen Putney house, 1012 East Marshall,³² is more spectacular but less unusual in pattern than the verandah and fence of the Samuel Putney house next door. Much later in date is the vine-fence at 1001 East Clay, which cannot be earlier than 1879 when the house was built. Equally beautiful was a post-war verandah which formerly stood at 901 East Clay, a house built in 1869. It is worth noting that in these later examples, including the houses built just before the War, the iron-work, unlike that of the Capitol fence, the Medical College or St. Paul's, was not designed to harmonize with a fine piece of architecture but was rather intended to "dress up" a building of relatively little character.

After 1865, the Court End began to go down as a residence section, even though as late as 1882 a prosperous businessman of taste like the second Mann S. Valentine established his home in the Wickham house. In the following decade the big mansions began to be utilized as institutions—the Bruce and first Brockenbrough houses as school and hospital of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the William Grant house as the Sheltering Arms Hospital, the Wickham house as the Valentine Museum. Since 1870 the former White House of the Confederacy had housed Central School: in 1894 it was opened as the Confederate Museum, the first old house to be saved from destruction by concerted public effort. Others without its historic appeal were pulled down the homes of James H. Grant, Philip N. Nicholas, Jaquelin Harvie, and the beautiful

Hayes-McCance mansion. By the 1920's the neighborhood was a mixture of institutions and shabby houses, many of them rabbit-warrens of cheap lodgings. In the 'thirties the process of demolition was accelerated by the demand for parking-lots, the expansion of John Marshall High School and of State and City offices, and particularly by the mushroom growth of the Medical College of Virginia. Since 1940 this process has been temporarily arrested by the impossibility of building in war-time. But with the plan for a Civic Centre, one can only fear that except for buildings protected as are the Confederate Museum, the Valentine Museum and the John Marshall house, all traces of Richmond's past will soon disappear from this, the most historic of its many old neighborhoods.

Notes

1. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Daniel Call House
2. Mutual Policy 76 (1796) says specifically "North end intirely (sic) of Brick the Balance all of Wood."
3. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, The John Marshall House
4. For a complete discussion of Jefferson's Capitol, see Fiske Kimball, *Thomas Jefferson, Architect* (Boston, 1916).
5. Mordecai, 2nd ed., p. 247, Walthall, p. 4.
6. *Dispatch*, Sept. 4, 1867.
7. It is interesting to find the widespread mispronunciation, "Babtist," reflected in spelling is a mention of this building as early as 1809 (*Argus*, April 14).
8. See *Houses of Old Richmond* Edmund Randolph House, Alexander McRae House, First Brockenbrough House, The Governor's Mansion, Wickham-Valentine House, Benjamin Watkins Leigh House, Jaquelin Harvie House, Hayes-McCance House, White House of the Confederacy, Spencer Roane House.
9. Ezekiel, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, p. 223.
10. Minutes of the Common Hall, vol. 5, pp. 38 and 46-47; Council Ordinances, 1804-21, pp. 145-47; *Virginia Patriot*, July 10, 1814.
11. Minutes of the Common Hall, vol. 5, pp. 148 and 150. For floor-plans see Weddell, *Richmond, Virginia, in Old Prints*, p. 199.
12. *Compiler*, July 16, 1821.
13. *Dispatch*, Jan. 12, 1870.

14. See [St. Peter's](#) in Court End.
15. See [Frame Chapel](#) in Marshall Street.
16. Minutes of the Common Hall, vol. 5, pp. 112 and 182-83. See also Mordecai, 2nd ed., p. 219. Mordecai says the building never rose above the basement.
17. See [Stetson](#) in Court End.
18. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Two Early Greek Revival Houses
19. *Dispatch*, Feb. 11, 1853.
20. *Houses of Old Richmond*, Maupin-Maury House
21. *Ibid.*, Jaquelin Taylor Row
22. The spire was removed in 1905, leaving the present unattractive pepper-cruet.
23. This system of support was changed about twenty years ago.
24. *Dispatch*, Oct. 17, 1853.
25. See [Confederate flag](#)
26. *Dispatch*, March 14 and 16, 1861.
27. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Three Step-Gable Greek Revival Houses and Mann S. Valentine House
28. *Ibid.*, Donnan Houses
29. *Ibid.*, Hubbard House
30. *Ibid.*, Sheltering Arms Hospital
31. *Ibid.*, Morson Row
32. *Ibid.*, Stephen Putney House



Hayes-McCance House



Hayes-McCance House site today.

Council Chamber Hill

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ALL BUT ONE of the neighborhoods treated in this book contain at least a residuum of old buildings: the sole exception is that area east of Governor Street and west of the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad tracks. Here an atomic bomb could hardly have made a more complete clearance of the past.

Even the topography has changed. Prior to 1845 there rose a mound, probably below the present Fourteenth Street and between Ross and Broad. On this stood a building that had been used during the Revolution for meetings of the Council of State. Sometime before 1798 that tireless *entrepreneur* John Mayo bought four and a half acres, including the former Council Chamber, which was a one-story brick house, 32 by 30 feet, with half a dozen frame outbuildings. Mordecai describes Col. Mayo as watching his toll-bridge from this house, but to judge by land-books and insurance policies, it was rented out most of the time, one of the occupants having been Alexander McRae. The last mention we have thus far found of the former Council Chamber was in 1835.¹

From early times other public enterprises were located in this same general neighborhood. Near the present southwest corner of Locust Alley and Franklin was a frame building used as the State Treasurer's office. Later on this was occupied as a residence by James Brown, Jr., and in 1822 two brick dwellings were built on the site, though for twenty years after that it was still referred to in records



From a watercolor by B. F. Lanobe (Courtesy of the Library of Congress)

*Fig. 103. Probably “Clifton”
Fourteenth and Apricot Alley
Built 1808-9, Demolished 1905*

as “the Old Treasury lot.” North of Franklin near Fifteenth were the Falling Gardens, established in 1805 by James Lownes. Among the gardens’ chief attractions were baths. Further up the hill was Byrd’s Warehouse, still remembered in the name, Tobacco Alley. “Byrd’s,” as it was generally called, was located at the southwest corner of Fourteenth and Franklin. It was burned in the fire of 1787, rebuilt and again was burned sometime before 1814. On part of the site William Galt built two houses, 10 and 12 North Fourteenth, in one of which John Allan lived after his return from England. No. 10 has been greatly altered, and only the granite first floor of No. 12 remains. Byrd’s Warehouse later occupied for a few years the corner east of its early location, but was replaced by the Exchange Hotel.

At Fourteenth and Apricot Alley Benjamin James Harris

in 1808 built what was certainly the most interesting if not the handsomest dwelling in this section. Insurance plats show it to have been very similar in shape to the Hancock-Caskie house. Both its appearance and location on a hillside overlooking the river strongly suggest a house designed by B. H. Latrobe, which the architect said overlooked Shockoe Creek. This water-color design is now in the Library of Congress (fig. 103). That the house in its heyday was a remarkable one is evidenced by a writer in an 1885 newspaper. His article bears quoting, both because it is not easily accessible and because it gives a good idea of the “lay of the land” around the Harris house:

How often have we looked up at the tall, massive chimneys of the ‘Harris’ home and wondered why Benjamin James Harris . . . should have built his grand old mansion at the foot instead of at the top of a high hill. In those days there were no streets across the Council Chamber Hill—all was grassy, sloped or wooded height. The Harris house, long called “Clifton,” was going to ruin when we first knew it . . . The hill which towered above it had been diminished to a gently sloping flat. The old foreground has been cut away and the old background built up with unsightly additions. . . .

It was erected in 1815² . . . and was then regarded as the finest house ever built in Richmond. Marx’ on the corner of Cary and Fifth and Wickham’s on Leigh between Tenth and Eleventh streets,³ so famed for the taste displayed in their outer and interior architecture, reluctantly yielded the palm to it . . .⁴

The writer, who signed himself C.M.W. (probably Charles M. Wallace), then waxes lyric over the interior, the

. . . quaint rooms within rooms and closets within closets, panelled walls with niches for statuary and overset with deep-ribbed wainscotting; oaken mantels elaborately carved by hand, on either side of which look down the portraits of Sully or Martin; secret passages or cosy alcoves, wide halls and winding stairs, with ballusters of blackest walnut—a marvel of the stair-builders' art—. . . ceilings blushing with relieve in plaster . . .

After 1843 for many decades this building together with a large annex was used as a boarding-house, called the Clifton House. In 1889 the owner, Dr. Booth of Carter's Grove, lent the house, then in very deteriorated condition, to the infant Sheltering Arms Hospital, which occupied it until it moved to the Grant house on Clay four years later. The Clifton House was demolished in 1905.

A house on Mayo Street built probably in 1818 by John Rutherford has been more fortunate. While it was torn down in 1930, the interior trim, far richer and more unusual than the exterior would have led one to expect, has been incorporated into a modern house, 2705 Park Avenue, which in 1949 was left by Miss Gabriella Page to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

Besides Mayo, other street-names in this section are interesting mementoes of its early history. Ross Street (a continuation of Grace) recalls that Scottish pioneer of milling, David Ross, who owned land here prior to 1796. Locust Street was named by James Lownes,



Dr. W. H. Taylor

*Fig. 104. Beth Shalome Synagogue
115 Mayo (Ballard) Street
Built 1822, Demolished 1934*

proprietor of the Falling Gardens. Below Mayo was Dogwood Alley, suggesting how lovely this hillside, now a tangle of ailanthus trees, waist-high grass, tin-cans and brick-bats, must have been in the early 1800's. John Mayo's heirs tried to honor the victories of his son-in-law, General Winfield Scott, by calling two streets in their development Chapultepec and Cerrogorido, but luckily these exotic names did not stick, as it is hard to imagine how subsequent denizens of the region would have pronounced them!

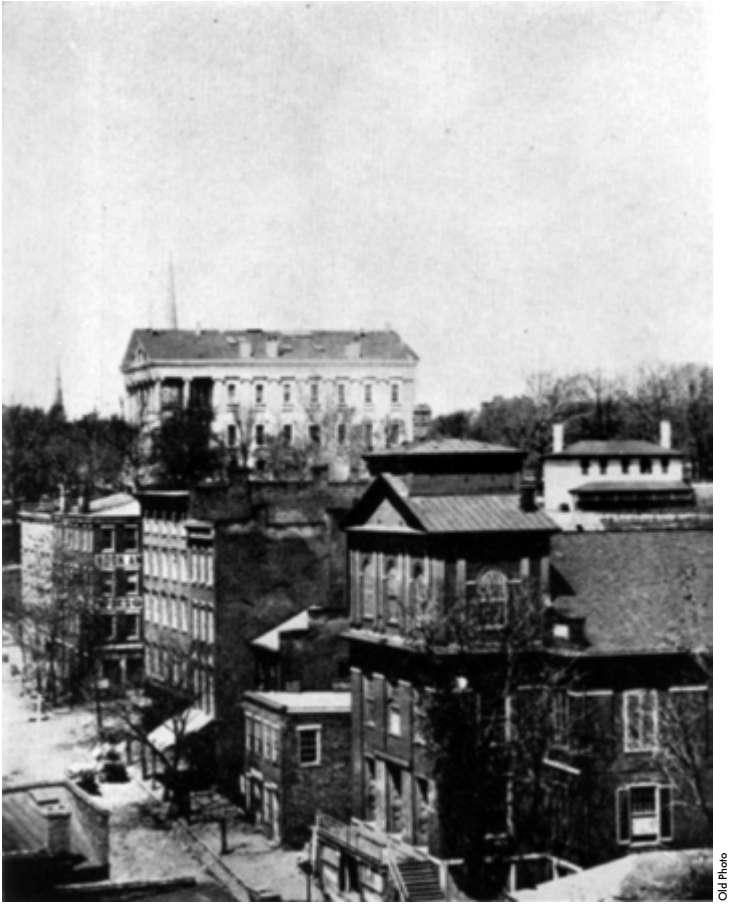
Lower Franklin and Mayo streets attracted churches moving uptown from the Shockoe Creek section as early as 1822, when the synagogue of the German and Dutch Jews of the Sephardic Ritual was consecrated. This charming little brick building on Mayo, Beth Shalome as it was called, was used regularly up to 1877, and occasionally until 1891 (fig. 104). Even in the last stages of decay, it



*Fig. 106. Trinity Methodist Church (first building)
1417 East Franklin Street
Built 1836, Demolished 1905*

had great charm of proportion. It is a pity that the Jews in Richmond did not have sufficient pride in it to insure its preservation.

Two nearby churches erected a few years later were Trinity Methodist and First Presbyterian. Trinity, built in 1828 on Franklin below Fourteenth, was burned in 1835 but rebuilt the following year (fig. 106). Just before the Civil War, the congregation split, one faction building a church at Twentieth and Broad that carried on the name “Trinity,” and the other faction settling at Tenth and Broad.⁵ The old church on Franklin was used in the ’seventies, ’eighties and ’nineties as a colored Odd Fellows’ Hall. First Presbyterian built its third church-building on the north side of Franklin above Fourteenth (fig. 105). In 1853, when this was only twenty-five years old, the congregation moved to a new building at Tenth



*Fig. 105. Franklin Street looking west from Fourteenth
In foreground former First Presbyterian Church, afterwards Metropolitan Hall
Built 1828, Demolished 1882-83*

and Capitol.⁶ The earlier church-building, however, had a lively subsequent career, first as Metropolitan Hall, scene of lectures, theatrical entertainments and political conventions, and later as a rather questionable variety-house.

A fourth religious edifice nearby was the Universalist Church on Mayo Street, built in 1832 (fig. 107). While the congregation



*Fig. 107. Universalist Church
207 Mayo Street
Built 1832, Demolished 1920*

was never a flourishing one, many young intellectuals attended its services. The rooms in the basement were occupied at different times by various schools, one being that of William Burke, who had once been the teacher of Poe. An English Lutheran church organized in 1869 began a flourishing career in this building.

With photographs of four religious edifices built in this same section within a span of ten years, we have admirable material here for comment on what those of the stagnant era were like. First Presbyterian will have to be counted out, as contemporary accounts of its alteration in 1853 make it clear that it must have been considerably changed and that it was probably more pretentious



Fig. 108. Looking south Mayo Street

than the other three. It even had a tower that was partially taken down at that time. The most attractive of the others was certainly Beth Shalome, which with its recessed arches, lunette over the door, and picket fence was closely akin to buildings designed a few years before by Otis Manson. The Universalist Church was a simplified edition of Beth Shalome—a comparison of the two photographs shows how much recessed arches added to the beauty of a simple building. Only the long shuttered windows give any relief to the stark simplicity of the Universalist meeting-house's façade. Trinity was very similar to it, only larger, with two stories instead of one. When we add to these four church-edifices Old Sycamore and the probable appearance of the first building of Third (Grace) Baptist,⁷



Heurth B. Cook

*Fig. 111. Dr. Cullen's House
Ross and Governor Streets
Built 1837, Demolished 1911*

we can imagine the impressive change in church-architecture with which St. Peter's and St. James' heralded the next era of prosperity and Classic Revival buildings.

The construction of the three later churches in the Council Chamber area was symptomatic of a boom in that neighborhood. Of the small amount of building in Richmond during the 1830's, a surprising proportion was centered in Mayo Street and vicinity. Between 1828 and 1832 Garland H. Mitchell built three dwellings on Mayo. Two others built in 1835, 106-8 Mayo, belonged for many years to John Thompson, the latter, and in one of them his famous son, John R. Thompson, lived during part of his career as editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*.

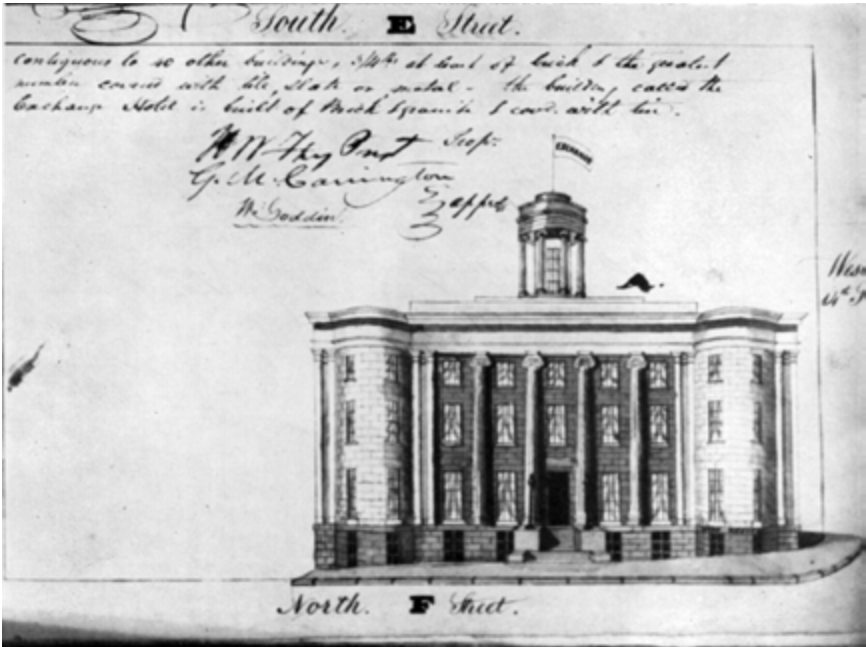
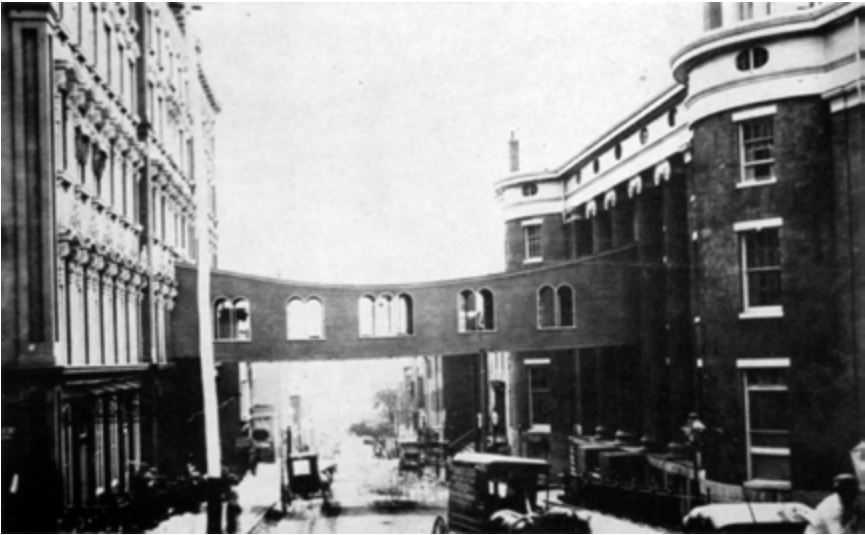


Fig. 109. Exchange Hotel
Franklin and Fourteenth Streets
Built 1841, Demolished 1900

The most pretentious residence in this section dating from the 'twenties or 'thirties was one built at the corner of Ross and Governor by Dr. John Cullen.⁸ This three-story stuccoed building, later enlarged by a wing, was for many years a boarding-house, called even as early as the 1830's "the Richmond House" (fig. 111). In the 'seventies it was occupied as the John A. Worsham Club Rooms. In 1883 Dr. Hunter McGuire opened a private hospital there, called St. Luke's, which occupied the old building for sixteen years. When the Cullen house was demolished, it was found to be not only splendidly built, but even insulated, the thick walls being padded with tobacco-stems.⁹

The proximity of this section to the Capitol had made it from



*Fig. 110. Ballard and Exchange Hotels
Franklin at Fourteenth
Ballard built 1855-56, Demolished 1920*

an early date a logical location for boarding-houses. In 1841 such small enterprises were eclipsed by the building at Fourteenth and Franklin of the Exchange Hotel. When it was opened on July 1 of that year, no detail of its appearance or accommodations is spared in enthusiastic contemporary newspapers (figs. 109 and 110). The architect was Isaiah Rogers of Boston and New York. From the insurance-drawing and from a large colored lithograph preserved at the Valentine Museum, it is evident that it was a fine and original example of Classic architecture. In 1856 John P. Ballard, then proprietor of the Exchange, built across the street an even more modern hotel of four stories, called the Ballard. The two were connected by an iron bridge of Gothic design, which was removed in 1867. Later on the ugly bridge shown in our photograph joined the two hotels, masking the handsome front of the Exchange. Even



*Fig. 112. Odd Fellows' Hall
Franklin and Mayo Streets
Built 1841, Demolished 1936*

after the construction of later hostelries, the Ballard and Exchange, as they were called, remained the most respected ones in Richmond. The two buildings were refitted and given a fresh start after the Surrender and again as late as 1891, but five years afterward both were closed and the Exchange was demolished in 1900.

The building of the Exchange had a stimulating effect on the Council Chamber section, particularly on lower Franklin Street. Handsome stores formed the ground-floor of the hotel, and others were built nearby. In November, 1841, the I.O.O.F. dedicated a hall at the northeast corner of Franklin and Mayo (fig. 112). This was rented for such varied entertainments as operas, “The Singing

Sisters in Bloomer Costume,” instructive lectures and the midget, General Tom Thumb. The first meeting to organize a Mechanics’ Institute was held in 1854 in Odd Fellows’ Hall. In the ’seventies and ’eighties part of it housed the Police Court, and from 1917 to 1936 it was occupied by the William Byrd Press.

After the Civil War the Council Chamber section was still sufficiently alive for one more religious edifice to be built there—the Polish synagogue, Keneseth Israel, built in 1869 on Mayo Street. The congregation moved to the present building on Nineteenth in 1908.

More than thirty years before that date, the Council Chamber region had begun to deteriorate. Its fall, which was more spectacular and thorough-going than the change in most old neighborhoods, probably began with the infiltration on Fourteenth and on Lucust of tough saloons, gambling houses and women of shady reputation. At Girolami’s bar on Franklin at Fifteenth “you could be killed for five dollars,” chuckles an old inhabitant. The deterioration did not reach Mayo, the street with the largest number of residences, until the 1890’s. During the first twenty years of the present century Mayo was the red light district, part white and part colored, with whites replacing colored inhabitants, oddly enough, around 1910. A change of the name to Ballard Lane or Street in 1920 had no effect in arresting the street’s disintegration. By the time this writer first saw it, in 1928, the red light district had been broken up, and the street was too down-at-heels to have any of the lure of sin. Within five years after that, little Beth Shalome and the cunning brick houses were being pulled down. Now only one double frame house and a few granite steps emerge from the wilderness of ailanthus and weeds

to recall what was twenty years ago one of the most picturesque streets in Richmond.

Lower Franklin and Fourteenth streets, while equally devoid of old buildings, are as alive as Mayo is dead, for they are the centre of the engraving, book-binding and printing industries. Not one brick remains of the Old Council Chamber, Harris's mansion, the Ballard and Exchange Hotels, the five churches, Odd Fellows' Hall, or the many quaint dwellings of this vanished neighborhood.

Notes

1. *Compiler*, April 22.
2. An error in date.
3. This should be Clay and Eleventh. For the Wickham and Marx houses, see *Houses of Old Richmond*, Wickham-Valentine House and "Hanover House"
4. *Dispatch*, July 26, 1885.
5. *Houses of Old Richmond*, Richardson Cottages and Adams-Van Lew House
6. *Houses of Old Richmond*, Adams-Van Lew House
7. See figures 89 and 197 for photographs of these two buildings.
8. For an account of Dr. Cullen, see W. B. Blanton, *Medicine in Virginia in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond, 1933), pp. 43-44.
9. Conversation with Mr. G. G. Worsham.



Heinrich B. Cook

Exchange Hotel at 14th and Franklin



EXCHANGE HOTEL

Southeast corner Franklin and Fourteenth streets, Richmond

Built 1840-41; demolished 1900-1

Photograph: Virginia Historical Society

New Englander Isaiah Rogers, the nation’s premier figure in the genre of hotel architecture, designed the Exchange Hotel, which soon was celebrated as one of the great buildings in the nation. Calling it “the Lion of the day” at its opening in 1841, the *Richmond Whig* reported that this mammoth and multipurpose structure housed a “Hotel, Post Office, Reading Room, Baths, Stores, &c.” Rogers gave the Exchange a handsome exterior that was distinctive. He designed an overtly Greek Revival building, but one made up with Greek components in a way than no ancient architect could have imagined. In 1851 the hotel was acquired and refurbished by John Ballard, whose Ballard House Hotel fronted it across Franklin Street. With Victorian eclecticism, he linked the Greek Revival structure to his newer Italianate one, by means of a Gothic pedestrian bridge (later replaced with the one pictured here). Competition in 1895 from the new Jefferson Hotel forced the closing of the Exchange the following year. (From *Lost Virginia*, Calder Loth)



Heusti, B. Cook







Exchange Hotel site today.

East Main Street, Shockoe Hill

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AS EARLY AS 1785 when Thomas Rutherford arrived in Richmond, he was told that most business was transacted west of Shockoe Creek. Mayo's bridge which crossed the James River at Fourteenth, the new residence-section around the unfinished Capitol, the need for more space for the city's trade and for inns and shops near the County Road (Governor Street) all these considerations were pulling the business-centre of the little town westward.

The City Fathers were slow to improve a street that Mordecai remembered as a series of gullies and streams. As late as 1845 a writer in the *Times* and *Compiler* complained that not over \$500 altogether had been spent on Main and Cary west of Seventh. "They are in very nearly the same situation that nature placed them."¹ While this is probably an exaggeration, it is true that even in 1860 Main had not been paved between Sixth and Ninth, though as we shall see, a third "generation" of buildings was being erected there.²

Of pre-Civil War dwellings, stores, banks, hotels, not half a dozen remain. Even without the Evacuation Fire, this would probably have been true, as business sections change much more rapidly than residence neighborhoods. In the early 1800's wooden buildings gave place to brick: in the 1840's these were either torn down or altered by granite or iron fronts.

A century ago the early inns of Main Street disappeared. In 1802 Bowler's Tavern which stood on the north side just below Fifteenth was replaced by the Bell, noted as the scene not only of recruiting in the War of 1812 but of countless slave-auctions. This in turn was



*Fig. 121. St. Charles Hotel
1500 East Main Street
Built 1846, Demolished 1903*

succeeded in 1846 by the “modern” City Hotel, known during most of its history as the St. Charles (fig. 121). In 1853 we find “an old wooden building formerly called the Globe Tavern” advertised at auction, the building to be removed within five weeks of the date of sale.³ The Globe, formerly Mrs. Gilbert’s Coffee-house opened in 1788, gave place to Kent, Paine and Co.’s dry-goods store, the “first Richmond example of the Broadway style of dry-goods palaces.”⁴

The Eagle Tavern was built in 1787 on the south side of Main between Twelfth and Thirteenth. Here Marshall began his examination of Burr, and here two years later Thomas Jefferson was entertained.⁵ Ralph Izard, staying there in 1810, wrote of it: “Of all the Taverns I ever was in, that yclept Eagle is the worst.”⁶ Insurance



Elythe Beveridge

*Fig. 115. Southern Literary Messenger Building
1501 East Main Street
Built 1813, Demolished 1916*

policies show that the Eagle sat back from the street, and had a courtyard surrounded on three sides by “porticoes.” These may have been added when the old inn was made over into a “hotel” in 1817. It was probably this courtyard that was temporarily covered over with eight thousand feet of flooring when a ball was held for Lafayette in 1825. The Eagle burned fourteen years later, and its ruins, which for six years disfigured Main Street, were cleared away finally for stores, though the corner was still called Eagle Square as late as 1860.

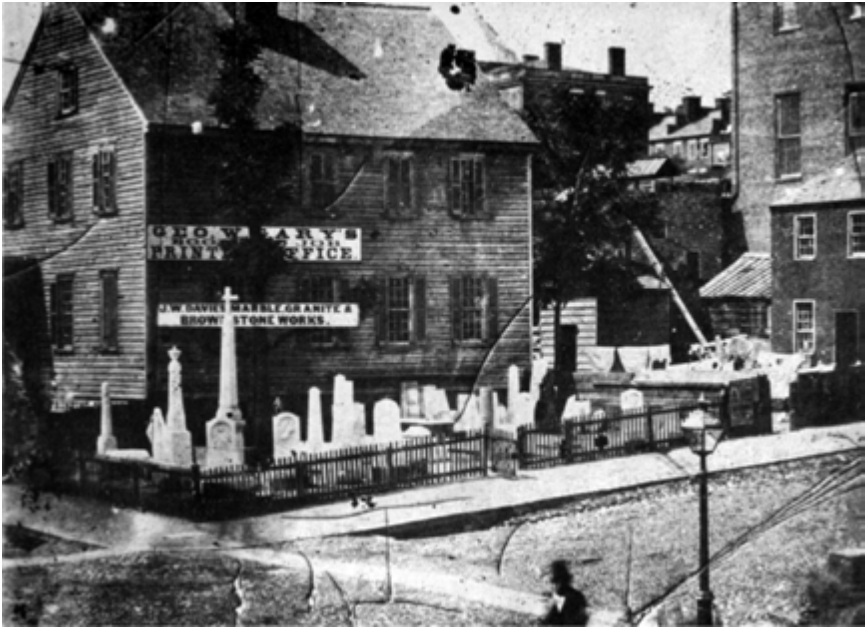


Herbert B. Cook

Fig. 117. 1441-47 East Main Street
 Built 1813-14, Two eastern buildings demolished 1911

All these early inns had been crude places, intended primarily for men. Their replacement by hotels with greater comfort, catering also to women, marks a far-reaching change in the mores of the travelling public.

To visualize the combined stores and dwellings that made up the greater part of the buildings on lower Main Street, we have photographs of the handful that survived to recent times, several insurance drawings, and two prints, both purporting to show the street as it was in 1853. It is hard to know whether to accept at face-value the rather arid one from a drawing by Chapin, or the picturesque array of tall chimneys, angular roof-lines, and dormers that enliven the print from a drawing by Eyre Crowe, Thackeray's secretary.⁷ A beautiful insurance drawing dated 1816 of a row west



Old Photo copied by Heunis, B. Cook

*Fig. 116. Archibald Blair Jr. House
Northwest corner of Ninth and Main Streets
Built before 1798, Probably burned in Evacuation Fire*

of the Bell Tavern shows that in the first years of the century at any rate, Main Street must have looked rather like Crowe's impression of it.⁸

A small number of buildings that came down to the era of photography complete the picture. Most interesting of them were three stores at the southeast corner of Main and Fifteenth. Facing Main was one erected in 1813 by James Lownes, creator of the nearby Falling Gardens. In the 1830's the building was the headquarters of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, during the editorship of Edgar Allan Poe. Facing Fifteenth were two stores erected in 1817 by Poe's foster-father John Allan and his partner, Charles Ellis (fig. 115). In the one nearer Main the firm of Ellis and Allan had its



*Fig. 113. Green House
631 East Main Street
Built 1814, Demolished 1922*

store, and here the boy Edgar no doubt often “hung around” if he was not actually called upon to lend a hand when not at his studies. Both this building and the former *Messenger* headquarters were torn down in 1916.

Just west of these, near the corner of Fifteenth and Main, four buildings of the same type, erected by James and George Winston, were rented as stores with dwelling or boarding-houses above (fig. 117). Two of them, 1441 and 1443, are still standing. Though the dormered roof has disappeared from one, and the other has a much later cornice, they are interesting as the only early nineteenth century buildings left in the neighborhood.

Further up Main, many buildings that were purely residences



Fig. 114. Doorway of Green House

were erected, even as late as the 1850's. The earliest one of which we have any photograph was the frame house built before 1798 at the northwest corner of Ninth and Main (fig. 116). When it was relatively new, it was occupied by Michael Poitiaux; later on, the second Archibald Blair lived there. In its final decay, it was surrounded by a marble-yard. A picturesque account of the building's last years as an oyster-house called "Old Rough and Ready," said to have been burned in 1862,⁹ is unfortunately not confirmed by either the 1860 directory or by any contemporary newspaper reference to its destruction. It probably perished in the Evacuation Fire.

A handsomer residence that survived to more recent times stood at the southwest corner of Main and Seventh (figs. 113 and 114). Built in 1814 by William MacKenzie, foster-father of Rosalie



*Fig. 118. Bank of Virginia and Farmer's Bank
South side of Main between Tenth and Eleventh Streets
Built 1817, Burned 1965*

Poe, this was bought in 1856 by the distinguished legal scholar, William Green. After his death in 1880 it became the home of his grandchildren, the Hayes family. It was distinguished not only by the bold roof-line with diaphragm wall characteristic of the period, but by an unusual stoop with curved iron rail of peculiar delicacy. Before the house was torn down, this charming entrance had been replaced by a store-front.

The variety of pursuits that went on on Main would have been a modern city-planner's nightmare. No idea of zoning prevented residences, hotels, shops and banks from sitting cheek by jowl with carriage-factories, bell-foundries, marble-yards and saw-mills! Such were the blocks between Fifth and Fifteenth down to the very eve of the Civil War. Not only does the ancient photograph which we reproduce show John L. Davies' marble-yard at the corner of Ninth



*Fig. 119. Exchange Bank
1104 East Main Street
Built 1841, Demolished 1935*

and Main, but directories indicate that Rogers and Miller operated another marble-works as late as 1881 right across from old Second Baptist Church.

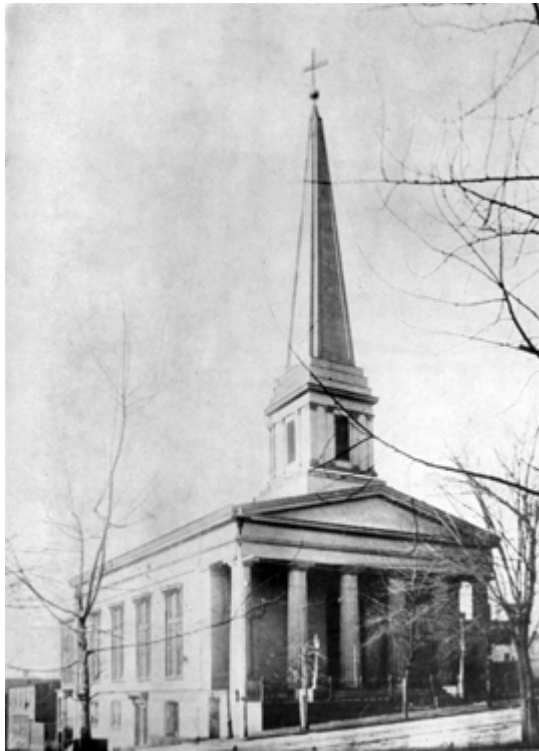
Hotels and residences are as much a thing of the past on Main, east of Fifth, as bell-foundries and sawmills. But since banks were first introduced into Richmond, this section has remained the centre of the financial district. In 1819 the Bank of the United States was located on the south side between Thirteenth and Fourteenth. The Bank of Virginia moved from this same block to a building erected in 1817 between Tenth and Eleventh, adjoining the Farmers' Bank, built at the same time (fig. 118). If we may trust Sheppard's drawing, the picturesque arches of these buildings were more suggestive of an Italian villa than the hub of Richmond's financial structure. Linden Waller remembered the iron fence, the building set back

from the street, and a guardhouse in front of it. That “the banks,” as they were always called, were shaded by trees is evident from an indignant protest in the *Dispatch*: if people didn’t stop tying their horses so that they could wander up on to the sidewalk, the trees would have to go!¹⁰

Much closer to the present conception of a bank was the Exchange, built in 1841 and designed by that same Isaiah Rogers who planned the Exchange Hotel (fig. 119). With its narrow frontage and two towering columns, the Exchange could be considered a prototype for countless modern banks. Its façade together with the fireproof Post Office stood alone and intact among the ruins after the Evacuation Fire. The historic and beautiful bank-building was torn down a decade ago to make way for the Parcel Post Annex.¹¹

In the years just before and after the building of the Exchange Bank, Main Street in that vicinity underwent a thorough face-lifting. Modern stores supplanted buildings that fell into decay or were burned, like the Globe and Eagle taverns. Early shops were freshened up with granite-fronts in vogue at that period. By April, 1845, only one building was left in Exchange Square without a granite front.¹² Most of these covered only the first floor: the first building to have a two-story granite front had been built in 1844 to be occupied by Thomas and Charles Ellis.¹³ Not one example of this stern and dignified type of façade is left on Main Street, but good examples may be seen at 12 North Fourteenth and at 15 and 17 South Fifteenth.

Further up the hill the James brothers had in 1836-37 erected at the northeast corner of Sixth and Main a large building which for many decades was used as a boarding-house, first called the



*Fig. 122. Second Baptist Church (second building)
Built 1841, Demolished 1906*

Edgemont and later the Arlington. Two picturesque outbuildings that belonged to it still face each other behind where it stood.

The southeast corner of Eighth and Main was occupied early in the century by Bockius and McKechnie's tannery, which was succeeded by Tanbark Hall. Between 1834 and 1841 James Bosher, the carriage-maker, built on this site a row of stores and dwellings, east of his own home which was at the corner. Like many of their neighbors, these buildings had granite fronts. During the 'forties many dwellings of Greek Revival style were built on Main above Ninth. While some remained standing until relatively recent years,

the only ones still left are 711-13-15, and their entrance-porches were long since replaced by store-fronts.

Two hotels were added to Main in the 'forties. The St. Charles, already mentioned, was designed by Otis Manson who had planned Dr. Adams's Union Hotel more than a quarter of a century before. This seems never to have been as popular as the American, built in 1849 at the southwest corner of Eleventh and Main. Both Thackeray and Ole Bull stopped at the American during their visits to Richmond. It was burned in the Evacuation Fire. Another hotel of the same name built after the War a block further east was afterwards called the Lexington. This burned in 1922, and since that date, there has been no hotel on Main Street east of Fifth.

The only church which this section ever boasted was Second Baptist. First built in 1822 on the east side of Eleventh south of Main, it was later used as a tobacco factory and then as a furniture warehouse, and disappeared in the Evacuation Fire. In 1841 the congregation had sold it and built a splendid new church at Sixth and Main (fig. 122). Designed by Thomas U. Walter, himself a devoted Baptist, at the same time he was designing old First Baptist,¹⁴ it differed from the latter building both in its imposing portico and in its steeple, which blew down in a storm in 1896. Second Baptist was replaced by stores when the congregation moved to its present location at Adams and Franklin streets.

As early as 1841 iron fronts had begun to appear on Main, though they did not begin to rival granite fronts in popularity for another decade. What these pre-war iron fronts looked like, we do not know, since those on Main were swept away by the Evacuation Fire. The only pre-War buildings of this type may be seen at 5 and 7



*Fig. 123. United States Customs House after Evacuation Fire
Main near Tenth
Built 1858*

Governor Street, two of the three units in the “Iron Block” erected in 1859-60 by the Donnan brothers, C. D. Yale and Bolling W. Haxall. The northernmost of these handsome structures was torn down some years ago, but the elaborate and harmonious arches of the two remaining are beautiful examples of cast-iron.

A contemporary iron front was that of the Spotswood Hotel, built also in 1859, on the site of Tanbark Row. The owner was Lewis D. Crenshaw, the architect and contractor Joseph F. Powell. In this newest hotel in town, fashion and war-profiteers, officers on leave and politicians congregated during the four years of the Confederacy. Here President and Mrs. Davis stayed until the Brockenbrough house was ready for them. When Davis was brought back for trial, he and Mrs. Davis occupied the same room they had had six years

earlier. The history of this corner is typical of the rapid turn-over in a business section: Tanbark Row had stood little more than two decades; the Spotswood was burned only eleven years after it was built.

Just before the Civil War we begin to see newspaper notices of a new type of architecture on Main Street. In October, 1858, Messrs. Kersey and Davis were completing “a handsome three-story tenement with brownstone front” on the north side between Eleventh and Twelfth streets.¹⁵ Two years later Mr. P. Bargamin built east of the new Spotswood “a beautiful brownstone and iron front building, to be occupied as a tin and copperware factory and salesroom.”¹⁶ The age of granite fronts was gone, the iron front still had ten years or more of popularity ahead; brownstone both for stores and residences for over three decades was to darken the face of Richmond.

One of the handsomest buildings added to Main Street just before the War was the Post Office and Customs House, “opposite the Banks.” Composing five arches of the present Post Office, it ran from Main to Bank Street, with the entrance on Bank, and was designed by Captain Albert Lybrock ([fig. 123](#)). Prior to its construction, the Post Office had been housed in various places, including the Museum Building and the Exchange Hotel, while the Customs House had for many years used a warehouse on the east side of Fifteenth near Cary. For the first time Federal offices and courts were combined under one roof. Here during the Confederacy was located the Confederate Treasury Department, and here Jefferson Davis was brought for trial. Local jealousy had protested the choice of a German architect,¹⁷ but Lybrock’s solid structure of iron and



Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress

*Fig. 124. Iron Fronts
1207-11 East Main Street
Built 1866*

granite brought his fine building unscathed through the holocaust around it.

Less fortunate was the new Mechanics Institute, on Ninth just north of Davies' marble-yard and the old Blair home. It too had just been finished in 1858, and in it the Confederate War Department was located. The building disappeared in the Evacuation Fire.



Fig. 120. Main Street near Shockoe Creek during a flood

On that fatal April 3, 1865, when the doomed Confederate government ordered the tobacco warehouses fired to keep their contents out of the enemy's hands, the neighborhood between Ninth and Fifteenth was lost forever. On the north side of Main from Eighth to just below Governor, on the south side from Ninth to Winston's old buildings at the corner of Fifteenth, and from Main on south to the Canal were smoking ruins.

At the edge of this no man's land stood the Spotswood and the "Iron Block." Fear of fire probably had a greater influence than a fashion in building in leading the property-owners to replace the old gabled stores-and-dwellings or the granite-front shops with handsome iron façades. The rapidity with which the "Burnt District" was rebuilt, the part that northern capital played in this stupendous undertaking, are fascinating problems for some future

student of Richmond's economic history. Within six months a hundred buildings were in process of construction.¹⁸ During the five years after the fire, the five blocks east of Ninth became one of the most beautiful and harmonious business districts in the country. Two of the buildings, 1007-13 and 1207-11 East Main are rows, most of the rest are single stores. The iron-work of both rows was made by Hayward, Bartlett of Baltimore (fig. 124); so was a similar front at 1306. Many have the names of Richmond firms—Snyder and Irby, Richmond Architectural Iron and Stove, Architectural Iron Works—decipherable on the base of some column. In many cases the maker's name has disappeared when a plate-glass store-front replaced the discreet if rich combination of columns and arches. Three of the most interesting of these iron-front buildings are 914 East Main, 1015, location since 1861 of the Virginia Fire and Marine Insurance Co., and the curious building, 1321½, which was erected by James H. Gardner and still belongs to the estate of his adopted daughter, Mrs. Anna H. Reynolds. This Richmond oddity, four stories high with elaborate iron from top to bottom, is only eight-and-a-half feet wide!

On the north side of Main many iron-fronts have given way to parking-lots or to the expansion of the Post Office, but on the south side for almost six blocks the pageant of cast-iron is only interrupted by two skyscrapers and by a modernistic building that replaced the burned Lexington Hotel.

The character of Main Street has changed considerably since the Civil War. No one lives there any more, even in hotels. The upper floors are used chiefly as lofts. Retail business, outside of a few stationery and men's clothing-stores, has departed. The street is

chiefly given over to banks, offices, the post office, and lower down to wholesale businesses. Its appearance is discreet and handsome rather than lively and picturesque, as it must have been in antebellum days. While one can but regret the passing of that earlier phase, it is one of the few neighborhoods which has retained a homogeneity no less interesting for being later in date than many other old sections of Richmond.

Notes

1. April 28, 1845.
2. *Dispatch*, May 2 and 29, 1860.
3. *Ibid.*, Feb. 9, 1853.
4. Mordecai, 2nd ed., p. 58.
5. *Virginia Argus*, Mar. 21, 1807 and Oct. 24, 1809.
6. Letter to his mother, Alice de Lancy Izard, in Charleston Historical Society, communicated by Miss Helen C. McCormack.
7. Both illustrated in Weddell, *Richmond, Virginia, in Old Prints*, pp. 97 and 99. The unusual photograph (fig. 120) of Main below Fifteenth discovered by Mr. John Haase shows a roof-line almost as lively as that in Crowe's drawing. Mutual policy 739 (vol. 54).
9. *Richmond News*, March 23, 1901. Unsigned article on "Famous Old Corners."
10. *Dispatch*, Feb. 18, 1853.
11. The columns have been lying ever since in the grounds of the former Soldiers' Home.
12. *Times and Compiler*, April 23, 1845.
13. *Ibid.*, June 3, 1844.
14. See [Thomas U. Walter](#).
15. *Dispatch*, Oct. I, 1858.
16. *Ibid.*, Jan. 26, 1860.
17. *Ibid.*, Sept. 13, 1854.
18. *Whig*, Oct. and 14, 1865.

Grace And Franklin, Social Centre Of Victorian Richmond

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THE TWO LONG STREETS that lead west from Capitol Square must be considered as one neighborhood, since their development up to 1865 was almost identical, both in the kind of buildings erected and in the type of people who lived in them.

Their architectural evolution was similar to that of the Court End, except that it was more gradual and that no public buildings save churches interrupted the purely residential character of the two streets. Toward the end of the eighteenth century small wooden houses, many of them with gambrel roofs and all accompanied by out-buildings, occupied large lots. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century some fine brick mansions and several rows of smaller brick dwellings were erected. In the 'forties and 'fifties a great number of large houses and imposing rows replaced most of the remaining eighteenth-century cottages.

Among the earliest dwellings was the frame house of Chancellor Wythe, which stood near the southeast corner of Fifth and Grace. Here in 1806 the old man was fatally poisoned by his great-nephew. Across Grace at the northwest corner of Sixth stood the home of Major William Duval, whom Mordecai remembered as "one of the last of the cocked hats, satin shorts and bag wigs."¹ Here Major Duval entertained Washington Irving, and the house is said to be the setting for Irving's story, "Ralph Ringwood." The building was a



*Fig. 125. Ellis House
117 East Franklin Street
Built 1798, Demolished 1883*

gambrel-roofed frame house with long wings on either side. William Wirt lived there in 1810-13, and James Gray from 1831 to 1852. It is probable that the “Clarke” occupying one wing as a schoolroom in 1822 was Joseph Clarke, and that it was here that Poe went to school.

The last frame cottage that remained on Grace or Franklin and the only one of which a photograph exists was the Ellis house, at the southwest corner of Second and Franklin ([fig. 125](#)). From 1813 until its demolition seventy years later it was the home of Charles Ellis, then of his son-in-law George Wythe Munford. When Ellis’s partner, John Allan, returned from England in 1820, he and his family, including the young Edgar Poe, visited here for some months.



*Fig. 126. McClurg or McCaw House
600 East Grace Street
Built 1807, Demolished 1894*

The house with its five dormers, wing and double chimneys was probably larger than most of its contemporaries.

Before 1819 many houses faced the side streets rather than Grace or Franklin. Such was the small brick building on Sixth which as early as 1782 was the home of Samuel Dobie, builder of the Capitol. The house survived until 1927 as the “office” of the Cunningham-Archer mansion. Nearby on Sixth south of Franklin was one of the first of the more impressive brick houses of the early 1800’s. Its builder, John Robinson, was for over fifty years clerk first of the District Court and after it was abolished of Henrico Court. Built in 1801, his house was occupied by his family until its demolition in 1860. Its chief interest for us was its similarity to the Hancock-Caskie house, insurance policies showing the same curious bow-

windows.

Two of the most attractive houses of the early 1800's stood just east of Major Duval's on Grace. Both were built in the yards of earlier frame dwellings. At the corner of Sixth was the handsome stuccoed mansion erected by Dr. James McClurg and long owned by his descendants, the Wickham family (fig. 126). In the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties this was the home of an equally well-known physician, Dr. James Brown McCaw, head during the Civil War of the mammoth Chimborazo Hospital. Dr. McCaw had studied with Dr. McClurg in the very office, the door of which opened on to Sixth Street, where he later practised. East of the McClurg house was one built three years after it by Christopher Tompkins, "undertaker," or contractor as we should say, of the Governor's Mansion. In the 1830's the Tompkins house (fig. 127) became the home of the distinguished lawyer William H. Macfarland, who in 1862 sold it to John H. Tyler and moved across Grace to the former Stanard house. The McClurg and Tompkins houses are interesting examples of two frequent types of early nineteenth century dwellings. The Tompkins-Macfarland house with its high gabled roof and diaphragm wall, its dormers, and the door on one side, was similar to the home of Parson Blair,² and was certainly less imposing than the McClurg house. The latter suggests the Wickham and Marx homes—broad, with the door in the middle, a low hipped roof and chimneys at the centre. It lacks the triple windows that probably did not become habitual in Richmond until a few years after it was built, but it had a belt-course and handsome keystones. Both houses had been superficially altered: we note the Ionic columns on the McClurg mansion and the large window-panes of the Tompkins-Macfarland



*Fig. 127. Tompkins-Mcfarland House
604 East Grace Street
Built 1810, Demolished 1908*

house. We have no description of the interior of the latter, but a granddaughter of Dr. McCaw recalls that the hall ran through the centre of his house, with two large rooms on either side, while the stairway was in the back of the hall. This was similar to the arrangement of the almost contemporary Hancock-Caskie house, and offers an interesting transition between the rather confused arrangement of the Ambler and Marshall houses and the beautiful use of entrance, stairway and garden-front in the Wickham house.

Both of the Grace Street houses disappeared long ago. The ugly row of small dwellings that supplanted the McClurg mansion have themselves gone down before a movie-house, while the Y.M.C.A. building that replaced the Tompkins house gave way to a parking



Dr. W. H. Taylor

*Fig. 129. 108-10 North Fourth Street
Built 1817, Demolished 1913*

lot and then to a large store.

At the southeast corner of Seventh and Grace was a house not unlike the Tompkins home. Built in 1811 by Mrs. Judith Nicholson, it was for many years the home of her son-in-law, the beloved Dr. George Woodbridge, rector of Christ Church and afterwards of the Monumental, whose daughter lived there as late as 1912. Before the house was torn down thirteen years later, many eyes were attracted to it by a gay fruit-stand clinging to its side, at once emphasizing and contrasting with its decay.

Though one or two shops or livery-stables on Grace and Franklin are mentioned in early records, the two streets remained predominantly residential down to the first World War. A curious exception was the corner across from the Woodbridge house. Here in a wooden structure called "Terpsichore Hall" dancing was taught by a one-time soldier of Napoleon, John M. Bossieux. When



Fig. 128. 507-9 East Grace Street
Built 1817, Demolished 1925

Terpsichore Hall burned, no dwelling seems ever to have replaced it. For several decades the lot was occupied by Green and Allen's lumber yard, later on by Wallen and Wray's marble yard, strange neighbors, either of them, for the mansions of Dr. McClurg and Judge Stanard!

Probably the handsomest house on Grace or Franklin dating from the boom years was the Cunningham-Archer house, built in 1816, which faced Sixth at Franklin.³ While this mansion has been extensively discussed in the writer's earlier book, to skip it in this chapter would be to play *Hamlet* without Hamlet: the Archer house was Franklin to most Richmonders. The beauty of its outlines, its high-walled garden, the great sycamore in the middle of the pavement beside the wall, its perfect and unaltered preservation—all these made it, even for those who had never crossed the threshold,



*Fig. 130. Rutherford House
14 West Franklin Street
Built 1795, Demolished 1894*

the embodiment of what was most charming in Richmond's past.

A modest contemporary of the Archer house was 108-10 North Fourth ([fig. 129](#)), the home from 1817 until her death six years later of Mrs. Jean Wood. Mrs. Wood, widow of a Revolutionary general and governor of Virginia, was a poet, a close friend and adherent of the Reverend John Holt Rice, and was the first president of the Female Humane Association. Her house was an attractive little building, the diaphragm-walls, small attic windows and above all the recessed arches attesting its early date.

On Franklin, adjacent to Mrs. Wood's, was one of the most attractive among several rows built in this period of expansion. The corner house, built by James Connelly and for thirty-four years associated with the Brander family,⁴ was the most beautiful

of five dwellings, all dating from 1816 or '17. The others were of three stories, entered directly from the street by stoops that had undergone considerable alteration through the years.

A block away, at Fourth and Grace, two houses of the same period have just been demolished (1948). Erected in 1818-20 by George Greenhow,⁵ their delicate exterior trim and rich woodwork within showed the standards of construction at that period even in houses built to sell or rent. Just above Sixth on the south side of Grace, William MacKenzie at this same time built four houses chiefly remarkable for the number of well-known Richmonders who lived in them (fig. 128). Mrs. Abigail Mayo died in the corner house, which was pulled down or burned during the 'fifties. Among the owners and occupants of the other three were Peter V. Daniel, Corbin Warwick, James Caskie, Lewis H. Blair (grandson of the Parson) and best known of all, Thomas Ritchie, founder and editor of the Richmond *Enquirer*, chief Democratic organ of the State. Ritchie lived at 511 from the time it was built until 1826, and in 509 from then until 1845, when he handed over the *Enquirer* to his sons and moved to Washington.

The development of Grace and Franklin before 1819 that we have thus far followed has been limited to the distance between Foushee Street and Capitol Square. West of Foushee stretched the farm that Thomas Rutherford bought in 1794 from the brother of Parson Buchanan, Rutherford had planned to put his house in what would be the middle of Franklin Street, but after more far-sighted friends warned him that this would block the westward expansion of the town, he selected what is now the northeast corner of Franklin and Adams. George Winston, whom we have



Robert A. Lancaster

Fig. 131. Parlor of Rutherford House

encountered many times in the eastern end of Richmond, furnished the bricks and supervised the construction of the two-story house where Rutherford spent the last fifty-six years of his long life (fig. 130). Just after his death in 1852 it was purchased by John Y. Mason, minister to France from 1853 to 1859. During his brief ownership it suffered a serious fire, in September, 1853. After that it was occupied by S. G. Stevens as a school, in the 'eighties by General T. M. Logan, who added bay-windows, and finally by Colonel A. S. Buford, who pulled it down. The exterior had already been so much altered, partly after the fire, that from photographs it would be hard to believe its age. But the handsome panelled drawing-room which we illustrate (fig. 131) shows that it was one of the really fine houses of late eighteenth-century Richmond.



*Fig. 132. Archer Anderson House
103 West Franklin Street
Built 1816*

About 1803 Thomas Rutherford started to build up around him a neighborhood of congenial friends, and sold several blocks fronting on Franklin, with the result that between then and 1816 seven substantial brick houses were built immediately west of him. The earliest, 105 West Franklin, generally called the Barksdale or Atkinson house, was built in 1803 by Alexander Stuart. Among many subsequent owners or occupants were John A. Chevallié, John G. Gamble, Temple Gwathmey, Samuel Taylor, Clement Barksdale and Thomas Atkinson. When the house was replaced by a filling-station in 1936, it bore little trace of its original appearance. The same may be said of most of this group of houses: they paid the penalty of being in what for over a hundred years was a prosperous neighborhood, where the owners were constantly

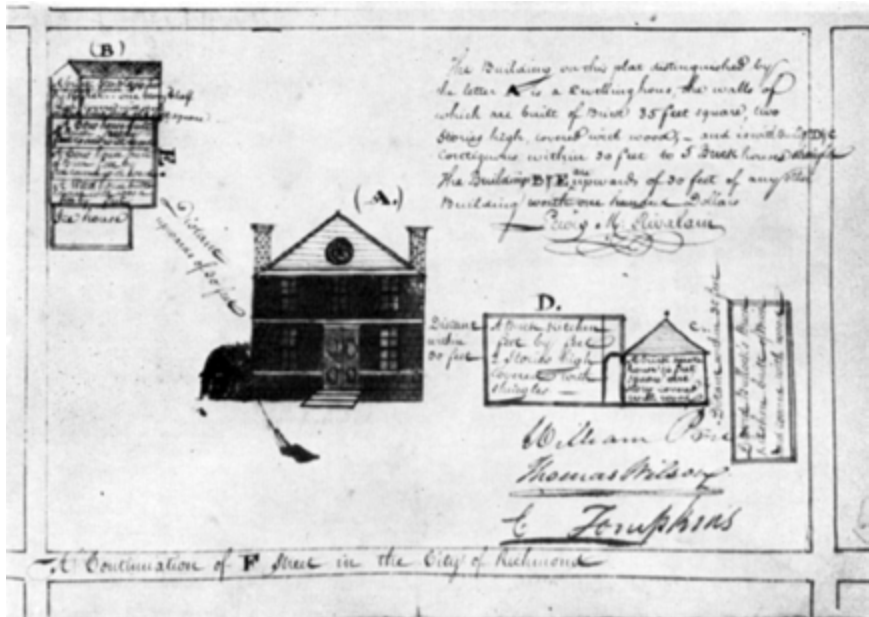


Fig. 137. Price House
212 West Franklin Street
Built before 1810

making improvements that changed the entire character of the homes.

Across from the site of the Barksdale house stands the latest building in Rutherford's development, the Archer Anderson house (fig. 132). Erected in 1816 by Carter B. Page, it was, according to the builder and contractor, Anderson Barret, "the best built house in the city." In 1853 it became the home of Charles Y. Morriss, at that time one of the two proprietors of the Tredegar Iron Works, and in 1880 it was bought by Colonel Archer Anderson. The next year Colonel Anderson allowed his old friend M. J. Dimmock to enlarge and Victorianize it. A third story and wings were added, and the façade completely altered. It is only when one stands in

the beautiful yard, which still occupies a quarter of a square, and gazes up at the bold and graceful ellipse of the original rear portico that one can imagine both the house and this whole neighborhood as they must have looked in the opening years of the nineteenth century.

Shortly before Rutherford's Addition was taken into the city in 1810, two houses were built on each side of Franklin in the block between Jefferson and Madison. Of these four, two are still standing, the Cole Diggs house, 204 West Franklin,⁶ being by far the less altered of the two. The other, No. 212, was built by Major William Price, who had distinguished himself at the battles of Cowpens and Stony Point and in his later years was Inspector of the Public Warehouse of Richmond. Major Price died in 1835. Among those who have occupied the house since the War were General Bradley Johnson, Byrd Warwick, Major James Dooley and John W. Harrison. It is now the Tucker Sanatorium. Originally a two-story brick house, it has been so greatly altered and enlarged that only a few fine trees and the massive wall surrounding the big yard make its age seem credible.

We are fortunate in having beautiful insurance drawings of the Price house (fig. 137) and of two others in Rutherford's development, but neither photograph nor drawing preserves the appearance of the house which Robert Greenhow built on the south side of Franklin just below Madison. Demolished in 1882, this was for several decades the home of Joseph Mayo, mayor of Richmond from 1853 to 1865, when the old man was obliged to ride forth and deliver his burning city to the triumphant Federal army.

Both an excellent drawing and a photograph show us the

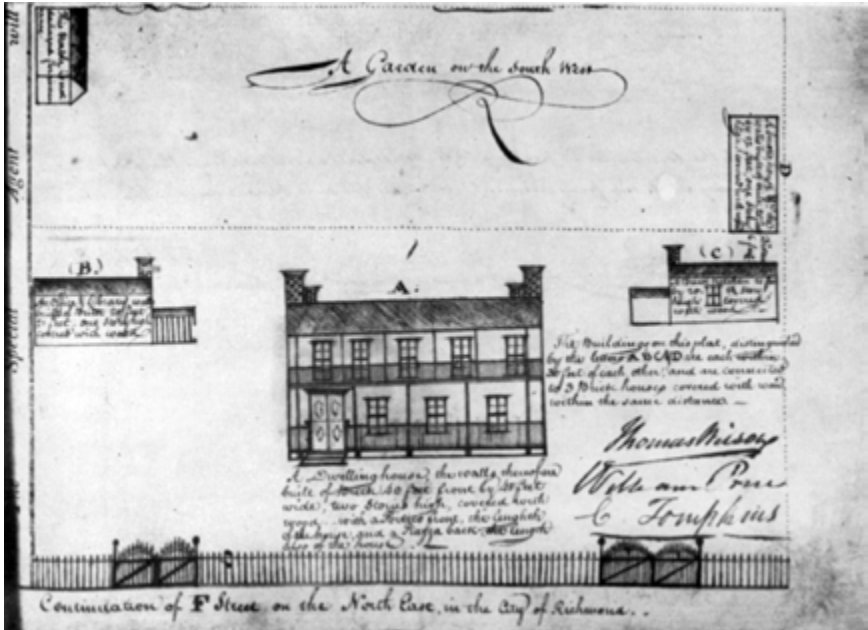


Fig. 135. Wilson-Bayly House

appearance of the home of Thomas Wilson, just east of the Greenhow house (figs. 135 and 136). Wilson was four times mayor and died in office in 1818. His wife, like Greenhow's, had perished in the Theatre Fire. With its picket fence and a verandah in the rear, this must have been a picturesque building before the addition in 1845 of a handsome if disproportionately large Classic portico. From the 'fifties until its demolition it was the home of Samuel T. Bayly and his family.

The furthest west of the houses in Rutherford's addition was one built by Peyton Drew where the Commonwealth Club now stands at Monroe and Franklin (figs. 133 and 134). From 1827 through the 'forties it was the residence of David Bullock and of his widow, and from 1853 until its demolition that of George S. Palmer. The quaint icehouse remained standing long after the mansion, but



Old Photo

*Fig. 136. Wilson-Bayly House
203 West Franklin Street
Built between 1805 and 1809, Demolished 1892*

eventually was replaced by a wing of the Club. To judge by our photograph, this handsome house had been less altered than any of the others in Rutherford's development.

West of his land were a few country-places, where the dwellings were not aligned with the future Grace or Franklin streets. Had "Bellville," the handsomest of them, not been burned in 1841, it would have blocked the development of Grace, as it stood in the middle of the present street about at Ryland. Built at an undetermined date prior to 1814 by John Bell, a Scottish merchant, it became in 1817 the home of Colonel John Mayo. Mayo died the following year, but his family continued to live there and "Bellville" was the scene of many entertainments, most notable of them being the marriage in 1817 of Maria Mayo to General Winfield Scott. After her children were married, the redoubtable Mrs. Abby Mayo

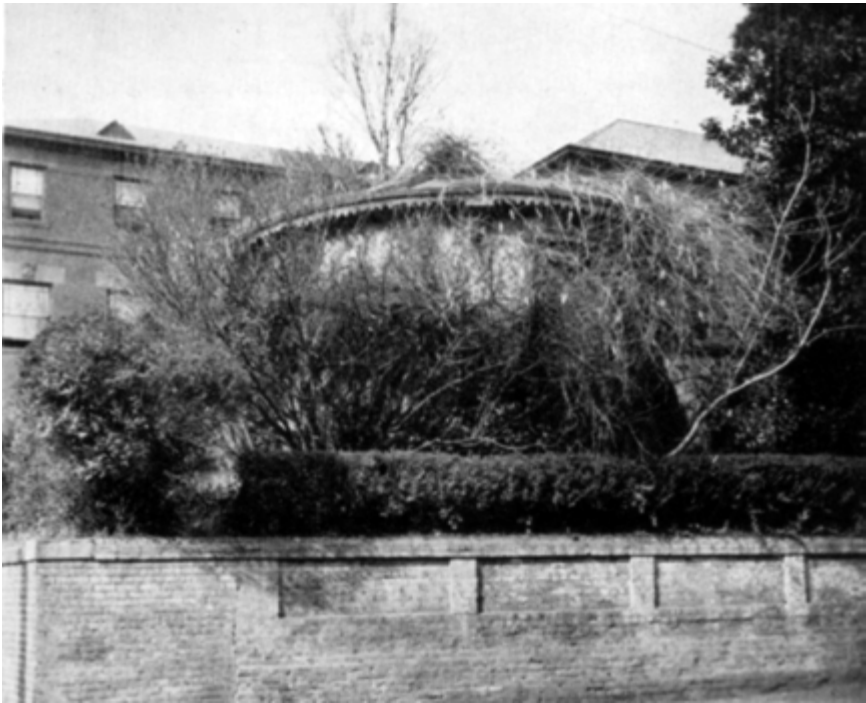


Fig. 133. Ice House of George Palmer House

lived alone in the great mansion, the servants sleeping in the out-buildings. According to family tradition, it was the coachman, weary of entertaining, who set the house on fire.

Just west of “Bellville” was “Columbia,” built in 1817 by Bell’s brother-in-law, Philip Haxall. Though superficially altered, this fine brick mansion is still in active use as the Law School of the University of Richmond.⁷

Closer to Park Avenue than to Franklin was a house built by Mansfield Watkins, which in 1830 became the home of Peter Cottom, the printer (fig. 138). In the ’fifties it was bought by John C. Shafer, who lived there for nearly four decades and gave his name to Shafer Street which bounded on the east the beautiful square around



Old Photo

*Fig. 134. George Palmer House
401 West Franklin Street
Built 1814, Demolished 1890*

his home. This square was built up in the 'nineties, but many fine magnolias recall the setting of the simple yet comfortable-looking house.

While the Shafer place, like “Bellville” and “Columbia,” was a suburban home, not a farm, “Talavera,” built in 1838 by Thomas Talley,⁸ was more of the latter type, having been for years one of the many “market-gardens” in the environs of Richmond. The house, greatly changed but interesting on account of Susan Talley Weiss’ friendship with Poe, is still standing at 2315 West Grace, shorn of all of its twenty-five acres save the usual city back-yard.

The Talley house has carried us into the period beyond the great depression of 1819. During the next two decades few buildings were



Heunis & Cook

*Fig. 138. Cotton-Shafer House
Park Avenue between Shafer and Harrison Streets
Probably built 1817, Demolished 1895*

added to Grace or Franklin. The earliest that survived to recent times were the four charming houses that Richard Anderson built in 1823 at the northwest corner of Sixth and Franklin.⁹ These are gone, but a pair of somewhat later date still stand at 402-4 East Franklin (fig. 139). Built in 1829 by Mann S. Valentine, they are architecturally interesting as the earliest known examples of Classic Revival style in Richmond. Originally both had gabled roofs, but third stories were added in 1894. No. 404 has an iron verandah, also far later in date than the house but of unusual and charming pattern.

The earliest mansion of Classic design was the one which Abraham Warwick built in 1834 on the site of Chancellor Wythe's modest home. The demolition of the Warwick or Munford house¹⁰ was a sad loss for the architectural history of Richmond. Of the



*Fig. 139. Mann S. Valentine or Caskie Houses
402-4 East Franklin Street
Built 1829*

same date was the house at the northwest corner of Seventh and Grace, built by Judge Peter V. Daniel, member of the United States Supreme Court, who lived there, when he was not in Washington, for nearly twenty years (fig. 141). Very different from the broad, low Warwick mansion, this house more nearly resembled older buildings such as the Tompkins-Macfarland house next door to it.



Palmer Gray

*Fig. 141. Peter V. Daniel House
612 East Grace Street
Built 1834, Demolished about 1908*

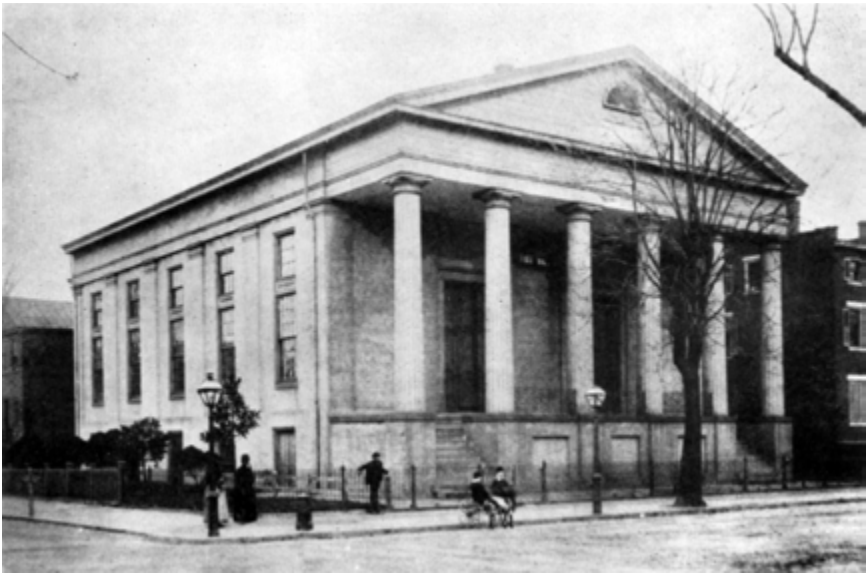
In the early 1800's Grace and Franklin were referred to as the upper or the lower street leading to the Capitol. Grace was sometimes called Capitol Street, a name still retained by the three blocks that border Capitol Square between Ninth and Governor. It was decided in 1844 to name the east-and-west streets instead of continuing to use the letters that were used in records but, we suspect, had found little favor in common speech. F was now to become Franklin and G, Grace. The tradition that the latter name was due to the many churches on Grace may be based on fact, since two were already built and two others under construction at the time the name was chosen.

The earliest church built on either street was Shockoe Hill Presbyterian, built in 1821 at the northwest corner of Eighth and



*Fig. 140. United Presbyterian Church
Northwest corner of Eight and Franklin Streets
Built 1821, Demolished 1865*

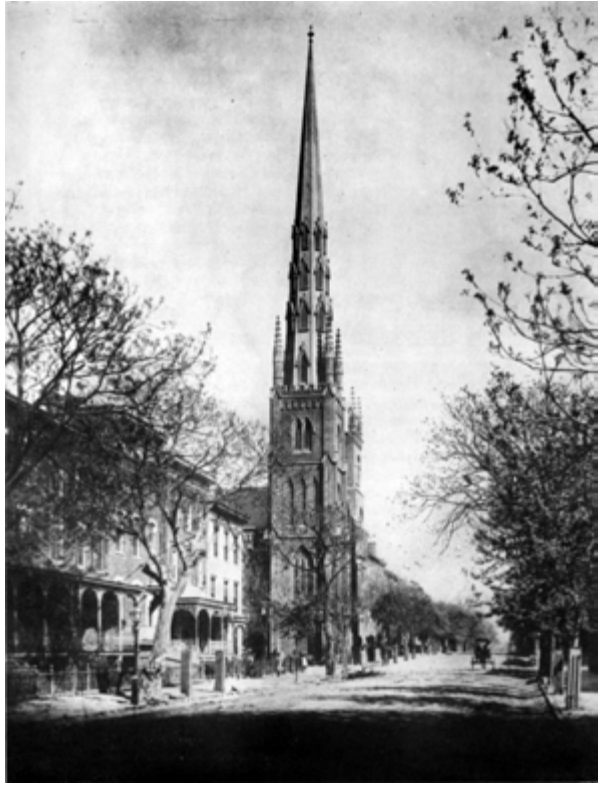
Franklin (fig. 140). The Reverend John D. Blair was pastor until his death two years after the church was opened. In 1838 a third of the members of First Presbyterian joined those of Shockoe Hill to form what was then renamed United Presbyterian. This group represented, theologically, what was called the New School, who wished to unite with the Congregationalists, as opposed to the stricter Old School, of which First Presbyterian was the Richmond representative. The Sunday School building at the right of our illustration was erected at the time of the merger, and both the deed to that property and the imposing size of the church suggest that



*Fig. 142. Grace Street Baptist Church
Northeast corner of Grace and Foushee Streets
Built 1846, Demolished 1890*

it was altered and perhaps enlarged at that time. Both buildings disappeared in the Evacuation Fire, marking the furthest point north and west that the conflagration reached.¹¹

The prosperity which launched Richmond on a building program in the late 1830's was particularly noticeable on Grace and Franklin streets. By this time the Court End was pretty well filled with substantial houses, and leaders of Richmond's business and social life looked elsewhere for a place to build. South Fifth and the far larger space offered by Grace and Franklin were the most favored locations. It was in the 'forties and 'fifties that the two thoroughfares up to about Madison received their full development as fine residence-streets. After the War they pushed further west, remaining the social centre of Richmond until just before the first World War,



Heather B. Cook

*Fig. 151. Grace Street Presbyterian Church
Fourth and Grace Streets
Built 1852, Demolished 1920*

when business began to creep in. Despite several handsome houses on Grace, Franklin had a slight edge in popularity and prosperity, particularly after 1865. On the other hand, a surprising number of large churches were built on Grace, whereas only one, Park Place—or, as it was later called, Pace Memorial Methodist—was built on Franklin between erection of the Presbyterian church already mentioned and the end of the nineteenth century.

Between 1843 and 1846 three churches were built on Grace—St. Paul's,¹² Centenary Methodist and Third or Grace Street Baptist.

The last occupied no less than three buildings in the course of the next eighty years, all of them on the northeast corner of Foushee and Grace. The first had a handsome portico (fig. 142), said to have been added some years after the church was built. In 1891 this attractive building was replaced by one that burned a few years later and was succeeded by a very ugly granite church that the congregation used until 1923 when it left this location altogether. Three famous ministers served as pastors of Grace Street Baptist: Rev. James B. Taylor, the first pastor, Rev. B. Jeter (1852-70) and Rev. William E. Hatcher (1875-1901).

Centenary Methodist,¹³ the oldest building of that denomination now standing in Richmond, superseded in 1843 the modest Shockoe Hill meeting-house two blocks away.¹⁴ While the present Centenary is of Gothic style, originally it must have been rather similar to Union Station (fig. 37). The architects were John and Samuel Freeman, and as we have seen,¹⁵ Samuel Freeman was the architect of Union Station. The present tower and façade date from extensive alterations carried out in 1874, from designs by Albert L. West.

After the War several churches were built on Grace. Fourth or Grace Street Presbyterian, at Grace and Fourth streets, dated from 1870 (fig. 151), Seventh Street Christian from 1872. In 1885 First Presbyterian was moved from Capitol Street to Madison and Grace. By an odd coincidence, it sat directly across from the Call house which had been moved from Ninth and Broad, only a stone's throw from the church's earlier location. In the late 'seventies an English Lutheran Church was built on Eighth just north of Grace.

Most of the Grace Street churches had lofty spires, that of St.



*Fig. 144. Breedon Williams House
315 East Grace Street
Built 1844, Demolished 1926*

Paul's being the highest in the city. Until terror of their falling caused them to be taken down, most of them in 1911-12, they were a striking feature of the street. Now Seventh Street Christian, Grace Presbyterian and the Lutheran church have been demolished, and the congregation of First Presbyterian has moved from its old site to Westhampton.

The dwellings built on Grace and Franklin in the two decades before the Civil War were practically all of brick, a great many of them mansions, many others three-story buildings that would now be considered too large for comfort. Of the former class, three built between 1839 and 1845 stood on Grace until quite recent years. The earliest was 601 East Grace, begun in 1836 by James Gray and finished three years later by Judge Robert Stanard. This

house, made famous as the Westmoreland Club, like the earlier Warwick house was of Greek Revival style, but somewhat heavier than the mansions of this type on Fifth Street. The massive porch and excessive use of triple windows suggest a style that had not quite found itself, while the recessed arches over the windows hark back to buildings twenty years older.¹⁶

At the southwest corner of Fourth and Grace was a larger mansion erected five years later by William Breeden, partner of Mann S. Valentine (fig. 144). Their drygoods store stood a block away at Fourth and Broad. The absence of stucco and the three stories suggest that the Breeden house was a prototype for the Hobson-Nolting house, but a second look reveals that there were no triple windows in the Breeden house, its cornice is much better proportioned to the house, and the heavy Doric entrance-porch could hardly have been conceived by the same builder as the more spindling entrance of the Nolting house. In the 'seventies and 'eighties this was the home of A. G. Nalle, and at the beginning of the present century of John L. Williams.

Less imposing than either the Stanard or Breeden homes was 1 East Grace, built in 1840 by Royal Parrish, and chiefly interesting as the location from 1849 to 1859 of Mrs. A. M. Mead's fashionable school for girls. When Mrs. Mead retired in 1853, her school was carried on by Hubert P. Lefebvre—"the priestly Lefebvre" as Mrs. Mead's son dubbed him—who had taught seven years in his predecessor's school. From the early 'nineties until its demolition in 1918 the Parrish house was the home of Dr. T. R. Baker. Its little kitchen on Foushee street is still standing thanks to the imagination of Mrs. Todd Dabney, who as early as 1920 made it over into a

dwelling—perhaps the first such reclamation of a picturesque outbuilding to take place in Richmond.

Walking up Franklin twenty years ago one could still see a number of large houses dating from the 1840's. At the southwest corner of Sixth was one built in 1841 by William Mitchell, jeweller and silver-smith. It had been spoiled by a mansard roof added by Alexander Cameron, the Petersburg tobacconist, whose family lived here from the late 'seventies until 1916. The Dunlop-Blair house at the corner of Fifth will be mentioned in the chapter on Fifth Street. At the northwest corner of First, the house completed in 1845 by Horace L. Kent is still standing, its beautiful yard one of the few reminders of what all of Franklin Street was like in the early 1900's.¹⁷ At Foushee George Wythe Munford built 1 West Franklin in 1840. After the War he sold it to Thomas Branch, Petersburg merchant and banker who had just moved to Richmond. It was so altered by his son John P. Branch that no trace of the Munford building can be detected in the home occupied by the Branch family until 1935. Across from it was a mansion built two years after it by Alexander Rutherford, just east of his father Thomas Rutherford's home.¹⁸ The beautiful house built in 1845 and for most of its existence the home of Joseph R. Anderson, has long since given place to the Jefferson Hotel,¹⁹ but across from it still stands a similar building of the same date, for many years associated with one of Richmond's wealthiest and most generous citizens, Peter F. Mayo.²⁰ The Mayo and Anderson mansions differed from all their Classic Revival contemporaries in Richmond in having two-story porticoes with pediments and low wings flanking the central portion—a graceful and dignified variant of the Classic style of mansion.

We have hastily skimmed the most impressive houses of Franklin Street, first, because a number of them have been treated in detail in *Houses of Old Richmond*, and, second, because all save the Dunlop and Joseph R. Anderson houses had been so altered that their interest is—or was, for few are still standing—chiefly their connection with local history. Except for the Anderson and Taylor houses, and the Kent house which had an iron verandah, they were basically similar in appearance to their less altered contemporaries on Fifth Street: large square buildings, two stories plus a high basement, with two-story verandahs in the rear, the front door, in the middle of the house, sheltered by a small porch with Classic columns, and approached by high granite steps flanked with granite cheeks.

Less altered and no less imposing than the individual mansions were several rows built on Franklin during the 1840's. Sometimes these were built by more than one owner, or were begun by one man and completed by another, who fortunately, even after a lapse of several years, carried out the plan of the original owner. What these houses lacked in variety and originality, they compensated for in dignity and harmony. Only one of the rows remains, Linden Row, on Franklin between First and Second. The eastern half was built in 1847 by Fleming James, the western half six years later by sons of Thomas Rutherford.²¹ Eight of the ten houses are still standing. Basically unchanged, they have more of the atmosphere of Franklin Street as it used to be than any building, not to mention any block, still standing.

Diagonally across from Linden Row at Second stood Gray's Row, built in 1848 by James Gray. This consisted of five houses facing



*Fig. 143. 206 West Grace Street 202 West Grace Street
 Built 1841, Demolished 1893 Built 1840, Demolished 1902*

Franklin and two facing Second. Even more extensive were the rows built by William C. Allen south and east of his own mansion, which stood at the southeast corner of Sixth and Franklin.²² The earliest of these houses was built in 1847, the latest not until 1860, on the site of the old John Robinson home.

The Allen block was echoed by the one east of it, where the houses were built by three different people. Five of them belonged to Norman Stewart, the dates ranging from 1844 to 1849. The three westernmost houses on this block had only two stories and a dormered roof. Those east of them were three-storied houses which, taken separately, looked rather like shoe-boxes set on end. In the rear were two-storied verandahs enclosed by shutters, in front were small Classic entrance-porches. The front door and hall were on one side of the house, a front and back parlor occupied the other

side. Every house of this type east of Linden Row is gone with the exception of Norman Stewart's own home, 707 East Franklin, which has been saved thanks to its having been the war-time residence of General Lee.²³ While never actually part of a row, it harmonized with the others on the block. Now, an island amid office-buildings and parking-lots, it looks rather dreary and alone.

Many single houses and pairs resembled these in the rows, some having three stories and some two-and-a-half. A few may still be found on Grace and Franklin, the most attractive being 6 East Franklin, built in 1848 by Robert Edmond, president of the Canal-boat company. Though the dormered roof has been replaced by a botchy third story, its unusually beautiful entrance and the wisteria which riots all the way to the roof give it great charm.

A few houses of the 'forties deserve to be remembered for their historic connections. At 214 East Franklin, Wirt Robinson in 1845 built a house which later played a prominent part in the social history of Richmond: for more than twenty-five years it was the home of the Richmond Club, predecessor of the Commonwealth. Long before it was demolished in 1939, the original façade had been changed to a brownstone front. West of Jefferson on Grace were two houses of the 'forties intimately associated with the Civil War. At 202 West Grace lived Dr. Samuel Preston Moore, Surgeon-General of the Confederacy, who died there in 1889. Just west of this was the house occupied during the War by Dr. Brewer, to which his brother-in-law, General "Jeb" Stuart was brought after he had been mortally wounded at the Battle of Yellow Tavern ([fig. 143](#)).

By 1850 Grace and Franklin were already the handsomest streets in Richmond and certainly the most sought-after by wealth



*Fig. 147. Maben-Branch-Randolph House
512 East Grace Street
Built 1852, Demolished 1916*

and fashion. As some of the early frame cottages with big yards were still standing, there was room for good-sized houses. Many dating from the 'fifties followed the Classic models that had been in the ascendant for a decade. Among them were two built in 1852 on the site of Major Duval's home. At the corner of Sixth and Grace, John Maben built a broad, two-story brick house in no wise differing from the mansions of the 'forties (fig. 147). During the 'seventies and 'eighties this was the home of Thomas Branch, and afterward that of Major Norman V. Randolph. Just west of it James Gray built a three-story house similar to those we have described as forming the rows. Less markedly Classic was the large house at the southwest corner of Grace and Adams, built in 1857 by David Saunders. The chief interest of this rather ugly building is that in the 'nineties



*Fig. 145. William C. Allen House
17 North Sixth Street
Built 1855, Altered 1909*

it was the home of “Chilly” Langhorne, father of the “Langhorne beauties,” one of whom was to become Lady Nancy Astor, first woman member of the British House of Commons. The mansion, enlarged by a mansard roof and a big wing, served in later years as Dr. Allison Hodges’ Hygeia Hospital until it was destroyed by fire.

Similar to the Maben-Branch-Randolph house was one built three years later by William C. Allen at the southeast corner of Sixth and Franklin (fig. 145). Architecturally this had one interesting innovation. While the proportions, location of the chimneys, Doric entrance-porch and two-storied portico in the rear were equal to the best houses of the ’forties, the arrangement of the windows in pairs was a novelty, which does not seem quite so satisfactory as the earlier use of triple windows. This house has had a curious fate. Far from being pulled down like most of its neighbors



*Fig. 146. Gildersleeve-Boyd House
117 West Grace Street
Built 1852, Demolished 1925*

and contemporaries, it has been enormously enlarged. The front portico has been moved to the Franklin Street side and a third story added, besides a great extension to the east. This was done when the house became the first location of Johnston-Willis Hospital. Since this institution moved to the west end, the building has been used for many years by the Richmond Builders' Exchange.

Two slightly less imposing houses, entirely Classic in style though dating from the 'fifties, were 117 West Grace (fig. 146) and 211

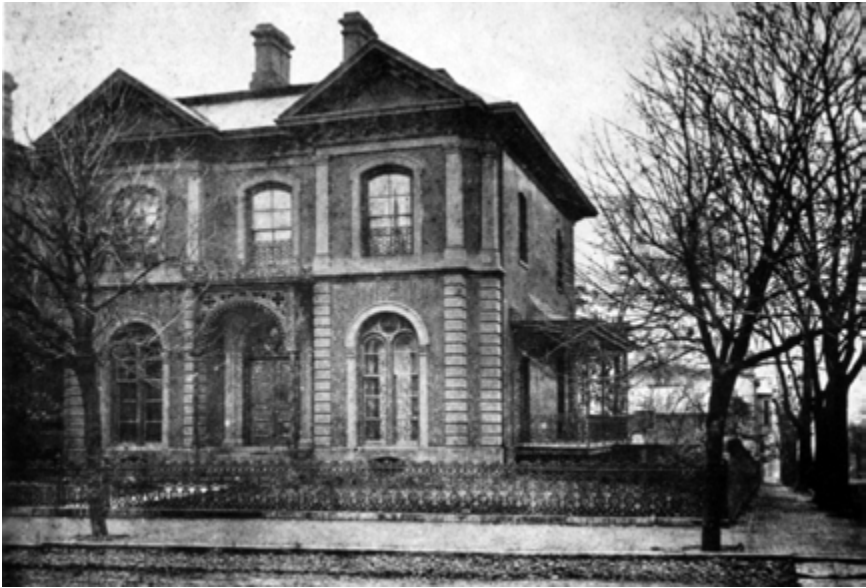


Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 148. Ritter-Hickock House
821 West Franklin Street
Built 1855*

West Franklin. The former, built by Dr. Benjamin Gildersleeve, was for thirty years the home of his son-in-law, Robert Howard. Here the great Greek scholar, Dr. Basil Gildersleeve, spent his youth. For the last three decades of its existence, this house was the home of James N. Boyd and his family. Architecturally it was similar to the rows and single houses of the 'forties, its most noticeable attractions being a large and beautiful yard and a rich iron balcony on the side. The balustrade across the top of the house may have been characteristic of others from which balustrades have been removed.

Similar to the Gildersleeve or Boyd house, though without a yard or side-balcony, is the Palmer house, 211 West Franklin, built in the same year (1852) and fortunately not only standing but in the state of repair that one would wish for all old buildings equally beautiful.²⁴



*Fig. 149. Watson House
13 West Franklin Street
Built 1857, Demolished 1904*

During the 1850's change was in the air, and most prosperous businessmen who were building big houses did not wish to copy the homes of men who had achieved affluence ten years earlier. A complete break with Classic models was made in the Thomas (or Rutherford) house, built in 1853 at the northwest corner of Grace and Second.²⁵ Only the beautiful yard, occupying a quarter of a square, recalled in any way the houses of an earlier date. Similarly the Bolling Haxall house, 211 East Franklin, built five years later and still in active service as the headquarters of the Woman's Club, is entirely devoid of Classic influence. Arches replaced lintels, and even the pediment over the front is almost a horse-shoe.²⁶

More attractive than either the Thomas or Haxall mansions is 821 West Franklin, built by William Ritter in 1855 in what was



Henrich B. Cook

*Fig. 150. Powell School
3 East Grace Street
Built 1859, Demolished 1937*

then a suburb (fig. 148). Called in the first insurance policies an Italian villa, it bears but faint resemblance to such a model. But the wings set back from the façade give it a restful character in keeping with its one-time rural location. After Ritter's death in 1865, the house was occupied by Samuel W. Harwood, and in the 'nineties by Richard B. Chaffin. It was charmingly restored by Mrs. J. J. Hickock, who lived there for thirty years. Since her death it has



*Fig. 153. Haxall-McGuire House
513 East Grace Street
Built 1862, Demolished 1926*

become a part of the Richmond Professional Institute.

In the five years preceding the Civil War, Grace and Franklin began to blossom forth with cast-iron verandahs and fences, the former replacing the earlier columned entrances. While many of the verandahs, particularly those that date from the 'seventies and later, are uninteresting and monotonous in pattern, taken as a whole they

made a lacelike and gracious ensemble.

Three deserved special mention for their unusual and lovely patterns. 301 West Franklin was built in 1858 by Dr. Robert Archer, president of the Armory Iron Works and father-in-law of General Joseph R. Anderson. For decades the home of the Lyons family, this house, after a shabby interlude, has recently been restored.²⁷

The other two are gone. 13 West Franklin (fig. 149) was built by Edwin Robinson, president of the R. F. and P. Railroad and a son of that John Robinson whom we met at Sixth and Franklin.²⁸ Shortly after erecting his handsome house, Edwin Robinson was obliged to resign and dispose of all his assets to pay back large sums he had borrowed from the railroad to develop the village of Ashland. For forty years his mansion was the home of Garret F. Watson and of his son. A most unusual house, entirely without Classic influence, it had not only a graceful balcony but a rich cast-iron fence, one side of which, oddly enough, is still in place, though the house was demolished nearly half a century ago to make way for the present building of Second Baptist Church.

No. 3 East Grace, except for its beautiful verandah, was not unnaturally a less distinguished building, as it was erected for a school (fig. 150). The builder was Hubert P. Lefebvre, Mrs. Mead's successor. Of several other schools that later on used the house, the most famous was the Richmond Female Seminary, "Powell's School," as it was always called, which occupied the building in the 'eighties and 'nineties. Headed by Professor John Powell, father of the pianist and composer, John Powell, this fashionable institution occupied for several decades much the same position that Mrs. Mead's school had held at an earlier period. In the present century,



*Fig. 152. Hawes House
422 East Franklin Street
Built 1874, Demolished 1923*

the building was used for over thirty years as the Home for Needy Confederate Women.

The only house of any importance built during the Civil War on either Grace or Franklin was the large one at the southwest corner of Sixth and Grace ([fig. 153](#)). Built by Dr. Robert Haxall, it was later occupied by Judge Ould and in the 'eighties and 'nineties by the beloved Dr. Hunter H. McGuire. This cumbersome pile was the forerunner of many built in the three decades after the Surrender. Brownstone or other elaborate trim masked as much as possible of the humble bricks; bumps and bulges, sprouting bay-windows and elaborate porches blurred outlines that lacked the satisfying simplicity of the 'forties. For sheer ugliness it would be hard to choose between the mansions erected by James B. Pace at 100 West Franklin (1876) ([fig. 132, background](#)), Alfred Harris, Jr., at

518 West Franklin (1885-86) and Major Lewis Ginter at 901 West Franklin (1888-89). Close competitors were the S. H. Hawes house, which in 1874 replaced John Warden's old home at Franklin and Fifth, 712 West Franklin, built by the writer's grandfather, Major F. R. Scott, in 1883, and the Saunders house at Shafer and Franklin on the site of Rev. James B. Taylor's modest frame home. The Saunders house is said to have been built from the same plans as the Scott house. We select the Hawes house for illustration (fig. 152) because it is the only one of these that is gone—an ironic fact when one remembers all that Richmond has destroyed.

Only the Scott and Ginter houses were in any way softened by large and beautiful yards. Most of the men who built these costly monstrosities seemed unwilling to invest in the spacious grounds deemed necessary by the builders of modest cottages ninety years before. However, the ever increasing ugliness of Grace and Franklin was gradually masked by the growth of the numerous trees, chiefly elms, that lined the sidewalks and formed a lacy arch above passing victorias or buggies. A wealth of green was also found in Monroe Park, the only open space nearer than Capitol Square in the chief residence part of the city. One of the "squares" purchased in 1851 for parks, it was established two years later as the Fair Grounds, and at that time was called the Western Square. During the Civil War, troops were encamped there, and after the War it was made into a real park, to become the delight of generations of Richmond children—and of their mammies, so long as such existed.²⁹

After the War, Grace and Franklin continued to be the most desirable residence streets, though by this time Franklin was well in the lead. Practically no handsome houses were added to Grace,

but the iron verandahs made it a charming street. The ugliness of the houses, inherent in a period of bad taste, was unobtrusive where that of Franklin was expensive and pretentious. Green yards and an arch of elms overhead did much to soften architectural defects. When this writer first remembers them, near the turn of the century, Grace and particularly Franklin were still the social centre of Richmond. Except for the Bayly, Anderson and McClurg houses, most of those mentioned in these pages were still standing. The only business that had invaded either street was the first narrow building erected in 1902 by the telephone company. Many of one's playmates lived around Fifth or Sixth streets. On Sundays the crowds from all the downtown churches walked home, the regular route being up Grace to Fifth and then over to Franklin, the stream dispersing long before it reached remote Lombardy Street. Those who have never seen this Sunday parade or the houses draped with Confederate flags for Memorial Day or General Lee's birthday will never know the atmosphere of Richmond forty years ago. We who lived on more modest Grace could stand on the hospitable porches of friends and relatives on Franklin and shout "Dixie" as the white plumes of the Blues, the bearskin shakoes of the Howitzers or the wilted uniforms of the men in grey—some of them could still march in the Confederate Reunion of 1907—followed the same route as the regular Sunday parades.

But a history dares not stray into reminiscence. The atmosphere of a neighborhood is an intangible thing to describe. Occasionally one catches a whiff of what life in Richmond was like then, before there were any motor-cars or suburbs, when few people had electric light, and folded notes were preferred to telephone calls. Perhaps the

friendliness, the small kindnesses of a little town are best recaptured when there is trouble in one of the old families that used to live on Grace or Franklin, and is still living in some small closely built neighborhood where people take the time to be neighborly. Then Grace and Franklin briefly live again in spirit if not in material existence.

For both are almost as much a part of the past as Council Chamber Hill. Only a scattered handful of old buildings still stand on Grace, which began its new life as a shopping street during the first World War. Franklin lasted about a decade longer: now business has crept up to Second, and most of the old houses left there are being held as investments by those who are sure that stores and parking-lots will soon engulf all of them. The only hope for saving the few remaining old ones is that they should be used either by institutions and clubs (as the Bolling Haxall, Ritter and Taylor-Mayo houses are), for downtown apartments, or for business offices, as two of the Fifth Street houses are now used. Thus at least a small fraction of the former architectural beauty of Franklin Street may be saved.

Notes

1. 2nd ed., p. 104.
2. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Parson Blair's House
3. *Ibid.*, Cunningham-Archer House
4. *Ibid.*, Brander House
5. *Ibid.*, George Greenhow Houses
6. *Ibid.*, Cole Diggs House
7. *Ibid.*, "Columbia"
8. *Ibid.*, "Talavera"
9. *Ibid.*, Richard Anderson Houses
10. *Ibid.*, Abram Warwick House
11. R. H. Bullock, "The First Century of Presbyterianism in Richmond Virginia" (typescript, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond), 1939. See also D. B. 39, p. 71.
12. See [St Paul's](#).

13. For a detailed discussion of Centenary see F. D. Stoneburner, “History of Centenary Methodist Church, 1810-1875” (typescript, University of Richmond).
14. See [Shockoe Meeting House](#)
15. See [Samuel Freeman](#)
16. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, The Westmoreland Club
17. *Ibid.*, Horace Kent House
18. *Ibid.*, Rutherford-Hobson House
19. *Ibid.*, Joseph R. Anderson House
20. *Ibid.*, Linden Row
21. *Ibid.*, Linden Row
22. See [William C. Allen](#)
23. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Norman Stewart House
24. *Ibid.*, Palmer House
25. *Ibid.*, James Thomas House
26. *Ibid.*, The Woman’s Club (Bolling Haxall House)
27. *Ibid.*, The Woman’s Club (Bolling Haxall House)
28. See [John Robinson](#)
29. For a sympathetic evocation of life in “the park” see James Branch Cabell’s sketch, “Of Some Virginia Ladies” in *Let Me Lie* (New York, 1947).

South Fifth Street

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BETWEEN SHOCKOE CREEK and Seventh Street the bank of James River spreads out flat and wide, affording an admirable location for the factories and warehouses that multiplied there near the canal-basin. West of Seventh several promontories approach the canal too closely for the waterside to offer anything more practical than enchanting sites for homes. The third William Byrd—if it was he and not his father who built “Belvidere”—was the first to realize the possibilities of these beautiful riverside locations. However, the first of them to be developed as a residence-neighborhood was, not unnaturally, the one nearest town—Fifth Street.

While Gamble’s Hill and Belvidere (or Oregon) Hill are steep and high, Fifth Street slopes gently to the canal. So far as we know, all the eighteenth-century dwellings there were of frame. One of them was built at the present southwest corner of Fifth and Main by Anthony Singleton, perhaps after his marriage in 1788 to Mrs. Peyton Randolph of “Wilton.” After his death in 1795 it was the home of his widow and later of his son-in-law, Thomas Taylor. For several years before its disappearance, it was occupied as a school by Miss Jane MacKenzie, and it was no doubt here that Rosalie Poe assisted Miss Jane by teaching sewing. The school was carried on by Miss Jane’s niece, Miss Janetta MacKenzie Gordon, until just before the old house with its bevy of outbuildings gave way in 1847 to the Hobson-Nolting mansion.

Higher up the hill at the northwest corner of Franklin stood a house built in the early 1790’s which was the home, successively, of two prominent eighteenth-century lawyers, Alexander Campbell

and John Warden, concerning both of whom Mordecai has a good deal to say.¹ This building was afterwards used by various schools. Marion Harland tells of attending one there that was conducted by a Mrs. Nottingham and her daughters. To her description of it as “an irregularly built frame house painted colonial yellow”² we can add nothing, as it disappeared in the early ’seventies.

We are more fortunate in regard to the building that stood at the southwest corner, a frame house built between 1789 and 1796 by John Barret, thrice mayor of Richmond. Before 1810 a large brick addition was built by James Brown, Sr., whose descendants owned the building until it was pulled down in 1878. Mr. Brown was one of the wealthiest merchants in the city, and was said at one time to have had fifty-four vessels of merchandise in the river. The house, surmounted by a “cupalo with a fish on it,”³ was the location from 1843 to 1860 of a girls’ school conducted by the Rev. Moses D. Hoge. Miss Boykin, a great-granddaughter of James Brown, owns two enchanting water-colors of the Barret-Brown house, painted by her grandmother. These are the sole visual record of any of these earliest Fifth Street houses, all of which disappeared before the day of photography.

In the first fifteen years of the last century Fifth Street experienced a second wave of popularity. Houses dating from that period were “Moldavia,” home of David Meade Randolph and later of Joseph Gallego and John Allan, the Marx or Freeland house, the Hancock-Caskie house and the homes of Major James Gibbon and William Munford. Since all but two of them were treated in detail in *Houses of Old Richmond*,⁴ we shall limit ourselves to discussing the Gibbon and Munford houses. Robert B. Munford has used as

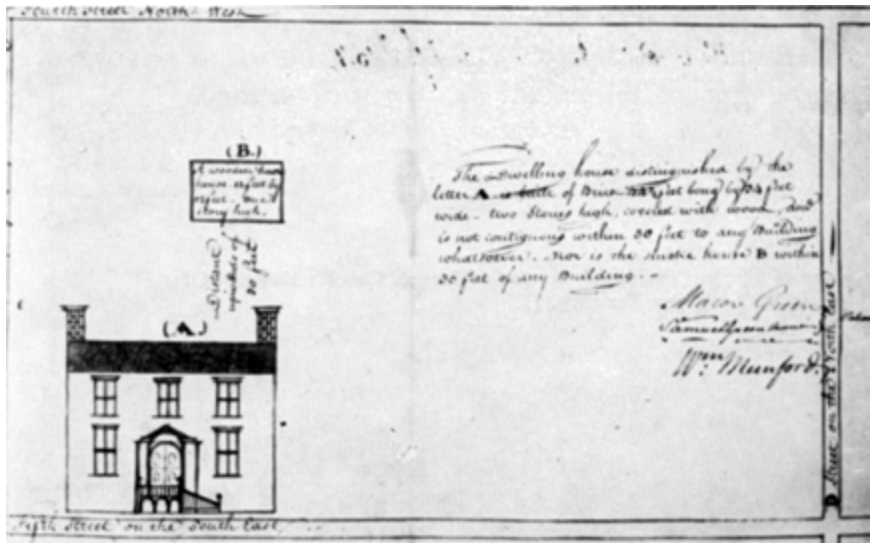


Fig. 155. William Munford House
Fifth and Canal Streets
Built 1810, Demolished 1871

frontispiece to his *Richmond Homes and Memories* a charming watercolor of his grandfather's house, which stood on the high mound at the southwest corner of Fifth and Canal (fig. 155). To his description of this family home and those who lived in it⁵ we shall only add that the house was short-lived, being built in 1810 and torn down in 1871.

Major Gibbon's house, at the northeast corner of Fifth and Main, survived to much more recent years (1902), hence many photographs of it exist. These show it to have been a three-storied brick house, stuccoed, with small entrance-porch and a two-story portico in the rear (fig. 154). It was a curious building to date from 1809: it looked much more like a Greek Revival house than one of so early a period. But nothing in the land books or insurance policies leads one to think it was substantially altered through the



Heunli B. Cook

*Fig. 157. Rootes-Enders House
6 North Fifth Street
Built 1824, Demolished 1914*

years. The builder, Major James Gibbon, always referred to as “the hero of Stony Point,” as a reward for his services in the Revolution was appointed by Washington Collector of the Port of Richmond. His son, a lieutenant in the regular army, was lost, together with his fiancée, Miss Sally Conyers, in the Theatre Fire of 1811. Major Gibbon himself lived until 1835. During the next twenty-five years the house was occupied successively by H. St. George Tucker, Henry L. Brooke, Poitiaux Robinson and David M. Lea. In 1860, Dr. Hoge, pastor of the church next door, moved to the Gibbon house and remained there until his death on January 6, 1899.

Two less pretentious dwellings of this period stood until about twenty years ago—119 South Fifth, the smaller of the two houses

erected by Samuel Marx,⁶ and 131 South Fifth, an attractive little stuccoed dwelling.

Though Fifth Street like the rest of Richmond was stagnant so far as building was concerned during the two decades following the panic of 1819, one large house dated from that time. This was No. 6 North Fifth, built in 1824 by Edmund Rootes (fig. 157). It was a two-story brick mansion, the type of those built twenty years later in this section, though it is hard to be sure of its original appearance, as it was considerably altered in 1853. According to Mordecai, it was Edmund Rootes who dubbed the Randolph house “Moldavia” and called its first mistress “the Queen.”⁷ Mrs. Rootes had a fine garden, which included orange-trees, a great temptation to the Brown children next door. One day one of them succumbed to the point of climbing the fence, to be met by a severe Mrs. Rootes. “You have such beautiful oranges!” said the small intruder longingly, to which Mrs. Rootes retorted, “Yes, but they’re not for you!” a saying that has become proverbial among the descendants of James Brown. After the Rootes, the families of John Enders, Jr., Edwin Robinson and Dr. Hugh Taylor lived at 6 North Fifth, which was eventually demolished to give place to the Y.W.C.A. building.

Beginning in 1840, Fifth Street had its third and greatest avatar. During the next seven years the four grand old mansions that still stand there and several that have disappeared were built, most of them by prosperous tobacco manufacturers. While those that are left have a strong family resemblance to each other, with small Classic entrance-porches, square outlines, simple iron fences, and high porticoes in the rear, they show nonetheless an evolution in Greek Revival style.⁸ The two earliest, the Bransford house (13



Katherine Howes

*Fig. 156. Fifth Street looking South from Franklin
(Fry, Boyd and Bransford Houses and Second Presbyterian Church)*

North Fifth) and the Scott-Clarke house (13 South Fifth) are similar in arrangement—two big rooms on the garden side, a small entrance-hall, the stairway tucked in the northwest corner (in the Clarke house running awkwardly across a front window). William Barret’s mansion at Fifth and Cary marks the high point of Classic Revival architecture in Richmond. Except for its peerless location, the exterior is like the Clarke and Bransford houses. But the centre hall and sweeping stairway make the interior vastly more impressive than the two earlier buildings. The Hobson-Nolting house, latest in date of the four, is much larger than the others, with heavier and less satisfying proportions. But the rear portico, where huge columns replace the pillars of the earlier houses, and the centre hail, flanked by Corinthian columns that are, strictly speaking, too heavy for it,

are both breath-taking.

Several other houses on Fifth that dated from the 'forties have been torn down. The greatest loss was the Dunlop-Blair house on the site of the Hotel John Marshall. Its columned portico in the rear, the garden wall topped by shade-trees, together with the four earlier houses east of it on Franklin⁹ made one of the most beautiful blocks in Richmond.

Across from the Dunlop house, where the Professional Building now stands, were two houses dating from 1840 (fig. 156). The corner one, built by Joshua Fry, was for thirty years the home of Alfred Harris, and afterwards was that of Dr. Charles M. Shields, the first eye, ear and throat specialist in Richmond and the son of James W. Shields of the Craig house. The mansion had been spoiled by a mansard roof. Between it and the Bransford house was one similar to the Lee-Stewart house. This was built by Joseph Boyd, architect of old St. James' Church and of the Female Humane Association building on Leigh Street.¹⁰ Other houses of the Classic Revival period were the Strother or Gray mansion, 8 South Fifth, dating from 1847 (fig. 158), and a slightly later but similar building at Fifth and Cary erected in 1854 by the Rev. Robert Howell, then pastor of Second Baptist Church. In the 'seventies and 'eighties this was the home of the Word family and later that of Hiram Smith.

Few small houses were located in this vicinity. Exceptions were three little frame dwellings back of the Nolting house, built in 1849 but altered in varying degrees before they were pulled down. No. 2 was the home of Mark Downey, No. 6 of John K. Childrey. The only nearby house of modest size left until recently was behind the Howell-Word mansion, at 408 East Cary. It had a certain interest in



*Fig. 158. Strother-Gray House
8 South Fifth Street
Built 1847, Demolished 1924*

the history of tobacco, having been from 1849 until his death the home of John F. Allen, the almost forgotten partner of Major Ginter. Allen's name remained coupled with Ginter's after he retired from business, having made what he considered a competence, while his erstwhile partner pushed on to become a millionaire. The little stuccoed house, overshadowed by a large magnolia, had an elaborate scroll-saw verandah, obviously a later "improvement."

The year 1847 saw the completion not only of the Hobson-Nolting house but of the one church on Fifth Street, Second Presbyterian, which has outlived most of the houses that once surrounded it (figs. 154 and 156). Dr. Wyndham B. Blanton has so admirably covered the founding and subsequent history of Second



Fig. 154. Rear of Gibbon House and of Second Presbyterian Church with Chapel where Church was started

Presbyterian¹¹ that little need be added here. It is interesting to note that two years after St. Paul's was completed, Dr. Hoge and his congregation, tiring of Classic models, turned to the mediaeval for their design. So great an innovation was this that for several years after it was finished Second Presbyterian was called simply "the Gothic church (Rev. Mr. Hoge's)"¹²

In 1890 "Moldavia" was demolished, in 1892 the Freeland house followed it into oblivion. Both were succeeded by rows of small dwellings along Fifth. At the southwest corner of Fifth and Cary Major Ginter replaced two houses of the 'forties by a large apartment house, or "flats" as they were then called. The whole character of Fifth Street was changing. Mansions, especially if they were close to factories and other sources of downtown soot, no longer suited

smaller families and servant shortages. In the early 1900's the Grays, Colemans, Willinghams, Noltings and Mrs. Caskie still remained to give Fifth Street some of its earlier character. The Grays sold their house to be demolished in 1924. Mrs. Caskie died in 1941. Then only the Noltings were left. By 1936 the Barret and Clarke houses had reached a nadir of neglect. The following year the Barret house was restored, and at the same time Second Presbyterian made the Bransford mansion into a church-house. In 1943 Mrs. Caskie's heir sold her house to be headquarters of the war-expanded Red Cross. Suddenly in 1945 the shortage of office-space led business concerns to discover the possibilities of these mansions, and both the Barret and Clarke houses were taken on long-term leases by two large organizations. Should the same good-fortune befall the Nolting house, one might have confidence that the five magnificent homes remaining on Fifth Street had found a permanent place in the life of Richmond and that their future was secure.

Notes

1. 2nd ed., pp. 108-10.
2. *Autobiography*, p. 150.
3. Waithall, *Hidden Things Brought to Light*, p. 12. A picture of the Barret-Brown house may be seen in Blanton's *Making of a Downtown Church*, p. 64.
4. *Houses of Old Richmond*, Michael Hancock House, Smaller Marx House, "Hanover House"
5. Pages 1 ff.
6. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Smaller Marx House
7. 2nd ed., pp. 127-28.
8. For these four houses see *Houses of Old Richmond*, Bransford House, Scott-Clarke House, Barret House, Hobson-Nolting House
9. *Ibid.*, James Dunlop House
10. See [Female Humane Association at Leigh Street](#)
11. *The Making of a Downtown Church*, passim.
12. *Dispatch*, Feb. 28, 1852.

Gamble's Hill

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ON THE BROW of Gamble's Hill, overlooking the rocks and wooded islands of James River, stands a cross mounted on a pile of rough stones. This was set up to mark the three hundredth anniversary of the erection of another cross, a small one of wood, on one of these islets in the river, when on Whitsunday, May 24, 1607, a week after landing at Jamestown, Captain Newport, Captain John Smith, Gabriel Archer and the Honorable George Percy came up to explore the new country.

A hundred and thirty years were to elapse before a town was started at the falls of the James, and over sixty more passed before Colonel Robert Gamble took up his residence on this fine site and



Fig. 159. Doorway of Gamble House, with McGuire's School

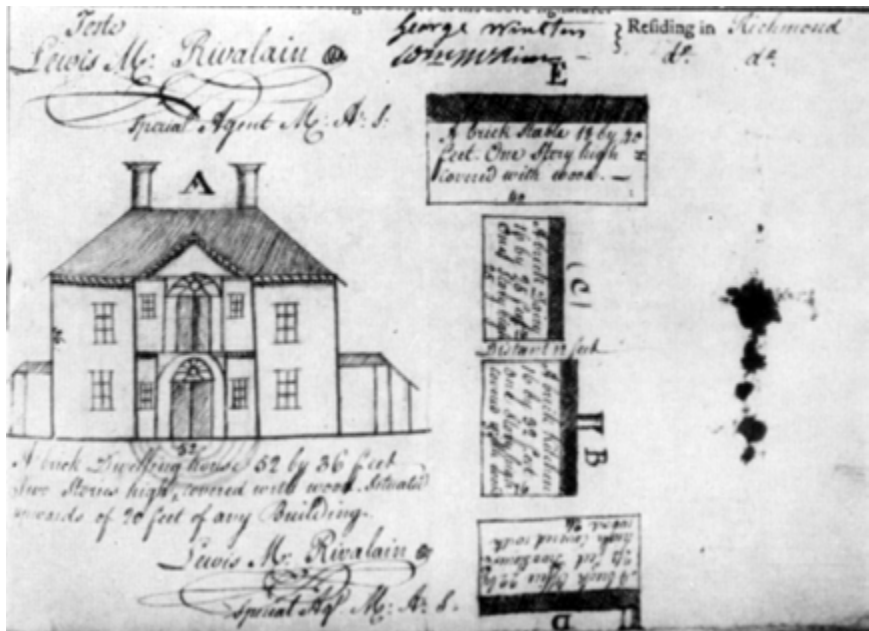


Fig. 160. Gamble House
Byrd Street between Third and Fourth
Built 1798-99, Demolished 1889

thus gave it his name.

Gamble's handsome house was designed for Colonel John Harvie by Benjamin H. Latrobe, and was built in 1798-99 (figs. 159 and 160). Latrobe's beautiful water-color designs for the house have recently (1945) been presented to the Library of Congress by one of his descendants. We know from a comparison of these plans with early insurance policies that it was a two-story brick building with a rounded bay on one front and a one-story entrance-porch on the other, both features suggestive of the Wickham-Valentine house. The wings which Latrobe planned were never executed. Whether or not Harvie quarreled with Latrobe, as Mordecai relates,¹ he sold it the year after it was built to Robert Gamble.



Old Photo

*Fig. 161. Chevallié Cottage
101 South Third Street
Built 1806, Demolished 1893*

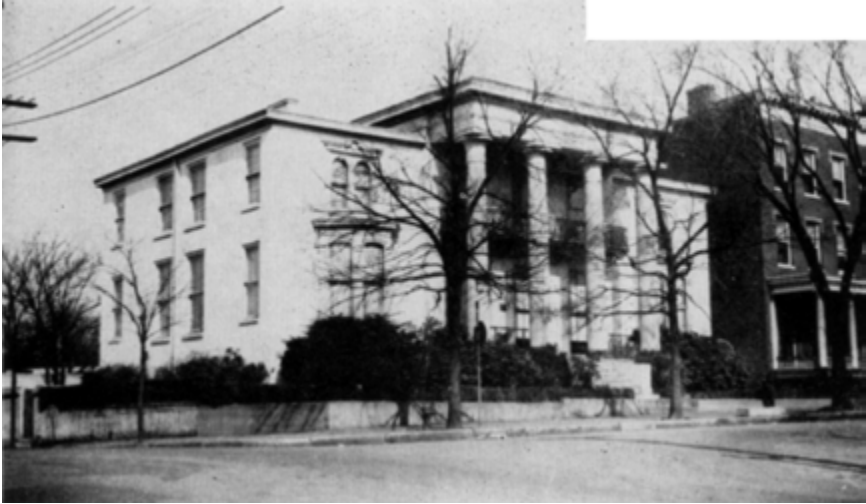
Born in Augusta County in 1754, Col. Gamble served in the Revolution and moved to Richmond in 1792, becoming one of its most prominent merchants. He died in 1810, and his widow continued to occupy the mansion until her death in 1832. One daughter had married William Wirt, and another, the wife of former Governor William H. Cabell, occupied the Gamble house for some years. John Maben rented it for at least five years before building at Grace and Sixth.² In 1852 the house passed from the hands of the Gamble heirs. During the 'fifties it was occupied by the family of Moses Preston, and in the 'sixties by that of Charles M. Wallace. In the late 'seventies and early 'eighties McGuire's School was located there. The only photograph thus far found of the house shows Mr. McGuire before the portico surrounded by little boys, most of whom



*Fig. 162. 17 South Third Street
Built 1809, Enlarged 1894*

have themselves passed into Richmond history. Before the house was torn down, its broad acres and many outbuildings had shrunk to a mere half-block near the southwest corner of Byrd and Fourth streets.

In Colonel Gamble's day, his mansion stood almost alone on its commanding ridge. At the foot, beside the Canal was the Armory, gutted in the Evacuation Fire. To the west, between Gamble's Hill and Latrobe's model penitentiary, were Harvie's Mill Pond and Gallows' Hill. Fourth Street was then merely a series of gullies. Along the ridge that is now Third a few frame cottages were beginning to spring up. One of these, at the southeast corner of Gary and Third,



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 163. H. Coalter Cabell House
116 South Third Street
Built 1847*

long occupied by Peter J. Chevallié and by his widow, outlived its contemporaries (fig. 161). Before Col. Gamble's death similar cottages were already being replaced by substantial brick houses. One of the latter, just across Third from the Chevallié house, was built about 1812 and was the home of Benjamin Watkins Leigh, the distinguished jurist, in the years before he married as his third wife the daughter of John Wickham and moved into the house his father-in-law had built at Tenth and Clay.³

The only survivor of these early houses is 17 South Third (fig. 162). In spite of its enormous size and modern appearance, this is the oldest house now standing on Gamble's Hill. Its third story and the large wing that replaced its many outbuildings are relatively recent. Basically it is of the same type as the Leigh house at Tenth and Clay and the Spencer Roane house, all of them big square buildings almost flush with the sidewalk and planned for use and

comfort rather than for architectural distinction.

With this one exception, all the pre-Civil War houses now standing on Gamble's Hill date from the 1840's and 1850's. The handsomest is 116 South Third, erected in 1847 by William O. George (fig. 163). For three decades, beginning in the 1850's, it was the home of Henry Coalter Cabell and is usually called the Cabell house, although that family never owned it. Architecturally it is unique in Richmond. The big front portico suggests the Ludlam-Anderson or Mayo houses, but there is no pediment, and the side wings, unlike those of the two other mansions, have always had two stories. The coarseness of the interior trim suggests that it was imitated from one of the earlier buildings, but carried out by a less skilled contractor, perhaps with demands for economy from the owner. Despite these defects, and despite such alterations as bay-windows, recent white paint on the bricks and a large addition in the rear, it is an impressive building. The Universal Life Insurance Company, which did it over as offices, deserves great credit as the first Richmond firm to utilize an old house without disfiguring changes.

Less fortunate is the contemporary home of John F. Tanner, 216 South Third (fig. 169). The pebble-dash verandah that replaced its Greek Revival entrance-porch effectively conceals its age. For thirty years Tanner was connected with the Tredegar Iron Works, and his son, William E. Tanner, continued the tradition of iron manufacture, being president of the Metropolitan Iron Works, which made many of the iron-fronts on Main Street. Perhaps his firm also made the beautiful two-story balcony on the wing added in 1869 to his father's house. The rich fence was probably older.



Fig. 169. *William E. Tanner House* *John F. Tanner House*
 218 South Third Street 216 South Third Street
 Built 1882, Demolished 1938 Built 1848

This encloses the front of what was once Mrs. Tanner's rose-garden. Here in 1882 William E. Tanner built himself a large Victorian mansion (fig. 169), but it has vanished as completely as the roses it supplanted.

Up to 1946 the most appealing house left on Gamble's Hill was probably 221 South Third, a small dwelling set back in the yard and shaded by a big magnolia (fig. 164). When the magnolia was cut down, the little house lost all its charm. It was built by Charles Campbell, foreman of the Tredegar, and afterwards the first superintendent of the City Gas Works. In 1856 he erected a larger house, 217 South Third (fig. 167), chiefly noteworthy for its beautiful iron verandah and fence, the latter identical with the Tanner fence across the street. The second Campbell house was bequeathed in 1938 to the A.P.V.A. by Mrs. Ione Crutchfield



Fig. 164. 221 South Third Street
Built 1848

Pulliam, whose home it had been for over thirty years.

The greatest charm of Gamble's Hill today is the park at the southern terminus of Third and Fourth, overlooking the rocks of James River. Like Libby Hill and Monroe Park,⁴ this site was purchased by the City in 1851. In announcing that Council had given this for a "public promenade," the *Dispatch* commented:

... when this fine location shall be planted with trees and enclosed, there will be no pleasure-grounds compared with it, in all respects, in the United States. (Feb. 18, 1852).

Until the little park was disfigured in recent years by a hideous stone building blocking the view at the end of Third Street, it was, as the writer of those lines predicted, an unusually beautiful spot.

Other assets of Gamble's Hill which he probably did not foresee



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 167. Verandah of Pulliam House
217 South Third Street
Built 1856*

are its arch of trees and the wealth of cast-iron verandahs, a type of entrance that began to replace Classic porches in the middle 'fifties and continued popular through the 'seventies. We have already mentioned the porches of the Pulliam and Tanner houses. Others worth noting are at 214 and 322 South Third, at 314 South Fourth and 314 East Byrd (fig. 166). The house erected in 1861 by E. L. Chinn at the extreme south end of Third Street has both a verandah and an attractive iron balcony overlooking the river.



*Fig. 166. Byrd Street looking West from Fourth
Houses built in 1840's*

Two iron-masters besides the Tanners lived on Gamble's Hill. No. 314 South Fourth (fig. 168) was built by one of them, Andrew J. Bowers, brother-in-law and at one time partner of the more famous Asa Snyder. Snyder spent his last years at 214 South Third, and it was here, at the end of the 'seventies, that his daughter Virginia Snyder opened what is said to have been the first kindergarten in Richmond.

Before we pass to Fourth Street, a few late houses on Third remain to be mentioned. The pair 113-15 are big three-storied buildings erected in 1858 by Col. Charles S. Morgan, Superintendent of the Penitentiary. No. 113 remained in his family until recent months. His grandson, the noted historian Morgan P. Robinson, lived until his death in 1944 in the same room where he was born. More



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 168. 314 South Fourth Street
Built 1856*

attractive architecturally than the Morgan houses was the little pair, 3-5 South Third, built in 1858 also, by John C. Hobson (fig. 170). Their demolition removed two of the best examples of the change from Classic straight lines to Victorian curves, a trend illustrated on a larger scale by the Woman’s Club and Morson Row. A certain historic interest was attached to No. 5 as the home for some years of the “Langhorne beauties.”

Fourth Street has always been a step-child compared to Third. In the early 1800’s William Hay had a brewery there, between Cary



*Fig. 170. 3-5 South Third Street
Built 1858, Demolished 1941*

and Canal. Before the gullies were filled in in 1851, giving a second approach to Gamble's Hill, a row of tiny brick houses, Nos. 323-31, had been built by Joel B. Bragg on the edge of the hill. During the 'fifties a number of unpretentious dwellings were added to Fourth, the Bowers house among them. More imposing was a Greek Revival house, now demolished, at the northwest corner of Fourth and Byrd, which for many decades was the home of William Gray and of his

son-in-law John Wade (fig. 166).

Ironically it is Fourth Street which can claim the most striking landmark left on Gamble's Hill: Pratt's Castle.⁵ So much has been written about this amazing example of the craze for Gothic, Romanesque and Byzantine "cottages" that swept America in the 'fifties that we shall confine ourselves to re-stating its proper date—1853. That this unique building was almost burned down in 1945 is not surprising when one realizes that it is constructed of wood, covered with plates of sheet-iron.

Of Gamble's Hill during the Civil War a contemporary observer has left a picturesque description:

In those days Third Street, leading out to the pretty heights of Gamble's Hill, was a favorite evening promenade. The people of Richmond, save such as visited friends in the country, remained in town during the summer, for no places of public resort were open. On summer nights the better classes, maid and matron, old men, high officers, soldiers, boys and girls, strolled back and forth on Third Street to catch the southern breeze upon the hill, cooled by its passage across the falls of the James to watch the belching furnaces of the Tredegar cannon foundry on the river banks below; and to listen to the band which sometimes played upon the hill.⁶

From just after the War until 1941 one of the most picturesque features of Gamble's Hill was the tunnel which connected the R. F. & P. railroad with the Richmond and Petersburg line. Trains from New York to Florida stopped at that social centre, known



*Fig. 165. Railroad Connection Tunnel
Byrd Street
1867-1941*

in the kitchen quarters as “Elbow Station,”⁷ crossed Franklin and Main at Belvidere Street, and plunged into the bowels of the earth before coming out at the more formal but less patronized Byrd Street Station. When it was first opened, the “Connection Tunnel” was a favorite resort. “The passage of the train through the tunnel is witnessed from the western end by hundreds,” writes a contemporary reporter.⁸ After the Belt Line was put in use in 1919, the abandoned tunnel-entrance shown in Mr. Gray’s photograph (fig. 165) remained for over two decades to puzzle younger or more recent Richmonders, who would never realize what the building of Broad Street Station had taken out of the social life of earlier generations.

Following the Civil War and even down into the ’nineties many houses were added to Gamble’s Hill. Of these only one is outstanding

in charm—100 South Third, built by Henry K. Ellyson in 1874 on the site of Benjamin Watkins Leigh's early home. Afterwards the residence of John A. Coke, then of J. Thompson Brown, this house has not only a graceful iron verandah but unexpectedly good lines for its period. In 1946 it was purchased by the Tobacco Trading Corporation as its headquarters—the second Gamble's Hill building to be thus utilized by a business concern.

Socially Third Street had a curious evolution. Those who built the attractive houses of the 'forties and 'fifties, while substantial and often prosperous citizens, were not the leaders of Richmond's social or intellectual life. Third Street reached its social apogee when it was old, in the 1890's and early 1900's. People who spent their youth there will find this chapter disappointing, for what Third Street means to them is not architecture or ironwork but a whole way of life. To its urbane and almost small-town intimacy was added a tremendous intellectual stimulus in the group that centered around 101 South Third⁹ home of Mrs. B. B. Valentine, creating a ferment of modern ideas and the search for educational and political progress in a Virginia too content with the past.

About 1910 the families which gave its special flavor to the neighborhood began to move with the automobile to the suburbs, and by 1940 a handful of the older inhabitants—Miss Ruth Sublett, Miss Florence Peple, Mr. Robinson and the Blankenships alone clung on amid cheap rooming-houses, bootleggers and worse who had turned many of the big old houses into shabby and often vicious rabbit-warrens. Now only the Blankenships remain. To evoke the life there of forty years ago one must seek out Meades and Valentines, Cooks, Glovers, Brockenbroughs, Carys, Wallersteins,

Tanners, Snyders and ” scattered to remote parts of the city. Let us hope that before it is too late, one of these children of Third Street will undertake to write his or her recollections of Gamble’s Hill in its heyday.

The rest of us, less privileged, can only sit on a wooden bench in half-deserted Gamble’s Hill Park, with Pratt’s fantastic castle behind us while spread at our feet is a pattern of green islands, rocks, bridges, factory-chimneys and sky-scrappers. There better than anywhere else we can evoke the panorama of our city’s past, from the Whitsunday when the explorers planted a cross in an unknown wilderness to the gradual development of modern industrial Richmond.

Notes

1. 2nd ed., p. 98.
2. See [John Maben](#)
3. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Benjamin Watkins Leigh House
4. See [Libby Hill](#) and [Monroe Park](#)
5. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Pratt’s Castle
6. John S. Wise, *The End of an Era* (Boston, 1899), p. 334.
7. See [Elba](#)
8. *Dispatch*, Aug. 24, 1867.
9. One of a row of houses built on the site of the Chevallié cottage.

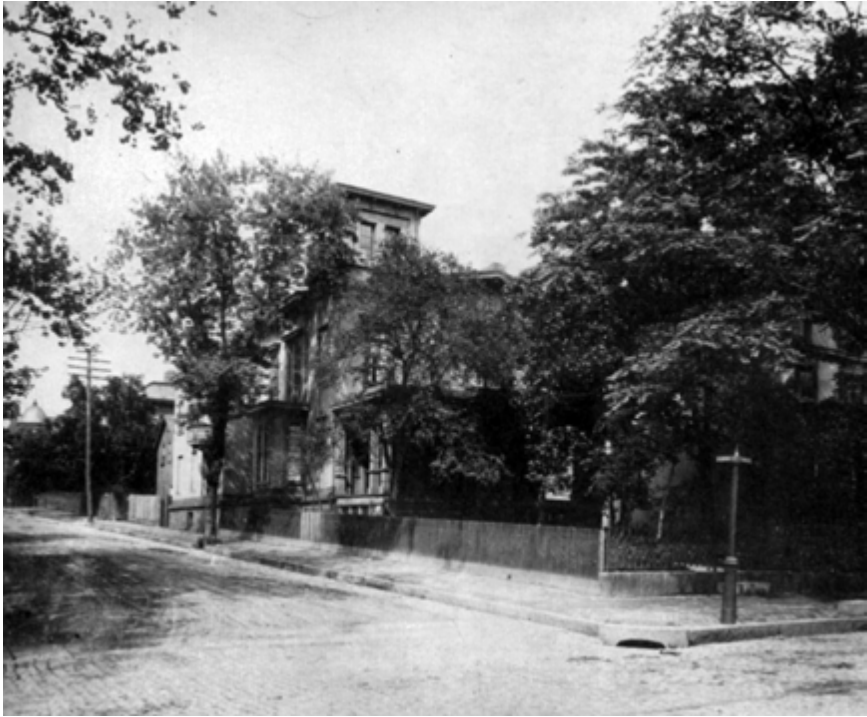
Around First And Main

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WITHIN A THREE-BLOCK radius of the corner of First and Main streets one still finds so many old houses that it seems practical to treat this as a neighborhood. Actually, it includes the remains of about four neighborhoods, of very different characters. On Main once stood a number of handsome homes, of which only the Glasgow and Crozet houses remain, as well as a good many others less pretentious. Cary, between Adams and Third, was closely built with substantial three-story residences, mostly dating from the 'fifties. On the west side of First a number of attractive two-story houses are still standing, while south of them are the remains of Penitentiary Bottom, tucked between the promontories of Gamble's Hill and Oregon Hill.

The earliest surviving Main Street house is the one which Curtis Carter built in 1814 at the northeast intersection of First, a house made famous by the residence there of Claudius Crozet.¹ At the east end of this block, Curtis Carter's brother, William, in 1812 built a brick-and-frame house facing Second Street. Partially demolished in 1847, this was replaced by a brick row, 6-8-10-12 North Second. Remains of the original house may be discerned in the stone foundation and graceful stairway of No. 8. No. 12, with its gabled roof-line, small window-panes and charming iron balcony, is the only one of the three houses still standing that is sufficiently unchanged to show how attractive the row must have been when it was new.

Though a brick store occupied the corner of this lot as early as 1821, this part of Main was decidedly a residence-neighborhood.



*Fig. 171. Jenkins House
14 West Main Street
Built 1853, Demolished 1921*

West of First began to be developed in the 1830's when Thomas Rutherford sold some of the spacious acres that stretched from his own home as far south as the Penitentiary. Just east of Rutherford's land, in 1837 William B. Lipscomb built a two-story brick house, now No. 12 East Main, which became in 1852 the property of Richard H. Dibrell, a prominent tobacconist. Enlarged to three stories and now rather characterless, this was Dibrell's home until his death in 1896, and belonged to his family up to 1935.

The earliest houses on the Rutherford land were 4 and 6 East Main, a charming little Greek Revival pair built in 1836 by William



*Fig. 173. Griffin Davenport House
9 West Main Street
Built 1853, Demolished 1916*

C. Allen. Similar in design is the Quarles house, 1 East Main, built three years later. Foushee Street, laid off at that time, separates this graceful house from the more pretentious one built in 1841 by David M. Branch and since made famous as the home of the novelist Ellen Glasgow.² Main was on the way to becoming a street

of fine residences.

At the southeast corner of Main and Second there stood in the late eighteenth century a modest brick-and-frame house, home of Elder Elisha Morris. In a small building behind this, facing Cary, Elder Morris started in 1780 the humble forerunner of the many prosperous Baptist churches in Richmond. A little graveyard surrounded the chapel. In 1833 the Main Street corner was purchased by the Rev. James B. Taylor, soon to become one of the most prominent Baptist ministers in Virginia. Dr. Taylor lived in the old house before moving to Shafer and Franklin,³ and later developed the site by building two brick houses facing Second and three larger ones facing Main. By some strange delusion, the legend became current that Poe's sweetheart, Elmira Royster, lived as a girl at No. 7 South Second, in romantic proximity to the Ellis cottage where Poe stayed just after his return from England.⁴ These houses were not built until shortly before Poe's death, nor is there any record that the Roysters ever lived in the early house they replaced.

In 1853 Mrs. William A. Jenkins built at Adams and Main a picturesque house that may be counted among the pseudo-Italian villas of that decade of reaction from Classic simplicity (fig. 171). Its shady side-yard, porches and dangerous winding stair are vivid memories to many middle-aged Richmonders who during the first decade of the present century, when it was the habitat of the Scott-Talcott kindergarten and primary school, learned the three R's in its spacious rooms or played "Fox-in-the-water" under its trees.

Just west of the Glasgow house, which was occupied in the 'fifties by Isaac Davenport, his son Griffin Davenport in 1853 built a three-story Greek Revival home (fig. 173). The only special interest



*Fig. 172. Crenshaw House
21 West Main Street
Built 1862, Demolished probably 1909*

attached to this vanished building, which was architecturally similar to dozens of others, is that Judah P. Benjamin occupied it during the Civil War. From his reputation as a gourmet, we may imagine that some high living distinguished it from most Richmond homes during those years of scarcity.

The only other ante-bellum building on that block was one erected by Lewis D. Crenshaw after he had sold his former residence to the City as a home for President Davis ([fig. 172](#)). As our photograph shows, this was a very large house, as little influenced by Victorian curves as it was by Classicism. Mr. Crenshaw's daughters



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*Fig. 174. 109-15 West Main Street
Built 1849-50*

occupied the home as late as 1900. Before it was demolished, this writer recalls art exhibits held there, the pictures being closer to the soap-premiums then popular than to what the art-world outside of provincial Richmond was admiring around 1903.

Of a much more modest character than these mansions were several little houses built in 1849 and '50 on the block between



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*Fig. 176. 10-12 South First Street
Built 1848*

Jefferson and Adams (fig. 174) Four of them are still standing. With their dormered roofs and Classic entrance-porches, they differ very little from the pair William C. Allen had built fifteen years earlier.

The growth of this section was attested by the opening in 1858 of Grace Church, at Foushee and Main. Called in contemporary descriptions Romanesque, the building was designed by a Richmond architect, Joseph F. Powell. The first rector was the Rev. Francis M. Baker. In 1924 the congregation combined with that of Holy Trinity, and since 1930 the building has been the church of the Greek Orthodox, frequently enlivened with picturesque and exotic ceremonies.⁵

That West Main developed slowly was partly due to the block-deep backyards and outbuildings of the houses facing Franklin. Behind the Bayly house above Jefferson Street, the land was only built up after 1877. The nondescript houses are notable for their unusually attractive iron fences. West of these were rows of small houses, devoid of charm except for a few iron verandahs. The street deteriorated, stores and shabby rooming-houses crept in, and with Miss Glasgow's death in 1945 the last of the old residents of Main Street was gone. During the following two years, the restoration of the Quarles house and of one or two others, and above all the purchase of the Glasgow house by the A.P.V.A. in 1947, gives some hope that this neighborhood may be preserved by adapting most of its former dwellings as antique shops, which has already been successfully done with the Crozet and Quarles houses.

Since Cary Street, once a prosperous residence-neighborhood, has become a speedway to the financial district, one old house after another has given place to a filling-station. Between the upper end, shabbier if possible than the same part of Main, and the arid waste of gas-tanks below Second, one block, between First and Second, is an oasis. Half a dozen of the houses in it have been made over into offices, and the charming result, even when they have been unnecessarily altered, shows what could be done to save old buildings in a business-section. The only house in the block that retains its original appearance is 107 East Cary. Built in 1852, this was used as a school in the 'eighties and 'nineties by Dr. George Merrill, whose daughter still makes her home there.⁶

South Second Street, which twenty years ago was full of interesting houses, since the opening of the Lee Bridge has become



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*Fig. 175. 118-22 South First Street
Built 1807*

a series of gas-stations, a neighborhood as utterly gone as Council Chamber Hill. South First, on the other hand, which leads nowhere, has retained a goodly number of attractive old dwellings, one of them the most ancient building in this whole section of town.

Walking south from Main, one passes three houses built in the 'forties, Nos. 10, 12 and 14 South First ([fig. 176](#)). On the block south of Cary are two of the same period, Nos. 100 and 104, the intervening house having been torn down. Of greater interest than the actual buildings is the fact that for more than a century they belonged to the descendants of Mrs. Amos Ladd, widow of a prominent Quaker.

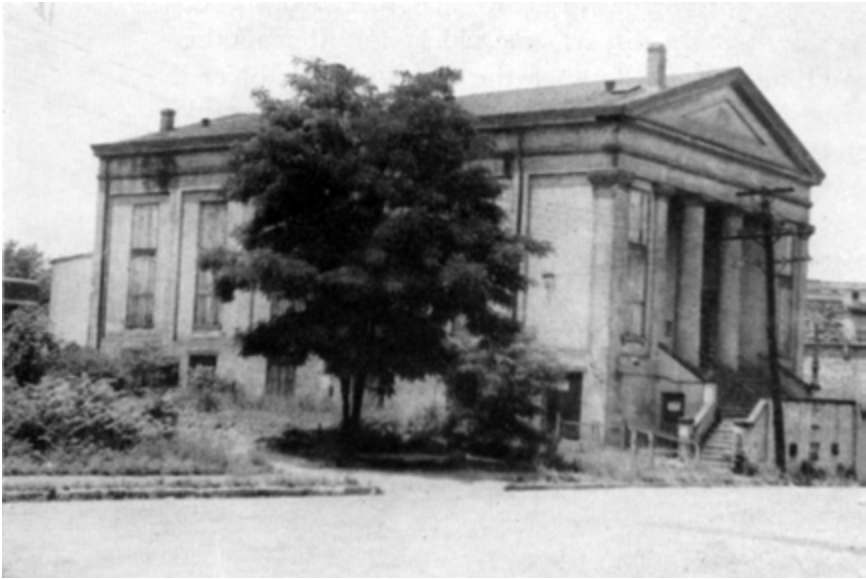
At the south end of this block, 118-20-22 South First, though altered by verandahs and cornices and divided into three dwellings,



*Fig. 177. Tyree Houses
208-14 South First Street
Built 1841 and 1861*

is interesting both for its age—it was built in 1807—and because it represents a type once fairly common in Richmond but now represented, we believe, by but two examples ([fig. 175](#)).⁷ It is a two-story brick house, sixty feet wide and eighteen feet deep. The idea behind these curious proportions may have been to get a maximum of ventilation in a hot climate. Behind this house at 14-16 East Canal is another one almost as old, having been built about 1812, but its plan is less unorthodox than that of the corner building.

On Canal Street we approach what has long been called Penitentiary Bottom, the fourth neighborhood in this loose aggregation, and, as its name indicates, a veritable poor relation to the other three. Few pre-Civil War houses survive in this shabby



*Fig. 178. Second African Baptist Church (second building)
Byrd Street between First and Second
Built 1866*

hollow overshadowed by the ever-expanding State Penitentiary. The most picturesque are those built by William Tyree and now numbered 208-14 South First (fig. 177). These little brick houses climb up the steep hillside like a bit of some European town, and must have been even more taking before the upper story was removed from two others nearer to Byrd Street.

That Penitentiary Bottom has been primarily a Negro settlement for a century is evidenced by the fact that the Second African Baptist Church was built here as early as 1847. This wooden building was replaced in 1866 by a beautiful and dignified stuccoed brick church, somewhat similar to Walter's First Baptist, though smaller (fig. 178). Since the congregation moved to Idlewood and Randolph, this building has been closed, until recent years it was taken over by a

lumber and junk concern, a disfiguring fate for a little architectural jewel. Its restoration and use as a community church would perhaps go far to rehabilitate a lost neighborhood.

Notes

1. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Curtis Carter House
2. *Ibid.*, Greek Revival Houses in Richmond, Two Early Greek Revival Houses, and Ellen Glasgow House for the Allen, Quarks and Glasgow houses.
3. See [Dr. Taylor](#)
4. Hervey Allen, *Israfel, The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1926), pp. 134-135 and M. E. Phillips, *Edgar Allan Poe, the Man* (Philadelphia, 1926), p. 176.
5. This building was ruined in 1948 by a coating of imitation stone.
6. For the atmosphere of this neighborhood in the late nineteenth century, see Robert B. Munford's *Richmond Homes and Memories*, pp. 18 ff.
7. See below about [two example brick buildings](#) but unsure if this is the right page reference.

Oregon Hill

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IMMEDIATELY WEST of Gamble's Hill rises Oregon Hill. The two were formerly separated by Harvie's Mill Pond or Penitentiary Pond, long since filled in. There in the 1840's people used to leave their boats so long that the Basin Master had to warn them that the boats would have to be sold at auction on account of the stagnant water they collected. Later on this pond was used for the Canal boats to spend the night.

Though the name Oregon Hill is now loosely used of the whole section south of Cary and east of Hollywood, Oregon Hill proper is a very small neighborhood, occupying the V between the two entrances to the Robert E. Lee Bridge. Belvidere Street forms the dividing-line between it and Sydney. In deeds of the 'forties the whole promontory is called Belvidera Hill, from Belvidere, the home of the third William Byrd of which we shall say more in the next chapter. The excitement in 1845 over the boundaries of Oregon ("Fifty-four-forty-or-fight") that almost drew the United States into war with Great Britain led some wag to dub the remote and barely accessible development Oregon Hill, and the name stuck.

Three unrelated elements played a determining part in the development of both Oregon Hill and the section west of it. These were the location of the Penitentiary, sales of land by the Harvie family, and the growth of the Tredegar Iron Works.

In his invaluable memoir, Thomas Rutherford gives an indignant account of how he happened to sell the State of Virginia twelve acres of beautiful woodland overlooking the river in order to prevent the Penitentiary's being placed two blocks from



*Fig. 179. Ben Green Row
22-30 Maiden Lane
Built 1838*

his home, on the future site of Linden Row. As the building was being designed by B. H. Latrobe according to the most advanced conceptions of penology, Rutherford's brother-in-law, William Radford, thought he was doing Rutherford a positive favor. Rutherford saw otherwise: a penitentiary, however, beautiful or modern, inevitably throws a blight on a neighborhood, and he preferred to sacrifice the uninhabited river-bank rather than the westward expansion of Franklin Street. It is intriguing to speculate what would have happened had he not interfered with Radford's sale. Would Richmond have taken advantage of the river-bank, now given over to industry and cemeteries, or would the lack of roads and the instinct of a small town to huddle together have sacrificed its residence possibilities?

As it was, the Penitentiary, built in 1797-1800, cut this whole

promontory off from town. Up to 1838 only one house, so far as we can ascertain, had been built between it and the river. Built before 1811 and apparently destroyed by 1828, “The Cottage” as it was generally called, belonged during most of its brief existence to the family of Thomas C. Howard. It stood near the present southwest corner of First long called Howard-Street and Maiden Lane. To judge by insurance policies, it was an unusual and interesting house. One-and-a-half stories in height, “stockoed” brick, it had a bay or saloon, like that of the Wickham house, on the west side, and five-columned porches on the north and south façades. The view toward the little city and over the rocks and wooded islands of the river must have been beautiful.

So far as we know, the Tredegar Iron Works had no actual financial part in the development of Oregon Hill. But it needed workmen’s homes within walking distance as the plant began to hit its stride under Joseph R. Anderson, and the expansion between 1838 and 1850 of that type of settlement just across the canal was a very natural sequence.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the first division into small lots of the land on Belvidere Hill took place in 1817. This, however, was west of Belvidere Street. In 1838 Lewis E. Harvie sold two acres east of Belvidere and south of the Penitentiary to that remarkable adventurer, Benjamin Green, who in the same year built nineteen small brick houses. Five of these are still standing, numbers 22-30 Maiden Lane ([fig. 179](#)). This little row is very picturesque, especially when viewed from the rear, since all but one of the houses is masked in front by a modern porch. Ben Green may be considered the first to determine the character of the buildings on Oregon Hill as modest



*Fig. 180. 8 and 10 Maiden Lane
Built 1846 and 1848*

three or four room dwellings. South of his row are three small frame houses a few years later in date. The fact that 8 Maiden Lane, which we are tempted to call the “cutest” house in Richmond, sold in 1936 for \$200, and in 1948 for \$2,000, gives a measure of how cheap real estate on Oregon Hill remained before the post-war housing shortage (fig. 180).

Two developments in 1846 and 1847 really launched the hill as a residence-section for workmen. In 1847 the Howard family sold off lots on the present South First, but as few houses remain from this development and none of these is very interesting, we shall not linger there. The sale that really started Oregon Hill was a tract which Lewis E. Harvie auctioned in May, 1846. His plat divided into thirty-foot lots the area from the east side of Belvidere Street through the east side of Church, bounded on the north and south respectively by Maiden Lane and Holly Street. A few lots were



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*Fig. 183. Rowe House
618 Church Street
Built 1853*

bought by workmen who put up their own houses, but most were purchased by investors who either resold them or erected several small dwellings.

Church Street owes its name to the fact that in its two short blocks were no less than two churches. Oregon Hill Methodist Church, erected in 1849, was the landmark by which people living in this section were located in the 1856 directory. “North



*Fig. 182. 631-33 Church Street
Built 1848-50*

(south, etc.) of Methodist Episcopal Church Oregon Hill” was the cumbersome and vague address of scores of Richmonders. A Baptist chapel built the same year, also on the east side of Church Street, was used until 1869, when the congregation moved to the corner of Pine and Spring, and still later to Pine and Albemarle streets. The Methodist church, probably larger though both were brick buildings, was abandoned in 1880 and its successor now stands back to back with the Baptist Church, at Laurel and Albemarle.

Though bereft of its churches, Church Street is one of the most picturesque in Richmond. It descends rapidly toward the riverbank, the lower block a green cavern with trees overhanging the narrow way. At least twenty-eight of its houses date from before 1865, most of them from before 1850. Practically the only modern ones are those that replace the two churches. All are of modest



*Fig. 181. 100-108 Holly Street
Built about 1848*

size, crowded close together, about half of them brick and the rest frame. Let each visitor take his choice of the most attractive; this writer's are 518-20, a double brick house, and the Rowe house, at the corner of Church and Rowe ([fig. 183](#)). This latter street, really an alley, is appropriately named for the builder, William Rowe, a millwright. He, and later his heirs, owned the house from 1853 to 1943! Perched high and sheltered by a magnolia, it is somewhat more pretentious than the other houses on the street, and is one of those buildings with a real personality. Perhaps some visitors will prefer the two little pairs, 627-29 and 631-33, crouched like field-mice beneath shading trees ([fig. 182](#)).

At the bottom of Church Street is Holly or High Street, where one has a beautiful view of the river. In the short block between Church and Belvidere are three, originally five, small brick houses,



*Fig. 184. 611 South Belvidere Street
Built 1860*

the box-like pattern of which suggests the work of some precursor of Cubism (fig. 181).

Fortunately the development of Belvidere Street as part of Route 1 has not yet swept away the attractive cottages that line the east side. There is more uniformity in these than in the dwellings on Church or Maiden Lane. All except 527 and 529-31 are of clapboard. The least altered is No. 625, built in 1856 by a carpenter, Albert Barefoot, a name now spelled Barfoot, which indicates the

earlier pronunciation. The most appealing is No. 611, though it was not built until in 1860 (fig. 184). Its position, peeping above the sidewalk like a child on tip-toe, is probably due to street grading.

The mushroom rapidity with which Oregon Hill developed seems to have impressed a great many contemporary observers. The *Times* for Nov. 14, 1851, tells of a Richmonder who had been away ten or twelve years and was especially struck with Oregon Hill, “risen from the bosom of a forest.” Two years later it is called “a handsome little village,” and property there “that but a short time since, could have been purchased for a mere song, is now commanding exorbitant prices.” This writer in the *Dispatch*¹ is impressed with the character of the settlers, whom he calls “honest, industrious working men, who have acquired comfortable houses for their families, and who cannot now be induced to give them up for money.” Mordecai describes the dwellers on Oregon Hill as “a hardy and industrious and fiery race, disciples of Vulcan.”² If one runs through the 1856 directory one finds that many of the hundred and eighteen people listed as living there were puddlers or moulders in the nearby Tredegar or Armory Iron Works, but carpenters, stone-cutters, millwrights, shoemakers, city guards and even a school-teacher were also listed among the inhabitants. A contemporary newspaper confirms the appropriateness of the name Oregon Hill for this isolated settlement:

Oregon Hill has become a very respectable village within the past few years, and if the city would open a good carriage thoroughfare to it, would continue to increase in number of population and buildings for years to come. Many of the working men of Richmond would readily

build and locate on Oregon, if they had any way to get provisions and fuel to it during the winter months, without being compelled to travel into the country, and thereby increase the charge for hauling . . .³

An approach to the hill was made two years later by the extension of First Street,⁴ now, of course, blocked by the greatly enlarged Penitentiary, the present approach being the broad highway of Belvidere.

An interesting fact concerning the early dwellers on Oregon Hill is that two of the houses were built by free Negroes—527 Belvidere by Lucretia Brown and 609 by James Miller, whose descendants owned it until twenty years ago. Although they lived there until the nineteen-twenties, “the Hill,” as the inhabitants always call it, has remained fiercely white, at least two near-riots having occurred in this general neighborhood when colored people attempted to move in in recent years. With a part of Sydney, Oregon Hill is the only old section of small houses that has been left to white people of modest means.

Notes

1. Sept. 10, 1853.
2. 2nd ed., p. 291.
3. *Dispatch*, June 2, 1856.
4. *Ibid.*, April 2, 1858.

Sydney

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VISITING RICHMOND in 1759, the Rev. Andrew Burnaby described as follows the home of the third William Byrd:

. . . a small place called Belvedere, upon a hill at the lower end of these falls, as romantic and elegant as anything I have ever seen. It is situated very high, and commands a fine prospect of the river. . . . there are several little islands scattered carelessly about, very rocky, and covered with trees . . .¹

“Belvidere” as it is now spelled, was located near the present northeast intersection of Belvidere and China streets. The house itself was unpretentious: insurance policies show a two-story frame building with wings on either side and the usual cluster of outbuildings. The squares between Laurel and Belvidere streets, from Spring Street south to the canal were surrounded by a brick serpentine wall.² In the 1790’s “Belvidere” was the home of Judge Bushrod Washington. In 1798 it was bought by Col. John Harvie, who lived there until his death in 1807. The Harvies must have pronounced the name in the Italian manner: we find curious attempts to put this in writing. The name is spelled “Belvidery” in a policy of 1806, and later on “Belvidera,” which form is used in practically all the deeds and land-book references to the “Belvidera Hill” development of the ’forties.

After Col. Harvie’s death, “Belvidere” was occupied by various people, including Benjamin J. Harris and William Anderson. By



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Fig. 186. “Bleak Hill” (“
227 South Belvidere Street
Built before 1820, Demolished 1939

the 1850’s it had deteriorated into a sort of rooming-house for ironworkers, probably the Irish or Welsh mechanics imported to work at the Tredegar. On February 5, 1854, it burned. So completely were both William Byrd, III, and Col. Harvie forgotten that this event got only a few lines in the *Dispatch* and no mention in the other two newspapers. An eyewitness, however, remembered the conflagration as the most spectacular he had ever seen: “. . . the house was of heart-pine. . . . When it burned, the framework stood awhile like the finest set piece of splendid fireworks.”³

The writer of this letter, the Rev. John M. Pilcher, lived in one of the four houses that in the early 1800’s broke the vast stretches southwest of Richmond. “Belvidere” and the short-lived “Cottage” we have already described. At what is now the corner of Belvidere



*Fig. 185. Parson's House
601 Spring Street
Built 1817-19*

and Canal streets there stood until 1939 a brick house, which sat at rather a rakish angle to both streets and was swept away in the widening of Belvidere (fig. 186). Built before 1820, it was from 1837 until after the Civil War the home of John A. Pilcher and of his widow, John M. Pilcher's parents. From its lonely location, the house was called "Bleak Hill." Actually, it belonged neither to Oregon Hill nor to Sydney, since it was north of the Penitentiary and east of Belvidere Street.

On the south side of Spring Street is the only one of these early houses still standing today. This is the dignified brick home built by Samuel P. Parsons while he was superintendent of the nearby Penitentiary (fig. 185). The Parsons and Pilchers were connected, and all were members of the old Quaker Meeting-house on East

Cary. Parsons' house, built between 1817 and 1819, was occupied by him during the 'twenties, was later the home of the fabulous Ben Green, and then for many years was that of the family of Reuben B. Tyler. In 1874 it became a refuge for unmarried mothers, and is still generally called "the Spring Street Home." After that organization moved to the country in 1932, the house harbored pensioners of the City. In 1948 it was bought by the State as a receiving home for children handled by the Welfare Department. In spite of two awkward additions, it is still a beautiful house. Our surmise is that the two entrances, at the front and side, date from the house's original construction, since this arrangement was not uncommon in early nineteenth-century houses. The good lines of the building, its graceful stair in a spacious entrance-hall, the delicate mantels, two of them very fine, the amount of the early trim—six-panel doors, chairboard, etc.—that has survived its long use as an institution—all these things make the Parsons house most worthy of preservation. Not least notable is the giant hackberry tree that shades it, surely one of the most beautiful trees in Richmond.

In the boom year 1817 Benjamin J. Harris laid off "Belvidere" and the acres surrounding it in lots. He called this development "Sydney," for what reason we have been unable to ascertain, though the spelling would suggest Sydney, Australia, as the source. In the 'fifties this was corrupted to Sidney, but one finds both spellings. The first sale of lots in Sydney extended from the present Cherry to Belvidere Street, and from Spring Street to the edge of the canal. Like other proposed suburbs of that date, this one did not amount to much. The Parsons house is the only one remaining from this development. In 1824 thirteen acres including "Belvidere" were



*Fig. 187. Sweeney House
1920 West Cary Street
Built 1823*

bought by William Anderson, who lived at “Belvidere” before he built in 1830, considerably west of it, a home which he called “Warsaw,” in compliment, it is said, to a Polish friend. This house he gave to his daughter, the wife of Harmer Gilmer. The Gilmer place was sold in 1876 to the Roman Catholic Church, and is the site of the large plant of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

The only really early house still standing in the great expanse of land gradually included in Sydney is even further west, at 1920



*Fig. 188. 600 Block West Cary
On extreme right 611
Built 1842*

West Cary (fig. 187). This was built in 1823 by Andrew Sweeney, who died in 1841 at his home in “Sidneyvill.” The house which has belonged since 1869 to the family of George H. Reith, is picturesque, in spite of an ugly alteration of the west end of what was originally a long brick cottage.

The street-names in Sydney were an extension of those used in Harris’ 1817 plat. Most of them were named for trees—Holly, Cherry, Plum, etc. Even the name China Street may have been inspired not by its remoteness from town, as one is tempted to suppose, but by the China or Chinaberry tree. Of course the chief thoroughfares were determined by the then existent roads, notably the Westham Road (Cary Street) and the Scuffletown Road, which is followed

to some extent by Park avenue. The continuation of Main Street was called Elmwood. South of the Westham Road the east-west streets imitated the A B C names of their opposite numbers within the city limits—Albemarle, Beverley (now Idlewood Avenue) and Cumberland.

In the 'forties when Oregon Hill was being built up, Sydney began to take on a little life also. At least two substantial houses considerably above the level of their contemporaries on Church Street or Maiden Lane were erected on Cary just west of Belvidere. No. 605, built in 1842 by Charles Philips, a shoe-merchant, and still occupied by his family in the 'nineties, has been greatly altered. Much less changed is 611 West Cary, built in the same year ([fig. 188](#)). This was sold in 1849 to William Smith who was to be twice Governor of Virginia and was to go down in history by the preposterous name of "Extra Billy," stemming from his profitable contracts with the United States Post Office. It is amusing to find that an insurance policy on his house dated 1851 distinguished him from other William Smiths by the parenthetical remark "sometimes called Extra." In the 1880's Extra Billy's house was the home of the Rev. Pike Powers, long rector of St. Andrew's. It has been altered since Mr. Gray's photograph was taken by a not unsightly two-story verandah in place of the small front porch.

Another building of the 'forties has been less fortunate. This is a frame house at the southeast corner of Laurel and Main, which was built in 1849 by Caleb Jacob, coachmaker, and belonged to his family for ninety-five years. When it was sold, it had been unoccupied for some time and sorely needed paint, but what it got instead was imitation-brick siding, which has spruced it up but

completely destroyed its charm.

Probably the most pretentious house still standing in this whole area is far to the west, at the present intersection of Meadow Street and Lakeview Avenue. This big step-gabled building with a magnolia close to it is the citified kind of house one would expect to find on Franklin Street, not out in what must have been remote country when it was built in 1849.

In June, 1847, about forty-five acres were sold by the Harvies to a group of gentlemen who planned to develop a “rural, decorated cemetery.” This tract, later enlarged, ran west of Cherry and south of Albemarle Street, with rolling, wooded hillsides and a beautiful view over the James River. At first the owners planned calling it Mount Vernon Cemetery, but John Notman, the landscape architect summoned from Philadelphia to lay it off, suggested “Hollywood,” from the magnificent holly-trees still to be seen there. In this tract was already the Harvie graveyard, surrounded by a brick wall. To these tombs have been added during the past hundred years those of thousands of Richmonders, the distinguished and the obscure. Here lie two presidents of the United States, James Monroe and John Tyler, and the only president of the Confederacy. Here the unmarked graves of eighteen thousand Confederate soldiers are commemorated by what is probably the most beautiful as well as the simplest monument in Richmond—a pyramid of rough granite that rises above even the tall trees around it.

The development of Hollywood and of the later Mount Calvary and Riverview cemeteries to the west of it effectually prevented any mansions from dominating the river as “Belvidere” had done. From 1850 on, small houses for workmen began to fill the blocks between



*Fig. 192. Beutel House
800 West Main Street
Built 1846, Demolished 1925*

Hollywood and Belvidere Street, from Cary to the bluff overlooking the canal. Thus this eastern end of Sydney became in character an extension of Oregon Hill, by which name it is usually called.

Main (then Elmwood) and Cary streets were also developed in the 'forties and 'fifties, with a few houses slightly more pretentious than those south of them. A majority of the dwellings in all parts of Sydney, however, were small two-story frame buildings with a slightly gabled roof, or, just before the Civil War, with the flat roof and square outlines that we have found all over the city at that period. They had either small entrance-porches with square pillars, or jigsaw verandahs. Most of the builders were the same kind of people who were building up Union Hill in the same decade—small tradesmen and skilled mechanics. The building societies probably played the same role that they did on Union Hill in enabling these



Palmer Gray

*Fig. 189. 901 West Main Street
Built 1851, Demolished 1927*

men to own their own homes.

Two houses attractive primarily in their setting were 800 and 901 West Main. The former was a frame house, but unlike countless similar dwellings in Sydney, was set back in a large yard and was sheltered by a big magnolia (fig. 192). Built in 1846 by Silas Beazley, it was from 1876 to 1917 the home of Adolph Beutel, tailor, and of his family. No. 901, a brick house, built by James H. Gray, was for three decades the home of John H. Dickerson, harnessmaker (fig. 189). This house caught the eye not only by proportions that might have dated from a much earlier period but by a large and beautiful crepe myrtle in front of it. Both house and crepe myrtle gave way to progress in the form of a filling-station.



*Fig. 191. Farmer Cottage
417 South Pine Street
Built 1856*

Few of the houses left stand out with any special distinction. An exception was 417 South Pine, built in 1855, and from 1859 to 1896 the home of Jonas Farmer, described in the directories as a “heater” (fig. 191). Until it was covered in recent years with the ubiquitous asbestos siding, this was the most perfect small Gothic cottage in Richmond.

A handful of houses of some architectural interest date from the eve of the War or its early years, notably two that like the Farmer cottage have vertical stripping. These are 1905 West Cary (fig. 190) and 2226 West Main. The first, shaded by beautiful trees, is in poor condition and may have disappeared before these pages go to print.⁴ The second, built in 1859 and owned from 1868 to 1913 by the



*Fig. 190. 1905 West Cary Street
Built 1862, Demolished 1950*

family of Jacob Liesfeldt, has recently been restored and shows how attractive this type of house can be if its frame is not masked by asbestos siding. In the years following the War, small houses were multiplied in Sydney. Most of them would appear to be ante-bellum, so faithfully did they imitate older types of building. Only a study of the titles enables one to distinguish the houses of the 'fifties from those of the 'seventies.

Thus far nothing has been said of the churches of Sydney, though in the chapter on Oregon Hill we had occasion to mention the post-war Baptist and Methodist churches at Albemarle and Pine and Albemarle and Laurel streets. Methodist and Baptist churches were established in Sydney before the Civil War. The first Methodist services took place in the home of Mrs. Catherine Bethel, just west of the Beutel house. Sydney Baptist Chapel was established in 1856 as far west as the present corner of Robinson Street and Maplewood

Avenue. No early church buildings of any denomination survive in Sydney.

The most ambitious church-development in this section if not in any part of Richmond was St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. From the small frame building erected in 1875 at Idlewood (then Beverley) and Laurel, this expanded twenty years later into a plant that included a large church, a school, a library and the building that still serves as headquarters of the Visiting Nurses (I.V.N.A.), besides a chapel and baths on Belvidere, in Oregon Hill proper. All this was done for the people of Sydney and Oregon Hill through the generosity and creative imagination of a remarkable woman, Miss Grace Arents, niece of Major Lewis Ginter. The original little building of St. Andrew's, moved to the corner of Grove Avenue and Rowland Street and called the Church of the Holy Comforter, with its big yard, shade trees and masses of forsythia has more of the charm and atmosphere of a village church, whether in England or America, than any building we can think of in Richmond.⁵

Notes

1. Burnaby, *Travels through the Middle Settlements of North America* (London, 1775), 2nd ed., p. 13.
2. See plat in Henrico Deed Book 15, p. 274.
3. Letter from the Rev. J. M. Pilcher to E. V. Valentine (MS, Valentine Museum).
4. It has been demolished.
5. In 1949 this property was sold to a Jewish recreation group.

III. Jackson Ward

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NEARLY HALF of the pre-Civil War houses now standing in Richmond are in the section north of Broad Street. This large area bounded on the north and east by the deep valley formed by Bacon Quarter Branch and Shockoe Creek is occupied almost entirely by Negroes. Though the political division that comprised Jackson Ward went out of existence in 1905 and never extended farther south than Leigh Street, the name “Jackson Ward” or simply “The Ward” is still universally used in popular speech to designate this, the largest Negro section of Richmond.

Jackson Ward is difficult to divide. A few small sections like French Garden Hill or Navy Hill, at first separated from the city by ravines, were built up as homogenous neighborhoods, but any division of the rest of the area is bound to be arbitrary. Even the three long streets—Marshall, Clay and Leigh—do not constitute three neighborhoods: the houses and the occupants of the east and west ends were quite different. As for the north-and-south streets (or as we say in Richmond, the cross-streets) between Tenth and Brook Avenue, a separate chapter for each one would be a convenient

arrangement for those wishing to visit them, but too choppy for organizing or illustrating a book.

Granted, then, that our division is arbitrary, we shall first consider Marshall, Clay and Leigh streets, and then the shorter east-west streets—Catherine, Jackson, Duval and Baker. Then we will look at the cross-streets, proceeding from east to west (which is the general sequence of this book) and grouping them except where one street had some rather special development.

An appreciation of “the Ward” depends more on a sense of the picturesque than on a knowledge of history. In spite of much shabbiness, dirt and ill-judged repair, Jackson Ward is still a treasure-trove of old houses. This, we fear, will not long be true. Should the proposed Express Highway, defeated by a referendum while this book was at press, be again revived, the east-west arm alone, designed to follow Jackson Street, would destroy more than fifty houses built before 1865 on that street and on those it cuts across. In the destruction of old buildings, this plan will have a more far-reaching effect than any event in the history of Richmond except the Evacuation Fire.

Marshall Street

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KKNOWN IN THE early nineteenth century as I Street, Marshall Street got its present name from the home of Chief Justice Marshall. The eastern part of the street near his house has already been considered as part of the Court End. In our chapter on that neighborhood we have mentioned such early buildings as the Marshall, McRae and Pelouze houses, and among later buildings the Richmond Academy, the row west of Marshall's home, the Davis-Stokes mansion and the two Putney houses. Many others nearby could have been included were photographs of them available and if one did not hesitate to clutter a book with the names of too many men and buildings.

On the edge of the Court End, at the northwest corner of Marshall and Seventh, stood the house of Dr. James Lyons and of his son, James Lyons, the distinguished lawyer, whom Waller calls "the most courtly and elegant gentleman I ever saw." Built before 1810, this was torn down in the present century, but the solitary photograph of it that has come to light shows only the charming doorway, facing Seventh Street.

Diagonally across from the site of the Lyons house is one of the most mysterious relics of early Richmond, a large granite ball mounted on a stone pedestal. Formerly there were three of these balls, generally referred to as Turkish cannon-balls, though it is hard to imagine an early cannon capable of containing, much less of projecting them. According to local tradition, two of them came to Richmond as ballast and were dumped on the wharf of James Moncure. Moncure brought them up to serve as ornaments for



*Fig. 193. Shockoe Hill Meeting House (Methodist)
410 East Marshall Street
Built 1811, Demolished 1913*

his house, which stood on the southwest corner of Marshall and Seventh. When the house was demolished, they were moved to the front of the Armory where one of them still remains.

At the southeast corner of Marshall and Sixth the City in 1817 erected a market, which proved more successful than the one established earlier at Twelfth and Broad. Officially named Second Market, this is still frequently called “the New Market!” It was rebuilt in 1853, but the present rather handsome building decorated with bulls’ heads is modern. Perhaps the centre created by a market attracted other public buildings to that immediate neighborhood, as four churches were built within two blocks of the market. The

earliest of them, Shockoe Meeting House, antedated the New Market by five years, however (fig. 193).¹ This unpretentious building served the Methodists of Shockoe Hill until Centenary was opened in 1843, and after that was used by the Lutherans before they built on North Fifth.²

The next church to be erected was a frame chapel put up by the Roman Catholics in 1825 near the southwest corner of Marshall and Fourth. This is said to have been the first building in Richmond to be surmounted by a cross.³ The block between Third and Fourth had been left by Joseph Gallego as the site for a Roman Catholic



*Fig. 194. St. Joseph's School and Orphanage
Fourth and Marshall Streets
Built 1840, Demolished 1935*

church, but the will was contested and the case carried to the United States Supreme Court. In a significant decision that body, doubtless influenced by the early republic's dread of church power, ruled in 1832 that property could not be bequeathed to an organization non-existent when the will was made. Father Timothy O'Brien, first resident priest, then purchased the lot at Fourth and Marshall. After the congregation moved to St. Peter's, he established in the former chapel three Sisters of Charity. In 1840 they opened a girls' school to which an orphanage was added a few years later. Brick buildings were erected, the earliest being two step-gabled houses at the corner (fig. 194). St. Joseph's, as it was called, flourished, so that by 1850 there were ninety pupils in the academy and fourteen orphans. By the time the buildings were torn down, a large plant had been added to the original houses. Thanks to a handsome bequest from Major James Dooley, the orphanage moved to its present location on the Washington road a few miles north of Richmond.

In 1839 St. James' Episcopal Church was constructed a block east of St. Joseph's (fig. 195). This, the first Episcopal Church added to Shockoe Hill since the completion of the Monumental twenty-five years earlier, developed into one of the most vigorous in the city. The original building designed by Joseph Boyd was of temple form with a portico facing Fifth. Perhaps because it sat low, close to the street, it was appealing and intimate rather than imposing. The interior was unusual among Episcopal churches in following the broad, theatre-like plan that Mills had used for the Monumental rather than the long basilica design. The first rector, the Reverend Adam Empie, was called from his position as President of William and Mary. His successor was the beloved Dr. Joshua Peterkin, who



Heurth B. Cook

*Fig. 195. St. James' Church
Fifth and Marshall Streets
Built 1839, Demolished 1912*

was rector from 1855 until his death in 1892. According to the original terms of incorporation, the building was to be torn down should the congregation ever leave it. Thus when in 1912 the present St. James' was built on West Franklin, those who loved the old church were spared the pain of seeing it used for some business purpose as it undoubtedly would have been so close to the shopping centre.

In 1851 a fourth church was built in the New Market district. German Roman Catholics, growing annually more numerous during the 'forties, had been holding services with sermons in their own language at St. Peter's, until St. Mary's was built on the north side of Marshall between Third and Fourth. The church was considerably altered in 1867, in 1880 and in 1905, but is still the centre of one of the few attractive blocks in this part of town.



*Fig. 197. Former Third Baptist Church
Marshall and Second Streets
Built 1834*

One or two old dwellings in this vicinity deserve mention. At the northwest corner of Sixth and Marshall there stood until 1909 a large brick mansion dating from 1814. In the 'thirties and 'forties this housed successively two girls' schools, the first one conducted by the painter Gennarino Persico and the second by Mrs. A. M. Mead. From the 'fifties through the 'nineties it was the New Market Hotel, with a large "saloon" or hall called New Market Hall which was rented for meetings and entertainments.

At the northeast corner of Fourth and Marshall once stood what was probably the oldest building in this neighborhood, a gambrel-

roofed cottage dating from 1790. In 1875 it was either taken down and rebuilt or rolled to the north end of Third Street, where it still stands.⁴ East of its original location James Bray, whose family owned it for over half a century, built in 1841 a brick house, 404 East Marshall, now the furthest east of the old buildings remaining on Marshall, exclusive, that is, of the handful in the Court End. With its steep roof and triple window, it forms an odd contrast with the nondescript business buildings around it.

West of the Market section, very few large houses and only one public building, so far as we can find, were built on Marshall. The latter is still standing though few people who pass the congested corner of Marshall and Second realize that they are seeing the earliest Baptist church now standing in Richmond (fig. 197). Called Third Baptist, it occupied a simple brick chapel from 1834 to 1845, when the congregation moved to Grace and Foushee.⁵ The chapel on Marshall was made into two dwellings facing Second Street, and now disfigured by store fronts. The first pastor was the Reverend Henry Keeling, the best known was the Reverend James B. Taylor, who took over the church in 1840. The only two large houses that we know of on Marshall above the Court End have both disappeared. At the southwest corner of Second stood one built in 1809 which was purchased in 1825 by Archibald Thomas, brother of the better-known James Thomas, Jr., and, like his brother, a tobacconist. “Archie” Thomas died in 1860, but his widow, his children and grandchildren continued to occupy “Bright Corner,” as it was called, until it was pulled down thirty-nine years later. Best-known of his descendants was the sparkling writer, Miss Callie Ryland, who grew up in this patriarchal establishment, and has left



*Fig. 196. "Bright Corner" (Archibold Thomas House)
201 East Marshall Street
Built 1809, Enlarged 1836 and '57, Demolished 1879*

an affectionate account of its garden, presided over by "Old Miss," her grandmother. Thomas had considerably enlarged the original house, first in 1836 and again in 1857. To judge by the photograph of its three tiered back portico, it must have been one of the most imposing dwellings of Richmond ([fig. 196](#)).

Unfortunately no picture has been found of the house built in 1836 by Jesse Williams at the northeast corner of Marshall and



*Fig. 198. Barham House
313 West Marshall Street
Built 1817*

Adams. Described in the directories as a bricklayer, Williams would probably be called today a builder and contractor. He was a large owner of real estate in the city and county, and the ancestor of many prominent Richmonders.

Of the fifty-five or more ante-bellum houses still standing on Marshall between the Sixth Street Market and Graham Street, only



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*Fig. 200. 701-3 West Marshall Street
Built 1819*

three are very old. Probably the oldest is 315 West Marshall. Built by William Young, who rented it to various people, it was bought in 1844 by Addolph Dill, whose daughter, married to Col. Thomas Barham, lived there through the 'sixties. It is an attractive house in spite of the heavy Greek Revival porch and the elaborate cornice probably added shortly after Dill's purchase of it (fig. 198).

A pair of houses at the southwest corner of Marshall and Munford was built by Curtis Carter, another "bricklayer," whose own home at the time these were built was the elegant little Crozet house. No. 703 West Marshall has been less altered than 701, which has had the front windows enlarged (fig. 200). However, the corner house still shows on the east wall the bricks set vertically to form a cornice

above the windows, a detail characteristic of most buildings erected before the depression of 1819.

This pair of houses is described in early deeds as being in “Buchanan’s Old Field.” The term “old field” was used for tracts that had been abandoned for cultivation. Parson Buchanan’s house, “Gielston,” was near Broad, above Hancock Street. Buchanan’s Spring was nearer Clay. Here John Marshall and his friends played quoits, and here, for many years, the Richmond Light Infantry Blues held their annual outing, always drinking a toast to the long-dead Parson.⁶

East of Hancock Street at what would now be the middle of Marshall Street was a large suburban home, built between 1815 and 1817 by Michael Hancock. This was for many years the home of Judge Dabney Carr, who called the place “Elba” because he said he was as far from his friends as Napoleon was during his first exile. John Minor Botts lived there before the Civil War, and in its decay the old house was used for such varied purposes as a prison for Confederates after Libby was closed in 1868 and a mission of Second Presbyterian Church. Dr. Hoge was disagreeably impressed by the building’s eerie atmosphere. The large grounds, known as Elba Park, served for such festive activities as Fourth of July picnics in the years immediately following the Surrender.⁷ Long after the house was torn down in order that Marshall Street might be cut through, the name “Elba” was kept alive by the informal little railroad-station at Broad and Pine which, until the new Union Station was opened in 1919, served as a social gathering-place for dwellers on West Grace and Franklin streets. Elba School, now a Negro gradeschool, is located not far from the site of Judge Carr’s former mansion.



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*Fig. 199. Isbell House
608 West Marshall Street
Built 1849*

To return to the houses still standing on Marshall, quite a number were built in the 1840's. No. 608 West Marshall is one of the most noteworthy. Built in 1849 by Francis T. Isbell, it is still not only owned but occupied by his granddaughter, Mrs. Maude

C. Merrydew, the only white person, so far as we know, now living in that neighborhood. The ghostly dilapidation of the house is softened by a large tree-box close to the front (fig. 199).

On the north side of the 200, 300 and 400 blocks are many houses dating from the 'forties. One is the picturesque "cottage residence" 206 West Marshall, set far back in the yard. The Reverend Samuel T. Mooreman lived in the 'sixties and 'seventies at 210, now spoiled by a scroll-saw porch. Some houses built in the 'forties were pairs or rows of small two-story dwellings. Among them were 600-602, built in 1849 by F. T. Isbell, 300-302-4 West Marshall (1848), and 219-21-23 East Marshall (1847), this last row torn down in 1947. Numbers 414-16 and 308-10 were built in 1855 and '56 by two partners in the grocery business, Richard S. Glazebrook and William J. Thomas. The Glazebrooks lived at 308 for more than two decades.

Many of the houses above Monroe Street date from the 'fifties. They are unpretentious dwellings, some brick and some frame, built for the most part by mechanics and small tradesmen. They are attractive as an ensemble rather than individually. Number 403, built in 1855 by John J. King, a grocer, who lived there nearly thirty years, is one of the prettiest of these houses of the 'fifties.

Returning briefly to the Market area, three stores deserve mention. They were built at the southeast corner of Marshall and Fifth in 1861 by George K. Crutchfield, father of "Justice John" of Police Court fame. In the 'sixties, 'seventies and 'eighties the future police court magistrate himself sold groceries and liquor in the corner store.

There is a good deal of cast ironwork on Marshall, but on the

whole it is later in date and more scattered than that on Clay. One of the most unusual and beautiful verandahs in Richmond is at 216 East Marshall, built in 1867 by John F. Anthony. An attractive pair of verandahs are a somewhat incongruous ornament on two unpretentious frame cottages, 702 and 704 West Marshall, dating from this same period.

During the First World War colored people began to move to Marshall Street. Except for a handful of houses east of the Market, the street is now almost entirely occupied by Negroes. Business is gradually creeping up as high as Brook Avenue, and many picturesque dwellings will soon be replaced by stores or filling stations. The 300 block will be sacrificed to the express highway, if the latest proposed route is followed. As an old neighborhood, Marshall Street will soon be a thing of the past. But at this time a walk along its shaded sidewalks reveals an unusually large number of homes built in days when it was a pleasant residence street for people of moderate means.

Notes

1. *Virginia Argus*, March. 28 and Dec. 10, 1811.
2. *Compiler*, June 7, 1843. See below, p. 283 for first Lutheran building.
3. Magri, *The Catholic Church in the City and Diocese of Richmond*, (Richmond, 1906), p. 47.
4. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Four Gambrel-roofed Cottages
5. See [above](#) about congregation moving to Grace and Fouchée.
6. *Dispatch*, May 13, 1852.
7. Blanton, *Making of a Downtown Church*, p. 181, *Christian. Richmond*, p. 301 and *Dispatch*, July 2, 1867.

Clay Street

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KSTREET, just north of Marshall, became Clay in 1844. Not only was Henry Clay the god of a predominantly Whig city, but he was considered a local hero. He had been born near Ashland and began his professional career in Richmond, where he lived from 1792 to 1797 as secretary to Chancellor Wythe and at the same time deputy clerk of the Chancery Court.

Like Marshall Street, Clay developed in three distinct parts. The eastern section, with houses of the 1790's and large mansions of the early 1800's we have already considered as part of the Court End. In the part between Seventh and Brook Avenue, the small frame houses of the early nineteenth century were replaced in the 'forties by substantial two-story brick homes, to which a great many more were added in the ugly period after the Civil War. At the upper end, as far west as Graham Street, a large number of modest brick or frame houses were built by mechanics and small tradesmen, chiefly during the 'forties and 'fifties.

Although Clay has more old houses remaining than any other street in Richmond—sixty-four between Sixth and Graham streets—none dates from before 1820. For knowledge of older buildings, we must rely on insurance policies or the recollections of citizens like Mordecai or Linden Waller. Typical of the earliest dwellings on Clay was one that stood at the southeast corner of Fifth, where John Allan lived for some months not long after his return from England in 1820. This was really two houses, both frame, one facing Clay and one facing Fifth, with a brick kitchen and a wooden smokehouse in the angle between them. Among other well-known residents of



*Fig. 201. James M. Taylor House
136-38 West Clay Street
Built probably 1820-21*

Clay Street in the first years of the nineteenth century was William Marshall, brother of the Chief Justice, was living in 1810 at the northwest corner of Fifth and Clay, and five years later at the northeast corner of Second and Clay. Dr. Adam Empie, first rector of St. James', lived at the southwest corner of Clay and Fourth. Dr. Tazewell's frame house between Third and Fourth became after his death the first location of Mrs. A. M. Mead's well-known school for young ladies.¹

All these houses disappeared before the day of photography. The earliest to survive to recent times was 314 East Clay, built by Arthur Brockenbrough, a brother of Dr. John Brockenbrough, and



*Fig. 202. 213 West Clay Street
Built 1839 or '41*

occupied by that family until the late 1880's. It had been greatly altered by the addition of a mansard roof as well as the enlargement of the windows, but basically it was a typical city house of the early 1800's.

The only building of comparable date still standing on Clay was built probably in 1820 by Isaac A. Goddin at what is now 136-38 West Clay (fig. 201). Sixteen years later it became the home of James M. Taylor, who lived there for over twenty years. Taylor, who was an auctioneer and large builder and owner of real estate, was a leader of Richmond Methodism. Although his one-time home has been made into a double house and disfigured by pairs of arched windows, the general outlines are characteristic of many early nineteenth century houses—broad and shallow with a gabled roof.

Across from his own home Taylor built in 1839 or '41 an attractive little row of four houses, 207-13 West Clay, of which only the western one remains unchanged (fig. 202).

The solitary house on Clay dating from the stagnant years between 1820 and 1836 is also the only real mansion on that street west of the Court End. This is 00 Clay, built in 1832 by Addolph Dill at the point where Foushee Street would cut through had it not been interrupted by this house and the handsome grounds that formerly surrounded it. The many points of resemblance between the Dill mansion and that of John Wickham, built twenty years before, are an excellent example of how the builders during that period of inactivity fell back on the designs used in the active decades before the 1819 depression.²

The greatest development of both the upper and middle parts of Clay occurred after 1840. Among many attractive houses dating from that period are two imposing step-gabled houses of Greek Revival style, Nos. 17 and 21 West Clay, built by Addolph Dill just west of his own home.³ Across from them, Nos. 8, in, 12 and 14 West Clay while less pretentious, form a charming row, ranging



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*Fig. 203. 10 and 12 West Clay Street
Built 1847 and 1855*



*Fig. 204. 305 and 307 West Clay Street
Built 1845-46*

in date from 1847 to 1855 (fig. 203). Families associated with them include those of Henry Newman, who lived at No. 12 from 1866 to 1894, of C. B. Habliston, at No. 10 in the 'sixties and 'seventies, and of William B. Ratcliffe, who occupied No. 8 from the 'fifties through the 'nineties. Of the same Classic style are Nos. 211-13-15 East Clay, built in 1848 by Larkin W. Glazebrook.

Simple square pillars take the place of Greek columns on another row, Nos. 305-11 West Clay, built between 1845 and 1848 (fig. 204). Like too many old houses, these have recently been spoiled by the war-prosperity and deficient taste of their owners.

At the west end of Clay between Henry and Smith, two blocks laid off in the "flush times" as part of Bullock and Harris' Addition were not actually built up before the 'forties and 'fifties. Still further west, in "Buchanan's Old Field," the present 600 and 700 blocks



*Fig. 205. 710 West Clay Street
Built 1845*

were also developed in the 'forties with small but attractive houses, most of them of brick. This the new residents called "Ashland

Retreat.”⁴

A few of these West Clay Street houses were constructed by builders or large owners of real estate as investments. Among these are 724, built by the bricklaying firm of Glenn and Davis, and 505-7 by John W. Beveridge. A much larger number were built or else owned and occupied for many decades by mechanics and shopkeepers. Of this group is 815 West Clay, built in 1859 by J. N. King, carpenter, whose family lived there until 1901 and owned the property until 1919. No. 503, built by another carpenter, Robert V. Priddy, was both owned and occupied by his family from 1857 until 1919. No. 713, dating from 1860, was occupied by the Ballou family from 1867 until 1900. Sally Clopton owned 721 from 1857 until 1901, and John J. Davis, of Glenn and Davis, built 517 in 1856 and lived there through the 'seventies. Another brickmaker, William T. Bowles, lived at 700 West Clay in the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties.

One of the most attractive of these small houses is 710 West Clay, built by Rosetta Paul, afterwards Mrs. Edmund A. Cox (fig. 205). The Cox family lived in it until 1923, and sold it as recently as 1927, eighty-two years after it was built. The tall chimney on this quaint building is probably a modern improvement, intended to carry the smoke above the nextdoor house. The picturesque outbuilding is almost as big as the house itself.

All of the lots are narrow in this section, the Cox house being one of the few with side yards. Some houses have a shallow front yard, many come out to the street line. Among the most picturesque is 600 West Clay, a frame house with a two-story verandah (fig. 206). Somewhat similar is 608, belonging for many decades to the



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*Fig. 206. 600 West Clay Street
Built 1849*

family of the builder, Mrs. Ann Smith, whose heirs were living there as late as 1885. A description of this end of Clay would be incomplete without some allusion to its trees, many of them very large and beautiful, which add immeasurably to the charm of the modest homes shaded by them.

In the 1850's a number of substantial brick houses were erected

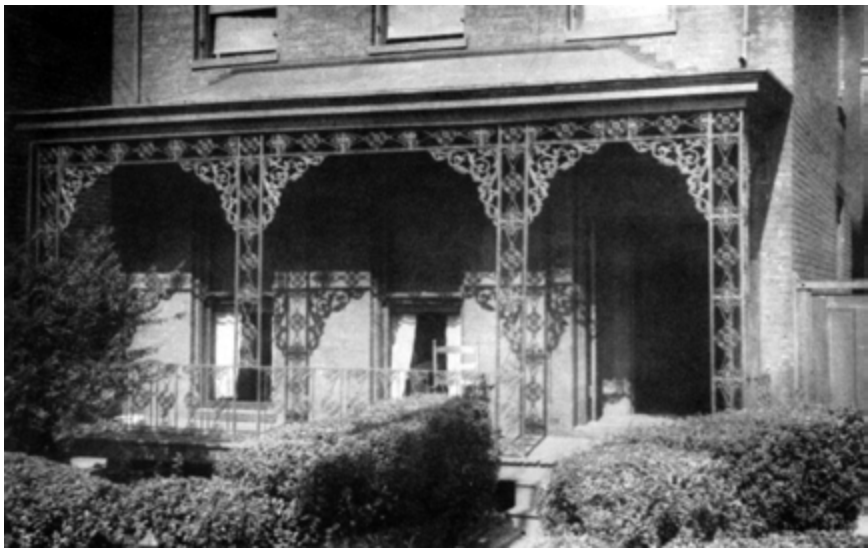


Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 208. 206 East Clay Street
Built 1856*

on Clay in the section between Sixth and Brook Avenue. The furthest east to survive is 508 East Clay, built in 1854 by David A. Brown, saddler, whose family lived there as late as 1885. Its step-gable is striking, particularly today in a block of shabby homes, small shops and parking-lots, but the original entrance, whatever it was, gave way long ago to a flimsy verandah.

Less pretentious but more appealing is 206 East Clay, built by George Minor, a carpenter (fig. 208). This house is of a type that



*Fig. 207. 308 East Clay Street
Built 1855*

must have been popular in the 'fifties, as the only other surviving examples are contemporary with this one. Placed far back in the yard, and without a visible basement, these houses faced not the street but the side yard. Being so close to the ground would seem a disadvantage, but the seclusion had a charm seldom sought by Richmond builders, nearly all of whom put houses close to the street. This little dwelling was even more attractive before the bricks were recently painted a light grey.

A number of houses of the late 'fifties and early 'sixties depended for their beauty less on their rather commonplace lines than on elaborate iron verandahs. Among the most charming of these porches are 306 East Clay, dating from 1861, and 308 East Clay, built in 1855 and for over thirty years the home of John W. Dennis ([fig. 207](#)). Equally beautiful verandahs were the most striking feature of many houses built just after the Civil War, among them one of rich

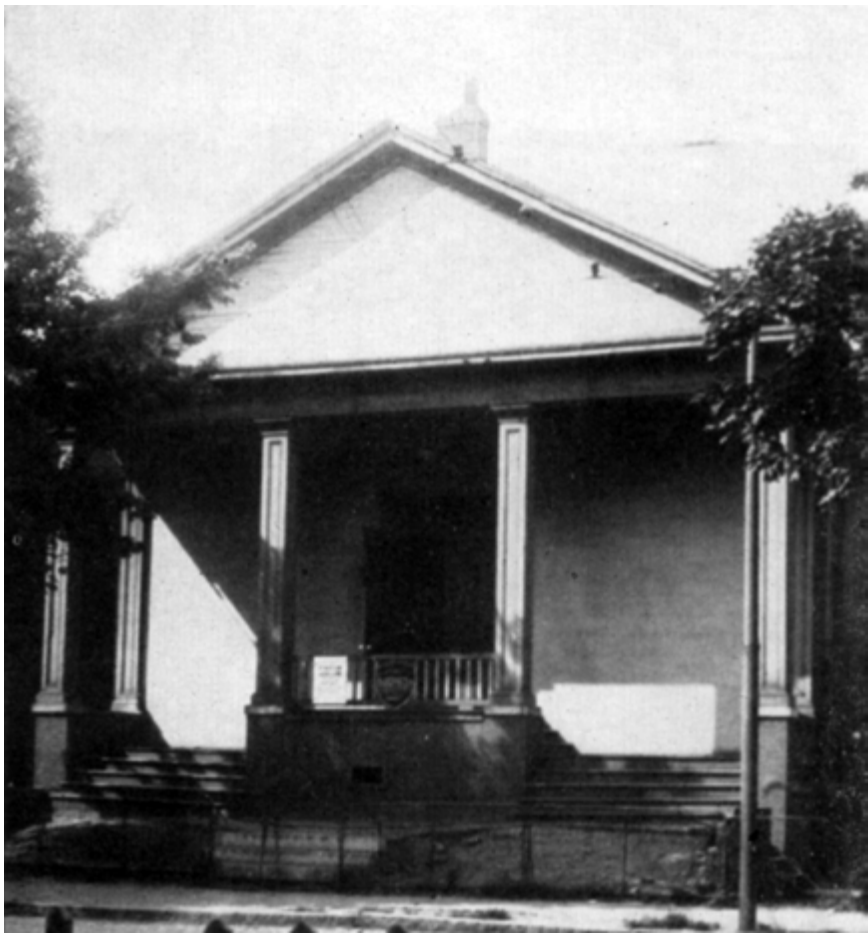


Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 210. Clay Street Methodist Church (Second Building)
Built 1856
Spire added 1890, Removed 1945*

and unusual pattern at 106-6½ East Clay (1867). Ironwork ranging in date from 1855 to 1870 makes Clay one of the streets most worth seeing in Richmond.

Before the War only one church was built on Clay—Clay Street



*Fig. 209. Friends's Meeting House (Second Building)
7 East Clay Street
Built 1856*

Methodist, first located in a frame building erected in 1845 by James M. Taylor on his own property between Brook Avenue and Madison Street. In 1859 a brick church designed by Albert L. West was built at the corner of Clay and Adams, site of an abortive mission of the Monumental called St. Luke's. An imposing façade and graceful spire, both added in 1890, entirely altered the appearance of West's

building (fig. 210). Sold in 1918 to a Negro congregation, the church a few years later lost the spire, its most noteworthy feature.

Shortly after the Surrender, the Society of Friends, which had sold its original meeting-house at Nineteenth and Cary, erected just east of the Dill mansion a second building with a rather attractive A-roofed portico (fig. 209). This was Richmond's Quaker Meeting-house until it was sold in 1911 to a Negro congregation.

A few years younger than the Friends' Meeting house was St. Mark's Episcopal Church at Second and Clay. This simple Gothic-type building was the third occupied by that congregation since its formation in 1866, and was used until St. Mark's moved in 1922 to its present site on the Boulevard. The former church, now used as a storage warehouse, is unique in Richmond in that shops have been built between the buttresses, recalling picturesque churches in Europe.

During the 'eighties and 'nineties a number of prominent Jewish families lived in the substantial houses in the middle section of Clay. With the prosperity of the First World War, Negroes began to move to the street, and by 1923 all of Clay was colored. Thus far business radiating from lively Second Street has invaded one block, that between Second and Third. Should it press further, the old houses will rapidly disappear. At the present moment, the unparalleled number, the architectural variety of the old dwellings, the beautiful trees and rich ironwork together make Clay Street a mecca for those who enjoy Richmond's past.⁵

Notes

1. See Mrs. Mead's school for young ladies [here](#) and [here](#).
2. For the Dill house, see *Houses of Old Richmond*, Addolph Dill House

3. *Ibid.*, Three Step-Gable Greek Revival Houses

4. *Compiler*, April 23, 1845.

5. In July, 1950, most of the trees were cut down in the process of paving the western end of Clay Street. No attention was paid to impassioned protests from residents of the street and representatives of the James River Garden Club.

Leigh Street

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A LONG BLOCK separated Clay from the street north of it to which in 1844 the name of Benjamin Watkins Leigh was given. At that time a deep ravine lay between Clay and Leigh streets as far west as Sixth, the stream in this gulley flowing east into Shockoe Creek.

Being more remote from the centre of the city, Leigh Street saw fewer of its early buildings replaced by rows, and retained more of them until relatively recent times, though most of them have now been replaced by storage-garages.

The earliest house that we can find a photograph of was a frame cottage that stood at the northeast corner of Sixth ([fig. 211](#)). Built at an undetermined date before 1792, it was, like the Copland house at Eleventh and Broad, evidently a composite, the oldest part being the cottage on the corner, to which two wings had been added in the rear. The earliest occupant known to us was Col. John Steele, who migrated to Mississippi in 1804 or earlier. At that time the house was purchased by Anderson Barret, a builder, who spent his last years in a house on the west side of Sixth, north of Leigh. As a youth he had worked on the Capitol, in 1816 he built the Archer Anderson house, and in his old age he supervised the construction of his cousin William Barret's mansion at Fifth and Cary. He died in 1857, aged eighty-four. His son-in-law, Logan Waller, lived in the house at Sixth and Leigh from 1832 through the 'sixties, and here in 1832 was born Linden Waller, who at the request of Mr. E. V. Valentine wrote a lively memoir of his recollections of Richmond covering two-thirds of the nineteenth century.¹ Mr. Waller says that



*Fig. 211. Waller House
Northeast corner of Sixth and Leigh Streets
Built before 1796, Demolished 1905*

when the old house was pulled down, a tablet was found in the chimney giving the date as June 25, 1740. This would be difficult to verify, but if the original cottage was really as old as that, it was no doubt part of the farm-buildings of a place then fairly remote from the newly founded village of Richmond.

Three other early frame dwellings on Leigh of which we have record dated probably from the 1790's. Parson Blair's first Richmond home stood at the northwest corner of Seventh. James Hayes, the printer, lived in what would now be the middle of the street, between Eighth and Ninth, the house being removed and the street opened after his son's later mansion was built. We are fortunate in having both photographs and insurance drawings of the Macfarlane house, which stood until 1903 at the northeast corner of Fifth and Leigh.²



Mrs. William W. Northrop

*Fig. 212. 416 East Leigh Street
Built 1833, Demolished 1927*

This curious building was apparently the earliest of the variously shaped houses, all called octagons in early records, which Dr. Little noted as a remarkable feature of Richmond.

The oldest brick house in this pleasant neighborhood of which we have any record was the interesting Patrick Gibson or Mills house, 706 East Leigh, probably built in 1796 by Joseph Jackson, and demolished in 1931.³ The grounds originally occupied the whole block, extending far north to the City Spring, from which the place took its name, "Spring Hill."

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century several fine houses, all of which are described in *Houses of Old Richmond*, were built on Leigh. Two of modest but comfortable size were

those of Parson Blair, built just west of his frame house,⁴ and of James Gosden, at Third and Leigh.⁵ These were both built in 1812. Dating from 1816 was the mansion of Dr. Hayes, later enlarged and beautified by Thomas Green and for many years the home of the McCance family. Until 1893 this stood at the southeast corner of Eighth.⁶ Contemporary with it is William Mann's house, 506 East Leigh, long identified with the Hawes family, and now the headquarters of the Salvation Army.⁷ The last home of Judge Spencer Roane, at Ninth and Leigh, possibly resembled the Blair or Gosden house before the cumbersome third story and bay-windows were added.⁸ Of these early buildings, only the Hawes, Gosden and Roane houses are still standing, the last one so altered and in such bad condition that one would hardly regret its passing.

How little architectural fashions changed during the years of stagnation after 1819 is evident from the close resemblance between the Gosden house and 416 East Leigh, built in 1833 by the City Chamberlain, William P. Sheppard ([fig. 212](#)). Until one notices the four chimneys on the later house, our photograph would seem to be that of the present Leigh Street Y.M.C.A. During the 'seventies and 'eighties the Sheppard house was the home of E. H. Fitzhugh, and in the 'nineties and until 1906 of Carl Ruehrmund.

During the prosperous 1840's fine brick residences erected on Leigh were similar to those of the same period of Grace or Franklin. One of the most interesting buildings of that period was the second home of the Female Humane Society. This organization, formed in 1807 to shelter and educate orphan girls, was first located at Charity and St. John streets. The second building, at Seventh and Leigh, was erected with a bequest from Edmund Walls, a poor Irish boy



*Fig. 216. Female Humane Association
701 East Leigh Street
Built 1843, Demolished 1920*

who had made a fortune in Richmond and had risen to the position of Inspector of Flour for the port. The handsome building finished in 1843 was of Classic style (fig. 216), and was designed by Joseph Boyd, Jr., architect of St. James' Church. In 1916 the home moved to Highland Park, and shortly afterwards the name was changed to Memorial Home for Girls. As children without proper homes are now either adopted or placed in boarding-homes, the institution, cherished by many generations of Richmond's finest women, has practically closed, the buildings at Highland Park being utilized by the Children's Memorial Clinic. The change both in name and scope during the hundred and forty years of its existence is an interesting example of the change in emphasis in philanthropic work.



*Fig. 215. 512, 514 West Leigh Street
Built 1841 and '42*

During the 'forties and 'fifties the western end of Leigh was developing along quite different lines from the substantial and dignified residences east of First Street. In the vicinity of Brook Avenue a number of small houses were built by free Negroes. The earliest of five remaining houses in this group are 512 and 514 West Leigh, quaint if dilapidated homes built in 1841 and '42 by James Sabb (or Saab) and John Jones respectively ([fig. 215](#)).⁹ In the 'seventies and 'eighties 514 was occupied by a white family, that of a moulder named Joseph Eck. A less noticeable house is 227 West Leigh ([fig. 214](#)), built in 1846 by John Adams, a Negro plasterer who owned a considerable amount of real estate in Richmond.¹⁰ The most remarkable fact about this house is that it still belongs to



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*Fig. 214. Adams House
227 West Leigh Street
Built 1846*

Adams' descendants. Just east of it, 221 and 223 West Leigh, while even less picturesque and considerably altered, were built in 1856 by two free Negro women, Sophia Hill and Catherine Harris. They had bought the land from an owner with the extraordinary name



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*Fig. 213. Ebenezer Baptist Church (Second Building)
Leigh and Judah Streets
Built 1873*

of Keesey Boubee, described in the deed as a free mulatto woman.

With a nucleus of free Negroes in this neighborhood, it was natural that a third African church should be organized there. The first building, of frame, was dedicated in May, 1858, and was given the name of Ebenezer Baptist Church. In 1873 brick walls and an imposing portico transformed the ante-bellum building into one of the handsomest of Richmond's old churches (fig. 213). Ebenezer is still one of the most prominent Negro congregations in Richmond. We shall have occasion to mention one of its best known pastors, Reverend Richard E. Wells, in connection with his home on Duval Street.

Dwellers on West Leigh in ante-bellum days were by no means limited to free Negroes. A number of small houses are still standing that were built and occupied for decades by white people. Among them is a group of four stores and dwellings, 407-13 West Leigh, built in 1848. No. 413 has what appears to be one of the handful of original shopfronts left in Richmond. Just west of these there stood until 1945 what looked like a stage-set for *The Grapes of Wrath*. This picturesque wreck, 501 West Leigh, was built in 1847 and for thirty years was Mrs. Kell's grocery.

Below First Street many excellent houses and rows were built during the 'fifties. Most of these have been torn down in the past twenty years. Among those still standing is 308 East Leigh, attractive if unpretentious home of the builder, Charles C. Ellett, who lived there until his death in 1870 (fig. 218). In the division of his estate, this is referred to as "the mansion house," a term that seems to have been synonymous with "the family home," regardless of size. Just west of the Ellett house is one of the few stores on Leigh,



*Fig. 218. Charles C. Ellett House
308 East Leigh Street
Built 1853*

which was as completely a residence-street as Grace or Franklin. 300 East Leigh, with its bold step-gable (fig. 217) was built by John Ahern, who with his wife Mary had been among the earliest and most faithful supporters of the Roman Catholic Church in Richmond, Mr. Ahern having served Masses for Father Hoare in the little wooden chapel on Fourth near Marshall before St. Peter's



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*Fig. 217. Ahern Grocery
300 East Leigh Street
Built 1853*

was built. Linden Waller remembered Mrs. Ahern selling children “lady’s cakes” at the Leigh Street store.

Even more unassuming than the Ellett “mansion” is 507 East Leigh, built in 1850. This and the house just east of it were similar to a type already cited in the chapter on Clay—set sidewise, far back in the yard. A larger house now masks 509, but 507, almost



*Fig. 219. 802-8 East Leigh Street
Built 1855-58, Demolished 1936 and 1945*

covered by a great tree, is picturesque if sunless.

Three more imposing residences of Classic Revival pattern are still standing—408 East Leigh, built in 1852, and 611-13 East Leigh, built in 1859. The first, now spoiled by a fire-escape, was the home of Bernard D. Chalkley during the 'seventies and 'eighties, and during the 'nineties that of August Pohlig. In the pair 611-13, now in wretched condition, lived for nearly thirty years George W. Anderson and John L. Williams.

Imposing rows now gone were those at the southwest corner of Leigh and Eighth, and on the north side between Eighth and Ninth (figs. 219 and 220). Though built by different individuals, they followed the same general pattern. As details that did not stem from Greek Revival style crept in with the late 'fifties—curved-top windows, iron verandahs or balconies, ornate square pillars in



Heurich B. Cook

*Fig. 220. 707-11 East Leigh Street
Built 1860-61, Demolished 1936-37*

place of columns—the general effect of these rows was harmonious without monotony. Curiously enough, the latest of these houses, 705 and 707 East Leigh, built respectively by Dr. Joshua Peterkin and the Methodist Bishop David S. Doggett in 1861 and 1860, were simpler and more traditional than the slightly older houses east of them.¹¹ Several people well-known in local history lived in the row between Eighth and Ninth, among them Mrs. Sarah Elmira Shelton, Poe’s boyhood sweetheart, and the poet and editor John R. Thompson. Of these two rows all that remains is a stable on Eighth near Leigh, and one house, at the corner of Ninth and Leigh, neither of them probably destined for long survival.

Leigh Street has not grown old gracefully like Clay and Marshall.

Small houses in the western end were gradually occupied by colored people decades before they moved on to Marshall and Clay. But the large houses east of about Third did not lend themselves well to this natural push south of the growing Negro population. As Leigh ceased to be fashionable, various institutions took over a few of them. Some were replaced by rows of small residences. About 1915 the building of storage warehouses and garages began, and within the next twenty years most of the fine residences mentioned in this chapter were torn down. Those remaining, both old and modern, were occupied by Negroes. While some of these, particularly west of Fifth, are well kept up, the majority, being large, are all too easily exploited as cheap rental property, the owners well knowing that they will soon be sold for business purposes. As long as the Hawes and Gosden homes, and some later ones like the Ellett and Ahern houses are still standing, Leigh Street deserves a visit as an old neighborhood. But even should the Express Highway not utilize it as its East-West arm, there is every reason to fear that with the increasing need for garages and other buildings subsidiary to the Broad Street business section, the few remaining old houses on Leigh will become only a memory.

Notes

1. MS in the Valentine Museum.
2. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Octagon Houses
3. *Ibid.*, Patrick Gibson House
4. *Ibid.*, Parson Blair's House
5. *Ibid.*, Gosden House
6. *Ibid.*, Hayes-McCance House
7. *Ibid.*, Hawes House
8. *Ibid.*, Spencer Roane House
9. 514 was ruined by asbestos siding in 1947.
10. In 1862 Adams owned eight lots in Monroe Ward, six of them with

buildings on them.

11. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Peterkin House

Catherine Street

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WEST OF BROOK AVENUE there was no need for a deep block between Clay and Leigh, since they were not separated by a gully. Hence when Bullock and Harris in 1817 laid off one of the developments on the outskirts of Richmond that Mordecai derides as mushrooming (on paper) in those “Flush Times,” they planned a street to run between Clay and Leigh. Probably named in compliment to Mrs. Bullock, Catherine is a very narrow street, with no room for trees, but it is one of the most picturesque spots in the older parts of Richmond.

Only three houses from its earliest phase came down to recent times, all of them built by Jesse Williams. Two are still standing—508-10, a frame house that was doubled in size probably in 1840, and 516, a brick house. No. 512, torn down a few years ago, was more picturesque than either of the others, in spite of altered windows and a later verandah.

Most of the actual building on Catherine Street took place in the 'forties and 'fifties. All the houses are small, most of them frame. They were built and occupied by the same type of people who developed Union Hill—small tradesmen, mechanics, policemen. Probably the most prominent person who lived there for any length of time was James L. Davis, Superintendent of the City Water Works, who lived at 500 Catherine from 1845 until 1885 ([fig. 221](#)). A more atmospheric house of the same period is 701 Catherine,



*Fig. 221. Davis House
500 Catherine Street
Built 1845*

which from 1873 to 1896 was the home of William Orange, police sergeant. A pair contemporary with these two houses is 700-702, built by Robert K. Brock, who built a good many houses on Marshall Street at this same time ([fig. 225](#)).

Three houses now or originally facing Monroe may be grouped with those on Catherine. No. 516 is really only half a house, the other part having been torn down, which leaves a chimney disproportionately large for what is hardly more than a picturesque shanty ([fig. 223](#)). Just south of this stood a more pretentious frame building dating from 1847. In 1892 this was moved to its present location, 410 Catherine, when the Board of Missions of Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church erected a church for Negroes on the corner of Catherine and Monroe. Just across from this church at 512



*Fig. 225. 700-702 Catherine Street
Built 1843*

Monroe is one of the most attractive and unusual small houses in Richmond, a raised cottage built by Matthew M. Lacy, a carpenter, whose family lived there for twenty-five years ([fig. 222](#)).

Like this Lacy cottage, most of the houses on Catherine date from the 'fifties. In fact the block between Monroe and Henry was only cut through then, and the upper part was built up when Glenn and Davis' brick yard was sold off in lots. One of the most attractive houses on the street is 521, a brick house built as late as 1861, and notable for an enormous knotweed in the shallow front yard. In the 'seventies and 'eighties this was the home of Reuben T. Seal, a police sergeant ([fig. 224](#)).

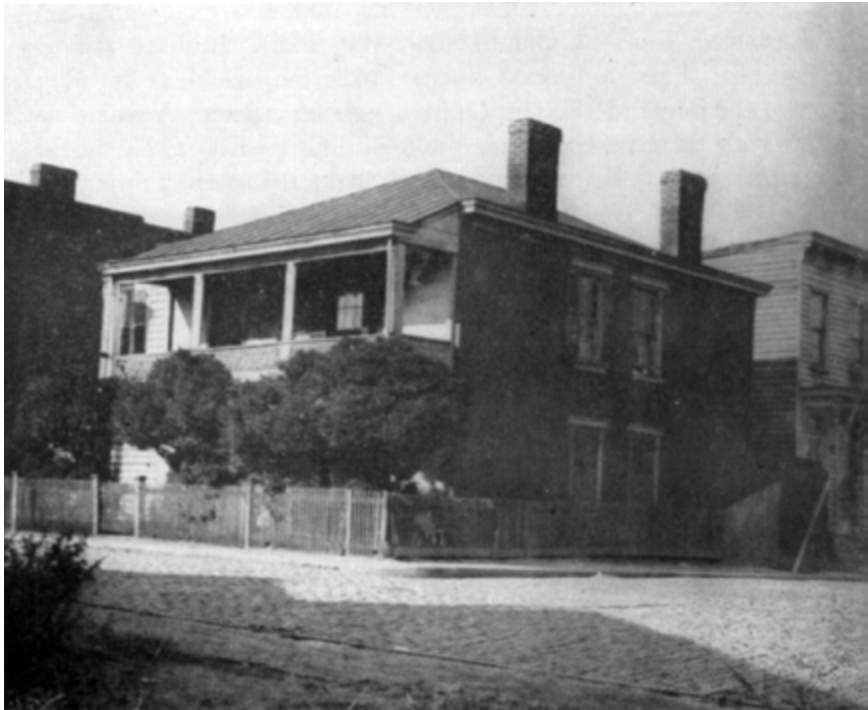
Several other families lived for many decades on Catherine besides the Davises, Oranges and Seals. Peter Everett, who had a butter-stall in the Second Market, built 517 in 1854, and his



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*Fig. 223. 516 Monroe Street
Built 1847*

family lived there as late as 1892. The Isbell and related Edwards families lived at 501 from the 'sixties until 1892 also. The Lamberts, butchers, lived at 709 from 1870 until the late 'nineties, and the



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*Fig. 222. Lacy Raised Cottage
516 Monroe Street
Built 1852*

Hargroves, painters, owned 705 from 1855 until 1928, though they occupied it only through the 'seventies.

Immediately after the Civil War more small houses of the same type as the earlier ones were added to this retired little street. While Negroes moved to the 700-block as early as 1879, the three lower blocks remained predominantly white until the 'nineties. Catherine Street is a pleasant neighborhood, undisturbed by the noisy radios and rowdy corner-stores that scream from many picturesque blocks in "the Ward." The epidemic of asbestos siding has spruced up—and spoiled—a few of the little frame houses. But when the Express



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*Fig. 224. 521 Catherine Street
Built 1861*

Highway cuts in half the three short blocks where its old houses are still almost undisturbed by modern intrusions, it will pass from memory.

Jackson Street

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ORIGINALLY CALLED Carter Street, the street immediately north of Leigh has been called Jackson for over a century, the name coming from Joseph Jackson's garden, which extended from St. Peter to Second, and from Leigh to Jackson. Jackson runs only as far west as St. Peter, and below Fifth deep ravines prevented its extension further east. Like Catherine, it is very narrow, and while the old houses remaining there are less concentrated, they are individually somewhat more interesting.

Most of the ante-bellum houses on Jackson date from the 1840's, a few from the 'fifties. However, two earlier ones merit special



Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress

*Fig. 226. Meredith House
133 West Jackson Street
Built before 1813*

notice. The oldest is 133 West Jackson, built sometime before 1813, probably by William Mann, builder of the Hawes house on Leigh. From 1856 to 1897 it was the home of William Meredith, coachmaker, and his family. Even in our photograph (fig. 226) it is evident that the east end is a later addition. The A-roofed porch, one of only two or three left in Richmond, was placed originally at one side of the front, like that of the Snyder house on Church Hill. The windows have unfortunately been lengthened, and have inappropriate large panes.

Number 101½ West Jackson, built in 1835 by Drewry Fox, seems to have been less altered, but as the list of new buildings for that year calls it a story-and-a-half dwelling, it may have been more changed than appears to be the case. This whole block on the south side of Jackson between Price and Chamberlayne Avenue is extremely picturesque (fig. 227) and was even more so before some of the two-story back porches were suppressed a few years ago.



Fig. 227. Intersection of Jackson Street and Chamberlayne Avenue

Across from this block is a frame house, 102 West Jackson, dating from 1840. During the 'forties and 'fifties it was the home of Thomas Baillie, foreman in the *Times* office, and from 1858 through the early 'eighties that of Lucien Peyronnet and his widow. The few frame houses with two-story verandahs are among the most attractive types of old houses to be seen in Richmond.

In the block just east of Price are several dwellings of the 'forties, most of them brick, no one of them particularly interesting, but the general effect on the narrow street is quite picturesque. 26 West Jackson was the home of Norman Brumfield, carpenter, who built it in 1849; 16 West Jackson was from 1853 till the early 'eighties that of Randolph Maynard, bricklayer. Probably both of these men would have been called builders or contractors in the language of today. Slightly more individualized than the other houses nearby is the little row, 18-20-22 East Jackson, at the corner of First. This step-gabled row with quaint outbuildings was probably started in 1842 and added to thirteen years later.

Though one house, 12½ West Jackson, was from 1854 to 1861 owned by a free Negress, Ariadne Vanderwall, we have no evidence that any colored people lived on the street before the Civil War. Immediately afterwards, however, they began to move there, probably attracted by the fact that there were no large houses to keep prices on the street high.

This may not be the explanation, as the same would apply equally well to Catherine or to Church Street. Since about 1898 Jackson has been entirely occupied by Negroes. It is an attractive little street, full of atmosphere, and we can only hope that the present plan of running the express highway east-and-west on it

will not be carried out, as it would destroy every building on the south side and would naturally eliminate all the atmosphere which is Jackson's chief claim to notice.

Duval And Baker Streets

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JUST NORTH OF Jackson is Duval Street, named for Benjamin Duval, whose property in this section was taken into the city in 1793 as Duval's Addition. Duval Street, which runs from Brook Avenue to Seventh, departs from the regular lines of the streets south of it and makes a long diagonal between Brook Avenue and Second Street.

The oldest house now standing on Duval is also the most interesting, both architecturally and historically. This is the gambrel-roofed cottage, 400 West Duval, built in the 1790's by a free Negro, Abraham Skipwith, and owned for eighty years by his descendants, named Roper.¹ This house together with the one behind it which Skipwith also built seems to have been the nucleus of a group of houses owned by free Negroes. The only two buildings remaining from this settlement are much later in date—433 West Duval, built in 1841 by George P. Gray,² and 405, built in 1852 by Lucy King, "free woman of color," whose relatives lived there through the 'eighties.

Just east of Roper's Alley was quite a large development made in the 'thirties and early 'forties by John B. Prentis, who built many small houses, some facing Duval and some facing Baker. Of these the only ones standing are 318-20 West Duval, a rather attractive brick pair marred by the wooden verandahs that have been added to so many old houses.

Further east are two much earlier dwellings, the only ones left on Duval that are of comparable date with the Skipwith-Roper cottage. 19 East Duval is a small two-story brick house built in 1818



*Fig. 228. 19 East Duval Street
Built probably 1818 or '19*

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by William Saunders (fig. 228). With the exception of the Craig house, it is the only old building standing in Richmond that sits cater-cornered to the street. This gives it a piquant air in spite of its deplorable condition. In better repair is 23-25 East Duval, one of those long, shallow houses that must have been quite common in Richmond before 1820, to judge by insurance policies. Though spoiled by an addition in the rear and a ramshackle verandah,

this house has characteristic keystones over the windows, and an interesting molded brick cornice similar to that on the Crozet house. Both No. 19 and Nos. 23-25 could easily be remodeled into charming and usable buildings.

Between these two and Price Street are quite a number of houses dating from the 'forties. These were built by people of the same social and economic level as those who put up the dwellings a block away on Jackson. Charles R. Harreys who built 121 West Duval in 1848 was a painter. Ezekiel Brower who built No. 109 a year earlier and lived there for two decades was a railroad engineer.

In 1846 a Presbyterian church, Duval Street Chapel, was established at the northeast corner of Duval and St. John streets. Within twenty years, Negroes began to move east on Duval, and in the 'seventies the street was predominantly colored. In 1870 the former Presbyterian church became the property of Sixth Mount Zion, which was soon the most famous Negro congregation in Richmond, under the thirty-four year leadership of the Rev. John Jasper. His sermon, "De sun do move," was probably as widely known as any ever preached in the whole country. The present building of his church was erected in 1887. Ironically enough, just across at 107 East Duval lived the Rev. Richard E. Wells, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Jasper's deadly rival, of whom he often said, "Brother Wells is a base fabricator!" Wells' widow lived at No. 107 as late as 1937.

One of the most successfully altered old houses in Richmond is 307 East Duval, a tiny brick house dating from 1857. Forty years ago its present owner doubled its size by adding an attractive wing at right angles to the house (fig. 229). Few other buildings on Duval have



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*Fig. 229. 307 East Duval Street
Built 1857*

been so fortunate: pebble-dash, asbestos siding and inappropriate verandahs spoil those that are in good condition, while many are in a sad state of decay.

Baker Street, immediately north of Duval, is named for Martin Baker, original proprietor of what was subsequently known as Goddin's Tavern.³ There are only twelve ante-bellum houses standing on Baker, compared with twenty-three on Duval. We have reason to think that its remote location on the edge of town led to several more pretentious suburban residences being built there in the early years of the nineteenth century. One of these, the Grant or Bright house at the corner of St. James, will be treated in the chapter on "Postletown." The only one still standing, 12 West Baker, built in 1813 by Preston Smith, has been too much altered to be of any great interest. Also greatly altered is another large house, 508 West Baker, built in 1834 by Jacob Shook. Since the branches were lopped off of a big magnolia this building has lost every vestige of charm, but its history evokes memories of the cattlemen and butchers who lived along nearby Brook Avenue. Shook was a cattle-dealer, and Alexander Robertson, who bought the house in 1859, a live-stock broker. In the 1890's it was the home of a colored doctor, H. L. Harris.

The remaining houses on Baker are small and for the most part in poor condition. The only one that specially attracts the eye is the tiny cottage, 6 East Baker, one of several houses built in that vicinity by Thos. C. Epps, whose own home once stood at the northwest corner of First and Baker ([fig. 230](#)).

Even before the Civil War Negroes had moved to the street. A relic of this settlement is the small pair of dwellings numbered



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 230. 6 East Baker Street
Built 1847*

534-36 West Baker, built in 1860 by Edward S. Gentry. These little houses, together with three more picturesque ones just west of them and the cottage we illustrate, are almost the only buildings left to make us extend our tour of old neighborhoods to Baker Street.

Notes

1. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Four Gambrel-roofed Cottages
2. See [George Gray](#)
3. See [Goddin's Tavern](#)

Cross Streets of Jackson Ward

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NORTH OF CLAY STREET the terrain was exceedingly irregular: as we have already seen, the long gully between Clay and Leigh was not entirely filled in until just before the War. Beyond Leigh a series of fingers stretched out in the wider valley formed by Bacon Quarter Branch. In the early 1800's knolls cut off from the city were the site of a few remote suburban houses. During the 'forties and 'fifties the need for more and cheaper building-lots led to these one-time country-places or market-gardens being laid off as residence sections for houses of modest size. Eventually the ravines were filled with earth, much of it from the foundations of the new houses. Foot-paths connecting these new developments with the city became carriage-roads which are now such well-graded streets that it is hard for us to visualize the "lay of the land" at the time when most of the ante-bellum homes were established there.

Between Marshall and Leigh many old houses are still standing which will be included in the following chapters, though they do not, historically speaking, belong with the more isolated settlements north of Leigh. From a practical angle, it is easy to walk three blocks on Sixth, Seventh or Eighth, unaware that the old buildings one passes were once separated from each other by impassible ravines. Without failing to call attention to that fact, we shall in this section let history bow to the needs of convenient sight-seeing.

French Garden Hill

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TODAY WE CAN best visualize the remote settlements of the 'forties and 'fifties by walking to the northern ends of Eighth, Ninth and Tenth streets, which still run only two blocks north of Leigh before ending in a steep and rugged ravine. Here in 1792 one Didier Cohn bought nearly nineteen acres of land and opened an amusement park, called from the nationality of its proprietor the French Garden. Cohn was a wigmaker who lived and plied his trade on Main Street just west of Shockoe Creek. He could not have been a refugee from the Santo Domingo revolution, as Mordecai implies, since he was living in Richmond in 1788.¹ By the end of 1806 he was dead, and half of the former French Garden had been bought by Col. John Mayo. The old name stuck to the tract, which Mayo apparently never attempted to develop.

It has been surmised² that Cohn's house was one that stood until recent years at what would be the corner of Abigail and Tenth, were Tenth Street cut through to the brow of the hill. While the history of this property remains obscure, it is evident from the deeds and land books that the big overgrown cottage, of which only the stone foundation now remains, did not date back to Cohn's time (fig. 231).

Linden Waller gives a lively description of French Garden Hill before its development as a residence section:

There was one small brick house occupied by a colored woman who used to have a tame coon, chained to a tree. All around the brow of the hill was to be seen the remains

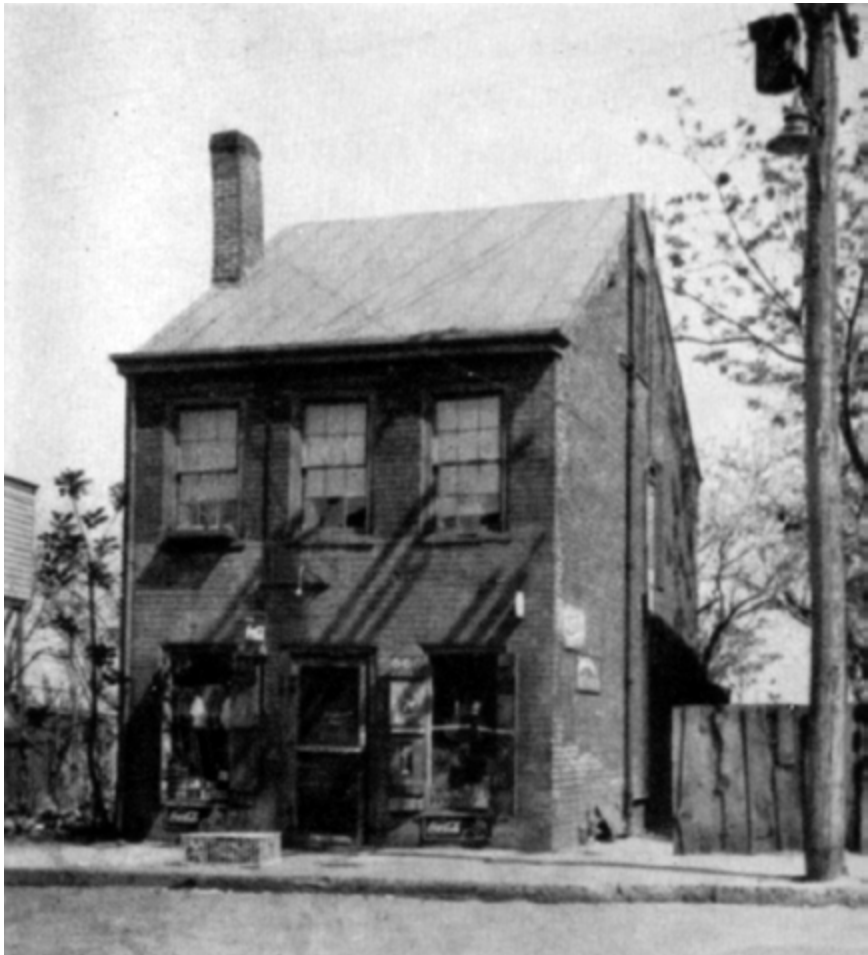
of old fortifications. From the eastern side of the hill from the top to the bottom were large pine trees and we boys used to have our pranks and slide over the pine tags to the bottom. (MS, Valentine Museum.)

At least one house stood on the bluff, just south of Mayo's property. This was the home of James Brown, Jr., second auditor of Virginia. It was a frame dwelling built in 1817 by Michael B. Poitiaux. According to Waller, Dr. James Brown McCaw, Brown's grandson, at one time made his home there. The Poitiaux-Brown house vanished long since, but the big tree in front of the Ritchie cottage is probably a survivor of the orchard and grove with which it was once surrounded.

In 1845 after the death of Mrs. Abigail Mayo her children divided the French Garden tract into more than sixty thirty-foot



*Fig. 231. Stone House on Abigail Street
Date uncertain. Demolished about 1930*



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 232. 719 North Ninth Street
Built 1854*

lots running along Ninth and Abigail streets. These were auctioned off at around three dollars a front foot, and during the next decade a number of unpretentious houses were built on Ninth, the other lots being unusable due to the abrupt slope. Of the nineteen houses still remaining from this settlement, all but five are frame. The people who first lived there were mostly small tradesmen or mechanics:

coopers, patternmakers, carpenters and stonecutters are among those listed in the 1856 directory as residents of French Garden Hill. One free Negro, Mansfield Austin, built the house now numbered 767, but he sold it two years afterwards. A few houses were built as investments. Three of the builders were, oddly enough, like Didier Cohn of French descent or birth: Robert Duquesne, Lucien Peyronnet and Sebastien Delarue.

Today North Ninth is one of the most picturesque corners of old Richmond. It is a dead-end street of one very long block, the numbers running to an astronomical 778! Among the more attractive of the remaining houses is 719, a brick store-and-dwelling built by Nicholas Fisher, a grocer, who lived there for two decades (fig. 232). It is curious how little the building, recently spoiled by a coat of gas-tank red, differs from such houses as the Sterling Crump pair at Nineteenth and Grace, which were built forty years earlier.³ No. 705 North Ninth, built by Robert McNamee, manufacturer of surgical instruments, has a beautiful iron verandah undoubtedly later than the house, as it is like the verandah of the Hancock house on Libby Hill, which only dates from after the Civil War⁴ (fig. 233).

Two of the smallest in a street of small buildings are the cunning Gothic cottage, No. 746, and a little brick midget, No. 778, more picturesque when it was shaded by a great tree that may have been growing there when the house was built (fig. 236). The position of this cottage, peeping up from the ravine, is probably due to street-grading. This has resulted in some other houses being “skied,” with striking effect. We illustrate such a pair, both numbered 753 (fig. 235). Dating the houses in this almost forgotten neighborhood proved quite a task, since the present numbers are so haphazard



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 233. McNamee House
705 North Ninth Street
Built 1844-45*



Ellen Guigon

Fig. 236. 778 North Ninth Street
Built 1849

that one finds not only two 753's side by side but two 767's that are almost an ordinary city block apart!

A curious though far from beautiful dwelling is 735 North Ninth, really half a house, the southern part having been pulled down leaving exposed no less than five chimneys in a row! The history of this building is as unusual as its array of chimneys: since 1849 it has belonged to one man, John Shillinglaw by name, and his heirs.

A writer in the *Dispatch* for Sept. 28, 1852, tells how Ninth Street has been built up in the preceding five or six years. Where there were formerly only four or five houses north of Leigh, it is now a nice village. When the ravine between Clay and Leigh is filled (this is slowly being done with earth from the excavations) it will, he says, be one of the most popular parts of the city.



*Fig. 235. 752 North Ninth Street (both houses)
Built 1851 and 1859*

Actually this prediction never came true. Only one person of any distinction in the history of Richmond ever sought this beautiful promontory for a home. South of French Garden Hill, on the former Brown property stands the only house in the neighborhood with any



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 234. Minor House
607 North Tenth Street
Built 1859*

claim to historic interest. This is 616 North Ninth, built in 1853 by William Foushee Ritchie, son of “Father Ritchie” of the *Enquirer*, and grandson of the first mayor of Richmond. Here W. F. Ritchie and his wife, the actress and author Anna Cora Mowatt, spent the less than ten years that they lived together.⁵ The Ritchie cottage and others on French Garden Hill have recently been spoiled by the prevalent rash of asbestos siding, an “improvement” that has, however, probably delayed the picturesque but inexorable decay of this section.

Thus far nothing has been said of Tenth Street, which, due to the contour of the bluff, is considerably shorter than Ninth. In 1851, as we have seen, City Council acquired sites for parks in various parts of town.⁶ There seems to have been more doubt where to put a park north of Broad than in the other three sections. When Joseph Jackson demanded too much for his garden at First and Leigh, in spite of a good deal of opposition, five and a half acres between Ninth and Twelfth were bought, chiefly from the heirs of Dr. Philip Turpin who in the eighteenth century had owned most of the Court End. In 1859 the City abandoned the park scheme, sold off the lots and then opened Tenth Street. This was shortsighted, both because the City got no benefit from the immediate advance in the value of the lots once a street was opened, and because a park would probably have saved the houses in this neighborhood from deterioration and would have made a hillside that was a beauty-spot instead of the dismal eroded cliff strewn with tin cans and refuse that it now is.

Beginning in 1860, the newly opened Tenth Street was built up with houses that were less picturesque but far more substantial

than those on Ninth. They are excellent brick homes, with the square outlines and flat roof characteristic of the period. Most of them have graceful iron verandahs, but one pair, 605-7, had instead the elaborate scroll work that became popular in the 'fifties (fig. 234). Prominent people occupied these houses down into the present century. The family of Mrs. Landonia R. Minor lived at 607 from 1876 to 1912, that of David J. Baker lived in the corner house (variously numbered 601 and 603) from 1865 until 1924.

In the early 'seventies Negroes began to move into the small houses on Ninth, and by 1879 occupied half of the long 700 block. The larger homes on Tenth were less adapted to their financial status, but the proximity of the open dump at Eleventh and Leigh made the neighborhood undesirable to the better class of citizens of either race. Since 1926 Tenth Street has been entirely occupied by Negroes, largely of the shiftless type. Owners are allowing the houses to fall to pieces in the hope that the Medical College will extend its already tremendous holdings to this promontory. The rear view of once handsome dwellings would be the delight of an artist and the despair of a social worker. If the east-west arm of the Express Highway follows Jackson and M (or Turpin) streets, it will eliminate the houses on Tenth in any case. Nor is there much hope that the desolate hillside overlooking the C. and O. and Seaboard tracks will ever again be more than an ironic caricature of the wigmaker's French Garden.

Notes

1. Minutes of the Common Hall, vol. 1. Cf. Mordecai, 2nd ed., pp. 217-18.
2. E. L. Ryan, "The Old Villa that Stood on French Garden Hill," *Virginia Magazine of History*, vol. 47, pp. 356-58 (Oct., 1939). Colin wrote his name thus on several insurance policies, and Collin in two deeds.

3. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Brick Double Houses
4. See [Civil War](#)
5. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Ritchie Cottage
6. See [Libby Hill Park](#), [Monroe Park](#), and [Gamble's Hill Park](#).

Seventh And Eighth Streets

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PROBABLY THE EARLIEST house on either Seventh or Eighth was one that stood near the southeast corner of Seventh and Leigh. This was built about 1786 either by Albert Gallatin or by Savary de Vaucoulon (or Valcoulon), with whom Gallatin had first come to Richmond three years before.¹ “The house,” says Mordecai, “was rendered singular in appearance by its tall, rounded chimneys. Two acres were attached to it, in which was a wooded dell.”² Long after Savary’s day, Linden Waller watched muskrats playing in the stream that ran through the grounds, and Marion Harland remembered “the perfume of violets rising in almost visible waves from a ravine where the grass was whitened as with a light fall of snow.”³

From 1792 to 1801 this picturesque domain belonged to Bushrod Washington, who planted sycamore trees there in the shape of the letter W. Some of these were still thriving in Mordecai’s time, though the dell had been obliterated shortly before the second edition of his book appeared. From 1801 to 1842 it was the home of Dr. James Drew McCaw, whose courage and giant strength saved many lives in the Theatre Fire.⁴ In the ’forties Conway Robinson occupied the house before building his new home just south of it, and in the ’eighties it was occupied by John L. Williams.

The curious house has long since disappeared. Of the buildings now standing on Seventh and Eighth, the earliest dates back only to 1838. This is 632 North Seventh, built by Samuel Jordan Blair on the land that stretched back of the home of his father Parson Blair, which stood close to the corner of Seventh and Leigh.⁵ Mrs.



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 237. Jordan Blair House
632 North Seventh Street
Built 1839*

Jordan Blair lived at No. 632 until her death in 1874 (fig. 237). For more than twenty-five years it has been owned and occupied by an outstanding Negro couple, Mr. and Mrs. James H. Poindexter, and is in as beautiful condition as any old house in Richmond. The only change that one could suggest is a paling-fence in place



Valentine Museum Collection

*Fig. 241. Conway Robinson House
515 North Seventh Street
Built 1849*

of the present rock wall. It is a charming house, not unlike the Parson's, and similar to such transitional buildings as the Andrew Ellett house, 2702 East Grace.⁶ The porch has the delicate paired columns that preceded the heavier if more orthodox Classic orders.

In 1849 Conway Robinson built a mansion in the yard of the Vaucoulon-McCaw house, where he was then living. A distinguished lawyer, writer on legal subjects and president of the R. F. and P. Railroad, Robinson was a son of that John Robinson who built the "octagon house" at Sixth and Franklin where Conway no doubt was born, in 1805.⁷ In the 'seventies the Conway Robinson house, 515 North Seventh ([fig. 241](#)), was the home of General T. M. Logan. From 1883 to 1914 it served as the Presbyterian and Methodist Old Ladies' Home, and since then has been the headquarters of the Phyllis Wheatley (Negro) Branch of the Y.W.C.A. The house,



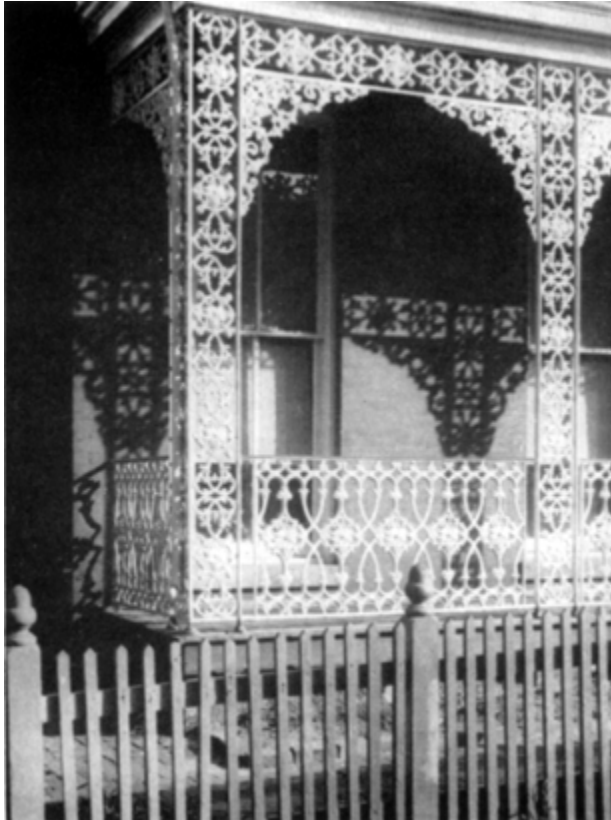
*Fig. 242. 623-35 North Eighth Street
Built 1846, '47 and '57*

probably designed by Henry Exall,⁸ has been considerably altered by a mansard roof. The most striking feature of the interior is the spiral stair, which runs up to the third floor, and for this reason as well as its rather unattractive newel-post and trim may be contemporary with the mansard rather than with the original construction. At present the stucco of the exterior is painted a staring white that contrasts disagreeably with the bright green woodwork.

Several Greek Revival houses of the 'forties and 'fifties are still to be found on both the 500 and 600 blocks on Seventh, no one of them of outstanding interest and most of them in poor condition. All the antebellum houses north of Leigh are on the west side of the street, for the same reason that all but two on Eighth are on the east side: the extensive grounds of the Patrick Gibson or Mills house⁹ occupied the whole block between Seventh and Eighth as

far north as the City Spring. That favorite picnic ground of earlier days is now covered by the Howitzers' Armory and its extension to Seventh, used at present as a storage-garage.

The houses on the 600 block on Eighth form a remarkably attractive and homogeneous ensemble, nearly all dating from a division into lots of a part of James Brown, Jr.'s, place in 1845.¹⁰ Most of the houses are modest two-story brick dwellings with Greek Revival porches (fig. 242). One more imposing pair, Nos. 613-15, which now have three stories, in the beginning had two-and-a-half,



*Fig. 238. 635 North Eighth Street (verandah)
Built 1857*



*Fig. 239. Walter Blair House
618 North Seventh Street
Built 1853*

with step-gables. The most altered house in the row is the one with the most stable history. This is 637 North Eighth, from 1876 to 1942 the home of William J. Henning and his daughters, Mrs. G. M. Smithdeal and Miss Julia Henning. The latter, for many years a teacher at John Marshall High School, lived there until her death, although the neighborhood had been a Negro one for two decades. The most striking house on Eighth is No. 635, notable for an iron verandah of unique and lovely pattern that we know to have been contemporaneous with the house ([fig. 238](#)).¹¹

Returning to Seventh Street, we find several interesting houses of the 'fifties. Walter Blair, a son of the Parson, had built in 1843 between his father's home and that of his brother Jordan a low brick house, rather like an overgrown outbuilding. Ten years later he

erected in front of this an extraordinary frame house, described when it was new as an “Italian cottage residence”¹² and connected by a passage with the older building behind it (fig. 239). Unfortunately this interesting architectural novelty has recently been ruined by asbestos siding.

Two houses dating from the eve of the Civil War are 620 North Seventh, built by D. J. Burr Reeve in 1860, and 624, built the next year by Charles Gennett, jeweller and silversmith, who lived there for over twenty-five years. Both these houses have unusual and attractive iron verandahs.

Contrasted with these two sophisticated and urban buildings is a bizarre little cluster just north of the Jordan Blair house. Below the street-level, three (formerly four) little cottages with big chimneys sit at odd angles to each other, looking more like mountain cabins than anything on a prosperous city-street. Perhaps they were built for slaves or to rent to free Negroes (fig. 240).

Until 1924 Seventh and Eighth were white residence-streets. Within two years both were practically taken over by colored people, both north H and south of Leigh Street.

The block south of Leigh on Seventh and Eighth is now, we fear, hopelessly condemned to storage garages, parking lots and other accessories of the nearby business district. If all the cross streets in “the Ward” are not ruined by the Express Highway, the block north of Leigh would lend itself to development as one of the most attractive Negro sections. The large number of dignified old houses, practically all brick, the fine trees, the contrasting charm of Seventh, a broad, smooth highway, with Eighth, a shady back-water of one long dead-end block—all these elements would make both



Mary Wingfield Scott

Fig. 240. 638-42 North Seventh Street
Built 1854

streets beautiful places to live if a perceiving eye might be given to more leading Negroes before there is nothing left to perceive.

Notes

1. According to a deed of 1789, the house was built by Savary (H.D.B. 3, p. 50). See also an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* dated Dec. 8, 1790. However, due to Gallatin's minority when he started land purchases, his financial affairs were much entangled with those of Savary, whom he served as interpreter.
2. Mordecai, 2nd ed., p. 249.
3. *Autobiography*, p. 249.
4. Mordecai, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
5. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Parson Blair's House
6. *Ibid.*, Andrew Ellett House
7. On page 376 above at "1805" Refers to page above beginning "[Before 1819 many houses...](#)" but I am unable to locate what part of this page it refers to.
8. *Dispatch*, Feb. 11, 1853.
9. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Patrick Gibson's House
10. See preceding chapter.
11. *Dispatch*, Oct. 15, 1858.
12. *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1854.

Sixth Street

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THE OLDEST HOUSE left on Sixth is No. 509, built between 1803 and 1810 by Peter Tinsley (fig. 243). This is one of the most interesting early houses in Richmond, on account both of its architecture and of the unusual number of prominent Richmonders who have occupied it. Tinsley was clerk of the Chancery Court, and it was under him that Henry Clay saw his first public service. He died in July, 1810, shortly after the house was built, and during the minority of his children it was rented to Philip Haxall, who lived there just before he built "Columbia," and to Andrew Stevenson, later minister to the Court of St. James. From 1831 to 1849 it was owned and occupied by Sterling J. Crump, whom we met on Nineteenth Street,¹ and from 1849 to 1868 was the home of Wellington Goddin, probably the most prominent real-estate man of nineteenth-century Richmond. For the next thirty years Franklin Stearns, wealthy brewer, made his home there. Architecturally the house is now unique in Richmond in having a large chimney on the front. The northern end, which includes the chimney and porch, was built by Tinsley; the southern end was added by Goddin in 1853. The older part still has its slate roof. The porch was similar to that of the slightly later Wickham house, broad with paired columns on either side. Unfortunately the top was removed a few days after our photograph was taken. The whole building is in deplorable condition. Not only has a store been added to the front of the southern end, but the rest of the house is used largely for storage purposes. How long it will remain standing is problematical.

Slightly later than the Tinsley house is 619-21 North Sixth,



*Fig. 243. Tinsley House
509 North Sixth Street
Built before 1810*

built in 1818 by Anderson Barret ([fig. 245](#)). As we have seen in the chapter on Leigh Street, Barret was then living at the corner



*Fig. 245. Barret Double House
619-21 North Sixth Street
Built 1818*

just south of this. He built this house as an investment, but was evidently caught by the 1819 depression and sold it in that year to Thomas Price, whose heirs owned it for three decades. During this time it was made into a double house, which explains the blocked window on the front. The best-known person who ever lived there was the printer William B. Allegre (pronounced and often spelled



*Fig. 244. Fontaine House
606 North Sixth Street
Built probably in 1810, Demolished 1889*

Allegree), nephew of Sophia Allegre, the young bride of Albert Gallatin.² Allegre lived at 621 in the 'fifties and 'sixties and at 619 in the 'seventies. The house is a large stuccoed mansion, with the belt-course typical of the early nineteenth century and the hip-roof also fairly common at that time. A few years ago it was in as bad condition as the Tinsley house; in the welcome restoration it



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 246. 625 North Sixth Street
Built 1848*

unfortunately lost an unusually picturesque outbuilding.

Across the street stood a house built by David Bullock, probably in 1810 (fig. 244). From the 'fifties through the 'eighties this was the home of Edmund Fontaine, president of the Virginia Central

Railroad, and of his daughter, Mrs. Richard Meade. The position of the entrance and chimney suggest that before the wing on the north was added in 1840, it must have resembled the nearby Tinsley house.

A dwelling of the 'forties that we select for illustration is 625 North Sixth, built by Fred P. Smith (fig. 246). This has the triple windows and small porch with square pillars, both features long popular in Richmond.

During the 1850's a number of prominent people lived on Sixth, most of them in houses that have now disappeared. Among those listed in the 1856 directory, besides Col. Fontaine, were Dr. J. P. Little, author of the first history of Richmond, John H. Strobria and Anderson Barret, who by then was living on the west side of Sixth north of Leigh. Houses built in this decade that are still standing include two handsome Greek Revival buildings, No. 503, a step-gabled house built in 1853 in the one-time yard of the Tinsley house, and 617, dating from 1855. Here the Patrick H. Gibsons were living in the 'eighties when their daughter was drowned together with her cousin Charlotte Williams. It was in memory of this disaster that the Memorial Hospital was later erected, on the site of the Samuel Myers house.³

Another residence originally Greek Revival is 515 North Sixth (fig. 247). The present two-story verandah is of recent date. Built in 1854 by R. W. McGruder, this almost rivals the Tinsley house in the number of prominent Richmonders who have lived there. William B. Isaacs occupied it for about fifteen years, after which it was successively the home of T. M. R. Talcott, Dr. E. T. Robinson and Louis Rueger. From 1919 to 1928 it was used as the Greek



Old Photo

*Fig. 247. Isaacs-Burges House
515 North Sixth Street
Built 1854*

Orthodox Church of St. Constantine.

A number of old stores are still standing in the block between Marshall and Clay. The oldest one, at the southeast corner of Sixth and Clay, built in 1840 and occupied during the 'fifties by John O. Steger, lawyer, was intended to be a dwelling and has been spoiled by a projecting store. Two pairs, Nos. 415-17 and 419-21, on the other hand were built for stores and have been very little changed (fig. 248). At least one of these buildings, No. 417, has what is no doubt the original store-front, though the two windows flanking the door may have had smaller panes when the house was new.

In 1853 a group of Germans built just north of Clay a small



*Fig. 248. 419-21 North Sixth Street
Built 1852 or 1857*

meeting-house called Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church. After a larger place of worship was erected in front of it fifteen years later, the first tiny building was used as a parochial school. There

is some question whether the small brick building still standing behind what is now Sixth Street Baptist Church (Negro) is the original Bethlehem Church, or whether that was a frame structure, as a newspaper account of 1868 states, perhaps erroneously.⁴

Colored people moved into the 500 and 600 blocks in the early 1920's, and with the exception of the stores, Sixth is a Negro street. The 600 block, which will be practically wiped out by the Express Highway, is particularly charming on account of its old houses and the shady arch of trees. The 500 block is threatened by its proximity to the centre of business: like the same square on Seventh and Eighth it will probably become before long merely an aggregation of parking-lots and storage-garages. The buildings on Sixth most likely to survive are the stores close to the market: if they can escape further face-lifting, they may continue to be utilized as they have been for almost a century.

Notes

1. See [Sterling J. Crump](#) above.
2. See [Albert Gallatin](#) above.
3. See [Samuel Myers](#) above.
4. An account of the church built in 1868 calls the older building frame (*Whig*, Aug. 25, 1868). This may be an error, as a member of Bethlehem Lutheran whose ancestors have gone there for generations assures the writer that the little brick building still standing is the original church built in 1853.

Navy Hill, Fourth And Fifth Streets

page 279

PLATS SHOWING the ante-bellum grades of Fourth, Fifth and Sixth streets easily explain the slow development of those streets north of Leigh. Just beyond Jackson ran a gully as wide and deep as a crevasse, where Linden Waller remembered chasing rabbits, probably in the early 1840's. North of this was a large farm, belonging to Wright Southgate. The first attempt to develop this tract occurred during the "Flush Times": in 1816 we find an advertisement for lots on "the ridge," where it was proposed to erect a pillar in memory of "our Naval Heroes."¹ Thus, ironically, a pillar that never materialized, so far as we know, has given the name of Navy Hill to a large section where for nearly a century no hill has been perceptible!

In Linden Waller's youth, the Navy Hill farm was owned by one of the Southgate heirs, Mr. Edmund Anderson, who had the largest vineyard around Richmond, and used to make wine and sell grapes. Actual development of this farm did not take place until 1854, when lots were laid out from Sixth to Third, north of Jackson Street. The plat of this development shows the gully extending from Third to Sixth streets.²

Since the northern or Navy Hill end of Fourth and Fifth dates only from the late 'fifties, let us first look at the part of both streets that lies closer to Clay and Leigh. As we saw in the chapter on Clay, many houses there faced the side streets. Such was one on the east side of Fifth north of Clay, which had been built in the early 1800's by Dr. James Greenhow and became in 1822 the home of Rt. Rev. Richard Channing Moore. Bishop Moore had come to Richmond in



*Fig. 249. 608-10 North Fifth Street
Built probably 1833*

1814 to be rector of the Monumental and at the same time Bishop of Virginia. He lived in the house on Fifth until his death in 1841. His home was a modest one, part brick and part frame. “What,” asks Mordecai, “would an English Primate think of such a palace?” (2nd ed., p. 120). Bishop Moore’s house disappeared in 1863, but a little office of Dr. Greenhow’s at the corner of Clay became in 1865 the home of the architect Albert L. West, builder of many Richmond churches. Seven years later West pulled it down and built a small brick home which is still standing.

The earliest house now to be seen on either Fourth or Fifth, 608-10 North Fifth, was probably built in 1833 (fig. 249). Originally one of those wide, shallow buildings which we have mentioned in connection with the much earlier house at First and Canal,³ it was divided into two dwellings in the ’fifties. Though in wretched



Mary Wingfield Scott

Fig. 251. 522, 524 North Fifth Street
Built 1845 and '46

condition and marred by a flimsy verandah, it could be made charming, particularly if the deep yard were planted with flowering shrubs.

On the block south of this are two attractive houses dating from the 'forties, Nos. 522 and 524 (fig. 251). The former, a step-gabled house built by Leroy A. Crenshaw,⁴ was during the 'fifties and 'sixties the home of William Sands, editor of the *Religious Herald*. On Fourth three houses, Nos. 529 and 522-24, all date from 1842. The only frame house left from the 'forties is 621 North Fifth, built in 1843 by Lavinia B. V. Claiborne, maiden sister of Herbert A. Claiborne, Sr., who at the time of his death was living in the Hawes house on Leigh and owned land stretching back to the ravine. His sister's home has one of the most fantastic of the scroll-saw verandahs left in town, no doubt a later "improvement." Just north



*Fig. 250. Smith-Beal House
910 North Fifth Street
Built before 1842*

of this formerly stood a pair of houses built in 1848 by William A. Pratt, who lived in one of them before he built the Castle on Gamble's Hill. Judging by that edifice and by his Daguerrian Gallery called "At the Sign of the Gothic Window," this vanished "Cottage ornée," as he called it, would probably have been a valuable item in the study of Richmond architecture.

Far north of these is another house of the 'forties, 910 North Fifth, built in 1842 by John W. Smith who two years earlier had been appointed keeper of the nearby Powder Magazine. From 1858 to 1891 this dignified building (fig. 250) with its pair of chimneys on the gabled north end was the home of the Beal (or Beale) family.

In the 'fifties several dwellings were put up south of the gully, the most attractive one left being 531 North Fourth, built by George W. Sublett (fig. 253). In place of its picturesque outbuildings it now has



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 253. 531 North Fourth Street
Built 1855*

a charming back yard, and is beautifully kept up. Though so late in date, the house has the simple lines of the earlier houses near it, and has been less altered than most of its neighbors.

Fourth might well be dubbed Sublett Street: not only did John, George and Walter Sublett occupy this house or the one



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 254. 1001-3 North Fourth Street
Built 1858 or '59*

just south of it—sometimes both—for most of the time between their construction and 1901, but John T. Sublett built almost the entire west side of the block between Jackson and Duval. These unpretentious houses, mostly frame, date from between 1852 and 1859, though a few were added after the War. Like most of the houses on Fourth north of Leigh, they were built as investments and rented to mechanics and small tradesmen. The most attractive of the houses on this street are Nos. 1001-3 ([fig. 254](#)), built in 1859, and 1009-11, built in 1850. The pair illustrated as typical of this section has been spoiled by asbestos siding, which is rapidly disguising the many old frame houses of “the Ward.”

The Navy Hill part of Fifth Street had a very definite character, due to the large number of Germans who built there in the late 'fifties. On Fourth we find only Caspar Wendlinger, builder of



Old Photo

*Fig. 252. Lutheran Church
Fifth at Jackson Street
Built 1847, Demolished probably in 1885*

several houses on the 800 block, but on Fifth, among those who built the houses still standing were Emmenhausers, Rebmans, Krauses, Gassers and Hoyers. This is not surprising when we know that the first German church in Richmond, the one later called St. John's Lutheran, was built in 1847 on the east side of Fifth just north of Jackson ([fig. 252](#)). After moving to Eighth and Marshall in 1881, the congregation is now on Stuart Circle.

Even in the eighteenth century Germans settled in Richmond,

witness the names of Ege and Sherer among the earliest property-owners. But in the 'forties and 'fifties they began to come in great numbers. In 1844, for example, the ships *Lucilia* and *Palos* arrived with over a hundred and fifty German farmers and mechanics.⁵ Mordecai waxes enthusiastic over both the number of skilled workmen and the gaiety they contributed to Richmond.⁶ St. John's and Bethlehem Lutheran churches and St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church were founded in the wake of this mass immigration. The chief centres where the newly arrived Germans settled were Union Hill and to a greater extent North Fifth, Third and Second streets.

During the 'fifties the suburb on Navy Hill grew by leaps and bounds. Says the *Dispatch*:

Fifth Street, north of Leigh, is improving so rapidly that Navy Hill begins to present the appearance of a neat little village. A large number of pretty residences have sprung up in that section within a short time, and many others will be put up at once if the city would only bridge the gulley so as to make a carriage way to the settlement. (April 25, 1859.)

The houses on the northern end of Fifth show considerably more architectural variety than those on Fourth, probably because more were built to be occupied by their owners. But many have been altered and few are noticeably attractive. An exception is No. 710, built by Charles C. Ellett in 1855 but looking like a much earlier house. No. 747½ is a quaint house set back in the yard, more like an outbuilding than a residence. No. 715, while so distorted by alterations that one would never guess it was built in 1854, is

noteworthy for an exquisite little iron balcony almost concealed between this house and the house south of it.

Returning toward Clay, we find a handsome row erected just before the War at 508-18 North Fifth. John I. Sublett, Charles C. Ellett and others built these six imposing three-story houses, which with their delicate iron verandahs at street-level are almost identical with rows near Third and Franklin⁷ and at Tenth and Clay that date from the same time. The one on Fifth is in wretched condition, no one having the imagination to see what handsome apartments could be made here for Negro families who wanted a Prestwoud or a Monroe Terrace.

Beginning about 1905, colored people moved south on Fourth and Fifth. The houses north of Leigh for the most part are well adapted to their use and are better kept up than those in most parts of Jackson Ward. While Fifth is the more prosperous looking of the two, it is less suited to residences, being a race-track to the viaduct that crosses Bacon Quarter Branch to Highland Park. Fourth, on the other hand, is a quiet, sleepy street that seems to be going nowhere. Both are beautifully shaded with large trees. It is sad to think how many of these trees and how many quaint though not handsome old houses will fall in the swath cut by the proposed Express Highway.

Notes

1. Flat in City Surveyor's office.
2. *Enquirer*, June 19, 1816. Cf. Mordecai, 2nd ed., p. 286.
3. See [Fig. 177](#)
4. The step-gable has recently been removed.
5. *Compiler*, July 10, 1844.
6. 2nd ed., p. 244.
7. Demolished 1950.

Third Street

page 285

THE TWO ENDS of Third Street differed in character even more than those of Fourth and Fifth. Between Marshall and Leigh substantial houses were built early in the nineteenth century. One of them, 408 North Third, survived until recent times (fig. 258). Even in the stage shown in our photograph, when it was being used as a filling-station, it was a distinguished little building. The gabled roof with pairs of chimneys at each end, the small windows with keystones and eighteen lights—all were details characteristic of its period. At what date the Gothic ornament of the porch was



*Fig. 258. 408 North Third Street
Built 1815, Demolished 1922*



*Fig. 259. Crutchfield House
514 North Third Street
Built 1829*

added, we do not know. Archibald Bolling lived there for about five years after the Civil War, and during the 'eighties and 'nineties it was occupied by the family of August Herembourg.

A later house in this same part of Third, No. 514, which is still standing, was built in 1829 by George K. Crutchfield (fig. 259). Crutchfield, an Englishman by birth, was for many years presiding justice of Hustings Court. Since he occupied this house for at least fifteen years, it seems probable that his son, "Justice John" of Police Court fame, was born here, in 1844. In spite of the modern double

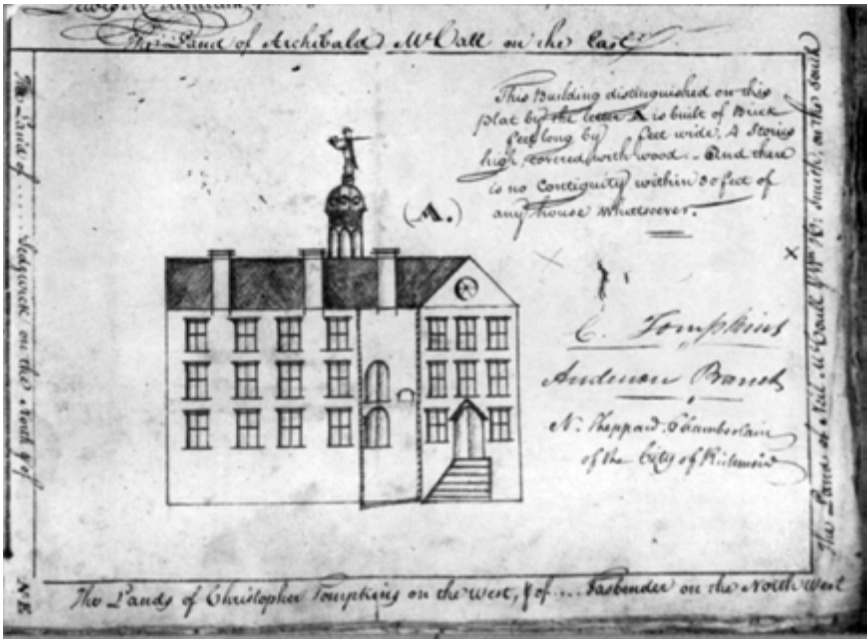
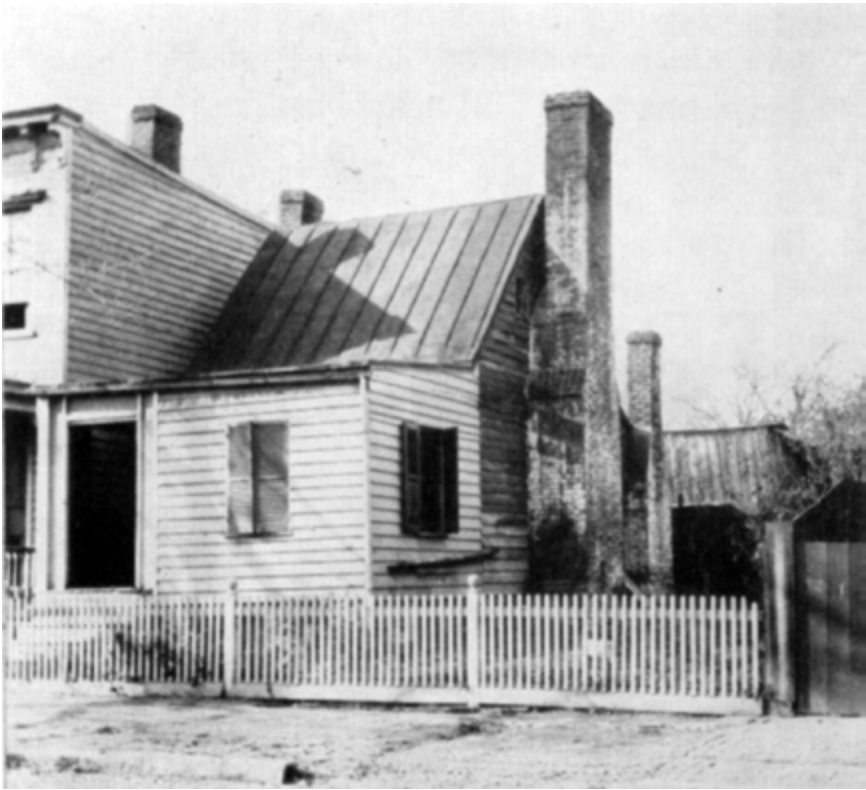


Fig. 255. Poor House, Hospital and Third Streets
Built 1805, Demolished 1860

windows, this Crutchfield home is a charming little building, with a paneled stair and a delicate mantel on the ground floor.

Though the gulch that separated Navy Hill from town was probably less marked on Third than on the streets east of it, it was sufficient to make the northern end a world apart.

Why the City in 1799 bought twenty-eight-and-a-half acres of ground at what is now the north end of Third we do not know, since the Council Minutes for that period are missing. The first use made of it was the construction five years later of a Poor House (fig. 255). This building was replaced in 1860 by the nucleus of the present City Home, as it is now euphemistically called. After the burning of the Virginia Military Institute in 1864, the Poor House was rented



*Fig. 256. 736 North Third Street
Built before 1818, Demolished 1938*

for the rest of the session of 1864-65 as barracks for the youths who had fought seasoned Union troops at New Market.

The first group to see the possibilities of the vacant land around the Poor House for cemeteries were the free Negroes, who in 1814 petitioned the City Council for a burying-ground there. Two years later the congregation of Beth Shalome asked the City for a plot for their use. In 1820 the vestry of “Henrico Church” informed the Council that the small graveyard around the old church was filled. As a result, the city fathers decided to enclose with a brick wall



*Fig. 257. 612 North Fifth Street
Built 1800*

four acres of the Poor House tract, “which when enclosed shall be considered a burying ground for the white inhabitants of the City.”¹ Both Shockoe Cemetery, as this one came to be called, and the adjoining Hebrew Cemetery have been several times enlarged, the brick wall of Shockoe that follows Bates Street having been put up in 1850.

South of Shockoe Cemetery on the west side of Third there



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 260. Wittkamp Saloon
629 North Third Street
Built 1859*

stood in the early 1800's a group of small frame cottages built by Daniel Vanderwall and rented and subsequently sold to free Negroes. Lucy Mingo, Mingo Jackson and Eliza Harris are the names of some of these earliest dwellers on Third. The first insurance policy on these minute buildings is dated 1818, but one that was standing in the 1930's had chimneys with bricks on the splay laid flat that indicated a much earlier date (fig. 256). One of this group, No. 722, is still standing, encased in later construction. Its present height,

two stories, compared with early insurance policies, which show it as a one-story cottage, would suggest that the street-level has been considerably lowered.

The only two other very early houses standing on Third have no connection with this little settlement. The older, No. 1015, a gambrel-roofed cottage opposite the entrance of Shockoe Cemetery, formerly had the date 1790 on the corner. This seems to have been covered with stucco. The house was moved in 1876 from its original location on the corner of Fourth and Marshall.² No. 612, the smaller of two “Dutch roof” cottages that once stood near Third and Leigh, was built apparently in 1800 by Joel Tucker, whose widow subsequently erected the much handsomer Gosden house on the same property, facing Leigh.³ The little cottage, turned endwise to Third Street, is spoiled by an incongruous if comfortable verandah and pebble-dash stucco on the street end (fig. 257). Viewed from the west, its monumental chimney contrasting with its infinitesimal size makes it one of the quaintest buildings in Richmond. For nearly sixty years it has belonged to the same Negro family. “Aunt Martha” Kerr, whom this writer called on there some years ago, said she had been baptized and married by the famous John Jasper.

The systematic development of Third north of Leigh did not begin until 1851, when the property of a man with the extraordinary name of Increase Plant was divided into lots and sold. These lots ran from Third to Fourth and on north beyond the present Jackson Street. The Ahern grocery and Charles C. Ellett “mansion house” were both on this “Plant Plan.”⁴

Most of the houses on both the Plant and Navy Hill developments were unpretentious frame structures, though the



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 261. Eberhard Lohman House
301 East Preston Street
Built 1852*

grocery store of Bernard Gude, 617 North Third, is a three-story brick building, as substantial if not as striking as that of John Ahern. Nearly all the names of the people who built on North Third in the 'fifties were German—Ernst, Wittkamp, Gude, Gerding, Lohman, Lauman, Hulcher, Rebman and Naglesman. The early owners were carpenters, grocers, saloonkeepers. We reproduce the saloon of Bernard Wittkamp, who occupied this frame building, 629 North Third, from 1860 to 1901 ([fig. 260](#)). John Lohman's brick house at 1000 North Third was built in 1851 but collapsed three years later, due to street-grading,⁵ which bears out our surmise that the north end of Third was once higher than at present. Rebuilt in 1856, the Lohman house is one of the most attractive in this group, in spite of

a bathroom-tile finish on the bricks.

Diagonally across from it and facing Preston Street is another brick house, built by Eberhard Lohman, a carpenter, as was John (fig. 261). Originally a step-gabled house, it has been raised to three stories, with an awkward roof-line. Occupied by the Lohmans until the early 'nineties, the house was afterwards used as the hall of the Knights of Pythias (Negro). Its long frame wing, evidently intended to be servants' quarters, is both picturesque and interesting as the birthplace of the Negro dancer, Bill ("Bojangles") Robinson.

Colored people began to move to Third Street shortly after the Civil War. A study of Fifth, Third and Second streets in old directories suggests that the Germans were less hostile than other groups to a peaceful penetration. We find a Negro church, first called African Methodist, now Bethel M.E., built next to the Tucker or Kerr cottage as early as 1856. It is still at the same spot, though the building was materially altered in 1875 and again in the present century. By 1879 Third Street was entirely Negro from Shockoe Cemetery to Jackson Street, but the blocks south of that remained a mixture of white and colored until the early 1900's.

Third is a charming if unpretentious street. Reaching a dead end at the cemetery, it offers no attractions to the speeding motorist. Its trees are even more luxuriant and less interrupted than those on Fourth or Sixth. A whole day could be spent wandering up this backwater, imagining the early freed slaves and the later German immigrants, and finally passing pleasant hours in deserted Shockoe Cemetery, finding there the few bits of rich ironwork that have thus far escaped the scrap-metal hunters, locating among the thirty thousand who lie buried there the monuments of most of the prominent

Richmonders who died between 1820 and 1850—Marshalls, Blairs, Amblers, Caskies, Ellises, Allans, Stanards, Mills, Leighs. Beside those who have made notable marks on Richmond history are the tombs of many less well-known, newcomers from Germany, France, Corsica—all contributors by their enterprise and their labor to the building of the city of today.

Notes

1. Minutes of the Common Hall, vol. 7, p. 110.
2. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Four Gambrel-roofed Cottages
3. *Ibid.*, Gosden House
4. See [Ahern Grocery](#) and [Charles C. Ellett](#)
5. *Dispatch*, Dec. 15, 1854.

Second Street

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FROM THE POINT of view either of its past or its present, Second Street is a complete contrast to Third. To loiter in this lively business section, known to the flippant as “Nigger Broadway,” is as impossible as loitering in the real Broadway would be, while the cars that dash along the wide highway make photography there a hazardous pastime: Yet the twenty-two ante-bellum buildings still standing on Second enable one to evoke to some degree its earlier history.

Actually, it has been to a certain extent a thoroughfare and a business-street for over a century. Before 1840 there were several groceries, notably those of Peter Everett and of William Clarke. Before Third or First were passable, Second was “the street leading to the Poor House” or “the street leading to the Burial Ground on Shockoe Hill.” Along it, no doubt passed the funerals of those who were buried in Shockoe Cemetery in the ’twenties, ’thirties and ’forties. Before 1841 people who walked to the cemetery had to cross the street four times, but in that year a footpath was paved, the west side being chosen because it was sunnier. Three years later the east side was paved also.¹

Only two very early houses remain on Second, both considerably altered. These are Nos. 749 and 827, built respectively in 1816 and 1817. A store-front, long windows and a heavy cornice disfigure No. 749, one of a pair erected by William Bowler. During the ’forties, ’fifties and ’sixties this was the dwelling and grocery of Daniel Murphy. The high slant roof and little dormers attest its age. No. 827, basically a more commonplace house, retains some



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 262. 827 North Second Street
Probably built 1817*

of the charm of a residence, in spite of large panes and a jig-saw verandah (fig. 262). Its history is unusual: from 1851 until quite recently it has been the home of the descendants of George P. Gray, a Negro barber, who bought it nearly a century ago. This is the third longest tenure of an old house mentioned in this book, the only ones exceeding it being the Isbell house on Marshall and the one on Leigh built by another free Negro, John Adams.²

Among the buildings left on Second are two from the “stagnant years” between 1819 and the beginning of Greek Revival architecture. 725 North Second would be more attractive than either of the earlier ones we have cited were it not so disastrously restored (fig. 263). The very steep roof and tiny windows attract



*Fig. 263. 725 North Second Street
Built 1827-28*

one's attention, but the diamond panes, modern verandah and violently white stucco spoil its potential charm. Since 1895 it has been used as part of an undertaking establishment by a Negro family, that of Arthur Hayes.

Its contemporary, No. 1011, was built in 1834 by Peter Everett, who died twelve years later. His grocery is often used as a landmark in contemporary advertisements. What looks like the original shop-window, almost square, is on one side; the other side is occupied by a door leading to the second story. Probably this was a frequent arrangement in small stores with living-quarters upstairs. The



*Fig. 265. Adam Fischer Houses
908-10 North Second Street
Built before 1859*

building has large double chimneys at the north end. The roof-pitch is steep and the upstairs windows very small. The building to the north which otherwise looks modern has the same tiny windows, and may have been originally a wing which has had its roof modernized.



*Fig. 264. 800 North Second Street
Built 1855*

Seventeen of the ante-bellum houses on Second lie north of Jackson, but a handful are still standing among the modern stores south of it. Among them the largest was probably 525½ North Second, built in 1854 by George McGowan. The front of this building is completely masked by a store, but the double porches in the rear are unchanged and quite picturesque. The visitor to the backyard from which they may be seen is rewarded by making the acquaintance of one of the handsomest trees in Richmond, a very large and graceful elm, a strange anomaly in a commercial neighborhood.

Many buildings were erected on Second in the 1850's, although it was considered a tough street.³ The reason for this state of affairs is obscure. Many Germans were among the builders of houses still standing that date from that decade. Among them were Bernard Hoyer, David Strasberger, stonemason, John Roos, baker (who could have been Dutch), and Adam Fischer. The double house, 908-10 that Fischer built, was occupied by his family from 1859 to 1912 (fig. 265).

Both Fischer's buildings and No. 800, a four-story store and dwelling erected by William B. Gaines in 1855, have striking step-gables (fig. 264). Gaines's house is probably the largest old one remaining on Second Street.

While a few small houses that were purely residences were built in both the 'forties and 'fifties, the majority, if we may take those still standing as a fair cross-section, were combined stores and dwellings. That most of them come out to the sidewalk is probably due in part to the widening of the street. However the absence of porches and sparseness of trees give Second, even north of the business-section, a very different appearance from the cross-streets to the east of it.

By 1900 Second was largely a Negro street as far south as Leigh, though a few white families, like the Fischers, still lived at the northern end. Five years later most of the houses between Clay and Leigh were occupied by colored people. At present it is the chief shopping-centre used primarily by Negroes, with stores, pool-rooms, hotels and movie-houses occupying nearly every lot between Broad and Jackson. Unless this development extends east on Clay rather than north, the future of old buildings left on Second is dim: let those who wish to see them hasten.

Notes

1. *Compiler*, Aug. 18, 1841 and April 10, 1844.
2. See [Isbell House](#) and [John Adams](#)
3. *Dispatch*, Sept. 15, 1853. While V.M.I. cadets were lodged in the Poorhouse in 1865, they had constant brawls with Second Street “rowdies” (Col. Wm. Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, Richmond, 1939, III, 77).

“Postletown”

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BEFORE A WALKING-TOUR to “Postletown” was announced in the Richmond newspapers in 1946, we question whether the word had ever appeared in print. Yet ask any middle-aged native Richmonder whether he has ever heard it and he will hesitate a minute, admit that he has, and if pressed, will probably be able to tell you where it is.

How it happened that in Protestant, Evangelical Richmond the five streets west of Second should have been named in the early 1830’s for St. Stephen, St. James, St. Peter, St. John and St. Paul is a puzzle thus far unsolved. Very few old houses remain on the last three named. The Negro housing-project, Gilpin Court, has cut deeply into St. Peter and St. Paul streets, probably destroying some buildings that were interesting if dilapidated. The handful remaining on St. John date from the ’fifties and are of the same modest and not particularly interesting character as those on the northern part of Fourth Street.

More old houses are left on St. James than on the three streets west of it. Among them are two of early date. No. 916, built in 1817 by John Tinsley, belonged from 1870 until recent years to the family of a Negro waiter, William Bullock, whose descendants lived there as late as 1940. While not remarkable, the house is attractive, or would be so without the modern stucco and the unsuitable expansion of the porch.

Almost across from it is a contemporary dwelling that is much more interesting. This is 1011 St. James, built in 1815-16 by John Leslie ([fig. 266](#)). In 1821 it was bought by William Galt, wealthy



*Fig. 266. Elizabeth Galt House
1001 St. James Street
Built 1815*

uncle of John Allan, who left it to a former slave of his, Elizabeth Galt, or, as she is called, rather surprisingly, in the Land Books, “Miss Gault.” He had established her there almost as soon as the house was built, and left her not only her home but a slave named Annie.¹ The house, which she owned until 1849, was until recently in wretched condition. The A-roofed porch, typical of the period when it was built, was removed or perhaps fell down after our photograph was taken. It has been replaced, but the columns are now unsuitably large. The windows in both stories have fifteen lights each and the bricks above them are set to form the characteristic cornice. The outbuilding, which has an enormous chimney, is probably the most



Fig. 267. Kitchen of Elizabeth Galt House

picturesque one now standing in Richmond ([fig. 267](#)). As both house and outbuilding were about to tumble down, we have every reason to be thankful that the present Negro owner has done much to repair them.



*Fig. 268. Grant or Bright House
900 St. James Street
Built 1815, Demolished about 1920*

Probably the handsomest residence that ever stood on St. James Street was the one erected in 1815 by James A. Grant at the corner of St. James and Baker (fig. 268). From 1851 to 1870 this building was the headquarters of the Male Orphan Asylum, which had been founded in 1846. After this institution was moved to the suburbs, the Grant mansion was purchased by Dr. George H. Bright, who had his home and office there until 1897. It then became the headquarters of a very successful Negro enterprise, now known as the St. Luke's Society, in which that remarkable colored woman, Mrs. Maggie L. Walker, was the leading spirit. As its headquarters expanded, this institution eventually pulled down the Bright house.

If there were other mansions on the northern outskirts of town, no photographic record of them has come down to us. This one was



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 269. 1115 North First Street
Built probably 1816*

not unlike the Parsons house, except that it seems never to have had any entrance save the one on the gable-end.²

A few houses still standing on the 900 block of St. James date from the 1840's. That some colored people besides Elizabeth Galt were living there before the Civil War is evident from the name

of one Warner Davis, who occupied 800 St. James in the 'fifties. After the War, two well-known Negro ministers had homes on St. James: William Troy, pastor of various Baptist churches, lived in the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties at No. 810, a house built in the 1840's, and the more famous John Jasper lived from the early 'seventies until his death in 1901 at 1112 St. James.

The north end of First, from Duval to the viaduct that leads to Barton Heights, was so remote from town that no one knew, apparently, what street it would connect with were it linked to the city. As late as 1835 many deeds call it Second Street, which is confusing to the student of old buildings. Among several houses built there in the first years of the nineteenth century, two are still standing. The one numbered 915-17, built in 1820 by Smith Puryear, a brickmaker, has been so altered as to be of little interest. On the other hand No. 1115, the attractive house built by Dr. Peter Letellier, dentist, probably looks very much as it did in 1816, except that street-grading has "skied" it, and the present small porch with square pillars might be later than the house ([fig. 269](#)). The windows have fifteen lights upstairs and eighteen on the main floor, with the cornices that are also characteristic of the time when it was built. What is not peculiar to any date is the unusual and lovely ochre-color of the bricks.

In the 1830's this northern end of the street was named St. Stephen's. It was separated from town until 1853, when First Street was opened from Marshall to Duval.³ The name St. Stephen's was used, nonetheless, for the north end in records even after the Civil War. The remaining houses on both ends are nondescript small buildings, mostly frame, put up in the 'forties. Many sit at

a slight angle to the street, which has undoubtedly been widened and probably changed somewhat in direction to connect First and St. Stephen's. We find two interesting deeds relating to one pair of dwellings, Nos. 1008-10, which give every detail of building called for when they were constructed in 1848 by Taylor and Bassett.⁴ Unfortunately the owners of many of these small houses have listened to the blandishments of asbestos-siding salesmen. This fact combined with the absence of trees on several blocks makes First less attractive than the streets east of it.

By 1879 most of the houses north of Duval were occupied by Negroes. South of that the street remained white until about 1905.

Notes

1. Galt's will is printed in Hervey Allen's *Israfel* [New York, 1926], pp. 859-64.
2. See [two entrances](#)
3. *Dispatch*, Oct. 11, 1853.
4. Deed Book 53, pp. 237, 238.

Brook Avenue

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THE CROSS-STREETS we have thus far been visiting are all broad, flat thoroughfares, most of which have through the years undergone much filling, grading and widening. Let those who want to visualize Richmond streets of the early 1800's thread their way through Brook Avenue, which runs at a tangent north from Broad at its intersection with Adams, descends to Bacon Quarter Branch, and climbs the hill on the far side until it merges with a straight modern double road down which the Ashland carline formerly ran.

According to Mordecai, Brook Avenue was the oldest turnpike road leading into the city. The tobacco wagons followed it, turned east on Broad and then rumbled down the steep hill that is now Governor Street to the inspection warehouses. As late as 1845 it could still be called "the principal point of access to the city."¹

The most interesting building ever located on Brook Avenue was Baker's Tavern, better known as Goddin's Tavern ([fig. 270](#)), built by Martin Baker in the late eighteenth century. Since the Swan and the St. Claire had been altered and only insurance policies record the appearance of the Eagle,² Mr. Lancaster's excellent photograph gives us our best idea of the primitive inns of early Richmond. Behind this building was another; both were of brick. In the courtyard was a spring of delicious water, shaded by large sycamores. Mordecai gives a lively if brief account of the life there when it was the first stopping point in town of the early drovers.³ Baker died in 1821. His sons had all moved away from Richmond, and in 1835 they divided the twenty-five acres that had surrounded the tavern into lots, and sold the tavern itself with a



*Fig. 270. Goddin's Tavern
821 Brook Avenue
Built probably about 1791, Demolished 1912*

two-hundred-foot frontage to Captain John Goddin, who ran it for two decades. During the 'sixties it belonged to a Roman Catholic order, and was run as the hospital of St. Francis de Sales during the Civil War. Here Mrs. Patterson Allan, northern daughter-in-law of John Allan, was imprisoned when she was accused of traffic with the enemy. In 1883 Thomas F. Hannigan bought the old tavern and for a decade ran it as a saloon.

About 1810 Martin Baker's son Thomas built a brick house south of his father's inn at the corner of Baker and Brook Avenue. After his death his widow continued to run a grocery and to live there. In the 'eighties and 'nineties it was operated as a grocery by Frederick Bauer. Though too much altered to be of great interest, this house, 801 Brook, is probably the oldest building standing on the street today.



*Fig. 271. Beine House
530 Brook Avenue
Built 1836, Demolished 1931*

The last early nineteenth-century house to be left on the street in anything like its original condition was the one occupied for many decades by John W. Beveridge as a grocery and feed-store.⁴ When this picturesque building, dating from about 1802, was demolished in 1944, the last vestige of Brook Avenue's early atmosphere departed.

Twenty-five years ago when Palmer Gray took his delightful snapshots, the street still retained much of its charm. Among his pictures we select for illustration a house that stood in the triangle at Monroe and Brook, just across from 514 Monroe and the Lacy cottage,⁵ with which it must have made an old-world ensemble. Built in 1835 by Royal Parrish, it belonged for forty-two years to the family of August Beine, who in his lifetime ran a grocery there (fig. 271).

As may be seen from all the above examples, the buildings on



Mary Wingfield Scott

*Fig. 273. Snider-Frick House
1417 Brook Avenue
Built 1830*

Brook Avenue were for the most part not strictly dwellings, but combined stores-and-dwellings. Beyond where the narrow street descended to Bacon Quarter Branch and mounted the hill on the north side, the houses were of quite a different character. Here lived many prosperous butchers. Their houses, to judge by the three surviving examples, were charming ones that would have graced any part of town. But in the large yards were not only the outbuildings to be expected in a suburb, but slaughterhouses. Old



*Fig. 272. 1514 Brook Avenue
Built 1842*

residents remember vividly the olfactory ordeal of a walk through this section and marvel at how oblivious the residents were to the smells. The earliest of this group of houses still standing is one built in 1830 by Philip Snider, and owned from 1866 to 1920 by another butcher, Theodore Frick. This once attractive home is in the lowest stage of degradation, surrounded by an automobile “graveyard” ([fig. 273](#)).

The other two, while shorn like the Snider-Frick house of all their outbuildings, are fortunately in a less desolate state. In fact, No. 1531 has been quite handsomely restored by its present owner, Dr. J. M. Bassett, a Negro physician. It was built probably in 1844 by one Benjamin Franklin, who died that same year. His obituary is rather touching: “Although a butcher by trade, he was one of Nature’s genuine gentlemen. Richmond boasts not an honester

man—and if any, few as benevolent . . .”⁶ From 1850 to 1898 the house belonged to John Lindsay, also a butcher.

While the interior woodwork of the Franklin-Lindsay house is disappointingly coarse, that in 1514 Brook, just two years earlier, is unusually delicate. In fact the stairway is almost as beautiful as that in the Craig house, over fifty years older. Of the same general type as the Lindsay house, it has a more picturesque setting, far back from the street in a large yard, with a few decayed trees near it (fig. 272). It was built by William Sledd, a butcher, who lived there in the 'forties, 'fifties and 'sixties. Its present use is unique in Richmond: for many years it has been headquarters of a group of Negro Mohammedans, and turbaned colored people replace the butchers of yesterday.

Returning toward the centre of town we find a few houses left from the past. 533 Brook Avenue, built in 1845 by Sebastian Delarue and owned by his descendants until 1907, is almost the only residence on the street south of Bacon Quarter Branch with no trace of a store about it. The most extraordinary building of any date on Brook was built in 1860 by George Meyer, who operated a saloon there as late as 1885 (fig. 274). The corner of Brook Avenue and Leigh forms an acute angle, to which the flat-iron shaped house is fitted. Though some of the wooden porches and excrescences must have been added, they make today a bizarre ensemble.

Brook Avenue is now a Negro street from Broad to several blocks north of the Lindsay house, where it becomes a part of Ginter Park. A great many of the buildings between Broad and Bacon Quarter Branch are used for business purposes, though no street could be less adapted to automobile traffic or parking than this narrow one with



*Fig. 274. Meyer Saloon
533 Brook Avenue
Built 1860*

its twists and jerks. It seems improbable that any old houses will remain there, unless by chance either of the two dwellings near the Lindsay house should be reclaimed as it has been.

Notes

1. *Compiler*, May 15, 1845.
2. See [taverns](#) and [Globe Tavern](#)
3. 2nd ed., p. 219.
4. See *Houses of Old Richmond*, Beveridge House
5. See [Lacy Cottage](#)
6. *Compiler*, May 11, 1844.

Conclusion

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IT TAKES NEITHER an Evacuation Fire nor a super-highway to obliterate an old city. As we look back over the neighborhoods sketched in these pages, we shall see that not one of them has the same appearance or character that it had even a century ago. The chief causes of change in Richmond as in most old cities of America are the spread of business and the spread of slums.

Unless a city fails to grow, inevitably it requires ever larger areas devoted to business and manufacturing. The expansion of retail business is responsible for the destruction of scores of interesting houses and churches on Grace and Franklin streets, on East Marshall, Clay and Leigh. But it does not explain the fate of hundreds of buildings in Jackson Ward, on Church Hill or in Shockoe Valley. Outside of the present retail section, the greatest cause of destruction is neglect and often exploitation of old buildings. As earlier occupants have moved to the suburbs, their former homes have frequently been allowed to deteriorate into rookeries or hovels. With no care exercised in the choice of tenants, rents go unpaid, balusters and mantels are used for firewood, the landlord not unnaturally loses any interest he ever had in keeping up the property, which eventually the Building Inspector condemns. One house on a block thus allowed to deteriorate is like a rotten spot in an apple: the others nearby soon share its fate.

To prevent the further destruction of old buildings still left in the centre of town, notably on Franklin and South Fifth and Third streets, the William Byrd Branch of the A.P.V.A. has proposed a new zoning classification. This Intermediate Business Zone would

allow former dwellings to be used as offices, antique-shops and any other type of business that did not require alterations in the outward appearance of the houses. If the City Planning Commission accepts this suggestion, many houses may be put to constructive use, and much property on the fringes of business areas will escape being allowed to sink to near-slum condition because the owners hope to turn the site into a lucrative filling station.

People

Just thinking of including something about the people in Richmond mentioned in the book.

Maggie Walker

say something here

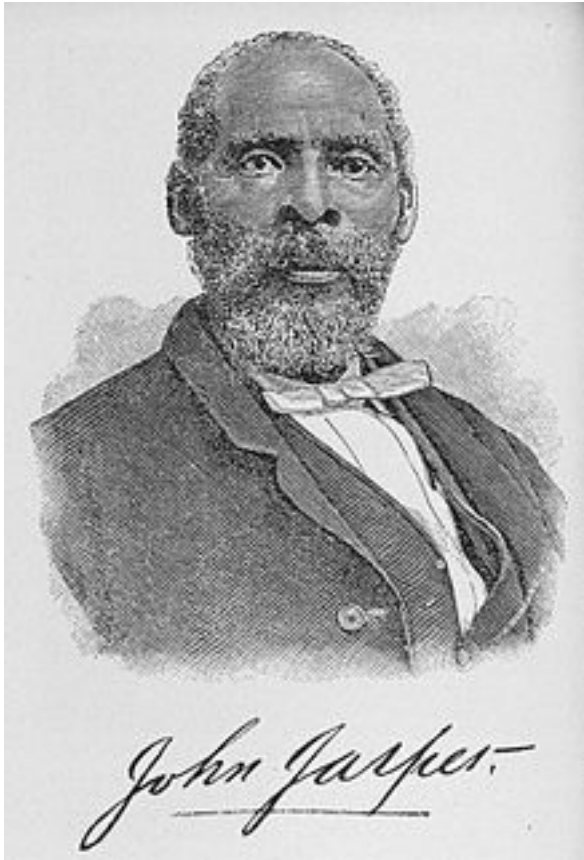




John Jasper

say gave the famous De Sun Do Move sermon





It might be interesting if we could include a recording of this famous sermon. There is a recording in the Library of Congress from 1937-1940 from the Hampton Institute of the Rev. James Boatman (it appears) and it would be interesting to bring this voice from to this book as an audio clip. However, it appears to be quite difficult to get these recordings release, so maybe we will just have to imagine it. However, the full sermon can be found on-line.

Bojangles Robinson

say something here





A Bibliographical Note

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LIKE *Houses of Old Richmond* (1941), this book is based on the deed books and land books of the City of Richmond and of Henrico County, on the policies of the Mutual Assurance Society, and on early Richmond newspapers, a complete list of which may be found in the author's earlier book. Both the arrangement in chapters and the larger number of buildings mentioned make a detailed bibliography for each one impractical.

Of great value are the Minutes of the Common Hall (i.e., City Council) and the maps at the City Hall and Henrico Court House and in the Department of Public Works.

Other primary sources drawn on extensively were the Memoir of Thomas Rutherford and the recollections of Linden Waller, both thus far unpublished. In this same category of personal recollections are Mordecai's *Richmond in By-Gone Days* (2nd edition, 1860) and Robert B. Munford, Jr.'s *Richmond Homes and Memories* (1936).

Of the many books that Richmond has inspired, the most reliable is W. Asbury Christian's *Richmond, Her Past and Present* (1912). While Christian was not interested in buildings, his account of events was soundly based on contemporary newspapers. Other secondary sources are cited in the footnotes at the end of each chapter.

Would that more studies of individual buildings similar in approach if not necessarily in scope to Dr. Wyndham B. Blanton's *Making of a Downtown Church* (1945) might be undertaken! The field of Richmond's industries—tobacco, flour, and paper-products—are likewise inviting topics that should produce books equal to the late

Kathleen Bruce's *Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era* (1930). Equally tempting is a study of her architects, ranging from men of national reputation who worked briefly in Richmond, like Robert Mills and Thomas U. Walter, to our own local architects, such as Otis Manson or Albert L. West, and early architect-contractors, like Thomas and Samuel Freeman, of whom at the present time practically nothing is known.

With no such detailed studies as a background, a synthesis such as this book perforce must be is bound to contain both errors of fact and errors of judgment. We can only claim that it is based on original documents, not on hearsay information or secondary sources.

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