

much nearer the lines during the siege of York, Oct., 1781, it was so bombarded that it was never repaired. Not a vestige of it now remains. Secretary Thomas Nelson was in this house when the siege commenced. During the bombardment, his butler was killed while serving dinner, waiter in hand. Then Secretary Nelson left the house under a flag of truce, and was escorted into the American lines by his three sons, who were officers under Washington. Fourth. The present Nelson House, which was occupied by Lord Cornwallis as headquarters of the British Army, during the siege, Oct., 1781, was built as late as 1740-41, by President William Nelson, for his eldest son, Thomas, afterwards signer of the Declaration of Independence, Governor of Virginia, and Major-General in the American Army. Gov. Nelson was an infant in 1740-41, having been born 26th Dec'r, 1738, and it was through his little hands that the first brick was made to pass when the present Nelson House was founded. For a picture of this house see Bishop Meade, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 204; Scribner's Monthly Illustrated Magazine (The Century), Oct., 1881, p. 803; and the Magazine of American History, A. S. Barnes & Co., July, 1881, p. 47.

The old Custom House at Yorktown, Virginia, was doubtless built about 1715, the same year as the first Nelson brick house—or even before it. In either case it would be the oldest brick house in that section of the country, as it is the oldest and first Custom House in the United States of America. It escaped serious injury during the bombardment, in Oct., 1781.

The following is copied from a letter to Dr. R. C. M. Page, of New York City, from Col. William Nelson, of Oakland, Hanover County, Virginia, under date of April 3d, 1883:

"I learned in my young days from my father and mother that the present Nelson House at Yorktown, Virginia (the same, by the way, in which I was born), was built about the year 1740-41, by President William Nelson for his eldest son, Gov'r Thomas Nelson—then an infant in his nurse's arms—and the first brick was made to pass through his little hands. This occurred a few years before the death of his grandfather, Scotch Tom, who died 7th Oct., 1745. Bishop Meade was certainly inaccurate in his statement of the building of that house. As regards your account of the other Nelson houses at Yorktown, Virginia, I think that it is as nearly accurate as you can get it at this late day.

"Gov'r Thomas Nelson died 4th January, 1789, at one of his farms in Hanover County, Virginia, and his body was carried down to York and buried in the old churchyard, immediately at the foot of his father's tomb; so that grandfather, father, and son (Scotch Tom, President Nelson, and Gov'r Nelson), were buried in a continuous line, the head of the second near the foot of the first, and the head of the third near the foot of the second.