

Francis Dodge Warehouse
1006 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-~~100~~436

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

FRANCIS DODGE WAREHOUSE

- Location: 1006 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.
(Note: Prior to 1881, Wisconsin Avenue was called High Street and had different address numbers. From 1881 to 1906, Wisconsin Avenue was known as 32nd Street and had present address numbers.)
- Present Owner: Carolinian Corporation founded by Donald Stetson Davis, Yacht Zephyrus, 1020 Maine Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. and Dr. Alfred E. Jackson, 814 Stafford St., Arlington, Virginia.
- Present Occupant: Vacant.
- Present Use: It is proposed to use this structure as a museum of the port of Georgetown.
- Statement of Significance: This building is one of a row of three late 18th century warehouses which preserve most of their original architectural features and were typical of the Georgetown waterfront.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following information is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure was built. The site is in Square 1188, present lot 816, part of lot 74 of the original plan of Georgetown. The reference for the following material is the Recorder of Deeds, District of Columbia.

1807 Deed June 16, 1807 recorded June 25, 1807 in Liber R folio 406 containing a clause about the building of wharves and the construction of docks and slips
Benjamin Oden

To
Allen Dodge
Francis Dodge
tenants in common

1807 Deed June 15, 1807 recorded June 25, 1807 in Liber R folio 408 for lots 74 and 75

Philip B. Key
Walter S. Chandler
To
Benjamin Oden

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- 1824 Deed July 1, 1824 recorded October 22, 1824 in
Liber WB 12 folio 253
Allen Dodge and wife Mary
To
Francis Dodge
- 1835 Deed July 15, 1835 recorded July 16, 1835 in
Liber WB 54 folio 365
Richard Davis
To
Francis Dodge

2. Date of erection: The building is probably late 18th century.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc: None known.
5. Notes on alterations: Though the original form of this building is apparently preserved, there have been numerous changes which can be seen in the walls. Part of the south wall of the building is stone. (Mentioned in a Lease August 26, 1813 recorded November 23, 1813 in Liber AF folio 468 as part of an "old stone house").
6. Important old views: Block in which warehouse stands is shown in photograph taken by George Barnard during Civil War - [Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs, B 8171-290]

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Washington directories provide the following tenant information:

1808	W. and C. Smith
1835	Roswell Woodward
1896-1922	Wm. H. Gaskins and Sons, coopers
1923-1926	vacant
1927-1931	Paul F. Brandstedt Inc., sheet metal
1932-1943	vacant
1954-1966	W. H. Winslow, paint company storage
1966	Carolinian Corporation

C. Supplemental Material:

The following is an incomplete summary of research on the Dodge Warehouses by Mary (Mrs. William) Mitchell, 1718 Hoban Road, N.W., Washington, D.C.

"The property first entered the D.C. Land Records in 1807 when Francis Dodge of Georgetown and his brother Allen of Newburyport,

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Massachusetts bought it for \$3,300. [Liber R folio 17 recorded June 25, 1807.] Dodge's name first appears in the U.S. Census for 1800 under that of Isaac Tenney who had also come from Newburyport. Dodge was eighteen years old.

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"Grantor of this property was Benjamin Oden, trustee for heirs of his father-in-law, Stephen West, of Prince Georges County, Maryland, who had died in 1803. Back to 1792 the property was still in West's possession. It measured 104' on Wisconsin Avenue (Water Street in those days) by 80'-2" on K (Keys at that time), and the north and west lines were parallel to these. On it was a 'large stone house.' The bearing wall inside the present warehouse and the foundations reaching to the corner, both of thick stone and solid mortar, are undoubtedly part of the original building. It is possible this was a so-called Rolling House, to which hogsheads of tobacco would be rolled down the hill for inspection, weighing and then shipment. Whether the wall was the north or south wall of the house is not clear.

"In 1813 Dodge leased this part of his purchase to Richard Elliott (Liber AF folio 31). The property leased measured 55' from the corner up to the 'south end-wall of a 2-story brick house late in occupation of Isaac Tenney.' 1006 Wisconsin Avenue is probably the house referred to. If it was on the property when Dodge bought it, the deed does not so state. The Assessment Volumes for 1808 and 1813 may clarify this. The lease occurred in the middle of the War of 1812 when all shipping came to a halt.

"Four months after the war was over, he [Dodge] was ready to start again. On April 10, 1815, he and two other men bought the 130-ton brig, "Adeline," and registered her for foreign trade at the Port of Georgetown. But they were over-eager, for England didn't open her West Indian ports to U.S. commerce until 1830, and a small vessel like this would have been uneconomical for the transatlantic trade.

"However Dodge was already prospering. He had bought a large mansion from Nicholas Lingan in 1811 and surrounding lots for pasture and gardens at the corner of what is now 31st and Q Streets. In 1821 he bought 68' wharfage on the SW corner of Wisconsin (High) and K (Water Street by then - names were switched in 1818) from the Georgetown Corporation, and 37 more feet with a brick warehouse along the south line of Water with wharfage.

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"In 1824 he bought out his brother for \$5,500. In 1828 he and an Alexandria merchant bought "Olympia," a 199-ton brig, also "Hope and Folly," a 91-ton schooner. Soon he had accumulated enough wharfage to total 150' along the waterfront, and began to buy docks and more warehouses near the foot of 31st Street (Congress). During the Thirties he had major shares in "Rubicon" 120 tons, "Rambler," "Potomac" 147 tons, "Kathleen Jackson" 456 tons, "Caledonia" 647 tons, and "Francis Depau" 595 tons. All these were registered at the Port of Georgetown for foreign trade, and can be assumed to have docked on the wharfage directly across from the Lot 74 warehouse. By 1840 it presented the busy wharf scene, typical of other seaboard towns.

"In 1834 the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal was extended to Harpers Ferry. Business correspondence of Francis Dodge now in the Peabody Room at the Georgetown Public Library reveals that he traded in commodities like grain and lime transported on the Canal from the fertile hinterland and then shipped to New York and New England. With the opening of the Canal, surplus water was available for waterpower, and in 1835 the Congress passed an Act allowing Georgetown to draw on it to operate flour and cotton mills. Dodge helped back a large flour mill at the west end of town. This meant that the export of flour via the coasting trade to the north was also part of the business conducted from the main warehouse.

"Francis Dodge, Jr. first appeared in partnership with his father in 1832, when they, together with two other local merchants, bought the brig "Rubicon." William A. Gordon's colorful description of the souvenir in the old warehouse shows the wide extent of the family's commerce with foreign parts:

'... Still lower down was the Dodge warehouse, a never ending source of delight. The firm was engaged in trading in their own vessels with the West Indies and South America, and were large importers of sugar and molasses. Each year a sale took place, the wharves being covered with hogsheads, and buyers from the large cities of the North attending. On these occasions, the boys were allowed to move about through the rows of hogsheads supplied with long straws, which they would dip through the bung hole open for inspection and feast on the molasses drawn out. The counting house was capacious, and decorated with curios brought from the tropics, such as flying fish, shark's jaws, and sword-fish and saw-fish. On the sale days

elaborate lunches were served, with fine cigars and every variety of drinkables for the guests. Out from the counting room extended a wide platform overlooking the river, furnished with chairs and benches, which on warm summer afternoons was used as a meeting and lounging place by the friends of the proprietors...

[William A. Gordon: "Recollections of a Boyhood in Georgetown," in Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C., vol. 20, 1917, p. 131.]

"A. H. Dodge, F. D. Jr.'s brother, younger by ten years, became a partner in 1844 when the brothers bought "Sturges," 130-ton schooner. During the forties, they took shares in seven other vessels, five schooners enrolled for the coasting trade, a brig and a bark registered for foreign trade. Commodities advertised regularly in the Georgetown Advocate (copies at the Peabody Room, Georgetown Branch, District of Columbia Public Library) show a predominately West Indian origin.

"Francis Dodge died October 10, 1851. On March 20, 1854 when the estate was finally settled, the property in Lot 74 was still intact with the dimensions given in the original deed Liber R folio 17. (Settlement of the estate appears in Liber JAS 79 folios 1-55.)

"On October 5, 1857 the house of F. & A. H. Dodge failed, and all properties were assigned to H. C. Matthews and Edward Chapman as receivers. At a sale on December 4, 1858 (Liber JAS folio 167), the warehouse at 1000 Wisconsin sold for \$4,000 to William R. Edes. (Liber JAS folio 176) records another sale to Edes in 1859. Further research at the Land Deeds will tell whether both 1000 and 1006 were thus transferred to Edes. In 1860 (Liber JAS folio 198) George Shoemaker, Flour Inspector, bought the 'shed and warehouse on Water (K) Street adjoining the Edes property for \$1,050.' This would be the Krause restaurant now (1966) for sale. On June 13, 1863 (Liber NCT folio 7) Shoemaker deeded this property to his son George, Jr., who had been clerk for the brothers before the bankruptcy.

"During the Civil War the warehouse and offices at that corner were shared by N. P. Denison, Commission Merchant, and the N. Y. Steamship Line. Since Edes was one of seven independent flour merchants operating with war contracts out of Georgetown, and the annual wartime local volume was around 200,000 barrels of flour, this was again one of the old Port's busiest corners."

Prepared by Dr. James Philip Noffsinger
Architect
National Park Service
August 16, 1966

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Dodge Warehouse is the center building in a group of three late 18th century Georgetown waterfront warehouses. It has escaped not only excessive alteration but the seemingly inevitable destruction visited upon--in one form or another--nearly all of the waterfront structures dating from Georgetown's maritime era in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Although merely functional in design, the Dodge Warehouse possesses an architectural integrity of character that is matched by few commercial structures, large or small, in the Georgetown Historic District.
2. Condition of fabric: Surrounded by other structures, only the east facade of the warehouse is viable to any extent. Although the oft-patched exterior wall has suffered some structural deterioration and missing bricks, the warehouse appears to be sound and the interior fabric appears to be well-maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 25'-10 1/2" (three-bay front) x 47'-6"; two-and-one-half stories in height; rectangular in layout.
2. Foundations: Rubble stone masonry, exposed above grade on south bay of east elevation by steep (north to south slope of site).
3. Wall construction: Original Flemish bond red brickwork has been extensively repaired in common bond.
4. Chimneys: Red brick chimney (1'-8" x approximately 6' rises above north party wall east of ridge; two-course brick cap bevels inward slightly at top.

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5. Openings:

- e. Doorways and doors: Main entry has an approximately 5' masonry opening in central bay of east elevation; light wooden enframements entirely within masonry opening; wooden sill and flanking vertical fenders protect lower half of opening; two concrete steps below; worn plain metal-covered wooden double doors.
- b. Windows and shutters: Six-over-six-light double-hung wooden sash, wooden sills, flat brick arches over openings. Window in central bay of second floor is result of alteration of a supposedly earlier door (lower part of earlier larger opening now boarded in). Triple segmental-arched openings in west (rear) wall have been closed with brick infilling. Cellar windows on east elevation are in line with upper windows; alteration to south cellar window in east elevation indicates opening may have extended below grade. Pintles on several windows indicate former shutters.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gabled (north-south ridge) roof, tin covering.
- b. Framing: Heavy timber, mortise and tenon construction.
- c. Cornice, eaves: Simple brick string course projects immediately below eaves (does not carry through central bay); tin gutter appears to be of early date.
- d. Dormers: Central dormer on east slope of gable roof has projecting gable roof over board and batten door. This hood formerly protected hoisting mechanism. Central dormer on west slope of gable roof aligns with east dormer. Small ventilation dormer on southwest corner of roof is louvered (does not date to original construction of warehouse).

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Open plans with support columns (which run north-south under ridge).
2. Stairways: One-run wooden stairway rises from east to west along south wall, beginning from southeast corner of building (on both first and second floor).
3. Flooring: Random width boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Rubble masonry south wall indicates that present warehouse probably incorporated wall of older non-extant structure; numerous repairs and alterations, notably on south wall, are of common bond brick masonry. Ceiling is exposed beam and decking.
5. Doorways and doors: None. Opening with wooden lintel in south wall of first floor level connects with warehouse to south.
6. Trim: None.
7. Hardware: Iron hook is suspended from dormer hood; square iron nails protrude from ceiling beams in garret area near dormer.
8. Lighting: Modern incandescent.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Dodge Warehouse faces east onto steeply sloping (north to south) Wisconsin Avenue near its intersection with K Street, one-half block north of the Potomac River. The warehouse is enclosed on three sides, sharing party walls with adjacent warehouses to the north and south and abutting a later two-story structure to the west. One-and-one-half blocks south of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, it was once in the center of Georgetown's thriving maritime activity. With a shift in commercial activity as well as location, the warehouse is now located well away from the most vital areas of modern-day commercial Georgetown.
2. Enclosures: None.

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3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: Abuts modern public sidewalk to the east.
5. Landscaping: None.

Prepared by Thomas R. Martinson
Student Assistant Architect
National Park Service
August 17, 1966