

Cooper-Lawrence House  
Burlington, Burlington County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-73

HABS  
N.J.

3- BURL

457

459 High Street

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Cooper-Lawrence House  
Burlington, Burlington County, New Jersey

Owner: Cooper House - Burlington County Historical  
Society  
Lawrence House - Sara B. Marrs, her sisters,  
and brother

Date of Erection: About 1696

Architect:

Builder: The rear portion of the Lawrence House  
was built by Henry Grubb before 1696;  
front portions built about 1750 - north  
end by Samuel How, south end by Edw.  
Brooks.

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone  
Exterior walls - stucco over  
brick  
Interior walls - plaster  
Floor - random width boards  
Inside brick chimneys  
Roof - pitch, tin

Historical Data:

The number 457 High Street, Burlington, was  
the birthplace of James Fenimore Cooper. The building

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was erected prior to the Revolutionary War, but was not occupied by Elizabeth and William Fenimore Cooper, the parents of the novelist, until after the war. Cooper lived there only one year; he was born there in 1789 and moved to Cooperstown, New York, in 1790; in the southern end of this house, number 459, Captain James Lawrence, naval hero of the war of 1812, was born on October 12, 1781. This was his home from 1781 to 1813. His dieing words "Don't give up the ship", which he repeatedly cried as the Chesapeake lost to the Shannon, is part of the tradition of our navy.

Neither property was ever owned by the Cooper or Lawrence families. County records indicate that the Lawrence House was built prior to 1696 by Henry Grubb. This is the interesting portion of the house.

Bibliography:

Court Records of Burlington County  
searched by Frederick A. Eckhart.

*Walter E. Root*  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

*Seymour Williams*  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.  
District Officer

Reviewed  
Sept 2, 1936  
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The land upon which the Cooper-Lawrence House stands was part of the tract granted by John Pennford to Thomas Olive and David Mills for the use of Mary Perkins and her heirs. Part of this land was deeded to Henry Grubb and Thomas Raper.

The history of this property and that of the Hartshorn House (NJ-251) is the same from the time of the ownership of Grubb and Raper until 1742. From Grubb and Raper the property passed to Nathaniel Westland who actually took it over so as to make it possible to settle the estate of Joseph Adams, one of whose executors Westland was; this was in 1704. He sold the property in the same year to Hugh Huddy. Six years later the property came into the possession of Joseph Myers. Myers ownership lasted four years when Jasper Moon became the owner. Two years after this Moon made an addition to the property from the Bassnett tract.

In 1720 William Pattison became the owner. He died intestate and the property came into the possession of his daughters Sarah Bard and Hannah Hartshorn. Benet and Sarah Bard and Hugh and Hannah Hartshorn in order to settle the estate sold to Isaac De Cou in 1742. De Cou sold a portion to Hugh Hartshorn, probably the part on which the Hartshorn House (NJ-251) stood, and the other portion to Benet Bard in the same year. This later would seem to be the portion containing the older section of the Lawrence House.

There is a gap in the record of ownership of the Lawrence House from 1742 to 1767 when Edward Brooks sold to Edward Tonkins. It passed from Israel Tonkins, a son, to William Mc Ilvain in 1796.

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Almost immediately Mc Ilvain sold to William Smith. Robert Coe became the next owner in 1801. From that time until 1936 when the Misses Marrs became the owners twelve transfers are recorded for the Lawrence house in the clerk's office at Mt. Holly.

There is a longer gap missing in the ownership of the Cooper House, 1742 to 1782. In the later year John Howe came in possession of it by will from his father Samuel Howe, Sr. He obtained the rest of the property in 1796 from his brother Samuel, Jr. The clerk's office records nine transfers from that time until the Burlington County Historical Society came in possession of it in 1923.

Bibliography:

Title searched by F. A. Eckhart

*Walter C. Rull*  
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