

The Tench Francis House and Barn
Near Paulsboro, Gloucester County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

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

The Tench Francis House and Barn
Near Paulsboro, Gloucester County, New Jersey

Owner: Dr. Isidor P. Strittmatter
Thorofare
Woodbury

Date of Erection: 1765-1770

Architect:

Builder: Tench Francis, Jr.

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Main house three; wing two and
one-half

Materials of Construction:

HOUSE:

Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - stone; frame additions of later date

Interior walls - plaster; exposed joists in some rooms on second and third floors

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - gambrel on main part with dormers on west elevation; pitch on rest

BARN:

Foundation - stone

Two stories

Exterior walls - stone

Interior walls - oak framing with plank floors

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

On May 30, 1763 Tench Francis, Jr. obtained a tract of land in Deptford Township containing about seven hundred and fifty acres from the executors and heirs of John Alford. It is upon this tract that the present house stands. Many believe that it was built by the first Tench Francis who was a well known lawyer in Maryland and Pennsylvania, being the attorney-general of the latter state, and one of the founders of the University of Pennsylvania. However, Tench Francis, Sr. died in 1758 and from the record of purchase we know that it would have been impossible for him to have been the builder. It is also claimed that the stone of which this house is built was brought as ballast by a vessel from France. No existing vessel of that time could have carried as much stone as was necessary to build this house; furthermore, the stone is of the Pennsylvania variety and similar stone can be found in the vicinity of Chester.

Tench Francis, Jr. was born in Talbot County, Maryland in 1730. He was a prosperous merchant of Philadelphia and active in city and national affairs. At one time he contributed five thousand pounds to the Continental Army. For many years he was the agent of the Penn family in Pennsylvania. He was also the first cashier of the Bank of North America which office he held until his death in 1800. His will dated 1800 left to his wife Anne all his personal belongings and his real estate "to sell and dispose of as she shall think proper". We also learn from this will that approximately three hundred and fifty acres had been sold to James Cooper and was then in the possession of Peter Grimm.

Anne Francis sold in 1802 to Samuel Whitall the remainder of the tract, three hundred and eighty-four acres. Samuel that same year transferred the title of two hundred acres to Joseph; this was the tract upon which the house stood. It was sold out of the Whitall family in 1856 by David to Clayton N. Shuster from whose executors the present owner bought in 1904.

During the Revolutionary War a battery of guns was located near the house of Tench Francis, and we are told that the hot shot was heated in Tench Francis' forge. It is believed that it was this battery that blew up the British ships Augusta and Merlin; this took place on October 24, 1777.

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7/11/19