

General Mercer House
Princeton, Mercer 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

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General Mercer House
Princeton, Mercer County, New Jersey

Owner: Henry E. Hale, Jr.

Date of Erection: About 1772-1775

Architect:

Builder: Thomas Clarke

Present Condition: Very good

Number of Stories: Two and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame
construction

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

The exact date of erection for this house is not known, but it was called new in 1777 and is known as the Thomas Clarke House. We know from the search of the title that Thomas Clarke obtained possession of the farm upon which this house stands from William Clarke in 1772. It was described then as part of the farm of John Clarke, deceased, and it contained at that time one hundred ninety-nine and three quarter acres. The search also reveals that John Clarke received the farm from Benjamin Clarke in 1722.

The will of Thomas Clarke made in 1802 directed that his plantation go to his brother Ezekiel Clarke; apparently, Sara Clarke, the sister of Thomas and Ezekiel, came into possession of the property for by her will of 1854 she left the farm to John H. Clarke who in 1865 sold to Henry E. Hale. The property is now in the possession of his son.

The house is of historical importance because here on January 12, 1777 General Hugh Mercer died. General Mercer was born in Scotland about 1720. He was a native of Aberdeen. In 1746 at the Battle of Culloden he served as an assistant surgeon in Charles Edwards' army. He emigrated to America the following year. We find that he received a medal from the corporation of Philadelphia for his courage in the assault against the Indian settlement of Kittanning in the Allegheny River where he was severely wounded. He was a companion of Washington in the army of General Forbes at the reduction of Fort Duquesne. After this he practiced as a physician at Fredericksburg, Virginia. In 1775 he was a minute man and the following year we find him as an organizer of Continental regiments. He was promoted from Colonel of the Third Virginia Regiment to rank of Brigadier-General in the year 1776. At the Battle of Princeton he was severely wounded and left as dead by the British. He was carried by his aid to the Clarke House which stood on the battlefield and was nursed by Mrs. Clarke dying several days after the battle.

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A search of Mercer County court records
by Robert H. Daley, Mercer County
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