

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

for

APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park

Appomattox Virginia

by

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Architect

December 1962

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction

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APPROVAL SHEET

RECOMMENDED

Superintendent

Date _____

Robert E. Smith

Robert G. Hall
Chief ACT'G

Date 12.17.62

Regional Director, Southeast Region

Date _____

APPROVED

Director

Date _____

The Appomattox County Court House was erected in the center of the village of Appomattox Court House in 1846, and served that village until it was destroyed by fire in 1892. By this time the village had started to decline and a new settlement had started to spring up along the railroad which passed about three miles from the village. The new Court House replacing the one destroyed by fire was built in this new settlement in the 1890's. No remains of the original Court House have survived above ground. However, the Court House square managed to survive the years and the underground remnants remain to give the exact location and size of the building, as well as the size of bricks and various miscellaneous details.

This evidence is recorded in a report by Archeologist Edward McM. Larrabee, dated April 1961, and entitled Archeological Exploration of The Court House Building and Square, Appomattox Court House NHP, Appomattox, Virginia. Practically all the county records were in the Court House when it burned; therefore, written material pertaining to the structure was destroyed along with the structure. A few newspaper advertisements and miscellaneous data remain which confirm the archeological findings. Research Historian Dr. Frank P. Cauble has assembled this material in his Documented Report on the Appomattox Court House Building, which was distributed by the Regional Office on September 21, 1959.

It is fortunate that a few photographs of the building were made before it burned, two of which were taken by Matthew Brady a few days after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox. A later photograph of about 1890 gives a view showing an end wall which is not visible in the Brady photographs and which also gives evidence that the Court House had deteriorated by that time. Some of the columns and rails had been replaced and the building was generally in shabby condition. There are also numerous sketches of the village area; however, they show no details of the building. All pertinent photographs and sketches are contained in Dr. Cauble's report.

Because of the clarity of Matthew Brady's photographs, many details are visible which give basis for an accurate reconstruction of the east and west facades.

No attempt is being made to explain the interior of the original structure in this report, as the interior of the building will be constructed for modern use and will not be restored. Dr. Cauble's report contains sketch plans prepared by long-time residents of Appomattox--Mr. C. A. Hancock and his wife. These plans have many inaccuracies, but they do give a general idea of the original internal use of the building.

Various mid-nineteenth-century buildings in the Appomattox area were studied in order to obtain the details which were not discernible from photographs.

Ken Anderson

January 22, 1964

Jack Walker

Appomattox Court House NHP: Historic Structures Reports

For whatever use they may be to you, here are some comments on Carroll's architectural data reports.

McLean Slave Quarters

1. In the discussion of sketches showing the McLean slave quarters Carroll mentions neither the drawing by Colletti nor the Henderson and Company engraving. (Both are discussed in my report on pages 42-43.)
2. Some confusion might arise from Carroll's reference to Ragland Featherston's 1940 description of the slave quarters as being in "ruinous condition." Featherston was born in the McLean house in 1874 and lived there as a small boy. His description refers to the condition of the slave quarters in his childhood.
3. Carroll states he finds it "strange" that I did not locate the remains of the chimney base. As the structure was already in ruins circa 1880, it seems rather probable that its foundations and the chimney base would have been removed while the McLean house was still in use. The rock plating along the back of the yard is yet to be explained. It may possibly be made up of rocks originally used in the slave quarters.

McLean Ice House

1. Carroll cites me as stating that the ice pit was "approximately 11' x 11' square at the base." I did say this, and this was (and is) the best inference I could make from my excavation. However, since Carroll has re-excavated the pit and has located all four of the log retaining walls at the base of the pit (whereas I had located only one), I do not understand why he did not state what he found.

McLean Kitchen

1. No comment.

Should you wish to consult my report on the excavation of these structures, a copy is in Dr. Corbett's office.