

391/132013
INTERIM HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT, PART I

on

FRANKLIN'S HOUSE

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

NOVEMBER 1960

INDE. 205 01
CRBIB# 002112

H30

Region Five
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

March 26, 1962

Nalley
3/23
Crown
3/26/62

Memorandum

To: Chief, EODC

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Franklin's House,
Architectural Data Section, Independence

By memorandum dated December 20, 1961 this Office transmitted one copy of the Franklin House report to assist you in preparing the required Architectural Data Section. We have delayed reviewing the report pending receipt of this section. Please let us know at your earliest convenience when it may be expected.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

In duplicate

CPassarelli

General
Daily
Area

Region Five
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Penna.

H30

January 10, 1961

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park

From: Regional Director

Subject: Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I - Franklin's House, Independence NHP

The recommendations set forth in Chapter III, Section 2 of the subject report are approved. As soon as the frost and dampness have gone out of the brickwork, mortar and ground, a proved weather resistant compound such as Dow Corning No. 772, mentioned in the report, should be given further trial. Then, if it has been clearly demonstrated that this compound can be relied upon to prevent further water penetration into the remaining structural portions of the foundations, the waterproofing should be done forthwith.

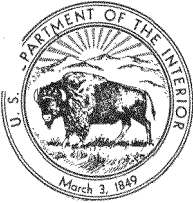
(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

In duplicate

MHNELLIGAN/JLCotter:em
General
Daily
Area

Handwritten notes:
JLC
1/10
Nelly
1/10
C. J. Lee
1/10/61



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 16, 1960

H30-DCA

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
DEC 20 1960		
REG. DIRECTOR		
ASST. REG. DIR.		
OPERATIONS		
INTERPRETATION		
ADM.		
REG. RES. PLAN		
RANGER ACT'S		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Chief Architect

Subject: Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I - Franklin's House, Independence NHP

The Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I - Franklin's House, Independence National Historic Park has been reviewed by the interested Divisions in the Washington Office and cleared for approval.

These significant archeological remains were not included in the "Inventory with Classification and Work Code for Historic Buildings and Structures, together with Guidelines on Restoration and the Preparation of Historic Structures Reports", recently released. However, we have considered the attributes of Franklin's House for coding and are entering it under Group II - Miscellaneous Historic Structures with an A-4 designation.

Robert E. Smith
Chief Architect

Copy to: Chief, EODC (2)
Supt., Independence

COMMENTS DUE: DEC. 16, 1960

✓	History
	Nat. His.
✓	Archaeo.
	Pub.
	Museum
	Soc. V.

Religion Class #270

A good report. The protective measures recommended may have been attempted too late, since the extreme cold of the week of Dec. 11 found the protection coming incomplete.

incomplete. The complete archaeological report will include evaluation of artifacts.

[illegible]

Info	OPERATIONS	Not	Initial and Date
✓	Land Embroider		CB
✓	Booklet	LB	JE
✓	Land Book		Tom
✓	Signatures		Chris

12/16/60

1/13/61

LBC/JEC 12/16

19.61 ~~Handwritten~~ 1/13

Chris, 12/14/60 NC

H30

Region Five
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

December 6, 1960

Handwritten:
12/6/60
Nelson
12/6

Memorandum

To: Director
Chief, EODC

From: Regional Director

Subject: Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I, Franklin's
House, Independence NHP

Attached for your review and comment is the report on Franklin's
House. Please submit comments by December 15, 1960.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

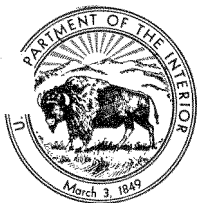
Regional Director

In duplicate

Attachments - WASO 2
EODC 1

Copy to: Supt., Independence

cp
General ✓
Daily
Area
Programs



IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park
420 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

November 30, 1960

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
DEC 5 1960		
REG. DIRECTOR		
ASST. REG. DIR.		
OPERATIONS		
✓ INTERPRETATION	<i>M</i>	<i>12/5</i>
ADM.		
REC. REG. PLAN		
RANGER		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region V

From: Superintendent, Independence

Subject: Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I, on
Franklin's House

Enclosed in quadruplicate for your review and distribution is
the Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I, on Franklin's
House.

M O Anderson
M. O. Anderson
Superintendent

Enclosures

Independence National Historical Park
420 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

H30

November 30, 1960

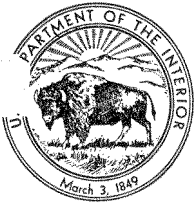
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region V
From: Superintendent, Independence
Subject: Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I, on
Franklin's House

Enclosed in quadruplicate for your review and distribution is
the Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I, on Franklin's
House.

M. O. Anderson
Superintendent

Enclosures



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Eastern Office
Division of Design and Construction
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

December 15, 1960

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-H

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
DEC 19 1960		
ASST. DIRECTOR		
ASST. REG. DIR.		
OPERATIONS		
INTERPRETATION		
ADM.		
REC. RES. PLAN.		
RANGER ACT'S		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Acting Chief, EODC

Subject: Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I, Franklin House,
Independence NHP

The subject report has been reviewed by the interested personnel of this office and is recommended for approval.

We are glad to see steps taken to preserve these valuable remains of Benjamin Franklin's home.

John B. Cabot
John B. Cabot
Acting Chief

Copy to: Supt., Independence
Chief of Design and Construction (2)

SIGNATURE SHEET

RECOMMENDED

Director

Date _____

Regional Director

Date _____

Chief, Eastern Office, Div. of Design & Construction

Date _____

APPROVED

Superintendent

Date _____

INTERIM HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

on

FRANKLIN'S HOUSE

PART I

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Prepared by

Staff

Independence National Historical Park

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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November 1960

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	Section 2. Conclusions and Recommendations
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	Section 2. Recommendations

CHAPTER I

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Prepared by Superintendent M. O. Anderson

Chapter I
Section 1
Page 1

NAME AND NUMBER
OF BUILDING

Franklin's House, Franklin Court, no building number.

PROPOSED TREATMENT OF
BELOW-GROUND FEATURES

Certain measures for preserving what remains of the foundations, retaining wall, cellar floor, ice house, and necessary of Benjamin Franklin's House are recommended in Chapter III, Section 2, of this report. The advisability of such measures cannot be doubted. As they represent the best available opinion on the subject and as they would in no way inhibit future development of the site, we propose that they be approved and applied as soon as is practicable, using funds currently available for archeological work.

Chapter I
Section 3
Page 1

ESTIMATE OF COST OF PRESERVING
BELOW-GROUND FEATURES

\$100.00

CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL DATA

Prepared by Supervising Park Historian John D. R. Platt

HISTORICAL DATA ON
BELOW-GROUND FEATURES

The few tangible remains of Franklin's unique home have been turned up by the Park's archeologists. Though not extensive, they are originals, possessed of intrinsic worth. Though fragmentary, they are vital evidence. These relics are to be sheltered pending decisions as to their place in the developed Franklin Court area. A Part I Historic Structures Report on Franklin's House is being assembled which will, among other things, consider them in detail.

Documentary evidence about the below-ground features which have so far emerged is presented under the following headings:

1. Foundations Stone from John Parish's quarry made up the 1764 house's 34 feet square foundations. These foundations were of a breadth sufficient to support the three-story 14 inch brick walls above, to which the 1766 insurance survey refers. In addition, there was a footing or foundation for a two-story "9 inch Brick wall [partition] to the Garet floor in the westernmost part" of the house. These foundation walls were not pierced by vaulting, as is shown in letters exchanged between Franklin and Deborah on the subject (October 9, 1765, [Fall] 1765, and February 27, 1766). The 1786 addition to the house was on a foundation 16-1/2 by 33 feet or as he stated in a letter to his sister, Jane Mecom, "the whole length of the old house."

2. Cellars No documentary evidence about the partitioning, floors, or other structural features has been found to date. The 1766 insurance survey and Colonel Carr's much later "Personal Recollections of Benjamin Franklin" (The Historical Magazine, August 1865) place the kitchen in the cellar. That the floor was finished presumably in brick is clear from Deborah's reference on February 10, 1765, to "laying the Kitching flore." An 1801 newspaper advertisement referred to it as a "large kitchen." It held "several contrivances to carry off Steam & Smell and Smoke" and was referred to by Franklin as "a mere machine" ("...being new to you, I think you will scarce know how to use it," B. Franklin to Deborah Franklin, June 4, 1765).

In the cellar was also situated an iron or copper furnace. Colonel Carr remembered that "a small iron plate or trap-door, about five or six inches square, with a hinge and a small ring to raise it by" was located in the hearth of the first floor's northwesternmost room. Through this trap-door a draft from the cellar was supplied the grate.

The cellar under the addition was used for storing wood (Franklin to Jane Mecom, September 21, 1786; May 30, 1787). From the first, however, Franklin had considered in time using it differently: "...the story under it [Library] will for the present be employ'd only to hold Wood, but may be made into Rooms hereafter."

3. Ice House The only reference to this feature is found in the reliable Colonel Carr's "Recollections." There he states simply "The kitchen was in the basement, with an icehouse under it."

4. Retaining Wall While rental advertisements before 1800 place the "Coach House and stabling," "Bathing House," and "Wash House" "at the central and yet retired situation of the [Franklin] House," in no known source are any of these "appurtenances" referred to as adjacent to it. However, the 1766 insurance survey establishes the existence of "2 Large painhouses with trusses at each end," apparently the same features about which Deborah Franklin had written in 1765: "...the pente houses is dun I paid above tin poundes for shingales and sum other thinges, so you see that when a house is dun, thair is much to be dun after."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

However the Court area and its complex of structures and sites may be developed as a result of research still in progress and decisions yet to be made, the remains of Franklin's House unquestionably will be preserved intact and distinguishable from surrounding structures. The recommendations set forth in Chapter III, Section 2, of this report are shown to be necessary and desirable if these below-ground features are to be preserved, and they are entirely consistent with all foreseeable development objectives. They are, therefore, strongly endorsed.

CHAPTER III

ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA

Prepared by Park Archeologist E. Bruce Powell

THE EXCAVATIONS

Introduction

The present explorations, planned to provide complete archeological information on the site of the Franklin home, enjoyed the advantage of information gained by Mr. Paul J. F. Schumacher's preliminary excavations at the site in 1953 and 1955. Schumacher's discoveries provided specific points from which to expand the excavations in the area of the Franklin House. This section will provide a brief summary of Schumacher's research, outline the results to date of the present work, and give an indication of the direction future work will take.

The Preliminary Excavations

Schumacher's excavations were limited in extent since South Orianna Street at that time was still in daily business use. This precluded his excavating beneath the roadway. He was able, however, to work beneath the sidewalk on the east side of the street and in vacant lots formerly occupied by Nos. 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, and 31 South Orianna Street.

His most important finds came in the area beneath the sidewalk, where he located portions of the north and south wall foundations of the house, a part of the brick cellar floor, the light well retaining wall on the south, and the brick structure we have found to be an inlet into the Franklin privy. His excavations in the vacant

lots revealed modern building walls and foundations, several nineteenth century privy pits, and one brick privy pit which may date from the Franklin era.

Schumacher mapped his discoveries, protected the structural features with wood and tar paper, and refilled the trenches. Details of his work may be found in his report of September 1956, "Preliminary Exploration of Franklin Court, Archeological Project No. 4, May-September 1953."

The 1960 Excavations

Since July 11, 1960, work has been progressing in the house area and to the south thereof. Beginning in Schumacher's 1953 trenches, we have expanded the dig to the westward to include the total limits of the house, northward to just beyond the north wall of the house, and southward into the yard or garden area. All of the features found by Schumacher have been relocated and completely exposed. In addition, several new features have been found (Illustrations No. 1 and 18).

The north wall foundation (Feature 36) has been exposed as far as the building line on the west side of Orianna Street, where it was destroyed by later construction (Illustrations No. 2 and 3). This wall, of stone, is 1.5 to 3 feet wide, 13.5 feet long and 2 feet deep. Its top lies at a depth of approximately 5 feet below the modern surface. The eastern portion, for a length of 6.5 feet, has been knocked over and now lies partially on its original south face.

Only a small portion of the south wall foundation (Feature 37) remains, the major portion having been removed at some previous time (Illustration No. 4). The remaining wall extends 3.5 feet westward from the modern building line on the east side of the street. This feature, too, is stone. It is 1.5 feet wide, 2 feet in depth, and its top is 4.5 feet below present surface. The previous position of this wall westward of the remaining portion was marked by an ill-defined line of rubble extending to the modern walls on the west.

5.2 feet south of the house foundation is another stone wall (Feature 39) which completely spans the space between the modern building lines (Illustration No. 5). This wall is 19.7 feet long, 1.5 feet wide and 2.1 feet deep. Its top lies at a depth of 4.5 feet. I believe this wall to represent the retaining wall of an area-way or light well on the south side of the Franklin house. It probably provided light for Franklin's cellar windows. There was no evidence of a floor between this wall and the foundation wall to the north.

Other walls or wall traces include portions of the stone foundation and the construction trench of the original (1765) east wall of the Franklin House (Feature 65, Illustration No. 6). This feature lies 5.5 feet east of the modern building line on the west side of Orianna Street. The wall, formerly present but now largely missing, was similar in size and material to foundation walls previously described. Running westward from Feature 65 is another stone

foundation (Feature 66) which extends to the building line on the west (Illustration No. 7). This feature has not been completely excavated but is similar to the other foundations. It lies 15 feet south of the inside of the north house wall. It indicates that the original cellar had at least two rooms.

We have also located part of Franklin's cellar floor, a privy, his ice storage pit, and an unexplained brick-lined pit which may post-date the Franklin home.

The small portion of the brick floor of Franklin's cellar which Schumacher uncovered in 1953 is the only intact piece of flooring remaining. West of the bricks is a large rectangular area of poor mortar bearing brick impressions. This mortar, Feature 42, covers the southern two-thirds of the 1786 addition to the house (Illustration No. 8). It is rectangular in area, 9.5 feet by 18.5 feet. The brick which formerly rested on this base were laid on edge and were oriented with their long axes east and west. North of Feature 42 lies another, smaller patch of mortar sub-flooring (Feature 43) upon which the brick were set on edge with their long axes running north-south. This undoubtedly indicates two different rooms in the cellar of the addition (Illustration No. 9).

Just west of the 1765 east wall trench and north of the south wall line there is another small patch of brick and mortar cellar floor (Feature 67). No complete bricks remain, but brick impressions can be seen in the mortar. This feature is approximately

4 feet long (north-south) and 2-1/2 feet wide (Illustration No. 10).

All of the subfloor mortar is soft and of uneven thickness. It is in serious danger of deteriorating.

The privy (Feature 38) is represented by a brick-lined pit, 4 feet inside diameter, which abuts the south side of the light well wall (Illustrations No. 11 and 12). The pit, now excavated to its bottom at 13 feet below the top of Feature 39, was formerly domed over with a brick roof. Its top had been broken open during the laying of a sewer line beneath Orianna Street. Immediately north of the pit, and on the north side of Feature 39, is a rectangular brick structure (Feature 45) whose top contains two square holes (Illustration No. 13). The southernmost of the two holes communicates with the privy pit, through the light well wall, by means of a sloping stone slab (Illustration No. 14). The structural evidence indicates to me that Dr. Franklin, unlike most of his contemporaries, built his toilet separate from his privy pit, and that he undoubtedly had some sort of flush arrangement. Feature 45 is 1.5 feet wide east-west, 2.3 feet long north-south, and 2.9 feet deep.

The remaining two features lie in the western part of the house (Illustration No. 15). Feature 63 is the remains of Franklin's ice storage pit (Illustration No. 16). It was originally a stone-lined pit some 10 feet in diameter and 10 feet in depth below the cellar floor. Unfortunately, some two-thirds of the pit has been destroyed by the intrusion of a massive reinforced concrete foundation,

and about 4 feet of the top has been removed by modern construction. The exterior edge of the ice pit apparently almost abutted the west wall of the house and was about 1.5 feet from the south wall. A pile of stones in the southern half of the remaining feature may be original construction.

Just east of the ice pit we uncovered Feature 61, a small brick-lined pit (Illustration No. 17). Although the brick wall was probably complete at one time, a part on the north is now missing so that the remainder forms a horseshoe-shaped wall. It is approximately 3 feet in inside diameter, although very irregular, and is only 2.5 feet in depth. It is built of brick bats and fragments and presents the appearance of hasty and careless construction. All the artifacts from this pit are of nineteenth century date and the pit itself may well date from a nineteenth century building on this spot. I doubt if it is associated with Franklin's structure.

Future Work

We plan to work as long, this season, as weather will allow; complete exploration will take several months longer. Work is now proceeding beneath the street to the south of the house and to the east of the building line on the east side of Orianna Street. In the latter area we hope to find the foundations of the east wall of the 1786 extension to the house.

Future work will probably be concentrated in the area beneath the street and sidewalks, since the depth of basements on

either side of the street promises scant chance of finding anything beneath them.

The investigation of the Market Street houses, which has not been touched on in this report, must be completed (Illustration No. 18).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the remains exposed to date are extremely fragile and are in imminent danger of being destroyed or seriously damaged by weather action. I urge, therefore, that immediate steps be taken to stabilize and protect these historic ruins. In addition to providing shelter from rain and snow, I feel we should apply accepted protective measures to each feature. After consultation with Supervisory Archeologist Gordon Vivian, N.P.S. Southwest Archeological Center, Globe, Arizona, on the site, I concur in his recommendations of the following procedures:

1. All masonry features should be water proofed as completely as possible, using some commercial weather resistant compound such as Dow Corning No. 772.
2. To minimize frost damage, all features should be covered with straw to a minimum depth of 1 foot.
3. The straw should be covered with plastic or tarpaulin, at least until such time as a wooden shelter is completed.

~~Protective earth fill, proper drainage, and protection~~
~~from visitor spoliation must be provided.~~ *ack*

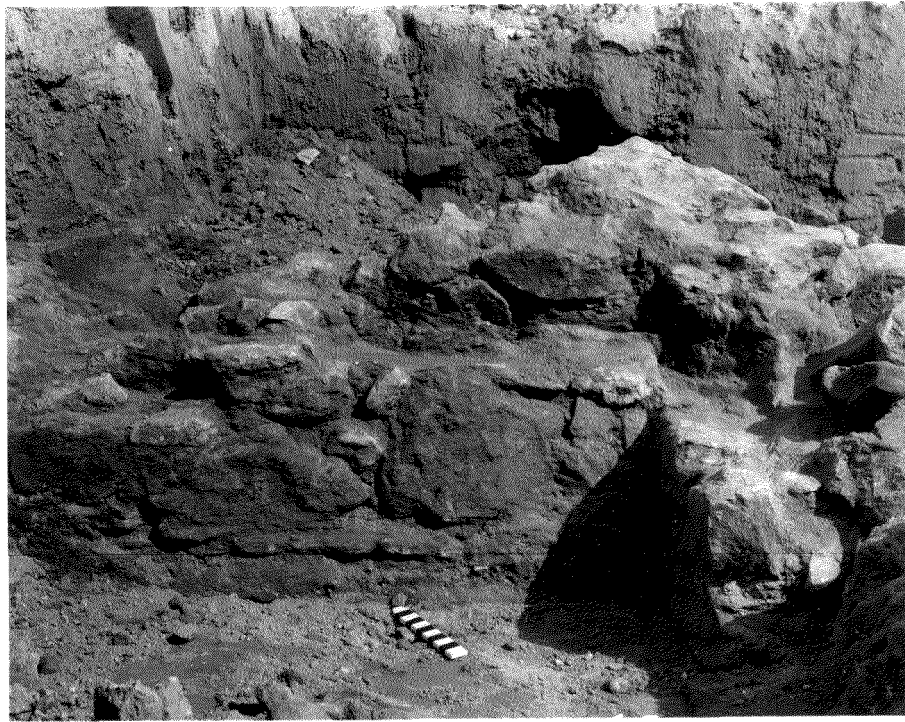
ILLUSTRATIONS

Chapter III
Illustration No. 1



**View of the excavations in Franklin
Court, looking south from the roof
of 314 Market Street. Photograph
taken October 5, 1960.**

Chapter III
Illustration No. 2



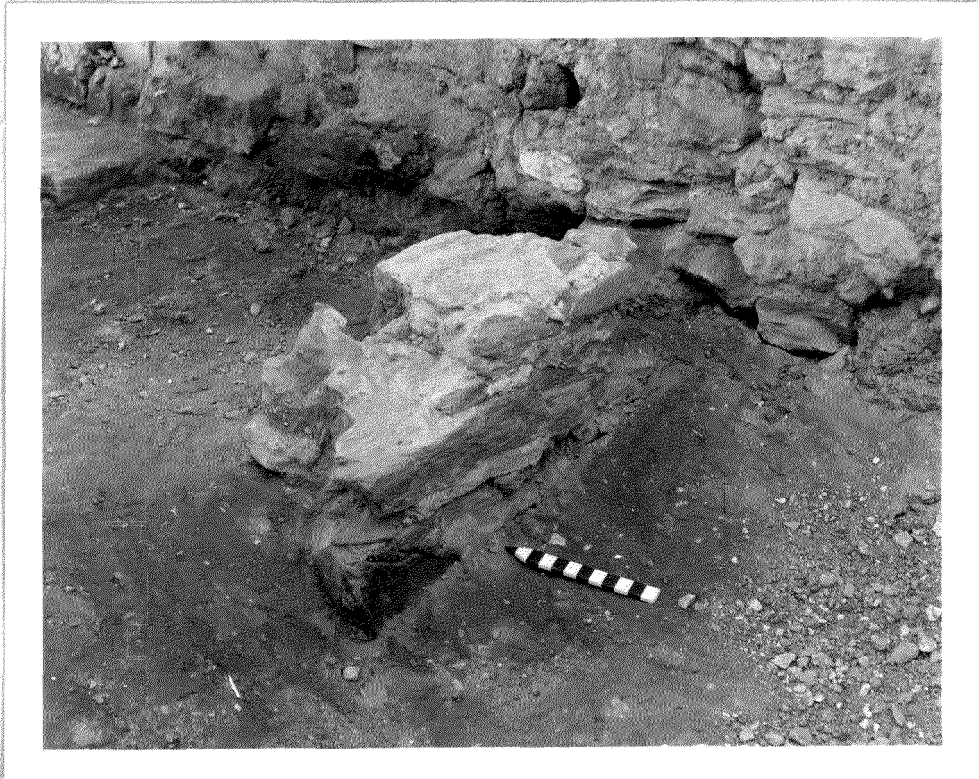
Remains of the north foundation wall of the Franklin house (Feature 36), near its remaining western end. The southward projection on the right is believed to be a part of the 1765 east wall of the house. The arrow points north.

Chapter III
Illustration No. 3



Looking west along the north wall foundation of the Franklin house (Feature 36). The portion of wall in the foreground has been knocked over and lies partially on its side. Arrow points north.

Chapter III
Illustration No. 4

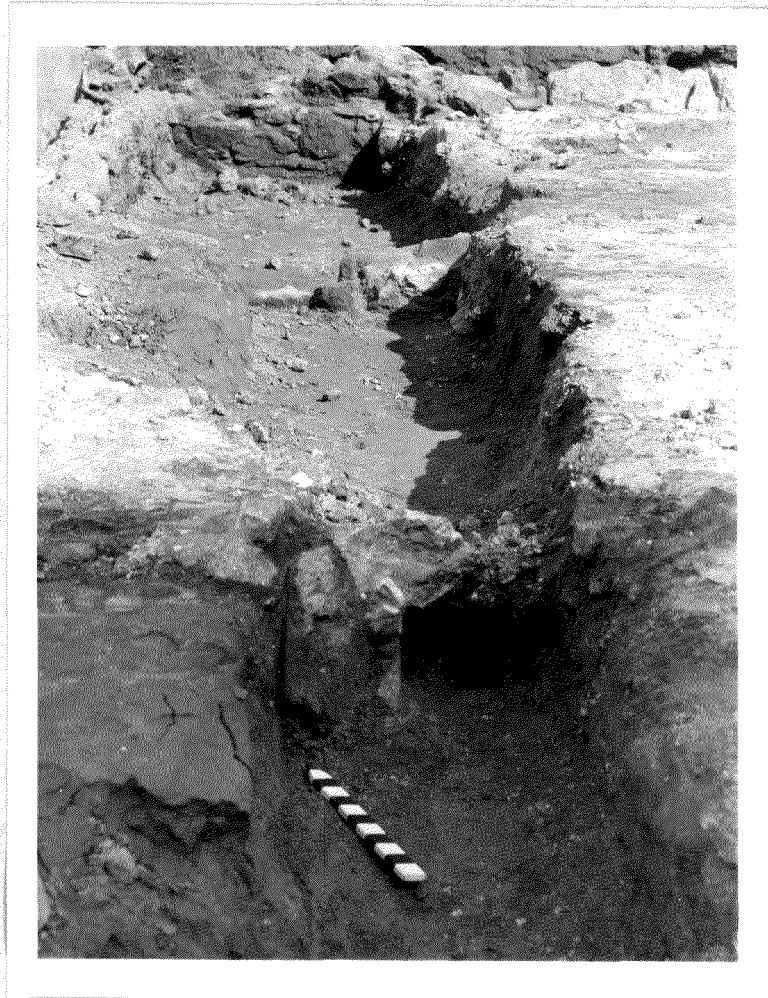


The foundation of the south wall
of the Franklin house (Feature 37).
Arrow points north.

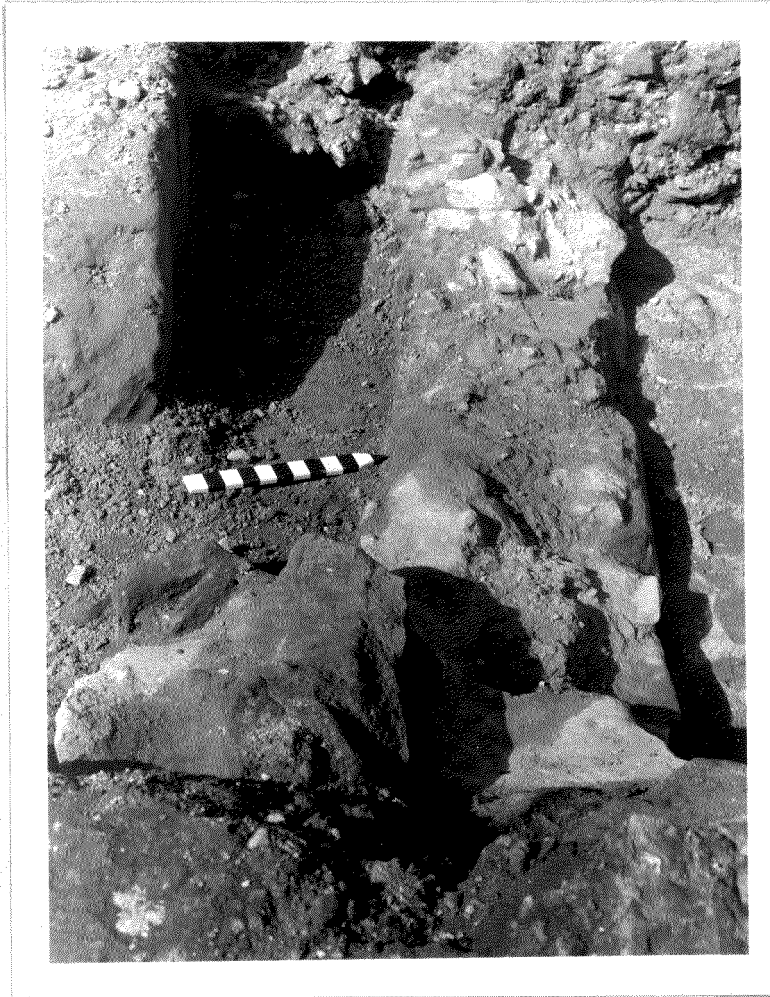


Looking east along the light-well
retaining wall (Feature 39). The
brick inlet to the privy (Feature
45) can be seen in the middleground.
Arrow points north.

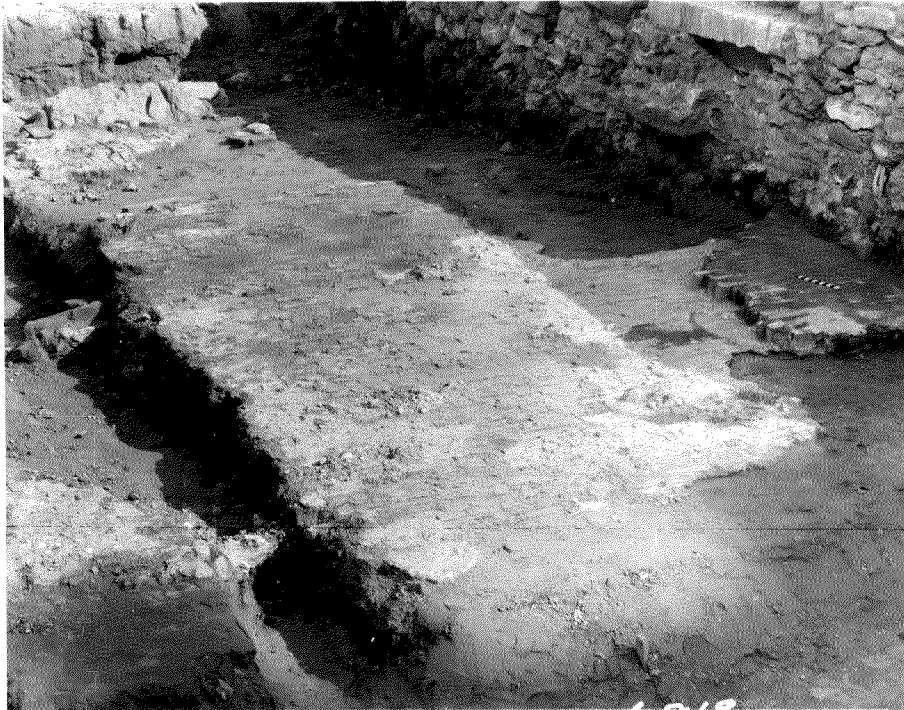
Chapter III
Illustration No. 6



Portions of the original (1765) east wall of the house (Feature 65). The stone in the foreground and part of the stone in the middleground are remnants of that wall. Arrow points north.



East-west partition foundation in the
1765 portion of the Franklin cellar
(Feature 66). Arrow points north.



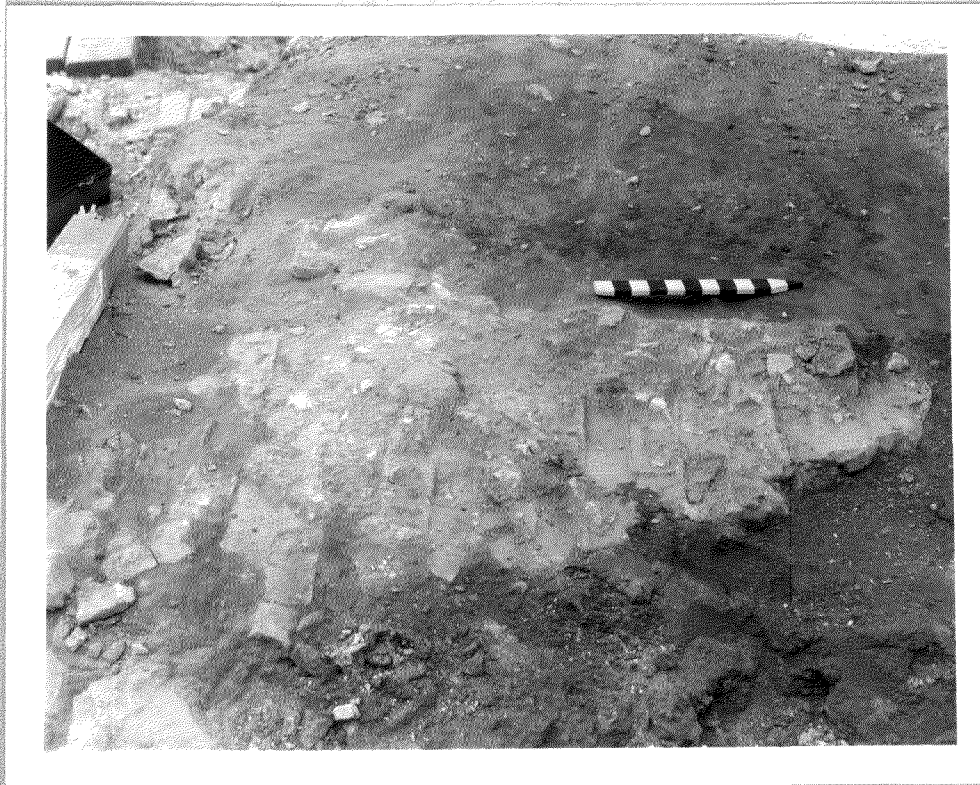
Cellar floor remains. The brick on the right is the only piece of intact flooring remaining. It and the large rectangular area of mortar in the middle ground constitute Feature 42. Feature 43 lies in the upper left of the picture and Feature 67 in the lower left. Arrow points north.

Chapter III
Illustration No. 9



Patch of lime mortar subflooring near the
north wall of the house (Feature 43). Arrow
points north.

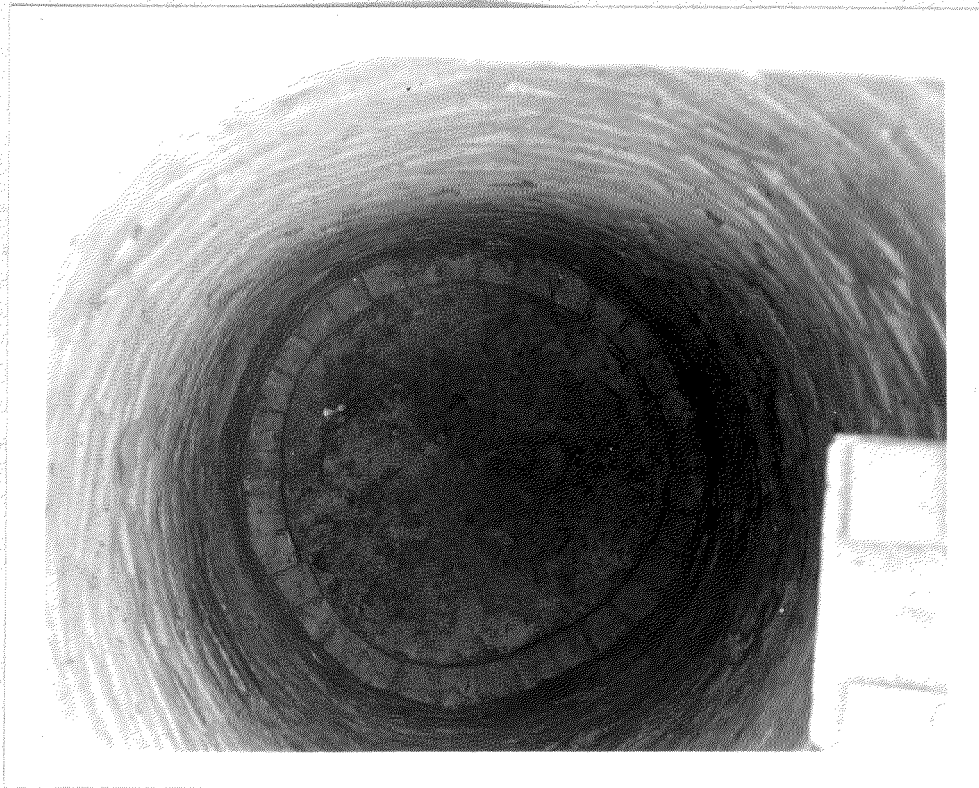
Chapter III
Illustration No. 10



The only floor evidence remaining in the 1765 portion of the house is this small patch of lime mortar (Feature 67). Arrow points north.



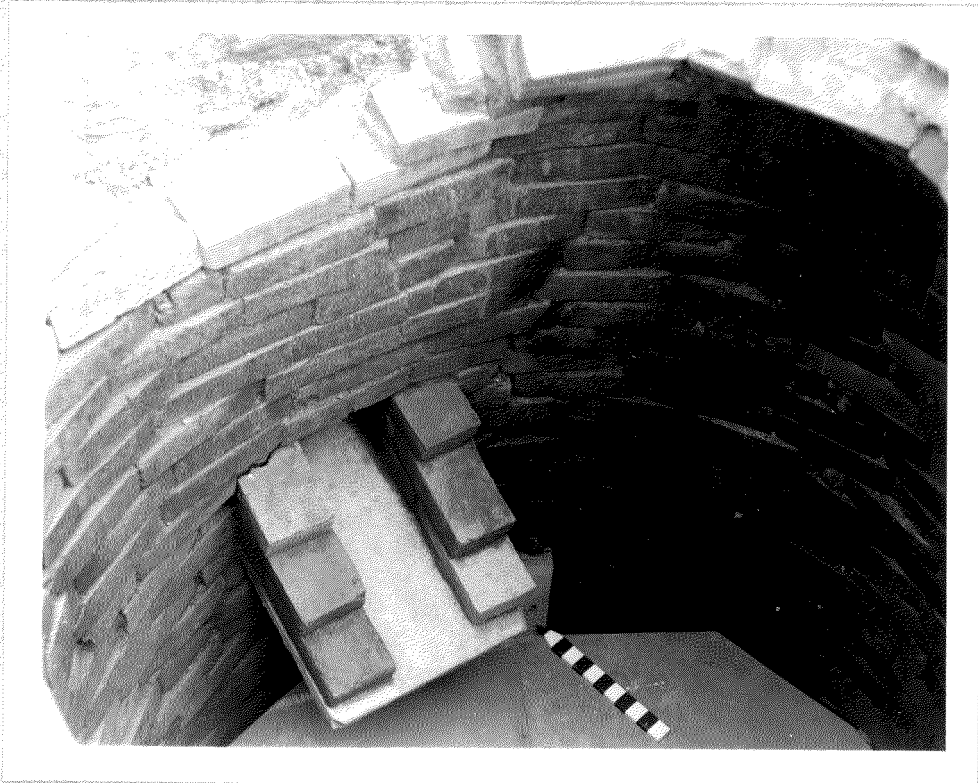
View of the privy pit (Feature 38). The stone wall is Feature 39, the light-well retaining wall. Part of Feature 45, the brick inlet to the privy, can be seen to the left of the stone wall. Arrow points north.



View directly down into the privy pit:
the top of the photograph is the east
side. Note the lowest course is com-
posed of headers projecting inward.
Part of the stone slab inlet can be
seen in the upper left.



The brick privy inlet (Feature 45). Note that it abuts directly into the light-well wall (Feature 39). The square hole behind the arrow communicates to the privy pit via the stone slab seen in Illustration No. 14. Arrow points north.



View of the stone slab in the privy pit.
The arrow, pointing north, lies on a
temporary wooden platform in the privy.



View of the ice storage pit (Feature 63)
and the small brick-lined pit (Feature 61).
The arrow lies on a modern concrete foun-
dation which destroyed over half of the ice
pit. Arrow points north.



View southward into the ice pit (Feature 63). Note the stone lining at the bottom. The stone cribbing in the right of the photograph is as yet unexplained.



The small brick-lined pit (Feature 61).
Arrow points north.

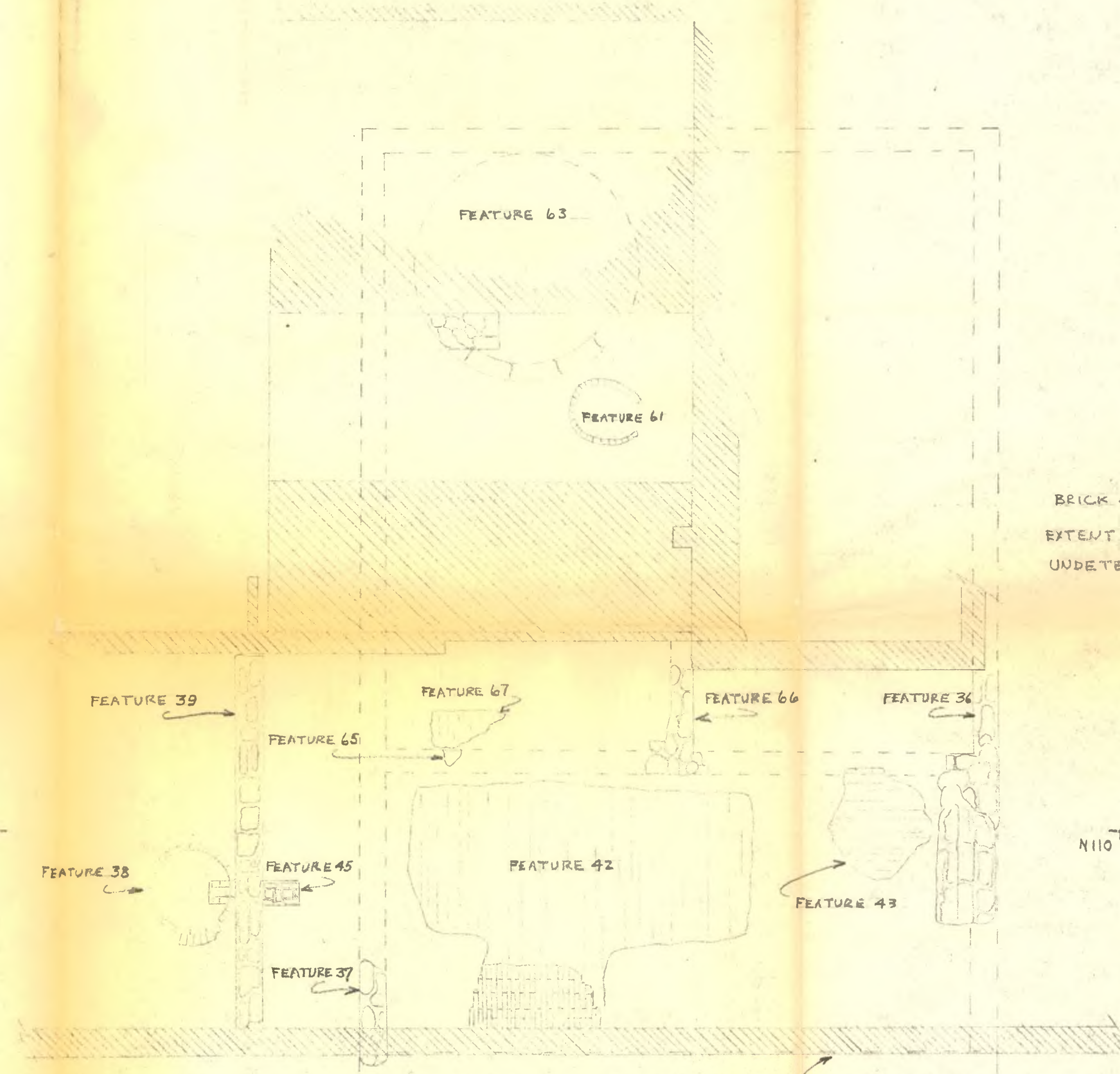
Chapter III
Illustration No. 18



Plan of the excavation in Franklin Court.

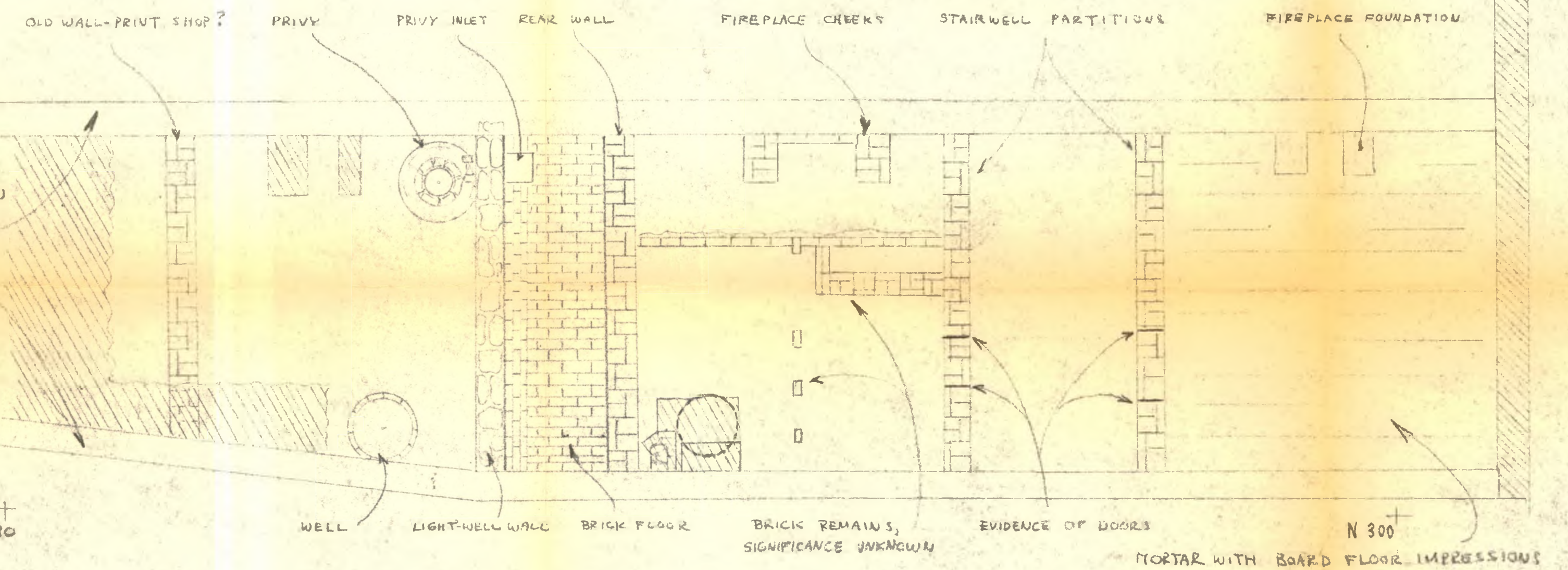
FRANKLIN HOUSE

318 MARKET STREET



Dotted lines mark the original extent of the house
Hatched areas mark modern walls & foundations

BRICK & STONE PARTY WALL,
EXTENT OF ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION
UNDETERMINED.



316 MARKET STREET

1 INCH = 5 FEET

RECOMMENDED	DATE	REGION
	UNITED STATES	FIVE
	DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	PCP
	NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	SHEET 1 OF 1
ARCHAEOLOGY	PREPARED BY	DRAWING NO.
FIELD	OFFICE	NHP IND
APPROVED	ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS	DATE 16 NOV 60
	FRANKLIN HOUSE	
	INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK	



ORIENTATION
REVIEWED

OPERATIONS
REGION

WASHINGTON

INTERP.
REGION

WASHINGTON

COOP. ACTV.
REGION

WASHINGTON

DES. & CONST.
STERN

A.

E.

L.A.

WASHINGTON

A.

E.

L.A.

OTHER

PREPARED

POWELL

DESIGNED

POWELL

DRAWN

CHECKED

REVISED

DATE INITIAL