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One Building, Four Houses: How Identity Influenced the Historic Forms of the William Brinton 1704 House

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Abstract

Built in 1704 by early Chester County Quaker, William Brinton the Younger (1670-1751), the 1704 House underwent four substantial phases of use and modification--a genteel great house (1704-1752), an ornamental farmhouse (1829-1863), a moral rural homestead (1864-1953), and a Colonial Revival house museum (1954-2018). Each of these phases represented a different owner of the structure who modified it to meet their needs and priorities. This thesis examines who these individuals were, how they were influenced by their own conscious values and subconscious social norms, and why and how they adapted the 1704 House as a result. Today, following a 1954 restoration to its circa 1752 form, the house is interpreted mainly as a family shrine to the early Brintons, with little mention of the two intermediate phases. The overall conclusion drawn from this examination of the major historic phases and actors in the history of the building is that to properly understand the modern 1704 House, one must understand it not as a building interrupted in 1752 and rescued in 1954, but as a continuously changing structure with four distinct periods all connected to one uninterrupted thread to the past. Viewing the 1704 House in this way could also serve to help interpret other sites with histories of change over time in a way that unifies their entire past.

Keywords

Brinton 1704 House, architectural history, Delaware Valley, change over time, Chester County

Disciplines

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ONE BUILDING, FOUR HOUSES: HOW IDENTITY INFLUENCED THE HISTORIC
FORMS OF THE WILLIAM BRINTON 1704 HOUSE

Anthony Richard Carlos Hita

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

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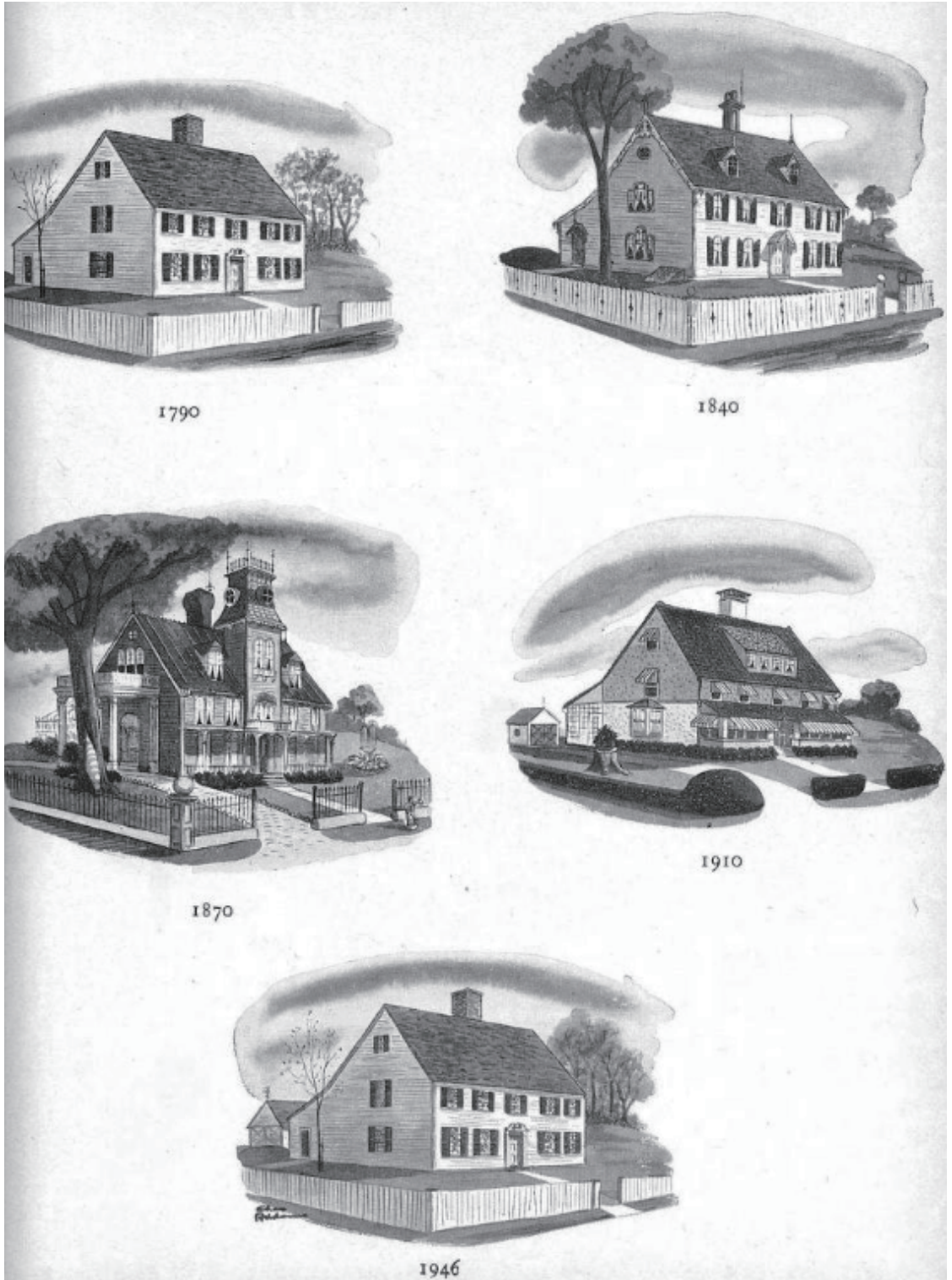


FIGURE 1: “The Remodeled House” (1946) by Charles Addams. (Image: Addams, *Addams and Evil: An Album of Cartoons by Charles Addams*, 94)

INTRODUCTION

“This love of home, and with it all the tender affections bound up in that endearing word, will be sure to grow with every step we take to add to its comforts, or increase its beauty; and if we feel a species of affection for the goodly trees we have planted, which growing along with us, seem like old familiar friends, we must acknowledge a still greater attachment to a dwelling we have built...”

A.J. Downing, *Cottage Residences*, Pg. 89

In 1946, the *New Yorker* published a satirical cartoon by Charles Addams titled “The Remodeled House.” (Figure 1) The cartoon features five panels corresponding to five eras from 1790 to 1946. During this time, a Georgian saltbox house gradually evolves into a Gothic cottage, an ornate Second Empire mansion, an awning-clad bungalow, and finally back to a saltbox.¹ Addams’ cartoon satirizes American domestic architecture as a mutable and even capricious expression of taste. In 1948, the authors of *New Houses from Old* chose it as their frontispiece commenting, “It is not difficult to build a house so that it will stand for centuries...but it is impossible to predict the tastes and needs of future generations.”² While acknowledging Addams’ criticism, the authors instead argue that taste, while fickle, is necessary, as present homeowners adapt standing dwellings to meet the needs of their current occupants. Taste is not an end, but a vehicle that allows these changes to be palatable to a wider audience, and so ensures the house survives. Remodeling, the authors argue, saves time, saves materials, saves money, and ultimately, saves houses.³ Occupants will change a structure to reflect their own

¹ Charles Addams and Wolcott Gibbs, *Addams and Evil: An Album of Cartoons by Charles Addams* (New-York: Simon and Schuster, 1947), 94.

² Reginald R. Hawkins and Charles H. Abbe, *New Houses from Old: A Guide to the Planning and Practice of House Remodeling* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), 2.

³ Hawkins and Abbe, 2-3.

changing needs and social concerns. Because change results from the specific needs of occupants, change in form and style comes not from change in taste, but from change in identity on the part of homeowners. Identity in this sense refers to conscious self-assessments and subconscious social factors that determine how a person asserts themselves in their environment. Thus to understand *why* a dwelling changed, one must also understand *who* changed it and *what* factors operated to effect that change. The place a person lives has utilitarian and symbolic functions, and so it becomes, as historian Richard L. Bushman notes, “The prime repository for asserted identity.”⁴

Situated approximately five miles from downtown West Chester in a suburbanizing part of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, is the historic William Brinton 1704 House, a structure whose history of formal change could be peeled directly from Addams’ “The Remodeled House.”⁵ An ample stone farmhouse constructed in 1704 by one of the earliest English Quaker families to settle the region, the structure was not the first home constructed by the Brintons. However, the 1704 House, where the family lived for over 150 years, became one of their most recognized symbols. After the property was sold in 1860, it remained outside the family Brintons repurchased it in 1947.

For over a century after construction, the 1704 House retained much of its original character. However, substantial changes began when Ziba Darlington (1788-1876), the great-grandson of William the Younger, purchased the property in 1829. At that time, the building was in a state of disrepair, described by Ziba as practically a standing ruin.

⁴ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 211.

⁵ The name “1704 House” appears as far back as the early 19th century in primary sources, and has been the accepted term for the building among both Brinton and non-Brinton owners for at least 150 years. There is scant evidence for how the house was referred to prior to the 19th century, so for clarity of future interest and scholarship, this thesis will refer to the building as “The 1704 House” throughout.

Ziba repaired the crumbling homestead, but also made many Gothic Revival alternations. When he sold the house in 1860, it bore only a passing resemblance to the original form his ancestor built.

After 1860, the house entered almost a century of non-Brinton ownership. During this period, the structure played home of two successive generations of the Faucett family, specifically Henry M. Faucett (1828-1911), and later his son Henry P. Faucett (1862-1941). The elder Faucett again altered the house considerably starting in 1868, most notably by adding a large wing in 1881. Like Ziba Darlington before him, Henry M. Faucett followed architectural fashions of his time as he adapted the house to meet his own priorities. Unlike Ziba, however, Faucett was less concerned about preserving the Brinton legacy. His changes to the house were controversial among local Brintons like Ziba Darlington, and inspired new generations of Brintons to consider how they might reacquire and restore the character of their ancestral home.

In 1946, Francis and Deborah Brinton purchased the building plans to restore its 18th century form for use as a house museum. In 1952, after a period of fervent fundraising, they hired noted architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh to complete the restoration of the house. In order to do so, Brumbaugh had to significantly alter the fabric of the building, which by that time bore little resemblance to its 18th century configuration. Rather than a strict restoration, Brumbaugh's work might be considered a reimagination, as he incorporated his own creative touches and necessities of a modern museum into his design. When completed in 1954, the result was hailed as a faithful restoration of the

form and style of William Brinton the Younger's original 1704 structure despite the stylistic and utilitarian changes Brumbaugh had made.

Starting with Ziba Darlington in the early 19th century, Brintons tended to feel that the more original material remained in the 1704 House, the better association it had with the Brinton family. As a result, during the Faucett era, Brinton family members saw the changing design of their ancestral home as a sign of the declining prestige of the family. John Hill Brinton (1811-1893) made meticulous notes on the original form of the house as Ziba and other surviving 18th century family members remembered it. J.H. Brinton explains, "I thus relate these facts minutely in order that some future Brinton, descended from the Colonist (if he so minds) may restore the old house to its primitive aspect..."⁶ A decade later, Philadelphia painter and Brinton family friend, Thomas Eakins, depicted the house in a manner probably based on J.H. Brinton's description.⁷ Brumbaugh would later remark that the Eakins painting had so many errors that it was almost certainly the result of a verbal description painted from notes in Eakins' studio.⁸ (Figure 2)

Brinton family interest in the 1704 House intensified during the 20th century. The 1925 edition of the family's published genealogy opens with an appeal to memory, "We should feel ignorant indeed if we did not know the history of our country. How much more ignorant are we if we do not know the more intimate history of our family. Its

⁶ "August 23 1868" in John Hill Brinton. "Some Notes Taken from the Manuscript Account of William Brinton and the '1704 House' Birmingham Township, now Delaware County, Pennsylvania, by John H. Brinton, Esq., 1858-1880" Manuscript Group 1, Brinton Family Association, Box 1704 Brinton House. (Chester County Historical Society Archives: West Chester, PA.).

⁷ Gordon Hendricks and Thomas Eakins, *The Life and Work of Thomas Eakins* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974), Fig. 89.

⁸ Helen Schenck and Michael Parrington, *An Archaeological Investigation of the Brinton 1704 House*, Archaeological Report (Unpublished Report: Helen Schenck Associates, 1994), 10n2.

importance has been neglected for too long a time.”⁹ The book recounts multiple stories of the 1704 house, including a picture in its post-1881 configuration.¹⁰ The growing interest in genealogy and filiopiety on the part of the Brintons was part of an emerging post-Civil War trend that would coalesce in the Colonial Revival and manifest itself through the restoration of the house by the 1950s.¹¹

In 1945, when the 1704 House was put up for sale, Francis and Deborah Brinton purchased it and presented it to the Chester County Historical Society. At the same time, the Brinton Family Association undertook a fundraising effort to restore the house to its circa 1752, the year William the Younger’s inventory and will were filed following his death. Alongside this effort, the Association undertook the process of developing a comprehensive Brinton family tree. Their goal was to link modern Brintons to each other through a familial organization and to the past through a direct link to ancestral dwelling they saw as the birthplace of the family. They advertised the move as “...The first opportunity that such a family association has had to restore and perpetuate a family relic, their original home in America, built at such an early date.”¹² In restoring the house, the Brintons shared an impulse common among organizations of the Colonial Revival period,

⁹ Janetta Wright. Schoonover and Gilbert Cope, *The Brinton Genealogy: A History of William Brinton Who Came from England to Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1684: And of His Descendants with Some Records of the English Brintons* (Trenton, NJ: MacCrellish & Quigley, 1925), 5.

¹⁰ Schoonover and Cope, 122.

¹¹ Alan Axelrod, *Colonial Revival in America* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co, 1986), 10-12; François Weil, *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 112.

¹² *The 1704 House (Restoration Fundraising Pamphlet*. West Chester, PA: Brinton Family Association, ca.1950.), 4.

trying to not only rebuild family connections, but also establish a link to the founding of America.¹³

Today, the 1704 House is a museum and is largely interpreted in the same vein as in the mid-20th century fundraising materials—that is, a family shrine that was rescued from neglect and restored to both its rightful form and rightful place as an 18th century landmark. In this view, layers that accumulated after Ziba Darlington took ownership are less important, or as described in restoration fundraising materials, “accretions” that somehow detract from the authenticity and integrity of the original.¹⁴ However, the history of the house’s architecture is hardly as simple as this narrative of decline and rebirth suggests. Indeed, rather than a venerated relic that depreciated over 300 years only to be rescued in the 20th century, the 1704 House is better understood as a case study of changing self-expression through architecture. For interpretative purposes, the 1704 House should be thought of not as a single entity but, in effect, *four* houses—Genteel Great House, Ornamental Farm House, Moral Rural Homestead, and Colonial Revival House Museum. Each layer cannot be classified as more or less significant than another in an absolute sense, but must be viewed as containing important clues to the way the Brintons and those they saw as interlopers used architecture to present themselves to a change (and widening) outside world.

As the authors of *New Houses from Old* rightly observed, houses do not change, they are changed, and when a change occurs it is done to suit the needs and concerns of the present generation. While vernacular architecture is often practical in intent,

¹³ *The 1704 House*, 2; François Weil, *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 166-167.

¹⁴ *The 1704 House*, 2

decorative elements and specific stylistic choices reflect *identity* and *intent* on conscious and subconscious levels useful for understanding the house as a home in a particular place at a particular time. A study of the 1704 House demonstrates that buildings are connected to an uninterrupted thread to the past challenges the observer to consider how identity translates to architectural form and in turn how social status, economic circumstances, and cultural orientation shape our built environment. Particularly for sites that have had restorations following multiple eras of change, understanding that the site is part of a larger interconnected whole widens the field of interpretation and invites in stakeholders who might have otherwise not felt any particular affection for or awareness of the place.



FIGURE 2: "The Brinton House" (1878) by Thomas Eakins. (Image: Photocopy included in HABS No. PA-1258-1; Original painting in private collection)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary difficulty in studying a building with a history as complex as the 1704 House is assembling sources that account for change to the structure itself, and provide insight into the mindset of the people who changed it. To do this, two categories of sources are necessary—primary sources from each period of the house including inventories, diaries, and written ephemera; and secondary sources both those relevant to the individuals and locality associated with the house, and those analyzing larger themes of style, social trends, and national events that impacted time periods during which changes to the site were made.

The 1954 “restoration” of the 1704 House was so complete in its destruction of previous layers that very little evidence remains beyond ghosts of removed doors and windows, bits of historic mortar, and some remaining finishes on the interior. As a result, a traditional “building archaeology” analysis must rely heavily on textual sources, eliminating the actual house itself as a source. Because of this, archives are an important source for mining information regarding all four periods of the house and, especially, the liminal points where the house was actively changing from one form to another. Most archival sources used in this thesis are from one of three repositories: the Chester County Historical Society Library in West Chester, Winterthur Library Archives in Delaware, and the Brinton Association of America’s archives stored at the site itself.

From the Chester County Historical Society comes a selection of material both documentary and photographic that chronicles the history of the 1704 House and Brinton family. In particular, CCHS has several dozen photographs taken by Bart Anderson from

1946-1955 of the house before, during, and after restoration. The importance of these photographs cannot be overstated as no systematic documentation was made of the structure prior to Brumbaugh's so-called "exploratory demolition" preceding his restoration.¹⁵ Anderson, who served as director of the CCHS, contributed much of his research to the Brinton collection at the CCHS library. Important documents in this collection include the diary of John Hill Brinton who recorded many details of the house in its early 19th century phase. J.H. Brinton also interviewed several key eyewitnesses of the site's early 19th century evolution, including Ziba Darlington. The collection also includes first-person accounts of Brumbaugh's work and correspondence from key supporters of that work, Francis and Deborah Brinton.

Supplementing the collection at CCHS is the G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection in the Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera in the Winterthur Library. The collection contains records of Brumbaugh's architectural firm that were donated to Winterthur after Brumbaugh's death, including hundreds of drawings, research notes, and correspondence related to his work on the site. While many of the 1704 House-related materials are not directly relevant to the research questions posed in this thesis, the collection does contain correspondence and research notes that illuminate Brumbaugh's understanding of the site and his project there. These underscore the importance of seeing the 1954 "restoration" as a dynamic intervention that has itself accrued historical and cultural value.

¹⁵ G. Edwin Brumbaugh, "Address to the Brinton Family Association by G. Edwin Brumbaugh, Architect of the Restoration of the Brinton 1704 House" (Address, August 9, 1969). Manuscript Group 1, Brinton Family Association, Box 1704 Brinton House. (Chester County Historical Society Archives: West Chester, PA.).

While not containing as much documentary material as either CCHS or Winterthur, the small archive maintained on-site at the 1704 House by the Brinton Association of America nevertheless includes some important sources. Most notably, it features promotional publications articulating the logic behind the 1950s restoration while raising funds for that purpose. Also in the archive is the 1994 archaeological report prepared by Helen Schenck and Associates, which is one of the few sources that systematically approach the house's pre-restoration phases as important pieces of the site's history. As such, the 1994 report includes a wealth of images and documentation collected and interpreted, helpful for understanding the site's evolution.

The principal difficulty with the primary sources related to the 1704 House is that they cover a broad timespan and focus mostly on exterior features without giving much insight into the social and historic factors that drove key changes to physical fabric. Three sources in particular are helpful to guide the interpretation of the aforementioned primary sources. First, the already mentioned diary of John Hill Brinton; second, the 1925 *Brinton Genealogy*; and third, the 1961 George Stetson thesis "The 1704 House Built in Chester County, Pennsylvania, by William Brinton the Younger."

J.H. Brinton was one of the first people to call for the preservation of the 1704 House, becoming both its historian and its advocate in ways that other sources like the 1925 *Brinton Genealogy* continued. The *Genealogy* is also useful in that it provides biographies of many of the important figures in the house, including William Brinton the Younger, Ziba Darlington, and John Hill Brinton.¹⁶ Finally, the George Stetson thesis is

¹⁶ Because many people in the story of the 1704 House have similar (or identical) names and surnames, this thesis sometimes refers to individuals less formally than might otherwise be expected for an academic

among the most important sources for this report as he was brought into the project *during* restoration by Brumbaugh and Anderson in order to formally document the history and changes to the house. Unfortunately, Stetson, who was returning from military service to go back to school, did not arrive until the project was nearly complete, meaning his work misses crucial early moments of the restoration prior to Brumbaugh's demolition work.

The final set of sources on which this thesis draws are those secondary sources that address broader issues of style, society, and culture influencing the change over time of the 1704 House. Not all of these sources address the 1704 House in particular, but some do. The essays collected in *Quaker Aesthetics* (2003) provides good background for the particular status and identity markers latent in Quaker dwellings of the early 18th century, specifically through Bernard L. Herman's included essay on the practical dimensions of Quaker houses.¹⁷ Richard L. Bushman's *Refinement of America* also provides insight into the particular sociological trends influencing architectural expression in the region.¹⁸ Though Bushman's book is mistaken on some particulars of the history of the 1704 House, his broader analysis of trends influencing the area are relevant to the Brinton family of the time. These books are supplemented by Arlene Horvath's 1986 article "Vernacular Expression in Quaker Chester County," which takes

paper, using surnames where possible, but first names, initials, and titles elsewhere to distinguish one person from another contemporarily and across time. William Brinton the Younger will often be referred to as "William the Younger," Ziba Darlington will often be known by his first name "Ziba," and John Hill Brinton will henceforth be referred to as "J.H. Brinton." Other less frequent names will follow this pattern where appropriate or necessary for clarity.

¹⁷ Emma Jones Lapsansky-Werner and Anne A. Verplanck, *Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on a Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption, 1720-1920* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

¹⁸ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

some of the broader regional and national themes presented in other sources and applies them to dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the 1704 House, specifically through a case study of the Taylor-Parke House.¹⁹

Bushman again offers considerable insight into the factors influencing the changing architectural and aesthetic choices of structures during the 19th century. Specifically, he uses the 1704 House as an example to illustrate his points regarding how privacy and a more insular conception of family influenced farmhouse design of the time. In a similar manner, Adam Sweeting's *Reading Houses and Building Books* (1996) explains how architecture was influenced by the crossing of literature and architecture present in pattern books popular during the first half of the 19th century.²⁰ Sweeting's focus on Andrew Jackson Downing and the evolution of taste in architecture prior to the Civil War illuminates Ziba Darlington's occupation and modification of the 1704 House when the structure took on a form very reminiscent of one of Downing's patterns. Although not as narrowly focused as other works, Duncan Faherty's ambitious *Remodeling the Nation* examines sociological trends in personal and familial self-conception in the nation's literature as they pertain to how the existing built environment was changed in order to establish a new sense of national identity.²¹ Faherty's work suffers primarily from an overreliance on intermingled case studies often divorced from outside secondary scholarship. Though this problem limits *Remodeling the Nation's*

¹⁹ Arlene Horvath, "Vernacular Expression in Quaker Chester County, Pennsylvania: The Taylor-Parke House and Its Maker," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 2 (1986), doi:10.2307/3514326.

²⁰ Adam W. Sweeting, *Reading Houses and Building Books: Andrew Jackson Downing and the Architecture of Popular Antebellum Literature, 1835-1855* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996).

²¹ Duncan Faherty, *Remodeling the Nation: The Architecture Of American Identity, 1776-1858* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2007).

usefulness, Faherty's nevertheless provides insightful interpretation of domestic space as it relates to a broader quest for national stability.

The 20th century changes to the 1704 House are part of a larger movement in the United States known as the Colonial Revival. François Weil's *Family Trees* explores the development of genealogical scholarship and the family organizations that grew out of it during the early years of the Colonial Revival in the late 19th century.²² He traces these roots through the end of the Victorian period and into the diverse and often tumultuous years of the first half of the 20th century, where middle class white families in particular sought to establish firm connections to one another and to a common past through exploration of ancestral bonds.

Two books help take the themes Weil explores into the practical dimension of architectural change. First, the essays collected by Alan Axelrod in *Colonial Revival in America* (1986) offer a multitude of scholarly perspectives on various themes related to the period and its impact on the American environment.²³ Second, Richard Handler's critique of Colonial Williamsburg, *New History in an Old Museum* (2002) is particularly useful in contextualizing the Williamsburg-inspired efforts of Brinton family member as they sought to create a family shrine after World War II.²⁴ Modern secondary scholarship is rounded out by two theses—Cynthia Anne Rose's "Architecture as a Portrait of Circumstance," and Emily Wolf's "Architecture Tells the Story," both of

²² François Weil, *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

²³ Alan Axelrod, *Colonial Revival in America* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co, 1986).

²⁴ Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

which investigate the career and influences of G. Edwin Brumbaugh, the restoration architect of the 1704 House.²⁵ Wolf's thesis in particular uses the site as a case study.

²⁵ Cynthia Anne Rose, *Architecture as a Portrait of Circumstance*, Master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania, School of Design, Department of Historic Preservation, 1990 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990); Emily Lynn Wolf, *Architecture as a Portrait of Circumstance*, Master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania, School of Design, Department of Historic Preservation, 2008 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008).

SECTION I: WILLIAM BRINTON THE YOUNGER—A QUAKER LEADER’S GENTEEL GREAT HOUSE (1704-1752)

Born to a Quaker family in Worcestershire, England on August 12, 1670, William Brinton the Younger was fourteen when his father, William the Elder, and mother, Ann, left their home in Nether Gornall, England to settle in William Penn’s new Pennsylvania colony. Though later family lore claims the they landed at Grubb’s Landing nine miles from the present site, the family likely arrived in Philadelphia as evidenced by the fact that William Brinton the Elder initially registered with the Philadelphia Friend’s Monthly Meeting. Rather than staying in Philadelphia, William the Elder took his family into the largely unsettled lands of Chester County west of the city. Legend states that the family’s first winter in America was cold and severe, forcing the family to shelter in a cave where Lenape Native Americans provided them with food and clothing until spring.²⁶ By the summer of 1685, the family had erected a cabin in a clearing, and soon after William the Elder journeyed back to Philadelphia to purchase 400 acres of land around the cabin from

²⁶ There is reason to doubt the veracity of this tale, as its first recorded mention occurs in 1879 in the journal of John H. Brinton, who was told the story by Frederick G. Brinton. J.H. Brinton doubted the claim, noting the “cave” was a shallow depression on the bank of a creek that looked like it was probably never a proper cave, though he does note that there was an important Lenape settlement about five miles from where the Brintons settled. J.H. Brinton had spoken extensively to Ziba Darlington, William the Elder’s great-great-grandson, before Ziba’s death in 1876, and Ziba never mentioned the story, despite having known William and Ann’s grandchildren. Gilbert Cope, historian and genealogist who was hired by the Brinton family in 1914 to assemble a systematic genealogy, similarly doubts the claim, believing that the family stayed in Philadelphia in the winter, with William the Elder possibly wintering alone in Chester County while looking for a place to settle. Cope believed mythologies about the family arose from later historical misunderstandings about early settlement patterns. George Stetson, who conducted archival research on the family as part of a documentation of the restoration, also doubted the cave story, suggesting instead that a hybrid shack of earth and wood framing was a more likely shelter, if indeed a shelter was ever used.

William Penn.²⁷ The family continued to live in the cabin until at least 1703, and the cabin itself survived until at least the first quarter of the 19th century.²⁸ (Figure 3)

William the Younger married Jane Thatcher, the daughter of neighboring settlers, in 1690. Together, William, Jane, and their four children, continued to live in the cabin with his parents and siblings. Starting in 1697, he became the primary caretaker of the family farm, renting the property from his father, who conveyed it unto him completely after his death in 1700. In 1704, with a fifth child on the way, William the Younger built a new stone house for his family out of stone quarried from the family property.²⁹ His fifth and sixth children were born in the new dwelling, and after William's death in 1752, the building was conveyed to his third son, Edward. When finished, the new stone house was almost four times larger than any neighboring houses.³⁰

Later 19th century writers look back on Quaker dwellings of the late 17th and early 18th century in the Philadelphia region as “plain,” drawn from a Quaker aesthetic that eschewed outward signs of wealth while consciously building with a mind towards humility in line with religious expression. However, this nostalgic notion of Quaker “plainness” ignores the wide variety of individual expression and architectural variation present in Quaker structures. Rather than a unified aesthetic, Quaker buildings represented a mixture of practical accepted building forms with ornamentation choices that expressed the individuality of the occupants. Retrospectively, these individual expressions seemed “plain,” but to a person of the period, the distinctions would have

²⁷ *The 1704 House*, 2-3; Schoonover and Cope, 98-99.

²⁸ John Hill Brinton, “February 11, 1876.”

²⁹ Schoonover and Cope, 123.

³⁰ George Edward Stetson, *The 1704 House Built in Chester County, Pennsylvania, by William Brinton the Younger* (Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1961), 33.

been marked and helped distinguish an individual's place in society.³¹ So long as a member of a local Meeting was known to be honest in financial transactions and upright in social interactions, more ornate forms of expression could be tolerated so long as an individual was steadfast morally and moderate financially and did not cross the line into over-indulgence. Quakers of higher social status were also expected to have grander homes and finer material objects reflecting their gentility as status and wealth were natural parts of an ordered society.³²

In a time before architectural pattern books, families tended to build according to traditional methods. Identity in architecture was transmitted through the power of associative symbols present in the choice of decorative motifs, materials, and ornamentation. As the 17th century gave way to the 18th century, further connectedness between colonial locations and the broader world began to allow a greater amount of expression of rank and status distinctions in architecture.³³ The disparate kind of house chosen by Elder and Younger William Brinton act as an illustration to this point. The two homes were radically different in material and form, but still combine a Quaker emphasis on utility with the individual expression of their respective builders, with William the Younger's house demonstrating the kind of status display William the Elder had yet no need or no desire for.

William Brinton the Elder was part of the first generation of Quakers coming to Pennsylvania. With little experience as a settler, he relied on tracts published by William

³¹ Bushman 102-104; Bernard L. Herman, "Eighteenth-Century Quaker Houses in the Delaware Valley and the Aesthetics of Practice" in Lapsanky and Verplanck, 188.

³² J. William Frost, "From Plainness to Simplicity: Changing Quaker Ideals for Material Culture," in Lapsanky and Verplanck, 27; Herman in Lapsanky and Verplanck, 201.

³³ Nicholas Cooper, "Display, Status and the Vernacular Tradition," *Vernacular Architecture* 33, no. 1 (2002): 28-29.

Penn to help define the form of his plank house dwelling, as descriptions of the house match almost to the letter building instructions provided to settlers by Penn.³⁴ Penn's advice bespeaks an early Quaker emphasis on utilitarianism, which included the avoidance of frivolity and an emphasis on actions that had a purpose. But beyond the religious dimension, they were also essentially necessary. Pennsylvania was a land that required taming. Building out of wood made sense as there were abundant forests that needed cleared to establish towns and pastures. Keeping oneself occupied with practical actions ensured the work of building a new society moved forward.³⁵ For William the Elder, if a larger structure than the plank house was not necessary, why bother taking the time to build one when there was so much other work to be done?

The plank house may have also reflected William the Elder's own personality. Eschewing Philadelphia in favor of the then-distant hinterlands 30 miles inland, William the Elder sought evidently sought a more pioneering lifestyle where he could put to use the agricultural skills he undoubtedly learned from his homeland.³⁶ The forests and fields of Chester County presented a stark contrast to the meadows and coal patches of the Brinton homeland in England. Known as "The Black Country," the forests of Staffordshire had been stripped as early as the late-16th century for firewood and to fuel a growing industrial demand for coal and charcoal for use in iron production. With few forests, the residents of the region developed a tradition of building in stone.³⁷ William the Elder was also a known Keithite, a sect of Quakerism that developed in 1691 as a

³⁴ Stetson, 25.

³⁵ Lapansky and Verplanck, 21-22.

³⁶ Stetson 3, 23.

³⁷ Ibid., 2-3.

reaction against the urban Philadelphia Meeting, which Keithians believed were increasingly straying from orthodox Christian teachings. Probably because of his association with the Keithites, William the Elder and his wife Ann were not buried in the Concord Friends burial ground.³⁸

Unlike his father who orbited at a distance from the Quaker community, at times in conflict with it, William the Younger was a central figure. The period that included the construction of the 1704 House was a time of change and growth for William the Younger as he took on not just the mantle of head of the Brinton family, but also several major leadership roles in Chester County. In 1701, his wife Jane was appointed overseer of the local Quaker Concord Meeting. Until her death, her name appears frequently in this role, along with William. Together the two prepared certificates, oversaw weddings, collected money, and looked after secular affairs. Indeed, prior to the establishment of a permanent meetinghouse, Meetings were sometimes held at the 1704 House. William in particular is listed as one of the major land holders of Chester County, and was responsible for laying out many of its developing roads during the first decade of the 18th century. In 1714, William was elected a member of the Provincial Assembly, an office he was again elected to in 1721. By the time of his death in 1751, William Brinton the Younger was one of the wealthiest landholders in Chester County.³⁹

With his new status as one of the landed gentry of Pennsylvania, William the Younger needed a dwelling that would assert his position in the community stylistically while at the same time acting as a practical place in which to raise his family and manage

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁹ Schoonover and Cope, 122-124.

his growing fortunes. According to surviving 18th century family members interviewed by J.H. Brinton in the early years of the 19th century, the structure was initially known to the community as “William Brinton’s Great House.” The stone house William the Younger built was substantial for the time and region, four times larger than any neighboring houses, and one of only a handful of stone houses in Chester County.⁴⁰ While the use of stone was practical, as bricks were expensive and hard to obtain in the area during a period before roads, it also spoke to the status as stone had a lasting monumental quality which required great amounts of labor to quarry, move, and erect.⁴¹

However, while the house became a well-known site and meeting place for the growing community, there are no contemporary depictions or descriptions of the house prior to the Federal Census of 1798.⁴² What is known about the form of the house comes from a combination of later descriptions primarily from Ziba Darlington, who was interviewed extensively between 1858-1872 by John Hill Brinton, and archaeological evidence uncovered by G. Edwin Brumbaugh as part of the 1954 restoration.⁴³ In 1878, Thomas Eakins painted a depiction of the house’s original form as a favor for Dr. John Hill Brinton⁴⁴ based on a verbal description, likely the same description J.H. Brinton recorded in his diary based on Ziba Darlington’s recollections.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ John Hill Brinton, “March 1, 1876;” Stetson, 51.

⁴¹ Lapansky and Verplanck, 205.

⁴² Stetson, 40, 100.

⁴³ Schenck and Parrington, 1993, 5; United States, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Historic American Building Survey, Brinton 1704 House*. by Bart Anderson, HABS No. PA-1258 (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 1958), 10-12.

⁴⁴ Not to be confused with his cousin J.H. Brinton (a lawyer), friend of Ziba Darlington, who wrote the diaries used as a source for the 1704 House’s history.

⁴⁵ Hendricks and Eakins, 110-111.

Based on what can be gleaned from the few primary sources available, William the Younger's stone house seems to have embraced the growing urbanity of Philadelphia and the larger context of English settlement from which he came in contrast to his father's which turned away from such things. William's stone house adapted a vernacular expression of the traditional English architectural vocabulary of his homeland, producing a dwelling that followed an outward pattern of design typical among 17th century buildings of the English hinterland.⁴⁶ Inwardly, the house was typical for English colonial architecture of the time, following a hall-parlor plan common among genteel homes on the eastern seaboard.⁴⁷ Built of field stone from a nearby quarry 21x40 feet in dimension with stones laid in regular horizontal courses 22 inches thick pierced by 27 leaded glass casement windows, William mingled a practical use of available materials with a distinct character that reflected his ethnic origins, economic status, and utilitarian concern of settlers of the period.⁴⁸ While not architecturally all that different from contemporary dwellings built by his peers in the area, the house nevertheless acted as a marker of William the Younger's social position and which he used to assert his standing in the context of rural Chester County.⁴⁹

The 1798 census enumerates only 12 window openings, suggesting that by that time many of the original openings were already filled in.⁵⁰ The census indicated double-hung sash windows, but evidence in the frames discovered in the wall and glass fragments uncovered during pre-restoration excavation reveal that an older set of

⁴⁶ Horvath, 152.

⁴⁷ Horvath 152; Lapansky and Verplanck, 111.

⁴⁸ Horvath 153; Stetson 31, 36, 40, 100.

⁴⁹ Bushman, 10.

⁵⁰ Stetson, 100.

diamond-paned leaded glass casement windows were likely the original configuration.⁵¹ The census does not mention dormers, which probably means they were removed. Ziba Darlington noted that when he took ownership of the house in 1829 and renewed the roof, the scars of the dormers were present.⁵² Brumbaugh likewise found scarring, showing the presence of dormers.⁵³ According to William Brinton (the grandson of William the Younger), who was born in the house in 1755 and died in 1830, there were pent eaves on all the cardinal elevations.⁵⁴ The presence of these pent eaves is also attested to by stone flashing discovered in the mortar between stones during restoration.⁵⁵ Additionally, the primary north elevation entrance had a small stoop and was flanked by two wooden benches extending out from the wall, attested to by both the aforementioned William Brinton and scarring discovered in the stone.⁵⁶

The house was capped with a gable peaks and chimneys on the east and west side made of handmade brick, likely made on site, and laid in Flemish bond pattern.⁵⁷ The brick was whitewashed, with the initials⁵⁸ of William and Jane and the date of construction painted over the wash on the west end.⁵⁹ Initially the building in this way served the dual purpose of announcing the family's presence upon the land and their Quaker faith. The letters and numbers act as a type of signature which "implants family

⁵¹ Brumbaugh, "Address"; Stetson, 37-38.

⁵² John Hill Brinton, "June 20, 1868."

⁵³ Stetson, 40.

⁵⁴ John Hill Brinton, "June 20, 1868."

⁵⁵ Stetson, 45.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁷ Stetson, 32.

⁵⁸ Painted initials were indicated by Ziba Darlington in 1845 configured as:

B
W and J
1704

⁵⁹ HABS No. PA-1258, 5.

bloodlines in the physical fabric of the landscape” while asserting the companionate nature of husband and wife who operate the household together.⁶⁰ Bernard L. Herman observes, “In their monumentality, they exert familial claims that anticipate the first stirrings of local genealogical research in the mid-1800s.”⁶¹ Indeed, though the exact form of the initials would change over time, their presence on the house became an important presence for later generations of Brintons for whom the house became important evidence of their status as one of the regions original founding families.

The interior of the house was framed in oak timbers, with hewn floor joists and roof rafters.⁶² Visible elements, such as window and door frames, doors, and partitions were walnut.⁶³ The interior was divided into three levels, with a basement kitchen, hall and parlor rooms on the first story, two rooms on the second story, and a large unfinished attic space. Sometime after construction, the upstairs was further divided from two rooms into three. Arrangement and size of partitions was determined by analysis of nail holes discovered in the floor and scarring beneath the oldest layer of plastering.⁶⁴ Both the east and west sides of the first and second stories had fireplaces. The basement kitchen had a single large fireplace on the west side, which included a built-in brick bake oven which was discovered with its opening and silhouette still intact during restoration.⁶⁵

The arrangement and ornamentation of the interior act to reinforce the genteel image William the Younger was hoping to transmit to his peers. With its showy walnut

⁶⁰ Lapansky and Verplanck, 199.

⁶¹ Ibid., 199.

⁶² HABS No. PA-1258, 6.

⁶³ Brumbaugh, “Address.”

⁶⁴ Brumbaugh “Address;” Stetson 52, 184.

⁶⁵ Stetson, 47-48.

paneling and furniture, and material objects that included brass scales, a clock and case, ivory-hafted silverware, and long table with many chairs, the hall was the most public space in the house and acted as “the theater for display and the performance of social and economic power.”⁶⁶ The large paneled fireplace underscored the room’s social nature. Flanking doors to the left and right of the fireplace provided access to the private areas of the house. The left door led to a spiral stairs case providing circulation to the building’s other levels, while the right door concealed a closet where the family would have likely stored their tableware and books. If left open, the closet provided a glimpse of the family’s material wealth and connectedness to the wider world, while closed provided a measure of security and humility. Even the stairs from the kitchen were a display of status, as those serving below literally had to ascend to the hall where those of important social standing would meet and transact business.⁶⁷

On the west side of the hall, a door led into the parlor. The parlor allowed the family and selected peers to retreat from the common space of the hall to an area that was more private but still a quasi-public space for display. The family’s best furniture would have been displayed here, and included multiple arm chairs, two sofas, several large chests, and at least one bed.⁶⁸ Two closets in the room are lit by their own individual windows, and may have acted as either storage or working spaces. At least one closet was recreated by Brumbaugh as a writing closet, where a built in desk and shelves provided a sanctuary for study and private business. Whether or not these closets in there

⁶⁶ “Inventory of the Estate of William Brinton, Deceased, Filed 20th February 1752.” Chester County Wills and Administrations Index 1714-1923, File 1414. (Chester County Archives and Record Services: West Chester, PA.); Lapansky and Verplanck, 194.

⁶⁷ Lapansky and Verplanck, 193-194.

⁶⁸ Brinton 1752 Inventory; Bushman, 120; “Inventory of the Estate of William Brinton”

restored configuration are original to the space is unknown, but certainly closets of this type are attested in Quaker homes of the region including the nearby contemporary Ashton House (c. 1705) in New Castle County, Delaware and Miller House also in Chester County. The Wright House (c. 1726) in Salem, Jersey does not have a writing closet, but instead possess a built in closet-cabinet for storage and display of goods.⁶⁹

At first, the parlor would have likely also acted as the sleeping chamber for William and Jane Brinton following a tradition of best chambers as sleeping rooms carried over from 17th century England. The upper stories of the house would have likely been for storage and children. However, as the 18th century progressed, an increasing emphasis on privacy led to the division of second-story spaces in New England and Mid-Atlantic English dwellings.⁷⁰ The subdivision of the two chambers of the second story into three sometime prior to 1752 attests to this trend. At least one of the upper story rooms—the East Room—contained a somewhat expensive bed, several storage chests, and multiple chairs, perhaps indicating the status of whomever occupied the room. Whether or not William and Jane themselves moved upstairs at this time, or whether the room was subdivided for one of their adult children is not known. The other rooms were plain in comparison, containing sparse furnishings including beds and chests, but little else.⁷¹

Of curious note, the East Room contained a picture of a sailing ship typical of the late 17th century. (Figure 4) Who painted the ship and why is not known, but it must have

⁶⁹ Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 16-19; Lapansky and Verplanck, 124.

⁷⁰ Bushman, 109

⁷¹ "Inventory of the Estate of William Brinton"

been rendered sometime during William the Younger's lifetime as the subdivision of the room cuts directly through it. Family legend states that the ship may be the vessel William Brinton the Elder and his family arrived on in 1684, though this is largely unprovable.⁷² However, the presence of the ship may still attest to William the Younger's mindfulness of commerce, trade, and the wide world in contrast to William the Elder who seems to have wanted to leave such things behind.

Through the 1704 House, William the Younger clearly distinguished himself from the rustic beginnings established by his father. In doing so, he asserted his identity as part of the Quaker gentry of Chester County through subtle but meaningful displays of prosperity, social status, and family prominence. Like contemporary homes of Quaker gentry in the region, William's dwelling would have "commanded the attention of both neighbors and strangers and provided a visual assertion of [its] owner's importance."⁷³

The "Lost" Years (1753-1827)

The period following William Brinton the Younger's death in 1751 is one of the least documented portions of the 1704 House's history in so far as changes to the fabric of the building are concerned. Sometime during the 18th century, the interior spaces on both the first and second floor were decorated by a stenciled daisy pattern.⁷⁴ (Figure 5) During the American Revolution, following the Battle of Brandywine, the house was in the path of the British forces pursuing retreating Americans. Captain John Montresor, Chief Engineer of the British forces, noted that on September 11th and 12th of 1777,

⁷²Deborah Brinton. "1957 Brinton House Tour." (Recording by Theodore Brinton Hetzel. Brinton House Archives, April 14, 1957); Stetson, 52.

⁷³Lapansky and Verplanck, 201.

⁷⁴Stetson, 51-52.

British forces looted the area surrounding Dilworthtown for supplies while camping near Chadd's Ford. The 1704 House was one of the buildings plundered during this period, with George Brinton (William the Younger's grandson), losing a substantial amount of goods including hay, grains, livestock, furniture, provisions, and clothing. George Brinton submitted a claim for these goods to the American government in 1782. Whether or not the building itself sustained any damage is unclear.⁷⁵

George Brinton left the property to his son Joseph Brinton in 1792.⁷⁶ Sometime before 1798, the roof dormers were removed and the amount of openings on the building were reduced from 27 to 12 and converted from leaded casements to double-hung sashes.⁷⁷ In 1802, a lawsuit brought against Joseph by his cousin who was also named Joseph stemming from a disagreement between their grandfathers (two of William the Younger's sons). The suit resulted in the division of the Brinton land, with the portion of land containing the 1704 House transferred to cousin Joseph, who passed it to his descendants, remaining in their hands until 1829.⁷⁸ The extent to which these descendants lived in or used the house is unclear, but according to Ziba Darlington, who purchased the house from Thomas Brinton in 1829, by that time it was little more than a handsome ruin.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Schenck and Parrington, 7-8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁷ Stetson, 40-41.

⁷⁸ Schenck and Parrington, 9.

⁷⁹ John Hill Brinton. "August 23, 1868."

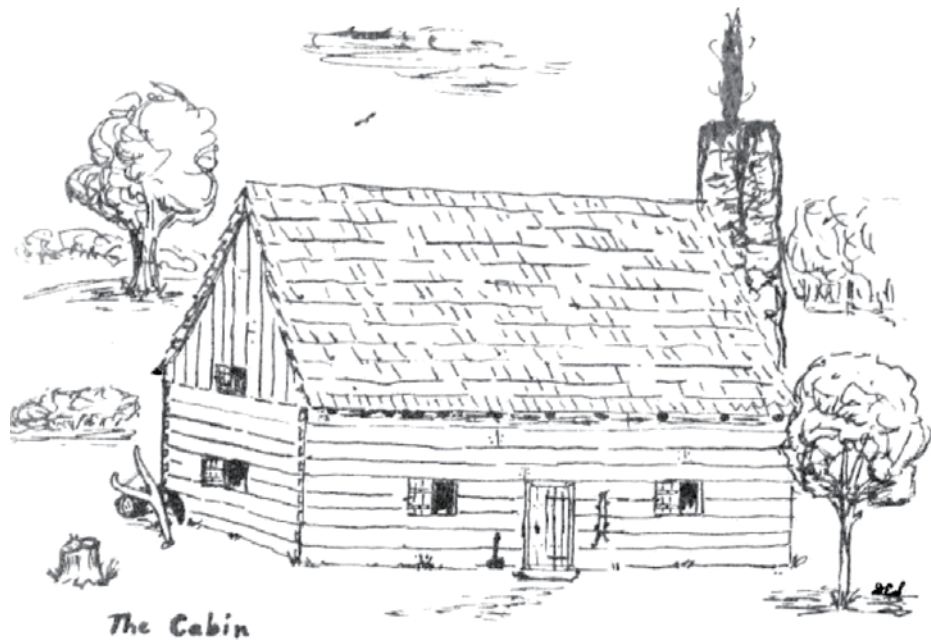
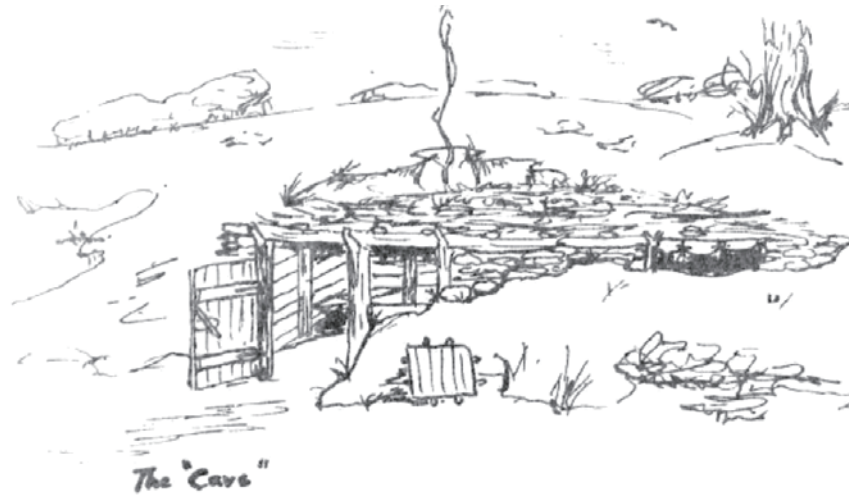


FIGURE 3: Artist's conception of William Brinton the Elder's "cave" and plank house dwellings. (Image: George Stetson, 1961, from Stetson, "The 1704 House," Plate 5)

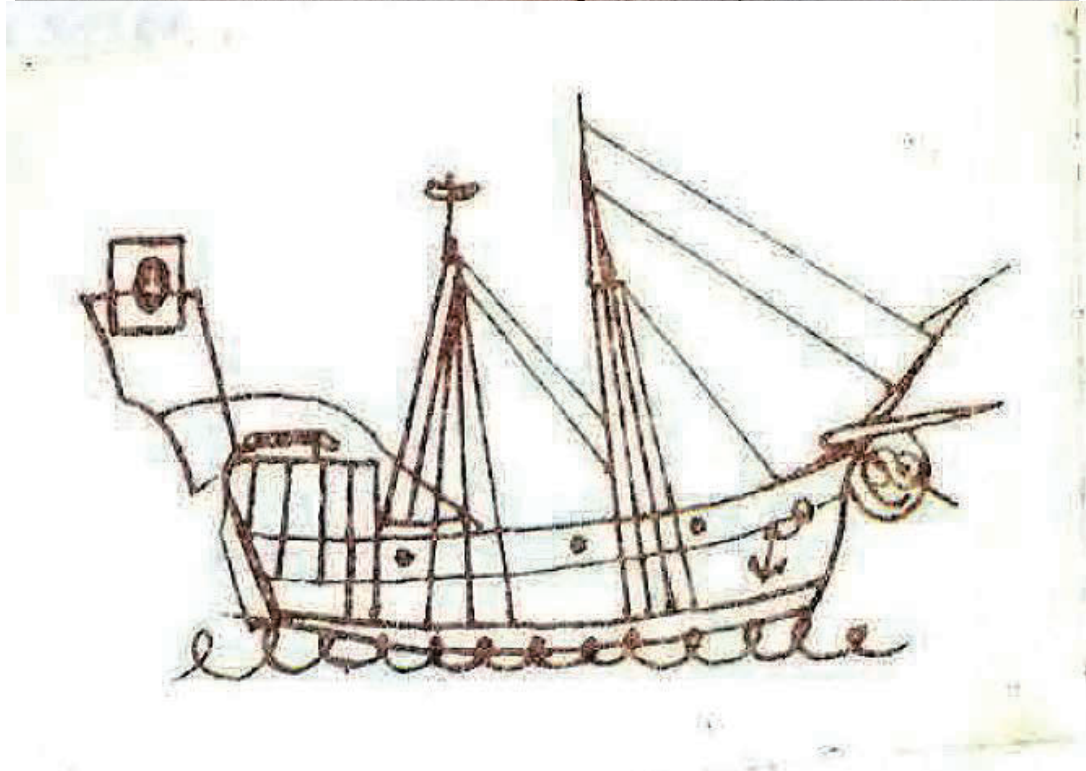


FIGURE 4: *Top:* The drawing of a ship discovered by Brumbaugh during pre-restoration demolition in the upper story. The ship is bisected by the partition of the East and Center Rooms. *Bottom:* Artist's rendering of the ship as it would have appeared before being covered. (Image: *Top:* Photo by author; *Bottom:* George Stetson, 1961, from Stetson, "The 1704 House," 185)



FIGURE 6: Daisy stencil pattern uncovered by Brumbaugh in 1954. (Image: Bart Anderson, 1954, from Stetson, "The 1704 House," pg. 184)

SECTION II: ZIBA DARLINGTON—A PUBLIC-MINDED INTELLECTUAL’S ORNAMENTAL FARMHOUSE (1829-1863)

The year 1829 marked an important transition point for the 1704 House. That year, Ziba Darlington, the great-great-grandson of William the Younger, purchased the house from Thomas Brinton. A veteran of the War of 1812 and the younger brother of well-known botanist, doctor, and politician Dr. William Darlington, Ziba was a prominent member of the West Chester area community. He was remembered by the 1900 *Genealogy of the Darlington Family*, as “quiet and unostentatious, dignified in bearing, and...given much to charity...”⁸⁰ His obituary hailed him as a hardworking intellectual who possessed “a public spirit seldom equalled [*sic*] [and] was largely interested in antiquities...”⁸¹ Despite his Quaker religion, during the War of 1812, he enlisted as a volunteer in the American Greys company, ordered to defend Philadelphia after the burning of Washington in 1814. His military service cost him his membership in the Society of Friends, though he continued to attend Friends meetings for the rest of his life.⁸²

Ziba had grown up on the Darlington farmstead immediately adjacent to the Brinton property. In 1825 when his father Edward died, Ziba inherited a tract of land from his father immediately adjacent to the 1704 House.⁸³ With his marriage to Hannah Webb in 1829, Ziba likely purchased the historic structure hoping to turn it into a home

⁸⁰ Gilbert Cope, *Genealogy of the Darlington Family* (West Chester, PA: Darlington Family Committee, 1900), 134.

⁸¹ "Death of Ziba Darlington," *Daily Local* (West Chester, PA), November 7, 1876.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Cope, 101.

for his new family.⁸⁴ Years later in an interview with J.H. Brinton, Ziba recalled that when he purchased the building, it was “extremely venerable,” but “...in bad repair...so decayed that [I] pushed the pent eaves down with [my] cane.”⁸⁵ He described the house as covered in green biogrowth with the interior and exterior woodwork in poor repair.

With the building in such poor repair, Ziba undertook what would be the first known substantial renovation of the house since it was built.⁸⁶ He completely replaced the roof and restored what woodwork he was able to, including most of the rafters, some of the flooring, and the exterior door on the first floor. At the same time, he also modified the house, digging a pumped cistern, adding a small frame addition to the east side of the house, replacing window and door frames, reducing the size of the chimneys by 18 inches, and white washing the exterior masonry.⁸⁷

Ziba’s work was not limited to the exterior; he undertook a campaign of massive rehabilitation of the interior spaces of the structure as well. Ziba further modified the remaining openings of the house, walling up several windows on the east and west side.⁸⁸ In the basement, Ziba repaved the floor with new mortar⁸⁹, and replaced the cellar door and stairs.⁹⁰ On the first story, he cut back the great summer beams supporting the upper stories so that they were nearly flush with the ceiling of the room. On the upper stories,

⁸⁴ Cope, 134.

⁸⁵ August 23, 1868, Diary

⁸⁶ HABS No. PA-1258, 6.

⁸⁷ HABS No. PA-1258, 6-7.

⁸⁸ Stetson, 40.

⁸⁹ It’s unclear whether or not Ziba also reflagged the basement. Ziba tells J.H. Brinton that the basement was “originally flags and the cellar floor earth,” which suggests he may have put new flags in place to restore it to how it once was, or perhaps the flags were gone by that point. In 1954, Brumbaugh discovered six fragments of flagstone in the northwest corner of the basement floor, which formed the basis for his restored flagstones in the space. Without any reliable dating methods available at the time, the assumption was made that these were simply original, but that assumption is based entirely on the one statement by Ziba (Stetson 46).

⁹⁰ Stetson, 46.

Ziba took down the partitions that divided the upstairs rooms and used them as the flooring for a porch that wrapped the south side of the building.⁹¹ Throughout the structure from basement to attic, Ziba also added new lath and plaster to the interior walls.⁹² (Figure 6)

Ziba's apparent plans for a family home with his new wife were not to be. The couple's three children all died in infancy, and Hannah herself died in 1843. Ziba remarried in 1850 to his cousin, Ruth C. Gilpin. The two had no known children, and moved to West Chester, selling the 1704 House to a non-Brinton in 1860.⁹³ While Ziba never successfully raised children in the 1704 House, the changes he made to the structure over the time he resided in it speak to a man who was seeking to establish a rural family home of moral character.

For Ziba, younger brother of the affluent and successful Dr. William Darlington, the drive to provide a practical home for his family must have certainly been driven by an additional desire to also demonstrate the refinement of the Darlington clan. Ziba had already shown a tendency to mimic his brother in other ways, turning away from his Quaker roots to follow William to war in 1812, and even dabbling in botany, his brother's chosen art. Additionally, the brothers' father, Edward, a state representative, instilled in his children a love for architecture at an early age by taking his sons on his frequent trips to Lancaster, Harrisburg, and Washington D.C. to view the works erected

⁹¹ Schenck and Parrington, 11.

⁹² Stetson, 51.

⁹³ Cope, 134.

there. Ziba continued to make a pilgrimage to Washington D.C. practically every year for the rest of his life.⁹⁴

Fifteen years after Ziba began the campaign of renovation on the 1704 House, Andrew Jackson Downing published *Cottage Residences*, a work which mingled architectural pattern book with philosophical treatise. Downing's "Design IV: An Ornamental Farm House" bore more than a passing resemblance to the 1704 House following Ziba's modifications.⁹⁵ Though Ziba's work predates *Cottage Residences*, the musing Downing provides along with the pattern for "Design IV" help to understand the probable goals of Ziba when he took it upon himself to purchase and update his family's ancestral home. Indeed, Ziba, an intellectual who had a large library and keen interest in reading, probably knew of Downing's early works as Downing's first articles were published during the 1830s in various journals the Darlington family would undoubtedly have read including the *Magazine of Horticulture* and *New York Farmer*.⁹⁶

Downing writes, "There is no reason why the dwelling houses of our respectable farmers should not displace some evidences of taste...By bestowing some degree of ornament on farm houses, we shall hope to increase the interest and attachment, which the farmer and his family have for their home, and thereby to improve his social and domestic state."⁹⁷ Where Ziba differed from Downing, however, is in whitewashing the exterior of the building. Downing abhorred the color white for rural cottages, feeling that it would interrupt the harmony of a structure with its natural surroundings. However, the

⁹⁴ "An Old Relic," *Daily Local* (West Chester, PA), May 3, 1876.

⁹⁵ A. J. Downing, *Cottage Residences* (New York, NY: Wiley and Putnam, 1842), Fig. 31.

⁹⁶ Sweeting, 15-16.

⁹⁷ Downing, 88-89.

whitewash itself was in keeping with Ziba's own apparent desire to be a noticed moral entity on the landscape of the rural West Chester hinterlands and would have echoed the white structures of the nation's capital of which he was so found. During the first half of the 19th century, white was considered a refined color representative of civilization. Despite objections of writers like Downing, the stark contrast with the environment was precisely the goal of rural gentility who wanted their homes to be noticed so that the world would see that, despite the remote location, the building contained within a member of a wider connected civilization.⁹⁸

Politically active, intellectually engaged, and connected to the wider United States, Ziba Darlington's family home needed to convey a sense of rooted moral stability. Duncan Faherty, examining the fictional life of the Effingham family in James Fenimore Cooper's 1838 novel *Home as Found*, recounts how the family's renovation of their ancestral home in a "modest Gothic style" under the guidance of the family patriarch's "instructed intelligence" resulted in the transformation of "a very ugly dwelling into one that is almost handsome."⁹⁹ According to Faherty, this remodeling of an older home ground the family in their ancestral past and "restor[es] the legal authority of the Effinghams over their own property...reestablish[ing] the property rights of the individual as the foundation, or source, of a stable society."¹⁰⁰ Faherty concludes that one of the tenets established in *Home as Found* is the "need to reaffirm a connection to the past by appropriately inhabiting and shaping, not destroying, [the] inherited

⁹⁸ Sweeting, 109.

⁹⁹ Faherty, 128.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 128.

environment.”¹⁰¹ Bushman underscores Faherty’s point directly referencing the 1704 House, saying that Ziba’s changes to the house step back from the monumental qualities of the original form, giving the house a subdued moral character that draws the family away from the vulgarities of public life.¹⁰²

Childless and possessing an antiquated ancestral dwelling not too dissimilar from the House of Usher, Ziba Darlington could have easily become a manifestation of Roderick Usher who “denied the opportunity to fashion a home that expresses his individuality...is consumed and erased by the house.”¹⁰³ Faherty, examining Edgar Allan Poe’s 1839 short story “The Fall of the House of Usher” opines that the true cause of the House of Usher’s “fall” was not architectural, but social. A traditional landed aristocratic family, the Usher’s ancestral home ceased to be relevant to the modern world. With no scions, the branchless Usher’s fade from existence, unable to speak any relevant message to the antebellum world increasingly moving away from old fashioned genealogical aristocracy. Poe uses the image of a spreading crack in the house to highlight the growing social tension leading up to the literal collapse of the house in which the last two Ushers die. “The tale affirms the impossibility of separating the house and its inhabitants,” comments Faherty.¹⁰⁴

Rather than allowing himself to become the terminus of an antiquated family line, Ziba instead used the moral and historic character of the 1704 House to continue to inform his intellectual conception of what it meant to be a modern descendant of the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 128-129.

¹⁰² Bushman, 261-261.

¹⁰³ Faherty, 171.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 170-171.

Brinton and Darlington clans. With no offspring, Ziba turned his attention to the children of the community, becoming a sort of ubiquitous father or grandfather figure for his many Brinton and Darlington nieces and nephews, often featuring in stories recalled by the immediate generations following him. A man of many trades, including soldier, farmer, and teacher, Ziba used his many experiences in life to instruct his fellow citizens on what he saw as the proper understanding of history and their place as residents of the West Chester area. He was known to have taken people on tours of area historic landmarks, including the Brandywine Battlefield. His obituary recalled “His fellow-citizens frequently availed themselves of his intelligence and unswerving integrity...and required him to serve as an umpire in settling disputes, and to contribute in various ways to advance the interests of the community...”¹⁰⁵

Though tragic, Ziba’s loss of his own family probably did more for his reputation and identity in the community than a narrow focus on his own genealogy might have by itself. During the second quarter of the 19th century, genealogical research was growing in respectability, but still largely seen as the realm of antiquarians. Historically, Americans had been suspicious of too much focus on one’s ancestors, as it suggested a kind of aristocratic culture more accustomed to the British Empire they had left behind. However, during the antebellum period, genealogical research was seen as acceptable so long as it was couched in the language of republicanism.¹⁰⁶ His brother William, who published a Darlington family history in 1853, noted that the purpose of such inquest was to promote “just pride in the traditional family reputation of plain, old-fashioned,

¹⁰⁵ “Death of Ziba Darlington.”

¹⁰⁶ Weil, 70.

unpretending integrity.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, by using the 1704 House as an illustrative centerpiece for larger campaigns of civic engagement and historic instruction, Ziba was seen as opening up his family history to teach lessons of integrity and morality to a broader audience. Through so doing, Ziba became a beloved figure to the entire community instead of a chronicler and patriarch of a single household. Throughout his lifetime, both during and after his ownership of the property, Ziba became a great advocate for the preservation of Brinton history, and the house itself. He frequently took younger members of the Brinton family to the old stone building where he would tell them stories and help them climb the ancient spiral staircase.¹⁰⁸ His knowledge and passion for the 1704 House were captured by one of these younger Brintons—John Hill Brinton, who maintained a friendship with Ziba throughout his lifetime. (Figure 7)

In John Hill Brinton, Ziba seems to have found the son he was never able to produce naturally. Born in 1811 in the 1711 Joseph 1704 house not far from William Brinton the Younger’s Great House, J.H. was prolific diarist who kept detailed records of his travels and conversations with local people from 1855-1892. Ziba Darlington features frequently in J.H.’s diary, as the two men spoke often, particularly about the 1704 House. J.H. inherited Ziba’s intense passion for the dwelling, recording the details of its original form so “that some future Brinton...may restore the old house to its primitive aspect...”¹⁰⁹ While J.H. did not marry, his diary became a primary source for future Brinton genealogists and historians interested in the original form of the 1704

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 70.

¹⁰⁸ Schoonover and Cope, 17-18.

¹⁰⁹ John Hill Brinton, “June 20, 1868.”

House.¹¹⁰

By 1860 when Ziba Darlington sold the house to Gideon Williamson, the original genteel rural stone house form of the 1704 House had been transformed into a mid-19th century rural Gothic Revival cottage. Ziba's reasons for selling his ancestral home and moving to downtown West Chester are not entirely clear, but may have to do with age, as he was 72 by that time. Even after the sale, his passion for the building remained strong, leading him to several conflicts with the owners during its next distinct phase. For Ziba, the ancient building represented his attempts throughout life to establish a moral home from which to influence the character of his family and neighbors. Though ultimately unsuccessful as a family man, Ziba nevertheless continued to use the 1704 House as a central focal point from which he instructed the children of his region. In this way, Ziba forged an identity as an upright, steadfast member of the community who was beloved well beyond his immediate kin. Ziba embodied Downing's notion that a moral community extended outward from a moral homestead reflected in the very architecture of the building itself.¹¹¹ In Ziba Darlington, the House of Brinton avoided the fate of the House of Usher, transformed into a then-modern homestead occupied by a man who was both rooted in the land and engaged in the community according to the past practices of his time.

¹¹⁰ Schoonover and Cope, 248.

¹¹¹ Sweeting, 103.



FIGURE 6: West elevation of the 1704 House ca. 1870 showing the modifications completed by Ziba Darlington, and early modifications by Henry Faucett (gable dormers and wrapped porch) (Image: T.W. Taylor ca. 1870, from the Photo Archives, Chester County Historical Society).



FIGURE 7: John Hill Brinton (1811-1893) ca. 1870, author of the diary accounts that informed much later knowledge of the 1704 House in its 18th and early 19th century forms. (Image: Schoonover and Cope, *The Brinton Genealogy*, pg. 248)

SECTION III: HENRY FAUCETT—A CULTIVATED FARMER’S MORAL RURAL HOMESTEAD (1864-1953)

In 1860, Ziba Darlington sold the house to his next door neighbor, Gideon Williamson. Williamson did not hold the house long, selling it quickly in 1864 to Henry Faucett, a local farmer and entrepreneur for \$140 an acre.¹¹² Like the Brinton family, the Faucett family was a well-established pioneer family who had settled the Chester County region early on not far from the original tract of land purchased by William Brinton the Elder. The 1904 *Historic Homes and Institutions of Chester and Delaware Counties* by Gilbert Cope (who also authored the 1925 *Brinton Genealogy*), described the Faucett family as a hardworking family of farmers with a “pioneer spirit” who were “conspicuous and noted for their integrity, uprightness, and honorable and conscientious dealings with their fellow men...”¹¹³ Like the Brintons, the Faucetts first lived in a plank house, where they were shopkeepers and farmers. By the middle of the 18th century, they too had upgraded their modest home to a stone house. Also like the Brintons, their ancestral home was on the Brandywine Battlefield, used during the battle in September 1777 as the headquarters for American General John Cadwalader.¹¹⁴ Like Ziba Darlington, Henry Faucett was the great-great-grandson of his family’s founder, George Faucett. Also like Ziba, Henry was a veteran, having served in the Civil War.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Schenck and Parrington, 13.

¹¹³ Gilbert Cope and Henry Graham Ashmead, *Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memorials of Chester and Delaware Counties Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Lewis, 1904), 600.

¹¹⁴ "Genealogical Department Queries and Answers," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, January 1916, 57.

¹¹⁵ Death Certificate for Henry Faucett. Certificate No. 3102. Ancestry.com. *Pennsylvania, Death Certificates, 1906-1966* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

In 1864 when Henry Sr. purchased the 1704 House from Gideon Williamson, Henry and his wife Prudence had just welcomed their first son, Henry P. Faucett, who would later inherit the house following the senior Henry's death in 1911.¹¹⁶ This suggests that perhaps, like Ziba, the dwelling was acquired with plans to accommodate a growing family. However, where Ziba was largely cautious (at least in his own view) of modifications made to the 1704 House, the Faucetts do not seem to have shared any such mindset. The modifications made to the house by Faucett father and son over the next 62 years would be some of the most radical changes to form and style in the structure's history.

Changes began as early as 1868, when, Henry Sr. replaced the roof of the 1704 House and added an ornamental chimney and small decorative gables to the north and south slopes of the pitched roof.¹¹⁷ The great walnut door in the north entrance that dated to the earliest years of the house was also removed by the Faucetts in 1868.¹¹⁸ The next year, he continued to renovate the exterior of the house, wrapping the long porch Ziba built on the front around the west side and unblocking and expanding window openings Ziba had blocked up by turning them into doors, removing two large chimney jambs in the process.¹¹⁹ The changes to the gables and chimneys required the Faucetts to remove a plaster date stone Ziba had placed on the west gable to replace the original painted date.¹²⁰ To compensate for this, and perhaps in respect of the home's legacy, Henry Sr.

¹¹⁶ HABS No. PA-1258 , 1.

¹¹⁷ John Hill Brinton, "August 23, 1868."

¹¹⁸ Ibid., "August 30 1868."

¹¹⁹ Ibid., "July 3, 1869."

¹²⁰ Written sources often conflate Henry Sr. (Henry M. Faucett) and Henry Jr. (Henry P. Faucett) into just "Henry," "Mr. Faucett," or just "Faucett," making it hard to distinguish father from son. In any case, both

placed a marble date stone on the exterior chimney stack.¹²¹ He also renovated, or perhaps rebuilt, Darlington's east frame wing, extending it to two and a half stories.¹²² The Faucetts reused the stone taken from the walls as foundation piers for the new expanded porch.¹²³ In 1872, changes continued as the Faucetts removed the sills from the exterior doors of the house and placed new frames in their place. J.H. Brinton was presented with a picture frame made from the walnut of these frames by Mrs. Faucett.¹²⁴ (Figure 8)

Ziba greatly disapproved of the changes. In July 1869, he took out an ad in the local papers passively denouncing Henry Faucett Sr.'s changes to the house. In it, Ziba calls the house "the oldest house now standing in either Chester or Delaware county" and reminds the readers that it was at one time "the homestead of one of our largest and most influential Chester County families." Perhaps hoping readers might ignore or not be aware of his own large changes to the property, Ziba claims that the house has remained mostly unchanged before giving a listing of all the Brintons who occupied it from 1704 onward; "William Brinton, 47 years; George Brinton, 42 years; Joseph Brinton, 12 years; Joseph Brinton, Esq., 24 years; Ziba Darlington, 32 years; Henry Faucett, 8 years."¹²⁵ By itself, the ad appears to be little more than a celebration of the house, but combined with Ziba's condemnation of the changes as recounted by J.H. Brinton, it appears obvious that

father and son lived together and probably worked together on the house until Henry Sr.'s death in 1911, making the distinction before 1911 perhaps unnecessary.

¹²¹ Letter from Francis Brinton to Charles Brinton. December 20, 1946 in Manuscript Group 1, Brinton Family Association, Box 1704 Brinton House. (Chester County Historical Society Archives: West Chester, PA.).

¹²² HABS No. PA-1258, 2.

¹²³ Stetson, 32.

¹²⁴ John Hill Brinton, "January 12, 1872."

¹²⁵ Ziba Darlington, "The Old Brinton House," *Reading Times*, July 7, 1869.

Ziba was attempting to illustrate the Faucett family's lack of authority to change the building as they were. However, not everyone was as upset as Ziba. J.H. Brinton took a more measured approach, noting that "the repairs improve its appearance and may secure it a lease of another 164 years of life."¹²⁶ Exactly a century later, G. Edwin Brumbaugh, speaking in an address to the Brinton Family Association, found the squabble between the two men amusing. Brumbaugh noted that Ziba was just as responsible for damaging the form of the house as Henry Faucett. However, Brumbaugh is less forgiving to Ziba, saying that because he *was* a Brinton, he had less of an excuse to change the home.¹²⁷

Nevertheless, like Ziba before him, Henry Faucett was likely channeling elements of architectural philosophy that called for a home of moral character, in addition to the practical acquisition of good farmland. While Ziba was likely aware of the writings of individuals like Downing and his predecessors, Faucett almost certainly was guided by Downing in particular, as the changes he made to the house produced an almost picture perfect copy of Downing's "Design IV: An Ornamental Farmhouse" by 1869. J.H. Brinton indicates that at the same time these changes were happening to the exterior, the Faucetts were also reconfiguring the interior.¹²⁸ (Figure 9)

Downing emphasized a three part moral geography for the ideal home divided into the house, its surrounding landscape, and the broader rural context. These three axes of aesthetic character functioned to develop a sense of taste and foster grounding in morality that could extend outwards into the community.¹²⁹ Similar to the architectural

¹²⁶ John Hill Brinton, "September 2, 1869."

¹²⁷ Brumbaugh, "Address."

¹²⁸ John Hill Brinton, "June 21, 1879."

¹²⁹ Sweeting, 103.

concepts employed by the 18th century English who divided the main floor of a dwelling into public hall and semi-private parlor, Downing's conception of the living space employed a main social area divided among parlor and dining room. The parlor took on a role similar to that of the traditional hall, acting as a place where the family could engage in social entertainment with guests. The dining room then became the semi-private space reserved for the family and close acquaintances where interfamilial contact forged bonds of moral relationship.¹³⁰

While exterior photos taken from c.1870 to 1946 clearly document the exterior transformation of the house, interior changes during the same period are not well documented, and no notes were taken about interior configurations prior to Brumbaugh's demolition. However, the *Brinton Genealogy* notes that the ancient spiral stairs Ziba had once taken young Brinton family members up and down had been completely removed by the Faucett family's subsequent renovations.¹³¹ Brumbaugh noted prior to restoration that not a single scrap of original decorative woodwork had survived, the fireplaces had all been torn out or altered, and the only original material left was some of the floor boards, joists, and summer beams.¹³² At some point, the Faucetts also added a bathroom with running water to central room of the second floor of the original 1704 portion of the house. Remains of reddish-purple paint or varnish are still visible in the floor of that room, as Brumbaugh did not want to damage the original floor boards by attempting to remove it.¹³³

¹³⁰ Sweeting, 103.

¹³¹ Schoonover and Cope, 17-18.

¹³² Brumbaugh, "Address."

¹³³ Deborah Brinton, "1957 Brinton House Tour."

Changes of this nature were quite common throughout the early and middle portion of the 19th century. As fortunes rose and fashions changed, families of all economic classes adapted the spaces they already lived in to meet the new requirements in form necessary for polite social interaction. Parlors, sitting rooms, and libraries were constructed in middle class homes bringing family activities to a central focus in the plan of the dwelling. These spaces served both to gather the family during private day-to-day life, and host social events where visitors could be surrounded by the signs of refinement present in the family home. Meanwhile, the exterior of a house was meant to be admired, catching the eyes of a passerby with a demonstration of the cultivated environment of the family who dwelt within.¹³⁴ Even the act of cutting a new door on the west side of the house, much maligned by Ziba, acted as a sign of refinement as having a separate “business” door to access the farm kept the dirty necessary work of farming away from the tranquil retreat of the family home. In this scheme, the porch acted as a liminal transition zone, providing a gentle movement from the house’s interior out into yard and away from the work spaces behind the house which were largely meant to be unseen.¹³⁵

Unlike Ziba, who was remembered mostly for using the house as a teaching tool to instruct his family and community on the tenets of their ancestors, the Faucett family used the reconfigured space in the 1704 House in a manner much closer to Downing’s prescription in accordance with cultivated taste of the time. The Faucett family was known to host semi-frequent social gatherings, which included musical entertainment provided by an organ in the parlor and cooking and eating occurring in spatially distinct

¹³⁴ Bushman, 256-257.

¹³⁵ Bushman, 262.

rooms.¹³⁶ One occasion, the 25th wedding anniversary of Henry Faucett Sr. and his wife Prudence, drew notable members of the local community including Ziba Darlington. The article concludes with a short history of the 1704 House, stating it is one of the oldest in Pennsylvania, and praising the Faucett family for their work in repairing and improving it.¹³⁷

Beyond the house itself, the Faucetts also maintained an ordered garden landscape, something essential to Downing, but largely ignored by Ziba. Downing believed an ordered landscape was necessary for the happiness and moral fortitude of the family in rural settings by transforming the landscape into a quiet retreat. Downing did not expect most farmers to be able to afford the elements of finery present in urban and suburban estates, and so he recommended the garden as an arguably superior alternative in a well-regulated home.¹³⁸ The Faucett family became well known for its ordered gardens, which included apiaries, aviaries, and orchards. *The Times* of Philadelphia recommended visitors to the hinterlands of West Chester stop by the 1704 House to see the Faucetts “zoological garden” which included “wild geese, ducks, parrots, owls, ferrets, and other birds and animals.”¹³⁹ *The Centre Democrat* of Bellefonte, PA even entertained its readers with a humorous story of how Henry Faucett managed to tame a flock of geese, only to find he could not overcome their instinctual desire to migrate

¹³⁶ Sweeting, 108.

¹³⁷ "Silver Wedding," *Daily Local* (West Chester, PA), December 21, 1875.

¹³⁸ Downing, 89-90; Sweeting, 116.

¹³⁹ "Suburban Pith and Point," *The Times* (Philadelphia, PA), February 8, 1881.

yearly, resulting in him having to hunt down the geese each year and beg hunters not to shoot them. When the effort became too much, he simply clipped their wings.¹⁴⁰

In 1881 the Faucetts added a large two-and-a-half story wing to the north side of the house, effectively doubling the size of the building.¹⁴¹ (Figure 10) Built of serpentine block quarried from a nearby quarry owned by J.H. Brinton, the rest of the structure was painted green to match the hue of the serpentine.¹⁴² (Figure 11) The choice of serpentine is almost certainly practical rather than stylistic. Serpentine is abundant in the Delaware Valley, particularly around Chester County, where it is used in buildings built by all economic and social classes.¹⁴³ The family's reasons for adding such a large wing are not quite clear, but may have to do with the transition from father to son as Henry Faucett Sr. aged and Henry Faucett Jr. began taking on more of a role in the leadership of the house. However, this is largely speculation, as Henry Jr. would not marry until 1898.¹⁴⁴

The changes made by the Faucett family to the form of the 1704 House conveyed a sense of rural refinement meant to show that they were a respectable family living in a moral home. In a sense, their acquisition of the house acted as a sort of appropriation of the Brinton legacy on the land. Unlike the Brintons, the Faucetts were not as intermarried or dispersed and were not as well-known to the community as someone like Ziba Darlington. Through their modifications of the house, they sought to establish themselves as one of the integral families of the region, refined and civilized. Bushman, commenting on the Faucett era changes, notes, "While no mansion, the house was a

¹⁴⁰ "Wild Geese," *Centre Democrat* (Bellefonte, PA), April 3, 1879.

¹⁴¹ Schenck and Parrington, 15.

¹⁴² HABS No. PA-1258, 6-7.

¹⁴³ Lanier and Herman, 95-96.

¹⁴⁴ "Henry P. Faucett," *Daily Local* (West Chester, PA), August 2, 1941.

fitting residence for a respectable family, displaying the family's undoubted commitment to refined living."¹⁴⁵ By the end of Faucett ownership the building had 14 rooms and three bathrooms, and was hailed as "one of the finest [homesteads] along the Wilmington pike."¹⁴⁶

Despite the criticism they received from Brinton descendants during their ownership of the property, there is no evidence that either Henry Sr. or Henry Jr. ever responded to Brinton criticisms. Indeed, the Faucetts remained sensitive to the desire of Brintons to remain connected to their house, often inviting curious visitors inside to see what little material remained from William the Younger's period.¹⁴⁷ Though Ziba did not approve of Faucett's changes, having sold the property, he had little recourse.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Ziba was not alone in his objection to non-Brinton ownership and modification of the building, and by the second decade of the 20th century, Brinton family members were rallying for the house to be restored to its original form. By that time, the house was owned by Isaac Sherwood.¹⁴⁹ Henry Jr. had sold the house quietly to Sherwood in 1926. Sherwood, who had come from New Jersey with his aunts to try his hand at farming, seems to have been unable to maintain the property, which fell into a continuing state of disrepair.¹⁵⁰ (Figure 12) At the same time, Francis Brinton, a local antique dealer, had begun to make plans to reacquire and restore his family home.

¹⁴⁵ Bushman, 262.

¹⁴⁶ "H.P. Faucett Sells His Farm," *Daily Local* (West Chester, PA), May 11, 1925.

¹⁴⁷ John Hill Brinton, "December 4, 1870."

¹⁴⁸ Schenck and Parrington, 13.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁵⁰ "H.P. Faucett Sells His Farm."

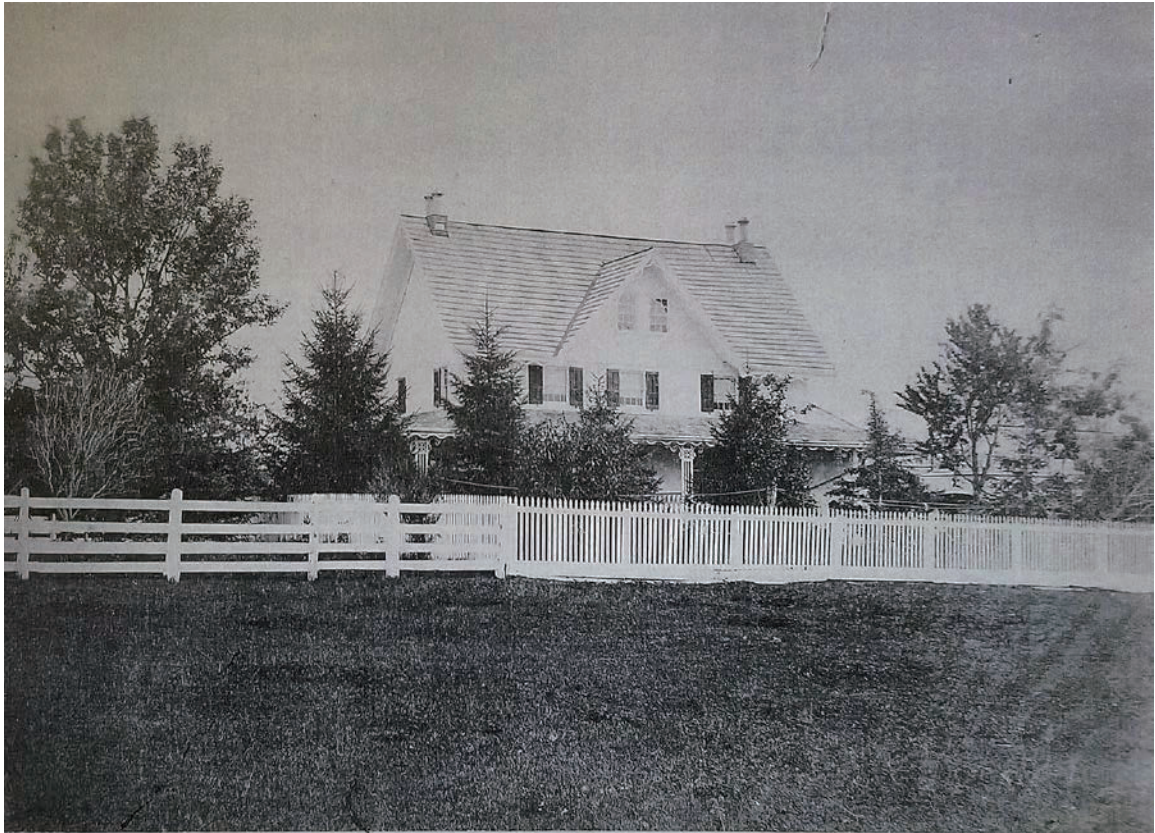


FIGURE 8: The photograph presented by Mrs. Faucett to J.H. Brinton in 1872, originally in a frame made from walnut wood taken from an 18th century door jamb during Henry Faucett's renovations. (Image: Henry Faucett, 1872, from Photo Archives, Chester County Historical Society)



Figure 9: “Design IV: An Ornamental Farmhouse” in A.J. Downing’s *Cottage Residences* (1848). The renovations conducted by Ziba Darlington and Henry Faucett in the mid-19th century bear strong resemblance to this design. (Image: A.J. Downing, *Cottage Residences*, Fig. 31)



FIGURE 10: *Top:* West elevation of the 1704 House ca. 1924 while still owned by the Faucetts showing the addition of the serpentine wing. *Bottom:* Focus shot of the north elevation of the serpentine wing in 1953 before demolition. (Image: *Top:* Schoonover and Cope, *The Brinton Genealogy*, 122; *Bottom:* Schenck and Parrington, *An Archaeological Investigation of the Brinton 1704 House*, Fig. H)

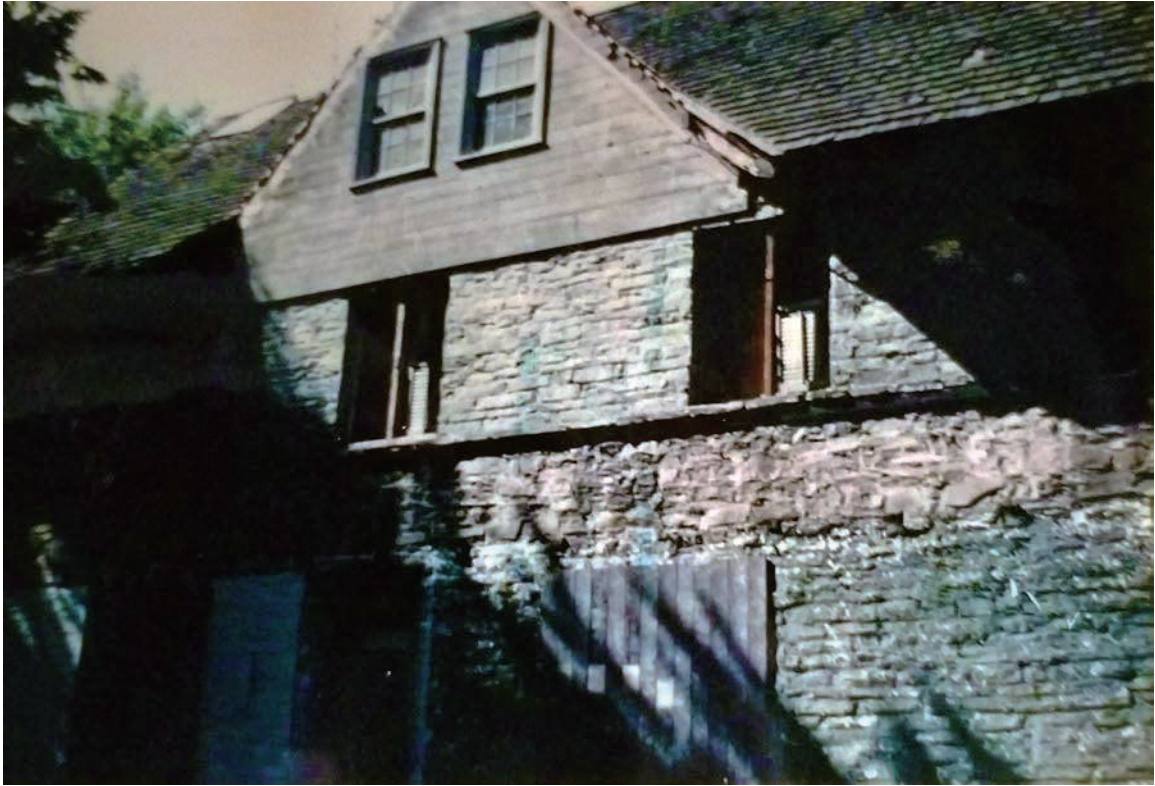


FIGURE 11: Frontal south elevation of the 1704 House during pre-restoration demolition showing the green paint applied in 1881 to match the serpentine block of the addition. (Image: Bart Anderson, 1954, from Stetson, "The 1704 House," 193)



FIGURE 12: West elevation of the 1704 House in 1953 showing signs of general disrepair. (Image: Clement S. Brinton, 1953 from Photo Archives, Chester County Historical Society Library)

SECTION IV: FRANCIS BRINTON—A NOSTALGIC ANTIQUARIAN’S REIMAGINED HOUSE MUSEUM (1954-2018)

Francis Darlington Brinton, born in 1877, married Deborah Howell in 1899. Together, the couple ran an antique store in West Chester, with Francis in particular having a special interest in early American furniture. Francis, who was the director of the Chester County Historical Society for 35 years, was known as a local expert on early Americana, and had even helped Henry DuPont obtain and establish appropriate layouts for the period rooms at the Winterthur Museum.¹⁵¹ For most of his adult life, Francis dreamed of restoring his family’s home, to the point that whenever he would be out sourcing antiques for his shop or for clients, he would often purchase and set aside pieces from the early 18th century similar to those found in the 1752 William Brinton the Younger Estate Inventory that he hoped he could someday use in the restored 1704 House.¹⁵² (Figure 13)

Francis grew up during a time of transition in American identity following the trauma of the Civil War. Between the 1870s and 1920s, large scale immigration, industrialization, and urbanization triggered a wave of genealogical interest, particularly among middle class white Americans who were searching for place and meaning within their race and heredity.¹⁵³ The Civil War opened questions of what it meant to be an American and who constituted the nation.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, the editor of *The Brinton Genealogy* echoes these sentiments, introducing the book by saying, “We should feel

¹⁵¹ “Francis Brinton Obituary,” *Daily Local* (West Chester), October 19, 1951.

¹⁵² Brumbaugh, “Address.”

¹⁵³ Axelrod, ix; Weil 112-113.

¹⁵⁴ Weil, 127.

ignorant indeed if we did not know the history of our country. How much more ignorant are we if we do not know the more intimate history our family. Its importance has been neglected for too long.”¹⁵⁵

For Francis and many of his Brinton peers, status as a member of one of the founding families of Chester County connected them directly to a sense of individual identity and national pride; works on genealogy soon followed, beginning with *The Brinton Family* published by Garrison Brinton in 1878. The book greatly impacted Francis, so much so that in 1897, at 20 years old, Francis borrowed the book from the library and copied the entire thing by hand so that he would have the information always available.¹⁵⁶

As interest grew in Brinton history among descendants, Brinton family members began to rally for a new book on Brinton history that would include more recent generations. In the early 1910s, Francis and likeminded Brintons in the West Chester area formed a committee to enlist the help of professional genealogists to publish a new edition of the Brinton family history. With no real way of tracking down every single Brinton descendant, the committee proposed hosting a family reunion to establish genetic ties for use in the book. The idea was received with enthusiasm. On September 19, 1914, within sight of the 1704 House (but not on the property, which was still owned by Henry Faucett Jr.), Brinton family members gathered. The reunion was far larger than

¹⁵⁵ Schoonover and Cope, 5.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

anyone expected, attracting over 1,000 people. (Figure 14) Shortly thereafter, the Brinton Family Association was formed to keep members connected.¹⁵⁷

The growing emphasis on genealogy and focus on surviving sites like the 1704 House was part of an emerging period in America thought which would become known as the Colonial Revival movement. Starting in the years leading up to the centennial in 1875 and reaching a peak around the middle of the 20th century, the movement presented itself in a re-evaluation of traditional craft, an emphasis on American exceptionalism, and a rediscovery or invention of mythology and folklore.¹⁵⁸ Because an archaeological understanding of material culture was still in its infancy when the movement started, there was not yet a clear understanding that objects had an unbroken string to the past. Thus, the Colonial Revival was both inventive in that it reimagined the past and applied it to modern life, and destructive in that it frequently elevated one period of history above all others.¹⁵⁹

Indeed, reunions of the kind the Brintons organized were a natural extension of the Colonial Revival mindset that was growing across the nation in the years leading up to the turn of the 20th century. “Colonial” in this sense referred to a time before 1840 and the onset of the Victorian period which had ushered in the modern world. In other words, a focus on the colonial was essentially anti-Victorian or anti-modern.¹⁶⁰ Family reunions and the family associations that often resulted gave individuals a sense of kinship and pride that reestablished familial relationships that had steadily been eroded by

¹⁵⁷ Schoonover and Cope 14-15

¹⁵⁸ Kenneth L. Ames, “Introduction,” in Axelrod, 10-12.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 6, 12.

¹⁶⁰ Ames in Axelrod, 6.

industrialization and mercantile individualism of the Victorian era. Unlike antiquarian genealogists of the early 19th century, participants in family reunion eschewed a scientific focus on family trees, and instead preferred to engage in “family traditions” which were often inventive myths that connected modern members to each other and to the past.¹⁶¹ These invented sources of family lore sometimes became the bane of scientifically focused historians. Following the nation’s centennial, less scrupulous historians and genealogists sometimes embellished or fabricated connections to famous people or places in order to claim a share of the booming genealogy market. Later professionals developed a strong belief in rigorous fact-finding to establish “scientific” evidence that proved their assertions about the past.¹⁶²

Objects also played an important role in the Colonial Revival movement as surviving objects from the past were seen as enduring markers of people, places, and common memory. So long as the object survived, so too did these things. In this mindset, someone like Francis Brinton, an antique collector and amateur historian, had a special power as a collector to act as a gatekeeper to the past, allowing present generations to connect to objects they may not have even realized had sentimental importance. People payed individuals like Francis not for a chair or table, but for a chance to connect to the past. However, the commercial mingling of meaning derived from time and objects could also be problematic. Change over time means that all objects will inevitably have phases brought about by adaptation and continued use. To a collector, these changes move the object away from its desired period and create mixed signals that muddled

¹⁶¹ Weil, 171-172.

¹⁶² Ibid. 165

authenticity. Thus, the collector seeks to minimize the change and in so doing, maximize both the monetary and sentimental value of an object. For Colonial Revivalists like Francis Brinton, the period between the present and the time of interest in an object had to be downplayed, forgotten, or entirely removed.¹⁶³

In the context of the Brinton family, association with the still-standing but modified 1704 House became one of the chief focal points of family pride, but everything added after 1752 marred the authenticity of the house. The fact that the structure had been heavily modified and was occupied by the non-Brinton Faucett family became a sore spot for Francis and his Brinton peers, so much so that *The Brinton Genealogy* introduction ends quite sardonically with a comment on how repeated remodelings of the structure have all but eliminated beloved traces of the family's past.¹⁶⁴ Reacquiring the house became one of Francis's chief lifetime goals, and for years, he patiently waited, collecting furniture and conducting research on the house so that one day when he finally could reclaim it, he might be able to return it to its original form.¹⁶⁵

Francis's opportunity finally arrived in 1946 when Sherwood sold the land and house to Clarence H. Kemery. Kemery was a West Chester real estate broker who was mostly interested in obtaining the farmland. In 1945, Kemery placed an ad in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* advertising the property and its buildings for sale for \$10,500.¹⁶⁶ Kemery, who is remembered by surviving family members as a kind and generous man who often helped others financially, seems to have been aware of the Brinton family's

¹⁶³ Ames in Axelrod, 8-9.

¹⁶⁴ Schoonover and Cope, 17-18.

¹⁶⁵ Brumbaugh, "Address."

¹⁶⁶ Clarence H. Kemery, "Complete Sale of All Stock and Equipment of a Well Equipped Dairy Farm," advertisement, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 4, 1945.

growing desire to reacquire the 1704 House.¹⁶⁷ According to Deborah Brinton, in 1946, he contacted Francis Brinton and offered to sell the historic portions of the land which included to stone house, the suspected location of the plank house, and “cave” to the Brintons.¹⁶⁸

The following year, in 1947, the Brintons conveyed the property to the Chester County Historical Society for the sum of one dollar with the agreement that the CCHS would own the property while the Brinton Family Association would operate and maintain it.¹⁶⁹ While Francis and Deborah knew they had reacquired the genuine house built by Francis’s ancestor William Brinton the Younger, they were not architectural experts themselves, and only had a broad sense of what might be historic within the home. After the house was purchased, but before plans were set in motion to begin a restoration proper, Francis reached out to his cousin Charles W. Brinton, then-head of the Brinton Family Association. Charles was close friends with A. Lawrence Kocher, noted mid-century modern architect and advocate for historic preservation. At the time, Kocher was working as editor of *Architectural Records* at Colonial Williamsburg, and a lecturer at the College of William and Mary.¹⁷⁰

Kocher visited the house with the Brintons on December 6, 1946 and was extremely impressed with it. He noted that much of the wood flooring was likely original, and advised that the first place to look for more evidence would be behind the

¹⁶⁷ Diane Marino, "Interview with Diane Marino, Granddaught of Clarence Kemery," e-mail interview by author, March 30, 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Deborah Brinton, "1957 Brinton House Tour."

¹⁶⁹ Schenck and Parrington, 17.

¹⁷⁰ "Alfred Lawrence Kocher," Black Mountain College Project, accessed April 1, 2018, http://www.blackmountaincollegeproject.org/Biographies/KOCHER_LAWRENCE/KOCHER_LAWRENCE_BIO.htm.

plaster and lath walls.¹⁷¹ Kocher also helped guide the Brintons to what he thought would be an appropriate interior for the house of the period 1704 to 1752. For example, the Charles wondered if the ceilings were originally lath and plaster with an open cathedral ceiling exposing the rafters of the attic to the second floor. Kocher advised that houses of this period in this region were not likely to have lath or plaster attics, and that cathedral ceilings were incredibly rare.¹⁷² Francis was excited to hear of Kocher's conclusions, noting that in his experience hunting for antiques in attics of old farm houses of a similar age, "75% to 90% of them never had any lath and plaster ceilings, but were entirely exposed to the roof, showing the rafters and shingles."¹⁷³ Kocher's final verdict on the house was that it was an incredibly important piece of American architectural history and that a restoration would be difficult but not impossible.¹⁷⁴

Kocher's inclusion in the project and his connection to Colonial Williamsburg is an interesting one which underscores the explicitly Colonial Revival nature of the Brinton family's goals for the 1704 House. The initial reconstruction of what would become Colonial Williamsburg was a story of "impression management." Rev. W.A.R. Goodwin, rector of the Bruton Parish Episcopal Church in Williamsburg wanted to turn the town into a national shrine. To do so, he needed to convince a patron that there was Revolutionary era "treasure" beneath the "shabby modernity" of the pre-reconstruction town. Goodwin approached architect William G. Perry to prepare some maps of the

¹⁷¹ Letter from Charles Brinton to Francis Brinton, December 9, 1946 in Manuscript Group 1, Brinton Family Association, Box 1704 Brinton House. (Chester County Historical Society Archives: West Chester, PA.).

¹⁷² Charles Brinton to A. Lawrence Kocher, January 22, 1947 in Manuscript Group 1, Brinton Family Association, Box 1704 Brinton House. (Chester County Historical Society Archives: West Chester, PA.).

¹⁷³ Francis Brinton to Charles Brinton, January 26, 1947 in Manuscript Group 1, Brinton Family Association, Box 1704 Brinton House. (Chester County Historical Society Archives: West Chester, PA.).

¹⁷⁴ Charles Brinton to A. Lawrence Kocher, January 22, 1947.

restored historic area, which Goodwin then used to convince John D. Rockefeller Jr. to invest in the project.¹⁷⁵ Unlike previous generations which had equated moral or aesthetic values with taste, “good taste” in the context of Colonial Williamsburg meant “correct knowledge.”¹⁷⁶ Authenticity could only be conveyed if mistakes were avoided and people *believed* the town was an authentic restoration, not a reconstruction.¹⁷⁷

By inviting Kocher to evaluate the 1704 House, the Brintons were in essence expressing a desire to have the site treated with the same measure of exacting authenticity and empirical historicism the restorationists at Colonial Williamsburg had used to recreate their colonial town. Undoubtedly, they were hoping to avoid the kind of invented tradition accusations that plagued restorations and genealogical projects a half-century prior. However, the scientific and archaeological approach favored by men like Kocher and his peers at Colonial Williamsburg treated history as a fragmented puzzle where putting the pieces back together “requires the problem-solving skills of a detective searching out mysteries and hunting through minutiae for clues...To put back together such a puzzle, one starts with the surviving fragments and fills in the gaps between them in order to re-create a complete portrait...”¹⁷⁸

So long as Henry Faucett and Ziba Darlington’s additions to the 1704 House concealed the “true” 18th century house underneath, the site could not adequately convey the sense of identity Francis Brinton and others saw as its potential. In a 1950 letter to Brinton family members, Francis and Deborah announced plans to restore the house to its

¹⁷⁵ Handler, 31.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁷⁸ Handler, 70-71.

original form by removing the remaining early-19th century Ziba phase additions, and late-19th century Faucett phase serpentine wing. Among items to be restored, the letter lists cleaning whitewash and paint off the walls, restoring the window and door openings, replacing the fireplaces, rebuilding the staircases, and removing the porches to place back pent eaves.¹⁷⁹ The letter concludes with Francis and Deborah’s vision for the restored house:

We hope to raise funds to remove the green stone addition of 1880. We believe that the frame edition on the east end should be remodeled to correspond with the old part, and contain the water-tank, also heating and hot water unit in the basement. The 1st floor would be kitchen and dinette, with bath and bedroom on the 2nd floor, thus making living quarters for the caretakers, and then furnish the old house with the appropriate heirlooms and antiques of the time.¹⁸⁰

Soon after, the Brinton Family Association began publishing fund raising materials including pamphlets and booklets detailing the history of the home house and their vision for its restoration.¹⁸¹ Francis estimated the cost of the restoration would be \$25,000 based on the cost of the restoring Washington’s Headquarters nearby on the Brandywine Battlefield Historic Site.¹⁸² (Figure 15)

The Brinton family devotion to the 1704 House following the 1914 family reunion has many of the hallmarks of a religious revival, with Francis Brinton as its missionary preacher encouraging his congregation in the erection of a new shrine to their shared faith. During the Colonial Revival period, couching projects in quasi-religious language was not uncommon. Even the very term “revival” had religious connotations.

¹⁷⁹ Francis Brinton and Deborah Brinton to Brinton Family. (September 30, 1950. Brinton 1704 House Archives, Chadd's Ford, PA.)

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ “The 1704 House.”

¹⁸² Deborah Brinton, “1957 Brinton House Tour.”

By viewing the past as a moral and simpler time, Colonial Revivalists sought to apotheosize the past as means of developing a shared culture in which to resist the upheavals of modern diversification.¹⁸³

In 1950, with fundraising underway, Francis approached G. Edwin Brumbaugh,¹⁸⁴ asking him to visit the site with the hopes that he could convince him to take on the restoration of the 1704 House.¹⁸⁵ (Figure 16) By this point in his career, Brumbaugh was a well-known restoration architect, having worked on several properties in the Chadds Ford area, including the nearby Daniel Boone Homestead in Birdsboro, and Lafayette's Headquarters at the Gideon Gilpin House on the Brandywine Battlefield.¹⁸⁶ Brumbaugh was initially reluctant to take on the project, as he was in the midst of a frustrating restoration at the Ephrata Cloister, and was discouraged by the structures's extreme alterations. He encouraged Francis to find another architect, telling Francis that it would be at least a year and a half before he could undertake such a project. Francis, however, was content to wait.¹⁸⁷ According to Deborah, Francis and her had such strong positive reactions to Brumbaugh's other work, especially Washington's

¹⁸³ Ames in Axelrod, 13-14.

¹⁸⁴ Note that the 2008 Emily Wolf thesis "Architecture Tells the Story" on Brumbaugh cited in this thesis contains incorrect information regarding when Brumbaugh was first contacted by Francis D. Brinton. Wolf claims that Francis first approached Brumbaugh in 1953. This is incorrect. Francis first approached Brumbaugh in 1950. Francis died in 1951, making a first contact in 1953 impossible. Given that the rest of her information is correct, this may have been a simple typo.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Francis Brinton to G. Edwin Brumbaugh, September 10, 1950 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

¹⁸⁶ Rose, 5.

¹⁸⁷ Brumbaugh, "Address."

Headquarters, that they could not imagine anyone else other than Brumbaugh performing the restoration.¹⁸⁸

Francis's insistence that no one other than Brumbaugh be allowed to conduct the restoration is not surprising. Brumbaugh came from a similar background to Francis. Born in 1890 in Western Pennsylvania, Brumbaugh was exposed early on to the architecture of his Pennsylvania German ancestors.¹⁸⁹ Brumbaugh's father, Martin Grove Brumbaugh, served as Pennsylvania's governor from 1915-1919, and was known for his attention to preservation of history, including the establishment of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission. Brumbaugh, who had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1913, used his father's influence to establish his own architectural firm. Many of his early projects required additions or modifications to historic churches and schools, and by the second decade of the 20th century, his firm was focusing almost exclusively on restorations.¹⁹⁰ By 1940, Brumbaugh had restored buildings all over the Eastern Seaboard, including many sites in the West Chester area.¹⁹¹

Brumbaugh's attitude towards restoration combined the quasi-religious vocabulary and exacting scientific method desired by the Brinton family for the 1704 House. Brumbaugh believed architecture had an inherent social value and that proper restoration was both a constructive and patriotic duty. Through the proper study of a historic structure and piecing together its past, a structure could do more than just capture history, it could inspire people and convey important moral lessons. "Architecture has

¹⁸⁸ Letter from Deborah Brinton to G. Edwin Brumbaugh, January 27, 1952 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

¹⁸⁹ Rose, 1.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 5.

always been the great story-teller of history, because it has never failed to reflect all that is really worth telling about people,” Brumbaugh said in an address to the Pennsylvania German Society in 1930.¹⁹²

Throughout his career, Brumbaugh clashed with well-meaning amateurs and young architects who he viewed as lacking the experience, unable to correctly draw out the atmosphere and spiritual meaning necessary to understand historic architecture.¹⁹³ During his restoration of the Ephrata Cloister, which Brumbaugh started just before the 1704 House restoration, he clashed frequently with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, who believed Brumbaugh’s investigative process took too long and wanted him to be concerned only with the physical aspects of the building, not its rhetorical dimensions.¹⁹⁴ Brumbaugh wished to follow the kind of exacting process engaged by restoration architects at Colonial Williamsburg, while the PHMC wanted the project completed quickly and on a small budget.¹⁹⁵

Brumbaugh’s experience with the PHMC at Ephrata Cloister reinforced his already held notion that a qualified restoration architect should be given a large measure of autonomy in the proper restoration of a historic site. This may be why, at first, he was hesitant to accept Francis Brinton’s overtures to restore the 1704 House. Francis had a very clear idea of what he wanted the house to represent, and Brumbaugh may have feared another overbearing amateur client such as the ones he had encountered previously

¹⁹² Rose, 10.

¹⁹³ Wolf, 59.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 55.

¹⁹⁵ Rose, 28.

in his career and was presently dealing with at Ephrata Cloister.¹⁹⁶ However, the situation surrounding the 1704 House was about the change.

In October 1951, Francis died.¹⁹⁷ Deborah then became the main pusher of the restoration project in her husband's memory, joined by Bart Anderson, who had succeeded Francis as director of the CCHS. In a 1952 letter to Brumbaugh, she again insists that he should be the one to carry out the restoration saying, "I feel, and Bart Anderson...thoroughly agrees with me, that if at all possible, my Francis' dream for the old house should be carried out."¹⁹⁸ Brumbaugh accepted. In the intervening time between when the house was purchased in 1946 and when work began in 1954, the house was apparently rented to tenants, as Deborah indicates in a note to Brumbaugh that they have been evicted and work can begin in 1954.¹⁹⁹

The restoration of the 1704 House gave Brumbaugh the kind of restoration experience he thoroughly enjoyed. First, Deborah Brinton and the Brinton Family Association gave Brumbaugh a great deal of deference, allowing him ample leeway to interpret the historic facts as he judged best. Second, Bart Anderson was a respected historian in his own right, with the kind of long experience Brumbaugh respected. Third, the project's contractor, Howard M. Ryan, worked with the kind of slow and careful diligence Brumbaugh required for his restoration methods.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Wolf, 67.

¹⁹⁷ "Francis Brinton Obituary."

¹⁹⁸ Letter from Deborah Brinton to G. Edwin Brumbaugh, January 27, 1952.

¹⁹⁹ Letter from Deborah Brinton to G. Edwin Brumbaugh, April 20, 1954 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

²⁰⁰ Brumbaugh, "Address;" Wolf, 68.

Because so little remained of the original fabric and sources for the original form of the house only dated as far back as 1798, Brumbaugh was forced to rely on a mixture of archaeological evidence drawn from the building and form and style comparisons of similarly aged homes in the Mid-Atlantic and New England to design the restored 1704 House.²⁰¹ Howard Ryan of West Chester was selected as the general contractor for the project, overseeing a team of mostly local craftsmen and subcontractors, with some regional reproduction specialists fulfilling more specialized reproduction orders.²⁰² Among those providing reproduction pieces for the house were Robinson Flagstones of Philadelphia providing the flagstones for the basement; Donald Streeter of Iona, New Jersey hand forging replica hardware; Boyerstown Planing Mill producing frames and interior partitions; Joseph Messersmith of Chadds Ford created the leaded glass casement windows; and Colonial Hand Split Shingles, Inc. providing cedar shingles for the restored roof.²⁰³

The original plan for the restored woodwork of the house had most missing woodwork replaced with a mixture of white oak and pine, but after discovering a double walnut doorframe in the basement, Brumbaugh hastily wrote a letter to Howard Ryan ordering him to change a large amount of woodwork from oak or pine to walnut, including the stairs, partitions, doors, frames, and trim.²⁰⁴ To fulfill this order, Brumbaugh sourced old growth walnut from the Boyerstown Planing Mill. By

²⁰¹ Brumbaugh, "Address"

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Bill from G. Edwin Brumbaugh to Brinton Family Association, May 31, 1956 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

²⁰⁴ Letter from G. Edwin Brumbaugh to Howard M. Ryan, June 18, 1955 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

appropriate coincidence, the mill had a supply of walnut available from an old growth walnut grove on former Brinton property a mile from the house. The wood had been cut down nearly a decade previously, and was about to be sold by the mill to make caskets.²⁰⁵ Brumbaugh convinced them it would be better used in the house instead.²⁰⁶

Because the frame addition added by Ziba in 1829 and renovated by the Faucetts in 1881 was considered outside the period of significance, Brumbaugh debated removing it, but ultimately decided to retain and convert it into a caretaker's wing for the house.²⁰⁷ Brumbaugh redesigned the wing as a kneewall house to the period circa 1725 based on the frame wing of the nearby Gilpin House, which Brumbaugh had restored previously. He reduced the height from two-and-a-half to one-and-a-half stories as he wanted the house to be visually subordinate to the massing of the main house.²⁰⁸ (Figure 17)

Ostensibly, Brumbaugh include the frame wing as a way to isolate the modern elements necessary for the site like running water, electricity, and other comforts necessary for a caretaker.²⁰⁹ However, he had other reasons for keeping it as well. Brumbaugh was upset that the National Park Service had not let him restore the frame wing on the east side of the Gilpin House. His frustrations were further compounded

²⁰⁵ The sourcing of the walnut has become part of modern mythology surrounding the restoration of the house. Likely originating with Deborah Brinton, who first made the error in a celebratory note to Bart Anderson and repeated it in tours after the restoration, the myth has been spread that the partitions in the house are from a casket factory, and that the partitions themselves are sized up casket pieces. This is a misunderstanding of the truth. The Boyerstown Planing Mill was (and still is) a well-established architectural woodwork provider and provided reproduction pieces in a variety of wood types to the 1704 House and many other restoration and commercial projects. While Brumbaugh did manage to buy wood reserved for sale for casket-making, the wood and partitions are not strictly speaking casket-related beyond that they might have one day ended up as casket parts had Brumbaugh not intervened.

²⁰⁶ Brumbaugh, "Address."

²⁰⁷ Stetson, 45-46.

²⁰⁸ Letter from G. Edwin Brumbaugh to Bart Anderson, August 23, 1954 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

²⁰⁹ Deborah Brinton, "1957 Brinton House Tour."

when the State undertook their own restoration of the wing after his project concluded, resulting in what Brumbaugh called “pretty badly done.” Ironically, following the conclusion of the 1704 House restoration, the authorities at the Gilpin House used Brumbaugh’s template to correct some of their own mistakes.²¹⁰

The changes to the frame wing were not the only anachronisms Brumbaugh introduced to the house. Brumbaugh chose to omit the kind of wrapped pent eaves that were attests to have existed on the house prior by sources interviewed by J.H. Brinton. By his own admission, he excluded a wrapped pent eave because it would have been too German, and he wanted the house to instead be read clearly as an English house.²¹¹

The kind of reimagining Brumbaugh employed in the restoration of the 1704 House was typical for the Colonial Revival movement he was a part of. The past of the house, which had been obscured by its 19th century changes, provided Brumbaugh with fertile ground for which to imagine, interpret, and evaluate features of the house in order to give them the importance he felt they needed to correctly convey their meaning. Colonial Revival projects were known to transform the physical and philosophical in order to meet the needs of modern society, without necessarily being seen as losing a sense of authenticity.²¹² By removing its post-18th century “accretions,” Brumbaugh was able to bring out the original character of the house he and the Brintons so desired.²¹³ However, Brumbaugh’s drastic interpretation of the house was not well received by everyone. In a letter to Brumbaugh, Deborah Brinton remarks, “We hear the neighbors

²¹⁰ Brumbaugh, “Address.”

²¹¹ Brumbaugh, “Address.”

²¹² Ames in Axelrod, 5-6.

²¹³ Wolf, 71.

cannot understand why we tore down the good house which was already there!”²¹⁴
(Figure 18)

Despite delays, the restoration of the 1704 House was finished by October 1955, at a cost of \$47,737.78, nearly double what Francis had projected in 1946. (Figure 20) To pay the remaining balance past the \$25,000 raised by the BFA, Deborah Brinton took out a mortgage.²¹⁵ The house was dedicated October 29, 1955 at the Brinton family reunion. The keynote address for the dedication of the building was given by the chair of the BFA, John H. Brinton. He lauded the restored structure as an example of moral architecture in a world full of uncertainty and confusion saying:

Our Heavenly Father, we are gathered here to dedicate this house in memory of the two brothers who are the ancestors of the Brinton family. We thank Thee for the good example of those who came here in search of religious freedom, who were willing to endure the hardships of pioneer life that they might worship the God they loved. We can little realize the hardships they endured for the faith, away from friends and relatives, yet they never forgot the God whom they served. Sunday morning was the day of worship when they attended their First Day Meeting. They had a sense of right and wrong which we have often forgotten in this modern world of uncertainty and confusion. We can be thankful for the way in which they treated their fellow man, the natives of this country by calling them together and paying them for the land which they received. Help us not to forget the good example of their lives and may we show the same love to our fellow men as they showed. We dedicate now this house to the memory of William Brinton that it may be a constant reminder for us who follow to keep the faith which they have set for us.²¹⁶

John H. Brinton’s address underscores the Colonial Revival mindset that had informed the restoration of the house from its earliest years. In it, he emphasizes the

²¹⁴ Letter from Deborah Brinton to G. Edwin Brumbaugh, October 4, 1955 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

²¹⁵ Deborah Brinton, “1957 Brinton House Tour.”

²¹⁶ Brinton, John H. "Dedication of 1704 Brinton House." Speech, 1955 Brinton Family Reunion, Brinton 1704 House, West Chester, October 29, 1955 in Manuscript Group 1, Brinton Family Association, Box 1704 Brinton House. (Chester County Historical Society Archives: West Chester, PA.).

moral character of the past compared to the uncertain morality of the modern world. He reinforces family mythology, reminding listeners of the “pioneer” spirit of their ancestors, and the historically questionable way in which they interacted peacefully with the Native American inhabitants of the land. Finally, he reminds the audience that the ultimate purpose of the restoration is not simply to restore their ancestral homestead, but to teach higher lessons about how to love and serve each other. Though Francis had not survived to see the completed project, John H. Brinton’s remarks make it clear that the work of identity building that Francis had started in the 1890s had finally found a nest in the restored form of the 1704 House and the Brinton Family Association who maintained it.



FIGURE 13: Francis D. Brinton (right) and Deborah Brinton (left) ca. 1950.
(Image: Brinton Association of America Archives, Brinton 1704 House)



FIGURE 14: Brinton family members in 1914 gathered for the first family reunion. (Image: Brinton Association of America Archives, Brinton 1704 House)



FIGURE 15: Conceptual drawing of the 18th century form of the 1704 House used for restoration fundriasing based on descriptions taken from J.H. Brinton’s diary. (Image: Gordon Colket, 1950, from *The 1704 House (Restoration Fundraising Pamphlet)*, Brinton Association of America Archives, Brinton 1704 House)



FIGURE 16: G. Edwin Brumbaugh at Pottsgrove Manor, ca. 1942 (Image: G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, Winterthur Library)



FIGURE 17: North elevation (rear) of the 1704 House during restoration after removal of the serpentine wing. (Image: Clement S. Brinton, 1954, from Photo Archives, Chester County Historical Society)

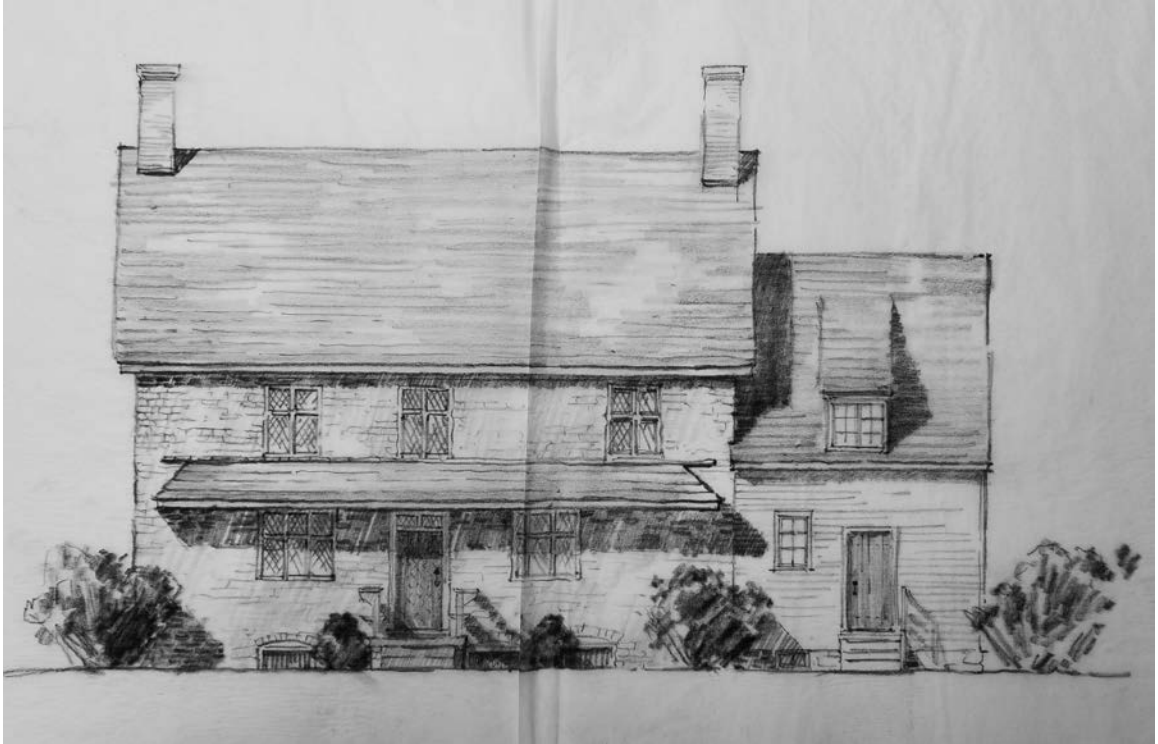


FIGURE 18: Initial conceptual elevation drawing by Brumbaugh based on his research before beginning restoration work. (G. Edwin Brumbaugh, 1954, from G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, Winterthur Library)



FIGURE 19: The restored 1704 House in 2018 (Image: Photo by author)

CONCLUSION

For over 300 years, the 1704 House originally constructed by William Brinton the Younger has changed as the people who occupied it adapted the structure to their needs. As a result, the house at various times has grown or shrunk, had windows and doors added or removed, changed color and materials, and blended in or stood out from its surroundings. Each of the building's four distinct phases illustrates some aspect of the identity the owners at the time were trying to convey through their modifications of the property. As such, each phase was different, but each nevertheless has its own equally important values, making the change over time of the house not a story of decline from the golden age of the 18th century, but a relevant and important story of self and family within the larger context of America over 300 years.

William Brinton the Younger built a home that, in contrast to his father's, looked towards his English heritage and the growing urban presence of Philadelphia. For William, the building needed to convey a sense of humble but clear gentility to mark him as one of the leaders of his community. Using vernacular traditions familiar to him from his English roots and common to other genteel homes of the region, William built a genteel rural stone house that provided him with a stage on which to conduct his business in the region. The interior ornamentation and arrangement helped identify William a prosperous but upright Quaker. Though plain by later standards, the house during his time would have been clearly recognized as the home of a well-connected pious man.

For Ziba Darlington, who purchased the property in 1829, the 1704 House was a venerated ancestral site, the appropriate place in which to raise a family. Ziba renovated the building into an ornamental farmhouse to help develop the moral, civilized character

of the children he one day planned to raise there. When his familial aspirations failed, the structure instead became a teaching tool, through which he instead forged an identity as a beloved instructor of the community who could help others learn the lessons he was never able to convey through family. Ziba's love of the house and his dedication to the history of the Brinton clan would have long term impact on the conception of the site, stretching well beyond his lifetime.

Henry Faucett, the most prominent non-Brinton owner of the site, did not share the same ancestral ties as previous owners. For him, the house became a vehicle through which to demonstrate his identity as a steadfast middle class farmer. The Faucetts changed the land around the house, adding gardens and orchards and reconfigured the interior to better suit the frequent social gatherings they hosted on the property. Very closely following ideas prescribed by architectural pattern books published by architectural philosophers like Andrew Jackson Downing, Henry Faucett Sr. and his son, Henry Jr., transformed the former Brinton dwelling into a moral rural farmhouse meant to convey the cultivated identity of the family within. By the end of their tenure at the site, the original 1704 House had nearly doubled in size and contained all the accoutrements of a comfortable modern home.

As Henry Faucett and his son modified the property, the Brintons in exile watched reacting sometimes approvingly and other times with objection to the Faucett changes. During this period, the Civil War through the end of the Victorian era ushered in the diverse rapidly changing environment of the 20th century. Like other middle class white families of the period, the Brintons sought to ground their modern identity through a connection to the past. In particular, Francis Brinton, a local antiquarian who had grown

up hearing stories of the grand past of the 1704 House and legacy of the Brinton clan, sought to reassert his family's legacy through the reacquiring and restoration of their ancestral home. To do this, he enlisted the help of restoration architect and Colonial Revivalist G. Edwin Brumbaugh, who shared his quasi-religious devotion for historic structures. Though Francis did not survive to see Brumbaugh's work completed, the recreated 18th century form of the 1704 House became the type of familial shrine he had hoped to one day make it.

The 1704 House's long history of change and the stories of the people who enacted it give the site a unique character that allows it to act as a case study on how to understand American sites that have undergone similar long-term changes. Except for natural deterioration, buildings do not change; they are changed. Each time a change occurs, there are human factors behind it, rooted in the needs and self-understanding of the person or people changing its form. Though particular stylistic tastes and the sociological factors influencing identity formation change over time, the human need to modify the environment remains true. Identities developed by families and individuals do not exist in a vacuum, but rather are influenced by larger factors that influence and contribute to self-understanding and self-projection. The homes people establish and the buildings they establish them in act as deeply personal reflections of their creators—who they were, and what how they sought to portray themselves to the world. As identities develop and are refined over time, the physical structure of the fabric of a dwelling often changes too. To understand the complete history of a building, one must also be sensitive to the human factors that contribute to why the structure was modified.

Today, the 1704 House site remains unique in that it is completely owned and operated by a genealogical organization directly related to the original builders. The site maintains one year-round Museum Director, as well as a seasonal Weekend Volunteer Coordinator, with five regular volunteers and a fluctuating higher number during the open season. The site is funded through a combination of a lease agreement of the neighboring field to farmers, a rental property on site in a renovated barn, and membership dues to the Brinton Association of America (the successor organization to the BFA), with occasional funding in the source of grants and donations. Annual visitorship to the site in 2017 was 427 people, up from 420 in 2016.²¹⁷ This number is less than half of what the site originally obtained in the decades after it opened, where the site had 950 visitors in 1969 to a peak of 1066 visitors in 1976.²¹⁸

No longer a family home, the 1704 House exists in a liminal zone wherein interpretation is much more flexible and change much slower. However, this comes with the added burden of maintain funding and interest in the site. To do so, the present house museum that occupies the site must move away from the narrative of the building as an “interrupted” structure that was saved from its middle phases and faithfully restored by diligent scholars piecing together portions of a puzzle to restore a complete image of the past. Presentation of this sort, which is most notably practiced at Colonial Williamsburg, sacrifices the living past that contributed to the vernacular evolution of the site in favor of a sterile environment where the line between interpretation and fact is not always clear.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Giulietta Fiore, "Giulietta Fiore, Brinton 1704 House Museum Director Exit Interview," e-mail interview by author, March 20, 2018.

²¹⁸ Brinton Family Association Annual Letter, 1970, Brinton Family Association Annual Letter, 1976 in G. Edwin Brumbaugh Collection, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera. (Winterthur Library: Winterthur, DE).

²¹⁹ Handler, 73-76.

Consequently, people who do not fit the narrative like Ziba Darlington, Henry Faucett, and other owners of the site, get swept under the rug since they challenge the constructed authenticity of the site. Indeed, even people within the scope of interpretation like William Brinton the Younger, end up becoming caricatures of assumptions about the past, rather than real historic figures who lived and influenced the present, not always in neatly positive ways.

Rather than attempting to recreate or reimagine the past in the present, the 1704 House is best understood as a product of the concerns and social factors of the people who lived in and modified it over time. Over 300 years, the house was transformed in response to the practical needs of those who owned it and the identities they sought to forge. Understanding this entire past, not just selected portions of it, might hopefully allow the site to connect to the broader social factors influencing the transformation of identity today, thereby connecting it to the common stories of all people Brinton and non-Brinton alike.

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APPENDIX 1—TRANSCRIPTION OF THE ESTATE INVENTORY (1752) OF WILLIAM BRINTON THE YOUNGER

An apportionment of all and singular the goods and chattels rights and credits of the personal estate of William Brinton, late of the borough of Birmingham in the county of Chester and province of Pennsylvania. Yeoman, deceased, particular are as follows:²²⁰

Item (original has two items per line)	£ [pounds]	s [shillings]	d [pence]	f [farthings]
His purse and wearing apparel	53	3	1	2/4
Old case of drawers	2	0	0	0
Flock bed furniture	1	15	0	0
	3	15	0	0
3 Leather chairs	0	15	0	0
Old iron dogs w/ brass faces	0	3	0	0
	0	18	0	0
1 old feather bed and furniture	4	0	0	0
Large old chest	0	2	6	0
1 more ditto [large old chest]	0	10	0	0
	0	12	6	0
1 feather bed and the furniture	12	0	0	0
5 fine sheets	2	10	0	0
3 pair coarse ditto [sheets]	1	10	0	0
	4	0	0	0
3 table cloths	1	15	0	0
Set of window curtains	0	6	0	0
	2	1	0	0
5 napkins and [8] pillow cases	0	8	0	0
[o]ld carved chest	0	15	0	0
Low flat box	0	2	0	0
	0	17	0	0
3 r[us]h bottom chairs	0	9	0	0
3 ya[torn] [w]oolen cloth	0	10	6	0
Old slouch [torn]	0	1	0	0
	0	11	6	0
An o[ld] [br]ass hackle	0	2	6	0
6 large cloths [torn]	5	10	0	0
	5	12	6	0
1 [torn] feather bed and furniture	15	0	0	0
Rush [bottom]ed couch	0	15	0	0
Square walnut [ta]ble	0	12	0	0
	1	7	0	0
Larg[e] [torn]ink	0	2	6	0

²²⁰ The original inventory has two items per line, with a total. The items do not appear to have any particular association. For clarity, I have placed each item on its own line, with the total in bold.

Arm chair	0	16	0	0
	0	18	6	0
Pair s[torn]cons	0	5	0	0
Walnut screen and sta[nd]	0	8	0	0
	0	13	0	0
Spic[torn]	0	3	0	0
Tin candle box	0	1	0	0
	0	4	0	0
Glass [tum]blers, 2 drinking glasses, glass [torn] and 1 decanter	0	12	0	0
Bo[okc]ase	0	2	0	0
Small looking [glass]	0	4	6	0
	0	6	6	0
La[rge] long table and bench	3	0	0	0
Le[a]ther couch	2	10	0	0
7 old cha[irs]	1	17	6	0
	3	7	6	0
Sm[a]ll square table	0	10	0	0
Clock and [case]	4	0	0	0
	4	10	0	0
La[rg]e dog irons, fine shovel, and to[ngs]	0	15	0	0
William Sewell's History	[torn]	15	0	0
Jacob Behman's Ministerium	[torn]	10	0	0
George Fox's Doctrinals	[torn]	5	0	0
George Fox's Journal, large old [Bible]	[torn]	14	0	0
3 brass candlesticks, one large	0	15	0	0
1 pewter cup and candlestick of pewter	0	5	0	0
6 blue and white earthen plates, 2 basons	0	5	0	0
2 salts and 1 sugar pot	0	2	0	0
10 knives and 13 forks, ivory hafted	0	10	0	0
Warming [pan]	0	12	0	0
Old couch	0	5	0	0
	0	17	0	0
Dough trough	0	3	0	0
Iron peel	0	4	0	0
	0	7	0	0
Pair of dog irons, fine shovel, and tongs	0	10	0	0
Pot rack	0	3	0	0
Large cupboard	0	12	0	0
	0	15	0	0
5 old chairs	0	3	4	0
1 old table	0	2	0	0
	0	5	4	0
Small round table	0	2	0	0
Old chest	0	1	0	0

	0	3	0	0
Grid iron, old box from heaters	0	7	6	0
Pair of brass scales and some weights	0	3	0	0
2 iron candlesticks and other odd things	0	2	0	0
Pair of shilliards & pea	0	10	0	0
Old pair of hedge sheers, 2 flesh fork skimmers, spit, and chopping knife	0	7	6	0
A large copper kettle	4	0	0	0
2 sm[al]l brass kettles	0	15	0	0
	4	15	0	0
2 [torn] pots, iron kettle, and [torn]	1	10	0	0
2 l[ar]ge pewter dishes, 4 small [torn]	2	10	0	0
12 [pew]ter plates , tankard, [4 porr]ingers, [torn] spoons	1	8	0	0
3 silver teaspoons and one [torn]	0	17	0	0
[torn] funnel, tin cups, sugar box, [torn] pans	0	4	0	0
Bassoon, trenchers, some earthen [torn]	0	2	0	0
Large earthen pans, jug, 4 pots [torn]	0	5	0	0
[torn] bottles, earthen quart and [torn]	0	3	6	0
[torn] pails, churn, and keiler	0	6	0	0
[Ced]ar tub	0	3	0	0
18 pound limner[torn]arn	1	7	0	0
[torn] cotton	0	5	0	0
Timber chair	0	10	0	0
	0	15	0	0
[torn] [bar]rels and 3 powdering tubs	1	10	0	0
[torn] [hog]sheads	0	10	6	0
[torn] spinning wheels and cheese press	0	9	0	0
[torn] saddle	0	10	0	0
Old cart	2	10	0	0
	3	0	0	0
[torn] [lar]ge cows	8	0	0	0

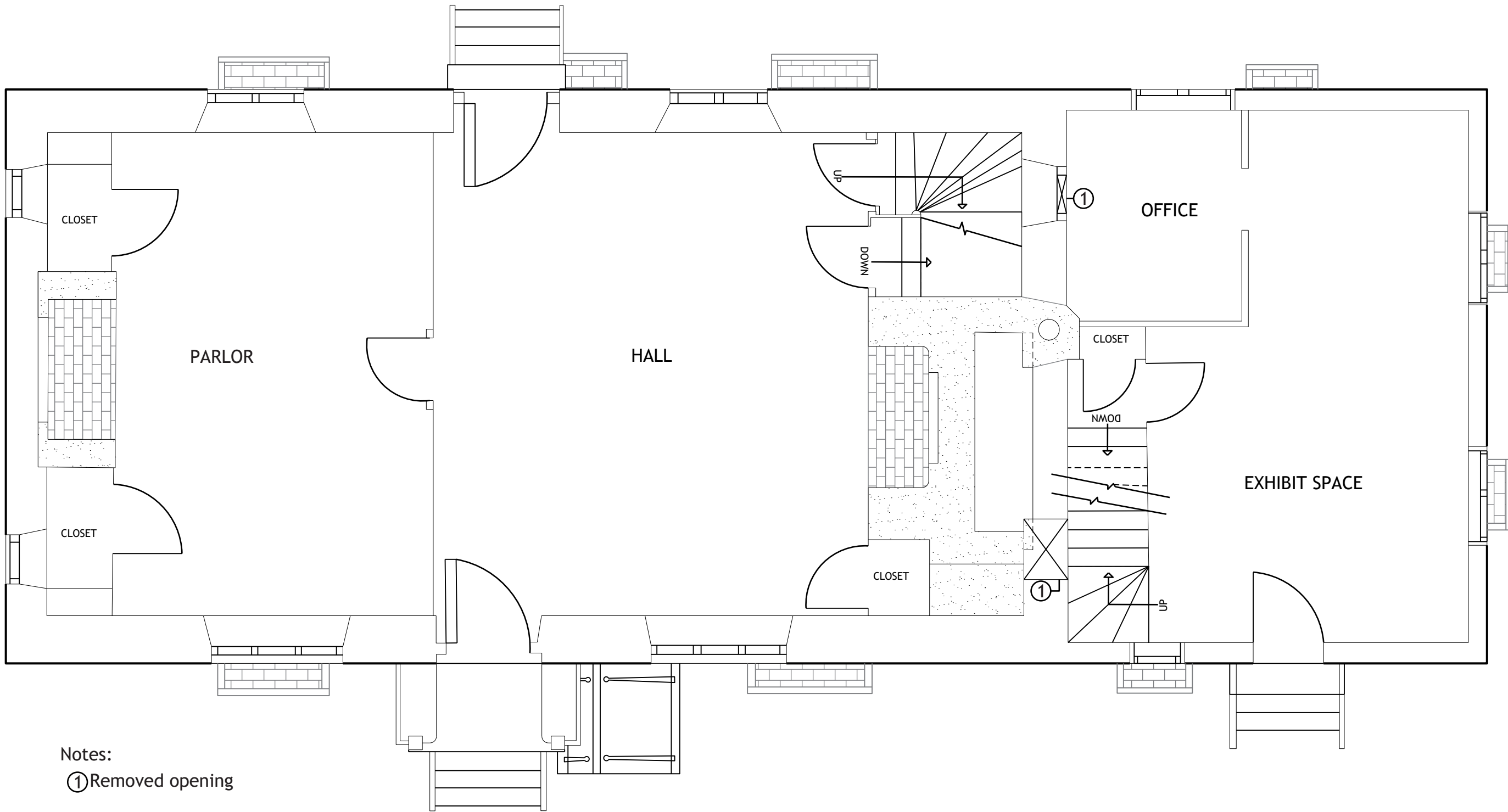
The afforsaid inventory of goods and chattels of William Brinton was carefully appraised by us the subscribed on fifth day of the second month called February in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty-two, 1752

And signed by: James Taylor
Benjamin Taylor

APPENDIX 2—CHAIN OF TITLE FOR THE 1704 HOUSE

Information assembled by Bart Anderson for HABS No. PA-1258 with supplemental information added by Schenck and Associates in 1993.

1704-1751: William Brinton the Younger
1751-1779: Edward Brinton
1779-1792: George Brinton
1792-1802: Joseph Brinton
1802-1826: Joseph Brinton, Esq.
1826-1829: Ziba Darlington
1860-1864: Gideon Williamson
1864-1911: Henry M. Faucett
1911-1926: Henry P. Faucett
1926-1946: Isaac Sherwood
1946: Clarence H. Kemery
1946-1947: Francis D. Brinton
1947-1993: Chester County Historical Society
1993-Present: Brinton Association of America



Notes:
 ① Removed opening



For visualization purposes only, not a construction document.
 Names updated to reflect modern usage.



William Brinton
1704 House
 (Brumbaugh Phase)
 21 Oakland Road
 West Chester, PA 19382

FIRST FLOOR

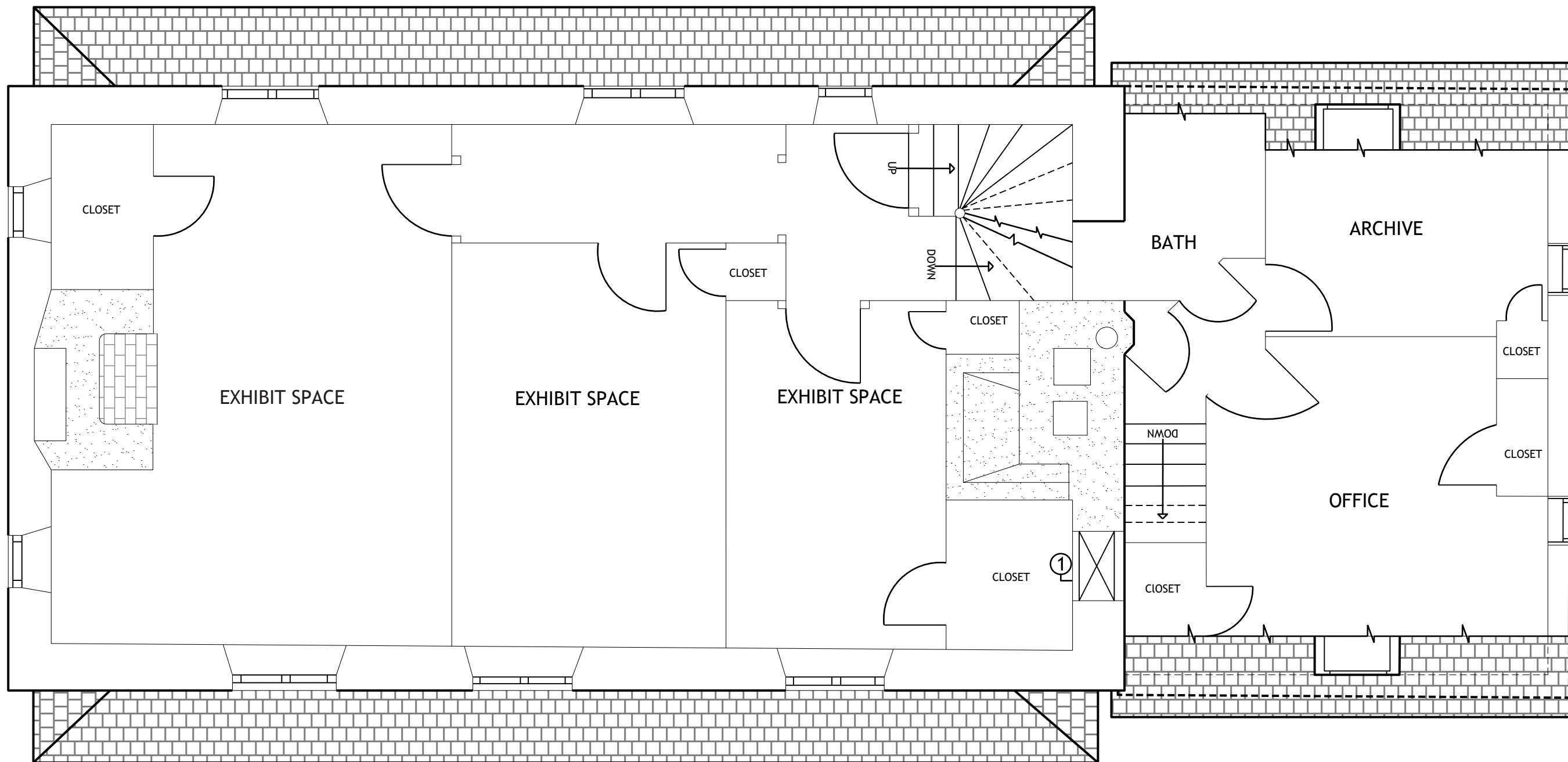
Drawn by:
 Anthony R.C. Hita

Feb. 19,
 2018

Sheet
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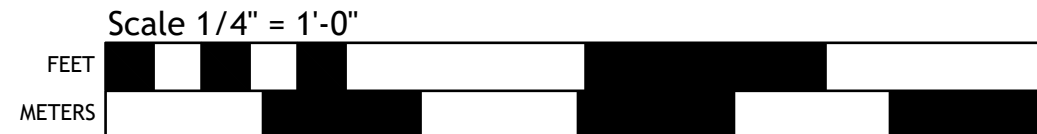
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Orig. Hand Drawing:
 G.E. Brumbaugh
 (Nov. 19, 1954)

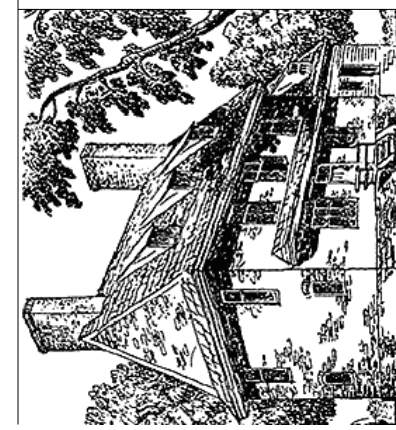


Notes:

① Removed opening



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William Brinton 1704 House

(Brumbaugh Phase)
21 Oakland Road
West Chester, PA 19382

SECOND FLOOR

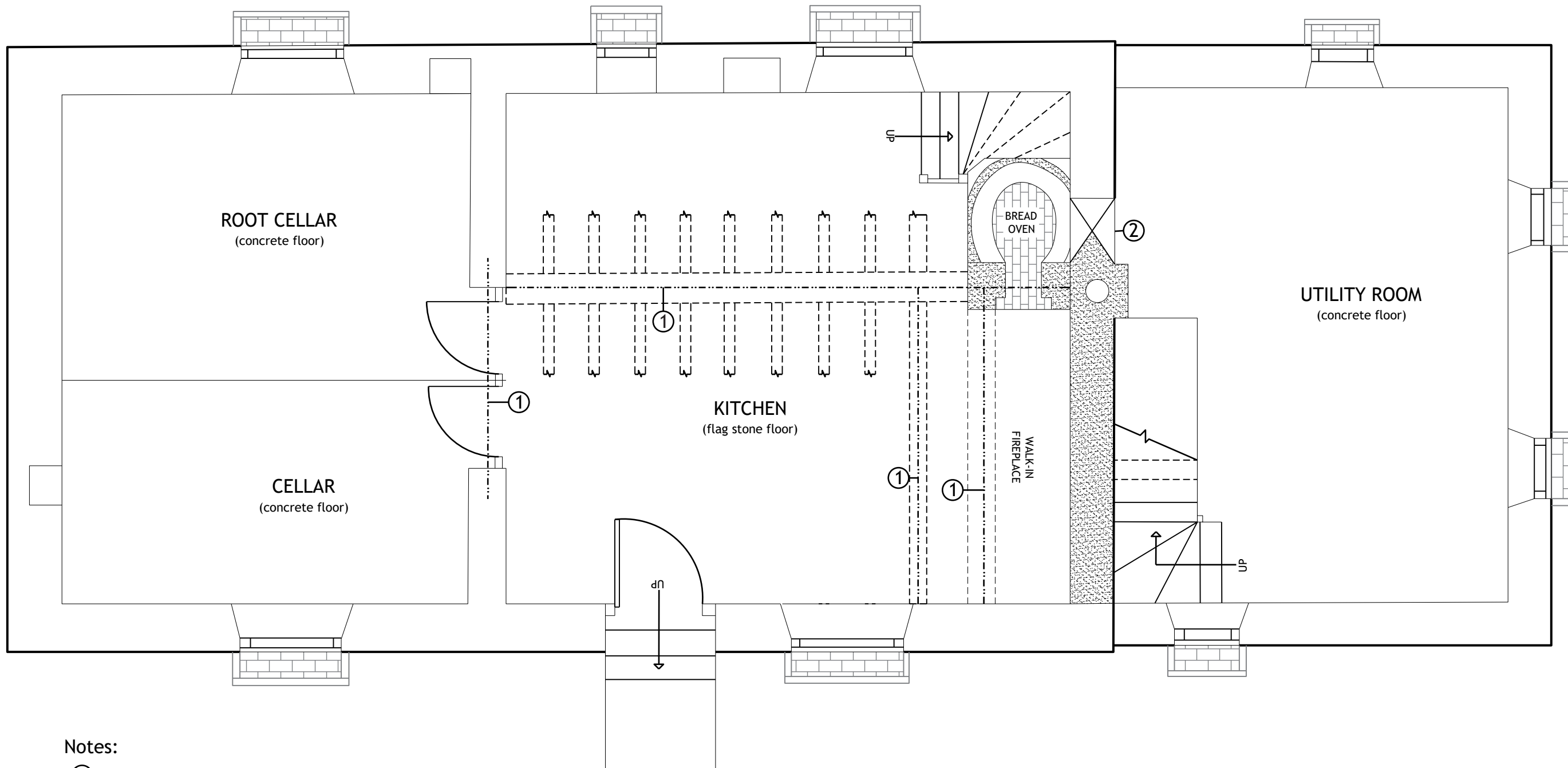
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Feb. 19,
2018

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Original Author:
G.E. Brumbaugh
(Nov. 19, 1954)



- Notes:
- ① Concealed steel structural beam
 - ② Removed opening



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Names updated to reflect modern layout and usage.

Drawn by:
Anthony R.C. Hita

Original Author:
G.E. Brumbaugh
(Nov. 19, 1954)

Basement Plan

Feb. 19,
2018

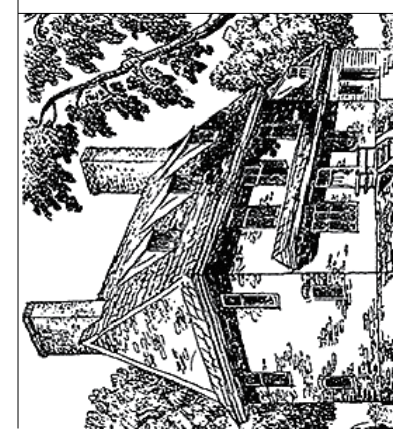
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William Brinton 1704 House

(Brumbaugh Phase)

21 Oakland Road
West Chester, PA 19382



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