

Peter Pelham Shop Historical Report, Block 2 Building 66

Originally entitled: "Pelham Shop"

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Have asked Mr. Knight for drawing of foundations unearthed on this lot. This will be Illustration #1 when he sends it up.

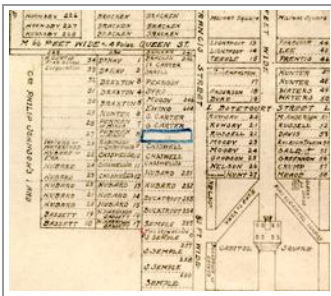
M.A.S.

March 1952.

[PELHAM SHOP]

Report by:
Mary A. Stephenson

March, 1952



PHOTOSTAT COPY OF THE WILLIAMSBURG PLAT IN "WILLIAMSBURG, THE OLD COLONIAL CAPITOL" BY LYON G. TYLER

[PELHAM SHOP]

*Lot West of Chiswell-Bucktrout House
Block 2 No colonial lot number*

LOCATION:

Colonial lot on the south side of Francis Street in Williamsburg between the lots marked "Chiswell" east and "G. Carter" west. See: plat on opposite page.

A SUMMARY OF REPORT

Prior to 1768 the property may have been a part of the acreage owned by the Bray family. The destruction of the James City County Court records has made it impossible to make a definite statement about the lot before this date. In 1768 Peter Pelham, organist at Bruton Church, advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* that he was "next door to Mrs. CHISWELL'S" where he sold an "assortment of ivory combs, a variety of buttons, also shoe buckles for men, women and children." In March 1769 William Kennedy, cabinet-maker, advertised that he had moved to "the house where Mr. Pelham now lives" and would solicit any customers there. Pelham must have sold the storehouse in December 1769 to Thomas Penman's estate. The Frenchman's Map (1782) shows no buildings on the lot.

Either a fire had completely demolished the houses there or the buildings had been razed by this time. In 1809 Anthony Robinson was holding 6¼ lots valued at \$100 and 2 lots at \$10 via Carter. From subsequent records we find that the lot in question belonged to this block of property. In 1815 John Bracken had come into the block of lots via Anthony Robinson. Bracken held the property until 1841 when Lemuel J. Bowden is listed as owner of a lot valued at \$100 with buildings added \$1500 "via Susan Byrd - heretofore charged to John Bracken." Bowden offered his Francis Street property for sale in 1856 but the sale had not been made at the time of his death in 1864. Litigations and suits followed for some years. In 1883 the west portion of the lot fronting 66 feet on Francis Street at the corner of R. H. Graves' lot, was conveyed to W. H. E. Morecock as trustee. The eastern portion of the above lot 41 feet fronting Francis Street and extending south 96 feet, was conveyed by Henry Pierce to Samuel Harris in 1891 who in turn sold to Sarah Howard. In 1928 the property was conveyed to Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, trustee for Williamsburg Restoration. In 1932 the western part of the lot was sold by Mount Ararat Church to the Restoration. Further study of the property after 1932 can be seen in the Accounting Department, Colonial Williamsburg.

THE HOUSE:

A house of some kind was on the lot by 1768. It was used as a storehouse in 1768-1769 and a cabinet making shop in 1769. By 1782 the house had disappeared according to the Frenchman's Map. Sometime in the nineteenth century another house was erected on the lots, and was used as a dwelling, for many years.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE:

Foundations of a small house was unearthed by the archaeologist in July 1941. This house was approximately 24 by 24 with inside chimney, steps to basement on east side and no paving on basement floor.

There is a possibility that this building and another of approximately the same size formed two flanking buildings for what was apparently seventeenth century foundations to the south and on the same lot.

[PELHAM SHOP]
Lot West of Chiswell-Bucktrout House
Block 2 No colonial lot number

LOCATION:

The lot lies on the south side of Francis Street in Williamsburg between the lots marked "Chiswell" to the east and the lots marked "G. Carter" west. (See: Tyler's adaptation of the College Map on opposite page)

HISTORY:

As the lot is located in the James City County part of Williamsburg and the court records relating to this area were destroyed by fire during the Civil War period, it is impossible to secure a clear title to the lot. The scattered data assembled is given below.

In May, 1941, John Henderson, architect of Colonial Williamsburg, talked with the Misses Morecock about this property. The ladies recalled a small building between the Chiswell house and the Graves house (now known as the George Carter house) which they thought was old and much like the Galt Cottage. Recently, the archaeologist has found foundation of a small house on this lot which he believes to be eighteenth century. If eighteenth century, it was late and could not be Peter Pelham's shop.

Prior to 1768 we know nothing definite as to ownerships or occupation of the lot. Probably, it belonged to a large acreage once owned by the Bray family in the early eighteenth century. This property passed in large part to Colonel Philip Johnson who had married Elizabeth Bray. (See: Hening's Statutes, volume VI pp. 412-416 and volume VII, pp. 247-248)

On June 16, 1768, Peter Pelham ¹advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* that he was doing business "next door to Mrs. CHISWELL'S."
²

Williamsburg, June 15, 1768.

To be SOLD by the subscriber, next door to Mrs. CHISWELL'S,

A NEAT assortment of cutlery, consisting of knives, rasors, scissars, &c. of various prices. Likewise a good assortment of ivory and horn combs, a variety of buttons, also shoe buckles for men, women and children.

As the above articles were imported upon the best terms, they will be sold at a moderate advance for ready money.

PETER PELHAM. ³(*Virginia Gazette*, Rind, editor)

It is possible that the Peter Pelham who advertised assorted goods for sale was the son of Pelham, the organist. However, it is more than probable that it was Peter Pelham, the elder, as sources indicate that the younger Pelham was deputy clerk in Brunswick County prior to 1771 when he was appointed clerk. [4](#)

In March, 1769, a notice in the *Virginia Gazette* appeared which may have some bearing on the lot in question:

WILLIAMSBURG, March 9, 1769.

The partnership between Bucktrout [1](#) and Kennedy [2](#), though not yet dissolved, will terminate as soon as the work which is already bespoke be finished, and matters brought to a proper settlement; at which time WILLIAM KENNEDY proposed carrying on the business of cabinet making, at the house where Mr. Pelham now lives. Any of those Gentlemen who have been customers to Bucktrout and Kennedy,* and all others who please to employ him, may rely on the best endeavours to give satisfaction.

*He has no intention to rob Mr. Bucktrout of his old customers, nor does he think he can as yet properly call any his own. ([Virginia Gazette](#), Purdie & Dixon, eds.)

Pelham paid tax in James City County on 5 tithes, no land or chariot. (James City County Tax Lists 1768-1769) This would indicate that Pelham was living in that part of Williamsburg which lay in James City County but did not own a house.

The Frenchman's Map (1782) shows no houses on the lot between what is thought to be the Chiswell house and the house believed to be the George Carter house. See: architect's drawing from the Frenchman's Map and archaeological findings of 1950. ([Illustration #2](#))

If the archaeological findings are correct - being 18th century foundations then, the house must have burned or been razed prior to the date of the Frenchman's Map; and the old house recalled by the Misses Morecock in 1941 was not the original house but one built after 1782.

In October, 1769, the estate of Thomas Penman was being settled. Among the entries was:

1769		Dr
Octr 15	To Do [cash] paid Peter Pelham for the Storehouse---	£60.-.-
...		

(York County Records, Wills & Inventories,
Book XXII (1771-1783) pp. 36-38.

A glance at the College Map (1791?) would indicate to us that two lots marked "Penman or Mires" (numbers 7 & 8) lay south of the [Pelham] lot [subject of this report]. Penman died in 1759. The "two lots of land lately purchased by me of Col. Philip Johnson" were noted in his will. (York County Records, Wills, Inventories, Book 20, p. 527)

The tax records for this part of Williamsburg are very vague. Around 1809 Anthony Robinson seems to hold 6¼ lots valued at \$100; and 2 lots at \$10 via Carter. In 1815 John Bracken had come into "8¼ lots valued at \$120 via Anthony Robinson and Elizabeth his wife — certain houses & Lotts of land." Bracken or his estate held most of this block until 1841 when Lemuel J. Bowden [1](#) was the owner of "1 lot \$1100; added for buildings \$1500 via Susan Byrd - heretofore charged to the estate of John Bracken." (Williamsburg Land Tax Records, microfilms Research Department - see: [Illustration #3](#))

We do not have the complete lot transfers for this block of lots. However, a look at the College Map (1791?) indicates "Chiswell" on 2 ½ lots facing upon Francis Street, 3 with "Chiswell" south of the first set, and 1 lot marked "Robinson or Chiswell's." ([Illustration #1. Map](#))

Bowden occupied the property known as the "Chiswell-Bucktrout House" from 1841 to sometime in 1858. Bowden's property on Francis Street had not been sold at the time of his death in 1864. Litigations and suits went on for some years as to distributions to the heirs.

In 1883 property known as the "Bowden lot" fronting 66 feet on Francis Street, at the corner of R. H. Graves' lot, and running down said lot 10 feet east of the new house, now known as Mount Ararat Church; thence a southerly course until it passes to the rear of said church 10 feet; thence a westerly course, or straight line, 10 feet in rear of the church, until it strikes the line of R. G. Graves', and a northerly along said line, to the point of commencement; and being a portion of the lot conveyed to said Harrell [trustee] by deed of trust, bearing date on the 16th day of October, 1882, and admitted to record on the same day... was deeded to William H. E. Morecock, trustee. (Recorded May 22 1883, Williamsburg Deed Book #2, P. 15) This deed mentions a church (which had been a new house). From its location, it seems that the church was located on the lot which is the subject of this report.

The eastern portion of the above lot is mentioned in a suit of 1867 - Porter and wife vs. Bowden's executor et als. This portion of 41 feet fronting Francis Street and extending back 96 feet south, was conveyed in 1889 by Henry Pierce to John Cary, trustee. This property was bounded on the west by Mount Ararat Church. (Ibid, P. 319) This part was conveyed by Pierce to Samuel Harris in

1891, who the same year sold to Sarah Howard. In 1928 the property was conveyed by Sarah Howard's heirs to Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, trustee. (Ibid. #12, P. 587)

The western portion of the lot was finally conveyed by Mount Ararat Church to Williamsburg Holding Corporation in April, 1932. (Ibid, #15, p. 236) In July, 1932, the Williamsburg Holding Corporation paid to L. W. Wales Jr [pastor] three thousand dollars in full payment and fee simple rights in the property. Further study of this property after 1932 can be found in the chain to title, Accounting Department, Colonial Williamsburg.

Mr. John S. Charles in his "Recollections of Williamsburg" (written 1928) describes the row of houses next east [of the St. John house] on Francis Street as he remembered them during the Civil War period:

... the row of houses next east [of the St. John house] on Francis Street were all there when the War began, and presented much the same appearance as now.. The colored church and the small wooden house next to it were not in evidence then. (Recollections of Williamsburg by John S. Charles, P. 59)

Footnotes



^ 1 Peter Pelham, the organist, was the son of the Boston mezzotint artist of that name. Pelham was born in London in 1721 and was baptized at St. Paul's Covent Garden on December 17th of that year. He came to Boston with his father about 1726. Prior to his arrival in Virginia, young Pelham taught music in Boston where he served also as organist at Trinity Church there from ca. 1745 until November 1749 when he came to Virginia. While in Boston Pelham having completed his study of music advertised in the *Boston Evening Post* of May 30, 1743, that he had been "from Boston for these Nine Years past under the Tuition of an accomplish'd Professor of the Art of Musick, is now return'd and ready to attend Ladies and Gentlemen as a Tutor in the Art on the Harpsichord or Spinnet. And further offers his Attendance on young Ladies and Gentlemen... in order to Teach the Rudiments of Psalmody, Hymns, Anthems, &c."

Pelham married Ann Creese of Boston in 1746. She was the daughter of Thomas and Ann Creese. They had fourteen children. The first two children, Peter and Charles, were born in Boston - May 1, 1747 and July 11, 1748. Sometime before 1750 Pelham had come to Virginia. His son, Thomas, was born in Hampton on September 2, 1750; Ann was born in Hampton in 1752 and died in 1756; Sarah, in Suffolk in 1754; Lucy in Williamsburg in 1757 and died in 1758; all the other children: Ann, William, Lucy, John, Elizabeth, Mary, Henry and Parthenia, were born in Williamsburg; the last named was born in 1772. (See: Allison Notes on Pelham Genealogy, copy, Illustration #2, Appendix)

Pelham helped to install the organ at Bruton Church, Williamsburg, in 1752. Upon its installation Pelham became the organist holding that position until his removal to Richmond ca. 1800. during the Revolutionary War period, Pelham served as jailer at the Public Gaol in Williamsburg and was allowed £40 per year. He also served as a clerk to the House of Burgesses and was one of three men appointed to supervise the printing of notes and currency. (*Virginia Gazette*, August 1, 1771, Rind, ed.)

He augmented his income further by playing the organ at Bruton Parish Church, providing music for the theatre, and teaching young ladies to master the harpsichord and spinnet. Pelham was musical director when The Beggar's Opera was first performed in Williamsburg.

Alexander Macaulay, a Scotsman who came to Virginia in 1783 described Bruton's organ "of one hundred tones, touch'd by the modern Orpheus - the inimitable Pelham." (*William and Mary Quarterly*, series 1, volume 11 for Journal of Macaulay. Ann Pelham died in 1778. Peter Pelham died on April 20, 1805 in Richmond, Virgin[ia].)

^ 2 Colonel John Chiswell, husband of "Mrs. Chiswell" owned the property east of Pelham. (See: Chiswell-Bucktrout House History, Research Department)

^ 3 Pelham had recently moved to this location. In advertising other property for sale at public auction on December 1, 1768, it was described as "TWO LOTS... with a DWELLING-HOUSE thereon, where Mr. Pelham lately lived, formerly the proper[ty] of Edward Bowcock, deceased..." (*Virginia Gazette*, Rind, editor)

^ 4 Peter Pelham, the son, was in Brunswick as early as 1761. It is thought he was learning the trade of clerkship. Lads were trained before maturity in the public offices and were ready to serve as clerks or deputy clerks by the age of 21. Instances can be found in Johnston's *Memorials of Old Virginia Clerks* (Lynchburg, 1888) Pelham was clerk of Greensville County from 1781-1807. (Ibid)

^ 1 Benjamin Bucktrout stated in the *Virginia Gazette* on this date that "he now carries on his cabinet making business, as usual, at the shop formerly kept by Mr. Hay."

^ 2 Research has failed to locate William Kennedy on any other property in Williamsburg. A person by that name was in Petersburg in 1776 and had a cabinet shop there.

^ 1 In 1856 Bowden advertised his house and lot on Francis Street for sale- "... six rooms a very wide passage on the first floor-three rooms and a passage on the second floor...four or five acres of land..." (*Williamsburg Weekly Gazette*, Ewing, ed., August 7, 1856.)

In September, 1858, a letter of S. S. Griffin from Williamsburg, discloses that "Lemuel Bowden's Edifice is nearly finished." In June 1858 notice of this handsome building locates it on a lot bought from the Episcopal church. [the present Armistead House] (Ibid., June 30, 1858, Ewing & Lively, eds.)

Lemuel Jackson Bowden was born in 1815 and died in 1864. He attended William and Mary College, was a member of the Virginia Constitutional Conventions of 1849 and 1851, senator from Virginia and member of the Legislature held in Alexandria in 1863/64. The *Weekly Gazette & Eastern Virginia Advertiser* (April to June, 1860) contain a good deal of material on Bowden; also William and Mary College Papers, folder 121-B.

Illustration #2
From the Notes of Miss Anne Allison
GRANDCHILDREN OF PETER & MARTHA PELHAM
CHILDREN OF PETER & ANN CREESE PELHAM



Peter Pelham: B. May 1st, 1747. "Born Fryday Morning at about 10 minutes past nine in Boston N: Eng: 1747 May the 1st and Baptized on the 10th Instant in Trinty Church *by the Revd. Mr. Chs: Brockwell the sponers were my Hon'd Father, my Brother Charles Pelham and Miss Mary Aston." (Family Bible, hand of Peter Pelham, Artist of Boston) Whitmore gives same data of date and year of birth, no other details.

Charles Pelham (Major Charles): B. July 11, 1748, Boston. "Born Monday Morning about 8 or 10 Minutes before 8 o'clock July the 11th 1748 in Boston N. Eng: and Baptized on Sunday the 17th *Instant by the Reved Mr. Wm. Hooper. The Sponsors were Doct. Aston, My Brot. Charles & Mrs. Mary Emmerson." (Family Bible, hand of Peter Pelham, Artist of Boston) Whitmore gives day July 22nd, 1748. (Pelham Family Register)

Died Aug. 29, 1829, at his home, Mason Co., Ky. Deposition of his wife Oct. 1847. Charles buried at Maysville, (Mary Pelham Graves)

Thomas Pelham : B. Sept. 2, 1750, d. Sept. 6, 1750. "Born at Hampton in Virginia on Sunday Morning at about 5 o'clock Sept. 2 1750 and received private Baptism on the 5th from the Revd. Mr. Willm Tysse (Tyffe). Dy'd on the 6th Inst:(Family Bible, hand of Peter Pelham, Musician)

Whitmore gives birth date only.

Pelham Family Register gives "died Sept. 28, 1750"

Ann Pelham: B. 15th Nov. 1752, Hampton; died 6 July, 1756 (Whitmore & Pelham Family Register)

Sarah Pelham - m. Blagrove.

B. 4th Oct. 1754, Suffolk (Va.) (Pelham Family Register & Whitmore) D. 1834. Confirmed by letter to William Creeese Pelham dated Washington City, April 11th, 1833, from H. B. Blagrove, reads: "Mother who is now in her 79th year, enjoys as good health as age and circumstances will admit. She resides with me." D. Jan. 5, 1834 (Blagrove Descendants Papers & Pelham Family Register)

Lucy: B. 30 Jan. 1757, Williamsburg; d. 10 Aug. 1758 (Whitmore).

Ann: B. 31 July 1758, Williamsburg; d. 26 Aug. 1758 (Whitmore). Pelham Family Register says 1750, & died 26 Aug. 1758.

William: B. Aug. 10, 1759, Williamsburg (Whitmore & Pelham Family Register) D. Feb. 3, 1827, nr. New Harmony, Ind. (Family Bible & Pelham Family Register)

M. Nov. 8, 1801, Penelope Pelham (B. March 6, 1760, Boston; d. Zanesville, Ohio, 1822 (W. C. Pelham Diary)

Lucy Pelham: B. 13 July, 1761, Williamsburg; d. 25 April, 1764. (Pelham Family Register)

John Pelham: B. 19 April, 1763. Bapt. Bruton Church rec. (Pelham Family Register) D. probably 1827, Philadelphia.

Elizabeth Pelham: B. Apr. 3, 1765, D. Oct. 3, 1805. (Blagrove papers).

Mary Pelham: B. Mar. 23, 1767, d. 1768. (Blagrove papers)

Henry Pelham: B. 6 July, 1768. Living "very feeble", 1839, at Maysville, Ky. D. Maysville, Ky., 1851 (C. P. Greenough) 1854 (Blagrove Papers)

Parthenia Pelham: B. 19 Oct., 1772, Williamsburg. D. June, 1798, home of "Mrs. Hide," Newton, Mass. Buried Trinity Church, Boston, "June 28, 1798, age 24" - Trinity burials, p. 124. Perhaps in her grandfather Peter Pelham's tomb.

Illustration #3



Williamsburg Land Tax Records:

1809	Anthony Robinson -----	6 ¼ lots -----	\$100
	-	--	

	Anthony Robinson ----- -	2 lots -----	10 via Carter
1811	Anthony Robinson ----- -	8 ¼ lots ----- --	100
1815	John Bracken -----	8 ¼ lots ----- --	120 via Anthony Robinson & wife certain houses & Lotts of land
1818	John Bracken -----	7 ¼ lots ----- --	[1 to Thomas Sands]
1819	John Bracken -----	7 ¼ lots ----- --	\$137
1820	John Bracken -----	1 lot	\$1275 lot\$1000 for buildings -- \$137
1841	--Lemuel J. Bowden ----- --	1 lot \$100	\$1500 inc. buildings via Susan Byrd heretofore charged to the estate of John Bracken

Footnotes



[^] * Trinity Church Baptism, also.