

# *John Blair House Historical Report, Block 22 Building 5 Lot 36*

*Originally entitled: "John Blair House - No. 76 (1940 Map Folder)"*

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## *JOHN BLAIR HOUSE - No. 76 (1940 Map Folder)*

### *Block 22*



Lyon G. Tyler, in his *Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capital*, (p. 248) says that tradition told that the Blair house was the home of John Blair, Jr., who became an associate justice of the United States, and it will be seen that records of a later period show that this property came into the possession of Blair's daughter. From these records it seems probable that Mrs. Mary Blair Andrews inherited the house from her father some time during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Since John Blair, Sr., had bequeathed to his son, John Blair, Jr., "All those Lots and house where I now live," it seems probable that this house had likewise been the residence of John Blair, Sr., who had served as President of the Council, and on two occasions was Acting Governor of Virginia in the absence of the chief executive, and who had died in 1771. (See will of John Blair, Sr., *York County Records, Wills and Inventories*, Vol. 22, p. 43, and see also *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. II, p. 337.)

The map of Williamsburg by an unknown Frenchman, made in 1781 (or 1782 or 1786), indicates that a rectangular structure was standing at that time at what is apparently the site of the Blair House. Another map of Williamsburg by Benjamin Bucktrout, made in 1800, shows the lot upon which this house stood and several other lots in the same block in the possession of some member or members of the Andrews family. A third map of the town, made by an unknown draftsman about the same period (dated by Lyon G. Tyler as 1790 but probably of a later date), also shows this lot and several others in the same block in the possession of a person or persons named Andrews.

The property had probably already come into the possession of Mary Blair Andrews, the daughter of John Blair, and her children at the time the above maps were made. Blair's daughter had been married to Robert Andrews in 1795. Andrews was a professor of Mathematics at the College of William and Mary.

Richmond, March 28.

On Tuesday evening last was married, in Williamsburg, ROBERT ANDREWS, Esq., to Miss MOLLY BLAIR, daughter of John Blair, Esq. of the above place.[ *Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Thomas Nicolson, Ed., March 28, 1795]

An insurance policy of 1309 shown that the Blair property had, some time prior to that date, come into the possession of Mary Blair Andrews and her children, and that her husband, Robert Andrews, who had heretofore declared the property for assurance, was no longer living. This policy of 1809 shows that there were standing on this lot at that time a one-story wooden dwelling house, 64 feet by 28 feet; a detached kitchen 18 feet distant from the dwelling; a laundry; and a one-story wooden office, 21 feet by 16 feet, and 21 feet distant from the dwelling on the west. (See policy #989, insurance book, p. 7.)

Few records relating to the later ownership of this property are available at than present time. It is possible that further and exhaustive research may provide a fuller account of its history.

H. D. Farish  
Director.

Summer, 1940.