

Peyton Randolph House Archaeological Report, Block 28 Building 6 Lot 236

Originally entitled: "Archaeological Report Area B, Block 28 (Randolph-Peachy Lot)"

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT *Area B, Block 28 (Randolph-Peachy Lot)* *September 1, 1939*



HISTORY AND NATURE OF SITE

The present property consists of a lot of double width at the northeast corner of the intersection of Nicholson and Queen Streets. The records indicate that this double lot has formed one property since 1723 or 1724, when two lots were bought by John Randolph from John Holloway. ¹There is strong indirect evidence that a house was standing on each lot as early as 1716. ²A third unit, connecting these two house, had probably been built by 1737; for John Randolph's will, filed in that year, speaks of but one house in Williamsburg. The original house to the east was thus reduced to the status of an east wing.

At some later date this east wing was destroyed. Thus the present house consists of two units. ³At the west is a square block which was the original house of the southwest corner lot. It is prolonged to eastward by a two-story addition which was built to form a connection with the eastern house, which itself has since been destroyed.

The whole property is nearly level.

Excavation

Trenches were dug down to hardpan over the area north and east of the present house. Ground between the trenches was probed

Foundations discovered constitute three areas: the old east wing, and two groups of outbuildings which are divided by a marl walk running north from the main house.

OUTBUILDINGS WEST OF WALK

First Kitchen

Of three successive kitchens which have left traces along the west property line, north of the house, the earliest was a rectangular wooden structure 19 x 32 feet in plan, with a large chimney ¹at north end, built flush against the inside of the wall. Fireplace was off center to west, but flues may have been sloped to bring chimney out of roof at center. ²

It is impossible to discover whether this kitchen had another chimney at the south end, since chimney construction of later date in this area had destroyed any possible evidence.

The 9-inch foundations indicate that the structure was wooden. Parts remain of all four outside walls. Interior foundations were also found, outlining divisions into three cells along the west side and a corridor along the east. These foundations are of unknown purpose. It seems unlikely that they could represent interior partition walls contemporary with the chimney. ³

<i>Brick</i>	9½ x 4½ x 2½. English bond.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Fragmentary.

Second Kitchen

The foundation of a second chimney ⁴lies just north of the first. This chimney belonged to a second kitchen, of which only part of the east wall and perhaps of the north ⁵, was found. The east wall, 13 inches thick, is laid on a 21-inch spread footing. ¹

To the southeast are foundations of three walls and a chimney, which seem to represent a later addition to the same building. ²A corner was found where the newer wall, at the bottom, overlaps the footings of the older, and higher up makes a flush instead of a bonded joint.

The added room forms the leg of an L. Its walls measure 13 inches (on the south and east) and 17 inches (on the north). The difference is not explained.

The chimney is inside, and bonds with the walls.

Brick	Size varies: bats numerous.
Mortar	Shell.
Condition	Generally bad.

Third Kitchen

A third set of foundation walls is built partly on the first. The plan is rectangular. The 13-inch brickwork necessarily projects from the 9" wall of the first foundation, but the inside faces of the two line up on the west side, and line up within 2 inches on the east. ³To northward this third foundation is not traceable beyond the middle of the first kitchen. ⁴Across the south wall of the first kitchen, laid against it on the outside, was found a cross wall, formed by a double chimney (belonging to the third kitchen) with wing walls flanking its south face. ⁵The south fireplace opening of this chimney was thus flush with the wing walls, while to the north the chimney projected into the room the whole depth of both fireplaces. The south fireplace opened into a room the floor of which was raised above the brick vault. Thirteen-inch walls to west, south, and east are well preserved up to a few inches below present grade. Below the vault (the axis of which runs north and south) was a low chamber ¹believed to have been used as a wine cellar. ²

Access to the wine cellar was provided by a stairway of brick, with wooden nosings, which started up at the wall line on the south, and which was probably protected by a cellar door. This stair is centered on the vault, and the common center is 2 feet west of the center of the building.

The vault, 9 inches thick, springs from dwarf walls at a level about 18 inches above the original floor. It appears to be built about three centers, on radii of 6 feet and 2 feet more or less. Buttresses number three on each side, two of them engaged with the foundations to north and south, and one at center.

Against the east wall of the wine cellar butts a foundation of 5-foot projection and 12 feet in length, which probably supported steps, a platform, or both, giving access to the third kitchen.

Brick	8-8½ x 3-3¼-4½ x 2-2½. English bond.
Mortar	Shell.
Condition	Vault construction, south chimney foundations, and some walls, may be fit for re-use with considerable patching.

Probable Floor Levels

The brick underfires of the first and second kitchen ³were at the level of the original grade, or slightly below it. Both were laid on ashes, which may mean that the original hearth was of earth at a lower level. The floor of both kitchens was doubtless at the hearth level. No traces of floor paving were found, and it may be that both kitchens had floors of packed earth.

The third kitchen had a higher floor level over the wine-cellar in order to clear the vault, which rose more than a foot higher than grade. This floor may have been of brick supported by the vault. The floor in the remainder of the building was probably held to the same level ¹, but no doubt was of ordinary wood construction.

No traces of hearths were found in front of any of the kitchen fireplaces. ²In the first and second kitchens the earth floor or loose stones may have served. In the third kitchen, where the floors were raised, the hearths were no doubt destroyed with the floors.

Smokehouse (?)

Northeast of the kitchen was found part of the 9-inch brick foundation of a building just over 12 feet wide and of indeterminate length. Only the southern portion of this foundation could be uncovered, the remainder lying across the present property line.

A pathway, surfaced with marl, was traced along the east side of the kitchen ³and almost as far north as this outbuilding.

The use of this building cannot be deduced from the available evidence. But its proximity to the kitchen suggests that it may have

been a smokehouse, wood-house, or other outbuilding.

The brickwork resembles that of the second kitchen, with which it is probably contemporary.

<i>Brick</i>	8½ x 4¼ x 2½. English bond.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Fair.

Forge

At the northwest corner of the north chimney of the second kitchen is a foundation which seems to represent a fire chamber of great depth. ¹Inside was found a layer of ashes 12 inches deep. The foundation might have served for a forge, but evidence is too scanty to allow of definite conclusions. No traces of walls were found.

This foundation is too close to those of the kitchen chimneys to allow convenient circulation between them. It therefore seems doubtful whether the structure here indicated was in existence at the same time as the first or the second kitchen. It may have stood during the period of the *third* kitchen.

<i>Brick</i>	Varies. English bond.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Fragmentary.

Chimney at South

Just south of the basement steps of the third kitchen is a foundation which has the size and shape of a kitchen chimney. ²Some ashes were found here, but no traces of underfire paving. A row of brick on edge, stretching north from the east breast of the foundation, may be a wall foundation. A short length of 4-inch brick foundation on the west is of unknown purpose.

A patch of brick paving near the basement stair may have been part of the floor in front of this chimney.

This chimney probably belonged to an outbuilding of the period of the first or second kitchen. The third kitchen extends too far south to have been contemporary.

<i>Brick</i>	8½ x 4 to 4½ x 2½. English bond.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Poor.

Covered Way

A covered passage is known to have existed between the main house and the kitchen. ¹Traces of its foundations remain, bearing considerably east of south and west of north.

Since the floor of the third kitchen ²was near the level of the first floor of the main house, it may be assumed that the connecting passage had a level not more than one step down from the lower of the two (which was the kitchen), and very likely had the same level.

The comparatively light cross traffic might be provided for by steps, anywhere in the length of the passage.

On the east side are the irregularly spaced foundations of three piers 17 inches square, and a longer foundation near the center. The latter may have determined the location of the one or two steps which were probably required to reach grade. ³

One or two steps also probably existed on the west side, but there is no definite evidence to establish their location. ⁴

The slight remains of foundations on the west consist of 9-inch brickwork, which suggests that the wall above was continuous, rather than of the post construction which the piers on the opposite side seems to indicate. It is possible that the passageway had a screen wall, pierced by windows and a door, on the west (the side exposed both to public view and to the prevailing winter wind), and free-standing posts or columns on the east.

The Covered Way may have been built later than the kitchen, for its construction must have thrown into disuse the stoop east of the wine-cellar. ¹

<i>Brick</i>	8¼ x 4¼ x 2½.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Unfit for reuse.

Service Entrances to House ²

Three sets of foundations at the south end of the Covered Way represent service entrances of different periods.

1. The earliest of these consists of brick steps (formerly with wood nosings) down from grade, and the remains of a basement areaway against the house. These foundations undoubtedly antedate the Covered Way, since one of the piers of the latter was built against the center of the steps.

These steps started at grade level, and were undoubtedly reached by a marl-surfaced pathway ³of which traces were found east of the kitchen.

The east edge of the path was clearly marked, and lined exactly with the east edge of the steps.

These steps are considerably farther away from the house wall than are those of the usual basement bulkhead entrance.

This may indicate that they entered under the floor of a porch at first floor level. Such a porch could have been reached by steps from the side. But there is no evidence of such steps. The first-floor house wall has not been investigated for evidence of an opening; but if an opening is found, it would be ascribed to the period of the later porch and not necessarily to this earlier period.

There may have been an area at the foot of the steps, with floor at basement level, and roof aligned with bulkhead covering over steps (when in closed position). But here again, only surmise is possible.

<i>Brick</i>	8½-9 x 4-4¼ x 2½.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Bad.

2. Other foundations indicate a passage which gave access, but means of stairs down from grade on the west, to an area under the north end of the Covered Way, which communicated with the basement of the house. Remains of these steps are scanty, but the retaining wall which formed an areaway at the bottom is plainly indicated.

This entry must have had approximately the same term of existence as the Covered Way. Thus at this time the house had service entrances one above the other, on two levels, basement and first floor. ¹

<i>Brick</i>	8 x 4-1/8 x 2½.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Fragmentary.

3. A third foundation on this site has the characteristics of late work, and seems to represent a porch measuring about 10 x 11 feet, constructed after the Covered Way had disappeared. Two 4-inch projections on the outside of the north foundation wall, while of unknown purpose, may be buttresses of spread footings. Since there are no evidences of any opening in this foundation, it seems probable that with its construction the older basement entrance was closed, ¹the porch giving access to the first floor only.

<i>Brick</i>	Size varies. Bond irregular.
<i>Mortar</i>	Lime.
<i>Condition</i>	Poor.

East Basement Steps ²

Immediately east of the porch is a flight of brick steps with provision for wood nosings, which goes down from grade to reach basement floor level near the line of the basement wall. The former opening in this wall has been bricked up.

The work appears to be of late date ³, and may have been executed to provide access to the basement at the time when the old entrance under the Covered Way was closed.

Very likely the old undergrade entrance had constituted a drainage problem, whether a cellar door was provided or not. The new location may have been thought better protected.

<i>Brick</i>	Size varies.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Bad.

MARL WALK AT CENTER

Northward from a point near the center of the present house runs a path about 6 feet wide, edges with brick on the west, and

surfaced with layers of several substances, predominantly marl. This walk was probably in use for many years, as it was built up at various times with marl, crushed brick, ashes, and other debris. Its thickness ranged from 5 to 9 inches. The original walk was of marl.

OUTBUILDINGS EAST OF WALK

Storehouse ¹

East of the marl walk, and opposite the north end of the kitchen foundations, are the remains of three outbuildings superimposed on each other. The purpose and date of these buildings can only be conjectured, although it is possible that one of them was the storehouse mentioned in the inventory of 1776. ²All three foundations are of 9-inch brickwork.

1. The earliest foundation measures about 8½ x 16 feet. At its south end is a cross wall enclosing a space less than 3 feet wide. Remains of crushed brick paving were found on both sides of this cross wall.

<i>Brick</i>	8½ x 3¼ x 4-4½ x 2½. English bond.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Bad.

2. Of the second foundation there remains only the west and south walls; and the northwest corner, which indicates that the building was over 22 feet long. The south wall is out of perpendicular to the west wall, which is built partly on the west wall of the first foundation. ³

<i>Brick</i>	Size vary. Bats numerous. Mostly English bond.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Bad.

3. A third foundation, of late construction, seems to represent an outbuilding about 12 feet square, with a 7-foot addition on the north side, probably of still later date. The west wall of this building is only about 11 feet from the marl path, while the first and second walls are more than 15 feet distant. The south wall of the third foundation crosses the west walls of the other two. ¹Its east wall rests partly on the first east wall.

<i>Brick</i>	Sizes vary. Bats numerous. Mostly English bond.
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Bad.

Shed ²

Separated by 3 feet from the nearest storehouse foundation, and by 13 feet from the marl walk, remains of another outbuilding were found opposite the southeast addition to the second kitchen. Four 9-inch walls were traced, defining a building which measured about 10 x 14 feet. Paving of brickbats was found inside. Earlier work under parts of the north and east walls indicates that the building was destroyed and rebuilt on the same site ³, or perhaps that the same building was raised to a higher level.

Two short 9-inch foundations project from the west wall south of center, but are not bonded with the wall. They may have supported a small stoop, or a narrow flight of steps.

The brickwork in this foundation is of an early character as that in the first storehouse foundation. The east wall of this foundation lines with that of the third storehouse. ⁴Hence the life of the building or buildings here indicated may have spanned that of all three storehouses.

This building cannot be positively identified, but it may be the shed mentioned in Humphrey Harwood's account for 1777. ¹

<i>Brick</i>	8-8½ x 3¼-4 x 2-5/8
<i>Mortar</i>	Shell.
<i>Condition</i>	Bad.

EAST WING OF HOUSE

A foundation was uncovered of brickwork 14 to 15 inches thick, and about 20 x 35 feet in extent. On the south its face recedes about 4 inches from the face of the present house, but on the north its face projects nearly a foot beyond the house. ²

The east wall of the house may be built upon the west wall of the "wing" as its foundation; ³but investigation is not yet complete.

What appears to be a 4-inch brick veneer covering the house wall is set back 4 inches from the east face of the foundation wall. ⁴

Brick	9 x 4½ x 2½. Reddish salmon. Common bond.
Mortar	Shell.
Condition	Unfit for reuse.

Chimney ⁵

The chimney foundation is built against the inside of the north wall, which is here interrupted as if the chimney made the wall unnecessary. At basement level a fireplace was formed facing west, but on the east the chimney face was solidly built up. The underfire gave evidence of two levels of paving. Patches of the lower, earlier pavement were also found in or near each corner of the basement. The chimney was deep enough from west to east to have allowed for two fireplaces upstairs, back to back. The east and west faces of the chimney made obtuse angles with the north wall, so that the fireplaces would throw their heat more directly into the rooms.

Brick	9 x 4¼ x 2¼-2½ . English bond.
Mortar	Shell.
Condition	Fragmentary.

East Wing Basement Stair ¹

Brick stairs with wood nosings, between 9-inch retaining walls, went down from grade to the basement floor at the east end of the original building, near the south corner.

Brick	Size varies (Smaller than wall brick.)
Mortar	Shell.
Condition	Bad.

Of the *Wind Mill* mentioned in the Robertson-Holloway deed of 1723, no traces whatever were discovered.

Also notable is the absence of a Well. ²

Either or both of these constructions may have been located in the northward prolongation of the property.

Stable

On the north side of Scotland Street, lying across the present extension of North England Street, the Frenchman's map shows a long building which is identified in the Research Report (p. 15) as the Randolph stable.

The center of this site had been disturbed by the extension of the street, and the west end was inaccessible because it was privately rented. The east end, however, was excavated in July, 1938. Findings consisted of:

- (a) A small patch of paving--bricks laid on edge.
- (b) A fill, 3 x6 feet in extent, containing brickbats and shell mortar.
- (c) A fill 2 feet square, 3 feet 6 inches deep with the same contents.
- (d) Small detached areas of crushed brick.

No traces of walls were found.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

Before 1724, the west lot probably contained the westernmost of the two original dwellings, the first kitchen, and perhaps one or more of the group smokehouse-storehouse-shed. The east lot contained the dwelling and perhaps no outbuildings. It was probably not long before the two dwellings were joined, or long after that before the east wing (the old east dwelling) disappeared. ¹

Some time before 1782, probably before 1775 ², the first kitchen gave way to the second ³and the second to the third. The third kitchen was connected with the house for a time (probably still before 1775) by the covered way. The covered way disappeared at a time unknown, but while the third kitchen was still in use; for other service entrances were provided to replace it.

The subsequent history of the outbuildings is one of progressive desuetude, decay, and disintegration.

**CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE, BASED ON
REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND RECORD**

July 26, 1938

1714	8 lots ¹ deeded to William Robertson with proviso requiring erection of buildings within two years.
1715	Philip Ludwell buys two southeastern lots. ²
1716	Houses presumably completed, since Robertson and Ludwell retained titles.
1723	John Holloway buys 4 lots, ³ with houses and a windmill, from Robertson for £80.
1723 or 1724	John Randolph buys one of Holloway's two southwestern lots.
1724	Randolph buys the second of Holloway's lots.
1737	Randolph dies, mentioning "house in Williamsburg" in his will. His son Peyton Randolph inherits the property.
1775	Peyton Randolph dies.
1776	Inventory mentions lumber in <i>storehouse</i> .
1777	"Shed" mentioned in Humphrey Harwood's accounts.
1778	Covered way mentioned by Harwood.
1783	Betty Randolph dies. House bought from estate by Joseph Hornsby.

SOURCES

1. Fragments:

Few fragments, and none of importance, were found among the outbuildings. The east wing excavation yielded some china fragments in unusually good preservation, some of them almost whole pieces. But nothing was found of particular architectural interest.

Fragments have been consigned to the Educational Department.

2. Photographs:

- 5818 Wine-cellar from east
- 5819 Southeast kitchen addition from south
- 5820 Close-up of kitchens from southwest
- 5821 North kitchen chimneys from north
- 5822 Wine-cellar steps from north
- 5823 "Storehouse" from northwest
- 5824 "Shed" from south
- 5825 "Shed" from northwest
- 5901 "Storehouse" from southwest
- 5902 North kitchen chimneys from south
- 5903 Forge and chimneys from northwest
- 5904 Service entrance foundations from northeast
- 5905 South chimney from north
- 5906 Service entrance foundations from west
- 5907 East wing basement stair from southwest
- 5908 East wing chimney from south
- 5909 Southwest corner of east wing, from south
- 5910 East wing basement stair from northwest
- 5911 Basement stair east of service entrance foundations, from north

Points from which photographs were taken are indicated on Archaeological Survey Drawing. Prints may be found in record books in offices of Williamsburg Restoration, Inc.

3. Archaeological Field Notes

In separate file.

4. *Archaeological Survey Drawing*

A print is filed with the original of this report.

5. Research Report, "Randolph-Peachy House", July 26, 1938.

A copy is filed with the original of this report.

6. Report of Conference, July 12, 1938, between Mrs. Ball and Messrs. Kendrew and Reed: "Randolph-Peachy House".

A copy is filed with the original of this report.

F. D.



[^] 1 See Research Report, p. 1.

[^] 2 See Research Report, p. 1, and Chronological Table.

[^] 3 A modern addition in the rear is here left out of consideration.

[^] 1 5½ feet wide.

[^] 2 It is also quite possible that the chimney was off center of the roof ridge for its whole height.

[^] 3 So large a fireplace would hardly be built for a room as small as the one outlined by these foundations.

[^] 4 See Photograph N 5821.

[^] 5 There are traces of a corner formed by the east wall at a point which would indicate that the north wall intersected with the *front* of the chimney. But there are also traces of a north wall across the *back* of the chimney. The evidence in each case are too scanty to allow of definite conclusions.

[^] 1 The evidence seems to indicate that the wall above was of frame construction. Foundations 13 inches thick were usual under frame buildings of this size, while a brick building would have required 13-inch walls, and foundations still thicker. A brick outbuilding is in any event improbable behind a house of frame (though the Archibald Blair kitchen is one such case).

[^] 2 See Photograph N 5819.

[^] 3 The outside width, about 20 feet, indicates that the roof space was ample. It therefore seems possible that this was developed as a storey-and-a-half building with dormers.

[^] 4 See Photograph N 5820.

[^] 5 See Photograph N 5818, 5822.

[^] 1 The clear pitch is just under 6 feet at center.

[^] 2 See for instance Report of Conference between Mr. Reed, Mr. Kendrew, and Mrs. Ball (p. 3).

[^] 3 Including the southeast fireplace of the second kitchen.

[^] 1 Strong evidence of a raised floor in the northern end of the kitchen is the absence of any trace of underfire paving in the north fireplace. If the floor in this room was at grade, such traces would almost certainly be present—as they were in the fireplaces of the first and second kitchens.

[^] 2 A brick underfire, however, was preserved in the north fireplace of the first kitchen.

[^] 3 This path crossed the foundations of the southeastern addition to the second kitchen.

[^] 1 See Photograph N 5903.

[^] 2 See Photograph N 5905.

[^] 1 See Research Report, p. 9.

[^] 2 Backfill found under the two northernmost piers of the Covered Way proves that it was built after the wine cellar.

[^] 3 It also seems to have governed, at least in some measure, the location of the 17-inch square piers.

[^] 4 Three short lengths of brickwork, exactly opposite the longer foundation on the east, appear to have constituted a continuous foundation 6 feet long. This is the only evidence of a continuous foundation wall on this side. But this fact is not necessarily significant, for two or three foundations of equal length may have existed in the spaces where no remains now exist.

[^] 1 The Covered Way blocked the marl path which connected the stoop with the house, but there is no evidence that this path was replaced by another on a different line.

[^] 2 See Photograph N 5904, 5906.

[^] 3 The same path was mentioned under "Store House."

[^] 1 There is, however, only indirect evidence for the first-floor entrance, pending an opportunity to strip and examine the wall where it is assumed to have existed.

[^] 1 Or it may have been left open for access to storage space under the porch floor. (This seems the best explanation for a patch of brick paving at a level which, in an entryway, would apparently be too high.)

[^] 2 See Photograph N 5911.

[^] 3 Wood nosings were commoner at an earlier period, but were known as long as soft-burned brick steps were used without cement.

[^] 1 See Photograph N 5823, 5901.

[^] 2 See Research Report, p. 6.

[^] 3 Most conclusive indication of the true order of the series.

[^]₁ Most conclusive indication of the true order of the series.

[^]₂ See Photograph N 5824, 5825.

[^]₃ There is a slight offset in the brickwork which is probably due either to negligence or to an effort to square up the northeast corner.

[^]₄ And both are just west of the line of the east end of the present house. Since the original lots were divided on about the same line, it seems likely that the site of at least one outbuilding of this group was determined before the amalgamation of the property in 1723-4.

[^]₁ See Research Report, p. 9.

[^]₂ This job furnishes strong confirmation of the proposition of page 1, that the easternmost section of the original house was not built as a wing, but was a separate house, later connected to the western section by an intermediate unit which survives as the *present* east wing. For if built as a wing, this section would undoubtedly have continued the established lines of the plan; or if a jog had been laid out, at least it would have been a symmetrical one.

[^]₃ More evidence to the same effect.

[^]₄ See Photograph N 5909.

[^]₅ See Photograph N 5908.

[^]₁ See Photograph N 5907, 5910.

[^]₂ There is a spring at no great distance from the house.

[^]₁ It is safe to assume that the east wing was gone when, in 1783, an advertisement described the house as of "four rooms on a floor". (See Research Report, p. 10.)

[^]₂ This is the year of the death of Peyton Randolph, none of whose successors probably lived on as grand a scale as he, or on a scale grand enough to accord with the building of a vaulted wine-cellar, etc.

[^]₃ If Peyton Randolph undertook works of reconstruction on inheriting the property in 1737, this might possibly establish the date of the second kitchen. The first kitchen, to judge from its 9-inch foundations, was lightly built.

[^]₁ #207, 208, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237.

[^]₂ #233, 234.

[^]₃ #207, 208, 236, 237.