

Friends of the Hollow News

June 2000

Noted Architectural Historian Retained

Dr. David C. Collins, the new owner of The Hollow has retained noted Warrenton architectural historian, Cheryl Hanback Shepherd, to prepare and submit the nomination for Virginia Historic Landmark status on an expedited basis. Ms. Shepherd has been working at a feverish pace to complete the necessary basic research for the submission of the Preliminary Information Form (PIF) to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources so that the eligibility determination decision can be included on the agenda for the next State Review Board meeting.

Ms. Shepherd's initial observations from her analysis of the house have been extremely interesting. We are grateful to her and Dr. Collins for allowing us to reprint them at the end of this newsletter.

John Marshall Children's Park

Dr. Collins has begun preliminary design of the "John Marshall Children's Park" that he intends to establish on the site. His current plans include fishing ponds, hiking trails, restroom facilities, parking, museum space and, of course, the house site with possible reconstructed outbuildings as the centerpiece. He intends that the new buildings and parking be visually concealed as much as possible from the view at the house site.

Colonial Williamsburg Architectural Historian Lounsbury Visits

On June 20, 2000, Dr. Carl R. Lounsbury, author of *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* and member of the Architectural Research Department of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, conducted an on-site analysis of The Hollow with two of his colleagues, Michael Bourne and Peter Sandbeck. Dr. Lounsbury's review and analysis of the building will assist in proper restoration of the building to its original period.

Commonwealth of Virginia Funding

Much to our surprise, we obtained an additional \$50,000 matching grant for restoration of The Hollow from the Commonwealth of Virginia during the current budget year. This brings the currently available matching restoration funding to \$100,000. Because there are extensive strings attached to any use of the grant money, we are unfortunately unable to access the funds.

Architectural Analysis Notes by Cheryl Hanback Shepherd

What follows are the rough e-mail notes that Ms. Shepherd provided to us as she is conducting her research on The Hollow. The notes are extremely interesting to those of us with an interest in the secrets that The Hollow holds about the boyhood life of John Marshall.

Thursday June 1, 2000

I spent several hours at The Hollow Monday doing a preliminary architectural study until my flashlight gave out. I noticed quite a few interesting changes, such as the door we enter through was originally a window (likely a 6/9 double-hung sash). The interior sheathing above this door is cut in a tall rectangle above the door--too tall for a transom - but at the same height as the original tall window openings. The stairway was relocated from the chamber to the hall as evidenced from the original opening clearly cut in the ceiling of the chamber to the left/west of the room partition, which also shows in the floor in the room above. The partition moved east at the same time. It appears, then, that the first-floor rooms were nearly symmetrical, but I have to take measurements as I continue my evaluation. This means that the rear doorway, which has an ill-fitting modern door, would be in the way of the original stairway location, and I want to study that opening and its rhythm more closely.

I won't go into all of my early observations as I'm still evaluating, but I wonder if anyone has noticed the clear evidence of plaster on the interior stone chimney which is stepped back behind the extant sheathing? Yes, the original early common lime-sand mortar has been repointed w/Portland cement in places, but there are some ca. 3/4" thick plaster sections remaining on the chimney. This could suggest that perhaps the room was first plastered, as the upstairs was. It would also cast suspicion to the authenticity of the wall sheathing, though I'm aware of the wrought nails in some of the early horizontal wall board. Better light would help with the study of tool, saw marks and nails. Isn't it interesting that the upstairs had plaster at one time as well? Still investigating and asking questions . . . On the other hand, on the rear wall of the hall and under some layers of paint, someone penciled "JM". There is more graffiti on the east wall, one looks like

"CM". A later tenant, visitor or could it be??? I wonder if the layers of paint might be analyzed to determine a potential close date of the graffiti. Too early in my survey to tell if that is an early wall board, but it makes the study even more fun and shows the importance of going about this preservation effort meticulously. Further, VDHR has stressed the importance of demonstrating strong evidence of historic integrity remaining in the building as a qualification of its listing on the National Register.

I am returning Monday, June 5th, for an all-day analysis/documentation on both the house and landscape. The chain of title is just about finished.

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Thought you'd appreciate a short report of some of the outstanding findings during Monday's site visit. I am no longer worried about proving the historic integrity as much of the original material remains in place.

Landscape - To the east of the dwelling there are three falls or drops in level down to the stream in the gully. These terraces appear to be a manipulation and several old mulberry trees with very interesting branch formation were discovered here. One has fallen. We are studying whether this might be a location of some outbuildings. With the height of the grass, it is difficult to look for patterns of rock that might indicate a foundation, but I'll continue to look. Also located here are the building ruins, which I understand are the demolished addition. Correct?

We know it was demolished after Upton's survey. I found a few large timbers with tenons indicating that the structure was timber-framed. However, the presence of circular saw marks indicates that it was built mid-to-late-nineteenth century and land tax records should confirm that.

Dwelling

Exterior - Original beaded weatherboard on the front south wall remains from the west corner to the door, protected by the addition, no doubt. Lots of wrought roseheaded and T-headed nails are present. The southwest window here is all original, even the sill. More original weatherboard was discovered on the north rear of the house under the cornice.

Interior -

East "Hall" room -

1. Staying on the southwest window - a ghost of the original molding strip remains visible on the now plain surround; probably had a nicely detailed framing when Thomas built the house.
 2. The original pit-sawn horizontal beaded wall and ceiling is attached with wrought roseheaded and T-headed nails around the room EXCEPT for the later partition to the east. There is a sloppy patch with cut nails (19th C) at left west side of the rear door. Some boards were placed upside down. The door opening, which would be in the way of the original stair location, has a circular-sawn left/west jamb and a pit-sawn right/east jamb, which was a reused board. Wire nails are in the lintel. The replaced floor has circular saw marks.
 3. The partition - I wonder if this first floor was not a single-room originally, with the original partition being only to the end of the stairway at the rear, which was originally located 28" further into the Hall room. If there was only one chimney to heat the house in the winter on the west wall, a room divider would have made the east end much cooler - unless there was a chimney on the east gable end as well. It was typical for colonial dwellings to have a chimney at each end, but for such a small house, one might suffice without an inner room partition. Secondly, there is no evidence of where the partition originally attached to the north and south walls. The partition today is unattached and moves upon the slightest push, it also is cut out for the front door. I suggest Thomas would have done a much better job.
- 3A. Door in partition - has early H-hinge with leather washers though nails are later.
4. The original fireplace in the stone chimney has been crudely closed with portland cement and stone. There is evidence of a fire along the ceiling. The original chimneypiece may have been burned and destroyed at the same time. The peg holes remain in the studs to the north and south of the chimney where the original surround attached. Oh, how I'd like to have seen what it looked like! There is a considerable amount of remaining common lime plaster with animal hair on the stone chimney above where the mantel shelf would have been, as I conveyed earlier. There is no certain answer why this is here, since the adjacent wallboard is pitsawn with wrought nails, Period I of construction. Was the chimney plastered above the mantel to better insulate it? I'll be interested to hear Lounsbury's thoughts.

The East Chamber-

1. The pit-sawn wall sheathing was attached with cut nails, not wrought. The question is why. Only a few wrought were discovered on the flimsy partition wall which means they were recycled. There are some replacement circular-sawn boards present. We questioned the originality of the east room as the sill is broken on the north elevation to the east of the rear door, yet the nails, saw marks and seemingly continuous plate in the attic don't support this. Neither does the apparently (as visibility thus far allowed) continuous sill on the south elevation. Why was this sheathing later attached with later nails? Was there something else on this wall originally?

2. Already discussed the door on the southeast being a window originally due

to the cut out and repaired sheathing above the doorway.

3. Did find a couple of roseheaded nails in the backstairs.

4. Floor is absolutely not original.

5. A door opening was cut and repaired in the corner of the east wall. The exterior weatherboard has not been cut, indicating that alteration predated the weatherboard replacement.

Attic -

1. Strong presence of wrought roseheaded and T-headed nails again both east and west, though again, more to the west. The ceiling was originally plastered over split lath, while the side walls had horizontal sheathing matching the downstairs. A few circular-sawn boards are on the north wall of the east room, crudely finished.

2. The stone chimney had a fireplace opening as well, judging by the hint of the hearth, which makes sense for it would have been quite chilly without one.

3. The Roman numeral "II" is chiseled on the north plate at the west end.

4. There are peg holes for the tightening of the flooring on the southwest girder, but not on the southeast end of it. hmmm.

Crawlspace - such fun, shudder!

1. Greatest interest is that Thomas apparently was originally building a 16' x 20' typically-sized lease house, but realized it was too small and expanded it during construction. A repointed stone foundation stands at 20' 3" measuring from the west end wall. It has a horizontal opening in the north end for a typical window that would have had horizontal bars. Also an indication of a raised basement on this end. All the joists are pit-sawn, except for the last two on the east end which are circular sawn.

2. Broad-axed east-to-west summer beam terminated just beyond the original stone wall about 26" or so. The summer is unusually pieced at the center to the north-south girder with mortise and tenon, rather than vice versa.

3. The flooring and joists have remains of whitewash on the west of center.

4. The original 8-12" flooring remains under the later floor in the east room.

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The Friends of the Hollow, Inc. is a Virginia non-stock, non-profit charitable corporation formed in 1981 with the express purpose of preservation and restoration of the boyhood home of Chief Justice John Marshall known as The Hollow. Basic membership dues are \$10.00 per year and sustaining membership is \$25.00 per year. Additional donations are welcome. Dues and contributions are fully tax deductible. Please make checks payable to Friends of the Hollow, Inc. and mail to Friends of the Hollow, 4283 N. 38th Street, Arlington, VA 22207.

Friends of the Hollow News is published by the Friends of the Hollow, Inc., 4283 N. 38th St., Arlington, VA 22207.
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