

# DELAWARE

THE FIRST STATE

DECEMBER 7, 1787



## *Defenders of Our Tradition*

*John Dickinson and the United States Air Force*

### JANUARY · 1955

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
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<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<sup>23</sup> <sub>30</sub>	<sup>24</sup> <sub>31</sub>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

August 9, 1952

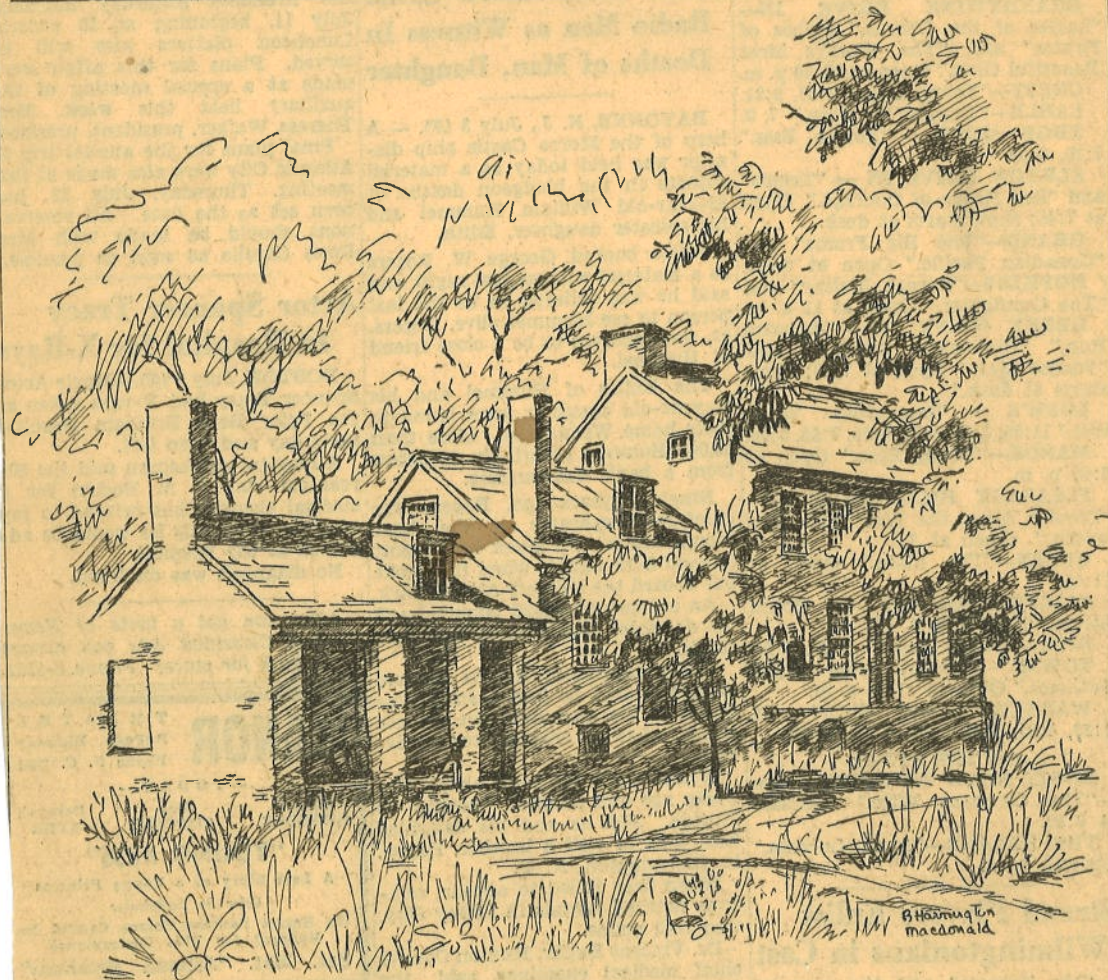
MEMO

TO: Leon deValinger, Jr.

FROM: Kenneth M. Wilson

Mrs. Gladys B. March, Antique dealer from "Mordington", Milford, Delaware, from whom we purchased a McConnell teaspoon, informed us of a pine table, with square, splayed legs, no drawer, which she has in her possession and which she acquired at an auction at the John Dickinson Mansion about 10 years ago. It is, she said, about the same size and shape (except as noted above) as the pine candle table in the Museum. Has been refinished. Price \$30.00.

## Historic Landmarks Of Delaware and the Eastern Shore



### The John Dickinson Mansion

By BETTY HARRINGTON  
MACDONALD

**J**OHAN DICKINSON, "Penman of the Revolution," was born in Maryland in 1732. Samuel, his father, moved the family to his new estate near Dover in 1740. They lived in a house Samuel built "on the site of John Briggs' house" while Samuel erected the brick house now known as the John Dickinson Mansion.

John and his brother Philemon were tutored at home until John went to Philadelphia to read law in 1750. After studying at the Middle Temple in London he practiced law in Philadelphia. He represented Pennsylvania in the first and second Continental Congress, but up to the Declaration of Independence he had striven for American autonomy short of war. Then, without signing it, he joined the Pennsylvania militia.

After his father's death he continued to live in Philadelphia. How-

ever he did move his family down to the plantation in 1776 when the British capture of Philadelphia seemed imminent. The next year he rose from private to brigadier general in the Delaware militia. Later he signed the Articles of Confederation as a Delaware delegate. He returned to Philadelphia to live.

Then in 1781 he hurried to Kent when he heard that Tories from New York had landed at Kitts Hummock and raided his estate of silver, clothing, meat, and one slave. This time he stayed 16 months. He restored order to the panicked plantation, manumitted most of his slaves, and in November was elected "president" of Delaware. In 1782 he became president of Pennsylvania. By 1786 he had moved to Wilmington. He was one of Delaware's delegates to the Constitutional Convention, and later a signer of the Constitution. He died in 1808.

The Dickinson house must have had handsome details when Samuel built it, but a fire gutted it in 1804 leaving little but the walls. John apparently decided not to reside there again, and in restoring it for the use of tenants put in plainer woodwork. He described the house as one of the most substantially built in the state, having brick walls 18 inches thick at the water-table, and 14 inches thick above. Near the old mansion he built is the grave of Samuel Dickinson covered with honeysuckle. Large broken trees still shade the three section house, and a lane wanders down towards St. Jones Creek where once the Dickinsons must have had a sturdy wharf.

The Mansion is now owned by the state and careful restoration is planned.

From Route 113, five miles below Dover, take the Kitts Hummock Road .3 mile. The house is visible on the right.

## John Dickinson Home Tour Set

J. E. E., Sept. 5, 1953

**Patriotic Group to Lead  
Public Visit on Sept. 17;  
State Will Receive Gifts**

A public tour of the John Dickinson Mansion southeast of Dover will be led by the Sons of the American Revolution and the Friends of the Dickinson Mansion from 4 to 6 p. m. Thursday, Sept. 17.

Following this annual Constitution Day pilgrimage to the mansion, the SAR will hold a dinner meeting at the Dinner Bell Inn, Dover, at 6:30. Dr. John H. Powell, author and former assistant professor of history at the University of Delaware, will be the principal speaker.

Dr. Powell will speak on "The Mansion on Jones Neck."

Another feature of the program will be the presentation to the state of the silver set used by John Dickinson. Associate Justice James M. Tunnell, Jr., of the Delaware Supreme Court and president of the Friends of the Dickinson Mansion, Inc., will make the presentation and David Stockwell of this city will speak briefly telling how the set was obtained as a gift in memory of the late John Marshall Phillips, former director of the Yale Museum and an authority on early American silverware.

A set of silver sugar tongs will be presented by Mrs. Paul Franklin of Chatham, N. J., daughter of the late Merris Taylor, a former editor of the Every Evening. The sugar tongs bear the date of 1802 and although not the property of John Dickinson are of the same approximate period.

Both gifts will be accepted by Secretary of State John N. McDowell, acting in behalf of Gov. J. Caleb Boggs for the state, and by Mrs. Henry Ridgely, president of the Public Archives Commission for the commission.

Members of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc., and of all patriotic organizations, and all interested citizens, are invited to the affair. Dinner reservations may be made through Clarence W. Taylor, Wilmington, who is secretary treasurer of the SAR.

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P. O. Box 710  
Dover, Delaware

Charles Dutton owns old brick house  
Mrs. Percie Simpson in mill house

Checks  
1808

John Dickinson's will again  
His wife's will & inventory

A14, 63

Samuel Dickinson's will & invent.

A10 21-24  
(1789)

Will & inventory of Thomas Collins

A10, 27-29, 1832

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS  
Committee on Publication Policies  
of Archival Agencies

Dover, Delaware  
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# THE CHRONICLE

## *of Early American Industries*

Volume III No. 17

October 1948

### **Street Lighting**

by BERTRAM K. LITTLE

The 18th century brought great advances in street lighting both abroad and for the first time in this country. By 1702 the streets of Copenhagen were widely lighted by lanterns, very much like those in Holland. The latter city refused to have flambeaux because of fear of fire; servants carried dark lanterns for their masters. During this century many cities on the Continent and in England were added to the number whose streets were lighted at public charge. The big progressive step, which came early in the century, is the replacing of lanterns with street lamps having glass globes and reflectors, using oil lamps instead of candles and being regularly cleaned. In France in 1703 a M. Fabre proposed specially designed lamps with reflectors and chimneys. From a picture it looks as if he had used crude magnifying lenses, but these are not mentioned in the description. By 1741 Paris had one man in charge of every ten lanterns and every detail of their care and maintenance was carefully regulated. Three years later, Chateau-blanc invented a reflector lantern which cast no shadows below it, but it was somewhat costly, and had the disadvantages of growing dull because of the smoke, and of going out from congealed oil in cold weather. To offset the latter fault, M. de Lierville invented a very thin metal stem which he called a heater, and which conducted heat from the flame down into the oil reservoir.

About 1765, M. Patté developed a street light attached to a building, raised and lowered the length of an iron rod by means of a little weight; the lamp in it tipped automatically to use up the last drop of oil. It burned oil made from beech-nuts which M. Patté claimed would burn as well as olive oil at about  $\frac{1}{3}$  the cost. He arranged it so that one wick would produce three lights — one natural and two

Continued on Page 147

### **Dating Old Buildings**

by LORING McMILLEN

#### **I—Stone and Brick**

In general there are three methods of dating an old building; first by documentary means, second by the style of architecture, and last by a study and analysis of its parts and the method of their construction.

The first two methods are well known. When sufficient evidence exists, as with most of our better known buildings, no further proof is necessary. However, as is more often the case with lesser buildings, documentary evidence is inconclusive or wholly lacking and so many renovations have been made that the original architectural style has been lost. The third method has then to be used. Too little is known about this method, since many early details of construction persisted with minor changes for many years and for a similar reason others have no place in written history. However, exhaustive study of many examples, and of records, is gradually building a check list of data which can be applied to any structure with reasonable accuracy. The following data was drawn from a study of buildings in the vicinity of New York, chiefly Staten Island, first settled by the Dutch in 1639 and later by the French and the English. It is applicable equally, with the usual local variations, to buildings elsewhere.

Materials commonly used in building have been wood, stone and brick. In New England, tradition and an abundant supply of timber led to the construction of the typical New England frame house. Stone and brick were used sparingly. In cosmopolitan and Dutch New York and neighboring New Jersey, the frame house shared equal favor with the traditional Dutch brick house and the French stone house. In Dutch, or German, Pennsylvania, due to the abundance of the material and a knowledge of its use, the stone house predominated, while in the

## The Chronicle

South the brick building was generally constructed.

Stone walls were constructed 22 inches in thickness and consisted of an outer and an inner wall, bonded to each other by overlapping the larger stones and the keying effect of the smaller ones. This thickness was the natural result of the size of stones which could be conveniently handled. Variations exist such as in foundation walls, which were thicker, and in large buildings. Early mortar was made of lime and sand and unless locally available used only in pointing, the remainder of the wall being laid up in ordinary clay. At first, and until as late as about 1720, much of the early lime for mortar was obtained from the burning of oyster shells, and mortar thus made can be readily recognized by the presence of large calcinated pieces of shell.

Legislation in the various provinces discouraged this practice, New York forbid the taking of oyster shells for the burning of lime in 1704. Lime burned from limestone came into use about 1730 with the discovery of limestone deposits. The early mortar thus made shows large particles of the stone, but with the gradual improvement in kilns, and in burning, these particles after 1830 can no longer be discerned.

Early stone walls show little attention paid to coursing or dressing, being laid up in what is known as "undressed random rubble," that is the stones were used as found, and placed without continuous horizontal joints. Gradually greater care was used in dressing, that is, in tooling or in squaring the stones and laying them up in courses. Greater care was also used, in quoining on the corners, or "long and short work," as it was called. By 1800 and earlier we have the beautiful stonework of the buildings of Pennsylvania and of northern New Jersey, but by 1820 stone as a common wall material ceased generally to be used in all, but public buildings.

While records exist referring to the importation of brick at New York and other colonial ports, the tradition of Dutch and English brick brought from the old country is largely unsubstantiated. To the contrary, ample evidence exists showing the local manufacture of brick from the earliest times to the present. Unfortunately, little concerning age can be deducted from the size, texture or color of bricks. Various sizes were employed in all sections notwithstanding that on June 19, 1703, New York Province standardized by law the size of manufactured brick

at  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4} \times 9$  inches. This was the most generally accepted size and prevailed until about 1790 when the present size of  $2 \times 4 \times 8$  inches came into use.\*

Old bricks, of course, were hand made, that is hand processed in wooden molds open at the top. They thus show five smooth sides and one sanded or rough side. No marking was made upon these bricks to the despair of the historian, and determination of their age can only be hazarded by increasing evenness of texture, hardness and depth of color of later examples. Later bricks were also more uniformly and carefully made and as a result the joints between are narrower. Bonds, such as English or Dutch, were used at all times and thus can not be used for dating of brickwork.

Stone and brick were both used in fireplace, hearth, and floor construction; stone more generally in the older examples, particularly in the kitchen fireplaces where its use lasted until about 1750.

The tools formerly employed by the mason and bricklayer were similar to those in use today: the stone mason's hammer for rough shaping stone; the three-cornered trowel, the most useful tool of all for laying mortar, rough pointing and shaping brick—a beautiful tool to watch in the hands of a skilled workman; the rectangular smoothing trowel for plastering work; the mason's level, at first a plumb bob on a T frame; then about 1830-40 the spirit level—much longer than the carpenter's level; the lead plumb bob suspended from a string; the "hawk," a square board with a round handle set at right angles for holding mortar while plastering.

The "hawk" and the smoothing trowel were actually plasterers' tools but in former years the trades of mason, bricklayer and plasterer were one, even as they are today, particularly among independent workers. Old plaster followed the same rules as mortar, being made in the same manner. Plaster in the stone houses was applied directly to the stone in one thin coat. In the frame house plaster at first also was one coat mixed with the hair of some animal for greater binding and elimination of cracks. About 1790 to 1800, two coats, a scratch coat and a fine coat began to be applied. The three coat plastering job is a modern improvement.

\*"Dutch Brick" commonly spoken of in New York, originally referred to the larger size brick. In more recent times "Dutch Brick" has mistakenly been thought to suggest the actual place of origin, as being in Holland.—Ed.

May 9, 1952

Mrs. Charles L. Reese, Jr.  
Chairman  
Historic Activities Committee  
National Society of the  
Colonial Dames in the State of Delaware  
Old Kennett Road  
Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Mrs. Reese:

It is indeed a pleasure to transmit to you the resolution adopted by our Commission at their special meeting held May 8. We are indeed grateful for the fine work done by you and your Committee in raising funds to acquire and help with the preservation of the John Dickinson Mansion.

May I add my personal expression of thanks for your excellent work and for the feeling of relief to know that this historic site will not be further neglected and will be preserved for future generations.

Cordially yours,

State Archivist

LdeV:esa

Enclosure

Fall 1792  
May 5, 1952

Whereas, John Dickinson signed the signature of "Pamphlet of the Revolution" through his writing in behalf of the American Cause of such decisions as: "The Declaration of Rights Adopted By the Stamp Act Congress," ~~October 19, 1765~~ "A Petition to the King from the Stamp Act Congress" (October 19, 1765), "An Address to Friends and Countrymen On the Stamp Act" (November 1765), "Petition of a Farmer in Pennsylvania" (1768), "A Song for American Freedom" (July 1768), "Oliver Cromwell's Petition" (July 8, 1775), "Petition of the <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>Articles of Confederation</sup> (1778)", "Petition of Fugitives" (1787), and Constitution of the State of Delaware" (1792), and

Whereas, he marched with his regiment against the enemy in New Jersey <sup>in 1776</sup> and served in the Delaware Militia in 1777 immediately following the Declaration of Independence which he did not sign as he advocated a confederation of all colonies under a constitution with continental control before independence, and

Whereas, he rendered further public service as a Member of the Continental Congress from Delaware in 1776, 1777, 1779 and 1780, President of the Delaware State 1781, President of Pennsylvania 1782-1785, <sup>Chairman of the American Constitution</sup> member of the Federal Constitutional Convention from Delaware 1787 and Chairman of the Delaware Constitutional Convention 1792, and

Whereas, the mansion where he was raised on his father's plantation Dover and where he

recited most of the time when in Delaware has  
been neglected and in danger of being lost to  
posterity, Therefore

Be It Resolved by the Public Schools  
Commission of the State of Delaware that a  
unanimous vote of thanks be given to the  
Historic Activities Committee of the National Society  
of the Colonial Dames in the State of Delaware,  
under the <sup>their invaluable efforts in</sup> proprietorship of Mrs. Charles S. Reese, Jr.,  
for having sufficient funds by public subscription  
to purchase the John Dickinson Mansion with  
sufficient acreage and presenting this historic  
landmark to the State of Delaware to restore  
and preserve for posterity as part of the rich  
cultural heritage of this State and Nation.

# THE CHRONICLE

## of Early American Industries

Volume III, No. 18

January 1949

### Primitive Lighting in America.

From a talk given at the EALA sessions of the Cooperstown Seminar, July, 1948, based on information obtained from the files of THE RUSHLIGHT

MALCOLM WATKINS

The settlers of the coastal colonies brought with them memories of cultivated European surroundings. They were familiar with a variety of lighting devices, ranging in design from the crude to the elaborate. There were recollections of pine splints, torches and fire baskets, all used generally in Europe. Crusiform lamps had been seen virtually everywhere: the double crusie of iron, copper, brass, and tin was known in slight variations all along the western European coasts, while the so-called "betty" lamp (crusie with wick support) was universally recalled. The spout lamp was remembered particularly by the Dutch settlers. Candles had been used in all countries by those who could afford them and in Britain a related device was the fat-soaked rush, burned either in a clip-like utensil or on the edge of a table or chest cover.

Besides knowledge of these things, the early colonists brought examples with them; but so far as the making of lighting devices here is concerned there was a distinct retrogression. This may be attributed to limitations on skill, time, and material: there was always too much to do and too little to do with. Thus the settler reverted to rudimentary technological levels, in lighting perhaps more than in other colonial arts.

It is logical to suppose that seventeenth-century colonists turned first to the pine splint and the torch in the absence of suitable fuels and sufficient lighting devices. This is borne out by ample literary evidence. In 1630 Francis Higginson wrote in *New England's Plantations*:

"Yea, our pine trees, that are the most plentiful

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### Dating Old Buildings

by LORING McMILLEN

#### II—Wood

In studying the frame house, we find that it was still being constructed in the countries from which our first settlers came. However, as a result of the depletion of the forests in the lowlands, we find the Dutch, the French and the Germans more versed in the construction of masonry buildings, whereas the English, with some forest reserves, were still accustomed to erecting frame buildings.

As far as I have been able to determine, the construction methods employed by the carpenters of each nationality were nearly identical and it was only in architectural details that variations occur; as for example, the frame house of New England has no resemblance to the frame house of the Hudson Valley or farther north, although the method of joining is the same.

In the New World, timber was framed at the building site or nearby, and prior to 1790-1800 each building member was hewn from a log nearest in size to the desired dimension so as to make the smallest amount of cutting. For this cutting or hewing, the broad axe with one perfectly flat side and a cutting edge sharpened like a chisel was used. This axe and the ordinary felling axe in the hands of a skilled artisan were all that were needed to square and smooth a log for use. The adze, often accredited for the smoothing of the surfaces of a beam was never used for this purpose, but when used at all by the house carpenter was employed to level the upper surfaces of joints for the more even laying of the floor boards.

The method of framing a building is ages old and is still practiced in some sections in barn construction. It has not been used since about 1870-80 for house construction. After hewing to the required size, all members were cut to length and joined to-

## The Chronicle

gether on the ground by the mortise and tenon method, secured by one or more wooden pins or treenails. To insure that no member would be separated from its component and would take its place in the erected framework of the building, the carpenter joiner marked the outside of each member close to the joint with a Roman numeral, beginning with I and working usually right to left along one face of the building, repeating the same numerals on the opposite side. Usually these marks were made with the one or two inch chisel, but often a small tool called a scribe was used. This had a small steel blade set in a handle which, with a scratching movement, cut the necessary numerals. The use of this tool caused this method of construction to be named the "scribe rule" as distinguished from the "square rule" which followed. The latter method has been used since mortise and tenon framing went from general practice about 1870. This method, used today, by which the carpenter saws each member to proper length on a line indicated by his "square," is familiar to us all. Since there is no mortise and tenon to be fitted, as only nails are used for fastening, each member today can be placed in position as soon as cut.\*

When the frame was completed on the ground, the sides were assembled and raised into place on the sill of the foundation walls. The other members, floor joists and roof plates were then added. Roof rafters, usually first assembled as a simple "A" frame, were finally raised upon the plates and the house was ready for covering. Numerous are the accounts of the old house or barn "raisings" of former years. Only a few years ago I was fortunate to chance upon one in the French-Canadian section east of Quebec where this practice seems still to be continuing. Here 40 to 50 men and boys swarmed about the laid out hewn framework of a barn and at the shouted directions of a master carpenter carried and erected in a few hours the entire framework of the barn.

In dating framework, the following can be used as a guide. In the earliest work, oak was almost universally used, with the gradual substitution of other wood, particularly the softer varieties such as pine and whitewood. At first members were exceptionally large, indicating little understanding or regard for what was necessary for strength. About 1770 members became smaller in cross section, particularly floor joists which in the early examples were nearly

square in cross section. These now gradually assumed greater depth in relation to width. Spacing between joists and posts diminished from 44 inches in Colonial days to 24 inches about 1830. The most significant change took place about 1790 when sawed timber began to take the place of hewn, at first in studding and bracing, but finally in the larger members as well.

Probably the most interesting operation in building following the erection of the frame took place immediately after the shingles or clapboards were placed. Stakes, either split or whole saplings about 2 inches thick, were slipped horizontally into grooves formed by two small strips nailed to each side of a post. Clay mixed with straw or salt marsh hay was packed about the stakes filling the space between the posts with a solid wall insulation, which was plastered over for the wall covering within. This process was called "daubing" and was identical with the same process used in erecting the half-timbered houses of Europe, with the clapboards omitted and the outer surface whitewashed. Records exist attesting that the "half-timbered house" was erected in this country in the early days. However, the scarcity of lime and the abundance of wood, together with the more rigorous climate of America soon discouraged the erection of such buildings. About 1790, in the New York area, bricks began to be used instead of clay for wall filling, although examples are known earlier. By 1870, this construction ceased entirely, only to be revived in recent years by substituting patent wall insulating material for brick.

Clapboards and shingles have been mentioned as the usual covering for the sides of the frame house. Both were used from the earliest times, often in combination, shingles on the north and east since they gave better protection, and clapboards on the south and west, or often, as when the home faced south, clapboarded only on the front, since clapboards with their beaded or molded edges were more attractive. In New England clapboards were narrow and thin, made of oak and later white pine. In New York early clapboards were much wider of random widths, as wide as 12 inches, with a beaded edge. By 1790 these were narrower and the beaded edge, so popular as an edge molding during colonial times, had become an ovolo (quarter round) or cyma molding.

The earliest shingles, or shakes, were of oak, of which no examples have survived to the author's knowledge. Very early, however, white cedar and white pine were used, three feet being the usual

## Early American Industries

length of the shingle. These were random width  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick at the butt and hand riven. Before 1780 shingles were often "battered," that is butt trimmed in the shape of a circle or three sided. These were nailed both at the butt and in the length to riven oak furring strips. After 1800 these strips were power sawed and following 1840-50 shingles were also.

Boards for flooring were at first of oak, but very early of white pine. Before the general introduction of power sawing, about 1790, they were hand sawed. Hand sawing can be recognized by the irregular kerf marks left by the ancient two man pit saw. Boards were joined by tongue and groove or by a slip joint—a piece of wood slipped into the grooves of two joined boards. By 1800 floor boards became narrower and usually of one width, which permitted alternate breaking of joints. In old flooring of random widths, as much as 20 inches had to be broken over the same joist to prevent wastage.

Earliest roof coverings were clapboards and shingles. Thatch, which was occasionally used, was used as late as 1800 in covering barns. Tiles were used only on the better buildings at early dates, and it is believed no early examples of any of these coverings exist today. Shingles became the universal roof covering in the same sizes as those used for wall covering. The three foot shingle seems to have been more popular before 1780 and the 27 inch length thereafter.

With structural details, belong those simple articles of joining called builders' hardware. Chief among these is the lowly nail and its less frequently used cousin, the screw. Contrary to popular belief, the iron nail is nearly as old as frame building itself. The expression referring to a building as being constructed without a nail is only partly correct, for only the framework was thus constructed. All the superficial covering of clapboards, shingles, lath and trim were fastened with iron nails.

The nail has been the object of much descriptive writing and I will not therefore linger upon this interesting subject. Prior to about 1790 nails were made by hand and their simple outline can easily be recognized by the sharp point and finely tapered shank with irregular hammered sides, and the head beaten into many shapes—each with its purpose and name. Like the sturdy oak tree, there were over 300 varieties of nails, each with its name and purpose, such as the "Rose Sharp," "Fine Rose," "Flat Point Rose," "Clasp," "Clout," "Fine Dog," etc.

Following 1790 machines were invented which made the shank of the nail, leaving the head still to be hand fashioned as formerly. By 1825 the entire nail was machine made and for years the "cut nail" as it was called was the standard nail for all general use and can be recognized by its regular flat sides, blunt point and flat head. The present wire nail came into general use following 1890.

Iron screws were used only to fasten butt hinges and other hardware. Prior to 1846 these were pointless and before about 1800 hand made. Butt hinges were cast iron and came into use following 1780. By 1820 they had replaced the strap and "H" or "HL" hinge for interior use. Wooden case locks with wrought iron works precede 1780 and between this date and 1820 the wrought iron case lock was in general use. These were rim locks, that is, applied to the surface of the door. Mortised, or built in locks, began to be used as early as 1810 and from this date, or somewhat later, the cast iron lock begins to appear. Latches were at first of the Suffolk type, that is open handle, and the Norfolk type of handle fastened to a plate came into general use about 1810-20.

Probably no trade, no industry, has shown so little change during the centuries that has fulfilled the needs of mankind, as the art of building. From foundation to roof, from timbered frame to finished trim, the story is the same: stone by stone, brick by brick, timber by timber they are fitted into place— one by one—with the same age old tools, the mason's trowel, the carpenter's hammer and saw, each fulfilling the same function as formerly. Only in the substitution of materials and the conveniences within the house has there been change. If the ancient carpenter were to return today, he could take up his old trade after a short period of adjustment by the side of his modern fellow workman.

\*The balloon frame, which involved the substitution of thin plates and studs, running the entire height of the building and held together only by nails, for the older method of mortised and tenoned joints. Invented apparently by George Snow in Chicago in the early 1830s it marks the penetration of industrialization into housing. Its invention coincides with the improvement of sawmill machinery as well as with the mass production of nails.—Ed.



HALL.

The Mansion was built by Judge Samuel Dickinson who moved his family here in 1740.

His son, John, the "Fonsan of the Revolution", was eight years old at that time. Here he was raised and educated by a tutor, William Killen, until he went to Philadelphia to study law in 1750.

The tall clock on the stairs was made by Duncan Beard of Appoquinimink, Delaware, (now Odessa), about 1780. He was Delaware's first clockmaker.

GUIDE'S  
HANDBOOK  
TO  
THE HOME OF  
JOHN DICKINSON  
NEAR  
DOVER, DELAWARE

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:  
The wall color which John Dickinson described as "a light straw color".

The front door knocker was on the Mansion when it was owned by the Hon. and Mrs. Charles L. Terry, Jr., who later presented it.

The other furnishings are gifts, loans, or purchases typical of the time when John Dickinson lived here.

The Duncan Beard clock is a gift from Mr. H. Rodney Sharp.

The brass candle sconces were given by Mr. H. F. duPont of Winterthur.

PARLOR.

HALL.

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His son, John, the "Penman of the Revolution", was eight years old at that time. Here he was raised and educated by a tutor, William Killen, until he went to Philadelphia to study law in 1750.

The tall clock on the stairs was made by Duncan Beard of Appoquinimink, Delaware, (now Odessa), about 1780. He was Delaware's foremost clockmaker.

ANSWERS TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

The walls are painted a color which John Dickinson described as "a light straw color".

The front door knocker was on the Mansion when it was owned by the Hon. and Mrs. Charles L. Terry, Jr., who later presented it.

The other furnishings are gifts, loans, or purchases typical of the time when John Dickinson lived here.

The Duncan Beard clock is a gift from Mr. H. Rodney Sharp.

The brass candle sconces were given by Mr. H. F. duPont of Winterthur.

### PARLOR.

This was the finest room in the house and probably the scene of much entertaining by Judge Dickinson and his family.

This room is furnished in antiques of the Queen Anne and late Chippendale periods.

Above the fireplace hangs a portrait of Judge Samuel Dickinson, father of John Dickinson.

### ANSWERS TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

Old Chester County, Penna., marble has been placed around the fireplace.

Before the fire of 1804 there was panelling in this room. It has been replaced from an old house nearby of about the same age, called "Cherbourg".

The windows are unusually large having sixteen 8 x 10 panes in each sash or 16" over 16".

The Queen Anne style desk has been transferred from the State Museum. It was owned at one time by a Dover family.

The two Queen Anne style chairs were formerly in the Rodney family. As Caesar Rodney was a near neighbor of John Dickinson's it reflects the taste and style of this locality.

The bracket clock on the wall was a personal possession of John Dickinson and is on loan from Dickinson College.

GROUNDS AROUND THE MANSION:

The landscaping that has been started follows a plan which Mr. Alden Hopkins, Landscape Architect of Williamsburg, Virginia, prepared for the Garden Club of Wilmington. This organization kindly presented this fine comprehensive plan and a sum of money to begin the work.

The large boxwood plants are a gift of Mrs. Mary H. Taylor of Wilmington, when she sold her old family home near Dover. These pieces of boxwood are reputed to be about 125 years old. The cost of moving them was defrayed by Mrs. E. Paul duPont as a memorial to her late husband.

The wooden building in the back is a Plank House, which formerly stood at Cheswold, Delaware. It is not as early as the log house but it is architecturally important as it is the next step in development of house-building from the log house. It will be used as one of the out-buildings in the Dickinson Mansion restoration.

The old brick wall near the lane encloses the Dickinson family burial plot. Here Judge Samuel Dickinson, who built the Mansion, is buried. Excavations made by the Archaeological Society of Delaware determined that his burial is the only one in the plot.

The bracket clock on the wall was a personal possession of John Dickinson and is on loan from Dickinson College.

LIBRARY:

This room was known as the Library.

The State Federation of Women's Clubs  
have kindly contributed funds to furnish  
this room.

SMALL PARLOR:

According to the correspondence between John Dickinson and the Insurance Company of North America, following the fire here in 1804, this room was known as the Small Parlor. It was probably a retiring room for the ladies when the men were in the Library.

The small bed chamber at the front of the house (South) were furnished through the kindness of the Daughters of the American Revolution in the State of Delaware. The walnut chest-of-drawers and the wrought iron andirons are part of the furnishings.

### SUMMER KITCHEN:

As the household work at the Mansion increased, the old kitchen in the cellar could not meet all of the needs. This led to the building in 1754 of this second wing to provide larger kitchen facilities and additional sleeping quarters above for the household slaves.

### ANSWERS TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

The ladder with a trap door leads to the slave quarters.

When the restoration began this ceiling was covered over with tongue and groove boards, but upon taking them off these old blackened beams were revealed.

The three doors and two windows to the outside provide plenty of ventilation from the kitchen heat on summer days.

We believe that here many of the heavy household duties, like soap and candle making, fat rendering, hackling of flax, carding and dyeing wool, and spinning were carried on.

SMALL BED CHAMBERS:

These small rooms were apparently occupied by Judge Samuel Dickinson's sons John and Philemon, and later by John Dickinson's daughters Sally and Maria. Both of them have been finished in the colors that were originally found in the rooms.

The small bed chambers at the front of the house (South) were furnished through the kindness of the Daughters of the American Revolution in the State of Delaware. The walnut chest-of-drawers and the wrought iron andirons are part of the furnishings.

### DINING ROOM:

This wing or addition to the Mansion was built in 1752 to provide a dining room and additional living quarters.

Above were sleeping quarters for household slaves. This space is now used as an office.

### ANSWERS TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

The panelling in this room is also from "Cherbourg" an old house nearby of about the same age which has since been taken down.

There is a modern service kitchen behind the closed door.

The new floor made of old boards is laid on top of two earlier badly worn floors.

In preparing the woodwork for painting in this room, a painted foliage design was found around the fireplace, together with the name "W. Cullen" printed in the upper right hand corner. This type of decorative art is quite rare in early American houses.

The portrait above the huntboard is of John Dickinson.

Some of the silver and china in the cupboard was owned by the Dickinson family.

NOTE  
ETCH

DRESSING ROOM:

The room at the head of the stairs was a dressing room, or a sewing room. It has been finished in the same color that it was originally painted.

SMALL BED CHAMBERS:

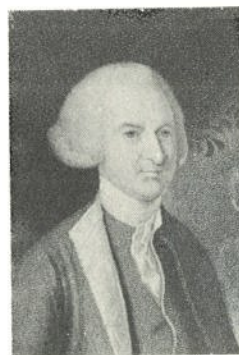
ATTIC: These small rooms were apparently occupied by Judge Samuel Dickinson's sons John and William, and later by John. This part of the house was probably used for storage and household crafts, such as spinning and weaving. found in the rooms.

The small bed chambers at the front of the house (South) were furnished through the kindness of the daughters of the American Revolution in the State of Delaware. The walnut chest-of-drawers and the wrought iron andirons are part of the furnishings.



*The Home of  
John Dickinson  
"Penman of the Revolution"*

### *The Penman of the Revolution*



John Dickinson was born November 2, 1732 at "Crosiadore", the estate of his parents, Samuel and Mary (Cadwalader) Dickinson, in Talbot County, Maryland. Shortly afterward his father acquired large tracts of land in Kent County, Delaware where he built a mansion and moved his family in January of 1740. Here John and his younger brother Philemon were raised until 1750, when John went to Philadelphia to read law with John Molland, Esquire. Then he studied at the Middle Temple in London until 1757, when he returned to Philadelphia where he began practicing his profession. Soon he developed an interest in politics which he expressed in pamphlets, the chief medium of that time. His election to the Delaware General Assembly in 1760 was followed by election to the Pennsylvania Assembly from Philadelphia in 1762 and 1764. The next year he was a delegate from that State to the Colonial Congress. On October 19, 1765 he prepared for that body, *The Declaration Of Rights Adopted By The Stamp Act Congress*. From then on he wrote practically all of the important documents of the American Congress up to the Declaration of Independence. These justly earned for him the title of "Penman of the Revolution." His famous *Letters Of A Farmer In Pennsylvania* written in 1768 and his *A Song For American Freedom* of the same year contributed greatly toward showing colonists their rights as free men and helping to solidify public opinion in the colonies. When the petitions of Congress to the Crown, which Dickinson had drafted, failed to effect a reconciliation the revolutionary faction introduced Lee's resolution for a complete separation. As this was opposed to the thinking of John Dickinson and his associates that there should be a general confederation of all American colonies under a constitution with continental control before resorting to armed force to gain independence, he absented himself from Congress and refrained from signing the Declaration of Independence.

Within a week of the proclaiming of Independence he marched as a colonel at the head of his Philadelphia brigade against the enemy which threatened to invade New York and New Jersey. Next he rendered valuable military service in Delaware until 1778, when as delegate in Congress from that state he resumed his role as "The Penman of the Revolution" by drafting the Articles of Confederation. In 1781, following his term in Congress, he was elected to the position of president (governor) of the Delaware State. He served ably in this high office until 1782 when he resigned to accept the Presidency of the State of Pennsylvania, a position he held until he resigned in 1785 to return to Delaware.

The year 1786 saw him at the head of Delaware's delegation to the Annapolis Convention, of which he was elected chairman. In this capacity he prepared the report recommending the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia the next year. There with his colleagues from Delaware he was active in preserving the rights of the small states. His chief contribution was the advocating of equal representation in the Senate for all states. After the Constitution was drafted and submitted to the states, Dickinson by addresses and a series of stirring letters, after the style of his famous "Farmer's Letters" but now signed "Fabius" urged the hasty ratification of the new Federal Constitution. Delaware's honor of being the first state to ratify the new Constitution on December 7, 1787 may be attributed in part to the work of Dickinson. Then in 1791-1792 he was the leading figure in the State Constitutional Convention in which he prepared a strong frame of government which served Delaware for many years. He maintained an active interest in political affairs and continued a voluminous correspondence with friends and statesmen at his home in Wilmington until his death on February 14, 1808. There he was buried in the Friends Meeting Yard at Fourth and West Streets.

### *The Mansion*

The large strongly constructed brick dwelling, laid in Flemish bond, was built by Judge Samuel Dickinson to face to the south and to connect by a lane through his broad fields with the landing on the nearby St. Jones River, which provided easy access by water to Wilmington and Philadelphia. As the needs of his household

grew and the inadequacies of the cellar kitchen were felt, additions were made with the dining room wing of 1752 and the kitchen addition of 1754. Meanwhile the barns, sheds, slave-quarters and other out-buildings were added as the gardens matured and the fields were cleared and cultivated.



*A view in the parlor showing John Dickinson's bracket clock*

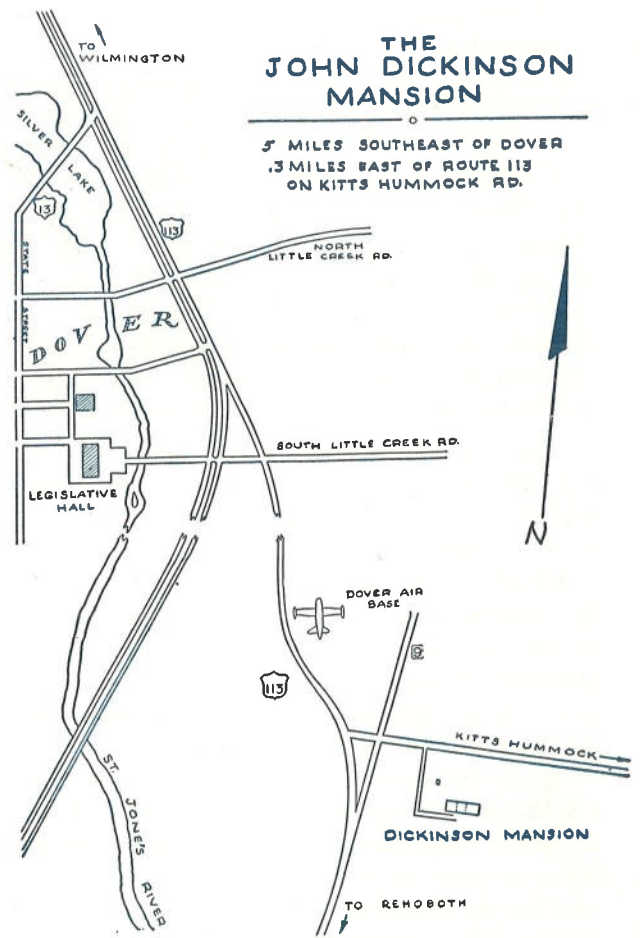
There were no major changes in the mansion until 1804, when a disastrous fire weakened the roof and destroyed much of the interior woodwork. This damage was repaired by John Dickinson but in a simpler manner than his father had built. Since that time and until it was acquired for preservation it has been inhabited by tenants for the Dickinsons, the Logans and subsequent owners. This venerable old dwelling is more than a fine example of lower Delaware eighteenth century plantation architecture; it is an historic site giving an insight to the way of living of one of the great founders of our Country. Decay and neglect of recent years were menacing this historic house so that it might be irreparably damaged and lost to posterity. Recognizing its historic value the Historic Activities Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Delaware raised the sum of \$25,000 which was presented to the State of Delaware on Constitution Day, September 17, 1952 to purchase the mansion and a suitable plot of ground. Following archaeological, architectural and historical research, the

Public Archives Commission with the valued assistance of an Advisory Committee, carried forward the restoration with State appropriations and private gifts.

A separate Furnishing Committee, reflecting the taste of the Dickinson family, guided the furnishing of the mansion with antiques once owned by the family or typical of the Southeastern Pennsylvania-Delaware area. These furnishings of individual pieces or of whole rooms were provided by womens clubs, patriot, civic and historical organizations and by private gifts or State purchase. The gardens are being re-created through the help of a number of the garden clubs of the State and by private donations. The mansion was formally opened on May 2, 1956.



*The John Dickinson Mansion 1740*



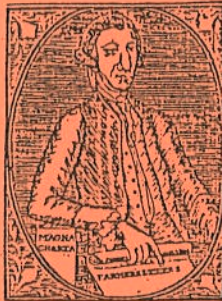
Hours: The Dickinson Mansion is open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays 10:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M.; Sundays 1:00 P. M. to 5:00 P. M. Closed Mondays, and the following holidays: Easter, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's.

Admission: There is no admission charge.

Guides: All visitors are escorted through the Mansion.

Groups: Schools or other organizations are welcomed but must make advance reservations to be accommodated with guide service. Requests for appointments should be made to The John Dickinson Mansion, P. O. Box 796, Dover, Delaware, or by telephone to Dover 734-9439. The John Dickinson Mansion is administered by the Delaware State Museum. For further information please communicate with Leon DeValinger, Jr., Director.

# Dickinson Plantation Dedication



December 5, 1987

1p.m.-4p.m.

EXHIBIT: "AFTER RATIFICATION:  
MATERIAL LIFE IN DELAWARE, 1789-1820",  
by the University of Delaware Museum  
Studies Program; Plantation Center.

PLAYLET: "WILLIAM WHITE, DICKINSON'S  
TENANT", Burton K. Kummerow; Mansion  
Parlor.

CONJURER: Magic and juggling by Robert  
Chambers; throughout the Mansion.

PHYSIOGNITRACE: Silhouette making machine  
by Grace Patterson; Mansion Dining Room.

CHAMBER MUSIC: 18th Century melodies by  
the Dover Early Music Consort; Mansion  
Master Chamber.

DRIED FLOWERS: The art and mystery of  
early flower arrangements by Sarah Eidson;  
Mansion "Room Over the Entry".

FOOD: Ham, turkey, cookies, fruitcake and  
punch; Mansion Kitchen.

CARPENTRY: Demonstration; Granary.

MEAT CURING: Demonstration; Smokehouse.



Co-Sponsored By  
The Delaware Division of Historical  
and Cultural Affairs  
and  
The Friends of John Dickinson Mansion



The PATRIOTIC AMERICAN FARMER  
I.N. DICKINSON, Esq; Barrister at Law

# DICKINSON PLANTATION TIMES

July 3 11-5

*Being a simulation of a fictional 1787  
Militia Muster and County Fair presenting  
sundry aspects of daily work and play in  
John Dickinson's Delaware and Warranted  
to Inform and Amuse one and all in great  
measure!*

## SCHEDULED VIGNETTES

Militia Muster - Second Pennsylvania Regiment, Captain A. Thomas Miller,  
Commanding

11:00                      12:30                      2:00                      4:15

Dover Early Music Consort - Edith and Winfried Mroz, Margaret and George  
Young, Alexander Apostolina, of Dover,  
Delaware.

11:30                      1:00                      2:45                      4:00

Playlet - Written and performed by Burton Kummerow, St. Mary's City,  
Maryland.

12:00                      1:30                      2:30                      3:30

Dover Country Dancers - Dancers: Ruth and John Bochnowski, Sue and Vic  
Ribaldo, Carol and Gil Neild, Nancy  
Gardner of Dover, and Howard Way of  
Wilmington, Delaware.

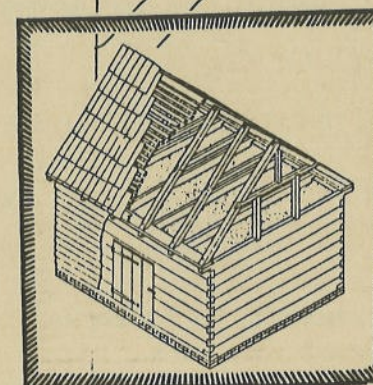
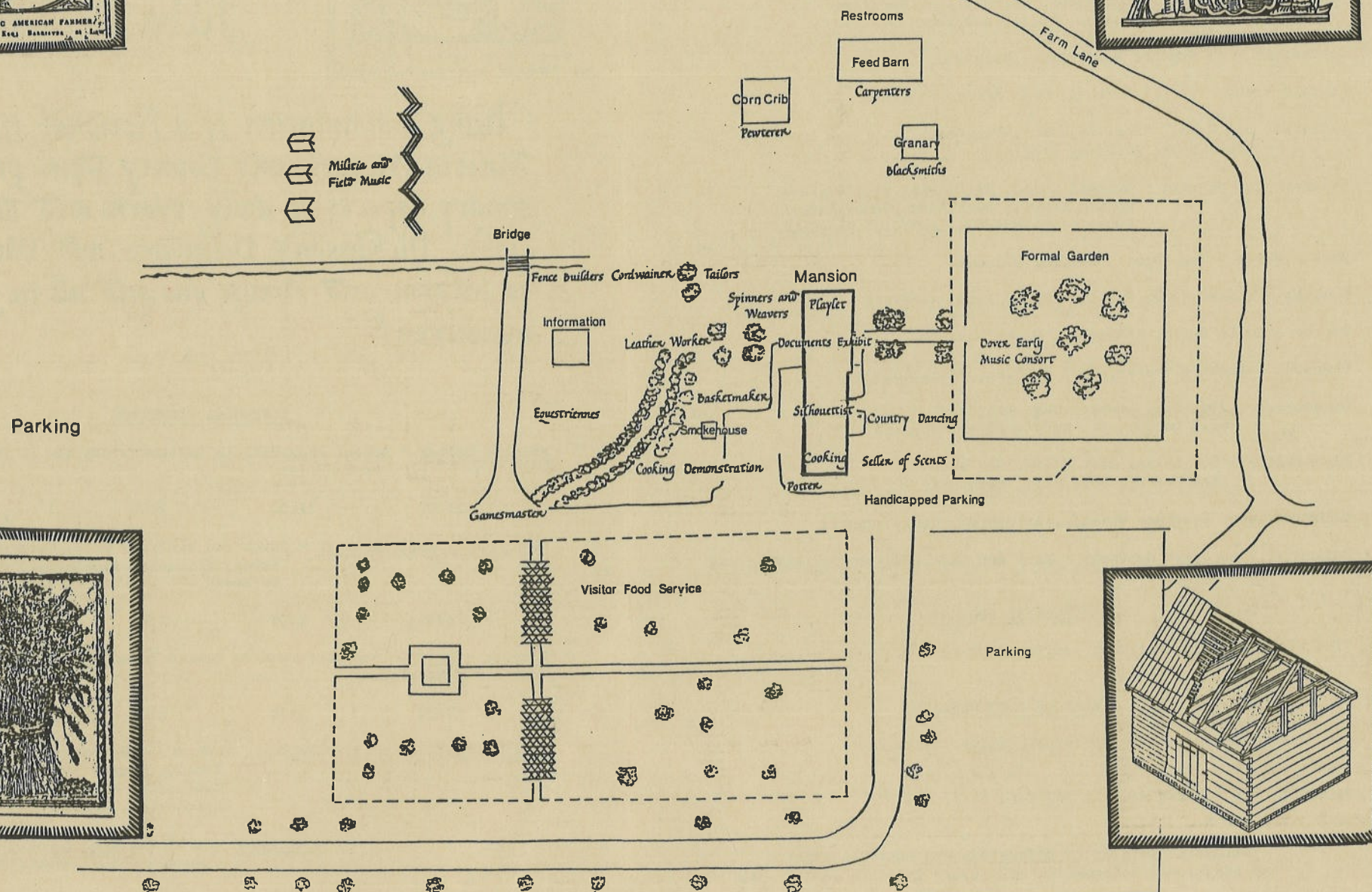
Musicians: Carol and Earl Abbott, Alexander  
Apostolina of Dover, Delaware.

12:15                      1:45                      3:15                      4:45



# DICKINSON PLANTATION TIMES

July 3, 1987



ONGOING VIGNETTES

Field Music - Second Maryland Infantry, Sergeant Denis Reen, Commanding

Gamesmaster - Charles Childs, Rogers, Ohio

Fence Builders - Jefferson Hobbs, Catonsville, Maryland  
Steve Hanson, Oella, Maryland

Cordwainer - Al Saguto, Kensington, Maryland

Leather Worker - Terri McMahon, Glen Allen, Virginia

Tailors - Jim Poole, Virginia Beach, Virginia  
Mark Clark, Fairfax, Virginia

Spinners and Weavers - Michael Colby, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Donald Graves, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Debra Pence Massie, La Plata, Maryland

Basket Maker - Joe Hughes, Felton, Delaware

Cooking - Master Cook; Harriet Stout, Ford, Virginia

Potter - Julia Smith, Arlington, Massachusetts

Pewterer - Richard Graver, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Carpenters - Jim Laws, Leonardtown, Maryland  
Bill Dalton, St. Mary's City, Maryland

Blacksmiths - Bob Alley, West Point, New York  
Tom Presby, Snow Hill, Maryland

Silhouettist - Courtney Skinner, Arlington, Massachusetts

Seller of Scents and Nostrums - Mary Ann Sabol, Maplewood, New Jersey

SPECIAL EXHIBIT

"The First Signal: Delaware Ratifies the Constitution - December 7, 1787"

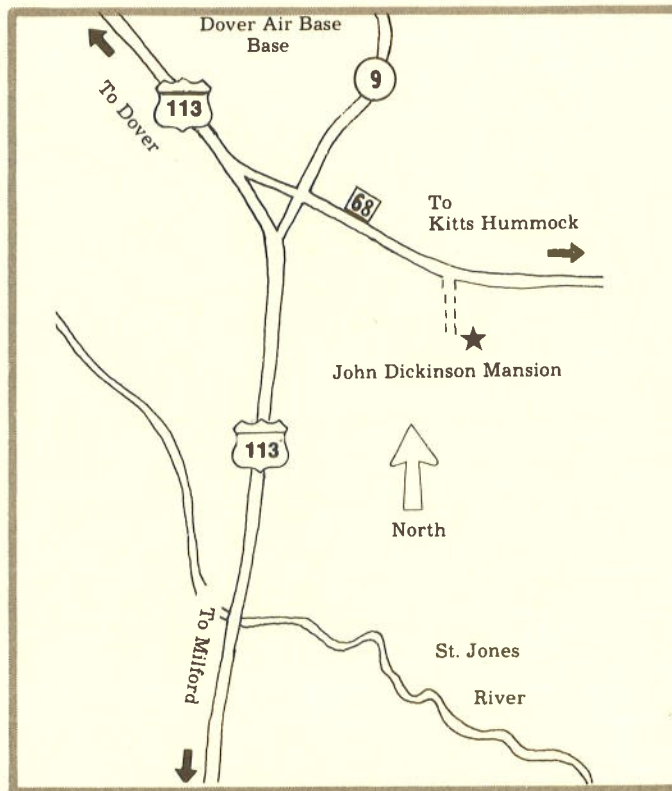
VISITOR FOOD SERVICE

By: Park Vending and Food Service, Camden, Delaware

Restrooms are located east of the Feed Barn.

DELAWARE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
for additional information call (302) 736-4266 or 736-5314

# Delaware's John Dickinson Mansion

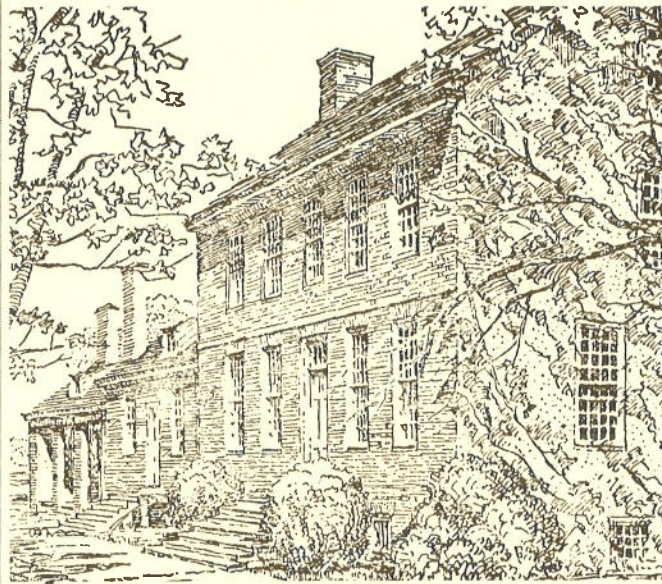
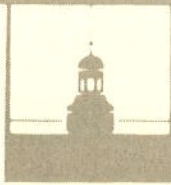


The John Dickinson Mansion, south of Dover, is located on Kitts Hummock Road just off Route 113 south of the Dover Air Force Base. It offers barrier-free access and is open to the public without charge.

**Hours:** Tuesdays through Saturdays,  
10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Sundays, 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Closed Mondays and State Holidays.

More complete information for planning visits or group tours to Kent County's historic sites is available from the staff of the Visitor Center at Federal and Court Streets in Dover (302/736-4266).

# DELAWARE'S JOHN DICKINSON MANSION



The John Dickinson Mansion, boyhood home of one of Delaware's foremost Revolutionary War patriots, was built in 1740 by Samuel Dickinson, John's father, as the seat of his prosperous 5,000 acre plantation. The Mansion, a National Historic Landmark and an arresting sight in its rural setting, looks across a sweep of cultivated fields to the St. Jones River.

Though the original woodwork was lost to fire in 1804, the Mansion's interior has been restored with comparable period panelling. Visitors may enjoy a glimpse of the life of one of America's founding fathers in the Mansion's rooms. Among the Dickinson family furnishings on display are an English bracket clock, an armchair and several pieces of ceramic and silver.

John Dickinson, often called "The Penman of the Revolution", wrote many popular political pamphlets and articles about American independence. He remained in public life after the Revolution, serving as chief executive of both Delaware and Pennsylvania, and was a framer of the United States Constitution.

*The Slaves and  
Free Blacks of  
John Dickinson*





John Dickinson was a wealthy farmer who owned at least 59 slaves. His lifestyle was heavily influenced by Quakers. The publication of his eloquent writings brought him to the forefront of politics during the American Revolution. Though politically active in Pennsylvania and Delaware, he signed the U.S. Constitution in 1787 as a delegate from Delaware.

Dickinson inherited land and slaves in Kent County upon his father's death in 1760. The slaves were the primary source of the labor required for the production of corn and wheat. In 1777, John Dickinson no longer desired to maintain the continuance of slavery and executed a manumission document which freed his slaves. This was a conditional agreement requiring them to serve him for a period of 21 years in exchange for food, clothing, shelter and remuneration. His decision was influenced by Delaware legislation, its state constitution and Quaker requirements. In 1785, to clear his conscience, he unconditionally freed all of his slaves. Therefore, the adults among Dickinson's freed slaves were presumably among the 293 free Blacks assessed in the

county in 1797. Their freedom was restricted by law and did not include privileges, such as the right to vote. However, free blacks could own property by law in 1787.

Throughout the 1780's and 1790's, free Black tenants on Dickinson property performed a variety of jobs. Women were responsible for spinning yarn to clothe themselves and others, sewing and completing miscellaneous domestic activities. Men were responsible for digging ditches, plowing, planting, maintaining and harvesting fields, herding and caring for livestock, and repairing fences.

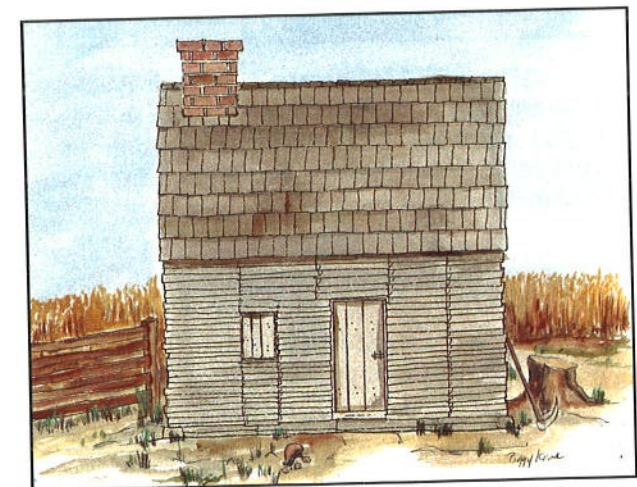
Prior to manumission, detailed rental leases executed by Dickinson authorized tenants to use his slaves with the understanding that the tenants would be held responsible for providing "... food, clothing and shelter. . . tenderness and care. . .". Occasionally, slaves would be leased to others by written agreements.

After manumission, many of Dickinson's former slaves continued to reside in either log or small wooden tenements located on Dickinson's Kent County property. Rental agreements specified areas where Black families lived. They were to be left alone to freely enjoy defined privileges, including the raising and grazing of livestock, gathering of firewood and maintaining small gardens.



Log dwellings, the most frequently recorded housing type in Kent County by 1797, were occupied by all social classes. Commonly recorded sizes were 20' X 16' and 18' X 16'. These structures were frequently sided with oak or pine clapboards, sheathed with oak roof shingles, contained plank or dirt flooring and brick chimneys, and were constantly in need of repair.

The Plantation's "log'd dwelling" enhances the interpretation of the lifestyles of rural Kent Countians 200 years ago.



Representative samples of inventories for free Blacks during the early 1800's showed estates valued between \$83.04 and \$1,029.82. These documents provide clues to the types of objects owned by Kent County's free Blacks. The greatest values were associated with livestock, especially cattle, oxen, horses, pigs and sheep. Essential household furnishings included beds, chests, tables, chairs, earthenware, spinning apparatus, cooking utensils, miscellaneous storage containers, field and gardening tools. Consistent food listings included beans, potatoes and cabbage. Kent County records document free Black housebuilders and blacksmiths active during this time period.



The lifestyles of Dickinson's slaves and free Blacks are an integral part of the Dickinson Plantation's interpretation provided by Delaware's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Museums and Historic Sites.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

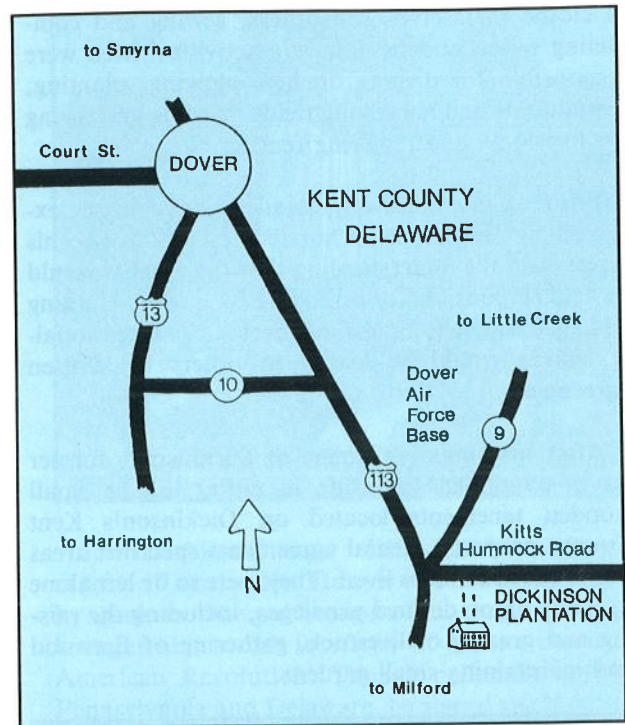
Publication of this brochure is a service of the Afro-American Historical Society of Delaware.

Funded in part by the Delaware Humanities Forum.

Artwork and text provided by Delaware's Bureau of Museums and Historic Sites.

## John Dickinson Plantation

**Location:** Six miles south of Dover, Delaware, on Kitts Hummock Road just off Route 113 and southeast of Dover Air Force Base.



**Hours:** Tuesdays through Saturdays:  
10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sundays: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Closed Mondays and State holidays.

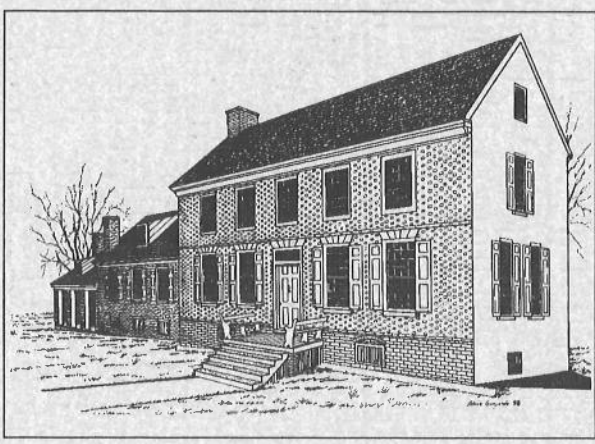
**Tours:** Group tours may be arranged by calling (302) 739-3277.

Admission Free. Barrier Free.

For more information on this subject contact:  
The Afro-American Historical Society  
512 E. 4th St.  
Wilmington, DE 19801 (302)652-1313



# John Dickinson Plantation



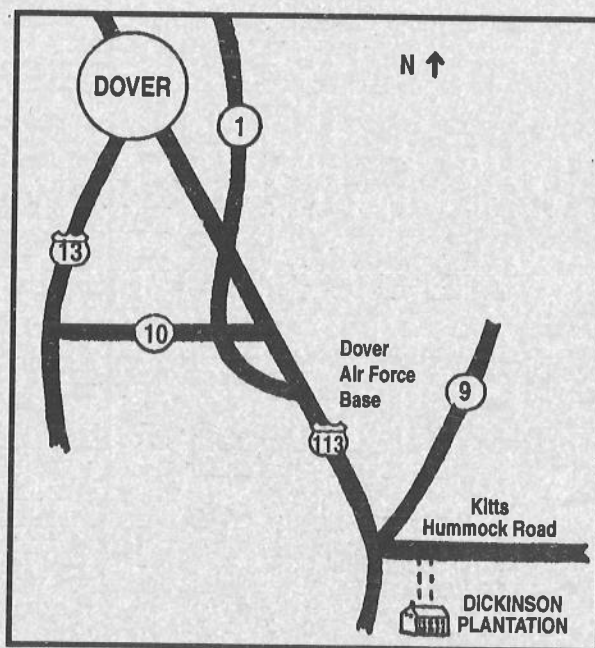
The Plantation, including the brick mansion, reconstructed outbuildings and a slave/tenant house, stands as a memorial to John Dickinson, the "Penman of the American Revolution."

Dickinson, a framer and signer of the U.S. Constitution, was called upon to write many political documents as a member of the Continental Congress. He later served as chief executive of Delaware and Pennsylvania.

John Dickinson grew up along the banks of the St. Jones River in Kent County, Delaware. The original 1740 brick house burned in 1804. Dickinson completed the rebuilding of his childhood home in 1806.

Visiting the John Dickinson Plantation, a National Historic Landmark, is a step back in time to 18th century Delaware. Guides in historic clothing interpret the daily life of the Dickinson family, tenants, and slaves who lived on the farm.

Delaware State Museums  
**John Dickinson Plantation**  
Kent County, Delaware



**Directions:** Located on Kitts Hummock Road (County Road 68). Visitors may reach the Plantation by following signs from Rt. 113 to Rt. 9. Southeast of Dover Air Force Base.

**Hours:**

Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sundays 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Closed Mondays and State Holidays.

Closed Sundays in January and February.

Hours subject to change.

**Fee:** Admission is free. Donations are accepted.

**Services:** Restrooms and museum shop. Visitor Center and first floor of Mansion are handicap accessible.

**Special Events:** Participation in:

Old Dover Days, first weekend in May.

Decorative dessert table, December.

**Tours:** Group tours require a reservation. Special hours available.

For information call (302) 739-33277.

Document Control #: 20-06-98-08-02



The Friends of  
The John Dickinson Mansion  
Incorporated

Post Office Box 1110 • Dover, Delaware 19903

For almost forty years, The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion have provided support for the State of Delaware's efforts to preserve and maintain the boyhood home of John Dickinson, "The Penman of the Revolution." The house was built by Dickinson's father Samuel in 1740 and remained in the family until the twentieth century when it passed through a series of owners. In 1952, the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Delaware purchased the Mansion and gave it to the State. Realizing the amount of work that would be involved in restoring the house, members of the Colonial Dames and other concerned individuals organized the Friends as a group through which they could lend continuing support to the restoration effort.

The objectives of The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion are stated in their Certificate of Incorporation as follows:

"To encourage and sponsor the acquisition of the Mansion by the State of Delaware, to the end that it may be repaired, restored, held and maintained in perpetual trust by the State as a historical memorial for visitation and enjoyment by the public.

"To furnish financial and advisory assistance to the State of Delaware . . . with respect to the acquisition, repair, restoration, maintenance and utilization of the Mansion and the collection and dissemination of data and information pertaining to the Mansion and to John Dickinson.

"To stimulate and endeavor to perpetuate interest among the people of Delaware and elsewhere in John Dickinson, president of the State of Delaware under the Constitution of 1776, and a signer of the Constitution of the United States, and in the Mansion located in Kent County, Delaware near the St. Jones River, where he resided during a portion of his life, through the collection and dissemination of data with reference thereto."

Over the years the Friends have undertaken many projects to achieve these goals. In the 1950's, Mr. Henry Francis du Pont, the founder of Winterthur Museum and a member of the Friends, headed the committee that furnished the Mansion. Since that time, the Friends have continued to help the State obtain silver and other Dickinson family items for the house. Fortunately, the Friends have often been able to arrange the loan or donation of such pieces.

The financial assistance the Friends have provided has also included funding for additional acreage and landscaping around the Mansion. Most recently they furnished new draperies and upholstery throughout the house as part of the State's current effort to reinterpret the Mansion and its grounds in light of extensive research done in the 1980's.

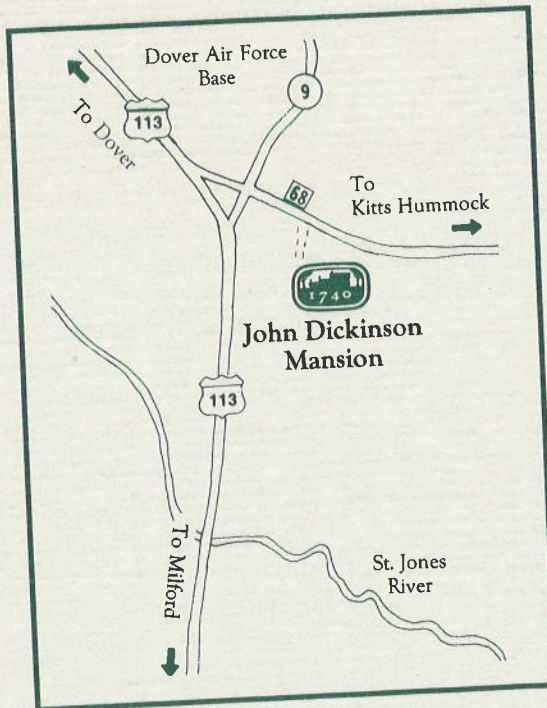
The Friends have commissioned research for publications about Dickinson, one of which is Milton Flower's biography, *John Dickinson, Conservative Revolutionary*. In 1989, the Friends helped fund the film *Peaceful Rebel* which is shown as part of the tour of the Plantation. They also publish a semi-annual Newsletter for their members.

Each Fall the Friends commemorate John Dickinson's birthday and gather to place a wreath on his grave at the Wilmington Friends Meeting House. Throughout the year, they work with the State to encourage and host special tours of the Mansion. At Christmas they decorate the house for holiday visitors and a member's party. In June the annual meeting is held at the Mansion with a dinner following in Dover.

The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion encourage junior (under 18) as well as adult memberships in the group. Members of the Friends receive first-hand information about historical, archaeological, and architectural research being carried on in Delaware while at the same time they are supporting the State's efforts to preserve one of its National Historic Landmarks.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please  
write to:

**The Friends of  
The John Dickinson Mansion, Inc.**  
Post Office Box 1110  
Dover, Delaware 19903



The John Dickinson Mansion is located on Kitts Hummock Road, just off Route 113 south of the Dover Air Force Base. The first floor of the Mansion and the Visitor Center Barn are barrier-free.

**Hours: Tuesday through Saturday**  
10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Sunday – Call for hours

**Closed Monday and State Holidays**

Tours and school groups welcome by appointment. For current hours, additional closings, and further information, please call (302) 739-3277.

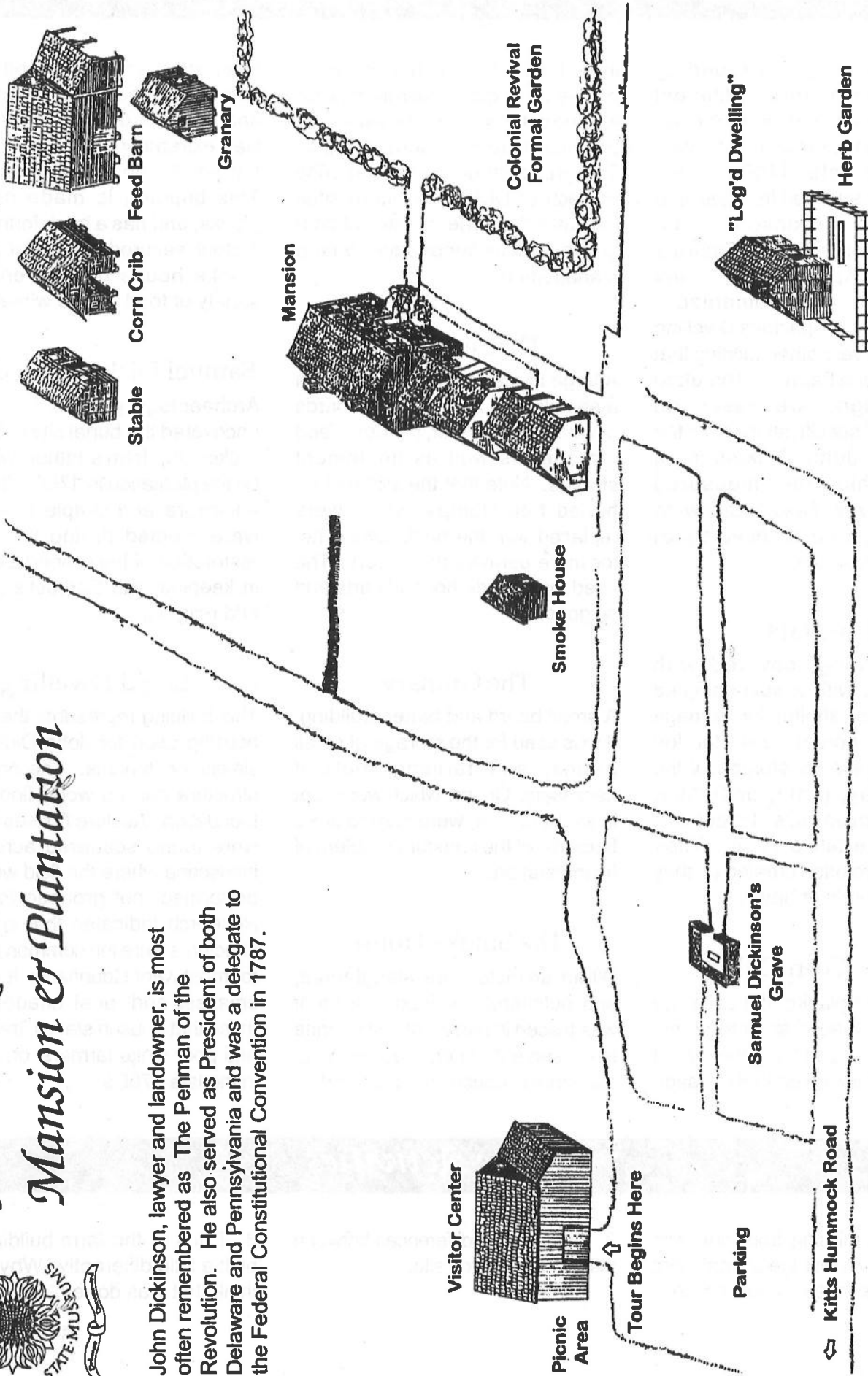


Revised 2/91



# John Dickinson Mansion & Plantation

John Dickinson, lawyer and landowner, is most often remembered as The Penman of the Revolution. He also served as President of both Delaware and Pennsylvania and was a delegate to the Federal Constitutional Convention in 1787.



Flax/Wheat/Corn

# John Dickinson Plantation & Outbuilding Complex

The outbuildings surrounding the Mansion represent different building types and construction styles known to exist in Delaware during the late 1700s. No outbuildings survived from the time of John Dickinson, and documentation is scarce. From the 1797 comprehensive tax assessment the Homeplace consisted of ...a Spacious Dwelling house and Every other building that is Needful for a Farm.... Therefore, the designs are based on architectural specifications from the papers of John Dickinson, a photographic and measured drawing survey of extant Delaware structures, and archaeological investigations on site.

## The Stable

A log building, covered with clapboards, with a split-shingled roof provided shelter for carriage and saddle horses. An attic loft provided space for storage of the animals hay, grain, or fodder. Working farm animals - horses and oxen - were left outside. Their shelters were often created as they ate into mounds of hay.

## The Corn Crib

Built of sawn planks, the corn crib has boards spaced apart to permit air to circulate and keep the stored corn dry. The wide central passage

indicates a double corn crib, which enables a wagon to pass through for loading or unloading. The loft above provides increased storage space. The presence of many corn cribs at each of Dickinson's farm sites indicates the large quantity of corn grown, and its importance to farm management.

## The Feed Barn

A large braced-frame building with a shingle roof and oak clapboards covering the exterior, provides feed storage, as well as implement storage. Note that the sills rest on buried tree stumps, which were replaced with the brick, over time, for more permanent support. The shed on the side housed carts and wagons.

## The Granary

A small board and batten building. It was used for the storage of small grains, and farming tools if necessary. Grains, which were kept in sacks or bins, were hard to store because of the constant problem of fly infestation.

## The Smoke House

When animals were slaughtered, and butchered for food, the meat was placed in barrels of salt or brine to preserve it. Then it was hung in the smoke house, for a period of

time, where confined wood smoke helped to further preserve the meat and give it a distinct flavor. Meat was extremely valuable, therefore the smoke house was well built. This building is made of sawn planks, and has a brick foundation. A stout, secured and well regulated smoke house help to ensure a variety of food for the winter.

## Samuel Dickinson's Grave

Archaeology work in the 1950s uncovered the burial site of Samuel Dickinson, John's father, who died on the plantation in 1760. The brick enclosure and simple headstone were erected during the 1950s restoration of the property, and are in keeping with Samuel's position and religion.

## Log'd Dwelling

This building represents the kind of housing used for John Dickinson's slaves, or tenants. The one room structure has no wood flooring, or foundation. Austere houses like this were found scattered across the landscape where the field work was performed, not grouped together. Research indicates that small log structures were the common housing for most Kent Countians: it was the smallest and most unadorned of these that housed slaves, freedmen, and poor white farmers, or tenants, in the late 1700s.

## On Site Activities

1. What is missing from our farm yard? Can you list the animals that John Dickinson farm would have?
2. Describe the differences between the two gardens on site.
3. Each of the farm buildings are built a little differently. Why do you think that was done?

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