

# JOHN DICKINSON

## *FORGOTTEN PATRIOT*

BY EDWIN WOLF, 2ND

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*Nationally and internationally known as a brilliant historian and bibliographer, Mr. Wolf directs the activities of The Library Company of Philadelphia as its Librarian. Founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, the organization holds many of the precious papers and letters of the "Penman of the Revolution."*

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In 1782 John Dickinson's handsome mansion on the north side of Chestnut between Sixth and Seventh Streets in Philadelphia was rented to the Chevalier de la Luzerne. The owner was temporarily out-of-town, serving as the chief executive of a state to the south. Ten years before, Dickinson had spent almost £4,000 to improve and enlarge the house for which he had originally paid the same amount. Before the Revolution, that can only be described as a whale of a lot of money. With the latest in exterior woodwork, decorative plastering and rich panelling, it was, with the houses of John Cadwalader and Samuel Powel, among the most elegant in the city at a time when the aura of grandeur crowned Philadelphia's streets.

Against that background, La Luzerne planned such a fête as had not been seen in the Quaker City since Major André, during the British occupation, had acted as theatrical manager and stage designer for the Meschianza. The architectural and landscaping arrangements for the occasion were executed by the French officer L'Enfant, who later was to lay out in a sea of mud the plans for a Federal city. Negotiations for a peace treaty with Great Britain were then in progress. As a gesture to enhance Franco-American relations during that critical diplomatic period, the French minister chose to entertain in

celebration of the recent birth of Louis-Joseph, Dauphin of France. He was fortunate for at that particular moment Rochambeau had asked Washington to meet with him in Philadelphia, and so the party was to be graced by the presence of America's greatest hero.

The distinguished physician and patriot, Dr. Benjamin Rush, was invited, went, and wrote a long letter describing the entertainment. He told of thirty cooks borrowed from the French Army, of the ladies of the city getting up as early as four in the morning to get their hair dressed so great was the demand for "the gentlemen of the comb," of a crowd of ten thousand who gathered outside to see the guests and peek at the festivities, of the hugh dancing room which was built for the day, and of the fireworks. "Here we saw the world in miniature," he wrote, all the people of consequence in the city, all the officers of the government, ladies and gentlemen of the most ancient as well as most modern families, lawyers, doctors, ministers of the various churches, professors of the college, and, as Dr. Rush described them, "painters and musicians, poets and philosophers, and men who were never moved by beauty or harmony or by rhyme or reason."

### *Dickinson, Hero Among Heroes*

#### HE CONTINUED:

"Here were to be seen heroes and patriots in close conversation with each other. Washington and Dickenson held several dialogues together. Here were to be seen men conversing with each other who appeared in all the different stages of the American war. Dickenson and Morris frequently reclined together against the same pillar. Here were to be seen statesmen and warriors from the opposite ends of the continent talking of the history of the war in their respective states. . . ."

The purpose of this prologue is merely to set the stage, as it were, to show John Dickinson at the age of fifty as a hero among heroes, a peer among peers. He was not, moreover, at the end of his career. The following year he was to become President of the Su-

preme Council of Pennsylvania, and five years later he was to represent Delaware as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. What is it that has made John Dickinson the least known of all major American figures of the Revolutionary and Federal periods?

Ask any schoolboy who Washington was, or Franklin, or John Adams, or Jefferson, and you will get an answer of sorts. Ask him who John Dickinson was, and he will reply in the vernacular of today, "Who he?" Yet, as the author of *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, he enjoyed an international reputation at the time second only, among Americans, to Franklin. So great was the impact of this able pamphlet in support of the liberties of the colonies that its author became a hero. The *Letters* were reprinted in newspapers throughout British America. Seven separate editions of it appeared in 1768, and two more and a French translation the following year. Franklin supplied a preface to John Almon's London printing. On March 17, 1768, a Town Meeting at Faneuil Hall in Boston voted, "That the THANKS of the Town be given to the ingenious AUTHOR of a course of Letters published at Philadelphia, and in this place, signed, A FARMER; wherein the rights of the American subjects are clearly stated, and fully vindicated. Dr. Benjamin Church, John Hancock, Esq; Mr. Samuel Adams, Dr. Joseph Warren, and John Rowe, Esq; were appointed a committee to prepare and publish a letter of thanks accordingly. A note in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which reprinted the Boston resolution, read: "*This is the FIRST honor of the kind that ever was conferred by a city on any person in America.*"

In New York a week later on the anniversary of the repeal of the Stamp Act, the Friends of Constitutional Liberty and Trade met at the nearly adjoining Jones's and Bardin's Taverns to dine, wine and toast. Among the twenty-one toasts drunk on that occasion, which was spent according to a contemporary account "in Harmony, Cheerfulness, and a pleasing Flow of social Affections" (and, one can believe, of liquor, too), was one to "The ingenious and patriotic Author of the Farmer's Letters." An engraving of Dickinson was made for the enterprising bookseller Robert Bell lauding "The Patriotic American Farmer . . . who with Attic Eloquence and Roman Spirit hath

Asserted, The Liberties of the BRITISH Colonies in America." A doggerel verse was added to the praise:

'Tis nobly done, to Stem Taxations Rage,  
And raise, the thoughts of a degenrate Age,  
For Happiness, and Joy, from Freedom Spring;  
But Life in Bondage, is a worthless Thing.

This should be almost enough evidence to contravert the statement made by Vernon L. Parrington that, however Dickinson's writings may have appealed to Whiggish lawyers, "it is inconceivable that they should have appealed to the rank and file of Americans."

### "Penman of the Revolution"

THE TONE of denigration is one that has so far prevailed with regard to Dickinson. As long ago as 1891 Charles J. Stillé—in the preface to his pioneer biography of the Pennsylvania Farmer—could regret that Dickinson had never been the subject of an elaborate biography prepared by a friendly hand. Three-quarters of a century later it is possible to say that there has been no major biography written since Stillé to incorporate into it the accumulation of unpublished information which has piled up since his day. Perhaps, stimulated by Stillé's enthusiasm, Moses Coit Tyler in his seminal *Literary History of the American Revolution* dubbed Dickinson the "penman of the Revolution," a soubriquet which appears nowhere in his biography in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Yet, it is one to which he has a just claim, for Dickinson wrote in part or in whole many of the major documents approved by the Continental Congress.

Let us look for a moment at his role as the "penman of the Revolution." Popularly speaking, the American Revolution is said to have begun with the opposition to the Stamp Act in 1765. When news of the passage of that act reached America, John Dickinson was a well-established and successful lawyer of thirty-two. He had read law in Philadelphia under John Moland and then spent several years of further study at the Middle Temple in London. In 1760 he was elected to the Assembly of the Lower Counties (Delaware was not so officially designated until 1776) and became its speaker. Dickinson

might be termed a chronic bi-statal. In 1762, he was back in Pennsylvania where the citizens of Philadelphia chose him one of their representatives to the legislature. The complicated political story of the struggle between the Proprietors of the Penn family and the Assembly is not here pertinent. Suffice it to say, that Dickinson found himself in the middle and failed of re-election in 1764.

Yet, when the troubles came in the form of new revenue acts designed to tax the colonies, Dickinson was turned to as the best and most lucid authority on the unconstitutionality of taxation without representation. In October, 1765, he was sent as one of the Pennsylvania delegates to the Stamp Act Congress which convened in New York. With them went a set of Resolutions the first draft of which survives in Dickinson's autograph. He wrote such phrases as: "it is inseparably essential to a free Constitution of Government, that all internal Taxes be levied upon the People *with their consent*," and "that the levying Taxes upon the Inhabitants of this Province *in any other Manner*, being manifestly subversive of public Liberty, must of necessary Consequence be utterly destructive of public Happiness." In essence, this first statement of Dickinson, prepared for the provincial Assembly, became the meat of the Resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress, which, too, he drafted. In all, there survive three or four manuscripts written for this purpose by Dickinson. It is almost inconceivable that no detailed study of them has been made, save for a few pages in David L. Jacobson's excellent monograph, *John Dickinson and the Revolution in Pennsylvania*. Representing the first action taken by any group of colonies against the repressive acts of Parliament, the Stamp Act Resolutions constitute one of the most important documents of American history. Had a Virginian written them, the draft would have a place of honor in the Capitol at Williamsburg and a wealth of articles would have acclaimed it.

### *The Moderate Colonist*

BUT this was just the beginning of Dickinson's career on a national scale. We have spoken of the famous *Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, but before passing them by again, it seems appropriate

to quote an estimate of their worth from the other side of the Atlantic. The *Cambridge History of American Literature* states, concerning them: "What Dickinson did and did with effective skill was to present in attractive literary form the best of what had already been said and thought on behalf of the colonial claims. . . . Too patriotic to submit without protest, and too thoughtful to rebel, he voiced more successfully, perhaps than any other American publicist of his day, the sober second-thought of the great body of colonists who were ready to carry resistance to any point short of separation and war." As Jacobson so incisively put it, "Whatever the defects of indecisiveness or vagueness in Dickinson's argument noted by later critics, they were not seen until well after 1768, and no suggestion that the tone was overly moderate or obsequious toward the King was made in that year."

In the spring of 1768, when Philadelphians were debating the adoption of a non-importation agreement, the leaders who argued in favor of it were Charles Thomson, later Secretary of Congress, and Dickinson. "The ministry, having divested us of Property . . . are proceeding to erect over us a despotic Government, and to rule us as Slaves," Dickinson declaimed to a public meeting, which, in spite of his eloquence and trenchant arguments, was not then willing to go as far in the way of passive resistance as was Dickinson. He even wrote a popular song, known and sung widely through the colonies as "The Liberty Song." It hardly has the ring of today's "We Shall Overcome,"

In Freedom we're born, and in FREEDOM we'll live,  
Our Purses are ready,  
Steady, Friends, Steady  
Not as SLAVES, but as FREEMEN, our money we'll give.

Yet, John Adams, who later scorned Dickinson, praised it for "cultivating the sensations of freedom."

Let us skip quickly to the meeting of the First Continental Congress for this began the critical period of Dickinson's life, the period which should have brought him glory and did, in fact, doom him to limbo in the popular mind. Due to the influence of the conservative Joseph Galloway, Dickinson was not at first elected a delegate by the Pennsylvania Assembly. However, the radical Whigs won the election on October 1, 1774, and two weeks later, when the new As-

sembly met, they added Dickinson to the list of delegates to Congress from Pennsylvania. Perhaps, the picture of Dickinson then as painted by John Adams is the most interesting, for Adams' later hostility may be at the root of the general low esteem in which he has been held. The influential New England historian Bancroft called Dickinson a "timid apathetic spirit."

When John Adams first met him on August 31, 1774, he was struck by his appearance of poor health: "He is a Shadow—tall, but slender as a Reed—pale as ashes." After dining with the squire of Fair Hill two weeks later, he commented, "Mr. Dickinson is a very modest Man, and very ingenious, as well as agreeable. He has an excellent Heart, and the Cause of his Country lies near it." He noted that the result of the October elections "will make a great Weight in favor of the American Cause." So far, so good. Immediately upon Dickinson's appointment to Congress he was put to work to do what his fellow delegates thought him best equipped to do—write. An Address to the King had been decided upon and a committee appointed to write one. When the committee's draft was rejected, Dickinson was promptly added to the group and the writing of a new version was turned over to him.

### *Beleaguered Author*

His autograph draft, full of corrections and interlineations, has survived. Much controversy, even during his lifetime, arose about his role in the writing of that significant paper. John Marshall in his *Life of Washington* stated that it was generally believed to have been written by Richard Henry Lee. Dickinson was indignant, and in 1804 wrote to his cousin Dr. George Logan, then a senator from Pennsylvania, that he had permitted the document to appear in a collected edition of his writings. "I must be guilty of the greatest baseness," he raged, "if for my credit, I knowingly permitted writings which I had not composed to be publicly imputed to me, without positive and public contradiction of the imputation. This contradiction I never have made, and never shall make, conscious as I am that *every one of those writings was composed by me.*"

Alas, poor Dickinson! He only recently received full credit for what he had done. Thomas Jefferson, who was not even in Philadelphia at the time, sent an account of Patrick Henry's participation in the Address to William Wirt, then collecting material for a memoir of the Virginia patriot. Somewhat later, in 1813, John Adams reminisced for the benefit of Jefferson. He had the advantage of having been on the committee charged with drafting the Address, but the disadvantage of a bad memory. The first draft and all the essentials were put together by Lee, he told Jefferson, and "it might be embellished and seasoned Afterward with some of Mr. Dickinson's piety; but I know not that it was." Richard Henry Lee's grandson produced hearsay evidence and offered the matter of style to show that Lee had written it. The recent editor of the *Diary of John Adams* noted that Dickinson "claimed" to have composed it, and the late Bernhard Knollenberg stated that no evidence remained to show how the drafts differed—the first draft had been rejected—and to what extent, if any, Dickinson was responsible for the changes. A few years ago I found in the Dickinson Papers of The Library Company Henry's draft and Dickinson's version. Later Lee's draft turned up at the University of Virginia. It can now be stated that the preliminary sketches of Henry and Lee bear little resemblance to the approved text, and that Dickinson's Address is almost word for word the approved text.

Alas, poor Dickinson! His role in the even more important Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking Up Arms, which a committee was ordered to prepare by Congress in June, 1775, was the subject of even more controversy. It had been included in the 1801 edition of Dickinson's writings. In 1821 Jefferson wrote that he had prepared a draft of the Declaration, but it was too strong for Dickinson who "still retained the hope of reconciliation with the mother country, and was unwilling it should be lessened by offensive statements." Jefferson continued, patting Dickinson patiently on the head, "He was so honest a man, and so able a one that he was greatly indulged even by those who could not feel his scruples." Consequently, the Virginian recalled, Dickinson prepared an entirely new statement, preserving only the last few paragraphs of the first draft. Opinion veered during the ensuing century from giv-

ing the whole to Jefferson to giving the whole to Dickinson. Julian P. Boyd, in his meticulous edition of the Jefferson Papers, has produced all the available evidence and described which of the two men did what in a scholarly editorial note too long and too complicated to summarize here. Suffice it to say, that Jefferson wrote a preliminary draft and a fair copy, the latter of which Dickinson used as the basis for his version. Far more important, however, is Dr. Boyd's appraisal that "Dickinson helped to make it both a more suitable and a more inflammatory Declaration." The belief that the differences and the debate in the committee were caused by Jefferson's radicalism opposed to Dickinson's conservatism is simply not valid.

### *John Adams, Antagonist*

LET us return to John Adams. During the year he spent among his fellow radicals in Massachusetts between the first and second Congress, his earlier opinion of Dickinson had undergone a radical change. In a letter to James Warren, written in July, 1775, which had been captured by the British and widely reprinted, he referred to Dickinson as "A certain great Fortune and piddling Genius [who] has given a silly Cast to our whole Doings." When Adams passed Dickinson on his way to the State House on September 16, Dickinson cut him dead. So began a feud which reflected personal animus as much as political disagreement. Adams recorded in his diary with considerable gusto Benjamin Rush's account of the growing popular dissatisfaction with Dickinson's considered hesitation. The more he argued in favor of seeking another avenue toward reconciliation the more he opened himself to criticism. He was able to convince Congress in 1775 to send off a final Address to the King, the Olive Branch petition, which Dickinson also wrote. But he could not stop the inevitable move for independence.

By 1776, the Pennsylvania Farmer had given up hope of a reconciliation. However, he was not ready, and he believed the colonies were not ready, for independence. In the lengthy justification of his actions during the Revolution written for the newspapers during the political campaign in Pennsylvania in 1783, Dickinson stressed

the point that he never opposed independence; he opposed a public declaration in June and July of 1776 because he was convinced the timing was wrong. When the first vote was taken on independence on July 1, Pennsylvania and South Carolina cast negative votes; Delaware was split; and New York abstained. On the next day South Carolina switched; Caesar Rodney arrived to break the Delaware tie; New York went along; and John Dickinson and Robert Morris abstained from voting, permitting Pennsylvania to go for the motion three to two. Dickinson's action on July 2 is not what destroyed his reputation, but his subsequent refusal to sign the Declaration did.

### *The Honest Abstainer*

OTHER MEN who had abstained at the time of the critical vote or even argued and voted against independence were willing to sign the formal document. Of Dickinson's refusal, Ezra Stiles, soon to be chosen president of Yale, wrote vehemently, "He now goes into Oblivion or a dishonorable Reminiscence with Posterity—while the Names of the rest of the Delegates subscribed to the Declaration of Independency are consigned to an honorable Immortality in the History of the United States." Not such was the opinion of Richard Hildreth, novelist, abolitionist and historian, who, understanding Dickinson's character better than most historians, characterized his act as the "noblest proof of moral courage ever shown by a public man in the history of the country." On July 4, 1776, Congress discussed measures to be taken for the defense of Pennsylvania and New Jersey from the threat of the British on Staten Island.

*Within a week Dickinson was off to the wars in command of a Pennsylvania battalion!*

That Dickinson did not disappear into oblivion as forecast by Stiles is evidenced by the fact that in 1779 Delaware sent him back to Congress where he drafted the instructions to the Commissioners "for treating with Great Britain." In 1781, as noted, he was elected President of the State of Delaware, and the following year President of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. In 1786 he presided at the Annapolis Convention which recommended a Constitutional

Convention, and Delaware sent him to that convention which drew up the Constitution of the United States. Few Americans participated so fully in public life during the critical last quarter of the 18th century; few Americans have received so little recognition for their services.

Dickinson did not seek public recognition, but he was jealous of his reputation. He shrank from undue or immodest publicity. When he married Mary Norris in 1770, he wrote to the publishers of the newspapers:

I earnestly entreat as a favor of great weight with me that you will not insert in your newspaper any other account of my marriage than this: "Last Thursday, John Dickinson, Esquire, was married to Miss Mary Norris." An account of the expressions of joy shown on the occasion will give me inexpressible pain, and very great uneasiness to a number of very worthy relations.

When Robert Edge Pine requested that Dickinson sit for him so he could be included in a picture of Congress at the time of the Declaration of Independence, Dickinson declined to do so. "The truth is," he wrote, "that, as I opposed making the Declaration of Independence at the time it was made, I cannot be guilty of so false an ambition as to seek for any share in the fame of that council." He continued:

Enough it will be for me should my name be remembered by posterity, if it is acknowledged that I cheerfully staked everything dear to me upon the fate of my country [there were no other major figures in the Revolution who had three of their houses burned by the British], and that no measure, however contrary to my sentiments, no treatment, however unmerited, could, even in the deepest gloom of our affairs, change that determination, and that though I resigned the favors of my fellow-citizens by endeavoring, as I judged, to promote their happiness, I continued inflexibly attached to their cause.

### *Undeserved Oblivion*

WHEN HE DIED in 1808, three Philadelphia newspapers carried an obituary notice which can only be described as scornful in its brevity, and one of them carried no announcement of his death at all.

At the end of his biography of Dickinson, Stillé printed a statement by the eminent lawyer Horace Binney complaining bitterly about Philadelphia's neglect of the memory of its great men. "She does not take, and she never has taken, satisfaction in habitually honoring her distinguished men as *her* men, as men of *her* own family," he stormed. "She has never done it in the face of the world, as Charleston has done it, as Richmond has done it, as Baltimore has done it, as New York has done it, or at least did in former times, and as Boston has done it, and would do it forever. She is more indifferent to her own sons than she is to strangers."

Delaware was not tarred by Mr. Binney's brush. You still have the opportunity of rescuing the memory of John Dickinson from undeserved oblivion. You must get the Dickinson Papers into print; you must see that a good, sound biography of him is written. Jefferson, upon receiving news of Dickinson's death, wrote that "his name will be consecrated in history as one of the great worthies of the Revolution." *It is time to make his prophecy come true.*

*To provide for the Common Defense*



*John Dickinson*

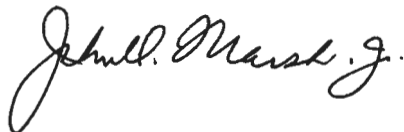
Soldier-Statesmen of the Constitution  
A Bicentennial Series



# Introduction

In September 1987 the United States commemorates the bicentennial of the signing of the Constitution. Twenty-two of the thirty-nine signers of the Constitution were veterans of the Revolutionary War. Their experiences in that conflict made them deeply conscious of the need for a strong central government that would prevail against its enemies, yet one that would safeguard the individual liberties and the republican form of government for which they had fought. Their solution is enshrined in the Constitution. The President of the United States is the Commander in Chief of the nation's military forces. But it is the Congress that has the power to raise and support those forces, and to declare war. The Founding Fathers established for all time the precedent that the military, subordinated to the Congress, would remain the servant of the Republic. That concept is the underpinning of the American military officer. These twenty-two men were patriots and leaders in every sense of the word: they fought the war, they signed the Constitution, and they forged the new government. They all went on to careers of distinguished public service in the new Republic. Their accomplishments should not be forgotten by those who enjoy the fruits of their labors. Nor should we forget the fortieth man whose name appears on the Constitution. The Secretary was the twenty-third Revolutionary veteran in the Convention, who continued his service to the nation as one of its first civil servants.

This pamphlet was prepared by the U.S. Army Center of Military History with the hope that it will provide you with the background of a great American; stimulate you to learn more about him; and help you enjoy and appreciate the bicentennial.



John O. Marsh, Jr.  
Secretary of the Army

# JOHN DICKINSON Delaware

John Dickinson represented both Delaware and Pennsylvania at the founding of the Republic. A man of the Enlightenment, he believed that government was a solemn social contract between the people and their sovereign. Like most colonial leaders, Dickinson considered himself an Englishman with all the ancient rights and privileges such citizenship conferred, and he was quick to oppose any abridgment of those rights by Parliament. But when others carried such opposition to the point of rebellion with the Declaration of Independence, Dickinson refused to sign. His reasoning set him apart from most of his colleagues. He understood the contract to be with the King, not with Parliament, and to be mutual as well as permanent. He hoped that an appeal to reason might remind the King of that contractual obligation to his American subjects and thereby restore good relations. Only when King George publicly sided with his ministers and ordered a Royal army to New York did Dickinson consider the social contract dissolved. Although he refused to sign the Declaration, Dickinson was among the first to don uniform to defend the new nation.

## THE PATRIOT

Dickinson's view of government evolved naturally. Born into a family of wealth and privilege, he elected to follow his father, a judge in the Delaware courts, into the law. He began his training in Philadelphia and then spent four years studying at the Inns of Court in London. His time there provided the young colonial with an opportunity to hear the leading legal minds of the day argue the fine points of Enlightenment philosophy and the rights of English citizens. Returning in 1757 to practice law in Philadelphia, Dickinson's industry and ability quickly earned him a reputation as one of America's finest lawyers. His interest in politics grew apace. In 1760 he was elected to the Delaware legislature. During the next fifteen years he would serve both in that body and in the Pennsylvania legislature, a dual service made possible because of his property holdings and residency in both colonies.

Dickinson's entry into politics coincided with the rise of colonial opposition to the government in London. In debt from the Seven Years' War and obliged to maintain an army in America, Parliament now ended a century of "salutary neglect" in regard to the financial and political affairs of the colonies by instituting measures to raise revenue and provide for the quartering of British troops. One of these parliamentary measures, the Stamp Act

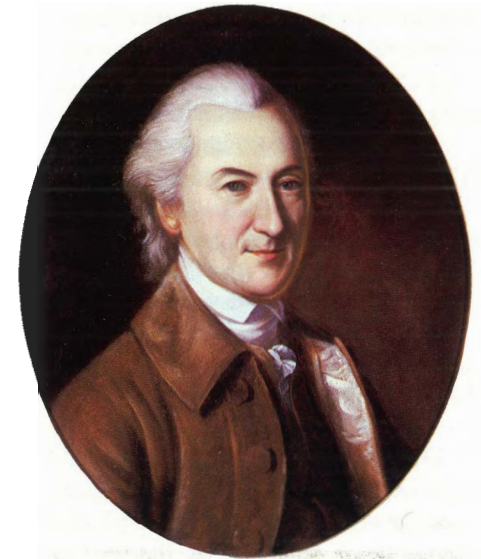
of 1765, was the first attempt to impose a direct tax on the colonies, and it provoked a strong and united opposition. Jealous of the rights and privileges of their own legislatures, the colonies retaliated by refusing to pay the tax and by boycotting English goods.

Dickinson played a major but restraining role in this opposition. Sympathetic to colonial complaints, he nevertheless sought to avoid violence. He urged Americans to rely primarily on economic pressure, and he enlisted the help of the powerful British merchants in the colonists' cause. His diplomatic approach coupled with his commitment to the colonial side led the Pennsylvania legislature to appoint him to represent the colony at the Stamp Act Congress in 1765. There he eloquently defended the proposition that reconciliation was possible if King and Parliament could be brought to see colonial opposition as an expression of the time-honored English principles of political liberty. His arguments were encapsulated in his *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, a series of essays that gained its author international recognition as a man of reason and principle.

Later Dickinson organized Philadelphia's protest over the Coercive Acts, a series of political and economic measures that Parliament enacted in 1774 to demonstrate its control over the colonies, but which the Americans interpreted as a blow to their liberties. In keeping with his support of the colonial protest movement, Dickinson also figured prominently in the convening of the Continental Congress. Elected to that assembly, he played a critical role, drafting two key documents: a petition for redress of grievances, and a message urging the inhabitants of Canada to join the thirteen colonies in opposition. He returned to serve in the Second Continental Congress, but after the clashes at Lexington and Concord changed the attitudes of many members, Dickinson's continuing stand for reconciliation cast him in the role of a conservative when compared to such firebrands as John Adams and Benjamin Franklin. In July 1775 he drafted Congress' last attempt at compromise, the "Olive Branch Petition." Against ever-increasing odds, Dickinson continued into July 1776 to work for one further appeal to King George. But bowing to what had become inevitable, he absented himself on July 4 so that the vote for independence could be unanimous.

## THE SOLDIER

Dickinson saw no contradiction in his decision to volunteer immediately for militia service. In his "Declaration of Causes for Taking Up Arms," he actively supported the right of free citizens to defend themselves from direct attack, and he preached the concept of military preparedness to his fellow Pennsylvanians. Since June 1775 he had been chairman of Pennsylvania's Committee of Safety and Defense. He also had organized the first battalion



Oil on canvas, by Charles Willson Peale (1780), Independence National Historic Park Collection.

of troops raised in Philadelphia, the so-called Associators (today's 111th Infantry, Pennsylvania Army National Guard). Lacking a militia organization, Pennsylvania traditionally had relied on volunteer units such as Dickinson's Associators for military support. When a large British invasion force appeared in New York harbor in July 1776, Pennsylvania called the Associators into active duty as a part of the general mobilization of militia to defend New York City, and Dickinson absented himself from Congress to assume command. His unit was assigned to the Flying Camp, a mobile reserve that provided Washington with some 10,000 men who could be called forward to join the continentals holding New York City. Dickinson commanded a major garrison point at Elizabeth, New Jersey, in the defense against any attempt by British forces on Staten Island to cross the New Jersey countryside to attack Philadelphia.

Turned out of Congress after refusing to sign the Declaration, Dickinson resigned his commission in the Associators and retired to his home in Delaware. During the summer of 1777, however, he once more enlisted for active duty, this time to serve as a private in Captain Stephen Lewis' company of Delaware volunteers. The mobilization of Delaware units was in response to the appearance of a British force under General Sir William Howe at Elkton, Maryland, at the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay. From there Howe planned to attack Philadelphia, the American capital. General Washington's hastily organized defense called for the mobilization of Delaware's militia under the command of General Caesar Rodney; its mission was to maintain a sector of the cordon thrown up between the approaching British and the capital by combined troops from the middle states. Rodney's units were also expected

to delay any possible British drive south toward Baltimore until Washington's continentals could arrive on the scene. During this defensive action, Dickinson's company guarded the approaches to the Brandywine River. His unit, along with the rest of Delaware's forces, returned home after the British retired from the area, but Dickinson continued as a part-time soldier. In October 1777 General Rodney issued him a commission as a brigadier general of militia. His resignation the following year would usher in his later political career, which began when Delaware appointed him to serve in the Continental Congress from 1779 to 1781.

## THE STATESMAN

During that term Dickinson signed the Articles of Confederation, which he had drafted while representing Pennsylvania in the Congress in 1776. Like most Americans, he had assumed at first that the political and economic liberties being defended on the battlefield could best be preserved by state governments and military forces created by state governments. In adopting the Articles after much debate, Congress thereby endorsed his plan for a limited national organization of independent and sovereign states.

Military and political experiences during the course of the war, however, served to modify Dickinson's views, and the once strong proponent of a loose confederation of states was gradually transformed into a leader of the cause of strong central government. Dickinson's active duty had demonstrated to this observant citizen-soldier that the country needed a strong national defense, but that dependency on temporary and often inexperienced state units imposed many limitations. Later service as governor of both Delaware and Pennsylvania in the early 1780s reinforced his growing belief that many problems rising at the local level could be resolved only by national action. His executive experience also convinced him that the citizen's basic rights were best safeguarded by a national government that represented all the citizens.

Setting aside his wish to retire, Dickinson accepted Delaware's call to represent it at a convention in Annapolis in 1786 to discuss economic problems affecting Delaware and its neighboring states. There he supported the idea of creating a new national government, and in 1787 he went on to represent Delaware at the Philadelphia Convention, where his experience and skills made a significant contribution to the foundation of the new Republic. In particular, Dickinson was a major architect of the "Great Compromise" that reconciled the differences among delegates over representation in the new government. Designed to protect the rights of both the small and more populous states, the compromise called for a national legislature that gave equal voice to all thirteen states in a senate composed of two representatives from each, but which respected the rights of the majority in a house of representatives based

on population. The Great Compromise ushered in a series of other compromises on lesser subjects and was critical to the final approval of the Constitution. Ironically, Dickinson again failed to sign one of history's most important documents. This time illness, not a lack of ardent support, was the cause; his name was penned to the new instrument of government by a colleague.

Before finally retiring to the pleasures of his library and estates, Dickinson made one last contribution to the nation. Signing himself "Fabius," he again addressed a series of open letters to his fellow citizens, this time in defense of the new Constitution. His concern for liberty was at the heart of his arguments. "The power of the people pervading the proposed system, together with the strong confederation of the states," he contended, "forms an adequate security against every danger that has been apprehended." With compelling examples drawn from history and the Enlightenment philosophers, Dickinson explained how the Constitution's system of checks and balances—among the branches of government and between the new government and the individual states—would safeguard the civil rights of the people while it promoted the liberty of the nation.

His reasoned appeal bore fruit. In December 1787 Delaware became the first state to ratify the Constitution.

The Congress shall have Power . . .  
To raise and support Armies . . . ;  
To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia . . . ;

ARTICLE I, Section 8.

# Personal Data

**BIRTH:** 19 November 1732, at “Crosiadore,” Talbot County, Maryland\*

**OCCUPATION:** Lawyer and Politician

**MILITARY SERVICE:**

Militia—4 years

Highest Rank—Brigadier General

**PUBLIC SERVICE:**

Continental Congress—4 years

Governor of Delaware—1 year

Governor of Pennsylvania—4 years

**DEATH:** 14 February 1808, at Wilmington, Delaware

**PLACE OF INTERMENT:** Friends Burial Ground, Wilmington Delaware

\*In 1752 the English-speaking world shifted from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, adding 11 days. Thus Dickinson’s date of birth was recorded in 1732 as 8 November.

## Further Readings

Dickinson is the subject of two recent studies: Milton E. Flower’s *John Dickinson: Conservative Revolutionary* (1983) and David L. Jacobson’s *John Dickinson and the Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1764-1776* (1965). These volumes are supplemented by several older biographies, especially George H. Moore’s *John Dickinson* (1890), Charles J. Stille’s *The Life and Times of John Dickinson* (1891), and Robert H. Richards’ *The Life and Character of John Dickinson* (1901). Dickinson’s military career is described in Don Higginbotham’s *The War of American Independence* (1971) and Francis E. Devine’s “The Pennsylvania Flying Camp,” *Pennsylvania History* (1979). Other studies that place Dickinson in the context of the Constitutional era include Sol Bloom’s *The Story of the Constitution* (1937), David F. Hawke’s *A Transaction of Free Men* (1964), Merrill Jensen’s *Making of the Constitution* (1979), and Clinton Rossiter’s *1787: The Grand Convention* (1966).

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Cover: *Scene of the Signing of the Constitution of the United States*, by Howard Chandler Christy, courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol.



Portrait of John Dickinson by Charles Willson Peale, 1770. Peale's original commission for a portrait of Dickinson, ordered by a Marylander living in London, came with a request for American scenery in the background. Hence we see here the falls of the Schuylkill River along with native plants and flowers. During the 18th and early 19th centuries the falls of the Schuylkill River, four miles upstream from its once marshy confluence with the Delaware River, was the most famous natural attraction in the vicinity of Philadelphia, where its roar could be heard when the wind blew from the northwest. Boats could be guided through the rocky hazards of the falls by skilled pilots. The original painting is in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## DELAWARE'S JOHN DICKINSON: THE CONSTANT WATCHMAN OF LIBERTY

*A joint effort of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion,  
the Delaware Department of State, and  
the Delaware Heritage Commission,  
published in commemoration of  
the 250th Anniversary of the publication of  
a work crucial to the cause of American independence,  
Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the  
Inhabitants of the British Colonies,  
by John Dickinson.*

—  
JOHN SWEENEY, EDITOR

2018

**DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES**

## THE WRITINGS OF JOHN DICKINSON

One of the ironies of American history is that the man tagged by historians as the “Penman of the Revolution” has not been very well read. John Dickinson’s writings have been overlooked not because of his style or content. They just simply have not been available.

How can we understand him if we cannot read him? Here is a man who wrote more state papers during the Revolution than anyone and who produced some of the most persuasive arguments for liberty ever written, and yet interested students either do not know they exist or cannot find them. This is a key reason Dickinson’s reputation as a Founding Father is not as high as it should be.

Dickinson himself published two volumes of his writings in 1801. The Pennsylvania Historical Society attempted to collect and publish Dickinson’s works in 1807. It managed to publish one volume and then stopped. Today, the most readily available work is *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. That is fitting. It is his most famous and most influential work.

However, his letters and smaller but important political essays are hard to come by. For years, scholars and students of Dickinson have called on colleges and institutions to put the Penman’s works before the public.

That is finally happening. Under the editorship of Dr. Jane E. Calvert, the Dickinson Writings Project has been collecting, editing and annotating the complete works of John Dickinson. Publication will begin soon. For more information contact the project at <http://dickinsonproject.rch.uky.edu/>.

In the meantime, here is a list of Dickinson’s major writings as compiled by the Dickinson Writings Project:

*A Speech, Delivered in the House of Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania*, May 24th, 1764

## The Farmer and the Penman

*On occasion of a petition, drawn up by order, and then under consideration, of the House; praying His Majesty for a change of the government of this province.* Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1764.

*The Late Regulations Respecting the British Colonies on the Continent of America Considered, in a Letter from a Gentleman in Philadelphia to his Friend in London.* Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1765.

“Petition to the King from the Stamp Act Congress.” *Proceedings of the Congress at New-York*, 1765.

“The Declaration of Rights adopted by the Stamp Act Congress.” *Proceedings of the Congress at New-York*. Annapolis, 1766.

*An Address to the Committee of Correspondence in Barbados. Occasioned by a late letter from them to their agent in London. By a North-American.* Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1766.

“Letters from a farmer in Pennsylvania, to the inhabitants of the British colonies.” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 3, 1767—February 8, 1768.

“Letters to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies in America.” *Pennsylvania Journal; and the Weekly Advertiser*, May 25, June 1, June 8, June 15, 1774.

*An Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great-Britain over the Colonies in America; with the resolves of the committee for the province of Pennsylvania, and their instructions to their representatives in Assembly.* Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1774.

“Bill of Rights [and] a List of Grievances.” *Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the American Continental Congress*. Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1774.

“To the Inhabitants of the Colonies.” *Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the American Continental Congress*. Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1774.

“The Petition of the Grand American Continental Congress to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty.” *Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the American Continental Congress*. Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1774.

*A Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec.* Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1774.

*The Humble Petition of the Twelve United Colonies, by their Delegates in Congress, to the King [Olive Branch Petition].* Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1775.

*A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America, Now Met in Congress at Philadelphia, Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of Their Taking Up Arms.* Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1775.

*Essay on a Frame of Government for Pennsylvania.* Philadelphia: James Humphreys, Jr., 1776.

*The Letters of Fabius, in 1788, on the Federal Constitution; and in 1797, on the Present Situation of Public Affairs.* Wilmington, DE: From the office of the *Delaware Gazette*, 1797.

*Ode, on the French Revolution.* Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin Bache, 1798.

*A Caution; or, Reflections on the Present Contest between France and Great-Britain.* Philadelphia: Benj. Franklin Bache, 1798.

*An Address on the Past, Present and Eventual Relations of the United States to France.* New York: T. and J. Swords, 1803.



## A JOHN DICKINSON CHRONOLOGY

1732

John Dickinson is born on Nov. 13 in Talbot County, Maryland, the first son of Samuel and Mary Dickinson.

1741

The Dickinson family moves to the present site of the Dickinson Plantation in Kent County, Delaware.

1750

At age 18, Dickinson moves to Philadelphia to study law under the prominent attorney, John Moland.

1753-1757

John continues his law studies at the Middle Temple, Inns of Court, in London.

1757

He returns to Philadelphia to practice law.

1759

Dickinson is elected to the assembly of the Lower Three Counties, as Delaware was then known.

1760

Samuel Dickinson dies.

John Dickinson is elected speaker of the

assembly of the Lower Three Counties.

1762

He is elected to fill in a vacant seat in Pennsylvania Assembly in a special election.

1764

He is re-elected to Pennsylvania assembly.

Dickinson breaks with two powerful assembly leaders, Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Galloway, over their push to make Pennsylvania a royal colony. Dickinson's speech is reprinted in pamphlet form, leading to a war of words between Dickinson and Galloway. Dickinson would remain on cool terms with Franklin and an enemy of Galloway's. Dickinson warns against the dangers of royal power.

1765

Parliament passes the Stamp Act. Dickinson leads the protest in Pennsylvania. He attends the Stamp Act Congress and writes *The Late Regulations Respecting the British Colonies Considered*, which urges repeal of the Stamp Act.

1766

The Stamp Act is repealed.

1767

Parliament passes the Townshend Duties, a set of taxes and laws aimed at increasing revenue and limiting American commerce.

Dickinson writes *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. It becomes a huge success and is reprinted in every colony. It has particular success in Boston, where it influences the Massachusetts assembly to send a Circular Letter to all of the colonies.

1770

Dickinson marries Mary Norris, daughter of a wealthy and prominent Philadelphia Quaker family. They will have five children, two of whom, Sally and Maria, will live to adulthood.

The Boston Massacre occurs when Boston civilians clash with British soldiers. Five civilians die.

Parliament repeals all of the Townshend Duties except one, a tax on tea.

1773

On Dec. 16, Boston residents, masquerading as Mohawks, board the ships carrying tea and throw 342 chests into the harbor.

1774

In retaliation to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passes a series of laws designed to punish Massachusetts and the other colonies until the East India Company is paid damages. The British call these laws the Coercive Acts. The Americans call them the Intolerable Acts.

Dickinson becomes chairman of the Philadelphia Committee of Correspondence.

Several colonies, including Pennsylvania, call for a continental meeting to protest the Intolerable Acts.

Dickinson is elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly and appointed as delegate to the

First Continental Congress; He writes *An address to the Inhabitants of Quebec*, an attempt to persuade Canadians to join the lower colonies in protest.

1775

The battle of Lexington and Concord is fought on April 18.

His mother, Mary Cadwalader Dickinson, dies.

Dickinson is selected as a Pennsylvania representative to Second Continental Congress in May.

On June 17, the British army attacks American forces at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Dickinson emerges as the leading moderate in the congress. He writes the "Olive Branch Petition," which proposes a cease fire in exchange for recognition of American rights and an end to the Intolerable Acts. He joins Thomas Jefferson in writing the *Declaration on causes and Necessity of taking up arms*, a justification of the colonies' militant actions.

King George III refuses to consider the "Olive Branch Petition."

1776

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* is published January 9.

On June 7, Richard Henry Lee proposes that Congress declare the colonies free and independent.

Dickinson writes the first draft of the Articles of Confederation.

He argues for delay one last time on July 1. The final vote for independence is held July 2. Dickinson stays away, recognizing his negative vote would jeopardize unity at the time of war. He joins his militia unit in New Jersey, across the river from the invading British army.

1777

The Delaware Assembly appoints Dickinson

as a delegate to the Continental Congress. He declines.

1779

Delaware appoints him to Congress. He accepts.

1780

He is elected to the Delaware Assembly.

1781

Tories attack and damage Poplar Hall. He returns to Delaware to oversee repairs. While in the state, politicians place his name in nomination to the state senate. He is then elected President of Delaware

1782

While still serving as president of Delaware, he is elected President of Pennsylvania.

1786

He leads Delaware delegates at the Annapolis Convention, where he is elected chairman. He works closely with James Madison and Alexander Hamilton to bring about a bigger, wider-ranging convention in Philadelphia the next year.

1787

He is a delegate from Delaware at the

Constitutional Convention.

1788

He writes the nine letters signed "Fabius." The letters defend and endorse the Constitution.

1792

He is elected to the Delaware Assembly. He leads the Delaware Constitutional Convention.

1793

He resigns his senatorial seat. This signals the end of his political career.

1801

Dickinson publishes two volumes of his collected works on politics.

1803

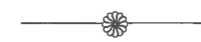
Mary Dickinson dies.

1804

Poplar Hall burns. Dickinson takes up residence in a new home at Eighth and Market Streets in Wilmington

1808

John Dickinson dies.





## THE DRAMATIC BACKSTORY OF A QUIET LITTLE MASTERPIECE

By John Sweeney

Sooner or later, classic books take on a life of their own. Unfortunately, it is a predictably solitary life on a bookshelf. There they sit, unopened and unread. We may speak of such books in hushed tones, but they did not become classics by sneaking into a library without anyone noticing. It usually happens the other way. They come into life roaring, alternately exciting, inspiring, infuriating or outraging readers.

Sometimes, their very publication becomes a political event.

All of that was true of John Dickinson's masterpiece, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. While its author spoke in civil, reasonable tones, the *Farmer* helped pave the way for a revolution.

Of course, every political event comes with a backstory. And the backstory to *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* is one full of intrigue, conflict, and a yearning for freedom. It also involves a transoceanic struggle for power.

This backstory began in London in 1766 when Benjamin Franklin appeared before a committee of Parliament. His job was to assure a receptive audience that Americans would not object to the right kind of tax. The wrong kind of tax is what caused the fuss over the 1765 Stamp Act.<sup>1</sup>

That fuss included protests, petitions, boycotts, riots, property destruction, and beatings. Mobs seized and tormented Americans picked to be Stamp Act agents. Some were dragged through the streets. They were told to recant or suffer the consequences. The mobs even attacked Franklin's house in Philadelphia, putting his wife in danger and compelling her to rush their daughter off to safety in New Jersey. A group of tradesmen loyal to Franklin, the White Oaks, came to his wife's rescue, guarded the house, and prevented Philadelphia from suffering the same mob violence Boston did.<sup>2</sup>

Franklin eventually got the message. While in London, he had completely misread the American reaction to the tax act. He opposed it at first, but then, seeing its passage as inevitable, wangled an appointment for his good friend and political ally John Hughes to be the Stamp Act

agent for Pennsylvania and Delaware. The appointment not only meant good money for Hughes, but patronage jobs for Franklin's political machine in the Pennsylvania assembly.<sup>3</sup>

Hughes would regret his friend's benevolence. He would be forced under threat to renounce the appointment in both states. In London, Franklin recanted his earlier support. He now correctly read the public temperament in the colonies and worked feverishly to get the Stamp Act repealed.

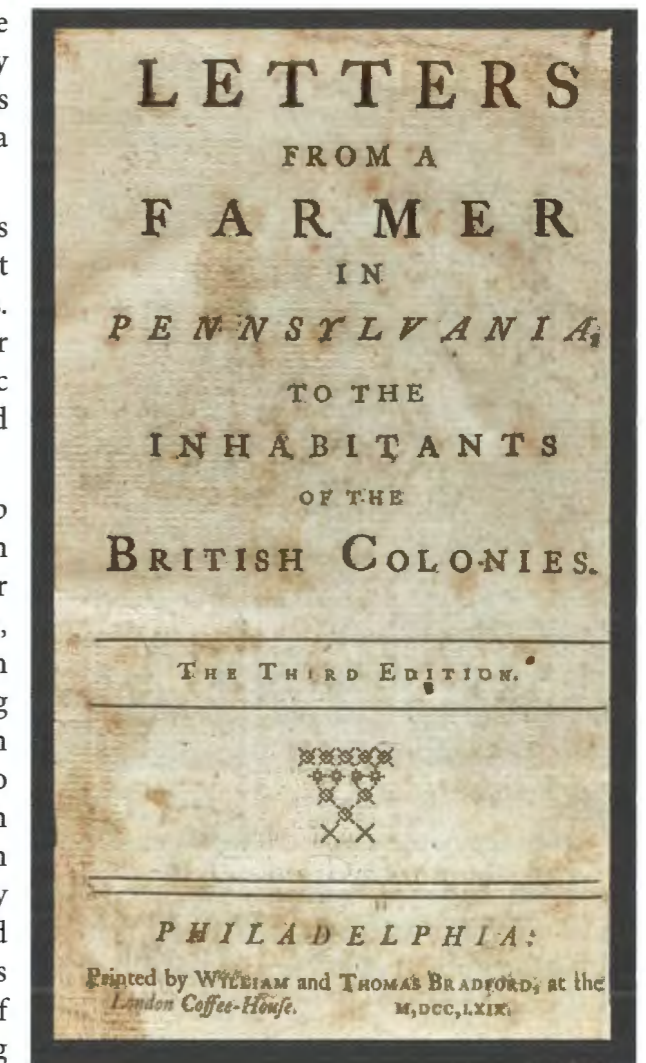
That is why he told Parliament the Stamp Act was the wrong kind of tax. It was an internal tax, a small sum attached to paper products of all types—contracts, newspapers, deeds, calendars, diplomas and so on. Each purchase was an obvious and irritating reminder of Parliament's intrusion. Franklin said the colonists would be more likely to accept an external tax, such as tariffs put on goods before they reach the consumer. In other words, they would pay the taxes if they did not see them. Franklin had rehearsed his testimony with British cabinet ministers eager to persuade reluctant members of Parliament to repeal the act. The rioting in some colonies was so violent that the ministers feared revolution. They wanted the Stamp Act repealed as much as Franklin did.<sup>4</sup>

However, after listening to the American's testimony on the difference between internal and external taxes, one Member of Parliament questioned Franklin. He looked at the petitions against the Stamp Act from the various colonies. He picked Pennsylvania's petition. This, he said, says Pennsylvania objects to all taxes imposed by Parliament, not just internal taxes.

Franklin was in London as Pennsylvania's agent, or lobbyist. He dismissed the statement, saying that if Pennsylvania says all taxes, it means only internal taxes.<sup>5</sup>

Franklin was wrong again.

Pennsylvania actually did mean all taxes. The statement was written by John Dickinson, Franklin's opponent in the Pennsylvania assembly. Dickinson was one of the first Americans to oppose the Stamp Act. In fact, he had warned years before that something like this was coming. Few believed him. In 1764, Dickinson opposed Franklin's plan to make Pennsylvania a royal colony like Virginia. Franklin and the politicians he led, the Assembly party, wanted the king to take ownership away from the Penn family. Dickinson objected. William Penn's Charter of Liberties of 1701 guaranteed Pennsylvanians more freedom than the royal colonies enjoyed, he argued. Dickinson said the king and his ministers could not be trusted. The assembly did not



A 1769 Third Edition of Dickinson's  
Letter from a Farmer in Pennsylvania.

listen to him. Instead, the members sent Franklin to London to seek the king's takeover of the colony.<sup>6</sup>

While Franklin dawdled in London waiting for a hearing, Parliament proved Dickinson right. In 1765 Parliament passed a law taxing paper, legal documents, books, newspapers, and a host of other everyday items. Parliament also passed laws cracking down on smuggling and making it harder for the accused to get a jury trial. The Pennsylvania Assembly was slow to react to the Stamp Act. Franklin's party dominated the vote. Dickinson, however, was unrelenting. He persuaded his fellow Pennsylvania Assembly members to oppose the Stamp Act. He also wrote the declaration opposing it at a gathering of other colony representatives in New York – the Stamp Act Congress.<sup>7</sup>

Dickinson would later write one of the most powerful pamphlets against the Stamp Act and other efforts by Parliament to raise revenue.

The official protests from the colonies as well as the unofficial riots, threats and commercial boycotts convinced the king's ministers that the Stamp Act had to go. Part of the repeal effort was to put Franklin on the stand. The American was convincing. Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766 even though many members scoffed at the idea that there was a difference between internal and external taxes. The most important scoffer was Charles Townshend, later Chancellor of the Exchequer. Townshend would use that very argument to serve up more taxes for the Americans. Along the way, he set in motion events that we now see led to the War for Independence.<sup>8</sup>

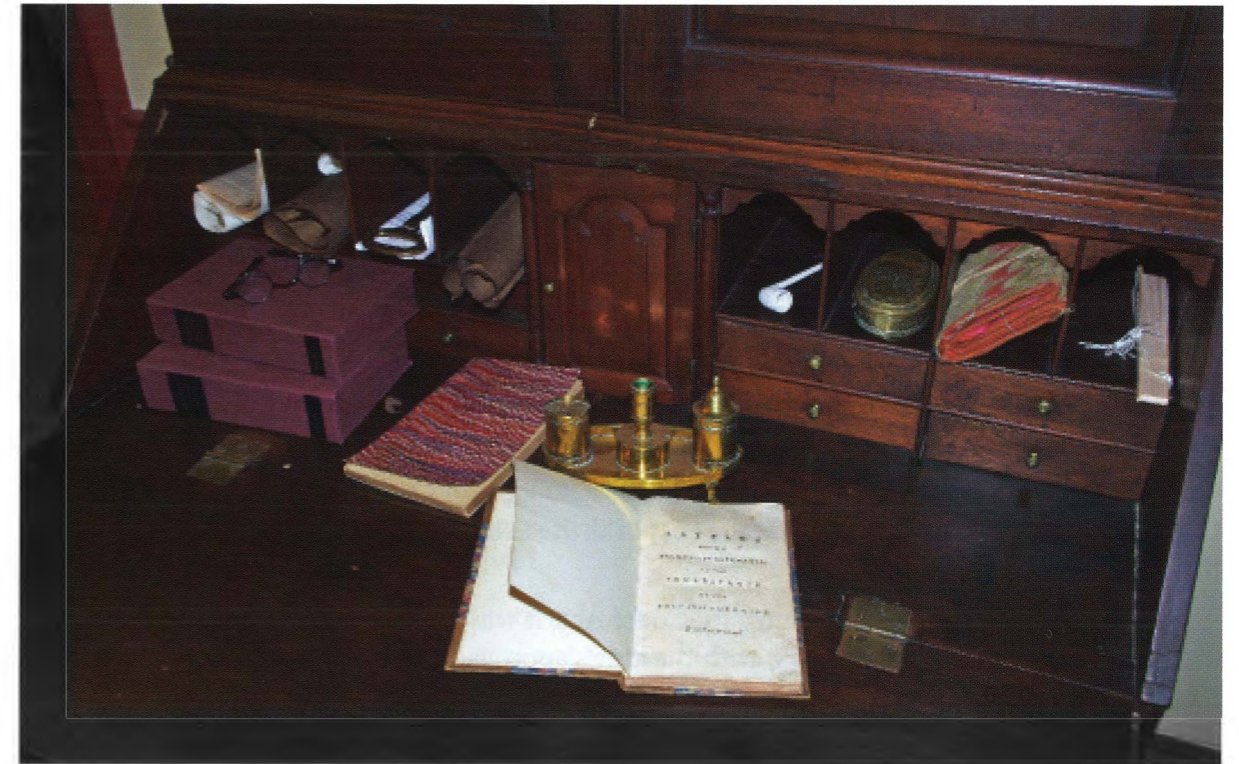
Once again, the clear, strong voice opposing him belonged to John Dickinson.

When Parliament scrapped the Stamp Act, it also passed a little-noticed but ominous law called the Declaratory Act. In it, Parliament proclaimed the right to make all laws affecting the British Empire. All of the king's subjects had to obey those laws. No exceptions.<sup>9</sup>

The Americans celebrating the repeal of the Stamp Act paid little heed to the Declaratory Act. Nor did they listen to Townshend when he promised to revisit the revenue issue.

Townshend had little choice. Since the French and Indian War ended in 1763, Great Britain found itself saddled with an enormous debt, a vast new territory to guard, and a sluggish economy. Despite this, the king and his ministers also decided not to reduce the size of the army in North America. Some historians speculate that the decision to keep thousands of redcoats in the colonies had more to do with government patronage than with colonial security. Bringing home too many officers and enlisted men would have swollen the ranks of pensioners among the officers and the unemployed among the enlisted men. The extra cost could be paid by the people the army protected – the colonists. However, other historians claim the real reason has never been determined.<sup>10</sup>

Great Britain's economic relationship with its colonies was simple. The colonies existed to provide wealth for the mother country. Britain's navigation laws were designed to ensure the flow of raw goods to England and finished products from England to the New World. Therefore, manufacturing was forbidden in the colonies. Goods had to be shipped in British ships through British ports. Trade between the colonies and foreign countries was strictly controlled.<sup>11</sup> The colonies were not allowed to print currency. This limited their economic growth. How could they buy goods and pay bills without a currency? All of this had one practical effect: corruption. The British ministers reckoned that corruption – smuggling by the colonists and bribe taking by crown officials – cost the treasury an enormous amount each year. Parliament repeatedly



*A bound copy of the first edition of John Dickinson's Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania sit on a desk in the John Dickinson Mansion (photo by Dick Carter).*

attempted reforms. It expanded the number of trials without juries. It allowed greater use of searches without probable cause. It issued arbitrary judgments against suspected smugglers. And it urged the Royal Navy to track smugglers and seize their ships. Tensions between the British government and the colonies in North America kept rising.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, Townshend had to deal with another problem the Americans did not recognize. Parliament wanted revenge. Its members deeply resented repealing the Stamp Act. They resented the mobs and the bullying of agents. They resented the gleeful response from the colonies when the act was repealed. In other words, they wanted to show the colonists that Parliament was in charge.<sup>13</sup>

The Townshend Acts arrived in 1767. Charles Townshend pushed through five laws that would make the Americans pay their share of the bill. They faced severe penalties if they tried to fight it. Townshend was attempting to solve a multitude of problems with one set of laws.<sup>14</sup> The chief goal, as Townshend and his allies saw it, was to regain control of the colonies. Deep in the tax bill was a provision to pay the colonies' governors, judges and other officials directly from London. It would end the one power the "mini-Parliaments," or assemblies, had over the royally appointed governors and judges. Until then, the assemblies could simply hold up the governor's pay if he refused to cooperate.<sup>15</sup>

The Townshend Acts also expanded the availability of writs of assistances, the general search warrants that only judges could squelch – judges now in the pay of the crown.

The first of these laws was the New York Restraining Act of 1767. Great Britain demanded the colonies support the army stationed in their midst. The Quartering Act of 1765 required colonies provide shelter for the soldiers in public buildings like halls and churches, food for the

men and their horses, and other supplies like hay, candles and cider. Most colonies reluctantly obeyed. Pennsylvania was the only colony to quickly and fully comply. New York, however, refused. Because of its location, New York had the most soldiers. Its assembly declared the bills too high. Therefore, it refused to pay. The Restraining Act simply closed the New York assembly until it paid. Actually, New York relented and paid before word of the law arrived to America. But the point was made. Parliament had no regard for the Americans' local assemblies.<sup>16</sup>

Another of the Townshend Acts, the Revenue Act of 1767, placed taxes on items like glass, lead, paint, paper and tea. The Americans could only buy these items directly from England, so the tax was added before it reached the consumer. Thus, it was considered an external tax. This act also gave customs officials increased power to search private property for smuggled goods.<sup>17</sup> Another bill was the Commissioners of Customs Act. This increased the number of inspectors. They began conducting raids on private property. The Indemnity Act of 1767 eliminated taxes on tea imported into Great Britain. The bill was a bailout for the struggling British East India Company. It was designed to reduce the cost of the tea sold in America, thus cutting down on the use of smuggled tea.<sup>18</sup>

The final law was the Vice Admiralty Court Act. It was enacted, not by Parliament, but by the Commissioners of the Treasury, with the king's approval. It came in 1768, after Townshend had died suddenly. It increased the number of the admiralty courts. The advantage to the crown was that these courts did not use juries. Too many local juries refused to convict their fellow colonists in smuggling cases. Now crown officials would decide the fate of the accused.<sup>19</sup>

Parliament had come roaring back. The Americans had no choice but to submit.

For a time it looked like Parliament was right. The Americans were quiet. There was some grumbling, but no marching in the streets, no mobs, and the colonial legislatures were mum.

Then, on Dec. 3, 1767, a short essay appeared in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*. It was signed "A Farmer."<sup>20</sup>

It changed everything.

The world would soon know "A Farmer" was John Dickinson. Over the next 12 weeks, his "*Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*" would wake the colonists from their slumber. He challenged the Americans to reject Parliament's actions. In a reasonable and civil voice, he quietly dismantled the argument behind the Townshend Acts. He destroyed the claim that there is a difference between internal and external taxes. More important, he insisted that Parliament had no right to tax the colonials.<sup>21</sup> The colonists enjoyed the same rights as all Englishmen. They could only be taxed by their own representatives. Dickinson acknowledged Parliament had the right to set trade laws and regulate commerce. But Parliament had no right to tax Americans because the Americans were not represented in Parliament.<sup>22</sup>

The *Farmer's Letters* became America's first bestseller. It eventually appeared in 19 of the 23 newspapers then printing in the colonies. It quickly became a pamphlet repeatedly reprinted in North America and in Europe. The Farmer, even before his identity was revealed, was toasted in every colony and hailed as a friend of liberty.<sup>23</sup>

The Letters were clear, to the point, and powerfully argued.

Looking back, with the advantage of knowing how everything turned out, it is hard to appreciate the effect of *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. No, it did not demand a revolution. No, it did not condemn the British, defame the king or urge immediate independence. If it had, no one would have read it in 1767 and 1768. Dickinson knew his audience. He tempered the

style and even the classical allusions to fit the occasion. He collected and articulated many of the thoughts his contemporaries were thinking and put them into words that they could easily share in taverns or town meetings. The essays of *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* were written as a single piece. All 12 were written before the first was published. He also wrote them to be read by a wide audience. His argument was serialized in weekly installments over a 12-week period. He organized his essays to spread out his points, to make them more accessible.<sup>24</sup>

By doing so, he also shaped the American argument.

"Dickinson," the historian Merrill Jensen wrote, "rescued Americans from a theoretical dilemma and he was applauded from one end of the colonies to the other."<sup>25</sup>

And what did Dickinson say?

He stated flatly that the distinction between an internal and external tax was chimerical. They are all taxes. The Townshend Acts imposed taxes, not duties, not trade regulations. He said the Quartering Act that led to the restrictions on the New York assembly was just a tax and because it was a tax it was illegal.<sup>26</sup>

Second, the taxes were unconstitutional. A free people can only be taxed by their own elected representatives. Americans were not represented in Parliament. Therefore, Parliament had no right to impose taxes on Americans.<sup>27</sup>

Dickinson also hit on two arguments that would reverberate throughout the revolutionary period.

He was the first writer to claim that Americans were a different people, "a free people" and they would deal with the English as one free people to another. The historian Carl Becker said Dickinson's phrase and idea became the basis for the American argument against British policy.<sup>28</sup> By 1776, it would be a commonplace assumption. "The assumption," Becker wrote, "was that Americans were one 'people,' the English another, and each a 'free' people." The British ministers did not think that way. They did not consider the American colonists anything but a subject people. However, Becker argues, this idea took root. Soon Samuel Adams would be addressing Americans as a separate people. Benjamin Franklin, reading both Dickinson and Adams, would begin thinking that way as well. The separation came a little closer with each step. Eventually, in the Declaration of Independence it became "When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another ..."

A second point about *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* helped it fit into the popular thinking of the day. That was conspiracy theory. Bernard Bailyn, the great historian of early American politics, said Dickinson believed that certain ministers of the king conspired to subject America. This was popular among Americans who followed English Whig writers like John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon. The blame would shift as the crisis unfolded. At first, a handful of ministers would be at fault. Then the blame would be tacked on to Parliament as a whole and appeals would be made to the king. Finally, as in the Declaration of Independence, the blame would be put on the king.<sup>29</sup>

Dickinson also placed great emphasis on unity. He said Americans could only fight back if they stuck together. He castigated the other colonies for not being outraged and protesting the restrictions against New York. After all, he said, the same thing could happen to each colony.

He wrote, "To divide, and thus to destroy, is the first political maxim in attacking those, who are powerful by their union. He certainly is not a wise man, who folds his arms, and

The argument and the tone were similar to the *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer*.<sup>31</sup>

The Circular Letter outraged the British cabinet. Lord Hillsborough, secretary for the American department, directed that the Massachusetts governor “require” the legislature to rescind the letter. The legislature did not. The governor then dissolved it. However, the protest spread to other colonies. They followed Massachusetts’ lead and sent letters of protest. They too were dissolved. This led to widespread import boycotts.<sup>32</sup>

Customs officials pressed on with their own duties, but they were not very successful. Officials kept arguing with each other. One of their favorite targets was the Boston merchant John Hancock. His sloop *Liberty* was seized in June 1768. Crowds turned out to protest, threatened the customs officials and their homes. The officials fled to a fort in Boston Harbor. This was too much for Lord Hillsborough and the rest of the cabinet. They ordered two regiments of British soldiers into Boston to protect officers of the crown. The soldiers arrived in October. Instead of relieving tension, the military presence only increased it. Eventually, the conflict between the civilians and the soldiers led to the Boston Massacre, when redcoats opened fire on a taunting, snowball-throwing crowd.<sup>33</sup>

Eventually, the cabinet pulled an about face and got Parliament to repeal the Townshend duties in 1770. They kept only one of the new taxes – the tea tax. That tax was the only one making money. As the British historian Peter D.G. Thomas wrote, “The concession to the colonies was therefore a token one, removal of the other duties that had been insignificant in their revenue yield. This fateful decision was to prove the point of no return in the sequence of events leading to the American Revolution.

“Without a tea duty there would have been no Boston Tea Party and no consequent final quarrel between Britain and her colonies.”<sup>34</sup>

This was not what John Dickinson had in mind. The “Farmer” wanted to change the way Americans viewed their freedom. He advocated a careful watch on liberty. His view – for constitutional protest but against violence – would dominate the political landscape for several years. It was what most Americans wanted to hear. Charles J. Stille, who wrote the first biography of Dickinson, said of the *Letters*, “To most Americans they became, until the beginning of the war, a genuine political text-book, and their maxims were received with absolute confidence.”<sup>35</sup>

It is inevitable though, that from our vantage point, we would ask whether *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* deserves a prominent place in our history. Certainly, the turn of events outdistanced Dickinson’s arguments for moderate protests. His masterpiece would be overtaken by another one, Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*.<sup>36</sup>

Pierre Marambaud, a literature professor at the University of Nice, suggests that the differences between Dickinson’s essays and Paine’s *Common Sense* highlight how large the gap between Great Britain and the American colonies had grown from 1767 to 1776.<sup>37</sup>

“How did it happen,” he asks, “that in 1768, when Dickinson’s *Letters* were widely read and admired in the colonies, their author’s mind came to coincide with general opinion, something which was never to occur again for the rest of his life?”

“During the years that followed, he did not change although the temper of his countrymen did. He could only be the champion of the popular will while moderation remained the rule in colonial protest.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1767, the American public believed the New York Restraining Act violated their constitutional rights. They were outraged at the behavior of Parliament. They were not



A nearly contemporary engraving of the 1770 Boston Massacre by Paul Revere. Though not a completely accurate depiction of the event, it was created by Revere some three weeks after the event (New York Public Library).

reposes himself at home, viewing, with unconcern, the flames that have invaded his neighbor’s house, without using any endeavors to extinguish them.”<sup>30</sup>

The *Letters* were printed in every colony, but they especially made a stir in Boston. Soon after the first installment was published. Dickinson sent a complete set to James Otis, a fervent critic of Parliament and an ally of Samuel Adams. *The Farmer* became compulsory reading in Boston. The *Letters* gave new life to the protest movement there. In February 1768, the state legislature issued a Circular Letter to all of the other colonies, asking them to protest the Townshend Acts.

demanding separation from England.

Some of Dickinson's critics, then and now, claim that his proposed solutions in the *Letters* were vague. But what was he trying to solve? Independence? If he and everyone could have seen the future, that is what he should have done. They could not. The problem he was trying to solve was something completely different. Marambaud said for Dickinson to have contemplated independence in 1767 would be for him to have contemplated civil war.<sup>39</sup>

Dickinson's attempt to solve the problems he and other Americans were facing made perfect sense to people in 1767. Marambaud said, "... both conservatives and radicals could endorse Dickinson's statements because most of his contemporaries, like himself, still believed in the possibility of a compromise and the avoidance of bloodshed; even radicals could hope that the London government would yield as it had already done in the Stamp Act crisis."<sup>40</sup>

But *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania's* importance went beyond that. It helped give shape to the American argument. It convinced Americans that they were a people.

Near the end of his long and distinguished career, the Yale historian Edmund S. Morgan wrote, "people have to learn to see themselves as a people."<sup>41</sup>

He added, "The ideas generated by the Stamp Act crisis were crucial to the creation of that vision among Americans of all kinds."

That vision would continue to evolve.

With John Dickinson's "*Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*," Americans would gain an indispensable guide.

- 
1. Edmund S. Morgan & Helen M. Morgan, *Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution*, Chapel Hill, 1995. 286-287.
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  3. William S. Hanna, *Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics*, Stanford, 1964. 176.
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  5. Morgan & Morgan, *op cit.* 287.
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  8. Thomas, *op cit.* 339.
  9. Morgan & Morgan, *op cit.* 279.
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  14. Jensen, *op cit.* 227-228.
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  16. Jacobson, *op cit.* 47.

17. Jensen, *op cit.* 228.
18. Thomas, *Townshend*. 20.
19. Jensen, *op cit.* 228.
20. Jacobson, *op cit.* 45.
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22. Jacobson, *op cit.* 51
23. Carl F. Kaestle, "The Public Reaction to John Dickinson's Farmer's Letters," *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings*, 1969. 323.
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26. Jensen, *op cit.* 242.
27. John Dickinson, "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania." *Empire and Nation*, Forrest McDonald, ed., New Jersey, 1962. 23.
28. Carl Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas*, New York, 1958. 96.
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30. Dickinson, *op cit.* 6.
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34. Peter D.G. Thomas, *Revolution in America: Britain & The Colonies 1763-1776*. 20.
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36. Pierre Marambaud, "Dickinson's Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania' as Political Discourse: Ideology, Imagery, and Rhetoric," *Early American Literature*, Volume XII, 1977. 63.
37. Marambaud, *op cit.* 63.
38. Marambaud, *op cit.* 64.
39. Marambaud, *op cit.* 65.
40. Marambaud, *op cit.* 66.
41. Morgan, *op cit.* viii.



## THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION: THE FIRST FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

**R**ichard Henry Lee of Virginia formally proposed on June 7, 1776, that Congress declare the American colonies free and independent. That led to the vote on separation and the Declaration of Independence. That wasn't all Lee asked for. His proposal also called for a unified frame of government for the colonies.

Before the crisis with Parliament, the colonies rarely cooperated. However, they started working together when they met for the First Continental Congress in 1774. Congress appointed a series of committees to run the developing war against Great Britain and a foreign policy for all 13 colonies. However, by the spring of 1776, no one believed the arrangement worked well.

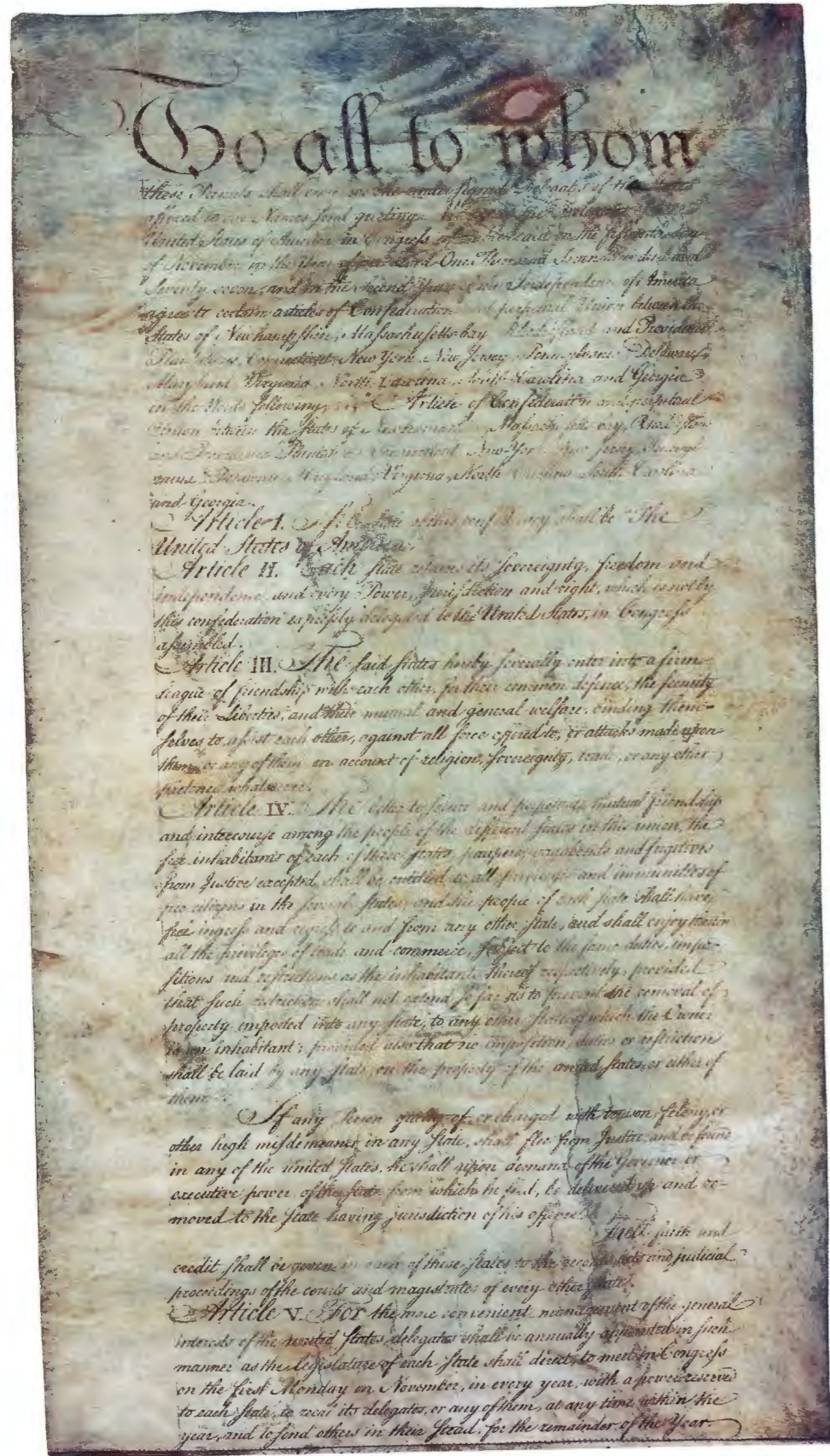
Congress thus jumped on the Lee's proposal and appointed a committee to develop such a frame of government. Each state had one vote. The committee picked John Dickinson as chairman. It fell to Dickinson to gather the opinions of all members and form them into a whole.

It was an almost impossible task. Dickinson did it, however. He studied previous proposals. One, the Albany Plan of Union, went back to 1754. Another, proposed by Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania, was from 1774. A third proposal, offered by Benjamin Franklin, was only a year old. Either the colonies or Congress had rejected all three.

The colonies were jealous of their freedom and of each other. By this time, practically all of the colonies had declared their independence from Great Britain. They were reluctant to give that up.

Dickinson did his best and the committee submitted the draft in July. Dickinson's version called for a stronger central government than the newly formed states were operating under. It also gave Congress powers to deal with the borders of the states, a controversial issue that would lead to problems. Dickinson also offered an innovation. He proposed limits on the states' ability to further infringe on religious freedom. At the time, almost all states had established churches. This also would be controversial. The draft also gave each state one vote in Congress. There was no executive branch.

Congress debated the draft for a month, and then dropped it until 1777. A much weaker document finally was submitted to the states for approval. It gave Congress little power and gave



A view of an original draft of the first page of the Articles of Confederation in the collections of the U.S. National Archives.

Congress few tools to run the government. The states did not adopt the Articles of Confederation until 1781. By then, most of the fighting of the Revolutionary War was over. The articles would create an alliance of states rather than a unified nation. The failures and weaknesses of the Articles would add to the argument for the stronger national government that came out of the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

Dickinson did not take part in any of these debates. By that time, the new government in Pennsylvania had dismissed him from Congress.

Dickinson, however, was able to revisit his belief in stronger government at the Constitutional Convention. He joined with other critics of the Articles of Confederation to form a stronger, but balanced federal government.



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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES - COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC John Dickinson House

AND/OR COMMON John Dickinson House

## 2 LOCATION

STREETS & NUMBER 5 miles south of Dover via U.S. 113 and .3 miles east of U.S. 113 on  
Kitts Hummock Road.

CITY, TOWN Kitts Hummock  VICINITY OF  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

STATE Delaware CODE 10 COUNTY Kent CODE 1

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL/COMM. <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of Delaware, administered by Delaware State Museum, Mr. Henry Draper,  
Milton, Delaware.

STREETS & NUMBER Hall of Records  
CITY, TOWN Dover STATE Delaware  
VICINITY OF

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Kent County Courthouse

STREETS & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Dover STATE Delaware

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE 1936  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs  
CITY, TOWN Washington STATE District of Columbia



# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built between 1739 and 1754, the John Dickinson house is an excellent restored example of an Early Georgian mansion. The house illustrates what may be called the "telescope type of planning," in which a series of smaller wings are added to the main house at later dates. The main house here was erected by Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1739-1740, on a 13,000 acre plantation tract. The mansion is a five bay, two-story structure, built of brick in Flemish bond, with black glazed headers. There is a wide central hall with a parlor to the east and two smaller rooms, each with an angle fireplace to the west, or left. The cellar of the main house, which is raised almost to ground level and is well-lighted, originally contained a large storage room to the east, a wine cellar under the front door, and a scullery and kitchen at the west end. To the west, two lower wings step down from the main house on the same axis. The first of these wings was added in 1752 and contained a dining room with a bedroom above. The smallest and westernmost wing was added in 1754. This whitewashed section housed the kitchen and the quarters of the household slaves above it, and is fronted with a brick-columned arcade.

The mansion faces directly south and though well-lighted, has only three windows on the north side, in order to conserve heat in the winter. The main house, as it was built by Judge Dickinson, was three full stories in height, over a raised basement, and had a hipped roof. The first floor windows, which are unusually tall, still reflect the original design that was proper for such a Georgian three-story house.

In 1804 a disastrous fire occurred, which left little of the house standing, except the four walls. John Dickinson supervised the repair of the house, through an extensive correspondence from his home in Wilmington. The original hip roof was replaced with a gable roof, and the mansion was lowered to two stories. The interior of the repaired house was substantial but plain, unlike the expensively decorated and carved woodwork of the original. The repair of the house along simple lines was natural in view of the fact that Dickinson now made his home in Wilmington, and apparently intended the house for tenant use.

In 1952, the National Society of Colonial Dames of America raised \$25,000 which was presented to the State of Delaware to preserve the Dickinson House, when its destruction appeared imminent. The State matched the gift and purchased the house and a 13-acre tract around it. Architectural, archeological and historical research was performed under the direction of the Delaware Public Archives Commission, and with the assistance of an Advisory Committee, restoration was carried out. The restoration of the house was based on Dickinson's correspondence and written instructions of the 1804-1806 period. Materials of the original structure were reused when possible, and the house has been refurnished with pieces formerly owned by the Dickinson family.

There are no surface remains of the outbuildings and slave quarters which once were a part of the plantation, and no archeological work has been done in this area. There are slight vestiges of the long lane which ran from the house south to the landing on St. Jones River, and it is reported that along this lane is the site of the slave burying ground. A formal boxwood garden has been laid out directly in front of the main house, and to the west of the house is a large kitchen garden. Both gardens are enclosed by picket fences. To the east of the house is a log outbuilding, which was recently moved to the site and is not historic.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The land to the east and south of the Dickinson house is presently under cultivation, and is reminiscent of the plantation days. U.S. Route 113 runs along the western boundary of the property and the Bay Road extends along the northern boundary.

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# **E SIGNIFICANCE**

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PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
(1732-1808)		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES (1732-1808)

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"John Dickinson has been aptly termed the 'Penman of the Revolution.' In the literature of that struggle, his position is as pre-eminent as Washington in war, Franklin in diplomacy, and Morris in finance.

His internationally famous Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania (1767) and the subsequent Letters to the King provided calm analysis of the strained relations between England and the colonies from an economic and legal standpoint. Following the Revolution, Dickinson remained an active political leader and proved one of the prime movers in the Constitutional Congress of 1787 and in the ratification of the Constitution.

The Dickinson house, located five miles south of Dover, Delaware, where it is believed he wrote the famous Letters, was built in 1740 by the author's father. It is a fine example of Delaware plantation architecture, and has been restored to its early appearance by the State of Delaware, and it is presently open to the public.

## Biography

John Dickinson was born in Talbot County, Maryland in 1732, and moved with his family to Kent County, Delaware in 1724. His father, Samuel Dickinson, was a rich planter and ~~his~~ a judge, who in 1740 purchased a 13,000 acre plantation on St. Jonas Creek, and there erected his fine brick mansion.

In this house young Dickinson grew up as a rich planter's son enjoying the life of a country aristocrat. He was privately tutored by a young Irishman, William Killen, who later became the first Chancellor of Delaware. In 1750 John left home for Philadelphia to study law, and from there he traveled to London to continue his studies at the Middle Temple.

Dickinson returned to Philadelphia after completing his studies, where he began a successful law practice. He frequently returned to his father's house when his public affairs permitted.

1: Paul L. Ford, The Writings of John Dickinson, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Memoirs, XIV (Philadelphia, 1895) preface.

(continued)

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 Pennsylvania Memoirs XIII (Philadelphia, 1891).  
 Moses Tyler, The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-1783, 2 vols. (New York,  
 1897): i.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 13  
 UTM REFERENCES

A 1.8	4 6 , 1 2 , 0	4 3 2 , 8 2 , 4 , 0	b 1.8	4 4 , 6 , 1 , 2 , 8 , 0	4 4 , 3 2 , 8 , 8 , 0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C 1.8	4 6 , 1 , 2 , 0	4 3 2 , 7 9 , 0	0 1.8	4 6 , 1 , 2 , 8	4 3 2 , 7 9 , 0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION beginning at the inter section of Kitt Hummock Road and the abandoned dirt road, proceed south along the eastern curb of the dirt road 1000' to a point, thence east for approximately 500' to a point, thence north for approximately 750' back to Kitt Hummock Road, thence northwest along the southern curb of Kitt Hummock Road to the point of origin.

(See sketch map)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE  
 Richard E. Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION  
 Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE  
 3/12/75

STREET & NUMBER  
 1100 L Street NW

TELEPHONE  
 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN  
 Washington

STATE  
 D.C.

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL \_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Designated: JAN. 20, 1968

Boundary Certified: data 8/2/73

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 8/11/77

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER/OPIH: NATIONAL REGISTER: lli

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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John Dickinson House, Delaware

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE (1)

Biography (continued)

When trouble with England was made acute by the Townshend Acts of 1767, he wrote his letters to a farmer in Pennsylvania (Delaware was then in the Three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania) which brought him fame in America and abroad. These pamphlets, as well as his subsequent letters to the king were an appeal to reason to avert or postpone a break with England. Unlike Patrick Henry's incendiary speeches, Dickinson's patriotism took the form of a calm analysis of the problem from a legal and economic standpoint. His thesis was that England would enjoy a more profitable trade with the Colonies if she did not labor them with taxes.

This unfulfilled hope for reconciliation cost him popularity when, in July 1776, as a delegate from Pennsylvania, he absented himself from the vote on Richard Henry Lee's resolution for independence, voted against the Declaration of Independence, and then declined to sign that document. The Colonies, he felt, would not stand much chance of winning the war without strong allies or a strong central government to hold the Colonies together. Nonetheless when the war began he was one of the few members of the Continental Congress to take up arms.

In 1781-2 Dickinson's prestige was sufficiently restored for him to serve as President of Delaware, after which he resigned to become President of Pennsylvania.

Dickinson's passion for justice and order in government reached its flower in the Constitutional Congress of 1787, where his counsel halted fruitless bickering and clarified many problems. After the Constitution was finally drawn up he campaigned for its adoption by the States with pamphlets signed, "Fabius," and had the satisfaction of seeing Delaware ratify it first.

Dickinson spent his last years in Wilmington, Delaware, where he died in 1808.

Property *Dickinson, John, House*

311

**BOUNDARY DEFINITION**

State *DELAWARE* Working Number *NML*

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**TECHNICAL**

*if A\ v. ... il J too much area enclosed*

**CONTROL**

Photos \_\_\_\_\_  
Maps \_\_\_\_\_

*1.31.77*  
**HISTORIAN**

*No photos of intrusions. Boundaries seem reasonable.*

*ok*  
*J. Crowder*  
*2/7/77*

*See O.M. v. W.A. - that part of Dickinson's estate being ex. ... State ... 13 acres, yet ...*

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

*L. E. ...*  
*2.16.77*

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_  
Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Register Entry \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Register Entry \_\_\_\_\_

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_  
Send-back \_\_\_\_\_  
Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_  
Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

Entered \_\_\_\_\_  
Entered \_\_\_\_\_

INT 2106-74  
NT 2106-74

FHR-8-300A  
FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

### Revised Boundary Description

John Dickinson Mansion

National Historic Landmark

Beginning at the intersection of County Route 68 with a lane leading to the John Dickinson Mansion east along County Route 68 approximately .6 mile, from thence due south to the St. Jones River, thence west along the historic course of the St. Jones River to an unnamed creek, thence north along the creek and the west side of the lane leading to the John Dickinson Mansion to the point of beginning.

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V/f!

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION  
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION  
DICKINSON MANSION NATIONAL LANDMARK  
DICKINSON MANSION NATIONAL LANDMARK

Cara L. Wise  
Historical Archaeologist



It has been proposed that the boundary of the Dickinson Mansion National Landmark be revised to conform to the boundaries of the St. Jones Neck Historic District, which includes the Dickinson Mansion itself but which does not include all the area described for the National Landmark. The boundaries for the St. Jones Neck Historic District were chosen to include intact architectural and archaeological evidence of the historic development of St. Jones Neck using existing natural and visual boundaries wherever possible.

With respect to the Dickinson Mansion, the woods along the unnamed creek used as the western boundary of the district and the trees planted along the lane to the Mansion provide a visual and physical terminus to the property. The fields to the west of this creek contain no historic period occupations, so far as can be determined by surface survey, nor is there any documentary evidence that such an occupation should be expected. Based on our knowledge of archaeological sites of the same period, all the archaeological remains associated with the structure can be expected to be found east of the creek within 150 ft. of the house. The woods along the creek also serve to screen the Mansion from Rt. 113, which is the western boundary of the Landmark. The plantation aspect of the Landmark's significance is adequately expressed by the land east and south of the structure.









John Dickinson House, Dover, Delaware

3750

3750

John Dickinson House, 1739-54  
South (Front) Elevation and West End,  
near Dover, Del.

N.P.S. Photo, 1967

(28)



3749

John Dickinson House, 1739-54  
South (Front) Elevation and East End,  
near Dover, Del.

N.P.S. Photo, 1967



DE 3

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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6-2

②

PHOTOGRAPH FOR  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
by JACK E. BOUCHER, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

PERSPECTIVE CORRECTION  
WITHIN ONE DEGREE

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

7-75

dae: 10-15-66

DEL.: DOVER VIC. JOHN DICKENSON HOUSE  
Kent Co.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

John Dickinson House

AND/OR COMMON

John Dickinson House

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN

Kitts Hummock  VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Kent

STATE Delaware

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT

National Park Service

DATE OF PHOTO

1967

NEGATIVE FILED AT

n. r.

Confirmed by Richard E. Greenwood

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

NATION HISTORIC LANDMARK  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES - ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

John Dickinson House

AND/OR COMMON

John Dickinson House

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN

Kitts Hummock

~~K~~-VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Kent

STATE Delaware

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE U.S.G.S. Map, Frederica Quadrangle  
(7.5' Series)

SCALE 1:24,000

DATE 1956

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

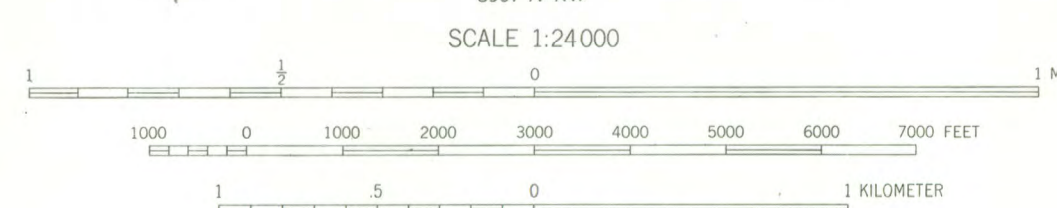
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES



The John Dickinson House UTM  
U.S.G.S. 7.5' Frederica Quad.  
A 18.461120.4328240  
B 18.461280.4328180  
C 18.461300.4327900  
D 18.461130.4327900

Mapped by U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey  
Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USC&GS and USGS  
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs  
taken 1946. Topography by planetable surveys 1946. Revised  
by USGS 1956  
Hydrography compiled from USC&GS chart 1218 (1955)  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Delaware coordinate system  
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue  
Unchecked elevations are shown in brown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

FREDERICA, DEL.  
SW/4 BOWERS 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3900—W7522.5/7.5

1956  
AMS 5962 III SW—SERIES V832

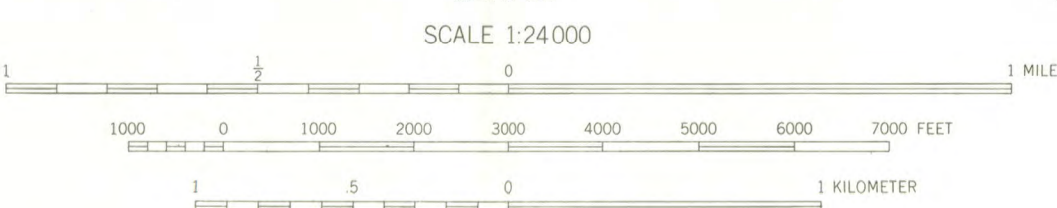
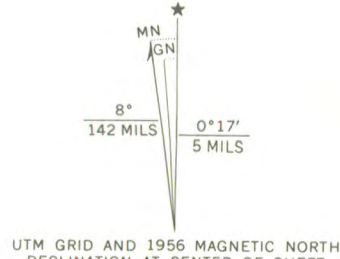
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.8 FEET  
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



The John Dickinson House  
USGS '16' Series  
Frederica Quadrangle  
Near Dover, Delaware

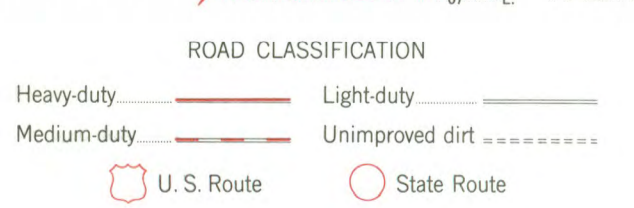
UTM References  
A 18, N:4328000, E:462000  
B 18, N:4325590, E:462000  
C 18, N:4326385, E:460460  
D 18, N:4328260, E:461070

Mapped by U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey  
Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
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10,000-foot grid based on Delaware coordinate system  
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue  
Unchecked elevations are shown in brown



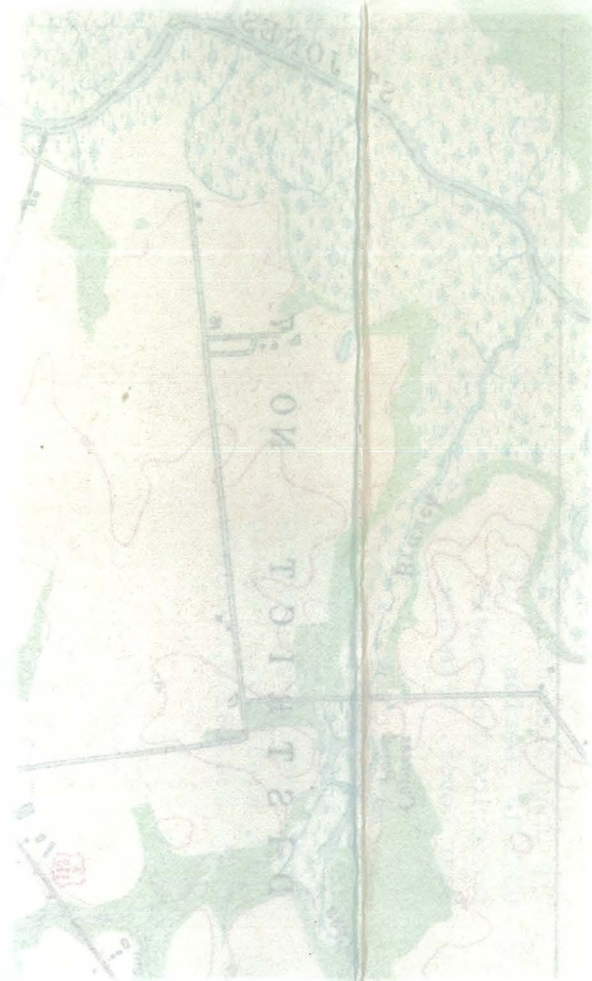
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.8 FEET

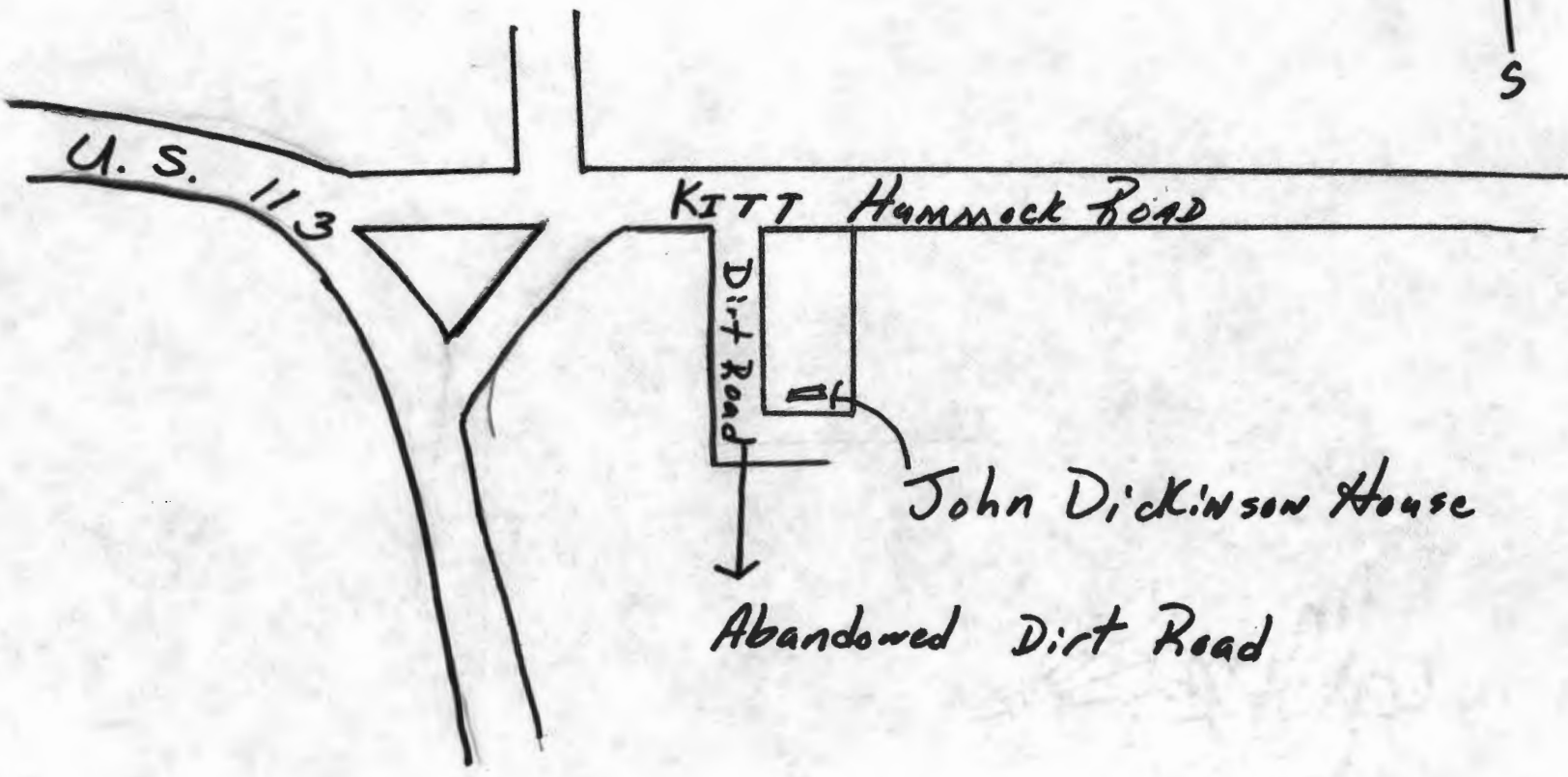
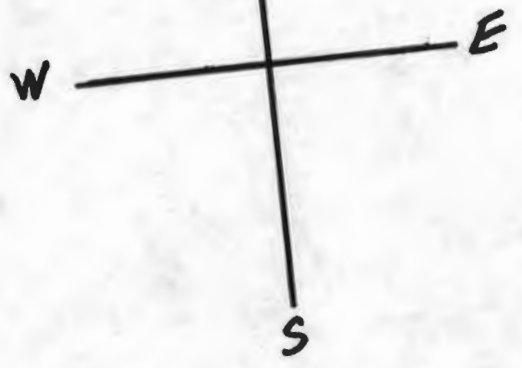
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FREDERICA, DEL.  
SW/4 BOWERS 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3900—W7522.5/7.5

1956  
AMS 5962 III SW—SERIES V832





U.S. 113

KITT Hammock Road

Dirt Road

John Dickinson House

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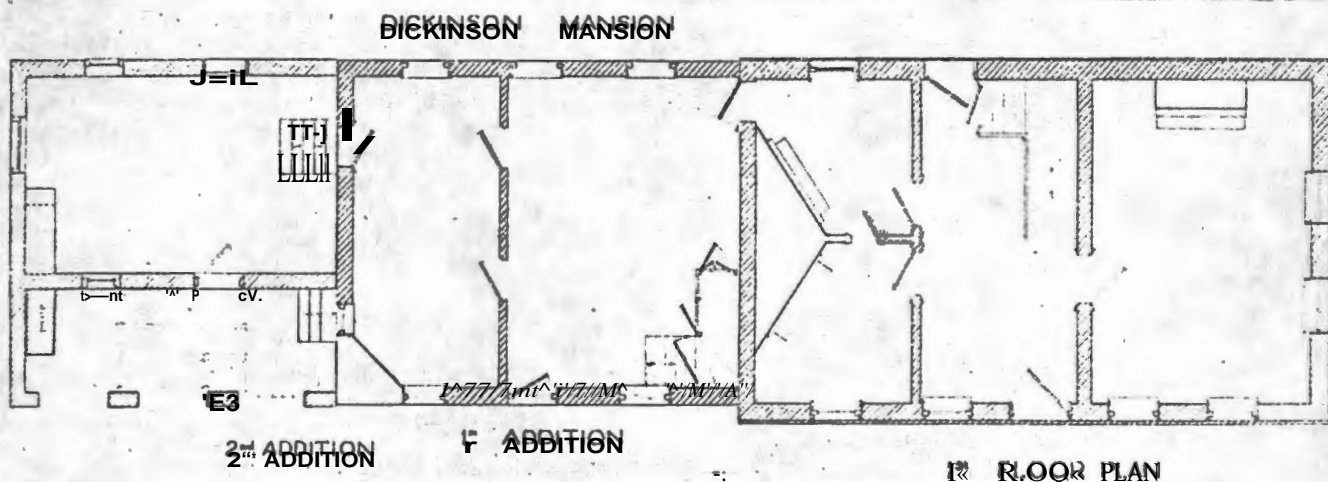
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First floor plans of the John Dickinson Mansion for the original 1740 part and the wings of 1752 and 1754.

From Isaold D. Eberlein and Corliss V. D. Eberlein, *Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware* (Wilmington, Del., 1953), 76.

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IRS. HENRY RIDGELY, PRESIDENT  
GEORGE M. FISHER, VICE-PRESIDENT  
JAMES E. GOSLEE, SECRETARY  
MRS. EDWARD W. COOCH  
DONALD R. MORTON  
MRS. JAMES M. TUNNELL



STATE OF DELAWARE  
PUBLIC ARCHIVES COMMISSION  
DOVER

Leon de Valinger, Jr.  
STATE ARCHIVIST

*Survey  
John Dickinson  
House*

January 4, 1950

Honorable J. Allen Frear  
U. S. Senator  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Frear:

During the course of years many people coming to Dover inquire of the location of the John Dickinson House; and, after some of them have seen it, they express surprise that the home of so prominent an early patriot of our Country has not been preserved as an historic shrine. We explain that, as there is no Society for the Preservation of Antiquities in our State and further that as the State is only now establishing a State Museum in Dover, aid from these sources could not be obtained for this purpose. We have been so impressed by the sincere wishes of people to see this mansion preserved that we have attempted to interest a group of private citizens in the State to undertake purchase and preservation of the House. These efforts, however, were unsuccessful as it would apparently require more funds than could be raised for this purpose.

As John Dickinson was born in Maryland, raised in Delaware, held prominent offices in this State as well as in

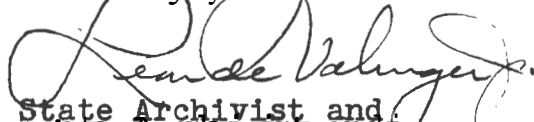
Honorable J. Allen Frear

-2-

January 4, 1950  
January 4, 1950

Pennsylvania, and through his writings contributed largely  
Pennsylvania, and through his writings contributed largely  
to the independence and growth of our Country, it is thought  
to the independence and growth of our Country, it is thought  
by many citizens that his mansion near Dover should be  
by many citizens that his mansion near Dover should be  
preserved as a national shrine. It is for that reason that  
preserved as a national shrine. It is for that reason that  
on behalf of many interested people I am asking you to  
on behalf of many interested people I am asking you to  
intercede for us with the National Park Service. In this  
intercede for us with the National Park Service. In this  
folder is a sketch of John Dickinson prepared by Dr. John  
folder is a sketch of John Dickinson prepared by Dr. John  
H. Powell, his official biographer, as well as a map showing  
H. Powell, his official biographer, as well as a map showing  
the location of the House and some photographs showing its  
the location of the House and some photographs showing its  
present site. We will be pleased to do all we can to  
present site. We will be pleased to do all we can to  
assist with furtherance of this project and we hope that  
assist with furtherance of this project and we hope that  
the National Park Service will recognize the importance  
the National Park Service will recognize the importance  
of this historic house and add it to the historic sites  
of this historic house and add it to the historic sites  
under its custody.  
under its custody,

Cordially yours,



State Archivist and  
State Archivist and  
Director Delaware State Museum

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UNITED STATES SENATE

Washington, D. C.

27 January 1950 P::

The Honorable Oscar L. Chapman

Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
Interior Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:  
Dear Br. Secretary:

I have just forwarded to the Director of the National Park Service a letter and other documents having to do with a proposal to preserve the John Dickinson House in Kent County, Delaware, as a national monument. Dickinson, as you well know, was one of the great men of the Revolution.

As the "Patriarch of the Revolution" his eminence was recognized not only in Delaware and Pennsylvania, but throughout the Colonies. Later by the use of his influence and his pen he did much to have the Constitution of our young Nation successfully adopted. He held high offices in Delaware as well as in Pennsylvania and today hundreds of graduates of Dickinson College, which was named in his honor, revere his memory and would be particularly interested in seeing his home preserved as a national shrine.

I want to point out in particular that of the many historic sites throughout the country which have been preserved by the National Park Service, no attention or recognition has been given to those of Delaware. A decision to preserve the John Dickinson House by the National Park Service will be looked upon with great favor by the people of my State. I earnestly trust that you will agree with me in this regard.

Sincerely yours,  
Sincerely yours,

(sgd) J\* Allen Freer, Jr.

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

312 reply in folder tot  
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*Lurvey  
Del.*

FEB: - 2 1950

Hon. J. Allen Frear, Jr.  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Senator Frear:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th, enclosing  
a letter from the National Park Service, dated  
March 10, 1950, regarding the proposed  
acquisition of the 100-acre tract in  
the town of ...

The ... and that of  
the ...  
I am ...  
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I am ...  
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I am ...

Your letter of the 27th, enclosing  
a letter from the National Park Service, dated  
March 10, 1950, regarding the proposed  
acquisition of the 100-acre tract in  
the town of ...

Sincerely yours,

A. E. ...

(SGD.) A. E. T5SKMWT-

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Regional Director, Region 6  
Lands Division  
History Division  
Mr. Young (detached)

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UNITED STATES SENATE

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Washington, D. C.

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Mr. Newton B. Drury, Director  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Interior Building  
Washington, D. C.

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Dear Mr. Drury:

I am enclosing for your attention an illustrated brochure and a letter to me from the State Archivist and Director, Delaware State Museum of the State of Delaware, Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr. Its contents are self-explanatory and are being forwarded to you at the suggestion of Mr. Donald F. Lee, the Chief Historian of the National Park Service.

I am intensely interested in having the National Park Service preserve the John Dickinson House as a historic shrine. The enclosed information about Dickinson was prepared by Dr. John R. Powell, his official biographer.

A number of people are very much interested in anything connected with John Dickinson as he was one of the great men of the Revolution. As the "Father of the Revolution" his eminence was recognized not only in Delaware and Pennsylvania but throughout the Colonies. Later by the use of his influence and his pen he did much to have the Constitution of our young Nation successfully adopted. He held high office in Delaware as well as Pennsylvania and today hundreds of graduates of Dickinson College, which was named in his honor, revere his memory and would be particularly interested in seeing his home preserved as a national shrine.

The John Dickinson house, where he was raised as a boy and spent much of his time while in Dover, is very conveniently located on the Kittumock Road (State Route 9) just a few hundred feet off U. S. 113 southeast of Dover. This location is very convenient for tourists visiting Delaware or to the increased number of motorists using the Ocean Highway going or coming from the North to Florida. In addition to being easily accessible, the house is an excellent example of the large brick mansion type of Kent County, Delaware, which is rapidly disappearing.

After examining the list of sites under the custody of the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service, it is my feeling that the John Dickinson house certainly deserves inclusion in such a list. I believe also that of the many historic sites throughout

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the country, which have been preserved by the National Park Service, no attention or recognition has been given to those of Delaware. If you desire, I will be happy to discuss this matter further with you.

For your information, I have also written the Secretary of the Interior asking his consideration in the matter of preserving the John Dickinson house,

Sincerely yours,  
Sincerely yours.

J. Allen Frear, Jr.

Enclosure

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

reply refer to:  
158 WASO  
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PM 3:30

FEB - 7 1950

*Sweeney*  
*Delaware*

My dear Senator From:

I have received your letter of January 27 concern-  
ing your interest in the preservation of the John Dickinson  
House in Kent County, Delaware, as a national monument.

I am asking Senator Horton B. Drury of the National  
Park Service to give consideration to your  
proposal. You should hear from him regarding it within  
a few days.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD.) C. GIRARD DAVIDSON

Acting Secretary of the Interior

IM\* #: *Allen Young*  
Washington, D. C.

cc: Mr. Young, Mr. [illegible] (By MP) with copy of Mr. [illegible]  
letter of January 27.

Mr. Young:bb

'Alpm:



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to:

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25, D. C.

MAR 15 1961

*Survey*

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Hon. J. A. ...  
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Washington D. C.

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conservation.

Sincerely yours,

(s6D) A.E. IWMUH

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to: Regional Director, ... (with a copy of  
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History Division

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 1950

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Mr. Norton B. Drury, Director

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

Washington, D. C.

3-

Dear Mr. Drury:

I have received your letter of March 8, with further reference to the proposed preservation of the John Dickinson Home. It would be appreciated if you could confirm the April 18th date for the meeting of the Board, as I have already communicated with Mr. da Talinga, and he will be happy to come to Washington to appear before the committee.

I agree with you that it is a desirable policy to encourage the states to preserve historic sites whenever possible; Unfortunately, an organization to carry out such an undertaking in Delaware does not exist. Further, in our state, we do not have a National Shrine up to the present time.

You may be interested to know that a number of reputable citizens in the state are taking an increased interest in the John Dickinson House and are hopeful that favorable action may be forthcoming. I should like to assure you again of my great interest in this project and of my desire to be of whatever aid I can in furthering its acceptance by the National Park Service.

Kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) J. Allen Proctor, Jr.

COPY

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In i refer to:  
L58 WAGO

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

March 30, 1950

Memorandum

To: Chief Historian  
From: Chief Architect  
Subject: John Dickinson House, Dover, Delaware.

We have very little information on the above structure, which, I understand, is scheduled for consideration as a National Historic Site at the April meeting of the Advisory Board.

In the Historic American Building Survey the district officer for Delaware had given it a low priority and recommended photographing only. It is described as a typical mid-eighteenth century dwelling of the manor type, with two early-nineteenth century additions.

There are no outstanding architectural characteristics or even well preserved features which would justify its designation as of National significance.

This structure should be placed in the category for preservation and operation by the local government or by some historical organization interested in exhibiting the house to the public.

*Dick Sutton*

Dick Sutton  
Chief Architect

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OFFICE MEMORANDUM  
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Project Manager  
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Resident Architect  
a«\*idi\*nt Arohitaot

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April 25, -If#

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**Visit to John Dickinson House**

I was invited to accompany Mr. Harold D. Sherman and  
Or\* Rik\* oa a visit to the Quaker House in the county  
Or\* Kloby had to  
Mr\* Raph Itakha accompanied us\*

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took lunch with Mrs. Harry Bldgaly-at Ootar and visited  
the Oikiasoa house with Mr. Laa ddfaliagar, Jr\*, Stata  
ArohiTiat\*. Aftaraarda «a visited the Arohivaa building and  
saw some very interesting items\*

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The Dickinson house is a two-story gable-end house with  
two hrok addition at oaa and\* the front is of Fhah  
bond with glass haadarat the rear of Sachah bead\*. Oaa  
and is antiraly phatarad, the other bigly oanoaad  
by addition\* the originalaa aolaba is m haag and it  
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old woodwork in «a nauaa. It appaarad, ta ba ratar lata in  
parod\*. Mr\* datlingara aantonad that there had boon a fire  
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**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.**

is reply refer to:  
150 WASO

*Survey*

Hon\* J. Allen Frear Jr.  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

MAY - 8 1950

My dear Senator Frear:

I have received your letters of April 19 and April 27 concerning the commission reached by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, at its recent meeting. In regard to the preservation of the John Dickinson House near Dover, Delaware, as a national historical area.

I have also read with interest the resolution adopted by the Dickinson Club of Delaware enclosed with your letter of April 27 and have been pleased that Mr. Kelly, your Administrative Assistant, as well as Mr. Leon DeValinger, State Archivist of Delaware, made an effective presentation regarding the Dickinson House during their appearance before the Advisory Board on April 18. Dr. Edo U. Island, retiring Chairman of the Board, has also asked me to convey to you the Board's appreciation for your usefulness in asking Messrs. Kelly and DeValinger to present your views and those of the several groups of citizens at Dover concerning the John Dickinson House.

The resolution adopted by the Advisory Board regarding the Dickinson House is now before Secretary Chapman and as soon as he gives his approval, I shall be glad to advise you.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) A. E. DEMARAY

A. E. Demaray  
Acting Director

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?>7 ipi7# Copy to Regional Director, Region One  
Mr. Wirth  
Recreational Planning Division  
Historical Division  
Mr. Long (detached)

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(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

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Assistant Director

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Assistant Director Wri  
Land Planning Division  
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PARKS

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zn.reply refer to;  
L58 JOSO



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

PES 1393

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Survey

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ISOD.J OSCAR W. CHAPMAN

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Secretary of the Interior

Hon. J. Allen Frear, Jr.  
United States Senate

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UNITED STATES SENATE

Washington, D.C.

11 May 1957

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Honorable Oscar L. Chapman  
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Director of the Interior  
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Washington 2a D C\*

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Ky 4tsr Mr. Smrwimryt

Tim Aetlie Dli<<tar of Oho VaUenoX Pork S^oloo oiMoo\*  
The Acting Director of the National Park Service advises  
me that a resolution adopted by the Advisory Board on  
National Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites, Building and  
with reference to the John S. Eaton House in Delaware  
is now awaiting your approval.

I am not aware of what recommendation the Committee made  
but I doubt that the recommendation of the American  
Bureau of Archeology and Ethnology, Popular support  
for restoration of the house is widespread, and I am  
doubtful of delay of the house is desirable to secure its  
by the Department of the Interior. I am in hope that your  
earliest judgment will lead you to the action which  
I hold. As you know, Delaware had no satisfactory  
sooner at the present time.

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Sincerely yours,

/s/ J. Allen Root, Jr.

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TO SECRETARY  
JUL 21 1950  
FOR SIGNATURE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to  
the reply file  
L58 WASH

AUG-31 1950

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Survey  
RA-

My dear Senator Brewster:

I have received your U%mc ^ JwmiiA m\$M4'uiim  
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appointment concern. MfMm, fast m% ifei\* pm\$m% h»» a»t tmm  
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, SGD.) OSCAR E. CHAPMAN

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SECRETARY  
AUG 26 1950  
FOR SIGNATURE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

AUG - 3 1950

Survey

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(USGD.) OSCAR L. CHAPIAS

Secretary of the Interior

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Secretary to the President  
from mlto IMWO  
Washington 25, D. C.

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HiS'l';

My dear Senator *rnmt\**

Your letter of June 11 concerning the preservation of the  
John Dickinson House near *aMMirt iiiiMif%* §. m lam^f lite  
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Department of the Interior.

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K-i.-Sers;  
Hon. JU iisfii Proar, Jr.  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 13, 1950

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MEMORANDUM FOR

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Matthew J. Connelly  
Secretary to the President

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

In reply refer to  
L58 WASO

B. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

-%

*Survey*

SM 22 1930

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region One

From: Assistant Director Wirth

Subject: Field investigation of the John Dickinson House, Dover, Del.

The enclosed correspondence is self-explanatory. It is requested that you arrange to have a field investigation made of the John Dickinson House at Dover, Delaware. It is hoped that this investigation can be completed prior to the next meeting of the Advisory Board which is now scheduled to be held in Washington on November 2-3.

It is suggested that the person or persons making this investigation call first on Mr. De Valinger, State Archivist of Delaware, who will be able to put our representatives in touch with all persons whom they should see while conducting this study. Please let this office know as soon as this study is scheduled so that Senator Fears' office may be advised.

(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

Assistant Director

In duplicate

Attachments 2

Copy to History Division

RLC:md

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to  
158 HASO

FBS 2322  
ms, t312

SEP 28 1950

SEP 25 1950  
FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of September 14 in which you request that further consideration be given to the proposed withdrawal of the 381-acre portion of the National Park System known as the Minto Unit, located in the State of Alaska, within the next few weeks, to explore for oil and gas. The proposed withdrawal is being considered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the provisions of the Act of October 3, 1940, as amended, which provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall, upon the request of the State of Alaska, withdraw from the National Park System any lands within the State of Alaska which are owned by the United States and which are not needed for the preservation of the objects of the National Park System.

Following the completion of this study, the proposed withdrawal will be recommended to the Secretary of the Interior for his approval. The Secretary of the Interior will also consult with the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Navy, as appropriate, regarding the proposed withdrawal. The proposed withdrawal is being considered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the provisions of the Act of October 3, 1940, as amended, which provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall, upon the request of the State of Alaska, withdraw from the National Park System any lands within the State of Alaska which are owned by the United States and which are not needed for the preservation of the objects of the National Park System.

Sincerely yours,

OSCAR S. BEAMAN

Secretary of the Interior

John J. Hill  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

Very truly yours,  
Oscar S. Beaman  
Secretary of the Interior

Mr. Tolson

Mr. Loring (detached)

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(by NPS)

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UNITED STATES SENATE

COPY

14 September 1934

The Honorable Oscar L. Chapman  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Secretary Chapman:

Following receipt of your August 3rd letter regarding my interest in the establishment by the National Park Service of an historic shrine in my state, I discussed the matter in detail with a number of interested persons, many of whom are distinguished and honored citizens of the First State. It was agreed that, though the establishment of a site in the community of New Castle would be highly desirable, the consensus of opinion still favors the restoration and preservation of the John Dickinson House.

My reasons for seeking recognition of this project are set forth in earlier communications, including an illustrated brochure which is now in the hands of the Director of the National Park Service. Since receiving your letter, I have assembled statistics showing the number of projects and the cost to the Federal Government of maintaining them throughout the United States. This information convinces me more than ever that Delaware richly deserves fully appropriate recognition of this type.

Perhaps it would be desirable for me to forward to you the names of some of the many persons from Delaware and other states who have communicated with me urging that the John Dickinson mansion be preserved. This list is immediately available if you desire.

It is my feeling that additional consideration be given by the National Park Service on the feasibility of taking over the John Dickinson House and preserving it in a manner consistent with its historic value.

I will be happy to receive your added views as soon as convenient.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) J. ALLEN FREAR, JR.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Reply refer to:  
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OCT - 6 1950

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Hon. I\* iOIM .ItWWr-^  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

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Sincerely yours,

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Director

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Copy to: Assistant Director  
History Division

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Sincerely yours,

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Reply refer to:  
158 MSO

ICTT, & 1950

Memorandum

To: *Lin A Winnu, Region One*

From: *Jv; -jymit Uttt Mmrt or Htw Hni*

Subject: Field Investigation of the John Dickinson House,  
Rever, Delaware

Attached is my letter to Mr. Valinger re the information we have available on the John Dickinson House. Incidentally, Charles E. Peterson Mn 19M huli li m ttmUw 1U ti Ma Dickinson House a4 jWi \*r wslh tm t Mt tem t mi 9\*0 to the architectural importance of the structure. We have checked tm iiaA that thhNI are m tiii r 4jig of Hmim.

If Mr. Applemann 4M is present at the time heard aatiaa when this site is considered we believe it will be helpful to the Board 12 2 their deliberations. WMid.wi 4 a af m# ait h m n n f d the tentative exida 19 in aimiac e v 4ir 3.

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PAUL R. FINKE

S'y. Ai4e. ir

Acting Assistant Director A : "AA Si i'tllf

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Attachments 2

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
REGION ONE  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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October 11, 1950

*La Roy*  
*H. Fall*

**Memorandum**

**To: The Director**  
**From: Regional Historian**  
**Subject: Field Investigation of the John Dickinson House**

I appreciate receiving the material from your files relating to the John Dickinson House near Dorer, Delaware, which was forwarded by Acting Assistant Director Frank's memorandum of October 6.

As requested, the material is being returned to you:

*Roy E. Appleman*  
Regional Historian

**Attachments-3**

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UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park Project

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Preference is laid to your Iditeff of October 9,  
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With best idshss, I sa A :.iiiS»iiiiiiiiiii3S

Sincerely yours,

Vr A v ; ^ ' : \ p V Ohsrlts S Petarsea  
Resident Architect

cc: Chief of Plans & Construction

Handwritten signature at the bottom of the page.







UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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October 12, 1950

Dear Mr. m tfcUagwri  
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facilitate Mr. Applesman's investigations and studies.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) CHARLES W. PORTER III

rnmrtn % nmmr> Hi' :R^S@p'S"#aSS\*>'  
'knim ^mrt Historian

Regional Director, Region One (2)

History Division

Mr. Young (detained)

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UNITED STATES  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
 WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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*0. Memorandum*

To: Regional Director, *in 9m*

From: *mm* Chief Historian *mm*

Subject: *Wio Sk\* Smrw\* \* Report in Salm M. McKinson House*

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In duplicate

Copy to i 'Hr. Firth'  
 History Division  
 Mr. Young (detached)

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RECEIVED  
OCT 12 1950  
FOR SIGNATURE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Enclosure refer to:  
L587.150

MS 2504

OCT 13 1950  
Oct 13 1950

Mr. M.,

Your letter of October 6 regarding the proposed  
of the National Wildlife Refuge System is  
received. The proposed  
is being reviewed and the  
results will be reported to you  
in due time.

Very truly yours,  
Secretary

Sincerely yours,  
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Acting Secretary Mimihi SMW'ip'

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Washington 25, D. C.

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Copy to: Mr. Smith (By NPS) w/ copy of Mr. M...  
History Division  
Regional Director, ...

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J. Allen Freer, Jr.  
Delaware

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UNITED STATES SENATE  
J. Allen Freer, Jr.

5 October 1950 kw

3.

The Honorable Oscar L. Chapman  
Secretary of Interior  
Department of Interior  
Interior Building  
Washington 25 D.C.

Dear Secretary Chapman:

Senator Freer has been informed by telephone of the receipt of your letter of September 28, in which you advised him that additional consideration is to be given to the preservation of the John Dickinson Home in Delaware, at a National Shrine. The Senator was very happy to have this information and is hopeful that favorable results will be forthcoming following the visit to the site by representatives of the National Park Service.

Incidentally, the Senator would like to be present personally, or have his representative on hand, when the National Park people come to Delaware. I am sure he will be pleased to lead his associates in the making of necessary arrangements.

Sincerely yours,

Robert E. Kelly  
Administrative Assistant  
to Senator Freer

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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REGION ONE

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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Sub>ct John Dickinson House, Historic Site Site 7-1p<Y" Viaf^SpS !4 P

Here are attached copies of a Historic Site Survey Report on the John Dickinson House, Kent County, Delaware. This report has been prepared in accordance with Assistant Director Merrill's memorandum of September 22. The report was desired in connection with the setting of the Advisory Board, which is to be held in Washington, December 2-3.

Five copies of the report are complete with text, photographs, and six copies lack the photographs and two copies lack both photographs and maps. I did not think it necessary to circulate all copies with the photographs.

As requested, I shall be in your office between 3 o'clock or about eleven o'clock.

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Region One  
Richmond 20, Virginia

THE JOHN DICKINSON HOUSE

Kent County, Delaware

Historic Sites Survey Report

by Roy E. Appelman

October 31, 1950

REGISTERED NATIONAL  
HISTORIC LANDMARKS

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## THE JOHN DICKINSON HOUSE

Kent County, Delaware

### Historic Sites Survey Report

by Roy E. Appleman  
October 31, 1950

I visited the John Dickinson House on Sunday afternoon, October 22, and again the next day, October 23. On October 23, I was accompanied by Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr., Delaware State Architect, at which time we saw the interior of the house. Later in the day, we had luncheon with Mrs. Henry Ridgely at her home in Dover and discussed the house and what might be done with it. Mr. Kelly, administrative assistance to Senator Frear, called from Washington and advised me of Senator Frear's interest in the house. The comments made in the body of the report below are based upon information obtained by personal inspection of the house and grounds and various printed sources consulted on John Dickinson's career.

**Name of Site:** John Dickinson House, sometimes called Kingston-Upon-Hull.

**Location:** Kent County, Delaware, 5 1/2 miles southeast of Dover and a few hundred yards off U. S. Highway 113 just beyond intersection of U. S. Highway 113 with Delaware State Route 9 (The Kittumock). The house is reached from the hardsurfaced state road by a dirt lane, 3/40 mile long. The house is located on the flat coastal plain that characterizes this part of Delaware.

**John Dickinson House:** The original house was built by Samuel Dickinson, father of John, in 1740. The front of the main, east wing is of Flemish bond with glazed headers brickwork. The rear of this main wing is of English bond. The original main cornice is missing, and the east end wall is entirely plastered over with a concrete plaster. The west gable end has been repaired in common bond. The middle wing has both Flemish and common bond brickwork. The west end wing is of common bond.

The building was photographed, but not measured, in the Historic American Buildings Survey of the 1930's. Mr. de Valinger



who was a civilian advisor for the Historic American Buildings Survey in Delaware at the time, explained to me that practically all of the architects in the state were in and around Wilmington, that the survey had very little money for travel, and that, accordingly, very little measuring of houses was done down state, including the Dover area.

The house appears to have no special architectural merit. Photographs attached to this report show the main features of the present structure.

Grounds and Outbuildings surrounding the House: Large cornfields now completely surround the John Dickinson House. There are no formal grounds to the house as the fields encroach immediately on the house, barn, and outbuilding group. There is a picket fence enclosing a savall yard at the front and west side of the house. I counted ten outbuildings to the east of the house and three to the west, making thirteen in all. Those to the east include a large barn, a corn crib, a vehicle shed, a storage building, outside privy, a concrete milk house, and another small concrete structure of undetermined use. The buildings to the west of the house are a little farther away and include one vehicle shed and two small wood shacks. The barn held a considerable quantity of baled hay. A few pieces of farm equipment lay scattered around the yard.

I understand from conversation with the tenant farmer that there is still evidence of the large slave burial ground to the south of the house near Jones' Creek. It has been stated that about 40 plantation slaves are buried here. This burial ground is several hundred yards, perhaps 1/3 to 1/2 a mile, from the house, and is near a long lane, part of which is still in use as a farm lane leading from the house southward to an old landing on Jones' Creek. There is no remaining evidence of the slave quarters, although they must have been extensive at one time, nor was I able to determine their location.

Owner: The present owner of the John Dickinson House and surrounding grounds is Mr. H. Carlton Draper of Milton, Delaware. I was informed by Mr. de Wallinger that Mr. Draper purchased the house in the autumn of last year, presumably September or October, 1949. Mr. Draper bought the property for the land acreage and was not interested in the house. He is engaged in

pp  
lc

the canning business, is a business man, and will not consider giving the house to an organization, but he will sell it at a reasonable price. He wants to realize enough from the sale to build a three-bedroom farm tenant house and to move the barn and certain farm outbuildings.

Value of House: Mr. Draper bought the house last year from a Mr. Moore. A Judge Terry had become interested in the old Dickinson house and had formulated tentative plans for the purchase of the house and several surrounding acres for the purpose of restoring and living in the house. He had carried on negotiations with Mr. Moore for the purpose of obtaining an estimate of cost in acquiring ten acres of ground and the house, Mr. Moore quoted him a figure of \$15,500 for the house and ten acres of land. This figure was based on a cost of \$175 an acre for the land (\$1,750), \$10,000 to build a three-room tenant house to take the place of the Dickinson house in housing a farm tenant, and the remainder for the purpose of removing or building new farm outbuildings at the new tenant house (\$4,000). This figure was quoted to Judge Terry by Mr. Moore in June, 1949. The cost of building a new tenant house and of moving some of the outbuildings might be greater now; and accordingly, Mr. Draper, if he used the same basis for arriving at a sale price, might reach a somewhat higher figure. Upon the basis of this information, it appears that the house with five to ten acres of surrounding land will cost at least \$15,000 to \$16,000.

Present Condition of House: The John Dickinson House is composed of three wings all in line from east to west. The main wing is at the east end and appears to be the only part that is original. The two smaller wings on the west, stepping down in size from the east wing (much like the Jt. George Tucker House at Williamsburg) are 19th century construction, I should judge, from the appearance of the brickwork. The end wall of the smallest wing has partially fallen down as the result of bulldozer operations for a road around the house last year. The removal of earth near the west end of the house weakened the foundation there to the point that it gave way. The remaining part of the west end wall is pulling away from the side walls and is braced by three heavy poles and braced tinkers.

In general, the house has a dilapidated and deserted appearance. The two 19th century wings have been whitewashed at some time in the past; and the back side of the main, or original, part of the house has been whitewashed one or more

times. The east end of the main part of the house is completely plastered over with a form of concrete plaster. I do not know what is the condition of the brickwork underneath it. All the chimneys have been repaired and patched. A clearly marked line of rebuilt brickwork shows on the west wall of the main part of the house. Many of the lights in the windows are gone. The little porch at the main part of the house is obviously not original and is in a dilapidated condition. The steps are gone, and the ceiling has fallen down. The platform was covered with rubbish.

The interior of the house was inspected very briefly on my way to an appointment with Mrs. Ridgely. There is a full basement underneath the main wing of the house. It appears to be dry. The ceiling beams appear to be reasonably sound, although there was evidence, I thought, of termite and post beetle infestation. The brick foundation walls, as seen from the basement, have lost practically all of their mortar and need repointing badly. I did not notice any sag in the floors. The flooring appears to be of 19th century, or later, construction. The interior woodwork is very simple and without much decoration and is covered with several coats of paint. I understand from Mr. de Valinger there was a fire in the house in the 1790's. He told me he has seen correspondence from John Dickinson to the carpenter doing repair work in the house after the fire in which Dickinson instructed the carpenter that the woodwork need not be as decorative or as expensively carved as the original. The reason for this instruction is obvious, since Mr. Dickinson was then living, and had been for a number of years, at Wilmington, Delaware. His house was occupied by a tenant farmer; and he, apparently, never expected to live there again himself. Since practically all of the woodwork in the house has the same simple pattern, I infer that all of it is replacement, and not the original. This matter, however, will have to be studied carefully by an architect to determine the point. Most of the doors in the main wing may be original. There are only three or four pieces of old hardware of the doors. Most of it has been removed, including the lock and fixture on the main entrance door.

Mice were running around underneath our feet the whole time we were in the house. The big east end room on the main floor serves as a storage place for oats.

The middle wing of the present structure is occupied by a farmer tenant and his son, who appeared to be about 12 years old. The place was in a disordered and untidy condition.

The main part of the house, which I assume to be the original part, has a wide hallway running across the width of the structure, with a large square, or nearly square, room on the east. There are two small, odd-shaped rooms on the west side of the hallway with a large angle chimney in the west end of the original wing. Upstairs the hallway is smaller. The large east end room is similar to the one on the main floor, with two small rooms on the west side similar to those directly below. One small additional room upstairs takes up part of what is hallway space on the main floor. There is a stairway to the attic, which is floored. The roof appears to be in reasonably good condition. I noticed only one slight leak after a night and day of very heavy rain.

The main part of the house, if my assumption is correct that only the east, large wing is original, does not appear to have a formal dining room. It is possible, of course, that the fire in the 1790's destroyed an original wing and that there was a dining room and a kitchen where the present west wings are located. Research into old insurance records and other documents will have to be made to determine more about the extent of the original house. Certainly if there is ever to be a restoration, historical, archeological, and architectural study would have to be carried on preliminary to such work. The main wing, which appears to be original, does not seem to satisfy all the needs of a country mansion of the period.

Background of the movement to Preserve the Dickinson House: From Mr. de Wallinger and Mrs. Ridgely, I learned the following facts about efforts made in past years to preserve the Dickinson house;

Over a period of several years, the Daughters of the American Revolution and other patriotic groups and individuals interested in preserving the Dickinson house have tried to raise the money to buy the property and to restore it, but have failed in this purpose. The historical societies in Delaware, apparently, have very little financial resources. The State has not seen fit to undertake the project. Efforts

have been made to interest the Du Pont family, but Mr. Harry Du Pont, according to Mr. de Valinger who has talked with him on this and related subjects, is not willing to give any money for the purpose, as related above, Judge Terry, up until a year or so ago, had planned to restore the house and to live in it. Coming down to the present then, the people in Delaware who are interested in saving the Dickinson house think they have exhausted all means of accomplishing their purpose, save appealing to the Federal Government. That they have now done. Mr. de Valinger pointed out that this is the first time the people of Delaware have appealed to the Federal Government for help in a historical preservation problem.

I gained the impression from conversations with Mr. de Valinger and Mrs. Ridgely that if the Federal Government can assist financially in the acquisition and restoration of the house, the state of Delaware would be glad to assume maintenance and operation of the house for public visitation thereafter.

#### RESIDENCES OF JOHN DICKINSON

In considering the claims of the Dickinson house to memorialization, it is important to determine the periods and length of time John Dickinson lived in the house and what, if any, notable events transpired there. The following summary is intended to locate John Dickinson during the main periods of his life. From this it will then be possible to evaluate the importance of the house in Kent County, Delaware, as a residence of John Dickinson.<sup>1/</sup>

1659 - Walter Dickinson, the first ancestor in America of John Dickinson, came to Talbot County, Maryland, from the Eastern Shore of Virginia and established himself on a plantation called "Crosia-dore."

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<sup>1/</sup> This summary is based upon Charles J. Stille, The Life and Times of John Dickinson, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Memoirs, XIII, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1891.

- 1732 - John Dickinson was born at "Crosia-dore," November 8, 1732, the second son of Samuel Dickinson (grandson of the first proprietor of the estate) and Mary Gadwalader.
- 1740 - Samuel Dickinson moved to Kent County, Delaware, and established himself on a 1,300 acre plantation. Here he built the house now called the "John Dickinson House."
- 1750 - John Dickinson began the study of law with John Roland in Philadelphia.
- 1753 - John Dickinson went to London as a student in law at Middle Temple.
- 1757 ^ John Dickinson returned to Philadelphia and began the practice of law there.
- 1760 - In October Dickinson was elected a member of the Delaware Assembly. (He was still in Philadelphia at this time as far as I can find out. Up to the time of the Revolution, Delaware had the same Governor as Pennsylvania, but a different assembly. There appears to have been an extensive interchange of officials between Pennsylvania and Delaware at this time.) Dickinson became the speaker of the Delaware Assembly.
- 1762 = Dickinson elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly from Philadelphia. He held the seat, apparently, until 1765, losing it then as a result of opposing in 1764 a change in the proprietor government of Pennsylvania. He did not regain a seat in the Pennsylvania Assembly until 1770.
- 1771 = Again a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly.
- 1774 = October 17, Dickinson chosen a delegate to the first Continental Congress. (He had just been elected a member of the Assembly in October to fill a vacancy.) The first Continental Congress adjourned October 26. Hence it appears that Dickinson was a member of the first Continental Congress for about nine days.
- 1776 = Left Philadelphia, apparently, some time during the first half of July and was with the Pennsylvania militia troops

at Elizabethtown, New Jersey. On the 12th of July, he wrote a letter stating that he was then in New Jersey. On September 26, 1776, the convention chose Roberdeau as Brigadier General of the militia, superseding Dickinson. Dickinson thereupon resigned. He was not elected a member of the new state convention, which gathered July 2 to frame a new state constitution. The convention was revolutionary. Dickinson, as will be brought out later, was not in sympathy with the purposes of the convention.

1776 - In November Dickinson was chosen a member from Philadelphia of the new state assembly. Dickinson considered its activities illegal, and he proposed a course of action for it which would legalize it. This was not accepted by the assembly. Dickinson then said he would not sit in the assembly, but would retire to another state where his services would be better appreciated. (He meant to go to Delaware.) The latter part of November, he was elected by Delaware as one of its delegates to the Continental Congress, but he declined to serve without giving a reason.

On December 11 Dickinson removed with his family from Philadelphia to the farm near Dover, Delaware. He moved from Philadelphia, apparently, upon receiving information that the British Army was approaching Philadelphia.

1779 - January 18 Dickinson was chosen a delegate to Congress from Delaware. He took his seat in Congress at Philadelphia on May 23 and served there until the autumn of that year when he resigned his seat to return to his farm in Delaware.

1781 - Dickinson elected a member of the Supreme Executive Council of Delaware and shortly thereafter was chosen its President or Governor.

1782 - Dickinson was elected a member of the State Executive Council for Pennsylvania from the county of Philadelphia; and in November of the same year he was chosen by the legislature as the President of the council. This was comparable to being governor of the state. Dickinson, apparently, returned to Philadelphia some time in October, 1782.

1765 - Dickinson returned to Delaware.

1786 - Dickinson was a commissioner from Delaware to the Annapolis Convention. He was chosen President of this convention and made the report to Congress, recommending that a convention be called the next year for the framing of a new constitution.

1787 - Dickinson took a seat in the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia as a delegate from Delaware.

1786-1808 - The volume on Delaware in the American Guide Series, page 272, carries the statement that when John Dickinson's term as Governor of Pennsylvania expired in 1785 he "came home and built the largest private house in Pilmington at the northwest corner of Eighth and Market Streets." It would appear from this that Dickinson moved into this house when completed, which, apparently, was in 1785 or shortly thereafter. He lived in this house until his death in 1808.

From the foregoing it appears that John Dickinson lived in the Dickinson house near Dover, Delaware, for a total of about 15 or 16 years; 10 years between 1740 and 1750; about 2½ years from December 11, 1776, to May 17, 1779, and a few months near the end of the year; and 2 years, 9 months from 1780 through October, 1782. He may have lived there a period in 1785-1786 while his new house in Wilmingon was being built. I have not been able to ascertain any facts on this point.

The longest consecutive period John Dickinson lived in the house near Dover was for 10 years of his youth between 8 to 18 years of age. I gather that he did not return to Delaware later in his life until he ran into political difficulties in Pennsylvania arising out of opposition to signing the Declaration of Independence. As a result of this action, he became extremely unpopular with the Revolutionary Party, which was in control of Congress after mid-1776. The longest and most important part of his political career was identified with Pennsylvania; and during this time, he lived in Philadelphia.

It is undoubtedly true that Dickinson returned to the place near Dover frequently on matters of farm business, but as to how extensive this was, I have no reliable information. Dr. John H. Powell of Philadelphia, who is now at work on a two-volume life of John Dickinson, has written on this point that nearly every year



John Dickinson spent some time in his mansion house in Kent and devoted much time to administration of large farm holdings in the region.

It may be well at this point to state that the town house occupied by John Dickinson in Philadelphia before the Revolution was on Chestnut Street below Seventh. Apparently, he moved into this house in 1774 and remained there until July, 1776. It has long since disappeared.

John Dickinson married Mary Morris, daughter of Isaac Norris, speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, in 1770. After his marriage, he settled at his father-in-law's estate, "Fairhill," which was one of the grand landed estates in and about Philadelphia. This mansion was burned by the British in 1778 when they evacuated Philadelphia.

The birthplace of John Dickinson, "Cross-dore," Maryland, was still standing in 1940, according to Maryland, a volume of the American Guide Series.

Dickinson's big town house, built in 1785, in Wilmington was torn down; and on the site, a public library was erected in 1860. The present public library at Wilmington is at another site.

### III: EVENTS IN JOHN DICKINSON'S CAREER

John Dickinson was 8 years old when his father, Samuel, established himself on the plantation in Kent County near Dover, Delaware, and became a judge and a man of some prominence. Here John grew up a rich planter's son and was taught by private tutor. In 1750, when he was 18, he went to Philadelphia to study law. After three years there, he went to London where he studied law at Middle Temple. He returned to Philadelphia in 1757 and began the practice of law. His career, henceforth until the Declaration of Independence in 1776, was almost entirely identified with Pennsylvania. It was in Pennsylvania that he gained his fame as a leader in the movement for colonial rights.

#### The Stamp Act Congress, New York, 1765:

Dickinson at first achieved prominence in the colonies by his part in the Stamp Act Congress, which was held in the fall

of 1765. This Congress was called by the House of Representatives of Massachusetts and was intended to organize opposition to the Stamp Act recently passed by the British Parliament. The Stamp Act Congress met in the city hall, New York City, and was composed of twenty-seven delegates representing nine of the thirteen colonies. Dickinson was a member of the Pennsylvania delegation. There were eleven days of violent debate upon the opinions to be expressed in the resolutions that would be drafted and sent to Parliament. John Dickinson prepared two of the papers of the Congress: The Declaration of Rights and The Petition to the King. In these papers, Dickinson set forth the inherent right of trial by jury and stated that the Stamp Act tended to subvert the rights of the colonies. He held that taxing the colonies without their consent violated the ancient rights of Englishmen. One discerning critic of the period has stated that: "In whatever light we may view them, *these papers of the Stamp Act Congress [Dickinson's two papers] are masterly and impressive pieces of political statement,—learned, wise, firm, temperate, conservative, even reverent,—as far removed from imbeculence as from fear,*"<sup>2</sup>

The Stamp Act was repealed February 22, 1766, after the Rockingham Ministry came to office. The repeal of the Stamp Act was undoubtedly influenced by the various papers produced by the Stamp Act Congress and, also, by a notable pamphlet which appeared in Philadelphia, December, 1765, entitled "The Late Regulations respecting the British Colonies on the Continent of America Considered in a Letter from A Gentleman in Philadelphia to his Friend in London." This pamphlet was written by John Dickinson and was republished immediately in London where it was widely read. This pamphlet established Dickinson's reputation as a political writer.

#### A Song for American Freedom:

It is interesting to note that in the pamphleteering and political writings of the period, Dickinson wrote verses for a song which had wide vogue in the colonial period and championed the cause of colonial rights. In May, 1768, customs commissioners in Massachusetts seized John Hancock's sloop, "Liberty," on the

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1/ Moses Coit Tyler, The Literary History of the American Revolution, I, 113-114.

charge that Hancock was importing goods without payment of duty. This gave colonial patriots an excuse for further agitation. Dickinson, upon learning of the seizure, wrote verses to David Garrick's tune, "Hearts of Oak" and called his piece "A Song for American Freedom." He sent this to James Otis in Massachusetts, who had it published in the Boston Gazette, July 18, 1768. For many years thereafter "The Liberty Song," as it was called, was the most popular ditty of its kind in the colonies. The verses themselves are very poor, having little literary quality.

### The Letters of a Pennsylvania Farmer:

Of all John Dickinson's writings, perhaps the most famous and the most important were The Letters of a Pennsylvania Farmer. These letters were written as a result of the Townshend Acts, which were enacted by the British Parliament in 1767. These were acts sponsored by Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer, intended to raise imperial revenue in the colonies by imposing duties on many commodities which were imported, such as tea, glass, paints, and many other items.

In the previous dispute over colonial rights, the colonies had admitted that Parliament might levy external taxes, but that it might not collect internal taxes. This was the main dispute in the Stamp Act affair two years earlier. Dickinson began the publication of his famous series of letters in The Pennsylvania Chronicle, December 2, 1767. The last of the twelve letters appeared in the Chronicle, February 15, 1766. These letters had the title, "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies." They were soon given a short title of "Farmer's Letters." They were published without the author's name, but they were immediately recognized as the work of John Dickinson. The letters were written by a man who was thoroughly aroused by the British attack on colonial rights, but who was entirely intent upon composing the difficulties with the mother country rather than increasing the difficulties. These letters appeared at a time when there was no guiding hand to direct the controversy in the colonies that was increasing daily. Dickinson believed in the traditions of English liberty. He believed that all Englishmen had the right of pointing out grievances and of them seeking a remedy. He wrote as a "judicious counselor." His first letter began: "I am a farmer, settled, after a variety of fortunes, near the banks of the river Delaware,

in the province of Pennsylvania.<sup>1/</sup> In these letters, Dickinson began by discussing the acts of Parliament, which abrogated the legislative assembly of New York because it had refused to comply with the Quartering Act. Dickinson argued that the Quartering Act was in effect a tax upon the colonies for the expense that accrued in complying with it. His purpose was "to convince the people of these colonies, that they are, at this moment, exposed to the most eminent dangers; and to persuade them, immediately, vigorously, and unanimously, to exert themselves, in the most firm but most peaceable manner, for obtaining relief."<sup>2/</sup>

At another point in the letters, he wrote: "Let these truths be indelibly impressed on our minds; that we cannot be happy without being free; that we cannot be free, without being secure in our property; that we cannot be secure in our property, if without our consent, others may, as by right, take it away; that taxes imposed on us by parliament, do thus take it away."<sup>3/</sup> At the same time, Dickinson was opposed to any thought of colonial independence.

Dickinson's arguments had a certain amount of inconsistency in them, as has been pointed out so well by one noted American historian, Edward Channing, in his *History of the United States*. In theory, Dickinson argued that Parliament had some undefined power in the regulation of Empire matters; but whenever the government undertook to enforce this power, Dickinson made out that such an exercise was "in the nature of levying a tax." In theory, he did not object to the levying of a customs duty, but he did object to the collection of them.

Dickinson was a devoted friend of England; but at the same time, he was an American patriot. His writings were admired on both sides of the ocean for their temperate tone and elegant

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1/ Paul Leicester Ford, *The Writings of John Dickinson*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Memoirs, XIV, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1895

2/ *Ibid.*, I, 235

3/ *Ibid.*, 236

expression. In the colonies Dickinson might be said to occupy a position similar to that of Edmund Burke in England.

The Letters of a Pennsylvania Farmer were almost immediately reproduced in all the twenty-five newspapers then published in America. There are only four known exceptions; within four weeks after the last letter had made its appearance, they were all collected and issued as a pamphlet. At least eight different editions were published in various parts of the colonies. Two editions of the pamphlet were published the same year (1768) in London and one edition in Dublin. Each of these foreign editions carried a preface written by Benjamin Franklin. The next year, 1769, a French version was published in Amsterdam and was widely read on the continent of Europe.<sup>1/</sup>

Dickinson was widely talked of in the salons of Paris, and the "farmer" was likened to Cicero. Voltaire in France gave notice and applause to the "Farmer's Letters." In Paris, Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia heard a company at airabeau's house discussing Dickinson's letters along with Diderot's writings.<sup>2/</sup>

Dickinson's conception of the true relationship of the colonies to England can best be given in his own words: "Let us behave," he said, "like dutiful children, who have received unmerited blows from a beloved parent." The outstanding student of the political writings of the Revolutionary period says that in Europe Dickinson achieved by the "letters" "literary renown surpassing that of any other American, excepting Benjamin Franklin." This same student appraised the letters of the Pennsylvania farmer thus: "No other serious political essays of the Revolutionary era quite equalled the 'Farmer's Letters' in literary merit, including in that term the merit of substance as well as of form, and, excepting the political essays of Thomas Paine, which did not begin to appear until nine years later, none equalled the 'Farmer's Letters' in immediate celebrity, and in direct power upon events."<sup>3/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Tyler, I, 237

<sup>2/</sup> Exalts Boutwell Greene, The Revolutionary Generation, 89.

<sup>3/</sup> Tyler, I, 236

## Political Career Up to the First Continental Congress:

It will be well to pause here and trace briefly Dickinson's political career in Pennsylvania up to the calling of the Continental Congress, we have noted earlier that Dickinson began the practice of law in Philadelphia in 1757 after finishing his studies at Middle Temple in London. His first public office and the beginning of his political career came in 1760 when he was chosen a member of the Delaware Assembly. In 1762 he transferred to the Pennsylvania Assembly, and he served there until 1765. Dickinson lost his seat in the Pennsylvania Assembly due to his strong opposition in 1764 to the movement that was afoot to change the form of the proprietary government. He did not regain a seat in the Pennsylvania Assembly until 1770, which he held then until 1776 when the colonial government of Pennsylvania expired.

## The First Continental Congress

The First Continental Congress met at Philadelphia, September 5, 1774. John Dickinson was not one of the original members of the Pennsylvania delegation to the Congress; Joseph Galloway, who had long been hostile to Dickinson's views, prevented him from being chosen originally as a delegate. Dickinson took his seat October 17, 1774, nine days before the first Congress adjourned, October 26. In this short period of time before the First Continental Congress adjourned, however, Dickinson had written two of the most memorable papers adopted by the First Continental Congress. The First Continental Congress issued five state papers. Of these Dickinson wrote two. He was the only member of the Congress to be the author of more than one of the official papers of this Congress.

The Congress was in secret session until October 25. The original committee named by the Congress to prepare a petition to the King was composed of five men: Richard Henry Lee, John Adams, John Rutledge, Johnson, and Henry. Dickinson was added to this original committee on October 21. The committee reported a draft on October 24, and it was considered on October 25. This draft, prepared by Richard Henry Lee, did not meet acceptance, and John Dickinson was given the task of rewriting it. This he did, and it was his draft of the paper entitled "Petition to the King's most Excellent Majesty" that was adopted by the first Continental Congress. Dickinson also wrote the

paper entitled "Address to the People of Canada." The Petition to the King was the most memorable paper drafted by the First Continental Congress. It was Dickinson's work as a draftsman of state documents and his previous writings, such as, "The Letters of a Pennsylvania Farmer," that earned for him the title, "Penman of the Revolution."

### The Second Continental Congress and the Articles of Confederation:

Dickinson was a delegate from Pennsylvania to the Second Continental Congress, which met in Philadelphia, May, 1775. He took an active part in the debates of this Congress which led up to the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the final separation of the colonies from England. Before discussing the part he played in this great event, it will be well to digress for a moment to note Dickinson's connection with the Articles of Confederation, the basis for the form of government adopted by the colonies for the latter years of the war and the intervening period before the adoption of the constitution of the United States.

Upon receiving Richard Henry Lee's motion, June 7, 1776, for independence, Congress on July 11, appointed a committee to consider a form of confederacy for the colonies. John Dickinson was chairman of this committee. In July Dickinson reported to the committee a draft of the Articles of Confederation. There was little interest in this document at the time, Dickinson was in great disfavor because of his stand on the Declaration of Independence and the Continental Congress was overwhelmed with more pressing matters concerned with fighting the war. Parts of this draft of the Articles of Confederation were debated from time to time. One feature of the articles proposed that each state have one vote. Benjamin Franklin strongly opposed this. Finally on November 15, 1777, sixteen months after Dickinson's first draft was reported to the Congress, Congress approved a draft and sent it to the states for ratification. All the states had to ratify it before it could go into effect. The Articles became law, March 1, 1781, after the several small states had ratified, following a settlement of the western lands problem. Dickinson's original draft was, of course, considerably modified.

### The Fight for the Declaration of Independence:

Dickinson opposed the Declaration of Independence. He stuck to his principles on this matter to the bitter end, and it cost him popularity in the Revolutionary Congress and in the colonies generally. It forced him from the Continental Congress and into semi-retirement for many years.

Dickinson's stand, in some respects, is hard to reconcile with some of his activities at the outbreak of the war because he favored resorting to arms to obtain redress for the grievances of the colonies. For instance, on July 8, 1775, he was the author of the Second Continental Congress' paper entitled "Declaration of the Causes of Our Taking Up Arms," in which he said that the colonists were "resolved to die free men rather than to live as slaves."<sup>1/</sup>

Throughout all the deliberations of the Continental Congress, however, it was clear that Dickinson did not favor separation of the colonies from England. This finally led to extreme bitterness between him and leaders of the Revolutionary party, such as John Adams of Massachusetts. As an instance of this feeling, it may be worthwhile to relate an incident touched off by a speech by Sullivan, who favored separation of the colonies from the mother country. After the speech by Sullivan, Dickinson is said to have rushed out of Independence Hall in a passion and met Adams in the State House yard. According to Adams' account, Dickinson cried out to him: "What is the reason that you New England men oppose our measures of reconciliation. There now is Sullivan in a long harangue following you in a determined opposition to our petition to the King! Look yeir—if you don't concur with us in our pacific system, I and a number of us will break off from you in New England, and we will carry on the opposition by ourselves in our own way."<sup>2/</sup> After this exchange, Adams went to his lodgings and wrote some letters. Apparently, he was somewhat stirred up by what Dickinson had just said to him for in one of his letters, he said, referring to Dickinson: "A certain great fortune and piddling genius, whose fame has been trumpeted so loudly, has given a silly cast to our whole doings. We are between hawk and buzzard."<sup>3/</sup>

The whole matter came to a head when Richard Henry Lee, on June 7, 1776, introduced his set of resolutions for the independence of the colonies. Dickinson at once opposed these resolutions on the ground that there was no chance for independence until first a stable government had been organized among the colonies and a foreign alliance obtained. Dickinson's opposition and that of a few more men who thought like him was sufficiently strong to postpone consideration of the Lee resolutions until July 1, The first of Lee's resolutions, the one for independence.

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<sup>1/</sup> Stille, 162

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid, 159

<sup>3/</sup> Ibid, 159



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came up for debate on that day. There is no record of the debate extant, but letters written by contemporaries indicate that John Adams took a leading part for approval of the resolution. John Dickinson was the leader of the opposition. The vote on the resolution was postponed until the next day, July 2. As things stood on July 1, Delaware was divided on the question of independence; Pennsylvania was against it; Dickinson, Robert Morris, and James Wilson out-voting Franklin and Mott. South Carolina and New York had not given definite instructions to their delegates. Only nine states were in favor of the resolution for independence on July 1.

By the next day affairs had been so contrived that twelve colonies voted for the resolution. Only New York remained silent. South Carolina's instructions were construed by the delegates as sufficient authority to vote for independence. Dickinson and Morris were induced to stay away from the hall, and Wilson changed his vote for independence, giving the necessary three out of five of Pennsylvania's delegates. Of Delaware's delegates, Caesar Rodney had been called away from the Congress on June 22 to Sussex County, Delaware, in connection with a threatened Loyalist uprising. At the time the resolutions were being considered, he had just returned to his home in Kent County, Delaware. There he received an express message from Thomas McKean, the other Delaware delegate who was in favor of the resolution. McKean urged Rodney to hurry to Philadelphia to cast a vote in favor of Lee's resolutions. Rodney rode 80 miles on horseback, arriving late in the afternoon of July 2 in time to cast the deciding vote for Delaware in favor of independence. The Delaware vote was McKean and Rodney for the resolution and Read against it.

Early in July, New York authorized its members to agree to the Declaration of Independence. On August 2, 1776, the members then present signed the Declaration. Dickinson neither voted for, nor did he sign, the Declaration.

As a result of his stand on independence, Dickinson lost his position of a leader in the colonial movement which he had held for twelve years, ever since the Stamp Act Congress. The historian Hildreth in commenting on Dickinson's action in not voting for the Declaration says it was the "noblest proof of moral courage ever shown by a public man in the history of the country."

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✓ Channing, III: 201, 202; Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, 81-82 (Centenary Edition).

Dickinson had been chairman of the Philadelphia Committee of Correspondence and had urged the raising of a military force. The Pennsylvania Assembly passed a law for this purpose, June 30, 1775, authorizing the raising of five battalions in Philadelphia. The first battalion of militia raised in Philadelphia elected Dickinson its colonel. Three battalions, under the command of Dickinson, were made ready to march to the relief of New York in February, 1776, when it was thought that that city was to be attacked. In July, 1776, after the vote on the Declaration of Independence was taken, Dickinson went to join the Pennsylvania militia then at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, with the rank of Brigadier General. But his military career was of short duration: On September 26, the Pennsylvania Convention chose Hoberdeau to succeed Dickinson. Dickinson then resigned.

On July 20 when the new state convention met to frame a new state constitution, Dickinson was not elected a member. In November Dickinson was chosen a member of the new state assembly from Philadelphia, but he considered the new assembly illegal; and when his policies were not accepted, he resigned his seat and announced his decision to retire to Delaware. Dickinson did, in fact, remove his family to his farm near Dover, Delaware, on December 11, on the eve of the British occupation of Philadelphia. Thus, it will be seen that the events which led to the Declaration of Independence brought retirement to John Dickinson. He had fallen out of step with the times.

#### The Years Between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitutional Convention:

Apparently Dickinson lived on his farm near Dover from December, 1776, until May, 1779. On May 23, 1779, he was returned to the Congress as a delegate from Delaware. He carried with him to Congress on this occasion the ratification of the Articles of Confederation by the state of Delaware, dated February 3, 1779. This helped to make Dickinson somewhat persona grata in Congress once again. He remained in Congress until the fall when he resigned his seat and returned once again to Delaware.

As stated earlier, Dickinson in the next five years served two years as Governor of the state of Delaware and three years as Governor of Pennsylvania.

An important event occurred in 1783 while Dickinson was Governor of Pennsylvania, or as it was called then, President of the Executive Council. On June 20, 1783, about eighty Pennsylvania militia troops of the Continental Army from Lancaster arrived in Philadelphia and demanded their pay. They were joined

by some veterans of the Continental Army. The next day, June 21, they staged a disorderly demonstration in front of Independence Hall where Congress was sitting, and threatened that body. Dickinson, who was President of the Pennsylvania Council when asked by Congress to disperse the rioters, said he could do nothing; that he only had a small body of militia at his disposal, and he doubted they would act unless the troops guilty of the disorder committed some outrage on person or property. That night Congress adjourned; and three days later it left Philadelphia and fled to Princeton. The Continental Congress never again returned to Philadelphia. If Dickinson had taken a firmer stand and restored order, it is quite likely that Congress would have continued to sit in Philadelphia throughout the remainder of the war.

At about this time Dickinson College was founded at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1783. Initially established as a Presbyterian school, it was transferred to the Methodists in 1883. This college was named after John Dickinson. Many of the books he inherited through his wife from the old Logan Library are now in the college. A special room containing these rare books is called the "Dickinson Room."

#### The Annapolis Convention:

In September, 1786, representatives of five states met at Annapolis, Maryland, to consider commercial regulations affecting their respective states. The Articles of Confederation failed miserably to control relations of the states in this respect. John Dickinson, a delegate from Delaware, was chosen President of this convention. In February, 1787, he presented to Congress the recommendations of the Annapolis Convention, which he had a leading part in formulating; namely, that a new convention be called in May to be attended by delegates from all the colonies for the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation and adopting a new constitution.

#### Constitutional Convention of 1787:

In accordance with the recommendations of the Annapolis Convention of 1786, Congress issued a call for a convention of

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2/ The Continental Congress, upon leaving Philadelphia, stayed in Princeton until November, 1783, but next sat in Annapolis, Maryland, to June 1784; was then in Trenton, New Jersey, from November to December, 1784, and was in New York City, January, 1785, through October 21, 1788.

delegates from all the colonies to meet in Philadelphia in May, 1787, for the purpose of framing a new instrument of government.

Dickinson, as one of five delegates from Delaware, took a leading part in the debates of the Constitutional Convention. The best and most complete record of the debates in the convention is found in Madison's notes, since published. From these and other sources, we know pretty well the viewpoint taken by Dickinson on the great issues before the convention. He represented a small state; and accordingly, he was one of the leaders of the small-state group. He proposed that the executive be removable on request of a majority of the legislatures of the individual states. Madison strongly opposed him on this point; and when a vote was taken, Delaware stood alone.

Dickinson argued that the states should have equal votes in at least one branch of the national legislature. He believed that the states had to be retained as a check on the central government. He proposed that senators be elected by state legislatures so they would be intimately connected with the state governments. He also thought this method of election would assure that distinguished persons would be chosen as senators. He looked upon the Senate as comparable to the British House of Lords, and he felt that a higher type of person would be selected in this manner than if elected by the people.

Dickinson argued that the vote in the states should be restricted to freeholders—those who had a stake in the country. He said they were the "best guardians of liberty" and that they would resist "dangerous influence of those multitudes without property and without principal, with which our Country like all others, will in time abound." Franklin strongly opposed this viewpoint, claiming that it would "debase the spirit of common people." Upon a vote on this matter in the convention, the states voted unanimously on the proposal of the Committee of Detail, which was that any person might vote that was qualified to vote in a given state for the most numerous branch of the state legislature. In other words, the Constitutional Convention refused to set up any property qualifications for voters as Dickinson had urged.<sup>3/</sup>

Dickinson was a member of the committee that worked out a compromise on the slavery issue. He opposed the extension of slavery, and he insisted that the Federal Government have the power to prohibit the importation of slaves:

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<sup>1/</sup> Carl Van Doren, The Great Rehearsal, gives a summary of Dickinson's views on these and other matters; 58, 59, 67, 85, 142, 143.

Throughout the debates on the form of government, it was apparent that Dickinson was in that minority group which believed that a limited monarchy of the English type was the best form of government. Madison, in his notes, records Dickinson's viewpoint in these words: "A limited Monarchy he considered as one of the best governments in the world. It was not certain that the same blessings were derivable from any other form. It was certain that equal blessings had never yet been derived from any of the republican form. A limited monarchy, however, was out of the question!"<sup>1/</sup>

Work on the Constitution was finally finished; and on September 15, a Saturday, the constitution was ordered to be engrossed. On Sunday, September 16, the Constitution was engrossed by an unknown penman on four pages of parchment. The next day, Monday, September 17, 1787, the engrossed document was read and signed by all members present, excepting Randolph and Mason from Virginia and Gony of Massachusetts.<sup>2/</sup> Read, one of the Delaware delegates signed for Dickinson, who had left for home on the 15th because of illness.

Dickinson was not a member of Congress later, nor did he ever hold any Federal office after the adoption of the Constitution. Apparently, until his death in 1808, he belonged to the anti-Federalist party, or the Jeffersonians.<sup>3/</sup>

Dickinson exerted himself in championing the new Constitution and did much to assure its adoption by the state of Delaware. In this cause, he wrote nine letters signed "Fabius," which appeared in the newspapers of the day. These letters, while of not the same calibre as those written by Madison, Jay, and Hamilton and known to posterity as "The Federalist," nevertheless, were potent arguments for the adoption of the new Constitution.

#### DICKINSON'S POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

Something of Dickinson's political principles has already appeared in what has been said. Professor Moses Coit

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<sup>1/</sup> Charles A. Beard, Economical Interpretation of the Constitution, 195, citing Farrand Records, I, 86.

<sup>2/</sup> Van Doren, 167, 175

<sup>3/</sup> Stille, 278

Tyler, student of the period, said of Dickinson that his actions were throughout in accordance with certain fundamental principles; that these were:

"first, that it was the ancient and manly method of loyal Englishmen, in cases of extreme danger, to make demand for political rights with arms in their hands, and even embodied in military array against the king's troops; and, secondly, that every citizen, having said and done his best to secure the prevalence of his own view, was bound to submit himself to the decision of the community to which he belonged, and help to carry it out. Indeed, no other American who finally supported the American Revolution in its ultimate issue—that of secession from the empire—exhibited, from first to last, a more perfect familiarity, or a more perfect sympathy, with the great historic precedents set by the English people in the management of fundamental controversies between subjects and their sovereign."<sup>1/</sup>

Dr. John H. Powell, who is currently at work on a two-volume life of Dickinson, has written that Dickinson's writings up to the time of the Declaration of Independence expressed a basic syllogism of government; that "No man can be happy unless he is free, no many can be free unless he has control over his own property, men cannot control their property unless they control the taxing power of the government; therefore, no man can be free when he is taxed without his own consent, by representatives of his own election."<sup>2/</sup>

Mr. Stille, Dickinson's biographer, described him as "an English Constitutional Whig," who believed the English monarchy was the best government man had contrived, but that opposition to usurpation by the king and Parliament were proper courses of conduct of all good Englishmen.

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<sup>1/</sup> Tyler, II, 27-28

<sup>2/</sup> Powell, two-page typescript sketch of John Dickinson for Delaware State Archivist, de Valinger.

## APPRAISAL OF DICKINSON

Dickinson has frequently been referred to as "the Penman of the American Revolution." Tyler, in his work, has an entire chapter (Volume 2, Chapter 25) entitled "John Dickinson as Penman of the American Revolution." Tyler characterizes Dickinson as "a man of powerful and cultivated intellect, with all his interests and all his tastes on the side of order, conservatism, and peace."<sup>1/</sup> In another place, he wrote:

"Just as the politico-literary influence of James Otis was, upon the whole, predominant in America from 1764 until 1767, so, from the latter date until some months after the outbreak of hostilities in 1775, was the politico-literary influence of John Dickinson predominant here. Moreover, as he succeeded to James Otis in the development of Revolutionary thought, so was he, at last succeeded by Thomas Paine, who held sway among us, as the chief writer of political essays, from the early part of 1776 until the close of the Revolution itself."<sup>2/</sup>

Paul Leicester Ford, who edited the writings of John Dickinson in 1895 for the Pennsylvania Historical Society, in his preface, wrote:

"John Dickinson has been aptly termed the 'Penman of the Revolution.' In the literature of that struggle, his position is as pre-eminent as Washington in war, Franklin in diplomacy, and Morris in finance."<sup>3/</sup>

Dickinson's biographer, Stille, wrote:

"From the year 1760 until his term of office as President of the Supreme Executive Council [Pennsylvania] expired

<sup>1/</sup> Tyler, I, 235

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid, II, 32

<sup>3/</sup> Ford, Preface, Writings of John Dickinson

in 1783, Mr. Dickinson was probably the most conspicuous person in the Service of the State."<sup>1/</sup>

Dr. Powell, who is now engaged on a biography of Dickinson, recently said of Dickinson that it was not lack of patriotism but a disagreement with his associates as to the logical sequence of actions that was responsible for Dickinson's reluctance to support the movement for independence. It was premature, he [Dickinson] though, if it preceded the establishment of unity among the colonies and the safeguarding of personal freedoms.<sup>2/</sup>

Upon Dickinson's death, Thomas Jefferson, then President of the United States, wrote of him:

"A more estimable man or truer patriot could not have left us. Among the first of the advocates for the rights of his countrymen when assailed by Great Britain, he continued to the last the orthodox advocate of the true principles of our new government, and his name will be consecrated in history as one of the great worthies of the Revolution."<sup>3/</sup>

Earlier Jefferson had declared Dickinson's "Farmer's Letters" as "ignis fatuus, misleading us from true principles."<sup>4/</sup>

Charles Beard, in his famous work on An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution, characterized Dickinson as a very cautious man who was seriously discredited with the patriot party during the Revolution as it was rumored he had advised his brother against accepting payment of debts in paper, which he thought was sure to depreciate.<sup>5/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Stille, Preface

<sup>2/</sup> Mississippi Valley Historical Rev., Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, Sept., 1950; 266

<sup>3/</sup> Stille, 236-7

<sup>4/</sup> Tyler, II, 33

<sup>5/</sup> Beard, 88



Edward Rutledge, who in June, 1776, agreed with Dickinson in opposition to the plan for independence, nevertheless, said of him that the "vice of all his productions, to a considerable degree" was "the vice of referring too much."

John Adams, as the leader of the patriot party urging independence, was possibly Dickinson's most severe critic. We have seen earlier that Adams called Dickinson "a piddling genius" who for a whole year prior to the Declaration of Independence had given "a silly cast to our whole doings." In April, 1777, Adams wrote to James Warren of Plymouth, Massachusetts, saying of Dickinson:

"The Farmer turns out to be the man that I have seen him to be these two years. He is in total neglect and disgrace here. I am sorry for it, because of the forward part he took in the beginning of the controversy. But there is certainly such a thing as falling away in politics, if there is none in grace." 2/

At another time Adams wrote of Dickinson:

"I have always imputed the loss of Charleston, and of the brave officers and men who fell there, and the loss of a hero more worth than all the town, to Mr. Dickinson's petition /first petition/ to the king, and the loss of Quebec and Montgomery to his subsequent unceasing, though, finally unavailing, efforts against independence." 2/

It occurred to me it would be interesting to see how much space was given in the Dictionary of American Biography to John Dickinson as compared with some of his contemporaries. The amount of space given in the Dictionary of American Biography may be taken as a rough, rule-of-thumb of the opinion held by modern scholars as to the place of the individual in American history:

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1/ Tyler, III, 33

2/ Ibid, 34

3/ Stillé, 160

The columns of space given to Dickinson and a number of his contemporaries are as follows:

John Dickinson	3-1/3	columns
John Dickinson	25	"
Benjamin Franklin	27	"
Benjamin Franklin	37	"
Thomas Jefferson	37	"
Thomas Jefferson	36	"
George Washington	36	"
George Washington	8-1/2	"
James Wilson	8-1/2	"
James Wilson	19-1/2	"
James Madison	19-1/2	"
John Adams	18-1/2	"
John Adams	12	"
Samuel Adams	12	"
Alexander Hamilton	18	"
Alexander Hamilton	18	"
Edmund Randolph	4	"
Edmund Randolph	4	"
James Otis	9	"
James Otis	3-1/3	"
Caesar Rodney	3-1/3	"
Caesar Rodney	4	"
George Read	4	"
Thomas Mckean	5-1/4	"
Thomas Mckean		

It is seen from this tabulation that Caesar Rodney, George Read, and Thomas Mckean, the three other delegates from Delaware at the Continental Congress who voted for the Declaration of Independence, receive as much, or more, space than John Dickinson. Compared with Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Adams, it is seen that Dickinson receives minor treatment in the Dictionary of American Biography.

I think it may fairly be said that Dickinson was among the foremost leaders in the American colonies who formulated and guided colonial opposition to the acts of the British Parliament when colonial opposition reached its logical climax in the move for independence, he lost his leadership. There were certain inconsistencies in his character, it seems to me, although, of course, it can be argued logically that he was consistent with his principles throughout. Dickinson sank into relative insignificance and went into retirement virtually throughout the period of the Revolution. He played a very minor role in military and state matters during this crucial period. It is because of his opposition to the Declaration of Independence and his subsequent retirement from public life during most of the war period, that Dickinson lost what might have been a really great name in American history.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Dickinson occupies a place in American history worthy of commemoration; the acts for which Americans should remember him were almost entirely associated with the ten years prior to the Declaration of Independence. He lived in Philadelphia virtually the whole of this period, and this part of his career was associated with Pennsylvania. It was as a leader arousing American opposition to the acts of the British Parliament for which Dickinson best deserves to be remembered. The question follows: How and where should his memory be commemorated in this connection?
  
- 2) (a) ~~Federal Hall~~ Federal Hall, New York City, has already been set aside for preservation as a national historic site and plans are being developed for its use as an interpretive center relating to the pre-Revolution and Revolutionary periods. The Stamp Act Congress of 1765, in which Dickinson took a leading part, was held in the old city hall on the very site where Federal Hall now stands. In the exhibits that will eventually be placed in Federal Hall relating to the Stamp Act Congress, Dickinson can receive prominent mention.
 

(b) ~~Independence National Historical Park~~ Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia has been authorized by the Congress and money has been appropriated for land acquisition. This project, when completed, will commemorate the great events associated with the two Continental Congresses, the Revolution, and establishment of American independence. It may be assumed that in the final development of this major historical park, proper attention will be given to the events leading up to the securing of independence by the American colonies. John Dickinson should receive prominent mention in this story.
  
- 3) I cannot see that any special significance attaches to the John Dickinson House in Kent County near Dover, Delaware, or that there is any important connection between this house and those parts of Dickinson's career which entitle him to historical recognition. I think Dickinson can be properly commemorated in the development of Federal Hall in New York City and Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia. He, along with other leaders of the times, should be given

appropriate attention at these two places: I believe such treatment is sufficient for a proper commemoration of John Dickinson in American History:

Roy E. Appleman

Roy E. Appleman  
Regional Historian

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TO SECRETARY  
MAR 6 - 1951  
FOR SIGNATURE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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In reply refer to:  
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FRS No. 117

MAR 15 1951

*Lurvey*

My dear Senator Brewster:

I have received your letter of February 21, inquiring as to the possibility of the establishment of the John Dickinson House, near Dover, Delaware, as a national historical area.

I am glad to have your further expression of interest in the preservation of this old structure. As indicated in your letter, this proposal appears to have a propitious time in case reports to advance certain kinds of national projects. I regret to advise that this appears to be true in regard to the John Dickinson House near Dover, since the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, at its meeting on April 19, 1950, was unable to approve that area for inclusion in the National Park System, as a national historical site. Further investigations of the structure were completed by the National Park Service during the fall of 1950, at your request, appear to confirm the viewpoint of the Advisory Board.

I am advised, however, that there are other important historic sites in the State of Delaware which would offer better opportunities as possible national historical areas. Even though the Federal Government, I shall be glad to have such possibilities investigated to determine all the facts and to prepare for the future. It may also be possible for representatives of the National Park Service to give advisory assistance to the people at Dover in regard to the preservation of the John Dickinson House through efforts within the state.

I appreciate your writing to me in regard to your continued interest in the preservation of the John Dickinson House. Should you wish to have some of the other possibilities, to which I have referred, considered, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD.) OSCAR J. CHAPMAN

Secretary of the Interior

Blair J. Allen, Jr.  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

Copy to: Regional Director, Region One (2)  
Assistant Director, Wildlife  
History Division  
Mr. Young (detached)  
Mr. Young: RFL:hc

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21 February 1951 kw

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The Honorable Oscar X. Chapman  
Secretary of Interior  
Department of the Interior  
Washington 25, d. C.

Dear Secretary Chapman:

You will recall our correspondence concerning the proposed restoration of the John Dickinson House as a national shrine. In view of the defense Program and the probable reduction of funds for non-defense purposes, I am wondering if any further attention is like to be given this matter:

Even if approval of the project could be granted with the promise that the actual work could not begin until some future date, such a decision would be gratifying to Delaware, since, as you know, we have no national shrine whatsoever.

I will appreciate your comments when convenient.

Sincerely yours.

J. ALLEN FREAR, Jr.  
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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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Sen. J. Allen Frank, Jr.  
United States Senate  
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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to:  
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TO SECRETARY  
OCT. 24 1951  
FOR SIGNATURE

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*Survey*

*Ijr ittir SwMkter Wnm\**

*to ham mmimA jmr* letter of October 14, 1951, for  
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Sincerely yours,

(SGD.) OSCAR L. CHAPMAN.

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Hon. J. Allen Frear, Jr.  
United States Department of the Interior  
Washington 25, D. C.

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UNITED STATES SENATE

Washington, D.C.

18 October 1966

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The Honorable Oscar L. Chapman  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C.

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/s/ J. Allen Frear, Jr.

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to:  
LSD WABO r>r<r

Survey 4

NOV 16 1951

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park Project

From: Assistant Director Lee

Subject: Further investigation of John Dickinson House, Dover, Delaware

Over the past year and a half, we have received urgent requests from Senator Jim JIKm fimar, Ar of Ida constituents to designate the John Dickinson House, near Dover, Mianm, aa « aaUoal kutoale alta.

At the 22nd meeting of the Advisory Board, Mr. Louis de Valinger, Archivist for the State of Delaware, Dover, Delaware, appeared before the Board and presented the case. The Board was unable to make a recommendation on this matter and the attached copy of letter of June 5, 29 contains the resolution of the Board. But Senator Frear has shown a reaffirmed interest in having the house preserved. The attached copy of our letter of November 6, 1951 to him indicates that this Service is unable to assist in a way that would be helpful by rendering advisory assistance.

Dr. Edward M. Riley is the Park Service historian nearest to Dover, Delaware, and we suggest that he get in touch with Mr. de Valinger to examine the Dickinson House and offer such suggestions as he can as to preservation and use. Perhaps it will be possible to have a committee to the widespread interest of State and local societies in historical preservation and to have a group to take on the responsibility.

We may raise the issue of having at least one Park Service area within the State of Delaware. The Advisory Board does not recommend a change in the State's geographical distribution, in fact, there are several such as Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine which have no National Park Service areas within their boundaries.

I am not believe the John Dickinson House deserves national recognition, we are interested in encouraging State and local organizations to take an ever-increasing degree in the preservation of the house.

I am not believe the John Dickinson House deserves national recognition, we are interested in encouraging State and local organizations to take an ever-increasing degree in the preservation of the house.

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(SGD.) RONALD F. LEE  
Assistant Director

Mr. ktwifa

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Enclosures )

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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JUNE 5 1950  
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Dear Senator Freer:

I have received your letter of May 11 concerning the resolution adopted by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments at its recent meeting in regard to the proposal to preserve the John Dickinson House near Dover, Delaware, as a national historical area.

I appreciate your deep interest in the preservation of this structure and have been advised that through your arrangements were made for Mr. Kelly, your Administrative Assistant, and Mr. McDonough, Valinger, State Architect of Delaware, to appear before the Advisory Board's Subcommittee on Historical Problems on April 18 in support of the proposal to preserve the Dickinson House. I have been informed that the presentation of these gentlemen was very helpful to the Advisory Board in its deliberations regarding the significance of this structure. After consideration by the Subcommittee, it recommended the following resolution, which the Board adopted on April 19 and which was recommended by the Director of the National Park Service, I have subsequently approved:

Resolved, that the Advisory Board fully recognizes the historical importance of John Dickinson. It has carefully considered the position of the structure near Dover among the several other homes of Dickinson - his birthplace in Maryland, his residence in Philadelphia, and in Wilmington, no longer existing. After deliberation the Board does not feel it can consider his house near Dover (his boyhood home, and occasional later residence) to be of national significance, either in relation to his career or for its own architectural merit. It commends to the State of Delaware the desirability of organization, both public and private, for the preservation of this and other ancient monuments that have high significance for the State and people of Delaware.

There is a growing number of worthwhile preservation projects which it has not been possible for the National Park Service to assist except in an advisory capacity. The pressures of the building boom, the rapid growth of population, and the spread of commercial and industrial developments have jeopardized the preservation of many interesting historic landmarks, particularly in recent years. In the past 18 months, the National Park Service has been asked to consider 111 separate preservation projects, including 28 in the form of proposed legislation. Because of the

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of those proposals, and the heavy financial burden already imposed upon the Federal Government in the maintenance and development of areas already a part of the national Park system, it has been particularly difficult to assume new obligations.

During recent years, the National Park Service has been recommending more and more that local governmental agencies or private associations care for many of these sites, which are of definite significance as a part of our historical heritage, but the care of which it would be very unlikely that the Federal Government could possibly assume. In many of these cases, local agencies have found ways and means to assume the responsibility for the preservation of the sites. I should, therefore, like to endorse the Advisory Board's suggestion and urge that the preservation of the Dickinson House be undertaken by State or local governmental agencies, or by private historical associations, such as the Friends of Old Dover. Should it prove practicable to interest any such agencies or associations in this project, the National Park Service will be glad to make available to appropriate representatives their advisory services. Insofar as funds will permit.

I regret that I cannot be more encouraging about active Federal participation in the saving of the John Dickinson House, and I want to thank you for the personal time and effort that you have devoted to bringing this proposal to my attention and for presenting it to the Advisory Board for its consideration. I do hope that the interesting old structure may be preserved through cooperative effort.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) OSCAR L. CHAPMAN  
Secretary of the Interior

-Wm,

Fe. J. William Griffith, Jr.  
United States Senator  
Washington 25, D. C.



WWMSM Survey

UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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IwaeramdaBi on the results of the visit.

cc: Director ✓

Edward J. Hiley  
Historian

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Worth, Mr. Keller *see*

DATE: Dec 6 1946  
*Kehler Survey*

FROM : Z3-B.

SUBJECT: Riley phoned from Philadelphia <sup>C</sup> to report <sup>title</sup> ~~title~~ visited Dover, Delaware last Tuesday and discussed the John Dickinson House, in which Sen. Frear is interested, with de Valinger the State Archivist. <sup>YIT > DIVIM Se^</sup> A report will be in <sup>very soon</sup>. It looks like the Colonial Dames will buy it as a Area 2 project.

*Postscript will you write report on Riley's Report is in*

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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Hon. J. Allen Frazier, Jr.  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Senator Frazier:

We have received by reference from Secretary Chapman, your letter of November 21 regarding your interest, and that of private groups, in the preservation of the Dickinson House near Dover, Delaware.

I am with the Superintendent of the National Park Service, Hatteriasal Me Project, miMialftela\* Pawwiriariiyit, a Im or\* p. piia, as liisfeMtaa m i«a ataicr, mU «e lk\*« Leon De Walinga p» «r«\* State Archivist of Delaware, at Dover, for the purpose of discussing with him and with interested groups the question of restoring and preserving the Dickinson House. If Dr. auij liui not already been to Dover in this connection, I will undoubtedly go in the near future.

We are pleased that private citizens in the Dover area are interested in the preservation of the Dickinson House, and trust that a suitable plan for preserving the building for public use may be devised.

Sincerely yours,

(S6W) Hillary A. Tolson  
Hillary A. Tolson  
Acting Director

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#DPy to: Supt., Indianapolis IBP  
Regional Director\*, Region  
History Division  
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UNITED STATES SENATE

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The Honorable OsMir is Chapman  
B4a0r Ministry of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
Washington 25, D, C;

Dear Secretary Chapman:

I would like to inform you of the letter of January 6 which forwarded to the status of the Jete Diokiaswi Base near Oonol, Qoloxoro which I originally thought could be restored as a National Historic Site.

Since it appears practically impossible to establish this area as a Federal shrine, I feel that such could be agreed by the Advisory Board of the National Park Service staff, which you have offered for the purpose of making a study of the extent to which it would be possible to assist private citizens in procuring the tract.

I am informed that a private group is actively undertaking consideration of the possibility of buying the site and for the purchase, early establishment of the Park Service interpretation and the BMMH of the private group in Bahuaio, about to be highly desirable.

My investigation that the Director of Park Service officiate directly with Mr. Robert Ballaghr, Jr., the State Architect of Interior, who is assisting the private committee in its discussion of possible restoration procedures.

I shall look forward to hearing from you further as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

Sincerely yours,

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(Sgd) J. Allen Troar, Jr.

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Superintendent

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December 70 1972

Park Historian

Historical Society of the Modoc National Monument, Denny, MS Linn

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Edward M. Hihl  
 Park Hiataria

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 Mr. Peterson

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Independence National Historical Park Project  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Old Custom House  
1000 Market Street  
Philadelphia 6, PA

December 13, 1971

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Assistant Director Lee

Investigation of Jite J&llama Imwi atsr Bvtr# Delaware

Investigation of Jite J&llama Imwi atsr Bvtr# Delaware

Attention is a ...  
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It is noted that ...

H. G. Anderson  
Superintendent

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Peterson

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Draft of Letter to Senator Frank J. La Follette

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...have encouraged the resident to help ... Gharas K Peterson and the link R storm ...

...the property has been purchased ... the property has been purchased ...

...the historical research phase of the program does not appear to be as urgent as the architectural work ...

...in an effort to find early insurance surveys ... Our such policy is ...



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Independence National Historical Park Project  
420 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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February 17, 1991

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**JOHN DICKINSON** of the Borough of Wilmington in the State of Delaware Esq. For Insurance of One Thousand Dollars on a policy framed according to the terms of the Charter of the State of Delaware to the Merchants of the said City of Wilmington formerly in the tenure of John Warrick let 37 in the term of JOHN COCHRAN and now in the tenure of JOHN COCHRAN and JOHN COCHRAN of the said JOHN COCHRAN & CO. Merchants.

For three years

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Rate 1000t ----- 1 ploy for 3 yrs: : . . \$30.00

Debr. 2/3 of a years prem. as abated . . . : 3.32

Add indgr 27.67

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Decem. 29

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**JOHN DICKINSON** of the Borough of Wilmington in the State of Delaware Esq. For Insurance of One Thousand Dollars on a policy framed according to the terms of the Charter of the State of Delaware to the Merchants of the said City of Wilmington formerly in the tenure of John Warrick and now in the tenure of JOHN COCHRAN and JOHN COCHRAN of the said JOHN COCHRAN & CO. Merchants.

For three years

Dzo 1000t ----- 1 ploy for 3 yrs: : . . \$30.00

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Decem. 29

JOHN DICKSON of the Borough of Winton in the State of  
Victoria; For Intention of three thousand Dollars on  
Two Store Brick Smiling Barn and a One Store Brick Addition  
to It which addition is 10 feet in length 0 is foot in width,  
situate in Jones's Hack, Dover Hundred, East County, and State  
of Delaware; to the Southward of the road from Dover to  
the Storehouse formerly in the tenure of John Avery  
in the tenure of Joseph Smith and now in the tenure of  
Isaiah Honor Mann. & James Kinney of the  
said Joseph Kinney's Estate:

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Drs. 3,000 . . . . . 50 cents for 3 years . . . \$150.

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JOBH MCKINSEY of the Borough of Winton in the State of  
Delaware; For Intention of ten thousand Dollars on  
A Two Store Brick Smiling House, situate in Brandoria Hundred,  
County of New Castle and State of Delaware; About two Acres and  
an half more or less of land on the East side of Concord  
Road, and near the Junction of that road and Patuxent Road formerly  
in the Tenure of William Little but now in the Tenure of Daniel  
Chapman

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3092

JOHN DICKEY of the County of Wilkes in the State of Delaware, Esqr. - For Insurance of Two Thousand Dollars on a Two Story Stone Building House, situate on the Northern side of the Mill Creek in Broadwinds Hundred in the County of Kent in the State of Delaware about a quarter of a mile from the Village at Broadwinds Bridge formerly in the tenors of Charles Burr Wharton but now in the tenors of John Witteret

For three years

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park Project

Old Custom House  
420 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

Sss'®\*-whites..

December 13, 1961  
December 13, 1961

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Memorandum

To: Assistant Director Lee  
From: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park Project  
Subject: Investigation of John Dickinson House near Dover, Delaware

Attached is a proposed draft of a letter from Secretary Chapman to Senator Frear, prepared by Dr. Riley, which explains more clearly the type of assistance which will be possible for this Park to give in the preservation of the John Dickinson House. It is hoped that this draft will be of assistance to you.

/s/ M. O. Anderson  
M. O. Anderson  
Superintendent

enclosure



Draft of letter to Senator Freer re: John Dickinson House

As mentioned in my letter of November 6, I have discussed with the Director of the National Park Service the question of the extent to which it will be possible for that Bureau to assist the group or groups interested in undertaking the restoration and preservation of the John Dickinson House near Dover, Delaware. Although the National Park Service does not believe that the house deserves national recognition, they are interested in encouraging a local organization in undertaking its preservation. Because no funds are available for the purpose, however, the National Park Service will be unable to contribute directly to the cost and must confine its assistance to general advice regarding restoration and preservation policies and techniques.

The nearest area of the National Park Service to Dover is the Independence National Historical Park Project in Philadelphia. Even in this case, however, the Dickinson House is more than 125 miles from downtown Philadelphia and requires nearly a full day's round trip in traffic.

We have consulted the Resident Architect, Mr. Charles B. Peterson, and the Park Historian, Dr. Edward M. Riley, regarding the type of assistance they may be able to give. Both of these gentlemen are willing to advise the group in a general way. Their long experience in the restoration and preservation of historic buildings and their knowledge would be most valuable. They have visited the Dickinson House with Mr. de Valinger and are acquainted with its condition. Because of the very heavy program of work being carried by them in connection with the development of the Independence National Historical Park Project, it will not be possible for them to carry out or supervise detail work in connection with the preservation of the Dickinson House.

We feel that it would be advantageous for the group to employ a local architect to plan and direct the preservation work as soon as the property has been purchased. Mr. Peterson will be glad to nominate an architect and consult with him as much as possible. The first step should be a set of measured drawings of existing conditions and one of the first decisions should be as to whether or not a custodian will maintain living quarters in the building.

The historical research phase of the program does not appear to be as urgent as the architectural work. Dr. Riley has offered to examine the records of the various insurance companies in Philadelphia in an effort to find early insurance surveys. One such policy is mentioned in the Dickinson papers in the Delaware State Archives. He will also be glad to advise the historian of the group but he cannot do the actual research. He will also be able to consult with the group on interpretive plans when that point in the development of the area is reached.

Oscar L. Chapman

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to:  
JIBB WASO-E

*Survey*

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Please feel free to communicate with Mr. Cox or this  
Office in regard to the problem of the restoration and preservation  
program at the John Dickinson House as we are greatly interested  
in your proposals to see this structure saved and to give you any  
further assistance that is within our power to do so.

Sincerely yours

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Ronald P. Lee  
Assistant Director

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Cow tm Section Director, Esplanade (2) ISSyilSiR»aiMSSi5  
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Design and Construction Dir.  
History Division

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In Reply Refer to  
LSS 1050-H

*Survey*

DEC 20 1951

Hon. J. Allen Frear, Jr. |  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

WYA, Senator Smart

In accordance with Assistant Director Tolson's letter of November 26, 1951, and in Assistant Director Tolson's letter of November 30 to you regarding the John Dickinson House, near Dover, Delaware, I am pleased to report that Dr. Donald H. Riley of this Service, conferred with Mr. Leon de Vainger on December 4, in regard to the preservation problems at this structure.

Following a conference at Mr. de Vainger's office in Dover, an examination of the structure and property easements by Messrs. Riley and de Vainger. Dr. Riley learned from Mr. de Vainger that the Historic Activities Committee of the Dover Chapter of the Colonial Dames and certain other private individuals have recently shown a distinct interest in purchasing the house and a small tract of land at the site with a view of undertaking under private sponsorship a non-MMT and progressive program of restoration and preservation. Dr. Riley found that the most urgent needs of this structure and its private supporters are for architectural and planning advice in connection with the project. Dr. Riley discussed with Mr. de Vainger an outline for an essential historical research program, which Mr. de Vainger felt the Committee would be in a position to undertake under his direction. Historian Appelman, of this Service, has prepared a historical survey study of the John Dickinson property of which we shall be pleased to forward copies to Mr. de Vainger for his use and for the use of the Committee.

Secretary Chapsa in his letter of November 6 to you regarding the Dickinson House, suggested that the advisory assistance of this Service in regard to restoration and preservation policies and techniques would be available in the limits of existing appropriations in connection with private efforts to save and preserve the Dickinson House. I am sure that this Service is willing to give such assistance as is within its power in advising Mr. de Vainger and the local groups in general architectural and planning problems at the Dickinson House property, and in advising Mr. de Vainger of our views on this matter. To this end the Committee

*VM*

**BBi:**

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It is suggested that he communicate with Mr. Albert Cox, Regional Director of our Region One Office, 900 North Lombard Street, Richmond 20, Virginia. In addition, I believe it would be very helpful if the Committee would employ an architect who could give day to day supervision to the project, when the Service is unable to do.

f#li^

It is greatly encouraging to learn that, through Mr. de Valinger's interest and leadership and that of the local Committee, there is a distinct prospect this interesting structure may be saved.

Sincerely yours,

...."m

(SCH) CONRAD L. WIRTH

Conrad L. Wirth  
Director

copy to Regional Director, Region One (2)  
Supt., Independence N.H.P.P,  
Assistant Director Lee  
Design and Construction Dim,  
History Division ✓

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to  
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Sf

Jan - 3 1977  
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Survey

SnjB

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region One

From: Assistant Director Lee

Subject: John Dickinson House, Dover JMAWMPii

The attached copy of a self-explanatory letter from Leon  
de Volinger, Jr., State Archivist of Delaware, regarding the John  
Dickinson House near Dover Delaware, will be of interest to you.

(SGD.) ROMID F. im:

Assistant Director

tl Hitiliwi

In duplicate

Copy to: Superintendent, Independence Hall N.H.P.S.

History Division

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Journal of BEUSAI J-#;  
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December 27, 1941

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We were especially pleased to learn from the third  
paragraph of your letter that the national Park Service is ill-  
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ganaralarehnaetural and punnng advia\* Va ean asaora you that  
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Soeaty of the Cobnial Danas\* vllloaMnneata vlll Mr. Gok as  
reqaasted by you.

As you tBueubtedly know\* Dr. SiUy has recently aont us  
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fomation that was startling\* it was bs3>fal in arxplamaatSjg what  
Ma had. Va are iadtaad obligad to Br< Bilay for sarvaying the sits  
of the Dickinson House and for his interest in davelcldng this  
fnrthar infoxnation for us.

CeHtdially yours\*

A/Leon da minggaic^ Jr.  
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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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July 15, 1951

MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Superintendent, National Park Service  
From: Superintendent, Zuni National Monument  
Subject: Dickenson, J. C. -

Reference is made to your memorandum of July 8, 1951, regarding car accident involving a vehicle on the Monument. The driver is identified as Mr. Dickenson.

Mr. Dickenson has been interviewed with respect to the accident at the Monument for July 8, 1951.

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July 30, 1952

Dear Mr. deValinger;  
Dear Mr. deValinger

Here are some comments on the Dickinson House at St. James Creek, Kent County, Delaware, made for the record of our joint inspection on July 30.

1. The documents you have recently located relative to the fire of 1804 are very valuable in understanding the structure as it now exists. It is quite clear that the upper part of the house built by Judge Samuel Dickinson about 1735 -- with its "peaks" front and back and the third floor rooms with garret above -- was of a distinctly different character. The informally arranged openings in the rear, set in English bond brick walls are definitely pre-Georgian in feeling. The old roof lines seen in the attic of Addition No. 1 are also remains of earlier structures not readily understandable.

2. As I believe you suggested, the most practicable date for restoration is the 1805 period after the fire. The house as it now stands has been little changed since that time. The interior trim is almost complete for that period. It seems quite evident from Dickinson's letter of April 4, 1804, that the house had been completely gutted during the fire.

3. It seems certain that there is not room in the old house for quarters for a custodian and public comfort station facilities too. For that reason I would pull off Addition No. 2, even though it has a certain picturesqueness. It is so far gone that it cannot be stabilized without considerable expense.

4. As to new buildings: They could be conjectural restorations of old structures now gone. As you point out, in an old but undated document, Dickinson had 25 negroes. That indicates a large farm layout with quite a few outbuildings. If the grounds were systematically trenched, foundations would probably prove the locations of these buildings, which could be reconstructed. Perhaps it would be better in the end to build them in a frankly modern style at a decent distance from the old house, especially since there seems to be no old farm groups to study for precedent.

5. In any case, I would (a) carefully pull off the two porches and cut down the nearby weeds so as to allow an unimpeded view; (b) prime and paint all old woodwork new weathering fast; and (c) prepare a careful set of measured drawings as the basis for the restoration studies. A full set of the latter should be made - not only for the guidance of the mechanics but for the approval of the various parties concerned with the promotion. The drawings would show clearly the proposed work on paper so as to avoid misunderstandings which could otherwise develop.

6. The present main cornice, front and rear, is a later replacement and out of character. A new one should be designed, using precedent from nearby houses of the period - in case old photographs or other data are not found. It would seem worth while to conduct an extensive campaign to locate such material.

7. It takes a great deal of time to really study an old building and to understand it. The above recommendations should be evaluated, knowing that the writer has seen the house only twice (very briefly at that).

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and is not familiar with Delaware architecture,  
and is not familiar with Delaware architecture#

Sincerely yours,  
Sincerely yours.

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**sm.**

Charles E. Peterson  
Charles E. Peterson  
Resident Architect

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From UT-

Subj: Restoration of Dickinson House at St James Park  
Kent County, Delaware

Yesterday with architect I drove down

to Dover and the Dickinson House, leaving of

at 4:30 am and returning at 4:30 pm (via New Castle).

I prepared a letter with comments to the

Delabinger which he read (and seemed to approve)

while I was there (copy attached).

It seems that Senator Iwan is tired of

voting appropriations for National Parks when

Delaware doesn't have one. Because the Federal  
Dickinson House was burned down, he wants a

complete plan for development and  
contamination.

Such a plan would require a lot of  
work in this department - probably more than

we have spent <sup>to far</sup> on any one building except

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4> ~~was~~ <sup>been</sup> completely gutted ~~of original contents~~ <sup>gSBgsaa</sup> during <sup>ctb</sup> fire <sup>fix</sup>.

<sup>^ji^-;</sup> <sup>vjw</sup> room in the old <sup>iU-</sup> <sup>fix</sup>

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4. <sup>[-o</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>new</sup> <sup>bedrooms</sup>; they <sup>could</sup> ~~be~~

<sup>conjectural</sup> <sup>restorations</sup> of <sup>st</sup> <sup>structures</sup> <sup>are</sup> <sup>gone</sup>. <sup>It</sup> <sup>is</sup>

<sup>Li</sup> <sup>you</sup> <sup>haven't</sup> <sup>out</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>an</sup> <sup>dated</sup> <sup>document</sup>, <sup>Dickinson</sup>

<sup>^JT~</sup> <sup>Vj-yc/Oxo</sup> <sup>had</sup> <sup>25</sup> <sup>negatives</sup>, <sup>and</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>indicates</sup> <sup>a</sup>

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could be reconstructed conjecturally. Perhaps it would  
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7. It takes a great deal of time to really study  
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designed from nearby houses of the period -

in case old photographs or other data is

not found. ~~It would be~~ <sup>new</sup> ~~worth while to~~

conduct an intensive campaign to locate

such material.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM  
OFFICE MEMORANDUMUNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Superintendent, Independence NHP

DATE: July 30, 1952

FROM : Resident Architect

SUBJECT: Restoration of Dickinson House at St. Jones Creek,  
Kent County, Delaware

Yesterday, with Architect Lipari, I drove down to Dover and the Dickinson House, leaving at 9:45 a.m. and returning at 9:45 p.m. (via New Castle).

I prepared a letter with comments to Mr. de Valinger which he read (and seemed to approve) while I was there (copy attached).

It seems that Senator Frear is tired of voting appropriations for National Parks when Delaware doesn't have one. Because the Federal ownership of the Dickinson House was turned down, he wants a complete master plan for development as our contribution.

Such a plan would require a lot of work in this department - probably more than we have spent so far on any one building except Independence Hall itself. This is especially true since it takes two hours each way to drive by the fastest route.

If we have to make the measured drawings, the only thing I can see is to set up a summer camp there next year. One team could probably do the operation in about four weeks.

Charles E. Peterson  
Resident Architect

cc: Regional Director, I  
cc: Regional Director, I

Independence! - t!on2n"at!r!f;! F:r! Project  
 Old Custon Kōuca = 4.1 e isotiit Street  
 Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

August 5, 1952

Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr.  
 Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr.  
 State Archivist of Delaware  
 State Archivist of Delaware  
 Dover, Delaware  
 Dover, Delaware

Dear Mr. de Valinger:  
 Dear Mr. de Valinger:

We recently were requested by our Regional Office to have our Mr. Charles E. Peterson, Resident Architect, get in touch with you in response to a request which you had addressed to Mr. Elbert Cox, Regional Director, Richmond, Virginia, on July 14 for advisory assistance in connection with the Dickinson House at St. Jones Creek, Kent County, Delaware.

As Mr. Peterson no doubt informed you at the time he and Mr. Lipari of this office visited and consulted with you on July 30, he has now departed for an extended European visit. Before he departed, he brought to my attention the draft of a set of recommendations which he indicated had been reviewed with you on July 30. These recommendations and suggestions which were reported to have been considered and discussed between yourself and Mr. Peterson are noted as follows:

1. The documents you have recently located relative to the fire of 1804 are very valuable in understanding the structure as it now exists. It is quite clear that the upper part of the house built by Judge Samuel Dickinson about 1735 — with its "peaks" front and back and the third floor rooms with garret above — was of a distinctly different character. The informally arranged openings in the rear, set in English bond brick walls are definitely pre-Georgian in feeling. The old roof lines seen in the attic of Addition No. 1 are also remains of earlier structures not readily understandable.

2. As I believe you suggested, the most practicable date for restoration is the 1805 period after the fire. The house as it now stands has been little changed since that time. The interior trim is almost complete for that period. It seems quite evident from Dickinson's letter of April 4, 1806, that the house had been completely gutted during the fire.

3. It seems certain that there is not room in the old house for quarters for a custodian and public comfort station facilities too. For that reason I would omit Addition No. 2, even though it has a certain picturesqueness. It is so far gone that it cannot be stabilized without considerable expense.

4. As to new buildings: They could be conjectural restorations of old structures now gone. As you point out in an old but undated document, Dickinson had 25 negroes. That indicates a large farm layout with quite a few outbuildings. If the grounds were systematically trenched, foundations would probably prove the locations of these buildings, which could be reconstructed. Perhaps it would be better in the end to build them in a frankly modern style at a decent distance from the old house, especially since there seems to be no old farm groups to study for precedent.

5. In any case, I would (a) carefully pull off the two porches and cut down the nearby weeds so as to allow an unimpeded view; (b) prime paint all old woodwork now weathering fast; and (c) prepare a careful set of measured drawings as the basis for the restoration studies. A full set of the latter should be made - not only for the guidance of the mechanics but for the approval of the various parties concerned with the promotion. The drawings would show clearly the proposed work on paper so as to avoid misunderstandings which could otherwise develop.

6. The present main cornice, front and rear, is a later replacement and out of character. A new one should be designed, using precedent from nearby houses of the period - in case old photographs or other data are not found. It would seem worth while to conduct an extensive campaign to locate such material.

7. It takes a great deal of time to really study an old building and to understand it. The above recommendations should be evaluated, knowing that the writer has seen the house only twice (very briefly at that) and is not familiar with Delaware architecture.

As has been previously suggested to Senator Frear and yourself by representatives of the National Park Service, it is believed that efforts by you to arrange for the employment of a local architect to carry out restoration work on the house would be the logical procedure to follow. While Mr. Peterson and possibly other members of our staff would be happy to assist with occasional consultation and advice, the pressure of their duties here prevents them from being able to consider spending time in connection with actual on site supervision or carrying out of the plans which he might be of assistance in helping you develop.

Mr. Peterson expects to return about the middle of September and if his advisory services are desired subsequent to that date, it would be appreciated if you would get in touch with us.

Very truly yours  
Very truly yours

M. O. Anderson  
M. O. Anderson  
Superintendent

cc: Regional Director, I  
Regional Director, I  
C. E. Peterson  
C. E. Peterson

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August 13, 1952  
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Mr. Elbert Cox  
Regional Director  
National Park Service  
Region One  
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Mr. Cox:  
Dear Mr. Cox:

In accordance with your letter of July 22, Mr. Charles E. Peterson, Resident Architect of your Philadelphia office, came to Dover on July 30, in company with Mr. L. Bart, and spent the afternoon with me at the John Dickinson Mansion. We are indeed grateful for the excellent suggestions he gave us for making the building weather-tight preparatory to closing it in for the winter. These suggestions were reiterated in Mr. H. O. Anderson's letter of August 5, of which you have undoubtedly received a copy. We have transmitted these suggestions to our Advisory Committee and we are prepared to put them into effect.

Despite these valued suggestions and Mr. Peterson's willingness to cooperate, we were disappointed to learn that that was apparently all the Philadelphia office understood it was to do for us. It was our understanding in view of Senator Frear's conversation with Secretary Chapman and his letter offering assistance that the National Park Service would be in a position not to make expenditures on the restoration of the John Dickinson Mansion, but to give us guidance and any other assistance within its means. We realize that Mr. Peterson would be unable to give day to day supervision of the work and we are not asking that of him or any other employee of the National Park Service. What we do desire and hope you can give us is a master plan for the proper restoration of this historic house and suggestions for its proper administration as an historic site by our Commission. We realize this would require the making of measured drawings by employees of your staff, but it was our understanding that this together with concrete suggestions and specifications, was contained in Secretary Chapman's offer. If I am correct in my assumptions, will you please verify them and also indicate when we may expect employees of your department to begin preparation of such a master plan for us?

We have nearly completed the historical research on this house, so that this would not have to be undertaken by any of the members of your staff.

Cordially yours,

S/ Leon de Valinger Jr.

State Archivist

cc: Senator Frear  
Mr. H. O. Anderson

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AUG 25 1954 -j, 'Lury

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region One

From: PI3WMS

Subject: John Dickason House, D&mr, Bldg BWIIM

Following receipt of your memorandum of August 15, 1954, in which you requested a careful study of our file and correspondence made by this office regarding advisory assistance to be given in connection with the restoration of the John Dickason House in Skiver, Delaware.

There is no reference in any of our correspondence in this District to providing more than advisory service by Service personnel. Since the inactivation of the Historic American Buildings Survey, which was financed largely through Y. P. K. and to a small extent within a AAA project, the Service has no available personnel with which to measure old buildings of historic interest. Mr. Peterski estimated that a measuring squad would require about four weeks to make measured drawings of the Dickason House. It would take practically all the architectural talent of Region One to make such a squad, and the absorption for a month of all your resident work to make their services available. Salaries and per diem would amount to several thousand dollars. The legality of spending such a sum on a Non-Federal project could certainly be questioned, even assuming that otherwise you could undertake the work.

It seems to this office that the visits to the site of Messrs. Jitley, Iopari, Peterson, etc., and the probability that subsequent visits will follow if the restoration project is undertaken, constitute considerable assistance to Mr. de Malinge and his group. It is a fast two-hour drive each way from Philadelphia to Dover, and Service representatives certainly cannot be expected to take charge of day-to-day work at the site. The local group must secure the services of a local architect, whom we shall be glad to continue to advise.

We trust that you are able to explain this situation to Mr. Lean de Malinge and that the restoration of the Dickason House may be forward on a cooperative basis in which our assistance is strictly limited to advice and consultation.

Copy to: History Division

Director  
Design & Construction Division

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Memorandum

To: Regional M3pms^f HnKf,cim Qmi^ <<as

Wewm Director

Subject: Advisory Assistance of National Park Service in Restoration of John Dickinson House

Senator Frear of Delaware has again requested the National Park Service to extend as much advisory assistance as we can to the State of Delaware in connection with the restoration of the Dickinson house near Dover.

At the recent meeting of the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., the following was discussed: WaMmua mraai tm mMmmrn Wwmmtmimf Oiaf mcteriaa IBnhl^r M m <f>ear<is^ m mmmmm-mm dtiiiiiaQa Bsiin Up. m mmmmm\* mm mmm mm&mm <f> Mmemm\* m. m wmmmtp mmmmm Wxmt\*^ j n w \*^# for rnMilimma, m^ttanf rnmimmrn\*

It is the desire of this Office that you arrange to extend additional advisory assistance to the State of Delaware in connection with the restoration of the Dickinson house near Dover.

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Independence National Historical Park Project

Old Custom House

820 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, Pa.

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Hr# Edmyd S. Hamat  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Park Service  
900 No. Lombardy Street  
Richmond 20, Virginia

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Charles E. Peterson  
Resident Architect

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UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
REGION ONE  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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December 9, 1952

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Mr. Linn de Valinger, Jr.  
State Architect of Delaware  
Dover, Delaware

My dear Mr. de Valinger:  
My dear Mr. de Valinger:

This is to advise you that Mr. Daniel Breslin, architect of this office, will arrive at your office in Dover on the morning of December 10 to confer with you and your architect on the restoration of the Jdm Dickinson House.

I am sure you will find Mr. Breslin both capable and helpful and I sincerely hope that the United States is able to spare from our own program of work will be of assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

(SIGNED)

S. M. Lisle  
Regional Director

Copy to: Charles E. Petersen

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In reply refer to: 1957

TO SECRETARY  
DEC 9 1957  
FOR SIGNATURE

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My dear Senator Frear:

I appreciate your concern for the John Dickinson House, expressed in your letter of November 23, and have asked that the National Park Service give as much advisory help as possible.

It is my understanding that the Service is taking steps to acquire the property. Mr. Leonard, the Director, is interested in the restoration of the house and the State of Delaware are also interested. Unfortunately, the Service only has limited funds available for such projects.

I am interested in the restoration of the house and the State of Delaware are also interested. Unfortunately, the Service only has limited funds available for such projects.

I am sure that you will be successful in this important historical conservation project in which you are now engaged.

Sincerely yours,

J

(sgd) JOEL D. WOLFSOHN

Assistant Secretary of the Interior

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United States  
Washington 25, D. C.

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Copy to: History Division w/o of San. Frear's ltr of 11/26  
Design & Construc. Division, ditto  
Rec. Planning Division, ditto  
Regional Director, Region One 3 j ditto (2)

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WASHINGTON

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25 November 1972

CrXXXI

The Honorable Oscar L. Chapman  
Secretary of the Interior

Iatwriw Bullbine  
Midagttm 25, » e.

VXV-

Dear Secretary Chapman

My correspondence concerning efforts on my part to obtain advisory assistance from the National Park Service in the restoration of John Mocti Wtiti Mwifioa ia Belli. I have more

Tim reHsoreMoB pr>4c% has imMa aa4er<alEiw by the etatef hut w urgently vuqlre his lawii advice. At the Hatlenl Park Sarrico aaa uwftoubt^:xi? provide.

Several days ago, my @mo\* taltoad ia fomally with Mr\* Kalai^ foa of the Natlonl Park Sorylco and it mppm that a regiaaai ropr<aaatatlW^ of the oomba will be in Bolawaro an<>ity, I hope away mwh that ho oaa rondor ua helpfulaaabtaoo, and to that end I w ill greatly appotato your ooforato.

With assistance of a poothlo while your tenuro as Secretary rsMiss< -I bolitto this to be ospoollaly desirable since you are thoroughly acquainted with the matter and thus in a better position to move ahead to the fullest possible extent.

Sincerely yours

(Signed) J. ALLEN FREAR, JR.

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
REGION ONE  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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To: The Director  
Tim Directw

From: Assistant Regional Director, Region One

Subject: Assistance of National Park Service in the  
restoration of John Dickinson House

Reference is made to your memorandum of October 25, 1964, as above.

In this connection we forward a copy of Architect Broalin's report on his recent visit at the John Dickinson Mansion in Dover, Delaware. It was evidently a very profitable occasion.

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(SIGNED)

Daniel J. Tobin  
Assistant Regional Director

Attachment

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Regional Director

December 19, 1952

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Architect Breslin

4 visit to the John Dickinson Mansion, Dover, Delaware

On December 18, 1952, the writer visited the John Dickinson Mansion, five miles southeast of Dover, Delaware, in company with Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr., State Archivist for Delaware, as requested by memorandum from the Director, dated November 25, 1952.

was delighted to see the way the restoration of this historic house is progressing under the direction of Mr. de Valinger and his advisory board. As the house is in very good condition, very little replacement of adobe members and architectural details will be necessary; consequently, most of my visit was spent in going into various technical restoration methods.

Mr. de Valinger had a great many questions to ask concerning the best methods of heating an historic house. In anticipation of this, I had sample prints of the heating layouts for the Ford Mansion and the Hasdec House with me which I used to illustrate my suggestions for solving their problem. Mr. de Valinger seemed to be pleased with all of this and stated that he felt better able to deal with the heating contractors that they arrive at that phase of the restoration.

Next this we went on to such things as pointing up brick work, removing white wash from the water table, locating electric outlets, location of proposed elevator station, best method of interpreting the house to visitors, burglar and fire protection, cleaning woodwork and scraping for original paint on the interior trim, preservation of iron objects, best location for a parking area, special use permits for town surplus land, and all the thousand and end other questions that arise during a restoration.

I tried to answer all of these questions by citing the methods used by the National Park Service. Those that I was in doubt about, i.e., the best methods for preserving iron objects, I have, since my return to the Regional Office, procured the correct answers from the proper sources and forwarded same to him with other items from our files that I felt would be most helpful.

Mr. de Valinger and his advisory board have unearthed a great mass of documentary material pertaining to the rebuilding of this house after the fire of 1804, which is simplifying their job to a large extent. It

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Daniel J. Bralito  
Architect

Copy to: The Director

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The John Dickinson Mansion

Branch of the Delaware State Museum

Branch of the Delaware State Museum

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June 9,, 1960

Mr. Ronald F. Lee  
Regional Director  
United States Dept. of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Region Five Office  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania,

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Dear Mr. Lee:

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Recently I discussed with you informally the procedure for having the John Dickinson Mansion, near Dover, designated as a National Historic Site. We wish to have this letter considered as our formal application for such a designation and ask that you please consider it and forward it to the National Office.

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The John Dickinson Mansion is wholly owned by the State of Delaware and administered by it. In the acquisition of the property we were greatly assisted by the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Delaware and many other organizations and individuals in both the restoration and the furnishings.

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We are enclosing publications which will provide you with the historical background regarding the importance of the John Dickinson Mansion and his part as one of the

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Mr. Ronald F. Lee

-2-

June 9, 1960

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founders of our Country. If we can provide you with any

further information please do not hesitate to communicate .. /P?-

with us. Copies of this letter are being sent to Senators

J. Allen Freear and John J. Williams as we believe they will

be interest in having this historic mansion designated as,

a National Historic Site, Thanking you for your considera-

tion, I am,

^ton, I am, ".V \*"" 33 \*3, "

Cordially yours,

*Don de Valen*

Director

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cc: Senator Freear  
cc: Senator Freer  
cc: Senator Williams  
Enclosures  
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June 15, 1960

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Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five 'A#  
From: Chief Historian -wm  
Subject: ~~John Dickinson Estate, Dover, Delaware~~ 'tm:Mm0?mmm Mi:

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House and was informed that it would be considered under  
m^rn- rnm-mtm for Independence, which is iftitItiM Urn-  
3Pj^^ August 1. He was iMaateaf.iii %mi\$ nt^ ,4^%;;Vj;  
registered National Historic Monument and will  
in the National Park System. I believe Mr. De Valinger  
has spoken to you as he has \*>>>>>wmmUrnZrn .j,'| '-1, ?f,;,%  
of recognition.

(SGD) HERBERT E. KAHLER

M Chief Historian

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Mr. Tolson  
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Region Five  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

June 20, 1960

Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr., Director  
John Dickinson Mansion  
P. O. Box 710  
Dover, Delaware

Dear Mr. de Valinger:

Thank you for your letter of June 9. We shall consider it as your formal application for official designation as a National Historic Site.

You will recall that I mentioned, during our recent discussion, that the National Park Service is conducting the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings as an important aspect of its Mission 66 program. Theme X of the Survey, "The War for Independence," into which the John Dickinson House would naturally fall, is being studied now by our Regional Historic Sites Survey Historian, and I have given him the publications you so kindly sent me. His report on that theme is due to be finished this summer; it will then go to Washington to be considered by the National Park Service Advisory Board, which is meeting early in the fall.

At the moment I believe we have sufficient information on the John Dickinson House needed for the survey report. Please be assured that your request will receive the fullest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Ronald P. Lee  
Regional Director

Copy to: Director w/ copy of incoming

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143 XKS street  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

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June 20, 1960

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Hon. John J. Williams  
Hon. John J. Williams  
United States Senate  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Williams:  
Dear Senator Williams;

This is in reply to your letter of June 16 regarding the possible designation of the John Dickinson Mansion, near Dover, Delaware, as a National Historic Site.

As you no doubt are aware, the National Park Service is now conducting the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings as a very important phase of its Mission 66 program. The John Dickinson House falls naturally into theme X of the survey which embraces those sites and structures associated with the War for Independence. This theme is under study by our Regional Historic Sites Survey Historian, and we expect the report on it will be completed this summer in time for the National Park Service Advisory Board to pass on it when the Board meets early in the fall.

Mr. Leon de Valinger has written to us, also, requesting that the Dickinson House be designated a National Historic Site; a copy of our reply to him is attached. You may be assured that Mr. de Valinger's request will be given fullest consideration.

Sincerely yours,  
Sincerely yours.

/s/ Ronald F. Lee  
Regional Director

Enclosure

Copy to: Director

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# The John Dickinson Mansion

Branch of the Pennsylvania State Museum

Post Office  
Box 100

June 21, 1960

Dr. Ronald F. Lee  
Regional Director  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Region Five  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

Ref: L58

Dear Dr. Lee:

Thank you for your letter of June 20th stating that ours of June 9th will be considered a formal application for official designation as a National Historic Site. We are pleased to learn that John Dickinson falls into Theme X of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings and that our request will be given the fullest consideration. We hope we will be successful in receiving the requested designation.

Cordially yours,

Director

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143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa

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July 1, 1960

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To: Director  
frus Acting Luigi Mil Sirueter

Subject: John Pichlaun Mumion; IMHOVFA

With reference to the postscript in Secretary Saxon's letter  
of JUN 24 to Comtor J. Allen Frowe attached are copies of  
Mr. B. Wallinger's letter of June 1 which is the formal application  
and our reply of June 20. Also attached is a copy of Mr.  
B. Wallinger's letter of June 21.

(Sgt) J. Carlisle Crouch

Acting Regional Director

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In duplicate  
Attachments

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JUN 24, 1960

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PARKS

Dear Senator Frear:  
Dear Senator Frear:

I appreciate your letter of June 14 and your conversation over the telephone on June 16, suggesting that the John Dickinson Mansion, in Kent County, Delaware, be designated as a national historic site. We shall be glad to give careful consideration to your proposal and to the formal application which you state has been submitted by Mr. Leon Devallinger, State Archivist of Delaware.

The John Dickinson Mansion was studied by us in 1950, and we are currently bringing our information up-to-date in connection with the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. That part of the survey dealing with the War of Independence is scheduled for completion during August of this year. The sites covered by that part of the survey, including the John Dickinson Mansion, will then be presented to the Consulting Committee of the National Survey and to the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, to determine which of them are worthy of national recognition under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666).

The next meeting of the Advisory Board will be held next September. As soon as the results of the meeting are known, we shall be glad to write you further regarding this matter.

Sincerely yours,  
Sincerely yours.

/s/ Fred A. Seaton

Secretary of the Interior  
Secretary of the Interior

Hon. J. Allen Frear, Jr.  
Hon. J. Allen Frear, Jr.  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.  
Washington 29, D. C.

Copy to: Asst. Secy., PIM  
Copy to: Asst. Secy., P.N.  
Regional Director, Region Five. With copy of incoming.  
Regional Director, Region Five. With cc of incoming.  
Mr. Devallinger's formal application cannot be found here. Please advise if it was sent to your office. If so, please send us a copy.  
Mr. Diederich. With copy of incoming.  
Branch of History. With copy of incoming.  
Branch of History. With copy of incoming.

W.P. Porter:HAF:cbv 6-22-60  
CW Porter:HAF:cbw 6-22-60

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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INFORMATION SERVICE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

For Release JANUARY 20, 1961  
For Release JANUARY 20, 1961

SECRETARY SEATON RECOMMENDS ADDITIONAL SITES FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton has recommended an additional 51 sites as being eligible for Registered National Historic Landmark status, it was announced today.

The sites possessing exceptional historic and archeological value are described in three new "theme studies" in the National Park Service series which eventually will cover all the major periods of human history in the United States. The three studies are: ~~Prehistoric Hunters and Gatherers; The War for Independence; and a sub-theme under Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries, entitled: Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River.~~

The Registry of National Historic Landmarks was approved by Secretary Seaton and established by the National Park Service in October 1960. Eleven theme studies covering the English, French, and Spanish Exploration and Settlement; the Development of the English Colonies, 1700-1775; The Advance of the Frontier, 1763-1830; Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1830; The Civil War, 1861-1865; and four sub-themes under Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries, entitled: The Santa Fe Trail; the Cattleman's Empire; Military and Indian Affairs; and The Texas Revolution and the War with Mexico, 1820-1857, were announced.

A total of 324 sites have been recommended, with 213 declared eligible for landmark status and the remainder already in the National Park System or having received Federal recognition.

National Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth said that the Registry of National Historic Landmarks is designed to recognize and endorse the preservation and protection of structures and sites now administered by States, other public agencies, or historical societies, and to encourage private owners of historic landmarks to maintain them.



The Registry is an outgrowth of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings program of the National Park Service. This program was authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which provided for a "survey of historic and archeological sites, buildings, and objects for the purpose of determining which possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States."

Administrators of sites found eligible for Landmark status may apply to the National Park Service for such recognition and will receive a certificate. Arrangements are also being made to make available a suitable marker.

Descriptive summaries of the sites in the presently announced theme studies are attached. A list of themes under study is also attached. Additional studies will be announced from time to time. The various theme studies may be published later for public distribution. Only reading copies are currently available.

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## Prehistoric Hunters and Gatherers

The Advisory Board has recognized 20 sites as having exceptional value. Nineteen of these, not administered by the National Park Service, are eligible to receive certificates as Registered National Historic Landmarks. They are:

1. Iyatayet, Alaska. One of the earliest sites yet found in Alaska. This is the type site for the Norton Culture which flourished from 500 B.C. to A.D. 300.
2. Ipiutak, Alaska. A large spectacular Paleo-Eskimo site with house remains and elaborate burials.
3. Double Adobe, Arizona. The first site where the early and distinctive Cochise Culture was recognized. It contained evidence of food gathering peoples who lived in the area about 5,700 B.C.
4. Ventana Cave, Arizona. Contained a deep stratified deposit showing human use during a period of about 5,000 years, ending in historical times.
5. Lindenmeier Site, Colorado. The first recognized and investigated Folsom camp site in the United States. A recent radiocarbon date places the Folsom occupation at this site at over 10,000 years ago.
6. Stallings Island, Georgia. Probably the most famous shell heap site in the deep Southeast, this site gave a knowledge of prehistoric Indians from the Archaic pre-pottery people through those who made the earliest pottery in the southeastern states.
7. Modoc Rockshelter, Illinois. A deep, stratified Archaic site. This is one of the oldest Archaic sites east of the Mississippi. Earliest occupation began around 8,000 B.C. Work here yielded clear indication of an Archaic occupation in the East as early as the early hunters of the West.
8. Graham Cave, Missouri. The first site to provide radiocarbon dates for an Archaic occupation in the time range previously considered typical of the Paleo-Indian stage. It presented the first association of fluted projectile points with spear points of Archaic type. The earliest occupation occurred around 9,700 years ago.

9. ~~Signal Butte, Nebraska.~~ This was the first Plains Middle Prehistoric site to be described. It provided much of the data necessary for determining the cultural sequence of the Northern Plains. The earliest occupation seems to have begun around 2,500 B.C.

10. ~~Leonard Rock Shelter, Nevada.~~ This stratified site provided evidence for three periods of prehistoric occupation in the Great Basin, the first beginning about 7,000 B.C.

11. ~~Sandia Cave, New Mexico.~~ This was the type site for Sandia points and was one of the first sites to provide evidence of man's occupation of North America at a time earlier than that of Folsom bison hunters.

12. ~~Anderson Basin (Blackwater Draw), New Mexico.~~ A well preserved section of a locality famous for its important archeological and paleontological remains, this site has yielded Folsom points and the earlier Clovis type of human weapons in association with a variety of extinct mammal remains.

13. ~~Folsom, New Mexico.~~ Here scientists first made their dramatic find of man's weapons unquestionably associated with the bones of an extinct species of the bison. This evidence profoundly modified scientific thought about the antiquity of man in America.

14. ~~Lamoka, New York.~~ This is the type site of the Lamoka culture. It provided part of the basis for the initial definition of the Archaic stage in the Eastern United States.

15. ~~Fort Rock Cave, Oregon.~~ This cave yielded the famous Fort Rock sandals which are the oldest dated artifacts in the New World. It also indicated that Indians occupied Central Oregon at the time of the Newberry eruption of Mount Mazama.

16. ~~Plainview, Texas.~~ This is the type station for Plainview points. Excavations here demonstrated an association of the Plainview point with bones of an extinct bison species.

17. ~~Danger Cave, Utah.~~ Danger Cave is the most important of the Great Basin finds. It led to the formulation of the "Desert Culture" concept, and showed that early peoples of the Great Basin lived in an entirely different environment from that of the High Plains Paleo-Indian hunters. It indicated that weaving was known in America prior to 7,000 B.C.

18. Oconto Site, Wisconsin. This was a site where implements of the "Old Copper" Culture were found in association with human burials. It provided what appears to be an accurate date for the Old Copper Culture, and places this occupation of the western Great Lakes region at roughly 6,000 to 7,000 years ago.

19. Horner Site, Wyoming. This is the type station for the Cody Complex which includes Scottsbluff and Glen points and the distinctive Cody knife. Radiocarbon dates indicate a period of occupation about 5,000 B.C.

In addition, one site recognized as having exceptional value has been accepted by the Secretary of the Interior as a donation from the National Geographic Society. This site is Russell Cave, Alabama.

## The War for Independence

In the study of the War for Independence, thirty-two sites have been recognized as possessing exceptional value. Twenty-two of these, not administered by the National Park Service, are eligible to receive certificates as Registered National Historic Landmarks. They are as follows:

1. **The Webb House, Wethersfield, Connecticut.** This fine Colonial structure, built in 1752 by Joseph Webb, was the scene of the historic May, 1781, conference between Gen. George Washington and Count de Rochambeau, Commander of the American military forces in Newport, Rhode Island. The result was an agreement by which the French and American Allies marched south to cooperate with Admiral de Grasse's French fleet to oppose and surround Lord Cornwallis, the British Commander in Virginia. The meeting may not have produced specific plans for the victorious Yorktown Campaign, but it laid the ground work leading to Cornwallis' defeat. Owned by the Connecticut Society, Colonial Dames of America, and open to the public.

2. **The John Dickinson House, near Dover, Delaware.** The restored Dickinson House is the surviving structure most eminently associated with the great writer so aptly termed the "Penman of the Revolution." In the patriotic literature of that struggle, Dickinson was as pre-eminent as was Washington in war, Franklin in diplomacy and Morris in finance. With the help of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, the State of Delaware restored the Dickinson House in 1952, and it is now exhibited to the public by the Delaware State Museum.

3. **Bunker Hill Monument, Boston, Massachusetts.** The famed Bunker Hill Monument, situated on Breed's Hill, commemorates the first full-scale action, on June 17, 1775, between American militia and British troops. The battle was a repulse for the raw American Army, but as a costly victory, it convinced the British Command that defeating the rebellious Colonists would not be easy. The courage of the American defenders at Bunker Hill has become a classic in American military history. The monument is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and administered by the Metropolitan Commission of Boston.

4. Old North (Christ Episcopal) Church, Boston, Massachusetts.

From the belfry of this church on the night of April 18, 1775, lanterns notified patriots on the opposite shore of the Charles River that British troops were beginning their march to Lexington and Concord, where they were engaged next day with the Minute Men in the opening skirmish of the American Revolution. Boston's oldest surviving church, this structure is one of the nation's most cherished landmarks, both historically and architecturally. Old North Church is owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and is open to the public.

5. Paul Revere House, Boston, Massachusetts. Although extensively restored, this colonial structure retains its original framework and, in addition to its significance as the home of the Revolutionary patriot, is important as downtown Boston's only surviving 17th century dwelling. Through its back door, Revere probably passed for his famous ride on the night of April 18, 1775, to warn the patriots in Lexington and Concord. The structure is owned and exhibited to the public by the Paul Revere Memorial Association.

6. Lexington Green, Lexington, Massachusetts. Here on the morning of April 19, 1775, occurred the short but momentous skirmish between the Minute Men and the British forces from Boston that initiated the armed struggle for American independence. Lexington Green is owned by the Town of Lexington, Massachusetts.

7. Buckman Tavern, Lexington, Massachusetts. Located on the east side of Lexington Green, the Buckman Tavern is the oldest of the Lexington inns and is the one most intimately associated with the famed opening struggle of the American Revolution. Owned by the Town of Lexington, it is leased to the Lexington Historical Society, which exhibits the building to the public.

8. Wright's Tavern, Concord, Massachusetts. A landmark more memorable and significant than is sometimes realized today is Wright's Tavern at the center of the Town of Concord. Built in 1747, it was the scene, within a few hours on April 19, 1775, of meetings by both Minute Men and British Redcoats. It was also associated in October 17, 1774, with the meeting of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, which gathered in the adjacent meeting house of the First Parish to prepare the way for the Revolution in Massachusetts. Wright's Tavern is owned by the Society of the First Parish, in Concord.

9. Monmouth Battlefield, near Freehold, New Jersey. The Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1776, marked the combat debut of the American Army after the hard winter's training at Valley Forge. Washington failed at Monmouth to stop British movement across New Jersey after these forces left Philadelphia. But this last major battle in the north demonstrated that a new American Army, able to engage the British forces on equal terms, had been forged. The major scene of the battle, northwest of Freehold, New Jersey, retains much of its original character and is now largely privately-owned farm land.

10. Princeton Battlefield State Park, Princeton, New Jersey. Washington's victory at Princeton on January 3, 1777, had a generally encouraging effect on the American Revolution at a time when the spirits of the American people were at a very low ebb; this victory, coming so soon after Washington's Christmas night defeat of the British at Trenton in 1776, brightened the American cause and strengthened Washington's army. A New Jersey State Park on the southern edge of Princeton preserves the scene of the heaviest fighting on the Princeton Battlefield. State owned.

11. Washington Crossing State Parks, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Washington's crossing of the Delaware on Christmas night 1776, for the brilliant raid on Trenton, was a crucial episode in the struggle for independence. By this daring act he carried the war to the enemy and gave the new nation and his often-defeated army a taste of victory at the war's lowest ebb. On the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware, the well-maintained State Park of approximately 300 acres preserves the site of the embarkation of Washington's main force. On the New Jersey side of the river is a 312-acre State Park preserving the scene of the landing above Trenton.

12. Bennington Battlefield State Park, New York. The American militia's victory at the Battle of Bennington, August 16, 1777, was a significant contribution to the defeat of Burgoyne's British Army at Saratoga, two months later. The 208-acre Bennington Battlefield Park includes the center of heaviest fighting on the high ground overlooking the little village of Walloomsac and affords a wide view of the battle terrain. The park is administered by the New York State Education Department, Albany, N. Y.

13. Morris-Jumel Mansion, New York City. In addition to its distinction as the only important pre-revolutionary house still standing in Manhattan, the Morris-Jumel Mansion is the major surviving landmark of the Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776. One major result of the battle was the restoration of the

offensive spirit of the American Army, after a succession of defeats and retreats. The Jumel House was Washington's headquarters from September 14 to October 18, 1776. The house was saved from demolition in 1903 when the City of New York purchased the property and by special legislation gave its care to the Washington Headquarters Association or the Daughters of the American Revolution.

14. Stony Point Battlefield Reservation, New York. By the action at Stony Point, July 16, 1779, Gen. George Washington asserted his grip on the Hudson and especially on West Point, "the key to the Continent." The Battle of Stony Point was the last major military action in the northern theater of war during the Revolution. This property, owned by the State of New York, is administered by State Conservation Department in cooperation with the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society.

15. The Gundelo Philadelphia, New York. The United States Gundelo Philadelphia is the only surviving gunboat built and manned by American forces during the Revolutionary War. Further, it is one of the 15 small craft with which Benedict Arnold fought 29 British vessels in the battle off Valcour Island, Lake Champlain, October 11, 1776. The year of grace won by the building of Arnold's "fleet" and the battle off Valcour Island paved the way for the decisive American victory at Saratoga the following year. Privately owned, the vessel is now located on the west shore of Lake Champlain, on New York Route 22, in Essex County, N. Y.

16. Valcour Bay, New York. Benedict Arnold's daring fleet action off Valcour Island, in Lake Champlain, on October 11, 1776, had a far-reaching effect on the outcome of the war for American independence. Although the Americans were defeated on the lake, their very presence and stubborn fighting proved to be a strategic victory. British invasion of the northern colonies was delayed while a fleet was built to engage Arnold's small flotilla. By the time the lake had been cleared of American vessels, the season was too far advanced to carry out the projected British movement to Albany. The site is marked by a small monument on the mainland about five miles south of Plattsburgh, N. Y., in view of the island. This was erected in 1928 by the New York State Education Department and the Saranac Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.



17. ~~Washington's Headquarters, Newburgh, New York.~~ None of Washington's military headquarters during the War for Independence is of greater historical significance than the Hasbrouck House at Newburgh. Arriving at Newburgh on April 1, 1782, the Commander-in-Chief remained at the Hasbrouck House, save for occasional enforced absences, until August 19, 1783. This was a longer period than Washington spent at any other headquarters. Aside from its intimate association with Washington, the Hasbrouck House has the distinction of being the first historic site preserved by a state. The state obtained the property in 1850 for non-payment of debt. It is administered by the New York State Education Department, Albany.

18. ~~Brandywine Battlefield Park, Pennsylvania.~~ One Battle of the two main armies during the campaign which resulted in the British capture of Philadelphia. Although defeated, Washington extricated his force in good order, and the Continentals demonstrated their ability to withstand the determined attack of British regulars. Brandywine Battlefield Park comprises 50 acres of rolling ground overlooking the main battle areas to the north and west. Owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Park is administered by Brandywine Battlefield Park Commission.

19. ~~Chew House (Gliveden), Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.~~ This fine Georgian home is the most important surviving landmark of the hard-fought battle of Germantown, October 4, 1777. In that action, Washington's Army narrowly missed winning a significant victory over a large contingent of the British Army guarding the northwestern approaches to newly-occupied Philadelphia. It also proved to be a major influence in the consummation of the alliance with France that spelled final victory for the new American nation. The house is privately owned and is not open to the public except on special occasions.

20. ~~Valley Forge State Park, Pennsylvania.~~ No name in American history conveys more of suffering, sacrifice and triumph than Valley Forge. The bitter winter of 1777-1778 endured here by Washington's ragged, hungry troops saw the emergence of a real American Army, risen from the wreckage of the defeated force which staggered into the camp on December 19, 1777. The military training and discipline imposed at Valley Forge created a force which from that time on would meet its professional enemy on equal terms and at last defeat him. Owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Park is administered by the Valley Forge Park Commission.

21. ~~Camden Battlefield, South Carolina.~~ The Battle of Camden, August 16, 1780, was the climax to a series of disasters which began with the fall of Charleston to Clinton's British army in May. Though a tactical defeat for the Americans, it brought Nathanael Greene to the American command. The Daughters of the American Revolution own 2 acres of the battlefield located 3 miles north of Camden, S. C., and the rest is owned by various private citizens.

22. ~~St. John's Episcopal Church, Virginia.~~ In St. John's Church on March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry delivered the stirring "Liberty or Death" speech which sounded a clarion call for his fellow Virginians. There, in the third great speech of his career, the spellbinding orator of the war for independence attained a measure of unending fame. The church has been altered several times since 1775. The church and southern half of cemetery is owned by the congregation of St. John's Episcopal Church; the northern half of cemetery, by the city of Richmond.

In addition, 10 sites are represented and interpreted in the National Park System as follows:

1. Cowpens Battlefield Site, South Carolina
2. Guilford Courthouse National Historical Park, North Carolina
3. Independence National Historical Park, Pennsylvania
4. Kings Mountain National Military Park, South Carolina
5. Minute Man National Historical Park Project, Massachusetts
6. Moore's Creek National Military Park, South Carolina
7. Morristown National Historical Park, New Jersey
8. Saratoga National Historical Park, New York
9. Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York
10. Yorktown Battlefield, Colonial National Historical Park, Virginia.

L.:

## Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River

In the study of Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River, 16 sites have been recognized as having exceptional value in illustrating and commemorating the history of the United States. Nine of these, not administered by the National Park Service, are eligible to receive certificates as Registered National Historic Landmarks. They are as follows:

1. Migration Canyon (at point of the Pioneer Monument), Utah. Brigham Young and his Mormon followers arrived at the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 by way of Migration Canyon. Here at the mouth of the Canyon, now the east edge of Salt Lake City, there is a fine panoramic view of the land that was to be their home. It is perhaps the best place to commemorate the long, history-making migration of the sect. Owned by the State of Utah.

2. Naucvo, Illinois. The place from which the great Mormon migration westward to Utah began in 1846 following mob violence and persecution of the sect. By 1842 more than 10,000 Mormons had settled in Naucvo, and it soon became the largest city in Illinois. Many of the structures originally built by and associated with the Mormon leaders of that time survive. Some of them are preserved by the Reorganized Church, others by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, and still others are privately owned.

3. Robidoux Pass, Nebraska. A significant landmark and campsite on the Old Oregon and California Trail. The great migrations of the 1840's passed through it, and from its crest the westbound travelers had their first view of Laramie Peak, which most of them considered to be the Rocky Mountains.

4. Independence Rock, Wyoming. This huge rock-mass, rising like a monster out of the sagebrush plain near the Sweetwater River, became known as "the great registry of the desert" because of the large number of names and dates carved, painted, or written on it. It was one of the best known landmarks on the Oregon and California Trail.

5. South Pass, Wyoming. This was the long looked for crossing of the Continental Divide on the Oregon and California Trail, and as such was one of the great landmarks on the Trail. It also is the easiest passage of the Rocky Mountains, and was famous in the days of transcontinental animal-drawn transportation.

6. Donner Camp, California. Site of the snowbound winter camp of the Donner Party, 1847-1848, in which tragedy struck this California-bound party of 89 people. Only 45 survived the ordeal, one of the worst episodes of overland migration. In a sense, it epitomizes the hardships and dangers encountered by those who made the overland crossings in those days.

7. Sutter's Fort, California. The Fort and settlement established by John A. Sutter in 1839 on the Sacramento River which became the objective of nearly all westbound emigrants to California from the United States by way of the central and northern routes. Sutter was a generous benefactor to the emigrants and his Fort and assistance proved an invaluable aid in the American settlement of California. Sutter's Fort has been restored and is now a State Historical Monument.

8. Warner's Ranch, California. This ranch, 75 miles northeast of San Diego, established by Jonathan T. Warner, an American citizen from Connecticut was a famous place on the southern emigrant and wagon road into California. It was the first place the traveler could find shelter and food after enduring the hardships of the desert crossing, and almost everyone traveling by this route stopped there. Owned by the San Diego Water Company and leased to private ranchers.

9\* Fort Hall, Idaho. Established by Nathaniel Wyeth in 1834 and one of most famous of all landmarks and stopping places on the Oregon and California Trail. The Oregon and California Trails, westbound, separated at Fort Hall. The Fort was associated importantly with the fur trade, the overland migrations to Oregon and California, and the transportation and supply network to the Inland Empire and the gold mines of Montana. Located in the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, and under the jurisdiction of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The National Park Service presently administers several federally owned areas associated with Overland Migrations west of the Mississippi River. The seven established areas in the National Park System are the following:

1. Death Valley National Monument, California
2. Fort Laramie National Monument, Montana
3. Fort Union National Monument, New Mexico
4. Fort Vancouver National Monument, Washington
5. Lassen Volcanic National Park, California
6. Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska
7. Whitman National Monument, Washington

Letter February 3, 1961, (with application forms) to owner of John Dickinson Mansion, Delaware notifying him of eligibility of Landmark Status, signed by Acting Director Scoyen.

Owner: Hon Elbert N. Carvel, Governor of Delaware, Dover, Delaware;  
Hon Elbert N. Carvel, Governor of Delaware, Dover, Delaware;  
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Letters also sent to: Sen. John J. Williams, 1-20-61  
Sen. J. Caleb Boggs, 1-20-61  
Cong. Harris B. McDowell, Jr., 1-20-61

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Mr. John Dickinson Munsu

Department of the Interior, S\*«tr Mu«tmi

Post Office Box 710  
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February 7, 1961

Secretary of The Interior  
Department of The Interior  
Washington 25. D. C.

Dear Sir:

We have recently been advised that the John Dickinson Mansion has been evaluated by The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, and approved for registration as a National Historic Landmark. We are indeed gratified to learn that the John Dickinson Mansion has qualified for this certification.

We are pleased to comply with the provisions for such National Historic Landmark status and we wish to apply for a certificate attesting to that fact «id for a marker mentioned in the letter from your office.

Thanking you, I am,

Sincerely yours,  
*Samuel H. Hargis*  
Director

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# The John Dickinson Mansion

Branch of the Delaware State Museum

Post Office Box 710  
Dover, Delaware

February 28, 1961

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth, Director  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wirth:

In compliance with the instructions contained in the letter of Mr. E. T. Sawyer of February 3rd to Governor Elbert N. Carvel we have filed in the form and herewith make formal application for a certificate designating the John Dickinson Mansion as a Registered National Historic Landmark. We are very much pleased to receive this designation and look forward to receiving the certificate and markers.

We are having an Annual Meeting with additional ceremonies at the Mansion on Monday, May 1st. It would be quite helpful if we could display the certificate at that time. Thanking you for consideration of this request, I am,

Cordially yours,

Director

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Enclosures  
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Mr. Conrad L. Wirth, Director  
 National Park Service  
 Department of the Interior  
 Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wirth:

As the owner (or owners) of John Dickinson Mansion located ~~at~~ near  
 (name of site)

Dover	Kent	Delaware
(City)	(County)	(State)

(I, we) hereby make formal application for a certificate designating this historic property as a Registered National Historic Landmark.

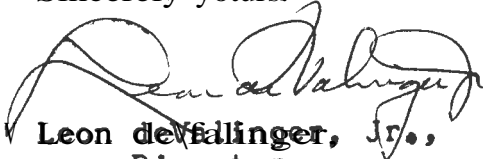
1. Fully conscious of the high responsibility to the Nation that goes with the ownership and care of a property classified as having exceptional value and worthy of Registered National Historic Landmark status (I, we) agree to preserve, so far as practicable and to the best of (my, our) ability, the historical integrity of this important part of the national cultural heritage.

2. Toward this end, (I, we) agree to continue to use the property only for purposes compatible with its historical character.

3. (I, we) also agree to permit an annual visit to the property by a representative of the National Park Service, as a basis for continuing landmark status.

4. If for any reason the three conditions mentioned above cannot continue to be met, it is agreed that the Registered National Historic Landmark status shall cease and that until landmark status is restored by the Secretary of the Interior, the Registered National Historic Landmark Certificate will not be displayed.

Sincerely yours,

  
 Leon deVallinger, Jr.,  
 Director

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April 14, 1961  
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Mr. Leon de Valinger  
State Archivist  
Dover, Delaware

Dear Leon:

I have checked with regard to the certificate for the John  
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j^i04iB^ Qf.. «Jii» for the May 1 ceremonies.

I have also checked on the status of your marker and find the  
order has been placed with the Lorson Industries, but find they  
will not have it cast for us and shipped to you by May 1.

Sincerely yours,

HERBERT EKAHLA  
Chief Historian

Copy to: Regional Director, Region Five  
Branch of History

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# The John Dickinson Mansion

Director of the Delaware State Museum

Post Office Box 710  
Dover, Delaware

AH 14 4b, 1733

Mr. Herbert F. Kahler  
Chief Historian  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

L58-18H

Dear Herb:

It was certainly a pleasure to see you at Charleston and I appreciate very much your letter of April 11th telling me that the certificate for the John Dickinson Mansion has already been sent to the office of Mr. Ronald Lee, Regional Director at Philadelphia. As you point out, we should receive it in plenty of time for our May 1st ceremonies. As the marker will not be ready for that occasion it will not inconvenience us as the certificate will be on hand and the presentation ceremony by our Governor can be planned around it. The marker will be welcome when it is ready. I am indeed obliged to you for following up this material for us so promptly.

Sincerely yours,

Director

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April 24, 1961

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*Handwritten: Release*

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**Acting Chief Historian**

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Attached is a copy of a letter from Mr. de Vallin, Director of the John Dickmeon Jarulo Deleware.

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Mr. Littleton talked briefly to Mr. HeUgan about the date of the copy and we are pleased to note that you have taken care of the matter of presenting the certificate.

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**/SA CARLES % RWTER-Jbij-t^Si:©**

**Acting Chief Historian**

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**Attachment**

**Copy to: 4 Mr. Littleton**

**JOL>ittleton;mg**



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# The John Dickinson Mansion

Branch of the Delaware State Museum

Post Office Box 710  
Dover, Delaware

May 3, 1961

*Telephone*  
734-9429

Dr. Murray H. Neilligan  
Regional Chief of Interpretation  
National Park Service  
Region Five  
443 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

Dear Dr. Neilligan:

It was indeed a pleasure to meet you and Mrs. Neilligan at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of The John Dickinson Mansion, Inc. on May 1st. We appreciate very much your cooperation in coming to Dover to make the presentation of the Certificate from the National Park Service to our Commission through the Governor and President of The Friends of The John Dickinson Mansion, Inc. Your presence added considerable to the importance of this presentation and we are indeed obliged to you for taking time from your many activities to be with us.

We were very sorry that the rainy weather prevented the dancing and the outdoor exercises planned in conjunction with it. I also regretted that you and Mrs. Neilligan had to return to Philadelphia without supper and the candlelight tour of

Dr. Murray H. Nelligan

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May 3, 1961

the Mansion, It was indeed attractive especially with the eighteenth century musicians in costume, I hope you will both take advantage of the rain check I offered and come to lunch some day soon and let me guide you through and tell of our problems and the splendid assistance we received from the National Park Service in the early days of the restoration. Your presence obviously inspired our Governor to make the public pronouncement that he is backing our project to save the Old State House, We have been trying to get this project underway for several years now, but at last it seems to be in motion, I sincerely hope we will be successful,

Looking forward to seeing you again soon,

I am,

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Sincerely,

Director

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Region Five 4 \*4;,,  
North Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

May 11, 1961

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Memorandum

To: Director xwtp

From: Regional Director

Subject: Presentation of Certificate for Signatures/ Dover, Delaware to Governor Elbert I. Cerrig

Monday, May 1, Regional Chief of Interpretation M. B. Reilgen presented the Registered Betonel Interpretive Certificate for the John Dickneon, Inc. Dover, Delaware to Governor Elbert M. Cerrig at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the John Oakneon Memorial, Inc. The ceremony went off very well and, as you will note in the attached copy of the letter from Br. Leon de Feinger, Director, Estate Archives, Dover, Delaware, gave Governor Cerrig the opportunity to launch a rehabilitation and restoration project for the "Old Estate House" at Dover.

We anticipate that this practice will prove equally and mutually beneficial in the future to both the Betonel Permit Service and the new organizations and individuals working in the interest of historic conservation.

(Sgd.) Romid F. Lee

Regional Director, ifr

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Attachment

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Mr. Leon deValinger, Jr.  
Director  
Delaware State Museum  
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Dear Mr. deValinger:

It is the MSTel M»k Service's iMliri\* that H» CFlatladAy .:;,i "T!" W  
between the owners of the sites or buildings in the Registry of  
National Historic Landmarks and itself will be mutually beneficial.

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S«ti«i National Park Service establishing the John Dickinson Museum a

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We look forward to this opportunity to further our association with  
the Delaware State Museum.

Yours sincerely,

Regional Director

Director

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Wilfredo J. 10 > 1964

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M. J. ...

Mr. Ir H. Pilling, Sr., Manager  
Sgt. J. A. Blekinson, Manager  
"Libel of the Stillborn State JiuMwi"  
Hoymer, Schmitt

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SigHed ,mm\$BiS^AOB

fl: Sydney Bradford  
Historic Sites Historian

s.-f .

cc:  
vS'' SS-s-'ADirector, w/c inc. ✓

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JKSSiSiSL. ^

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'sHs'.

X^AMMMAR\*

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February 6, 1964

John Dickinson House  
Fairbanks Alaska

AW  
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Dear Sidotta:

*Bn\* is the main* correspondence on the matter that is **IS^fiitJSiltsu** *tan*  
I supplied you in my 25, 1964. A copy of **Wwinnii^iit**  
to the Region **X Om^y**. **Ev JoQi X?** in **rmivna** a letter to **Ullif**  
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**Regions**.

file →

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**you** **or** **Dr.** **MaUigan** **visit** **taara** **tbia** **aontM** **XW** **»HI** **aaa** **It**. **fbOf**  
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Sincerely yours,

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John O. Zittieten

Enclosure



**The John Dickinson Mansion**  
**Branch of the Delaware State Museum**

NORTHEAST REGION		Initial and Date
FEB 10 1964		
Reg. Director		
Asst. Dir. (Adm.)		
Asst. Dir. (Ext. Affs.)		
Asst. Dir. (Gen. Inv.)		
Asst. Dir. (Ident.)		
Asst. Dir. (Int. Affs.)		
Asst. Dir. (Lab.)		
Asst. Dir. (Plan. & Insp.)		
Asst. Dir. (Rec. Mgmt.)		
Asst. Dir. (Spec. Inv.)		
Asst. Dir. (Training)		
Asst. Dir. (Public Affs.)		
Asst. Dir. (Tech. Serv.)		
Asst. Dir. (Director's Sec'y)		

February 7\* 1964

Dr. Ronald F. Lee  
 Regional Director  
 National Park Service  
 Northeast Region  
 143 South Third Street  
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Ref. L58-CHAI

Dear Dr. Lee:

I have been away a good bit recently and only now have the opportunity to reply to your letter of January 27th. We will be pleased to have a representative from the National Park Service visit the John Dickinson Mansion; You and your associates are welcome at anytime and of course they may visit during February to comply with the terms of the Registry of National Historic Landmarks. We shall look forward to a visit from someone from the National Park Service shortly.

Sincerely yours,

*Ronald Valinger*  
 Director

LdeW-Jbb

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MAR 11 1964

Kohler  
M. J. L. L. L.

M

Northeast Region

143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

L38-CHAH

MAR 6 1964

mM:Mm

Mr. Robert de la Unga, Jr. Director

Blawie State Historical  
Museum, Pottsville, Pa.

SMT Hr: de la Unga

It was a great pleasure to meet and talk with you yesterday. My only regret is that I arrived a day too soon, thus upsetting your schedule for the day.

Both the John Dickinson Mansion and the State Museum impressed me a great deal and your staff certainly have done a wonderful job, which any visitor cannot help but realize when visiting either site.

Captain Caatven gave me a stimulating tour of the Museum and Dover, and I shall write to him to express my appreciation. In addition, I would like to ask if you would forward the enclosed note to Mrs. Tadee, whom I would also like to thank for her courtesy.

The materials that you requested are enclosed. I am happy to say that some copies of the leaflet on the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings can be included in the pamphlet which the Historic Registry of National Historic Landmarks. The instructions for the maintenance of the page I hope will be useful.

Again, let me express my appreciation for the cooperation of you and your staff.

Sincerely yours,

Signed

S. Sydney Bradford, X, k  
Historic Sites Historian

Enclosures 21

CC: Piretto

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DAVID F. ANDERSON, President  
 HENRY JOHNSON, II, Vice President  
 HENRY JOHNSON, II, Vice President  
 MRS. VERNOTT B. OERRICKSON, Secretary  
 MRS. EDWARD W. COOCH  
 MRS. CHESTER T. DICKERSON  
 EDWIN P. MESSICK



*m*

Leon J. Valinger, Jr.  
 State Archivist

STATE OF DELAWARE  
 State of Delaware  
 PUBLIC ARCHIVES COMMISSION  
 DOVER

NORTHEAST  
 State Archivist  
 MAR 17 1964

Reg. Director	
Asst. Dir. (PA)	
Program. Serv.	
Asst. Dir. (Adm.)	
Finance & Prop.	
Rec. Mgmt.	
Sec'y	
Asst. Dir. (Hist. & Arch.)	
History & Arch.	
Nat'l. Hist. Serv.	
Off. of Mus.	
Plan. & Eval.	
Pub. Aff.	
Adm. Serv.	
Land & Water	

March 16, 1964

Dr. S. Sydney Bradford,  
 Historic Sites Historian, Northeast Heflon,  
 National Park Service, Department of the Interior,  
 113 South Third Street  
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (19106)

Dear Doctor Bradford:

It was our pleasure to have you visit and inspect the John Dickinson Mansion and view other points of interest in Dover recently. In response to your request we are sending under separate cover several photographs of the John Dickinson Mansion, the Sign of the Buck Tavern and the Fisher House.

Under separate cover we are also forwarding one copy of Historic Houses And Buildings Of Delaware, by Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Cortlandt V. D. Hubbard. The package is marked for your attention and the billing is made out to the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

If we can be of further service, please call

on us,  
 on us,

Cordially yours,  
 Cordially yours,

*Leon J. Valinger, Jr.*  
 State Archivist

Mil State Archivist

lilliW'r.

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SS



Mr. John Dickinson McInnis

Branch of the Delaware State Museum

March 20, 1964

Dr. S. Sydney Bradford  
Historic Sites Historian  
National Park Service  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Penna. 19106

REF: L50 CHAH

"NORTHEAST REGION Region 11 MAB 26 V564		Initial mm Data
Reg. Dir.	Dir.	
Post Office Box 710 Dover, Delwa		
Nat. Hist. Serv.		
Oper. Serv.		
Off. Serv.		
Plan. Serv.		
Land & Water		
Land & Water		

Dear Dr. Bradford:

I find that I have been remiss in acknowledging your cordial letter of March 6th, with which you kindly sent us a supply of the leaflet on the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings and also the Registry of National Historic Landmarks. A portion of these have been given to Mrs. Paradee for judicious distribution at the John Dickinson Mansion.

We enjoyed your visit to Dover and we are looking forward to your trips from time to time. We also appreciate your kindness in sending us the information regarding the treatment of the plaque.

Sincerely yours,  
Sincerely yours,

*Samuel H. King*  
Director

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F. E. Mastand, Jr.

CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA 17013  
Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013

January 11, 1970  
January 11, 1970

Dear Howard:  
Dear Howard:

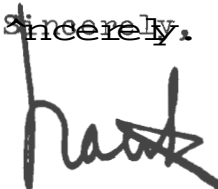
I presume it is in order for me to say welcome back. ~~If I don't say it now I won't have another opportunity before the end of February,~~

I don't know to whom this note should be addressed. I have been looking through the National Register of Historic Places for 1969,

search as I would, I cannot find any record of the John Dickinson Home having received landmark recognition and yet I am sure it did.

I note Missouri's State Capitol has been accorded landmark recognition. There may be others. It occurs to me that the Pennsylvania State Capitol quite possibly merits recognition to a degree equal to that which resulted in Missouri being recognized,

Sincerely,



Mr. Howard Stagner  
Mr. Howard Stagner  
Assistant Director  
National Park Service  
Dept. of the Interior  
Washington, D. C.

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January 10, 1970

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Mr. F. T. Mmland, Jr.

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\*m>> Ql

Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013

fpSJS\*

Dear Frank:

V.:

Howard Stagner has asked us to check into the questions you asked about Uataga in the National Register of Historic Places.

\*iill

i-Vi?

You are quite right about the John Dickinson Home. It was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in the 1961 study in the revolution. The announcement was made in a press release dated January 25, 1961, and the presentation was in 1961. The Dickinson Home is listed on page 47 of the National Register. The indication of the fact that it has been accorded recognition as a landmark is in the title of the National Historic Landmark description.

A:#

The Missouri State Capitol is entered in the National Register as a result of the nomination of the State Patron Officer for Missouri. It has not been recognized as a National Historic Landmark. As you know, the National Register includes both the Landmarks and the results of the survey by the State. I am enclosing a letter that discusses the way of being placed on the National Register. The Pennsylvania State Capitol can, of course, similarly be nominated by the Pennsylvania State Survey. Pennsylvania has not yet been especially active in making National Register nominations. This may well be speeded up as the Preservation Act becomes better funded and more assistance can be given to the State surveys.

fe-yfe

Sincerely yours,  
Sincerely yours,

/s/ Robert M. Utley

Robert M. Utley  
Chief Historian

Enclosure  
lkcbaur

cc:  
Regional Director, Northeast Region w/c inc.

DAS Mr. Stagner w/c inc.

T-Mr. Butterfield w/c inc.

HHS Mr. Sheely w/c inc.

HJSheely mc 1/28/70

HP Delaware-John Dickinson House  
HP Delaware-John Dickinson House



STATE OF DELAWARE  
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs  
 Hall of Records  
 Dover, Delaware 19901

DR. H. BERKELEY TOMPKINS  
 DIRECTOR

February 12, 1973

Mr. Ron Greenberg  
 Mr. Ron Greenberg  
 Publications Section  
 National Register of  
 Historic Places  
 Department of the Interior  
 National Park Service  
 18th and C Streets, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20240

(2)

Dear Mr. Greenberg:

In response to your notice in the National Register newsletter, we have three suggestions for rewording the titles of some of our entries:

In Kent County, the "Dickinson (John) House" should be designated as the John Dickinson Mansion.

In New Castle County, the "Blockhouse and Robinson House" is more commonly called Naaman's, or the Robinson House.

In Kent County, the "Eight-Square Schoolhouse" is known in our promotional literature as the Octagonal Schoolhouse.

You have the best available photographs of our properties in your files. I suggest that you look in the Register files for the following properties: Grand Opera House; Barnhart's Chapel; Governor's House; Town Point; Christ Church, Broad Creek; and Fort Delaware.

Sincerely,

*E. Berkeley Tompkins*

H. Berkeley Tompkins, Director  
 Division of Historical and  
 Cultural Affairs  
 State Liaison Officer for  
 the National Register



STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs  
Hall of Records  
Dover, Delaware 19901

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXX  
xtmmmmk

August 2, 1973  
August 2, 1973

(4)  
(HJ)

Mr. Ron Greenberg  
Editor  
National Register of Historic  
Places  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Greenberg:

In response to your notice of July 30th, we have some changes to be made in the listings for Delaware's National Register properties:

Kent County  
Kent County

"Cowgill vicinity" is locally known as Cowgill's Corners, after the family that owned nearby property.

"State House" should be two words, and not "Statehouse" as appears in the current (February 28th) Federal Register listing.

The "Dickinson, John, House" should properly be called the "John Dickinson Mansion". This change is particularly important since the property is operated with the assistance of a corporate body known as the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion. There is another property nearby that was occupied by John Dickinson, and could also be known as the John Dickinson House; the term "Mansion" will alleviate confusion.

The Bradford House in Dover should be called the "Bradford-Loockerman House" to avoid confusion with other houses owned by the Bradford family.

New Castle County  
New Castle County

The "Blockhouse and Robinson House" at Claymont should be called simply the "Robinson House," since some historians have cast doubt on the authenticity of the blockhouse.

Sincerely,  
Sincerely

James D. McNair, II  
Assistant Director

YLMnt

H. J. Shady 8/11/73

AUG 16 1973

USA PHH  
H34-PHH

Memorandum  
Memoandum

To: Director, Northeast Region  
Director, Northeast Region

From: Chief Historian  
Chief Historian

Subject: Receipt of National Historic Landmark Biennial Inspection Reports  
Reports

We are pleased to acknowledge the receipt of biennial inspection reports for the following national historic landmarks:

- Aspendale, Delaware
- Aspendale, Delaware
- Corbit Sharp House, Delaware
- Corbit Sharp House, Delaware
- John Dickinson House, Delaware
- John Dickinson House, Delaware
- Fort Christina, Delaware
- Fort Christina, Delaware
- Holy Trinity Church, Delaware
- Holy Trinity Church, Delaware
- Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital, Pennsylvania
- Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital, Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Hospital, Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Hospital, Pennsylvania
- Walnut Street Theatre, Pennsylvania
- Walnut Street Theatre, Pennsylvania

Your continued cooperation in keeping us informed of further developments regarding landmarks in your region, including changes of ownership and any potential threats to their integrity or existence, will be greatly appreciated.

(Sgd.) A. R. Mortensen

A. R. Mortensen

..14 > PHH: [unclear] 8/1/73  
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BASIC FILE RETAINED IN PHHS

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SEP 26 1979

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Mr. Lawrence C. Henry  
Director, Division of Historical  
and Cultural Affairs  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Hall of Records  
Dover, Delaware 19901

yy-yw

Dear Mr. Henry:

Your letter of September 11, 1979, to William Lebovich requesting revision of the national historic landmark boundary for the John Dickinson Mansion has been forwarded to the Historic Sites Survey for evaluation and reply.

We have checked our file on the Dickinson Mansion and find that the parcel which you suggest be removed from the landmark is not currently a part of it. The boundary for the Dickinson landmark, approved on August 10, 1977, consists of the 13-acre parcel described in the enclosed nomination form. We can find no record of the larger boundary described in your letter; however, we assume that it represents a draft proposal that was subsequently redefined. It would also appear that through an oversight on our part our office was never notified of the approved boundary.

We apologize for any difficulties this situation may have caused. Should you have any further questions regarding the Dickinson Mansion designation, please contact our staff architectural historian, Polly Matherly, at (202) 343-6404.

Sincerely,

/s/ Horace J. Sheely, Jr. z^yyyMi

Horace J. Sheely, Jr.  
Acting Chief, Historic Site  
Survey Division

Enclosure

bcc: Director's Reading File  
NERO, Regional Director, HCRS Philadelphia, Pa., Attn: Mr. Gene Peluso  
HSS Reading File  
HSS Matherly  
w/c of inc: }

Matherly:mc:9/26/79:  
343-6404

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HSS

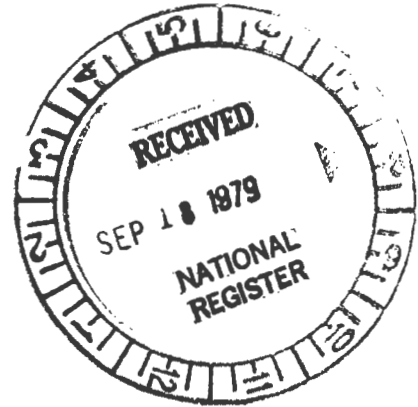


STATE OF DELAWARE  
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
**DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

HALL OF RECORDS • DOVER • 19901  
 (302) 678-5314

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
 OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

September 11, 1979



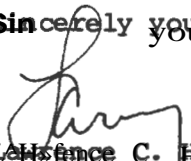
Mr. William Lebovitch  
 Acting Chief; Registration Branch  
 Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service  
 Department of the Interior  
 440 G Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20243

Dear Mr. Lebovitch:

By this letter and enclosures the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office is hereby requesting a reevaluation of the western boundary of the John Dickinson House National Historic Landmark. Based on our recent survey of the historic resources of St. Jones Neck, we do not feel that the current western boundary is justifiable or defensible. Specifically, this issue has come to light in several compliance cases where a "taking" of the extreme western portion of the current landmark tract is proposed. While we often take a strong position on the protection and enhancement of cultural resources, we do not feel the current boundary is defensible. Therefore, based on the justification outlined in the enclosures we request your reevaluation of the boundary. Enclosed is 1) Boundary justification for the new boundary, 2) Sections from the multiple resource nomination on St. Jones Neck dealing with the Historic District of which the Dickinson Mansion is a part, 3) A copy of the existing Landmark nomination map and boundary description, 4) A map of the Lower St. Jones Neck Historic District and its relationship to the Landmark boundary, 5) A suggested "boundary description" for the proposed change and 6) the appropriate U.S.G.S. Quad with the proposed revisions incorporated.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel R. Griffith, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer at (302) 678-5314.

Sincerely yours,

  
 Laurence C. Henry  
 Director/State Historic  
 Preservation Officer

Enclosures

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North Ugiett  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106  
mU4.i^u, F.: 1912\*

Memorandum

To: Director  
From: Regional Director  
Subject: Boglstorod National Matorid' LiniteairiKa: Blatmlal  
V^ialt to cha John Dickinson Mansion, Belawaro

Two coploa of Historic Sitos HiatordUn Bradford's biomial oisitr  
report for the John Dickinson Mansion, Dover, Delaware, are etu i^  
closed\*

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Enclosures 2

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~~REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS~~

~~BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT~~

~~John Dickinson Mansion~~

Date: March 5, 1964

Visited by: S.S. Bradford

1. Location: ~~Five miles S.E. of Dover, three miles east of U.S. Route 113~~  
~~on Kitts Hummock Road, Kent County, Delaware.~~

2. Theme:  War for Independence

3. Owner:

a: 1961 - ~~State of Delaware, administered by Delaware State Museum,~~  
~~Dover; Leon deValinger, Jr., Director.~~

b. Present:  Same

New

4. Use

a: 1961: ~~Historic~~ house museum.

b. Present:  Same

Changed as follows:

~~REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS~~  
~~REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS~~

~~BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT~~  
~~BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT~~

John Dickinson Mansion

5. Physical condition

a. 1961: Excellent

b. Present:  Excellent;  Good;  Fair;  Poor

Comments:

The house is maintained in excellent fashion. As the house is in an isolated situation, a night watchman is employed.

6. Special Problems:

Two questions arose concerning the Landmark plaque, which is in the cellar, next to the sales desk. First, many visitors read the plaque and ask if the Federal government has assumed responsibility for maintaining the building. It was suggested that the attendant explain the significance of the designation as a Landmark, stressing that there was no Federal financial or administrative responsibility involved. Copies of the leaflets on the Survey and Registry are to be sent for the use of those on duty at the mansion. Second, a request was made for information concerning the maintenance of the plaque. Instructions for the plaque's care will also be sent.

7. Suggestions offered to the owner:

Director 2

*Sydney Bradford*  
S. Sydney Bradford  
Historic Sites Historian

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings  
The fictional Bvamy of Historic Sites and Buildings

The John Dickinson House - Delaware  
The John Dickinson House - Delaware

John Dickinson has been aptly termed the "Patriot of the Revolution" in the literature of that struggle; his position is as pre-eminent as Washington in war, Franklin in diplomacy and Morris in finance. The restored Dickinson House near Dover, Delaware, is the surviving structure most intimately associated with the great writer of the Revolutionary period; the plantation house on Beesie's flat coastal plain was built in 1734 by Judge Samuel Dickinson when John was eight years old; and there the boy lived until 1750 when he went to Philadelphia and began the study of law. Dickinson lived in the house at various times after 1750, although his role in public life kept him in Philadelphia and other parts of the time. He was living in Burlington in 1801 when fire gutted the old mansion, and over the next two years closely supervised the repair of the dwelling. The recent restoration of the house was based on Dickinson's correspondence and written instructions during the period between 1801 and 1806 when the repairs were completed.

The brick mansion, its facade broad front facing south, is one of the most interesting architectural examples of a plantation house of the region. In 1952, the Historical Society of Colonial America of America raised \$25,000 which was presented to the State of Delaware to preserve the Dickinson House when its destruction appeared imminent. The State added in its donation with a smaller amount and the house and a tract of ground around it was acquired. Architectural, archeological and historical research was accomplished under the direction of the Delaware Public Archives Commission, and with the assistance of an Advisory Committee, restoration was carried out by means of state funds and private gifts. Owned by the State of Delaware, the Dickinson House is administered by the Delaware State Museum and is exhibited to the public.

\* \* \* \* \*

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE **Delaware** 2. THEME(S): IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO.  
**Theme X, The War for Independence**

3. NAME(S) OF SITE **The John Dickinson House** 4. APPROX. ACREAGE

5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc.: If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet)  
**Kent County, five miles southeast of Dover, three miles east of U.S. Route 113 on**

6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner)  
**Kites Hummock Road  
State of Delaware, administered by Delaware State Museum, Dover**

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)

"John Dickinson has been aptly termed the 'Penman of the Revolution'. In the literature of that struggle, his position is as pre-eminent as Washington in war, Franklin in diplomacy and Morris in finance."\*

At the time of Dickinson's death, Thomas Jefferson, then president of the United States, wrote:

A more estimable man or truer patriot could not have left us. Among the first of the advocates for the rights of his countrymen when assailed by Great Britain, he continued to the last the orthodox advocate of the true principles of our new government, and his name will be consecrated in history as one of the great worthies of the Revolution.\*\*

The restored Dickinson House near Dover, Delaware, is the surviving structure most intimately associated with the great writer of the Revolutionary period. The plantation house on Delaware's East Coastal Plain was built in 1740 by Judge Samuel Dickinson when John was eight years old, and there the boy lived until 1750 when he went to Philadelphia and began the study of law. Dickinson lived in the house at various times after 1750, although his role in public life kept him in Philadelphia and elsewhere most of the time. He was living

\*Paul L. Ford, The Writings of John Dickinson, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Memoirs, XIV (Philadelphia, 1895), Preface.

\*\*C. J. Stille, The Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Memoirs, XIII (Philadelphia, 1891), 236-237.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts, if any)  
Paul L. Ford, The Writings of John Dickinson, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Memoirs, XIV (Philadelphia, 1895), Preface; C. J. Stille, The Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Memoirs, XIII (Philadelphia, 1891); Moses C. Tyler, The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-1783, 2 vols., (New York, 1897), I.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as NPS study, HABS, etc.)  
Roy E. Appenlar, "The John Dickinson House, Kent County, Delaware," (Ms. Historic Sites Survey Report, National Park Service, October, 1950); Memorandum of Daniel Breslin, Architect, National Park Service, to Regional Directory, Region One, (Sept., 1950)

10. PHOTOGRAPHS: ATTACHED: YES  NO  11. CONDITION **Very good** 12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) **Historic House** 13. DATE OF VISIT **4/19/60**

14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) **C. E. Shedd, Jr.** 15. TITLE **Historic Sites Historian** 16. DATE **8/1/60**

\*DRY MOUNTAIN AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

i.

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET**

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

<b>STATE</b>	<b>NAME(S) OF SITE</b>
Delaware	The John Dickinson House The John Dickinson House

**7. Importance and Description (cont'd)**

In Wilmington in 1804 when fire gutted the old mansion, and over the next two years closely supervised the repair of the dwelling. The recent restoration of the house was based on Dickinson's correspondence and written instructions during the period between 1804 and 1806 when the repairs were completed. From that time on the house was occupied by tenants and Dickinson, who died in 1808, never again made it his home.

The brick mansion, its Flemish bond front facing south, is one of the most interesting architectural examples of a plantation house of the region. All around it stretch cultivated fields, giving it an air of authenticity as a plantation home - which it once was. The original dwelling was a two-story brick with hip roof. A story and a half was added shortly before the fire of 1804 which left little of the house save its four walls. In correcting the fire damage, a gable roof was added to the mansion and a small brick kitchen wing built at its west end. The interior of the repaired house was substantial but plain, unlike the expensively decorated and carved woodwork of the original. The repair of the house along simple lines was natural in view of the fact that Dickinson now made his home in Wilmington and apparently intended the house for tenant use. In 1932, the National Society of Colonial Dames of America raised \$25,000 which was presented to the State of Delaware to preserve the Dickinson House, when its destruction appeared imminent. The state matched this donation with a similar amount and the house and a tract of ground around it were acquired. Architectural, archeological and historical research was accomplished under the direction of the Delaware Public Archives Commission, and with the assistance of an Advisory Committee, restoration was carried out by means of state funds and private gifts. In the course of restoration, materials of the original mansion, when found in good condition, were reused. The house has been restored and furnished as faithfully as possible to the period when Dickinson last knew it. In the course of restoration the National Park Service offered advisory assistance to the State of Delaware. A furnishing committee has furnished the mansion with items once owned by the Dickinson family or which are typical of the region. A garden adjacent to the house, is being recreated with the help of a number of garden clubs and by private donations. The house was formally opened to the public on May 2, 1936.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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STATE Delaware	NAME OF SITE The John Dickinson House
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9. Reports and Studies (Cont'd)

National Park Service, December 19, 1952; "The Home of John Dickinson, 'Patriarch of the Revolution', Information Leaflet (r.p., n.d.); Historic American Buildings Survey, (one photo, 1936). s ii/

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BY:

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

REPORT ON ANNUAL VISIT

JMBI DECEMBER MURIMI

Theme **If War for Independence**

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Date of Visit: **May 1, 1961**

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Visited by: **ROTHA T. MUM**

Condition: **AM-Uent\* ftttois partially restored, litfitts flik which, M lavdmi 4oval0>t, mill be wellUscreeas Exam ths boure**

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Operation:

vi:

vfc

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Special Problems:

Suggestions offered:

**Hna<r(i)**

**Murray H. NelUplift**

**Murray B. Saiatt**  
**Chief of Interpretation**

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Delaware	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XX Architecture (Colonial); X War for Independence
3. NAME(S) OF SITES John Dickinson Home	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 3 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, road, etc. Use State or Fed. State on Supplementary Sheet) 5 mi. so. of Dover via U.S. 113 and .3 miles east of U.S. 113 on Kitts Hurmook Road; Kent County.	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) State of Delaware, administered by Delaware State Museum.	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes the important or what makes it unique)	

Built between 1739 and 1754, this house is an excellent restored example of an Early Georgian residence. The dwelling was also the home of John Dickinson, the "Penman of the Revolution."

This house illustrates what may be called the "telescope type of planning," in which a series of smaller wings are added to the main house at later dates. Judge Samuel Dickinson, the father of John, erected the main house in 1739-40. This mansion is a five-bay, two-story structure and is built of Flemish bond with black glazed headers. There is a wide central hall with a large parlor to the east and two smaller rooms, each with an angle fireplace, to the left or west. The center of the main house, which is almost of ground level and well lighted, originally contained a large storage room to the east, a wine cellar under the front door, and scullery and kitchen at the west end. To the west two lower wings step down from the main house on the same axis. The first of these wings was added in 1752 and contained a dining room with a bedroom above. The smallest and westernmost wing was added in 1754 with white-washed walls and a brick-columned arcade. This porch section contained a kitchen and quarters for household slaves above it.

The mansion faces directly south and though well lighted, has only three windows on the north side. This arrangement was planned to conserve heat in the winter. The main house, as Judge Dickinson built it, was three full stories in height over a high basement, and had a hipped roof. The first floor windows, which are unusually tall, still reflect the original design that was proper for such a Georgian three-story house.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best source; give location of manuscript and rare works)

See page 3.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best report and studies, e.g., NPS study, HABS, etc.)

None

10. PHOTOGRAPHS 5747-50 ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION Excellent (Restored)	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Historic House Museum	13. DATE OF VISIT Apr. 15, 1967
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Name) Charles W. Snell	15. TITLE Historian	16. DATE OF EATS Nov. 50, 1967	

\*DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES. PHOTOGRAPHER, GIVE

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO IT BY NUMBER)



UNITED STATES  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
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 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) ... Page 2.

STATE Delaware	NAME(S) OF SITE John Dickinson Home John Dickinson Home
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8. Continued:

In 1804 a disastrous fire occurred, which partially destroyed and badly damaged the fine original interior woodwork and paneling. When John Dickinson repaired the damage, he reduced the main house to its present two stories and covered it with a gabled roof. The original interior woodwork was also replaced in 1806 by substantial but plain material that was in keeping with its intended use as a tenant house.

Condition  
~~Condition~~

The National Society of Colonial Dames of America presented \$25,000 to the State of Delaware in 1952 to preserve the Dickinson House, when it was threatened with destruction. The State matched this donation with a similar amount, and the house and surrounding tract were acquired; the necessary research accomplished and it was restored to its appearance as Dickinson last knew it, by means of State funds and private gifts. The reconstruction was based on Dickinson's correspondence and written instructions during the period 1804-06. Materials of the original structure were reused when found in good condition. The garden has also been reconstructed. The house is open to visitors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturday and from 1 to 3 p.m. on Sunday. The structure is closed on Mondays.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
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Page 3.

STATE <b>Delaware</b>	NAME OF SITE KAMECS QESTIE <b>John Dickinson Home</b>
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8. Bibliographical References.

James G. VanderPool, "Historical Development of Architecture in the U.S.A., 1632-1912," (N.P.S. typescript, 1966), 54; Dorothy and Richard Pratt, A Guide to Early American Homes--South (New York, 1956), 50-51; Harold D. Eberlein and Cortlandt V. D. Hubbard, Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware (Wilmington, Del, 1963), 73-77; Delaware--A Guide to the First State (American Guide Series) (New York, 1955), 395-398.

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John Dickinson House, 1739-54 South (Front)  
and East end

On Kitts Hannock Road, Kent County

Delaware

April 5, 1967

Charles W. Snell  
Western Region Neg. 3749



John Dickinson House, 1739-54--South (Front)  
and West End

On Kitts Hummock Road, Kent Cty

Delaware

April 5, 1967

Charles W. Snell  
Western Region Neg. 3750



John Dickinson House, 1739-1754 North Side (rear)  
and West End

So. of Dover, Hummock Road, Delaware

April 5, 1967

Charles W. Snell  
Western Region Neg. 3747



John Dickinson House, 1739-54--North Side (rear)  
and east end  
Kent County  
Kitts Hummock Road, Delaware

April 5, 1967

Charles W. Snell  
Western Region Neg. 3748

CHS A 100



The John Dickinson House, near Dover, Delaware

National Park Service Photograph, 1960

77485

AGS-61X

NHL

The John Deere Bank, West Tower, Baltimore

National Bank Building, 100

State





11. Detail of front and gable end at main end of building, and brick construction of front middle wing.



12. State historical marker on State Highway No. 9, near the John Dickinson House.

c 1930 1/2



1. John Dickinson House and farm buildings in middle distance as viewed from State Highway No. 9 — the Kitts Hummocks Road. (All photographs were taken by Roy B. Appleman. They were, of necessity, made on Sunday afternoon, October 22, with a heavy overcast — shortly before an all-night rain began. As a result the pictures are not as clear as they would have been under better conditions.)



2. Front view of the John Dickinson House, which faces south.



3. Another view of the front of the John Dickinson House showing gable ends of two wings and other details of construction. Front of main wing is Flemish bond, back is English bond, gable end of main wing partly rebuilt with common bond; front of middle wing is Flemish bond (but does not match main wing), back is of common bond; west end wing is of common bond. The several pictures illustrate these features.



4. Front of south face of main wing which stands at east end of house. Brick work Flemish bond with glazed headers. This part of the house is original, I presume. Porch is a late addition.



5. The back (or north) face of the John Dickinson House. The brickwork of the main wing at the left (east) is of English bond in contrast to Flemish bond at the front. The east end is entirely covered with a concrete plaster of relatively recent date. The entire backside of the house has been white-washed one or more times in the past. Note the entire absence of windows to the east of the doorway in the main part of the building.



6. View of east end of house looking west along front elevation.



7. View looking east shows part of end and back walls of west wing gone. The end wall has pulled away from chimney and is braced by the three poles seen in the picture. The collapse of the brickwork was caused last year by grading operations with a bulldozer in making a road around the house. Foundation at this point apparently was disturbed enough to cause the collapse of the wall.



8. View looking east from the western end of the building showing front facade and gable ends.



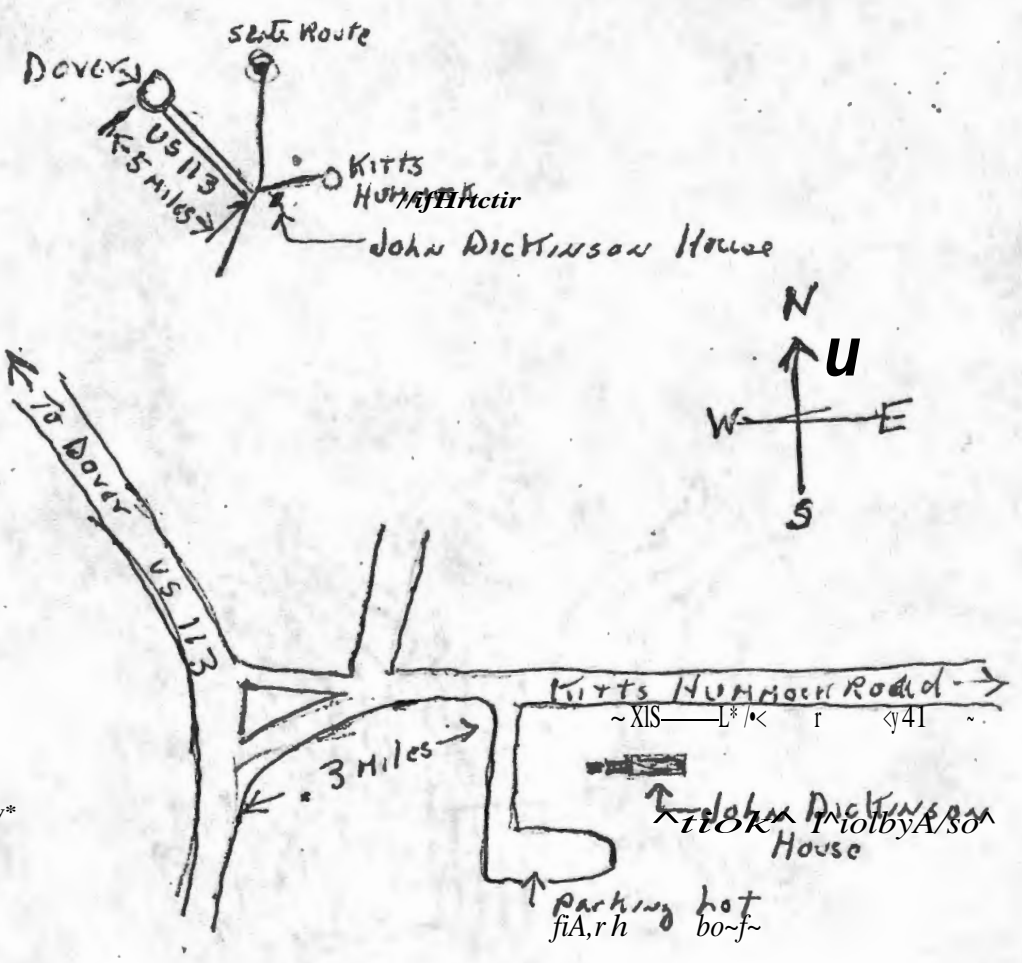
9. View looking west from yard in front of house to three outbuildings beyond the house.



10. View looking east from yard in front of house showing the barn and several of the main outbuildings. Several more outbuildings at this end of the house are not visible in the picture, including two concrete-block buildings behind the house to the left of the barn.

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Location Map for  
 JOHN DICKINSON HOUSE,  
 near DOVER, MENT COUNTY,  
 Delaware

C.W. [unclear] = 5/9/67

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC  
AND NATURAL LANDMARKS

REPORT OF BIENNIAL VISIT TO

John Dickinson House

Date of visit June 6, 1973

Visited by Douglas Wamock\*, Assistance Superintendent, Independence NHP  
 (name) (title) (office)

Received by Mrs. Pardee, Receptionist, John Dickinson House  
 (name) (title) (office)

Condition\*

John Dickinson House is in good condition. The old log cabin to the rear of the House has been badly neglected. The floors are unsafe and the whole structure is leaning. The inside appears as an old cluttered shed. A pile of broken limbs and other debris to the right of the cabin adds to the general dilapidated look of the immediate area.

Operation\*\*

The House is operated through funds appropriated by the state of Delaware. Donations are received but are too insignificant to run the House. Average visitation is 10,000 to 12,000 people per year.

\*Accompanied by David Dutcher, Historian, Independence NHP  
Richard Helman, Intake Trainee, Independence NHP  
Richard Helman, Intake Trainee, Independence NHP  
Kent Taylor, Intake Trainee, Independence NHP

\*Grounds, structure/s, furnishings

\*Note any changes in ownership, sponsoring organizations, operating staff, use, location of plaque and certificate, etc.



## Special Problems

The location of Dickinson House is near Dover Air Force Base. Sonic booms from aircraft using that base have damaged ceilings in the house.

## Suggestions Offered

The log cabin should be stabilized and scheduled for preservation treatment.

David C. Dutcher

(signed)

6. 13. 73

(date)

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC  
AND NATURAL LANDMARKS

REPORT OF BIENNIAL VISIT TO

JOHN DICKINSON MANSION

Date of visit 6/15/71  
Date of visit 6/15/71

Visited by Chester L. Brooks, Superintendent, Independence NHP.  
Visited by Chester L. Brooks (name), (title) (office)

Received by Emmet T. Galahan, Director, Div. of Historical and Cultural Affairs, State of Delaware.  
Received by Emmet T. Galahan (name), (title) (office)

Condition\*  
Condition\*

House excellent - Garden delightful  
House excellent - Garden delightful

Operation\*\*  
Operation\*\*

Paid Guides - all tours guided  
Paid Guides - all tours guided  
No charges at state installations  
No charges at state installations

\*Grounds, structure/s, furnishings  
\*Grounds, structure/s, furnishings  
\*\*Note any changes in ownership, sponsoring organizations, operating staff, use, location of plaque and certificate, etc.

**Special Problems**

None  
None

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**Suggestions Offered**  
Suggestions Offered

None  
None

v4:

Chet T. Brooks  
(signed)

Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
 Department of the Interior

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS REPORT: 1978

**I. General Background**

1. Official Landmark name: JUDITH DICKINSON'S HOUSE  
 Address: KITTS HUMMOCK ROAD  
DOVER, DELAWARE

2. Name, address, phone number of the Landmark owner:  
STATE OF DELAWARE  
DIVISION OF HISTORICAL & CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
HALL OF RECORDS, DOVER, DEL. 19901

3. Name, title, address, and phone number of person responsible for management of the Landmark: (If same as person in number 2. Write "same")  
LAWRENCE C. HENLY, DIRECTOR 302-678-5304  
SAME

4. Name, title, address and phone number of additional person(s) contacted about this Landmark:  
JOAN NORTON, ARCH. HISTORIAN  
HALL OF RECORDS, DOVER, DEL. 1-7pc

5. Name, region and phone number of HCRS official preparing report:  
JOHN M. DAVIES  
NEPO

6. Date of this report: 6/20/78  
FEDERAL BLDG, 600 ARCH ST PHILA, PENN.  
215-5591-1211

**III. Condition and Maintenance of Buildings, Sites and Historic Districts**  
 (If Landmark is visited, provide photographs (or slides) of serious problems or possible threats)

**1. Architectural or Engineering Features**

a. What is the general physical condition? excellent  good  
 needs repairs (explain)  excellent  good

b. Are there any obvious structural problems or water related problems?  
 no  yes (describe) INTERIOR PAINT PEELING  
AND CRACKS IN WALLS

c. Are there planned future building alterations or new construction?  
 no  yes (explain)

d. Are there historic interior furnishings present?  yes  no  
 Are they well cared for?  yes  no (explain)

Will they be retained?  yes  no (explain)

e. Are there historic machinery or equipment present?  yes  no  
 Is it well cared for?  yes  no (explain)

Will it be retained?  yes  no (explain)

22. Environmental, Historical, Natural and Archeological Features

a. What is the general condition of the site? Excellent good  
needs repair (explain)

b. Are there visible archeological ruins, remains or artifacts? yes no  
Are they well cared for? yes no (explain)

c. Has there been recent site disturbance, digging, or construction?  
no yes (explain)

d. Are there plans for future site work or construction?  
no yes (explain) CONSTRUCTION OF SUPPORT BUILDINGS (SHOP FOR MAIN CRANE)

3. Historic District Features

a. What is the general physical condition of the buildings, roadways, and other historic features of the district? excellent good  
needs repair (explain)

b. In general, what is the level of construction activity in the district?  
high construction activity moderate low

c. Is there a local design review board, historic district commission, or other governmental body which reviews construction activity in the district? yes no

N/A

III. Building, Site, or Historic District Integrity

1. Are there any conditions on the lands adjacent to the landmark that might result in serious impairment, diminishment, or destruction of landmark resources, character, and/or significance? no yes (explain)

2. Has there been an introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that are out of character with the property and its setting?  
no yes (explain) DOVER AIR FORCE BASE FLIGHT PATTERN OVER STRUCTURE

3. Are there any potential threats (i.e., highways, adjacent construction, zoning changes, etc.) likely to occur in the future? no yes (explain)

4. Is there any agency regarding any of the threats? no yes (explain)

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3. Does the owner show interest in the long-term preservation of the Landmark?  
no  yes (explain)

IV. \* Supplementary Information

1. Does the Landmark have a plaque?  yes  no  
Is it displayed?  yes  no  
Is it displayed?  yes  no

2. Has an agreement form been submitted?  yes  no  
If no, does the owner wish to sign an agreement with HCRS?  yes  no

V. Comments

V. Comments

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SKETCH OF JOHN DICKINSON  
by  
Dr. John H. Powell

SKETCH OF JOHN DICKINSON  
SKETCH OF JOHN DICKINSON

by

Dr. John H. Powell  
Dr. John H. Powell

John Dickinson was by temperament a thinker. Yet the circumstances of his life obliged him to enter the hurly-burly of politics and fight for the principles he believed in. He became a man of action in public affairs whose peculiar ability was to persuade people that public problems might be solved by reason, by high purpose, by taking thought. To three men we owe most of the philosophy of our Revolutionary period, and most of that system of the federal distribution of powers which ensured us a government under law: to John Dickinson, to John Adams, to James Wilson. By commemorating the lives of these men, we reaffirm our present faith in the ideal of the free man in the free state for which they contended.

Dickinson was the most effective writer for the American cause before independence. In his letters from a farmer and in a dozen other books, in the Stamp Act Congress, in the First Continental Congress, in his signature and in committees of correspondence, he expressed again and again that basic syllogism of government to which he was dedicated: no man can be happy unless he is free, no man can be free unless he has control over his own property, men cannot control their property unless they control the taxing power of the government; therefore, no man can be free when he is taxed without his own consent, by representatives of his own election.

"For who are a free people?" Dickinson asked in his Farmer. "Not those, over whom government is reasonably and equitably exercised, but those, who live under a government so constitutionally checked and controlled, that proper provision is made against its being otherwise exercised."

Yet, he always insisted, revolution was not the only solution. Americans could be free within the British Empire, if the federal structure he proposed were adopted. In 1775, still hopeful of reconciliation, Dickinson wrote the second Petition to the King, the so-called "Olive Branch Petition," in a last attempt to preserve the political unity of the Anglo-American peoples.

Independence he deemed unnecessary and unwise, at the time of its proposal. He voted against it. But once Congress adopted it, Dickinson placed himself at the head of his regiment and marched off to defend the American cause.







View of the John Dickinson House  
from the northwest showing  
deterioration of the smallest  
wing, said to have been part of  
the slave quarters.



View of the John Dickinson House  
from the southwest.





View of the John Dickinson House  
from the southeast.

exhibit being planned. Col. Clarence M. Dillon of Wilmington has presented for our costume collection his full-dress Delaware National Guard uniform. He was for a long time an active officer in Delaware military affairs.

Other articles recently presented to the Museum include: an oil painting of the Delaware State seal, probably displayed at the Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia; given by Mrs. Thomas F. Bayard of Wilmington; a black-enameled souvenir tray attractively decorated with a view of the Delaware Memorial Bridge; by the American Bridge Division of U. S. Steel Company; and a photograph of the Lakeview Hook and Ladder, formerly used in Delaware, presented by the North America Company, Philadelphia. We are once more indebted to Mr. Herbert W. Guest of Chadds Ford, Penna., for his interest in adding to our collection several cooper's crozes and an early wooden wagon jack. Three carpenter's braces of different styles and a small drawknife, exhibited among the Woodworking Tools, were kindly loaned by Mr. Walter T. Massey of Dover.

In addition, the Museum acquired by purchase a good collection of carpenters and cabinetmakers tools from Miss Martha Edwin of Felton, which had been used by her grandfather, who operated a shop there many years ago. Other purchased accessions were: a flaxbreak; biscuit beater; two lace nightcaps; a butter mold; a flax wheel; a loom shuttle; and a Happlewhite style walnut side table.

**TOURS**

**M. R. S.**  
Tours, if desired, by groups from schools or other organizations may be arranged by communicating with the Curator, Mr. Kenneth M. Wilson.

**MUSEUM HOURS**

The Museum, located at 316 S. Governors Avenue (on U. S. Route 13), is open daily, Tuesday through Saturday, from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.; Sunday, from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

**WOODWORKING TOOLS**  
WOODWORKING TOOLS

An exhibit devoted to early woodworking tools which were utilized by several industries prominent in Delaware's earlier history has just been completed and opened in the Museum's Number 2 Building. The exhibit calls attention to the important role played by Delaware in these industries, and at the same time emphasizes the rapid change that has occurred in industry in the last half-century. It also serves to provide information of once-important industries no longer extant as well as to preserve these relics of the past.

The tools in this exhibit are divided into four categories: Coopers Tools; Shinglemakers Tools; Pumpmakers Tools; and Carpenters and joiners Tools.

Among the Coopers Tools are two long wooden jointer planes. One of these is set up in its normal working position, to show the unique manner in which this unusually large plane was used; while the second is displayed to show the opposite side of this type of plane. In addition to such other tools used by the cooper as the hand adze, croze and drawknife, there is an enlarged illustration of a sixteenth century German woodcut which shows a long jointer plane and other tools then in use and indicates that these tools remained virtually unchanged until the end of the nineteenth century.

The Shinglemakers Tools are out small reminders of a once important and thriving Delaware industry, which has now become virtually non-existent. Riven shingles and clapboards comprised a large part of this state's earliest exports, and the industry continued to be a source of economic income until about 1865. These products were fashioned with but a few simple tools, the bolting frow; riving frow; oaddle or maul; the drawknife; and the shingle "hoss"; all of which form part of the present display. In addition to these tools, the exhibit is supplemented by several drawings, an historical sketch, and examples of raw materials and finished shingles.



A set of Pumpmakers Tools provides an interesting and illuminating insight into a highly-specialized craft which was, until relatively recent times, much in demand. One which has now passed into oblivion. Pump augers for drilling long, straight holes; pumpmaker's twisted reamers; and boxed-end, funnel-shaped reamers for enlarging these holes, together with accessories such as a pump-tree gauge; valve-setter; a twelve-foot extension shank; and an L-shaped crank for turning it, form the nucleus of this exhibit. A focal point of the display is a T-section of wooden water pipe, taken from the Wilmington streets, which was bored by tools such as those exhibited.

One of the highlights of the Carpenters and Joiners Tools section is the display of some fifty planes of the type used by these craftsmen from colonial times to the end of the nineteenth century; included are representative examples from the three categories of planes used by the carpenter-- leveling, fitting, and moulding planes. A selection of fitting and moulding planes has been arranged to provide visitors a clear view of their construction and shapes. Each plane thus displayed is accompanied by a sample cut of wood made by the plane, thus illustrating the function each performed. A variety of saws; axes; braces; augers; and chisels, as well as numerous tools and instruments used for measuring and marking, surround a work bench upon which is mounted an early carpenter's vise. A boring mill, the forerunner of the modern drill press, provides another point of interest within the exhibit.

#### IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES TO COSTUME EXHIBIT

Since the last issue of our Museum News, the exhibit of eighteenth century ladies costumes and accessories, entitled A BELLE OF 18TH CENTURY DOVER, has undergone certain renovations and changes intended to display more effectively these fine costumes. A ceiling has been constructed to convert the display case into a closed room, and direct lighting sufficient to fully illuminate the costumes to their best advantage has been installed. Four additional dresses have been hung on the back wall of the room to supplement those already displayed on mannequins. A Happlewhite table recently acquired by the Museum has replaced the Chippendale chest of drawers as an accessory in the exhibit.

#### SECOND ANNUAL EXHIBIT OF DELAWARE PRINTS

The Second Annual Exhibit of Delaware Prints, sponsored by the Museum, will open Dover Day, May 3, and remain on exhibition in the Museum's Number 2 Building through May 31. The exhibit will present a collection of photographs depicting the habits and characteristics of Delaware people and the State's varied scenery. Awards will be made to entrants whose photographs are selected as having exceptional merit.

#### RECENT GIFTS AND ACQUISITIONS

Through the generosity of interested persons, the Museum has continued to add a number of interesting and valuable accessions to its collections, largely through gifts and loans. An agricultural implements exhibit, to be opened early in May, is assured of an appropriate background by a gift from Mr. Charles T. David, of Dover R. O. U, of a sufficient quantity of weathered barn boards for this purpose. The Simpler Lumber and Coal Company of Felton, Delaware kindly presented a quantity of rough-cut boards, which served as the background for the Woodworking Tools Exhibit. Miss Florence G. Lurty, of Smyrna, presented a quantity of varied objects dating from the nineteenth century. Among her other gifts were a small brass powder horn; an iron husking peg and pruning knife which will form part of the Agricultural Exhibit; a pair of spectacles; two straight razors; an embroidered cigar case; two fans; several pieces of handmade linen neckwear; and a bead loom, with examples of bead lace made upon it.

A blacksmith's leather bellows, an example of which the Museum was very desirous of obtaining to use as part of a blacksmith's forge contemplated as a future exhibit, was presented by Mr. E. Stuart Outten, of Dover. Through the courtesy of Mr. James Humes, of Milford, additional blacksmith's tools and equipment, as well as the old shop sign, were contributed by Mr. Louis Chorman, who until recently operated a forge in Milford. An attractive and instructive knot board, prepared and contributed by the Plymouth Cordage Company of Plymouth, Mass., and several running lights, a compass-in-Gimballs and other ship appurtenances from the Delaware-New Jersey Ferry Company, presented by the State Highway Department through Col. W. A. McWilliams, will greatly enhance the maritime

NEWS RELEASE  
NEWS RELEASE

The boyhood home and later country estate of John Dickinson, "Penman of the Revolution", was formally accepted on Constitution Day, September 17, in a meeting arranged by the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution, Governor Elbert N. Carvel received a deed of gift from the Historical Activities Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Delaware through its Chairman, Mrs. Charles L. Reese, Jr., and then transferred the title to Mrs. Henry Ridgely, President of the Public Archives Commission. Practically all of the patriotic, historical and preservation societies in the State participated in this formal presentation and the dinner meeting which followed when the principal address was given by the Honorable James M. Tunnell, Jr., Justice of the State Supreme Court. At this same meeting, announcement was made of the formation of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion Society, Inc., a group consisting of all donors and those interested in the restoration, maintenance and extension of public interest in the John Dickinson Mansion.

The sum of \$25,000 raised by the Colonial Dames enables the State to purchase the property and make preliminary restoration. This work is going forward; and, when the Mansion has been restored and furnished as an historic house, it will be administered by the Delaware State Museum, a division of the Public Archives Commission.

In the work of restoration and furnishing to be carried forward by the Public Archives Commission, it will be aided by an Advisory Committee comprising: Mrs. J. Wheeler Campbell; Mrs. Lamont du Pont Copeland; Mr. H. F. du Pont; Mrs. J. Allen Frear, Jr.; Dr. John A. Munroe; Mrs. C. L. Reese; and Mr. H. Rodney Sharp. Anyone having information from early photographs, sketches, diaries or personal recollections as well as furniture, fixtures or hardware are requested to please communicate with Leon deValinger, Jr., Director, Delaware State Museum; 316 S. Governors Avenue; Dover, Delaware.

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[Draft in the hand of Dickinson probably to Insurance Company of North America]

June Week 19<sup>th</sup> Lie the 4<sup>th</sup> Month 1804 - Kvf

Respected Friend

Thy letter of the 13th was received yesterday evening and it now becomes my painful employment to refute the great mistakes of the person who was sent over to view the ruins. I understand, this to be his statement "that the House was only 40 feet by 22 from east to west and very slightly built; that the joists of the first and 2d floors were only 8 by 3 inches; that the joists of the Garret were 3 by 4 scantling, and no work done in the Garret; that the small Rooms were not more than 10 feet square; that the Roof had never been shingled since the House was built; that the window shutters and Doors were very slightly made; that many of the sash lights were stopped with wood in place of glass; and that all the window sashes and shutters and Doors both inside and outside are scored; many of which appear as if they were never painted."

I now proceed to Reality. The House is 45 feet and 1 inch in length and 26 feet and 4 inches in Depth, these dimensions were verified by the Depositions of .# already transmitted by Me to the office and this week I have had the Measurement repeated in my presence, and I averr the size to be what I have mentioned. The person who viewed for the Company took a very hasty look as I thought at the Ruins, and made no measurements,

So far was the House from being lightly built that I am confident it was the strongest built private House in the State

AS|\*i

The walls were 18 inches to the Water Table, and then what is called a 34 inch nail was carried up not only to the squere, but to the very top of the Peaks in front and back which the tlawer took notice of and said it was not usual now to carry up walls so thick.

The same regard to itrenly in idhserved in construction of the floors. The first floor was double laid of poplar and oak as is proved by the Depositions.

As to the objection of the first and second floor joists being only 3 by 3 inches, it is founded on an error. The joists of the first floor are 8 by 4 nearly if not quite, as appears by a piece taken out of the wall. But, if these joists had been only 8 by 3, they would have been more than sufficient for this reason. These joists were flashed from the South that is from the front of the House and from the North that is from the back of the House to a vastly large girder, that stretched with proper supports the whole length of the House from East to West. The size of this girder is ascertained by the open places in the Eastern and Western walls that received its ends. Of course the joists of the first floor had only half the depth of the inside of the House, between 11 and 12 feet to run to this girder. On this point further observation is needless.

As to the joists of the second floor, I had their size ascertained by the holes into which they run, and sent the information to the Office before the receipt of thy letter. But these joists were found to be 10 inches by 3 or 4 inches, I forget which.

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WMm

With respect to; the "Garret", the statement made...

M&W

Company was uniformly erroneous as in the preceding parts. I am  
 sure the Company do not believe that in building a House where so  
 many notes appear of attention to solidity, the joists of the  
 Garret floor, that were to span upwards of 26 feet and the whole  
 breadth of the building were "only 3 by 4 scantling." Reason  
 rejects the insinuation! And a particular examination proves its  
 contradiction to fact. The Carpenters before mentioned have 2 days  
 ago on a very exact observation of the Ruins discovered from the  
 distances between the remains of plastering in the 2d story and  
 the remains of plastering in the Garret, that the joists of the  
 Garret were 8 inches deep. The breadth they could not determine.  
 An account of their proceeding was also sent to David Evans, who  
 will lay it before the Company.

The assertion that "there was no work done in the Garret"  
 is totally wrong, if the word "Garret" includes all of the building  
 above the second story. The Peaks of the walls in the Front and  
 Back of the House were so high as to afford space for two rooms  
 above the 2d story, one a handsome square room without any slope  
 in its sides, and the other room a long narrow one, both of them  
 plastered, with three doors and ... windows. Above these two  
 rooms was what might, perhaps be more properly be called the Garret.  
 For these particulars I beg leave to refer to the Depositions.

They are all perfectly well known to my Brother.

The Allegation, that "the small Rooms were only 10 feet  
 square" is contradicted directly by the Depositions, and by the

actual size of the House, which being upwards of 45 feet long, will, after allowing for the large parlour and large Chamber in the eastern part of the House, and for the Hall in the middle part, as set forth in the Depositions, leave ample space for the two small parlours and the Chambers over them as mentioned in the Depositions;

The suggestion that "the House has never been shingled since it was built", is rash and unkind. A new and substantial Roof was put upon the whole House in 1778, and it has been since once if not oftener all painted over.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
FIELD NOTE BOOK

Building John Dickinson House

City or Vicinity St. Jones Neck - Kitts-Hummock Road.

County and State Off. U.S. 13 - 5 miles from Dover.  
Kent County, Delaware.

HABS Survey No. \_\_\_\_\_

July 29, 1952.

Dickinson House Hardware, at,  
Delaware State Museum

1. Shutter Strap Hinge (10 in number)  
19½" long  
Hand wrought Iron.
2. Shutter fastening bar. (2 in number)  
18¾" long.  
Hand wrought Iron.
4. Strap Door Hinge. (1 in number)  
22½" long.  
Hand wrought Iron.
5. Brass Door Knocker. (Privately owned)  
Plain
6. Brass Box Lock (Front Door).

Take <sup>2</sup> of front porches / Paint woodwork  
Cut down weeds (make mess deep)

Had 25 slaves (no date) 9 of which  
we located elsewhere

see = Purchase c 1734-6 By Judge Samuel Dickerson

bird at St Jones Creek Mansion  
after fire of 1804?

} English bond  
} Pecks

John Dickinson House, Del.

Owner:

Carlton Draper

acq. in Oct 1941

occupied by a tenant farmer

Price

would exchange for  
a house for his tenant  
farmer

Acquire:

House, plot of land in front.

Restoration Project: a

complete rest, req -  
occupied by tenant  
farmer

Small building beginning  
to collapse

Kimball -

Is this Dickinson's  
only home? What  
of best place?  
The Dickinson says  
only 15' house  
standing

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Just only 1 of Dickinson's  
home? ydx - boyhood  
c#-14X

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Public Archives Course  
has acc. 1 hist. church  
- no state parks program



Governor E. N. Carvel of Delaware accepts  
Landmark Certificate from Dr. Murray H.  
Nelligan for John Dickinson Mansion, 5/1/61.





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

r-1970

Has been used in my  
sketch. use in site

### 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

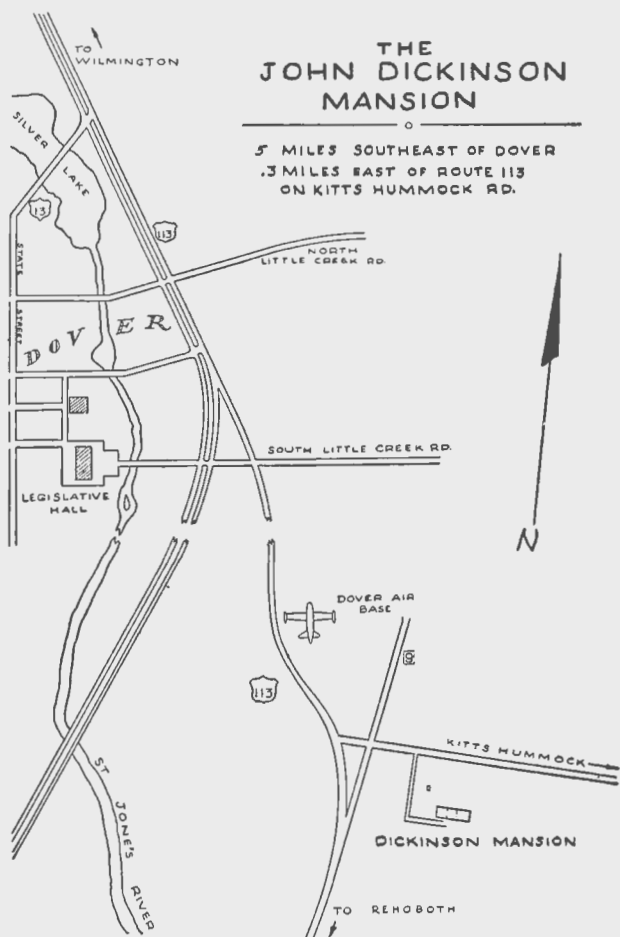
Public Archives Commission with the valued assistance of an Advisory Committee, carried forward the restoration with State appropriations and private gifts.

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*

Kingston - upon - Hull <sup>il</sup> chd of  
HABS



**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.



*The*  
*John Dickinson*  
*Mansion*



THE  
JOHN DICKINSON  
MANSION

By LEON DEVALINGER, JR.  
Delaware State Archivist

JOHN DICKINSON, the eldest child of Samuel and Mary (Cadwallader) Dickinson, was born November 2, 1732, at their estate "Crosia-doré" in Talbot County, Maryland. Here he lived until January of 1740 when his father, Samuel Dickinson, moved his family to Kent County, Delaware, where he had purchased large tracts of land for his plantation. Included among his landholdings were the tracts "Town Point," "Kingston upon Hull," "Burton's Delight," "Mulberry Swamp," and part of "Poplar Neck." It was upon a part of "Kingston upon Hull" that Samuel Dickinson built the brick mansion where he resided while First Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Kent County, and where he reared his family. It was here also where he was buried following his death on July 6, 1760.

*Dickinson's Boyhood Home*

Here too his sons, John and Philemon, were carefully educated by William Killen, a young Irish tutor who later became Chief Justice and the first Chancellor of Delaware. In 1750, when John Dickinson was eighteen years old, he went to Philadelphia where his father had arranged for him to read law in the office of John Moland, Esquire, the King's attorney in the Province of

Pennsylvania. His studies continued there until 1753 when Judge Dickinson permitted him to go to London where he studied law at the Middle Temple. There he continued his studies until 1757, when he returned to Philadelphia and began the practice of his profession. He undoubtedly visited his parents in Kent County and maintained his contacts there, for in October of 1760 he was elected a member of the Assembly from that county.

Two years later he was elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly from the City of Philadelphia where he married on July 19, 1770, Mary Norris, the daughter of Isaac Norris of "Fairhill." Although he continued to see his old friends George Read, Thomas McKean, and Caesar Rodney from the Three Lower Counties in the Stamp Act Congress, the First and Second Continental Congresses, where he helped represent Pennsylvania, his interests and residence were in the State until 1776. In this year he continued his advocacy of a general confederation of all American colonies under a constitution with continental control before resorting to armed force to gain independence. Having failed in his political struggle with John Adams and his faction to achieve this, Dickinson absented himself from Congress and refrained from signing the Declaration of Independence.

Within a week of the Declaration of Independence he marched to Elizabethtown at the head of his regiment of Pennsylvania militia against the enemy who were invading the State of New Jersey. Later that year when his regiment's period of enlistment expired, he returned

to Philadelphia. On December 10, 1776, when he knew that Congress would adjourn to some other place and when it was generally believed that the British would capture Philadelphia, he decided to move his wife and family to his farm in Kent County. At the end of the six-day carriage trip, Dickinson stated: "On the sixteenth of December, I arrived at my house in Kent, where my tenant spared me two rooms; and I was enough employed in procuring necessaries for those I carried with me."

### *Dickinson A Brigadier General*

Apparently their stay at the mansion in Kent was extended through most of the next year, for early in 1777 he enlisted as a private in Captain Stephen Lewis's Company of Delaware militia and served ". . . with my musket upon my shoulder during the whole tour of duty performed that summer by the militia of that State, when the British army landed at the Head of Elk, and was advancing towards this city [Philadelphia]." Following this he went about the State collecting arms and ammunition to help supply the militia. In recognition of his efforts, Delaware in October, 1777, commissioned him a brigadier general of the militia. The following year he was back at his old role as "Penman of Revolution" when he drafted the Articles of Confederation and signed as a delegate from Delaware.

It is not known how long Dickinson and his family remained at the mansion near Dover, but apparently they had returned to Philadelphia before August of 1778 as a child was born to them there at that time. In all probability his



visits to Kent County were limited to annual inspection trips of his thirteen-hundred-acre plantation until August of 1781. At that time a party of sixteen Tories from New York landed from a whaleboat in the vicinity of Kitts Hummock and marched inland to the Dickinson Mansion. They frightened his slaves and stole the silver, a large quantity of his wife's clothes, all of his meat supply, and other provisions; and, although they did not destroy his library, they marched away with one of his slaves after greatly disturbing the whole countryside.

### *Dickinson Returns to Mansion*

Dickinson hastened from his home near Philadelphia to determine the loss and set his affairs in order. What he thought would be a short trip turned into a sojourn of sixteen months. While staying at his estate to correct the losses by pillage the smokehouse was resupplied with meat, undeveloped fields were grubbed and cleared, a road to a neighbor was straightened, a domestic problem of his tenant was solved, and the majority of his slaves were manumitted.

Although he made plans early in the fall of 1781 to return to his home and family in Philadelphia, his old friend George Read persuaded him to stand for election as a member of the Council from New Castle County in place of Samuel Patterson. He was elected on the first of October and took his seat on the twentieth of that month when the Assembly and the Council met in Dover. In this body he worked assiduously, drafting bills which would correct a number of the weaknesses in the State's governmental

structure. Toward the closing days of the session at the end of October, he wrote to his wife of his approaching return to Philadelphia and she replied urging him to come home at the first opportunity. She also wrote regarding the safe-keeping of their possessions at the mansion in this manner:

"If thy fr[ien]d [William] Killen would Lend thee a room in his House, or Dr. [Charles] Ridgely, and thee would have our things packd and placed in it for a little while, wd it not be best; there is a great deal of China queens ware & Pewter, that was I there I would try to secure, and that Large bed could not be purchased for £50. ye Glasses are valuable so is ye Kitchen furniture, & flat Irons & innumerable things."

One of the last and most important duties of that legislative session was the selection of a new president or governor. The two houses met together on November 6, 1781, when Dickinson was declared elected despite his protests, by a vote of twenty-five to one: the one vote obviously being his own. The next day he wrote to his wife of the news of his unanimous election and of his attempts to avoid acceptance of this office. It meant, of course, that he would not return to "Fairhill" and that they would take up their residence in Delaware.

Through the remainder of 1781 and most of 1782, until he resigned to accept the Presidency of the State of Pennsylvania, he resided at this mansion.

In 1786, John Dickinson was living in Wil-

mington and from there he journeyed with other delegates from this state to the capital of Maryland to attend the Annapolis Convention. That meeting, of which Dickinson was chosen chairman, did not accomplish its intended purpose but it did pave the way for the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia the next year. Delaware's delegates of John Dickinson; George Reed; Jacob Broom; Gunning Bedford, Jr.; and Richard Bassett went instructed to Philadelphia not to surrender any of the state's rights of representation. Each of these delegates represented Delaware well in the Convention but that is another story.

#### *Dickinson at Constitutional Convention*

Dickinson was especially active in advocating equal representation in the Senate for all states. His advocacy of this and the support it received from the Delaware delegates and the other small states is largely responsible for our having two Senators in the Congress today.

After the Constitutional Convention had completed its work, and the delegates had signed this great document, Dickinson with the other members from Delaware returned home and began working to acquaint the citizens of Delaware with the provisions of the Constitution. As he had drafted the Articles of Confederation, no one was in a better position than he to recognize the weaknesses of that frame of government. By addresses and his writings, for which he was noted, he urged the public in a series of stirring letters signed "*Fabius*" to hasten in the ratification of the new Federal Constitution.

The fact that Delaware was the first state to ratify on December 7, 1787 is not accidental. Our delegates, who attended the Annapolis Convention and the Constitutional Convention, knew of the need of a new frame of Federal government and they had carefully instructed the citizens of Delaware in the desirability and necessity of this newer, stronger system of government. In this Dickinson was a leader. This was his last great public act on a national scale. In 1791 and 1792 he was again to lead the people of Delaware in drafting a Constitution which replaced the early stop-gap frame of government adopted in 1776.

Following his term of office as Chief Executive of the State of Pennsylvania, he returned to Delaware and took up residence in Wilmington, where he lived for a while in houses which he rented until about 1800 when he built a mansion at Eighth and Market Streets, the site which was later occupied by the Wilmington Institute Free Library. He was, in the meantime, continuing his visits to his boyhood home to inspect the plantation and care for its many needs.

In 1804 a disastrous fire swept the old mansion house with the result that not much remained but the four walls. In his correspondence with the Insurance Company of North America, Dickinson pointed out that it was the most substantially built house in the state, having brick walls eighteen inches thick at the watertable and fourteen inches thick from there on up. As he apparently intended that the mansion should thenceforth be used only by the tenants, he decided to replace the interior woodwork in a plain

substantial manner. His correspondence reveals that this work was completed in 1806, and much of the information for the present restoration of the mansion was gleaned from his instructions and correspondence of that period. During much of the two-year period when the fire damage was being corrected, he was living either with friends in the neighborhood or at the mansion.

He died in 1808 at his home in Wilmington, where he was buried in the Friends Meeting yard at Fourth and West Streets.

### *Restoration*

A careful study is being made of historic materials as well as the building itself before undertaking the full restoration. Those materials of the original mansion which are found to be in good condition will be re-used in the restoration. An effort will be made to restore and re-furnish the mansion as faithfully as possible of the period when John Dickinson last knew it. Some of the old hardware, missing from the mansion, has been kindly presented for its restoration and other old hardware we hope to obtain by gift or purchase.

The history of this historic house is being developed by Public Archives Commission research. However, it is believed additional information can be added from early photographs, sketches, diaries, or from personal recollections of tenants who have lived in it. Such data will be welcomed by Leon deValinger, Jr., Director of The Delaware State Museum, 316 South Governors Avenue, Dover, Delaware. (Telephone: Dover 4297).

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JOHN DICKINSON MANSION  
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*Persons interested in John Dickinson and his mansion are urged to become members of Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion. Annual dues are two dollars, payable to Secretary-Treasurer.*

# THE JOHN DICKINSON MANSION

5 MILES SOUTHEAST OF DOVER  
.3 MILES EAST OF ROUTE 113  
ON KITTS HUMMOCK RD.

