

Smith Homestead  
New York and Moss Hill Road  
Smithville, Atlantic County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-280

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

Smith Homestead  
New York and Moss Hill Road  
Smithville, Atlantic County, New Jersey

Owner: Mr. Isaac Smith

Date of Erection: 1787-1789

Architect:

Builder: James Baremore or Baymore

Present Condition: Fair

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame  
construction, siding

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

The present dwelling grew from a single room to its present size. It was originally a cedar clapboard brick lined structure built in 1787-1789 by James Baremore (sometimes spelled Baymore). Baremore previously to 1787 kept a small tavern at Sweetwater on the Mullica in partnership with Peter Turner. No one now living knows when the rooms were added to the original one, but it is supposed that as his family grew James Baremore added rooms.

DATA NOT COMPILED AND NOT GUARANTEED  
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Since houses were few and far apart in those days and since this one stood on what was a stage coach route, it is no wonder that the travelers stopped here and that Baremore became again a tavern keeper.

He had four children. One of his daughters Sarah, married Isaac Smith, a grandson of John Smith who had come down from Long Island. Isaac at the age of eighteen had served in the company that had defended Somers Point during the War of 1812. He purchased the tavern and considerable acreage from his wife's father. Here he kept a tavern, tilled their large farm, and raised a family of thirteen children.

There is a legend in the family that during the War of 1812 a British sloop came to anchor behind Brigantine and that the sailors coming ashore gathered the cabbage and green vegetables growing in the Baremore fields. The family was unable to make any show of resistance. However, toward evening the commanding officer was rowed ashore and coming to the tavern paid for all the provender his men had made off with.

It is generally understood by the family that Isaac also made additions until the tavern was more than twice its present size. It was never more than one room deep and ran along the top of the slight rise looking off across the meadows to the bay. Originally, the tavern was used as the voting place of the township and we are told, although the space was small, a fence was erected to separate the Democrats from the Whigs. At one time there were large barns upon the place and public auctions were held each week.

Henry D. Smith, son of Isaac and Sarah Smith, married Harriet Henderson about 1840 and purchased the place from his father. He carried on the tavern business

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which had increased since a regular coach line now ran from Somers and Leeds Points to Camden. More wealthy citizens of Philadelphia gained health and recreation and many men came for hunting and fishing.

About 1850 the Smiths found that their business had outgrown the old house and sea bathing had become more of a fad. They built out on Brigantine and tore down a portion of the tavern leaving only the brick lined room, the fireplace room, and two chambers above. The travelers coming by stage from Philadelphia stayed here overnight and the next day were taken in a small boat to Brigantine. The old tavern on the mainland was abandoned in 1880 and was used only as a place of storage for years. The present Mr. Isaac Smith inheriting it from his father renovated it and lived there for a few years. Now he and his sister, Mrs. Ulmer, use it only as their summer residence. The house has the distinction of never having been out of the family since it was built.

Bibliography:

Heston, A. M. Absegami: Annals of Eyren Haven and Atlantic City Two Volumes Camden, For the Author, 1804

Heston, A. M. South Jersey History 1664-1924 Four Volumes New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc. 1924

Information from the present owner secured by Alberta H. Moss, H.A.B.S. Field Historian

Walter E. Reed  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.  
District Officer

3/11/37

—WJ

A D D E N D U M

In our first account of this house we followed the information given by Heston in the works cited in the bibliography; however, we have made a search of the title and find that it does not agree with the information given in these volumes.

We find that on April 20, 1784 Daniel Leeds sold to John Smith among other pieces the land upon which this house stands. Smith in his will of August 30, 1805 gave to his son Enos the two tracts of land "whereon he now lives" together with the mill, mill lots, and utensils during his natural life; it was then to be divided equally among his sons. Our next record is a deed of June 19, 1855 where John Smith et als, apparently, the sons of Enos, deeded the property to Henry D. Smith. Henry by his will of June 15, 1698 gave to his daughter Helen G. Smith all of his real estate. She died intestate and the property descended to her brother, Issac, and upon his death to her sister, Dolly Smith, who married Dr. Charles Ulmer; she is the present owner. 8 ?

It may be possible that the tavern was built as we originally stated by James Baremore, one of whose daughters married a grandson of John Smith, but our search shows that John Smith owned this particular piece of land and we believe that he was in all probability the builder.

## Bibliography:

A search of Atlantic County court records  
by Oscar F. Benjamin, Camden County Office

*Walter E. Ruth*  
Supervising Historian

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