

Somers Mansion  
Shore Road and Goll Street  
Somers Point, Atlantic County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-281

HABS

N.J.

1- SOMPC

1-

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

Somers Mansion  
Shore Road and Goll Street  
Somers Point, Atlantic County, New Jersey

Owner: W. Shoffer Smith

Date of Erection: 1730

Architect:

Builder: Richard Somers

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Three

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - original  
section brick, later  
section frame construc-  
tion

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - original roof  
gambrel, later section  
extended from inner  
section of gambrel on  
north elevation

Historical Data:

The founder of the Somers family in America  
was John Somers who came from Worcester England in

Sir George Somers, one of the London company for the colonization of Virginia, and Lord John Somers, counselor for King William III.

John Somers became a Friend and migrated with one of the groups bound for Pennsylvania in 1681. After a short stay in Pennsylvania, he came to West Jersey and purchased in 1695 from Thomas Budd, a proprietor, three thousand acres of land and several tracts lying on the Great Egg Harbor River for the sum of two hundred and forty pounds.

Richard Somers, one of the nine children of John and Hannah Somers, was born in 1693. Richard married Judith Letart, daughter of Sir James Letart, deceased, of Acadia, Nova Scotia, and an adopted daughter of Peter White, a wealthy gentleman from Philadelphia, who bought land at Absecon and brought his family there to live. Judith was seventeen in 1729 when she married Richard who was then in his thirty-fourth year and a man of considerable wealth.

Richard built the brick portion of the present Somers Mansion in 1730, and the heart shaped ventilator carved in the door of the stairway and in one closet door is a reminder of the romance. According to tradition, the bricks for this house were burned on the property. The property passed to Richard Somers II, the fifth child, who continued to live in the old mansion. He was a Judge of the County Court. His name appears among the members of the Provincial Congress for the year 1775, but he does not seem to have taken his seat. During the Revolutionary War he was a Colonel of the Egg Harbor Militia. It appears that Colonel Richard Somers with an attachment of militia acted as a sea coast guard at Great Egg Harbor.

There are records which tell of a ship which was captured and later sold at the home of John Somers at Great Egg Harbor.

Shortly after the war Richard Somers II moved to Philadelphia. However, Richard III was born at Somers Point before removal to Philadelphia and he is known as the hero of Tripoli. He was granted a midshipman's warrant by Washington in 1796, promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 1801, and was commander of the Nautilus when he was killed in 1804.

Claypooles Daily Advertiser, of Philadelphia, carried an advertisement dated January 10, 1800, in which Somers Mansion with four hundred acres of upland, and three of meadow and marsh, were for rent.

#### Bibliography:

Heston, A. M. Absegami: Annals of Eyren Haven and Atlantic City 2 Volumes Camden, For the Author, 1904

Hall, J. F. Daily Union History of Atlantic City and County, New Jersey Atlantic City, Daily Union Printing Company, 1900

Clement, John Surveyor's Association of West New Jersey Camden, S. Chew, 1800

Jones, R. M. Quakers in the American Colonies London, Macmillan, 1911

Lee, F. B. New Jersey As a Colony and As a State 5 Volumes Publishing Society of New Jersey, New York, 1903

Kull, I. S. (editor) New Jersey - A History 4 Volumes New York, American Historical Society, 1930

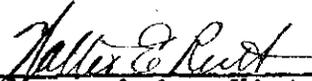
Johnson, Allen) (editors) Dictionary of Malone, Dumas ) American Biography 20 Volumes New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936

Stryker, W. S. Official Register of the Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Revolutionary War Trenton, W. T. Nicholson & Company, 1872

Heston, A. M. Historical Calendar Atlantic City, The Author, 1901

Woody, Thomas Quaker Education in the Colony and State of New Jersey Philadelphia, The Author, 1923

Gordon, Thomas F. A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey Trenton, D. Fenton, 1834

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.  
District Officer