

"The Old Mansion" (Bowling Green)
Bowling Green, Caroline County, Virginia

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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings
PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Virginia

Historic American Buildings Survey
Major Eugene Bradbury, A.I.A., District Officer
210 East Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia

OLD MANSION
Caroline County, Virginia

Owner: J. C. White and Miss Anne White, 1013 West Grace Street, Richmond, Virginia.

Date of Erection: No documentary evidence has been found, but the original structure believed to have been built prior to 1669 and the rear wing between fifty and one hundred years later.

Architect:

Builder: The original front portion of the building with brick walls was built by Major John Hoomes; the frame wing in the rear was built by Colonel John Waller Hoomes.

Present Condition: The brickwork is in a good state of preservation, and the rest of the structure fair. Certain minor changes have been made in the interior such as the addition of a partition in Room C, and the removal of a partition between Rooms B and C and folding doors substituted. Several fireplaces have been closed up for the use of stoves. A modern porch has been added on the front and also one in the angle between the front portion and wing. The roofs are covered with composition shingles and tin. The brickwork has at some period been whitewashed.

Number of Stories: Basement and story and a half.

Materials of Construction: The exterior walls and chimneys of the original front portion are brick, with a brick watertable. Below the watertable the brick are laid English bond and above, Flemish bond with glazed headers. The windows of first floor and front door have flat brick arches. The rear wing has brick basement walls and frame above, weatherboarded, with a brick chimney. Portions of the brickwork are laid English and part Flemish bond. The basement floor is earth and the first and second floors have random width pine flooring. Interior woodwork is pine painted. Composition shingles and tin roofing replace what was undoubtedly a shingle roof. The exterior woodwork is painted white. The building has been recently repaired and painted.

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Other Existing Records: The following abstracts were taken from Wingfield's History of Carolinas County, Legislative papers, wills, diaries, old family Bibles and from traditional history:

The "Old Mansion", originally known as "Bowling Green", was built not later than 1675. Major John Hoomes, grantee of this estate in 1670 by King Charles II, erected the house in the center of the track of land, which has remained in the same family, either by inheritance or purchase.

Wingfield, in writing about the "Old Mansion", says:

"The structure is of early Colonial 'one and a half story' type and is said to have been built of brick brought from England. It is also said that this particular style of architecture prevailed in the earliest Colonial Period because of the higher tax levied by England on two story and three story houses."

Major John Hoomes had one son, Col. John Waller Hoomes, who had one daughter, Sophia. She married Major Allen for whom Col. John Waller Hoomes (between fifty and one hundred years after the original house was built) added a frame addition to the "Old Mansion."

In the late 18th Century, the County seat of Caroline County was removed from the original site to the town of Bowling Green which was established shortly after the formation of the County in 1727. According to Legislature Petitions, Major Hoomes donated the land for the Court House and other public buildings, giving the name of his estate to the town, and the name "Old Mansion" to the said estate, by which it is still known.

Caroline County Legislative Petitions No. 4617, dated December 16, 1803, filed in the original handwriting in the Virginia State Library, Archives Department, are as follows:

"Know all men these Presents that I, John Hoomes of Caroline County are held and firmly bound unto George Buckner, Lawrence Battaile, John . Woodford - Daniel Coleman, and Richard Howes, setting Justice of the County Court of Caroline and their Successors in the just and full sum of five thousand dollars to which payment well and truly to be made to the said Justices or their successors. I bind myself my heirs Executors and Administrators jointly and severally firmly by these presents Sealed with my seal and dated this 12th day of August 1801. The Condition of the above obligation

is such, that whereas the above bond John Hoomes inconsideration of the seat of Justice for the County Court of Caroline being removed to the Bowling Green did amongst other things agree to build and furnish for the use of the said County a good and sufficient Court house of the same size and kind of materials of the old Court House.

"Now if the said John Hoomes his heirs executors or administrators shall within three years from the date hereof build or cause to be built a Court house as above described. Vizt. of the same size and kind of materials of the old Court House, and have the same properly and completely finished at his own expences, and convey unto the sitting Justices of Caroline County, and their Successors, the Court house so built with the spot of ground on which it shall stand, together with the ground on which the other public buildings may have been, or shall hereafter be erected - And the ground so to be conveyed shall be for the use of the Public Buildings and no other whatever. Then the above Obligation to be void, or else remain in full force & Vertue. Signed: John Hoomes.

"At a Court held for Caroline County on the 12th day of August 1801. This Bond was acknowledged by John Hoomes and ordered to be Recorded. Teste: Wm. Nelson, Cl. A copy Test Jno. Pendleton Jr. D. C."

"To the Honorable the Speakers, and Members of both Houses of the General Assembly.

"Your Petitioner John Hoomes, begs leave with great deference, humbly to State to your honorable body, that in the year 1794 a Mr. James Johnston owned the Lands, on which the Court House of Caroline County stood, that the said Johnston, came to your Petitioner, and offered to sell him the seat of Justice; application was then made to the county Court and with their consent and advice, your Petitioner agreed to give the said Johnston, seven hundred pounds for the removal of it to the Bowling Green; a petition was sent to the next assembly for that purpose, stating that the People of Caroline should be placed on the same footing at the Bowling Green that they were on at the former Court House, It was universally signed by all to whom it was presented & met to general approbation of every body, particularly the Court of the County & a law passed for the removal of the seat of Justice in December 1794, to a House at the Bowling Green, found by your Petitioner, as a temporary Court House, and was received by the Court as such, until one could be built of the same size & materials as the former one, the bounds

for Debtors was laid out, and upwards of four Acres of Land (the greater part of which is planted in trees) are set apart for public purposes, no part of which, is in cultivation except a small garden, your Petitioner has also bound himself to the Court in the penalty of 5,000 \$ to make a Deed to the justices for the use of the County, of such Land as the Public Buildings, do now, or may hereafter stand on; & your Petitioner begs leave to observe, that he has put the County on a much better footing at the Bowling Green, than they were on at the former place, for they never have a foot of Land there, & the situation for less comfortable, than the present one -- Your Petitioner further states that he does not conceive himself in the situation of one, who has gratuitously received the seat of Justice, from the Court, having with their consent and advice, as well as by the Petition of the People, at large, purchased the removal at a very high price, he therefore can see no cause, why his contract to put the people on the same footing, at the Bowling Green as well as to one with the Court since; shall be changed - your Petitioner never heard that there was a dissatisfied person, in the County until very lately, which he has no doubt was brought about, by a Certain Mr. Kenner (long known for his restless disposition) who has a petition to the present Assembly, to condemn two acres of your Petitioners Land for public use, altho four are already set apart for that purpose, he has told the people, that as soon as the Land is condemn,d he will petition again, have apart of the two Acres sold, that other Taverns may be built, & that they will in that case get what they want, one hundred per cent cheaper, than they now do altho he knows that the rates for Taverns, are regularly fixed by the Court, & it is hardly to be expected that these were a Dozen, they would sell below the rates fixed for them -- Your Petitioner believes that nine out of Ten of the people are perfectly satisfied with the Court House as it now standes, & cannot help observing that greater regularity & better order is not kept up at any Court House in the State, nor at any public place have the people more convenience -- Mr. Kenner has been very industrious in handling his Petition through the, County, & has blended in the same petition the removal of the Clerks Office, to the Court House, & by that means has obtained, signatures that care nothing about the two acres of Land, while your petitioner thinking it a matter entirely relating to himself has not offered to get a single one, altho great numbers might be had. The removal of the Clerks Office has been already voted by the County Court, & the Clerk has appealed from their decession, to the High Court of Appeale, when it now stands, wanting for the final determination of that Court. Your Petitioner is by no means anxious

for the contenance of the seat of Justice at the Bowling Green & has an offer to purchase it, to be carried back again to its former place, & should your honorable body think that you cannot dispense with condemning two acres of Land there, your Petitioner prays that it may be postponed for the present, that he may have time to arrange the business & be well come forward at the next Seseion with a Petition for the removal of the seat of Justice from the Bowling Green to its former place."

The "Old Mansion" in the later 18th century was quite a social centre. The races of the American Jockey Association were frequently held at "The Bowling Green." A race track of much fame was on Major Hoomes estate. In front of the house was a fine bowling green, which still remains, and from which the house received its original name.

According to tradition, the large cedars, which have bordered the lawn of the "Old Mansion" for over a century, were brought as tiny switches from Gloucester County, England, in the saddle bag of Major Hoomes.

General George Washington and his soldiery enroute to Yorktown are believed to have camped on the lawn at the "Old Mansion." There is also some historical support that Washington on his return from Yorktown, after the surrender of Cornwallis, gave a great banquet on the lawn in honor of LaFayette.

According to Washington's Diary, he had dinner on April 10, 1791, at what is now the "Old Mansion." The stop at Bowling Green was made in connection with the President's inspection of the docks in Richmond. The entry in the diary is as follows:

"April, 1791 --- Sunday, 10th. Left Fredericksburg about 6 o'clock, - myself, Majr. Jackson and one servant, - breakfasted at General Spotwoods. The rest of my Servants continued on to Todd's Ordinary where they also breakfasted. Dined at the Bowling Green, and lodged at Kenner's Tavern, 14 miles farther -- in all 35 m."

The following extract is from the old Allen Family Bible now in the possession of Miss L. B. Cullen, 1986 First Avenue, San Deigo, California:

"John Hoomes, Sr., born 1649, died 1712. Mary George Hoomes, born 1709. John Hoomes, born 1749, died 1805. Ann Hoomes. Elizabeth Brodnax married John G. Woolfolk. Ann Hoomes Woolfolk married W. G. Maury. Finella Maury married J. T. White. J. L. White. J. C. White."

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The following extract is taken from a copy of the will of John Hoomes of Bowling Green, Virginia:

"In the name of God Amen, I, John Hoomes, of the Bowling Green having my perfect senses and memory do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following -- Imprimis, I lend unto my beloved wife Judith Hoomes during her natural life, the tract of land whereon I now live, comprised of the Bowling Green and sundry purchaes so as to form one entire tract of about 4000 acres, subject to the devises or exceptions hereafter mentioned in favor of my children John & Sophia, with all the furniture in the tavern and the negroe employed at or belonging to the tavern --- all for her life, and at her death I direct all the slaves and personal estate lent to her to be equally divided among my children, John, William, Richard, Armistead and Sophia ... Sealed this first day of October 1804 By John Hoomes (seal)

"Will in possession of Mrs. J. G. Huges, of Ashland, Virginia, on 3rd day of Dec. 1925. (Signed) Robert T. Winston."

Additional Data: In 1842, the "Old Mansion" was purchased by William Grymes Maury. In 1862 the estate passed into the possession of Jamee Thomas White, who married Fenella Strachan Maury, second daughter of William Grymes Maury. The property remains in possession of the White family.

Bibliography:

A History of Caroline County, Virginia, by Marshall Wingfield. Printers: Trevvet, Christian and Company, Inc., Richmond, Virginia. Copyright, 1924.

The Caroline Progress, Bowling Green, Virginia, dated August 27, 1936.

Richmond Times-Dispatch, dated September 27, 1936.

Caroline County Legislature Petitions, No. 4617, dated December 16, 1803, filed in the Archives Department of the Virginia State Library.

The Diaries of George Washington, 1748 - 1799. Edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, A.M., Volume IV. Published for the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, Copyright, 1925.

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Personal notes of Miss Anne White, as collected from the old Allen Family Bible now in the possession of Miss L. B. Cullen, 1986, First Avenue, San Deigo, California.

John Hoomes' Will, dated October 1, 1804, now in the possession of Mrs. J. C. Huges, Ashland, Virginia.

Virginia Thompson
Historian

Approved: December 31, 1936

Eugene Bradbury
MAJOR EUGENE BRADBURY, A.I.A.
District Officer
District of Virginia

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Rw. Feb. 5 '37 THW