
Report on the 1964 and 1968 Archaeological Excavations of the John Custis Site, 4B

By

Ivor Noël Hume

Edited and Compiled by

Katherine Wagner

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Department of Archaeology

P.O. Box 1776

Williamsburg, Virginia 23187-1776

1968

Preface

Ivor Noël Hume devoted three decades of his life to the archaeology program at Colonial Williamsburg. Between arriving in 1957 until his retirement in 1988, he excavated multiple sites in and around Williamsburg and made major contributions to our understanding of life in the Virginia Chesapeake during the 17th and 18th centuries. He has written several books on the topic of Colonial American archaeology, including such helpful reference material as *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America* (1970). Noël Hume even starred in a movie, *Doorways to the Past* (1970), which featured excavations at Custis Square.

Noël Hume conducted archaeological investigations on the Custis Square property in 1964 and then again in 1968. As the current Department of Archaeology is one year into a project to further excavate and research the Custis family and property, we often look back to the information Hume uncovered for guidance. Knowing where certain features and artifacts were found on the property helps inform where we are digging today. With additional excavation and research, we can build on earlier information, refining Hume's interpretations from the 1960s and in some cases, depending on what is unearthed, perhaps even contradicting them.

The following report comprises Noël Hume's findings from those excavations at Custis Square, which mainly focused on the structural evidence left behind—the main house, the kitchen, the dairy, two wells, and a brick drain coming off of the main house. He takes the reader through his interpretations of the artifacts and stratigraphy of each of the major features found on the landscape. Although this report was written in 1968, it was never completed, and the only surviving copy remained as an unfinished draft among the shelves of field records in the archaeology library. Now, over 50 years later, the Department of Archaeology is excited to share this unpublished work with the public. The report remains written largely in Hume's own words, with only a few edits made to enhance the clarity of his writing and to insert photos of the excavation in progress. This report provides a snapshot of the methods, interpretations, and research questions from 1968, and while it's a good read, it should only be cited as a reference to earlier work and not a final interpretation of Custis Square.

Katherine Wagner, April 2020

Contents

Preface.....	iii
Figures.....	v
The Archaeological Evidence Uncovered on the Custis Site	1
The Main House.....	1
The Kitchen.....	7
The Dairy (?).....	10
The Wells	12
Well A.....	13
Well B.....	14
The Landscape Evidence	17
The Artifacts (Summary)	21
Conclusions.....	23
Works Cited	24
Appendix I	25
Appendix II.....	27

Figures

FIGURE 1. The Custis property's well complex and eastern part of the dwelling in course of excavation.....	vi
FIGURE 2. Detail of the Custis dwelling's cellar fill.....	2
FIGURE 3. Flooring tiles unearthed in the western portion of the Custis dwelling's cellar.....	2
FIGURE 4. Robbed basement floor.....	4
FIGURE 5. Partially excavated drainage tunnel which had extended northward from the dwelling's northeast corner. Photo from the south. 64-INH-615.....	4
FIGURE 6. Close-up view of the brick drainage tunnel prior to removing its fill. Photo from the south. 64-INH-597.....	5
FIGURE 7. Custis tunnel's manhole after its filling had been removed. Photo from the south. 64-INH-623.....	6
FIGURE 8. Structural remains of the colonial kitchen.....	8
FIGURE 9. Surviving portion of a wooden sill found outside the kitchen's east wall.....	9
FIGURE 10. Foundations of what was thought to be a dairy outbuilding.....	11
FIGURE 11. Detail of the central pit in the dairy.....	12
FIGURE 12. Canine interment with the skeletal remains of a whippet.....	13
FIGURE 13. Well B after excavation.....	17
FIGURE 14. Aerial view of the elaborate series of holes discovered between the well complex and the dairy.....	19
FIGURE 15. Map of planned and completed (darker lines) excavations from the 1968 field season of digging at Custis Square.....	20
FIGURE 16. Frenchman's Map created in 1782, with arrow pointing to Custis Square.....	22



FIGURE 1. The Custis property's well complex and eastern part of the dwelling in course of excavation. The broken south end of the main house's drainage tunnel can be seen at right background. Photo from the southeast. 64-INH-732

The Archaeological Evidence Uncovered on the Custis Site

The initial archaeological investigations, on what was known as “Custis Square”, were embarked upon in March 1964, and the digging continued through November of that year. During these excavations, the remains of three structures were unearthed. These buildings included the main Custis dwelling, a kitchen, and another dependency thought to be a dairy. Other major finds were two abandoned wells, a water drainage tunnel, and an elaborate and deep series of holes believed to have been associated with a cedar trellis used to support climbing plants (Figure 1).

Digging on the Custis property was resumed on May 20, 1968 and continued through July 30 of the same year. The 1968 excavations were undertaken in conjunction with the shooting of the archaeological film *Doorways to the Past* and the initial work was confined almost entirely to the reopening of areas which had been examined in 1964. However, while the filming was in progress, new sectors were investigated west of and southeast of the extant ca. 1810 kitchen structure. The 1968 archaeological work did not produce evidence of structural remains other than those found in 1964; however, the excavations provided additional information concerning the evolution of the early kitchen outbuilding, as well as new knowledge about the 18th-century surface levels, planting and post holes, and other facts pertaining to the site’s social history.

In the following report, an attempt is made to combine the evidence extracted from the Custis property during the two seasons (1964 and 1968); however, it must be noted that only a small portion of the site has been examined. Consequently, conclusions arrived at in this report may be altered or even rejected if subsequent archaeological work reveals new or additional information about the evolution of the “Custis Square” area.

The Main House

Unfortunately, when the Custis mansion was destroyed, the bricks had been removed apparently for elsewhere; however, a small section of the building’s east wall survived as did a portion on the west side of the house. The width of the robbed wall trenches (Figure 2), along with the undisturbed brickwork, indicated that the structure was supported by foundations which were approximately 1 ft. 6 in. thick (two bricks). Sample bricks removed from the east wall measured 9 1/4 in. x 4 1/2 in. x 2 1/2 in. and 7 1/4 in. x 3 3/4 in. x 2 1/2 in. The robbed wall trenches around the perimeter of the dwelling disclosed that the house had an east/west measurement of 48 ft. 9 in. and a north/south dimension of 23 ft. 3 in.

A basement had been dug beneath the main house, apparently as part of the original construction work, and its base was reached some 4 ft. below modern grade. The cellar’s floor had been laid with 9 in. square tiles embedded in mortar (Figure 3). Only a few of the tiles remained in situ and these were found close to the east and west walls; however, the mortar base for the floor was encountered all over the cellar area, suggesting that this type of flooring had been used throughout. The south cheek of a chimney was found at the cellar floor level



FIGURE 2. Detail of the Custis dwelling's cellar fill at left along with the debris in the structure's robbed south wall (right center). Photo from the west. 64-INH-609



FIGURE 3. Flooring tiles unearthed in the western portion of the Custis dwelling's cellar. The remains of the south cheek of a chimney can be seen in the center and the some of the surviving west wall of the structure is at the right background. Photo from the east. 64-INH-634

abutting the robbed west wall. In a comparable position at the east side, an area of burn was discovered which was thought to have been the result of another fireplace (Figure 4). If this last assumption can be accepted, it can be established that the Custis dwelling possessed interior chimneys at the east and west ends. At any rate, the presence of the fireplace remains on the basement floor level would suggest that the cellar initially served as a kitchen.

An exterior entrance into the basement could not be conclusively located; however a large hole, measuring 1 ft. 9 in. x 2 ft. 3 in., was found outside the cellar's southwest corner and immediately north of the pit, an offset was discovered possibly indicating an entry way from the west side. Extant documentation only mentions a basement entrance once when in 1779 Humphrey Harwood was paid for, among other tasks, "Bricking up the Cellar Door" (Harwood 1779:26). Thus, it seems that the cellar was approached from the outside by a doorway rather than a bulkhead. Additionally, it would seem logical that, prior to the 1779 work, more than one exterior door gave access to the underground facility so that when Harwood closed up the entrance at least one other remained operational.

Projecting northward from the cellar's northeast corner was found a massive brick drain which, according to Mr. Paul Buchanan, had been constructed to carry the basement's water seepage away from the house (Figure 5). If this conclusion is correct, it would seem that those living during the 18th century had to pay a large price for having a dry cellar because the Custis drain was built entirely of brick with walls averaging seven courses high topped with a semicircular crown (Figure 6) and stretched more than 90 ft. in length. The tunnel's opening averaged 2 ft. 4 in. x 2 ft. 4 ½ in., which would seem far too large to accommodate a mere trickle of water being removed from the basement. Mr. Buchanan explained that the oversized interior was to facilitate young boys crawling down the shaft from time to time to clean the silt from the drain's floor. Nevertheless, since young boys were able to traverse down chimney flues less than 1 ft. 1 in. square, it would still appear that the Custis tunnel had been constructed twice as large as needed, especially since the amount of silt from a brick-tiled cellar would not have accumulated very fast with only a minimal flow of water away from the house. However, if Mr. Buchanan was only partially correct as to the drain's utilization and more than just basement seepage flowed down the tunnel, then the drain's proportions possibly could be justified.

The fact that fragments from a single delftware plate, found in the drain's primary fill, were discovered up to 47 ft. apart (E.R. 762D & E.R. 797J) would strongly suggest if not prove that, at times, a substantial stream of water was present in the Custis drain. It has been conjectured that the tunnel may have been situated in such a way as to catch the rainwater coming from the roof. Substantiating evidence was not found; however, during a small exploratory excavation at "Corotoman" on the Northern Neck of Virginia, a brick tunnel, almost identical to the Custis one, was examined and found to have a secondary shaft leading from the area of the building's southeast corner. Thus, the "Corotoman" drain adds fuel to the theory of using tunnels for eliminating water shedding from the roof, but obviously verification or rejection must be delayed either until a proper archaeological study of the northern Neck property can be undertaken or until another, better preserved tunnel is found in Williamsburg.



FIGURE 4. Robbed basement floor with string enclosed area indicating the area of burned clay whose discovery suggested the location of an east wall fireplace. Main building's surviving east wall can be seen in the left background. Photo from the north. 64-INH-628



FIGURE 5. Partially excavated drainage tunnel which had extended northward from the dwelling's northeast corner. Photo from the south. 64-INH-615



FIGURE 6. Close-up view of the brick drainage tunnel prior to removing its fill. Photo from the south. 64-INH-597

Both the Custis and “Corotoman” tunnels possessed square manholes (Figure 7) which were, no doubt, installed to facilitate easier cleaning of the drain. The “Corotoman” manhole was positioned some 37 ft. from the house whereas the Custis one was placed 59 ft. from the dwelling. All that can be deduced from these facts is that the openings were probably situated at arbitrary distances from the mouth of the tunnel rather than at a prescribed interval. The Custis manhole, with an opening which measured 2 ft. square, had been filled with great quantities of domestic rubbish (E.R. 797D). The debris, deposited in the period ca. 1770 – 1785, included fragments of creamware saucers, tureens, plates, and bowls along with a plate base of overglazed



FIGURE 7. Custis tunnel's manhole after its filling had been removed. Photo from the south. 64-INH-623

Chinese porcelain and a teapot lid and two sauce boats made of white salt glaze. The architectural material recovered from the manhole fill included pieces of crown window glass, flooring tiles, and black slate—the latter possibly coming from mantles or from flooring of elaborate character. It should be noted that since these artifacts were deposited at such a late date they have no bearing on the life of the property in the John Custis period. The curious aspect of the tunnel's fill is that it indicated that the drain was abandoned prior to the destruction of the house—a fact which casts a shadow over the previously stated conclusions and conjectures as to the tunnel's utilization since the need for the drainage would not have been less great at the turn of the century than at the time of the facility's construction.

Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence indicated that the Custis dwelling had been destroyed during the first quarter of the 19th century. The usable materials had been salvaged around ca. 1820 but the cellar hole was left open for a short time. This last fact was discernible by the presence of a considerable amount of silt along the edges of the cellar's floor; a deposit which had come from the clay banks after the walls had been dismantled. The basement was subsequently filled with destruction rubble and artifacts which indicated a post ca. 1820 – 1830 deposition. It was deduced that the Custis main house was dismantled during the winter months, for the remains of a bonfire (E.R. 779C) were found near the east end of the cellar at the robbed basement floor level but sealed beneath the brickbat fill. Since the bonfire's debris contained only light tree branches and yielded no evidence of burned structural timbers, it was concluded

that the fire's purpose was to provide warmth rather than to dispose of waste lumber from the dismantled house.

The Kitchen

The remains of an earlier kitchen outbuilding were discovered beneath and extending eastward from the extant ca. 1810 dependency. The surviving foundations indicated that the structure had measured 28 ft. 7 in. x 24 ft. and was composed of three rooms on the ground floor (Figure 8). No doubt, the westerly room was the center of activity as it was by far the largest of the three (22 ft. 10 in. x 18 ft. 10 in.) and was the only room fitted with a fireplace. The other two rooms may have been utilized for storage for they were quite small—the one at the northeast having interior dimensions of 9 ft. x 7 ft. 4 in. while that at the southeast measured 9 ft. 3 in. x 7 ft. 4 in.

A rubbish pit (E.R. 922C), filled with dark brown clay and brick rubble, was found passing beneath the kitchen's northeast corner. The artifacts recovered from the deposition, including bones, nails, three wine bottle fragments, one pipe stem, and a white salt glaze knob, suggested the pit was filled post ca. 1730, thereby indicating a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the kitchen. It should be recalled that the cellar in the main house probably served initially as the kitchen since evidence of at least one fireplace (possibly two) was found on the basement's floor level. Therefore, the outbuilding discovered beneath and east of the extant dependency should post date the Custis dwelling. If the argument can be accepted, the post ca. 1730 *terminus post quem* for the kitchen can also serve as a *terminus ante quem* for the erection of the main house.

As noted previously, the kitchen's west room contained the only fireplace on the ground floor of the building. It was centered on the room's north wall, and its surviving brickwork had an exterior measurement of 10 ft. 5 in. x 5 ft. Sample bricks removed from the foundation measured 8 ¾ in. x 4 3/8 in. x 2 3/8 in. and 8 ¼ in. x 4 1/8 in. x 2 ½ in. The west room was not excavated entirely due to the fact that the majority of its space was covered by the flooring in the extant building. The position of the kitchen in relation to the main house, however, leads one to conjecture that a doorway probably was located in the dependency's west wall. This question will have to be resolved during subsequent archaeological studies, but as will be noted below, an eastern access to the building was determined during the 1964 excavations.

Traces of a wooden sill (Figure 9), found immediately east of the kitchen, indicated the position of the building's rear entrance. The marks of other timbers inside the structure provided evidence of interior walls flanking a short passage between the northeast and southeast rooms. No doubt, each of the three rooms was fitted with an opening onto the hallway but no evidence of it could be found archaeologically.

For some unexplained reason, the floor levels in each of the three rooms were appreciatively different, but it was determined that the building's initial flooring was made of hard-packed yellow clay. The west room's floor was laid on a 3 in. thick layer of brown clay (E.R. 806G), whereas the first floor in the other two rooms was found to be overlaying the natural subsoil. Apparently, during the utilization of the southeast room, sporadically placed



FIGURE 8. Structural remains of the colonial kitchen. The tile floor in the foreground had been installed in the northeast room. Beyond the paving was a narrow passage way which divided the northeast and southeast rooms. The larger west room was partially covered by the extant ca. 1810 kitchen (right background). Photo from the north. 68-PH-2291

mounds of wood ashes were deposited on the floor and these mixed with brown loam and mortar pieces to form a sealing stratum over the clay floor. This occupation layer (E.R. 806H) contained material which dated post ca. 1740.

The initial clay floor in the west room had traces of mortar overlaying it which would suggest that a brick or tile floor had been installed there as was the case in the basement of the



FIGURE 9. Surviving portion of a wooden sill found outside the kitchen's east wall. This evidence indicated the position of the structure's back door. The brickwork at top right is part of the building's east wall foundation. Photo from the north. 64-INH-676

main house. However, the brick tiles which survived in the kitchen's northeast room were laid on the dirty yellow clay without mortar. Perhaps, when the remainder of the west room is investigated, the purpose of the mortar will be determined conclusively.

The 1964 excavations disclosed that the northeast room's tile floor had been overlaid with brass and iron waste, assumed to have come from Peter Hardy's metalworking operation of 1772 – 1774. The fact that the debris was not confined within the room area would suggest that it was deposited after the building was destroyed. Similar trash was found in the southeast room and it is significant that fragments of a creamware dish from this stratum (E.R. 802C) mended to other pieces (E.R. 762L) found some 24 ft. down the main house's drainage tunnel. This important crossmend indicates the abandonment of the kitchen and the tunnel was undertaken simultaneously after ca. 1785.

Much the same destruction date was determined by the 1968 re-excavation of the kitchen area. Three holes which had cut through the clay floor were found in the dependency's southeast room; one of which (E.R. 806M) had been filled with mixed clay and artifacts dating post ca. 1760. A curious mound of yellow clay (E.R. 806K), dumped into the southeast corner of the building after the structure was no longer being utilized, had been deposited over the fill of the

hole. The mound contained broken window glass and seven pieces of roofing tile along with datable material that suggested a deposition around ca. 1790. Hence, the late 18th-century destruction date would seem to reinforce the argument that the extant kitchen was erected ca. 1810.

The Dairy (?)

The incomplete foundation (10 ft. x 10 ft. 2 in.) of what may have been a dairy was discovered south of the kitchen. The floor and wall had been destroyed at its east end, but the former was intact to the west and was laid with random brickbats and occasional flooring tiles comparable in size to those used in the main house and kitchen (Figure 10). Apparently, the building was almost totally underpinned late in its life as evidence by the fact that the surviving brickwork had marked variation in its coursing and a thin gap of dirt was found between the bottom course of foundation and those on top.

Positioned in the center of the “dairy” was found a brick and tile-lined pit (Figure 11), 2 ft. 9 in. in depth, measuring 3 ft. 9 in. square at the top and 1 ft. 10 in. square at the bottom, resembling an inverted and truncated pyramid. The feature had been filled with layers of yellow clay and localized deposits of wood ash—the primary stratum being a 2 in. thick layer of ashes (E.R. 854M) in which were found three large fragments of roofing tiles and one small piece of brass waste. Even though the pit’s fill included ash strata, there was no indication that the feature had actually contained a fire—the only burning being confined to three bricks close to the top. Indeed, the lack of any heat discoloration on the yellow clay on which the ashes had been dumped would clearly indicate that the cinders had been deposited after cooling.

The brick and tile-lined hole appeared to be contemporary with the brickbat and tile floor, which in turn seemed to be associated with the underpinned and re-laid wall foundations. Therefore, it would seem conceivable that the pit was not part of the initial construction, but, instead, relates to a possible change in the building’s utilization. At any rate, if the function of the pit could be determined, the structure’s purpose would, no doubt, be obvious, but the feature’s use remains a mystery. The absence of burning and the unusual depth infers that it was not a fire pit for a smokehouse. Then again, the brickwork was held in place by clay and not by mortar, which would seem to rule out its being used as a cistern beneath a dairy. The presence of a the fragment of brass waste at the bottom could perhaps indicate that the hole was installed as an ash pit beneath a furnace standing above the floor level, but if this were the case, a good deal more metal-working evidence would have been discovered in the pit’s fill, and the alternating layers of yellow clay would not have been present. Needless to say, the 1964 and 1968 excavations provided no clues, other than the few mentioned, to aid in determining the function of the building or the pit.

The extant documentation coupled with the archaeological discoveries, however, has let this Department to conjecture that the structure was used as a dairy, at least during the later years of its life. On October 9, 1779, Humphrey Harwood billed Dr. James McClurg, owner of the Custis property from 1779 to 1783 or later, for “underpinning Dairy & laying floor,” and



FIGURE 10. Foundations of what was thought to be a dairy outbuilding discovered south of the extant ca. 1810 kitchen. The central pit was lined with both bricks and tiles held together by yellow clay. Photo from the northwest. 64-INH-697

archaeological evidence showed that these two tasks had been performed on the building with the brick and tile-lined pit (Harwood 1779:26). Therefore, unless these two identical repairs were made on more than one structure, it can be almost sure that the building refurbished by Harwood was the one south of the kitchen and that it served as a dairy by 1779. Even though the central pit was not the typical type found in 18th-century dairies, it probably was utilized in some way to help with the cooling of the structure. It should also be mentioned that on the same day that Harwood charged McClurg for flooring and underpinning the dairy, he noted that he was due

PHOTO NOT FOUND

FIGURE 11. Detail of the central pit in the dairy (?). A portion of the dependency's west wall is visible in the background as is a section of flooring. Photo from the east. 64-INH-704

payment for "seting up a Grate 75/ & 3 Days labour a 20/."(Harwood 1779:26). Although no definite connection can be substantiated, it would seem possible that the grate had been installed over the brick and tile-lined pit in the dairy outbuilding. If so, the grate must have been either on a pivot or not secured to the brickwork so as to provide easy access to the pit because the hole was lined on all sides and the bottom leaving only the top open.

The structural remains of this perplexing outbuilding had been sealed by a layer of mixed brown loam (E.R. 856F), a stratum which contained, among other items, pieces of a German stoneware tankard and chamber pot, a creamware pitcher, and a plate and heavy base of white salt glaze, and broken window and wine bottle glass. By far, the most important artifact recovered from the sealing stratum was a fragment of a Chinese porcelain barber's bowl, which was extremely significant because it mended to other pieces found in the manhole destruction fill (E.R. 797D, G, S, T, & V). Therefore, the building was no longer standing when the drainage tunnel was abandoned, which occurred after ca. 1785. It should be recalled that a crossmend was likewise found between the drain fill and a destruction stratum overlaying the kitchen's floor, so it can be said that the kitchen and "dairy" were dismantled near the same time that the drainage tunnel was being abandoned. If this argument is correct, it would seem that by the start of the 19th century the main dwelling may have been the only building of any consequence standing on the "Custis Square".

An extension of digging east of the dairy (?) foundations revealed a dog interment (E.R. 921B) which according to Dr. J. A. Finnegan, a local veterinarian, contained the remains of a whippet (Figure 12). The dog's long toe nails and the presence of tartar on its teeth led Dr. Finnegan to deduce that the whippet had been someone's house pet. The fact that the dog's teeth were well worn and the sutures around the cranium were almost closed indicated the canine died at an advanced age.

It should be noted that the iron buckle which had fastened the dog's collar was also found among the bones. The grave was sealed by a 19th-century stratum but since no datable material was found in the interment it was not possible to determine the age of the skeleton archaeologically. However, during the 18th century a whippet was not a common dog in America, but it was a popular type among the gentry. Since the dog was found in an area which was not occupied after the early part of the 19th century, it can be concluded that the canine belonged to a family living on the Custis property during the colonial period.

The Wells

Two wells were discovered on the Custis property during the 1964 excavations; one of which was immeasurably rich in artifactual remains while the other was almost void of them.

PHOTO NOT FOUND

FIGURE 12. Canine interment with the skeletal remains of a whippet. The grave was discovered southeast of the dairy (?) outbuilding. Photo from the south. 68-PH-2317

This phenomenon was caused by the two different but typical methods of filling an abandoned well shaft. The well which was practically barren had been filled with the sterile clay from a newly excavated shaft, while the more productive well had been used to dispose of household rubbish and other trash from the property. The latter case, obviously, is the most rewarding from an archaeological viewpoint. At any rate, both of the wells investigated in 1964 appeared to have been utilized during the 18th century and they will be discussed in chronological order.

Well A

The shaft of what was believed to have been the initial well on the Custis property was found some 14 ft. 9 in. from the southeast corner of the main house. As the cellar in the dwelling may have originally served as the kitchen, so the positioning of this well so close at hand would seem to support such a theory. The shaft had been completely stripped of its lining presumably so that the bricks could be used in the construction of a new well and was subsequently back-filled with the clean clay derived from the digging of the replacement water supply.

Although only a minimal number of artifacts were found in the well's filling, those that were recovered suggested a deposition of ca. 1725 – 1740; a date bracket which encompasses the year (1737) that John Custis is thought to have installed a new well (see Well B section). The upper most stratum (E.R. 872E) in the shaft's fill consisted of ashes (presumably from the clearance of domestic hearths) and household debris including four wine bottle fragments, a piece of a coarseware bird bottle of local manufacture, an iron lock plate, four pipe stems (one of which had been notched on two sides), and a pipe bowl which was marked EVANS (probably a Bristol manufacturer working in the late 17th and early 18th centuries). Beneath the ash layer was found a shallow deposit of brick rubble (E.R. 872F) which sealed the well's principal fill – dirty yellow clay. The rubble stratum only yielded two iron horseshoe fragments while the upper few inches of clay (E.R. 872G) contained four coarseware pieces, three mendable fragments of a thin delftware bowl, an unmarked pipe bowl, a pipe stem which measured 5 7/8 in. long, and a multiple-knopped candlestick of the period ca. 1690 – 1710.

The well's primary fill was comprised of a 9" thick layer of gray silt (E.R. 872H) in which was found only a part of a well brick. Its surviving measurements were 5 ½ in. x 3 in. x 2 ½ in. (narrow end) and these compare closely with some of the bricks removed from the later well (see Well B section). The bottom of the shaft was reached at a point 21 ft. below the colonial grade, and a thin stratum of sand, extending through the clay in all directions at that level, indicated that the well had drawn water. However, the bottom was above the modern (1964) water level, and it would seem possible that the well had been dug at the time when there was a misleading amount of surface drainage. The fact that the replacement well, only 5 ft. away, was dug almost twice as deep as its predecessor would seem to support such a conjecture. At any

rate, the average diameter of the earlier well was 4 ft. 1 in., and its shaft was excavated entirely by mechanical means since, at the time of the archaeological excavations, modern methods of well investigation had not been devised for the safe digging of shafts without a brick lining. Consequently, the hole which may be uncovered by future archaeologists will be considerably larger than well size as clam-shell digging must be extended outward as the depth increases.

Well B

The most rewarding well, from an archaeological standpoint, yet examined in Williamsburg was discovered 5 ft. southwest of well A and some 14 ft. off the southeast corner of the main house. Its brick-lined shaft, having an interior diameter of 3 ft. 5 in., had been sunk to a depth of 40 ft. 1 in. below the colonial grade; a fact which, with the aid of extant documentation, can identify the well as having been in existence by 1737. In that year, John Custis wrote a letter to Peter Collinson in which he stated:

“As you are a very curious gentleman I send to some things which I took out of the bottom of A well 40 feet deep; the one seems to be a cockle petrefyd; (this?) seems to have been the under beak of some large antediluvian fowl.” (Zuppan 2005:187-188)

The similarity in depths between Well B and that which Custis referred to, coupled with the discovery upon excavation of a bed of fossil-bearing marl at the bottom of the former, would strongly suggest, if not verify, that the two were one in the same. If true, the fossils sent to Collinson must have been retrieved either during the construction of Well B or at a time when its shaft was being cleaned. The archaeological evidence would seem to point to the former, but irrefutable proof was not forthcoming.

It could be argued that Well B was being installed at the same time that Well A's bricks were being salvaged and its shaft filled, since the brick fragment found in the Well A's primary deposit matched the average sizes of those used to line Well B's shaft. Sample specimens from the later well range from 8 ¾ in. x (4 ¼ in. x 3 in.) x 2 ½ in. to 9 in. x (4 in. x 3 in.) x 2 ½ in. Obviously, similar brick sizes cannot be considered conclusive evidence, but it would seem that certain inherent advantages would be realized by positioning a new, deeper shaft close to one found to be too shallow. Firstly, the salvaged bricks from one shaft could easily be tossed over near the other for stacking and subsequent reuse. Secondly, when the lining had been totally stripped from the old well, most of the clay from the new shaft could be expediently back-filled into the abandoned well. Another advantage which could be of importance would be the relative position of the new water supply. No doubt, the initial well was placed so that it was readily available to buildings and/or gardens for which water was needed, and by keeping the replacement well nearby, that accessibility would be retained. Thus, a case can be made for Well B having replaced Well A and, if true, the former was probably constructed in 1737 since its predecessor was abandoned during the period ca. 1725 – 1740.

At any rate, it was determined that Well B was operative until after John Custis' death in 1749. The shaft's primary deposit (E.R. 850Y) yielded only a few datable pottery fragments, but the layer immediately overlaying it (E.R. 850X) was rich in artifacts. The latter, beginning at a

depth of 36 ft. 6 in. below the colonial grade, contained a good deal of early 18th-century material including 60 broken or intact wine bottles with seals bearing the name of John Custis and the date 1713, a rare glass sugar bowl with handles of ca. 1700, and 18 English drinking glasses ranging in date from ca. 1695 to 1730. Nevertheless, the stratum also produced a small Whieldon-type clouded ware tea bowl of the 1750s and a white salt glaze tankard of a similar date. Thus, the water supply could not have been abandoned until sometime after ca. 1750.

It was conjectured that the shaft was filled after the death of John's son, Daniel Parke, in 1757, since before that date, he and his wife, Martha, lived in the house while they were in Williamsburg. However, when Martha remarried in 1759, the Custis property began a long history of rentals (Stephenson 1959). It would seem reasonable to assume that, prior to being leased, the unwanted Custis paraphernalia was removed from the buildings and subsequently discarded. If this were the case, it would explain the presence of so much early material, once belonging to John Custis, in a context of post ca. 1750. The recovery of eleven keys from the lower levels would also suggest that the shaft was being filled at a time when the occupancy of the property was changed, since keys for unknown locks are of no use to the new tenant.

However, it seems strange that only the bottom 3 ft. 7 in. of the well was filled in as early as 1759, while subsequent strata dated much later. Indeed, it would be ludicrous to close a usable well prior to attempting to lease the property. The brick-lined shaft remained structurally sound, even in 1964, and, although it is possible that something had fallen down the shaft to spoil the water, it would have been far more economical to have the well cleaned rather than replaced. Thus, it could be argued that the initial deposits were not part of a planned abandonment of the water supply, but instead, may have been the result of workmen who either misunderstood the instructions or were too lazy to dig a refuse pit or haul the debris away. If the argument is valid, Martha and her husband probably had no knowledge of the debris in the well; in which case, the new tenants, no doubt, continued to utilize the water supply, since the refuse would have settled to the bottom leaving clear water above it.

The next layer (E.R. 850W) dumped into the shaft, consisted of brick rubble and bats, along with artifacts which suggested a post ca. 1770 – 1780 deposition. Included in the finds were fragments of creamware bowls and feather-edged plates, two intact wine bottles of the period ca. 1770 – 1780, a well preserved bell metal skillet, and the wooden well bucket in such good condition that it was hoisted to the surface on a rope. This layer undoubtedly represented the destruction of the wellhead and the above ground lining courses, since fragments of both regular and well bricks were recovered from the deposit. If true, it would seem possible that this work was undertaken in 1779 when Dr. McClurg was having the property refurbished for his new bride.

However, McClurg commissioned Humphrey Harwood to repair a well in 1779; a fact which gives rise to the question of whether the work entailed mending the head on Well B or repairing another shaft which, as yet, has not been found by the archaeological activity. The latter would seem more reasonable because surely the shaft of Well B would have been cleaned if parts of the old wellhead had tumbled into the water by mistake. Nevertheless, the presence of a third well on the property must remain conjectural unless further excavations of the area uncover evidence of another water supply.

Immediately above the wellhead rubble was found a 6 ft. 5 in. thick deposit of organic silt (E.R. 850V). This layer, beginning at a depth of 26 ft. 7 in. below the colonial grade, contained a wealth of late 18th-century artifacts, the most recent being a portion of a pearlware tea bowl with handpainted decoration which dated to at least ca. 1790. Among the more important ceramic finds were fragments of creamware plates, tea bowls, saucers, a large serving dish, a basin, and an ointment pot; pieces of a white salt glaze toy basin and a molded fruit dish; and portions of overglaze decorated Chinese porcelain cups, saucers, and cans. The stratum also produced a complete silver shoe buckle with iron works, a penknife with shell handle decoration, portions of two leather shoes, and three wooden spinning tops, along with a fragment of another. However the most important discovery was a large accumulation of plant material which will no doubt, aid the landscape architects immeasurably in reconstructing the Custis gardens (see The Landscape Evidence section).

Atop the artifact-rich organic silt was found a stratum of gray mud (E.R. 850T); a deposit which began at the water level (25 ft. below the colonial grade). Unfortunately, this mud layer produced no datable material for only an iron rim lock and various animal bones were retrieved. Subsequently, strata of clean washed silt were dumped down the shaft and from these only a minimal number of artifacts were recovered, but those fragments included creamware sherds which could not date before ca. 1770. This sterile silt, beginning at a depth of 7 ft. 11 in. below the colonial grade, served as a 17 ft. 1 in. plug which insured that the organic remains in the lower levels were sealed from the atmosphere and consequently were kept in a good state of preservation because of the continuous moisture.

The upper 7 ft. 11 in. of the well's fill consisted of layer upon layer of domestic ashes; presumably representing the frequent clearance of hearths. The artifacts recovered from these strata indicated a deposition of post ca. 1810. As the ash levels went too deep to have been merely a topping to offset settlement in the shaft, it must be assumed that the well was filled in stages, the last being after the turn of the century. Indeed, the variance between the dates of the lower levels and the upper ones would suggest a considerable time lapse in the well's abandonment. Consequently, with the shaft open for such a lengthy period, it was not surprising to find that a protective barrier had been installed around the potentially dangerous hole (Figure 13; see The Landscape Evidence section for more details).

One other factor about Well B should be mentioned and that is that the reasoning which brought about its abandonment is somewhat obscure. Ordinarily, an experienced excavator can readily determine what cause a well's destruction because usually the clues are physical ones (i.e. a dry well leaves evidence that it has drawn water (as Well A), a gaping hole in the lining would suggest a possible cave-in or root damage, etc). However, these indicators were not found during the work inside Well B; indeed, if the shaft were cleaned and fitted with a new head, it could be made operative today (1968). Thus, it must be assumed that this water supply was not destroyed because of a physical defect or deterioration, a phenomenon which adds a touch of perplexity about the well's past.



FIGURE 13. Well B after excavation. The post holes around the shaft indicated that a protective barrier had been installed while the water supply was being abandoned. Photo from the S.S.W. 64-INH-706

The Landscape Evidence

It should be recalled that between 1734 and 1746 John Custis kept up a most interesting and revealing correspondence with the noted 18th-century horticulturist, Peter Collinson. These extant records provide an insight into the types of plant life that Custis grew, but the documentation does not disclose how many of them survived to maturity. This information was at least partially supplied by the archaeological activity in 1964. Some 40 to 50 years after

Custis' death, the trees and scrubs on the property were pruned and the unwanted cuttings were dumped down Well B. The varieties of vegetation, identified by Messrs. Eaton, Mahone, and Sprinkle, included black walnut, ailanthus, linden, coconut, Virginia scrub pine, buckeye, red or sugar maple, loblolly pine, and smoke tree.

Additionally, at least thirteen types of plant life which had been mentioned in the Custis – Collinson letters were recovered. These included persimmon, hickory, peach, nectarine, gourd, red oak, grape, locust, holly, Dutch box, domestic cherry, viburnum, and sassafras. Although it cannot be proved that the trimmings in this last group were from the selfsame plants grown by Custis, the fact that identical species were on the property after ca. 1790 would almost dictate that the plan for reconstructing the gardens should include at least one of each plant variety.

An elaborate and deep series of holes (E.R. 865D, 866G, 867C, 868D & E) were discovered in the area between the dairy (?) outbuilding and the well complex. The features (Figure 14) had been stepped down to enable the workmen to seat the posts much deeper than would be necessary for the construction of a fence. Thus, it would seem possible that the holes were associated with a high trellis frame or arbor to support some type of climbing plants. If true, there is a good likelihood that Custis had trained grapevines on it because his friend Collinson advised him to “Run them up to cover an High Arbour of Trellis” (Swem 1957:36). Nevertheless, substantiating evidence was not forthcoming.

Numerous planting holes were discovered during the excavations (see Master plan) but, due to the as yet incomplete study of the artifacts, an association between them, if one existed, has not been ascertained. Also, if there had been a symmetrical plan for the laying out of the Custis gardens, it was not revealed by the locations of these features. Nevertheless, it must be reminded that all of the property has not been examined, so it seems possible that subsequent archaeological work may uncover areas of formal planting.

Similar difficulties were encountered when the fence-line evidence was assembled, for it was found that many features resembling post holes were located, but only the placement of one enclosure was discernible. That fence had been installed around Well B presumably to ensure that no one accidentally tumbled down the shaft while it was being abandoned. However, since this barrier dated later than the Custis occupation and consequently will not figure in the reconstruction planning, additional factors concerning it need not be discussed here.

Walkways were encountered in many areas of the site but all except one were of 19th century date or later. These relatively modern paths, constructed of brick rubble and mortar scraps, apparently derived their materials from the Eastern State Hospital buildings destroyed in the 1880s. The lone 18th-century path was found extending southwest from the earlier kitchen's chimney area (Figure 15). This walkway, made of broken pan tiles, was subsequently cut through by the existing kitchen's brickwork but evidence of the pavement continued southwest of that outbuilding. The stratum which predated the tile path (E.R. 791E) contained a fragment of creamware so, if this was not an intrusive piece, the walk was constructed after ca. 1770. Among the broken roof remains was found the only ogee pan tile yet recovered from Williamsburg excavations whose total length (1 ft. 3 in.) could be determined.



FIGURE 14. Aerial view of the elaborate series of holes discovered between the well complex and the dairy (?) outbuilding. Well B can be seen in the center foreground while the building in the left background is the extant ca. 1810 kitchen. Photo from the west. 64-INH-74

The digging southwest of the dairy (?) outbuilding produced what seemed to have been a stretch of colonial roadway. It was built of rammed brick rubble with an average width of 8 ft. and was pursuing a north/south course. However, since the feature was not followed to its northern limit, any change in the route was left undetected. The fact that evidence of the road was not found west of the dairy (?) would strongly suggest that it had either stopped or turned prior to entering the site's work area, but substantiation or rejection of the theory must be delayed until further archaeological investigations can be undertaken.

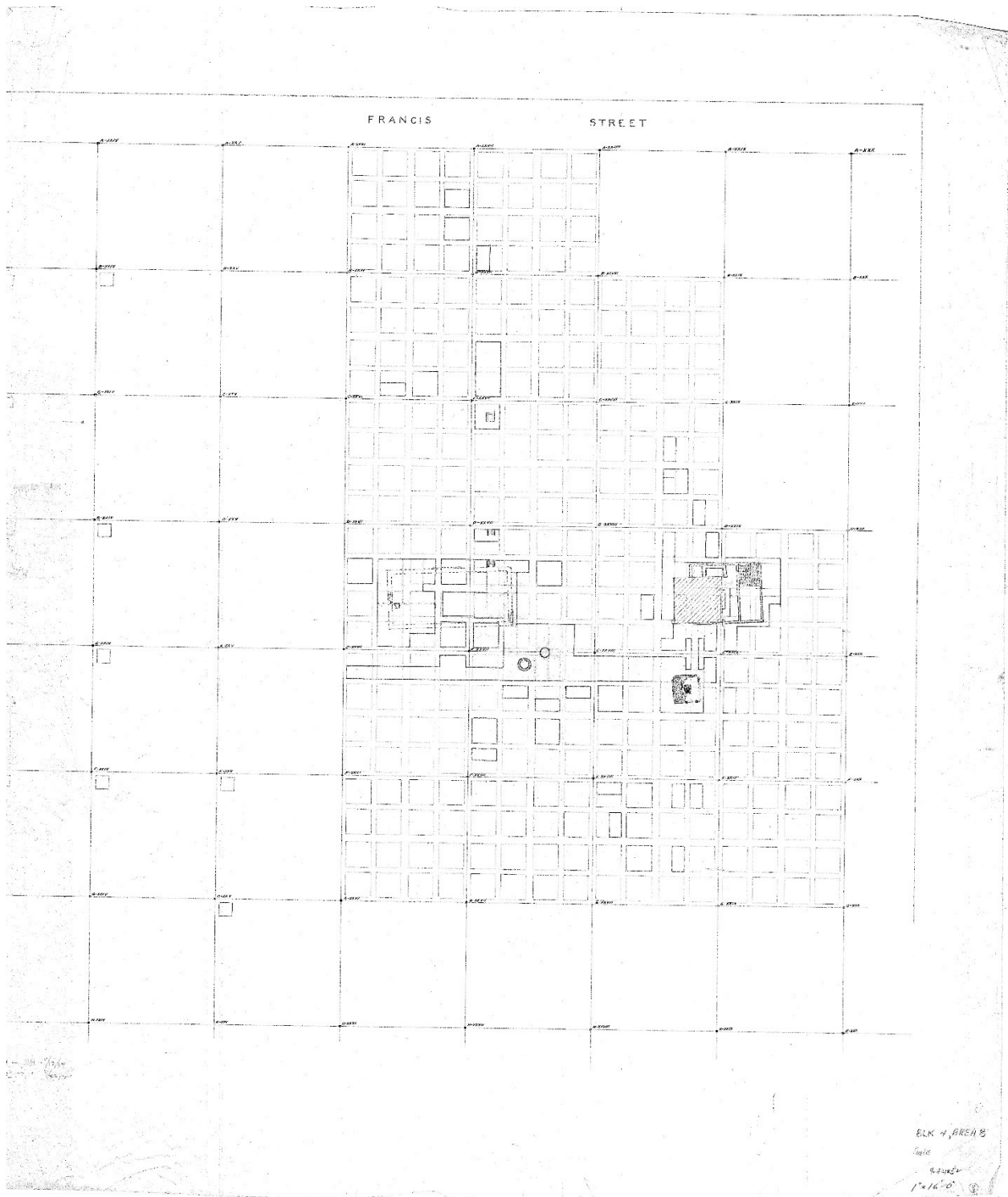


FIGURE 15. Map of planned and completed (darker lines) excavations from the 1968 field season of digging at Custis Square.

The topographic appearance of the site has changed somewhat through the years. Apparently, during John Custis' occupancy of the property, the area southeast of the extant kitchen sloped in a southeasterly direction as it does now (1968), but the 18th-century declivity was much more pronounced. Test digging at the northern edge of the site revealed a draw running more or less east/west beside Franklin Street. This feature, prior to the 1964 work, was totally concealed by 6 ft. 6 in. of 19th century silt and 6 in. of topsoil. It would seem possible that this gully was associated with those sketched on the 1782 Frenchman's Map (Figure 16) but substantiating evidence was not forthcoming. It should also be noted that the supposed terracing of the site was created after the Custis dwelling was destroyed, probably to obtain fill for use elsewhere rather than for ornamental purpose.

The Artifacts (Summary)

The 1964 and 1968 finds, along with others to be recovered during future work on the Custis site, are to be the subject of a subsequent artifactual report as well as figures in later extramural publications. However, since the complete report on the property's finds will not be prepared until the archaeological study of the area is finished, it was decided that a precis of the more important excavated material should be discussed here.

As stated previously, the most productive well yet examined in Williamsburg was found on the Custis property during the 1964 digging season. Most of the significant objects from that abandoned shaft (designated Well B for this report) have already been mentioned; however, other interesting finds include a fife made from a pistol barrel, white salt glaze basket fragments similar to others recovered at the Travis House site, a pair of iron dividers in a good state of preservation, portions of cabinet, rim, and padlocks, and also various types and sizes of iron hinges. In addition, the well fill contained numerous fragments of flower pots, one of which had been embossed with the Hanovarian arms (only part of the unicorn survived) painted black over the gray, and with the supporters painted yellow.

The Custis site as a whole was very rich in artifactual remains and these provided an insight into the 18th century living and working conditions on the property. In addition, some of the finds helped support a previous conjecture that the Post Office site (Block 15, Areas A & B) and the Custis land were somehow related. While excavating a cellar hole on the former lots, many fragments of glass bell jars used by gardeners for nurturing young plants were recovered and, in the report on that season's digging, it was theorized that the debris may have come from the nearby Custis area. The same basement fill produced pieces of an extremely unusual ca. 1740 delftware plate with a moth decoration on the marly. Another fragment from an identical plate was found between the first and second hearths in the Custis kitchen. Thus, a strong case can be made for an artifactual association between the two sites. Additional support was forthcoming in that the same Post Office cellar debris contained no fewer than eight 'BIK' wine bottle seals and the Custis well produced another (Hume 1970). This in itself would not be considered very strong evidence because others were found during the Palace and Capitol excavations. However, if the following conjectures as to the identity of the initials 'BIK' are correct, a definite association with the Custis family will be ascertained.

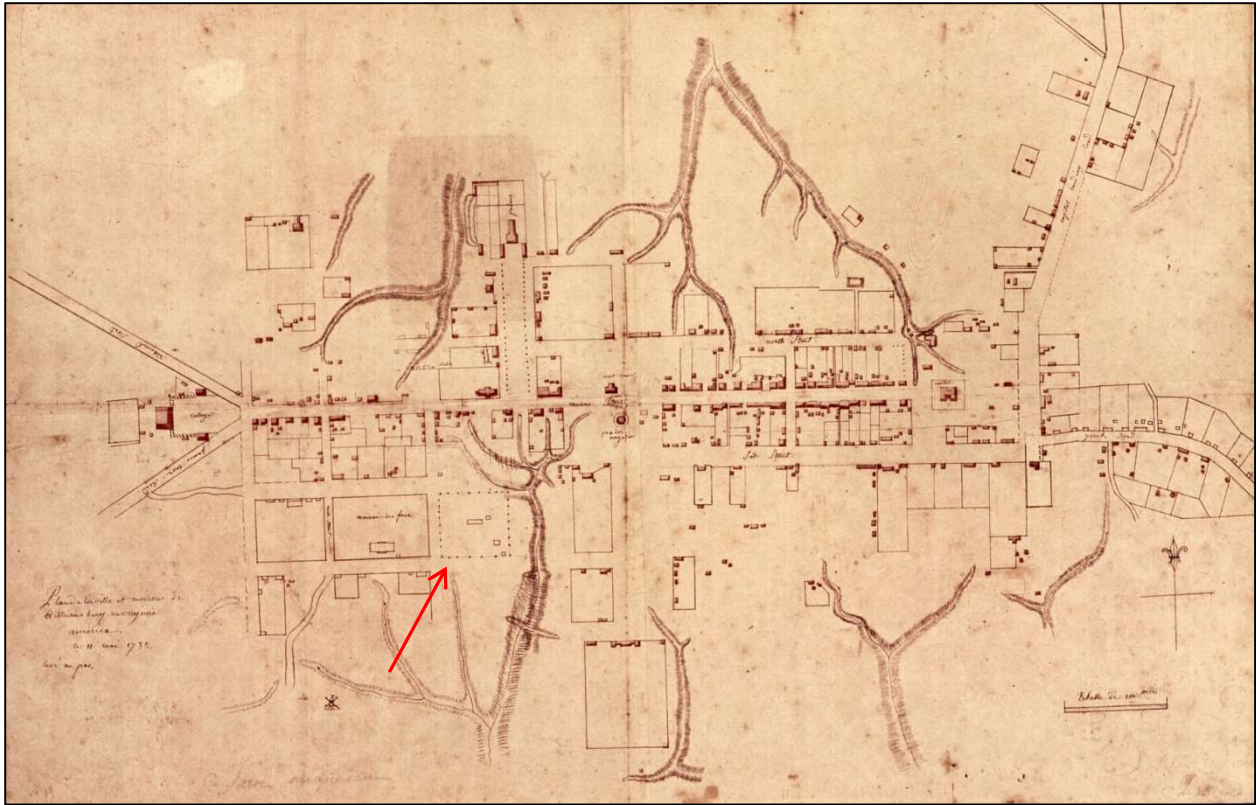


FIGURE 16. Frenchman’s Map created in 1782, with arrow pointing to Custis Square (seen as square with dotted line). Note ravine to the north.

An examination by the Research Department into the extant documentation failed to reveal the identity of anyone with the initials ‘BIK’. A memorandum from Mr. J. R. Fishburne, dated 13 January 1965, stated that the “*Virginia Historical Index* and the *Virginia Gazette Index* were checked in their entirety for any possible combinations that would result in a man with the initials ‘BK’ or ‘BIK’ living in Virginia or associated with the Custis family in the eighteenth century, but this search was to no avail”. However, the fact that these initials flank a merchants mark led the staff members of the Department of Archaeology to pursue the possibility that the seals may have come from a business enterprise owned by three families. These explorations were far more rewarding, but irrefutable evidence to prove or disprove the theories has yet to be discovered.

John Custis’ sister, Margaret, married William Kendall of Northhampton County and had a child whom they named Custis Kendall. John Custis’ father owned a share in a brigantine built by John Bowdoin, and in 1764 Custis Kendall married Bowdoin’s granddaughter. Thus, we have a blood connection between the Custis family and two others with the initials ‘B’ and ‘K’. In the 18th century surnames beginning with the letter I were extremely uncommon, but a prominent family named Ironmonger was living on the Eastern Shore of Virginia at that time. Although this may seem thin reasoning, it remains possible that a colonial trading company by the name of Bowdoin, Ironmonger, Kendall was operative in Virginia. If not, these arguments may prompt future research which might not have otherwise been undertaken.

Conclusions

The Custis dwelling, measuring 48 ft. 9 in. x 23 ft. 3 in., was all but completely robbed of its reusable materials; however, considerable evidence survived to aid in future reconstruction plans. The house had a full basement with chimneys on its east and west ends, and the cellar's flooring was of 9 in. square brick tiles. Extending northward from the building's northeast corner was found a massive brick drain whose maintenance opening was placed some 59 ft. from the main structure.

A three-roomed kitchen outbuilding was discovered beneath and extending eastward from the extant dependency. The remains of a fireplace were found against the north interior wall of the westerly room, and apparently this was the only heat source in the structure. The other two rooms were quite small and may have been utilized for storage. A rear entrance, discernible by the placement of portions of a wooden sill, opened to a short passage flanked by the two smaller rooms. The kitchen had been built sometime after ca. 1730 and was replaced by the extant structure after ca. 1790.

South of the kitchen remains was found the incomplete foundation of what may have been a dairy. The structure measured 10 ft. x 10 ft. 2 in. and contained a central brick and tile-lined pit 2 ft. 9 in. in depth, 3 ft. 9 in. square at the top, and 1 ft. 10 in. square at the bottom. No *terminus post quem* for the construction of the dairy (?) could be determined but the archaeological evidence did indicate that it was no longer in use after ca. 1785.

Two well shafts were investigated on the Custis property—the earliest being filled with uninformative sterile clay while its replacement produced invaluable artifactual remains. The latter (Well B), although abandoned after John Custis' death, yielded cuttings from thirteen types of plants known to have been grown by Custis. Additionally, this shaft's fill provided good examples of late 18th-century ceramics and glassware, as well as, a sizable quantity of earlier material.

The landscape evidence was not as plentiful as one would have liked but it must be reminded that only a portion of the property has been examined, a fact which leaves some hope for determining more about the 18th-century appearance of the area. The remains of what appears to have been a trellis or arbor were uncovered between the well complex and the dairy (?) outbuilding. Portions of a colonial roadway were found as was a path made from broken roof tiles. It should also be pointed out that many holes resembling those typically dug for planting and for installing fence posts were unearthed, but a more complete study of the artifacts must be undertaken prior to ascertain any relationships, if any exist.

Works Cited

Fishburne, J. R.

1965 Personal Communication, 13 January.

Harwood, Humphrey

1779 Account Book, Folio 26-Folio 30. Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, VA.

Hume, Audrey Noël

1970 *United States Postal Service Archaeological Report, Block 15 Building 10B*. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series 1316, Williamsburg, VA.

Stephenson, Mary.

1959 *Custis Square Historical Report, Block 4 Lot 1-8*. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Report Series 1070, Williamsburg, VA.

Swem, E.G.

1957 *Brothers of the Spade: Correspondence of Peter Collinson of London, and of John Custis, of Williamsburg, VA. 1734-1746*. Barre Gazette, Barre, MA.

Zuppan, Josephine

2005 *The Letterbook of John Custis IV of Williamsburg, 1717-1742*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham, MD.

Appendix I

Brick Samples Removed from the Custis Site

Location	Measurements	Color
<u>Main Structure</u>		
East wall of dwelling (E.R. 776C.4B)	7 1/4 in. x 3 3/4 in. x 2 1/2 in. 9 1/4 in. x 4 1/2 in. x 2 1/2 in.	Medium red Orange
West wall of dwelling (E.R. 784F.4B)	9 1/2 in. x 4 1/2 in. x 2 1/2 in. 9 1/4 in. x 4 1/2 in. x 2 5/8 in.	Medium red Medium red
Tiles from cellar floor (28 intact ones salvaged)	8 3/4 in. x 8 3/4 in. x 2 1/4 in. (average size)	Dark orange to red
<u>Kitchen</u>		
East wall foundation (E.R. 934E.4B)	8 1/2 in. x 4 1/4 in. x 2 1/2 in. 8 1/4 in. x 4 in. x 2 1/2 in.	Orange Dark red
South wall foundation (E.R. 934F.4B)	8 3/8 in. x 4 1/8 in. x 2 1/2 in. 8 3/8 in. x 4 1/8 in. x 2 3/8 in.	Orange Medium red
Interior N/S wall (E.R. 934H.4B)	8 1/4 in. x 4 1/4 in. x 2 1/2 in. 8 1/2 in. x 4 1/4 in. x 2 3/8 in.	Dark orange
West room's chimney (E.R. 813H.4B)	8 3/8 in. x 4 3/8 in. x 2 3/8 in. 8 1/4 in. x 4 1/8 in. x 2 1/2 in.	Dark red Medium red
Flooring tiles in N.E. room (E.R. 934J.4B)	8 3/4 in. x 8 3/4 in. x 2 1/4 in. 9 in. x 9 in. x 2 1/4 in.	Orange Dark orange
<u>Dairy(?)</u>		
West wall foundation (E.R. 934A.4B)	8 3/8 in. x 4 in. x 2 1/2 in. 8 1/4 in. x 4 in. x 2 3/8 in.	Dark red Dark red
South wall foundation (E.R. 934C.4B)	8 3/8 in. x 4 in. x 2 3/8 in. 8 1/8 in. x 4 in. x 2 3/8 in.	Dark red Dark red
Structure's central pit (E.R. 934D.4B)	9 1/8 in. x 4 1/4 in. x 2 1/2 in. 8 7/8 in. x 4 1/4 in. x 2 3/8 in.	Burnt orange Burnt orange

Mortar Samples Removed from the Custis Site and Preserved

Location	Composition	Color
<u>Main Structure</u>		
East wall of dwelling (E.R. 776C.4B)	No sample available	
West wall of dwelling (E.R. 784F.4B)	No sample available	
<u>Kitchen</u>		
East wall foundation (E.R. 934E.4B)	Medium composition with large fragments of oyster shell	buff
South wall foundation (E.R. 934F.4B)	Medium composition with some limestone and oyster shell	buff
Interior N/S wall (E.R. 934H.4B)	Generally finely ground with oyster shells and flecks of ash	buff to gray
West room's chimney (E.R. 813H.4B)	No sample available	
<u>Dairy(?)</u>		
West wall foundation (E.R. 934A.4B)	Coarse, containing small fragments of oyster shell and some limestone	buff
South wall foundation (E.R. 934C.4B)	Coarse, containing oyster shell and some charcoal	buff

Appendix II

SUMMARY OF EXCAVATION REGISTER NUMBERS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>Excavation Register (E.R.) Number</u>	<u>Terminus Post Quem</u>	<u>Description of Feature or Stratum</u>
762D	1785	Primary silting and fill on the tunnel's brick floor in the area from 8 ft. to 12 ft. 3 in. north of that feature's broken southern extremity.
762L	1785	Tunnel fill in the area from 19 ft. to 25 ft. 9 in. north of that feature's broken southern extremity.
771C	1805	Back-filling of mortar in the dwelling's robbed north wall trench.
772A	1840	Brown fill in area XXVI D 15 beneath the topsoil and overlaying the brick rubble within the dwelling's east/west robbed wall trenches.
772B	1820	Brick rubble fill in the dwelling's north and south wall trenches sealed by the above stratum of brown soil.
779C	1820	Ash and partially burned twig remains from a bonfire overlaying the robbed floor in the eastern portion of the dwelling.
791E	1770	Finds beneath and predating the construction of the pan-tile path located southwest of the chimney in the 18th century kitchen.
797D	1780	Manhole fill from 6 in. below the surface to the bottom of the feature.
797G	1780	Spreading of the manhole fill south of the feature beneath a washed plaster layer (797F) and overlaying the floor of the drainage tunnel.
797J	1780	Finds from the top silt layer in the area 3 ft. 0" south of the manhole.

797S	1780	Top 6 in. of manhole fill immediately north of that feature.
797T	1780	Tunnel fill from 6 in. below the surface to the bottom (compares with 797D) in the area from 1 ft. 7 in. to 4 ft. north of the manhole.
797V	1780	Tunnel fill from 6 in. below the surface to the bottom (as 797D and 797T) in the area from 5 ft. 5 in. to 6 ft. 6 in. north of the manhole.
802C	1775	Stratum of ashes, coal, slag, brass waste, and domestic refuse, 2 in. to 6 in. in thickness, extending into the robbed N/S party wall in the 18th century kitchen.
806	Modern	Topsoil in Area D XXIX, square 9 comprising part of the southeast corner of the colonial kitchen, along with the structure's north/south party wall and a portion of the southeast room.
806A	1885	Thick layer of brick rubble used as a walkway for the hospital sealed by the topsoil.
806B	1775	Brown loam stratum beneath the above hospital path and overlaying the robbed cross wall of the colonial kitchen (as 802C). Layer contained some ash and slag largely within the kitchen's southeast room.
806C	1765	Light yellow clay mixed with loam and some ash beneath the above brown loam stratum within the kitchen's southeast room.
806E	No finds	Thin mortar spread overlaying the yellow clay floor in the kitchen's southwest room. The mortar apparently had been used to support a tile floor as was the case in the main dwelling's cellar.
806F	Colonial	Dirty yellow clay floor in the colonial kitchen's southwest room beneath the thin mortar spread (E.R. 806E) to a stratum of brown clay.
806G	1730	Brown clay layer beneath the above clay floor to natural in the kitchen's southwest room.

806H	1730	Brown loam with ash and mortar flecks beneath the yellow clay (E.R. 806C) to a sticky yellow clay floor within the kitchen's southeast room.
806J	1730	Hole located near the center of the kitchen's SE room, filled with mixed dark clay and plaster and sealed by a brown loam layer (E.R. 806H).
806K	1790	Curious mound of clay which had been deposited in the southeast corner of the kitchen atop the southeast room's clay floor.
806M	1760	Large hole, in the southeast corner of the kitchen's southeast room, filled with mixed clay and mortar and cutting through that room's yellow clay floor.
806N	1730	Shallow rectangular hole, northwest of the above feature, filled with mixed dark clay and cutting through the yellow clay floor in the kitchen's southeast room.
850	Modern	Topsoil in area XXVII E 2, along with a yellow clay layer beneath it from which no finds were recovered.
850A	1860	Brown fill dipping into the saucer of Well B and immediately overlaying the well bricks.
850B	1810	Top of well fill – dark soil with some ash to a depth 1 ft. 6 in. below the existing rim.
850C	1810	Gray ash stratum beneath the above layer to a depth of 2 ft. 9 in. below the existing rim.
850D	1810	Red and purple ashes beneath the deposit of gray ashes (E.R. 850C) to a depth 3 ft. 3 in. below the existing rim.
850E	1810	Dark brown ashes beneath the above ash deposit to a depth of 3 ft. 9 in. below the existing well rim.
850F	1810	Pale brown ashes beneath the above deposit to an arbitrary point 4 ft. 2 in. below the existing well rim.

850G	1810	Brown ashes with pieces of plaster beneath and probably the same as the above deposit to a depth of 4 ft. 8 in. below the existing well rim.
850H	1810	Reddish ashes resting on a 3 in. thick layer of gray sand to a total depth of 5 ft. 11 in. below the existing well rim.
850J	1810	Oyster shell fill with ashes below the above mentioned gray sand to a depth of 6 ft. 8 in. below the existing well rim.
850K	1810	Mixed ash deposit beneath the above layer to a depth 7 ft. 3 in. below the existing well rim.
850L	1810	Gray ashes beneath the above ash deposit to a depth 7 ft. 7 in. below the existing well rim.
850M	1810	Sandy ashes beneath a layer of clean silt and overlaying a thick deposit of sandy silt. The latter ended at a depth of 17 ft. 3 in.
850N	No datable artifacts	Brick fragment from the well shaft at a depth of 15 ft. below the existing rim.
850P	1810	Sandy silt with bricks and some ashes beginning at a depth of 17 ft. 3 in. and ending only three inches deeper.
850Q	1762	Sandy silt from a depth of 17 ft. 6 in. to 18 ft. 7 in. below the existing well rim.
850R	1770	Sandy silt from a depth of 18 ft. 7 in. to 22 ft. 5 in. below the existing well rim.
850S	1762	Wet sandy silt overlaying a stratum of gray mud and ending at a depth of 25 ft. below the existing well rim.
850T	No datable artifacts	Gray mud deposit beneath the above silt layer to a depth of 26 ft. 7 in. below the existing well rim; no datable artifacts.
850V	1790	Organic silt deposit from 26 ft. 7 in. to 33 ft. below the existing well rim, containing large amounts of plant material.

850W	1770-1780	Layer of brick rubble and bats below organic sludge to a depth of 36 ft. 6 in. below existing well rim, representing destruction of well head.
850X	1750	Layer containing many artifacts relating to John Custis, likely deposited after his death, 3 ft. 7 in. deep.
850Y	1720	Well shaft's primary deposit.
853A	1770	Post hole NW of Well B.
853B	No finds	Post hole south of 853A.
853C	1713	Post hole south of 853B, 7 in. diameter.
853D	1713	Post hole SE of 853C, 7 in. diameter.
853E	No finds	Post hole east of 853D & SE of Well B, 1 ft. 10 in into subsoil.
853H	1780	Mutilated edge of well, being cut northeast.
854M	No datable artifacts	2 in. of ash under yellow clay at bottom of pit in possible Dairy.
856F	1800	Mixed brown loam immediately over north wall of possible dairy.
865D	1720	Immediately beneath brown fill and over post hole no. 13, SE of Well A.
866G	1775	Large stepped down hole no. 6 containing post holes at bottom, top of hole in sandy clay.
866H	No datable artifacts	Fill from hole no. 7 inside 866 G.
867C	1750	Post hole no. 1 in large stepped down hole similar to 866G and 865D.
867D	1770	Hole no. 2 in sandy clay beneath hospital walk.
868D	No datable artifacts	Step of large hole no. 1 similar to 867C, 866G, & 865D, in sandy clay.

868E	1820	Post hole no. 2 in sandy clay, contains remnants of cellar post in place.
872A	1810	Brown fill immediately beneath topsoil and above Well A.
872B	1780	Black fill with shell immediately over Well A and beneath brown fill.
872E	1720	Ash layer immediately below black fill with shell in Well A.
872F	No datable artifacts	Brick rubble layer below ash layer in Well A.
872G	1715	Dirty yellow clay fill beneath rubble in Well A, presumably clay from the excavation of Well B.
872H	No datable artifacts	9 in. layer of grey silt at bottom of Well A, 21 ft. below surface, containing only half a well brick.
921B	No datable artifacts	Dog grave filled with mixed yellow clay.
922C		Large hole filled with dark brown clay and brick rubble, predating early kitchen wall.
923A		Dark brown soil with brick flecks beneath topsoil.
923B		Loose brown sandy soil with oyster shells and ash flecks.
923C		Mixed yellow clay above subsoil.
923E	No finds	Brick bat spread in NW corner, sealed by topsoil.
926D	No finds	Post hole, in NW corner, filled with mixed yellow clay.
929C		Gray shell path or yard layer beneath black soil, 1 1/2 – 2 1/2 in. thick.
929D	No finds	Marl layer with brick flecks.
929H		Dark brown soil beneath sandy stratum with brick pieces.