

## CHAPTER 5

### TRENTON HOUSE

#### A. HISTORY

The lot that later served as the site of the Trenton House was part of a larger property that was held by William Morris by 1736 which included approximately two-thirds of the Dunhams Block (see WJ Deeds R 540, AL 77, AB 39, and AF 236) (Table 5.1). Morris was the son of Anthony Morris of Philadelphia (and the half-brother of the wife of William Trent) and had made his fortune as a merchant in the West Indies. In 1729 Morris, described as a resident of Barbadoes, purchased several properties in Trenton from James Trent (the son and heir of William Trent), including the present Trent House, the Trenton Ferry and the former Trenton Mill at the Broad Street crossing of Assunpink Creek (WJ Deeds D 382 and 386; Morris also subsequently bought additional land in the area from the Trent family and other local landowners) (Trenton Historical Society 1929:49; Toothman 1977:111,133,134,234).

By 1732 Morris was established as a merchant in Trenton, and during the next two decades he was very active in the buying and selling of local property (see WJ Deeds D-D 322, 333, 338, 340, 345, 347, 391, 392 and 402, E 38 and 381, E-F 171 and I-K 9). In his mercantile activities (in which he also involved his eldest son William Jr.) Morris drew both on his Philadelphia connections and his strong contacts in the West Indies. He was also involved in several industrial ventures in the Trenton area, often in conjunction with his half-brother Anthony Morris Jr., a brewer in Philadelphia. Morris remained as a resident of Trenton for almost 40 years before returning to Philadelphia to live out the last few years of his life. While in Trenton he was considered to be a leader in the local Quaker community, holding positions in both local and county government as well as playing a prominent role in the town's business community (Trenton Historical Society 1929:84,392,393; Toothman 1977:234,240,248-250,359,360).

As noted above, by 1736 Morris had gained control of the future Trenton House property, and in that year he participated in the Memorandum of Agreement that resulted in the creation of the 12-foot wide alley that was the forerunner of the present East Hanover Street (WJ Deed R 540). In 1746 Morris offered several of his Trenton holdings as available for purchase, and this property was described as an undeveloped lot that enjoyed 63 feet of frontage along King (North Warren) Street and extended back for a distance of 200 feet along Morris Alley

TABLE 5.1. TRENTON HOUSE  
OWNERSHIP SEQUENCE TO c. 1900

Ownership Tenure	Name of Owner	Acquisition Citation
-1775	William Morris	see text
1775-1778	Israel Morris	NJ Will 1174J
1778-	John Reynolds	WJ Deed AL 77
-	Barnt De Klyn	see text
-1788	William Churchill Houston	see text
1788-1794	William Churchill Houston Estate	NJ Will 1424J
1794-1803	Thomas Yardley	WJ Deed AV 185
1803-1804	Thomas Y. How	NJ Will 2089J
1804-1814	George Abbott	Hunt. Co. Deed 10 6
1814-1816	Benjamin C. White	Hunt. Co. Deed 23 340
1816-1824	Samuel Evans	Hunt. Co. Deed 25 387
1824-1833	John Savage	Hunt. Co. Deed 37 197
1833-1838	Robert F. Stockton & Philemon Dickinson	Hunt. Co. Deed 55 389
1838-1841	Camden & Amboy Railroad & Transportation Co.	Merc. Co. Deed A 339
1841-1846	William Snowden	Merc. Co. Deed C 568
1846-1851	Maria Snowden	NJ Will 358K
1851-1854	William & Maria Snowden Heirs	NJ Inv. 673K
1854-1904	Peter Katzenbach	Merc. Co. Deed 33 174
1904-1906	Peter Katzenbach Estate	see text
1906-	Trenton House Co.	Merc. Co. Deed 286 499

(Pennsylvania Gazette, April 24, 1746 in Nelson 1895:302). Morris also owned the lot that fronted on Queen (North Broad) Street and extended westward to the eastern end of the above lot (see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad Street), giving him full control of the southern side of the 12-foot-wide alley. Morris still owned the King Street lot in 1774 when the latter was described as still being unimproved in a sale advertisement for the property adjacent to the south (see Appendix A - 12-16 North Warren Street) (Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2362, March 30, 1774 in Honeyman 1917:318).

William Morris died in 1775, and in his will (drawn up just prior to his death; he still described himself as a resident of Trenton) he left the two lots on the south side of Morris Alley and most of the remainder of his real property to his son Israel Morris (NJ Will 1174J; this will was not probated in New Jersey until 1782, supporting the claim that the elder Morris was living in Philadelphia at the time of his death). It was probably Israel Morris who, during his relatively brief tenure as the owner of the property, built the structure that later served as the core of the Trenton House. In 1778 he sold the King Street lot (measuring 63 feet by 205 feet) to John Reynolds, a "Paper Maker" who had recently located in Trenton, for 350 pounds (WJ Deed AL 77; Reynolds did not pay cash for this property, but instead he gave Morris a mortgage for the full consideration, promising to pay it off within a year - see Hunt. Co. Mortgage 1 237). The size of this consideration suggests that the former Morris lot had been improved by 1778, almost certainly through the construction of the brick and frame structure that is discussed in greater detail below (Trenton Historical Society 1929:334).

John Reynolds was an experienced paper manufacturer from Germantown, Pennsylvania who appears to have migrated to Trenton in 1778. Reynolds and Stacy Potts, a prominent Trenton businessman, formed a partnership that resulted in the establishment of a paper mill at the mouth of Assunpink Creek. This mill was active by 1778. Reynolds apparently also established a store in the building he acquired from Israel Morris (he may have also used it as a residence). In the fall of 1778 he advertised that he had salt for sale at "the house formerly occupied by the Widow Cummins [evidently a former tenant of Israel Morris], opposite Capt. Joseph Clunn's tavern" (New Jersey Gazette, Vol. 1, No. 46, October 21, 1778 in Lee 1903:493; at this time Clunn was the proprietor of the Alexander the Great Tavern, sited on the west side of King Street opposite Morris Alley). Within three months, however, Francis Witt (later a prominent tavern keeper at the Alexander the Great and at the famous City Tavern on the southwest corner of North Warren and East State Streets) and Jacob Benjamin were apparently renting

the Reynolds lot as they advertised that they were conducting a "store in Trenton, at the house lately occupied by Mr. John Reynolds, opposite to Captain Clunn's" (New Jersey Gazette, Vol. 1, No. 53, December 9, 1778 in Lee 1903:579) (Nelson 1904:50; Trenton Historical Society 1929:319,321,322).

In 1780 Israel Morris reported that Reynolds had paid off the 350 pound mortgage he owed on the property in 1779 and had sold the property to Barnt De Klyn (see Hunt. Co. Mortgage 1 237; Figure 4.1). Reynolds appears to have ended his short term of residency in Trenton in 1780. Barnt De Klyn, a descendant of a wealthy Huguenot family from Boston, migrated to Trenton during the American Revolution and initially established himself as a dry goods merchant there. He eventually came to own a large quantity of real estate in the Trenton area and announced his intention to retire from his mercantile pursuits in 1786. It was at about this time that he completed the mansion in the southern part of Trenton known as Bow Hill and established this as his place of residence (Nelson 1904:50; Schuyler 1926:96; Wilson 1988:92,101).

By 1786 the lot at the southeast corner of King Street and Morris Alley had been acquired by William Churchill Houston (see Hunt. Co. Deed 1 137 and Trenton Township Tax Ratables 1786; this lot now extended 235 feet along the alley as 30 feet had been appended to its eastern end sometime prior to 1783 - see Hunt. Co. Deed 1 42). Houston (born in 1746) was a member of a wealthy Quaker family in South Carolina who came north to attend the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). After graduating in 1768 he was granted a position as a professor at the college in 1771. He began an involvement in governmental matters with his service as the Deputy Secretary of the Continental Congress in 1775 and 1776. He then served as a member of the New Jersey Assembly between 1777 and 1779, and represented his adopted state in the Continental Congress from 1779 to 1781 (and again in 1784) (Cooley and Cooley 1883:124-127; Woodward and Hageman 1883:554; Nelson 1904:288,289; Trenton Historical Society 1929:605,606).

Houston was admitted to the bar in 1781 and was immediately appointed as the Clerk of the New Jersey Supreme Court (a position he held until his death). In 1783 he left the College of New Jersey and established his permanent home in Trenton (he had lived there previously while engaged in governmental business). It is possible that Houston purchased the former De Klyn property at this time, and it appears fairly certain that the structure on this lot served as his place of residence during the remainder of his life. Houston enjoyed a successful private practice as a lawyer and remained active in state and national government while in Trenton, and in 1787 he was one of the state's delegates to the Constitutional Convention. He is said to have made a

significant contribution to the deliberations of this body despite a serious case of tuberculosis that ultimately kept him from signing the completed document. Houston succumbed to his illness in 1788, and his will (drawn up earlier in that year) left his real property to his wife Jane Smith Houston and their five children (NJ Will 1424J; he also authorized his executors to sell off his property for the benefit of his six heirs) (Cooley and Cooley 1883:124-127; Woodward and Hageman 1883:554; Nelson 1904:289,290; Trenton Historical Society 1929:606).

In 1794 the executors of William Churchill Houston sold the "house" and lot at the corner of King Street and Morris Alley (measuring 62 feet by 235 feet, its final configuration) to Thomas Yardley of Trenton for 1,050 pounds (WJ Deed A-V 185; see also NJ Account 1424J, which also notes the sale of the "House" to Yardley). By 1796 the building on King was once again being used for commercial purposes as it was referred to in a description for the property adjacent to the south as a "shop" occupied by Sylvester Doyle (see Hunt. Co. Mortgage 2 162) (see below, Chapter 6A). Doyle was later the owner of several properties in Trenton (including a lot within the Dunhams Block on East State Street which he acquired in 1798; see Appendix A - 12-14 East State Street) and it seems likely that his term as a tenant on the Yardley holding was relatively brief.

Yardley was living in the former Houston house when he drew up his last will and testament in 1800 (Figure 4.5). He ordered that the "House" and the associated lot that he had acquired from the Houston estate was to pass to his "Adopted Child" Thomas Yardley How (NJ Will 2089J; Yardley's wife was the former Mary How). The detailed inventory of Yardley's movable estate compiled after his death in 1803 reflected a dwelling that included a two-story center-hall structure with four rooms on each floor (the brick building at the corner of North Warren and East Hanover Streets) and an attached one-and-a-half story kitchen wing (said to have been a frame structure appended to the south side of the brick main block; see NJ Inventory 2089J). In 1804 How, who was described as a resident of Brownsville, New York (and a former resident of Trenton), sold his newly inherited holding to George Abbott of Philadelphia for \$4,000 (Hunt. Co. Deed 10 6).

Abbott relocated to Trenton shortly after this purchase and operated a dry goods store within the first floor of the former Houston house while using the building's upper floors as his residence. In 1814 Abbott sold this combined commercial/residential property to Benjamin C. White (both men were listed as merchants living in Trenton) for \$10,000 (Hunt. Co. Deed 23 340). White financed his new acquisition, which was described as including a "Brick messuage or dwelling house" with a \$7,000 mortgage (Hunt. Co. Mortgage 6 25), and in the following year he took out a

second mortgage of \$2,000 on the same property (Hunt. Co. Mortgage 6 160). In 1816 both of these mortgages were paid off as White, now given as a merchant living in Philadelphia, sold the brick house and store to Samuel Evans, a merchant of Trenton, for \$10,100 (Hunt. Co. Deed 25 387). Evans found it necessary to take out three mortgages on the property (including one given by White for \$6,000; Hunt. Co. Mortgage 6 232), providing him with \$11,900 to finance the purchase and, perhaps, some additional improvements (see Hunt. Co. Mortgages 6 238 & 255) (Trenton Banking Company 1907:72; Trenton Historical Society 1929:334,558).

Samuel Evans was living within the former Houston house shortly after he acquired it (see Hunt. Co. Mortgage 6 255) and he appears to have used the building as both a residence and a store for nearly a decade. Evans (1792-1881) was a lifetime resident of Trenton who was later active in city government. Between 1840 and 1841 he also served as the President of the Mechanics and Manufacturers Bank (see Appendix A - 6 North Warren Street). In 1824 Evans sold the "brick messuage or tenement" and its associated lot on North Warren Street to John Savage of Philadelphia for \$6,000 (Hunt. Co. Deed 37 197; all of the former Evans mortgages were paid off at this time). Savage immediately rented the property to Joseph M. Bispham, and by May of that same year the latter had established a hotel known as the Trenton House within the former Houston house (True American, May 8, 1824). The new hotel hosted the first of its many noteworthy visitors when the Marquis de Lafayette stayed there during his visit to Trenton in September of 1824 (Godfrey 1919:121; Trenton Historical Society 1929:213, 215,237,333; Sunday Times Advertiser, February 22, 1942).

Bispham had previously been the proprietor of the City Hotel (located on the west side of North Warren Street opposite Perry Street) before setting up the new Trenton House in 1824. He continued at the new hotel until 1829, at which point he left Trenton for West Point, New York. After a short stay in this latter location he moved to New York City, where he managed a hotel until his death in 1832. Surrogates records filed in Hunterdon County in 1833 included an accounting of the deceased's debts, which included \$7,000 owed to Savage and other monies owed to Robert F. Stockton and the Trenton Banking Company (see below; Hunt. Co. Surrogates Docket 574.5). Bispham was succeeded at the Trenton House by H.G. Herbert, who remained until 1831, when he in turn was replaced by Joseph Thomas (Trenton Banking Company 1907:79; Trenton Historical Society 1929:323,333-4; Sunday Times Advertiser, February 22, 1942).

In 1833 Savage sold the hotel property to Robert F. Stockton of Princeton and Philemon Dickinson of Trenton for \$7,325 (Hunt. Co. Deed 55 389). The new owners were both important figures within the Camden and Amboy Railroad and Transportation Company and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Company, which had been chartered in 1830, merged in 1831, and were commonly referred to as the Joint Companies. Stockton's position as the first President of the canal company made him one of the dominant forces in the affairs of the Joint Companies, while Dickinson was the President of the Trenton Banking Company (1832-1881), a major investor in both the railroad and the canal (Dickinson was also the Governor of New Jersey in 1836 and 1837). Both of these new transportation corridors ultimately passed through Trenton, and it seems likely that the purchase of the Trenton House (and the adjacent property fronting on Greene Street; see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad Street) was a speculative venture, reflecting the purchaser's confidence that the presence of the railroad and the canal would promote Trenton's development and increase the value of a commercial property sited within the town's central business district (Trenton Historical Society 1929:284,285,296,564; Lane 1939).

Stockton and Dickinson also gave Savage an \$8,000 mortgage as part of the purchase price for the "messuage tenement or Brick tavern house, stables", and lot on North Warren Street (Hunt. Co. Mortgage 14 428). In 1835 they took out a second mortgage on the "Brick house, Inn, or Tavern Called the Trenton House" and the associated "Stables" that was worth \$3,400 (Hunt. Co. Mortgage 16 30; these mortgages were not paid off until 1864 and 1863, respectively). Joseph Thomas continued as the proprietor of the hotel for only a year, being replaced in 1834 by William Snowden. Snowden gained a reputation as one of Trenton's leading tavern keepers during the mid-19th century and he remained as the proprietor of the Trenton House until his death in 1846 (Trenton Historical Society 1929:334,651).

In 1834 the Joint Companies purchased the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad (chartered in Pennsylvania in 1832 and completed to Morrisville in 1834) and the Trenton Bridge Company (chartered in 1803 and completed in 1806) in an effort to establish a more direct rail connection between Philadelphia and New York. In 1836 the Philadelphia and Trenton line was extended across the bridge to the canal just to the south of Assunpink Creek where it was to connect with the new rail line that the Joint Companies planned to build between Bordentown and New Brunswick (this line was completed in 1838). In 1837 a spur line was completed running west from the canal in Merchant Street, north in Stockton Street, and west in East Hanover Street to a

terminus on the property owned by Stockton and Dickinson at the corner of Greene and East Hanover Streets, the site of the Joint Companies' Trenton office (see Appendix A - 17-21 North Broad Street). A station was established next to the office and horse-drawn rail service to both the canal and the main line to Philadelphia in Morrisville was offered along this spur (Trenton Historical Society 1929:286-288).

With the completion of this rail line (the first horse railroad, or trolley, to operate within Trenton), the Trenton House and the adjacent office and station property were purchased by the Joint Companies (through their rail subsidiary, the Camden and Amboy Railroad and Transportation Company) from Stockton and Dickinson for \$20,000 (Merc. Co. Deed A 339). It seems likely that with the completion of these new rail facilities the leadership of the Joint Companies felt that full corporate control of these valuable properties was advisable. By this time the Trenton House was well-established as an unofficial center of state governmental affairs, a role it continued to fill for many decades. The Joint Companies were a dominant influence in New Jersey politics for much of the 19th century, and the Trenton House served for many years as the primary headquarters for those identified with these interests (Trenton Historical Society 1929:288,334; Sunday Times Advertiser, February 22, 1942; Trenton Times, February 12, 1953).

On January 1, 1839, with the opening of the new line connecting Trenton with Bordentown and New Brunswick (and thereby providing, through connections with other lines, a direct route between Philadelphia and New York), the East Hanover Street spur line was abandoned. This abandonment and a shift in the focus of local transportation activity to the new railroad station on East State Street much reduced the Companies' interest in their properties in the center of town (Figure 4.10). In 1841 the Trenton House property was sold to William Snowden, the long-time proprietor, for \$10,000 (Merc. Co. Deed C 568). Snowden partially financed this purchase by mortgaging the property (described as the "Brick House Inn or tavern called the 'Trenton House'") for \$2,500 (Merc. Co. Mortgage A 401; Snowden paid off this mortgage in 1845) (Trenton Historical Society 1929:288,334).

William Snowden drew up his will just before his death in 1846, leaving all his real property to his widow Maria (NJ Will 358K). The inventory of his personal property indicated that Snowden and his wife were inhabiting the residential portions of the building in addition to managing its hotel-related functions (NJ Inventory 358K). Maria Snowden continued to reside within and operate the hotel after her husband's death. Peter Katzenbach had been employed as the Snowdens' manager since 1843, and he continued in this position after the death of William Snowden. Katzenbach was the son of Henry Katzenbach, a



German immigrant who had come to Trenton in 1832 and established a hotel on South Broad Street. Peter Katzenbach (1820-1904) married the former Elizabeth Imlay in 1843 and in the following year he named his oldest son (Frank Snowden Katzenbach, later a prominent merchant in Trenton) for his new employers. Katzenbach's arrival at the Trenton House in 1843 was the beginning of an association with the property that lasted for more than six decades (Lee 1907:235; Trenton Historical Society 1929:334,925).

The widow Snowden's "Trenton House" was depicted at the corner of North Warren and East Hanover Streets on the map of the City of Trenton published in 1849 (Figure 4.11). The lot's North Warren Street frontage was, as expected, fully occupied by structural improvements (the two-story brick main block and the attached frame kitchen wing built during the 1770s were sited on this part of the lot). Additional construction had taken place to the rear of the original building, however, as a long, narrow addition was shown extending eastward along the south side of East Hanover Street. This addition (which was probably only one or two stories in height; see below) and the large stable shown to the rear of the main building were probably built between 1833 and 1841 during the ownership tenures of Richard F. Stockton and Philemon Dickinson and the Camden and Amboy division of the Joint Companies.

Maria Snowden died intestate in 1851, and the extensive inventory of her movable estate provided a detailed reflection of the physical appearance of the Trenton House property at that time. The hotel-related use of the building was evidenced by the presence of ten "Chamber" rooms (bedrooms), a "Bar Room", "Dining Room", a sitting room and a lobby. The continuing residential use of the property was apparent as a "Family Room" (a family living area) and a "Family Chamber" (bedroom) were also noted. The reference to a "Kitchen Chamber" (also a bedroom) over the "Kitchen" suggested that the one-and-a-half story frame kitchen wing in the southwestern corner of the lot was still standing, while the "Old House Cellar" and the "Old Garret" may have been related to the attached two-story brick main block. The enumeration of items found within the "Garret new part" indicated that some of the rooms listed above (probably the "Chamber" rooms) were located within a building of more recent construction (presumably the rear addition discussed above). There were also several outbuildings within the "Yard" of the Trenton House, notably the large "Stable & Carriage House" noted above, the "Ice House", and the "Wash House". It seems likely that these last two secondary structures were built at the same time as the rear addition and the stable (NJ Inventory 673K).

In 1853 the Mercer County Orphan's Court ordered that the former Snowden property be made available in a public sale for the benefit of the eight heirs of William and Maria Snowden. Advertisements announcing this sale described the property as the "Brick Tavern House, Stables, Sheds, and Lot of Land called the Trenton House" and proclaimed that "This stand is one of the most desirable in the state, and the reputation of the House has extended throughout the country" (State Gazette, November 18, 1853). In the following year Peter Katzenbach, who had continued to manage the property for the estate after the death of Maria Snowden, purchased the property for \$8,525 from the commissioners appointed by the court to complete the ordered sale (Merc. Co. Deed 33 174) (Trenton Historical Society 1929:334).

Peter Katzenbach served as the owner/proprietor of the Trenton House until his death in 1904 (he also resided within the building for about a decade before moving to a separate dwelling further north on North Warren Street; see Trenton City Directories 1854-1865/66). It was during Katzenbach's lengthy tenure that the Trenton House reached the peak of its reputation and influence. He greatly enlarged the building and improved the services offered therein, and for a time it was the largest and most popular hotel in Trenton and one of the leading establishments on the East Coast (Plate 5.1). The Trenton House also continued as an important unofficial focus of governmental activities for much of the second half of the 19th century as Room 100 (the second-floor front room in the structure that was erected in place of the original kitchen wing [see below]) gained a reputation as a place of decision-making that rivaled any room within Trenton's many public buildings. Katzenbach and his hotel also played host to many of the day's leading figures, including Abraham Lincoln, William Howard Taft, William Jennings Bryan, Horace Greeley and George B. McClellan (Woodward and Hageman 1883:709; Trenton Board of Trade 1889:69; Lee 1895:281; Lee 1907:235; Trenton Historical Society 1929:334,666; Sunday Times Advertiser, February 22, 1942; Trenton Times, February 12, 1953).

Shortly after his acquisition of the property Katzenbach financed the first of what was to be several major expansions of the hotel when he added about 50 new rooms during the mid-1850s. This first Katzenbach expansion involved the addition of two stories to the two-story main block of the former Houston house and the replacement of the former kitchen wing and the original rear hotel addition with two four-story brick additions. The completion of this construction effort brought the North Warren Street frontage and the western half of the East Hanover Street frontage to its final structural configuration (Figure 4.12). In 1854 Katzenbach also sold off the far eastern end of his property to William E. Hunt (the son-in-law of Dr. James T. Clarke,

the owner of two properties within the Dunhams Block on Greene Street; see Appendix A - 1-5 & 7-15 North Broad Street), but he reacquired this property from Hunt's estate in 1864 (Merc. Co. Deeds 29 243 & 58 532) (Cooley and Cooley 1883:143; Schuyler 1926:209; Trenton Historical Society 1929:334; Sunday Times Advertiser, February 22, 1942).

The second Katzenbach expansion is said to have been completed in 1869 following the erection of a large structure with 75 rooms on the eastern third of the lot (including the section recently reacquired from the Hunt estate). This addition, which was designed by H.E. Finch, a Trenton architect, was originally unattached to the remainder of the hotel as a gap of 25 feet was left between the new building and the rear of the existing structure to allow access to and from the large stable in the hotel's yard. This unusual arrangement was depicted on the map of Trenton published in 1870, with the main building shown extending eastward from North Warren Street along East Hanover Street to the narrow "alley" running to the stable, and the newly completed addition beyond (Figure 4.13).

Katzenbach's third and final building project followed quickly on the heels of the second as the two separate sections of the hotel were united in 1871 through the demolition of the stable and the construction of a new four-story structure within the former stable alley. The completion of this infilling structure brought the East Hanover Street frontage to its final appearance (Figures 4.14, 4.15, 5.1 and 5.2) (Sunday Times Advertiser, May 1, 1921 and September 21, 1922; Trenton Historical Society 1929:334; Sunday Times Advertiser, February 22, 1942).

During the latter decades of the 19th century the bulk of the hotel's various entertainments were housed on the first floor, with the upper floors being devoted chiefly to sleeping chambers (Figures 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18). The main entrance to the Trenton House was located on North Warren Street within the former Houston house, with the bar room to the south (in the building that had replaced the former kitchen wing) and the large dining room to the north (occupying part of the Houston house section and the large addition to the rear of the old house) (Plate 5.1). The kitchen was sited to the rear of the dining room within the infilled portion of the East Hanover Street frontage, while the billiards room (with a laundry later built within the basement) and a small barber shop were located within the large rear addition occupying the eastern end of the lot. The open courtyard in the center of the lot was ringed by a one-story frame porch (Lee 1907:235; Trenton Historical Society 1929:334,335).

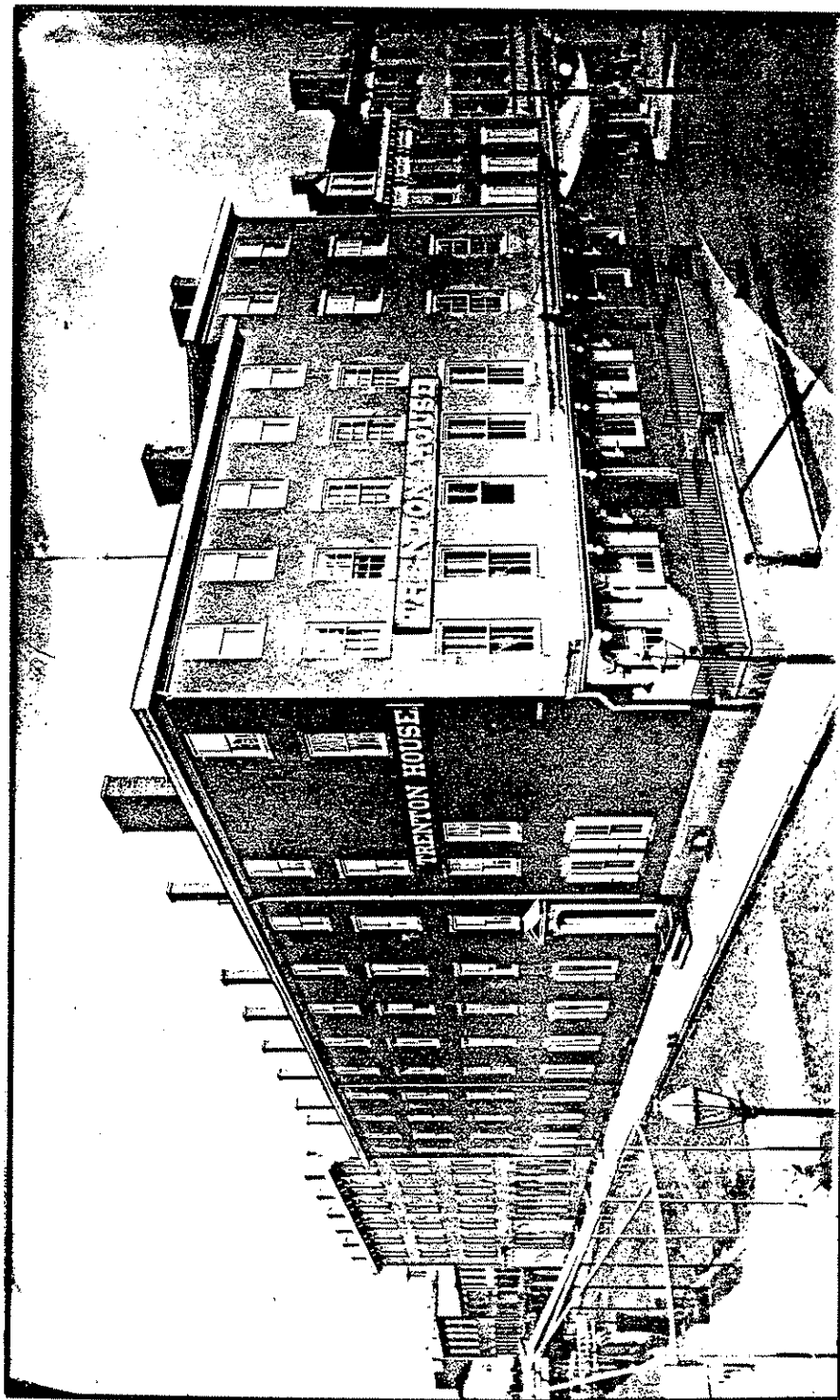


Plate 5.1 Trenton House, c.1880. Source: Trenton Free Public Library.

In 1897 Frederick F. Katzenbach was first listed as the manager of the Trenton House after he returned from working for a number of years as a merchant in New York City to assist his elderly father in the management of the hotel (Trenton City Directories 1876/77-1897). Peter Katzenbach died in 1904, and the Trenton House remained under the ownership of his estate and the proprietorship of Frederick F. Katzenbach for two years after his death (Figure 4.19). In 1906 Katzenbach's heirs sold the hotel property to the newly incorporated Trenton House Company, a group of investors that included several members of the locally prominent Kuser family (Merc. Co. Deed 286 499). The younger Katzenbach stayed on briefly as the manager of the property, but by 1908 the association between the Katzenbach family and the Trenton House, which had lasted for more than three quarters of a century, had come to an end. The property continued to function much as it had in the past through the First World War, with the major change involving the removal of the billiard room and the development of a restaurant in its place (Figure 4.20). By 1910 Benedict C. Kuser, one of the original members of the Trenton House Company, had emerged as the proprietor of the property (with the assistance of what was to be the first of many managers), and in later years he also became the dominant figure in the management of the nearby American House (Trenton City Directories 1907-1910) (Lee 1907:235; Trenton Historical Society 1929:334,335,926,1032; Sunday Times Advertiser, February 22, 1942 and April 29, 1956).

Physical alterations were made to the Trenton House during the 1920s, as the first elements of a decline that eventually culminated in the closing of the hotel began to take hold (Figure 4.21; see also Nirenstein n.d.; Franklin Survey Co. 1930). By the mid-1920s much of the first-floor space that had formerly been used for entertainment purposes had been converted to serve as commercial rental property. The hotel's bar room, kitchen and restaurant had all been shut down by this time, and space for at least seven shops had been created. It was also during this period that the former courtyard was enclosed within a single-story structure that provided support space for those businesses fronting on North Warren and East Hanover Streets within the older portions of the hotel. In 1925 a proposal was forwarded to tear down the old building and replace it with a modern 11-story structure to be called the Hotel Trenton, but this was never acted upon. By 1930 the property's historic name had been abandoned and it was being referred to as the Milner Hotel (Sunday Times Advertiser, November 23, 1958).

In 1941 the Trenton House Company sold the deteriorating hotel to the firm of Warren, Inc. (Merc. Co. Deed 818 203). Henry Kaplan, the president of this firm, immediately announced plans that called for the total reconstruction of the building's first floor to create a new entry and bar and additional retail space that could accommodate 17 stores. This project was partially realized and resulted in the relocation of the hotel's entrance to East Hanover Street and the development of a total of 14 commercial rental properties (Figure 4.22 and 4.23). In 1950 the ownership of the hotel passed from Warren, Inc. to Kaplan and his partner, Albert Kahn (Merc. Co. Deed 1130 156; the Kaplan and Kahn families continued their ownership of the property until 1979), and in 1952 it was renamed the Earle Hotel. The much-deteriorated hotel was closed by the City of Trenton in 1962 (Trenton Times, March 30, 1941, February 12, 1953, and August 20, 1962).

## B. Archaeology

The Phase 1 investigations of the Trenton House property identified a sizable 30 by 90-foot area within the former hotel yard that appeared to be without basements (Figure 1.4). Two small test trenches excavated through the floors of the early 20th-century structures in this area confirmed the presence of archaeological strata, producing evidence of structural features and approximately a four-foot build-up of cultural deposits. The recovery of 18th-century artifacts from these trenches further confirmed the archaeological potential of this zone.

The Phase 2 investigations, during which the bulk of the fieldwork was performed, involved excavation of three large excavation units (described in detail below) covering an area of roughly 385 sq.ft (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Two of these units (Excavation Units 1 and 2) produced an especially rich archaeological sequence. The third unit proved somewhat less revealing, the earlier deposits having been more drastically affected by the early 20th-century modifications. The Phase 3 investigations involved the excavation of four minor extensions to the two more productive units. These extensions covered an additional 100 sq.ft. or so of the 30 by 90-foot zone within the hotel yard.

During the course of six months of fieldwork within the Trenton House yard the archaeological team became extremely familiar with the buildings on the property and, as part of the work effort, measured plans were prepared for the basement and first floor levels of the hotel (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). These drawings emerged as an essential part of our understanding the history and physical development of the property and also proved of critical assistance in the analysis of the archaeological data (see below, Chapter 5C).