

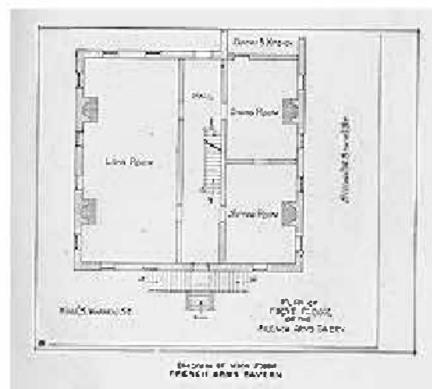


On This Site in 1784

French Arms Tavern

SW corner of State and Warren

So many significant events happened here that historians refer to it as “The Corner Historic.” The large tavern that stood here changed names several times, but in 1784 it was called The French Arms Inn. The stuccoed, two-story building was erected in the 1730s as the private residence of wealthy Trentonian John Dagworthy. Dagworthy’s lot was virtually the center of the small town of Trenton; it encompassed 66 feet on Warren Street and swept back 230 feet on State Street. His house measured 43 feet deep by 45 feet wide. The entrance was reached by two sets of stone steps, extending both north and south, that lead to a broad landing. In the rear of the building was an adjoining kitchen, and even further back, at the far end of the lot, was a coach house and stables.



The house was sold after Dagworthy’s death in 1756 and converted into a tavern. An additional story with a gabled roof was added, and two rooms on the first floor were converted into one room, 20 feet wide by 43 feet deep, and known ever after as the Long Room. A barroom was established in the basement, which was entered by a door under the stone steps to the main entrance.

In 1783 the New Jersey Legislature authorized funds to transform the French Arms into a reasonable facsimile of a national capital. The Long Room received new wallpaper, new carpets, and new curtains, and the sooty ceiling was painted white. A platform was erected between the two great fireplaces on the South side of the room, and 48 new Windsor chairs and 13 new tables with green tablecloths were brought in. On November 1, 1784, when the Continental Congressmen arrived, the French Arms was ready to host yet another event that would go down in history.