

The House that “Jack” (Pidcock) Built

As understood by Catharine Pidcock Thomas
Based on Historic Structures Report of Thompson Neely House
commissioned by Washington’s Crossing Historical Park

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Knitting The Architectural and Historical Analysis Together

The Early Pidcocks/Pitcocks

This section contains conclusions based on Y-chromosome DNA analysis, military payment, court and church records.

Sometime prior to 1680 John Pidcock established a trading post on the west bank of the Delaware just north of Bowman’s hill¹. John Pidcock was literate and could sign his name – legal documents never mention him making a mark. While not personally wealthy, he enjoyed close relationships with two wealthy, landed gentlemen: Thomas Bowman of Burlington and Justice of the Peace, Gilbert Wheeler of Falls. Thomas Bowman died at Pidcock’s home. Pidcock was co-executor of Gilbert Wheeler’s estate.

The next generation contained William², John, Benjamin, Emanuel³ and Robert Pidcock. They covered a wide range: from lawyer to laborer, from literate to Benjamin making his

¹ 1680 NJ map found in “New Jersey as a Colony and as a State by Francis Bazley Lee”, 1902.

² William may be descended from William Piddock who departed Burlington, NJ bound for London on the “Friends Adventure”, Ed. Blades, Cmdr on April 25, 1679. List of Immigrants to America 1600-1700, Baltimore Gen. Pub. Co., 1968. The History of the Pidcock Family and Association is in error on the direction of William Pidcock’s passage. Both Pidcocks and Pitcocks who trace their ancestry to early 18th

mark, from Benjamin being one of four founders of Thompson Memorial Presbyterian Church on the original Pidcock property to lawbreaking for assault, adultery and horse theft. Some lines moved to western PA (Emanuel's), had only daughters (Benjamin's), died as young men, were undistinguished, or moved totally out of the area (Robert's). Y-chromosome DNA analysis of the male descendants of these men reveal 3 distinct paternal lineages, with only William's matching the Derbyshire Pidcocks. Pidcock is an unusual name, so it is surprising to learn these early 18th century NJ and PA Pidcocks are not related to each other. Somewhere in John's paternal ancestry there may be a case of undocumented conception (adoption or infidelity) of which John & William were unaware.

No Pidcock inventories, wills or family Bibles survive showing relationships amongst the first three generations of Pidcocks. Some inferences can be made by occupation, education or behavior. For example, Jonathan Pidcock was a Lambertville, NJ miller who sold flour to Gen. Washington's troops (military records) – he had to have learned his trade somewhere – learning from Simpson at Pidcock's complex would be logical. The Pidcock/Pitcock DNA study will, in time, be able to cluster living male Pidcocks /Pitcocks /Pidcoes. We hope to deduce the early relationships by working backward from family oral tradition and to confirm it with DNA testing.

Land Occupancy & Ownership

This section contains conclusions based on written records (maps, property documents, court proceedings, tax records, inventories and wills).

John Pidcock's complex was established before 1680 on the west bank of the Delaware (1680 NJ map). He therefore arrived and established squatters' rights by settling and improving his site before the land was given to William Penn. Although on paper, the land was initially sold to others, he was taxed on it in 1693. William Penn acknowledged his right to the land in 1701 and authorized a resurvey by Phineas Pemberton.

John Pidcock had periodic cash flow problems resulting in a number of court cases involving debts he owed or his attempts to collect payments. To get the capital to expand and improve the Pidcock complex, he indentured himself to Gilbert Wheeler (~1684-6) and at least considered mortgaging his land on more than one occasion.

The Pidcock complex is marked on a 1680 map as being of interest to travelers. He had a trading post facilitating trade between Native Americans and Europeans (court records). He served alcohol (court records). He had a mine on the property (deeds). There were "buildings, gardens, ways, waters, watercourses" (deeds). He or his son eventually added grist and saw mills (Mill lease in Simpson inventory).

century Pennsylvania or Burlington NJ and have Y chromosome DNA matching the Derbyshire Pidcocks may descend from this line.

³ The Pidcoe line descends from Emanuel.

Quaker Meeting records show John & Hannah Simpson lived in the vicinity from 1740-47. According to the inventory at his death, John Simpson leased the mills and he and his family were living there when he died in 1747.

In 1748 Robert Thompson, a journeyman miller working for John Simpson, married widow Hannah Simpson and assumed control of the mill and John Simpson's assets. The Thompsons raised their daughter and four surviving Simpson children in the wooden cabin. Pidcocks remained in the vicinity (census records).

This tract was repossessed by Lt. Governor Hamilton, the representative of William Penns' sons and surface rights were sold to Robert Thompson in a complex legal arrangement in 1753 (deeds & Watson resurvey). John Pidcock II protested, based on the Pemberton survey, to no avail.

After gaining clear title to the property, Robert Thompson built the west wing of the current stone house in 1757, tying it to the pre-existing wooden structure.



In 1766, Robert and Hannah Thompson's only daughter, Elizabeth, married Robert Thompson's apprentice, miller William Neely. Robert Thompson replaced the single story wooden structure with a two story stone structure for the Neely family. The families lived separately, side-by-side. Hence the house was known as the Thompson-Neely House.

In 1788, Robert Thompson again expanded the house, adding the east wing. The Neelys moved into the east wing exclusively and the Thompson dwelling expanded to include the central section. Extensive and expensive changes were made to make the middle section more convenient.

The land and house passed down in the Neely family until they lost it in bankruptcy to the High family in 1895.

House Construction

The stone house that stands today is constructed of local materials: field stone and mortar containing sand that could have come from Pidcock's creek. Logs for an early cabin could have been cleared from the site. The site has easy Delaware river access for transport of other materials.

The Historic Structures Report (HSR) labels the house by section: "A", "B" & "C"			
<p>WEST (Bowman's Hill side)</p>		<p>EAST (River side)</p>	
<p>A</p>		<p>B</p>	<p>C</p>
<p>FRONT faces SOUTH</p>			
<p>EAST (River side)</p>		<p>WEST (Bowman's Hill side)</p>	
<p>C</p>		<p>B</p>	<p>A</p>
<p>BACK faces NORTH</p>			

House as Envisioned in Historic Structures Report

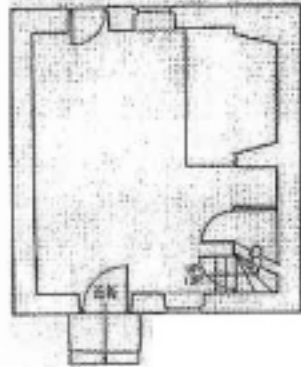


Plate 2a: Reconstructed first floor plan of original Unit B structure.



Plate 2b: Reconstructed isometric drawing of original Unit B structure.

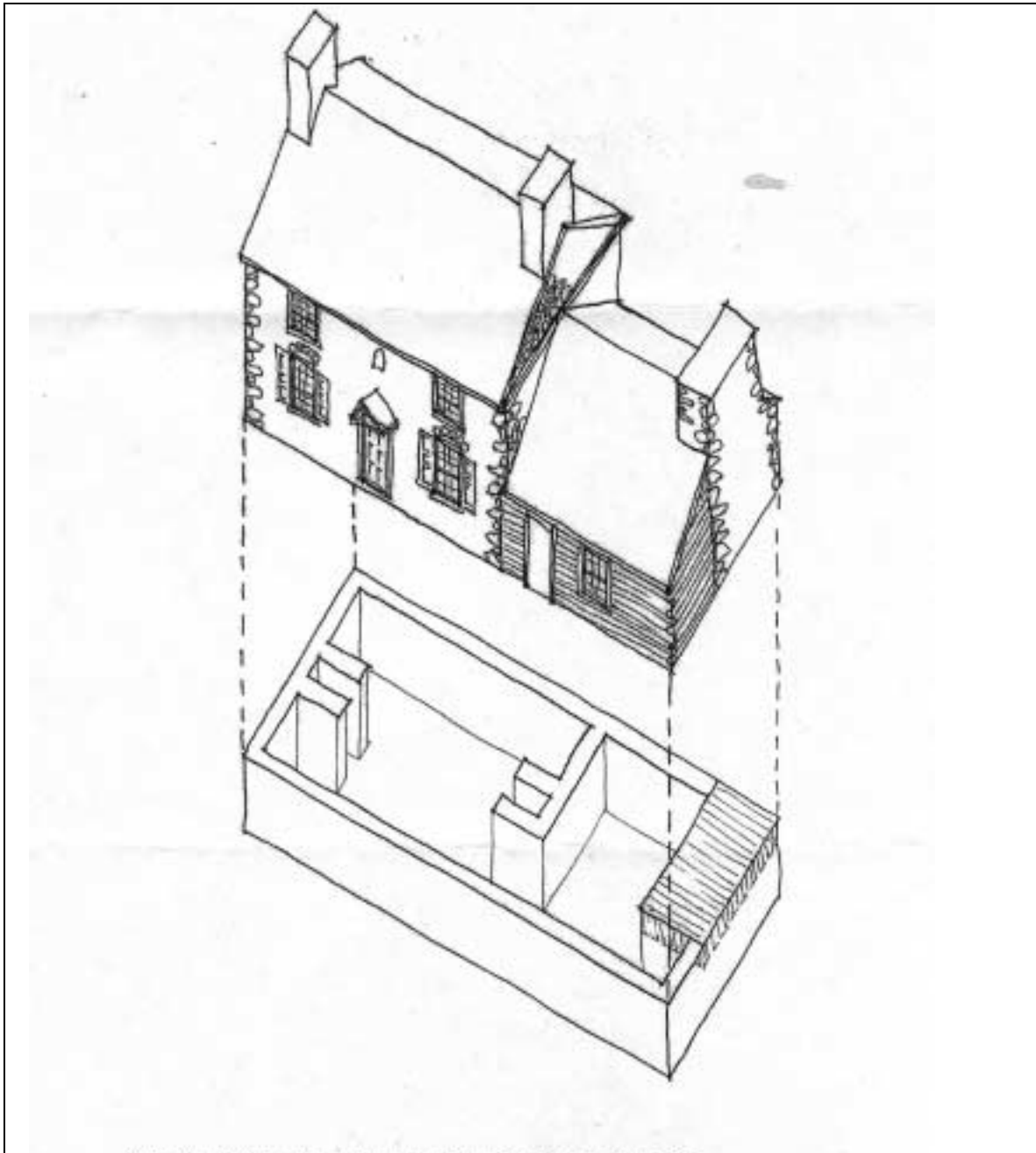


Figure 3c: Reconstructed isometric view of Units A and B, 1757.

**Thompson-Neely House
Historic Structure Report**

**Architectural Synthesis
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Diagram of Units "A" & "B" 1757

Diagram shows quoins (regularly placed large stones) along corners of unit "A"



Historic Periods & Architectural Units from HSR		
Only Period I is relevant to Pidcocks		
Period	Construction	Evidence
I	Wooden Cabin with loft (1 st floor, unit “B”) containing current stone fireplace, built on grade.	<p>Evidence that cabin predates unit “A”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No east watertable in unit “A” indicates there is a structure to the east already. • Unit “B” Gable outlined in mortar finish on east formerly external wall of “A” <p>Evidence for 17th century construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade-level unit “B” fireplace construction differs from 18th century arched breast cellar fireplace supports <p>Evidence for wooden cabin when “A” built:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4” rabbet tying wood “B” & stone “A” structures together • stone unit “B” uses unit “A” east wall with its embedded unit “A” chimney, not vice versa. • Unit “A” eastern corners have quoins indicating structure to east not stone. • Unit “A” & “B” foundation contemporaneous, no evidence of early unit “B” foundation. <p>Evidence for cabin built on grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rabbet at ground-level on north and south walls.
II	2 story west wing (unit “A”, including 3 rd floor unit “A” garret and cellar under units “A” & “B” accessed from unit “A”).	Stone over unit “A” south door indicates this was built by Robert & Hannah Thompson in 1757, when he had gained clear title to the property and after their children were grown.
III	2 story + garret unit “B” stone replacement. 2 nd floor may have been partitioned into two rooms by E-W wall. Stairs from 2 nd floor to cellar. Unit “A” only accessible through 1 st floor doorway at this time.	Stone unit B has quoins in SE corner but not on west corners indicating stone structure to the west already exists. The likely date for the stone addition is 1766 when Elizabeth Thompson and William Neely married. ⁴ Thompson & Neely families probably always lived side by side but separately.
IV	2 story Unit “C” built with	South-east Stone Quoin indicates Prine built



⁴ 18th century letters and the organization of the inventories of Robert Thompson and William Neely suggest the families lived separately within the Thompson-Neely house from the very beginning. Architectural modifications during the 18th and early 19th century support this thesis.

Historic Periods & Architectural Units from HSR		
Only Period I is relevant to Pidcocks		
Period	Construction	Evidence
	<p>3rd floor garret and cellar kitchen. All floors accessible via back hall staircase. Units "A"/"B" are only accessible through the 1st floor doorway.</p> <p>CPT thinks unit "B" 1st floor raised at this time to make it level with unit "C" which needed the higher floor to accommodate headroom in cellar kitchen.</p>	<p>this section in 1788.</p> <p>Evidence for raised 1st floor in unit "B":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty joist pockets in S "B" cellar. • Old floor joist embedded in SE "B" original fireplace mass (not hearth extension), now rotted away from South cellar wall. • Awkwardly high placement of unit "B" 1st floor door and windows flush with north & south plates (horizontal wooden beams visible from outside above doors and windows in "B") that may have supported 2nd floor, indicating that 1st floor openings were expanded upward and filled in below with stone wall or steps, but 2nd floor was not raised (no need because no connection with unit "C" 2nd floor") • Unit "C" has higher roofline, possibly indicating the upper floors are at a higher level than in "B" and "A".
IV	<p>CPT: The Neelys moved into section "C" and the Thompsons expanded into section "B", making modifications to make it more convenient.</p>	<p>Evidence of modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuilt & expanded hearth when floor raised. • Cellar access rerouted from "B" kitchen to "A" cellar necessitating unit "B" north exterior door to window conversion to avoid congestion. • 2nd floor access from "A" to "B" through closet in "A" east bedroom.
V	<p>Rafter repair in unit "B" removed plates explanation.</p>	<p>1920s repair and reconstruction</p>
V	<p>Brumbaugh replaced a stone shed with clapboard on the north side of unit "B".</p>	<p>Park Reconstruction</p>

Historic Periods & Architectural Units from HSR		
Only Period I is relevant to Pidcocks		
Period	Construction	Evidence
V	Park renovations to provide toilet & caretakers' apartment (later removed) in unit "C". Conversion of space under stairs to unit "B" 2 nd floor into a closet. Addition of a modernized temperature control & security systems to protect artifacts.	Park Renovations

Photographic Evidence of Period I

Evidence that cabin predates unit "A" (2 story stone west most wing built 1757)	
<p>No east water table (few inch, waist high ledge to direct rain away from foundation) in unit "A" indicates there is a structure to the east already</p> <p>South exterior of unit "A". water table protrudes several inches horizontally midway between cellar and 1st floor windows. It is noticeable in jagged shadow and shadowed edge at "A" (west-most section) – "B"(middle section) vertical mortar seam in south exterior wall of house.</p>	
<p>Unit "B" Gable outlined in mortar finish on east formerly external wall of "A"</p> <p>Red Arrow shows mortar with exterior finish. Blue arrow shows rough, unfinished interior garret mortar. Pencil diagonal line drawn on plaster shows the conjectured south roof slope, based on mortar.</p>	

Evidence for 17th century construction of Cabin & Fireplace	
<p>Grade-level unit “B” fireplace construction unlike 18th century arched breast cellar fireplace supports</p> <p>S-W corner of “B” fireplace mass. Floor joists visible above and dirt cellar floor below. Yellow arrow indicates vertical groove delineating hearth extension from original mass. East “B” cellar wall in background</p>	
<p>18th century arched breast cellar fireplace supports in east wall of cellar of unit “A”</p> <p>East fireplace breast showing wooden structure supporting embedded beam supporting unit A 1st floor joists. Opening to the right (south) leads to Unit “B” cellar.</p>	

Evidence for Wooden Cabin

Unit "A" & "B" foundation contemporaneous, no evidence of early unit "B" foundation.

Unit "B" cellar (brown) with black outline overlay of 1st floor. Cellar Mortar sample locations marked. Old retaining wall along east end of "B" visible in this diagram and as N-S running ledge in "C" (east most section) cellar kitchen.



HSR believes the N-S running ledge in "C" cellar kitchen predates the kitchen as an exterior retaining wall. The ground outside the building slopes sharply to the east.



Vertical seam between units “A” and “B”.
Unit “A” water-table seen as shadow on “A”
side of seam under plaque.

Note quoins (large, regularly spaced, corner
stones) along unit “A” (west side) of seam.
They would be needed if the structure “A”
abutted to the east was not stone.

CPT measurements:

South unit “B” exterior:

Vertical “A”-“B” seam to “B” door = 40.5”.

Interior unit “B”:

West wall to south door 37” stone + 3 ½”
door frame molding = 40.5”.

The “A”-“B” door is recessed into west wall
an additional ~ 3.5”

Measurements indicate vertical seam runs
along EAST exterior wall of unit “A” not a
WEST exterior wall of a pre-existing
hypothetically stone unit “B”.



Door between units “A” and “B” is recessed
in the wall, 4” to the west.



Interior door between units "A" and "B"
recessed in the wall, 4" to the west.



Evidence of a Wooden structure being tied to a Stone structure	
<p>The stone wall of unit "A" above the water table is 19" thick, which is enough to be 2 stones deep. Presumably the depth of the walls of unit "B" is comparable. This suggests originally the stone structure lapped the wooden structure as a 4" stone insert. Later, the log wall was replaced as a thicker stone wall. This diagram is based on a diagram in the HSR where "A101" designates the main ground floor room of unit "A" & "B108" refer to the kitchen in unit "B".</p>	<p>. 4" beam upon which wooden walls rested remains, either embedded in and supported by or set against back of new unit "A" east fireplace. Later wooden wall north & south walls rebuilt in stone resulting in 4" jog to the east in both the north and south new stone walls of unit "B". Original west wall of unit "B" either removed or partially laminated into new east wall of unit "A".</p>
<p>South 4" rabbet tying stone & former wood structures together</p> <p>South wall A/B vertical seam jogs 4" to the east, resulting in a ground-level notch to the west.</p>	<p>North 4" rabbet tying stone & former wood structures together</p> <p>North wall A/B vertical seam jogs 4" to the east, resulting in a ground-level notch to the west.</p>

Parts of Current House that may date back to John Pidcock's Cabin



Blue arrows highlight north-south seam in hearth indicating area extending into the room is an addition.



Blue arrows point to N-S seam of "B" Hearth Extension



Removal of plaster to take mortar sample M13 from south side of south jamb of unit "B" fireplace reveals fireplace construction. Door from "B" to "C" visible to right.

Early Material that has been Reused

1st Floor Board and Batten door between units “A” and “B” was an exterior door.

The inside side is in unit “A”.

2nd Floor unit “B” south window (Brumbaugh)



“B” Cellar, Oak Lintel (Brumbaugh) & Sill (HSR) in north wall giving crawl space access. Opening in north wall of “B” cellar to the shed crawl space has an Oak Lintel (Brumbaugh)[obscured by ductwork] & Sill (HSR) [at base of opening] that the may date to an older structure.

West face Fireplace mass to right.

Exposed stone and mortar (M19) from north corner of west wall of unit “B” 1st floor between cellar stairs and north window. This mortar contains horse hair, an older formulation than all the other samples.

The HSR offers no hypothesis or explanation.





Warrant of Re-survey signed by William Penn

March 31, 1701 Warrant for Resurvey of John Pidcock's Land (one sided document)
William Penn, True and Absolute Proprietary & Governor in Chief of the Province of Pennsylvania & Counties Annexed;

Whereas there is a certain parcel of Land reputed to contain four hundred acres, part of the five hundred acres laid out to Gilbert Wheeler in right of Thomas Rowland, purchased within my Mannor of Highlands, on which John Pidcock in whose possession it now is has requested a Resurvey; These therefore are to require thee forthwith to Resurvey or cause to be resurveyed the said tract of four hundred acres according to the first bounds and lines of survey, and make Returns thereof into my Secretaries office;

Given under my hand and Seal at Pennsbury, the 31st of ye 3rd Month 1701,
[signed] William Penn
Edward Penington, Surveyor General of the Province of Pennsylvania & Territories

Upon the Surveyor General's Decease thou art required to execute this Warrant by a Copy thereof to be transmitted to thee by the Secretary and made Return to him,

[signed] Edward Shippen
[signed] Thomas Story
[signed] James Logan

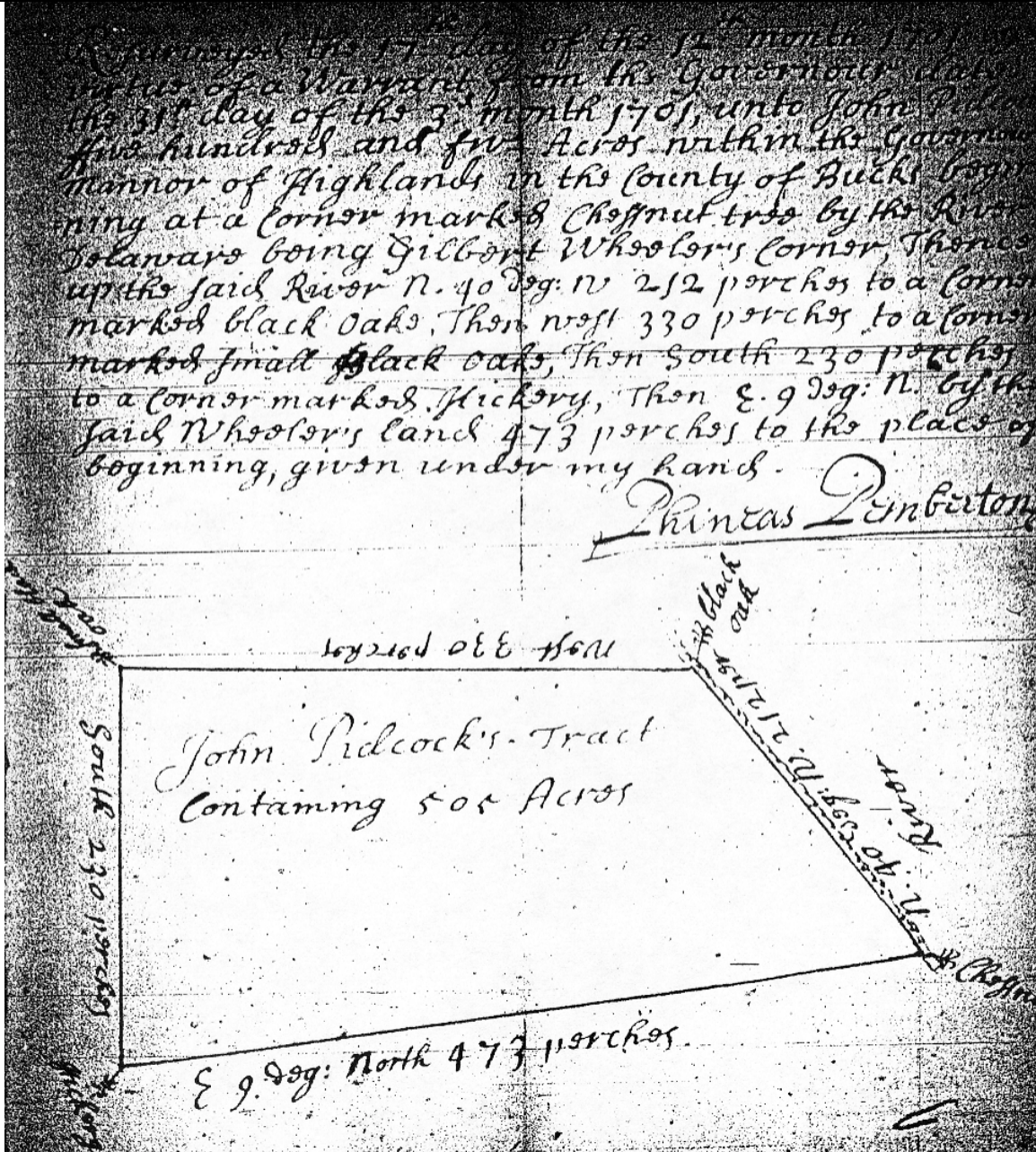
This being largely discoursed of at Buckingham when [the] Rent was paid at

their Request, I have passed this but desire the Govenour will be pleased to consider it.

May 31, 1701 Gilbert Wheeler conveys land to John Pidcock.

“Whereas, there is a tract of land lying and being about the Falls of Delaware, as is part of 500 acres of land which John Rowland by Deed Poll bearing date the 9th day of 7th month 1690, did grant unto Gilbert Wheeler, which said land is called and known by the Indian name of Win-ua-haw-caw-chunk, and was laid out to John Pidcock for 400 acres, which land the said John Pidcock hath seated and improved and is now in possession of him the said John Pidcock.

... with all buildings, gardens, ways, waters, watercourses. Consideration. (Bucks Co. Deed Book #3, p 41)



Phineas Pemberton Survey of Pidcock Tract 1701

Dec 17, 1701 Resurvey done by Phineas Pemberton for John Pidcock, showed actually 505 acres. **1701/2 re-survey of John Pidcock's tract of 505 acres** (a two-sided document)

On the front:

Resurveyed the 17th day of the 12th month 1701 by virtue of a Warrant from the Govenour dated the 31st day of the 3rd month 1701, unto John Pidcock, five hundred and five Acres within the Govenour's Mannor of Highlands in the County of Bucks, beginning at a Corner marked Chestnut tree by the River Delaware, being Gilbert Wheeler's Corner, thence extending up the said River N 40 deg W 212 to a Corner marked black oak, thence west 330 perches to a Corner marked small black oak, thence south 230 perches to a Corner marked hickory, thence E 9 deg N by the said Wheeler's land, 473 perches to the place of beginning, given under my hand.

[signed] Phineas Pemberton
[map of re-surveyed land]

On the rear is the 1753 denial:

"67 William Brigdale GN John Pidcock's Return; revised and copied; this is of no use see another return made by John Watson; compared by Altenberg & Davis"

1702 return of the re-survey of John Pidcock's tract of 505 acres (a one-sided document)

I do certify that by virtue of a warrant from the Proprietary and Governor dated the 31st of the 3rd month 1701, There is Returned into the General Surveyor's office the Resurvey of a parcel of Land Resurveyed to John Pidcock the 17th of the 12th month 1701, Certified by Phineas Pemberton which being Examined & Revised in the said office is as followeth, viz.:

Situate in the Manner of High Land in the County of Bucks, beginning at a Corner marked Chestnut tree by the River Delaware at Gilbert Wheeler's Corner, from thence extending up the said River North 40 degrees westerly two hundred and twelve perches to a Corner marked black oak. Thence west three hundred and thirty perches to a Small black oak, Thence South two hundred and thirty perches to a Corner Hickory, thence North eighty one degrees easterly by the said Wheeler's Land, four hundred seventy three perches to the place of beginning. Containing (505) five hundred and five acres.

Returned into the Secretary's office

The [] day of the [] Month 1702 [signed] Jacob Taylor