

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

VLR: 08/21/90 NRHP: 01/11/91

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name BRAGASSA TOY STORE

other names/site number DHR FILE NO. 118-176

2. Location

street & number 323 325 TWELFTH STREET N/A not for publication
 city, town LYNCHBURG N/A vicinity
 state VIRGINIA code VA county LYNCHBURG CITY code 680 zip code 24504

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | buildings |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | sites |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Hugh C. Miller
 Director, VA Department of Historic Resources

Date 30-Nov-1990

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.

mother, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: Specialty Store

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

Stone

roof Tin

other Wood (Storefront)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Bragassa Toy Store is an example of a commercial building in the Italianate style built in 1875 during the reconstruction period. The building is a two-story, rectangular, massed plan, 33' x 43', of brick and stone on a stone foundation. The first floor of the Twelfth Street elevation has a wood and glass storefront which extends one bay on Court Street. Mr. Bragassa selected the site because he thought Twelfth Street would become the major commercial street of Lynchburg. Eventually, Main Street became the center of business. Adjoining the store on Twelfth Street was a row of stores of similar scale and materials. These adjoining buildings were demolished and the space is now used for parking for an ABC store. On Court Street the Bragassa property abuts the First Baptist Church, which is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register; and the Bragassa site is included in the Court Street area which the Lynchburg City Council recently declared a historic district.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The Bragassa building is situated on the corner of Twelfth Street and Court Street, fronting east on Twelfth. The Italianate entrance facade has five bays on the first-floor storefront. A stone foundation supports brick walls laid up in five-course American bond. Across the entrance facade there is a brick parapet with corbeled brick cornice. The storefront consists of two slightly recessed entrances alternating with three display windows. The wood-framed storefront has paneled Doric pilasters of varying widths connected by horizontal paneled bases below the windows and doors. An entablature of wood separates the storefront from the second floor. The entrance and shop window on the northern end of the storefront are narrower than those on the southern end, which served the toy store. The toy store was entered through a pair of doors, each with a larger single glass pane above the paneled base, surmounted by a fixed transom. There is a small vestibule which had a second paneled door that led to the store. This door was removed in the renovation of 1989. The pair of exterior doors and transom which led to the smaller store were removed at some time and replaced with a single door and modified display window. A new pair of doors and the original transom were installed in 1989, returning the facade to the original design. The two display windows for the toy shop measure 5'9" high by 6'2" wide and have display shelving within. The single window for the other shop is smaller--only 5'9" x 4'9". Members of several generations of the Bragassa family have passed on information that the plate glass display windows were the first

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Commerce

1875-1920

1875

Ethnic Heritage/European

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

The Bragassa Toy Store is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. It is eligible as an example of the commercial revival that emerged in Lynchburg in the 1870s on a street that soon rivaled the main business area. It was Lynchburg's first toy and confectionery store and today is the only surviving building within a four-block area that represents this commercial expansion. Next door is a recently built Virginia ABC Store; other lots within this area are either vacant or occupied by twentieth-century commercial buildings. Francisco Bragassa, the founder of the business, was an Italian immigrant who came to the South and, typical of many such immigrants, established a confectionery business.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bragassa Toy Store, on Twelfth Street in downtown Lynchburg, contained both a confectionery and a toy store for more than a century. While the primary commercial district in the 1870s was located on Main Street, two blocks to the north, the Bragassa store was at the center of a new, expanding commercial section of town. It was on a main road entering the business section; two blocks to the south two important highways joined to form Tan Yard Alley, later named Twelfth Street. One of those was Campbell Courthouse Turnpike, also known as the South Road, which crossed Diamond Hill and passed close to Richardson's Springs, a popular gathering place for townspeople. The other road was the Salem Turnpike, which led off to the west. It was down the hill along the Campbell Courthouse road that the residents of Diamond Hill approached the business section and Bragassa's Toy Store.

Having been built within a decade of the end of the Civil War, the Bragassa store was a product of the economic expansion that began in Lynchburg during Reconstruction. During that era many new buildings were constructed including the Lynch House, a commercial structure on Main Street; the Female Orphan Asylum; Piedmont Mills, the largest commercial structure of its time in Lynchburg; the Lone Jack Tobacco Works

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chambers, S. Allen, Jr. Lynchburg: An Architectural History. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981.

City Directory, 1873.

Conrad, Annie Giliam. The Street Above the Terrace. Staunton, Virginia: The McClure Printing Company, 1954.

Interview with Mrs. Alice Bragassa Pfingst, August 20, 1988.

Lynchburg Land Books, 1861, 1875, 1876. Clerk's Office, Lynchburg, VA.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources
221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 17 664420 4141920
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is a rectangular parcel, a portion of Lot 72, measuring 33'x 120' on the north corner of the intersection of Twelfth and Court streets with 33' fronting Twelfth Street.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the entire parcel purchased by Francisco Bragassa in 1871.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cline Hall and Louis Booth, Board Members

organization Lynchburg Historical Foundation, Inc. date July 3, 1990

street & number P. O. Box 248 (708 Court Street) telephone 804-582-2308 or 528-5353

city or town Lynchburg, state Virginia zip code 24505

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installation of plate glass in Lynchburg. There is no known confirmation of this. Above the display windows there are fixed transoms glazed with obscure glass--four panels above each of the larger windows and three above the smaller.

In 1888 or early 1889 an awning was added above the Twelfth Street entrances. Carter Glass wrote in long-hand on Daily News stationery:

An ordinance
Be it ordained by the City Council, that
Mr. Frank Bragassa by and is hereby per-
mitted to erect an awning and porch in
front of his property on the Corner
of Court and 12th Street of iron
with a wooden floor to the porch

A copy Teste:
Carter Glass, C.C.C.

There is no evidence of a porch ever having been erected. However, the awning, which had a wood and iron frame with steel reinforcing rods, appears in two photographs (attached). In an 1890 picture of the rear of the First Baptist Church reproduced in Allen Chambers's book Lynchburg, An Architectural History, a corner of the Bragassa building is shown in the foreground and a corner of the awning can be seen. The other photograph, which is in the collection of the Lynchburg Museum System, shows the underside of the awning. The awning projected from the building on Twelfth Street at the second-floor level 6' or 8' and then turned down towards the sidewalk 4' or 5'. It was removed in the 1930s because vehicles ran into it. The second floor of the east elevation has four two-over-two double-hung sash windows each having sills and segmental-arched heads of wood, and segmental-arched hoods with square label stops, all of wood in imitation of stone.

The south or Court Street elevation is constructed of American bond brick on a stone foundation. The corbeled brick parapet and cornice of the east elevation continue along its entire length. At the Twelfth Street intersection, there is a display window measuring 5'9" x 4'9" with Doric pilasters and surround, two pilasters, and entablature. There are three second-floor sash windows matching those on the east elevation. At some time a door which led from the first floor toy shop to Court Street was bricked up. This opening was 3'4" x 6'6" approximately 7' east of the southwest corner.

The west or rear elevation is of stone on the first floor level and American bond brick above but without the parapet or cornice. A hanging half round gutter provides roof drainage. On the first floor there are two doors, both with transoms, one leading into the toy shop and the other into the stair hall. The door to the toy shop was originally a window and at an unknown date was changed to a door. On the second floor there is one double-hung sash window matching those on the east and south elevations

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and a smaller one-over-one, in the stair hall, originally the bath. An early door leading from the second floor stair hall to the family porch has been bricked up.

The north elevation is on the property line and is of stone to a height of 8'6" with brick above surmounted by an unadorned brick parapet. There is one wood pilaster at the northeast corner where the front display window and entablature turn the corner. There is a hip roof. Over the years the standing-seam tin roofing had deteriorated and was replaced with a new painted forty-pound terne roof in 1988. There are three interior chimneys serving three fireplaces.

The first floor of the building is divided into two rooms. The larger, southern room measures 20' x 40' and was used for the sale of toys and candies. The smaller, northern room currently measures 10' x 40' and has a stair in the northwest corner to the second floor. The current stair, roughed in in 1989, replaces an earlier stair removed in 1946. The stair hall was originally separated by a partition from the front room, which measured 10' x 28'. The front room was first rented as a black barber shop and later as a restaurant. Toward the back of the building a door surmounted by a transom connects the larger room to the area that served as the stair hall. Another door connects the larger room with the area that served as the rental space. The flooring was originally wood but has recently been replaced with concrete due to termite and water damage.

The second floor served as the Bragassa family's living quarters until 1979. It consists of three bedrooms along the southern side of the second floor, a sitting room and a hallway. Each of the three bedrooms has a fireplace with identical wood mantels and surrounds. The mantel in the southwest bedroom is slightly larger than those in the other two bedrooms. The mantels are approximately 5'4" wide by 4'4" high. Each has two simple Doric pilasters surmounted by a "V" shaped arch. Each mantel is topped with a wood shelf.

The bedroom fireplaces have been closed and plastered over leaving only holes for stove pipes. The sitting room is located in the northwest corner and has a false fireplace. It has an imitation brick surround with a decorative bronze cover and a hearth of tile. The bronzed fireplace cover has relief figures depicting a woman in classical dress drawing water from a pump and a man in Colonial dress reading a book. According to Mrs. Jeanette Bragassa, the sitting room was used very little and in cold weather a gas heater was used if necessary. There was a bath at the rear of the second floor stair hall. Probably this was original construction, since according to Allen Chambers in Lynchburg, An Architectural History, the first bathroom installed in a Lynchburg home was in 1869 in a house two blocks from the Bragassa building, which was built in 1875. The Bragassa bath was removed during the renovations in 1989 making a larger hallway. Since the flues are not lined, all the fireplaces on the second floor were closed at that time. Each bedroom and the sitting room has a four-paneled entrance door with an operating transom for ventilation.

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Today there is little evidence of a wood frame extension at the rear of the shop, which served as a kitchen and bakery with a brick Dutch oven. Above the kitchen there was an open porch for family use. The land rises sharply toward the rear and the kitchen was built into the hillside with a stone foundation and a stone retaining wall above. A portion of the stone foundation of the rear wall of the kitchen and the retaining wall survive. However, this wing was originally connected to the first floor stair hall by a vestibule and at the second floor by a door into the stair hall. Around 1946 the narrow stair in the northwest corner of the brick building was removed and an outdoor stair parallel to the west wall of the shop was added for second floor access. At that time the second floor porch was enclosed to serve as a family kitchen. Around 1980 the wood extension had deteriorated and was razed, leaving only the open stair. The remnants of the outdoor stair were torn out in the 1989 renovations.

The Lynchburg Historical Foundation bought the building on 14 January 1988 and explored ways to restore it for alternative use. Funds were voted for initial restoration of the exterior with interior work to follow. Included in this work were reroofing, pointing of brick and stone, painting exterior trim in the original color determined to have been green, replacing the single barber shop entrance with a pair of doors matching the original (original transom was found during this work), replacing broken glass including two panels of original plate glass, and framing an interior stair to provide access to the second floor. The second floor bath and remnants of the exterior stair were removed and the second floor door on the west elevation leading to a former family porch was filled in with brick. Recently, the Virginia State Legislature approved a budget request for a matching grant of \$22,500 to help finish interior restoration.

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on Grace Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets; the Pace Tobacco Warehouse on Main Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets; two large churches; and the Bragassa Toy Store. The toy store is the only building still standing today along the four-block area of Twelfth Street that dates from the Reconstruction era. At the end of the area where the two turnpikes form Tan Yard Alley, there still stands a candle factory, built in the mid-nineteenth century, which has recently been restored.

Francisco Bragassa was born in Bardi, Italy, in 1829. He entered the United States through the port of Baltimore at the age of twenty and went west as a Forty-Niner to seek his fortune. He was successful enough to return to the East and open a confectionery shop in Liberty (now Bedford) in 1858. During the early war years, he moved to Lynchburg and most likely with the aid of his brother, Joseph, opened the first toy and confectionery shop in Lynchburg on Twelfth Street between Court and Clay Streets.¹ By 1861 Joseph Bragassa was paying taxes on Lot 176 in that area. After a friendly argument between the two brothers as to the relative importance of a Main Street or Twelfth Street location, Joseph later opened a confectionery shop at 167 Main Street. He had a thriving business there until the 1880s when he left Lynchburg. Frank's son, Basil, opened a confectionery store on Twelfth Street around the turn of the century, but it went out of business in 1919. The Italian Bragassa family, then, was the preeminent supplier of toys and candies in Lynchburg beginning in the 1860s; the Frank Bragassa store is the only one remaining.

The Lynchburg Female Seminary, which burned in 1870, stood on the northwest corner of Twelfth and Court Streets. In 1871, Francisco Bragassa purchased part of the seminary lot; his property measured 33' on Twelfth Street and 120' on Court Street. The tax records show a considerable increase in taxes from 1875 to 1876, indicating that he built the toy store then. There was space for comfortable living quarters upstairs, with the merchandise on the ground floor. At the front of the shop were the first plate glass windows ever installed in Lynchburg.²

Bragassa sold an assortment of fresh baked goods, candy and fruit. His advertisement in the 1873 city directory mentioned that he kept "always on hand an assortment of Foreign and Domestic Fruits, Nuts, Toys, etc Bread and Cakes baked fresh every day." Other businesses in the immediate vicinity of his store along Twelfth Street included several grocers, shops for boots and shoes, a physician's office, a soap and candle factory, and several chewing and smoking tobacco manufacturers.

After twenty-eight years in business, Bragassa died on 14 November 1894. His obituary reported that he "was attentive to business, devoted to his family, and esteemed by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances in Baltimore, New York, and other Northern cities."³ His widow, Josephine Bragassa, with the help of her son and daughter, Louis and Mary, continued the confectionery and toy shop with various kinds of sweets, fruits, peanuts, cookies, pickles, and homemade candies. Mrs. Bragassa's candies were famed throughout the town, especially her molasses taffy, coconut patties with red centers, coconut bars, and vanilla cream candy. The store was a popular place, often visited by the children from the school only two blocks away on Court Street.

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Bragassa's imported and domestic toys were purchased all year around, but most importantly at Christmas time. To the left of the entrance were dolls of all kinds and sizes, ranging from tall ladies in Paris finery to the "sankies," small dolls one inch high. A popular seller was a modest German doll with a flexible stuffed body, a winsome china head, and china hands and feet.⁴

For twenty-six years Josephine Bragassa operated the store until her death on 6 July 1920. An article published after her death noted her "ever tender solicitude for every childish trouble," which endeared her to the children of Lynchburg, and reported that "the grown-up children of the city join in lamenting her loss."⁵ The store was then operated by her son, Louis J. Bragassa. In 1945 the property was transferred to Laurence and James Bragassa, the grandsons of Francisco Bragassa. The confection goods were dropped from the inventory; the line of toys was expanded and sporting goods were added. The store remained in the Bragassa family until 1987, and was operated in recent years by Esther and Jeanette Bragassa, the widows of James and Laurence Bragassa. In January 1988 the Lynchburg Historical Foundation purchased the building from the Bragassa family.

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ENDNOTES

1. Evelyn L. Moore, "Bragassa's, Lynchburg's Oldest Toy Store," Lynchburg Historical Society and Museum Papers, Vol. VIII (January, 1972), p. 1.
2. Ibid. Family tradition supports this fact as well as the Lynchburg newspaper accounts of the Sesquicentennial in 1936. Mr. Si Hiller of the Lynchburg Plate Glass Company has confirmed that it could well have been the first.
3. Lynchburg News, November 15, 1894.
4. Moore, "Bragassa's," pp. 2-3.
5. Lynchburg Daily Advance, July 8, 1920.

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Lynchburg Daily Advance, July 6 and 8, 1920; Microfilm in Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Lynchburg News, November 15, 1894, July 8, 1920. Microfilm in Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Moore, Evelyn L., "Bragassa's, Lynchburg's Oldest Toy Store," Lynchburg Historical Society and Museum Papers, Vol. VIII (No. 4) February, 1972.

"View from the Terrace." Newsletter of Lynchburg Historical Foundation, September-October, 1987.

Noell, James Burroughs, compl. Business Firms of 1900 in Lynchburg, Virginia. Mimeograph booklet printed by Lynchburg Historical Society, 1972.

Story of Lynchburg, Virginia, 1912-1913.

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PHOTOGRAPH LISTING

The following information is the same for photographs numbered 1 through 11.

Name of property: Bragassa Toy Store
Location: Lynchburg, Virginia
Credit: Robert DeVaul, Photographer
Date: 1990
Negative filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
Negative number(s): 10682
File number: DHR 118-176

Photograph 1

Close-up view of south elevation as viewed from the east facing west

Photo 1 of 13

Photograph 2

Close-up view of west and south elevation as viewed from the south facing north

Photo 2 of 13

Photograph 3

View of east and south elevation as viewed from the east facing west

Photo 3 of 13

Photograph 4

View of northeast elevation as viewed from the northeast facing southwest

Photo 4 of 13

Photograph 5

View of northwest elevation as viewed from the west facing east

Photo 5 of 13

Photograph 6

View of west elevation as viewed from the west facing east

Photo 6 of 13

Photograph 7

Close-up view of cornice and parapet on southwest elevation as viewed from SW facing NE

Photo 7 of 13

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Photograph 8

View of entrance of toy store as viewed from the northwest facing southeast.

Photo 8 of 13

Photograph 9

View of northwest wall (rear) of toy store as viewed from the southeast facing northwest

Photo 9 of 13

Photograph 10

View of entrance to rented portion as viewed from the northwest facing southeast

Photo 10 of 13

Photograph 11

View of northwest wall (rear) of rented portion as viewed from southeast facing northwest

Photo 11 of 13

Photograph 12

Name of property: Bragassa Toy Store

Location: Lynchburg, VA

Credit: Photographer unknown

Date: c. 1925

Negative filed: Lynchburg Museum System, Lynchburg, VA

View of Twelfth Street showing Bragassa building awning as viewed from the northeast facing southwest

Photo 12 of 13

Photograph 13

Name of property: Bragassa Toy Store

Location: Lynchburg, VA

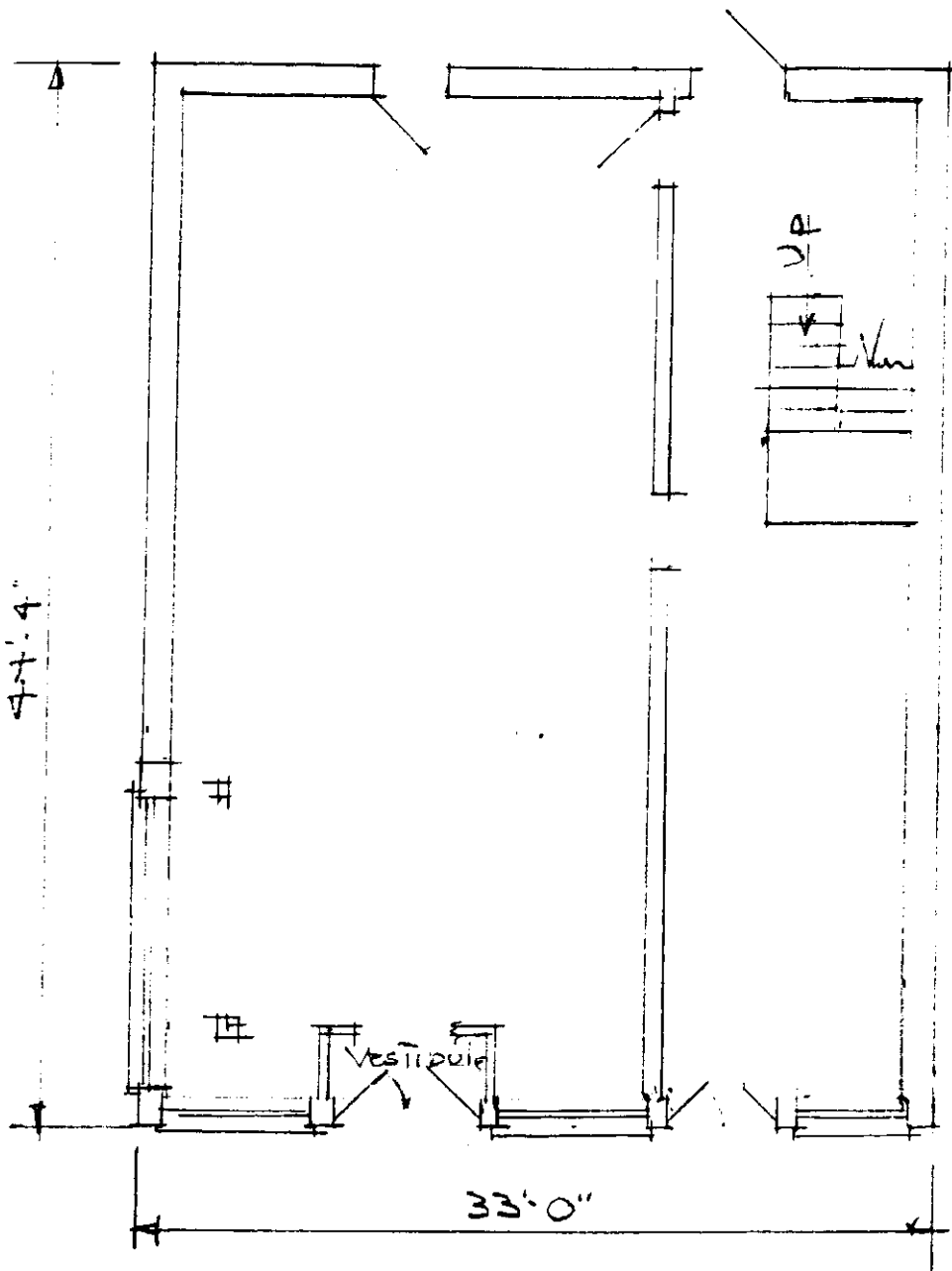
Credit: Photographer unknown

Date: c. 1890

Negative filed: Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA

View of First Baptist Church showing corner of Bragassa building awning as viewed from the south facing north

Photo 13 of 13



STAIR ROOM
17'-0" x 11'-0"

FIRST FLOOR

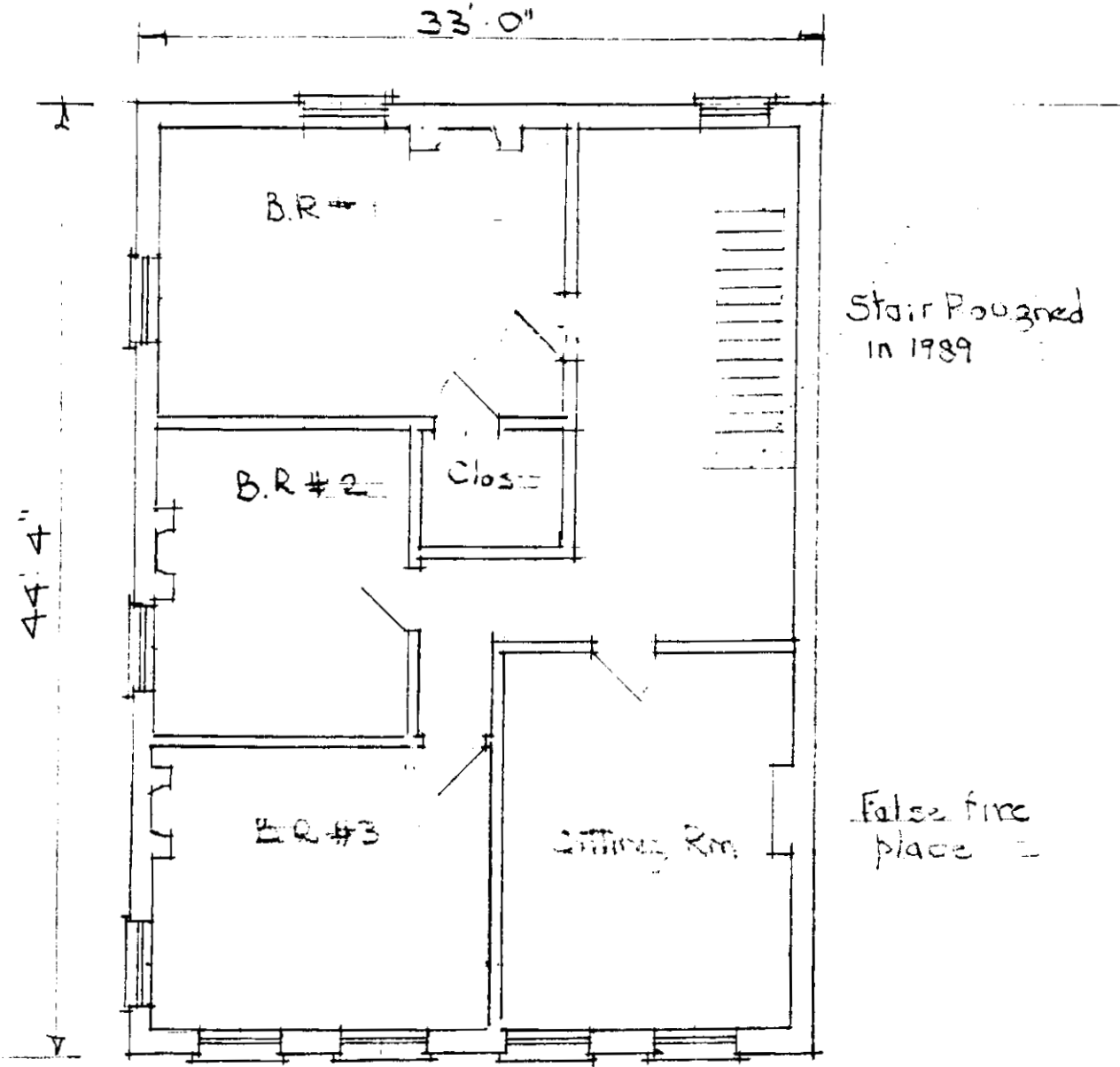
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BRAGASSA BLDG

LYNCHBURG Va

RECORD DWG

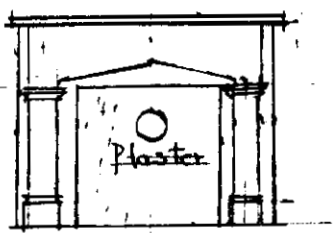
May 18 1990



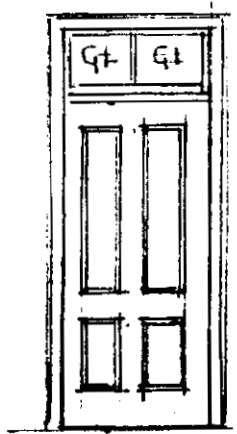
Stair Roughed
in 1989

False fire
place

SECOND FLOOR
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"



TYPICAL WOOD MANTEL



INT. WOOD DOOR
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

RECORD DWG
BRAGASSA BLDG
LYNCHBURG VA
May 18 1990

F.P. 1972
(C. B. 48, P.)

FROM PLANS
LYNCHBURG GOVERNMENTAL COMPLE

ADMINISTRATION BLDG.
F.P. 1972
(C. B. 48, P.)

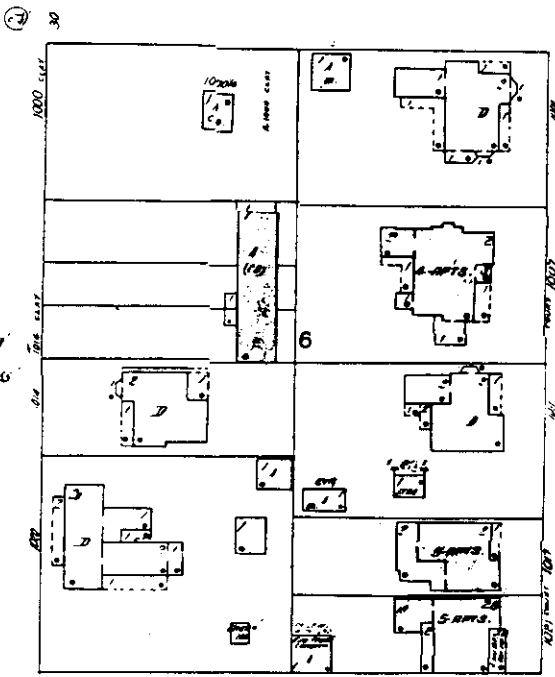
LYNCHBURG CITY COURT N
COURT RM
LAW OFFICES
COURT CLERK

2

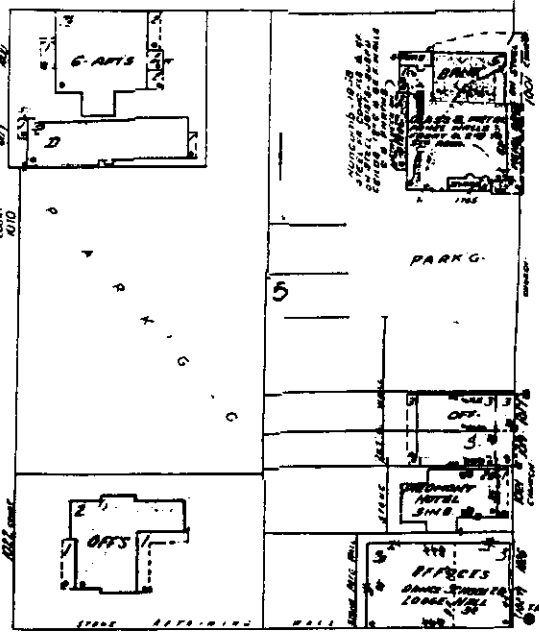
3D

24

CLAY



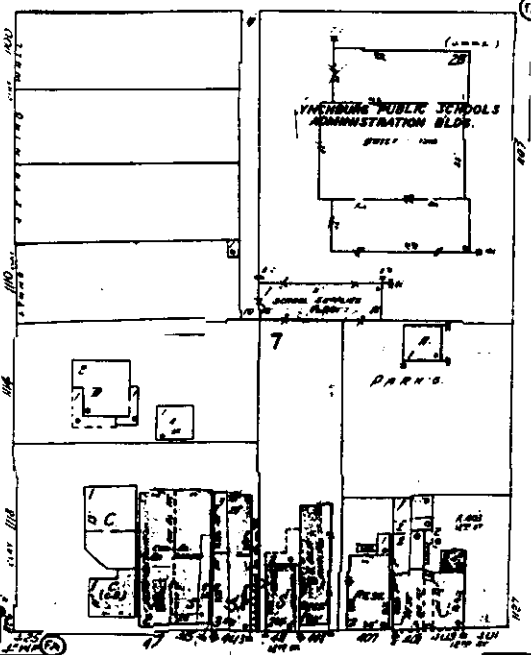
COURT



10 TH ST.

CHURCH

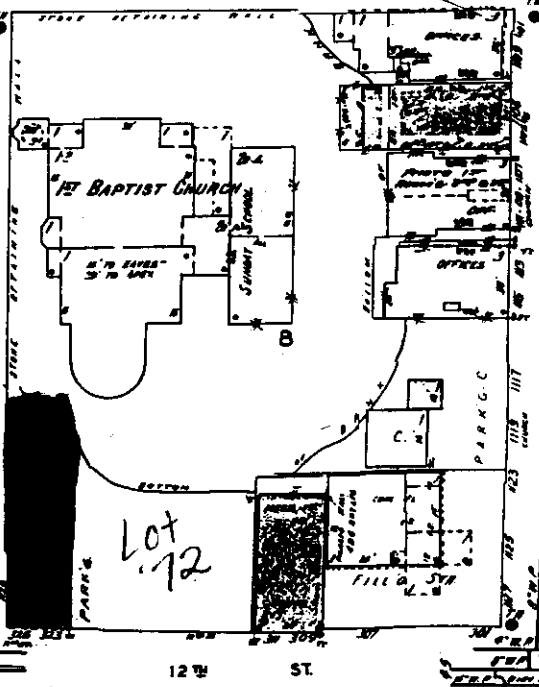
3E



LYNCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATION BLDG.

PARK

7



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

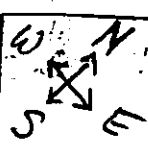
Lot 12

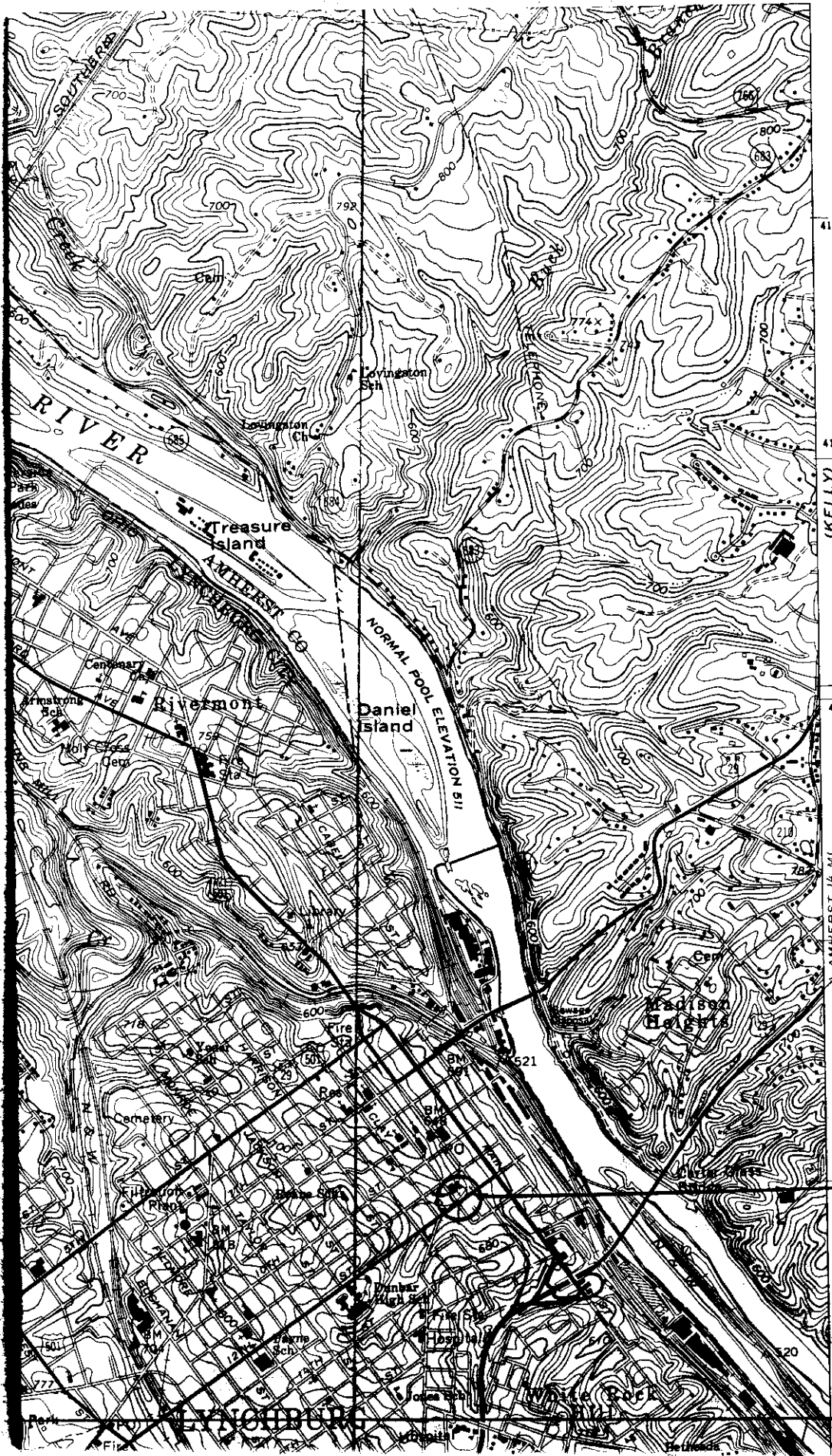
12 TH ST.

3E



Copyright 1972 by the Southern Map Co.





4146
4145
4144
25'
4141

BRAGASSA
TOY STORE
UTM
17|664420|441920

