

VLR 9/9/69 NRHP 10/15/66  
NHL 11/4/63

STATE	Virginia
COUNTRY	Alexandria (Ind. City)
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(NATIONAL HISTORIC

LANDMARKS) *Type all entries complete applicable sections)*

(1975)

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Gadsby's Tavern # 100-0029

AND/OR HISTORIC: Gadsby's Tavern

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: 134 North Royal Street

CITY OR TOWN: Alexandria CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Eighth (8th)

STATE: Virginia 22314 CODE: 51 COUNTY: Alexandria (Ind. City) CODE: 510

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: City of Alexandria

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Alexandria STATE: Virginia CODE: 510

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: City

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Alexandria STATE: Virginia CODE: 510

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress/Annex

STREET AND NUMBER: Prints and Photographs Division

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia	COUNTY: Alexandria	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

 Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

 Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Gadsby's Tavern comprises two adjoining tavern buildings; the smaller of the two was built in 1752 and was known as the City Tavern, or the Coffee House. It is topped by a gabled roof above a modillioned cornice with fretwork along the lowest molding. The roof is pierced by three dormers, large keystones accentuating the flat arches above the window openings. Fluted pilasters flank the central entrance and support a broken pediment that rises through a stringcourse above a round-arched transom with a tall keystone. The portal, the winged flat arches, and large key-blocks of stone over the windows are typical of late eighteenth-century Georgian Colonial design.

John Wise built a large three-story brick addition in 1792, with a simpler exterior than the original tavern. It included a large ballroom with intricate wood panelling and an overhead gallery for the musicians. Both interiors are notable for the quality and extent of their carved woodwork. The accompanying map A is a schematic diagram of a more intricate map done by John Wise, 1792-94. It shows a stable, kitchen, washhouse, coachhouse and necessary besides the remaining three brick buildings, labelled A,B, and F.

In 1794 the tavern was taken over by John Gadsby under a lease, at which time it gained its present name. In 1926 the tavern was purchased by the American Legion, Post #24. They saved the buildings from demolition and, along with other local organizations, did much to bring about its complete restoration. The ballroom woodwork of the corner building now belongs to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but has been copied in detail and replaced. The front of the larger building was restored by the Mount Vernon Chapter of the D.A.R., and the main doorway was repurchased from the Metropolitan in 1949. Two ballrooms, a walled courtyard with cobblestone surfacing, an underground brick kitchen, a tap room and lodging rooms are now undergoing extensive restoration in preparation for the nation's bicentennial celebration. Excavation is being done in the courtyard, with numberable artifacts already discovered. It is planned that the larger tavern will be converted into a working restaurant and tavern by 1976. The earlier building will remain as a museum.

BOUNDARIES

Gadsby's Tavern is located on a lot approximately 115 feet in depth and 100 feet in width; the boundary itself extends to the curbline. It is located on the southwest corner of North Royal and Cameron Streets, Alexandria. The streets have not changed configuration since their construction before 1752.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1752- c. 1852

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal                | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric               | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br><u>Travel</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture              | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Gadsby's Tavern is one of the best known inns in America. It was built in 1752, when it was known as City Tavern, or the Coffee House. In 1792 a three-story brick building was erected adjoining the original tavern. In 1794 John Gadsby leased the tavern from John Wise, at which time the inn acquired its present name. Known nationwide for its elegance and hospitality, Gadsby's Tavern housed and fed most of the famous persons visiting the country from 1752 for the next hundred years.

HISTORY

During the last half of the eighteenth century, Gadsby's Tavern was an important center of Virginia life. Two years after its construction, in 1754, George Washington recruited his first command there. He was quartered at City Tavern when he received his commission as Major on General Braddock's staff. The Fairfax Resolves were prepared here—those resolves which eventually grew into the Virginia Bill of Rights. In this tavern a convention called by Washington to settle the question of import duties on Potomac River commerce held its meetings. The question seemed of larger importance and eventually led to the convention in Philadelphia which prepared the constitution of the United States. The first celebration of the adoption of the Federal Constitution took place at City Tavern on June 28, 1788. John Wise built a large three-story brick addition in 1792. It was opened on February 11, with festivities commemorating Washington's birthday. In Wise's new hotel, Alexandria architecture reached its highest expression.

In 1794, John Gadsby took over the tavern under a lease. As fine as the tavern had been under Wise, it was to reach new excellence and fame. Running the two taverns as one, under the name Gadsby's Tavern, he spread the fame of its comfort and culinary art throughout the country. From Boston to New Orleans, the better-off traveler did his best to make Gadsby's. Gadsby established his own stage coach line from Alexandria to Philadelphia, and it was necessary to be a guest with him in order to get a ticket.

In 1798, George Washington made his last military appearance at Gadsby's.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Moore, Gay Montague, Seaport in Virginia; George Washington's Alexandria, Richmond, 1949.  
 Work Projects Administration, Virginia; A Guide to the Old Dominion, New York, 1940.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R UTM	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES	
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds			
NW	° ' "	° ' "	18.322510.4296970		
NE	° ' "	° ' "			
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Stephen Lissandrello, Historian, Landmarks Review Project

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service DATE: 2/10/75

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1100 L. Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register, Landmark Jan 28, 1964

(Designated: HISTORIC LANDMARKS) date

Director Office of Historic Preservation  
Charles Hane 7-17-75  
 (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) date

Date Arch. Surveys

ATTEST: Boundary Affirmed:  
AK [Signature] 7/24/75  
 Director, OAHIP date  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

ST Virginia	
COUNTY Alexandria (Ind. City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

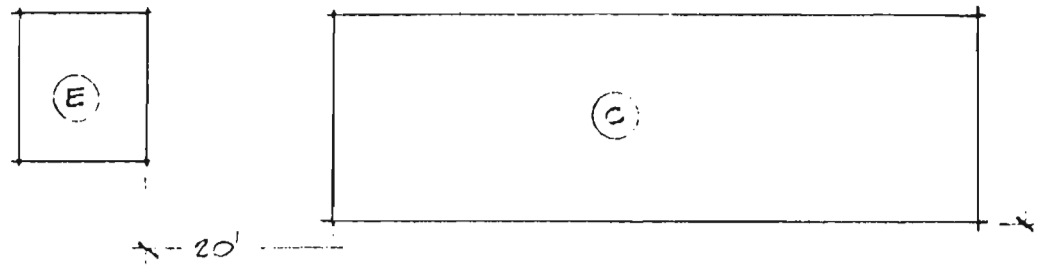
8. Significance second page

After a dinner of canvasback duck, hominy and madeira wine, he stood in the tavern doorway to review the Alexandria Independent Infantry Blues, a company of volunteers. The General issued a final military order bidding farewell to the troops on that occasion.

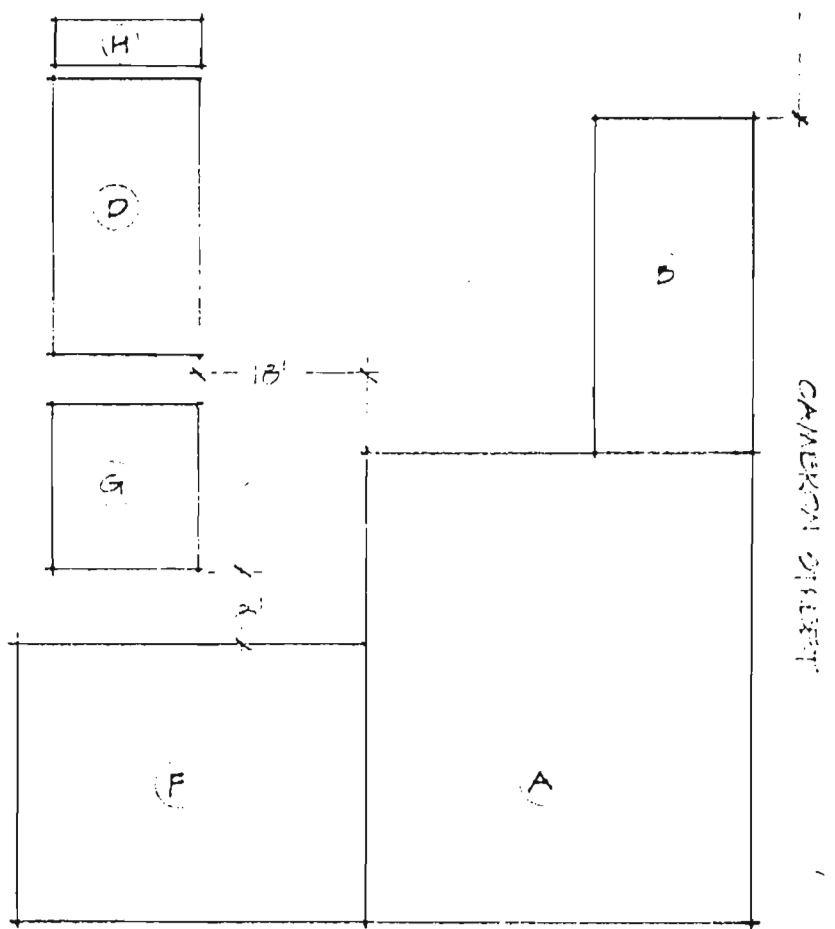
Others who enjoyed the hospitality at Gadsby's included the Marquis de Lafayette, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, John Paul Jones, Baron de Kalb, George Clinton, Benjamin Franklin, General Braddock, Aaron Burr, George Mason, George Clinton, the Lees, the Byrds, the Washingtons, the Fitzhughes, Francis Scott Key and Henry Clay. Indeed, there were very few notable men between 1752 and a century later who did not visit the tavern on journeys between Philadelphia and the South. There were few stops of any kind on the stage routes of that era, and taverns the quality of Gadsby's were very rare indeed.

209 B-20-73

B.



- (A) BRICK TAVERN - THREE STORES HIGH - 42 x 51 FEET - COVERED WITH WOOD - OCCUPIED BY MYSELF \*
  - (B) BRICK DWELLING HOUSE AND KITCHEN - TWO STORES HIGH - 36 x 17 FEET COVERED WITH WOOD - OCCUPIED BY MYSELF \*
  - (C) WOODEN STABLE - 42 x 70 FEET
  - (D) WOODEN COACHHOUSE 36 x 16 FEET
  - (E) WOODEN WASHHOUSE - 12 x 14 FEET - OCCUPIED BY MYSELF \*
  - (F) BRICK COFFEE HOUSE - 2 STORES HIGH - 32 x 30 FEET - COVERED WITH WOOD - OCCUPIED BY MRS. GRIFFITH
  - (G) WOODEN KITCHEN - ONE STORY - 12 x 12 FEET - OCCUPIED BY MRS. GRIFFITH
  - (H) WOODEN NECESSARY
- \* MYSELF - JOHN VICE



NORTH ROYAL STREET

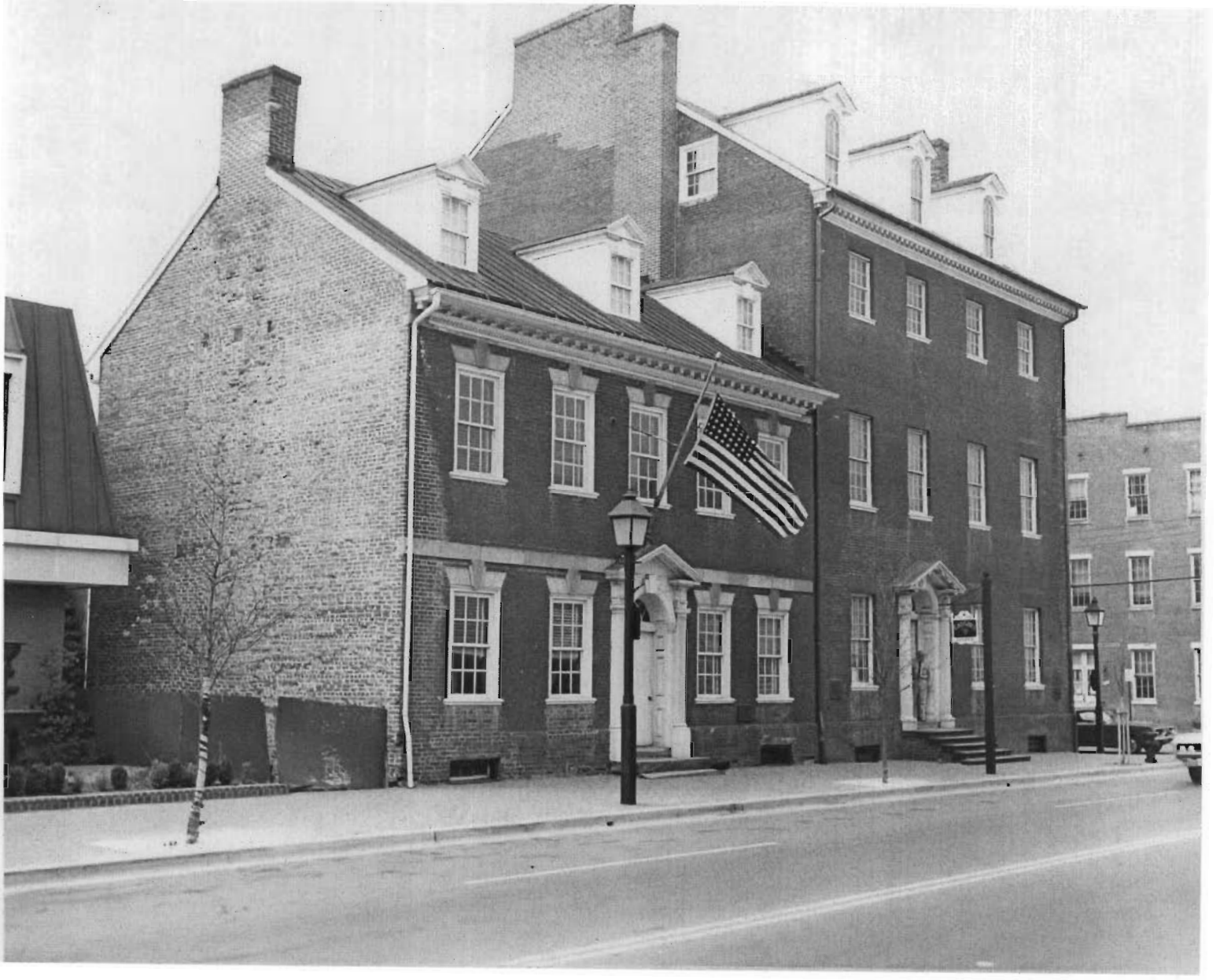
CAMERON STREET

SCALE: 1" = 20'



GADSBY'S TAVERN  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

A DESCRIPTION - MUTUAL ASSURANCE SOCIETY  
POLICY NUMBER 92 DATED 11 JUNE 1799  
BUILDINGS OWNED BY JOHN VICE



Form No. 10-301a  
(7/72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Alexandria (city)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: Gadsby's Tavern			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Gadsby's Tavern			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: 128 North Royal Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Alexandria			
STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: Alexandria (city)	CODE 510
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>			
PHOTO CREDIT: National Park Service			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1969 (confirmed Sept., 1974)			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service 1100 L. Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240			
<b>4. IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  From North Royal Street, facing northwest to Gadsby's Tavern			







Form No. 10-301a  
(7/72)

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NEGATIVE FILED AT: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service 1100 L. Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240			
<b>4. IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  From North Royal and Cameron Streets, facing southwest to Gadsby's Tavern			