

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0668923

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 17 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 2 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

Belcher - Ogden House

HISTORIC Governor Jonathan Belcher Mansion / Governor Aaron Ogden House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 1046 East Jersey Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Elizabeth

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

12th

STATE New Jersey

CODE 34

COUNTY Union

CODE *035-39*

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Elizabethtown Historical Foundation

STREET & NUMBER

31 Parker Road

CITY, TOWN

Elizabeth

STATE

New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Elizabeth City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Broad Street

CITY, TOWN

Elizabeth

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#1008.15)

DATE

1960

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation, DEP

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

EXTERIOR

The Belcher-Ogden Mansion is a 2 1/2 story, 5 bay, center hall brick dwelling built during the first half of the 18th century.

Off the east gable is a 2 1/2 story frame wing which is 2 bays over 3 bays. This wing was reconstructed in c.1965 using historical photographs and architectural/archeological data as part of the overall restoration of the building. A small one story frame wing was also rebuilt onto the 2 1/2 story frame wing at this time.

The exterior restoration of the brick unit consisted of the following:

- Removal of an early 20th century classical portico.
- Replacement of modern 1/1 sash with more appropriate 12/12 double hung sash.
- Louvered shutters were removed and paneled shutters with shutterdogs were installed on the first floor level.
- The wide double door entrance, which was Victorian, was changed into a more appropriate single leaf door with raised panels and overhead pediment.
- Chimneys were reinforced at caps.

In addition to the restoration, a large 2 1/2 story wing off the rear of the brick facade was demolished.

This rear wing was built in 1898 by Warren Dix using materials salvaged from the original kitchen wing which was deteriorating at the time. Dix eventually tore the entire frame wing off the gable end, and in doing so discovered a cast-iron fireback giving the date 1742; thus suggesting a firm date of construction.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 17 1978

DATE ENTERED NOV 1 1978

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

Belcher/Ogden Mansion
Elizabeth
Union County New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

(7. Continued)

The brick unit, which from a distance appears uniform, is actually a composition of several distinct types of bricks indicating multiple construction dates. A small section of Flemish bond brick with glazed headers is possibly the remnants of the earliest dwelling on this site (ca. 1722). This section brickwork is between the first and second floors east of the hall. Another break in the brickwork west of the hall door suggests another major renovation to the building.

The most plausible explanation for the differing patterns and sizes of bricks is that dwelling was constructed on this site around 1722 when Benjamin Ogden gave sons John and Benjamin the tract "where son John now dwells." If any of this dwelling still exists, it is most likely the small section of Flemish bond with glazed headers. This small dwelling was apparently enlarged around 1742 (note cast-iron fireback mentioned earlier) and is 2 1/2 stories high and 3 bays wide.

In order to make the building more "commodious" for Governor Jonathan Belcher in 1751, the west two bays were added. The interior appears to have been all completed at this time.

Warren Dix, who bought the property in the late 19th century, relates recalling another frame end attached to the west gable, but that upon his acquisition it was no longer extant.

INTERIOR

The interior of the brick unit of the Belcher Mansion is almost totally mid-18th century. The plan has a center hall with a single room deep.

The hall is 8'10" x 17'11" with a double leg stair against the west wall. The stairway and hall has raised panel wainscoting and chairrails. The stairrail has square newels and turned balusters.

The east room of the first floor, known as the library, has Georgian paneling, but also incorporates late Federal details. The Federal mantels have fluted columns and delicate, sharp detailing in the panel. There is an alcove on each side of the mantel entrance to which is made through an elliptical archway supported by fluted pilasters. In the soffit of the archways between the keystone and the capital of each pilaster are two ellipses.

The drawing room on the west is certainly the most elaborate with a dentil mold cornice, a broken pediment over the door in the overmantel. In the pediment over the door is an elegantly carved wooden urn. On each side of the chimney breast is an alcove highlighted by fluted pilasters.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

Belcher/Ogden Mansion
Elizabeth
Union County New Jersey 034

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 17 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

(7. Continued)

The second floor bedroom to the east is 18'6" by 17'11". The end wall is completely paneled with a center fireplace and raised panel overmantel flanked by round-arch raised panel double doors to alcoves. In the north alcove is a curious deck built into the wall with shelves and drawers and, opposite against the chimney breast are more drawers and a shallow closet. The end wall is divided into three parts - each is separated by a fluted and reeded pilaster. The side walls have raised panel wainscoting and chairrails. There is a cornice at the ceiling. Floors are random width throughout.

The large west bedroom (which is alleged to have been Governor Belcher's) is similar to the east bedroom. The hinges in this room, as elsewhere, are wrought iron H-hinges. The west room mantel and over mantel is reconstructed, all the woodwork between the pilasters having been destroyed in a fire in the late-19th century.

Timbers are hewn oak and some of the rafters appear to have been reused suggesting reconstruction after either the 1742 date or the circa 1722 period.

Around 1965 the Belcher Mansion was restored by architect Gerald Watland. While he seems to have completed a very good restoration, no record is known to exist of his documentary and architectural research conducted during the restoration.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARCHITECTURE

The Belcher Mansion and Boxwood Hall (Elias Boudinot House - NHL), one across the street from the other, are the two remaining mid-18th century Georgian style buildings in the city of Elizabeth.

Further, Belcher Mansion is among the best Georgian style interiors in New Jersey. While the exterior of the house is a simple 5 bay, center hall, single room deep, projecting a most austere appearance, the interior is clearly Georgian with characteristic symmetry, intricately carved paneling, elaborate overmantel with broken pediment on the main walls and plain, but raised, paneled wainscoting and ceiling cornice on the secondary walls.

The interior displays mid-18th century craftsmanship of an elegance seldom equalled in the state.

GOVERNMENT

Jonathan Belcher (1681-1757) who was one of New Jersey's proprietary Governors, enlarged the house significantly and lived here from about 1751 until his death in 1757.

Belcher, an American born to wealthy Cambridge Massachusetts parents, spent considerable time in Europe. On his second extended visit to England in 1729, he was appointed Governor of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Very unpopular, Belcher was removed from office in 1741.

Somehow vindicating himself, he returned from England in 1747 as the Royal Governor of New Jersey. First settling in Burlington, he later moved to Elizabethtown, leasing and occupying this house which also functioned as the colonial seat of New Jersey government until his death in 1757.

Another well-known owner, Aaron Ogden (1756-1839) was native-born Elizabethtown resident who functioned as Governor of the State of New Jersey from 1812-1813. He became the owner of the house in 1797.

Following his graduation from Princeton on 1773, Ogden taught school for a short period and then joined the Army, distinguishing himself in battle in the Revolutionary War and obtaining the rank of Colonel. After the Revolution, Ogden entered into the practice of law. He also became active in politics, performing duties as a United States Senator from New Jersey. In 1812, Ogden was selected Governor of New Jersey, and for the second time this house became the Governor's Mansion. Governor Ogden lived in the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Dix, Warren R. "Old Houses of Elizabethtown-The Belcher Mansion." Union County Historical Society Proceedings 1921-1923. (pp. 68-82)
- Mills, W.J. Historic Houses of New Jersey. Philadelphia, 1902.
- Hatfield, E.F. The History of Elizabeth, New Jersey. New York, 1868.
- Kelley, Frank B. Historic Elizabeth 1664-1914. Elizabeth Daily Journal, 1914 (p.18)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	566850	45101440	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies city number 9-431 and is approximately 140' X 104' in size.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Terry Karschner, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION: Office of Historic Preservation, DEP DATE: 8/77

STREET & NUMBER: 109 West State Street TELEPHONE: (609) 292-2028

CITY OR TOWN: Trenton STATE: New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE X LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

Deputy
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

4/29/78

TITLE Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

<p>DISCRETION, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p> <p>ATTEST: <u>Bill Lebovich</u></p> <p>KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER</p>	<p>DATE <u>4/21/78</u></p> <p>KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER</p> <p>DATE <u>10/23/78</u></p>
---	---

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 17 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1978

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

Belcher/Ogden Mansion
Elizabeth
Union County New Jersey -034

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

(8. Continued)

house from about 1797 to the 1820's, during most of his active political career. An influential Federalist, Ogden's residence was the focal point of numerous encounters with the prominent figures of the time including Aaron Burr and Marquis de Lafayette.

MILITARY

During the War for Independence, Belcher Mansion was owned by William Peartree Smith. Smith, from a prominent New York family, was a noted supporter of the Revolutionary struggle. In an important social affair during the war, Smith's daughter, Catherine, was married at the mansion to Elisha Boudinot, brother of Elias Boudinot who was later president of the Continental Congress and lived across the street in Boxwood Hall (National Historic Landmark). Among the guests were Generals Washington, Lafayette, and Alexander Hamilton. About a fortnight later, the house was invaded by British soldiers and, not procuring captives, they destroyed the furnishings in the building.

RELIGION

Reverend David Austin acquired the property shortly after the Revolution and established himself as an eccentric of some local note while in residence. As Reverend Austin was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, Belcher Mansion thus became his parsonage from 1788-1797. Austin declared in a sermon in 1796 that the world was about to come to an end. When the designated time passed without incidence, Reverend Austin is said to have preached, "The Lord delayeth His Coming." Failing in his prophecy, Austin was removed as pastor in 1797 and the house was sold.

HISTORICAL NARATIVE

The earliest reference of a structure at this site was found in Benjamin Ogden's will of 1722 which gave the tract to his sons John and Benjamin, describing it as the land "where son John now dwells."

It appears that the property remained in the hands of the Ogdens until the mid-18th century.

During the Ogden ownership, Jonathan Belcher who was a long-time occupant/leasee of the house, enlarged the structure substantially during his tenancy which began in 1751.

There is some controversy as to the ownership of the house after Governor Belcher's death in 1757. In all likelihood, William Peartree Smith bought the property directly from the Ogdens sometime around 1758. Smith was from a prominent New York family. His grandfather had been one of the first mayors of New York City and his father, Port Royal Smith, was Governor-General of Jamaica.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 17 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1978

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

Belcher/Ogden Mansion
Elizabeth
Union County New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

(8. Continued)

William Peartree Smith sold the property in 1788 to Reverend David Austin, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth who remained there until 1797.

In 1797 Colonel Aaron Ogden (1756-1839) purchased the house. A descendant of the first owners, Ogden, a Princeton graduate and lawyer, lived in the house during most of his active political life, which included Governorship of New Jersey in 1812.

Governor Ogden lost the property, due to financial difficulties and it was bought at a Sheriff's sale in 1823 by a son, Judge E.B. Dayton Ogden, from whom it passed to John J. Chetwood as trustee in 1826. It passed from him through Edward C. Mayo, Aaron L. Middlebrook, and F. D. Chetwood, to Dr. Charles David, who owned it from 1837 to 1858.

In 1858 the house again became the property of Judge Ogden who conveyed it to Amos Clark in 1865. Clark possessed the building (except for a short time) until 1898.

Warren R. Dix then purchased the property. In 1898 he conducted extensive research on the house and its owners and effectively rehabilitated the structure using as much of the original fabric as was possible.

Around 1965 the Elizabethtown Historical Foundation acquired the Belcher Mansion and restored the house to its original appearance.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 17 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1978

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

Belcher/Ogden Mansion
Elizabeth
Union County New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

9. Bibliography (continued)

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS-NJ-13). Governor Belcher
Mansion 1937.

Jonathan Belcher Inventory. October, 1757.

DaCosta, Beverley, editor, Historic Houses of America. New York, 1971 (p.172).

Union County Landmark Inventory. Report Number Nine, Union County Master
Plan. 1976, (p.29).

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Governor Jonathan Belcher/Governor Aaron Ogden
Mansion
Elizabeth
Union County, New Jersey

ADDENDA

In 1797 the Belcher/Ogden mansion was returned to the Ogden family when it was purchased by Aaron Ogden (1756-1839), a descendant of the property's original family. Aaron Ogden graduated from Princeton in 1773, and taught school for a short time until he joined the Army. He served in the Revolutionary War as a captain at the Battle of Brandywine; as an envoy of General Washington to General Clinton with the official account of the trial of Major Andre; and under General Lafayette in 1781 at Yorktown. For his service, Ogden received the rank of Colonel. After the Revolution, Ogden took up the law, and began to serve the new nation in a variety of political offices.

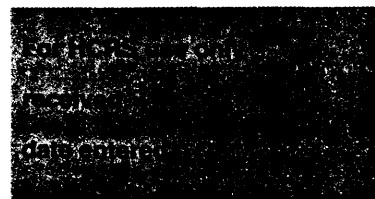
Aaron Ogden served as presidential elector, United States Senator from New Jersey (in 1801), and as Governor of New Jersey in 1812. Ogden's place in national history was made not as a politician, or even a lawyer, but as a litigant in the Supreme Court case, Gibbons vs. Ogden (1824).

LAW

As a business venture in the early 1800's, Aaron Ogden acquired monopoly rights to operate steamboats between New York and New Jersey. He was licensed by Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston, who in turn had been granted exclusive rights to operate steamboats in New York waters by the New York Legislature. Thomas Gibbons, a former partner of Ogden, began running two steamboats between New York and Elizabeth, New Jersey. This was in violation of Ogden's monopoly, but in accordance with the federal law of 1793. Ogden obtained an injunction from a New York court ordering Gibbons to stop operating his ferries in 1819. Gibbons took the blow not only as a personal one, but as an infringement on the ability to conduct free trade.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

The case moved through court after court for five years, finally reaching the Supreme Court in 1824. It was one of the important cases of Chief Justice Marshall's court which helped define the separation of state's rights and national interest. Gibbons and the case for free trade won, establishing the basis for the enormous, unrestricted flow of commerce between states which we enjoy today.

The legal battles and inroads on his business pushed Ogden into financial ruin. In 1823, Aaron Ogden was forced to sell his home at a Sheriff's sale, but it was purchased by his son. The elder Ogden apparently continued to reside in the old house, and he entertained Lafayette there during the Frenchman's triumphal visit to America in 1824.

In 1826, the Belcher-Ogden Mansion was again sold from the Ogden family, although it returned to the family one more time. Aaron Ogden's son, E. B. Dayton Ogden re-purchased the house in 1858 and lived there until his death in 1865.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gunther, Gerald. Cases and Materials on Constitutional Law.
Mineola, New York: The Foundation Press, Inc., 1975.
pp. 128-129.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. The Oxford History of the American People.

New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. pp 79, 402.

Prepared by Janet Foster
June, 1982