



The Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture

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Newsletter

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The Society for the Preservation of
**Hudson Valley
Vernacular Architecture**
is a not-for-profit corporation formed
to study and preserve vernacular
architecture and material culture.

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Drawings by Peter Sinclair

From the Editor:

Congratulations to you all! You all played an important role in historic preservation during 2011! The HVVA community is stronger than ever. We continue to grow in membership as well as in financial support. Since we have never sought government aid for our work, we gratefully recognize our community of members for their generous contributions to our collective endeavor to preserve history by research and education. I also would like to thank the members who took the time to answer our membership survey which was included with the last issue of the newsletter. We are pleased to report that an overwhelming number of responses were, "keep doing what you are doing" and "more of the same, please!" As anyone who has ever attended an HVVA board meeting knows, we are open to suggestions from the entire membership! So we are happy to see that many initiatives that have come from our general membership continue to serve you all so well. The research and education committee was also pleased to receive responses from many people living abroad, most of whom have never attended any of our tours or meetings; it is these responses which show just how important our website and newsletters are in bringing together community from the diaspora. For all of you living at a distance from the Hudson Valley, know that we who live among and some even within these vernacular structures are pledging to do our best to share them with you and the world. The one idea that was made clear to us is that our members want articles about how to maintain historic structures, and we agree! This will be addressed in 2012 with articles pertaining to timely topics for house maintenance and restoration. As

many of you fully know, HVVA membership has many fine restoration craftsmen within its ranks, so here is your chance guys to reach out to the multitudes and contribute some tips for keeping our history standing proud for future generations.

Understanding that each is endowed with differing talents to use for the betterment of our community, if you can repair walls or make window sashes, but don't claim a talent to write an article about it, we have a couple of folks who are willing to do the writing for you. So craftsmen, lets get banging away building a response to your fellow members request! Thanks to all of you who have returned the survey; those who haven't can find a survey form to print out at www.HVVA.org. It is never too late to tell us what you want, but we need to hear from you in order serve you.



Now as we bring this year to a close let us all take a little time to be grateful for the community we have created. A community which maintains an order of mutual respect, one that listens to diverse perspectives, a group who respects the old, but strives to include the new. A group which provides not only structural support but more importantly personal support. I am personally always humbled, but also exhilarated when I see what an amazing group assembles each month for an HVVA meeting. We come together for study and to conduct business, but most of all we gather for the important work of Fellowship. Isn't it nice to consider how in the preserving of buildings we might just be saving ourselves? May we continue to bless each other and the world we encounter in 2012!

Rob Sweeney – HVVA sheepdog

From Carl's Scrapbook: The Luykas van Alen House Kinderhook, Columbia County, New York

By Walter Richard Wheeler

In keeping with this issue's Columbia County theme, this installment of material from Carl Erickson's scrapbook reproduces his recording of the Van Alen house in Kinderhook, which he visited some time in late 1956 or early 1957. You might recall that Carl was not quite a teen when he began his recording of buildings in the Hudson Valley, many of which are now gone. He has generously allowed us to publish selections from the scrapbook he compiled during the second half of the 1950s.

When Carl and his parents visited the Van Alen house it was not much more than a ruin. The Historic American Building Survey visited the house in April 1934, and recorded it with measured drawings and photographs (*Photo 1 and Figure 1*). Carl sketched a plan of the house as he found it in 1956 (*Figure 2*). Unfortunately, no interior photos are part of the documentation package, making Carl's two images of the interior all the more important; they record the appearance of some aspects of the house before the first round of restoration was accomplished in the 1960s (*Photos 2 thru 6*). That restoration removed

Figure 1:
HABS drawing from 1934

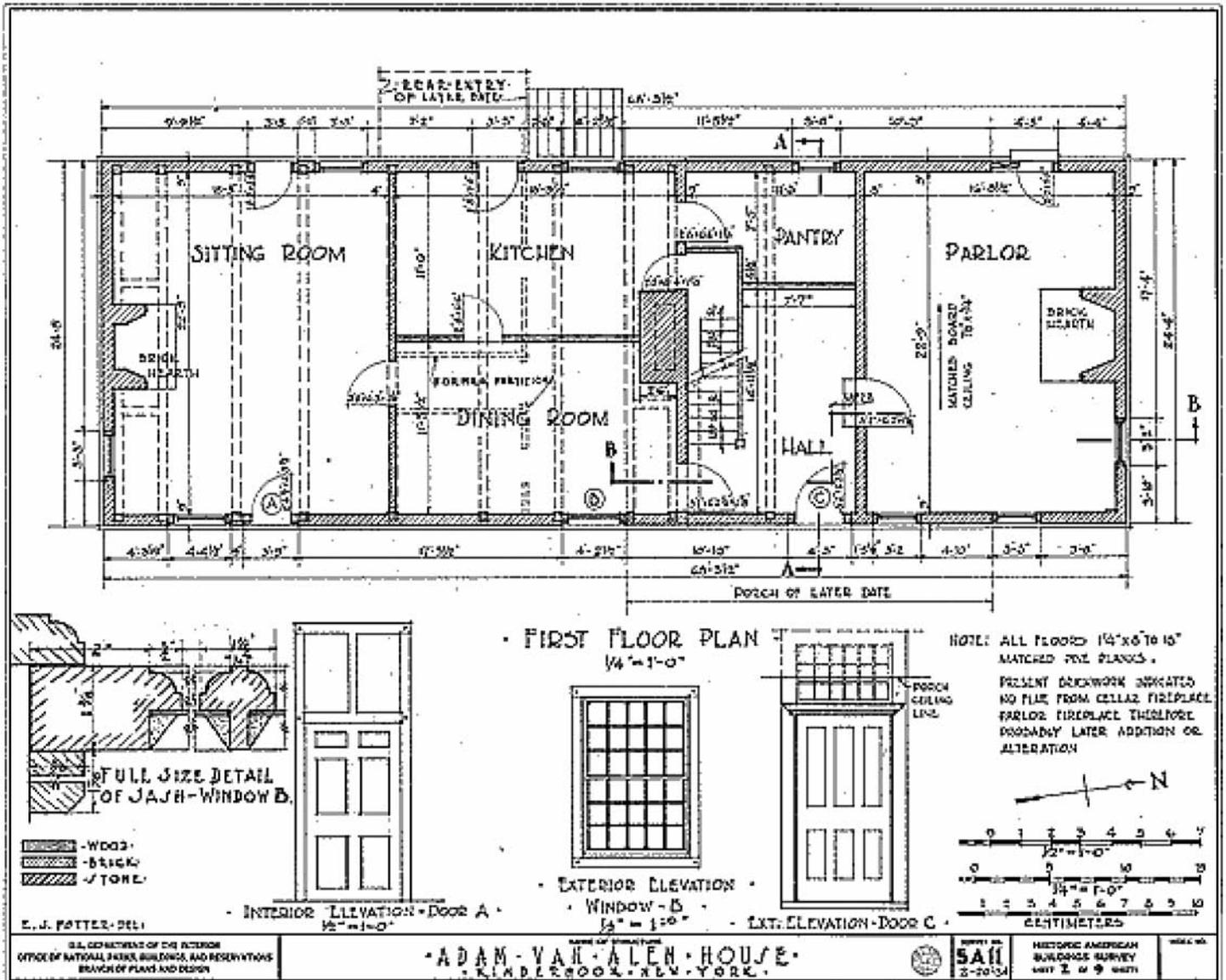




Photo 1:
West-southwest view, by Norman R. Sturgis, April 1934

many late eighteenth and nineteenth century features, and replaced the nineteenth century stair with one taken from the Jan Breese house, formerly located on River Road (Route 9J) in East Greenbush, Rensselaer County, which was roughly contemporary with the Van Alen house, and was razed in the late 1930s.

Carl's first photograph is quite similar to that taken by Norman R. Sturgis, an Albany architect, in April 1934 as part of the HABS documentation (*Photos 1 and 2*). Additional early photographs of the interior and exterior of the Van Alen house are available as part of the two Historic Structure Reports completed for the building, in 1972 by Ruth Piwonka and Rod Blackburn, and in 2001 by John G. Waite Associates, both for the Columbia County Historical Society.

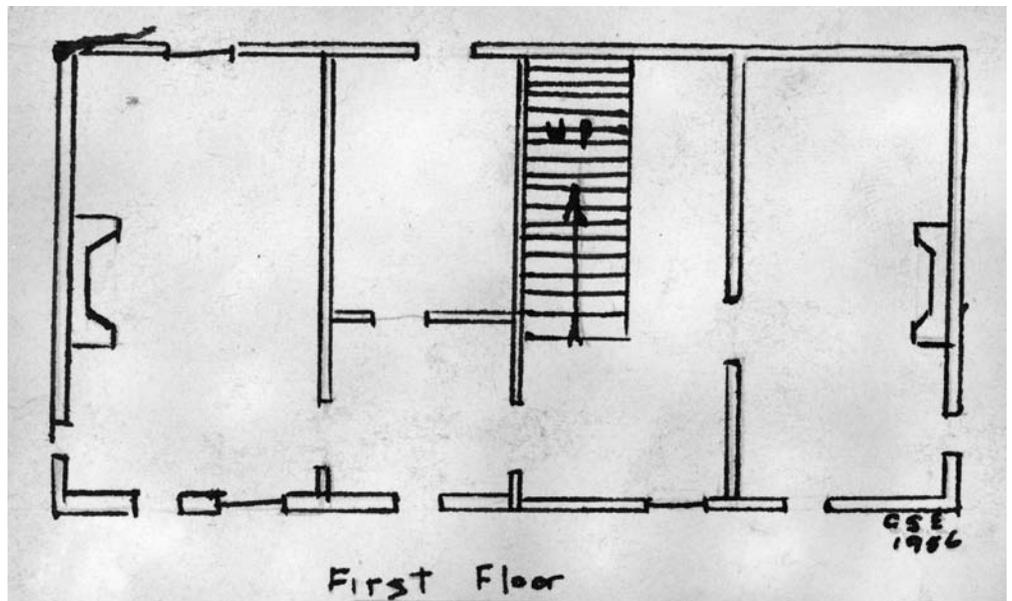


Figure 2:
Carl's sketch plan of the house, 1956



Photo 2:
West-southwest view by Carl Erickson, 1956.



Photo 3:
View from Route 9H, looking west-northwest, 1956.

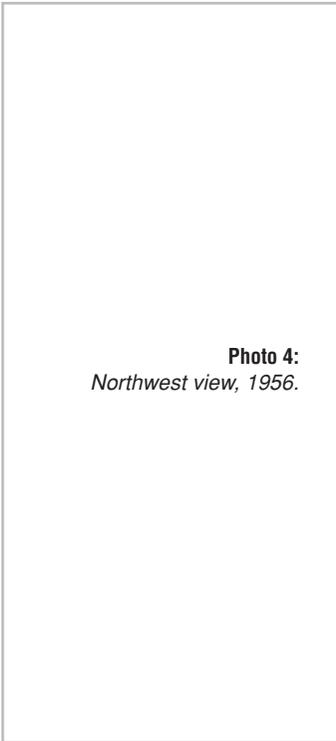


Photo 4:
Northwest view, 1956.



Photo 5:
Interior, looking east-southeast at door and transom in south room, 1956.



Photo 6:
Interior, looking southeast, showing now-removed fireplace, 1956.



Around the Neighborhood

By Ken Walton (photos by author unless otherwise noted)

When I was informed the theme of this issue of the newsletter is to be on Columbia County, I looked at the HVVA map for the county to come up with a selection of houses for this column. I quickly notice a fairly obvious pattern through out the county based on the basic construction materials used in erecting the walls of the buildings. The map's "flags" for each of the houses are color coded. The blue flags represent stone houses. Red means the house has a brick veneer (or at least the front of the house is brick). Green flags are for wooden houses. Looking at the flags around the county of Columbia, with a few exceptions, one's attention is quickly focused on three distinct columns of color stretching from the bottom of the county to the top. The first being at the west side of the county, one will notice a line of blue flags along the shore of the Hudson River. Next to be noticed is a dominate column of red flags to the right or east of the blue ones. Lastly, although a bit more scattered about, but the vast majority of the green flags lay to the right or even further east of the red ones. As such patterns become defined, it evokes a curiosity to discover the meaning or intent behind the creation of these configurations. Now, I not declaring there was such scheme as I know of no evidence to support such a theory and it may be totally coincidental for all I know, but it is a notion worth exploring... and speaking of exploring, the ordering in which theses houses are listed lend themselves for a pleasant afternoon driving tour. With the leaves off the trees, now is the perfect season to go house hunting.

In the Neighborhood

However, the purpose of this column is to identify the pattern in more detail by observing how the houses are situated to one another. I will leave the reasoning (if there is one) to those more scholarly than myself. To start, with the exception of the Clermont mansion (or also known as the Livingston estate) and its brick veneer within view of the Hudson River, the handful of stone houses of Columbia County start with the well known Konradt Lasher house, also known as {a.k.a.} the Stone Jug) just to the north of the mansion on State Route (SR) 9G in Germantown and continuing north near the river with the next one being the nearby 1746 Pfarrhaus



Bont House at 6009 Route 9G. A portion of this stone house is claimed to have been built circa 1730 by either Jan or Hendrick Bont.

or Parson's house at 52 Maple Avenue right in the hamlet of Germantown. Getting back onto SR 9G traveling north to one nearly reaches the city of Hudson, the Bont house will appear on your left. A portion of this impressive "L" shaped stone house is claimed to be built around 1730 by either Jan or Hendrick Bont.

In Helen Reynolds' book on Dutch houses in the Hudson Valley, she mentions a stone house just to the southeast of Hudson, NY that was in ruins in 1925. Then on the property of Knickerbocker Cement, the company had in their office the date stone carved with "Ano Nor 1729 VH" attributing the home to the Van Hoesen family. A cement plant is still in operation in the area, but I wonder if they are still in possession of the date stone. To the north of the city and again close to the river is the Van Salsbergen House which lays tucked back off the road at 333 Joslen Boulevard. This early stone house was recently listed on the National

Van Salsbergen House – With an estimated build date of c. 1700, this may be one of the earliest stone houses in the region that still exists today. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in November, 2010.



Register of Historic Places in November of 2010. Just two and a half miles north as the crow flies at the mouth of the Stockport Creek is the Staats House which is also mentioned in Reynolds' book. To reach there by roads, take Station Road (a.k.a. County Route 22) from US 9 and follow it to nearly the end; just before reaching the railroad tracks. Following the Kinderhook Creek north on US 9 from where it spills into the Stockport Creek, one will find what appears to be a late 18th century stone Georgian two story house on the east side of the road at the corner with Frisbee Lane. While the property was originally owned by Richard I. Goes (Hoes), the first person known to lived in this house is Abram A. Van Alen when he acquired the house in 1847. The name Frisbee came into play through marriage into the family in 1876.

The only stone house that does not fit into this pattern is the one at 134 Legget Road in Ghent. Last year, the HVVA toured several late 18th century wood frame houses that surround this place. I would like to think this is the oldest house on the road, perhaps the original Legget homestead, but I have no facts to support this.

Following the Kinderhook Creek further into the interior of the county, it brings one to the "top" of the column of the brick constructed house that runs more or less down the center of the county. Starting in Valatie at 1319 River Road. This modest brick house is claimed to be built around 1760 on land settled circa 1694 by Johannes Tyssen Goes. The house is believed to be the ancestral home of Maria Hoes, the mother of President Martin Van Buren. Just to the south, the village of Kinderhook is well known for its concentration of 18th century brick houses. On the north side of the main drag of Broad Street, starting with the Peter Van Schaack House built in 1785, but has been turned into a glamorous Victorian mansion. On the same block is the Van Schaack – Vanderpoel House built in 1774 as a classic Georgian. The next block over, is the John Quilhot House where is believed Benedict Arnold recovered for a time from his wound received at the Battle of Bemis Heights (Saratoga) in 1777. Diagonally across the street and back off the road a bit is the Schemerhorn-Pruyn-Beekman House built around 1713 and, too, is ment-



Abram Staats House – Although the historical marker posted in front of this house claims this is the house of Abram Staats built between 1654–1664, it is more likely built by a son or grandson of the same first name in the early part of the 18th century.

newsletter. Just a little farther west on Fingar Road is the Delamater house; a gambrel roofed, two story brick Georgian of the latter half of the 18th century. Just a few hundred yards further west but still in sight from the Delamater house is stone house of unknown origins. However, it still fits into the pattern as it is the western most of this cluster of old houses. Then at the southern central portion of the county there is the brick houses of Dirk Wessese Ten Broeck (1762) at 85 Buckwheat Bridge Road (but cannot be seen from the

Van Alstyne House (a.k.a. Tory House) is of a more common form of the mid–18th century brick houses found in Columbia County.



Right across the street at 31 William Street is what appears to be an 18th century stone house with brick additions to the front and back creating an unusual cross shaped footprint.

A close up of the elaborate brickwork found on the gable end at 26 William Street in Kinderhook.



ioned in Reynolds' book. Continuing on the same road to the western edge of the village is the 18th century Van Alstyne House also known as the Tory House. Turning back to the heart of the village, at 15 Hudson Street is a brick fronted house with clapboard siding on the sides. This place was for sale back in 2010 and is claimed to have been built in 1728 and used as a refuge during infrequent Indian attacks. One block to the east at 26 William Street is a one and a half story, gambrel roof, center entry house with the date 1766 done in bricks along with other amazing brickwork features and briefly mentioned in Reynolds' book. Unfortunately despite the appearance of affluence of the original owner, any history about the place seems to be lost. Across the street, is a stone house that is an exception to the pattern, if it is an 18th century house. I do feel that the brick portions of the house are additions to an original stone structure. Unfortunately, I have no information about this intriguing place at 31 Williams Street. And of course, one cannot talk about Kinderhook and not mention the well known and published Van Alen brick house just south of the village on SR 9H. Further south on SR 9H, is the Jonas Skinkle brick house that has been written about before in the Aug-Oct, 2008 HVVA newsletter.

As one heads south towards Claverack, where the next concentration of brick house are, on SR 66 is the only Van Hoesen house left still standing, but barely. Vacant for nearly 50 years, there is a grassroots movement attempting to save the structure before it deteriorates to a point of no return. It is believed to be built between 1715-24 by Jan Hanneessee, a grandson of patentee, Jan Franse Van Hoesen. In Claverack, on the main street, at 602 SR 23B, is the brick house of Cornelius C. Muller, where the iron anchor ties holding up the front brick veneer wall spell out the date 1767. This is another Dutch house mentioned in Reynolds' book. Just to the west of the hamlet on Spook Rock Road are three 18th century brick houses. Two of which HVVA toured in May of this year; the Keeler House, named after the most recent family to live here, the northern portion of this house was possibly built c.1715 by an unknown builder as a gable fronted house. The other house visited during the same tour was the Conyn–Van Rensselaer House. In between is the diminutive Tobias Van Duesen house, where the brick house was latter added onto with a rear stone addition and then a wooden addition on the creek side of the house. Although not toured this year, there is an article about the house in the Aug-Oct 2008 HVVA



On the main street through Kinderhook, is the John Quilhot House; marked 1770 in brick. This house is known historically to have housed Benedict Arnold when he was recovering from his wound received in the Battle of Saratoga.

While I don't have any information on this stone house at 134 Leggett Road, it is one of the very few that breaks away from the pattern of stone houses along the Hudson River and is found in the interior of the county.

Found by a real estate ad, it claimed this wood framed house is Dutch built around 1740.



road) and Samuel Ten Broeck – Livingston (1773) at the end of Calendar House Road. This establishes our brick column of houses running down the center of the county.

For the third column of wood constructed houses to the east of the brick column, the plotting of the sites is far from being comprehensive, but I believe there are enough to "paint the picture". Starting off in the town of Ghent, where the HVVA did a tour in November of 2009 at 397 Old Post Road was discovered a brick house laid in Flemish bond which appears to be of 18 century, but nothing more is known about this place. To the east, Leggett Road runs parallel to the Old Post Road and on it lies some late 18th century wood houses, such as the Hamm House at 342 Leggett Road and the place at 297, which possibly belonged to the Traver family. At 1346 County Route 22, sits the Nicholas Kittle house; a H-Frame timber construction built c.1785. For more information about these houses, see the Jan.-Mar. 2010 HVVA newsletter. Also in the area at 5 Link Road is a plain, two story Georgian that started out as a blacksmith shop around 1790.

The Nosy Neighbor

In Craryville, at 55 Cross Street, is a wooden house which was claimed to be a circa 1740 Dutch house by the real estate ad I had seen a couple of years ago, but I know nothing more about. Again, you will note that there are several houses mentioned in the issue that have very little if any background information about them. If you know of anything more about these places or any others, I surely would like to hear from you. Until next time... happy hunting.

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For more information about most of these houses, go to www.HVVA.org and click on the "Mapping History" link under the "Research & Resources" heading. Please send any comments you have to: kaw9862@optonline.net or by mail to: Ken Walton, 12 Orchard Dr., 2nd Floor, Gardiner, NY 12525. If [HVVA] is at the beginning on the subject line of the email, it will help me expedite a response.

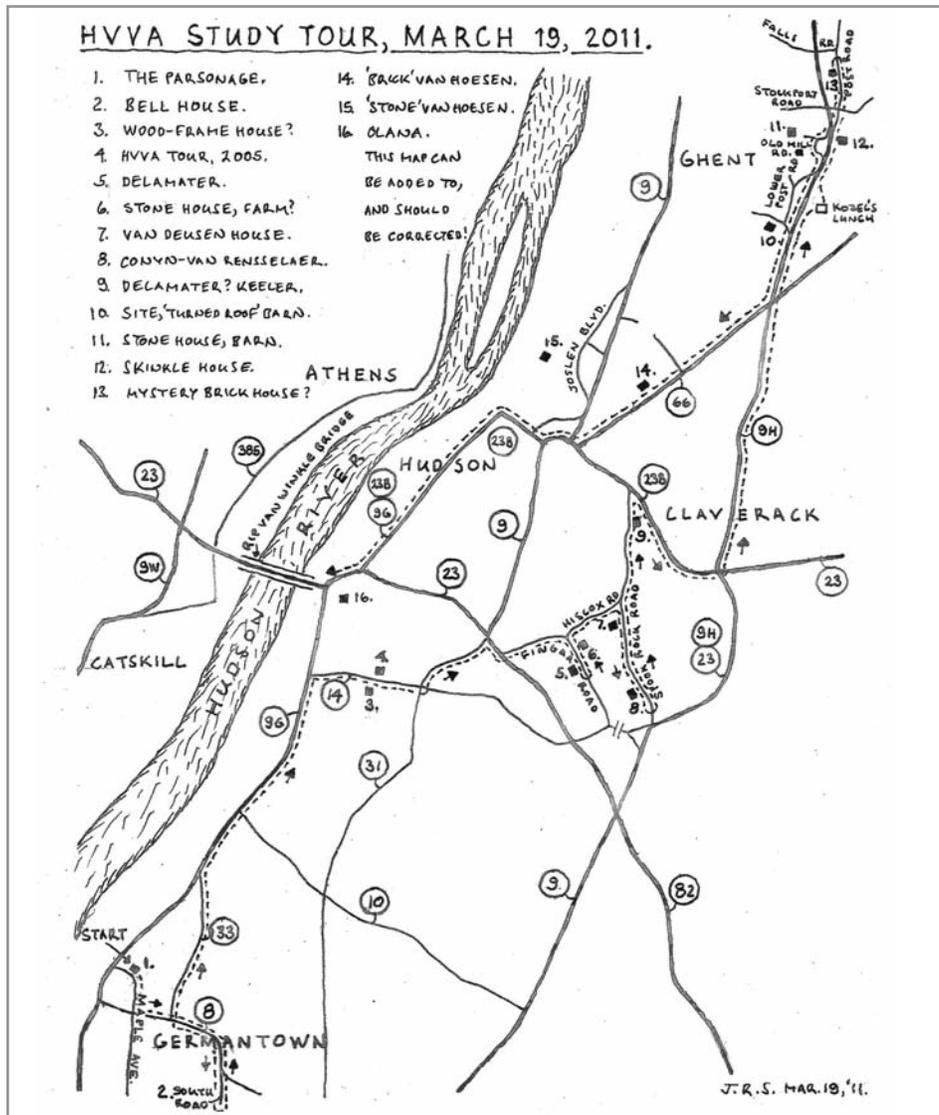
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HVVA Columbia County Study Tour – March 19, 2011

By John R. Stevens



Mystery House, Route 14, South side, West of Route 31, Town of Greenport.



The March tour revisited several sites that had been seen previously in Columbia County and also broke some new ground. We started off at the mid-18th century Lutheran Parsonage at Germantown which has been visited several times in the past and was a good meeting point for the tour participants. After the group had assembled and had an opportunity to inspect this interesting building again we set off to see, on Route 33 south of Germantown the rehabilitated and expanded 1840s period house of a Mr. Bell who uses it as a weekend retreat. Its compact exterior belied its spaciousness within, which makes the maximum usefulness of the available space.

We retraced our steps back through Germantown and north up Route 9G to Route 14, Church Road proceeding east on it. On the north side we inspected a house now vacant and on the market that HVVA visited in 2005. It started out in the 18th century as a timber-framed one-room house which has a larger brick addition, in Dutch cross-bond, built in the early 1800s. The quality of the brickwork is very good, but has suffered from heavy-handed re-pointing. On the south side of Church Road, not far distant, we saw, on a rise at the end of fairly long driveway, a 1½ story, five-bay timber framed house covered with weatherboards. It has a relatively steep roof with and chimneys. It appears to be 18th century, has an interesting character and would be a good subject for a closer examination.

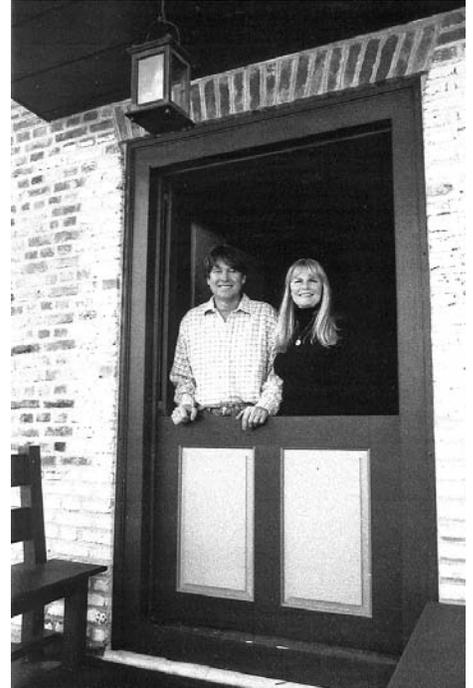
Proceeding north on Route 14 to Route 23 going east, we shortly made a left turn on to Fingar Road to look at a 2-story, gambrel-roofed five-bay brick house. It has

Delamater House on Fingar Road.





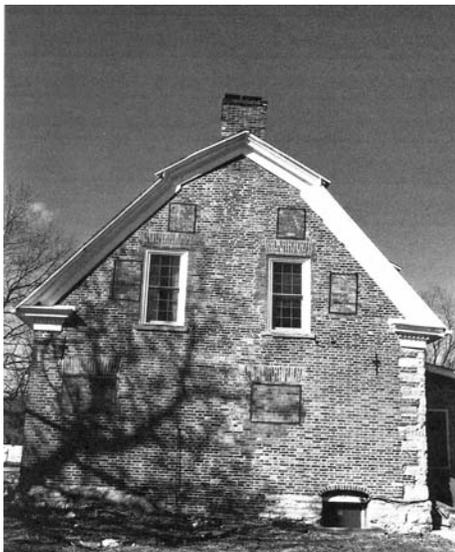
ON THIS PAGE: *Conyn-Van Rensselaer House.*
The photo above was taken in 1999.



recently been painted a garish bright red! Nancy Ginsberg showed me this house about five years' ago – she identified it as a Delamater house. Its proportions are similar to her Conyn-van Rensselaer house. Nancy had been able to get into it and took interior photographs, which showed it had high-style English Georgian woodwork. The hall and its grand stairway have survived in near original condition. Nearby, on the other side of Fingar Road we saw a farm complex with a 1½ story stone house of late 18th or early 19th century character built end-on into a bank – a feature suggestive of Palatine origins. This site deserved further study. The ideal way to reach our next destination, the Conyn-van Rensselaer house would have been to proceed south on Fingar Road to Stone Mill Road and then north on route 29, Spook Rock Road. But as Jim Decker and I found out on our planning excursion for the tour, Stone Mill Road is closed on account of repairs to the bridge over Claverack Creek. So we had to detour via Hiscox Road to Spook Rock Road, very near the mid 18th century van Deusen house that HVVA studied in 2007 (see Newsletter for Sept.-Oct. 2008). The Conyn-van Rensselaer house was purchased by Nancy Ginsberg about 10 years ago. It is an imposing two story, five bay structure of Dutch cross-bond brickwork with an early stone wing. It is dated 1766 on the north gable, and this gable is edged with *vlechtingen* which for some reason were not used on the south gable. The south gable never had parapets, so



ABOVE AND BELOW:
75 Spook Rock Road, Greenport.



the *vlechtingen* treatment was purely for decorative effect. There are other houses known on which this was done – notably the Rensselaer-Nichol house in Bethlehem (c. 1730s) and the John Pruy house in Kinderhook, dated 1766 in header bricks in a style similar to the gable-end date on Conyn-van Rensselaer.

Our group was met at the front door by Mark and Holly Dreyer in the absence of Nancy Ginsberg, and we were given full access to the interior of the house. Some HVVA members, myself included, had visited the house from the early period on Nancy's ownership, and a number of them played a role in its restoration. A serious problem with the house was caused in the early 19th century when, in order to install lath-and-plaster ceilings the original hand-planed beams were substantially reduced in depth to match that of the beams in the partitions. About 4 inches was taken off the bottoms of the beams – more from the hood beams. This weakened the beams causing them to deflect badly. Nancy Ginsberg wanted to expose the beams, apart from stiffening up the floor structure, and had the old beams replaced with ones of the right sectional dimensions – re-used timbers from industrial structures. The result is very good!

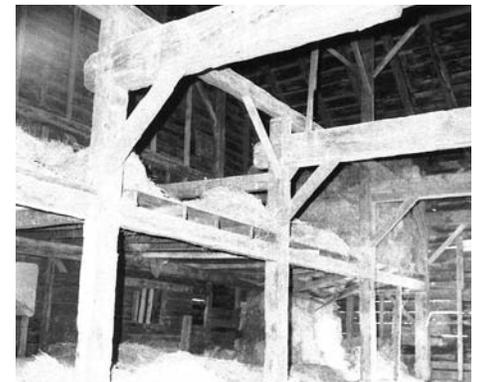
The fireplaces in the main house and the wing were in poor condition, and they were taken out. The first floor fireplace at the north end of the house was originally of the jambless type. The front cornice molding from it was found in the attic. After the structural repairs to the house had been

carried out, Nancy engaged our hosts of the day, Mark and Holly to restore the interior of the house, and they made an excellent job of this, as we saw on our visit. Some of the basic fireplace reconstruction had been carried out before they got involved by Conrad Fingado. The window frames had new sash of a design appropriate to the 1760's installed in them. A large timber-framed addition was attached to the stone wing for contemporary living accommodations for Mr. and Mrs. Ginsberg thus sparing the old buildings from plumbing improvements.

The outstanding surviving original interior feature of the house is the staircase, of a certain 'Dutch' character, that extends from the first floor to the attic. Several original doors have survived, as well as a number of pieces of early paneling in a re-used context.

After we had seen all we wanted at the Conyn-van Rensselaer house, there was 'agitation in the ranks' that we have lunch right away instead of looking at another house. So we proceeded north up Route 9H through the Village of Claverack, through the intersection at Route 66. At the north west corner of this intersection, we saw that the roof of the fine Federal period brick building – probably built as an inn – had collapsed and the gable walls were crumbling away. Our lunch destination was Kozel's restaurant, near Lower Post Road. In the 1960s, I had examined and measured on Lower Post Road, quite close to 9H, the first 'turned roof' Dutch barn I had ever seen. This type of barn has its roof at right angles to the nave/threshing floor. This barn appeared to have been built this way, but other examples are alterations made to the standard-form Dutch barn. Drawings of this barn accompany the article. It was demolished not very long after I recorded it.

Interior view of the barn on Lower Post Road, Town of Ghent.

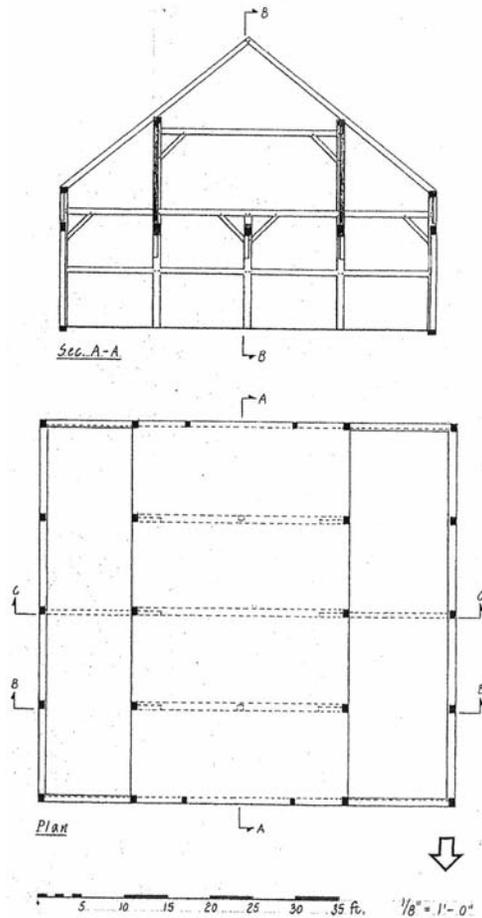


It had been my intention after lunch to continue north on Route 9H, first to Old Mill Road near the Skinkle house (see Newsletter, Aug.-Sept.-Oct. 2008) to see a large Dutch barn and the adjacent farmhouse, a stone 'double house' that originally had twin front doorways like the Luykas van Alen house. When I first saw the barn, it was exceptional in retaining its manger

although the overhead feed rack was missing. The manger was subsequently removed but I had measured it. A drawing of the barn and details of the manger accompany this article. There are also photographs of the manger in *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America*, figures 85, 86. I had also hoped to proceed even farther north on 9H,

to Stockport Road, and east of 9H on Post Road drive past a steep-roofed brick house, the kitchen wing of which possesses a prominent bypass flue for a basement fireplace. This house deserves further investigation.

Because of time limitations, after lunch we drove directly to the house of Gene and Donna Keeler that I had scheduled examining before lunch. This is at 75 Spook Rock Road. It has intrigued me for many years. A year ago a group of HVVA members were in the area and we took the opportunity to knock on the door of this house and introduce ourselves. The owners let us have a look at the interior and were very receptive to the idea of HVVA including the house in one of our study tours. I had somehow gotten the information that it was a Delamater house, but its actual name needs to be verified.



'Turned roof' barn, Lower Post Road, W. of 9H. Town of Ghent, Columbia Co., N.Y.

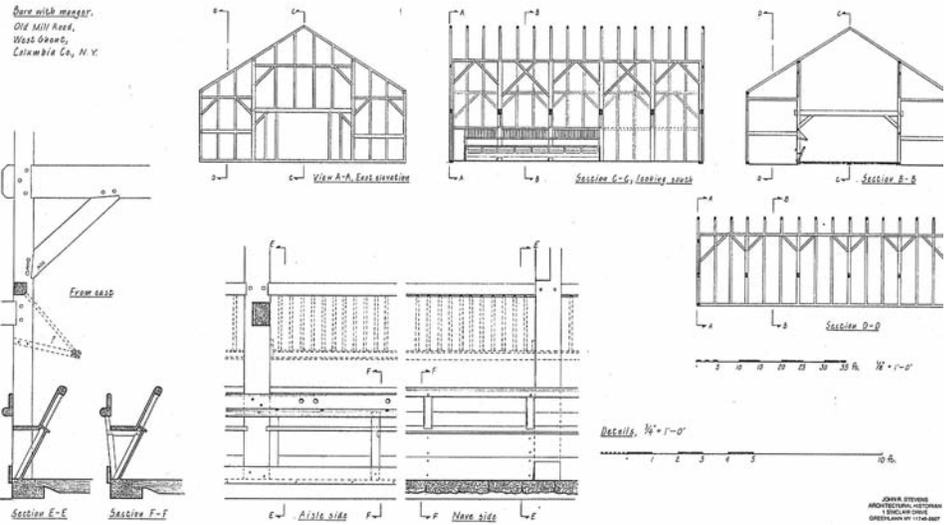
JOHN R. STEVENS
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
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Barn on Lower Post Road, Town of Ghent.

It is one-and-a-half story with a gambrel roof. Its front wall, 57 feet long, facing west, is of Dutch cross-bond brickwork. The south wall is also cross-bond brickwork but the north wall and the east walls are all stone. The 'ell' at the north side of the house with its leanto roof is misleading. It is actually part of the original construction. Internal examination of the house had shown that the north part of the house had been built in the early 18th century as a two room 'double' house- essentially two standard-sized one-room houses back-to-back. Originally it had back-to-back jambless fireplaces on the partition wall. Its gable ends faced west (to the road) and east.

The original house measured 40 feet, 6 inches west to east, and 24 feet, 8 inches north-south. At a possible relatively early date, an addition was built against the south wall, and flush with the west wall, 32 feet, 4 inches north-south, and 28 feet, 4 inches west to east. Its roof would have been at right angles to that of the original section. Within the original section of the house, the first and second floor beams are exposed. The first floor beam are of oak, rough hewn, and the second floor beam are of pine, of large section and smoothly finished. The second floor beams in the addition are hidden under plaster ceilings. In the basement, the first floor beams of the addition, except for three at the north end are smoothly planed indicating that this was work space for the house's occupants. At the south end of the basement there is a trimmed opening, as if for a centered hearth, 5 feet, 10 inches wide by 11 feet, 3 inches long.





ABOVE: Barn on Old Mill Road, West Ghent.

ABOVE, FROM TOP:
House on Old Mill Road, West Ghent.
Barn on Old Mill Road, West Ghent.
Barn interior on Old Mill Road, West Ghent.

BELOW:
Skinkle Barn, 9H, Ghent.



It is interesting to hypothesize how the house was transformed, probably around the middle of the 18th century into what we see today. It appears as if a decision was made to modernize the house, first by giving it a gambrel roof – a roof type that became fashionable in the middle years of the century, as we had seen earlier in the Conyn-van Rensselaer house, and the Delamater house on Fingar Road both of which were built in the mid 1760s (as also the Ten Broeck Bouwerie in Clermont which some of us have visited). The roof changes involved the total removal of the original roofs. The next reconstructive feat was to replace the original stone walls on the west side and south end of the house with Dutch cross-bond brickwork. These changes would seem to be largely an esthetic decision and would not have added any usable space to the interior of the house. In fact, in this house the change to a gambrel roof may have reduced available space in the upper part of the house. The whole operation of reconstructing the house into the form we see today would have been a significant engineering accomplishment requiring great skill. The writer has known this house since the 1960's and had he not gotten into it last year would not have tumbled to the fact of its early origins and subsequent transformation. Dealing with these early buildings, you never know what you are going to find. No early house stands today without major changes having been made to it, and it can be a tedious job extracting the information to discover the original form and details. Surprises are still waiting for us – which keeps our interest up and keeps us alert for the unexpected.



Mystery House, West side of Post Road, North of Stockport Road.

Mystery House...note bypass flue on wing.



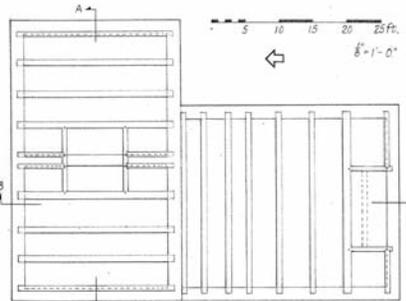
*Delamater(?) - Keeler house,
75 Spook Rock Rd., nr. Hudson, Colu. Co., N.Y.*



North elev. J.R. Stevens, June 2011.



*Delamater(?) - Keeler house,
75 Spook Rock Road, near Hudson, Columbia County, N.Y.*



First floor framing plan. J.R. Stevens, June 2011.

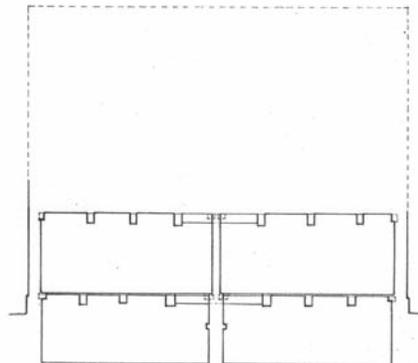
**Delamater (?) - Keeler House,
75 Spook Road, near Hudson,
Columbia County, NY.**

*Delamater(?) - Keeler house,
75 Spook Rock Road, near Hudson, Columbia County, N.Y.*

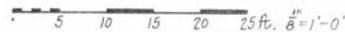


West elevation J.R. Stevens, June 2011.

*Delamater(?) - Keeler house,
75 Spook Rock Rd., nr. Hudson, Colu. Co., N.Y.*



Section A-A J.R. Stevens, June 2011.



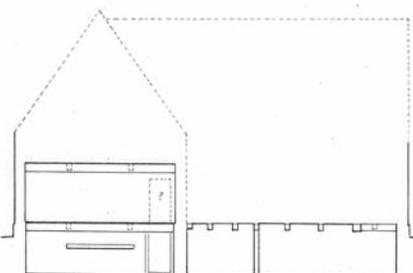
*Delamater(?) - Keeler house,
75 Spook Rock Rd., nr. Hudson, Colu. Co., N.Y.*



South elev. J.R. Stevens, June 2011.

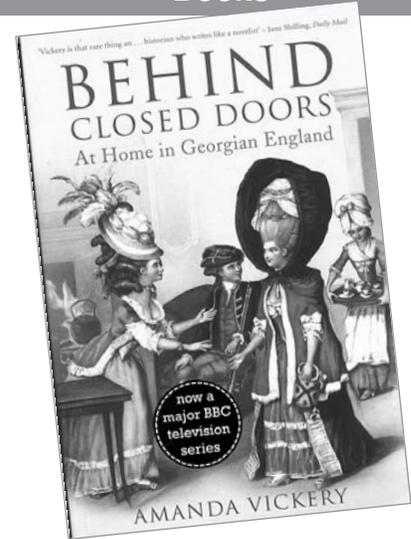


*Delamater(?) - Keeler house,
75 Spook Rock Road, near Hudson, Columbia County, N.Y.*



Section B-B J.R. Stevens, June 2011.

Books



In this brilliant new work, Amanda Vickery unlocks the homes of Georgian England to examine the lives of the people who lived there. Writing with her customary wit and verve, she introduces us to men and women from all walks of life: gentlewoman Anne Dormer in her stately Oxfordshire mansion, bachelor clerk and future novelist Anthony Trollope in his dreary London lodgings, genteel spinsters keeping up appearances in two rooms with yellow wallpaper, servants with only a locking box to call their own.

Vickery makes ingenious use of upholsterer's ledgers, burglary trials, and other unusual sources to reveal the roles of house and home in economic survival, social success, and political representation during the long eighteenth century. Through the spread of formal visiting, the proliferation of affordable ornamental furnishings, the commercial celebration of feminine artistry at home, and the currency of the language of taste, even modest homes turned into arenas of social campaign and exhibition.

This book should have a broad appeal to HVVA members especially those who like to get a feel of how houses were lived in the 18th Century. Although this work was based on research from England, it does offer some clues into the mindset of some of the people that built the great houses of Columbia County by looking at who they were trying to emulate.

Vernacular Documents VI

An indenture for building a house for William Powers, in Spencertown, Columbia County, New York, 1786

By *Walter Richard Wheeler*

Among the individually accessioned documents in the collection of the Manuscripts and Special Collections department of the New York State Library at Albany is an indenture between William Powers and William Dean for the construction of a substantial house in 1786. It is presented here, retaining quirks of spelling and capitalization:

This Indented Agreement Between Willm Powers of Kings District in the County of Albany & Willm Dean of the District of Hills Dale & County of Albany aforesaid first the said Willm Dean for himself His Executors Administrators & Assigns doth Promise to and with the said Willm Powers his Executors administrators & assigns by these Presents in Manner following that he the said Willm Dean His Excuts Adminstrs & Assgns for the Consideration herein after Mentioned shall & will Build and sett up in a Workman Like Manner one New Tenement or Dwelling House forty five feet in Length & Thirty five feet in Width two story High Each Story to be Nine feet and half High Betwixt Joists. Unless said Powers shall otherwise Direct together with a Stoop Ten feet in Width the Length of said House on the Back side & shall make Four Rooms on Each Floor together with a Hall, Eleven feet Wide Leading through said House, and one Small Room to be Made & finish'd In One End of the Hall in the second Floor, and a Kitchen Made & finished in one End of the Cellar, where said Powers shall Direct the Roof to be a Hipt Roof and said Dean is to Do and Perform all the Carpenters and Joiners Work to finish it Compleat said House in a fashionable and Workmanlike Manner and to find all the Timber, Planks Boards Shingles Lath & all the Wood of Whatever Name or Nature Necessary or Wanting to finish & Compleat said House. Said House to be finished & Completed By the first day of October in the Year of Our Lord 1787 To Include Closets Cupboards Cloaths Presses Window Shutters Lathing for Plaistering and all the Stuff Necessary to be Seasoned to be well Seasoned fit for said Work, & said House To sett up on a Spot of Ground where said Powers shall Direct & the said Powers in Consideration of the said House being Built & finish'd in Manner aforesaid By the said Willm Dean his Executr Adminstrs & assigns shall and

will Truly Pay unto the said Dean his Exturs Adminisrs & assigns The sum of Three Hundred Pounds at Three Several Payments that is to say One Hundred Pounds in a Negro Man Named Jeff which the said Dean has Now in His Possession and one Hundred Pounds in Neat Cattle or Goodes out of said Powers Shope, on or Before the first Day of April 1789 & one Hundred Pounds on or Before the first Day of October one Thousand seven Hundred & Eighty Nine & to find the said Dead [?] & Hands he shall Employ in Building said House with Victuals and Drink when at work on said House, & for the Performance of all & Every Article and Agreement, above Mentioned, the said Willm Powers & Willm Dean do hereby Bind Themselves, their Exectrs Adminss & assigns Each to the other, in the Penal Sum of Six Hundred Pounds NYork Currency firmly by these Presents is witness hereunto we have Hereunto Interchangeably sett Our Hands & seal this 20th of March 1786.

Seal'd & Deliverd in the Presence off,
Joseph Wadsworth William Dean
Abel House William Powers¹

The complex nature of the payment arrangements, which included human trafficking, value in livestock or barter for shop goods, and exchange of currency, was not uncommon in the years immediately after the close of the Revolution. The house described in this document was typical of those structures built in the Hudson Valley by well-to-do landowners in the years immediately after the Revolution. There is no indication in the indenture respecting the framing system; this was frequently left up to the discretion of the builder.

William Powers was the son of Dr. Peter Powers and Mary Allworth, who had been married in Stonington, CT in 1740.² His parents were originally from Ireland and are buried along with William in what is today the Spencertown Cemetery.³

Because of changes in boundaries of counties and towns, Powers residence in Kings District in the County of Albany later came under the jurisdiction of various towns in Columbia County. Kings District was established by the colonial government in 1772, and originally consisted of "all of the present towns of Canaan, New Lebanon, the east three-fourths of Chatham, and Austerlitz in part."⁴ Although the site of the house appears to have fallen within the town of Canaan when actually constructed, at Powers' death in 1796 he was listed as a resident of Chatham. The Town of Austerlitz was formed in 1818 from the southeast corner of Chatham, the south end of Canaan, and the north part of Hillsdale. The house is today in the Town of Austerlitz, in the Spencertown is within the present bounds of the Town of Austerlitz.⁵

Powers was one of the wealthiest people in Columbia County in the late eighteenth century. He is listed in the 1790 census as having a total of 20 people in his household, six of them slaves, more than anyone else in the Town of Canaan at that time.⁶ His builder William Dean does not appear in the 1790 census; it is possible that he died, was missed by the census, or moved out of state by that date.

Photo 1: House at Stever Hill Road and County Route 203.
Photo by Bill Krattinger, October 2010.



It is likely that Dean and Powers were related; William Powers' wife was the former Rhoda Deane.⁷ The family name was, however, common in the region at that time. The tentative identification of the house presented here (*Photo 1*) is partially based upon the fact that this dwelling was occupied by a descendant of Powers' heirs, S. D. Deane, in 1873.⁸ The house is located at the southeast corner of NY Route 203 and Stever Hill Road. By that date all of the Powers' family had moved from the area; it is possible that the house was transferred to his executor Samuel Deane (likely the half-brother of William's wife), on the marriage of Powers' widow in 1798, per the stipulations of his will.⁹

By 1770, and as early as 1768, William Powers served as an ensign in Colonel John van Rensselaer's Regiment of Militia.¹⁰ Powers was trained as a doctor, perhaps by his father Peter. He served in that capacity during the Revolution, but after the close of hostilities seems to have confined his activities to that of a merchant, landowner and public official. In 1784-86 and again in 1789-90 he held the office of Town Supervisor for the Town of Canaan.¹¹ From 1786 until 1795 he was a Justice of the Peace for the town.¹² Between 1787 and his death he represented Albany and then the newly-established Columbia County in the 10th and 11th sessions of the New York State Legislature as an assemblyman. In the 15th, 16th and 17th state legislative sessions participated as a Senator representing the Eastern District.¹³ When Powers died on 8 April 1796, his obituary reported

in the 49th year of his age – having faithfully served the public in a variety of important offices with honour to himself and satisfaction to his constituents – He laboured under a long and painful illness for more than four years...He left a sorrowful widow and eight children deeply to lament the loss of a kind and loving husband, a tender and affectionate parent – a large circle of connections, friends and acquaintance, to lament the loss of a very benevolent and amiable friend and companion, and the community at large, to lament the loss of a wise, candid and firm statesman. On Sunday his funeral was solemnized by a very numerous concourse of relatives, friends and acquaintance, and by upwards of seventy of his brethren of the ancient and honourable society of Free and Accepted Masons...¹⁴

Little is known of the house and its occupants during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On 18 November 1825 James Powers, son of William Powers, wrote a letter from Canaan, describing the building of a kitchen wing on the house as underway at that time.¹⁵ As previously mentioned, in 1873 S. D. Deane was living in the house.



Photo 2: Johnson Hall. Photo by W. R. Wheeler, September 2005

Photo 3: Screen capture from online source, 2011



As originally constructed, the 45 by 35 foot, two story wood-framed house with hipped roof, central hall and four principal rooms per floor may have resembled Johnson Hall in Johnstown, Fulton County, NY, constructed in 1762 by Samuel Fuller for William Johnson (*Photo 2*). The house, if it is in fact the same as that built for Powers in 1786-87, was greatly altered during the course of the nineteenth century. Certainly the core of the present house – a two story, wood-framed house with hipped roof and kitchen wing – matches the description presented in the indenture and the 1825 letter. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century a gabled pavilion was constructed, effectively covering approximately half of the original façade. Decorative verge boards were added at that time. Subsequent additions further obscured what was likely the original form of the house.

At present the house is embowered among evergreens, making it nearly impossible to get a good photograph, except through aerial photography (*Photo 3*).

¹ Item 11488, Manuscripts and Special Collections, New York State Library, Albany, New York.

² William H. Powers. Powers-Banks Ancestry. (Ames, Iowa: John Leslie Powers, 1921), 24 and 29.

³ Much of the genealogical information in this article, the location of the Powers' burial site, and help with identifying the location of the Powers house, was provided by Ruth Piwonka. Thanks Ruth!

⁴ Franklin Ellis. *History of Columbia County, New York*. (Philadelphia: Everts & Ensign, 1878), 320.

⁵ Horatio Gates Spafford. *A Gazetteer of the State of New-York*. (1824) Reprint edition. (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1981), 35.

⁶ *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: New York*. (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 58.

⁷ Powers 1921, 31.

⁸ D. G. Beers & Co., comp. *Atlas of Columbia County New York*. (Philadelphia: D. G. Beers & Co., 1873), 13.

⁹ Powers 1921, 30, 32.

¹⁰ *New York Colonial Muster Rolls, 1664-1775* (1898) Reprint Edition. (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 2000), 769.

¹¹ Ellis 1878, 320.

¹² Ellis 1878, 321.

¹³ Powers 1921, 27-28, 30.

¹⁴ [Obituary], *Western Star* (Stockbridge, Mass.), 26 April 1796, 3.

¹⁵ Powers 1921, 34.

Membership info

If you have been receiving this newsletter, but your membership is not current and you wish to continue to receive the HVVA newsletter and participate in the many house-study tours offered each year, **please send in your dues.**

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A look back



Shown here is a wonderful photograph of the Van Allen House in Kinderhook, Columbia County, New York, taken circa 1940, Prior to the any modern restoration efforts.

Calendar

Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 21, 2012 – 10:00 AM

The meeting will take place in Deyo Hall, 6 Broadhead Avenue, New Paltz, (part of the Historic Huguenot Street). A planning session and election of offices and board members will take place. Followed by a house tour and lunch. We hope to see you there!

TBA

Saturday, February 18, 2012 – 10:00 AM

Please check the EVENTS tab on our website or call a board member.

For more information, please check www.HVVA.org