



HVVA is a not-for-profit corporation formed to study and preserve the vernacular architecture and material culture of the Hudson Valley

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The Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture

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View of the miller's house at Centerville, Town of Lloyd, Ulster County, ca. 1803.

Photo by Neil Larson.

The Wallkill Valley Land Trust hosted its sixth annual Houses on the Land tour on Saturday, June 4, 2016. Focusing on a different town in its watershed each year, the 2016 event presented a selection of houses in the Town of Lloyd. Formerly part of the Town of New Paltz, it had been divided into lots by the Huguenot patentee families in the late 1700s. A number of them settled on the better land there, but the stony and swampy sections of limited agricultural value that was sold or leased to homesteaders, some of them members of the Penn Yan community, followers of Jemima Wilkinson, the Universal Friend.

In this and previous land trust tours, HVVA members assisted both in the planning and delivery of the event. As usual, Ken Walton took the lead and helped WVLT president and tour leader Vals Osborne and her crew in selecting interesting properties. Ken then corralled HVVA members, notably John Stevens, Rob Sweeney, Jim Decker and Neil Larson, to make inspections and help interpret the architecture for WVLT volunteers writing entries for the tour guide. On tour day many of these same HVVAers, as well as others like Michele Van Hoesen and Don & Kathleen Hanzl, helped out as guides.

Our relationship with WVLT has been beneficial to both groups. Participating HVVA members get introduced to historic buildings they might not otherwise see, adding to our collective knowledge of Hudson Valley vernacular architecture, and the land trust's house tours provide better-informed interpretations. We appreciate WVLT's interest in historic properties and their vision of the Wallkill Valley as a cultural landscape worth preserving. HVVA has collaborated with other land trusts and historical societies in developing house tours and hopes to have more opportunities in the future.

Rare Eighteenth-Century Dwelling found in Austerlitz



Fig. 1 – View of house from NW. The wing on the right was a porch bumped out and enclosed as a room in the 1990s. The one on the left is a more recent addition.

A few issues ago, we published an article based on some of the findings of the ongoing historic resource survey in the Town of Austerlitz written by Michael Rebic (“New England Hall-and-Parlor Plans and “Coffin Doors” in Eastern Columbia County,” HVVA Newsletter, Vol. 18 No.2, April-June 2015). Readers may recall that Austerlitz originated as the Massachusetts town of Spencertown in 1756 with the land held in common by 75 proprietors. Few of these men actually intended to move to the town; rather they sold or leased the land to others—mostly settlers from Connecticut, which is documented in scores of ambiguous grants recorded in surviving minutes of proprietors’ meetings. Only a small handful of 18th-century dwellings have been identified in the survey, the best-known being the two-story, center-chimney-plan Pratt Homestead in Spencertown, built ca. 1756,

pictured in Rebic’s article. The remaining houses in this group were constructed late in the century.

The only possible conclusion has been that the dwellings of the earliest settlers were small and impermanent and gradually replaced by better buildings. Thus, it was an exciting moment when Michael Rebic called recently for advice on a small house with a bent frame the survey had turned up (*see photos*).

Research undertaken by the survey’s co-director, Tom Moreland, the Town of Austerlitz Historian, revealed that this house had been recognized on previous occasions, and it raised the same quandary then as now. According to Tom, one story is that the house had been the kitchen ell for John Griswold’s house, constructed in 1795, and was moved when the big



Fig. 2 – Chaffee House, Windsor, CT. From J. Frederick Kelly, *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut* (1924), Plate XIII. One theory for the house is that it originated as a kitchen ell and was moved.

house was demolished in 1922. But, the house appears to have been constructed earlier than that and is depicted at its current location on an 1873 map of Austerlitz and, perhaps, on one dated 1851. At that time it was part of an industrial site owned by John Griswold's grandson, Lucien S. Griswold, along with the rest of the family homestead. Another story is that it originated as an outbuilding on the Griswold farm and was moved to the present site at some unknown time. Yet, characteristics of the house frame and gambrel roof are not consistent with our image of 18th-century farm buildings. Likely, the gambrel roof has led some inexperienced historians to equate it with 20th-century barns.

What's really interesting about the house is its frame, which then-owner Bud Barden exposed after he

bought the property in 1994. The narrow plan is framed in a Dutch method with nine bents constructed with rough-hewn oak posts and planed pine beams regularly spaced more than three feet apart. The beams are joined to the posts and secured by two pegs. The beams are not as wide as the posts and rest on shallow shoulders. The joints have marriage marks; those on the beams would have been visible if they were exposed as their smooth finish suggests. The posts have a pattern of nail holes indicating that the walls were lathed and plastered. Barden found no in-fill between the posts and there is no evidence on the inside faces of the posts of grooves or strips for traditional Dutch wall packing or discoloration from clay or mortar. There had been windows between some of the posts, but all had been removed or made into doors when wings were added to the sides.



Fig. 3 – View of interior, east room.

On the exterior, Barden found old weatherboards flipped and used as sheathing for later wood shingle siding. The floorboards between the 9- to 11-inch tall beams were finished and were restored by Barden, but the next owner covered them up with sheetrock.

The dimensions of the plan – about 16 ft. by 30 ft. – suggest that it contained two rooms. Presently a stair exists on the west side of the center line; Barden built it to replace a similar one in its place. There is no indication of a center chimney. There is a small stone hearth support in the east end of the basement, but none on the west end. The absence of clear evidence of fireplaces other than on the end is puzzling and supports the story of the building once being an ell. However, the house from which it reputedly came did not have a gambrel roof, which would be expected, and it seems this building predates 1795.

While the bent framing is Dutch in origin, the gambrel roof represents the New English presence in Spencertown. Only the upper roof framing is visible,

but the dimension, tooling and joinery of the rafters are consistent with 18th-century construction methods. (Barden reported that the upper rafters are joined with a bird's-mouth joint to the purlins.) Thus,

Fig. 4 – Detail of framing joint.





Fig. 5 – View of upper roof frame.



Fig. 6 – Detail of rafter where it joins the purlin.

we are presented with an amalgamation of Dutch and New English features that is emblematic of the interaction of the two cultures along the ambiguous boundary separating the two colonies. There are examples of cross-over types such as the center-chimney Pratt Homestead with its Connecticut River Valley doorway in Spencertown or the Dutch brick

Tullar House in South Egremont, Massachusetts, but seldom-seen are blended houses such as this one. Without knowing the original owner or builder, it is not know for sure what happened to create this house. If it was, in fact, built as a dwelling, then a possible scenario is that the owner wanted a Dutch-style house, but it was built by a New English carpenter.

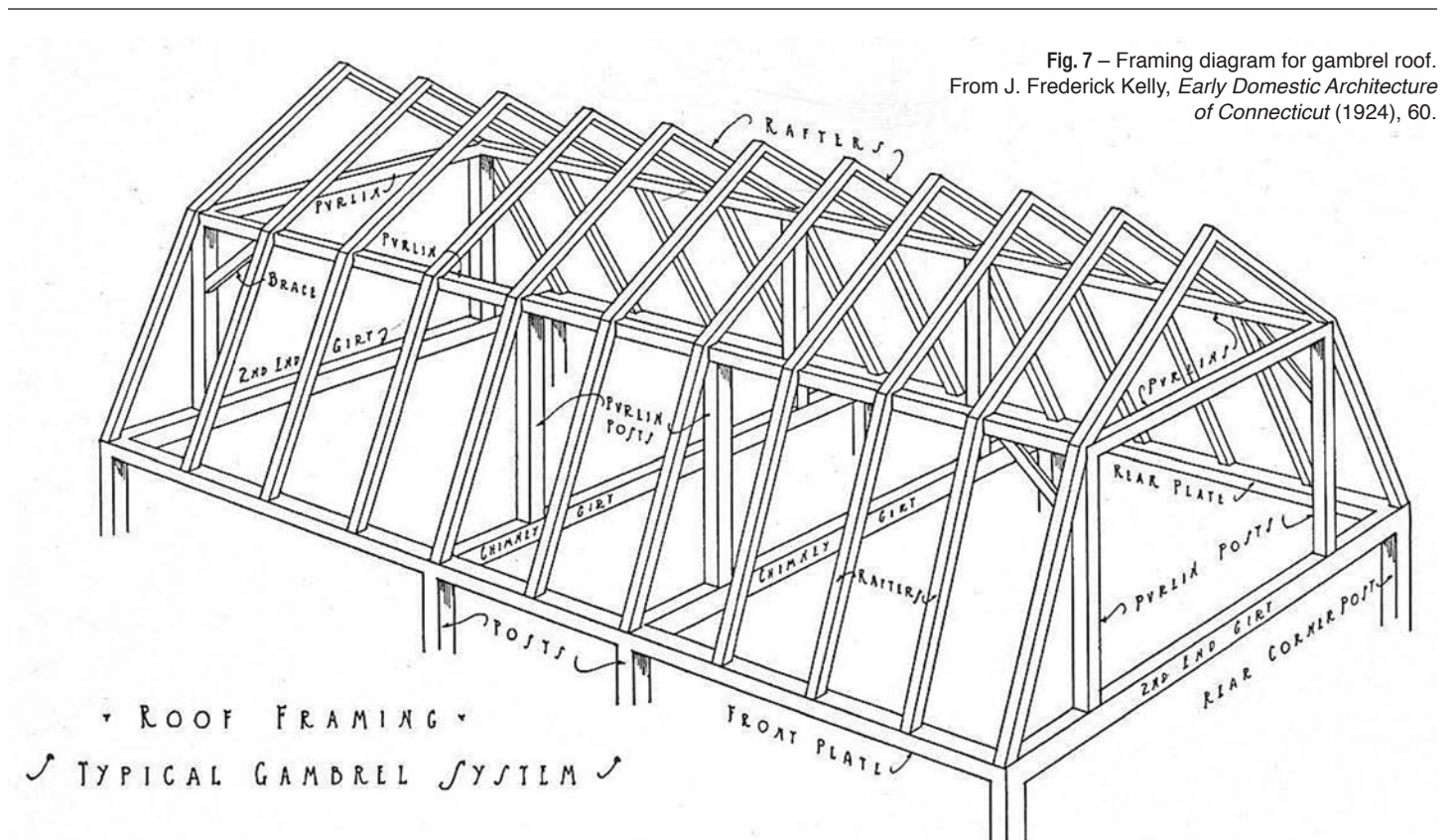
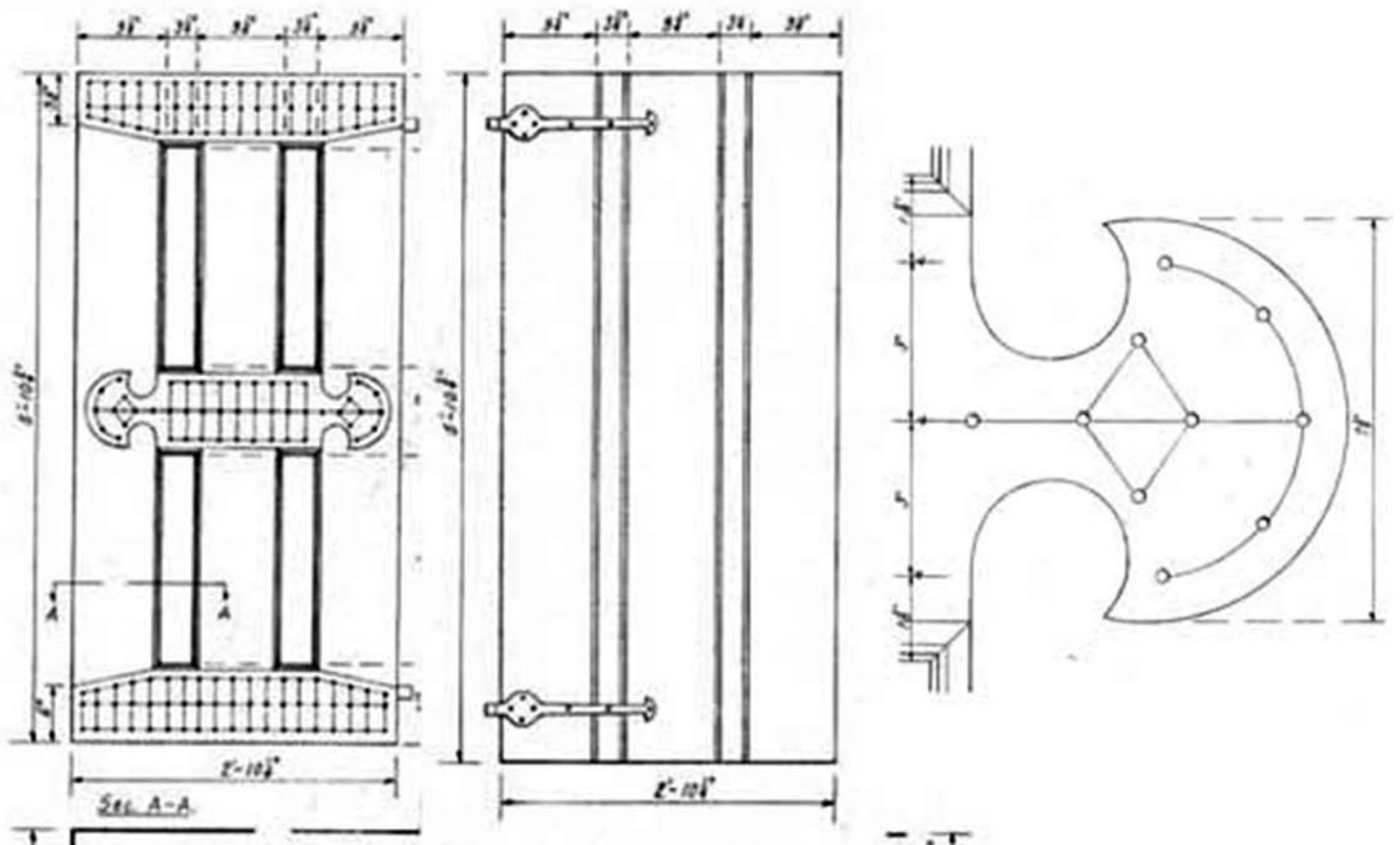


Fig. 7 – Framing diagram for gambrel roof.
 From J. Frederick Kelly, *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut* (1924), 60.

Examples of Extraordinary Craftsmanship – Mainly Doors

By John Stevens



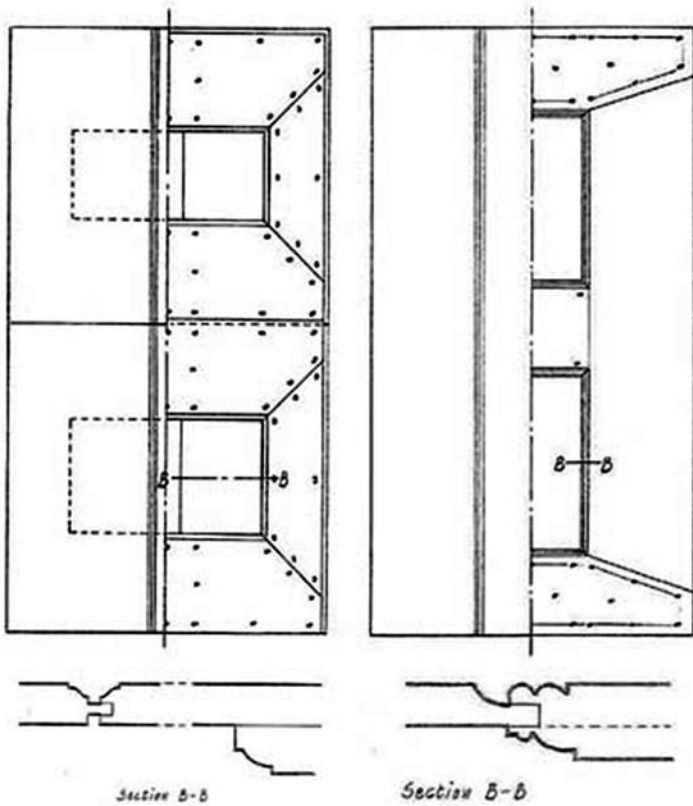
Dwg. A – Elevations, section and detail of door found in Van Cortlandt Mansion, The Bronx, New York. Drawing by author. See also John Stevens, *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1640-1830*, Plate 84A. Hereafter referred to as *DVAinNA*.

While in the process of collecting information on Dutch-American house details to help me plan the restoration of the c.1730 Roeloff/Minne Schenck house at Old Bethpage Village Restoration in 1968, I visited the Van Cortlandt Mansion in The Bronx. This large house, built in 1748 was too “high style” Georgian for my purpose, but on an upper floor there is a room in the “early Dutch Colonial style.” I was not able to find out anything about it and had the thought that it was an import from the Old World. The door was made of oak, which was not a typical American door material; I later found out, while inspecting 17th century buildings in the Netherlands, it was the predominant wood species used for interior woodwork there.

Years later I came across Donald Millar’s *Measured Drawings of Some Colonial and Georgian Homes* (Vol. 1, 1915). A detail sheet in that book (*Plate 27*) shows details of the Van Cortlandt house, including

the door I had seen in it. Millar stated that it is a chamber door from the attic, and implies that it was one of several doors of this design and construction. He thought that it had come from an earlier building and dated it to c.1700.

The Van Cortlandt Mansion door is only one inch thick and consists of three wide boards that are full thickness with two narrow boards one-half-inch thick between them tongue-and-grooved together. On the hinge side the five boards are joined flush; on the other side the narrow boards are recessed and overlapped with battens, one-half inch thick, at the top, middle and bottom and let into the side and middle vertical pieces their thickness (*Dwg. A*). The corner joints of the top and bottom battens are made with a diagonal cut, a feature also found in several of the oldest surviving Dutch-American houses, notably the Pieter Bronck House at West Coxsackie and the Jean/Jacob Hasbrouck House at New Paltz (*Dwg. B*).¹



Dwg. B – Door details from Pieter Bronck house at West Coxsackie, left, and Jean/Jacob Hasbrouck House at New Paltz, right. Drawing by author. From *DVAinNA* Plates 83B and 84B).

An exceptional feature of the Van Cortlandt Mansion door is that the middle batten is made with elaborately shaped ends that are meticulously let into the side pieces. The battens are fastened to the side pieces with nails driven from the batten side and clenched on the other side. These nails are laid out to a pattern lightly scribed into the wood.

In July 1972 I was participating in an architectural study tour in Europe, and at Deventer in the Netherlands (which is in the south-eastern part of the country, north of Arnhem) I saw and measured a door similar in design and construction to the Van Cortlandt Mansion example (*Dwg. C*). Maybe because it was not plainly evident, I did not record the nailing pattern of the battens, nor do I have photographs of the door.

In the 1990s, Peter Sinclair—the founder of HVVA—was conducting for the Town of Rochester in Ulster County a survey of the Town's oldest buildings. In a house down a long lane off the south side of Route 209 between Accord and Kerhonksen he found with similarities to the Van Cortlandt Mansion door. Known as the Grace-Hornbeck House, it was described but not illustrated in Helen Reynold's book,

Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley Before 1776 (1929).² Peter told me about the door, I was anxious to see it, but it would take until October 2015 before I made a visit with Jim Decker. The house had been built in four sections, the oldest dating from the middle of the 18th century. In the basement of one of the sections, an enclosure had been made between the piers of a hearth support containing the door being discussed here (*Fig. 1*). It was reduced in height to fit this location by the removal of several inches from the top and the bottom; a third board was added to one side to make it wider. It presently hangs on casement window hinges of a nice design; parts of the outlines of the original Dutch pad hinges are still visible. An original latch with a drop handle and a diamond-shaped escutcheon survives in place (*Fig. 2*).

Dwg. C – Drawings for door on house in Deventer, The Netherlands. Drawing by author.

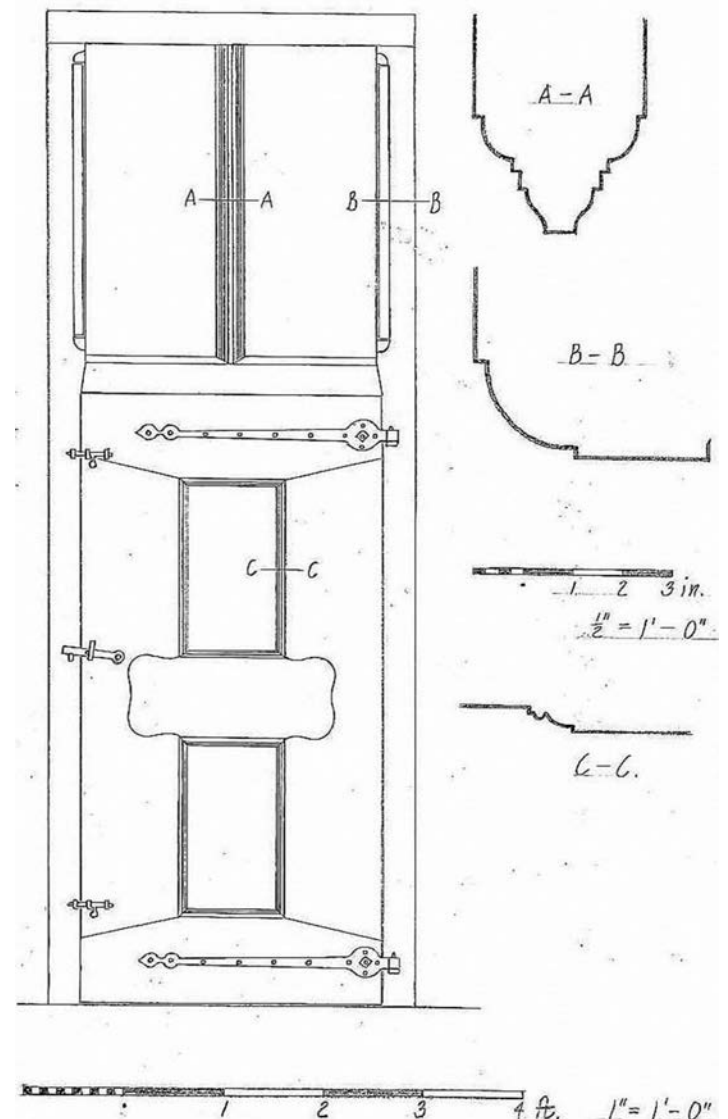




Fig. 1 – View of panel side of door in Grace-Hornbeck House, Accord, New York. Photo by author, 2015

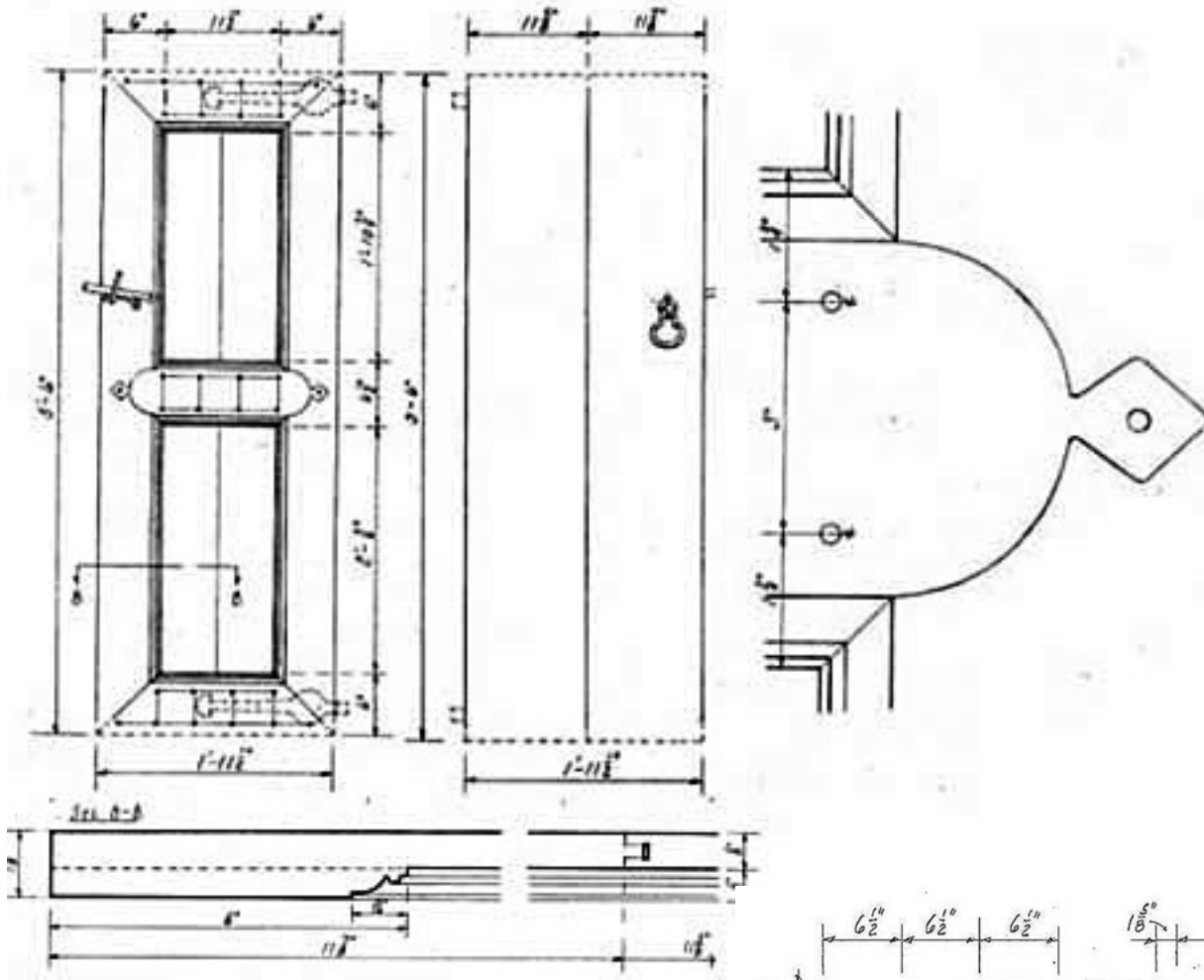


Fig. 2 – View of board side of door in Grace-Hornbeck House, Accord, New York. Photo by author, 2015

This door is made with five pieces of wood (not oak). The two vertical pieces are one-and-one-eighth inches thick with about half of each planed (plowed) to five-eighths inch thickness. The two five-eighths-inch edges are tongue-and-grooved together. The battens are a half-inch thick and are let into the verticals by that amount. The corner joints are made at forty-five degree angles. The middle batten is made with semi-circular ends, plus diamond shaped finials which are precisely let into the vertical pieces (*Dwg. D*). There is a scribed nailing pattern on the battens, but nails were used more sparingly than on the Van Cortlandt Mansion door, although it is an extremely fine example of craftsmanship and compares favorably with it. A shutter found on the second floor of the Jean/Jacob Hasbrouck House on Huguenot Street in New Paltz is apparently associated with the construction period of

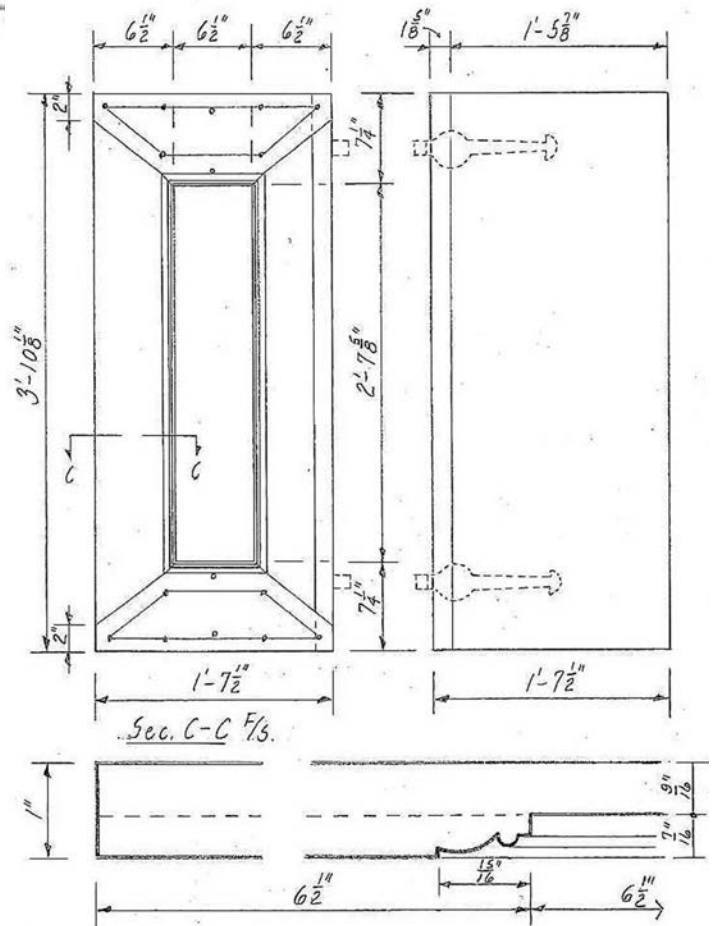
the house (1722). Its width matches the known width of the house's original window openings, but its height is eleven inches greater than the known height of the house's second floor end wall windows.

Its construction relates it to the Grace-Hornbeck House in Accord. It is essentially made of three pieces of wood (a narrow vertical piece on its hinge side was likely added during its original construction to achieve the desired width). The vertical piece is one-inch thick and the middle third was plowed to a thickness of nine-sixteenths of an inch. The battens are seven-sixteenths of an inch thick and are let into the sides of the vertical piece by that amount at a forty-five degree angle (*Dwg. E*). The nailing pattern follows scribe lines and like in the Grace-Hornbeck House example (*Dwg. D*), nails were used sparingly.



Dwg. D (above) – Elevations, section and detail of door found in Grace-Hornbeck House, Accord, New York. Drawings by author.

Dwg. E (right) – Elevations and section of shutter found in Jean/Jacob Hasbrouck House, New Paltz, New York. Drawings by author.



ENDNOTES

- 1 The Tobias Van Steenburgh house at 97 Wall Street in Kingston, which appears to date to c.1750, has two interior doors made with splayed corner joints and also has such joints for the middle batten. The original shutters also have splayed joints to the top and bottom battens. See *HVVA. Newsletter*, Vol. 15, No.1 (Jan. - Mar. 2012), p. 4, Fig. 4.
- 2 There had been a Dutch barn on the Grace-Hornbeck Farm that would seem to have been constructed by the same builder as the Garret Nieuwerkerk barn at Hurley (see *DVAinNA*, Plate 105) as it had the initials and date AHM1766 cut into one of its anchor beams. While the barn was taken down many years ago, the beam with the inscription has survived.

The End of Stone Houses, Part I

The Hardenbergh-Jenkins Farm on the Walkill River

By Neil Larson, with facts provided by Jose Moreno-Lacalle

Last October, a HVVA study tour made a stop at this significant two-story wood frame farmhouse down a long lane and on the banks of the Walkill River south of New Paltz. A long restoration project undertaken by its owners was near enough to completion that they were ready to share it with those who love old houses. The house, dated 1831, is situated in the midst of active farmland accompanied by a Dutch barn and the site of an 18th-century stone house.

The origin of the farm, exclusive of its Native American history, dates back to the granting of the 2,000-acre Guilford patent to Abraham J. Hardenbergh around 1743. Hardenbergh built a stone house by the Walkill River soon after the purchase and had seven children in all by two wives. The oldest of them, Johannes (John A., 1743-1795), would inherit the property and by his wife, Rachel DuBois, have seven children, of whom Jacob would continue to operate the farm. Jacob J. Hardenbergh (1780-1804) married Jane DuBois (1778-1859) in 1800 and they had two children, Rachel (b.1802) and Jacob (b.1803). Rachel Hardenbergh eventually acquired title to the farm in a transaction with her brother Jacob.

In 1818, at the age of sixteen, Rachel married Crines Jenkins (1796-1878), who had been born in what become known Jenkinstown, an industrial center on the Plattekill. His father, Lambert Jenkins, moved there from Bergen County, New Jersey in 1793. Crines Jenkins is enumerated as a head of household containing Rachel, one child and a slave. Jane Hardenbergh was enumerated alone in a separate household in the family's stone house.

Based on a date engraved in a knocker on the front door, it has been assumed that the main section of the house was built in 1831. Where the Jenkinses lived before that is not known for sure; perhaps in a small dwelling that became the rear ell of the house they built later or perhaps somewhere else. A Dutch barn on the property is believed to have been erected in 1820; that date is painted on one of the beams. Story has it that young Crines spent a few years upgrading the old farm and achieving the prosperity reflected in the house.

In the long run, it is of little matter whether the house was constructed in 1818 or 1831. Yet, for the purposes of this article it makes a difference, because appearance of Crine and Rachel Jenkins' house represents the end of stone house architecture in Ulster County.

Since the turn of the 18th century, stone was the quality material that separated the best houses and the best families from the common. It still needs to be said that throughout the 1700s stone houses represented the upper class of Ulster County society. They were not primitive hand-built pioneer dwellings. In fact they took a lot of effort and expense to

construct and employed a dozen or more craftsmen, laborers and slaves to construct. The stone house persisted for a century because it became, like "Dutch" houses in other parts of the region, an icon of the preservation of the Dutch colony in the face of British rule since the conquest of 1667. The persistence of Dutch material culture in the Hudson Valley was a remarkable phenomenon, and it is what sets the region apart from every other. However, the success of the Revolutionary War took the steam out of Colonial cultural animosities.

After the war, house design became more organized and systematic reflecting a drive to shape it to a national ideal. Classical order and motifs were common to domestic design in all regions. Conveniently, the revival of Classicism sweeping through the Western World provided all the republican emblems needed to celebrate the promise of American independence. At first, fragments were incorporated into traditional building practice, but eventually local architecture conformed to universal forms, plans, materials, decoration, and building methods. Variations were a matter of social and economic class and identity politics.

Josiah Hasbrouck's mansion at Plattekill, built in 1814, was the first "modern" house to appear in New Paltz. It also was the first to be named: Locust Lawn. Based on a design published by Asher Benjamin, the builder fashioned the house within the constraints and requirements of the local context. Of no little importance, Locust Lawn was constructed of wood not stone, a change made more significant by the fact that Josiah Hasbrouck had grown up in his grandfather Jean Hasbrouck's monumental stone house on Huguenot Street.

Josiah Hasbrouck had served in Congress during the Jefferson presidency, so his modern outlook is understood. His son-in-law, Josiah DuBois, built a fine brick house on Libertyville Road in 1822. His father, Cornelius DuBois, also was the father of Rachel Hardenbergh Jenkins' mother. Other distinctive, two-story brick houses were constructed in New Paltz by this post-war generation: two Elting houses on Huguenot Street and Plains Road, Hendrickus DuBois's house on Libertyville Road, and John Cole's house in Modena. All of these had rear and some end walls built of stone, in most cases salvaged from the 18th-century dwellings they replaced. They also displayed modern plasterwork and millwork in the latest fashion available to their builders.

These modern brick houses did not fully sever ties with the stone house tradition, and they were at the forefront of scores of more modest stone houses that were constructed in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Yet, by 1820 stone houses had receded into the realm of old-fashioned, ethnic lifestyle and were rejected by those another generation removed from the Colonial past. Enter the era of the wood frame farmhouse.



Front façade of Crines & Rachel Jenkins House, Gardiner, Ulster County, 1831.

Crines Jenkins was a member of that generation, as was his wife, Rachel Hardenbergh. Jenkins also was not related to a Huguenot or native Ulster County family, which may have been a factor in his lack of allegiance to local architectural traditions. The house is not completely revolutionary. It has a center passage plan a room-and-a-half deep like most farmhouses of the period, large or small, and a basement kitchen that maintained the integrity of the house's neat exterior dimensions. (Because of the existence of the basement kitchen, the present ell is believed to be an addition, an improvement, as often was the case, made to have the convenience of a kitchen at first-floor level.)

Large farmhouses built in the early 19th century incorporate distinctive features based in Neoclassical precedents but interpreted within the rural experience. Among these are ornamented entrances with intentionally distorted Classical architraves and porches with arched ceilings, attenuated posts and retro benches evincing Dutch stoops. On wood frame houses such as this one, windows were surmounted by highly-stylized three-dimensional entablatures with stretched friezes and flattened, projecting cornices. The roof edge displayed modillions, rosettes, panels and/or triglyphs in jumbled disregard of true Classical orders. Principal rooms on the interior followed a hierarchy of finishes distinguishing the parlor, hall and dining room expressed in plaster cornices, wood mantels, staircases, and door and window trim. As on the exterior, creative ingenuity prevailed. We know nothing of the shops where this millwork originated or where they were located (Jenkinstown?). Few, if any, mantels were the same,

either in the house or from house-to-house, suggesting that each house was customized in deference to the others.

The front façade of the Jenkins House contains features that illustrate the next phase of Classical decoration: the Greek Revival. While features of the Federal period are maintained, there is a shift in the character of the decoration. The faces of window trim are grooved and terminate at corner blocks rather than capitals. The doorway is flanked by fluted columns and the sidelights are surmounted by entablatures with bolections in a desire to be architectonic. The porch has a flat roof and column posts with the same thin flutes as those at the entrance at the front corners in the "modern" taste. Corner boards have been widened to the scale of pilasters, although their bases and capitals are barely developed. The roof overhangs the front façade, but there is no frieze board announcing the full embrace of the Greek. The same kind of conditional change is reflected in the interior decoration. The house is a document of a transitional moment in New Paltz architecture, and probably represents the evolving building craft, the availability of millwork in new designs and the retooling of regional producers rather than any particular agenda of the owners. This was all new to them.

ENDNOTES

- 1 This land grant had nothing to do with the huge 1-million acre Hardenbergh Patent of 1708, which covered the Catskills.
- 2 Neil Larson, "Building a Stone House in Ulster County, New York in 1751," HVVA Newsletter. Vol. 15 Nos. 4-6 (April-June 2011), 5-11.

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.**

Membership currently pays all the HVVA bills and to keep us operating in the black. **Each of us must contribute a little.**

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View of brick wing on the Ariantje Coeymans House, Coeymans, Albany County, This building has recently been reconstructed by Paul Lawler and his family from plans developed by John Stevens. The Lawlers hosted a well-attended visit by HVVA on June 18, 2016. We expect to have more about this remarkable project in a future issue. Photo by Neil Larson.

Upcoming Events

This House Matters, Tina Traster and Lennon Nersesian's documentary on the loss of significant historic buildings in Rockland County has been selected by the Kingston Film Festival and will be showing on August 19th or 20th. We have covered previous showings of this film and want to encourage our members to think about attending this one in Kingston. Check the Kingston Film Festival web site for more information or contact Tina Traster at ttraster@aol.com.

Historic Barns of Clinton, a photography exhibit organized by the Clinton Historical Society will be showing at the Creek Meeting House in Clinton Corners during weekends in August, 1-4 pm. Opening reception on Saturday, August 8th, 1:30 to 3 pm.

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| August 20 | Tour of houses in Marletown, Ulster County by Ken Krabbenhoft |
| September 17 | Tour of houses in Greene County by Don Hanzl |
| October 15 | Tour of houses in Albany County by Wally Wheeler |
| November 19 | Tour of houses in Clinton, Dutchess County by Neil Larson |
| December 10 | Holiday tour and luncheon in Kingston hosted by Rob Sweeney |