

The Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture

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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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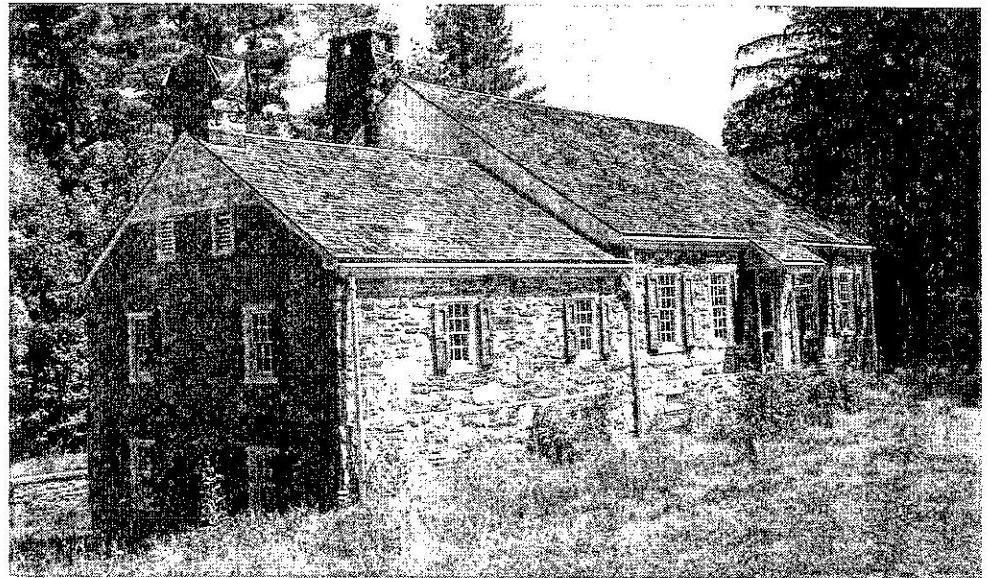
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The Game Lodge at Appeldoorn Estate (photo by Manuela Michailescu).

From the Editor

The summer months have been filled with exciting events for HVVA members. Those who have participated know that to be true, the rest of you will need to wait till winter to read about our excursions in the newsletter. And from this editor's view point much will be lost! So if you're feeling a bit left out, be consoled there is a lot more to come before the close of the year. On September 20th, HVVA members will host an open house at the Matthew Persen house in Kingston. John R. Stevens will be available to sign copies of his book, *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America 1640-1830*, which will be available at a special price for the event. This is a really good time to visit the Persen house, as its "bones" are completely exposed and this maybe the only time in history that its complex evolution can so closely and completely be examined. In October HVVA will visit houses in Columbia County and the autumn colors promise to be at their peak for this tour. In November we invite the members to join the trustees for a planning meeting. Where are we going as an organization? Help us trim our sails and join the momentum as we move forward into 2009. December offers you the opportunity to visit houses in the Stockade

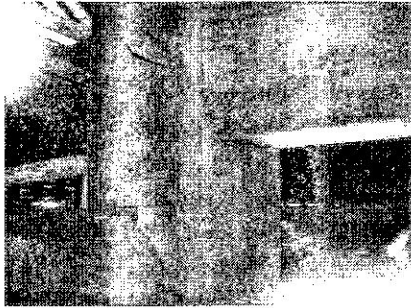
district of Kingston and join us for a holiday luncheon at the historic Hoffman House Tavern. This has been a great "meet and greet" kind of event so if you have never attended an HVVA tour, this is the time to start! More details on these events can be found by visiting HVVA.org. I hope you will consider joining or perhaps even planning a study tour in the future. If you've wondered why HVVA haven't visited your historic structure or neighborhood – invite us! I firmly believe the best thing about HVVA is its members and with an active membership come friendships and often the fruits of these relationships is preservation. That's how we get our goals met and our mission sustained. From our very beginning HVVA has been about networking – bringing like minded folks together. We often leave "the Society" part off our name, but without it we would accomplish nothing. I for one I am very proud of the society we all have created... Now let's spread the word...

Rob Sweeney – HVVA's sheepdog

"The circa 1860 eight-bay Schoonmaker barn" article by Gregory D. Hubber published in our previous issue had a few incorrect photo captions.

Correct captions:

Photos by Gregory D. Hubber



H-frame post is joined to high longitudinal ties. At lower left is a high side aisle tie. Pencil marks to denote placements of mortises are easily seen.



Top of H-frame post appears with upper tie beam and tie brace. At top of post are purlin plate and its braces. Above purlin are rafters.



The two beams seen at bottom half of photo are likely recycled anchor-beams.

The Jonas Skinkle House

by John R. Stevens

The circa 1750 Jonas Skinkle house is located on the east side of New York Route 7H, opposite the Red Barn café in the Town of Ghent, Columbia County. It was visited and examined by members of the HVVA on May 20, 2007. The house faces south, and measures 36 feet, 8 inches across the front and is 24 feet, 6 inches across the end wall. It is one-and-a-half story, solid brick construction in Dutch Cross bond over a rubble stone foundation. There is good evidence that the gables were originally parapeted, although *vlechtingen* (tumbling) was not employed. The bricks that formed the parapets were broken off when the roof was carried over them. Since there are no verge boards, the broken bricks can be seen quite clearly. This same condition was seen by the writer at the de Clark-de Wint house of 1700, at Tappan in Rockland County. The west gable

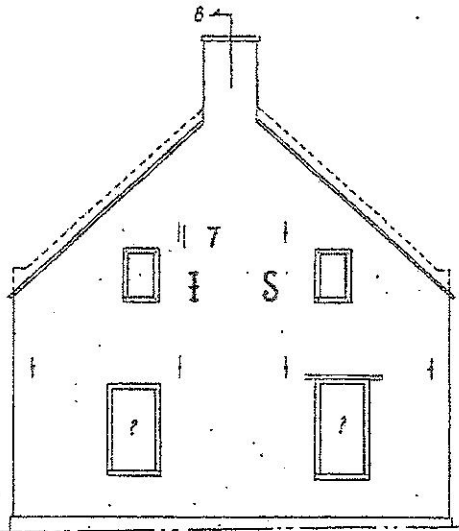
(see drawing), over the tops of the second floor windows has the numbers 1 and 7 in black header bricks. It seems that there should be two additional numbers to form a date, but there is no evidence they ever existed. Lower, between these windows, are the letters I (J) and S – initials for Jonas Skinkle.

The interior is divided into two unequal-sized rooms, that on the west side being the larger, and having the front entrance door. Each room has an original window frame with brick voussoirs over it. The east room has an additional, slightly smaller window added between the original one and the doorway. There is a cellar only under the west room. There is clear evidence on the inside of the east gable that there had been a jambless fireplace at that end of the house, later replaced with a jambed one. Judging from the spacing of

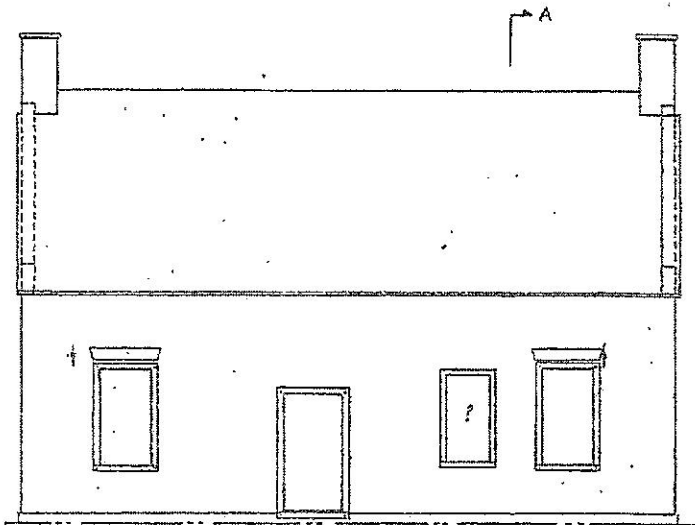
South front of the Skinkle house.



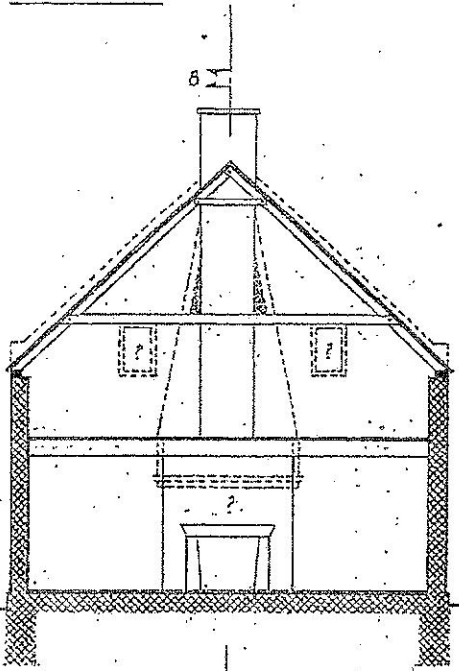
Jonas Skinkle house, Route 9H, Town of Ghent, Columbia Co., N.Y.



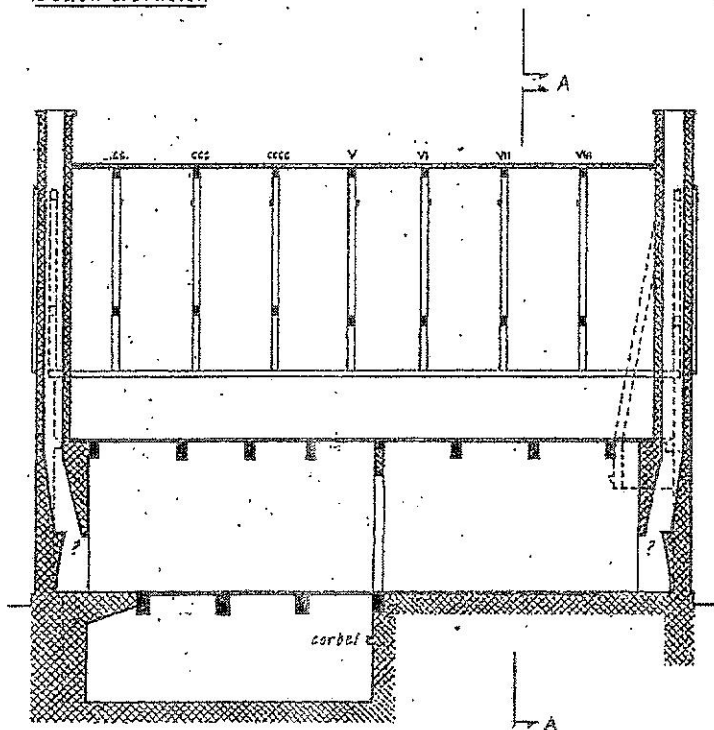
West elevation



South elevation



Section A-A



Section B-B

1 2 3 4 5 10 15 20 25 30 ft.

$\frac{3}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

JOHN R. STEVENS
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
1 SINCLAIR DRIVE
GREENLAW, NY 11740-2807



Adriance barn complex – South view of the main barn

Winnakee Land Trust's 3rd Annual Tour of Historic Dutch and English Barns

When:

Saturday, October 11, 2008
Barns open: 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM
Reception: 4:00 – 5:30 PM

Highlights:

- Eight historic, privately owned barns will be open to guests
- A mapped brochure will outline this self-guided route along some of the oldest and most scenic roads in northern Dutchess County
- Docents will guide visitors through each site
- Sites include: several extraordinary Dutch barns, a sheep farm, an historic church, an equestrian property, other rural attractions

Cost:

\$35.00 per person includes tour and reception. Children under 10 – free. Delicious boxed lunch available for an additional \$15.00 per person (by reservation only). Reservations recommended.

For more information:

Call: (845) 876-4213
E-mail: info@winnakeeland.org
Visit: www.winnakeeland.org



The mission of the Winnakee Land Trust is to protect and preserve the natural, agricultural, recreational, architectural, cultural, scenic, historical, and open space resources of northern Dutchess County.

the wall anchors towards the middle of the west wall (not spaced far enough apart), there had not been a jambless fireplace at that end. The existing fireplace at that end of the house had been rebuilt on a poured concrete foundation. Difficult to understand is the corbel on the east wall of the basement, as if the hearth support for a jambless fireplace? The corbel is shown on the longitudinal section (*B-B in the drawing*). Hardly any original trim survives on the interior, but there is a typical four-panel door, – of English type, from the middle of the 18th century – in the partition wall between the two rooms.

There are 9 pairs of rafters, numbered from the west end. For some reason, the collar ties of the three

western pairs of interior rafters are set about a foot higher than the four interior pairs of the eastern side. Each rafter pair, has, near its apex pieces of riven lath nailed on in the way of upper collar ties.

There had been a three-aisled Dutch barn a little south of the house that had survived into the 1990's. It was photographed by the writer in black-and-white in 1969, and in color in 1992. Its ridge ran north and south, and originally the barn had the usual gable-end entrances but at some point in its history, it was altered with side wall doors. It had six bents, five bays. To create a transverse threshing floor, the bent at the south side of the middle bay was shifted some feet to the south.

West end wall of the Skinkle house.



HVVA Annual Picnic

by Marion Moore

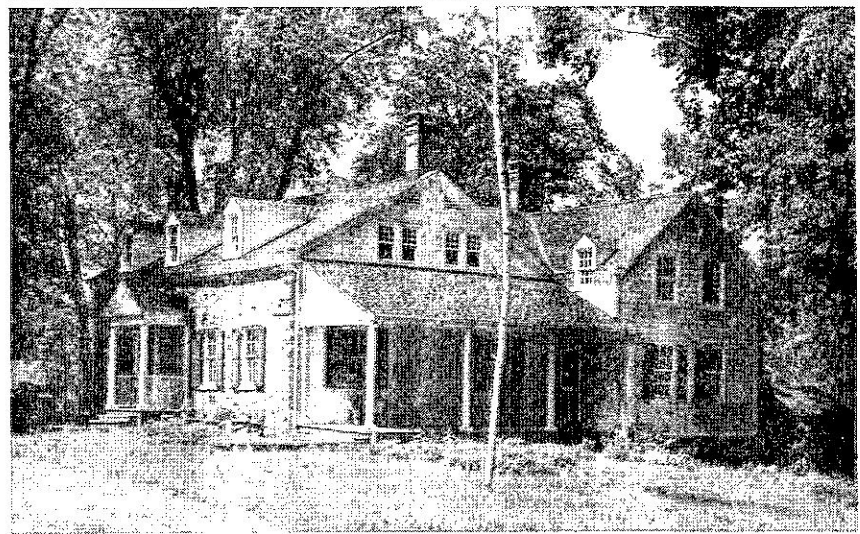
HVVA members attended their annual picnic in High Falls on August 16. A really festive occasion with glorious weather, it was held at the restored historic stone house of David Cavallero and Dan Geisinger.

To kick off the occasion, the group visited Appeldoorn Farm Estate, which included three interesting houses and several additional buildings. The charming dower cottage welcomes guests at the entrance to the estate. Built in 1758, the main house spans more than two centuries and steps into modern times with a nearby landing strip and hangar plus staff housing.

A year ago, HVVA was a host for a tour of houses and other buildings designed and restored by Kingston architect Myron Teller. Appeldoorn shows more examples of Teller's work (with his partner, Harry Halverson) in the 1930s additions; also shows examples the metal hardware, based on Dutch prototypes, manufactured in Teller's workshop.

Most exciting was the Trophy House of 1937, designed by the Kingston architect as well. This has a huge central hall with African and other animals mounted on the walls, including the front half of a magnificent giraffe. More than seventy animals are shown in dioramas throughout the building – a display reputed to be, at the time, the most outstanding private collection of its kind in the United States. It was assembled by the owners, who also had convenient living quarters in the building.

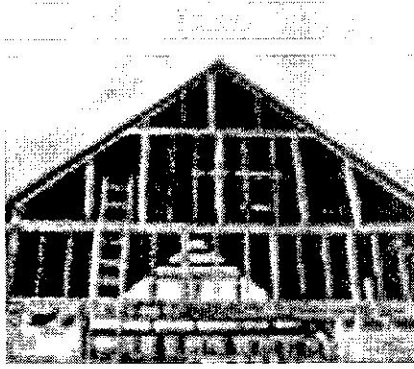
Back at Dave and Dan's, the group welcomed HVVA founder and honorary president Peter Sinclair. We explored the attractive historic house of our hosts and also their capacious barn – the scene of many weddings. Refreshing drinks and cookies preceded the tour and afterwards a tasty pot-luck lunch was served on the lawn.



The Appeldoorn House. **Top:** The South façade, showing Teller's addition on the left; the stone section dates to 1758. **Above:** The North façade; the porches and the wing to the rear are all Teller's creation.

Below: HVVA members enjoying the picnic.





Sunday, October 26, 4-8 pm

**The John St. Jam's
BENEFIT
Barn Aid Concert**

for
**Saugerties Historical
Society's Dutch Barn
Restoration Project**

at
**Gisiano's Restaurant
174 Main Street
Glasco**

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*The John St. Jam
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of local musicians
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of traditional,
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*Please write "Barn Aid Concert"
on check.*

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Our Travels in the Hudson River Valley

by Roberta S. Jeracka

Peter Sinclair and I have been busy these past few months. We have been able to attend many HVVA events and promote *the Society* to the general public. Despite the heat or rain, it was fun and a good opportunity to see many folks that we haven't seen in a few years.

On Saturday, June 21, 2008 we attended the **HVVA / DBPS Barn Tour** arranged by Bob Hedges in Dutchess County. A group carpooled from the Albany area, and we all met at the Quitman Center, 7015 Rt. 9, Rhinebeck, NY. From there we went to the Palatine Farmstead just down the road towards Rhinebeck. This is where I first took a workshop with Peter in 2006 working on the barn. Bob Hedges is continuing the restoration of the barn – at this time with grant money received from the state.



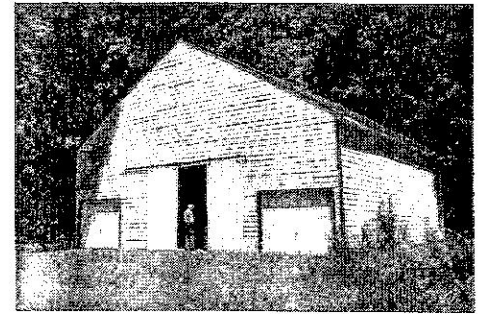
Peter Sinclair pointing out to Leebert Williams some of the work we had done last May.

The Palatine Farmstead is undergoing restoration. A feature that is particularly interesting is the new kitchen hearth and bake oven that has been rebuilt by Conrad Fingado. We want to be there when it is fired up for the first time.



You can see all the work that is being done. Peter and I did not go into the house due to all the construction.

Then we drove to Slate Quarry Road in Rhinebeck. Ned Pratt sent me the follow-



Slate Quarry Road barn.

-ing notes on the barn that was seen. "This is a 4-bay Dutch Barn with two side aisles. Originally it was a 3-bay barn, a bay was added at the rear and the anchor beam posts were extended about 4 feet; it also looks like the roof pitch was lowered. Some of the rafters show an extra bird's mouth. There are no wedges in the tenons of the anchor beams, and it is a scribe rule barn."

The tour ended here for us, but the group continued on to Pine Plains.



*Peter Sinclair and Rob Sweeney
(in period dress) at the HVVA table.*

The next event that we attended was **Hurley's Stone House Day** on July 12, 2008. HVVA had a table and display set up at the Elmendorf house on Main Street in Hurley. Peter and I assisted handing out newsletters and talking to folks, walking down the street, about HVVA's goals and activities. I believe we sold a few books too. It was an extremely hot day, with the sun shining, which brought out a lot of participants to this event. Once again Peter saw many acquaintances he knew from his previous work.

There were demonstrations and re-enactors from the Kingston area. Here is Alvin Sheffer greeting a few visitors next to the Elmendorf house. There were about



Peter Sinclair and Walter Wheeler.

eleven HVVA members that participated Saturday, either showcasing their homes or attending to the HVVA table.

Then there was the **Blueberry Festival** in Austerlitz, New York on July 27, 2008. HVVA also had a table display with demonstration on how wooden pegs were made by Bob Hedges.



Once again there were a lot of familiar faces that stopped by to say hello and get updated on HVVA's events.



Pat Graf, a friend of Peter's and Bob's, stopped by to say hello.

Many people attended the festival but this time the weather did not cooperate. Although the day started out nice, conditions quickly changed.



Peter Sinclair

It has been brought to my attention that many people have been asking about Peter and how he is progressing after suffering a stroke two years ago this past October.

He has received letters and phone calls but is unable to independently respond. I started a weekly/monthly update e-mail during Peter's recovery – when he was still in the hospital.

Now Peter is able to take a more active role in HVVA and preservation activities. I think it is fitting to submit to this newsletter (which Peter dearly loves) the activity updates that we are partaking.

If you wish to contact Peter do not e-mail him as he doesn't have access to his e-mail at this time.

He receives mail at his home address: **83 Spillway Rd., West Hurley, NY 12491** or you may contact me via e-mail at: **rjeracka@hartgen.com**

I live in Albany County and I am in contact with Peter weekly by phone, and visit him 3-4 times a month. He saves his mail for me to read to him and we respond to this written correspondence. I also read him all the e-mails I receive on his behalf. He looks forward to this.

– RSJ

Brother did we ever get washed out! That's Alvin standing on a piece of wood to stay dry, the look on his face tells it all. On the other hand Bob was ankle deep in water. Needless to say that was the end of the festival.



The last HVVA event we attended was the **HVVA Annual Picnic** held in High Falls on August 16, 2008. Peter and I were not able to take the morning tour that was set up, but we did meet every one in the early afternoon. The camaraderie and food was the best, a good time was had by all.

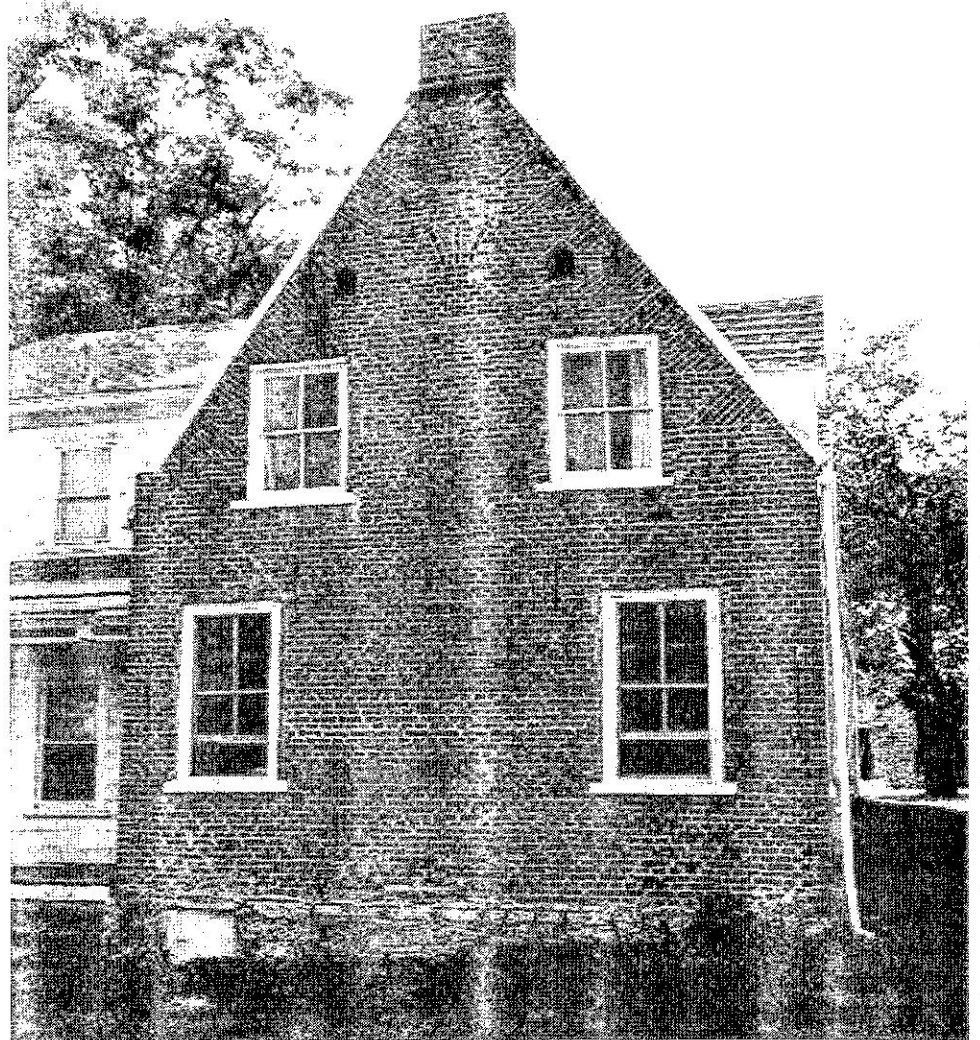
The Van Deusen House

by John R. Stevens

The Van Deusen House is located on the west side of Spook Rock Road (local road No. 27) a short distance north of Hiscox Road, and a short distance south of Route 23B. It is in the Town of Greenport in Columbia County.

Back in the late 1960s, the writer read about the van Deusen house 'under the shadow of Becraft Mountain' in Helen Reynold's book, *Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley Before 1776* (page 70). She mentioned 'ceiling beams with bracket supports' and that it had 'by tradition' beam anchors with the numerals 1742 'once affixed to its east wall' (there is no visible evidence of where these numbers could have been). As I was then well launched into my study of early Dutch-American buildings in connection with my work on the restoration of the Minne Schenck house at Old Bethpage Village Restoration on Long Island, it seemed worth the considerable effort it took to find it! I finally did find it, and then it was a problem to contact the owner to get permission to see the inside of it. Arrangements were made to get in, and we were there at the appointed time – but no one was home! 38 years passed before the HVVA arranged with Peggy Lampman Real Estate to give us access to the interior of the house, and I was finally able to see it on August 27, 2007!

The south side was originally intended as the front of the house, but this side is now mostly covered with a late 19th or early 20th century wooden wing, except at the eastern side where an original doorway still exists. The main part of the house measures 34 feet in length and 19 feet, 7 inches in width. At the west end there is a rubble stone wing 22 feet in length and 20 feet in width across its west end although the side walls line of with those of the main part of the house. The main part of the house is timber frame, Dutch H-bent construction over a rubble stone foundation. The end walls are solid brick, and the side walls are filled with brick and with a brick veneer covering the wall posts. This part of the house shows evidence of being built in two stages but it is not at all clear how this had been done. The western part, which seems to be the



East façade of the Van Deusen house

older, is 19 feet long and has a lower ceiling height than the eastern part (see drawing, section C-C). Two of the framing bents in the western section were fitted with corbels. One corbel survives within a lavatory.

The pitch of the roof of the main part of the house is about 53 degrees. Both end walls have parapeted gables, the edges of which have *vlechtingen* (tumbling). Also, each gable has ventilating openings with pointed tops, and between these openings are decorations in black header bricks. The one on the east gable looks like a flower pot with three long-stemmed blossoms coming out of it. The west gable

decoration, seen from within the roof of the stone wing, is difficult to decipher. It is basically a large 'V' with a pattern of bricks within it (see drawing, east elevation and section B-B). On the east end wall there is a brick with the initials AB and the date 1758 scratched on it.

As mentioned, an original doorway survives at the east end of the south wall (see section C-C, and detail drawing of this doorway). All of the windows of the main part of the house, with one exception, are either replacements of early windows, or added in the 19th century. The exception is a frame on the second floor on the west wall of the main part



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Dr. Natalie Naylor
Professor Emerita, Hofstra University

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of the house which has survived within the roof of the stone wing. A shutter hinge of somewhat Germanic form survives, still on its pintle, on this frame although the shutter has gone.

There is a basement under the main part of the house. At the east end, the trimmer arch for a jambless fireplace survives. There had been a similar arch at the west end, of which only the corbel exists. It can be seen that there was formerly an 8 inch thickness brick wall dividing the basement into two rooms. The only original features to show inside the main part of the house on the first floor are the second floor beams, and, as mentioned previously, one beam corbel. The wall posts have been covered with furred-out wall surfaces. The first floor boards are covered, as also the undersides of the second floor boards. On the second floor, the old flooring is exposed. There was no access to the upper part of the roof, so we could not determine the number of rafters. There may be a way into this space from the roof of the south wing, but in any event there were tenants in the wing and we could not get in it.

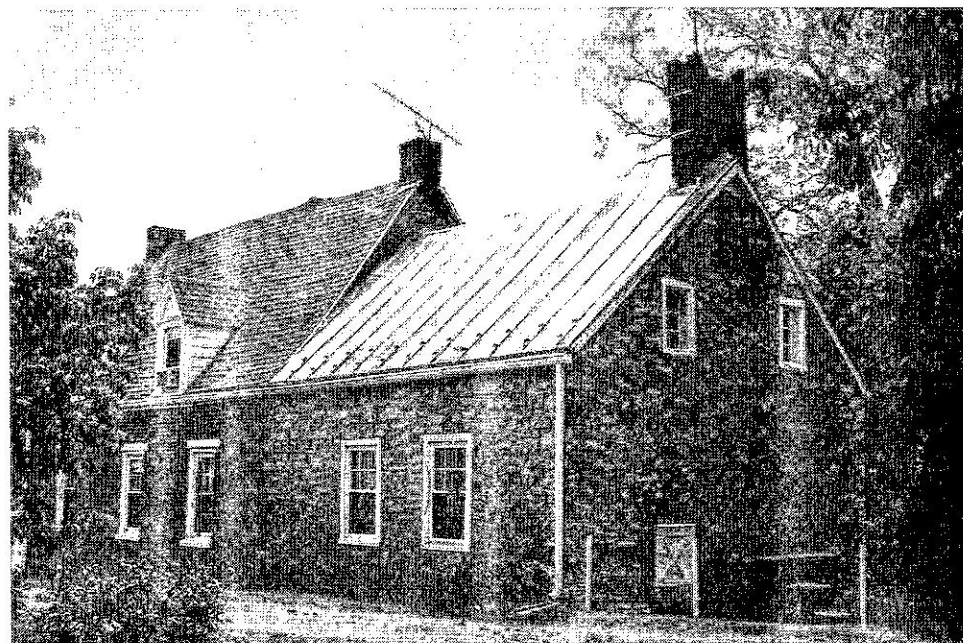
The stone wing may not be too much later than the main part of the house. Its roof pitch is about 41 degrees. It would appear to never have had a jambless fireplace. The existing cooking fireplace once had a bake oven on the north side of it that projected through the west wall. Its outline can be seen on the wall. The attic is accessed by a narrow stair that

runs up over the bake oven location. There is tongue-and-groove boarding applied to the underside of the collar ties, and the interior faces of the rafters that implies that this had been habitable space. The chimney brickwork and the interior face of the gable end is parged and white-washed; the exterior of the west wall of the main part of the house, up to the ceiling boarding, is also whitewashed. Above the ceiling boarding can be seen the decorative brickwork and the two ventilating openings. This brickwork survives in pristine condition.

Two window frames on the north wall of the wing are original, as also are the two west gable window frames. There is evidence that the doorway on the south wall may have been moved from a location towards its west end, judging from the filled-in opening that corresponds with it in size. The frame with its divided door survives, the door having its original Dutch-type 'pad' hinges and two latches with English Suffolk-type grasps. The wing, on both the first floor and in the attic, has the least changed interior spaces in the house.

The writer's long-delayed inspection of this house was certainly worth the wait, and it can only be hoped that the house finds a sympathetic purchaser. It is a late example of the use of timber-frame-and-brick-veneer construction, and the use of beam corbels. It represents a kind of 'last gasp' of the Netherlandic traditions brought to America in the 17th century.

Northwest view of the Tobias Van Deusen house.



Hortus

Preserving Plants in Historic Burial Grounds

by Scott G. Kunst

Plants are an essential part of every old burial ground and deserve the same respect and care as any other historic artifact. In many burial grounds, scraps of pre-settlement vegetation survive. In most, mourners and caretakers have added favorite plants. Those surviving today create a living document that tells of local history, garden fashion, ethnic influences, and cultural change. Every plant lost diminishes the document and our understanding of the past.

These plants may also be great rarities. Old burial grounds have yielded roses and other living antiques once thought lost forever. To an untrained eye, an overgrown lilac may seem identical to those at local garden centers – and therefore expendable or easily replaced – but a plant historian may recognize it as something distinct and rare. Even same weeds are historic plants; black locust seedlings may be descendants of trees that ringed a cemetery years ago. Plants can be amazingly tenacious. Until proved otherwise, consider each plant an irreplaceable bit of the historical record and an endangered species.

How to Find Historic Plants

Relic plants are often overlooked because they grow unobtrusively and in unexpected places. Getting down on hands and knees can be enormously revealing. Search first at the base of the marker – front, sides, and back. Even if the grass is trimmed right up to it, look carefully; peonies and other plants can survive for years when mown to grass-height. Search apparently empty lawn, under overgrown shrubs, and at the base of trees. Search the perimeter of the burial ground, especially just outside any fence, and near the refuse pile. Escaped or discarded plants often survive there in benign neglect. Search through the year to discover bulbs and plants that go dormant. Map and describe everything found.



The Burhans Cemetery located on a bluff above the Hudson River in the Town of Ulster, clearly depicts the need for study and documentation of historical plant specimens.

How to Protect Historic Plants

Most important is an informed attitude. When plants are regarded as historic artifacts and endangered species, half the battle is won. So spread the word.

Modern maintenance is perhaps the greatest danger to relic plants. Attempting to meet suburban lawn standards while cutting costs, many cemeteries mow and weedwhip brutally, destroying historic plants. Weed-killers eradicate those that have escaped into lawns and are especially destructive at the base of markers.

Unfortunately, graveyard preservation poses other dangers. "Cleanups" often sweep far too clean, and marker conservation work may damage plants. Rather than removing shrubs to protect markers, prune judiciously or dig and move them a few feet. As a last resort, take cuttings to replant. Changes in the microclimates in old burial grounds can cause problems also. Trees and shrubs mature, for example, shading once sunny spots. Though some changes can be moderated, at times it may be necessary to relocate a plant.

It may also make sense to reestablish plants that survive only as "escapes," or to increase the numbers of a threatened plant. In any rescue, keep in mind that no matter how endangered a plant may seem, it has long survived as is. Intervention often leads to extinction. Moving or increasing a plant also changes the historical record, so use discretion and document.

Collecting seeds is the least damaging way to propagate. To reproduce a plant exactly, take cuttings or dig a tiny piece, leaving most in place. Never jeopardize the continued life of the original plant.

Avoid introducing new plants into old burial grounds, since it alters the historical record, and the new may grow to overwhelm the old.



Scott G. Kunst is a landscape historian and preservation planner in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He teaches courses in landscape preservation at Eastern Michigan University.

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.**

Membership dues remains at a low \$20 per year (\$15 for Students). So if you haven't sent in your dues or given a tax deductible donation to the HVVA mission, **please consider doing so now.**



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Name

Address

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City.....

State Zip

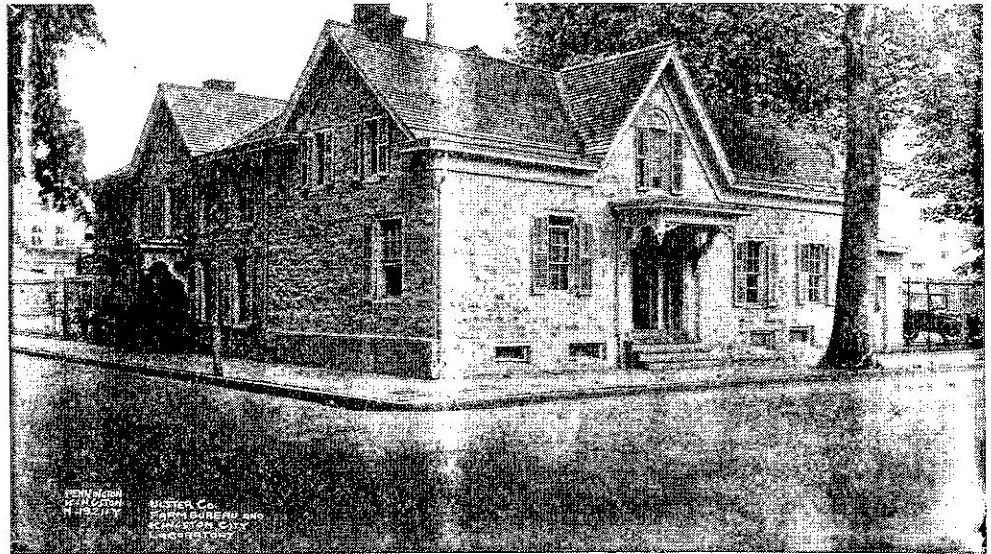
Phone

E-mail

Please mail checks to:

HVVA
P.O. Box 202, West Hurley, NY 12491

A look back



Persen House – corner of John and Crown St., Kingston, NY, circa 1880. Photo courtesy of Friends of Historic Kingston.

Calendar

Tour the Persen House with the experts

Sat., Sept. 20, 2008 – 10 AM to 2 PM

HVVA will host a book signing and open house at the Matthew Persen House, 74 John Street, Kingston, NY. Stop by and have a look at this house which dates back to the 17th century! A brief Trustee meeting will be held at 10:30 AM.

To Gent we go!

Sat., October 18, 2008 – 11:00 AM

Tour an 18th Century home located at 211 Snyder Road, Gent, NY. Lunch and visiting other houses in the afternoon are being scheduled. Car pooling available from the HVVA office (1019 Flatbush Road, Kingston) at 10:00 AM.

For further directions, contact Roberta: (518) 526-8658

Planning we must do.....

Sat., November 15, 2008 – 10:00 AM

Planning the 2009 events will take place at the North Marletown Fire House on Route 209. All members are welcome; your ideas mean a lot. Lunch at the Hurley Mountain Inn follows the meeting.

Contact Jim with items for the agenda: (845) 527-1710

Holiday tour!

Sat., December 13, 2008 – 10:00 AM

By far the most fun tour of the year! Here we visit houses, have a great lunch and out to visit more houses! Meet at 10:00 AM in the parking lot of the Hoffman House Tavern on the corner of North Front and Green Street in Kingston, NY.

Cost of the tour is \$20 which covers the cost of the lunch.

RSVP is a must to attend this outing! Contact Rob: (845) 336-0232