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# The Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture

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## Newsletter

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Collection of George Way, Staten Island.  
Photo courtesy of Historic Huguenot Street.

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## European Dutch Decorative Arts – The George Way Collection

By Ruth Piwonka

*This article was derived from a presentation Ruth Piwonka made to HVVA for the 2018 Maggie MacDowell Lecture at Woodland Pond, New Paltz on February 17, 2018. Piwonka is a leading historian of Dutch culture in the Hudson Valley, and she is the author of the catalog for the exhibit of the George Way Collection of Dutch objects now on display at Historic Huguenot Street in New Paltz.*

Selections from George Way's collection of primarily 17th century antiquities are presently exhibited at the Jean Hasbrouck House, Historic Huguenot Street, New Paltz, through the coming summer season. With such a rich infusion of Dutch household goods there, one ponders anew just how this might have worked. Did they bring their own furniture from Patria? Did someone here know about that furniture and make pieces like it in America? Did someone bring drawings of new designs from Europe?

Before tackling those questions we need to consider scholarship over the past 117 years. The appended bibliography lists a number of publications on topics of the decorative arts in the Netherlands and America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. All of them are important and informative regarding the interchange between Europe and its American colonists. Most of these studies have been coeval with museum exhibitions. It is pertinent to call attention to several, which are less well known to most of us.

Three sources from the first several years of the twentieth century by Esther Singleton continue to be extremely useful. They can be found on line, along with one that seems new to students in America.

This is Karel Sluyterman's *Huisraad en Binnenhuis in Nederland in vroeger eeuwen* (1918) or *Household Furnishings and Interiors in Earlier Centuries*. He was involved in industrial arts education, so-called, and had a great passion and pride for his country's place in woodworking and the developing decorative arts of the seventeenth century. This Dutch-language publication contains many illustrations and text that one might select for online translation (almost guaranteed to confuse both Russians and CIA). Sluyterman's work can be found at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) and at <https://archive.org/details/huisraadenbinnen00sluy>.

Seemingly, with the 1976 United States Bicentennial, a rising generation – and more – pressed for a better understanding of colonial prototypes and antecedents that informed the era before and during the Great American Resistance. This new American interest occurred simultaneously with new, sophisticated approaches to historical archeology and decorative arts studies.

Beginning with Peter Thornton's *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France, & Holland* (1979), only relatively recently has new research of Dutch-American decorative arts occurred in America and in The Netherlands. Reinier Baarsen's study of Dutch furniture has called attention to details of exchange with France and England, and also highlighted some aspects of regionalisms. Alma Reumpol's masterful *Pre-industriële Gebruiksvoorwerpen [Pre-industrial Utensils] 1150-1800* (1991) demonstrates the importance of the archeological records in providing helpful guides to identifying and dating artifacts found and used across American colonies. It is a significant complement to Ivor Noel Hume's classic reference *A Guide to the Artifacts of Colonial America* (1969).

Sluyterman's and Baarsen's Netherlandish publications demonstrate (and richly illustrate) the considerable diversity of form, design, and ornamentation found in Dutch furniture. Such confirmation is important to American interests because the relatively few New Netherland inventories surviving from the late 1630s through 1664 intimate a diversity of styles and types. For example, mention is made of cupboards of varying sizes and materials, evidently varied stools [chairs], chests large and small, tables with boards to be pushed out or pulled in.

Even so, most persons in America's New Netherland were there as settlers and employees of the Dutch West Indian Company the administrators of which had strongly advised them to bring suitable clothing and tools, and to prepare for a somewhat subterranean dug-out residence for a year or more; following that settlers could expect to use their dug-outs as a cellar, building upon it housing of a somewhat more conventional type. No mention was made pertaining to the acquisition of beautifully carved, inlaid, and/or styled furniture to make their houses richer or more comfortable.



Surviving examples of any of such artifacts from this early period in the Hudson Valley are rare to non-existent. Examples that may well have flourished in Manhattan and Kingston were plausibly burned by the British at time of the Revolutionary War; or if not burned, may well have been cast out by later generations of New Yorkers who saw such antique furnishings as out of place, culturally insignificant, ugly, and old-fashioned.

For the most part, the wonderful artifacts from George Way's collection now exhibited in the Jean Hasbrouck house are examples of stylish European pieces that characterized the somewhat more sophisticated late seventeenth European town households rather than rural households in a late seventeenth-early eighteenth century Hudson Valley community.

During the three and half decades between the English takeover of New Netherland and about 1710,

there continued to be immigration from the Netherlands to colonies in the former Dutch cultural area. Probably in this period more than others, there was opportunity for prosperous families to obtain more stylish furniture forms. It was in this period that iconic Dutch brick houses and stone Ulster County houses were constructed. Further in Europe, internationalism blossomed among the English, French, and Dutch. It was an amazing fluorescence. The French artisan and craftsman Daniel Marot created “the look” while Dutch craftsmen were called upon to manufacture it. The English and French distributed it to the colonies, where yet other craftsmen imitated and more often reinterpreted it in ways best suited to American woods and American life-styles.

A notable component of the Way collection is its variety of small paintings. The size of the paintings is critical. Seeing such paintings grouped in a single room is a very useful aid to our understanding of how many paintings might be managed in a household. Seventeenth century English travelers in the Netherlands remarked about plentiful artworks, noting they were found in farmhouses and even hanging in cowbarns. Although not quite so plentiful here, travelers in America noted the Dutch taste for artwork across New York colony, evidently greater than found in New England or in southern colonies.

Even though much of George Way’s collection is of stylish Netherlandish origins and consists of artifacts not likely to be used or even found in the Hudson Valley, every part of it remains an important reminder of the source of Hudson Valley decorative art.

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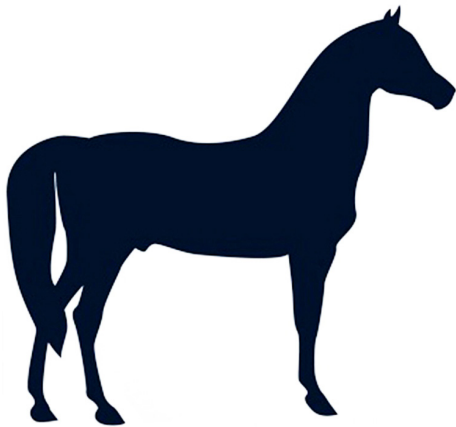
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## Livestock of Wiltwyck: A Moral Inventory

*In which the Judgment of Oliver Goldsmith,  
the Great Chronicler of Animated Nature,  
is Weighed in the Scales of Colonial Justice*

Humbly Submitted to the Reader's Impartial  
Scrutiny by K.L. Krabbenhoft, Jr., BA, MA, PhD, HVVA,  
Fellow Lover of Truth



### The Horse

Animals of the horse kind deserve a place next to man, in the history of nature. Their activity, their strength, their usefulness, and their beauty, all contribute to render them the principle objects of our curiosity and care, a race of creatures in whose welfare we are interested next to our own.

Oliver Goldsmith, 1774<sup>1</sup>

How many modern writers pay homage to the automobile? Even Wright Morris, arguably the American novelist most brilliantly attuned to the everyday life of the statistically average citizen of our country, neglected to praise the simple existence of the vehicles that figure so prominently in the lives of his characters.

The equivalent of today's sedan, SUV, or pickup truck in the Dutch colony of New Netherland was the horse. And yet, despite being as ubiquitous and indispensable to colonial society as our vehicles are to us, there is nothing comparable to Goldsmith's eulogy in surviving documents. If we were to judge solely by the written evidence, we would have to conclude that the ups and downs of horses' lives were no more noteworthy than the way my Subaru drives before and

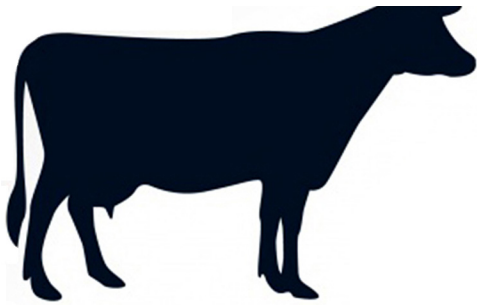
after a tune-up.

It would seem at first blush that the horses of Wiltwyck fit the above description: they were a virtuous lot who responded well to human curiosity and care, as the Court received few complaints about them in comparison with pigs and cows. But as we shall see, Goldsmith has a penchant for exaggerating an animal's positive or negative sides, but rarely both. Wiltwyck's horses are a case in point: in addition to their activity, strength, usefulness and beauty, they were far from faultless.

On March 20, 1672, for example, Cornelis Wyncoop's stallion was rusticated to the other side of the Rondout Kill for having caused "much damage" in town. The nature of its offense was probably so well known that it didn't merit mention. Did it bite other horses or people, trample crops, knock down fences, harass unreceptive mares, all of the above? While the Court was at it, they dismissed Wyncoop from his job as one of the town's Examiners of Stallions. The official reason for this was "because his time has expired". One suspects there was more to it. Another ruling made the same day sent the Examiners back out to make another round of inspections, because there were so many "bad stallions" out there (480).<sup>2</sup>

In a fresh attempt to deal with the problem Wiltwyck inaugurated a pound a few months later, with Aert Otterspoor, the town wolf master, in charge (484-485). This was not to Cornelis Wyncoop's liking, because it seems he had "bad" cows in addition to his bad stallion. In October he took upon himself to spring three of his cows from the pound, arguably the first jail-break in Kingston history. His remarkably irrelevant justification was that "the pound keeper is obliged to impound pigs as well as cattle" (487). Anyway, Otterspoor took him to court and Wyncoop had to pay his cows' bill for lodging.

Just when the bad stallion problem seemed to be under control, the establishment of the villages of Hurley and Marbletown threw a wrench in the works. In May 1674 the Examiners reported that there was a surge in stallion trouble from the new villages! The Court declared that “all bad stallions shall be arrested” and “the honorable courts at Horly and Marbel [sic]” instructed to arrest them, too. Four days later, Aert Otterspoor asked to be relieved of his job as keeper of the pound. Apparently wolves were nothing compared to rowdy horses and scofflaw cows.



## The Cow

Of all animals, those that chew the cud are the most harmless, and the most easily tamed. As they live entirely upon vegetables, it is neither their interest nor their pleasure to make war upon the rest of the brute creation: content with the pastures where they are placed, they seldom desire to change. As the food of the ruminant animals is entirely of the vegetable kind, and as this is very easily procured, so these animals seem naturally more indolent and less artful than those of the carnivorous kinds; and as their appetites are more simple, their instincts seem to be less capable of variation. They deserve the first rank, both for their size, their beauty and their services.<sup>3</sup>

Ok. A cow is a cow. Everybody knows what cows look like and what services they provide. Being so obvious to everybody, these aspects are not described in the annals of Wiltwyck, neither are the size or beauty of any given cow except in some wills and sales of livestock. No, when they do come up, it's because they're a public or private nuisance.

In all fairness to Goldsmith, the public face of the cow problem has more to do with the owners than with any cow's moral character. I'm thinking of cows

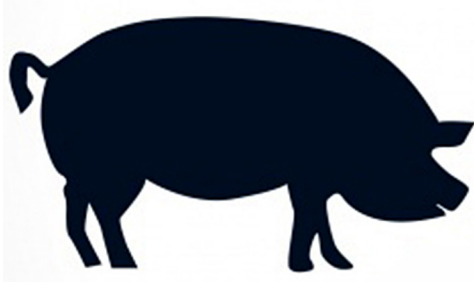
encouraged to spend the night in the middle of the street. We remind ourselves that Wiltwyck's streets were very dark indeed: the candle light escaping from the one or two windows of houses facing the street was ghostly at best, and candle-powered lanterns wouldn't reveal a clutch of drowsy cattle until you were on top of them. It's wonderful when cows stay put in their pastures. But each of those cows that are blocking your way weighs hundreds of pounds. And as Goldsmith points out, once they get somewhere, they don't like to leave it. As Gertrude Stein would have put it, “Cows in the grass, alas”.

This was not simply a matter of an unimpeded return home from Matthys Roelofsen's tavern when you've had too much to drink: it was so fires could be put out before the entire town burned down or attacking Esopus warriors stopped at the stockade wall. Tjerck Claessen De Witt, sergeant of the civil guard, made this clear in June 1665 when he begged the Court to do something so that “the cattle, at night, may be kept off the street, that the round may pass freely and without obstructions, and also that, in time of need or alarm, there may not be obstacles along or on the street”. The Court accordingly ordered each inhabitant to “keep his cattle, during the night, inside his enclosure, and not on or about the street”, under penalty of a fine (240).

On the private side, depending on the circumstances, the guilt of a misbehaving cow could fall on the cow herself. Take the case that Harent Cornelisse Vogel presented to the Court in October 1667. Vogel had entrusted a cow to Arien Gerrits to take care of for the winter. He claimed that, when spring came, Gerrits “chased the cow in the wood before there was grass”. The defendant countered that when he had asked Vogel “whether or not he should give her into the care of the cowherder”, he had answered: “Just drive her outside Tomesen's gate and let her go”. This seemed reasonable to Gerrits, because at the time “most of the village cattle were being sent into the woods to pasture”. To this Vogel replied that he had left Wiltwyck for Fort Orange (Albany) in early April and couldn't have said what Gerrit says he said “because at the time there was no grass yet”. A case of he-said-she-said.

The Court considered the testimony and declared that the defendant “is not responsible for the animal's loss” because the village cattle were all being driven into the woods at the time (362). So what happened

to the cow? If we want to avoid criticizing Goldsmith for exaggerating the bovine virtue of unenterprising immobility, we'll have to assume that Vogel's cow fell victim to foul play. The case is still open.



## The Hog

The Wild Boar, which is the original of all the varieties we find in this creature, is by no means so stupid nor so filthy an animal as that we have reduced to tameness. The hog seldom refuses animal food, how putrid soever, although it is never at the pains of taking or procuring it alive. For this reason it seems a glutton rather by accident than choice. If we behold the hog in its domestic state, it is the most sordid and brutal animal in nature. It seems possessed only of an insatiable desire of eating; and it seems to make choice only of what other animals find the most offensive. It is less active in its motions, less furnished with instinct in knowing what to pursue or to avoid, incapable of instruction, and insensible to blows or rough usage. It is, by nature, stupid, inactive, and drowsy. The only times it seems to have passions of a more active nature, are when it is incited by venery.<sup>4</sup>

Let us add that, unlike cows, hogs are not harmless and they are not easily tamed. The only trained hog I know, Hermie, watches television from the living room couch of his home in Rosendale. I suspect that it's his owners who've been trained by Hermie, rather than the other way around.

If Goldsmith had been acquainted with any upper-crust types like Hermie, his scorn for barnyard hogs might have been less passionate and all-embracing. But he didn't, and neither did the farmers and tradesmen of Wiltwyck. The magnitude of the latter's problems with pigs can be appreciated by the ongoing crisis in fencing. Broken fences and hogs went hand

in hand – or should I say “hoof in hand”? – all over the Hudson Valley in colonial times.

The documented history of inappropriate behavior of this gluttonous, lazy, filthy and stupid creature begins in March 1648, when the New Netherland Council issued an ordinance “against goats and hogs running at large in New Amsterdam”. These beasts “cause great damage in orchards and gardens and other improvements”, not to mention “great injury to many private parties”. They would henceforth be confined to their own enclosures and not be pastured outside them”, under penalty of law.<sup>5</sup> That this was a perennial problem is attested by a session of the Wiltwyck Court nearly thirty years later, in October 1667, when a sachem of the Esopus tribe named Tamirewackingh complained that “for the last two years his maize on his plantation has been eaten and destroyed by the pigs from this village”. Two Court magistrates and the commander of the garrison agreed to accompany the sachem to verify the damage. There's some urgency, because the Indians are about to “set out on their [winter] hunting expedition” (363).



## 4. The Goat

The goat seems, in every respect, more fitted for a life of savage liberty than the sheep. It is naturally more lively, and more possessed with animal instinct. It easily attaches itself to man and seems sensible of his caresses. It is also stronger and swifter, more courageous, more playful, lively, capricious, and vagrant; it is not easily confined to its flock, but chooses its own pastures, and loves to stray remote from the rest. The inconstancy of its nature is perceivable in the irregularity of its gait; it goes forward, stops, runs, approaches, flies, merely from caprice.<sup>6</sup>

Those of us who have spent time with sheep undoubtedly understand what Goldsmith is getting at when he



compares them unfavorably to goats, but for what it's worth he evens the score when he compares goats disparagingly to wild boars. There is an important distinction, though: in Goldsmith's view, sheep have no one to blame for their numbskulled herd-instinct because it is in their nature to be what they are, whereas goats are "savage and filthy" because we humans have deprived them of their "savage liberty", reducing them (he says) to tameness. The same distinction is at work in Goldsmith's remarks on wild boars and hogs. Like wild boars, the only nobility goats have managed to retain consists of their "lively nature" and "animal instinct", which apparently account for their "inconsistency".

Underlying this tangle of anthropomorphizing illogic is the Enlightenment notion that the rules and regulations of social institutions like Church and State narrow the scope of human interaction with each other and the world. This is why Goldsmith can use the word "savage" in both a positive and a negative sense: positive when it is synonymous with liberty (which somehow makes the noble goat "sensible of" the caring touch of human hands), and negative when it is paired with filth, "filth" being synonymous with hogs, as we've already seen.

It would have been nice if Goldsmith had mentioned how funny goats can be, but that would have detracted from the wild dignity of both bucks and does.



## The Chicken

When the hen begins to sit, nothing can exceed her perseverance and patience; she continues for some days immovable, and when forced away by the importunities of hunger, she quickly returns. When the young are produced, her affection and her pride seem

then to alter her very nature, and correct her imperfections. Whatever the invading animal be, she boldly attacks him. When marching at the head of her little troop, she acts the commander, and has a variety of notes to call her numerous train to their food, or to warn them of approaching danger. The cock, from his salaciousness, is allowed to be a short-lived animal.<sup>7</sup>

Allow me to summarize Goldsmith's account: The female chicken is a morally spotless incarnation of ideal motherhood. She is patient and persevering almost to the point of death by starvation. She is selflessly devoted to her young and proud of them, presumably because they actually improve her already unimprovable virtues. She is a fearless defender of her offspring, a prescient safeguard of the safety of the entire society of chickens. After yielding only once to the advances of a repulsively promiscuous rooster, leering and strutting with lust, she can have babies all by herself! Good riddance to that faithless sex addict, whose evil ways will fortunately take him to an early grave.

All of this may be true of the hens that Goldsmith was acquainted with. It is not true of my Grandfather's chickens (see below). On the other hand, who could find fault with his portrait of the rooster? Especially those who've been awakened at dawn by his cockadoodle yacking?

## The Wisdom of Oliver Goldsmith

But why should we care about Oliver Goldsmith's views on the moral character of farm animals?

For one thing, his influence in America, which paralleled his success in England, was assured by none other than Washington Irving, the first of our authors to earn international recognition. Among many other "firsts", he was our first important biographer, choosing three men for meticulous study and high praise: Christopher Columbus, George Washington, and, interestingly enough, Oliver Goldsmith.

Known primarily for his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* and his play *She Stoops to Conquer*, Goldsmith was notorious for both his addiction to alcohol and gambling, and his extraordinary personal charm and selfless generosity. He died in poverty at the age of 45.

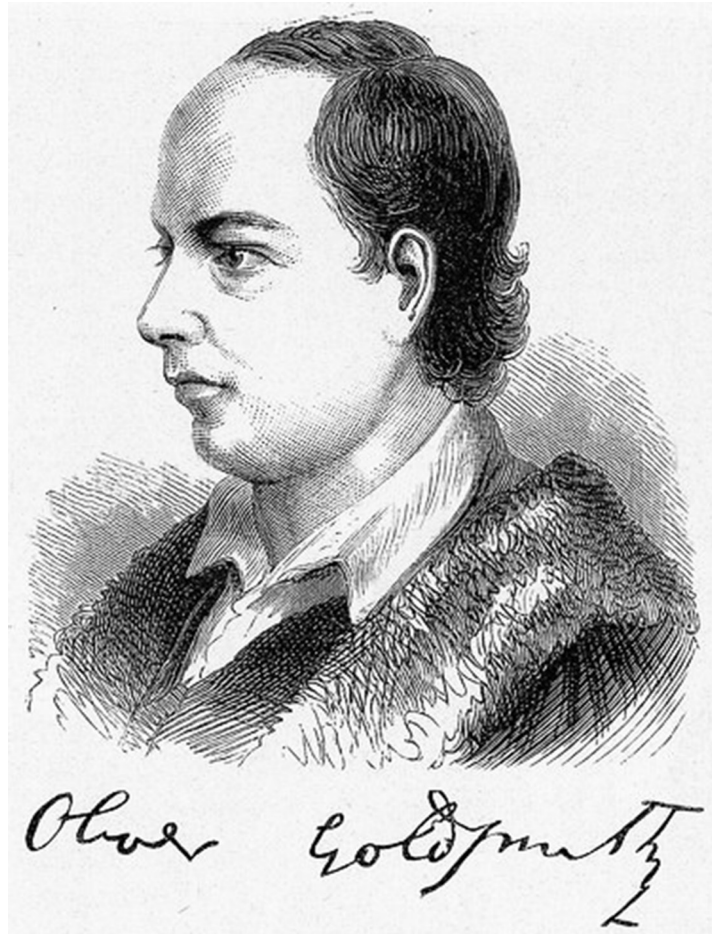
As for how he came to write the seven volumes of *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, the source of this essay's quotations, the shortest and perhaps most persuasive answer is found in the answer to the related question of why Goldsmith was hired to write such a grand and scientific-sounding treatise in the first place. In a practical sense, it was because of his experience with work-for-hire, aka hack work. His friendship with such luminaries as Boswell, Samuel Johnson, and Edmund Burke and his perpetual need of money came into play, too. In the intellectual sense, the view of animated life he gives us with his superbly entertaining prose was that of the cutting edge of science in the 1770s. By Goldsmith's own admission, they came directly from the thirty-six volumes of the Count de Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*, the most famous work of eighteenth-century naturalism.

There was no Buffon in the seventeenth-century, but an inventory of the residents of Wiltwyck would most likely turn up very similar views. Stallions could be macho brutes, hogs were slovenly food-addicts, goats were egomaniacs, and chickens were pure egg-laying machines.

I would go so far as to say that Goldsmith's moral categories are alive and well among us today, even though we know they aren't scientific. They were certainly the norm on my grandfather's farm in Miles, Iowa, where I spent glorious weeks during summer vacations from grade-school. He made his living from the saleable virtues of his horses, cows, hogs, and chickens (no goats), but his message to me was straight out of Goldsmith: don't let them fool you, because they have vices that could cost you a limb, or your life.

Whisky, the pinto pony we were allowed to sit on (under supervision) was mean and stubborn. If you weren't careful, he'd pin your foot down with his front left hoof and refuse to move. Don't go near the pigpen, because the pigs, though they are delightfully filthy and eat the most wonderfully disgusting things, are vicious and territorial and will take a bite out of you when you aren't looking. It doesn't matter (said Grandpa) that your father had a pet piglet named Peter. He was a farm boy and knew better, unlike you city kids.

Beware of the cows you come across grazing in the field: those big sweet eyes and sideways-chewing jaws are hypnotic, but just because they make milk



doesn't mean they're nice like your mother. If you're in their way, they'll walk straight through you. Don't throw dirt clods at the chickens. Yes, they're hilarious when they scatter like a scandalized mob, but they're so dumb and skittish they'll forget to lay. Roosters are dangerous, violent, jealous birds. And so forth.

So hats off to Oliver G. and the "science" that conflated instincts and morals. The error makes for a much better story, the story that most of us keep alive in our love for our pets.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (London: William Charlton Wright, 1824 [1774]), Volume I, Chapter XXXVIII, p. 311.
- <sup>1</sup> Numbers in parentheses refer to Peter Christoph et alia, *New York Historical Manuscripts, Dutch: Kingston Papers 1661-1675* (Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.: Baltimore, Maryland), 1976. In two volumes.
- <sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapters XLI, p. 334, and XLII, p. 337.
- <sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter XLVI, pp. 407 and 409-410.
- <sup>1</sup> *New Netherland Council Dutch Colonial Ordinances* (Albany: New York State Archives), Series A1875.
- <sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter XLIII, p. 357.
- <sup>1</sup> *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1859 [1774]), Volume II, Chapter II, pp. 63-64.

## The endurance of the New England plan in Spencertown, New York

By Neil Larson

Finally, after decades of recognition of Spencertown's architectural significance, the Austerlitz Historical Society has sponsored a National Register historic district nomination to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Austerlitz. A town-wide historic resource survey conducted by the historical society over the past few years, as well as research done in preparation of the nomination form, has revealed interesting facts about local architecture, some of which already has found its way into this newsletter. Of course, what makes Spencertown of particular interest in the context of the Hudson Valley is that it is a New England village created by Massachusetts in the 1750s. This is not unique along the fluid NY/NE border, but few if any others developed to the extent or architectural distinction of Spencertown. And, remarkably, the peak of Spencertown's development occurred between 1820 and 1850, well after it was formally incorporated into New York State and disputes over land ownership were resolved. These New England natives, mostly from Connecticut, seem to have been as conscious of preserving their cultural identity as the Dutch had been.

One compelling comparison emerging from the analysis of the design of houses in Spencertown in the 18th and 19th centuries is the subtle persistence of hall-parlor with back kitchen plan that was basic to the traditional New England center-chimney house. The Pratt Homestead, probably familiar now to everyone, was built around 1760 in the best manner of a Connecticut River Valley house of the period (*Fig. 1*). It is such an iconic example that its builder likely was brought from Connecticut expressly for that purpose, and its uniqueness suggests that whoever it was did not stick around to build any others like it. The two-story center-chimney plan contained under a single gable roof represents the fullest extent of the design; more common manifestations of the type in the period were one-story houses with the kitchen contained in a shed-roof lean-to on the rear. In either case, the center chimney provides hearths for two flanking rooms in the front and one in the rear (*Fig. 2*).



Fig. 1 – Pratt Homestead, ca. 1760, 866 Rt.203.

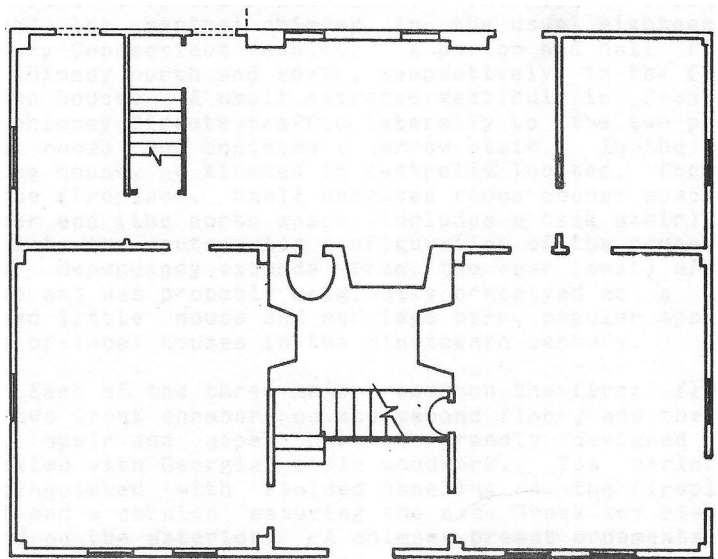


Fig. 2 – Pratt Homestead, first floorplan.

In 1802 a house was built next door for John Tibbetts (*Fig. 3*). Outwardly, it represents house design in the late Federal Period when the bulky mass of 18th-century houses was relieved by plans one-room deep creating narrow gable ends with vertical emphasis and attenuated details, such as in this case, thin corner pilasters and a pedimented doorway. In an important concession to the modern style, the center chimney was removed and replaced with a center passage, with fireplaces moved to the end walls, bringing another feature into the emphatic symmetry of the overall design. To accommodate the kitchen, a service wing was appended to the rear of the house. This improvement represents the initial stages of what became ubiquitous in 19th-century farmhouse design, a dissembled plan comprised of a formal and organized principal unit representing the family and its private and public realms and a diminished appendage associated with farm and domestic work and the subservient people involved in it. Often, as in the case of the Tibbetts house, these messy wings were concealed out of public view in the back of the house, but just as often, perhaps more often in Dutch houses, they were appended to one end of the house creating a paradoxical melding of symmetry and asymmetry, fashion and function, leisure and work, family and the other. That the rear kitchen wing of the Tibbetts house is positioned in the same place as the interior kitchen in the center-chimney house probably is no accident (*Fig. 4*). It maintains the traditional organization of rooms, now each with its own chimney and the center passage linking all three as the center stack once did.

More than thirty years later, a fancy house was built for Timothy Reed on South Street (*Fig. 5*). The eccentric Greek Revival design is attributed to Spencertown carpenter Hiram B. Mather. (Mather was born in 1802 in Whately, Massachusetts, a Connecticut River Valley town, where his father, William Mather, is known to have been a housewright and cabinetmaker.) Yet, at this late date, the three-room plan, two in the front and one in the back, is clearly intact with



Fig. 3 – John Tibbetts House, ca, 1802, 858 Rt. 203.

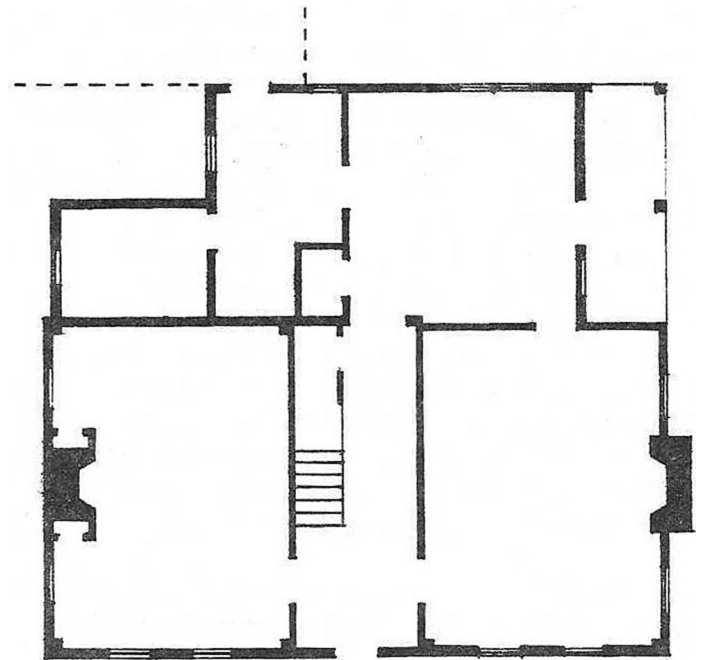


Fig. 4 – John Tibbetts House, first floor plan.



Fig. 5 – Timothy Reed House, 1836, 5179 South St.

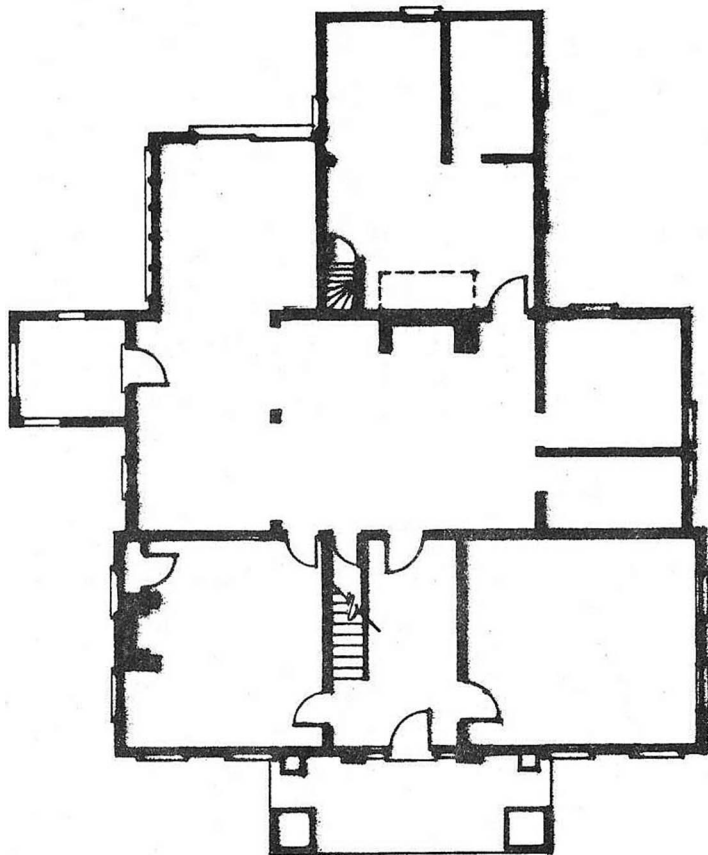


Fig. 6 – Timothy Reed House, first floor plan

a hearth in each room and all linked by a center passage (Fig. 6). The traditional plan is cleverly concealed within a Classical envelope with a two-story center section fronted by a pillared portico and flanked by one-story wings; the kitchen is contained in a separate rear wing. Viewed from the exterior, who would think this house preserved a traditional 18th-century house plan? Perhaps it had something to do with the mentality of its rural builder.

During this period, many more houses were constructed in Spencertown with two-story, side-passage plans and kitchen wings on the sides and exteriors distinguished by Neoclassical and Greek Revival decoration. Directly across the street from Timothy Reed's house is a more elaborate example of a Greek Revival temple form with a side-passage plan and kitchen wing built for Uel Lawrence around 1845 (Fig. 7). It has been attributed to another local builder, Benjamin Ambler, probably because of his documented association as the builder of the Spencertown Academy, a larger and more imposing Greek temple. So, traditional and modern plans existed simultaneously in one place, as usually is the case.

On the topic of contrasts, a second National Register nomination was made for the hamlet of Austerlitz, at the eastern edge of the town, in this bicentennial project. While Spencertown was building up into a town center with churches, an academy, commercial buildings and dwellings of fashionable distinction, Austerlitz, while its Congregational church and academy were of equal design quality (neither extant), developed at a more modest level. Two-story houses were rare, with story-and-a-half, center-chimney houses with hall-parlor plans; many with kitchens in rear lean-tos (Figs. 8 & 9). These houses, too, preserved the traditional center-chimney plan far longer than the changing fashions would suggest. More about these houses perhaps at another time.



Fig. 7 – Uel Lawrence House, 1845, 5178 South St.  
 Fig. 8 – Major M. Tyler House, ca. 1836, 11623 Rt.22.

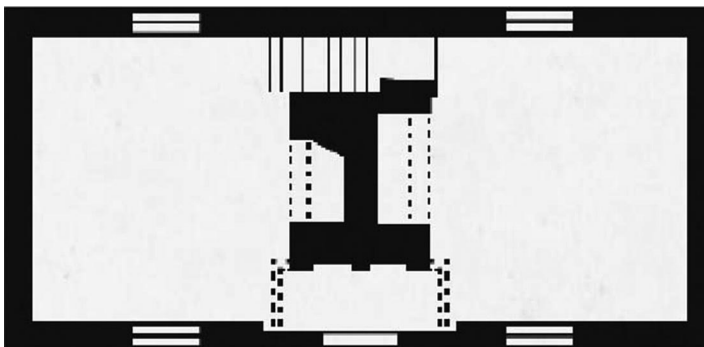
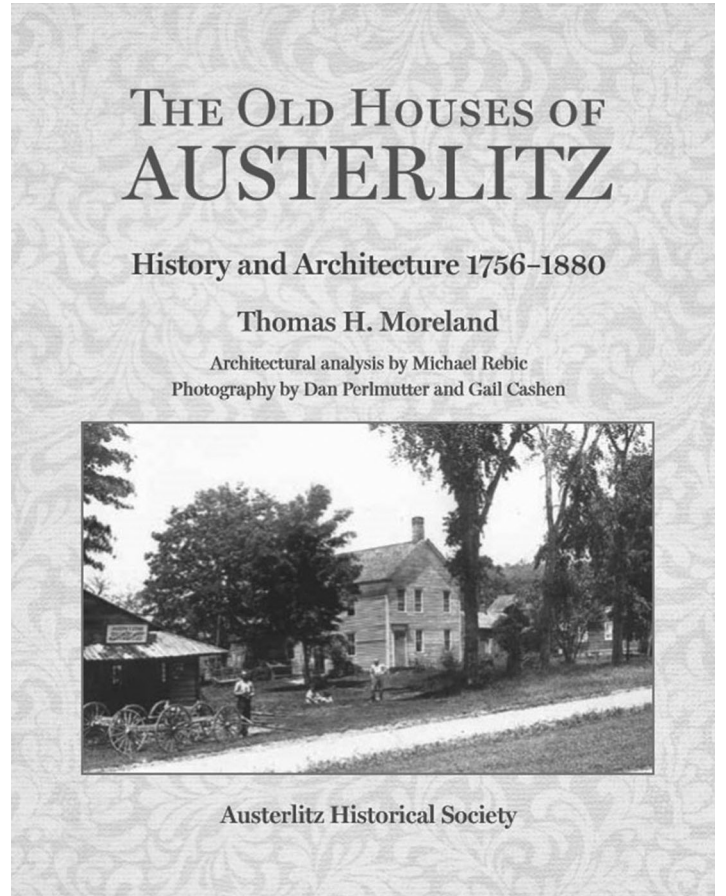


Fig. 9 – Plan of typical hall-parlor house. From Michael Rebic, “The Architectural Landscape of Austerlitz,” in Thomas H. Moreland, *The Old Houses of Austerlitz: History and Architecture, 1756-1880* (Austerlitz Historical Society, 2018.)



For those interested in learning more about the vernacular architecture of the Town of Austerlitz look for this book hot off the press.

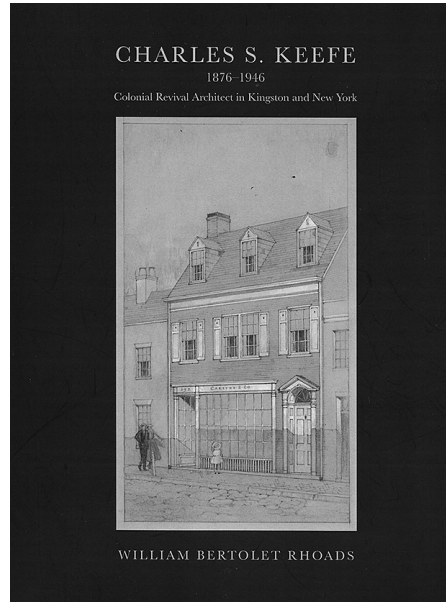
## William Bertolet Rhoads

### *Charles S. Keefe, Colonial Revival Architect of Kingston and New York*

Delmar NY: Blackdome Press Corp., 2017

William B. Rhoads, architectural historian, SUNY New Paltz Professor Emerita and HVVA member has just published an excellent monograph on Kingston-born architect Charles S. Keefe (1876-1946). One of scores of independent architects at the turn-of-the-20th-century who received their training as draftsmen in major New York offices rather than at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Keefe developed a specialty in farm buildings and staff houses for country estates in New Jersey, Connecticut and Long Island while working for firms headed by Edward Burnett and Alfred Hopkins. In 1920 Keefe opened his own office, providing similar services to similar elite clients, hoping to get the opportunity to design the big houses. While waiting, he made a living drafting and publishing plans for small houses in the Colonial Revival style. He studied old vernacular houses in New York and Cape Cod and used them as models for contemporary suburban homes. He favored New England styles, such as the two-story Colonial he built for himself in Kingston, but there are houses he designed in the Dutch taste, too. (See illustrations here.) He did some restoration work on historic homes in Ulster County, but in this respect, he was overshadowed by Myron Teller.

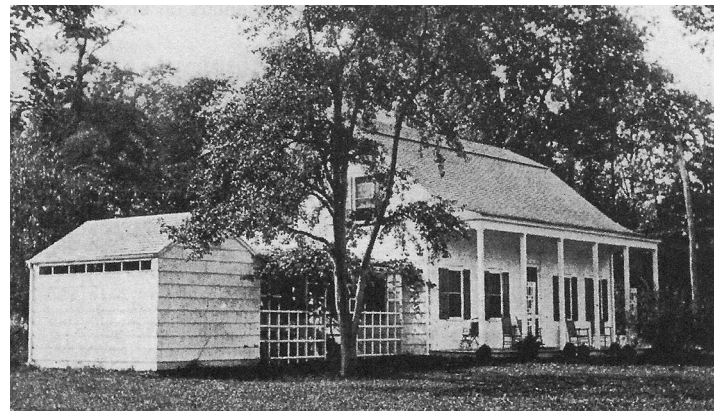
Bill Rhoads' exhaustive study of Charles S. Keefe began thirty years ago when he acquired his business records from a Kingston antique dealer. (The collection has been donated to Friends of Historic Kingston.) His command of his subject is evident. In addition to covering aspects of Keefe's personal life that reveal his approach to archi-



ecture, Rhoads has written detailed descriptions of nearly all his known projects exploring the often-subtle aspects of their design in the contexts of themes associated with the Colonial Revival period. Of particular interest here is Keefe's place in Hudson Valley vernacular architecture. He had a keen interest in historic architecture and incorporated features of it in his contemporary designs. In another sense, we can interpret Keefe's domestic designs as examples of 20th-century vernacular architecture: houses built for local people planned by a local architect employing designs sourced in local building traditions. Altogether, Keefe's

story provides valuable insight leading to a greater appreciation for the development of our towns in the early 1900s, a period that only now is coming into the scholarly realm.

With Bill Rhoads bringing his solid scholarship to bear on this Kingston native and his modest architecture, the subject has been elevated to a new level of significance. His narratives on the buildings are well-constructed and easy to read, and the book is nicely organized and illustrated. The author and his publisher have designed a quality book, which adds dignity to Keefe and his time. The serendipity of discovering the records of a local architect has resulted in a wonderful book, and it sets a high standard for others of us endeavoring to write about Hudson Valley architecture. Charles S. Keefe, *Colonial Revival Architect of Kingston and New York* belongs on every Hudson Valley architecture bookshelf, along with his other guides to architecture in Ulster County and Kingston.



## 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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## In Memory of Ev Rau

Everett Rau died on Sunday, March 25, 2018, at the Pleasant View Farm in Altamont that his family has tended for more than two centuries. He was 98. Ev was well-known among local historians, as well as many members of HVVA, for his knowledge of traditional agricultural practices, from the building of Dutch barns to the restoration of antique farm machinery. He loved sharing his knowledge and was a fixture at the Altamont Fair, helping to restore now-antique equipment and teaching others how to use it. Ev once not only grew appropriate grain to thatch an Elizabethan-style theater but even harvested it with period tools. He was an active member of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society.

He was born on Aug. 22, 1919, the son of Frank Emil Rau and Margaret Van Valkenburg Ogsbury Rau. When his mother's mother, Sarah Frederick Ogsbury, died in 1917, the Raus moved to her Pleasant View Farm and Ev's father left his job at General Electric to manage it. After graduation from Altamont High School, Ev worked at a variety of jobs for General Electric, and it was there he met the woman who would become his wife, Margaret Vedder. The couple married on June 20, 1943.

In addition to farming and taking in city boarders over the summer, the Raus raised turkeys. "Turkeyland," as the Raus called their business, sold roasted turkeys at 89 cents a pound while the competing supermarket charged 59 cents. "My turkeys were raised on a ramp off the ground. They did not walk on dirt. This was my selling point," said Mr. Rau. "We were successful until the arrival of the first shopping center in Schenectady." Mr. Rau was pleased to see his grandson Timothy, and his wife, Amanda, as well as his son Ken Rau's family continue to preserve the centuries-old legacy of Pleasant View Farm raising natural pork, turkey, and chickens.

## Upcoming Events

- May 19** Warwick Tour, Orange County / Ken Krabbenhoft
- June 2** Walkkill Valley Land Trust House Tour / For info and fees see WVLT website
- June 16** Vishers Ferry Tour, Saratoga County / Wally Wheeler
- July 8** Ken Krabbenhoft talk / *Pop Culture in Kingston, NY, 1664*  
Ulster County Historical Society / For info see UCHS website
- July 14** Hurley Stone House Day / HVVA picnic & business meeting
- August 18** Marletown & Kripplebush Tour, Ulster County / Ken Krabbenhoft
- September 15** Deyo-Dubois House, Intensive study. Highland, Ulster County
- October 20** Millbrook Tour, Dutchess County / Neil Larson

**For more information, please check [www.HVVA.org](http://www.HVVA.org)**