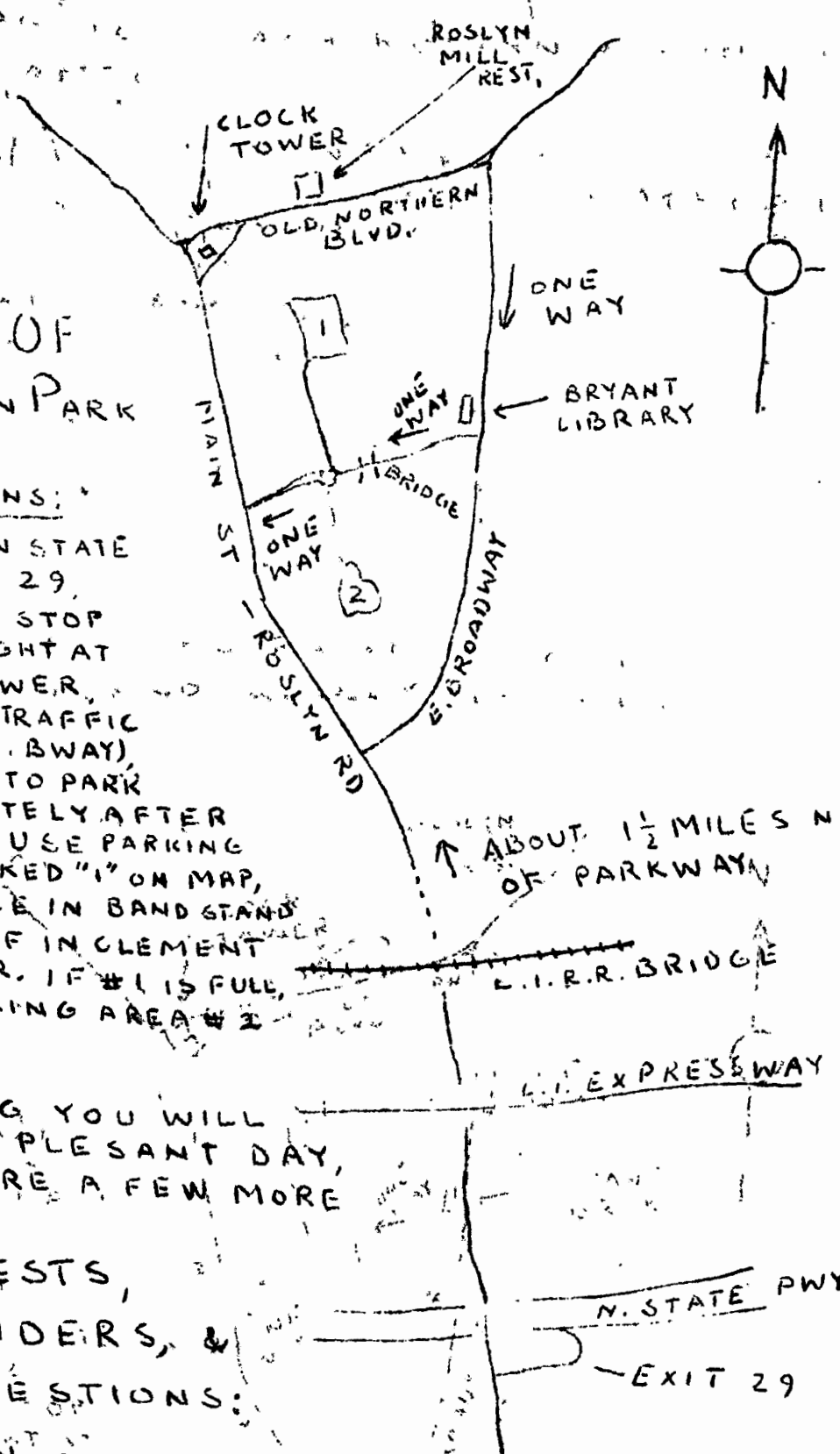


Prepared for Roslyn Historical Society
JUNE 2ND 1962 Roslyn House Tour

MAP OF ROSLYN PARK

DIRECTIONS:

NORTHERN STATE TO EXIT 29, RIGHT AT STOP SIGN, RIGHT AT CLOCK TOWER, RIGHT AT TRAFFIC LIGHT (E. BWAY), RIGHT INTO PARK IMMEDIATELY AFTER LIBRARY. USE PARKING AREA MARKED "1" ON MAP, ASSEMBLE IN BAND STAND IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER. IF #1 IS FULL, USE PARKING AREA #2 ON MAP



HOPING YOU WILL HAVE A PLEASANT DAY, HERE ARE A FEW MORE

REQUESTS, REMINDERS, & SUGGESTIONS:

PLAN TO REACH ROSLYN AROUND 10 - 11:30 AM

NO CHILDREN PLEASE
 SPIKED HEELS PLEASE (PINE FLOORS)
 SMOKING WHILE IN THE HOUSES.

YOU WILL MAKE YOUR OWN ARRANGEMENTS FOR LUNCH. WE CAN SUGGEST THE MILL (SEE MAP)
 ONE OF THE HOUSES WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLY UNTIL 1 PM, ONE OF THE HOUSES ONLY AFTER 1 PM.
 YOUR GUIDES WILL ADVISE YOU
 THERE WILL BE A RECEPTION AT THE HOME OF MR. & MRS. M.W. GETLER - BRYANT AVE, ROSLYN HARBOR - AT 4:00 PM. TO WHICH YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED.

ROSLYN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Roslyn is of architectural interest because of the very high survival rate of homes dating from the mid-19th century and earlier.

Apparently the earliest published record identifying the locations and owners of Roslyn homes is the Walling Map of 1859, which was probably actually surveyed a year or two earlier. A large percentage of the houses and commercial buildings shown on this map are still standing.

Because research has been sketchy to date, not very much is known about the actual construction details of houses shown on the Walling Map. However, much may be conjectured by evaluating the architectural concepts; the construction techniques; and the decorative details. Few, if any, of the early Roslyn houses were actually designed by individual architects. Nevertheless, each house had an architectural concept which determined its appearance and function. This concept was frequently strongly influenced by the various published architectural works of the period, as Benjamin, Hanlett, Downing and Vaux, and in other cases was simply the result of a discussion between the owner and the carpenter. Architectural concepts of Roslyn houses are usually quite reactionary as might be expected in a small country village. In general, the more ambitious the house at the time it was built, the more likely it was to have been built in a contemporary style. Less important houses, where owners were more likely to be interested in shelter than flourishes, frequently reflected the designs of earlier periods. Construction techniques are another important device in the dating of homes. Workmen trained in a country village were likely to persist in the utilization of the techniques of their apprenticeships. In sufficiently isolated communities, a workman might continue in the techniques of the early working years of the elderly man who taught him. Reactionary techniques in one trade may appear side by side with relatively modern techniques in another, depending on the training of the man who did the work. In situations of this sort, the date of the house cannot be earlier than the introduction of the latest construction technique used, provided it may be accepted that the work is a part of the original structure. In general, framing of Roslyn houses tends to conform to contemporary standards. However, the plastering techniques of clamshells and horsehair which continued into late in the 19th century, had been discontinued in cities like Boston by 1750. Masonry also was likely to be reactionary. The brickwork in at least one house of the 2nd quarter of the 19th century was laid in Flemish bond, a style which had largely

disappeared elsewhere at least a century earlier. It is worthy of comment that prior to about 1860, foundations of Roslyn houses were built of large stones, arranged in such a manner that the exposed inside surfaces of the cellar became smooth, while the outer surfaces were covered by earth below grade, and were irregular. After about 1860 foundations were usually built of brick.

Decorative details, as hardware, stair railings, mouldings, etc. are also of great value in establishing the age of a house. In Roslyn the concept and construction details, and even the hardware, may antedate the mouldings by many years. In such a case, the date of the house cannot be earlier than the date of earliest appearance of the specific moulding style, provided that the mouldings may be accepted as original work, and not later alteration. Wooden decorative detail in Roslyn houses usually shows a high type of conformity to contemporary styles, probably because the presence of two lumber yards made it more convenient for carpenters, even the cheaper ones, to buy their mouldings ready made in preference to working them out with moulding planes. For the same reason, mantles and door frames were usually in style and executed with contemporary detail. On the other hand metal hardware was frequently retarded in style, as the result of availability of out-of-date stock or the re-use of early materials. "H" and "H-L" hinges and oval keyholes were used long after their use was discontinued in metropolitan centers. Prior to about 1825, locks were imported from England. After that date they were of local manufacture, some of them by A. Searing of Jamaica.

The foregoing is, of course, only the briefest of resumes. Additional information will be given, when feasible, in the descriptions of the individual houses below. In all cases, estimates of construction dates have been evaluated on the basis of the architectural characteristics described above. In some instances, an individual house may have been built earlier than the attributed date, but alterations have given it the characteristics of a later period. In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the houses on exhibit have been selected to demonstrate the continuing story of Roslyn architecture, and to indicate the various interesting inconsistencies of architectural concept, construction methods, and decorative detail as they appeared in local houses. Many more equally interesting houses remain and it is hoped that they will be exhibited in future tours.

For convenience in classifying the various architectural styles and periods in the United States, a list of these classifications, with approximate dates, is given below. In actual practice "high styles" in each category rarely reached localities which were not in close contact with metropolitan centers. For this reason definite architectural styles do not appear to be in evidence in Roslyn until the Federal period. However, for the convenience of the reader some classification must be given. This one is appended for whatever information it may provide:

1700-1750 Queen Anne

1730-1780 Georgian

1770-1825 Federal

1830-1865 Classic Revival (Greek, Tuscan and Babylon Revival)

1810-1900 Gothic Revival

1835-1920 Victorian Eclectic (Roman, Classic, Gothic, Flemish, Italianate and Swiss, components in same building)

THE SMITH HOUSE
106 Main Street

This house is a typical New York "village house" of the early 19th century; although it may be an earlier house which later alteration has given an architectural flavor of this period. The house has been in the family of the present owner since 1856 and is listed on both the Walling and Beers-Comstock maps as belonging to W. H. Smith. In a photograph of about 1870 it has the profile of a "salt box." However, the kitchen was removed in the late 19th century to permit the construction of the present ell which provides for a full second storey. The present front porch, bay window and extended eaves with brackets are also later additions. It is definitely far more sophisticated than the Story House on East Broadway, although some of its mouldings are similar to and in period with those of the Story House. However, its rooms were designed for specific uses as parlors, etc.

The doorway, in the Federal style, is typically New York and would be considered to be a fine example even in a New York City house of the period. It is worthy of careful examination. It should be noted that the fine carved framing of the glass side and over-door windows are made of wood, not metal. The small ornaments are lead. Originally the doorway was completely exposed and there was only a small "stoop." The front door lock is of British manufacture. It has an open, panel-

led stairway in the Federal style. The cherry stair rail is 18th century in concept and has simple, square balusters. However, the newell which is usually the most stylish part of a stair-rail is quite definitely early 19th century in character. The house originally had a central chimney which is usually characteristic of an 18th century floor plan. This feature suggests the possibility that the house may have been built earlier than its present appearance. The mantle in the rear parlor is original, except perhaps for its shelf, and is a charming example of a small Roslyn mantle of about 1825.

The kitchen is also worthy of comment, as its appearance has scarcely changed since it was built in the late 19th century. It still retains its original furniture, cabinets, and wood-burning range. The fine bootscraper at the kitchen entrance may be the work of C. H. Baxter, a local blacksmith, who lived in the house prior to 1856.

THE BROWER HOUSE
110 Main Street

The Brower House is shown on the Walling Map (1859) as the residence of S. R. Ely, D.D. It is not known when the house was actually built or for whom, but most of its surviving architectural detail is of the second quarter of the 19th century. It is, and probably always has been, one of the most imposing of the village houses, if one considers Cedarmere, Willowmere, Sycamore Lodge, etc., to be in the outlying districts rather than in the village, proper. The house is situated on a hillside, well above Main Street, and has magnificent open views to the north and east. The house was built in the Federal Style, which relates it to the Smith House, but unlike it was built on a five bay central hall plan, with major entrances at both ends of the hall. The Beers-Comstock Map (1873) shows driveways to both front and rear entrances. The north wall of the house was relocated early in the current century, to expand the floor plan. As a result, the rooms north of the central hall no longer retain their original architectural detail, although many of the architectural features, as some of the mantles, have been re-located and re-used. The house is built of characteristic clapboard construction on the typical "rubble wall" foundation of the the first half of the 19th century. Many of the secondary areas, as the cellar stairway, are panelled with horizontal or diagonal sheathing with fine reeded edges. Much of the original hardware has survived throughout the house including some Norfolk latches of the second quarter of the 19th century.

The most interesting area, architecturally, is the central hallway. All the doorways have corner blocks, a Federal feature, but the door-frames themselves include some of the standard Roslyn Greek Revival mouldings. Most of the doors throughout the house also utilize Greek Revival mouldings incorporated into a design utilizing five horizontal panels. The front entrance has sidelights and an overdoor window with bentwood muntins and lead ornamentation in the typical New York manner, similar to those in the Smith House and Cedarmere. The louvred sunburst over the exterior of the rear doorway is a later addition. The stairway has turned mahogany balusters and newel, and is similar to, but not identical with, that in the Gerry House. Unlike it also, the Brower stair-rail extends all the way to the third storey.

The living room to the north of the central hall has been enlarged. The two rooms originally in this area were the size of the present dining room. The living room contains a number of interesting examples of furniture. Probably the most important is a delightful small Empire sofa of New York origin of about 1825. This room also contains an important collection of Washingtoniana, a pair of familial portraits, and a meticulous model of a motor sailer made by the late Judge Brower.

The dining room also contains a number of interesting objects, including a magnificent convex mirror with sconces, a large pair of terrestrial and celestial globes on Regency bases, a copper lustre tea service of about 1825 which has descended in the family, and a pair of ship models one of which was made by Judge Brower, and the other, an early one, which was re-rigged by him. The mantle is Federal in concept and is original to the house. It is closer to one end of the room than might be expected, because the dining room, itself, was made from two originally smaller rooms.

On the second floor, the North Chamber also contains a Federal mantle with a "pillow moulding," which is original to the house, but which was moved here from another room. In addition to other early pieces of furniture, this room contains a fine, small, serpentine front mahogany chest of drawers with original handles.

The other bedrooms on the second floor retain their original floor plans and contain a number of fine pieces of early furniture. These include several New England highboys, one of which probably originated in Connecticut; a fine, early 18th century drop-leaf table in the Queen Anne style, probably from Massachusetts; and a fine late 17th

or early 18th century ladder-back armchair with "sausage-turned" stretchers. The latter was converted into a rocking chair at a later date. The large South Chamber has a fireplace faced with early Delft tiles showing scenes from the Bible.

THE GERRY HOUSE
105 Main Street

Like the Brower House and the Moreland House, the Gerry House may be placed in the second quarter of the 19th century, the period during which most of the surviving Roslyn houses were built. It is shown on the Walling map as belonging to W. Valentine, whose family owned most of what is now Roslyn Park. It is the most sophisticated of the houses reviewed thus far. Its interior decorative detail in the Greek Revival manner was in high style when it was installed, and the mouldings themselves show subtle differences from room to room, depending on their importance. It is the first of the houses described to have cornice mouldings, panelling under the windows in the more important rooms. The second, or street floor, is in almost original condition. The front and rear door locks were made by A. Searing of Jamaica, prior to 1840, when the name of the firm changed. Almost all the windows, throughout the house, are original. The main staircase, with its handsome mahogany rail, extends from the second to the originally unimportant third floor. There are definite front and rear parlors, kitchen and dining rooms, although the bedrooms probably had movable board interior walls and doors as does the rear chamber today. Notwithstanding its stylish interior, the exterior is quite reactionary. The Cape Cod profile has survived, and by this time one would have expected the gable end of the house to have faced the street. The roof has been raised with two dormers but the original roof line is easily seen. ~~The brick walls of the first storey~~ are laid in Flemish bond, a 17th century technique. Inside, "the closed end" secondary stairway is an early detail which may have once been completely enclosed. The house shows, for the first time in this group, the problem which continued to plague Roslyn builders during the remainder of the 19th century, i.e. the problem of developing a house which would work well with the steep hillsides. In this case, it was solved by making the second or street level floor, the principle one. Originally there was true access to the front and rear doorways on the second floor, as there was an exterior stairway which led from the garden to the second storey porch

on the north side of the house. When the porch was enclosed, the stairway was eliminated.

The picket fence and small garden house, both in the more advanced Gothic style, are worth noting. Both were recently removed from Roslyn Harbor, where they were a part of the original Willowmere farm complex. They were probably built about 1837, when the estate changed hands. The latch on the front gate, which is original to it, is stamped "O.H. Baxter." Baxter was a local blacksmith who sold his business and home to W. H. Smith in 1856. It is the earliest signed example of a Roslyn artifact known at present.

In the garage there is a small exhibit of blacksmith made tools and hardware of the 18th and 19th centuries of American and English manufacture. Anyone wishing to visit this exhibit may do so on request. A Victorian Summer House or Gezabo in the Moorish Style, ca 1850, which has recently been removed from Cutchogue, L. I. is presently being reconstructed on the terrace. It is hoped that its restoration will have been completed by the time of the tour.

The home is almost completely furnished with 17th and 18th century pieces of American origin, most of them from New York and New England. There are a few Long Island pieces. A detailed catalogue which is not quite accurate is available to those who may wish to examine these pieces more carefully.

THE MORELAND HOUSE
88 Main Street

The Moreland House is shown on the Walling Map as having belonged to W. Thomas. It was built during the second quarter of the 19th century. Like the Gerry house, it was originally a three bay, side hall house of three stories, with the principle rooms on the second floor. ~~The south wing is a~~ later addition. However, there is no entrance to the second floor from the street, and the principle staircase starts opposite a window on the second floor and ascends to the relatively unimportant third storey. Originally this treatment made a little more sense than it does today, as there was a garden entrance to the rear of the second floor, which was eliminated when the present rear wing was built. Part of the original doorway, with its over-door window may still be seen. It is likely that visitors arriving by horseback or vehicle used this entrance. Like the Gerry house also, it was panelled under the principle stairway, and under some of the principle windows, in the Greek Revival Style. The secondary stairway

was originally "closed end" and may have even been completely enclosed. Important windows which are not fully panelled under the sills have the same deeply incised triple sill panels as other Roslyn homes. Since the Greek Revival mouldings in the Moreland house are similar to some of those in the Gerry house, a cross-section diagram has not been included. In its place is shown a drawing of its window sill treatment which may be unique to some Roslyn houses and may actually be a "trade-mark" of a specific carpenter.

"CEDARMERE"
Home of Miss Elizabeth Love Godwin
Bryant Avenue

Cedarmere was the home of William Cullen Bryant, noted 19th century poet and publisher, from the time he came to Roslyn in 1843 until his death in 1878. The house has descended in his family, and is today owned and lived in by his great-granddaughter. Among his many interests, Mr. Bryant had a great affection for Roslyn. He was the donor and founder of the Bryant Library, which still survives, and was present at its first meeting in the original Library building. It may be of additional interest to mention, today, that he was a member of the Board of Councillors of the Long Island Historical Society.

His son-in-law, Parke Godwin, in his "Life of William Cullen Bryant" wrote that the original farmhouse was built by Richard Kirk, a Quaker, in 1787. It was later modernized by Joseph W. Moulton, a New York attorney and historian, who, with John V. N. Yates, published a "History of The State of New York" in 1824. Mr. Moulton made a number of alterations to the original house, including the addition of the portico with its great square columns. During the years 1836-1838, J. H. Bufford, the noted lithographer, published two views of Cedarmere, one of which was used as the frontispiece for the first (1839) edition of Benjamin Thompson's "History of Long Island." Before the property was acquired by Mr. Bryant, the Moultons considered its modification into a sort of real estate development and the plans for the "Montrose" project still survive.

Mr. Bryant acquired the place in 1843 as a weekend and summer residence. He apparently made some improvements, as a set of plans for alterations were made in 1874 by Thomas Wisedell, an architect of New York. The upper stories were damaged by fire in 1902 and during the ensuing restoration the present living room wing was added to the ground floor. The outer doorway was added during the 1902 restoration and

is typical of New York work of the 2nd quarter of the 19th century. Similar doorways may be seen in the Brower and Smith houses in Roslyn and the Museum of The City of New York. The inner doorway has arched overdoor windows of the 18th century configuration which may have been a part of the original Kirk farmhouse. The inner door, itself, is shown in its present location in prints made during the mid-19th century. Cedarmere is shown on the Walling Map of 1859. At that time the road, the present Bryant Avenue, was situated somewhat west of its present location and ran between the house and Hempstead Harbor.

The garden plan of Cedarmere reflects a rare appreciation of natural beauty. The first impression is one of familiarity which may well be explained by the fact that the landscape architect of Cedarmere, Frederick Law Olmstead, was also the planner of Central Park. In both places Mr. Olmstead attempted to attain the ideal of 19th century romanticism, a sentiment probably originated by Capability Brown in his garden at Doddington Park in Gloucestershire in 1764, and further developed by Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, the beginning of the Gothic revival in England. Olmstead was especially successful at Cedarmere whose gardens have a romantic quality which probably has not survived elsewhere in the United States. An envious San Francisco perhaps described this feeling best by the simple statement, "We just don't have anything like this in California." The Gothic Mill is an important part of the garden's atmosphere of serenity and harmony. It was built to replace an earlier 18th century mill which had been destroyed by fire. The architect of the present mill is unknown, but research will probably substantiate that it was built by Calvert Vaux, a well-known mid-19th century New York architect with a strong affect for the Gothic Revival style. Mr. Vaux worked closely with Mr. Olmstead on a number of projects, and also was a friend of Mr. Bryant's. The mill at Cedarmere is one of the most architecturally important of Roslyn's buildings, and we are indeed fortunate that it has survived. The gardens, only, of Cedarmere will be open for the tour.

SYCAMORE LODGE
The Fahnstock House
Bryant Ave.

The last two houses of our group represent a departure from the other houses. All the others are, in one way or another, some form of modification of the basic Cape Cod cottage, a distinct American type. While some are called Greek Revival, etc, these characteristics are

merely decorative appendages, and the fundamental shapes of the houses are quite similar. This does not imply that only one type of house was built in the United States prior to the mid-19th century, as the large country homes and the more pretentious of the town houses were built in true Queen Anne, Georgian, or Federal styles. However, apart from the houses of the rich, especially in New England and the neighboring states, the homes of all classes of Americans were like to be some form of Cape Cod cottage.

During the early years of the 19th century, the Romantic Revival developed. This became evident in all the arts, including architecture. Ladies wore Grecian robes, and every landscape painting had at least one dramatic weeping willow with a romantic pair beneath. Life in the U.S. became secure, and the more prosperous and better educated of its citizens could turn once more to Europe for cultural inspiration, without odium. Many Americans took trips abroad, especially to England and Italy. Horace Walpole's Gothic Revival started at Strawberry Hill during the late 18th century, and by the early 19th had spread to America. Houses were built in the Gothic and Tudor styles, so that they very closely resembled contemporary houses in England. At first only the very rich could afford such houses, as residences or as follies or garden ornaments. Originally, the Gothic style was very concentrated, but became diluted as it filtered down through the economic levels of society. In highly extenuated form it persisted until the late 19th or early 20th century.

Sycamore Lodge is a Gothic Revival house with Flemish gable ends. In stone it could have been built in England and in either case was meant to resemble an English country house of the Renaissance. It is perhaps the finest Flemish gable-end house in the U.S. It is unfortunate that its architect is not known, because it was indeed designed by an architect who was a first rate man in his time. If the Roslyn Landmark Society survives, its architect must become known. Sycamore Lodge is not shown on the Walling or Beers-Comstock maps as they do not extend this far north. Local tradition credits it with having been built in 1843, and stylistically it could easily have been built in that year or even earlier. It was absolutely the last word, with great unanimity of design between the interior and exterior. The interior and exterior mouldings are rich, strong and deeply cut. They are reproductions in good and gesso (on the cornices) of Medieval

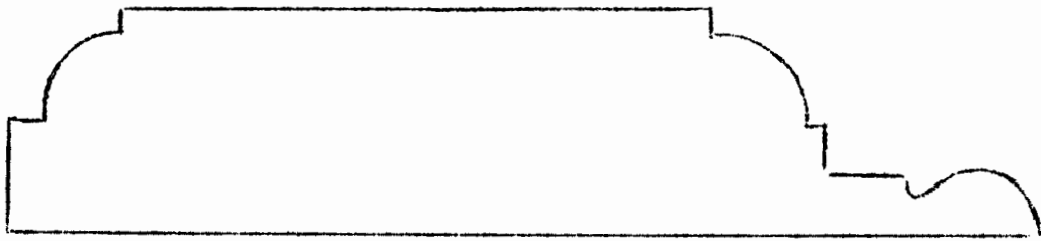
and Renaissance stone mouldings. The scenic frieze in the dining room is European and contemporary with the house.

THE AALUND HOUSE
Railroad Ave.

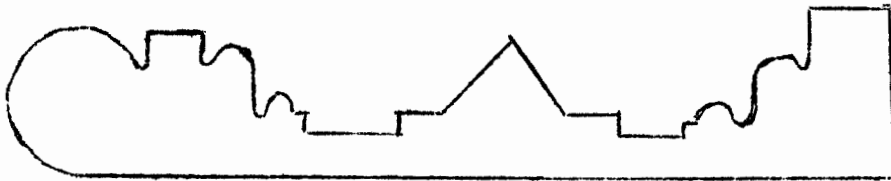
The Aalund house is a part of the same Romantic Revival movement as Sycamore Lodge, but was designed to resemble a Swiss chalet rather than a Renaissance English Country house. It is not shown on either the Walling or Beers-Comstock maps, but was photographed by George Brainard when he worked in Roslyn in 1879. Its west wing and rear addition are later.

The Aalund house also differs from Sycamore Lodge in that it was built primarily to be a sort of garden ornament on a country estate, and was not meant to be lived in by the owner of the property. For this reason, the greater part of the architectural effort was expended on its exterior. Its first storey of cut stone, of different types to form a pattern, is probably the only one of its sort in Roslyn. Its "flying gallery" unsupported by columns, has been destroyed by vandals, but the great supporting brackets remain. Its dominant roof with its great overhang, a construction of hip over gable-ended, is the type known as "Jerkin-headed." This roof type is extremely rare in the U.S. and may be unique in Roslyn.

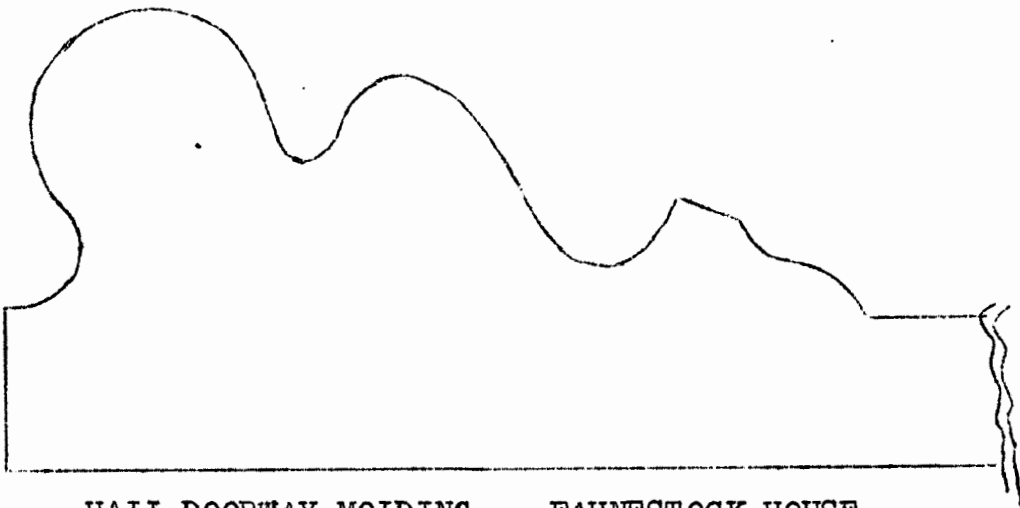
In comparison with the rich exterior, the interior is somewhat unpretentious, apart from the majogany railed principle staircase. The interior detail, where it has survived, is Gothic in character. It is interesting to note that even at this late date, the architect, (and this house certainly must have been designed by one) was unable to solve the problem of what to do with the main floor, when the house is built into a hillside. In this case, as in the Moreland and Gerry houses, he placed it on the second floor. The house is also worthy of comment for a completely different reason. Its owners have acquired it recently following more than ten years of vacancy. During this period the house was badly vandalized. Undismayed by the monumental job ahead of them, the new owners pitched into it themselves. Merely the removal of debris was an heroic job. However, the restoration is underway and the job has at least been analyzed and they know what they have to do. Each step of the restoration is being studied to assure that the original appearance will be restored. We hope in the not too distant future this house will be standing in its cobbled forecourt, behind its iron gates with its gallery restored, and glis-



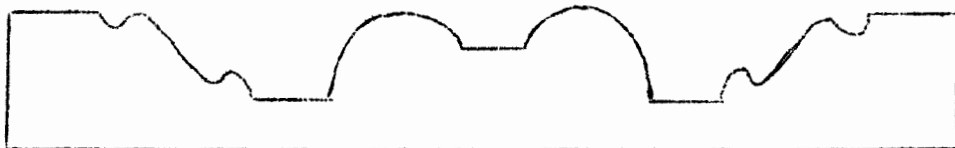
STAIR WINDOW TRIM -- AALUND HOUSE



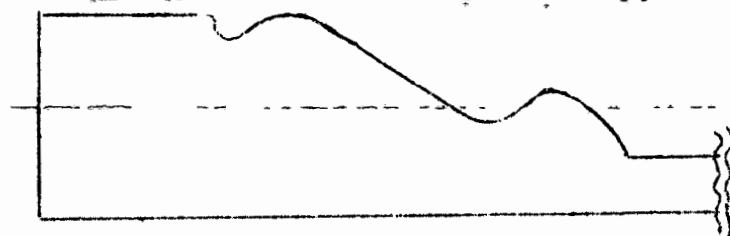
FRONT DOOR REVEAL -- SMITH HOUSE



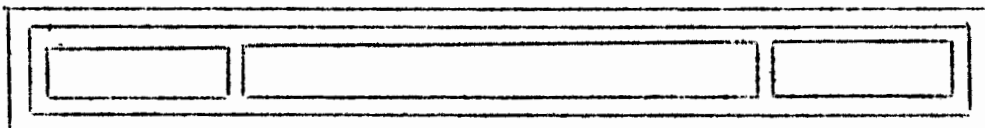
HALL DOORWAY MOLDING -- FAHNESTOCK HOUSE



EAST DOOR FRAME, HALLWAY -- BROWER HOUSE



LIBRARY WINDOW MOLDING -- GERRY HOUSE



WINDOW SILL IN HALL -- MORELAND HOUSE