

FIFTH ANNUAL
HOUSE TOUR

THE

ROSLYN

LANDMARK

SOCIETY

SATURDAY

JULIE 12 1965

10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.

HOUSES ON TOUR

HAROLD D. GRAHAM, 115 MAIN ST, ROSLYN

ARTHUR WELLS, 94 MAIN ST, ROSLYN

WILSON WILLIAMS, 160 MAIN ST, ROSLYN

STARKINS' HOUSE, 221 MAIN ST, ROSLYN

DONALD G. HORN }
"WILLOWMERE" } BRYANT AVE, ROSLYN HARBOR

NO

CHILDREN PLEASE
SPIKED HEELS PLEASE (PINE FLOORS)
SMOKING WHILE IN THE HOUSES

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. Only a few 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 second 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 doorframes 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. Willowmere, a mid-18th century house has locks made by Mackrell & Richardson of New York, which were installed circa 1840.

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 Babylonian Revival)

1810-1900 Gothic Revival

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

WILLOWMERE

Home of Mrs. James F. Curtis, and Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Horn
Bryant Avenue - Roslyn Harbor

Willowmere is one of the earliest and most interesting of the houses surviving in Roslyn. Not only was it built on a larger scale than many of the other local houses, but it has had three distinct alterations, about fifty years apart, each of which has added to the very distinct character of the house. Willowmere is reputed to have been built by Nathaniel Pearsall circa 1685, and originally was known as the "Pearsall House". There is little, if any, evidence left today to substantiate this reputation. However, while its origin may be open to conjecture, its subsequent history is far better documented than most of the surviving Roslyn houses.

There is no doubt that it was owned, originally, by the Pearsall family. In 1839 it was acquired by W. Cairns, Jr., and legend advises us, this time, in order to settle the gambling debts of the last Pearsall owner. The Cairns named the house "Clifton" and under this name it was illustrated in the second Edition (1843) of Benjamin Thompson's "History of Long Island". Shortly after acquiring the house, Mr. Cairns made numerous alterations (Alteration #1). It descended in the Cairns family, and its branches, until its most recent sale to Mr. James F. Curtis, about 40 years ago. During the last quarter of the 19th century, extensive alterations were made by Admiral Aaron Ward, USN (Alteration #2), which not only increased the size of the house but gave it a distinct Victorian flavor. After Mr. Curtis acquired the house, he made a substantial effort to restore it to its original 18th century appearance (Alteration #3), and removed most of Admiral Ward's Victorian additions. As it stands today, the house appears to be a typical large shingled house of the mid-18th century with a five-bay facade and a high gambrel roof. From the beginning it appears to have had an ell at its east end, and the house so appears in the lithograph in Thompson's "History". The original full cellar, with rubble walls to the eills and stone arches under the chimneys, still survives in excellent condition. The original wide (12 inches and more) yellow pine floor boards can still be seen from the cellar, resting on the original beams. Part of the south cellar wall, under the present ell is also rubble, but the remaining walls are brick indicating that the original ell was substantially altered, probably by Admiral Ward as full brick foundations did not appear in Roslyn until the second half of the 19th century. At present, the front (south) facade has six bays in place of the original five, but the southeast corner does not rest on the original rubble foundation but on a later brick foundation (Alteration #2). In addition the shingles in the area of

the "sixth bay" obviously are newer than the rest. The length of the rear wall has not, apparently, been altered since the house was built. The dormer windows are modern, and were added during Alteration #3 or even later. Incidentally, illustrations of the house during all its three periods, and the plans for Alteration #3 (Architects Peabody, Wilson & Brown) will all be available for examination during the tour. The front porch of the house was installed by Mr. Curtis to replace the great Victorian verandahs and porte cocheres which had been added by Admiral Ward. The present porch is an adaptation of an 18th century porch of New England origin. The eight-panel front door and doorway are in the Greek Revival Style and utilize Tuscan mouldings and sidelights, and are a part of the Cairns' alteration (circa 1839). The original hardware and lock on the front door still survive. The latter bears the stamped mark of "Mackrell & Richardson, New York" on its bolt as do most of the other locks in the house. This firm of lockmakers worked on Houston Street, in New York, from 1835 to 1868.

First Floor Hall: The large central hall continues to a rear side-lighted doorway which is executed also in the Greek Revival Style, although the door itself is later. The 18th century style New England stair-rail was added by Mr. Curtis, but the stairway, itself, is Greek Revival (Cairns-1839). The six panel doors leading off the central hall all date from the Cairns' alteration and utilize Tuscan mouldings, but the 18th century raised panelling below the original chair rail still survives. There are several interesting pieces of furniture to be seen in the hall and these, as well as most of the other pieces of furniture in the house, have descended in the Curtis family. Among the interesting pieces in the hall are four, of a set of eight, New York chairs in the Empire Style, circa 1820, with sabre-shaped legs and splats carved in the shape of swags. The hall also includes a late 18th or early 19th century cherry tall-case clock of New England origin, two English looking glasses in the Chippendale Style, and a most unusual English serving table in the Hepplewhite Style which includes interior drawers behind its doors. Of special interest in Roslyn is the map of the proposed Montrose Development which was lithographed by J. H. Bufford of New York between 1836-1838 for the widow of Joseph W. Moulton who lived in nearby Cedar Merc. As a matter of fact, Willowmere, itself, may be seen at the rear of the landscape included in the Bufford Map.

Library: The library to the west of the central hall is an extremely pleasing room which includes the original 18th century panelled fireplace wall although the flanking bookcases were installed by Mr. Curtis. The fireplace opening is surrounded by a facing composed of Delft tiles which

are, in turn, surrounded by a bolection moulding, although the mantle shelf, itself, is later. The remaining panelling beneath the chair rail is all 18th century and original to the house.

The Family Sitting Room: The Family Sitting Room, to the east of the central hall, is an especially attractive room which is completely finished in the Greek Revival Style except for a small area immediately around the fireplace. The architectural detail of this room dates from the Cairns' alteration (1839). The room contains several interesting items, as an American round-topped, three-legged table and a chest of drawers of New England origin with straight bracket feet in the Chippendale manner. There is also a Chinese Export Porcelain tureen in the FitzHugh Pattern which was made about 1810. In addition, there is a series of three coloured pencil drawings, in their original elaborate mats, showing scenes of London drawn by Carl Beggrow in 1822.

The Dining Room: The dining room is finished in the Federal Style and utilizes corner blocks over the doors. However, the mouldings themselves are of the Tuscan type, so the architectural finish of this room must be considered to date from the Cairns' alteration. Actually, this room was lengthened by Admiral Ward, who added two large bay windows. The original room ended at the boxed-in beam and the window and door north of this beam were finished to conform to the earlier work. The finish of the bay windows is characteristically of the late 19th century. The mantle is finely finished in the Federal Style with appropriate mouldings. However, the straight shelf appears to be later work, perhaps, also, of the Ward Period. The fireplace facings and hearth are black slate which is only rarely found in Roslyn. There are a number of interesting decorative items in the dining room, of which only a few can be described. Most important are a pair of Hepplewhite card tables of the Federal period, which were made in New England circa 1790. There is also an Empire table of New York origin with turned carved legs and cloverleaf shaped drop-leaves. This resembles two other tables known to have descended in Roslyn families and was made about 1825. The room also contains an English bow-front sideboard with spade feet on which stand several examples of Waterford glass made during the late 18th century. The dining room silverware is also worthy of comment. There are two pairs of old Sheffield candlesticks which were made about 1790 and 1820, respectively, and standing on a fine tole tray of about 1815 may be seen a teapot-on-tray with sugar basket and creamer. All were executed in the Classical manner, in London, during the late 18th century.

The Drawing Room: The drawing room was also substantially enlarged by Admiral Ward. It contains a number of interesting furniture examples and decorative objects. These include an early 19th century English bookcase with glass doors and shaped wooden muntins and an interesting New England maple kneehole desk which was executed in the country Chippendale manner. In contrast to the latter, there are a pair of elegant lacquered and decorated Regency torcheres which were made in England circa 1815. There is also an English Regency sofa table which was made about 1820, and an American mahogany Pembroke table, having shaped leaves with cross-banded inlaid borders, which was made in New England circa 1800. The two fireplace cupboards contain an assortment of oriental export porcelain of the 19th century.

The most interesting objects in the room are the paintings. There are two English genre paintings in their original frames, one of which was painted by W. R. Briggs, R. A. (1775-1810), and the other by George Morland (1763-1804). There are also two portraits worth noting, one of a lady in a mid-19th century dress. The other is a portrait of George Guelph Barrell who was born in York, Maine, on November 24, 1780 and died in Barcelona, Spain, on November 12, 1838. He was the U. S. Consul-General in Malaga for many years, and family tradition credits him with having been the father of the Empress Eugenie. It also credits the portrait with having been painted in Spain, but it could well be an American painting of about 1815. Both portraits are painted on wooden panels.

The Upstairs Hall: The upstairs hall looks much the same today as it did during the 18th century, except that the front end of the hall has been closed in by a partition which includes the only later door. All the other doors utilize the characteristic raised panels and H-L hinges of the 18th century. These doors are all four-panelled, which is usually considered to indicate work of the first half of the 18th century.

The Northwest Chamber: The northwest chamber contains two English Chippendale four-drawer chests-of-drawers, but its most interesting furniture specimen is a later Sheraton table, circa 1825, the top of which swivels ninety degrees on its base to permit the use of an additional board at each end, thus converting the piece from a sofa table to a dining table. When not in use the extension boards were stored in a box-like compartment under the top. Since New York card tables swivel in much the same manner, this table may be assumed to be of New York origin and may be unique as well.

The Southwest Chamber: Like the Library beneath it, the Southwest Chamber has an 18th century panelled fireplace wall, which appears to be

original to the house except for the later mantle shelf which somewhat spoils the appearance of the panelling behind it. The fireplace, itself, is faced with Delft tiles of the 18th century. There are several interesting specimens of New England furniture in the room. These include a maple Queen Anne highboy with cariole legs terminating in pad feet which was made about 1750; a maple ox-bow chest-of-drawers with straight bracket feet which was made in the Chippendale manner about 1770; and a fine Sheraton maple field bed with turned, reeded posts and an ox-bow canopy. The bed was made about 1810.

The Southeast Chamber: The Southeast Chamber contains two highly vigorous and altogether quite remarkable specimens of the late Empire Style as it was executed in New York. These are a chest-of-drawers with animal feet and carved pilasters, and a bed with extremely heavy posts intricately decorated with carved acanthus leaves, etc., and with a carved fruit basket cresting over the panelled headboard. Both pieces were made of mahogany about 1840.

Residence of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur M. Wells
94 Main Street

This small house was shown on one of the previous Landmark Society Tours (1963) at which time it belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Ronald R. Galione. Shortly thereafter, it was sold to the present owners who have made a number of improvements which have not affected the basic architecture of the house. It is now being re-exhibited on the basis of its fundamental architectural quality, its altered interior decoration, and the fact that so few members of the Landmark Society had the opportunity to see the house during its previous exhibition.

The house is a 3-bay, side-hall, clapboarded "Cape Cod Cottage" with "eyebrow" windows. It is shown on both the Walling Map (1859) and the Beers-Comstock Map (1873) as having belonged to "L. Thorn". At that time it was a part of the same property as the neighbouring house to the north, the present Moreland House, 88 Main Street. As a matter of fact, the property was not divided until a few years ago. Its ownership prior to 1859, and its exact date of construction are not known at the present time.

The house was built about 1825, although it gives the impression of having been built somewhat earlier. It was built on a typical rubble foundation which extends above grade to the sills and, in this respect, resembles the Federal Period part of the William M. Valentine House which has a similar foundation surrounding a full cellar, and the Smith House (106 Main Street) which has only a small root cellar. In a small way its foundation resembles that of Willowmere, which is also on exhibit during the current tour. The "full" cellar is locally thought of as being the earlier type. The Wells House has no cellar at all at the present time. It is likely that a root cellar once existed, but that access to it was lost as the result of later additions. The house still retains a two storey entry, although it is not the original one. However, this is the only house remaining in Roslyn into which one may enter either the first or second storeys from the same exterior system. Similar two storey entries existed in a number of other hillside houses in Roslyn, but this is the only survivor.

The ground floor apparently was designed for family use only, and is relatively unimportant in relation to the second, principal, storey. The lower front door has six panels, in the Federal style, with simple, applied mouldings as in the somewhat earlier William M. Valentine House. An even earlier version of the same door styling may be seen in the Wilson Williams House, in which the mouldings have been planed into the stiles, not applied. The lower front door retains its original iron knocker, of a

type seen on at least four other local houses, including the Smith House, next door. It also retains its original rectangular lock stamped "Searing" on the face of the bolt. These locks were made in Jamaica, New York prior to 1839, and similarly marked locks survive in the Gerry House (105 Main Street) across the street. The most unusual feature of the lower entrance hall is the survival of the unsheathed rubble retaining wall on the north side. One of the remaining walls is sheathed with finely reeded pine boards, about ten inches in width and laid horizontally. Similar sheathing may have once covered all the ground floor walls. The ground floor living room retains its original chair-rail, another Federal feature, which utilizes mouldings identical with those of the front door. The floor in this room also is original. The simple mantle has built-in cupboards at one end, a feature usually considered to be an early one. However, the mantle itself, the cupboards, and all the interior door frames are finished with the "Tuscan" mouldings of the late Federal-early Greek Revival Era, which probably were unavailable until almost 1835. These mouldings probably were purchased, made-up, from the local lumber mill. The earlier mouldings were worked out by the carpenter with his own moulding planes. The living room also retains early, adze-split, exposed beams. Marks of later lathing remain on the beams, suggesting, but not establishing, that they were originally concealed above a plaster ceiling. The much earlier exposed beams in the Joseph Starkins House are far more carefully finished, and those in the somewhat earlier Wilson Williams House (circa 1770) are most meticulously boxed-in.

The kitchen, to the rear of the living room, is a bit hard to evaluate as there is no continuity of its structure with the main part of the house. However, the large fireplace, which is missing its original mantle, is apparently mid-19th century work, so at least a part of the room represents an early addition. The extensions of the kitchen and the dining room are both recent work.

The second storey is the important floor of the house. It was entered by means of its own impressive doorway, with side-lights and overdoor window. The doorway is Federal in concept and utilizes appropriate corner blocks. However, it was executed with late Federal (Tuscan) mouldings which could not have been available much before 1835. The doorway is closely related to that of the Smith House, next-door, but lacks the bent-wood muntins and lead decorations. The front door itself has two vigorous raised vertical panels, in place of the similar, single panel in the front door of the Gerry House. In addition, the original box lock with its

original key, which appears to be a Searing product, the brass keyhole escutcheon, and the panelling under the stairs are all closely related to similar details in the Gerry House. In many respects, the Wells House seems to represent a transitional phase between its neighbours, the Smith and Gerry Houses. The simple, elegant stairway, which extends to an almost negligible third storey was, obviously, meant to represent "a best foot forward". This effort is supported by the impressive low closet at its third floor end, which was meant to be looked at from the second storey. This closet is very elegantly executed in the Federal Style with Federal mouldings, pilasters, and corner blocks. The details may have been selected because they were a little out-of-date, and therefore, less expensive, and no guest would be permitted to come close to the closet anyway. It is more likely, however, that this closet was removed from another earlier house, as the pilaster bases do not extend down to the floor, and it seems unlikely that the closet was specifically designed for its present location. The original wide pine flooring has survived throughout both upper storeys.

The Master Bedroom on the second floor originally was the parlor, and was meant to be the most important room in the house. All the doors in this room have two vertical panels, and this is true also of the other doors on this floor, which are decorated with Tuscan mouldings in the Classic Style. Since all are "single-faced", the rear of the panels differ from similar doors in other Roslyn houses by having the edges of the panels finished with extended rabbets which achieve a sort of chiaroscuro effect on the reverse sides of the doors. There is an elegant mantle in the Federal Style, in this room, which is similar to one in the Smith house parlour. The mantle mouldings, again, are all executed in a "Tuscan" variant, which did not appear until the late Federal Period. An interesting feature of this mantle, not seen in any other Roslyn house, is the use of a wooden fireplace facing which is stepped in the manner of Federal and Greek Revival baseboards. Incidentally, the baseboards in this room are capped with vigorous ogee mouldings usually thought to be mid-19th century or later. The same characteristic prevails in the Gerry House and suggests that baseboard mouldings were sometimes removed and replaced in an attempt to "modernize", or, and possibly more likely, that ogee baseboard mouldings were in use at an earlier date than is generally realized. The windows in this room alone, in the Wells House, are panelled beneath the sills again employing late Federal or early Tuscan, type mouldings. The rear bedroom on the second floor is much less elegantly finished and apparently

always was intended for use as a bedroom.

The Old Presbyterian Parsonage
Residence of Mr. & Mrs. Harold D. Graham
115 Main Street

The old Presbyterian Parsonage is one of the best documented houses in Roslyn. The Roslyn News for August 13, 1887 advised that "The contract for building the Presbyterian parsonage was awarded to Stephen Speedling of this village and ground will be broken next week." "It will be a 2-story, double-pitched roof house and will contain 8 rooms. When completed, it will be a credit to the Village as well as to the Presbyterian Church." In its issue of February 18, 1888, the Roslyn News announced, "Contractor Speedling has about completed the Presbyterian parsonage and it is one of the neatest and cosiest houses in Roslyn."

In addition to the foregoing documentation, a copy from Stephen Speedling's workbook, in the Donaldson Collection in The Bryant Library, provides all the data for his bill, from "Diging out the Celer @ \$25.00" to "Moldings and mecking (probably "making") for 1 & 2 floors @ \$5.00." The total construction cost for the house was \$2284.43. Interestingly enough, the original Presbyterian Church, circa 1850, for whose minister the Parsonage was built, still stands at 33 East Broadway, although the building now serves as a home, not a church.

The house itself is indeed a "2-story, double-pitched roof house", in the Victorian Gothic manner, and probably was adapted from "Suburban Cottage No. 1", published in Calvert Vaux', "Villas & Cottages", published by Harpers in 1864. According to Mr. Speedling, the original roof was surfaced with tin, probably with standing seams. In the manner of its time the roof is steeply pitched, and the horizontal eaves are all trimmed with simple, single-drop brackets. The west roof slope is asymmetric to permit the inclusion of a large overhanging bay-window in the south gable-end, a most distinctive and unusual architectural feature. This bay-window, off the parson's study, has a superb view of Roslyn Park, and must have made sermon-writing a sheer delight. All the gable-ends, which are unbracketed, utilize simple, swag-like, pierced verge-boards, and to enhance the Gothic overhang effect, all the gable fields are finished in board-and-batten, in contrast to the clapboarding of the remainder of the structure. The bottom of each gable field is finished with a course of cut-out herringbone which similarly suggests an overhang which actually does not exist.

The house includes a full cellar, and like other Roslyn houses of its period, the foundation walls are constructed entirely of brick which extends all the way up to the sills.

The Parsonage originally had pent-roofed porches along the north side of the west wing, and completely across the rear. The rear porch was removed shortly after World War II and was replaced by the present, wider, sun-deck. The front porch was removed in 1955 to make way for the present library.

The front door is the original, and according to Mr. Speedling's work-book, has always contained glass in its upper part. The exterior mouldings probably are Mr. Speedling's own design, and project well beyond the stiles. The interior door mouldings, as well as most of the interior trim, are executed in standard ogee mouldings. These, apparently were made by Mr. Speedling in his work-shop, with moulding planes, if we are correct in interpreting the word "mecking" as meaning "making".

The stairway, in the entrance hall, unlike most local stairways, is curved. It employs turned balusters which differ from the usually encountered "vase-turned" type. The balusters and the moulded stair-rail are made of chestnut, a wood frequently used in New York State, but one only rarely encountered in Roslyn.

The living room windows are all paired, a common enough feature in Victorian houses, but one only rarely encountered in Roslyn. They are trimmed with standard Victorian facings which utilize corner blocks containing turned roundels. The panels beneath the windows are finished with standard ogee mouldings. The window sash all employ a single vertical muntin, in accordance with the style of the period. The dining room is similarly treated, architecturally, with the exception of a large bay window, which overlooks Roslyn Park, at the south end of the room. Originally, there was a dividing wall, with large sliding doors, which divided the living room and the dining room. This, and the mantel in each of the rooms, was removed about 20 years ago. However, apart from these changes, the interior of the house has survived with remarkably little alteration. The paired gesso ceiling medallions, in both rooms, at one time supported paired chandeliers which, probably, were fitted for illuminating gas.

The bedrooms on the second floor are finished in much the same manner as the main floor, but are more simply executed, and for example, moulded panels were not installed beneath the windows. The second storey still retains its original flooring in all but one bedroom, and the floorboards are wider and were more carefully selected than those seen in most houses of this period. It is obvious they were not intended to be covered with carpeting.

Throughout the house, there are a number of interesting examples of furniture and decorative objects. These include a small, 19th century Dutch painting, and a pair of 18th century bell-metal candlesticks in the classic manner, in the hall. In the hall, also, is a remarkable "Calendar Clock", patented in 1865, which indicates not only the hours of the day, but also the days of the week and of the month. In the living room may be seen an impressive American mahogany secretary with a pedimented top, circa 1850, an unusual early 19th century New York State mahogany pembroke table with gadroon-moulded edges, and a remarkably fine early 19th century Coalport or Minton sauce tureen decorated in enamel colors in the Japanese manner. There is also a small landscape, "A View of The Ramapo", (N. J.) in its original frame, which was painted by David Johnson 1860.

Stephen Speedling was proud of his Parsonage, and perhaps he even regarded it as his masterpiece. In any case, it bears his painted signature, "S. Speedling, Roslyn, L. I.", on the under surface of one of the cellar steps. He had every right to take pride in this example of his skill. It is today, "one of the neatest and cosiest houses in Roslyn", and is still, indeed, "a credit to the Village".

WILSON WILLIAMS HOUSE
Between 148 & 180 Main Street

Almost nothing is known of the history of the Wilson Williams House. There is not a single photograph of it in the Landmark Society's very large collection of early Roslyn architectural negatives. Situated on Main Street behind a high board fence, most Roslynites are unaware of its existence, yet it is architecturally one of the most important houses in Roslyn.

In 1896, when he was 79 years old, Francis Skillman, who was for many years Justice of The Peace in Roslyn, wrote a letter to the Editor of The Roslyn News. In it he described his recollections of Roslyn houses throughout the entire 19th century. Skillman was much interested in Roslyn history and, apparently, knew his subject well. There is no reason to believe that his recollections are inaccurate. In his account he mentions that "Hendrick Onderdonk owned the land (along Main Street) as far south as Cider Mill Hollow (now 128 Main Street). Then next south of this Wilson Williams, a cooper, owned some land. His son, John Williams, built a house"---near its northern boundary. This house is still standing and is now 130 Main Street. "Thos. Woods, a carpenter, afterwards owned the Wilson Williams place. H. Onderdonk gave Williams the little piece of land that Thos. Woods' carpenter shop and barn stands on, for making a wood vat to be used in the Paper Mill." Elsewhere, Skillman observes, "The next place south of Wilson Williams (Thos. Woods), (Skillman's) was the Methodist Church", whose personage still stands at 180 Main Street, just to the north of the no longer standing Methodist Church.

The Walling Map (1859) shows the Wilson Williams House as belonging to "Thos. Woods". It also shows Thomas Woods' carpenter shop across the street, immediately to the north of the present 179 Main Street, on "the little piece of land" which H. Onderdonk gave to Wilson Williams as compensation for making the vat for the Paper Mill.

In addition to the foregoing, Henry Onderdonk, Jr., in his "Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County", which was published in 1846, notes that Wilson Williams was one of approximately 150 men, who were not Quakers who were included in the "Training List of the Officers and Men in the District of Cow Neck, Great Neck, etc." who were preparing for military action against the British at the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

From the foregoing, it may be conjectured that Wilson Williams was living in the vicinity of Roslyn during the period immediately preceding the Revolution, and that he owned the tract of land situated on the west side of Main Street which extends today from the south boundary of

110 Main Street to the north boundary of 180 Main Street. Since the Onderdonk-Remson-Gaines Paper Mill was built in 1773, Mr. Skillman's comment that Wilson Williams was given land situated on the east side of Main Street, at the present site of 179 and environs, in return for constructing a vat for the Mill, suggests strongly that he already was in residence on the west side of Main Street before the Paper Mill was built.

The Wilson Williams House remained in the possession of the Wood family until late in the 19th century. It is shown on the Beers-Comstock Map (1873) as belonging to "W. Wood", and one infers it still belonged to the Wood family at the time of the Skillman letter in 1896. In any event, the house, along with 148 Main Street, was acquired by the late Henry W. Eastman and Mrs. Eastman early in the present century. The Eastmans used 148 as their residence, but did not wish to use the older house for residential purposes. On this basis, large doors were let into the west end of the house, and the room adjacent to them was used as a garage until very recently. As a result of its use in this manner, the house has never had any of the amenities of 20th century living incorporated into its structure. It has never had central heating of any sort, and the only plumbing and electrical services extended to the house were in connection with the rather small area which was used as a garage. As the result, except for the alteration in connection with the garage doors, the house stands today much as it did at the time each part was built, and it still retains almost all of its original architectural features even down to flooring, shutters, shutter-fastenings and door-hardware. Since the house includes many features of Federal Period architecture, from the very early to the very late, it is indeed an important key in the evaluation of almost every house in Roslyn built prior to the introduction of the Greek Revival Style circa 1835.

The original house was built circa 1770 and consists of a large room, or "hall", at grade, with a smaller, rectangular chamber at its north end. Above the two is a very large, very high attic, and beneath them is an L-shaped room, with a root cellar, which was once used as a kitchen.

About 1825, the house was doubled in length by extending its roof line toward the east. Further unity was achieved by the use of shingles on both parts of the house, and by the use of symmetrical gables and chimneys at the east and west ends of the extended structure. Since the house was built into a hillside, it has three separate and distinct "ground" floors, i.e., the garage at the west end, the kitchen partially beneath it, and lowest of all, the room beneath the dining room at the east end of the

house. All levels of the house were built on the characteristic rubble retaining walls which extend up to the sills. The floors of each of the ground floors were laid on locust beams placed directly on the earth. In most instances the beams have survived, but in some areas the pine flooring has rotted badly. However, the sills of the house are at ceiling level in these areas, so the structure of the house has remained unaffected by this floor rot.

The large chamber in the 18th century part of the house is approximately 18 feet square. It preserves its original flooring beneath later flooring added to provide support for automobiles, and its walls are intact on three sides. All three retain their original chair-rails with horizontal pine sheathing below. In places where the plaster has fallen, the early hand-rived lathing may be seen. The south wall still preserves the original doorway, with interesting side-windows of a type not seen elsewhere in Roslyn. The door itself, as do all the outside doors, dates from the 1825 enlargement. The fourth wall has been removed to make way for paired garage doors, and its removal effected a serious blow to the architectural integrity of the house. This wall was panelled originally with flat panels surrounded by simple mouldings planed directly into the stiles. This wall, the steep, enclosed stairway behind it, and the large fireplace, bake-oven and chimney are all gone. However, a few pieces of panelling remain, one of which indicates the steep stairway configuration. The broad rubble base for the fireplace and chimney also survives, and these, together with clues obtained from the absence of paint in some areas, will make possible an extremely accurate reconstruction of this wall. The board ceiling in this room is remarkable for Long Island in that the beams, which extend from the north to the south walls of the house, are boxed in. The casings, themselves, have delicately beaded corners, a most sophisticated feature in a country village. This large room, or "hall", was a true "living room" in the full sense of the word, as all family activities were carried on here, as cooking, eating, and probably even sleeping. The small chamber to its north is approximately half as large, i.e., 9 by 18 feet, and survives in almost original condition. It probably originally served as the bed-chamber for Wilson Williams and his wife. In it, the original wide pine flooring has not been covered, and only the short, easily restored nine feet long wall at the west end has been altered. The door which connects the two rooms dates from the building of the house, circa 1770, has "H-L" hinges, and is identical in construction to the panelled wall in the larger chamber.

The large attic, 18 by 27 feet, covers both lower rooms and was reached, originally, by a steep enclosed stairway behind the now missing panelled wall. The attic stair opening remains, surrounded by a stair-rail taken from another part of the house. Part of the original pine sheathing still remains, and considerably more has been utilized in various other parts of the house. This sheathing originally extended to the ridge to form a dramatic, acutely-pitched ceiling. No "tie-beams" were incorporated into the roof structure. This room was designed to be used as a sort of "dormitory" for children, servants, cooperage apprentices, etc. It was used also for spinning, weaving, and many other tasks of the 18th century household.

Beneath the large chamber, there is a long kitchen, made narrow by the broad, rubble chimney base. This room has windows, in deep reveals, let into the plastered rubble walls at its north and south ends. However, there is sufficient space remaining at the north end of the chimney base to permit the inclusion of a root-cellar. The ceiling bracing in this room was installed during the present century to support the weight of cars above. The stamped metal ceiling dates from the last quarter of the 19th century. All the other architectural detail in this room dates from the 19th century, and it is reasonable to assume that it was not intended, originally, for use as a kitchen. In all probability, it was designed to be used as a shelter for animals, and for storage of farm equipment, and may have been open to the weather along its east side. The cold-cellar appears to be a part of the original structure. If this conjecture is correct, the room may not have been converted into a kitchen until well after the 1825 addition was completed, and it was found that a kitchen in this location was more convenient, on the same floor as the 1825 dining room than, as originally planned, beneath it. Similarly, if this conjecture is correct, the windows at the north and south ends were not a part of the original structure, but were installed later. This alteration probably accounts for the poor condition of the foundation at the north-west corner of the house.

All the remaining rooms in the house date from the 1825 enlargement. The dining room, on the same floor, is the most pretentious room in the house, and is finished in the typical late Federal Style utilizing undecorated, square corner blocks together with applied slender "Tuscan" mouldings which prognosticate the Greek Revival Style. The panels beneath the windows are trimmed similarly. The impressive mantle has free-standing Doric columns, slate facings, and an impressive cast-iron lining

which utilizes sunburst and palmetto leaf motifs. There is a small chamber to the north of the dining room, suggested, perhaps, by the similar chamber to the north of the 18th century "Hall".

Beneath the dining room is a large, simply finished room with a very large fireplace. The walls and ceiling are lathed and plastered now, but examination of places where the plaster has fallen discloses a deeper plaster layer applied directly to the rubble walls. The ceiling boards were similarly whitewashed above the present lathing. Obviously, both rubble walls and board ceiling were meant to be exposed at the time the 1825 addition was built. It is most likely that this room was designed to be the kitchen and was, probably, the first room in the house to be built with this purpose specifically in mind. Later on in the 19th century, when it was considered to be inconvenient to carry food upstairs to the dining room, the present kitchen was developed from the enclosed, but originally open, shed in the 18th century part of the house. The small room at the north end of the original (1825) kitchen, includes a cold-cellar, and was probably designed to serve as a larder. It has its own entrance from the outside, which supports this thesis. The entrance to the cold-cellar off this room included an unusually fine "board-and-batten" door with a moulded joining which looks much earlier than either part of the house. It appears to date from the late 17th or early 18th century. However, the cyma curves in the moulded joints appear to have been made with the same moulding plane as those in the stiles of the remaining 17th century interior doors and panels.

Above the dining room is a room of similar size, which similarly dates from the 1825 enlargement. It is finished in characteristically late Federal detail, including the panels beneath the windows, although not so elaborately as the dining room. It includes an unusual small mantle which has never surrounded a fireplace, but which utilized some type of early cast-iron stove which stood in front of the mantle to provide greater heat. The stove-pipe, itself, entered the chimney through the mantle opening and, in this manner, was almost invisible from the room. This room was built to be the "master" bedroom, and the small chamber at its northern end, a placement characteristic which appears four times in this house, probably originally was a nursery. The latter room includes an exterior entrance which opened to a small porch which no longer survives.

The 1825 attic, above the bedrooms, is large and commodious. However, unlike the 18th century attic, its walls do not appear to have ever been sheathed and, in all probability, its sole function was to provide storage

space.

All the remaining stairways in the house date from the 1825 enlargement, and all but one of them are of the "boxed-in" type. The stair-rail of the remaining stairway still survives and surrounds the 18th century attic stair opening. It bears a strong resemblance to the principal stair-rail in the mid-Federal, William M. Valentine House and suggests the long use of specific architectural devices.

In closing, it should be noted that the Wilson Williams House is outstandingly worthy of preservation because of the extremely high survival of its late 18th and early 19th century characteristics. In fact, the latter part of the house remains almost unchanged since the time it was built circa 1825. In addition, the ingenious method of expanding the house provides a flexibility which would adjust itself well to 20th century requirements. Most important of all, the preservation of this early house with two acres of wooded hillside overlooking Roslyn Park would provide a substantial impetus to the entire preservation effort in Roslyn. The Wilson Williams House has been acquired recently by Roslyn Preservation, Inc., a group of private citizens who bought it in an effort to save the house, prevent division of the site, and to effect its appropriate restoration. There is, indeed, room for hope that the 1966 House Tour will see the Wilson Williams House restored, furnished, and lived in, a sight which will gladden the eye of all who hope well for Roslyn.

The Joseph Starkins House
221 Main Street

Very little is known of the early history of the Joseph Starkins House. It is shown on both the Walling (1859) and Beers-Comstock (1873) maps as belonging to J. M. Kirby, who owned the land on both sides of Main Street and East Broadway with the result that for many years this intersection was known as "Kirby's Corners". Francis Skillman throws some light on its early ownership in his letter to The Roslyn News in 1896 (Note 1, below). Skillman notes, "The next place south of Wilson Williams was the Methodist Church, past this, the home of Anthony Wilkey, a great talker of politics and only here and there with a grain of sense. His house was lately sold to Jonathon Conklin and moved to the east side of the swamp (Roslyn Park). Then his son, Warren, built the new large house on the land (still standing, 194 Main Street). The next house south (Note 2, below) was Joseph Starkins, the blacksmith, at the fork (with East Broadway) in the road." Beyond this, there is little to go on, as Skillman does not indicate whether Joseph Starkins owned the house immediately before the Kirbys, i.e., the early 19th century or at the time it was built more than a century earlier. However, Skillman makes a practice in other parts of his letter of going back to origins, and it seems likely that he at least thought of Joseph Starkins as the first occupant of the house. If this is the case, Skillman would have been depending upon the memories of people no longer alive during his own lifetime, and we can not hold him responsible for what may prove to be the errors of others. A check of the "Training List of The Officers & Men in The District of Cow Neck, Great Neck, Etc." (early 1776) includes no mention of anyone named "Starkins". However, there is a "John Sterkings" who, almost certainly, was a relative, and may have been a son or grandson, or even the father of Joseph Starkins, depending upon at which date the latter owned the house.

Note 1: Please see description of the Wilson Williams House for a more detailed account of the Francis Skillman letter.

Note 2: Skillman obviously refers to some period prior to the construction of 219 Main Street, which is indicated on the Walling Map (1859) as also belonging to J. M. Kirby. This house (219) is still standing between the Warren Wilkey House (194 Main Street) and the Joseph Starkins House. Skillman does not even indicate this house on his own rough map, circa 1895, which locates the houses which he described in his letter, even though it appears obvious that 219 Main Street was built many years earlier than the Warren Wilkey House, and that Skillman mentioned the latter only in connection with the earlier, Anthony Wilkey House which had been moved.

Architecturally, the house is one of the most interesting in Roslyn. So far as can be ascertained from its construction methods, the original part of the house appears to have been built circa 1700, probably even earlier. This early origin places it in active competition with the Grist Mill (1701-1709) as the earliest surviving building in Roslyn. However, historical record has established that the Grist Mill can have been built no earlier than 1701, while the Starkins House may have been built considerably earlier. Possibly, it is the only 17th century structure remaining in Roslyn.

In addition to its early origin, the architectural development of the house is highly interesting, as it demonstrates no fewer than five distinct periods of growth and modification. These may be summarized as follows: The small main block which was built about 1700, perhaps earlier. This was enlarged, circa 1750, by raising and extending the entire rear slope of the roof, thus permitting the addition of a room to main floor and providing added head room on the second floor. The third alteration, during the early 19th century, consisted of the addition of a $1\frac{1}{2}$ storey wing to the east end of the house. This was followed (1860-1875) by the erection of a second, two-storey, east wing, parallel to and behind the first. During the 20th century, an additional, one-storey wing was added to the west end of the house, and at about the same time, dormer windows and a back porch were added to the early central block. In company with each of these additions, modifications also were made to the already existing parts of the house. In the paragraphs to follow, the architectural history will be traced, and an effort made to describe each section of the house as it was originally and as it stands today.

Central Block (1700 or earlier): The original house was, essentially, a one room structure, with an attic overhead, built over a cellar whose thick rubble walls extend to the sills. The roof was steeply pitched, but only the front (south) slope survives. However, the original roof profile may be conjectured by standing beyond the west end of the house and visualizing how the house would look if the rear slope of the roof was symmetrical with the front. A small part of the original west wall is still exposed, and the original, "round-butt" shingles may be seen. These are the earliest type of shingle seen in the U. S. and may be identified by the chamfered, or angled, corners of the exposed end of the shingle. It is thought that more of these shingles will be exposed when the 20th century west wing is removed. The single main room (the present living room) served the family for all living activities. There was a large

fireplace at the east end of the room, where the hall stairway now stands, which served for both cooking and as a source for heat. The base of this fireplace and chimney still survives in the cellar. The original, carefully finished, ceiling beams still survive and it is conjectured that the original "gun-stock" corner-posts are present under later "boxing" in each corner of the house. The loft, over this room probably was sheathed and white-washed. The original 17th century, white-washed ceiling beams may still be seen in the present attic, over this room. Its front (south) roof slope survives, under plaster, and originally the rear slope in this room was symmetrical with it.

Mid-18th century alteration: The entire rear slope of the roof was raised to permit the inclusion of a long narrow room, probably a "buttery" at the rear of the house. This modification accomplished the present "salt-box" profile. The original mid-18th century shingles still survive on the north face of the house, where they have been protected by the later porch. Interestingly, the cellar was enlarged to conform to the new floor plan, and the original north cellar wall was removed, so that the present rubble-walled cellar extends under the mid-18th century addition as well as under the original house.

This alteration to the roof created considerably more head room in the second storey chamber which was now plastered. A small, carefully wrought, iron mirror-hook is still in place on the north wall. This probably was installed at this time, and may have been made by Joseph Starkins. To reach this now more useful room, a boxed-in stairway was installed at the east end of the house. This required the demolition of the fireplace, and its replacement with another in the northwest corner of the main room, where a later fireplace now stands. In this manner, also, space was provided for a small stair-hall at the foot of the stairway, opposite the front door. This hall and stairway are panelled with horizontal and diagonal pine sheathing, which appears to be contemporary with the mid-18th century modification.

At this time, the ceiling of the main room may have been plastered. If this should prove to be the case, the gunstock corner posts and the lower half of the heavy oak plates may have been boxed-in to provide a more attractive finish, beneath the newly plastered ceiling. This "boxing" still survives, but until samples can be taken down for examination it is difficult to determine whether it represents 18th or 20th century work. However, until proved otherwise, it must be assumed to be of recent origin.

Little of the original architectural detail of the "buttery" survives. However, the window openings in this room probably have retained their original dimensions.

Early 19th century modification: The small gable-ended wing was added to the east end of the house, continuous with the south facade. This provided an additional room on the ground floor, probably with a fireplace along its west wall. This room was almost certainly designed to be a kitchen, with an "open" ceiling with exposed beams. The beams have survived and show no signs of having ever been lathed. The original rear door of this wing still survives, on its original strap hinges. The door itself is a fine example of a board-and-batten type, divided into upper and lower halves, a design usually attributed to the Dutch influence. In addition, this wing provided a small loft, probably used as a sleeping chamber by children, in which a grown man may barely stand erect only directly under the ridge. Access to this loft was provided through a low door off the stairway, requiring that the upper part of the stairway be moved to the rear to permit the inclusion of a small landing. The construction of this wing required the elimination of either a window or the original front door-way, at its present communication with the stair-hall. In either case, the problem of getting light to the stair-hall was resolved by the construction of the present front door-way with its simple over-door window. At this time, also, the front windows were enlarged to their present dimensions, in the manner of the period. In addition, the small "eyebrow" windows were inserted to provide more light to the now commodious, principal bedroom.

Later 19th century modification: This consisted, in the main, of the construction of a 2-storey, gable-ended wing at the east end of the main block, parallel to the lower, early 19th century wing, but to its rear. The two wings, however, were not connected, but a sort of outdoor passageway ran between them, to provide access to the cellar, and perhaps to the buttery, from the outside. Because of its isolation from the rest of the house, this wing had its own stairway which extended from the ground-floor room, the kitchen, to the chamber overhead. This stairway still survives, although part of it was incorporated into a kitchen closet when the enclosure of the "middle passage" made a more convenient modification of this stairway feasible. During this modification, the bay window at the east end of the early 19th century wing was installed, thus making possible the use of this room as a truly "proper" dining-room.

20th century modification: The outside passage-way between the two 19th century wings was enclosed, utilizing a V-shaped roof, thus providing space for the present breakfast room. During this modification, the single-storey wing was added to the west end of the main block, and the present porch was added to its rear facade. In addition, the large rear dormer window was installed, and possibly the small front one, although the latter may date from the late 19th century alteration.

Examination of the attic, shows some of the carefully-finished 17th century rafters still in place. Over them may be seen the adze-finished mid-18th century rafters, which were installed to permit the elevation of the rear slope of the roof. Above the mid-18th century rafters may be seen the sawn, 20th century, dormer window rafters.

The future: The Incorporated Village of Roslyn is negotiating for the acquisition of the Joseph Starkins House, and it is hoped that by the date of the House Tour, this transaction will have been completed. After the Village Government has acquired title to the house, it is contemplated that it will be leased to the Landmark Society at an annual rental of one dollar. The Society will then proceed to restore and furnish the house, and open it to the public as a "house museum". As a matter of fact, through the cooperation of the present owner, the Landmark Society presently is renting the house at the foregoing rate. This arrangement was made so that a caretaker could be placed in the house to prevent damage, and so that preliminary architectural measurements could be made under the direction of Mr. Daniel M. C. Hopping, a Trustee of The Society and the Architect-in-Charge of the restoration of the Jan Martense Schenck House, circa 1675, in the Brooklyn Museum.

After the house has been acquired by the Village Government and leased to The Society, Phase 11 of the restoration effort will begin. This will consist of the removal of certain areas of plaster to permit examination of earlier sheathing, now covered, removal of at least some of the "boxing", covering the plates and corner-posts, to determine its age, and the removal of other covering materials so that original construction methods may be examined.

By the time Phase 11 has been completed, the plans for the restoration of the house, and the decision concerning which elements are to be preserved, should have been made. Obviously, all the 20th century work will be removed. This will include the west wing, both dormers, the back porch and the enclosed breakfast room. More difficult to decide about is