

Roslyn Landmark Society
Annual House Tour Guide.



June 5, 1976
10:00-4:00

A Manual of Pre-Revolutionary Houses.

***HOUSES ON TOUR**

VAN NOSTRAND-STARKINS HOUSE
221 Main Street, Roslyn
Pages 9 to 19

WILSON WILLIAMS HOUSE
150 Main Street, Roslyn
Pages 20 to 26

JOHN ROBESON — JEREMIAH WILLIAMS GRIST MILL
Old Northern Blvd., Roslyn
Pages 28 to 34

JOHN ROGERS HOUSE
95 East Broadway, Roslyn
Pages 36 to 40

VALENTINE-LOSEE HOUSE
117 East Broadway, Roslyn
Pages 42 to 46

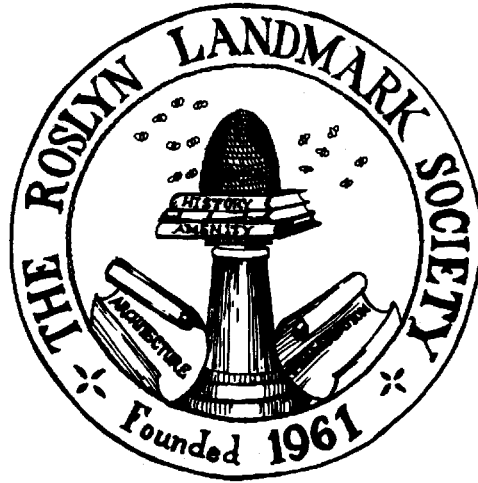
VALENTINE-ROBBINS HOUSE
1535 Northern Blvd., Roslyn
Pages 48 to 55

EAST TOLL GATE HOUSE
Roslyn Cemetery, Northern Blvd., Greenvale
Pages 56 to 58

WILLOWMERE
Bryant Avenue, Roslyn Harbor
Pages 60 to 63

***PLEASE**

NO CHILDREN
NO SPIKED HEELS (PINE FLOORS)
NO SMOKING WHEN IN HOUSES



The 1976 issue of the Landmark Society's Tour Guide has been planned in celebration of our country's bicentennial. To this end the book is larger than previous editions and a greater number of buildings are described. The number of illustrations has been increased and a more attractive cover has been designed which includes a drawing of the 17th century Van Nostrand-Starkins House by John Collins, Director of the Huntington Historical Society. To accomplish all this it has been necessary to increase the size of the staff, all of whom serve as volunteers. Most important of all, with a single exception, all of the buildings described were standing during the period of the Revolutionary War. Two were old even at that ancient time. The exception, the East Toll Gate House, now in the course of restoration, was included in the Tour because its restoration is a product of the Bicentennial. Without the initial support of a Bird & Co. Bicentennial Award and later a substantial grant of the Town of North Hempstead American Revolution Bicentennial Commission this most important project could not have been undertaken, at least not at the present time. Finally, so far as we know, this book is the first published architectural review of a number of 18th century vernacular buildings in a single Long Island village.

Architectural Text: Roger Gerry, John Stevens
Historical Text: Ellen Rosebrock
Editing: Peggy N. Gerry
Plates: Guy Frost, John Stevens, John Collins
Layout: Jean Chapman

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Rev: June 1970-71-72-73-74-75-76

REFERENCES

The following is by no means a list of all the reference material available. However, most of the publications included are more or less easily obtainable and, between them, include much of the known information concerning Roslyn's architectural past. Most of these references are available in the Department of Local History, Bryant Library, Roslyn.

ARCHITECTURAL SOURCES:

- Benjamin, Asher: "The Practical Home Carpenter", Boston 1830. (Pub. by Dacapo Press, New York, 1972)
Ranlett, William H.: "The Architect", vols I & II, DeWitt & Davenport, New York 1849.
Downing, Andrew J.: "The Architecture of Country Houses", D. Appleton & Co., New York 1854.
Vaux, Calvert: "Villas & Cottages", Harper & Brothers, New York, 1864.

MAPS:

- Walling, H.F.: "Topographical Map of the Counties of Kings and Queens, New York", published by W.E. & A.A. Baker, New York, 1859. Includes insert map of Village of Roslyn.
Beers, Frederick W.: "Atlas of Long Island, New York", Beers, Comstock & Cline, N.Y. 1873.

BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS:

- Onderdonk, Benjamin Tredwell (Bishop): Holographic letter to Mrs. Eliza Leggett written on Feb. 3, 1851. The original manuscript is on file in the Morton Pennypacker Collection of the East Hampton Free Library and describes life in Roslyn between 1796 and 1811. Bishop Onderdonk's letter was printed in The Roslyn News for July 3, 1903.
Valentine, T.W.: "The Valentines in America: 1644-1874, Clark & Maynard, New York, 1874.
Munsell, W.W.: "History of Queens County, New York", W.W. Munsell & Co., New York, 1882.
Wilson, James G. & Fiske, John: "Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography", D. Appleton & Co., New York 1887.
Skillman, Francis: Letter to The Roslyn News in 1895. We have had access to typescript copies only and have never seen either the original manuscript or the original printed text. For this reason copy errors should be suspected, i.e. "east" for "west" and vice versa. The letter describes life in Roslyn between 1829 and 1879. Additional Skillman material, mostly referring to the present Village of Roslyn Harbor, is available in the Bryant Library.
Chapman Publishing Co.: "Portrait & Biographical Records of Queens County, New York", New York & Chicago, 1896.
Hicks, Benjamin D.: "Records of the Town of Hempstead and South Hempstead", Vol. 1 thru 8. Published by the Town Board of North Hempstead, New York, 1896.

NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS

- The Plaindealer: Published in Roslyn by Legett & Eastman, weekly, from July 12, 1850 thru July 9, 1852. All issues have been reviewed and relevant items abstracted.
Once-A-Week or the Roslyn Tablet: Published by the Keeler Brothers. Vol. I was published elsewhere and is unrelated to Roslyn. Vol. II commenced with the issue for Oct. 12, 1876, the first Roslyn issue, and continued (Vol. III) thru the issue for Oct. 19, 1877, at which time publication was suspended. All issues published in Roslyn have been reviewed and the relevant items abstracted.
The Roslyn News: Vol. I (1878) thru Vol. 18 (1896). Selected issues have been reviewed.

UNPUBLISHED HISTORIES:

- Brewer, Clifton H. (Rev.): "The History of Trinity Church, Roslyn, 1785-1909", written circa 1910.
Radigan, John J.: "History of St. Mary's Church, Roslyn, 1943 and 1948.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

- Gerry, Peggy & Roger: "Old Roslyn" I (1953) and II (1954), published by Bryant Library, Roslyn.
Moger, Roy W.: "Roslyn — Then & Now". Published by the Roslyn Public Schools, 1964.
Fahnestock, Catherine B.: "The Story of Sycamore Lodge", published by C,B, Fahnestock, Port Washington, 1964.
Gerry, Roger: "The Roslyn Historic District", The Nassau County Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, Winter-Spring 1967.
Withey, H.F. & R.: "Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (deceased)". Published by Hennessey & Ingalls, Los Angeles, 1970.
Goddard, Conrad G.: "The Early History of Roslyn Harbor". C.G. Goddard, 1972.

ROSLYN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Roslyn is of architectural interest because of the high survival of buildings dating from mid-19th century and earlier. A significant group of architecturally consequential buildings date from the second half of the 19th century. Apparently the earliest known published record identifying locations and owners is the Walling Map of 1859 which probably was surveyed a year or two earlier. A large percentage of the houses and commercial buildings found on this map still stand.

Historic knowledge concerning individual houses, originally quite sketchy, has been expanding as the result of recent research. Sufficient has been learned to accomplish the inclusion of the Main Street Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Preparation of data to support registration of the East Broadway Historic District has been completed and submitted and future preparations of applications for the Mill Dam-Turnpike and Bryant Avenue Historic Districts is planned. This work is being undertaken by Ellen Rosebrock, a professional architectural historian. In addition, quite a lot has been learned about individual construction detail, largely as a result of exploratory and recording procedures used in the preparation of the Tour Guides (TG) as well as from stripping techniques used in the examination of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1975-1976) and the Robeson-Williams Grist Mill (TG 1976) by John Stevens.

Forty seven buildings exhibited on Landmark Society Tours since 1961 have been examined carefully and much useful architectural information has been gained. Some of this study has been conducted under the direction of professional architectural historians as Daniel M.C. Hopping and John Stevens. In addition, much can be conjectured by evaluating architectural concepts, construction techniques, and decorative details of the houses already studied and applying these criteria to the examination of other houses. Careful historic investigation of one house, as the study into the origins of the Van Nostrand-Starkins house by genealogist Rosalie Fellowes Bailey, have revealed data concerning the histories of other houses. Careful review of the early newspapers, i.e. The Roslyn Plain Dealer, published 1851-52, and the Roslyn Tablet, 1876-1877, have published much detailed information concerning individual local buildings. In addition, a letter written to Mrs. Eliza Leggett in 1851 by Bishop Benjamin Treadwell Onderdonk, describing his boyhood in Roslyn during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, has been most useful in identifying structures standing at that time. In a similar manner a letter written by Francis Skillman to The Roslyn News (1895) describes the history of many houses standing in Roslyn during the period 1829-1879. In general, each building or house is exhibited for two consecutive years with the result that approximately half the buildings on each tour are being shown for the second time. One of the benefits of this system is that data brought to light after the first showing may be included in the description of the second showing.

The preparation of the 1976 Tour Guide produced at least two interesting conjectures of major consequence. It now seems obvious that Roslyn, long considered unique for its large content of 2nd quarter and mid-19th century houses, includes at least three major early Federal Houses, i.e. the Anderis Onderdonk House (TG 1970-1971) known to have been built between 1794 and 1797; the Federal part of the William M. Valentine House (TG 1963), which almost certainly was standing in 1801 and possibly even three or four years earlier; and the Federal part of the Jeremiah-Robbins House (TG 1976) which can at present be dated only architecturally but which certainly was built within a few years of the other two. It seems reasonable at the time of writing to assume that the Onderdonk House was built first, then the Robbins House and finally the Valentine House although future investigation may alter this tentative sequence. What is more important is that it seems almost certain that all three were built by the same carpenter-builder whose identity at this time cannot be even conjectured. Additional early Federal houses, possibly by the same hand, may yet be identified. The gambrel-roofed Francis Skillman House (not studied), badly damaged by fire, may be a future member of this group. In addition there may be one or two more houses which so far have eluded notice. In addition to the discovery of an unknown Federal carpenter-builder of talent we were amazed to identify the number of early buildings which included kitchen dependencies. It is now certain that a number of local houses at one time had kitchen dependencies and that a significant number of these have survived. Most of these appear to date from the first half of the 19th century although further study may establish that some are even earlier. The practice certainly continued as late as Vaux & Withers' enlargement of "Montrose" in 1869. The Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1975-76) and William Hicks' original "Montrose" both had kitchen dependencies which no longer survive. The kitchen dependencies of the John Valentine House (TG 1976), the John Rogers House (TG 1976) and of the 1869 alteration of "Montrose" all are standing. While the existence of kitchen dependencies in other Long

Island villages has not been studied, so far as we know it seems obvious that the local group was extremely large in comparison to the numbers in other places.

Apart from the large "summer seats" in Roslyn Harbor, only a few of the early Roslyn houses actually were designed by individual architects. Nevertheless, each house had an architectural concept which determined its appearance and function. The concept was frequently strongly influenced by the various published architectural works of the period, as Benjamin, Ranlett, Downing and Vaux, and, in other cases, was simply a result of a discussion between the owner and the carpenter-builder. One early carpenter-builder, Thomas Wood, is known. He probably was Roslyn's principal carpenter-builder between 1825-1875. An article in the Roslyn News for September 20, 1878, describing life in Roslyn fifty years earlier, states "Probably no builder erected as many of the existing dwelling houses, barns, etc., in this town as Mr. Wood." Thomas Wood is indicated on the Walling Map as the then owner of the Wilson Williams House at 150 Main Street which he purchased in 1827, according to an interview with his grandson Monroe Wood which appeared in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle for Sunday, August 17, 1913. In all probability he built the later (1827) half of it, as well as several other local houses which seem related to it. Later carpenter-builders were John Wood, Thomas' son, and Stephen Speedling. Both worked during the second half of the 19th century.

Architectural concepts of Roslyn houses were usually quite reactionary as might be expected in a small country village. In general the more ambitious the house at the time of building, the more likely it was to have been built in a contemporary style. Less important houses, in which owners were more likely to be interested in shelter than flourishes, frequently reflected the designs of an earlier period. Even in the stylish houses, secondary rooms appear retarded stylistically. In some houses the upper story trim was added as much as 10 years after the main floor trim and obviously appears to be later work.

Construction techniques are another important device in the dating of homes. Workmen trained in a country village were likely to use techniques of their apprenticeships. In sufficiently isolated communities, a workman might continue in 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 others, 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 the work is part of the original structure. In general, framing of Roslyn houses conforms to contemporary standards. However, the plastering techniques of clamshells and horsehair continued into the late 1800's even though these techniques had been discontinued in cities like Boston by 1750. Early masonry, also, was likely to be reactionary, but improved markedly after the arrival of Samuel Dugan I, an Irish-trained mason, circa 1855. The brickwork in at least one house built in the second quarter of the 19th century was laid in Flemish bond, a style which had 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 were smooth while the outer surfaces, covered by earth below grade, were irregular and thereby bonded together by the earth back-fill. After about 1835 the exposed parts of foundations, i.e., from grade to sill, were brick. From about 1870, the entire foundation walls were brick. The latter practice continued until about 1900.

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 moulding styles 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. Mouldings usually were stylish, probably because the presence of two lumber yards in the Village made it more convenient for carpenters to buy many mouldings ready-made. William Hicks started his sawmill in Roslyn Harbor in 1832 and may have operated another mill yard earlier. For the same reason mantels and doorframes were usually in style and executed with contemporary detail. On the other hand, metal hardware frequently was retarded in style, as result of availability of out-of-date stock or re-use of earlier materials. "H" and "H-L" hinges and oval keyholes were used long after their use had been discontinued in metropolitan centers. Prior to about 1825 door locks were imported from England. After that date they were of local manufacture, some by A. Searing of Jamaica. Willowmere, a mid-18th century house, has locks installed circa 1830 made by Mackrell & Richardson of New York, and at least two more survive in the Wilson Williams house and the John Mott house.

The foregoing is only the briefest of resumes. Additional information will be given, when feasible, in descriptions of individual houses. In all cases, estimates of construction dates have been evaluated on the basis of architectural characteristics as 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.

As noted above, most of the early Roslyn buildings were designed by local carpenter-builders who, in some instances, worked from architectural pattern books. By the mid-19th century, however, the larger, more fashionable houses being built along the harbor must have been designed by architects, even though in some instances the quality of the building provides the only evidence for an architectural attribution. The earliest building designed by a known firm of professional architects was Christ Church Chapel (later the first Trinity Church, Roslyn) which was designed by McDonald & Clinton in 1862. An earlier suggestion had been made that the Roslyn Presbyterian Church be designed by an architect but this proposal was not accepted by the congregation. The earliest known published work is William Copley's design for the Jerusha Dewey house built in 1862 by William Cullen Bryant and published in Woodward's Country Houses (published by the authors, George E. and F.W. Woodward, New York, 1865, Pg. 40). The earliest major work by a prominent architect is Jacob Wrey Mould's design for Thomas Clapham's "Stonehouse", now "Wenlo", in 1868. A contemporary newspaper clipping in the possession of the present owner identifies Mould as the architect. Plate #61 of Bicknell's "Brick and Wood Architecture" (1875) illustrates a house very similar to "Stonehouse" in facade design and floor plan. Bicknell credits the design to J. Wrey Mould and identifies the owner as Thomas Clapham of Roslyn. Mould designed many churches in New York, including the All Souls' Unitarian Church and Parsonage (1853-1855). In 1859 he became Associate Architect of the New York City Department of Public Parks and, in 1870-1871, the Architect-in-Chief. In these capacities he designed most of the buildings and other structures in Central Park including the bandstand (1862), the terrace (1858-1864) and the casino (1871). (See Van Zanten, David T.; "Jacob Wrey Mould, Echoes of Owen Jones and The High Victorian Styles in New York, 1853-1865", Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XXVIII, #1, March, 1969, pgs 41-57).

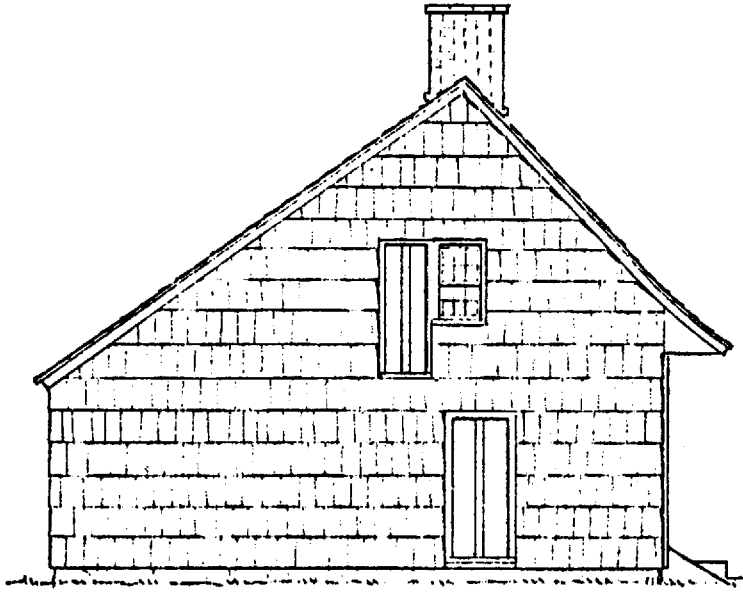
In 1869 Calvert Vaux, one of the most prominent architects of his day and the author of a number of books on architectural subjects, did the design for the enlargement of "Clovercroft" (now "Montrose") to the order of Mrs. Parke Godwin. The drawings and elevations for the Vaux design survive and bear the imprint of Vaux, Withers & Co., 110 Broadway, New York. In 1874 Thomas Wisedell, of New York, prepared drawings for the enlargement of "Cedar Mere" for William Cullen Bryant. Other buildings in Roslyn Harbor which must represent the work of competent professional architects are "Sycamore Lodge", "Locust Knoll", now "Mayknoll" (1854-1855), the Gothic Mill at "Cedar Mere" which, apparently, was not included in the Wisedell design and St. Mary's Church (1871-1876). Samuel Adams Warner, (1822-1897) was a New York architect who lived in Roslyn during the third quarter of the 19th century. A Swiss Cottage built on his estate circa 1875 survives on Railroad Avenue and almost certainly must have been built to Warner's design. A letter from Warner's great-grandson Captain Harry W. Baltazzi, USN, dated September 7, 1965 (Bryant Library) states "My father told me that his grandfather, S.A. Warner, had given land to the Long Island Railroad with the provision that the station was to be built upon it". The Railroad Station is very close to the site of the former Warner house. Could the station also have been built in Warner's design? Warner may have designed some of the Roslyn Harbor houses for which architectural attributions have not yet been made. Warner designed major buildings in New York. These included the Marble Collegiate Church as well as a number of buildings. 13 of these built between 1879 and 1895 survive in the "SOHO CAST IRON HISTORIC DISTRICT" of which all but one have cast iron frames.

Actually the impact of William Cullen Bryant and his circle must be considered in developing the architectural attributions of the great mid-19th century houses in Roslyn Harbor. Frederick Law Olmstead, a close friend, is credited with the landscape design of "Cedar Mere" and later was the landscape architect of Central Park, a project strongly supported by Bryant. Calvert Vaux was closely associated with Olmstead and was officially charged, with him, with control of the designs for Central Park. Vaux is known to have worked for Mrs. Parke Godwin, a Bryant daughter, and probably designed other local buildings including possibly the Gothic Mill at "Cedar Mere". These local connections of Olmstead and Vaux may also have been responsible for bringing Mould, a Central Park associate, commissions in this area. It is certainly to be hoped that, ultimately, the mystery surrounding the origins of this important group of buildings will be solved. Near the turn of the century architectural attributions may be made with stronger authority. In 1893, or shortly thereafter, Ogden

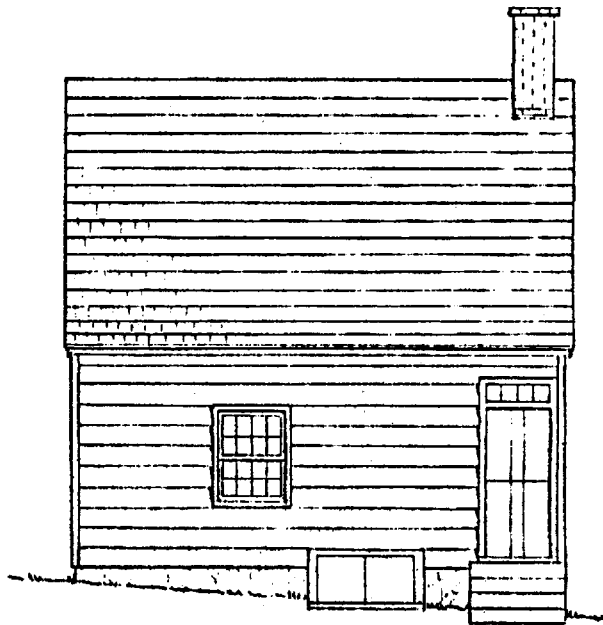
Codman, Jr., designed a house for Lloyd Bryce which later was acquired by the late Childs Frick, named "Clayton" and substantially altered. The design of the Ellen Ward Memorial Clock Tower (1895) can definitely be credited to Lamb & Rich, 265 Broadway, New York. Clarence Mackay's "Harbor Hill" was designed by McKim, Meade & White during 1902-1904, most of the design having been executed by Stanford White. Most of "Harbor Hill's" important buildings have been demolished, but the Stanford White gatehouse survives at the intersection of Harbor Hill and Roslyn Road. The same architects did the designs for Trinity Church Parish House (1905) and Trinity Church, Roslyn (1906).

Architects of national reputation continued to work in Roslyn almost until the present day. William Bunker Tubby, who was related to a prominent local family, did most of his important work in Brooklyn where he designed the Charles Pratt House, now known as the Bishop's House, in 1893, Wallabout Market and Tower, in 1896, and the library for the Pratt Institute, also in 1896. He also designed a group of five Brooklyn Carnegie Libraries in 1904. His activity was not limited to Brooklyn, as he was the architect of the Newark City Hall in 1901, the Nassau County Court House in 1899 and its addition in 1916. He designed three major buildings in Roslyn, all in the colonial revival style. These are the Roslyn Presbyterian Church, 1928, the Roslyn National Bank and Trust Co., 1931, and the Roslyn High School, 1926. Unfortunately the latter was recently demolished to make way for the new high school. The Roslyn Presbyterian Church survives with some additions. The Roslyn National Bank and Trust Co. is in the course of restoration, using Tubby's original plans and elevations. When the renovation is complete the building will serve as the engineering offices of Stefan Geiringer. The architect is Guy Ladd Frost, AIA.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the buildings on exhibit have been selected to demonstrate the continuing story of Roslyn architecture, and to indicate various interesting inconsistencies of architectural concept, construction methods and decorative detail. Many more equally interesting buildings remain—it is hoped they will be exhibited on future tours. It should also be mentioned that since 1971, the Landmark Society received grants from the New York State Council on The Arts to defray the publication costs for the annual Tour Guide. In the same year, the Society was the recipient of the National Award of Merit of the American Association for State and Local History for, among other achievements, the accuracy of its research and the quality of its annual Tour Guides.



Western elevation



Southern elevation

VAN NOSTRAND-STARKINS HOUSE, as it appeared about 1790.

THE VAN NOSTRAND-STARKINS HOUSE (Circa 1680)
Owned by the Incorporated Village of Roslyn and being
restored under a long-term lease by the Roslyn Landmark Society

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Before the end of the 18th century the history of the Van Nostrand-Starkins house is only conjecture. By the 1790 Federal Census, William Van Nostrand was the head of the household there; his neighbor to the south was William Valentine. Van Nostrand and his wife Sarah sold their house and land to Joseph Starkins, a blacksmith, in 1795. There is no deed recording William Van Nostrand's acquisition of the land; no early Town record of a Van Nostrand land grant at Hempstead Harbour. Two early clues, though not clear in their reference, may someday lead to new knowledge:

First: In 1755 a William Van Nostrand, blacksmith, and his wife Phebe, conveyed an 18-acre parcel of land in Hempstead's "south woods" to Frederick Van Nostrand, Sr., and Frederick Van Nostrand, Jr. Whether or not William Van Nostrand was the same person who later lived in Hempstead Harbour is not known.

Second: An Aaron Van Nostrand, turner, who was neighbor to Ephraim Valentine in 1747 along a road running north and south somewhere in this vicinity, died in Jamaica in 1764, leaving his estate to two of his sons, Aaron and Isaac. He could have had additional sons who had been given their portions during his lifetime. One of these sons could have been named William Van Nostrand. Amos Denton was the executor. Aaron Van Nostrand had formerly lived in what is now North Hempstead, as he was assigned an earmark for his livestock in 1714.

In 1700 Abraham Denton bought a three-acre parcel of land with a house on it from Richard Valentine, to whom it had been given, house and all, in 1686 as his wife's dower portion from her father Timothy Halstead. It was adjacent to land on which Valentine lived.

Richard Valentine, in his own turn, was a member of a group of "planters" who joined together in 1668 to "take up land" on "the north side of the town." Timothy Halstead, too, was a member of that group.

This collection of facts may be only coincidentally related. But if Richard Valentine's land was the same, or in part the same, as Ephraim Valentine's and later William Valentine's; and if Amos Denton inherited from Abraham Denton; then it would be fairly logical to guess that Aaron Van Nostrand, having moved on to Jamaica later in his life, drew on a neighbor's friendship in making Denton his executor. If these relationships are valid, which we do not know, then they tell us something about the earliest settlement here at Hempstead Harbour.

After 1790, though, the Van Nostrand-Starkins house history is clear and easy to follow. On March 21, 1795, Van Nostrand conveyed his four-acre plot to blacksmith Joseph Starkins and Ann Elizabeth, his wife, for £120. (Queens County, Liber 65 of Deeds, Pg. 291). In 1801 the Starkins bought more land, south and north adjoining the house lot, from William Valentine. Starkins' oven house and his blacksmith shop are both mentioned in 1824 highway records. (North and South Hempstead Records, Vol. 7, Pg. 43). Joseph Starkins was born around 1769 and he died in the Town of North Hempstead in 1844.

In 1847 Joseph Starkins, presumably the blacksmith's son, mortgaged the four-acre property, and in 1850 he and his wife, whose name was Ann Elizabeth, sold it to William Verity. (Queens County, Liber 85 of Deeds, Pg. 486). Two years later Verity sold it to merchant Jacob M. Kirby (Queens County, Liber 101, Pg. 142) who was acquiring the land all around the Main Street-East Broadway intersection forming the locality then known, and still today, as "Kirby's Corners". Kirby owned a fleet of ships—early in his career he sailed them—market sloops that ran between Roslyn and New York, trading farm produce and lumber for fertilizer, dry goods and agricultural implements, which he sold in his Main Street store, still standing near the Corner.

Jacob Kirby died in 1880, leaving his property (his temple-front house on the eastern side of the road south of the Corners; the store, houses and barn within the Corners triangle; the Van Nostrand house and its neighbor to the north, with his little office in the back), to his wife Elizabeth, who conveyed it all the next year to her son, the Reverend William Wallace Kirby.

William Wallace Kirby served as pastor for the Roslyn Presbyterian Church for a year (1870-71), and later was Justice of the Peace for the Town of North Hempstead. As an attorney he was a younger contemporary of Henry W. Eastman, and many of his legal papers survive in the collections of the Nassau County Museum and the Roslyn Landmark Society. W.W. Kirby transferred title to Ernest and Henrietta Schuman on the first of November, 1887 (Liber 771, Pg. 186) but two days later the Schumans transferred it to Susan Eliza Kirby, William Wallace's wife (Queens County, Liber 771, Pg. 189).

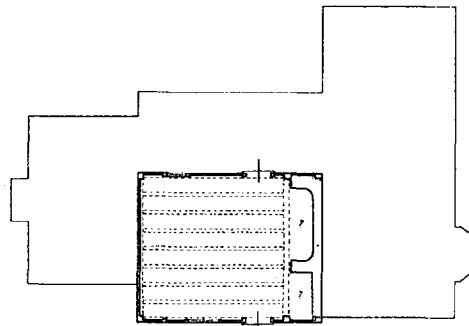
From Susan Kirby the house passed to her son Ralph in 1918, who retained it until his death in 1935. His brother, Isaac Henry Kirby, who was resident in the Van Nostrand-Starkins house, had probably been living there even before title passed to Ralph from his mother. He willed it, with other family property, to his cousin Virginia Applegate who, after his death, lived in the tiny house within the Kirby's Corners Triangle.

In 1937 Mrs. Applegate sold the Van Nostrand-Starkins House to Mr. and Mrs. George J.G. Nicholson, who lived there until 1945, when the Nicholsons sold it to Mr. and Mrs. John G. Tarrant. In 1966 the Incorporated Village of Roslyn acquired the property from a holding company who had owned it for three years.

Through about three centuries, from the early days of Hempstead Harbour until about 1970, the house was continuously in use as a residence. Today the Roslyn Landmark Society, with funds matched by a grant from New York State, is restoring the house to its appearance at the time it was the home of Joseph Starkins and William Van Nostrand.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS REPORT

STAGE I c. 1680—c. 1740



It cannot now be determined if the original part of this house has always stood on its present site. Although it may have done so, it is also possible that it could have been moved in Stage II, from which time the present foundation may date.

The original unit measured slightly over 20 feet in length, and 16 feet in width. The front and rear walls measured 10 feet 9 inches in height, from the underside of the sills to the tops of the plates. There were knee walls, 3 feet 2 inches in height.

The main elevation faced south. There is evidence for a doorway east of the center of the wall, and of a mullioned casement window to the west of the center. A doorway was also located in the north wall, opposite that in the front wall. There had also apparently been a single casement window in the north wall. No evidence could be found for a window in the west end wall. The east end wall, between the corner posts and at least as high as the plates, was either of stone or brick.

A major part of the original framing has survived. It is entirely of oak. The original north and west sills exist, although a short piece of the north sill at the east end is missing. There is a rabbit in the west sill to receive the ends of the floor boards. The floor joists are set the thickness of the floor boards below the top surface of the north sill. Two of four original joists survive. They measure 9 inches in width by 6 inches in depth. Their tenons

are flush with the top surfaces, but nailed in the rabbet of the west sill. The four main posts are about 8 inches square, without any taper. They are connected in pairs by end girts and chimney girts that measure 7 inches in thickness by 13 inches in depth. These two bents are connected at a distance of 15 feet 6 inches by front and rear girts that are 4½ inches in thickness by 8 inches in depth. The inner, lower corners of the girts are chamfered, as also are the inner corners of the posts. The chamfers of the end girt and the posts are terminated by lamb's tongue stops; the chimney girt has a more elaborate treatment with a decorative notch at each end. The chamfer of the front girt is interrupted at the positions of the door posts. There are seven second floor joists, equi-distantly spaced between the front and rear girts, and lodged in notches in the end and chimney girts. The middle joist is made with dovetailed ends. They measure 4½ inches in thickness and 5½ inches in depth. They are numbered at the chimney girt end, with corresponding numbers on the girt. The original flooring of the second floor between the end and chimney girts has survived. It is of mill-sawn pine 1 inch thick, the saw marks showing on the upper surface. The lower surface, which formed the ceiling in the first floor room, is planed. The widths are fairly uniform, being about 10 inches wide. The boards were laid in two lengths, with the joints coming on a line on the first joist in from the south wall. The joints between the boards were tongue and grooved. The boards were nailed with 2 inch rose head nails.

No original studs now survive in any of the walls. It would appear that originally there were no studs except at door and window positions. This is determined from the existence of mortices that relate to the original construction period. Later mortices or gains for studs are clearly distinguishable. There have never been any studs in the north knee wall, which became an interior wall in Stage II. It would therefore appear that the exterior of the house had originally been vertically boarded, and that the inside of this boarding formed the interior wall surface of the house. This is born out by the presence of whitewash on the underside of the front, rear, and end girts which could only have been applied prior to the construction of studded lath and plaster walls in Stage II. In Rhode Island, where this type of construction is known, the boarding was most often covered on the exterior with riven clapboards. This may also have been the case with the Van Nostrand-Starkins house, but it is possible that the exterior may have been shingled.

At the east end wall position, there are corner posts measuring about 6 inches that had no transverse timber connecting them. There had been horizontal timbers between them and the main posts measuring 3 inches by 4 inches. That in the front wall was located 2 feet 4 inches below the plate while that in the rear wall was 5 feet below the plate. The function of these timbers has not been determined. The plates measure 4½ inches in thickness and 6½ inches in width. They once extended beyond the corner posts. There are 2 inch by 4 inch braces between the main posts and the plates, and also between the upper ends of the main posts, running down to the end, and chimney girts. The two braces at the chimney girt are missing.

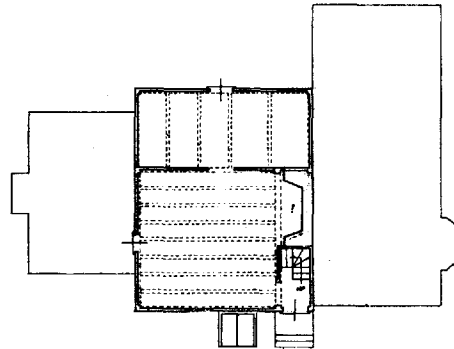
There were five pairs of rafters, of which the inner three pair survive in place, in a mutilated condition. The roof pitch is 13 inches : 12 inches. Shingle lath notches, 1 inch by 3 inch are spaced on 16 inch centers. The collar beams are made with half-dovetail ends and let into the west side of the rafters and pinned. The upper ends of the rafters are morticed and pinned. The feet of the rafters are made with a transverse cog that bears against a corresponding notch in the plate. The rafters' feet are pinned through the plate. It appears that the east gable had overhung that wall by a few inches, while the west gable had about one foot overhang. The overhangs were removed in Stage II, at which time the gable rafters were converted onto studs. Both original west gable rafters survive in this re-used condition in the present west gable. One of them is almost complete, short pieces only being missing from each end. In addition to the standard roof shingle lath notches, it has a series of gains in what had been the outside face, for lath for shingles that formerly covered the gable end. The collar beam was set lower in the gable than for the other rafters, apparently to make the head of a window.

The east wall, as noted previously, was of masonry between the corner posts, and was at least as high as the plate. Whether the masonry was of brick or stone cannot now be determined, although stone is the most probable. Most of this wall was occupied by a fireplace. The stairway to the loft was probably located at the south side, as there is evidence of a door location at the south end of the chimney girt, consisting of a mortice for a door post, and in the adjacent main post there are rabbets for the battens of a door. It cannot be ascertained positively whether these door clues are from Stage I or Stage II.

There is a possibility that a north lean-to of some kind existed in Stage I. The evidence for this is a notch in the rear plate, to the east of the central rafter, that would seem to relate to a lean-to rafter. As sections of this

plate are missing, the evidence had been removed of any other notches. In addition, the present north cellar wall is about 18 inches inside (south) of the present (Stage II) north lean-to foundation wall. No structure of any sort rests upon this inner wall, which may have been the north foundation wall of the original, smaller lean-to. If this conjecture is correct and an earlier, Stage I, lean-to did exist, the present foundation may date from Stage I also.

STAGE II c. 1740—c. 1810



Some time around the middle of the 18th century, and possibly as early as the beginning of the second quarter, the house underwent a major transformation. It is possible that it may have been moved to its present site from another location. The original structure would appear to have been stripped to the frame. A lean-to addition was built on the north side, 9 feet wide.

The present foundation may date from this time. It is of rubble masonry, generally about 1 foot 6 inches thick, except at the east end where there is a foundation for the fireplace and hearth, 5 feet 6 inches wide, and along the north wall to the lean-to, that was added at this time, there are inner and outer foundation walls as mentioned above. An areaway is located on the south elevation, partly under the position of the Stage I door. This location of the areaway suggests that the foundation may date from Stage II.

Extensive changes were made to the structure of the house. The south sill was replaced, along the two joists and the floor boards. The siding (clapboards or shingles?) was removed along with the vertical boarding to which it was applied. New studs were placed in the south elevation, two of them using original mortices in the girt. The others (3) were gained into the girt. The doorway was eliminated. A window, somewhat narrower than the original one, occupied the old location. One stud for it survives in place, on its east side. Gains in it indicate the size of the window frame. It was of 8 over 8 configuration with 7 inch by 9 inch glass. The other stud survives out of place and turned around so that its exterior face can be seen, with plain marks of weatherboard siding. In the south knee wall, four studs were placed, spaced more or less equi-distant between the main posts. They were morticed into the front girt and gained into the plate. Their lower ends are numbered, from the east side.

The north wall of the building became an interior wall with the construction of the lean-to addition. None of the original studs were retained in this wall, and while several of the original mortices were used for the replacement studs, most of these were gained into the rear girt. A stud from this period survives in place at the west side of the former window location. The only other surviving stud stands to the east of this one. The other Stage II studs were removed in the 19th century, when two were re-used out of place in the wall. One had pintle holes.

Six studs were erected in the west wall, some of them evidently being reused pieces, but their former situation has yet to be determined. Four of them appear to have been studs. They have chamfered interior corners and show whitewash on three surfaces. Several of these have clear marks on one side from shingle lath, spaced on 15 inch centers. The upper ends of these pieces were gained into the end girts. Between the middle pair of these studs there was a door, not more than 26 inches wide, the jamb-ends of which went into the end girt with square gains. These door jambs were removed in the 19th century.

The overhanging west gable was cut back flush with the lower part of the wall. The new gable end was given six studs, four of which were former rafters; the pair in the middle being the former rafters of the overhang gable. Very little had been cut off the ends of these to make them fit their new situation. Between these two there had always been a window. To the north of the window there remained the lower portion of an 18th century batten door together with one of its stops.

The "stone end" each wall was removed and replaced by a stone wall that ended short of the south wall, and extended up only as high as a girt inserted at this time. The top surface of this girt was on the same level as the original girts. Its ends are gained into the corner posts. There are seven more or less equi-distantly spaced studs above the girt, most of which have survived. Below it there were three studs toward the south side, only one of which survives, out of position. That the back of the fireplace was exposed to the exterior is confirmed by a corner board from Stage III, still in place, that had been scribed to the stone wall, which was itself later removed.

The three interior pairs of rafters were not disturbed. The original gable rafters of the projecting gables were removed and, as noted, made into studs. The new gable rafters were not notched for shingle lath, but were set with their outside surfaces on the same plane as the original rafters. This indicates that the original shingle lath were removed. The nailing pattern on the rafters shows that boarding was applied. Either at the beginning of Stage II or subsequently, extension pieces were applied to the rafters of the front slope, to make an overhang, perhaps 2 feet 6 inches wide. Notches occur in the plate beside each rafter for such a construction, and also in the posts and studs, for a soffit that would have been 2 feet below the top of the plate.

The lean-to was very simply framed. Its first floor joists were attached to the north sill of the original part by being let into it with a dovetail end joint. None of the joints survive, nor does the north sill, although the west sill still exists, made from a former rafter. The second floor joists are rather carefully finished, but spaced rather irregularly. There are six, including two end ones. The end ones are gained into, and nailed to, the north corner posts. The intermediate joists lay on top of the original Stage I north wall girt. The outer ends of these joists are morticed into the lean-to plate. The lean-to corner posts are 5½ inches square. They are braced to the plate. There are seven somewhat irregularly spaced studs in the north wall. A pair in the middle of the wall are spaced 2 feet 11 inches apart for a doorway. A head piece is gained into these. No evidence could be found for early windows in this wall. Apparently there were none. The west end wall framing shows evidence of an incomplete window-frame that was apparently never used. It does, however, seem to have functioned as a shallow cupboard until some time in the 19th century when it was covered over with lath and plaster. One original stud and the upper parts of two others survive in the east wall of the lean-to. No original first floor boards survive in the lean-to, but nearly all of the original second floor boards are in place. Their under surfaces, which show as the first floor ceiling, are planed. They are about 12 inches in width.

Except in the west gable, the lean-to rafters were cut on a bevel at their upper ends to lie on the original rafters. In the west gable, the rear main rafter was omitted.

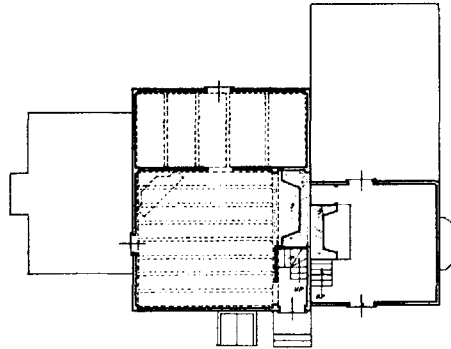
A large part of the Stage II riven oak shingle lath, set on 16 inch centers, and a good-sized area of clipped-butt shingles as well, survive on the west end wall and on a portion of the east gable. While the shingles of the north wall (lean-to) are 19th century in date, they perpetuate the original arrangement, as there are scribe marks on the studs for the shingle lath positions.

On the east gable, an area of beaded, ship-lapped weatherboards has survived within the roof of the Stage III wing. Other weatherboards from this gable were re-used as boarding for shingles above the roof of the wing. The weatherboards have an exposure of about 10 inches. Nail holes in the southeast corner post and the original studs indicate that the facade of the house was weatherboarded.

A fireplace was located at the east end of the house, smaller than the one that had existed in Stage I, but still of generous proportions. On its south side there had been a staircase, the top step of which survives, cut out of the east side of the chimney girt. Facing the stair, in the south wall, was the main doorway. That this had a horizontally divided door is known by the four pintle holes in the corner post.

The interior walls were plastered on riven oak lath. Areas of the original lath, and small areas of the original plaster, survive on the north and east walls of the lean-to and on the walls of the main room behind the Stage III or Stage IV corner fireplace in the north west corner of that room. Sections of original base board also have survived behind the corner fireplace.

STAGE III c. 1810



The construction of the east wing is conservatively dated at c. 1810, but it could date as early as 1800. This estimate is based on the use of forged nails in the interior woodwork, and an early form of cut lath nails. The only surviving interior trim moulding is of quirked ovolo with astragal form, that came into common use at the beginning of the 19th century.

The wing is 14 feet in length, and 14 feet, 2 inches in width. The side walls are 13 feet in height from the floor to the top of the plate. There are knee walls, 2 feet, 3 inches high. The front wall of the wing is set back about 6 inches from the front wall of the main unit. The frame of the wing does not come against that of the original section, but there is a 6 inch space between them.

The frame of the wing is of mill-sawn oak. The posts are 4 inches square, and are framed as bents with the second floor joists, which measure 4 inches by 6 inches. The bents are spaced about 3 feet, 6 inches on centers. The plates measure 3 inches by 5 inches. The front and rear walls have 7 foot long braces between the corner posts and the plates. The end walls have shorter braces between the corner posts and the end girts. Part of the west girt has been cut out, and both of its braces are missing. The three intermediate floor joists were replaced in the recent past. The outside walls were originally covered with beaded weatherboards having an exposure of 9½ inches. Three pieces of this material survive at the top of the north wall, along with the corner board at its west end which, as mentioned previously, was scribed to fit against a stone wall. These pieces show almost no indication of weathering, and have their original red paint. This was matched and its entire exterior painted in 1975 on the basis it represented the earliest exterior paint ever applied to the house.

The second floor boards have survived, and indicate that there was originally a staircase in the south west corner, coming up over the side of the fireplace. The roof has a pitch of 11½ inches : 12 inches. The rafters are spaced to come over the wall posts. There are no collar beams. One of the original studs has survived in place in the east gable, and parts of the other two exist, out of place. There were no studs in the west wall. At the junction between the wing and the main unit, the ends of the shingle lath had survived, showing that the original shingle exposure had been 10½ inches.

There is a fireplace at the west end of the wing, set off center towards the north wall. It had an opening that was 4 feet, 3 inches in width and 4 feet in height, although the opening was later reduced in width, height and depth. Most of the original whitewashed plaster of the jambs and back survived under the later brickwork. The original lintel is missing, but the crane irons are still in place.

There was a door and window in the south elevation. The existing window and its sash are possibly original, but had been taken out and re-set when the present square-edged siding was installed, probably in Stage V. The extant door is a late replacement. Its jambs would seem to date to Stage V. The original door had been

horizontally divided, as is evidenced by the four surviving pintle holes which had been covered by Stage V trim. There had been a window in the east elevation, towards the south side. Clear indications of its former presence were found when a bay window, added in Stage V, was removed. These two windows had 6 over 6 lights that were 8 inches by 10 inches in size. It was not possible to determine if there had been a window in the east gable originally.

There is an original door in the north wall, opposite that in the south wall. It is outward opening, and hung on strap hinges with driven pintles. This door is of batten construction with false applied stiles to make it appear as a two-panel door from the inside. The middle batten rail is in two parts, as if it had been intended to make a divided door. The door has its original cast-iron latch. The casings of this doorway originally had backbands on both sides, but only the exterior ones survive. It is of quirked ovolo with astragal section.

The casing of a closet door on the north side of the fireplace survives, although the door itself had been replaced. The top casing had originally extended up to the second floor boards, and only the lower part of it survives. It was determined from nail holes that the original door had been hung on H-L hinges. The other walls have a board dado, most of which survives. The projecting part of the chair rail had been cut off. Above the chair rail, the walls had been plastered on riven oak lath applied with early cut nails. Only fragments of this lathing survive. The second floor beams and the underside of the floor boards were exposed originally, and had a base coat of red paint which had later been whitewashed over.

The loft had originally been left unfinished; the inside of the roof and gable were whitewashed. The beaded ship-lapped weatherboards of the original unit formed the west wall of the wing's loft.

There was apparently no communication between the wing and the main unit for some time after the wing was constructed. Access between the two sections would seem to have been made in Stage V.

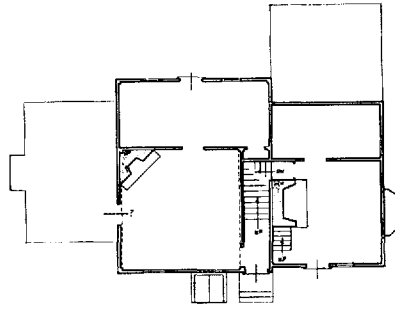
The existing structure of the lean-to of the wing evidently dates to the latter part of the 19th century. However, the unweathered condition of the original weatherboards on the north wall of the wing would indicate that they had always been protected. Also, the outward opening door from the wing into the lean-to space shows no sign of ever having means of securing it from the wing side. It would therefore appear as if there had been a lean-to on the wing from the time it was constructed, and that this feature was subsequently totally replaced.

It would seem that at least at the beginning of Stage III, the main unit remained unaltered. A question that remains unanswered relates to the date of the corner fireplace in the main unit. It is quite definite that the east wall fireplace existed at the time that the wing was constructed. The scribed corner board confirms this, as also does the fact that the chimney flue of the wing fireplace was joined with that of the main unit within the roof of the wing, as can clearly be seen from the cut-out area of weatherboards of the main unit's gable, where the wing flue had slanted through the wall. The construction of the corner fireplace appears to be very old. The brick is laid up with clay. There is a wrought iron lintel bar suspended by means of a bolt from a wooden lintel, set in the brick work three courses above the opening. It is unlikely that the corner fireplace and the east end one co-existed. That it was built at some time in Stage III tends to be confirmed by the fact that the floor beams and the underside of the second floor boards in the main and lean-to rooms of the main unit were painted after the construction of the corner fireplace. Only one thin coat of paint is present, and there is no paint in the area covered by the fireplace.

With the removal of the east end fireplace, the tight, winding stair to the loft was replaced by a straight run of stairs between the chimney and the end girts. A board partition was erected under the chimney girt, extending to the north wall of the main room. Although this boarding was later removed, pieces of it survive with the paint outline of the stair. A corresponding paint outline survives on the east face of the chimney girt. A new chimney for the wing fireplace was constructed, extending straight up through the roof of the wing.

There is evidence of the existence of a transverse board partition in the loft that extended at least part of the way across the space, as can be seen from the absence of whitewash on the west face of the second rafter and collar beam from the west end. The loft had been whitewashed as high as the collar beams, and much of this survives.

STAGE IV c. 1840

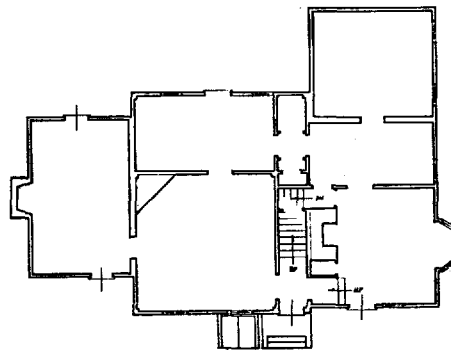


The principal change made in this period was the remodeling of the facade of the main unit in the Greek Revival style. To accommodate two large windows that had 6 over 6 lights of 10 inch by 12 inch glass, the studs of the front wall were shifted. Only two remain in their original locations. Additional sawn fir studs were inserted supplementing several Stage II studs that were shifted out of their original locations. The short studs between the girt and the plate were also shifted to allow the insertion of two 3-light windows. The overhang was removed.

The front wall was given square edge weatherboards, applied directly on the frame, with a flush-boarded frieze starting at the bottom of the second floor windows. A two-panel door with a three-light transom replaced the Stage II doorway. The door panels are flush-beaded on the inside, while the exterior has applied panel mouldings of ovolo with astragal section. A porch roof was probably built at this time, as old photographs show one with a shed roof. The first floor windows have three-panelled shutters.

Owing to the height of the new windows and the lowness of the front girt, the window stools are very close to the floor. There are panels under the windows. It is difficult to determine internal changes made at this time, as further changes made in Stage V obliterated most of the evidence. It would seem though, that plaster ceilings were installed in the first floor rooms of the main unit, if not the wing also. The two windows in the north wall of the lean-to of the main unit would seem to have been inserted at this time. These windows are similar to that in the south wall of the wing, being 6 over 6 and having 8 inch by 10 inch glass, but they have parting strips, which the other window does not. The frames of the two windows are slightly different and may be re-used units. The doorway was apparently altered at this time, judging from the casings and drip cap that have survived under Stage V trim. These pieces show that the door had been outward opening and hung on strap hinges with driven pintles.

STAGE V c. 1875



Added at this time was a shed addition across the west end of the main unit, 12 feet, 4 inches wide. The lean-to of the wing, as it presently exists, was built, probably replacing earlier construction. A bay window was added on the east elevation of the wing, replacing an original window. A small dormer window was constructed

in the front slope of the roof. Part of the middle rafter was cut out for it. The square-edged weatherboarding of the wing and the lean-to date from this time, as probably did the hipped porch roof that extended over the door and window of the south wall of the wing, and which is known only from photographs. Following soon after this, a separate structure, the Kirby Cottage, was moved against the wing lean-to and joined to it. This building, 12 by 14 feet; one and a half storeys in height, which originally had raked eaves, appears to date to the 1860's.

Nearly all of the surviving interior finish dates from this time. Most wall surfaces were replastered on new lath, and new door and window trim applied. The openings of both fireplaces were reduced in size. The floor boards of the first floor of the wing were replaced, and additional joists inset.

The board partition for the stairway in the main unit was replaced by studded framing, lath and plaster being applied on the room side, and the old boarding with the pieces out of order on the stair side. The stair itself was reconstructed with a landing at the level of the second floor of the wing, with a door to the wing loft. Most of the wall between the main, and lean-to rooms of the main unit was replaced except for a section at the west end. An interior cellar stairway was built, leading from the closet on the north side of the wing fireplace. The access between the main unit and the wing at the south side of this fireplace, as it now exists, was constructed at this time. The original stair to the wing loft was removed.

20th CENTURY ALTERATIONS: Most of the 20th century work involved the second floor of the main unit. On the first floor, the only significant change was the replacement of the flooring. In the main room, the original joists were retained, but short joists were installed between them so that the new flooring ran from north to south. In the lean-to, the joists were replaced, but the flooring continued to run from east to west.

At the rear, a dormer was constructed, almost the full length of the main unit. Except at the gables, sections were cut out of the Stage I and Stage II rafters. Sections were also cut out of the Stage I rear plate, and the top of the north main post at the chimney girt was cut off, level with the floor. The removed sections of the rear Stage I rafters were built into the front slope of the roof, as reinforcing. The new rooms on the second floor were lathed and plastered, as was the loft space of the wing.

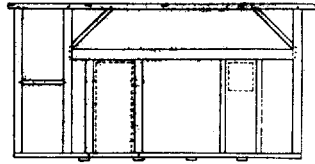
EPILOGUE: The foregoing structural analysis of the Van Nostrand-Starkins house was prepared by John Stevens, Architectural Historian-in-Charge of the Old Bethpage Village Restoration and an authority on early Dutch Colonial architecture. Mr. Stevens also is the Architectural Historian for the Van Nostrand-Starkins House restoration project and, in this capacity, established the structural history of the house and developed the plans for its restoration. The chimney and fireplace design and construction were accomplished under the direction of Colonel Frederic N. Whitley, Jr., U.S. Army Engineer, Ret'd, who has rendered similar service in connection with most Roslyn restoration projects. Most of the carpentry was accomplished by Steve Tlockowski and Edward Soukup who previously had worked on the Smith-Hegeman and James Sexton houses. The interior color analysis was completed by Frank Welch, and the interior painting was accomplished under the direction of Kenneth Rosevear.

The analysis presented here describes the structure of the house as it was immediately prior to the restoration procedure. In developing a restoration program, it was necessary to decide which stage of the development of the house should be restored. To restore it to Stage I, circa 1680, would have involved the destruction of a large amount of original 18th century work. Restoration to Stage IV was contra-indicated because almost all the interesting early work would have been concealed. In addition, the Stage IV modifications were not particularly impressive, especially in view of Roslyn's wealth of surviving buildings of this period. It was decided to restore the house to the very beginning of Stage III, circa 1800. At this time the original house (circa 1680) with its early 18th century lean-to (circa 1730) had remained virtually unchanged for well over half a century. The only modification which Stage III actually involved was the construction of the East Wing (circa 1800) of which there was an extensive survival. To accomplish this project the only notable structure which would be lost was the late Stage III corner fireplace of which the chimney was missing and the fireplace itself badly damaged and in poor repair. The reward for the loss of this corner fireplace was the exposure of a Stage II early 18th century plaster wall with its original baseboards. There was sufficient evidence to accomplish the contemplated restoration without conjecture, apart from the reconstruction of the Stage II fireplace and chimney. In this case, considerable information was available in the surviving chimney

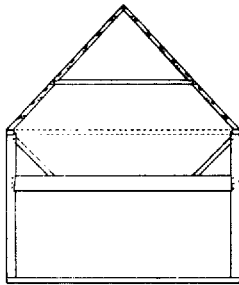
foundation, Stage III scribed corner board, etc., all of which Mr. Stevens describes in his text.

At the time of writing, March 1976, the restoration of the Van Nostrand-Starkins is almost complete. By the day of the House Tour the restoration should be finished and exterior grading and landscaping well under way.

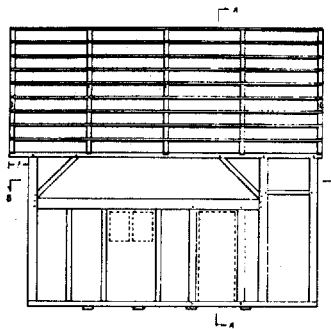
North elevation



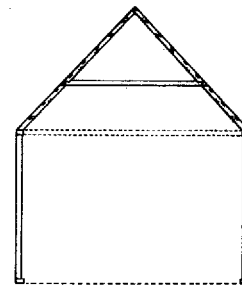
West elevation



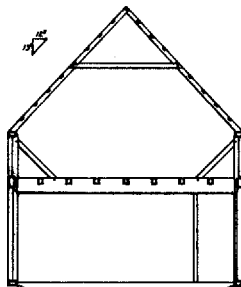
South elevation



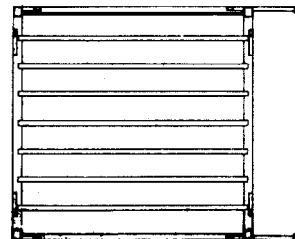
East elevation



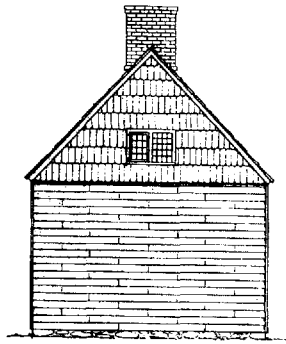
Section A-A



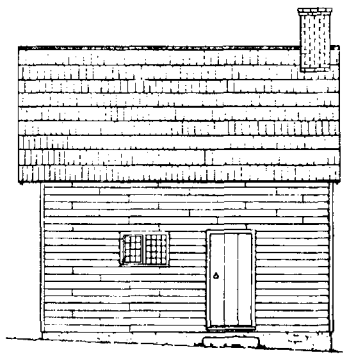
Section B-B



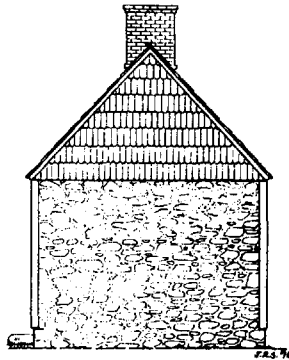
VAN NOSTRAND-STARKINS HOUSE
STAGE I — circa 1680
Framing details



West elevation

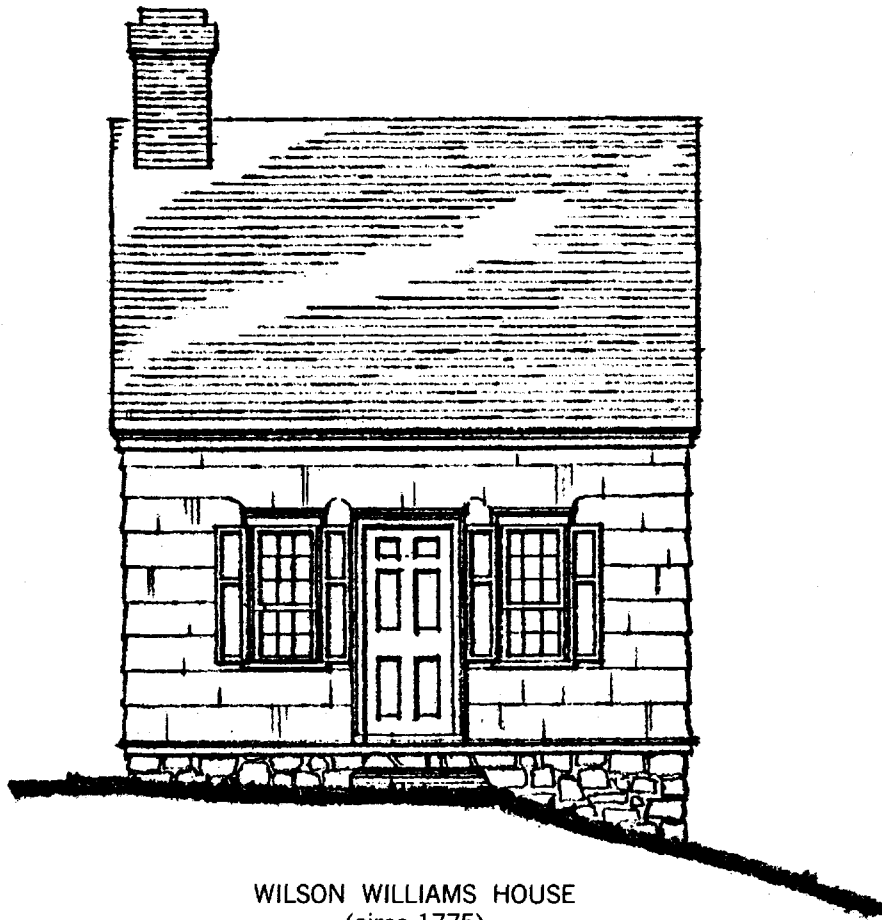


South elevation



East elevation

VAN NOSTRAND-STARKINS HOUSE
Reconstructed elevations
Stage I, c. 1680—c. 1740



WILSON WILLIAMS HOUSE
(circa 1775)

WILSON WILLIAMS HOUSE
150 Main Street
Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Van Curry

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Roslyn's V-shaped village began to take shape along its major roads during the 18th century with the early, far-apart houses characteristically sited with their broad fronts facing south and north. Wilson Williams, a cooper by trade, born in North Hempstead in 1754, appears to have built his hillside house on Main Street circa 1773-75, the period in which he built a vat for Hendrick Onderdonk's Hempstead Harbor paper mill. Onderdonk, according to Francis Skillman's recollections, gave Williams a bit of land on the east side of Main Street, "in the mill swamp", where he may have built his cooperage.

Wilson Williams, a patriot, trained for service against the British at the beginning of the Revolution and was listed as living in Hempstead Harbour by the Federal census of 1790 and 1800.

"In my earliest recollections of Hempstead Harbour," wrote Benjamin Treadwell Onderdonk to Eliza Leggett, describing the years between 1796 and 1811, "there was no stage. The first one was established by a Mr. Wilson Williams. It was a covered wagon . . . and it . . . [ran] (crept) once or twice a week . . . I remember well hearing Wilson Williams' horn at about eight o'clock in the evening announcing the approach of the stage . . .".

In 1806 Williams moved to South Hempstead and presumably sold his house, though no deed has been found to document the sale. On 24 March 1815, he gave testimony in the lawsuit between the towns of Hempstead and North Hempstead over the Hempstead salt marshes.

On the first of May (a traditional date for real estate transfers, known as "Moving Day" in New York) 1827, Thomas Wood bought the former Wilson Williams house from Townsend Rushmore of Oyster Bay. (Queens Co. Liber V of Deeds, Pg. 488). Uncharacteristically, the Rushmore-Wood conveyance does not refer to an earlier deed, nor does it mention the name of the house's residents, though it does name neighbors.

Along with the main house, Wood bought the piece of land in the mill swamp, north of the present 179 Main Street, on which he had his carpentry shop, and also claimed right-of-way over two extremely interesting back roads leading between the house, the highway (Main Street) and "the old Cider Mill hollow", a stream-bisected vale above and behind No. 110 Main Street. "The said Thomas Wood," runs the colorful language of the deed, "in fetching or driving his creatures is not to let them run out of the road whereby they may injury or damage the owners unreasonable." Not only does the Cider Mill hollow exist untouched today, but, deed in hand, one can still trace the narrow path of the lane over the hillside, behind the houses, as it runs to the Williams house.

Thomas Wood was a carpenter-builder of considerable style and skill. He arrived in the Village just before the great upbuilding period that began with John Willis' Main Street land sales in 1835, and he is probably largely responsible for much of the characteristic appearance of Roslyn's late Federal and Greek Revival houses. He was certainly the designer-builder for the big 1827 extension on his own house, and his responsibility for the neighboring Methodist Parsonage, built in 1843, is documented. Time and again certain details and treatments appear in local houses, strongly suggesting Wood's involvement in their construction.

Throughout most of the rest of the 19th century the house descended in the Wood family, belonging to W. Wood in 1873.

Early in the 20th century, Henry M.W. Eastman, having retired and moved from 72 Main Street, purchased the Wilson Williams house together with the nearby Samuel Dugan I house (148 Main Street), (TG 1966-1967). Using the newer Dugan house as their residence, the Eastmans inserted broad swinging doors in the pre-revolutionary west wall of the Williams house and used this space as a 3-car garage. They also extended the eaves to protect the original shingles. The balance of the building served for general storage and provided space for a small unheated study. Because of this use, the Wilson Williams house stood nearly as the Woods left it, virtually untouched by the 20th century, until bought for restoration by the Roslyn Preservation Corp. in 1964.

In 1964 the Roslyn Preservation Corporation retained the late Gerald R.W. Watland to study the house and prepare drawings for the restoration of those portions of the original house which had been altered or were missing. These included restoration of the east chimney (built in 1827); reconstruction of the missing west chimney (built ca. 1775); "clipping" of the east and west eaves of the early 20th century overhangs; reconstruction of the west wall (ca. 1775) at the ground floor level; and reconstruction of the west fireplace, panelled wall and stairway within. Reconstruction of the north and south pent-roofed porches (built ca. 1827) was also planned. These latter were totally missing but their dimensions could be calculated from the survival of a rubble foundation wall on the north side and the existence of clapboards, having an exposure of 5 inches, rather than shingles, on those portions of the north and south walls of the 1827 addition which were covered by the porch roofs. The north porch was to be reconstructed to its original dimensions. The depth of the south porch allowed it to be slightly extended in rebuilding. The details of both porches were in period and appropriate but otherwise entirely conjectural as no additional evidence of the actual porches survived except for a photograph of the altered north porch in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle for August 17, 1913. After the drawings were completed the house was offered for sale.

In September 1966 it was sold to the late Donald Burkhard and Mrs. Burkhard (now Mrs. Van Curry), of Roslyn, with covenants in the deed providing for the implementation of Mr. Watland's drawings, covering the restoration procedures, and assuring the open quality of the property. Actually so much of the original fabric of the house remained that little architectural guidance was necessary. Thomas Wood, who enlarged the house in 1827, would have little difficulty in finding his way around it today. The carpenter in charge of the 1966-68 restoration was the late Adam Brandt, of Greenvale. A major part of the finishing was done by Mr. and Mrs. Burkhard who spent so many weekends sanding and removing paint they almost forgot what weekends are really for. Their craftsmanship is evident in many an old floorboard, baseboard and bannister and the reward for their hard work was having this superb house to live in and the satisfaction of knowing they virtually brought it back to life and assured its future.

The house had no 20th century amenities until its 1966-68 restoration. It had never had central heating of any sort and the only plumbing and electrical service were in the rather small area which was used as a garage. As a result, except for the alteration in connection with the garage doors, the house stood, in 1966, and stands today, much as it did at the time each part was built. It still retains almost all its original architectural features even down to flooring, shutters, shutter-fasteners, door hardware and plastered walls. 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, ca. 1835. The house was exhibited in the Landmark Society tours before and during its restoration—in 1966, 1967, and 1968.

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. The ingenious techniques used in enlarging the house, almost 150 years ago, provide a flexibility which adjusts itself well to 20th century needs. Most important of all, the preservation of this early house, along with two acres of wooded hillside overlooking Roslyn Park, has provided substantial impetus to the entire preservation effort in Roslyn.

EXTERIOR AND FLOOR PLAN: The original house (the western section of the present structure) was built c. 1775 and consisted of a large room, or hall, at grade with a smaller rectangular chamber, or keeping room, at its north end. Above the two rooms is a very large, very high attic, and beneath them an L-shaped room, (possibly originally an open shed) with a root cellar which was once, and is now again, used as a kitchen. The exterior of this part of the house retains most of the original shingles which are butt-nailed with rose-headed nails and have a 12" exposure.

In 1827 Thomas Wood doubled the length of the house 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. The shingles were not precisely identical in both parts of the house as the 1827 addition utilized shingles having a 12½" exposure nailed at the butts with cut nails. Most of these appear to be the original.

Since the house was built into a hillside, it has three separate and distinct "ground" levels, i.e., the hall at the west end; the kitchen partially beneath it with the 1827 dining room and a chamber, and, at present street level, the 1827 kitchen, cold cellar and larder. All levels of the house were built on rubble retaining walls which extend up to the sills. The floors of each of the levels were laid on locust beams placed directly on the earth. In most instances the beams survived, but in some areas the pine flooring had 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 deterioration of the flooring.

Originally, both the early (ca. 1775) house and the 1827 addition had "clipped" eaves. These were all extended, probably by the Eastmans, early in the 20th century to protect the original shingles from rain drip. During the 1966-68 restoration the architect clipped the east and west eaves but retained the overhangs on the north and south to provide drip protection in the most dangerous areas.

With the exception of the dining room most of the rooms in the 1827 addition employ door and window surround mouldings which are S-shaped in cross section with a square fillet on one side and a bead on the other—planed from the same strip of wood. This actually is a late Federal, somewhat coarse, modification of the more delicate Federal mouldings which trim the door and window surrounds in the 18th century Hall and chamber. The 4-panel door between the latter two rooms and the surviving panels in the 18th century fireplace wall include the same S-shaped mouldings which are characteristic of the first half of the 18th century. A early 18th century board-and-batten door found in use in the 1827 root cellar included the same mouldings. Since its original location in the Wilson Williams house could not be established, this door has been used between the hall and north chamber in the restoration of the Van Nostrand-Starkins house.

STAIRWAYS: All the surviving stairways in the house date from the 1827 enlargement. All but one are completed boxed in. The single exception is in the hallway outside the 1827 East Chamber, part of which has a railing. For many years this railing had been relocated in another part of the house. Happily most of it survived for replacement in its original location. A few of the balusters had to be copied and about two feet of stair rail had to be replaced. The original newel was missing and its replacement has been copied from the one in the Federal hallway of the William M. Valentine house (TG 1963). The rails and balusters were identical in both houses and it was considered the Valentine house newel would be appropriate in the restoration.

WEST HALL (ca. 1775): The large chamber in the 18th century part of the house is approximately 18 feet square. This room, or hall, was a true "living room" in the full sense of the word. All family activities were carried on here, as cooking, eating and probably even sleeping. It has the original flooring and its walls are intact on three sides. All three retain their original chair rails with horizontal pine sheathing below and have been plastered on early hand-riven lathing above. The south wall still preserves its original exterior doorway, with interesting side windows of a type not seen elsewhere in Roslyn. These windows date from the 1827 enlargement and replace the original 9/6 windows in the same locations. Until the recent restoration an original S-shaped shutter catch for the window to the west of the doorway remained in its 18th century location and indicated the position of the early 9/6 window. During the restoration the course of shingles below the window was replaced and the shutter catch used elsewhere. As a result the original position of the catch has been lost. However, a simple curved shaping of the butt of a shingle above this window indicates the original location of the outside of its facing. Probably there was a similar 9/6 window to the east of the door, as the 1827 one in this location today. However, without stripping the frame it is impossible to confirm this. The door itself matches others in the house but was obtained from another local house. The 18th century door probably was of the board-and-batten type with a moulded center strip. The original door may be one found in use in the 1827 root cellar and which is now in use as an interior door in the "hall" of the Van Nostrand-Starkins house.

The west wall, the location for the original chimney and fireplace (possibly with a bake oven) and a steep enclosed stairway leading to the attic, had been removed, as mentioned heretofore, to make space for paired garage doors. Its removal effected a serious blow to the architectural integrity of the house. The wall originally was panelled with flat panels surrounded by simple "S" mouldings planed directly into the stiles. However, a number of clues to the original structure remained. These included the rubble foundation for the chimney and hearth, about one-half of the original crown, or cornice moulding, two small doors from the panelled wall, and one of the original panels, with the marks of stair treads on its reverse surface. This evidence made it possible for the architect to establish a plan for the reconstructed wall which utilized the remaining original material and which "works" with the remainder of the structure.

Unfortunately, the original hearth, much larger than the conjectured reconstruction, was not uncovered until after the working drawings had been prepared. On this basis, the original opening was much larger than it now appears and the panel over it would have been differently arranged. In all other respects the reconstructed fireplace wall appears to be accurate.

The board ceiling is remarkable for Long Island because the beams, which extend from the north to the south, are boxed in. The casings themselves have delicately beaded corners, a sophisticated feature in a country village.

WEST KEEPING ROOM: This small chamber, to the north of the West Hall, is approximately half as large, i.e. 9 x 18 feet, and survives in almost original condition. It may originally have served as the bed chamber of Wilson Williams and his wife. The original pine flooring remains as do three of the original walls. The west wall was part of the section removed for the garage space. The walls have horizontal pine sheathing below the stair rail. The north wall retains the only 9/6 18th century window remaining in the house. All others are 6/6 and date from the 1827 enlargement. The missing west wall has been reconstructed to match the other walls of the house. Its missing window has been replaced with one similar to the early 19th century windows used in the rest of the house—to follow the practice employed at the time of the 1827 enlargement, and because it was possible to find matching windows of the period for this location, and for its mate which opens on the reconstructed enclosed stairway, at the south end of the west wall.

The door which connects the two rooms dates from 1775, has its original H-L hinges and is identical in detail to the remains of the panelled wall in the larger chamber. Its wrought iron “Suffolk” latch, of the “bean” type, is contemporary with the door and matches markings on it both in size and contour. It is one of the period locks given to the restoration of the house by the Landmark Society.

WEST ATTIC: The large attic, 18 x 27 feet, covers both lower rooms and was originally reached by a steep enclosed stairway behind the now reconstructed panelled wall. This stairway has been reconstructed and conforms to the tread markings on one of the original panels. Part of the original pine attic 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. The 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. Ultimately it may be utilized again as a bedroom. There is no direct access between this west attic and the east attic provided when the roof line was extended in the 1827 addition.

WEST KITCHEN: Beneath the Hall and West Keeping Room 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 of its north and south ends. However, there was sufficient space remaining at the north end of the chimney base to permit the inclusion of a root cellar. This root cellar area has been redesigned to serve as a laundry. During the period in which the rooms above were used as a 3-car garage, additional bracing had been installed to support the weight of the cars. It has been conjectured that this room originally served no domestic purpose but was open on its east side and used as a shelter for animals and for the storage of farm and cooperage equipment. This impression was confirmed during the restoration when it could be observed there was not a true rubble foundation under the east wall but only a shallow “footing” constructed of small stones to support the construction of an inside wall, after the house was enlarged. Further information was obtained from the presence of large wrought nails, designed to serve as hooks, in the large ceiling beams which originally were exposed. The beams had sagged from the weight of the automobiles above, and required “doubling”. The introduction of new wood was the basis for the installation of a new plastered ceiling. Prior to reconstruction, it was evident that this room had been used as a kitchen. However, it probably did not become a kitchen until the mid-19th century when it became obvious that a kitchen on the same floor as the dining room would be more convenient than the one provided through the 1827 addition and located one level below the dining room. If it is correct that the present kitchen originally was an open shed, it may be also assumed that the windows of the north and south ends of the room were let into the original rubble foundation walls when the room was converted into a kitchen during the mid-19th century. This may explain the poor condition of both walls prior to restoration. The south wall was salvageable with repointing and lining, but the north wall required complete rebuilding. Prior to reconstruction, it was obvious that the process of collapse had been going on for many

years, as the interior sheathing of this wall was wedge shaped in cross section in an effort to correct the sag. Since this sheathing could not have been installed much after 1880, it becomes obvious that the partial collapse was of long standing.

This mid-19th century kitchen originally had an "open" ceiling which was covered with stamped tin sheathing of about 1880. The mid-19th century double window at the south end is the original. The north wall had included a single window, but in the 1966-68 restoration a new double window, to match the one at the south end, was installed for the simple purpose of admitting more light. This window is the only "new" window in the house.

1827 ADDITION (DINING ROOM): The dining room, on the same level as the West Kitchen, is the most pretentious room in the house. It is finished in the typical late Federal style, using undecorated, square corner blocks together with applied slender Tuscan mouldings which introduced the Greek Revival style. The panels beneath the windows are similarly trimmed. The impressive mantel has free-standing Doric columns and an original cast iron lining ornamented with sunburst and palmetto leaf motifs. Its black marble facings are the most elegant in Roslyn. They were cracked and had been painted over, but were removed, repaired and polished in April 1968. All the original stone survives. This mantel was the source for the restoration of some of the missing details of the front parlor mantel of the James and William Smith House (TG 1973-1974).

1827 ADDITION (NORTH CHAMBER): There is a small late-Federal chamber to the north of the dining room, suggested perhaps by the similar chamber to the north of the 18th century West Hall. This room retains an exterior doorway which leads to a small porch which has been almost completely rebuilt on its original foundation. Part of this room has been utilized to create a modern bath.

1827 ADDITION (EAST CHAMBER): Above the 1827 Dining Room is a room of similar size. It is finished in late Federal detail, including the panels beneath the windows, although not so elaborate as in the dining room. It includes an unusual small mantel which has never surrounded a fireplace, but which utilized some type of early cast-iron stove which stood in front of the mantel to provide greater heat. The stovepipe itself entered the chimney through the fireplace facing. This room was built to be the "master" bedroom. The small chamber at its northern end, a floor-plan characteristic which appears four times in this house, may originally have been a nursery. The latter room has been divided in the recent restoration to provide for a closet and bath, in addition to a small bedroom.

1827 ADDITION (EAST ATTIC): The 1827 attic, on the east side of the house, is large and commodious. However, unlike the 18th century West Attic, it was sheathed only along a part of the east wall. In all probability its sole function was for storage. Vestiges of floor battens survive which may delineate the location of board walls creating one or two servants rooms near the windows in the east gable field.

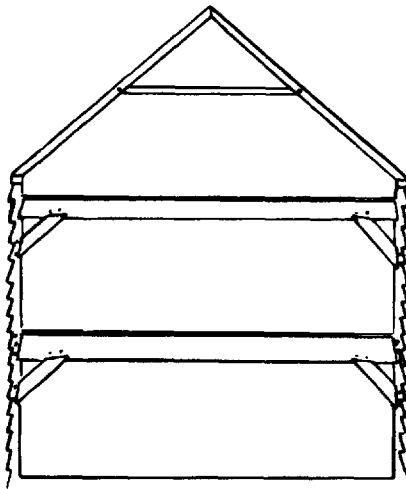
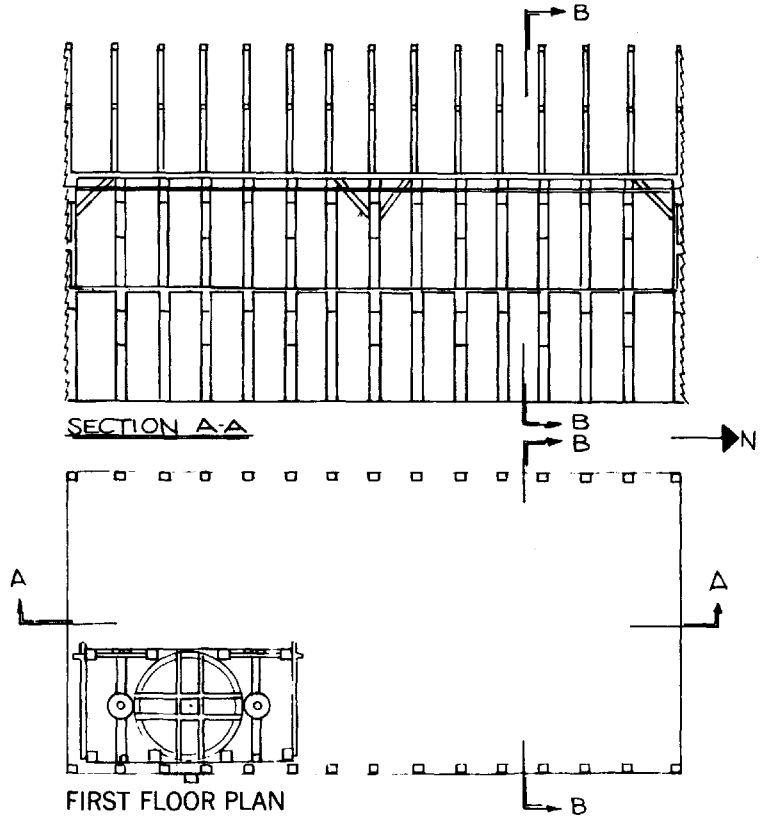
1827 ADDITION (KITCHEN): Beneath the 1827 Dining Room and the chamber at its north end, is a large, simply finished room, with rubble walls on three sides and a very large fireplace. Originally there was a non-bearing wall across the space immediately to the north of the fireplace. This wall was relocated slightly to the north during the recent restoration. The smaller chamber at the north originally was divided further into halves, the rear one for a cold cellar, and the front, which had a window and opened to the street, as a larder. This space now serves as a workshop. The large room with the fireplace (and a door to the street) was designed to be the kitchen of the 1827 addition. Originally the ceiling beams were exposed and the rubble walls were whitewashed. The beams all bear saw marks, although some of them have adze marks on one surface, suggesting that the log was squared off with an adze prior to being placed on the sawmill carriage.

Some time after it was built the 1827 kitchen was lathed and plastered. It is conjectured this modification was done after the room had been abandoned as a kitchen and was used for some other purpose. During restoration the lath and badly decayed plaster were removed. The south rubble wall, which was leaky, was lined with concrete and the rubble portion of the north wall similarly treated. Most of the north wall, i.e. the part above grade, had no foundation but was cantilevered out from the end of the rubble wall. The open space, beneath a porch, was then closed in with simple board sheathing. This space has now been filled in with a modern concrete block foundation. The long rubble wall along the west side of the room remains in its original state.

Since the recent restoration the 1827 kitchen beams have been almost completely covered to conserve heat. However, the lower surfaces of the beams remain exposed. Beneath the original kitchen stairway there is a small closet having a simple board and batten door, which is part of the original structure.

— NOTES —

Longitudinal Section of Building;



Transverse Section
Alternate frame bents do not have braces.

JOHN ROBESON-JEREMIAH WILLIAMS GRIST MILL
Old Northern Blvd., Roslyn

JOHN ROBESON - JEREMIAH WILLIAMS GRIST MILL
Old Northern Boulevard, Roslyn
Property of Nassau County Museum

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The grist mill at the head of Hempstead Harbor has been the focus of the village that is Roslyn today from the earliest days of settlement in the north part of Hempstead. The mill that stands on Old Northern Boulevard today is probably not the first one built on the site, but it is a 17th century type "Dutch" mill, and it is the only surviving commercial building of Dutch origin known to be standing in the United States.

Its beginnings are recorded in the minutes of a Hempstead town meeting held on April 2, 1698, when John Robeson "had lierti (liberty) granted to set up a grist mill and a fulling mill on ye streame at the hed of yt harbour . . ." providing that he have the mill in operation within two years. (Benjamin Hicks ed., North & South Hempstead Town Records, Jamaica, 1897, Vol II, Pgs 131-132.) Robeson (whose name was sometimes spelled Robison, and later spelled Robinson) was first mentioned in the Town Records in February 1691-92. (Vol II. Page 110-111).

The mill should have opened early in 1700, but it apparently did not, as at Town Meeting on April 1, 1701, a committee declared that the 1698 agreement was made void by Robeson's default. By 1706, however, mention was made of a road leading from Robison's Mill Dam (Town Records, Vol. III, Pg 77) and in 1709 John Robeson and his son Joseph Robison (sic) sold to Charles Mott "one sartain grist Mill with ye dam and stream . . . : a small frame of a house and one Iron croo (crow? ed.) with some other Instruments, belonging to ye said . . . Mill." (Town Records, Vol. III, Pg 56).

When Charles Mott sold the mill for £120 to Jeremiah Williams on July 2, 1715, the deed's language states explicitly that "John Robinson Builded a Grist Mill" on the stream of water "that Leadeth Dow to ye head of Hempstead Harbour". (Town Records, Vol. III, Pgs 353-355). That mill, together with its iron crow and all other ye instruments," was deed to Jeremiah Williams.

The language of the next deed, 26 years later, strongly suggests that Jeremiah Williams built a new grist mill, replacing John Robeson's mill. On June 22, 1741, Jeremiah Williams, merchant, sold his grist mill to Thomas Pearsall of Cedar Swamp. (Town Records, Vol. III, Pg. 370) This deed is of great interest, as it describes Williams' purchase of several pieces of land lying to the westward of the mill and its swamp which included two dwelling houses and a barn. In regard to the grist mill itself, the deed states: "And whereas the said Jeremiah Williams hath greatly Augmented ye Improvements on ye sd Stream of Water and Dam by Erecting A Large and Specias Mill Upon (it) and Greatly Advanced ye Said Mill Dam . . . as well as Built Severall Dwelling Houses with a Barn and other Edifices Upon ye Land . . . ". The sale price of the grist mill and its lands in 1741 was £1050, and the purchase included the mill and mill house, stones, running gear, the two bolting mills standing within the mill together with the utensils used with them.

It is not possible to know when the "Large and Specias Mill" was built, but it was evidently done between 1715 and 1741, and the likelihood is that its owner built it early rather than late in his tenancy.

On April 12, 1742, Thomas Pearsall Jr. (now of Hempstead Harbour) sold the mill and its adjacent lands and buildings to his son-in-law Richard Mott for £1050, the price for which he had purchased it 10 months earlier. However, the Pearsall-Mott conveyance mentions "three Bolting Mills" instead of two. (Town Records, Vol. III, Pg. 375). Richard Mott, who had been called a "yeoman" in earlier Town Records, now changed his stated occupation to "bolter", and entered the trade that did more than any other to build up the exports of New York port. Just prior to his purchase of the mill, Richard Mott had bought from Adam Mott a 122-acre farm west of the road "that is on ye west Side of ye Swamp that Thomas Pearsall's Mill stands on".

Prior to the revolution, New England had its fisheries and lumber and rum distilleries to provide an exportable commodity. Virginia had tobacco and South Carolina had indigo and rice. But New York's fur trade, for which it was settled, could not support its consumption of imports. The answer was found in flour. Hundreds of small operations like the Robeson-Williams grist mill, located near waterways with access to New York, were established to grind flour from farmers' grain. The flour went to New York where it was exchanged for goods; then, inspected and graded, it was shipped out to the West Indies, whose sugar products and cash were the basis of many a New York fortune.

Richard Mott died in 1743, and his executors sold the grist mill to John Pine on March 30, 1744. (Deed mentioned in Town Records, Vol. IV, Pg. 305). Pine further purchased from Thomas Pearsall the swamp at the head of Hempstead Harbor, the majority of which was under water in Pine's mill pond.

On March 30, 1758, John Pine sold the grist mill to Hendrick Onderdonk, "merchant", who may have been the first of its owners to run a store as well. Onderdonk owned the grist mill through the Revolution, and it was to his house (which is said to have been built by John Pine) that President George Washington came for breakfast on April 24, 1790.

Daniel Hoogland and Abraham Coles bought the grist mill on February 18, 1801 (Queens County Liber H of Deeds, Pg. 13) together with extensive tracts of land, one on the west side of Main Street from the Clock Tower site south to Wilson Williams' land, one on the east side of upper Main Street that included the mill dam, and one north of the Clock Tower site and along Shore Road to the place once known as Appleby's Landing. In all, the lands purchased with the grist mill by Coles and Hoogland amounted to about 90 acres. This interesting deed mentions the Onderdonks' "new paper mill", the Great Settling Spring now in the north yard of the James & William Smith house (TG 1973-74), at 106 Main Street, and the sand bank in back of the Smith house from which the paper mill dam was built.

Several Coles & Hoogland account books, the first of which begins in March, 1803, give an idea of the business of the mill and its related country store. The record appears to have been kept in New York, and "received of Grist Mill" at intervals were bushels of bran and barrels of flour of various types. Presumably the mill's flour, vended, provided some of the capital for the "sundries" sent to the "concern at Hempstead Harbour", which appears to have been Coles & Hoogland's store. The purchases of local residents who shopped there were recorded in the book. James W. Smith, for example, bought an iron shovel during April 1807 as well as an iron shovel, an assortment of threads and fabrics (he was a tailor), molasses, tea, flour, butter and spirits. Richard Valentine (who lost his property and "lay drunk in the mill creek" after the Revolution) bought pork, spirits, molasses, spirits, tea, candles and spirits!

The next owner of the grist mill was Benjamin Allen, although his deed of purchase has not yet been found.

On November 15, 1828, Allen sold a half interest in the mill to John Willis, Jr. (Queens County Liber X of Deeds, Pg. 425), and at the same time sold Willis 31 acres on the west side of Main Street (Liber X, Pg 428) as far south as land then owned by James Smith (near the driveway of No. 110 Main Street). Francis Skillman states, and earlier Tour Guide research confirms, that John Willis sold this land off in building plots, with the greatest concentration of sales during the spring of 1835. Francis Skillman writes that Jeremiah Reynolds actually ran the grist mill from 1828 until the arrival of Leonard Thorne nine years later. Reynolds, he says, also kept a tavern in "the yellow front house" (which may have been the Washington Manor, or a house on today's Tower Street) and then he went to the Red Mill in Port Washington.

Leonard Thorne bought a half interest in the mill from John Willis on June 25, 1838 for \$5,000 (Queens County Liber 54 of Deeds, Pg 20) and 11 years later Thorne sold his half interest in the grist mill to Joseph Hicks of Westbury on August 2, 1849. (Queens County Liber 80 of Deeds, Pg. 314).

It is not yet known how or when the Hicks family acquired the remaining half-interest in the mill, which was presumably still held by the heirs of Coles & Hoogland, or Benjamin Allen. But Isaac Hicks, Joseph's youngest son, was its last private owner. In 1916 he transferred it to a board of trustees who were to administer it "for the benefit of the town of Roslyn". At the same time the building, which was falling into decay, was repaired and stabilized by Harold Godwin. The Robeson-Williams Grist Mill was thus one of this area's earliest projects in historic preservation.

PRELIMINARY ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS: The existing building, on the north side of Old Northern Boulevard in the village of Roslyn, would appear to be that built by Jeremiah Williams some time during or after 1715. "The Story of Roslyn Grist Mill" by the late Marion Willetts Brower mentions that this man is reported to have erected "a large and specias mill". The existing building was constructed in one stage, as can be determined by the framing, and does not have incorporated in it any major timbers from an earlier structure. It would therefore appear that an earlier mill, built by or for John Robinson in the first years of the 18th century,

and sold in 1709 to Charles Mott, was in turn sold in 1715 to Jeremiah Williams, who replaced it with the present structure.

The mill building measures 25 feet in width, and 50 feet 6 inches in length, to the outside of the framing. It contains two full storeys and an attic. The side walls originally measured about 19 feet from the underside of the sills to the top of the plate. This measurement is somewhat in doubt due to the fact that none of the original sills survive, and none of the posts survive to their full length. Most are missing several feet from their lower ends, and only one has survived that is nearly its full length. The mill has a gable roof with a pitch of 10 inches: 12 inches.

The main axis of the building is north-south, with the south end abutting the mill dam. Originally, the height of the second floor coincided with the top of the mill dam, which was occupied by a roadway—now called Old Northern Boulevard. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the level of the road has been raised so that now the level of the sidewalk is 3 feet, 6 inches above the second floor of the mill

CONSTRUCTION: The frame of the mill is entirely of oak. It has Dutch structural antecedents. Very little effort was expended by the builders in hewing the timbers to a relatively smooth surface, although the joints throughout are skillfully made. The structure consists of 15 bents, each consisting of a pair of wall posts and two anchor beams, except that in the way of the machinery at the south east corner, the second floor beams were framed into a trimmer. The bents are numbered from north to south, on their north faces. The posts measure 8½ by 10 inches, and the anchor beams are 10 by 13 inches, with minor variations. The beams of alternate bents (bents II, III, VI, VIII, etc.) have heavy braces, 9 inches square and almost 4 feet in length, measured in the soffit from beam to post. All of the surviving braces with one exception are straight (several of the braces are missing). The exception, which is located in post II, second floor, at the east wall, has a curved soffit, like similar braces found in a number of Dutch-American houses. Geographically, the nearest example is in the Jan Martense Schenck house, preserved in the Brooklyn Museum. The end walls had braces measuring 3 by 5 inches, and 5 feet, 3 inches in length. None of these are now present. Those for which evidence survives, in the form of the mortices, were located on the second floor and ran from the corner posts both up to the third floor beams and down to those of the second floor. No clear evidence has so far been found that braces occurred on the first floor level, between the corner posts and the second floor beams. Braces were used in the side walls, between the corner posts and the plates and also at bent 8. Only the corner braces of the west wall survive. The wall posts extend 8 inches above the third floor beams. The plates are 7 inches by 9 inches in section, and originally ran in one piece for the full length of the building, as the east one would appear yet to do. The west plate has been repaired, with new material inserted between posts V and VII. No original end wall studs survive. There are 15 pairs of rafters, all but the gable rafters being located immediately to the north of the corresponding wall posts. At the rafter feet, there was a projection 6 inches in length and 2 inches in depth, beyond the plate. While these projections have been removed on the west side of the building, some still survive on the east side. Collar beams were fitted to all rafters, all except the north gable collar beam being let into the south side of the rafters with a half-dovetail end. Most of the original collar beams are missing. Original ones survive on rafters III, V, VIII, XII and XIII.

The most unusual feature of the building, and one that bears a direct relationship with Dutch Old World examples is the manner in which the wall posts and gable rafters have slanted notches cut in them for the reception of the weatherboards, so that the weatherboards had a continuous bearing against the frame. At the corner posts, and at door and window locations the weatherboard notches are interrupted; about 4 inches of the post being left at full section. These portions of the posts presumably were covered with cornerboards, or door and window casings, as applicable. The weatherboards were 14 inches in width, with exceptions that were somewhat wider or narrower. Because of the absence of siding notches adjacent to openings, it has been possible to determine the original arrangement of openings on the side walls.

On the east wall, there were doors on the first and second floors between posts II and III. Windows occurred between posts V and VI, and XII and XIII on the second floor; the evidence for first floor windows has been destroyed. Post II retains batten notches and pintle holes for divided doors on both floors. Corresponding notches exist on Post III, but above the second floor, the outside face of this post has deteriorated considerably; the portion of the post below the second floor has been replaced. The west wall had windows opposite those of the east wall. Positive evidence, in the form of gains for head and sill members is visible on the second floor; on

the first floor, an original head timber survives, morticed and pinned into posts V and VI. Immediately below the window sill level on all four walls and on both first and second floors, a deeper notch cut into the weatherboard notches indicates the former presence of horizontal members that were about 1½ by 4 inches. The function of these elements cannot be determined.

No original flooring has survived on the first and second floors. At the time of writing, the third floor boards have not been completely uncovered, but it would appear that a large part of them is of original material. This flooring shows marks on its underside to reveal that it was produced by power-driven saw. The boards are in widths of 14-17 inches and have slip-tongued joints. They are face-nailed with rose headed, hand forged nails.

The mill stones have always been located at the south end of the building, on the second floor at the east side. The existing drive is not original although it is very old. Second floor beam X is deeper than the others, and originally extended across the full width of the building. At the time that the frame for the present drive was installed, a section at the east end was cut out in the way of the replacement drive.

The present machinery may date to the late 18th century, or more possibly, to the early 19th. The frame housing the drive measures 10 feet 6 inches in width by 17 feet 3 inches in length (north-south). The timbers are in general 12 inches square. Each end has cross braces, halved into one another at the crossing, and there are also braces between the corner posts and the top plate of the west side. On the east side there were braces between the posts that carry the ends of the tentering beams and the top plate. The top plate on the west side has a ledger spiked to it, to support the ends of floor beams X to XIV. As noted previously, beam X originally extended across the full width of the building. The other beams formerly were probably framed into a trimmer that ran from beam X to beam XV. Such a trimmer may have been part of the machinery frame.

Nothing remains of the wheel and wheel shaft, and the pit wheel is gone. The main vertical shaft is probably the original for this rebuilt machinery. Its end bearing is mounted on a 12 inch square beam running from north to south, which in turn is supported at each end on transverse timbers set close to the end frames and morticed into the sills of the machinery frame. At the lower end of the main vertical shaft there is a cast iron bevel gear, the "wallower".

The "great spur wheel" is of all wooden construction. The teeth are secured with wedges except at the positions of the spokes, where wooden pins are used. The top of the shaft extends to the second floor level, where a coupling protrudes above floor level. This coupling formerly drove a secondary vertical shaft that powered elevators, bolting machinery, etc. The form of the present coupling—a circular plate with bolt holes—suggests that it is of mid-19th century date.

The two bed stones which are located on a north-south axis, slightly off-center to the west of the axis of the main vertical shaft, are supported on 3 inch thick planks spanning the top members of the machinery frame, which in turn lie on 9 inch square transverse timbers morticed into the plates of the frame. The runner stones are driven by cast iron pinions keyed to iron shafts. The pinions cannot be disengaged from the spur wheel by being raised out of mesh with the teeth of the spur wheel, as in the case of the Saddle Rock grist mill. Originally, the pinions were undoubtedly wooden, as also would have been the wallower. As the 19th century progressed and cast iron became readily available, it is logical that the smaller gears, such as the wallower and the pinions would be replaced in that material. Millwrights did however, avoid the use of iron-to-iron gearing. The runner stone has to rotate with a controlled distance between it and the bed stone. The stones would be damaged if they rubbed together, and the degree of fineness or coarseness of grinding is controlled by the interval between the faces of the stones. This control, or "tentering" is achieved by the spindle of each stone working in a bearing mounted on a transverse tentering beam. The east end of each beam is made with a tenon that is pinned as a pivot, in a post which is part of the machinery frame. At the west side of the frame there are two pairs of guides for the tentering beams. The west ends of the tentering beams lie upon longitudinal timbers 3 by 11 inches in size which are pivoted on the pair of posts towards the middle of the west side of the machinery frame. The other ends work in slots cut in the cornerposts with 9 inches of the north beam extending beyond the corner post. The outer ends of these timbers lie on the ends of a third set of levers, lying transversely, that on the north side being on the outside of the frame, the south one being within the frame. These work in guides bolted to the frame, and are pivoted at their east ends. The free ends extend 6 inches past the west face of the frame, and are slotted for an iron strap, 4 feet 2 inches in length, and 7/16 inch in thickness that extends upward, with a 90

degree twist, to go through a slot in the end of a hand lever by means of which the tenting adjustment is made. The upper end of the strap is pierced with a series of holes, through one of which an iron pin is placed, to bear on the top of the lever. The lever is pivoted on a shouldered and braced iron bar driven into the corner post at about 6 inches below the underside of the plate. The levers are 5 feet, 5 inches long, and taper from 3¼ inches square at the strap end, to 1¾ inches. The corners are chamfered, except for 11½ inches of the length at the large end. A hole through the small end of the lever is used to retain it in position.

The mill stones are French burr stones made of a number of pieces skillfully fitted together, the joints cemented, and bound with iron bands. The backs of the stones are levelled off with plaster of Paris. The stones are 42 inches in diameter, and the "eye" of the runner stones is 9½ inches. In the eye of each runner stone, a square iron bar is fitted. This engages a slot in the upper end of the drive spindle.

The millstone enclosures (called "vats" are circular, 4 feet 5½ inches in diameter, and 15½ inches in height from the floor to the top of the covers. The frames that support the hoppers for the grain being fed to the stones (called "horses") are nicely made, with turned legs of typical early 18th century character. The vats, horses and hoppers may belong to the earliest period of the building. Also possibly original to it is the crane used to raise the runner stones off the bed stones for dressing. The crane had to be shifted to be used on each run of stones. Calipers engage holes in the edges of the stones, the curvature of the calipers allowing the stones to be rotated through 180 degrees. The lift is by means of an iron screw, working through the end of the crane.

Holes occur in the attic floor for grain elevators, and parts of the bolting equipment survive. The arrangement of this secondary equipment remains to be investigated.

When the exterior of the building was done over with shingles cannot now be determined, as none of the 19th century cladding has survived. The oldest photographs of the mill dating to about 1880, show the shingling to be in a very weathered condition. A lean-to on the west side of the mill would appear to date from the same period as the shingles. Its roof line was continuous with the main unit, but had a slightly flatter pitch. A field stone foundation, apparently laid up dry, extended across the full width of the north end of the building, including the lean-to.

A feature added in the 19th century which still survives, is the extension of the south gable and above the attic floor level, 3 feet beyond the original wall line. The fact that this extension is framed with sawn timber indicated a post-1850 date for it. At the top of the north gable, the roof was extended several feet to provide shelter for hoisting equipment. A Brainard photograph of the north end of the building, taken c. 1880, shows a windlass-like affair mounted in the gable.

There were loading doors on all three floors, those on the second floor and attic being horizontally divided. The only windows in the end were on the second floor, one on either side of the door, and one in the lean-to. The Brainard photograph also shows a further addition to the lean-to, doubling its width, and making it a full two storeys in height. This part was of board and batten construction, and there was no foundation under it. It appeared to be of recent construction when the picture was taken. A lean-to on the west wall is shown in late 19th century photographs. This would appear to have been about one quarter the length of the side wall, and located with its south wall at about the center of the main wall. Its roof had a slightly flatter pitch than the main roof, but was not continuous with the main unit, being dropped about 1 foot below it.

Several undated photographs show the south elevation of the mill. The earliest of these would appear to be contemporary with the c. 1880 Brainard view of the north side. The projecting south gable is covered with board and batten siding like that on the addition to the west lean-to. There is a hoisting beam at the peak of the roof with a small shuttered opening beneath it. To the west side of this opening there is a pole fastened to the wall with most of its length projecting above the ridge. It has a turned ball finial, and near the top, an insulator for a telegraph wire is attached. There is a door on the third floor level, and on its west side a shuttered window-sized opening. The second storey elevation is weatherboarded, with a double door set in the middle.

An addition to the mill on the west side is shown in one of the photographs. This addition served as a feed store. It has a flat roof that extended over the south wall by about 3 feet. Its front wall was weatherboarded and had three doorways, one of them with a double door. The farthest west portion of this structure extended beyond the board-and-batten addition that was mentioned previously, shown in photographs of the north side of

the mill. Whether the addition on the north side was built earlier or later than that on the south side cannot be determined; both are certainly after 1860 or thereabouts.

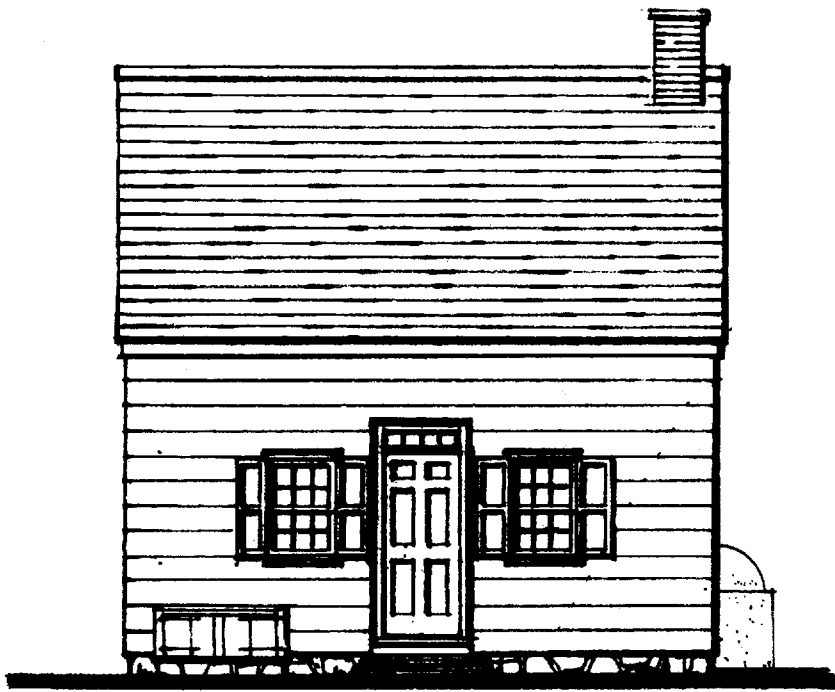
Through gradual deterioration over a long period of time, caused by foundation failure and the decay of the sills and lower wall posts, the walls settled unevenly. As a result of this settling, the upper floors and the roof are considerably out of level. In 1916, the building was extensively repaired, but apparently little effort was made to correct the alignment of the frame. A concrete floor slab was installed on the first floor level. On the north and west sides, concrete footings were installed above the level of the floor to support the wall posts, which had been shortened by varying amounts through the removal of the decayed portions of them. At the south end, a concrete retaining wall was constructed up to the second floor level. The date 1916 was inscribed on the inside surface of this. On the east side, all but one of the wall posts below the second floor level was decayed. The survivor, on bent II has supplied the evidence for an original door location. As only a small portion of its lower end is missing, this post was the most nearly complete of any. New oak was supplied for the missing post sections, but no effort was made to replace the braces. The only surviving brace on the east wall is on bent II.

The second floor boards were discarded, and except in the south east corner where the mill stones are located, a concrete floor was installed. A fireplace was constructed on the west wall, near the north end. A lean-to was constructed along most of the east walls to accommodate kitchen facilities when the building began to be used as a restaurant, under the name of the Roslyn Mill Tea House. "The Story of the Roslyn Grist Mill" states that at the time of the 1916 restoration, an overshot wheel existed. Nothing now survives of it, or of the main shaft and the pit wheel. For a period in the present century the mill wheel drove an electric generator which remains in place.

The exterior of the building has stripped, new window units installed and the exterior was given a concrete cladding, moulded on the north, east and west walls, and the south wall below the overhang. This was done to give the appearance of weatherboards. The overhanging south gable was treated to look like board-and-batten siding. The main entrance, at the south end of the second floor, was given a fine late 18th century divided door. It is panelled on the exterior and has original, beaded lining. The original hardware was retained with this door.

EPILOGUE: The March 1976 meeting of the Roslyn Landmark Society was devoted to a discussion of the Nassau County plans for the Robinson-Williams Grist Mill. At that time it seemed evident that funds would be available for the restoration of the mill in May 1976 and that the actual restoration procedure would begin shortly thereafter. It is obvious from John Steven's description of the mill that its restoration will be a long and difficult procedure, requiring much study and careful consideration. The members of the Landmark Society and the residents of Roslyn are deeply grateful to Ed Smits and to the Nassau County Museum for their willingness to undertake a project of this magnitude.

— Notes —



JOHN ROGERS HOUSE
Conjectured Appearance Circa 1800

JOHN ROGERS HOUSE
95 East Broadway, Roslyn
Property of Mrs. Sydney Fairbanks

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: It is Francis Skillman's narrative that identifies this 18th century house as the house of John Rogers, a blacksmith. John Rogers and Richard Valentine, who had signed a patriot petition of allegiance in 1776, were among the men of Long Island who emigrated to Connecticut in 1776 to escape punishment at the hands of their Tory neighbors. This flight indicates that their rebel sympathies were pronounced, and that their lives so near the loyalist lines at New York would not have been easy during the seven-year occupation.

No record exists of John Rogers or his house before the Revolution, but since a house and a blacksmith shop were mentioned shortly after the peace, and Rogers was away during the war, it is thought that this house was built before he left in 1776.

In the Town Records for 1786, mention was made of a blacksmith shop John Rogers had built on land being sold by John Carman to John Golden (N. H. Town Records, Volume VI, page 340). And on May 31, 1793 John and Elizabeth Rogers sold a house and blacksmith shop to Andrew, Henry and William Onderdonk. (N. H. Town Records, Volume VI, page 347). This deed, however, locates the house on the west side of the road, with the blacksmith shop on the east. As the house is presumably standing on its original foundations on the east side of East Broadway, the possibilities are that the course of East Broadway has been changed since 1793, or the language of the deed was transcribed or typeset incorrectly for the Town Records. The third possibility, that this house is not John Rogers' house, discredits Skillman's narrative, and gives us an 18th century house not mentioned by him or anyone else.

At this point there is a hiatus in the known deeds for the Rogers house until December 20, 1830 when Robert Seaman purchased a five-acre parcel south of John R. Schenck's land from Stephen Weeks. (Queens County Liber AA of Deeds, page 468). Though no house was mentioned, this five-acre parcel seems to have included the Rogers house. It was Seaman who occupied the house when the Walling Map was surveyed just before 1859, and Seaman whom Skillman identified with the John Rogers house in his narrative.

In 1865 the Seamans sold off a parcel of land north of the house of Benjamin Hicks. (Queens County Liber 250 of Deeds, page 94).

After having been put up for public auction, the Rogers house passed next to Benjamin D. Hicks of Westbury and Henry W. Eastman of Roslyn, on November 21, 1870. That deed, which is very specific, refers to "Wilkey's burying ground" (probably the old Roslyn Cemetery on the hillside above East Broadway), and it further refers to a Seaman family burying ground 32 feet wide on its north and south ends and 82'4" on east and west sides. It was at the northeasterly corner of the Seaman land, and thus may have been abutted directly on the Wilkey Burying Ground already established. The land conveyed was just under 4½ acres (Queens County Liber 334 of Deeds, page 418).

In 1906 and 1914 the house belonged to Mrs. H. Browne.

The original John Rogers House was much smaller than it is today and, in its early state, had a strong resemblance to the earliest section of the Wilson Williams House, (Tour Guide 1975-76) although considerably smaller than the latter. Both probably date from the third quarter of the 18th century although it is impossible, in the light of present knowledge, to determine which house was built first. The Wilson Williams is larger and the more sophisticated of the two houses.

EXTERIOR: In its present form the John Rogers house is six bays wide across its principal (south) front. The easterly three of these are later insertions of indeterminate date. The steeply pitched, gable-ended roof ridge extends from east to west at right angles to the road. The ridge angle is approximately 90 degrees. The original roof almost certainly was shingled as it is today but the shingling had a greater exposure to the weather, and would have included a "combed" ridge. The house now has overhanging, bracketed eaves, and an extension forming a roof over the doorway, both of which were added at the same time during the second half of the 19th

century. The original eaves were clipped. The present house is sheathed with heavy weatherboards having exposure of 9 to 10 inches. These probably date from the second quarter of the 19th century. There is an early, but undateable, chimney protruding through the roof somewhat to the east of the mid-point of the ridge. The chimney indicates the east end of the original 18th century house. Examination of the weather boards indicates that these end on a line with the east face of the chimney and that later each clapboard course was extended to the east to form an addition. This evidence, because of the weatherboards, suggests that the east addition dates from after the mid-point of the 19th century.

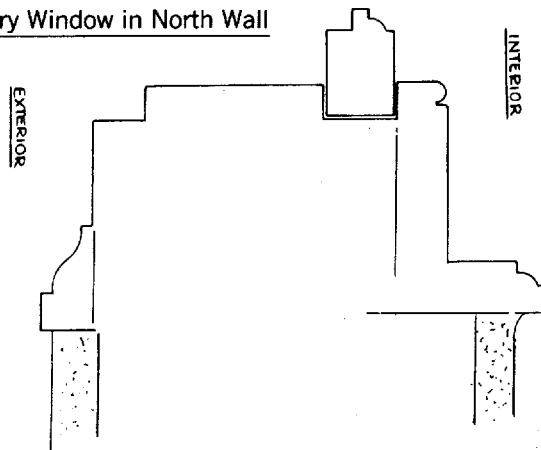
The entire foundation is constructed of rubble to the sills as is the foundation of the kitchen dependency to the north. The rubble foundation at the east end of the house extends to the 2nd storey floor level. This dates from the construction of the east addition and is not a part of the 18th century house. The cellar areaway remains in its original site although the cellar bulkhead is 20th century work. The Victorian scrolled board over the bulkhead was relocated here sometime after the bulkhead was built.

SOUTH FRONT: Like the Wilson Williams House the original front "south" door was flanked by windows and this early arrangement more or less survived with some modification. The present doorway has been rebuilt and the present front door, while old, does not originate with the house and was installed by Mrs. Frances Storey during the late 1950's. The flanking 6/6 windows have Federal trim and probably date from the early 19th century. The present flanking windows are slightly eccentrically positioned with respect to the doorway, probably as the result of enlargement of the latter during one of its alterations. The notch in the weatherboard over the doorway indicates its original width. The long window near the east end of the original house was installed at the same time as the present front door in the position of an earlier vitrine window of more or less the same dimensions. Beyond the east end of the early house there is an original exterior doorway to the easterly addition which is no longer in use.

WEST FACADE: The large bay window is later than the original house and dates from the 2nd half of the 19th century at the time the eaves were extended and bracketed. It is rectangular in floor plan and resembles those in the Wm. M. Valentine House (Tour Guide 1963) and the Epenetus Oakley House (Tour Guide 1973-1974). The double-hung window in the west gable field dates from the same time. The marks of the earlier, taller and narrower window are still evident where the weatherboards have been patched.

JOHN ROGERS HOUSE

Cross Section of 18th Century Window in North Wall



NORTH FACADE: The two 6/6 windows have casings with backbands dating from the 18th century that may be presumed to be original to the house. A "driven" shutter pintle of the same date survives in relation to one of these. The easterly window in the north facade is located in the late 19th century addition but is 20th century work. It may represent the site of an earlier exterior doorway.

KITCHEN DEPENDENCY: Like the main house the kitchen dependency has a rubble foundation to the sills and the 19th century clapboards have an exposure of 11" to the weather. It has a gable-ended roof the ridge of which extends north and south and is parallel to the road. There is a late 19th century brick chimney which

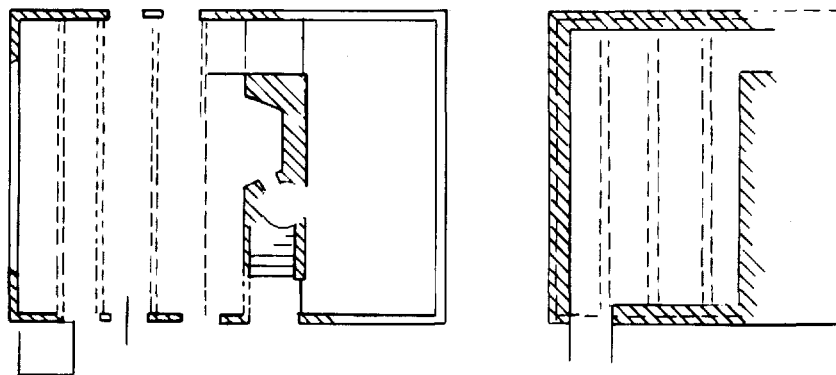
probably was built for use with a wood-burning kitchen stove. The dependency originally was completely separate from the main house and the present covered passage dates from the late 19th or early 20th century. The date of the kitchen dependency is difficult to establish as no original, exposed, architectural detail survives and both the exterior and interior surfaces are fully sheathed so that no framing is accessible for examination. There is a 19th century 6/6 window in the west wall of the kitchen dependency. The steeply pitched roof suggests that the dependency may be contemporary with the original house although most likely it is somewhat later in date. Its location to the east of the house's original east wall suggests that it may be contemporary with the mid 19th century eastern addition.

INTERIOR

CELLAR: The rubble-walled cellar survives with substantial level of its original fabric. It occupies the entire foundation area of the early house although it was intended to serve only as a root cellar. Almost the entire original east cellar wall served as the base for the chimney fireplace, bake-oven and hearth. The west rubble foundation walls continue to the south to form the west wall of the cellar areaway. The original north and south oriented floor joists survive. These are adze-dressed on one or more sides and bear the marks of pit-sawing on the other surfaces. The primary growth logs were dressed with an adze after which the squared-off logs could be placed on a saw mill carriage. The remainder of the job of cutting timbers was completed with a saw. This practice, using a circular saw in its final days, continued well into the 1830's in the case of very large timbers. The original board cellar ceiling which forms the first storey flooring also survives. These boards are yellow pine and are 12 or more inches in width.

JOHN ROGERS HOUSE Ground Floor and Framing Plan

KITCHEN BUILDING NOT PLOTTED



18th CENTURY HALL AND CHAMBER: The present living room includes the original hall and north chamber and thus encompasses the entire first floor plan of the 18th century house. Only the hall had a fireplace which was used for cooking as well as for heat. A boxed-in stairway extended over the fireplace to the attic above. It is the existence of this floor plan as well as the survival of the window-flanked doorway and strongly pitched roof which serves to relate the John Rogers House to the Wilson Williams' House.

The four ceiling joists extend, unbroken, from north to south. They are lightly chamfered along their lower corners but the chamfering stops a short distance before the north and south walls. There is a large "boxed-in" I-beam which extends east and west just north of the center of the room. This framing member was added by Mrs. Frances Storey during the early 1950's to support the four original floor joists. It replaced an earlier wooden girder located somewhat to the north of the I-beam. This earlier wooden beam was in turn supported by turned Victorian porch posts which possibly were installed during the late 19th century. The east end of this earlier girder survives as a "console" in the east wall. A matching "console" south of the I-beam was placed there for symmetry by Mrs. Storey when the present I-beam was installed and the wooden girder removed. The board ceiling of the hall and chamber area is original. The boards themselves extend from east to west. It is difficult to establish just where the wall which divided the hall from the chamber was located. It may be assumed it was located at the site of the early wooden girder, which has survived only as a console north of the

fireplace. There are no mortises or gains indicating a location of studs, although there are nail marks and other scars at this point in each beam, which may indicate the location of this early dividing wall. It is possible there may always have been a girder at this point and the dividing wall framed beneath it.

The principal feature of the present room is the fireplace and vertically sheathed fireplace wall. Both fireplace and paneled walls have been substantially altered. The original fireplace probably was larger although its south jamb is original. The installation of a "Heatolater" unit during the 20th century has made careful evaluation of most of the fire box and chimney base impossible at the present time. Survival of a brick oven with a sealed opening to the south jamb (visible from the dining room) establishes this fireplace as the only known survivor in Roslyn of an oven with a jamb opening. All other survivors have the later type of separately built oven, alongside the firebox, which have their own individual openings in the face of the fireplace wall.

The mantel itself and the vertical, "V"-grooved sheathing above it date from the early 1950's. The vertical, butt-jointed sheathing to the north of this is earlier but not original to the wall. Originally there probably was an embrasure or a cupboard north of the fireplace. The vertical sheathing to the south of the fireplace has a beaded joint and forms the west wall of the enclosed stairway. This section is original to the house. There is a horizontal dado which also has beaded joints and is capped with a 1" torus molding around the three remaining walls of the combined hall and chamber. This thick cap suggests that the dado, or at least its cap moulding, dates from the 19th century and probably originally the dado was only in the early hall. The windows in the combined hall and chamber date from a variety of periods it has already been mentioned that the south windows are trimmed with Federal mouldings of the very early 19th century. The bay window, in the west wall, dates from the 3rd quarter of the 19th century. The two north windows date from the 18th century and with their sash are original to the house. Their simple but prominent casings are set at right angles to the sash-stops and include a plain cyma moulding planed into the inner corner of the back-bands.

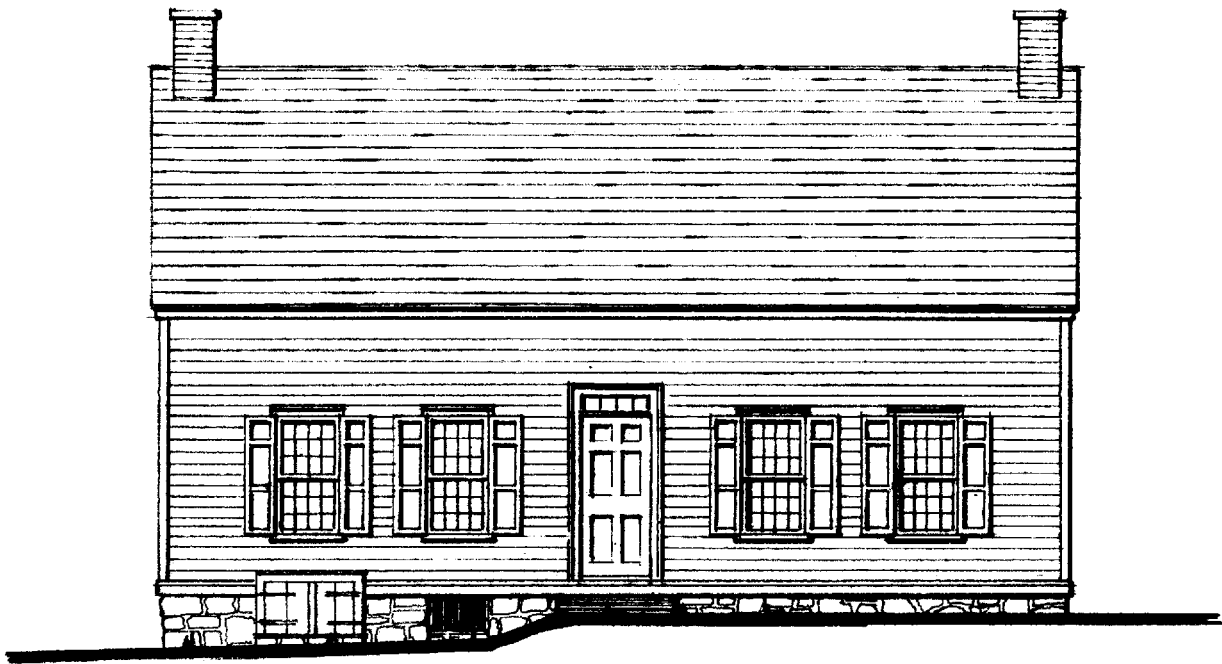
The original east end of the house is located just east of the doorway to the enclosed stair. The original board-and-batten door to the latter survives on its original "H" hinges and an imported iron Norfolk latch of about 1830. The vertical board sheathing along the west wall of the stairway dates from the original house. The four-light horizontal window in the east stair wall was relocated, probably from another part of the house. It may be the original front door transom. It has very thick muntins and dates from near the mid-18th century.

DINING ROOM: The present dining room is located entirely within the later, east addition to the house. The doors and window surrounds with flat, untrimmed facings and dado of 6" wide, vertically placed, beaded boards all suggest a construction date in the 3rd quarter of the 18th century. The board-and-batten closet door with its ¼" beaded joints and fragments of "H" hinges; the similar south exterior door with an inserted later window, and the early 19th century 6/6 sash at the south end of the room all antedate the dining room and were reused, probably from the early part of the house.

The most interesting feature of the dining room is the fireplace which actually is not a fireplace at all but the exposed bee-hive oven of the 18th century hall fireplace. The bricked-up opening in the south jamb of the hall fireplace is clearly evident from the inside of the former oven. The opening into the bee-hive oven from the dining room originally was bricked-up. Mrs. Storey thought the oven could be used as a fireplace and broke away the dome to create the present opening into the dining room in the early 1950's. The oven was unsuccessful as a fireplace but the opening has never been closed.

ATTIC: The attic was sheathed for the most part and there is little opportunity for the examination of early framing. All visible flooring represents a second, later, layer. The unbeaded horizontal board sheathing which forms the east and west walls of the stairtop chamber probably dates from the 18th or early 19th century. The west chamber retains its early plastered ceiling over the original hand-rived wooden lathing. This chamber was the only plastered attic room in the original house. A heavy original rafter may be seen in the closet at the north end of the room. An "out-looker" for the 19th century overhanging eaves may be seen beside it.

— NOTES —



VALENTINE-LOSEE HOUSE
Conjectured Appearance Circa 1800

VALENTINE-LOSEE HOUSE
117 East Broadway, Roslyn
Under contract for sale to Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Genovese

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The history of this mid-18th century house is not a clear one. Francis Skillman, whose recollections are seldom wrong, says it was built by John Valentine in 1743, and although certain documents indicate that this may be true, nothing absolutely proves it.

John Valentine died before his father Richard Valentine Sr., leaving him "the house I built", among other things. On March 20, 1758 Richard Valentine Sr. deeded to his son Richard Valentine Jr. three houses, one of which was described as "the house that John Valentine built on the East Side of the Road . . ." and other descriptions in the deed establish "the Road" as today's East Broadway. (Town Records, Vol. IV, Pg. 293). Without Francis Skillman's attribution it would not be possible to identify the Valentine-Losee house from this unelaborated description.

Skillman further says that William Valentine sold the house to Benjamin Albertson, who "settled his son Hicks on it, who later sold it in different parcels." Skillman states, too, in another portion of his narrative, that Sam Hallet once owned the place. Deeds have not yet been located to substantiate or refine these facts, but some others that may include the house have been found.

On March 31, 1762, the two Richard Valentines sold a 15 acre parcel of land, with no house mentioned, to Richard Weeks (cordwinder) and George Weeks (ship carpenter). (Town Records, Vol. IV, Pg. 314). Later deeds show that these Weeks (also spelled Weekes) were the sons of Richard Valentine Jr., although we are at present unable to account for the difference in names. Five years later the executors of Richard Valentine Jr. transferred a house to the Weeks on the east side of East Broadway immediately north of the land they had purchased from the Valentine. (Town Records, Vol. VI, Pg. 322, May 8, 1767). Further, the house is described as being the same one given by Richard Valentine Sr. to Richard Valentine Jr. on March 20, 1758: in that deed "the house that John Valentine built". This may be the Valentine-Losee house — but it might be a house no longer standing, some distance to the north on East Broadway.

The Weeks brothers — of whom George alone was still living — were mentioned in the will of Richard Valentine Sr. (proved June 18, 1768) as the sons of his deceased son Richard Valentine. Through the will George Weeks acquired another piece of meadow land, whose location is not known.

So far, if indeed these wills and deeds refer to the Valentine-Losee house, its ownership is still within the Valentine family. Deeds of 1785 and 1792 record sales of land from George Weeks to Charles Titus, and from Titus to Andrew, Henry and William Onderdonk (Town Records, Vol. VI, Pgs. 327 and 329), but it is not clear that these deeds include the house.

Then, on May 4, 1835, James Losee purchased two parcels of land on the east side of today's East Broadway from a man named Nathan Payne. One of them was a 15-acre parcel that may have included the Valentine-Losee house. The other was bounded on the north and east by land of Samuel P. Hallett (whom Francis Skillman said once owned the house). Local tradition says that James Losee bought his land in 1834 or 1835. Nathan Payne stated that he owned the premises conveyed by "right of a good, absolute . . . estate of inheritance in fee simple". (Queens County, Liber JJ of Deeds, Pg. 454). Searching backwards then for Payne's title to his lands, it was revealed that the second-mentioned East Broadway parcel had been sold to him in 1831 by a man named Stephen Weeks. (Queens County Liber AA of Deeds, Pg. 454, April 26).

None of these deeds shed light on Skillman's statements about Albertson and Hallett ownership of the house. A lengthier title search is likely to uncover information about these families. Nor does the information at hand illuminate the local tradition that Methodist minister (and storekeeper) David Buck owned the house and sold it to Losee. It is possible that Buck, whose dates of activity in Hempstead Harbour were ca. 1806 to his death in 1823, occupied the house by lease. The house stayed in the Losee family well into the 20th century, owned next by James' son Washington, and in 1914 by C.A. Losee.

PROLOGUE: The Valentine-Buck-Losee house was badly damaged by fire in the early 1940's. Subsequently the damage was repaired but the technical expertise necessary for proper restoration was not available to the owners at that time. They did the best they could to rebuild the house as they remembered it before the fire. Since they had purchased the house shortly before the fire, these recollections were not always accurate. For these reasons, the following description of the house is based not only on the structure as it stands today but also upon the study of early photographs which show the house as it appeared prior to the fire. The best photograph was taken during the late 19th century when the house belonged to Washington Losee. The house, with its five-bay principal facade and four corner fireplaces which provided heat for all major first floor rooms, was an important one in the village when it was built. While it survives today in much altered state as far as the interior is concerned, it is likely that much evidence of its original appearance will be disclosed by interior "stripping" and that much interior detail will be found. The house is of sufficient consequence to justify this effort.

EXTERIOR: The house is a one and half storey, gable-ended structure. Its ridge is at right angles to the road. The principal front of the house faces south and is five bays in width. The house has shingle sheathing today but a late 19th century photograph shows narrow clapboard sheathing, a characteristic of 17th century and early 18th century New England houses. However, from the beginning years of the house, the end and rear walls may have been shingled. The original rubble foundation to the sills survives although this is now covered with stucco. A barred cellar window, probably the original, survives in the southwest corner. The split bars are square in cross-section and set diagonally in the frame, the usual practice in local windows of this type. The cellar bulkhead is on its original site and retains its early profile but dates from the 20th century. The present windows of the house are of the 6/6 type. All appear to date from the 1940s renovation. The shingled hoods over the 6/6 south windows are devices used after the 1940s fire to permit the installation of vertical window frames in a wall which had sagged inward. The smaller window openings were employed for the same reason. The photograph referred to above, in the Local History Department of the Bryant Library, shows 12/12 sash in somewhat larger openings than the present. The survival of early sheathing and 12/12 windows until late in the 19th century establishes that the house apparently was little altered during its approximately first 125 years. The same photograph shows a single dormer over the doorway. This apparently dates from the late 19th century as it includes 2/2 glazing of that period. The same photograph also shows the retention of three-panel shutters. These date from the very early 19th century, or earlier. The large shed dormer in the north and south slopes of the roof both date from the 1940s. The original roof was shingled, as usual, and retained its combed cresting, the earliest type used, until the time of the late 19th century photograph. The slope of the roof may have been changed after the fire and an effort should be made to determine whether or not this has happened. No early rafters have survived by which the roof slope may be dated.

The present doorway is Greek Revival in style and is certainly not the earliest one in its location. It dates from the second quarter of the 19th century, and may be as late as 1850. It includes 4-light sidelights and an overdoor window and is trimmed with square pilasters faced with Tuscan mouldings. The doorway is eccentrically placed and is about 2 feet closer to the east end of the house. The four-panel Tuscan-moulded door appears to be the original for the doorway. The interior wrought iron box-lock with its oval brass knob dates from the late 18th century and may have been transferred from an earlier door in this location.

Originally there were two chimneys, one at each end of the house. Each accommodated two flues to supply drafts for the four corner fireplaces. The original west chimney has been completely removed from its foundation upward. The east chimney may remain inside the walls but all the visible work dates from the 20th century.

The Kitchen Dependency is one of a group found in Roslyn. In this case it is a two-story gable-ended building, its roof ridge parallel to the road. A brick extension to the north foundation wall extends irregularly upward to the second floor level, forming the back of the original kitchen fireplace, the oven, and the flue which was extended from the oven to the chimney. This type of oven construction usually dates from the second quarter of the 19th century. The building is shingled and, like the main house, the shingles may be assumed to date from the 1940s. For some reason having to do with its interior design there are no upper storey windows in the west wall of the dependency. Because of the hillside, only the west and south walls show two full storeys above grade. The date of the kitchen dependency is difficult to assess without more careful examination and the stripping of its sheathing. If the fireplace and oven-back are the original, the dependency probably dates

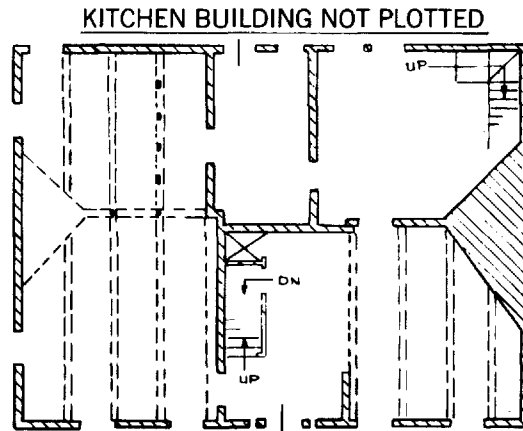
from the second quarter of the 19th century. The interior of the kitchen dependency includes no readily accessible clues for dating. The interior of the brick fireplace has been completely rebuilt and has a surprisingly small opening. The iron door of the oven is painted closed so its interior cannot be examined. Locally, iron oven doors of this type were used during the second quarter of the 19th century. A similar oven with an iron door survives in Thomas Wood's Methodist Parsonage on Main Street which was built in 1843. The exposed sawn overhead beams in the kitchen dependency date from the 20th century. The connecting passage between the south wall of the kitchen and the main house is much later and probably dates from the late 19th or early 20th century. There is a large flat rock west of the dependency near the road. This exhibits wear on its upper surface and may have been an early doorstep.

MAIN HOUSE INTERIOR: It has been mentioned above that the house was badly damaged by fire during the early 1940s. As a result almost all the interior detail has been replaced, some of it with an obvious effort at retaining the feeling of an early interior.

The root cellar has the greatest unaltered survival of any of the interior spaces. It is located in the southwest corner of the house beneath what was originally the southwest chamber. It has already been mentioned that the cellar bulkhead dates from the 20th century. However, it has been built over the original cellar areaway and conforms to the original profile. The original wide board-and-batten door at the bottom of the areaway still retains its blacksmith-wrought, Dutch-type strap hinges, all dating from the 18th century. All the original beams survive. These are 8½ x 7" in cross-section, and are set with their greater dimension in the horizontal position. These are adze-dressed, set on 42" centers, and support the original, deteriorated, 11½" wide, yellow pine flooring of the main floor. The triangular rubble base for an original corner fireplace on the floor above survives, although the fireplace and chimney are no longer present. It may be assumed that three similar fireplace foundations survive in the unexcavated parts of the cellar.

Sufficient evidence remains to reconstruct at least the major part of the original floorplan:

VALENTINE-LOSEE HOUSE
Ground Floor and Framing Plan



At first, this was thought to be the traditional center hall with front and back chambers on either side of the hall. It is now obvious that the "center hall", if it may be called that, extended only about one half of the north-south axis of the house. It has already been pointed out that the "center hall" is about 2' off center toward the east. This space is entered by the Tuscan-moulded, Greek Revival doorway which has already been described. There is a steep, enclosed stairway along the west side of the entrance "center" hall. This appears to be early work because of patination, and because of its extremely high risers. It cannot be dated with accuracy but the plastered wall along its east stringer may have been sheathed with vertical boards. Originally there was a door at the bottom step of this staircase which is now missing. An interior stairway to the cellar occupies the space beneath the boxed-in stairway.

The east wall of the entrance hall is missing but its location is indicated by a heavy beam which extends north and south. The remaining exposed beams in this area are original to the house and were exposed originally. They have small chamfers on their lower corners; are 5" wide, adze-dressed and set on 42" centers. The site of an early corner fireplace occupies the northeast corner of the original southeast chamber. All that is visible of the fireplace appears to be 20th century work although some portion of the mantel may be 19th century reused material. It is obvious that the entire south wall has been "furred out" on the interior side to correct its sloping contour. The more-or-less Tuscan-moulded window facings surrounding the embrasures all date from the 1940s.

The dividing wall between the southwest and northwest chambers has been removed and replaced with a kind of "summer beam" extending across its width. The original adze-dressed beams survive above it. These are north-south oriented and extend, unbroken, for the entire dimension of the house. They are 5" wide, set on 42" centers, have chamfered lower corners and were exposed originally. Examination of the beams at the point they are crossed by the modern "summer beam" discloses the gains for the studs of the wall that once stood here. The westernmost beam does not have a gain as no stud was necessary because this beam was supported by the masonry of the two back-to-back corner fireplaces which originally stood here. The foundation of the southwest fireplace may still be seen in the root cellar below. The most easterly beam of the present northwest chamber also exhibits gains for early wall studs. This pattern suggests that a wall originally divided the house from east to west at the location of the 20th century "summer beam". The latter, incidentally, could not have been installed until the two west corner fireplaces had been removed. There also was a north to south wall at the location of the gained beam just mentioned (see drawing of floor plan). On this basis, the east wall of the originally smaller northwest chamber is not in its original location. It is obvious there were at least three, and possibly even four, small rooms originally ranged along the north side of the ground floor.

Like the north half of the present living room, the present kitchen extends further to the west than it did originally. The stairway from the present kitchen to the second storey is 20th century work. The mantel of the corner fireplace in this room is in the Gothic style of the third quarter of the 19th century and is the earliest of the surviving two mantels although much later than the original house.

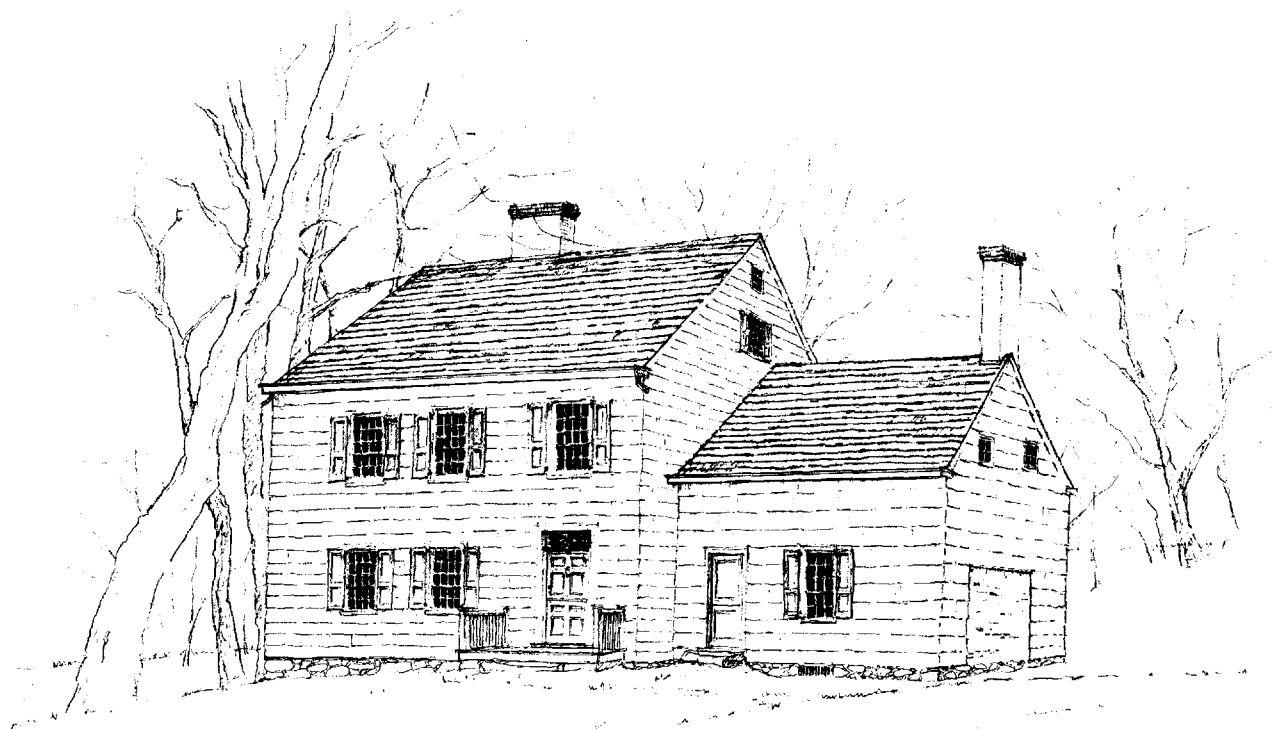
None of the early room divisions of the upper story survive. However, a few early artifacts can be seen here. There is no reason to assume that any of them are in their early locations. These include:

1. An early Victorian linen cupboard, now bonded into the plastered wall.
2. A Tuscan-moulded, four-panel, flush-back door, circa 1835, in the northwest chamber. The three light transom window over this door may have been relocated from the original front doorway.
3. A finely beaded 18th century board-and-batten door entering the southeast chamber.
4. An early 6/6 window in the west gable field in the northwest chamber.
5. A board-and-batten door dating from the second quarter of the 19th century in use for a closet in the northwest chamber.

The rafters of the present roof may be seen through a trapdoor in the hall ceiling. All visible rafters date from after the 1940s fire, and it is possible that the original roof pitch may have been changed during the subsequent renovation.

EPILOGUE: The Valentine-Buck-Losee house is in the course of sale to Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Genovese who expect to acquire title early in May 1976. Subsequent to their acquisition of the house they plan a careful study of surviving fabric with the intention of restoring the house to its early appearance as far as feasible. Actually, notwithstanding the fire damage, the early profile of the house and its room divisions can be ascertained by a study of the framing. Also, original door and window openings may be identified. Early sheathing can be identified from the surviving nailing patterns. In addition, early material will be discovered as the stripping procedure progresses. It should be appreciated that this house, with its five-bay width and four-corner fireplaces, was a most important building, locally, for the second quarter of the 18th century. It will be a real challenge to the new owners to re-achieve this standard. The authors are confident of their ability to do so.

— NOTES —



JOHN COLLINS
3/76

VALENTINE-ROBBINS HOUSE
Conjectured Appearance Circa 1800

VALENTINE-ROBBINS HOUSE
1535 Northern Blvd., Roslyn
Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Novak

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The Valentine-Robbins house was built in two sections: the easterly portion of it is one of the earliest Valentine houses in this vicinity to which the family came late in the 17th century. The earliest recorded mention of a house on Richard Valentine's hundred acre tract on the east side of Hempstead Harbor, "near ye head thereof," was made in a will proved August 6, 1709 (Town Records, North and South Hempstead, Vol. III, Pg. 317), when Richard Valentine left the entire tract to his oldest son, also named Richard. It is impossible to tell from that document whether the house transferred in 1709 is the oldest segment of the house standing there today. In 1728 the younger Richard Valentine added 6¼ acres to his landholdings with a purchase from William Willis. That deed refers to "Richard Valentine's House," to which a road ran from the grist mill. Since the Valentines had more than one house, it is not known whether this is the one referred to there.

In 1753 Richard Valentine II gave his youngest son, Richard Valentine III, half of his lands and meadows, including "the farm and plantation where I now dwell with my East Dwelling House, Leanto, Upper Room and the Equal Half of the Cellars and the Equal Half of my Barn, Stables and out Houses, Orchard, Timber, trees, fences . . ." It is very likely that that farm and plantation included the old wing of the Valentine-Robbins house.

In 1766 Richard Valentine III's will directed that the lands he held jointly with his father be divided. (New York Historical Society, Collections, Abstracts of Wills, Vol. VIII, Pg. 4). Certain parts of Richard III's holdings were to be sold to pay his debts. "Only I would not have my house, where my father now lives, sold," he stipulated, "and I would have my executors set apart so much of my movable estate as will be sufficient for my wife and children to keep house and carry on farming." He left his wife Phebe many of their household goods, including two beds, six sitting chairs, £2 worth of pewter, one "high Bilstede Chest" valued at 1.8s, and a riding chaise and horse worth £25.2s.6d. His son, Richard IV, was to have his house after Phebe died, and a double share of his estate. Richard Valentine III's sister had married Benjamin Robbins, who was named as an executor. Richard Valentine II died two years after his son, in 1768. His will (N-YHS Collections, Vol. VIII, Pg. 183) makes it clear that there were by then a number of houses owned by this branch of the Valentine family. One, which he left to the use of his sister Ann Pearsall, was called his "west dwelling house," and probably is not standing today. With it he left her the right to firewood to support one fire, the privilege of gathering apples, two barrels of cider yearly, a cow and a black horse — until she married.

Richard Valentine IV continued in possession of the Valentine lands until 1776, when in the revolutionary difficulties of the late summer he fled with his neighbor John Rogers to Connecticut for safety. On October 6, 1778, fearful that his property would be confiscated by the Crown because of his avowed patriot stand, he sold "the whole Real Estate [his] Grandfather Richard Valentine bequeathed [him]" to his uncle Jeremiah Robbins, who had lived in Oyster Bay. (Town Records, Vol. V, Pg. 81). According to Francis Skillman, who later owned the south part of the farm, Jeremiah had agreed that Richard was to have his property back, "should the times become safe for him to hold it." Skillman wrote in his reminiscences of Hempstead Harbor that Richard Valentine, unable to get his house and lands back at the end of the war, took to drink, and "lay drunk in the mill creek and the tide rose over him." This apparently did not occasion his death, as Skillman further reported that Valentine afterward built the structure that later became the Mansion House, and lived there for the rest of his life.

It may have been Jeremiah Robbins who added the great early Federal wing on the west side of the Valentine house around 1790. In 1795 a dispute about the highway that later became School Street and Bryant Avenue (Town Records, Vol. VI, Pg. 360) mentioned a "line fence" separating Robbins' land from that of Andrew (Andries, Anderis) Onderdonk (TG 1970-1971). The same year, Jeremiah Robbins registered his claim to the ashes that were burnt in the Hempstead Harbor school house, which stood on a lot carved from his land where the Roslyn Hook & Ladder house stands today. (Town Records, Vol. VI, Pg. 464-65). And in 1805 another highway proceeding (Town Records, Vol. VI, Pg. 435) mentioned the boundary shared by Robbins and Richard Valentine III's grandson Richard Kirk, who owned the land that later became, in substantial part, the Cedarmere and Montrose estates of William Cullen Bryant's property. All of these landmarks: the Anderis Onderdonk land, the Hempstead Harbor school, and the Richard Kirk land, verify the fact that the Valentine-

Robbins farm comprised the lands that were later owned by John Tatterson (the Valentine-Robbins house), and Francis Skillman (the Blue Spruce Inn today).

On February 14, 1814, John and Daniel Robbins, possibly Jeremiah's sons or grandsons, made a deed of partition dividing the old farm into north and south halves. (Mentioned in Queens County Liber 70 of Deeds, Pg. 316). The Valentine-Robbins house went with the north half to Daniel Robbins. Whether John and Daniel inherited directly from Jeremiah Robbins, or purchased the property after his death, is not yet known.

Richard Tatterson was the next owner of the house, purchasing it on May 28, 1823 (Queens County Liber S of Deeds, Pg. 109) from the estate of Daniel Robbins. The land by then contained about a hundred acres, and it ran west to the high water mark of Hempstead Harbor. A fulling mill, its press house and its stream were reserved from the sale. John Tatterson, presumably Richard's son, acquired the farm on May 6, 1835 (Queens County Liber JJ of Deeds, Pg. 482) and it was he who opened, in 1847, the small road that runs before the house (Witte's Lane) connecting Bryant Avenue with the Flushing-North Hempstead Turnpike. (Queens County Liber 81 of Deeds, Pg. 289).

Valentine Mott (see footnote*), from New York City, bought the Valentine-Robbins house and farm from John Tatterson on February 16, 1857 (Queens County Liber 158 of Deeds, Pg. 410) and his successor Stephen Mott sold it to Nathaniel M. Terry on April 23, 1863.

Later owners have included William J. Witte in 1906; Merritt Lund, who owned the house for about six years after 1907, making changes in the Colonial Revival style; and a family named Lowe who owned it in 1914 and sold the house in 1926 to Edmund Durkin. Following Mr. Durkin's death the house was acquired by a man named Gomper, who sold it to Frank B. Mendl, a retired State Senator, in 1951. Senator Mendl sold the house to the present owners in 1973.

EXTERIOR: To the passerby today the Jeremiah Robbins House appears to be a fine example of an early 20th century "Colonial Revival" house. It is worthy of study from that viewpoint alone as, apart from later sheathing with aluminum clapboards and the inclusion of an unfortunate view window in its south front, the exterior of the house has survived unchanged since Merritt Lund created his "Colonial Revival" masterpiece between 1907 and 1913. The Dutch overhang of the south roof slope, the impressive veranda, the doorway, the monumental brick wall on Church Street to assure privacy from Trinity Church on Sunday morning and the stable court with its contents all are part of the Lund project and certainly are worth a walk around the property to view. The stable court with its romantic well house, small stable and brick wall laid in Flemish bond with burnt headers

*FOOTNOTE: This probably was Dr. Valentine Mott (1785-1865), the world's foremost surgeon during the mid-19th century. He was awarded his M.D. from Columbia in 1806 and subsequently spent three years in London and Edinburgh observing the great British anatomists and surgeons. He was appointed Professor of Surgery at Columbia in 1810. Subsequently, in 1841, he was the principal founder of the New York University School of Medicine and served there as Professor of Surgery and President of the Faculty. He simultaneously served as Chief of Surgery at the New York Hospital. For about 15 years subsequent to 1850 he served as Senior Consultant in Surgery to Bellevue, St. Luke's, Hebrew (now Mount Sinai), St. Vincent's and Women's hospitals. Throughout his life he was a surgical innovator and was the first to perform a number of procedures which are challenging even today. He was the first to ligate the innominate artery (1818) for the treatment of an aneurysm of the right subclavian artery. In 1821 he performed a hemimandibulectomy after having first ligated the common carotid artery to control hemorrhage. Altogether he ligated the common carotid artery 46 times. In 1828 he removed the right clavicle in the treatment of a large sarcomatous (sic) tumor, which involved the ligation of a large number of major vessels. The patient recovered but more than 30 years passed before another surgeon attempted the same procedure. His spectrum of surgical operations was tremendous ranging from vascular orthopedic and abdominal surgery to oral surgery and oto-laryngology. He was deeply interested in the role of general anesthesia in surgery and was largely responsible for the early acceptance of anesthesiology as a surgical adjunct. In 1862 he prepared a monograph, at the request of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, on the use of general anesthetics in Army hospitals. Sir Astley Cooper, the great 19th century English surgeon and anatomist, wrote that Mott had completed "more of the great operations than any man living, or that ever did live". However, notwithstanding his considerable surgical zeal he was a friend and advocate of conservative surgery and never performed an operation without weighing the question of its necessity with great deliberation. In his later years he was the recipient of honorary degrees from most of the world's major medical faculties including an honorary M.D. from the University of Edinburgh and an honorary L.L.D. from the University of the State of New York. He was the President of the New York Academy of Medicine for many years and his extensive medical library is housed there today. While it cannot be established with certainty that the Valentine Mott who owned the Valentine-Robbins House actually was Dr. Valentine Mott, it is unlikely there were two people named Valentine Mott living in New York in 1855, the year in which the house was purchased. As a matter of fact, Dr. Valentine Mott's son, Dr. Valentine Mott, Jr., died in New Orleans in 1854. Dr. Mott was born in Glen Cove and was familiar with the local area. By 1855 he was advanced in years and it seems likely that he would purchase a summer retreat in the fashionable Hempstead Harbor area. He owned a town house which still stands at #1 Gramercy Park West (N.Y. Times, 9/24/41) but the Roslyn house would not have been considered a year-round residence in any case. (R.G.G.)

are unique in Roslyn. The cottage which is partially within the stable court, may also be a part of the Lund project. It was a servants' quarters and garage at the time the present owners purchased the house. However, it is lacking in the romantic quality and flair of the remainder of the stable court and most likely ante-dates it. Possibly it was an outbuilding of the original house.

Beneath the Lund exterior changes are, in fact, two connected houses, a small 1½ storey 18th century house to the east, which has been so extensively altered that little of it can be seen today without considerable effort, and a much larger 2½ storey, side hall, 3-bay wide, Federal house, the interior of which has survived almost unchanged since the time it was built. Both houses, or to be more precise, the Federal house with its earlier east wing, have gable-ended roofs with their ridges extending from east to west and both are built on rubble foundation walls to the sills and include full cellars. Prior to the application of the aluminum siding both parts of the house were sheathed with butt-nailed shingles having an exposure of 13" to the weather. Examples of these are visible in the attic and cellar areaway. It cannot be established at this time whether the early house was shingled originally or the shingles applied for conformity when the Federal house was built.

The Federal house obviously is a part of the group which includes the Anderis Onderdonk House (TG 1970-1971) and the Federal part of the William M. Valentine House (TG 1963). Its monumental attic is similar in scale to that of the gambrel-roofed Onderdonk House and its stair rail, main storey floor plan and door panel mouldings are very close to those of the William M. Valentine house. The Federal house retains its original 12/8 windows in its north front. Those in the south front and the west facade are 6/6 and, at first thought, insertions of the second quarter of the 19th century. However, since they are set in their original frames and have fixed upper sash and retain the same dimensions, 36 x 55", as the 12/8 north windows, it is possible they may represent original construction. This view is supported by the survival of original 6/6 sash in both the Valentine and Onderdonk houses. The latter was built between 1794 and 1797 and the former no later than 1801. It is hard to decide upon architectural evidence just where the Federal Robbins House stands in relation to the other two. The surviving 12/8 windows may indicate that it antedates them both. All of the attic windows including the quadrant windows date from the early 20th century.

INTERIOR

CELLARS: The Federal cellar and the cellar of the earlier house both are continuous and of rubble wall construction throughout although the early cellar is smaller in both dimensions than the Federal cellar. The early cellar is 15' north to south by 20½' east to west. The north-south oriented floor joists of the early cellar are adze-dressed throughout and are 5" x 7" in cross section and set on 32" centers. The placement of the greater dimension of a beam in the horizontal position is also followed in the 1743 John Valentine House (TG 1976). The intact rubble foundation piers for the early fireplace hearth and oven survive, projecting from the east wall of the early cellar. There are east-west oriented adze-dressed trimmer joists, 6" x 7" in cross section, at each end of the fireplace tiers to tie the now missing timber and brick fireplace base and framing together. This structure provides no support for the present modern fireplace and chimney above which are much smaller than the original. The early cellar ended just east of the present cellar stairwell and the west sill of the early house still remains visible in this location. A small patch of early shingling may be seen in the cellar areaway in the north wall of the early house. An example of the exterior foundation wall finish of the early house, a very rare survival showing the use of mortar pointing to provide a smooth exterior surface, may be seen in the southeast cellar areaway of the Federal house.

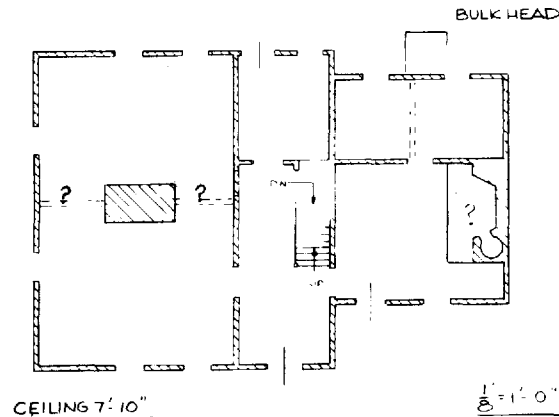
The Federal cellar is larger from north to south and the floor joists may be seen through the modern insulation in some areas. These are partially adzed, partially pit sawn timbers, 3½" x 10" in cross section and are set on 24" centers. So far as can be determined from both cellars the original yellow pine flooring survives above in good condition in both parts of the house. The massive rubble pier which supports the back-to-back fireplaces and center chimney above survives as do the concave brick hearth supports placed north and south of the pier. The use of a central chimney in a Federal house usually suggests an early construction date. The Anderis Onderdonk House includes a similar center chimney base while the Federal part of the William M. Valentine House has two side-by-side end wall chimneys. The small brick walled store room in the southwest corner of the Federal cellar dates from the 20th century.

The enclosed interior cellar stairway is located entirely within the Federal house. There is horizontal sheathing along the east side of the cellar stairway with sawn lath and plaster above which formed the west wall

of the earlier house after the Federal house was built. Although the sawn lath is later this modification suggests that at least some of the studs of the early house were removed when the Federal house was built. Hand-rived lathing may be seen at the north end of the cellar stairway which provides an interesting opportunity for comparison. The west wall of the stairway is sheathed with vertical yellow pine boards 21" wide. These are now covered on the hall side with plaster-board or masonite but almost certainly were part of the stairway paneling originally. Interestingly, the wall beneath the William M. Valentine house stairway was found covered with later plaster at the time of its restoration and the original paneling was found beneath (TG 1963).

VALENTINE-ROBBINS HOUSE

Ground Floor Plan



EARLY HOUSE — GROUND FLOOR: The present dining room, east of the Federal side hall, occupies almost all the ground floor area of the early house. The dining room detail which dates from the Merritt Lund alterations represents an attempt to achieve the then fashionable 16-17th century European farmhouse interior using some modern materials. The side-board is mid-19th century "revival" style which incorporates some earlier fabric, as the linen-fold panels. The extremely low fully plastered ceiling strongly suggests that in the original house the ceiling beams were intended to be exposed. Fragments of these beams are exposed in two locations, i.e. in the later pantry and upstairs bathroom floor, and in both cases evidence of early whitewash survives. In both places the beams are 5" x 8" in cross-section, are unchamfered, extend from north to south, and are set on 40" centers. The present dining room extends somewhat further to the south than did the early house. The south wall of the latter was located just to the south of the present doorway to the Federal side-hall. The east wall of the early house corresponds to the east wall of the present dining room and the north wall of the early house is the north wall of the small bar and pantry to the north of the present dining room. The interior dimensions of this space are 17½' north to south and 23' east to west. Considering the thickness of the rubble cellar walls these conform to the interior cellar dimensions of 15' x 20½'. In all likelihood this space was divided into two chambers, a larger "hall" to the south, which included a brick fireplace and oven along its east wall, and a smaller unheated chamber or chambers to the north. After the Federal house was built the early "hall" probably survived as the kitchen. This floor plan conforms to the early 18th century floor plan of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1975-76). Like the Van Nostrand-Starkins House, there apparently was only one window centrally located in the south wall. This wall is now missing but the present surviving cellar window confirms its location in the original wall. The dividing wall probably stood at or near its present location where it divides the present dining room from the bar and pantry. Obviously, somewhere in this area there was a stairway or ladder to the loft above but its location cannot be determined at this time.

EARLY HOUSE — SECOND FLOOR: In the original house the present second storey, which has been achieved by the use of large shed dormers, was part of a simple loft. This probably had knee-walls at the north and south with sloping ceilings above. Examination of existing rafters indicates that the early ridge had an angle of about 100 degrees. This space has been so much altered that no further observation should be made without exploratory stripping. No conjectures are feasible concerning the original stairway location, room division, if any, or whether or not the loft was plastered or otherwise sheathed.

EARLY HOUSE — ATTIC: The unfinished portion of the attic of the early house is a very small space which can be reached only through an opening in the east wall of the Federal house. It has no flooring but the sawn lathing

of the late plastered ceiling below. Examination is very difficult. The roof framing consists of 3½" x 3½" adzed rafters set on 40" centers and apparently roughly notched for purlins. As mentioned above the ridge angle is approximately 100 degrees. Early shingles of the Federal house may be seen lining a part of the west wall of the early attic.

FEDERAL HOUSE — INTERIOR: Unlike the remainder of the house the Federal house has been little altered, especially on the main floor. Later hardwood strip flooring has been imposed but the original yellow pine flooring has survived beneath in apparently good condition. Although no evidence remains for substantiation all the fireplaces may have been changed in a mid to late 19th century modernization. All three Federal fireplaces and mantels were replaced during the early 20th century and it is difficult to understand why this alteration alone was made in the Federal part of the house. If the Federal fireplaces had been replaced with second half of the 19th century Victorian fireplaces they would have been considered most unsuitable by the Lunds and removed. The survival of the altered late 19th century front door, from which the glass is missing, in an ogee-moulded (circa 1870) colonial revival doorway adds some substance to this conjecture.

FEDERAL HOUSE — INTERIOR TRIM: Three types of original door and window surrounds survive in the Federal house. All have the same back-bands with cavetto and bead-and-fillet mouldings, an 18th century form not previously found in Roslyn. All have a bead at the inner corner. The most elaborate includes a step which is moulded with a bead-and-cyma which matches the door panel mouldings. The same casing-step and door-panel mouldings are employed in the William M. Valentine House (TG 1963). All of the aforementioned mouldings are standard early Federal types. The second type of facing includes the same back-band moulding but the step is not moulded. The simplest version includes the back-band moulding as above and the inner bead, but has no step. In addition to these there are several doorways simply faced with flat surrounds. Ordinarily these are considered to be late 19th century but in this house they sometimes appear with characteristically Federal facings on the other side of the doorway. It is possible that the flat facings are later replacements but this seems like a lot of nuisance to no purpose and it is likely they are simply original to the house and the least expensive type of facing available. In addition there are a number of doorways trimmed with ogee mouldings. Some of these date from the early 20th century Lund alteration but some are more vigorous, i.e. the front doorway surrounds, and date from about 1870. Their presence suggests that at least some of the alterations to the house took place at that time. Most of the baseboards, except for the first floor hallway, appear to be the original. These are not stepped and are capped by an ovolo (quarter-round and fillet) moulding. These have survived all over the Federal house including along the stairway where it is unlikely the baseboard would have been changed.

FEDERAL HOUSE — FIRST FLOOR: The side hall extends through the house from south to north to an exterior doorway at each end. The north door is modern but surviving pintle marks in the frame indicate the original was a two part "Dutch" door. There is a dividing wall just beyond the bend in the stairway which forms a separate back hall as in the William M. Valentine House (TG 1963). The front hall forms a room 9½' wide x 20½' long which served as a cool summer sitting room when the front and back doors were open. The doorways to the present dining room, to the east; the front parlour, to the west; and the rear hall, to the north, all include 6-panel doors with delicate Federal mouldings similar to those of the William M. Valentine House interior doors. Like the Valentine house the two upper panels are much shorter than the four lower ones. All are flush paneled and beaded on the reverse. The door casings of the front west and north walls of the principal side hall are stepped and moulded as described above. The two doorways along the east wall are not stepped and probably were relocated from other parts of the house; most likely from the two casings of the now-closed up doorway which originally led from the back hall to the back parlour. The doorway surrounds in the back hall are not stepped but are moulded in the early Federal manner. Originally there was an additional doorway with moulded back-bands and beaded inner corners, probably from the back hall, which gave access to the back parlour. This doorway has been removed and its opening closed — most likely during the early 20th century. The modified four panel ogee moulded door in the east wall, to the powder room, was inserted during the Lund alteration and represents an effort to match the existing Federal doors.

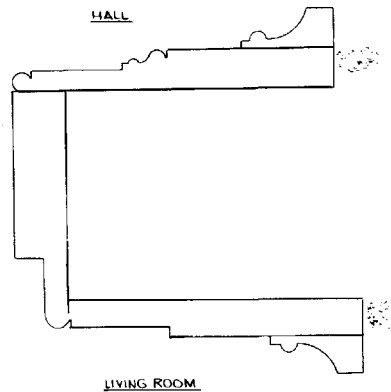
The side hall wallpaper has been recently removed to disclose stenciled wall painting dating from the early 20th century. There is a dado made up of horizontal boards 12" wide, lining both front and back sections of the hall. This is capped by a projecting torus moulding 1" thick. The latter probably replaces the original cap and served as a chair rail after the hall had been papered and 20th century baseboards applied. As mentioned

earlier, the wall surface beneath the stairs probably is paneled and the panels concealed under later plaster or wallboard.

The stairway in the characteristically local Federal style is quite imposing. The treads are 44" in length as compared with 34" in the William M. Valentine house. Like the Valentine house stairway and the remaining remnants of the Anderis Onderdonk stairway, its rail, which is probably mahogany or cherry, is circular in cross-section and oversails the typical, square-tapered newel. The straight balusters are rectangular in cross section and set with their greater dimension parallel to the length of the treads. The short eastward extension at the top of the stairway dates from the time the original stairway of the early house was removed. It is not a part of the original Federal stairway. Since the door it approaches is of the four-panel, ogee-moulded type it may be conjectured to date from the late 19th or even the early 20th century. The stair rail becomes somewhat awkward as it approaches the second floor. Ordinarily, the stair well is wider than the stairway at this point so that the hand can pass along from the ascending to the horizontal rail without interference. In this instance the flooring extends almost to the ascending rail. The bend between the ascending and horizontal rails is accomplished by the use of two awkward newels. Obviously the carpenter originally planned to have the east-west segment of the rail extend obliquely downward and sawed the easterly newel diagonally to achieve this. When this arrangement did not work out he extended the newel but the saw-marks remain. This problem is so beautifully worked out in the William M. Valentine house one feels that the carpenter must have learned on the Robbins stair-rail. Unfortunately this part of the stair-rail has been replaced in the Anderis Onderdonk house so that a comparison cannot be made.

VALENTINE-ROBBINS HOUSE

Cross Section of First Floor Federal Door Casing



FEDERAL HOUSE — FRONT PARLOUR: The front parlour remains as the originally conceived room except for 20th century hardwood strip flooring which has been superimposed on the original, the south view window which dates from the mid-20th century and a 20th century mantel. The latter appears to date from after the Lund alteration of 1907-1913. The paired arches at each side of the fireplace, which open to the back parlour, also date from the 20th century. Without further investigation it cannot be conjectured what originally stood in their places, perhaps paneling, cupboards, or embrasures for prized pieces of furniture. The doorway surround is moulded and stepped but unlike the side-hall casings the step is not moulded. The west window surround is moulded but not stepped. There is no chair rail today but it is likely there was a chair rail originally. The simple baseboards are capped by an ovolo moulding.

FEDERAL HOUSE — BACK PARLOUR: The Federal back parlour has suffered essentially the same changes as has the front, i.e. flooring, mantel and archways. In addition, as mentioned earlier, at one time there was almost certainly a doorway from this room to the back hall. The window surrounds are moulded but not stepped. The matching doorway surround is missing but probably has been relocated to the dining room or powder room doorway. It should be noted here, as already mentioned, that the north windows are 12/8 with 8" x 10" glazing, while the west is 6/6. However, since both types are of the same dimensions, 36" x 53", and both have fixed upper sash, it may be assumed that both types may be original to the house. The baseboard is the characteristic one already described. As in the case of the living room there is no chair rail today.

SECOND STOREY — SIDE HALL: The second storey side-hall occupies the same space as does the first floor hall and like it includes a small chamber at its rear. Except for the 20th century hardwood strip flooring all the architectural features are original, except for the east wall, four-panel, ogee-moulded door which opens to a bath. It should be recalled that this bath and the powder room below it are located in the 20th century addition to the original early house. The chair rail appears to be the original Federal period work. The door and window facings are not stepped and employ the same back-bands with cavetto and bead-and-fillet mouldings found elsewhere in the house. The 6-panel Federal flush-back doors are identical to those below. The doorway to the small chamber at the north end of the hall has matching detail which appears to be the original. The window facings in this bedroom match those of the hall. This window retains its original 12/8 sash with 7" x 9" glazings. The interior door facings are devoid of any mouldings.

FEDERAL HOUSE — SOUTHWEST CHAMBER: The southwest chamber occupies the same area as the front parlour below. It is in somewhat more original condition than the other second floor rooms as, while it includes modern strip hardwood flooring and an impressive early 20th century Colonial Revival mantel, retains its early south 6/6 windows and original closets flanking the fireplace. The east closet is intact and has paired doors. The west closet has had its opening partially filled in and a later single door inserted. However the original openings of both closets were the same. The classically moulded casings are simply stepped. The window surrounds are not stepped although the back-bands are moulded. The chair rail which forms the window sills is the same as that in the second storey wide hall. Actually all this trim may be as much as a decade later than the first floor work.

FEDERAL HOUSE — NORTHWEST CHAMBER: The northwest chamber on the second floor has been changed considerably from the original floor plan and a single room as been converted into an accessory hallway and two small rooms. The window surrounds and chair rails are the original Federal fabric and utilize moulded back-bands, but are not stepped. Everything else, including the ogee-moulded door-facings, appears to date from the early 20th century.

FEDERAL HOUSE — ATTIC: The enclosed attic stairway is located in the second storey side hall. The board-and-batten door to the stairway is constructed of two pine boards, one of them 18" in width, having ¼" beaded joints. The door retains its original spring lock and finely moulded battens. The stairway itself is original and its upper stairwell is enclosed by a Federal railing identical to the principal stair-rail below. The attic itself was romanticized during the Lund alteration but with few actual changes to the fabric. The rafters are 3¼" x 6" in cross-section. They are both adzed and sawn on different surfaces and are set on 33" centers. The original north and south wall plates are clearly evident and form the tops of very low knee walls. As usual in early Roslyn houses, there is no actual ridge member. However, there are large purlin plates, 6 x 4½" in cross-section, which connect the east and west gable fields midway between the ridge and the north and south wall plates. The rafters rest on these purlin plates which in turn are carried by 6 x 4½" posts set vertically in each gable field, and at intermediate positions these posts are braced to the purlin plates. The posts are tied together, north to south, by tie-beams of the same dimensions. The large ornately sheathed tie-beam connecting the north and south roof slopes just east of the chimney serves no structural function. It is purely decorative and dates from the Lund restoration. The 8" yellow pine flooring may be the original. It has been already mentioned that the gable-field windows are 20th century work and that there is a small door in the east attic wall, at the head of the stairway, which provides access to the small attic of the early house.



EAST TOLL GATE HOUSE Circa 1860

EAST TOLL GATE HOUSE
Roslyn Cemetery, Greenvale
Property of the Roslyn Presbyterian Church

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: During the second quarter of the 19th century the Flushing-North Hempstead Toll Road Company was organized to improve the highway which is today known as Northern Boulevard and to keep it passable throughout the year. The Company was free of debt by 1850 and it continued to prosper until the extensive development of the railroads during the 1870's provided a level of speed and dependability with which the Toll Road could not compete. However, during the half century or so of its operation the availability of the Toll Road was a most important link between North Hempstead and New York and was a major factor in the growth and development of North Hempstead. During the period of the operation of the Toll Road, toll-gate houses were erected at suitable intervals to collect the tolls from the wagoners. Originally there were two toll-gate houses in Roslyn, the West Toll-Gate House near the intersection of Old Northern Boulevard and West Shore Road and the East Toll-Gate House which still stands in the Roslyn Cemetery just north of Northern Boulevard in Greenvale. The earliest positive record of its existence is in December of 1860, when "the new toll gate east of the village" was mentioned in a deed (Queens Co. Liber 185 of Deeds, pg. 119). Of all the large number of 19th century Long Island toll-gate houses it is the sole survivor, probably as the result of the relocation of Northern Boulevard some yards to the south and the subsequent inclusion of the East Toll-Gate House within the precincts of the Roslyn Cemetery, where it still stands facing a short strip of the early toll-road. John Radigan, whose reminiscences cover the last quarter of the 19th century, briefly described its use. The toll-collector, Mrs. Noon, lived in the building and she watched the turnpike from its west windows. A long pole that extended over the roadway was moved up and down to stop vehicles and let them pass after their toll was paid.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: The East Toll-Gate House is a 1½ storey, board-and-batten building having a gable-ended roof, the ridge of which extends from north to south and is at right angles to the road. The original roof was shingled and the shingles had a 7¼ inch exposure to the weather. The building is 27¼ feet long by 17½ feet deep and has a facade gable on its principal (west) front. The original 4/4 windows survive. These are paired, have flat surrounds, and simple drip caps. No evidence of shutters survives. The two door surrounds, in the west and south fronts, conform to the window surrounds. The front (west) doorway includes a three-light overdoor window. There is a small, round-headed, 2/2 window in the facade gable-field. All three gables have simple, sawn, curvilinear verge-boards. Originally there was a small gable-roofed porch in the west front beneath the facade gable; a simple, bracketted shed-roof over the south doorway and a wooden cellar bulkhead which opened to the south end of the cellar. These are missing but their shapes and dimensions can be determined from the survival of original flashing, framing scars, etc. The water-table is rectilinear in cross section except that its upper surface is chamfered. The wooden sheathing battens form double, back-to-back ogees in cross-section. The building has a full cellar and rests upon a foundation which is rubble-constructed to the grade and brick laid in common bond from the grade to the sills. The original chimney-cap has a projecting band of brick, two courses in height, two courses beneath the chimney top. This is matched by a similar projection, one brick high, which rests upon an even wider plinth which extends up from the roof line.

PRESENT CONDITION: At the time the restoration procedure started, the East Toll-Gate House was in a badly deteriorated state even though almost all of the building had survived in unaltered condition. The east rubble foundation wall had sagged badly causing virtual collapse of the brick foundation wall above it. The only cellar window, at the north, had been removed and its opening bricked in. The mortar of the north, south, and west brick foundation walls had washed out in part although the bricks had not shifted much from their original positions. The east sill was very badly rotted. The remaining sills all were rotted in part. The lower ends of some of the studs which form the balloon frame had rotted. The east water-table was badly rotted and required replacement. The chimney was in very poor repair within the roof structure and some of the bricks were missing so that the flue was exposed to view. The attic floor joists rested upon brick projections built into the chimney stack. This arrangement represented original design but was dangerous if the one brick thick chimney was ever to be used. The original roof had been covered with a layer of asbestos strip-shingles which were badly deteriorated. The wooden shingles beneath were so badly rotted they would not retain nails. As noted above, the original small front (west) porch and the shed roof over the south doorway both were missing. The original south and west doors had been replaced with modern substitutes and the cellar bulkhead had been replaced with a metal Biltco door.

THE RESTORATION: The restoration of the East Toll-Gate House began with the announcement by Bird & Co. of Massachusetts of a nation-wide competition for twenty matching restoration grants of \$5,000 each for the exterior restoration of buildings included in the National Register of Historic Places or eligible for inclusion in it. In a combined effort by the Roslyn Preservation Corporation, a non-profit revolving restoration fund, and the Roslyn Presbyterian Church, which owns the Roslyn Cemetery, the National Register nomination forms were completed and the necessary documentation for the Bird and Co. competition prepared. The Town of North Hempstead American Revolution Bicentennial Commission agreed to supply the matching \$5,000 from Community Development funds available to it.

As a result of the overwhelming number of applicants for Bird and Company grants, 120 national awards were made, instead of the 20 originally contemplated. On this basis, the grant to the East Toll-Gate House Project was only \$500.00 instead of the \$5,000 sought. Nevertheless, work started during the fall of 1975 using the Bird and Company grant, approximately \$3,000 in contributions and a similar amount from borrowed funds. The Town of North Hempstead American Revolution Bicentennial Commission agreed to donate \$6,000 instead of the \$5,000 it had promised originally. However, the availability of the Town of North Hempstead grant depended upon environmental clearance and actual certification of worthiness for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by the Secretary of the Interior. Satisfying these procedures involved several months, so work had to be stopped during the winter of 1975-1976 because of lack of funds. Prior to the cessation of work, the stone and brick portions of the foundation were repaired or rebuilt as required, and the rotted sills replaced. Deteriorated framing members also were repaired or replaced. The badly deteriorated chimney was carefully measured, drawn and photographed, and the portion extending above the roofline taken down. The rotting roof was then removed, deteriorated shingle-lath replaced, and the entire roof reshingled to duplicate the original roof.

With the availability of the Town of North Hempstead grant during the first half of March, it is anticipated that the restoration procedure will be recommenced and that work will be essentially completed by the time of the House Tour. Plans call for repairs to the board-and-batten siding as required, restoration of the window sash as needed, and reconstruction of the small porch on the west front, the small south entry with its bracketed shed-roof, and the cellar bulkhead. Both original four-panel ogee-moulded exterior doors are missing and will be replaced. The exterior of the building will be carefully prepared and painted. John Stevens, the Architectural Historian in charge of the restoration of Old Bethpage Village as well of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House and Grist Mill restorations locally, has prepared working drawings for the restoration of the front porch and south entry working from surviving construction scars on the building and from a much enlarged photograph of the Roslyn Cemetery which shown the south profile of the front porch and about one-half of the south entry. This photograph establishes the original use of four-panel ogee-moulded exterior doors and of turned corner columns on the front porch. A pair of appropriate columns added to the A. Nostrand House (circa 1830) in about 1855 (TG 1974 and 1975) but not used in its recent restoration will be used in the restoration of the front porch.

— NOTES —



WILLOWMERE
Conjectural elevation of principal (south) facade circa 1850,
at which time the house was called "Clifton".

WILLOWMERE
Bryant Avenue, Roslyn Harbor
Residence of Mr. & Mrs. Jay Kaufmann

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: In 1685, Nathaniel Pearsall was one of the six patentees in whose names the settlers of the towns of North and South Hempstead were granted title to the lands on which they dwelt by Governor Thomas Dongan. As a patentee, Pearsall was entitled to claim 150 acres of land somewhere within the towns, and it is thought his original claim was the harborside land on which Willowmere stands today.

On November 21, 1702, Quaker minister Nathaniel Bounas held a meeting in the house of "one Nathaniel Pearsall", and it is usually assumed that that house, built by Pearsall in late 17th century, stood where Willowmere stands today, and that a part of its fabric may remain on part of the present gambrel-roofed, Georgian house.

Nathaniel Pearsall died 2 March 1703/04 and the property passed to his son Thomas. When Thomas made his own will in 1759 he made clear reference to his "house, buildings, lands and improvements whereon he then dwelt" at Hempstead Harbour, and it is obvious that his house was Willowmere.

In 1774 Israel Pearsall inherited the estate and had his spinster sisters Mary and Martha in residence with him. The two sisters were remembered late in their lives by Benjamin Treadwell Onderdonk, who called them "Miss Polly and Miss Patty", and thought them "somewhat peculiar and eccentric". During the Revolution the two women were said to have driven off some marauding British soldiers by clanging a bell that hung at the top of the house. Later owners have whispered tales of ghosts seen "in the summer dusk, when the bats begin to fly" — the ghosts are said to be the maiden ladies still watchful for the safety of their house.

Israel died in 1799, leaving the house to his sisters for their lifetime, with title passing afterward to yet another Thomas Pearsall. In 1839 the estate was sold, after more than a century and a half of Pearsall ownership, to Ann E. Cairns, who named it Clifton.

The house is shown in two views taken during the last years of Pearsall ownership (Bufford's Lithograph for William Hicks, 1836, and Thompson's "History of Long Island, 2nd Ed., 1843" in which the house is labeled "Clifton"). Miss Hilda Ward, the great granddaughter of Ann Cairns, wrote that her early memories of it coincide with those representations — a two-chimneyed, gambrel-roofed classic country Georgian house with a five-bay main block centered by a southward-looking door and a three-bay pitched-roof kitchen wing extending to the east. A handsome drive entrance with urn-capped gateposts opened to a sweeping drive and ogee-headed picket fencing ran along the south and east property lines. A remnant of the original fencing stands today at 105 Main Street and some of the running fence is still standing in its original location across the road east of Bryant Avenue.

In 1882 Clifton passed to the Cairns' daughter Mrs. Aaron Ward, who renamed it Willowmere. In 1893, recalls Miss Hilda Ward, the east extension shown in the early views "was pulled down and rebuilt". The two-bay addition to the gambrel-roofed block, the dormer windows and much of the pitched-roof extension must then date from 1893. Miss Ward goes on to say that "the back door had been the front door and had the old knocker. The front door dated from 1893, as did the porte-cochere and the fountain."

In 1924 James Curtis acquired Willowmere and afterward told of his own work on its fabric. He removed the "scroll-and-gingerbread" porte cochere and substituted "an exact replica of the porch of the Tucker-Rice House on Essex Street in Salem, Massachusetts". He also removed the small, late-19th century shingles on the kitchen wing, replacing them with new ones copied from the 18th century shingles on the side walls of the main block. The attic was made into four bedrooms during those alterations.

In 1929 as automobile traffic was on the rise and the noise became unbearable, Mr. Curtis built the famous brick wall along the highway. The round "Chinese holes" along its length were designed to allow springtime passers-by to look in at the legendary display of blooming crocus started by the Wards around 1900. Mr. Curtis judged that his holes had "met with considerable public appreciation, judging by the number of visitors who appear in them during the season".

Today's owners, Mr. and Mrs. Jay Kaufmann, acquired the house in 1968 from Mr. and Mrs. Donald Horn. Mrs. Horn is Mrs. James Curtis' daughter.

EXTERIOR: As it stands today, the house appears to be typical large shingled house of the mid-18th century with a six-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 of Long Island, 2nd Ed., 1843". The original full cellar, with rubble walls to the sills and stone arches under the chimneys, still survives in excellent condition. The original wide (12" and more) yellow pine floor boards may still be seen from the cellar, resting on the original beams. These all are covered on the ground floor interior by 6" oak flooring of the 20th century. 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 principal (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 (Admiral Ward's alteration). In addition the shingles in the area of the sixth bay obviously are newer than the rest. All the shingles are butt-nailed and have a 12" exposure. The rear (north) facade remains five bays in width. The original water table with a rounded upper edge also survives along the south front. The dormer windows are 20th century and were added during the Curtis alteration. The facade windows all are 6/6, many of them original. The louvered shutters date from Admiral Ward's Victorianization of the late 19th century. Hopefully, illustrations of the house during all its three periods will be available for examination during the tour. The architects for the Curtis alteration were Peabody, Wilson & Brown. The present front porch was installed by Mr. Curtis to replace the great Victorian verandahs and porte cochere which had been added by Admiral Ward. The present porch is a replica of an 18th century porch of Salem, Mass. origin. The 8-panel front door and the doorway are in the Greek Revival style and utilize Tuscan mouldings and sidelights and are a part of the Cairns' alteration of 1839. The original (1839) 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 locksmiths worked on Houston Street, New York City, from 1835 to 1868.

FIRST FLOOR HALL: The large central hall continues to a rear side-lighted doorway which is executed in the Greek Revival style, although the door itself in 20th century Queen Anne Revival. The 18th century style New England stair-rail was installed 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 moulding and smaller center panels. The raised panel dado beneath the chair rail is in the 18th century style and probably dates from the Curtis restoration.

LIBRARY: The library, to the west of the center hall, is an extremely fine room which includes an early 18th century panelled fireplace wall which may be original to the house. The flanking bookcases were installed by Mr. Curtis. The opening is surrounded by a facing composed of 18th century Delft tiles which, in turn, are surrounded by a bolection moulding. The mantel shelf is later. The remaining panelling beneath the chair rail is all 18th century type and possibly original to the house.

MUSIC ROOM: The Music Room, to the east of the center hall, is an especially attractive room which is completely finished in the Greek Revival style except for the face of the chimney wall. The architectural detail of this room dates from the Cairns' alteration. The chimney wall panelling appears to be 20th century as is the mantel. These probably date from the Curtis restoration. The doorways in this room are the most impressive of the remaining architectural features and include stepped pilasters and stylish Tuscan moulded architraves capped by projecting cornices. The doors are all of the six-panel, Tuscan-moulded type. The windows also include Tuscan moulded panels beneath the sash. The baseboards are stepped and capped by Tuscan mouldings.

DINING ROOM: The dining room is finished in the Federal style and has square corner blocks in the door surrounds. However, the mouldings themselves are of the opposed Tuscan type which is encountered in many Roslyn homes. The architectural finish of this room must be considered to date from the Cairns' alteration. Actually this room was enlarged 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 are finished to conform to the earlier work. These probably were relocated bays from the original north wall of the room. The two east windows include Tuscan moulded panels beneath the sash. The finish of the bay windows is in character of the later 19th

century and includes corner blocks enclosing rondels. The mantel is finished with early Federal style mouldings and a moulded rectangular shelf. The fireplace facings are black painted limed mortar and the hearth black painted slate. The limed mortar facings suggest the mantel is original to the room. However, the slate hearth appears to replace an earlier brick hearth as it does not extend back to the chimney wall.

DRAWING ROOM: The drawing room was also substantially enlarged by Admiral Ward and almost completely refinished during the Curtis restoration. The door to the central hall is early and the thumb-nail moulded, flat panelled fireplace wall with its pinned mortise and tenoned stiles are the original and may date from the 18th century. The mantel is 20th century, of the Colonial Revival type.

UPSTAIRS HALL: The upstairs hall may look much the same today as it did during the 18th century, except that the front end of the hall may have been enclosed by a partition which includes the only later style door. All the other doors utilize the characteristic raised panels and H-L hinges of the 18th century. These doors are all four-panel, a characteristic which is usually considered to represent work of the first half of the 18th century. The thumb-nail door mouldings are planed directly into the stiles, a mid-18th century technique. The door to the southeast chamber is a 20th century reproduction and indicates the careful workmanship of the Curtis restoration.

NORTHWEST CHAMBER: The northwest chamber appears to have survived in relatively intact condition from the early 19th century. The slightly coved ceiling probably dates from that time and most likely was installed to conceal exposed framing. The marbleized door surrounds and simple baseboards probably date from the Curtis alteration to match the artificial fireplace.

SOUTHWEST CHAMBER: Like the library beneath it, the southwest chamber has an 18th century panelled fireplace wall. It is unquestionably original to the house except for the 20th century mantel shelf which probably was installed during the Curtis alteration. The flat panels are surrounded by thumb-nail mouldings planed directly into the stiles and probably date near the mid-18th century.

INNER SOUTHEAST CHAMBER: Much of the room dates from the Curtis alteration although the interior door with its stepped Tuscan moulded surround in the Greek Revival style dates from the Cairns alteration.

OUTER SOUTHEAST CHAMBER: This room is in the main block of the house but includes the "6th bay" added by Admiral Ward. The door and window surrounds are trimmed with mouldings and square corner block which include the rondels of the 1880's. The doors are all of the 4-panel ogee-moulded type. The wooden mantel is contemporary with the room although the tile facings date from the 20th century.

SECOND STOREY WING: There are two small bedrooms in the wing on this floor. Since the wing was greatly modified by Admiral Ward during the late 19th century both of these are finished with appropriately moulded surrounds having square corner blocks with turned rondels and include four-panel ogee moulded doors. The two late Greek Revival mantels date from the late 19th century.

THIRD STOREY — MAIN BLOCK: There are four small chambers on the third floor, all of which were extensively reworked by Judge Curtis during the early 20th century.

THIRD STOREY WING: The finish of the wing remains almost unchanged from Admiral Ward's enlargement in the late 19th century. There are four chambers on this floor, all of which utilize door and window facings having square corner blocks including rondels, characteristic mouldings and 6-panel ogee moulded doors of the late 19th century. The middle chamber has a six-panel Tuscan moulded door of the Cairns' period, relocated here from another part of the house. The wing's stair rail has turned mahogany newels of the Ward period. However, the mahogany rail, circular in cross section, and the turned mahogany balusters probably date from the Cairns' alteration. Probably the rail and balusters were a part of the Cairns' Greek Revival principal stairway of 1839. If this conjecture is correct, this rail was replaced by Admiral Ward and relegated to its present secondary location. The Ward principal stairway, of which no trace survives, was replaced by Judge Curtis with the New England type stair rail which remains in place today.

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