

Saturday February 4 I went with John Stevens to visit the one-room gable-entrance Adam Vrooman House in the Stockade district of Schenectady. This small frame house is dated 1720 and presently has a side-wall jamed fireplace but evidence in the cellar shows that it originally had a Dutch end-wall hearth. Although the ceiling beams are presently hidden behind a plastered ceiling, they would have been exposed and had traditional Dutch corbels, (short curved braces). In the afternoon John gave a talk and book signing at the Schenectady Historical Society. 72 people attended.

Sunday, February 5 A small group met at the Squire Nicoll House in New Windsor, Orange County, on the north bank of the Murderer's Creek. This house was recently purchased by Richard Buckley and Gonzalo Sanchez from Manhattan. The house lies off Route 9W on a 6-acre piece of open land. The front stoop of this two-story frame house overlooks Storm King Mountain, and a large tidal estuary of the Hudson River, that is now a migratory bird sanctuary, owned by Scenic Hudson.

During The Revolution, General Washington's Headquarters was located two-miles north of here at Newburgh and the front yard of the Nicoll House served as a drop off point for supplies. The farm was first settled in 1685 by, "Colonel Patrick MacGregorie and a group of fellow Scotsmen who had been given permission by Governor Dongen to purchase land from the Indians. Cabins were soon built and a trading post established across the creek on Sloop Hill, but many troubles beset the small band. After serving as muster-general of the militia. MacGregorie lost his life during the Leisler Rebellion of 1691." (*)

The original Nicoll House is thought to have been built in the 1730's and there is evidence of this in the design of a surviving molded hand-rail in the cellar. Most of the house reflects its final major change in the late 18th century. The main house began as two-story one-room deep house that was later widened one-room. The evidence of this is in the loft, and in the changes that were necessary to the rafters. The two-large chimneys were constructed in this second phase. The original frame is a traditional English scribe-rule box-frame with flared posts. These posts project into the corners of many of the rooms, a characteristic of English flared post construction. The rafters are joined with bird's mouths to the wall-plate.

Little of the two frames are exposed but in the loft the floor on the addition side is about 8-inches lower than the older front half, indicating local carpenters had abandoned the English box-frame for a Dutch frame with a short half-story knee-wall.

The Nicoll house has been well maintained. The staircase and many of the window frames and interior trim are late 18th century. The interior doors are period with a variety of panel and hardware designs indicating some may come from other buildings or have been moved. The house has been carefully restored but typically none of the modern alterations were recorded so that evaluation is sometimes difficult. As the new owners live with their house, and probe its secrets, certainly a better understanding will come.



**View from The Squire Nicoll House
Storm King Mountain and the Tidal
Estuary fed by Murders Creek**



Back of The Squire Nicoll House

(*) for a good historic account of the Nicoll House see: 18th Century Homes in New Windsor and its Vicinity, by Marion M. Mailler and Janet Dempsey, The National Temple Hill Assoc., 1968.

From the Van Hoesen House

Claverack, Columbia County, NY=====

Dear Peter, The following should provide a brief synopsis for your members regarding this Dutch brick house and the state of our efforts to organize and preserve it:

The Jan Van Hoesen house, located on Rt. 66 in the Town of Claverack near Hudson, NY, is unquestionably the finest surviving example of un-restored second-quarter of the eighteenth century Dutch-American architecture remaining in the Hudson Valley. Abandoned and empty since the 1950's, the house boasts an embarrassment of riches in 18th century detail both inside and out. Even the carpet of litter and household debris now covering the floors in the rooms dates back to the mid-twentieth century.

Since early summer 2005, in conjunction with the present owner, a group of concerned individuals have been working through the process of forming a NFP (not-for-profit) to acquire, stabilize, study, and restore this incredible structure. Our efforts were rewarded this past December when the Van Hoesen House Historical Foundation was recognized and accorded NFP status by the NYS Department of State.

Having moved past the busy holiday season, the founding board of directors will be meeting at the end of February to select corporation officers and get on to the next stage in our agenda: raising of the funds necessary to acquire the property. With a treasurer installed, we will be issuing a general appeal for donations to the acquisition fund while following up on the various funding leads we have already developed over the past 8 months. Also, we will finally be in a position to offer membership in the Foundation to all interested parties.

Once acquired, the board envisions an open forum to be an important part of the restoration process, in which all serious students of Dutch architecture will be welcome to study the house, and to submit their observations and interpretations to the Building Committee. The potential for the success of this critical project, at a very high level of execution, is enormous.

For more information at this time, please contact:



Ed Klingler at klingler57@yahoo.com, or call 518-929-0971 any evening between 7 and 10 PM.

Regards, Ed

From Holland.....

Wim Lanphen sent us some photographs from the Netherlands, of an old barn being restored in Markelo, a village in the Achterhek region, near the German border, a poor agricultural area where he was told, "that the walls in early times in Markelo were made of wood branches set in the ground with no foundation."

Wim thinks the Markelo barn is not a *los-hues* where animals shared the space with people, but when he goes back, later this month, he will find out more about it and let us know. The photographs appear to show the back-end of an H-bent barn with side-aisles and a back-aisle. The purlin-plates and side-walls extend out from the end bent to support an angled gable end roof. Sometimes this is referred to as a docked (cut off) gable. I asked Wim if this Marcelo barn roof might be a kind of roof called a "wolfs roof" a term found in a translation of an early Ulster County barn contract. He E-mailed me back, "yes, we call it *wolfsdak*, and I am sending you another beautiful picture with a house, a barn, a hayshed (*steltenberg*, shed-barrack) and two *wolfsdaken*." The Dutch word *dak* is defined as, "roof; to give shelter to". What is the meaning of *wolf*?

Wim has a Markelo report on his hay-barrack site <www.hooiberg.info>.