



The Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture

March - April 2008

Newsletter

Vol. 10, No. 3-4

The Society for the Preservation of
**Hudson Valley
Vernacular Architecture**
is a not-for-profit corporation formed
to study and preserve vernacular
architecture and material culture.

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Dennis Tierney – *HVVA Past Vice President*, Peter Sinclair – *HVVA Founder*, and Jim Decker – *HVVA President* stand before the door of a model home at "Brook in Waterland" a new development – based on an Old Dutch model – in Clinton Corners, New York.

From the Editor

A successful December tour of "Brook in Waterland" – a planned development situated on 196 acres in Dutchess County, NY – was held in conjunction with our holiday party. The distinctively designed houses draw their inspiration from the historic village of "Broek in Waterland" in the Netherlands. Although historically the high style of the "Brook in Waterland" project never existed in the Hudson Valley, we celebrate the fact it does now. Projects like this add to the visibility of the enduring contributions of the Dutch culture, seldom given the attention and credit it deserves.

At our annual meeting – held on January 19th – the first issue of business was the dedication of the new office building. The project was first started at our 2007 annual meeting, when the need for housing decades of research in one accessible location was made apparent after Peter Sinclair's most unfortunate stroke. Peter had been the custodian of the HVVA archive from its inception. So when a new home for the archive was decided on, the HVVA board felt it best to place it in a building separate from any member's home. HVVA is seriously committed to the dissemination of knowledge and we hope our office will be a testimony to this fact.

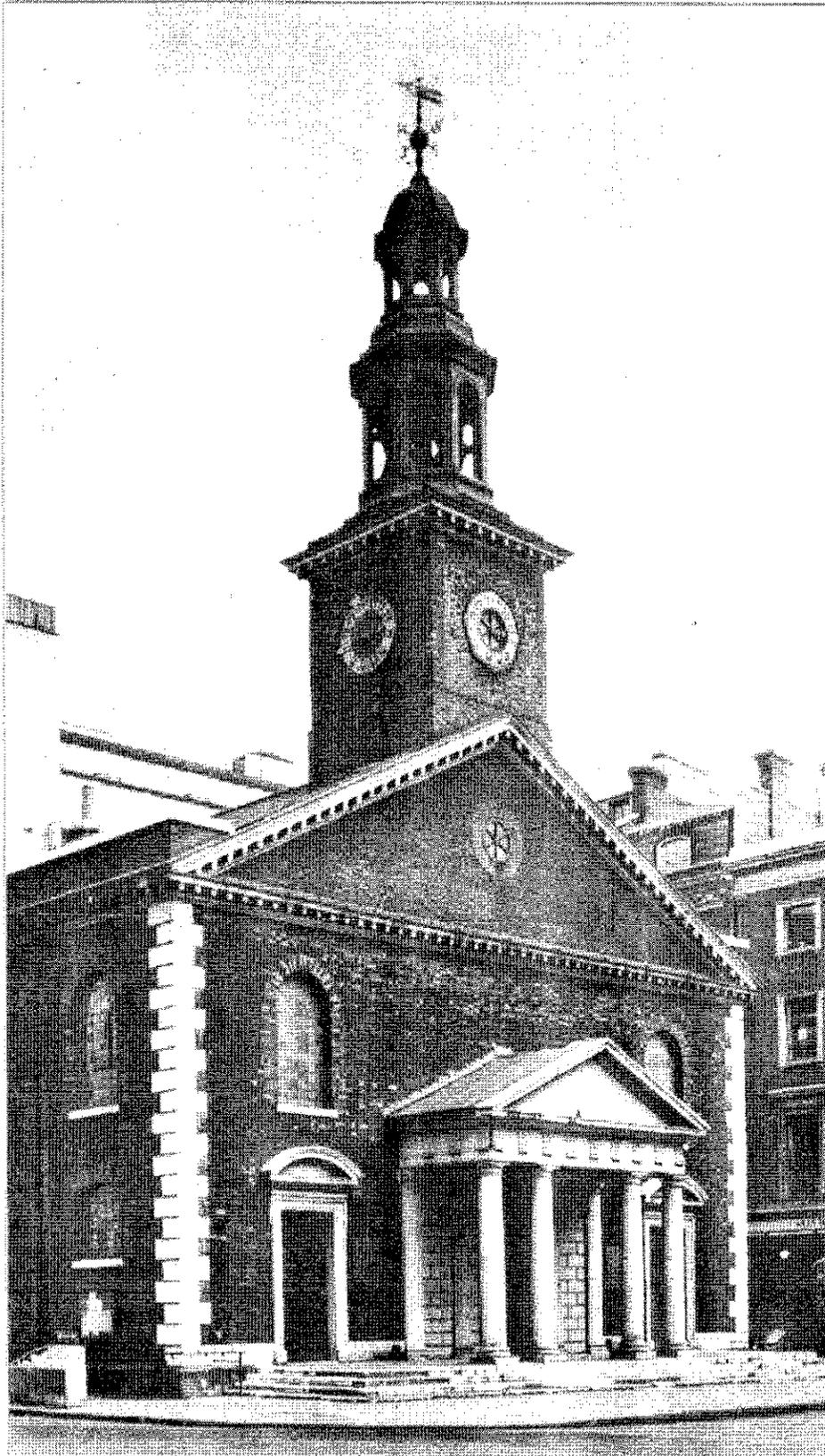
Onto the Hudson quadricentennial, the HVVA Board will be creating a lavish website to highlight the Dutch vernacular building influence in America. We would love to

know what you the reader would like to see included on the new site, so please let's hear from you. In conjunction with the launch of the website a huge house tour will be the main event sponsored by HVVA to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's claim on the North River for the Dutch. So again those members who own and enjoy these precious monuments please consider opening your doors for this special tour in 2009. Planning has begun but many more houses are needed. Please contact any of the Trustees if you want more information on how to get involved with this once in a lifetime celebration. Noting that HVVA does not only look to its own backyard for historical inspiration, I would like to thank John Stevens for his ambitious contributions to this month's Newsletter. John's articles will take you on a journey from Wethers Field to Coxsackie, Halifax and back! This issue is truly a testament to the breadth of HVVA's interest. As this newsletter is not keeping a perfectly regular schedule, please visit HVVA.org to keep abreast of the monthly meetings and study tours – dates, places, and times. Looking forward to seeing everyone in the field.

Rob Sweeney – *HVVA's sheepdog*

A large pre-fabricated 18th Century timber-framed building: Saint Paul's Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia

by John R. Stevens

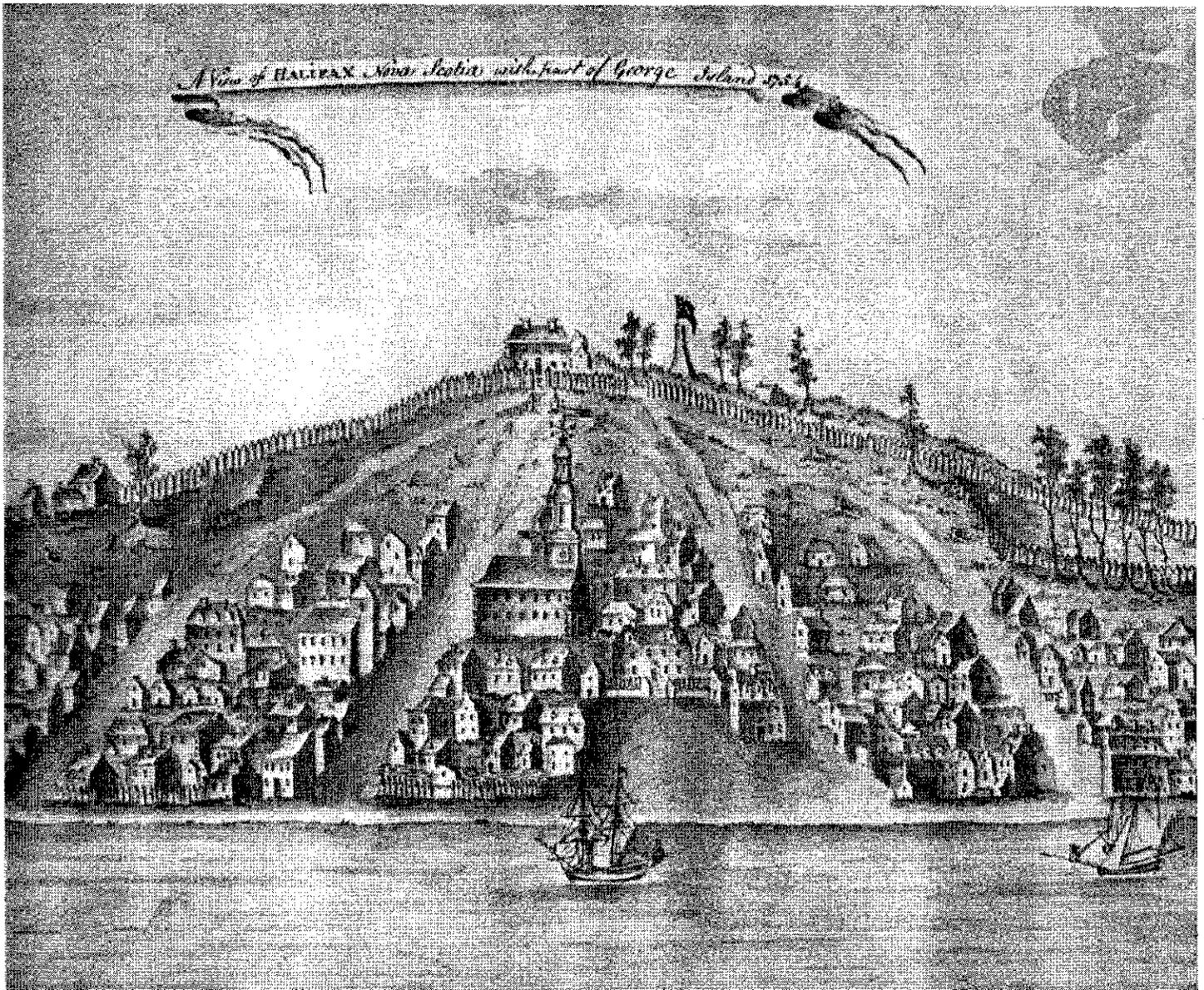


James Garvan, a featured speaker at the March 3, 2007 meeting of the New England Chapter of the Vernacular Architecture Forum gave a most interesting presentation on the extensive trade in building frames – in effect pre-fabricated buildings – that were produced from the forests of New Hampshire. This business commenced before the end of the 17th century and continued into the 19th. Many of these frames travelled relatively short distances from their point of origin; others were shipped abroad to destinations such as the West Indies – where timber for building purposes was in short supply, and to Newfoundland where there was plenty of timber but a shortage of skilled labor to convert trees into building frames.

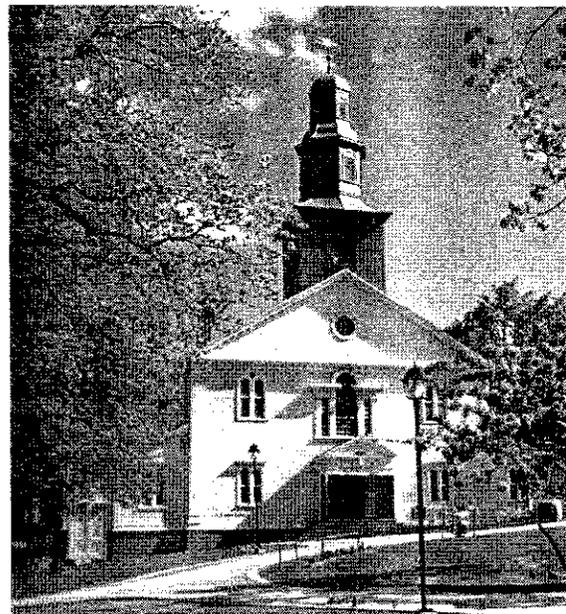
This talk particularly appealed to me, having recorded St. Paul's Anglican church in Halifax, Nova Scotia along with other Halifax buildings, for a preliminary study that was to lead to the establishment of the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings – the Canadian equivalent of the Historic American Building Survey in the United States. St. Paul's church is the oldest building to survive in Halifax, which was founded in 1749. Erected the next year, the frame was supplied from Boston, Massachusetts although the forests of New Hampshire were the most likely place of origin for its pine timbers.

In 1749, King's Chapel in Boston was completed – a building in Quincy granite that replaced a timber-framed church built in 1688. Peter Harrison of Newport, Rhode Island, who supplied a design for its construction based it on illustrations in James Gibbs's (1682-1754) *A Book of Architecture*, published in London in 1728. This folio volume had Plates of two particular London churches – St. Martin's-in-the-Fields and Marylebone Chapel (now St. Peter's Vere Street) – that were, apart from King's Chapel, to have a major influence on the design of churches in the American colonies and the early Republic. The design of Marylebone Chapel was especially favored because its interior detailing was

Left: Marylebone Chapel in London, (now St. Peter's Vere Street), James Gibbs architect, 1722. Postcard view.

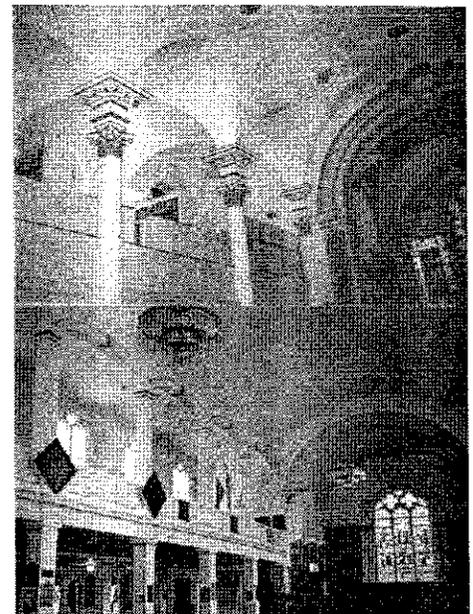


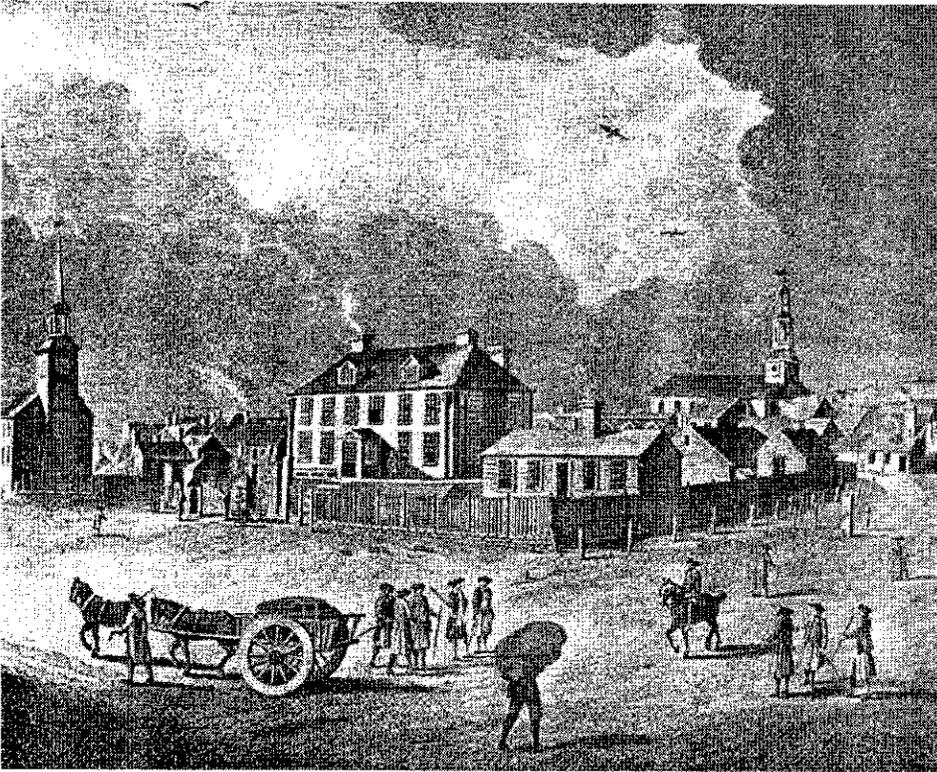
Above:
Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1754.
Watercolor drawing, artist unknown,
showing the five-year old settlement,
with St. Paul's Church prominent in
the middle of it. (ere Street), London.



Right:
Saint Paul's Church, Halifax, Nova
Scotia from the north. Postcard view.

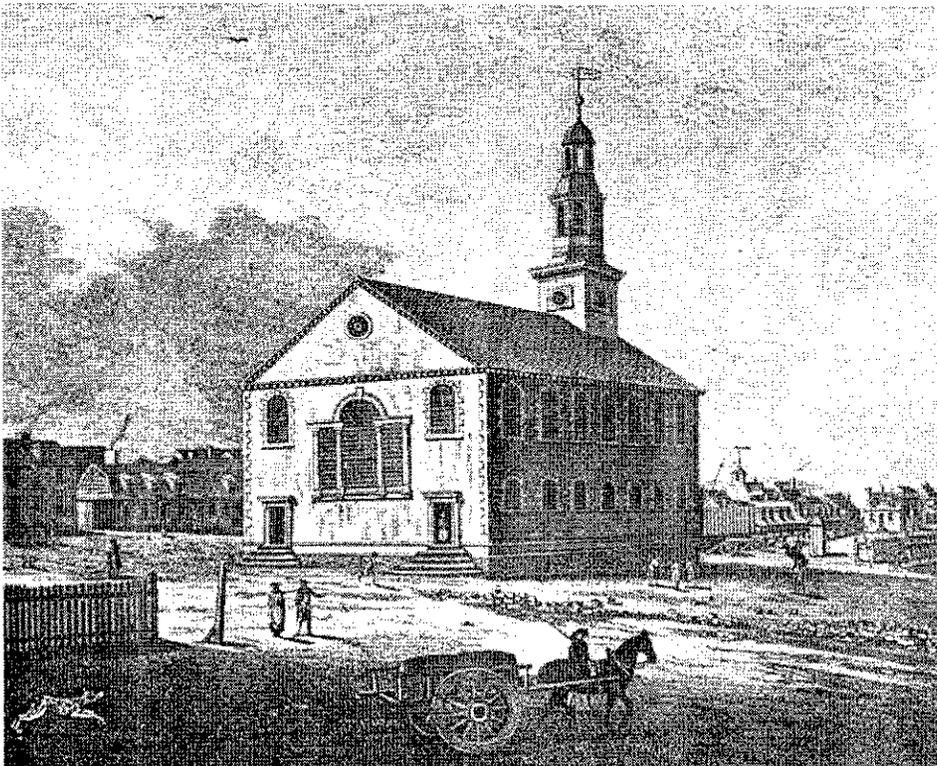
Far right:
TOP: Interior of Marylebone Chapel
(St. Peter's Vere Street), London.
BOTTOM: Interior of Saint Paul's
Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia.





Engraving after Richard Short, 1759.
View of Halifax, Nova Scotia showing Saint Paul's Church at right rear.

Engraving after Richard Short, 1759.
Saint Paul's Church from the south east.



simplified and therefore easier to deal with by colonial craftsmen.

While King's Chapel approached completion, a timber frame was being cut in New England, as previously noted probably in New Hampshire, for delivery through the port of Boston to Halifax. Halifax had been established both as a base for the British army and for a dockyard for the Royal Navy. A grid plan was laid out for a town with a space in the middle designated for the location of a church. Quoting Terry Friedman's biography, James Gibbs (1) "...During these same months in 1749 [as the completion of King's Chapel in Boston] the wooden structure for St. Paul's church in the newly founded town of Halifax in Nova Scotia was 'framing in Boston'..." This church was a translation from the brick of Marylebone Chapel to a timber-framed building, and was the same size—55 feet wide and 90 feet long. It was estimated that it would cost 1,000 Pounds, and would be "capable of holding 900 persons".

On March 17, 1750 the appointed rector of the church, William Tutty, reported that "...as soon as the frost is quite gone the foundation would be laid and I hope finished for the church [frame] by the time it arrives from Boston...". The cornerstone was laid on June 13, and the building was sufficiently completed to be used for worship on September 2, 1750, although it was still November 1751(2).

The ridge of the church is on a north-south axis with a tower at the north end and (originally) a large Palladian window in the south end. Nothing can be seen of the wall construction of the church. The roof is constructed with eight pairs of principal rafters on approximately 12 feet, 9 inch centers. There are three common rafter pairs in each bay, supported by purlins. The drawings show the sizes of the timbers. The church has a barrel-vaulted nave with side aisles. The exterior was covered with clapboards with rusticated wooden quoins at the angles. About 1810, it was lengthened fourteen feet at the north end and a new tower and belfry built, of the same design as the original but of slightly greater dimensions. The framing of the original tower survives in part within the roof of the church. Between 1868 and 1872, a chancel was built on the south end eliminating the great Palladian window, and the side aisles were widened on the first floor level but not including the galleries. Two early

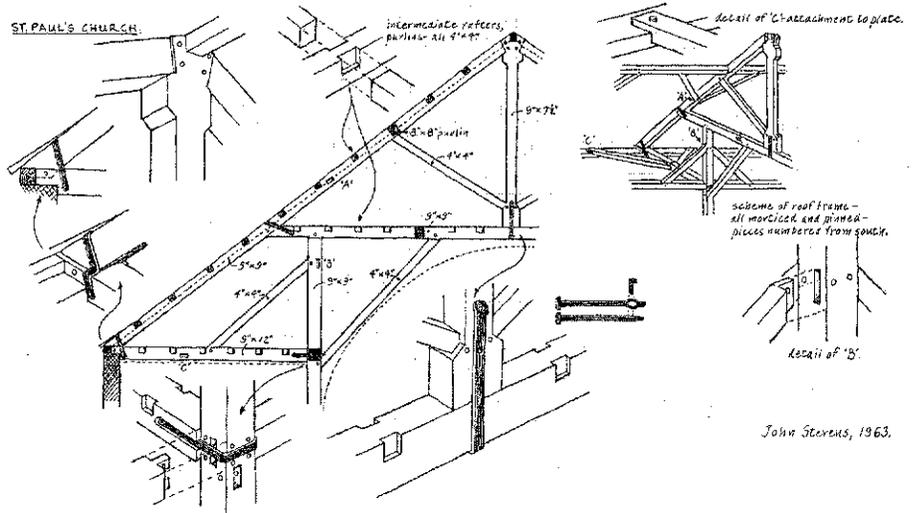
photographs exist, one showing the exterior of the church and the other an interior view of the south wall with the Palladian window recording its appearance before the Victorian 'improvements'. The structure of the 1749 building survives relatively intact today, 257 years after its timbers were cut, shaped and test-fitted in New England.

What seems exceptional to me is the large size of this building and its complexity. It consists of some thousand or so pieces which, by the scribe-rule system of building had to be shaped, test-fitted, numbered with Roman numerals, then the pieces were transported by land or water to the port of departure. The average merchant vessel of the time had a length on deck of about 100 feet, and a beam of about 24 feet. Some vessels were equipped with bow or stern ports for handling long timbers, like the pine trees cut in New England, destined to be masts for ships of the Royal Navy. How many transport ships were required to move all this timber? It is also to be considered that the window and door frames; doors; sash; interior trim pieces were shipped along with the frame.

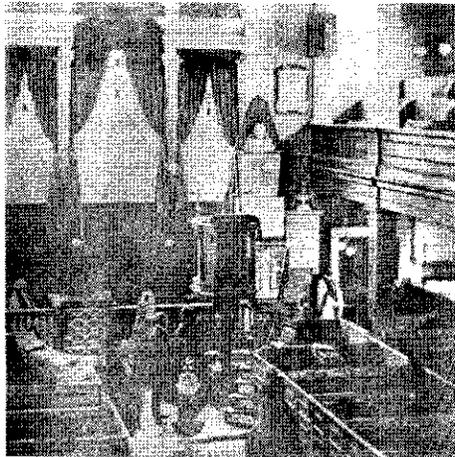
Once at Halifax, all this multitude of pieces had to be unloaded and carted up the hill to the building site. Then they were sorted through like a huge jigsaw puzzle so that every piece was in its appointed place. It is incredible, all the circumstances considered, that this building was erected, ready to be used, in a period of about two and a half months! One wonders what kind of assembly drawings accompanied the shipment, or maybe there was an inventory of all the parts, such as I have seen for several good-sized warships (frigates) that were sent from Britain in pieces, to be reconstructed at Kingston on Lake Ontario towards the end of the War of 1812-14?

(1) Friedman, Terry. *James Gibbs*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1984. See pages 277, 279 and fig. 312, 313.

(2) Harris, Reginald V. *The Church of Saint Paul in Halifax, Nova Scotia*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1949. See Chapter III, pages 14 - 20.



Above:
Drawings of roof construction of Saint Paul's Church. (J.R.S. 1963)



Left:
Photograph of interior of south end of Saint Paul's Church taken before the addition of the chancel in 1868. Note the pulpit and the original Palladian window.

Below:
Photograph showing part of the east wall of Saint Paul's Church before the side aisles were expanded. Barrington Street in the foreground.



Dutch cross-bond brickwork in Connecticut: First Church of Christ Meetinghouse, Wethersfield

by John R. Stevens

This meetinghouse is exceptional in being built of brick, and further exceptional in that the brick is laid up in Dutch cross-bond. This large and impressive meeting house was built 1761-64, replacing a timber framed building constructed in 1686. The corner stone from the older building has been re-used in the present one. Its main side faces south, and the original steeple on the west end survives. Twice in the 19th century, 1838 and 1882 the interior of the meetinghouse under-

went heavy remodelling. The exterior was affected by the replacement of the first and second story windows with what appeared as tall single units.

In 1971-1973, the meeting house was meticulously restored to a close approximation of its original condition. The original high pulpit which had survived in storage was reinstated in its original location on the north interior wall, opposite the main entrance centered on the south wall.

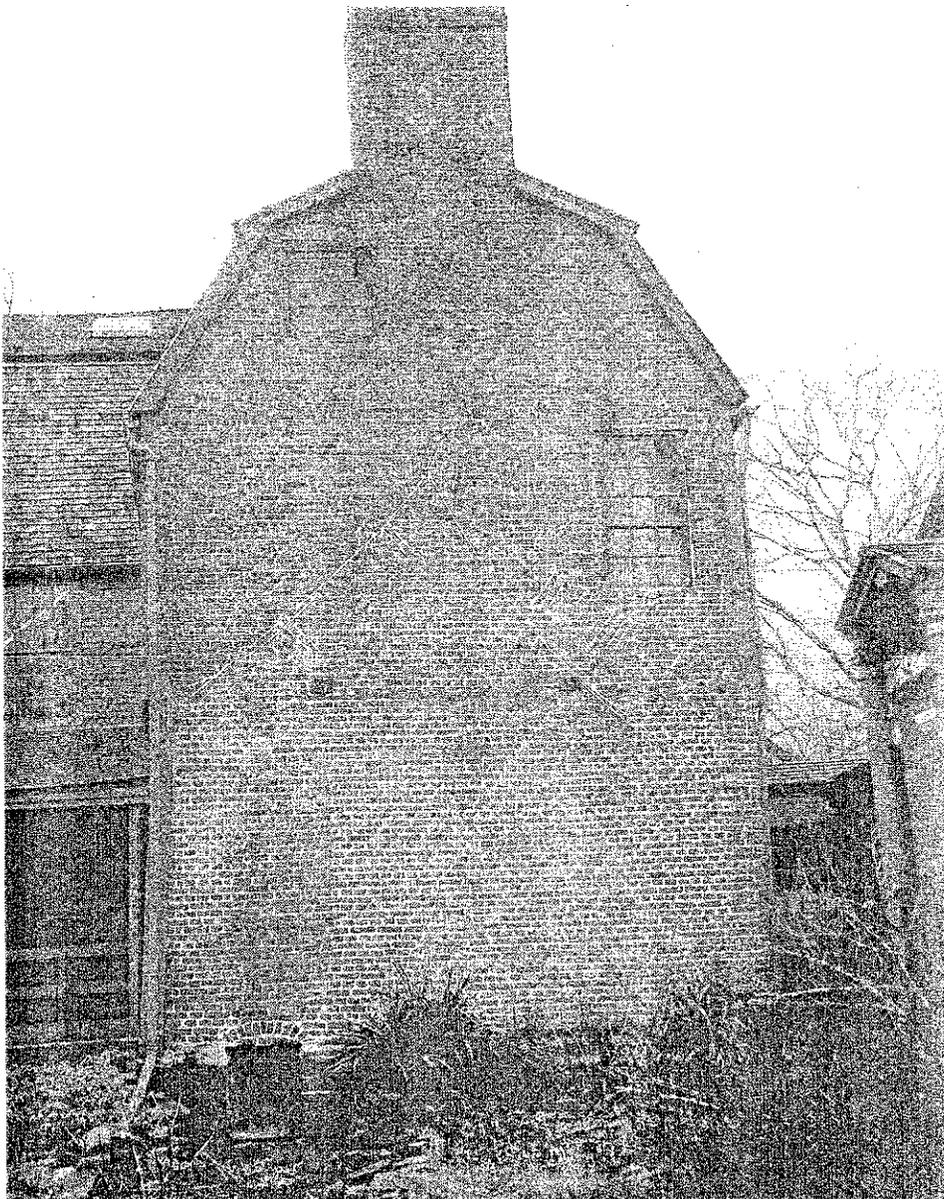
Great care was taken in the replacement of the brick entailed in putting the windows back in their original configuration.

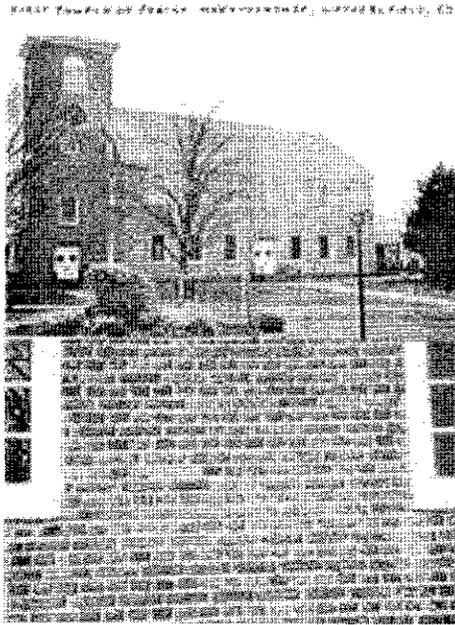
The brick is of excellent quality, of a fairly uniform red color. Individual bricks measure $2\frac{1}{4} \times 4 \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Four running bricks measure $34\frac{7}{8}$ inches, center to center of the mortar joints; vertically, five courses of brick measure 13 inches, center to center of the mortar joints. The joints are ruled with a grape-vine tool as is customary in Hudson Valley work. Why was Dutch cross-bond chosen for this building? Two other examples in Connecticut are known and will be discussed. It seems likely that a brick mason from the Hudson Valley was responsible, and it would be most interesting to find out who it was and where he came from. An almost exactly contemporary example is the 1767 brick Dutch Reformed Church at Claverack in Columbia County, Wing, Joseph Webb House.

On the other side of the Main Street in Wethersfield and several hundred yards south of the meeting house is the timber-framed Joseph Webb house, famous for its George Washington and Rochambeau connections. Facing east, this large two-story, five-bay gambrel roofed house was built in 1750-52. What is pertinent to us here is the *ëellí* on the west side of the house, and flush with its south wall which had served as a one story kitchen wing. Although timber-framed in the New England manner, with a summer beam and joists, its west end wall is entirely of brick laid in Dutch cross-bond, and further, the gable edges are finished with *ëvlechtingení* (tumbling) indicating that there had been gable parapets. At a later date in the 18th century, the *ëellí* was raised to a full two stories in height and the end wall brick work extended accordingly, but using a different brick bond. In spite of this change, the *vlechtingen* has survived largely intact.

The wing is noted in Norman Isham and Albert Brown's *Early Connecticut Houses* published in 1900 and available as a Dover Press reprint. They understood that the *ëellí* was an earlier structure that had stood on the site of the present house, and had been moved to its present loca-

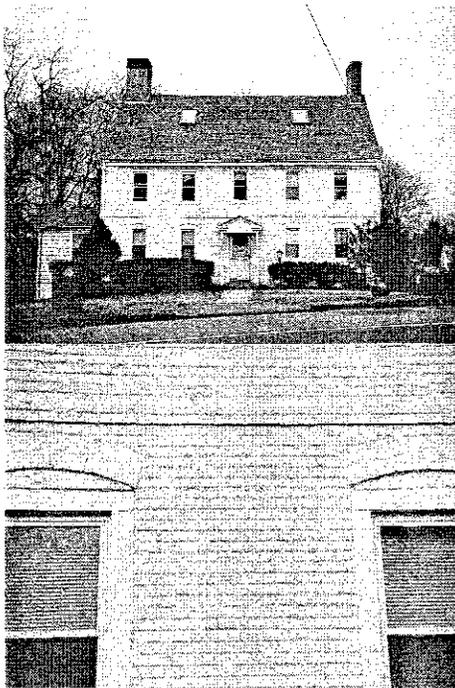
3PH WEBB HOUSE, W. WALL OF 1764 'ELL' WETHERSFIELD, C'





tion when the Joseph Webb house was built. Recent research has determined that in fact the ðellí was constructed in 1764 – just after the meeting house was built – and the brick end wall was the product of the masons that had worked on the meetinghouse?

The brick used was of a poorer quality, smaller in size and darker red with more color variation than the ones used on the meeting house. Quite a number of the header bricks are burned blue-black. It can be said, too, that the quality of the workmanship is not as good as that seen on the meetinghouse. Individual bricks



measure 1 7/8 X 3 5/8 X 7 5/8 inches. Four running bricks measure 33 1/2 inches, center to center of the mortar joints; vertically, five courses of brick measure 12 3/8 inches, center to center of the mortar joints.

The writer has known of this brick wall for a considerable length of time and thought that the ðellí pre-existed the construction of the Webb house, as Isham and Brown surmised. It did seem odd that of only three known examples of Dutch cross-bond brickwork in Connecticut, two of them co-existed within a short distance of one another in Wetherfield. Now that a building date of 1764 was established in the process of preparing an Historic Structure Report on the Webb house, it makes much more sense.

1706 Quinnipiac Avenue, New Haven. This house was recorded by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) in 1939. It was identified as the Widow Smith house. This brick, five bay gable roofed house is two stories in height, two rooms deep, has end wall chimnies and a partial center hall. It appears to have been built about 1760. Its front (east) wall is Dutch cross-bond over a molded water table. The other walls are a variation of common bond with three running courses of stretchers separated by a bonding course having single headers separated by two stretchers. The house has been painted white for a long time which somewhat hides the bonding pattern. It has been used for years as a tenement and one can wonder what, if anything, is left of the fine interior woodwork recorded by HABS.



"Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1640-1830 is a significant and important contribution to architectural history and our understanding of the early Dutch settlers. It will be invaluable to those interested in Dutch-American architecture, buildings, and culture. Moreover, it is an indispensable guide to those restoring early Dutch houses."

Dr. Natalie Naylor
Professor Emerita, Hofstra University

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Early Houses – Staten Island

Photos from the Archives Staten Island Historical Society. 70 rare B&W photographs of Dutch Vernacular Architecture. Large photo format (8.5"x11") with concise information regarding Dutch construction and building traditions.

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An early pre-fabricated building...

In *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut* by J. Frederick Kelly (published in 1933 by the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut) there appears the following on page 1:

"The men who came from Massachusetts by water, with the intention of making a settlement at Matianuck - where the town of Windsor now stands - knew of the existence of a fortified Dutch trading post at Hartford. Anticipating the hostility of the Dutch, they brought with them the prepared timbers of a house, and its outside covering, in order to establish themselves as quickly as possible. Concerning this, Bradford says in his *History of Plymouth Plantation* (Ford ed. II, 167-168):

'They having made a small frame of a house ready, and having a great new barke (sailing vessel), they stowed the frame in her hold, and boards to cover and finish it, having nayles and all other provisions fitting for their use... Coming to their place, they clapt up their house quickly, and landed their provisions, and left the company appointed, and sent the barke home, and afterwards palisaded their house about, and fortified themselves better. The 'barke' was brought to anchor just below the mouth of the Farmington River, where a landing was made on September 26, 1633. At that place the house was quickly 'clapt up'..."

Note:

The Connecticut River was considered by the Dutch to be the eastern boundary of New Netherland. The river had been discovered, and claimed for the Dutch by Adrien Block in 1614 on the *Orrust*, the sloop built on Manhattan Island and now being reconstructed at the Mabie farm at Rotterdam Junction. In 1633, the Dutch purchased land from the Pequot Indians at the present location of Hartford, Connecticut, and built on it a trading post that they named "The House of Good Hope". The trading post was seized by Captain John Underhill for Connecticut in 1654.

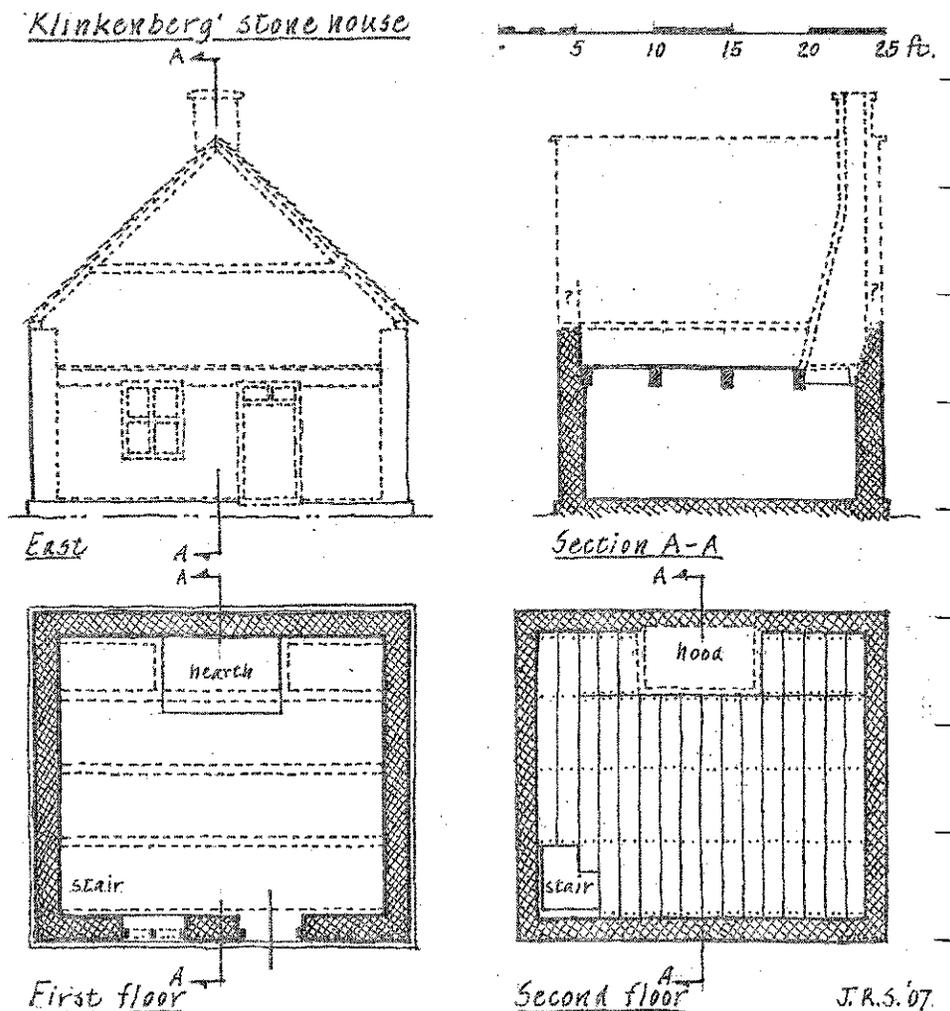
Contributed by John R. Stevens

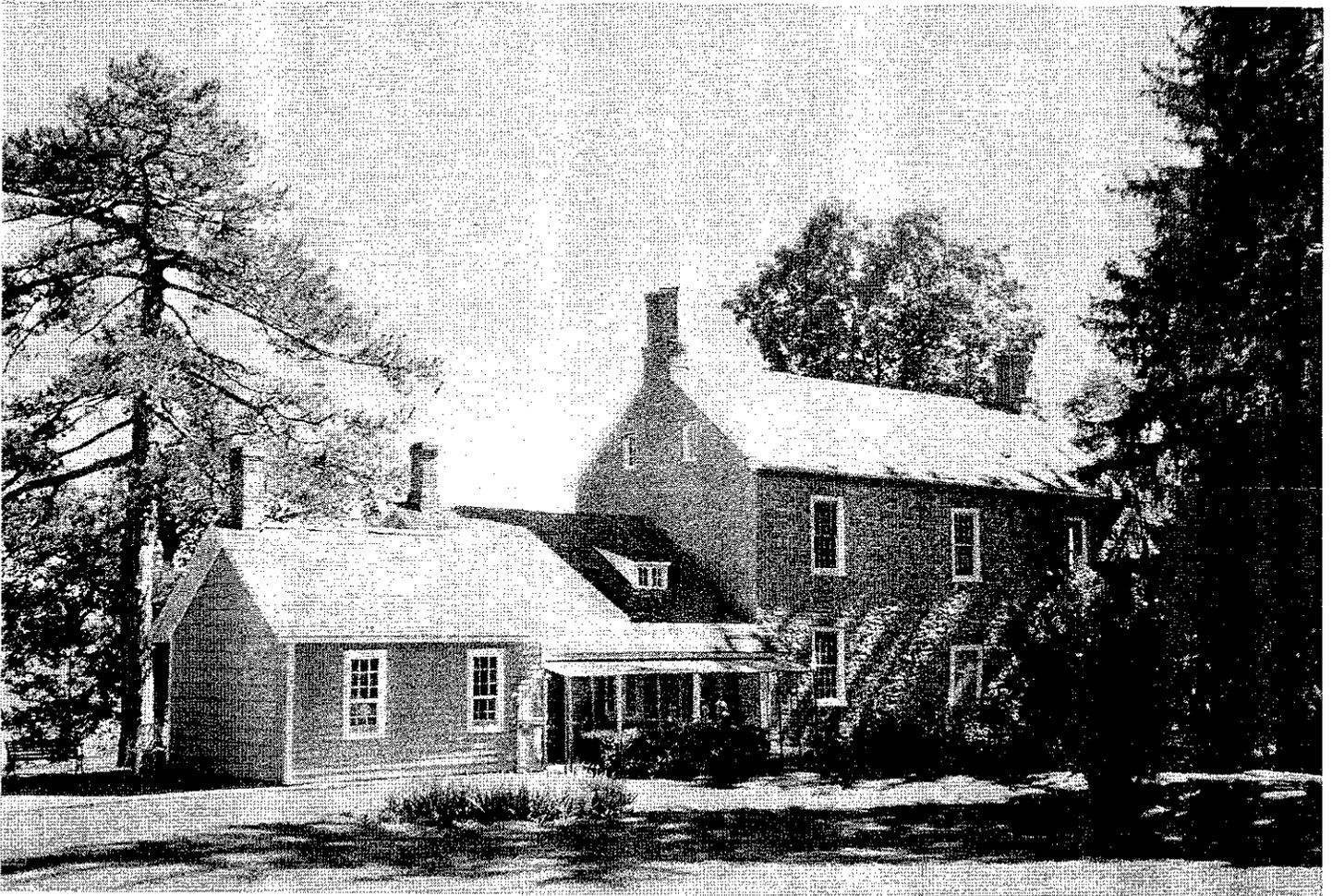
Klinkenberg

by John R. Stevens

On September 23, several HVVA members (Jim Decker, Rob Sweeney, Eddie Cattuzzo, John and Marion Stevens) attended an Open House given by Heather Cromer Real Estate, representing Sotheby's International Realty. Klinkenberg is located on Four Mile Point Road, east of Route 385, a few miles south of the village of Coxsackie. The house faces east and is only a hundred feet or so from the edge of the Hudson River. Across the river can be seen the bridge that carries Amtrak over Stockport Creek.

The rubble stone part of the house is stated to have been built in 1670. Attached to the south side of it is a two-story house, one room deep with a center hall and end wall chimneys. This also faces east. Near the top of the north gable it is dated 1804 on a square brick (a hearth brick) set on its diagonal. The stone part of the house interested us most because of the early dating given it. It was obvious on inspecting the interior, from the north-south orientation of the beams, that it had been built gable-fronted. The roof was





altered at the time the 1804 section was constructed. There is no basement under the stone section.

It measures 24 feet wide, north-south; 20 feet 9 inches east-west. The interior is 20 feet 6 inches north-south and 17 feet 6 inches east-west. The height from the first floor to the underside of the second floor is 8 feet 2 inches. The walls of the first story are about 21 inches thick. The beams are of pine. There are three internal beams plus beams embedded in the east and west walls. These last are 7 inches in width and 13 inches in height and are buried about half their width in the walls. That on the west wall is in two sections, interrupted by the hood of a jambless fire-place. The hood was 7 feet 5 inches in width

between the trimmers. The hood beam measures 7 5/8 X 15 1/4 inches; the second beam 7 X 13 3/4 inches; the third beam 7 by 12 3/4 inches. The south knee wall measures 2 feet 3 inches in height, less the depth of the wall plate.

The east wall has two mullioned windows of indeterminate age. Originally these were probably the only wall openings below the gables. One of these, presumably the one on the north side of the wall was originally the doorway and the other a cross-window (kruiskozijn). The present north gable has two small window frames, at least one of which was made from parts of a larger window frame, and shows the grooves for leaded glass on the inside.

The first floor boards cannot be inspected and it is not known if the original floor boards exist under what can be seen. The second floor boards (of pine) appear to be entirely original. There are 16 of them, with a line of joints on the hood beam except for the two boards at the south side which are shifted to provide a space for a stair in the south east corner. The floor boards run about 15-16 inches in width.

The present roof may in part have been constructed using the original rafters. One collar tie appears to be a re-used rafter and has a lap-dovetail trench in it for a collar tie. From this it was determined that the original roof pitch had been 43 degrees – almost square. On the east slope of the roof there

are two brick-cheeked dormers with mullioned frames that were installed by the present owner who copied them from the ones on the Leendert Bronck house at West Coxsackie.

Assessing this building, it seems unlikely that it dates as early as 1670. It is comparable with the Pieter Bronck house at West Coxsackie, the dating of which to 1663 seems questionable; the Bevier-Elting house at New Paltz which may date to c. 1705; the Albertus van Loon house at Athens with a datestone giving 1724; the du Bois-Kierstede house at Saugerties, dated 1727 on a datestone. The last two of these, like Klinkenberg, had their roofs re-oriented. The five of them are of similar dimensions, with the same number of beams and the beams of similar sectional dimensions.

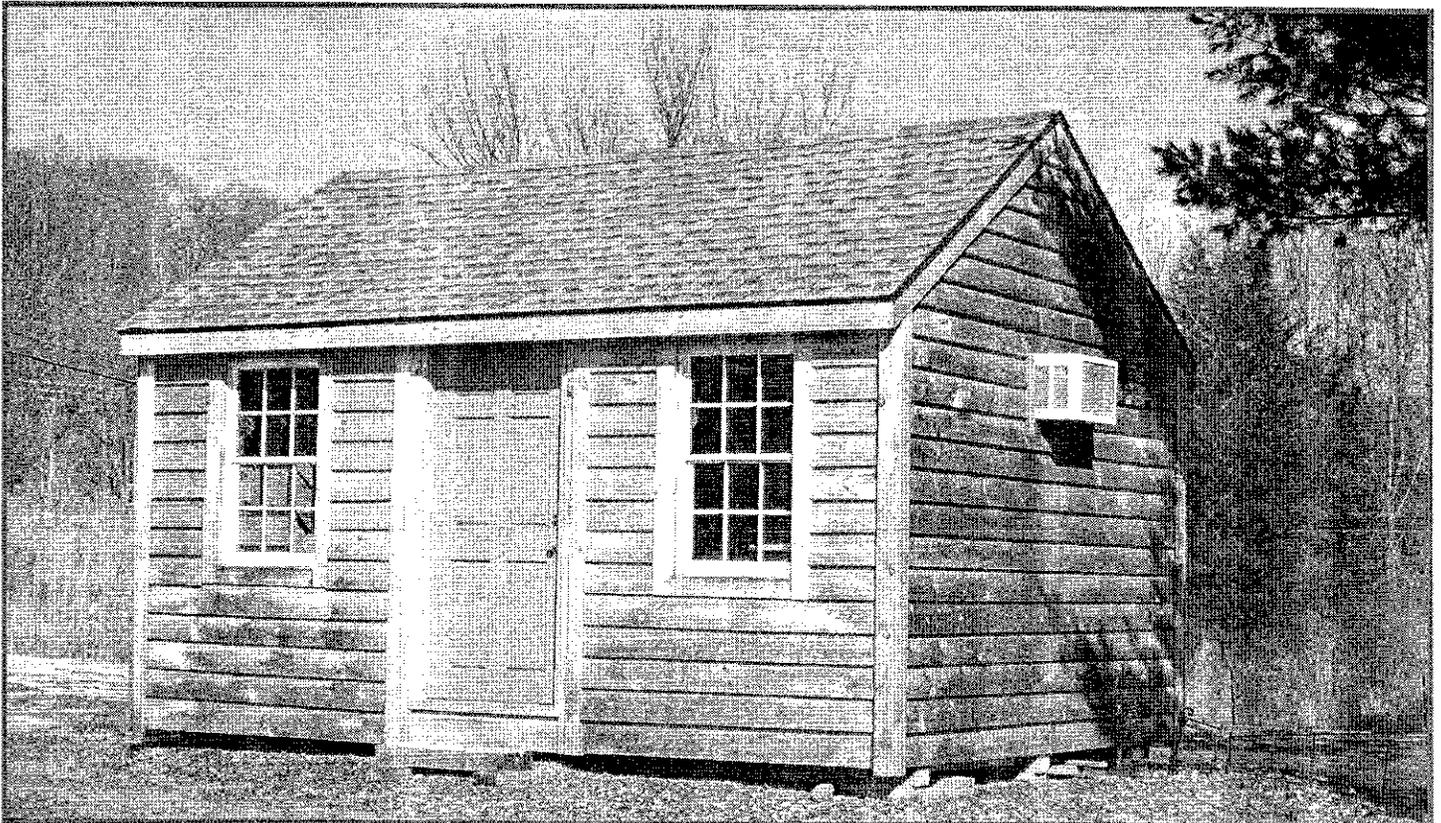
They seem to represent a formerly common type of gable-fronted, story-and-a-half, one room house that may have been replacements for earlier one-room, timber-framed houses. The writer prepared a list of gable-fronted houses which was printed in the June-July issue of the HVVA Newsletter. This list is to be considered as very much a preliminary one. Much work remains to be done to expand and refine it.

The 1804 brick and stone house is deserving of commentary as well. It is unusual in having its façade (east elevation) of Flemish bond; the south wall of Dutch cross-bond; the north wall of common bond and the west wall of rubble stone. The massive first floor beams look as if they had been part of an earlier building – they are not characteristic of work done

at the beginning of the 19th Century, not in the writer's experience anyway. Most of the windows are 6 over 6 but three of the second floor windows on the west wall are 12 over 12 with 7" X 9" glass. Jim Decker discovered that the north window of this group had actually been reconfigured from 6 over 6 sash! The probability seems to be that all the windows may originally have been 12 over 12, and an early change had most, but not all of these replaced by 6 over 6 windows.

The interior detailing of the 1804 building is severely plain – not at all like one might expect in such a large house. This is the first instance that the writer has seen a bead used as a panel molding, on the doors and the panelling under the main stair which has survived without visible alterations.





From small acorns grow mighty oaks...

President James Decker dedicated the new HVVA office in honor of Peter Sinclair (*below*) and to the continuation of his work with vernacular architecture and material culture, on January 19, 2007.



We hope HVVA will continue to grow from its humble start, to be of better service to our community, to be dutiful in fulfilling its mandate, to protect and document our fragile regional history. Our small, efficient office is now a place of community, a safe place in which tireless hours of documentation are lodged. We hope its library and archive will grow and its branches of knowledge may shade all who wish to learn. This office space belongs to all our members and – with your help – it will only continue to improve.

The Board of Trustees of the Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture wishes to thank those members and friends whose gifts of time, labor, and material made possible our first office building.

Advantage Insulation

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Membership info

If you have been receiving this newsletter, but your membership is not current and you wish to continue to receive the HVVA newsletter and participate in the many house study tours offered each year, **please send in your dues.**

Membership currently pays all the HVVA bills and to keep us operating in the black **each of us must contribute a little.**

Membership dues remains at a low \$20 per year (\$15 for Students). So if you haven't sent in your dues or given a tax deductible donation to the HVVA mission, **please consider doing so now.**



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Calendar

HVVA March Study Tour

Saturday, March 15, 2008 – 10:00 am

Monthly study tour to leave from the HVVA office, 1019 Flatbush Road, Kingston. Structures in Rhinebeck and Hurley are slated for study. Call Rob for more information.845.336.0232

HVVA April Study Tour

Saturday, April 19, 2008 – 10:30 am

The monthly study tour will be heading south to Northern New Jersey. We'll gather at HVVA member Doug Johnsen's home, 9 Haring Farm Lane, Rockleigh, NJ, (201)768-3408 or cell (201)264.2438. Doug promises a new sighting for us to visit along with a couple old favorites. Some car-pooling will be available. Further directions will be posted to the web site.

HVVA Planning Meeting

Saturday, May 17, 2008 – 10:00 am

HVVA planning meeting at the North Marbletown Firehouse, Route 209 just south of the Bevier House. Lunch to follow at the Hurley Mountain Inn.

Early American Industries Association Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 28 – Saturday, May 31

Early American Industries Association will hold its annual meeting at the Holiday Inn, Wolf Road Albany, NY. Hands-on demonstrations, talks and presentations, and a great tool auction. www.EAIAinfo.org

Jonathan Nedbor, of Canal Forge in Allgerville, demonstrates the blacksmith's art at History Day 2007 in Accord, NY.

