

***HVVA Study Tour of Kripplebush and Marbletown, NY
August 18, 2018***

I

**The Creek House
Kripplebush, NY**

Susan and Paul Sprachman, Hosts

The entrance to the house is also its oldest part, originally a simple one-room structure from around 1795. In the early 1800s additions with Greek Revival features were made to both the north and south sides of the original section, over which a half-story garret was built. By around 1830 the house had acquired its pre-twentieth-century configuration of a three-room, one-and-a-half story clapboard house, with bedrooms upstairs and dormers for headroom and light.

A family of coopers named Wood were the earliest inhabitants of the house. There is evidence that they enlarged and dammed a section of the kill to create a pool for softening staves. The bluestone retaining wall that is still intact along the Creek may well date to the house's earliest years; somewhat farther downstream the wall is made of rough-cut stone blocks. Damaged by Hurricane Irene in 2011, some of the wall had to be rebuilt; one section on the south side is now shored up with concrete.

In the 1970s a modern kitchen and porch were added to the north wing of the house, and the south wing was connected to a formerly freestanding icehouse, which was in turn connected to a former smokehouse. A fireplace was built in the smokehouse, which is now a study overflowing with books.

Another structure on the property is a guest house connected to a small 19th-century barn and workshop erected on an earlier stone foundation.

Generations of owners have left their imprint on wood trim, fire boxes, and storage spaces. The fireplace of the icehouse bedroom, for instance, has a surround with bolection moldings and cabinets to either side taken by previous owners from the ca. 1760 kitchen wing of the Wynkoop-Lounsbery House in Stone Ridge (they were Lounsberys themselves) --- a fine example of the reuse of elements from older buildings.

[adapted with permission from the Ulster County Historical Society's
guidebook to the April 2018 tour of historic homes]

II

The Thomas Chambers House Kripplebush, NY

Scott Greathead and Juliette Bennett, Hosts

The original section of the house, to the left of the front door, is thought to have been built by Thomas Chambers in 1780. Close examination of structural elements may help date the addition of the newer stone section, to which a large wooden extension was added sometime later. It was destroyed by fire in the 1930s, the only evidence of its existence being the bricked-in door suspended over what is now the driveway.

There is conflicting evidence about the origin of the three-bay English barn with vertical board-and-batten siding and a corn crib. A carved inscription reads “May 5, 1877”, while a recent evaluation suggests a construction date between 1820 and 1840. At one time there was a stationary hay-press inside the barn, which may account for the 1877 inscription. If so, the improvement may have been part of a large-scale makeover that included the Gothic revival dormer above the front door.

The house had been abandoned for many years when it was purchased by John Boka in 2003. He replaced the rotting front Greek Revival porch with the current roofed structure, removed the stucco that coated the stones, and restored the late nineteenth-century lathe-and-plaster walls in the interior. Although many of the original floor boards have survived, others had to be replaced.

The current owners have brought together antiques, reproductions, and modern pieces to give the house a comfortable feel in harmony with the original Federal and Greek Revival features. They have plans to restore the barn and are actively working with a local farmer to restore their thirty-acre property to healthy meadowland.

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III

The Blandina Bevier House Marbletown, NY Joy Pollock, Hostess

Documentary and architectural evidence confirm the year 1863, carved on a stone in the front wall of this imposing house, as the date of construction. The barn is also of nineteenth-century origin.

The property on which the house stands belonged to the Bevier family from 1771 to 1906. It was the location of the parsonage of the Marbletown Reformed Church until 1850, when a new church in the Greek Revival style was planned for Stone Ridge. The property passed to Blandina Bevier and her sister Esther. Esther married two years later, leaving Blandina, who never married, as sole owner. It was under her auspices that the present house was built.

Upon Blandina's death in 1889 the house was purchased by her nephew Isaac Hasbrouck of Brooklyn, a professor at Rutgers University. He and his family used it as a country retreat until 1906, when he sold it to Eliza J. Crossman, a fellow Brooklynite. In 1908 she conveyed it to her daughter Elizabeth P. Taylor, who sold it two years later to Allen G. Newman and his wife Florence, of New York City.

Allen G. Newman was not your ordinary weekender from the City: he was a sculptor with a national reputation and a desire to promote modernist architecture. He made external changes like the wrought-iron doors of the entranceway, the columns of the porch that opens off the entrance, and the support posts for the abandoned bower at the south-west corner of the house, all in the Art Deco style. Internal changes, including reconfiguration of the upstairs rooms and positioning of stairs, need to be confirmed by our HVVA authorities. The gallery and tall sliding doors in Newman's barn studio are as he left them.

The Newmans' children owned the property until 1973, when Joy Pollock became the owner. She is in the process of updating the house, beginning with a new wooden shake roof. She also has ambitious plans for the garden.

[Ken Krabbenhoft]