
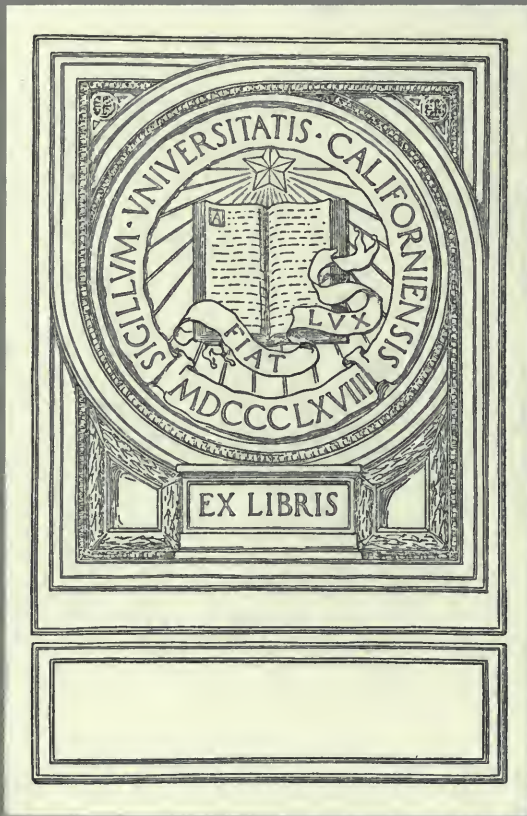


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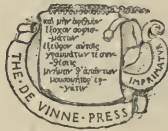
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Volume I *Number 3*

FARM HOUSES *of*
NEW NETHERLANDS

With Introductory Text by
Aymar Embury II

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GEORGE F. LINDSAY, *Chairman*
WHITE PINE BUREAU
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA





An Architectural
Monograph *on*
Farm Houses of
New Netherlands



With Text by
AYMAR EMBURY II.
Prepared for Publication by
Russell F Whitehead formerly Editor
of *The Architectural Record*
and *The Brickbuilder.*
132 Madison Ave, New York N. Y.

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Photograph by J. W. Gillies

THE VREELAND HOUSE AT NORDHOFF, NEW JERSEY. Detail, front entrance

An unusually good example of carpenter carving done with a gouge

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AVAILABILITY TODAY AS A STRUCTURAL WOOD

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No. 3

FARM HOUSES OF NEW NETHERLANDS

By AYMAR EMBURY II

Mr. Embury has devoted much sympathetic study to our early architectural history, and as an architect has won wide-spread recognition because of his ability to solve successfully the country house problem. His contributions to the literature of Colonial Architecture include such well-known works as "Early American Churches," "The Dutch Colonial House," "One Hundred Country Houses," etc.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK COUSINS AND JOHN WALLACE GILLIES

LONG after the Colonial work of New England and the South became well known to the architects, and had become regarded by them as a suitable source from which to draw precedents for modern work, the remaining examples of the work of the Dutch in their colony of New Netherlands remained unnoticed and neglected. It is not easy to discover why this should have been, since much of it is in close proximity to New York City, some of it indeed within the city limits, and these examples are not inferior in charm, less in number, or of a later date than the Colonial work of Massachusetts and Virginia.

The settlement of New Netherlands antedated by some years that of New England, and its development was steady and rapid, the Colonists pushing out from New York along the river valleys and Indian trails which formed the natural means of communication in a country where roads were still to be constructed. Many of these early Dutch houses still exist, and although the area in which they occur is comparatively small, it must have been, for a farming community, very thickly populated and extremely prosperous. The age of these houses cannot be determined with any real accuracy, and while the earliest of them appear to have been erected about the same time as the earliest remaining examples in New England or Virginia, the very natural tendency to exaggerate the age of old work has probably been not less apparent in New Netherlands than in New England. The whole question of the dates of old work is a rather delicate one, and I have found in all parts of the American colonies that the dates assigned to old buildings were those at which some por-

tions of them had been built, although the entire building might have been reconstructed since that time.

In selecting the subjects for the illustrations for this article, then, I have been unable to find in many cases any real historic evidence as to the dates of construction, and have been obliged to accept family traditions or the records of the local historic societies as guides, and these dates are offered with reserve. The fact is that in most cases the testimony as to the age is probably no better than that given me by a negro employee on one of the old farms, who told me that the house was built "so dog-gone long ago that there ain't nobody remembers when she was built." I have gone into this question of dates with some particularity, because the determination of the sources and progress of any style must rest primarily upon the comparison of houses in their chronological order, assuming, of course, variances in the style arising from local conditions. Now while this evidence is very far from complete, it is convincing on one point, namely, that the Dutch early found their *métier*, and pursued it substantially unchanged up to, and in some cases even through, the period of the Classic Revival. The difference between the earliest of the Dutch houses and the latest is far less marked than the difference between the early and late houses of New England and the Southern Colonies, and without previous knowledge as to the age of the remaining Dutch buildings, it would be practically impossible to pick certain of them out as being the prototypes of the style and others as examples of the style developed.

The most curious thing about the architec-

ture of New Netherlands is that which strikes us in the other colonies, namely, the almost complete renunciation by the Colonists of ideals, processes and precedents of their mother-country. The Dutch houses in Long Island and New Jersey resembled nothing but themselves, and were even more radically different from the work of the Dutch in Holland than they were from the work of the other Colonists. This difference is not alone a question of material, which might be expected in a new country, but is also a question of form and of detail. The steep-pitched roofs of Holland were here transformed into low gentle lines, and the narrow flat cornices of the mother-country were replaced by broad overhanging eaves, from which Classic treatment in general was absent. It was an architecture altogether autochthonous, and not the less interesting for that reason.

The characteristics of the Dutch work are by this time fairly well known: the houses are for the most part one story in height, with low curved overhanging eaves on the front and rear, and an almost total suppression of cornices or rake moldings on the gable-ends. The earliest buildings apparently had single pitched roofs; the gambrel form, so common in these colonies that the term "Dutch roof" has become synonymous with "gambrel," was a thing of later development, although toward the latter part of the seventeenth century it already had become customary; but aside from this one change in the roof shape, apparently the only variation from type was the gradual introduction of a piazza or stoop under the overhanging eaves; and this, too, must



SHENKS-CROOK HOUSE, BERGEN BEACH,
FLATLANDS, N. Y. Built 1656

of any material used in Colonial times which was so beautifully handled as the red sandstone from which the bodies of many of the houses in Bergen and Hudson Counties in New Jersey were built. The entrance sides of the houses were invariably better finished than the others, and were usually of coursed ashlar with either fine picked or four cut surfaces, small joints and neatly cut sills. The lintels were flat arches, often of wood and with wooden carved key blocks, painted and sanded to represent stone. The other sides of these buildings were of rougher stone or of wood or of brick, handled with a facility and playfulness which in no way detracted from the dignity and attractiveness of the whole building.



LAKE TYSEN HOUSE, NEW DORP, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

have occurred at a very early date.

The materials in the Dutch work were those used in the other colonies: shingles and clapboards, stone and brick for wall covering, and hewn timbers for the frames. These materials were, however, mingled together with much more freedom than we customarily find in the other colonies, and were perhaps treated with a little better realization of the artistic effect possible from careful selection of materials and appropriate treatment of their surfaces than was elsewhere the case. I do not know

We find the same motive in most of the houses still remaining. Each consists of a central mass with one or two wings, invariably placed on the gable-ends, but it is probable that the original houses were single rectangular blocks which now constitute the central portions or in some cases are now the wings, to which the main bodies of the houses have been added.

The materials va-

ried with the location: in Long Island the exteriors were of wood, generally white pine shingles but sometimes white pine clapboards; in Staten Island and New York they were sometimes of stone whitewashed or stuccoed, and sometimes of shingles, stone apparently having been used where it was not too hard to cut, and wood used elsewhere. In New Jersey, where the fields were covered with erratic glacial drift of red sandstone, and had to be cleared before cultivation, the bodies of the houses up to the second-story line were generally built of this stone, with the gable-ends, roofs and wings of wood. This red sandstone split readily, was easy to work, and hardened upon exposure to the air, and was therefore chosen in many instances; but it is a curious side-light upon the knowledge of our ancestors to find that people who could work stone so beautifully as the Dutch had no mortar which was durable when exposed to the weather, and the stone walls were therefore protected by overhanging eaves of wood, while the wooden walls needed no such shelter.

The roof shape adopted by the Dutch made dormers unpractical for light in the second story; and as metal for flashing, so essential around dormers, was scarce and difficult to obtain, dormers were usually, if not invariably, omitted, and evidently in those houses which

now possess them they were added at a date far later than that of the construction of the main building. The second stories of these houses were therefore lighted at the two gable-ends only, and in several of the old buildings which remain in their original condition I have found that the second-story bedrooms were formed by partitions only, no ceilings having been constructed, so that there was a through ventilation of air from one end of the house to the other over the tops of the bedrooms. The framework was in general constructed in the same manner as in the other colonies: it was of the post and lintel type. In the earliest times the bodies of the walls were built of thick planks set edge to edge vertically; the inner sides of these planks were adzed to give a mortar clinch, and the shingles or clapboards for the exterior were nailed to the outside. The custom of filling in between the posts with studs was probably begun as early as 1725, and the spaces between the studs were often filled with brick or small stone laid up in clay; sheathing was then applied much as it is today, and the outside shingled or clapboarded, although in some instances the buildings were stuccoed directly on the studs and masonry filling between them, without sheathing or lath.

The earlier houses had little interesting detail, and, curiously enough, much of what there



THE BERGEN HOMESTEAD, FLATLANDS, BROOKLYN, N. Y. Built about 1655

was was strongly reminiscent of Gothic. The doorways, for example, in the old Verplanck house at Fishkill, New York, are not dissimilar from the English Elizabethan type, and hexagonal and octagonal columns were used in very many cases. The later houses, probably through the influence of the New England work, had considerable attention paid to the treatment of the doorways, the cornices and the window openings, and some of the Dutch doorways and cornices are among the most interesting Colonial works still remaining. The cornice of the main part of the Board House (which dates from 1790), for example, illustrated on pages 8 and 9, has a narrow frieze decorated in the Chinese-Chippendale manner, and the cornice of the wing shows an extremely interesting combination of dentil course and fluting; both cornices are rich, vigorous and refined. Several of the other houses have doorways carved as elaborately as could be done by a carpenter with the tools then at his command; the use of the gouge to form rosettes and other decorated forms being the marked characteristic. An excellent example of this is the doorway of the Vreeland House, which, though late in period, is much more Colonial than Neo-Grec in sentiment.

The Dutch uses of ornament were characterized, however, by the same freedom from traditions as were the masses of their houses; and indeed the pervading sentiment of all the Dutch work is one of spontaneity and disregard for precedent, rather than the adherence to formulæ customary in New England.

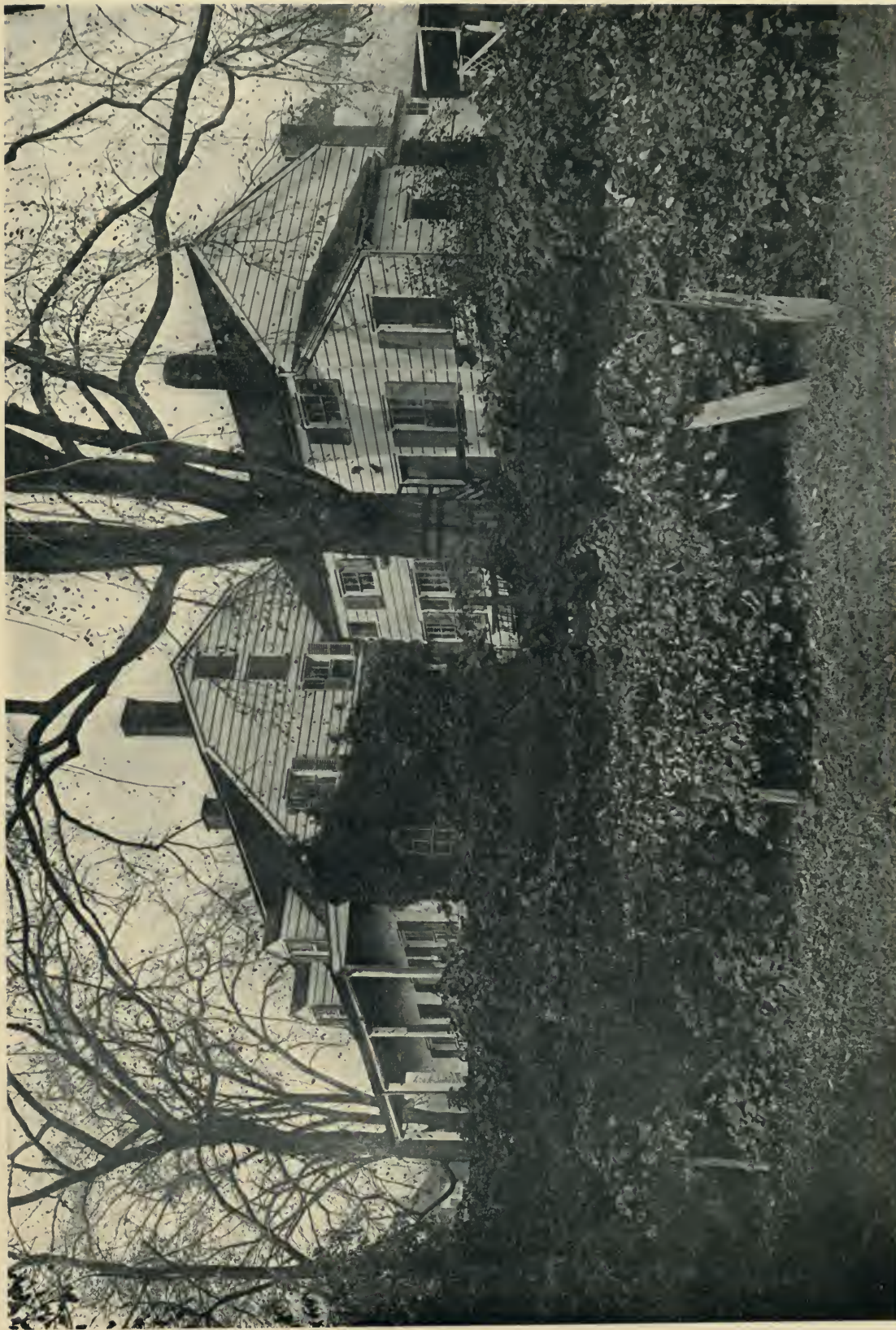
The Dutch houses had not, as a rule, very much pretension to stylistic correctness; they were charming rather than beautiful, and quaint rather than formal. This quality makes them especially adapted for precedents for small country houses of to-day, just as the symmetrical dignity of the Colonial work of New England and the South lends itself to larger and more expensive residences which may be termed "mansions."

Certain of the Dutch forms, especially that of the roof, cannot be readily used, the flat slopes of the Dutch work admitting little light and air in the second story; but the other shapes of gambrel, which were used practically all over the United States, and of which there are examples existing at such widely separated points as Castine, Maine; Annapolis, Maryland; and New Orleans, Louisiana, can be harmonized with the spirit of the Dutch work with profit to our architectural design.



ROADSIDE FARM HOUSE NEAR PEARL RIVER, NEW JERSEY

Note the use of "Germantown hoods," and the fact that wings are added to the ends only



THE TERHEUN HOUSE, HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY. Date about 1670

The body of the house is the oldest section. One of the few examples where use was made of moldings on the exterior other than door and window architraves



THE BOARD-ZABRISKIE HOUSE, ON THE PARAMUS ROAD,
NEW JERSEY. Date, 1790, carved in lintel of a cellar window

Note the Chinese-Chippendale ornament in the cornice of
main house. Dormers, wing and railing probably added later



THE BOARD-ZABRISKIE HOUSE, ON THE PARAMUS ROAD,
NEW JERSEY. Detail of west wing at right angle to road

Of all houses in this section none is more charming; the
interest lies both in the composition and beautiful detail



THE ACKERMAN (BRINCKERHOFF) HOUSE, HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY

Date, 1704, carved in end of chimney. Interesting use of columns under the overhang in the center only



THE LEFFERTS HOUSE, FLATBUSH, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Present house dates partly from before 1776 and partly from a century earlier. A portion of the house was destroyed by the British in the battle of Long Island, but was soon rebuilt on its undamaged beams



JOHN PETER B. WESTERVELT HOUSE AT CRESSKILL, NEW JERSEY. Date about 1800
An almost perfect example of the full development of the style



THE VREELAND HOUSE AT NORDHOFF, NEW JERSEY

The wing dates from the 18th century; the body of the house was added about 1825,
and is extremely interesting in detail, as may be seen in the frontispiece illustration



THE ANDREW HARRING HOUSE AT NORTHVALE, NEW JERSEY. Rebuilt 1805 and 1838



JAN DITMARS HOUSE AT FLATLAND NECK, BROOKLYN, N. Y. Date about 1800

While this house is built entirely of wood, it is interesting to note that the proportions and type are exactly similar to the Harring house above



THE VAN NUYSE-MAGAW HOMESTEAD, FLATLANDS, BROOKLYN, N. Y. Built about 1800



A DUTCH HOUSE ON LONG ISLAND. Early 19th Century

Here the gambrel roof is above two full stories; unusual near New York. All existing examples thus designed have cornices and detail resembling the work of New England rather than other Dutch houses



THE DOORWAY OF THE LEFFERTS HOUSE ON FLATBUSH AVENUE,
FLATBUSH, L. I. Built in the 17th century, rebuilt about 1780

An extremely interesting doorway, showing the freedom
with which the Dutch builders used Classic motives



HOUSE ON ESTATE OF MRS. GLENN STEWART, LOCUST VALLEY, L. I.
Alfred Hopkins, Architect, New York, N. Y.

COMPARATIVE WHITE PINE COSTS

A STATEMENT, BASED ON NEW YORK MARKET PRICES OF TO-DAY, APPLYING TO THE HOUSE BUILT FOR MRS. GLENN STEWART, LOCUST VALLEY, NEW YORK. ALFRED HOPKINS, ARCHITECT

AS White Pine has withstood every test where a structural wood is exposed to the weather, architects naturally concede a preference for its use, and its cost therefore becomes the determining factor. For the outer covering of a house the cost is relatively very small in comparison with the total investment, and may be very misleading. To illustrate this clearly we give below a comparative statement of actual costs, painstakingly computed in order not to mislead, as between White Pine and substitute woods, based on New York market prices of to-day, figured for the house illustrated above.

<i>Labor and Materials</i>	<i>Using White Pine for Exterior Woodwork</i>	<i>Using Substitute Woods for Exterior Woodwork</i>
General Contract:		
Excavation and Masonry	\$800.00	\$800.00
Rough Lumber	785.00	785.00
Outside and Inside Finish	950.00	836.00
Carpenter Labor	850.00	850.00
Sheet Metal Work	120.00	120.00
Lath and Plaster	450.00	450.00
Painting and Glazing	300.00	300.00
Heating	200.00	200.00
Plumbing	375.00	375.00
Electrical Work	75.00	75.00
Hardware	125.00	125.00
Lighting Fixtures	60.00	60.00
Marble and Tile Work	60.00	60.00
Total	<u>\$5,150.00</u>	<u>\$5,036.00</u>

THE cost of this house with its entire Outer Covering and Inside Finish of White Pine was only \$5,150.00. Had a Substitute Wood been used for the Exterior

Surfaces the cost would have been \$5,036.00, a difference of only \$114.00. This small difference of \$114.00, or but a little over 2% of the total investment, determined between the

use of White Pine or Substitute Woods for the Outer Covering.

The example here chosen to illustrate comparative costs between White Pine and Substitute Woods may be termed an inexpensive house, not necessitating elaborate hardware, plumbing, lighting fixtures, etc., and the total cost was therefore very small. Had the building been more elaborately finished the percentage of difference which determined the use of White Pine would have been reduced to about $1\frac{1}{3}\%$, as has been demonstrated by many cost compilations for various types of houses.

The same comparative cost figures apply with slight variations to all territories in the United States, with the possible exception of the Pacific Coast States and extreme Southern States, where the use of White Pine is perhaps not commercially practical. Later there will be published comparative figures covering other territories to substantiate this statement further.

The selection of a structural wood is too frequently determined by its price per thousand feet, and not by its true worth for the particular purpose for which it is to be used. The

first cost of White Pine is higher in price than that of other structural woods; but when considering those distinctive qualities possessed by no other wood where exposure to the weather is to be the test, it is in the end the most economical. With mitres that will not open, and grain that will not lift, White Pine forever

“stays put,” and does not shrink, swell, check, crack, split, twist, or warp under the most exacting climatic conditions, and lasts almost forever. Despite an impression of its scarcity, White Pine is still abundantly available today, as it always has been, in any quantity or quality desired, and can or should be purchasable in all mar-

kets. If the lumber dealers supplying you or your clients at any time are unable to furnish it, we would appreciate the opportunity of being helpful to you in securing it.

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Side Elevation

HOUSE ON ESTATE OF MRS. GLENN STEWART, LOCUST VALLEY, L. I.
Alfred Hopkins, Architect

The subject of the fourth monograph will be Houses of the Middle and Southern Colonies, with article on the Colonial Renaissance by Frank E. Wallis

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