

HRH NEWS APRIL 16, 2009

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TOUR THE ca. 1730 JAN VAN HOESEN HOUSE

On April 5th Hudson River Heritage partnered with the Van Hoesen House Historical Foundation (www.vanhoesenhouse.org) in support of their commitment to preserve the Dutch-American house in Claverack, Columbia County, New York. The Van Hoesen House is a significant architectural resource for scholars as they try to refine a picture of early European history in the Hudson River Valley. The house was built ca. 1730 by Jan Van Hoesen, grandson of the original 1660s patent holder of the area, Jan Franz Van Hosen, and its Dutch architecture points to possible pockets of persistence of Dutch expression long after the English conquest of 1664.



Members and friends at the Van Hoesen House (photo by John Vincent).

Ed Klingler, Van Hoesen House Historical Foundation president, has called the house “the finest surviving unrestored example of a unique brick-clad timber framing style that was introduced to the Hudson River Valley by the first Dutch Colonists in the early 17th century.” The house’s Dutch characteristics are numerous and easily visible, due to minimal alterations. An HRH member wrote “even in its present condition its fine quality and integrity are apparent. I’m grateful to HRH for alerting me to the event.” Warren Smith, HRH Board member and architect, noted that it is a special opportunity for preservation when a rare and fine example of Dutch architecture has managed to survive in such an unaltered state.

Tours by Ed Klingler, and Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture member Rob Sweeney, were recorded by John Vincent, videographer and member of the Rhinebeck Historical Society and Hudson River Heritage, as a way to make them available to a wider audience.

The history of the Dutch in the Hudson Valley is a field that is currently yielding many fresh discoveries. Several Hudson Valley scholars, researchers, and authors are investigating Dutch heritage and ethnicity through the lens of architecture, using colonial era Dutch documents and records recently translated by scholars specializing in the Dutch language as it was written and spoken in the seventeenth century. They are unexpectedly finding that many elements of Dutch culture persisted even after others died out.

The Preservation League of New York State has named the Jan Van Hoesen House to its 2009 Seven to Save endangered properties list. The Foundation’s primary goal is to halt the house’s deterioration, but they would also like to improve access to it as an educational resource.

The event was an inspiring start to the Quadricentennial and a good complement to Hudson River Heritage’s 21st Country Seats Tour of Dutch-American Rural Architecture, presented in conjunction with Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture, on October 3rd and 4th.