

The Quarterly JOURNAL

A Publication of the Greene County Historical Society, Inc.

U. S. Route 9-W

Coxsackie, N. Y. 12051

Vol. 4, Issue 4

★

Winter, 1980

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BRONCK HOUSE, COXSACKIE

—Joseph W. Hammond

As one aspect of his graduate work in museum studies (State University of NY at Oneonta – New York State Historical Association), Joseph Hammond developed a major paper on the significance of the Bronck House complex. His material was later released to the firm of Mendel, Mesick, Cohen and Waite for use in the Bronck House Historic Structure Report. The society appreciates the release of this carefully researched material; it has selected that portion for journal publication which relates to the houses' architectural significance in the Hudson Valley.

—Editor's Note

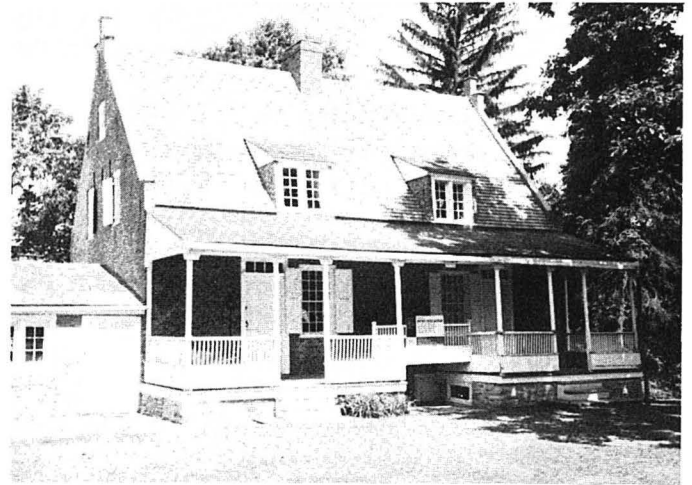
After appointing Frans Barentsz, Pastoor his special attorney during his absence [from Albany] on May 1, 1662, Pieter and his family departed to take possession of their new property in compliance with the deed. One can imagine their anticipation and excitement as the bounds were marked by Dirk Hendrixse, already living with his wife in the Coxsackie area, Sachemoes and Bronck

The establishment of an active farm at Coxsackie advanced quickly, for by 1665 over 126 morgen of land (264 acres) had been cleared for cultivation or pasture. It seems fairly certain that Pieter Bronck lost no time in providing living quarters for his family. By tradition, the one-room stone house which now forms the southeast corner of the Bronck House complex was thought to have been built by him in 1663. While this cannot be documented, we do know that some dwelling had been constructed by 1665 and that the present structure could have been built at that early date. Of one-room plan, the first Bronck House was typical in scale of many buildings for which documentary evidence survives

In all probability, Pieter Bronck hired workmen from Albany to build his house at Coxsackie as even in the 17th century there was a very definite division of labor which was reinforced through the apprenticeship system.

The basic structural fabric of the first Bronck house remains intact although nearly all decorative trim has been changed in the intervening three hundred years. It was built in the typical North European tradition which utilizes heavy but widely spaced joists spanning the entire width of the

(continued on page 2)



The Completed Project – 1738 House

THE BRONCKS: PIETER, HILLITJE, JAN AND COMMERTJE

—Raymond Beecher

In midwinter, on January 13, 1662, at Fort Orange (Albany), before the Dutch West India Company's representative, Johannes La Montague, the Catskill Indians Sicketas and Sachemoes affixed their marks to the parchment transferring title to their tribal lands at Coxsackie; Pieter Bronck then signed as the purchaser. The transaction was witnessed by Jan Verbeeck, Pastor Frans Barentse and Jan Dareth. Petrus (Peter) Stuyvesant, the colonial Director General for the Dutch West India Company, had earlier assented to the transaction. Pieter's finances were at a low ebb and he delayed payment; the land brief was valued at 150 guilders in beaver skins. He did commit himself to pay this sum to the Indian owners "one half when he shall come to live there, and the other half on the first day of May A. D. 1663." Fortunately for Pieter and Hillitje, the terms of the Dutch surrender to the Duke of York's representative in 1664 recognized these Dutch land patents; Pieter's was reaffirmed by Governor Nicolls on June 11, 1667.

(continued on page 6)

ANALYSIS OF BRONCK HOUSE *(continued from page 1)*
structure. These joists intersect the side walls several feet below the plate, creating a building of somewhat tall proportion. This method of framing is found in Europe from northern France through The Netherlands into coastal Germany, and was also used throughout Scandinavia. It is interesting to note here that immigrants to New Netherland came from all these countries, yet presented a surprisingly homogeneous cultural profile in terms of language, customs, and craft techniques. Not until the Palatine migrations of the early 18th century can any separation of building tradition be detected in the upper Hudson Valley.

While Pieter Bronck chose to build with stone, an analysis of surviving building contracts and other documents suggests that this was highly unusual. In fact, this writer has not found any contract specifying stone construction, but rather wood framing seems to have been universally used. Only after 1710 do stone buildings appear with any frequency in the upper Hudson Valley, and then primarily in areas settled by recently arrived Germans. It can be further noted that the Dutch were widely known for exceptional brickmasonry which utilized an underlying wood frame, a tradition also transferred to New York. However, because of the unusually cosmopolitan mixture of immigrants in even a remote place such as Albany, there must have undoubtedly been workmen capable of building in rubble stonework. Perhaps the distance from the river or inaccessible sawmills prohibited Pieter Bronck from choosing a frame structure, although a pitsaw could have easily been erected. Like so many other questions, this one must also go unanswered.

We can only conjecture what the interior of the Bronck House looked like when built, but the placement of the doors and windows appears to be unchanged. Evidence in the framing along the west wall and in the attic indicates the relative size and location of the traditional jambless fireplace, long a characteristic of North European building . . . In addition, the door which now leads into the hyphen as well as its casing and header may be of early date and possibly original. Their heavy construction and character have a vitality and boldness not found in woodwork executed during the second phase of building at the Bronck House. Other than these two features, we must assume that the typical divided casement windows, paneled shutters, and other common features of Northern European building were also a part of the original dwelling. While pantiles were often used as roofing material in New Netherland during the 17th century, it is more likely that the Bronck House was covered with boards or thatch, but probably not shingles.

In summary, the house apparently built by Pieter Bronck soon after purchasing land at Coxsackie represents a widely used building form in the Hudson Valley which was made unusual through the early use of rubble stone construction. The single room dwelling with grain storage in the garret, as suggested by the two oval ventilators near the eastern gable peak, was the basic housing unit used throughout New York beginning in the 17th century. It had counterparts in nearly every area of North America, furnished with a minimum of large or fixed pieces of furniture, such a house could provide quarters for even a large family as patterns of living were not based on the later concepts of personal privacy or specific room function . . .

Leendert [grandson of Pieter] and Anna, in 1738, began an extensive building program which resulted in the construction of a totally new dwelling.

This new structure was built at right angles to the original stone house, and a few feet to the north of it. Within a few years it was also connected to the old building by a covered passageway now identified as "the hyphen." In terms of form, construction techniques, and decorative elements, this house represented the continuation of a Lowlands building tradition at least three hundred years old. At the time that New Netherland was settled, house types in Northern Europe had broken into two basic forms, rural and urban. While both could incorporate the characteristic H-frame made up of closely spaced yet heavy posts, and joists spanning the full depth of the building, city houses were further encased in a veneer of brick which initially served as fire protection. These urban structures were usually oriented with the gable or narrow end facing the street, and this facade was frequently ornamented by the use of decorative brickbounds, or sculpture and carving of various forms. However, this system of non-supporting brick facing over a wood frame which in itself was not particularly stable resulted in a structure that was highly susceptible to movement, water leakage, and collapse. To help give the frame some strength, house carpenters frequently used corbels at the junction point between the joist and post, a feature often mis-attributed today to ship's carpenters. Nonetheless, the frame still lacked lateral stability and one wonders why this inefficient system continued to be used for hundreds of years over such a large geographic area. The power of tradition must indeed be strong.

Rural dwellings, although similar to middle class urban houses structurally, often lacked the ornamental emphasis placed on the gable end, as well as the brick veneer. They reflected the more basic agrarian nature of their occupants by paying little

(continued on page 3)

ANALYSIS OF BRONCK HOUSE *(continued from page 2)*

attention to fine detail, and were often roofed with thatch or board instead of tile. However, the divided casement window, jambless fireplace, two-part doors and the so-called "box" or built-in bed were still common to both. It is important to note that each house type is found in this Country, with the urban style occurring in New York City, Albany, Schenectady, New Castle in Delaware, and possibly other locations where a nucleated settlement pattern developed.

The 1738 house of Leendert Bronck, for historical purposes blessed with three datestones (two of which bear the initials of the builder and his wife), combines city and country building traditions in a manner which is probably the result of an extended cultural separation from the Mother Country. Left in isolation and surrounded by alien Anglo-American fashions, the Dutch builder was left to carry on his traditions by memory and through the apprenticeship system. After the immigrant generation passed away, the distinctions between urban and rural construction became meaningless or disappeared, permitting an interchange of ideas and techniques.

The new two-story [Bronck] dwelling was divided into two rooms per floor by a partition which also included the central chimney stack. A small but typically enclosed stairway occupied the southeastern corner of the building, and markings on the floorboards and ceiling indicate that other partitioned areas might also have been located against the south wall on the main floor. Few modifications have been made in the fenestration, but these include the replacement of two narrow casement windows on the east or main facade with sliding sash in new positions. While there are also two sliding sash windows in the west or rear facade of the building, it is not clear if these are an enlargement of earlier casement openings or simply cut through at a later time.

The new house differed little from domestic structures of nearly a century earlier as suggested by the following contract for two houses signed on May 30, 1649.

... each 32 feet long, 18 ditto wide, 9 feet high under the beams and 3 feet from the beams to the wall plate, with header and trimmers for a double chimney and the shaft

- 5 outside and inside doors
- 3 Gothic window frames
- 1 window frame with transom and mullion
- 2 three-light window frames
- Three partitions as happens to be most convenient
- The roof frame covered with boards
- Doors and window sash as required . . .
- 2 closets with shelves inside the square room
- 2 bedsteads

It appears to have been typical also of many houses built in the Albany area between 1720 and 1740.

Five other structures of very similar character which were constructed between 1729 and 1737 still stand or were photographed before demolition. An informal survey of surviving houses in New York and New Jersey suggests that building construction techniques in the North European tradition remained unchanged far longer in the Albany vicinity than anywhere else . . .

Leendert Bronck's builder used the formerly urban technique of placing a brick veneer over the supporting wooden H frame, ornamenting the main facades with Dutch bond. The gable parapets were also capped with the traditional yet highly decorative mousetoothing which placed a hardburned brick surface to the weather as protection against spalling or weathering. Interior framing indicates that jambless fireplaces were placed in both rooms on the ground floor, and exterior divided doors were constructed with wide stiles and rails surrounding one flat panel in the continuation of 17th century manner. However, all elements are somewhat lighter in scale than those of the early door in the stone house, suggesting a gradual deterioration of craft technique, an expected phenomenon.

Two crude yet original wooden casement sash with shutters and hardware survive on basement windows, suggesting window treatment for the entire structure. However, a nearly contemporary leaded sash set with square panes from the Van Bergen house in Leeds might also represent the type of casement used in more prominent areas.

Much has been written concerning the built-in beds, and indeed there is considerable documentary evidence to suggest that they were widely used by the Dutch in America. An English observer, while passing through Albany in 1774, wrote that the people there "have their beds generally in alcoves so that you may go thro all the rooms of a great house and never see a bed." The deletion of two corner corbels between the posts and joists on the west side of the Bronck House has given rise to the theory that this may have been to accommodate two such beds. However, knee braces were not always placed in that specific location as implied by a house contract drawn up in 1649, which called for a building "forty feet in length and twenty feet in width . . . ; six beams with corbels and two without corbels . . ."

To summarize, Leendert Bronck's house of 1738 was characteristic of 17th or early 18th century Dutch buildings in the Albany area, and it represented the continuation of construction traditions several centuries old. Politically and therefore culturally separated from The Netherlands, Albanians clung to a way of life that was familiar to them and their ancestors but which had become outdated

(continued on page 6)

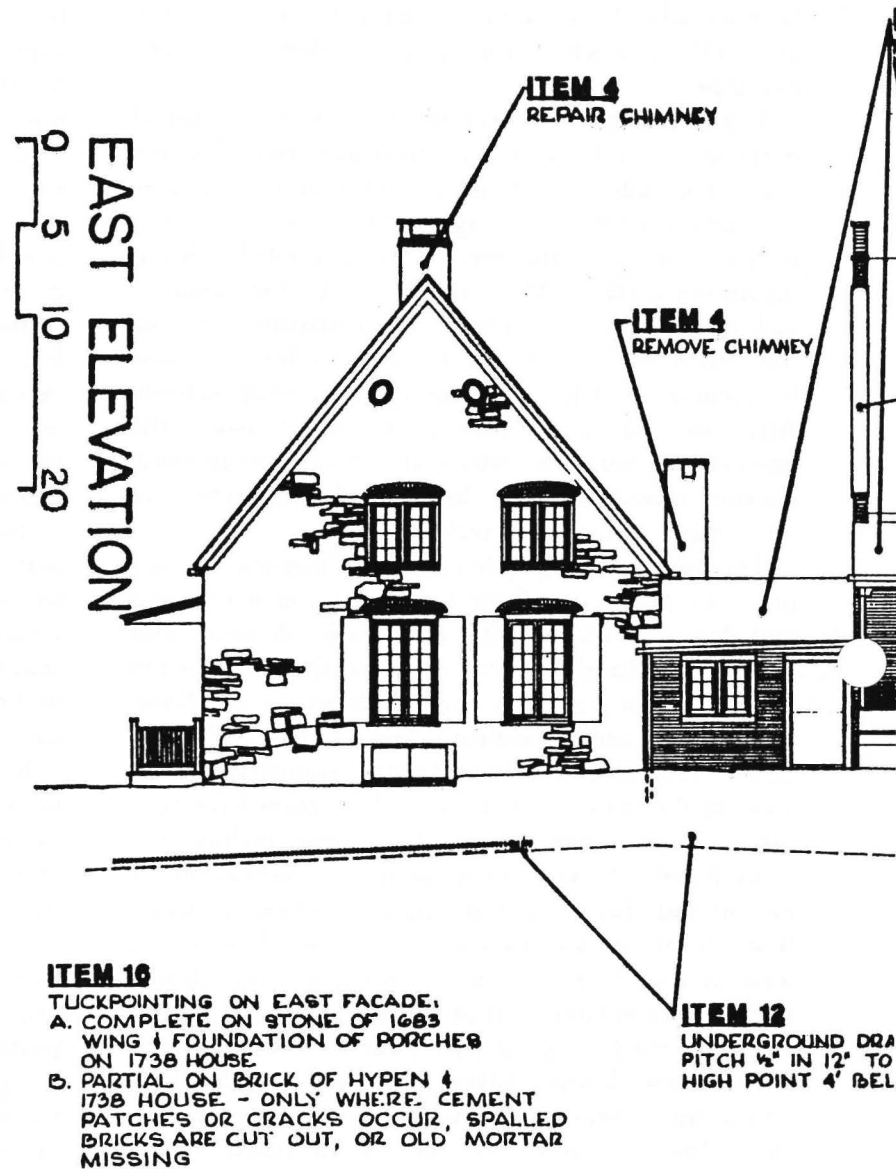
The Restoration Process



Relaid flank dormer wall and new wood shingles front of 1738 house.



Coping on Gable parapet wall and relaid North West Side - and kneeler 1738 house.



Special acknowledgment is given to the following individuals and corporations who were of major assistance in financing the extraordinary repairs to the ancient Bronck houses, by amounts of \$1,000 or above:

Mr. Schuyler Van Loan, Athens

Mr. & Mrs. Nelson D. Griswold, Tannersville and Lake Jackson, Texas

Mr. Richard V. Bronk, Oneonta - In Memory of C. Louis Bronk, James Edmond Bronk and Dr. Marcellus Bronk
First Reformed Church of Coxsackie, West Coxsackie

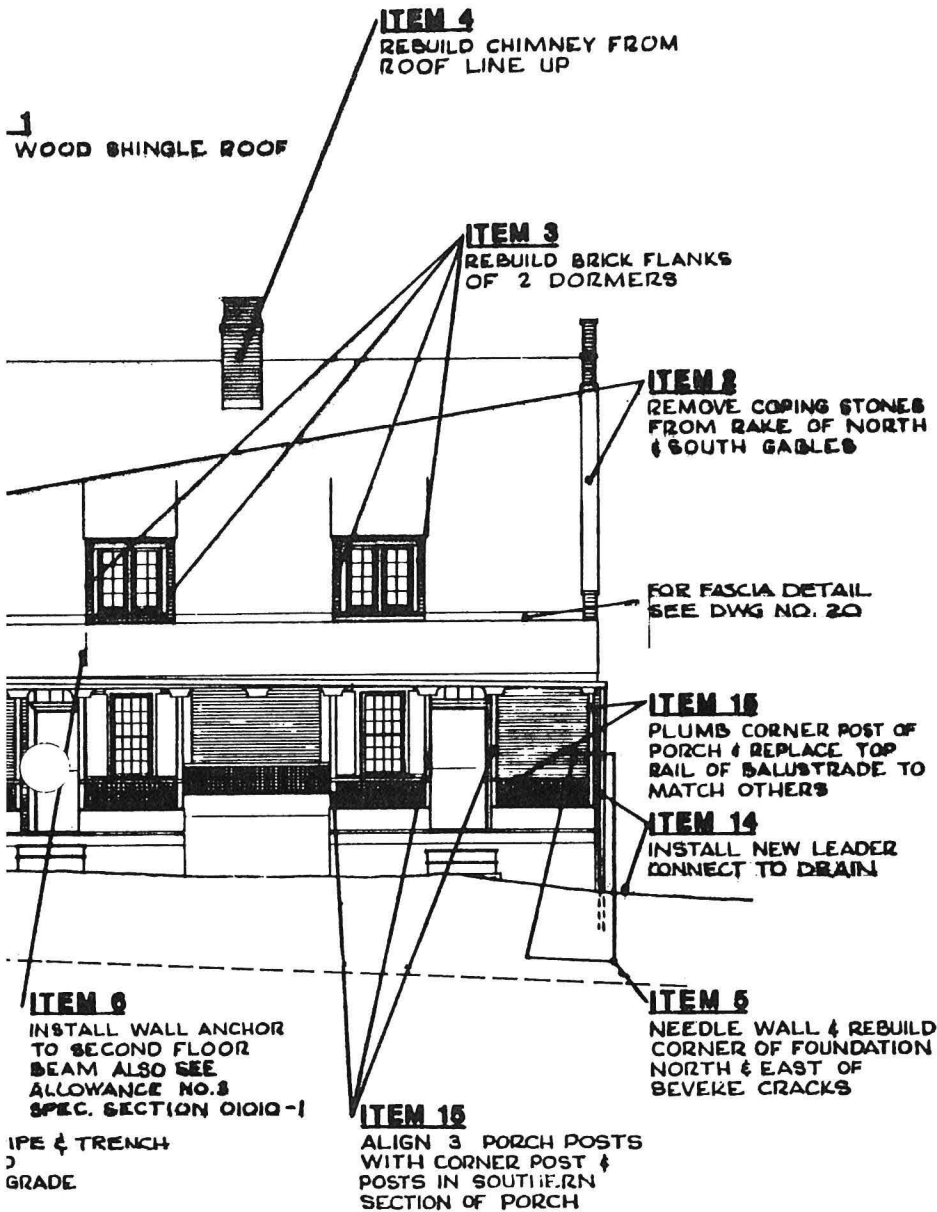
Greene County Savings Bank

IBM Fund for Community Service Program (Application of Carol Keinath)

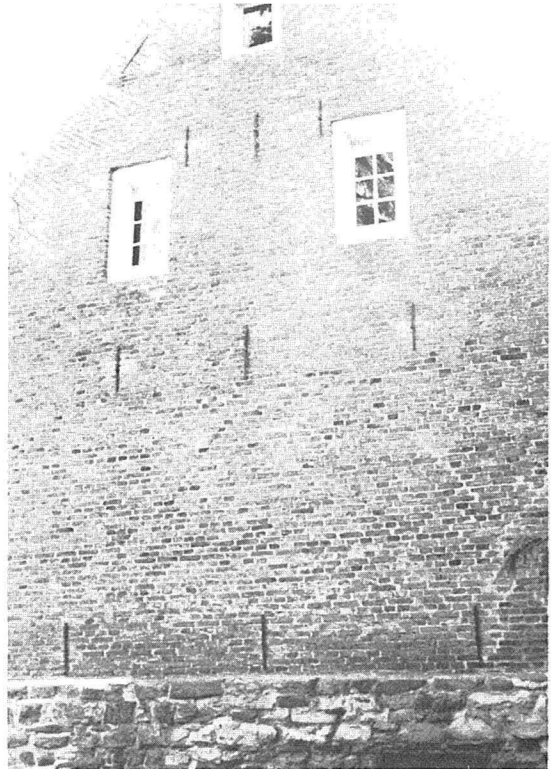
Mountain View Coach Lines, Inc. - In Memory of Henry J. Albright

State Telephone Company, Coxsackie

A Pictorial Record



South Pinnacle Torn Down



Anchor bars and relaid bricks North side 1738 House

Architectural Drawing: Courtesy of Mendel, Mesick, Cohen & Waite

Mr. Lewis A. Swyer, Albany
 Catskill Savings Bank
 National Bank of Coxsackie
 Bank of New York, Catskill
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Beecher — In Memory of George W. Bagley

Matching funds, in part, were made available by the Division for Historic Preservation, N.Y.S. Parks & Recreation and the United States Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. Mr. Wilbur J. Cross, Executive Vice President and Secretary, Catskill Savings Bank, chaired the fund drive. A number of area residents contributed in several collection drives; their names are unknown; we can only say THANK YOU.

ANALYSIS OF BRONCK HOUSE *(continued from page 3)*

elsewhere, even in the Mother Country, by 1750. While the Dutch in other parts of New York had begun to assimilate English tastes and fashions within a few years after the takeover in 1664, those in the upper Hudson Valley continued to preserve their Lowlands culture and used its material manifestations as a subconscious means of separate identity.

Virtually nothing is known of the life of Leendert Bronck or his wife, including their dates of death. We can, though, determine that by 1730 they had become the parents of two sons and three daughters, and that both were still living in 1751. Their eldest son and next owner of the Bronck farm was named Jan Leenderse, who was baptised at the Dutch Reformed Church in Albany on July 14, 1723.

The three decades preceding the American Revolution appear to have been prosperous ones for the Bronck family. It is possible that the Dutch barn located to the northeast of the homestead was built about the same time as the brick house, and it became the center of an increasingly active and productive farm. In 1747 Jan married Elsie van Buren, three years his junior, and their only child, who was named Leendert, was baptised at the Reformed Church in Claverack on May 11, 1751. Marital ties with the Gansevoorts, de Wandelaers, van Burens and other upper valley families assured the Broncks of good social standing and constant communication with Albany . . .

□□□□□

THE BRONCKS *(continued from page 1)*

The Coxsackie area would be the third place of residence for Pieter Bronck in the new world. He first appears on the scene in New Amsterdam, overshadowed by his close relative, Jonas Bronck. These Broncks, according to the research of Mr. G. V. C. Young (Isle of Man, British Isles), were of Swedish extraction. Jonas was born in the year 1600 in the Province of Smöland in Sweden; the birthplace of Pieter is now established as Jonköping, also in the same province. Using the Julian calendar, and taking into correction the necessary months' adjustment, the birthdate of Pieter is 1616/1617.

Prior to his marriage to Hillitje in The Netherlands, Pieter earned his livelihood as a sailor. There is no indication he lived full-time with Jonas and Jonas' second wife, Antonia Slagboom Bronck at *Emmanus* (now South Bronx); it may well be he was at sea during a portion of this period. It is a matter of record that Pieter was one of three persons who assisted in the evaluation of Jonas' estate at the time of the latter's death in 1643. Unfortunately, Jonas' will has never been located, if one existed, and we will never know what portion of the estate, if

anything, went to Pieter.

Early in November, following Jonas' death, Pieter had his will drawn up; a record survives in the New York State archives:

In the year [after] the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus [Christ] one thousand six hundred and forty-three, before me, Cornelis van Tienhoven, secretary in New Netherland, appeared Pieter Bronck, of sound body, up and about and in full possession of his memory and understanding, who declared that he, reflecting on the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the hour thereof and wishing therefore to anticipate all such uncertainty of death by testamentary disposition, has of his own free will, true knowledge and deliberate intention, without inducement, persuasion or misleading on the part of any one, made and confirmed, as he hereby does make and confirm, this his testament and last will, in the manner and form hereinafter written:

First, after revoking all and whatsoever testaments and other dispositions which he before this date may in any wise have made or executed and then proceeding to the terms of his present testament, he Piter Bronc [Pieter Bronck] bequeathes and devises to Engeltje Mans all such goods and chattels as he shall leave behind after his death. As regards his father, mother, or other friends, they are far from here, and if there be anything, they can not come here. Willing and requesting that this after his decease may take effect before all courts and judges. Done the 4th of November A° 1643.

P. Bronc[k]

Cornelio van der Hoykens, fiscal, witness

Within a few months we find Pieter returning to the old country – The Netherlands; here he married Hillitje (Hilletie) Jans of Quakebrugge. Both are indicated in the marriage banns as being 28 years of age; both further indicated their parents were deceased. Pieter gave his occupation as that of sailor.

Returning to New Netherland, we next hear of this newly married couple as being at Beverwyck (Albany) by the year 1649. The early minutes of the colony of Rensselaerwyck identify Pieter as having a house in that city (December, 1649). At this location their son, Jan, was born about 1652.

These same minutes, as well as those of Fort Orange (1652-1660) cast additional light on Pieter's activities. The records show him involved in various business enterprises, a man of quick temper, one not afraid of physical combat, impatient of local regulations, and both a creditor and a debtor. He was classified as a burgher, one of the more substantial citizens.

The Honorable Pieter Stuyvesant, concerned with the shortage of grain for bread, had attempted to restrict the number of taverns with their brew houses, and had also sought to reduce the potency of the beer. When Pieter Bronck petitioned the court at Fort Orange on September 14, 1651, for permission to construct a tapping house "for which he had a quantity of lumber piled near his house," it was recognized the town already had its allotted two taverns, but it would approve Pieter's request "for

(continued on page 7)

THE BRONCKS *(continued from page 6)*

the convenience of the public." The building lot for the tavern and brewhouse was approved by the council on October 25, 1653, located on the east side of what is now Broadway. Pieter also succeeded in securing a large plot of land on North Pearl Street.

At times Pieter resorted to court litigation to secure tavern and other debts due him as in the case of one Jan Van Bremen; the latter put up a counterclaim of money due him for hops sold to Pieter. This same court, noting Pieter's disregard of the regulation prohibiting very strong beer, on May 11, 1655 ordered him enjoined from tapping his supply on hand, "for the reason that he brews the same, in whatever manner it may be, and on acting contrary hereto he shall the first time forfeit 25 guilders, the second time 50 guilders and the third time receive arbitrary correction, provided that he shall be permitted to draw the wine which he now has in the cellar according to the gage."

Occasional fights broke out in the Bronck tavern, perhaps from the potency of the Bronck flip he was alleged to have served. But the burghers continued to frequent the tavern for official business. Selling strong drink to the Indians was forbidden; Pieter was once accused in court of "enticing savages into the town, an action which he denied."

Barent Oosterman and Poulus Martensen had reason to fear Pieter's temper. The latter had pulled a knife on Poulus during a quarrel and on another occasion physically assaulted Barent. In the Oosterman case, the victim sought the protection of the court, urging that Pieter Bronck be banished from the town for three years if he did not forsake force.

On April 22, 1659, Harman Bastiaensen and Pieter Bronck were granted permission to build a saw mill "on condition that Abraham Vosborch shall have the first choice of location, as he was the first applicant." It is doubtful if they took advantage of this approval.

The early colonists were not exempt from economic depressions; Pieter Bronck's financial affairs became increasingly involved when a period of economic stagnation prevented him from collecting or paying debts. He resorted to the mortgaging of his tavern and brewery, Jacob Gevick advancing him money on that security on November 16, 1661. During the next few years Pieter was unable to liquidate this mortgage and was finally forced to surrender title to his tavern and brewhouse to Jacob Gevick and Reyndert Pietersen in 1663. Somehow Pieter did manage to retain title to his Albany house to which, in subsequent years, Pieter and his family returned during the winter months.

The reasons for Pieter locating his stone house of 1663 inland from the river remain a matter of conjecture. Open land along a flowing stream?

Nearness to the Catskill Indian footpath? Availability of rubble stone? He may well have had this site in mind during those Albany years when he became acquainted with Hans Vos (Catskill Landing) or when he was on hunting and trading expeditions. Dr. A. W. Van Slyke of Coxsackie, a local historian, maintained Pieter Bronck had a crude hunting lodge prior to 1663 near the site of the present James Warren residence (New Baltimore—Coxsackie town line). If so, this was not far from the present Bronck Homestead site.

The river, Marte Geeretsen's (Van Bergen's) Island, the great spring or fountain, the Kats Kill Path, the Stone Kill, and Neuton Hoeck were all useful landmarks in defining the limits of the Bronck Patent. Until his death in 1669, when his widow paid the Dutch Church at Albany "two schepels of wheat for the mourning pall," Pieter worked his land during the growing season with little neighborly conflict. Subsequent to his death, however, both Hillitje and her son, Jan, appeared in court against her neighbor to the northward, one Barent (Coeymans) the miller. She proved successfully he "was coming on her land to cut logs, she intending likewise to build a saw mill on her kill."

Hillitje and Jan were not as successful in the matter of defining the limits of the south boundary. In the *Court Minutes of Albany* (Vol. 1, page 1745), we read: "Hilliken (Hillitje) Bronck appearing with her son exhibits some affidavits showing that the land situated at Kocks Hackie as far as Styffsink (hill) belongs to her and requests that the ownership of that part of the land may be confirmed to her by patent. Jan Clute representing the other patentees [of the Loonenburg Patent, Fountain Flats section], says that the land claimed by Hilliken Bronck does not belong to her but was purchased of and for them according to the bill of sale which they have."

This court dispute and the surviving minutes give us some insight into the earliest years of the Bronck settlement at Coxsackie. In supporting her claim for the south boundary, Hillitje called as witnesses Dirk and Sarah Hendrickse. Dirk testified (probably by affidavit) that he was 50 years of age and recalled the year before the ice flow: "that is 18 years ago, he resided at Coxsackie and with Pieter Bronck and the Indian who had sold the land, went to mark the limits. First came to a Steine Kil which comes out of the Great spring (Groote fonteyn) and there marked a tree, then Eastward to Styffsink, from there to the river, coming out a little below the Hoy Hoeck near a little kil on the west shore opposite the lower point of the great Neuten Hoeck."

Sarah Hendrickse swore that she was 45 years of age and "says that the year before the ice flow

(continued on page 8)

1665/1666), she went a short distance with Hillitje Bronck and the Indian proprietor of the land at Coxhacky to see the bounds marked, but Hillitje on the way got a pain in her back, so that she and Hillitje did not go further on the land than to the oak tree, and then turned back. Later her husband (Dirk), Pieter Bronck and Shakemose (Sachemoes) the Indian came home and she saw that he (Sachemoes) received his last payment for the land at that time."

Jurian Teunise, on the other side of the court dispute sought to discredit testimony of Jan Bronck by remarking: "What does Jan Bronck know about it? He was at that time a snotty boy."

Another witness, Jacob Phoenix of Klinkenbergh swore that "Jurian Teunise went out into the field of Pieter Bronck who was plowing and asked him how far his land extended and Pieter answered, "to the trees which are withered." Other witnesses were called upon to identify such landmarks as the Steene (Steine, Stoney) Kill, and the Fonteyn (Fountain) Spring.

The court decision in this latter case went against Widow Bronck and her son, Jan. "The right honorable general and council having heard the parties on both sides and carefully examined and considered the documents in the case, adjudge and decide that the land in question belongs to Jan Clute and his partners, the evidence produced by said Hillitken (Hillitje) Bronck (Bronck) being insufficient. Therefore the respective parties shall regulate themselves according to their patents."

Andriessen, the Irishman, was among the first to purchase land for homestead purposes from Pieter Bronck. The latter sold Andriessen 70 morgens where Andriessen proposed to build a house. This land is believed to be north of the present Cocksackie Correctional Facility; Andriessen defaulted on this purchase and later Hillitje and Jan sold their interest to Marte Geeretsen (Van Bergen).

For some unknown reason, possibly because his mother would not turn over the Cocksackie land holdings to him, Jan Bronck, in the year 1675, acquired from the Indians a fertile tract of fifty acres of land at Katskill (Leeds), adjacent to the creek. In a 1734 deed to his son, Casparus, Jan noted that part of his Leeds land was granted to him by Lord Edward Cornbury, colonial governor of New York (cousin to Queen Anne), and part by conveyance from Francis Salisbury with release from Garret, Martin and Petrus Van Bergen.

In 1680, five years after acquiring the Katskill land, Jan Bronck married Commertje Leendertse Conyn; her one sister marrying Harmon Gansevoort. Jan had certainly farmed the Cocksackie family lands

from early manhood and subsequent to his marriage lived at the Bronck Homestead for a short period of time. But by June of 1682 he and his growing family removed to Old Catskill; in 1731 Jan replaced his log house there for one of stone. Hillitje Bronck leased the Cocksackie land and the homestead to Harmon Gansevoort for three years, the latter entering into possession on July 1, 1684. By the terms of Hillitje's will, Jan inherited the homestead at Cocksackie about 1685.

Harmon Gansevoort, Commertje Bronck's brother-in-law, found himself at odds with Marte Geeretsen Van Bergen over the Bronck acreage, Van Bergen seeking to eject Harmon Gansevoort from the Bronck Homestead itself. The case was finally settled when Jan Bronck and Marte Geeretsen Van Bergen merged their land claims; the new Cocksackie Patent of 1687 was the result of this agreement.

Jan Bronck is thought to have had a younger sister, the daughter of Pieter and Hillitje, but practically nothing is known of her. She may have been deceased at an early age.

Commertje and Jan Bronck were parents to nine children, three daughters and six sons. All but one, Philip 1st, grew to adulthood. Anietje married Jan Witbeck, Antje married the Reverend George Weiss "in her father's house at Catskill," and Hillitje was united in marriage with Thomas Williams of New York City. Of the sons, Pieter married Antje Bogardus in 1705 at Albany and built the small stone house at West Cocksackie (in the field behind the present Gaffney residence); Jonas married Antje Conyn at Albany — their son, Jan, would marry Charlotte Amelia Coeymans and live in the stone house on the north bank of the Hannacroix between New Baltimore and Coeymans; Philip 2nd lived to marry Sarah Conyn. Both the two remaining sons married — Leendert to Anna de Wandelaer in 1716 and Casparus to Catharine Van Bergen, at Kingston, in 1739.

To provide sustenance for a family of ten must have kept Jan and Commertje Bronck occupied. It was also a large number of sons and daughters to "set up in the world." The girls had their traditional doweries of personal property but the sons needed land. Except for Casparus who took over the Leeds farm, the solution lay in the Cocksackie Patent. Leendert Bronck and Anna de Wandelaer (daughter of Johannes de Wandelaer and Sarah Schepmoes), who were married on February 26, 1717, took over the Bronck Homestead at Cocksackie shortly after their marriage. It is known that Leendert held title to part of this land prior to his father's death in 1743.

Jan Bronck was active in the colonial militia and served as a lieutenant under Peter Schuyler in the 1705 expedition against French Canada. His sons

(continued on page 9)

THE BRONCKS *(continued from page 8)*

were also enrolled in local militia companies in compliance with the colonial policy, Casparus being elected a captain.

In his will probated October 6, 1743, Jan Bronck named his son, Casparus, sole executor; the witnesses to the document were neighbors Silvester and William Salisbury, and Jacob Fresee. Having disposed of much of his property to his family during lifetime, Jan recommended his soul into the hands of God, expressed his desire for a proper Christian burial, "never doubting but at the General Resurrection . . ." The oldest son, Pieter, received four morgens of land (8 acres) near the Deep Kill at Cocksackie in right of primogeniture; all five sons, namely Pieter, Leonard, Jonas, Philip and Casparus were to share the undivided lands at Cocksackie with the restriction that Casparus was to have timber for his saw mill at that place. Obviously Jan Bronck had already provided for his daughters. It is known, however, that Thomas Williams, husband to Hillitje Bronck, was sold a plot of Jan Bronck's Cocksackie land west of the Cocksackie Creek on June 29, 1725.

In two generations, the Broncks had established themselves firmly into the fabric of colonial New York, their descendants would intermarry with many prominent upriver families and there would be lasting kinship ties among the Conines, the Van Burens, the Van Dycks, the de Wandelaers, and the Van Bergens.

□□□□□

Aspects of the Conservation Work:

Archaeological study (to be the subject of a special article in subsequent issue of this Journal.)

Rebuilding of three chimneys from the roofline up, removal of wooden chimney.

Rehanging of the gutters.

Installation of 6 wall tie rods and anchors in the 1684-1792 west stone wing.

Major repairs to the 1738 house porch.

Caulking of wood-to-masonry joints.

Painting as required.

Lightning protection system replaced.

Photographic documentation undertaken for permanent historical reference.

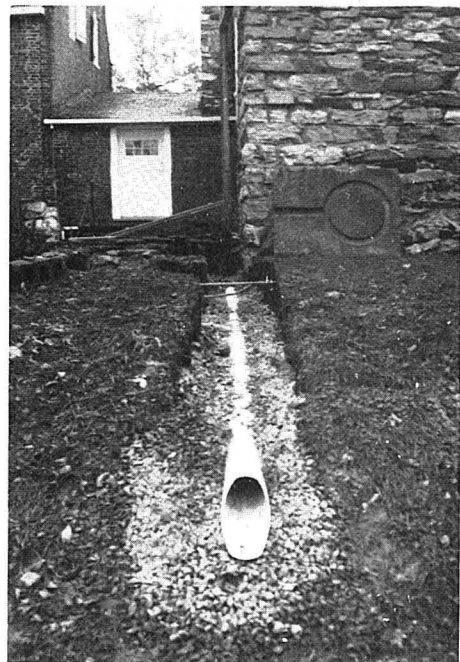
Foundation Repairs: The lack of a proper drainage system around the Bronck House, coupled with the normally damp soil conditions and the great weight of the slate roofs, caused a severe foundation failure at the northeast corner of the 1738 house. The damaged portion of the foundation was rebuilt on a fill of crushed stone to allow for proper drainage. The brick veneer exterior and interior walls were rebuilt.



*Removing slate and old wood shingles and installing new shingles
1663 House, South Side*



Stone foundation torn down under 1738 house, North East Side



6" PVC drain pipe, North West corner, 1792 house.

IN APPRECIATION

Extraordinary conservation efforts to save the 1663 and 1738 National Historic Landmark houses in the Bronck complex were, in part, made possible by financial contributions from the following concerned individuals and corporations. (Major contributors for \$1,000 or above are listed on pages 4 and 5.)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Mrs. Reed Adams
Mrs. LeRoy W. Atwater
Miss Eleanor V. Albright
Amos Post, Inc.
American Thermostat, Inc.
First Reformed Church, Athens
First Reformed Church, Athens,
150th Anniversary Fund
Mr. & Mrs. Henry W. Bagley
Mr. & Mrs. Calvin S. Borthwick
Mr. & Mrs. William C.
Burmeister
Mr. & Mrs. Herman Bauer
Miss Helen Becker
Mr. & Mrs. Richard J. Buck
Mrs. Matthew Bender IV
Bryant's Super, Inc., Greenville
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas H. Blaisdell
Mr. Clark W. Blackburn, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. William W. Bergman
Mr. William R. Bronk
Brooksbury Mason Contractors,
Inc.
Mrs. Florence D. Bucher
Mr. & Mrs. William Beck, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Becker, Jr.
Mrs. Eleanor J. Bagley
Miss Harriet L. Bronk
Dr. & Mrs. Robert N. Blakeslee
Mr. & Mrs. Edward A. Bogardus
Bethlehem Historical Society
Mr. & Mrs. Ludwig Bindl
Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth F. Bott
Mrs. Henry J. Conland
Mr. & Mrs. Franklin Clark
Mr. & Mrs. George E. Carl
Ms. Mildred W. Chatterton
Ms. Marjorie D. Chatterton
Dr. & Mrs. John J. Christian
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert S. Cahn
Mrs. Hugo W. Claassen
Mr. & Mrs. H. Milton Chadderdon
Mr. Wilson O. Clough
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Chiesa
Dr. & Mrs. Robert G. Chaloner
Mrs. Robert G. Chatterton
Miss Esther H. Dunn
Mr. Burdette Dewell, Sr.
Miss Julia M. Dolan — Thelma Dolan
Mr. & Mrs. Walter P. Dietz
Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Durham
Mr. George Diederick
Ms. Freda H. Engle
Miss Roberta M. Everitt</p> | <p>Mrs. Ruth M. Franklin
Mr. & Mrs. G. Howard Fisher
Mr. Jacques E. Guttinger
Mr. Rubén Garcia
Mr. Edwin G. Grossman
Greenville-Norton Hill Lbr. Co.
Mrs. Fannie P. Grossman
Mr. John J. Gilligan
Mr. & Mrs. K. S. Goranson
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph T. Garland
Mrs. Janet Hoch
Mrs. Frances Hartman
Mr. & Mrs. Francis A. Hallenbeck
Mr. & Mrs. George F. Holdridge
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Hunter
Mr. George Henke
Hensonville Frozen Food
Lockers, Inc.
Ms. Myrtle E. Hamm
Ms. Jane E. Haines
Mr. Walter J. Heffernan
Mrs. Ariel Ingalls
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald T. Ingalls
Dr. & Mrs. DuBois Jenkins
Mrs. Ralph J. Kamenoff
Mr. Irving M. King, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Valentine
Kriele, III
Mr. & Mrs. Clifford
Kisselburgh
Kiwanis Club of Greenville
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lindsay
Mrs. Betty D. Larsen
Ms. Catherine R. Lamb</p> | <p>Mr. George C. Lewis
Mrs. Leonard Marquoit
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Mikhitarian
Mrs. Fredrick H. Miller
Mrs. Patrick J. McKenna
Mr. & Mrs. Harry J. Miller
Dr. & Mrs. Bernard Margolius
Ms. Freeda Margraf
Ms. Lottie M. Margraf
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E.
Mulligan, III
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Mancuso
A. Oren & Son, Inc.
Mr. Theodore S. Overbagh
Mr. & Mrs. Keith L. Prostler
Mrs. Ruth E. Powell
Ms. Grace E. Pelham
Hon. Edward W. Pattison
Pioneer Insurance Company,
Greenville
Ms. Rose Pantaleo
Mr. & Mrs. Frank L. Palmer
Mrs. Howard L. Richardson
Mr. Fred Rominger
Rich's Floor Covering
Ms. Gertrude J. Robinson
Ms. Doris Roe
Rotary Club of Cairo
Miss Alice L. Stevens
Mr. & Mrs. Frederick C. Schwinn
Ms. Sally Swartzmiller
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene K. Somers
Mr. & Mrs. Earl C. Scott
Mr. & Mrs. Russell Sutton, Jr.</p> | <p>Mr. Harry A. Steele
Stiefel Labs, Inc.
Mr. Lawrence Starr
Mr. Herman E. Story
Mr. & Mrs. W. Henry Schmidt
Mr. Charles J. Sbarboro
Mrs. Doris C. Sullivan
Mr. Charles Stiller
Ms. Evelyn M. Tomlinson
Mrs. Dorothy B. Todd
Mr. & Mrs. Warren W. Travis
Tranquility Camp, Inc.
Mr. Frank Tompkins
The Thompson House, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. Everett H. Tourjee
Ms. Margaret S. Ten Eyck
(In Memory of William P.
Stevens)
Ms. Fradelia V. Vaughn
Mr. George E. Van Dyke
Ms. Margaret Varden
Mr. Leo Vermann
Mrs. M. Bruce Wayman
Mr. Robert V. Warrington
Miss Janet Walker
Mrs. Evelyn E. Wardle
Ms. Katherine Wallwork
Mrs. Ellen Whitbeck
Mr. Robert B. Whitbeck
Windham Country Club, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. Judson Wright
Wines & Liquors, Unlimited,
Ravena
Ms. Frances E. Woodruff</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

Greene County Historical Society
Raymond Beecher, Editor
R. D.
COXSACKIE, NEW YORK 12051

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
**U. S. POSTAGE
PAID**
CATSKILL, N. Y. 12414
PERMIT NO. 91