Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture

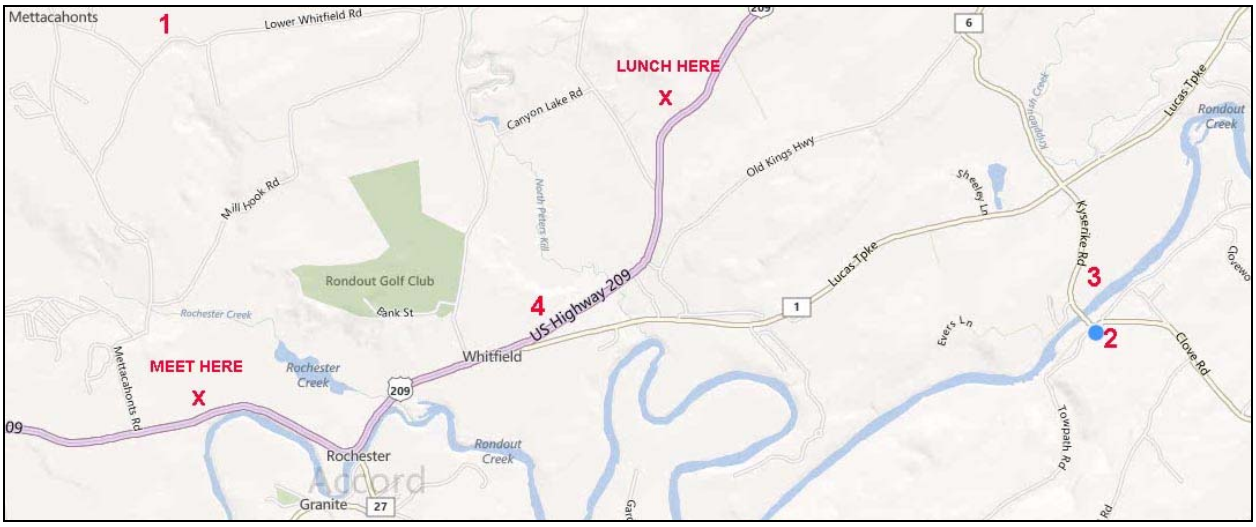
Tour of Historic Farmsteads in the Town of Rochester, Ulster County
Saturday April 21, 2012

Following up on a project documenting 10 historic farmsteads in the Town of Rochester, Neil Larson will be conducting a tour of three of them that illustrate a range of periods from the earliest, the Osterhoudt Home Farm, which may date as early as 1720, to the latest, Appeldoorn Farm, a 1756 farmstead updated by Myron S. Teller in 1937. In between is a farm established in the 1830s by Thomas S. Schoonmaker. In addition, we will be making a visit to Jonathan Nedbor's Canal Forge. We will be meeting at the parking lot of the Rochester Reformed Church, 5142 Route 209, Accord at 10 am. The tour will wrap up by 5:30 pm. There will be a Dutch-treat lunch stop at the Hillside Restaurant.

SCHEDULE

10:00	Meet at Rochester Reformed Church, 5142 Route 209
10:30-11:30	Osterhoudt Home Farm, 167 Lower Whitfield Road (#1 on map)
12:00-1:00	Canal Forge, 496 Towpath Road (#2 on map)
1:30-2:30	Lunch at Friends & Family II Hillside Restaurant, 4802 Rt. 209
3:00-4:00	Thomas S. Schoonmaker Farm, 607 Kyserike Road/County Route 6 (#3 on map)
4:30-5:30	Appeldoorn Farm, 4938 Route 209 (#4 on map)

The map below will serve as your guide. Numbers correspond to the schedule.



STOP #1

OSTERHOUDT HOME FARM
167 Lower Whitfield Road

View of Osterhoudt Home Farm house, wagon house and setting from southwest

The Osterhoudt Home Farm originated as the centerpiece of a larger land grant devised to Osterhoudt family soon after the Town of Rochester was incorporated. Based on its front-gable-façade design, the initial stone house could have been built as early as the 1720s when Kryne Osterhoudt and his wife, Geertje Decker, settled in the town, moving there from Kingston with Kryne's father Teunis. The farm is situated on an upland plateau well-watered by numerous small streams converging into the Rochester Creek near Mill Hook. The cultivated landscape remains open and functional across most of the farm stretching north from Lower Whitfield Road to the base of a ridge carrying Upper Whitfield Road. The stone house and farm buildings of the neighboring farmstead, known as the Schoonmaker-Rider Farm, which was partitioned off from the east side of the Osterhoudt tract, is visible and the agricultural landscape behind it blends seamlessly with the home farm. Likewise on the west, the lands of the adjoining Markle-Osterhout Farm expand the rural setting into that portion of the historic Osterhoudt settlement. The home farm includes parts of the creek on the south side of Lower Whitfield, on land that was added later from a farm owned by Moses Depuy and now, for many years, the Kelder family. It contains the west end of a ridge that defines the southern edge of the fertile plateau. Portions of this farm appear to have originated with Peter DuBois Bevier's land grant, which extended down to the Rondout Creek.

The building compound is set back from the public road behind a lawn that now characterizes the full extent of the northern roadside. The house is sited on a slight knoll with the basement of the stone house exposed at grade on the front façade. The house reflects the oldest style of Dutch domestic architecture in the region, that is, a front-gable form, which evolved from the first wood frame dwellings introduced to New Netherlands' first settlements in the 17th century, of which Kingston was one. (This may be the only stone house with front-gable façade design left in the town.) In Ulster County, they began to be replicated

in stone in the early 18th century by more affluent farmers and merchants. The Osterhoudt house was built in two sections, a sequential construction program typical of early stone dwellings. As in other cases, e.g., in Kingston, as well as new towns like Hurley and New Paltz, a wood frame house likely was built first and gradually replaced by stone additions. The at-grade basement entry suggests that a kitchen was located in the basement; it was also the place where butter was made and kept cool. The existing wood frame wing on the west side of the house is a mid-19th-century addition.

A Dutch barn sited west of the house is now the centerpiece of a more developed early 20th-century farm yard. Dutch barns were common to all farms in the town and county in the 18th and 19th centuries, at least those farms owned by families of Dutch heritage. They are quite rare now, so this survivor is of exceptional significance. Like the house, the Dutch barn presented a gabled front façade, and it had low side walls and a huge roof. (The English had their own traditional barn type, which differed significantly from the Dutch barn. It had taller walls, a smaller roof and an entrance on axis perpendicular to the ridge of the roof.) The Dutch barn was designed for the drying and processing of wheat, the principal cash crop of farms in the Hudson Valley region during the 18th century. After the Revolutionary War, due to wheat blights and price competition from more fertile areas west of the Catskills, the local agricultural economy abruptly shifted to dairy farming, with butter as the main product. No longer engaged in the international wheat trade of the Colonial period, farmers provided fresh foodstuffs to meet demand in the fast-growing city to the south.

This change in agriculture resulted in fundamental changes to farmsteads. Whereas the Dutch barn met most of the needs of the 18th-century farmer, as production diversified, a different type of barn and a variety of specialized outbuildings became necessary. The Dutch barn on this farm was altered with the removal of a side aisle on the east side and the addition of a door on the heightened façade, changing the orientation from the road (south) to the east and adapting the interior to accommodate animals and hay rather than grain. (Hay was in ever-increasing demand on dairy farms, and any excess could be sold to liveries in New York City.) Additional buildings were added to stable horses, shelter wagons and machinery, stockpile corn and extra hay, house sheep and poultry, and store milk awaiting shipment (a later development). A two-hole privy now tucked behind the barn was once located much closer to the house before being replaced by indoor plumbing.

The earliest farm statistics are found in the 1850 U.S. Census. At that time the farm contained 55 improved and 10 unimproved acres, indicating that more than the existing farm was used for production. It supported two horses, four milk cows, three other cattle, six sheep and eighteen swine, all of which were pastured. Fields were planted with rye, oats, buckwheat and corn, all of which largely went to animal feed; meadows produced hay. In addition, Irish potatoes, peas and beans were grown for human and animal consumption. Butter, wool, maple sugar, beeswax and hops were market products. Animals were slaughtered for meat, some for home consumption, some for sale. Poultry and orchard products were not recorded in 1850, but they would have made an important contribution to the farm's income. Production statistics remained consistent to the end of the 19th century, which was near the mean for farm activity town-wide.

Farm activity has ceased, and the Osterhoudt Home Farm is dormant; however, the buildings and farm land have been sufficiently maintained so that it represents the architectural and spatial character of an evolving 300-year-old farmstead.

Historic Features

The stone house was constructed in two stages beginning as early as c. 1720 with a wood frame wing added in the late 1800s. The story-and-a-half stone house has a front gable façade with an entrance and window under a porch and a basement entry at grade. A seam in the east wall indicates the two sections of the house. There are a later door and two windows in the east side wall and a single window in the rear

gable end. The few windows and low side walls suggest an early 18th-century building date. The two-story wood frame wing added to the west side of the house, probably during the time Elias D. Osterhoudt lived there. It more than doubled the size of the dwelling and provided more up-to-date accommodations. In this period, it appears that the kitchen occupied the rear section of the stone house.

The Dutch Barn, built sometime in the 18th century, has been altered but survives as an important landmark not only to this first phase of agricultural architecture in the region, but also for the evidence of how it was adapted to changing farm practices. (No Dutch barn exists wholly intact and all that survive show how the form was adapted over time by redesign, alteration and addition.) Original components of the H frame remain in place. A side aisle was removed in the 19th century to create a new tall side façade similar in appearance to the progressive dairy barns of the period. As in this case, many Dutch barns had their entrances moved to the side walls, but the removal of a side aisle is an unusual alteration.

The Hay Shed was recently added to the north end of the Dutch Barn to store the large hay bales now in general production. The pole structure (apparently reusing creosoted telephone poles) is the common construction method for agricultural buildings.

The Small Barn was built in two sections with the front gable section on the north side constructed first. Its low space on the ground level suggests it originated as an animal house with hay and feed storage in the loft above. Constructed of a combination of hewn and sawn materials, it likely was built in the mid 19th century. An addition was created by extending the roof on the south side; it is a taller space capable of sheltering farm equipment. Screened openings in the rear suggest that part of it was used as a poultry house for a time.

The Milk House is a relic of the period when local dairy farmers shifted from preserving milk as butter to shipping raw milk by wagon or railroad to regional creameries for processing. This appears to be a building constructed in the early 20th century.

The Wagon House/Garage is an altered mid-19th-century building reflecting the change from horse-drawn to motor vehicles. Its location close to the house indicates it had a more domestic than farm function.

The Animal House is a mid-19th century building located on the south edge of the road opposite the house where there was pasture land. It could have housed calves, sheep and/or poultry.

Chain of Ownership

Teunis Osterhoudt, patriarch leading relocation of his family from Kingston to Rochester
Kryne & Geertjen Osterhoudt, by 1726
Cornelius & Helena Osterhoudt, until 1794
Kryne & Jannetje Osterhoudt, until 1831
Elias D. & Harriet Osterhoudt, until 1886
David & Ida Osterhoudt, until c. 1925
Deroy & Hannah Baker, until 1946
Franklin S. & Mildred Kelder, 1975
Wayne and Elizabeth Kelder
Chris Kelder, current owner

STOP #2

THOMAS S. SCHOONMAKER FARM
607 Kyserike Road (County Route #6)

View of farm buildings from SE.

The core of the Thomas S. Schoonmaker Farm exists essentially intact on the north side of the Rondout Creek, although early deed descriptions indicate it was larger, extending south across the creek and west across Kyserike Road. Later deeds document that the family also owned lots on the north side of the Shawangunk ridge. Thomas's father, Simon Schoonmaker (1765-1827) was the first of the family to own and develop the farm, but no evidence of his occupation has been identified. It is probable that the fertile bottom land had been farmed before the Schoonmakers appeared on the scene, but by whom remains unknown. Simon Schoonmaker was the fourth generation of his family living in Rochester and Marbletown. His grandfather, Daniel Schoonmaker, lived within the large tract granted to the family in 1703 nearer to Accord. Simon's father, Thomas, inherited Daniel's Marbletown lands and settled there. Thomas married Helena Van Wagenen of Kyserike, which is probably how he obtained the land that his son eventually farmed. Little more is documented. The earliest recorded deed yet found, by which the farm was sold by Simon Schoonmaker and Sarah C. Lounsbury, two of Simon's grandchildren, to their brother, Daniel, cites it was the farm that Simon Schoonmaker conveyed to his son, Thomas. The house, barn and most of the outbuildings date from Thomas S. Schoonmaker's lifetime. It is not known if the existing house replaced an earlier one.

The Greek Revival-style of the story-and-a-half wood frame farmhouse indicates that it was built c. 1840 when Thomas S. Schoonmaker was the proprietor of the farm. His father Simon Schoonmaker had died in 1827, and Thomas seems to have made a concerted effort to modernize the farm. The house retains the traditional scale and form of 18th-century dwellings, though updated in exterior appearance and interior plan. The symmetrical front façade with center entrance was a common design feature by the turn of the

19th century as well as the center passage plan with one or one-and-a-half rooms on each side. Windows in the Greek frieze indicate that the upper story was finished with bedrooms. A large kitchen ell attached to the rear is another item of domestic improvement that was popular in the period. Stone had fallen out of favor by this time. The material evidently was associated with old-fashioned customs and lifestyles and no longer conveyed an elite class distinction; in fact it was the opposite with the existing stone houses being relegated to older generations or lower-class tenants. Houses the design of Thomas S. Schoonmaker's proliferated in this period and distinguished the better farms in the early 19th century. The best houses of the period were still two-stories in scale and built of either brick—a costly manufactured material—or wood.

The barn was built in three sections, with the earliest western half being built around the time of the house. Like the house, it represents the progressive mentality of the period. By 1830 or 1840 farm function had shifted from wheat-growing to dairy and animal husbandry, and the Dutch barn was no longer an effective building. Those that survive were enlarged and adapted to accommodate animals and their feed, but many were replaced with a more efficient and commodious barn, often with a basement to house the dairy herd. Perhaps because of its location on the flats near the Rondout Creek, a basement was not practical in this case. Alternatively, a cow house may have been attached to one end of the barn, which was later replaced by an addition built on the easterly end of the barn in c. 1875 that doubled the size of the barn with stations for cows below and a voluminous hay mow above. Increasing production of hay drove farmers to build larger and larger barns. The third section is a granary attached to the southerly side of the barn where the two earlier sections are joined. The granary was where feed was stored and this unusual instance of it being connected directly to the barn presages the later introduction of silos to store feed (ensilage) in a manner and location facilitating delivery to the animals within the barn.

Other outbuildings include a wagon house that was built during the period of the barn and an ice house and equipment shed that were added some time later. A small shed sited between the two latter buildings is reputed to have originated as one associated with the Delaware & Hudson Canal, which was routed on the south side of the creek opposite the farm, and later moved to its present location. The design and finish of the building supports this assertion. At the west end of the property, outside of two stone gate posts flanking the driveway leading to the house, a long, story-and-a-half building currently identified as a workshop is nestled within some evergreens. The exact function and history of this building is not known; it may have been used as a poultry house at an earlier time.

The buildings are assembled at the southwestern end of a large, open 115-acre field that continues to be cultivated for sweet corn. The earliest farm statistics are found in the 1850 U.S. Census when Thomas S. Schoonmaker was reported as owning 80 improved acres and 70 unimproved acres, the latter probably on the mountainside south of the farm. In that year, the farm was largely involved with animal husbandry. It supported two horses, four milk cows, and four swine. Compared to other farms of similar value, this was a small animal population. There were neither cattle intended to be slaughtered for beef nor were there any sheep. This would suggest that this bottom-land farm had little pasture on which these animals relied. (Hillside farms were better suited to sheep and less suited for crops. The present open landscape would have been compartmentalized into a number of smaller fields that planted with oats, rye, buckwheat and corn, all of which largely went to animal feed. Only 4 tons of hay was produced in 1850, suggesting that Thomas S. Schoonmaker was not engaged in producing feed and bedding to ship on the canal to city stables or to feed to tow mules. In addition, Irish potatoes were grown for human and animal consumption. Butter was the principal market product. The 420 pounds of butter churned on the farm was not an exceptional amount, and the waste products would have been fed to the swine. Animals were slaughtered for meat, some for home consumption and some for sale. Poultry and orchard products were not recorded in 1850, but they would have made an important contribution to the farm's income. The low farm statistics may reflect Thomas S. Schoonmaker's advancing age (he was 50 years of age in 1850) and

diminished interest in producing at a higher level. Once his son, Simon, took over management of the farm, production recorded in subsequent censuses was notably better.

The house and farm buildings on the Thomas S. Schoonmaker Farm no longer functions as part of an agricultural enterprise; however, its land continues to be farmed by others. In spite of its current condition as a single open 100-plus-acre expanse without interrupting stone walls or tree rows, the historic agricultural setting is preserved. The historic house, barn and remaining outbuildings link the property to its agricultural origins in the 19th century.

Farm Features (numbers relate to site plan at end of form)

Thomas S. & Elizabeth Schoonmaker House, built c. 1830
Ice house, c. 1900
Shed (former D&H Canal "Locktender's Shanty" moved to site), built 1828-1850
Equipment shed,, c. 1900
Barn, c. 1830 & c. 1875
Wagon House, c. 1875
Gate posts, c. 1830
Poultry House, c. 1895
Delaware & Hudson Canal, 1828

Chain of Ownership
Thomas Schoonmaker (1734-1815), probably acquired farm through marriage to Helena Van Wagenen
Simon Schoonmaker (1765-1827) & Margaret Louw, by unrecorded conveyance
Thomas S. Schoonmaker (1799-1886) & Elizabeth Alliger, by will
Heirs of Thomas S. Schoonmaker, Simon Schoonmaker (1823-1895) was proprietor of farm
Daniel Schoonmaker, by deed from brother Simon and sister Sarah C. Lounsbury, 1889
Mary Schoonmaker, inherited from father, Daniel Schoonmaker, when he died in 1919
Elmer & Brigetta Smith
Virginia Smith Boyce Schoonmaker, by will, c. 1940, farmland conveyed to John L. Schoonmaker, Jr., Daniel L. Schoonmaker & David J. Schoonmaker after 1962
Keith Eddleman & Frank Macagnone, house and 32.45 acres, 2001

STOP #4

APPELDOORN FARM
4938 Route 209

View of Appeldoorn stone house, 1756 & 1937 and setting from southeast

The building compound is set back from the public road reached by a picturesque tree-lined lane. Two massive cut limestone posts frame the entrance, once having gates now gone. A mid-19th-century wood frame tenant house, with a wide front dormer in the Gothic taste that then pervaded the region, stands sentry west of the gateway. The lane runs perpendicular to the highway, bending westward at the vanishing point to approach the house. On the east side of this curve, Howard C. Sykes built a stone "Game House" with a great room to contain the trophies he had collected as a big-game hunter. Stones and timbers from the nearby DeWitt house, which the Sykes brothers bought with 80-acres of neighboring land in 1937, were used in the construction. Kingston architect, Myron Teller, who had made a name for himself with creative Colonial Revival-style "restorations" of stone houses in the county, modeled the recreation building after the nearby Schoonmaker house. After bending westward, the lane emerges from its wooded setting into an open vista with an expansive field stretching south- and west-ward. Midway in this vista, on a ridge above the floodplain of the North Peterskill is the old stone house with dramatic views in every direction.

Teller was also called upon to enlarge and aggrandize the interior of the historic house, which was likely in serious disrepair after years of tenancy and deferred maintenance. The project was one of the architect's major accomplishments. According to William B. Rhoads in his recent publication on Teller & Halverson, Teller was pleased to have the commission because, as he wrote in 1939, it was "one of the early American grants with a homestead lived in by a descendant as it was handed down through the generations and exemplifies the homing instinct of the Ulster County Dutch folk." From this experience, he went on to achieve his masterwork at Brykill in Brunswick, which was similarly commissioned by a Bruyn descendant coming home. At Appeldoorn Farm, Teller stabilized the stone exterior of the old

house, constructed a large wood-frame rear addition and designed new Colonial Revival-style interiors—based on Ulster County models—appropriate to a 20th-century country house. The exterior is distinguished by a new entrance with sidelights and transom framed by an elegant pedimented porch in the "Ulster County Dutch" style. Windows were replaced and solid shutters added to return the house to its perceived Colonial appearance, and dormers—a defining Teller feature—were added to the roof to improve living conditions in the attic.

From the house, the lane continued to the barnyard where it turned into a field road. Originally, farm functions would have centered on a Dutch barn, that is, the steep gable-roof aisle barns typical of the area when wheat was the primary commercial crop. Based on other documented 18th-century farmsteads in the county, this barn would have been later adapted to accommodate cows and hay when the farm economy shifted to butter production after the Revolutionary War. Dairy farming continued to be the main agricultural occupation into the 20th century when the current gambrel roof barn was built, probably on or near the site of the Dutch barn it replaced. (It is likely the Dutch barn survived until the turn-of-the-century when the existing barn was constructed; barns were not replaced with much frequency.) The innovation corresponds with the shift in product from butter to raw milk. Concrete foundations in the ground east of the barn indicate the location of accessory sheds and, perhaps, a silo, now gone. The existing metal stanchions were added by tenant farmer in 1948. An addition on the south side of the barn contains a milk tank added when a sealed vacuum milking system was installed in the mid-20th century.

Few additional farm buildings were needed for the function of the farm. A poultry house, which is another iconographic form of the turn-of-the-century farmstead when the demand for egg production, particularly from summer boarding houses, provided valuable income for the farm. (There may have been more than the existing small poultry house currently located near the barn.) Machinery and storage sheds were common. None survive here. One located south of the barn was replaced in 1937 with a stone-fronted garage and workshop designed by Myron Teller. A one-story, three room cottage south of the barn was built at the turn of the 20th-century to house farm workers.

Following the Sykeses' elevation of the farm to the status of a country retreat, the farm evidently was maintained to provide a scenic rural setting for the buildings and recreational activities, such as annual autumn pheasant shoots. The modest scale of the barn shows that they had no ambition to support a model farm on the property. Tenant farmers were employed until 1969 to maintain a resident dairy herd with the requisite corn and hay fields and pastures. The fields occupied the relatively flat zones south of the house and west of the farmyard, with the low-lying areas along the North Peterskill north of the house used for pasture. A large field exists in the northeast quadrant of the parcel; an airport occupies the southern edge of this expanse along the tree line of the woods that envelops the rest of the old DeWitt property. The barn and pasture continues to support a small herd of beef cattle, and the fields are still planted annually in hay and corn.

Historic Features

Stone house built c. 1756 with wood frame sections and interiors added in 1937. The story-and-a-half stone house has a gable roof and a five-bay front façade with a center entrance. A stone carved with the initials B.V.S. (for Benjamin Schoonmaker) and the date 1756 is positioned above the windows on the west side of the façade. Construction stages and decorative changes typical of stone houses have not been identified; most evidence was removed or concealed in the 1937 "restoration" of the house. The entrance and porch, windows, dormers and brick chimneys were added as part of the 1937 renovation. .

Barn built c. 1905. The wood frame building has a balloon frame composed completely of sawn elements and a patent truss gambrel roof. Exterior siding, doors and windows are intact. The roof utilizes Shawver or plank trusses to span the width of the barn and remove posts from the haw mow, which were obstacles

to hay handling machinery. (Named for John L. Shawver, who published plans in *Plank Frame Barn Construction* in 1904.) Rows of metal stanchions flank a center aisle with a large loft above for hay.

Poultry House. The small wood frame building with a shed roof was built about the same time as the barn (early 20th century). The exterior with wood siding is essentially intact.

Farm Worker Cottage built c. 1905. The wood frame dwelling is presently unoccupied. It has a gable roof that slopes over a wide porch on the north side of the building overlooking the low land along the creek. There are three connected rooms in the interior with a privy enclosed at the east end of the porch.

Garage & Workshop, 1937. This one-story gable-roof building reputedly replaced a machinery shed previously in this location, which is in a depression on the south side of the barn yard. It has stone walls on its north and east sides and wood frame walls on the other. The stone may have come from the DeWitt house, which was torn down and its stone and timber salvaged for the Game House (#6). A stone carved with initials V Y V W and the date 1775 is located at the base of the east wall, which also contains two garage bays with swing doors and a pedestrian entrance recessed under an overhang supported by stone wing walls on the sides. The wing wall on the north side is incorporated into a stone retaining wall along the north side of the depression. A stone post is engaged to the north wall near the east end, where a wood rail fence once terminated; a second stone post located north of the building, where the driveway enters the field east of the barnyard, is the other terminus of this missing fence. A narrow room partitioned on the north side of the building's interior is fitted out as a workshop. Myron Teller's distinctive reproduction Colonial hardware is extant on exterior and interior doors.

Game House, 1937. Like the garage (#5) this building was constructed with stone walls on the two most visible sides (south and east) and wood frame on the other two. The stone and timbers exposed on the interior were salvaged from the nearby DeWitt house, which by 1937 was in a near-ruinous state. As designed by Myron Teller, the one-story principal south façade has a center entrance flanked by two windows in the manner of the old Schoonmaker house. A smaller stone ell is attached to the east end; large brick chimneys distinguish the gable roof. The interior of the main section contains a large hunting trophy room illuminated by an unusual two-story metal-framed bay window on the north side.

Tenant House, c. 1851. Located at the highway end of the driveway, this story-and-a-half with a five-bay façade and a center entrance appears to have been built soon after its occupants Catherine Schoonmaker and David R. Elting were married. The broad central wall dormer is a feature of the period.

Gate Posts, 1937. Although no particular documentation survives, these features probably were built by the Sykeses in 1937.

<u>Chain of Ownership</u>
Benjamin Schoonmaker
Cornelius B. Schoonmaker I
Cornelius B. Schoonmaker II
Cyrus Schoonmaker
Alice Schoonmaker Sykes
Howard C. Sykes & Edward P. Sykes
Appeldoorn Realty Corp
Catherine Van Diest
Open Space Conservancy, Inc.