

Yellow Bedchamber

Originally decorated with flock wallpaper, this bedchamber is interpreted as in use by the 2 youngest Schuyler daughters, Cornelia and Caty, who would still have been living at home in 1790, and an enslaved woman as seamstress. Items here, such as books, art & writing supplies, embroidery and a filled trunk reflect the style of education the girls received at boarding school in NYC – a combination of humanities and “ornamental arts” considered appropriate for young ladies of their social rank. Portraits are Philip Jeremiah Schuyler (1768-1835) and his first wife, Sarah Rutsen (1770-1805).

Green Bedchamber

Bedchambers in the 18th century were generally public, versatile spaces in which people not only slept, but also bathed, dined, socialized, met with family, and directed the enslaved men and women who did the work of the house. The arrangement seen here illustrates the multifaceted activities Philip, Catharine, and the enslaved would have engaged in while in this room. The large size and elaborate furnishings were designed to impress the very important guests who were given this room for their own use: British General John Burgoyne, for example, was given this room while a “prisoner-guest” following his defeat at the Battles of Saratoga.

Back Courtyard

Today, none of the outbuildings or mansion appendages once located in the back courtyard survive. However, some are indicated by raised garden beds seen as you exit the mansion through the back door. The left bed represents the size and location of Schuyler’s office. On the right, the furthest bed from the mansion represents the kitchen, where enslaved women would have prepared meals for the family and guests; the bed closest to the mansion was the nursery (for plants). These buildings were connected by a covered walkway. Other work done here may have making soap, laundry, mashing meal, etc.

Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site

Schuyler Mansion was built for Philip and Catharine Schuyler between 1761-1765. It was the seat of an 80+ acre estate which included formal gardens, orchards, and farm. An enclosed courtyard was located in back of the mansion and contained out-buildings, including the kitchen, ash house, and Necessary House (outhouse). The courtyard was also where many of the men and women enslaved by the Schuyler family labored. They may have also lived in the garrets of a few of the out-buildings, as well as in the attic and cellar of the mansion.

Philip and Catharine (Van Rensselaer) Schuyler spent their lives in this house, along with their 8 surviving children (out of 15 born), up to 13 enslaved men and women, extended family, and numerous guests. Children are Angelica, Elizabeth (Eliza), Margaret (Peggy), John Bradstreet, Philip Jeremiah, Rensselaer, Cornelia and Catharine (Caty).

Front Hall

The front hall was a grand space intended to impress visitors. Twenty-six feet long with twelve-foot high ceilings, adorned with elaborate wainscoting and English hand-painted wallpaper called *The Ruins of Rome*, it was the first space in which Schuyler’s status, wealth, and desire to be fashionable were emphasized. This was underscored by family and guests being met at the door by an elaborately dressed enslaved man, possibly Prince, Schuyler’s head enslaved servant.

The hall was not only a passageway to other rooms, but during warmer months, might also be used as a room by the family for dining, entertaining, or visiting. However, the lack of a fireplace would prevent winter use when the hall would be extremely chilly.

The Best Parlor

At the time of Philip Schuyler's residence in the mansion, the Blue, or Best Parlor would have been the most formal and elegant room found in the house, perhaps in the city of Albany. Here the Schuylers would display their wealth and elegance to prestigious guests visiting the mansion, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Marquis de Lafayette, and John Jay.

Conversation, playing music, singing, or an evening of games as seen here, were some of the 'refined' activities that took place. Often, special occasions and family events would be held in the most distinguished room of the house and so this room was the setting for the marriage of Elizabeth Schuyler and Alexander Hamilton in 1780.

Yellow Parlor

This room served as a slightly less formal gathering space, where family members and more intimate guests would gather to converse, write letters, read the family Bible (on table) and drink tea, as shown here. Equipped with stylish furniture that could accommodate different activities, it's possible that this room was heated and often used by the family during the coldest winter months as well. Portrait is youngest daughter Caty Schuyler (1781-1857) holding her baby daughter.

Library

While Philip Schuyler received little formal education, he was nevertheless a learned man and used this room for his private study. The breadth of his interests was a sign of wealth and culture – as was the size of his library. In an age when many people were illiterate, Schuyler's collection of over 200 books was truly extraordinary. He owned books in six languages: English, Dutch, Latin, French, German and Greek and had a wide range of interests: business, politics, finance, mathematics, and political philosophy. His collection was used by Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr and John Jay, among others. Schuyler also received and wrote letters

for his many political and military affairs in this room, likely served by Prince, an enslaved servant and Philip's personal attendant.

Dining Room

While the Schuylers likely continued the earlier practice of dining in the house where season and comfort dictated, by the 1790's having a formal dining room was both a symbol of economic success and indicative of a high level of refinement. High status guests would have dined here, eating numerous courses seen here, that would have taken the enslaved cook days of labor to prepare. Guests would have been served by liveried enslaved men/boys. Portraits are: (above sideboard): Philip Jeremiah Schuyler (1768-1835) and his 2nd wife Mary Ann Sawyer (1786-1871) and Cornelia Schuyler Morton (1776-1808) and husband Washington Morton (1774-1810).

Saloon

This spacious hall, adorned with painted wainscoting, hand-painted *Ruins of Rome* wallpaper, and an elaborate cornice, was likely used for receiving prominent visitors, and for dancing or other large gatherings. While a perfect place to sit and catch river breezes during the summer, the Saloon was a mere passageway to warm bedchambers in winter months. The image on the windows is a replica of one painted by Thomas Davies from near Schuyler's property in 1766, showing the view over the Hudson River.

Blue Bedchamber

This smaller bedchamber is interpreted as being in use by visitors. Schuyler's military, business and family affairs would have brought many visitors to the mansion. As travel in the 18th century could be long and arduous, hosting overnight guests - who carried bedding or even a bedstead as part of their baggage - was common. Furnishings would have enabled different activities such as hygiene, eating, socializing, or writing letters.