

## **Holmes-Hendrickson House**

Built Circa 1754

Holmdel, Monmouth County

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, English and Dutch immigrants began settling in Monmouth County. These two cultures, transplanted to a new world, gradually mingled through marriage. English-Dutch intermarriages often retained distinct cultural customs and characteristics. The Holmes-Hendrickson House stands as a rare surviving example of this vibrant cross-cultural melding both through its family history and its architecture.

The property passed through only four families until its eventual acquisition by the Historical Association in 1959. The land upon which the house was eventually built was originally owned by Richard Stout (d. 1705) and his wife, Penelope (d. 1732/33.)<sup>1</sup> Penelope Stout is one of the best-known early settlers of Monmouth County. Her dramatic account began when she and her husband were among a group of settlers who landed on the Jersey coast near Sandy Hook in about 1620. The party was attacked by Indians soon after landing, and Penelope, the sole survivor, was beaten, disemboweled, and left for dead. She somehow managed to survive her injuries, and married Richard Stout in 1644.<sup>2</sup> Penelope gave birth to ten children, and by 1688 the aging couple began dividing their large tract of over 1,500 acres between their sons. Peter Stout (1654-1703), their eldest son, held the parcel of land until his death in 1703, when it passed to his son, John Stout (b. 1675).<sup>3</sup>

In 1716, Obadiah Holmes (1666/7-1745), another early Monmouth County settler, purchased the property “along the Hopp Brook” for approximately £500.<sup>4</sup> Obadiah probably purchased the land as a wedding gift to his eldest son Jonathan Holmes (d. 1768).<sup>5</sup> Jonathan’s

marriage to Teuntje Hendricks in 1715 was one of the earliest intermarriages between English and Dutch settlers in Monmouth County. In 1721, Jonathan received title to the property, while records indicate that he and Teuntje were already living on the farm with their first child, Obadiah.<sup>6</sup> While surviving records do not furnish specific information about the farmhouse, it was likely that a small one- or two-room structure had been built on the property. Between 1721 and 1740, Teuntje gave birth to ten more children.

In 1742, Jonathan and Teuntje sold their farm to their youngest son, William Holmes, for £600, and the couple retired to Freehold.<sup>7</sup> William held onto the farm for four years. During this time, it appears that William made serious improvements to his property, including the construction of a house and possibly additional outbuildings. Entries in the daybook of Jonathan Holmes, Jr., a cousin of William and a Freehold lumber and seed merchant, indicate that in the Fall of 1754 William Holmes purchased not only a sizeable amount of board lumber but also the services of two workmen for a period of time.<sup>8</sup>

Two years after the construction project, in 1756, William Holmes sold the property and its improvements to his cousin, Garret Hendrickson (1734-1801), for the sum of £2100, almost four times that which William had paid for the farm. The 1756 Deed of Sale mentions only "...premises...structures & improvements..." but does not detail what type of structures were included.<sup>9</sup> This high selling price, along with the extensive purchases of lumber, supplies, and workmen, indicates that William Holmes constructed the house now owned by the Historical Association.

The house itself is a fascinating blend of English and Dutch architectural features inside and out. The balanced façade, with a central door flanked by pairs of lights, recalls traditional Georgian architecture, which by the mid-eighteenth century had filtered down to rural areas of

The Hendrickson family, like so many others in Monmouth County, was caught up in the powerful force of the American Revolution. Garret Hendrickson served as First Lieutenant in Captain William Schenck's company, the First Regiment, Monmouth Militia. On 21 June, 1780, Garret was hit by a musket ball, permanently losing the use of his right arm. The skirmish was reported in the *New Jersey Gazette*, although Hendrickson's name was incorrectly reported as "Henderson."<sup>13</sup> In 1784 Hendrickson was awarded a pension of \$60 per year from Congress.<sup>14</sup>

During the tumultuous years of the American Revolution, Monmouth County was a hotbed of strife. Raids by Continentals and Loyalists alike were common, and farms suffered greatly from losses of animals and destruction of property. On the snowy evening of 8 February, 1782, a raiding party of forty British refugees, led by one Lieutenant Stevenson, came ashore at Sandy Hook and proceeded westward, attacking farms along the way and carrying off prisoners, horses, household goods, and supplies. Stevenson's raiders arrived at the Hendrickson farm and captured Garret Hendrickson, his brother Hendrick Hendrickson, and several others. Published accounts of this foray give no mention to the fact that there were four children under the age of ten in the house at the time, including Garret and Helena's youngest daughter, Lydia, less than five months old. One account of the incident described a raider wrapping a ham in Mrs. Hendrickson's silk dress.<sup>15</sup> Garret's eighteen-year-old son Hendrick and his friend William Thomson managed to hide themselves in the attic and escaped to the house of Captain John Schenck, of Colonel Asher Holmes' regiment. Schenck quickly assembled a rescue party and after a wild chase along snowy trails and a good deal of musket fire, the prisoners were rescued and the plunder recovered.<sup>16</sup> At the end of the skirmish, there was only one fatality: William Thomson, Hendrick's young friend who assisted in raising the alarm.<sup>17</sup>

the American colonies. The graceful sloping roof with its generous overhang call to mind a strong Dutch influence.<sup>10</sup> Analysis of the 1937 Historic American Buildings Survey drawings reveals both English and continental framing techniques in the construction of the house.<sup>11</sup> The Holmes-Hendrickson House uses both English and Dutch floor plan arrangements. The rooms at the front of the house are arranged in a typical Dutch or Low Country “large room” plan, while the rooms in the back of the house are arranged on either side of a central hallway, a distinguishing characteristic of English-influenced architectural plans.

Interior design elements also show a unique blend of English and Dutch sensibilities. Delicate paneling and corner fireplaces, both English architectural conventions, mix with two enclosed staircases and utilitarian hardware so popular in Dutch homes. An intensive paint study and analysis of the house completed in 1964 uncovered strong evidence that the kitchen wing was in fact a later addition to the circa 1754 main structure.<sup>12</sup>

Garret Hendrickson moved into his new home with his first wife, Catherine Denise (1732-1771). Between 1757 and 1768, Garret and Catherine had six children. The names they chose for their offspring clearly indicate their strong Dutch cultural roots: Hendrick (1757-1757), Francyntje (1758-1815), Denise (1761-1839), Hendrick G. (1764-1837), Neeltje (baptised 1766), and Catherine (1768-1822). Catherine Denise Hendrickson died in 1771 at the age of thirty-nine. Three years later, Garret married again, this time to Helena Van Lieu (1753-1785). Helena, who in various documents was also called “Lena” or “Nelly,” gave Garret five more children, all with English names: Ida (b. 1775), Daniel G. (b. 1776), Mary (b. 1779), Lydia (1781-1851) and Anne (b. 1783). This interesting change in naming tradition reflected the gradual but definite merging of the early Dutch culture into the broader Monmouth County society.

Three years after the British raiders' assault on the farm, Garret's second wife Helena died in 1785 at the age of thirty-two. Garret had now been twice widowed, both wives dying in their thirties. A study of Catherine's and Helena's deaths in relation to the time periods between the births of their children indicates a very strong probability that both women died in childbirth or from childbirth-related complications. This was a very real fear for many women of the time; until well into the twentieth century, one woman out of every 150 died giving birth.<sup>18</sup> Between the childbearing years of twenty to forty-five, a late eighteenth-century woman's life expectancy was lower than her husband's. If a woman passed through the perilous childbearing years, her life expectancy became higher than her male counterpart's.<sup>19</sup> Garret married a third time, on this occasion to Nelly Smock (c. 1743-1834), widow of Captain Hendrick Smock. This union produced no children.

Garret himself died in 1801 at the age of sixty-seven. A clear picture of highly successful farm emerges from the pages of the inventory taken after Garret's death in December of 1801.<sup>20</sup> Large quantities of hay, rye, oats, corn, and wheat are mentioned. Flax and flax seed were also listed, along with spinning wheels, hatchels, and other textile production tools, hinting that the Hendricksons produced at least the linen thread for cloth. A loom is not mentioned, so it is likely that the Hendricksons sent the thread to be spun into cloth.<sup>21</sup> Seven horses, including a pair of matched blacks, colts, seven cows, calves, pigs, and a pair of oxen are also listed. Prior to the nineteenth century, fowl, including chickens, ducks, and geese, were typically not listed in inventories, as most farmers did not consider these barnyard denizens valuable enough to include in records.<sup>22</sup> It would be unlikely, however, that a farm the size of Garret Hendrickson's would not have had at least some flocks to provide eggs for the table.

The house itself was generously furnished, indicating the family's success as farmers. Several beds, with blankets, sheets, and bed hangings were listed, as were window curtains, certainly a luxury item at the turn of the eighteenth century. Tables, chaires, tools, looking glasses, dishes, utensils, and other items were also mentioned. A tantalizing clue to Garret Hendrickson's personality appears in one listing for "twenty-six books." Clearly this was a farm who read more than the typical annual almanac, often the only book other than the bible found in many farmhouses at that time.

Also included in the inventory, between "10 Oak barrel staves" and "an Oyster rake at the Shore," were seven slaves noted only as "Negro man Peter, Negro man Towe, Negro boy Peter, Ditto Jack, Girl Phebe, Boy Robbin, Woman Jane" listed at a total value of £367. These seven men, women and children point to the grim side of Monmouth County history. In 1790, in the first census taken in the County, one-tenth of its population were slaves. By the late eighteenth century, New Jersey was the second-largest slaveholding state north of the Mason-Dixon Line, a figure surpassed only by New York.<sup>23</sup> Separate slave quarters were not mentioned in the very thorough 1801 inventory of Hendrickson's estate. The slaves probably slept in the small rooms above the kitchen wing, as the list mentioned "Tow's Bed, Jane's Ditto...Robin's Bed & Bedding" among items specified as being stored "Up Kitchen Chamber."

In addition to the house itself, there were at least six other outbuildings, including a good-sized barn, a "cyder house," a "wagon house," a separate stable, a "crib house," and a "smoak house." The estate was given a total value of £4,770, a substantial sum in 1801 and one which certainly indicates the success with which Garret ran his farm.

After Garret's death, ownership of the farm passed to his oldest son Hendrick G. Hendrickson (1764-1837), the young man who had, with his friend William Thomson, secured

help during the British raid in 1782. Garret's third wife, Nelly Schenck, was given the use "...of the two back rooms of my dwelling house and all the personal property she brought into my family," assuring his widow of at least a roof over her head for her remaining years. This was not an unusual bequest for a husband to make, and often appeared in eighteenth-century wills in both Dutch and English families alike.<sup>24</sup>

Hendrick G. Hendrickson married Phoebe Van Mater (1773-1836) in 1791, and the couple had nine children. Early research into the transfer of the Holmes-Hendrickson property was thwarted for a time when Hendrick Hendrickson's will deeding his farm to his son could not be located. It was later determined that, in a highly unusual move, Hendrick G. Hendrickson did not will his farm to his children. Rather, in 1830, sixty-six year old Hendrick and his wife Phoebe deeded their house and property to their sons Garret (1800-1866) and Cyrenius (1802-1870).<sup>25</sup> In exchange for their father's property, "...including all the out Lotts & Salt meadow," Garret and Cyrenius promised their parents "...a home and a living on said premises as long as they live, [and]...the same priviledges as heretofore..." Hendrick Hendrickson's unusual document also made financial provision for his two living daughters, Mary (1791-1852) and Eleanor (1806-?), and their children. Hendrick's second son, William (1795-1835?) was given an annual stipend of one hundred dollars "every year [of] his natural life." William was also given a horse, a brindle cow, a sulky, and grass for "the keeping of a cow."<sup>26</sup> Hendrick and Phoebe's youngest son Denise (b. 1804) was also mentioned in a puzzling provision: "In case Denise the forth [sic] son of said Hendrick, shall ever return, the said Garret & Cyrenius...[are] to pay him two thousand Dollars...." It is unknown where Denise was at this time or if he ever returned to the family home to collect his inheritance. Hendrick may have concocted this singular and

detailed document to enable him to “retire” from active farm life and insure comfort in his and his wife’s later years.

After Hendrick Hendrickson’s death in 1837, his sons Garret and Cyrenius divided the property. Garret received a large portion of the farmland and Cyrenius secured the house and outbuildings and some of the farmland as his share.<sup>27</sup> Cyrenius and his wife, Ida Van Mater (1795-1875), who married in 1828, had only two children, a boy and a girl. Their only son, Henry Denise (1824-1890), inherited the Hendrick homestead in 1870. However, changing fortunes made it necessary for Henry Denise Hendrickson to sell the farm at a sheriff’s auction to pay heavy family debts. After one hundred and seventeen years, the farm which had been the backdrop to births, deaths, marriages, and family life passed out of Hendrickson hands.

The property was purchased by John W. Herbert and Joseph I. Thompson in 1873.<sup>28</sup> During the next fifty-six years, various members of the Herbert family lived on the farm. The house remained virtually unchanged during the Herbert ownership. Plumbing and electricity was never added to the structure. By 1899, Agnes D. Herbert, daughter of John W. Herbert, held title to the property, and in 1915, her daughters Kate Herbert Kelly and Jean R. Herbert inherited the house and remaining property. The Herbert family relocated to Marlboro in the early 1920s, and rented the structure to a succession of tenant farmers. In a 1936 publication on Dutch architecture, it was noted that the house was called the Charlie P. Conover house, after the current tenant farmer, and in other publications the structure was also called the Long house after earlier tenants.<sup>29</sup> In 1929, the sisters sold the property to William B. Wallace, who purchased the Herbert property and two other Holmdel-area farms for a total of \$80,500. Wallace later sold the house and property to Bell Laboratories in the late 1940s, and the farmhouse remained vacant but well cared for, used as a storage structure for equipment and landscaping tools.



In 1959, Bell Laboratories planned to erect new buildings on the site of the Holmes-Hendrickson House. The company's plans called for the demolition or move of the structure. The Monmouth County Historical Association agreed to purchase the farmhouse for one dollar, and the structure was moved one quarter of a mile northwest from its original site to an acre of land donated by MCHA Board members Mr. and Mrs. William C. Riker. Mrs. Riker, President of the MCHA Board of Trustees from 1949 to 1967, was instrumental in financing the move and restoration of the structure. The Frank K. Arnold Company of Freehold was contracted to oversee the entire project and to provide a new foundation for the building. Arnold subcontracted C. Van Howling of Wallington, New Jersey, to move the structure from its original location to the new land. Much of the original stone foundation material was reused in the new footings. On 20 November, 1959, the farmhouse that William Holmes had built and in which Garret Hendrickson had confronted British raiders was pulled free from its foundation and headed northwest to a small knoll overlooking Holmdel Park.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin Ellis, History of Monmouth County, New Jersey (Jerseyana Club of the Shrewsbury Historical Society, 1972 reprint of 1885 original) 816.

<sup>2</sup> A highly dramatic account of Penelope Van Princes Stout's ordeal is related in William S. Horner, This Old Monmouth of Ours (Cottonport, LA: Polyanthos Publishing, 1974 reprint of 1932 original) 146-7.

<sup>3</sup> Monmouth County Hall of Records, Book D, 253

<sup>4</sup> Secretary of State's Office, Trenton, New Jersey, Deed Book F, p. 14

<sup>5</sup> The Jonathan Holmes who married Teuntje Hendricks has been assigned the designation "Junior," a differentiation which appears in early family records to distinguish him from his uncle, Jonathan Holmes "Senior" (b. 1681/2). John E. Stillwell, Historical and Genealogical Miscellany (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1970) Vol. 3, 317.

<sup>6</sup> Rosalie Fellows Bailey, A.B. Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1936) 421.

<sup>7</sup> New Jersey State Archives: Deeds K-2, p. 300.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Holmes, Junior's daybook includes such entries as "*Sept 4<sup>th</sup> 1754...two hundred and forty eight feet of ... boards.*" An undated entry, also from 1754, notes "*300 feet of three quarter boards...six days work by George O'Bryan...six days work by Gidden Graceford...*" Daybook of Jonathan Holmes, Jr.: William Holmes, 4 September 1754 entry. MCHA Library and Archives: Cherry Hall Collection #22, Box 4, Folder 5.

<sup>9</sup> Deed of Sale, William Holmes to Garret Hendrickson, 3 February 1756. Monmouth County Hall of Records, Book I, p. 107.

<sup>10</sup> Kevin L. Stayton, Dutch By Design: Tradition and Change in Two Historic Brooklyn Homes (New York: The Brooklyn Museum in association with Phaidon Universe, 1990) 79-80.

<sup>11</sup> David Steven Cohen, The Dutch-American Farm (New York: New York University Press, 1992) 53.

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- <sup>12</sup> Penelope Hartshorne Batcheler, Paint Color Study: Hendrickson House, Holmdel, New Jersey (April, 1964) unpublished report, MCHA Curatorial Files
- <sup>13</sup> "Letter from Monmouth County," New Jersey Gazette, 28 June 1780.
- <sup>14</sup> The petition records for Garret Hendrickson include two sworn statements by Colonel Asher Holmes of the First Regiment and by Thomas Henderson, one of two doctors who treated Hendrickson. Henderson wrote "...every Endeavor was made to preserve the use of the arm still they proved in a great measure ineffectual and that the laid Lieutenant Hendrickson has almost entirely lost the use of the arm and in my opinion has no prospect of ever recovering the use thereof..." Monmouth County Clerk's Office: Miscellaneous Records, B-10.
- <sup>15</sup> George C. Beekman, Early Dutch Settlers of Monmouth County, New Jersey (New Orleans: Poyanthos Books under the Patronage of The Township of Neptune Historical Society, 1974) 132.
- <sup>16</sup> Captain John Schenck (1754-1834) himself was no stranger to the British Army. He was a staunch Patriot and served as captain in the First Monmouth Regiment and also served in Colonel Asher Holmes' Militia regiment. Schenck was so hated by the British that a reward of £50 was offered for him dead or alive. Schenck generally slept in the woods surrounding his home in order to avoid the almost constant threat of capture. Ellis, 673-4.
- <sup>17</sup> Beekman, 133.
- <sup>18</sup> Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Base on Her Diary 1785-1812 (New York: Vintage Books, 1991) 170.
- <sup>19</sup> Jack Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790-1840 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988) 78.
- <sup>20</sup> New Jersey State Archives: Inventory of the Estate of Garret Hendrickson, 29 December 1801
- <sup>21</sup> Grace Rogers Cooper, The Copp Family Textiles (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971) 53.
- <sup>22</sup> Hubert G. Schmidt, Agriculture In New Jersey (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1973) 87.
- <sup>23</sup> Graham Russell Hodges, Slavery and Freedom In The Rural North: African-Americans in Monmouth County, New Jersey 1665-1865 (Madison, WI: Madison House Publishers, Inc., in cooperation with the Friends of Monmouth County Parks System, 1997) 53.
- <sup>24</sup> Firth Haring Fabend, A Dutch Family in the Middle Colonies 1600-1800 (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1991) 223-225, 230.
- <sup>25</sup> Monmouth County Clerk's Office, Miscellaneous Records C-89. A full transcription of this document in the Curatorial files of the Historical Association.
- <sup>26</sup> This rather odd stipulation hints at a possible health or mental problem suffered by Hendrick's second son William. The provision also makes no mention of the possibility of William ever having offspring, although Hendrick included detailed instructions regarding the eventuality of his daughters bearing more children. The document also includes specific directions for Garret and Cyrenius to provide their brother with "a home & a living on the premises as long as he chooses," also pointing to the likeliness that William was unable to care for himself independently.
- <sup>27</sup> Monmouth County Hall of Records, Book S-3, 39-41.
- <sup>28</sup> [citation for Herbert ownership]
- <sup>29</sup> Rosalie Fellows Bailey, 421.
- <sup>30</sup> The house was moved with its chimneys and fireplaces intact. Before the house could be moved to its new location, a small bridge on the movers' path had to be shored up. In the five years following its relocation, the house underwent restoration, in which later plaster, woodwork and windows were removed. MCHA Curatorial files: correspondence and memoranda, 1959-1960.