



Monmouth
County
Historical
Association

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COVENHOVEN HOUSE TOUR OUTLINE

GOAL: To present to visitors the Covenhoven family's change in cultural identity, from Dutch to the dominant English culture in Monmouth County, in the years 1760 to 1790, using documentary and artifactual evidence.

I. **Introduction** [do this outside, weather permitting]

- A. Brief history of building
 - 1. Original structure (kitchen today) built prior to 1711.
 - 2. William Covenhoven adds on in 1752-53; this is the earliest example of domestic Georgian architecture in Monmouth County (probably by the same builder/architect as Old Tennent Church 1750-51)
- B. Brief history of William and Elizabeth Covenhoven
 - 1. Both born in Monmouth County and raised in Dutch Reformed Church; all 9 of their children were baptized in the Dutch Reformed Church
 - 2. William buys land on Burlington Path in 1723 and 1731
 - 3. Between 1750 and 1759, through two bequests, William and Elizabeth inherit £464 in cash
 - 4. With inheritance and construction of new Presbyterian church in Monmouth Court House, comes the change in the Covenhovens' lifestyle which included breaks with some of their Dutch traditions
 - a. Joined English-speaking church
 - b. Georgian-style (English) home [with some Dutch elements retained, such as stoop, round-butt shingles, and interior furnishings]

II. **Hall/Office**

- A. English floor plan, open stairs
- B. Business area for farm accounts; desk
- C. Kas used for storage of linens and clothing; persistence of Dutch furniture (form) in Monmouth County
- D. House furnished according to 1790 inventory:
 - 1. Furnishings represent 1/10th of the total listed
 - 2. Would have had 2 dozen or more chairs, 4 slaves

III. **Front Parlor**

- A. Used for formal and informal entertaining – multi-purpose
- B. Tea drinking important social ritual
- C. English details in paneling and carved shell bonnets

IV. **Best Bedroom**

- A. Used for both sleeping and entertaining
- B. Bedding would have been feather mattress, with valence and curtains

C. House used by General Sir Henry Clinton prior to Battle of Monmouth

V. Second Floor Bedroom

- A. Painted wall panels indicate Covenhovens spared nothing in decorating their fine home; painting is reminiscent of Dutch tiling
- B. Would have had more chairs than current furnishings reflect
- C. High chest of drawers from Longstreet family of Monmouth County, made in Delaware River valley about 1780, used for storage of linens, clothing, etc. [contrast with Dutch kas in hall]
- D. Dressing table and accessories, women's toilet articles

VI. Kitchen

- A. Originally 1-1/2 room house – multi-purpose
- B. Domestic activities:
 - 1. Farm products
 - 2. Open hearth cooking
 - 3. Well water