

*History of the Hendrick Martin House in Red Hook Dutchess County, New York:*

*Based on research by Ruth Piwonka: edited revisions are the responsibility of Barry and Roni Gurland.*

**Architectural description:**

The Hendrick Martin house is located in Dutchess County, New York, on 7.49 acres in the Town of Red Hook, and 0.99 acres in the Village of Red Hook, though all of the Hendrick Martin house is located in the town. It is on Willowbrook Lane, a northwesterly turn off Route 9, close to the municipal line between the village and town. Willowbrook Lane runs straight across flat agricultural land to a terrace that drops down to a flood plain along the Saw Kill. Just before the lane turns towards the Village well, there is a mid-eighteenth century Dutch barn, once associated with the Martin house, but now on the Cookingham farm that borders on the Hendrick Martin house. The Hendrick Martin house is built into the terrace at the easterly side of Saw Kill, about a quarter mile south of an early mill operation.

The house is a two-and-on-half story stone bank house built. The easterly-facing façade is frame-veneered, comprising early lean-to rooms at either end, and, between them, a previously open portico. The roof at this front is double slanted, now asphalt shingled; there is evidence in the attic of earlier wood shakes. Three dormers (two dating from the Victorian era, and one from c2000) light the upper half-story interior. Two interior chimneys are at the roof peak. The dormer spacing aligns with roof rafters, and similarly the chimney locations relate to functional features inside the house. The terrace drop begins at the gable ends of the house, which is built of local stone. The gable pediment on the South side is filled with early brickwork.

The rear façade may at one time have been the main 'front' façade, for there appears to be a trace of a road set about 30 feet behind and roughly parallel with the length of the house. A pond is located beyond this possible road trace. A garden is developed at the southwesterly corner of the house.

Overall, the house is 49 feet long by 33 feet deep, and the stone portion is overall about 28 feet deep. The stone walls are generally about 2 feet thick, but vary in thickness. Inside, the house's massive framing is exposed: on the ground level the beams are 12 inches deep by 8 inches wide in the original kitchen, and 11 inches deep by 8 inches wide in the hall and parlor additions. Center-entry doorways are one above the other at ground-floor and the first floor levels, and the upper doorway is approached by a stairway that runs perpendicular to the house. To the left (north) of the center entry a vertical seam in the masonry marks the division between the original house and an early addition consisting of the center hall and flanking rooms added at the south side.

The east entry, through the lean-to portico, reveals the stone walls of the main house. The seam marking the old north section of the house is evident and a second doorway, original to the first section of the house, is prominent. With the addition of the flanking wing, a new main center entry was built, leading to a center hall that runs the depth of the house. On the north side one large room now serves as a living room. The fireplace in this room is of shallow Rumford design. It is built into the old chimney stack that was once on the exterior wall of the original north section of the house. Old substantial shelving backed with wide-board sheathing fills the space between

the hearth and the west wall. Other walls have been recently plastered on new lathe in order to preserve the original plastered stone walls underneath.

Off the hall and within the addition, one main room with a fireplace takes up the southwest side of the house. A lathe and plaster partition separates this room from the one at the southeast side. A doorway leads into an early partitioned section of the lean-to (a room that now serves as a bathroom).

The hallway itself is somewhat narrow and has stairs leading to the upper half-story and the ground floor. The large ground floor north room (now a modern kitchen) has ceiling framing evidence around its existing hearth for the existence of a jambless hearth system that must have been part of the original house. The south ground floor room has a kitchen hearth and well-preserved bake oven in situ which can be associated with the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. This room, like the one above it, is partitioned from the easterly section; with this east section, however, additional (quite old, if not original) partitioning creates utilitarian storage spaces, and must have originally served as a "cellar". Today this area serves modern heating and electrical services.

Within the half story, the space has evidently been used for bedrooms for an extended period of time. Recent renovation at the house has been in keeping with the plastered walls and original flooring that survive throughout the house, bringing it back to the documented condition of the house as found in 1943 when the house was acquired by a new owner. Photographs taken at that time have been deposited in the Dutchess County Historical Society collections.

The house is distinguished for its vernacular character and for the high state of preservation of many of its original or early features. Further its chimneys, and some doors and windows, asymmetrically arranged on the exterior, are a testament to interior functionality and design, and best express the vernacular character of the house.

### **History and Significance**

The house, probably built by Hendrick Martin, demonstrates the importation of German domestic design and customary lifestyle and their adaptation in provincial New York. Queen Anne had sent about 3000 German refugees from the Palatinate to New York in 1710. The initial plan to employ them in the manufacture of pitch pine tar for naval stores failed, and the Palatines were at last left on their own. Some of them opened wilderness in Schoharie for settlement, while others developed agricultural properties near the Hudson River in the towns of Germantown, Saugerties, Red Hook (then still part of Rhinebeck). It took a generation for them to become established and more integrated into the existing Dutch and increasingly English cultures of the region.

The history of the Hendrick Martin house reflects that success of the second generation Palatines and it is further defined by published histories as well as some abstracted documents. The house is a significant document embodying the aspirations and accomplishments of the German Palatine immigrants who first came to America in 1710. As early as 1882, a ca1732 date was suggested for the house by James H. Smith (*History of Dutchess County, New York ... 1683-1882*. Syracuse, New York: D. Mason & Co., 1882, page 186), when he wrote:

The most historic points of interest near this village are the houses of E. L. Traver and Edward Martin. The former at one time known as the "Martin House" was

built probably one hundred and fifty years ago [i.e., about 1732], and still retains the characteristics of the architectural style of those days. .... Hendrick Martin, the great grandfather, was the first proprietor of the farm as tenant. The house of Egbert Traver, before mentioned, was the original dwelling of the ancient Martins.

He also cited the nearby stone house (now NR, Cookingham, Rte 9, Red Hook village) that was built by the son of Hendrick --

“The Martin Homestead, the present occasional residence of Edward Martin, was built by his grandfather, Gotlieb, or Gotlop Martin, in 1776, the rafters being raised on the stone walls on July 4th of that year. This homestead has never been out of the family. The house stands on the road leading to Upper Red Hook.”

While not mentioning the Hendrick Martin house, son Gottlieb Martin's house was cited by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds [*Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley before 1776*, The Holland Society, New York, 1929 (reprinted, 1969), pp 320-321] as one of several examples of the type of stone houses built by Palatine Germans in Dutchess County. Gottlieb's house stands today on Route 9, within the village of Red Hook, a prominent stone house on the outskirts of the village and a short distance from the house his father built. The characterization of Gottlieb's house -- a representative of Palatine German dwellings -- would apply equally to Hendrick's house -- especially its original two-and-a-half story, one-room square footprint set into a steep slope. It compares in size and scale, for example, with the Lasher family's dated 1752 Stone Jug (NR-listed, Rte 9G, Clermont).

Hendrick Martin, born 30 January 1715, was the son of Johan Heinrich Mertens and Catherine Esenroth, who emigrated to America with the great Palatine immigration of 1710. They evidently lived at West Camp (town of Saugerties) where Hendrick was baptised by the Lutheran minister Justus Falckner, who traveled from Loonenburg (modern Athens, Green County, New York) to visit, marry and baptize his wide-spread congregation. Twenty-one years later, Hendrick married Elisabeth Emmerich at Kaatsbaan where they then resided. Their first four children were baptized at Kaatsban, the last in 1743; the baptismal records of the next two -- Gottlieb [b c1745-November 1832] and David -- are not located in the Hudson Valley churches. Their last child, Anna, was baptized at the Rhinebeck Lutheran Church. Thus Hendrick Martin's arrival in Red Hook is not fixed with certainty but is likely to have occurred between 1743 and 1751, when he received a deed for his Red Hook property.

Although, Smith's history states that Hendrick Martin was the first proprietor of the farm as a tenant, land records suggest variations of this. Several unrecorded leases and deeds were transcribed in 1933 and are deposited at Egbert Benson Historical Society. From these documents, one can illustrate the growth and development of Hendrick Martin's farm. They are most clearly articulated in the conveyance made by David Martin, who inherited Hendrick's house and barn, to his brother Gotlieb on 24 April 1794. This conveyance was evidently the formal division of property that the two brothers had inherited from their father., for it conveys to Gotlieb

The equal half or moiety of all the several tracts ... of land which were devised to the said David Martin in virtue of the last will and testaments of is father Hendrick Martin deceased dated 29 April 1786.

Refers to deed granted to Hendrick Martin by Henry Beekman by an indenture dated 1 May 1751,

the equal half of the premises conveyed to Hendrick Martin by Hendrick Teeter by indenture dated 14 May 1756;

the equal half of land granted and conveyed to the said Hendrick Martin by John Van Ness, Catherine Ten Broeck and Jacob Ten Broeck by indenture dated 30 March 1773;

subject to the rent covenants and conditions in the before recited deeds.

Abstracts for the otherwise unrecorded documents survive, except for the 1751 conveyance to Martin. Judging from the language in the will, it is assumed that this was a lease like the others. Based strictly on this, and if it is true that Martin was the first to farm the property, the original house likely dates from 1751. However, it entirely possible that the original section of the stone house had served as the dwelling for a previous tenant of Beekman. The addition to the house seems most suited to the needs of Hendrick and Elizabeth Martin and their large growing family as they existed in the 1750s and 1760s.

Based on the available abstract of his will, Hendrick Martin made bequests to only his younger sons David and Gottlieb:

First I give to my son David Martin the house outhouses and barn barrack with three acres and one quarter acre of land which is most convenient to the house and barn

Also my son David Martin shall give unto my son Gottlieb Martin the half of the orchard until Gottlieb's orchard brings fruit.

I also give unto my two sons ... all my lands woodlands hayland which shall be equally divided amongst them

[He gave to his wife Elizabeth a female slave and appointed Gottlieb and David, and a neighbor, Ebenezer Adams as executors. The abstractor notes that other portions of the will pertained to personal property and were not abstracted.]

Provision for his older children must have been made as these children grew up and left the family. However, in the 1790 and subsequent censuses, it is the elder sons and Gottlieb who are present in Red Hook. Living evidently at the house was Henry (b1739), the eldest son of Hendrick and Elizabeth. It is he who remained here for several decades, later to be joined by John (b 1743), who in 1790 lived at New Marlborough. David who inherited the house settled in New Marlborough (Rockland County) and seems never to have lived at Red Hook.

Ownership of the house between c1794 and c1850 is being researched. From Federal censuses and published maps, we find that in the 1850s, the house was occupied by John R. Faure, a New York city merchant, and his wife Catherine. In the 1860s the house was occupied by J H Lord, and in the 1870s and beyond, it was occupied by Egbert Traver, a farmer and member of a local family. More recent ownership has included Mr. G. Martin Coffyn (c1943), Charles and Elizabeth Townsend (1959), and Barry and Roni Gurland, the present owners who acquired the house in 1997. Over the past decade, the present owners have removed modern work and upgraded utilities and mechanicals in house with great sensitivity for the historic fabric of the house.

## Sources

Deed and will abstracts, transcribed and deposited at Egbert Benson Historical Society, Red Hook, NY.

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Photographs of the Martin House, 1943 taken by past owner and now deposited at Dutchess County Historical Society, Poughkeepsie.

### Waist high measures in inches of stone walls:

South wall of kitchen in earliest house: 29"

East wall of kitchen in earliest house: 24"

East wall of living room in earliest house: 21"

East wall of study in lowest floor of later house: 20"

### Beams in inches (depth x width)

Kitchen: 12' x 9' 11" x 11" Side beams of jambless smoke curtain: 8' x 6'

Lowest hall and study: 11 x 8: depth reduced in living areas.

**Distance between sides (not centers) of adjacent beams:**

Kitchen (Earliest house): 3'6"

Living room (Earliest house): 4'

Other rooms in later house: 3'6" to 3'9"

Beams run the entire length of kitchen and living room.

**Floor boards in inches**

Living room (Earliest house) up to 13"-15"

North bedroom and hall in top floor up to 13"-15"

Thickness of floorboards where not worn: 1 ½"

**Widest panel of cupboard** in middle floor sitting room: 18"

**Original entrance:** 6'0" x 3'1"