

PH0356671

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 26 1976

DATE ENTERED MAY 28 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC *Lawrence Kearny House* \*\*

AND/OR COMMON  
Kearny Cottage

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
63 Catalpa Street

CITY, TOWN  
Perth Amboy

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
15

STATE  
New Jersey

VICINITY OF  
CODE  
34

COUNTY  
Middlesex  
CODE  
023

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Mrs. Walter J. Rielley, President, Perth Amboy Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER  
227 Water Street

CITY, TOWN  
Perth Amboy

VICINITY OF

STATE  
New Jersey

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Middlesex County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
New Brunswick

STATE  
New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Historic American Buildings Survey (NJ-637)

DATE  
1940

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS Division of Prints & Photographs Library of Congress (annex)

CITY, TOWN  
Washington

STATE  
D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Constructed around 1784, Kearny Cottage, as Lawrence Kearny preferred his home be titled, is a simple 2½ story clapboarded and shingled frame dwelling. The roof is gable with a slight return and small brackets beneath the eaves. The front facade, which is clapboarded, has four bays with the entranceway at the center. The upper story has 3 bays with modern casement windows as contrasted to the original 6/6 sash of the first floor. There is a later 19th century one story porch across the front facade.

Originally an I form structure, a leanto wing was later added to the rear to give the house a visual salt-box form. The rear exterior facade of the leanto is brick, although it is actually a frame wing. There are two modern dormers on the roof of the original unit. The interior walls are plaster and the floors have 9" pine floorboards.

In the 19th century the cottage was threatened by development which prompted Commodore Kearny to write "Woe be to him who ventures upon the sacred soil of my old cottage and draws a nail."

Kearny Cottage was moved around 1924 to a location in the park near the Raritan River when urban development plans threatened the building. It was again moved in 1936 to its present site within a park on Catalpa Avenue.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1789-1868

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kearny Cottage on Catalpa Street in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, was the lifelong home of Commodore Lawrence Kearny. Assigned to East Asian waters to protect American trade, he was the first to urge upon the Chinese in 1842, that American interests be privileged to an extent equal to that of the "nation most favored". The Chinese agreed. Kearny thus established the most favored nation doctrine as the standard for our relationship with China and a policy still the subject of negotiation in United States trade relations. Kearny's exchange of notes with the Chinese, Foster Rhea Dulles has called "the genesis of the Open Door doctrine proclaimed by Secretary Hays some fifty-seven years later."<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterward, in 1844, Kearny's achievement was sealed by Caleb Cushing in the Treaty of Wanghia, the United States' first treaty with China.

## Biography

The Kearny Cottage on Catalpa Street was the lifelong residence of Commodore Lawrence Kearny (1789-1868). Born and raised in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, he was appointed midshipman in the Navy in 1807 and sailed the Atlantic coast in protection of American shipping. Gradually rising in rank, he successively commanded several schooners and a flotilla of galleys and barges. His first exploit was in capturing the British ship Hebrus in 1815. In 1821, while in command of the Enterprise he captured several pirate ships near Cuba and destroyed a pirate encampment at Cape Antonio, Cuba. Promoted to master commandant in 1825, he was assigned to the Mediterranean where he distinguished himself in taking seven pirate vessels and recovering stolen merchandise.

The most significant period in his life began in 1840 when he was given command of the East India Squadron and instructed to protect American interests in China. At the

<sup>1</sup>Foster Rhea Dulles, "Kearny's Mission to China", an article in Dictionary of American History, Vol. III (New York, 1940), pp. 201-202.

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bemis, Samuel Flagg, A Diplomatic History of the United States, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1936.
- Dulles, Foster Rhea, "Kearny's Mission to China", Dictionary of American History, Vol. III, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.
- Pratt, Julius W., A History of United States Foreign Policy, New York, Prentice Hall, 1955.
- McGinnis, William, History of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, 1651-1958, 1958(p. 13)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

4483

A	1	8	5	6	7	6	0	4	4	8	4	2	0	B										
	ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING					ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING						
C														D										

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

*[Faint, illegible text describing the boundary]*

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Benjamin Levy, Senior Historian

ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology DATE

and Historic Preservation, National Park Service 6-19-73

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L Street, N.W. TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE    LOCAL xx

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *[Signature]*

TITLE Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection DATE September 16, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION *[Signature]* DATE 9/28/75

ATTEST: *[Signature]* DATE 5-21-76

ACTING KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER *[Signature]*

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8. Significance: (1) Lawrence Kearny House

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

conclusion of the Anglo-Chinese, or Opium War, in 1842, Kearny opened a series of deft diplomatic maneuvers which laid the foundation for an eventual extended relationship with China; on par with Great Britain. Going to Canton he made a favorable impression by announcing that the United States "does not sanction the smuggling of opium on this coast under the American flag, in violation of the laws of China."<sup>2</sup> In addition, in demanding reparations for damages to American property due to mob violence, he ruled against excessive claims.

Having thus ingratiated himself to the Chinese, upon hearing that Great Britain had signed a treaty with China, he addressed the Chinese authorities, urging that American citizens "be placed upon the same footing as the merchants of the nation most favored."<sup>3</sup> Kearny had achieved a modus vivendi which significantly influenced Caleb Cushing's successful conclusion of the Treaty of Wanghia (1844)--the first American treaty with China. On his return from China, he made forceful representations in Hawaii for the purpose of blocking a British attempt to obtain exclusive privileges there.

His subsequent career was relatively uneventful. He served as president of the board to examine midshipmen (1846), commandant of the Norfolk Navy Yard (1847), general superintendent of ocean mail steamships at New York (1857). He retired in 1861 and was commissioned a commodore on the retired list in 1867. He served one year as mayor of Perth Amboy and during his career returned home frequently to his wife and two sons. He died in the same house in which he was born.

<sup>2</sup>Kearny correspondence, Sen. Doc. No. 139, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., quoted in the Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. X, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 271.