

PH0367435

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 17 1976  
DATE ENTERED JUL 20 1977

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

Westervelt-Ackerson

AND/OR COMMON

Ramsey's Old Stone House

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

538 Island Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ramsey

VICINITY OF

7th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Jersey

34

Bergen

003

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

**PRESENT USE**

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

State of New Jersey, State Highway Commission

STREET & NUMBER

1035 Parkway Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Hackensack

STATE

New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1973

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Sites Section, Department of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The Ramsey Historical Association headquarters, commonly known as the Old Stone House and historically titled the Westervelt-Ackerson House, is a one and one half story gambrel roofed dwelling constructed of native rubble stone laid up with clay mortar reinforced with straw and animal hair in a random pattern.

The front facade of this dwelling has four bays - a window at each corner and two independent entrance doors in the center, typical of New Jersey Dutch architecture in the first half of the 18th century.

The windows of the front facade are 6/6 double hung sash with modern paneled shutters. Beneath one window is a three pane cellar window and under the other window was a cellar entrance, but this was covered in the 20th century. The two front entrances are double swinging doors with Dutch strap hinges. The front doorway steps are cut red sandstone (the only cut stone in the building), which was plentiful in the area. There is a modern flagstone patio in the front reinforced with brick.

The rear facade has three bays - the central aperture now being a doorway, but originally was a window. The windows on this facade are 12/8 sash with modern paneled shutters.

The gable end facades are clapboard to the eaves and then continue in random stone.

The roof of the house is gambrel and of modern construction, but indications are that the roof was always gambrel. There is a small interior brick chimney which serves as the exhaust for the modern central heating system. Originally, however, there were chimneys on each gable end.

Attached to the east facade of the house is a 20th century one story frame leanto porch unit.

The main floor of this stone house has four rooms; two large rooms up front and two small rooms in the rear. The outside Dutch doors open directly into the front rooms. The west room is 14'6" by 18'8" while the east room is 14' by 15'6" shortened on the north by a modern partition which forms a small closet and narrow hall entrance for the doorway (once a window) on the gable end facade.

The two rear rooms are 8' by 9'6" and 9'6" by 14' separated by a square vestibule for the rear entrance.

The open hewn oak beam ceilings on the first floor are planed with simple beading. The floors are all wide pine, but the second floor wide boards were covered with narrow hardwood boards in the second quarter of the 20th century.

Both main rooms originally had fireplaces and, obviously, interior gable end chimneys. The west room originally had a walk-in fireplace. The east room's fireplace was removed, but reconstructed over the original foundation circa 1925-50.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Agriculture

The Westervelt-Ackerman House is characteristic of the modest Dutch farmhouses which dotted northern Bergen County's landscape in the mid-18th century. Historically, these farmhouses were isolated from other properties, reflecting the agricultural tendencies of the Dutch settler in New Jersey. Today, few of these 18th century farmhouses remain, this being the oldest of its type in Ramsey Borough.

The average Dutch farmhouse, of which Westervelt-Ackerman House was apparently no exception, was erected by the owner and his family, occasionally with the supervision of a mason or carpenter who in essence was not much more than a farmer himself. Consequently, those farmhouses which are still extant symbolize the staunchly independent nature of the Dutch farmer.

### Architecture

The Westervelt-Ackerson House is typical of the mid-18th century Dutch farmhouse as constructed in the New York-New Jersey region of which few survive in the region.

Eighteenth century Dutch houses in New Jersey were generally in three forms - a one and one half story one room gable roofed dwelling, a one and one half story two room gable roofed dwelling with two independent front facade entrances, and a one and one half or two and one half story four room gambrel roofed dwelling.

In some cases, as with the Westervelt-Ackerson House, characteristics of the latter two forms were combined. Consequently, the Westervelt House has two independent front entrances and an exterior front facade cellar entrance, but interestingly, also has four rooms - two large rooms in the front and two narrow rooms to the rear. In addition to the overall form, the structure has a number of original details, including double Dutch doors with strap hinges, window and door openings with the original mid-18th century moldings, and open beam ceilings which are planed with simple beading on the first floor.

Uriah and Roeloff Westervelt leased the land on which the Old Stone House now stands in 1743 from the New Jersey Proprietors. While there is no concrete documentary evidence of a house being on the property at that time, it is not uncommon for persons to be living on the land before the lease agreement was filed and it is possible that the Westervelts' built the current house even prior to 1743, although this is

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of Old Stone House. Mrs. Fred E. Blowers and Mrs. Lambert Wilder. Ramsey Historical Association. 1957, 1974. Booklet published by the Association from a talk delivered in 1957.

Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York. Rosalie Fellows Bailey, 1936 (pp. 279-80, 345).

"New Jersey Historic Sites Survey Worksheet - Old Stone House". Charles Tichy, 1973.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.00 1

UTM REFERENCES

*Lebanon* **4/7/77**

A	1 8	5 7 1 8 9 0	4 5 4 7 0 7 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John Y. Dater, III, Trustee (Revised by Terry Karschner, DEP) February 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Ramsey Historical Association

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

538 Island Road

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Ramsey

New Jersey

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XXX

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

TITLE

*John Y. Dater, III*  
Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

DATE

JUN 28 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

*Wm. M. ...*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Charles ...*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6-1-77

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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WESTERVELT-ACKERSON HOUSE

Ramsey

Bergen County

New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET

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The second floor was apparently originally an open garret used for storage; accesible from the first floor only by a ladder through a trap door. Around 1920 this garret was converted into three bedrooms. A stairway, located on the first floor in the rear vestibule, was added at the same time. It is quite possible that the present gambrel roof, which has circular sawn rafters and modern windows on the gable end, was also completed then.

The basement was originally entered by a trap door in the east room, but also had an exterior cellar entrance. In the basement are hewn oak beams. The west cellar originally had a summer kitchen with fireplace, but this has been removed.

The Westervelt-Ackerson House has been the headquarters of the Ramsey Historical Association since the late 1950's. Three first floor rooms are currently restored and furnished with period furniture. The fourth room houses displays.

To the rear of the property is a cement block museum buildings, originally built in the second quarter of the 20th century as an antique shop.

The property is bordered on the east by Route 17 and Spring Street to the south.

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WESTERVELT-ACKERSON HOUSE

Ramsey

Bergen County

New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET

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ITEM NUMBER

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unlikely. Late in the 19th century an 18th century barn, then on the property, which had fallen to decay, was torn down by Charles D. Ackerson. One of the beams removed from the barn bore the date 1747. In addition, Mrs. John S. Garrison of Ramsey, great-great granddaughter of Benjamin Westervelt (1749-1819) stated that her ancestors felt the house was built in 1755. This evidence, in conjunction with the architectural evaluation, further substantitates the feeling that the house was erected approximately in the mid-18th century.

Other than their being farmers, little is known of either Uriah or Roeloff Westervelt. Benjamin Westervelt (1749-1819) of Schraalenburgh, son of Jan Westervelt and Marytje Durie, bought the property from the Proprietors in 1786. It is not known of what relationship he may have been to Uriah and Roeloff, although the Westervelts had a common 17th century ancestor. Benjamin married Dianna Tallman around 1769 and raised seven children (3 males, 4 females), six of which were surviving at his death in 1819.

Peter Westervelt inherited the part of his father's estate on which the old stone house was situated.

In 1837 David and Rachel Christie acquired the farm. The Christies sold it to Abraham Van Horn in 1852 who in turn sold the property to David Ackerson in 1855.

The farm then continued in the Ackerson family for several generations - willed to Charles D. Ackerson in 1866, then to Walter Ackerson, and finally to Margaret Ackerson Vanderbeck.

In 1897 Albert Hague bought the property from the Vanderbecks and for the next fifty years the property changed hands numerous times when, in 1955, the New Jersey Department of Transportation purchased it, planning eventual demolition. The Ramsey Historical Association persuaded the Department of Transportation that a viable use was possible and subsequently convinced Ramsey Borough to lease the building and site for the headquarters of the Association.

# BERGEN COUNTY STONE HOUSE SURVEY

INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM 216

130

GENERAL

HISTORIC NAME: Westervelt-Ackerson House

COMMON NAME: Old Stone House  
 LOCATION: 538 Island Road.

MUNICIPALITY: Ramsey  
 OWNERSHIP:  Public  Private  
 OWNER/ADDRESS: State of New Jersey

REFERENCE

MAP REFERENCES:  
 Erskine (1778-80)  
 Hopkins-Corey (1861) D. Acker  
 Walker's Atlas (1876) Chas. Ackerson  
 Bronley (1912) Ackerson  
 Other  
 RECOGNITION:  
 National Register  BCHS Marker  
 HABS  Bailey  
 Other

ENVIRONMENT

HOUSE ORIENTATION: S 10° E  
 IMPORTANT RELATED STRUCTURES:

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:  
 Residential  
 Commercial  
 Agricultural  
 Open Space  
 Other

COMMENTS: On a cloverleaf island of N.J. Route 17.

USE

ORIGINAL: Residence  
 PRESENT: Museum

THREATS

THREATS TO STRUCTURE:  
 Roads  
 Development  
 Zoning  
 Deterioration  
 Other  
 No Threat

COMMENTS: Busy intersection w/ Route 17.

CONDITION

CONDITION:  
 Excellent  Good  
 Fair  Deteriorated

STATUS:  
 Occupied  
 Unoccupied  
 Work in Progress

ACCESSIBLE:  
 Yes, Restricted  
 Yes, Unrestricted  
 No

The house was rescued from demolition in 1956 by the State Highway Department's agreement to modify the Route 17 overpass. It has been "restored" and is maintained by the Ramsey Historical Society. There is a shed dormer on the rear and the west fireplace was removed. There is a shed porch to the east.

PHOTO



MAP

USGS QUAD: Ramsey



**DESCRIPTION**

**CONSTRUCTION DATE/SOURCE:**  
1747/Bailey  
Mid-18th century/Architectural evidence

**BUILDER:** Unknown

**FORM/PLAN TYPE:** "D" 2 door, 2 front rooms,  
each w/ gable end fireplace and 2 small  
narrow rooms to the rear (36'0" x 32'6").

**FRAMING SYSTEM:**  
 Intermediate Summer Beam  
 Intermediate Bearing Wall  
 Clear Span  
 Other

**EXTERIOR WALL FABRIC:**  
Light colored rubble (mostly orange)  
roughly coursed with no cornering.

**FENESTRATION:**  
33" x 52" openings. Front are 6/6  
and rear are 12/8.

**ENTRANCE LOCATION/TYPE:**  
2 front doors on south front. 34"±  
x 6'7" split leaf Dutch style doors.

**NUMBER OF STORIES:** 1-1/2  
**CELLAR:**  Yes  
 No

**CHIMNEY FOUNDATION:**  
 Stone Arch  
 Brick Arch, Stone Foundation  
 Other

**FLOOR JOISTS:** 6-1/2" x 8-9" deep  
@ 21-34" apart.

**FIRST FLOOR CEILING HEIGHT:**  
7-1/2"

**FIRST FLOOR WALL THICKNESS:**  
27"

**GARRET FLOOR JOISTS:** 6½" x 9",  
26-32" apart (beaded).

**GARRET:**  
 Unfinished Space  
 Finished Space (Meeting rooms)

**ROOF:**  
 Gable  
 Gambrel  
 Curb  
 Other

**EAVE TREATMENT:**  
 Sweeping Overhang  
 Supported Overhang  
 No Overhang  
 Boxed Gutter  
 Other (Straight overhang)

This house is significant for its architecture and its association with the exploration and settlement of the Bergen County, New Jersey area. It is a reasonably well preserved example of the Form/Plan Type as shown and more fully described herein. As such, it is included in the Thematic Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Early Stone Houses of Bergen County, New Jersey.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Block

Less than 1 acre

U.T.M.

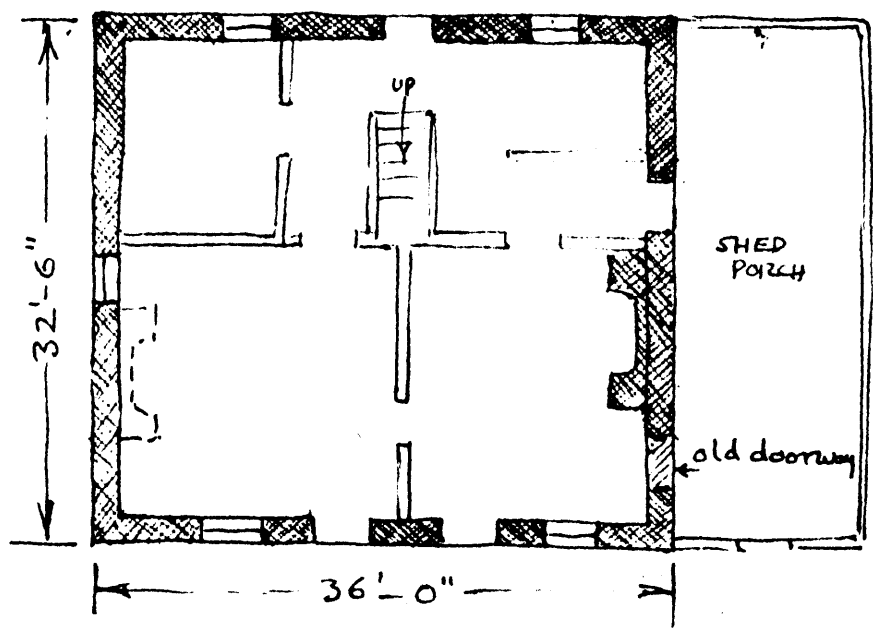
18 571 900 4547 060  
Ramsey, New Jersey-New York



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BERGEN COUNTY STONE HOUSE SURVEY  
HISTORIC NAME: Westervelt-Ackerson House  
LOCATION: 538 Island Road, Ramsey

FLOOR PLANS 130



In 1739 Charles Clinton, making a survey of the Cheescocks Patent, reported the house of Peter Vandamakak (Wanamamek) at this site, or approximately one hundred yards to the northwest. The 1739 house was not mentioned as being stone nor do we now know of what material the wing, which is now gone, was made. There is certainly a possibility of a connection with the Wanamaker family as builders if they were in such close proximity. Benjamin Westervelt mentions land that he bought from the Wanamakers. However, the house is strongly associated with the Westervelt Family and may have been built on leased land prior to Benjamin's purchase of this tract of 198 acres (Lot # 136) from the Proprietors of New Jersey on November 11, 1786. Mrs. John S. Garrison of Ramsey, great, great granddaughter of Benjamin, stated the house was built in 1755 and that a barn baem bore the date of 1747. Both Uriah and Ruloff Westervelt leased land somewhere in the Ramapo Tract in 1744; or it may have been Benjamin's father Jan (born 1722) that had settled here earlier; but it could have been Benjamin himself, as he was not born until 1749. He married Dianna Tallman about 1769 and, of their children, the house was inherited by Peter B. and Maria on June 15, 1819. They sold it on March 1, 1837 with 97.15 acres to David I. and Rachel Christie. The Christies sold the property with 95 acres on May 11, 1852 to Abraham Van Horn, who sold it on March 23, 1855 to David P. Ackerson with 9.74 acres. He or his son Charles D. Ackerson, who inherited the property on October 15, 1866, tore down the large wing of the house and the barn. They told the story of how the house had been an inn where Aaron Burr occasionally stopped. Charles Ackerson's daughter who married Walter Vanderbeck inherited the house and told of the two large fireplaces in the house, the one on the south being large enough to walk into, and the cellar kitchen on the south wall that had a bake oven. The Vanderbecks sold the house and 2.15 acres to Albert B. and Alvina Hague on July 19, 1897 and they in turn sold it to William and Mae E. Mac Kensie on March 4, 1898. On November 18, 1904 it went by sheriff's sale to William Meyer and on May 21, 1906 to Thomas H. and Sarah C. Tatham. Fred Warner and Gertrude Robinson bought it on August 5, 1907 and rented it to the Van Horns and then sold it on February 18, 1919 to William and Susan Brooker. On July 17, 1924 Bertram and Theodora Hewitt purchased the house and subsequently made changes and added three bedrooms upstairs. On December 26, 1925 Mrs. Emma Schweitzer bought it with 1.78 acres. She laid new flooring over the old, built the terrace and rebuilt the north side fireplace, which had been torn apart by a minister looking for hidden money. On February 23, 1950 the house was bought to be used as an antique shop by Alfred and Jahanne Lange who also added the rear dormer. They sold to Majorie and Michael Labosky, who were also in the same business, on October 18, 1951. The house was severely threatened after the New Jersey State Highway Department bought it on October 3, 1955 to build the Route #17 overpass (1.0015 acres). Letters from Mrs. R. L. Barton and Mrs. F. E. Blowers of the Ramsey Women's Club forced the State to modify its plans in 1956. The Ramsey Historical Association was organized on June 21, 1956 to maintain and develop the house. In May of 1957 restoration work on the first floor began. The house is leased to the Borough for \$1.00 a year.