

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Jersey	
COUNTY: Union	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Governor William Livingston House, "Liberty Hall"

AND/OR HISTORIC: Liberty Hall

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Morris and North Avenues (State Route 82)

CITY OR TOWN: ~~Elizabeth~~ Union

STATE: New Jersey CODE: COUNTY: Union CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. John Kean

STREET AND NUMBER: Box 1

CITY OR TOWN: Elizabeth STATE: New Jersey CODE: 07207

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: Elizabeth STATE: New Jersey CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey (13 sheets and 8 photos)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1938 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: _____

COUNTY: _____

ENTRY NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

FOR NPS USE ONLY

227

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

An organic growth house, "Liberty Hall," in its present form, is a three-story, three-part frame house with an elevated stone basement, gable roof, and bracketted eaves; the mansion is about 83 feet long and 46 feet deep. As built by William Livingston in 1772-73, "Liberty Hall" was a three-part frame structure 83 feet in length. The center section, 37 feet wide and 34 feet deep, was two stories high and had a modified gambrel roof and two interior chimneys. The central block was flanked by one-story wings built on the main axis with polyangular ends, hipped roofs, and end chimneys. Each wing was 23 feet long and 17 feet deep. Exterior walls were flush boarded, the corners of the central block were marked by quoins, and first story windows were topped by flat cornices with key-blocks. In 1789 a second story was added to the west or left wing as a guest room for Martha Washington's use when she came North to see General Washington inaugurated as the first President of the United States.

The existing third-story of the west wing and center section, the gable roof with bracketted eaves, and the upper two stories of the east (or right) wing were added about 1870. The rooms and tower at the northwest (rear) corner and also the rooms at the northeast (rear) corner were added about 1870. Except for the added stories, the south or front elevation of Liberty Hall retains its original appearance.

The original floor plan of the 18th century portion of the mansion has also not been greatly altered. A center door opens into impressive parlor which is 30 feet long and 19 feet deep. Doors to the left and right lead into 25 by 17 feet parlors which occupy the first-stories of the flanking wings. Each side parlor has a fireplace and near the northwest and northeast (rear) corners of the great central parlor are two large fireplaces. In the center of the north (rear) wall of this latter room a door opens into a rear center-hall which contains the stair. This hall is flanked on the left and right by two smaller (15 by 15 and 10 by 10 foot) rooms. The elaborate mantels of the house date from the 19th century. There are six bedrooms on the second floor in the 1772-1789 portion of the mansion.

Liberty Hall still contains many original manuscripts, books, pictures, portraits, and furniture of William Livingston and other early owners. The mansion has never been restored; used as a private residence, Liberty Hall is not open to visitors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1772-1790

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1772-73, "Liberty Hall" was the home from 1773 to 1790 of William Livingston, Governor of New Jersey (1776-1790) during the War for Independence and a major political leader of the American Revolutionary period. "Liberty Hall," although enlarged by 19th century additions, is intact within these enlargements and is furnished with Governor Livingston's possessions.

History

William Livingston, son of Philip and Catharine (Van Brugh) Livingston and a grandson of Robert Livingston, was born at Albany, New York, in 1723. He spent his childhood there under the care of his maternal grandmother, Sarah Van Brugh, and at the age of 14 he lived for a year with a missionary among the Mohawk Indians, an experience which his family felt would be valuable if the lad turned his attention later to the fur trade or the possibilities of land speculation on the frontier. He graduated from Yale in 1741. While in college he decided that law had a larger claim than mercantile affairs upon his interest. Accordingly, he avoided his brothers' (Philip and Peter Van Brugh) countinghouses in New York City and entered the law office of James Alexander, who had been a vigorous champion of the freedom of the press in connection with the Zenger trial. Livingston was admitted to the bar in 1748. About 1745 he married Susanna French, the daughter of a wealthy New Jersey landholder. There were three children—Henry Brockholst Livingston; Susanna, who married John Cleves Symmes, and Sarah, who became the wife of John Jay.

From the day of his admission to the bar in New York, Livingston was an aristocratic leader among those of assured position who liked to be known as supporters of the popular cause. In close association with John Morin Scott and William Smith, Jr., the historian, Livingston, as one of this "New York Triumvirate," held political views that were distinctly liberal for that generation. Around these three men gathered a group of sturdy Calvinists who courageously objected to the dominant position of the Anglican gentry and their allies in New York politics. Petulant and impatient of restraint, Livingston soon aroused the resentment of the conservatives by his sweeping criticism of established institutions. Always more facile in writing than in speech, he delighted to compose satirical verse and witty broadsides. Possessing a tall, slender, and graceless figure, Livingston was nicknamed the "whipping-post" by one of his acquaintances.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

NEW JERSEY, A Guide to its Past and Present (American Guide Series)
(New York, 1939), 508-509.

Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XI, 325-327.

William Livingston, Address by Honorable Robert Winthrop Kean, Auspices of The Boxwood Hall Memorial Association, Elizabeth, New Jersey, February 28, 1962.

Benson J. Lossing, The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution (2 vols., New York, 1860), I, 329-330.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	40° 40' 45"	74° 14' 04"		40° 40' 42"	74° 13' 45"	
NE	40° 41' 04"	74° 13' 48"		Location of the house		
SE	40° 40' 36"	74° 13' 14"				
SW	40° 40' 17"	74° 13' 41"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 140 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service DATE: 4/5/72

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

236

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE New Jersey	
COUNTY Union	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

Liberty Hall-
William Livingston (Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

(2)

8. Significance:

In 1751 the controversy over the establishment of a college in the province became a focal point in his developing political philosophy. Although anxious to promote a collegiate foundation, Livingston protested against the plan to place the institution in the hands of a board of trustees dominated by the Episcopalians and refused to serve as a representative of the Presbyterians on the board. To him the proposal appeared as the first step toward establishing the Anglican Church in New York and giving it general supervision of educational matters. His views were ably presented in the Independent Reflector, a weekly which his friends inaugurated in 1752 "to oppose superstition, bigotry, priestcraft, tyranny, servitude, public mismanagement and dishonesty in office" and to teach the "inestimable value of liberty." On the question of the college (King's College-Columbia-chartered by George II), Livingston took the stand that the institution should be non-sectarian and catholic, that it should be established not by royal charter but by act of the Assembly, and that the trustees and faculty should be subject to no religious or political tests.

His contributions to the Independent Reflector and the "Watch Tower" column in the New York Mercury violently attacked the movement to establish an Anglican episcopacy in the American colonies and accused the faction, headed by Lieutenant Governor James De Lancey, of favoring the union of church and state. His appeals on this issue aroused the nonconformists and strengthened the liberal party, which was rapidly becoming a Livingston faction in New York politics. The first important victory of the Livingstons at the polls resulted in driving the De Lanceys from their control of the Assembly in 1758. For 11 years William Livingston was accorded a position of leadership not only in the councils of the party but also in its tactics in the legislature. He was determined in his opposition to Parliamentary interference in provincial affairs. Convinced of the desirability of provincial home rule, he was equally persuaded of the necessity of the wealthy liberals continuing to rule at home. As the issues raised by Grenville's tax program reached a crisis, the unity of the Livingston forces was seriously threatened, for the patrician elements in the party were troubled by the violent reaction of the plebeian groups to the Stamp Act. Livingston labored hard to reconcile the "Sons of Liberty" and other radicals to the moderate leadership which his family represented, but the masses were dissatisfied with the temporizing Whigs. In the election of 1769 the De Lanceys won a decisive victory and secured a majority in the New York Assembly. William Livingston's power was gone.

Never entirely happy in his legal work and temporarily dispirited by the turn of his political fortunes, Livingston determined to retire to his country estate near Elizabethtown, New Jersey, which he had acquired in 1760. In May 1772 he laid out elaborate grounds, planted an extensive orchard, and erected a mansion known as "Liberty Hall." There he began life anew as a gentleman farmer, but not for long. The removal to New Jersey provided to be merely a prelude to a career more illustrious than the one just finished in New York politics. Becoming a member of the Essex County Committee of Correspondence, he quickly rose to a position of leadership and was one of the provinces' delegates to the First Continental Congress in 1774. There he served on the committee with his son-in-law, John Jay, and Richard Henry Lee to draft an

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE		New Jersey
COUNTY		Union
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	

(Number all entries) 8. Significance (3)

address to the people of British America. He was returned as a deputy to the Second Continental Congress, serving until June 5, 1776, when he assumed command of the New Jersey militia. He discharged these duties until August 31, 1776, when the legislature under the new constitution elected him first governor of the State. For the next 14 years he bore the responsibilities of the governorship during the extraordinary conditions of war and reconstruction. The multitudinous duties, civil and military, the threats of the British, and the disloyalty of friends harassed his nervous and excitable temper but failed to overcome his spirited support of the patriot. Rivington's Royal Gazette dubbed him the "Don Quixote of the Jerseys."

His boundless energy was an incalculable asset during the gloomiest period of the War for Independence. When peace came his messages to the legislature dealt discriminatingly and comprehensively with the problems of reconstruction. He opposed the cheapening of the currency by unrestricted issues of paper money, counseled moderation in dealing with the Loyalists and their property, and looked forward to the day when the question of slavery would be settled on the basis of gradual emancipation. In 1787 he freed his own two slaves. As authority slipped out of the hands of the Continental Congress, Livingston called for a revision of the Articles of Confederation, in which he was privileged to participate at the Federal Convention of 1787. Though he was not conspicuous in debate, he ably supported the New Jersey plan and worked for a compromise that would mean success. His influence was largely responsible for the alacrity and unanimity with which the New Jersey state convention ratified the Federal Constitution. On July 25, 1790, while resting at "Liberty Hall," Governor William Livingston died. Originally buried in the Presbyterian churchyard at Elizabethtown, his remains, together with those of his wife, were removed to the vault of their son, Brockholst, in New York City, in 1791.

HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

Acquiring the land in 1760, William Livingston erected "Liberty Hall" in 1772-73 and resided there until his death in 1790. Lord and Lady Bolingbroke then acquired the property and lived there. Susan Livingston, the niece of William Livingston and daughter of Peter Van Burgh Livingston, next purchased the estate and it has been in the possession of this family (Kean) ever since. Her first husband was John Kean, a member (1785-87) of Congress from South Carolina, and the first cashier of the first U.S. Bank (1791). Her second husband was Count Julian Ursin Niemcewicz, a Polish nobleman who had come to the United States in 1797 as an aide and companion to the Revolutionary hero, General Thaddeus Kosciuszko. She changed the name of the manor in 1800 from "Liberty Hall" to "Ursino" in honor of her second husband. As a condition of this marriage which took place in 1800, Niemcewicz renounced any right to his wife's and her son's (Peter Kean) estate. About 1870, the original two-story house was enlarged by the addition of a third story to the center and west wing and two stories to the east wing. Rooms and a tower were also added to the north or rear side of the original building. The room plan and interior trim of the 1772-73 portions, however were little altered. Used as a private residence, "Liberty Hall" is not open to visitors.

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

STATE	New Jersey	
COUNTY	Union	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

Liberty Hall
(Gov. William Livingston House) *(Continuation Sheet)*

(Number all entries)

Boundaries for the Governor William Livingston House, Liberty Hall:

Approximately 140 acres, including Governor William Livingston's mansion known as "Liberty Hall" and garden, beginning at the northwest corner on the east side of Morris Avenue at latitude 40° 40' 52" - longitude 74° 14' 04", from here going northwest about 1650 feet to a point on the west bank of the Elizabeth River at latitude 40° 41' 04" - longitude 74° 13' 48", then going southeast following along the western bank of the Elizabeth River to a point at latitude 40° 40' 31" - longitude 74° 13' 24" hence following the northern edge of road going west about 700 feet to a point at latitude 40° 40' 30" - longitude 74° 13' 34", then proceeding to the southwest about 800 feet to a point at latitude 40° 40' 25" - longitude 74° 13' 41", then running northwest about 300 feet to a point at latitude 40° 40' 28" - longitude 74° 13' 44", then proceeding southwest about 400 feet to a point at latitude 40° 40' 25" - longitude 74° 13' 47", from here continuing about 200 feet to a point on the east side of North Avenue at latitude 40° 40' 25", longitude 74° 13' 50", hence going northeast along the east side of North Avenue about 1100 feet to the junction of said street with Morris Avenue, hence going northwest along the east side of Morris Avenue about 2600 feet to the point of beginning, the northwest corner.

Precise boundaries, as described above, are on record on a copy of U.S. Geological Survey Map: Elizabeth Quadrangle, New Jersey-New York, 1967, 7.5 Minute Series, on file with the Historic Sites Survey, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service.