

PH0356581

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 23 1976
DATE ENTERED JUL 29 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 ******
The Van Ness House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 236 Little Falls Road
CITY, TOWN Fairfield, N.J. VICINITY OF Eleventh
STATE New Jersey CODE 34 COUNTY Essex CODE 013

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Raymond & Dorothy Wilson
STREET & NUMBER 236 Little Falls Road
CITY, TOWN Fairfield VICINITY OF STATE New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Essex County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER Hall of Records, High Street
CITY, TOWN Newark STATE New Jersey (07102)

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey (NJ-625)
DATE 1940 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress (Reference Department)
CITY, TOWN Washington, STATE D.C.

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 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

Architectural Analysis:

"The effect of this unimposing farmhouse as originally built has been entirely changed by subsequent alterations and additions. The oldest features remaining, besides the one story masonry walls, are the door in the south front of the kitchen, composed of five bevelled edge panels in the fashion of the first half of the 18th century millwork, the pilastered mantel in that room (unusually elaborate for that location), a post-Revolution piece, and perhaps the mantel in the large parlor, this last being evidently of early 19th century work. All of the window sash are modern replacements of the original small paned ones.

"The most drastic rebuilding which entirely changed the original character of what was a good example of Dutch Colonial farmhouse came about 1840 when the probably gambrel roof with outspread eaves was either jacked up or removed to change the garret into a partitioned and finished second story having full headroom at the eaves, as shown by the frame extension and its windows above the original masonry walls. At the same time, the main entrance doorway with its glass transom and side lights was inserted to replace the original doorway, the design and details indicating its period as Greek Revival, about 1840. Likewise the wide trim to the interior passage doors, the molded box cornice at the new eaves of the roof, the baseboards at the floor line, the interior trim of the windows, further testify to the regrettable remodeling and supposed improvement of the house about that year. Finally, the sun parlor and the annex to the kitchen which disfigure the entire front have been added recently to complete the transformation." (1)

The Van Ness house, with construction beginning about 1720, originally consisted of one room, a kitchen with an overhead loft. The main portion of this modest homestead was added circa 1760 (2) for, the entire structure can be noted on the Ball Map as having had two hearths. (3) Remodelling of this main section in 1840 reflects the Greek Revival influence. The renovations incurred at this time did

¹ Historic American Buildings Survey, The Peter Van Ness Farmhouse, (NJ-625) Works Progress Administration, 1940.

² Historic American Buildings Survey, The Peter Van Ness Farmhouse, (N. J. - 625), W.P.A., 1940.

³ The 1766 Map of Thomas Ball, New York Historical Society.

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

Van Ness Homestead
Fairfield Borough
Essex County

New Jersey 034
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

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DESCRIPTION:

much to change the appearance of the Dutch colonial farmhouse. Presumably, a gambrel roof composed of curved, outstretched eaves was either raised or entirely replaced to allow for full headroom in the former second story garret. Evidence of the remodelling can be seen if one examines the area above the brownstone walls, a frame extension with windows. The main doorway, replaced during the remodelling, has glass in the side lights and transom, with Greek Revival details. Molding around the celings, doors, and windows also date from 1840. None of the original window sashes are intact. Presently covered by brownstone is a former window on the west elevation. On the other hand, a window in the upper wood section of the west facade was added about 1900. The brownstone facing in the north, east, west, and part of the south elevation, is in need of painting and repair.

Apropos the interior the house, the original wide floorboards are intact, covered over with plywood or linoleum. A large fireplace has been recently rebuilt in the kitchen, which is the oldest section of the house. The original mantel was pilastered and unusually elaborate for its location. The present hearth runs practically the entire length of the east wall. The hand-hewn ceiling beams are intact, hidden from view by the present ceiling. A second fireplace and chimney, now unused, is found on the west side of the first floor, in the front parlor. This mantel is thought to be of early nineteenth century origin. In the cellar is found a base footing which apparently supported a third fireplace directly above it. The door in the south front wall of the kitchen, with the masonry walls, are the house's oldest remaining features. A sun parlor and a kitchen annex were added to the front of the house during the 1930's.

A map is attached.

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 NO	<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 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

The Van Ness house is of local historical significance, since Simon Van Ness, first of the Van Ness lineage in Fairfield, was among the earliest group of Dutchmen to settle in western Essex County. (1) Five months after his second marriage to Hester de la Maitre in Albany, Simon Van Ness brought his family to Fairfield in 1701 to claim ownership to the land that he Hans Spier, and others had brought from the Indians. (2) Simon Van Ness was known as a farmer in Essex County in 1717. In 1710 and 1717, he purchased part of the Schulyer patent on the western banks of the Pequannock River, increasing his land-holdings in northeastern Fairfield to 300 acres. (3)

As a prominent landowner who was listed with the thirty-five families who first inhabited the Horseneck area, (4) Simon Van Ness became embroiled in the Horseneck riots opposing English land domination. (5) More fortunate than the majority of settlers who were considered as squatters in the final decision by the courts, Simon Van Ness received a deed from the Proprietors in 1744, confirming his land acquisition. (6) Used to settle subsequent land disputes, the Proprietors' Deed is a valuable document which substantiates the Van Ness Indian deed, lost at the present time.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Van Ness family was to the Dutch Reformed Church of Fairfield, whose congregation Simon Van Ness helped to found in 1720. David Van Ness, a descendant, was a

¹The Van Ness Genealogy

²Proprietors' Deed from Topkow, et. al to Simon Van Ness, et. al, 1 May 1701, E. N.J. Deed Book, O, P, 149.

³William Shaw, A History of Essex and Hudson Counties, New Jersey, Everts & Peck, Philadelphia, 1884.

⁴Reverend Charles Berry, An Historical Survey of the First Presbyterian Church, The Daily Advertiser, 1871.

⁵William Shaw, Op. cit.

⁶Proprietors' Deed, Op. cit.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Primary Sources:

Proprietors' Deed of 1744, confirming a May 1, 1701 Deed between Simon Van Ness, et. al and Chief Topkow, et. al, East New Jersey Deed Book, O, P., 149.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA $\frac{1}{8}$ acre

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	56,236,0	4,52,58,2,0	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
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

(Terry Karschner -Historic Sites Section
Trenton, 609-292-2023

NAME / TITLE

Jacquelin Gioioso, Historian; Joseph Esposito, Art Historian

ORGANIZATION

Fairfield Bicentennial Committee

DATE

December 15, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 893

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Fairfield

STATE

New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

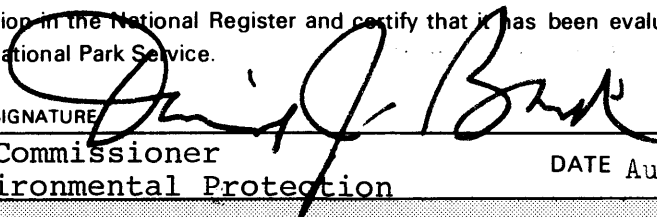
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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



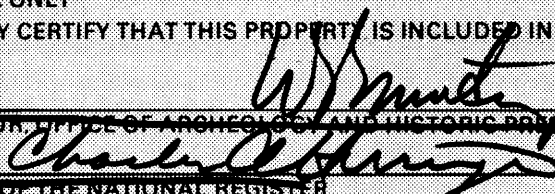
TITLE David J. Bardin, Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection

DATE August 10, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:



KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 7/29/77
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE 6-28-77

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PAGE 2

SIGNIFICANCE:

manager and builder of Fairfield's brownstone church begun in 1804. (7)
A Van Ness in the twentieth century was the last of the family to live in the house. Mary Francisco, who was the daughter of Isaac J. Van Ness and the grandmother of Raymond Dey, sold the house and its remaining acres in 1924 for \$26,000. (8)

The question of when the Van Ness house was build and by whom is debatable. The earliest known reference to the house is November 17, 1724, when it was used as a terminal point in delineating the Great Notch Road. Known as Little Falls Road today, it was "laid to the fork in the Passaic River near Simon Founesses (Van Es or Van Ness) house." (9)

Although the house has been dated circa 1760, it is likely that, as was typical of early Dutch houses, the Van Ness house was built in various stages. It had its beginnings with Simon Van Ness, who probably erected a one room building, in reality, a kitchen which was used for cooking, heating, and sleeping. Simon's son Isaac, who married in 1729, and had two children born in Fairfield by 1732, must have been the initial contributor to the house's brownstone character. Peter Van Ness, sone of Isaac who seems to be the Captain Van Ness cited on the Ball Map as the owner, apparently was responsible for the bulk of the construction. (10)

More significant than its exact age is that the Van Ness house predates the American Revolution. It is an architectural creature of the brownstone era in the eighteenth century when Dutch settlers cut sandstone by hand from the banks of the Passaic River near the Little

⁷Fairfield Church Account Book.

⁸Historic American Buildings Survey, The Peter Van Ness Farmhouse, N.J. 625, W.P.A. 1940.

⁹A History of Little Falls, Centennial Edition, 1968, page 14.

¹⁰Historic American Buildings Survey, Op. cit.

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SIGNIFICANCE:

Falls and hauled it with oxen to their building sites. (11) The Van Ness house was built along the fertile flatlands of the Passaic River. Experiencing different periods of growth, made of hand cut brownstone, and 1 1/2 stories in height, the Van Ness house is typical of the Dutch colonial farmhouse in northern New Jersey.

However, the Van Ness house does differ from the few remaining Dutch colonial houses in New Jersey, for it is in contrast to the Dey Mansion or the Zabriskie-Van Steuben house, both of which were relatively grand manors built by wealthy Dutchmen. Simon Van Ness was a Dutch farmer of the middling class who built an unpretentious homestead.

It is ironic that only the mansions are saved although houses like the Van Nesses constructed more accurately depict the way of life in the New Netherlands settlement. In truth, the Dutch colonial farmhouse is becoming extinct, victim of demolition, or as with the Van Ness house, neglect. Although not yet listed with over one-half of the buildings destroyed since the Historic American Buildings Survey, the Van Ness house is in need of an immediate and complete restorative program. In its present delapidated state, it is a sad reminder of an important period in American history. Restored, as is the intention of the local government, the Van Ness house will become a noteworthy example of the Dutch settlement in northern New Jersey.

¹¹Barbara Land, "Quarry for the Brownstone Era", The Royle Forum, March 15, 1964.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY:

"Essex Roads, A, 47, November 17, 1724," A History of Little Falls, Centennial Edition, 1968.

Rev. Charles Berry, An Historical Survey of the First Presbyterian Church, The Daily Advertiser, 1871.

The Van Ness family Bibles, in the possession of C. Wellington Dey, 40 Mountain Avenue, Pompton Plains, New Jersey; and Raymond Dey, The Dey Mansion, Wayne, New Jersey.

The 1766 Map of Thomas Ball, New York Historical Society
Secondary Sources:

Rosalie Fellows Bailey, Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northeastern New Jersey and Southern New York, Dover, 1968, (page 521).

Alan Gowans, Architecture in New Jersey, The New Jersey Historical Series, D. Van Nostrand Company, 1964.

Genealogy of the Van Nesses, in the possession of Raymond Dey, The Dey Mansion, Wayne, New Jersey.

William Shaw, History of Essex and Hudson Counties, New Jersey, Everts & Peck, Philadelphia, 1884, (page 849).

Historic American Buildings Survey, Works Progress Administration, N.J. 625, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Barbara Carper Land, "Quarry for the Brownstone Era", The Royle Forum, March 15, 1964.