

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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

Fort Crailo

AND/OR COMMON

Fort Crailo

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Riverside Avenue

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Rensselaer

\_\_ VICINITY OF

29

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New York

36

Rensselaer

083

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDINGS
- 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
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

State of New York, Division of Parks and Recreation

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Albany

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Rensselaer County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Congress Street

CITY, TOWN

Troy

STATE

New York

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

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

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

Killiaen Van Rensselaer was one of the most successful of the Dutch patroons, who although he never even visited his holding in North America, nevertheless contributed directly to the settlement of the Hudson Valley in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Dutch occupied the upper Hudson valley for trade with the Indians shortly after Henry Hudson's famous 1609 voyage in the Half Moon. After 1629, the Dutch used a unique system to encourage settlement, known as Patroonship. By this system, wealthy Dutch merchants controlled extensive tracts of land, provided they encouraged settlement of the area by providing passage to the continent, supplies, and protection for the farmers. The merchants stood to reap their profits from both the new farming, and also the fur trade in the area.

Van Rensselaer acquired 700,000 acres in the area around today's Albany and Rensselaer Counties, and his patroon was known as Rensselaerwyck. Parts of the huge estate were called after Van Rensselaer's holdings in Holland. Crailo is just one of those areas, referring to the Dutch word meaning Crow's Woods. It was the nucleus of an area known as Greynen Bosch (Green Bush) because of the impressive stands of Virgin Pines there.

Following the death of the elder Killiaen, the property was managed by a succession of family members. About 1712, a grandson of the old patroon, Hendrick Van Rensselaer, inherited the Crailo, and put up the substantial brick house we refer to as Fort Crailo. This old portion of the house is the portion facing Riverside Avenue today. A later addition was made to the house c. 1762-68, by John Van Rensselaer, Hendrick's son.

The two sections of the house tell more about the social history of the periods of the house than anything else. The interior of the older portion of the house has been restored and re-restored at different times. What remains clear however, is the difference between the 1712 portion with its fortress-like construction, unmistakably defensive in character, and the 1762-68 portion, more open, spacious, and one might say, confident, in a less troubled historical period.

The bitter competition between the French and the English for the ascendancy in North America struck terror into the hearts of agrarian settlers, because each of those nations enlisted the help of Indians to carry on the most conspicuous brutality. The savages helped both sides to destroy the homes of 10,000 families in the Hudson and Mohawk Valley during the 18th century, not to mention the raping, murder and pillaging that went with it. The 20 inch thick brick walls of Fort Carailo are a reflection of the need for a defensive, fortress-like dwelling. So too are the gunports added probably shortly afterwards.

Fort Crailo is a 2 1/2 story brick house with gable roof, broad to Riverside Avenue, dating from about 1712. The ell at the rear of the house is perpendicular to the older section and dates from c. 1768.

The earlier portion of the house consists of two rooms on each floor, connected

# 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 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 checked="" 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 c. 1707-1712, c. 1768

BUILDER/ARCHITECT *Anonymous*

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historic house we call "Fort Crailo", is a fine example of an 18th century Hudson Valley house built in a Dutch style, reflecting the background of its builders.

The Dutch occupied the upper Hudson Valley for trade with the Indians shortly after Henry Hudson's famous 1609 voyage on the Half Moon. After 1629, the Dutch used a system of land tenure called Patroonship, whereby Dutch merchants were required to encourage the settlement of their large land holdings. One of these families was that of the Van Rensselaers, who ultimately built, about 1712, and then expanded, about 1768, this house. The building remains to us then as both an unusual architectural example, and an important artifact of this regional socio-political system of patroonship.

SEARCHED  
SERIALIZED  
INDEXED  
FILED

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 1  
 UTM REFERENCES 18.602520.4720880

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Fort Crailo, the eighteenth century house located in Rensselaer New York, once was the focal structure of an extensive area of land controlled by the Dutch Patroon Killiaen Van Rensselaer. Unhappily, nothing of the character of that agrarian environment remains in the vicinity of the house. The house itself is within a densely built up section of this small city on the east bank of the Hudson River. Fort Crailo stands today as one link in a chain of houses along Riverside Avenue, which lie just a matter of feet from each other. Facing the Hudson to the West

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Dillon, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, Historic Sites Survey

DATE

9-8-76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

523-5464

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     

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Landmark

Designated: Nov. 5, 1967

date

Boundary Certified:

JUNE 21, 1978

DATE

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
 LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
 LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
 LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
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Fort Crailo  
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by a hall where the stair is placed. "Loopholes" in the basement may be evidence of the need at any moment to defend the building with rifle-fire, during the earliest period. Expansion of the building to a third floor, and the addition of an ell at the rear is thought to have taken place about 1768. Brickwork is of a mixed bonding and quality throughout the house, with diapering evident in some of the larger blank walls, and mouse-toothing at the eaves. The heavy mullions of the casement windows in the older section, as well as their heavy, batten shutters, are in direct contrast to the obviously lighter and more secure six over six, thin-mullioned, late-Georgian sash windows.

Gabled dormers pierce the metal roof of the new section, while the older sections tile roof, features only its two end chimneys. The two gables are perpendicular to each other. Entrances are in the west side of the older section, and in the north and south sides of the ell.

A well at the rear of the house has traditionally been identified as the site of the writing of the Revolutionary War song, Yankee Doodle, purportedly penned by a British officer quartered at Fort Crailo, as he observed the raggedy appearance of the rebellious amateur soldiers of the colonial armies.

Fort Crailo is operated today as a historic site by the State of New York, regularly open to the public, and explain by a trained historian.

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Fort Crailo  
CONTINUATION SHEET Boundary ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

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across an open space of lawn about 50 feet wide between the river and Riverside Avenue, the east side of the house faces another string of houses facing the next most easterly city street, at a distance of approximately 100 feet.

The boundary of this National Historic Landmark then consists of only the lot upon which the building stands, bounded on the west by the east curb of Riverside Avenue, and on the east by the rear lot line of the property, about 100 feet behind the house. The north and south lines of the lot lie within a few feet of the house on either side, where privately-owned dwellings are standing.

Total acreage of the site is approximately one-half.