Inside The Jacobus Vanderveer House & Museum

Jacobus Vanderveer House & Museum

Bedminster, New Jersey

Introduction to the Jacobus Vanderveer House

The Jacobus Vanderveer House tells two related stories. First, it gives us a window into life in the Bedminster area when settlers of European descent first began to live here on a full-time basis in the 1700s. The Vanderveer family were Dutch-Americans who were among the first of these settlers. The Vanderveer House also tells us a story of national importance: the house was probably the headquarters for General Henry Knox during the winter of 1778-79. Nearby, he directed America's first military academy, the Pluckemin Cantonment, which was a crucial turning point in the Revolution and in American history.

Life for the people who lived here in the 1700s was rural and agrarian and shaped by traditions, family connections, and religious faith. The story of the Vanderveers, the wealthiest family in the area, includes the drama of premature death that struck many at the time, no matter how rich. Jacobus Vanderveer lost his young wife Winche and daughter within five years after they moved into their new house around 1773. Jacobus's son Henry died in his 20s in the early 1800s, soon after he inherited the house and farm. The lives of the Vanderveers also tell us about how immigrants become part of the American melting pot over time. The story of the Vanderveers includes the difficult but important subject of slavery in New Jersey.

Date of the House

The Jacobus Vanderveer House was built in **two phases**. The **first part** was built in **1772-73** by Jacobus Vanderveer, the first member of his family to be born in the area after his family moved here in the 1740s. The house stood on a 500-acre farm created on land that Jacobus inherited from his father. The original house had a large kitchen, which was altered and then replaced in the later 19th century. Today, the kitchen is a reconstruction based on archaeological evidence. The **second section**, on the east (Route 206) side of the hall, was mostly built in **1811-12**. It was begun by Jacobus Vanderveer's son Henry, who died before work on this section was totally completed.

Historic context

The Jacobus Vanderveer House was at the heart of a **farm** estate of over **500 acres**. This farm had been part of the larger landholdings of Jacobus Vanderveer Sr., who held well over 1000 acres in the vicinity and settled his family in the Raritan Valley in the middle of the 18th century. The immediately adjacent township land today is the remaining portion of this former farmland. The Jacobus Vanderveer farm had a significant number of outbuildings, most of which stood to the north and west of the main house. The family's homestead, as well as the family mill on the North Branch of the Raritan River, stood to the south of the Jacobus Vanderveer House and on the other side of the road where Route 206 is today.

North of the Vanderveer House stood the local **Dutch Reformed Church**, the heart of this Dutch-American community. Although the church itself has been demolished, the cemetery there today is the remnant of this crucial community institution.

Today, we enter the house from the north. Visitors in the 1700s would have entered on the south side into the hallway that is now at the center of the house. The house is oriented with its long elevation and the most windows on this side. This traditional way of building houses takes advantage of natural light and winter solar warmth.

Place in the history of the development of the community

The area around the Jacobus Vanderveer House was only permanently settled by European-Americans in the mid-1700s, so the house represents one of the earliest to be built here, and one of the oldest houses that survive in the region. The Vanderveers were among the wealthiest people in the area, so the modest size of the house (think of the scale and grandeur of Mt. Vernon, which was also the center of an agricultural estate) indicates the generally rural and relatively remote nature of the area in the period.

What happened in it – Knox Headquarters during the Pluckemin Cantonment

A substantial amount of information points to the Vanderveer House as the military headquarters and residence of **General Henry Knox** and his family during the nearby Pluckemin Cantonment of the winter of 1778-79. The Cantonment was an important turning point in the Revolution and America's first military academy. It is likely that the widowed Jacobus Vanderveer did not live in the house during the time that the Knoxes used it, and may instead have lived with his recently widowed sister-in-law at the family's homestead to the south and east.

General Knox's family lived with him at the house during the Cantonment. With him were his wife Lucy Flucker Knox and their daughter "Little" Lucy. While they were here, Lucy Knox gave birth to a daughter, Julia, who died in June of 1779 and is buried in the graveyard to the north of the house.

What happened to it – later changes and restoration

After her father Henry Vanderveer's death in 1813, Mary Hardenburgh Vanderveer and her mother left the area, never to return. The house thus was really only lived in by one generation of the Vanderveer family. Mary sold the property to her cousin in 1833. The house remained as a farm, but was rented until 1874, when it was sold out of the family. About 1875, the original kitchen wing was demolished and replaced with a smaller structure. In the 1910s, the house underwent substantial alterations, including the addition of a porch on the north side (removed during restoration) and the present stair in the hall today. The house was restored by the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House during the last ten years.

Today, visitors see spaces at the Vanderveer House that serve as period rooms with historic furniture, as galleries for temporary exhibitions, and as event venues.

The Vanderveers

Jacobus Vanderveer was the first member of his family to be born in the Raritan Valley, in 1743. His parents were born in Flatbush, Brooklyn and were part of a tight-knit, conservative Dutch immigrant community there that was centered on the Dutch Reformed Church. Jacobus was already three generations removed from his immigrant ancestor who came to Brooklyn in the mid-seventeenth century, but he still maintained a number of Dutch traditions, including holding slaves, and a strong adherence to his church.

The Vanderveers' Dutch identity extended to resentment of the British, who had taken over the New Amsterdam Colony from the Dutch. Thus, during the Revolution Jacobus and his family supported the Continental cause. This led to his brother's death at British hands while he was imprisoned during the war. By the end of his life, however, Jacobus had changed his name to "James" showing that he had become as much "Anglo-American" as "Dutch-American."

Jacobus **married** twice in his life. He and his first wife **Winche** probably married about the time the house was built, when Jacobus was in his 30s and she was in her 20s. Winche and their only **child Catherine** died in 1777, leaving Jacobus a widower during the Revolution. Jacobus married again after the war was over, to **Maria Hardenburgh**, the daughter of a prominent clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church. Jacobus and Maria had **3 children** that survived childhood: **Henry, Dinah, and Phebe**. Maria died in 1789, leaving Jacobus a widower for the rest of his life. Jacobus died in 1810 at the age of 66. At the time of his death, his estate was among the most valuable in Somerset County.

Henry S. Vanderveer inherited his father's house and large farm at the age of 23. He married **Francis Nesbitt** about the time of his father's death and started a large addition on the east side of the house. Its details are a rural version of the dominant Federal Style architectural taste of the period – showing how much the Vanderveers had become part of the American cultural mainstream. Unfortunately, Henry Vanderveer didn't live to see the addition finished. He died in 1813, only three years after he had inherited the estate. His widow and young daughter **Maria** (also called **Mary**, born ca. 1810-1811) left the property and never lived here again.

During the entire time the Vanderveers lived here, up to 6 **enslaved workers** also lived here in the house. Enslaved Africans, and African-Americans, were held by many wealthy Dutch-Americans in New Jersey and New York in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. In fact, there is no record of the Vanderveers having any workers other than slaves, who took care of domestic chores in the house and operations on the farm, and were key to the agricultural wealth of the Vanderveers. Slave labor may also have been responsible for the creation of the Vanderveer house itself.

The Vanderveers, like many Dutch-Americans, did not hold a particularly large number of these workers (in comparison to the popular image of southern plantations), but documents indicate that from the time he was living as an independent adult, Jacobus Vanderveer had at least one slave. He inherited a woman named **June** as part of his father's estate at the time the house was under construction, so that she was presumably the first slave to live at the house. During his lifetime, Jacobus may have held as many as 6 slaves at a time. He left two girls – one whose name we do not know and one named **Bit** – to his granddaughters Maria and Catherine Vail (Dinah Vanderveer Vail's daughters).

The inventory of Henry Vanderveer's 1813 estate taken at his death lists 5 enslaved workers, which he probably inherited from his father Jacobus: a man and woman (**Eve** and **Jack**) and 3 children (**Susan** and **Betty** and an **unnamed boy**). These people could easily have been a family, although it is possible we will never know this for certain. A girl named **Eve** was part of the inventory of Jacobus's father's estate. However, just as no document tell us whether the slaves held by Henry were a family, no known written record followed the course of Eve's life.

The **emancipation law** passed in 1804 in New Jersey only freed those who were born in slavery after that date, and then only when they reached their twenties. The law did not guarantee freedom for any other enslaved people. In 1830, New Jersey retained two-thirds of all the enslaved people in the northern states, and free African-Americans were banned from voting in 1807. Slavery wasn't completely abolished in New Jersey until 1846. The federal census for 1840 shows that 4 slaves, as well as 13 free blacks, still lived on the Vanderveer property at that date.

Henry Knox (1750-1806)

Henry Knox was born in Boston, Massachusetts. He was a self-made and largely self-educated man: the son of a mostly absent shipmaster who died in 1762 when Henry was 16. Both tall and heavy compared with many of his contemporaries and jovial by disposition, Henry was a physically impressive presence, weighing some 280 pounds as an adult. Henry **studied** at Boston Public Latin Grammar School until his father's death, when he was apprenticed to a bookseller, which both gave him a livelihood and completed his education through reading the books sold by his master.

Henry opened his own **bookstore** in Boston in 1771, advertising works for sale on a wide variety of topics of "polite literature," as well as stationery, wall paper and "Ladies Pocket Memorandum Books." His bookstore became a gathering place for young well-to-do Bostonians, whose behavior Henry emulated. He stocked a large number of military works for (British) officer customers, and mastered the content of these books. He joined the local artillery company at the age of 18 and had risen to the rank of second lieutenant of the Boston Regiment's grenadiers by 1772.

He married **Lucy Flucker** in 1774. In contrast to Henry, who was "in trade," she was among Boston's political and financial elite. Henry refused a commission as a British officer from his father-in-law, thus starting a break with Lucy's Loyalist family. With the outbreak of hostilities in Boston in 1775, Henry and Lucy escaped through British lines in the summer, and Henry met George Washington. Henry started as a civilian consultant to the Continental Army and then was commissioned.

At the beginning of 1776, Henry led a raid and captured cannon and munitions from the British at Fort Ticonderoga, hauling the guns 300 miles through winter ice in western Massachusetts to Washington's forces in Boston. Henry was promoted to brigadier general in 1776, and distinguished himself in the **battles of Trenton and Princeton**, Brandywine, Germantown and **Monmouth**.

In the winter of 1778-79, General Knox supervised the creation and use of the **Pluckemin Cantonment**, where, under his leadership, American military training was begun before the creation of West Point. The Cantonment was located to the south and east of the Vanderveer House.

After the Revolution, Henry continued to be a key player in American military affairs, becoming Secretary at War in 1785, reporting to Congress before the drafting of the Constitution, and then Secretary of War after its ratification. A Federalist, Knox was a crucial figure in Indian affairs. He resigned as Secretary in 1794 and "retired" to his estate "Montpelier" as a gentleman farmer in Thomaston, Maine, thanks to the extensive lands inherited in Maine by Lucy and land tracts he purchased speculatively. At Montpelier, he was occupied by a number of business enterprises, and died there at the age of 56.

Lucy Flucker Knox (1756-1824)

Lucy Flucker was born into a family at the apex of Boston pre-Revolution society, the daughter of the royal provincial secretary Thomas Flucker and his second wealthy wife, Hannah Waldo. An obituary described Lucy as a woman of "strong mental powers" and having "acquired much useful information" through "extensive reading." Her level of education was exceptional, even among her elite social class.

She first met Henry Knox **at his bookstore** and they **married in 1774** despite her family's strong opposition to someone "in trade." Throughout their life together, she continued to encourage him toward the grand lifestyle to which he aspired, although it was sometimes beyond their means. The Revolution caused her to choose life with her husband over her Loyalist family. Like her husband, she was a physically large person, attaining 250 pounds as an adult. Although many officers' wives did follow their husbands to field headquarters like the Vanderveer House, Lucy Knox did so to an unusual extent, living in rented facilities in a number of locations.

While she was at the Vanderveer House, Lucy was either in the late stages of pregnancy or ill after the birth of her daughter **Julia**, who died at the house. Lucy went to live at Mount Vernon with her friend Martha Washington after leaving the Bedminster area in the summer of 1779. After the end of the war, the Knoxes moved to Boston. She was awarded the family estates as the only non-Loyalist Flucker. The Knoxes followed the capital to New York and Philadelphia in the 1780s and '90s, where Lucy became a close friend of the socially prominent Federalist Anne Willing Bingham.

After the Knoxes moved to Montpelier, Lucy continued to entertain visitors in her grand house. One of the tragedies of the Knoxes' life was the loss of nine of their twelve children in infancy or before adulthood.

Knox Children

"Little" Lucy Knox (1776-1854). The elder daughter of Lucy and Henry Knox, Lucy accompanied her parents. She was two or three at the time of her parents' residence at the Vanderveer House. She was the oldest of the three Knox children to survive to adulthood, along with her brother Henry and sister Caroline.

Julia Knox (1779). The second child of Henry and Lucy, Julia was one of the nine children of the Knoxes who did not survive to adulthood. She was born and died in the Vanderveer House. Her burial sparked a controversy because she died of a "paroxysm" that indicated possible demonic possession to the members of the Dutch Reformed Church clergy. Further, her family were not members of the church. According to tradition, she was buried in unconsecrated ground given by Jacobus Vanderveer where he had buried his own infant daughter who had died two years before. This land is now incorporated in the existing cemetery.

The Pluckemin Cantonment

The cantonment (military installation or barracks) near the crossroads village of Pluckemin to the south of the Vanderveer House was a key event in American military history. Like the occupation of Valley Forge in 1777-78 by George Washington and his troops, the Pluckemin Cantonment was a temporary winter encampment whose purpose was to drill and train the Continental Army's soldiers.

In November 1778, Washington's orders established winter quarters for different sections of the army for different purposes beginning in December. The main force of the troops, the infantry, was sent to Middlebrook (near where Somerville, New Jersey is today). The British army was located at the time in Manhattan. The Continental Army's position at the southern end of the Watchung Mountains allowed Washington to both protect areas further south and to move north defensively behind the Watchung Range if necessary.

The artillery section of the army was then under the command of weapons expert Brigadier General Henry Knox. His force consisted of the "machines of war" such as mortar and cannon, and the soldiers and officers who moved and operated them. In this period, artillerymen were considered among the elite of the military, since the operation of large guns required careful geometric calculations to place the projectile on the target. Knox's division was sent north of the main body of the army to the area of Pluckemin, where it was protected from the British by the second Watchung Mountain and Washington's infantry.

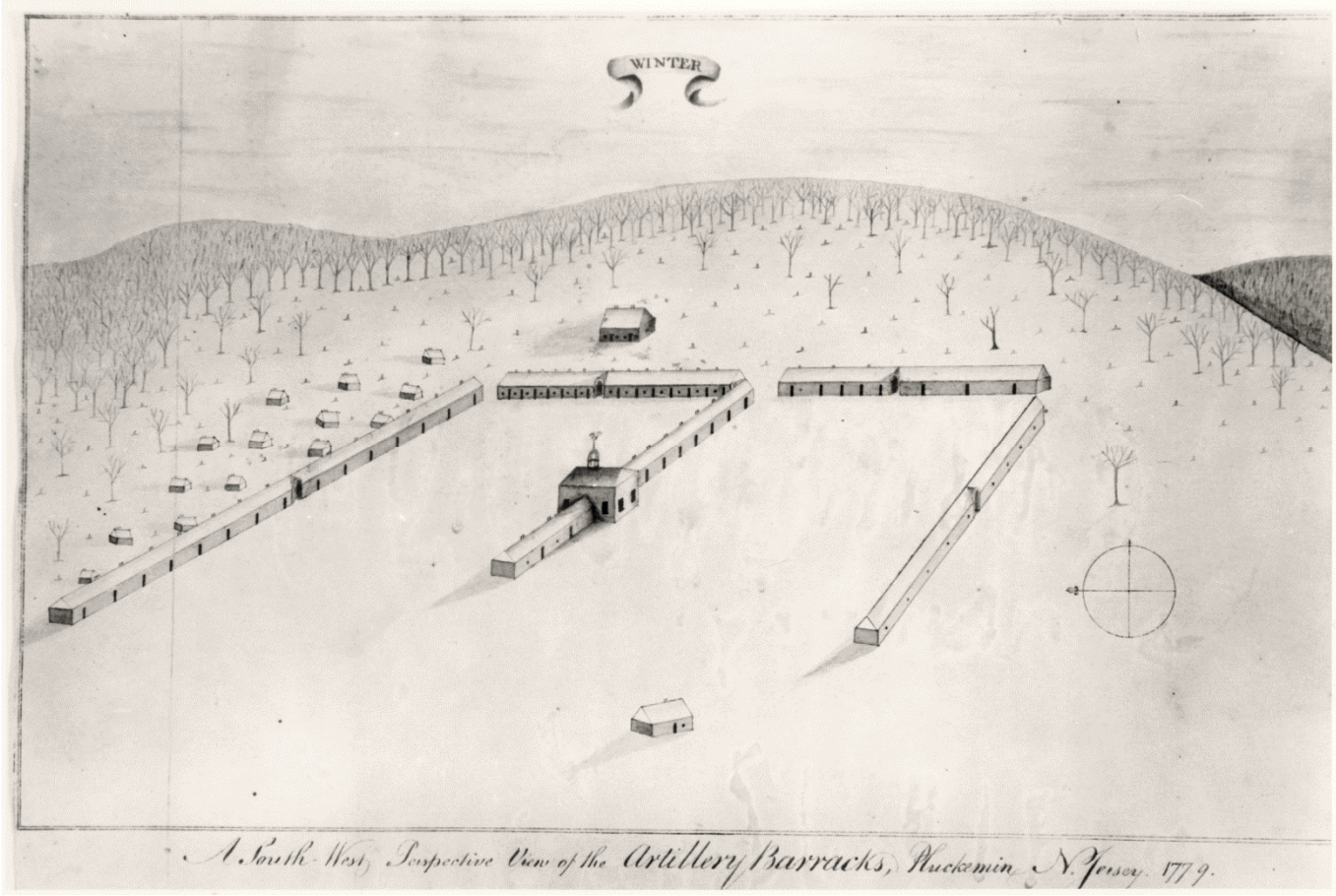
Beginning in December, 1778, the soldiers under Knox's command cleared an area on the western mountain slope north of the village of Pluckemin to create the encampment. An impressive complex of building in an E-shaped plan served three purposes: housing the artillery troops and officers and camp followers, creating new weapons to resupply Washington's army, and training the artillery forces. The largest building at the center of the complex provided classes to officers each day on the complicated techniques and details of using weapons and ordnance to the greatest effect.

This academy building was the first such American facility, and was created because Henry Knox promoted the idea of the highest quality military education. The academy at Pluckemin preceded the creation of West Point, which was established in 1802 partly as a result of General Knox's proposal written in 1783 to create such a school. After the end of the Revolution, Knox went on to serve as Secretary of War in George Washington's first presidential cabinet.

<u>After the Cantonment</u>

The encampment at Pluckemin lasted from December, 1778 to June, 1779. Both the military training supplied in the academy building and the production of weapons and equipment by artificers and gunsmiths put the Continental Army in a considerably stronger position than it had enjoyed previously.

Despite the extent and substantial nature of construction for the cantonment, it was not intended to be, nor did it serve as a permanent military facility. After the disbanding of troops that had lived, worked, and learned there in the late spring of 1779, the cantonment's buildings did remain in use as a military hospital into 1780. The buildings were probably not used again and slowly collapsed over time, disappearing into the hillside as trees regrew around them.



View of the Pluckemin Cantonment by John Lillie, 1779

The Back Room / Knox Bedroom (built 1772-73)

The Back Room / Knox Bedroom is one of the **original rooms** of the house, built in 1772-73 by Jacobus Vanderveer and his first wife Winche. It would have served as the Vanderveer family's private living space and main bedroom, or "chamber," although bedrooms were also rooms for entertaining and eating in the 18th century. The room is installed with furniture like the objects that we know that Henry Knox ordered to be bought from Boston for his use while he was on campaign to reflect its use as the Knoxes bedroom during the Pluckemin Cantonment.

Lucy Knox and her children at the Vanderveer House

This room would have been the primary living space for Lucy Knox and her daughter "Little" Lucy while they were in residence here. Lucy would have played games here and spent time with her mother, who was either pregnant or recovering from childbirth during her whole stay at the house. It would also likely have been the room where Lucy gave birth to her daughter Julia, and perhaps even the room in which the child died. Sadly, in the 18th century many children did not survive infancy, and many women struggled with and even died in childbirth or from post-partum infections. At the Vanderveer House, Jacobus's wife Winche died in 1777 soon after their infant Catherine. Their deaths were probably related.

In January, 1779, two young women relatives of Henry Knox, the Winslow sisters, came to help Lucy Knox at the house. Lucy gave birth to her daughter Julia on March 28th. Lucy was increasingly ill after giving birth and was unable to leave the house after the Pluckemin Cantonment ceased operations and its military personnel began to be sent on to other duties in June. Julia Knox died in July and was buried in Vanderveer land adjacent to the Dutch Reformed Church cemetery.

Features of the Room

Although it is on the north side of the house, the room has a large, corner fireplace that is one of two surviving original fireplaces in the house. This fireplace is particularly large relative to the size of the room, so this space would have been more comfortable to be in during the winter months. Like the Parlor, this room features large windows that take maximum advantage of natural light.

Furniture

The more sophisticated furniture and textiles in this room, and the contrast between these and the ones in the Parlor, provide the opportunity to understand the difference between the conservative, rural lifestyle of the Vanderveers in contrast to the urban, worldly life of the Knoxes. Notice the contrast between the elaborate bedhangings in this room, such as those the Knoxes would have owned, in contrast to the plainer ones on the slaubank bed in the Parlor, which would have been more typical of those the Vanderveers had. A carpet on the floor in any house in this period, even the one that is in this room today which seems quite plain, was a rare luxury.

In the 18th century, bedrooms served as family eating and even as entertainment spaces, and were not considered the personal, private space we consider them to be today.

Among the pieces of furniture that Henry Knox ordered to be sent to him from Boston during the Cantonment for his family's use was a "close stool": a chair that had an enclosed chamber pot. He also ordered to be sent:

- a set of 8 mahogany chairs
- a mahogany armchair (part of the same set)
- a breakfast table (a folding table such as the one in this room)
- a washstand
- brass andirons
- fire shovel and tongs
- 2 brass candlesticks
- 1 feather bed, a bolster, 2 pillows, a set of bed curtains, sheets, and pillow cases

The 1813 inventory of Henry Vanderveer's estate also indicates that the family used this space as a bedroom and as a place for "taking" tea into the early 19th century. The room's contents at that date included blue china, a sugar caster, silver tea spoons and tongs, and "tea waiters," as well as a bed and a wash stand.

The Entry / Hall (built 1772-73, altered 1811-12 and early 20th c.)

The Entry / Hall provides a window into the way Dutch-American colonial houses were built and how the house was changed in 1811-12 by Henry Vanderveer. The reveals in the wall and the change in floorboards show that the space was originally two rooms, that the ceiling was raised when the 1811-12 wing was added, that the eastern wall was originally on the exterior of the building, and the heavy timber frame structural system of Dutch Colonial Houses. The existing stair is a later (ca. 1909) alteration. The precise configuration and location of the original stair is uncertain because later alterations that erased the evidence.

The Entry / Hall was the eastern edge of the original 1772-3 Vanderveer House. The eastern wall (toward Route 206) was originally the outside, and the **frame on the wall** indicates the location where a window was before the addition of 1811-12 was constructed.

Originally, **the hall was divided into two rooms**, as the point where the floorboards change indicates, as well as the exposed section of the wall. The south half, or the entry, connected to the main, front door on the south side of the house (houses were usually oriented with their main front on the south to take advantage of solar heat and light in the winter). An entry such as this served as both a people and environmental filter – keeping cold air out of the main rooms on the first floor.

The **massive heavy timber post** and **brick nogging** seen in the reveal in the middle of the wall show you how medieval in character this kind of structure was under the "skin" of the walls. This is another example of the persistence of traditional Dutch ways in the colonial period.

The exposed **former ceiling beam** near the ceiling shows the height of the space before alterations were made at the time of the 1811-12 eastern addition. The original ceiling would have been the floorboards of the room above, just as they are in the Parlor and the Back Room.

A look into the eastern rooms shows a contrast between the older and new parts of the house: notice the change in style detail, in the size of windows, and the proportions from the earlier rooms. The gains in glass technology led to larger, less expensive pieces of glass that were more readily available in 1811 than in 1772.

During the Pluckemin Cantonment, the rear, or northern portion of the Hall could easily have served as a **military office** for Henry Knox during the time it was used as his headquarters, and would have been a place that his aides would have slept as well. Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory shows a bookcase as well as a bed in this space. It is the kind of space that could have served as an **office** for Jacobus and Henry Vanderveer in keeping track of the records of their farm/estate.

The Second Floor

The second floor of the original house would have served both as bedroom space for children and for storage. We do not know if Jacobus Vanderveer finished out the second floor at the time he built the house in 1772-73. He may have only done this later as his family grew after he had children. By the time of Henry S. Vanderveer's death in 1813, the second floor had **two bedrooms** and a **"lumber" or store room**. The room over the parlor was certainly a bedroom, but whether the room behind it was the "lumber" room or the space over the new parlor served this purpose is not certain.

In addition to the rooms in the main part of the house, it is likely that there was a **room over the kitchen** that served as a bedroom for the Vanderveer's enslaved workers. This room was probably accessed from the second floor in the main part of the house.

Lumber Room

Henry S. Vanderveer's estate inventory suggests that this space was used as a "Lumber Room" – essentially an attic space that would have been used **to store** extra furniture, miscellaneous items and anything that not being used in the present season but not what one would want to store in a barn. Among the items in the 1813 inventory was a "mead box" for fermenting honey, and a "woolen weil" or spinning wheel. Like the rest of the house, its walls would have only have been finished, whitewashed plaster.

The reveal in the northwest wall around the window shows the historic **wattle and daub** insulation, a traditional material consisting of rough plaster with small sticks and straws as structural elements. The one window in the room is also original to the 1772-3 construction of the house by Jacobus Vanderveer.

Enslaved Vanderveers. Dutch-Americans relied heavily on slavery to supply a workforce for domestic and farm work. Slavery was more deeply entrenched as an institution among the Dutch than other ethnic groups in the region, although those of British descent also held enslaved workers. It is most likely that the slaves slept in the second floor, kitchen garret of the house, and was the typical lodging place for these workers in Dutch-American households.

During the Knox occupation of the site, every available place in the house would have been used for officers to sleep in, which is shown in the present installation of the Lumber Room.

The Kitchen

The Kitchen today is a **reconstruction**, based on extensive historical research and archaeological investigation. In rebuilding the kitchen, the original fireplace was not recreated because there was insufficient evidence to create an authentic replication of the original.

Domestic work in Dutch-American households was done to a great extent by enslaved workers.

Cooking in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on an **open hearth** was accomplished by the use of hanging pots of various sizes and "spider" pots on legs that could be moved on top of the flame, as well as spits for meat and game. The 1813 inventory of Henry Vanderveer's estate lists "trammels" for holding meat on a spit, as well as pots and kettles, a griddle and a "gridiron" in the kitchen.

Cooking on an open hearth was a dangerous proposition, particularly given women's long and relatively wide skirts. In addition to the products of the farm, the eighteenth century diet usually included a large amount of game, including small birds which we no longer eat today.

The Vanderveers kept cattle, sheep, and hogs, and Henry's 1813 inventory shows meat stored in casks, barrels of whisky, and apples in storage, as well as butter churns and tubs for preparing meats for curing. The Vanderveers also grew rye, wheat, and flax, and had horses and oxen for transportation and farmwork. The property also had outbuildings geared to making and storing food: a milk cellar, a granary, a smoke house and a hog house.

The original kitchen wing had **two rooms on the first floor** and a **garret second floor**. One room on the first floor was primarily for storage. Today, the furniture in the kitchen includes a typical work table, a dough box and a set of pewter measures.

1. History and Use of the Room

The Kitchen is a reconstruction of the part of original building first replaced around 1875 when the 1772-73 kitchen wing built by Jacobus and Winche Vanderveer was demolished for a wing that was smaller in footprint than the original and relatively poorly built. The demolition of the 1772-3 kitchen erased all evidence of the configuration of this part of the building above ground. The original, full dimensions of the wing were determined through archaeological investigation.

Information about the number of rooms in the kitchen wing comes from the 1813 inventory taken after Henry Vanderveer's death, although we have no way to know precisely how these rooms were laid out or what their size was. In addition to the main cooking space, the kitchen wing had a "chamber" on the first floor and a room on the second floor. Physical evidence in the form of an opening in the brick fireplace in the parlor strongly suggest that the chamber was adjacent to the parlor, and held a 5-plate iron stove that heated this space (later versions of this heating apparatus are often called a Franklin stove because Benjamin Franklin patented a version that he called the "Pennsylvania fireplace"). Such heating stoves were commonly used in the colonies in the 18th century by Dutch, German, and Swedish settlers and their descendants. In 1813, the main kitchen room contained storage vessels for meat and grain. The cellar had storage rooms for holding meat, dairy, and fruit and vegetables.

The 1813 inventory also suggests that the second floor held sleeping accommodations for enslaved workers and served for storage and perhaps also as a work area.

2. Architectural Features

The reconstructed kitchen wing today features details intended to harmonize with the historic portion of the house. The hearth mural serves to evoke the historic kitchen fireplace without fooling visitors into thinking that a reconstructed hearth was the original.

3. Interpretation

The kitchen serves two purposes today: to interpret the historic, demolished kitchen of the Vanderveers, and to accommodate interpretive and changing exhibitions. It is important to note that domestic work in Dutch-American households was done to a great extent by enslaved workers such as those held by the Vanderveers.

4. Objects

Furniture

Stepback cupboard
American
Late 18th century
Primary wood: Pine
Comments: This relatively simple piece represents the sort of storage furniture that one would find in a kitchen like the Vanderveers'. It corresponds to the "kitchen dresser" found in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory.

Work table
American
Mid-18th century
Primary wood: walnut
Comments: A simple work table such as this appears in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory.

Dough box
American
Early 19th century
Primary wood: Pine
Comments: Dough boxes held yeasted bread dough while rising. In contrast to many examples of this type, this piece retains its original cover.

Butter churn
American
Comments: a "cedar churn" was among the items listed in the upper room of the kitchen wing in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory.

Firkins
American
Comments: Firkins were used as moveable kitchen storage containers for items used in cooking, such as butter, grain, and flour.

China and Pewter

Delftware
The ceramic charger (plate) and jars on display in the room are a kind of tin-glazed earthenware referred to generically as "Delftware," although similar ceramics were made in England soon after they began to be produced in the Netherlands in the 1500s. As the pieces in this room indicate, Delftware was intended to mimic Chinese porcelain that was coming into the Netherlands thanks to the Dutch East India Company China Trade. The European imitations feature many motifs that derive from Chinese examples, particularly Asian landscape scenes and floral decoration, and use the same white background with blue or polychrome decoration of Chinese wares. In Chinese porcelain, the white background derives from the color of the material itself rather than the glaze, and blue and/or polychrome decoration comes from overpainting. In European Delftware, both the white background and color painting are from glazes.

Europeans began to produce true porcelain, a lighter, harder and even more translucent ceramic, in the 18th century, but it was not produced in quantity or at prices affordable to most until well into the 19th century. In the 18th century, porcelain goods in Europe and the Americas were more commonly imported from China itself, and were most often made specifically for the western, export market.

Pewter

Pewter, a tin alloy, was the material that provided the best table and kitchen wares for the middle class in colonial America in the 18th century. Pewter tableware and vessels were both made in the colonies and imported from Britain and continental Europe. The wealthiest colonists were likely to have both "plate" – i.e. sterling silver — and pewter dishes, implements and vessels. Pewter was used to create the pitchers, tankard and graduated measures on the mantelpiece in this room in addition to the plates in the cupboard.

No pewter appears in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory (which included "26 table and tea spoons and sugar tongs" of silver), but inventories taken at the death of three of Jacobus' brothers Joseph, John, and Elias all suggest that both silver and pewter objects were likely to have been in the Vanderveer House in the fourth quarter of the 18th century. Joseph (died 1769) had pewter vessels and measures as well as a set of six silver teaspoons. John (died 1771) had a set of half a dozen silver "table Spoons" in addition to a variety of pewter objects and a set of silver teaspoons. Elias (died 1778) possessed pewter dishes as well as a silver tankard and six silver teaspoons.

The pewter vessels and desk pieces on display in this room represent the various points of origin of pewter that could be found in American households in the 18th century. Some pieces were made in continental Europe, some in England, and some in the American colonies.

Redware

Redware was the earliest type of ceramic made by colonists in America. They used clay they found in the East Coast's stream beds and marshes to make the country's earliest cooking and storage vessels and tableware. Lead-glazed redware continued to be the main material for cooking molds, pitchers, jars, and similar objects such as those on display here for American households into the mid-19th century, despite the danger of the glaze material.

Other objects

Candlestick
Wrought iron

Spice Grinder
Cast iron
This grinder would have served to process spices, a costly item for American colonists.

Spider Pot
Wrought iron
Cooking on an open hearth was accomplished by the use of hanging pots of various sizes and "spider" pots on legs that could be moved on top of the flame.

Mortar and Pestle

Slotted Spoon

Wooden cooking implements were common in the 18th century colonial kitchen.

1. History and Use of the Room

The Parlor is one of the original rooms of the house, built in 1772-73 by Jacobus Vanderveer and his first wife Winche. In 18th-century Dutch-American houses, a parlor was a space reserved for special occasions, for entertaining, and for guests to sleep in. It would not have served as a family living room. The parlor would typically have held the most important and expensive pieces of furniture in the house, including the "best bed" as well as a large *Kas* to hold the family linens. These were a very valuable item in an era when textiles were much more costly than wooden furniture and invariably the most expensive parts of anyone's household goods. The two open cupboards on either side of the fireplace would have held the household's best china, pewter, and "plate" – i.e., sterling silver. Therefore, this room would have held and displayed not just the most important furniture, but the most expensive things. In other words, it was set up to create a physical image of the elevated social standing of the Vanderveer family: it was dressed to impress. The Parlor is the largest surviving space of the original portion of the house. Only the main working area of the kitchen (whose precise dimensions we do not know) may have been larger.

Information about the way that Dutch-Americans furnished their houses comes primarily from estate inventories taken when a property owner died. The inventory taken when Henry Vanderveer died in 1813, just three years after his father, reflects the furnishings and to an extent the way they were used in the house in the period after the Revolutionary War. The descriptions of items in the inventory indicate that the family owned furniture of different periods: some of it would have dated to the early 18th century and may have been inherited by Jacobus, some items were clearly purchased by Jacobus later, and some items, such as some of the bed linens, had been bought by Henry Vanderveer after his father Jacobus died.

In 1813, this room held all of the sets chairs in the house, presumably moved into this space for the inventory. Their descriptions suggest different dates of acquisition: for example, the "6 high backed rush bottom" chairs probably correspond to a set inherited from Jacobus' father. In contrast, and "eight day Clock & Case," the "Set of Muslen Window Curtens," and the "Rag Carpet," would have been acquired after the Revolution. There would have been neither floor nor window coverings anywhere in the house in an earlier period. Further, the room held no bed, which it almost certainly would have done when the house was first built.

During the Pluckemin Cantonment of 1778-79, when the house was likely to have been used as the headquarters of General Henry Knox and his family, the room would have been used by the general as a place to entertain other officers and take meals with them, to plot strategy and discuss military tactics, and to conduct similar business. It thus would have seen significant more use during the period of the Knoxes' residence than by the Vanderveers in the same period.

After the construction of the eastern 1810s wing of the house, the Parlor served as the dining room for the house during the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, the north wall of the room was removed to create a single, multi-function, large space. The north, barrel-backed cabinet was altered to create a door into the kitchen on the other side. During the restoration of the house in 2002-03, the north wall and north cabinet were reconstructed.

2. Architectural Features

Even without furniture, the Parlor is the "best dressed" room in the house: the raised field panel west wall with barrel-back niches with shaped shelves flanking the fireplace represent the most elaborate architectural decoration of the original house and the chance to display the family's high status through their collection of china and pewter. In a period that depended on natural, rather than artificial light sources, this south-facing room would have been the best lit in the house during the day, with two windows on that side. The niche cabinets are a simplified version of a stylish feature of 18th-century American colonial houses for the wealthy from the 1730s on. The most elaborate versions of this type of feature have half-dome, often shell-shaped tops. The version of the cabinet at the Vanderveer house shows the persistence of an earlier style detail in a rural, conservative area. Because carpenters in the area would not have been as accomplished as those in more urbanized regions, the Vanderveer House cabinets are simplified, and suggest a half-dome top by using an arched molding on the outside. These cabinets were typically painted in a strong, contrasting color, just as these are. The random width, wide pine floor boards are typical of the period, as are the unpainted, white plaster walls and the uncovered windows, which would have been protected by exterior shutters. The beams visible at the ceiling are original, and the boards are the floorboards for the room above. The simple fireplace surround is a conjectural reconstruction because the original was removed in an alteration, but is typical of the style of the period.

3. Interpretation

The room is set up today to depict a moment when the Knoxes were using the house as their headquarters when Jacobus Vanderveer, then a childless widower, was probably not living in the house, having vacated it for the Knoxes. Therefore, the room reflects a mix of furnishings: the items that the Vanderveers might have had in this space at the time as well as items brought here by the Knoxes. As was typical of the period, the "Turkey" carpet (Oriental rug) is installed on the table, not the floor, since these textile objects were too valuable to walk on and were another way for the wealthy to display status. The room is shown in active use as the Knox headquarters and billet, but when furniture was not in use in the 18th century, it would have been moved to the perimeter of the room.

4. Objects

Furniture

Desk
American, Delaware Valley
Ca. 1710-1735
Primary wood: Walnut
Comments: This William and Mary/Queen Anne transitional style desk is the sort of case piece that Jacobus Vanderveer might have inherited from his father. It features the typical tear-drop shaped brass drawer pulls of the period. Although a relatively plain piece to our eyes, the turned bun (also called ball) feet, beaded drawer surrounds, and complexly curved niches were all signs of the joiner's skill and the owner's status.

Slaubank Bed
Reproduction by Harrison Higgens, furniture maker of Richmond, Virginia
Comments: This reconstruction of a slaubank bed shows all the typical features of this Dutch form of a folding bed, and item that appears in a number of inventories from Dutch-American residents in Northern New Jersey. In contrast to full tester beds, it would not have been possible to close the curtains around the sleeper while the bed was occupied. The reproduction hangings are made with a glazed wool fabric, and can be closed when the bed is up and not in use. Glazing caused fabrics to shine in imitation of silk. The bed has a painted finish as would be typical. Bedding would have lain on top of the animal hide and rope support visible in the frame.

Gate-leg table
American, Eastern
Pennsylvania / Delaware Valley
Ca. 1710-1745
Primary wood: Walnut
Comments: This early, William and Mary style table features the elaborate turnings of the style. Conventionally, when a table was not in use, it would gave been placed at the perimeter of the room against the chair rail.

Dressing table
American
Ca. 1730-1740
Collection of the Newark Museum
Primary wood: Mahogany
Comments: This Queen Anne style dressing table features cabriole legs with Spanish feet and the typical shaped skirt carving of the style. It retains period brasses.

Small table or candlestand
American
Ca. 1730-1750
Primary wood: Walnut
Comments: This relatively unsophisticated Queen Anne style candlestand features simplified versions of fashionable details like slipper feet and cabriole legs, and also has more old-fashioned notched carving where the legs meet the main stem. It is the sort of simple piece that the Vanderveers might have owned.

Easy chair
New Jersey
Ca. 1740-1760
Collection the Newark Museum
Comments: This Queen Anne style easy chair came from the Frelinghuysen family of New Jersey. Easy chairs were normally bed chamber rather than parlor seats, but occasionally they were used by invalids in parlors to provide a sort of "microenvironment" in front of a fire.

Side chairs
Boston, Massachusetts
Ca. 1740
Primary wood: walnut; leather seats.
Comments: These Queen Anne style chairs represent relatively utilitarian examples of higher style furniture that the Knoxes would have brought to the Vanderveer House during the Pluckemin Cantonment.

Side chairs
American
Ca. 1720-1740
Painted wood with rush seats.
Comments: These transitional William and Mary / Queen Anne style painted chairs feature the curved crest rail and back splat of the Queen Anne as well as extensive turnings on the legs and "Spanish" feet, which are more characteristic of the William and Mary period. We do not know precisely what they would have looked like, but we do know that the Vanderveers had a set of 6 "high backed rush bottom" chairs which might have been similar to these chairs.

Mirror
English
Ca. 1750-1760
Walnut veneer
Comments: This Chippendale style mirror features the scrolled forms and gilt decoration typical of this style, which is related to the swirling, elaborated forms of the Rococo. This mirror features a shell at the bottom and a *chinoiserie* foliate decoration at the top. Mirrors were usually among the more valuable pieces of furniture in 18th-century inventories because both the glass and silvering behind it were expensive. These precious objects would have advertised the family's high status and also served to reflect light in a time when candles and hearth fires were the main evening illumination sources. A "looking glass" appears in the parlor in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory.

Candle Box
American
Early 18th century
Walnut
Comments: candle boxes served to store this key source of artificial light and keep them handy for use. Both candles and candle ends would be stored in this container. Candle ends would be melted and used to form new ones rather than being thrown away.

Spoon cabinet
American
Early 18th century
Collection the Newark Museum
Comments: This decorative and functional object served both to store and display either pewter or silver spoons, which would have been considered high status items in the period. The geometric decoration shows the persistence of medieval motifs that were typical of Dutch and German colonial pieces in the early 18th century.

China and Pewter

Delftware
The ceramic chargers (plates) and jars on display in the room are a kind of tin-glazed earthenware referred to generically as "Delftware," although similar ceramics were made in England soon after they began to be produced in the Netherlands in the 1500s. As the pieces in this room indicate, Delftware was intended to mimic Chinese porcelain that was coming into the Netherlands thanks to Dutch trade with China. The European imitations feature many motifs that derive from Chinese examples, particularly Asian landscape scenes and floral decoration, and use the same white background with blue or polychrome decoration of Chinese wares. In Chinese porcelain, the white background derives from the color of the material itself rather than the glaze, and blue and/or polychrome decoration comes from overpainting. In European Delftware, both the white background and color painting are from glazes.

Europeans began to produce true porcelain, a lighter, harder and more translucent ceramic, in the 18th century, but it was not produced in quantity or at prices affordable to most until well into the 19th century. In the 18th century, porcelain goods in Europe and the Americas were more commonly imported from China itself, and were most often made specifically for the western, export market.

Pewter
Pewter, a tin alloy, was the material that provided the best table and kitchen wares for the middle class in colonial America in the 18th century. Pewter tableware and vessels were both made in the colonies and imported from Britain and continental Europe. The wealthiest colonists were likely to

have both "plate" – i.e. sterling silver — and pewter dishes, implements and vessels. Pewter was also used to create objects like the inkwell in this room.

No pewter appears in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory (which included "26 table and tea spoons and sugar tongs" of silver), but inventories taken at the death of three of Jacobus' brothers Joseph, John, and Elias all suggest that both silver and pewter objects were likely to have been in the Vanderveer House in the fourth quarter of the 18th century. Joseph (died 1769) had pewter vessels and measures as well as a set of six silver teaspoons. John (died 1771) had a set of half a dozen silver "table Spoons" in addition to a variety of pewter objects and a set of silver teaspoons. Elias (died 1778) possessed pewter dishes as well as a silver tankard and six silver teaspoons.

The pewter vessels and desk pieces on display in this room represent the various points of origin of pewter that could be found in American households in the 18th century. Some pieces were made in continental Europe, some in England, and some in the American colonies.

Biblical Tiles
The reproduction Delftware tiles installed around the fireplace are representative of a common type of fireplace surround for the period. Biblical scenes were painted onto ceramic tiles both in the Netherlands and in England.

Other objects

Vanderveer Bible
17th century, published in the Netherlands
Gift of Vanderveer family
This bible was owned by Cornelius Vanderveer.

Decanter and Glass
18th century

Reproduction wine crates
These crates represent a present of wine sent from George Washington to Lucy and Henry Knox at the Vanderveer House.

Candle sticks
18th century
Brass

Andirons
18th century
Wrought iron with cast brass finials
These relatively simple examples represent the kind of rural andirons the Vanderveers were likely to have owned.

1. History and Use of the Room

The Back Room / Knox Bedroom is one of the original rooms of Jacobus Vanderveer's house. In 18th century Dutch-American houses, a small room like this would have served as a family living and eating space, and even as a "chamber" (bedroom).

Information about the way that Dutch-Americans furnished their houses comes primarily from estate inventories taken when a property owner died. The inventory taken when Henry Vanderveer died in 1813 reflects the furnishings and to an extent the way they were used in the house in the period after the Revolutionary War. In 1813, this room contained a valuable "din[ing] table & ends" made of mahogany. This was an item that was almost certainly acquired by Henry Vanderveer after his father's death, since dedicated dining tables did not come into use in a house like this until the early 19th century, and mahogany furniture would not have been found in rural houses like the Vanderveers' in an earlier period. In contrast, the much less valuable tea table and washstand in the room in 1813 were probably much older, and almost certainly reflect the combined use of the room as family dining room and bedchamber. This is supported by the presence in the room of "26 table and tea spoons & sugar tongs Silver," as well as a set of blue china and a glass sugar caster.

After the construction of the eastern 1810s wing of the house, the Back Room probably continued to be used as a space for taking small meals and as a family living room. In the early twentieth century, when the house was reoriented toward the north, this space became part of the larger living room when the wall separating the Parlor and this room was removed. The single window in the north wall was replaced by a much larger, paired set of windows and the historic window on the west wall was also removed. A plate rail was also added around the room in this period. A door was cut into the east wall for access from the entry when the north hallway door became the main entrance to the house. During the restoration of the house in 2002-03, the wall separating the two rooms was reconstructed, the added doorway into the hall closed in, the plate rail removed, and windows like the originals were installed in historic locations.

2. Architectural Features

As originally constructed, this room had only one point of access, as it does now, and two windows. The presence of the large corner fireplace means that this would have been one of the most comfortable rooms in the house in the winter, and the room's placement on the north would have made it relatively cooler in the summer as well. Corner fireplaces were an English, rather than Dutch convention, and the installation of one in the Vanderveer House indicates the status of the family's acculturation at the time. The relatively elaborate mantel and shell decoration – also more an English motif than a Dutch one – in the sandstone fireplace lintel are original. Paint analysis revealed that the original color of the chair rail and other trim was a Prussian blue, a relatively costly color to produce in the 18th century and thus a marker of high status. Thus, although this was a

small, "back" room, the elaborations of the mantelpiece indicate that it was an important one. The random width, wide pine floor boards are also typical of the period, as are the unpainted, white plaster walls and the uncovered windows, which would have been protected by exterior shutters. The chamfered beams visible at the ceiling are original, and the boards are the floorboards for the room above.

3. Interpretation

During the Pluckemin Cantonment of 1778-79, when the house was likely to have been used as the headquarters of General Henry Knox and his family, the room would have provided the most privacy, convenience, and comfort for Lucy, who was six months pregnant at the time, and Lucy and Henry's three-year-old daughter, also named Lucy. Thus, the room is set up today to depict the use of the room as the Knoxes' private space and bedroom. The room reflects the sophisticated furnishings that we know Henry Knox had sent from Boston for his family's use while headquartered in the area during the Pluckemin Cantonment. In contrast to the simpler, more rural, less expensive furniture of the Vanderveers, which included pieces dating to the early 18th century, the Knox furniture represents the contemporary taste of wealthy, upper class urbanites. Mahogany, imported into the colonies for fine furniture, predominates instead of American walnut. There are more textiles in the room, and they are more elaborate in style. A carpet is placed on the floor, which represents an up-to-date, costly furnishings fashion used by only the upper echelons of the elite colonists. This room would have served not only as the Knoxes' bedroom, but also as their family dining room and living space.

4. Objects

Furniture

Bed and hangings
American
Ca. 1770
Primary wood: Mahogany
Comments: This full tester bed features a full set of reproduction block-printed cotton hangings that accurate reproduces the look and functionality of high style bed curtains of the period. We know that Henry Knox sent for a full set of bedding and associated linens and hangings: a feather bed, a bolster, 2 pillows, a set of bed curtains, sheets, pillow cases, a quilt, and bed curtains, 2 sets of valances, and a tester (the top fabric). The curtains, valances, and tester served to create a "room-within-a-room" for both privacy and warmth. In the 18th century, the "bed" – that is, the hangings, feather bed, and so on – associated with what we would think of as the piece of furniture, would invariably be among the most valuable, if not the costliest item in the house. The reproduction bedclothes include a matelassé coverlet.

Trundle bed
Reproduction
Comments: A trundle bed was a common way to add sleeping facilities to a room. It can be moved under the bed when not in use.

Gate-leg dining table
Boston, Massachusetts
Ca. 1770
Primary wood: Mahogany
Comments: This Chippendale style dining table features ball-and-claw carving on its feet and cabriole legs. Its relatively small size was typical of 18th-century dining tables, in a period before the establishment of the custom of eating at a large, fixed table in a room devoted to this use.

Side chair and reproductions
Philadelphia (period chair); reproductions made by Harrison Higgins, furniture maker in Richmond, Virginia
Ca. 1765
Primary wood: Walnut
Comments: This trifid foot Chippendale style chair and reproductions feature the sophisticated carving on the back splat, knees, and front, as well as the curvilinear forms of the back and crest rail and typical curved back legs of Philadelphia Chippendale chairs, in a period when the city produced some of the finest furniture in the colonies.

Washstand
English
Mid-18th century
Primary wood: Mahogany
Comments: A washstand was among the pieces of furniture sent from Boston for the Knoxes' use. Like this one, it would have most likely been an imported, English example. Another item sent from Boston was a "close stool," or portable toilet. These two pieces of furniture provided up-to-date comfort facilities for the upper echelons of American colonial society. The washstand holds a pewter chamber pot, which served the same purpose as the close stool.

Blanket chest
Philadelphia
Ca. 1785-1790
Primary wood: Walnut
Comments: This Chippendale style chest represents the sort of container in which many of the Knoxes' things might have arrived at the Vanderveer house. Wooden chests would have provided the safest way for them to move their possessions from one military encampment to the next during the war.

Looking Glass
English
Mid-18th century
Primary wood: Mahogany
Comments: This small, Chippendale style looking glass features gilding around the mirror. Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory shows an inexpensive looking glass in this room.

China

Knox china
American
Ca. 1830
Porcelain, with overpainted decoration
Comments: Although this tea set post-dates the period that the Knoxes would have been in residence in the Vanderveer House, it descended in, and was donated by the Knox family. This room held a set of blue china as well as other items relating to taking tea (the main evening meal).

Other objects

Candle sticks
18th century
Brass

Andirons
18th century
Cast and wrought iron with cast brass finials
Comments: These Chippendale style andirons represent a set sent from Boston for the Knoxes' use.

Fire back
18th century
Cast iron

Rug
Cotton
Comment: Reproduction of an example at Mount Vernon.

1. History and Use of the Rooms

The two spaces that are now hallways on the first floor of the house have very different origins. The hallway leading from the kitchen into the parlor is a space created during the restoration of the house in the 2000s when the kitchen wing was reconstructed, and provides barrier free access to the historic part of the house from the outside. The eastern hallway between the parlor and the 1810s wing was the eastern edge of the original 1772-3 Vanderveer House. The eastern wall of that hall (toward Route 206) was originally the outside of the house, and the frame on the wall indicates the location where a window was before the addition of 1811-12 was constructed.

Originally, what is now a single, central hallway space was divided into two rooms, and as the point where the floorboards change indicates, as well as the exposed section of the wall. The south half, originally the house's entry, connected to the main, front door on that side of the house until the house was reoriented to the north with a porch addition in the early 20th century. An enclosed, winder stair may have straddled the former partition on the east wall, or the original access to the upper floor may have been by way of a ladder, since the second floor may not have been finished at the time of the house's original construction.

During the Pluckemin Cantonment, the rear, or northern portion of the Hall, identified in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory as the "room behind the entry," might have served as a military office for Henry Knox during the time it was used as his headquarters, and would have been a place that his aides would have slept as well. The 1813 inventory shows a bookcase as well as a bed in this small room. It is the kind of space that may have served as an office for Jacobus and Henry Vanderveer for keeping track of the records of their farm/estate.

A stair was constructed in the southeast corner of the entry when the eastern 1810s addition was put on the house by Henry Vanderveer. The early 20th-century alterations to the house made major changes to this space: the ceiling was raised by about 9 inches and an anchorbent beam removed to accommodate the opening in the ceiling for the stair, and the present, ca. 1909 stair replaced the winder at the southeast.

2. Architectural Features

The central Hall was likely always to have been a relatively utilitarian space, but evidence about the historic character of the space was removed by alterations, particularly the ca. 1909 changes which removed the original ceiling and beam and inserted the present stair. Evidence of the location of the former partition is visible in the reveal in the wall and the change in the floor boards. Similarly, the location of a former window is framed on the eastern wall. The massive, heavy timber post and brick nogging seen in the reveal in the wall show the medieval character of the Dutch anchorbent

beam, which was an H-shaped structure under the "skin" of the walls. The Vanderveers' use of this structural system is another example of the persistence of traditional Dutch ways in the colonial period. The exposed former beam near the ceiling shows the height of the space before alterations were made in the early 20th century. The original ceiling would have been the chamfered anchorbent beam and the floorboards of the room above, just as they are in the Parlor and the Back Room.

3. Interpretation

The ramp hallway from the kitchen to the parlor is an exhibition rather than a historic space. Reconstruction of a historic stair in the historic, central hall provides serious challenges with respect to both historical accuracy and maintaining adequate circulation to the second floor. Therefore, interpretation of the central hallway as a historic space is limited.

4. Objects

Furniture

Windsor Armchair
Philadelphia
Ca. 1795
Primary wood: Ash, originally painted white, with mahogany arms
Comments: This Federal style, fan-back Windsor chair with bamboo turnings was one of a set of 100 ordered by Lucy and Henry Knox in 1795 from Philadelphia chairmaker William Cox for their estate, Montpelier, in Maine. Cox recruited fellow chairmaker Joseph Henzey to assist in completing this extraordinarily large order. The chairs in the set, including this one, are stamped with both maker's marks on the underside of the seat.

Kas

Made by Matthew Egerton, New Brunswick, New Jersey
Ca. 1775
Collection of the Newark Museum
Primary wood: Walnut
Comments: The Kas (plural kasten or kasses) was an essential piece of furniture in Dutch-American households. It held linens and clothing. These pieces could be very elaborately decorated. This particular example has several of the conventional features of this type of furniture, including ball, or onion feet, a large cornice at the top which could serve as a storage shelf, drawers in the bottom section and paneled, outward opening doors. Kasten were normally considered parlor furniture, and thus among the more important pieces in the Dutch-American household. Matthew Egerton and his son of the same name made kasten for Dutch-American clients as well as many other kinds of furniture, including tall case (grandfather) clocks.

1. History and Use of the Room

The Lumber Room is part of the original house built in 1772-73 by Jacobus Vanderveer and his first wife Winche. We do not know, however, whether it was a finished space at the time the building was completed, or whether it always served as attic storage. At some point in the 18th century, plaster was applied to the walls and planking was installed as the ceiling.

Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory shows three rooms on the second floor, but the room division partitions and all evidence of their historic location were removed in the early 20th century; we therefore do not know whether the current size of the room corresponds to its historic size. The "front room upstairs" corresponds to the space over the parlor which was in use as a bedroom in the early 19th century. The second floor also held a "lumber" room. In this case, the term "lumber" does not refer to sawn timber, but rather to objects that were not in use and therefore put out of the way according to an older use of the word no longer common.

2. Architectural Features

The window in the western wall dates to the period of construction of the house. The reveal below the window shows the original wattle and daub insulation used in the walls in the house. Wattle is the structural framework of woven sticks onto which plaster-like mixtures of various constituencies were "daubed." The daub mixture in this wall includes straw as a stiffener. The difference in height between this room and the adjacent hallway is due to the hallway alterations ca. 1909, when the ceiling was raised and the current stair installed.

3. Interpretation

The room is set up today to depict the room in its role as the Vanderveers' main storage area and as billet for military personnel who would have accompanied Henry Knox at his headquarters during the Pluckemin Cantonment. The trunks contain reproductions of period clothing, and the other items that would have corresponded to the effects brought to the house by those living here with the Knoxes. The room contains a spinning wheel, corresponding to the "woolen weil" that appears in Henry Vanderveer's 1813 inventory, as well as the sort of barrels that might have stored grain or other goods in this kind of space for the Vanderveers. The furnishings and other objects in the room are a combination of period pieces and new ones.

4. Objects

Historic Furniture

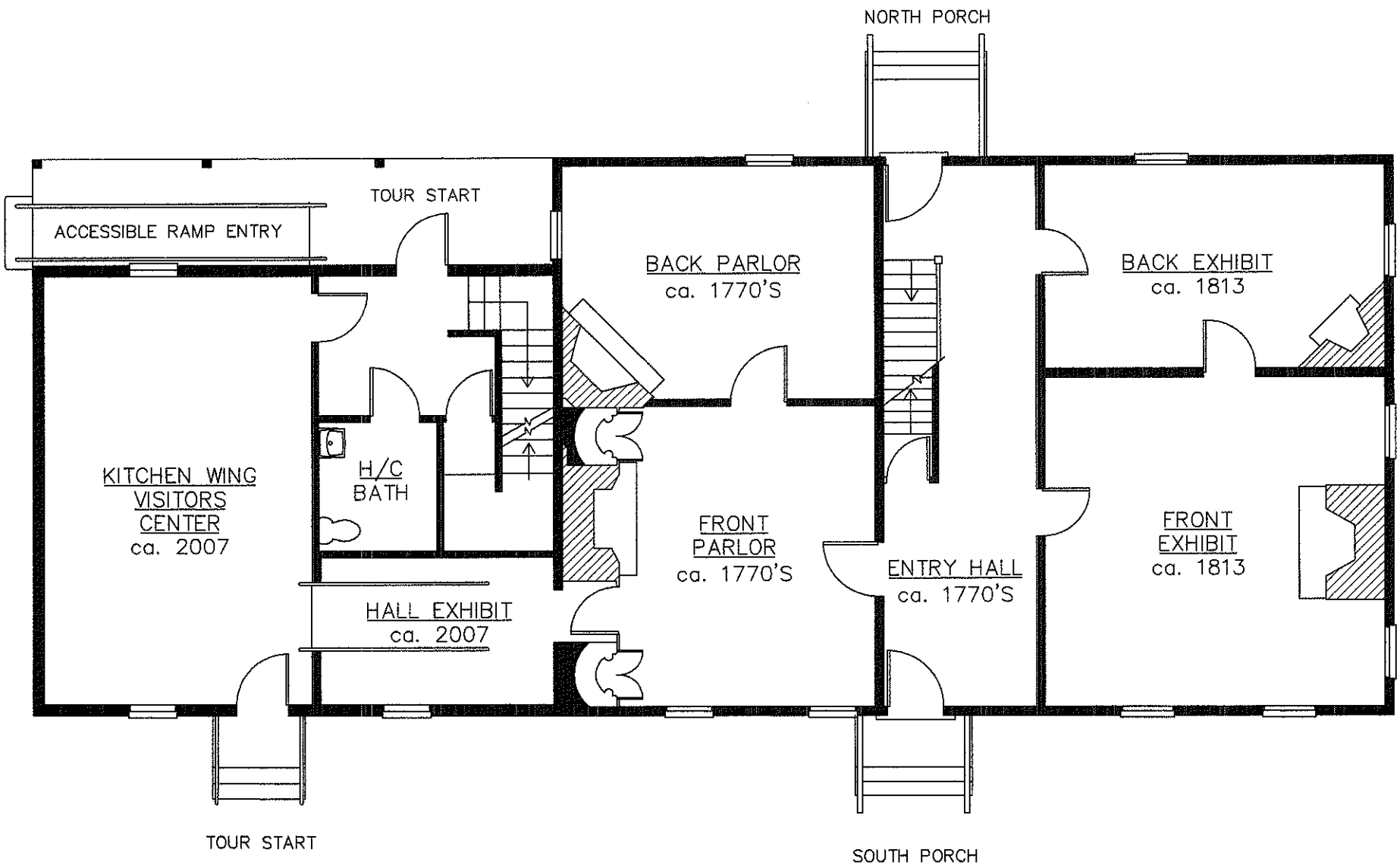
Low post bed
American
Early 19th century
Painted wood
Comments: This low post bed demonstrates the use of roping to support bedding, as well as a simpler form of bedstead than the full tester, mahogany bed in the back bedroom on the first floor.

Spinning wheels
American
18th and early 19th century
Comments: these spinning wheels area accompanied by combs for carding, or combing out raw wool to prepare it for spinning.

Storage trunk
American
Late 18th/ early 19th century
Painted wood
Comments: This trunk shows a typical travelling storage piece from the period.

JACOBUS VANDERVEER HOUSE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



JACOBUS VANDERVEER HOUSE

SECOND FLOOR PLAN