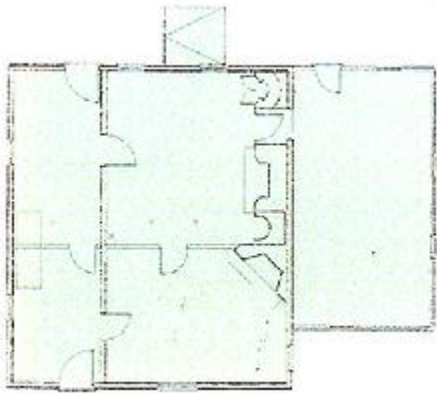


Jacobus Vanderveer House & Museum

Vanderveer-Knox House Construction Chronology

Initial Construction – c 1770's the Jacobus (James) Vanderveer Era Time Period – c1772 – 1813



The original 1770s portion of the house runs from the front door to the Kitchen Wing. The area to the right of the door is the early 19th century addition. This was the original front entrance of the house. It is even possible that the first access to the second floor was a ladder rather than a staircase. Similarly, there is no physical evidence to determine the original layout of the 2nd floor. By 1813 the 2nd floor had been divided into three spaces.

Figure 1: Conjectural floor plan of the first floor of the Jacobus Vanderveer House as constructed in the 1770s. The faint rectangle overlapping the dividing wall between the front and back rooms on the right indicates one possible location for an enclosed winder staircase. The south or front of the house is at the top of the image.

This plan shows the kitchen wing as one large area. However, the 1813 inventory of the original portion of the house indicates that the wing had two rooms, the "Kitchen Chamber," and the "Kitchen."

While the Parlor on the first floor speaks loudly of the local, Dutch heritage of the Vanderveers, the first floor Back Room/Knox Bedroom puts those Dutch traditions in counterpoint to the more sophisticated and stylish world introduced into the house in the winter of 1778-1779. It is furnished almost exclusively with the types of objects General Henry Knox and his wife Lucy are known to have brought with them to Bedminster. These two first floor rooms offer a strong contrast between the fashionable, high-style. The plan also suggests furnishings for a "Military Office" that could be installed in the "Room Behind the Entry" when the 20th century center hall is restored to its 18th century configuration at some future date.

Sometime between the fall of 1772 when Jacobus Sr. wrote his will, and the spring of 1778 when Jacobus (James) Jr is assessed £3738 for 575 acres of improved land, the Jacobus Vanderveer Jr. house was constructed. The original 1770s house is a 1½ story, three bay, frame structure with a kitchen wing attached to the west end. Paneling, hardware, nails, saw marks and construction methods confirm a pre-Revolutionary War date. Original configuration was 1-1/2 story; 7 structural bents; four rooms at ground floor plus kitchen wing; entry at south. Stair location and configuration of kitchen wing remain a puzzle.

The Second Era – Dr. Henry Vanderveer , (Jacobus's Nephew (Elias's son))

c. 1813 - 1874

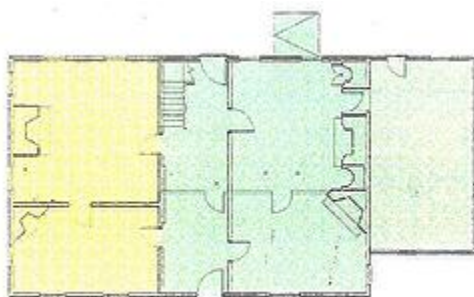
The East rooms nearest the highway and the stairway, were added by Henry Vanderveer's daughter Mary Hardenburg. Style of mantel and molding profiles, windows, nails, lath and saw marks indicate pre-1820 date. The house was owned by Dr. Henry VDV (Elias' son), but not occupied by him.

Changes to the house included:

- two windows on east wall of ground floor removed.
- south porch (no longer visible) may have been added at this time.

1833-1868 / Changes to the house included:

- south porch (no longer visible) may have been added at this time.



Conjectural floor plan of the first floor of the Jacobus Vanderveer House in the early 19th century. The yellow shaded area on the left indicates the new East Addition. There is now a narrow staircase in the southeast corner of the Entry. The new layout approaches that of a fashionable 5-bay Federal house with center hall, however the Vanderveer House retained its simple entry room and back room, rather than a true center hall. As in Figure 1, the Kitchen wing should have two rooms rather than the one room shown here.

The early 19th century East Addition added two bays to the east side of the house, creating a Federal 5-bay home, essentially anglicizing and upgrading the original Dutch farmhouse. The East Addition

included two large rooms to balance the two large west rooms. These rooms had fashionable 9'6½" ceilings, substantially higher than those in the original house. The front or south room became the formal parlor while the slightly smaller back room may have served as a family parlor.



Dr. Henry Vanderveer did not live in the Jacobus Jr. House but remained in his childhood home. He probably rented the house and farm out to tenants from 1834 until his death in 1868. In 1874, the sale of the Jacobus House and lot were made to Henry Ludlow for \$7489.72.

Photograph 2: This undated photograph shows the south side of the Vanderveer House in the late 19th century. The original 18th century kitchen wing appears to remain in place with its small shed porch visible to left of the large tree. It seems likely that this was the house's appearance in 1874 when Henry Ludlow purchased the property from Dr. Henry Vanderveer's estate. The photograph,

which appeared in 1918 in volume VII of the *Somerset County Historical Society Quarterly*, is identified as "Lent by L.V. Ludlow, Far Hills."

3rd Era - Dr. Henry Ludlow – 1874 – 1909

House bought by Henry Ludlow at auction. Once again the owners of the house became its permanent residents. Henry and his wife Augusta, along with 2 wards and 2 servants lived in the house in 1880. At that point they farmed approximately 120 acres of land. In 1900 Henry and Augusta still shared their house with boarders.

Changes to the house included:

- gas installed
- kitchen wing remodeled
- Parlor cabinet altered to become doorway to kitchen wing
- west wall of house re-framed and re-sided
- Room 1 dividing partition remove~ and ceiling plastered.

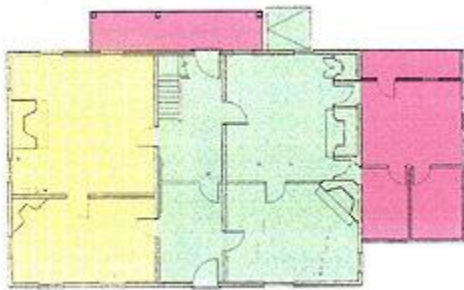


Figure 3: Conjectural floor plan for the first floor of the Jacobus Vanderveer House following the removal of the 1770s kitchen wing and the construction of the new Kitchen Wing. The areas shaded pink depict the changes. The small front porch sheltering the front door on the south side. HSR, I, p. 4-16.

The Ludlow's are the most likely candidates to have made the next significant alterations to the house. The 1770s kitchen wing on the north end of the house simply may have deteriorated over time, or it may have suffered some significant damage late in the 19th century.

Regardless of the reason the old kitchen wing was torn down c. 1875 and a new wing was built.

The new kitchen was divided into four rooms. The original barrel cupboard on the north side of the Parlor fireplace was removed to create a passage into the northeast room in the new wing. The c. 1875 alterations also included the erection of a small porch over the south entrance door.

4th Era – The Ballentine Era - 1910 - 1916

The Ludlow's remained at the house until 1909. In November they sold the house to Frank A. and Frederick E. Ballentine. Both Frank and Frederick still lived in Bernardstown in 1910. Frank and his wife Josie owned their home on Prospect Street. Frank gave his occupation as "farmer." Frederick rented a house on Morristown Road. He called himself a "dealer in houses;" his business — "real estate."

The Ballentine's have traditionally been credited with the final round of alterations to the Jacobus Jr. House. With the alterations giving the old-style farmhouse a more fashionable "bungalow" appearance, it is quite possible that the purchase was speculative, getting the property up to par with an expectation of selling it at a profit.

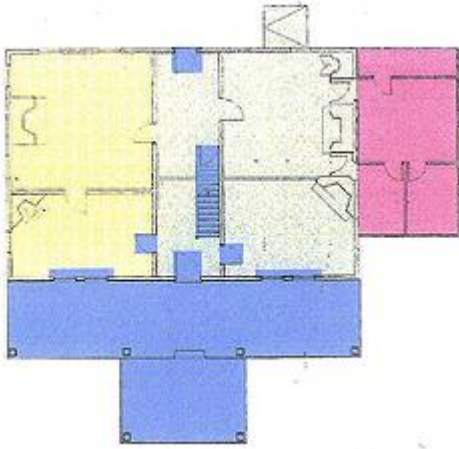


Figure 4: Conjectural floor plan for the first floor of the Jacobus Vanderveer House following the early 20th century alterations, c. 1910-1916 shown in blue. The north side of the house, now ornamented with a large porch and a porte cochere, became the front of the house. Pairs of large 1/1 windows replaced the original single windows in each of the north rooms. Dormer windows punctuated the north and south roof lines. On the interior, the wall between the original west rooms [Parlor and Back Room] was removed, creating one large room. The removal of the interior wall between the Entry and the small back room created a true center hall. The front and back doors were moved to the west, centered in the new hall and the ceiling in the hall was raised. A new staircase, moved to the northwest side of the hall, led upstairs to a totally reworked second floor, now divided into eight rooms. Interior doorways were moved to accommodate the new staircase.



The 19th century alterations to the house had been significant, but they really did little to alter the character of the house, it still looked like a farmhouse. The alterations of the early 20th century were different. Both the exterior and the interior underwent major changes, transforming a clapboard clad late 18th, early 19th century farmhouse into a pseudo bungalow, an emerging style of choice for the second decade of the 20th century.

The transformation began with a reorientation of the house. The house had always faced south, looking out across fields toward the river. Ballentine put in a driveway on the north side of the house, making that the front entrance. He added a broad shed porch across the entire north side of the house. The porch was supported by four substantial square posts. A porte cochere extended out from the center of the new porch, placing the updated house squarely in the age of the automobile. Three large gabled dormers on the north and south side of the house brought light into the upper story. New pairs of 1/1 sash windows replaced the single multi-light units that had been in place in the north elevation. The new front door and back doors were moved slightly to the west, centering them on the facade. Stucco was applied to the north elevation and the kitchen wing while the south elevation was shingled and painted.

This 1960s photograph shows the broad porch, porte cochere, and dormer windows installed by Frederick and Frank Ballentine early in the 20th century. From Walter Frederick, *The Township of Bedminster*, 1964. House owned by Frank Ballantine. He claimed to have "repaired, stuccoed and added porches".

Changes to the house included:

- main entry relocated to north side
- new doors and paired 1/1 windows on north elevation
- hall stair relocated and widened
- doors to Rooms 1 and 4 relocated
- center hall opened and ceiling raised
- new flooring installed (much of which has been removed)
- dormers added
- 2nd floor east rooms constructed
- steam heat added
- plumbing installed

5th Era - Grant and Kenneth Schley 1917-1989



Owned by Schley family. Used also as part of the local Polo and Hunt Clubs.

Grant B. Schley purchased the Vanderveer House and surrounding lands from Frank A. and Josie Ballentine March 21, 1916. Schley was a wealthy financier with a country home in nearby Far Hills. Schley was an avid huntsman, a member of the Essex Fox Hounds. He hosted the New Jersey Hunt Cup steeplechase at his "Froh Helm" estate in Far Hills in 1916.

His grandson Kenneth Jr. reported that this love of fox hunting led Grant to purchase the property for the use of the hunt and also as a way to protect the entrance into Bedminster from possible development. Grant Schley died the next year and bequeathed the Vanderveer House and lands to his son Kenneth who continued to use the grounds for the hunt and for polo.

The house and land remained in the Schley family until 1989. Kenneth Sr. died in 1944, leaving the house to his wife Ellen. Their children Kenneth B. Schley and Anne C. Straddling inherited the property following Ellen's death in 1966. The house would have been electrified during the Schley tenure, probably in the 1930s or 1940s. Further research would indicate when electricity became available in Bedminster.

The north elevation of the Jacobus Vanderveer House in 2000 shows the bungalow quality of the house with its broad shed porch supported by substantial square posts and dormered roof line. Three gabled dormers brought light into the second floor which was divided into 8 spaces. The porte cochere had disappeared by the 1990s.

- gas lighting replaced by electricity probably in the 1930's.
- Port cochere on the north end of the house is removed.



The 6th Era – Bedminster Township

1989 – Present

On May 23, 1989, the Township of Bedminster acquire the Vanderveer house and surround lands through eminent domain, taking the property “for the use of the Township of Bedminster” for \$7,411,000. The majority of the property is set aside as park land for recreational use. Tenants continued to occupy the house as discussions relating to its future use focused on possible preservation due to its association with the Pluckemin Artillery Park. In 1995 the house is placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Sites making it eligible for grant aid and ensuring State review of all plans for the house.

Additional Information:

From the NJ Historical Trust:

<http://www.njht.org/dca/njht/funded/sitedetails/jacobusvanderveerhouse.html>

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