



Jacobus Vanderveer House & Museum

Vanderveer-Knox House Structural Tidbits

Floors:

The wide plank flooring in the two west rooms and the center hall on the first floor and in the two west rooms on the second floor is original to the 1770s construction. It shows heavy wear and has been damaged in many areas. The floors have been sanded and repaired in kind where needed. The current finish replicates the original finish.

Walls:

The exterior walls and some of the interior walls are original to the 1770s construction. The plaster in these walls had significant areas of loss and other damage. The interior walls dividing the "Parlor" from the "Back Room" and the "Entry" from the "Room behind the Entry" were removed as part of the early 20th century renovations.

Windows:

Prior to restoration the house contained a mixture of 1770s windows, early 19th century windows, late 19th century windows, and early 20th century windows. It was common to reuse elements of earlier windows whenever new windows were installed.

Doors:

The original exterior doors were split Dutch doors. The south or front door had a simple four light transom above the door. These doors were removed during the early 20th century alterations when the center hall was created. The replacement twentieth century doors and frames were centered on the new space. During the restoration the doors were returned to their original position against the east wall of the center hall and reproduction split doors were installed. Two 1770s interior doors remain in the house, the door from the Entry into the old west Parlor and the south door in the west wall of the Parlor that leads into the Kitchen Wing. These doors served as models for the reproduction doors used during the restoration.

Ceilings:

In the first floor rooms in the 1770s farmhouse the anchor bents that run north to south are planed smooth and have chamfered edges. Originally the bents were exposed, the wide planks that formed the floor for the second floor creating the ceiling. During the 19th century this old-fashioned ceiling was plastered over. This plaster was removed during the early 20th century renovations. Exposed beams were once again fashionable, especially in bungalows and in Colonial Revival interiors. The ceiling on the second floor consisted of variable width planks nailed directly to the rafters. These planks were painted.

During the restoration the beams on the first floor were sanded and the original finish was recreated. On the second floor the ceilings were reframed and covered with a combination of original planks and new planks. The ceilings were painted based on paint analysis of surviving 18th century planks.

The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House

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Fireplace and stove in the parlor/kitchen wing

Physical evidence in the back of the Parlor fireplace indicates that there was a five-plate iron stove flush with the east wall of the Kitchen Wing. Fuel for the stove would have been fed into the stove through the hole in the Parlor fireplace. These iron box stoves were brought to the colonies by German settlers and are found in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Henry S. Vanderveer's 1813 inventory of the Kitchen Chamber indicates that this early 18th century design had been updated to a 10-plate stove, developed in the 1770s.

Lighting:

Candles and lanterns provided artificial lighting for the Vanderveer farmhouse during the 18th century and into the 19th century. Oil and kerosene lamps would have become more commonplace as the 19th century progressed. It appears that gas was piped into the house during the early 20th century renovations. The presence of a gas pipe stub in the ceiling in the center of the hall indicates it was installed when the wall dividing the front and back portions of the hall was removed. Later in the 20th century, probably during the Schley era in the late 1930s or during the 1940s, electricity replaced gas lighting.

Additional Information:

From the NJ Historical Trust:

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

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