

FARM to CITY

DYCKMAN FARMHOUSE MUSEUM was built c. 1784 and restored and donated to the city in 1916. It has been open to the public since that time. Today, nestled in a small park, the farmhouse is an extraordinary reminder of early Manhattan. The farmhouse is owned by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and is a member of the Historic House Trust.

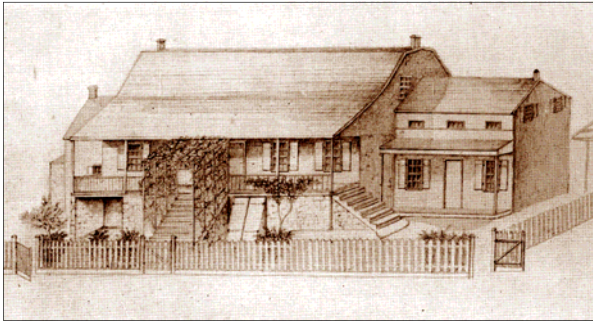
The farmhouse is managed by the **Dyckman Farmhouse Museum Alliance** which fundraises to enable the site to offer public programming, maintain the lovely garden and care for the collections. Your donations are greatly appreciated. Please contact us to learn more about supporting the work at the Farmhouse. For more information visit our website or email us at info@dyckmanfarmhouse.org

Enjoy your visit!

THE FARM

The first Dyckman, Jan, arrived in New Amsterdam in the 1660's and settled in Northern Manhattan. By the Revolutionary War, the Dyckman homestead was located at the Harlem River just north of present day 207th Street and Jan's grandson William had inherited Dyckman land. During the British occupation of Manhattan (1776-1783), William and his family fled their home and sought refuge upstate.

After the War, William returned to find the family home and farm destroyed. It is believed that he immediately began building a new house, but chose to build in a new location, along Kingsbridge Road (now



The earliest sketch of the farmhouse, c. 1835. The addition on the right was torn down in 1915-16.

Broadway). This small Dutch Colonial style home was most likely constructed with the help of family, friends and slaves.

William's son Jacobus inherited the farm in the 1790's and it was during his tenure that the farm prospered. On the first and lower floors of the farmhouse the spaces are furnished to tell the story of the family in 1815-1820. During this period about 10 people were living in the household, including: Jacobus, three of his sons (Jacob, Isaac and Michael), his young grandson James Frederick Smith, his niece Maria, one unidentified white women, a free black woman, a free black boy and one male slave.

There were also 30 people living within three other houses scattered across the roughly 250 acre farm. The residents included laborers and other Dyckman family members. The main outbuildings for the farm were built close to the farmhouse including a cider mill, corn cribs, barn and stable.

THE PARLOR

On the first floor there are two large parlors. These would have been used for a variety of activities including dining and socializing with friends and business and political associates. Jacobus, who primarily identified himself as a farmer, was also involved in local politics. Two of his sons worked on the farm while two others pursued higher education. We believe the portrait in this room is of his son, Dr. Jacob Dyckman.

THE BEDROOM

During this period there would have been two bedrooms on the first floor and one large sleeping space on the second floor. Jacobus, who would have been about 70 during this time, may have had a bedroom on the first floor.

THE WINTER KITCHEN

The Farmhouse has two kitchens, Winter and Summer. The Winter Kitchen would have kept the home very warm in the cold months and would also have been used as a non-cooking work space in the summer. The Summer Kitchen (closed to the public) has a small bedroom above it and that room, as well as both kitchen spaces, may have been the sleeping quarters for the free black woman, free black boy and one male slave within the household.

When Jacobus died in 1832, his bachelor sons, Isaac and Michael, continued to live in the farmhouse with their nephew James Frederick Smith. By the 1850's, they had moved to another house on their property and rented out the farmhouse. James Frederick Smith later inherited much of the family property and changed his name to Isaac Michael Dyckman in honor of his uncles. The farmhouse left family ownership in the 1870's.

THE CITY

By the early 20th century, the farmhouse was in disrepair and the rural character of the neighborhood was quickly changing. In response, Mary Alice Dyckman Dean and Fannie Fredericka Dyckman Welch, daughters of Isaac Michael Dyckman, bought the property in 1915 to ensure its preservation.



The farmhouse soon after it opened as a museum in 1916.

With their husbands, curator Bashford Dean and architect Alexander McMillan Welch, they undertook a major restoration and furnishing project to bring the house back to an earlier appearance. This included removing later woodwork, restoring missing features and tearing down a later addition. The farmhouse today represents all the layers of its history: the original modest 18th century structure, 19th century room modernizations such as staircases and the early 20th century alterations for museum use. The interior paint colors date to this early museum period.

THE RELIC ROOM

One interior alteration for museum use was the creation of the *Relic Room*. Designed by Dean and Reginald Pelham Bolton, a historian and amateur archaeologist, the space contained objects discovered by those who were conducting digs in the area. Their work was essential in capturing information before development erased all evidence of early life. We are currently raising funds to conserve the objects and create a new exhibit.

THE SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM

Some rooms were furnished with the goal of recreating a New York interior in the year 1800. They collected furniture and objects dating to the 18th and 19th centuries, some of which originally belonged to the Dyckman family. Their museum rooms reflected the early 20th century romantic view of colonial life. This contrast is reflected by the two bedrooms we have on view. On the first floor is a bedroom, perhaps that of Jacobus, as it would have been arranged in the early 19th century. On the second floor we have maintained a bedroom as it would have appeared when the museum first opened in 1916. Do you notice the difference?



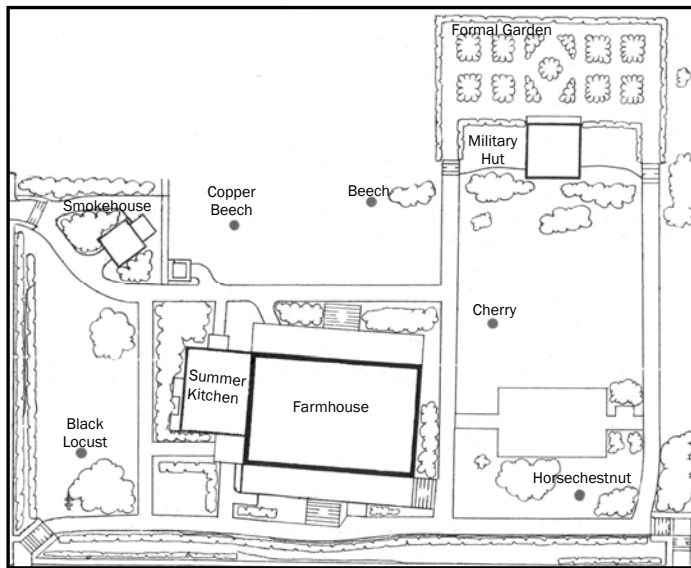
The bedroom on the second floor as it appeared when the museum first opened in 1916.

THE GARDEN

In 1915-1916, while the restoration team tried to re-create the 19th century atmosphere on the interior, they were unable to re-create the farm itself. Most of the surrounding land had left family ownership, so they were only able to acquire about 1/2 an acre. They chose to landscape this as a small garden although they did hint at the farming past through two elements: they constructed a reproduction smokehouse to represent the outbuildings that would have been in the farmyard and they planted a cherry tree to represent the former orchards.

One of the more unusual elements they included in the garden is the reconstructed *Military Hut*. (see the signage by the hut)

We continue to work to keep the garden beautiful and have planted thousands of new plants. Many of these are old-fashioned varieties such as bleeding heart and foxglove which were included in the 1915-1916 planting plan. We hope that you enjoy the garden, but ask that you help us maintain it by keeping it clean and admiring plants from afar. *Please do not pick any flowers, leaves or plants!*



Museum & Garden Hours:

Friday-Sunday 11am-5pm

Monday-Thursday by group appointment only.

Museum Admission:

Minimum admission of \$1 for adults,
free for children under 10

Groups of 10 or more by appointment,
see website for information on our school tours



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