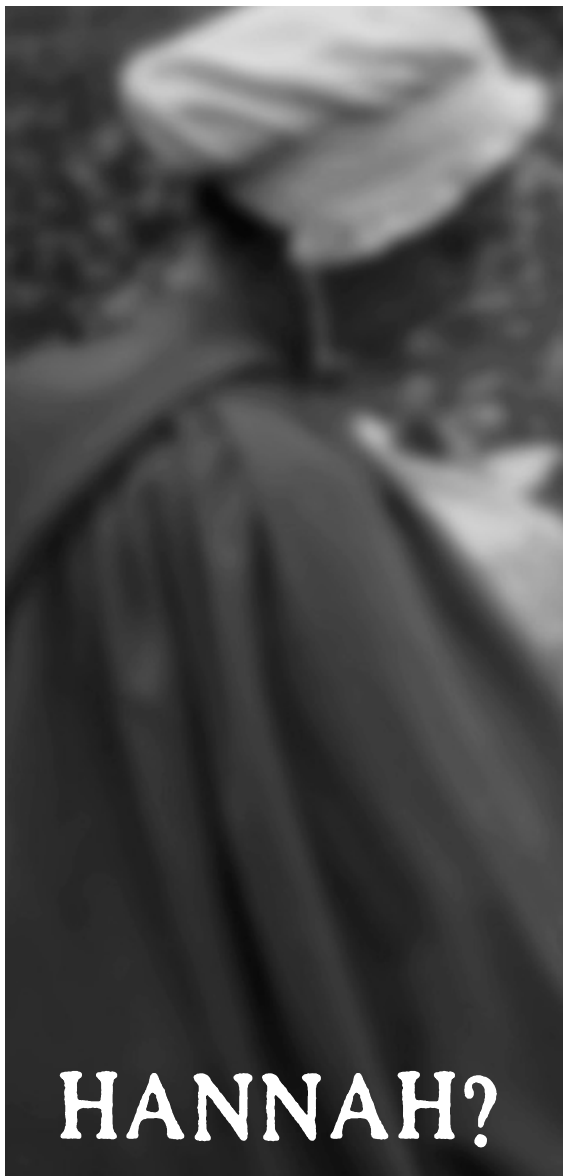


YE OLDE DYCKMAN GOSSIP RAG

April Fool's Day 2009

New York

Dyckman Farmhouse Museum



HANNAH?

DYCKMAN
GROWTH
CHART
UNCOVERED!

they really were
that short back then . . .

DYCKMAN TWINS -SEPARATED AT BIRTH!

exclusive pictures on page 3

WARNING The journalism in this Gossip Rag is flawed, see if you can tell what is true and false. Answers on pages 7 & 8.

YE OLDE DYCKMAN GOSSIP RAG

April Fool's Day 2009

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MYSTERY SIGNS APPEAR

This spring staff have begun to notice small signs appearing in the grass at the farmhouse. First appearing in March, the signs are on wire stakes driven into the ground by an unknown person. The text, "Bulb Alert! Please Stay Off The Grass & Give Our Flowers a Chance To Grow" seems harmless enough. As a staff member noted, "The person that did this is really doing us a favor. Our plants are very tender right now and any unintentional walking on them could really impact our growing season." Staff hopes that the mystery sign placer will appear every spring.

DYCKMAN RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR

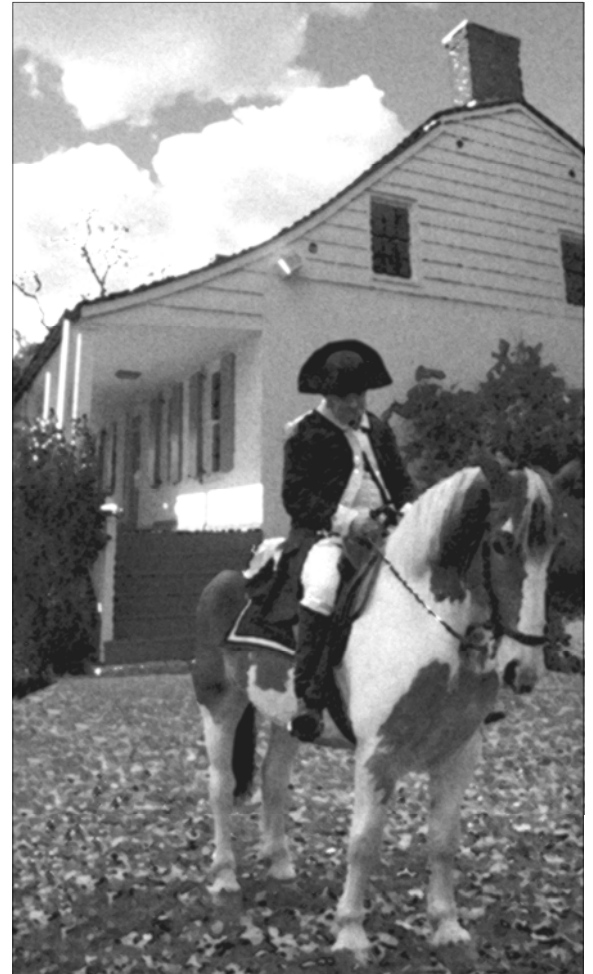
designated as the only historic house in America where Washington DIDN'T sleep

DYCKMAN FARMHOUSE

was recently designated by the National Register of Historic Places as the ONLY historic house in the United States where George Washington didn't sleep. This rare designation affirms what historians believed all along - that while George Washington seemed to spend much of his time moving from house to house to ensure the future significance of house museums and the ability to claim "George Washington slept here," the Dyckman family chose not to take advantage of this not-so-rare opportunity.

"While the Dyckman's were supporters of Washington's they felt they did not want their house or family to be burdened with the notoriety involved with Washington spending the night," explained the historian in charge of the designation. Ironically, their decision ended up making the farmhouse an even more significant site. While tourists can visit sites across the country that claim "Washington slept here," the recent designation will ensure that visitors to Dyckman Farmhouse Museum get an experience that they can't receive at other historic sites.

A new series of interpretive panels will soon be in place and guided tours will be conducted to further illustrate for visitors



A disappointed George Washington is turned away from a night at the Dyckman Farmhouse. George tried to stop by in 1778, six years before the farmhouse was built (Re-enactment.)

the lack of a George Washington story. As part of the designation a new plaque will also be installed on the front façade of the farmhouse, inscribed with the words:

*Dyckman Farmhouse
George Washington free since 1784!*

STRANGE and maybe true?

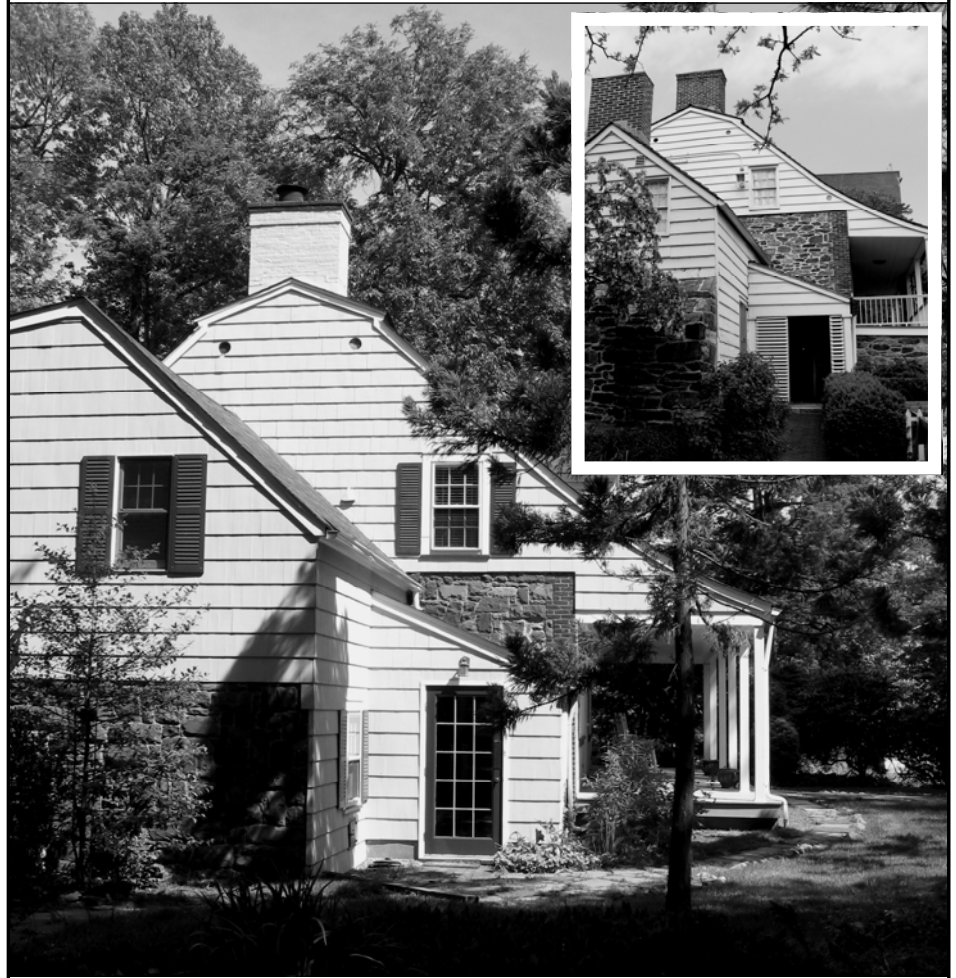
Teeth Found—Workers at Dyckman Farmhouse were restoring a wall in the Winter Kitchen when they uncovered some teeth still attached to a jawbone. Experts say that the teeth would have belonged to a roughly three year old pig. It is possible that the pig was once dinner for the Dyckman family. Because the floors in the Winter Kitchen would have just been dirt, there could be more clues to the Dyckman eating habits underneath the floorboards.

Lost Iguana—In the 1990's, staff was stunned to discover an iguana at rest in the garden. Perhaps he escaped his cage or was abandoned by his owners, but a New York City farmhouse is not the native territory for an iguana. A suitable home was found for the lost lizard and he lived a happy life.

Ghostly Writing—While doing a furniture inventory, a staff member was examining a rocking chair. She noticed that there appeared to be writing underneath the seat but couldn't quite make it out. She cleverly slid her digital camera underneath and snapped a picture. When she pulled her camera out to see the results, she was stunned to see that underneath the chair her very own name, "Susan," was written in white chalk.

Llamas for Sale! —According to a newspaper report from 1858, the first auction of llamas in the United States took place on Dyckman farmland on Saturday, March 20, 1858. The hope was to introduce llamas as a new domesticated farm animal as well as a pack animal for travel through American deserts and mountains. Unfortunately, the sale was not a great success and only three llamas were sold.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH!



This New Jersey house is an obvious twin to the Dyckman Farmhouse (inset.)

TWINS, YET STATES APART. Detective work has recently uncovered a twin to the Dyckman Farmhouse, located in New Jersey of all places. Built in the late 1920's the house eerily replicates many of the features of the Dyckman Farmhouse, including the chimneys, gambrel roofline, brick and stone detailing and garden setting. Shockingly, not much is known as to how or when the twin houses were separated or what caused the family estrangement. The New Jersey house has made some efforts to distinguish itself from its historic twin by modernizing to include a garage and other conveniences. But the family resemblance is undeniable. Efforts have begun to determine if other Dyckman siblings exist as rumors persist that the twins are actually triplets and another sibling resides in Scarsdale.

**THINK YOU KNOW WHAT IS TRUE AND FALSE?
SEE PAGES 7 AND 8 FOR THE ANSWERS.**



Newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Eliphalet Wellington, posed for this picture on the front porch of the farmhouse. They stopped by the Farmhouse during their recent honeymoon in the Big Apple. *Send us pictures of your visit for our next edition!*

DYCKMAN POKEY

Tucked away in the corner of the Dyckman Farmhouse garden there is a small stone building with a big history. The small barred windows betray its purpose – a jail.

During the American Revolution, Northern Manhattan was teaming with British and Hessian soldiers who conquered the island very early in the War for Independence. The Dyckman family, already living in their 1784 constructed house during the war years of 1776-1783, used the jail to hold traitors to the American cause. Loyal to the British, these prisoners were not happy about being confined, although the flower garden in front of the jail should have done much to cheer their mood.

Archaeological evidence provides the proof of the use of the stone building as a jail. Archaeologists Reginald Pelham Bolton and William Calver, who uncovered the stone remains of the building, discovered other evidence of the soldiers' frustration at being jailed. Broken bottles, silverware, and teacups were a common find—evidence of bad tempers run amuck. In fact, very few artifacts unearthed by the archaeologists in the early 20th century were found intact.



DEAR MARY ALICE & FANNIE FREDERICKA

Ask the Dyckman Sisters!



My uncle is telling me that in order to inherit anything in his will I'm going to have to change my name. What should I do? *James*

Dear James: What's in a name? We suggest you change your name to honor your uncle's wishes, family is important after all.

I visited your farmhouse and noticed that there are a lot of squirrels. Why? *Scarlett*

Dear Scarlett: Squirrels are very important staff members at the farmhouse as they are all trained archaeologists. Observe them and you will see them digging everywhere on site, looking for clues as to how the Dyckman family lived on the farm. Squirrels are also excellent gardeners.

I've noticed the public bathroom at the farmhouse is underneath the front porch. Is there a luxurious bathroom inside for staff while they force visitors to use an outside bathroom? *Mr. Commode*

Dear Mr. Commode: Don't you find the outside bathroom adds to the authenticity of the experience? We wanted to stay true to the experience of our ancestors so we kept *all* the bathrooms outside.

There is a room on the first floor of the museum called "The Relic Room." Was this where the Dyckman's displayed all their fancy stuff for visitors? *Confused*

Dear Confused: Good guess, but the exhibit cases in this space were installed in 1916 to display archaeological objects found in the neighborhood. Relic is another word for something saved from the past. Because this space was used to

display relics of the past it became known as the Relic Room.

Why is there a sign carved into the stone wall that says "Dyckman Houfe" Why do you call it a houfe and not a house? *Missing S*

Dear Missing S: Your eyes aren't deceiving you, it really does look like an f rather than an s, but it would still be pronounced house. That letter is known as a long s. We wrote it like that to make it look like it was carved in the 18th century. Did we fool you?

I heard that there weren't any closets in the olden times because they were considered rooms and would have been taxed. Is this true? *Full Closets*

Dear Full Closets: We get asked this question quite a bit as you will notice that there are no closets at Dyckman. While our closets might be full today, if you had lived in 1784 you probably wouldn't have had that many clothes to choose from. So it wasn't that closets were expensive, they just often weren't necessary.

I would like to buy the Dyckman Farmhouse and move in. How much does it cost? *Future Farmer*

Dear Future Farmer: Sorry, we donated the farmhouse to the City of New York in 1916 and it will remain a museum. Perhaps you might want to start looking at co-ops.

If you have a question for Mary Alice & Fannie Fredericka send an email to askmaryfannie@dyckmanfarmhouse.org

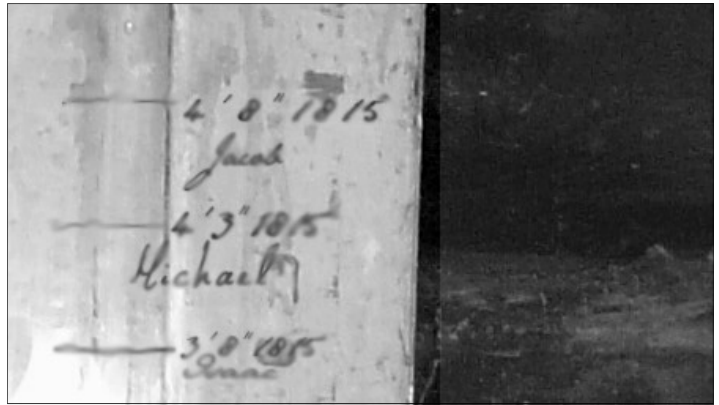
DYCKMAN GROWTH CHART

Solves lingering questions

AS IF the low doorways and ceilings were not enough proof, a recent conservation project in the Farmhouse revealed a century's old growth chart, penciled onto the door frame of a bedroom entryway. This is a very exciting discovery for staff and interested visitors alike.

Now we have the evidence – the Dyckmans were indeed a short family, just as most people were shorter in the past. The growth chart has several markings showing the heights of three sons of Jacobus Dyckman, revealing that none of them was more than 4' 8" tall. Perhaps this explains why Jacob Dyckman, the tallest in the family, was the one to attend Columbia University and study medicine?

Obviously the low hanging lanterns, doorways and claustrophobic steps also all make sense now. While staff had previously stressed to visitors that these features were more about practicality and reflected the very nature of the structure as a modest farmhouse, they must now change their story. "This growth chart gives positive proof that everyone in the early 19th century was quite small and that there was little or



The growth chart was discovered on a bedroom door frame.

no height variation in the population," said one shocked staff member.

The growth chart will be preserved and made available for researchers. Beds already on display in the museum will be shortened to reflect the new information.

IS THIS HANNAH?



is apparent from the poor quality of the image and the domestic scene it captures that the photo dates to 1810, a very prolific time period for American photographers when just about everyone had a camera," stated Mr. Moore. We do know that Hannah would have been living in the farmhouse around this time and would have been one of several free black and enslaved people living and working on the farm. Because there is so little documentation on their lives, photographs such as this one are key to filling in the research gaps. This photograph likely shows her preparing dinner for the family.

IS this recently uncovered photograph a picture of Hannah, a free black cook living in the Dyckman Household? Little is known about Hannah beyond what family stories have been passed down which say that she was the daughter of an enslaved woman who lived in the farmhouse.

Historian Blazius Moore visited Dyckman Farmhouse and examined the photo. "It

JACOBUS DYCKMAN'S GHOST APPEARS, but really doesn't say much . . .

Did the Dyckmans prefer to be seen but not heard? Well, that is true for one Dyckman, at least. For centuries, occupants of the Dyckman Farmhouse have reported encounters with the mild mannered Jacobus Dyckman. While he has not said much over the years, the lucky few who have met him say he has been very helpful. Staff members claim he has replaced light bulbs, advised about problematic locks and latches, and pitched in when heavy things need to be carried or moved. He has even been known to scare off those who enter the park after hours with less than noble intentions.

Despite many attempts, we were unable to locate Jacobus for an interview for this article.

LULLA-BYE OF BROADWAY?

famous street in jeopardy!

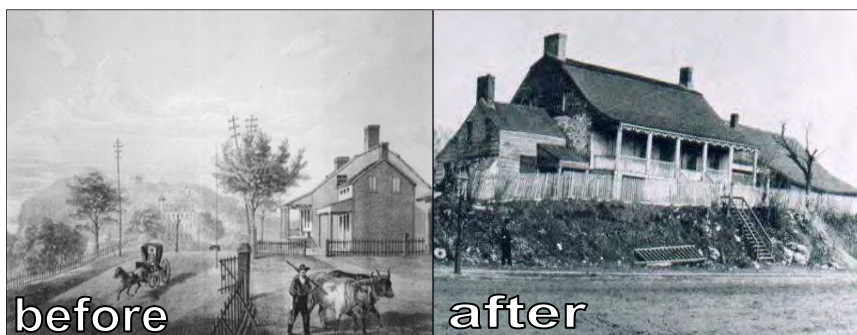
Many visitors to the farmhouse have been left scratching their heads – why would a farmer build his house on a hill? The Farmhouse is currently perched above Broadway, with a very steep drop-off separating it from the bustling street below. Many are surprised to learn that when the Farmhouse was built it was at street level. So where has Broadway gone? Speculation is abounding, and some of the theories are rather intriguing.

“Rock theft” is how neighbor William Nagle explains Broadway’s gradual disappearance. “People have been coming to this neighborhood for years under the cover of night, to steal our famous Inwood Marble. I just don’t know what will happen if they don’t stop.” He sadly added “I don’t want my daughters to ask “Where did Broadway go?”

Another local resident, preferring to remain anonymous, explained that Broadway’s disappearance began centuries ago, when farmer’s herded their cattle along Broadway as they traveled to and from market in lower Manhattan. “Have you ever seen the damage a herd of cattle can do? There is no surprise that Broadway’s elevation paid the price.” She added “It’s a good thing farming went out when it did, or I fear the dam-

age would have been much, much worse.”

This may also explain why the Dyckman family moved out of the farmhouse in the 1850’s. As shown in the photos, the disappearing street created the need for a staircase up the hill in order to reach the farmhouse and barns. Carrying their



These historic images from the collection of the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum show how severe the disappearance of Broadway impacted the site within just a few decades.

cattle up and down the steps to bring them to and from the fields every day would not have been easy.

The photographic evidence is indisputable—Broadway is disappearing.

Special Delivery

CANNONBALL

arrives in the mail. What started as any other day for mail carrier Frederick Vermilyea of the Inwood branch of the US Postal Service quickly became an extraordinary reminder of why he loves his job. “Things go on as usual, and then something like this really changes your perspective on life.”

What was so life changing for Mr. Vermilyea? In a routine postal delivery he passed off a rather heavy package to Farmhouse staff. That hefty parcel turned



out to be a Revolutionary War era cannon ball, taken from the site decades before, by a young visitor with sticky fingers. As this youngster grew up he never forgot what he had done. As an adult he decided to set things right.

Mr. Vermilyea smiled “It just made me feel good to know I helped someone correct a mistake they made in the past.” Farmhouse staff was surprised and very grateful for the reunion.

HELP WANTED

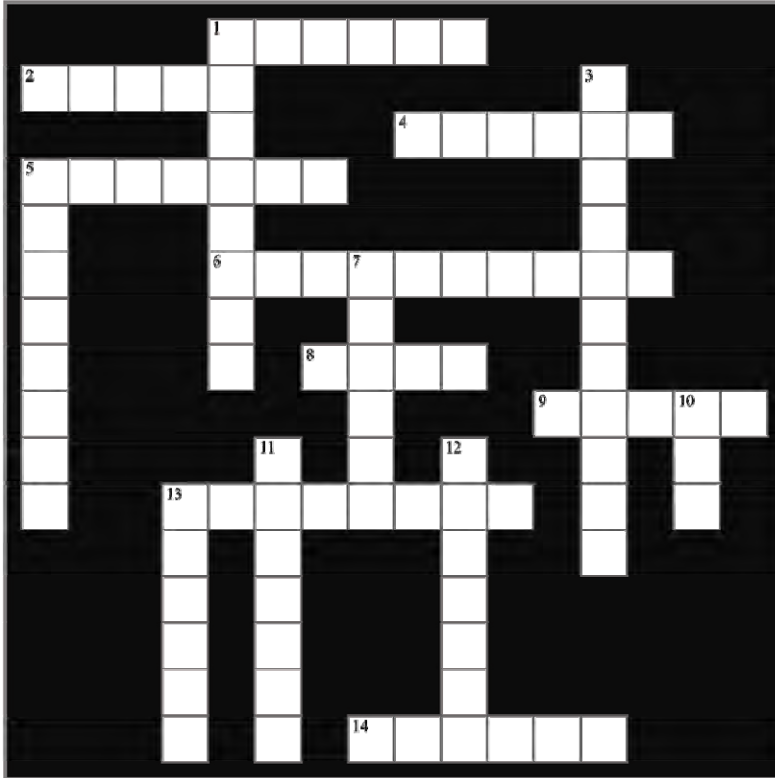
RELIC HUNTER. Interested parties should be able to supply their own digging tools such as an asparagus shovel. Should be willing to work long hours, be able to dig holes and work well with others. For more information contact Reginald Pelham Bolton or William Calver at LOrraine 5-5555.

FOR RENT

Diamond in the Rough—Military Hut. Cozy hut, former home to 6-8 British soldiers makes unique home. Live an authentic 18th century life in a 21st century city. No plumbing, heat or electricity but loads of charm. \$15,000 per month. For more information contact Lieutenant-General von Knyphausen

THINK YOU KNOW WHAT IS TRUE AND FALSE? SEE PAGES 7 AND 8 FOR THE ANSWERS.

THE CROSSWORD OF TRUTH



ACROSS

1. Reginald Pelham _____ was an amateur archaeologist who was dedicated to preserving the history of northern Manhattan around the turn of the 20th century.
2. The Dyckman Farmhouse was built _____ the American Revolution.
4. 5' 8" was the average _____ of an adult white male in the late 18th century.
5. James Frederick Smith changed his name to Isaac _____ Dyckman at the request of his uncle, Isaac Dyckman.
6. George _____ never slept in the Dyckman Farmhouse.
8. The story about the Dyckman Farmhouse twin in New Jersey is _____.
9. _____ Dyckman was a doctor.
13. Jacob Dyckman went to _____ University.
14. The Farmhouse became a _____ in 1916.

DOWN

1. _____ has been lowered as a result of urban development.
3. There weren't any _____ in 1810, because cameras had not been invented yet.
5. The _____ hut was moved from its original location nearby and was rebuilt in the Farmhouse park in 1916.
7. In the early 1800s, the Dyckman farm stretched from the Hudson to the _____ River.
10. The bars on the windows of the hut were installed in modern times to keep people _____, not to keep prisoners in during the American Revolution.
11. _____ was not abolished in New York until 1827.
12. There was never a tax on closets or _____ in New York.
13. A _____ ball was returned to the Farmhouse by mail, but the rest of that story is false.

WORD BANK

After
Bolton
Broadway
Columbia
Cannon

Harlem
Height
Jacob
Michael
Military
Museum

Out
Photographs
Slavery
True
Washington
Windows

THE RELIC HUNTERS



BY MAX RIFFNER

THE ADVENTURES OF BOLTON & CALVER IN NORTHERN MANHATTAN



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True or False—The Answers Make sure you complete the crossword puzzle; many of the answers are here!

Page 2
Mysterious Signs - Farmhouse staffers have put out signs asking people to keep off the grass during our spring bulb season.

Page 3
All the stories are true! Maybe the twins weren't separated at birth, but there is a house in New Jersey that was built as a replica of the Dyckman Farmhouse.

Page 4
Jail - The small military hut has never been used as a jail. It was a living space for British and Hessian soldiers during the American Revolution, and was rebuilt in the Farmhouse garden in 1916.

Page 5
Growth Chart - There is not a Dyckman growth chart in the Farmhouse. For more information see the Crossword of Truth.

Page 6
Ghosts - Dyckman Farmhouse Museum does not have any resident ghosts.

Page 7
Broadway - Beginning in the late 19th century the portion of Broadway that runs in front of the Farmhouse was lowered between 10 and 15 feet as a result of urban development.

For Rent—Sorry, the Military Hut is not for rent or sale!

THE TRUTH REVEALED!

In 1783, the British evacuated Manhattan after an eight year occupation during the Revolutionary War. William Dyckman returned from a temporary home in upstate New York to the family homestead in Northern Manhattan. He discovered the homestead by the East River destroyed and set about building a new house, but chose a *new location* --- directly on Kingsbridge Road (Broadway). This is the present day Dyckman Farmhouse, which has stood in its original location since its construction c. 1784. When William died in 1787, his son Jacobus eventually took over the house and farm and it was during his tenure that the farm prospered.

By 1820, there were 10 people living in the household. Jacobus was the head of a household that included: his three bachelor sons (Jacob, Isaac and Michael), his young grandson James Frederick Smith, his niece Maria, one unidentified white woman, a free black woman named Hannah, a free black boy and one enslaved male.

While the size of the farm fluctuated under Jacobus' ownership, it was roughly 250 acres in size. The boundaries of the farm would have stretched from river to river east to west, and from roughly modern-day 213th Street to the north down to the 190's to the south. The farmyard, the area right around the farmhouse, included the main outbuildings for the farm, including a cidemill, corn cribs, barn and stable. The family had orchards and also grew crops such as corn, cucumbers, cabbage and hay.

Jacobus lived in the farmhouse until his death in 1832. His sons Isaac and Michael lived in the farmhouse until the early 1850's when they moved to another house on the property. They continued to farm and also added substantially to the

landholdings. When Jacobus' last son, Isaac, died in 1868, much of the family land was sold for development. James Frederick Smith, the young grandson of Jacobus who moved into the farmhouse in the early 19th century, changed his name to Isaac Michael Dyckman in accordance with his Uncle Isaac's will and inherited some Dyckman land.

By the early 20th century, the farmhouse was in disrepair and the rural character of the surrounding neighborhood was quickly changing. The extension of the subway lines to Northern Manhattan led to rapid development in the neighborhood. Archaeology enthusiasts such as Reginald Pelham Bolton and William Calver worked rapidly to try and capture history before it disappeared by conducting digs throughout the neighborhood. Among their many finds were Revolutionary War camp sites, including the stone remains of soldier's huts.

In response to the possible danger of losing the farmhouse, Mary Alice Dyckman Dean and Fannie Fredericka Dyckman Welch, daughters of Isaac Michael Dyckman, bought the property to ensure its preservation. With their husbands Bashford Dean and Alexander McMillan Welch they restored the farmhouse, furnished it and landscaped the grounds. In 1916 the farmhouse was donated to the City of New York and it has been open as a museum since that time.

Still curious?

Visit www.dyckmanfarmhouse.org
for information on the TRUE
story of the farmhouse.

Museum & Garden Hours

Wed-Sat 11am-4pm, Sun 12-4pm
Closed Mondays and Tuesdays

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



4881 Broadway at 204th Street

New York, NY 10034

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www.dyckmanfarmhouse.org

The Dyckman Farmhouse Museum is owned by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and is a member of the Historic House Trust.