

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SARATOGA Historical
NATIONAL PARK
Stillwater, New York

PROPERTY OF LIBRARY
DIVISION OF CULTURAL
RESOURCES, NARO

FILE NO.

A PRELIMINARY REPORT

ON THE

(SCHUYLER HOUSE RESEARCH)

OLSON (1955)

IMPORTANT

This file constitutes a part of the official records of the National Park Service and should not be separated or papers withdrawn without express authority of the official in charge. All Files should be returned promptly to the File Room. Officials and employees will be held responsible for failure to observe these rules, which are necessary to protect the integrity of the official records.

A PRELIMINARY REPORT
ON THE
SCHUYLER HOUSE RESEARCH

Prepared by: Herbert Olsen
Park Historian
Saratoga National
Historical Park
Stillwater, N. Y.

September 12, 1955

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDY	
Newspapers, 1890-1931	
Research, 1954-1955	3
Suggested Research	4
Travel Accounts	
Anne Royall, 1827	5
Lafayette's Visit, 1825	6
Strover Papers, 1839-1886	
Accounts	8
Insurance Policies	8
Surrogate's Court	
Albany County	10
Saratoga County	10
Westchester County	11
Fanny Schuyler Inventory	11
Schuyler Papers	
New York Historical Society	
Fanny Schuyler MSS	12
New York Public Library	13
New York State Library	13
Iconographic Sources	14
Drawings	
Schuyler House Floor Plan	14
Paintings	
Philip Schuyler II and family, 1824	15
Maps	16
"Undated Map of Schuylerville"	16
II. THE SCHUYLER FURNISHINGS	
Introduction	20
The Furnishings	20
Conclusion	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY	36

INTRODUCTION

Shortly after title to the General Philip Schuyler House and Grounds, Schuylerville, N. Y., was vested in the United States on March 30, 1950, the National Park Service initiated the documentary research basic to the preservation and restoration of this historic property. Park Historian Charles W. Snell, Saratoga National Historical Park, was assigned responsibility for the conduct of this research and his resulting efforts were embodied in: A Report on the History, Construction, and Social Use of the General Philip Schuyler Summer House at Schuylerville (Old Saratoga), N. Y., dated April 16, 1951.

Mr. Snell's report indicated the difficulties which he encountered in uncovering materials on the Schuyler House. Significantly, Mr. Snell was able to date the construction of the original portion of the house (the west wing, 21 feet by 60 feet, 2 stories high) as having taken place in November 1777. Aside from this contribution, however, Mr. Snell was not able to learn much about the original house -- its structural characteristics, its exterior or interior colors and finishes, its furnishings, or its later alterations and additions.

The writer of the present report was assigned the task of continuing and expanding the research begun by Mr. Snell and began his efforts in the late fall of 1954. Like Mr. Snell, the writer soon became aware of the magnitude of the bibliographical problem confronting the researcher engaged in this particular study.

The meagre findings gleaned during the past winter's research have resulted in a request for and approval of the continuation of Research Project No. 1, The Schuyler House and Grounds, 1777-1953, on the 1956 fiscal year research program of the Park. Normally, therefore, preparation and submission of a report on this project would be delayed until all avenues of research had been exhausted.

The coming transfer of the writer to a new assignment makes it imperative, however, that a preliminary report be prepared to serve, at least, as a guide to his successor. The report which follows, therefore, is primarily a bibliographical study, with special consideration given to a subject of major significance -- the original furnishings of the Schuyler House. With the latter exception, no effort could or has been made to synthesize the complete results of the past winter's research.

CHAPTER I

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

Newspapers, 1890 - 1931

Research, 1954 - 1955

In his research on the Schuyler House in 1950 and 1951, Mr. Snell covered the "usual reasonably accessible sources" except for local newspapers. Hoping that these sources might yield material pertinent to the entire history of the Schuyler House, research was begun in this field first, late last fall.

Through the courtesy of Mrs. Allan Nevins, Editor, the newspaper files of The Schuylerville Standard were made available for research purposes. This local weekly began publication on October 7, 1877, the centennial of the Second Battle of Saratoga and has continued publication down to the present day.

With the exception of the first issue, however, the office file of The Schuylerville Standard does not begin until April 31, 1890. Starting with the latter issue, therefore, The Schuylerville Standard was examined and read through and including the year 1931. In this period, there were many single issues missing, as well as whole years in several instances (1901-03, inclusive; 1906-09, inclusive; and, 1916-1921, inclusive).

All the issues examined contained a column of local news in which items such as repairs, alterations, and painting by local homeowners were often mentioned. Not one single item of this nature appeared in the newspaper for the Schuyler House, however, even though

its owners and their social doings are occasionally mentioned in the local news column. If the reporting of The Schuylerville Standard is complete, therefore, no minor or major repairs or alterations were made in the Schuyler House during the period from 1890 - 1931. This statement must be further qualified to take into consideration those issues of the newspaper which were missing and could not therefore be examined.

Suggested Research

Reading of The Schuylerville Standard should be continued from 1932 to 1950. But there seems little reason to carry this tedious task beyond March 30, 1950, when title to the Schuyler House was formally vested in the United States. An effort should also be made to locate and examine the issues missing from the office file in Schuylerville; a complete list of these missing issues will be found under the heading "Bibliography" in the research note file on the Schuyler House.

The Schuylerville Standard was not the only newspaper ever published in the town. In fact, there were at least five predecessors of this paper, published in the period from 1849 to 1877: (1) The Old Saratoga, 1849 ? to 1852; (2) the Battle Ground Herald, 1852 to July 1857; (3) The Schuylerville News, ? to 1874; (4) The Standard, 1871 to ? ; and, (5) The Standard Daily, October 1877.

Mr. Vibert Ostrander, Schuylerville, New York, a descendant of one of the earlier editors of The Schuylerville Standard, has kindly

loaned the Park five bound volumes of some of the newspapers. These should be examined and returned to Mr. Ostrander, who has promised to make other issues of local newspapers in his possession available to the Park for research.

In addition to the purely local newspapers, research should be conducted in county newspapers and those of nearby towns or cities. Attention, too, should be devoted to carrying the newspaper research back as far as 1777. The New York State Library, State Education Building, Albany, N. Y., has an extensive newspaper collection. For a guide to this collection and that of the Troy Public Library, Troy, N. Y., prior to 1820, consult Clarence L. Brigham's History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690 - 1820 (2 vols., Worcester, Mass.: 1947).

Travel Accounts

Anne Royall, 1827

This field of research requires more attention than Mr. Snell or the writer have given it. The latter spent almost an entire day in the New York State Library attempting to locate accounts by travelers who had either passed through Schuylerville or stopped at and perhaps described the Schuyler House. Several accounts were found which depicted the Schuyler House and estate prior to 1777, but only one important description of the present Schuyler House was located. Writing of a visit to Schuylerville in 1827, Anne Royall, a pioneer woman journalist, described the Schuyler House and Grounds in the following words:

From the field of surrender I walked to Major Philip Schuyler's, a grandson of General Schuyler. His house stands on the opposite side of Fish Creek, a few yards in front of the General's which was burnt by Gen. Burgoyne.

After paying my respects to Major Schuyler and his family, Mrs. Schuyler walked out with me to the spot where Gen. Schuyler's house stood. The length and breadth of the house was distinctly seen, being sunk below the adjoining ground. His garden is also visible, being near the house, and the rose bushes and lilies are still fresh and green. The house in which Major P. Schuyler now lives, was built by the General himself a few days after the other was burnt. Four lofty locust trees stand in front of the house; two of these were planted by General Schuyler himself, and two by the Major's mother. The house is one of the finest in the country, sits on an even plain, washed on one side by the Hudson, and on the other by Fish Creek -- splendidly furnished with a profusion of plate etc. which are themselves the fairest of the whole.¹

Lafayette's Visit, 1825

What little research the writer was able to do on the subject of Lafayette's visit to the Schuyler House on his return to America in 1824 and 1825 has convinced him that the visit could not possibly have taken place in 1824 as Brandow contends.² The visit could only have occurred between June 28 and July 3, 1825, when Lafayette traveled from Whitehall, N. Y., to New York City. The following letter from Lafayette to Philip Schuyler II, dated July 6, 1825, lends added credence to this view:

¹Sarah Harvey Porter (ed.), The Life and Times of Anne Royall (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1909), I, 69 f.

²John Henry Brandow, The Story of Old Saratoga. The Burgoyne Campaign to which is added New York's Share in the Revolution 2nd ed.; Albany: The Brandow Printing Company, 1919), p. 346.

You have promised me to present my apology to the Gentlemen of Saratoga Springs who had so very politely visited me, and whom you expected to see the next day at New York - Yet, as it is impossible for me to pay them the visit before I proceed to Philadelphia and Washington I enclose a few lines to which I beg you to give the proper direction.

I hope you will have good news of Mrs. Schuyler and family & offer to you the affectionate Sentiments of an old friend of the four generations.³

The entire subject of famous visitors to the Schuyler House requires more careful attention and research. The writer is not willing to accept Mr. Snell's contention that General John Stark utilized "General Philip Schuyler's Summer Manor House" during the summer and autumn of 1781.⁴ Moreover, the possibility that both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison visited the house in May or June 1791 and spent the night there, as General Schuyler informed his son that he had entreated them to do, should also be investigated.⁵

Strover Papers, 1839-1886

Mr. Snell was permitted to examine some of these papers by William M. Snyder and Miss Mabel R. Snyder, his sister, in December 1950.⁶ According to the Snyders, however, Mr. Snell never examined

³Misc. MSS, Schuyler, Philip John, New York Historical Society (hereinafter referred to as NYHS)

⁴Charles W. Snell, A Report on the History, Construction and Social Use of the General Philip Schuyler Summer House at Schuylerville (Old Saratoga), N. Y. (April 16, 1951), p. 111.

⁵General Philip Schuyler to John Bradstreet Schuyler, May 26, 1791, Box 38, Schuyler Papers, New York Public Library (hereinafter referred to as NYPL).

⁶Snell, op. cit., p. 33.

them in their entirety. The whole collection, filling four large cardboard boxes, was therefore made available to the writer for perusal.

Accounts

These papers reveal that George Strover, who owned the Schuyler House from 1839 until his death in 1886, was a businessman and property owner in Schuylerville of some note. Yet, while Mr. Strover followed the best business practices by apparently keeping every bill he ever received, he was hardly as meticulous in earmarking what his expenditures were for. Unfortunately, therefore, the hundreds of bills for lumber and other building materials, as well as for labor, in this collection cannot be tied down specifically to repairs to the Schuyler House and/or any other buildings on the property. Unless corroborative evidence is obtained from wholly independent sources, this material will remain virtually valueless.

Insurance Policies

Among the Strover Papers there was one important source of information about the buildings on the Schuyler property. This was in the form of a number of insurance policies, the first of which was taken out by George Strover a month after he purchased the Schuyler House and Grounds. This policy, issued by the Saratoga County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, contains the following description of the property on February 28, 1839:

On his Dwelling House, Wing & Larder adjoining
Situated in the Town of Saratoga \$1000... On his Barn \$100
On his Farm House \$200 On his Wood & Wash House \$100.

Another policy, issued by the same company and dated April 9, 1853, makes it clear that the barn mentioned in the above policy was a "two story wood Barn on the bank of the Canal east of his [Strover's] Dwelling House [the Schuyler House]."

There are a number of other insurance policies of later date among these papers which would help to identify the buildings which stood on the property, but their synthesis will not be attempted at this time. It is important to note, however, that the woodhouse, mentioned by Mr. Snell⁷ burned before 1910, according to another of these insurance policies. This building undoubtedly burned sometime between 1906 and 1909. The exact date could be determined if the missing issues of The Schuylerville Standard for these years could be located and examined.

An effort was made to locate the records of the Saratoga County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, since one of the application requirements for insurance was a detailed inventory and description of the buildings. Unfortunately, the search proved wholly negative. The company is still in existence, but the whereabouts of its earlier records is not known. First incorporated on May 5, 1834, the company never became very large and apparently, at least in its earlier years, all records were kept on an individual agent basis. When the latter died or left the company, the records disappeared. At least this was the view of Mr. George Lohnes, Quaker Springs, N. Y., who is the present secretary-treasurer of the company. The writer is not wholly

⁷Ibid., pp. 30f.

satisfied with this explanation, because Mr. Lohnes is rather elderly and uncertain about the early history of his company.

Further research in connection with these insurance policies might provide additional information about the Schuyler House and the other buildings which stood on the grounds at one time.

Surrogate's Court

Albany County

General Schuyler Inventory. - The long sought inventory of General Philip Schuyler's estate⁸ was finally found in the Surrogate's Court of Albany County, Albany, N. Y. The inventory, dated April 12, 1805, is so general in nature that it is of little value. It was hoped that it would provide information about the Schuyler House furnishings, but it merely lumps all of the General's "plate and other household goods" together at a value of \$4,735.54. Perhaps General Schuyler's executors submitted a more detailed inventory of his property at a later date, but, if they did, it is doubtful that it will ever be located in the abominably kept records of this court.

Saratoga County

The records of this court were searched for the will and inventory of John Bradstreet Schuyler, a son of General Schuyler, who occupied the Schuyler House and managed General Schuyler's estate at Saratoga from late 1787 until his death in August 1795. The well kept and indexed records of this court were a welcome contrast to those of the Surrogate's Court of Albany County, but neither John Bradstreet Schuyler's will nor the inventory of his estate were found therein.

⁸Ibid., p. 28.

Westchester County

Following loss of the Schuyler House and estate as an indirect result of the financial panic of 1837, Philip Schuyler II, a grandson of General Schuyler, served briefly as Consul to the port of Liverpool, England, in the administration of Martin Van Buren and then returned to America to settle at Pelham, N. Y. Consequently, the writer went to the Surrogate's Court of Westchester County, White Plains, N. Y., to examine the wills and inventories of Philip Schuyler II and his descendants.

Fanny Schuyler Inventory. - Here was found what is undoubtedly the most significant material relating to the original furnishings of the Schuyler House. The results of this search, climaxed by the discovery of the detailed inventory of Anny Schuyler's estate, is synthesized in the second chapter of this report.

Of particular note, too, is Fanny Schuyler's reference to "my Historic books" in her will, and the appearance on the inventory of her estate of William Withering's Systematic arrangement of British Plants.... in four volumes.⁹ This work was first published in 1776 under the title: A botanical arrangement of all the vegetables growing in Great Britain.¹⁰ This botanical guidebook may well have been used at Saratoga by the most famous of Fanny Schuyler's ancestors, her great-grandfather, General Philip Schuyler.

de
in
file

⁹File No. 939-1917, Surrogate's Court of Westchester County, White Plains, N. Y. Hereinafter this court will be referred to as SCWC.

¹⁰Information obtained from the Library of Congress Catalog of Printed Cards.

Schuyler Papers

New York Historical Society

Fanny Schuyler MSS. - The collection of Schuyler Papers in this repository is rather meagre in comparison with the collection in the New York Public Library. In contrast to the latter collection, moreover, the papers in the New York Historical Society are primarily those of John Bradstreet Schuyler and Philip Schuyler II, and not those of General Schuyler. This fact led the writer to ask himself whether these papers might not be the "Schuyler MSS," then in the possession of Miss Fanny Schuyler, which Brandow used as the basis of his account of John Bradstreet Schuyler and his son, Philip Schuyler II, in 1919.¹¹

With the foregoing question in mind, the acquisition records of the Society were consulted, but they failed to reveal the source of acquisition of these papers. It was therefore necessary to arrive at the source of their origin in another manner.

According to the terms of her will, Fanny Schuyler bequeathed the so-called "Schuyler MSS" in her possession to her nieces, Grace Schuyler de Luze and Sarah Frances de Luze upon her death on January 10, 1917.¹² Neither the will of Grace Schuyler de Luze, who died in 1924, nor that of Sarah F. de Luze, who died in 1940, mentions these historic papers.¹³ Given the family concern for the preservation and disposition of their historic Schuyler possessions, as evidenced by specific references to them in their wills,

¹¹Brandow, op. cit., pp. 336-350.

¹²File No. 939-1917, SCWC.

¹³Will of Grace Schuyler de Luze, File No. 361-1924, SCWC; Will of Sarah Frances de Luze, File No. 730-1940, SCWC.

it would appear that the "Schuyler MSS" were probably disposed of prior to the death of Sarah F. de Luze in 1940. If so, the New York Historical Society appears to have acquired them, either by gift or purchase, for a careful examination of the Society's Schuyler Papers leaves little doubt in the writer's mind that they are at least part of the "Schuyler MSS" used by Brandow.

The original of the lengthy letter of December 3, 1787, from General Schuyler to John Bradstreet Schuyler, which Brandow quotes,¹⁴ is among the Society's collection of Schuyler Papers. Equally significant is the fact that many of these papers bear notations in the handwriting of Fanny Schuyler, with which the writer is familiar. Furthermore, the fact that these notations were made by Fanny Schuyler is also attested to in several instances by her nephew, Louis P. de Luze, who endorsed several of them "written by Fanny Schuyler L.P. del."

Actually, the Schuyler Papers of the Society add little to our knowledge of the Schuyler House, since their salient contents were presented in Brandow's book. There is one significant exception, however, and that is a "Schedule of Household furniture May 4th, 1837," which will be discussed more fully in the second chapter of this report.

New York Public Library

Included in the collection of Schuyler Papers in this repository are a large number of letters to John Bradstreet Schuyler from his father, General Schuyler, during the period from 1787 to 1795. They are concerned primarily with the economic affairs and management of General Schuyler's Saratoga estate, which his son was responsible for until his death in 1795.

¹⁴Brandow, op. cit., pp. 336-340.

In addition to the above, there is a "Ledger of Land Accounts at Saratoga, 1769-1805" and a "Ledger of [tenant employment and] accounts, 1774-1796."

Research in the above material would prove invaluable to the interpretation of the significance of the Schuyler House as headquarters for the management of the Schuyler estate -- its lands, forests, and mills.

New York State Library

The Schuyler Papers in this repository at Albany, N. Y., were also checked to be certain that no pertinent material had been missed. From the letters in this collection, a calendar of the dates on which General Schuyler is known to have been at Saratoga was worked out. This was also done for the papers in the New York Public Library.

Iconographic Sources

The importance of iconographic source material cannot be over-stressed in a study in which documentary source material has proved exceptionally meagre. Mr. Snell properly stressed maps of the grounds, showing the buildings which existed on them. Equally, however, emphasis must be placed on locating and copying drawings, paintings, and photographs of the buildings. This has been done in a number of instances, and a few words should be said about several of the iconographic sources of special interest.

Drawings

Schuyler House Floor Plan?— A floor plan was discovered among the Schuyler Papers of the New York Public Library on March 2, 1955.

Whether this is a plan of the Schuyler House is problematical and will require further research for determination. The floor plan may be General Schuyler's original conception of the house he would rebuild at Saratoga, since its layout greatly resembles the original west wing of the present building. Its dimensions, however, are only 42 feet by 20 feet, instead of 60 feet by 21 feet as actually built. The plan bears the following legend: "42 by 20 [?] [?] first story 10 ft. 2nd hip Roof 8 ft. Cellar 4 ft. in Ground and 8 foot in all 18 Lights in first story 12 Do [lights] in Second An oven in the kitchen under the parlour."

Paintings

Philip Schuyler II and Family, 1824. - Through research in the Surrogate's Court of Westchester County it was learned that Miss Elizabeth Harrison, a beneficiary of the will of Sarah F. de Luze, was still living at 333 East 68th Street, New York City. Miss Harrison was contacted by telephone; but because she is elderly and had been rather ill recently, it was impossible to arrange a personal meeting. However, Miss Harrison did inform the writer that she had given a number of Schuyler items which had been devised to her by the will of Sarah F. de Luze to the New York Historical Society.

Armed with the above information, a personal visit was made to the New York Historical Society to see Mr. Richard J. Koke, Curator and a former historian at Saratoga National Historical Park. Mr. Koke generously presented the writer with a photograph of a watercolor of Philip Schuyler II and his family which was painted in the Schuyler House by Ambrose Andrews, an itinerant artist, in 1824. The original

watercolor, donated to the Society by Miss Harison in 1952, was not seen since it was in storage.

The painting is of some interest, since, among other things, it shows a number of pieces of furniture. Moreover, Mr. Koke has subsequently passed on the information that the walls shown in the painting are not papered but appear to be painted a dark blue-gray. As Mr. Koke was quick to add, however, the watercolor "probably has changed color somewhat since it was originally made."

Maps

Before passing on to the principal item for discussion -- the "Undated Map of Schuylerville" -- it should be noted that the Park files contain another map of some interest in locating the original Schuyler Gardens which was not listed in Mr. Snell's report. While almost exactly the same as the map appearing as item number 1 on Mr. Snell's list,¹⁵ there are certain significant differences in the appearance and layout of the garden. The map in question is: Plan de l'Arma sous les Ordres de son Excellence le Lieutenant General Burgoyne à Saratoga dant sur la Retraite de Fremanns Ferme . . . Dresse sur la Champ par Gerlach Capit et Depute Q^r M^r General.

"Undated Map of Schuylerville. -- The existence of an "undated map of Schuylerville," in the possession of Mr. William M. Snyder of Schuylerville, N. Y., was first mentioned in Mr. Snell's report in 1951.¹⁶ Subsequently, the Park obtained a photograph of that portion of the map showing the Schuyler House and Grounds.

¹⁵Snell, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 33

Convinced that another copy of this map must exist, the writer examined the map collection of the New York State Library. Therein was found a copy of the map, in almost perfect condition, bearing the interpolated date [1837].

The first attempt to date this map was made by Park Historian Charles E. Shedd, in response to Assistant Regional Director Lisle's memorandum of January 30, 1953. After presenting the evidence, Mr. Shedd concluded "that the date of the map's preparation lies between the years 1836 and 1839."¹⁷

Mr. Shedd did an excellent job in narrowing down the possible date of the map's preparation with the information at hand. Recent research in the deeds of the Saratoga County Clerk's Office, Ballston Spa, N. Y., however, has provided a clearer picture of the economic conditions prevailing in Schuylerville during the year from 1836 to 1839. Thus, it is now possible to show that the map was probably prepared in 1837, rather than at any other time during the interval from 1836 to 1839.

As a result of his financial losses in the panic of 1837 and his heavy indebtedness (\$400,000) to Stephen Van Rensselaer, Jr., Philip Schuyler II deeded his property to Jacob T. B. Van Vechten, his lawyer, on April 28, 1837.¹⁸ According to the terms of this indenture, Van Vechten or his heirs were to use "their best endeavors to grant

¹⁷Memorandum from the Superintendent, Saratoga National Historical Park, to the Regional Director, Region One, March 2, 1953, File No. D6223, Saratoga National Historical Park.

¹⁸Deed Book DD, pp. 470 ff., Saratoga County Clerk's Office, Ballston Spa, N. Y. Hereinafter this office will be referred to as COOBS.

bargain sell convey & dispose of the said real estate at public or private Sale . . . and shall apply the proceeds & avails . . . in satisfaction of the debts of the said Philip Schuyler."¹⁹

In conformity with the provisions of their agreement, Jacob T. B. Van Vechten held a public sale of all the lands conveyed to him by Philip Schuyler II at Schuylerville on November 2, 1837. For the purposes of this sale, the property of Philip Schuyler was divided up into "parcels" or "lots."²⁰ It is the writer's contention that it was in preparation for this public sale that the "undated map of Schuylerville" was probably drawn up.

The above conclusion is further supported by the nature of two legends which appear on the map. The one in the lower left hand corner briefly extolls the virtues of Fish Creek as a source of "extensive water power. . . for manufacturing purposes." The legend in the lower right hand corner is devoted to emphasizing the central location of Schuylerville, its proximity to nearby cities, its accessibility by means of the Champlain Canal and the Whitehall Turnpike, and the expected development of railroad lines running north and south and east and west through the town. The tone of the above cited legends is so definitely promotional, that there can be little doubt that the map was drawn up to encourage the sale and purchase of the former Schuyler lands.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 471.

²⁰Deed from Jacob T. B. Van Vechten to Teunis Van Vechten, as trustee of Stephen Van Rensselaer, Jr.; Deed Book 00., pp. 113-118, CCOBS.

In conclusion, therefore, it is more probable that the map was drawn up in time for the public sale of the former Schuyler lands on November 2, 1837 rather than at any other time in the years from 1836 to 1839.

CHAPTER II

THE SCHUYLER FURNISHINGS

Introduction

The synthesis which follows on the subject of the furnishings of the Schuyler House is largely the product of research in the records of the Surrogate's Court of Westchester County, White Plains, N. Y. Among the papers in the file on the estate of Fanny Schuyler, a great-granddaughter of General Schuyler and a daughter of Philip Schuyler II, was found a detailed inventory of furnishings. This study is an effort to prove that the furnishings listed in this inventory were originally used in the Schuyler House.

The writer would be the first to admit that the evidence presented hereinafter in behalf of his thesis is far from conclusive. The reader, likewise, must recognize that the thesis can be accepted only tentatively until such time as further research closes the gaps and supplies evidence which is now missing but is essential to conclusive proof of the hypothesis. Wherever gaps occur in the evidence that can be corrected by further research, they will be pointed out and suggestions made for their solution.

The Furnishings

After the rebuilding of his house at Saratoga in November 1777, General Schuyler and his family occupied the house from time to time for ten years. Then, on September 18, 1787, John Bradstreet Schuyler, a son of the General, was married to Elizabeth Van Rensselaer

at Albany; and shortly afterward, on December 3, 1787, General Schuyler turned over occupancy of the house and management of the estate at Saratoga to his son.¹ At the same time, General Schuyler promised John Bradstreet Schuyler that "Directly on my return to Albany I shall make you out a Deed of Gift for all the. . . household furniture....."²

For almost eight years, Mr. and Mrs. John Bradstreet Schuyler resided at the Schuyler House.³ There two sons were born to them -- Stephen and Philip, the first of whom died in infancy.⁴ There, too, John Bradstreet Schuyler died on August 19, 1795, after a brief illness, at the youthful age of thirty.

Following the death of John Bradstreet Schuyler, the occupancy of the Schuyler House becomes rather uncertain. It must be remembered, however, that General Schuyler did not give his son title to the house in 1787, but only the privilege of occupying it. Until his death in 1804, therefore, possession of the Schuyler House remained in the hands of the General. Moreover, with the death of his son, management of the estate at Saratoga once more became the General's direct responsibility. Unquestionably, therefore, General Schuyler was forced to be at the house at Saratoga on numerous occasions to look after his business affairs, and undoubtedly other members of his family accompanied him and stayed at the house as well.

¹General Schuyler to John Bradstreet Schuyler, Saratoga, December 3, 1787; Misc MSS, Schuyler, Philip John, NHYS.

²Ibid.

³Brandow, op. cit., p. 341.

⁴Ibid.

What of the furnishings of the Schuyler House from August 1795 until the General's death in November 1804? It must be remembered that the furnishings in the house at the time of John Bradstreet Schuyler's death belonged to him, having been given to him by his father by "Deed of Gift" in 1787.⁵ In the absence of a will, it can only be presumed that these furnishings then became the property of John Bradstreet Schuyler's widow, Elizabeth.⁶ Subsequently, on December 18, 1795, General Schuyler informed five of his tenants at Saratoga that the "effects of my late son are to be removed from this place [Saratoga] to Albany during the present Winter" and called upon them to carry out the necessary moving.⁷ Presumably, the "effects" included all or at least a part of the household furnishings, since General Schuyler called on each of the five tenants to bring his sled.⁸ Here our knowledge of these furnishings ends, and it is not known definitely whether they were actually taken to Albany or, if so, ever returned to the Schuyler House. But despite the uncertainty about the disposition of the foregoing furnishings, there can be very little doubt that the house was again furnished during the years from 1796 to 1804.

⁵Supra, p. 21.

⁶A diligent search was made for the will and inventory of John Bradstreet Schuyler in the Surrogate's Courts of Albany and Saratoga Counties and among the Schuyler Papers of the New York State Library, the New York Public Library, and the New York Historical Society. The will and inventory were not located.

⁷General Schuyler to Messrs. Samuel Brian, John McKinstry, William Wilcox, George McScutchin and Abner Scidmore, Saratoga, December 18, 1795; Misc. MSS, Schuyler, Philip John, NYHS.

⁸Ibid.

With the death of General Philip Schuyler in November 1804, a major share of the Schuyler estate at Saratoga was devised to his "beloved" grandson, Philip Schuyler II, the only surviving child of his deceased son, John Bradstreet Schuyler.⁹ In addition to the land bequeathed to Philip Schuyler II, the General also included "all and singular, the houses, out houses, mills and other buildings and appurtenances to the said hereby devised premises in any wise appertaining . . ."¹⁰ Thus, Philip Schuyler II inherited the Schuyler House and its furnishings. Unfortunately, the extremely brief and unspecific nature of the inventory of the General's estate provides no clue to the furnishings at this time.¹¹

Philip Schuyler II was only sixteen years of age when his grandfather died, and accordingly the latter named his son Philip Jeremiah Schuyler and his sons-in-law Alexander Hamilton and Stephen Van Rensselaer as guardians of his grandson.¹² These men were

⁹"Last Will and Testament of Philip Schuyler, "Book of Wills, III, 149, Surrogate's Court, Albany County, Albany, N. Y. Hereinafter this court will be cited as SCAC.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹"A true and perfect inventory of all the goods, chattels and credits of Philip Schuyler. . . this twelfth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand Eight hundred and five." SCAC.

¹²"Last Will and Testament of Philip Schuyler," Wills, III, 149, SCAC. It would be of some interest and perhaps of considerable value if the records and accounts of the guardians of Philip Schuyler II could be located. It would seem that an accounting of their stewardship of Philip Schuyler's estate until 1809 must have been required by the Surrogate's Court of Albany County, in which the will was probated.

entrusted with the management of the estate of Philip Schuyler II until he came of age in 1809 and with applying the "rents and profits thereof" to his "education and maintenance."¹³

With Philip Schuyler II in attendance at Columbia College for at least a portion of the period from 1804 to 1811,¹⁴ it is not known to what extent and by whom the Schuyler House was used until the marriage of Philip Schuyler II to Miss Grace Hunter on September 12, 1811.¹⁵ Thereafter and until 1837, the Schuyler House was occupied by Philip Schuyler II, his wife, and family.

The panic of 1837 proved to be a heavy financial blow to the fortunes of Philip Schuyler II. As a result of heavy indebtedness, he was forced to turn over his real estate to his lawyer, Jacob T. B. Van Vechten, and to grant the latter the power to dispose of this real estate by public or private sale and to apply the proceeds to the settlement of his debts.¹⁶ So serious were Philip Schuyler's financial difficulties, moreover, that he was even forced to empower Van Vechten to convert all his goods, chattels, stocks, household furniture, and

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Brandow, op. cit., p. 343.

¹⁵Ibid. The finding of the papers of Mrs. Elizabeth Van Rensselaer Schuyler, mother of Philip Schuyler, would be of considerable value. She later remarried and became Mrs. John Bleecker of Albany, N. Y.

¹⁶Deed from Philip Schuyler II and Grace Schuyler, his wife, to Jacob T. B. Van Vechten, April 28, 1837, Deed Book DD, pp. 470 ff, CGORS.

personal property of every description into money to be applied to the payment of his debts.¹⁷

Some inkling of Philip Schuyler's household furnishings is gained at this time by a "Schedule of Household furniture May 4th, 1837," which he apparently drew up in accordance with his commitment to Van Vechten.¹⁸ The "schedule" lists the furniture in the "Parlour" and on the "Piazza" as follows:

Parlour	Carpet, Sopha, Center table - Pier table - 12 mahogany chairs - 2 arm chairs - 2 ottomans - rug. 2 andirons, Fender, Tongs - Shovel, clock - Piano & seat - 2 tripods - 2 nests of small tables, 2 candle-abras. Guitar - Small table - 4 curtains - cornices & shades - Looking glass -
Piazza	2 sophas ¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., p. 471. Forming a part of this deed were four schedules which contained the following information: Schedule 1 - a list of real estate; Schedule 2 - a list of goods, chattels, household furniture and effects, and personal property; Schedule 3 - a list of bonds and other securities; and Schedule 4 - a list of Philip Schuyler's creditors in order of preference of payment. Only Schedule 1 was entered in the Deed Book by the County Clerk; see ibid., pp. 573 ff. Unquestionably, Schedule 2 and the "Schedule of Household Furniture May 4th, 1837," cited next in the text, were intended to be one and the same, but the schedule was never filed because Mrs. Elizabeth Bleecker bought the furniture.

¹⁸Misc MSS, Schuyler, Philip (1788-1865), NYHS. Only half or a third of the "schedule" was found; the remainder was apparently torn off and lost.

¹⁹Ibid.

To rescue her son from the necessity of selling his household furnishings, Mrs. Elizabeth Bleecker now stepped in, bought the furniture, and gave title and ownership of it to Philip Schuyler's wife, Grace Hunter Schuyler, so that it could not be attached by Philip's creditors.²⁰ Thus, though the Philip Schuyler's were not able to take much with them when they left Schuylerville in 1837, they were able to take their furnishings through the generosity of Mrs. Bleecker.

Several years later, Philip Schuyler II was appointed Consul to the port of Liverpool, England, by Martin Van Buren. With the change of administration in 1843, however, Philip Schuyler II was recalled and returned to America. He then settled with his family at Pelham, New York, at what later appears to have become 380 Pelham Road, New Rochelle, New York.

The date of the death of Philip Schuyler's wife, Grace Hunter Schuyler is not yet known nor has her will been located.²¹ But it is assumed that she devised the family furnishings to her husband upon her death.

²⁰Copy of the Will of Mrs. Elizabeth Bleecker, Misc. MSS, Schuyler, Philip (various members of the family), NYHS. In addition to this document mentioning the purchase of her son's furniture, the writer recalls having read "the deed of gift" from Mrs. Bleecker to M^rs. Schuyler in the same collection of papers. The notes on the latter document, however, have either been mislaid or lost.

²¹The writer did not find the name of Grace Hunter Schuyler in the index of wills of the Surrogate's Court of Westchester County. The importance of her will to this study was not fully realized until the discovery of the will of Mrs. Elizabeth Bleecker in the New York Historical Society, sometime after research had been completed in the Surrogate's Court of Westchester County. Until M^rs. Grace Hunter Schuyler's will is found, this will remain the weakest link in the thesis that the furnishings on the Fanny Schuyler inventory were originally used in the Schuyler House.

Philip Schuyler II died in 1865, and, according to the terms of his will, he left all his "real and personal estate" to his friend, Robert Ludlow, in trust.²² As trustee, Ludlow was to permit Philip Schuyler's unmarried children to have the use and benefit of the "farm and house at West Neck, with all the goods and chattles appertaining to the same;" and the house was also to serve "as a homestead for the family."²³ At the end of the term of one year from the time of Philip Schuyler's death, however, Ludlow was to sell the property and divide the proceeds into nine equal parts to be shared among the beneficiaries.

The terms of Philip Schuyler's will were not exactly carried out. The beneficiaries, all of them children of Philip Schuyler II, agreed among themselves not to sell the house, the farm, or the household furnishings.²⁴ Instead, they decided to keep the house as a "family homestead" and a residence for the unmarried members of the family and to leave the family furnishings therein. This situation seems to have prevailed down to the death of Fanny Schuyler, an unmarried daughter of Philip Schuyler II, with little change.

²²File No. 238-1865, SCWC.

²³Ibid. An inventory of the household furnishings which belonged to Philip Schuyler II at the time of his death will be found in this. It is not very descriptive or specific, and a photostatic copy was not obtained for this reason and due to the lack of funds. A copy should be obtained, however, for possible comparison with the Fanny Schuyler inventory.

²⁴Ibid.

On January 10, 1917, Fanny Schuyler died. By the terms of her will she left her "share of the old family furniture and other household effects belonging to the Schuyler Estate" to her four nieces and specifically designated the items each was to receive.²⁵ She was also careful to specify that:

My dear Nephew Philip Schuyler de Luze having died on June 11, 1909, I leave to Grace Schuyler de Luze & Sarah Frances de Luze, his sisters, my historic books, letters, Manuscripts, pictures & photographs which I had intended leaving to him; also, the care of the old "historic letters & papers in the mahogany box, as "Custodian of the latter, many of which date back to Colonial times & came into our care here on the death of their grandfather, Philip Schuyler [II] of Schuylerville Saratoga.²⁶

Subsequently, on November 19, 1917, the furniture and personal effects at 380 Pelham Road, New Rochelle, N. Y., were appraised, as required by the Surrogate's Court of Westchester County in which Fanny Schuyler's will was probated. The appraiser's affidavit and appraisal speak for themselves:

²⁵Will of Fanny Schuyler, File No. 939-1917, SCWC.

²⁶Ibid.

SURROGATE'S COURT,

COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER.

* * - - - - -X
 In the Matter of the Transfer :
 Tax upon the Estate :
 -of- :
 FANNY SCHUYLER, :
 DECEASED. :
 - - - - -X

CITY & COUNTY OF NEW YORK, SS:

F.H.G. Keeble, being duly sworn, says:

I am connected with The Anderson Galleries Inc., dealers in, and auctioneers and appraisers of furniture and other personal effects, whose offices are at Madison Avenue and 120th Street in the City of New York, and am an appraiser of furniture and other such personal effects. I have been engaged in that business for more than ten years last past, and have made a large number of appraisals of household furniture and other such personal effects and am well acquainted with the values thereof.

On the 19th day of November, 1917, at 380 Pelham Road, New Rochelle, New York, I examined and appraised the furniture and effects hereinafter scheduled, which, as I am informed, belonged to the heirs of Philip Schuyler, who died more than fifty years ago. I am informed that the above named Fanny Schuyler, deceased, in whose residence said furniture and effects were when I saw them, had an undivided

nineteenth-ninetieths interest therein, and in my opinion such interest was worth not more than nineteen-ninetieths of the whole value of said effects as appraised by me. I have placed opposite the items of said furniture and effects in the annexed schedule the values thereof according to the best of my judgment, and in my opinion the values thereof were the same on the 10th day of January, 1917, the date of the death of said Fanny Schuyler, as they are today. I appraise the whole of said effects at the total mentioned in said schedule, or \$7,549.00, and I appraise the undivided interest of said Fanny Schuyler therein at nineteen-ninetieths of said sum, or \$1593.68

Sworn to before me this)
30th day of November, 1917.)

(Signed) F. H. G. Keeble

(Signed) C. W. Breck

Notary Public Westchester Co.

Filed in New York Co.

SCHEDULE OF FURNITURE &C.

Parlor

Mahogany Colonial Console, white marble top, mirror under	\$ 75.00
Pier glass, gilded, with shaped top	50.00
Four late Sheraton arm chairs, scroll arms, carved backs	240.00
Nine Colonial side chairs, carved backs (4 in parlor, 1 in south bedroom, 3rd floor, 1 in hall, 3 in Miss Schuyler's bedroom)	225.00
Two Empire mahogany chairs, loose seats	FTC. > 150.00
Roman bench of Colonial mahogany, needlework seat	25.00
Roman bench, similar, smaller	20.00
Large Hepplewhite couch, scroll head, round foot, claw feet	200.00
Colonial mahogany round table, marble top	50.00
Large Hepplewhite couch, ends scrolled, top rail carved, with drapery and cornucopia	200.00
Mahogany Colonial chair for spinet	40.00
Chippendale pie crust table	750.00
Mahogany Sheraton Bookcase, two doors with Gothic lattice	100.00
Colonial gilded mirror	30.00
Two Empire candelabra, female figures, bronze base and arms in part gilded	35.00
Two Colonial lamp stands, mahogany, marble top (one in ante room)	70.00
Two bronze Colonial candlesticks	20.00
Three pairs Empire curtains, holders of bronze gilt	15.00
Nest of four lacquer tables	60.00
Two classic bronze candlesticks, Colonial	70.00

Ante Room to Parlor

Large Hepplewhite mahogany dining table, tilting tops, two parts as side tables	200.00
Pembroke Hepplewhite mahogany table	125.00
Colonial mahogany stand for books	50.00

Dining Room

Mahogany Hepplewhite sideboard	150.00
Mahogany folding pillar table	60.00
Mahogany Hepplewhite folding-breakfast table	150.00
Eleven mahogany Colonial chairs (4 in dining room)	330.00

2 in "Lafayette room", 2 in J. S. 's room, 1 in
third floor south, 2 in third floor north)

Forward,

\$3,490.00

(Signed) F. H. G. Keeble

Brought Forward,

\$ 3,490.00

Empire mantel clock, Sienna marble base	75.00
---	-------

Miss F. Schuyler's room

Colonial four post mahogany bed	100.00
Colonial bureau with mirror over	50.00
Colonial washstand	20.00
Sheraton mahogany secretaire, fall front drawer	200.00
Hepplewhite desk and work table	75.00
Colonial mantel clock, black with bronze mountings	40.00
Sheraton nest of three tables	30.00

"Lafayette Bedroom"

Hepplewhite four post mahogany bed, reeded pillars, gilded carved canopy	1,000.00
Mahogany wardrobe, to match bed	350.00
Small mahogany Colonial drop leaf table	50.00
Sheraton inlaid mahogany card table, mirror over same	100.00
Two pairs curtain holders, rosette, brass	10.00
Hepplewhite mahogany dressing table	125.00
Mahogany Sheraton carved table	75.00
Mahogany Sheraton washstand	40.00
Painting, Tiepolo school	20.00

Mr. J. Schuyler's room

Empire bed, mahogany	60.00
Small mahogany table	25.00
Small mahogany washstand	20.00
Small mahogany bureau	40.00

Hall, Second Floor

Colonial mahogany table	20.00
-------------------------	-------

Third floor, south bedroom

Mahogany Sheraton bureau	60.00
Mahogany Sheraton washstand	35.00
Chippendale pole screen	40.00

Third floor, north room

Mirror	10.00
--------	-------

Servant's bed room

Sheraton mahogany bureau

35.00

Dining room (continued)

Empire coffee set, 9 pieces

125.00

Forward,

\$6,340.00

(Signed) F.H.G. Keeble

Brought forward

\$6,340.00

Teapot, gilded

20.00

Twelve Crown Derby plates, scroll pattern,
dark blue

25.00

Twelve saucers, light blue, flowers

15.00

Yellow band cups and saucers

10.00

Fourteen Colonial cut green wine glasses

20.00

Nine Colonial cut goblets

20.00

Thirteen tall Colonial cut champagne glasses

39.00

Eight Colonial cut wine glasses

24.00

Six red glass finger bowls

12.00

Two Colonial cut glass bowls, pineapple

25.00

Colonial cut glass punch bowl

40.00

Four Colonial cut glass dishes (as are)

10.00

Two Colonial glass sugar bowls and covers

15.00

Two Colonial cut glass sugar bowls, steeple tops

60.00

Four Colonial glass candy dishes

40.00

Six Colonial glass salts

9.00

Two Colonial cut glass double mouthed decanters

30.00

Four cut glass claret decanters

30.00

Two Colonial cut glass water pitchers

50.00

Large Colonial dinner set, white and gold

150.00

(if broken into two sets, \$100.00 each)

Two old Canton platters (as are)

25.00

Three piece Empire Furniture, Bisque figures

150.00

Three Empire pots, griffin handles

75.00

Two blue and redpots

15.00

Two covered jugs, Staffordshire

35.00

Two delft vases

150.00

Two cut glass decanters (odd)

5.00

Portrait of a Boy, artist Unknown

50.00

Two miniatures, Mr. & Mrs. Schuyler

60.00

(Signed) F.H.G. Keeble

\$7,548.00 ²⁷

²⁷Affidavit and Appraisal by F. H. G. Keeble "In the Matter
of the Transfer Tax upon the Estate of Fanny Schuyler Deceased," ibid.

Conclusion

Mr. Keeble's testimony concerning the ownership of the furniture which he appraised at 380 Pelham Road is, of course, hearsay evidence. There is little reason to question this testimony, however, which Mr. Keeble could only have obtained from the surviving relatives of Fanny Schuyler. Moreover, as we have already seen, the "heirs of Philip Schuyler"-- his children -- had actually agreed among themselves after their father's death to keep the family furnishings intact in the family "homestead" at 380 Pelham Road.²⁸

There can be little doubt, therefore, that the furniture and other effects appraised by Mr. Keeble were actually those devised by Philip Schuyler II to his children. On the basis of the other evidence presented in this chapter then, it is contended that the furniture and other effects appraised by Mr. Keeble were those used by Philip Schuyler II and by his grandfather, General Philip Schuyler, before him in the Schuyler House.

One further conclusion emerges clearly from this study in the writer's opinion -- that is, the furniture and other effects listed on the Fanny Schuyler inventory are widely scattered among the descendants of Philip Schuyler and their heirs. It is quite probable and in some instances certain, too, that many of them have been given away or sold by now to public institutions and/or private individuals. It might well be possible to trace the whereabouts of every item of furniture on the Fanny Schuyler inventory by carefully

²⁸Supra, p. 27.

searching the wills of Philip Schuyler's nine children and their descendants down to the present day. This was done by the writer in one particular instance--that of Miss Elizabeth Harrison of 333 East 68th Street, New York City. The results, while not conclusive, were disappointing in that Miss Harison had given a number of Schuyler items willed to her to the New York Historical Society. While this information is of some value, the end result might will be the same in other efforts to trace the furniture. It is to be wondered, therefore, whether the end results which might be expected would justify the lengthy and expensive search involved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Manuscript Materials

New York Historical Society, New York, N. Y. Schuyler Papers.

New York Public Library, New York, N. Y. Schuyler Papers.

New York State Library, New York, N. Y. Schuyler Papers; and Map Collection.

Saratoga County Clerk's Office, Ballston Spa, N. Y. Deed Book, Vol. DD & GG.

Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y. Records

Snyder, William M. & Mabel R., Schuylerville, N. Y. George Strover Papers, 1839-1886.

Surrogate's Court, Albany County, Albany, N. Y. Wills, Vol. III; and Philip Schuyler File.

Surrogate's Court, Saratoga County, Saratoga Springs, N. Y. Records.

Surrogate's Court, Westchester County, White Plains, N. Y. Wills, Vol. CXXIV; and File Nos. 238-1865, 939-1917, 361-1924, and 730-1940.

Newspapers

The Schuylerville Standard, Schuylerville, N. Y. 1890-1900, 1904-1905, 1910-1915, and 1922-1931, inclusive.

Diaries

Royall, Anne. The Life and Times of Anne Royall. Edited by Sarah Harvey Porter. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1909, Vol. I.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

Brandow, John Henry. The Story of Old Saratoga. The Burgoyne Campaign to which is added New York's share in the Revolution.
2nd ed.; Albany: The Brandow Printing Company, 1919.

National Park Service Reports

Snell, Charles W. A Report on the History, Construction, and Social Use of the General Philip Schuyler Summer House at Schuylerville (Old Saratoga), N. Y. April 16, 1951.