

# Stories of

# Wildercliff



An scrapbook of published articles  
Prepared for  
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Dutchess County Historical Society  
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## Historical Society To Stage Annual Pilgrimage Sept. 21

### Annual Tour of County Society To Visit Three Estates Near Rhinebeck

The Dutchess County Historical Society will hold its fifteenth annual pilgrimage next Wednesday. Linwood, Wildercliffe and Ellerslie will be visited in the afternoon by the convoy of cars.

The morning sessions will take place at "Locust Grove," the estate of Mrs. William Hopkins Young, about two miles south of Poughkeepsie. Here the centennial anniversary of the invention of the telegraph by Samuel Finley Breese Morse will be celebrated. "Locust Grove" is the former home of Mr. Morse. Pilgrims will meet at the entrance to the estate at 10.45 a. m.

A short program will take place on the south lawn after the guests are received by Mrs. Young. W. Willis Reese, president of the society, will preside and introduce the speakers:

Miss Leila Livingston Morse of Monterey, Massachusetts; William S. Thomas, M. D., of New York and Miss Helen Wilkinson Reynolds of Poughkeepsie. A basket luncheon will follow the addresses.

In the afternoon three old estates at Rhinebeck, "Linwood," "Wildercliff" and "Ellerslie," which are near each other and rich in traditions, will be visited.

"Linwood" was created as a country-seat about 1796 by Dr. Thomas Tillotson and Margaret Livingston, his wife, and occupies one of the most commanding sites along the Hudson. Pilgrims will be the guests of the Messrs. Ruppert and of J. Ruppert Schalk.

"Wildercliff" dates from 1794 and is associated with the life-story of the Rev. Freeborn Garretson and Catherine Livingston, his wife. The hostesses there will be Mrs. Robert B. Suckley and Mrs. Walter K. Freeman.

"Ellerslie" was laid out in 1804 by Martin Livingston and Margaret Lewis, his wife, and from 1866 to 1920 was the home of Lev Parsons Morton, sometime vice president of the United States, governor of New York, minister to France, etc. Mrs. Helen Morton opens "Ellerslie" to the pilgrim for the visit.

At each of the three estates at Rhinebeck an address will be given by Brigadier General John Ros Delafield of Barrytown.



# Year Book

Dutchess County Historical Society

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## WILDERCLIFF

On a steep rock or cliff going down into the waters of the Hudson River on lot 2 of the original partition of Aartsen, Roosa, and Elton, was roughly cut in outline the figure of an Indian holding in one hand a tomahawk and in the other a calumet. Hence the name of this property;—the place of the wild man's rock. When the name was given is not now known. It probably grew unconsciously as the best way to identify the locality.

Lot 2 in the partition of 1702 fell to Roeloff, oldest son of John Elton, deceased,<sup>1</sup> who had left it by will to his five children.<sup>2</sup> In 1721 Gerrit Artsen, also called Van Wagenen, bought this lot from the heirs of John Elton.<sup>3</sup>

Barent van Wagenen, baptized at Kingston April 18, 1675, the third son of Gerrit Artsen bought from his father and settled on three-fifths of lot number 2. He had by his wife Lea Schapmoes whom he had married Sept. 28, 1703, eleven children.<sup>4</sup> The other two-fifths of lot 2 went to Goosen Van Wagenen a younger brother of Barent. Goosen had on June 15, 1715, married Geertruyd Swart but they had no children, and he left the property by will to his nephews Johannes and Benjamin, sons of Barent Van Wagenen.<sup>5</sup> Four of the daughters of Barent conveyed their shares in the three-fifths of lot 2 to three of their brothers by deed dated April 28, 1759, which states that Barent Van Wagenen, late of Rhinebeck, deceased, had by will dated April 28, 1730, left all his lands to his wife for life and then equally to his four sons and six daughters. For £240 consideration the four daughters conveyed to their brothers Gerrit, Johannes and Benjamin, and described the three-fifths as bounded on the south by lands of Laurentz Osterhout, on the east by the creek, on the west by Hudson's river, and on the north by lands of Goosen Van Wagenen and as being a tract conveyed by Gerret Aertse or Gerret Van Wagenen to Barent Van Wagenen.<sup>6</sup> One of these brothers, Benjamin Van Wagenen, finally obtained from his brothers all of lot 2, probably by purchase of their shares from his brothers and sisters for in 1795 his four sons, Jacob, Benjamin, Barent B., and

Johannes B. owned the whole of lot 2 containing 160 acres, which by deed dated May 5, 1795 the three former sold to their brother Johannes B. Van Wagenen.<sup>7</sup>

It was this land which John B. Van Wagenen sold for \$2,500 to Rev. Freeborn Garrettson by deed<sup>8</sup> dated September 23, 1799 which described the property as containing 160 acres and bounded it on the north by lands of the heirs of Jacobus Kip, deceiver;<sup>9</sup> on the west by Hudson's river, on the south by lands of Matthew Van Etten,<sup>10</sup> and on the east in part by Landsman's Kill.

It is stated that this was not a sale but an exchange and that lands in the vicinity of Schooterhook in the interior of Rhinebeck were given by Mrs. Garrettson to John B. Van Wagenen.<sup>11</sup> This would account for the small purchase price which would seem to have been a difference in value paid in cash. Rev. Freeborn Garrettson met his future wife, Catherine Livingston, while he was staying at Linwood as a guest of Dr. Thomas Tillotson, who also came from Maryland. She was already a Methodist, having become such of her own choice without the sanction of her mother or of her brothers and sisters.

The following paragraphs quoted with her consent from Miss Helen Wilkinson Reynold's Dutchess County Doorways, give a pleasing and accurate account of Wildercliff while it remained the home of the Garrettsons.

"One of the most widely known itinerant preachers of the early days of Methodism in America was the Reverend Freeborn Garrettson (1752-1827). Born in Maryland, his forbears members of the Church of England, he chanced when about eighteen to hear the Reverend Robert Strawbridge preach and as a result became interested in matters of a religious sort. Passing through a violent emotional experience in 1775, he decided to enter the Methodist ministry and in 1776 the Baltimore Conference appointed him to the Frederick District. From 1776 until 1817 he continued as a circuit-rider under official appointments; while from 1817 until his death in 1827 he labored in the same way as a volunteer. In this half-century of service Mr. Garrettson travelled extensively in the Atlantic states from Massachusetts to North Carolina; from New York City he worked northward to Lake Champlain; and in 1785-1787 he lived in Nova Scotia as a missionary.

In 1793 Mr. Garrettson married Catharine Livingston (1752-



1849), one of the six daughters of Robert and Margaret (Beekman) Livingston of (the present) Columbia County, New York, a woman whose environment and whose contacts with life had been quite unlike her husband's.

Catherine Livingston was within one month of her forty-first birthday when she married Freeborn Garrettsen. Her five sisters had all married and gone out from the home of their parents. That home was called Clermont. And it was, presumably, at Clermont that Catherine Livingston lived before her marriage, in companionship with her widowed mother. She has been described as tall and stately in figure, calm and dignified in manner, with hazel eyes and brown hair, and as wearing—in her later years—a close fitting cap with a border of crimped muslin. She grew up midst the scenic beauty surrounding Clermont, in a large house where were the elegancies of that day and under the shelter of the prestige of the well known name of a family whose manners and customs were marked by conservative social standards.

It was in 1799 that Mr. and Mrs. Garrettsen bought one hundred and sixty acres of land, southwest of the present village of Rhinebeck, with a long frontage on the Hudson, and built a house on a site that commanded a view of lawn and woods, river and hills. They are said to have moved into their new house in October, 1799, and the house continued as their home until they died and as the home of their only child, Miss Mary Garrettsen, until the latter's death in 1879. For eighty years Wildercliff, as the place was named, was the scene of unlimited hospitality, not only to friends and family, but to all who needed temporary shelter. It was a haven, where all sorts and conditions of humanity found aid and comfort.

In itself, the house built by Mr. and Mrs. Garrettsen consisted of a rectangular frame and gambrel roof. The walls were two full stories in height, clapboarded, and the floor-plan was divided into four rooms of equal size. There were no halls."

The Reverend Freeborn Garrettsen died on 25th September, 1827 while on a visit to his friend George Suckley in New York leaving his widow and daughter, Mary Rutherford Garrettsen. On the death of her mother, which came suddenly on June 14, 1849 while she was visiting at Montgomery Place, the latter inherited Wildercliff. Her father had on December 3, 1802 sold<sup>12</sup> to Morgan Lewis for \$220 a tract of a little more than eight acres at the north westerly corner of his property. This property came to be known as Morgan Lewis' Landing, which, however, also included a small parcel on the river conveyed by Rev. Freeborn Garrettsen to Morgan Lewis on November 27, 1801, for £100 "opposite a flat in said river

called the swan flat".<sup>13</sup> It was subsequently conveyed by General and Mrs. Lewis to James Thomson and became part of Ellerslie.<sup>14</sup> On June 14, 1853, just four years after her mother's death, Mary R. Garrettson sold an additional thirty-two acres and one rood out of the northwesterly corner of the property.<sup>15</sup> Thomas H. Suckley was the purchaser. He paid \$4,837.50 for it and on this site built himself a country home. There then remained the part of the property easterly of the road that leads northerly from Linwood through the Wildercliff to Rhinebeck. This contained a little more than forty-five acres and Miss Garrettson sold it to Alfred Wild, the then owner of Ellerslie, for \$12,000 by deed dated September 14, 1866.<sup>16</sup> In the disposal of Linwood, on foreclosure of the mortgages placed upon it, this parcel was sold by referee's deed dated December 30, 1874 to Thomas H. Suckley.<sup>17</sup> After Miss Garrettson's death in 1879, Mr. Suckley became the owner of the rest of the original property and of the old house by purchasing from her executors for \$15,000 by deed dated February 28, 1880.<sup>18</sup> In this deed it was described as "All that country seat and farm at Rhinebeck on the easterly bank of Hudson's river, lately the homestead of said Mary Rutherford Garrettson and known as Wildercliffe" and containing fifty-nine acres, one perch and about three-quarters of a perch.

Thomas H. Suckley was one of the sons of George Suckley and Catherine Rutsen his wife. He was born on November 22, 1810 and had his country house, called Wilderstein, on the part of Wildercliff bought by him in 1853. He married Katherine Murray Bowne who died in August 1879. He survived her and died on February 9, 1888, leaving a son Robert Bowne Suckley born June 5, 1856 and died January 3, 1921 leaving his widow Elizabeth P. Montgomery and several children, who continue to own Wildercliff though they reside in the house of Thomas H. Suckley.

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1.—History of Rhinebeck by Edward M. Smith pg. 12.

2.—Ditto pg. 43

3.—Ditto pg. 43.

4.—Ditto pg. 34.

- 5.—Ditto, pg. 38.
- 6.—Dutchess County Clerk's Office deeds Liber 5. pg. 159.
- 7.—The History of Rhinebeck by Edward M. Smith, pg. 38.
- 8.—Dutchess County Clerk's Office Deed Liber 19, pg. 280.
- 9.—This subsequently became Ellerslie.
- 10.—Subsequently the residence of Miss Jones.
- 11.—History of Rhinebeck by Edward M. Smith, pg. 39.
- 12.—Dutchess County Clerk's Office, Liber 26 of Deeds, page 46.
- 13.—Idem Liber 17, page 233.
- 14.—Idem Liber 39, page 65.
- 15.—Idem Liber 99, page 547.
- 16.—Idem Liber 141, page 451.
- 17.—Idem Liber 178, page 221.
- 18.—Dutchess County Clerk's Office Deeds Liber 199, pg. 448.







The house built in 1799 by the Reverend Freeborn Garretson and Catharine Livingston, his wife, on the estate at Rhinebeck called *Wildercliffe*. The central portion with its gambrel roof is typical architecture of 1799. The long veranda is of the mid-nineteenth century and the two wings of recent date.

*The plate was made from a snap-shot, taken on the occasion of the pilgrimage of the Dutchess County Historical Society on September 21, 1932, which is reproduced by the kind permission of the owner of the house, Mrs. Robert B. Suckley, and the occupant, Mrs. Walter K. Freeman.*







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# PICTURE ROCKS



American Indian  
Rock Art in the  
Northeast Woodlands

*Edward J. Lenik*



that it was a grave marker, but the meaning of the various figures and symbols is lost.

### The Indian Rock Petroglyph

In 1893, Garrick Mallery published an illustration and description of a Historic Contact-period Indian carved on a rock at Esopus Landing, New York. This petroglyph, now known as “Indian Rock,” is located on the west bank of the Hudson River approximately one-eighth of a mile north of a historical structure known as the Judge Alton Brooks Parker House (built ca. 1860s) in the Town of Esopus, Ulster County, New York.

The description of this Indian figure in Mallery’s book was extracted entirely from an account of the site written by Henry R. Schoolcraft in 1853 (fig. 134). Schoolcraft described the human figure as an Indian “chief” or a person skilled in “medico-magical art.” This conjecture was based on his observation that plumes emanated from the top of the head. Schoolcraft also stated that a gun was held at rest in the right hand and the left hand appeared to support a wand. Furthermore, he said, the figure was probably carved with metal tools; the lines were deep, plainly impressed, and consisted of double lines. Schoolcraft dated this petroglyph between 1609, the date of Henry Hudson’s discovery of the river that now bears his name, and 1624, the date of the erection of Fort Orange at present-day Albany, New York.

In his 1893 account of the Indian Rock petroglyph, Mallery stated, parenthetically, that the site is “now obliterated.” However, a photograph taken in 1913 shows the petroglyph, with the upper part of the head, plumes, and left hand missing. The 1913 photograph also shows several initials carved into the rock below the human figure: “ATW” appears three times, and “H + E” once. The site was examined in 1913 by Charles J. Elting of Ulster County, New York. Elting reported that the human figure and initials were of the same workmanship and that the object(s) in the left hand resembled “arrows.”

On April 19, 1980, I visited the Indian Rock petroglyph site for the purpose of recording and studying any remains of the human-figure glyph. At the time of my visit, only a portion of the head, upper torso, the right arm, and a part of the gun remained (figs. 135, 136), the balance of the figure having disappeared as a result of exfoliation of the rock. The figure was pecked into a shaley sandstone bedrock ledge located immediately adjacent to the water’s edge. It was evident that the rising tides of the Hudson River as well as ice, snow, wind, rain, freezing, and thawing had taken their toll of this rock art site. It was also clear that



134. The Indian Rock petroglyph. Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick after Schoolcraft 1853.



135. Site of Indian Rock petroglyph at Esopus, New York. Rock ledge at center, along Hudson River, contains a pecked human figure. Photo by E. J. Lenik, 1980

Schoolcraft's description of the figure being made of "double lines" was incorrect. The figure was executed in single pecked lines.

Documentary research indicates that Indian Rock marks the northeast corner of the New Paltz Patent. This land was purchased from the Indians in 1677, but a thorough survey of the property was not made until 1709. This suggests that the Indian figure may represent a survey marker as evidence of this purchase; that is, it was pecked into the rock as an indication that the Indians would stand by their word and that there would be no further sale of the land by other Indians. According to the 1656 map of New Netherland by Nicholas J. Visseher, the Indians living in this area were Waranawankongs.

### The Rhinebeck Petroglyph

A second carved figure of a human, presumably that of an Indian, is located on the east bank of the Hudson River in the Town of Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, New York. This figure is located about six miles north of the Indian Rock petroglyph at Esopus, and at the end of a small point of land forming the north end of a cove on the former riverfront estate of Daisy Suckley in Rhinebeck. The petroglyph sits in a small tidal marsh between the present east bank or shoreline and a railroad right-of-way, which intersects the cove to the west.



136. Detail of extant portion of human figure on Indian Rock. Photo by E. J. Lenik, 1980.

The Rhinebeck petroglyph, first recorded in 1877, was described as consisting of two Indian warriors cut into a flat rock on the shore of the Garretson property. The 1877 report also noted that some lines had disappeared as a result of “natural forces.” A subsequent historical account published in 1908 also stated that the petroglyph rock had two cut figures. A photograph of a rubbing of the petroglyph taken in 1930, however, shows only one human figure consisting of a head, upper torso, and arms. The petroglyph was also examined in 1930 by Robert Brown Suckley, who indicated that the left hand of the human figure originally held a “tomahawk” and the right hand held a “peace pipe.”

In 1978, the Rhinebeck petroglyph was photographed and recorded by Michael F. Laccetti, who reported the presence of two design elements on a water-isolated exposure of bedrock. The first design was a human figure with featherlike protuberances coming out of the top of the head and with right and left arms or appendages. The second design element consisted of letters that Laccetti described as cut with metal



137. The Rhinebeck petroglyph, Rhinebeck, New York. Photo by E. J. Lenik, 1979.





Series Written by Owner at the Time Richard Rockwell, 1975  
For the Rhinebeck Gazette

JANUARY 9, 1975

by Richard Rockwell

The following incident is related in Nathan Bangs' "The Life of the Reverend Freeborn Garrettsen":

"The day on which the house was raised, while Mr. Garrettsen stood admiring with what facility the frame went up, the power and goodness of God were so gloriously manifested, that he was constrained to retire to the lime house to give vent to his tears. After composing himself, he returned."

"Wildercliff", the name given by the Garrettsens to their new home, derives from two Dutch words, "Wilden Cliff" or "Wilder Klippe". There is some variation in the spelling, but in Anglicized form it is "Wildercliff". On a steep rock or cliff the rough outline of an Indian appears with a tomahawk in one hand and a

peace pipe in the other. The Dutch words mean wild man's or wild Indian's rock. When the name was given is not known, but it probably came into use unconsciously as the best way to identify this locality.

The following is a quote from Bangs', "The Life of the Reverend Freeborn Garrettsen":

"In this mansion the family of Mr. Garrettsen, consisting of his wife, an only daughter and a few pious domestics, resided until his death and here the widow and daughter still reside. Here was everything to make life comfortable. The house stands on a high bank on the eastern side of the noble Hudson, whose waters are perpetually enlivened by numerous sloops transporting the produce of the county to New York and carrying up in

exchange the necessaries and luxuries of life, as well as by steamboats loaded with passengers. A commanding view down the river for several miles is afforded to the eye of the inmates of the house and their numerous visitors."

Benson Lossing in his book, "The Hudson", states that "the mansion is a very modest one, compared with some in its neighborhood. It was built in accordance with the simple tastes of the original proprietor."

In Helen W. Reynolds', "Dutchess County Doorways", the house is described as follows:

"In itself the house built by Mr. and Mrs. Garrettsen consisted of a rectangular frame with gambrel roof. The walls were two full stories in height, clapboarded, and the floor-plan was divided into four rooms of equal size. There were no halls. Entrance to the house was had on the north side by a door leading into the northwest room and from that room a flight of stairs rose to the room above. The location of the stairs is supposed to be now slightly different than at first, but the original hand-rail remains.....Across the south facade of Wildercliff is a long veranda, in workmanship of the nineteenth century (perhaps between 1830 and 1850) and additions were made to the house at the east and at the west which are probably of even more recent date. Opening on the south veranda are four French windows, two from each main south room."

It is possible that the French windows were put in at the time the porch was added. It is highly unlikely that they would have been original to the house. The illustration of the southeast

parlor (dining room) in "Dutchess County Doorways" shows the old mantel, believed to be in the original house. The southwest parlor (living room) contains a fine marble fireplace in the Adam style which although not believed to be in the original house, was added early in the nineteenth century.

These two rooms were connected by an open arch at an earlier date. This opening appears on plans drawn for Henry E. Montgomery around the turn of the century. Whether or not this was the original design remains uncertain.

(To be Continued)

by Richard Rockwell

The bedroom and den (formerly the second bedroom) above these two main south rooms are probably much the same as they were in the Garrettson's time, except for the addition of closets on the north side of each fireplace. One of these closets appears on the plans drawn for Mr. Montgomery. These plans also show that door openings were filled in several areas and new partitions made in the old part of the house. Some of these changes have since been rechanged, however. The mantels in each of the main second floor rooms may well be original to the house.

The old section of the house and cellar is outlined in yellow on Mr. Montgomery's plans.

The four rooms on each floor in the old section can be clearly seen, but they are not of equal size as described by Helen W. Reynolds. The second floor plan almost exactly duplicates the first floor, but the two north rooms on each floor are considerably smaller than the two corresponding south rooms.

Benson Lossing describes the setting of "Wildercliff" as follows:

"The very beautiful view from this mansion, down the river, is exceedingly charming for its simple beauty, so much in harmony with the associations of the place. In the centre of the lawn stood a sundial. On the left was a magnificent wide-spreading elm. On the right, through the trees, might be seen the

cultivated west shore of the Hudson, and in front was the river, stretching away southward, at all times dotted with the white sails of water-craft."

It is interesting to note how closely Mr. Lossing's description and the illustration in his book, originally published in 1866, corresponds to an early photograph taken in front of "Wildercliff". Exactly when the picture was taken is not known, but it probably dates from the 1870's, late in Mary Garrettson's life.

I am indebted to J. Winthrop Aldrich for obtaining for my use the early photography, together with one of the house and a small photograph of Mary Garrettson, the daughter and only child of the Reverend and Mrs. Garrettson. Mr. Aldrich was also kind enough to loan me much of the research material used in the preparation of this talk.

Benson Lossing continues as follows:

"This mansion has many associations connected with the early struggles of Methodism, very dear to the hearts of those who love that branch of the Christian church.....Probably no house in the world has ever held within it so many Methodist preachers as this, from the most humble of 'weak vessels' up to Bishop Asbury, and other dignitaries of the church; for, with ample means at command, the doors of Mr. Garrettson and his wife were ever open to all, especially to their brethren in the ministry. And that generous hospitality is yet dispensed by the daughter, whose table is seldom without a guest."

A quotation from "Dutchess County Doorways" that appeared in the 1932 Yearbook of the Dutchess County Historical Society states: "For eighty years 'Wildercliff', as the place was named, was the scene of unlimited hospitality, not only to friends and family, but to all those who needed temporary shelter. It was a haven, where all sorts and conditions of humanity found aid and comfort."

(To Be Continued)



by Richard Rockwell

Miss Mary Garrettson became the mistress of "Wildercliff" upon her mother's death. She never married and lived there until her death in 1879.

Miss Garrettson is described in the "History of Rhinebeck" as being "dwarfed in stature, but possessed of a mind of full strength, which had been thoroughly and, we presume, systematically cultivated." She is buried with her mother and father in a vault attached to the Methodist Church here.

Daisy and Arthur Suckley recall their father, Robert B. Suckley (1856-1921), telling them how, as a young boy, he used to go over to "Wildercliff" for Sunday School. He remarked what an interesting and intelligent woman Mary Garrettson was, and how he always wished that his children would grow up to be like her.

The Suckleys have also informed me that the Methodist clergymen for the Rhinecliff and Hillside Methodist Churches lived at "Wildercliff" for a number of years. This would account for the numerous rooms on the third floor and the large western wing that appears in an early photograph of the house. "Wildercliff" was a convenient location for the clergymen as it was about midway between the Rhinecliff and Hillside churches.

The old well in the lawn just north of the house was dug by Miss Garrettson as she needed more water for the household. The workmen were sceptical and somewhat discouraging about the prospects of finding an adequate water supply at that particular location. She is said to have replied that the "Good Lord knows I need water, and he will take care of me."

The well was dug and nearly completed save for some work around the top when they stopped for the day. When the workmen left the well was dry, but when they returned to finish off the top, the well was full, and it has been full ever since. Moreover, the water has always been pure. This is another case

of the Garrettson faith in Divine Providence!

Workers on the railroad used to climb the long hill just to get water from the well. The Suckleys can recall men still coming up the hill in the early 1900's, long after Miss Garrettson's time!

(To be Continued)

by Richard Rockwell

In 1853, just four years after her mother's death, Mary Garrettson sold some 32 acres in the northwest section of the property to Thomas H. Suckley (1810-1888). He built a country home on this site, "Wilderstein", but that is a separate story. Thomas was the son of George Suckley, the friend at whose home at St. Mark's place in New York City that the Rev. Garrettson died in 1827. Thomas Suckley is the grandfather of Daisy, Arthur, and the late Robin Suckley, and Mrs. Elizabeth Hambley, our neighbors.

In the disposal of "Linwood", Mr. Suckley was to acquire additional land east of

"Wildercliff" by referee's deed dated 1874, which had earlier been sold off by Mary Garrettson. After her death, he acquired the remainder of the original "Wildercliff" property and the old house in 1880 from her executors.

The "Wildercliff" story now merges into the Suckley family history, and the house remained in the family until sold to Professor and Mrs. Fredrick W. Duppe in 1958. Mrs. Rockwell and I purchased the house from Mr. and Mrs. Duppe in 1971. There have been several tenants living here over the years. Mr. and Mrs. Henry E. Montgomery lived here for 20 years or more. Gladys Freeman's mother, Mrs. Walter K. Freeman, lived here for several years and Mrs. Eugene Hawkins rented the house for another 20 years or so.

(To be continued)

**RING**

by Richard Rockwell

The Suckleys tell me that many of the renovations and alterations to the house were probably done by Henry Montgomery, Daisy and Arthur's uncle. The Suckley children spent the years 1897 to 1907 in Europe and Daisy recalls that upon her return from Europe the construction work had been completed.

The foyer on the north side of the house has been added that time. Another photograph taken about the same time during this period of construction shows a full view of the south side of the house. Comparison of this view with the present appearance of "Wildercliff" reveals the fact that the servants' area (now a playroom and storage area) on the second floor of the east wing was the last major alteration to the house. This section, like the front foyer, was added after the photograph was taken, as the east wing has only one story in the picture.

The Suckley family remembers that Mr. Montgomery also rebuilt the barn, greatly enlarging the old one and making the horse stall area and the apartment section. The family also said that the staircase was moved several times during various reconstructions in the early 1900's. The present fireplace in the sun room was added during one of these reconstructions. The small 19th century dollhouse is of uncertain age, but the

Suckleys feel that it was built for Mary Garrettson as a young girl. If so, then it would date from quite early in the nineteenth century.

Several questions remain in the "Wildercliff" story however! When were the third floor and the dormers added to the house? Did the house really have a gambrel roof originally, or a plain peaked roof that was raised to accommodate the additional living space? Was the gambrel roof original and just the dormers added to provide more living space on the third floor?

Of special architectural interest, however, are the gambrel-roofed dormers on the third floor that repeat the lines of the main roof. We hope that some of these questions will be answered when further research and analysis is done in the future.

Inspection of some of the attic beams suggests that the old roof was raised sometime in the nineteenth century. An early photograph showing Miss Garrettson on the front porch confirms the fact that it was done during her lifetime. The picture shows the gambrel roof and dormers exactly as they appear today, about a century later.

The Garrettson's house was always open to all, especially those in the ministry. This suggests that by the middle of the nineteenth century, as the ranks and influence of the Methodists grew, and, particularly during the period when Miss Garrettson housed the ministers for the Rhinecliff and Hillside churches, that more living space was necessary.

(To Be Continued)

(Editor's note: This is the last in a series of articles Richard Rockwell, owner of "Wildercliff", has written about his home.)

by Richard Rockwell

By comparing photographs, we can determine that the first story of the east wing (containing part of the present kitchen, the laundry room and pantry) was added sometime after the early photographs from Miss Garrettson's time and before the picture taken during the early 1900's construction period. A 1903 date appears on one of the plans drawn for Henry Montgomery. Thus, it appears likely that the east wing was added shortly before the second picture was taken. It was also during this time span that extensive changes were made on the west wing of the house. This involved the removal of a large glass enclosed area, a greenhouse, and another extension on the west side of "Wildercliff." This work had already been completed by the time the early 1900's pictures were taken, as the west wing appears the same as it does today. Whether these major alterations were part of the early 1900's reconstructions or took place at a slightly earlier date is uncertain.

The photograph in the 1932 Dutchess County Historical Society Year Book shows the house essentially the same as it is today. The restorative work that Mrs. Rockwell and I have done was mainly internal wall and ceiling work. We did, however, remove the rear hall and two very small bedrooms

in the east wing (servant's area) to create a large playroom. The lighting and insulation were also improved wherever possible throughout the house. Our landscape work has been extensive in nature, but we felt it was needed to enhance the setting of the house and recapture the tranquil beauty of the property.

The atmosphere at "Wildercliff" has served to stimulate intellectual pursuits over the years. A Welsh girl, Maria James, came around 1815 as a maid to Mrs. Garrettson. She showed a great talent for composing poetry. Her poems were eventually printed, and she was honored at a tea given by the Livingstons in 1839.

In more recent times, Clare Booth Luce is said to have done some writing here, and Joseph Lash wrote part of his book, "Eleanor and Franklin", while staying at "Wildercliff".

The previous owner, Frederick W. Dupee, now living on the west coast, was a professor of English Literature at Bard College and Columbia University. He is considered one of the foremost authorities on Henry James (1843-1916). Interestingly enough, Mr. James was a nephew of Augustus and John Barber James, who owned "Linwood" from 1836 to 1865. Young Henry James visited at "Linwood" several times in his early youth.

If Mrs. Rockwell and I do not expect to match these earlier achievements, we hope to continue the tradition of generous hospitality for which "Wildercliff" was so famous.

chasing your antique  
AL RUGS

## 'Wildercliff' Estate Is Sold Recently

**Columbia U. Professor Is Purchaser of Historic Property On Hudson**

"Wildercliff," one of the historic homes of Dutchess county, and 21 acres, once part of the estate of Chancellor Robert Livingston, have been sold, according to Previews Incorporated, real estate market agents.

Frederick W. Dupee of Red Hook, professor of comparative literature at Columbia University, purchased the home and land in negotiations handled by Homer K. Staley, Rhinebeck realtor.

The 15-room mansion was built in 1798, according to records of the Dutchess County Historical Society. High above the Hudson, with views for 20 miles up and down the river, "Wildercliff" was constructed as the home of Freeborn Garretson and his wife, a sister of Livingston. A portrait of the pioneer diplomat has hung in the dining room of the old house for many years.

At the time the house was built, Livingston owned 400,000 acres of land, extending for 14 miles along the Hudson river and eastward to the Connecticut border.

"Wildercliff" has been owned for many generations by members of the Suckley family. It was sold by Miss Margaret L. Suckley of Rhinebeck and her brothers, Robert Suckley of Rhinebeck and Arthur L. Suckley of Monte Carlo, Monaco.

Miss Suckley, archivist at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Library at Hyde Park, and her brothers have a home at "Wilderstein," and a sister, Mrs. L. Hambly, lives at "Wilderkill," adjoining properties which were also part of the Livingston holdings.

The three-story house has a columned veranda across the front, overlooking the river, with French doors to the interior. The living room, the library and dining room have fireplaces and wideboard floors. Seven bedrooms and three baths are on the second floor, and three bedrooms and a bath on the dormered third floor.



One of the historic houses of Dutchess county, "Wildercliff," on the banks of the Hudson River here has been sold by Miss Margaret L. Suckley and her brothers, Robert Suckley of Rhinebeck and Arthur L. Suckley of Monte Carlo, Monaco. The purchaser was Frederick W. Dupee of Red Hook, professor of comparative literature at Columbia University.



Richard Rockwell's Wildercliff property in Rhinebeck was recently purchased by a New York City couple.

Rhinebeck Gazette  
June 28, 1979

## Wildercliff estate sold to Halls

A New York City couple recently purchased the Wildercliff property in Rhinebeck.

Mr. and Mrs. Allison Hall bought the 20 acre property,

including a 37 foot square, two story Federal house built in 1977 from Richard Rockwell for \$220,000, according to Hurl Sheldon, a real estate salesman with Tieder Realty, Rhinebeck.

Although Sheldon declined to release details about the couple, Mrs. Hall is reportedly a television actress.

The house was originally built for the Rev. Freeborn Garretson, a Methodist preacher who married Margaret Livingston, sister of

Chancellor Robert Livingston Rhinebeck's United Methodist Church on East Market Street was named after the Rev. Garretson.

The property, the third Rhinebeck estate to change hands in recent months, is part of the recently designated Hudson estates Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Good news:**



MISS GARRETTSON AND HER HOME.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: A few weeks since you announced in your paper the death of Miss Mary Garrettson. Miss Garrettson was so endeared to all who knew her, by her words and works, that she was entitled "The Good Lady." Her pleasant and hospitable country mansion, "Wildercliff," on the banks of the Hudson, a few miles from the beautiful village of Rhinebeck, was the resort of many choice spirits. Here the venerable Dr. Noit of Union College enjoyed his hours of leisure; Bishop Potter also; and this was the home of Miss Maria Potter, now the wife of the sculptor. Here came Dr. Butler, the celebrated missionary, and author of that delightful book, "The Land of the Veda":—he, who with his missionary wife, had passed through all the horrors of the Sepoy rebellion, and whose child was born in the midst of that terrible massacre. Here the gifted and lamented Thomas Randolph Mercein, whom Dr. Dewey so highly eulogized, author of "Natural Goodness," and one of the most promising ministers of the day, was a special favorite. Here "Father Brownson," who died two years ago, after thirty-six years of indefatigable labor for the American Bible Society, was an honored guest. Here Miss Susan and Miss Anne Warner, authors of "The Wide, Wide World," and Edward Eggleston, most delighted to spend their hours of recreation. Here Hanown, Foss, Otheman, Kettell, Glover and many other "bright, particular stars" of the Methodist firmament came year after year. And this is the home of Andrew Hunt, one of the ablest minds of the Methodist Church. By the will of Miss Garrettson's father—the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson—Miss Garrettson's home was to be the home of a young minister during the first two years of his ministry. This was faithfully carried out, and these young neophytes first entered upon their work surrounded by the refinements of this delightful home, preaching in the two little chapels of Hilside and Riverside, built under Miss Garrettson's auspices.

Miss Garrettson's intellect was fine, her memory remarkable; she had a keen sense of humor and a quaint way of indulging it at her own expense. Her habits were active, and, until within a few years of her death, she used to get up early and work in her garden for hours before breakfast. Unlike the millionaires of the present day, who leave high-sounding legacies to be mangled over after death, she spent her money while living, and literally "went about doing good." If the sick were to be cared for, she did it; giving choice flowers, books, delicacies, and, far more than all, her own welcome presence; she clothed the destitute, fed the hungry, consoled the mourners; and so indefatigable was she in this service that it was said her carriages and horses never lasted long. In the Village of Rhinebeck she was beloved, admired and revered, and her name is "a household word." In the pretty church embowered amid the tall maples, is a tablet to her father's memory, erected by the congregation, in token of loving gratitude, as a Christmas gift to Miss Garrettson.

M. P. G.

New-York, April 7, 1879.

New Paltz  
March 13, 1879

—Miss Mary Rutherford Garrettson died on Thursday last, in the eighty-seventh year of her age, at her residence, "Wildercliff," at Rhinebeck, on the Hudson. The deceased was the daughter of Freeborn Garrettson, of Maryland, a prominent Methodist clergyman, who died in 1827. Her mother was Catherine Livingston, the daughter of Robert Livingston, of Clermont, and sister of Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of New York State, and of Edward Livingston, author of the Code of Louisiana, and at one time Minister to France.—The deceased was a lady of marked intellectual ability, and was well known for her benevolence.

tools and of recent origin. Laccetti concluded that the human figure was not modern.

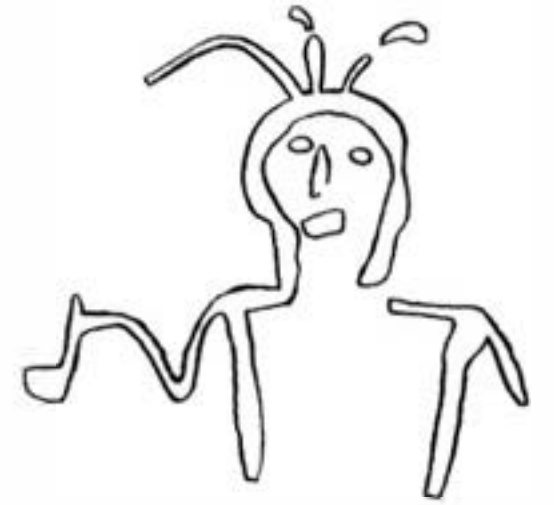
On November 4, 1979, I visited the Rhinebeck petroglyph site to observe and record my own impressions of the glyphs. The design of a human figure consisting of head, upper body, and arms was pecked into the northwest vertical face of the exposed bedrock (figs. 137, 138). The human figure was actually within a shallow depression that was low and at the base of the rock. At that time, the figure extended down to the tidal ground-surface muck and may even have extended below it. This bedrock outcrop, a graywacke of the Hudson River series, was probably more exposed at an earlier time, but, due to riverbank erosion, flooding, and silting, the marsh that surrounds the rock is filling up.

The width of the pecked face and body lines averaged 12 millimeters (0.5 inch), while the depth was about 5 millimeters (0.2 inch). The somewhat linear mouth and circular eyes were pecked into the rock. The nose was prominent and appeared to be incised. In general, the pecking was clear and sharp. The surface of the rock had become discolored to some extent, having a mottled red and tan color in several places. Some damage caused by exfoliation of the rock was also noticeable.

A second design, consisting of three letters, was evident on the upper or top surface of the rock near its southwesterly side. These letters were incised into the rock and consisted of a capital A, a small s, and a backward capital B.

The land on which the Rhinebeck petroglyph is located was purchased by Gerrit Aertsen Van Wagenen, Arie Roosa, and Jan Elton in 1688 from three Indians named Aran Kee, Kreme Much, and Kora Kee. The 1656 map of New Netherland by Nicholas Visscher, as well as the 1673 copy of Visscher's map by Hugo Allard, indicate that this general region was occupied by the Mahicans.

The similarity of the Rhinebeck petroglyph to the one at Esopus, New York, is striking in terms of style and method of execution. Both figures have "headdresses," arms bent at the elbows, and hands grasping objects such as a gun, arrows, pipe, or tomahawk. Both designs have been pecked into the rock and may be associated with Indian land purchased by Europeans. These data suggest that the Rhinebeck petroglyph may also represent a symbol or marker to seal the deed of purchase.



138. Field sketch of Rhinebeck petroglyph.

Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick.

No scale.

## The Bear Rock Petroglyph

A large granite boulder with several pecked designs stands in a flat wooded area near a hiking trail at the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, a Westchester County park in Cross River, New York. This boulder,