

The Capt. Moses Este House  
62 Water Street  
Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-677

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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N.J.

14. MORTO.

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The Capt. Moses Este House  
62 Water Street  
Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey

Owner and occupant: Miss Lillian Heslin

Date of Erection: About 1770 and rebuilt 1786

Architect: Unknown

Builders: For John Crane (1748-1783) about 1770;  
destroyed by fire 1786 and rebuilt same  
year for Capt. Moses Este\* (1752-1836)

Present Condition: Good, front window sash, also  
front and rear entrance porches, not  
original

Number of Stories: Two and one-half over cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry

Exterior walls - timber frame, clapboarded

Interior walls - lath and plaster on wood  
framing

Chimneys - brick, built into inside of gable  
end walls

Roof - gable, modern composition shingling

Historical Data:

The late Alfred E. Mills, a great grandson of Captain Moses Este, the abovesaid original owner of the house here considered, in an affidavit stated "The old Este house where Sally Este lived with her father and mother, brothers and sisters, is still standing on the corner of Spring and Water Streets, which was the center of Morristown at the time of

\* Este, Moses, Capt. N. J. Militia; wounded at Monmouth, 28 June 1778. Died 1836. (F.B. Heitman, Histl. Reg. Officers of the Contl. Army, p. 218).

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its erection.....It was erected shortly after Capt. Este's first house was burned on Jan. 18th, 1786." His sister-in-law, Mrs. Edward K. Mills informs us "I have always understood that the house was rebuilt immediately after the destruction of the first house in 1786".(a)

Apparently that house stood on the same site, but to what extent it was destroyed and rebuilt in 1786 as the present structure has not been possible to determine here. In any case the latter house exhibits the four chimneys and the central hall serving two rooms on either side, a floorplan familiar in post-Revolution 18th century mansion-house design, but with various interior woodwork of mantels and doors in successive styles, assignable to 1770, 1786, 1825 and 1840.

That the lot at the northwest corner of Spring and Water Streets, Morristown, was purchased by Moses Este(b) abovenamed on 26 June 1783 from the

(a) Information from Mrs. Edward K. Mills of 66 Macculloch Avenue, Morristown, 23 November 1940

(b) Moses Esty (signature) b. 18 Jan. 1752, Enfield Conn., removed with parents 1756 to Bucks Co., Pa., and 5 or 6 yrs. later to Readington, Hunterdon Co., N.J., where he lived until the commencement of the war, and in 1779 or 1780 he moved to near Chester, Morris Co., for 1 or 2 yrs. before finally settling in Morristown. His house was burned 19 Jan. 1786, with all his commissions and other papers which contained a memo of dates and places of his service during the war, for which reason he can only specify his service as they occur to his recollection. In Aug. 1832, he was living in Morristown and stated that he was commissioned in 1774 by the Committee of Safety as a Lieut. in a company of militia commanded by Hankinson and succeeded him as captain in 1775 or 1776, in the regiment of Col. Helm who was succeeded by Col. John Taylor. In 1776 he was stationed at Elizabeth for guard duty in the lines and at several points of landing used by the enemy in raids from S.I..... (Chas. Este, Estes Genealogies 1097 - 1893, publ. 1894, p.321) Note: The above account is probably derived from Capt. Estey's written application for U.S. pension. He is of record as placed on the pension roll in 1832 for service as Capt. in the N. J. line. See also D.A.R. Lineage Book No. 72. L.D.C.

estate of John Crane, decd.\*, is recited in a deed of 7 November 1829 by which Este, described as then resident of Trenton, N. J. conveyed the same 8/10 acre to Andrew Howell, Esq., of Somerville, in trust to be sold for the benefit of Este's daughter, Mrs. William Nottingham, also of Trenton. In this deed a corner lot is described as having some 286 feet frontage on the southeast side of Spring Street and 230 feet on the northwest side of Water Street. If a house was on this lot in 1783, it appears from this evidence that John Crane (1748-1783) the late owner may have erected it in or before 1774, the year of his marriage.

Accordingly, by deed of 23 January 1830, the said Andrew Howell Esq., trustee, conveyed the same property to Este's son-in-law Lewis Mills of Morristown, for \$500 reciting its being that which Moses Estey(c) conveyed as abovesaid. Capt. Estey died 4 February 1836 in Philadelphia, at the home of his sister Nellie, wife of John Keen(a).

\* John Crane of Morristown d. 22 May 1783 ae. 35, having mar. 19 Sept. 1774 Mary O'Harrah who mar. 2nd 24 Dec. 1786 John Cummins (Hist. First Presb. Ch. Morristown II, 51, and N.J. Archives XXXV, 102)

(c) Moses Este or Estey, d. in Jan. 1836 aged 84, his 1st wf. Elizabeth Fearels Este d. 23 Feb. 1783 aged 23, and his 2nd wf. Anna Kirkpatrick Este d. 11 Nov. 1811 aged 47. The last was a daughter of David and Mary (Mc Eowen) Kirkpatrick of Mine Brook, Somerset Co., N.J. His children: David K. b. 21 Oct. 1785, d. 1 Apr. 1875 in Cincinnati; Elizabeth b. 8 July 1787, m. 2 Oct. 1808 Wm. Nottingham of Phila. and res. Trenton 1829; Charles b. 12 May 1789; William b. 9 July 1791; Sarah Ann mar. 11 Dec. 1817 Lewis Mills of Morristown as 2d wf.; Hannah mar. David G. Barnet, 1st govr. of Texas; Mary mar. Jos. C. Clopper of Cincinnati and d. Oct. 1882 aged 82. (History of the First Presb. Ch., Morristown, N.J., Part II, pp. 68 and 298). "According to Mr. A. Pierson of Morristown who formerly wrote articles for the Morristown Record, Moses Este had a chair factory in the rear of his residence. He also had a small store next to the Court House on the site of the present Green, which was torn down after a few years.(a)

Subsequently, by deed of 19 September 1840 this Lewis Mills<sup>(d)</sup> and wife Sarah Ann of Morris Township conveyed the property to John Haviland of same place for \$1000, describing the lot as containing 86/100 of an acre and as being the "lot and premises known as the Estey lot". Haviland sold to Peter Petty in 1867 a strip off the southwest side of the lot, having a frontage of some 30 feet on Water Street, and to William H. Allen in 1868 the rear end of the lot, a parcel having a frontage of some 115 feet on Spring Street.

The remaining part of the lot, 160 feet on Water Street and 176 on Spring, on which the house stands was purchased from the estate of Haviland, deceased, by William T. Meeker of Morris Township at a public sale held on 23 February 1871 at the United States Hotel in Morristown, and it was conveyed to him by deed of date two days later.<sup>(e)</sup>

Public sale of the property was decreed by the Court of Chancery on 21 June 1905 in the case of Meeker versus Meeker et al., and accordingly it was sold to the complainant, John R. Meeker, of Morristown, highest bidder, on 31 July next. He conveyed the same to his wife's sister, Mabel C. Heslin, of Morristown on 1st October following and she remains as owner and occupant at the time of our survey of the house in October 1940.

(d) Lewis Mills, b. 19 Jan. 1782 in Morristown d. there 5 Mar. 1869, son of Edward and Phoebe (Byram) Mills, mar. 1st 19 Jan. 1809 Mary Armstrong Pierson and 2nd, 11 Dec. 1817 Sarah Ann Estey, b. 30 Apr. 1793, who d. 13 June 1842, dau. of Moses Estey of Morristown, by whom six sons and 2 daus. (F.B. Lee, Genealog. & Memorial Hist. of N.J., 395 et seq.) Lewis Mills, a merchant, built and occupied until his death a large brick house on Washington Street, Morristown, foundation of which is now incorporated in the Foley store(a).

(e) Map of Boro of Morristown publ. in Beers' Atlas of Morris Co. 1868, shows the Estey house at s.w. cor. Spring and Water Sts. marked J. Hyler, evidently as tenant.

Note: The present stairway in the entrance hall is obviously of date later than 1786 and was evidently built as an auxilliary to the original box stairway still remaining.

Reference:

Search of title in Morris County land and probate records by James Hanlon, H.A.B.S. abstractor, reported 4 November 1940

*Lewis D. Cook*

Supervising Historian

Approved:

*Seymour Williams*

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer

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