

The Abraham Staats House
General Baron Von Steuben Headquarters
South Bound Brook, Somerset County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

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

The Abraham Staats House
General Baron Von Steuben Headquarters
South Bound Brook, Somerset County, New Jersey

Owner: R. J. Riddell

Date of Erection: Original house and kitchen early
eighteenth century; additions
about 1800, 1825, and 1936

Architect:

Builder: Various members of the Staats family

Present Condition: Very good

Number of Stories: One and one-half older section;
two stories for 1825 addition

Materials of Construction: Foundation - red sandstone

Exterior walls - frame
construction, both
shingles and siding

Interior walls - plaster
with some paneling

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch, dormers on
the older sections

Historical Data:

This house was in continuous possession of the Staats family from 1738 until 1935. The date of erection is not certain. The members of the family believe that the oldest part of the house was built before 1700. The house was described as "old" in 1738.

Peter Staats bought the property on September 11, 1738 from Cornelia Van Dan who had inherited it from her father Gerret Beekman. It was a tract of 305 acres. By assignment the property came into the possession of Hendrick Staats on April 29, 1740, and there are those who think that the oldest section of the house was built about that time by Hendrick who was termed a resident of Somerset County.

On April 5, 1769 the property was conveyed to John Staats, the brother of Hendrick. It was probably given to Abraham Staats about the time he married in 1770 although the transfer bears the date October 11, 1781. Abraham Staats was born on May 25, 1743 in Sourland, Hillsborough Township, Somerset County. He married on November 8, 1770 Margaret Du Boys (Du Bois). Family tradition says that he was a collector of taxes for the crown before the Revolutionary War. One thing is certain, however, that from 1792 until 1820 he was a collector for Somerset County. Just what part Abraham Staats played in the Revolution is unknown. However, in 1776 when amnesty was granted by Lord Howe, Abraham Staats along with three others from this section were excepted. He was supposed to have been a surveyor and a teacher of mathematics, surveying, and navigation. During his occupancy of the house in the winter of 1778-1779 Baron Steuben had his headquarters here. There were from eight to ten thousand men in camp at Middle Brook (Bound Brook), men from Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. Baron Steuben used the living room for his office. Washington during that winter occupied the Wallace House (NJ-20) at Somerville. Lossing in his Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution gives an account of the recollections of one of the daughters of Abraham Staats. From this we learn that Washington was entertained here on more than one occasion. From the letters Steuben wrote

during that winter, we know that he did not spend all his time at the Staats House.

There was a kitchen added to the house on the west by Abraham Staats about 1800, at which time a part of the old house may have been torn down. Rosalie Bailey suggests that otherwise when the house was enlarged in 1825 by Isaac Staats, who built the high addition on the east end, the oldest unit of the house was destroyed.

The property passed from Abraham Staats when he died in 1821 to Isaac his son. Later on three of Abraham's daughters - Phebe, Mary and Sally - bought out Isaac. By marriage the La Tourette family became the actual processors. Margaret Ann, the daughter of Sally Staats Bayles, married as her second husband Cornelius Wyckoff La Tourette. The last member of the Staats family in possession of the house was Eugene La Tourette, a son of this marriage. The house was sold in 1935.

From the best evidence it seems that the center portion attached to the modern east section was built about 1740 at the time that Hendrick Staats came into the possession of the property and that the rest of the center section and the west section was built about 1800. The two story addition on the east toward the canal, which was formerly the road, was built around 1825 by Isaac Staats. The other additions on the house were made in 1936 by the present owner.

Bibliography:

Field book and drawings of the survey

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Rev. Jan. 25 '37 TTB.