

BYBERRY COTTAGE  
East side of River Street  
between Main and Church Streets  
Cooperstown, Otsego Township  
Otsego County, New York

HABS No. NY 250

HABS  
NY,  
39-COOP,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
120 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BYBERRY COTTAGE

HABS  
N.Y.  
39-coop  
2-

Street Address or Location: East side of River Street, between Main and Church Streets, Cooperstown, Otsego Township, Otsego County, New York

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Keck, River Street, Cooperstown, New York (summer residence)

Brief Statement of Significance: This house was built in about 1855 for the two daughters of novelist James Fenimore Cooper.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Built for the two daughters of novelist James Fenimore Cooper; subsequent owners were Paul Fenimore Cooper and Sheldon Keck.
2. Date of erection: About 1855 on a high bank above the Susquehanna River.
3. Original plans, construction, etc.: Built of red brick largely from brick rescued from Otsego Hall. The balusters of the stairway and the oaken doors in the brick portion were also rescued from the Hall. (Otsego Hall was built 1799, destroyed by fire in 1852, was the home of William Cooper and his son James Fenimore Cooper.)
4. Notes on alterations and additions: Wooden addition to the north was built in the 1930's. At this time the main entrance was changed from the brick portion to the wooden portion. Original clustered chimneys replaced by single ones. Interior and exterior alterations now (1958) taking place.
5. Important old views and references: Local History File in the New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York. Photographs: two of Byberry Cottage before the wooden addition was built.

B. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Cooper family papers.

Prepared by F. Ward - October 1958

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This two-story brick and wood structure, in Gothic-revival style, has a high peaked roof with wide overhang and fretwork edging on gables.

2. Condition of fabric: In process of reconditioning by private owner.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Foundations: Stone
2. Wall construction: Original portion - brick, common bond. Wooden addition - vertical wood siding.
3. Chimneys: Brick
4. Windows and shutters: Outside window shutters. Two bay windows on front facade.
5. Roof: a. Shape, covering: High peaked, wide overhang  
Asbestos shingles  
b. Cornice: Fretwork edging on gables

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Two stories
2. Stairways: Spiral staircase in original portion. Balusters on this stairway were in Otsego Hall (the home of novelist James Fenimore Cooper).
3. Flooring: Painted
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered
5. Doorways and doors: Mostly oak. Some grained to resemble oak wood.
6. Lighting: Electricity
7. Heating: Central heating and fireplaces

D. Site:

1. General setting: Situated on a high bank on the west side of the Susquehanna River.
2. Orientation: House faces west
3. Enclosures: Front enclosed with a wooden fence.