

The Vreeland Homestead
(Cornelius Bastiaense Van Giesen House)
226 Chestnut Street
Nutley, Essex County, New Jersey

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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
135 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Vreeland Homestead
(Cornelius Bastiaense Van Giesen House)
226 Chestnut Street
Nutley, Essex County, New Jersey

Owner and occupant: The Woman's Club of Nutley

Date of Erection: Supposed 1702*, with annex about
1850 on older foundation

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Supposed Jacob Vreeland*

Present Condition: As restored by present owner

Number of Stories: One and one-half, over cellar;
two and one-half in frame annex

Materials of Construction:
Foundation - stone masonry
Exterior walls - coursed ashlar stone
masonry front; semi-coursed rear and
ends up to eaveline; frame gable ends
above. Frame annex clapboarded
Interior walls - stone partywall and
frame partitions
Roof - gable, wood shingled
Chimneys - brick, built into inside of
gable end walls

Historical Data:

The qualified statements of certain writers
in attempting to provide some account of the erection
and ownership of this farmhouse by relying on mere

* "The homestead was built in 1702 by Jacob Vreeland
for the Van Giesen family," (The N.J. Club Woman,
Magazine, 1928). Per contra, "In Nutley there still
stands an old veteran built in 1704 by Michael Vreeland"
(Nicholas G. Vreeland, History and Genealogy of the
Vreeland Family, 1909, p. 143 and photo, p. 137). If
the house was erected 1702-04, apparently Bastiaen R.
Van Giessen (d. 1751) was its original owner; if later
(as appears likely), his son Cornelius B. Van Giesen
(d. 1779). L.D.C.

tradition are quoted hereafter and followed, in contradiction, by a report of the pertinent evidence derived from the source material necessary for an account of any house, that is, a search of title as recorded in the public archives.

"The Vreeland Homestead on Chestnut Street, opposite the Town Hall, was built according to tradition in 1702 or 1704 by the same mason who built Bend View. The house bears no tablet. This was erected for the Van Giesen home and was lost with its surrounding fields when the property was confiscated at the close of the Revolution..... After the war was over and Capt. Speer had bought the confiscated estate of Van Giesen, the Tory, a part of which he immediately sold to the Vreeland family, he" etc.(a)

"It is claimed that the house on the bank of the Third River in Nutley was built by Abraham Van Giesen in 1702 and lettering to this effect has lately been cut in a stone by the door; on an 1850 map the house is stated to have been built in 1700. It is possible that Abraham Van Giesen lived for a time on the Third River near the Passaic River, although Folsom* and Nelson*, both authorities, state that he lived at Stone House Plains in Montclair Township, which is further inland and through which the Third River runs....A study of the land records may ascertain the builder of the house in Nutley.... The house remained in the possession of the Van Giesen family until confiscated during the Revolution from Tory Van Giesen. This Tory is believed to be Abraham Van Giesen.....probably the son of Andries.....In the (modern)restoration, stones on either side of the

(a) Eliz. S. Brown, The History of Nutley, Essex Co., N. J., 1907, pp. 24 and 32. No references being cited by the author, all statements are qualified accordingly.

* Jas. E. Brooks, The Annals of Stone House Plains or Brookdale, pp. 162-179 in Jos. F. Folsom, editor, Bloomfield Old and New, 1912, p. 169. Wm. Nelson, Hist. of City of Paterson and County of Passaic, 1901, p. 265.

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door were inscribed "AVG 1702, IVL 1783, AVL 1821, WVL 1883, to represent various owners." (b)

These inscriptions, most valuable clues to identity when contemporary with the erection of a building, may accordingly be dismissed in this case. The notations on the rubbings thereof, sheet 5 of our survey drawings of this house (made in 1934) evidently from the popular accounts quoted above, are found contrary to fact.

The ascription of the erection of this house to one Abraham Van Giesen (1666-1753) by tradition (b) has been impossible to verify, likewise its possession by any "Tory Van Giesen" as above quoted. The evidences show otherwise in each case. If the property was indeed confiscated, as stated above, no published notice* of such and no deed of sale from the Commissioners of Forfeited Estates is found on record. Likewise on the contrary, the title back through successive owners has been traced to one Abraham B. Van Giesen of Second River 1783, and previously to his brother Cornelius B. Van Giesen 1770, as hereafter outlined.

It is possible that the name of this recorded 1783 owner has been confused by "tradition" in the popular accounts first quoted above as being both that of the original owner of the house in 1702 and of the so-called later Tory owner. But this

(b) Rosalie F. Bailey, Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families, 1936, pp. 517-19.

* Abstracts of Newspapers, publ. in N. J. Archives, 2nd series, II, III, etc.

Abraham B. Van Giesen (1706-1785) is readily cleared of both charges. (c)

Report of Search of Title to establish the name of original owner and approximate date of erection of the house at No. 226 Chestnut Street, Nutley, Essex County.

A Patent dated 27 January 1695/96 to John Treat of Newark, New Jersey for 60 acres of land in that township, describes (1) a lot on Bareskin Brook, on the north side of Third River and (2) a lot on that river bounded south by land of Bastian Vangiesen, west by unsurveyed land, north by the line of Acquackanok Township and east by Third River. (d) This is the earliest evidence found for possession of land on the left bank of Third River by Bastiaen R. Van Giesen, although he is recorded in 1694 as a settler in the township and possibly in 1688.

(c) "During the Revolution, one of the Van Giesens of Stone House, Plains....., joining the British army in September 1777,.....was another Abraham Van Giesen, and his home was on the west side of Broad Street, north of the present line of Watchung Avenue. In March 1779, the State of New Jersey seized and sold this property under an act of confiscation passed Dec. 11, 1778. The Commissioners gave a deed to Thomas Sigler, in consideration of 300 pounds, that being the highest bid. This deed has been kept by the descendants of Thomas Sigler." (Jas. E. Brooks, The Annals of Stone House Plains or Brookdale, publ. in Bloomfield Old and New, Jos. F. Folsom, editor, 1912, p. 170. See also, Collections of the N. J. Hist. Soc. Vol. X, appendix III, publ. 1927, p. 312 and the references there cited.) Evidently this Tory, "Abraham Van Giesen Jr." of Essex Co. was the Abraham Andriese Van Giesen of Newark Twp. b. 18 May 1728, bapt. in R.D. Ch. of Acquackanok, whose will dated 29 Sept. 1785 and proved 24 Oct. next, names wife Mary and daughters Sarah Post, Maritie Debaun, Carrel Debaun, Fitie Woodendike and Hillotie Van Giesen. He mar. 27 Jan. 1751 Marytie Van Vorst and had childn. bapt. at Acquackanok (Passaic) viz. Andries 1752, Gerrit 1755, Sarah 1757, Gerrit 1762, Fytje 1764, Hille-gont 1767 and William. If he had lived in Nutley, they would have been bapt. at Second River (Belleville).L.D.C.

That he also owned land on the opposite bank is clear from the record of a Patent, dated 22 October 1697, granting to Tunis Janis alias Espeere and Bastian Van Giesen, both of Newark Township, 200 acres there, at the rear of the Dutchmen's lots on Passaic River, bounded west by Third River, Eliphalet Johnson and a small brook, east by the Dutchman's lots, north and south by unsurveyed land. (d) The location of his house on one or the other lot cannot be determined, but from the fact that his eldest son Hendrick apparently succeeded to (and certainly possessed) land on the right bank, it would appear that Bastian R. Van Giesen built there and so not the house here surveyed. He died intestate and his estate was administered by his eldest son, Hendrick B. Van Giesen who gave bond dated 22 July 1751. Apparently, in a division of his real estate among his several sons, the lot in the west bank of Third River (the one here considered) was awarded to the son Cornelius B. Van Giesen who had probably resided thereon and who is of record as owner thereof in 1770 as follows. (e)

(d) Recorded in E. N. J. Deed Book E p. 405. Abstract publ. in N.J. Archives XXI, 236. See also pp. 249, 274, and 306.

(e) Bastiaen Reynierse Van Giesen, b. about 1664 in Flatbush, L.I., a son of Reynier Bastiansen Van Giesen, "the "Court Attendant" and schoolmaster there, who removed in 1664 to Bergen, N. J., with his wife Dirckje Cornelis Van Groenland (d. 1698) and served as "Voorlezer" (parish clerk) there until his death in May 1707, having mar. 2nd 17 Oct. 1699 Hendrickje Janse Buys, widow of Cornelis Verwey), was admitted as a "planter" at a town meeting of Newark, N. J., 5 Mar. 1693/4. He was mar. 25 June 1688 at Bergen to Aeltje Hendrickse (Brinckerhoff), in the record of which he is described as a young man then living at Acquackanonk* and she a maiden living at Hackensack, both from Midwout (Flatbush). Bastian R. Van Giesen was elected a deacon of the Ref. Dutch Ch. of Acquackanonk (Passaic) 1694 and 1697, an elder 1700, 1706, 1712, 1719, and 1721. After that date he doubtless attended the nearer church of Second River (Belleville) founded before 1725. He died intestate there in the Second River section of Newark Township before 22 July 1751, the date of the bond of his eldest son Hendrick B. Van Giesen" of Second River" as administrator. The issue of Bastiaen R. Van

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The first definite record of ownership and description of the particular property here considered is a mortgage dated 6 March 1770, placed on a "Tract of land lying and being at the upper part of Second River, formerly by some called Agquackanong" in Essex County, in which mortgage the property lines are described as "Beginning at the third River at the mouth of a Brook called Bearskin Brook, running a Westerly course 21 chains to a white oak tree, thence north 45 chains to a stake with a small heap of stones round it, thence east to the Third River, thence along the Third River to the place where it began," containing 80 acres," which land and appurtenances is mortgaged by Cornelius Bastianse Van Giesen of Second River aforesaid unto Tunis Jeralemon of the same place" to secure the payment of 100 Pounds with interest on 24 February next. (f)

(c)ontinued (e)

Giesen and wife Aeltje Hendricks Brinckerhoff were: (1) supposed Rynier B. d. infancy, (2) Hendrick B. b. 3 July 1690, bapt. at Bergen, d. 1765, at Second River, without issue, having mar. Hendrickje Van Dyke who d. 1768, (3) Reynier B. 22 July 1693 at Second River, bapt. at Bergen, d. 1768 at Totowa (Paterson), without issue, having mar. 1737 Catryntje Marselis of Bergen, (4) prob. Aeltje, (5) sup. Joris, b. July 1702, bapt. at Bergen, (6) Johannes B. mar. 1727 Annatje Westervelt at Hackensack and 1731 Susanna Vincent who mar. 2d. 1735 Cornelius Spier, (7) Dirck B., b. 3 Aug. 1705 at Acquackanok, bapt. at Bergen, d. 1784 at Totowa (Paterson), (8) Cornelius B., d. 1779 intestate, at Second River, (9) Abraham B., d. 1785 at Second River, of whom further. (T.G. Bergen, Register of Early Settlers of Kings Co., N.Y., 1881, p. 341. Holland Society of N.Y. Year Book 1913, 1914, 1915 (Bergen Ch. records). N.J. Archives XXXII, 335; XXXIII, 448; XXXIV, 543; XXXV 410.) Wm. Nelson, Hist. of City of Paterson & Co. Passaic N.J. 1901, 264, 266).

*The parish of the Reformed Dutch Church of Acquackanok (Passaic) included the Nutley region until the foundation of the church at Belleville before 1725.

(f) Essex County Mortgage Book A, p. 355).

The mortgagor was evidently that Cornelius Van Giesen of Essex County, N. J., deceased intestate, administration upon whose estate was granted to Abraham B. Van Giesen who gave bond dated 6 April 1779. (g) No evidence of any confiscation of the estate of Cornelius Van Giesen as a Tory* (as stated in the published accounts cited) appears on record, and the lot above described as being his property in 1770 next appears on record in possession of his brother and administrator, the said Abraham B. Van Giesen.

Thus by deed of 6 October 1783, Abraham B. Van Giesen and wife Catrina^(h) conveyed to Abraham

(g) N.J. Archives, Abstracts of Wills etc., XXXIV, 543.

* Abm., Cornelius and Isaac Van Giesen and six others were taken prisoners by Col. Morgan in Essex Co. on 20 July 1777 as tories, of whom Cornelius and Isaac Van Giesen and others were discharged upon taking the oath of allegiance on 20 Aug. 1777. (Selections from the Correspondence of the Executive of N.J., 1776-86, publ. 1848, p. 84., Minutes of the Council of Safety, publ. 1872, p. 120.)

(h) Abraham Bastiense Van Giesen of Second River, Essex County, New Jersey, b. 1706-12, d. 1785, youngest of the seven sons of Bastiaen Reynierse Van Giesen (d. 1751) of Newark Twp., Essex Co. He mar. 1st in 1737 Jannetje Van Houten, b. 21 Jan. 1712, per records of Ref. Dutch Ch. of Acquackanonk, in which both are described as born and living within that parish. Evidently she died before 9 April 1769, the date of the marriage of "Abraham Van Giesen, widower, from Achquegnok" and Tryntie Ryke, widow, as recorded by the Dutch Ch. of Second River (Belleville). She was Tryntje (Catrina) Spier, b. at Second River, who had mar. 13 Jan. 1742 Jacob Ryker of Acquackanonk and later of Horseneck, Essex Co., admin. upon whose estate was granted to her 7 Mar. 1759, and as widow of Abraham B. Van Giesen was living in Newark Twp. 1791. In his will dated 24 Aug. 1785 and proved 14 Dec. next, Abraham B. Van Giesen of Second River, Essex Co., devised his real and personal estate to his wife Catherine during widowhood, and afterward to her son Jacob Ryker, excepting 8 acres in the rear of Lot No. 1 to Christopher Stager, and appointed the wife and Richd. Ludlow execrs. (Wm. Nelson, Van Giesen pedigree, in Hist. of City of Paterson and Co. Passaic, 1901, p. 266. N.J. Archives XXII, 617, XXXII, 277, XXXV, 410).

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Speer, all the parties being of Newark Township, for 482 Pounds 10 shillings, a tract of 106 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres "on the west side of the Third River in Newark Township," Essex County, N. J., beginning "at the mouth of Basken Brook where it runs into the said Third River." The boundary lines are therein described as running thence north 49 degrees 45 minutes west 21 chains to a white oak tree on the division line between this tract and the land "now in possession of Gysbert Peck" thence northeast along that line and the lands of John Van Riper 45 chains to a stake, thence south 49 degrees 45 minutes east 21 chains to Third River, and thence up stream along that river to the first point. "Together with all Houses, out Houses, Barns, Stables, Buildings, woods" etc. The names of adjacent property owners are given as Henry Van Winkle on the South, Gysbert Peck and John Van Ryper on the West, Michael Vreeland on the north with Third River on the East. No recital of grantor's title appears in this deed. It was recorded 10 October 1835 in Book Z-3, p. 326 of Essex County deeds, at which time Michael J. M. Vreeland identified the signature of his father, John M. Vreeland, one of the two witnesses to the deed.

(h) (continued)

His farm of 105 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres extended west from Passaic River to Third River, bounded south by Darby's Brook and the road "from Passaic River to Povershon" (Avondale Ave.) and north by the line of present Grant Ave., in Nutley, as appears from a deed of 1 July 1791 conveying it from the executor and widow of Abraham B. Van Giesen to James and Thomas Speer*, recorded in Essex Co. Deed Bk. V2, p. 569. In a mortgage dated 13 Dec. 1775, placed on this farm by Abraham B. Van Giesen, farmer, of Second River in the County of Essex", he states that it was conveyed to him by deed from his brother Henry Van Giesen, Decd., and describes the tract as being at Second River, and as bounded west by the Third River, south by land of late Dirck Jeralemon, east by Passaic River and north by land of the late Henry Van Giesen. (Essex Mtg. Bk. A, p. 387). Thus, it appears that the farm on the west side of Third River conveyed by said A. B. Van Giesen on 6 Oct. 1783 to Abraham Speer, as cited above, was separated from this other farm only by Third River.

*Brothers of Capt. Abraham Spier, and of Annatje (Spier) Vreeland, supra.

From (Capt.) Abraham Spier(j) some 26 3/4 acres of the farm passed to his sister Annatje Spier's husband, John Michielse Vreeland, by an unrecorded deed of same year 1783.(k)

John M. Vreeland(1) who thus acquired the house on Third River in 1783, which property lay south adjacent to that of his father, Michael D. Vreeland (and which latter he inherited by his

(j) Abraham Spier, b. 13 Mar. 1746/7, d. 1834, of River Rd., Belleville, Essex Co., son of Johannes Spier of Belleville, mar. 8 Oct. 1772 Emmetje Wouterse. "He commanded a company of patriot soldiers in the Revolutionary War". (Wm. Nelson, cited above, pp. 191 and 202.) In his will dated 13 Oct. 1833, Abraham Spier of Bloomfield Twp., Essex Co., devised to his grandsons Steger the 80 acre "remainder of my Van Giesen farm".

(k) "John M. Vreeland who increased his inheritance by purchase in 1783.....The Vreeland purchase from Capt. Speer was on the north side of Chestnut Street and included the homestead. The deed is in the hands of a descendant who received this land from his father and still lives on it, Mr. Warren Vreeland." (E. S. Brown, cited above, p. 21). We are unable to locate living descendants of Mr. Vreeland in order to obtain copy of this deed. L. D. C.

(1) John Michielse Vreeland, b. 31 May 1755, d. 1821, son of Michiel D. Vreeland of Third River (Nutley), miller, and his wife Aeltie Van Giesen, mar. Annatje (or Jannetje) Spier, dau. of John Spier of Second River (Belleville) and sister of Capt. Abraham Spier the abovenamed grantor 1783. "He carried on his father, Michael's, grist mill at Third River until his death in 1821." (Wm. Nelson, cited above, pp. 121, 199, 200, 266). Aeltje Van Giesen, supra, b. 23 June 1728, dau. of Johannes E. Van Giesen (not the original owner of this house as stated on Drawing No. 6).

father's will proved 20 October 1804), held the same until his death in 1821. In his will, undated, proved 30 June 1821, he, as John M. Vreeland of Spring Garden, (m) Bloomfield Township, Essex County, devised to his eldest son Michael J. M. Vreeland certain 10 acres, to son John Vreeland 10 acres on the south side of the road from the saw mill, between the sawmill dam on the east and Capt. Speer's land on the west, To his son Ralph Vreeland 8 acres on the north side of Stinker's Brook "whereon his house now stands." To his son Abraham Speer he devised 8 acres with one-half the barn and "half of the house wherein I now dwell." Other devisees named were his daughters Anny Van Winkle and Magdalen Vreeland, to whom the personal property divided between them. Son Abraham Vreeland and son-in-law Daniel Van Winkle were named executors. Disposition of the other half of the house and lot was not therein specified.

Accordingly, by deed of 26 December 1821, the eldest son and devisee abovenamed, Abraham Vreeland and his wife Elizabeth, with his brother-in-law and sister, Daniel Van Winkle and his wife Ann, all of Bloomfield Township, conveyed to their sister, Magdalen Vreeland, of same place the 9.32 acres eastern part of the lot and half the house and barn describing the property lines as being the Third River on the east and the road on the south, "Being part of the real estate of John M. Vreeland late of the township of Bloomfield, deceased, which was not divided by his last will."

(m) Spring Garden or North Belleville, Bloomfield Tp., Essex Co., upon Third River and about a mile west of Passaic River, contains from 50 to 70 dwellings, a cotton manufactory, a school and a Methodist Church". (Thos. Gordon, Gazetter of the State of N.J., 1834). Spring Garden was the flat from Chestnut St. to the Belleville line. (E.S. Brown, cited above, p. 36).

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Similarly, by deed of 14 March 1832, the said Abraham Vreeland and wife Elizabeth conveyed to his brother-in-law Daniel Van Winkle the .28 acre western part of the plot and half the barn thereon. Van Winkle and wife Ann, of Belleville Township, conveyed this to the latter's brother-in-law, John Oldham by their deed of 13 April 1853, and thus he and his wife Magdalen Vreeland became joint owners of the homestead.

John Oldham survived his wife and died in Franklin Tp. 6 February 1882 in full possession of the property,* and by will directed his executors to sell all of his estate, the proceeds to go to his sister, Alice Tatlow of Clithero, Lancashire, England, nephew Warren Vreeland, nieces Mary A. Garrabrant, Hannah Coeyman, Anna Stager, and Magdalen Van Riper, and to the Reformed Church of Franklin. Accordingly, by deed of 31 May 1883, the said executors conveyed to the nephew Warren Vreeland of Franklin Township, for \$2635 the homestead and house here considered.⁽ⁿ⁾

Mr. Vreeland died in Nutley** 20 April 1909, having devised to his daughter Virginia McFarlan "the homestead and all the buildings, "bounded south

* See map of Franklin village, plate 155 in R.H. Pidgeon, C.E., Atlas of Essex Co., N. J., 1881.

(n) Abraham Vreeland, b. 22 Sept. 1789, d. 3 Mar. 1860, mar. 1817 Elizabeth Mason and had a son and 5 daughters. He inherited the west half of his father's house.....and lived there until 1838, when he built another house, later his son's. His only son, Warren Vreeland, was b. 1828 in the old stone house and lived there the first twenty years of his life. The house was still owned by him in 1906 and was leased to the Woman's Club of Nutley who later purchased it for a clubhouse and successfully restored it.(b)

** The town of Nutley was incorporated 1902 from Franklin Township which had been created 1874 from Belleville Twp. Belleville 1839 from Bloomfield Twp., and Bloomfield 1812 from Newark Twp., Essex County. (Compendium of Censuses 1726-1905 publ. 1906 by State of New Jersey, pp. 20-21).

by Chestnut Street, west by Franklin Avenue, north by the old John Vreeland line, east by the proposed new street to be called Warren Street. To his daughter Laura Tuers he devised the part lying at the northwest corner of Chestnut Street and Franklin Avenue, also "that strip of land east of Warren Street, bounded east by Third River, south by Chestnut Street and north by old John Vreeland's line." The house stands on the last described plot.

By deed of 10 October 1923, the said daughter and devisee, Laura M. Tuers and husband, Willis J. Tuers, of Paterson, N. J., conveyed to the Woman's Club of Nutley, Essex County, New Jersey, a plot having a frontage of 112 feet on the northeast side of Chestnut Street in that town, and on which stands the house here considered, reciting the will of her father, Warren Vreeland.

Reference:

Search of title in Essex County land and probate records by Tyrus Peck, H.A.B.S. abstractor, reported June 1941, verified and completed by supervising historian

Laura D. Cook

Supervising Historian 1st October 1941

Approved:

Seymour Williams

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