

Montgomery Place Mansion  
Annandale Road  
Barrytown Vicinity  
Dutchess County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5625

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONTGOMERY PLACE MANSION

HABS No. NY-5625

Location: Annandale Road, Barrytown vicinity  
Dutchess County, New York

Present Owner: Delafield Mansion Corporation

Present Use: Residence

Significance: Dramatically situated along the Hudson River, Montgomery Place was a showplace during the nineteenth century, widely known for its richly ornamented Federal house and extensive pleasure grounds. The original house with its delicate interior details was built in 1802 for Janet Livingston Montgomery, widow of General Richard Montgomery. The house was enlarged by the well-known architect, Alexander Jackson Davis, who added an elaborate portico and complex decorative scheme to the exterior. Montgomery Place is one of twenty-one contiguous estates along the east bank of the Hudson between Staatsburg and Tivoli, New York. The land, originally part of the Beekman patent and then the Livingston estate, Clermont, was given to Janet Livingston Montgomery by her parents, Judge Robert and Margaret Beekman Livingston.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The original house was constructed for Mrs. Janet Montgomery between 1802 and 1805.
2. Architect: None known for the original structure.
3. Original and subsequent owners:
  - 1829 Book H page 177  
Records of Dutchess County Surrogate's Court  
  
Janet Montgomery  
to  
Edward Livingston
  - 1836 Book J page 313  
Record of Dutchess County Surrogate's Court  
Edward Livingston  
to  
Louise Livingston

- 1853 Book U page 501  
Records of Dutchess County Surrogate's Court  
Louise Livingston  
to  
Cora L. Barton
- 1860 Deed recorded May 16, 1860 in  
Book 116 page 512  
Joseph and Elizabeth Spurr  
to  
Thomas Barton (purchase of property for construction  
of Swiss, north and Spurr cottages for \$7,000)
- 1873 Book 2 page 237  
Records of Dutchess County Surrogate's Court  
Cora L. Barton  
to  
Maturin L. Delafield
- 1917 Deed recorded November 23, 1917 in  
Book 400 page 304  
Julia, Maturin L. Delafield, Jr., et al  
to  
John Ross Delafield
- 1964 Deed recorded November 6, 1964 in  
Book 1156 page 200  
John Ross Delafield's will instructs a domestic  
corporation to be formed
- 1969 Certificate of Incorporation recorded June, 1969  
Docket 5, Number 246, page 492  
Delafield Mansion Corporation
- 1969 Deed recorded November 18, 1969 in  
Book 1277 page 313  
Executors of John R. Delafield  
to  
Delafield Mansion Corporation for \$1. without tax stamp

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The builder for the original structure is unknown. However, a contract dated 1844 between Mrs. Livingston and Mr. Sternberg for the first additions to the mansion has been found. Peter Harris, carpenter, was mentioned in an 1863 letter to Mr. Davis, and it was he who constructed the outbuildings in the 1860's.

5. Original plans and construction: Little remains on the exterior to identify the original two story 40' by 60' Federal house with its exquisite interior woodwork. In Dutchess County Doorways Helen Reynolds wrote,

The main floor is divided into a West half and an East half. In each, two large rooms (a drawing room and a dining room) face the West, the Easterly half was divided into three parts with a hall (nearly square) in the center. North of the hall at Montgomery Place is a room, nearly square; South of the hall is a small front room and, behind that, in an oblong space, the staircase ... the ceilings of the first floor of the Chateau de Montgomery are a little more than thirteen feet high.

In 1927 Brigadier General John Delafield described the original Montgomery Place

with its stuccoed stone walls more than two feet thick and having the kitchens and service quarters in the basement, dining and drawing rooms, library and one bedroom in the high ceilinged first floor, bedrooms on the second and maids' quarters in the dormer windowed top floor under the steep sloping roof.

6. Additions and alterations: A.J. Davis was commissioned in 1841 by Louise Davezac Livingston, Edward Livingston's widow, to add the south wing, the open north pavilion and the terrace on the west. Later, Davis remodelled the west and east fronts, adding the grand semi-circular portico and balustrades. Davis' first references to Montgomery Place appeared in 1841 in Day Book I. By October 1843, he was at work on plans and elevations, but it was not until 1844 that a building contract was signed between Mrs. Livingston and Mr. Sternberg. Although Davis made a visit on July 3-5, "to direct the Pavilion," the work had been completed in June 1844. The arcaded north pavilion with its delicate engaged Corinthian columns is balanced by a one story south wing with Corinthian pilasters and frieze which echo the north pavilion. Both are crowned by a balustrade punctuated with decorative urns.

After Mrs. Livingston's death in 1860, her daughter, Mrs. Coralie Livingston Barton, contracted Davis to undertake the changes to the east and west fronts. Bills for his services document the progress of the alterations:

April 30, 1863	Visit to Mont Pl and design for semi-circular portico to house: plan elevation and section	\$30.00
May 22	Details for portico, entablature, [sic], balustrade, door dressings full size	10.00
June 25	Direct workmen	10.00
July 1	Design for balustrade and blocking on top of house	5.00
July 22	Drawings for terrace East and West, full size balustrade	10.00
August 5	Design. West terrace	5.00
August 11	1/4 size blocking	
August 19	Ceiling of portico	5.00
Sept. 1 + 9	Sketches about balustrade	
November 4	Elevation of West balustrade	5.00
January 6, 1864	Details, West blocking, pedestals, windows	5.00

The portico, based on the Temple of Vesta in Tivoli, accompanying entablature and door trim were the first changes to be made. The alterations proceeded, though not without some difficulty. Jane B. Davies, historian, wrote

Davis had planned a higher roof-balustrade as part of his design for the facade, but because of complications and expense, Mrs. Barton decided to forego it, and this shortly precipitated a crisis.

Thus, Mrs. Barton asked Davis for help.

The columns are up & the entablature is progressing. The whole thing per se is beautiful — but alas! It squashes down the whole house, & as one of the ancients said: 'Who tied my son to that sword!' so I exclaim 'Who has clapped my old house to the Temple of Vesta!' The addition to the

top of the house becomes a necessity & is the only thing to save us from a monstrous incongruity ... anything rather than this beautiful, overwhelming Portico should look so out of proportion with the main house ... Pray-pray-my dear Mr. Davis, think of what can be done ... You see, I am in despair ... I wish Montgomery Place had the power to attract you & to make you come on the Jefferson Thursday morning ... You wicked man, with your Temple of Vesta to lead me to all this ruinous extravagance which I cannot now avoid without being ridiculous.

Mr. Renwick the architect was here today & admired the columns & the proportions & the whole thing exceedingly but he was too polite to say anything about its crushing the good old house by its magnificence! Your reputation is at stake & you must reconcile what is now so incongruous.

Davis responded by arriving at Barrytown a week later. Within a month, the new balustrade was erected. Mrs. Barton praised the "new" Montgomery Place:

The portico I must say is extremely handsome — the railing on the roof & the blocking are up — the effect surpasses my expectation — the vase of course will crown the whole.

Because of Mrs. Barton's frugality, Mr. Coffee, a sculptor who made Davis' designs to order, was fired after starting the extensive decorative carving. Mrs. Barton complained that Coffee called himself an artist and thus charged too much and took too long. Consequently, she preferred to hire Smith and Crane, a larger production firm. Coffee, however, did complete the keystone, door trim and vases on the portico. Smith and Crane provided the portico columns, and balustrades for the roof, terraces and portico. They also supplied the many wreaths, scrolls, festoons, swags and other decorative details on the entablatures, blocking and chimneys, including a simpler, less costly version of the Davis-designed vase that crowns the roof. (Two drawings of details are located at the Avery Library).

Although most of the 1863 work was on the east front, changes were made to the west terrace and on August 11, 1863, a letter notes changes to the roof, attic and dormers. On August 31, Mrs. Barton wrote that the steps and flooring of the west piazza were rotted and needed rebuilding. Davis' bill indicates that the west blocking and window detailing were added at this time.

Twice more Davis was called upon to make small changes. In 1867 the stairway was altered and a bathroom added. Davis prepared plans in 1872 for the attic and details for a new cornice, but these were never executed since Mrs. Burton died before they could be built.

Brigadier General John Ross Delafield added a sleeping porch to the roof of the north pavilion in the 1930s, necessitating the installation of a column in the middle of the north pavilion. His son, Major John White Delafield, replaced the floor of the north pavilion c. 1969.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Since its construction in 1802, Montgomery Place has never been sold. Each descendant has, in turn, received the family estate.

Janet Livingston Montgomery, the oldest of the eleven children of Margaret Beekman Livingston and Judge Robert R. Livingston, married General Richard Montgomery in 1773. Two years later, he was killed at the Battle of Quebec and his wife mourned his death throughout her life. In 1802 Mrs. Montgomery purchased 250 acres of land, part of which had been the old Schuyler Patent, from John Van Benthuyzen. Mrs. Montgomery was nearly sixty years old when she moved from her estate, Grasmere, to the Montgomery Place. She probably moved because of Grasmere's association with her husband, and a wish to be nearer Clermont, the Livingston estate.

Mrs. Montgomery willed Montgomery Place to her youngest brother, Edward Livingston, in 1828. Politically active in New York and Louisiana, he first served as Mayor of New York. During his term a scandal followed an aide's error and Livingston gave his personal fortune to correct the mistake. He fought in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 and later was elected Congressman from Louisiana for several terms. Livingston also wrote the model penal code for the state of Louisiana. In 1828, he was elected United States Senator. President Andrew Jackson appointed Livingston Secretary of State in 1831 and Minister to France in 1833. After the United States severed relations with France in 1834, he returned to spend his last years at Montgomery Place.

Livingston's wife, the beautiful Louise d'Avezac de Castera, and their daughter and only child, Coralie, spent much of their lives at Montgomery Place. With Alexander Jackson Davis, the architect, they made Montgomery Place the showplace of the Hudson.

Coralie Livingston married Thomas Pennant Barton of Philadelphia in 1833. In 1860 Mrs. Barton inherited Montgomery Place.

Major John White Delafield, the present occupant, is a descendant on his grandfather's side of Gertrude Livingston Lewis, sister of Mrs. Janet Montgomery, and on his grandmother's side, of Chancellor Robert A. Livingston, a brother of Mrs. Montgomery.

PART II SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

A. Original architectural drawings:

1. A.J. Davis Collection, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, New York

Main elevation  
Attic elevation  
Second floor plan  
Main floor plan  
West elevation (pencil)  
Pavilion  
East front of main house (1870's)  
Corinthian order from Temple of Vesta at Tivoli  
Study for portico  
Main floor plan with old house in blue and Davis additions  
in yellow

2. A.J. Davis Collection, Department of Prints, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

Shore Seat, Mont. Pl.  
Prospect Tower, three views  
Periploca  
Study for Prospect Tower, Elevation and Plan  
Carriage entrance Gate, Elevation and Plan  
Summerhouse folder, Arbors for Wisteria, Dutchmans Pipe,  
and Periploca, Prospect Tower  
Gothic studies box, Terminus Livingston and Carriage entrance  
gates in gates and fences folder  
Swiss cottage, elevations and plan  
Tuscan Gate House for Mont Pl (not executed)

3. A.J. Davis Collection, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

Farmhouse, south elevation, east elevation and plan

4. Montgomery Place Collection, Major John White Delafield, Barrytown, New York.

East facade, c. 1863

Attic, plan and section, 1840's

Study for north pavilion, 1840's

Main floor, 1840's

Basement plan

South wing, 1840's

Cornice c. 1872

Rustic shelter, 1847

Gazebo, elevation and plan, 1848

Chinese seat c. 1844

Garden arch, plan and elevation, c. 1851

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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Records of the Surrogate's Court, Dutchess County Courthouse, Poughkeepsie, New York.

Day Books, Barton-Davis correspondence, and specifications for ornament, A.J. Davis Collection, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, New York.

Journal, A.J. Davis Collection, Department of Prints, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

Contracts between Mrs. Livingston and Mr. Sternberg, builder, and Mrs. Livingston and Peter Harris, builder, Montgomery Place Papers, Major John White Delafield, Barrytown, New York.

Day Book and Legal Papers, 1834-1870, A.J. Davis Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscripts Division, New York, New York.

b. Secondary and published sources:

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Pawling: Philip H. Smith, 1877.

Prepared by: Susanne Brendel  
Historian, 1974

Susan Stein  
Architectural Historian  
1981

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was sponsored jointly by the National Park Service and the Dutchess County Landmarks Association, with a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts and further assistance from the IBM Mid-Hudson Valley, the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation, the Rhinebeck Historical Society and private donors; measured and drawn during the Summer of 1974, under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), by Richard Crowley (Architect, Rhinebeck), Project Supervisor, with Susanne Brendel (Columbia University), Historian, and Randy Abramson (Washington University), Robert Ferland (Cornell University), Thomas Fisher (Cornell University), and Stanley Tang (University of Pennsylvania), Student Assistant Architects, at Rhinebeck, New York. The historical and descriptive data was edited in 1981 for HABS by Architectural Historian Susan Stein. Final preparation of the documentation was carried out in the HABS Washington Office by Paul Dolinsky, HABS Architect, and Lucy Pope Wheeler, HABS Writer/Editor.

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