

Pantigo Windmill
Inc. Village of East Hampton
Suffolk County
New York

HAER No. NY-143

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Pantigo Windmill

NY-143

Location: Inc. Village of East Hampton,
Suffolk County, New York

Date of Construction: 1804

Present Owner: Inc. Village of East Hampton

Significance: The Pantigo Windmill is one of eleven surviving 18th and early 19th century wind-powered gristmills on Long Island. This is one of the mills built by Nathaniel Dominy V, a prominent East Hampton craftsman who built four of the extant windmills.

Historian: Robert Hefner

Transmitted by: Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, April 1984

I. History of the Windmill

The Pantigo Mill was built on Mill Hill on the common at the south end of East Hampton, the third windmill to occupy that site. The Mill Hill had been built up from a natural rise in 1729 when a post mill was moved there. The post mill was replaced by a new windmill in 1771.

Samuel Schellinger began building the Pantigo Windmill for Huntting Miller in March of 1804. Three months later the owners of the windmill across the common also began constructing a windmill with intermediate gearing. This was to replace their mill built in 1769. This second windmill, the Gardiner Mill, was being built under the direction of Nathaniel Dominy.

Samuel Schellinger charged Huntting Miller for 83 days of his own time and an additional 144 days for the work of his assistants, James Raynor, Mathew and Richard. Also assisting on the mill was David Sherril, and East Hampton carpenter whose account book shows that he repaired several local windmills. In the summer of 1804 David Sherril charged Huntting Miller for thirty-five days work on the mill. In June Sherril noted he was framing the mill and in August he was working on "the Mills running gear."¹

Samuel Schellinger's ancestors had been woodworking craftsmen in East Hampton for a number of generations. Samuel's father, Jonathan Schellinger, was a carpenter and furniture-maker and one of his earliest East Hampton relatives, William Schellinx (the Dutch spelling), built and furnished the town prison in 1698. Samuel Schellinger's own extant account books show that much of his time was spent on large construction projects, such as mill, houses, and barns.

He often managed a sizable crew, which included carpenters from East Hampton, Amagansett, and Sag Harbor. Schellinger also did considerable work on boats at Sag Harbor. In 1809 he made a new mast and boom for the sloop Cynthia. Schellinger spend some of his time making furniture, small wooden objects, and tools. Because the surviving account books are far from complete, the full scope of Schellinger's millwriting practice is not known. His accounts document repair work on seven local mills. He built the Pantigo Mill and the Beebe Mill and he probably built other local windmills as well. Schellinger's work was not confined to the east end of Long Island. He built a windmill in Setauket in the 1820s and, according to his apprentice, William Baker, Schellinger built windmills at Brooklyn, Nantucket, and Block Island.

Huntting Miller apparently had the maintenance work on his new mill done by David Sherril. In his account book, Sherril noted work on the mill in 1805, 1807, 1814 and 1815. The accounts of Nathaniel Dominy V do not mention this windmill until 1821 when he "put Shaft beam &c to Mill" for Huntting Miller.²

Huntting Miller left his property and the windmill to his grandson, Captain William Hedges, who acquired the mill in 1832. In 1834 Hedges had the mill's machinery put in good order, as Nathaniel Dominy V charged him for sixteen days labor to "put in shaft Cogs & Rounds." In 1845 William Hedges sold the mill to David A. Hedges who moved it to his property on the north side of

Pantigo Road about one half mile east of the village. A letter from a visitor to East Hampton published in 1857 states that the mill was moved from Mill Hill because it had been so close to the road that its turning sails frightened the horses.

David Hedges apparently installed a cast-iron cross on the end of the mill's windshaft to secure the sail stocks. This is the earliest record of ironwork on a windshaft of a Long Island windmill. In almost every English windmill of the period, the sail stocks were held in iron, either by a solid cast-iron shaft or by an iron cross or poll-end fastened to a wooden shaft. Thomas Edwards, an East Hampton native born in 1854, wrote in his "Reminiscences of Old East Hampton by the Sea" (1929) that he "saw from the Hook School window the first ironwork put on to this Dominy mill [Pantigo Mill] to hold the shaft and arms together."⁴ This device remained on the mill until 1879 when the mill was disabled by a storm. The Sag Harbor Express (21 August 1879) reported: "Nathaniel Dominy's Egypt Mill had its iron shaft, which holds the mill arms, twisted off."⁵ From these descriptions, the "iron work" must have been a cast-iron attached to a wooden windshaft. The sail stocks were bolted and clamped to the arms of the cross. This was probably the same type of cross as that seen on another Long Island windmill, the Orient Mill. Further documentation of this iron cross is found in the 1872 etching of the Pantigo Windmill which appeared in Picturesque America. This etching shows a narrow spire projecting from the head of the windshaft. Guys run from the point of the spire to the sails stocks. This same unusual bracing is seen in a design for an English windmill with an iron cross, drafted by John Smeaton in 1754.

David Hedges sold the mill to Hiram Sandford who moved it to the corner of Pantigo Road and Egypt Lane where it stood until 1917. This seventy-two year residence on Pantigo Road gave the mill its present name. Some time before 1865, Sandford sold the mill to Nathaniel Dominy VII, who also owned the Hook Mill. An inscription on the stairway in the Pantigo Mill indicates that Dominy was repairing the mill in February 1878 and that he "Commenced to Grind" on 12 June 1878. Unfortunately Dominy only had a year of service from his mill following these repairs, for in August of 1879 a storm, described as the "heaviest since 1811" "twisted off" the iron cross holding the sails stocks.⁶ Dominy never put the mill back in running order.

The Pantigo Windmill was purchased in 1917 by Gustav Buek who moved it to the rear of his house on the East Hampton Common. After Mr. Buek died, the Village of East Hampton acquired his seventeenth-century house, known as "Home Sweet Home," and the windmill. The Village undertook extensive repairs to the mill in 1978-1979.

Footnotes:

- 1) David Sherril Account Book, 1799-1827, manuscript, East Hampton Free Library.
- 2) Felix Dominy, Nathaniel Dominy V and Nathaniel Dominy VII Account Book, 1809-1862, East Hampton Free Library.
- 3) Felex Dominy, Nathaniel Dominy V and Nathaniel Dominy VII Account Book, 1809-1862, manuscript, East Hampton Free Library.
- 4) Thomas Edwards, "Reminiscences of Old East Hampton by the Sea," 1929, manuscript, East Hampton Free Library, p. 18.
- 5) in text.
- 6) Sag Harbor Express, 21 August 1879.

ADDENDUM TO
PANTIGO WINDMILL
James Lane
East Hampton
Suffolk County
New York

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