

***PHASE 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATION***

GRAHAM-BRUSH LOG HOUSE

Village of Pine Plains
Dutchess County, New York.
OPRHP 99PR1492

Prepared For:
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Introduction

On Saturday, June 1, 2002, CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants completed a Phase 2 Archaeological Investigation of the Graham-Brush Log House, located in the Hamlet of Pine Plains, Dutchess County, New York (Map 1-2 & Fig. 1). The Graham-Brush Log House, a rare example of log architecture dating from the 18th century, is currently owned by The Little Nine Partners Historical Society. The Phase 2 Archaeological Investigation followed a Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey conducted by CITY/SCAPE Cultural Resource Consultants on June 10 and September 3, 2000. These archaeological investigations on the property were completed as part of the development of a preservation plan undertaken by The Little Nine Partners Historical Society intended to stabilize and maintain the Graham-Brush Log House. The Graham-Brush Log House meets the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places with significance at a statewide level.

One of the goals of the Phase 1B survey was to uncover the original builder's trench. If present, a workman's trench could have provided valuable insight into log house construction and a context for artifacts that could date to the years just prior to the Revolutionary War, the time period when the Graham-Brush Log House was constructed. The Phase 1B testing, however, yielded no stratigraphic or material evidence of the existence of a workman's trench around the perimeter of the Graham-Brush Log House, and CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants conjectured that the shallow, 3-foot deep, shale foundation of the structure was constructed by workmen standing inside the foundation. Evidence of such activity might exist beneath the floorboards on the west side of the house, which appears to be the oldest portion of the structure, but our conjecture cannot be tested at this time.

Having completed the Phase 1B survey, CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants recommended that a Phase 2 Archaeological Investigation of the Graham-Brush Log House be completed. Douglas Mackey, Program Analyst for OPRHP, was consulted, and it was his recommendation that several 1-meter-square units be excavated around the foundation of the log house in a second, more rigorous attempt to locate a builder's trench. Mr. Mackey indicated three specific loci for testing. In accordance with this recommendation, CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants completed the excavation of the three units as part of a Phase 2 Archaeological Investigation. These excavations offered the opportunity to recover additional cultural material, thereby providing a more extensive material record of the site. The excavations also had the potential to increase our understanding of the lifestyle of the families that occupied the house, and their economic and social status, as well as changes in the community of Pine Plains during the 200 year time span during which the house was occupied.

Archaeological field work was supervised by Stephanie Roberg-Lopez, M.A., R.P.A., Principal Investigator. Field technicians included Kristin Brown, Jorge Lopez, Nasim Flores, Jeff Sheehan, and James Kennedy, who, in addition to participating in the unit excavations, surveyed the site and completed computer mapping. James Kennedy also provided the initial artifact catalog and digital images of cultural materials recovered. Stephanie Roberg-Lopez and Gail T. Guillet were responsible for the site photography. Artifact analysis was conducted by Gail T. Guillet, Nancy Stehling, and Susan M. DeLeonardo, who created the data base and the edited version of the artifact catalog. Stephanie Roberg-Lopez, Gail T. Guillet and Susan M. DeLeonardo wrote the final report. Report production was completed by Beth Selig.

Background Information

The Graham-Brush Log House, built sometime after 1773 on a 259-acre parcel of land owned by Lewis Graham, is situated in the center of the village of Pine Plains in northeastern Dutchess County, New York. The house is on a 0.4 acre roughly rectangular parcel of land with a rectangular extension measuring approximately 10 (3 m) by 40 feet (12 m) projecting off from the southeast corner. This small extension joins a 10 (3 m) by 120 foot (36.576 m) right-of way that extends southward to meet Church Street, the main east-west thoroughfare in the hamlet. The east-west road, now NYS Route 199, was known in the 18th century as the Dutchess and Ulster Turnpike (alternatively the Salisbury Turnpike), which linked the Hudson River and Connecticut, while the north-south highway, now Main Street, linked the village to the rural towns in Columbia County and the southern and central parts of Dutchess County (Larson 1999). As described by Larson, who prepared an architectural assessment of the house for The Little Nine Partners Historical Society, the Graham-Brush Log House originally fronted on Church Street, but in 1802 the highway was realigned to the south, cutting the Graham-Brush Log House off from the street. The development of commercial and residential lots along Main Street and Church Street left the Graham-Brush Log House isolated on an interior lot, with only the narrow extension providing access to Church Street. The house and one acre of land was sold in 1829 to Alfred Brush, who over the years expanded his property until he owned approximately three acres, but, over the years, his holdings were gradually reduced until the house, then situated on a 1.3 acre parcel, was conveyed with 0.4 acres to the Little Nine Partners Historical Society in 1997 (Larson 1999).

The Graham-Brush Log House is currently surrounded by mown lawn and contains several shade trees, along with a copse of white pines along the rear property line. A gravel driveway that provides access to Church Street occupies most of the 20-foot boundary along the eastern edge of the parcel.

In its larger context the Graham-Brush Log House site is located at the northeastern corner of the intersection of Route 199 (Church Street) and Route 82. (Map 1 & 2) It is bounded to the south by lands owned by Richard A. Osofsky, to the west by lands owned by John L. Behler, to the north by lands owned by Miller Brothers Construction, and to the east by lands owned by Douglas F. Wicks, Leland B. Miller, Jr. and the blacktop parking lot of Pecks Supermarket. The Graham-Brush Log House sits in the center of the 120 by 130 foot parcel. The house appears slightly angled when aligned with the modern properties that surround it; however, as noted above, this is related to changes in the alignment of Church Street in the early 19th century, and the subsequent subdivision of the property around the house into lots that fronted the Dutchess and Ulster Turnpike.

Cartographic research, census data, and records of land sales indicate that the Graham-Brush Log House was built sometime after 1773, and inhabited by Lewis Graham and members of his family from c. 1776 until at least the end of the American Revolutionary War in 1783. Following the war, he and his family returned to Morrisania, but he retained ownership of the Graham-Brush Log House until his death in 1795, after which it passed through several owners, including his nephew, Cornelius Willett Van Ranst, until it was purchased in 1829 by Alfred Brush, a tailor, and his wife, Sophia Buckbee Brush. The Brush family lived in the house from 1829 until after Alfred Brush's death in 1872. In 1881 the house and property was sold to Isaiah Dibble, and at least three generations of the Dibble family occupied the house in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The house remained in the Dibble family until 1946, when it was sold to George Sanford, a grocer. The last family to occupy the house was the Shook family, who purchased the house and property from the Sanfords in 1968. When the Shooks moved out in 1989, a local construction company purchased the property for investment purposes, but later that same year sold it to the Little Nine Partners Historical Society. The house appears on early maps of Pine Plains (Map 3 & 4), and has survived to the present day in part due to the appreciation that its owners and neighboring residents of Pine Plains have had for its historical significance.

Background research was conducted on the Graham-Brush Log House by Neil Larson, who completed an extensive and detailed review of the architectural history of the Graham-Brush Log House in 1999. His report incorporates census data, deed research, and histories of the towns of Westchester, Morrisania, and Pine Plains, New York. It also traces the ancestry and lives of the families who occupied the house. His report is referenced frequently in this report, and is summarized below. A complete text of the Conditions Assessment of the Graham-Brush Log House by Neil Larson (1999) was included in the Phase 1B report. In 2000, Neil Larson published a his Graham-Brush Log House report in *The Hudson River Valley Review* (www.hudsonrivervalley.net/hrvr/essays/larson retrieved 4-16-08).

As stated above, CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants performed the Phase 1B Reconnaissance Survey on the Graham-Brush Log House site in 2000. In an effort to provide a comprehensive narrative of the work performed in the Phase 1B, the results of the Phase 1B Survey, and the 1999 Larson study are presented below.

Phase 1B Reconnaissance Survey of the Graham-Brush Log House

At the time of the Phase 1B Field Reconnaissance Survey in 2000, the Graham-Brush Log House was in sturdy condition in spite of its age and long use history; however, the need to stabilize and conserve the house was emphasized after a fire set by vandals in 1998 that damaged the upper floor of the house.

The Phase 1B investigation of the Graham-Brush Log House focused on the site's high potential to contain subsurface historic features in both the yard area and around the perimeter of the house. Testing was designed to locate and identify any subsurface features, including the original workmen's trench, and to assess the condition of the foundation. Additional goals of the Phase 1B were to locate the privy and any remains of the original exterior kitchen. The testing strategy consisted of a tight transect of shovel tests around the foundation of the structure at 10 foot (3 m) intervals, and a fine grid of shovel testing at 25 foot (7.62 m) intervals that blanketed the entire yard area. Field methodology included the excavation of a stratigraphic control test to identify depth and composition of the soil layers. This test yielded four distinct strata characteristic of soils that have been disturbed. The upper layers were gray silt mixed with gravel and fill, underlain by a dark brown sandy glacial subsoil. In addition to the excavation of the stratigraphic control test, the entire land surface was subjected to a walkover and visual inspection, shovel testing with 40 cm (15.74") diameter shovel test pits in potentially sensitive areas, and photographic documentation of the overall site. Soils were passed through a ¼ inch steel mesh screen, and the materials remaining in the screens were carefully examined for historic and prehistoric artifacts. All stratigraphy of each test was recorded, including the depth and the soil description of each layer. All cultural material recovered was removed to the CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants laboratory for analysis.

The Yard

The Phase 1B historic artifact assemblage from the yard area was substantial and diverse. It consisted of a representative cross-section of debris from 18th and 19th century consistent with a domestic assemblage: ceramic and porcelain tableware fragments, bottle glass, kaolin pipe fragments, nails, brick, oyster and clam shell, animal bone, coal, slag, plaster, shingle fragments, window glass, and flower pot fragments. Recognizable among the assemblage was Blue Willow transfer printed whiteware, stoneware crock fragments, a bottle glass fragment embossed with the word "SEWING", a 19th century medicine bottle, a bitters bottle, and two pennies dated 1974 and 1979. No prehistoric artifacts were recovered from any tests in the yard grid.