

# Lewis Graham's House in Pine Plains: A Revolutionary Log Building

by Neil Larson

At first glance, the Lewis Graham house in Pine Plains is an extremely rare and significant example of eighteenth-century log architecture in the Hudson Valley. It is one of only three intact log buildings built before 1800 that are known to exist in the region. Although these dwellings have virtually disappeared from the region's landscape, they were once a prolific house type appearing during a major settlement period between 1750 and 1800. This paradox underscores the importance of the surviving relics and makes them invaluable resources for the study and interpretation of New York's architectural heritage, as well as the history of the people who occupied them. The exotic historic value of Lewis Graham's log house was recognized over 100 years ago, but the antiquarian preciousness of this house has belied an even more remarkable significance. Lewis Graham's house appears to be the only example of a log building built to military specifications during the Revolutionary War that retains sufficient architectural integrity accurately to represent the character of the hundreds of log huts constructed by the Continental Army to house troops and refugees from Virginia to Maine temporarily, including the major encampments at New Windsor, Morristown and Valley Forge.

Lewis Graham built the house to accommodate himself and his family when they were exiled from their home in Morrisania, located in southern Westchester County (now the Bronx), by the British invasion of New York in 1776. Lewis Graham was a scion of a wealthy and influential New York family. He was a grandson and heir of Augustine Graham, a patentee in both the Great Nine Partners Patent and Little Nine Partners Patent, two land grants made in central Dutchess County at the end of the seventeenth century that were pivotal in the settlement history of the Hudson Valley. The log house was built on a lot deeded to the Grahams when the Little Nine Partners Patent was partitioned in 1744. In 1829 Alfred Brush bought the house, which is now known by the two names.

## Site

The Graham-Brush Log House is located near the principal crossroads of the hamlet of Pine Plains in northeastern Dutchess County, New York. The east-west axis of this intersection originated in the early eighteenth century as part of a regional route linking the Hudson River and Connecticut, later known as the Dutchess and Ulster Turnpike. This highway is now identified as NYS Route 199 and is called Church Street in Pine Plains. The north-south axis, Main Street, is also an old road that links the hamlet with associated rural towns in Columbia County to the north and with the central part of Dutchess County (and the county seat at Poughkeepsie) to the south. The southerly leg of this axis is now part of NYS Route 82.

The Graham-Brush Log House occupies a 0.4-acre lot in the midst of the northeast quadrant of this crossroads. The house was constructed sometime after 1773 when Lewis Graham assumed ownership of a 259-acre parcel that extended more than a mile north of the house. It originally fronted on Church Street, but the road was realigned farther south when it became part of the Dutchess and Ulster Turnpike in 1802. Small commercial and residential lots were gradually subdivided on Church and Main Streets, leaving the log house and its associated acreage isolated within. In 1829, the house was sold to Alfred Brush with approximately one acre of land. In three transactions over the next twenty-one years, Brush expanded the size of the lot to roughly three acres, which has been gradually reduced over the past one hundred years as the hamlet has grown and consolidated. The house was situated on a 1.3-acre parcel until it was conveyed with 0.4 acres to the Little Nine Partners Historical Society in 1997.<sup>1</sup>

## General Description

The Graham-Brush Log House is a two-room log structure with a wood-frame lean-to on its rear elevation. The log section roughly measures 39 feet long and 18 feet wide and one-and-one-half stories in height; it has a gable roof oriented with its ridge parallel to the long side. The one-story lean-to adds approximately 10 feet to the width and has a flatter, single-pitch roof that joins the log-house roof at the eave line. The exterior log walls are covered with "German" or novelty siding with two horizontal gouges planed out of each board

creating an appearance of siding with a more narrow exposure. The lean-to is sided with wider boards with only one gouge per board. The roof of the log portion is covered with asphalt shingles applied over one or more layers of wood shingles; the lean-to has a raised-seam metal roof. A fire set by arsonists in the northeast corner of the second floor of the log house in 1998 has damaged the roofing in that section of the house. Until it is repaired the roof has been protected with plastic tarpaulins. Large brick chimneys protrude through the roof ridge of the log house at the gable ends. A tall brick stove flue exits the lean-to roof in approximately the center. A stone-walled basement exists under the east end of the log house. All other sections are built on stone foundations over crawl spaces.

The facade of the house has a southern exposure, with the lean-to appended to the northern side. A door is centrally located on the facade and is flanked by pairs of windows containing six-over-six sashes. The stone back of the fireplace on the west end of the house protrudes through the log wall and is exposed on the exterior elevation. Two nine-pane casement windows flank the chimney on the second story. There is no masonry exposed on the east end of the log house. A window is located near the southeast corner of the ground floor with six-over-six sashes consistent with those in the front. An entrance to the basement and its bulkhead doors are located under this window. Two four-over-four sash windows flank the chimney on the second story, being different in type, dimension, and pane configuration from those on the west elevation. The northerly window was destroyed in the fire.

The lean-to contains a variety of window types and sizes; a number of them are older than those in the log house. There is one window on each end: one with twelve-over-twelve sashes on the west, and one with twelve-over-eight sashes on the east. The north elevation has four window and two door openings fairly evenly spaced. The openings nearest the corners contain eight-over-eight sash windows. Two windows and a doorway have been walled from the interior as the result of room changes. A door and window remain in place and are enclosed in a large (7 ft. x 11 ft.) shed.

## Log House, Phase I: c1776

It is apparent that the log house was erected in two sections, and the lean-to was added at a still later phase; other alterations occurred over the long history of the house. The western front room represents the original one-story,

one-room log building erected on the site when Lewis Graham and his family fled their home in Morrisania, Westchester County following the British invasion of New York. Measuring nearly square, 18 feet on a side, the building was constructed of pine logs hewn on four sides to the dimensions in the wall of six inches wide and eleven inches high. Corners were made by sawing six-inch square notches halfway into the ends of the logs and lapping the front and rear wall logs over the side wall logs. The sill logs were raised slightly on a stone foundation. They were wider than the wall logs leaving an inside ledge to support the floorboard ends. Pine logs hewn only on their top face were mortised into notches cut into the top of front and rear sill logs at about three-foot intervals to support floorboards. About six feet higher on the wall, hewn beams were similarly installed and floored over. At this initial stage, the log wall would have terminated at or just above the ceiling of the room. Rafters, hewn on four sides, likely the present rafters later raised above this section, would have been notched and pegged or spiked to the wall plates and lap-jointed and pegged together at the ridge as they are in the existing roof. The original roof would have been fabricated with wood shingles. Lewis Graham was operating a saw mill on his property by this time.<sup>2</sup>

A stone fireplace was constructed on the west end of the house. The chimney and hearth are supported by a shallow stone footing in the ground beneath the floor, and the log walls are built around the back of the firebox exposing the



*First Floor, west room, west wall, with fireplace.*



*South Elevation. Original one-room log hut (c. 1776) left of door; log addition (c. 1776-1778) on right; window sash installed c. 1820; wall rebuilt and siding added c. 1888. Note failed asphalt shingles roof.*



*West Elevation. Log section (c. 1776) under gable roof; lean-to added c. 1910. Note stone back of fireplace exposed on exterior with bulge due to collapsed foundation.*

stonework on the exterior of the building. A stone or brick chimney was built inside the wall and exited through the roof. The existing fireplace contains elements of the original one; the firebox was reduced in size in a subsequent stage. The entrance to the original house would have been on the south side of the house where two later windows are framed into a void in the log wall. A nine-foot-long notch is cut in the underside of the log serving as the header of this opening and appears to exist from the initial construction of the house. This indicates that the entrance would have been paired with a window to create the facade of the house. A patch in the east wall identifies where another window was located in the c1776 house. The present door connecting this room to the center passage was later inserted in its place. A similar notch in the header log above the existing door in the rear wall of the room indicates that a door or window was built into the north elevation of the building, but perhaps at a later period. The garret windows in place in the west end of the house would not have existed in the shorter original house and were added in a later phase.

The one-room-plan house would have been Spartan in its level of finishes. Log walls where they are visible in the room are whitewashed indicating that they were not plastered originally. The ceiling retains evidence of having been painted as well. The beams and boards were planed somewhat smooth to create a finished appearance, and the beams have been chamfered in a rough fashion. They may have been unpainted originally, which was the norm in eighteenth-century English houses. The fireplace was wider than it is in its current altered condition. A stone hearth would have extended into the room following the dimensions of the wooden patch presently in the floor. The cabinets that fill the spaces on either side of the chimney if not original were added in Phase II. Placing the doorway and a window on the southern exposure would have been a practical arrangement for both warming and illuminating the interior of the house. The door would have been constructed simply with board and battens like the door now in the opening to the passage; this door is probably the original exterior door. The windows would have been sash units by this time, and the opening is large enough for a sash the size of the 12-over-12 or 12-over-8 units placed anachronistically in the lean-to. Trim around these and the other window or windows would have been minimal. The low, dark garret would have been unfinished and unlighted. Access to the space would have been made either from a trap door in the ceiling or an exterior hatch. Eighteenth-century log houses in other regions left a portion of the ceiling open and used the upper level as a loft, but for this to have been the case here, since there are no cuts or patches in the ceiling, the loft would have had to have been refloored during later renovations.



*East Elevation. Log addition on left under gable (c. 1776-1778) with rebuilt chimney (c. 1820); lean-to (c. 1910) on right. Note fire damage around window outside the room where the arson took place.*



*North Elevation, northwest perspective. Lean-to addition (c. 1910) with raised-seam metal roof; green asphalt shingles on log portion; west chimney on right, east chimney on left, north chimney at north wall.*

## Log House, Phase II: c1776-1780

Very shortly after the original one-room house was erected, a second log crib was constructed off its east side. The new section was built in essentially the same dimensions and manner as the existing house except that a basement was dug beneath it and the ceiling height was increased. The four-walled log structure defining the new room was separated from the old house by a space five feet wide that was enclosed by extending the logs on the front and rear walls to create a center passage. The three spaces were further joined together by new courses of logs above them that raised the second floor to a half-story. Hewn pine logs 36 feet long spanned the entire distance between corners on the long elevations. As in the original room, widely spaced beams were saddled into front and rear wall logs to support the floor above. Ceiling height in the addition was increased by one log over that in the old section, or about twelve inches. A new roof was constructed to cover the enlarged building using hewn rafters and collars. Rafters and collars numbered I to IV from the west were reused from the Phase I roof and elevated into new positions; new rafters and collars numbered I to V from the east provided structural support for the roof of the Phase II addition.

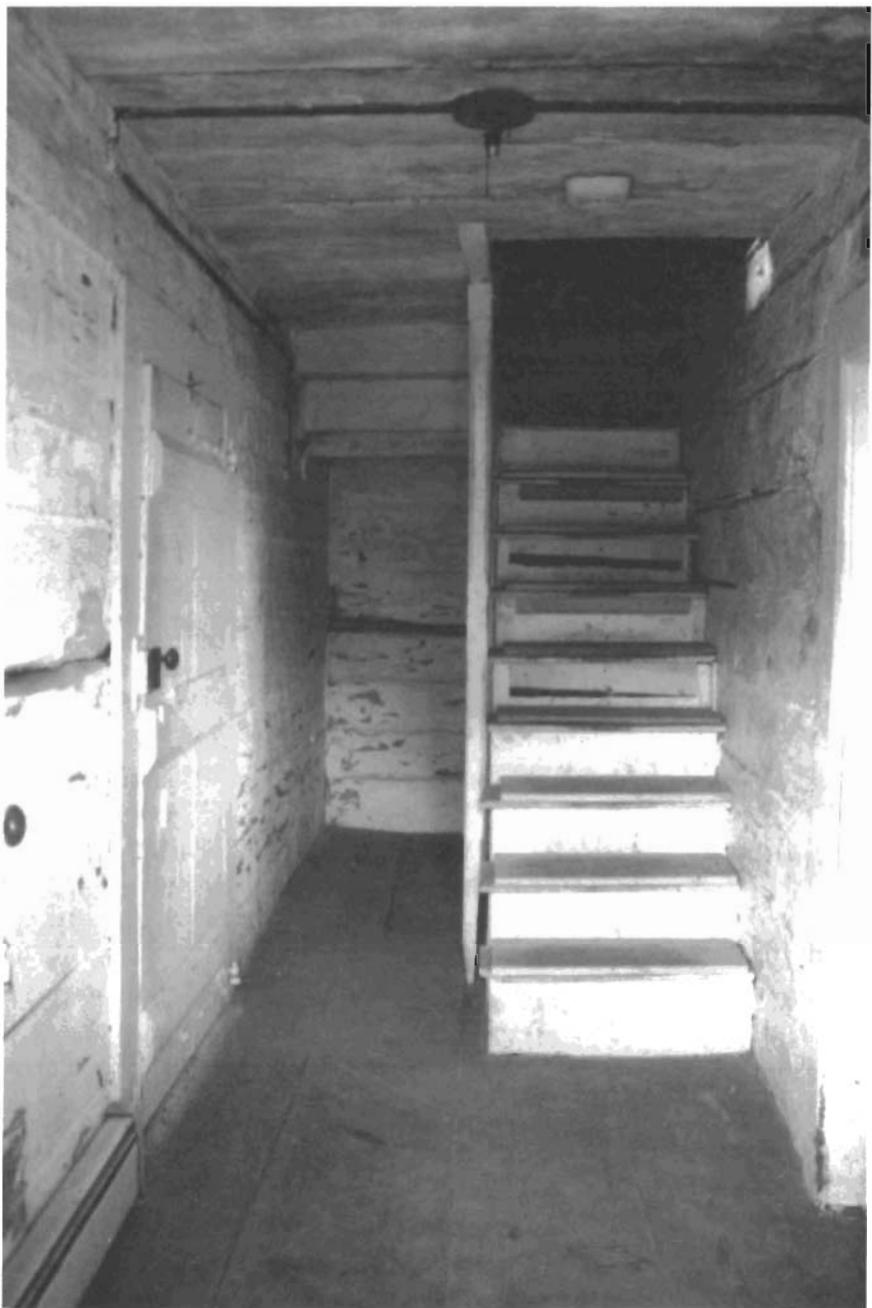
The facade of the house changed dramatically after the addition. With a new entrance built into the center passage between the cribs, the entrance into the original room was relocated from the south to the east side, taking its present place in the former window position. The space left on the facade was probably filled with two windows as it is now. There would have been enough room in the original opening for this using the existing window and adding another in the door space. A similar hole or holes were built into the front wall of the new section of the house as it was being built, and two windows were inserted there to achieve an axial symmetry on the expanded facade. The doorway in the north wall of the old room was probably cut through at this time providing access to the back of the house. At some point, possibly at this phase, a detached or attached kitchen would have likely existed, and the old room would have been the logical point of connection. Also, the passage was built without a rear door so an exit here would have been practical. At least one opening in the rear wall of the new room was original, used for a doorway or a window. The window located on the east wall of the new room was added during later renovation efforts in the house. There is evidence in what remains of the log wall on the east end of the building for a stone fireplace with an exposed back like that which remains in view on the west end. At a later time, a small, cast-iron fireplace was inserted and a new brick hearth installed. More recently, the chimney

enclosure was widened on the north side when a furnace flue was brought up through the floor and broken into the chimney above the mantel. All these Phase II enlargements and alterations were concealed by weatherboards nailed on the outside of the log walls.

Stairs to the second floor were built at the time the passage was constructed. The existing staircase is the result of a late-nineteenth-century alteration that lengthened and flattened the run of stairs. Cruder, steeper stairs descending to the basement are enclosed beneath with an intact old door with iron strap hinges and a wooden latch closing off the space. Log walls are exposed on all four sides of the passage. A void was left under the header log in the front wall for the entrance; the rear wall is solid with no evidence (or space) for a doorway. Each side wall has a single doorway entering the flanking rooms. The doorway into the old house section is roughly centered on the wall. A patch is evident to the right of the door trim where an earlier window existed. The doorway into the new room of the house is positioned closer to the front of the house to allow adequate space for the stairs, which make a straight run to a landing two steps below the upper floor level. Boards span the five-foot-wide gap between cribs that create the passage at both floor and ceiling levels.

With its whitewashed log walls, board ceiling, doors and stair, the passage provides a fairly accurate representation of the appearance of the rest of the ground floor of the house. Although the east room is plastered and covered with recent applications of manufactured materials, it is evident that in the beginning it was as roughly finished as the original house. As in the old room of the house, the log walls and ceiling bear traces of heavy layers of whitewash and paint. Lath nail holes in the beams document that the ceiling was plastered at some interim date. With alterations to the ceiling, fireplace, fenestration and finishes, it is evident that an extensive updating of this space occurred in the early nineteenth century.

A second floor was created in the second phase of construction. Raising the roof created headroom for living space. Because of the higher ceiling level in the added section, floor levels are uneven. A room was created over the old room where the floor was lower and there was more headroom by erecting the board partition that still exists west of the stairs and laying a board ceiling above the rafter collars. An elegantly shaped horizontal batten on the room side of the partition also serves as a decorative chair rail. In a remarkable display of the economical use of materials and craftsmanship typical in log houses, the ceiling boards are pegged to the collars rather than nailed. The remaining portion of rafters and roofing between the collars and the plate was left exposed. The



*First Floor center passage with stairs, looking north from entrance.*

plank wall, ceiling and roof surfaces, and the exposed logs have been painted and/or whitewashed many times. The original Phase II finish has not been determined. The chimney was extended through the new space, and the small fireplace was constructed to heat the room. These, too, have thick coatings of paint. Two end-wall casement windows were installed at the time the roof was raised and the room created. Surviving boards behind the chimney indicate that the gable end walls above the log were constructed with vertical planks.

A second board partition dividing this room is a later alteration, as is the slim doorway cut into the Phase II board wall to provide access into the second room the partition created. In this second phase of construction, the garret above the new section of the house was left unpartitioned and open to the rafters. A board wall was erected to partition off the space over the east room in a later phase. Like the room on the west side of the garret, this room was, still later, bisected by a plaster partition to create two sleeping rooms. It was this area, particularly the northeast room, that was severely damaged by arsonists. There were likely windows on the east end of the house to light the garret space, but the discrepancy in the types that survive on opposite ends suggests that the sash units in the east end are later additions made when rooms were created in the space.

In the garret space, the stairway turned on a landing two steps below floor level. As built, this platform was shallower. (The rafters were not yet plastered over so there would have been more headroom.) The stair hole was cut back about twelve inches when the stairs were shifted back from the wall, and the railings were extended to enclose the void. Otherwise the stair arrangement at this level is intact and perhaps the house's most remarkable example of craftsmanship. At the landing, the stairs turned left around a shaved and carved (not turned) post with a pyramidal finial. The smaller stair hole was fenced off using a hierarchy of decoration that reinforces the distinction between the finished and unfinished sides of the house. On the west side, a fancy balustrade with chamfered spindles made a short run up the final two steps and across the hole. It cornered at a plainer post with the same finial and traversed the south side of the hole with a simpler rail. The rail was neatly mortised into the post at the fancy corner but was nailed to a tapered board that served as the post at the plain corner. (Marks under the rail indicate that there were balusters beneath the rail, but none survive to show if they were scaled back from the decorative level of the others.) From here a rail fence extended to the back wall, closing off direct access to the unfinished side of the house. On this side, corner and medial posts were cleated to the log wall supporting the floor along that side. The rails were planed and beaded and nailed at the top end of the posts.

In the basement, the joint between the Phase I and Phase II sections of the



*Second Floor, fireplace.*

house is evident where a new sill is butted against an earlier sill and by a comparison of floor joists side to side. As noted above, the sleepers under the floor of the old house are hewn only on the side that meets the floorboards; the rest of the joists are unhewn with their bark intact. In the addition, floor joists are hewn on four sides. The original Phase II set of stairs to the passage are located in the northwest corner of the space. The stairs are hung from a beam embedded under and cantilevered from the paired sills on the west side of the basement. The only other structural feature in the basement is the chimney and hearth support on the east end of the house. A narrow stone base was built out from the basement wall to carry the chimney. When the fireplace was altered in the early nineteenth century, a heavy frame crib was built to support the brick hearth in the floor overhead. Its small scale and sawn components correspond with the early nineteenth-century characteristics of the iron fireplace and other alterations and small chimney in the room above.

## Log Architecture

Log construction was introduced into Hudson Valley domestic architecture as a cheap alternative to frame and masonry construction and required only

basic tools and experience. This excessive use of wood at the bottom of the architectural hierarchy signifies that raw materials were cheap, and skilled labor was expensive. As settlement in the region finally began to progress in the second half of the eighteenth century, log houses became the affordable housing of people at the lower end of the economic scale. The pioneer image of the home-steader cutting down trees, chopping notches in the ends of logs, and building his own crude abode is not far from the truth. How, from where or by whom log construction was introduced cannot be determined. By this time, architectural ideas were freely circulating. Immigrants were arriving from all areas of Europe and the American colonies; through inter-colonial trade and travel, people were aware of the different ways of building in other places. Log construction should not have been a mystery to anyone, and it would have been a near intuitive solution for a settler in a forest, with an axe and the desire for shelter.

## Temporary Log Housing During the Revolutionary War

While there are no personal accounts, the documentary record convincingly supports the conclusion that Lewis Graham moved his family into the log house in Pine Plains as a temporary refuge from the enemy occupation of their home in Morrisania, Westchester County. Following the British invasion of New York in August 1776, New York City and lower Westchester County (now the Bronx), where Morrisania was located, were controlled by the British military until peace was declared in 1783. British troops were billeted at the Graham home, and it eventually burned due to their negligence. Morrisania became the headquarters of James Delancey's loyalist marauders and a camp of Tory refugee huts was built there. Farms were raided by both sides for cattle, wheat and other foodstuffs; this area was quickly abandoned by virtually all civilians and remained a wasteland through the entire rebellion. Diarist Timothy Dwight made the following observations during the autumn of 1777:

The unhappy inhabitants...houses...were in a great measure scenes of desolation. Their furniture was extensively plundered or broken to pieces. The walls, floors and windows were injured, both by violence and decay, and were not repaired because they had no means to repair them, and because they were exposed to the repetition of the same injuries. Their cattle were gone. Their enclosures were burnt when

they were capable of becoming fuel, and in many cases thrown down when they were not. Their fields were covered with a rank growth of weeds and wild grass.<sup>3</sup>

Lewis Graham was active in the rebellion, and he and his family would have been in jeopardy had they stayed at Morrisania. His role was recorded by historian Isaac Huntting as follows.

Lewis Graham...was elected to the first Provincial Congress of the Colony of New York, May 8, 1775, from Westchester County. November 7th following, he was re-elected to the second Provincial Congress, which convened in New York November 14th following, which continued without dissolution - having several sessions - until the second Tuesday of May, 1776. Mr. Graham was an associator from Westchester County, and a member of the sub-committee of the "borough and town of Westchester" in '75 and '76, and in the latter year was a member of the committee to detect conspiracies, in which he took an active part. He held a commission as Colonel and was also Judge...He signed the "association" when members of the first Provincial Congress of New York, held in New York, May 26, 1775, when all the members signed the same.

His intimate involvement with the war effort and military action made him and his family a target of violent reprisals. Thus, Lewis Graham, as well as his brothers and sisters, set up temporary households (some turned out to be permanent) in the safe and protective community of Pine Plains for the entire period of the war.<sup>4</sup>

Lewis Graham's role in the leadership of the American war effort would have introduced him to temporary military housing, which was being built throughout the lower Hudson Valley as the Continental Army was bringing in increasing numbers of troops into the region to relieve the New York militia regiments. This housing was built of logs, and the army developed a standardized method of construction to direct soldiers in their fabrication at encampments in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. There are also accounts of log huts, as these one- and two-room buildings were commonly called at the time, being built by refugees or by Committees for the Poor in New York counties inundated with homeless exiles. Because of his familiarity with this housing option, and likely because he considered his habitation in Pine Plains to be temporary, Lewis Graham opted to build a log hut and followed a military prototype. Graham's

original one-room house has a remarkable similarity to huts described in Revolutionary War records. Built without a basement on a trenched foundation, square in plan, seven feet tall, and with its hearth and chimney resting on the ground, the house is consistent with Revolutionary era descriptions. It utilizes the half-lapped corner method favored by the military, and following all accounts, it was built with few tools and metal parts. When Lewis Graham decided shortly thereafter to enlarge the house, he amended the specifications to create a more comfortable residence for his family.<sup>5</sup>

Archeological investigations at the New Windsor Cantonment unearthed a continuous stone-wall foundation built in a trench for a regiment commander's hut and evidence was discovered for stone fireplaces with flared wing walls and hearthstones that extended two feet beyond the firebox. Both of these are features found in Lewis Graham's log house. Detached kitchens were also common. At Newburgh in 1782, Quartermaster Thomas Pickering issued the following specifications for erecting kitchens: "The field officers will build kitchens of 14 feet by 14 from outside to outside - the captains and subalterns, kitchens of 12 feet by 12 feet, from outside to outside: All kitchens to be placed endwise behind the center of the huts to which they belong with an interval of eight feet between. The square of the kitchens is to be seven feet high." Kitchens were considered to be unhealthy in small, one-room living quarters. On April 22, 1783, the Second Massachusetts Regiment, which was camped at New Windsor, received the following directive: "The warm season being so far advanced that cooking in the huts makes them not only uncomfortable, but will destroy that health which is so remarkable in the Regiment, therefore in future (when the weather is dry) all cooking will be done in the kitchens made in front of the parade for that purpose. No fires are to be made in the huts but the ashes be taken from the hearths the hearths swept clean, and green brush put in the chimnies [sic]." The standard practice of defining kitchens separate from huts further supports the theory that the Graham-Brush Log House had an exterior kitchen in the eighteenth century and perhaps until the lean-to was added in the early twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

## The Graham Family

The Graham family figures prominently in the political and land history of New York. Lewis's great-grandfather, James Graham, arrived in New York in 1678. He had emigrated from Scotland where his grandfather, the Marquis of

Montrose had been executed as a leader in a nationalist uprising. James Graham was wealthy and well-positioned in the merchant class of the colony, and he was a confidant of Governor Thomas Dongan. Through this association, he was active in acquiring land in Ulster County, Staten Island and New Jersey. In 1685, Dongan appointed him “Attorney General and Supervisor of all Patents” for the Province. He served through two turbulent terms, once during Dongan’s ill-fated attempt to consolidate the New York and New England colonies (for which Graham was briefly imprisoned and exiled to England) and again in the midst of the Leisler Rebellion. Graham also acted as Speaker of the Colonial Assembly for three different terms between 1691 and 1699 before dying in 1701 at his home in Morrisania, Westchester County.<sup>7</sup>

James Graham willed his property undivided to his children. His eldest son, Augustine, following in his footsteps, became Surveyor General of the colony and positioned himself favorably in numerous land deals in the Hudson Valley as the seventeenth century came to a close. In 1697, he became one of the proprietors of the Great Nine Partners Patent in central Dutchess County. Soon after, in 1706, he joined another group of nine partners in a smaller patent in northern Dutchess County that became known as the Little Nine Partners Patent. One of the drawbacks of large frontier patents like the Great and Little Nine Partners Patents was that surveying and dividing the grants into lots was costly and proprietors took years to complete the task, especially when demand for lots was so unpredictable. For many years, the only inhabitants on these patents were random tenants and squatters. When Augustine died in Morrisania in 1718, neither Dutchess County patent had been partitioned and his eldest son James Graham became proprietor of his property in Dutchess County and elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

## Evidence of Lewis Graham’s Presence in Pine Plains

There is documentary evidence that associates Lewis Graham with Pine Plains during the late 1700s and with the property on which the log house was constructed. While there is no deed record of his ownership of the property which contains the house (Dutchess County land records are quite incomplete for this period), there is a reliable explanation in Hunting’s *History of Little Nine Partners* based on records of which the author was aware in 1897. According to this account, Lewis Graham received title to the land where the Graham-Brush

Log House was built in the distribution of his father James Graham's lands in the Little Nine Partners Patent. The Grahams owned two adjacent lots, identified as No. 29 and No. 48, which are of particular interest because they include much of the land that went into creating the Pine Plains hamlet. Lot No. 48 was bisected east-west by the Sharon Road (the Dutchess and Ulster turnpike), and this road intersected with a north-south route aligned with the lot's western boundary. Lot No. 29 abutted Lot No. 48, its northeast corner overlapping its neighbor's southwest corner. The south leg of the crossroads bisected Lot No. 29 on its course to Poughkeepsie. According to Huntting, both these lots were subdivided by the heirs in an unrecorded survey dated 1773. In the distribution of the land, Lewis Graham received approximately 259 acres of land on the west side of Lot No. 48 with its southwest corner aligned with the intersection.<sup>10</sup>

Following the Revolution, Lewis turned his attention to land matters in Pine Plains. A few local documents and public records place him in the town from just after the war until 1794 when he contributes timber to build a bridge across the Shekomeko Creek. Like his brothers Morris and Charles before him, Lewis Graham served in positions of local government, and his terms as supervisor of the Northeast Precinct occurred during this period from 1779 to 1781 and again in 1784. Huntting also reports that Lewis Graham married Margaret Walton of Pine Plains and fathered a daughter before they returned to Westchester, where he died around 1795. Pine Plains would have offered many opportunities to a landholder in the period following the Revolutionary War. It can be assumed that Lewis Graham was speculating with lands he and his siblings had inherited. For property of which he had obtained title, he was either seeking buyers or harvesting timber and other available natural resources. He and the others would have been managing leaseholds on lands not yet sold. On his own land, Lewis Graham operated a mill and supported a farm, using the log house as a headquarters for his business and political endeavors.<sup>10</sup>

When Lewis Graham died, his estate conveyed the 257 acres in Lot No. 48 of the Little Nine Partners Patent with its "mill & farm" to Cornelius Willett Van Ranst, the stepson of his brother Augustine. Both the Willett and Van Ranst families had been neighbors of the Grahams in Morrisania and had intermarried. Van Ranst owned the property for only a short time. The land records are incomplete, but by 1801 he had divided the parcel into three parts, selling the northern 105 acres and the mill to Matthias and Henry Hoffman and at least 100 acres of what remained to Stephen Leggett, scion of another prominent Morrisania family. The remaining 54 acres, including the log house were conveyed to Moses and Amy Barlow who in turn sold the property to Peter Husted

in 1805. Husted subdivided three lots from this parcel, one at the north end for the burying ground and two along the turnpike (Church Street), one for the Meeting House and a house lot sold to Tyler Dibblee. The remaining 49.5 acres was tied up in Husted's estate from when he died in 1808 to 1825 when Dr. Cornelius Allerton , his son-in-law, obtained a deed for it. Four years later, Allerton sold the log house and one acre to Alfred Brush. Who was living in the house in the period of years between the end of Van Ranst's occupancy in 1801 to Brush's in 1829 is unclear. It was likely tenanted for a significant portion of the time, and with this transition into a more conventional domestic building, the log house's association with the Grahams and other elite families as a refuge became history. From that point, the log house began a renewed existence as component of the vernacular architecture of the rural hamlet of Pine Plains.<sup>11</sup>

## Alfred Brush and the Redefinition of the Log House

Alfred Brush occupied the log house from 1829 until his death in 1872. Brush's occupancy is significant for making the log house into a permanent abode. At this time, significant changes were made to the house to restore its failing condition, improve some of its cruder elements, and make it more livable as a nineteenth-century dwelling. This work was either done by Brush or by Allerton in preparation for selling the house. The most evident alterations occurred on the facade of the house, where new six-over-six sash windows replaced eighteenth-century fenestration. By this point, the log walls would have also required some repair. On the interior, the east room was made updated as a fancy parlor. The fireplace in this room was reduced in size and an elegant iron firebox was inserted. A delicate mantel shelf was installed, and a closet enclosed the space between the chimney and rear wall (since removed). The walls and ceiling were plastered creating a low but stylish room. The older, west room was also plastered, but the wooden ceiling was left exposed. The fireplace in this room was also reduced in size and plastered. The old paneled cupboards flanking the hearth remained intact. The old-fashioned space clearly became secondary in the spatial hierarchy of the house. The reduction of the size of the fireplace in this room provides further support for the theory that a kitchen existed somewhere in the rear of the house at this time. Upstairs, both the board wall dividing the existing chamber and the plank partition enclosing the east side of the garret were built during Brush's occupancy, although probably at dif-

ferent times (with the room divider occurring first). Few other changes were made to the house at this time or during Brush's lifetime.

Little is known about Alfred Brush. He was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1814, moving with his family to Dutchess County as a child. Brush was a tailor and probably operated his business out of his home, so some of the interior space, perhaps on the second floor, would have been devoted to a workroom. His property never extended to Church Street, so it is unlikely he had a shop in the midst of other commercial enterprises at the crossroads. He was independent but was of a "middling sort" or lower. In 1826, before he purchased the house (but perhaps was living there), he was assessed \$0.51 of tax by the town. More than half the assessments were less than one dollar, however, his neighbors were much better off. Cornelius Allerton, from whom he bought the house, was assessed at \$4.25, Stephen Eno at \$6.29, Isaiah Dibblee at \$10.64. Walter Reynolds, another neighbor, owed \$0.85, and Henry Hoffman, who owned Lewis Graham's old mill site, led the town with an assessment of \$23.25. In 1836, Alfred Brush hosted a meeting to incorporate the Baptist Society of Pine Plains. He and many of his neighbors had baptised in the Shekomeko Creek in Hammertown the year before. The church was built in 1837. Over the years, he purchased three more small pieces of land from his neighbors, assembling nearly three acres total. One source notes that Alfred Brush was an invalid by 1852 and "helpless" from 1867 until he died in 1872. Brush and his wife were childless; Sophia Brush died in 1875. His estate held the title until 1881 when the property and the house was sold to Phebe Thompson.<sup>12</sup>

## The Dibblee Era: Graham-Brush House as a Historic Relic

Phebe Thompson was a distant relative of Alfred Brush, as well as the granddaughter of Lewis Graham's brother, Augustine. She sold it in 1890 to another cousin, Isaiah Dibblee. Huntting's otherwise reliable accounting of local history contradicts the deed history and raises a question about occupancy at this stage. It would not be necessarily critical except that the historian makes this reference in relation to the appearance of siding on the log house. The Huntting entry is as follows:

Pine Plains village is indebted to the Grahams for its site, and to Lewis Graham in person. He built the log block house in 1773 or '74, known later as the "Brush House," now [1897] owned by Mr. Isaiah Dibble who

in 1881 put on siding and other repairs as it now appears. The frame and main portion were made from oak logs hewn square, and the house had a large entry and hall way in the center and a large room on each side of the hall. Mr. Isaac Huntting has an arm chair made by Henry Englekee from an oak log taken from the house when the repairs were made in 1881.

The above reveals the historic status the house had achieved, at least locally, by 1897, much of it probably the result of Huntting's newspaper articles on local history and his book. It is this history that created and then sustained people's historic interest in the house. However, this account is at odds with the interpretation presented here on a number of points. Huntting described the house accurately enough, but it is curious that in a place whose name and history revolve around the pine forest early settlers found there, he would refer to the logs used in the house as oak. (Did Mr. Englekee deceive Huntting about the wood he used in that chair?) <sup>11</sup>

Also, the present novelty siding was not the first layer of siding put on the building as Huntting asserted, although the existing siding appears to be the material put on by Isaiah Dibble in 1881. There is physical evidence of older nails used to attach siding to the logs, probably weatherboard applied when Lewis Graham expanded the house. Perhaps this siding had deteriorated and come off during Alfred Brush's occupancy. Huntting was fairly fastidious about accuracy, and for a nineteenth-century historian, avoids many of the usual Romantic pitfalls. (In fact, Huntting was a genealogist and erred on the side of detail, especially when it came to listing names.) He was also related to Mr. Dibble, which was probably how he became so intimate with the house. So in addition to using this account to document the age of the siding, it would appear that Isaiah Dibble succeeded the Brush family as the occupant of the house, even though Phebe Thompson owned it for a time. The Dibble family lived in the house longer than any other occupant. When Isaiah Dibble's granddaughter, Gladys Dibble Greene, who grew up in the house, sold the place in 1946 after her mother died, it ended 56 years of ownership and probably 65 years of living there. As a result, any of the significant alterations - the building of the lean-to, making rooms and plastering on the second floor, and as Huntting records, repairing and re-siding the log building - can be attributed to the Dibbles. And although there was no organized preservation effort in Pine Plains at that time, the house emerged as a local historic site during that time.

## Recent History

In 1946, the “Brush House” was purchased by George Sanford, who had recently moved to town to run a local grocery. When an old Pine Plains landmark just east of the house was torn down for a new Grand Union Supermarket in 1950, George Sanford became the store manager. Considering the Sanfords’ economic and social position in the community, it appears that the Brush House had been elevated in image to an antiquarian object because of its age and reputation. During their twenty-two years in the house, the Sanfords made sensitive improvements. They modernized the lean-to kitchen and may have been the owners who built the first bathroom in the house. They also stripped layers of plaster and paint from the wooden ceilings to enhance the historic appearance that earlier occupants worked hard to cover up. The last family to occupy the house, the Shooks, purchased the house from the Sanfords in 1968. They continued to maintain and repair the decaying log structure, but few changes in the old section of the house are noticeable. When the Shooks moved out in 1989, the house was bought by a local construction company as an investment property. When their plans to renovate the house did not materialize, the Graham-Brush Log House was sold to the Little Nine Partners Historical Society. The building will now continue its long journey as a historic artifact as a museum.

The passage of time inevitably obscured and generalized the history of the house. Inaccuracies in written histories, such as Huntting’s assumption that the house was built of oak logs instead of pine (which is all the more ironic having been built in Pine Plains) and the tradition of the building having been a block house, even though Pine Plains was well removed from the front, have continued to inform preservationists and local historians. While implausible, the legend of the house’s association with the Revolution reflects the fact from which it originated.

## Notes

1. Isaac Huntting’s *History of Little Nine Partners of North East Precinct and Pine Plains, New York, Dutchess County* (1897; rpt. Rhinebeck, NY: Arthur C.M. Kelly, 1974) is the principal source of the history of the partition of Graham lands in Pine Plains. The earliest description of Lewis Graham’s property is in a 1795 mortgage granted by the executors of his estate to his nephew, Cornelius Willett Van Ranst (*Dutchess County Mortgages*, Lieber 7, pp. 63-64), and it contradicts Huntting’s account, which he must have learned secondhand. The transactions by which Alfred Brush purchased the house and adjoining acreage are documented in county deed records, as are all the subsequent transfers.
2. Huntting dates the origins of the house to the undocumented 1773 partition of Lots No. 29

and No. 48 in the Little Nine Partners Patent by the heirs of James Graham (pp. 347-349), but it more likely was built while the Grahams were living as refugees in Pine Plains during the Revolutionary War. The Grahams' property and family home in Morrisania was occupied by British and Loyalist troops throughout the war, beginning when the British landed at Throg's Neck in September, 1776. See accounts in the Rev. Robert Bolton's *The History of the Several Towns, Manors and Patents of the County of Westchester...* Third Edition (NY 1905) and Otto Hufeland's *Westchester County during the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (White Plains, NY, Westchester Historical Society 1926). The mill is referenced in the 1795 mortgage between Lewis Graham's estate and Cornelius Willett Van Rans; it was located on the Shekomeko Creek on the northern edge of his property where Hoffman's, or Patchin's Mill currently exists.

3. Timothy Dwight's *Travels in New England and New York* (New Haven, 1821).
4. Huntring, p. 69. This entire history is comprehensively covered in Hufeland's *Westchester County during the American Revolution, 1775-1783*, although there are few direct references to Lewis Graham. Also see appropriate sections in Bolton's *The History of the Several Towns, Manors and Patents of the County of Westchester*, as well as Huntring's chapters on the Revolutionary period.
5. There is a small repository of copies of documents relating to log huts at the New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site in New Windsor, Orange County, New York where all the following references were collected. The National Archives is the source of most of the material, although the most explicit specifications for huts built at the cantonment, written by Quartermaster Timothy Pickering in 1782, are in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Charles Fisher's archeological report on one hut site in New Windsor, "A [Draft] Management Plan for Archeological Resources at the Town of New Windsor Parkland" (Albany: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 1985), provides information on foundations, chimney bases and other material history regarding log huts. The New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site also maintains a log-hut structure that the National Temple Hill Association had purchased in the 1920's understanding it to be a surviving hut that had been moved and adapted into a kitchen wing on a nearby farmhouse. In recent years, site managers began collecting physical and archival evidence for constructing huts to document this building only to find it quite inconsistent with eighteenth-century specifications. The Graham-Brush Log House may provide new information for this analysis and the accurate representation of log architecture on this and other Revolutionary War encampment sites such as Morristown, New Jersey and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where no original buildings survive and reconstructions are of questionable authenticity. There is an account in Bolton's *History of ... County of Westchester* regarding a member of the Leggett family, who were neighbors of the Grahams in Morrisania, who after the British invasion fled to Saratoga "cleated a small piece of land, erected a log house, and prepared to spend the winter" (p. 447).
6. All these references are located in the New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site's research files: Charles Fisher, "A Management Plan for Archeological Resources at the Town of New Windsor Parkland" (draft), 1985, NYSOPRH, p. 29; Pickering Letterbooks, Letter dated Nov 4th, 1782; Regimental Orders, 2nd Mass. Regiment, April 22, 1783.
7. Huntring, p. 343-344. James Graham's close association with the well-known Morris family of that place is indicated by his daughter Isabella's marriage to Lewis Morris; she was the mother of Gouverneur Morris and Lewis Morris, the signer of the Declaration of Independence.
8. Huntring, p. 345.
9. Huntring, p. 347; . A mortgage issued in 1795 by Lewis Graham's estate for land sold in Lot 48 identifies that parcel as containing 259 acres. (Dutchess County Mortgages, Book 7, pp. 63-64) A "mill & farm" are referenced in the document.
10. Huntring, p. 346. Other than what Huntring has recorded and scant references to Revolutionary Era activities, no record has been located concerning Lewis Graham's personal life.

11. A deed for Van Ranst's transaction with the Hoffmans is recorded in the Dutchess County Clerk's Office (Lieber 178, p. 549, April 1, 1801). The Leggett transaction is referenced in a later deed for the sale of 100 acres immediately south of the Hoffman purchase as occurring on April 18, 1801 (Lieber 41, p. 282). The deed where the Barlows transferred the log house to Peter Husted, as well as the three exceptions, are referenced in an 1825 deed conveying the property from Husted's estate to Cornelius Allerton (Lieber 34, p. 28). Alfred Brush's purchase of the house and one acre is documented in a deed found in Lieber 42, p. 339.
12. Both Alfred Brush and his parents are buried in the Evergreen Cemetery in Pine Plains. His will (Dutchess County Wills Book 2, p. 315, dated: January 17, 1844) left his brother, Robert Starr Brush "all the tools Rule books and measuring implements used by me in the Tailoring business." The tax assessments are in the Stephen Eno Papers at the New York State Library, Albany, New York (Box 2, Folder 85). The background of the Baptist Society is recorded in Huntting, pp. 211-212. Additional information about Alfred Brush's health came from the name files in the library of the Dutchess County Historical Society; the notes were compiled by genealogist Rosemary Lyons O'Mara of Pine Plains. The sale to Phebe Thompson is recorded in Dutchess County Deeds, Lieber 252, p. 426.
13. Huntting, p. 349.