

## **The Federal Era Row House of Lower Manhattan**

In 1964, Ada Louise Huxtable made a plea for the preservation of Lower Manhattan's most venerable and vulnerable buildings. "Few New Yorkers realize," she wrote in *Classic New York*,

"that the comfortable, charming, and historically important small house c. 1800-30 still exists. It is too well hidden, too efficiently defaced, and – above all – too fast disappearing.

Those accidental and anonymous survivors of the city's early years may be gone before this guide ever reaches the reader's hands. Some can, and should, be saved. Some are beyond saving. All are a special problem in preservation, for they are not monuments or masterpieces, but a more modest part of the city's original fabric....Their value is contrast, character, visual and emotional change of pace, a sudden sense of intimacy, scale, all evocative qualities of another century and way of life. They provide the impression of a city 'in depth,' the richness of past and present side by side.

But these buildings are not profitable, because they are small and old, and their greatest value seems to be cheapness of acquisition, so that developers and speculators...can tear them down to put up more high-return, faceless new construction....

What follows, therefore, may be here today and gone tomorrow, and my selections are presented with a small prayer that they may still be around to be seen when this is read."

Ms. Huxtable's plea serves all too well, unfortunately, as a preamble to this selection of Federal Era row houses. They represent just a few of the over 300 buildings of the period still standing in Manhattan south of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Individually and collectively they speak of the history and ethic of the early Republic, when New York City was beginning to take its leading place in America's culture and economy. At a time now of both great threat and great pride, these rare survivors of our City's youth should be celebrated and protected.

## **Thirteen Federal Buildings**

Chronologically the selection spans the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, beginning and ending with two grand Federal homes, 67 Greenwich Street (ca. 1800) and 4 St. Mark's Place (1832). Geographically the selection traces the growth of the city's residential districts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, traveling from the once-elegant precincts of Greenwich Street north to new neighborhoods above Canal Street, including Greenwich Village and what is now the East Village. The buildings themselves tell the history of social and economic changes throughout the century, as full fourth floors replace dormers and gambrel roofs, and shopfronts appear in ground floors, accommodating both population growth and new commercial uses. The selection shows how pervasive the Federal style was for both grand homes and more modest dwellings, what Montgomery Schuyler, writing at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, described as "the most respectable and artistic pattern of habitation New York has ever known."

**67 Greenwich Street**  
**94, 94 ½, 96 Greenwich Street**  
**57 Sullivan Street**  
**486 and 488 Greenwich Street**  
**2 Oliver Street**  
**127, 129, and 131 MacDougal Street**  
**7 Leroy Street**  
**4 St. Mark's Place**

### **Acknowledgements**

The following building descriptions are based on tax assessment and building department records, docket books and city directories. They were written primarily by historian Susan De Vries, with the exception of 67 Greenwich Street and 94-96 Greenwich Street, which are drawn from National Register eligibility reports written by Andrew Dolkart; 4

St. Mark's Place, which is drawn from the designation report for 20 St. Mark's Place; and 2 Oliver Street, which is drawn from research files at the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and an article by Professor Franklin Toker entitled "James O'Donnell: An Irish Georgian in America" in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (May 1970). The concluding essay on historical context was based on Ms. DeVries' draft cover document for potential submission to the National Register of Historic Places. The accompanying photographs are the work of Phyllis Hoffzimer.

Ms. De Vries' study began in 1995 when the Landmarks Preservation Commission initiated a review of undesignated Federal Era row houses. The Commission asked the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, where Ms. De Vries was an intern, to catalog buildings in its neighborhood and beyond. The study grew when Ms. De Vries made it the subject of her 1996 Master's Thesis for the Department of Historic Preservation at Columbia University. She has continued it as a labor of love.

## 67 Greenwich Street

No. 67 Greenwich Street is an extremely rare survivor from New York's early history. This mansion was erected early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on one of the most prestigious streets in New York. Beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Greenwich Street developed into one of New York's prime residential streets with a significant number of mansions that were four bays wide. All of the other houses have been demolished, making 67 Greenwich particularly important.

No. 67 Greenwich Street has a simple Federal-style front elevation and simple stone lintels. To accent the central portion of the facade, the windows on the second and third floors of the two central bays have splayed lintels with raised keystones. This is an unusual feature on a New York house; there are no other known surviving examples of this kind of detail.

As was typical of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the original owner of the house, merchant Robert Dickey, both lived in the house and ran his business there. In 1821 he sold 67 Greenwich Street. At some point, perhaps as early as 1821, the house was divided into apartments. Sometime between 1858 and 1873, the original roof (probably a peak or gambrel roof with dormer windows) was removed and a full fourth floor added, as was common practice on New York's older houses. The neighboring mansions were all demolished for the construction of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel.



## 67 Greenwich, Continued

Of special interest on 67 Greenwich Street is the oval bay on the rear elevation. The Federal style often made use of curving forms; oval rooms remain as familiar features in grand 19<sup>th</sup> century homes all along the Eastern seaboard. Such curved features could only be used in large houses, because they needed a substantial amount of space. Nineteenth-century maps of New York City show an impressive row of them on the array of mansions on southern Greenwich Street.

The only other comparable examples in the five boroughs are in the wooden homes of Rufus King in Queens and the Commandant's House in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. No other masonry houses with this feature remain anywhere in New York City.

No. 67 Greenwich Street has been declared eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



## 94, 94½, 96 Greenwich Street

Like 67 Greenwich Street, the three buildings numbered 94 to 96 Greenwich Street are rare surviving former residential structures from the very early 19<sup>th</sup> century when they were located in a prosperous and desirable neighborhood. These Federal style houses are typical of the fine row houses that were once common in Lower Manhattan. The buildings retain much of their original detail, including Flemish bond brickwork, original window lintels and sills, and the line of the original roof slope on the side elevation of No. 94. By 1859 the original dormers had been removed from 94 Greenwich and the full fourth floor constructed.

Greenwich Street remained a prestigious address until the 1820s and 1830s when New York's affluent residents moved north to new residential neighborhoods in what are now Tribeca, Soho, and Greenwich Village. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of the surrounding area was redeveloped with new office buildings, but 94 to 96 Greenwich Street survive as reminders of the early residential character of this part of Manhattan.



## 57 Sullivan Street

The structure located at 57 Sullivan Street is an important early example of the Federal Period building in Manhattan. Constructed in 1816 or 1817, the building has retained many of its significant architectural features. The house sits in the area now known as the South Village, but during the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was known as the Lispenard Farm. Alexander L. Stewart, a merchant who married Sarah Lispenard, safeguarded his property on this block by including in the conveyance the provision that “the house to be built in front on the lot herby granted shall be a good brick or brick front house the full breadth of the lot.” The house was constructed by Frederick Youmans, a carter, and sold in 1817 to David Bogart, a mason.

The architectural history of 57 Sullivan Street is typical of many federal structures. Originally built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, it underwent alterations in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate changes in style and space needs. The building still retains important elements of the Federal period: the Flemish bond facade, the windows with simple paneled lintels, and the doorway with a simple brownstone arch around the fanlight. A third story was added in the late 1850's, replacing the original pitched roof and dormers. The builder carefully duplicated the original lintels in the new construction.

The house changed ownership in the late 1990's and the new owner undertook a number of renovations. Work included new windows, shutters, ironwork, the re-facing of the side facade, and the installation of windows in that facade. The owner did maintain the original brownstone lintels and door surround. According to the owner, the wooden siding on the side facade had been replaced numerous times and therefore he did not remove original material.

Despite recent alterations, the building maintains a high level of integrity and with its early lintels and door surround, is an important link in understanding the full range of the Federal style in Manhattan.



## 486 and 488 Greenwich Street

Numbers 486 and 488 Greenwich Street are a pair of modest Federal Period brick structures that have retained their early 19<sup>th</sup> century character and form despite the alteration of the surrounding blocks to a more industrial character. Each building features a three-bay facade, gable roof, single dormer, and plain rectangular brownstone lintels on the second story. The first floors have been altered for commercial use. Number 488 features a simple doric-columned entry, however photographic evidence shows that this was a post-1978 addition.

The buildings were built c. 1820, most likely by John Rohr. Rohr was a merchant tailor who developed several properties on both sides of nearby Canal Street and had his business in a building at the northwest corner of Canal and Greenwich. He also built 508 and 506 Canal, both individual landmarks, where he lived with his family between 1830 and 1853.

In 1997, Numbers 486 and 488 Greenwich were determined to meet eligibility criteria for the State and National registers.





## 2 Oliver Street

The house at 2 Oliver Street was built by Robert Dodge in 1821. Dodge was a painter and glazier whose office was around the corner on Chatham Square. He leased the building to James O'Donnell, an architect who was trained in Dublin and came to New York in 1812. O'Donnell is important as one of the first trained architects to work in this country, where he designed the Fulton Street Market while he was living at nearby 2 Oliver Street. He later moved to Montreal where was the architect of the Basilica of Notre Dame.

No. 2 Oliver Street is a characteristically simple Federal style building, three bays wide on a basement, with Flemish bond brick work on the two original floors. A third floor was added ca. 1850, with the builders taking care to replicate above the new windows the same rectangular lintels with incised squares found on the lower windows.

The association of this building with one of New York City's first professional architects is unusual and noteworthy.



## 127, 129, and 131 MacDougal Street

These buildings were built on land originally part of the Elbert Herring farm. John Ireland was deeded a portion of the farm in 1825, and after several years began developing the land. The entire blockfront on MacDougal Street between Amity and Fourth was developed between 1829 and 1831. The buildings constructed on the block were typical of the period – modest 2½-story Federal-style row houses.

The Federal style is typified by 127, 129 and 131 MacDougal Street, excellent remaining examples of the Federal style in Greenwich Village. Despite some alterations, all three buildings retain the simple silhouette of early 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings. Particularly notable are the original door surrounds found on all three buildings. Even more remarkable is the survival of the original pineapple finials on the ironwork of the stoop. A symbol of welcome, the pineapple was frequently worked in iron and placed in a prominent place near the entry.



## 7 Leroy Street

The stretch of Leroy Street located between Bedford and Bleecker presents a wonderful opportunity to see the range of New York's residential architecture, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings include 7 Leroy, an excellent example of the Federal style. The building was constructed between 1830 and 1831 by Jacob Romaine. The area known today as the South Village was known as Richmond Hill in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Aaron Burr purchased the country mansion of the estate in 1797 and much of the farmland was sold off in the 1820's. As residents of Lower Manhattan looked to escape the regular cholera outbreaks occurring in the more densely populated neighborhoods at the tip of the Manhattan, this neighborhood became more heavily populated. By the 1830's many of the streets in the area were slowly being filled with small row houses.

7 Leroy Street perhaps best typifies what people envision when they think of a Federal period row house. It is 2½ stories high over a high basement. The steeply pitched roof is pierced by two wooden dormers. The brick facade is laid in Flemish bond, which alternated a stretcher and header in every row. The windows have simple incised brownstone lintels. The building also features what is commonly referred to as a horse walk, a secondary entrance placed to the left of main entrance. This small wooden door provided access to the rear yard, and often a stable or rear lot house that was constructed there. Above the wooden door is a window – often a typical feature when a horse walk was included in the design of the house. Rear lot structures were quite common throughout Lower Manhattan. No. 7 Leroy Street still has a rear lot structure, although the construction date is not known. The tax assessment records do record a structure very early, and it was most likely a house rather than a stable. By 1906, a rear house was still being used and a total of five families lived between the two houses.

In style 7 Leroy Street is very similar to 131 Charles Street, an individually designated local landmark known as the David Chrystie house after the stonecutter responsible for its construction. Chrystie has been credited with a number of houses in the South Village. It is believed that the Chrystie and Romaine families were related by marriage, perhaps explaining the similarity in style.



## 4 St. Mark's Place

No. 4 St. Mark's Place is part of an entire blockfront that was built in 1832 on the south side of the street when it was in the midst of New York City's most fashionable residential area. Its mirror image at 20 St. Mark's Place is an individually designated landmark.

Both buildings are distinguished examples of a late Federal style, with magnificent arched stone entrances featuring triple keystones and vermiculated blocks in the enframement. The pedimented lintels over the windows of both houses show the emerging influence of the Greek Revival style. The ground floor features Gibbs surrounds on the window openings.

Although the current condition of 4 St. Mark's belies its elegant pedigree, its condition is comparable to that of 20 St. Mark's Place when it was designated. At that time Ada Louise Huxtable told her readers that No. 20 contained an espresso café, with the doorframe painted two-tone blue and brown, and its windows "extended into suggestions of Moorish arches with a pattern of brown paint on a tan ground." The stonework of the ground floor was covered with a composition stone veneer, and the cornice covered in sheet metal.

Today the colored paint has been removed, the Flemish bond brick revealed, and the ground floor and cornice restored. With landmark designation and the same thoughtful care, 4 St. Mark's Place could once again reflect its handsome origins and the grand history of its neighborhood.



## Historical Context

Built primarily from ca. 1790 to ca. 1835, the basic Federal Period row house form could be found throughout the growing cities of the eastern seaboard. Each city, however, modeled the form and plan to suit its development pattern, individual characteristics, and the materials available. The Federal Period row houses of Manhattan reflect its local building traditions and materials, the patterns of speculative development of property beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the beginning of the metamorphosis of New York City from modest town to prosperous city.

As the 18<sup>th</sup> century turned to the 19<sup>th</sup>, New York was beginning this transformation from a small village to the new country's most prosperous and populous city. New York was occupied throughout the War for Independence; it was not until the departure of the British in 1783 that it began a climb towards prosperity. New York's population of 33,131 in 1790 climbed to 96,373 by 1810.<sup>1</sup> By 1820 New York had surpassed Philadelphia as the most populous city in the United States.

New York's harbor fueled this population growth by bringing in new citizens and foreign and domestic goods. Already growing by 1800, the supremacy of the port was established by such advancements as the first regular transatlantic freight and passenger line, the Black Ball line, established in 1818. The end of the War of 1812 brought an increased amount of foreign goods into the harbor, with the British dumping of excess goods for auction. The Erie Canal, opened in 1825, created a water link between the Great Lakes and the Hudson River, allowing goods to move more quickly and cheaply than ever before. Products from the middle western states were brought into New York via the canal and left through its port for export around the world.

Foreseeing the impact of such economic and population booms, the state appointed financiers and businessmen to a City Commission in 1807. The Commissioners' Plan laid a grid of streets across the island north of Houston Street. The crooked streets of the Dutch plan and Greenwich Village were retained, but northward the grid created regularized streets and avenues.<sup>2</sup> The Commission hoped that the strict grid would end the haphazard growth of the city by creating streets and setting fixed block and lot sizes. Lots were typically 25' wide by 100' deep and blocks were solid. No service alleys were provided.

---

<sup>1</sup> Disturnell, John. *New York as It Is 1837*. New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1837, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Reynolds, Donald Martin. *The Architecture of New York City*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994.

The economic and population expansions led to the transformation of the colonial city and the expansion of the city beyond traditional boundaries. New developments, made possible with the implementation of the Commissioner's Plan and the subdivision of country estates, extended the city's boundaries northward, while commerce replaced the residential areas in the city center. Another significant factor in the move northward was the common eruption of disease and fire. Frequent fires and outbreaks of cholera led citizens to flee the old city for the less populated northern regions. Cholera epidemics, particularly those in 1805, 1821, and 1822, sent city dwellers fleeing for the supposedly healthy climate of the bucolic Greenwich Village. The first epidemics brought a wave of temporary housing and commercial structures. By the epidemic of 1822, many temporary refugees became permanent residents.

Such a combination of a booming population, fire, disease and fashion set the population on a march northward. Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century land "up north" was controlled by Dutch and English gentlemen farmers and Trinity Church. The surge in population and the opening of new streets led to the quick subdivision of these northern estates and the development of "instant" neighborhoods. Such rapid development was accomplished with speculative development, whereby property owners would often lease their property to others who were willing to build. These lessees would then often turn around and rent out the dwellings.

### **The Federal Row House**

#### **Form and Precedents**

The row house form was ideally suited to meet the needs of a quickly growing population, the plotting of land and the method of speculative development so common in Manhattan. A simple form, it allowed efficient use of the standardized lot while still permitting individual ownership. Despite the expansive growth of the city, New York was still tiny compared to the boom it would experience in mid-century, and the modestly scaled Federal dwelling reflected the city's scale. Ostentatious dwellings were not yet in great demand, and indeed were prohibitively expensive. The refined simplicity of the row house, with only slight modifications, could reflect the wealth of the owner.

In elevation and plan, Federal Period row houses were quite modest. Characterized by classic proportions and almost planar smoothness, they were ornamented with simple detailing of lintels, dormers, and doorways. Usually two to three stories high, three bays wide, with steeply pitched roofs, houses were of load bearing masonry construction. The brick facades were laid in a Flemish bond which alternated a stretcher and a header in every row. On early examples of the

style, the brick was sometimes painted, often in red or gray<sup>3</sup>. The basic form was frequently modified to provide commercial use on the ground floor and residential above.

The basic form has its roots in English Georgian architecture. Although the young country had established political independence, culturally it still reflected the influence of the former mother country. As James Fenimore Cooper noted "the Americans have not yet adopted a style of architecture of their own. Their houses are essentially English."<sup>4</sup> Derived from the Georgian townhouse form and the delicate ornamental work of the Adam brothers, the English model was adapted to the land and available materials of the new country.

### **The Craft Tradition and Pattern Books**

Standards set by British models were adapted to suit the new country by local architects like John McComb. In turn, their work was filtered down to builder-craftsmen who were responsible for the construction of the majority of the small dwellings. Although McComb did design small row houses in New York, most of the modest houses were built by craftsmen either as dwellings for themselves or for the growing housing market. Local builders relied on tradition and most importantly pattern books.

Pattern books were already available in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century were easily accessible to local builders. Originally imported from England, the first American pattern book is generally considered to be Asher Benjamin's *American Builders Companion*, first published in 1797.<sup>5</sup> Pattern books contained drawings and instructions for exterior and interior details, such as lintels, columns, dormers, and mantels. Similar motifs appeared from building to building, neighborhood to neighborhood. This was not always indicative of the same builder but rather of the common use of pattern books and the practice of copying from another successful building.

Use of pattern books also allowed the builder to introduce slight variations from building to building within a row, without a major expense. A change from a triangular to an arched pedimented dormer, or from a plain to a splayed keystone, gave variation to the row without interrupting its regularity.

---

<sup>3</sup> Cooper, James Fenimore. *Notions of the Americans*. New York: State University of New York, 1991, reprint.

<sup>4</sup> Lockwood, Charles. *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Rowhouse, 1783-1929, an Architectural and Social History*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p 30.

## **Row House Design**

The modest scale and simple materials of the early row house were responses to the standardized lots, the influence of the English example, the pattern books, and the new fire codes regulating materials. Their relative uniformity in plan and elevation, and the simplicity of ornamentation produced neat and regular rows.

The brick facades were laid in a Flemish bond, which alternated a stretcher and a header in every row. This system allowed the linking of the brick facade with the cheaper brick behind it. Walls were usually two wythes, or eight inches, thick.<sup>6</sup> Originally the brick was painted, most often red or gray, and mortar lines were delineated in white. The frequent repainting contributed to the fresh appearance of the streets, which was frequently commented upon by foreign travelers. The practice of painting the brick facades persisted until the 1830's.

Although the brick facade was the standard, there were exceptions. More elaborate Federal Period row houses were constructed with entire marble or granite facades. These were typically built as part of an entire blockfront development in what were considered the fashionable streets of Lower Manhattan.

### **The Plan**

In plan, the interior of the row house was as modest as the exterior. The width of the house was dictated by the lot size and the depth was dictated by the need for proper light and ventilation. Twenty to 25 feet wide, row houses were usually only two rooms deep, which insured adequate lighting and ventilation.<sup>7</sup> The extra portion of the rear lot could be put to use as a garden. The garden was accessible from the house through a door off the kitchen, and was placed several steps below ground level. The basement placement of the kitchen was a practical measure. The kitchen was convenient to the garden and to the sunken storage vaults often placed adjacent to it. Its cellar location also separated the noise, smell, and heat of the open fire cooking from the formal, public rooms above.

The main entrance, raised above the cellar by the low flight of stairs, led directly into a stair hall. The stair, usually placed to the rear of the hall, led to the second floor bedrooms, with the first floor containing the public rooms of the house. These public rooms, a rear and front parlor, could be made one room by opening wide folding doors which

---

<sup>6</sup> Friedman, Donald. *Historical Building Construction*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1995, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Lockwood. p.14.



typically separated them. Flexible furniture arrangements were necessary to create the flow of space. Dining rooms were usually placed in the front room of the basement level. This arrangement not only allowed quick table service from kitchen to dining room, but also kept the parlors free from bulky tables and chairs. As servants and the installation of dumbwaiters became more common, the dining room was often moved upstairs to the rear parlor.

The exterior emphasis placed on the first level, with the low rise of steps, and the elaborate doorway, also reflected the interior treatment of the rooms. Like the exterior, the interior spaces were pleasantly proportioned and modestly but elegantly detailed. The delicately detailed cornices, mantel and door surrounds reflected the influence of the Adam brothers. The parlors were usually square shaped with nine to ten foot ceilings topped with plaster moldings. Doors were enframed with moldings and decorative corner blocks and mantels were adorned with columns and ornamental panels. Decorative elements were greatly simplified in the second floor bedrooms and usually non-existent in the attic servants' bedrooms.

Deviations from the basic form described above could be found in row houses that were built as both commercial and residential structures. The simple detailing remained, with minor alterations. The main entrance of residential buildings was usually reached by a low flight of brownstone steps placed to one side of the facade. While the stoop allowed a more formal entry, in commercial structures it was usually eliminated in favor of a ground floor shop for customer convenience. Combination residential and commercial structures were quite common, particularly on the main access streets of the city.

### **Variations**

Federal Period row houses are commonly classified as Early or Late Federal. Traditionally, the term late Federal has been ascribed to buildings of three or more stories, with steep stoops, ornate doorways and generally more elaborate detailing. Late Federal buildings are a bridge between the modest two-story dwellings and the more elaborate Greek Revival buildings which would proliferate during following decade. The assignation of this term, however, can be misleading. The very nature of the Federal row house as an easy to build, inexpensive house adapted to both the middle and upper classes means that while a row house may look Early Federal it may perhaps have been built in the same year as a building termed Late Federal. These terms then should be considered as signifying merely the architectural styling of the row house rather than the chronological identification.

## **Row House Details**

The defining characteristic of Federal Period row houses, both Early and Late, was their simplicity. They were modest structures with classic proportions and an almost planar smoothness. The facades were ornamented with simple lintels of brownstone or marble, plain wooden cornices, and wooden dormers. These basic elements can help define the range of ornamentation of the Federal style.

### **Doorways**

The doorway was typically the most ornamental feature of the main facade. A modest piano nobile, the main entrance was reached by a low flight of brownstone steps placed to one side of the facade. The origin of the stoop has frequently been attributed to the Dutch tradition of raising dwelling entrances as protection against flood waters. The stoop had practical advantages as well. The elevation of the main entrance not only raised the level of formality by indicating an ascension to the ceremonial areas of the house, but also allowed the height of the basement level to be raised.

Windows, and often a secondary service entrance, allowed light and air to reach the basement rooms. Some builders also incorporated "horse walks." These secondary entrances provided access from the street to the rear yard and often the stable that was located there.

The ornateness of the main entry often reflected the wealth of the owner. The cost of such labor-intensive hand work was prohibitive for most. While doors were consistently wooden, usually with six to eight deep set panels, the style of door surrounds can tentatively suggest either the wealth of the original owner or the time period in which it was constructed.

The earliest surrounds were quite simple, usually with simple engaged columns or pilasters and a toplight. Late Federal doorways are identified by their more elaborate columns, usually ionic, with flanking colonnets framing sidelights all topped with a delicately leaded toplight. The elaborate segmental fanlight did not appear until the late 1820's and 1830's, as ornament became more affordable and fashionable. Much simpler fanlights were crafted in the early 1820's.<sup>8</sup> Simple brownstone trim surrounded the door and a paneled double keystone crowned the arch over the fanlight.

---

<sup>8</sup> Huxtable, Ada Louise. *Classic New York: Georgian Gentility to Greek Elegance*. Garden City, NJ: Anchor, 1964, p. 41.

## **Ironwork**

Iron railings, fences and newel posts added an extra touch of ornamentation to the procession towards the main entrance. Wrought iron railings and fences provided the practical function of shielding basement doors and windows, and aiding safe ascension up the stoop. Boot scrapers were often incorporated into the stoop railings. These practical functions were transformed into delicate wrought iron railings with pineapple, pine cone, and acorn finials. The most elaborate newel posts were the "hollow cage" posts, topped with a large urn terminating in a pineapple.<sup>9</sup>

## **Lintels**

In contrast to the more elaborate door surrounds, the lintels were modestly detailed and almost flush with the brick facade. Lintels were typically of brownstone, a material that was unpretentious and inexpensive. Brownstone was suitable for lintels, door surrounds, steps, and basement levels.

A typical three-bay three-story row house had modest six over six windows that were consistent in size on all floors. Exceptions were the small, usually oval windows, found above horse walk entrances, and the popular Late Federal parlor windows that dropped to the floor. Shutters, usually paneled on the parlor floor and louvered above, provided relief from sun, insects, and harsh winds.<sup>10</sup>

Like door surrounds, the level of lintel detailing reflected the time period and wealth of the owners. The earliest lintels were plain stone block, splayed, or splayed with a keystone. Incised detailing, or paneled lintels, appeared in the 1820's. Cap lintels were most common after 1830.<sup>11</sup>

Corner lot houses typically had a uniform Federal front facade, but the secondary street facades provided more room for builder imagination. A common solution was the highlighting of the steeply pitched roof with an arched window flanked by smaller quadrant windows. Windows were not always as symmetrically placed as those on the main facade. As evidenced by remaining corner lot houses, it does not appear that many builders deviated from the Federal form by creating a main entry on the longer facade. Despite the longer side facade, from remaining examples of this type it appears that most builders retained the main and secondary entrances on the shorter facade.

---

<sup>9</sup> Lockwood. p.11.

<sup>10</sup> Lockwood. p13.

<sup>11</sup> Huxtable, pp.41-44.

### **Cornices**

Relatively few original cornices remain. Originally simple wooden fascia boards, cornices were designed for the practical purpose of hiding gutters and were minimally detailed. They were usually 12-18" high, with simple egg-and-dart or dentil molding directly below.<sup>12</sup> Original cornices were removed when additional stories were added, replaced with more elaborately detailed cornices as fashion changed.

### **Dormers**

The defining characteristic of the simple, Early Federal row house was the steeply pitched roof pierced by wooden dormers. The dormers, usually paired, created usable attic space. Common detailing included triangular pediments with incised detailing and triangular or arched pediments, or segmental openings with keystones.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Lockwood. p.13.

<sup>13</sup> Schuyler, Montgomery. "The Small House in New York," *Architectural Record* (April-June 1899): 364.

## MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Benjamin, Asher. *American Builders Companion*. Boston: R.P. & C. Williams, 1826.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Practical House Carpenter*. New York: Collins Keese and Co., 1839.

Biddle, Owen. *The Young Carpenter's Assistant*. Philadelphia, 1810.

Blackmar, Elizabeth. *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Blunt, Edmund T. *The Picture of New York and Strangers Guide*. New York: A.T. Goodrich, 1828.

Bunner, HC. *The Story of a New York House*. New York: Scribners, 1887.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *Notions of the Americans*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, reprint.

Dolkart, Andrew S. *The Texture of Tribeca*. New York: Enterprise Press, 1989.

Friedman, Donald. *Historical Building Construction*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1995.

Gowans, Alan. *Styles and Types of North American Architecture*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

Haddon, Rawson. "Varick Street Which is in Greenwich Village, Manhattan." *Architectural Record*. 1914 January: 49-57.

Hardie, James. *A Census of the New Buildings Erected in this City in the Year 1824*. New York: S. Marks, 1825.

Hardie, James. *Description of the City of New York*. New York: S. Marks, 1827.

Hayward, Mary Ellen. "Urban Vernacular Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore." *Winterthur Portfolio*. 1981 Spring (vol. 6, no. 1): 33-63.

Hone, Philip. *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1927.

Huxtable, Ada Louise. *Classic New York: Georgian Gentility to Greek Elegance*. Garden City, New York: Anchor -----Books, 1964.

Jackson, Huson. *New York Architecture, 1650-1952*. New York: Reinhold, 1952.

Lafever, Minard. *The Modern Builder's Guide*. New York: Dover, 1969, reprint.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Young Builder's General Instructor*. New Jersey: W. Tuttle & Co., 1829.

Landmarks Preservation Commission, City of New York.

18 Bowery, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1966.

131 Charles Street House, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1966.

Charlton-King-Vandam Historic District, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1966.

Greenwich Village Historic District, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1969.

71 Pearl Street, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1966.

326 Spring Street, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1969.

20 St. Mark's Place, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1969.

57 Sullivan Street, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1973.

83 and 85 Sullivan Street, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1973.

2 White Street, Designation Report. New York: The Commission, 1966.

Lockwood, Charles. *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Row House, 1783-1929, an Architectural and Social History*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972.

Massey, James C. and Shirley Maxwell. "Rows and Rows of Row Houses." *Old-House Journal*.  
1993 March/April: 52-57.

*New York Evening Post*. Housing advertisements, 1824-1830.

*New York City Directories*, 1820-1840.

Reynolds, Donald Martin. *The Architecture of New York City*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994.

Roberts, Lee. "Existing Brick Houses in Lower Manhattan, 1785-89-1820." 1967. From the files of the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Schuyler, Montgomery. "The Small City House in New York." *Architectural Record* 1899 April-June: 357-388.

Shivers, Natalie Wilkins. *Those Old Placid Rows*. Baltimore: Peabody Press, 1981.

Small, Verna. *Nineteenth Century Dwelling Houses of Greenwich Village*. New York: Association of Village Homeowners, 1969.

Stokes, I.N. Phelps, ed. *Iconography of Manhattan Island*. Volume V. New York: Arno Press, 1928.