

THE STORY OF CRAWFORD HOUSE

By Walter A. Tuttle



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEWBURGH BAY
AND THE HIGHLANDS

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On October 3, 1953, Crawford House was scheduled for public auction. That sale, it was known, would almost inevitably result in demolition of this beautiful old 19th century building, or its practical destruction in being adapted to a rooming or apartment house.

At an inspired meeting on September 28, five days before the auction, Crawford House was purchased by spontaneous, unanimous action of Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands.

This act was quickly followed by substantial contributions by Ossoli Club, the Trustees of Washington's Headquarters and Daughters of the American Revolution. And in the fund-raising campaign which followed for improvements and decorations, there was warm, generous support by the people of Newburgh.

Thus Crawford House, which comes close to being the most handsome residence in the Hudson River Valley, is preserved and will serve as a useful, vital and beautiful center for the years to come. Hasbrouck House, Knox's Headquarters and Crawford House—the rich heritage of Newburgh!

Additional copies of "The Story of Crawford House" at one dollar a copy. Address Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands, Post Office Box 287, Newburgh, New York.

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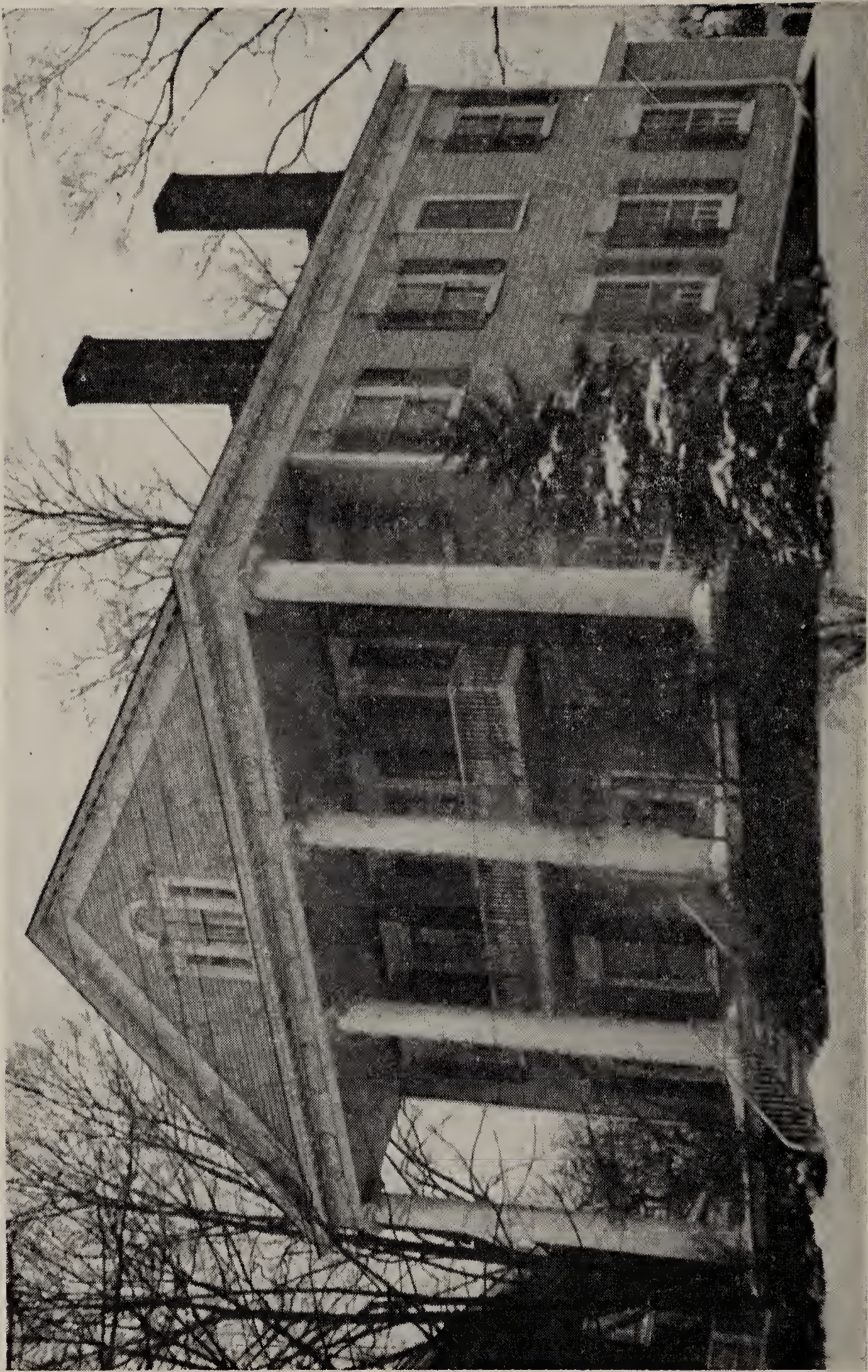
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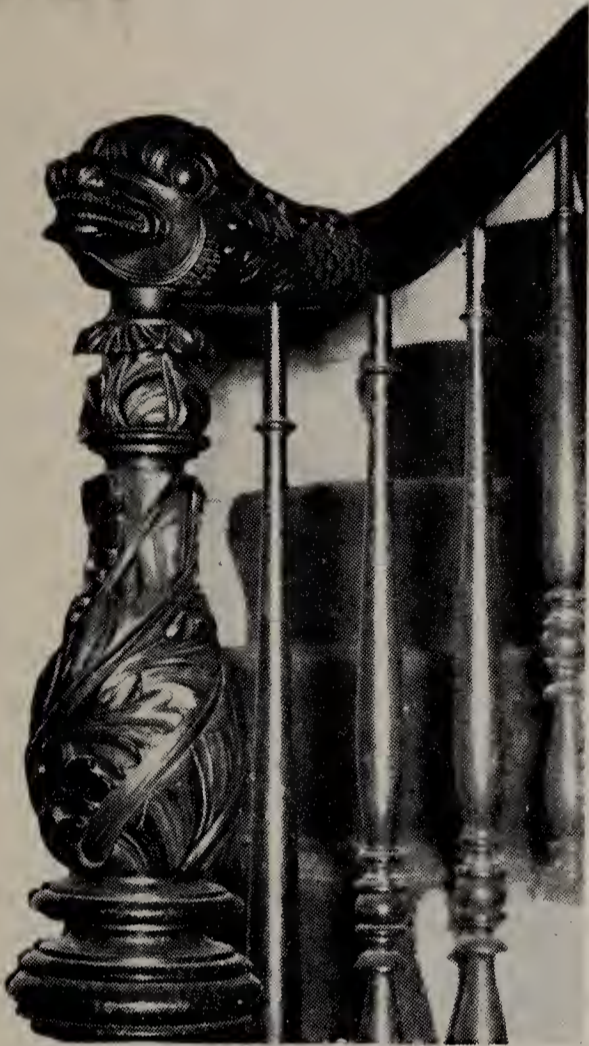


*Courtesy of Mildred Parker Seese
from "Old Orange Houses"*

CRAWFORD HOUSE

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THE HOME OF DAVID CRAWFORD



The famous dolphin newel post in Crawford House. It is thought to be the work of a Massachusetts carver of ships' figure heads.

On March 8, 1830, the Trustees of the Glebe leased to David Crawford, merchant, Lot 39 on the old Glebe map for a period of 900 years. On this property, at the southwest corner of Clinton and Montgomery Streets, David Crawford built his home.

With a love of architectural beauty and an abiding faith in the future of his community, the home built by David Crawford was a reflection of the man: substantial, honest and handsome.

This was his home for the remainder of his life, a little more than a quarter of a century. And it was to be his period of greatest achievement in and usefulness to Newburgh. For David Crawford was one of a small group of men through whose vision and labor Newburgh develop-

ed and matured to take its place as an important mercantile and shipping point in the Hudson River Valley.

It was 120 years from the settling of Newburgh by the Palatines to the building of the Crawford House, thus placing the building at the mid-point of the city's history. In 1830 Newburgh was a village of little more than 6,000. E. M. Rittenber wrote of the period "... the general progress of the town and village has been comparatively slow. The people, it must be confessed, failed to put forth those efforts which would have established a flourishing commercial city."

Nor had Rittenber a high opinion of the architectural aspects of the village, for he wrote in 1859, "For the beauty of its private residences, Newburgh had not a high reputation 30 years ago. The Ruggles house, on the southeast corner of Washington Place, was then regarded as one of the most elegant . . . Then came the residences of David Crawford, James S. Brown and William Roe." The late

Raphael A. Weed, former president of Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands in 1931 described the Crawford Mansion as coming close to being the most handsome residence in the Hudson Valley.

Mr. Weed observed that it was a great misfortune the architect's name has not been preserved, and points out that the only possible clue to him comes through a family resemblance the house bears to four or five other mansions built in or near Newburgh in the same period.

These include the house built by Capt. William Roe, 160 Grand Street, and the Benjamin Carpenter house, which stood on the west side of High Street near Broadway. It was, until recent years, the Children's Home, and was demolished not long since to make a parking lot off Grand Street. Another house, erected in the same period and possibly by the same builder, is the Clisophic-Williams-Gouldie house, 169 Montgomery Street, originally standing next door to the Crawford Mansion but now separated by one house.

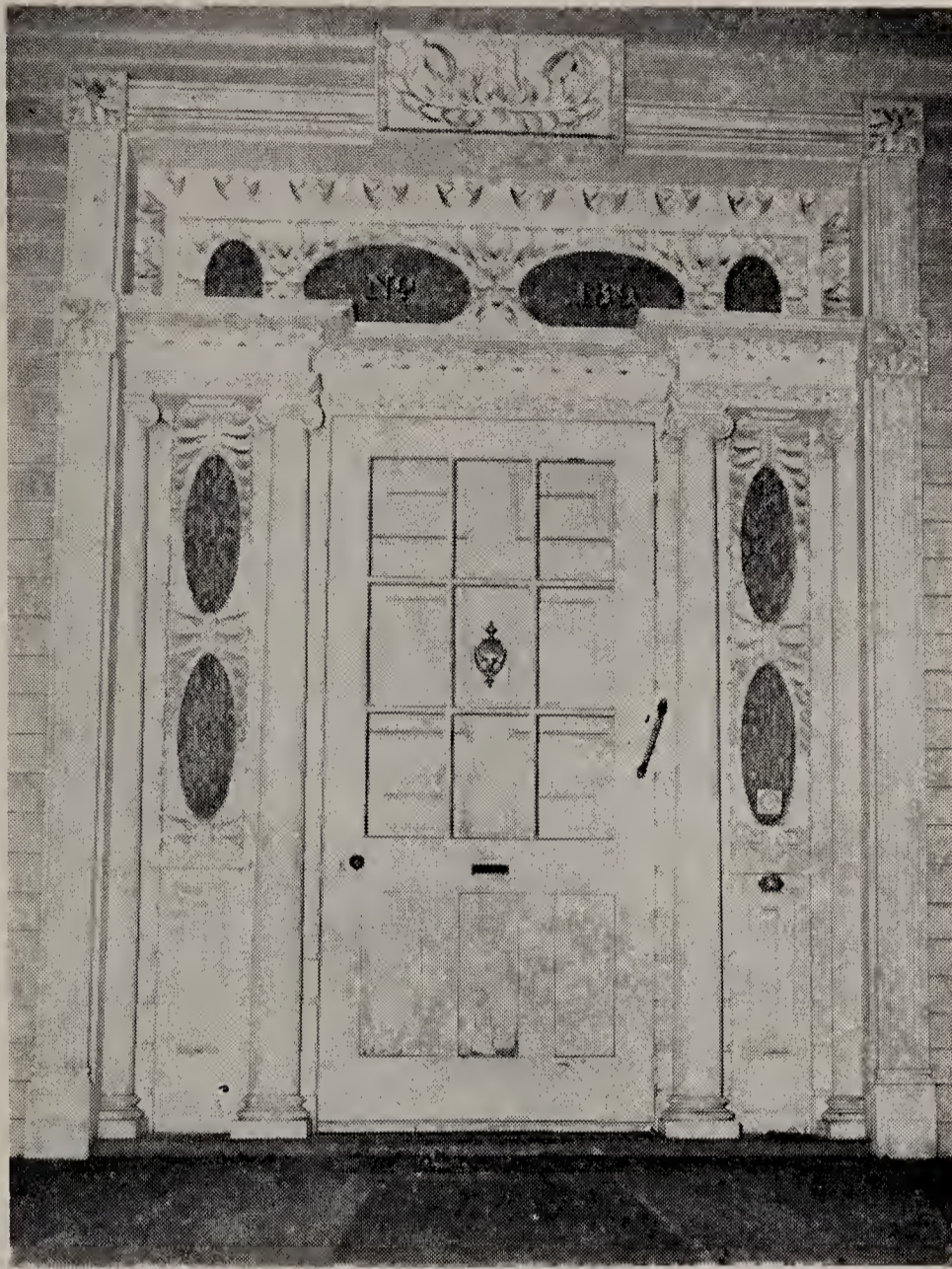
A close intimacy existed among some of these men which might well have led to their employment of the same designers and builders. Benjamin Carpenter and Captain Roe were associates in Newburgh Whaling Co. Thomas Shaw, of Little Britain, built a warehouse for David Crawford and another for Benjamin Carpenter.

SIMILAR ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

The architectural features common to all include: first halfway down the wide central hall of each, the builder has placed a repetition of the framework of a front door complete with sidelights and fanlight. Another characteristic is to break the entablature of each wide double door throughout the house by a small rectangular panel containing carved leaves and flowers. Similar ornamentation is placed over the windows.

The Crawford Mansion occupies approximately an acre of ground and the Ionic columns, the handsome palladian windows, front and back, and the balcony are strongly reminiscent of southern colonial architecture.

The front door is a masterpiece of the woodcarvers' craft with sidelights and fanlight delicately framed with a carved floral design, the columns replicas of the large ones they face and the panel design over the doorway of carved leaves and flowers.



DOOR OF THE CRAWFORD HOUSE

a wealth of ornament and perhaps the finest carving outside of New England.

EXQUISITE TASTE AND BEAUTY

Throughout, the interior is executed with the same exquisite taste and dignity as may be observed on the exterior. The magnificent paneling and woodcarvings recalls McIntyre's architectural genius in Salem, Massachusetts.

The fireplaces on the main floor are fashioned of black marble with supporting columns which match in style the 40 foot Ionic columns in front of the house. Brass fenders and side ornamentation are strikingly effective. The famous dolphin newel post, carved in solid mahogany, is thought to be the work of a New England carver of ships' figureheads.

With acquisition of Crawford House by the Historical Society, it is a source of satisfaction to know that it will be proudly cherished by its neighbors and the city as well. And it will also be a mecca for visitors, along with the Hasbrouck House and Knox's Headquarters.

BIOGRAPHY OF DAVID CRAWFORD, ESQ.

This gentleman died in his residence in Newburgh, on the 23rd inst., in the 69th year of his age.

The Crawfords came from the north of Ireland, a part of the colony associated with Col. Charles Clinton, arriving here about 1731. They were able to purchase lands, and improve them. Some settled in the Town of New Windsor, and formed the settlement of Little Britain. The Clintons settled in the same vicinity. Others settled near La Grange, on the Wallkill, and others on the high lands of Town of Crawford, in the vicinity of Graham's Church.

The ancestor of David Crawford, settled on a farm of some 300 acres east of Little Britain Church. The families were Protestants.

Francis Crawford married Eunice Watkins, daughter of Samuel Watkins of Campbell Hall, in Town of Hamptonburgh. They had four sons, Thomas, Samuel, David and James.

Till 1806, Mr. Crawford labored on the farm with his elder brothers, when the family removed to Newburgh, and commenced mercantile business, David acting as a clerk. In 1810 when John G. Hurtin of Goshen was appointed sheriff by the old Council of Appointment, Crawford accepted appointment as deputy sheriff. He did so hoping to benefit his health, being threatened with consumption, a disease which had carried off his mother and her relatives. Riding on horseback, and continued exercise in the open air had the desired effect. His three brothers died of that disease.

In one year Hurtin was turned out of office and Crawford of course went out with him. The Council of Appointment was a political body, and changed as a party gained power.

CAPTAIN IN WAR OF 1812

When the United States declared war against Great Britain in 1812, it was destitute of troops, there having been only the untrained militia. Congress invited formation of volunteer regiments for one year's service.

Crawford and other young men called on their fellow-citizens to volunteer, formed companies, and were commissioned as captains. The regiment to which Crawford was attached was artillery, commanded by Col. Alexander Denniston. The unit's service was in the vicinity of the Port of New York. After the year was up, Crawford received a commission in the regular service, and continued on duty till end of the war.

He then returned to commerce with his father. The business was merchandising in Newburgh and freighting to and from New York. Crawford is believed to have owned the first steamboat engaged in freighting. He owned at different periods many other vessels.

In the spring of 1851 Crawford sold his business to Powell, Ramsdell & Co., and returned to private life, devoting himself to preservation of a liberal fortune.

In May, 1822, Mr. Crawford's marriage to Fanny C. Belknap, only daughter of Gen. Isaac Belknap, took place. The general was a soldier in the Revolution, and also commanded troops in the War of 1812.

In the establishment of banks, railroads, plank roads, docks and other facilities for the enlargement of commerce David Crawford stood beside such men as Powell, Ramsdell, Carpenter, Forsyth, Farrington and other village patriots.

KIND HUSBAND, INDULGENT FATHER

In his domestic relations Mr. Crawford was a kind husband and indulgent father. By disposition he was cheerful and hospitable. He was evenly tempered, polite, and handsome. Though mild and pleasant to all, in every condition of life, he was a person of quick wit, which though keen never left a barb.

The great benefactors of our beautiful village, in a business point of view, have now almost all passed from the scene of action; but it is our consolation to know they have left names and good deeds behind them which speak to the living. When will Newburgh see their like again?



THE VILLAGE OF NEWBURGH FROM CRAWFORD HOUSE, 1830

From the steel engraving by William Wall. The house in the right stands at the southwest corner of South and Montgomery Streets

THE VILLAGE OF NEWBURGH

1825-1850

For over a century after its settlement, the "general progress of Newburgh was comparatively slow," wrote E. M. Ruttenber in 1859. The village had sprung from a royal grant to German Palatines, who came in 1709.

Then about 1825, new life stirred, and Newburgh began to develop, as a result of efforts by a small group of far-seeing men, among them David Crawford.

A starting point for this phase of history might well be General LaFayette's visit on September 14, 1824. The evening before beacons on east shore mountains proclaimed he would arrive on the morrow. Lofty arches of green branches and flowers were erected across Water Street.

Next day 10,000 people from near and far assembled in the streets and at wharves. Four companies of cavalry, a company of infantry from Fishkill Landing and another from Washingtonville, and three companies of Newburgh infantry were conspicuous.

On arrival of the steamboat from New York, LaFayette was conveyed by barouche through Colden, First and Smith Streets to the Orange Hotel. There in the Long Room he was officially welcomed by the village president, Francis Crawford (father of David Crawford).

Opening of Erie Canal

Just over a year later (in October, 1825) another event vitally affecting Newburgh's future took place. When the packet "Seneca Chief" entered the newly completed Erie Canal from Lake Erie, a cannon salute in Buffalo was repeated in Rochester, Syracuse and Albany, thence down the Hudson to New York.

This heralded a new age in transportation—by steamboat, plank road, and railroad. Much of David Crawford's time for the 25 years following was devoted to development of transportation as it related to Newburgh. His own boats joined the armada plying the river.

In 1824 the Supreme Court had ended the 17-year steamboat monopoly of Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston, and Newburgh

business men were quick to take advantage of open competition. On June 7, 1825, at a meeting of sloop owners, with Selah Reeve chairman and David Crawford secretary, arrangements were made to place a steamboat on the Newburgh-New York line to carry freight and passengers.

From the chapter "Forwarding Lines" in Ruttenber's "History of the Town of Newburgh" (1859) is drawn this outline of David Crawford's steamboat activities:

"From Walsh's dock, foot of Third Street: F. & D. Crawford (1827); D. Crawford & Co. (1831); Crawford, Mailler & Co. (1838).

"In 1830 Christopher Reeve purchased the steamer Baltimore, later selling a half interest to David Crawford. In 1834 David Crawford became her sole owner and transferred her to the route between Newburgh and Albany.

"In 1833 D. Crawford & Co. built the steamer Washington, which was far superior to any other.

"The use of steamboats, however, soon gave place to barges (towboats). The first vessel, the Minisink, was placed on the line by Crawford, Mailler & Co. in 1841."

Newburgh Men Promote Railroads

An act of the Legislature in 1830 appointed David Crawford, Christopher Reeve, John P. De Witt, Thomas Powell, Joshua Conger, Charles Borland, William Walsh, John Forsyth and their associates "a body corporate and politic under the name and title of Hudson & Delaware Railroad Co." to construct a railroad or way from Newburgh through the County of Orange to the Delaware River." This act became void, no effort having been made to build the road within three years.

In 1835 a meeting of citizens, including David Crawford, was held to discuss the uniting of the Hudson and Delaware Rivers by the New York and Erie Railroad. Then began a long struggle to secure the eastern terminus of the Erie in Newburgh. This too failed when the Erie decided in favor of Piermont.

Following this failure the Newburgh group revived the old Hudson & Delaware Railroad Co. and David Crawford and others were elected directors. Ground was broken in November, 1836.

Again failure followed, due to the panic of 1837. But in 1845 a new arrangement was made with the Erie, and by 1850 the opening of a branch road to Chester was celebrated.



DAVID CRAWFORD

about 1812 in his uniform of Captain of Artillery. He was about 23 years old.

In 1844 the Newburgh Steam Mills, a stock company, was formed to manufacture cotton goods. The company erected the building now known as the Coldwell lawn mower structure, which still dominates the water front. David Crawford was one of the original directors of the mills, which gave employment to 350 persons.

In 1849, construction of a plank road from Newburgh to Ellen-ville was proposed by David Crawford, and after a survey it was determined to construct two roads, a northerly route and a southerly route. The roads were completed in 1851.

The organization of the Quassaick Bank was effected at a meeting of citizens in 1851, with David Crawford as chairman.

The Newburgh Gas-Light Co. was organized in May, 1852, with David Crawford as president. Gas was first lighted in the latter part of 1852. Crawford's participation in this company was his last public service, he having disposed of his mercantile establishment the previous year.

During his long career David Crawford served in the Board of Trustees of the village for 10 terms, starting in 1830.

THREE LITTLE MAIDS FROM SCHOOL

*Three little maids from
School are we,
Pert as a school-girl
Well can be,
Fill'd to the brim
With girlish glee,
Three little girls
From school.*

When Sir William Gilbert wrote the libretto for "The Mikado" in 1888, he could well have been describing "three little maids from school" in Newburgh in the early 1840's: Mary Elizabeth (Lib) Crawford, her cousin Clara Belknap, and Charlotte Miller. These 17 year old girls were indeed pert and filled with girlish glee, and their letters enable us to share their adventures and escapades, to attend their parties, and to secure a glimpse of the old Newburgh Academy in Montgomery Street.

"Coterie" evenings were the popular social event and as "coterie" is described as a set of persons associated by exclusive interests, it is not difficult to imagine that "coterie" evenings will again come to Crawford House.

One letter relating to a coterie evening speaks of "its many lovely girls, but specially the image of frolicsome, 'witching Lib Crawford, perhaps engaged in teasing some poor fellow, or floating like a swan through mazes of the dance, or pouring forth in notes of sweetness, "I'm O'er Young to Marry Yet," "The Days We Went Gypsing" or "The Sunny Hours of Childhood."

Clara, another of the little maids, was the daughter of Col. William Goldsmith Belknap (1794-1851), who was an officer in the War of 1812 and remained in the service for the rest of his life. He was cited for gallantry in an attack by the British at Fort Erie, August 15, 1814. In the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma in the Mexican War in 1846 he further distinguished himself. In Newburgh, a committee including David Crawford, caused a sword to be made for presentation to Colonel Belknap.

Clara's brother, William Worth Belknap, after gallant service in the Civil War, was appointed Secretary of War by President Grant in 1869.

No information is available concerning the family of the third little maid, Charlotte Miller.

Lib Crawford Off To School

In October, 1841, Lib Crawford left Newburgh to attend Mr. Canda's School in New York, at 17 LaFayette Place. Clara and Charlotte wrote faithfully to Lib to cheer the homesick girl.

The first letter, dated October 23, 1841, is from Clara. The letter mentions walking along the River Road to the Vale along Quassaick Creek. The heights south of the vale were 100 feet above the level of the stream as it "murmured along a gentle declivity to mingle its water with those of the Hudson."

Clara wrote: "You ask if I have had any adventures since you left . . . As Charlotte and I were walking along River Road to the Vale, Mr. Phinney's wagon passed. We leaned against the fence, and talked of all the melancholy things in the world, and among the rest our separation from our dearest friend, Lib.

"Well, when we turned around to resume our walk, we saw a large bundle by us, which proved to be a paper filled with chestnuts. We noticed the young gentleman in the wagon looked very laughingly at us. Don't you think there is a great deal of romance connected with chestnuts?"

SOAP-LOCK OF "MR. UNLESS"

And the same month Charlotte wrote to Lib: "When you get low-spirited you must think of last winter scrapes about moving the school-room clock and pouring water in overshoes, etc. I must tell you that "Unless" has soap-locks the longest I think I ever saw except those at Mr. Phinney's last winter." (Mr. "Unless" it appears was an admirer of Lib's, not held in very high esteem.)

The letter concluded with a "duet post script" by the two little maids in Newburgh to a homesick little maid in New York. Charlotte writing:

"Dear Lib: Clara is here and we have concluded to cross* this page, as we have so much to tell you. The coterie met last night at

* *To cross a page meant that after writing in the usual manner, i.e. from west to east the writing was continued from south to north. It hardly contributed to easy reading but doubled the writing space.*

Adele's and wonderful to relate there were 12 gentlemen and only 7 girls . . .

"Last night Clara says Sophy upset a saucer of ice-cream on her beautiful dress, only worn once before. Clara thanked Joel Phinney for the paper of chestnuts he so politely bestowed upon us."

Clara is writing now: "We have been eating some molasses candy, and you must not be surprised if our post script is very sweet. If only you could have seen Marcher last evening you would have laughed. He flew about like a fairy with his flowing locks and twinkling orbs . . ."

Charlotte is writing now: "Marcher is raising whiskers and I suppose he greases his face each night . . . You must not cry so much, Lib, it will make you sick."

A Conspiracy in School Room

From Clara, February, 1842: "I will tell you the important things which have happened in this most mighty village. Miss Dwight is sitting on the stage in all her dignity, and casts every now and then a suspicious glance to our side of the room, and well she might for there is a grand conspiracy in operation. I am sitting in the corner, like our old friend 'Mr. John Horner,' looking as intellectual as possible, with my pencil in my mouth, and writing on an atlas which lies on my lap.

"Charlotte is sitting by my side for a screen, and there is a book on the desk open, which I read a few lines from once in a while and then commence writing again, as if taking extracts. Don't you admire this grand specimen of genius? Yesterday was Valentine Day and you were overwhelmed with love epistles, I suppose. I will give you an extract from a poetical valentine I received:

*"My passion is as mustard strong;
I sit all day sober sad;
Dumb as a fool all day long;
Or like a March hare mad.*

*Fat as a pear-monger I'd be,
If Clara were but kind;
Cool as a cucumber could see
The rest of womankind.*

*Like a ninny I gaping stare,
And eye her o'er and o'er;
Lean as a rake am I with care;
(Sleek as a mouse before)."*

In one letter Charlotte observed that she had passed the home of "Unless" and noticed him at a window smoking a cigar. Perhaps, said Charlotte, he was composing poetry to Lib in this strain:

*When weary I ar
I smokes my cigar,
And when the smoke rises
Up into my eyeses,
I think of thee dearest
And oh how I sighses.*

And in a more melancholy vein Charlotte writes: "Clara and I called at Mr. Bellows' the other day to see how Frances was, and Carnelia said that she was evidently failing every day; and Dr. Payne thinks she will die with the leaves have fallen."

OLD ACADEMY DORMITORY REMAINS

Mary Elizabeth's younger sister Anna also attended the Newburgh Academy, described as a "classical and commercial boarding and day school." It was just a few doors south from the Crawford Mansion in Montgomery Street. One of the buildings, which served as a dormitory, survives and is known as the McQuade Foundation, a home for children.

One of Anna's letters, written in 1841, deals with teachers, playmates and pets and says in part:

"Your favorite Mr. Foote is the most awful looking man this winter you ever saw. He wears a long-tailed morning gown all day in school, and I suppose thinks that if he stops all creation would stop too.

"All the children came up to this house, and I brought up Miss Kitty Clover and they screamed and made a great fuss over her. So Kitty went into a fit. She is growing to be a large fat cat."

A family friend of the Crawford's wrote Mary Elizabeth describing an evening in the Crawford house: "Your sister Anna is

talking about her cat—your father is in his rocking chair with his feet on another, and your mother is walking around eating apples—your father making speeches as usual. I suppose you are almost a French lady by this time. Anna Rogers and you must be real comforters to each other, though I hear you are not allowed much time.”

*Three little maids who
All unwary,
Come from a ladies'
Seminary,
Freed from its genius
Tutelary,
Three little maids
From School.*

FLIRTATIOUS COUPLE REPORTED ON

Romance was ever in the hearts of the little maids, as when Charlotte wrote to Lib on February 7, 1842: “You must make haste home if you want to enjoy the sight of a most singular flirtation. The enamoured pair sat at a bow window the whole evening at Mrs. Downing’s party looking at the moon; and the next night at a coterie at Clara’s they were together nearly all of the time. The gentleman wears a pair of *large, black whiskers* and is a brother of a great friend of yours—and the lady has the *highest forehead* in Newburgh.”

Lib returned home to Newburgh in the Spring of 1842. Her friend Margaret Brown penned a poem to celebrate the approaching event which ended: “At coteries some missed your father’s prancing bays, all missed his dear loved daughter.”

With Mary Elizabeth’s return home, and the girls together again, the letters cease, but we may be certain that their lives were full and their hearts were light. And then, in 1843 Mary Elizabeth (Lib) fell in love.

Sands McCamly of New York was the fortunate suitor among many. Sands had been born in 1814 on a farm in the Town of Vernon, Sussex County, N. J., and was 10 years older than Mary Elizabeth. When he was very young the family moved to Warwick, Orange County, and it appears his family and the Crawfords had been acquainted for many years.

As a young man Sands went to New York to work for his prosperous uncle, Sands McCamly, a merchant at 96 Pearl Street. He was

thus employed during his brief courtship and still briefer marriage to Mary Elizabeth.

LIB'S LETTER TO HER FIANCE

On January 22, 1844, Mary Elizabeth wrote to Sands: "Many thanks, my very dear friend, for your kind letter which I received last Thursday. I am sure you would have been surprised at the change your epistle wrought in me; my eyes brightened, my spirits rose, and I was entirely a different creature. I went out and made my visits with a light heart; talked over all the scandal, and no one would have suspected that a few hours before I was vexed and scolding away at the greatest possible rate."

The little maid was growing up and, as with all lovers, on occasion, Mary Elizabeth in another epistle observed that "the sombre sky darkly casts a shade. You will not find me an agreeable companion, for I believe I have got what people call the blues. I do not know whether I shall attribute the strange fit to the state of my nerves after parting with you so recently or to the weather which is most gloomy and March-like.

"Another long, long week must pass before I see you—but you will write next Sunday, will you not? that I may hear from you the first of the week. It is but four days since you left, yet it appears much longer. How wearily the time passes when separated from those we love."

Mary Elizabeth and Sands were married on August 6, 1844, and a few months later she joined her husband in New York for the winter, returning to Newburgh in the Spring. While she was in New York, the two little maids, who remained in Newburgh, resumed their correspondence with her.

*From three little
Maids take one away,
Two little maids
Remain, and they
Won't have to wait
Very long they say
Three little maids
From school.*

FANCY DRESS BALL AT CHRISTIES'

One of the social events in Newburgh in the Winter of 1845 was the Christies' fancy dress ball. Charlotte reported it in so much detail that Lib must have felt she had attended it; a feeling that we too may experience: "You asked me to describe to you Mrs. Christies' fancy dress ball . . . Imagine nuns, Swiss damsels, monks, Quakeresses, freebooters, broom-girls, naval officers, courtiers and court dames, all in one crowd, but talking like Newburgh persons of the weather, etc., and you will have a pretty good conception of the party.

"Mrs. George Reeve, in my opinion looked the most 'distingue' of anyone. She was dressed as a Highland lady, in a dark red plaid dress, with a short skirt. On her head she wore a black cap with a long, white feather, which made her look like Dia Vernon in her riding dress.

"Mrs. Monell as a gypsy queen, with an amber colored turban and her long black hair in braids down her back, looked magnificently. There was a Miss Ting from Philadelphia in Spanish costume—black velvet and pearls and a long black veil.

"Mary Case went as a Turkish lady, in a dress of pale pink, glittering with gold spangles. Elizabeth Case was dressed as a fat Dutch Vrow and had her hair combed straight back over her head, fastened in a knot on the crown. Margaret Case wore a dress in imitation of the peasantry of the south of France. She had a double skirt, the outside one of lighter colored material than the other. Her head-dress was a foot high, shaped like a grenadier's cap.

"Mr. and Mrs. Christie were in Dutch characters and looked and acted them to admiration. Miss Margaret Case of Fishkill, was dressed as a Dutch lady who had lately lost her husband—in a pink marino and black beads. Sarah Hasbrouck really looked beautiful as a broom-girl. Her dress was a cherry-colored bodice, low in the neck with short sleeves and a stomacher.

"Mary Frances was a flower girl in a white dress with a short skirt and, a cherry-colored apron, with a bib and shoulder straps. Everyone admired her, and she looked over young; but her bewitching naivete of manner was lost upon me, for I know her too well.

DOWNING, HIGGINSON, JIM PHINNEY

"Mr. Downing was in the character of a brigand and Mrs. Downing was dressed as a lady of the old school in one of her Aunt Adam's

court dresses which was splendid. Mr. Higginson wore a court dress of claret colored velvet, ornamented with gold. Nathan Reeve was Count D'Orsay in white pantaloons, white satin vest, coat of latest cut, immense pink breastpin, eyeglasses, watch chain and other geegaws. He looked the fop and fool to the life.

“Jim Phinney did not go as Dr. Busby's handsome son, as Anna told you he did. He went as a naval officer, with furious mustaches; he was obliged to hold them on with his hand.

“Jim Graham was dressed as a Highlander and he looked very well in blanket shawls. Mr. Boice was a Chinese astrologer with flowing robes of brown muslin, a girdle covered with mysterious characters, a very high steeple hat, and a long white beard. He carried a black spear, as tall as Mr. Proudfit who was his chaperon.

“The season for Valentines has come and passed away. Did you receive many this year? I got but two, miserable little things.”

FULL DRESS WEST POINT PARTY

Parties constitute an important part of the letters of this period such as the one from Clara Belknap in Newburgh to the young bride, Mary Elizabeth in New York, describing an affair in West Point, attended by General-in-Chief of the Army, Winfield Scott. Jim Graham, also referred to, is James G. Graham who then lived in Wallkill, 14 miles from Newburgh. The Grahams moved to Newburgh early in the 1860's.

Clara wrote of the party: “The officers were all in full uniform. Their glittering dress added much to the appearance of a room . . . General Scott and his family attracted more attention than any of the other distinguished strangers. The General is certainly the tallest man I ever saw . . .

“You will be surprised to hear we are not only having parties in town, but go out of town to attend them. Jim Graham gave invitations to his sister's party last week. We had a lively time, not getting home till 2 in the morning and riding in by moonlight.”

Early in 1845 Colonel Belknap was transferred to Florida, prior to his service in the Mexican War. Clara in a letter to Mary Elizabeth tells of the voyage by sailing ship:

“When I left New York it was with a sad heart, for it was uncertain when I should see the North and my many friends again, per-

haps never. Just as the vessel left Jim Graham called out with a long face, 'the last link is broken' and made me laugh.

CLARA TELLS OF STORM AT SEA

"We had a much longer passage than we expected, with a wind most of the way against us, and for variety had a storm which I can never forget. You can have no idea what an awful thing a storm at sea is. With the wind howling, the waves throwing the vessel from side to side like a feather, and the noise and confusion of everything movable rolling about in every direction; and with pale sea-sick persons on whose faces horror and fright are plainly written, asking every moment 'Is there any danger?' 'Must we be lost?' It is terrible and awfully sublime. 'A life on the ocean wave' has no attraction.

"I was only sea-sick a few days. There were beautiful sunsets and lovely moonlight nights. Miss Wood, the only young lady besides Anna Mary and myself, we are very much pleased with. She is, I should think, about 25 years old, but has youthful manners."

A SLIGHTLY JEALOUS LITTLE MAID

The last letter from Clara, written in Fort Brooke, East Florida, March 31, 1845, shows her resentment at the damage matrimony has done to the spirit among the little maids; gone is the girlish glee, pertness, and childhood:

"At last your letter came, and I know you still sometimes thought of the absent. I felt sad, and low-spirited after reading it, for although it contained so many kind words of affection, yet it seemed as if you did not love me as you used to. And you say 'You never were so happy in your life'—so you see, this made me feel badly and I shed some tears over the letter. We three, you, Charlotte and I, were so happy when we were girls together."

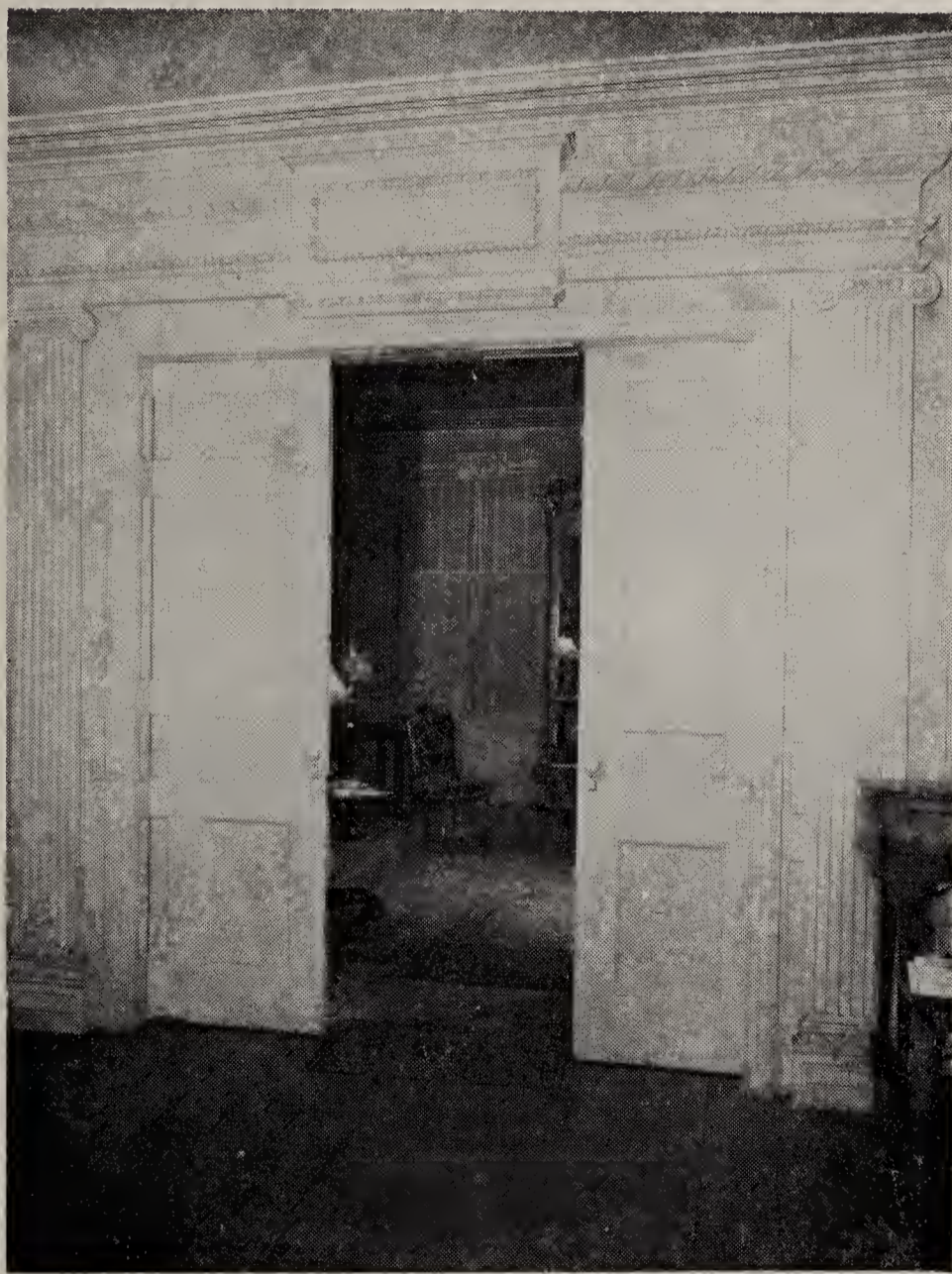
And Charlotte, the last little maid, not yet 20, was writing to Mary Elizabeth: "Those happy hours will never come back, dear Lib, and I do not believe that I at least, will ever be as careless and light-hearted again. But long ago I gave up mourning over the pleasant past; I am now trying to 'wisely improve the present'."

“NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE”

*Say, why should friendship grieve for those
Who safe arrive on Canaan's shore?
Releas'd from all their hurtful foes
They are not lost, but gone before.*

First stanza from a poem sent to Mrs. David Crawford two months after the tragic death of Mary Elizabeth on July 8, 1845.

Finis



DOORWAY BETWEEN THE NORTH PARLORS
*over doorways and windows are carvings which reminds
one of McIntyre's genius in Salem, Massachusetts.*

FREDERIKA BREMER'S ACCOUNT OF ANNA CRAWFORD'S WEDDING

In 1849 Frederika Bremer, famous Swedish novelist, was the guest of the Andrew Jackson Downings in their Newburgh home, the grounds of which constitute the block bounded by Broad Street, Grand Street, Nicoll Street and Liberty Street. On October 11, 1849, with the Downings, she attended the wedding of Anna Crawford to Richard A. Southwick. Anna was the only surviving child of David Crawford, her sister Mary Elizabeth having died on July 8, 1845—a bride of 11 months, a mother of one month, and not 20 years old.

The account of Anna's wedding appeared in Frederika Bremer's book "The Homes of the New World: Impressions of America," (1853), Harper Brothers, New York, and follows:

We went to the wedding at 9 o'clock in the morning. We drove to the house of the bride in pouring rain. All the guests, about a hundred in number, were already assembled. The bride's father, an elderly man of a remarkably agreeable appearance, offered me his arm to lead me into the room where the marriage was to take place. It was the only daughter of the house who was to be married. The elder sister had been dead about a year and that the mother still grieved for her loss might be seen by her pale, sorrowful countenance.

The wedding company was very silent; one might rather have believed one's self in a house of mourning than at a joyful festival. And as the eldest daughter had died soon after her marriage and in consequence of it, namely, when she was about to become a mother, it was not without cause that this festival was regarded with serious thoughts. Presently a door opened, and a young gentleman entered leading a young lady in her bonnet and trailing dress. They took their places at the bottom of the room, a venerable clergyman stepped forward to the young couple, and they were united in holy wedlock by a short prayer, admonition and benediction.

Friends and relations then came forward and kissed and congratulated the new-married pair; I also went forward, leaning on the father's arm, kissed the bride, and shook hands with the young husband. The bride was very pretty and was dressed for a journey. The couple was to commence their journey through life immediately after the marriage ceremony, sailing for Niagara and must therefore hasten away to the steam-boat. Champagne and cake were handed round.

Bridal presents were arranged on a table; each guest received a little pasteboard box tied with a white ribbon in which was a piece of bridal cake. The young couple were to return after a few weeks to reside with the parents.

This marriage ceremony seemed to me characteristic of that haste and precipitation for which I have heard Americans reproached. Life is short, say they, and therefore they must hurry along its path, dispensing with all needless forms and fashions.

But I must acknowledge that on this occasion it was merely the form which was hurried. I was aware that earnestness lay at the bottom of every heart. Many persons were affected, some wept.

The old servant, a Negro, who handed about refreshments, had one of those countenances in which may be read a whole volume of the inner life of the family, and which shows that it is a life of affection, in which the servant feels himself to be a member of the family.



NEWBURGH ACADEMY IN THE 1840's

Attended by the "three little maids." On the right the dormitory—now the McQuade Home for Children on Montgomery Street just above South Street.

THE CRAWFORD HOUSE TITLE

by Edward G. O'Neill

The first record of the tract on which the Crawford House stands is found in the lease made by Trustees of the Glebe to Elnathan Foster, dated August 20, 1793, and leasing Lot No. 39 on the old Glebe map. Elnathan Foster died leaving a last will and testament dated April 12, 1822. This will is recorded in Liber G of Wills, page 19. The executors under the will were Levi P. Dodge, Richard Hand and Ruth Foster.

On April 15, 1825, the executors surrendered the lease to the Trustees of the Glebe. Then, on March 8, 1830, the trustees made a new lease to David Crawford for a term of 900 years. David Crawford died leaving a will, which was probated August 5, 1856, and recorded in Book V of Wills, page 347. The executors were Fanny C. Crawford and Richard A. Southwick. On April 28, 1864, the executors assigned the lease of the Crawford tract and one other lease to Eugene A. Brewster. Trustees of the Glebe then formally conveyed the property to Brewster on April 29, 1864.

On February 16, 1865, Eugene A. Brewster and Anna W. Brewster, his wife, conveyed the property to Fanny C. Crawford, widow of David Crawford, deceased, and to Fanny C. Southwick, Anna C. Southwick and Florence Southwick, children of Anna Southwick, deceased; and to Mary E. C. McCamley. On May 1, 1865, Fanny C. Crawford conveyed her share to Mary E. C. McCamley. There was no change in title thereafter until 1886.

In the interim, Mary E. C. McCamley married Charles F. Allan, Anna C. Southwick married Walter Kerr, and Florence Southwick married Robert L. Burton.

Mrs. Fanny C. Crawford died intestate. On May 6, 1886, the heirs, Fanny C. Southwick, Mary E. C. Allan, Fanny C. Kerr, and Florence S. Burton, conveyed the property to Edwin T. Skidmore. Their husbands joined in the conveyance. Edwin T. Skidmore died on January 28, 1896, leaving a will, which was probated February 18, 1896. Emma D. Skidmore, widow, and Thomas H. Skidmore, son, were named as executors. Under the terms of the will the widow, Emma D. Skidmore, received the Crawford property.

On March 1, 1914, Emma D. Skidmore conveyed the property to Carl Maurice Dietrich by a deed recorded in the Orange County

Clerk's office March 18, 1914, in Liber 548 of Deeds, page 11. Carl Maurice Dietrich died January 29, 1953 leaving a will. The will bequeathed all his property to three sisters, Clara Louise Dietrich, Nettie Margaret Dietrich, and Caroline Van Tine. There were three deaths within a week. Nettie Margaret died January 26, 1953, Caroline Van Tine died January 28, 1953, and Carl Maurice Dietrich died January 29, so that the sole survivor of the family was Clara Louise Dietrich, Louise Krom Dietrich, wife of Carl Maurice, having died August 6, 1944.

Clara Louise Dietrich then transferred the title of the Crawford House to the Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands, by deed dated November 2, 1953.

(On December 13, 1953, Clara Louise Dietrich, the last of the Dietrich family, passed away.)

Edward G. O'Neill, attorney and immediate past president of the Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands performed the legal services in connection with the transfer of Crawford House from the Dietrich Estate to the Society. Matthew E. Devitt contributed his services, as searcher of deeds and titles, to the Society.



HALL OF CRAWFORD HOUSE

Halfway down the wide central hall a repetition of the framework of the front door.

THIRD HOME OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In its 70th year, the Historical Society begins occupancy of its third and final home—the Crawford House, which combines all the beauty, qualities and associations of other famed mansions of the city and region which have been lost with the passing of time and march of progress. Here it is purposed to build and develop a community cultural and historical center that with Hasbrouck and Knox's houses will link the outstanding eras of the past with the present and future.

It was not until 1940-41 that the society had a home. It then occupied basement rooms in the J. Renwick Thompson law building in Second Street. In 1942-43 it took over Glebe House, Clinton Street, and now it is moving a block and a half east to Crawford House on the corner of Montgomery Street.

To give credit to all who have aided in the acquisition of this historical property, and who are aiding in its improvement, is beyond our capability. Suffice to say, they have made possible a community accomplishment that will be appreciated by and increasingly beneficial to, succeeding generations of citizens.

CALVIN D. MYERS, *President*

GIFTS TO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mrs. Alice Curtis Desmond, period drapes for hallway of Crawford House

Mrs. J. Renwick Thompson, James Truslow Adams' "Album of American History" (Colonial)

Senator Thomas C. Desmond, large period knocker for Crawford House

Goudy Wildlife Club, core from Balmville Tree establishing its age

Mrs. Lee Woodward Zeigler, inlaid white holly table

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(including Memorials on preceding page)

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