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*(Photograph courtesy of Gretchen Rendes)*

## **Social and Architectural History**



*Maple Grove after 1891 alterations. (Photograph courtesy of St. Simeon Foundation)*

Calvert Vaux once wrote, “The art of building faithfully portrays the social history of the people to whose needs it ministers, but can not get beyond those boundaries.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the country estates established in the mid-nineteenth century to the north and south of the Poughkeepsie City limits along the Hudson River, reflected the social history of the new American wealth. Maple Grove is one of very few remaining country estates that lined the Hudson River along the South Road. The “South Road Corridor” as it has come to be known by historians,<sup>2</sup> is a three mile stretch of road that skirts the Hudson River holding some of the most significant architecture in the Hudson Valley from the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, most have succumbed to the development pressures of a growing city and are no longer standing. Well-known 19<sup>th</sup>-century architects and arbiters of the new American “taste” such as A.J. Davis and A.J. Downing, designed and landscaped estates along the Hudson River. Although the architecture of Maple Grove recalls aspects of Downing and Davis designs, not to mention designs from popular pattern books, the architect/builder of Maple Grove remains a mystery.

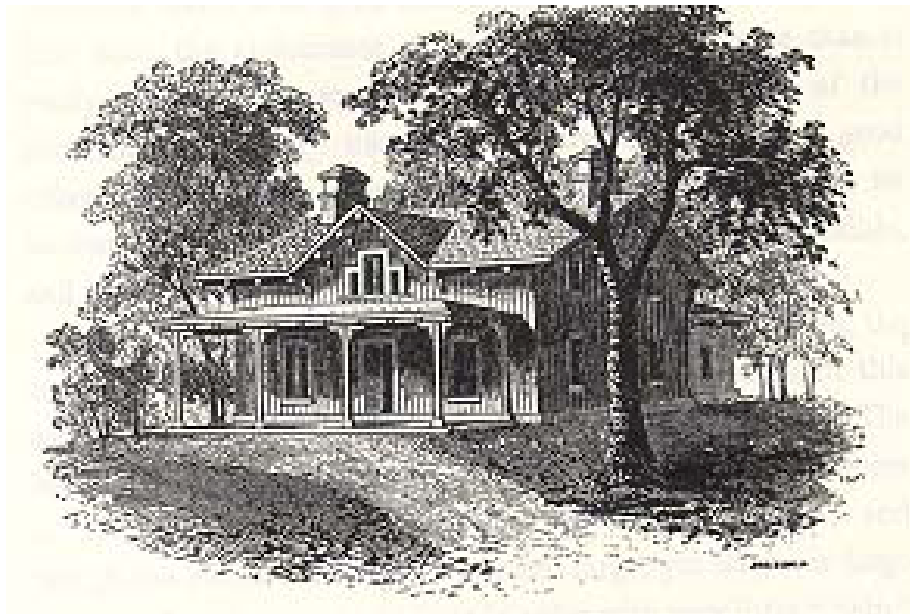
From 1686, when the first patent was granted to Sanders and Harmense until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Europeans who settled in the area around the City of Poughkeepsie farmed the fertile soils with little industry of which to speak.<sup>4</sup> Gradually, the City gained importance and became the Dutchess County seat with shipbuilding and other industries bringing new settlers to the area. At one time, Poughkeepsie served as the temporary capital for New York State and the site for the ratification of Constitution of the United States in 1788.<sup>5</sup>

Transportation by ship up the Hudson River and the completion of the Hudson River Railroad in 1849 brought a new class of citizens from New York City: wealthy businessmen and their families who sought refuge at their country homes from the summer heat and filth of the city. As the population increased and the land developed, the rural landscape of Poughkeepsie was divided into estates built on the rolling hills and forests that descended to the ragged cliffs along the Hudson. Spectacular estates lined the Hudson River from Tarrytown to Hudson: Sunnyside, Lyndhurst, Wyndcliffe, Clermont and Olana, to

name just a few. Mansions, gatehouses and picturesque landscapes transformed what were once simple farms into elegant country estates befitting the wealth of the new owners.

Straying from their democratic roots, wealthy Americans in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century began to express their prosperity in more conspicuous ways: travelling the world, decorating their city homes in the latest of fashion and building mansions in the country in every style imaginable. Designers and builders used pattern books, magazines and travelogues for inspiration. Filled with images of classical architecture, the styles and elements were often applied randomly and many from across the Atlantic Ocean critiqued the American taste for grand buildings as inappropriate for use as homes. Ostentatiousness was the rule. Calvert Vaux went on to say in his book *Villas and Cottages* (1867), “In an intelligent age and country like this, ugly buildings should be the exception, not as hitherto, the almost invariable rule.”<sup>6</sup>

Publishers and architects hoped to redefine American domestic architecture by focusing on designs appropriate for various income levels and uses. Cottages, Ornamental Farmhouses and Villas were explicitly described in the volumes. Masonry systems, board and batten siding, chimneys, brackets and technology were outlined in great detail to assist builders. *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* and pattern books such as J. C.



*Design Number 10 from A.J. Downing's Cottage Residences.*

Loudon's *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture* (1833) from Europe, and Andrew Jackson Downing's *Cottage Residences* (1842) and A.J. Davis's *Rural Residences* (1838) from the United States influenced the way in which the homes of bankers and industrialists were designed. The buildings created were as varied as the examples in the books. Edith Wharton, who coined the phrase “Hudson River Bracketed”, wrote of the estates of the new monied class and described their grand homes with their wild, yet cultivated landscapes.<sup>8</sup>

More modest than many of the other estates in the vicinity of Poughkeepsie, the Maple Grove estate was originally part of a larger farm that was sold to Charles A. Macy in 1850 by Nathan Jewett. Macy was a New



*The rolling front lawn of Maple Grove offered picturesque views of the Hudson River.  
(Photograph courtesy of St. Simeon Foundation)*

York banker with connections to Poughkeepsie through his wife. In the 1830's, a small farmhouse and barn were built, but it was not until Macy purchased the 35-acre parcel some time in 1850's that Maple Grove joined the roster of country estates along the South Road.<sup>7</sup> It remained a "country estate" as well as a farm throughout its history, passing from Macy, through two owners to the Hamilton-Kinkead family in whose possession it remained for over 100 years.

The 1850 cornerstone on the main house attests to the date that Macy developed his property as a country retreat. Although at that time the well-known architect A.J. Davis was in the area working with Samuel F.B. Morse on Locust Grove to the south, and A.J. Downing was working to the north at Matthew Vassar's Springside, no record of an architect for Maple Grove has been found, nor are there any construction documents from the Macy estate describing who did the work and how much it cost. Many of the exterior features such as the use of Gothic trim and bracketed cornices, lattice porch supports and the siting of the house with its pastoral viewsheds and intersecting driveways do relate to the work of Downing,

Davis, Samuel Sloane and Richard Upjohn all of whom designed homes of this type. However, Maple Grove in its original form does not have the unity of an architect-designed building suggesting that perhaps a builder was responsible for the plan of the interior at the very least.



*Kinkead girl on west verandah, c. 1900.  
(Photograph courtesy of Gretchen Rendes)*

The main house is a well-composed, symmetrical building constructed of painted red brick, combining elements of Gothic and Italianate styles. Maple Grove retains most of its original exterior features from 1850, along with a number of changes from the 1891 alterations. Its graceful symmetry consists of a main block with a cross-gabled roof and a deep bracketed cornice. Two wings are recessed from the main block and have gable roofs parallel to the main façade. A one-story wood veranda extends across the main block, turns back, and extends across three-quarters of each wing. The veranda has a flat-seam terne- or tin-coated metal roof with a distinctive concave curve and elaborate Gothic fretwork much in the style of A.J. Davis' resi-



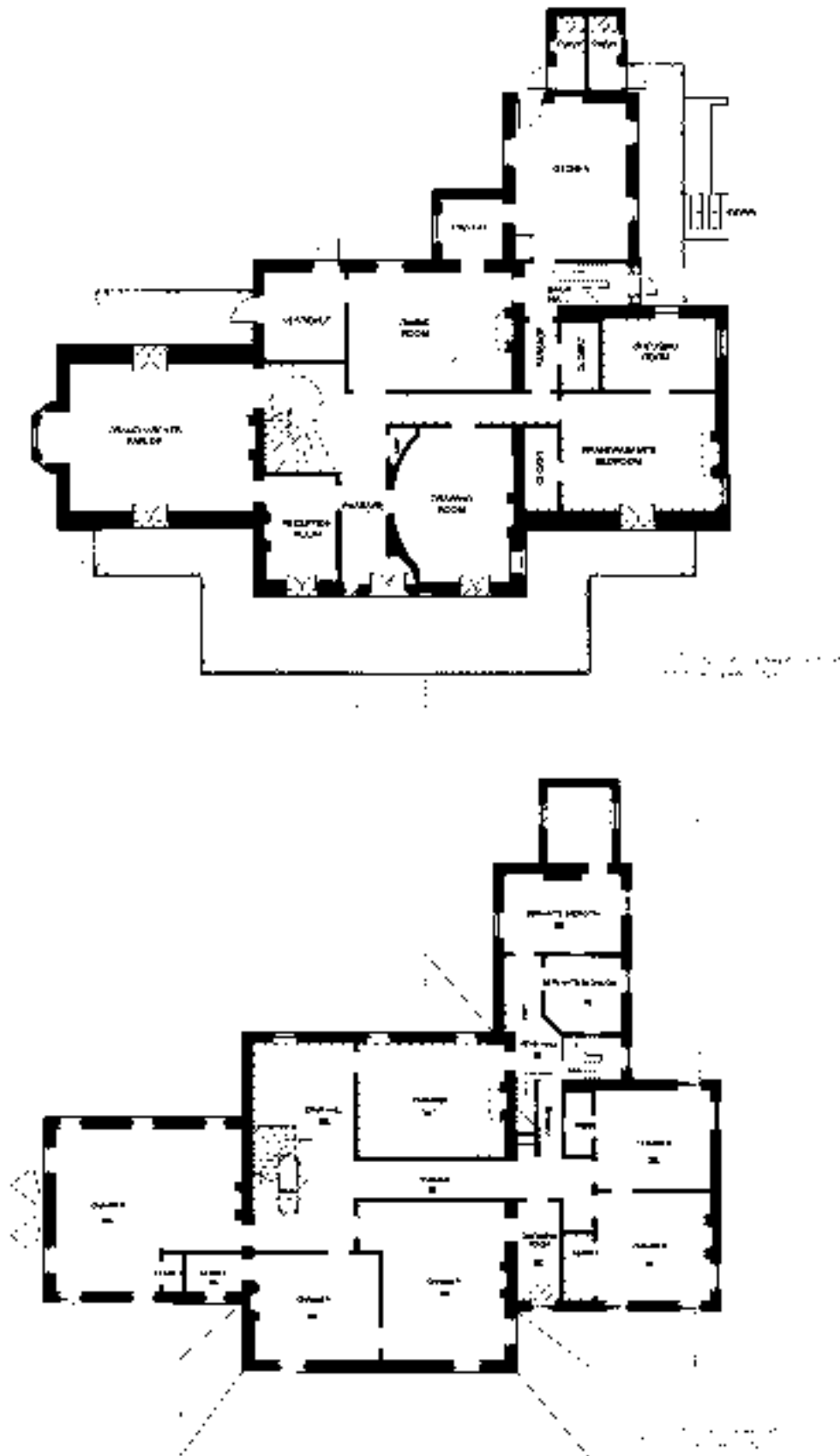


*West facade of Maple Grove, c. 1998*

dential work.<sup>7</sup> The main block fenestration was originally arranged symmetrically with a center door flanked by two sidelights (the one to the south was blind). All the window openings onto the verandah consisted of paired-sash casement doors. A paired-sash door was also located at the center of each wing and to either side of the main entrance on the main block. There are two windows on the second floor of the main block with a false window in the center and a circular window at the peak of the gable. The windows on the front and sides of the main block and those on the main floor of the wings have brownstone label molds that reflect the drop finial pattern of the verandah fretwork. Three circular windows adorn the second story of each wing with simple brick surrounds and casement sashes. On the second floor of the south wing of the house (south end), there were three windows with simple brownstone lintels, the two double-hung windows flanking a center blind window. Two windows were placed on either side of the fireplace on the main floor in 1850 beneath the two second story windows. A two-story service wing was built perpendicular to the house at the southeast corner along with another verandah along its south side. The verandah had a bracketed cornice with simpler geometric ornamentation than that on the west.

On the north side of the north wing, a large bay window was placed on the first story fitted with full-height casement sash. (These likely give a clue to the 1850 full-height casement windows used elsewhere on the house.) A one story verandah, similar to the southeast verandah, was located on the east side of the north wing.<sup>8</sup> Doors led to the verandah from the Dining Room and Grandparent's Parlor. The fenestration of the east façade, or rear of the house, was an arrangement of double-hung windows with simple brownstone lintels—three on the second floor and one on the first floor with a door on the north side, three circular windows and a full-height casement window at the center on the north wing and one circular window at the gable. A small one-story block was located at the intersection of the main block and the kitchen wing on its north side. One double hung window punctuated its north wall.

Maple Grove's floorplan was quite contrary to the quiet symmetry of the exterior. The two-leaf front entrance doors are so off-center on the hall that only one leaf was used. The other was an inactive leaf, however, it was necessary to build a partial niche to accommodate its occasional opening into the main passage. To the right of the hallway in the main block was the Drawing Room. Its curved walls were both elegant and practical in that the plan accommodated the incongruity between the interior and exterior.



*Conjectural floorplans, c. 1850. First floor (above) , second floor (below). Room names are derived from recollections of Elise Hamilton and Gretchen Rendes, both of whom lived in the house.*

To the north of the main passage was a small parlor, or the Reception Room, a beautiful Italianate marble fireplace standing at the center of the north wall adjacent to a doorway into the Grandparent's Parlor. Stairs to the second floor were likely located just past the Reception Room along the north wall of the main block. Passing under the stairs one entered the Grandparent's Parlor in the north wing. Likely, the laylight above the stairs allowed light into the space. An Italianate marble mantelpiece centered on the south wall, a plaster cornice and pocket doors at the bay window gave the Grandparents' Parlor an aura of elegance. Full-height sash doors led to the east and west verandahs. At the end of the Passage was the original Dining Room, its fireplace located on the south wall. From the Dining Room one could pass into the Pantry through a door in the east wall or into the south wing through an opening to the west of the fireplace. Late Greek Revival woodwork and flat plaster walls were applied throughout the main part of the house with eared window and door surrounds on the main floor.

Bedrooms, storerooms and sitting rooms were located on the second floor of the main block and wings, but the exact layout is unknown. It is doubtful that it differs much from today's plan with the exception of the change required by the new Stair Hall. A stair led from the second floor of the south wing, near the back stair, up to servants' quarters in the attic. Greek Revival woodwork and plaster walls finished the second floor spaces, however the molding profiles were considerably simpler than those on the main floor.

Maple Grove's service wing housed the kitchen and pantry areas, the staircase leading to the second floor and servants quarters above the Kitchen. The stove was located on the east wall of the Kitchen in a niche. Behind the Kitchen was a small two-story structure which was originally accessed only from the exterior of the building. It is possible that this was the location of the privy when the house was constructed in 1850.

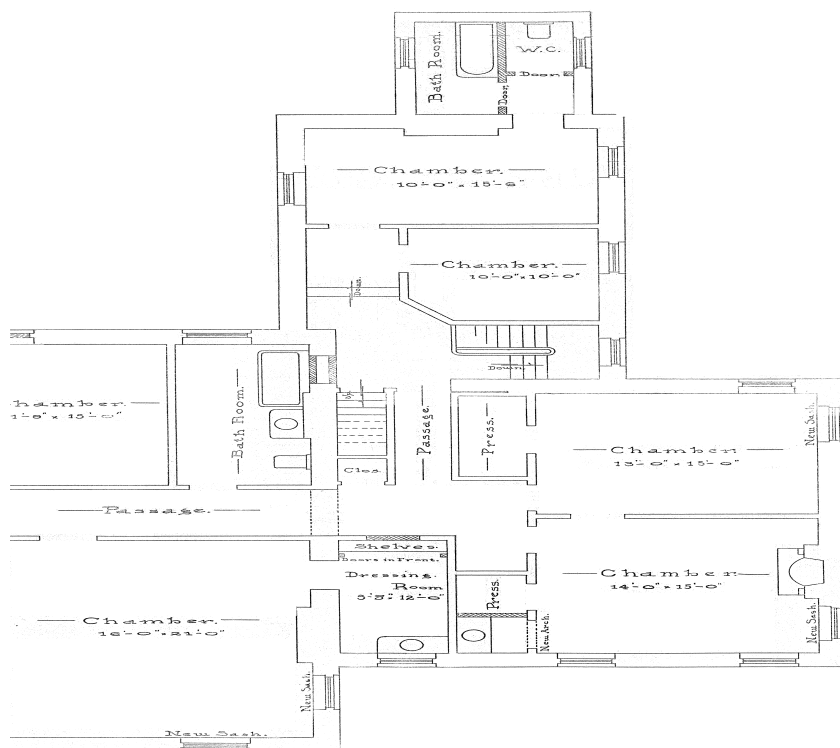


*Adolphus Hamilton  
(Courtesy of St. Simeon  
Foundation)*

Charles A. Macy sold the property after owning it for a mere seven years. According to research done by Landmarks of Dutchess County, two other families owned the property after Macy.<sup>8</sup> In 1870, Adolphus Hamilton, a merchant banker from New York, purchased the property from the Sweetser family. Maple Grove remained in the Hamilton-Kinthead family until 1987 when it was passed on to the Saint Simeon Foundation.<sup>9</sup> Physical evidence shows few significant changes were made to the building during Hamilton's tenure, perhaps a change in wallpaper or other minor modifications to the interior. However, no documentation exists to support this claim.

*Main facade, c. 1891. Note  
the position of the front door  
and windows. (Courtesy of  
St. Simeon Foundation)*





*1891 alterations to the interior of Maple Grove designed by William R. Walker & Sons. Only the first floor (above) and second floor (below) were modified in any appreciable fashion.*



The most significant changes occurred in 1891-2 when the house was passed on to Hamilton's daughter, Elise, and her husband, Dr. John Kinhead. They hired the Providence, Rhode Island, architecture firm of William R. Walker & Son to remodel the house. It is not known how the firm was selected, perhaps a family connection as the firm also worked on Dr. Kinhead's brother's home in Kentucky.<sup>10</sup> The floorplans were altered, a new style was adopted for interior elements and plumbing and mechanical systems were updated. Photographs and plans were published in a portfolio of the firm's designs in 1895.

The Walker firm made two significant changes to the exterior of the building which effected the interior quite positively. They relocated the front door with its sandstone lintel to better align with the existing floorplan moving it approximately four feet to the north and placing the window in the door's original location. The design created an awkward arrangement on the exterior, but was more logical in relation to the interior plan. Walker also removed the paired-sash casement doors on the first floor and replaced them with the full-width, double-hung sash. The upper sash had multiple panes and two panes in the lower. Brick filled in up to the level of the new sill and window seats were built into the niches on the interior. The second change was to insert a large Colonial Revival window at the level of the second floor on the east side of the house to illuminate the new stairway.



*Colonial Revival Hall and Library, c. 1910. Note the finely turned balusters on the staircase, the paneling and coffered ceiling. Note the quantity of light streaming in from the new window on the east wall of the Stair Hall. (Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society, William R. Walker & Sons Architectural Portfolio)*



*Top: Grandparents' Parlor, c. 1900.*

*Left: Grandparents' Parlor, north wall, c. 1900.*

*Lower right: Drawing Room, c. 1900.*

*(All photographs courtesy of St. Simeon Foundation)*





THE LIBRARY.  
"MAPLE GROVE," Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

WM. R. WALKER & SON,  
ARCHITECTS,  
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

*View of the Library, c. 1891, from the William R. Walker & Sons Architectural Portfolio. (Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society)*

The most significant design change to the interior was the transformation of the original dining room on the east side of the house into a Colonial Revival Library and Stair Hall. It is a flamboyant and altogether successful adaptation of the English notion of the "living hall". The hall was entered through an arch at the end of the main Passage. A grand staircase just past a small seating area led up to the second floor with the Library extending off to the right. The stairs ascended with three steps flanked by fluted columns to a large balcony. The balcony overlooked the library with its carved wood mantelpiece, coffered ceiling, paneled walls and bookcases. It then rose to the second floor in four flights. The Colonial Revival-style tripartite window with an elliptical fanlight was located between the second and third flights. The posts at each landing were finely turned with attenuated finials at both the top and bottom typical of the elegant Georgian homes of the Colonial period. The open risers are adorned with carved details, and the gracefully sweeping railings are supported by slender twist-turned balusters. The second floor, Upper Stair Hall was a light and open space illuminated by a skylight that was likely a survivor from the 1850 construction (a conjecture due to its misalignment with the Walker staircase). The 1850 openings between the first floor service areas, the Butler's Pantry and the Kitchen, were closed off and access to the Kitchen was accessed through the Back Passage behind the fireplace.





THE HALL.  
"MAPLE GROVE," Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

WM. R. WALKER & SON,  
ARCHITECTS,  
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

*View of the Stair Hall, c. 1891, from the William R. Walker Architectural Portfolio. Note the tight spacing of the balusters, the acanthus leaf capitals and the sweeping stair rail. (Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society.)*



THE DINING ROOM.

*View of the 1891 Dining Room from William R. Walker & Son Architectural Portfolio. Note the lush interior typical of the period. (Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society)*

The Walker firm transformed the Grandparents' Bedroom in the south wing into a Dining Room designed in the Colonial Revival fashion. It is an elegant room with dark-stained paneled wainscoting wrapped around the walls. Floral wallpaper covered the walls between the dado rail and the cornice. The fireplace on the south wall and a double-hung window were removed and replaced with a large picture window. A new fireplace was built in the northwest corner of the room. The mantelpiece is graced with intricate carvings of vines and grapes surrounding the fireplace and two framed beveled mirrors surmount it. A door in the middle of the east wall gave access to the new Butler's Pantry. A new parquet floor, simple in design, was installed in 1891.



*Dining Room, c. 1900. (Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society)*



Little is known of the 1850 Kitchen arrangement, but drawings, photographs and recollections give us clues to its layout prior to and following the 1891 alterations. The small room at the east of the Kitchen was made into a Laundry in 1891, accessed through a new opening on the south side of the stove. The opening to the north of the stove was bricked up at some point in Maple Grove's history. A Butler's Pantry was established in the former Grandparents' Dressing Room in the south wing entered through an opening in the middle of the east wall of the Dining Room. The kitchen remained quite the same except for upgrades in the cooking equipment and mechanical systems. A sleeping porch was added over the southeast verandah in the 1920s. The window on the south wing was enlarged to make a door.



*Sleeping porch addition was built between the two wars to accommodate George Kinhead. (Courtesy of Gretchen Rendes)*



*Southeast verandah during 1985 fire. Note the collapse of the second story above. (Courtesy of Gretchen Rendes)*

The service wing, southeast verandah and the roofs of the main house were destroyed in a suspicious fire in 1985 before Elise Kinhead willed the property to the Saint Simeon Foundation in 1987. Repairs have been undertaken to stabilize the house: a new roof of asphalt shingles, replacement of the bracketed cornices and drainage systems on the main block, and masonry repair in the affected areas. The upper portion of the service wing was rebuilt with modern materials and new windows have been installed to keep out the weather.

Maple Grove remains much as it was in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, it is deteriorating without proper attention and use. Steps must be taken to preserve the fine finishes and the building structure in the near future. Maple Grove was and still is a fine example of an “ornamental farmhouse” of the period. It is illustrative of the many styles and approaches to the new country ideal of 19<sup>th</sup> century America. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Every spirit builds itself a house, And beyond its house, a world, And beyond the world, a heaven.”



*View from the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery to the east toward the house. Maple Grove was part of the Picturesque movement when it was built with its rolling hills and cypresses. Its west verandah looked down the gently sloping hills to the Hudson River. (Courtesy of St. Simeon Foundation)*

# Hamilton-Kinkead Family

(Maple Grove occupancy shown in bold type)

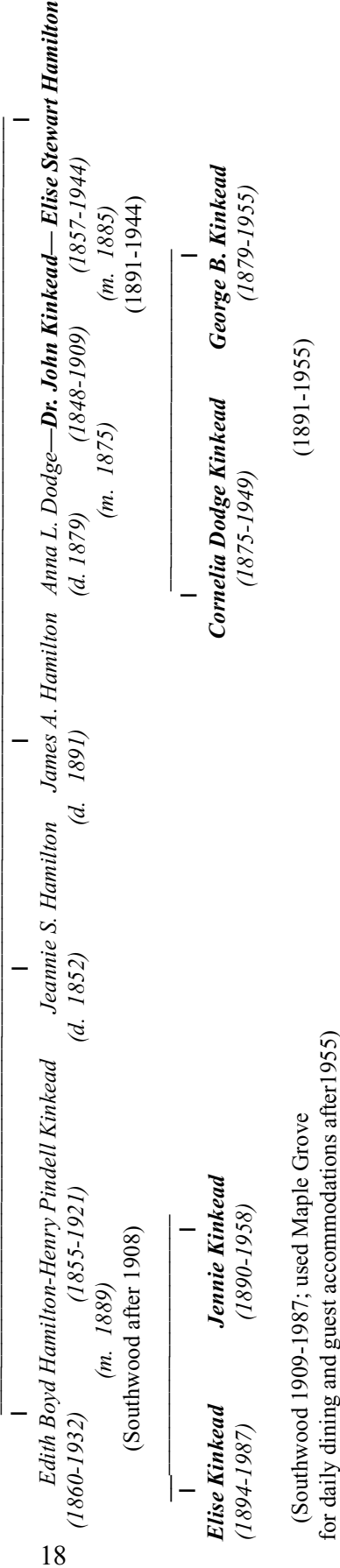
## Previous occupants of Maple Grove

Charles A. Macy  
1850-7

Sweetser Family  
186?-1870

Adolphus Hamilton—**Matilda Jane Boyd**  
(d. 1882) (d. 1891)

1870-1891



Elise Kinkead willed Maple Grove to the Saint Simeon Foundation 1988



*Dr. John Kinkead*



*Elise Stewart Kinkead*



*Jennie and Elise Kinkead, last owners of  
Maple Grove.*



*George and Cornelia Kinkead.*

## Endnotes

1. Vaux, *Village and Cottage Architecture*, p.8.
2. Boesch, *Stage I Archaeological Survey of the St. Simeon II Project Area*, p. 26.
3. *Ibid.* p.20
4. *Ibid.* p. 22.
5. Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
6. Wharton, *Hudson River Bracketed*, p. 12.
7. Shaver, Peter, *National Register Nomination Form*, section 4, p. 8.
8. Walker, William R. Sons. *Floor plans from 1891 alterations to "Maple Wood."*
9. Shaver, Peter *op. cit.* and Holly Wahlberg (transcription) and Kenneth Toole (interviewer), *Conversation with Elise Kinkead*.



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