

DEACON ANDREW HETFIELD HOUSE

Circa 1760

Mountainside, New Jersey



The Hetfield House

The Deacon Andrew Hetfield House was entered onto the New Jersey Register of Historic Places on June 8, 1989 and onto the National Register of Historic Places on July 27, 1989.

The house was built in three stages and altered over the years to meet the needs of the family. The oldest section, probably built by Andrew Hetfield circa 1760, is a one and one half story wing consisting of a kitchen and a sleeping loft on the left side as one faces the front of the house. A one story, two room deep section was added next and finally a two story section with a second floor added over the middle section. Based on the type of construction used, it is certain all this work was completed by 1830.

The bay windows to the right of the entrance were probably added during the 1840's or 1850's while those on the left were added in the 1870's.

Andrew Hetfield was born in 1740 in Elizabethtown, was a private in the Essex County Militia and fought in the Revolutionary War. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church of Westfield where he served as a Deacon and an Elder and was buried in the Presbyterian Church cemetery at the age of 84.

Andrew's daughter Sarah married William Clark who was a cousin once removed of Abraham Clark, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a delegate to the Continental Congress and the first Constitutional Convention. William joined the Revolutionary Army at the age of 17 and had a lengthy history of involvement in action in the surrounding area. Sarah and William Clark's two sons, Andrew Hetfield Clark and William Clark, Jr., were both active in the public and religious life of the area and William, Jr. served in the war of 1812.

Down through the years the house remained the property of the Hetfield family and their descendants. Approximately 20 years after World War I it was used as a tea room. During the 1930's it was rented for a time by McKinley Kantor, the author of "Andersonville". In 1935, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Rosencrantz and their daughter Walda rented the house and established "The Dutch Oven" antique business. In 1946 Walda purchased the property from the Rev. Frederick Fitz Randolph, a Hetfield inlaw. She continued the antique business until the sale of the property on the westbound lane of Route 22 in 1984 to the Kuczynski family.

Walter and Richard Kuczynski planned to erect a commercial building on the site. The new owners became aware of the historic value of the house and, at considerable expense to them, postponed their construction plans for more than six months to give municipal officials and the Mountainside Historic Preservation Committee,

headed by Fern Carter Hyde, the time to rescue the house. Efforts were successful and in June 1985 the house was moved at a cost to the Borough of Mountainside of approximately \$70,000.00.

The move was an exciting event and had extensive newspaper and television coverage. True to its mission, the Historic Preservation Committee has a video tape of the event. This notoriously busy Route 22 was closed to traffic on the west side of the road on a Saturday morning as the house was raised from its foundation. A huge, enthusiastic crowd followed as the house was moved up the highway with very little structural damage. Today the Deacon Andrew Hetfield House is located on Constitution Plaza in peaceful surroundings adjacent to the Mountainside Library.

The gift of the house "to the people of Mountainside" from the Kuczynski Family is recognized by a plaque inside the front door.

Actually, the house had been relocated once before. In 1929 it was moved back on the original property by the New Jersey Department of Transportation in conjunction with the construction of an additional traffic lane on US Route 22, then known as NJ Highway 29. However, continuing research into the early owners of Mountainside properties indicated that the house in its new location may still be on original Hetfield property.

Following the move to its present location, a new foundation was built, the plumbing and heating systems were redone and structural and aesthetic work including painting, landscaping, finishing of floors and shoring up of ceilings in the middle rooms was done enabling the Historic Preservation Committee to open the house to the public. Through donations and fundraisers such as geranium sales and raffles, renovations continue as funds become available.

The Historic Preservation Committee decided that the Hetfield House would be both a museum and a meeting place for use of the people of Mountainside. The kitchen on the left has been restored as a colonial kitchen and the parlor on the right as a Victorian parlor. The two rooms in the middle are used for meetings and special events by community organizations, and by individuals for wedding receptions and other special occasions.

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