

Persean for Kids House

**An activity booklet for kids created by the
Ulster County Clerk's Office Records Management Program**

2022

Matthewis Persen House Museum & Cultural Heritage Center

(The oldest house owned by Ulster County c.1661)



74 John Street, Kingston, NY 12401

Open Spring through Late Fall Each Year

**Visit us online for days and hours of operation.
clerk.ulstercountyny.gov/archives/persen-house**



Or Contact Us to Schedule a Tour
(845) 340-3415 or archives@co.ulster.ny.us

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I'm Archie the Ant and I am here to guide you through the Persen House for Kids packet. If you haven't been to the house for a tour we welcome you to visit; don't worry it's FREE! This packet will include all the information you need to complete the activities inside and give you some background information on the oldest house owned by Ulster County.



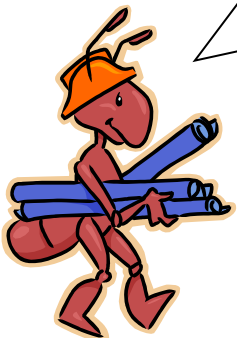
Background



The Persen House is located on the corner of Crown Street and John Street in uptown Kingston's Historic National Stockade District.



The intersection of Crown & John Streets is the only known intersection in the whole country where 4 pre-Revolutionary War stone houses still stand!



The Persen house was built inside the stockade. The stockade was a big log fence that surrounded a part of Uptown Kingston. It was used to keep the settlers safe.





A variety of cultural groups from Ulster County are invited to be Guest Hosts at the House each year. Every Saturday during the season there is a special guest host. We've had Revolutionary War re-enactors, historical societies, boy & girl scout troops, Native American groups, community organizations, art students, and more! Be sure to check out our schedule so you don't miss out on all the fun!



When you come for a visit, you can take a self-guided tour or there are specially trained docents (tour guides) that can show you around the house. If you want to bring a big group, we can set up a special tour just for you! We have given group tours to school classes, family organizations and tourist groups among others. Simply give us a call at the County Clerk's Office and we'll make it happen!



GYSBERT'S INVENTORY:
 A Reflection of 1665
 Dutch Life in Wiltwyck
*Gysberts inventaris: een weerspiegeling
 van het Nederlandse leven*

Gysbert van Imbroch

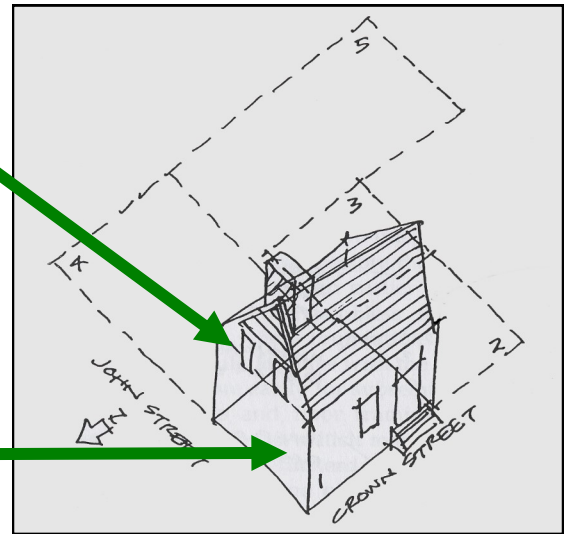
While you are visiting the Persen House, you can also view a special exhibit titled "Gysbert's Inventory: A Reflection of 1665 Dutch Life in Wiltwyck." Learn about the first owner of the Persen House, Gysbert Van Imbroch, and what life was like in the 17th century!

The Matthewis Persen House was built in 5 phases. Phase 1 started in 1661 and Phase 5 was completed in 1999.

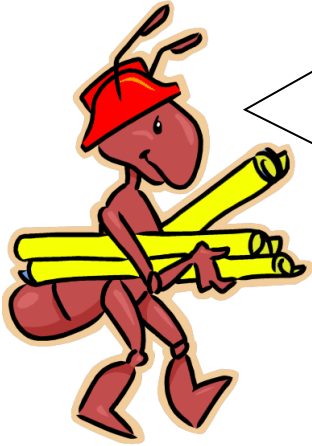
Originally, Phase 1 of the house was built of wood. It was a small, one-room house with a loft and cellar. The first person to occupy the home was Gysbert Van Imbroch. Gysbert was a barber-surgeon. He lived in the home with his wife, Rachel, and their three children. In 1663 the house was burned in a Native American attack, this was the first of two burnings the house has been through. The house was then rebuilt of stone.



**Phase 1
Upstairs**

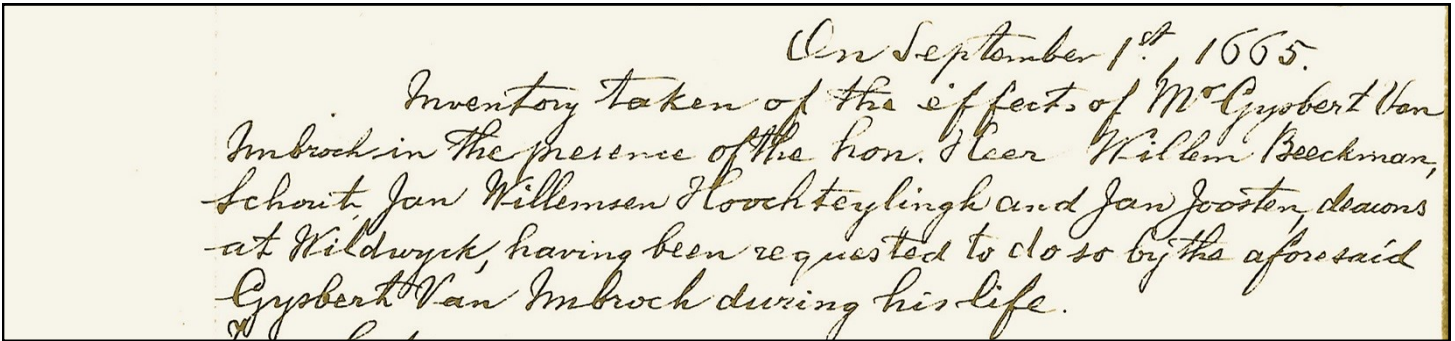


**Phase 1
Downstairs**



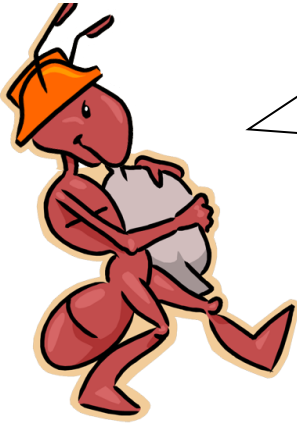
After Gysbert's death, there was an inventory done of his possessions. The County Clerk's Office used this inventory to create a document-based curriculum and a permanent exhibit at the Persen House. You can learn all about Gysbert, his family and how they lived.

The document below is the beginning section of Gysbert Van Imbroch's inventory. The original document was written in Old Dutch, since that was the main language spoken in this area at that time. The Dutch document was translated in 1895 by a man named Dingman Versteeg. This sample is from that translation and is in his own handwriting.



1. Can you tell what day the inventory was done?

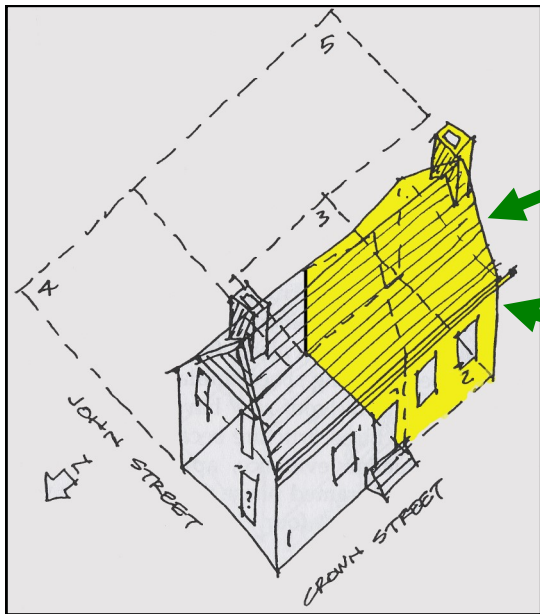
2. Why did they do an inventory?



Around 1669, a new stone addition was added to the house. It made the house twice as big. This section is called Phase 2. It has a fireplace that mirrors the fireplace in Phase 1 across the hall. When Matthew Persen lived in the house, the upstairs of Phase 2 was his bedroom.

In the mid 1800's, a man named Dr. John Goodwin used the first floor of Phase 2 as a drugstore (also known as an apothecary) and a grocery store. He must have been very busy.

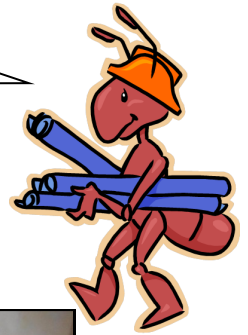
Phase 2 Upstairs



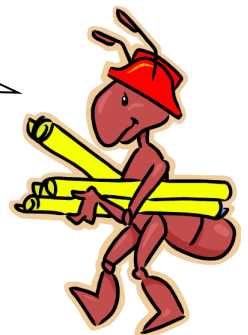
Phase 2 Downstairs



What did Matthewis' bedroom look like? What kind of furniture and personal effects did he have? We may never know, but the picture on the right, from the American Independence Museum in New Hampshire, gives us a small glimpse at the possibilities. What do you think Matthewis had in his room? Did he have any of the same things that you do?



Dr. Goodwin installed expensive French wallpaper in this part of the house and a piece is still above the door after 150 years. The company that makes it still exists in France and even makes this same pattern today!

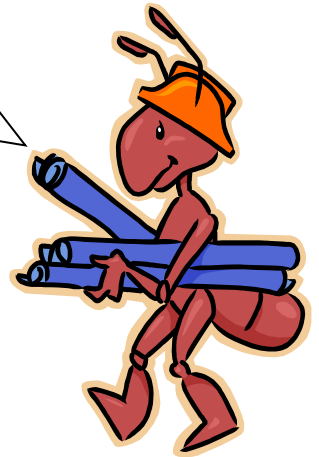


This doorway is on the opposite wall from the fireplace. It leads into the hallway between Phases 1 & 2. The small piece of wallpaper above the door is the remains of the wallpaper that Dr. Goodwin installed.



In 1698, a barn was added behind Phase 2. What kind of animals do you think they would have had? Cows, chickens, horses, goats, or other animals? Later, they turned the barn into a kitchen and made it into a regular room with an attic. We call this section Phase 3.

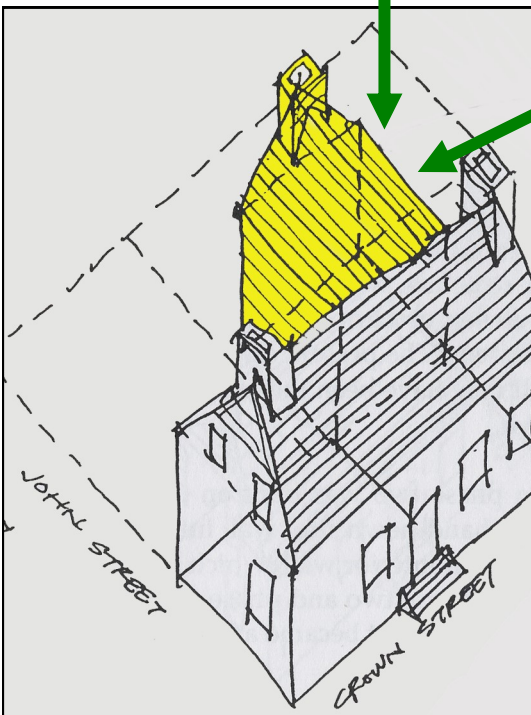
When restoring the house, the stone wall in the kitchen needed extensive repair. To preserve it they photographed & numbered each stone as they removed it, then put the wall back exactly as it was.



Phase 3 Upstairs



Phase 3 Downstairs



The downstairs of Phase 3 was the only room in the house that did not have a basement underneath. This made it a perfect room for an archaeological dig. Over 20,000 artifacts were found! They even found an original stockade post hole here. The room is now covered by a temporary floor to protect the area.



Archaeology is the scientific study of historic or prehistoric peoples and their cultures by looking at the artifacts and monuments they have left behind.



Dr. Joseph Diamond of SUNY New Paltz conducted an archaeological dig at the Persen House from 1999 through 2003. Layers of ground were removed little by little in order to find the artifacts. It is hard to believe that over 20,000 artifacts came out of this small room. Everything from pottery and dishes to cannonballs and Native American projectile points were found in this one room.

An artifact is a handmade object, or the remains of one, with characteristics of an earlier time or culture. Each artifact found at the Persen House was numbered and labeled with the exact location in which it was found.



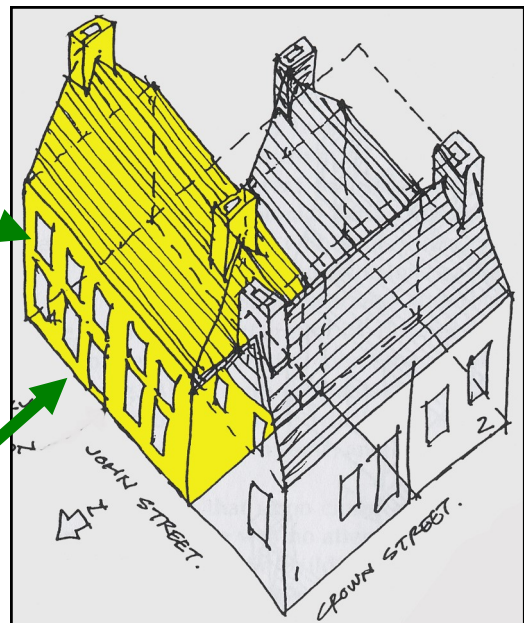


In 1735, the big room in the house was added. This is now called Phase 4. Here two brothers, Adam and Cornelius Persen, had a tailor shop on the first floor. A tailor shop was where you went to get clothes made or fixed. Cornelius had a son and named him Matthewis. The house was named after Matthewis because he was the longest living resident; he lived in the house for 80 years. Wow, that's impressive!

Matthewis opened a public house (tavern/inn) in the house in the late 1700's. The main room of the tavern was the upstairs area of Phase 4. The tavern was open during the times leading up to and through the Revolutionary War. What do you think they talked about during those times?



**Phase 4
Upstairs**

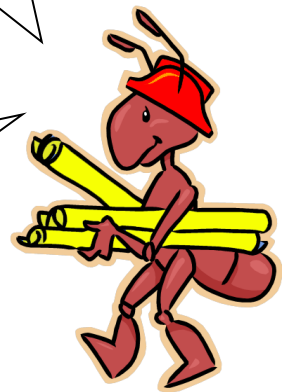


**Phase 4
Downstairs**

These beams run the entire length of the room. Can you see the small light lines on the beams? These are called kerf marks, which are small notches made by the saw or tool used to form the square beam from a round tree. Those must have been some tall trees!



During restoration of the house, the existing hand-hewn beams in the ceiling of Phase 4 could not hold the weight of the roof. A steel support structure was built to help stabilize the roof while still being able to keep the original wood beams.



The Gothic Revival in the United States was a popular architectural style in the 1840's through the 1860's. Many "Gothic" features were added to existing homes. Some of these features include a steeply pitched roof, gables (like the ones at Persen House), decorative stone or scroll work, pointed or arched windows and sometimes even stained glass windows.



This window located in the upstairs of Phase 4 is known as a gable. It was added around 1850 during the Gothic Revival.



This picture shows the outside view of the same gable in Phase 4. Notice how the stone is darker around the gable. That is because they used a different kind of stone than the original limestone.

Ulster County bought the house in 1914, and added a brick addition in 1922. That addition was the fifth and final major change to the house. The house was then used for offices, like the County Nurse, 4-H, and Cornell Cooperative.

In 1999, they had to move everyone out of the building, because it needed a lot of repair. They then restored the building, and made it safe for public use. It is now used as a cultural heritage center for Ulster County.

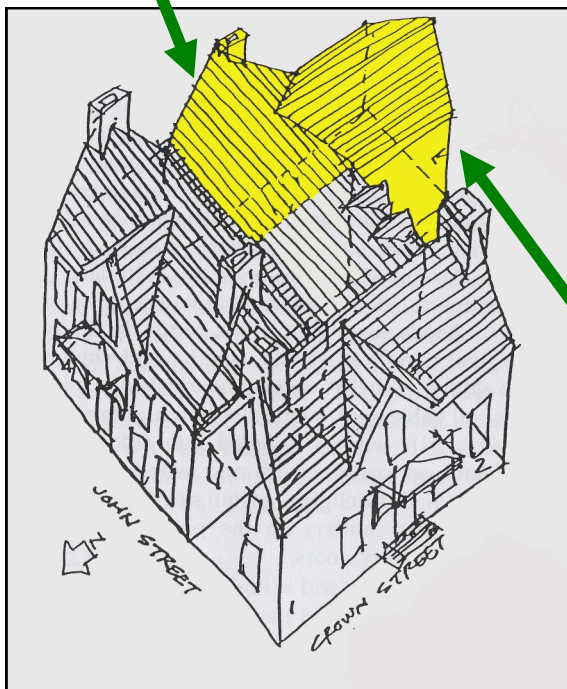


Phase 5 Upstairs

Guest Hosts frequently use Phase 5 downstairs for special events, such as video presentations, lectures, games, crafts and more!



Phase 5 Downstairs



Now that we've been through all 5 phases of the house, here are some other fun facts for you to ponder before we look at the artifacts...



Fun Facts...

- ◆ **Why does the house look unfinished? That's a great question! During the repairs, it was discovered that the house had much more history than was originally thought. A Preservation Architect, named Kenneth Hewes Barricklo, was hired to write an "Historic Structure Report" on the house and its architectural history.**

After the house was restored for safe use, Ulster County decided to leave the house "unfinished" so that visitors could see the history of the house as they moved from room to room. This building has seen the entire history of Ulster County, from 1661 to now. That's over 360 years!

- ◆ **The display cases upstairs in Phase 4 hold a variety of artifacts. These items were found in the nooks and crannies of the building as workers stripped away some of the 20th century materials from the walls. They even found a box with old shoes in the attic.**
- ◆ **What kind of name is Matthewis? It's Dutch. Matthewis' great-great grandfather, Hendrik Alberts Persen, came from Holland. All of Ulster County was part of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam until the British took over in 1664 and renamed it New York.**
- ◆ **The house has been sold or transferred to many different owners. In 1698, Teunis Tappen bought the house for "seven hundred and eighty scheppels of good marketable wheat." Why do you think someone would accept wheat as payment?**

Wheat was a very valuable item in the colonies. Since paper money was not widely used until after the Revolutionary War, people often bartered or traded for the items they needed.

Artifacts



When Dr. Diamond conducted the dig at Persen House, over 20,000 artifacts were found! Here are some interesting samples of the artifacts he and his crew discovered.

Every year the Ulster County Clerk's Office selects a few artifacts to display at the house in a special exhibit. If you would like to see something that is not on display, simply give us a call and we'll set up a special viewing for you!



Woman with Pleated Curls
by Wenceslas Hollar, 1645

Bodkin circa pre-1663

One of the most significant finds at the Persen House was this bodkin. A bodkin is a type of decorative hair pin worn by women in the 1600's. They commonly had a jewel or pearl attached to or hanging from the end. This particular bodkin dates back to pre-1663 and is only one of three ever found in New York State.

Bodkins also appeared in art and literature of the 17th century. The 1645 etching to the left shows a woman with a jeweled bodkin in her hair.





Native American Artifacts circa 1230-300 B.C.

Many different kinds of Native American artifacts were found. Projectile points, pottery, stone drill points and debris from stone tools are some of the many items discovered. These artifacts show the presence of Native Americans in the area prior to it being colonized by Europeans.



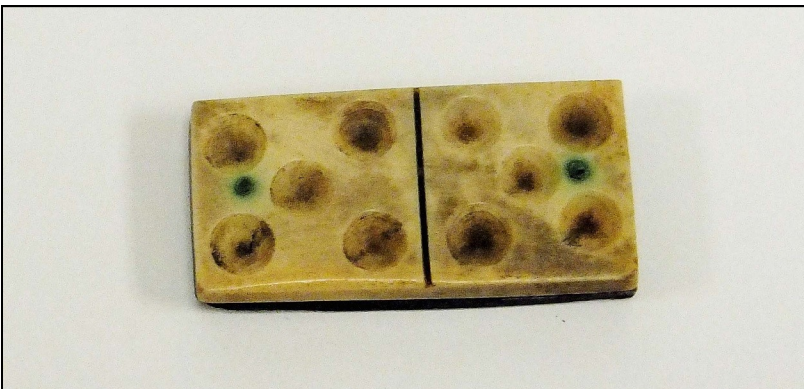
Cannonballs circa 1660's

A total of four cannonballs were found at the Persen House. Each one was approximately four pounds and was most likely used in a small defensive or signal cannon located in the northwest corner of the Stockade Area.



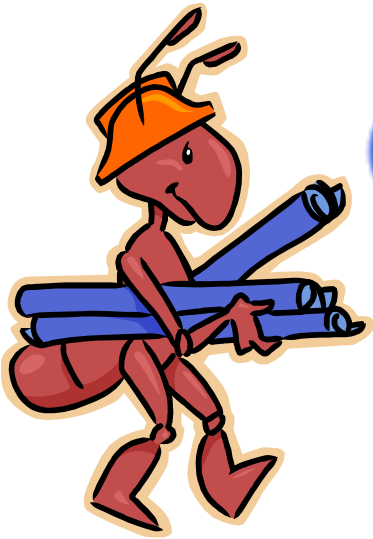
Delft Tiles circa 1640-1800

Delftware is a blue and white pottery made in the Netherlands starting in the 1500's. It was very popular by the mid-1600's and was often brought over with colonists. Fragments of plates, bowls and other items were found throughout the dig.



Domino circa 1700-1800

This ivory and bone domino was found in the loose soil between the floor joists with other cultural materials, such as buttons, coins, a slate pencil and a bone toothbrush.



Archie the Ant here, and I am going to march through the events of the Persen House

Timeline of the Persen House

- 1661 The house is built of wood. Gysbert Van Imbroch and wife Rachel live in the house with their three children: Lysbet, Johannes, and Gysbert
- 1663 The house is burned in a Native American attack and rebuilt in stone.
- 1666 After the death of their father, the Van Imbroch children rent out the house while they live with their guardian.
- 1669 Phase 1 completed and Phase 2 starts.
- 1688 Robert Bickerstaff owns the property.
- 1689 Robert Bickerstaff and his wife Elizabeth transfer the property to Thomas Hall, Elizabeth's eldest son from a previous marriage.
- 1698 Phase 2 completed and Phase 3 is started and Thomas Hall transfers the property to Teunis Tappen.
- 1724 Teunis Tappen's will dated June 12, 1724 puts the responsibility of selling the house on his brother, Christopher Tappen.
- 1728 Christopher Tappen transfers property to Anthony Slecht.
- 1734 Cornelius Persen marries Catharina Dyrk Oosterhout.
- 1735 Anthony Slecht transfers property to Cornelius Persen. Phase 3 completed and Phase 4 begins.
- 1737 Adam Persen marries Catalyntje Swart.
- 1739 Matthewis Persen is born of Cornelius and Catharina Person.
- 1735-1769 Families of Cornelius and Adam Persen (both tailors) live in the house.
- 1769 Cornelius Persen's will, dated August 8, 1769, leaves his house and properties to his four children.
- 1770 Matthewis Persen buys out his siblings' shares of the house. He is now the sole owner and begins to operate a public house or tavern.
- 1777 One house and one barn belonging to Matthewis Persen are listed as having been destroyed in the burning of Kingston by the British.

- 1778 Phase 4 completed (modified 1778-1850 and again 1850-1922).
- 1819 Estimated date of death of Matthew Persen (80 years old).
- 1820 Dr. John Goodwin has a grocery store and apothecary in the house.
- 1830 Hiram Radcliff is granted a grocery license for the house on the corner of John and Crown. He is most likely renting the building.
- 1837 Henry Myer, John Van Buren and others (many married to nieces of Matthew Persen) transfer the property to Hiram Radcliff.
- 1914 Charles Romeyn, who lives on 64th Street in New York City, transfers the house to County of Ulster.
- 1922 County adds brick addition (Phase 5). Farm and Extension Services as well as the local 4-H club and later the Cornell Cooperative Extension occupy the building.
- 1964 Persen House is the subject of a Kingston Board of Supervisor's meeting. Renovations are discussed as well as the option of moving the Agricultural Extension into the new County Building.
- 1999 Cornell Cooperative Extension is relocated for emergency roof stabilization.
- 1999-2003 Archaeological dig recovers over 20,000 artifacts.
- 2000 Historic Structure Report prepared to establish basis for restoration of house.
- 2007 Opened for public tours on Saturdays during the Kingston Farmers' Market by the Friends of Historic Kingston with permission of the County Executive.
- 2010 Opened for the first full tour season and staffed by Ulster County Clerk Youth Workers Tuesday through Saturday from Memorial Day through Labor Day.
- 2013 Persen House is the subject of a curriculum guide created by the Ulster County Clerk's Office through a NYS Archives Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRIF) grant.
- 2015 The Clerk's Office receives a second LGRIF grant to develop the permanent exhibit *Gysbert's Inventory: A Reflection of 1665 Dutch Life in Wiltwyck*.
- 2016 A press conference is held at the House to announce the beginning of the sixth annual Cultural Heritage Week.
- 2019 The Clerk's Office receives a grant from the Pomeroy Foundation to install a roadside marker for "The Four Corners" which states "All Four Stone Houses at this Intersection Built Between ca.1663-1775 Prior to the Revolutionary War." A special celebration was held for the sign's unveiling.





Phases 1 & 2
(Crown Street)



Phase 3



Phase 5



Phase 4
(John Street)

Activities

Trivia

True or False

Sorting

Word Search

Criss-Cross Puzzle

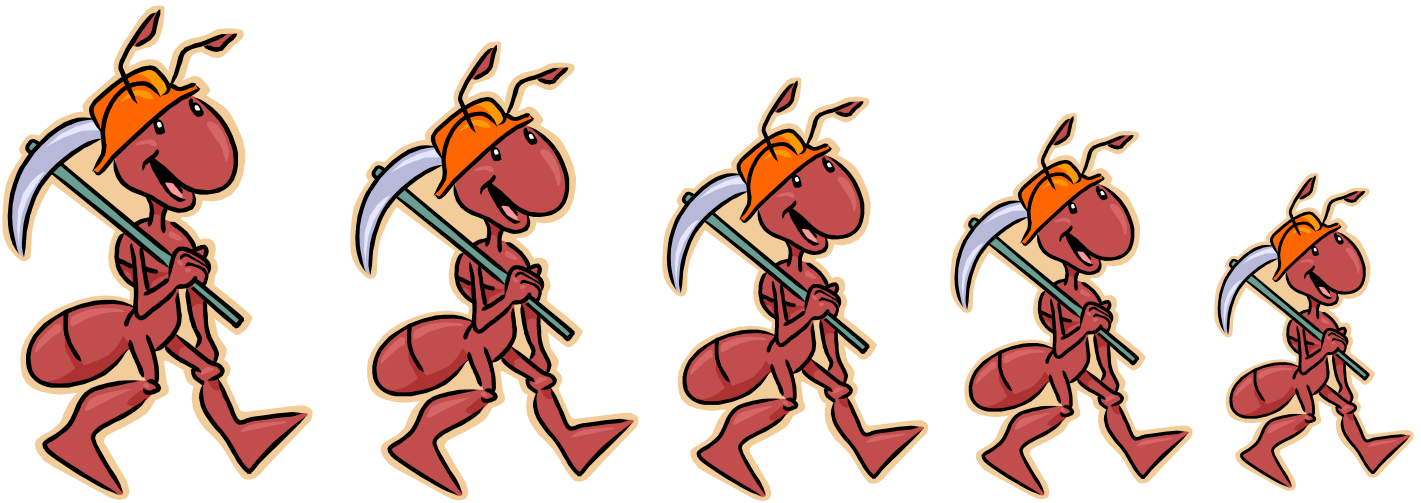
Critical Thinking



I'm getting antsy let see what you've learned by answering these trivia questions.

**T
R
I
V
I
A**

1. Who was the longest resident of the Persen House?
2. The Persen House was built in phases. How many were there?
3. What is the most significant personal artifact recovered from the Persen House excavations? Hint: There were only 3 ever found in New York State.
4. How many years after the house was built in 1661 was the house burned in a Native American attack?
5. What was Gysbert Van Imbroch besides a surgeon?
6. What were 2 businesses the Persen House used to be?
7. How many artifacts were recovered from the archaeological dig?
8. What year did the Persen family start living in the house?
9. What did Dr. Goodwin leave behind?
10. In what phase is a stockade post hole located?



TRUE or FALSE

- 1. The Persen House was built in 1662.**
True False
- 2. The first family to occupy the Persen House was the Persen family.**
True False
- 3. The archaeological dig recovered over 20,000 artifacts.**
True False
- 4. Matthewis Persen lived to be 80 years old.**
True False
- 5. The Persen House was burned more than once.**
True False
- 6. The house was originally built of stone.**
True False
- 7. The company that made the french wallpaper still exists.**
True False
- 8. The stone wall in the kitchen was restored by taking each stone out and numbering them to be put back exactly as it was.**
True False
- 9. The Persen House is located at an intersection, which is one of two with pre-Revolutionary War stone houses on all four corners.**
True False
- 10. Matthewis Persen was the first of the Persen family to occupy the house.**
True False



**There were so many artifacts found
and now I need to put them all away!
Can you help me sort all these
artifacts into the right boxes?**

**Iron Tacks
Comb
Two-Tine Fork
Toothbrush
Bone Button
Window Glass**

**Brass Thimble
Iron Pot
Marbles
Goblets
Red Dutch Brick
Buckles**





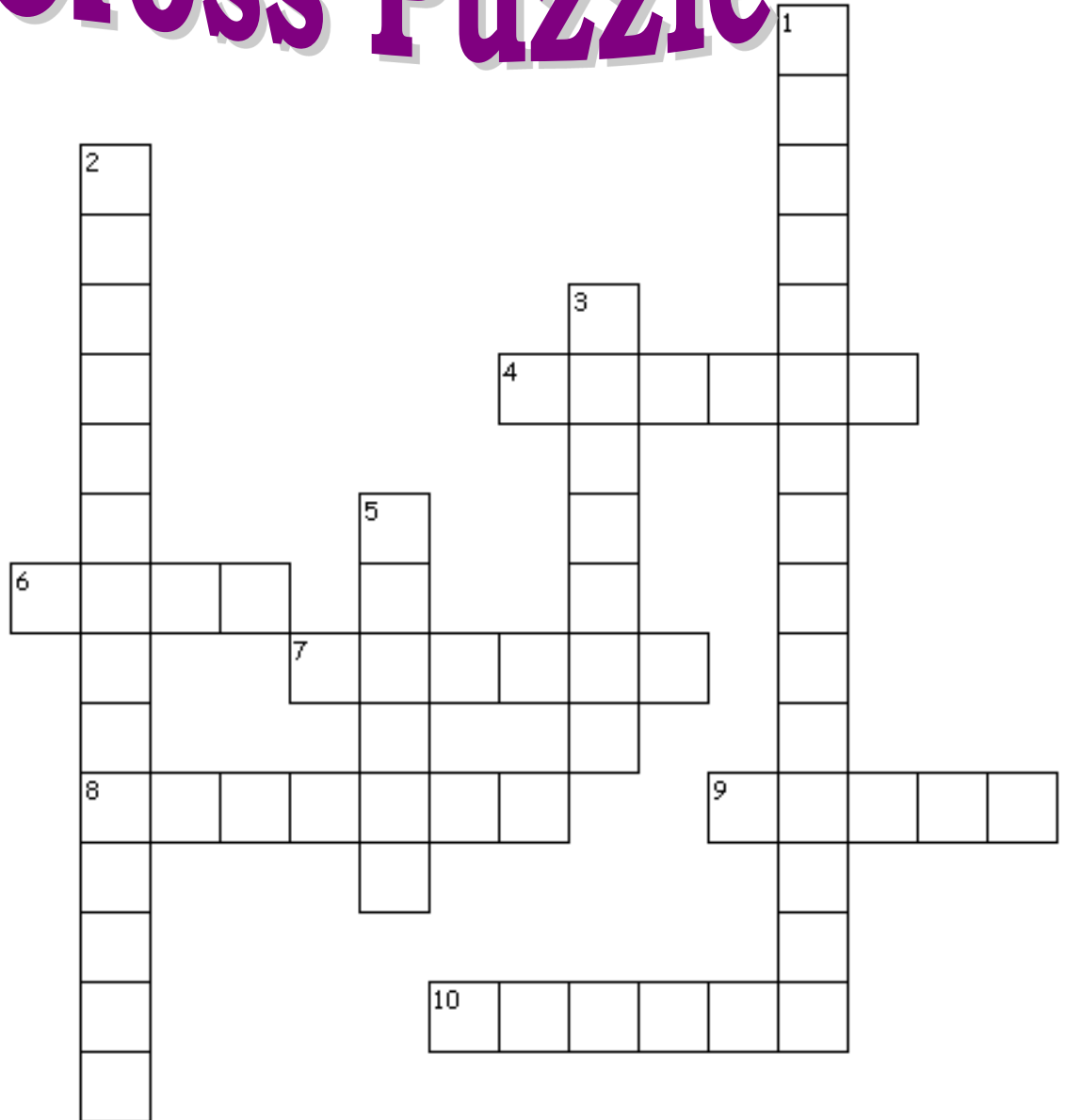
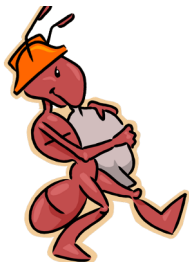
FIND THE ARTIFACTS

L B X G B C W U G I S X B E X
Z F E O A Y M L M E J Y O O D
U S I A K V A A H K L S N I P
C J C E D S E S K Z C L E C A
C L Y C S S U J V W G L S Q B
N S A W A R R O W H E A D S D
M O A Y B P E Z X J W B G L E
X R T R P S N G Q F T N X X L
E T I E V I N X W V E O Y J F
I A F X K S P O O N S N R Q T
H D C D I H R E T H Q N E Z T
S E O N I M O D S T X A T P I
Y B T C D L C N U A U C T X L
P B T G G B X N M S H B O T E
C I M J W I S B W J T W P A L

ARROWHEADS
BEADS
BODKIN
BONES
BUTTONS
CANNONBALLS
CLAYPIPES
DELFTTILE

DOMINOES
GLASSWARE
HAIRBRUSHES
KEYS
PINS
POTTERY
SPOONS

Criss-Cross Puzzle



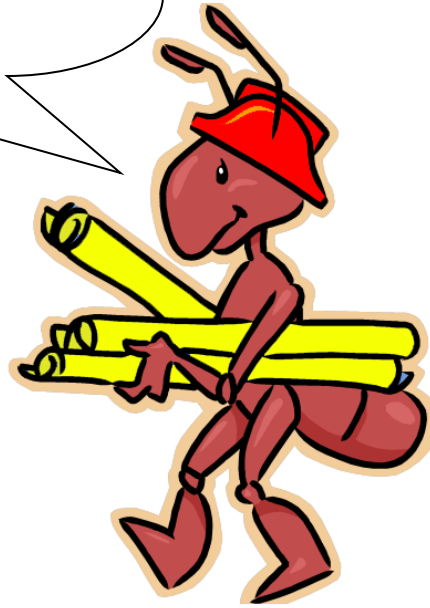
Across

- _____ were added during the Gothic Revival.
- The Persen House was originally built of _____.
- Matthewis turned the house into a _____.
- _____ Van Imbroch was the first person to occupy the house in 1661.
- The house is located on the corner of John and _____ Streets.
- An ornamental hair piece, called a _____, was found at the house.

Down

- The house is named after _____.
- An _____ dig recovered over 20,000 artifacts.
- Cornelius Persen and his brother were _____.
- The house was built in 5 _____.

I'm stumped! Do you think you can figure out the answers to these questions and get back to me? I've been looking through all my papers and I just can't seem to figure it out.



1. Why do you think many buttons, pins, thimbles and other clothing related items were recovered during the archaeological dig?
2. Why do you think the house is made from stone?

Write your thoughts on the back of this page.

OR
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Shhhh...

Don't tell, but here are the answers to check your knowledge.



Gysbert's Inventory

On September 1st, 1665.

Inventory taken of the effects of Mr Gysbert Van Imbroch in the presence of the hon. Heer Willem Beeckman, Schout, Jan Willemsen Hoochteylingh and Jan Joosten, deacons at Wildwyck, having been requested to do so by the aforesaid Gysbert Van Imbroch during his life.

On September 1st, 1665.

Inventory taken of the effects of Mr Gysbert Van Imbroch in the presence of the hon. Heer Willem Beeckman, Schout, Jan Willemsen Hoochteylingh and Jan Joosten, deacons at Wildwyck, having been requested to do so by the aforesaid Gysbert Van Imbroch during his life.

Answers

1. The inventory was done on September 1, 1665.
2. An inventory was done because Gysbert requested it before he died.

TRIVIA

1. Matthewis Persen. He lived in the house from 1739-1819, 80 years.
2. There were 5 phases. Phase 1 started in 1661 and phase 5 was completed in 1999. 338 years.
3. A Bodkin.
4. 2 years. The house was burned in a 1663 Native American attack.
5. Gysbert Van Imbroch was a barber and a surgeon.
6. The Persen House was at one time a tavern, drug store (or apothecary), a grocery store, as well as many offices, such as the 4-H Club, the Agricultural Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and County offices (prior to the county office building on Fair St.).
7. Over 20,000 artifacts were recovered.
8. 1735
9. The French wallpaper located in phase 2 above the door.
10. Phase 3. The Kitchen

1. **False:** It was built in 1661.
2. **False:** The first family to occupy the house was the Van Imbroch family.
3. **True**
4. **True:** Matthewis Persen was the longest resident of the house, which is where it got its name.
5. **True:** It was burned in 1663 by a Native American attack and then again in 1777.
6. **False:** It was originally built of wood. After the Native American attack it was rebuilt of stone.
7. **True:** The company still prints the same pattern.
8. **True**
9. **False:** The intersection at Crown and John Streets is the ONLY intersection in the United States with four 18th century stone houses on each corner.
10. **False:** Cornelius Persen was the first of the Persen family to occupy the house. Matthewis was born in 1739.

TRUE OR FALSE

Sorting

Kitchen

Two-Tine Fork
Iron Pot
Goblets

Clothing/Sewing

Bone Button
Brass Thimble
Buckles

Personal/Recreation

Comb
Toothbrush
Marbles

Building Material

Iron Tacks
Window Glass
Red Dutch Brick

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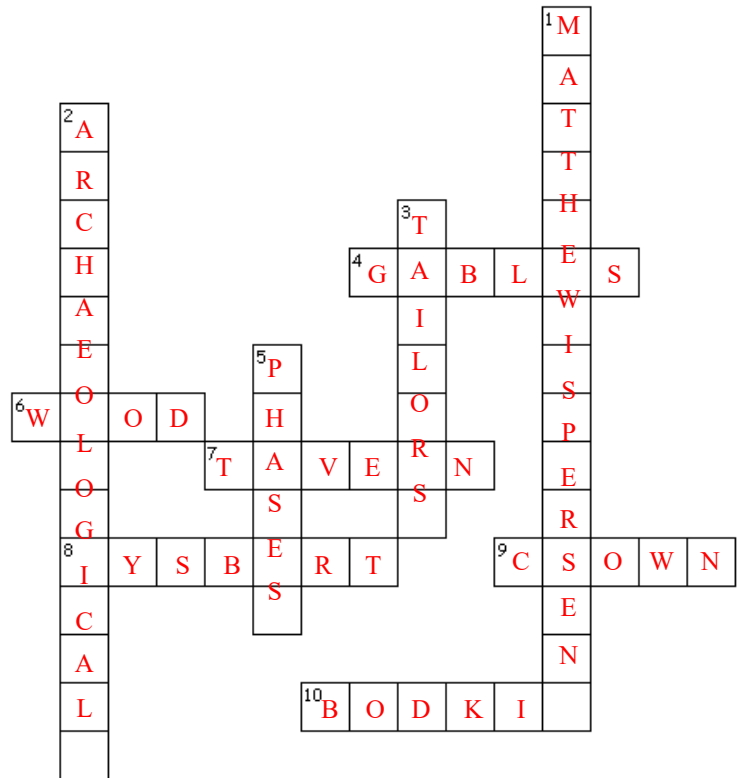
+ B + + + + + G + S + B + +
+ + E + + + + L + E + + O + +
+ + + A K + A + H + + S N I P
C + + E D S + S + + + L E + +
+ L Y + S S U + + + + L S + +
+ S A W A R R O W H E A D S D
+ + A Y B + + + + + B + + E
+ R + R P S N + + + + N + + L
E + I + + I N + + + + O Y + F
+ A + + K S P O O N S N R + T
H + + D + + + E T + + N E + T
S E O N I M O D S T + A T + I
+ B + + + + + + + + U C T + L
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ARROWHEADS
BEADS
BODKIN
BONES
BUTTONS
CANNONBALLS
CLAYPIPES
DELFTTILE

DOMINOES
GLASSWARE
HAIRBRUSHES
KEYS
PINS
POTTERY
SPOONS

Word Search

Criss-Cross Puzzle



Across

- Gables** were added during the Gothic Revival.
- The Persen House was originally built of **wood**.
- Matthewis turned the house into a **tavern**.
- Gysbert** Van Imbroch was the first person to occupy the house in 1661.
- The house is located on the corner of John and **Crown** Streets.
- An ornamental hair piece, called a **bodkin**, was found at the house.

Down

- The house is named after **Matthewis Persen**.
- An **archaeological** dig recovered over 20,000 artifacts.
- Cornelius Persen and his brother were **tailors**.
- The house was built in 5 **phases**.

Critical Thinking

- In 1735 Cornelius Persen and his brother Adam were tailors and had a tailor shop in the house.
- The house was rebuilt in stone after the wood structure burned in 1663. Since stone was abundant in the area and it does not burn, it was a better choice for a building material.

Glossary of Terms

Apothecary

A person who prepared and sold medicines in past times or the place where the medicine was sold.

Archaeology

The scientific study of historic or prehistoric peoples and their cultures by looking at the artifacts and monuments they have left behind.

Architect/Architectural

A person who designs buildings./Related to designing buildings.

Artifact

A handmade object, or the remains of one, with characteristics of an earlier time or culture.

Barber-Surgeon

A person responsible for a wide variety of personal health care (cutting hair, treating minor ailments, performing minor surgery) in the 16th & 17th centuries.

Cultural Heritage

The ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.

Docent

A person who is a knowledgeable guide, especially one who conducts visitors through a museum.

Gable

A section of a building's outside wall that is shaped like a triangle.

Gothic Revival

A Gothic style of architecture popular between the late 18th and late 19th centuries reflecting the public's taste for buildings inspired by medieval design.

Intersection

The place where two or more streets meet or cross each other.

Inventory

A complete list of the things that are in a place.

Kerf Mark

A groove or notch made by a cutting tool, such as a saw or an axe.

Phase

A part or step in a process or one part in a series of related events or actions.

Pre-Revolutionary

Before the American Revolutionary War began in 1775.

Preserve/Preservation

To keep something in its original state or in good condition./To keep something safe from harm or loss.

Renovation

To make changes and repairs to (an old house, building, room, etc.).

Restoration

To return something to an earlier or original condition by repairing it, cleaning it, etc.

Scheffel

A unit of dry measure (usually for grain) considered to be a little less than a modern day bushel.

Stockade

A line of tall posts that are set in the ground and used as a barrier to protect or defend a place.

Tailor

A person who makes men's clothes (such as suits and jackets) that are measured to fit a particular person.



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