A House Tour

The MATTHEWIS PERSEN HOUSE

Ulster County's Heritage Gateway

Stockade National Historic District of Kingston

Ulster County Clerk's Office
Ulster County Executive's Office

The Persen House restoration uncovered artifacts from centuries of Kingston's history.

C. Snyder

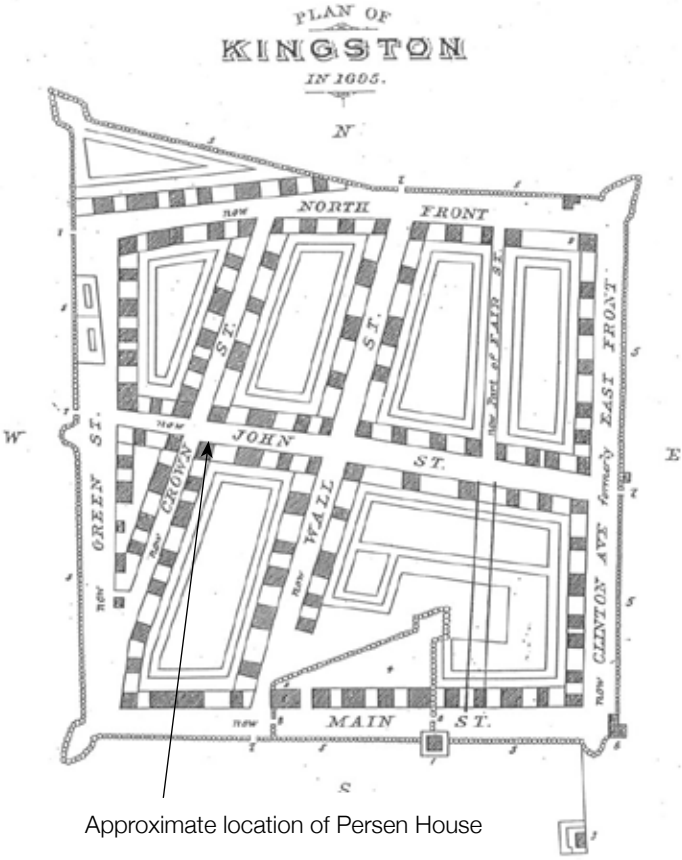
Matthewis Persen House

Named after its longest resident, Matthewis Persen (1739-1819), the Persen House is located within Kingston's Stockade National Historic District. Its earliest portions date from c.1661 and it is one of four landmark buildings on each corner of John and Crown Streets. Each house at this intersection pre-dates the Revolutionary War.

This neighborhood was established just a few years before the Persen House began construction. In 1658, a group of 60-70 European settlers living along the Esopus Creek moved to the bluff above and built the 1,200 x 1,300 foot wall from tree trunks pounded into the ground. The streets of the original village remain laid out just as they were in 1658.
(see next page for map)

Learn more about the diverse heritage of Ulster County at
www.ulstercountyalive.com.

Miller map of Kingston Stockade area in 1695
as designated by Governor Peter Stuyvesant.



This corner of John and Crown Street is occupied by four Pre-Revolutionary stone structures.

The extension of the Persen House visiting hours and the vision of creating a shared, interpretive center for heritage in Ulster County is an initiative of the offices of the Ulster County Clerk and Ulster County Executive.

C.Snyder

Ulster County welcomes you to the Persen House, one of our oldest and most significant buildings. This house has witnessed so many important moments in Ulster County's history. It was burnt at least twice, saw wars and revolution, and was home to doctors, tailors, grocers, druggists, and innkeepers.

The Persen House has been owned by Ulster County Government since 1914 and was used as the office for Cornell Cooperative Extension agricultural services. The restoration began in 1999 after the occupants were moved out due to structural instability.

Ulster County's extensive restoration took years and uncovered over 20,000 archaeological artifacts. These were meticulously catalogued and archived. Several objects are on display in the house. This tour is designed to take you chronologically through each phase of the building's history.

As we walk through the building, we walk through time. Each section was built in a different period, five phases, and the restoration was carefully done to respect and reveal this history.

The general floor plan above shows the five chronological “phases” in which the Persen House was built.

PHASE 1 (C. 1661-1669)

Built of wood on a stone foundation in 1661, the house was burnt in the second Esopus War and rebuilt in stone probably that same year. All living, eating and sleeping happened in this one room dwelling with a cellar below and loft above for storing valuable farm products. Gysbert Van Imbroch, a surgeon from New Amsterdam, occupied this house. There were about 50 houses within the stockade. This corner of John and Crown Street is occupied by four Pre-Revolutionary stone structures.

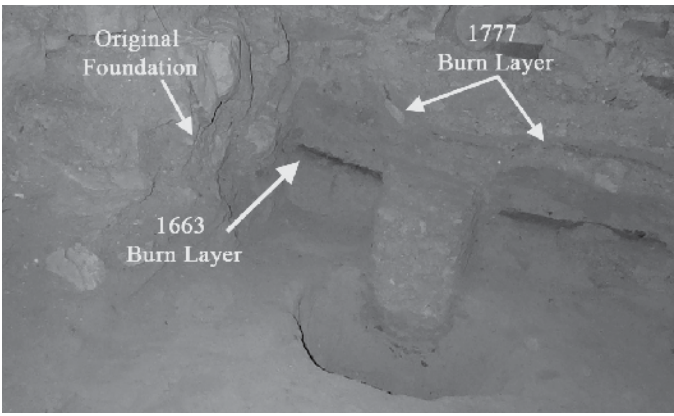
Restoration work was made possible in part by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation through a grant from the Environmental Protection Fund.

PHASE 2 (C. 1669-1720)

This stone addition was added to the earlier structure circa 1669-1720s. It too has a cellar and loft, accessed first by ladder, then by a stairwell, after the loft area was converted to living space. Doctor John Goodwin kept an office here in the early 1800s. He may have installed the French wallpaper, as seen over the hallway door. The window to the right of the English fireplace had been a door to an open porch, long since removed. Replacement beams were fit to the deflected floor. A timber framed wall shows brick infill and framed openings to Phase 3.

PHASE 3 (C. 1698-1735)

It was discovered that this area was once a wood-framed barn/kitchen/scullery and attached to Phase 2 by a hand-hewn stud wall and infilled with soft handmade bricks. Second floor framing revealed an opening for a large fireplace structure rebuilt here as a typical jambless 17th century Dutch fireplace. This phase was built without a cellar, making the dirt floor the original height of uptown Kingston's streets. Since the dirt floor was undisturbed, this is where an archaeological dig discovered over 20,000 artifacts, including burn layers of both the 1663 and the 1777 conflagrations, and a posthole from the 1661 stockade expansion.



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PHASE 4 (C. 1735-1922)

Here the house came into the possession of the Persen family. Cornelius Persen, Matthewis' father, and his brother Adam ran a tailor shop out of the house. Later, the two-family house was converted to a single family. By the late 1700s, Matthewis Persen opened a public house/tavern and this room, along with its upstairs, became the main rooms of the inn. Ulster County acquired the site in 1914 for use by the Farm & Extension Services. This area and others were partitioned into office spaces.

PHASE 5 (C. 1922-1999)

A two-story brick addition was added by Ulster County in 1922. Certain stone walls and framing details of the house were altered or removed to accommodate the addition. Decisions of the time were economic, not historical. The building became offices for the local 4-H Club, the Agricultural Department, the forerunner of the Cornell Cooperative Extension, and various other departments and offices.

KINGSTON

First Capital of New York State

The Senate House State Historic Site on the corner of Clinton Avenue and North Front Streets in the Stockade Historic District. Start your tour at the oldest public building in America.

The Persen House sits right in the middle of the Uptown Kingston Stockade National Historic District, one of the oldest neighborhoods in America. While you're in Kingston, complete your visit with a walk through time.

1 AMELIA WESTBROOK HOUSE (c. 1831)
292 Clinton Ave.

2 20 JOHN STREET (c. 1836)

3 VOLUNTEER FIREMAN'S MUSEUM (1857)
26 Fair St.

4 OLD DUTCH CHURCH (1659/1852)
272 Wall St.

5 FRED J. JOHNSTON MUSEUM/ FRIENDS OF HISTORIC KINGSTON MUSEUM (c. 1812)

63 Main St.

6 DR. CORNELIUS ELMENDORF HOUSE (1725) 255 Wall St.

7 TOBIAS SWART HOUSE (e. 19th C.)
74 Main St.

8 DR. JAMES ELMENDORF HOUSE
(e. 18th C.) 77 Main St.

9 JACOB TREMPER (e. 18th C.)
Green and Main Sts.

10 CORNELIUS TAPPEN HOUSE (1777)
10 Crown St.

11 HENRY SLEIGHT (DAR)HOUSE
(left,17th C.)
At the pie-shaped junction of Green and Crown Sts.

12 JUDGE LUCAS ELMENDORF HOUSE (c. 1790)
111 Green St.

13 COLONEL ABRAHAM HASBROUCK HOUSE (mid-1700s)
135 Green St.

14 GERRETT VAN KEUREN HOUSE (c. 1725)
138 Green St.

15 DR. LUKE KIERSTED
95 John St.

16 EGBERT DUMOND HOUSE (C. 1690)
147 Green St.

17 DR. JACOBUS C. ELMENDORF HOUSE 175 Green St.

18 ANTHONY HOFFMAN HOUSE (c. 1658)
94 North Front St.

19 FROG ALLEY HOUSE RUINS
(right, c. 1665)
Just outside NW corner of the Stockade area

20 ANTHONY FREER HOUSE
61 North Front St.

21 PEACE PARK Site of former Jacobus S. Bruyn House, corner of North Front and Crown Sts.

22 ABRAHAM LOUW HOUSE (l. 1700s)
55 Crown St.

23 THE FOUR CORNERS (l. 1700s)
At John and Crown Streets.

24 DR. MATTHEW JANSEN HOUSE
(c. 1663) 43 Crown St.

25 FRANZ ROGGEN HOUSE (c. 1752)
42 Crown St.

26 KINGSTON ACADEMY (est. 1774)
35 Crown St.

27 MATTHEWIS PERSEN HOUSE
(mid 1600s to 1920) 74 John St.

28 WALL STREET (19th c., 1970s arcades)

29 ULSTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
(right, 1818)
285 Wall St.

30 LOUGHRAN HOUSE 296 Fair St.

31 THE 1676 SENATE HOUSE STATE HISTORIC SITE
331 Clinton Ave.

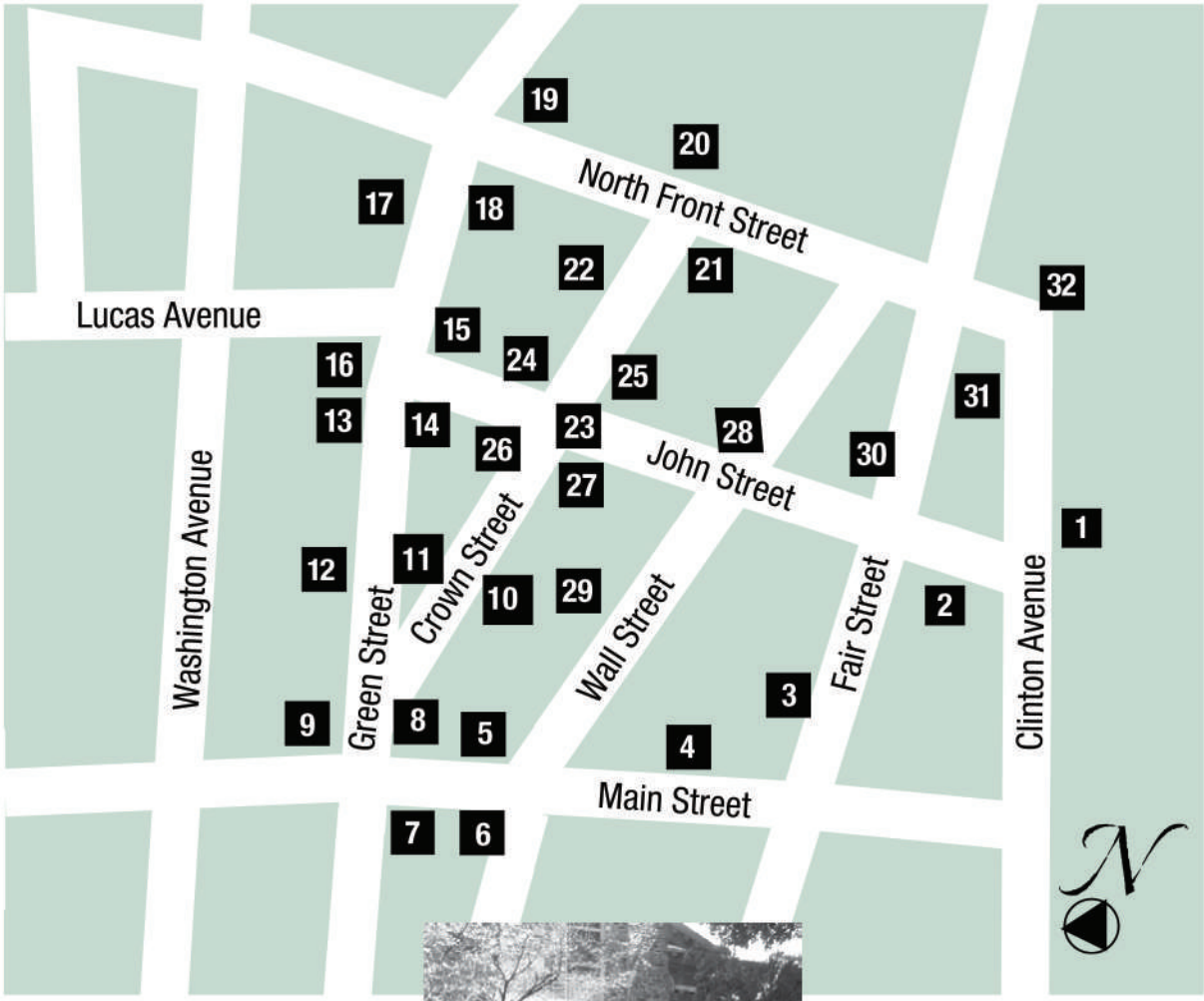
32 JOHN TREMPER HOUSE (1802)
1 North Front St.

Historic property photos courtesy of Friends of Historic Kingston

#25 *Franz Roggen House*

C.Snyder

#31
Senate House
State Historic Site



#29 *Ulster County Courthouse*

#4 *Old Dutch Church*

#5 *Fred J. Johnston Museum*

While You're in Kingston…

- **SAVOR** a bounty of fresh picked, locally grown produce at a farmers market.
- **EXPLORE** wildlife and history as you paddle a kayak along the Rondout Creek, a Hudson River tributary.
- **ENJOY** this city of the arts in our many galleries, museums, and arts venues.
- **TASTE** the mouth-watering fare of our many highly-rated restaurants.

KINGSTON FARMERS' MARKET

(Wall St. between John & Main Streets)
Fresh baked bread, hand-crafted artisan cheese, locally grown fruits and vegetables, and more. Open Saturdays, from May-Nov., 10 am – 2 pm. Winter Farmers Market takes place in the Old Dutch Church every other weekend from every other Saturday from 9am – 2pm. December through April. For a complete list of vendors and events schedule, visit: www.kingstonfarmersmarket.org

HUDSON RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM

Follow the Hudson River through time with displays and collections featuring boats, models, photographs, paintings and artifacts. Exhibits cover a wide range of topics including the river's history, industries, ecology and environment. Open April - Nov. Call: 845-338-0071 or visit: www.hrmm.org

KINGSTON KAYAKS

Explore the wildlife and history of Kingston's great waterways. Trips for beginner or intermediate paddlers. Select dates June - August. Morning and evening paddles. Other days and times can be arranged. To register call: 845-481-7336 www.kingstonparksandrec.org

FIRST SATURDAY ART RECEPTIONS

First Saturday of the month only. Kingston's citywide art receptions are every first Saturday of the month in the city named one of "America's Best Places for Artists" by Business Week. Full schedule of events and openings at KingstonHappenings.com

Adam Husted

ULSTER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (UPAC)

Built in 1926, this National Historic 1400-seat theater is the largest between New York City and Albany and features world-class musical performances. 601 Broadway. Box office: 845-339-6088. www.bardavon.org

THE RONDOUT WATERFRONT

Also a National Historic District in Kingston, this maritime area thrived in the 19th century with the D&H Canal. Today it is a busy destination with museums, restaurants, galleries, and parks.

For more information on Kingston, visit:

KINGSTON HERITAGE AREA VISITORS CENTER

20 Broadway, Kingston

800-331-1518

www.kingston-ny.gov/tourism

Ulster County
is alive with history

Ulster County is rich with industrial, recreational, agricultural, and architectural heritage. The National Register of Historic Places lists over 160 sites and 27 historic districts in Ulster County, including Old Hurley, Huguenot Street in New Paltz, Saugerties Village, Pine Hill in Shandaken, and Kingston's various districts. Our industrial heritage is also a great asset, from the cement mines in Rosendale, bluestone operations in the Catskills, and brick industry on the Hudson, to the historic railroads and waterways such as the Catskill Mountain RR and the D&H Canal. The diversity of our history is notable, with Native American, Dutch and British settlements, as well as the home of many generations of immigrants.

Kingston is the home of the Hudson Valley's oldest existing synagogue.

This was also the home of African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist Sojourner Truth.

For more information on the heritage of Ulster County visit:

Ulster County Tourism
www.ulstercountyalive.com
800-342-5826

Ulster County Clerk
ulstercountyny.gov/archives/
845-340-3415

Ulster County Historical Society
www.ulstercountyhs.org
800-338-5614

Friends of Historic Kingston
www.fohk.org or 845-339-0720

Getting Here:

The Persen House is in the heart of
Kingston's Historic Stockade District
at the corner of John and Crown Streets
just minutes from
Exit 19 of the NYS Thruway (I-87)
via Washington Avenue.

Hours

Tuesday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Memorial Day Weekend to Labor Day Weekend,
Saturdays 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. until
pre-Thanksgiving weekend
and by appointment

For more on the Matthewis Persen House
contact the Ulster County Clerk's Office
at (845) 340-3040
or visit
ulstercountyny.gov/countyclerk