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Give An Old Dutch Barn A New Home

An architecturally significant, early 19th-century Dutch barn from Branchburg, NJ will soon become the centerpiece of a planned farmstead surrounding Bedminster's historic Jacobus Vanderveer House.

The only hitch...the barn is in pieces...in a 44' trailer...awaiting assembly at its new home.

In the coming months, The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House (the non-profit organization that operates and manages the Jacobus Vanderveer House, owned by Bedminster Township) will work with architects, government agencies, and historic preservation experts to come up with detailed plans for the multipurpose barn, which will:

- Provide much-needed space for our popular community events and educational programs
- Showcase important Revolutionary War artifacts uncovered during the Pluckemin archaeology dig
- Preserve Somerset County's Dutch-Colonial heritage, and

- Offer a unique venue for public, private and corporate events.

To finance the next critical phases of this ambitious project, expected to cost approximately \$1.2 million, The Friends have initiated a capital campaign aptly named [**Raising The Bar\(N\)**](#).

One Family...One Barn...And A Community Dedicated To Historic Preservation



Barn owner Christine Sena with her children Annabelle (5) and Liam (8) Rusin.

“When we moved to our property on Old York Road more than a decade ago, it was run down and overgrown,” recalls Christine Sena. “The house was falling apart. There were eight dilapidated outbuildings and two had already fallen to the ground. The Stage House was in disrepair, but the Dutch Barn (to those in the know) was still in good condition. We had hoped that we could do something to preserve it.

“After a little research, I found out that the majority of Dutch barns were built in upstate New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania by Dutch settlers who brought these designs from their homeland,” she added. “Dutch barns had long, sloping roofs and mortise and tenon beams. Those built in the early 1800s, were simple and open. They were clapboarded with gabled roofs. They had smaller side doors as well as large carriage doors on the ends. Side



aisles housed livestock, while the center area would be used for threshing wheat. I learned that Dutch barns remain one of the rarest types of barns in America today.

“As time went by,” says Christine, “I became increasingly concerned that the barn would decay past the point of no return. I consulted representatives of the New Jersey Barn Company, who suggested that I contact Branchburg Township to find out if we could take the barn down and preserve it.

“The Branchburg Historic Preservation Commission told me that The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House were looking for a barn exactly like mine to fulfill their long-range plan for a farmstead surrounding the Vanderveer property.”

Community Support

The Branchburg Historic Preservation Commission unanimously voted that this rare example of Dutch new world construction should be salvaged and preserved. They recommended that Christine transfer the barn to The Friends to preserve this example of rural architecture and keep it within Somerset County.

Following an endorsement by the Bedminster Township Committee to proceed with the project, The Friends applied for emergency funding from the Somerset County 2016 Historic Preservation Grant Program administered by the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

The Friends enlisted the help of HMR Architects, a firm with extensive historic preservation work and expertise, to prepare and submit an application for a Certificate of Eligibility to the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the barn’s listing in the New Jersey and National Historic Registers of Historic Places. The Bedminster Township Historic Preservation Commission unanimously supported that application. The SHPO agreed that the barn had a sufficient number of New World Dutch Barn characteristics that would make it eligible for listing in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places at its proposed relocation site, the Dutch-Colonial Jacobus Vanderveer House in Bedminster.

In June, The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House were awarded a \$94,190 Historic Preservation Grant from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders for the dismantling, documentation, and relocation of the 33’ x 51’ barn, from Christine’s property to the grounds of the Jacobus Vanderveer House.

“We recognized the urgency and importance of saving this structure as part of our commitment to preserving our region’s rich heritage,” observed Somerset County Freeholder Director Patricia Walsh. “The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House have done an admirable job of creating a museum that interprets Dutch colonial life in America as well as the Pluckemin cantonment, now considered to be America’s first military academy, and the military achievements of General Henry Knox, who used the Vanderveer House as his home and headquarters during 1778-79. The acquisition of the Dutch barn will further their contributions to historic preservation and interpretation at this site, located within the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area.”

The Preservation Experts

From July through August, historic preservation experts from HMR assisted a team of historic restoration and relocation experts from Restoration Technologies of New Jersey, LLC, in documenting the barn through photography, annotated measurements and drawings.



Boring samples were taken from wood timbers to more closely determine the age of the barn and the local mills that may have crafted its beams and siding.

The dendochronological analysis performed at Tree Ring Research Laboratory, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University, revealed that the barn was, most likely, constructed in 1832. [Dendrochronology is the science of analyzing and dating annual growth rings in trees.]



Restoration Technologies then carefully and methodically dismantled the Voorhees Dutch Barn (so-called for a historic owner) in preparation for its repurposed life in Bedminster. The salvaged beams and rafters (primarily composed of oak and poplar), some original hardware, and stone were placed inside a 44-foot trailer and transported to the Vanderveer property where they await reassembly.



“When I looked at my options, I knew I had made the right decision to save the barn

and was happy to put it someplace nearby where our community can appreciate it, including my parents and my children,” observed Christine.

“Adam Wengryn, from Restoration Technologies, and his crew are true preservationists. His love and appreciation for these barns is genuine and he has gone above and beyond to help me and my family throughout this process.

“Looking at our property now without the barn we had gazed at for over a decade is bittersweet. But we take comfort in knowing that we will be able to see it again in all its grandeur on the Vandever House property.”

While the Somerset County grant will cover the cost of dismantling and relocating the barn, preparation of National and New Jersey Register nomination forms, initial construction documentation and schematic designs, additional funds must be raised to construct a new foundation, reassemble and repair the historic frame and enclose the barn with new siding, stress skin paneling, a roof, windows and doors, as well as complete finishes and building systems.

For more information about the Voorhees Dutch Barn and The Friends’ plans to recreate a late 18th Century/early 19th Century farmstead surrounding the Jacobus Vanderver House, visit www.jvanderverhouse.org or call 908-396-6053.

Watch the barn be salvaged and dismantled: https://youtu.be/_ayRWSHtMU0

Support [***Raising The Bar\(N\)***](#) today.



Become a Member of The Jacobus Vanderver House & Museum

Enjoy free unlimited visits to our open houses and lively educational programs.

Join Us
In Making
History!

Your support helps restore, develop and operate the Jacobus Vanderver House property, significant in United States Revolutionary War military history, as a nationally important historic site and an educational and community resource.

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Directions: The Jacobus Vanderveer House is conveniently located near Routes 78, 287 and 22 at the River Road exit on Routes 202/206 in Bedminster, New Jersey. Enter through River Road Park. Parking and restroom facilities are available onsite.

Google Maps Users Enter: Jacobus Vanderveer House
GPS Users Enter: 3055 River Road, Bedminster, NJ
(Enter through River Road Park)
GPS Coordinates: 40.666816,-74.644819

Jacobus Vanderveer House & Museum



2016 Calendar of Events

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and

Register On-Line

www.jvanderveerhouse.org

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The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House received an operating support grant from the [New Jersey Historical Commission](#), a division of the Department of State.



The Jacobus Vanderveer House is handicap accessible. Anyone anticipating the need for additional accessibility services is requested to phone us at (908) 396-6053 or email us at info@jvanderveerhouse.org at least 2 weeks in advance.

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