

## Clinton Home on Pumpkin Lane Awarded Landmark Status

by Craig Marshall

The Clinton Historical Society has added the 1790 house of Jim La Marca on Pumpkin Lane to the list of Landmark structures in our town. This award recognizes historic structures in Clinton that have been well preserved or restored to near-original condition.

Jim's restoration, which began when he bought the home in 1980, was a major challenge and his success is a source of personal pride. Major structural problems were present with rotted sills, deteriorated siding supports and floors, and interior 1950s additions. In each case he was careful to re-use original materials where possible, such that the home has kept its historic integrity and footprint. All wideboard floors were removed, restored, and put back in place. Original doors were restored with their original iron hardware. When opened, a cupboard displays an imprint of the owner's initials (WHG for William H. Gildersleeve) dated 1828.

One of the house's most notable features is the large 1790 fieldstone fireplace in the dining room. Jim discovered that the size had been reduced substantially by a later renovation using a mud filler and was able to bring it back to its original 4' x 7' opening. It showcases the original iron swing-out crane and built-in ladle holder.

The restored and exposed large hand-hewn ceiling beams provide a dramatic effect. A large early dairy barn with an 1895 inscription is present on the 117-acre property near the house. It appears to have been used at one time for a carriage-making business, as evidenced by buried wagon parts found by Jim and a 1790 will that bequeathed carriage tools to one of the owner's sons.

The Gildersleeves owned the property

until 1856, when it was sold at foreclosure auction to William Hicks. It then went through four owners before Jim bought



*1790 fieldstone fireplace, restored*

the property 35 years ago. At that time he owned (and still owns) an advertising media business in New York and was looking for a weekend retreat. As a part-time history professor at St. John's University in Queens,

this historic home restoration appealed to him. The comfortable house, which boasts three working fireplaces, is filled with great antique furniture and accessories.

"The project was bigger than I anticipated, but I had skilled help and greatly enjoyed it," Jim said. "Unfortunately, it's time to move on and I've recently put the home on the market." Congratulations, Jim, on your well-deserved award! 🍷



*The original homestead 1867.*



*The homestead as it looks today.*