



## A LOVE AFFAIR WITH WINDSWEPT FARM

by *Dacie Kershaw*

High on a hill on Sunset Trail overlooking the Town of Clinton sits our historic homestead, aptly named "Windswept Farm." In 1823, Jonathan Lyon built it for his bride on land that was acquired by his grandfather from the Great Nine Partners Patent in 1782. Located eight miles east of the Hudson River and one mile east of Wappinger's Creek, it is ideal farming country. The house is surrounded by birch, sugar maples, and oak trees, and is an excellent example of the kinds of dwellings that dominated Dutchess County from 1790 through the 1820s. The farmhouse has a sturdy colonial interior and delicate Federal ornamentation. The interior is organized around a central hall flanked by two principal rooms, a parlor and the original kitchen. A fully developed horizontal beamed doorway with four fluted pilasters, molded frieze and deep cornice enriches the broad and well-proportioned entrance hall, lighted by generous sidelights. A turned newel post, simple turned balusters, under stairwell of molded panels and square fluted supports grace the stairway. Geometric corner blocks of concentric squares enhance the door moldings. Throughout the house, the floors are of wide pine boards.

West of the house is a mid-nineteenth century dairy barn with a cupola and doors on each long end that are on two different levels because of the slope of the hill. South of the house is a

nineteenth century cider mill. The mill is a low rectangular building on a terraced stone foundation. Beyond are pastures, fields, and a pond that is a wild fowl refuge. North of the house is an herb garden, vegetable garden, and orchard. The surrounding acreage is rolling land including pasture where corn, oats, hay, and alfalfa are rotated. The appearance of the farm has changed little since the nineteenth century. It is a Clinton Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

We have raised hogs, horses, beef cattle, chickens, goats, guinea fowl, a long line of barnyard dogs and cats and, not to be discounted, five children. We have grown apples, hay, oats, corn, and even a little flax (which is one of the crops the Lyons grew for family use and profit). We've made apple cider (worms and all) using the old press found in the cider mill, and we still make maple syrup.

We feel a great connection to the Lyons family who settled the land. There are no ghosts, but I often think of the Lyons when I walk the pastures or make gingerbread on a snowy winter day. The honesty of the house, its wonderful fireplaces, the way the sun floods the front rooms, the peace and history make it a special place to live in and love.

*Note: Dacie and Warren Kershaw are long time members of the Society and have enthusiastically supported its programs for many years.*