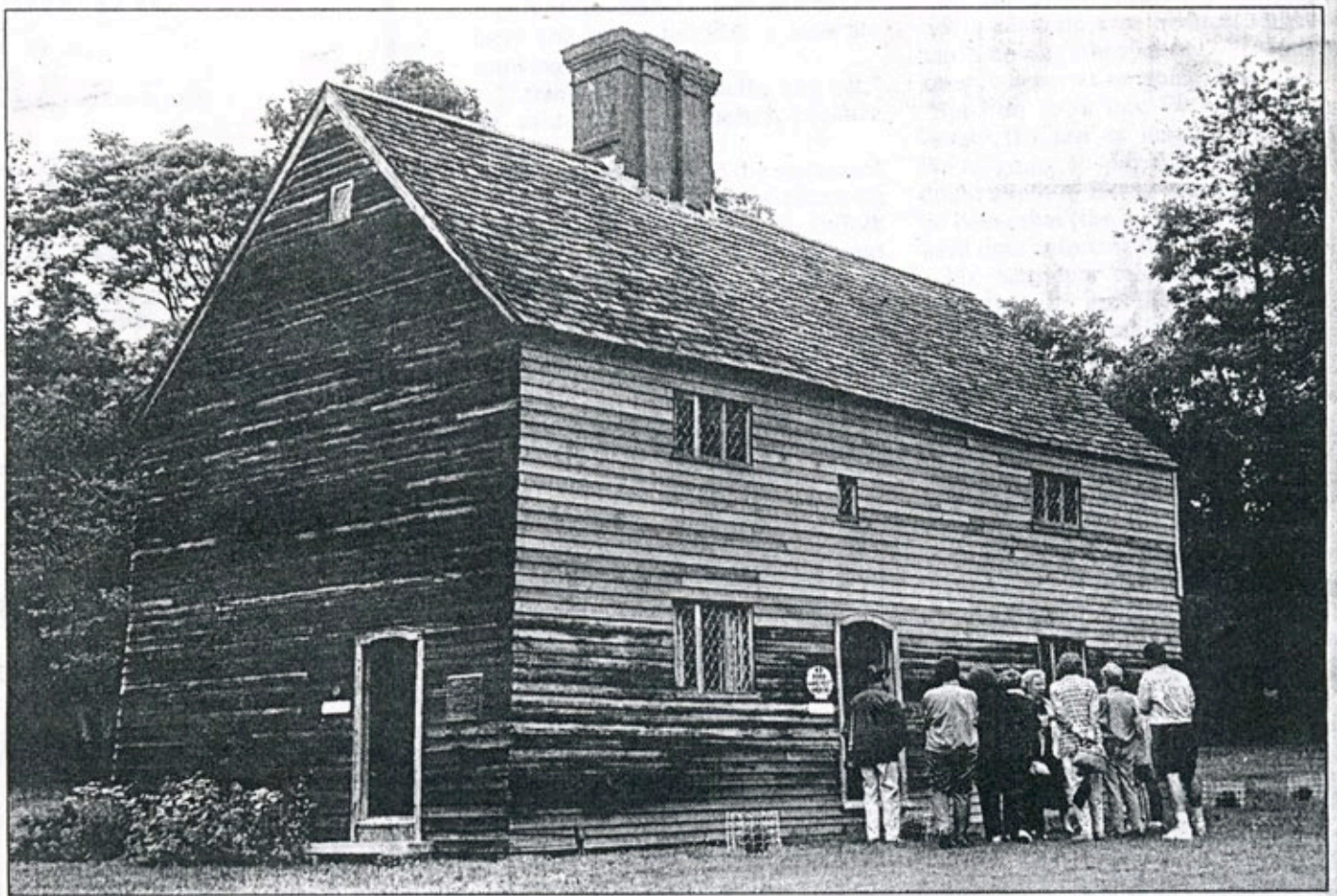


The Suffolk Times.



Suffolk Times photo by Judy Ahrens

A group touring the Old House, beside the Cutchogue Village Green, on Monday.

Old age assaults Old House *Landmark seeks funds for lifesaving surgery*

By Linda Crawford

CUTCHOQUE—You had an extensive facelift that knocked years off your appearance. You looked like a kid. Your plastic surgeon was a genius.

Flash forward a few decades. You still turn heads, but inside you're sagging; your bones are rickety; you feel older than God. A specialist diagnoses the problem: severe, prolonged edema has spawned a fungal infection, organ damage, even bone loss. The cause? A shoddy job — using shortcuts, inferior materials, poor technique — by Mr. Miraculous all those years ago. The remedy? Several major surgeries, liposuction, chemo, bone transplants, the works. The prognosis? You'll look and feel better than ever.

And if you were the 1649 Old House, on Cutchogue's Village Green, upon hearing this you might nod knowingly and say, "I know *exactly* what you mean. I'm in the same spot. And, by the way, it costs a bundle." In the neighborhood of \$250,000 for the National Historic Landmark.

The building had already turned 300 when this part of its history began in 1939 with the decision to restore it to its 17th-century appearance. The occasion was Southold's upcoming tricentennial the following year. And a discovery was made at the outset of the restoration effort that snatched disaster from the jaws of serendipity.

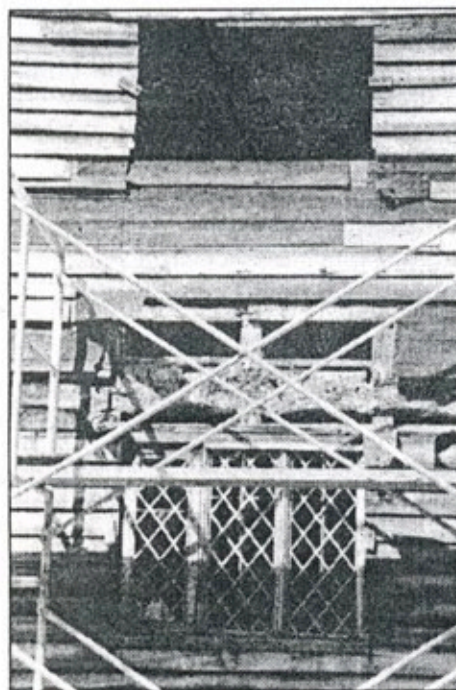
An original casement window frame and portion of double clapboard wall was uncovered. So the real 17th-century McCoy — casement frames, which swing open, holding tiny diamond-shaped leaded panes — was reproduced exactly throughout the house. The inner layer of clapboard wasn't, however, with horizontal sheathing and tarpaper used in its

place.

That's why, and when, the Old House began to retain water, causing drastic rot of the window sills and the giant support timbers beneath them. And that's the reason the Old House — on the eve of its 360th birthday — is facing major surgery. And the method of securing the funds is not unlike getting an operation pre-approved by an HMO. In this case, the Old House Society is seeking a grant of \$125,000 from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Its co-pay would be an equal amount.

A casement history

The house — built in Southold by John Budd and given as a wedding gift



Old House Society photo shows water damage behind the clapboard at the Old House.

to one of his daughters, after which it was moved to Cutchogue — has already undergone an exploratory operation, revealing the source of the leakage, and indicating that rot was widespread, with damage existing throughout the building. At present, while waiting for the money, the patient's receiving temporary support, undergoing tests on two kinds of experimental flashing around the windows and on the effects of double clapboard, and has been sewn up.

When funding is available, the following procedures are scheduled:

1. Removal of the cladding.
2. Excision (or the less surgical term, hogging out) of the areas of deterioration of the framing, as well as sanitizing and fumigating them. And fitting and installing sister timbers.
3. Removal of the window frames, with leakproof replicas put in their place.
4. Electricity installed to operate fans and assist ventilation.
5. Fungus and mold-killing chemicals applied to the beams.
6. Double cladding applied, replacing the inauthentic whitewashed planks that formerly lined the interior. And no tarpaper.

There are a couple of ironies hidden in this tale. According to Joy Bear's 1981 "Historic Houses of the North Fork and Shelter Island," a "particular glory" of this house was its chimney, which had "projecting courses of brick" atop it to keep water away from where the chimney met the roof, an obvious spot for leakage. However, what's added to the Old House's current problems is a chimney cap, installed to prohibit the growth of flora and moss and to keep out rain. The result? Water retention, once

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again. With no means of ventilation, water has seeped into the brick, causing it to deteriorate.

Also, says Bill Peters, a trustee of the Old House Society who's overseeing the restoration project, barely half a century after the house's construction, double-hung windows came into vogue, and were installed in the Old House. They held up well for roughly 250 years, and no doubt would have continued to. Not so the casements installed nearly 60 years ago.

But this time, Mr. Peters promises, they're going to do it right.