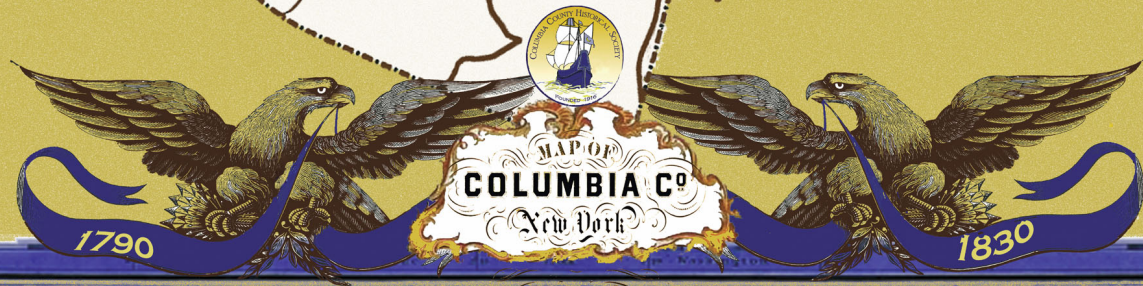


FEDERAL STYLE

IN COLUMBIA COUNTY



- JAMES VANDERPOEL HOUSE C.1820
- JOHN J. VAN VALKENBURGH HOUSE C.1814
- JOAB CENTER HOUSE C.1820
- HUDSON ALMSHOUSE C.1818
- BANK OF HUDSON C.1809
- ROBERT JENKINS HOUSE C.1811
- ELISHA GILBERT HOUSE C.1794
- ANSON PRATT HOUSE C.1793
- FIRST COLUMBIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE C.1786
- RICHMOND HILL C.1814



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Federal style was the predominant architectural form directly following the U.S. Revolutionary War, when our young republic was establishing its own Federal system. Taking inspiration from Greek and especially Roman classicism, Federal architecture further refined the earlier Georgian style, with an emphasis on stately symmetrical forms, patriotic motifs and delicate ornamental details including swags, garlands and urns. Structures featured here represent the pinnacle of Federal architecture in Columbia County. Despite variations in form, function and wear, the Federal hallmarks shine through in testament to the timeless elegance of this style.

Federal Architecture (1780-1830)

In the years following the Revolutionary War, as our Federal government was being built and refined, American architecture underwent its own transformation. Like the Federal system, this new architectural style was inspired by the great democracies of Greece and Rome, and incorporated classical motifs into the established Georgian forms. Federal, or Adam architecture, influenced by English architect Robert Adam, flourished in the Northeast and New England, exemplified in structures ranging from Boston's Faneuil Hall to the James Vanderpool House in Kinderhook, one of the most significant local examples.

A typical Federal-style house is a simple brick or clapboard-clad rectangle, two or two-and-a-half stories high, and two rooms deep. Exterior features include a symmetrical placement of windows, a low-pitched side gabled or hipped roof, and a decorative main entrance—often including a fanlight window above a paneled front door with flanking sidelight windows. More elaborate façades used three-part or Palladian windows with curved arches located on the second floor, above the entry. The structures highlighted here are some of the finest examples of Federal architecture in Columbia County. Despite variations in form, function and wear, the Federal hallmarks shine through in testament to the timeless elegance of the style.

① James Vanderpoel House (c. 1820)

16 Broad Street, Kinderhook

A quintessential example of Federal architecture in the Hudson Valley, the James Vanderpoel House was constructed for prominent lawyer, judge and civic leader James Vanderpoel. Built with local brick and trimmed with marble, the stately side-gabled structure features two stories, five bays and exquisite Federal detailing inside and out. With its nearly identical front and rear façades, the house takes symmetry to heights rarely matched in the region. The entries feature a Dutch stoop, an indication of Vanderpoel's Dutch heritage and the pervasive Dutch influence in northern Columbia County.

James Vanderpoel married Anna Doll of Kingston, and together they had six children. In 1810, he was elected to the State Assembly and later succeeded his friend and colleague Martin Van Buren as Columbia County surrogate. In 1833, Vanderpoel was appointed New York State Supreme Court judge and relocated to Albany. Shortly thereafter, one of his daughters married a son of Martin Van Buren. The home subsequently passed through many owners, including Mordecai Myers and Thomas Burt. In 1925, the Daughters of Columbia County—later the Columbia County Historical Society—purchased the home, which by that time had fallen into significant disrepair. The purchase was the culmination of a multiyear search for a suitable 'House of History' to hold their meetings, library, and growing collection of historical objects. After an ambitious restoration, the house was opened to the public in 1932. The Columbia County Historical Society is now the longest owner of the James Vanderpoel 'House of History.'



Directions to Next Stop: Head northeast on Broad Street, then continue onto U.S. 9 N/Chatham Street. Continue to follow U.S. 9 N for 1.6 miles. Turn right onto Main Street, then continue onto Upper Main Street. Continue straight onto County Road 28A/Upper Main Street, and continue to follow County Road 28A (becomes County Road 28). In 3.7 miles, turn right onto NY-66 S. After crossing the bridge, the destination will be just ahead on your left.

② John J. Van Valkenburgh House (c. 1811-1813)

Route 66, Chatham Center

This elegant clapboard home built by John J. Van Valkenburgh around the War of 1812 features a gable front with flanking wings, a less common style of Federal architecture in Columbia County. The period during the War of 1812 was one of much activity in Chatham Center. This tiny community on the banks of the Kinderhook Creek had been a remote farming frontier until the war turned it into an important transportation route for artillery and munitions. Culturally, Chatham Center was a meeting point between the primarily Dutch settlers of Kinderhook and the New Englanders who made their way west from Connecticut and Massachusetts. Van Alstynes, Van Alens and Van Valkenburghs established farms and businesses alongside Sutherlands, Oakleys and Wilbors. Eventually, the community would encompass multiple mills, a tavern, hotel, stores, post office and railroad station. During this time of expansion, John J. Van Valkenburgh obtained the land for this home from one Colonel Van Alstyne. The Adam-style house may have been built by the Ray Brothers of Old Chatham, but other sources claim it was built by an itinerant architect from Connecticut. It was reportedly modeled after another Federal-style home on this itinerary, the Anson Pratt House of New Concord.



Directions to Next Stop: Head north on NY-66 N toward Church Lane. Follow signs for NY-66 N for 5 miles. Turn left to stay on NY-66 N. In 2.9 miles, turn right onto US-20 E. In 6.8 miles, the destination will be on your right at the corner of Bicknell Hollow Road.

③ Elisha Gilbert House (c. 1794)

Corner of Bicknell Hollow Road at NY-20, New Lebanon

This grand white clapboard home was built in 1794 by Elisha Gilbert, a Revolutionary War captain at the Battle of Saratoga. The two-story frame home features five bays with a center entrance pavilion and a gambrel-style roof. Because its construction dates to the early days of the Federal era, the house reflects a combination of Georgian and Federal details.

For all the grandeur of its exterior, one of the home's most noteworthy features is hidden inside: extensive masonic murals, adorning the walls and ceiling of the garret level, survive as an artifact of the strong influence of freemasonry during the Federalist era. In New Lebanon, Mason Unity Lodge No. 9 was formed in 1788. In about 1794, "an arrangement was entered into with Major Elisha Gilbert, whereby a room in the house which he was then building was secured for lodge purposes," wrote Capt. Franklin Ellis in his 1878 *History of Columbia County, New York*. By 1796, Ellis continues, the lodge claimed 115 members, "among them being the most prominent citizens of the town." Some speculate the murals may have been the work of an itinerant craftsman named Daniel Bartling. The Elisha Gilbert House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.



Directions to Next Stop: Continue east on US 20 E., then turn right onto County Route 5. In 4.2 miles, turn right onto NY-295 W. In 4.3 miles, slight left onto County Road 9 S/Tompkins Street. Continue to follow County Road 9 S, and your destination will be on the right in approximately 1.2 miles.

④ Anson Pratt House (c. 1802-1812)

County Road 9 at New Concord Road, East Chatham

This extraordinary Federal home stands out for its opulent, Adam-inspired exterior details—including pilasters, rounded window forms, cornice with dentil mouldings, and delicate ornamental details such as swags and urns. The home was built for Anson Pratt (1771-1841), a native of Connecticut who settled in the town of Chatham sometime in the 1790s. In 1798 he was the Chatham town clerk, and served in the state assembly three times between 1800 and 1810. Pratt married Sally Beebe, whose father, Hosea Beebe, was an early settler of the King’s District—the area of Columbia County that includes present-day Chatham, Canaan and Austerlitz. It is likely that Anson Pratt was involved in the local textile industry, which was driven by the sheep farms that once flourished in northeastern Columbia County. He is also known to have owned a mill. Pratt’s elegant home is related in style to at least two other houses in Columbia County, most notably the John J. Van Valkenburgh House in Chatham Center.



Directions to Next Stop: Turn left onto New Concord Road. In 1.2 miles, slight left onto NY-295 W. In 3.3 miles, slight left onto NY-66 S/Hudson Avenue. Travel for 9.4 miles, then turn left onto NY-9H S. In 3.1 miles, turn right onto Old Lane. In .6 miles, the destination will be at your right (at NY-23B).

⑤ First Columbia County Courthouse (c. 1786-1787)

NY 23B at Old Lane, Claverack

One of the earliest Federal-style buildings in the region was the First Columbia County Courthouse. The two-story, five-bay brick building sits on a stone foundation and is topped by a gabled roof. Sidelights and a transom frame the entry, and a large fanlight sits on each gable wall. It was renovated around 1830 with Greek Revival features, including the front portico. The property is said to have originally included a small jail, a pillory and a hanging tree. Claverack was the County seat of Columbia County at the time the courthouse was built, but would remain so only for another 20 years; in 1805, Hudson took its place. The first courthouse remained in use as a meeting room, but was eventually converted to housing. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.



Many prominent lawyers argued cases here during its short tenure, including William P. Van Ness, Peter Van Schaack and Martin Van Buren. Acting as attorney for his in-laws, the Schuylers of Albany, Alexander Hamilton likely appeared here during ongoing litigation over a Hillsdale land dispute. Several cases of national note also unfolded here, including the Harry Crosswell libel case of 1804, in which a Hudson journalist was charged, and convicted, for criticizing President Thomas Jefferson. In this early test of freedom of the press, Crosswell appealed his verdict to New York’s highest court, where Hamilton—a vehement opponent of President Jefferson—passionately argued for the defense. Judges in the case deadlocked and Crosswell was never sentenced or retried.

Directions to Next Stop: Turn right onto NY-23B and travel for 2.4 miles. Turn right onto US 9 N/Fairview Avenue. In 1 mile, turn left onto Fabiano Boulevard. The destination will be straight ahead.

6 Joab Center House (c. 1812-1820)

14 Fabiano Boulevard, Hudson

This quirky and striking home, built for Joab Center and his wife, Eunice Jenkins Center, has been the subject of much local lore. It is widely known in Columbia County as the “Turtle House” for the way its curved portico resembles a turtle’s shell, but the likelier inspiration for the unusual design was a ship’s hull. Historical records suggest that the Centers were associated with Hudson’s maritime industry. Joab Center is listed as a “captain” in the record for his marriage to Eunice Jenkins, and 19th-century newspapers contain references to a Joab Center as a “master of cargo ships.” One local rumor holds that the giant portico columns were built from a ship’s masts. This does not appear to be true, though they are original to the house. The “lozenge-shaped” brick core is flanked by small brick wings. The rounded projections of the front façade are unusual for the time period in Columbia County, but similar shapes can be seen in classic Federal buildings such as the Octagon House in Washington, DC (built 1799). Another rumor claims that the house was built by an Italian architect; unfortunately, the name of the architect has not been discovered. However, another local mansion, The Hill (built for Henry W. Livingston in 1803 and sadly demolished in the 1980s), featured similar rounded elements—and was also said to have been the work of an Italian architect. The Center family sold the house in 1836. In 2001, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.



Directions to Next Stop: Head south on Fabiano Boulevard toward James Street. Turn right onto Joslen Boulevard, then turn left onto Harry Howard Avenue. In 1 mile, continue onto Short Street. Slight right onto Carroll Street, then turn right onto State Street. In 79 feet, the destination will be on the right.

7 Hudson Almshouse (c. 1818)

400 State Street, Hudson

This imposing building is one of only a handful of extant Federal-style institutional structures in Columbia County. It was built in 1818 to house Hudson’s indigent and elderly populations. Plans for the almshouse were drawn up by Robert Jenkins, a two-time Hudson mayor whose own house is featured on this itinerary. The builder was Ephraim Baldwin, whose work was supervised by a committee consisting of John Talman, Judah Paddock and Barnabas Waterman. Though it has not been proven, Waterman is believed to have been the builder of several Federal-style houses in the area, including the James Vanderpoel House in Kinderhook.



HUDSON LUNATIC ASYLUM.

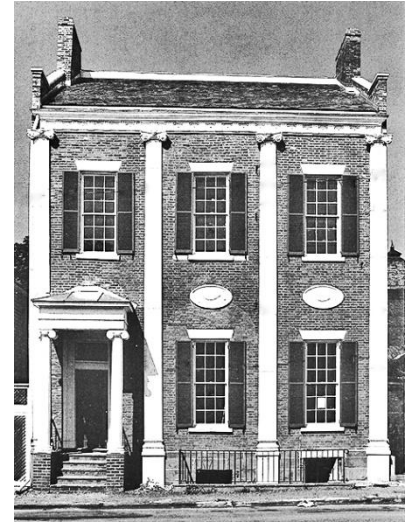
The building’s days as an almshouse were short-lived. The city abandoned the building in 1830, and that same year it became an insane asylum specializing in the humane care of mental patients. The asylum’s founder, Dr. Samuel White, was a Hudson doctor who also founded the Columbia County Medical Association. Later, the building housed an orphanage and a female academy. Most recently, it served as the Hudson Area Library, which relocated a block north to the historic Hudson Armory at Fifth and State streets in 2016. The almshouse building is now vacant.

Directions to Next Stop: Head northwest on State Street toward N. 4th Street for .2 miles. Turn left onto N. 3rd Street. In .1 miles, turn right onto Warren Street, and your destination will be on the right in .2 miles.

8 First Bank of Hudson (c. 1805)

116 Warren Street, Hudson

An outstanding example of Adam-style architecture, this building at 116 Warren Street was built to house the First Bank of Hudson, founded by John C. Hogeboom. The bank failed soon after it was chartered, a victim of the economic depression that plagued the nation between the Embargo of 1807 and the War of 1812. Soon after the bank's failure, the building was converted into a private residence for the Hogeboom family, with a few changes. According to *A Visible Heritage* by Ruth Piwonka and Roderic H. Blackburn, "the original entrance, centered in the façade, was moved to its present side location, and a Greek Revival portico was added. Judging by changes in brickwork, the original entrance had a fan-shaped transom window complemented by the two flanking medallions." These changes represent an early use of Greek Revival features in Columbia County. The building's highly ornamented front façade—featuring decorative swags and garlands, friezes and grand marble pilasters—speaks to the prosperity of Hudson at the turn of the 19th century. The bank was also an early cornerstone of commerce on Warren Street, which would grow to become Columbia County's foremost commercial corridor. Today, the building houses an art gallery.



Directions to Next Stop: Head northwest on Warren Street toward 1st Street, and the destination will be on your left.

9 Robert Jenkins House (c. 1811)

113 Warren Street, Hudson

Hudson was famously the first city incorporated after American independence, and much of the infrastructure of Lower Warren Street sprang up during the Federal period. Seth Jenkins was one of Hudson's founding "Proprietors" in 1783, serving as Hudson's first mayor beginning in 1785; his son Robert followed in his footsteps as a civic leader, twice serving as mayor of Hudson (1808-1812 and 1815-1819). Robert Jenkins built this stately Federal home in 1811, during his first tenure as mayor. Next door at 115 Warren Street is another surviving Federal-style house, built in 1795 by Robert's brother, Seth Jenkins, Jr. Tragically, Robert died in 1819 after being knocked overboard on a sloop traveling from New York to Hudson.



The proportions of the Robert Jenkins House are similar to those of the James Vanderpoel House, and indeed they are believed (though not confirmed) to share the same builder, Barnabas Waterman. It is now owned by the Hendrick Hudson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Much of the interior was changed during renovations in the early 20th century, though the exterior remains largely intact.

Directions to Next Stop: Head southeast on Warren Street toward S. 2nd Street; turn right at the first cross street onto S. 2nd Street. Turn left onto Allen Street, then turn right onto NY-23B W/NY-9G S/S 3rd Street and drive for 1.8 miles. Turn left onto Middle Road. In 2.3 miles, turn left onto Greendale Road. In .2 miles, turn right onto Blue Hill Road. In 5.3 miles, the destination will be on your right.

10 Richmond Hill (c. 1806-1808)

County Route 31/Blue Hill Road, Germantown

The prominent Livingston family once possessed 160,000 acres of present-day Columbia and Dutchess counties, and built many homes during the Federal years. This red brick manse, built between 1806 and 1808 for Walter Tryon Livingston, is one of the few Livingston homes that can be seen from a public road.



Walter Tryon was a grandson of Robert Livingston, First Lord of Livingston Manor. But Richmond Hill was not built on inherited land; Walter purchased the land to add to the acreage he had inherited from his father, Peter Robert Livingston. Richmond Hill takes its name from the land's original owner, John Richmond. Oddly, it seems Livingston never resided in the house. Upon its completion in 1808, Livingston entered into a property swap with General Samuel Ten Broeck of Clermont, receiving Ten Broeck's Bouwerie estate in the exchange. General Ten Broeck lived at Richmond Hill until his death in 1841, at age 95. The house passed out of the Ten Broeck family in 1853.

Set amid 58 bucolic acres and oriented for sweeping views of the Catskill Mountains, the house offers a striking formality that is characteristic of Federal architecture, in pleasing contrast with the rural surroundings. Its tall windows, entry fanlight and attic fanlight brought needed natural light into the house before the days of electricity, while the two end chimneys provided warmth—and a crowning touch to the symmetry that characterizes the Federal style.

IMAGE SOURCES:

James Vanderpoel House: Copyright Columbia County Historical Society.

John J. Van Valkenburgh House: Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator. *John Van Walkenburg House, State Route 66, Chatham Center, Columbia County, NY.* Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/ny0499/.

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Anson Pratt House: Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator. *Anson Pratt House, New Concord, Columbia County, NY.* Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/ny0911/.

First Columbia County Courthouse: By Daniel Case - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8707758>

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Robert Jenkins House: Postcard, Columbia County Historical Society collection.

Richmond Hill: By DACC23 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=73703961>

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