

COLUMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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C. 1850 Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse Nominated to New York State Register of Historic Places

KINDERHOOK, NY – December 19, 2022 – The Columbia County Historical Society announced today the c. 1850 Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse, located at 2589 NY-9H in Kinderhook, has been nominated to the New York State Register of Historic Places after a unanimous vote by the State Board for Historic Preservation. The nomination will now be reviewed by the National Park Service for inclusion on the National Register. A second Columbia County structure, the Harder Mill in Hudson, was also nominated.

"These nominations showcase New York's diverse history through preserving important places where New Yorkers have lived, learned, worked and built communities," said Governor Kathy Hochul. "By adding these sites to our historic registers, we are recognizing the critical role that they play in telling our state's story. I hope these landmarks will inspire, educate and entertain future generations and help connect New Yorkers to our past."

The State and National Registers of Historic Places are the official lists of buildings,

structures, districts, objects and sites significant in the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture of New York and the nation. The same eligibility criteria are used for both the State and National Registers.

“We are thrilled with the New York State Review Board's decision—not only for the recognition of the Ihabod Crane Schoolhouse’s historical significance, but because it will allow us to secure additional funding to preserve and maintain this important piece of New York State history in Columbia County,” said CCHS Executive Director Lisa Weilbacker.

Owned and maintained by CCHS, the Ihabod Crane Schoolhouse was built circa 1850 to replace an earlier school where Jesse Merwin served as schoolmaster. Merwin was a Kinderhook resident and friend of author Washington Irving. In a correspondence, Irving addressed Merwin as “the original Ihabod Crane”—the schoolteacher character made famous in Irving’s *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Merwin was also an acquaintance of Martin Van Buren, and in 1846 the former president offered his testimony that Merwin had been the “pattern” for Crane.

The Ihabod Crane Schoolhouse served local children of the Town of Kinderhook as District Schoolhouse #6 until the 1940s. In 1952, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt delivered a radio address from the schoolhouse acknowledging the work of local women in converting the former school into a community center. In 1974, the building was moved less than 200 yards from its original location at NY-9H and Fischer Road to its present location on the property of the 1737 Luykas Van Alen House (also owned and operated by CCHS), where it reopened as a museum of early schoolhouse education. It remains an excellent and intact example of a rural, one-room schoolhouse with a gable roof, clapboard siding and single pent-roofed entrance.

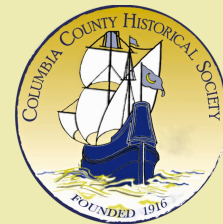
Though both historic buildings are closed for the season, the 33-acre property is home to a permanent exhibit of narrative panels that interpret various aspects of the site's history. The exhibit is open seven days a week from dawn to dusk, and admission is free.

For further information, please contact :
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ABOUT CCHS

Founded in 1916, the Columbia County Historical Society Museum & Library collects, preserves, interprets, and presents the history, heritage, and culture of Columbia County, New York, and serves residents of all eighteen towns and the City of Hudson. A vital community resource, CCHS collections include important and unique paintings, textiles, furniture and decorative arts, archives, maps and genealogical materials, and four distinct historic properties relating to Columbia County's heritage.



In recent years, CCHS has sustained a range of programs: the award-winning magazine *Columbia County History & Heritage*; recurring lecture series; annual *Day of History*' field trips for County fourth-graders; and exhibitions in the museum galleries. CCHS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization chartered by the Board of Regents, New York State Department of Education.

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