

# Village of Kinderhook

The settlement at Kinderhook (Dutch, “children’s corner”) began in the 1660s by Dutch families from Albany. Originally called het Dorp or Groot Stuk, the settlement formed on the west bank of the Kinderhook Creek on lands purchased from the Mahican Indians.

During colonial times, large farms and spacious lots shaped the nascent hamlet. Roads in place then – first William Street and later Hudson, Albany, and Broad Streets – formed a pattern that remains to this day.

Colorful historic figures passed through Kinderhook during the American Revolution. One of them was Colonel Henry Knox, whose horse-drawn sledges carried artillery through the village in January 1776 en route from Ticonderoga to Boston.

Following the Revolution, Kinderhook experienced significant growth as it emerged as a postal and stagecoach stop between Albany and New York City. By the time of its incorporation in 1838, the village had become a bustling commercial and manufacturing center, with shops that supplied groceries, dry goods, books, pots, pans, and stoves. Hats and carriages were the principal manufactured products. A printing office published an important newspaper, and several lawyers and physicians helped villagers live more law-abiding and healthy lives. Three taverns afforded lodging, food, and drink.

As manufacturing in the village declined during the nineteenth century, Kinderhook became an increasingly residential village. Over time an eclectic array of architectural styles spanning two centuries informed buildings that lined the village’s streets. Included were Dutch vernacular, Federal, Georgian, and Greek Revival styles.

Preservation of the village’s architectural heritage is recognized by Kinderhook’s listing on the National Register of Historic Places and its designation as a Preserve America Community.

## Farther Afield

- 29 Luykas Van Alen House: 2589 Route 9H (1737)**  
One of the finest examples of Dutch architecture, this house features parapet gables, Dutch doors and stoops, distinctive Dutch brickwork, and iron beam anchors. The home was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1967 and is open for tours during the summer.
- 30 Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse: (ca. 1850)**  
Now on the grounds of the Van Alen House. This one-room schoolhouse was moved kitty-corner from the other side of Route 9H in 1974 by the Columbia County Historical Society. The building was a functioning school until 1940. The name Ichabod Crane comes from the Washington Irving tale, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Jesse Merwin, a local schoolteacher, was the prototype for the main character.
- 31 Lindenwald – Martin Van Buren National Historic Site: 1013 Old Post Road (1797)**



Built by Peter Van Ness in 1797, this house was later purchased by President Martin Van Buren as his retirement home. The name Lindenwald, bestowed by Van Buren, comes from the German for “linden woods.” After losing his bid for reelection in 1840, Van Buren returned to his native Kinderhook to farm the 230-acre estate, growing timothy, potatoes, grapes for wine, hops for beer, and pears and apples. Between 1840 and 1848, Lindenwald served as a busy political hub. Van Buren died here on July 24, 1862. The site is operated by the National Park Service and is open for tours.

Funded in part by the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.



“Kinderhook Village Green” by Alan Foster. Courtesy of private collection.

Photo of Lindenwald courtesy of National Park Service.

For special events and to learn more about what’s going on in Kinderhook and Columbia County, please visit:

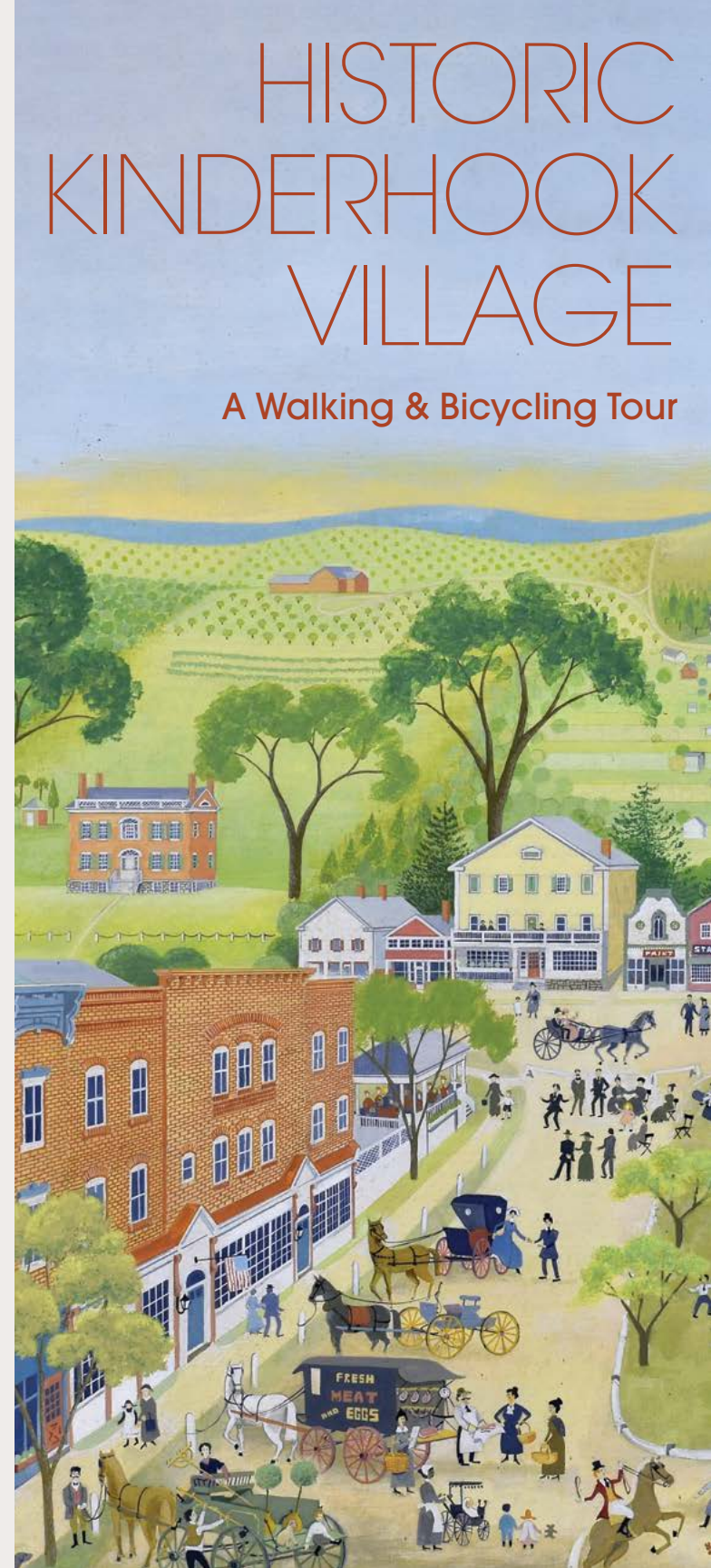
Columbia County Historical Society  
[cchsny.org](http://cchsny.org)

Columbia County Tourism  
[columbiacountytourism.org](http://columbiacountytourism.org)

Kinderhook Memorial Library  
[kinderhooklibrary.org](http://kinderhooklibrary.org)

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site  
[nps.gov/mava/index.htm](http://nps.gov/mava/index.htm)

Village of Kinderhook  
[villageofkinderhook.org](http://villageofkinderhook.org)



## Begin Your Tour at the Flagpole

### 1 The Village Green

Imagine the square bustling with tradesmen, farmers, horses, and wagons circa 1820. It was then a small circle with ample room for horses and wagons. Just three years before, the village cemetery had spread across the bank lawn and filled the head of Chatham Street, which was then a small lane. All interments in the cemetery were moved to upper Albany Avenue. The change was made to improve the roadway and to create a commercial center and market area. About 1824, 1 Hudson Street was built as a residence by Peter Van Vleck. The present bandstand had been the location of a hay scale large enough to weigh wagons and their contents. The brick row on the westerly side of the square was built following a disastrous fire in 1880. The ruins were soon replaced with new commercial buildings housing trade shops, a hardware store, and a knitting mill where caps and mittens were made until 1940. The stretch of clapboard buildings on Broad Street housed an inn, a watchmaker, a stationer, a shoe shop, and a drug, paint, and grocery store. The green itself was enlarged after the fire into the "village park," undoubtedly in part to accommodate



two large cisterns needed in case of a future fire. The park remains much the same, with only the village elm and the surrounding cast-iron fence missing.

### 2 Martin Van Buren Statue

Martin Van Buren was the son of Maria and Abraham. Abraham was a farmer and tavern keeper and a supporter of the American Revolution. Martin grew up in the village, studied law here, and began his political career in Kinderhook. He and his wife, Hannah Hoes, had four sons and spoke Dutch. Hannah, his childhood sweetheart, died at the age of thirty-five from tuberculosis; he never remarried. Van Buren was elected to the presidency in 1837 and served only one term. Known in government circles as "Old Kinderhook," the term "OK" came to be synonymous with Van Buren. Originally a slang term meaning "oll korrekt" (all right), the expression was used as a rallying cry by his supporters. Van Buren used the initials next to his signature as a sign of approval. He is credited with creating an independent treasury and being instrumental in the founding of the Democratic Party.

### 3 James Vanderpoel House: No. 16 Broad Street (ca. 1819)

Operated as a "house of history" since it was acquired by the Columbia County Historical Society in 1926, the house has served the organization's mission by variously exhibiting decorative, fine, and utilitarian arts, and interpreting the history of the county. Vanderpoel, a prominent lawyer and politician, enjoyed a prosperous and elegant nineteenth-century lifestyle. His house remains one of the finest examples of Federal architecture in the Hudson Valley. The fashionable Federal style emphasized the lightness of proportion, symmetry, and delicate ornamentation.

### 4 Peter Van Schaack, Jr.: No. 15 Broad Street (ca. 1821)

This Federal style home was built by Peter Van Schaack, Sr., as a wedding gift for his son. Notice that the front doors of the father's and son's homes are directly across from one another. No. 17 Broad Street housed Peter Van Schaack, Jr.'s stationary shop and newspaper office. It is the oldest extant commercial building standing in the village. Between 1825 and 1832, *The Kinderhook Herald*, a four-page journal, commenced publication in this building. Van Schaack followed it with *The Sentinel*, which flourished until 1854 when Peter Van Vleck purchased it and changed its name to *Kinderhook Rough Notes*.

### 5 Peter Van Schaack House: No. 20 Broad Street (ca. 1787)



Before the Revolution, Peter Van Schaack (1747–1832), colonial New York's distinguished young lawyer, sacrificed his legal career in New York because of his conviction that the Revolutionary movement was extra-legal and therefore morally wrong. Although banished for his insubordinate thinking in 1778, he was eventually allowed to return in 1785, settling in first at his family's homestead – it once stood at 10 Church Street. Between 1785 and 1789, he built this house which closely followed the Georgian style of his brother David's house, still standing at 24 Broad Street. Between about 1865 and 1888, James Mix, a successful Albany jeweler, owned the house. He is credited with the Second Empire alterations that included a Mansard roof, a second story-centered projecting oriel with triple Gothic windows, a single-story side porch to the west and the bay windows to the east, and paired doors at the front entry.

### 6 David Van Schaack House: No. 24 Broad Street (1774)



A story first reported in the late nineteenth century fostered the myth that General John Burgoyne had been entertained here when he was taken

as prisoner between Saratoga and Boston. Recent research indicates that Burgoyne and other English military were taken due east through Williamstown and then to Northampton, Massachusetts, and thence eastward, while Hessian prisoners were taken through Kinderhook and to Springfield. A Hessian officer's journal mentioned the hospitality offered by the Van Schaacks when the Hessians stayed at their home after the Battle of Saratoga. This Georgian mansion was built by David Van Schaack. It is one of only three or four such mansions to have been built north of Manhattan before the Revolution and an important example of colonial design. Its wings were added circa 1840.

### 7 Persons of Color Cemetery: Rothermel Lane

In his 1815 will, homeowner John Rogers stipulated that a portion of his property be "intended as a cemetery for the people of color." The cemetery and its fifteen remaining headstones are listed on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places.

### 8 Jacques Quilhot House: No. 28 Broad Street (1770)

Commonly referred to as the Benedict Arnold House, although recent research has revealed that contrary to popular belief Arnold probably was not treated for wounds in this house. The house was built for physician Dr. John Quilhot (formerly Jacques) who settled in Kinderhook in 1758 following his service for France in the French-English war. No. 28 also served as a boarding house for students attending Kinderhook Academy. It has a double slant roof and its date worked in brick headers on its westerly end wall. A diamond-shaped, brick bond pattern on the façade is highlighted with glazed dark headers following Dutch style.

### 9 Martin Van Buren School: No. 25 Broad Street (1930)

When it was new, students from kindergarten through high school convened in this elegant Colonial Revival building. This architectural style was popular across the country. In rural areas the style introduced a gracious experience along with a tribute to the nation's cultural history. The Kinderhook school was distinguished by being dedicated in 1930 by Franklin Roosevelt. Today the building's exterior is finely preserved and its interior a joyous expression housing contemporary art.

# Village of Kinderhook

Total Distance within Village: 2.5 miles



**10 Kinderhook Dutch Reformed Church: No. 21 Broad Street (1814; 1849–50; 1869)**  
Originally formed in 1712 as a mission church from the Dutch Reformed mother church in Albany, this congregation was the first in New York State, becoming its own entity in 1723. The first structure was in the vicinity of 25 Hudson Street. The present site, its third location, houses the fourth church edifice. Walls of the church's present building date from 1814, when William Murray, an Albany craftsman, appears as the contractor for the new church. In 1849 another Albany architect, William Ellis, was called upon to design an addition for the church. The church burned in December 1867. Walls from the 1814 church survived and were incorporated in the new structure designed in the Romanesque Revival style by Charles C. Nichols and Frederick W. Brown, also from Albany. A large box pew in the southeast corner was habitually and reverently occupied by Martin Van Buren. **Turn right onto Church Street and then left onto Sylvester Street.**

**11 Francis Silvester House: No. 7 Sylvester Street (ca. 1805)**  
Built by Francis (1767–1845) around the time of his marriage, the house remained in the Silvester family until 1903. The graceful fanlight over the entry is one of the village's premier expressions of Federal design. Here crisp, neoclassical proportions herald major changes from eighteenth-century styles. After studying law with Francis, and even though their politics diverged, Martin Van Buren was welcomed in this house by two generations – first by Francis Silvester and later by Silvester's daughter Margaret and nephew Francis Jr.

**12 St. Paul's Episcopal Church: No. 6 Sylvester Street (1852)**  
This church, designed by British-born Richard Upjohn and built in 1852, was originally located on Chatham Street next to the present Village Hall. Upjohn had recently provided the Italianate renovations for Martin Van Buren's Lindenwald. Van Buren's son, Smith T. Van Buren, further engaged Upjohn to design a church for the emerging Episcopalian congregation. Growth and crowding at the village center moved the congregation to relocate the building to its present location. Upjohn was able to assist with the mechanics of the move, which was done in 1869. The Tiffany windows in the sanctuary were given to the church in 1912. **Proceed to Hudson Street.**



**13 Kinderhook Memorial Library: No. 18 Hudson Street (ca. 1933; 2018–19)**  
The library was initially chartered in 1928. In 1931 Mrs. Caroline Davie Lloyd erected a new library in memory of her father, Mr. George Davie. This Colonial Revival building, designed by Mantle Fielding, was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day 1931. The library is now part of the 66-member Mid-Hudson Library System. In 2018–19, a substantial addition to the library was made with contributions from the library's many users.


**14 No. 15 Hudson Street: (1729)**  
First parsonage of the Dutch Reformed Church. Originally built with a steep-pitched roof, similar to the Luykas Van Alen House. Remodeled after the Revolutionary War (circa 1786) to include more Federal elements, such as the gambrel roof and front brick facade. It has been a private residence since its sale in 1836.


**15 Martin Van Buren Birth Place: No. 46 Hudson Street (Historic Marker)**  
Martin Van Buren was born to Maria and Abraham Van Buren in the tavern house that once stood on this location. Maria Hoes married Abraham after the death of her first husband, Jacobus Van Alen. Van Buren had three half and four full siblings.

**16 Kinderhook Creek**  
Travel on the King's Highway between New York City and Albany was facilitated when the New York provincial legislature passed a law in 1719 to fund a bridge at this location. Possibly this was the original covered bridge that survived until the 1938 hurricane. Such a crossing called for taverns and inns to be built, which in turn gave rise to the lively location of Maria and Abraham Van Buren's tavern just up the hill from the creek crossing. Set back from the roadways are extensive flats that were valued for their rich soils. This kind of locale was attractive to the Dutch who first settled here. Past the middle of the nineteenth century two operations were established at creek side: Herrick's candle factory and Bigelow's slaughterhouse.

**17 William Street**  
The village's earliest settlement was located on the rise above Kinderhook Creek and William Street then followed the brow of the hill. William Street was the village's first main roadway. Opposite the intersection with Hudson Street stood the earliest Reformed Church, moved to its present location in 1814. Old houses flanking William Street and fronting Hudson Street are No. 39, a Dutch-framed dwelling somewhat transformed in more recent centuries, and No. 41, a Revolutionary era inn.

**18 No. 31 William Street: (ca. 1754)**  
This early Dutch house stands on a terrace of what was originally the Groot Stuk ("great piece"), land spanning both sides of the creek from Valatie to Lindenwald. The land was divided among four men after purchasing it from the local Indians before 1668. One of the four, Martin Cornelissen, was Martin Van Buren's great grandfather. The center core of this home is stone and is flanked with paired Federal-era wings made of that delicate pink brick for which the Hudson Valley is most known. Other later nineteenth-century frame additions are at the rear.


**19 1766 Tenant House: No. 26 William Street (1766)**  
  
Sometimes referred to as the John Pruyn House, this brick gambrel incorporates New England features distinguishing it from the continental, Dutch-styled houses. The changes include a center hall, ceiling beams concealed with lath and plaster, more paneling, and a second floor that was used for living quarters instead of storage. This gambrel-roof home illustrates a concern for style as well as functionality. **Turn left onto Maiden Lane. On Hudson Street turn right.**

**20 Van Vleck House: No. 1 Hudson Street (ca. 1825)**  
  
Originally constructed as a private home by Peter Van Vleck, this Federal-style building sits on the former burying ground of the Reformed Church. The National Union Bank of Kinderhook moved into this building in 1859. Peter's brother Henry had the house at 4 Albany Avenue.

**21 Albany Avenue**  
Developed mainly after 1817, Albany Avenue is characterized by Federal and later nineteenth-century architecture. Henry and Peter Van Vleck's father, Abraham, owned a business at the corner of Albany Avenue and Chatham Street. Abraham also likely built No. 4 Albany Avenue sometime between 1790 and 1820. The house was embellished in the later nineteenth century with Renaissance Revival details; these contrast with Greek Revival columns on the porch of the bank building.

**22 Columbia County Historical Society Museum & Library: No. 5 Albany Avenue (1916)**  
The Royal Arch Masons constructed this stylish Beau Arts building. Note the stained-glass window in the edifice, a Masonic symbol. Besides use by the Masons, it was a nursery school, a village library, and the Elks Club. Now owned and operated by CCHS, the building houses its offices, collections, and library. Exhibitions change regularly.


**23 Van Slyck House: No. 12 Albany Avenue (ca. 1840)**  
This house was long the home of Peter Van Slyck, a local blacksmith. Its clapboard siding and tin roof are typical of many of the homes in the early 1800s. The Greek Revival style porch on this building was a twentieth-century addition, likely designed by local architect George Wilkins. Peter Van Slyck's descendants lived here through about 1980. Next door, No. 14, was Van Slyck's smithy. This smithy was converted to a private home in the early 1970s.

**24 Kinderhook Academy: No. 29 Albany Avenue (1836)**  
  
Columbia Academy was founded in the early 1790s and stood on the location of today's village parking lot. Academies offered traditional academic curricula, with classes in Latin, Greek, mathematics, geography, and the sciences. Columbia Academy grew in prominence, relocating three times and reincorporating as the Kinderhook Academy in 1824. In 1836 it moved to Albany Avenue, where the present building was constructed by Albany builder Henry Harrington.

Nos. 25 and 27 were a single building that served as a boarding house for the Academy. It burned in 1854 and was replaced with the present Nos. 25 and 27. No. 23 was a rear extension to this boarding house that served as the headmaster's residence. Later, ca. 1896 and after, the Academy building housed a print shop and a knitting mill and spent several decades as the Lindenwald Grange's meeting hall and finally a home for the Elks Club.

**25 No. 28 Albany Avenue: (ca. 1830)**  
This house is a classic example of Gothic Revival style architecture in the village. Despite the addition of gingerbread and newer sections to this home, the roof line and interior floor plan suggest that the home is an old Dutch style and older than it appears. This home is one of the surviving examples of Gothic Revival architecture. Notice the board-and-batten siding.

**26 Mills Park**  
At this corner Mills Park overlooks the Vly, a wetland that was part of the larger creek flats. The Vly was first managed by Dutch hydrology in the seventeenth century and was maintained as a meadow for livestock. Pronounced "fly," it is a Hudson Valley term derived from the Dutch vloed ("flowing water") that was commonly applied to wetlands. Before 1882 a cotton mill stood on the former site of a village water tower that stood here between 1925–26 and 1984. When the village moved the water tower, ownership of this lot reverted to the Mills family, who sold it to the village for recreational use.

  
Across the street is a renovated trolley station, which was formerly the station for the Hudson to Niverville line that ran using steam power from 1890 to 1900. Electrified in 1900, the route was extended to Albany and ran until the end of 1929.

**27 African Methodist Episcopal Church: 20 Sunset Avenue (by 1865)**  
The Kinderhook AME congregation formed in 1851. It served the African American community in the village and also the rural surrounding area. By 1985, the congregation had disbanded, and the church was sold for residential use.

**28 Martin Van Buren Gravesite**  
Just beyond Mills Park on Albany Avenue lies the village cemetery. The graves of President Van Buren, his wife, Hannah, his parents and his son, Martin Van Buren, Jr., are clearly marked.