

OSBORN-PATTERSON HOUSE, 711 Westfield Rd., #2*

The last word in American elegance of the day "Patterson's" was *the* town showplace in the late 1800s. Here politicians and local social lions, have rocked the wide pine floor boards, still preserved, for over 100 years.

This home gives us a good representation of two stages of early architecture. The back section was built in the pre-Revolutionary period, the front in the pre-Civil War days. Here we have an opportunity to compare the craftsmanship of the early period with that of the later time, the differences in width of molding, the variances in window sizes, and the height of ceilings. In the back section the hand-hewn beams have been exposed, while in the section built in 1862-3, we see the French influence in the high, molded plaster ceiling cornices. One can imagine the old familiar phrase—"you got to stand on your head to keep your feet warm," was often said. In the dining room is an unusual treatment of panelled wainscoting taken from the antique folding shutters originally used on the inside windows. Here, too, we have the white marble fireplace mantles, another with Black Italian marble, where in the earlier room is the original open hearth with the old bricks in evidence behind more recently added field stones. The old hearth crane is still in use, after at least 225 years. There is no basement under the older section only a small "frost fighter" for winter supplies. Other points of interest are the painted-grained doors, with original porcelain door knobs, and the cut-out skirtings on the stairs.

When Joseph A. Patterson bought the property on May 23, 1863, he must have felt comfortable in the rustic parlor of the old Osborn home. He was a tobacco dealer and sold clay pipes in Scotch Plains. When he came into more money by selling tobacco to the soldiers of the Union Army, he must have kept the old section of the home out of sentiment. As he grew in influence and became a member of the first Township Committee in 1878, when this township was set off from Westfield, the front parlors were the social and political gathering place of the town. Yet we can imagine that he and his political associates found the back section more congenial for their confabs. When Joseph died in 1902, he was buried in lot #75 in God's Acre.

The house became a private school in the 1920s, run by Reginald Huse, who tutored boys for West Point. His daughter, Mary, married the prominent New York criminal lawyer with the unusual Dutch name of TenEyck Beardsley. The house was in her name until 1944, when Denman Peniston took it over and tried to recapture its original beauty. The home was restored to its original importance when it again became the home of a Township Committeeman, Mauro Checchio, in 1960. The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Cochran, have found delight in keeping the front and back section of the home "in period."

The original Osborn of the early American section has been difficult to trace. On maps of 1862 the home is indicated merely as "Mrs. Osborn's." It may be (blank) Osborn, the cider miller's place, who in all the records has no first name. The spring-fed pond that was in the back yard until 1961, would have been an ideal location near which a cider miller could fix his fieldstone foundation.

Outside on both driveways are large, chiseled-out stones, similar to old Indian grinding stones, which pioneers used for feeding and watering their stock. They are considered more rare than Indian-grinding stones.

Now take a fast trip to "the other end of town," as Old Raritan Road was called in the old days. Continue up Westfield Road to North Avenue turning LEFT stopping the first traffic light. Then, turn RIGHT, going over the railroad overpass. Follow road map on the back inside cover, and the posted tour signs, if you're unfamiliar with the area. After taking HETFIELD AVENUE to West Broad, make a jog to the LEFT following LAMBERTS MILL ROAD, immediately on the RIGHT. Go past the Scotch Plains Country Club golf course, continuing to the old RARITAN ROAD. Turn RIGHT, and past the first block on the RIGHT, QUIMBY LANE, is our third stop, the residence of Clinton D. Seaman.

