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*Reframing History*



Photographs by Jeff Heatley unless otherwise noted

## Dominy House and Shops: History of Construction

**D**URING the late-18th and early-19th centuries Nathaniel Dominy IV (1737–1812), Nathaniel Dominy V (1770–1852), and Felix Dominy (1800–1869) fashioned clocks, furniture, and other items of wood and metal in a clock shop and a woodworking shop adjoining their home in East Hampton, New York. The Dominy house was dismantled in 1946, but the two shops were moved to a private estate, where they remained until being given to the Village of East Hampton in 2016 to be restored to their original site and configuration as the Dominy Shops Museum, a project of the Village of East Hampton (Fig. 1).

Today, the Dominy craftsmen are well known because of the collection of their tools and furniture at the Winterthur Museum, in Delaware, and the book *With Hammer in Hand: The Dominy Craftsmen of East Hampton, New York* (University of Virginia Press, 1976) by Charles F. Hummel. The clock shop and woodworking shop are a critical part of the Dominy story since they give a tangible sense of the environment in which these craftsmen worked.

The East Hampton Village Board of Trustees resolved to return the two shops to their original site and context by joining them with a reconstruction of the frame and exterior of the Dominy house. The intent was to replicate the hewn oak timber frame of the house to provide a historically accurate interior space that would serve as an educational center between the two shops. The timber frame would itself be a craft exhibit.

Reconstruction of the house and restoration of the two shops was possible due to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation of the Dominy house. The house and shops were recorded for HABS by two young architects, Daniel M. C. Hopping and Carl Stoye, in May 1940. Their field notebooks, containing more than 100 pages of sketches and notations along with the survey photographs, are the essential documentation for this project.

Phase one of the Dominy Shops Museum project, which accomplished all structural and exterior work, is complete. Phase two will restore the shop interiors and install mechanical systems. This next campaign will begin once fundraising goals have been met.

Creation of the Dominy Shops Museum required a close study of the history and architecture of the house and shops. In the course of rehabilitating the two shops, many elements, including the floor and wall framing and the exterior wall sheathing, were inspected for the first time. New information from examination of the shops, combined with study of the HABS field notebooks and historic photographs, raised some questions about the history and evolution of the structures. Another remarkable resource, the surviving account books of Nathaniel Dominy IV and Nathaniel Dominy V, contained entries that answered these questions. Information from these account

**1 Completed exterior details of the reconstructed Dominy house with the clock shop (left).**



HOUSE 1773



HOUSE 1773

WOODWORKING SHOP 1791

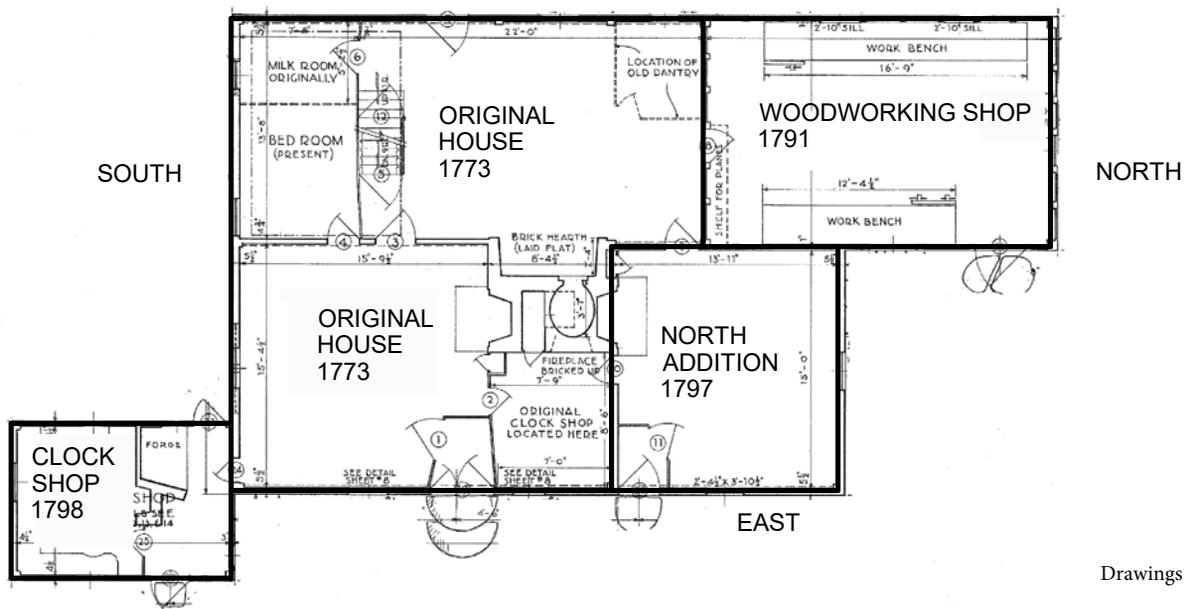


CLOCK SHOP 1798

HOUSE 1773

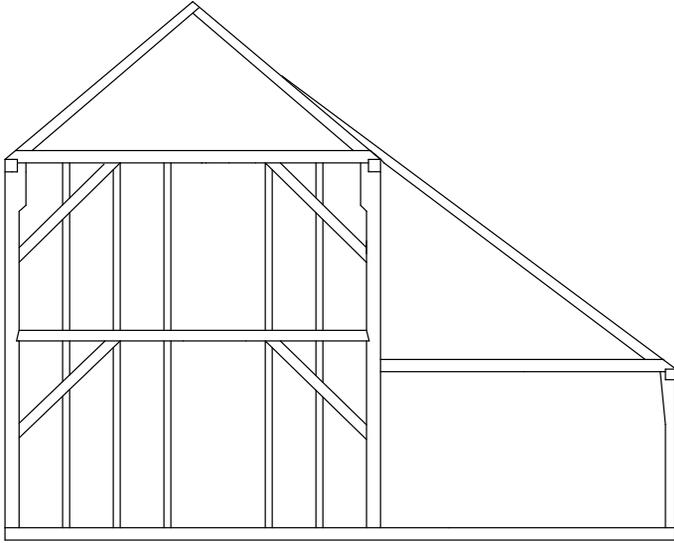
ADDITION 1797

WOODWORKING SHOP 1791

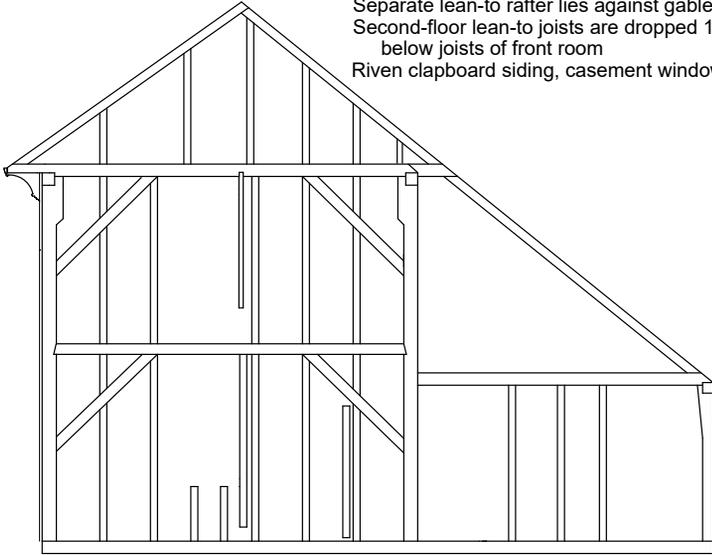


Drawings by Robert Hefner

2 Evolution of the Dominy house.

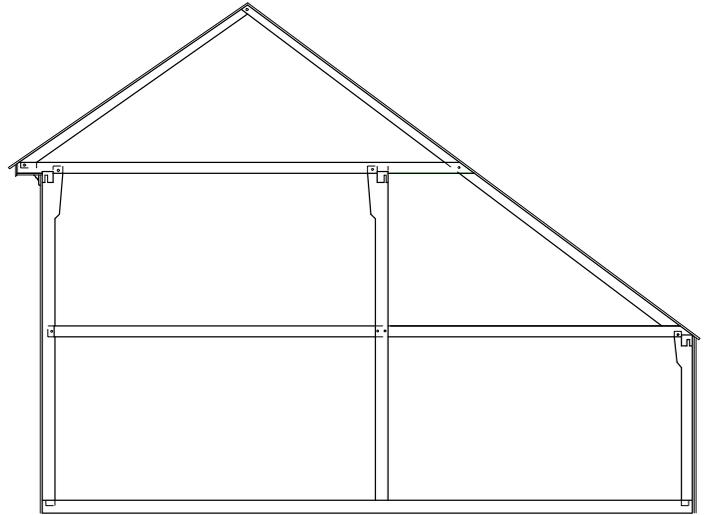


**HOME SWEET HOME 1721** No overhang at front eaves  
 Separate lean-to rafter lies against gable rafter  
 Second-floor lean-to joists are dropped 16 in.  
 below joists of front room  
 Riven clapboard siding, casement windows



**HOME SWEET HOME ca. 1750** Projecting front eaves with plaster cove cornice  
 Single lean-to rafter supported by 20-in. cantilever  
 of second-floor joists  
 Shingle siding and windows with up-and-down sash

3



**DOMINY HOUSE 1773**

Projecting front eaves with bed molding  
 Single lean-to rafter supported by 48-in. cantilever of second-floor joist  
 Second-floor lean-to joists continuous with joists of front room  
 Beaded clapboard front wall and shingled side walls  
 Windows with up-and-down sash

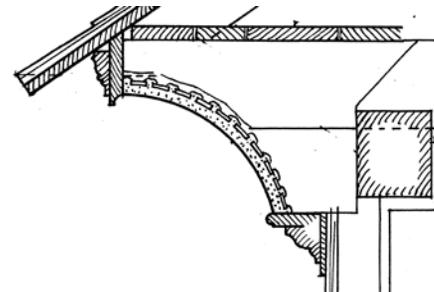
Data from measured frames of other East Hampton lean-to houses:

Ananias Conklin House, Amagansett, not dated  
 Single lean-to rafters supported by 14-in. cantilever of second-floor joists  
 Lean-to second-floor joists are dropped 14 in. below joists of front room

Thomas Osborne House, Wainscott, not dated  
 Single lean-to rafters supported by 38-in. cantilever of second-floor joists  
 Lean-to second-floor joists are dropped 12 in. below joists of front room

Baker House, East Hampton Village, not dated  
 Single lean-to rafters supported by 38-in. cantilever of second-floor joists  
 Lean-to second-floor joists are dropped 14 in. below joists of front room

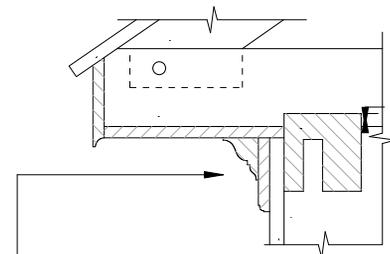
4



**HOME SWEET HOME ca. 1750 SECTION OF PLASTER COVE CORNICE**

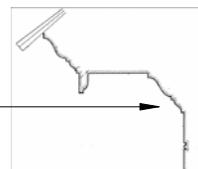
**3, 4 Development of the saltbox house frame in East Hampton, New York.**

**5 Front cornice treatments of Home Sweet Home, the Dominy house, and the Clinton Academy.**



**IDENTICAL BED MOLDINGS**

**DOMINY HOUSE 1773 SECTION OF CORNICE**



**CLINTON ACADEMY 1784 SECTION OF CORNICE**

5

books, along with all the other evidence, indicate that the house was built in 1773, the woodworking shop was added to the north wall in 1791, Nathaniel Dominy V built an addition for his new family in 1797, and the clock shop was built against the south wall of the original house in 1798 (Fig. 2). This article presents the evidence for dating the initial construction of the Dominy house complex and evolution while illustrating how this progression offers insight about the lives of these craftsmen.

**Dominy House, 1773** The Dominy house is an example of the saltbox house favored by East Hampton's wealthier landowners during the first three-quarters of the 18th century. The saltbox had a two-story gable-roof frame that was one room deep with a lean-to that continued the roof slope to the ground floor eaves at the rear of the house. The prevalence of saltbox houses may be the strongest reminder of East Hampton's New England cultural heritage. Eastern Long Island was settled by New England colonists in the 1640s and remained tied to that region.

Research for reconstructing the saltbox frame brought into question the 1715 date attributed to the house in the 1940 HABS drawings. It became apparent how the Dominy house differed from other East Hampton saltbox houses, especially the earliest ones. The Dominy house appears to represent the last stage of the evolution

of the saltbox in East Hampton. This is the only East Hampton saltbox that this author knows of, where the second-floor joists of the lean-to are at the same height as the joists of the front room. This continuous floor is made possible by the 4-ft. cantilever of the attic-floor joists that join the lean-to rafters midspan. This long cantilever provides headroom in the lean-to. In all other measured saltbox houses on Long Island's South Fork, the lean-to joists are set 12–14 in. below those of the front rooms. In these houses, the lean-to rafters are set closer in to the interior wall than at the Dominy house, limiting headroom and requiring a step down to the lean-to. A high-resolution photograph of the Dominy house being dismantled in 1946 clearly shows that the frame was a continuous build and not a remodeling of an older house. Figures 3 and 4 summarize the evolution of the saltbox house frame in East Hampton.

Exterior details also place the Dominy house near the end of the development of the saltbox house in East Hampton. The treatment of the front cornice is the clearest indicator (Fig. 5). The earliest houses had no front overhang. By the mid-18th century, a front overhang was decorated by a plaster cove cornice. By the 1770s, wood moldings decorated the overhang, replacing the plaster cove. The bed molding under the soffit of the Dominy cornice, as recorded by HABS, is identical to that of the 1784 Clinton Academy, which is located less than a mile to the south (Fig. 6). The two buildings also share painted beaded clapboards and wide front doorways. Based on exterior features, the construction date of the Dominy house appears to be closer to the 1784 date of Clinton Academy than to that of earlier saltbox houses.

An account book kept by Nathaniel Dominy IV (Book B) contains compelling evidence that he began building a foundation and hewing timber for the new house in 1772 (Table 1). Nathaniel's family moved into their new home in December of 1773. Some interior finish work may have extended into 1774. Dominy would have done much of the work himself, possibly with help from Jeremiah Sherrill, his apprentice, and family members. The book indicates that he did little work for others in 1773.

Nathaniel Dominy took several years to accumulate material and fashion the components for his new house. Nine loads of timber were carted for Dominy the five miles from a forest known as Northwest Woods in April 1771. The same year, he purchased 2000 shingles at Sag Harbor, the principal trading port for eastern Long Island. From June to



6 Clinton Academy, 1784.

Table 1.

Page	Date	Entry – All are credits to Nathaniel Dominy	£	s	d
43	4/19/1771	Thomas Mulford, By Carting 1 load of Timber from NW		7	
52	4/19/1771	John Parsons, By Carting 1 load of Timber from NW		8	
53	4/19/1771	Samuel Parsons, By Carting 1 load of Timber from N.W.		7	
59	4/19/1771	Timothy Mulford, By Carting 1 load of Timber from NW		8	
66	4/19/1771	Matthew Stratton, By Carting 1 load of Timber from NW		8	
50	4/19/1771	Capt David Mulford, By Carting 1 load of Timber from NW		7	
25	4/19/1771	Nathaniel Hunting, By Carting 1 load of Timber from N.W.		7	
71	4/19/1771	Jonathan Osborn, By carting 1 load of timber from N.W.		7	
7	4/14/1771	Ezekiel Mulford, By Carting 1 load of Timber		7	
61	11/13/1771	Jeremiah Miller, By 2M (2000) Shingles at 4-0-0	8		
34	6/6/1772 6/8/1772	Abraham Mulford, By 5 days work of Henry Sheril on frame By ½ Do		10 1	
88	6/6/1772	Abraham Mulford Jr., By 5 days work on frame	1		
7	8/12/1772	Ezekiel Mulford, By carting 1 M (1000) Cedar Boards from Sag Harbour		10	
4	6/4/1772	Jesse Dayton, By his helping load 6 loads of stone		3	
53	6/8/1772 11/16/1772	Samuel Parsons, By Carting 6 loads of Stone from New Town By Carting 2/3 loads Stone		8 1	
66	11/17/1772	Matthew Stratton, By Working 1 Day on Cellar		5	
47	11/1772	Nathan Conkling, By 2¼ days work on lath & shave Shingles &c	5	1	
61	11/2/1772	Jeremiah Miller, By Carting Shingles & Bolts from Sag Harbor		6	
92	4/27/1773 12/13/1773	Phebe Dayton, We moved to her House Left her House			
20	6/1773	Daniel Dayton, By Carting 844 feet of Bord from Sag H		8	6
34	6/1773	Abraham Mulford, By Carting 156 feet of Bord from Sag h		1	6
60	4/1/1773 7/21/1773	Samuel Sheril, By hinges & key By 2 lb of large nails By 1 lb large nails By 1 ½ lb large nails	0 0	1 2 1 1	4 0 0 6
63	5/1773 7/1773 8/1773	Jacob Sheril, By 3 Days & Dan 4 Do By 5 Days work on House @ 4/6 By 5 ½ Days @ 4/6	1 1 1	2 2 2	0 6 6
7	9/1773	Ezekiel Mulford, By carting 1 load of Bricks		6	
51	10/1773	Henry Dayton, By carting 1000 Bricks		6	
52	10/1773	John Parsons, By Carting 1000 of Bricks		6	
53	10/1773	Samuel Parsons, By Carting 1600 Bricks		9	8
77	10/29/1773	Uriah Miller, By 11 Days work on Chimney @ 5	2	15	0
103	5/5/1773 9/7/1773 11/20/1773  12/1773 1/4/1774 2/7/1774	Aaron Isaacs, By ½ Gall of oil & 2 lb of white lead By 6 lb of nails @ 1 By 2 lb of white lead By 3 lb of nails By 3 lb of Spanish white By 2 lb of nails By 3 lb of nails By 5 lb of nails		7 6 2 4 1 2 3 5	4 6 6 6

November of 1772, stones were carted and the cellar constructed. In June, Dominy paid two carpenters to begin scribing the joints for the frame, and in August he purchased 1000 cedar boards at Sag Harbor for the clapboards that would cover the front wall of the house.

It appears that the frame was raised on the new foundation beginning in the spring of 1773. Dominy credited Jacob Sherrill with a total of 13½ days of “work on House” from May to August of 1773. About 4600 bricks were carted to the site in October 1773. On

October 29th Dominy credited Uriah Miller with “11 Days work on Chimney.” Nathaniel IV’s account book shows that he boarded his family in a nearby home from April to December 1773 while the new house was under construction.

Features of the framing (the front overhang, the integral lean-to rafters, the long cantilever of the attic-floor joists, and the continuous second floor from the front room into the lean-to) and exterior details (the molded cornice and painted beaded clapboards) are consistent

with the 1773 date of construction indicated by the account book entries. This information brings the house to the center of the story as demonstrating the design ability and aesthetic sense of Nathaniel IV and his prominent standing in the East Hampton community. It was certainly a good advertisement for his woodworking abilities.

The account book entries for the 1773 house, the 1797 north addition, and the 1798 clock shop include purchase of stone, timber, siding, and brick. Entries for the 1791 woodworking shop include timber, siding, and brick. There are no other similar groupings of material purchases in the account books that suggest a major construction project. Most entries are for pine boards probably used for products made in the shop.

Why did Nathaniel Dominy IV build a new house in 1773 and move his family into temporary quarters during construction? Nathaniel Dominy was 34 years old in 1771, and his wife, Hannah, was 31. Their five children ranged in age from one to sixteen years old. Nathaniel's brother, Henry, married in 1773. Nathaniel IV may have been at the point where he wanted his own house, and at the same time the extended families may have outgrown the home of Nathaniel III.

In May 1784, Nathaniel IV credited Selah Pike with "1 Day work on old House puling down." Presumably this is his father's house. Nathaniel Dominy III died in 1778, and his wife died in 1781. Henry Dominy also lived in that house with his wife and children. Henry began buying land in Plattsburg, New York, in 1775 and eventually moved there. Nathaniel III's house and Nathaniel IV's house were likely on the same home lot.

The new house, which Nathaniel IV moved into in December 1773, had a small room in front of the chimney described as the "original clock shop" in the HABS drawings. This shop measured 7 ft. by 8 ft. 6 in. in plan, and was heated by a small fireplace. The shop had a window in the east wall and probably one in the north wall, where workbenches were likely located.

**Painting the house clapboards and clock shop siding red** Above his 1940 sketch of the east wall of the clock shop, the HABS architect Daniel M. C. Hopping wrote: "Vertical Boarding, Trim etc, etc was painted red originally." This note is the basis for our use of red paint on all exterior woodwork in the reconstruction, with the exception of the shingles.



7 The Hook School.

Nathaniel IV designed the façade of his new house with beaded clapboards, beaded window frames, a two-leaf doorway, window and door pediments, and a classical bed molding at the front overhang. The beads of the clapboards precisely align with the beads of windowsills, the top and bottom of pediments, and the bead of the frieze. Such a carefully planned façade using beaded clapboards instead of shingles would be expected to be painted.

We know of only three East Hampton buildings of the period 1770–1800 with narrow, beaded clapboards on the front wall: the Dominy house, 1773; Clinton Academy, 1784; and the Hook School, ca. 1784 (Fig. 7). The Hook School, now located just behind the academy, has a cornice identical to that of Clinton Academy, beaded clapboard walls, and a two-leaf entrance door. Clapboards that had been enclosed by an early addition retained early red paint. A ca. 1865 photograph of Clinton Academy shows the clapboards of the front wall painted. No research or analysis has been done on the paint history of Clinton Academy.

Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College from 1795 to 1817, visited East Hampton in 1811 and noted of the Main Street houses that "Scarcely any of them are painted." Dwight's observation supports the assumption that these three buildings with narrow beaded clapboards were painted while the many shingled buildings were not.

The linseed oil and pigments that Nathaniel Dominy purchased from the merchant Aaron Isaacs from 1765 to 1773 do not clearly indicate the exterior paint treatment of 1773 (Table 2).

Table 2. Paint ingredients purchased by Nathaniel Dominy IV.

Page	Date	Entry	£	s	d
105	1/6/1765	Aaron Isaacs			
101	11/27/1767	By 14 lb of Spanish Brown		9	
	10/23/1770	By 2 lb of Linseed oil, 1 lb of white lead		5	9
103	5/5/1773	By 2 lb of Red Lead		7	
	11/20/1773	By ½ Gall of oil & 2 lb of white lead		2	4
		By 2 lb of white lead		1	6
		By 3 lb of Spanish White			



8 Woodworking shop.



9 Scribed date on woodworking shop brace.

**Woodworking shop, 1791** Nathaniel V turned 21 in 1791, and by this time had begun to specialize in woodworking while his father devoted more time to clocks. This was a logical time for Nathaniel V to expand the family business with a new carpentry shop.

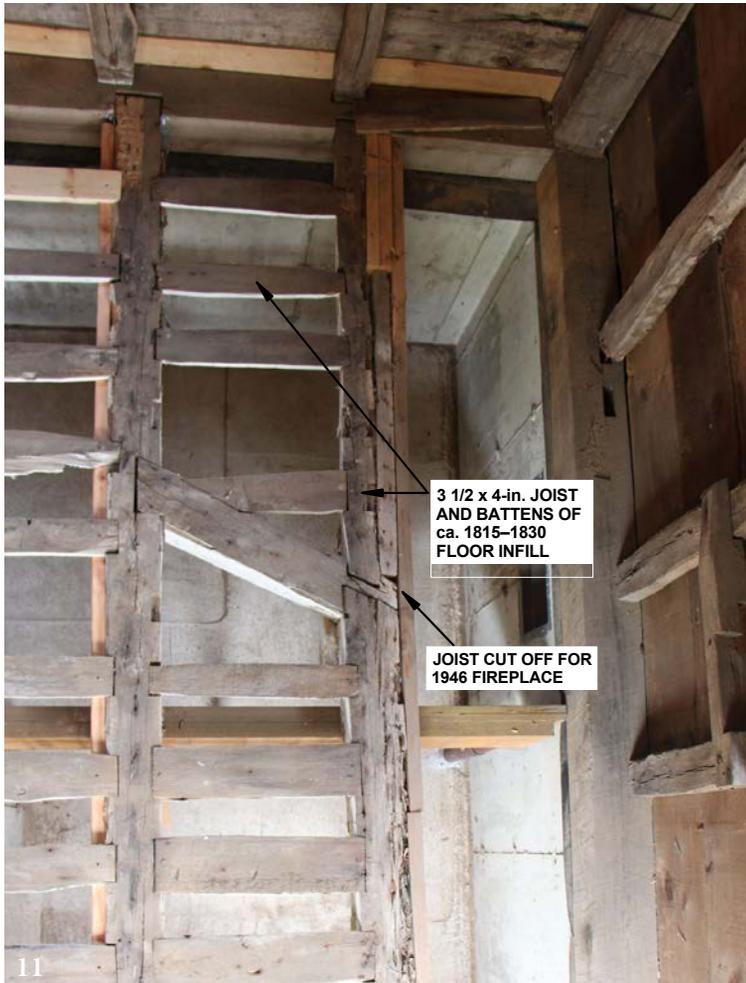
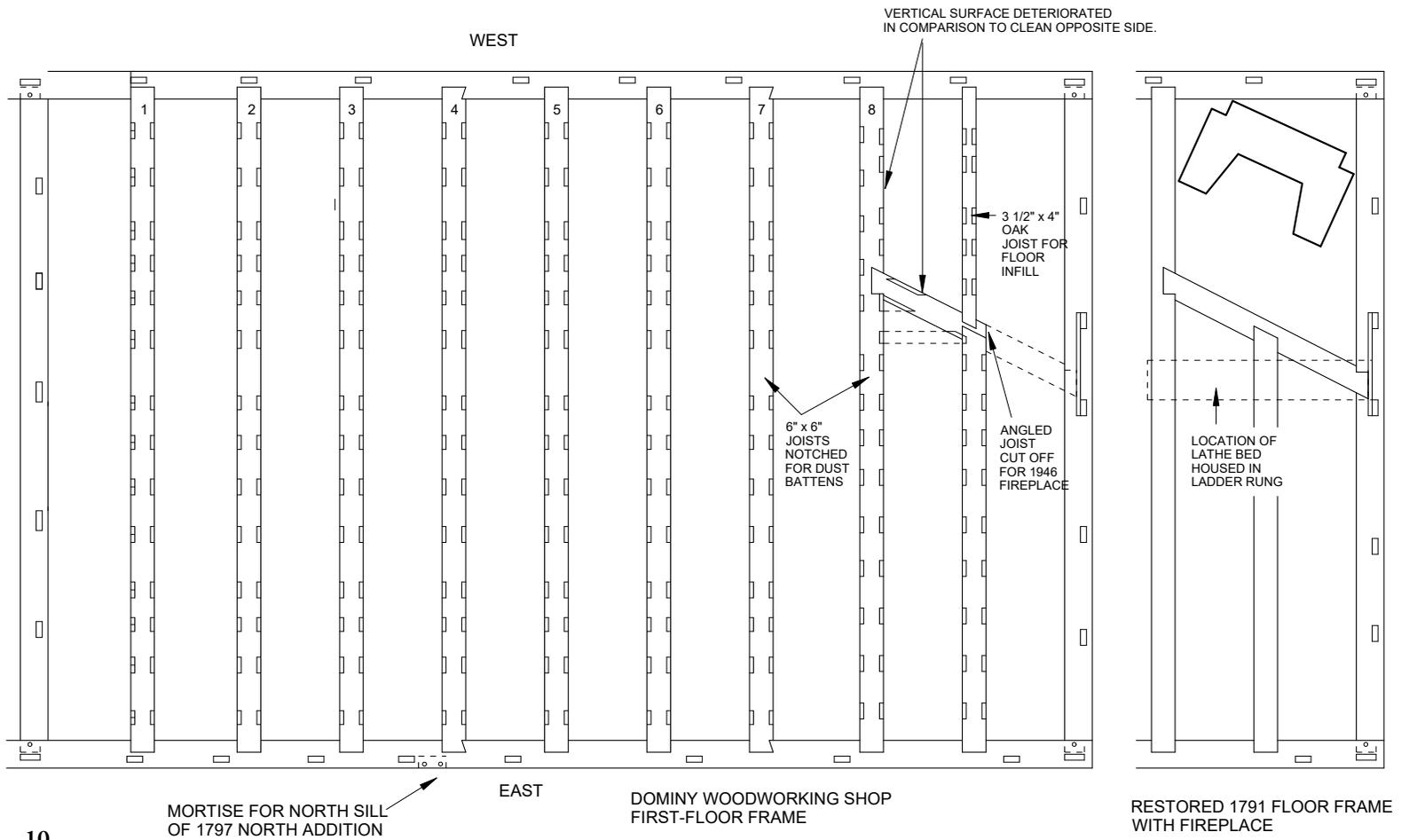
The date 1791 is twice scribed into the frame of the woodworking shop with a race knife: once on the nonreference face of a knee brace of the west wall and again on a plate (Fig. 9). Nathaniel V scribed construction dates in his windmill frames and did the same with his shop.

Entries in account book B appear to corroborate the 1791 date of construction (Table 3). Timber was carted from Northwest Woods in April 1791. Pine boards and shingles were carted from Sag Harbor in June 1791. The most compelling evidence that these account book entries pertain to the woodworking shop is Dominy's purchase of red cedar for three window frames: one with 25 lights, one with 20 lights, and one with 12 lights. The window illuminating the east bench in the woodworking shop has 25 lights (10 over 15), which is an unusual window size. The window at the west bench has 20 lights (8 over 12). The second-floor window in the east wall was probably the one with 12 lights (6 over 6). These three new windows required 57 panes of glass; on December 29, 1791, Dominy purchased "60 Sqrs of Glass" from Aaron Isaacs. The north shop window has a beaded frame matching those of the 1773 house and was probably relocated from the wall that was covered over by the 1791 addition.

Another entry that clearly links the 1791 work with the woodworking shop is Dominy's purchase from the blacksmith, David Talmage Jr., on August 27, 1791, of "5¾ lb of Brads for Shop Floor." The pine floorboards of the new shop were fastened with these nails. In 1791, a brad was a wrought nail with a diminished head rather than a large, spreading rose head. *The Builder's Dictionary: Or, Gentleman and Architect's Companion, Being a Complete Unabridged Reprint of the earlier work . . . Vol. I + Vol. II* (London, 1734) indicates

Table 3. Information on building the woodworking shop in 1791.

Page	Date	Entry – All credits to Nathaniel Dominy	£	s	d
106	4/4/1791	Stephen Hedges, By carting 1 load of Timber from N. W.		10	
93	4/1791	Isaac Van Skoy, By 449 feet of Timber @ 2d By carting 4 loads of Do @ 3	3 1	14 12	10 0
88	4/4/1791	Abraham Mulford, By carting 1 load of Timber from N. West		8	
135	5/26/1791	Deacon David Talmage, By 14 ½ oz of Nails & ½ lb some time ago		1	5
61	6/8/1791 6/15/1791	Jeremiah Miller, By Carting 275 feet of Pine Board from S. Harbr By Carting 1500 shingles & 20 feet of Mahogany		5 14	
27	1791	Jeremiah Osborn, By Red Cedar for 3 frames Viz 25, 20 & 12 Squares		8	
134	9/1791	Abraham Gardiner, By Cato Waggoning R. Cedar for 3 frames from Capt Osborns			6
132	7/1791	Phebe Tillinghast, By 1 lb 3 oz old Spikes			7
88	10/22/1791	Abraham Mulford, By carting 400 ft of Boards from Sagg Harbr		4	
8	11/26/1791	Ezekiel Miller, By Carting 1100 Bricks from Sagg Harbr		14	
110	6/10/1791 8/27/1791 8/30/1791 10/1/1791 11/30/1791	David Talmage Jr., By 4 ¼ lb of nails By 5 ¾ lb of Brads for Shop Floor By 1 Hinge &c. &c. &c. By nails &c &c By a Mantletree wt 4 ½ lb		4 5 2 1 3	3 9 3 6 9
104	12/29/1791	Aaron Isaacs, By 60 Sqrs of Glass	1	5	



that brads could be 2¼ in. long. Nathaniel Dominy purchased “200 6d Brads, (2” long)” from Aaron Isaacs on January 6, 1775 (Account book “B,” page 105).

The shop flooring was taken up in 2020, revealing the floor frame for the first time since 1950 (Figs. 10 and 11). An angled joist defines a void at the northwest corner for a fireplace and hearth. The angle of the joist directs the warmth from the fireplace toward the east workbench. The faces of the south joist and the angled joist within the opening are deteriorated, while the opposite sides of these joists and all other original floor joists of the shop are clean and sound. The deterioration is likely due to condensation from the abutting masonry.

Entries in Nathaniel IV’s account book corroborate the physical evidence for the fireplace. On November 26, 1791, Ezekiel Miller carted 1100 bricks from Sag Harbor, and on November 30, 1791, David Talmage Jr. forged a “mantletree” for Nathaniel.

That there was a fireplace in the shop is not surprising. Dominy had a fireplace in the small shop that was within the 1773 house. A fireplace was also in the workroom of the 1798 clock shop.

10 Woodworking shop floor framing plan.

11 Floor frame at northwest corner of woodworking shop.



12

HABS NY-5418

12 Exterior, general view from northeast (woodworking shop at right).



13

HABS NY-5418

13 Exterior, view of rear from northwest, showing later additions.

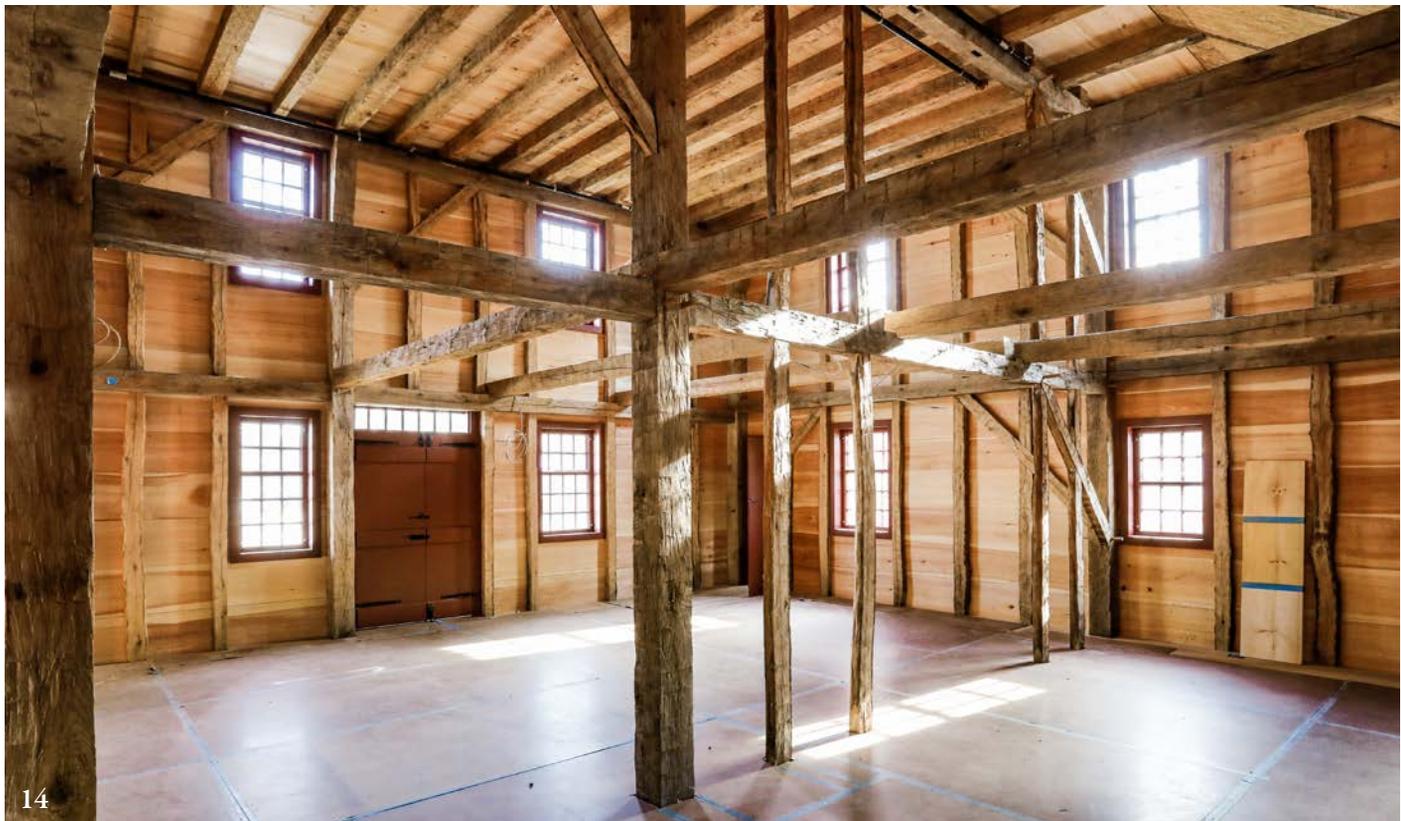
Dominy account books record winter work done in the woodworking shop from 1792 to 1827 that required a minimum temperature of about 50 degrees (see Table 4). These tasks included painting and varnishing furniture, painting window sash, making putty of linseed oil and chalk, and setting glass in window sash with putty.

The fireplace and hearth allowed the great wheel lathe to be positioned as shown on the floor plan drawn by Nathaniel M. Dominy in 1958. With the lathe bed set in the notched ladder rung, the legs would be on the pine floor. The center of the lathe would be about 3½ feet from the center of the fireplace. When no turning was being done, the lathe could be lifted off the ladder rung and swung aside, allowing the full heat from the fireplace to reach the workbench.

For about the first 25 years the woodworking shop had the fireplace at the northwest corner, a bench at the east window, a bench at the west window, and a third window in the north wall. This was the arrangement during the period when Nathaniel IV and Nathaniel V fashioned some of their most important pieces of furniture.

At some point the fireplace was removed and the opening decked over. The new framing installed for this infill flooring appears to date from before 1830. A stove was installed when the fireplace was removed. The 1940 HABS drawings show a chimney for a stove flue rising from the second floor at the northeast corner of the shop. The 1958 floor plan drawn by Nathaniel M. Dominy shows a stove near the middle of the room with a stovepipe running to the corner chimney above. The space where the fireplace and hearth had been then allowed for a second bench on the west wall. A new window was installed to light this second bench.

**North Parlor and Bedroom Addition, 1797** Nathaniel Dominy V married Temperance Miller in 1795. Their first child, John, was born October 23, 1795. Account book entries indicate that Nathaniel started planning and collecting material for an addition to the family home in 1796 and completed construction by the fall of 1797. The new north parlor, with its own entrance, and the bedroom above provided a separate apartment for his new family.



14

14 Reconstructed framing viewed from the saltbox.

**Table 4. Information on winter tasks in the woodworking shop that required a heated space.**

Source	Page	Date	Entry – All debits to Nathaniel Dominy	£	s	d
B	132	12/5/1792	Phebe Tillinghast, To 2 Frames 6 Sqr Each @ 3 & Sash 28 Sqr & Stock @ 5 Set Glass & Puttying		6 16	4 8
B	17	2/27/1792	David Leek, To 8 squares of Sashes & Stock & Set Glass		4	
B	94	2/15/1794	Thomas Baker, To mend, Paint, & Varnish 7 Chairs To repair case drawers & Paint Bedsted	1	12 2	6
B	114	11/21/1794	John Parsons, To making 2 Window Frames To 15 Sqr of Sash & Stock & Set Glass		12 8	9
B	55	1/1/1795	Henry Dayton. To Sash & Setting Glass &c		2	6
B	142	1/13/1795	Daniel Conkling, To 6 Sqr of Sash & Set Glass		3	
B	150	12/14/1796	David Talmage Jr. To 15 Lights Sash & Set Glass		7	6
B	39	2/12/1797	Elisha Miller, To 12 Sqr of Sash & set Glass for Ben Parsons		5	6
B	165	11/29/1800	Elnathan Parsons, To 6 Green Chairs & paint 1 large Chair	3	2	6
A		3/25/1801	Isaac Payne. To making 51 lights sash To paint Set glass & putty 171 lights To make 9 pounds of Putty	1 2	1 2	3 9
A		3/25/1801	Miller Dayton. To 120 lights of sash for Isaac Payne	3		
A		1/19/1802	Abraham Sherril jun. To 34 lights Sash set Glass etc		3	
A		1/19/1802	Abraham Edwards. To 34 lights sash set glass & putty, put hinges on		17	
B	23	1/19/1802 11/13/1802	William Conkling. To 6 lights of Sash set Glass To 6 Window Frames To 8 window frames To 120 lights of Sash, set Glass, paint & putty To 65 Do	2 2 4 1	3 8 5 12	
A		3/18/1802	Widow Mary Davis. To 20 lights sash To set glass & putty		8 3	4 6
A		3/3/1803	William Mulford. To 64 lights of Sashes. Paint set glass and Putty at 9d	2	8	
A		11/24/1803	John Huntting. To 4 green Chairs	2		
A		12/13/1803	Jonathan Tuttle. To 8 lights sash. To paint sash and fit to frame		4	6
A		12/14/1803	John Tillinghast. To 12 lights of Sashes paint set Glass Putty		8	
A		12/14/1803	David Hedges. To 4 lights Sash &c		2	9
A		1/8/1805	John Gan. To 24 lights Sash & putty		14	
A		1/7/1806	Joseph Barns. To 15 lights of Sashes		8	9
A	51	1/1808	Isaac Hedges. To 6 lights of Sashes set glass		3	
A		12/15/1808	Jonathan Stratton. To 21 lights of Sashes		8	9
A		12/30/1811	Henry Conklin. To 12 lights of Sash & Stock To furnish putty & Set Glass		5 2	9
A		1/16/1811	David Talmage. To alter sash & set glass		1	6
A		12/28/1812	Isaac Payne. To set and putty 6 lights of Glass		1	6
A		12/13/1814	Isaac Payne. To setting 6 lights of glass and putty Do		1	3
A		12/14/1816	Abraham Baker. To 6 lights of Sash set glass &c		3	6
A		11/2/1818	Josiah Dayton. To painting 6 Chairs		6	
C	42	1/13/1818	Joseph Barnes. To 20 light of Sashes paint & set glass & putty		11	8
C	6	1/16/1820	Joel Miller. To 30 lights of Sashes paint set glass & putty	1	2	6
C	68	12/10/1827	Abraham Parsons. To 4 lights of sash and paint		2	
C	42	12/13/1827	Joseph Barnes. To 12 lights of Sashes paint putty & set glass		8	

Three entries in particular tie this construction project to the north addition. Dominy purchased “1 Stone for Hearth” from William Conklin in June 1796 (Table 5). In June 1797, Miller Dayton carted “Shingles & Sideing” from Sag Harbor for Nathaniel Dominy. This entry could only refer to the clapboards for the front wall and shingles for the other walls. Dominy purchased from Jeremiah Osborn “Cedar which servd for 4 Frmes of 20 Sqrs & 1 of 12 Do.” The parlor and bedroom each had two windows with eight-light upper sash and twelve-light lower sash. The 1797 twelve-light window (6 over 6) may have been for the west kitchen wall since the

1791 and 1797 additions covered over one or two windows in the east and north kitchen walls.

This north addition was clearly built after the 1791 woodworking shop was completed. The east sill of the woodworking shop has a mortise to receive the north sill of the parlor. The east girt of the shop has a notch where the north parlor girt was slid through the sheathing and lapped over the shop girt. The HABS field notebooks include details of the Federal-period moldings in the north parlor, which would be appropriate for a 1797 date of construction.

**Table 5. Information on building the north addition in 1797.**

Page	Date	Entry – All credits to Nathaniel Dominy	£	s	d
26	3/25/96	John Hedges. By 2 Sticks of Timber @ 7 & 1/6			
23	6/11/1796	William Conkling. By 1 Stone for Hearth		3	
152	7/30/1796 8/1/1796 10/17/1796 9/26/1797	Thomas Baker, By Carting 400 feet of Pine Boards from Sag Harbr By Carting 92 feet of Pine Boards from Doctr Sages Ditto By Carting 5 Bundles of Shingles from Sag Hr		9 1 16 5	
27	1797	Jeremiah Osborn, By Cedar which servd for 4 Frames of 20 Sqrs & 1 of 12 Do		18	9
155	6/8/1797	Miller Dayton, By carting 2500 feet of Pine Boards from S Harbr By Carting Shingles & Sideing from S Harbr By 3 Casks of Lime	1 4	16 12 4	
10	8/23/1797	Jeremiah Parsons. By team work 1 day carting Timber from J Hole		10	
143	8/28/1797	Eli Parsons, By carting 1 load of Timber from Harbr Lot		8	
32	8/28/1797	Samuel Ranger, By carting 1 load of timber from Harbr Lot		6	
32	8/28/1797 9/7/1797	John Terry. By carting 1 load of Timber from Harbr lot By carting 1 load of Timber from Harbr lot		6 6	
88	8/28/1797 9/7/1797	Abraham Mulford, By carting 1 load of Timber from Harbr Lot By carting 1 load of Timber from Harbr both		13	
112	9/1/1797	Nathan Dayton, By carting 1 load of Timber from Harbr lot		7	
142	9/1/1797	Daniel Conklin. By carting 1 load of Timber from Harbr lot		5	6
145	10/17/1797	William Parsons. By 1 load of Stone		6	
8	10/1797	Ezekiel Miller, By Carting 1 load of bricks from 3 Mile harbr head		5	

**Table 6. Information on building the clock shop in 1798 and 1799.**

Page	Date	Entry – All credits to Nathaniel Dominy	£	s	d
155	4/6/1798 6/18/1798	Miller Dayton, By Carting 1m (1000) Pine Boards from S Harbr By Lime 2 Casks	2	12 16	
152	7/24/1798	Thomas Baker, By wagon & horses to bring 320 feet of boards from B Hampton		6	
142	4/25/1798	Daniel Conklin, By stone		2	6
112	7/24/1798	Nathan Dayton, By cart Stone from Willm Parsons ½ load		1	
145	7/26/1798	William Parsons, By Stone, Viz large ½ load		3	6
8	10/11/1798	Ezekiel Miller, By Carting 1 load of stone from 2 holes water	0	5	0
153	10/13/1798	Abraham Edwards, By Carting Sand from the Beach		2	6
10	3/30/1799	Henry Conkling, By ½ Bushl of Lime		2	
86	6/1799 7/18/1799	David Miller, By Carting 700 Bricks from Ak Springs By Carting 300 Bricks		7 3	9
59	9/28/1799	Payne & Ripley. By 421 feet of Pine Boards	2	2	6
112	9/28/1799	Nathan Dayton. By carting 421 feet of pine boards from Sagg Harbr		6	



15 Reconstructed framing at the chimney bay.

An April 1796 entry by Nathaniel V lists some furniture with the notation “The above articles for our family” (Dominy archive at Winterthur Museum MS 59x9.1). This included a chest, two tables, 12 chairs, a chest on chest, a bedstead, a stand, and a looking glass frame to furnish the new parlor and bedroom.

**Clock Shop, 1798** On October 30, 1797, the East Hampton Town Trustees approved a lease with Nathaniel Dominy for a portion of land in front of his house on which to construct a shop. The clock shop extends 5 ft. 6 in. toward the street from the front wall of the house. If the street boundary in 1797 were at the front wall, then permission to build in the street would have been necessary.

Nathaniel V’s addition of 1797 very likely covered a window in the north wall of his father’s clock shop in the northeast corner of the 1773 house. It may be that the 1797 parlor and bedroom for Nathaniel V and the new clock shop for Nathaniel IV were planned together. The new clock shop gave the Dominys room for a forge for the first time.

The clock shop frame and sheathing indicate that the shop was built at the present location and was not an existing building moved against the house. There was never any exterior sheathing on the clock shop where it adjoins the house.

It appears from the entries in Table 6 that the foundation, frame, and exterior were completed in 1798. The forge, fireplace, and chimney were built in 1799. Interior paneling, the partition dividing the forge room from the workroom, shelves, and benches were also installed in 1799.

Much of the work of interpreting the history of early structures relies on scant or vague documentary evidence, often limited to deed research and occasionally informative probate records. We study the construction methods and materials in an effort to reverse engineer a building’s story. While we are able to make informed interpretations based on extant attributes, there is almost inevitably a significant degree of conjecture. We consider ourselves to be quite fortunate to have such detailed journals, in addition to the HABS documentation, to help us better understand the history and significance of the Dominy property. Beyond the clarity that these documents offer about the sequence of the construction, we have gained rare insight into the lives of those involved, the values of materials used, and the time required to execute the various phases of construction. There are few examples of this level of documentation that we have to draw on as we strive to understand early American culture. We hope that the Dominy Shops Museum project serves to educate and inspire new generations of historians and traditional tradespeople.

—ROBERT HEFNER

*As Director of Historic Services for the Village of East Hampton, Robert Hefner drew the restoration and reconstruction plans for the Dominy Shops Museum and supervised the work. Richard Barons, Curator of the East Hampton Historical Society, collaborated on the project.*

*This article is the first in a series about the Dominy house and shops and their reconstruction.*