

BENNET-FARRELL-FELDMANN HOUSE, 119 95th Street, Brooklyn. Built c. 1847; moved to present site c. 1913.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 6115, Lot 52 in part, consisting of that portion of said lot bounded by the southwesterly lot line and, starting from the southwesterly corner of said lot, running southeasterly for approximately 66 feet along the 95th Street boundary of said lot, northerly at an angle of 90 degrees through said lot approximately 100 feet to the northwestern lot line, and northwesterly along said lot line for approximately 66 feet to the southwestern lot line, and southwesterly along said lot line for approximately 100 feet to the point of beginning.

On September 16, 1997, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House and the 125 95th Street Building, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty witnesses spoke in favor of designation of both buildings, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, the Municipal Art Society, the Society for the Architecture of the City, Concerned Residents of Bay Ridge, the Bay Ridge Historical Society, the Historic House Trust, the Friends of the Farrell House and Bennet Barn, the 95th Street Block Association, and the Alliance of Bay Ridge Block Associations. A representative of the New York Landmarks Conservancy spoke in favor of the designation of the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House but did not recommend the designation of the 125 95th Street Building. A representative of the owner spoke in opposition to the designation of both buildings. The Commission has received a number of letters and other statements in support of the designation of both buildings, including a petition with over 1,600 signatures and letters from Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden, City Councilman Marty Golden, State Senator Vincent Gentile, Assemblywoman Joan L. Millman, Brooklyn Community Board Ten, and the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. The Landmarks Preservation Commission previously held a public hearing on the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House in July 1980 (LP-1195).



Summary

The Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House is a rare survivor from the era when fashionable villas lined Shore Road along the bluffs of Bay Ridge overlooking the Narrows and Upper and Lower Bays. Built for Joseph S. Bennet around 1847, it was one of three houses erected by members of the Bennet family on Shore Road in the 1840s. Moved to its present location around 1913, it remains within the grounds of Bennet's original estate. The property was originally part of the mid-eighteenth-century farm owned by Bennet's grandparents. The grandest mid-nineteenth-century house still standing in Southern Brooklyn, the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House is a rare and exceptionally intact Greek Revival style villa in New York City. A five-bay-wide, two-and-one-half-story frame building, the house is sheathed in its original clapboards and features characteristic Greek Revival details such as columned front and rear porches, two-story corner pilasters, denticulated cornices, molded window surrounds, and a low attic story articulated as a crowning entablature. The house has passed through the hands of several owners. The colorful Farrell family, which occupied the house from 1890 to 1912, included James P. Farrell, a successful businessman and Tammany Hall politician, his daughter, Georgina, an early woman graduate of Pratt Institute, and son, Jack, a manager-promoter for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Today the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House is a tangible reminder of the borough's early history and the evolution of the Fort Hamilton-Bay Ridge neighborhood.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Bennets of New Utrecht

In 1761 John Bennet, a descendant of Willem Adriaense Bennet, the first European settler of the Gowanus area of Brooklyn, married Williamtie Barkeloo, the daughter of Harmanus Barkeloo, one of the principal landowners in New Utrecht. At the time of the marriage, Barkeloo conveyed to Bennet a tract of land, extending between present-day Third Avenue and the harbor from about 94th Street to 97th Street, where he built a wood gambrel-roofed farmhouse (demolished 1955).¹ Eventually, the northern half of the farm passed to John Bennet's daughter-in-law Mary Seguine Bennet.² Around 1840, she had the property mapped for division³ among her three sons and her son-in-law James S. Seguine.⁴ In the early 1840s, two sons, John H. Bennet and James S. Bennet, built villas along Shore Road. The third son, Joseph S. Bennet, a coal merchant living in Manhattan, and James S. Seguine, a resident of Norfolk, Virginia, held their ten acres of land in common until 1846. That year, Mary Bennet's twin brother, Joseph Seguine,⁵ a wealthy Staten Island businessman who operated the Blazing Star Ferry in Rossville, died leaving considerable property to his nephew, Joseph S. Bennet.⁶ With this inheritance, Joseph S. Bennet was able to purchase James S. Seguine's interest in the New Utrecht property and to build this handsome villa on the Shore Road, not far from his grandfather's old house.

The Development of the Fort Hamilton Neighborhood and the Joseph Bennet House

In the late 1840's, when Joseph Bennet built his new house, the transformation of the sparsely settled farming community in the township of New Utrecht to the prosperous village and fashionable resort of Fort Hamilton was well underway.⁷ A major impetus for the development of the village was the construction of a permanent casement fortress, named Fort Hamilton in honor of Alexander Hamilton, on the headlands overlooking the Narrows, between 1825 and 1831.⁸ While the fort was under construction, a number of laborers, many of whom were recent Irish immigrants, began building wooden houses to the west and north of the fort. Within a few years, a large village had developed with stores, houses, churches, and a school. Regular stage service to the town centers of New Utrecht and Gowanus, and to downtown Brooklyn, was established. Fort Hamilton was linked to Staten Island by ferry service from a wharf at the foot of Third Avenue; by the mid-nineteenth century there was also daily steamboat service to Murray Street in Manhattan.

The presence of a fort and ferry in the neighborhood created a need for temporary accommodations. By the 1840s, a number of villagers had converted their homes to boarding houses. Soon, there was also a grand hotel, the Hamilton House, on Shore Road near the ferry dock, which catered to summer visitors attracted by the spectacular harbor views, ocean breezes, and beaches. By mid-century, Fort Hamilton was a popular destination for excursions from New York and the Hamilton House was "crowded with guests from all parts of the world."⁹

In the 1850s, the neighboring village of Yellow Hook, centered around the intersection of Third Avenue and Bay Ridge Avenue and served by a dock at the foot of Bay Ridge Avenue, also expanded rapidly. This development was encouraged by the straightening and widening of Third Avenue in 1848 and by the establishment of the Ovington artists' colony in 1850. Located on the former Ovington farm, which extended from Third Avenue to Seventh Avenue near Bay Ridge Avenue, this development of large summer houses set in extensive gardens attracted such prominent residents as Charles Parsons, art director for Harper Brothers; stained glass designer Otto Hienigke; and lithographer George Schlegel. In 1853, residents of Yellow Hook, concerned that the village's name, which derived from the color of the clay cliffs overlooking the bay, was an unfortunate reminder of the area's recurring yellow fever epidemics, renamed their village Bay Ridge.

The villages of Bay Ridge and Fort Hamilton were linked by the Shore Road, which was described by a contemporary writer as

*one of the most picturesque roads in the vicinity of New York. It winds with the graceful lines of the shore, past old homesteads and modern residences, [looking out on views] unsurpassed by those seen from any other avenue in the world."*¹⁰

By the mid-1850s, Shore Road was lined with substantial freestanding villas in the then-fashionable Greek Revival, Italianate, and Gothic Revival styles. Many of the new houses, like Joseph Bennet's, were built by descendants of the first European settlers on a portion of their colonial homesteads. A good number of families continued to farm, like Joseph's cousin, Richard, who had taken over the southern portion of the John Bennet farm and was occupying the old John Bennet house. Many residents made their living from the sea, like Joseph's brother James, a sea-captain, who occupied the temple-fronted Greek Revival style villa

immediately to the north of the Joseph Bennet house. Other residents were connected with the military or were retired military officers. Joseph S. Bennet occupied his house with his wife Mary, their four children, and three or four Irish-immigrant employees, two of whom lived in the house for at least five years.¹¹

The Design of the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House

One of the most impressive of the Shore Road villas, the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House was originally set back from the road behind a stand of trees and a front lawn. The house is a rare and exceptionally intact Greek Revival style villa in New York City. The Greek Revival style that "dominated American architecture from the late 1820s to the late 1840s"¹² is widely represented by rowhouses in Brooklyn's older neighborhoods, such as Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill. Brooklyn also had a number of freestanding Greek Revival style farmhouses, townhouses, and villas (elegant free-standing rural residences set within picturesquely landscaped grounds)¹³, but few survive today.¹⁴

The large and imposing Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House is a rectangular building, five bays wide and four bays deep, with front and rear porches extending the full width of the house. Sheathed in its original clapboards, the house features characteristic Greek Revival style elements such as two-story corner pilasters, molded window surrounds, and a front veranda with fluted columns, turned balusters, and an entablature enriched with dentils. Pilasters emphasize the corners of the first-story facade and frame the central entrance, which is crowned by a denticulated entablature. Slender colonnettes set off a pair of handsome wood doors decorated with medallions, recessed panels, and arched lights. These Renaissance-inspired doors and colonnettes may be Italianate style elements original to the house, or may reflect an early alteration, perhaps dating from the 1860s. The full-height windows, which open onto the front porch, are typical of the 1840s, as are the small attic windows which pierce the frieze of the crowning entablature. On the side facades, blind windows with fixed inoperable louvered shutters contribute to the symmetry and proportions of the design. Historic photographs reveal that the entablature was originally surmounted by a parapet ornamented with Greek motifs. (A matching parapet has also been removed from the porch roof.) Pairs of chimneys at either end of the house enliven the roofline.

The Whitings, Crawford, and Maltby G. Lane

In 1856, the village of Fort Hamilton was subject

to a major epidemic of yellow fever. Several of Bennet's neighbors died of the disease, and from 1856 to 1858, many of the houses on Shore Road were empty. Around 1859, Joseph S. Bennet decided to move from Fort Hamilton to Staten Island, and to lease, and later sell (in May 1864) his property in Fort Hamilton to Matilda Church Whiting.¹⁵

Matilda Church (1831-?), who had been raised in the town of Fort Hamilton, was the daughter of James Church, one of the town's most prominent citizens.¹⁶ She married Dr. Alexander B. Whiting, a fashionable New York physician.¹⁷ The Whitings used their Fort Hamilton house during the summer months, spending the balance of the year in Manhattan, where they lived on East 34th Street with their three daughters.¹⁸ After Dr. Whiting died in 1868, Matilda Church Whiting began to have financial difficulties. In 1874 the property was sold at sheriff's sale. It was subsequently acquired by Susan E. Crawford, the wife of John Crawford.¹⁹

John Crawford (1817-?) was a native of Ireland who had earned his living as a dry goods merchant in Ohio before retiring to Fort Hamilton around 1870.²⁰ The Crawfords occupied the former Bennet house with their three teen-age daughters until 1882, when Crawford and his wife sold the property to Maltby G. Lane, a retired grain merchant who amassed a considerable fortune through investments in street railways and real estate in New York and Washington, D.C.²¹ In 1886 Lane also acquired the old John Bennet homestead and in 1887 he had the two properties surveyed and mapped into lots.²²

Lane died in 1889. In June 1890, the executor of his estate began selling his property in Fort Hamilton.²³ In October 1890, James P. Farrell purchased the former Joseph S. Bennet house which was sited on an L-shaped lot that extended 100 feet along Shore Road, 336 feet along 95th Street, and fifty feet along Second Avenue (now Ridge Boulevard).

The Farrells

James P. Farrell (1842-1910) was born in Cork, Ireland, and immigrated to the United States in 1865.²⁴ He came to this country as a poor immigrant, settled in the Irish neighborhood near the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and eventually found enough work to establish his own dry goods importing business. Farrell moved to the Cobble Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn in the 1880s where he became involved in Irish beneficial and fraternal organizations and Tammany Hall politics. About the same time he purchased the Shore Road villa, he began dealing in real estate in Southern Brooklyn. In 1900, his political connections led to his appointment

as the Superintendent of the Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School for Boys, a reform school for boys convicted in Children's Court.²⁵ He remained in that position until 1909, when charges of mismanagement and brutality against the boys led to his dismissal. He died the following year in his Shore Road home.

James P. Farrell occupied the Shore Road villa with his wife Norah, a native of Ireland, their six children, and several servants. By 1900, Norah's niece, Norah Ryan, a saleslady, was living with the family and they employed three servants and a coachman. According to James P. Farrell's grandson Fergus Bordewich:

*The Farrells were both colorful and progressive. James Farrell's son Jack traveled the world as the promoter of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Georgina, my grandmother, tended wounded soldiers at Fort Hamilton during the Spanish-American War. She graduated from Pratt Institute, in 1902, a rare achievement for a woman of her era.*²⁶

The Feldmanns and the Growth of Bay Ridge

By the time James Farrell died in 1910, the old town of Fort Hamilton had been subsumed into the larger neighborhood of Bay Ridge.²⁷ Through much of the 1890s, the area retained the character of "a small, quiet, English town [with] dirt roads arched over with great trees, large residences, well cultivated farms and just a sprinkling of new building."²⁸ However, improvements in public transportation, notably the introduction of electrified trolley service in 1891 and the opening of the Fifth Avenue Elevated in 1899, greatly increased residential development by the end of the decade. In 1903 plans were first announced to construct a subway to Manhattan along Fourth Avenue. Although the line did not open until 1916, anticipation of the new service led to unprecedented growth. In 1906 the Brooklyn Edition of the *Real Estate Record & Guide* reported that

*Between 60th Street and the Shore Road and the Bay and Tenth Avenue more than 500 houses, most of the two-family style, are under construction and no sooner is a row finished than another is begun. As far as opportunity to sell them or have them occupied is concerned, no apprehension need be felt; they are sold or rented long before completed.*²⁹

Land had become especially valuable along Shore Road, which had been widened and paved in 1891.

Following his father's death, James P. Farrell, Jr., who had been appointed executor of the estate, had the Shore Road property divided into several parcels. In April 1912, Clara Feldmann, a housewife, her son, Herman, a civil engineer, and daughter, Mina, a schoolteacher, purchased the forty-foot-wide vacant lot at 119 95th Street. At the same time, Clara's husband, Francis Feldmann (1855-1925), a former contractor and quartermaster who owned several fishing boats that operated out of Sheepshead Bay, purchased the adjacent property to the east. In January of the following year, the Feldmanns purchased an additional ten-foot-wide strip to the west of their property from Farrell.³⁰ The Feldmanns paid only \$100 per lot, approximately the same amount as the annual taxes on the properties, and agreed to "other valuable considerations." The most important of these appears to have been an agreement to assume the costs of moving the Bennet-Farrell house from Shore Road to the Feldmanns' new site, freeing the corner lot, which the Farrells retained, for future development.³¹ It is not known precisely when the house was moved, but it was first taxed on its new site in 1914.³²

Comparison of historic photographs shows relatively few changes to the building following the move. The basement was raised, necessitating the addition of two steps on the stairs to the front porch and changes to the railings flanking the stairs. The parapets were removed from the roofline and the front porch. The Feldmanns subsequently made further additions to a kitchen extension that probably dates to the nineteenth century.

When Francis and Clara Feldmann moved to 95th Street around 1913, their eight children were living with them. By the mid-1930s several of the Feldmanns' children had married and moved away, but Clare, Mina, Clifford, Albert, and George continued to live with their widowed mother. Eventually, the house passed to Mildred Feldmann and her sister Elsie M. Buscher. It is currently held by the Estate of Elsie M. Buscher.

Description

The Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House is located on a rectangular plot. Five bays wide and four bays deep, the Greek Revival style frame house is basically rectangular in plan except for a kitchen addition. It rests on a high brick basement which is covered with stucco and has two full stories and an attic topped by a low hipped roof with four side chimneys. The building retains its original mid-nineteenth-century wood siding. The lower stories are clad with wide lapped clapboards; the attic is faced with narrower boards which are laid

flat. Two-story corner posts, treated as giant pilasters, frame the facades. The rectangular window openings retain their original molded surrounds. Some original six-over-six double-hung sash survive on the rear facade but most windows have historic two-over-two wood sash. The small attic windows originally had triple-pane sash windows that opened into a pocket above the window; some of the windows have been replaced by single lights. Historic louvered shutters survive at the first-story windows sheltered by porches. A number of blind windows with inoperable louvered shutters are employed on the side facades.

A one-story wood porch with fluted columns and a molded cornice extends across the primary facade facing 95th Street. The porch is supported by brick footings that have been painted. Wood railed grilles (replacements for the original latticed wood grilles) fill the spaces between the footings. When the house was moved, the basement was raised and two steps were added to the porch stoop -- the bottom step is concrete, the second step stone. The railings at either side of the stairs are original but their original turned newel posts were replaced with paneled wood posts when the house was moved. The railings, with heavy turned balusters and molded rails, at the edge of the porch, also appear to be original.

The first story of the front facade has full height double-hung two-over-two wood windows that retain historic louvered shutters. (The bottom windows of the two eastern window bays have wood-framed screens.) Unfluted pilasters frame the corners of the facade. The central entrance is also framed by pilasters and crowned by a denticulated entablature. Slender colonnettes with Corinthian capitals set off the elaborate paired wood doors decorated with medallions and recessed panels and pierced by unusual segmental arch windows. (A mail slot has been inserted in the west door, a doorbell has been installed on the east colonnette, the doorhandle is historic.)

The second-story windows have historic two-over-two double-hung wood sash and non-historic aluminum storm windows. All of the original second-story louvered window shutters have been removed. The attic story is articulated as an entablature with small rectangular windows piercing the frieze. Only the easternmost window retains its original muntins which divide the window into three lights. The molded crowning cornice is enriched by dentils.

The east facade is articulated into four evenly spaced bays at each story except the basement where there are three square windows containing two-over-two double-hung wood sash and wood screens. At the first story, there is a blind window with louvered

shutters in the first bay (reading south to north). The windows in the other bays have two-over-two double-hung wood sash. There is a half-screen with a wood frame in the second bay. On the second story there are blind windows with louvered shutters in the first and fourth bays. The windows in the second and third bays have two-over-two double-hung wood sash and aluminum storm windows. At the attic level, the first and fourth bays are articulated as blind windows with louvered shutters. The window in the third bay retains its original wood muntins.

The west facade has three basement window openings with two-over-two wood sash. The north and south corner bays of the first story are articulated as blind window openings with louvered shutters. The second story and attic are articulated with four evenly spaced window surrounds. The first and fourth bays (reading south to north) at the second story are blind windows with louvered shutters. The second and third bays contain two-over-two double-hung wood sash and have wood-framed half-screens. At the attic, the first, third, and fourth bays have blind windows with shutters.

The articulation of the rear (north) facade is similar to that of the primary facade. However, the treatment of the porch is somewhat simpler, employing square posts with simple Doric caps and simple square balusters for the molded porch railings. Beneath the western portion of the porch the original wood lattice grilles have been replaced by wood-framed windows containing a pair of vertical lights separated by a narrow muntin. The original entrance stoop at the center of the facade has been replaced in recent years by a narrow wood stair, although the bottom masonry steps, added when the house was raised, still survive. Only the fourth and fifth bays (reading west to east) of the one-story porch, which originally extended across the length of the rear facade, remain unenclosed. The windows in those two bays have historic full-height double-hung wood sash and retain historic wood louvered shutters. The center bay is enclosed with historic vertical wood siding with beaded edges that probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century. The central entrance has a historic paneled wood door and non-historic wood screen door. A matching paneled door on the west side of the bay provides access to the porch. Although the porch entablature remains visible, the eastern bays of the basement and first story are enclosed within a historic kitchen addition dating from the nineteenth century.

On the upper stories the design echoes the articulation of the primary facade except that the center window is set lower than the other windows at the

second story. All the windows retain original six-over-six double-hung wood sash and have non-historic aluminum storm windows. The center and eastern attic windows retain their original muntins. The building's hipped roof is covered with tar. The four brick chimneys have molded caps and are parged with a dark stucco or tar.

Rectangular in plan, the kitchen addition has a painted brick basement, rabbeted wood siding, molded window surrounds, a molded cornice, and a flat roof with a massive stuccoed brick chimney. On its western elevation, the basement and first story have historic two-over-two wood windows with non-historic aluminum storms. There is also a two-over-two wood window with a non-historic wood-framed half-screen at the center of the first story on the eastern elevation. On

the southern end of the east wall there is a non-historic enclosed ground-level entrance porch with plywood siding and a shed roof covered with asphalt. On the north end of the kitchen addition there is a shed-roofed first-story extension resting on non-historic wood posts. Probably dating from the 1910s or 1920s, this historic extension has horizontal single-pane wood windows with molded surrounds, and a molded cornice. The wood stair, door, and storm door on the west side of the extension are non-historic.

Report prepared by
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Notes

1. For the early history of the Bennet family and the John Bennet farm see Maud E. Dillard *Old Dutch Houses of Brooklyn* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1945), 38; Henry R. Stiles, *History of Kings County* (Brooklyn, 1884), v.1, 80, 82; William V. Ledley, "Willem Adriaense Bennet and Some of Descendants," *New York Genealogical & Biographical Record* 93 (Oct. 1962), 200-201, 95 (July 1964), 154-157.
2. In 1807 Bennet drew up a will in which he bequeathed this homestead at the Narrows and "the shad fishery belonging to said farm" to his sons Herman [aka Harmanus or Harmon] and William. Herman was to receive the northern portion of the farm together with "the Barn and the house below the hill" [presumably on the beach beneath the bluffs]. William was to receive the southern portion of the farm, the family farmhouse on the hill, and a storehouse by the dock. The dividing line between the two parcels, each about seventeen acres, was located near present-day 95th Street. As Herman died intestate in 1812, predeceasing his father by a few months, Herman's interest in his father's estate passed to Herman's widow Mary Seguire Bennet. See Kings County, Office of the Surrogate, Will of John Bennet, dated Apr. 29, 1807, proved Mar. 24, 1813, Wills Liber 2, p. 210.
3. Mary Bennet resided on the farm until shortly before her death in 1840. Her occupancy of the farm and her sons' construction of the houses on Shore Road are documented in the Municipal Archives and Records Center, Brooklyn Town Records Collection, New Utrecht, Tax Assessment Records, 1822, 1834-52. For the deeds relating to the partitioning of Herman Bennet's farm see Kings County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 73, pp. 181, 183; Liber 91, p. 325; Liber 92, p. 492; Liber 119, pp. 93, 96; Liber 121, p. 324; Liber 162, p. 457. The partition map is missing from both the Office of the Register and the Brooklyn Borough President's Topographic Division. However, there is a small map in Conveyances Liber 469, p. 242, on the copy of a deed granting the right of way on a small private road to the beach which is marked with owners names and parcels numbers.
4. Mary and Herman Bennet also had a daughter, Jane, who died in 1834, a few months following her marriage to John Cortelyou. Her interest in her father's estate passed to her mother and the other children rather than her husband. This seems to have prompted her sister Catherine Elizabeth Bennet Seguire to enter into a series of transactions in 1837 which conveyed her interest in the estate to her husband James S. Seguire. See Conveyances Liber 73, pp. 181, 183.
5. Mary Seguire Bennet and Joseph Seguire were two of the twelve children of James Seguire (1725-95) and Catherine Sleight (1737-1803) of Rossville, Staten Island. For their extensive family connections see the Seguire

- Birth Records, Genealogical Collection, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences; Edgar A. Sleight, "The Rossville (Blazing Star) Burial Ground," *Staten Island Historian* 25 (July-Sept. 1963), 17-20.
6. Joseph S. Bennet inherited a farm of about 200 acres in Woodrow "on both sides of the public road from Smoking Point to the new road," seventeen acres of woodland near Indian Hill, and a salt meadow near Fresh Kill. James S. Seguine, who was the son of Joseph and Mary Seguine's deceased brother James, inherited all of Joseph Seguine's real and personal estate in Virginia and North Carolina, as well as a half interest in a building and lot at Broad and Front Streets in Manhattan. James's brother Henry S. Seguine inherited the other half interest in the Manhattan building, and all of Joseph Seguine's personal and real property in Rossville including his interest in the ferry and the Seguine-Decker Store. See Elsa Gilbertson, "Notes on the Will of Joseph Seguine," in her Joseph Seguine Land Transactions file, in the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Rossville, Staten Island Research file.
 7. This section on the development of the Fort Hamilton neighborhood is based on Teunis Bergen, "History of the Town of New Utrecht," in Stiles, v. 1, 263-67; Jerome Hoffman, *The Bay Ridge Chronicles* (Brooklyn: Bay Ridge Bicentennial Committee, Planning Board 10, 1976).
 8. Fort Hamilton Casement Fort, now the Officers' Club, is a designated New York City Landmark.
 9. *A Stranger's Guide Around New York and Its Vicinity* (New York: W.H. Graham, 1853), 59.
 10. Bergen, 266.
 11. United States Census Office, 7th Census, 1850, New Utrecht, New York, dwelling nos. 31, 37, 42; New York State Census, Kings County, Town of New Utrecht, 1855. According to the 1855 census, Bennet was farming his property.
 12. Charles Lockwood, *Bricks & Brownstone* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 55. For a discussion of the Greek Revival style see *ibid*, 55-97; William H. Pierson, Jr. *American Buildings and Their Architects*, v. 1, *The Colonial and Neo-Classical Styles* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1976), 430-432; Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (1944; Rpt. New York: Dover, 1964).
 13. Villas were considered particularly appropriate for sites along a waterfront or on a hill. For a discussion of this building type and its association with early suburban development see William H. Pierson, Jr. *American Buildings and Their Architects*, v. 2, *Technology and the Picturesque, The Corporate and Early Gothic Styles* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1980), 296-298; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Riverdale Historic District Report* (LP-1663) (New York: City of New York, 1990), 11-14.
 14. In addition to the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House, two rare survivors are the John Rankin House, a handsome brick Greek Revival style villa, built c. 1840, when the area known as Carroll Gardens was still largely rural, and the Joseph Steele House, a frame house, at 200 Lafayette Avenue in Clinton Hill, incorporating Greek Revival and Italianate style elements, built c. 1850. Both the Rankin and Steele houses are designated New York City Landmarks. The Rankin house is within the Carroll Gardens Historic District; the Steele house is within the Clinton Hill Historic District.
 15. The deed of sale indicates that Matilda Whiting was already occupying the house on Shore Road when she purchased the property. See Conveyances Liber 630, p. 61.
 16. James Church settled in Fort Hamilton in 1833 where he established a general store. He later opened coal and lumber yards, a wagon shop, operated the stage to Brooklyn, and became the town's first postmaster. A colonel in the National Guard, Church was a friend of many of the military officers stationed at the fort, particularly Robert E. Lee, who served as the fort's engineer from 1840 to 1845 and for a time rented a house from Church. As a young debutante, Matilda Church socialized with Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson who was stationed at the fort in 1848 following his Mexican War service. See Bangs, 167-169; Hazelton, 1094.
 17. For Dr. Whiting see Nathaniel Goodwin, *Genealogical Notes* (Hartford: F.A. Brown, 1856), 341-342; New York County, Office of the Surrogate, Letters of Administration, Liber 89, p. 185. George Templeton Strong mentions that Dr. Whiting was the physician for his wife's grandmother, the elder Mrs. Ruggles; see George Templeton

- Strong, *The Diary of George Templeton Strong*, ed. Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 385.
18. Their daughter Harriet died at age 4, in August 1864 while the Whitings were in Fort Hamilton. See "Deaths," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Aug. 18, 1864.
 19. Conveyances Liber 1161, p. 402. After leaving the Shore Road house, Matilda Whiting and her two daughters shared a modest house with another widow, Sarah Von Nostrand, and her son in the village of Fort Hamilton. See NYS Census, Kings Co., New Utrecht, 1875, p. 43.
 20. For the Crawfords see the NYS Census, Kings Co., New Utrecht, 1875, p. 18; U.S. Census, Kings Co., New Utrecht, 1880, p. 15.
 21. The sale to Maltby G. Lane is recorded in Liber 1467, p. 396. For Lane see his obituary "Death of Maltby G. Lane," *New York Times*, July 2, 1889, p. 8.
 22. Brooklyn Borough President, Topographic Department, "Map of the Land of Maltby G. Lane Situated in the Town of New Utrecht, Jan'y 1887," map 263. The author wishes to thank Richard Marks of the Brooklyn Borough President's Topographic Unit for his assistance with this project.
 23. For the settlement see "Dividing the Lane Estate," *New York Times*, June 26, 1890. For the sale to Farrell see Conveyance Liber 2007, p. 385.
 24. For the Farrells see "James P. Farrell" [obituary], *New York Times*, December 15, 1910, p. 9; Fergus M. Bordewich, Statement, presented at the public hearing on Sept. 16, 1997 (copy available in the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House (LP-1966) file); Christopher Gray, "A Shore Road Mansion, Now Obscured from Shore," *New York Times*, Aug. 17, 1997; U.S. Census, Kings Co., 1900, v. 99, ED 551, sheet 16, line 80; NYS Census, Kings Co., 1905, AD 7 ED 31, p. 31; Will of James P. Farrell, Kings Co. Office of the Surrogate, filed Jan. 16, 1911; Brooklyn Directories, 1890, 1891, 1905.
 25. For Farrell's involvement with the training school see "Metz Objects to Dainties," *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1909, p. 8; "Training School Inquiry," *New York Times*, Oct. 15, 1909, p. 10; "Grand Jury Acts on Training School," *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1909, p. 9; "Tell of Brutality in Training School," *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1909, p. 8; "Training School Head Out," *New York Times*, Oct. 30, 1909, p. 6; "Boys Tell of Blows in Training School," *New York Times*, Nov. 2, 1909, p. 8; "Declare Boy Was Flogged 45 Minutes," *New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1909, p. 18; "Blows and Kicks in Training School," *New York Times*, Nov. 4, 1909, p. 6; "Training School Board in a Row," *New York Times*, Nov. 5, 1909, p. 5; "Little Boy Kicked in Training School," *New York Times*, Nov. 6, 1909, p. 4; "Grand Jury Visits Training School," *New York Times*, Nov. 13, 1909, p. 6; "Farrell Put Out of Training School," *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 1909, p. 7; "Mayor Now to Probe School," *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 1909, p. 18; "Suggests Closing of Training School," *New York Times*, Nov. 22, 1909, p. 5.
 26. Bordewich, Statement, p. 2.
 27. On the growth of Bay Ridge in this period see Hoffman, *Bay Ridge Chronicles*, 73-100.
 28. Quoted in Hoffman, *Bay Ridge Chronicles*, 87.
 29. "Brooklyn Real Estate Notes," *Real Estate Record & Guide -- Brooklyn Edition*, Sept. 22, 1906, 332.
 30. For these purchases see Conveyances Liber 3364, p. 41; Liber 3364, p. 42; Liber 3413, p. 17. Clara, Mina, and Herman Feldmann transferred their interest in the property to Francis Feldmann in 1917. See Conveyances Liber 3678, p. 171; Liber 3678, p. 172.
 31. The Farrells sold the property in 1915 (Conveyance Liber 3576, p. 550). A later owner, probably John A. Moran, a manager at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, built a stuccoed three-story house and one-story garage on the site. These buildings were replaced by a red brick apartment building in 1939.
 32. Brooklyn Tax Assessments, 1914, sec. 18, v. 5, pp. 77-78.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House, built for Joseph S. Bennet around 1847, is a rare survivor from the era when fashionable villas lined Shore Road along the bluffs of Bay Ridge overlooking the Narrows and Upper and Lower Bays; that this five-bay-wide, two-and-one-half-story frame Greek Revival style house, sheathed in original clapboards, is the grandest mid-nineteenth-century house still standing in Southern Brooklyn; that it is a rare and exceptionally intact Greek Revival style villa in New York City; that its notable features include columned front and rear porches, two-story corner pilasters, denticulated cornices, molded window surrounds, and a low attic story articulated as a crowning entablature; that the house has passed through the hands of several notable owners, the colorful Farrell family, whose members included James P. Farrell, a successful businessman and Tammany Hall politician, his daughter, Georgina, an early woman graduate of Pratt Institute, and son, Jack, a manager-promoter for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show; that, moved to its present location around 1913, the house remains within the grounds of Bennet's original estate, on property that was originally part of the mid-eighteenth-century farm of his grandparents; and that the house remains a tangible reminder of the borough's early history and the evolution of the Fort Hamilton-Bay Ridge neighborhood.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House, 119 95th Street, Borough of Brooklyn, and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 6115, Lot 52 in part, consisting of that portion of said lot bounded by the southwesterly lot line and, starting from the southwesterly corner of said lot, running southeasterly for approximately 66 feet along the 95th Street boundary of said lot, northerly at an angle of 90 degrees through said lot approximately 100 feet to the northwestern lot line, and northwesterly along said lot line for approximately 66 feet to the southwestern lot line, and southwesterly along said lot line for approximately 100 feet to the point of beginning, as its Landmark Site.



Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House, 119 95th Street, Brooklyn
Built c. 1847, moved to present site c. 1913
Photo: Carl Forster



Detail from *Panorama of the Harbor of New York, Staten Island and the Narrows*
by John Bornet showing the village of Fort Hamilton and Shore Road in 1854
Arrow indicates Joseph S. Bennet House (Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House)

Source: Kouwenhoven, *Columbia Historical Portrait*



The Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House on its original Shore Road site in 1912
Photo: Courtesy of Fergus Bordewich



Farrell family members on the front porch steps of the Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House, c. 1900

Photo: Courtesy of Fergus Bordewich



Details of the first story facade facing 95th Street and front porch
Photos: Carl Forster



View of the western facade and detail of the entrance surround and front doors

Photos: Carl Forster



Details of the rear (north) facade
Photos: Carl Forster



66'

100'

Porch

Kitchen
1 Story

12'

100'

Two Story & Attic Frame

Covered Porch

66'

Sidewalk

Bennet-Farrell-Feldmann House
Address: 119 95th Street
Brooklyn, New York
Landmark Site: Block 6115, Lot 52 in part

95th Street