

HISTORIC ROOTS

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THE ETHAN ALLEN HOMESTEAD

By JOCELYN SECKER-WALKER

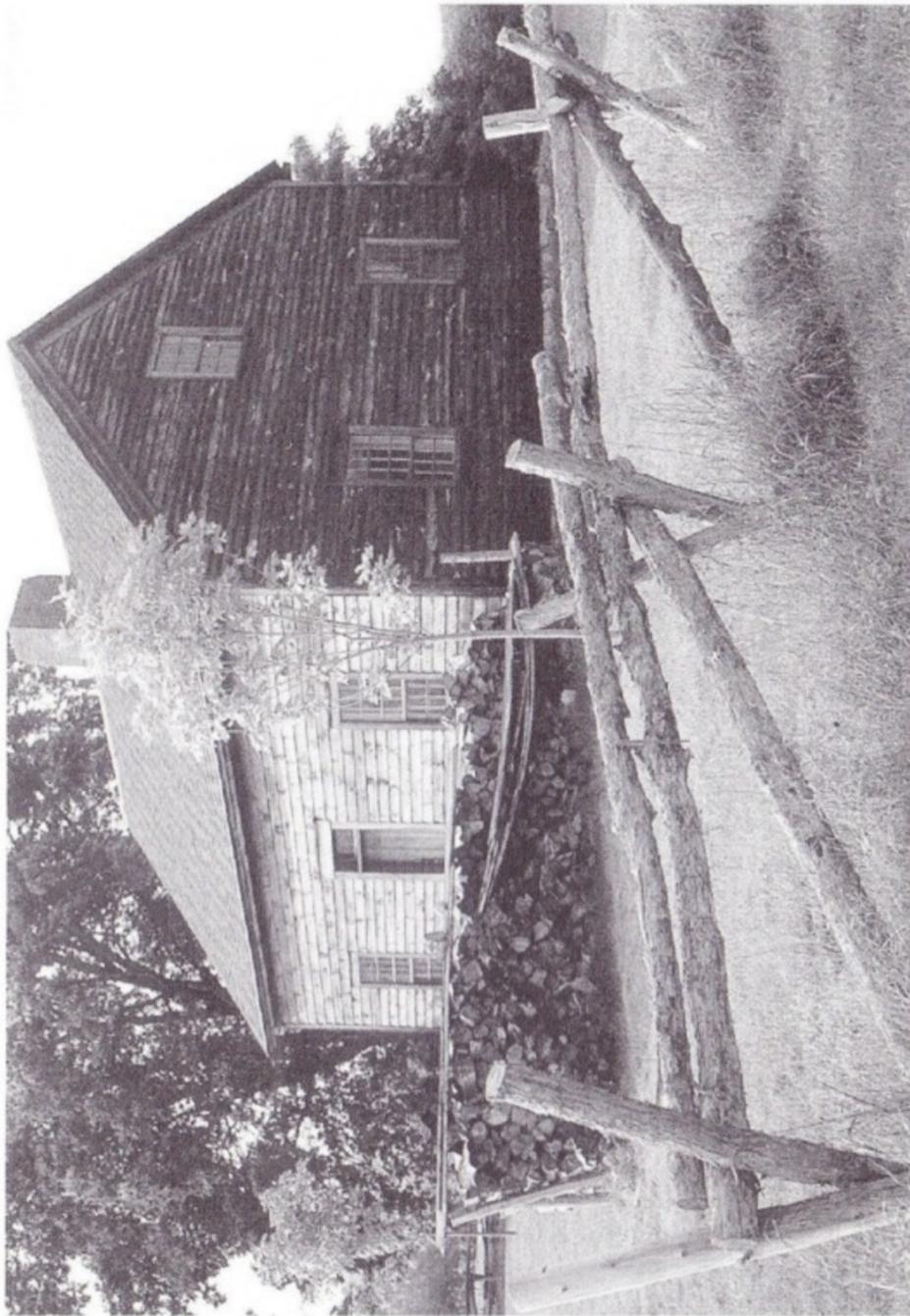
On a low bluff looking over farmland and a bend in the Winooski River, sits a small house. It looks very much as it would have during the two years Ethan Allen lived there, from 1787 until 1789. The house has simple wooden fences around it. In the garden in back grow the kinds of plants he might have grown. Downtown Burlington is only minutes away, but this is a very peaceful place.

The house has doors in the front and the back. There are two windows on each side of the house. One brick chimney comes through the simple shingle roof. A lot of work was done to put the house back into its original shape.

This was the house of a rich man. The outside is made of boards, not logs. The floor is also board, not dirt. The house has two stories.

Downstairs there is a kitchen, where the family cooked, ate, and spent much of its time. The furniture is simple; some is very old. The dishes and pots and pans are modern, but they were made the way they would have been in the late 1700s.

Across the hallway from the kitchen is a



Ethan Allen Homestead Trust

*Ethan Allen's
home as it
looks today.*



Ethan Allen Homestead Trust

Ethan Allen's house as it looked in 1900.

room that was both a bedroom and a parlor. The furniture is plain and useful. Burlington was a frontier town when Ethan Allen lived there. Frontier people did not have fancy things. Next to this room is a workroom. In it now is a display showing how linen was made from a plant called flax. It is likely that the Allens grew flax in their garden.

The upstairs has two bedrooms and attic space. The cellar was used to store food for the winter. Its walls are made of stone from a small quarry close by.

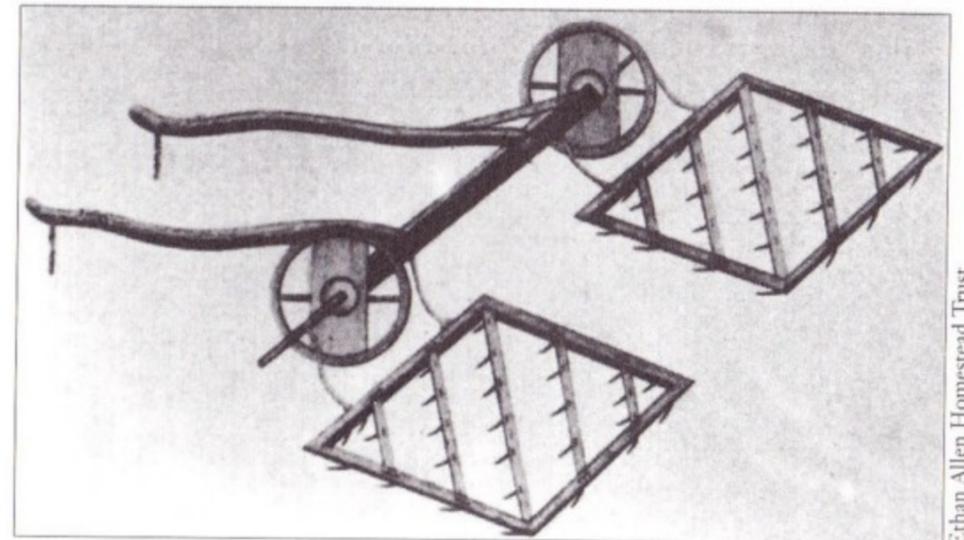
Ethan Allen lived here with his wife Fanny, their three children, and three daughters from his first marriage. Ethan and Fanny's daughter, whose name was also Fanny, became a nurse and Vermont's first Roman Catholic nun. Fanny Allen Hospital was named for her. Hannibal, their elder son, graduated first in his

class from the United States Military Academy at West Point.

When Fanny moved to Burlington in 1787, she was pregnant. She stayed in a tavern downtown until after the baby was born because she did not want to give birth in the wilderness. This baby was named Ethan Alonzo.

Ethan Allen had eight children in all, with five from his first marriage. Only Lucy, Pamela, and Ethan Alonzo had children, and only Lucy's family remains today.

After Ethan's death, Fanny married again and lived at the homestead for five more years. When the family moved, she sold the house to a farmer. The house continued to be owned by farmers for many years. In 1942, a grain company bought it and rented it to farm workers. In 1976, when people were thinking of ways to celebrate the



Ethan Allen Homestead Trust

Farm implement from Ethan Allen's time. It was used as a tiller and a hoe.

nation's bicentennial, some Vermonters raised the money to buy Ethan Allen's farm and the land around it. They gave it to the Winooski Valley Park District. In 1989, after years of restoration, the house was opened to the public.

Rooting Around

The Ethan Allen homestead is off Route 127 in Burlington. It is open from the middle of May to the middle of October. There is a videotape about the life of Ethan Allen. You can also visit the house and the garden. There are special events during the season and group tours can be arranged. There are also programs for children.

Please call 802-865-4556 for more information.