

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Vassar College Observatory

other name/site number: _____

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2. Location

=====

street & number: Raymond Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Poughkeepsie

vicinity: N/A

state: NY county: Dutchess

code: 027

zip code: 12603

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

=====
4. State/Federal Agency Certification
 =====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation _____ standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

 Signature of certifying official Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

 Signature of commenting or other official Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
 =====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- _____ entered in the National Register _____
 _____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined eligible for the _____
 National Register _____
- _____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined not eligible for the _____
 National Register _____
- _____ removed from the National Register _____
- _____ other (explain): _____

 Signature of Keeper Date
 of Action

Significant Person(s): Maria Mitchell

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Charles S. Farrar, scientific design
William Harloe, Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Vassar College Archives

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|--------|----------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|
| A | 18 | 591920 | ⁶ 4815200 | B | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| C | _____ | _____ | _____ | D | _____ | _____ | _____ |

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

All that tract of parcel of land situated in the Town of Poughkeepsie, County of Dutchess, and State of New York more particularly bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at a point 5.0 feet north of the extreme north wall of the Vassar College Observatory and 14.0 feet west of the west fact of the main west wall of said building; running thence due east 70.0 feet to a point, said point being 5.0 feet north of the extreme north wall of the building and 5.0 feet east of the east face of the easterly most wall of the building; thence due south 90.0 feet to a point which is 5.0 feet south of the southern most wall of the building and 5.0 feet east of the easterly most wall of the building; thence due west 70.0 feet to a point, said point being 5.0 feet south of the southern most wall of the building and 14.0 feet west of the main west wall of the building; thence due north 90.0 feet to the point and place of beginning.

Said parcel lying wholly within the lands of Vassar College as recorded in the Dutchess County Clerks Office in liber 118 page 310 and 311.

The point and place of beginning of the here-in described parcel is approximately 1450 feet due east of a point in the center line of Raymond Ave. said point also being south 10 degrees west 691 feet from the intersection of the center lines of college Avenue and Raymond Avenue in the town of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County, New York.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

The basis for determining each boundary is equal to the measurements of the building.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director, NCC

Organization - National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History

Date - September 25, 1989

Street & Number 400 A Street, SE

Telephone (202) 544-2422

City or Town Washington

State - DC ZIP - 20003

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Vassar College Observatory

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DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The Vassar College Observatory built for Maria Mitchell is located on the Vassar College campus in Poughkeepsie, New York. The structure is situated about 800 feet northeast of the Main Building, on the top of a hill in order to provide proper elevation.

The observatory faces west, and includes an octagonal center 26 feet in diameter surmounted by a dome 27 feet, 7 inches in diameter. Three additional two story wings, each 21-by-28-feet and containing various functional rooms extend to the north, east, and south. It is here that the clock, chronograph, transit and prime vertical rooms are all located. The basement of the wings, originally unfinished, has a nine foot high ceiling, and the floor of the observatory is four and one-half feet above the floors of the wings.

The primary material used in construction is brick. The walls of the observatory are of solid brick, whereas the walls of the wings are hollow. The dome, weighing one and a half tons was built with ribs of pine, and then covered with sheet-tin. Sixteen cast-iron pulleys, nine inches in diameter and running on an iron track revolve the dome.

Five stone piers, spanning the basement and the principle floors, are uniformly disconnected from the walls and the floors of the building so as to be "immovable by wind or any mechanical force."¹ A granite shaft rests on the most massive pier to hold the equatorial, with similar shafts for the transit and meridian circle of Onondaga limestone, and for the prime vertical of white Westchester marble. The bases of the clock and chronograph are Dover marble.

The north wing and portions of the basement served as the residence for Maria Mitchell and her father. Just a few years after the observatory was built, there were some renovations to enlarge the living quarters.

Today the original telescope is in the American History Museum of the Smithsonian Institution and the observatory is no longer used for teaching astronomy. City lights and electronic disturbances interfere with observation and measurement. Astronomy courses are now taught in the Sanders Physics Building and the Observatory serves as a general academic building with some rooms used as a college resource center.

The Observatory has remained essentially the same since its construction in 1865. While it is true that the Henry Fitz telescope was given to the Smithsonian institution in the 1950s, the sidereal clock and the five stone pillars remain as

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they were. The building has not been altered internally, and has remained as it was in 1888 when Mitchell last lived in it. Prior to 1888, a small addition was made in the rear to create more comfortable living quarters.

During the 1960s the telescope from the Vassar Observatory was placed on permanent exhibition in the Smithsonian's American History Museum. Last year it was placed in storage but may be used in a new exhibit on technology which is in the planning stage.

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Matthew Vassar built the Vassar College Observatory on the campus of his new college in 1865 exclusively for Maria Mitchell, astronomer, professor, and first woman elected to both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. Vassar lured Mitchell, an established scientist, as a professor despite her lack of a graduate degree. Mitchell made many important observations in this custom-designed building, but serving as a crusader for women's higher education became her most important role. Within the context of the National Historic Landmarks program thematic framework, Maria Mitchell's Observatory has national significance under theme: XIII. Science (A) Physical Science 1. Astronomy, and Theme: XXVII. Education (C) Higher Education (H) Special Populations 3. Women's Education.

Although Mitchell's home on Nantucket reveals much about her early life and her initial work as an astronomer, the observatory at Vassar best represents her significant and unprecedented support of women in the sciences and her efforts towards the cause of women's education and professional advancement. Within a few years of her arrival at Vassar, Mitchell had established herself as a thorough and inspiring teacher, and her principle goals gradually shifted from her own scientific research to the quality and necessity of rigorous and scholarly education for women. As her sister Phebe Mitchell Kendall later wrote: "...She was so much interested in the movement for the higher education of women, an interest which deepened as her work went on, that she gave up, in a great measure, her scientific life, and threw herself heart and soul into this work."¹

Mitchell's devotion to a role for women in the sciences took her into the public realm where she offered her own experience as a scientist and an educator as evidence of women's potential for significant academic achievement. The obstacles in the nineteenth century facing women who sought careers in the sciences were enormous. Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, the President of the History of Science Society, has noted that "it is significant that Maria Mitchell, having to some extent surmounted these obstacles, chose to work directly with women rather than to defy male hegemony."² Mitchell became a symbol, Kohlstedt stated, of the contributions women were able to make to science. With an unswerving commitment to women's education, Mitchell directed her energies to the Association for the Advancement of Women (AAW) in the 1870s. As a member and as president of this organization, Mitchell was instrumental in promoting women's professional involvement in the sciences. Among the members of the AAW were former students of Mitchell's; astronomer Mary Whitney, Ellen Swallow Richards, the first woman to study chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, psychologist and logician Christine Ladd-Franklin. Twenty-five of her former students are listed in "Who's Who in America" in their respective professions. Her emphasis on high scientific standards, feminist ideals, and "the worthiness of remunerative labor" made Maria Mitchell a role model for both the women she taught and those who followed her in the struggle for women's equality.³

Maria Mitchell was born in 1818 on Nantucket, and her early interest in science

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Vassar College Observatory

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and in the stars came from her father who worked as a cooper, a bank officer, and as an educator. William Mitchell became interested in astronomy, and along with his other professions, rated chronometers for use in celestial navigation by the Nantucket whaling fleet. Through a combination of working closely with her father, and teaching herself, Mitchell developed her knowledge and experience in sciences and astronomy. When she was twelve she assisted her father in recording the time of an eclipse. And at the age 17, she created her own school for girls training them especially in the fields of Science and Mathematics, and by age twenty she became the librarian for the Nantucket Atheneum. During her years as the Atheneum librarian, she spent evenings in an observatory her father had built on top of the Pacific Bank where he was a principle officer.

The childhood home of Maria Mitchell and her residence during her initial scientific work, 1 Vestal Street in Nantucket, reflects Mitchell's origins, the development of her independence in a unique place that fostered independent women during the long periods of time their men were at sea.⁴ It was also the location of her intellectual development, where she first pursued her love of mathematics and astronomy, and gained exposure to important literary and scientific personages at the Atheneum. Her home on Nantucket is a museum and contains many family heirlooms. Attached to the house is a domed observatory, however this was added after her death. In addition to the observatory, a library and research center for young scientists is attached to the house. Although her home on Nantucket reveals much about Mitchell, the observatory at Vassar best represents her professional life as the first woman professor of astronomy in the country and as one of this nation's strongest advocates of women's access to the study of science.

Life changed dramatically for Mitchell, when on October 1, 1847, she sighted a comet telescopically, the first comet sighting recorded in America. Standing on the roof of Pacific Bank building, near her Nantucket home, and using her father's two-inch telescope, she sighted the comet that was eventually named for her. In a short time she garnered the attention and awards of the international scientific community. In recognition of this achievement, the King of Denmark awarded her a gold medal, and other honors soon followed.

In 1848, she became the first woman elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1850, sponsored by the famous naturalist Louis Agassiz, she was elected to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1853 she received an honorary LL.D from Hanover College in Indiana, one of the first of such degrees to be awarded to a woman. In 1857-58, she went to Europe, met many of the more renowned astronomers and scientists of the time, and became the first woman to see the Vatican observatory.

In the early 1860s, Maria Mitchell's mother died and she and her father moved

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from Nantucket to Lynn, Massachusetts. It was while the Mitchells were living there that Matthew Vassar approached Mitchell about teaching at the women's college he was opening in Poughkeepsie, NY. Originally, Mitchell was reluctant, professing her lack of college degree and her lack of teaching experience as reasons for declining, but she finally agreed to come.⁵

In recognition of Mitchell's place in the scientific community, as well as the serious intent of the Vassar College program, Matthew Vassar built and equipped an observatory with the advanced equipment and furnishings necessary for both research and teaching. The telescope, built by Henry Fitz, a celebrated telescope-maker in New York, had an object-glass, 12" in diameter. Secured through special negotiations for less than the customary price, the glass was held in the college's safe, until the observatory was completed.⁶ At the time, Maria Mitchell's telescope at Vassar was the third largest in the country. A telegraph line was also installed, "thus affording at small expense, an opportunity to connect with observatories at Washington, Albany, Cambridge and elsewhere."⁷ While there were observatories in the United States equally and more advanced in their technology, the Vassar Laboratory "took precedence over all others in being designed for the practical use of students."⁸

Mitchell was a faculty member and researcher at Vassar College from 1865 to 1888. During this time, she did pioneering research in astronomy, specializing in studies of Jupiter and Saturn, and constructing a photographic apparatus to record information on the sun. Although there was no foundation money for faculty research, she printed her observations at her own expense in Silliman's Journal.⁹

While astronomy and science were her primary focus and expertise, during the years that she taught at Vassar she became a crusader for the higher education of women. She was, by all accounts, an excellent and unorthodox teacher, inspiring students in not just science, but in all their studies. Mitchell, contrary to the attitudes of the day, challenged the young women in her classes to question critically what they read and learned, and not to accept information without analytical examination. She would question her students: "Did you learn that from a book, or did you observe it yourself?"¹⁰ Mitchell did not put much stock in the traditional grading system, and she stated that "You cannot mark the human mind, because there is no intellectual unit."¹¹

In her evaluations to the college president, Mitchell expressed her philosophy about teaching students to observe for themselves. She wrote: "small telescopes and a transit instrument were put into their hands and they were allowed to practice with the meridian circle."¹² With the advanced training she provided, Mitchell motivated many of her pupils to pursue professional careers in science. One of Mitchell's many disciples, Mary Whitney, became her successor to the Astronomy chair at Vassar.

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Along with her teaching and research responsibilities, she was elected to the American Philosophical Society, became Vice-President of the American Social Science Foundation, and she was one of the founders of the American Association for the Advancement of Women. Her progressive feminism led her to actively campaign for the women's vote, and to fight discrimination against female faculty who were paid less than men even if they had more education and training. In her later years, she worked increasingly on the lecture circuit promoting the education of women, raising money for endowments, and accepting honorary degrees. She was instrumental in the founding of Radcliffe College. Mitchell strongly believed that women could make key contributions toward solving the problems of the world, saying once "I wish we could give to every woman who has a novel theory dear to her soul¹³ for the improvement of the world, a chance to work out her theory in real life."¹³

Mitchell has been described as "an educator of importance to her generation, an idealist, a stoic philosopher, a famous woman astronomer, a leader in the feminist movement for higher education of women, and a woman of strong character."¹⁴ The Observatory at Vassar best represents Maria Mitchell's professional contributions. The observatory was her home, her laboratory, and her classroom for the last 20 years of her life, and it was there that she inspired young women to think for themselves. Throughout her tenure at Vassar, Mitchell fought for funds to keep the observatory current with the latest technical equipment and in the forefront of scientific experimentation. Her progressive views on women's abilities and women's rights profoundly affected generations of women, and her observatory, located on a prestigious women's college campus reflects her influence.

¹Kendall, Phebe Mitchell. Life and Letters of Maria Mitchell (Freeport, NY, 1971) p. 172.

²Kohlstedt, Sally Gregory, "Maria Mitchell and Women in Science," in Abir-Am, Pnina G. and Dorinda Outram, eds. Uneasy Careers and Intimate Lives, Women in Science, 1789-1979 (New Brunswick, NJ, 1987) p. 134-135.

³Belserene, Emilia Pisani. "Maria Mitchell; Nineteenth Century Astronomer" The Astronomy Quarterly 5 (1986) p. 146-147.

⁴Torjesen, Elizabeth Frances. Comet Over Nantucket, Maria Mitchell and her Island, The Story of America's First Woman Astronomer (Richmond, Indiana, 1984), p. 30.

⁵Edward T. James, Ed. Notable American Women 1607-1950 Vol. II (Cambridge, MA, London, England, 1971), p. 555

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⁶Daniels, Elizabeth A. Main to Mudd An Informal History of Vassar College Buildings (Poughkeepsie, NY, 1987) p. 18

⁷Ibid. p. 18

⁸Ibid. p. 18

⁹Ibid. p. 18

¹⁰Babbitt, Mary King. Maria Mitchell as her Students Knew Her (Poughkeepsie, NY, 1912) p. 12

¹¹Ibid. p. 21.

¹²Daniels, p. 18.

¹³Flexner, Eleanor. Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States. (New York, 1972) p. 115

¹⁴ Priestley, Alice E. Maria Mitchell as an Educator (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1947) p. 4.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

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NY: Vassar College, 1912.
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- Priestley, Alice E. Maria Mitchell, As an Educator, Unpublished dissertation, New York University, 1947.
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VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
Northwest side
Photo by Barrett Gallagher, ca. early 1900s



Vassar College Observatory
Poughkeepsie, NY

Photographer: Barrett Gallagher

ca: early 1900s

location of original negative: unknown

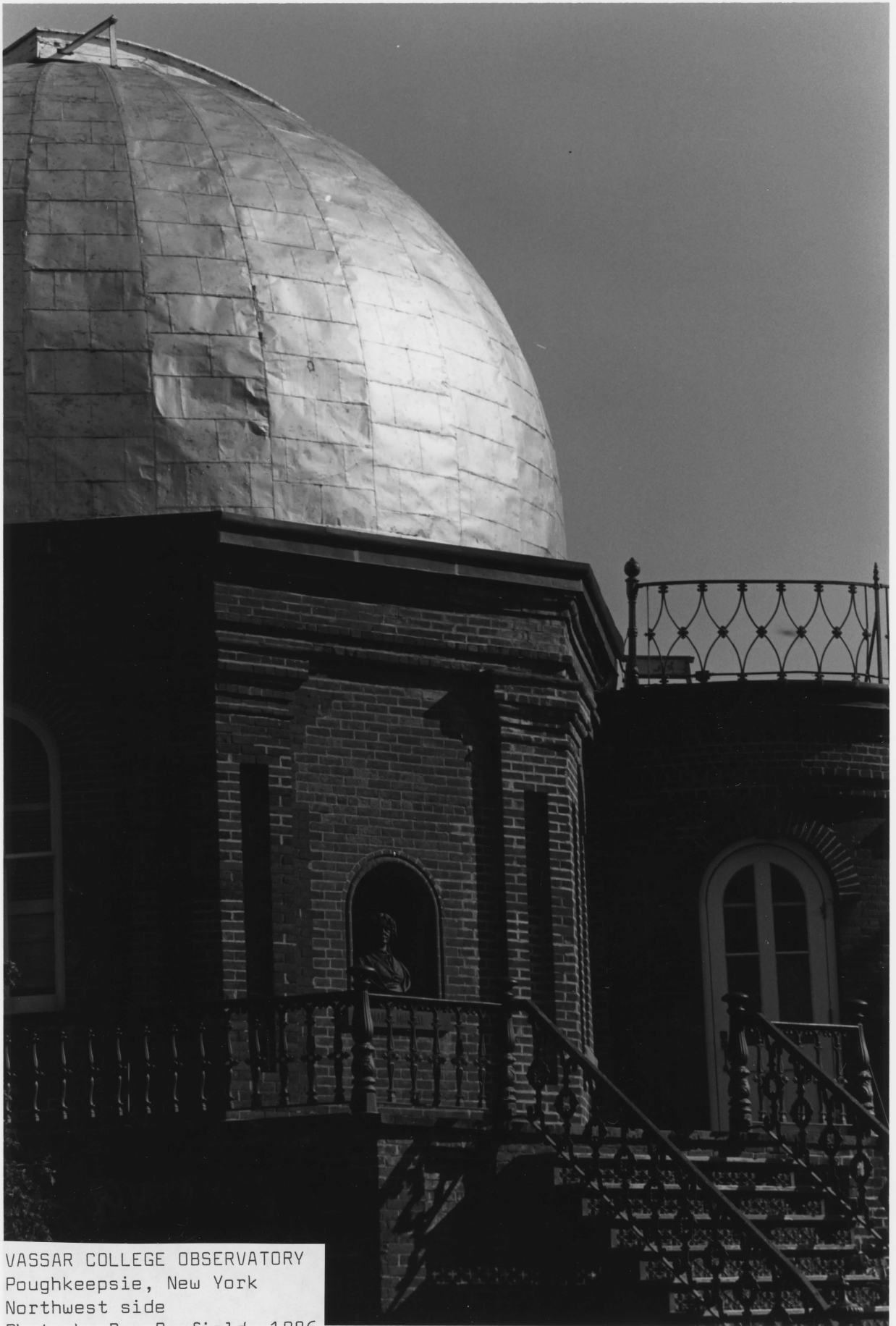
facing west

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY

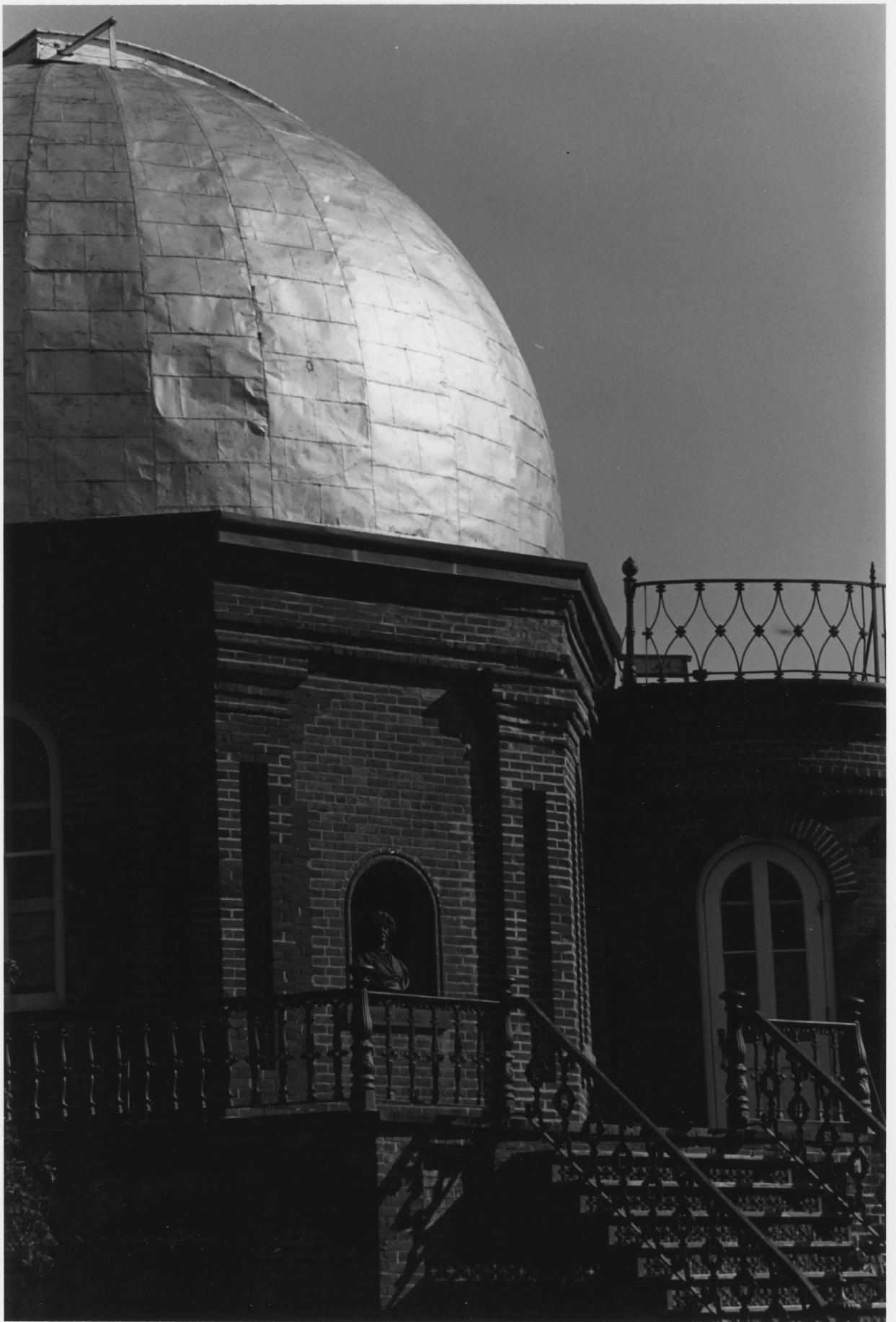
Poughkeepsie, New York

Northwest side

Photo by Barrett Gallagher, ca. early 1900s



VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
Northwest side
Photo by Ben Rayfield, 1986



VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, VASSAR COLLEGE

POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK 12602

BEN RAYFIELD

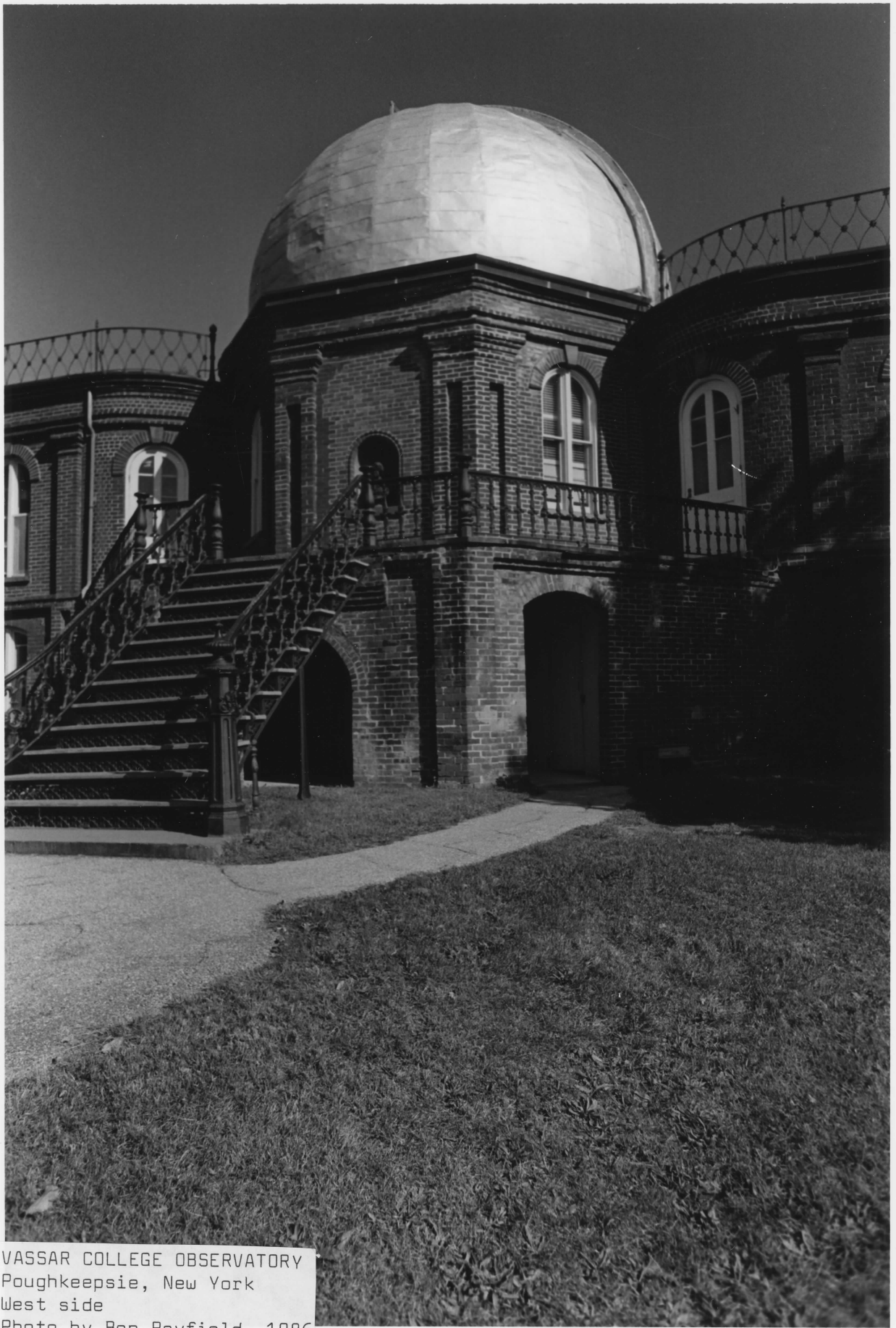
1986

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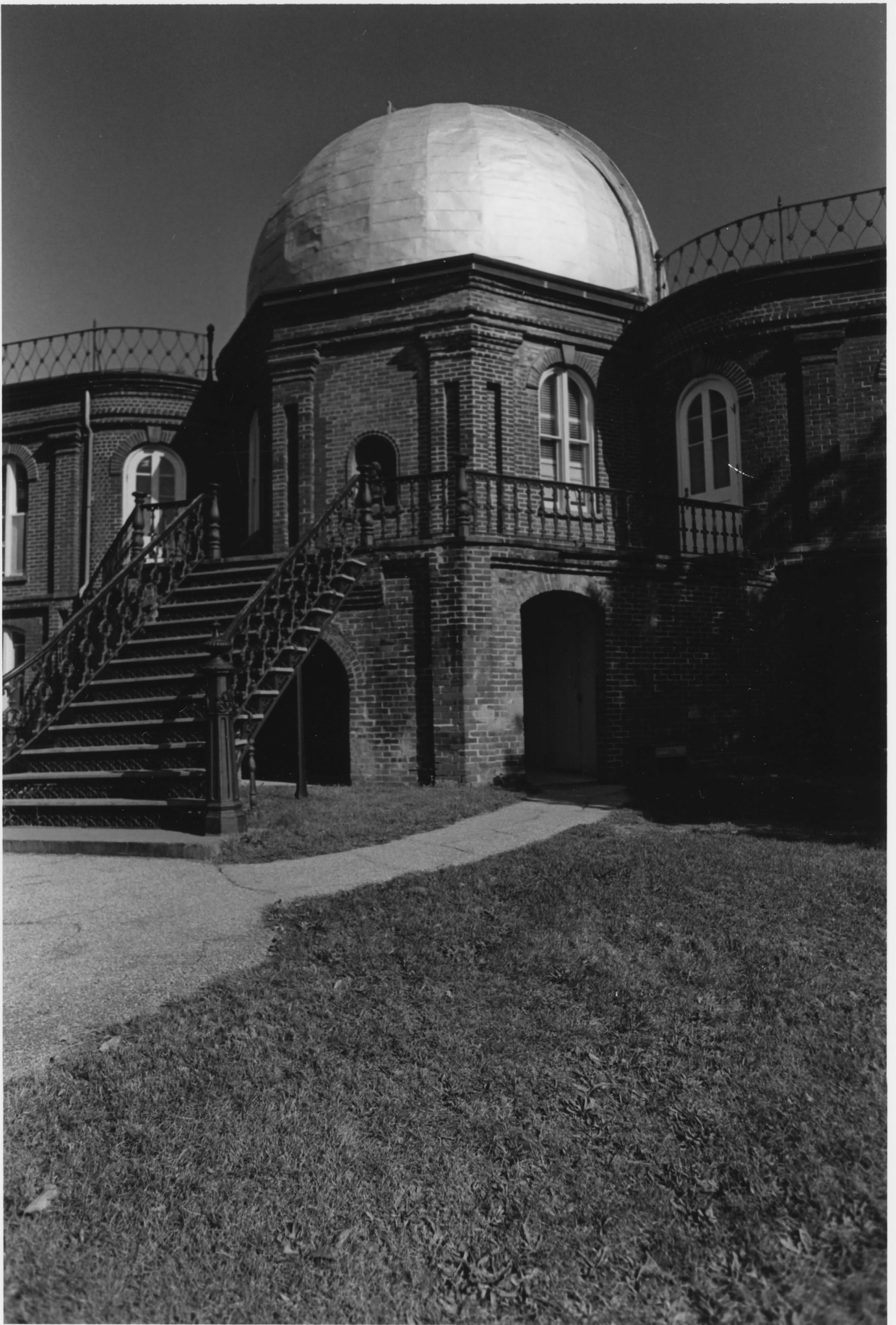
PICTURE TAKEN FROM THE NORTHWEST

The Observatory
Vassar College
Photo credit: Ben Rayfield

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
Northwest side
Photo by Ben Rayfield, 1986



VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
West side
Photo by Ben Rayfield, 1986



VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, VASSAR COLLEGE
POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK 12601
BEN RAYFIELD

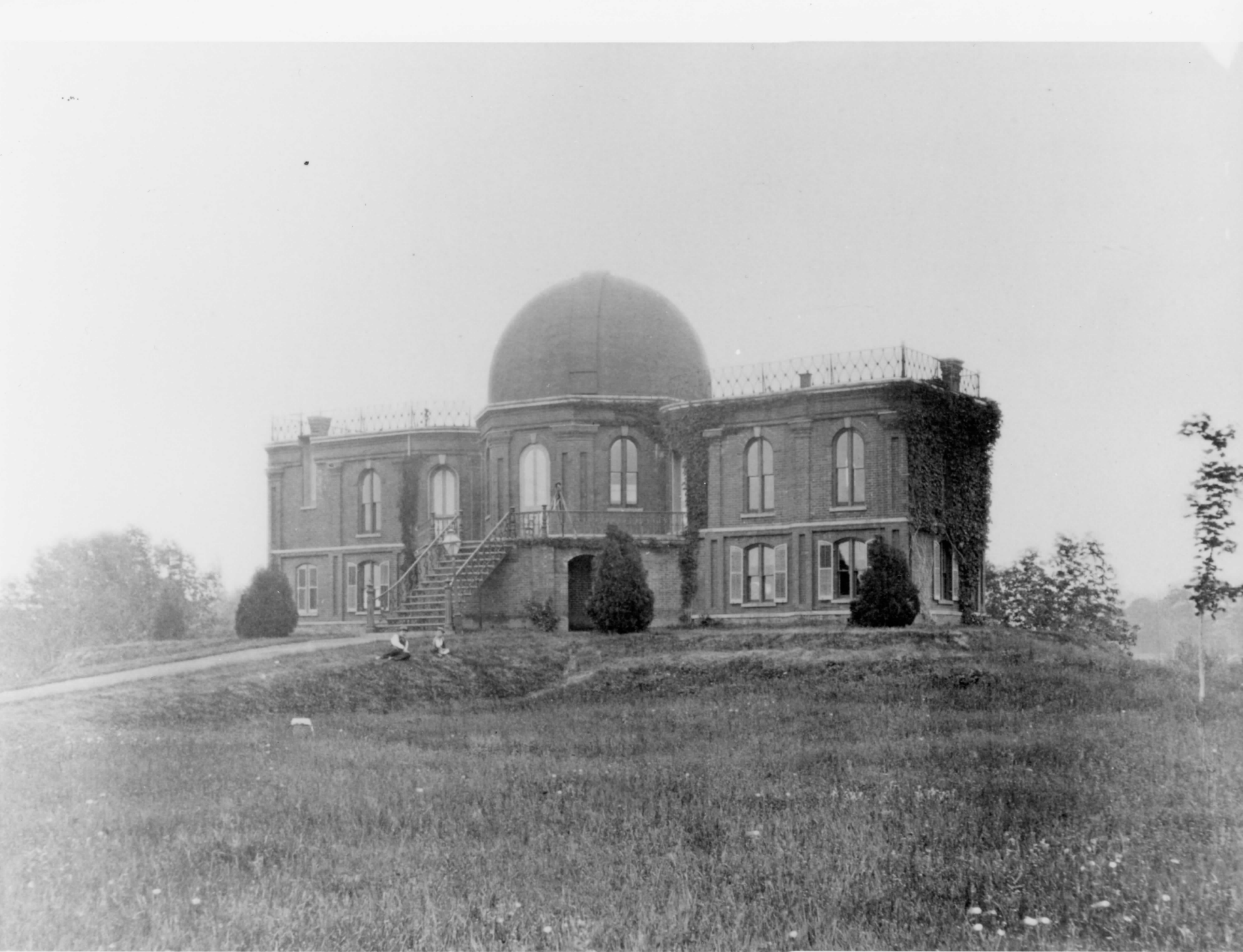
1986
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PICTURE TAKEN FROM THE WEST

**The Observatory
Vassar College
Photo credit: Ben Rayfield**

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
West side
Photo by Ben Rayfield, 1986



VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
East side
Photographer unknown, ca. 1873



Vassar College Observatory
Poughkeepsie, New York

Photographer: unknown

ca: 1873

location of original negative: unknown

facing west

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
East side
Photographer unknown, ca. 1873



VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
Poughkeepsie, New York
Maria Mitchell with Astronomy class outside
Photographer unknown, ca.1878



Maria Mitchell with Astronomy Class outside

Vassar College Observatory
Poughkeepsie, NY

Photographer: unknown

ca: 1878

location of original negative: unknown

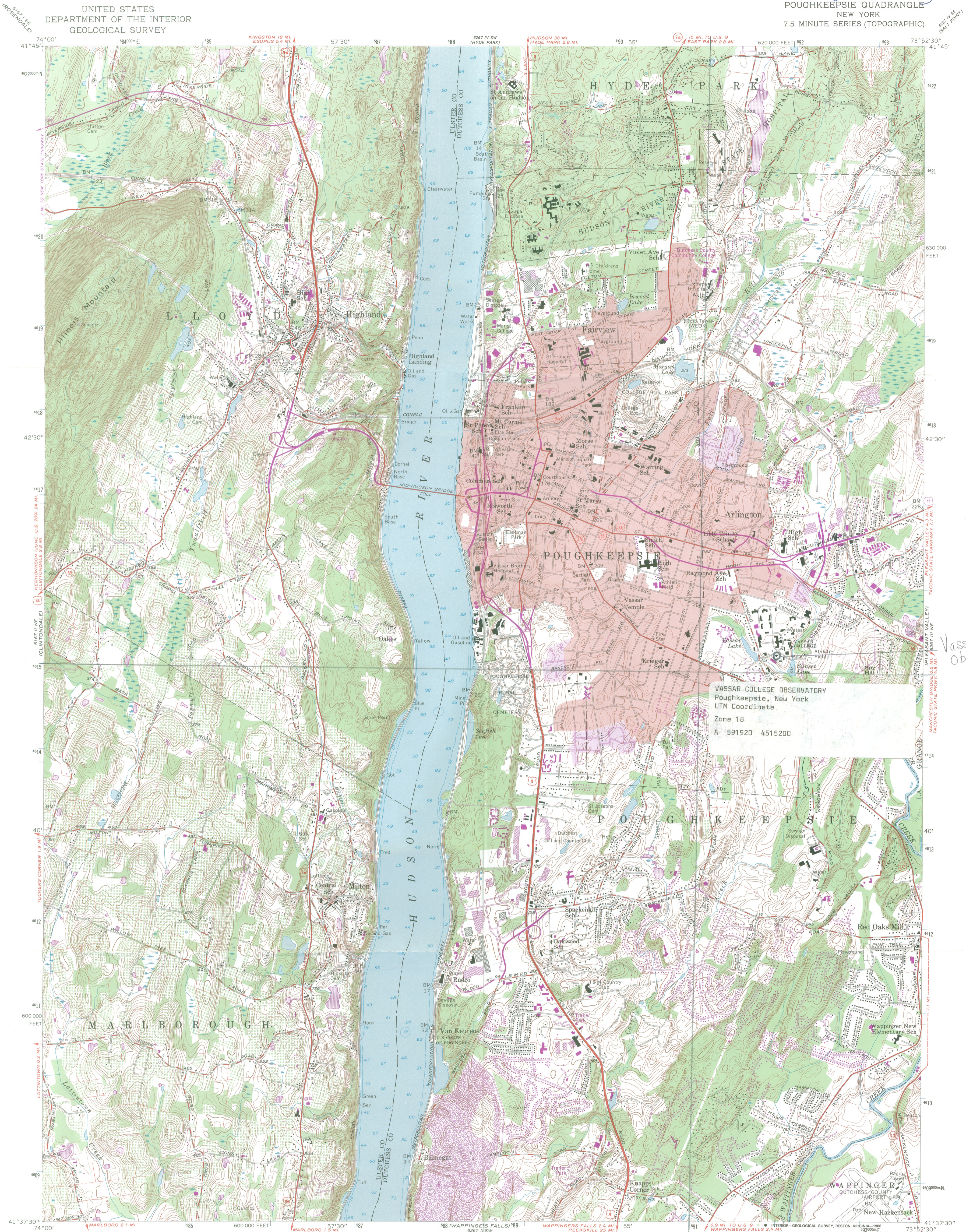
facing west

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY

Poughkeepsie, New York

Maria Mitchell with Astronomy class outside

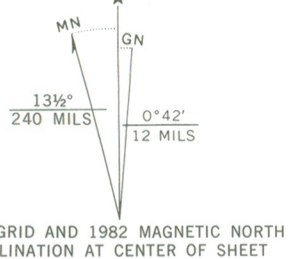
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VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
 Poughkeepsie, New York
 UTM Coordinate
 Zone 18
 A 591920 4515200

Vassar College
 Observatory

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1957
 Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS chart 283 (1954)
 This information is not intended for navigational purposes
 Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on New York coordinate system, east zone, 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum
 To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and 35 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
 Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
 SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 3.1 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
 Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
 Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
 U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

POUGHKEEPSIE, N. Y.
 41073-F8-TF-Q24

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial photographs taken 1980 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1982
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

1957
 PHOTOREVISED 1982
 DMA 6267 III NW—SERIES V821

NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
FOR THE PROMOTION OF HISTORY



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WASHINGTON, DC 20003/(202) 544-2422

DR. PAGE PUTNAM MILLER
Director

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Library History Round Table
Federation of State Humanities
Councils
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Federal Government
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Federation of Genealogical Societies
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Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives
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Nuclear Age History & Humanities Center
Public Works Historical Society
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Southern Association for Women
Historians

State Coordinating Committees

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Alabama | Missouri |
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April 11, 1990

Mr. Ben Levy
Senior Historian
History Division
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Excellent!

Dear Ben,

Attached is the nomination form for the Vassar College Observatory. After considering again the Nantucket site for Maria Mitchell, we decided that the Vassar one is by far the most appropriate. There is a recent video titled "Maria Mitchell: Her Legacy to Students" which would be additional evidence for the Vassar site. I could probably get this video on loan if you felt that it would be useful. In Harry's October comments on the first draft of this form, he suggested that we look at the biography Sweeper of the Sky by Helen Wright. After we were unable to locate it at the Library or Congress or the University of Maryland, I contacted the history of science specialist at the Smithsonian, Deborah Warner. She said that the Wright biography was very dated. She referred me to two recent articles, one in Astronomy Quarterly and the other in the 1987 book Uneasy Careers and Intimate Lives: Women In Science 1789-1979, both of which we use in this statement.

Let me know if you have further questions concerning this nomination.

Sincerely,

Page Putnam Miller

DEC 14 1990

H34(418)

Dr. Frances D. Fergusson
President
Vassar College
Box 43
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

Dear Dr. Fergusson:

We wish to inform you that the National Park Service is studying the property identified on the enclosed sheet to determine its potential for designation as a National Historic Landmark. The National Historic Landmarks Program recognizes sites of national significance in the Nation's history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Each Landmark receives a certificate of designation; owners may also apply for a bronze plaque.

National Historic Landmark designation follows three steps: study, which requires a visit to the property and preparation of a nomination; review of the nomination by the National Park System Advisory Board; and a decision by the Secretary of the Interior on the Board's recommendations.

When we complete our study of the property, you will receive a copy of it. At that time you will have 60 days to submit your views in writing if you so desire. After the 60-day period, we will submit the nomination and your comments to the Advisory Board and inform the Secretary of the Board's recommendations.

To assist you in considering this matter, we have enclosed a copy of the regulations that govern the National Historic Landmarks Program. They describe the effects of designation (Sec. 65.2) and specify how you may comment on a proposed designation (Sec. 65.5 (d)(4-5)). We also call your attention to the supplemental information that appears on the enclosed sheet.

Sincerely,



Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian

Enclosures

PROPERTY TO BE STUDIED FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, Poughkeepsie, New York

As a private owner in the property identified above, you may concur in or object to its designation. Your comments may govern whether or not the property will be designated. You can find guidance for your comments in Section 65.5(d)(4-5) of the enclosed regulations.

While you may comment at this time, you may wish to wait until the study is completed and transmitted to you. You are, of course, welcome to consult us at any time. If you wish to respond at this time please address your comments to Mr. Edwin C. Bearss, Chief Historian, National Park Service, History Division (418), P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

If you have general questions regarding the National Historic Landmarks Program, you may contact Ben Levy, Senior Historian, at the History Division address given above, or by telephone at (202) 343-8164; FTS 343-8164. Dr. Page Putnam Miller will prepare the study of the property. If you have questions concerning the study, you may contact Dr. Miller, Director, National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, 400 A Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003; or by telephone at (202) 544-2422.

SIMILAR LETTERS SENT TO:

OWNER: Dr. Frances D. Fergusson
President
Vassar College
Box 43
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

HEO: Honorable Robert Bleakley
Mayor of the City of Poughkeepsie
P.O. Box 300
Poughkeepsie, New York 12602

cc: Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director
National Coordinating Committee
for the Promotion of History
400 A Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

bcc: 4000 (MARO) B. Bolger
1600 (NARO) R. McIntosh
001 RF
400 RF
418 Levy
418 WOMENS HISTORY THEME STUDY (NHL Pending)
418 VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY (NHL Pending)

PHenry:12-03-90

HENRY NOTICE LETTERS/SPRING '91:VASS-1-B.LTR

H34(418)

DEC 14 1990

Mr. Orin Lehman
Commissioner
Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Dear Mr. Lehman:

We wish to inform you that the National Park Service is studying the properties identified on the enclosed sheet to determine their potential for designation as National Historic Landmarks. The National Historic Landmarks Program recognizes sites of national significance in the Nation's history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Each Landmark receives a certificate of designation; owners may also apply for a bronze plaque.

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Sincerely,

Edwin C. Bearss

Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian

Enclosures

PROPERTIES TO BE STUDIED FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
DESIGNATION

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT RESIDENCE,

257 Central Park West/2 West 86th Street, New York, New York

MARY DEWSON RESIDENCE,

171 West 12th Street, New York, New York

EMMA GOLDMAN RESIDENCE,

210 East 13th Street, New York, New York

MARGARET SANGER CLINIC,

17 West 16th Street, New York, New York

TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY BUILDING (Brown Building),

23-29 Washington Place, New York, New York

UNITED CHARITIES BUILDING,

105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY,

Poughkeepsie, New York

In commenting on the possible designation of the properties identified above, you may find guidance in Section 65.5(d)(4) of the enclosed regulations.

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cc: Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director
National Coordinating Committee
for the Promotion of History
400 A Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

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PHenry:12/03/90
HENRY NOTICE LETTERS/SPRING '91:ny-shpo.ltr

H34(418)

DEC 20 1990

Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Moynihan:

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Sincerely,

/Sgd/Jerry L. Rogers

(for)
Director

Enclosures

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DESIGNATION

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT RESIDENCE,

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TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY BUILDING (Brown Building),

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UNITED CHARITIES BUILDING,

105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY,

Poughkeepsie, New York

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cc: Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director
National Coordinating Committee
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400 A Street, SE
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PHenry:12/03/90
HENRY NOTICE LETTERS/SPRING '91:ny-sens.ltr

JAN 23 1991

H30(418)

Dr. Frances D. Fergusson
President
Vassar College
Box 43
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

Dear Dr. Fergusson:

We are pleased to inform you that the National Park Service has completed the study of the property identified on the enclosed sheet for the purpose of nominating it for possible designation as a National Historic Landmark. We enclose a copy of the study report. The National Park System Advisory Board will consider the nomination during its next meeting, at the time and place indicated on the enclosure. The Board will make its recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior based upon the criteria of the National Historic Landmarks Program.

You have 60 days to submit your views in writing, if you so desire. After the 60-day period, we will submit the nomination and your comments to the National Park System Advisory Board's History Areas Committee, which will then inform the full Advisory Board of the Committee's recommendations at the Board's meeting. The Secretary of the Interior will then be informed of the Board's recommendations for his final action.

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Sincerely,



Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian

Green Copy

Enclosures

PROPERTY STUDIED FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, Poughkeepsie, New York

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The History Areas Committee of the Secretary of the Interior's National Park System Advisory Board will evaluate this property at a meeting to be held on Monday, March 25, 1991, beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the National Park Service Director's Conference Room, 3119 Main Interior Building, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC.

The History Areas Committee evaluates the studies of historic properties being nominated for National Historic Landmark designation in order to advise the full National Park System Advisory Board at their meeting on Wednesday, April 24, 1991, at 10 a.m., in the Rosemary Environmental Center, Olympic National Park, Washington, and will recommend to the full Board those properties that the Committee finds meet the criteria of the National Historic Landmarks Program.

Should you wish to obtain information about these meetings, or about the National Historic Landmarks Program, please contact Mr. Ben Levy, Senior Historian, at the National Park Service, History Division (418), P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; or by telephone at (202) 343-8164; FTS 343-8164.

If you have questions concerning the study, which was prepared by Dr. Page Putnam Miller, you may contact Dr. Miller, Director, National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, 400 A Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003; or by telephone at (202) 544-2422.

SIMILAR LETTERS SENT TO:

OWNER: Dr. Frances D. Fergusson
President
Vassar College
Box 43
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

HEO: Honorable Robert Bleakley
Mayor of the City of Poughkeepsie
P.O. Box 300
Poughkeepsie, New York 12602

cc: Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director
National Coordinating Committee
for the Promotion of History
400 A Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

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1600 (NARO) R. McIntosh
001 RF
400 RF
418 Levy
418 Mendez
418 WOMENS HISTORY THEME STUDY (NHL Pending)
418 VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY (NHL Pending)

PHenry:12-03-90
HENRY NOTICE LETTERS/SPRING '91:VASS-2-B.LTR

JAN 24 1991

H30(418)

Honorable Hamilton Fish, Jr.
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Fish:

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Sincerely,

/Sgd/Jerry L. Rogers

Associate Director

Enclosures

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400 A Street, SE
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PHenry:12-03-90
HENRY NOTICE LETTERS/SPRING '91:vass-rep.ltr

JAN 24 1991

H30(418)

Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Moynihan:

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Sincerely,

/Sgd/Jerry L. Rogers

Associate Director

Enclosures

GREEN
COPY

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CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT RESIDENCE,

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105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York

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PHenry:12/03/90
HENRY NOTICE LETTERS/SPRING '91:ny-sens.ltr

JAN 25 1991

H30(418)

Mr. Orin Lehman, Commissioner
Parks, Recreation
& Historic Preservation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

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Sincerely,

18/
Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian

Enclosures

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PHenry:12/03/90
HENRY NOTICE LETTERS/SPRING '91:ny-shpo.ltr

VASSAR COLLEGE
POUGHKEEPSIE • NEW YORK 12601
Office of the President

February 6, 1991

Mr. Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian
National Park Service
Post Office Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

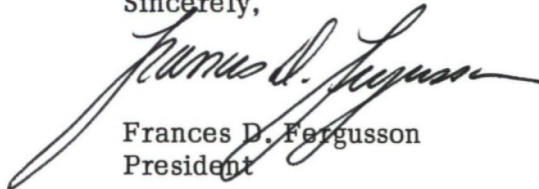
Dear Mr. Bearss:

Re: H30 (418)

Vassar College will be honored to accept a designation of the **Vassar College Observatory as a National Landmark**. We have read the nomination with interest and find it accurate and cogent. We have only one suggestion: Please alter the language on page 4 of Section number 8 to read, in the last lines of last paragraph; "Her progressive views...and her observatory, located on a prestigious women's college campus (now coeducational) reflects her influence." Please note that Vassar College has been coeducational since 1969.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Frances D. Fergusson
President

FDF:ngk



FEB 11 1991



TOWN OF POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK

66 DUTCHESS TURNPIKE

POUGHKEEPSIE, N. Y. 12603

(914) 485-3606
FAX (914) 485-8583

DAVID R. HINKLEY
Supervisor

February 8, 1991

Edwin C. Bearss, Chief Historian
National Park Service
History Division (418)
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Mr. Bearss,

Reference is made to the enclosed copy of your letter of January 23, 1991 to Mayor Robert Bleakley of the City of Poughkeepsie concerning the Vassar College Observatory which is located in the Town of Poughkeepsie.

The President of Vassar College has assured me that the College supports the proposal.

Accordingly, I confirm my enthusiastic support and that of the Town of Poughkeepsie.

The building in question is an appropriate age, is on an historic campus and was involved directly in research and discoveries in astronomy.

Sincerely yours,

David R. Hinkley
Supervisor

DRH/rjb

J
cc: Dr. Frances D. Fergusson
Mona Vaeth

Enclosures

FEB 11 1991



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30(418)

JUL 16 1991

Memorandum

TO: Secretary *Scott Sawell*

THROUGH: Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks JUL 16 1991

FROM: *JMR* Director, National Park Service

SUBJECT SUMMARY: Designation of 25 properties as National Historic Landmarks and 1 National Historic Landmark property Boundary Increase--Request for Secretarial Action

DISCUSSION: At a meeting on April 24, 1991, the National Park System Advisory Board recommended designation of the following properties as National Historic Landmarks:

WOMEN'S HISTORY THEME STUDY

1. PRUDENCE CRANDALL HOUSE, Canterbury, Connecticut
2. M. CAREY THOMAS LIBRARY, BRYN MAWR, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
3. NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, Washington, DC
4. UNITED CHARITIES BUILDING, New York, New York
5. LAURA INGALLS WILDER HOUSE, Mansfield, Missouri
6. SARAH ORNE JEWETT HOUSE, South Berwick, Maine
7. WENDOVER (Frontier Nursing Service Headquarters), Wendover, Kentucky
8. NEW ENGLAND HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN, Roxbury, Massachusetts
9. VASSAR COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, Poughkeepsie, New York
10. TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY BUILDING (Brown Building), New York, New York
11. MADAME C.J. WALKER MANUFACTURING COMPANY, Indianapolis, Indiana
12. FRANCES PERKINS HOUSE, Washington, DC

MARITIME THEME STUDY

1. N.S. SAVANNAH, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

Prepared by: Patty Henry ext: 343-8163

ARCHITECTURAL PROPERTIES

1. CANNELTON COTTON MILL, Cannelton, Indiana
2. GENESEO HISTORIC DISTRICT, Geneseo, New York
3. MARSHALL HISTORIC DISTRICT, Marshall, Michigan
4. BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING, Brooklyn, New York
5. THE HOMESTEAD, Hot Springs, Virginia
6. MARIN COUNTY CIVIC CENTER, San Rafael, California

PAINTING

1. BUSH-HOLLEY HOUSE, Cos Cob, Connecticut
2. HILL-STEAD MUSEUM, Farmington, Connecticut

INDIVIDUAL SITES

1. HAWTHORN HILL, Oakwood, Ohio
2. VERENDRYE SITE, Fort Pierre, South Dakota
3. FORT PIERRE CHOUTEAU SITE, Stanley County, South Dakota
4. BEDFORD SPRINGS HOTEL, Bedford, Pennsylvania

In accordance with National Historic Landmarks Program regulations, the Board reviewed the studies nominating these properties for Landmark status and found that the properties meet Historic Landmarks Program criteria. The Board, therefore, voted to recommend that they be designated as National Historic Landmarks. None of the parties required to be notified of a Landmark nomination proposal objects to these nominations, and a positive response, from the owners of each property, endorsing National Historic Landmark designation is enclosed.

At the same April 24, 1991 meeting, the National Park System Advisory Board also recommended a boundary increase for the following National Historic Landmark:

BOUNDARY INCREASE

1. CENTRAL CITY-BLACK HAWK HISTORIC DISTRICT, Central City, Black Hawk, and Nevadaville, Colorado

In accordance with National Historic Landmarks Program regulations, the Board reviewed the study increasing the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark property and found that the property's new boundaries meet Historic Landmarks Program criteria. The Board, therefore, voted to recommend that the boundary increase for the National Historic Landmark be approved. None of the parties required to be notified of a boundary increase to the National Historic Landmark objects to this boundary increase, and a positive response, from the owners, endorsing the boundary increase, is enclosed.

I recommend that you approve the Board's recommendations and designate as National Historic Landmarks the 25 properties listed above, and approve the boundary increase for the National Historic Landmark listed above.

Approve Manuel Lujan Jr. Disapprove _____
Date July 17, 1991 Date _____

Attachments

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Date: 11/7/91
To: ~~Edie Shean-Hammond~~ *Carolyn — FYI*
From: Mary Lynn Brand
Re: Information regarding an upcoming NHL Plaque ceremony.

Name / Location of NHL: Vassar College Observatory
Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County, New York

Requested Attendee: Duane Pearson, FDR NP has been requested.

Requested Presentation: Present the plaque and give brief talk on NHL Program.

Ceremony Information: The ceremony is tentatively set for Sunday, December 15, 1991. No other specific information set at this time.

Expected Attendees: No specifics yet.

Additional Information and/or Remarks:

I have been contacted by Dr. Elizabeth Daniels, Vassar College Historian regarding possibility of ceremony / plaque presentation to take place at the end of the Semester. She is shooting for December 15, 1991, but would like feed-back from our offices concerning the plaque and attendee before she takes it any further.

I have contacted the forge to see if this deadline can be met for the plaque, and am awaiting their response. I plan to let Dr. Daniels know no later than Tuesday, November 12th.

As attendee, she has requested Duane Pearson, FDR NP. She said this Park is close to site, and Duane has participated in other activities for the College with great success. If you would please contact Duane Pearson, and then call Dr. Daniels at (914) 454-2663 no later than Tuesday, November 12th, she would greatly appreciate it. Also, please let me know.

I have informed Dr. Daniels that she can expect a call from you or a member of your staff within a few days. If not in, leave message and she'll return your call.

Feel free to call me at (215) 597-5823 if you or Duane Pearson have any questions.

As always, thanks for all your help.

Mary Lynn

National Historic Landmarks Plaques
National Park Service / Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
2nd & Chestnut Streets, Room 251
U.S. Custom House
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

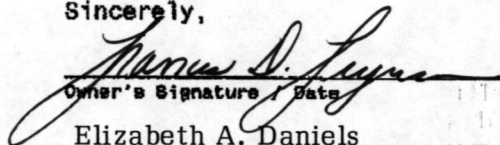
Attn: Mary Lynn Brand
Telephone: (215) 597-5823

Dear NPS:

As the owner(s) of Vassar College Observatory located in Poughkeepsie, New York and designated on July 17, 1991 (I,we) hereby make application for a bronze plaque identifying the property as a National Historic Landmark.

1. Fully conscious of the high responsibility to the Nation that goes with the ownership and care of a property classified as having national significance and worth of National Historic Landmark status, (I,we) agree to preserve, so far as practicable and to the best of (my, our) ability, the historic values of the site that satisfy the criteria for national significance.
2. (I,We) agree to permit periodic inspection of the property by a representative of the National Park Service for the purpose of monitoring its integrity and the nature and degree of any threats thereto.
3. (I,We) agree that, should the Landmark designation ever be revoked in accordance with the procedures outlined in the National Historic Landmarks regulations, the bronze plaque and the certificate of designation will be surrendered upon request to the National Park Service.
4. (I,We) further agree to affix the plaque for public view and in an appropriate manner.

Sincerely,



11/6/91

Owner's Signature / Date

Elizabeth A. Daniels

Name of Contact Person, if not Owner

Vassar College Box 74 Raymond Avenue Poughkeepsie New York 12601

Mailing Address (if P.O.Box, also include street address for shipping purposes)

Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

(914)-437-7200

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone Number

* Please keep a copy of this Agreement for your records *

NOV 1 1991

Original + one copy to WASO/HIST. DIV. 11-13-91 / YMRB, NPS/MARO/CRM-PGMS

INFORMATION FOR NOTICE LETTERS:

Exact name of property (this name will be used throughout the process and for purposes of listing and filing):

Vassar College Observatory

Location of property (full address): Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Name, title(if any) and address of each owner of the property: _____

~~Virginia Smith~~, ^{Dr.} Frances ~~Engel~~ ^{P.} Ferriuson
President, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Box 43

Is property public or private ownership? If multiple ownership, give status, public or private, for each owner Private

Name, title, and address of the highest elected official for the jurisdiction named as location of property:

Mayor Robert Bleakley, P.O. Box 300, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602

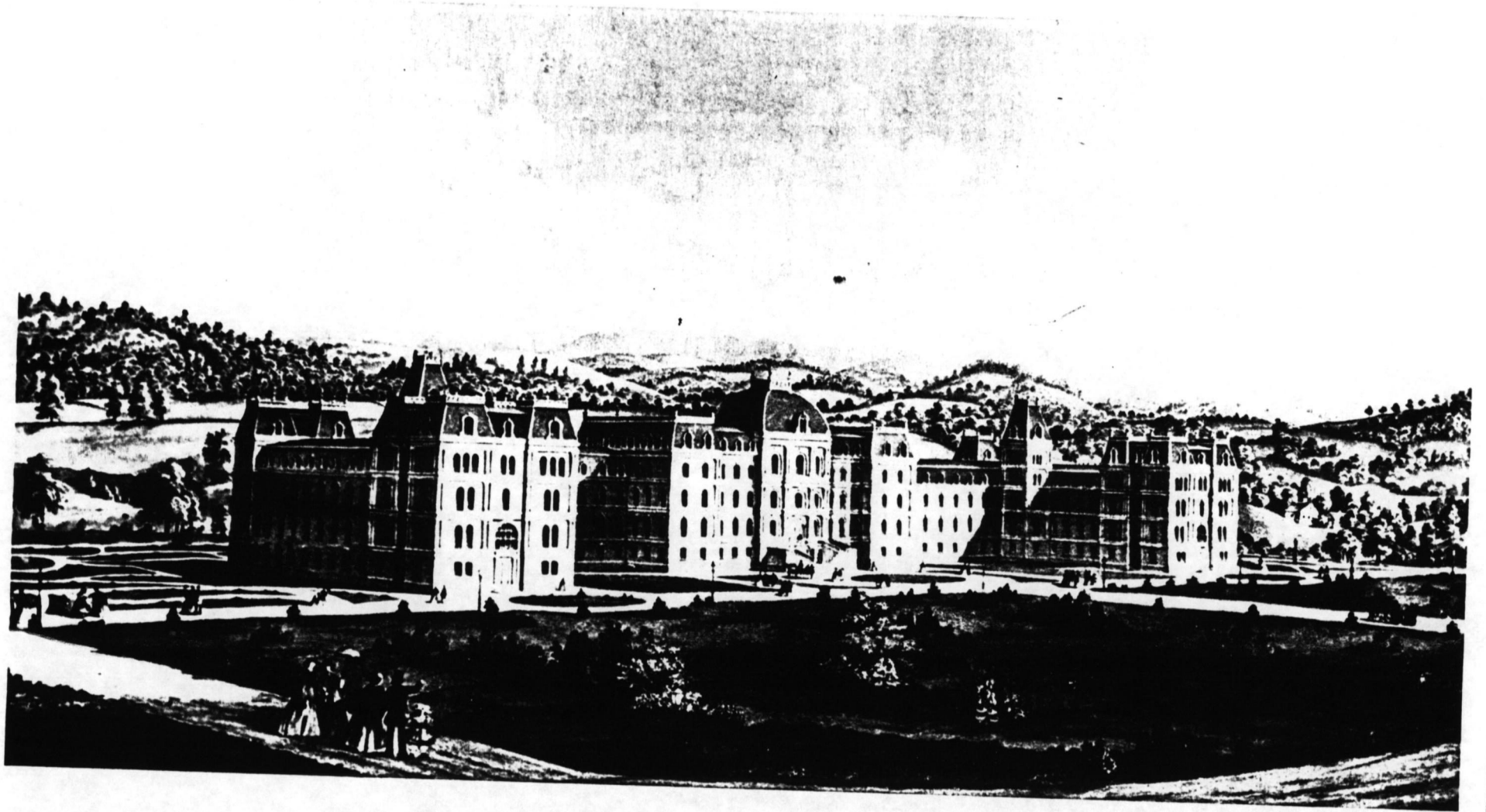
Name of the U.S. Representative Member of the district in which the property is located:

Hamilton Fish, Jr.

Name of both Senators for the state in which the property is located:

Alphonse D'Amato, Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Name, title(if any), and address of other parties advisable to receive copies of notice:



Old name, Vassar

ptg. as vassar existed in 1864.

Courtesy of Vassar