

# Pattern End Brick Houses

## *Leaving a Family Mark on the Landscape*

**Theme: Cultural & Historical**

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### Subject Areas

Social Studies and History,  
Mathematics, Art

### Duration

Two to three class periods

### Setting

Classroom and home, as well as  
possible field trip

### Skills

Classification, description, inference,  
calculation

### Charting the Course

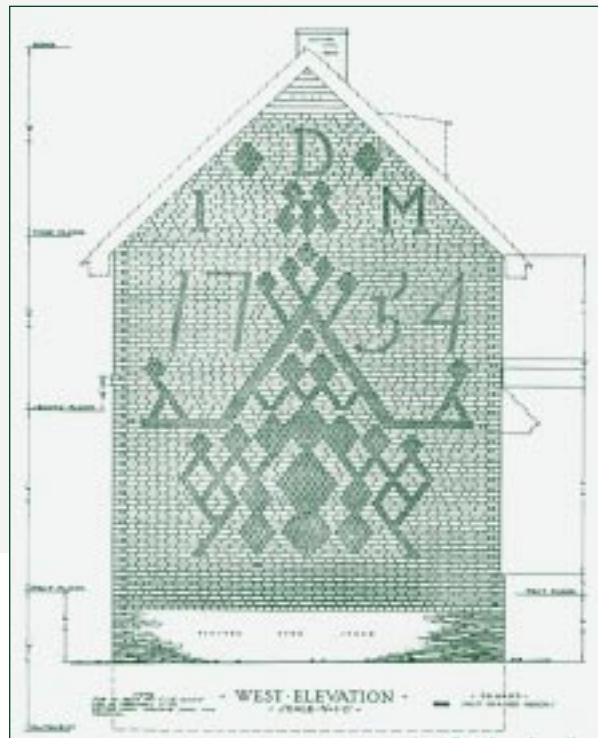
The teacher will need to obtain some visual aids that show patterned brick homes or review the portion of the film *Down Jersey* that shows them. Many resources and available documentation on these houses are listed in Appendix III, pages 177 through 180, in *Historic Themes and Resources*. Historical Societies (Salem), libraries, etc., could be contacted for resources to enhance this activity. A field trip to visit the Hancock House and Salem County Historical Society, Market Street, Salem, could be planned.

### Vocabulary

Patterned brick house (described through activity), chevrons, lozenges, zig-zag, Quaker

### Correlation to NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards

Social Studies	Mathematics*	Art
6.2 (3, 6)	4.1 (2, 3, 8)	4.7 (2, 6, 10)
6.5 (5)	4.2 (2, 5, 7)	4.8 (4, 5)
6.7 (5)	4.3 (6, 7, 10)	4.9 (1, 5, 14)
6.8 (1)	4.4 (3, 5, 10)	4.11 (1, 5, 9)
	4.5 (1, 2, 3, 4)	4.13 (4)
	4.6 (5)	4.15 (3)



\* This extensive list of Mathematics indicators being achieved through this activity is largely dependent on the extent to which the teacher takes the activity. Specifically, much of it depends on the actual calculation of building materials needed and the creation of a budget.

# Pattern End Brick Houses — *Leaving a Family Mark on the Landscape*

## ■ Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Describe the significance of patterned brick houses to the area known as the Delsea region.
2. Give examples of items and characteristics often included in the designs.
3. Interpret, through comparison and observation, the intended reasons for creating patterned brick houses.

## ■ Materials

Pen and ink drawings of pattern end brick houses (as overheads or handouts)

Pages 171–173 in *Historic Themes and Resources*

Map of New Jersey indicating location of patterned brick houses from Peter O. Wacker

Various art supplies

*Optional:* Catalogs/circulars from a variety of building supply retailers

Legos or other interlocking blocks

## ■ Making Connections

Through designing their own patterned end for their individual houses, students will realize the value of this architectural style/technique to the early settlers of the area.

This activity will allow students to express their own “sense of place.”

## ■ Background

*Historic Themes and Resources* pages 171-173 (Appendix 1)

*Pattern End Brick Houses — Leaving a Family Mark on the Landscape*, by Bernard L. Herman, University of Delaware

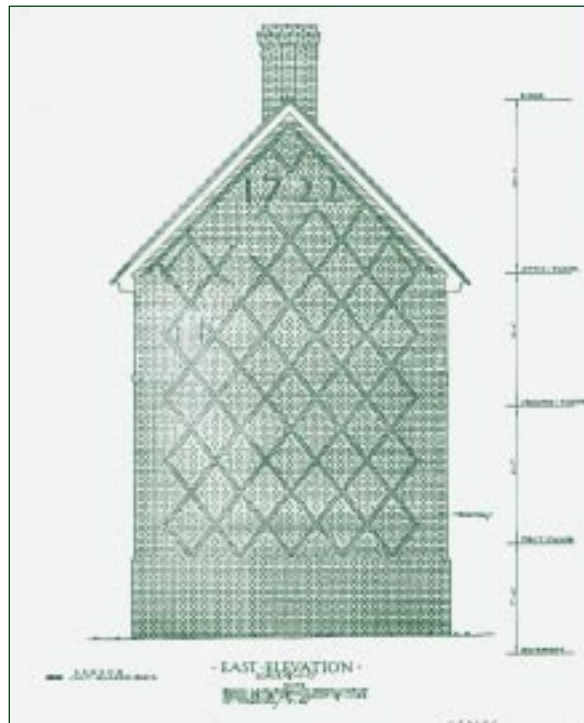
*Excerpts from National Significance Statement — New Jersey Shore of Delaware Bay Period I (1670–1720):*

Formative Landscape Traditions  
The single colonial architectural tradition most closely associated with the Delsea study area is that of the pattern end brick houses erected from circa 1718 through the colonial period.

The distinguishing characteristic of these dwellings is the use of glazed brick laid in intricate geometric patterns including chevrons, zigzags, and lozenges, along with construction dates and initials of the first occupants.

The architectural significance of the pattern ended houses was first recognized in the 1880s when Thomas York, a local photographer and antiquarian, undertook what may be the earliest known historic architectural survey in the United States. York bound his large-format photographs and accompanying family histories into a large volume that remains in the collections of the Salem County Historical Society. The Historic American Buildings Survey recorded many of the pattern end houses as they stood in the 1930s.

The pattern end houses of the Delsea study area are nationally significant as the architectural florescence of a regional building style without parallel in colonial America. The pattern end houses however, possess more than architectural significance.



## Pattern End Brick Houses — Leaving a Family Mark on the Landscape

With their prominent display of dates and initials, the pattern end houses describe public expression of wealth, kinship, and social status in an early agricultural community. Most closely associated with the early Quaker families who migrated into the area during the 1670s, these houses symbolize a “monumental” and long term investment in the region. The use of initials clearly places people and families on the land in personal terms, while the use of brick, the most costly and labor intensive of locally available building materials, speaks to the power of achieved prosperity. Thus, the houses stand as the monumental signatures of families whose descendants continue to occupy the area. The dates on the houses present a remarkable testament to the rise and fall of economic and political power. The dated houses are concentrated in the period from 1720 to 1750, or the second full generation of permanent English-speaking settlement. The dates of the pattern end houses consequently underscore the rapid economic rise of the first Quaker planters and their ability to exercise a tangible measure of visual authority over their landscape. The rapid and dramatic decline of new pattern end brick homes in the later decades of the 1700s speaks just as eloquently to the loss of Quaker authority even as the community assumed a more diverse social and religious character.

### ■ Procedure

#### *Warm Up*

Read (or have students tell from memory) the story *The Three Little Pigs*. Discuss the need for permanence in house building materials. Remind them (or re-show) the portion of the video *Down Jersey* that shows patterned brick houses. Discuss the background information and describe the significance of these houses as indicating the prominence of the Quakers settling in the region.

#### *The Activity*

1. Introduce the concept of patterns. Ask students for examples of patterns that they see around them.
2. Show photos, diagrams, drawings of actual pattern brick homes. Have students identify features of the houses and list them on the board.
3. Solicit from students the reasons for each feature: (date, family initials, pattern, etc.)
4. Ask students to describe their homes and to list features and what they illustrate about them and their families. For homework, students should find out the details of their house: (i.e. date built, material, size of one end (this may require parental assistance in measuring, costing-out building materials, etc.)

#### *Optional*

Using recent catalogs, circulars, promotional brochures, etc. from building supply companies, have students investigate the variety of bricks (i.e. pavers, various

colors, etc.) currently available and their cost per brick. The different shapes of bricks now available would allow for more varied and elaborate patterned ends to be designed today.

5. Students should be assigned to create their own patterned end for their individual houses. They should diagram, to scale, the pattern that would be indicative of their family life and heritage. The amount of time that a teacher wishes to devote to this will determine the amount of detail required.
6. Using various art materials, have students illustrate the patterned end for their house that they designed. Each design should include at least three features that symbolize their individual family heritage, name, date, etc. This may be done with pen and ink drawings, painting, modelling clay, etc. Younger students can also use small Lego blocks (or similar interlocking blocks) to create their patterns.

#### *Wrap Up*

1. Name three features of pattern end brick houses.
2. How did they indicate prosperity?
3. Why is there such a great concentration of them in the Salem/Cumberland county area?
4. How were they indicative of Quaker settlement?



## ■ Assessment

The students' individual pattern designs and renditions of their own houses, as well as a written description of them, is the assessment.

## ■ Extensions

Developing a budget for creating their pattern end house:

Using the catalogs and building supply circulars, students actually measure and calculate the materials that would be needed to create their patterned end. Having a mason provide price quotes (estimated per hour charge, etc.) for students to include in their "budget" would be significant to a full understanding of the costs associated with these homes and why they represented the wealthiest people in the community. This activity would be suited as a homework/extended assignment that would also serve to involve the parents.

## ■ Resources

*Invite a local mason to be a guest speaker in the class.*

*Have the students prepare specific questions about their trade and the skills needed for the specialized masonry evident in the patterned brick homes. What other types of specialized/custom masonry do people have designed for their homes?*

*Visit the **Hancock House, Hancock's Bridge, and the Salem County Historical Society, Salem**, for a firsthand look at these historically significant structures.*

***The Salem County Historical Society** at 79-83 Market Street, Salem, offers children's programs. Call for more information and reservations (609) 935-5004*

*Possible applications available in computer programs that are utilized by builders and designers where students could design their patterns?*

*Except for the Hancock House, the Woodstown and Salem Friends Meetinghouses\* and the Alexander Grant House (the Salem County Historical Society's headquarters) and the Gibbon House (Cumberland County Historical Society, Greenwich), all of the patterned brick homes are **private property**. Both the Grant House and the Gibbon House are pattern-brick structures, although not pattern end. They do, however, exhibit Flemish bond with glazed headers. The Salem County Historical Society, does, of course, welcome visitation.*

*\*Note: The two meetinghouses are interesting for comparative purposes — they include only the date of construction, but no initials, since these buildings belonged to the community, not any individual.*

***Paving Stone Companies, Masons, etc.** Check the telephone directory for a local listing.*

