Down Jersey:
From Bayshore to Seashore

Vernacular Architecture Forum

Annual Conference of the
Vernacular Architecture Forum

Galloway, New Jersey
May 7 - 10, 2014
Down Jersey: From Bayshore to Seashore

A Guidebook for the Annual Conference of the VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM

Galloway, New Jersey
Stockton Seaview Hotel & Golf Club
May 7 - 10, 2014

Janet W. Foster, Conference Chair
Robert W. Craig, Editor
Kate Nearpass Ogden, Photo Editor
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Co-Sponsor
Welcome to a place you’ve never heard of, with a name that doesn't exist on any map. You came to learn about vernacular architecture in a State as maligned as any for its congestion and for despoliation of its environment. But you have joined this 34th annual gathering because you know VAF will lead you to the most interesting places in North America. You also figured it wasn’t hard to get here – indeed our conference location is central to a large portion of the VAF membership. When you looked at our website before registering, you saw that we’re near some really interesting places that you’d been meaning to visit. Maybe you even heard fellow VAFers whisper in awed tones, “Greenwich,” “Salem,” “Cape May” or “the Pine Barrens.”

While not exactly a secret, “Down Jersey” is interesting precisely because it’s a little off the beaten path, a little less traveled than other places in our incredible State. Even most New Jerseyans have never been here. This old expression for the southernmost parts of the State appears in print in 1940, with a folklife study by Cornelius Weygandt: Down Jersey: Folks and Their Jobs, Pine Barrens, Salt Marsh and Sea Islands (New York: D. Appleton, 1940). Weygandt’s description still stands:

My South Jersey...though it has industries, it is not industrial as North Jersey is. It is largely farm country and fisherman’s country, with a fringe of resorts on the ocean front...

... The flatness all about widens your view; the far line of the horizon gives you a sense of space; the suggestion on the air of the sea somewhere beyond, with its waves rolling in mile after mile for thousands of miles, sets your thoughts roving to the world’s ends. You are freed from trammels, your heart takes wing...

People have been coming to and through New Jersey for hundreds of years, yet much of the travel in all that time has been on a northeast-southwest axis, between (and often to the aggrandizement of) Philadelphia, New York City, and their spreading metropolitan regions. But it has hardly been devoid of human activity, although people have come and gone for thousands of years, but the relentless rush of water and the determined growth of forests have steadily reduced evidence of material culture from all eras.

Look carefully at a map: more than a third of the State lies below Camden, across from Philadelphia. Cape May City, the most southerly point of New Jersey, holds the same latitude as Washington, DC. The routes southeast from Philadelphia across the flattening coastal plains first pass through the undeveloped Pine Barrens, the largest open-space preserve on the east coast. This pine-filled woodland standing on sandy soils was inhospitable to traditional farming, and so earned its lasting reputation as “barren” ground. Early travelers referred to the land of coastal New Jersey as the “Sandy Barren Desarts.” While in one sense, the name “Pine Barrens” can technically cover the whole sandy coastal rim, it is more commonly used to refer to the wilderness north of the Mullica River. The “Pine Barrens” in their broadest definition represent almost a million acres of land, some publicly owned and some privately owned, much of it forested in pine and oak, and interlaced with streams, bogs and marshes; all of it recognized by the State of New Jersey as the “Sandy Barren Deserts.”

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But it has hardly been devoid of human activity, for it became, for example, the locus of land-grabbing ironworks with their tree-cutting, charcoal-making appurtenances. Further south and east the routes pass large farms, places that still support New Jersey’s other moniker, “the Garden State.” Many roads through “Down Jersey” end at the water; the Atlantic Ocean, the Delaware Bay, or river landings, whence generations of fishermen and oystermen have made a living.
Introducing “Down Jersey”

In the Pine Barrens, dense forest cover prevents much of a view even from the low hills that formed from ancient, post-glacial, sand dunes. Westerly, closer to the Delaware River, in Salem and Cumberland counties, the land is more fertile, less sandy. There, farming is a major part of the economy. Adjoining tidal rivers, verdant meadows form, once controlled by man-made dikes, or “meadow banks.” The edges between the fast land and the brackish waters of the Delaware Bay are spanned by wide marshland meadows that separated fields from water, and plant and harvest the crops in those fields. Abolitionist feeling among Quakers in the area led to a repudiation of slavery among their members by 1780, after which African American communities of descendants of slaves started to appear. Soon, they began to be joined by escaping slaves from the South, and Salem has one of the few well-documented sites of the Underground Railroad.

The African-American communities tended to be set off by themselves, in marginal places on marginal lands, but always with a church to serve as community center.

The Baron de Hirsch Fund, established in 1889 to help relocate Eastern European Jews, purchased land in South Jersey for resettlement opportunities. Communities were established and synagogues built, and some families took up farming. However, many who ended up here had never farmed before, and found it hard to make the challenging soil yield much. Within a generation, most of the Jewish settlers relocated to more urban places, and the small settlements never became the populous towns some promoters had envisioned.

The most recent wave of agriculturally-driven resettlement occurred after World War II, with the arrival of European Jews, many with concentration camp numbers tattooed on their arms. They focused on chicken farming, which did work well with the soil and climate, and the nearby East Coast cities provided a robust market for eggs and poultry. The manure enriched the soil, and made possible some farming for family use. The culture and memories of this group of people are being supported and documented by the Holocaust Resource Center at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Commercial farming in the 20th century came to rely on big fields, technologies of fertilizer and irrigation, and migrant-workers as field hands. The richer soils of Salem and Cumberland Counties provided a better basis for vegetable and dairy farming, but the demands of commercial agriculture are far different than the idyllic view of the “family farm.” At the corners of fields or in the ranges of outbuildings, one can see the barracks-like structures where workers stay, coming seasonally to hand pick blueberries and tomatoes and melons. One of the last small-scale, family dairy farms in the county where cows were herded to pasture daily, went out of business in 2011, while industrial-scale dairying continued, because the highly trafficked counties to the north. In dollar terms, it is today the poorest region of New Jersey south of the corridor.
Introducing “Down Jersey”

the State, because modern industry and office parks and shopping malls have not concentrated here. But the benefit has been that more traces of the past remain here, in more or less intact settings, than in any other region of New Jersey. The landscape is as powerful as the buildings; both reflect successive human cultures and their diverse lifeways.

In 2014, we are celebrating the 350th anniversary of New Jersey as a distinct political entity. Since 1664 that entity has changed from a colonial possession of Great Britain to the third State to join the Union, in 1787. It has come to be a vibrant center of industry, technological development, research, and commerce. But within that political unity, there has always been a great variety of people, and the built environment clearly reflects that. For a small state, New Jersey has great geographic and ethnic diversity.

The tours that have been arranged for this VAF conference visit but a small fraction of the places to which we could have taken you. Hard choices had to be made. There are so many sites of historic and natural interest, and a drive through the region, especially on any back roads, will confirm for the VAFer that there is so much more to see. Your visit means a lot to us, especially if you go home with a new appreciation. All who have planned this conference share a great pride in our State, and we are delighted to take you down Jersey.

Many people worked together to help showcase “Down Jersey” for you. They are named on the following pages, and all deserve a special “thank you.” The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey is our partner in producing this conference, and we thank them for website, design, and logistical support, as well as offering the beautiful Seaview Resort and Conference Center to VAF.

Janet W. Foster
Kate Nearpass Ogden
Robert W. Craig

Credits:
Specimen Days are diary jottings by Whitman from his Civil War service through about 1881. He describes them as “memoranda” and he edited his notes for publication in his Collected Works, published posthumously in 1892. Whitman lived in Camden, New Jersey in the 1870s and 80s, but he traveled throughout southern New Jersey, and some of his observations of the landscape remain true in today’s “Down Jersey.”

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Annual Conference of the VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM, Galloway, New Jersey, May 2014

Acknowledgments

The Steering Committee for the 2014 Vernacular Architecture Forum is composed of dedicated volunteers who love the architecture and landscape of “Down Jersey” and who have committed time and energy to turn that into a conference we proudly share with you. Special thanks first to our Steering Committee:

Kate Nearpass Oglen, Professor of Art History, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey; Illustrations Editor for the Guidebook, liaison between VAF and Stockton, and all around communicator and organizer. Kudos!

Joan Berkey, Historic Preservation Consultant and Co-Coordinator of the Shore Tour

Michael Chiaiappa, Professor, Quinnipiac University; native “Down Jerseyman” and Organizer for the Bay Shore Tour

Robert W. Craig, NJ HPO Principal Historic Preservation Specialist; Editor of the Guidebook

Mark Demitroff, Department of Geography, University of Delaware; Co-Coordinator of the Pine Barrens Tour

Mary Delaney Krugman, Principal, Mary Delaney Krugman Associates, Inc., Historic Preservation Consultants, Montclair, NJ; Salem Tour Co-Coordinator

Janet L. Sheridan, Cultural Landscape Historian, Salem, NJ; Co-Coordinator of the Salem Tour

Andrea Tingey, NJ HPO Principal Historic Preservation Specialist; Co-Coordinator of the Shore Tour

Margaret Westfield, R.A., Westfield Architects; Co-Coordinator for the Pine Barrens Tour

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Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., President, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Dr. Robert S. Gregg, Dean, School of General Studies

Dr. Lisa K. Horraker, Interim Dean, School of Arts and Humanities

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Development of a conference of this magnitude, with multiple tours and sites to visit, requires thanks to so many in each community. Here are the principals for each tour:

Salem County: Patterned Brick and Beyond
Janet L. Sheridan and Mary Delaney Krugman, Tour Co-Coordinator

Site Owners and Representatives
Donald Asay, Mayor of Mannington, and David Culver, Mannington Township Historian, Marshallstown School Fred Andrews, Salem City Fire Department Chief Debbie and George Bee and Andrew Bee, Garrison Saltbox Mary and Bill Breneman, The John and Charlotte Wistar House

Andrew Coldren, Curator/Director, Salem County Historical Society
Suzanne and Mike Cooke, Royal Port Antiques
Suzanne and David Culver, The Casper and Rebecca Wistar House

James Christopher Davenport, Executive Director, Salem Main Street Program
Brenda Evans, Estuary Enhancement Program Coordinator, PSEG
Emmett Henderson, Marshallstown School Paul Isenberg, Garrison Saltbox

Ann and Jay Madara, The William S. Sharp House
Ronald E. Magill, President, Salem Old House Foundation, Abel and Mary Nicholson House Carl Nittinger, The Goodwin Sisters House
Rev. Wardell Sherman, Mt. Zion AUMP Church, Marshallstown
Peggy Simkins, Historian, and the Trustees, Akline United Methodist Church
Steven G. Smith, The John and Rachel Watson House

Ann and Ron Wohlrab, The Samuel and Eliza Clement House
Ann and Elmer Young, Mt. Zion AUMP Church, Marshallstown
City of Salem: Common Council; Kathleen Krenn, Salem City Clerk
County of Salem: Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders; Tal-Nesha Harris, Confidential Assistant to the County Administrator; Jeff Ridgeway, Department Head, Facilities Management

Field Work
Janet Sheridan, Organizer and Project Manager
Farms Crew I: Janet Sheridan; Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware: Rebecca Shepard, Assistant Director; Cate Morrison, Program Assistant; and Graduate Students: Sumithra Arjai, Hannah Blad, Melissa Illas, Virginia Davidowski, Michael Emmens, Keisha Gonzalez, Jennifer Nichols, Alexandra Tarantino, Alex Till, Farms Crew II: David and Suzanne Culver, Beverly Carr Bradway, Stephanie Long Fazен, Noel Kemm, Maria Corda-Moreno, AIA, Janet Sheridan, Steven Smith.

Salem City Crew: Joan Berkey, Stephanie Long Fazен, Janet Foster, Noel Kemm, Mary Delaney Krugman, Sally McMurry, Janet Sheridan, Linda Smith.

Marshallstown: Janet Sheridan, Beverly Carr and Arnold Bradway, Heather Boyd, Jayland Sye, Sharon Washburn

Research and Writing, Drawing, Bus Guides and other planning tasks
Joan Berkey, Maria Corda-Moreno, AIA, Patrick Hanhanburger, Mary Delaney Krugman, Janet W. Foster, Ann Madara, Ron Magill, Carl Nittinger, Matt Pisanki, Salem Main Street Program, Janet Sheridan, Andrea Tingey, James Waddington and David Orr

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Building the Bayshore: Gateway to Down Jersey
Michael Chiarappa, Tour Coordinator

Greenwich
Warren Adams
Kim Barbera, The Benjamin and Hannah Reese House
Stephen Barndt, The Joseph Dennis House
Pat and Frank Blake, The Stone Tavern
Cumberland County Historical Society
William and Cynthia Diffield, The Richard and Hannah Wood House

Robert and Sharon Kubis, The Job and Jemima Stiles House

Joe Mathews
Penelope Watson, AIA, The Sheppard Tenant House
Robert Watson, The Philip Dennis, Jr. House and The Reeve-Sheppard House

Fairfield Presbyterian Church
Bob Francois

Mauricetown
Walt Birbeck and Eileen Wiggins
Dan Compton and Marge Marthieshek, The Captain David Compton House
Irene Ferguson
Joe and Kim LaCroce, The Seth Sharp House
Mauricetown Historical Society, Abraham and Ann Hoy House, The Captain Edward Compton House
Dave and Betty McGrail, The James Compton House
Dave and Peggy Miletta, The Wills House
Bob and Judy Moore, The Captain Isaac Peterson House
John Nardone and Julia Candy
Rev. Mark O’Sheilds, Mauricetown-Halesville United Methodist Churches
Carole Penelli
Drew Tomlin
Libby and Brian Truitt, The Dr. Joseph Butcher House
Joseph Waddington and Nelson Garcia, 1211 Stable Lane

Cliff Young

Bucham Farm
Patricia Brianers Ball
Herbert Rockocista
Walt Witt

East Point Lighthouse
Dave Ivan

Mauricetown Historical Society
Kim Ruth

Bayshore Discovery Project, the Al Meerveld, and Bivalve
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Steve Gates, Laura Johnson, Rachel Rodgers DolanRzcky
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Additional research and writing by Joan Berkley, Mike Chiarappa, Jode Hillman, Gigi Price, Paul Schopp, Penny Watson, Robert Watson.

Four Centuries by the Shore in a Day Tour
Joan Berkley and Andrea Tingey, Co-Coordinators

Publicly Accessible Site Owners and Representatives
Lee Albright, South Seaville Methodist Camp Meeting
Richard Hellant, Lucy the Elephant
Bob Holden, Seaville Friends Meeting House
Freni Salvatore and the staff at Historic Cold Spring Village
Jane Stark, Sam Aroz Museum

Private Home owners
Lew and Jean Albrecht, The Reeves-Iszard-Godfrey House
James Davidson and Felix Amador, The John Doughty House
Chris Brown, Ruhlwad Cottage
Shawn and Cecelia Quigley, The Thomas Candy House

Research, Text Writing, Planning and Tour Guides
Sara Andre, Joan Berkley, Sarah Homer, Dick Regensburg, Andrea Tingey, Margaret Westfield, RA

People, Places, and Sugar Sand: A Pinelands Tour
Mark Dentroff and Margaret Westfield, Co-Coordinators

Wharton State Forest – Batsto and Axion
Bob Auermuller, Superintendent Wharton State Forest
Alexis Demetrillo, The Birches
Ted Gordon, Botanist and Pinelands Historian
Peter Hamilton, West Jersey History Roundtable
Patt Martellini, Vineyard History
John Morfa, Batsto Village Historian
Rick Radis, New Jersey Audubon Society

Acknowledgments
The Seaview Hotel and Golf Resort
Janet W. Foster

The Seaview Country Club was founded in 1914 as a retreat and playground by Clarence Geist (1874-1938), a self-made businessman who became the nation’s largest private owner of public utilities in the early 20th century. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as both a shrewd entrepreneur and an unabashed lover of status and money. Geist was also an avid golfer, and, it was said, founded his own country club to avoid waiting in line at other places. Geist purchased a bay-side farm near the burgeoning resort of Atlantic City and reportedly spent 1.5 million dollars to build the exclusive clubhouse and its golf course. The Seaview Country Club was created in what has been called the “Golden Age” of golf design, the period from 1911 to 1930 when virtually all of the great golf courses of America were built. During this period, the clubhouses and the golf courses themselves became far more sophisticated in design, and began to vie with each other in their beauty and amenities.1

The Seaview clubhouse opened in 1914, at the same time the golf course was initially laid out. It seems that Geist hired Frank Seeberger (1867(?)-1942) to transform an old farmhouse on the site into a clubhouse. Seeberger was a Philadelphia architect who trained as a draftsman at the Franklin Institute Drawing School and the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art. He worked for several years for architect Horace Trumbauer, and it is in Trumbauer’s office that Seeberger met Charles Rabenold. In 1914, the two established their own firm, and during their twenty-year partnership they designed many suburban houses around the Philadelphia area. They are also known for a number of Protestant churches. The catalog of Seeberger’s work alone, or in partnership with Rabenold, shows no other country clubs. The Seaview clubhouse was designed prior to the creation of the Seeberger & Rabenold partnership and it is attributed solely to Frank Seeberger.2

However, there is also clear evidence that in 1915-16, another Philadelphia architect, Ralph E. White (1886-1948), had a commission to design the Seaview Country Club, in the same location.3 It seems that after the rush to open the club, Geist hired an architect with experience in clubhouse design to create the larger and more opulent clubhouse we see today. The earlier building was subsumed within later construction. Ralph White had studied at Drexel Institute, graduating in 1901 with a Certificate in Building Construction, and launching his own firm that

With gratitude to all who turned an idea into a wonderful conference!

Janet W. Foster
NJVAF 2014 Steering Committee Chair

The Birches and Moore’s Meadow
Bill Bolger, National Historic Landmarks Program
Alexis Demitroff, Agricultural Intern, Richard Stockton College
Ted Gordon, Botanist and Pinelands Historian
Sam Moore III, Moore’s Meadow Blueberry & Cranberry Farm
Mary Ann Thompson, Owner, Birches Cranberry Farm
Budd Wilson, Historical Archaeologist

Tomasello Winery
Larry Coia, President, Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association
Charles Tomasello, Third Generation Outer Coastal Plain Winegrower, Tomasello Winery, Hammonton

Medford Lakes
The Protestant Community Church in Medford Lakes,
The “Cathedral of the Woods”
Carol Vahlstrom, Local Tour Co-coordinator
Joan Lewis, Medford Lakes Historian and Local Tour Co-coordinator
Christee Greatrex, Local Tour Co-coordinator
Jason and Ethan Evans, Evans Brothers Preservation Carpentry
Bob and Brenda Hardegen, Owners, 147 Stokes Road
Carol Latti, Owner, 113 Stokes Road
Gerald and Rosarie O’Rourke, Owners, 153 Stokes Road
Judy and Bill Smith, Owners, 50 Mohawk Trail
George and Jody Wilen, Owners, 74 Mohawk Trail
Shere Walsh, Tenant, & The Cathedral of the Woods,
Owner, 113 Apache Trail
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The Seaview Hotel and Golf Resort, ca. 1914-1928, before the wing on the right was increased to three stories.
The major public spaces of the hotel remain largely as they were a century ago, including the remarkable “tap room,” or informal dining room, with its hand-crafted “Moravian” or Mercer floor tiles. Dr. Henry Mercer’s home, museum and tile works were located in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia. His house, “Fonthill,” is open to the public. Mercer was well-known for his hand-crafted “Moravian” tiles, at least among Philadelphia architects, who would have been aware of his floor tiles installed in the Pennsylvania Capitol building, opened in 1908. These tiles accentuated the Arts and Crafts atmosphere created by the other interior details.

The original golf course, known today as the Bay Course, was partially designed by Hugh Wilson, the designer of the acclaimed Main Line Philadelphia Merion Country Club course. Seaview’s golf course first opened in 1915, and was extended and completed the following year when designer Donald Ross added the sand bunkers. The original landscape designs for this part of the golf course are framed and are on display in the pro shop at Seaview. The Seaview was in its heyday in the 1920s, when guests included President Warren G. Harding. The golfing opportunities expanded with the addition of another 18 holes, now called the Pines Course, in 1927-29. Geist meanwhile focused his attention on creating the Boca Raton Hotel and Club. It was completed in 1928 as the crowning achievement of the 1920s Florida land boom. The project was to be a city of luxury, sporting miles of Venetian canals and man-made lakes as the watery setting for the world’s largest and finest hotel. The development went bankrupt before completion, but Geist still managed to bring a scaled-down version to market.

Leo Fraser, who became the Seaview professional in 1935, has written this reminiscence:

Nothing was like Seaview in the rest of the country. How many other clubs at the time had an indoor swimming pool, a French chef and liveried chauffeurs who drove Rolls Royces and Pierce Arrow? Every affluent club used Seaview as its standard. They had horses, squash courts, tennis courts, a trap shooting range, and of course, the golf course. It only cost $100 to join Seaview, continued Leo, “but it took more than money to get in, and if Mr. Geist heard anyone complain about the price of anything, he’d just go up to that person and say, ‘Your resignation has been accepted.’ That’s the kind of guy Geist was. He despised dogs, thought airplanes were the product of the devil, couldn’t stand cigarettes and his feet always hurt.

The Seaview Country Club hung on through the Great Depression, and was a draw for celebrities and Philadelphia society through the 1950s. In 1942, Seaview hosted the PGA Championship where Sam Snead captured his first major tournament win, going on to become a major name in American golf history. In 1946, a Philadelphia socialite, Grace Kelly, celebrated her 16th birthday at a party in the Oval Room. She of course would later become famous as Princess Grace of Monaco.

During the post-World War II years, Seaview remained an exclusive country club and golf retreat, but shifted its focus to catering to business meetings and conferences. During this time, the Seaview’s physical plant was enlarged for the first time in 40 years, upgrading the Pines Golf Course, adding a conference wing in 1956 (where VAF will hold its paper sessions during the conference), additional conference/event building in 1964. The hotel wing extending at an angle from the main block was built in 1961, closely mimicking the form and finishes of the original part of the structure.

In 1984, the Marriott Corporation bought the club and turned it into a resort open to the public. Marriott sold the property to LaSalle Hotel Properties in 1998, but continued to manage it until 2009. In that year, Seaview was honored by Golfweek magazine as one of the “Best Courses You Can Play” in New Jersey, and by Golf World magazine with a 2009 Readers’ Choice Award. In 1998, the golf course was restored by Bob Cupp, Jr. to be close to the original design. Today the course plays as a par 71, 6,247 yards (5,712 m) from the back tees.

In 2009, Dolce Hotels and Resorts took over management of the hotel and Troon Golf was retained to manage the golf courses. On September 1, 2010, the College of New Jersey purchased the hotel for 20 million dollars, using it in part as a site for their Hospitality
and Tourism Management Studies Program, which is offered as a B.S degree through the College of Business. The Seaview Resort is proud of its long history, and of its beautiful building and grounds. Feel free to look at the photographs, drawings, and other memorabilia of Seaview found on the walls in all the public spaces of the hotel, including the pro shop, the restaurant and bar and the halls.

With thanks for information from Dolce Hotels and Resorts, including historic photographs from their files, and Tourism Management Studies Program, which is offered as a B.S degree through the College of Business.

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4. Ibid.

Quakers and Other Dissenters

European ambitions for the area consumed by the lower Delaware estuary yielded a succession of failed colonizing efforts until the 1670s.¹ By this time, Britain had consolidated its rule over the region, and plans were well underway to establish the colony of West New Jersey. Control of West Jersey’s proprietary land shares rested in the hands of a small group of Quakers, and among this cohort, John Fenwick claimed ownership of one tenth of the entire colony, and appropriated as his share the majority of the territory rimming Delaware Bay. Building on a spirit of boosterism that had been touting the region’s mercantile value since the Dutch arrived, Fenwick promoted his territory – variously designated the Salem Tenth or Fenwick’s Tenth – as a place where Quakers would, in George Fox’s vision of the New World, find spiritual and economic fulfillment through the plantations they cultivated. Whether seen as a metaphor for tending one’s soul or one’s pursuit of worldly wealth, Fox emphasized his metaphorically-charged use of the phrase “Plantation Work” by adding that it was “the work of this Generation.” While both Fox and Fenwick’s rhetoric, like that of other “Weighty Friends,” framed the transformation of the shoreline environment as a liberating enterprise for Quakers of all ranks, its potential was not solely limited to a bayshore brimming with plantations.² More to the point, no less a Quaker than William Penn speculated that the Delaware Bay’s environs provided a host of other assets integral to sustaining long-term social and economic development. Anticipating the benefits of a commercially-networked bayshore, a promotional broadside attributed to Penn declared:

*Building the Bayshore: Gateway to Down Jersey*

Michael J. Chiarappa

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But that which makes this Terrestrial Canaan…complete, are the many good Harbours for shipping both on the Sea-Coasts, and upon the said River of Delaware; The which descends by the West-side of the Province [West New Jersey] as aforesaid, to the Mouth or Bay of Delaware, from the Country North-ward, about two hundred Miles. In which are great numbers of Sturgons, Lobsters, Oysters, and many other Sea-Fish; And upon which River may be established a considerable Trade for Beaver, Tobacco, Iron, Fish, Porke, Beefe, Salt, Corne, Tanning, Masts, Building Of Vessels, &c.³

Penn’s ideas for developing Philadelphia showed how important city and town planning would be in advancing these goals, and closer to the Delaware Bay, Fenwick advised those who purchased shares of his proprietorship to consider “a place Chosen and set out for a Town or City to be built, in which every Purchaser must have a Part, by reason of Delaware River for Trade.”⁴ Fenwick specifically planned two towns, Salem and Cohansey (later called Greenwich), with these priorities in mind, and, regarding the latter, played to the site’s bayshore topography by envisioning lots laid out on necks of land adjacent to the Cohansey River where trade could be accommodated. Mindful of Quakerism’s collective ethos, his plan for Cohansey (Greenwich) included a marsh to serve as a commons and a one-hundred foot wide road linking all the properties and centralizing community life.⁵

Although Penn’s legacy is defined by his efforts in founding the City of Philadelphia and the Province of Pennsylvania, his earlier role as a West Jersey proprietor made him acutely aware of how the fates of these ventures were intertwined. Penn’s promotional tracts for his “Holy Experiment” always place it in a wider bioregional context, and he enticed his Free Society of Traders in Pennsylvania with accounts of a Delaware Bay containing:

- Of the water, the Swan, Goose, white and gray, Brands, Ducks, Teal also The Snipe and Curloes, and that in great Numbers...
- Of Fish, there is the Sturgeon, Herring, Rock, Shad, Catshead, Sheepshead, Ele, and Smelt, Roach ….Of Shellfish, we have Oysters, Crabs, Cockles, Concks, and Musshels; some Oysters six Inches long, and...
one sort of Cockles as big as the Stewring Oysters...and of the Water, the Whale for Oyl, of which we have good store, and two Companies of Whales, whose boats are built, will soon begin their Work...To say nothing of our reasonable Hopes of good Cod in the bay.\footnote{Quakers from Fenwick’s Salem Tenth made their way south along the bay to the area around the Cohansey River, where they purchased land and spent some time in the Delaware Valley, added more precise reference to the bayshore’s geography: “The Lands from the Capes, to about six Miles above New-Castle...is for the most part very rich, there being very many navigable Cricks on both sides of the River [and Bay], and on the River and Cricks are great quantities of rich fat Marsh Land.”}

Thomas Budd, a fellow Quaker who had already spent some time in the Delaware Valley, added more precise reference to the bayshore’s geography: “The Lands from the Capes, to about six Miles above New-Castle...is for the most part very rich, there being very many navigable Cricks on both sides of the River [and Bay], and on the River and Cricks are great quantities of rich fat Marsh Land.”\footnote{Quakers from Fenwick’s Salem Tenth made their way south along the bay to the area around the Cohansey River, where they purchased land and spent some time in the Delaware Valley, added more precise reference to the bayshore’s geography: “The Lands from the Capes, to about six Miles above New-Castle...is for the most part very rich, there being very many navigable Cricks on both sides of the River [and Bay], and on the River and Cricks are great quantities of rich fat Marsh Land.”}

During the 18th century, bayshore life was shaped by its participation in the Atlantic economy, and by the desire of some of the region’s various groups to more firmly establish their cultural presence in the region. While colonial observers usually classified the land nearest to the bayshore as “mostly poor,” reasonably productive farms capitalized on the loamy soils stretching from Alloway Creek to areas just south of the Cohansey River. These farms typically raised wheat, corn, and rye, and supplemented these staple food crops with beef, pork, and dairy products, as well as flax. It was common for these farms to have orchards, or, in what preceded modern truck farming, to raise vegetables and fruits for nearby town markets and Philadelphia.

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Intent on taking advantage of the “good meadows and marshes” that abounded along the bayshore, farmers banked or diked these tidal lands, reclaiming valuable acreage they used for grazing and fattening cattle, for raising hay, and for cultivating wheat and corn in the rich alluvial soil. Banked meadows became a signature feature of the bayshore landscape. But such enthusiasm for land reclamation had its costs. Building and maintaining dikes was a considerable undertaking, and local associations or commissions were formed to manage these affairs and their associated costs. Those who pursued the benefits of these land reclamation efforts needed to allay concerns over the impact they might have on navigation or adjoining properties.\footnote{According to historical geographer Peter Wacker, “woodlands,” “woodlots,” and “cedar swamp” – resulted from the economic value of “woodlands,” “woodlots,” and “cedar swamp” – underscoring the economic value of.}

The public was duly noted of such plans:

Notice is hereby given, that the principal owners of two several tracts of tide meadows or marsh, lying and adjoining on the north side of Cohansey-creek, alias Caesarea-river, in the county of Cumberland, in West New Jersey, one tract called and known by the name of the Fork Marsh; the other situation lower down on the said creek, joined on the same, and to the land of Jonathan Holmes, Esq.; design to make application at the next sessions of General Assembly of the said Province, to pass an act for banking, draining and maintaining the same at said owners expence.\footnote{According to historical geographer Peter Wacker, “woodlands,” “woodlots,” and “cedar swamp” – resulted from the economic value of “woodlands,” “woodlots,” and “cedar swamp” – underscoring the economic value of.}

Increased economic activity along the upper bayshore was accompanied by corresponding changes in the area’s social, cultural, and political framework. After a generation of proprietor-led government, the bayshore region in 1702 became part of the royally-governed Colony of New Jersey. In 1748 the majority of the upper bayshore – the area largely spanning from Alloway Creek to the Maurice River – became part of newly-created Cumberland County. Trade from the region moved principally through the ports of Salem and Greenwich, as well as through privately owned landings attached to farms (a distinct economic asset for any property owner) or ferries at remote locations all along New Jersey’s Delaware Bay coastline. Only minimal direct trade (be it exports or imports) with transatlantic, West Indian, and coastwise markets took place from these locations. Instead, most goods moving out of, and into, the bayshore bay oysters played a role in prompting New Jersey officials to regulate harvest methods and seasons as early as 1719. Farmers inclined to augment their income through harvesting oysters might also pursue shell and lumbering in the Delaware Bay and its adjacent tributaries during each species’ spring spawning run.\footnote{Imports of lumber and lumbering for such West Jersey locations to be touted as “a good Fishing-Place for catching of Shad.” Some farmers further supplemented their incomes with trapping and market hunting. But lumbering – the harvesting of wood for any number of forest products – was the most important supplementary income for the bayshore’s agriculturists, and for some settlers it was their primary income. Timber resources only rose in importance when settlers confronted the challenge of farming the marginal soils closer to the Maurice River and the Cape May County border. Property sales routinely mentioned if land was “well timbered,” underscoring the economic value of “woodlands,” “woodlots,” and “cedar swamp” – for eighteenth century bayshore settlers. Forest products derived from white cedar, oak, and pine – destined for local use and the valuable export market – included staves, shingles, clapboards, and charcoal, as well as a ready source of material for the region’s boatbuilding and shipbuilding operations.”}
Reeve Marshall Log House, ca. late 18th century, Dorchester area, Cumberland County. Photographed 1937

Cedar Plank House, Alloways Creek, Salem County.
region went via Philadelphia; in short, the City of Brotherly Love functioned as an entrepot, or transshipment center, for the bayshore’s exports and imports. These commercial relationships defined the bayshore’s relevance within Philadelphia’s emerging metropolitan sphere. Specific venues, such as Salem and Greenwich, began hosting semi-annual market fairs as early as 1682 and 1695 respectively. These events lasted until the 1760s, and reportedly, Philadelphia’s merchant class frequented the Greenwich fair. As such, these market exchanges punctuated the contours of an economic and cultural map that linked the area to Philadelphia and the wider Atlantic World. These trade patterns slowly led to a series of new settlements further south along the Delaware Bay at Mauricetown, Port Elizabeth, Leesburg, and Dorchester. Fueled by the Delaware estuary’s 18th-century economic and cultural networks, some residents in these locales hoped to take advantage of the area’s rich timber resources for export or shipbuilding, while others hoped the largely unsettled area might prove promising for crop cultivation and livestock.15

Remnant Swedish populations capitalized on their Old World skills as woodsmen, using this occupational tradition to their advantage in the bayshore’s lumbering economy. Not surprising, they also maintained vernacular building traditions, dotting the landscape with small log structures constructed with techniques inherited from their native homes in Scandinavia. New England settlers brought heavy timber-frame building traditions to the bayshore along with house floor plans and distinctive chimney placement traceable to their earlier place of residence. These architectural expressions, along with iconic images on gravestones, served as a cultural anchor for New England emigrants and their immediate descendants, and arguably – given their Presbyterian affiliations – proved useful in distinguishing their identity from that of the area’s dominant Quaker community.16

Patterned Brickwork and a Culture of Improvement

18th-century bayshore life took a decided regional turn when native-born elites began expressing their cultural authority through the construction of mansions, many using vitrified bricks to create patterned designs in blue, black, or slate gray on the gable ends of these houses or Flemish checker on the façade. Led by the area’s Quaker elites, this architectural idiom’s symbolic power took hold in other quarters of bayshore society between Alloway Creek and the Cohansey River. Most notable are the corresponding links between these buildings — specifically, their brick fabric — and the religious buildings their owners constructed. Moving through this tidewater landscape, one could discern these building patterns in the Alloways Creek (1756, 1784) and Greenwich (1771) Quaker Meetinghouses; in the Fairfield (1780-81) and Broad Street (1792-95) Presbyterian churches; and in the Cohansey Baptist Church (1801), each delineating the cultural and economic influence of their respective congregations. Indeed, architecture’s capacity to suggest competing visions of bayshore life was perhaps most apparent when it framed the actions of tea burners in Greenwich on December 22, 1774. Fueled by sentiment similar to Boston’s famous event, but undoubtedly shaped by local cultural politics, this group – largely Presbyterian – made their way from future governor Richard Howell’s house outside of Greenwich to the market square where they burned tea within the immediate vicinity of the Quaker meetinghouse.17

Similar to other areas of the newly formed United States, a “culture of improvement” gripped New Jersey’s Delaware Bay region in the early 19th-century. This temperament reflected a newfound zeal to improve America’s economic and technological infrastructure, and, in doing so, ostensibly create opportunities and benefits that would spread widely throughout society. Amidst these developments, bayshore residents needed to confront challenges that beset the region’s farming practices and their profitability. High demand for their timber had made bayshore farmers complacent stewards of their land, neglecting to use fertilizers or practice sustainable crop rotation, and hindered by antiquated plow technology, they exhausted the area’s soils. But the discovery of marl deposits along the bayshore and in other areas of southern New Jersey initiated fertilizer use and unleashed farm improvements that would carry forward over the course of the 19th century. Driven by implement and progressive agricultural methods that would advance their commercial ambitions, farmers in the area began professionalizing their work through mostly short-lived organizations such as the Cumberland County Agricultural Society (1823), with its goal to promote agricultural improvements and family manufactures, and later by the West Jersey Fruit Growers Association. The growing agricultural press and the steady progress of mechanization all played a role.18

These labors allowed farmers to become less reliant on grain crops — a niche overwhelmingly dominated by Western growers — and instead, profitably transition to the cultivation of fruits and “truck or market produce” [vegetables]. Rail access to Philadelphia and New York allowed farmers after the Civil War to capitalize on each city’s fresh produce market, while canning operations enabled them to supply larger and more distant markets. By the turn of the twentieth century, the bayshore region was fully awash in modern America’s commercial agriculture and boasted one of the country’s first, and largest, corporate truck farming ventures – the Charles F. Seabrook Company, also more popularly known as Seabrook Farms. When southern New Jersey historian Alfred Heston appraised the agricultural scene in 1924, he saw the bayshore’s future as part of a “time...not far distant, when the cultivation of standard crops will be mostly abandoned, and the county becomes almost one-entire market garden and fruit farm.”19

Signs of New Jersey’s intention to manage the Delaware Bay’s resources in the face of the commercial ambitions of the 19th-century bayshore emerged quickly as the state imposed regulations governing the taking of oysters from these waters. Central to this enterprise was the practice of oyster planting, technically speaking, the transplanting of small seed oysters from their natural spawning beds in the upper bay to grounds in the lower bay. Oystermen found that transplanting seed oysters to waters with higher salinity levels accelerated their growth and improved the quality of their meat. These benefits, which enhanced market options and culinary appeal, spurred the growth of Delaware Bay oyster.20 By the mid-nineteenth century, oyster planting was an established form of aquaculture on Delaware Bay.

Between the late 1880s and early 1900s, the West Jersey and Seashore Railroad (WJSR), a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CRNJ), undertook the construction of modern shipping
sheds to service the Delaware Bay oyster industry. The WJSRR built its facility at what became known as “Maurice River,” and the CRRNJ followed suit building an even more elaborate facility on the river’s west bank at the location famously labeled “Bivalve.” Each of these multi-unit facilities teemed with activity, so much so that they literally functioned as villages unto themselves. After oysters were harvested they were brought to these facilities where they were “floated,” bagged, barreled, and shipped. Eventually, shucking houses were built where oyster meat was removed from its shell and canned. This occupational environment was animated by a wide array of workers and supporting services who participated in the oyster industry. This mix—ranging from boat captains, politicians, scientists, and shipping merchants to African-Americans who arrived from the Chesapeake region to serve as oyster boat crew and shuckers—reflected the industry’s one-time status as the most important economic enterprise in New Jersey’s Delaware Bay waters.21

Railroad networks also transformed the Delaware Bay’s longtime shad and sturgeon fisheries. The
arrival of the CRNNJ at Bayside in the 1870s (a location just outside of Greenwich), allowed both fisheries the option of moving their catch to market by rail or by “buy” boat. In both cases, moving shad and sturgeon from the bay to market by modern transport networks escalated fishing effort and increased the volume harvested by both fisheries. Similar to spring bay season, when oystermen pursued valuable seed stock for their planted grounds, the onset of shad and sturgeon season each spring was a ritually-charged event greeted with great fanfare at Bayside’s wharves, processing facilities, and modest fishing shacks, as well as in the local press that revealed when reports of the first catches occurred.

By the second half of the 19th century, gill netting for shad and sturgeon became concentrated within the Delaware Bay at sites where volume harvesting could be pursued out of the way of upriver pollution and away from haul seiners. In a commercial context where fish stocks were declining or only sporadically rebounding, shad and sturgeon fisheries needed to live as close as possible to their fishing sites in order to efficiently respond. The infrastructure of these locales took on aspects of modern commercial fishing communities, being replete with sufficient watercraft, entrapment gear, processing and shipping facilities, dockside arrangements, and housing.

By the 1880s and 1890s, the Delaware Bay’s sturgeon fishery became “the most prolific of all the sturgeon grounds ever developed in this country.” This surge was principally fueled by demand for roe that was marketed as Russian caviar in Philadelphia and New York. The proximity of these urban markets to the Delaware Bay pushed this particular stock to the brink of extinction. When fishermen from the Delaware estuary’s most active sturgeon fishing communities met in Philadelphia about 1900 to form the Sturgeon Fisherman’s Protective Society, it was too late to stem the tide. The combined effects of pollution and of fishermen unwilling to curb their catch meant that a fishery once productive enough to allow people to purchase caviar sandwiches was in the midst of its final days.

On the bay, fishermen could transition from pursuing shad in March and April to sturgeon in April, May, and June, and work the same waters for the better part of four months. Transient and permanent residents often lived in one of the signature features of this working landscape, structures variously known as floating cabins, cabin scows, and cabin boats. Fishing firms and individual fishers would tow these structures to protected shoreline locations where they assumed the function of floating villages adjacent to their fishing grounds. These harvesting operations were extensions of Philadelphia’s economic sphere, and they maintained their role in this network by quickly transferring shad to buy boats or to the docks for rail shipment, or by rushing freshly caught cow sturgeon to butchering floats or wharves to have their roe processed into caviar.

The commercial rise of New Jersey’s Delaware Bay created a corresponding demand for vessels and watercraft. Reaching from Salem County’s furthest southwest border to northern Cape May County, shipyards and boatyards emerged to meet the diverse needs of the bayshore’s maritime economy. Some shipyards, such as J.H. Diverty’s in Dennisville, Lehman Blew’s in...
Mauricetown and Bridgeton, John Russell’s in Leesburg, the Vanaman family’s in Mauricetown, and Baner and Champion’s in Dorchester, developed a reputation for building coastal schooners, fore-and-aft rigged vessels designed to transport commodities between ports situated on the Eastern US seaboard, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Canadian Maritimes. Other yards developed a niche meeting the aggressive demand for oyster schooners and sloops. On the Cohansey River, William Rice and Brother of Bridgeton fell into this category, as did William Parsons’ Greenwich Piers Marine Railway. While both yards developed a reputation for excellent design, well-suited to the environmental conditions of the Delaware Bay, Rice Brothers became known for the sheer volume of oyster vessels it built and Parsons is acknowledged as having introduced spoon-bow schooner design to the region.

Shipbuilding patterns on the Maurice River produced both oyster vessels and coastal schooners, but in the early decades of the twentieth century a select number of yards became the oyster industry’s principal suppliers of dredgeboats. In Mauricetown, Joseph W. Vanaman and Brother assumed this role, later to be succeeded by E.C. Vanaman and Son. Across the river in Dorchester, John R. Chambers’ yard met the oyster fleet’s growing demand, and, by the close of the 1890s, Charles H. Stowman and Sons was emerging as the locally dominant builder of “oyster boats, fishing smacks and pleasure yachts – a role it held until 1930. Eventually, Charles Stowman’s son, Harry S. Stowman, established a separate shipbuilding concern – Harry Stowman and Sons, later organized as H. Bennett Stowman Company – also specializing in oyster boat construction with yards at Dorchester, Mauricetown, and Port Norris. Heavy demand for oyster vessels and repair work led to the formation of the Delaware Bay Shipbuilding Co. in 1926 on the former site of John Russell’s yard in Leesburg, a business that prided itself on being “composed of local oystermen.” Following the challenges presented by the Great Depression, the Stowman ventures gained new life when they were all merged to construct vessels for World War II under the banner of Stowman Shipyards, and the Delaware Bay Shipbuilding Co. similarly benefitted from wartime mobilization.

Shipbuilding operations worked closely with the area’s sailmakers and ship smiths (those who fabricated the vessel’s ironwork). New vessel construction was critical to each yard’s profitability, but each equally relied on a constant stream of repair work. The marine railway was an essential feature at each of these yards, hauling vessels out of the river for plank replacement, hull scraping, new copper sheathing, or re-caulking. Indeed, the means of powering these marine railways changed dramatically during this era, going from horses to steam to electric motor. Less dramatic was the important work of the bayshore’s boatbuilding shops. The Myers Boatyard in Fairton and the Bramble Boatyard in Hancock’s Bridge constructed shad and sturgeon skiffs for each fishery, as well as an assortment of other traditional small watercraft, including yawl boats to support the work of the oyster fleet.

Finally, the history of New Jersey’s Delaware Bay shoreline critically benefitted from government-funded lighthouse construction. Containing America’s largest freshwater port - Philadelphia - and linking an array of Middle Atlantic markets to America’s wider commercial orbit, the Delaware estuary became a crucible for some of the nation’s important developments in lighthouse technology and its associated building patterns. Most conspicuous were the channel lighthouses – Brandwyine Shoals, Miah Maull Shoals, and Ship John Shoal – anchored into the bay’s floor. Their modern appearance stood in sharp contrast to the bayshore’s vernacular landscape. This was less the case with lighthouses built along the shore. Starting in the early nineteenth century, lighthouses built on the marshes rimming New Jersey’s Delaware Bay guided vessels into the Maurice and Cohansey Rivers, and served as range lights for offshore navigation. The increased number of these lights reflected growing...
waterborne traffic. Some were built and re-built on the same or nearby sites during the course of their careers as navigational aids. These on-shore lights – Egg Island Light (1838), East Point Light (1849), Cohansey Light (1838, 1883), and Maurice River Range Light (1898) – utilized floor plans and exterior treatments that were largely in keeping with the prevailing vernacular landscape. To facilitate their specialized function, structural accommodations were made to anchor them to the salt marsh. Of these on-shore lights, only East Point Lighthouse survives and has become a fixture of the region’s maritime identity.29


4 Harper, John Fenwick and Salem County, 42.


6 Thomas Beall, Good Order Established in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in America (1685; reprinted, New York: William Cowans, 1865), 328.

7 Craig Koedel, God’s Vine in this Wilderness: Religion in South Jersey to 1800 (Woodbury, NJ: Gloucester County Historical Society, 1989), 13, 29-37; Domsart, Cape May County, 5-23.


10 Wacker, Land Use in Early New Jersey, 121.


14 Wacker, Land and People, 171; Wacker, Land Use in Early New Jersey, 191; Koedel, God’s Vine in the Wilderness, 17.


21 “When the Season Opens Down at Bay Side,” Bridgeton Evening News, 3 March 1911; Baer, Cossey, and Schopp, The Trail of the Blue Comet, 80, 225-226.


In 1685, Thomas Budd, a leader among English Quakers in West New Jersey, published Good Order Established in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, which attempted to promote the Delaware Valley to potential settlers. He described the land between Newcastle in northern Delaware and Burlington in New Jersey as “for the most part very rich, there being many navigable Cricks on both sides of the River, and on the River and Cricks are great quantities of rich fat Marsh Land.” He admitted however, of a hazard in this area of rich soils, namely the “small Flies, called Musketoes” which sometimes sickened people, particularly in the late summer. Budd optimistically suggested to potential settlers that this condition could be mitigated:

But were those Marshes banked, and drained, and then plowed and sowed, some years with corn, and then with English Hay-seed, I do suppose it would be healthful and very little troubled with Mosquitoes; and if cattle did commonly feed on this Ground, and tread it as in England, I suppose it would not be inferior to the rich Meadows on the River of Thames and were quantities of this Land laid dry, and brought into tillage, I suppose it would bear great crops of Wheat, Pease and Barley, Hemp and Flax…

Budd was correct in assessing that banking and draining the meadows and marshes would indeed produce fertile land, and he knew how this had been successfully applied in England and throughout northern Europe. The English, and famously, the Dutch, as well as French, Belgians, Swedes, and others had over several centuries developed sophisticated systems to regulate water flow and increase agricultural lands. But in New Jersey, the prospect of undertaking all that work at once in the New World must have presented a daunting task for early settlers.

Nevertheless, projects were begun. Some “meadow banking” (the word “diking” was not used here) was undertaken in Delaware before the end of the 17th century. Wage laborers, indentured servants, and slaves are all likely to have taken part in digging drainage ditches through the meadows and banking the spoil, so that flat fields of relatively dry land emerged.

It is unclear precisely when the first meadow banking efforts began in New Jersey, but Thomas Budd and William Hall entered into an agreement to keep a ditch in repair in June 1696. The colonial Assembly passed a series of statutes between 1711 and 1717 to encourage neighbors to cooperate in meadow banking efforts along several creeks that emptied into the Delaware River and had the best potential for “stopping out the Tide.” Curiously, a generation passed before the legislature again returned to the issue, but from 1753 onward, a procession of acts authorized more land to be embanked. Altogether, at least fifty laws dealing with meadow banking were passed by 1775. The provisions of these laws required the “owners” and “possessors” who benefited from the drained land to participate in the maintenance of the banks in proportion to the acreage of meadow that each owner had. Each group was required by law to meet once a year, and then to elect managers to oversee construction and repair of the banks, assessors to determine how to apportion the cost among the beneficiaries, and a collector to handle the money and pay the bills. Increasingly, these entities began to think of themselves as companies. The Salem County Historical Society holds a daybook of Bartholomew Wyatt, from 1703. The law adopted in 1713/14 authorizing embanking along Mannington Creek specified Wyatt’s house as the place where the owners and possessors were to meet annually. When a new statute updated this authorization in 1753, it still specified Wyatt’s house as the site for the annual meetings. Still later, Wyatt’s daybook became the minute book of the Mannington Meadows Company.

Meadow Banking

Toward the end of the 18th century, these meadow banking companies proliferated as corporate entities and came to be known by name. The Tilbury Meadow Company was in operation as early as 1790. The first decades of the 19th century witnessed many more, including the Cooper’s Creek Bank Company, the Fishing Island Meadow Company, the Lower Alloways Creek Bank Company, the Rich Island Bank Company,
A Water-Based Landscape

offered this cautionary tale:

risk. An early history of Cumberland County of capital and manpower, which was not without and hay, but the venture required huge outlays could create fertile, valuable land for raising cattle and hay, but the venture required huge outlays of capital and manpower, which was not without risk. As an early history of Cumberland County, their fields, and fertilize new, higher fields outside local government proclamations and lawsuits. The meadow banking companies The practice of “meadow banking” persisted in other parts of Down Jersey. The spread of banked meadows became quite impressive. Thomas F. Gordon’s Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey, an 1834 book that chronicled the places, geography, and development of New Jersey, noted “dykes” along the tidal creeks in the counties of Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland. “Many thousand acres have, by embankment, been converted into productive meadows which maintain large herds of cattle…. Adjacent to the Delaware Bay and sea coast are wide tracts of salt meadows, some of which have also been reclaimed by embankment.”4

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Banks were subject to destruction from storms, but it was the creep of deferred maintenance and the power of tides that was responsible for their gradual destruction. Banked farmlands commanded a premium price and the regular maintenance was the subject of many local government proclamations and lawsuits. Upkeep of the banks was expensive, and with the advent of cheap fertilizer, it made more economic sense to abandon damaged banks and their fields, and fertilize new, higher fields outside the marsh zone. The Coastal Survey maps of the 1840s show the extent of the dikes areas at their peak.

Today, a few meadow banks survive, especially in Salem and Cumberland Counties, including some created in the 19th century. Generally, however commercial farming has continued to look to fertilizers and other industrial solutions to increase land yield over manipulation of the landscape itself.

Salt Marshes

Salt marshes stretch beyond the outer limits of the banked meadows, or where they were absent, to the edge of the open water. They form perhaps the most common natural landscape and habitat associated with the Bayshore region of New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic estuarine environment. These wetlands fringe the brackish influx of water as it meanders and moves with the tides up the adjacent shoreline. As you move up the rivers and tributaries, the salt marshes gradually give way to fresh water marshes as the salinity decreases.

Salt marshes have played a significant role in the development of the region. They were nutrient-rich pasturelands for free-ranging cattle. Salt hay flourishes in this environment, and gathering salt hay has been a traditional occupation since colonial times. The arduous task of cutting, raking, baling, and transporting salt hay from the muddy, insect-infested salt marshes was offset by the fact that one could harvest tons of salt hay annually without cultivation. A wide variety of uses made it a valuable crop, and the market for salt hay continued to thrive to nearly the end of the 20th century. In barns, salt hay was a preferred bedding material in early American stables. Although it was slow to decompose, after being mixed with manure, salt hay provided an excellent, weed-free compost. It is used to this day in gardening and lawn maintenance.7

Salt hay is virtually impervious to rot, and it contains no weed seed like other types of hay. The fine, wiry salt hay has been used as an insulation material in preventing frost damage for tender agricultural crops such as strawberries, and, in construction, to protect freshly poured concrete. It was used as a packing material for regional glassware and pottery manufacturers in the 19th century, and as the chief insulation when packing ice into ice houses through the early 20th century. Views across the coastal marshes will reveal the subtle contours of meadow banks where they survive, and salt hay still grows in the wet and tidal places between water and land. They provide habitat for marine life and birds, and there are currently many preserved open spaces along the shoreline of the Delaware Bay.

Views across the coastal marshes will still reveal the subtle contours of meadow banks where they survive, and salt hay still grows in the wet and tidal places between water and land. They provide habitat for marine life and birds, and there are currently many preserved open spaces along the shoreline of the Delaware Bay. The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail is an annual event on the Cape May peninsula, held in May.

The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) was established in 1988 to “provide for public appreciation, education, understanding, and enjoyment, through a coordinated interpretive program of certain nationally significant natural and cultural sites associated with the coastal area of the State of New Jersey that are accessible generally by public roads.” The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail has brought greater awareness of the traditions of meadow banking and salt haying as elements of both a natural landscape and a regional cultural tradition.

Glades Wildlife Refuge, Cumberland County. Photo courtesy Steven Eisenhauer, Natural Lands Trust.
Sugar Sand Opportunity: 
Landscape and People of the Pine Barrens 

Mark Demitroff

The New Jersey Pinelands is a remarkable urban wilderness, a setting so valued it became a UNESCO International Biosphere Reserve in 1988. This vast tract of pine/oak woodland and cedar wetlands is bounded by exurban sprawl from New York City, Philadelphia, and the Jersey Shore; yet it has in many ways remained in a natural state. The environmental elements preserved within have been long lauded by scientists, but the cultural ecology has remained much more of a mystery. People adapted to this droughthy, infertile baren land, developing various industries and agricultural pursuits, evolving a keen sense of place along the way. Archives are replete with historical, social, and even economic studies, yet few integrate the physical and manmade landscape of this place.

To a casual outsider, this region will appear to be a monotonous lowland of quartz sand and gravel, the detritus of eons of mountain building and destruction. Shallow wetlands and watercourses cover a third of the land, dissecting ancient sediments carried into place over several million years by countless rivers now long gone. The ground ever so slowly weathered away. Ice age conditions were fiercely cold and dry; the vegetation sparse. Wind and snowmelt also etched the land, which washed into muted badlands. The massive Laurentide Ice Sheet episodically flirted with the Pinelands border but never reached it. South Jersey is the only ice-marginal coastal plain in North America. The effects of global climate change have left a distinctive mark, allowing us to link the landscape to the region’s cultural and environmental dynamics.

The first inhabitants were Paleo-Indians who to subsist on fish, shellfish, game, and acorns. There is little evidence of widespread agriculture according to vegetation. Activity waned as later pre-contact cultures were often sited at these focal points of historic travel and agricultural pursuits, evolving a keen sense of place along the way. Archives are replete with historical, social, and even economic studies, yet few integrate the physical and manmade landscape of this place.

For convenience, which became the loci of early settlement (plantations, forest stations).

Several types of rocks are native to southern New Jersey, and a number of exotic stones and large boulders were scattered across the Pine Barrens, either transported by strong currents or by river ice of the ancient Hudson River during the Miocene:

Ironstone – an iron rich sedimentary rock. In southern New Jersey, ironstone is associated with cementation of sands and gravels at a water table. It is by far the most important building stone in the Pine Barrens.

Silcrete – a silica-hardened stone derived from sandy soil (i.e., a duricrust). This very hard rock is locally abundant at higher elevations of the Inner Coastal Plain, and fields of highly weathered silcrete remain scattered across parts of the Pine Barrens. It was used in the foundations of various early Colonial structures across South Jersey. It is also known as “cuesta quartzite”, and as “sarsen stone” in Europe (e.g., Stonehenge). In America it is known as a “pudding stone” if pebbly.

Cohansey Quartzite – a less hard variant of the above sandstone containing seashells within its matrix. It is abundant in Cumberland and Salem counties. Like silcrete, it was put to use for tool making by aboriginals.

Ferricrete – an iron oxide-hardened sandstone that formed in soil. Like silcrete above, ferricrete is a duricrust. It is believed to have formed under hot semiarid conditions millions of years ago. Ferricrete is scarce, but can be seen at PAWS animal refuge in Mt. Laurel side-by-side with silcrete and ironstone.

Pinelands soils were too poor for traditional farming, hence early on they were considered “barren” for their inability to bear crops. An exception was cattle raising. Sedge and grass provided fodder, which occurred in abundance in Pinelands wetland savannah. Often associated with Africa, the word is of native Caribbean origin, used to describe the treeless marshy plains of the American tropics. Spaniards exploited brackish meadow (coastal savannah) for cattle production (hence Savannah, GA); here early settlers used freshwater meadow (inland savannah). Once more common, less than 900 acres of this critical habitat remain in the Pinelands National Reserve.

Early farmers avoided the white sands of the Pine Belt, an area described by some as a “great sandy desert.” Instead they filled the heavier loess-enriched (ice age dust) Inner Coastal Plain soils to the west, or the organics-rich coastal margins to the south and east that could be banked for farming. The Pine region was left to forest production. Growing cities like Philadelphia and New York created great demand for timber products. Swedish, English, and Dutch sawyers built water-powered mills, and quickly cut available wood up-gradient along every watershed until all good lumber was exhausted before the Revolutionary War.

Pinelands streams are bordered by very broad
During the ice age, charcoal was the only available fuel. Pines and oaks were tapped for naval stores – products used as coal mines and oil wells. Resin-rich pines were cut down and collected in 5-gallon barrels, which were then barged down creeks to melted into gutters and collected in 5-gallon resin through destructive distillation. The resin parts ("fat wood") were slowly heated to extract parts for naval stores. Naval stores were indispensable supplies for boat-building, early accounts suggested that they were the early equivalent of coal mines. Pines and oaks were the early equivalent of oil wells. Pines and oaks were used for charcoal production, most not all destined for the furnace.

Pine Barrens are composed of wind-blown sheet and dune sand. Pine and oaks are exquisitely adapted to dry low acid soils. Their abundance was quickly put to use for charcoal production, because coal and oil were not yet available. Pines and oaks were carbonized by collars in charcoal pits, making them the early equivalent of coal mines.

Naval stores were indispensable supplies for boat-building and ship production. Dozens of boat and shipyards operated along tidewater rivers throughout South Jersey. Pines and oaks were cut down and collected in 5-gallon barrels, which were then hauled down creeks to boatyards for refinement. The first thing a coaler would do was locate a place of refuge if a wildfire burned through. The Pinelands term for a little hollow-square structure is a "cubby". This author grew up on a Pinelands farm and heard "cave" used by old-timers to describe these simple accommodations. The Pinelands term for a little hollow-square structure is a "cubby". This author grew up on a Pinelands farm and heard "cave" used by old-timers to describe these simple accommodations.

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Charcoal became paramount with the arrival of iron. Traditionally used in charcoal making, charcoal was the only available fuel capable of reaching temperatures needed to smelt the native bog iron (2,000–3,000°F). There were fewer than 34 forges and furnaces operating in 19th-century South Jersey, so the demand for this product was high. A minimum of 20,000 acres of timberland was needed to keep a forge in blast. Weymouth Furnace (one of the largest) in Atlantic County had nearly 100,000 acres of associated lands dedicated to coal production.

In 1749 Swedish botanist Peter Kalm worried that the species would soon be exhausted due to over-harvesting. After cutting, a new stand of white-cedar required 70 years to become again a harvestable commodity, creating availability gaps. The curious labor-intensive practice of charcoal "mining," extracting trees long buried in river mud or swamp, began to fill supply shortfalls.

By the 1800s, the Pinelands were deadlocked between timber and agriculture. Around 1850, the Pinelands economy was valued at around $10 million per year. Three-quarters of the timber was shipped away by rail, because the Pinelands was America’s greatest remaining open space. Land promoters met with some difficulty in selling land. In the 1830s, New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils.

In 1854 the Camden and Atlantic Railroad (Camden to Atlantic City) began service, the first railroad to cross the Pinelands. With its appearance came major changes to cultural landscape. The iron industry was failing, unable to compete with competitors, particularly in Pennsylvania, who had access to a large amount of iron ore and mined ores. Demand for charcoal waned but did not disappear. Smaller markets for charcoal remained for domestic consumption, gunpowder production, medical purposes, and for certain processes carried out by the US Mint in Philadelphia. Local charcoal was highly prized by moonshiners through the 1930s, since it left little telltale smoke or odor to alert revenuers that a batch of poison was in distillation.

Coal with charcoal’s fall in the 1850s came the rise in demand for cordwood. Early steam boilers ran on cordwood, causing a sudden jump in the value of pine land. Carloads of fuel wood were shipped out by rail, because the Pinelands were powered by the very same fuel. Huge tracts of land were deforested, which prepared the ground for the next phase of Pinelands exploitation – the burgeoning of agricultural land schemes. Without furnaces and forges, large tracts of land were no longer needed for charcoal production. Outside owners now speculated in land development schemes.

Railroads made it easy to bring in guano or marl to amend otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils. New Jersey marl was not actually a fertilizer but rather a soil conditioner mixed into otherwise poor soils.

Land promoters met with some difficulty in selling farm plots in coastal New Jersey at time of US westward expansion with prime agricultural land available at little to no cost. Their hook was to promote planned centers of place surrounded by supporting agricultural lands. Buy a twenty-acre farm in the agricultural lands and your family was given a building lot in town. It was an agrarian utopia, “come earneth homeseekers,” be your
own boss, and live amongst health-giving pines.7 Big cities were only an hour away by modern rolling stock.

While these land schemes were at first pitched to people from England and New England, ultimately more favor was found in advancing these settlements along ethnic lines to the throngs of new immigrants. A curious settlement pattern developed in response to Pinelands topography, which Libby Marsh dubbed the “ethnic archipelago”. Discrete topographic rises, surrounded by wetlands, became islands of colonization for Germans, Italians, Jews, and other ethnic groups (Welsh, Russian, Ukrainian, Cossack, Kalmyk, Gypsy). In essence they were other ethnic groups (Welsh, Russian, Ukrainian, of colonization for Germans, Italians, Jews, and “ethnic archipelago”. Discrete topographic rises, surrounded by wetlands, became islands of colonization for Germans, Italians, Jews, and other ethnic groups (Welsh, Russian, Ukrainian, Cossack, Kalmyk, Gypsy). In essence they were the Pinelands as being “particularly well adapted for America.

Development pressures are extreme in New Jersey. Valued landscapes usually go to the highest years a great deal of attention is being given in this part of the State, and with very profitable results. By the mid-20th century, South Jersey became the egg capital of the world. Several factors account for the industry’s local dominance. First, the sandy and nutrient-poor soils were less likely to harbor poultry diseases that cause problems in heavier soils across the State. Second, railroad-era lots were smaller parcels, better suited to intensive agricultural practices like poultry farming. Third, chickens provided a valuable year-round domestic food source during intermittent economic lean periods commonplace in the Pine Barrens. By the 1970s, the entire industry moved to the Delmarva Peninsula and beyond. With the appearance of modern antibiotics, chickens no longer required range land, but now could now be caged. Down South, producers benefited from lower labor costs, cheaper grain, and an infusion of modern infrastructure. Hardly a chicken farm is left in the Pine Barrens, although coops, mills, and other architectural relics of the industry abound in various states of repair.

The Pine Barrens even has its own terroir, a special combination of ground characteristics, climate, and cultural techniques. Soils can be very old, possessing memory of rigorous freezing and thawing. Silicates like quartz and felspar share distinctive characteristics with those found in Northern Russia today. It is suggested that this unusual ice age inheritance imparts special qualities to the local ground that provides a distinct sense of place to some of the region’s agricultural products like its delicious Outer Coastal Plain Vineyard Association wine and famed “Jersey” tomatoes. Cranberries and blueberries are exquisitely adapted to the acid sands of local wetlands and lowlands. Vineyards, once commonplace until Prohibition, are returning, to good accolades as a sustainable crop for the uplands. The excellent quality and quantity of produce raised in South Jersey is impressive, including specialties like eggplant and dandelion. The most spectacular is the premier auction block on the East Coast, supplying produce to wholesalers from April to December.

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and the structures that commemorated them are quickly fading away. Problems compound as the Pinelands Commission’s planning power decentralizes and shifts to facilitate local entrepreneurial interests. The Comprehensive Management Plan, the ruling document for the Pinelands National Reserve, contains robust language about cultural protection, but its protections are often washed away. There is less and less enforcement of Pinelands cultural rules and few ways to punish those who choose to violate them. Currently the Commission’s heritage specialist, a Cultural Resource Planner, is budgeted to work one-half day per week to protect the cultural legacy of this 1.1 million acre biosphere with a permanent population of 700,000 residents. If current trends continue, we will lose much of the cultural landscape that has made this place special.

From the “Falls of the Delaware,” Mahlon Stacy wrote to his brother back in England, on the 26th of April 1860. He reported on the great natural bounty of the land in the West Jersey colony, particularly the variety of berries there.

We have...[a] great store of very good wild fruits, as strawberries, cranberries and huckleberries, which are like our bilberries in England, but far sweeter; they are very wholesome fruits. The cranberries, much like cherries for colour and bigness, which may be kept till fruit come in again; an excellent sauce is made of them for venison, turkeys, and other great fowl, and they are better to make tarts than either gooseberries or cherries; we have them brought to our house by the Indians in great plenty.1

It was not until the first quarter of the 19th century that cranberries were grown as a crop for market. Cultivation began on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, but was soon adopted in New Jersey as well. Land that had been formerly considered worthless was cleared and banked for cranberry cultivation. When bog iron furnaces withered and disappeared, cranberry cultivation brought income to the Pine Barrens. First attempted in New Jersey as early as the 1840s, cultivation really boomed after the Civil War.

South Jersey farmers organized a statewide “New Jersey Cranberry Growers’ Association” in April 1873 at a meeting in Pemberton, Burlington County, when the consolidation of two older organizations of cranberry growers was effected.2 The goal of the organization was to “advance the interests of all engaged in cultivating cranberries in this state, by obtaining statistics and information on the crop of this and other states...to secure the use of uniform packages, to enlarge the market both at home and abroad, etc.”3 The group worked to standardize the boxes and barrels used for shipping cranberries, and adopted a brand to be used on all their wooden boxes to promote the organization and its standards. By 1874, they had established a Foreign Trade Committee to promote the cranberry, which shipped well. Attention was also given to domestic markets, especially the American South. The establishment of this cooperative organization to promote the cranberry, which shipped well. Attention was also given to domestic markets, especially the American South. The establishment of this cooperative organization to promote the consumption of an agricultural product laid the groundwork for many other groups that became influential and literal “taste-makers” in the American diet in the coming century.

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1 Mark Demitroff, Pine Barrens Wetlands: Geographical Reflections of South Jersey’s Periglacial Legacy (MS thesis, University of Delaware, Newark, DE, 2007, 244 pp.).
4 Mary C. Hutchings, “Historical Sketches of Buena,” Chapter IV, Valley Ventura (Vineland weekly newspaper), October 9, 1907.
7 The term “Homesteaders” appeared in several late 19th century tracts and books encouraging agriculturally-based settlements around the United States. For instance, see W.J. Gibbs, Hints to Homesteaders, A Handbook of Agricultural Opportunities, 1891. Available on-line through Google Books.
The local “pineys,” who were accustomed to gathering wild berries for their own use or for sale to town dwellers, resented the development of commercial cranberry farms that asserted the berries as private property. There are tales of theft and sabotage, as landowners and growers sought to keep the pines out of their fields except during the few hectic weeks of harvest when the growers needed their labor. Today, migrant workers are brought to the bogs in the fall, after other local crops are harvested, to assist with the harvest.

From October to April, the bogs are flooded to protect the vines from frost, and acres and acres of the Pinelands are under water. When the water is let out of the dykes in April, the green bogs are a vivid contract to the browns and grays of their setting amidst oak and pine forest. The rectangles of deep red berries disengage from the bushes and float to the surface. The ripe berries are picked by hand, but to bring the harvest up to commercial levels, “wet harvesting” was developed, in which bogs are flooded for harvest, and the cranberry bushes are beaten by floating paddleboats or with long rakes maneuvered from shore. The ripe berries disengage from the bushes and float to the surface. The rectangles of deep red berries disengage from the bushes and float to the horizon.

Janet W. Foster

3 Ibid., page 243

Located in a spectacular setting of bogs, creeks and forests, the Whitesbog Historic District encompasses the Village and 3,000 acres of bogs, reservoirs, forests and fields, and serves as a microcosm of the Pinelands. It offers a diversity of wildlife and scenic beauty long enjoyed by visitors to this historic cranberry and blueberry farm. The Village is part of Burlington County, New Jersey. The Village is open 365 days a year, from dawn to dusk and offers designated hiking, biking, horseback riding trails and driving routes. Starting from the Whitesbog General Store, visitors are invited to explore the Village with a map and brochures available at the Visitors Center. More active interpretation of the historic sites is offered driving routes. Starting from the Whitesbog General Store, visitors are invited to explore the Village with a map and brochures available at the Visitors Center. More active interpretation of the historic sites is offered at

Oystering on the Delaware Bay
Cristina Radu and Penelope S. Watson

Oyster Fleet, Bivalve. Photo courtesy Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc.

Oystering on the Delaware Bay

1719 the New Jersey Assembly recognized the importance of Delaware Bay oyster beds, enacting a law to prevent depredation. Subsequent further restrictions included limits on the number of vessels allowed near the beds.

In the Delaware Bay, some of the very best oyster beds occurred in the Maurice River, and settlement began there by 1691 or before. Port Norris had its beginnings in 1738 as Dallas Ferry, when one William Dallas settled the area. The small town had most of its residents working in agriculture and in maritime-related activities, and oysters from the Maurice River Cove were shipped directly to the markets in Philadelphia. Oystering on the Delaware Bay

Early Oystering in the Delaware Bay

Oysters thrive in an optimum mix of fresh and salty waters that characterizes the Delaware Bay. Native Americans discovered the nutritious bivalve and picked up oysters at low tide. Even before the end of the 17th century, early settlers came to rely on oysters as a food. Moreau de Saint-Mery, a French lawyer visiting Philadelphia, observed a century later: “Americans have almost a passion for oysters, which they eat at all hours, even in the street. They are exposed in their own liquor, and are sold by dozens and hundreds up to ten o’clock at night in the streets…” Oysters provided an important source of nutrition and the discarded shells were burned for mortar, were sometimes used as fertilizer, and even in some places were very successfully used as a surfacing material for early roads.

Early Oystering in the Delaware Bay

Large oyster beds were found in all of the coastal colonies, but their extensive exploitation led to fears for their depletion, and several colonies acted to restrict their use to local inhabitants. In
In the 1820s, shortages led oystermen in the northern states (New York, Connecticut) to begin cultivating the bivalves in enhanced natural beds and, by 1860, oyster cultivation had become a standard practice. The process involved transplanting small seed oysters to specially prepared beds to reach maturity. The beds had to have a smooth, hard, silt bottom free of mud or shifting sand, with a good current of fresh waters. The beds were divided into lots and leased to oystermen.

In 1846 a State law was passed closing the oyster beds in summer. The grounds with natural oyster beds were owned by the State, due to its ownership of all riparian lands that it did not specifically sell off. According to the depth of the waters where oysters were found, two techniques of gathering them used either tongs or dredges. Tongs, made of a pair of rakes hinged together and having a handle, were used on small boats, in shallow waters. Dredges weighing several hundred pounds were used on larger boats in deeper waters. Before the advent of refrigeration, oysters were brought to shore and put in floats. These were 100-foot by 20-foot rectangular frameworks of large timbers, with a bottom constructed of wood boards that allowed oysters to be suspended just below the surface of the water, and have the water circulate through them. Large oysters were “primes,” “culls” were of middle size, and “cullins” were small ones. After floating, oysters were dried, sorted, bagged, and packed on boats that took them to market.

Maurice River, Bivalve and Greenwich Piers were the principal ports of shipment by water. In 1860, the steam-powered boats Ocean Queen and Helen Getty started to operate twice a week between Bivalve and New York and Philadelphia, respectively, carrying 1000 bags of oysters each. The business was not successful and it ceased in 1863.

Between 1830 and 1860, a small schooner-rigged vessel became known as the “Bay Schooner,” referring to the Chesapeake Bay. As the 19th century advanced, this vessel became the model for construction of oyster schooners, designed by New Jersey’s shipwrights, who adapted it to the Delaware’s strong tides and shallow waters. In 1871, to protect the industry, New Jersey passed a statute, requiring a State license for each vessel working on the New Jersey oyster beds.
The rail facilities attracted oystermen from Delaware, who frequently formed associations with New Jersey shippers, thus further stimulating the economy of the area.17 Despite the fact that during the first years the railroad company transported large amounts of oysters, the company began having financial difficulties. To avoid bankruptcy, an agreement was signed and in exchange for rescheduling the mortgage payments, the company was required to provide two new locomotives and construct wharves for the oyster business.18 The company was required to extend the line along the river to Long Reach and Bayside View. The Bridgeton & Port Norris Railroad succeeded in extending the line to Long Reach in 1875.19 Three years later the company was sold and reorganized as the Cumberland & Maurice River Railroad. The line initially extended south into the marshes, but, as the tracks were not stable, the company made Bivalve its terminus. William S. Lambert, who served as surveyor for the line along the waterfront of the Maurice River.20 He served also as postmaster between Bridgeton and Bivalve in 1871, was the first Railroad Agent at Bivalve, followed by his son S. Lambert, who served as surveyor for the line.21 Where in 1888 it began building shipping sheds and wharves on the east side of the river to attract back some of the oystermen when shipping from Long Reach. The opening in 1887 of the West Jersey line to Mauricetown brought competition to the Central Railroad Company that turned out to be beneficial to the oystermen. In 1888, the Central Railroad Company extended the docks at Long Reach to enable boats to off load at low tide. In 1890, the West Jersey Railroad Company started to run a tugboat between Maurice River and Bivalve transporting passengers and freight. A small station was built at Hand's Wharf, one of the wharves, to assist the oyster boats in docking and first tug to be assigned was the Jansen. In 1905, the company transferred one of its New York harbor tugs, the El Mora, to Bivalve; the tug remained in use until 1909.22 As harvesting of oysters increased significantly, legislation was passed to protect this resource.

Due to losing its oyster business in Long Reach to the CR&RR, the West Jersey Railroad built a line to an area directly across the river from Long Reach where in 1888 it began building shipping sheds and wharves on the east side of the river to attract back some of the oystermen when shipping from Long Reach. The opening in 1887 of the West Jersey line to Mauricetown brought competition to the Central Railroad Company that turned out to be beneficial to the oystermen. In 1888, the Central Railroad Company extended the docks at Long Reach to enable boats to off load at low tide. In 1890, the West Jersey Railroad Company started to run a tugboat between Maurice River and Bivalve transporting passengers and freight. A small station was built at Hand’s Wharf, one of the wharves, to assist the oyster boats in docking and first tug to be assigned was the Jansen. In 1905, the company transferred one of its New York harbor tugs, the El Mora, to Bivalve; the tug remained in use until 1909.

loading of the oyster sacks into freight cars.27 By 1886, ninety carloads per week were shipped from Bivalve.28 In addition to the freight cars, the railroad company operated two passenger trains per day in the first years. The “Owl” train, as the 4:00 am train was named, brought working people from Bridgeton and other places down the line to Bivalve; the oystermen returned with the evening train.29

In 1887, the New Jersey Southern Railroad, a company controlled by the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CR&RR), or “Central”),30 acquired the majority of the Cumberland & Maurice River Railroad Company’s stock. On February 13, 1887, the company operated its first train, a single, ceremonial car carrying the company’s officials. Around this time, most of the oyster trains went to Philadelphia. Beginning with the first season, the company made efforts to satisfy the oystermen by establishing a special seasonal train to Port Norris and a direct passenger train to Long Reach.31

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As harvesting of oysters increased significantly, legislation was passed to protect this resource.

The State Control Act of March 24, 1899 gave the state control over the oyster grounds that before were considered to belong to everyone. The law, known also as the “Rough Cut Law,” provided that fifteen percent of the empty shells be returned to the oyster beds for replenishment.32 At the same time, as oystermen were the principal fishery product, the state created an Oyster Commission to regulate the industry. A bill adopted by the State of New Jersey granted planters of the Maurice River Cove power to govern the industry, employ guards, and assess fees.33 This spurred the booming of the oyster industry in the Maurice River Cove, and, with most of the Delaware oysters marketed through the Maurice River Cove, it shortly became the “market depot” of the bay.34 By the beginning of the twentieth century, The Oysterman and the Fisherman, a trade journal devoted mostly to the state of the oyster industry, started publication.35

In 1903, a law was passed that provided for the issuing of a license to all persons engaged in the oyster business and provided for leasing of oyster grounds.36 The law provided for the establishment of the State Bureau of Shell Fisheries, responsible for issuing licenses to all persons involved in the oyster industry and leasing grounds for planting
In 1901, a trolley line from Bridgeton to Bivalve was opened, increasing the accessibility of workers to the area. In 1906, due to increased pollution of the waters, the Pure Food Decision No. 110 prohibited the floating of oysters and established new regulations for packaging, shipping, and retailing.

Maurice River Cove had hundreds of planters, although most planters were from the area. Most planters were from the area, some firms leasing at the Maurice River Cove from Philadelphia, Camden, and Bridgeton. The records for bed leases from 1912 show an increase in the number of planters (349); oystermen leased at least five acres.

In 1905, the railroad company offered passenger accommodations between Bivalve and Bridgeton on its freight trains; in 1926, this service, too, was discontinued.

To persuade oystermen working in the Maurice River Cove to use the Jersey Central railroad rather than the West Jersey Railroad on the opposite side of the river, in 1904 the Jersey Central company made a large investment and built thirty houses and sheds along the railroad, each with its own wharf space. The emerging influence of Bivalve increased in 1907, when the Bridgeton, Mauricetown and Goshen custom houses were closed down and Bivalve remained the only custom house in the area, reputed to be the smallest one in the United States.

At the peak of the shell oyster shipping period, there were twenty-nine ships on the Bivalve wharves and eighteen on the Maurice River Township side. The entire oyster industry in Port Norris area employed, by 1900, three thousand people. Most of the oystermen were brought by the oyster companies to the wharves and sold to shippers who had offices on the wharf. However, as the oyster companies in Bivalve controlled the price paid for oysters, some of the oystermen choose to take their loaded boats to other places such as Baltimore.

In June 1917, an agreement was reached between the board of directors of the Columbia and Maurice River Branches in New Jersey and the board of directors of the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey, the company that had operated the property of the CMRRC since 1887. The agreement covered the acquisition of property, franchises and railroads of the CMRRC. In 1918, the shipping sheds and wharves were part of the survey that assessed the property of the CMRRC.

Near the sheds, along the railroad, other businesses opened. Across the south section of the sheds, S. E. Meredith operated a restaurant (picture in 1904, Lighthouse to Leesward, p. 103); in 1913, Eliza Camp took over the business. The Dubois Oyster Company opened the first shucking house in 1922. Soon other houses were opened for shucking the oysters and, although the shucking capacity increased, the production of oysters surpassed it and oysters in shell continue to be sent to markets or to shucking houses in other areas.

The oyster industry reached its peak during the 1920s, when reportedly sixty-seven carloads of oysters left the area every day of the harvesting season, about 7,000 per year, and Maurice River Cove came to be locally referred to as the “Oyster Capital of the World.” When the harvest was abundant, as many as eighty carloads left Bivalve in one day. Half of the carloads were shipped to Philadelphia and other places in Pennsylvania, thirty carloads to Baltimore, and only two to New York. Most of the cars were carried by the overnight Winslow Junction trains, Nos. 4894-4895. More carloads left Bivalve with canned oysters to parts of the United States as far away as Ohio and Michigan. While in the beginning of the twentieth century all the oysters were shipped in shell, in 1923, with the opening of several shucking houses in Bivalve, about 58,800 tons of the oysters were shipped in shell (per year, by rail only) and almost the same quantity was shipped as shucked oysters (56,700 tons).

Besides the oyster businesses, the State of New Jersey in 1923 opened a shellfish laboratory at Bivalve, “where it belonged,” in one of the offices built by the railroad company. It was the first permanent station in New Jersey to investigate the health of the oysters. For the first three years, William H. Dumont was the biologist at the station on the wharf, and after 1926, J. Richards Nelson replaced him. Research on oysters and the best and better ways to increase production depend on the railroads. Toward the end of the 1920s, as the freight rates were so high, shippers were increasingly considering using trucks to send oysters to markets in Camden, Chester, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. At the same time, shippers formed the Maurice River Oyster Shippers Association to protect their interest and to better deal with the railroad company. Joseph N. Fowler was the president of the association, and several other men with business on the Bivalve wharves were members, including Peter Carlos Coster, one of the principal oyster shippers, head of the Riparian Association that attempted to control the oyster beds from Fortescue to Hawks Nest, Henry S. Robbins, Clarence Robbins and Robert Taylor Lane. The negotiations with the railroad company proved...
Oystering on the Delaware Bay


to be fruitful. In 1932, in an effort to gain back the oyster business, the railroad company agreed to trial rates, lowering the rates from twenty-eight cents to sixteen cents per hundred pounds, or about fifty cents per bag. After the trial period, if the shippers would not express “appreciation of the reduction,” the railroad company reserved the right to require the shippers to vacate their properties, leased from the company, within thirty days, according to a clause in the lease contract. Some of the oystermen protested the price fixing practiced by the large oyster companies, such as F. F. East, Bivalve Packing Co., and the Port Norris Oyster Co., and took their oysters to houses in Baltimore.72

Joseph N. Fowler, a business, civic and political leader of the Port Norris community, was director (1915-1933) and president (1933-1946) of the Board of Shell Fisheries, and one of the founders and president for several years of the Maurice River Cove Oyster Growers and Dealers Association, later renamed the New Jersey Oyster Planters and Packers Association, Inc. His son, J. McFerren Fowler, was also involved in the oyster business, and active in several organizations including the Oyster Institute of North America and the New Jersey State Shell Fisheries Council. Newcomb brothers Daniel and Josiah were the owners of the Newbay Oyster Company, a shucking house that at one point employed one hundred and fifty people. The company also owned a fleet of boats, including the Josiah S. Newcomb, the Florence Erickson, the Annie C. Johnson, the Walter M. Johnson, and the James W. Fennimore.73

After the Heyday

It is not known if the efforts to mitigate the conflict between the owners of the shipping sheds and wharves and the shippers would have succeeded. The entire oyster industry was seriously affected by the depression: the value of the oyster production dropped from $3,327,000 in 1929 to $542,000 in 1939.74 The decline of the oyster industry impacted the entire area’s shipbuilding industry; no new schooners appear to have been built in Cumberland County after 1930.75 The oystering business suffered additional damage from the 1938 Great Hurricane.

After the Second World War, the oyster industry revived, spurred by the passing, in 1946, of a New Jersey State law, which allowed oyster dredging using power vessels. After power dredging was legalized, many of the planters began operating them. In 1948, Charles E. Sharp was the owner of the 47-ton Katie E. Sharp,76 the 33-ton Robert J. Lore,77 the 21-ton Rosa Lambert, and the small Bay View; his wife, Eva M. Sharp, was listed as the owner of the 37-ton powerboat L. E. Yates.78 Margaret and J. McFerren Fowler owned the 70-ton Margaret E. Fowler79 and the 46-ton Mac Fowler.80 Many of the schooners and sloops anchoring at the wharf were converted to motor vessels, including the A. J. Meenwald, making oystering more efficient. The Maurice River cove in 1950 was still one of the largest oyster-producing regions of the world, containing 30,000 acres of leased oyster grounds and 20,000 acres of State-owned natural beds open to the public. However, as production dropped from $3,327,000 in 1929 to $542,000 in 1939, the tracks to the wharves were removed in 1953.81

In the spring of 1957, an epidemic hit the oyster beds with devastating results. Within a period of six weeks, eighty percent of the beds were infested with a parasite (Apatosporidium nelsoni), causing a major downturn for the oyster industry. By the 1959 season, the production of oysters at Bivalve dwindled from 900,000 bushels during the early 1950s, to a mere 10,000.82 In 1983, the shellfish laboratory operated by Rutgers University moved into a new facility in the vicinity of the Bivalve wharves.83 The laboratory was later renamed the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory. Over the years, the laboratory spent millions of dollars investigating disease-resistant oyster varieties, and during the past quarter-century, oystering in the Delaware Bay has to some extent recovered, and oysters once again have become one of the principal fishery products in Cumberland County.84

1 Mary Emily Miller, The Delaware Oyster Industry, Past and Present, Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1962, Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms, Inc., p.90.
3 One of the first records of settlement in the Bivalve area is a 1691 map showing a landing on the Maurice River named Clark’s Landing. Kimberly R. Selick and Sara Amy Leach, Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay-Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, P.O. Box 37127, Washington D.C. 20013-7127, p.43.
4 Ibid. In 1830, John Dallas sold the property to a Philadelphia coffee merchant who named the village Port Norris for his son Norris Jones.
6 Miller, 157.
12 Ibid, 134.
14 Miller, 159.
16 National Register Nomination, Section 8, page 1.
17 Miller, 160.
18 Blair, 157.
19 Ibid.
Throughout the nineteenth century, the Delaware Bay’s commercial development expanded the region’s exposure as a recreational venue. By the 1850s, Fortescue, centrally located along the bayshore, itself became a popular resort. Often labeled “Fortescue Island” in its early days, in line with therapeutic benefits associated with salt-water environments, it assumed the moniker “Fortescue Retreat,” a place its promoters imbued “with a reputation for excellent bathing and gunning facilities;” with “buildings…fitted up for boarders, and every facility for their comfort, convenience, or pleasure.” Visitors dined in its hotels and guesthouses on fresh fish and oysters, and dining at its oyster bakes complemented a growing menu of activities at the resort, an array of diversions also matched farther up the bay at the Warner House in Sea Breeze. Indeed, Fortescue’s popularity fueled the imagination of its supporters, leading to increased calls for sea wall construction, improved roads, and better boarding houses. Its location not only afforded visitors a captivating view of oyster boats at work, but also, when the industry’s captains took a playful turn, provided a prime view of oyster schooners and sloops racing in the off-season.

A hotel known as the Fortescue House served as the early catalyst for much of the resort’s recreational life, but as the nineteenth century waned, the infrastructure that supported leisure activities grew. Newspaper accounts reported that dancing at Fortescue Island’s pavilions and dining at its oyster bakes complemented a growing menu of activities at the resort, an array of diversions also matched farther up the bay at the Warner House in Sea Breeze. Indeed, Fortescue’s popularity fueled the imagination of its supporters, leading to increased calls for sea wall construction, improved roads, and better boarding houses. Its location not only afforded visitors a captivating view of oyster boats at work, but also, when the industry’s captains took a playful turn, provided a prime view of oyster schooners and sloops racing in the off-season.

Warner House, Sea Breeze.

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Fortescue House.
Such contests, occurring from the late nineteenth century until the famous Oyster Schooner Race of 1929, reinforced Fortescue’s regional cache, and, along with it, the amenities, entertainments, and outdoor activities that were making it a popular destination.3

Swept by this momentum, Fortescue assumed the shape of a modern bayshore resort in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Transcending its origins, it became “a veritable village of tents and cottages. From the persimmon grove down, there are erected at least fifty of these, all occupied by persons who are there to spend the summer. These tents and cottages are erected on the beach banks, fronting the bay.”4 This flurry of building activity consumed Fortescue until the Great Depression, with individual speculators, such as Zaccheus Joslin, and development firms, such as Stanger and Stanger, offering lots for sale. Gradually, Fortescue’s appeal prompted investment from an eclectic range of individuals. Bridgeton chandelier maker Thomas Pugh speculated in cottage development and built the widely popular Fortescue Bait House, while Bridgeton’s Parker Brothers Glass factory built a series of identical cottages fronting the bay. By the 1910s, a variety of cottage types dotted the resort’s beachfront, as did several boardinghouses or guesthouses capable of putting up sixty people at one time. These boardinghouses, venues known as Mohave Cottage, Williams House, and the new Fortescue House, accommodated family gatherings, religious groups, and anglers, patrons who were finding the Delaware Bay a viable, and more conveniently located, alternative to seaside attractions. Herbert Garrison’s new pier projected prominently into the bay and marked a turning point in the resort’s ascendancy, providing up-to-date mooring facilities for sailing and power yachts, launches of various sizes, and, perhaps most significantly, docking arrangements for party boats servicing recreational fishers—the pastime that was rapidly becoming the community’s signature enterprise. Fortescue’s boardwalk, along with the construction of the larger Garrison and Charlesworth Hotels, capped these pre-World War II developments, and signaled, despite the Depression, people’s desire to take refuge along the bay’s sandy shores. Not surprising, Fortescue served as the template for resort development at other bayside beaches: Gandy’s Beach, Thompson’s Beach, Moore’s Beach, and Bradford’s Beach.5

Fortescue epitomized how connections to place were being culturally cemented through America’s devotion to outdoor life. Its hotels, boardinghouses, and restaurants seized on their most ready resource, the Delaware Bay oyster, and made it a culinary favorite. “Fortescue Fries,” a preparation somewhere between an oyster fry and an oyster fritter, were singularly celebrated in a collection of essays by University of Pennsylvania English Professor Cornelius Weygandt, whose romantic tone was an early attempt at identifying Southern New Jersey’s distinct cultural life and history. In no small measure, the cultural energy that coalesced around Fortescue owed its force to the bayshore’s wider supporting context. North and south of the resort, the bayshore’s marshes, creeks, and rivers were lined with elaborate hunting lodges such as the Sora Rail Club, modest waterfowling cabins, muskrater shacks, and assorted bay dwellers whose environmental engagement defined the region. This cultural landscape proved an irresistible draw for the cultural imagination of Thomas Eakins whose paintings of railbird hunting on the bayshore’s marshes added yet another dimension to the region’s sense of place, and set a precedent that would be followed by artistic forays to the region by members of the Philadelphia Sketch Club for years to come. Valued as a distinctive place, the bayshore’s environmental vision reflected these meaningful affiliations, whether they came through the nature writing of Dallas Lore Sharp, the photography of William J.S. Bradway, Harvey Pech, and Graham Schofield, or the motor tourist who sought authentic release in observing those who worked the water.6
Captain A.D. Campbell, Jr. offered fishing groups aboard the Colleen Bawn.


The Jewish Settlement of South Jersey: Alliance and its Contemporaries

Matthew E. Pisarski and Janet W. Foster

The anti-Semitic pogroms that swept Russia in the 1880s created a wave of refugees to the United States and a crisis for already-established Jewish communities. The Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society (HEAS) formed in New York in 1881 to provide help for Eastern European Jewish immigrants. The HEAS partnered with the Paris-based Alliance Israélite Universelle, funded in part by the Baron de Hirsch Fund, and with Jewish philanthropists known as the “New York Committee” to complete the groundwork for the establishment of a community to be called “Alliance,” named after the French group. The HEAS plan was to guide new Jewish immigrants away from the crowded lower East Side ghettos of New York toward a better life in America.

The Jewish American immigration experience was largely an urban experience, and this was particularly true for the Eastern European Jews who immigrated to America beginning in the 1880s. Most came into New York City, and great numbers of them settled there, or moved to other large cities where there were already settled Jewish populations able to help the newcomers. Another alternative did, however, exist: to move to the countryside and take up rural life.

For some Jews this was an ideological choice – attempting to remake the Jewish condition by re-forging ties to the land that had existed in Biblical times. The Jewish social movement known as Am Olam (“Eternal People”) arose in Odessa, Russia, in 1881, contemporaneous with the onset of the pogroms. It was based on the belief that an agricultural life or “return to the earth” would allow the members of the Jewish diaspora to support themselves and live in community with other Jews. Immigrants sponsored by the HEAS were aware of the idea, if not the reality, of agricultural re-settlement.

For others, in the established Jewish urban communities, the removal of new immigrants to rural places was a way of separating themselves from the poorer, less educated and more “foreign” Jews. In 1891, Adolphus Solomons, executive director of the Baron de Hirch Fund, told the New York Times that the primary objective of the Fund was “the Americanization of our immigrants, to mix with the masses, to learn English and the ways of the country, including the respectable occupation of farming. He continued, “They can’t all be peddlers and merchants.” He wanted to “assimilate them with the masses and thoroughly imbue them with the American constitution and American institutions.”

In May 1882 a group of 43 Russian Jewish families, mostly from the region around Kiev and Odessa, became the first arrivals in New York assisted by the HEAS. But they were not to stay in New York. Rather, the HEAS sent them to a near-wilderness in southern New Jersey to establish new lives based on farming. The HEAS chose the location of the new settlement of Alliance for its location, sufficiently near the West Jersey Railroad to offer convenient access to Philadelphia and New York City. The philanthropic Jewish communities in those cities would be relied upon to help support the immigrants as the community was established. Other attractions included a climate conducive to agriculture, and the proximity to large urban markets for the sale of the fresh vegetables the colony was expected to produce.

The small village of Alliance began as a tract of mostly scrub oak and pine along the western shore of the Maurice River in Pittsgrove Township (Salem County). Halfway between the towns of Millville and Salem and west of Vineland, this section was sparsely populated with timbermen and a few berry farmers. In the early 1880s the Leach family owned much of the land in the region west of the Maurice River. In 1882 the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of New York City approached the Leaches with an offer to purchase about eleven hundred acres to establish a Jewish agrarian colony.

The Leach Brothers sold the land, then served as developers for the site, and ran the local sawmill and lumberyard that provided the new settlers with much of their building material, at the Society’s expense. The colony began with the Alliance immigrants spending their first year in Army tents provided by the U.S. War Department. Three large barracks were built by 1883 to house the families, each assigned a cubicule 8 feet by 14 feet. As individual houses were constructed, they were made with wood cleared from the land and milled by the Leach Brothers. Each house, 12’ by 14’ by 14’ high, consisted of two rooms, a small attic, and a cellar. For larger families, lean-tos were added on. The houses were lined with thin pine boards and plastered inside, but the settlers suffered from cold in winter and heat in summer.

The bigger problem was that the colonists were initially inexperienced farmers who were forced to learn through trial and error, especially in their attempt to find the right crop choices for a soil that could be rather unforgiving. Grapes, strawberries, blackberries, sweet potatoes, lima beans, tomatoes, rhubarb, white potatoes and peppers became their staples. These choices required few farm implements and could be planted without horses or plows. Their (at first) meager crop yields were shipped to New York through an agreement with Alliance’s benefactors. The profitability of the colony was boosted somewhat when small industries were developed, including a cigar factory and later, a clothing factory.
account of the colonies. A second synagogue was built and dedicated in 1889 by the so-called religious "reformers" of the community. Called Jphretherh Israel (Splendor of Israel), this building has been restored and is in occasional use today; it is commonly known as the Alliance synagogue. It is a simple but stately two-story white clapboard structure, with two levels of rectangular windows on each side, and tall narrow round-headed windows on the gable ends. The treatment of the roofline and corners, as seen in an early photograph of Eben Ha'Ezer, suggest that the same carpenters built both synagogues. A small entry portico is attached to the west gable end of the building and it is now enclosed. The portico provides entry into a small vestibule where prayer books are kept, and from which ascend the stairs to the women’s balcony.

By 1889, the Alliance colony included 92 houses, two synagogues, a library, a post-office, a school and the Alliance Cemetery. The population peaked in 1908, when there were almost 500 people living on 78 farms spread over 1,354 acres of cleared land. After this point, however, the population declined, and while Alliance received an influx of Jewish immigrants during and just after World War II, nearly every family of the early settlers had left the community by the 1970s. Their children educated and drawn to professional work in the cities, the original settlers had accomplished the dream of assimilation at the cost of maintaining a rural Jewish community. The synagogue and cemetery remain in use today, and a scattering of houses indicate to those who know to look that a village once was here.

After the initial settlement of Alliance, HEAS and the Baron de Hirsch Fund promoted further Jewish settlement nearby, and the communities of Brotmanville, Carmel, Malaga, Montefiore, Norma and Rosenhain were founded in the 1880s. They were separated only by a few miles, and initially, they were entirely separate enclaves from the non-Jews already living in the region. Woodbine, in Cape May County, was a more ambitious settlement project, founded in 1891. It was better funded, through the Baron de Hirsch Trust Fund, and used both agriculture and industry as the base for a local economy. Despite the complaints of the Orthodox that the new settlers were lax in their religious practice, all these towns had synagogues from an early date in their development.

For example, in 1883, the Eben Ha’Ezer (Rock of Salvation) was dedicated on July 29th, 1888. Five hundred acres today still retain their 14-acre size. Individual families owned their land rather than tracts with a well and a two-room house, so that had been leased land into approximately 14-acre partners sold the acreage and improvements of the build. The building was then torn down into a shirt factory. By 1885, the HEAS had dissolved, and its place sold the acreage and improvements of Alliance Colony to an entity called the Alliance Land Trust. This Trust proceeded to split what had been leased land into approximately 14-acre tracts with a well and a two-room house, so that individual families owned their land rather than being part of a cooperative. Many of the Alliance tracts today still retain their 14-acre size.

A synagogue, Eben Ha’Ezer (Rock of Salvation) was dedicated on July 29th, 1888. Five hundred dollars for the construction of the synagogue and the appointments of its library were donated to the community by the New York philanthropist Jacob Schiff, and one hundred dollars was given by M.N. Mendel of New York. This synagogue was torn down before World War II, but it is recorded in several photographs included by the Philadelphia journalist Moses Klein in his 1889 account of the colonies. A second synagogue was built and dedicated in 1889 by the so-called religious "reformers" of the community. Called Jphretherh Israel (Splendor of Israel), this building has been restored and is in occasional use today; it is commonly known as the Alliance synagogue. It is a simple but stately two-story white clapboard structure, with two levels of rectangular windows on each side, and tall narrow round-headed windows on the gable ends. The treatment of the roofline and corners, as seen in an early photograph of Eben Ha’Ezer, suggest that the same carpenters built both synagogues. A small entry portico is attached to the west gable end of the building and it is now enclosed. The portico provides entry into a small vestibule where prayer books are kept, and from which ascend the stairs to the women’s balcony.

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A number of Jewish agricultural settlements were founded around the country in the late 19th century, including Happinyville, South Carolina; Sicily Island, Louisiana; Clarion, Utah; Cremieux, North Dakota; Cotopaxi, Colorado; New Odessa, Oregon; and Hebron, Lasker and Montefiore, Kansas. Although the kansas settlement used the spelling “Montefiore” – presumably to honor the Jewish financier and banker Sir Moses Montefiore – the New Jersey literature consistently used the alternate spelling “Montefiore.” In the words of Leonard Robinson, writing in the American Jewish Yearbook in 1912, “they all went through the same experience – a premature birth, a brief struggle, and a more or less violent death.” Bad soil, freak accidents, but most of all an inexplicable and poor financing doomed these efforts from the start. The only settlements that were in any way successful in the last decades of the 19th century were those founded in southern New Jersey, and the oldest of them all, Alliance, has been identified as one of the most successful Am Olam colonies in the nation.

Today, the Jewish communities in all of these towns are small or non-existent; the towns themselves are historic place names rather than functioning town centers. Some of the historic synagogues are still kept up and are used on major holidays, when visitors come to participate in services. Others have been converted to churches to serve the religious needs of a new population. Temple Beth Hillel-Beth Abraham, in Carmel, is the only active Reform Jewish congregation in the entire Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem, and Cape May County region that serves a regular congregation and offers frequent services.

Alliance is not on the VAF tour but is worth seeking out, even though the buildings are not open to the public. The few remaining buildings from the heyday of the colony include:

Moshe Bayuk House: Built in 1899 for Moshe (Moses) Bayuk (1850-1932) and his family. Moshe was a community and spiritual leader of the Alliance colony from its founding through the next five decades, serving as emissary to the international Jewish aid societies that supported Alliance during its existence. The house is in ruinous condition but a local group plans to restore it and use it as a center for interpreting the role of Jewish settlement in South Jersey’s history and development.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM, Galloway, New Jersey, May 2014
Tifereth Israel Synagogue:  Built in 1889, Tifereth Israel’s gable end faces Cershul Avenue, directly across the road from the Moshe Bayuk House.

Alliance Chapel:  Built in 1923, Alliance Chapel is a one-story structure originally used for Sabbath, the preparation of the deceased for burial.

Alliance Cemetery:  Founded in 1891, the oldest section of the cemetery is located in the northwest corner.  Here, the markers memorialize the original members of the colony and are of a European design, with text written in Yiddish.  As the colony matured the markers became more standardized, with later text exclusively in English or Hebrew.  Jewish tradition discourages the living from walking over the dead, so stone paths are provided along the plots to guide visitors. The cemetery includes a Holocaust memorial to the original members of the colony and are of a European design, with text written in Yiddish. As the colony matured the markers became more standardized, with later text exclusively in English or Hebrew. Jewish tradition discourages the living from walking over the dead, so stone paths are provided along the plots to guide visitors. The cemetery includes a Holocaust memorial to the south of the property. Known as the Wall of Remembrance, it was designed in 1994 by local architect David Manders and includes a sculptural Remembrance, it was designed in 1994 by local architect David Manders and includes a sculptural

New Jersey is often referred to as the most densely populated state in the nation, with 1,195 people per square mile. The average density suggests that New Jersey must be nearly entirely urbanized, or at least suffering from end-stage suburban sprawl and congestion. Anyone arriving in New Jersey through Newark Airport might tend to agree, but as one travels throughout New Jersey, one senses a different narrative. The statistics bear this out as well, with density at its highest in Hudson County (10,179 people per square mile) to the north and at its lowest in Cape May County (157 people per square mile) to the far south of the state.

Through large parts of the southernmost counties of New Jersey – Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Ocean, Atlantic, and Cape May – one faces an anomalous landscape. Rather than the suburban sprawl, chemical factories and congested New Jersey Turnpike, travelers are greeted by vast fields of corn, soybeans, nursery stock and other agricultural commodities, or by marshlands and deep forests of old-growth deciduous trees, or by the unbroken pine forests known as the Pine Barrens. In truth, much of New Jersey bears little resemblance to its widely believed anti-image. This is not an accident. For decades New Jersey has been at the forefront of land preservation and environmental protection.

In 1970 New Jersey enacted the Tidel Wetlands Act, followed by the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act in 1973 and the Waterfront Development Act in 1975, all of which strictly regulate construction and development along shorelines and tidal waters. In 1987 New Jersey’s Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act was enacted, which restricts or prohibits any activity which would have a detrimental impact on freshwater wetlands within the state. In nearly every case, New Jersey’s environmental regulations either precede federal protection or are more stringent than federal regulations. For instance, New Jersey’s regulations restricting development in wetlands are more stringent than federal law. New Jersey’s Industrial Site Recovery Act stipulates higher standards for brownfield remediation than federal regulation does. Not satisfied with federal action to protect endangered species, New Jersey in 1973 expanded upon the then recently-adopted federal Endangered Species Act with its own, tougher law. Over five hundred wildlife species can be found within New Jersey, including more than sixty classified as threatened or endangered. Through these and other acts, New Jersey preserves through regulation a surprising variety of habitats: barrier beaches, coastal marshes, floodplain forests, and others.

Above and beyond the regulations imposed by these general laws, New Jersey has identified certain regions and ecosystems as so significant that they deserve special protection. In 1968.
The Pine Barrens is an area of forest stretching over seven counties in the south-east region of New Jersey. Despite its proximity to New York City and Philadelphia and the fact that both the Garden State Parkway and the Atlantic City Expressway run right through it, the Pine Barrens remained largely rural and undisturbed due to sandy soils unsuitable for most agriculture and an abandonment of its iron and charcoal making efforts which played an important role during the American Revolution. By the 1960s, the Pine Barrens had an average density of only fifteen people per square mile.

This did not deter developers from grandiose visions of the region’s future. In the late 1960s, plans began to be formulated for a new city of 250,000 residents and a “jetport” to mitigate the congestion of the Philadelphia and New York City regions. This plan envisioned the construction of the largest airport on earth – four times as large as Newark Airport, La Guardia and Kennedy put together. It was in this atmosphere that a series of essays in 1967 appeared in The New Yorker authored by John McPhee, which would a year later become the book, The Pine Barrens. McPhee’s book illuminated this misunderstood region and expounded on the pristine landscape, deep cultural heritage, and threatened wilderness that made the Pine Barrens a place to be cherished and protected. Many credit McPhee’s book with saving the Pine Barrens from rampant development by galvanizing the public support that led within a decade to action on the federal and state level to permanently protect the region.

In 1977 Congress established the Pinelands National Reserve, the first act of its kind in the nation through the National Parks and Recreation Act.

New Jersey followed in 1978 with its Pinelands Protection Act. This Act, created a special 927,000-acre zone known as the Pinelands Planning Area, to “Preserve, protect, and enhance the overall ecological values of the Pinelands, including its large forested areas, its essential character, and its potential to recover from disturbance.” This planning area covers portions of seven counties in southern New Jersey, the Wharton, Brendan T. Byrne, and Bass River State Forests, and two National Wild and Scenic Rivers: the Maurice and the Great Egg Harbor. The act created the Pinelands Commission which manages the Pinelands Planning Area and through a corps of botanists, geologists and archaeologists, has discovered “a potable water supply estimated at over 17 trillion gallons ... 580 native plant species, including 54 classified as threatened or endangered, and 299 kinds of birds, 91 fish, 59 reptiles and amphibians, and 39 mammals...”

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The Pinelands Planning Area comprises about 20 percent of New Jersey’s land mass.

New Jersey did not stop there, however, and in 2004 enacted the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act, for a large portion of northern New Jersey, creating a very similar protection area to that of the Pinelands. Encompassing land in four counties, the protection area preserves one of the most important aquifers for New Jersey and New York and curtails sprawl emanating from New York City. When you add up the acres and the square miles of New Jersey’s landscape which is protected through some form of regulation, well over half of New Jersey falls into some protection area. From the Highlands to the Pinelands and everything in between, New Jersey’s wide diversity of ecosystems are actively protected.

Yet regulation can only do so much. While it can, in some places and to some extent, deter sprawl development and encourage habitat protection, only land ownership or permanent easements can guarantee their outcome. Although New Jersey is often the brunt of jokes for having what many believe is an asphalt landscape, the state is a national leader in land conservation with more than one-fourth of the state either as one of many forms of publicly-owned open space or as deed-restricted farmland. Begin in 1986 under Governor Thomas Kean, New Jersey’s efforts to permanently preserve the garden in the Garden State took off in 1998 when then Governor Christine Todd Whitman later to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from 2001 to 2003 under President George W. Bush appointed Assemblywoman Maureen B. Ogden chair of the Governor’s Council on New Jersey Outdoors. The Council targeted raising $1 billion over the subsequent decade to be used to preserve 1 million acres of farmland and open space, a 20% buyback of the State over and above what had already been done.

New Jersey’s official tagline as the “Garden State” is well earned. The state produces nearly 300,000 tons of fresh vegetables per year and ranks 2nd in the nation in blueberry production, 3rd in the production of endive/escarole, spinach and cranberries, 4th in bell peppers, lettuce and peaches, 6th in lettuce, and 7th in tomatoes. However, the largest sector of New Jersey’s agricultural industry, nearly 40% of all agricultural products sold from New Jersey farms, is nursery and horticulture. It is important to note that New Jersey farmers experience some of the highest production costs in the nation, but due to the high profitability of the products grown, particularly horticultural, farms are able to maintain solvency.

Even in the 21st century, agriculture in New Jersey is a nearly $1 billion annual industry. To protect it, New Jersey has spent – to date – nearly $1 billion to acquire and permanently preserve farmland. The precise amount spent, at last count $922,124,957 (in 2013), is higher than that spent in California ($77 million), more than New York ($109 million) and more even than Massachusetts ($203 million). New Jersey has spent more for farmland preservation than any other State. This investment has permanently preserved 200,000 farmland acres, the highest rate of preserved farmland to total active farmland of any State. As you drive around, keep your eye out for “Preserved Farmland” signs which identify farms that have been permanently preserved.
New Jersey was once described as a noted geographer as a “peninsula of land lying between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers” and thus is “a unique symbiosis of land and water.” It is in this environment that the vernacular architecture of the various regions evolved. In recognition of its unique qualities, the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) was established by Congress in 1988 as a federal partnership with the State of New Jersey and various private and community-based organizations. The legislation that created the NJCHT was originally crafted and promoted by New Jersey Senators Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) to increase public awareness and appreciation of New Jersey’s cultural heritage and delicate habitats along the considerable coastline of the state.

The NJCHT is a network of roads through the bayshore areas of the Raritan and Delaware Rivers and the coastal areas of New Jersey marked by nationally significant natural and cultural sites and internationally significant habitats for migratory birds. It encompasses the area east of the Garden State Parkway from the Raritan Bay south to Cape May and the area north and west of Cape May south of Route 49 to the vicinity of Deepwater. Its 300 miles of coastline are divided into five regions: Delaware, Cape May, Absecon, Barnegat, and Sandy Hook. The first three lie within the Down Jersey region.

**Delsea Region** consists of Salem and Cumberland Counties, and part of Cape May County. It runs some 48 miles from the Delaware Bay Bridge on the east to the Garden State Parkway on the west.

**Cape May Region** consists of 36 miles that run between the southern tip of the Cape May peninsula to Ocean City, the northern boundary of Cape May County.

**Absecon Region** is in Atlantic County and extends 20 miles between Somers Point and the Burlington County boundary at the Mullica River.

**Barnegat Region** is mostly in Ocean County to the north and includes 36 miles from the southern tip of Burlington County at the Mullica River to its northern boundary at Point Pleasant Beach – a distance that parallels Barnegat Bay.

**Sandy Hook Region** includes Monmouth and Middlesex Counties and is both the northernmost and, at 115 miles, the longest of all the regions.

The 1991 National Park Service study, *Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail – Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay: Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties*, was the first major comprehensive study of this area, and still serves as a major guide to its heritage. That study identified five major interpretive themes that provided a framework by which each region could explore sites that feature one or more subjects areas of their cultural heritage:

**Maritime History:** Explores the interdependence of the people and the sea, including such activities as shipbuilding, fishing, shellfish harvesting, and shipping, and such features as lighthouses, lifesaving stations, forts, and fishing villages.

**Coastal Communities:** The local economies were shaped by the natural resources that were found in these regions. Glassmaking, bog iron production, ironwork, harvesting salt hay, canning fish and vegetables, and growing cranberries were among the numerous industries that provided sustenance for these coastal communities.

**Relaxation and Inspiration:** The Jersey Shore has long enjoyed a reputation as a place for respite and relaxation, for holidays and religious retreats. Much of its historic built fabric expresses how holiday seekers related to the coast and to their neighbors.

**Wildlife Migration:** The extensive wetlands of the New Jersey coastline are important resting places for migratory birds making their way up and down the Atlantic Flyway. Many dolphins and humpback whales can be seen plying New Jersey waters from spring to autumn, and may occasionally be observed during winter as well.
However, Congress’s funding authorization for the NICH expired in 2011, in spite of repeated efforts by the New Jersey Senate caucus for its renewal. With the lapse of federal funding, the participation of the National Park Service (NPS) also ended. Although the markers and interpretive signs still remain, some of the functions formerly undertaken by the NPS have since been assumed by private organizations, while some have been allowed to lapse. 4

In 2009, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition (SJBC) received a grant under the National Scenic Byways Program of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 6 for the creation of the Bayshore Heritage Byway, which was to build on the existing infrastructure of the Coastal Heritage Trail in Cumberland, Salem, and Cape May counties. 7 In 2012, the required “corridor management plan” was well on its way to completion when federal funding for that program, too, failed to be reauthorized by Congress. 8 An alternative plan that would establish the three southernmost “Bayshore” counties as a National Heritage Area was suggested as a possible workaround for the funding challenges in the current economy. National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. 9

The historic vernacular architecture of the Bayshore area of “Down Jersey” reflects the human activity that has taken place from New Jersey’s earliest settlement to the present. The land retains tangible reminders of its history in the form of architecture that expresses the distinctive character of each region. Whether through the Coastal Heritage Trail, the Bayshore Heritage Scenic Byway, or as National Heritage Areas, the culture and scenery of this important region will be preserved for future generations.

2 “New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route,” Great Outdoor Recreation Pages (GORP).
7 Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, PC., op cit. Before this plan could be adopted, Congress’s Transportation Reauthorization bill, entitled “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act” (MAP-21) failed to reauthorize funding for the National Scenic Byway Program.
10 Historic Trail, NPS, Northeast Region. Tel. 215-597-1280 (w) Em: phil_correll@nps.gov
Our journey through Salem County begins with the long-celebrated patterned-brickwork mansions of the 18th century. We will also explore the other kinds of buildings – domestic, agricultural, public, and religious – that took root in “Fenwick’s Colony.” When architectural historian Gabrielle Lanier examined the regional identity of the Delaware Valley through its historic architecture, she found many identities, a “region of regions.” Her case study of Mannington Township, which we will be visiting, showed that it typified Quaker-settled southwestern New Jersey with its elite brick houses monumentalized by historians. And yet, she found frame houses just as highly appraised, also occupied by elite families, that were “elided from the ancestral map” by the antiquarians writing local history and exposing glass plate negatives in the late 19th century.1 We will explore such elided places, and discover a cultural landscape mosaic within Salem County, linked together by themes of settlement, religion, agriculture, and emancipation, in a more or less chronological progression.2

The tour begins with an estuarine landscape that Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, and English settlers of the 17th century encountered as they sailed up the Delaware Bay and River. Tidal meadows lined the bay and river margins along New Jersey’s southern coast. The meadows sustained the settlers with grazing lands, salt hay, fish, and waterfowl. European settlement initiated a 300-year period of reclaiming tidal wetlands for agriculture by building banks and wooden sluices along the rivers and streams to keep the tide from flooding low-lying meadows.3 The first landowners under English rule, mostly Quakers, built their houses along and oriented to the watercourses, which were convenient not only for transportation but also for exploiting the fertile farming opportunity the meadows afforded. As they prospered, the second and third generations of “weighty” Quakers built the celebrated brick mansions decorated with patterns, initials and dates which have been interpreted as a visual proclamation of their social hegemony and economic prosperity.4

At our first stop, the view from the Mason Point observation platform includes just such a house in the distance – the Abel and Mary Nicholson House – on the next “neck” of upland to the east. The view gives us a sense of its isolated historic setting, which has scarcely changed since it was originally constructed. Looking southward, in stark contrast, looms a monstrous 20th-century monument to energy production sited on a river dredging spoil site, providing a counterpoint with a vivid and sobering illustration of the layering of this landscape over time. Invisible except in our imagination are the people of the margins – the Lenni Lenape, Nanticoke, and African-descended peoples – floating through this porous landscape. For enslaved African Americans of the Delmarva peninsula, their escape routes to freedom brought many to southern New Jersey across the Delaware Bay and River, where the meadows provided a many-channeled, protective landscape through which they fled on the flood tide.5

The Abel and Mary Nicholson House, now a National Historic Landmark, stands to the east of Mason Point facing Abbotts Meadow as a...
testament to the Quaker ideas of family, freedom, faith, plainness, and prosperity. Abel Nicholson, who sailed to New Salem with John Fenwick as a young boy, had this extraordinary brick mansion built in 1721. The remaining standing patterned-brick houses in the county, this one especially remarkable for its integrity, and it stands as an exceptional example of a 19th-century building tradition. Our approach by foot down the half-mile lane might well be wet from the receding high tide, reminding us of its proximity both to Abbotts Meadow and to the meadow’s breached bank. The slowely enlarging view of the house will evoke a sense of its isolation, antiquity, and loneliness. The farmyard, save giant Linden and Sycamore trees, is bare; gone are the outbuildings that once supported everyday life. But the conjoined brick houses of 1722 and 1839 stand. Absence of modernizations allows us to more clearly perceive a weighty Quaker household – its form, materials, spaces, symbols, and performances – and to ponder the meaning of “plainness” amidst the monumentality of its presence.

Ironically, its survival is linked to a power plant invisible from the house: PSEG Nuclear acquired the Nicholson property as part of mitigation for its continuing impact upon river water and aquatic life. However, the meadow was of interest, not the house. A local farmer employed by the utility who understood the historic value of the Nicholson House advocated for its preservation. Now, it is owned by a foundation specializing in preservation of the house for study. We are all beneficiaries of this act.

Over our lunch hour we will walk, self-guided, through the City of Salem – the hub of civic, commercial, and religious activity in the county from the time of John Fenwick’s founding. Today, there are three National Register districts encompassing the downtown and neighborhoods of both the elite and working classes. Printed walking tour guides provided by the Salem Main Street program are available for a deeper look. Several buildings on both Market Street and Broadway, the streets John Fenwick laid out in 1675, will be open for the VAF tour, including civic, commercial, religious and domestic buildings that span nearly 300 years of history and architecture.

Lunch begins at the 1772 Salem Friends Meeting House, a late example of patterned brickwork and the third meeting house built in the city. The Friends Burial Ground two blocks west on West Broadway, where the iconic, ancient Salem Oak stands, was the site of the first two. At the Salem Fire Company, the firemen proudly curate their extensive collection of historical artifacts in the old Union Firehouse. The City Municipal Building is an exuberant example of high Victorian Queen Anne style architecture built for a local bank. It was passed on to the city in 1926, and relocated when it was pulled by one horse to a site off Broadway. The Old Salem County Courthouse is reputed to be one of the oldest courthouses in continuous operation in the country, dating from 1735 and enlarged and rehabilitated twice. The Salem County Historical Society offers extensive artifact, archival and architectural collections, including a building complex featuring the 1721 Alexander Grant brick house with keeping room, a 1737 octagonal law office, a log house, and the Alonzo Eakin townhouse with its Gothic Revival bath house.

Johnson Hall was an early Federal work of architecture built in 1807 by the county’s wealthiest man, its first historian, and a progressive farmer: Robert Gibbon Johnson. First church to be built by a local man employed by the utility who understood the historic value of the Nicholson House advocated for its preservation. Now, it is owned by a foundation specializing in preserving the house for study. We are all beneficiaries of this act.

As we continue our tour, we will encounter structures built in the 18th century and early 19th century for a variety of property types – including civic, commercial, religious and residential buildings. The majority of both the elite and working classes. Printed walking tour guides provided by the Salem Main Street program are available for a deeper look. Several buildings on both Market Street and Broadway, the streets John Fenwick laid out in 1675, will be open for the VAF tour, including civic, commercial, religious and domestic buildings that span nearly 300 years of history and architecture.

Johnson Hall was an early Federal work of architecture built in 1807 by the county’s wealthiest man, its first historian, and a progressive farmer: Robert Gibbon Johnson. First church to be built by a local man employed by the utility who understood the historic value of the Nicholson House advocated for its preservation. Now, it is owned by a foundation specializing in preserving the house for study. We are all beneficiaries of this act.

The termination of the city tour will be the South Jersey Farmer’s Exchange built in 1918 on Fenwick Creek, a rare surviving city property related to agriculture and dairying. This building, a fireproof terra-cotta block construction and intact milling equipment. Now an antiques emporium specializing in architectural salvage, agricultural implements and furniture, it will provide a feast of regional material culture.

Our afternoon will begin in Mannington Township on the north edge of Salem, where Quaker identity ran especially deep. We will see sites associated with Quakers, African Americans and meadow farming. Two frame barns on an ancestral plantation on the eastern shore of Mannington Meadow, one with roots in the colonial period and one built of a piece in the early Republic, are connected by several generations of the Wyatt and Wistar families. This broad inland tidal flat was the first meadow to be explored for reclamation under colonial laws, and the company subsequently formed for that purpose met in Bartholomew Wyatt’s house from the early Republic to the present day. The Caspar and Rebecca Wistar house will provide a synchronic study in hierarchy of spaces and finishes in what might have been the last hurrah, shrouding wealth in brick, for this family. This Federal period house was built in 1825 in the expected five-bay formality, but offers an unexpected asymmetry, exceedingly generous proportions, and unique amenities of everyday life. The wagon house hides a large keystone-shaped corn crib with shed additions and clad in tin – a sign that the man was开了 brother John, but used a different architectural form. An open-front carriage shed offers yet another type of farm building commonly seen in the region. In the northern part of Mannington, on Haines Neck, a fragmentary built landscape remains, derived from the consequences of late 18th century abolitionism and manumissions among local Quakers: the growth and settlement of a large, free black population. The small community was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 17th century; two, the small community was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 17th century; two, the large Delaware Valley in the last quarter of the 18th century. Two, as African Methodists separated from their white brethren throughout the 18th century, free black population. Marshalltown was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 17th century; two, the large Delaware Valley in the last quarter of the 18th century. Two, as African Methodists separated from their white brethren throughout the 18th century, free black population. Marshalltown was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 17th century; two, the large Delaware Valley in the last quarter of the 18th century. Two, as African Methodists separated from their white brethren throughout the 18th century, free black population. Marshalltown was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 17th century; two, the large Delaware Valley in the last quarter of the 18th century. Two, as African Methodists separated from their white brethren throughout the 18th century, free black population. Marshalltown was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 18th century; two, the large Delaware Valley in the last quarter of the 18th century. Two, as African Methodists separated from their white brethren throughout the 18th century, free black population. Marshalltown was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 18th century; two, the large Delaware Valley in the last quarter of the 18th century. Two, as African Methodists separated from their white brethren throughout the 18th century, free black population. Marshalltown was a landscape of emancipation where three major regional trends played out: One, a “First Emancipation” ensued from Quakers and others who freed their slaves in the late 18th century; two, the large Delaware Valley in the last quarter of the 18th century.
The Mannington Quakers seemed complicit with the arrivals of African-descended people from the South, who comprised one-third of Mannington’s black population in 1850. Although there are no known oral accounts, the likelihood of fugitive slaves moving through Marshallville is high; it is bursting with circumstantial evidence, not the least of which is its isolated setting next to a major water route linking it to Salem and the Delaware River.

Upon the initial landowning efforts in 1834 by Thomas Marshall, an enterprising black farmer, storekeeper, and churchman, Marshallville (its first name) earned a place on the map by 1849. Marshall broke racial and economic barriers to become a landed independent farmer. He and others accumulated wealth, bought land, built some 30 houses, two churches, a school, and a lodge over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Of these, one church, the school house, two cemeteries, and three houses survive as evidence of this black enterprise. Most of these will not be open during our tour.

Our final stop is Aldine, a rural crossroads on a lodge over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Of these, one church, the school house, two cemeteries, and three houses survive as evidence of this black enterprise. Most of these will not be open during our tour.

The Watson farm house appears to pre-date the Watsons’ settlement. This hewn, frame house offers a contrast to those we saw in Elsinboro and Mannington in size, form and finishes. Post-Revolutionary in vintage, this chambered hall presents a post-medieval English yeoman’s house that never made the transition to Georgian form. As John Wistar was wrestling five bays out of two post-medieval wings, Watson’s predecessor found the older idea suitable. It grudgingly nodded to the modern with its plastered hall ceiling, but held to the past with articulated chamfered joists (finished and intentionally open to view) over the second floor and quick-beaded cased corner posts and beams poking out from the wall surfaces. Like John Wistar, however, John Watson raised his one-story kitchen to two and upgraded the woodwork in the “best room.” His house continued to accrue laterally with a two-story work shed that once shared the old kitchen fireplace, and may have served a commercial enterprise. Evidence exists for the presence of servants or laborers housed within the dwelling.

Like the Wistars, John Watson retained and expanded upon his hewn farm outbuildings: a three-bay English barn, and a drive-in corn crib. Very likely contemporary with the house, they show evidence of changing and expanded uses, keeping with regional changes in the agricultural markets and technology. For most of the 20th-century and into the 21st, this was a dairy farm that retained its first generation of milking stanchions as well as ownership by descendants of the Watsons.

Our exploration of Salem County shows it to be a “region of regions.” Initially dominated by Quakers, it provided a frontier for other ethnic, religious and racial groups seeking freedom and autonomy over the course of four centuries. Their surviving architecture provides evidence, just beginning to be tapped, for their ideas of home and the everyday life of farm and town.

Key to construction periods in the Salem Tour plans seen later in this guide book.
Our Salem County sojourn begins with a view of the tidal meadows of Elsinboro and Lower Alloways Creek Townships from Mason Point. This land is now part of the Alloways Creek Watershed Wetland Restoration Site managed by Public Service Electric & Gas (PSEG). Elsinboro is the county’s smallest township, where some of the earliest English settlements occurred (including a group from New Haven who attempted a settlement here in the 1640s), and where eight patterned-brickwork houses survive. The public access to the meadow here provides an opportunity to encounter a layered landscape that was harnessed by European Americans to sustain and enrich themselves, penetrated by enslaved African Americans from the South to free themselves, and now is restoring itself, with help, to a natural estuary. Ironically, the potentially threatening presence of a nuclear generating station towering over the vast natural landscape is contributing not only to the ecological restoration of the meadows, but has resulted in cultural resource preservation along the Delaware Bayshore.

This neck of upland surrounded by tidal meadows once occupied a portion of Roger Milton’s 2000-acre tract surveyed in 1686 called Anna’s Grove. In 1692, John Mason bought half of the Grove, and William Hancock bought an adjacent tract. Both built brick houses on their respective lots by 1705. On Money Island Road we passed Mason’s 1704 house, which contains a diaper-decorated wall fragment from his 1696 house. John Mason’s Quaker descendants reputedly used their isolation and river access to help freedom seekers from southern states make their way north to Canada, or simply to stay in southern New Jersey. This Quaker-settled landscape became known to southern blacks as a sympathetic destination. Writing in 1855, black orator Samuel Ringgold Ward described his parents’ escape from Maryland in 1820:

At the time of my parents’ escape it was not always necessary to go to Canada; they therefore did as the few who then escaped mostly did — aim for a Free State, and settle among Quakers. This honoured sect, unlike any other in the world, in this respect, was regarded as the slave’s friend…. To reach a Free State, and to live among Quakers, were among the highest ideas of these fugitives…. Quakers lived in numbers, who would afford the escaped any and every protection consistent with their peculiar tenets — and where a number of blacks lived, who in cases of emergency could and would make common cause with and for each other. 2

Ward further observed, “… when slave-catchers came prowling about the Quakers threw all manner of peaceful obstacles in their way, while the Negroes made it a little too hot for their comfort.” Thus a partnership of both races cooperated in resistance to fugitive slave laws.

New Jersey … afforded at least three important outlets for runaways from the territory west of the Delaware River. Our knowledge of these outlets is derived solely from the testimony of the Rev. Thomas Clement Oliver, who, like his father, travelled the New Jersey routes many times as a guide or conductor.

The Rev. Thomas C. Oliver, born and raised in Salem, N.J., says that the work of the Underground Railroad was going on before he was born (1818), and continued until the time of the War. Mr. Oliver was raised in the family of Thomas Clement, a member of the Society of Friends. …As a youth he began to take part in rescues. 3

One of the three routes, from Oliver’s account, “had its origin on the Delaware River… at or near Salem.” The Mason farm was involved, too: “In Salem City and vicinity were many negroes who acted as guides. Boats carrying blue and yellow signal lights would be met on the Jersey shore…. John Mason claimed to have helped 1800 slaves...
Annual Conference of the VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM, Galloway, New Jersey, May 2014

The lower ‘X’ is the PSEG EEP observation stand. (Source: A Map of the Counties of Salem and Gloucester, New Jersey from the Original Surveys by Alexander C. Mason Point Mason Point

Tour site 1. Elsinboro Township in 1849. Mason Point is at the end of the road where “J. Waddington” is noted. (Source: A Map of the Counties of Salem and Gloucester, New Jersey from the Original Surveys by Alexander C. Standish, James Keily, and Samuel M Rea. Phila: Smith & Wistar, 1849.) The upper ‘X’ is Waddington’s extant house; the lower ‘X’ is the PSEG EEP observation stand.

There are two observation platforms in the Mason Point area. From the southern observation platform at the end of Money Island Road, one can view Abbott’s Meadow to the east and southeast. Discernible due east is a brick dwelling and an ancient sycamore tree: the Abel and Mary Nicholson House built in 1722; surviving as a National Historic Landmark. Abel’s father Samuel purchased 2000 acres from John Fenwick in 1675. Dying in 1693, he left the land to his sons. Joseph Nicholson sold about 500 acres to George Abbott in 1696. Abbott built a brick house in sections in 1704 and 1725 that stands on the next neck to the east of the Nicholson house. Between the observation platform at Mason Point and the Abbott House, the Mason Point Meadow Company bank encircles Abbott’s Meadow, which contained approximately 500 acres of arable land contiguous with the Mason, Nicholson, and Abbott properties.

From 1703 through 1775 the New Jersey colonial legislature enacted 49 statutes enabling “owners and possessors of meadows or marshes” on designated watercourses to build banks, dams, water-works, sluices, flood gates, ditches, and races to “stop the tide.” Between 1777 and 1903, there were nearly 300 state acts regarding meadows. Laborers, including slaves and indentured white servants in the early colonial period and the many free blacks in the early Republic, dug ditches and threw the material up into banks four feet higher than the highest tide, using wood posts and boards to form a base. Wood sluice gates “stopped the tide” from coming in, but allowed freshwater drainage to flow out so that the land could dry and be cultivated. Networks of ditches and banks (mostly now breached) are still readily discernible from satellite imagery in Abbott’s Meadow and throughout the river margins of the bay counties.

Southeast of the Abbott House is the village of Hancock’s Bridge and there stands the 1734 house (now a state-owned historic site) of William and Sarah Chambless Hancock. It is infamous for a retaliatory massacre of sleeping patriots by the British that took place there on March 21, 1778. Lining the southern shore of Alloways Creek below the Hancock House are three more houses in patterned brickwork bearing the family names of Denn, Ware, and Oakford (now a ruin). In Elsinboro Township, the Isaac Smart, Samuel Nicholson (Abel’s son), Joseph Darkin, and Richard Smith patterned brickwork houses survive. Together they form the oldest cluster of such houses in New Jersey.

The meadow on the west reaches to the Delaware River. It was once a part of Redrobe Morris’s 300 acres purchased of Richard Guy in 1690. A road runs west atop a bank from Mason Point Road out to a circular banked area that was constructed in the 1970s by a sportsmen’s club. Where once the meadow supported the growing of crops, it was appropriated to serve the purposes of hunting. The property, now owned by PSEG Nuclear, is preserved for wildlife habitat, and serves the purposes of bird-watching and nature education. A second observation platform is now located on the north fork of the circular bank.

PSEG Nuclear operates three reactors south of Mason Point: Salem I and II, and Hope Creek. The reactors and Hope Creek’s concrete cooling tower stand on Artificial Island in Lower Alloways Creek Township. “The Island” was formed from river dredgings dumped there, beginning around 1900 (many areas along the New Jersey river and bay coast have served as dredge spoil sites where farms and wetlands once lay). In 1994, PSEG commenced the Estuary Enhancement Program (EEP) as environmental mitigation under a state environmental permit to continue using river water to cool the Salem reactors (a process which entrains and kills aquatic wildlife such as fish and turtles), in lieu of building a second cooling tower. As a result, the EEP has restored, enhanced, and/or preserved 20,000 acres of salt marsh and adjacent uplands in New Jersey and Delaware. This program focused primarily on benefitting the natural environment and ecology, in part through returning historically banked meadows to tidal inundation.

Though tidal re-inundation promoted the reversal of a cultural practice going back to the beginning of European settlement and the erasure of a historic cultural landscape, it brought many benefits to...
Detail of banking, cultivated meadows and farmsteads in Elsinboro Township in 1843. (Source: U. S. Coast Survey No. 155, Interior of New Jersey, from the town of Canton to Cohansey Creek, 1842, with Additional Topographical Survey from the town of Canton to Salem inclusive, 1843, http://www.westjerseyhistory.org/surveys/NJ-coastal-surveys/index.shtml)

The upper ‘X’ is Waddington’s extant house; the lower ‘X’ is the PSEG EEP observation stand.

J. Waddington House. This double-pile, “one-third Georgian” frame house serves as a field office for the EEP. Though somewhat altered, it is a good example of a Salem County house type built in rural areas in the latter half of the eighteenth century; this one probably after the Revolution. The main block retains unrestored integrity of plan and finish. The step-down kitchen wing was at one time one story, and the shed addition on the east end has an unusual storefront façade. The guest room in the shed retains isolation from the rest of the house, suggesting labor housing.

Photo © 2013 Janet L. Sheridan.

The EEP has won nineteen awards from environmental, business, and professional organizations, including two for cultural heritage contributions. The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office gave an award for preservation of the cultural landscapes of Bayside Tract in Cumberland County. In 2003, Preservation New Jersey, Inc. (PNJ), the statewide historic preservation non-profit organization, recognized the program for protecting and preserving historic buildings and landscapes in Salem and Cumberland counties through deeds of conservation, and for preserving and donating the Abel and Mary Nicholson House to the Salem Old House Foundation, a non-profit organization, its current owner and steward.

Janet Sheridan


5 David A. Fogg, great-grandson of Albert S. Fogg, personal communication with Janet Sheridan.

J. Waddington House Second Floor Plan. The first floor (not shown) has a double-pile plan with back-to-back corner fireplaces and an enclosed straight stair in the north parlor. Upstairs the builder inserted a small front room and a stair hall to afford privacy in all the rooms. The plan may provide a model for the original plan of the Bartholomew Wyatt house in Mannington seen later in this tour. Field Notes by Janet Sheridan, 2006.

From its diapered and dated gable end to its original ground floor writing closet, this building captures the ambitions and worldview of the region’s first landed elites…. The Abel and Mary Nicholson House is… a kind of architectural Rosetta stone that gives new direction to understanding the larger tradition.¹

Three-year-old Abel Nicholson endured the voyage from England in the ship Griffin in 1675. He was with his family and with colony founder John Fenwick, who arrived in Salem to establish a Quaker colony free from the rampant persecution Quakers faced in England. In 1693 Abel married Mary Tyler from within the Salem Friends Meeting, and by the ages of 50, they were ready to replace or add to his father’s house, which stood facing Alloways Creek and the once-banked but now flooded tidal meadow that afforded them a bountiful agricultural living. Their brick house built for them in 1722 proclaimed their permanence and their prosperity in the skillfully-executed diaper pattern of blue-gray headers, topped by the construction date. The Nicholsons, unlike some other wealthy Quakers building similar houses, eschewed memorializing themselves with their initials in the gable end, instead carving them after the fact into the bricks flanking their front door, and decorating their beaded wood parlor partition with two symbolic hearts. The house remains as isolated now as it was then on this neck of barely dry land, invisible from the public road, and reached only by a half-mile stretch of dirt road, which is often flooded by tides and cloaked in tall foxtail grass.

It survived with remarkable integrity into the 1990s, without major remodeling or restoration, or even the intrusion of electricity, plumbing, or a central heating system, when it was purchased by Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) for their Estuary Enhancement Program. Alerted to its importance, PSE&G listed the property on the National Register of Historic Places and subsequently gained its designation in 2000 as a National Historic Landmark, and prepared a Preservation Plan. The Nicholson House and five surrounding acres were acquired in 2004 by the Salem Old House Foundation, established as a steward by the PSEG employee who spoke up for the importance of the house. In accordance with the Preservation Plan, the house has been stabilized but not restored. The Foundation secured a Save America’s Treasures earmark and grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust to support the masonry stabilization. In October 2004, the National Park Service awarded the project a cost-share grant to support a charette with historic architecture specialists from throughout the United States. The resulting vision was that doing minimal work may be the best and most informative action for the house. New HABS photography was done by Joseph Elliott in 2009 and is pending submittal. The Foundation also undertook a program of environmental monitoring for groundwater levels and salinity intrusion and temperature and relative humidity in the house to assist long-term conservation.
Today, the property serves as a study facility of first-period vernacular architecture in the Delaware Valley.

The 1722 block, a two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, hall-and-parlor I-house, is an outstanding example of a Delaware Valley patterned brickwork house the integrity of which means that it stands as the only known, nearly-unaltered survivor of this Anglo-American building tradition that was practiced in the region for about one hundred years. When constructed, the original block of the house appeared much as it does today, except for a removed pent-roof, and windows and a front door installed in 1839. The house originally had a frame one-story kitchen at the west gable end. This dwelling was of such scale, such generous proportions, and of a level of such workmanship, that it was truly a mansion in relation to most other dwellings of its period in the area. While all four sides of the original house were patterned using vitrified brick laid in Flemish and English bond, the crowning touch was the diaper pattern on the east gable end culminating in the construction date. The building has existed now for over 290 years in a nearly pristine state, enhanced by the patina of age, with only routine maintenance. The 1839 addition, with a comparable level of integrity, enhances the significance of the property. It is characterized by fine Greek-Revival period finishes, yet retains post-medieval ideas of house form. Two structurally separate sections with separate winder stairs and a hierarchy of finishes embody the social separation of the family and its servants.

Dwellings of similar national significance in other areas include the Fairbanks House in Norfolk County, Massachusetts, Bacon’s Castle in Surry County, Virginia, and Drayton Hall in Charleston County, South Carolina, all designated NHLs in 1960. These landmark houses represent early periods of construction in the New England, the Virginia Tidewater, and the American Southern regions, respectively. The Abel and Mary Nicholson House fills the early construction period gap for the Mid-Atlantic region by representing a building style (patterned brickwork) which in the Mid-Atlantic, specifically in southern New Jersey, reached a higher state of elaboration and acceptance than anywhere else in America. As Paul Love observed in his dissertation more than half a century ago, over half of all surviving patterned-end brick houses in the United States are found in six southwestern New Jersey counties, and, according to Michael Chiarappa, they stand as “the most elaborate and community-derived brick building tradition in colonial and post-Revolutionary America.”

But even that doesn’t fully explain the appeal of the Nicholson house. Situated along Alloways Creek, it is part of the most remarkable neighborhood cluster of little-altered patterned brickwork dwellings from the first period of durable architecture in Fenwick’s Colony, which research may yet demonstrate was the hearth for this architectural expression in the Delaware Valley. Even among these, the Nicholson house stands out as the one nearly perfect balance of Quaker cultural norms and Quaker inventiveness in housebuilding.

Janet Foster, Ron Magill, Janet Sheridan, and Robert W. Craig

[Night: Conference attendees should be careful to look for other patterned brickwork houses that will be passed on both the Salem and Bayshore tours.]
"...one Major John Fenwick went thither, with some others, and built a pretty Town, and call’d it Salem."

Gabriel Thomas, An Historical Account of the Province and Country of Pensilvania; and of West-New-Jersey in America, 1698

In March 1673/4, Edward Byllinge and John Fenwick, prominent among the London Quaker community, seized an opportunity to buy a ½-interest in the proprietary colony of New Jersey. While Byllinge’s trustees (he was broke) – among them William Penn – tried to coordinate efforts to establish the New World’s first Quaker colony, Fenwick acted first, sponsoring an expedition that landed a boatload of Quaker families in the Delaware valley in autumn 1675. They came ashore at a place Fenwick named “Salem” (rooted in the Hebrew word for “peace”), which became the first permanent English settlement in the Delaware Valley.

In addition to Salem, later the capital of his proprietary, Fenwick laid plans for other settlements in several nearby locations. Salem Town’s considerable assets, however, endowed it with a lasting appeal as a center of commerce. Situated on the navigable Salem Creek and relatively close to the major markets of Philadelphia, Salem Town attracted not only a robust shipping industry, but also early tanners, merchants, hatters, fur traders, blacksmiths, and carpenters. Public auctions were held regularly at a fairgrounds located at the foot of Broadway, the street that surveyor Richard Noble laid out just one month after the party first came ashore. When Salem County was established before the end of the 17th century, Salem Town became the seat of its courts. By the early 18th century, quiet Market Street, running perpendicular to Broadway, became the preferred location for residences, later evolving into a neighborhood of substantial homes for prominent citizens of Salem.

Salem’s early shipping industry, served by wharves along both Fenwick Creek and Salem Creek, received shipments from Philadelphia, Boston, and the Caribbean. The colony grew slowly at first, due in part from competition for settlers among contemporary colonies in the area. After the town of Salem was incorporated in 1695, new roads were built, including Salem Street, later Fenwick Street, then East Broadway, which extended the commercial district and opened the town to points east.

When the Revolutionary War reached the middle States, Salem’s citizens were directly affected. In 1777-78, with British forces in possession of Philadelphia, the fertile area of Salem and Cumberland counties was a prime foraging ground for both sides of the conflict. The graves of Revolutionary War soldiers can still be found in St. John’s Cemetery, the Baptist Cemetery on Yorke Street, and the Methodist Cemetery on Walnut Street.
City of Salem

View of West Broadway, ca. 1888. Photo by Thomas J. Yorke Jr. Yorke Collection, Salem County Historical Society. Used courtesy of Salem County Historical Society.

With the end of the conflict, Salem could once again turn its attention to commerce and development. By the early 1800s, construction of new homes accelerated. The Gazette, Salem’s first newspaper, appeared in 1816. In 1817, Salem defeated an attempt to relocate the county seat to nearby Woodstown, which is closer to the center of the county, and remains the county seat to this day — the only one of New Jersey’s early counties that never moved its seat from the town where it began. Salem’s first banks were founded. By 1830, historic maps show that most of the lots along East and West Broadway had been developed. Between 1830 and 1850, the population of Salem grew from 1,570 to 3,052. This was all in the steamboat era, before the arrival, locally, of the railroad.

In 1820, legend has it that Colonel Robert Gibbon Johnson introduced the tomato to Salem County farming. While there appears to be little substance to the legend, it Nonetheless true that tomato agriculture and related industries became the major force of the local economy after the Civil War. Glassmaking found expanded markets in the 1860’s with the development of canning and pickling industries near the Broadway wharves. The Salem Glass Works opened in 1863 on Griffith Street where, by 1883, it employed some 350 workers in the manufacture of bottles and fruit jars. The Gayner Glass Works, founded in 1874 at the corner of Front Street and Broadway, specialized in hand blown and pressed glass; the site is now part of the City’s Port district. In 1883, Owen L. Jones controlled an extensive canning establishment on Fifth Street composed of four large buildings and a warehouse devoted exclusively to the canning of tomatoes. Another canning factory operated at the end of Hubbell Avenue in the late 19th century. One of the most important enterprises was the manufacture of farming and canning machinery led by the Ayars Machine Company on Ward Street.

The City of Salem served as an important railroad depot for imported goods as well as an outlet for local produce and manufactured products. The first railroad in Salem County ran to Elmer where it connected with the Camden-Bridgeton line. A train depot was built on Grant Street in 1882 when the railroad bridged Fenwick Creek from Claysville. The rail line still passes over Market Street near Fenwick Creek.

The industry of 19th-century Salem generated wealth that is today reflected in the substantial residences, commercial establishments, and institutions that can be seen along Market Street and Broadway. The Market Street Historic District is known for its high level of integrity and the diversity of its historic architecture. This district possesses a complete range of styles and periods, from the colonial period through the last decades of the 19th century. The architecture of the Broadway Historic District, which includes both East and West Broadway, runs the gamut from the 18th century to the first decades of the 20th, with most of the buildings dating from 1820s to the 1890s.

Like many American cities, Salem declined after World War II, drained by the loss of industry and an exodus to the suburbs. The resulting urban blight ultimately caused the removal of 25 percent of the building stock in the northeast quadrant — the center of industry and worker housing. This "urban renewal" damaged not only the city’s historic landscape but also the social fabric of working-class neighborhoods.

The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act provided the springboard for Salem’s redemption. In the 1970s, the City undertook a National Register nomination for Market Street and adopted local ordinances that established a design review board covering the Market Street Historic District and a portion of Broadway. By the early 1980s, federal funding supported homeowner restorations at the foot of Market Street, which is widely viewed as a great success. In the Broadway Historic District, revitalization has resulted in positive changes spurred by the Salem Main Street Program, established in 1999. These include the rehabilitation of the 1891 Finlaw Building, Fenwick Plaza, and the renovations now underway in the Nelson House/Washington Hall condo project on East Broadway, as well as the new Salem Apartments on West Broadway, that represent some $40 million in primarily private investment in downtown Salem.

Salem has also received capital grants from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund for the Salem Library, the Municipal Building, the Old Courthouse, and First Presbyterian Church, with additional planning grants to several historic churches. Finally, honoring Salem’s working class history is the Hedge-Carpenter-Thompson Historic District which was listed in concert with an extensive housing redevelopment in a crime-infested neighborhood. This district is rooted in the late 1840s building boom spurred by the city’s industrial expansion and the advent of building and loan associations. Irish and German Catholic immigrants settled here, and in 1852 the Diocese built the stone Gothic Revival St. Mary’s Church on Oak Street.

Janet Sheridan and Mary Delaney Krugman
The Salem Friends Meeting, founded in 1676, holds the distinction of being the oldest religious organization in Salem County. Their meetinghouse, built in 1772, stands as the oldest house of worship in Salem City. This is the Society of Friends’ third meeting house in the city; two predecessors, no longer surviving, were located on West Broadway in the shade of the famous Salem Oak. The present structure was designed by Philadelphia architect/builder William Ellis, beginning a long tradition of engaging Philadelphia architects to design important Salem buildings. At the time of its erection it was certainly the largest public building in the vicinity. The walls are 18 inches thick at the first floor level. The date of the building’s construction is worked into the brick design in the western gable. The exterior appearance of this handsome building remains unchanged since its construction.

The Salem Meeting House represents the pinnacle of Quaker meeting house design in the Delaware Valley in the 18th century. It was the second example built in New Jersey of the type that has been termed the “doubled plan,” and is the oldest standing example. This form incorporated men’s and women’s sections in equal proportions in a single building campaign, each with its own entry door. The interior was divided by a moveable partition constructed across the middle.

By the time Fenwick settled West Jersey, Quakers in England had already embraced George Fox’s idea that women would feel freer to contribute to business matters by having such a meeting among themselves. American Meetings adapted to this idea by devising structural solutions to the problems of providing one space for worship and separate spaces for men’s and women’s business meetings. This practice required the insertion of moveable dividers such as curtains or wooden shutters that either lifted or folded.

During the early 18th century, Quaker Meetings experimented with architectural forms, some of which incorporated an addition to double the earlier “Bank Meeting House” type which featured one front entrance (for the men) and side entrances (for the women). An example of this type is the Lower Alloways Creek Meeting House in Hancock’s Bridge, Salem County, built in 1756 and doubled in 1784. After 1768, the integral doubled plan took root around the Delaware Valley, with the Buckingham Meeting in Pennsylvania serving as a prototype. The Pilesgrove Meeting House in Woodstown followed the trend in 1785.

Also of note – the cast iron fence surrounding the meetinghouse was made in Salem at the Acton Foundry (formerly located at 4th and Griffith Streets) and installed in 1859.

James Turk and Janet Sheridan, and courtesy of Salem Main Street Program.

Salem Friends Meeting House

First Floor Plan, From HABS NJ 6-77, Sheet No. 3 of 10.

Balcony Floor Plan. From HABS NJ 6-77, Sheet No. 4 of 10.


Firehouse Museum

Union Fire Company No. 1 Firehouse, built 1869. Photo courtesy Salem Fire Company Museum.
Municipal Building

Built in 1888 as the Salem National Bank on West Broadway, Thomas J. Yorke, Jr. photographed it just as construction completed. It was moved to New Market Street in 1927. Photo courtesy Salem County Historical Society.

Old Court House

The Old Court House, built in 1775, which stood facing Broadway next to the Old Court House. Torn down 1866. Courtesy County of Salem.

Eakin House and Grounds

Alphonso Eakin House. Photo by Kate Ogden.

First Floor Plan, Alphonso Eakin House. Courtesy Watson & Henry Associates, Bridgeton, NJ. The front portion of the house was raised from two to three stories in the 1840s, during a Greek Revival renovation. The original roofline can be detected in the brickwork in the north wall, which may have been painted to hide the seam. The Georgian-style string course in the east elevation brickwork is a clue that this house was probably built in the eighteenth century. The plan is two-thirds Georgian with a double pile of parlors, each with a side-wall chimney, like several town houses in Salem built or enlarged in this period. A classical style in antis entry flanked by two Temple of Winds columns was also popular in Salem.

Front and back of Bath House. This architectural gem, a “folly” or small decorative structure, is located in the side yard of the Alphonso Eakin house. Locally called the “Rumsey Bath House,” family tradition maintains that it was used for bathing during warm weather. It was very close to the pump in the yard and had a stone-lined culvert to carry wastewater to a cistern behind it. Although its stylistic influences include Gothic and Moorish architecture, it was called a “French bath house” by the last family member living in the house, Eleanor Rumsey – a great-granddaughter of Alphonso Louis Eakin. Photos by Kate Ogden.
Alexander Grant House

Alexander Grant House, ca. 1888. Photograph by Thomas J. Yorke, Jr. The surviving portion is at the right. The portion with the arch over the cartway into the yard was demolished for the construction of Ford’s Hotel in 1891. The frame dwelling of Andrew Snickick at left was moved to Grant Street. The house was known as “Temperance Hotel” for a time during the nineteenth century. Image courtesy Salem County Historical Society.

Alexander Grant House, Exterior – Northeast Elevation, 1936. This view includes the north section not visible in York’s photo, and the “Rumsey wing” also now owned by the Salem County Historical Society. Ford’s Hotel stands to the left. Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS NJ,17-SAL,6, Nathaniel R. Ewan, Photographer.


Johnson Hall is the most ornate example of the Federal style in Salem City, and probably in the county. Constructed for local entrepreneur and political figure Robert Gibbon Johnson (1771-1850) between 1806 and 1807, this house is generally very well preserved. Inside and out, through its Adamesque details the house reveals an adherence to the most fashionable tastes of Johnson's merchant-class peers. It consists of a main, front block, 44' by 39,' and originally had a kitchen wing to the rear, 22' by 15.' At the same time, the façade is remarkably irregular and asymmetrical. The Federal style highly valued symmetry, balance, and proportion (as well as lightness and delicacy), but compared to the style's norms derived from other examples, Johnson's house seems to exhibit a deliberate idiosyncracy.

Johnson, himself, achieved a further eminence in Salem than previous generations of his family. Born in Mannington Township, he later lived in the Alexander Grant House on Market Street (also on the tour). Schooled at the Newark Academy and graduated from Princeton College in 1790, he returned to Salem, later becoming one of the principal founders of the First Presbyterian Church there. Through inheritances from both his family and that of his wife, Johnson eventually came to own more than half of the land encompassed in present-day Salem City. Still later, he wrote a history of Salem County and became a founding member of the New Jersey Historical Society in 1845.

At first glance, Johnson Hall displays a five-bay, 2 ½-story presence with interior, gable-end chimneys and three dormers symmetrically disposed across the roof. But below the cornice line, symmetry is elusive. To accommodate large parlors on the north side of the first floor, the impressive entrance was positioned off-center, leaving only a single window south of the door. In the second story, the middle window was
centered above the entrance, which softened the asymmetry but didn’t eliminate it completely. Although symmetry was a desired quality in Federal-style architecture, houses in New Jersey from this period regularly show that it would be sacrificed to practical needs whenever necessary. A secondary entrance, with its own frontispiece, is positioned in the south elevation, but it gives access to the southwest room on the first floor, not to a transverse passage (the latter becoming increasingly common in the better Federal-style houses).

Johnson Hall’s interior punch-and-gouge woodwork is, perhaps, its most remarkable feature. Such woodwork is a hallmark of the Federal style, and Johnson Hall possesses it in outstanding abundance and complexity. The HABS produced 69 sheets of drawings to record Johnson Hall in 1940, and most of them are devoted to delineating the woodwork. The entrance displays a punched, sinusoidal wave motif superimposed upon strong radial reeding, a design similar to that in the George Reed (II) House in New Castle, Delaware, built just a few years earlier. There are other similarities that Johnson Hall shares with the Read house. Johnson included fashionable composition ornament: allegorical figures applied to the chimneypieces for his first- and second-story fireplaces, which added a symbolic meaning to the rooms in which they were installed. While his surviving account books apparently have not yielded the name of his supplier, the example of the Read house, which contained some identical ornaments, strongly suggests that they were supplied by Robert Wellford of Philadelphia. The HABS drawings for Johnson Hall record the designs of the surviving ornaments.

Some alterations have been made to Johnson Hall. A Greek Revival, distyle portico for the entrance was an early addition. Some interior updates were made in 1866, removing the original 1st-story chimneypieces (their 2nd-story counterparts survive). The rear kitchen wing was removed in 1966 when the entire house was moved northeast on the lot to make room for the new courthouse. One man’s passionate demonstration to the Board of Chosen Freeholders led to a reversal of their initial decision to demolish it. This may have been the first conscious act of historic preservation in the city.

Roberta A. Mayer and Robert W. Craig
In 1857, Sarah and Abigail gave over their house built for themselves. The sisters purchased an adjacent parcel in 1824 and another in 1848, which created a generously-sized property for an apartment. The Goodwin Sisters House formally became the Goodwin Sisters house. Photo by Janet Sheridan, 2014


Abigail emerged as an ardent abolitionist in 1837 when, after seeking through the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society a more active role in the Underground Railroad, she and Elizabeth hosted James Miller McKim, a prominent abolitionist speaker, at a Salem meeting of Quaker women interested in assisting runaway slaves. The meeting was attacked by anti-abolitionists, who went on to demonstrate at the home of the Goodwin sisters where McKim was staying. This event only strengthened their resolve. Through the next 30 years, Abigail continued her efforts in support of those fleeing slavery and helped them to safe havens in the North via the network of supporters known as Underground Railroad. Her eloquent writings became widely known among Quakers, while Elizabeth was her helpmate, co-conspirator, co-hostess, and helped manage the household. Elizabeth died in 1860, just as the Civil War was beginning. Abigail died in 1867, having witnessed the elimination of slavery in the United States.

In 1872, noted abolitionist leader William Still published his book The Underground Railroad. In a section devoted to the story of Abigail Goodwin, Still wrote, “Abigail Goodwin, of Salem, N.J. was one of the chosen true friends to the Underground Railroad, whose labors entitle her name to be mentioned in terms of very high praise.”

No. 47 Market Street is a 2-1/2 story, 3-bay, frame dwelling of the Federal period. It features a six-panel door below a delicate fanlight, flanked by attenuated columns and ornamented with a dentil cornice in the front portico. The front section is double-pile, with a side-gabled roof. The two-rooms that comprise the rear section are covered by a roof oriented at a right angle to the front. The eaves of the front gable are flush with the side wall plane, a typical construction technique on Market Street, which anticipated closely spaced infill housing on adjacent lots. The current roofing material is asphalt that simulates shake roofing; historic photos, however, show a standing seam metal roof. All windows in the house, except for the renovated kitchen wing at the rear, are 6/6 double-hung sash; windows in the front section are replacement units with insulated glass and 6/6 surface-mounted simulated muntin grids.

The front entry portico has a barrel-vaulted ceiling and the door surround is ornamented with vernacular geometric cutwork with simulated keystone over the fanlight, a paneled reveal, and thickly reeded pilasters with bullseye corner blocks. The corner blocks and reeded pilasters may be a later modification, as they rather awkwardly intersect the capital of the pilaster underneath. The portico roof is supported by two Tuscan columns surmounted by a dentilated entablature with a simple frieze. The portico is raised on a brick foundation with a landing at the front entrance. A wrought iron railing has been installed at the south side of the steps.

In plan, the building is made up of three sections: the front section consists of the two main parlors arranged on the south side of the front hall. The hall runs the full depth of the building, and the middle section consists of the dining room and rooms above; it rests on a stone foundation. The rear section was substantially renovated in the 1980s, work that included the removal of a centrally-located wall to create an open-plan kitchen, the removal of a rear shed roof, raising the rear wall and extending the gable...
roof to accommodate an additional 2nd-floor bathroom at the rear. It retains no original finish materials. The beamed ceiling and support posts were salvaged from a local barn and installed for decorative character.

The plan of the second floor is generally consistent with the first floor. There are two bedrooms above the first floor double parlors and a small storage room over the front entrance. The front section third floor consists of two rooms. Notable aspects of the interior include the mantelpieces in the front and rear parlors, which exhibit punch-and-gouge, Federal-period ornamentation, with architraves that are Neo-classical in design. The dining room architraves are more simplistic than those found in the double parlors. The doors in the front side hall with double parlors section exhibit original faux graining.

Because the lot of No. 47 is larger than many of its neighbors, it enjoys breathing space from the city fabric, including a garden along the south of the residence and a deep garden at the rear that provides room for a barn/carriage house that dates from ca.1850, set back from the main house.10 The house is also set back from the north side lot line, thus permitting an expansion of the building footprint over the years. This included a 2-story, late 19th-century Queen Anne addition to the north that accommodated a full bathroom on the 2nd floor.

The three-bay, gable-fronted barn with loft is one of a few urban barns left in the city which served to house carriages, horses, possibly a limited collection of livestock, and their feed. The center bay is box-framed, using both up- and down-bracing. The south aisle exhibits toenailed construction, so may have been added later. The east elevation was modified with modern garage doors and structural repairs with modern lumber, but the upper level retains historic access doors.

Carl Nittenger, Joan Berkey, Mary Delaney Krugman, and Janet Sheridan

7 Steps to Freedom tells stories about the struggle against slavery from different points of view, including a Quaker abolitionist, Civil War soldiers, a young African American girl who became a poet and a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Seven locations around Salem County are associated with these narratives and can be visited by following the maps found at this website http://7stepstofreedom.wordpress.com/. Journey in the footsteps of these people and listen to their stories by cell phone in the places they knew (Call 856-339-8655 and use the extension listed below). You can also listen at the web site.

- Abigail Goodwin, Quaker abolitionist, Ext. 2203
- Amy Hester Reddes, who set herself free (1793-1881), Ext. 2205
- Dr. John Stewart Rock, the great orator, Ext. 2206
- A Slave Catcher on Trial in Salem, Ext. 2208
- Poet Hetty Saunders describes her escape Ext., 2211
- Thomas Clement Oliver, Underground Railroad conductor, Ext. 2209
- Black Civil War veterans remembered, Ext. 2201

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2 Salem County Deeds, Book 24: pp.678, 680. Salem County Clerk’s Office, Salem, NJ.
3 Salem County Wills, Book E: 650, et seq. Salem County Surrogate’s Office, Salem, NJ.
6 Salem County Deeds, Book 111: 2.
8 Salem County Deeds, Instrument #52880.
9 Shouds, 84.
10 Carl Nittinger, owner of the property since 2012.
The brick Italianate cubic house replaced an "ancient frame dwelling" that had stood for over a century.\(^1\) Sharp spared no expense for materials and craftsmen. "The front of the building was of the finest pressed brick and the setting of the doors and windows of handsome marble."\(^2\) The butter-jointed façade was described as time-consuming and expensive. According to a 19th-century source, "the brick was from Baltimore, as was the bricklayer."\(^3\) The layout and measure of the house closely mirrored town houses built in Baltimore and other cities in this period.

Typical of the Italianate style, the flat roof, with wide overhanging eaves, is supported by elaborate wooden brackets set against a frieze decorated with repeating wreath motifs. The rooftop cupola was topped with carved garlands, portrait masks, flora and fauna. Sharp's brother-in-law, an itinerant painter named William N. Davis, painted the frescoes and murals on the walls and ceilings with some custom vignettes of birds and insects in addition to grandiose copies of mythological subjects. Carved woodwork surrounding doors and windows was culled from Minard Lefever's Modern Builder's Guide. The décor was rounded out with marble mantles, sandblast-etched glass, and according to local newspaper The Salem Sunbeam, the "stock of Furniture, Paintings, &c. is comprised of the finest assortment and of the most exquisite designs and finish to be found in any city."\(^4\)

This house is uncommonly highly ornamented. It contrasts sharply with the surrounding houses on Market Street built before the Civil War. Even beyond the prosperous 19th-century town of Salem, and into other towns across New Jersey, interior decoration rarely approached the strength and grandeur of Sharp's "Brick Mansion house," nor its price tag, a staggering $35,000. Built for display, it was a "mecca for prominent personages from far and near at the time of Mr. Sharp's ownership."\(^5\) As a fit setting for the house, the grounds gave a performance of their own.

The garden was set in choice grapevines and pear trees, the hot-houses, cold grapevines and frames for starting plants and flowers, managed by a professional gardener. A large and well-appointed aviary was filled with a great variety of gay-plumed birds, so that every nook and corner of this large and fertile garden was filled with fruit, flowers and birds.\(^6\)

The grounds were "open on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from two until six o'clock, to view the collection of birds, flowers, fishes, deer, etc." Sharp charged a small admission fee in order to compensate for the expense of the groundskeeper, a guard, and to limit public access. Sharp's fortunes were short-lived. In 1867, President Andrew Johnson replaced Sharp for incompetency.\(^7\) By 1868, defaults in newspaper advertising revenues, lawsuits and other debts began to amass. But perhaps the fatal blow was Sharp's 1869 purchase of a large plantation and his attempt to start an oyster business on Virginia's Rappahannock River. In 1871, the newspaper, the house and all of his possessions were sold at a sheriff's sale, and Sharp with his wife Indiana Leatherbury removed to Trenton. There he built up a book and job printing enterprise and later served as the New Jersey legislature's Sergeant-at-Arms.

After 1875, the house was home to a banker, a charitable woman's society, a glass company executive, a dentist, a lawyer, and finally, to its longest resident, Dr. John S. Madara and his wife Ruth Igoe. Today, their youngest son Jay Madara and his wife Ann Lucchesi, professional artists, are repairing the structure and restoring the interior decoration, uncovering the murals and frescoes, some of which have been obscured for most of the 20th century.

Ann Lucchesi Madara


\(^2\) William Patterson, "History of Buildings on the Northwest Side of Market Street Salem, New Jersey" (From Papers in the Possession of The Salem County Historical Society, Salem, N. J., June 1868. Archives of Salem County Historical Society, Salem, N.J.)

\(^3\) William Patterson, "History of Buildings on the Northwest Side of Market Street Salem, New Jersey" (From Papers in the Possession of The Salem County Historical Society, Salem, N.J., June 1868. Archives of The Salem County Historical Society, Salem, N.J.)

\(^4\) Salem Sunbeam, 01 Nov 1871. Library of The Salem County Historical Society (Salem, N.J.)

\(^5\) Trust Deed from Emmor Reeve & ux and Jonathan L. Brown & ux to James Coombs & Samuel Allen, 10 May 1872 (filed 21 May 1872), Salem County, New Jersey, Deed Book 42, Page 709. Salem County Clerk's Office, Salem, N.J.

\(^6\) "Mr. Sharp's Former Palatial Home" Trenton Sunday Times Advertiser, 11 Dec 1904.

\(^7\) William Patterson, "History of Buildings on the Northwest Side of Market Street Salem, New Jersey."
This house provides an opportunity to see two houses built at different times by the same people, in both town and farm settings. John Wistar (1759-1815) was both a Quaker and a member of an elite, landed family. Born in Philadelphia, he was a son of the Alloway glassworks owner Richard Wistar (1727-1781). He and his wife Charlotte had resided since 1782 on a 640-acre plantation in Mannington Township (see the Bartholomew Wyatt farmstead, also on this tour).

In 1812, Wistar purchased three “lots of land” in Salem totaling 3.75 acres for $2,000 from a Mary Howell. At the time they were occupied by Jacob Hufty, a blacksmith. Two of the lots fronted on Market Street, providing one for a house and one for a long, narrow access lane to the third lot of meadow and upland between Market Street and Salem Creek. It is not clear if the house lot was already developed or not, but there is no extant physical evidence of an earlier house on the premises. John and Charlotte Wistar may have been contemplating a retirement town home, but it had not yet been constructed by August 1813 when John wrote his will. It noted his intention to build the house and ordered his executors “to build said house and finish it in a plain substantial way and to use the materials which I have prepaid as far as they will go in said house.” He further stipulated that his wife Charlotte should inherit the house and the right to dispose of it as she saw fit. The couple did not get to enjoy the property very long. Charlotte occupied it after her husband’s death; on her own death in 1819, she devised it to their four daughters.
Hannah Wistar, one of the four daughters, married Theophilus Beesley (1736-1867) in 1820. In 1820, the Wistars moved to Philadelphia where he continued to practice medicine. After the Beesleys moved away, he rented the house to tenants who included Francis L. Macculloch, a noted Salem attorney. In 1842 he sold it to Woodnutt Pettit of Manningtown Township for $2,000. The deed, for one-half acre and premises, enumerated a “dwelling house, barn, barnyard, and garden,” probably the Wistars’ improvements. After Pettit’s death, his executor sold the house in 1858 to Pettit’s son, Joseph, for $4,000, a steep increase in price that may reflect the construction of a frame Italianate addition on the north side until 1876. In 1865, Joseph sold it and another lot to David Pettit, his uncle, for $6,000. David Pettit’s heirs sold it to Richard Acton for $3,000 in January 1883, and just three months later Acton sold it to William C. Reeve and his wife Mary for the same price. The Reeves are probably responsible for the late-19th-century remodeling of the interior woodwork and staircase.

After the Reeves, four others subsequently held titles to the property. The current owners purchased it from the City of Salem in 1976 and began its restoration. By that time, the building stock at the north end of Market Street had severely deteriorated; these once-elite and grand houses were slums, and the neighborhood was home to an expensive junk yard. City and County officials tailed into Federal Grant-in-Aid programs to undertake an urban redevelopment/ historic preservation effort. Market Street was listed on the National Register, local homeowners were informed, and young homeowners purchased and restored the houses. Of this pioneering group, the owners of the Wistar house are the only ones who have stayed in their house to the present time.

John Wistar’s 2½-story, three-bay brick townhouse faces Market Street and Hancock Street. A double-pile main block has two-gable-end chimneys. A short rear wing extends from the main block of the house, space that was once a dining room with service quarters above, but which now contains the kitchen. The wing was thought to have been a pre-existing house, but recent study has found no physical or documentary evidence to support that idea. It has a side garden along Hancock Street and a larger garden at the rear. Although the current extent and interior appearance reflect subsequent renovations in the 1850s, 1880s and 1970s, aspects of a rather restrained Federal style still show through.

The brickwork on the street facade is laid in Flemish bond, the traditional brick bond of the colonial period and Quaker homes. Though patterned brickwork disappeared from the local architectural vocabulary by the late 18th century, Flemish bond persisted until about 1830-1840. Like most brick houses, the bond reverts to common bond on the secondary elevations. The facade masonry is uniform in size and color, and finer in finish. Brick used in the side walls is less consistent, more porous, and with variation in color. The chimney centered on the ridge was rebuilt prior to the city project.

Some ca.1814 woodwork within the house survives, mostly on upper levels. It is characterized by plain ovolo or quirk-beaded architraves, wide, paneled doors with ovolo-profiled frames and quirk-beaded panel edges. An original pair of such doors from this house was returned to the present owners when they began the then virtually unused 6½’ x 9½’ kitchen. Other such panel doors survive in the house, such as at the fireplace chimney cupboards on the second floor and the kitchen cupboard doors that were reportedly from first floor chimney cupboards. Another Federal feature is the surviving wood mantelpieces in the second-floor chambers. There, the Wistars’ understated Federal mantels with a spandrel and a skirt above have fluted and reeded pilasters supporting an arched surround and a paneled frieze. Originally the Wistars may have had different mantels. The interplay of the pilasters, the surround and widened it to the north to accommodate more stylish double doors.

A foundation of schist, a rock imported from Delaware County, Pennsylvania quarries, provides a high basement exposed above the sidewalk. The foundation under the kitchen wing contains oddities. A wide brick shelf feature in the kitchen basement sits in front of a stone foundation under the brick north wall. This brick shelf may be related to a deepening of a crawl space under the original kitchen wing when the Italianate wing was added (and subsequently demolished in 1876). Many of the existing windows are post-1976, with the windows on the second floor more recently added. The late 20th century restoration, the windows were substantially deteriorated and included a variety of sash configurations. Original early 19th century windows, likely used 6½’ x 9½’ sash, so that is the predominant style used for the replacement windows. Federal-style paneled shutters now flank the windows of the main block. The exterior window architraves vary widely around the house, with the latest style (a large round probably from the mid-19th century) on the most publicly visible elevations, and earlier, quirk-beaded profiles remaining on west and north exposures and at higher floors.

The interior shares the side-hall plan with many other Market Street townhouses. A hallway extends along the north wall of the front section. A stair to the second floor is fitted with an attic of original newel post and balusters reminiscent of the Federal style, which were installed in the 1970s. Before the restoration, the owners removed the “chunky” newel post and balusters, probably from the late Victorian-era changes by the Reeves.

The front and rear parlors both open into the front hall. A large opening in the wall between the parlors marks the location of a late-Victorian doorway that contained sliding pocket doors. Only one of these doors remains intact. For a time, at the 1970s renovations, it was removed. The architraves in the parlors were reinstalled with a construction of a quirked-ogee profile typical of the 1840s and 1850s in Salem, a renovation that corresponds to the period of ownership of the house by Woodnutt Pettit. Victorian-era slate mantelpieces seen in photographs of these parlors prior to the house’s restoration were replaced with wooden Federal style mantels. They match mantels created for other houses renovated on Market Street in the 1970s.

The frame kitchen wing is narrower than the front masonry section and is stepped down six inches from the main block. It encloses a smaller, older, brick service wing that was expanded south and west in frame form in 1858 by Woodnutt Pettit. A two-story, three-side bay with bracketed cornices facing Hancock Street comprises the southern extension. The west wall is sided with beaded siding, but it covers a masonry wall from the earlier wing. The original brick north wall remains exposed. Inside, built-in full-height cupboards in the kitchen, with Victorian-era hardware were reportedly repurposed from the parlor chimney cupboards to create kitchen cupboards, and likely date from the Pettit renovations.

Dramatic changes at the rear of the house occurred during the 1970s. A portion of the frame Victorian-era service wing containing two rooms west of the current kitchen, was in ruinous condition and was demolished. It was replaced with a shed-roofed screened porch completed in 1976. The west gable end of the wing was covered in beaded weatherboard, the roof pitch was steepened, and a new fireplace was constructed in the kitchen.

Janet Foster, Joan Berkey, Mary Delaney Krugman, and Janet Sheridan

1 Hitty’s house stands at 21 Market Street, next door. The four-bay rear section, in that case, was built prior to the later, front block, and was erst what this purchase took place. Note that with demolition of an Anglican presents as a decorative example of the Georgian-style (refer to the Gibbon House in Greenwich on the Bayshore tour), and contrasts in outward appearance with those built by Quakers.
The Clement house is a grand Federal-period townhouse, with a mature boxwood garden on the north side and additional gardens to the rear of the house. Today’s idyllic setting obscures the fact that from the late 19th century until 1980, the boxwood garden site was occupied by a three-story commercial building, that an active railroad line ran across the rear of the property, and that in the early 20th century a mill and coal yard were located just to the north of this property.

Local lore contends that the original house on the property was constructed in the 18th century, and that it stood back from the lot line, facing south toward an alley that ran east to west. The larger, more high-style front section now opening onto Market Street was considered a ca. 1815 addition to that earlier dwelling. Investigation of the present house strongly suggests that both front and back sections were built in a single campaign in the first decade of the 19th century and that the house was remodeled between 1830 and 1840. Differences between the front and rear portions of the house mark the differences between spaces for wealthy, style-conscious owners and the service spaces that supported them.

Salem merchant Thomas Clement (1754-1821) bought a half-acre, L-shaped lot with frontage on both Salem Creek and at this location on Market Street for £1,000, from Philadelphia merchant James Wood in 1797. It is highly likely that Wood had already established a store at this location. By 1808, Thomas Clement had purchased the town lot immediately to the south of the present house (today’s lot 13, or #17 Market Street). That year he gave both lots to his only daughter, Ruth, a spinster who cared for him until his death in 1821.
In 1812 Ruth sold part of the lot to her brother, Samuel (ca.1781-1834), also a merchant, but she kept the separately-purchased town lot to the south for herself. The legal description in that deed states this brick house was already erected.1 Samuel Clement …was a merchant in Salem the greater part of his useful life; he was so upright in all his dealings that he received – and that justly – the name of “honest Samuel Clement.” He was for many years in partnership with Gideon Scull, Jr.; they did a large business, particularly as grain merchants, perhaps the most extensive ever done in the city of Salem.5 After Clement’s death in 1834, his wife, Eliza, received the brick house as part of her dower right. In 1843 she conveyed it to her son, DeWitt.8 The resulting survey shows a fairly accurate drawing of the house. DeWitt Clement appears as a merchant in the 1850 census; in the 1860 census he is a railroad clerk, but in subsequent censuses he is listed as “treasurer of the Salem Rail Road Company.” His will, written in 1882 and proved in 1883, gave the house “at 15 Market Street” to his wife Mary for life, and after her death to their daughter, Eliza.9 Mary, Eliza, and Eliza’s husband Charles Bannard sold the house in 1920 to Lewers and Sade Teittel of Salem City for $3,200.3 Three years later, the Teittels sold the house to Isador/Isaac Character, a junk dealer (according to the 1930 census) who lived in the house with his wife and several children.10 The house stayed in the Character family until it was sold to the city of Salem in 1974.11 In 1975, the city sold the house to Christopher and Martha Warren for $11,000 with stipulations that the house be restored.12 The house was restored under the direction of Philadelphia restoration architect John Dickey and in 1985 the Walters sold the restored house to the present owners.13

The tall two-and-a-half-story house consists of a side gable main block facing Market Street with a dropped, 2½-story rear kitchen ell. Both are of red brick with wood shingle covered roofs. No visible seams divide the two sections. The main block has a three-bay facade above a raised basement that has street-level barren window openings. The entrance in the southernmost bay consists of an 8-panel door flanked by sidelights and topped with a decorative half-round transom containing a “spider web” pattern executed in wood. Windows, likely replacements, are 6/6 double-hung wood sash.

The facade brick is laid in Flemish bond, which continues in the high south gable end seen above the neighboring house. A brick parapet wall about two feet high follows the slope of the gable roof on the south side of the main block. The facade has two segmentally arched wooden dormers, embellished with applied pilasters and a delicate dentil molding. The broad north gable end of the house is laid with common bond and has narrow, paired chimneys linked by a flat-topped parapet wall, a form common in Federal period construction in New Jersey, and a nearly identical example can be seen in Salem at 109 West Broadway. The north side gable end is notable for the large Diocletian window centered below the parapet to provide light to the attic space.15 Similar windows with a tri-partite composition accented by wide mullions are found on other Federal-period houses in and around Salem.21 The rear ell service wing has the tall, narrow proportions of the so-called “I-house” form. Its common bond brick walls have randomly placed glazed bricks, both headers and stretchers. A brick bake oven, reconstructed off the rear gable end wall in the 1970s, is covered by a shed-roofed porch that extends off the rear of the building at the first floor level.

In plan, the main block features a side hall with front and rear parlors. The stair hall is divided into front and rear sections by an arch spanning the width of the so-called “I-house.” Its form, a raised panel inset beneath the window parapet wall about two feet high follows the slope of the gable roof on the south side of the main block. The main block were found to have been faux-painted to imitate mahogany and this was reproduced; one door on the second floor was stripped to its original grain-painted finish. Flooring was restored by removing later layers, or replaced with old wood taken from other old houses. Chair rails were reconstructed in the house, but most of the tall ovalo-molded baseboards appear to be original. The wooden window surrounds in the front parlor appear to be surviving late Federal period woodwork, characterized by a raised panel inset beneath the window itself, and molded sills that incorporate strongly horizontal moldings similar to those used on the front entry and in the pilasters of the hallway. The two rooms (front and rear) of the rear service wing each have a fireplace. The large, cooking fireplace at the rear of the house, in the present kitchen, was opened up in the 1970s renovation, and many of the old cooking tools on display were found sealed within the fireplace, according to the homeowners.

Janet W. Foster and Joan Berkey

1 Salem County Deeds, Book I, 249. Salem County Clerk’s Office, Salem, NJ.
2 Wood is listed in the 1793 Salem tax list, and as a merchant in the 1796 Philadelphia directory.
3 Salem County Deeds, Book M, 366; Salem Messenger, July 4, 1821.
5 Shourds, Thomas, History and Genealogy of Fenwick’s Colony (Bridgeton, NJ: George F. Nixon, 1876), 222.
6 Book I Of Divisions, 413. Salem County Surrogate’s Office, Salem, NJ.
7 Salem County, Salem City census records: 1850 census, p.126A; 1860 census, p.1; 1870 census, p.200B; 1880 census, p.156A.
8 Salem County Will’s Book H, 85. Salem County Surrogate’s Office.
9 Salem County Deeds, Book 148, p.328.
10 Ibid., Book 160, p.192; 1930 census, Salem City, sheet 1A.
11 Ibid., Book 5654, p.605.
12 Ibid., Book 576, p.564.
13 Ibid., Book 660, p.795.
14 Ibid., Book 660, p.795.
15 Diocletian windows are large segmented arched windows that are usually divided into three lights or compartments by two vertical mullions. The central compartment is often wider than the side lights on either side of it. Such as 109 West Broadway, and the Cooper Winter house north of town.
These modest frame houses stand in sharp contrast to their high-style neighbors across the street, but speak to economic relationships with them, to the pattern of people of different social and economic classes living nearby each other in the past, and to the former commercial bustle at the foot of Market Street at Fenwick Creek. Built after 1832 for George W. and Rebecca Garrison on a three-acre parcel she inherited from her grandmother Rebecca Hedge Thompson in 1831, these frame dwellings were originally double houses. George W. Garrison was a merchant and an organizer of the Salem National Bank Company in 1865, serving as President until his death in 1875. He may have had these built to be rental housing for workers in this busy commercial area, or for domestics working in the elite houses across the street. They exemplify the working-class dwellings of early 19th century Salem, examples of which survive throughout the city, particularly along the secondary streets.

The city’s population grew from 1,570 in 1830 to just over 2,000 in 1840. The demand for worker housing was likely great from expanding industries and the 21 stores, two hotels, two mills, and three lumber yards operating in the city at that time. Also, there had long been shipping activity at wharves on Fenwick Creek and the Salem River; agricultural products were exported and steam boats traveled daily to Philadelphia and other ports along the river and bay.

Though virtually identical streetside, differences in the overall footprint, size and placement of floor joists overhead in the basement, along with differences in foundation walls suggest that they were erected by different builders. The Garrisons may have had them constructed one at a time as finances permitted. The presence of machine cut nails, a timber frame with pegged mortise and tenon joints and smaller-dimensioned vertical-sawn framing members, in addition to original Norfolk latches in one of the houses, point to a construction date for both.

Both houses were rehabilitated in the early 1980s as part of a city-sponsored urban redevelopment initiative along the blighted north end of Market Street, which used Federal grant-in-aid funds to place Market Street on the National Register of Historical Places. Under terms of the grant, the homeowner, acting as developers, were required to restore the exteriors to their historic appearance, but were given more latitude on the interior, needing only to meet the building code. These two saltboxes are a study in different modern approaches to living in an old house.

No.16 has a 25'-wide by 44'-deep rectangular footprint, and No.18 is 24' by 42'. They both incorporate a two-story gabled front section and lean-to rear section. Though the roofs are continuous, there is a break in the slope where the lean-to begins. Though physical evidence was not visible, this suggests that the lean-tos were added after original construction in the way that the earliest New England saltboxes were made. In the next phase of New England saltbox construction in the late seventeenth century, the lean-to was built integrally with the main house. These Salem saltboxes seem to be of the additive type.

Both saltboxes are covered with modern wood clapboard, and have replacement six-over-six double-hung wood sash windows. No. 16 has a traditional wood shingle roof, while the roof on no.18 was replaced with a standing seam metal roof ten years ago. The original first floor plan appears to have been a parlor with a fireplace in the main block, behind the parlor was a room of unknown use, possibly a dining room, containing a winders stair to the second story. Upstairs in both houses there were at least two chambers, but only the front chamber had a heating fireplace. The current owner of no.16, who did all of the rehab work himself, states that he found masonry supports—presumably for back-to-back cooking fireplaces—in the ground under the rear section and a semicircular well nearby that would have been shared by both houses. However it is not known if this placement was original or resulted from the elimination of an out-kitchen in the backyard at a later date.

Of the two, no.16 retains the most historic fabric and intact floor plan. Although the partition wall dividing the two sides was removed to create a single-family dwelling, the center chimney and its four heating fireplaces were retained. The simple mantels in the two second-story chambers are original, while those in the parlors are Federal-style replacements. Many of the random-width, hard pine floors and beaded-edge baseboards remain, with nail patterns in the floors showing where partition walls and closets were originally located. The eat-in kitchen, located behind the parlors and set about 2’ lower than the main block, has an original winder stair with heavily-worn treads leading to the chambers and bathroom above. A shed-roofed bay window in the kitchen, added during the rehabilitation, overlooks a brick-lined side courtyard. The westernmost, or rear, room, used as a family room, has entirely modern finishes. The basement under the main block has a 24” high rubble stone foundation wall topped with a 38” high brick foundation. Some original basement window openings with wood bars are extant.

Both chambers (one over each parlor) have their original hard pine floors, some trim, and mostly-original board and batten doors hung on butt hinges and held closed with original wood turn buttons. A modern bathroom and sitting room are placed over the kitchen below. The finished attic, accessible only from the north chamber, has original floorboards, baseboards and trim, and may also have served as an additional chamber. There is no evidence that the south half ever had access to the attic.

No. 18 Market Street was thoroughly modernized on the interior. Like no.16, the partition wall separating the two halves was removed. The center chimney and four fireplaces were torn down to create a large parlor on the first floor and a single master chamber on the second story of the main block. A modern 2-way fireplace, which opens into both the parlor and the dining room behind it, was built using bricks taken from the original fireplace. Some original hard pine floor boards, identical to those in #16, are found in all but the rear section. Repurposed, original board and batten doors hung on modern strap hinges are found throughout; these have Norfolk latches with two different styles of handles but none are stamped with a manufacturer’s name. The original winder stairs in the center room were removed and a single new straight stair built in their stead. The westernmost wall of the house contains a large, modern kitchen.

Photograph of Garrison Saltboxes ca. 1975 just prior to the Market street redevelopment project. Courtesy Debbie Bee.

The Garrison Saltboxes ca.1830-40
16 and 18 Market Street, Salem City

The Garrison Saltboxes
ca.1830-40
16 and 18 Market Street, Salem City
The basement of this house has a 44" high stone foundation wall topped with a 21" high brick foundation. Because the stone foundation wall is thicker than the brick wall, a ledge runs along all four sides of the basement. Basement windows are modern wood sash.

Joan Berkey and James F. Turk. Courtesy of the Salem Main Street Program.

Garrison Saltboxes, First Floor Plans. Drawn by Maria Cerda Moreno and Janet Sheridan, 2013.

The Garrison Saltboxes

This two-story building from 1918 was erected for the South Jersey Farmers Exchange, a cooperative that marketed local agricultural produce and supplied farmers with feeds, fertilizers, seed, lime, and coal. Abandoned in the late 20th century, the warehouse was purchased in 2004 by Suzanne and Michael Cooke for conversion into an antique and architectural remnants shop. The two-story, gabled warehouse has a standing-seam metal roof, loadbearing structural terracotta tile block sidewalls, 6/6 wood sash windows, wooden loading bay doors, and a concrete foundation. The interior framing is of timber. The warehouse has a 60 x 100 ft. plan, providing for approximately 12,000 sq. ft. of storage.

The 1923 Sanborn map illustrates the warehouse’s original setting as the largest building within a bulk materials-handling complex that once included a granary, corn crib, coal bins and storage shed. The complex was oriented to the navigable tidal Fenwick Creek, where grain, coal and other shipments could be received by boat, as well as to a no-longer-extant siding of the West Jersey & Seashore Railroad, at the time a division of the Pennsylvania Railroad system. A photograph, dated circa 1934 shows that the warehouse’s main entry was at the south gable end, facing the railroad tracks. The Cookes reoriented the building to Market Street, adding a one-story shed-roof porch along the west and south elevations. This porch has the deceiving appearance of a loading dock, but originally farmers would have backed up their truck beds directly to the double-bay doors.

The South Jersey Farmers Exchange was established in 1909 by a dozen or more farmers from around Woodstown, NJ, about 10 miles northeast of Salem. They were motivated by their dissatisfaction with the low prices offered for eastern white potatoes, which had been one of the region’s most important cash crops since the middle decades of the 19th
century. The exchange’s cooperative business model improved the farmers’ bargaining power, bypassing the middlemen who bought potatoes by the wagonload from individual farmers at local railroad stations. Under the new cooperative system, the exchange dealt directly with wholesalers to negotiate better prices on the farmers’ behalf. In its first year, the exchange handled 945 railroad carloads of potatoes, but took a heavy financial loss due to the angered middlemen who bid up prices in an attempt to drive the exchange out of business. The exchange persevered, however, turning a modest profit in 1910 and paying regular cash dividends to its members beginning in 1917.

In the early 1910s, the South Jersey Farmers Exchange expanded into handling feed, grain, seed and fertilizer, purchasing these materials in bulk and offering them to farmers at discounted prices. Warehouses were rented in Woodstown and Daretown and throughout the year sold supplies such as seed potatoes, lime, coal, cement, and baskets. Farmers found that the exchange offered better prices and higher quality than local merchants did. Within a short period, farmers from other nearby localities were petitioning the exchange to open branch warehouses. The board of directors instead decided to move out of the rented warehouses and invest profits in purchasing a rail-side lot in Woodstown on which were built a new warehouse and office building, opened in 1913. The exchange continued to grow rapidly and branch warehouses were eventually opened in Mullica Hill in 1915, in Salem in 1918, and in Shiloh Crossing near Bridgeton in 1918. The Salem warehouse was built on the site of a former granary, coal, and lumber business. One of the exchange’s strengths was that it could order feed mixers were installed in the exchange’s warehouses so that farmers might be afforded the opportunity to mix home-grown grains with the exchange’s brand or whatever other commercially available feed they might be using.

The machinery in the Salem warehouse includes a vertical burr mill, powered by electric motors, located just inside and to the left of the antique shop’s main entry. Inside the housing of this mill are two grindstones (called burrs, which could be of stone or steel) mounted in vertical position, in contrast to the horizontal position generally used in earlier gristmills. Electric motors turned these burrs in opposing rotation, quickly pulverizing or grinding all kinds of farm grains. The numerous wood chutes and powered bucket elevators, also called grain legs, provided a means of delivering feeds in bulk from nearby companies and then sold them under its own Exchange Dairy and Poultry feeds brand. In 1924 and 1925, one-ton batch feed mixers were installed in the exchange’s warehouses so that farmers might be afforded the opportunity to mix home-grown grains with the exchange’s brand or whatever other commercially available feed they might be using.

A significant surviving feature of the Salem warehouse is the feed milling, mixing and bagging machinery which the current owners have had the foresight to leave in situ at the north end of the building. This machinery was installed in the warehouse about 1925 to meet a growing demand by farmers to have home-grown rations mixed with commercial feeds. The exchange was an important conduit for farmers to learn about and share experiences with various formulations of dairy and poultry feeds. A proper formulation improved the health of livestock, and ultimately the financial yield. Beginning in the early 1920s, the exchange began cooperating with state agricultural officials to develop formulae that met the needs of local farmers. The exchange purchased these state-approved formulations in bulk from nearby companies and then sold them under its own Exchange Dairy and Poultry feeds brand. In 1924 and 1925, one-ton batch feed mixers were installed in the exchange’s warehouses so that farmers might be afforded the opportunity to mix home-grown grains with the exchange’s brand or whatever other commercially available feed they might be using.

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farmer's specifications. The centerpiece of the mixing operation is a large rotary mixer, consisting of a cylindrical drum housing blades for blending the feed formula. Open-ended wood chutes near the northeast corner of the building indicate a bagging area. Bags would have been placed over the open ends of the chutes to be filled by gravity.

This machinery allowed the exchange warehouse to fulfill one of the services of a traditional gristmill, grinding an individual farmer's grains on "custom," i.e., for the farmer's own use with the miller taking a small percentage in payment. South Jersey is not often recognized for its waterpower heritage, especially as compared to southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware, where steeper topography and swiftly flowing streams provided ideal locations for mills. Gristmills, however, were present in South Jersey from initial settlement, with quite a few of the late-17th-century coastal mills tidal or wind-powered in operation. As settlement moved inland during the early 18th century, water-powered mills were established along many of South Jersey's streams often near the head of tide where a dam could be constructed to create a millpond with three feet or more of fall, enough to turn a waterwheel generating 8 to 12 horsepower. A number of important towns and villages such as Alloway, Millville and Bridgeton grew up around grist and sawmills located at the head of tide. By the early 20th century, these older water-powered gristmills had not completely vanished but the market for grains and flour had changed significantly. Under pressure from large corporate suppliers and feed stores, local millers found it almost impossible to compete and survive. Cooperatives such as the South Jersey Farmers Exchange were one of the adaptations to changing markets that drove gristmills out of business, but they also were able to preserve some of the traditional functions valued by local farmers, including custom milling.

The South Jersey Farmers Exchange's business model appears to have remained economically viable until the 1960s or early 1970s, but its fixed infrastructure, especially modest-sized warehouses that relied primarily on railroads for transportation, and the declining importance of potatoes as a local crop, likely led to a decision to sell off assets. In 1979, the exchange was sold to a private businessman, specializing in fertilizers. Today, the Woodstown warehouse site is the location of a garden supply center that continues to operate under the original South Jersey Farmers Exchange name. By 2004, when the Cookes purchased the Salem warehouse, the building had been abandoned for some time and was in poor condition. They are to be commended for preserving this important piece of local agricultural history.

Patrick Harshbarger

4 Cooke, 2013.
5 Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, 7-13.
6 Ibid., 17-26.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 27-28.
This 18th century frame farmstead presents many layers of change and unresolved riddles about its origin, but its architectural character reveals an early life of both gentility and large-scale farming with an emphasis on livestock. This timber frame house also offers a counterpoint to long-held expectations that link venerable early Quaker families with patterned-brickwork houses. The verifiable facts are that Richard Wistar (1727-1781) willed his Mannington plantation to his son John (1759-1815) in 1780. John and Charlotte Wistar (1762-1819) owned two houses but occupied this one in 1798, and the Wistars were living here at the time of his death in 1815. In addition to the house, the farmstead features two surviving frame agricultural outbuildings dating from the period of the early Republic or earlier: an agglomerated threshing/hay/animal/dairy barn, and a large crib barn/granary/wagon house. All the buildings face south on the north side of Harris Road. The Mannington Meadow can be seen to the north. Still attached to this property are lots once used for cultivation and grazing in the Wyatt Meadow, which was bounded by the Salem River to the west and Mannington Creek to the north.

The land descends from Bartholomew Wyatt (1669-1726), a Quaker from Worcestershire, England, who arrived around 1690 and bought 850 acres between 1692 and 1708 at “Quiettitty,” the Lenape place name for this vicinity. Besides amassing a large tract of land, he was a merchant in Salem town. Wyatt and his wife Sarah were active members of Salem Friends Meeting, contributing one of the largest sums of money for the building of the second Meeting House in the town of Salem. Bartholomew Wyatt was named to the building committee. Active in local civil affairs, he also served in the New Jersey colonial legislature in 1707. The Wyatt’s built a “log house of considerable size” near Puddle Dock Creek overlooking Mannington Meadow. Their second house, built of brick in 1723, was located about a half-mile north on Mannington Creek, roughly a quarter-mile west of 120 Harris Road. Both houses are gone.

Bartholomew II (1697-1770), heir to the 850 acres, occupied the second house. He was instrumental in the management of the Mannington Meadow Company. His minute book, begun in 1753, followed a state act “to enable the Owners of the Meadows and Marshes adjoining to and on both sides of Manneton [sic] Creek, to keep out the Tide from overflowing them.” Over a two-year period, Wyatt recorded expenses for construction of a new dam and sluices over the creek: labor, boarding workers, getting and hauling timber, digging, and of course, rum. The project may have been expanding upon what was built subsequent to a very similar law enacted in 1713/14. Ongoing banked meadow development in Mannington is reflected in another act was passed in 1758 “to enable the Owners and Possessors of some Meadows, Marshes and Cripples in Mannington [sic], in the County of Salem, to keep the Tides from overflowing the same.”

In 1765, Wyatt II sold a moiety of his 1200-acre estate totaling 641 acres to his son-in-law, Richard Wistar “of Philadelphia…Brass Buttonmaker,” who is principally remembered as the glassmaker of Wistarburg. Richard was a Quaker, and his marriage to Sarah Wyatt in 1751 allied the Wyatt and Wistar families. A survey of the division survives to reveal a landscape of cleared land, woodland, a dam and tide bank on Mannington Creek with drained meadows upstream, and a vast wild marsh extending from the fast land west to Salem Creek. Two houses labeled “Wyatt’s House” and “Wistar’s House” are depicted, but “The Barn” located at a right angle to Wyatt’s house is an architectural sign of the agricultural enterprise and who started it. In this location, brick field scatter has been observed and the ruin of a stone barn foundation stands in the orientation shown on the survey. The house at 120 Harris Road falls on Wistar’s parcel, but the survey depiction of Wistar’s house does not fall on any standing structure of today. If the surveyors showed all dwellings extant at that time and did so accurately, then this house was
Typically, colonial-period double-pile houses with no separate stair hall had an enclosed stair to the second floor from one of the parlors and a one-story kitchen wing with a winder stair or ladder accessing a garret. The 18th-century finishes of the stair hall, rear parlor and upstairs rooms are consistent with another and compare well to the raised paneling, half-timber and stucco finishes in the Holme House in Elsinboro, dated 1784. That suggests that the conversion of an earlier, less formal house to a more formal, closed-plan house occurred when John and Charlotte Wistar took possession of the house after 1781. An inscription remembered by the current owners, “1786,” that appeared in parget coating on a cellar wall may have marked this event.

The cooking fireplace is outstandingly large. Its opening, 11’ 3" wide and 5’ 4" high, with two bake ovens, under a one-foot-square timber lintel, points to food preparation for a large farming operation involving many people. These would have included family members, unrelated laborers such as indentured servants, and free and unfree blacks. It is possible that some of the meadow laborers for whom Bartholomew Wyatt paid board ate in this kitchen. Another sign of servants in the house are the now fragmentary secure basement storage area and the back stair that goes from the kitchen to an isolated bedroom and garret.

The house continued to evolve with a new generation. John Wistar willed this farm to his son John, still a minor at his father’s death in 1815. Upon his majority in 1825 he took possession of the house and seems to have remodelled it at the same time that his older brother Caspar constructed his own house across the road (see Caspar’s and Rebecca Wistar Farmstead). He retrimmed the two front parlors and one upstairs bedroom in up-to-date Federal woodwork and columned marble mantles very similar to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

The present owner grew up on this farm, and it was purchased by her grandparents in 1941. Her parents moved to the property in 1947 as tenants, buying it in 1951. After 1947 and on a north-south axis, probably in the early 20th century. These features may suggest the same carpenter and time period – sometime between Richard Wistar’s acquisition (1765) and John Wistar’s occupation (1782-1815).

The framing of these barns, though altered, converted, and reused in 18th-century farming evidence including iron door pintels, weathered edges, and robbed mortises. The westerly barn was a three-bay English barn with tall double-leaves, and the easterly barn on both long walls at the center of the house was constructed over a well at the south end of the milking barn to provide water for cows and horses in the barnyard.

Wyatt/Wistar Farmstead

Galloway, New Jersey, May 2014

Galloway, New Jersey, May 2014

The two hewn-framed barn shares features with every other and with the house. A particular joint whereby a horizontal beam joins another at a right angle called a “central post joint,” is found in both barns at the second level, and is also found in the first floor joists of the house stair hall. The other structural feature common to the barns and the house is the roof-purlin-on-post. These features suggest that the same carpenter and period – sometime between Richard Wistar’s acquisition (1765) and John Wistar’s occupation (1782-1815).

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Bartholomew Wyatt Daybook 1703, Salem County Historical Society, Manuscript MN70.


Ibid., 34.

Ibid., 224. According to *The Votes and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Province of New-Jersey, 1754-60*, 19th Assembly, one of the petitioners was John Gooing, and there were objections from Samuel Hedge and Samuel Mason who owned 245 acres that would have been affected. In the session, John Gooing was present to argue against their assertion of harm, but neither Hedge nor Mason showed up to answer Gooing’s testimony. The bill was passed with unrecorded amendments which may have altered the original plan.

Deed D-333, June 2, 1765. Manuscript at Salem County Historical Society, Salem, NJ.

Richard Wistar’s will of 1780 did not mention any slaves, but his brother-in-law, Bartholomew Wyatt III, manumitted eight slaves in 1777.

Deed D-333. June 2, 1765. Manuscript at Salem County Historical Society, Salem, NJ.

Ibid. for a discussion of the manumission trends and the unusually large black population in Mannington. Richard Wistar’s will of 1780 did not mention any slaves, but his brother-in-law, Bartholomew Wyatt III, manumitted eight slaves in 1777.

The houses are not extant, but ruins of the barn may be those at 130 Harris Road. Courtesy Salem County Historical Society.
Wyatt/Wistar Farmstead


Wyatt/Wistar Farmstead

Crib Barn/Granary/Wagon House First Floor Plan. This sash-sawn-framed barn would post-date the hewn threshing and cow barns, and could date to the late 18th or early 19th century. Drawn by Alexandra Tarantino and Janet Sheridan, 2013.

Wyatt/Wistar Farmstead

Barn Historic Plan. A three-bay threshing barn and a two-bay cow barn stood side-by-side and were later subsumed into one barn. They have contemporaneous construction techniques, including hewn frames, timber joints, and a roof purlin frame, all of which are found in the house as well. Drawn by Janet Sheridan, 2013.

Wyatt/Wistar Farmstead

Barn First Floor Plan. Drawn by Janet Sheridan, 2013.
Caspar and Rebecca Wistar House

1825
84 Pointers-Auburn Road, Mannington Township


The Caspar Wistar (1795-1872) of this farm was one of several namesake descendants of the well-known German immigrant who arrived in Philadelphia in 1717. He was a great-grandson of the immigrant Caspar Wistar, descended through his son Richard, and Richard's son John. Richard's presence in Salem County and his connection to the Salem Friends Meeting led to his marriage to Sarah Wyatt in 1751. Her parents, Bartholomew and Elizabeth Tomlinson Wyatt, sat on "Quietitty," a 1200-acre estate bounded on the Mannington Meadow. Richard purchased half of it from his father-in-law in 1763, but remained a resident of Philadelphia.

Richard left to his son John the 640-acre plantation at Quietitty, where John and his wife Charlotte settled in 1782. They, too, maintained a house and social ties in Philadelphia. John and Charlotte Wistar raised nine children on their farm at 120 Harris Road (also on the tour). Caspar Wistar was raised there. When his father died in 1815, he left Caspar "the part of my plantation now in the occupancy of John Knight," along with three lots of meadow and a parcel of woodland. Caspar thus inherited 300 acres of his father's land, but he also received a large legacy from his great-aunt Sarah Wistar (1738-1815): $11,000. He married Rebecca Bassett, daughter of Quaker Joseph Bassett, himself a major landowner on the north side of Mannington Creek.

Pointers-Auburn Road was not mapped as a public road until sometime between 1833 and 1849. John Wistar’s 1814 will refers to "the road from Salem into Haines Neck," so a local road must have existed crossing Mannington Creek on the earthen dam built by Mannington Meadow Company. The Wyatts and then the Wistars had been active in efforts to drain and bank the Mannington meadows since the early 18th century. Caspar became a member of the "Wyatts New Drain Meadow Company" when it began meetings in 1818.

Caspar had the present home built in 1825. It is a capacious, late Federal period, five-bay double-pile house with a Greek Revival front porch, encompassing about five thousand square feet. The façade is not strictly symmetrical. The front door is slightly off-center. Second floor fenestration is nearly symmetrical, and the three segmentally-arched dormers fully so. (In these qualities it very much resembles Johnson Hall in Salem City.) The brick façade was laid in traditional, but plain, Flemish bond, for patterning with vitrified headers was by then no longer in vogue.

The interior is spacious, gracious, and highly crafted, but not highly decorated. Even the most formal spaces lack a crown molding, for example, but the marble mantelpieces and cast iron firebacks evidence taste and respectability without ostentation. Caspar Wistar appears to have perpetuated his father’s Quaker sensibility to “finish it in a plain substantial way.” Caspar was described as “plain in his habits and tastes, and an earnest and consistent member of the Orthodox branch of the Society of Friends.” His house, though modern in style and finishes, expressed one antiquated feature: the corner fireplace. A stack of these rises in the southwest cell. It may have been a practical solution to fitting a fireplace into a wall that was to have both a door and a window. The fireplaces in the north parlors, on the other hand, stand in the middle of each parlor end wall, more typical of Federal-period architecture. In both gable ends the chimneys are bridged together, as became commonplace in the Federal period. Because the house has been little altered, it offers a good study in the hierarchy of finishes and in room function. Differences in woodwork (complexity of baseboards, door panels and moldings, and window jambs) and mantelpieces (materials and elaboration) are detectable from side to side, front to back, from lower level to upper level, and between the family quarters and servant quarters over the kitchen.

The woodwork in the finished attic is reminiscent of the colonial period, and some of the doors might have been salvaged from elsewhere. There is also a mixture of door molding profiles: some molded integrally, others applied, often on opposites sides of the same door.

Unique features include a deep cellar room, an array of iron hooks and wooden pegs embedded in the joists above the northwest basement room, and the non-extant cooking fireplace which had an 11- to 12-foot opening (partially reconstructed). This feature may have been associated with daily cooking for a large number of farm laborers. The attic contains a featherbed storage closet with wooden racks. A delicate tiger maple stair balustrade is a display of wealth intended to impress visitors who enter the spacious stair hall lined with grain-painted paneled doors. Roof rafters rest upon a timber false plate, which is unusual for this time period.
The kitchen and rear sheds show the usual alterations over time, driven by changes in cooking technology and household needs. The kitchen originally contained a straight stairway leading to a loft that provided access to servants’ room above. A shed addition on the rear of the house, positioned over a well, may have open, ground-level space. If so, this area was not part of the work area off the kitchen. Sometime in the 19th century it apparently was enclosed, and the kitchen staircase moved into the shed. A chimney added to the shed rose up the back wall of the house. The kitchen evidently occupied the shed by 1876.

Interestingly, this shed kitchen housed a commercial canning operation established by Flora and Joseph Hancock, who bought the farm in 1839. The canning business began “in a building in the rear of their house,” according to their son William. Joseph died in 1894 at the young age of 43, but Flora, undaunted, continued the business alone. An account written by her grandson Joseph G. Hancock related that her cold pack production on this farm for the family and for the large orchard may relate to the deep cellar house, granary, shedding for stock, “other necessary outbuildings,” and a “nearly four” room tenant house. The farm contained “essential outbuildings,” and a “nearly new” house, granary, shedding for stock, “other necessary outbuildings,” and a “nearly four” room tenant house. The farm contained 133 acres, including 34 acres of meadow and the balance upland in a high state of cultivation divided into 12-acre fields, and the balance upland “in a high state of cultivation.”

The crib barn in the farmyard is of the familiar drive-through variety with a central section flanked by two shed additions. In this case, the central portion is a hewn-framed, keystone-shaped corn crib with vertical slats on a gneiss stone foundation. A set of double-strap hinges on both sides. The original roof structure consisted of four hewn rafters, the tails of which were shaped and exposed to view, evidence that the crib may have been built standing. Later these hewn members were supplemented with five intermediate sawn rafters. When the strap hinges on both sides, the original roof structure consisted of four hewn rafters, the tails of which were shaped and exposed to view, evidence that the crib may have been built standing. Later these members were supplemented with five intermediate sawn rafters. When the crib became part of an outbuilding type in the area, typically used to house wheel vehicles.

Caspar Wistar continued to live on the farm until 1861. When he died in 1872, his son, Caspar, Jr., inherited the property. The son, however, died in 1876, after which the farm was auctioned. The “Homestead Farm of Caspar Wistar” described the farm in its prime: A large, two-story barn with stabilizing for 40 head of stock stood at the northeast corner of the farmyard. Its location can still be discerned in the northeast part of the farmyard. In addition, there were a wagon shed in which she installed six ranges, hiring six women. She specialized in tomatoes selected for frying, and built up a considerable local reputation, specialized in tomatoes selected for frying, and built up a considerable local reputation.

Gambrel-roofed house that stood on the Wistar farmstead, taken ca. 1870s. The man is identified as Caspar Wistar, but not which one. The house is labeled “Original hip roof Wistar house.” Photo courtesy Suzanne H. Culver.

Backed, the weatherboards in the gable end were in disarray, the lower, shingled roof slope was heavily stained, and the upper roof slope was re-roofed with standing seam metal. The roof overhung the wall and a missing soffit exposed the overhanging joists. Three asymmetrical bays contained replacement sash windows, but no door. A plainly dressed man with hat in hand stood in front of the house facing the camera. Handwriting on the back of the print identifies him as Caspar Wistar, and the house as “the original hip roof Wistar house.” The house in the photograph looks very much like other gambrel root houses built in the county in the early 19th century, though most known examples are brick.

1835 survey of Caspar Wistar’s farm shows a building in the former location of the old gambrel-roofed house on the east edge of the farmstead, where, according to other family photos, the adjacent small barn stood.
Portion of the 1835 survey showing the 2-acre farmstead itself, and orchard to the east. The barn and barnyard stood northeast of the house. Two smaller outbuildings at the east and south edges of the farmstead could be the corn crib and the gambrel-roofed Wistar house.

“A Survey and Plot of Caspar Wistar’s Farm in Mannington: made in August 1835 by Jos. E. Brown” showing the 156-acre farm divided into fields, woodland and farmstead. There were 80 acres of arable land, 30 acres of meadow, 39 acres of woodland and swamp. The roadway that goes over the meadow causeway was made out of 4 acres of land.
Wistar House basement floor plan. Drawn by Maria Cerda Moreno and Janet Sheridan, 2013.


Thomas Marshall (1803-1856), an enterprising free black man who assembled a ninety-acre farm of upland and banked meadows, spurred this settlement of free black laborers in 1834 when he bought his first parcel, a farmstead on six acres. Until the year he died, he steadily added land to his estate, subdivided parcels, co-established a church, sponsored a school, ran a store, probably hired his neighbors to help work his farm, and gave a respectable name—Marshallville—to the neighborhood otherwise commonly known only as Frogtown. Today, now, Marshalltown, the neighborhood is notable for its isolation, and yet its persistence, despite the environmental and economic forces that set this antebellum African American settlement into decline over the course of the twentieth century. The Marshalltown Historic District was listed in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 2013.

Marshalltown Township had a high concentration of Quaker landowners. It was a place of earliest settlement by Friends, including John Fenwick himself. It had fertile farms, extensive marl deposits, and, because it lay along the vast inland tidal flats of the Salem River called Mannington Meadow, it was more heavily invested in banked meadows than any other township in the county. All of this worked to draw and retain a large labor force, mostly African Americans. By 1850, the black population of Mannington was 35 percent of the township's total population, and 37 percent of Salem County’s entire black population.

In eastern Mannington and southern Pilesgrove Thomas Marshall bought his first land parcels in 1831. It is unclear where he was originally from or what his circumstances were, but likely his parents were from Delaware and that they raised their son in the neighborhood south of Woodstown in Salem County where a “Spencer” church of the African Union denomination of Wilmington, Delaware still stands. It is likely he was raised free to have had, as he did, sufficient resources by age 28 to buy land. In 1834, he came to Haines Neck, on the west side of Mannington. Several trends were already in motion that aided the establishment of an African American community at Marshallville. First, farmers had begun moving west around 1810 due to soil exhaustion, after a century of reckless handling of their lands, so the 1830s may have provided Marshall a buyer’s market. Second, new meadow companies were still forming, expanding and improving older systems of banking and drainage. Third, the Kates Creek Meadow Company occupied the northernmost portion of Mannington Meadow, next to Haines Neck. A causeway across Kates Creek Meadow was under development in the 1830s, where, by 1848, a new bridge across the Salem River gave Mannington farmers a convenient land route to the Delaware River wharves at Kinseyville (now Pennsville), and thus a better marketing opportunity for their produce. Fourth, marl, a natural mineral found to revive exhausted soil, was discovered in Woodstown in 1826. Farmers all over southern New Jersey subsequently began mining this valuable commodity out of streambeds. Joseph Bassett and others followed suit on branches of Horne Run in Haines Neck. Fifth, the major landowners in Haines Neck were Quakers who would have been more willing to sell land to African Americans. Sixth, the Bassett family, also Quakers, were sympathetic to the abolition of slavery, and they owned much of the land in the vicinity.

When Thomas Marshall began his enterprise in this meadow borderland, it is quite possible that the place was already populated with long-freed African American laborers or their descendants, living in cottages or in houses and with gardens built on their employers’ marginal lands. The place name of Frogtown, found in deeds but not on maps during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, may predate Marshall’s arrival. In any case, the name poked fun at the locale’s swampy terrain, but also perhaps at the persons living there. This triangle of barely dry land has a poor soil type—ideal for situating, and distancing, a labor force of color. Several black communities emerged in marginal areas of Salem County during the first half of the 19th century, on poor land distant from the functional centers of their townships.

Suchcottaging has been recognized in Pennsylvania and Delaware as a step in the transition from enslaved to free, and one of increasing social distance between landowner and laborer, yet retaining an economic tie that ensured a labor force for the former and reliable employment for the latter. Marshall not only broke the barrier to becoming a black landowner in Frogtown, but despite illiteracy, he became
an independent farmer and merchant who achieved above-average material wealth, and set a community on the road to self-development, as African Methodist preached.

Two strands of African Methodism played key roles in the growth of Marshallville. Thomas Marshall authored a religious society that formed the core of the African Union Church in 1844. He sold the church a half-acre lot on which to build a meeting house in 1847. The same year, another group in Marshallville headed by a landowning “mulatto,” one John Wesley, formed an AME church, later called “Little Bethel,” possibly after others. Widow Mary Marshall became a servant to Quaker farmer David Bassett, one Bilderbak in Salem town, son Thomas was indentured to Quaker farmer David Bassett, one of the witnesses to his father’s will, and son Jacob

first labored on Mannington farms then moved to Philadelphia for a life of wagon driving. The only Marshall real estate legacy was Mary Marshall’s house on Church Street (now Roosevelt Avenue). This parcel, known as “the town Adams lot” after an African American, John Q. Adams, who sold it to Marshall, is where Mary lived out her days with her adopted daughter Elizabeth. Elizabeth was from Pennsylvania, and the wife of gardener Daniel Shields, from Maryland. Mary left the house to Elizabeth, who hired a white carpenter, Edward Hall, to build her new house in 1890. That frame house was 26’ wide by 16’ deep, 2½ stories high, with a 15’ x 12’, one-story shed addition and an 8’ x 13’ cellar in the rear. From April 20 to July 10, Hall and a helper labored on the house, incurring a bill of $165.37 to Shields, and putting a mechanic’s lien on the property (which provides the above description). Elizabeth Shields evidently paid Hall’s bill, for she continued to occupy the most highly valued house in the neighborhood in 1918—assessed at $250

With Thomas Marshall and his farm gone, the hegemony shifted in Marshallville. No other black landowner wanted to fill the void. Landowning by blacks greatly increased in Marshallville after 1860, but most of the white landowners with significant interests in the expanding Kates Creek Meadow Company and surrounding farms subdivided house lots along Marshallville Church Street; 25 people bought one or more parcels. In the twenty-year period 1860 to 1880, the population of Marshallville increased from roughly 88 to 127, and the number of houses doubled from approximately 15 to 31.

The period 1860 to 1900 is marked by house- and farm-building and subdividing house lots. The growing number of houses and surrounding farms subdivided house lots along Marshallville Church Street; 25 people bought one or more parcels. In the twenty-year period 1860 to 1880, the population of Marshallville increased from roughly 88 to 127, and the number of houses doubled from approximately 15 to 31.

Both churches were also rebuilt in this period—the AUMP in 1879 and the AME in 1876—attesting to population growth. Their importance is attested to by population growth and the continuing importance of the churches. Little Bethel AME received a second-story with a gallery on its 24’ by 32’ frame building built by Joseph E. Moore. Mount Zion AME Church was also rebuilt in this period—by Susan E. Dunn, a Salem purveyor of building materials, who had provided quantities of wood and labor in the value of $375.15 for a frame church one story high. The load included hemlock and black oak (presumably framing timbers), heart pine scantling, white pine siding, white pine boards, two-foot long shingles, heart pine lath and yellow pine flooring. Evidently Dunn’s scope of work was to build the frame, construct the roof, exterior walls, flooring and board ceilings. During the next several years, the church completed the interior finish work of plastering, wainscoting, windows, doors, lighting and building two chimneys for heating. This extant building is considered to be among the larger churches in the region, attesting to population growth.

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historical importance bestowed upon it by Daniel James Russell, Jr. The twentieth century began with vigorous institutions: two churches, an Odd Fellows lodge, a Household of Ruth (female support organization for the black Odd Fellows lodge), a school, and at the peak of its population around 145 persons in about 33 houses. The early century saw Mount. Zion initiate efforts to further promote homeownership, but economic and environmental factors set in motion the decline of Marshalltown as a viable community. In 1926 the church purchased an 18-acre portion of a bankrupt farm and created a subdivision of 21 lots, shifting hegemony once again, and selling twenty lots between 1934 and 1946. Two of these, the first, became the new site of the Marshalltown School, when rising water levels required moving the school to higher ground. Few new houses were built on the other properties, however. One exception, Howard and Mary Turner’s one-story Craftsman-style house and small barn on Marshalltown Road, survive from their seven-lot small farm. And across the road from the schoolhouse stands the two-story gable-fronted house built by Harvey and Charlotte Brooks in 1938, after their 1923 bungalow burned down. But economic and environmental factors worked against the viability of the community. The Great Depression bankrupted farmers, and the meadow banks, themselves, began to succumb to storm damage, muskrat tunneling, and lack of maintenance. Agriculture was shifting from grain to vegetables, for which the meadows were unsuited. The meadows slowly became tidal once again, raising water levels in Marshalltown and rendering many house sites uninhabitable. Beginning in the 1920s, the Du Pont powder and dye works in Carney’s Point increasingly drew upon the labor supply in Marshalltown. Hook Bridge over the Salem River was damaged by a runaway barge in 1921 and never repaired, eliminating a transportation route. Little Bethel burned down. The school closed in 1951 when Mannington Township built a consolidated school. Homes were abandoned, burned, vandalized, foreclosed upon, and demolished. Three houses, one church, the school house, and two cemeteries survive as visual reminders of a once-vibrant community of color.

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Marshalltown in 1931. Kates Creek Meadow appears to be unforded by tidal water. Note bank at edge of upland, which corresponds to surveyed edge of meadow in a company survey of 1875. Note extent of cultivated fields and house and garden lots in Marshalltown.

The Howard and Mary C. Turner House (not open). In 1937, the Turners purchased two Mt. Zion lots on Marshalltown Road and built a frame, one-story, Craftsman-style house. Howard Turner grew up in Marshalltown next door to William H. and Sarah J. Thomas of parents who migrated from Alabama and Maryland after the Civil War. By 1949, they had assembled five more lots into a five-acre farmette with a small barn and an orchard. Their surviving barn with three pens and a hay loft testifies to their keeping of livestock. Of the houses built on the Mt. Zion tract in the historic period, only the Turner house, with its barn, survives. Photo by Janet Sheridan, 2012.
Marshalltown School, 1949. The school house frame, which is exposed on the interior rear wall, reveals a sawn, braced frame with mortised and pinned construction, dating it the first half of the nineteenth century. The building was mapped as part of Marshall's farm in 1861. It was moved to this location by the township in 1934. African Union Rt. Rev. Russell, Sr. may have started this school after he migrated from Delaware City in 1850, and Daniel James Russell, Jr. attended it in 1856. It retains original six-over-six, double-hung windows and wood wainscoting, with an overlay of 1950s domestic partitions. Photo courtesy Elmer Young, photographer.


Marshalltown School First Floor Plan. The interior was partitioned for a dwelling in 1951, the year when all the township one-room school houses were sold off after a central township school was built. A local farmer bought it to house his help, and later it was owner-occupied by black families. Drawing by Janet Sheridan, 2010.
Harvey and Charlotte Brooks House. They bought a seven-acre subdivided lot in 1923 from James Kernan, an adjoining white farmer, and built a one-story bungalow with a back porch. Harvey Brooks was a laborer born in Maryland of Virginia-born parents who worked on farms, bridge construction, and for Du Pont. Charlotte, a native born of Delawarean parents, worked seasonally at the Heinz plant in Salem. In 1938, the house burned down, and Harvey, who was also a carpenter, built a new house himself. This time, it was frame, two-stories, and gable-ended in orientation to the road, like many other houses in Marshalltown. They had peach and apple orchards and grew corn, pole beans, watermelon, and tomatoes. Their son Clarence Wilson and his wife Mabel purchased the house with a triangular, three-quarter-acre subdivision in 1953 and raised 19 children there. The house, with 1960s stuccoed, one-story additions, and a concrete block outbuilding survive, and is occupied by the fourth and fifth generations of this family. Photo by Janet Sheridan, 2012.

Little Bethel Cemetery. The cemetery occupies a one-quarter acre plot on the west side of Roosevelt Avenue near its intersection with Marshalltown Road. The lot, measuring 66 feet by 150 feet and enclosed with a four-foot high chain link fence, contains six gravestones and is overgrown with shrubs and vines under a mature willow oak tree. The non-extant church, built in 1847 and altered in 1876, was frame and two stories high on a 24-foot by 32-foot footprint. A pile of rocks discernible under overgrowth may be remains of the church’s foundation. A deep drainage ditch lies between the fence and the road; a wooden bridge providing access to the lot spans the ditch. The lot is adjacent to a modern dwelling (recently abandoned) and yard on the north and west, and a mown field on the south. Across Roosevelt Avenue is a 12-acre woodland. Photo by Janet Sheridan, 2012.

William H. and Sarah J. Thomas House. It is oriented side-wall to the street, and consists of an older one-story, one room house with a hewn frame that Thomas extended to two rooms with a second story. By the interior finishes, plaster walls, board ceilings, and window and door moldings, this well-finished house evidences a middle-class standard of living. The use of wood boards for ceilings is also seen in Mt. Zion Church, of the same period (built 1879-1887). By comparison, it was not uncommon for rural vernacular houses in the county to have articulated ceilings through the end of the nineteenth century. This is the only nineteenth-century house that survives in Marshalltown, and the earlier, hewn-frame house could have been a freedman’s cottage, or even a slave quarter. The Thomases were leaders in Mt. Zion Church and the G. U. O. O. F. Lodge, as were the Williamses who occupied it in the early twentieth century. Photo by Janet Sheridan, 2010.

Thomas House First Floor Plan. The house extension created a two-cell plan with a straight central stair. Drawn by Janet Sheridan, 2010.
Mt. Zion Cemetery. See church on next page. Gravestones are located in the lawn areas on the south and west sides of the church and many are in the woods on the west side. The markers range in quality and materials. They include ornately carved limestone obelisks, plain but professionally incised limestone tablets and granite bevels, homemade concrete tablets, veterans’ markers, and possibly fieldstone markers. The earliest marker is that of Thomas Marshall himself, who died September 21, 1856. That of his contemporary and one of the earliest landowners, Samuel Mink, is the next oldest at June 26, 1866. Because the first church edifice was built in 1847, earlier graves with no markers, missing markers, buried markers, or marked with fieldstones (as were found during the survey) would be expected. Photo by Janet L. Sheridan, 2010.

Mt. Zion AUMP Church. This is the 1879 rebuild of the 1847 church on the same site. Its gable-end façade presents a pedimented neoclassical style commonly seen in regional Protestant churches of the period. It has a rectangular plan, three bays in the gable, a central double door, a tripartite window in the second floor, three or more tall nave windows, a gallery at the entry end, and a chancel with balustrade and pulpit platform opposite. This example has no basement, and sits on brick piers. The gable end windows display stained glass in multi-paned wood window sashes. Photo by Janet Sheridan, 2008.

Mt. Zion AUMP Church Section A-A Looking North. On the interior, modern finishes cover a wood board ceiling and plaster walls above the wood wainscot. Two side windows were eliminated when the social hall was built, one of which became a door. The tiered balcony was walled over in the 1970s. Drawing by Janet Sheridan, 2010.
Mt. Zion AUMP Church First Floor Plan. The pews have been reconfigured for a central aisle from the original two. A piano platform covered a former exterior door. The social hall was built after the G. U. O. O. F lodge across the street was no longer extant, in the 1960s. Drawing by Janet Sheridan, 2010.

Mt. Zion AUMP Church Roof Truss Elevation  B-B Looking West. The ceiling hangs from kingpost wood trusses that are independent of the common rafter roof framing. Drawn by Janet Sheridan, 2010.

Here and there, all around this country village was a Watson farm and a Watson family. For a century perhaps the name Watson has been among the foremost...Aldine is not noted for its rolling stone proclivities. Watsons there were aplenty once, and Watsons there still are, the same as other families to the third and fourth generation. Some love its souls and soil to the extent they would move closer to the cemetery rather than further away.

Elizabeth Smith (1910-2006) grew up on the old Watson homestead. She was a daughter of Herbert and Hattie Freas Smith, who moved there in 1909, and a great-granddaughter of John and Rachel Watson, who settled on it in 1830. She had many suitors as a young woman, but rather than leave the farm, she never married. Though her brother Carleton took over the farm, she continued to occupy the house until her death. As "Aunt Betty" she doted on two generations of nieces and nephews whose childhoods revolved around this farm.

The Smith's Triangle Farm at the crossroads hamlet of Aldine in the township of Upper Alloways Creek is remembered for its cows. In the late afternoon brothers Donn and Dale Smith, Carleton's sons, drove them from the lower...
The Watson farm house in 1938 when occupied by the Smith family. Photo courtesy Steven G. Smith.

The Watson farm house in 1938 when occupied by the Smith family. Photo courtesy Steven G. Smith.

The Watson farm house in 1938 when occupied by the Smith family. Photo courtesy Steven G. Smith.
workplace of eighteen-year-old butcher William E. Simpkins, whose father took possession of the Watson house in 1869. Also, the kitchen fireplace was open on both sides and the shed ceiling was articulated on both levels, suggesting that the shed was an additional workspace related to the house, allowing for a second parlor. However, a rear room containing a cook stove and a chimney suggests a multiple use of the shed, possibly a commercial one. William E. Simpkins and his cousin Jeremiah S. Watson built a canning shed nearby in 1892, so the shed may have housed a nascent canning operation before that.

Watson who built the sixteen-foot extension to the main barn is sawn-frame equipment shed constructed from salvaged timbers, and before circa 1920 was extended on the east to the crib barn. The various expansions and alterations of the farm outbuildings evidence changes and expansion in agricultural activity in the early-20th-century during the occupation by Herbert and Hattie Smith.

Behind the house are 20th-century outbuildings including an auto garage, a privy, and a chicken house. Reflecting the increasing mechanization of farming after mid-century, a ring of 20th-century structures grew up behind the earliest farm outbuildings: a post-WWI laborer’s house re-purposed for storage, three silos, a free-stall barn, and various sheds for large equipment and hay bales. These buildings supported the shelter and feeding of the dairy herd using larger machines and baling methods developed in the late 20th century.

1 “Aldine,” a newspaper article dated April 3, 1931, Scrapbook #26, Salem County Historical Society.

2 The name changed to Aldine in 1880 when an official post office was established there, and Watson conflicted with another Watson, New Jersey. It is said to have been named for the 15th century Venetian Aldine Press editions of the classics.

3 HABS-NJ-638.

4 There is a cluster of this house-type in the vicinity of Aldine.

5 Everts & Stewart, Combination Atlas Map of Salem & Gloucester Counties, New Jersey: Compiled, Drawn and Published from Personal Examinations and Surveys. (Philadelphia: Everts & Stewart, 1876), 16.

6 Oral history from Steven Smith and Elizabeth Smith.

7 The original configuration is most discernible in the less-altered hay loft. Note the surviving upper wagon door post in the south side, the rearrangement of the roof rafters, and the surviving horse end-rafters.

Watson Farm


Watson Farm

Barns ground floor plan. They accrued from the original three-bay threshing barn and the crib barn, all ultimately connecting. Left to right: calf barn, milking barn, equipment shed, and crib barn with late 20th gable garage additions. Drawing by Janet Sheridan, 2014.

Watson Farm

Barns ground floor plan. They accrued from the original three-bay threshing barn and the crib barn, all ultimately connecting. Left to right: calf barn, milking barn, equipment shed, and crib barn with late 20th gable garage additions. Drawing by Janet Sheridan, 2014.

Watson Farm


Watson Farm
Watson Farm


Crib barn ground floor plan. Drawing by Janet Sheridan, 2014.


Within a decade after the Watsons settled at the crossroads that lies halfway between the villages of Allowaystown (now Alloway) and Pittstown (now Elmer), a hamlet had formed, consisting of about ten houses, Jeremiah Watson's store, William Simkins' blacksmith shop, a wheelwright shop, and a shoe shop, and the nearby mills of Watson and Ballinger. Here, the "Methodist Episcopal Church at Nazareth" was founded in 1841. The place name of Nazareth, though never officially noted, may be an indication of the unanimity of the religious adherence that had grown in the neighborhood. A "class" with local lay leaders, supported by itinerant, circuit-riding preachers designated by the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, had been meeting in a schoolhouse near Ballinger's gristmill on the Daretown Road for a time. The Methodist influence must have been considerable; Presbyterian and Baptist churches had been established just three miles north at Daretown in 1741 and 1771, respectively, and the Alloway M.E. Church established in 1821 was only five miles away.

The Aldine United Methodist Church stemmed from the rapid spread of Methodism through southern New Jersey during the latter years of the 19th century. Methodism in Salem County had been peopled by Presbyterians from the colony of New York in the first decade of the 18th century, by Presbyterians descended from settlers in Cumberland County who arrived from Connecticut, Long Island, and East Jersey, and by descendants of Baptists from Ireland and Massachusetts who also had settled in Cumberland County in the late seventeenth century. An Irishman, John Murphy, opened his home in Monroeville to Methodist preaching before 1772. There, in that year, Benjamin Abbott, a farm laborer from Pittsgrove, converted at a meeting, and both men began preaching and starting classes throughout southern New Jersey. Abbott founded churches in Monroeville, Centreton, Salem, Pennsville, Port Elizabeth, Tuckahoe, and Sharptown by 1784. Thus, Abbott, it has been claimed, was called the "Father of Methodism in Salem County."

In 1788, the Salem Circuit, over which Abbott rode, covered all of southern New Jersey, with thirty preaching places from Camden to Cape May. The Methodist population in New Jersey grew from about 200 in 1773, to 963 in 1784, to 17,600 in 1836. Benjamin Abbott's legacy was evident into the twentieth century. In Salem County in 1922, over half of the 30 churches were Methodist, the others were split among six denominations. Nearly half the 4,204 church members in the county were Methodist. Today, Methodist adherents run second only to Catholics in number, but still have by far the greatest number of congregations of any denomination in the county.

When the Nazareth group built their small brick church in 1841, it was the tenth Methodist church to be established in Salem County. Itinerant and local preachers supplied its pulpit, and the church was on circuits including Allowaystown, Deerfield, and Roadstown. By 1863, the Nazareth M.E. Church had 92 members, one local preacher, and was placed on a separate charge. After the Civil War, many churches were experiencing growth and rebuilding their houses. Aldine did so in 1868. The church hired B.D. Aldine United Methodist Church

(Nazareth Methodist Episcopal Church)

1868
780 Friesburg-Aldine Rd, Alloway Township

Annual Conference of the VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM, Galloway, New Jersey, May 2014

Aldine United Methodist Church

and W.C. Whitecar, a contractor from Bridgeton, to erect the 1868 brick house of worship, at a cost of $8,737.50, plus $1,126 for furnishings. Presumably, because there is no other architect or record, the Whitecar were architects/builder. Their design is a form common across Protestant denominations built in the region in the post-Civil War years. It is seen in several nearby churches, including both the Baptists (1866) and Methodists (1876) churches in Alloway. The Whitecars probably built the highly similar Cedarville M.E. Church in southern Cumberland County the same year.

The form is characterized by a rectangular footprint with a symmetrical gable-ended front of three bays, two stories in height, a shallow gable roof with either a full or interrupted pediment decorated with brackets or modillions. The central entry door led to a large audience room that was used for Sunday School and other activities. A parsonage was built next door in 1958, and a new audio-visual control center was sensitively nested into the balcony.

Aldine Methodist Church honors its history and historic architecture with anniversary celebrations of the year of construction, 1868, and with building stewardship respectful of its architecture. 125th anniversary quilts and historical documents and memorabilia are in the display case in the upper foyer. Descendants of Watson’s Corners are still active in this church.

Janet Sheridan

Footnotes:

1 In 1833 the mapmakers noted no name for this crossroads, but evidently, in 1841 when the church was established, it was called Nazareth. No mapmaker ever noted this, for in 1849, it was known as Watson’s Store Corner.


7 Ibid. Frank Groenap, a scholar of New Jersey churches, calls this form “the bank front.”
One of southern New Jersey’s earliest town settlements, Greenwich (pronounced Greenwich) initially emerged as a community designed to embody the collective idealism of its Quaker founders. Along with Salem, it was planned for in 1675, but its lots were not actually laid out until the early 1680s. The town plan consisted of a wide central thoroughfare (Ye Greate Street) that ran directly back from the Cohansey River, flanked on either side by a series of long lots to the Cohansey River. Its maritime orientation reflected the vision of its planner, John Fenwick, and his desire that his Quaker brethren cooperate in constructing their houses at “a place Chosen and set out for a Town or City to be built, in which every Purchaser must have a Part, by reason of Delaware River for Trade.”

Although planned as a port, Greenwich, not unlike Penn’s vision for a “green country town” at Philadelphia, was meant to empower the best of what the commercial and agricultural worlds had to offer. Reports to William Penn, who acted as a trustee for the sale of lands in West New Jersey in the late 1670s and 1680s, indicated that the majority of land being sold and developed in the colony’s bayshore area surrounded both Cohansey and Alloway Creeks. Aside from recognizing the benefits of being a port community, Greenwich’s early settlers quickly distinguished themselves by aggressively banking the watershed’s vast expanses of salt meadows for hay production. Not unlike other areas of southwestern New Jersey’s inner-coastal plain, Greenwich’s 18th-century agricultural economy settled into patterns widely shared throughout the region. A typical farm in Greenwich raised corn, wheat, rye, oats, and flax, maintained a vegetable garden, and quite often cultivated an orchard of apple and peach trees. Most farms supplemented crop growing with varying levels of investment in livestock, be it cattle, hogs, or sheep. These same farmers engaged in lumbering, fin fishing (particularly seining for shad), and shellfisheries (for oysters).2

As one of southern New Jersey’s few 18th-century port communities, Greenwich supported a conspicuous service economy. Its taverns provided refreshment for mariners, merchants, and farmers who made their way to town to either ship or trade the area’s principal commodities. The tempo of tavern life took a busy turn during semi-annual fairs that ran in the village from 1695 to 1765 during the months of April and October. Local stores along Ye Greate Street provided goods in the intervening months. Over the last half century, Greenwich’s four general stores on Ye Greate Street have closed, but one of the buildings is now occupied by a restaurant, Aunt Betty’s Kitchen. The ferry at the end of Ye Greate Street crossed the Cohansey River and facilitated the close links that developed between Fairfield and Greenwich over the course of the 18th century, as well as those commercial connections that were emerging along the wider bayshore. This infrastructure, ranging from stores and fairs to ferries and wharves, supported information exchange and the community’s growing consumer culture—refinements that led a young woman visiting the area to go to Greenwich “to get her broken watch crystal replaced, but the man had not received any from Philadelphia as expected.”

When Cumberland County was established in 1748, Greenwich’s standing led the colony’s legislators to choose it as the place where a vote would be held to determine the county’s permanent seat, and, in the meantime, the location of the county’s courts and jail.3

Greenwich blossomed into a regional port whose chief role was in shipping the area’s goods to Philadelphia where they were then transshipped into the wider Atlantic and West Indian marketplace. Moved in modestly sized shallops, Greenwich’s principal commercial exports were agricultural produce, fur pelts and...
The colonial period, New Jersey was mapped into three customs districts, with one port of entry for each district - Perth Amboy for the colony's northern reaches, Burlington for the colony's central region, and Salem/Cohansey for its southern most area. Greenwich not only fell into the Salem/Cohansey district, but was also one of its administrative centers. According to one scholar, with Greenwich "located on Delaware Bay comfortably downstream from the bustling port of Philadelphia and laced with myriad estuaries and navigable creeks, the region deserved its reputation as a haven for smugglers," one where "Under the best of circumstances customs officers faced a formidable task in superintending the enforcement of the navigation laws." Many of southern New Jersey's colonial traders en route to Philadelphia viewed stopping at Salem/Cohansey district office for customs papers as a "handicap." By the eve of the American Revolution, customs enforcement was so slack in the district that its collector, John Hatton, became known for his neglect and in 1766 was duly reported on by John Swift, Deputy Collector of Philadelphia, in his correspondence with the American Board of Customs Commissioners in Boston.5

These antecedents set the stage for the Greenwich Tea Burning on December 22, 1774. Earlier, in September 1774, the First Continental Congress, in reaction to Great Britain's tax policies, pledged that the colonies would not import or use British goods or East India tea. Cumberland County officials endorsed these non-importation measures on December 22, 1774, and at this time, were informed that tea shipped on the brig Greyhound had been secretly landed at Greenwich and stored in the cellar of David Bowen. Before a committee could be officially formed to respond to the handling of this controversial cargo, a group dressed as Indians broke into the cellar of Bowen's house and burned the tea in Greenwich's market square - an area adjacent to the Quaker Meeting House and the town wharf.

Much of this event suggests more than straightforward discontent with British tax policy, but was also, given that many of the tea burners were Presbyterian, a challenge to longstanding Quaker hegemony in the area. Indeed, some of the tea burners were educated at Rev. Enoch Green's Presbyterian-affiliated classical school at Deerfield, New Jersey and some at the Presbyterian-affiliated College of New Jersey (today Princeton University).6 The tea burners began their route to Greenwich's market square at the Howell Homestead, the residence of twin brothers Lewis and future New Jersey governor Richard Howell, both of whom studied at Rev. Green's classical school. Joined by a number of fellow Presbyterians from both the Greenwich and Fairfield congregations, they reputedly then stopped at Philip V. Fithian's residence on the way. The brick Howell Homestead was a starting point for the tea burning procession. For several decades leading up to the construction of the Howell Homestead, the practice of constructing houses in brick - meetinghouses and dwelling houses - was the principal expression of Quaker proprietary power in the region. Historian Larry Gerlach points out that New Jersey's Quakers "feared" Presbyterians,7 and that Presbyterians consistently "contested proprietary land pretensions." This was particularly the case in East New Jersey, but in West New Jersey the situation was magnified by greater Quaker numbers and landholding strength, and their use of brick buildings to reinforce their property-owning legacy. In the Greenwich area, the emergence of brick building by Presbyterians, and their allied Baptist neighbors, not only displayed an increasing level of social and economic parity with Quakers, but was also a means of countering their hegemony long expressed through brickwork's local symbolism.8

Although 19th-century Greenwich developed a vibrant economy around agriculture, shipbuilding, oystering, canneries, and shad and sturgeon fisheries, its collective memory remained deeply tethered to its 18th-century roots. On November 25 and 26, 1874, the West Jersey Railroad Depot in Bridgeton, New Jersey was adapted to stage the centennial celebration of the Greenwich Tea Burning An elaborate affair, its preparations received extensive coverage in the local press and cast the event as an appropriate prelude to the nation’s upcoming Centennial Celebration in 1876. Joel Parker, Governor of New Jersey, delivered opening remarks "replete with historical incidents, and affording an amount of information relating to our local history." As festivities neared their end in Bridgeton, an excursion train owned by the New Jersey Southern Railroad took a group of celebrants to Greenwich to engage in what today might be labeled "living history." Arriving in Greenwich, "the company wended their way down the broad old street to the place where once was the Market Square, where the semi-annual fairs were held" and then onto "the house where the tea was stored and the spot where it was burned...whether the exact spot or not, we were undoubtedly within a hundred feet or so of the place where occurred the bold deed." Before leaving, the party, escorted by Greenwich residents who recounted the town's early history, "wandered around the quiet village to see...the old houses, one of which had the date, 1734, upon it."
Greenwich has continued to uphold its colonial past, and the lack of significant development after the mid-19th century has preserved its buildings and streetscape to a remarkable degree. The Historic American Buildings survey visited the town in 1941 and recorded more buildings in Greenwich than in any other comparably sized community in New Jersey.


As cultural geographer Peter Wacker has observed, the 18th-century and letters of Philip V. Fithian largely corroborate these agricultural patterns, in particular, the effort required to repair the dikes and sluices used in draining marshes. Such drainage and banking produced marshes - reclaiming land much needed for hay production and for dikes and sluices used in draining marshes. Such drainage and banking produced marshes - reclaiming land much needed for hay production used for feeding livestock. Wacker and Clemens, Land Use in Early New Jersey, 128-129, 231-241; Wacker, Land and People, 282.


Not unlike Raritan Landing, upriver from New Brunswick, in Middlesex County, New Jersey, which performed a comparable function for the Raritan Valley that Greenwich performed for the Cohansey watershed, See Rebecca Yamin, Rediscovering Raritan Landing: An Adventure in New Jersey Archaeology (New Jersey Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, 2011).

Pleasantly situated on the North side of Cohansey River, a few miles from its entrance into Delaware Bay, is the old town of Greenwich, which has had more than two centuries of existence.

On the broad street of the village, and throughout the Township of Greenwich are a number of Colonial houses still standing and a larger number that have stood a century or more. Time, in its ever forward march and destroying agencies, and man ever striving to ameliorate his environment, may have erased many of the primitive ones.

One of the best preserved and most imposing in the village, erected in Colonial days is the Gibbon house. A mere passer by will not notice its great antiquity by its general appearance, but a close observer will see the old fashioned architecture in doors and windows with the narrow shingled roof or awning built over them for protection, and the obsolete style of brick laying, having been laid lengthways and sideways symmetrically in construction.

The house was considered elegant at the time of its erection, and was so carefully and substantially built that it has proved a weatherproof structure; for the stormy elements have battled against it for one hundred and sixty-seven years without defacing its outward form.

If you enter the interior you will find amplitude and many hints of by-gone years; a broad hall with an open stairway leading to the floor above, a large room on each side of the hall; the room on the right from the entrance contains two large corner cupboards arched over the doorways, one of them with glass in the doors, which in the past displayed the imported china or crockery, and glistening pewter which were especially dear to the women of the household.

A few steps down from the room at the left of the entrance lead to the kitchen. A large kitchen was considered essential in the days of the Colonies, and was the most cheerful and homelike room in the house; the glowing hearth radiated brightness and warmth from the blazing logs in the wintry season, and the fire dogs usually shone with polished brightness. The King's arm was often suspended over the fire-place. They chatted and entertained a neighbor, cooked and dined, and did a great variety of work in the kitchen.

The great capacity of the kitchen of the Gibbon homestead, originally built with its large corner cupboard and brick floor, convinces the visitor of to-day that all the olden time industries our great grandmothers engaged in, such as spinning and weaving, dyeing and carding, sewing and knitting, candle making and such like, were all successfully carried on there, and we feel like pausing and bowing our heads with reverence when we think of all the “Life and death that have come and gone over that threshold of wood and stone.”

This description comes from Bessie A. Andrews, Colonial and Old Houses of Greenwich, New Jersey (Vineland, NJ: G.E. Smith Printer, 1907), one of the early histories of Greenwich that recognized and celebrated the history of the town and its buildings. The Nicholas Gibbon house uses the patterned bricks and symmetrical facade of the emerging Georgian style to create an up-to-date house that showcased its owners’
wealth and connections to the mercantile world of the north Atlantic.

The Gibbon House was built by Nicholas Gibbon about the year 1730, and he occupied it until 1740, when he moved to Salem, New Jersey. Nicholas was in business, in partnership with Samuel Fenwick Hodge (a great grandson of the colony’s founder, John Fenwick) and Captain James Gould. Gibbon kept store in Greenwich, and with his brother Leonard erected one of the first gristmills in the Cohansey, on the stream called Macanippuck. The brothers later built a fulling mill on Pine Mount Run. Leonard Gibbon built a stone house a few miles northwest of his brother’s residence, overlooking the waters of the mill-pond. The brothers were English Anglicans by religion in this Quaker and Presbyterian town. It was they who promoted construction of an Anglican church on the main street of Greenwich, St. Stephen’s, consecrated in 1729. It was no longer standing by the late 19th century.

In the Pennsylvania Gazette, March 29th, 1759, the following advertisement is found:

TO BE SOLD.

A house and lot in the town of Greenwich, in the County of Cumberland, West New Jersey. The house is of brick, large and well built, two stories high, with a large kitchen. It is conveniently situated for a store, also sixteen acres of woodland and two acres and a half of meadow, within three quarters of a mile of the same.

For title and terms apply to the subscriber, in the town of Salem.

GRANT GIBBON.

In the 1750s, the Gibbon House on the Ye Great Street was sold to Richard Wood, a member of the New Jersey Assembly. The property remained in the possession of the Wood family for nearly two hundred years. The Wood family sold it to Everett Tomlinson in 1934. Tomlinson sold it to Manning Exton in 1953, who, in turn, sold the property to John Gillespie in 1954. The Cumberland County Historical Society acquired it as its permanent headquarters on June 16, 1969.

Color photos by Janet Sheridan, 2012.
Nicholas Gibbon House
ca. 1765-1775
Ye Great Street, Village of Greenwich

The mentioned building is the Greenwich Quaker Meetinghouse. This meetinghouse was evidently enlarged in 1771, and the interior was finished several years later. Although the meetinghouse of 1765 would have included its own partition, the new expansion almost doubled the footprint of the building to adequately provide separation and privacy for both the men’s and the women’s monthly meetings. The separate but equal role of these meetings found architectural expression on the exterior of the building through its dual entrances and outwardly symmetrical design. The expansion led to an upgrading of the meeting, itself. According to the minutes of Gloucester and Salem Quarterly Meeting, dated November 17 and 18, 1783, the Greenwich Preparative Meeting became a monthly meeting at that time. A minute of November 27, 1793 recorded that a fire had burned the Greenwich meetinghouse. The extent of the damage is not known.

The meetinghouse itself is made of brick, the preferred material for buildings of importance in Quaker New Jersey. The Greenwich Friends Meeting uses a classic Quaker meetinghouse plan, with two identical entries sheltered by pedimented porticoes that give equal dignity to the men’s and women’s entries. Inside, the gender-separate spaces are divided by a moveable paneled wooden dividing wall that allows the entire space to be open for general meeting use or be closed, as needed.

In 1765, the Greenwich friends were again planning to build. They reported to the Salem Monthly Meeting that they were “under the necessity of building a larger house for better accommodating their meeting and have proposed to build one 40 feet in width which they concluded will cost 250 pounds.” The larger meetinghouse also required a larger site. It is not clear when the additional property was purchased on which the present building stands, but there are two adjacent burial grounds, one in the rear of the meetinghouse and a nearby “Sheppard’s lot,” which may reflect the location of the 1694 building.

The Friends Meeting was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1941. The building is still in use as a meetinghouse from September to June.

Janet W. Foster, Damon Tvaryanas

Much of the documentation here is drawn from Esther Wasson and Nancy Middleton’s 1991 publication, Salem Quarter.

Minutes of the Salem Monthly Meeting of Friends reveal that on November 29, 1686, “it was … thought convenient by friends that the meetings at Greenwich be kept at Joseph Browne’s house if he and his wife be willing every first day.” On May 26, 1690, the minutes record that “Anthony Woodhouse of Cohansey [i.e. Greenwich] came … and [reported] to this meeting that the friends in that place [were] about to build a Meeting House and they desired some assistance from friends of this meeting.” It took more than three years for the Greenwich Friends to act. In December 1693, Joseph Browne conveyed a very small rectangular parcel, just over one-twentieth of an acre, for the site of a meetinghouse and graveyard. About one month later, on January 29, 1693/4, “the [Salem] Monthly Meeting ordered 4 pounds to be given the friends of Cohansie to help them build a meetinghouse.” A Preparative Meeting was afterward established at Greenwich in 1694, reporting to the Salem Monthly Meeting.

This meetinghouse, then, would have been the one that Thomas Chalkley, an eminent, well-to-do Philadelphia Quaker and recommended minister, frequently visited. His home, Chalkley Hall, overlooked the Delaware River in the Frankford area of Philadelphia; his Journal indicates that he had widespread shipping interests that extended to Greenwich. He married Joseph Browne’s widow in 1714. This first house of worship may have been replaced by a new, more substantial brick building in 1725.

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Joseph Browne was the owner of the nearby Reeve-Sheppard house.

The property on which this brick house stands first appeared in land records when Mark Reeve bought a 16-acre village lot in Greenwich on April 18, 1685. The land was a choice parcel with valuable Cohansey Creek frontage, and Reeve apparently had a dwelling of some sort constructed within a year. The use of brick in construction at Greenwich began at this time, and it is possible that Reeve had a small, brick house built here. Reeve sold the property in December 1686 to a Philadelphia merchant, Joseph Browne, and the consideration, 80 pounds, suggests that Reeve had made substantial improvements. Some interior details show that at least part of the cellar employs First Period (ca. 1685-ca. 1730) framing techniques.

During the 18th century, the building on the lot was used for a time as a tavern and community gathering place. When Cumberland County was established by colonial statute in 1748, an election was held at this house to determine where a courthouse and jail would be built. This event occurred during John Butler’s ownership (1741-1752). The county jail, a frame building still remembered from historic photographs, was built behind the house.

John Sheppard, a prosperous merchant and prominent member of the Greenwich community, bought the property in 1760. In January 1768, after a law was enacted to provide ferry service across the Cohansey, Sheppard agreed to operate the ferry and maintain the resulting causeway to Back Neck in exchange for the income the ferry would bring. Sheppard was elected from Cumberland to serve in the New Jersey Assembly in 1772, and again from 1785 through 1788. Sheppard continued to live here until his death in 1805, after which the house descended to his son, John. The Federal-style side-hall plan portion of the house certainly reflects the Sheppard family’s occupancy and relative wealth and status within the community.

John Sheppard, the son, took out an insurance policy for the house in 1838. As was routine practice at that time, an insurance survey was prepared to describe the new risk. These surveys commonly included one or more floor plan sketches. This one is unusual for having been carefully drafted. It is also worth noting that the handwritten text of this survey describes a house that has not been significantly altered since the survey was prepared, more than 175 years ago!

**SURVEY,** made by David A F Randolph and reported to the **FRANKLIN FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA.**

The dwelling house now owned and occupied by John Sheppard in the town of Greenwich, county of Cumberland and state of New Jersey – The building is of brick and stone erected at different periods and is of the following dimensions and finishes[] The Eastern part is of stone with a front of Philadelphia brick viz 22 by
The house remained in the Sheppard family through 1883. It is currently unoccupied and is not open for visitation.

Jeroen van den Hurk and Janet W. Foster

The western part is of brick 2 stories high on a cellar size 18 by 36 feet divided into 2 rooms in the first story – the Eastern room is 15 ½ by 17 ½ feet and contains 1 fireplace and 4 cupboards with a piazza in front – the west room is 15 ½ by 15 ½ feet and contains 1 fireplace and 1 closet – the 2nd story is divided into 3 bed rooms containing 1 fire place and 4 closets – The doors throughout are paneled – there are in this part 3 windows of 15 lights – 4 do of 12 lights and 2 do of 8 lights glass 8 by 10 – there are 5 pair of shutters 3 for 15 light and 2 for 12 light windows. The roof is of shingles and contain 2 dormer windows. The kitchen is in the rear of the last described building size 19 by 26 feet of brick one story with a shingle roof and contains 3 windows 2 out doors [a] fire place with an oven 1 stair case with an entrance into the cellar under the same – the floor is of brick on the east of the kitchen is a piazza 6 ½ feet wide covered with shingles and extending the length of the kitchen.

Dated at Greenwich the twenty ninth day of November one thousand eight hundred and thirty eight.

David A F Randolph


Reeve-Sheppard House, ca.1910


HABS, NJ-268, ca.1936.
Sheppard Tenant House

1789; ca. 1822
1081 Ye Greate Street, Village of Greenwich

Dated to 1789 by dendrochronology, the westernmost two-thirds of this 1½-story dwelling is significant as a Dutch-American framed house. The type, with its parallel and regularly-spaced anchor-beam bents, has been the subject of emerging scholarship and its geographic dispersion in New Jersey is still being assessed as new examples are discovered.¹ The Sheppard Tenant House reflects the influence of Dutch carpentry traditions on English building practices, resulting in a hybrid that demonstrates a cross-cultural melding of European-based house building technologies in America. The Dutch controlled New York and New Jersey from the 1620s until the English took over in the 1660s, and remained a strongly identifiable cultural presence through the 18th century, particularly in northern New Jersey where plentiful examples of historic Dutch-framed houses are extant. There are only a handful of known South Jersey examples of Dutch framed houses: three in Cumberland County; four in Salem County, two in Ocean County, and one in Cape May County.

The Sheppard Tenant House combines the exposed, H-shaped anchor bents of Dutch construction with the English-derived architectural characteristics of a side hall floor plan and a gable end fireplace that has a partially-exposed brick chimney back on the exterior wall. The distinctive feature of a window framed into the front door stud has been noted in other 18th century houses in the region, but it may transcend English or Dutch labels and merely serve as a convenient pattern for arranging openings in a limited space. The original section has a footprint that measures approximately 23' wide by 16' deep. In plan it consists of a 6' wide hallway to the east and a parlor to the west on the first story, with a heated chamber, hallway, and bathroom on the second story.

Framing members are all of oak and each is numbered with Roman numerals used to facilitate raising the frame. The H-shaped anchor bents are exposed in the parlor and consist of 6' wide upright posts spaced 3' on center. The spaces between the bents are filled with exposed brick nogging. Exposed, hand-hewn joists overhead measure 7" by 3½" and are pegged into the anchor bents. At the parlor’s west end is a fireplace (not original) with an arched firebox and no mantel or surround. A small board and batten door, possibly original and hung on butt hinges, fronts a closet placed north of the fireplace.

The parlor is separated from the hallway by an original beaded-board partition wall. An open string stair placed against the east wall becomes a winder stair as it rises to the upper floor. Original elements include a simple handrail, a chamfered newel post, and square balusters with a beaded edge. An original board and batten door on the rear (south) elevation is hung on butt hinges and is scratched with the date “1824.”

The second floor has some extant beaded board partition walls while the perimeter walls and the ceilings are of plaster. Random-width hard pine floors alternate tongue-and-groove with groove-and-groove and appear to be original. There is a small fireplace (not original), also with no mantel, in the chamber located at the west end of the second story. The east end contains a hallway and a bathroom.

The house stands on one of Greenwich’s original 16-acre town lots that was eventually purchased in 1773 by John Sheppard, a successful merchant and farmer who owned the large brick house (extant) across the street at Greenwich landing. It is likely this dwelling was constructed as a tenant house under Sheppard’s ownership. Charles Briggs, a weaver, leased the house in 1822 and added the east section to serve as a room for a weaver’s shop. According to an early 20th-century Greenwich historian, “the first big job he [Briggs] did was to make the carpets in the house at the other end of the street…sanded floors were just going out of style and this home with its rooms all carpeted was an event in the village.”

Joan Berkey

¹The study of anchor-bent and “H” form framing has been pursued in this region by Janet L. Sheridan. Her work on this topic may be found in her thesis, “Their Houses are Some Built of Timber.” The Colonial Timber Frame Houses of Fenwick’s Colony, New Jersey. University of Delaware, 2007; available through ProQuest; and in articles including “Colonial Timber Framing in Southwestern New Jersey: The Cultural Implications of Structural Logic.” The Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Delaware. No. 45 (New Series), 2008, 37-58.

1905 postcard; it shows the ca. 1822 addition facing the street

Drawing by Janet Sheridan and Michael Chiarappa.
Built about 1690, the 1½-story Joseph Dennis House has all of the hallmarks of first-period (ca.1685-ca.1730) heavy timber frame construction, as expressed in southern New Jersey: exposed, hand-hewn framing members, including a summer beam, that are decorated with chamfers ending in lamb's tongue stops, a 6'-wide chimney bay that originally contained back-to-back fireplaces, and rafters notched for roof lath. It is one of three known first-period buildings in Cumberland County with a summer beam, and its summer beam – like the others – is placed longitudinally. Except for the summer beam, which is of hard pine or cedar, and the rear girt, which is of poplar or some other hard wood, the frame is of oak.

The house stands on part of what was originally a 16-acre town lot, the standard size sold when the village was established in the 1680s. This lot was different from the others because it also contained the village’s 133’ by 133’ “public market place” – now the site of the Tea Burner’s Monument – in its southeast corner. To compensate for the loss of land to the market, the lot was made slightly larger than the typical (but not universal) size of 64 perches by 40 perches, to 64 perches by 41 perches. This extra perch made the history of land ownership somewhat easier to trace but generally Cumberland County residents in the colonial era rarely recorded their deeds. Fortunately, through the efforts of early 20th -century historian Charles Sheppard, who traveled throughout the county transcribing deeds owned by its oldest residents, much of the early history of land ownership for this property is known.

Merchant James Clarke bought this lot and another town lot from Fenwick’s executors in 1686, but the house was probably built by Michael Izard, Sr., an English Quaker who settled in Upland (now Chester, Pennsylvania) in 1677, and who then bought this lot from Clarke in February 1687/88. Izard, called a carpenter in the deed, lived here until his death in 1694. A survey in 1751 identified the house as belonging to Joseph Dennis, also a Quaker, but the deed for his purchase was never recorded. As the first confirmed owner of the house, it is named for him.

When built, the house contained a 13’ by 17’ parlor with a heating fireplace to the south, a chamber above the parlor, and a kitchen with a winder stair and cooking fireplace located in a one-story side lean-to to the north. Chimney posts and girts delineated the chimney bay. While the decorated summer beam, chimney girts, and other framing members exemplify New England building practices, the side lean-to and 1½-story massing are typical for southern New Jersey and reflect a significant departure from earlier precedents on Long Island and in the Massachusetts Bay area.

About 1750, the lean-to was raised to its present 1½-story height to match that of the main block, creating an additional chamber. Evidence of the side lean-to’s original massing is evidenced by a change in attic rafters over the north chamber, the existence of nail holes on what were originally the north gable end rafters, the presence of part of the original north gable end plate (almost entirely removed when the kitchen was raised and the chamber created) and the 1½-story shouldered posts into which it was tied, and 1-story shouldered corner posts in the kitchen. White paint (or wash) on original studs, joists, and corner braces shows that the house originally had no interior finish (e.g. plaster or board walls) and that the backside of the clapboard exterior was the interior wall finish.

Around 1820, the original back-to-back fireplaces were removed; a smaller fireplace (extant) was installed in the kitchen and a second fireplace (also extant) was installed within the original chimney bay but opening into a rear lean-to that had been built sometime earlier. Probably at this time, the stair was re-built and plaster walls with a chair rail were placed in the parlor. The one-room, 1½-story addition to the north was probably built about 1820-1840 by Priscilla (ca.1804-1884) and her husband, James Williams (ca.1802-ca.1865).
who lived in the house several decades. The room was reportedly added to raise silkworms. Silk worm culture was popular in the 1830s and 1840s, and was even lauded in the local paper, The Washington Whig, in 1836, which predicted that it would “soon become a great source of revenue to the people of the United States.” Its popularity was short-lived, however, but many Greenwich locals still call this the “Silkworm House.”

The current owners purchased the house in 2002 and embarked on a major restoration, still in progress, that included the in-kind replacement of termite-damaged framing members.

Joan Berkey
Philip Dennis, Jr. built this regionally distinctive Jersey sandstone house in 1765. Before then, a frame dwelling existed on this site, and in 1765 the double-pile-plan (two rooms deep) stone portion was added. In 1904, the original frame section was demolished, replaced by the frame section that now stands. At this time, extensive alterations were made to the entire house: stairway locations were moved, new plaster installed, and doors and windows replaced. The original fireplaces may also have been removed at this time.

The 1765 stone section consists of only three sides; it was constructed without an interior wall abutting the frame structure. Lacking that fourth stone wall, the interior ends of the front and rear stone elevations are, instead, squared-off with bricks formed around now-missing gunstock corner posts. Although both fireplaces and the original chimney in the stone section have been removed, remaining physical evidence allowed them to be reconstructed when the house was restored in the early 1980s. Extant floor framing adjacent to the corner fireplaces determined the sizes and locations of the fireplaces and hearths. During restoration, further investigation revealed that plaster was applied directly to the interior stone walls. Both first-floor rooms in the 1765 section originally had exposed ceiling joists. Remnants of whitewash remain on these features. The undersides of the second-story floorboards have whitewashed edges that outline the original locations of both fireplaces. On the stone exterior gable end, the original stucco plaque bearing the owners' initials and the date “1765” remains.

When the Philip Dennis, Jr. House was restored, existing mouldings, window sash, baseboards, interior doors, floorboards, and other elements of interior woodwork were used as patterns for any required reproduction. While much of the house's original fittings – hardware, doors, stairways, and windows – were removed, the house does retain some original plaster, rafters and floor joists, flooring, and beaded paneling.

Robert S. Watson and Michael J. Chiarappa
This third-period frame house was owned and occupied by Job Stiles (1768-1860), a saddler, and his wife Jemima Stiles (1771-1873), who apparently bought this land in the 1790s, but never recorded their deed. Title searches for adjoining lots have established that Stiles owned this lot by 1802. He appears as early as 1793 on the Greenwich Township tax list, and it is possible that the house was erected for Stiles and his wife around the date of their marriage in 1797. It is also possible, however, that the house predates their ownership.

The exposed chimney back on the exterior first-story west wall is characteristic of 18th-century frame houses in Cumberland and Salem counties and appears possibly to be a direct-from-England influence reflecting building practices in southeastern England. Interestingly, exposed chimney backs, although found among surviving early houses in many parts of New Jersey, are not found in New England, on Long Island, or in neighboring Cape May County.

Probably built sometime after the Revolutionary War, the house consists of a 2-story, 2-bay main block originally 1-story high, then raised to its present 2-story height about 1830-40. In plan, the 2-room-deep main block has a footprint about 18' long by 23' deep. As is typical in third-period (ca.1780 to ca.1845) heavy timber frame buildings, the Stiles House has flared corner posts covered with beaded-edge boards in all four exterior corners and smaller-dimensioned (8" wide) front and rear girts exposed only in the winder stair. The winder stair, in the northeast corner of the front room, is enclosed with original, beaded-edge boards that also line the winder stair walls. The front and rear first-story rooms served as the dining room and parlor with a separate out-kitchen behind the house. Each room has a diagonal, back-to-back fireplace in the west gable end, and both rooms have their original wood overmantels that consist of a full-width raised panel over the fireplace opening topped with two raised panels between chimney closets. The fireplace openings are framed in molded trim while the raised panel chimney closet doors are hung with butt hinges. Board-and-batten front and back doors appear to be original and are hung on original, hand-wrought strap hinges with original pintels.

Added to the east side of the main block is a 1-story, heavy timber frame shop with a 12' by 12' footprint, later expanded to the south by 4'. It was probably built in the late 1700s as the exposed, water mill sawn corner posts (straight) and rising braces suggest, but originally stood as a separate building elsewhere. To the rear of the shop is a 1-story addition that extends beyond the main block and contains a modern kitchen; it appears to date from the mid-19th century.

Joan Berkey
Cumberland County seems to have fewer examples than Salem of these early gambrel-roofed houses. The Philip Dennis house (no longer standing) and the extant ca.1730-40 section of the Thomas Maskell house are Greenwich examples. The Gambrel Roof house is the only known surviving example of this form in a frame house.2 No Cape May examples survive, though a hand-drawn picture of one (built ca.1695-1730) appears on a survey.3 One geographic outlier in brick is the Somers Mansion in Somers Point, Atlantic County (ca.1720-26).4

In plan, the main block of the house has a rectangular footprint approximately 30 feet wide by 20 feet deep with fireplaces in both gable ends. The fireplace in the north parlor was recently rebuilt to its original configuration; the original had been removed about 1840-50 and replaced with a chimney flue for a parlor stove. The house has a full cellar, with brick walls and cellar windows in the front and rear elevations. Joists seen in the basement supporting the floorboards overhead display a combination of pit-sawn and hand-hewn marks with some pieces water-mill-sawn, and individual timbers often display two of the three. The original oak joists measure a healthy 4” by 9” placed 31” on center, and are laid into the sill with a pegged mortise and tenon joint. The two joists at the northernmost end of the cellar are smaller-dimensioned (3” by 7.5”) and are infilled in the original north gable end chimney bay, laid into the sill with an open butt cog, evidently when a large chimney was removed. This evidence is consistent with a late First-Period date of construction in the 1720s.

The fireplace support at the south end of the cellar appears to have been reworked in the early 1800s and features brick sidewalls into which three large oak beams are laid horizontally to support the hearth overhead. A center stair, also added around 1800, leads from the cellar upward to the first and then the second story. One of the cellar windows in the front wall (facing Ye Greate Street) occupies an opening that was once much larger (4’ by 3’), a space infilled with brick to match the other basement window openings. This circumstance suggests that the larger opening was where a bulkhead entrance for cellar access was located.

The first story is divided into two rooms, each with plaster walls, plaster ceilings, and ca.1800 yellow pine floors that are random-width but not overly wide (4” to 8”), held with large, T-head nails. The north parlor is about 12.5’ wide, the south parlor about 17’ wide. The front and rear girts in both rooms are modestly exposed. The straight corner posts are exposed only in the north parlor and they are wrapped with beaded-edge boards. The corner posts are exposed 3” by 5.25.” The ceilings are 9 feet from the floor. A story post supports the front girt and another the rear girt, and marks the plaster partition wall that separates the first-story rooms.

The second story is divided into three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a small hall at the top of the stairs. Perimeter walls and ceilings are of plaster; a board wall separates the bath and hall. The ceilings are a generous 8’ high. The floorboards appear to be original and are random-width yellow pine, the widest of which was measured at 17” wide. The floorboards are held with large T-head nails; the nail pattern shows the joists overhead display a combination of pit-sawn and hand-hewn marks with some pieces water-mill-sawn, and individual timbers often display two of the three. The fireplace in the south parlor about 17’ wide. The front and rear girts in both rooms are modestly exposed. The straight corner posts are exposed only in the north parlor and they are wrapped with beaded-edge boards. The corner posts are exposed 3” by 5.25.” The ceilings are 9 feet from the floor. A story post supports the front girt and another the rear girt, and marks the plaster partition wall that separates the first-story rooms.

The evidence of the original plan of this house is almost identical to the 1764 Oakford house in Somers Point, Atlantic County (ca.1720-26).
in Salem County (HABS NJ-349), with minor differences in stairs. The winder stair was probably removed when the center stair was introduced about 1800, and if the house originally had a third façade dormer, it was probably removed at this time as well. Windows were added to the north gable end after the chimney there was removed.

Extensive title research has been performed to identify the first owners of this house, but without confident result. The house evidently stands on its original site, a location that was part of a 16-acre town lot in Greenwich owned by a Henry Joyce in the early years of the 18th century. The evidence yet discovered is unclear on how long he owned this site, but he evidently did not live on the property, and he died in 1726. His death falls just short of the finding of a dendrochronological study conducted several years ago by William Callahan in conjunction with the Lamont-Doherty Geological Laboratory of Columbia University, which returned a date of ca.1727 for the construction of the house. The date is quite plausible, but it has not yet been supported by other findings. If accurate, however, it means that the house was not built for nor owned by Phineas Carll in the early years of the 18th century. The house evidently stands on property that was an empty lot in 1791 when Wood bought this house in 1853 as part of 1.5-acre property and held it until his death, but it was only one of several Greenwich properties that Wood owned, and there is no indication that he ever resided there. He left the house to his nephew, R. Francis Wood, who held it until his own death in 1931.

Joan Berkey, Michael J. Chiapappa, Robert W. Craig

1 George Walter Johnson, 27th in 78: Patterned-brick Houses of Salem County (Associated Printers, 1977) adds additional examples that further evidence the trend.
2 Architectural historian Janet Sheridan has noted that one existed on East Broadway in Salem City – the Robert Zane, Jr. house, photographed by Thomas Yorke in 1888. It was of wood, but made of horizontal, dovetailed plank (email correspondence, Janet Sheridan to Joan Berkey, 3 May 2011).
3 Joan Berkey, Early Architecture of Cape May County: The Heavy Timber Frame Tradition (Cape May Court House, NJ: Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society, 2008): 257.
4 This is a heavily-restored building maintained by the Atlantic County Historical Society. See, for example, their website, http://southernpointhistory.org/tours/mansion.html.
5 See Cumberland County Deeds, Book Q, p.57.

This is a building that has long confused local historians, who have sought to attribute it to the colonial period. It does not appear on a map that surveyor Levi Heaton prepared of Greenwich in the 1780s. Heaton drew representations of every house from the landing to where the railroad later crossed, and no building is shown where the “Old Stone Tavern” stands. This building stood on property that was an empty lot in 1791 when Phineas Carll bought it from Richard Wood II and Thomas Daniel. Carll promptly had both sections of the tavern built and received a tavern license to operate there in 1792. The license calls it “a new house.”

By the time the building was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 1937, it had long ceased to be a tavern and was a single-family residence. But years of historic commemorations in Greenwich, starting in the 1870s, celebrating its Revolutionary War-era “Tea Party,” and continuing with the preparation of local history books by members of long-time families in the early 20th century, began to generate myths of a tavern at this site, dating from the 1720s or ’30s. The American Guide Series, books published about local history as part of the Federal Works Progress Administration and often used to promote motor travel, noted that the STONE TAVERN (private), built 1734, [which] looks much like the Dutch Colonial houses in northern New Jersey. It is believed that the cut stone of which it was built was brought to Greenwich as ballast in the hold of a trading vessel. The tavern originally dispensed hospitality and, on occasion, legal correction until the county seat was removed to Bridgeton. The building bears little evidence of its age.
The HABS recording team, which drew and photographed the building but did not undertake an independent historical investigation, took stock in the same story repeated a few years later by The American Guide Series: “The survey party were unable to learn the exact date of the building but it is known to be prior to 1775.” Perhaps they were unable to learn the exact date because so much material evidence points to its construction in the federal period, in direct contradiction to the enthusiasm within Greenwich to confirm the village’s stature as being a relic from the time of the Revolution and earlier. The building, a three-bay, side-hall plan main block with an attached, stepped-down kitchen wing to the side, is a form not common in southern New Jersey in the colonial period, even though it was common in central New Jersey. Examples there abound in stone, wood, and brick. The stone used in its construction is not local, and therefore must have been shipped in.

The first-story interior includes a “taproom” in front and a parlor behind, with a stair hall straight back from the entrance. The survival of a trap door in the floor of the taproom is thought to indicate the former location of the original cage bar. Millwork throughout the house is of a transitional type between Georgian and Federal, indicating that the house was built during the late 18th century, when the Georgian style was waning but before the Federal style had fully established itself within the county.

Robert W. Craig, Janet W. Foster

1 See letter of Carl Williams to Sally Watson, August 19, 1969, in collections of Cumberland County Historical Society, Greenwich, NJ.
4 The architectural style guidelines for the Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission, in Hopewell, Mercer County, are clearly written and well-illustrated. They show a similar house, in stone, with single-plane facades built at the federal period. http://www.hopewelltwp.org/Historic_Guidelines-3.pdf
The Swedish Granary, built of whole white cedar logs, originally stood on a farmstead in lower Hopewell Township in what is known as the Dutch Neck area on the north side of the Cohansey River. This is about four miles east of its present location in the village of Greenwich behind the ca.1730 Gibbon House, a house museum owned and operated by the Cumberland County Historical Society. The Granary, which had been protected from the elements by a ca.1850 wagon shed that surrounded most of it, was donated to the historical society in 1974 and moved to its current location that year. At that time, the roof and a few of the original notched logs were replaced.

Several experts in Swedish colonial architecture, including the late restoration architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh, examined the building and determined that it was of Swedish construction and probably dated to about 1640. They further noted that the structure was probably used as a storehouse or granary, possibly with heated living quarters in the south end, and used until a permanent house could be built, and that it was extremely significant as “probably the oldest building of its type in America.” The Granary also appears to be the only extant Finno-Swedish agricultural log building along the Delaware River and is similar to a Finnish whole log storehouse illustrated by Amandus Johnson in The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware (1911).

The identity of its builder is not known as there are no titles for or references to a Swede or Finn living in Hopewell Township in the seventeenth century. There were several thriving Swedish and Finnish settlements on both sides of the Delaware River north of Cumberland County. Thus it is left unsolved how the granary came to be built, whether by a Swedish/Finnish squatter who left no official evidence, or by a Swedish/Finnish carpenter for the Holmes family, the earliest English settlers of record who bought the farmstead in 1684 and lived on it for many generations.

A preservation plan (2013) determined that the original white cedar logs were remarkably well-preserved. But, as the building receives more attention from scholars, architects, and historians, questions linger about its true age. Ten dendrochronology samples were taken in 2008, but with no American white cedar master database in existence, the samples could not be dated. Recognizing the Granary’s potential for national significance if its mid-17th-century construction date could be proved, the Cumberland County Historical Society applied in 2013 for a grant to fund the creation of a database using ancient standing cedars, ancient stumps, and 17th-century cedar roof and wall shingles known to exist on several historic buildings in southern New Jersey.

The Granary has a rectangular footprint 30’ long and 16’ deep. The corner construction consists of notched (on the bottom) log ends placed over each other; most of the logs are original. The tenons of the ceiling joint ends protrude through angled notches in the logs on the façade (west elevation) and rear elevations at the first story level. The roof is covered with replacement cedar planks staggered over/under to create a waterproof covering. The planks are laid over narrow cedar tree trunks used for rafters (not original). The façade features a wide animal/wagon door to the north and a man door to the south. Both openings appear to be original. The animal/wagon opening is fronted by an open basket-weave design wood door, while the smaller entry, for human use, is finished by a board and batten door hung on strap hinges, neither of which is original. The structure has no windows on the first story; a small window opening, now closed over, is extant in the south gable end, but it is not known if the window opening is original or not.

The building interior is divided by an original log partition wall: the south half was used to store grain and possibly served as temporary living quarters while the other half was likely used to house farm animals. A loft on the south side of the partition wall there is accessed by a ladder, carved from a log and thought to be a historically accurate reproduction of the ladder that would have been used. Floorboards are wide and are undoubtedly replacements. Joists are hand-hewn and squared, except for the rounded ends that protrude beyond the façade.

Joan Berkey

[Editor’s note: The NJ Historic Preservation Office maintains a census of traditional log house buildings in the State constructed before 1900. Of many hundreds that were built, about 40 are currently known.]
This house was the residence of Benjamin Reeve, a watch and clockmaker who moved to Greenwich from Philadelphia in 1768. Although little is known about Reeve’s clockmaking career, several extant clocks are marked “Benj. Reeve.” The house is significant as an excellent, exceptionally well-preserved example of second period (ca.1730 to ca.1780-90) heavy timber frame construction as expressed in Cumberland County. It retains its original woodwork, original wood paneling, original fireplaces and mantels, original stairs, and original woodwork, original wood paneling, original woodwork, original wood paneling, original woodwork, original wood paneling, original woodwork.

In plan, the first floor features 2 rooms: a parlor in front with a dining room behind it, separated by an original, beaded board (vertical) partition wall. All perimeter walls are probably infilled with brick, over which plaster was applied. If lath had been used, the outline of so many rising corner braces would not be visible since the lath would have been nailed over top of the wood braces. Doors throughout the house appear to be original (except for the front door) and feature raised panels hung on original HL hinges with rosehead nails. A rim lock has been removed, but its keyhole remains.

The entrance includes a modern one-story lean-to with a screened porch to the rear (east) of the main block that runs parallel to the façade (west elevation) and is covered with wood shingles. A large, straight, brick interior-wall chimney pierces the roof at the peak of the north gable. A modern concrete block chimney on the outside of the north side wall provides a flue for a heater in the cellar. The roofline has a boxed cornice with no returns and there are no show rafters in the gable ends. The house stands on a parged brick foundation with cellar windows framed by wood bars that may be original.

The second story consists of two bedrooms and a bathroom. The bedrooms have diagonal fireplaces with raised panels, very similar to those on the first floor. Interior partition walls are mostly of vertical boards. Floorboards are random-width yellow pine between 8” and 12”. They are original. Exterior wall surfaces are of plaster over brick.
Benjamin and Rachel Reeve House

Reeve’s death in 1801, his real estate holdings were divided among his heirs and the divisions were surveyed by Elathan Davis. In February 1802, Reeve’s three sons, James (a Philadelphia cabinetmaker), Richard (a Philadelphia watch and clockmaker), and Joshua (of Mt. Holly), sold their father’s house and 3 acres to Samuel Reeve of Fairfield Township. Samuel Reeve paid $810 for the tract.7

Samuel Reeve died in 1815 and the house went to his daughter, Rachel Cope, in a division of the estate in 1816.8 Rachel and her husband Henry, both from Philadelphia, sold the house and its 3-acre lot to Gabriel D. Hall for $800 in April 1848.9 Hall is shown as the owner on the 1862 map, and is enumerated in the 1850 census as a 48-year-old farmer living in Greenwich with his wife Mary. He estimated the value of his real estate holdings at $15,000.10 The Halls sold in December 1862 to local grain merchant Benjamin F. Maul, who evidently lived elsewhere.

After Benjamin Maul died in 1910, the house was sold several times during the next hundred years, until the current owners bought it in 2004.11

Joan Berkey

3 Drost, Clocks and Watches of New Jersey, 207.
4 Pennsylvania Chronicle, #19, Feb 22, 1768; Shourds, History and Genealogy of Fenwick’s Colony, 44.
5 Cumberland County Deeds, Book 4, p.369, Cumberland County Clerk’s Office, Bridgeton, NJ.
6 Samuel Reeve’s relationship to Benjamin Reeves has not been determined.
7 Cumberland County Deeds, Book 4, p.369.
8 Book B of Divisions, p.107, Cumberland County Surrogate’s Office, Bridgeton, NJ.
9 Cumberland County Deeds, Book 78, p.446.
10 1850 census, Greenwich Township, Cumberland County, page 264A.
11 Maul devised the house to Margaret Schneider Evans, who died in April 1952. Evans willed the house to her sister, Laura Matilda Schneider, on whose death in 1963 the house passed to their niece, Barbara Mathis. Mathis sold the house in 1965 to Albert and Joyce Thomas who lived there for 4 years. The Thomases sold the house to Lawrence and Barbara Pigott in 1969. The Pigots sold the house to Thomas and Melanie Howard in 1996.

The attic story is finished into two rooms and appears to have always been so finished. A beaded-board partition wall, painted a flat barn-red color that may be original, divides the rooms. Floor boards here are wider than those on the second floor. The floor boards in the west room exhibit a barn-red stenciled decoration around the perimeter walls; it is not known when this was applied. The knee walls, which appear to be original, are accessed by two small modern doors. In the west knee wall, a single original butterfly hinge survives, still clinched with rosehead nails. The rafters behind the knee wall are hand-hewn and measure 3.5’ x 6’ where they meet the upper plate of a double-plate framing system. The rafters are not trenched for roof lath. The attic level is accessed by an original ladder and fence-like rail protecting the stairwell. The initials "AHW" are carved into the handrail, but the identity of the person is unknown.

The house is remarkably well-preserved and has had few alterations over the years. An addition to the rear, probably in the late 20th century, added a modern kitchen. The house probably had an out-kitchen originally.

The cellar exhibits hand-hewn first-floor joists squared on all sides and measuring 6’ by 1’. A 3’-high brick partition wall runs from north to south and, if extended, would dead-end into the framework for the two diagonal fireplaces above. It appears to have been a solid wall with a doorway at one time.

The house is remarkably well-preserved and has had few alterations over the years. An addition to the rear, probably in the late 20th century, added a modern kitchen. The house probably had an out-kitchen originally.

This house was built around 1769 for Benjamin Reeve (1737-1801) and his second wife, Rachel Tyler (1748-?), who were Quakers who married in 1769 in Greenwich. 3 Reeve was apprenticed to clockmaker Thomas Stretch in Philadelphia and eventually established his own business as a clock and watchmaker there. 3 He moved from Philadelphia to Greenwich around 1768. In February that year, he advertised the sale of a "bank house and lot of ground" between Chestnut and Walnut streets in Philadelphia, and stated that he was living in Greenwich. 3 Reeve’s house in Greenwich stands on a parcel of land that Reeve bought from his father-in-law in March 1769. This deed was not recorded, but is cited in a later conveyance in 1802. 5 The builder of the house is not known.

Benjamin Reeve continued to practice his trade as a clockmaker while living in Greenwich. After

The Fairfield Presbyterian Church

The Fairfield Presbyterian “Old Stone” Church was the third church constructed by the Fairfield Presbyterian congregation.1 Although the congregation’s second church was demolished in 1775 because it became unsafe, the congregation waited until 1780 to build the present “Old Stone” Church due to the wartime conditions of the Revolution. The building was constructed in the meetinghouse form: the three-bay, two-story symmetrical structure has a side-gable roof configuration with closed gable ends, twelve-over-twelve windows, paneled shutters on the first floor, and two entrances along its facade. The interior has a balcony on three sides surrounding an elaborate, high pulpit. Other details include Georgian paneling on the pulpit, pews, and balcony wall, and Georgian wall panelling on the stairs. The building was used by the congregation until 1850. The only alterations consist of Federal-period modifications to the pulpit box, the installation of a chimney and heating stove in the mid-19th century, and the later installation of a slate roof in place of the original wood shingle roof. The building retains its architectural integrity from its period of construction.

The congregation moved to a newly constructed church within Fairton in 1850, but, remarkably, they have maintained the Old Stone Church and its graveyard. The removal of the congregation actually saved the building from many potential alterations that befell other early churches during the ecclesiastical changes of the mid- and late-19th century. The building is in generally good condition and has received significant maintenance and repairs over the past few years.
The Fairfield Presbyterian Church

There are several issues that remain a cause of concern, however. First, the long walls appear to have bowed outward. Combined with the bowing of the roof and the gaping and sagging of the ceiling boards on the interior, this suggests that the roof trusses are spreading (due to the load of the slate roof above) and exerting lateral pressure on the walls. The second major issue is termite infestation. Although the building is now being treated for termites, they have done significant damage to some of the wood in the building, and there may be other, hidden damage. Finally, the building exhibits some other issues typical of older buildings such as the lack of a rainwater conduction system (which created the damp environment hospitable to the termites) and inappropriate repointing over the years.

The Fairfield Presbyterian congregation dates back to the seventeenth century. New Englanders, primarily from Connecticut, began to settle in the area in the 1680s, variously calling their new community Fairfield or the town of that name in Connecticut, or New England Town (not to be confused with a contemporary “New England Town” in Cape May County). The Presbyterians later grew in numbers strong enough to establish churches in Greenwich, Deerfield, and Bridgeton. The Fairfield congregation is among the oldest in the Presbyterian Church of America. According to some sources, the Connecticut settlers brought their pastor with them to New Jersey, enabling them to move forward with the early establishment of their congregation.

The second church constructed by the congregation was erected between 1773 and 1775 at a location about a mile east of the first building. This second building was reportedly constructed with the form of a New England meetinghouse and was of frame construction with shingled sides. A graveyard still marks this site. By 1775 the frame church had been deemed unsafe, and it was determined that a new church was required to address the needs of the growing congregation. The building was promptly taken down. The pulpit and benches were saved, however, and were used for outdoor services. It was decided that the new church would be built not on the same ground as the frame church, but instead on a lot along the main road running through the center of Fairfield Township, which the congregation bought in May 1775. It is on this lot that the present church stands.

Preparations for construction of a new church were interrupted by the Revolutionary War, however, preventing construction from moving forward. According to one source, material that had been delivered for the construction of the building was seized by British forces and used in the construction of a wharf at Coasney Bridge (Bridgeton).

The long-delayed construction finally began on May 1, 1780, after local skirmishes related to the War of Independence had subsided. To shoulder the construction, a subscription paper was circulated, asking for funds, labor, materials, or goods that could be sold. Beside cash, salable contributions included cattle, sheep, geese, and feathers! Some men worked out their subscriptions. According to historical sources, local ironstone was quarried and brought to the site, along with lumber – reportedly 189 loads of stone and 800 board feet of lumber. Plaster was made when lime and other ingredients were mixed at the site and left to season until needed. The initial construction went quickly, with the foundations and wall being constructed and the roof being framed by mid-June of 1780.

By the following spring, the interior had been completed. The windows are Wistar glass, made at Caspar Wistar’s factory in Alloway (Salem County), New Jersey. He was the first successful, long-term glazemaker in North America.

The first sermon in the building was preached by pastor William Hollingshead in the unfinished church on September 7, 1780. The church was incorporated on August 4, 1783. By 1816, the church had purchased additional adjacent plots of land to expand the current church and graveyard plot.

The church was used by the congregation until 1850, when the fourth and final church building was constructed on a site near the center of Fairton village. Although the congregation no longer uses the earlier building for regular worship services, the Old Stone Church has continued to be maintained and used at least once a year by the congregation.

There also have been minor reconfigurations of the pews to accommodate different needs. These alterations may have included moving some of the first floor pews around, changing the configuration of the benches along the walls of the balcony, and removing the doors to the corner box pews on the balcony. Differences in the railings around the top of the northwest stairwell opening also suggest that one section may be older than the other. The only other alterations noted were the possible redirection of the lower run of the pulpit stairs, the addition of the box pew in front of the pulpit, and the alteration of the railing of that box pew over time. It appears that the lower run of the stairs may once have turned east at its midpoint to run down along the front of the pulpit. The paneling on the box pew is different from that on the pews, suggesting together with the former stair location) that it may be a later alteration. The railing of the box pew apparently was raised on a balustrade at one point, but has since been lowered and capped with a replacement top rail.

Over the years, the wood on the interior of the building has been painted approximately four times. The interior generally appears to always have been white, with the possible exception of the lower portions of the columns supporting the balcony, which may have been painted different colors at different times due to their vulnerability to marks and nicks that would make them appear dirty if white. The only other color noted is the brown used along the tops of the pews and along the railings.

In recent years, a woman named Helen Bailey included a bequest in her will intended to serve as seed money for the restoration and preservation of the building. With a portion of the available funding, some repainting and repainting has been undertaken on the exterior shutters are also twentieth century in origin. On the interior, the wood elements damaged by termite infestation have been replaced, including some wainscoting, the lower run of the northeast staircase, and most areas of wood flooring beneath the pews. The brick floor in the aisles has been relaid to create a level surface. Vertical boards have also been installed on the interior side of the original doors for additional strength. Due to this alteration, as well as to deterioration issues, the door frames have been altered. Alterations to at least one of the window frames on the interior at the first floor level was noted, again most likely made in the course of necessary repairs.

Margaret Westfield

1 The essay above, with minor edits, originally appeared in “Fairfield Presbyterian Old Stone Church Preservation Plan by Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants, January 2003.”


3 Historic American Buildings Survey, “Fairfield
Following the War of 1812, America’s commercial ambition, and its quest to industrialize, rested largely on the nation’s capacity to encourage and develop a vigorous coastal trade; in short, a shipping economy that moved commodities, particularly in bulk, between the country’s ports. Federal policy makers advanced these aims with passage of the Navigation Act of 1817, which limited participation in the coastal trade – sometimes referred to as the “coastwise trade” or “coasting trade” – to American-flagged vessels. This practice, known as “cabotage,” was an exclusionary policy designed to protect American shippers from cheap foreign competition and encourage more robust waterborne trade throughout the new nation. Through this policy, the country’s coastal trade prospered, both for those who operated and built the vessels it used. With these inducements in place, America’s coastwise fleet surpassed the number of vessels used in the country’s foreign trade.1

The ascendancy of Mauricetown (locally pronounced “Morristown”) as a maritime community began amidst these larger developments, and it was arguably the first of New Jersey’s Delaware Bay locales to be so fully vested in America’s newly emerging waterborne economy. Although sparsely settled in 1730, and gridded and platted by 1818, it was not until the mid-19th century that Mauricetown took shape as a vibrant village community dedicated to the coastal trade, shipbuilding, oystering, timber exports, agriculture, and canning. Mauricetown’s earliest settlers had ample experience using shallops (light sailboats used mainly for coastal fishing) to ship timber products and other goods to Philadelphia during both the Colonial and Early National eras. Experienced in working the water, Mauricetown’s residents now took advantage of the country’s newly incentivized maritime economy and began building schooner-
Captain Alonzo Bacon

Quaker city, quite partial to our white house, take lessons on nullification at Charleston, fill hustling at Savannah, step the gentleman, New Orleans, and become free and easy in the Harbors of the Lone Star.4

Environmental factors and natural resources drove maritime activity along the bayshore, but few accounts exist or explain, in more personal terms, one’s motivation for entering the coastwise trade, or why the Mauricetown vicinity encouraged this occupational choice. Alonzo Bacon’s memoirs are among those that shed light on these matters. A longtime town resident whose house sat on high ground overlooking the Maurice River, Bacon was working on coastal schooners as early as age fourteen, and was a captain or master at twenty-four. Recounting the start of his thirty-five years at sea, he stated: “The occupations open to a boy, in which no capital was necessary, in any of the towns or villages in southern New Jersey were oystering, seafaring or farming. I chose the seafaring life as being one by which, with determination to put forth my very best efforts, success would be achieved, and a more remunerative occupation obtained.”5

Bacon’s recollections not only placed Mauricetown at the center of the bayshore’s profitable coastal trade, but also described how the village’s defining enterprise relied on a network of participants from the adjacent bayshore communities of Dorchester, Leesburg, Heislerville, Dividing Creek, Newport, Cedarville, Fairton, Bridgeton, and Millville in Cumberland County, and Dennisville and Goshen in Cape May County. Sustained by both local source of maritime skill, ranging from competent crew to the builders and repairs of vessels, Mauricetown’s coastwise traders moved such cargos as coal, lumber, sand, brick, stone, barrel staves, and phosphate rock, servicing the Philadelphia metropolitan area and ports all along the Atlantic Seaboard and Gulf of Mexico.6

Not surmising, given his station in the profession, Bacon celebrated the sea captain’s navigational skill, and his wider domain as “master in all things with none to say him nay, providing the vessel paid good dividends,” and who “chose the port of trade, negotiated for freight, employed and discharged the crew and took care of all needful repairs and expenditures.” Emphasizing that these “were the days of co-partnership or sailing on shares,” where captain and crew received a percentage of the shipping revenues and the rest was distributed among shareholders who owed fractional interests in the vessel (1/8, 1/16, 1/32), he highlighted how those from varying social and economic backgrounds might gain a reasonable measure of financial advancement through their participation in the coastal trade. When the area’s coastal traders achieved sufficient financial security or could no longer endure the rigors of life at sea, they typically turned their attention to agriculture or business pursuits ashore, and their biographies often make particular mention of when they re-orientered their lives to “terra firma.”7 Bacon, like others who plied the waters in coastal schooners, left the seafaring life to pursue business interests, and in the 1890s opened a ship chandlery that serviced the bay’s burgeoning oyster industry. He eventually became a Division Superintendent for the New Jersey State Oyster Commission. By this time, the area’s role in the coastal trade was in decline, and those who had created its schooners were following suit and finding employment either in the oyster industry or in the area’s shipyards – a logical transition given their ship handling skills and broader experience in sustaining maritime-related work. In his twilight years, Bacon reflected on how changes in ship size, steam technology, and immigration concern to the village during the second half of the 19th century, and ended Mauricetown’s run in preparing mariners for work on coastal schooners. He lamented that “With larger crews made up of all nationalities, largely Scandinavians, the home crews of young Americans disappeared and Southern New Jersey soon ceased to be the nursery of the coasting Merchant Marine.”8

While many of 19th-century Mauricetown’s residents made their living from coastal trade, shipbuilding was also vital to the community’s economic development. Once located near fine timber that was nearing exhaustion by the end of the 19th century, Mauricetown benefitted from its close proximity to two vessel-building communities directly across from it on the Maurice River – Dorchester and Leesburg. By the middle to late 19th century, it operated amidst a closely linked occupational network that included shipyards in Cumberland and Cape May counties, some in adjacent Atlantic County, and some in the Philadelphia/Camden area. Henry Hall, in his important 1882 survey of U.S. shipbuilding, described “the prosperity of the village (Mauricetown), . . . dependant on building [vessels] and navigation [coastwise trade]. There are 50 or 60 sea captains living in the place, and almost everybody owns shares in vessels.9 Referring to the locales and how their activities were deeply bound to Philadelphia’s economic orbit, he added that “building parties at the Maurice River” has been active for 50 years, the calculation being to launch a schooner or a barkentine from the yard of each…every year.”10

As schooner construction intensified to meet the rising needs of the region’s participation in the coastal trade and oyster industry, Mauricetown’s influence as a crucible for cultivating skilled shipwrights grew, as did its role in facilitating their entry into the area’s network of vessel building artisans. The work of Mauricetown’s shipbuilders, and that of their cohort throughout bayshore communities, fueled the imagination, never ceasing to engender appreciative gazes and anticipation from the people – both locals and outsiders – who encountered the vessel building process while passing through the area. Schooners built in Mauricetown became beacons of the region’s health and hope, and local newspaper reports frequently captured this sentiment, scrutinizing shipyard operations and the work of the 19th century, and ended Mauricetown’s run in preparing mariners for work on coastal schooners.

Society here is somewhat different from other inland towns, as pertaining to the peculiarity of the whole Atlantic border; from the cute home-made Yankee, to the still Aristocratic Southerner, learning Temporance from the Maine boys (at Portland), aping the sharp yes or no, of the Bostonians… get the cut of their coat from the
whether it culminated in the launching of a new vessel or started with a pre-existing vessel being hauled out on a marine railway for repairs, gave shipbuilding a cloak of technological innovation, and, thereby, promised a community pinning some of its loftiest aspirations on the coastal trade and modern oyster fishery.

Imbued with regionally defined expectations, Mauricetown took its place in shipbuilding’s occupational culture, and a one-time resident, Lehman Blew, epitomized how a mix of family/social networks, skill and craftsmanship, established shipyard sites, and client relations shaped one’s participation in it. Blew, who started his working life in Bridgeton (on the Cohansey River), was building vessels on the Maurice River in the 1850s as an individual shipyard operator in Mauricetown and under the partnership of Blew and Conron in Dorchester. His move to the Maurice River did not lessen his connection to Bridgeton, and, if anything, was seen as an indicator of the geographic mobility and occupational options exercised within Cumberland County’s shipbuilding network. When William Rice, Sr. of Bridgeton, who in the 1850s was embarking on his own shipbuilding career, sent his sons J. Lenhart Rice and William Rice, Jr. to Mauricetown to work in its shipyards, then, Joseph W. Vanaman and Edward C. Vanaman’s connections to William Blew’s move, anticipated opportunities to operate effectively as a sub-contracting group in either the Blew and Phillips yard or the Rice Brothers and Company yard established in 1865. David Vanaman reportedly functioning in this capacity for a portion of work when Blew and Phillips built the three-masted coastal schooner Elizabeth Edwards in 1869.10

That a group of Vanamans moved to Bridgeton did not signal the end of the family’s shipbuilding influence in Mauricetown. By the late 1860s/early 1870s, a third generation of Vanaman was assuming leadership of the village’s shipbuilding tradition. With their uncle and cousins having departed, New Jersey’s shipbuilding site, continue to exert significant influence in shaping the community’s collective memory and the connectivity it forges with the Maurice River and Delaware Bay.

For the young Rice brothers, Blew’s entrepreneurial temperament showed them how they might leverage their shipbuilding trade with other business opportunities. When not building vessels for clients, Blew was commanding sloops and schooners to points along the Delaware Bay and River and larger coastal schooners bound for east coast ports and the West Indies. Attracted by the prospect of building vessels in an urban setting, Blew arrived back in Bridgeton not only with his young understudy to accommodate the village’s enterprises, many residents went a step further and memorialized their economic and social standing through the most fashionable architectural designs of the middle to late 19th century. Architectural expression of Mauricetown’s rise as a maritime community is evident along Front Street – facing the Maurice River – where the residences of sea captains and the busy activity of shipyards unabashedly conveyed the village’s niche in the local, regional, and national economy. The housing stock and property holdings of Mauritontown residents, such as Edward Compton, Isaac Peterson, Joseph Vanaman, Maurice Godfrey, Henry Moore, Asa Haley, David Haley, Samuel W. Sharp, and Jonathan Shropshire, reveal that seafaring and shipbuilding were generally entrenched in the village’s 19th- and early 20th-century life. These surviving residences, along with the 当前页面的文档内容结束。
The Butcher House, believed to have been constructed in 1799, is a 2½-story dwelling situated on a five-acre lot across from the intersection of Highland (High) and Second streets. It is one of only two extant brick dwellings in Mauricetown, and as a Federal-style house it stands out among its Victorian brethren. In 1803, George Elkinton built a wharf in Mauricetown, which was then known as Mattox Landing. He is believed to have been the original builder of this brick house. Upon his death in 1820, he willed the property to his wife Beulah Wills Elkinton. In 1846, the Elkintons’ nephew deeded the land to a relative, Dr. Joseph Butcher, and his wife, Harriett Elkinton Butcher, who was a niece of George Elkinton. Thus began a long history of the Butcher family in Mauricetown, and they occupied this house for more than a half-century.

In a town known for its mariners in the nineteenth century, the Butcher House is best known for its physicians. The family progenitor, Dr. Joseph Butcher, himself first a Quaker and then a Methodist, was a physician, and at times a tailor, a merchant, a farmer and a postman. He was active in Mauricetown politics and as a member of the Odd Fellows fraternal organization. Of his many children and grandchildren, five became doctors either in Mauricetown or in surrounding towns such as Haleysville and Port Norris.

The house faces south, is three bays wide, and features a gabled rear wing. An early 20th-century photograph shows a frame addition that has since been removed, built onto the cross gable wing.
Upon entering the dwelling, visitors are greeted by a beautiful open stairwell. During the Butcher’s stay (1846-1901) the house acted as both home and doctor’s office. Both Dr. Joseph Butcher (1791-1864) and his son, Dr. Samuel Butcher (1839-1901), are believed to have practiced medicine from the home. A probate inventory taken at the time of Dr. Samuel Butcher’s death in 1901 indicates that medical supplies were kept in both the “Front Room Downstairs” and “Office Room.” In these two rooms, across from the stairway, the physicians would have received and examined patients. As the floor plan shows, the dwelling was constructed as a two-thirds, side-passage, double pile house with a rear wing. At one point in time, the rear wing contained stairs leading up to the second floor, as evidenced on the north wall. While other floors in the house indicate multiple periods of evolution, the cellar reveals some of the original construction. Architectural elements include hand hewn summer beams, carpenter’s marks, and the mortise and tenon assembly of three original fireplace support arches.

Virginia Davidowski

4 Last Will and Testament of George Elkinton, 1 October 1820, probated 13 November 1820, Cumberland Co., New Jersey, Will Book 1820, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, NJ.
5 Deed of Sale from George Elkinton Wills to Joseph Butcher, 19 May 1846, Cumberland County, New Jersey Deed Book 59, p. 8. Microfilm. New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, NJ.
6 A Historical Map of Mauricetown, dated 1862, shows Dr. Joseph Butcher at the residence and in the business directory (listed as “physician”). His brother, Dr. Charles Butcher, is also listed as a physician, who at the time lived in the residence next door. Another Historical Map of Mauricetown, dated 1876, shows that Dr. Samuel Butcher then occupied the residence, up until his death in 1901.
7 Last Will and Testament of Dr. Samuel Butcher, probated 15 November 1901, Cumberland Co., New Jersey, Will Book F, Page 630, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, NJ.

The David Compton House was one of the first homes built in the newly improved village of Mauricetown, making the timing of its construction and its placement significant. Compton had the earliest portion of this five-bay Federal-style house erected about 1818. Just a few years before, investors had laid out a grid of streets and rectangular building lots to create the village. The house overlooked the schooner landing at the bottom of the hill, but it was also strategically placed on the corner of an important crossroads. Compton’s location adjacent to High Street, the old main road to Port Norris, afforded plenty of exposure for his store (no longer extant) at the rear of the property. But Compton also situated his house to face Front Street, the promising new main street on the Mauricetown waterfront.

The evolution of the house is complex, displaying evidence of at least five building periods. The main block was originally a three-bay dwelling, including the current stair hall and north parlor – the only rooms with a cellar underneath. The house was expanded to a center hall plan around 1840 through the addition of the south parlor. A Greek Revival porch, which spans the center three bays, was likely added at the same time. An interesting adaptation is the cutout in the porch ceiling to accommodate the full height of the original fanlight above the entrance door. When David Compton passed away in 1838 his assets totaled $22,638, including a store on the property, several sailing vessels, a mill in the nearby village of Buckshutem, and significant grain and timber. His wealth supported a household of 14 people, including 4 adults, according to the 1830 census. The Compton house also has a two-story rear ell, for which the construction and documentary evidence is less clear. One theory is that the middle portion of the ell was a one-story kitchen built at the same time as the more finished original house, and the ell was later expanded upward.
The Edward Compton House is currently home to the Mauricetown Historical Society. Edward Compton bought a vacant lot here from his parents in 1862, and two Mauricetown carpenters, Griffith Pichard and Samuel Cobb, built the house in 1864. The house is a vernacular effort in the Italianate style, featuring a low-pitched roof, and porches on the façade and side with eight-sided Tuscan columns supporting a heavily bracketed cornice. The deeply paneled double-leaf front doors are very characteristic of the Italianate style, as are the long windows opening onto the front porch. A cast iron and wirework fence remains in the front lawn as it appeared in a historic photo of the property likely taken in the late 19th century. The southern enclosed porch once led to a cookhouse. Parts of the original cookhouse foundation remain. For interpretive purposes, the Historical Society constructed a cookhouse in the rear yard, basing its appearance on historic photographs and the measurements of the old foundation.

The choice of architectural style and its high quality execution – including manufactured items like the fence purchased from beyond the immediate area – is testament to the fact that in the mid-19th century, Mauricetown was a bustling port town with strong connections to the larger world.

Although Edward Compton died from tuberculosis in 1870, the house remained in the family. It belonged to Elizabeth Compton until 1887. The house then passed through a series of owners. One local resident remembered the house having been divided into two apartments during the period 1934 to 1964. In subsequent years, much of the outer siding and decorative elements deteriorated or rotted away, while the interior was covered with modern materials and the plumbing and crawl space suffered from severe sewage back-ups.

The Mauricetown Historical Society acquired the property in 1984, and since then has worked to restore and interpret the house.

Emily Miller
This house was built between 1853 and 1859 for James Compton, a local merchant. A store already stood on a portion of the then-larger property (where the Masonic lodge stands today) to the south. James Compton arranged for his home to facilitate his business, providing for a side entrance with access to a sitting room off the kitchen, which he used as his office. When he died in 1859, the lot contained many outbuildings, including a milk house and shed. Neither the store nor these outbuildings survive.

The James Compton house continues to charm visitors and owners alike. It is a three-bay, double pile building with a covered front porch and a center hall plan. From the entry hall, a room that was a sitting room is found to the left and a parlor is situated to the right. A staircase in the center leads to the second story; a passage beside the stair leads to the kitchen. The entry hall and the parlor both feature ornate ceiling medallions. Window and door millwork is heavily molded.

While guests would have entered through the very formal stylized front section, the family would have instead entered through the less formal side porch into the kitchen. The kitchen also offered the family and possibly servants a way to the second floor, without intruding into the formal part of the house, by means of a second enclosed winder stair. The two back rooms are less formal, as seen through their simpler moldings, echoed by the five bedrooms on the second floor.

The cellar extends the entire length of the house. Divided into three rooms, two in the front and one that runs the length of the back, the front two rooms have plaster over the stone foundation.

Hannah Blad
Constructed circa 1840, the Abraham and Ann Hoy House is a small, 1½-story house with a principal first-floor room and a second first-floor room within a one-and-a-half-story kitchen lean-to. Originally located on Buckshutem Road, just north of the Mauricetown Bypass (County Route 649), it was moved to its current location behind the Edward Compton House in 2005 after being purchased by the Mauricetown Historical Society. Abraham E. Hoy and his wife Ann owned the house at the time of Abraham’s death in 1866. A probate inventory taken for the property describes the house concisely, noting a “kitchen,” “room,” and “upstairs.”

The Hoy House represents a very common residential form found in towns throughout South Jersey. It is characterized by a main block that consists of a single room on the first floor topped by two rooms on the second. A central door flanked by a window on either side is another notable characteristic. These houses routinely display a lack of ornament. It is typical for such a house to have a “laterally placed shed-roofed addition,”2 which is the case here. The shed kitchen is located to the south of the main block and features an open cooking hearth and a separate door for entrance into the space. While it was common for these houses to be expanded with additions, it appears that the shed kitchen ordinarily was built concurrently. Such, evidently, was the case here.

Following the move into Mauricetown, the Hoy House underwent extensive restoration. While most of the existing timber framing elements are now covered with plaster, the gable ends

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1 Deed of Sale, James W. Compton and Ann H Compton to Seth Bowen and Ruth Bowen, June 29, 1859, Cumberland County Deeds, Book 94, page 201, Cumberland County Clerk’s Office, Bridgeton, NJ.
2 James Compton Inventory, November 10, 1859, Probate Inventory, Book D, page 385, Cumberland County Surrogate’s Office, Bridgeton, NJ.
of the half story above the shed kitchen feature what appear to be original timbers. During the restoration, the removal of interior plaster revealed a framing practice that may descend from Dutch-American housebuilding methods: the use of H-bents. In this form of structural logic, each floor joist joins to two posts in opposing walls, forming an “H” shaped vertical frame, sometimes referred to as an “anchor bent,” that is repeated at regular intervals. The presence of this framing practice – utterly commonplace in Dutch-settled areas of northern and central New Jersey – may be locally unusual in Cumberland County, but it may be that too few small 1½-story frame houses in southern New Jersey have yet been examined, or survive, for a sound generalization. However, the handful of examples of this house-type found in southern New Jersey occur from the Delaware River to the Atlantic coast. The Hoy house is one of three similarly-framed houses known to have stood in Mauricetown, but the only one to survive.

Robert W. Craig, Alexandra M. Tarantino

2 Ibid
4 Ibid, 48. In addition to the ones cited by Sheridan in Salem and Cumberland Counties, Berkey has found examples in Cape May County.

Mauricetown Methodist Episcopal Church

The original Mauricetown Methodist Church was built in 1842 and functioned as the town’s sole place of worship for almost forty years. In 1880, it was sold and moved from its location to make room for a new structure on the site. The moved building was re-used as the town’s Union Hall but was destroyed by fire in 1932.

The current church was built in 1880 for $6,160. The contract for its construction was awarded to a local builder, Griffith Prichard. Prichard’s design followed the basic principles of the popular Wren-Gibbs style church and variations of this design can be seen throughout Cumberland County. The rectangular, two-story, symmetrical structure is 38’ by 65’ and contains a tower that projects from the front wall. The town’s prosperity enabled the construction of a belfry and 125-foot spire. The spire served as a landmark to ships navigating the Maurice River.

Regrettably, the steeple was struck by lightening in 1907, 1937, and again in 1970. After the second costly repair, some church members suggested that the steeple be removed to avoid further damage. The proposal to eliminate the church steeple was adamantly opposed by a prominent town resident, Captain Alonzo Bacon. Captain Bacon successfully argued the steeple was a part of the town’s seafaring history and could not be lost. In 1968, a memorial fund for the preservation of the steeple was established in the name of Alonzo and Anna Bacon.

In 1915, the church appointed a committee to discuss the addition of stained glass windows and in 1921 the original double hung windows were replaced. The local chapter of The King’s Daughters, a Christian charitable organization, promoted the installation of the memorial windows and donated the large center window, “Annunciation.” A poem located at the Mauricetown Historical Society chronicles how each woman raised her share of the required funding. The three windows in the front of the church, including the Annunciation, are reproductions. In the summer of 2010 the original windows were sent to a stained glass studio in Minnesota for restoration work. During the trip the trailer containing the windows was stolen. The studio recreated the windows from photographs.

The Mariners Window, a painted stained glass memorial window, contains the names of 18 sea captains and 4 mates from Mauricetown who were lost at sea. Captain Alonzo Bacon, the last active captain in Mauricetown, dedicated the memorial window. The remaining windows in the sanctuary were dedicated to well-known individuals with close ties to the shipping community.

There have been renovations to the church over the years. Cracking interior plasterwork was covered with decorative metal. When the church was renovated in the 1960s exterior changes included aluminum siding, painting, and a new roof. The church balcony was closed during the renovation and remains used only for storage.

Corinne Hofmann
Although altered significantly over the past century, the Captain Isaac Peterson House provides a wonderful glimpse into Mauricetown's heyday. Built for sea captain Isaac Peterson between 1864 and 1868, the home's ornate detailing and simple plan reflect both the wealth and practicality that went into its construction.1

The house is a three-bay, two-story, frame house in the Italianate style, crowned with a small cupola or lantern. The traditional three-bay house is transformed to the cubical form common among Italianate homes by its proportions and a low pitch roof, which reads as flat from the street. The ornate brackets at the roofline and the tall front windows opening onto the porch further add to the stylistic identification. The covered porch features a standing seam metal roof, with sweeping eaves and a painted finish that suggests a tent or awning. An undated photograph, in which Captain Peterson is pictured, shows that the porch was historically decorated with detailed ironwork.2 The first floor has a side-hall plan, and a small family room, once a sitting porch, is situated behind the entry hall. Although that space has been closed in, it originally served as a side entrance to the house.

Many interior details still remain. The parlor ceiling exhibits original plaster decoration, and the dining room ceiling features wood moldings. A marble mantelpiece in the parlor dates from the Peterson era, with penciled notation on the soffit reading “I. Peterson” and “Maurice Town.” The hall’s stair rail, baseboards, door moldings, and staircase decoration are also original, and have been re-finished and re-grained to reflect their historic appearance. The house is almost identical in plan and similar in detail to the Edward Compton House. It is believed that Samuel Cobb, a local builder, oversaw the construction of both houses.

Captain Peterson’s widow sold the property in 1914.3 Several owners of the house.4 The Peterson House has undergone changes of use, and of design details, over time. During the Depression, the owners operated a delicatessen out of the formal parlor. Current owners Bob and Judy Moore have worked hard to restore the house to ensure its continued livability and historical legacy. Since purchasing the Captain Peterson House in 1971, the Moores have re-built and installed a cupola similar to the one seen in a 1910 postcard photograph, and made countless other alterations and renovations based on historic evidence.5 Although some projects have included moving walls, attaching vinyl siding, and replacing windows, the Isaac Peterson House offers an excellent example of the way old houses can be modernized while still reflecting their historic appearance.

Gabrielle Vicari

1 Deed of Sale, Seth Bowen to Isaac Peterson and wife, Cumberland County Deeds, Book CK, page 332. Cumberland County Clerk’s Office, Bridgeton, NJ.
2 Captain Isaac Peterson and neighbors on front porch. Photograph. Collection of Robert and Judith Moore.
3 Deed of Sale, Sarah Peterson to Benjamin and Gertrude Downs, Cumberland County Deeds, Book 350, page 114. 1900 United States Census, Census Place: Commercial, Cumberland, New Jersey; Roll: 961; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 0126; FHL microfilm: 1240961; 1910 United States Census, Census Place: Commercial, Cumberland, New Jersey; Roll: T126; Page: 27B; Enumeration District: 14; Image: 390.0; FHL microfilm: 2341067.
4 1914 United States Census, Census Place: Commercial, Cumberland, New Jersey; Roll: 1236; Page: 39B; Enumeration District: 0126; FHL microfilm: 1240961; 1920 United States Census, Census Place: Commercial, Cumberland, New Jersey; Roll: T326; Page: 278; Enumeration District: 14; Image: 390.0; FHL microfilm: 2341067.

Walter Bateman, a mariner, and his son Frank, a producer in the oyster industry, were subsequent owners of the house.6

The Captain Isaac Peterson House
Built about 1860, the Seth Sharp House is a four-bay, 2 ½-story house influenced by the Gothic Revival style, situated along the scenic Maurice River. The home has an abundance of bracketing, a cross gable with a pointed-arch window, and two ornate, covered porches that display rather more scroll-sawn tracery on the porch posts than an affinity with the Gothic Revival requires. The relatively uniform exterior detailing masks a complex history of alterations and adaptations. Like others on Front Street, the Sharp House was repeatedly altered to reflect its owners’ financial circumstances.

The Seth Sharp House was built between 1842 and 1860. Sharp bought the land from James Resley in the former year, and is known from the census to have been living in 1860 in a dwelling on the property. Sometime before 1862, the house was converted into a double house, likely because Sharp suffered financial reverses. William Compton owned the northern portion of the building and, residing elsewhere, used it as a store. The southern portion was owned by Sharp who sold his half of the building and property to Samuel Mickle in 1862. The deed describes the unusual property boundary, “[t]he said line passing directly through the center of the garden house and also the center of the well, and precisely through the dwelling house where the story and a half joins on to the two story part.” This split ownership is shown on the 1876 Historical Atlas of Cumberland County and through physical evidence in the home today on the second story where a former exterior wall has been enclosed to create a closet. This wall would have marked the division where Compton’s two-story portion of the house met Mickle’s portion.

By 1897 Samuel Mickle had acquired the other half of the house from Compton along with a lot to the south of the house where he operated a shoe store. After Mickle acquired the entirety of the house, he was likely responsible for the interior re-configuration reflected in the house today. Once again using the house as a single family home, he added a second story to the south end, added a cross gable to the attic, and reconfigured the second story circulation pattern to make both halves of the upstairs accessible. It is likely that Mickle also updated the exterior of the house to read as one cohesive dwelling with Gothic Revival details. In the years following the Great Depression and up until the 1970s, the building was converted once again into a multiple-family dwelling and mixed-use commercial space. The building was subsequently renovated in the 1980s and then again in 2003, when the current homeowners Joe and Kim LaCroce again converted it back into a single-family home. They added a rear wing to the house, where two separate porches had been, and they created an open circulation in the first floor. The Seth Sharp house highlights the versatility of vernacular architecture, the very adaptability of this house enabling it to remain as an artifact of Mauricetown history.

Candice Myruski

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1 1860 United States Census, Census Place: Downe, Cumberland, NJ; Roll: M653_687; Page: 266; Image: 270; Family History Library Film: 803687. Sharp died in debt and his property was sold at auction as indicated in a deed transaction in 1867 between his executor and Samuel Mickle. See Cumberland County Deeds, Book 113, p.161, Cumberland County Clerk’s Office, Bridgeton, NJ.
2 Deed of Sale from Seth Sharp to Samuel Mickle, 11 October, 1862, Cumberland County Deeds, Book 99, p.132.
4 Deed of Sale, Seth Bowens to Samuel Mickle, Cumberland County Deeds, Book 137, p.1439.
5 Interview with current homeowners Joe and Kim LaCroce.
This modest dwelling, tucked behind the canopy of a large hybrid poplar tree on Stable Lane, provides an aesthetic contrast to the elaborate Federal, Italianate, and Gothic Revival homes lining nearby streets. Although during the decades of Mauricetown’s prosperity the most fashionable houses were built along Front and High streets, smaller, relatively unadorned dwellings began to appear on Stable Lane and Noble Street, typically inhabited by seamen, shipyard workers, and others who engaged in support roles within the local economy.2

1211 Stable Lane is representative of them. Constructed by about 1880, the two-story, two-bay dwelling presents a façade set back nearly fifteen feet from the street. The building is thirty-five feet deep, while the façade is less than thirteen feet wide. The front entrance opens directly into a small living room. The kitchen follows, in line, and then a rear screened porch. A narrow winder stair from the kitchen leads to an open space on the second floor, with two bead-board closets and a plastered chimney stack. This room is sandwiched between a modern bedroom directly above the screened porch and a bathroom above the living room.

Early in the house’s history, one Martha Ireland operated a millinery shop within. Evidence of this commercial use is visible in the front display window that visually dominates the narrow façade. The widowed Ireland purchased the home from Charles P. Bacon in 1883. Behind a frame exterior front door, beautiful curvilinear molding decorates the inner door that opens into the living room. Other than the door and commercial window, the house’s finishes are uniformly plain.

In 1937, the house at 1211 Stable Lane was inherited by a woman who never lived there.3 As a result, during the fifty-year span between 1937 and 1987, few changes were made and the house remained largely intact. In the late 1980s, the structure was restored, modernized, and operated as a bed and breakfast for several years. The house is again a private home.

Laura Proctor

2 Ibid.
3 Deed of Sale, Lydia A. Harris to Carrie L. Harris, 16 October 1937, Cumberland County Deeds, Book 528, page 360. Cumberland County Clerk's Office, Bridgeton, NJ; Deed of Sale, Mary E. Janney to Thomas B., Jr. and Darlene Kates, 29 April 1987, Cumberland County Deeds, Book 1659, page 309.
Constructed about 1864, the Wills House retains its original floor plan and a significant amount of its original fabric despite three distinct construction periods. It is a five-bay, two-story house, with a symmetrical façade dominated by a covered porch, three bays wide, highlighted by Tuscan columns similar to those seen in the porches of the David Compton and Edward Compton houses. The window openings are filled with light six-over-six double-hung sashes. The gable end’s deeply recessed cornice and returns distinguish the roof lines of the original structure. This first section of the house features a center-hall plan with symmetrical parlors and a center staircase leading to a second floor of identical plan.

To the rear, the house exhibits additions from two periods. Several changes were made in the 1920s. The current dining room located in the northeast corner was the dwelling’s former kitchen. A change in floor elevation from the northwest parlor to the northeast dining room suggests that the kitchen was moved and attached to the house. Extended from the east elevation is a bathroom addition from 1928. The third period encompasses all of the alterations made by the current owners, Peggy and David Miletta. These include a modern porch on the east elevation and the construction of a modern kitchen where the original back porch once stood.

The former town stables, located on the east end of the property along Stable Lane, act as the Miletta’s antique shop, while the former chicken coop and former privy are used for storage.

Keisha M. Gonzalez
The Burcham farm is the last diked marsh farm on the Maurice River and the sole survivor of the many diked farms that once lined the waters of the Delaware Valley. Its marsh has been ditched, drained, diked and farmed continuously since 1814, and was probably diked before that, too. Though the dikes are not maintained by the same methods that they were in the nineteenth century, they still remain stout and strong, making this the only intact example of this historic landscape in the Delaware Bay region.

Historically, diked farming – “meadow banking” as it was known here – was critical to the development of the region, as it enabled the families who owned the edge of the uplands to drain their coastal meadows to grow crops without fertilizer and without having to clear dense forest land. During the colonial period, farmers relied on the intense fertility of these lands, and colonial laws record diking in New Jersey as early as 1711. During the nineteenth century, diked marshland became the corporate business of meadow banking companies. Commercial agriculture in South Jersey developed as a response to New Jersey’s diking law, and the Burcham property became a part of this large-scale effort. During that period, the banks or mud walls of the property were maintained by the local Millville Meadow Banking Company, a group of local marsh owners that shared the labor and expenses of maintaining the community’s dikes. At that time, both the Maurice and Cohansey rivers were diked for many miles. These diked or banked agricultural lands became a produce corridor for the Philadelphia market.

In 1865, the owners of the Burcham farm discovered a new and very profitable use for their diked marshland: brickmaking. Maintaining the dikes was just as essential for this new purpose, as the dikes provided the only access to the natural clay source on the farm. In 1867, Amaziah Burcham bought the property, establishing The
New Jersey Drain and Tile Works there. He began gradually equipping the farm with brickmaking equipment. During its heyday, the brickyard produced 15,000 bricks a week, making them a small producer, to be sure, but evidently a profitable one. The timing was auspicious for the new brickyard, for Millville's industrial economy was growing, and bricks were badly needed to build the new town. From 1865 until 1942, the Burcham farm functioned as an agricultural/industrial hybrid: a brickyard-farm. There, brick workers lived with the Burcham family. They cut wood to fire the brick kilns, maintained the dikes, and dug and tempered clay to manufacture bricks, usually seasonally, as a counterpoint to their farm chores. The workers and their families were fed by the produce of the farm, and they bought supplies from the Burcham store on the property.

Origin of the Burcham Farm
The first on-site owner of the Burcham farm was John Hopman, a third generation Swedish-American. Hopman bought 800 acres on the east side of the Maurice River, running from the Manetico to the Manumuskin in 1736. Born and raised in the Raccoon Creek settlement in Gloucester County, Hopman brought his large family to the area by 1736. He is remembered as the first man to dike or bank the river.

In 1788, New Jersey enacted a law enabling property owners to form meadow banking companies, small corporations for the purposes of constructing and maintaining banked meadows. In 1806, the legislature strengthened the power of meadow companies to enforce their agreements with neighboring property owners. The result, at least in the Maurice River, was a flowering of meadow companies. In greater Cumberland County, some very large diking projects were enthusiastically undertaken soon after the new law was adopted. One example of large-scale diking was undertaken in 1808 by the Maurice River Banking Company. They banked the east side of the river, beginning one mile north of Dorchester and running up to Mauricetown, encompassing 176.5 acres of land. The company also drained a second tract of 360 acres on the west side of the Maurice River the same year. In 1809, two men paid a great deal of money to embark on the east side of the Maurice from the mouth up the river for 15 miles, enclosing several thousand acres.

In 1823 Cumberland County farmers founded a county agricultural society “to promote agricultural improvements and encourage family manufactures.” An editorial in the local Bridgeton newspaper at that time encouraged farmers to spend less of their time lumbering and more time diking. The enthusiastic editor declared victory prematurely. It seems, writing, “It was manifest to every one present that the increasing agricultural spirit would very speedily supersede the toilsome and unprofitable business of cutting timber.”

The owners of farms on either side of the Burcham site were some of the original officers of the agricultural society. The earliest vice-president was John Lanning, Jr., the owner of the farm down river from the Burcham property, and the second was the owner of the farm upriver from the Burchams. There were fourteen other members. The society survived for three years, putting on annual county exhibitions and giving out prizes for the largest yields, before disbanding in 1827.

By 1826 the Learning family owned many acres of Millville marshland near the Burcham farm. In that year, they formed their own meadow company to guarantee the maintenance of this stretch of Maurice River meadows. This did not involve new banks, as the agreement makes clear that there are old banks on the property, banks “originally thrown by the Langstalls,” a local family who must have been leasing the land. Their agreement begins by citing Jersey Meadow Company law of 1788 and its 1806 supplement, then surveys the meadows covered by the agreement, four contiguous farms on the Maurice River known as the “Longstaff places.”

The Burcham’s Brick Factory
As the industrial town of Millville grew, the brick industry also grew, and the clay pits on the Burcham farm became valuable, as they were one of only two local sources of a prized type of clay called Cape May clay that was suitable for production of a variety of brick and tile products. By 1865, there was a commercial brickyard established on the site. The factory was built by John McClure, who purchased the property in 1865, and established a brick factory on the site soon afterward. Amaziah Burcham bought the farm and its factory two years later, and continued operations.

By the time of the 1870 census, his brother Joseph and two other brick makers were listed as living on the farm and working in the brick factory. Four of the eleven brick workers in Millville that year worked at Burcham’s. Amaziah had $1800 of capital invested, owned two brick press machines, employed 4 males over 16, paid $1,100 in wages, and ran the business for only 6 months of the year. He used $225 of clay, $90 of wood, and $480 of sand to produce 350,000 bricks that he sold for $3,500. He used the power of one horse in the process (probably to operate a small pug mill to temper the brick clay).

In 1880, Amaziah Burcham, then the only local brick maker listed in the manufacturing census, was still producing brick, and the census reveals that his business had grown. He employed twelve men, half of all the brickmaking workers in Millville, and he paid them $2,000 in annual wages. Burcham used wood and other materials worth $475 to produce 600,000 common bricks worth $3,600 and $200 of tiles. By 1880, he had installed steam power, one boiler and one engine. He had also installed some high tech equipment for the time, including a grinder and a brick press. He began to advertise, placing an ad in the Greenwich directory that year, selling hard, paving and pressed bricks, tile and drain pipe.

In 1904, the New Jersey state geologist wrote that the best Cape May clay in Cumberland county was found on either side of the Maurice river at Buckshutem: at A.E. Burcham’s brickyard on the east side of the river, and at Hess and Golder’s.
yard on the west. They were the only two brick makers listed in Millville. At Burcham’s, sandy clay was found under 15 inches of sand for at least nine feet in depth, but only the upper six feet were dug. The bottom layers were left to prevent the water of the creek from entering the pit. Burcham clay, according to the report, was a green brick mixture that required 27 percent water for tempering. Burcham was producing 3,000 red-burning bricks a day by the stiff mud process. (This revelation means that he had further upgraded his machinery to include exclusion of the tempered clay (no more horse-drawn pug mill), and wire-cutting of the raw bricks before firing.) Brickyard workers were seasonal employees, hired from Philadelphia employment agencies and offered accommodations from March to November. They lived in tenant houses on the property, “two of which were behind the wagon shed, and three more that were by the bend in the road.” Local history reports that Maud Jones Burcham, Amaizah’s daughter-in-law, who moved to the farm when she married Frank in 1908 baked 14 loaves of bread a day to feed the work force.

Amaizah’s son, Frank Burcham, took over the brickyard in 1913. Mary Samano Wheaton remembers that her father, John Samano, Sr., worked at the Burcham brickyard. Samano was a recent immigrant and a highly skilled mason, but did not speak English well enough to find masonry work when he first arrived. He and his family lived in one of the tenant houses on the Burcham property about 1920. Later Samano and his sons started a masonry business in Millville (Samano Brothers). They were responsible for many of the alterations done at the farmhouse.

By the 1930s, the brickyard operation was growing smaller, and the available clay was being exhausted. Frank cut back to only four workers. Maud still cooked lunch for the workers, but there were no boarders, for the workmen came by car. Gradually, it became a two-man operation. The power to run the brick machine and the clay car was converted from steam to an old Studebaker engine that Burcham hooked up to the machinery. Finally, the yard closed for good in 1942, and the men sought work in defense factories.

**Description of the Farm House**

The earliest identified farmhouse building on the Burcham property was a one-room, hall-plan structure that stood at the north end of the existing house. Its small size and high pitched roof suggest an 18th-century construction. The building was demolished in 1961, and the only evidence we have of its appearance are three photos taken that year. The photos show a 1½-story gable-end house with three bays, a center entrance and an interior-end chimney on the west side. The photos, which were taken from the north, show a north-facing entrance that faces the road. A corresponding south-side door faced the river.

Photographs also show the first addition to the original house, a small brick ell that still stands on the site. This addition is a 1½-story gable roof structure with a westerly facade. This change of orientation was probably a compromise between the two paths people took to the house and store: some came by river, others by road. The front door and windows of this facade can still be seen inside a shed-roofed structure that covers the entire width of the western facade. The door has two vertical panels at the bottom and four glass panes at the top. This would be appropriate for a 19th century house.

Clay Worker magazines that were found under the carpeting of this brick ell date in 1903 to 1904. They were probably laid during the 1907 renovation and enlargement of the house, as newspapers were commonly used as insulation in that period. If this brick ell was added to the early hall plan house in the late 19th century, then the early wood structure might have been used at that time. This might explain the plain doorframe, four-paneled door and simple window frames in six-over-six sash that are seen in the original house, as these are details that were typically used in mid-19th century building. The Burcham’s store may have been created by enclosing the porch space in front of the ell.

About 1907, the last major addition was added to the house. It consisted of a new southern front, a 2½-story brick, Gothic Revival building of the type that had been built all across the Delaware valley about 50 years earlier. It was a design inspired from the popular architectural pattern books of A.J. Downing or Calvert Vaux – a building with a high peaked gable roof. The brick walls of the basement kitchen were converted from steam to an old Studebaker engine that Burcham hooked up to the machinery. Brickyard workers were seasonal employees, hired from Philadelphia employment agencies and offered accommodations from March to November. They worked at the Burcham brickyard. Samano was a brickyard worker. Frank in 1908 baked 14 loaves of bread a day to feed the work force.

Though the exterior of the new building was a standard pattern book form, the interior was not. The plan of the house was haphazard, and adapted for multiple families and uses. The house was built without a principal façade, though its most elegant or dramatic side on the south elevation features a steeply pitched central gable and a raised porch across its entire width at the first floor level. But despite its dramatic features, the south facade has no entrance. It presents an elegant face to the river, but is not entered from that side. The actual entrance to the house is on the west side, through what was Frank and Maud’s kitchen. As in the earlier brick ell design, the west side was a convenient compromise entrance between the two directions from which people arrived at the property. Those who arrived from the road approached the north face of the building. Those who arrived by water, approached from the south.

At the time of its construction, the porch on the south side of the building wrapped around the full width of this west end with an entrance that was centered on the gable. This west end porch and the porch or store in front of the brick ell were both enclosed by a shed in the 19th century. A conservatory/kitchen wing and a two-story shed building were also attached to the east face of the building soon after the 1907 building was completed. The second floor of the shed was another bedroom used for unmarried workers. The brick walls of the basement kitchen still exist at the site, and the roof line of the glass conservatory and wood shed buildings can still be seen.

Patrick Bowers Ball

1 John was also known as Johannes Hopman or Hoffman.

2 Reacocon Creek is now known as Swedesboro, NJ.


5 The agreement is found in the papers of the settlement of Pennons Learning’s estate and in the Miscellaneous Book at Bridgeton. They agreed to “appoint a manager of said bank or banks in the same manner as directed in the second section of a supplement to an act entitled AN ACT TO ENABLE THE OWNERS OF TIDE SWAMP AND MARSHES TO IMPROVE THE SAME’ PASSED THE 27TH DAY OF NOVEMBER A.D. 1788 SUPPLEMENT PASSED THE 27TH DAY OF NOVEMBER A.D. 1806 REVOLUTIONARY LAWS F 5 29. The duties, fees and penalties of said manager shall be regulated by the second and third section of the aforementioned supplement and the expenses attending such duties shall be recoverable in any court where the same may be cognizable with costs from the person or persons whose duly it was to do and perform such repairs.”

6 The farms were named for the Langstall family, who are described in early deeds and in the 1819 meadow company agreement as the first builders of the banks – “old banks thrown by the Langstalls,” and other references. Presumably, the Langstalls were leasing the meadow from Aaron Learning at the time they were building banks along the Maurice.


8 The tenanted houses were wood frame, two story houses. Single men lived inside the family house in rooms that were in the second floor of the oldest section of the house.
Known during most of its years of operation as the Maurice River Lighthouse, the East Point Lighthouse was built in 1849 on a five-acre piece of marshy land just beyond the mouth of the Maurice River. The lighthouse was constructed upon a half-acre knoll or sand island known as Haystack Island. The location was later denoted on some maps as Bird Island, although it was never a true island, but rather a raised piece of ground amid an area of marsh.

Joshua Brick of Port Elizabeth sold the land to the federal government in April 1849 for $250. Congress had already appropriated funds for its construction, and the work proceeded with dispatch. Brick wrote to the Treasury Department just before the sale, requesting that he, himself, be awarded a contract to build the lighthouse. That letter prompted a hasty reply from Treasury official Stephen Pleasonton, who wrote that:

It is my practice to advertise for proposals to build all Light Houses by contract ... and to give the contract to the lowest bidder. I shall do so in the present case, so soon as you make a deed for the site and the Attorney General of the United States approves of the title, and as soon as I learn from Mr. Hicks whether the foundation will require piling or not. You will of course have an opportunity to put in proposals for doing the work.

Pleasonton directed another Treasury official to ...

cause the advertisement to be published in such paper in New Jersey as you may think best and also in a paper at Wilmington or Philadelphia as you may consider most advisable. You will accept the lowest offer and send me a list of all the offers, with 8 or 10 copies of your advertisement.
The Maurice River Lighthouse was described in a built with a full second story. The additional for a "reasonable sum," and the structure was Apparently the additional height could be added to the structure, required performance bond, and N. and S. Apparently, however, Ellis failed to post the law...altho it is evident the lowest bidder, Samuel Ellis, cannot accomplish the work for the Sum of 1975 Dollars, yet I do not consider...{the} oil-room. The first story is divided into two rooms and hall, with [a] stairway to second story, which is divided in the same way. There is a cellar under [the] whole house, which is wet in very high tides; it contains a cedar water-tank of a capacity of 700 gallons. The house is well supplied with closets, and was built by contract, in 1849. The brick fuel shed now standing on the site was built in 1900-1901. A new kitchen was added to the east end of the lighthouse sometime prior to 1905.

The plan of the Light-House for Maurice River is such as we have built at the entrance of Annapolis, in Maryland, and several other places, and will shew [show] a Light from 12 to 14 miles, sufficiently far to answer the purpose of all the navigation in and out of Maurice River. As you are very anxious however to have another story added to it – I will most willingly gratify you if the Messieurs Middleton will do it for a reasonable sum. I am very certain you did not state what they would ask to add another story to the building. You will be pleased to enquire of them what will be the lowest price they will ask to add another story 8 feet in the clear, and inform me, with as little delay as possible.

Apparent the additional height could be added for a "reasonable sum," and the structure was built with a full second story. The additional floor of living space allowed the lighthouse to be occupied by a lighthouse keeper and his family, and extended the range of the light itself.

The Maurice River Lighthouse was described in a government publication in 1876:

The light is exhibited from [the] lantern on top of the [brick] tower, and is 46 feet above ordinary sea level; it is of the 6th-order, fixed white, and is supplied with Franklin lamps. The dwelling is of brick, two stories high, and one-story kitchen adjoining east end, which is also used as [the] oil-room. The first story is divided into two rooms and hall, with [a] stairway to second story, which is divided in the same way. There is a cellar under [the] whole house, which is wet in very high tides; it contains a cedar water-tank of a capacity of 700 gallons. The house is well supplied with closets, and was built by contract, in 1849. The brick fuel shed now standing on the site was built in 1900-1901. A new kitchen was added to the east end of the lighthouse sometime prior to 1905.

A more detailed description was written on February 24, 1908, by draftsman Thomas J. Rout, Jr., who noted the lighthouse was white, with lead-colored trimmings, green shutters, and a black lantern. The woodwork was painted, the brickwork whitewashed, and the kitchen addition and octagonal lantern tower were built of frame construction. Other structures on the site described by Rout were a frame barn, a frame storehouse (9'6" by 13'6" in plan), a brick oil house (8' by 12' in plan), and a private boathouse (8' by 20'6" in plan). Rout also remarked that, as there was no well, water for drinking and domestic uses came "from the roof of light house and barn by downspouts to tanks." The quality was "not very good," and was "not ample in a dry season." The poor quality of the water had been noted earlier, by Commander Chauncy Thomas, Inspector, of the U.S. Navy. In a letter to the Light-House Board dated January 30, 1906, he recommended "the installation of a duplicate fresh water tank," giving the reasoning that "this station is reputed to be an unhealthy one, and this change will probably result in better health for the keeper and his family. Rain is the source of the water supply, and where but one tank is furnished there is no opportunity for it to properly purify itself."

The date on which the Maurice River Lighthouse was first lit is not known, but it would have been on or about September 10, 1849, when William W. Yarrington, the first keeper, was appointed, at an annual salary of $120 per annum. Just over two weeks later, on September 25, Yarrington was replaced by keeper Francis Elberson. Over the years, ten keepers and their families lived and served at the Maurice River Lighthouse; the last being keeper Linwood Spicer, who took his oath on December 12, 1905.

The Maurice River Lighthouse, like almost all of the isolated lighthouses along the marshy shores of the Delaware River and Bay in the early 1900s, was automated by converting the lantern and installing acetylene gas tanks and pipework, which would fuel the light day and night for a few weeks. As the tank ran low it had to be replaced. In 1908, just before the conversion, the lighthouse lens was a 5th-order Fresnel lens manufactured by Henny-Lepaute of Paris, with no date of manufacture given. A 9th-order funk tubular lamp was used, with one wick. At that time, the light was fixed red, with a narrow white sector marking the channel.

Once these light stations were automated, the U.S. Lighthouse Service no longer deemed it necessary to employ a full time keeper (earning $500 annually) to maintain and service them, and an attempt was made to find custodians to take their place. A custodian was allowed to live at the lighthouse with his family, rent free, and was paid the princely sum of $1 per annum. The custodian was requested to keep the grounds in order, and was to notify the USLHS of needed repairs, but did not maintain the light other than to make sure that the efficient acetylene was on hand to keep the light lit, without interruption.

The need for a custodian at this site was underscored in a letter to the Commissioner of Lighthouses, dated December 16, 1912, from Inspector Rout, who believed “that the interests of the Service demand an intelligent representative of the Lighthouse Service who can inform the office when the light is in need of attention, and who can and will give the necessary protection to the lighthouse property coming under his care.” Rout was well aware that finding such an individual would be difficult for an annual salary of only $1, and in the same letter he recommended the salary be raised to $120 per annum. Rout states:

It is found impracticable to get an intelligent capable custodian at the East Point Light, unless a reasonable salary is paid him, for the reason that there are little means of livelihood in the vicinity, and there is no incentive to a continuous residence at this isolated point.

The raise in annual salary was denied. Because of the automation, Keeper Spicer transferred to Christiana Lighthouse in Wilmington, Delaware, near the end of September 1911. The first known custodian at the Maurice River Lighthouse was Samuel Flick, who was appointed on December 7, 1911, and took his oath on January 16, 1912. That year the name of the lighthouse was changed to East Point Lighthouse, effective November 1, 1912. The change was made to conform to persistent local usage by mariners. Flick was followed by at least nine other custodians, and as few custodians stayed at the site very long, at times the lighthouse was empty. Joseph L. Peacock stayed the longest, about a ten-year period between 1926 and at least the mid 1930s. Undoubtedly, he stayed there so long because he was able to convince the Lighthouse Service to allow him to build and operate a boat-rental business at the site, which was later sold in succession to each custodian who followed him.

...altho it is evident the lowest bidder, Samuel Ellis, cannot accomplish the work for the Sum of 1975 Dollars, yet I do not consider that we have any right to set him aside. The law most certainly intended to give all our citizens an equal chance for the public work and at the same time to have it done on the cheapest terms. It gives us no power to decide that because a person bid low for particular work, that he will be unable to execute that work.

The plan of the Light-House for Maurice River is such as we have built at the entrance of Annapolis, in Maryland, and several other places, and will shew [show] a Light from 12 to 14 miles, sufficiently far to answer the purpose of all the navigation in and out of Maurice River. As you are very anxious however to have another story added to it – I will most willingly gratify you if the Messieurs Middleton will do it for a reasonable sum. I am very certain you did not state what they would ask to add another story to the building. You will be pleased to enquire of them what will be the lowest price they will ask to add another story 8 feet in the clear, and inform me, with as little delay as possible.

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The last custodian was Gustave Eulitz, who moved there with his wife, Ophelia, Margaret, and their children, sometime around September 1941. In an interview a few years ago, Clara (Mrs. Clara Eulitz), recalled moving there when she was 10 years old, and finding the lighthouse to be rather spooky, especially after blackout shades were installed at the beginning of World War II. The East Point Lighthouse was still without electricity, and the outhouse attached to the rear of the fuel shed was still in use. Clara remembers that no heat was available in the building other than the stove in the kitchen. Her older brother Andy was heavily involved in taking care of the rental boat business, and to make ends meet both of her parents had jobs away from the lighthouse—her father having to work as far away as a shipyard in Philadelphia. In 1945 the Eulitzes moved away, and Gustave sold East Point Boat Rentals, Inc. to three partners for $1500. Included in the bill of sale, dated February 15, 1945, were items that described the scope of the business:

All the Good Will, business and equipment of the fishing party boat business heretofore maintained by the said party of the first part at East Point Lighthouse, ...including twenty-two (22) row boats and equipment; one (1) power boat named "Miss East Point"; all restaurant fixtures, equipment or otherwise; one (1) refreshment stand and fixtures; two (2) toilets; one (1) pier; refreshment stand and fixtures; one (1) scow with 18ft. hoisting frame, pile jetting pump and mud sucking pump with all tanks and fittings; together with all fixtures, merchandise and equipment not hereinafter enumerated ...

Today there are no physical traces of that business on the site.

Blacked out during World War II, the U.S. Coast Guard decided the lighthouse was no longer necessary, and it was decommissioned. After the structure was vacated by the Eulitz family, the General Services Administration rescedined the sale, and on April 10, 1956, deeded the land and the former lighthouse to the State. The State obtained the East Point Lighthouse property to give public access for water recreation. The State had no intention of repairing and maintaining the structures on the property, and realistically, the Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife has never been sufficiently staffed or funded to be able to serve that purpose. Other than boarding up the structure and trying to protect it from vandalism, little was done to preserve the building.

Local residents were so concerned about the condition of the historic structure that in February 1971, the Maurice River Historical Society was founded, with the initial goal of saving the lighthouse, and, in time, of opening it to the public. While negotiations were being made with the State in pursuit of that goal, tragedy struck on the evening of July 15, 1971. A fire started by trespassers destroyed the lantern room, roof, and parts of the building's interior. Despite the unfortunate setback, the Historical Society's members made a determined effort to restore the structure. During the 1970s, through the use of donated materials and labor, as well as money obtained through fundraising activities, the Society defied the odds and rebuilt the lantern room and roof.

On the evening of July 2, 1980, as a result of public pressure and with the cooperation of several organizations, the lighthouse was reactivated by the U.S. Coast Guard as an official aid to navigation. As noted in the local newspaper, the Millville Daily, “At 8:40 p.m. Wednesday, Everett Turner of the Maurice River Historical Society threw the switch, sending power into a brand new beacon after 39 years of darkness.” An important point made by the reporter was that “Seldom is a decommissioned lighthouse reactivated. Usually, they either moulder and decay or succumb to fire or vandalism. East Point Lighthouse was given a new lease on life only because there were people who worked to save her.”

By the early 1990s, time and weather had again taken their toll, and the lighthouse was deteriorating faster than the Maurice River Historical Society could repair it. A rejuvenated effort by the Society led to the awarding of their first grant money—a Federal ISTEA grant of $184,000 in 1994. The structure was placed on the State and National Historic Registers in April. A long-term lease was negotiated with the State of New Jersey, and the Society applied for and was awarded a matching N.J. Historic Trust grant of $184,000 in 1996.

The East Point Lighthouse is the second oldest lighthouse in New Jersey. Only the Sandy Hook Light, built in 1764, is older. The lonely lighthouse at East Point is still an active aid to navigation, with a narrow sector of white light that has an isophase of six seconds (three seconds on, three seconds off) to guide mariners toward the Maurice River, and a very wide sector of red light, which is what those on land are accustomed to seeing. As part of the restoration process, the lantern has been painted black, as it was during most of its years of operation (from 1937 until the restoration project of the 1990s it was red). The black lantern had helped mariners differentiate between East Point and the red lantern of the nearby Cohansey Lighthouse.

Situated near a picturesque point of land where the Maurice River Cove meets the Delaware Bay, the East Point Lighthouse is being given a new lease on life. Throughout the spring and summer of 1998, more than $400,000 of restoration work was done on the building's weathered exterior. As soon as additional grant money can be secured, “phase two” of the building’s rehabilitation will be launched—an interior restoration, together with interactive displays—and additional work will be done on the surrounding grounds. Once complete, the lighthouse will become much more accessible to the public. Despite its out-of-the-way location and former poor condition, the lighthouse has become one of Cumberland County’s most popular tourist attractions. Due to the scenic beauty of the surrounding landscape, the lighthouse is a favorite of photographers and painters.

While much work remains to be done on the restoration of the lighthouse, many positive developments have occurred in the past few years that give cause for hope. Among them, the East Point Lighthouse has been marked as a point of interest on the N.J. Coastal Heritage Trail. It was chosen for the background of the 1994 N.J. Duck Stamp, and it has been included in two recent documentary films. In 1997, it was announced that when interior renovations are complete, the U.S. Coast Guard will place the lens removed from nearby Maho Maull Shoal Lighthouse on permanent loan to the Maurice River Historical Society, so it can be put on public display. This is only fitting, because the Maho Maull Shoal Lighthouse is almost always visible from the lantern room at East Point. The preservation of East Point Lighthouse has been a long time coming, but once the restoration work is complete, it will be well worth the wait.

Jim Cowdy and Kim Ruth
The Bivalve Shipping Sheds and Wharves are located along the west bank of the Maurice River, set back from High Street, near the intersection of Howard Street and Miller Avenue. Built in 1904 by the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey (CRRNJ) along the wharves the company had erected in the 1880s, these two-story shipping sheds replaced earlier structures to better accommodate the booming Delaware Bay oyster industry.

The structure referred to as the Bivalve Shipping Sheds and Wharves is a long, narrow building accessible from land on the west side. The Bivalve Shipping Sheds and Wharves are composed of a continuous two-story, wood frame structure, divided internally into individual units, with a one-story shed area extending on the east side of the office section, and a shed-roof covered wharf area that extends further to the east into the waters of the Maurice River. The docks, each about twenty feet wide, are centered on passages located between every other unit. The entire platform for the construction was erected on wood pilings. The two-story section housed offices, and is referred to in this essay as shipping sheds or office spaces. The sheds to the east of the office section are referred to as storage sheds. The original structure, built in the beginning of the twentieth century to accommodate oyster businesses, extended approximately 675 feet along the river and was divided into thirty units. The approximately 148-foot long, seven-unit structure that is part of the tour (Units 23 through 29), stands toward the south end. Twenty-two units of the original 30 constructed are still extant along the west banks of the Maurice River.

Beginning in 1887, one of New Jersey’s major railroads, the Central Railroad Company of...
Bivalve Shipping Sheds

New Jersey (CRRNJ) gained a controlling interest in a local, short-line railroad known as the Cumberland and Maurice River Railroad Company (CMRRC). Although in 1888 the CRRNJ made some improvements, extending the existing wharves, it was not until the first years of the twentieth century that plans for major restructuring of the wharves took place. Some of the old wharves were removed and a new building, the subject of this report, was erected. This building included thirty shipping units, side-by-side, like row houses. A $25,000 contract for their construction was awarded in summer 1904 to Albert R. Morrison of Wilmington, Delaware. The CMRRC held title to the new building, and its board of directors approved all leases. For several years afterward, each individual wharf continued to be covered with a gable roof that stopped short of the office building. Around 1916, the railroad company rebuilt and extended the piers. The new piers included a wide ferry wharf flanked to the south by eight narrow wharves and to the north by six narrow wharves; the new wharves were given one continuous shed roof.

Although no records survive to identify who rented these spaces in the first years, CMRRC records from 1914 and 1916 give a sense of the businesses that occupied the shipping houses. The Hettinger Engine Company had a branch in the Bivalve sheds, and other units were occupied by individual firms of shippers and oyster “planters.” Proximity to the oyster shipping businesses and their employees prompted the opening of a restaurant by one S.E. Meredith across from the south section of the sheds, in 1917. The wharves also housed a lumber business, small stores, and a post office. The Dubois Oyster Company opened the first shucking house there in 1922. Soon other houses were established for shucking oysters and, as capacity increased, it soon became a major seasonal activity. However, the oyster business at Bivalve surpassed the work of shucking and canning, and oysters in the shell continued to be sent to markets, or to shucking houses in other areas.

Research on New Jersey’s oyster cultures began with Dr. Julius Nelson in 1888, when it was estimated that 100,000 people depended economically on oysters from New Jersey waters. In 1901, the legislature appropriated funds for establishing and maintaining stations for scientific investigations, and by 1905, there were four stations. In 1923, the Department of Health of the State of New Jersey opened a laboratory at Bivalve in one of the offices built by the railroad company. The biologists at the station were specifically tasked with testing the waters and the shellfish to help insure that the oysters were not infected with typhoid, and they helped to develop national standards for harvesting, processing and packing shellfish that would reduce the chances for disease to spread.

Eight shellfish certificates issued by the New Jersey Department of Health are still displayed on the second floor south wall of room 6/201. The date can be read on only two of them, one valid between August 18, 1937 and July 30, 1938, the other valid between July 31, 1939 and June 30, 1940. Bivalve remains a center of research into oysters and the aquaculture of the Delaware Bay. In 1953, a laboratory operated by Rutgers University moved into a new facility near the wharves. The laboratory was later renamed the Haskan Shellfish Research Laboratory.

In 1928, six of the oystermen with businesses at the Bivalve wharves – Sanitary Oyster Company, John T. McNaney, H.W Sockwell & Sons, Fogg & Stowman, Newbay Oyster Company, and Maurice River Oyster Company – merged and formed the Port Norris Oyster Company. The trend toward consolidation into larger companies accelerated during the ’40s as costs for men and equipment rose. Fewer men were needed when power dredging was legalized at the end of World War II, but larger hauls drove down prices. Changing technology meant the old sail-powered oyster boats were retired in favor of much larger gas-powered boats. Organizations such as the Oyster Institute of North America and the New Jersey State Shellfisheries Council sought to market oysters, support prices, and drive interest and trust in the product. But oystering was a declining industry, and in 1949, the railroad ceased operating to Bivalve, essentially abandoning the sheds and the oyster industry itself.

The Delaware Bay oyster industry was in its twilight in the 1950s, when the oysters themselves began to disappear. A parasite, dubbed “MSX” for “multinucleated sphere X” by Rutgers’ scientists, killed off some 90% of the oysters within a few years. Growers and shippers who had hung on with power dredging and truck transport went bankrupt, and the shipping sheds themselves were abandoned to the elements.

Present Owner
The Bayshore Discovery Project (BDP) was formed in the 1990s to recognize the history of the Delaware Bay, and “to motivate people to take care of the history, the culture and the environment of New Jersey’s Bayshore region through education, preservation, and example.”

According to the BDP, oysters are harvested in the Bivalve wharves, and the laboratory is still in use by Rutgers University.
The group acquired their first unit in the Bivalve Shipping Sheds, Unit 29, in 1994 from Roger Allen. They acquired more of the sheds in 2001 as a setting for their museum and cultural exhibits.

Cristina Radu and Penelope S. Watson

An excellent summary of oystering in the Delaware Bay may be found at:
www.state.nj.us/seafood/DelawareBayOysters.pdf

The A.J. Meerwald is a Delaware Bay oyster schooner, representative of a distinctive type of vessel that evolved to meet the needs of the local oyster fishery. Launched in 1928, the A.J. Meerwald was one of hundreds of schooners built along South Jersey’s Delaware Bay shore — and among the last — before the decline of the shipbuilding industry that coincided with the Great Depression. The A.J. Meerwald embodies the true spirit of the schooner, adapting to efficiently fulfill the prevailing conditions and specific demands of her native waters.

In 1928, the Meerwald family of South Dennis commissioned Charles H. Stowman & Sons shipyard to build the A.J. Meerwald. Stowman launched it at Dorchester on September 7, 1928.

She was a wood centerboard schooner with low freeboard and a raked transom stern designed for oyster dredging under sail and power. She had minimal draft, a considerable beam and a flush deck from stem to stern. She had a large ‘gloriana peaked’ mainsail, a smaller foresail, and a spike bowsprit that supported a large club staysail. Oystering gear included a winder, or gas powered winch, for hauling in dredges, the several-hundred-pound machines used to scoop up mature oysters from the beds on the bay floor. Her overall length: 115 feet when fully rigged.
Each decade provided new chapters in the Meerwald’s history and physical changes to the vessel itself. In the early ‘40s, World War II brought a hiatus from oystering. In June 1942, the U.S. Maritime Commission commandeered the A.J. Meerwald under the War Powers Act. She was turned over to the U.S. Coast Guard, which outfitted her as a fireboat. After the war, in January 1947, the vessel was returned to the Meerwald family. Eight months later, they sold it to Clyde A. Phillips who again used her as an oyster dredge, but this time under power rather than sail. A new winder installed for dredging consisted of a power takeoff mounted forward of the engine. She was re-named the Clyde A. Phillips. In 1959 ownership passed again, this time to Cornelius (Nicky) Campbell, who outfitted her for surf claming. During the 1960s she was owned by American Clam, which operated her primarily as a clam dredge into the late 1970s. At that point, about 50 years old, she was essentially retired.

The Bayshore Center was formed in 1988 “to motivate people to take care of the history, the culture, and the environment of New Jersey’s Bayshore region.” Captain John Gandy donated the Clyde A. Phillips to an affiliated non-profit, the Bayshore Discovery Project, until a transfer was made to the Center in 1989. Three years later, the vessel was lifted by crane from the river and set in Bivalve for restoration. In 1995, with the restoration complete, the Clyde A. Phillips was rechristened with its original name, the A.J. Meerwald, and re-launched. That November the vessel was added to the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

Today the A.J. Meerwald is New Jersey’s Official Tall Ship. Through the Bayshore Discovery Project, she offers public sails, charters, family and youth camps, and adult and youth education sails throughout the Delaware River and Bay area, and along the Atlantic Coast. Where there were once as many as five hundred schooners sailing ‘up the Bay’ each spring to catch oysters, today there are none. Yet the A.J. Meerwald endures. Her construction remains ‘oak on oak’ (oak planks laid on oak frames), and with relatively light scantlings, no knees and no horn timber, she preserves the characteristic features of the Dorchester-built schooners.1

1 The word “scantlings" describes the structural girders and I-beams in a ship. “Knees” are curved pieces of wood used for bracing. A “horn timber” is a heavy longitudinal timber that angles upward from the stern to support the overhang of the stern.
The places locals call “The Shore” or the “Jersey Shore” refers to both the Atlantic coast of the State and the adjacent resort and residential communities. Mention of it conjures images of beaches, boardwalks, casinos, and arcades, but this is only part of the story. For more than four centuries, from the first explorers to the first iPhone carriers, people have been drawn to the Shore for its natural resources, recreational opportunities, and even the opportunity to worship God in a pleasant summer setting. Each of these reasons has left its distinct traces in New Jersey’s two southeastern-most counties, Atlantic and Cape May.

Early Settlement
After a time characterized by exploration (ca. 1609-25) followed by a series of colonizing failures (1623-ca. 1663) by Dutch, Swedes, and English, the Delaware Bay and River came under control of the English in 1664, along with the rest of New Jersey. About twenty years later, English families who had strong ties to New England were the first to settle permanently in what would become Cape May County. Some were attracted by the lucrative whaling industry they had followed on Long Island, others by the relatively cheap farmland in the strip of arable land that occupies the center of the Cape May peninsula. Bounded by marshes leading eastward to the ocean or westward to the bay, the land could be readily purchased in what was then a wilderness. Their arrival completed a migration that had taken them, or their forebears, from England to New England between 1620 and 1640, to Long Island in the 1640s and ‘50s, to northern New Jersey in the 1660s and ‘70s, and then to Cape May.

The early settlers brought their architectural heritage of timber framing with them, and it remained and evolved here with remarkable tenacity. Those who are familiar with the early framed houses of Massachusetts Bay, the Plymouth Colony, or early Connecticut will instantly recognize the oldest buildings in Cape May County as part of the same tradition. Such buildings were once commonplace in New Jersey’s northeastern counties also, but as those counties urbanized during the past one hundred years, most of the early buildings there disappeared. As a result, Cape May County today holds the largest concentration of first-period (ca. 1690-ca. 1730) heavy timber frame buildings in the state. Hallmarks of post-medieval English construction, including heavy summer beams, carved and shouldered posts, and interior exposed framing members decorated with chamfers and stops are still visible in the oldest houses throughout the area.

Quakers
The Quaker migration to the Delaware Valley brought the next profound changes to Cape May. The Protestant religious movement known as the Society of Friends, or Quakers, emerged as the Society of Friends, or Quakers, emerged out of the turmoil of the English civil wars of the 1640s. Quakers began to settle in small numbers in Rhode Island during the 1630s, and after 1646 the town of Shrewsbury, in what would become Monmouth County, was chiefly settled by Quakers. The Society’s founder, George Fox, visited Shrewsbury during a tour of the colonies in 1672. A complicated series of events in London beginning in 1674 led to the establishment of the first Quaker colony in America in 1676: West New Jersey. Quakers settled West New Jersey chiefly between 1675 and 1682, and a small percentage of them moved to Cape May before 1700. Quakers did not have chapels, churches, or cathedrals. Their plainness (an aversion to ostentation and vanity, but not to comfort) resulted in well-built meetinghouses that avoided spires or grand architectural flourishes. The most common forms share a rectangular mass with a unified interior space divided in half (floor to ceiling) by a partition, to divide women’s business meetings from men’s. Unlike in Salem and Burlington counties, for example, where the most impressive meetinghouses were constructed of brick, in the coastal counties they were frame buildings. The Seaville Friends Meetinghouse exemplifies the plank framed buildings of Cape May County.

Early Industry and Agriculture
Industries based on local resources were quickly established in both counties. Large forests provided the materials for ship masts, hoop poles (used in barrel making), wood shingles, tar, and a variety of wood products sent to markets (both local and distant) by ship. Charcoal burned from the oak and pine of the originally forested land literally fueled glass- and iron-making industries that capitalized on the area’s raw products of white sand and bog ore. The heyday of these industries was short-lived: most had died out before the Civil War and the places associated with them survive now only as archaeological sites. Shipbuilding here began in the 18th century and lasted almost until the end of the 19th, with hundreds of schooners, barques, and briggantines made in both Atlantic and Cape May counties. The area’s waterways were also a vital source of employment for baymen (who harvested fish,
Modern Jersey Shore

The Iron Horse and the Beginnings of the Modern Jersey Shore

The desire to escape urban life and industrial pollution added to the push for shore development. Beginning in the 1840s, railroads provided an inexpensive and easy way to reach the shore, however, resort vacations were limited to those who could afford travel and hotel accommodations. By linking the shore to major centers of population, the railroad created a tourist industry that supplemented the local, primarily maritime-based, economies of the small towns along the bay shore. The railroads themselves encouraged opportunities to create new towns on the barrier islands where none had existed before.

Atlantic City was the first. Establishment of rail service between Camden (linked by ferry to Philadelphia) and Absecon Island in 1854 allowed the founding of Atlantic City. Similarly, establishment of rail service to Cape May in 1864 further fueled the development of resorts and recreation there. Spurs built from these lines to undeveloped stretches of barrier beach led to a string of new resort towns up the Atlantic side of the Cape May peninsula from the Wildwoods to Ocean City. From Atlantic City south to Longport, trolley lines did the same for Atlantic County's ocean frontage (Lucy, the Margate Elephant, is a reminder of this period). Atlantic City, with the most direct rail access from Philadelphia, would grow the fastest and be the largest, becoming what one historian described as a "washbasin" for the great democracy and as the "Newport of the nouveau bourgeois." All of these infant towns would mature during the era of the automobile, but it is due to the railroad that the shore was transformed from a few ocean towns, widely spaced, to long, continuous strings of summer resorts.

Camp Meetings

The Cumberland Revival, which swept the Southeast in the late 1700s, marked the beginning of camp meetings in America. By summer 1800, the phenomenon had emerged as a successful tool of Protestant evangelism among Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, and it spread to its northeastern brethren. The growing popularity of camp meetings reached New Jersey in the mid-1800s, when railroads could deliver the crowds. Multitudes escaped from stifling cities for revivalsist preaching and healthful retreat in seaside, forested, and mountain settings throughout the State. Regardless of locale, camp meeting sites had a common physical layout: a central square or park with a preacher's pulpit, firebox, and wooden benches, surrounded by canvas tents in concentric rows and separated by narrow passageways. Ocean Grove, founded in 1869, has been called the "Queen of the Victorian Methodist Camp Meetings" but the state has had numerous others. The tour will feature South Seaville (est. 1863) in Cape May County. Vestiges and traces of other camp meetings at Cape May Point and Ocean City still remain.

Jewish Resettlement

When Czar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, many falsely blamed the Jewish community and a tidal wave of anti-Jewish pogroms followed. During the next three years, over 200 anti-Jewish events occurred in the Russian Empire. Combined with economic pressures, these worsening conditions made mass emigration a stark necessity. Ninety percent of those who left came to the United States. The spring of 1882 marked the arrival of the first Jewish settlers in South Jersey. In the place now called Alliance, in eastern Salem County, twenty-five families undertook to do the pioneer work of the settlement. The tract of land, comprising eleven hundred acres, was purchased for the purpose by the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society. It was the first of more than twenty Jewish agricultural settlements in southern New Jersey that were launched during the next decade and a half. One of the most important, in Cape May County, was founded in 1891, sponsored by the Baron de Hirsch Fund.

Baron Maurice de Hirsch was a European financier and philanthropist who dedicated his
fortune to the welfare of East European Jews. Convinced that modern secular education could ameliorate the lot of his oppressed brethren, De Hirsch hoped to re-educate them to become independent farmers and craftsmen in the New World. In 1889, De Hirsch allocated the proceeds of a $2,400,000 fund toward agricultural colonies and trade schools in the United States.

The early days of Alliance, Woodbine, and the other Jewish settlements had many features in common. Despite initial enthusiasm, they faced withering difficulties. The land had to be cleared and made fit to receive seed, and months were to pass before any returns could be expected. Meanwhile the immigrants were obliged to live in barns or in over-crowded houses. Provisions were scarce, roads were poor. The survival of the immigrants was a matter of pressing need. So it took weeks before any returns could be expected to pass before any returns could be expected. Meanwhile the immigrants were obliged to live in barns or in over-crowded houses. Provisions were scarce, roads were poor.

The Automobile
The automobile transformed the Atlantic shore landscape still further. In the 20th century the trip from city to resort became an easy “commute” rather than an arduous journey. The automobile opened up new recreational opportunities as well as opportunities for year-round living at the shore. Over the first quarter of the twentieth century Absecon Borough’s winter population rose 400% (from 530 in 1900 to 2,158 in 1930). “Rufwud,” a private cottage featured on the tour, was built in this period. At first, the infrastructure for the automobile consisted of the new State highways, which in many cases gave 19th-century turnpike roads a 20th-century makeover with highway engineering and concrete pavements. Automobile bridges joined the railroad bridges linking the mainland to the barrier islands. But the Garden State Parkway in the 1950s was the real game-changer.

The Garden State Parkway (GSP) was the new north-south superhighway built roughly parallel to US Route 9 and meant to supplant it for the heavy postwar summer traffic loads. In its wake, the shore resort towns flourished like never before, at least those that could adapt to the car culture that it represented. Constructed from 1922-1957, the GSP stretches 173 miles from Cape May to the New York State line, and was planned to help generate economic activity and revitalize the state’s sagging tourism industry. The GSP exceeded the expectations placed upon it by political leaders and the general public. The numerous interchanges were quickly surrounded by housing developments and shopping centers. In the first year alone, the ten counties through which the GSP passed gained $300 million in new tax ratables, owing to new construction and resident and tourism dollars. In 1958, those same ten counties earned $269 million more in new ratables, four times the amount earned in New Jersey’s other eleven counties.

The Recent Past
Creation of Atlantic City as a gambling resort in the late 1970s brought unprecedented growth to fill the housing needs of dealers, waitresses, casino managers, and other resort workers. The expansion of existing towns and the construction of new communities naturally concentrated in areas immediately outside of Atlantic City, but even spilled over into the upper half of Cape May County, which had easy access to the gambling mecca via the Garden State Parkway and the Atlantic City Expressway.

The new life that the casino economy breathed into the moribund Atlantic City sounded a death knell for many of its historic buildings, especially its old hotels, which had survived largely from a lack of attention. Outlying farms on the mainland were snapped up and converted into housing tracts, once-deserted roads became clogged with new residents, and shopping malls sprang up where cornfields once stood. In Atlantic City, almost every major historic hotel was razed so a new casino could be built. Little remains today of the Atlantic City the world loved in the 1920s. Boardwalk Empire’s Nucky Johnson would hardly recognize the place.

Cape May City experienced an opposite impact. While one of its historic neighborhoods was demolished in the 1960s as part of an urban renewal project, what remained – an extraordinary collection of more than 600 Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Shingle, and other Victorian-era cottages and hotels – pushed the nascent bed-and-breakfast movement into the American mainstream, helping to define heritage tourism. Today, most of the city is within a National Historic Landmark historic district, and has a nine month long tourism season.

Conclusion
Vernacular buildings representing four centuries abound in southeastern New Jersey, if you know where to find them: from heavy timber frame houses in Cape May County built when the county was young, a Gothic Revival farmstead, a religious retreat, a religious colony, and an elephant attraction of the 19th century, to an architect-designed seashore cottage built in the early 20th century. Remarkably, Historic Cold Spring Village has an enviable collection of buildings from all four centuries in one setting. Collectively, they display a great diversity, and reflect the many reasons people chose to live or visit Down Jersey.

Four Centuries by the Shore in a Day

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The Gothic Revival style house that John and Arabella Doughty built about 1863 was the expansion and remodeling of a smaller, Federal style brick house erected in 1831, which, in turn, had been the expansion of an even earlier and still smaller ca. 1770 dwelling. While the house’s steeply-pitched cross gables and mitre-arch windows outwardly reflect the Gothic Revival expansion, a basement fireplace, remnants of a bee hive oven, and closed-over window and door openings on the interior are reminders of the earlier structures subsumed by the re-working of the house just before the Civil War.

The house is one of several large, early to mid-19th century homesteads found along both sides of historic Shad Seashore Road. It reflects Absecon’s growing prosperity, an outcome resulting not only from an active shipping and ship-building trade begun in the late 18th century along nearby Absecon Creek (which meanders behind the house), but also because it was a stop along the rail line from Philadelphia to the nascent community of Atlantic City established in 1854.

The earliest part of the house, built by brothers Joseph and Edmund Ireland, is represented by the present dining room. Built about 1770 as a two-story, one-room-per-floor dwelling probably of brick, it had a modest 15-foot wide by 18-foot deep footprint with a fireplace on each story in the south gable end. Fireplaces were later removed from the first and second stories where today infilled floor boards mark their location. However, an original fireplace (now closed up) and remnants of its attendant bake oven are extant in the basement, which at the time was only partially-below grade.

Daniel Doughty (ca. 1795-1838), a sawmill owner, purchased the Ireland House in 1824 and expanded it to the south in 1831, creating a 38-foot wide by 18-foot deep rectangle with a center-hall plan and an interior wall chimney in the new south gable end. This end-wall chimney had a semi-circular chimney stone carved with the date 1831 and the initials “DED” for Daniel and his wife, Emma Doughty. The stone is now mortared into a former basement window opening on the north elevation. Ghosts of former window and door openings from this building campaign are visible throughout, particularly on what was originally the east exterior wall in the front parlor and corresponding chambers overhead.

Daniel Doughty’s brother Enoch bought the house in 1841 and promptly allowed his son, John Doughty, and his new wife, Arabella Somers, to live there after they married that year, eventually selling it to them in 1863.

John and Arabella expanded the house 20 feet to the rear, creating its present footprint of 38 feet square, more than doubling the house’s size. Finishing several rooms in the third story adding even more living space. Most of the original random-width floors and trim of the 1831 house were retained and are extant today. The entire structure was stuccoed with a mixture of sand and lime, scored to resemble stone blocks and left in a natural tan color. The Doughtys likely removed the original fireplaces from the Ireland house in the dining room and the chamber above, and used parlor stoves tied into slender, corbelled brick chimneys added during the expansion. Much of the interior wood trim was false-grained as championed by A.J. Downing, with the northeast and northwest bedrooms retaining this original decorative feature. In the new northeast corner basement room, they added a cooking fireplace (an anomaly for such a late date) that today still retains its crane pintels. They also recycled windows, four-panel doors, and other features, including the black marble mantel installed in the front parlor, which was taken from the ca. 1820 Joseph West Mansion built nearby that had been purchased by Daniel. When the current owners bought the house, many of the architectural details from the mansion were still stored in the barn.

John and Arabella’s daughter, Martha McMullin, undertook repairs when she inherited the house in 1898. At the time “glazed sash and shutters”
The house and its 12-plus acres were used as a working farm until the 1990s, so the property also boasts a ca. 1840 heavy timber frame barn (with later alterations), a ca.1925 root cellar, and a collection of other 20th-century outbuildings that include several chicken coops, storage buildings, and a corn crib.

Robert McMullin willed the property in 2000 to the National Trust for Historic Preservation under its Gifts of Heritage Program. Protective easements were then placed on the house and its acreage and the house was listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The current owners purchased the house from the National Trust in 2001 and while following the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for Rehabilitation and Restoration under the Trust’s watchful eye, they have installed a modern kitchen, expanded the sun room, and repainted almost every room on all three floors.

Joan Berkey
Lucy the Elephant stands in Margate, a seaside resort abutting the southerly end of Atlantic City, on Absecon Island. Its construction was the brainchild of James Vincent de Paul Lafferty, Jr. (1856-98), engineer, inventor, and real-estate speculator. He owned a tract of beachfront south of Atlantic City and hoped to capitalize on the increasing popularity of beach resort towns to create a housing development, but he needed something novel, an attraction to draw prospective buyers out of Atlantic City itself. He decided to erect a building in the shape of an elephant. Designed by William Free, a Philadelphia architect, and built in 1881, “Lucy,” as the building was subsequently named, and by which monicker it is now universally known, attracted visitors who came to marvel at her sheer scale. Invited to take a tour, they could enjoy panoramic views from the howdah on Lucy’s back (observation deck), peruse the real estate of Margate, and endure a sales pitch.

To protect his original idea, Lafferty applied for a patent from the U.S. government. He filed his application June 3, 1882, and received patent no. 266,503 on Dec. 5, 1882. The patent covered all animal-shaped buildings.

Essentially Lucy is a 5-sided heavy timber-framed box on stilts, braced with diagonal members, shaped with curved ribs, and clad with sheathing boards covered with flat seam metal roofing. Interior access is provided via spiral staircases in her hind legs. The constant perils of her seaside location have led to numerous upgrades, including the replacement in steel of some timber trusses and the introduction of rust-free tene-coated stainless steel roofing on her belly.

Lafferty constructed a second elephant building, the “Elephantine Colossus” at Coney Island, New York in 1884, but it was destroyed by fire in 1896. In disregard of Lafferty’s patent, another elephant, the “Light of Asia” was built in South Cape May, New Jersey by Theodore M. Reger in 1884-85. Never completed, however, that building deteriorated and was torn down in 1900.

In 1887 Lafferty sold Lucy to the Gertzen family, who also purchased the Turkish Pavilion from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, reconstructed it behind Lucy, and ran it as the Elephant Hotel. The hotel no longer stands. Three generations of the Gertzen family operated Lucy for over 80 years. It was during the Gertzen years that she acquired her name, despite her male tusks.

Over time, Lucy fell into disrepair. By the late 1960s her parcel was ripe for redevelopment and she was threatened with demolition. The Save Lucy Committee formed and Lucy was donated to the committee in 1970 with the stipulation that she be moved off site within 30 days. A two-block move to her current location in a city park occurred on July 20, 1970, taking seven hours.

She was listed in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 1971. In 1976 she was recognized as a National Historic Landmark. The John Milner Associates firm began restoration work in 1973. She re-opened for tours in 1974, although only exterior work had been addressed. Lucy’s interior was restored in 2004 by Margaret Westfield, of Westfield Architects. Her gift shop is a former Camden and Atlantic Railroad depot, with a two-story rear addition.

Lucy’s Statistics
- 65 ft. or 6 stories tall
- Weighs 90 tons
- Purportedly cost $38,000 to build in 1881
- 22 windows
- 12,000 sq. ft. of tin covers the structure
- Body is 38 ft. long and 80 ft. in circumference
- Ears are 17 ft. long and 10 ft. wide
- It is estimated that each ear weighs 2,000 pounds
- Tusks are 22 ft. long
- Her trunk and her tail are the same length, 26 ft.
- Her glass eyes are 18 inches in diameter

Andrea Tingey and Margaret Westfield
Begun over a century years ago, Woodbine was the experimental colony envisioned by the Baron de Hirsch Fund trustees to assist the immigrating Russian Jews coming to America in the 1890s. The hope was that immigrants could pursue farming in America. However, poor soil conditions resulted in Woodbine’s evolution into a factory town, the manufacturing center of Cape May County.

The first settlers arrived in Woodbine in 1891, and the residential center of town still uses the street grid laid out at that time. The Brotherhood Synagogue was constructed by its members and consecrated in 1896. Baron de Hirsch Agricultural College was also started in that year. It operated until World War I, winning many distinctions and awards. Today the property is the Woodbine Developmental Center, a state-run facility for training mentally disabled persons. The Developmental Center is the county’s single largest employer.

Woodbine is the largest of the late 19th century synagogues built in the newly settled “Jewish villages” of southern New Jersey. Its brick walls and rectangular form make it architecturally similar to many 19th century Christian churches in the region. The use of tall round-arched windows, well-proportioned pediments at the gable ends and exaggerated corner quoins in brick all reference a classical, Western European building tradition.

By 1999 the Jewish population had dwindled to a point where there was no longer a congregation to support services, the synagogue closed and the trustees were set to place the building up for sale. Michael Azeez came forward with interest in the property. He saw an opportunity to create a destination for visitors and a local resource for the entire Woodbine community. The restored synagogue and museum were named in honor of his father, Sidney ‘Sam’ Azeez, who grew up in Woodbine during the Depression. After earning a degree in electrical engineering, Sam became an entrepreneur. His company, Ultronics, developed the world’s first real-time computer quotation system, revolutionizing stock markets around the globe. Through his investments, he was a pioneer of the internet and cellular telephone communications.

The sanctuary has been restored and is available for special worship services. The lower level, Brotherhood Hall, houses the museum's permanent and temporary exhibitions. Also included is a community sculpture, the Collective Memory Wall, where Woodbine residents have contributed personal memories of their town. It initially opened to the public in 2003. The Azeez family donated the museum along with $5 million to Richard Stockton College. In Feb 2013, the college completed a $1 million, 2,825-square foot, one-story addition. The addition has two classrooms and two offices.

The Woodbine Brotherhood Synagogue was listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places on June 25, 1980, and in the National Register of Historic Places on September 17, 1980.

Andrea Tingey
Some Methodist historians have claimed 1864 as the year of the founding of the South Seaville Camp Meeting, but the meeting's own historians have long claimed that its beginnings occurred a year before, citing newspaper accounts of revival meetings that were held in August 1863 and reported in the Cape May newspaper. The railroad first reached South Seaville in 1863, and for the summertime religious pilgrimages, the railroad soon responded with excursion tickets, enabling much larger crowds to attend the meetings. The Rev. William B. Osborn, a leader within the “holiness movement,” was active in South Seaville, possibly from the beginning but certainly from September 1864, when his name was associated with the camp meeting of that year. At least one Methodist historian has credited South Seaville with being “the starting point of the great holiness movement under the National [Camp Meeting] Association.” Osborn was a creator of the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness in nearby Vineland in 1867, and he later founded Ocean Grove in 1869.

Large outdoor revival meetings were a central feature of the colonial-era Great Awakening. Although Presbyterians and Baptists also utilized the camp meeting format, it was especially popular among Methodists. The Methodist practice of quarterly meetings, which were often held outdoors, where many parishes gathered to conduct church business and stoke the fires of revival, was a model that easily evolved into camp meetings. The camp meeting provided a Christian substitute for fashionable “watering places.” Whether at seaside, or on mountains, or at lakes, camp meetings opened up popular resort environments to a generation of the Christian middle-class who viewed leisure with skepticism. These camp meetings or resort environments appealed to urban Methodists attracted to the holiness movement who had the resources and time to pursue a measure of leisure. Through Biblical wilderness images from both the Old and New Testaments, idle recreation was transformed into Christian conference, and the campground became a sanctified space.

In 1875, the camp was permanently established as the “South Jersey Camp Meeting Association located at Seaville Station, Cape May County, New Jersey.” The site encompasses approximately 33 acres. The directors of the South Seaville Camp Meeting Association drew an ambitious plan: five hundred numbered lots grouped in rectangular blocks arranged around parks. Buyers were expected to build a canvas or frame structure within one year of purchase. By 1877, ninety cottages had been built. At Seaville’s peak, there were as many as two hundred. Most of the cottages are simple, two-story, un-insulated, balloon-frame dwellings with open porches and wooden “gingerbread” trim. Many evoke the Gothic Revival Style.

The physical closeness of the cottages fosters the kind of accountability required by Wesleyan societies. The initial lack of insulation or interior paneling resulted in no sound proofing between cottages, demanding that tenants make a continual accounting to the neighbors. A boarding house was built in 1881, with a kitchen addition the following year. The Tabernacle, erected in 1890, is adorned with the words ‘Seaville and Salvation’ and serves as a testament to the continuing focus on religious life.

Historically, the camp meetings promulgated strict rules of personal behavior, and South Seaville was no exception. Most were designed to maintain the decorum appropriate for religious observance. Smoking was forbidden. So were bicycles and the game of croquet! South Seaville, like other camp meetings, also had a strong tradition of temperance. The first president of the camp meeting association, J.H. Diverty, was a passionate temperance advocate who, according to one claim, successfully prevented the courts from granting liquor licenses in Cape May County for many years.
Today the camp meeting grounds contain the tabernacle and 89 cottages, surrounded by several communal buildings: the dining hall, communal showers, a museum, and a gift shop. While rules are more relaxed, life remains deeply rooted in the Methodist tradition. Sunday dinners are still served at the Grove House (where the VAF tour will be eating lunch) following services. Having observed the 150th anniversary of its initial founding last year, it is the oldest continuing Methodist Camp Meeting still in service in New Jersey.

Andrea Tingey

4 Sullivan and Young, Ibid., 46.
6 Sullivan and Young, Ibid., 46, cites this claim from an unidentified article in the journal, The New Jersey Methodist.
9 Ibid., 5, 6.
10 Ibid., pages 14, 54.
11 Beverly E. Sullivan, manuscript dated February 2013, on file at NJ Historic Preservation Office, Trenton, NJ.
12 Ibid.
13 Messenger, Holy Leisure, page 75.
14 Sullivan, Manuscript at NJHPO.
ca. 1708, ca. 1800, ca. 1900, restored 2008. Seaville, Cape May County, New Jersey

When first visited by this writer in 2003, the ca. 1708 Thomas Gandy House looked nondescript on the outside and had been thoroughly modernized on the inside. Yet a hand-hewn rear girt decorated with a chamfer that ended in a lamb’s tongue stop was discovered upon opening a modern built-in cupboard door. Clearly, the house’s frame dated from the first period (ca. 1690 to ca. 1730) of heavy timber frame construction, a type of construction that was once common in New Jersey but of which few examples remain. The extant examples identified to date in Cape May County suggest they survive in large enough numbers that at least there they challenge the notion of rarity.

Cape May County was settled beginning in the 1690s, mostly by whalers and yeomen farmers, who hailed from East Jersey, Long Island, and parts of Connecticut and Massachusetts. Their settlement here completed a migration that had taken them, or their ancestors, from southeastern England to the Massachusetts Bay area in the 1620s, then to Long Island in the 1640s, East Jersey in the 1660s, and eventually to Cape May in the 1690s. They brought their heavy timber frame tradition with them, so it is no accident that Cape May County’s earliest frame houses have the same decorated and shouldered posts as well as exposed framing members (also decorated) as their New England counterparts.

New owners in 2006 decided to restore the Gandy House to its original, colonial appearance, hiring a local restoration carpenter (J.P. Hand) whose deconstruction of the Victorian-era plaster walls and interior details uncovered a wealth of surviving historic building fabric - original doors, cupboards, over-mantels, and stairways - that had been taken apart and recycled as construction components in the 1880s remodeling. Also uncovered was the building’s original 1½-inch thick plank frame exterior preserved throughout two-thirds of the house while sandwiched between the ca. 1880 plaster walls on the inside and a sheathing of late 19th-century clapboards covered with late 20th-century vinyl siding on the exterior.

With the Gandy House frame fully exposed for study, the knowledge and understanding of heavy timber frame construction as expressed in Cape May County advanced tenfold.

Though built in modest proportions and only a story-and-a-half tall, the Gandy House exemplifies a typical first-period building with a single chimney in a four-foot-wide chimney bay that contains back-to-back fireplaces, one opening into a lean-to kitchen (17’ by 18’) and the other into a parlor (16’ by 18’). Both have exposed, chamfered joists overhead that end with a lamb’s tongue stop and major framing members similarly decorated because the entire frame was exposed from the start, all hallmarks of first-period construction. The upper story over the parlor was partitioned into two chambers, one of which retains a row of original, hand-carved clothing pegs, divided by an original vertical board wall in situ. The loft area over the kitchen was likely used for storage as it had no windows. The house’s side lean-to and 1½-story masonry illustrate two important ways that heavy timber frame buildings in Cape May County differ from most of their New England contemporaries and predecessors.

The Gandy House is one of eleven, first-period plank frame buildings known in Cape May County and represents a type of timber framing that is also found mostly northeast of Boston, in Plymouth Colony, and in “large numbers” in Connecticut. It is remarkable for the great amount of extant, original plank siding that also served as the interior wall finish. Early 19th-century resident Hannah Gandy pricked her initials into the parlor’s interior planking where they are still visible some 200 years later.

One of the most exciting details uncovered was an 8” x 10” window opening that illuminated a dark closet placed in the kitchen against the fireplace masonry. Evidence of nail holes for clothing pegs, divided by an original vertical board wall in situ. The loft area over the kitchen was likely used for storage as it had no windows. The house’s side lean-to and 1½-story masonry illustrate two important ways that heavy timber frame buildings in Cape May County differ from most of their New England contemporaries and predecessors. Pieces of the paneled over-mantels of both fireplaces had also been recycled in the 1880s and guided restoration of the fireplaces and the fireplace walls in both first story rooms. Colors found on the original beams – yellow ochre in the parlor and barn red in the kitchen – were duplicated.

The mostly cedar frame importantly shows that the early settlers were using local, rather than imported, timbers. In Upper Township, where this building is located, local oak was not suitable for construction so the majority of early houses were built either partially or wholly with cedar.

A ca. 1880 addition to the north and an early 20th-century kitchen addition to the west (neither shown in the floor plan) have been retained to facilitate the building’s use by an adjacent preschool for special events and to teach children (and their parents) about colonial life.

Joan Berkey

Boards that originally lined the winder stair were reused in the 1880s remodeling and revealed the original winder stair layout of treads and risers, which was followed exactly as part of the restoration. Paint ghosts of an early, if not original, corner cupboard were found in the parlor and show that the cupboard was constructed so the divided light, single sash window next to the front door that slid open horizontally, could slide fully open into the side of the cupboard. Paint ghosts and the discovery of some extant recycled shelves (one with candle burn marks on the bottom side) showed the location of another cupboard in the southeast corner of the kitchen.

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Joan Berkey

Restored parlor at the Gandy House.
If it weren’t such a mouthful, the name of this dwelling should more properly be the Reeves-Izard-Godfrey-Albrecht House, to recognize its current owners, Lew and Jean Albrecht, who not only saved the house from demolition in 1962, but moved it several miles up the Garden State Parkway, set it down on a new lot, and then lovingly restored it after decades of near-ruinous neglect. Lew and Jean – preservationists long before the concept became popular – appropriately added a fourth, “new” heavy timber frame section in 1967 to the rear of the house in which they sensitively incorporated such modern amenities as a kitchen and bathrooms, leaving the extraordinarily well-preserved main block of the house untouched.

In 1940, the house was described as “possibly the oldest frame house in the state” and while that claim cannot yet be proven, it is certainly the best preserved among those built before 1700. It was built by, or for, John Reeves (ca.1660-1715) a cooper whose origins are unknown; he cannot be tied to other Reeves families in nearby Cumberland County or on Long Island. In 1715 he fell victim to an epidemic that killed 10 percent of Cape May’s population that year.

The house is clearly rooted in the heavy timber frame building traditions found mostly to the north and east of Boston in the late 1600s. With the exception of the side (rather than rear) lean-to, which is characteristic of southeastern New Jersey but not of New England, the house has all of the hallmarks of first-period construction: decoratively-carved shouldered posts, a chimney girt and transverse summer beam, framing members decorated with chamfers ending in lamb’s tongue stops, and massive hewn timbers. Its shingled exterior, atypical for Cape May County’s first-period buildings, is more commonly seen on Long Island and in northern New Jersey’s Monmouth County, two areas that might suggest the origin of the house’s builder.

The oldest section, consisting of the southernmost five bays of the main block and measuring approximately 38’ wide by 18’ deep, was built about 1695. It may even date to 1688; John Reeves owed money that year to the estate of Salem County bricklayer Richard Woodnutt, a debt that may have represented the cost of Woodnutt’s labor to build the house’s massive chimney. This part of the house features a chimney girt and a massive transverse summer beam in the first floor parlor (the largest in the county at 9” by 14.5”), molded and gunstock posts, and chamfered joists with lamb’s tongue stops, all of which are exposed and original. In plan, the house was originally configured with a two-story section to the south (represented by the present parlor and two chambers above) having a footprint of 26’ wide by 18’ deep, to which was attached a single-story, side lean-to kitchen to the north 12’ wide by 18’ deep. A chimney between the two contains back-to-back fireplaces in a chimney bay that measures seven feet wide. Tucked in the northeast corner of the chimney bay is a straight flight of stairs accessed from the kitchen lean-to; the stairs do not appear to be original, but are early. Many walls have interior flushboards, added ca.1825.

The parlor fireplace, with an opening that now measures 42” wide by 21” tall, was re-worked from its 5’ wide original size and made smaller as evidenced by infilled floor boards and a nail pattern on the north face of the chimney girt showing the dimensions and layout of the original paneled fireplace wall. The chimney girt and summer beam in the parlor are decorated with a chamfer ending in a lamb’s tongue stop; both are supported by shouldered oak posts that are molded or carved with a quarter-round profile. Ceiling joists overhead, made atypically of hard pine, are also chamfered and have a lamb’s tongue stop. The fireplace wall is covered with vertical flush boarding, of random width and hand planed.

One square casement window on the parlor’s rear (east) wall, and double-hung wood windows in the parlor’s front and rear walls, are possibly original, or at least early. The square casement
The attic is reached by a ladder located on the second floor on the west side of the chimney stack in the ca.1695 section. The original rafters over this section are trenched for roof lath placed 13.5’-14” on center to accommodate the nailing of wood shingles, strongly suggesting the use of shingles three feet in length. The chimney stack, which measures 34.5” square, has two flues and rises at the north end of this section; its handmade bricks have a very lumpy surface and are likely original. Behind the chimney, the original north gable end of the ca. 1695 two-story section is extant, preserved in situ when the lean-to was raised. It has its original cedar shingle exterior consisting of hand-split cedar shingles also three feet long, 7” to 8” wide, and 5/8” thick. The rafters own the kitchen, added about 1730 when the lean-to was raised to two stories, has shouldered corner posts that are molded with a half-round profile. These corner posts face each other, in an east-west direction, compared to those in the kitchen below which face in a north-south direction. Ceiling joists overhead — not chamfered — instead have a double bead and are made of cedar.

The lean-to kitchen has a large cooking fireplace located directly behind the parlor fireplace and both share the same chimney stack. The fireplace in the lean-to appears to be original and measures 6’ wide by 28” deep by 42” high. There is no evidence of a bake oven. The mantel is identical to that in the parlor and both appear to date from the late 18th century. Joists overhead in the kitchen are identical to those in the parlor and both appear to date from the late 18th century. Joists overhead in the kitchen are identical to those in the parlor and both appear to date from the late 18th century.

The northernmost section of the house, built about 1800, has a footprint of about 12 feet wide by 18 feet deep, and it represents third-period (ca.1780-90 to ca.1845) timber framing. Typical of that period, its framing members are smaller but still exposed, and feature straight corner posts, beaded joists of beech cedar, and girfs faced with beaded-edge boards. Rafters over this addition are mill-sawn and not trenched for roof lath, characteristics consonant with its construction date.

Victorian-era additions to the rear were removed by the present owners when the house was moved from its original to its present site in the winter of 1962.

Joan Berkey
1727, moved 1767, addition 1979
Upper Township, Cape May County

According to Society of Friends’ meeting minutes, this plank frame, one-story building was erected in 1727. It was originally located in Beesley’s Point (about seven miles to the north), a small village on the south side of the Great Egg Harbor River, where it was used on alternate Sundays by Friends who traveled by boat between this meeting house and another (no longer standing) in Somers Point on the north side of the river. It was moved to its present location about 1767, and a separate women’s section was joined to the earlier structure. This part of the building was either torn down or moved to an unknown location in 1871. Today, the Seaville Meeting is the only extant Quaker meeting house in Cape May County and its decorated frame is typical of the county’s first-period (ca.1690-ca.1730) heavy timber frame construction.

Although the original two-inch thick exterior vertical board siding is covered with clapboard added in the late 1800s, it remains exposed on the interior. The meeting house has a footprint approximately 24’ long by 20.5’ deep and its frame is made of hand-hewn and pit-sawn oak. It consists of a single nine-foot tall room that serves as church meeting space. Corner braces are exposed in all four corners and each has a chamfer ending with a modest lamb’s tongue stop. Exposed joists overhead have the same decorative treatment. The 8”-square corner posts, also exposed, are chamfered and flare 2½” at the top, while the front and rear girts have a beaded bottom edge. Adze marks are visible on the joists and some of the framing members.

The original exterior sheathing boards provide the interior wall finish: it consists of beaded cedar boards of varying widths, the two-inch thickness of which is the thickest found to date in the county, so thick that there was no need for a horizontal nailer to stiffen the wall. The boards are splined together rather than joined with a tongue and groove as was more typical among the county’s other plank frame buildings. The front and side doors appear to be original: board-and-batten made with a double layer of vertical boards. They are hung with original strap hinges and the door studs are framed into the plates with pegged mortise and tenon joints. Front door studs are rabited to receive the door. Rows of original wood benches line both sides of the center pathway and face each other. The backs of many bear hand-carved names and initials. At the rear (north) of the room are four sets of original benches that face south. Original wood benches also line the perimeter walls. Face-nailed shingles in the west gable end appear to be original; typical of early work, they were also used in the gable ends of the ca.1708 Thomas Gandy House, located immediately to the north. The roof lath to which the shingles are nailed measures 3½” by 3”, a heavier size than is usually seen; those on the south slope appear to be original. Hewn rafters, made of cedar, are seated at the end of the cantilevered joists (which by their extension create a cornice at the front and back of the meetinghouse) and are tied to the joists with a pegged mortise and tenon joint. This method of tying rafters to the frame, that is, tying them to the joists rather than to the front and rear plates, is only found in a handful of other Cape May County buildings, all of them first-period houses, including the ca.1695 Reeves-Izzard-Godfrey House.

The community room that abuts the original meeting house was added in 1979.

Joan Berkey
Seaville Friends Meeting House

Seaville Friends Meeting House

Seaville Friends Meeting House

Seaville Friends Meeting House
Rufwud Cottage

1917
Stone Harbor, Cape May County

Designed by noted Philadelphia architect Oscar Morris Hokanson (1871-1951) for his personal use, Rufwud Cottage (“Rough Wood”) is a relatively rare example of an Arts & Crafts-influenced summer cottage on the Jersey shore which exhibits an unusually high state of preservation. The exterior retains its original front porch, large bay window, bands of ribbon windows that open to catch sea breezes, and unpainted cypress clapboard exterior. Remarkably, the interiors have been little changed since the house was built and retain their original pine plank walls, boxed and exposed ceiling joists, and brick fireplace.

The doors, cabinets, and windows appear to have been constructed on the site with materials that were also being used elsewhere in the cottage. The kitchen has a ca.1910 Kohler sink on porcelain legs, a ca.1910 Detroit Stove Works gas stove, a ca.1927 GE top monitor refrigerator, and two cupboards rebuilt according to markings found on the floor and walls. One toilet, two bathroom sinks, and the bathtub are of the period.

Original electric light toggle switches have been replaced in-kind. Interesting original touches include several built-in drop-front hanging desks and a roomy front porch swing made about 1917 by Edward Culbertson, the father of Hokanson’s wife, Bess.

The foundation is composed of an unusual mixture of cement with lump coal, reportedly an experiment by the architect to lighten the foundation’s weight.1 The load-bearing walls are all of upright two-inch thick pine planks. The building also has no heat, typical for an early 20th-century summer cottage at the shore. Most extant dwellings from this period in Stone Harbor have been covered with low maintenance aluminum or vinyl siding. Many from this early period have been replaced by modern structures that optimize the economies of their lots. Others have been placed on new, higher, cement-block foundations, out of character with their intended relationship to the land.

1 The owner, a descendant of the architect, says his mother (the architect’s niece) was told that Oscar Hokanson specified the unusual concrete admixture as an experiment to lighten the weight of the concrete, and thus of the foundation, standing on a sandy beach.
Begun in 1973 with the purchase of the former Cold Spring Grange Hall (built in 1912) on a 22-acre lot, Historic Cold Spring Village has grown to 26 historic buildings that significantly represent the vernacular architecture of southern New Jersey. Collectively, these buildings recall a time when specialized building types housed small businesses that supported everyday life.

The founders, Dr. Joseph and Anne Salvatore, sought to preserve examples of everyday architecture rapidly being lost through redevelopment or neglect. Over more than 30 years, they acquired and moved public, commercial, and domestic buildings, and restored them, opening to the public a non-profit, open-air museum where the crafts and lifestyles of the 1800s are brought to life. The following buildings highlight the collection.

Coxe Hall Cottage

C. 1691; C. 1720; restored in 2006 to its c. 1720 appearance

Local tradition has long claimed that this 1½-story building is, or is a surviving part of, Coxe Hall, a towered residence built around 1691 that also served the young settlement of Cape May as a courthouse, meeting hall, and church. Coxe Hall was erected for Dr. Daniel Coxe (1640-1730), a London court physician who acquired a proprietary interest in 95,000 acres on the Cape May peninsula in the late 1680s. Coxe never came to the New World, but he encouraged the establishment of a whale fishery and a town (a site now mostly under the waters of the Delaware Bay) located on New England Creek in what became Lower Township. Coxe’s New World managers probably lived in the house in the late 17th century as they developed a trading post, sawmill, and other businesses in the area on behalf of Daniel Coxe.

The cottage’s massive framing members, rough-hewn joints, and carved corner posts are consistent with a late 17th-century construction date. It is too small to match the surviving descriptive information about Coxe Hall, but its earliest known historic location and its framing details suggest that the cottage we see today may well have been part of Coxe Hall. In 1897, local historian Lewis Townsend Stevens claimed that Coxe Hall was “at last converted into dwellings for workmen, who neither knew nor cared anything for its uses in former days,” adding further credence to the local lore surrounding this house.

In the 1890s, this small house was moved several miles from its location on the bayside to a quiet country road outside of Cape May City. It was raised a half-story to a 2-story height, a ca. 1720 fireplace was removed and replaced with a chimney flue for a parlor stove, and it received numerous additions. Vacant and facing demolition in 2006, the Salvatores moved it and restored its ca. 1720 appearance.
The cottage, which faces west at its present location, has a footprint that is approximately 18’ wide by 16’ deep; in plan, this consists of a common room on the first floor and a single chamber in the upper half-story. Removal of later interior and exterior finishes (including asbestos siding and ca.1890 plaster) during restoration revealed that the house was originally covered with wood planks, was originally joined to another building at the fireplace gable end, was not originally framed for a fireplace, and had a built-in corner cupboard (possibly original) in the common room. Pieces of the original, molded horizontal nailer for the plank frame exterior were found reused as plaster lath and were duplicated for the restoration. Joists overhead in the parlor are hand-hewn of oak and have no bead or chamfer. The underside of the east joists, bearing the ca.1713 Samuel Porter House in Hadley, Massachusetts.

Because it is unlikely that such highly-decorated post heads would have been used on a small, 1½-story house, the cottage may well have been part of Coxe Hall as tradition claims. In fact, a 1726 drawing of the Town Bank area where Coxe Hall originally stood shows a similar looking, 1½-story dwelling located behind Coxe Hall.

Spicer and Hannah Leaming House

The Spicer and Hannah Leaming House was built about 1815 by a descendant of two of the county’s most prominent whaler-yeoman families, the Spicers and the Leamings. The house originally stood on a large farmstead located at what is today the southern terminus of the Garden State Parkway in Lower Township. The original tract contained 200 acres purchased by Jacob Spicer, Sr. (1668-1741), a colonial legislator and judge who expanded the farmstead to 733 acres. In 1741, the farmstead descended to his son, Jacob Spicer, Jr. Esq. (1716-1765), best remembered for his service in the New Jersey Assembly.

The house was built about 1815 for his grandson, Spicer Leaming (1762-1838), and his wife, Hannah. While it is classifiable as a third-period house, it is peculiar. The north half appears retardataire, as it was built in the early to mid-1700s, with exposed corner posts and girts, beaded joists overhead, a large cooking fireplace in the kitchen, and board-covered walls. Yet the south half was modern for Cape May in 1815: its plaster walls and ceilings reflected the newest local trend. Plaster was just gaining acceptance as an interior finish in Cape May County, more than a century after it was adopted many other places along the eastern seaboard. If Spicer Leaming had instructed his builder to make half of the house look like one from his grandfather’s day, while building the other half brand new, it would have looked like this. This dichotomy of interior finishes had led earlier historians to believe that the house represented two building campaigns, but several types of physical evidence show that the entire house was built around 1815.

Strangely, despite a 35’ by 18’ footprint, the house lacks a center hall. During the early 19th century, the vast majority of the county’s two-room-wide houses had a center hall plan. That this house has winder stairs adjacent to chimneys in the gable ends, and no center hall, departs from the norm in Cape May County.

The house is well-built, composed of oak corner posts, oak rafter and oak studs. Many of its framing members, especially rafters and floor joists, bear both hand-hewn and vertical saw marks, illustrating the tenacity of the heavy timber framing tradition well into the 19th century.

The Spicer and Hannah Leaming House was moved to the Village in 1977; it has been determined eligible for listing in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.
**Dennisville Inn**

1836; bar rebuilt c.1985

Regarding this building, Orphan’s Court records reveal that Thomas Henderson (1764-1838) owned at his death “a public stand situate at Dennis Creek [that] has for many years past and is at present occupied as a public Inn or Tavern...containing 5 acres on which the said Henderson a short time before his decease built a spacious new House and other outbuildings. The old house having accidentally taken fire and burned.” Henderson erected this handsome 2½-story tavern on a well-traveled public road not far from a busy landing on Dennis Creek where an active trade in local lumber products and shipbuilding was carried on. The building continued to be used as a tavern until the early 1870s, when its owner became a Baptist; it was then used for church gatherings and meetings until the late 1800s. When built, the Inn had a rear ell that contained a dining room on the first floor and one or more chambers above; because of its size, however, the ell was not moved when the building was relocated to the Village in 1985.

The building is about 42' wide by 18' deep. The center door leads into a center hall with an elegant staircase; the bar room with its own exterior door is to the west and a meeting/dining room is to the east. The meeting room features a mural above the chair rail that was hand-painted by a former Village employee depicting scenes of Cape May County history. The second floor and the finished garret are divided into several bedchambers.

This large structure was moved about 20 miles south from Dennis Township. To do so, it was cut in half horizontally, moved, and then rejoined.

**Hathorn House**

ca.1722; ca.1780-90; 1970

This two-story house, now used as the Village’s general store, is composed of two heavy timber frame sections: one from the first period, the other late in the second period. It was moved to the Village in 1970 from its original location almost 25 miles to the north.

The original (southernmost) section was probably built about 1722 by yeoman-farmer James Hathorn (1700-1767), who recorded his earmark that year. This section features joists, girts, and plates decorated with chamfers and lamb’s tongue stops, two exposed gunstock corner posts, and two chased and flared corner posts, all characteristics consonant with a first-period (ca. 1690-ca.1730) construction date. In plan, it has a 26' wide by 18' deep footprint that accommodated a common room with a fireplace and adjacent winder stair on the first story (since removed) and one or more chambers on the second story. The chambers feature their original, hand-planed board exterior walls; those on the first floor are not original. Corner posts are of oak while the plates and girts are of locally abundant cedar, a wood especially seen in northern Cape May County.

About 1780-1790, a 1½-story gable roof addition was placed against the north wall. It has a somewhat smaller, 22' wide by 18' deep footprint. Its first story contained a kitchen and its cooking fireplace – among the largest in the county – survives. The exposed straight corner posts and the exposed front, rear, and side girts have a beaded, rather than chamfered edge, typical during the second period (ca.1730-ca.1780-90). There was at least one chamber, also with original hand-planed board walls, on the upper story. Around 1830, this section was raised to its present two-story height, and evidence of the raising is visible in a change in bricks that compose the upper few feet of the chimney and in re-used rafters with vacant mortise pockets that originally held collar beams used to frame the chamber ceiling when this section was 1½-stories tall.

The second floor joists and floorboards of both sections have been removed, exposing the interior framework to the roof and the masonry of the large chimney at the north end. First-story window and door placements were reconfigured to accommodate the building’s change in use.
This small store is standing at its third known location. It was originally built about 1856 for entrepreneur Mackey Williams in Tuckahoe, a small ship-building village on the Tuckahoe River about 25 miles to the north. In the 1860s, it was used as a tailor shop and later as a dry goods store operated by a retired sea captain, Elijah Wheaton. An inventory taken in 1893 of Wheaton's shop goods shows he sold, among other things, schoolbooks, pocketknives, candy, shirts and underwear, corsets, and dishes. From 1894 to 1913 it housed a local savings and loan that installed a locking grille system behind the bay windows and the front double doors, evidence of which remains. In the mid-20th century, it was used for township committee meetings, then was sold and moved about 6 miles to the east where it was used as a sandwich shop/lunch counter and later as the office for a motel. It was acquired by the Village in 1991.

The building's footprint is 14' wide by 16' deep with a 6.5' deep front porch. All building components appear to be original, including the bay windows, front porch with saw-tooth trim and paneled columns, double front doors, windows, bracketed cornice with dentil molding, and built-in wood gutter system. Examination of framing in the attic shows the building originally had a center chimney flue, which served a parlor stove, removed after ca.1950.
From the fire tower on Bear Swamp Hill, in Washington Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, the view usually extends about twelve miles. To the north, forest land reaches to the horizon. The trees are mainly oaks and pines, and the pines predominate. Occasionally, there are long, dark serrated stands of Atlantic white cedar, so tall and so closely set that they seem to be spread against the sky on the ridges of hills, when in fact they grow along streams that flow through the forest.

Thus begins John McPhee’s 1968 book The Pine Barrens, which introduced to many people – perhaps some of you – New Jersey’s most distinctive landscape. Given both the size of the Pine Barrens – much more than ten percent of the State’s land area – and the complexity of it, a full-day tour can only bring participants to a few well-selected places, to inculcate an appreciation for what fascinated McPhee. The Pine Barrens includes portions of seven counties, easily swallowing within its boundaries two large state forests, the 115,000-acre Wharton State Forest and the 34,725-acre Brendan Byrne State Forest, plus several smaller forests and wildlife refuges. Today’s tour will have six stops, with a large number of additional opportunities to see aspects of the Pinelands as we drive through. Our tour has been planned to introduce participants to the architecture, economy, and history of the Pine Barrens.

Once we leave the Seaview, the tour will follow Duerer Road through Cologne, Germania, and Egg Harbor City, an agricultural area heavily settled by German immigrants in the 1850s and 60s. As the bus turns north, the scenery will quickly give way to sandy pitch pine forests enroute to our first stop at Batsto. Batsto was an iron plantation on the banks of the Batsto River. First built in 1766, Batsto subsequently passed in 1784 to the family of William Richards who owned and operated an ironworks there through the 1840s, and a glassworks after that. The village supported a gristmill, a piggery, an icehouse, a general store, a post office, and a short-lived school. The factory produced window glass and glass for street lights. But even this production was short-lived, ceasing in 1867.2

In 1873, Philadelphia capitalist and philanthropist Joseph Wharton began purchasing Pine Barrens land as an investment. A year later, Batsto suffered a major fire.3 Wharton bought the Batsto estate in 1876. He paid what even then was a pittance: $14,000, and then spent $40,000 on renovations to the property. During Wharton’s ownership, the piggery was expanded, Batsto’s sawmill was constructed, and the mansion built by Richards was expanded and a tower added. Wharton sought to convert Batsto into an agricultural community, attempting to grow peanuts and sugar beets, but with little success. Eventually, he turned to cranberries, a crop better suited to the conditions of the area.

Wharton also devised a grand scheme that would convey pure Pinelands water to Philadelphia to improve the city’s existing supply. His plan involved a system of canals and lakes. The water from west-flowing streams would be added to the flow of the canal, eventually dumping into a gigantic lake near Haddonfield in Camden County. A pipeline would carry the water under the Delaware River to Philadelphia. Wharton’s plan raised great opposition in New Jersey, and the State enacted a law in 1884 making it illegal to convey New Jersey waters outside the state. Believing, however, that he that he would be able to overcome New Jersey’s opposition and that at some point Philadelphia would need the naturally clean water, Wharton continued to add to his landholdings in the pines until his death in 1909.4

For almost a century, Batsto was nearly forgotten, its few residents finding work where they could in the surrounding area. In 1954 the State of New Jersey finally bought the land of the Wharton estate, to become the Wharton State Forest. The state began planning for the use and development of the property, granting a lifetime tenancy to residents of the community. The last resident left in 1989. Batsto is not a restored ironworks. Most of the buildings today reflect the Wharton period. The village currently includes the mansion, general store, post office, gristmill, sawmill, wheelwright and blacksmith shops, workers’ cottages, icehouses, and church. Time has been allotted to tour the village.

With a stop at one of New Jersey’s older wineries, two major themes in Pinelands history will become apparent: agriculture and immigration. South Jersey’s Outer Coastal Plain produces approximately 70 percent of the wine grapes grown in New Jersey and has soil and climate conditions similar to the Bordeaux region of France. The Tomasello Winery, a stop on the tour, is located in Hammonton, a center of Italian immigration to South Jersey. Incorporated in 1866, Hammonton was the product of an agrarian vision shared by two Philadelphia land developers, Charles Landis and Richard Byrne. Three years earlier, the first Italian farmer, a Sicilian named Salvatore Calabrese came to Hammonton from the tiny village of Cessaro. Within a few years, many of the residents of his homestead had relocated to the area around Hammonton. By 1920, more than 60 percent of the population of Hammonton had Italian surnames and in the 2010 census, 44.6 percent of the residents reported themselves to be of Italian ancestry.

Frank Tomasello was a second-generation Italian-American farmer, known in the community for his raspberries, strawberries, peaches, and sweet potatoes, and who also had experience growing grapes and had a passion for wine. In 1933, with the end of Prohibition, Tomasello learned that the Federal government would issue winery licenses, and he sought and received License #68. The Tomasello Winery officially went into business that June, after New Jersey adopted the Twenty-first Amendment. Still operated by
members of the Tomasello family, the vineyard grows wine grapes on nearly 70 acres. The winery specializes in Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Riesling, as well as French Hybrid varieties. The winery has also become known for its dessert wines. Our stop at the winery will include lunch, a tour, and wine tasting.

The tour will next stop at the Atsion Mansion. Like Batsto, Atsion was established to take advantage of the bog iron deposits of the Pine Barrens. Atsion is not a restored village, either, today consisting only of the mansion house, the walls of a barn, and unrestored remnants of other buildings in the woods beyond. A sawmill was constructed there in 1765 and acquired later the same year by Supreme Court Justice Charles Read, founder of Batsto and two other Pine Barrens communities, Tauton and Etna, at about the same time. Read erected an iron forge and named the area Atsion, after his father before him. cranberries had been planted at the site of The Birches in the early 20th century, including a huge orchard and a cotton mill. In 1892, Wharton added Atsion to his vast holdings with the idea of the Medford Lakes Colony Club, which ultimately included homes for 1600 summer or year-round residents surrounding each of the communities 22 artificial lakes. The original idea was that all Medford Lakes buildings would be for summer use and constructed of logs. Craftsmen hired by Todd shaped logs into comfortable homes, some of which were built with the bark removed from the logs, others with logs un-scrapped. Fireplaces made with local stone completed the rustic aesthetic. The houses were designed to blend in with the pines. By the end of the 1930s, however, the resort had developed into a year-round community. Construction during the ‘30s and ‘40s required the use of full logs. In the 1950s, however, rules were relaxed to permit new homes to be built with simulated log siding. The community’s retail business, the Colony Club Pavilion, occupied a complex of log buildings, and so do the two churches and the Colony Club Pavilion.

Taken together, the sites visited during the Pine Barrens Tour illustrate how the land labeled “barren” was used over three centuries. The natural resources that confounded settlers with a maritime or agricultural background – pine trees, sandy soil, and iron-laced soil – came to

blueberries, with the remaining acres in forest or used as reservoirs. Fire in 1954 brought a temporary end to the cranberry business, but Samuel Moore, Sr. returned in the 1970s, and began cranberry production again.

The tour will stop at The Birches, the only remaining, commercially-operated, 19th-century cranberry farm that retains a substantial portion of its 19th-century buildings and equipment. Mary Ann Thompson will be our host at The Birches. Her father, Charles S. Thompson, Jr., managed the farm, as did his father before him. Cranberries had been planted at the site of The Birches in the early 20th century, but its origins can be traced to 1883, when Martin L. Haines, a member of a prominent Burlington County family, built a bog nearby. An article in Cranberries: The National Cranberry Magazine, described The Birches in the 1950s as a plantation set deep in the pines: “There are a number of dwellings and other buildings, including a huge screen house. In the houses, built of Jersey Cedar now time-darkened, the workers live with their families.” The tour will allow time for viewing the buildings of The Birches and examining how the traditional methods of cranberry growing differ from modern methods.

The day will end at Medford Lakes, a 20th-century real estate development at the edge of the Pines. The community was developed by Leon Edgar Todd, a Camden, NJ real estate operator, beginning in 1927. Todd developed the idea of the Medford Lakes Colony Club, which ultimately included homes for 1600 summer or year-round residents surrounding each of the communities 22 artificial lakes. The tour will proceed through the agricultural region of the Pinelands. The fields with low spindly bushes topped with a haze of red in winter are blueberry fields. The tour will show you bogs operated by two of the region’s cranberry growers. The tour will drive past a modern cranberry/blueberry operation, the Moore’s Meadow Blueberry and Cranberry Farm. The Moore family settled in Tabernacle six generations ago, and members of the family have owned the farm since 1889. The farm comprises 515 acres, of which about 70 acres are devoted to cranberry bogs and about half that acreage for
be understood and utilized by “pineys.” Today, vast swatches of the Pine Barrens are protected, preserving “natural resources” of clean air and water; the pines that were once cut and burned for iron production are now valued for their capacity to clear carbon from the air and the sand that once was formed into glass is now important as a filter for the largest freshwater aquifer in the northeastern United States. An awareness of the environmental significance of the Pine Barrens reached a national audience through John McPhee’s writings in 1968; by 1978, Congress passed legislation to designate 1.1 million acres of the Pine Barrens as the Pinelands National Reserve (the nation’s first National Reserve) to preserve its ecology. A decade later, it was designated by the United Nations as an International Biosphere Reserve. Development in the Pinelands National Reserve, the largest wilderness area in the mid-Atlantic region, is strictly controlled by an independent state/federal agency, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission.

It is hard to realize now, but New Jersey’s first major industry was iron making, often carried out in places that are now quietly rural. The ore was here, and because vast woodlands provided the raw material for charcoal, the fuel was here as well. The list of iron production sites throughout New Jersey is a long one, and includes mines, furnaces, and forges. Several places remain today as interpreted historic sites; many others survive as archaeological sites or ruined buildings, but are not interpreted or open to the public. In his 1931 book, *Early Furnaces and Forges in New Jersey*, Charles S. Boyer identified about seventy iron production sites, and even that enumeration may not be fully complete.

Geology and topography have given New Jersey iron a clear and obvious divide. The so-called “hard ores,” magnetite and red hematite, are found through the northern part of the state. Bog iron, or limonite ore, occurs most extensively in the outer coastal plain of southern and central of New Jersey. It is actually a renewable resource. In the lowlands of southern New Jersey, ground water percolates through the overlying organic matter to dissolve a considerable quantity of iron from the limonite rock. As the water moves into streams and is exposed to air, the iron begins to oxidize and is deposited as a reddish, muddy sludge along river banks and in coves and swamps. “Thus, the ore is formed by the reducing action of decaying vegetable matter on soluble iron salts.” As John McPhee explained, it “permeates the sands and gravels of the riverbank and cements them together into a sandstone composite.” It is estimated that under the right conditions an exhausted bog iron-ore bed can renew itself in about twenty-five years.

Since the regrowth of pine trees for charcoal making also required about twenty-five years, the bog iron operations could, theoretically, have continued operating in the same location for generations. American economic realities, however, did not support this outcome. Bog iron could succeed when no other was available, but as soon as “hard-ore” iron, fueled by fossil coal, could be transported by rail, the capacity of furnaces, especially in Pennsylvania, to produce better, cheaper iron left the south Jersey bog iron industry behind, both economically and technologically.

But before the sunset of the industry, there were decades when towns arose in the Pine Barrens, busy with activity, noisy with the pounding of machines, smoky with the blast from the furnaces and charcoal pits and cooking fires in many homes. Batsto Village is an exemplar of these places. The name is said to derive from the Swedish word “badstu,” for “bathing place.” The village of Batsto was founded in 1766 by Charles Read, of Burlington, who had a hand in developing several bog iron forges, including nearby Atsion and the Aetna Furnace which stood on the site of today’s Medford Lakes (both on the tour). By 1773, the Batsto property had been acquired by Philadelphia merchant John Cox, who sold out to Joseph Ball, the manager of the works, in 1779. Ball, with his practical experience in iron making, operated the forges throughout the Revolutionary war to supply munitions, as well as iron fasteners and fittings for artillery caissons, wagons and ships to the Continental Army. This war-time business boom led to an expansion of the bog iron mining operations there, to the construction of the Batsto Forge in 1781, and the addition of a slitting mill in 1783. The Batsto Furnace was known for its high-quality iron, and its casting shops, which made many products. They specialized in cast iron pipe, used in the 19th century for water systems in some American cities. George Washington commissioned four monogrammed Batsto firebacks for his home; two of them remain at Mount Vernon.
The Batsto ironworks would remain associated with various members of Ball's family until 1876, but the family name indelibly associated with Batsto is Richards. In 1784 William Richards (1738-1823), Joseph Ball's uncle and a former manager of the ironworks, purchased the property, and oversaw a period of increased development in the business. Upon William's retirement around 1810, his son Jesse (1782-1854) took over management, and it was during his long tenure that Batsto reached both its heights of production and its iron-making obsolescence. The War of 1812 provided a boost to Batsto, but the pace of production began to outstrip the availability of local bog iron. Jesse Richards began to import iron ore, allowing the furnaces to run full-time, leading to another period of profitability. During the 1820s, a number of the buildings and improvements still extant on the property were constructed, including the gristmill, the mule barn, the stone horse barn, and the canal.

In 1838, Richards had the furnace altered to use a newer technology: the hot-blast method of smelting iron, but he could not compete with the growing iron and coal industries in Pennsylvania, which made both the raw material and its production to finished goods cheaper than could be done with bog iron burned in charcoal-powered furnaces. A decade later, the Batsto furnace went out of blast for the final time. It collapsed over time, and today nothing is left of the furnace or forges that were the heart of the Batsto iron business.

Jesse Richards sought alternatives to keep his investment and his workmen in place. He opened a glass factory in 1846 that produced window glass through the Civil War. This was not an uncommon choice for bog iron furnaces, for the right type of sand was readily available and the vast forests continued to regenerate to provide the fuel. The ironworks at Allaire in Monmouth County also followed this course in the 1840s.

Yet by 1868 Batsto was bankrupt, and all its industries ceased operation. The community was largely abandoned. Census records show a township population of just over two thousand in 1850, during the glass producing years, but in 1880 only 389. The population drop was no doubt reinforced by a February 1874 fire that destroyed a large share of the workers' houses, the glass factories, and the most recent additions to the ironworks. Joseph Wharton (1826-1909), a Philadelphia industrialist, purchased Batsto from William Richards' grandson, Thomas Richards, at a sheriff's sale in 1876. Wharton had no interest in iron or glass, but purchased the village as part of the acquisition of thousands of acres of land in a plan to develop a water reservoir, and create a privately owned utility to sell water to the cities of Camden and Philadelphia.

Wharton used the Richards Mansion as the seat of a gentleman's farm, and he invested considerable funds in repairing and enlarging the former ironmaster's house to a suitable summer
house for himself and his family. Wharton also tended to the buildings of the village needed to support his farm, including upgrading the grist mill, building the sawmill, repairing the worker’s house, and re-establishing the Post Office. Wharton leased Batsto lands for a variety of agricultural interests, such as cattle, sugar beet and cranberry production, and forestry.

After Wharton’s death, his estate, including Batsto and his many other properties, was administered by the Girard Trust Company in Philadelphia. The Wharton family continued to use the Batsto mansion as a summer retreat and a sometime hunting lodge, but the agricultural uses of nearby land were gradually abandoned, and the land reverted to its wild state. The former village was abandoned and only a caretaker for the property occupied this place where once thousands had lived.

The history of the site was known and remarked upon as part of South Jersey lore; the arrival of a team of architects and historians to document several buildings at Batsto for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1937 confirmed its importance. In 1954, the State of New Jersey, in a major move that foreshadowed its future interest in open-space preservation, bought the entirety of the remaining Wharton “tract,” then over 92,000 acres (later expanded), and created Wharton State Forest. Batsto was to be treated as a historic property, managed as a state park. In 1960, restoration architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh prepared a restoration plan for Batsto village that focused on returning the surviving buildings to the Richards Era (1784-1854). Under his guidance, several buildings, including the Mule Barn, the Stone Horse Barn, the Sawmill, and the Batsto Store and Post Office were restored. The Batsto Mansion was always the home of the owners of Batsto. It was built in several stages, beginning in the late 18th century by the Richards family. Today the mansion reflects the changes made by Joseph Wharton in the late 1870s and early 1880s. He spent about $40,000 renovating the mansion, transforming it from a large but rather simple two-and-a-half story center-hall dwelling to a more picturesque villa with Italianate details outside, including a five-story tower topped by a belvedere, and a fashionable interior in the style of the Aesthetic Movement. The main rooms feature clear-finished wood, with single rooms devoted to showcasing individual wood species, including ash, chestnut, oak and walnut.

The General Store and Post Office and company offices occupied a building begun in the late 18th century, and enlarged in the Richards era. Built into a hillside bank, the store opens to the south, its entry through a broad porch sitting right beside the main street that once ran through the village. The windowless rear of the store is banked into the hillside. This portion of the building was constructed by the last quarter of the 18th century; its heavy timber frame is similar to that used for barns in the region. The upper

Batsto’s Buildings

Batsto Village is now part of the Wharton State Forest, administered by the State of New Jersey’s Department of Environmental Protection. In this rural setting, the village aptly shows the development of the small South Jersey towns that based their existence on iron or glass. The furnaces and forges that were at the heart of the community are long gone; their sites are marked. The buildings that can be visited are as follows.
two floors of the building were storage space for goods to be sold in the store. The banked form of the building allowed bulk deliveries directly into the upper levels.

An addition was made to the west about 1847, using brick and a gambrel roof form that would have been familiar in Philadelphia row houses, although it was rather old-fashioned in style and spirit for the mid-19th century. The timber framing and simple details speak of a conservative building culture that emphasized utility rather than decorative embellishment for this company town. When the Post Office was established at Batsto in 1852, it was located in a room on the top level of this addition, and was given its own access from the north side. During the Richards era, this was a true “company town,” issuing its own scrip, and settling employee accounts at the company store.

The Mule Barn was built in 1828 during Jesse Richards’ ownership, in a time of prosperity and expansion. The mule barn and gristmill were constructed at the same time and oriented to a new man-made waterway that functioned as both a millrace and a canal. The mule barn housed the mules used to pull barges to and from the gristmill and also had storage space for their feed and straw bedding. The barn was originally erected as a two-story masonry building, made of local bog iron ore (limonite or “peanut stone”), with a wood shingle roof. During the 19th century decline of the ironworks, the canal was abandoned and its form lost. The resulting dampness and water infiltration in the vicinity appears to have damaged the west side of the barn to such an extent that it was demolished and replaced with a frame section about 1894, during the Wharton era. The Mule Barn was originally a single open space, with wooden flooring and wooden stalls. HABS records for the barn note that “former wood stalls, grain & hay chutes now removed.”

Its companion building, the Gristmill, is also built of the same local stone, and was originally powered by a wooden water wheel positioned inside a frame wheel house extended over the mill race or canal. In 1882, the wheel was replaced by a more efficient side-winder water turbine. The mill ground and processed wheat, corn, and other grains for use within the community, and for sale at the store.

The Sawmill at Batsto stands on the opposite bank of the waterway from the gristmill. This frame building went up in 1882 as part of the Wharton-era renovations, but a sawmill had operated on or near this site since the middle of the 18th century. The present sawmill was built to use water power for a circular saw. The long form of the building, characteristic of sawmills, reflects the process of putting a log into a “carriage”, which guided it on a track past the saw blade. The length of the log carriage determined the standard length of lumber produced.

Today, 17 Worker Houses remain on the property, from about 75 that are known to have stood before the 1874 fire. They are configured both as single and double houses along an abandoned road that leads west to the Mullica River and to the church and community at Pleasant Mills. They were rented to employees at the furnace, and later, the glassworks, and finally to anyone who wished to live cheaply and remotely. Plumbing and electricity were only added after the State of New Jersey took over the property.
Batsto mule barn. Elevation and section; plan.

Batsto Village

site and developed interpretive uses for some of the houses in the 1960s.

A detailed investigation of the housing at Batsto, undertaken with documentary research, archaeology, and study of the surviving buildings, has revealed that between 1847 and 1870 the village had six types of houses. Two were log houses, and eleven were framed single houses or double houses. A majority of dwellings were of two stories with gable roofs oriented with the long side parallel to the street. The dwellings typically had three rooms downstairs, including a rear lean-to, and two rooms upstairs. The gable end was 15 feet wide and the front elevations 35 feet long; the shed addition extended 12 feet from the main house. Batsto records show that these houses were frequently whitewashed.12 Double structures had centrally located back-to-back fireplaces, with a closet to one side and a stairwell to the other. The fireplace was used for a small stove, supporting cooking and heating. The lean-to addition appears to have been an addition on some houses, and an integral structure on others; many were added in 1851 according to records of the company.13 The houses were built on a stone footing, but there is no cellar or crawl space underneath. The roofs and siding were made of the locally abundant cedar. Interiors were simply trimmed and finished with lath and plaster.

Credit for the preservation, interpretation and continued restoration of the buildings at Batsto goes to the Batsto Citizens Committee, Inc., which has been active at the site for over 50 years. The BCCI assists the administration of the Wharton State Forest in the form of time, money, and expertise in a variety of mutually agreed upon projects. Members of BCCI have rallied to open many buildings for the Vernacular Architecture Forum tour today, and thanks are extended to all for this opportunity to visit Batsto Village.

Janet W. Foster

1 Limonite is defined as a mixture of hydrated iron(III) oxide-hydroxides in varying composition. It varies in color and may appear brown or bright yellow. Relatively dense, it is found in marshes and meadows. It has been processed to make iron artifacts for literally thousands of years.


4 Although Swedes did settle farther south and west in Burlington County in the 17th century, there is no known association of this site with Swedish settlement.

5 Batsto Archives, Division of Parks and Forestry, as cited in Batsto Village Long Range Plan, 1993, p. 15.

6 Ibid.

7 The statistics are from Edward McNulty’s Historic Batsto, Arsenal of the Revolution, page 54.


10 Ibid., 5.

11 H.A.B.S, NJ-443, Sheets 1-17, 1937. The H.A.B.S drawings illustrate stalls but note that they are “now removed”; the present stalls and interior fittings were reconstructed by preservation architect Edwin Brumbaugh in the 1960s.


13 Ibid.
Tomasello Winery is a family-owned and operated winery. Founded by Frank Tomasello in 1933, the business was passed on to his sons Charles and Joseph in the 1940s and more recently to his grandsons Charlie and Jack, third-generation members of the family to operate the winery.

Frank Tomasello was a farmer in Hammonton, New Jersey in the 1930s, known for his raspberries, strawberries, peaches, sweet potatoes, a passion for wine, and a special knack for growing grapes. After New Jersey passed the 21st Amendment repealing prohibition, Tomasello Winery was officially in business. The original winery building was built in the 1940s and upgraded in 1981. Only a small portion of the old facility remains, sandwiched between more modern structures. The tank room, where fermentation occurs, is a modern facility located nearby, with stainless steel vats. The winery’s new banquet hall was constructed in 2002.

Tomasello currently has seventy acres under vine in Atlantic and Camden Counties, with more than thirty different varieties of grapes including classic European vinifera, Native American, and French hybrids. New varietals include Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Merlot, Sangiovese, and Syrah. The first three are components of a Bordeaux-style blend named Palmaris that has received excellent press. Tomasello’s high-end dessert fruit wines are also popular and include Raspberry, Cranberry, Blackberry, Blueberry, Cherry, Pomegranate, and Pomegranate/Blueberry wines.

Tomasello Winery is open for wine tastings every day. For more information call 800-MMM-WINE or visit www.tomasellowinery.com.

Kate Nearpass Ogden
Samuel Richards had his work cut out for him when he purchased the Atsion Iron Works in 1824. Just the previous year J.F. Watson recorded the site. Richards could not have been unaware of the activity in this area for many miles in any direction, dominating the simple frame houses occupied by the village workforce. Visitors to the mansion would alight from their carriages at the rear (north side) of the house and enter through a door that opened into a center hall.

The house has a roughly symmetrical interior design with plain ornamentation, large, heavy wooden trim work, and high ceilings. Guests were entertained in the two identically-sized large parlors that took up the east side of the building. Each parlor had its own door to the center hall and a large connecting door between them that could be thrown open for dancing or an especially large party. A formal dining room lay across the hall. The Richards and their guests would have dined on food from the preparation kitchen in the northwest corner of the house. This kitchen would likely have had a long wooden table, cupboards, and shelves for foodstuffs and table ware. Cooking was done in the basement kitchen on a large brick hearth with bake oven. The kitchen and dining room were the same size, and connected by a small hallway that also contained a stairway to the second floor and one to the basement. With doors closed, the servants could thus remain out of sight.

The second story of the mansion contained the living space for the Richards family. Each of its four principal rooms has a large fireplace with a marble mantle and cast iron fire-back, most likely made at one of the Richards’ furnaces. Living quarters for the staff were located on the third floor. These rooms were small, comfortable, but rather plain.

The mansion was the most prestigious building for miles in any direction, dominating the simple frame houses occupied by the village workforce. Visitors to the mansion would alight from their carriages at the rear (north side) of the house and enter through a door that opened into a center hall.

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mansion was superfluous; he preferred his newly
renovated mansion at Batsto and had no desire to
modernize a second expensive house. Instead,
the mansion ended up used as a storehouse, run
down and dilapidated.

After the State of New Jersey purchased the
Wharton tract, including Atsion, in the 1950s,
they carried out a quick exterior restoration on
the long-neglected Richards mansion. Yet the
mansion remained closed until 2008 when it
was carefully restored, inside and out, as a cost
of over one million dollars. The porch on the
north side was rebuilt, cleverly hiding a handicap
access ramp. The interior walls were patched and
repainted, with each room having a square or two
of wall unrestored so that visitors could see the
original state of the plaster and woodwork prior
to the restoration. Long shuttered to the public,
tours are now held allowing people to view the
interior of the impressive old house.

Ben Ruset

1 Quoted in Arthur D. Pierce,
Iron in the Pines: The Story
of New Jersey’s Ghost Towns and Bog Iron (1957. Reprint

Atsion Mansion floor plan. From Asher S. McCully, Survey of Mansion owned by W. C. Patterson, Esq., Village of Atsion, Burlington

The Birches Cranberry Company received its
name from an elegant line of white-barked birch
trees set against a backdrop of dark cedars lining
its entranceway along the Tom Robert’s Branch
of the Batsto River. According to family tradition,
the first cranberry bogs were set out in wilderness
about five miles southeast of the Burlington County
village of Tabernacle by Pemberton’s legendary
pioneer grower Theodore H. Budd just prior to
1859. Around 1880, Budd sold these bogs and
the nearby Goose Pond to Martin L. Haines of
Vincentown, who set out additional bogs. Early
on, cranberries were hauled to Vincentown to be
sorted and packed in a “screenhouse” located on
64 Mill Street. On the sudden death of Martin in
1905, management of The Birches and its satellite
holdings passed to sons Ernest M. and Ethelbert
Haines. In 1920, Ernest Haines became the
sole owner and manager, while Ethelbert (Bert)
ran the company’s holdings at Hog Wallow.

It is not clear how many structures comprised the
tiny cranberry hamlet prior to Martin’s death. A
November 4, 1915 photo of the cranberry storage
and sorting house with a horse drawn wagon
loaded with barrels of cranberries, appeared
in Hansberger’s classic 1916 monograph, The
Vegetation of the New Jersey Pine Barrens.1 It
is likely that by 1918, when Ethelbert had a
foreman’s house built, most of the essential
structures at The Birches were up, including a
large pickers’ quarter, a repair shop, and storage
sheds.

A nephew of the Haines’ brothers, Vinton N.
Thompson, became manager of “The Birches
Cranberry Company” on January 1, 1947
in partnership with his siblings Ella Wright
and Charles Shepherd Thompson II. Vinton
embarked on an ambitious renovation program,
assisted by Lewis Haines (no relation), foreman
at the bogs since 1904, and a year-round crew
of four. In the 1950s, “sanding” (cranberry-plant rejuvenation) was conducted using track and dump-cars loaded by power shovel and hauled by “donkey engines.” Berries were still harvested using hand scoops. Machine picking was tried but found inefficient because of heavy vine growth. Two Hayden separators and four old fashioned J.J. White separators were used to conduct the sorting. The “Whites” were much slower than newer equipment, but effectively took out every frosted berry for a higher quality product.

Charles (Chick) Thompson, an engineer, became manager of The Birches in 1963 after his brother Vinton died. Within a year, the farm’s longtime foreman Lewis Haines also died and his son Ethelbert (“Berkie”) took over that position.2 Under Chick Thompson’s management and with the guidance of the foremen, The Birches took an increasingly ecological view of working the land and maintaining the farm’s independence while other growers around them joined large co-ops and focused on industrial-style berry production. Water harvesting (walk-behind water reels) soon replaced dry harvesting. New cranberry varieties were planted. The White sorters were replaced by Hayden bounce machines. Production increased despite a decrease in pesticide use. For many years “Chick” sold his berries to C.N.E. Canners in Folsom and later to Pappas in Hammonton. Marketing, however, became increasingly more difficult for independent growers like the Haineses. Despite health problems and financial setbacks, “Chick” succeeded in preserving the farm and its historic structures and bringing it to the 21st century.

Chick’s daughter, Mary-Ann Thompson, is now the fourth generation of the Haines-Thompson family to own the land and operate it as a cranberry farm. A devoted conservationist, she took over management of the farm in 2012. An application has been filed with The Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program to retain the historic sorting house with its antique equipment. The plan is to focus on pesticide-free, dry-harvested heirloom berries (e.g., Howes, Chancellors, and Early Richards) for the organic food market and conduct ecological tours.

The Birches’ centerpiece is a 120’ by 40’ cranberry sorting barn, the construction of which began more than a century ago. It is one of only three such buildings still in continuous operation in the Burlington County cranberry district. Equally notable is the innovative cranberry screening machinery housed within its walls: five Hayden and a lone Bailey Separator, bounce machines ingeniously designed to separate sound berries from rotten ones and grade berries according to determined sizes. Sound berries are accorded seven opportunities to bounce over angled slats, then to advance by a conveyor belt to the hand-screening room. Soft unsound berries will not bounce. Upon striking the slats they fall directly into a refuse receptacle. To witness this fascinating display is to take a giant step back into the historic past of a remarkable industry.

Ted Gordon

2 Other contributing foremen were Ted King, Glen Horner, and Andy Wright.
Like other bog-iron furnaces and industrial complexes using the natural resources of wood, sand and water found abundantly in the Pine Barrens, the Etna (or Aetna) Furnace and Mills, founded in 1766 near the village of Medford, has completely disappeared from the landscape. Founded in 1766 by Charles Read, the same proto-industrialist who founded the Batsto and Astron works, the Aetna Furnace property encompassed some 9000 acres of timberland. Before purchased by Read, the land had been known as the “Sawmill Tract”, and he oversaw the operation of two sawmills, and a grist mill at the site, as well as the blast furnace that produced iron from 1766 to 1773. The mills continued to operate profitably under the guidance of the Ballinger family, who purchased the property in 1821. The land remained in successive generations of the family until 1926, when Laura Ballinger sold all but the homestead, first erected by Charles Read, to Clyde W. Barbour.

Barbour, and his business partner Leon Todd (1893-1959), purchased land that had regrown trees, and waterways that once powered mills. It was largely flat, and had little to recommend it, except that it sat on the northern edge of the Pine Barrens. To the south and east was a “wilderness” of fresh air and open space, while to the west sat Camden and Philadelphia, only a short drive away on newly paved roads. Barbour and Todd planned a new, family-friendly development on the property to lure people to vacation in the pines. Todd was by the 1920s a successful real estate developer who had constructed blocks of brick row houses and several commercial buildings in the city of Camden, New Jersey. An advertisement in the Camden Courier-Post stated that Leon Todd was the head of Camden’s largest real estate brokerage organization in 1926. The year he purchased the land for what would be Medford Lakes and his idealized vacation development. Todd moved his family into one near the Aetna Furnace site and remained there for the rest of his life.

Vacation meant summer, and for Todd, summer meant family-friendly activities like swimming, canoeing and fishing. Former mill ponds, cranberry bogs or cedar swamps in the developing community known as Medford Lakes were transformed to lakes that often appear a clear brown, like tea. The water is not dirty, but rather this is the natural color from the dissolved organic materials and the remnants of bog iron. The natural white sand of the landscape provides beautiful beaches. One of the largest bodies of water formed by Barbour and Todd was named Aetna Lake to commemorate the location of the original ironworks there.

The depression accelerated a trend toward winterizing the houses at Medford Lakes for year-round use. By 1936, the community was able to obtain WPA assistance to build a sewage system to handle the year-round population. In 1939, Medford Lakes established itself as a separate borough with its own municipal services and elementary school; Leon Todd was the mayor.

Even before the community established itself as a legally distinct entity, it had its own governance in place. The Medford Lakes Colony Club was founded by Todd as a sort of home-owner’s association long before the concept was common. He deeded to them the lakes, dams, parks, community houses, and playgrounds after the club demonstrated its capacity to realize Todd’s vision for forming an ideal community. As one source put it, “It is not enough to own or rent a cabin in Medford Lakes; membership in the Colony Club is necessary to use any of the community’s facilities, and without that privilege, any resident would be a hermit.”

The Colony Club is still an important part of Medford Lakes, and the club directs recreational activities and hires lifeguards for the lakes. The Vaughn Community House is a log building from 1938 that includes a stage, kitchen, seating for up to thirty, and is credited with the community’s development, despite the Depression, built the Medford Lakes Lodge in 1930. The Lodge was operated initially by Todd’s development company as part of their vision for forming an ideal community. It was later turned over to other private owners who housed in it Medford Lakes’ only bar and a restaurant. The Lodge building was largely destroyed by a fire in 1998; a P.J. Whelihan’s restaurant stands on its site today.

The log-cabin-themed community boasts twenty-one lakes, and many of the first houses were erected directly on the waterfront. The first cabins were built in 1927 on Lower Aetna Lake. Todd moved his family into one near the Aetna Furnace site and remained there for the rest of his life. Distinct from many other recreational developments, Medford Lakes was planned with a commercial center and civic buildings, and these were constructed in the log cabin style as well. In 1928 Van Gordon’s Log Cabin Tea Room offered refreshment to travelers visiting the area as well as ice, gasoline, kerosene, and food for the summer residents. Other stores were built in the town center, or “Trading Post”, which remains today.

In 1929, Todd bought out Barbour’s share of the development, and despite the Depression, built the Medford Lakes Lodge in 1930. While the community’s development remained focused on summer-long stays, shorter stays were possible at the Lodge (later Settlers’ Inn). The two-and-a-half story log lodge is said to have been modeled on the Old Faithful Inn at Yellowstone National Park, but the Medford Lakes version was considerably smaller in size. However, the massive stone fireplace was apparently on the same scale as the Yellowstone hotel, and its built-in pendulum clock in the chimney wall was remarked upon by everyone who saw it. The Lodge was operated initially by Todd’s development company as part of their vision for forming an ideal community. It was later turned over to other private owners who housed in it Medford Lakes’ only bar and a restaurant. The Lodge building was largely destroyed by a fire in 1998; a P.J. Whelihan’s restaurant stands on its site today.

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to 500 people, and offices for the Colony Club. They run an annual “canoe carnival” in early August, which is a highlight of the community’s annual social calendar. The August 2, 2014 Canoe Carnival will be the 83rd annual running of this themed event, which features two or three canoes lashed together, supporting parade-like floats, which glide across the Lower Aetna Lake at night, illuminated by lights.

The twentieth century log buildings of Medford Lakes tap into American history and folklore, observers such as Abraham Lincoln, Edison, and the wholesomeness of outdoor life. Log construction may have been initiated in what is now the United States in southern New Jersey. The twenty-first century log buildings of Medford Lakes canoes lashed together, supporting parade-like floats, which glide across the Lower Aetna Lake at night, illuminated by lights.

The idea of harmony of building materials and setting is one with a long history in American architecture, beginning with the Romantic Revival designs and extending to contemporary design. Unlike the Adirondaks camp-era houses, most log houses of the first half of the 20th century were stripped of their bark and finished with a stain. The Craftsman magazine assured readers that removing the bark removed the threat of rotting in the wood, while staining gave the raw, peeled tree trunks “a color that harmonized with their surroundings.” Buildings in Medford Lakes were mixed in their response to these directives – some were built with the bark adhering to the logs while others were stripped and stained.

The log-cabin appearance offered a unique “brand” for Medford Lakes, capitalizing on its Pine Barrens location and offering a “rustic” vacation experience as a contrast to the sophistication of urban and suburban life. It was not that far away in miles from cities and towns, and so Todd consciously used the log-cabin designs to signal the “otherness” of this place.

Cornelius Weygandt, the author of the 1938 book “Down Jersey,” noted:

South Jersey is a vacationland even in “The Pines.” By the lakes there it is proper now to build log houses, far (better) than the loosely thrown together bungalows that were the first shelters here for men escaping from the city. So prevalent is this form of inland Jersey architecture that carpenters advertise themselves as “log cabin builders” on signs before their homes. Most of the log houses were of pitch pine but I noted a few of white cedar logs and one of oak.”

Local builder Mancill Gager (1892-1951) and his sons were the pioneer builders of log cabins in Medford Lakes, and they are credited with constructing more of them than any other contractor. Gager began with the Administration Building, and is also credited as the builder of Memorial Hall, now part of the Protestant Community Church. Gager purchased groves of cedar trees within a fifteen-mile radius of Medford Lakes, hauling, cutting the wood, and fashioning the notched corners that turned cedar logs into bearing walls.

The early log buildings of Medford Lakes were formed with log walls, each log custom-fitted into its proper location, so that every project involved significant “custom” craftsmanship. The corner notchting provided structural integrity for a log box or “pen”. Hardwoods were selected for use according to their density, so that rot-resistant white oak might be found near the foundations, while lighter, more easily hewn wood such as poplar or cedar was used for the upper log courses.

The “chinking” or filler between the logs in Medford Lakes buildings was usually created with Portland cement applied over a dry blocking, such as narrow sticks, to fill the cracks between logs. Portland cement alone tends to shrink and develop hairline cracks, and retain moisture, all of which can be potentially damaging to the logs. Regular maintenance of the chinking systems is required to keep these structures intact and in good condition.
property had to have the appearance of logs, and all houses off the lake had to have a “rustic” appearance.13

Protestant Community Church Sanctuary and Memorial Hall

The Medford Lakes Colony Club was concerned about the religious activities of the community, and formed a “Committee on Religion” from the start. In 1928, the club built a pavilion for outdoor worship to be shared by both Protestant and Catholic congregations, but its roof collapsed during a snowstorm the following winter.

By the close of the 1930 season, it was evident a permanent church structure would be needed and could be supported by the summer residents. Leon Todd, the founder of Medford Lakes, appointed a Board of Trustees for a Protestant church, and gave them six house lots for construction of a building, which was formally dedicated on Sunday, June 21, 1931. Called “The Cathedral of the Woods,” the log church was served by a long list of seminary students, but by the 1940s, there was a move to transform the church and its congregation into a year-round endeavor. In an era when air conditioning was still a novelty for commercial buildings and gathering places like theaters, the Cathedral of the Woods was air-conditioned in 1940. By 1945, the roof was insulated and a heating system added. The first stained glass memorial windows were added in that year, adding a touch of elegance to the rustic building. The first full-time, permanent pastor, Rev. Dr. Cornelius Muste, was called in 1959.

Meanwhile, the Catholics in the community also wished to have their own worship space. After the collapse of the summer pavilion in the winter of 1929-30, the Catholic’s raised money among themselves to erect a small log-style church that was completed in July 1931. Called “The Cathedral of the Woods,” the log church was served by a long list of seminary students, but by the 1940s, there was a move to transform the church and its congregation into a year-round endeavor. In an era when air conditioning was still a novelty for commercial buildings and gathering places like theaters, the Cathedral of the Woods was air-conditioned in 1940. By 1945, the roof was insulated and a heating system added. The first stained glass memorial windows were added in that year, adding a touch of elegance to the rustic building. The first full-time, permanent pastor, Rev. Dr. Cornelius Muste, was called in 1959.

In 1968, the Protestant Cathedral of the Woods took over the building left behind by St. Mary of the Lakes. The former sanctuary was transformed into a multi-purpose building, called Memorial Hall, where theatrical productions, church suppers, and community meetings could be held. Both the log Protestant church and the old Catholic church are now part of the Protestant Community Church. Their campus expanded with construction of the Todd Christian Education Building in 1964. A narthex in honor of Helen M. Todd, wife of the founder of the community, was added to the front of the original church building in 1974. Major renovations of the church to stabilize the log structure were carried out in 2006.

Janet W. Foster and Margaret Westfield

4 Ibid. Ibid., page 111.
5 Ibid., p. 21.
6 Medford Lakes Colony Club, Ibid., page 24.
8 These mostly 1930s developments included Pine Cliff Lake in West Milford Township, Lake Mohawk in Sparta Township, and Highland Lake in Vernon Township, amongst a few others. In southern New Jersey, Medford Lakes was unique.
10 Ibid.
13 Ibid., page 2-7.
14 Ibid., page 7-16.
16 Cridland, Margery, Ibid., pages 126-127.
William H. Kenderdine, Log Cabin designs, 1927, Medford Lakes.

This cabin was built by Leon Todd, the developer of Medford Lakes, in 1929 as his own home. It is also the historic site of the Aetna Furnace, which made a vital contribution to the Revolutionary War through the manufacture of cannon balls. This home, now owned by Carol Latti, overlooks Lower Aetna Lake, the site of the annual Medford Lakes Canoe Carnival. A feature found in all of the colony’s lakefront homes, a spacious wrap-around rear porch overlooks the water. The Lodge room has a large Jersey fieldstone fireplace. An addition to the home was built in 1973 by Jack Todd who lived in the house after his parents died. Original 1927 drawings by Architect William H. Kenderdine of the log homes offered for sale by Todd Realtors are displayed in the basement.
This cabin, known as “Big Timbers,” was built in 1937 to the designs of Andrew E. Egeressy, Architect. The original owner, Roger F. O’Brien, was a chemist for DuPont Chemical Company, and he is responsible for the house’s unique butyl rubber chinking. Now owned by Brenda and Bob Hardegen, Big Timbers was named in recognition of the length and diameter of the Wisconsin red cedar logs used for the home’s construction. Several logs run the entire length of the cabin. These massive logs were shipped to Medford Lakes via a railroad that stopped near the commercial center of the community in the 1930s and ‘40s. The logs for interior partitions are local white cedar, and have been left in their natural, unfinished state, while the exterior logs have been stripped and stained. The architect’s blueprints are displayed in various rooms inside the home.
Adjacent to Big Timbers, this home is lovingly called “Little Twig” by owners Gerald and Rosarie O’Rouke. Built in 1929, this charming cabin was designed to provide fabulous views of the lake. The owners have recently renovated the kitchen, installing full-height windows to take full advantage of their beautiful surroundings. There is a historic photograph of the house in the dining room. The dark logs contrasting with white chinking made with cement are a typical appearance for Medford Lake’s houses, but the system requires constant maintenance to prevent cracking and leaks within the chinking.

This adorable log cabin belongs to the Cathedral of the Woods and is rented to Sheree Walsh. As with most of the earliest log cabins constructed in Medford Lakes, this cabin was built as a summer home for a simple, self-sufficient life style. As the colonists began to stay permanently in later years, the cabins were adapted for more comfortable, year-round living as seen here. There is a matching birdhouse in the yard.
William H. Kenderdine, Log Cabin designs, 1927, Medford Lakes. 113 Apache Trail was clearly built using Kenderdine’s Log House #2 design.

This cabin, “Schott’s Castle,” was built in 1940 by the Schott family who came from Germany and owned a restaurant in Philadelphia. Built as a summer home, it became a year-round residence in 1950. The current owners are Bill and Judy Smith, who have enclosed the porch and added a master bedroom to the original building. The Smiths were given Klara Schott’s original recipes from their restaurant when they purchased the property in 1994.
This log cabin sits on Lake Mishemowka next to the colony’s “3 Beach.” Medford Lakes has five beaches around town for the colony members to use. Built in 1937 by the Wilson family, this was the first log cabin on Mohawk Trail. As such, as tradition went during that time, it was therefore given a lodge name: “Towhee Lodge.” For nearly 65 years, the cabin was only used seasonally, until 2001 when the property was purchased by the current owners, George and Jody Wiker. They refurbished the cabin and built a 2,000 square foot addition, separated from the existing structure as a contextual response to the site. This atypical design by architect George Wiker, afforded the opportunity to maximize sunlight into all spaces, create a breezeway, and retain a strong pine tree in situ. The ‘bridge’ connection at the upper level provides continuity of the front façade, while creating a separate daughter’s suite. The addition features authentic half log exterior siding, with all of the logs debarked, cut, set and finished by the Wikers.