NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

872

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Bear Tavern Road/Jacob's Creek Crossing Rural Historic District

other names/site number:

2. Location

street & number: Bear Tavern Road (County Route 579); Jacobs Creek Road ☐ not for publication

city or town: Hopewell & Ewing Townships ☐ vicinity

state: New Jersey code: NJ county: Mercer code: 021 zip code: 08560

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this [x] nomination

☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property

[x] meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

☐ nationally ☐ statewide [x] locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Amy Cradic 10/3/11

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

Amy Cradic, Assistant Commissioner, Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

[✓] entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

for Edson N. Beall — Signature of the Keeper

11.30.11 — Date of Action

Bear Tavern/Jacobs Creek HD — Name of Property

Mercer County, NJ — County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] private
- [X] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [ ] building(s)
- [X] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
9	12	buildings
2		sites
4	2	structures
		objects
15	14	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/Storage
TRANSPORTATION/road related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/Storage
TRANSPORTATION/road related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Georgian
Federal
Greek Revival
OTHER/ I-House

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls STONE
BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations
(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] **B** removed from its original location.
- [ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] **D** a cemetery.
- [ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- [ ] **F** a commemorative property.
- [ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
ARCHITECTURE
TRANSPORTATION
ENGINEERING
MILITARY
AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance
ca. 1729 – 1930

Significant Dates
1776

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data

- [ ] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository:
_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 395 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	512221	4460509	3	18	514262	4461095
2	18	513606	4459981	4	18	514135	4461253

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dennis Bertland & Janice Armstrong with assistance from Beth Kerr, Roni Katz & David Blackwell

organization Dennis Bertland Associates date Revised October 2011

street & number P.O. Box 315 telephone 609-397-3380

city or town Stockton state NJ zip code 08559

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this from to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Located in New Jersey's Piedmont Lowland physiographic province, the Bear Tavern Road/ Jacobs Creek Crossing Rural Historic District occupies a portion of the watershed of Jacobs Creek, a small Delaware River tributary that drains an area of several dozen square miles in western Hopewell Township, as well as a portion of adjoining Ewing Township. The district consists mostly of open agricultural property on the undulating lowland to the north of the creek, along with a small section of the steep-sloped, heavily wooded ravine cut by the creek through the lowland as it descends to the Delaware River. Bear Tavern Road, an important early colonial thoroughfare known as the "river road," (and the route of Washington's troops on their march to Trenton on December 26, 1776), passes through the district from north to south, crossing Jacobs Creek where declivities cut by small subsidiary streams facilitated the road's passage through the difficult terrain.[1] The road generally follows its original alignment, from which it deviates only slightly at the creek crossing to accommodate the bridge, first built in 1796, just upstream from the earlier ford which the 1779 Erskine map suggests was nearer the confluence of Jacobs and Ewing Creeks.[2] An abandoned short stretch of unpaved roadway apparently associated with the 1796 bridge or the colonial road survives on the south side of the present bridge, a Pratt thru truss bridge erected in 1882, around which time a short segment of Bear Tavern Road was relocated to the abandoned right-of-way of the Mercer and Somerset Railroad (built in 1871-73) that ran along the south side of Jacobs Creek. A second bridge, originally built to carry the railroad over Ewing Creek, was repurposed for the new road and its stone abutments support the present road deck.[3] In addition to Bear Tavern Road and its related resources, the district encompasses three 18th/19th century farmsteads with extensive acreage located along the road to the north of the creek. While their historic barns have not survived, the farmsteads retain substantial houses ranging from the late 18th to the mid 19th century in date, as well as several early outbuildings. Two small houses and a number of outbuildings dating to the mid/late 20th century also are present. The district is almost entirely surrounded by 20th-century single-family residential development, which along with two farms on the west side of Bear Tavern Road developed as a corporate research facility in the 1960s, has been excluded from the district.

Contributing resources include nine buildings, four structures and two sites. Non-contributing resources include twelve buildings and two structures. Most of the non-contributing resources are 20th-century agricultural outbuildings and structures, which are unobtrusively located to the rear of the farm-

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[1] David McCullough, *1776*, p. 277; David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, p. 229; West Jersey Deeds, Book S, p. 412 and Book W, pp. 3 & 5 (These mid 18th-century deeds reference the road as the "river road.").
[2] Robert Erskine, "Road from Pennytown to Slack's Ferry and from Do to Trenton and Howell's Ferry," *Erskine-DeWitt Series No. 87B*, 1779;
[3] Mercer County Road Returns, Book A, p. 527; Richard W. Hunter and Richard L. Porter, *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, pp. 142, 144, 149, 164, 166, 169, 177 & 179.

steads (photo #s 4, 21 & 22) providing little visual distraction from the historic appearance of the farmsteads as seen from the road.

Landscape features

The landscape features of the Bear Tavern/Jacobs Creek District reflect its historic development during the 18th and 19th centuries. The farms, although reduced in size from their original extent, retain several of their 18th-century boundaries, and the three farmsteads occupy their dispersed 18th/19th century locations. One farmstead is sited a few hundred yards back from the road, and its dwelling faces south instead of the road (inventory #1, photo #s 1 & 3). The two other farmsteads are located in close proximity to the road, which their dwellings face with relatively short setbacks (inventory #s 4 & 5, photo #s 5 & 9). Although relatively few early outbuildings survive, the district's farmsteads (inventory #s1, 4 & 5) appear to have conformed to either the linear or rectangular site plan typical of Hopewell's early farmsteads, based on the location of extant historic features, a wagon house at inventory #1 and a barn foundation at #5, relative to the farmhouses and the evidence provided by two circa 1930 aerial photographs.[4] The dwellings are surrounded by informally planted yards containing domestic outbuildings. Farm fields exhibit the configuration extant circa 1930, as documented by several aerial photos taken in that year, and which presumably had been established much earlier, most notably the long, narrow fields to the west of Bear Creek Road stretching northward from Jacobs Creek (photo #23).[5] Fields are used for crops, permanent hay and pasture. Wooden and wire fences of several types, hedgerows and scattered deciduous tress variously line field and property boundaries; fencing and scattered trees are also present in places along Bear Tavern Road in the vicinity of the farmsteads (photo #8). The steep slopes of the ravine cut by Jacobs Creek and its tributaries are heavily wooded with mixed hardwoods typical of the region, as is the narrow creek floodway. This natural reforestation evidently began after 1888 and was well advanced by 1930.[6] The floodway immediately downstream from the Bear Tavern Road bridge is somewhat more lightly wooded than the steep ravine slopes, a reflection of its having been used for pasture or meadow as late as the 1920s, as documented by circa 1930 aerial photographs.[7]

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[4] Aerial photograph, circa 1930, NJ DEP, Division of Parks and Forestry, Washington Crossing State Park file; "Hopewell Twp., Ewing Twp., Intersection of Bear Tavern and Washington Crossing –Pennington Roads, looking SE, n. d." image 83.11.66, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection. The NJDOT photograph presumably also was taken shortly before the Bear Tavern Road was improved north of the creek in the early 1930s.

[5] Ibid.; "Hopewell Twp., Ewing Twp., Intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads, Maddock Road, looking SE, n. d." image 83.11.68, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection; "Ewing Twp., Hopewell Twp., Intersection of Jacobs Creek and Bear Tavern Roads, looking NE, n. d." image 83.11.69, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection.

[6] Ibid.; "A Topographical Map of the Vicinity of Flemington, Atlas Sheet No. 5," George H. Cook, State Geologist, and C. C. Vermeule, Topographer, *Geological Survey of New Jersey*, State of New Jersey, 1888.

[7] "Hopewell Twp., Ewing Twp., Intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads, Maddock Road, looking SE, n. d." image 83.11.68 and "Ewing Twp., Hopewell Twp., Intersection of Jacobs Creek and Bear Tavern Roads, looking NE, n. d." image 83.11.69, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection.

Architectural resources

Dating from the late 18th and 19th centuries, the district's historic resources typify the rural region's vernacular architecture, which has its roots in traditional building practices, but reflects as well the influence of more formal styles. A variety of construction materials, plan types and detailing characterize the district's four historic dwellings. One of two late 18th/early 19th century dwellings in the district, the Mershon-Titus-Burroughs House (inventory #1, photo #1) combines a coursed rubble-stone main block with a smaller lateral frame west wing. The two-story main block is a variant of the double-pile side-hall Georgian plan in which the stair hall does not extend the dwelling's full depth. Instead, a room with corner fireplace occupies the space more commonly allotted to the rear or northern half of the side hall, and the front or southern half contains the open staircase. The one-and-one-half-story kitchen wing to the west has a one-room-plan, and its gable-end chimney serves a large cooking fireplace with exposed exterior back. The main block has a regular fenestration pattern typical of the Georgian style on its front elevation and Georgian/Federal style detailing, mostly notably on the interior. The John Burroughs House (inventory #5, photo #8), which dates circa 1800, similarly is laterally massed, comprised of main block and gable-end service wing. However, the much larger dwelling is of brick construction. Its main block exemplifies the symmetrical, five-bay center-hall Georgian plan, and the service wing is a full two-stories in height. The main block is distinguished by the Flemish bond brickwork of its front façade (the other walls are common bond), as well as the molded brick water table and second-story belt course. The Georgian/Federal style front entry treatment incorporating a simple Doric entablature, triangular pediment, fluted pilasters and tracery fanlight also is of note. Instead of a lateral wing, the Hart House (inventory #4, photo #5) features a large rear service ell, an arrangement more typical of Hopewell's 19th-century dwellings. Constructed circa 1836-54 of brick laid in the common bond, the house features a symmetrical five-bay façade and center hall plan, along with Greek Revival detailing typical of that era: eaves cornice with block modillion brackets and entry with sidelights, transom and pilasters. The district contains one example of an I-type house, the vernacular house type once ubiquitous in the Delaware Valley: the Hart Tenant House, (inventory #3), a simple frame dwelling that probably dates circa 1860-75.

While the district's farmsteads undoubtedly once had a complement of the agricultural and domestic outbuildings typical of the region's 18th and 19th century farms, few early outbuildings remain. No barns are extant. However, there is physical and documentary evidence of district farmsteads having two-level basements barns, a barn type ubiquitous in 19th-century Hopewell Township. A coursed rubble stone, one-story foundation wall remnants mark the site of two-level basement barn demolished some years ago at the Burroughs Farmstead (inventory #5), and a circa 1930 aerial photograph documents that the Mershon-Titus-Burroughs Farmstead (inventory #1) once featured a two-level barn with perpendicular ell.[8] Frame, 19th/early 20th century wagon houses are present at two farmsteads, (inventory #s 1 and 4, photo #s 2 & 6). Both are of the gable-end entry type with upper level storage loft. An example of a double crib/wagon shed is located at the John Burroughs Farmstead (inventory #5, photo #12). This distinctive outbuilding consists

[8] Hunter and Porter, p. 73; Aerial photograph, circa 1930, NJ DEP, Division of Parks and Forestry, Washington Crossing State Park file.

of paired corncribs under one gable roof, which flank a drive-through wagon bay that is open at both ends. The John Burroughs Farmstead also retains two ancillary domestic features, a smoke house and a well, conveniently located near the kitchen wing. The substantial brick smoke house, which probably dates to the early 1800s, retains a gable-end entry with batten door hung on strap hinges (photo #10). The round stone well may be contemporary with the smokehouse, although its large hip-roofed cover is a 20th-century feature. The district features mid 20th-century dwellings, a frame 1950s ranch house and a contemporary Cape Cod style tenant house (Inventory #s 1 and 5, photo #s 20 and 22)

All three farmsteads feature outbuildings dating from the mid-to-late 20th century. They include one-story, gable-roofed barns, stables and equipment sheds of utilitarian design and construction, as well as several squat metal silos and a small road-side farm stand (inventory #s 1, 4 and 5, photo #s 4, 21 and 22). For the most part located to the rear of the farmsteads, they distract little from district's historic character as seen from the road.

Circulation network and related features.

Bear Tavern Road, which forms part of Mercer County Route 579 and generally follows its original 18th-century alignment, is the district's principal circulatory feature and has long served as an important part of the region's road network (inventory #6, photo #s 8 & 13). Traversing the district from north to south it intersects local roads providing connections to the Delaware River transportation corridor: Jacobs Creek Road, an 1882 replacement of an earlier road, just south of Jacobs Creek and late 18th-century Maddock Road a few hundred yards north of the creek.[9] The road north of Jacobs Creek remained little changed until the early 1930s, when the section between the creek and the Washington Crossing – Pennington Road was paved and improved.[10] Currently paved with asphalt, Bear Tavern Road features one travel lane in each direction, with painted center and shoulder stripes and generally with narrow shoulders. The minimal signage in the district consists of standard road identification and traffic control signs.

The district contains two bridges. One is a four-panel, half-hip, pin-connected Pratt thru truss bridge with wooden road deck and ashlar stone abutments erected in 1882 (inventory #7, photo #s 15 & 16). The bridge, which carries Bear Tavern Road over Jacobs Creek, was designed and fabricated by the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio. It is constructed with

> inclined end posts and upper cords are built-up box members composed of shallow channels with a face plate. 3" by 2" angles are used for the laced verticals. Diagonals and counters are both rods fitted with turnbuckles for turning the bridge, and the bottom chords are made up of square eyebars with drop forged eyes. The originality of the rolled I beam floor beams is not known, but a 1972 inspection report states that they are wrought iron. The lateral bracing is connected to brackets riveted

[9] Richard W. Hunter and Richard L. Porter, *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, pp. 164, 168 & 182.
[10] "Will Rebuild Bear Tavern Road," *The Hopewell Harold*, July 8, 1931; "Hopewell Township Aids County," *The Hopewell Harold*, October 5, 1932.

to each beam. The plain portal struts have diagonal corner braces and each strut carries a King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Co. plaque.[11]

An earlier bridge, erected in 1796 on or near its site, was of frame construction with wooden deck beams, deck planking and side walls, supported by stone abutments and piers.[12] The extant abutments may incorporate earlier work. The stone retaining wall along the road to the north of the bridge dates to the mid-20th century, as do three culverts located to the west along Bear Tavern Road (inventory #5), similarly detailed with stone end walls and parapets. These features possibly formed part of the improvements made to the road in the 1930s.

The district's second bridge carries Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads over Ewing Creek (inventory #9, photo #19). It consists of ashlar stone abutments that evidently formed part of the railroad bridge erected in the early 1870s as part of the short-lived Mercer and Somerset Railroad and a steel I-beam road deck with metal railing dating to the mid-20th century (what appears to be a wooden railing can be seen in two undated but presumably circa 1930 aerial photographs).[13] The right-of-way was acquired by Mercer County and utilized for the relocation of Jacobs Creek Road, laid out in 1882, and the railroad bridge over Ewing Creek was reused for the relocated road.[14]

Before the construction of a bridge in 1796, Bear Tavern Road crossed Jacob and Ewing Creeks by means of a ford, which the 1779 Erskine map depicts as near the confluence of the two creeks, a short distance downstream from the present bridge.[15] At the confluence and several other places between it and the present bridge the stream bed is relatively shallow and flat bottomed as a result of the exposure of bedrock, locations which would have been suitable for fording the creek (inventory #8, photo #18). In this area Jacob's Creek is between 25 and 30 feet wide. While the bedrock presumable would have withstood the effects of water erosion over the past two years, the stream banks would have been susceptible, although how they may have been altered remains unknown. A segment of road, measuring approximately 30 feet wide and 150 feet long runs south from between the southern end of the Jacobs Creek Bridge and the intersection of Bear Tavern Road and Jacob's Creek Road towards confluence of Jacobs and Ewing Creeks (inventory #8, photo #17). This historic road segment, bypassed by the current alignment of Jacobs Creek Road, rises gradually from the valley floor to meet the current road alignment just south of the Jacobs Creek

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[11] A. G. Lichtenstein & Associates, Inc., "New Jersey Historic Bridge Survey," Mercer County Bridge #1100060, 1991.

[12] Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Minutes, I, 1796, pp. 234-235.

[13] "Hopewell Twp., Ewing Twp., Intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads, Maddock Road, looking SE, n. d." image 83.11.68 and "Ewing Twp., Hopewell Twp., Intersection of Jacobs Creek and Bear Tavern Roads, looking NE, n. d." image 83.11.69, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection.

[14] Hunter and Porter, p. 182; "Hopewell Twp., Ewing Twp., Intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads, Maddock Road, looking SE, n. d." image 83.11.68 and "Ewing Twp., Hopewell Twp., Intersection of Jacobs Creek and Bear Tavern Roads, looking NE, n. d." image 83.11.69, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection.

[15] Rober Erskine, "Road from Pennytown to Slack's Ferry and from Do to Trenton and Howell's Ferry," *Erskine-DeWitt Series No. 87B*, 1779.

Bridge. The roadbed is clearly delineated and appears to have had a compacted earth surface. Apparently associated with the 1796 bridge, and/or the colonial road, it was bypassed during the 1882 road relocation.

Inventory

In the following inventory, each principal resource is identified by a number that locates it on the accompanying district map. All primary entries are categorized as either "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the significance of the district. All outbuildings and other secondary features included in the inventory are identified as either contributing or non-contributing with the designation (C) or (NC). In addition to visual inspection, historic sources were used for dating purposes include the following maps: J. W. Otley and J. Keily, *Map of Mercer County* (1849); D.J. Lake and S.N. Beer, *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton,* (1860); Everts & Stewarts, *Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County* (1875); and Pugh and Downing, *Map of Mercer County, New Jersey*, (1902).

1 **1139 Bear Tavern Road. Mershon-Titus-Burroughs Farmstead**. Gable-roofed **dwelling** consisting of a stone, 3-bay, 2-story main block with double-pile, side-hall plan and interior gable end chimneys (brick stack); a frame, 3-bay, 1 & ½-story west wing with interior chimney (stuccoed exposed back and brick stack) and shed-roofed north appendage; and flat-roofed south appendage.

Style: Federal style influences; modern Colonial Revival embellishment

Date/History: late 18th/early 19th century (main block & wing); late 20th century (south appendage & renovations). Henry Mershon, who purchased the farm circa 1772, is credited with building the house [Hunterdon County Mortgages, Book 1, p. 166; Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission]; however, Stephen Titus who evidently acquired the property around 1800 and occupied it until his death in 1826 may have been responsible [Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Minutes, I, 1796, pp. 234-235 & 246; NJ Wills 2860J; New Jersey Ratables, Hopewell Township, September 1802; NJ Wills 3512J]. Historic map designations include "A. T. Burroughs" (1849 & 1860); "N. H. Burroughs, 145 acres" (1875); and "Estate of N. H. Burroughs" (1903).

Additional description: Exterior features of the main block include coursed rubble stonework, stuccoed east gable end, gable dormer, box cornice, flush raking eaves, 6/6 and 9/6 sash windows with plain trim, louvered and paneled shutters (recessed panels edged with Grecian ovolo molding), recessed entry with recessed, edge-molded reveal panels and raised panel door. The west wing features clapboard siding, box cornice, flush raking eaves, gable dormers, 6/6 sash windows, semi-hexagonal north bay window and shed-roofed south porch.

The house has a variant of the double-pile side-hall plan in which the stair hall does not extend the dwelling's full depth. A room with corner fireplace occupies the space more

commonly allotted to the rear of north half of the side hall, and the front or southern half contains the open staircase with delicate railing incorporating turned newel posts, square spindles and round handrail. The front room's fireplace features of a "folk" interpretation of a Federal mantel with reeded pilasters and drill-work ornamented frieze. The smaller the rear room has a corner fireplace. The one-room-plan west wing features a wide cooking fireplace.

Outbuildings: (1) Concrete block and frame, 3-bay, gable-roofed **garage** (mid 20th century, NC); (2) fenced, in-ground **swimming pool** (late 20th century, NC); (3) frame, Frame, 1 & ½-story, 2-bay, gable-fronted **wagon house** of hewn timber, mortise-and-tenon construction on a stone foundation and with a metal roof over wood shingles, overhanging eaves and novelty siding over vertical plank siding; the doors of the loft entry and two wagon entries have not survived; while the building has deteriorated, the frame and siding remained largely intact (mid-19th century, C); (4) Steel-framed, 1-story, gable-roofed **equipment shed** with metal siding and roofing (mid/late 20th century, NC). Outbuildings (3) and (4) are located on lot 15.

Contributing B 98/L 44 & 15 (Hopewell) Photo #s 1 & 2

2 **1141 Bear Tavern Road.** Frame, L-shaped, 1-story, gable-roofed **dwelling**.

Style: none

Date: c. 1950s

Additional description: Exterior features include aluminum siding, and a shed-roofed porch.

Outbuildings: frame, gable-roofed **garage/equipment shed** (mid/late 20th century, NC)

Non Contributing B 98/ L 46 (Hopewell) Photo # 20

3 **1143 Bear Tavern Road. Hart Tenant House.** Frame, 2-story, gable-roofed, single-pile-plan **dwelling** with interior gable-end chimneys and projecting bays at the north end of the front and rear elevations; both bays may be later additions.

Style: none

Date/History: circa 1860-75, perhaps somewhat later; 20th century renovations. Historic map designation: "A. T. Hart" (1875). This house is thought to have been built as a tenant house for the Hart farm (inventory #4) [Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission].

Additional description: Exterior features include overhanging eaves, clapboard siding, wood-shingled gables, 1/1 sash windows with plain trim and an enclosed front porch.

Outbuildings: Frame, 1-bay **garage** with gable-end entry (cross batten double doors), overhanging eaves and clapboard siding (mid 20th century, NC).

Contributing B 98/ L 16 (Hopewell)

4 **1154 Bear Tavern Road. Hart Farmstead.** Brick, 2-story, gable-roofed **dwelling** consisting of a brick, 5-bay main block with apparently single-pile center-hall plan and interior gable-end chimneys (brick stacks) and a slightly lower, 3-bay, rear wing with interior south gable-end chimney (brick stack).

Style: Greek Revival influences; Colonial Revival embellishment

Date/History: circa 1836-54; mid/late 20th century renovations. The house probably was erected by Abner P. Hart, who acquired the farm in 1836 at the court-ordered auction held to settle his late brother's estate and who died in 1854 [Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 64, p. 68; NJ Wills 895K]. Historic map designations include "A. Hart" (1849); "A. T. Hart" (1860); "A. T. Hart, 117 acres" (1875); "A. T. Hart" (1903).

Additional description: The brick walls are constructed in the common bond above a stone foundation. Other exterior features include a slate roof; built-up box cornice (carried on the raking eaves) with block modillions (lower faces ornamented with bevel molding), crown and bed moldings and frieze; 6/6 sash windows with heavy timber lintels and sills and narrow trim with quirk-beaded edge molding; louvered and paneled shutters; central entry with transom, side-lights, pilasters with Grecian ovolo moldings; and panel door, elements surviving from the Greek Revival treatment. The entry's Colonial Revival surround, which incorporates a triangular pediment and fluted flanking pilasters, and brick probably date to the mid 20th century. The glass-enclosed sun porch on the south side of the rear ell dates to the mid/late 20th century.

Outbuilding: (1) Frame, 1 & ½-story, gable-fronted **wagon house** with overhanging eaves, clapboard siding, batten sliding doors, batten loft door, and 6/6 sash windows (late 19th century, C); (2) Frame, 1-story, gable-roofed **shed** with overhanging eaves, vertical siding and batten door (late 19thcentury, C); (3) frame, 1-story, gambrel roofed **stable/barn** with sheet-panel siding (late 20th century, NC); (4) frame, 1-story, gambrel roofed **stable/barn** with sheet-panel siding (late 20th century, NC). Outbuildings (3) and (4) are located on lot 2.

Contributing B 95/L 27 & 2 (Hopewell) Photo #s 5, 6 & 7

5 **1132 Bear Tavern Road. John Burroughs Farmstead**. Brick and frame, gable-roofed **dwelling** consisting of a brick, 5-bay main block with a double-pile center-hall plan and interior gable-end chimneys (brick stacks); a brick 2-bay, single-pile-plan east wing with interior south gable-end chimney (brick stack); brick and frame, 3-bay west wing; a frame, shed-roofed, 1-story west appendage; and an attached, brick and frame, 1 & ½-story, 3-bay garage.

Style: Georgian/Federal influences, Colonial Revival embellishment

Date/History: circa 1800 (main block & east wing); circa 1936 (west wing & appendages). The house is thought to have been erected circa 1800, when the property was owned by John Burroughs who had inherited it from his father Joseph in 1798. The latter purchased the property in 1749, and he was living there by 1763, as a deed from an adjoining tract references "Joseph Burroughs's house' on or near the site of the extant dwelling. [West Jersey [NJ Wills 1825J; West Jersey Deeds, Book W, pp. 1 & 3 and Book S, p. 412; Hunter and Porter, *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, p. 67]. The house was enlarged by Samuel and Elizabeth Kerr upon their purchase of the property in 1936 [Mercer County Deeds, Book 742, page 279; owner information]. Historic map designations include "J. Burroughs" (1849); J. & K. H. Burroughs" 1860); "heirs of Jos. Burroughs, 202 acres" (1875); "E. McGonigle" (1903).

Additional description: The brickwork of the main block's front elevation is constructed in the Flemish bond and incorporates a simple belt course (formed by two projecting stringer courses) at the second floor level, along with a water table Roman-ovolo molded profile at the first floor level. The walls of the other main block elevations and of the south wing are laid in the common bond, as are the walls of the later west wing and garage appendage. Other early main block features include box cornice with crown and bed moldings, flush raking eaves, 12/8 sash 2nd-story and 12/12 1st-story windows with architrave trim (Roman ovolo outer molding), raised-panel shutters hung on strap hinges, and the central front entry with pedimented surround, paneled reveals, tracery fanlight (sunray and swag pattern) and panel door. A vernacular interpretation of the Doric order, the surround incorporates a triangular pediment, entablature with triglyph-and-metope frieze and fluted flanking pilasters –all executed with delicate moldings typical of the Federal style. The slate roof and possibly the gable dormers date to the 1936 renovations. The south wing has similar eaves and window treatments, but a much simpler entry with plain trim and panel door. Also dating to circa 1936, the Colonial Revival exterior detailing of the north wing and appendages includes clapboard siding (garage front and shed appendage), gable dormers (garage), box cornices and 6/6 sash windows; the overhead garage door are modern replacements.

Outbuilding: (1) brick, gable-roofed **smokehouse** with gable-end entry fiited with batten door hung on strap hinges (early 19th century, C); (2) round stone **well** protected by a

square hipped-roofed **well curb** with stone wall and square stone corner piers (well, early 19th century; curb, circa 1936; C); (3) frame, 1 & ½-story, 3-bay, Cape Cod-style **tenant house** with side porch and rear shed dormer (mid 20th century, NC); (4) frame, 1-story, gable-roofed **stable** with (mid 20th century, NC); (5) **basement barn site** (19th century, C) comprised of one-story, course-rubble-stone foundation remnants, evidently the rear stable wall of the barn which stood on the site [information supplied by owners]; (6) in-ground **swimming pool** (late 20th century, NC); (7) frame, 1-story, **double crib/wagon shed** with novelty siding and batten sliding doors; crib slates covered with sheet metal (late 19th/early 20th century, C); (8) steel-framed, 1-story, gable-roofed **equipment shed** with metal siding and roofing (mid/late 20th century, NC); (9) steel-framed, 1-story, gable-roofed **equipment shed** with metal siding and roofing (mid/late 20th century, NC); (10) squat 4-unit metal-clad **silo** (mid/late 20th century, NC).

Contributing B 34/L31.01 (Hopewell) Photo #s 8 – 12

6 **Bear Tavern Road.** Improved and somewhat straightened over the course of the 20th-century, Bear Tavern Road (a segment of County Route 579) is an asphalt-paved, two-lane road with painted lane delineation and minimal shoulders. There are no sidewalks and signage is minimal. The included segment extends from the north to the southern boundaries of the district.

Date/History: Know as the river road in the 18th century, the Bear Tavern Road was one of three important early roads leading north and west from the falls of the Delaware River at Trenton. The river road, the westernmost of the three, The river road, the westernmost of the three, followed what is now County Route 547 (Bear Tavern Road) to just south of Harbourton, where it turned west and north along several present-day local roads and connected with the Old York Road at Coryell's Ferry, now Lambertville. The segment between Trenton and Jacob's Creek was surveyed in 1711, and the section to the north was extant by 1729 [Hunterdon County Deeds, Book A, p. 18; *The Town Records of Hopewell, New Jersey, 1721-1800*]. Boundary descriptions of deed from the 1760s indicates that the road followed it present alignment north of the creek by that time, as does the 1779 Erskine map [Joseph J. Falcone, *Land Transactions in Ewing Township, Mercer County, New Jersey, 1687 -1760*; Robert Erskine, "Road from Pennytown to Slack's Ferry and from Do to Trenton and Howell's Ferries," Series No. 87B]. The latter map shows the road's southwest dogleg turn just north of Jacobs Creek, but depicts the creek crossing downstream from the present bridge at the confluence of Jacobs Creek and its tributary Ewing Creek, beyond which it turned south again.

The road was paved and grading and drainage improvements made in 1931-32 ["Will Rebuild Bear Tavern Road," *The Hopewell Herald*, July 8, 1931; "Hopewell Township Aids County," *The Hopewell Herald*, October 5, 1932].

Associated features: Three small culverts with coursed-rubble stone end walls and parapet and a similarly detailed stone retaining wall associated with the road are located to the north of the Jacobs Creek bridge. They probably date to the mid 20th-century and may have formed part of improvements made to the road in the 1930s. One culvert crosses Bear Tavern Road just north of its intersection with Maddock Road; the second is located approximately 50 yards west of the Maddock road intersection, and the third is located approximately 200 yards north of the Maddock Road. The retaining wall extends for about fifty feet along the east side of the road just north of Jacobs Creek ans served to channel a subsidiary watercourse from. On the west side of the Bear Tavern Road about midway between the Jacobs Creek bridge and Maddock Road is an arrow-shaped, fieldstone set upright in the ground near the road edge of unknown provenance. Presumably an undocumented historical marker, the boulder has four drill holes at the corner of an approximately 12-inch square, which may have served to attached an inscription plaque.

Contributing Photo #s 8, 13, 14 & 15

7 **Bear Tavern Road Bridge over Jacobs Creek. (bridge #1100060).** Four-panel, half-hip, pin-connected **Pratt thru truss bridge** with wooden road deck and supported on ashlar stone abutments.

Date/History: 1882; plaque mounted on bridge. The oldest thru truss bridge in Mercer County, the bridge was designed and fabricated by the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio (A. G. Lichtenstein & Associates, Inc., New Jersey Historic Bridge Survey, Mercer County Bridge #1100060, 1991). An earlier bridge, erected in 1796 on or near its site, was of frame construction with wooden deck beams, deck planking and side walls, supported by stone abutments and piers [Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Minutes, I, 1796, pp. 234-235]. The extant abutments may incorporate earlier work.

Additional description: To quote from the above referenced survey form, the bridge's "inclined end posts and upper cords are built-up box members composed of shallow channels with a face plate. 3" by 2" angles are used for the laced verticals. Diagonals and counters are both rods fitted with turnbuckles for turning the bridge, and the bottom chords are made up of square eyebars with drop forged eyes. The originality of the rolled I beam floor beams is not known, but a 1972 inspection report states that they are wrought iron. The lateral bracing is connected to brackets riveted to each beam. The plain portal struts have diagonal corner braces and each strut carries a King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Co. plaque [also inscribed with date 1882]." The bridge was in good repair in 1991 "with welded repairs limited to the lower portions of some verticals" [A. G. Lichtenstein & Associates, Inc., New Jersey Historic Bridge Survey, Mercer County Bridge #1100060, 1991].

Key Contributing Photo #s 15 & 16

8 **Bypassed ford and road segment.** The 1779 Erskine map depicts the colonial ford at the confluence of Jacobs and Ewing Creeks, and there are several other locations between the confluence and the Bear Tavern Road bridge where the stream bed is relatively shallow and flat bottomed as a result of the exposure of bedrock, a suitable condition for a ford. The bypassed road segment consist of a gently rising earthen road, roughly 30' wide and approximately 500' long running south from close to the current location of the bridge. It was apparently in use from the 18th century until the realignment of Jacob's Creek Road in the 1870s, which was undertaken concomitantly with the construction of the Mercer and Somerset Railroad in the 1870s [Rober Erskine, "Road from Pennytown to Slack's Ferry and from Do to Trenton and Howell's Ferry," *Erskine-DeWitt Series No. 87B*, 1779; Richard Veit, Archaeologist, Memorandum of Findings, Jacob's Creek Archaeological Resources, June 1, 2011.] Hunter and Porter, p. 182; John Milner Associates, Inc., "Phase 1A Archaeological study Bear Tavern Road Bridge Over Jacobs Creek Hopewell Township, Mercer County, New Jersey," p. 10]. Metal detecting in this area revealed a stirrup dating from the 18th or early 19th century and a horseshoe fragment, consistent with the locations' use as a road [Daniel M. Sivilich, "Electronic Phase I Archaeological Survey Conducted at: Jacob's Creek Crossing Hopewell Township and Ewing Township Mercer County, NJ," pp. 8 & 9; Richard Veit, Archaeologist, "Memorandum of Findings, Jacob's Creek Archaeological Resources," June 1, 2011.]

Date/History: The ford evidently was in use until 1796 when first bridge was constructed over Jacobs Creek [Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Minutes, I, 1796, pp. 234-235]. The road segment presumably is contemporary with the 1796 bridge, or perhaps earlier.

Contributing	B 99.01/ L 36.01 (Hopewell) B437/ L 1 (Ewing)	Photo #s 16 - 19

9 **Bear Tavern/Jacobs Creek Roads Bridge over Ewing Creek.** Steel I-beam road deck carried on ashlar stone abutments.

Date/History: 1870s, abutments; I-beams, road deck and railing, 20th century. The stone abutments form part of the railroad bridge erected in the 1870s as part of the short-lived Mercer and Somerset Railroad. The right-of-way was acquired by Mercer County and utilized for the relocation of Jacobs Creek Road, laid out in 1882, and the railroad bridge over Ewing Creek was reused for the relocated road. What appears to be a wooden railing can be seen two undated but presumably circa 1930 aerial photographs. [Richard W. Hunter and Richard L. Porter, *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, page 182; "Hopewell Twp., Ewing Twp., Intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads, Maddock Road, looking SE, n. d." image 83.11.68 and "Ewing Twp., Hopewell Twp., Intersection of Jacobs Creek

and Bear Tavern Roads, looking NE, n. d." image 83.11.69, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection].

Contributing Photo # 19

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing Rural Historic District is significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of settlement, agriculture, architecture, military, transportation and engineering for the period beginning circa 1729, the earliest year that Bear Tavern Road, an important colonial thoroughfare known as the "river road," can be documented as extant north of Jacobs Creek, and ending in 1930, the year before work began to pave and improve the road north of Jacobs Creek. The district possesses significance in the area of settlement and agriculture as a rural landscape that still reflects its 18th/19th century pattern of development, exhibited by such features as property lines, farmstead locations, field patterns and circulation. The district's landscape is representative of the dispersed agricultural communities of scattered farmsteads once prevalent throughout much of New Jersey, shaped in large part by New Jersey's proprietary system of land distribution and established by pioneer agriculturalists of varied ethnic stock. In what became Hopewell Township, and elsewhere in the region, farms acquired from the proprietary owners by the pioneer settlers often continued in the same family for several generations. Such was the case in the neighborhood along Bear Tavern Road north of Jacobs Creek, where the Burroughs and Hart families remained prominent landowners and residents well into 20th century. Bear Tavern Road itself, one of the region's earliest and most important roads, gives the district transportation significance as a good example of a cultural route, a historic road type shaped by necessity or tradition. The road's distinctive double bends through the Jacobs Creek ravine reflect how such routes might respond to geographic constraints by following the path of least resistance across difficult terrain. As a cultural route in use for nearly three hundred years, the road also retains evidence of transportation improvements over time, particularly at the creek crossing where successive bridges replaced the colonial ford. Additional significance in the area of transportation, and in engineering, stems from the 1882 Pratt thru truss bridge carrying Bear Tavern Road over Jacobs Creek (inventory #7, photo #15). Produced by a major manufacture of truss bridges (the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio), the bridge is a good example and regionally rare survivor of the standard pin-connected Pratt design, one of the most common truss bridge types during the late 19th-century. The district's architectural significance derives from its late 18th/early 19th century dwellings whose construction materials, plan types and detailing are representative of the region's early domestic architecture, which has its roots in the region's traditional building practices, but reflects as well the influence of more formal styles. Of particular note, the circa 1800 John Burroughs House (inventory #5, photo #9) is distinguished by its brick construction, Georgian center-hall double-pile plan (one of few local examples of the type) and Federal/Georgian style detailing. Although no early barns survive, several outbuildings remain to reflect ancillary buildings once typical of area farmsteads; they include wagon houses and a smokehouse (inventory #s 1, 4 & 5, photo #s 2, 6, 10 & 12). The district possesses military significance for its Revolutionary War associations. Bear Tavern Road (the colonial river road) was the route of Washington's troops on their march to Trenton on December 26, 1776, and crossing Jacobs Creek presented a formidable challenge to the troops, second only to crossing the Delaware River. Not only did the soldiers have to ford the cold, quite possibly icy, stream, but the artillery, in accordance with standard military practice of the time, would have been required to unharness the horses pulling the cannon and employ ropes to haul the

guns down and up the steep slopes of the ravine, a challenging endeavor given the weather conditions that night. Nearly all of the route followed by Washington's troops between Washington's Crossing and Trenton has been transformed by urban and suburban development over the course of the last century, leaving the Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing District the only sizable area along the route, outside of Washington Crossing State Park, with the ability to evoke something of its appearance at the time of the Revolutionary War. In addition, although Criterion D significance is not claimed, a recent metal detection survey conducted in the vicinity of the Jacobs Creek crossing uncovered a stirrup dating from the 18th or early 19th century and a horseshoe fragment within a bypassed 18th-century road segment, finds consistent with the location's historic transportation use.[1] Archaeological resources relating to the area's 18th- and 19th-century material culture also may be present in the environs of district farmsteads.

The rural landscape of the Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing District still reflects to a remarkable degree its appearance as it had evolved by the early 20th century. Notwithstanding the improvements made to Bear Tavern Road beginning in the 1930s and the replacement of most of its historic barns with modern agricultural buildings, along with the loss of some early fabric to modern alterations, the district possesses significance and retains the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association necessary for National Register eligibility.

Settlement pattern/agriculture

The Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing Rural Historic District provides a good illustration of the dispersed agricultural landscape of scattered farmsteads once prevalent throughout much of New Jersey, originally shaped in large part by New Jersey's proprietary system of land distribution and developed by several generations of agriculturalists. In addition to its surviving early farmhouses and outbuildings, the district's land uses and spatial organization preserve a record of its historic development during the 18th century and 19th centuries, reflecting both natural and cultural factors. Underlain by Brunswick shale and Lockatong argillite, Hopewell Township's Piedmont Lowland features moderately fertile soils "that have received heavy agricultural use from the Colonial period up until the present day," especially the more level, well-drained lands like those that characterize the district's three farms.[2] Established during the first half of the 18th century, district farms (although reduced in acreage) still retain several of their original boundaries, which reflect Hopewell Township's early land division patterns, where watercourses and roads often shaped development. The land now encompassed by the district

[1] Daniel M. Sivilich, "Electronic Phase I Archaeological Survey Conducted at: Jacob's Creek Crossing Hopewell Township and Ewing Township Mercer County, NJ," pp. 8 & 9; Richard Veit, Archaeologist, "Memorandum of Findings, Jacob's Creek Archaeological Resources," June 1, 2011. On March 12, 2011, Battlefield Restoration and Archaeological Volunteer organization (BRAVO) conducted a Phase I metal detecting survey of Bear Tavern Road at the Jacobs Creek crossing and the adjacent floodplain along Jacob's Creek in an effort to determine whether artifacts associated with the march of the Continental Army on December 25th, 1776 were present. Eight members of BRAVO spent a total of 47 man hours working at the site. They unearthed eleven historic artifacts including a fragmentary strap hinge, a stirrup of 18th/early century type, a small unidentified brass fragment, a modern sling buckle, a long bolt and associated hardware associated with a modern telephone pole, a late 18th or early 19th century U.S. large cent, and a small fragment of iron, possibly from a horseshoe.
[2] Richard W. Hunter and Richard L. Porter, *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, pp. 16 & 17.

formed part of the 28,000-acre tract first surveyed for West Jersey proprietor Dr. Daniel Coxe in 1689, from which farms of up to several hundred acres were subdivided over the next several decades and sold (or in some cases first sold to absentee investors and rented) to pioneer agriculturalists of varied ethnicity, who established farmsteads on their land giving rise to a dispersed settlement pattern.[3] Bear Tavern Road, extant north of Jacobs Creek by 1729, and probably much earlier, served as a property boundary. Farms lying west of the road extended to the Delaware River, and those to the east encompassed or bordered portions of Jacobs Creek or its tributaries. In addition to good arable land, the diversified farming mostly practiced in 18th and 19th century New Jersey required well-watered land suitable for meadow and pasture, and the farms along Bear Tavern Road were configured to meet those requirements with a patchwork of fields often bordering a watercourse, a pattern remaining intact throughout much of the district (photograph #23).[4] Access to a supply of wood for fuel and other uses was another prerequisite for the traditional farmer, but the agricultural clearing begun by the pioneer settlers eventually decimated the neighborhood's once abundant hardwood forests. The 1888 state geological survey indicates that only a few scattered woodlots then remained in southwestern Hopewell Township, most of which were located on steeper slopes and watercourses, but none within the bounds of the district.[5] However, circa 1930 aerial photographs indicate that the steep slopes of the Jacobs Creek ravine had reverted to woodland by that time, except for small area of pasture in the creek flood plan just downstream from the Jacobs Creek bridge.[6]

The siting of the district's farmsteads reflects patterns common to 18th and 19th century Hopewell Township. In lowland Hopewell, early farmsteads typically occupied level, slightly elevated, well-drained sites commanding a good view of the surrounding farmland, near a potable source of water. Farmhouses almost invariably faced south to maximize exposure to sunlight. In the 19th century, as the local road network developed and access to markets became increasingly important, farmsteads were located closer to roads, and the farmhouses, more often than not, were erected to face the road, regardless of a site's southern exposure.[7] The district's farmsteads all occupy level, slightly elevated sites with a view of surrounding land. One farmstead is sited a few hundred yards from the road, and its dwelling, perhaps the earliest in the district, faces south (inventory #1, photo #1). The two other farmsteads are located in close proximity to the road, which their dwellings face (inventory #s 4 & 5, photo #s 5 & 9).

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[3] Ibid., pp. 49 & 50. This source places the cultural roots of dispersed settlement in the enclosure movement spreading throughout northwestern Europe at this time, especially in England, whereby landowners divided the common lands of the medieval village in separate farms "to make a more efficient and specialized use of the land."

[4] Hunterdon County Deeds, Book A. p. 18; *The Town Records of Hopewell, New Jersey, 1721-1800*; Hunter and Porter, pp. 45 & 53; Aerial photograph, circa 1930, NJ DEP, Division of Parks and Forestry, Washington Crossing State Park collection.

[5] "A Topographical Map of the Vicinity of Flemington, Atlas Sheet No. 5," George H. Cook, State Geologist, and C. C. Vermeule, Topographer, *Geological Survey of New Jersey*, State of New Jersey, 1888.

[6] Aerial photograph, circa 1930, NJ DEP, Division of Parks and Forestry, Washington Crossing State Park collection; "Hopewell Twp., Ewing Twp., Intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads, Maddock Road, looking SE, n. d." image 83.11.68 and "Ewing Twp., Hopewell Twp., Intersection of Jacobs Creek and Bear Tavern Roads, looking NE, n. d." image 83.11.69, NJ Archives, NJDOT collection.

[7] Hunter and Porter, pp. 53 – 55.

As was the case throughout much of northwestern New Jersey, Hopewell Township's early settlers were an ethnically diverse lot. Although English stock predominated, Dutch and Germans also were present, along with Scotch-Irish, Irish and Scottish in smaller numbers and enslaved African-Americans. Most of the English settlers came from East Jersey and Long Island, descended from New England's colonial population; smaller numbers came from the lower Delaware Valley, New England or England. While the Dutch settlers also came from East Jersey and Long Island, the Germans were from Pennsylvania. In several parts of Hopewell Township, a single family might predominate for generations, as documented by the clusters of one surname appearing on 19th century maps. Families of English origins (Hart and Burroughs) and Dutch or Huguenot stock (Mershon) were early property owners and inhabitants along Bear Tavern Road north of Jacobs Creek, and the Burroughs were slave owners. Burroughs dominated the neighborhood in the 19th century, owning most of the farms, and the Harts also maintained a presence there for generations. The John Burrough Farmstead (inventory #5, photo #s 8 –11) remained in family hands until 1926, and Harts retained ownership of their family farmstead (inventory #4, photo #s 5 & 6) until 1955.[8]

Transportation/Engineering

The district's significance in the areas of transportation and engineering stems from Bear Tavern Road (inventory #6, photo #s 8, 13, 14 & 15) and the four-panel, half-hip, pin-connected Pratt thru truss bridge, carrying Bear Tavern Road over Jacobs Creek (inventory # 7, photo #s 15, 16 & 18). One of the region's most important early roadways, Bear Tavern Road, while paved and improved in the 20th century, remains a significant example of a cultural route, a "historic road type that evolved through necessity or tradition."[9] Extant through the district by 1729, the road still follows its 18th-century alignment, which responded to geographic constraints by following the path of least resistance in crossing the obstacle presented by the Jacobs Creek ravine, giving the road its distinctive bends in that area. As a cultural route in use for nearly three hundred years, the road retains evidence of successive transportation improvements, particularly in the vicinity of the creek where the original colonial ford was replaced first by wooden stringer bridge in 1796 and then by an iron truss bridge in 1882 and where a railroad right-of-way along the creek, built and abandoned in 1870s, was reused as a public road in 1880, its gentle gradient providing an attractive alternative to an earlier township road along the creek. Erected in 1882, the Bear Tavern Road Bridge over Jacobs Creek is a good example and regionally rare survivor of the standard pin-connected Pratt design, one of the most common truss bridge types during the late 19th-century, and has suffered relatively few alterations. It was designed and fabricated by the King Iron Bridge and

[8] Ibid., pp. 26 & 27; J. W. Otley and J. Keily, *Map of Mercer County,* 1849; D.J. Lake and S.N. Beer, *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton,* 1860; Everts & Stewarts, *Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County* , 1875; and Pugh and Downing, *Map of Mercer County, New Jersey*, 1902; New Jersey Wills, 2860J; New Jersey Ratables, Hopewell Township, September 1802; Mercer County Deeds, Book 595, page 175 & Book 1320, page 246.

[9] www.historicroads.org.

Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, a major manufacture of truss bridges, of whose work there are few documented examples in New Jersey.[10]

During the 18th and 19th centuries Hopewell Township developed a road network, which provided for internal circulation as well as well as connections to the Delaware River and to Trenton, where agricultural products could by shipped down river to Philadelphia, and to points north and east. Ferries were used to cross the Delaware River throughout the 18th century; the first bridge across the river was erected at Trenton in 1806, followed by others upstream in subsequent decades.[11] While first traversed by fords, smaller streams like Jacobs Creek increasingly were spanned by bridges during the later 18th and 19th centuries. In the 19th century, a canal later paralleled by a railroad along the east bank of the Delaware River, and another railroad through the nearby valley of the Stony Brook, improved local access to urban markets, drawing economic activity to locations directly on their routes.[12]

The first roads to the north and west of Trenton were established in the early 1700s in conjunction with the pioneer settlement of the region. The river road (Bear Tavern Road) was one of three major roads leading north and west from the falls of the Delaware River at Trenton. The river road, the westernmost of the three, followed what is now County Route 579 (Bear Tavern Road) to just south of Harbourton, where it turned west and north along several present-day local roads and connected with the Old York Road at Lambertville.[13] The portion of the road between Trenton and Jacobs Creek was in use by 1711, and the stretch to the north can be documented as well established by 1729, and probably was in existence much earlier.[14] Boundary descriptions in mid 18th-century deeds indicate that the river road followed its present alignment north of the creek, as does the 1779 Erskine map, which depicts the road's present "dog-leg" bend just north of Jacobs Creek, but locates the creek crossing downstream from the present bridge at the confluence of Jacobs Creek and its tributary Ewing Creek, south of which the road again makes turns another sharp turn.[15]

The Jacobs Creek ravine presented a formidable obstacle to early travelers, and the river road followed the path of least resistance through the difficult terrain by taking advantage of the narrow declivities cut by Ewing Creek and Jacobs Creek's smaller unnamed northern tributary through the surrounding piedmont soils and bedrock, giving the road its distinctive double turns, an alignment that has survived subsequent late 19th and 20th century road improvements. Given the local topography, the ford at the con-

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[10] A. G. Lichtenstein & Associates, Inc., New Jersey Historic Bridge Survey, Mercer County Bridge #1100060, 1991.

[11] Hunter and Porter, pp. 163-183; Frank T. Dale, *Bridges over the Delaware River*, pp. 8 & 9.

[12] Hunter and Porter, pp. 177, 180 & 181.

[13] Ibid., pp. 167 & 169.

[14] Hunterdon County Deeds, Book A. p. 18; *The Town Records of Hopewell, New Jersey, 1721-1800.* In 1729, for the first time, the neighborhood roads were named in town records. Two men were then assigned to the River Road, John Anderson and Abraham LaRue. Deed research establishes that Anderson lived along the lower part of the river road, and LaRue was adjacent to the future location of Harbourton, along the upper part north of Jacobs Creek [communication from David Blackwell, Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission].

[15] Robert Erskine, "Road from Pennytown to Slack's Ferry and from Do to Trenton and Howell's Ferry," *Erskine-DeWitt Series No. 87B*, 1779; West Jersey Deeds, Book S, p. 412 and Book W, pp. 3 & 5.

fluence of Jacobs and Ewing Creeks quite possibly was used even earlier by Native Americans. However, only very limited information is available about Native American paths. Although fords required no maintenance, they posed a challenge for travelers, particularly pedestrians, during times of high water or during the wintertime. In 1796, two wooden stringer bridges supported by stone piers and abutments replaced the ford, one across Jacobs Creek and the second across Ewing Creek.[16] A new road would have been necessary to connect the south end of the Jacobs Creek bridge to the Ewing Creek bridge, and the short stretch of unpaved roadbed on the south side of the creek between the bridge and creek confluences apparently is that new road (inventory # 8, photo #17) which remained in use until 1882.[17]

Road connections between the river road and the Delaware River originally were limited but increased over time. Just northwest of the district a ferry was established at what is now Washington Crossing in the mid-18th century, and the road between the ferry to the river road was not surveyed until 1767 although it probably had been in use some years earlier.[18] While there were two gristmills near the mouth of Jacobs Creek by the 1730s, the earliest local road between the mills and the river road yet identified appears to have been Maddock Road laid out circa 1780, around which time a road was opened along the bank of the Delaware River south of Washington Crossing. A road surveyed in 1841 along Jacobs Creek between the old and new river roads facilitated access to the mills and Delaware and Raritan Canal (opened in 1834) and the Belvidere and Delaware Railroad (opened in 1851).[19]

The Morris and Somerville Railroad was constructed along Jacobs Creek in the early 1870s, and its abandonment within a few years facilitated improvement of the roads and bridges at the creek crossing. Its gradual grade providing an attractive alternative to the 1841 road along the west side of creek, the abandoned railroad right-of-way was acquired by the township and utilized for a new road surveyed in 1880.[20] The new road extended to the east of Bear Tavern Road along the railroad right-of-way to the Washington Crossing-Pennington Road. When the extant iron truss bridge was constructed in 1882 just upstream from the old bridge, two redundant segments of Bear Tavern Road were abandoned: the segment created to connect the 1796 bridge to the road and another segment extended from the south end of the earlier bridge across Ewing Creek to short distance to the point where the road turns sharply south.[21] Thereafter, the district's roads underwent little change until the early 1930s, when the Bear Tavern Road

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[16] Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Minutes, I, 1796, pp. 234-235.

[17] Sivilich, pp. 8 & 9; Richard Veit, Archaeologist, "Memorandum of Findings, Jacob's Creek Archaeological Resources," June 1, 2011. It is also possible, but less likely, that the abadoned road segement formed part of the colonial road. The road segement was abandoned in 1882, when the extant truss bridge was erected and the present alignment adopted [Milner, pp. 24 & 25 and figure 13].

[18] Hunter and Porter, p. 126; Hunterdon County Road Returns, Book 1, p. 163. Robert Erskines's 1779 maps indentifies the ferry as Slack's Ferry, but it was better known as McKoney's Ferry at the time of Washington's Delaware River crossing in 1776 [see footnote 8; Daivd Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, p. 208].

[19] Hunterdon County Road Returns, Book 1, p. 163; Hunter and Porter, pp. 163,164 & 179.

[20] Mercer County Road Returns, Book A, p. 527; Hunter and Porter, pp. 142, 144, 149, 164, 166, 169, 177 & 179.

[21] John Milner Associates, Inc., "Phase 1A Archaeological Study Bear Tavern Road Bridge Over Jacobs Creek Hopewell Township, Mercer County, New Jersey," pp. 9, 10 & 24; Sivilich, pp. 8 & 9; Richard Veit, Archaeologist, "Memorandum of Findings, Jacob's Creek Archaeological Resources," June 1, 2011; Hunter and Porter, pp. 142, 144, 149, 164, 166, 169, 177 & 179.

between Jacobs Creek and the Washington Crossing – Pennington Road was paved and grading and drainage improvements made.[22]

Architecture

In their form, construction and detailing, the district's dwellings are representative of the rural region's early domestic architecture, which has its roots in traditional building practices, but reflects as well the influence of more formal styles. English, Dutch and German building traditions intermingled in 18th-century Hopewell Township, but as the century ended, the Georgian style increasingly influenced local builders, and during the first half of the 19th century the classically based the Federal and Greek Revival styles became popular. Frame construction was widespread throughout Hopewell, and both Dutch and English framing techniques were employed. Stone construction also was popular, but largely confined to the northwestern portions of the township and along the Delaware River where suitable stone (Stockton sandstone and Lockatong argillite) was available. The use of brick was relatively rare in Hopewell, limited to "the larger, wealthier farms in the southern and eastern sections of the township," except for chimneys and small outbuildings, and perhaps reflects the limited influence of southwestern New Jersey, where brick construction was widespread.[23] Occupying an area of fertile farmland close to the Delaware River in the southern part of the township, the district, not surprisingly, has examples of the use of all three materials. The late 18th/early 19th century Mershon/Burroughs House (inventory #1, photo #1) illustrates such traditional practices as the linear massing of main block and service wing, as well as the combination of materials (stone main block and frame wing) and the exposure of gable-end chimney backs in frame construction. The brick John Burroughs House (inventory #5, photo #9), which dates circa 1800, also is laterally massed, comprised of main block and gable-end service wing. In contrast to them, the circa 1836-54 Hart House (inventory #4, photo #5) features a large rear service ell, the arrangement more typical of Hopewell's 19th-century dwellings. These houses all exhibit Georgian influences in their center-hall or side-hall floor plans and symmetrical fenestration patterns, along with classically derived Georgian, Federal and/or Greek Revival style detailing. The main block of the Mershon/Burroughs House (inventory #1, photo #1), a variant of the double-pile side-hall Georgian plan, has regular fenestration pattern typical of the Georgian style on its front elevation and Georgian/Federal style detailing, mostly notably on the interior. The John Burroughs House (inventory #5, photo #9) also is laterally massed, comprised of main block and gable-end service wing. The Burroughs House is distinguished by the Flemish bond brickwork of its symmetrical five-bay front façade, which incorporates a molded brick water table and second-story belt course, and the Georgian/Federal style front entry treatment featuring a simple Doric entablature, triangular pediment, flanking pilasters and tracery fanlight. The Hart house also has a symmetrical, five-bay front elevation embellished with Greek Revival detailing: eaves cornice with block modillion brackets and entry with sidelights, transom and pilasters. The district also contains one example of the simple I-type dwellings that once were ubiquitous in the Delaware Valley, the Hart

[22] "Will Rebuild Bear Tavern Road," *The Hopewell Herald*, July 8, 1931; "Hopewell Township Aids County," *The Hopewell Herald*, October 5, 1932. Bear Tavern Road to the south of the district evidently was paved and improved somewhat earlier earlier ["French Fliers Will Dedicate Two Memorial Tablets Here; Luncheons Planned for Visit," *Trenton State Gazette*, September 21, 1930].

[23] Hunter and Porter, pp. 52 & 60 – 68.

Tenant House, (inventory #3), a simple frame dwelling that can be dated circa 1860-75 on architectural grounds.

While the district's farmsteads retain relatively few early outbuildings, those extant are representative of the agricultural and domestic outbuildings once typical of the region's 18th and 19th century farms. They include two frame 19th/early 20th-century wagon houses (inventory #s 1 and 4, photo #s 2 & 6) of the gable-end entry type with upper level storage loft, and an example of a double crib/wagon shed comprised of paired corn cribs flanking a drive-through wagon bay that is open at both ends (inventory #5, photo #12). Of particular note is a brick smoke house (inventory #5, photo #10), one of only handful of brick examples of the building type identified in Hopewell Township. Probably dating to the early 1800s, it retains a gable-end entry with batten door hung on strap hinges.[24]

Military

The river road figured prominently in one of the most celebrated campaigns of the Revolutionary War as the route of George Washington's troops on their march to Trenton on December 26, 1776, where they surprised and defeated the Hessian garrison, wining one of America's key victories. Crossing Jacobs Creek presented a formidable obstacle to those troops, second only to crossing the Delaware River. Nearly all of the route followed by Washington's troops between Washington's Crossing and Trenton has been transformed by urban and suburban development over the course of the last century, leaving the Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing District as the only area along the route, outside of Washington Crossing State Park, with the ability to evoke something of its appearance at the time of the Revolutionary War and the challenges faced during this pivotal event in the struggle for American Independence.

In a letter written on the day after the battle of Trenton, General Washington provided an account of the march:

> The evening of the 25th, I ordered the troops intended for this service, which were about 2,400 to parade back of McConkey's ferry, that they might begin to pass as soon as it grew dark and imagining we should be able to throw them over with the necessary Artillery by 12 o'clock and that we might easily arrive at Trenton by five in the morning, the distance being about nine miles, but the quantity of Ice, made that night impeded the passage of the boats so much, that it was three o'clock before the Artillery could be got over, and near four before the troops took up the line of march, this made me despair of surprising the two [town?] as I well knew we could not reach it before the day was fairly broke, but as I was certain there was no making a retreat without being discovered and horrified on repassing the river, I determined to push on in all events. I form'd my detachments into two divisions, one to march by the lower or River Road, the other by the upper or Pennytown road, as the divisions had nearly the same distance to march.[25]

Although a few historians have maintained that the American forces divided shortly after crossing the river and climbing the hill to what is now know as the Bear Tavern crossroads --the right division led by

[24] Ibid., pp. 77, 78 & 82.
[25] George Washington to General Heath, December 27, 1776, as quoted in Milner, pp. 5 & 6.

Major-General John Sullivan then marching to Trenton along the river road and the left division led by General Nathanael Greene by the longer, more circuitous route of the upper or Pennington road– most now agree that the army followed the river road until within a few miles of Trenton, dividing at the cross-roads hamlet of Birmingham near Howell's Ferry.[26] A letter written by Major George Johnston of the 5th Virginia Regiment, dated December 29, 1776, noted that the two American divisions attacked Trenton "within 5 minutes of each other, though they parted 4 miles from the Town, and took different routes." A map included in the 1816 memoirs of Major James Wilkinson, an aide de camp who accompanied the army, indicates that the troops divided at the crossroads on the river road near Howell's Ferry, where Greene's division turned off on the Upper Ferry Road towards the Scotch and Pennington roads, and Sullivan's troops continued south along the river road.[27] The division place depicted by Wilkinson is approximately four miles from Trenton, which agrees with Johnston's calculation. Furthermore, Benjamin Titus, a young apprentice in the 1st Regiment of the Hunterdon County militia in the company of Captain John Mott, one of Washington's guides that night, specifically mentioned marching "down the river road till we got near the town" in describing his military service for his pension application:

> When we got to the [McKonkey's] ferry we found plenty of boats ready to take us over the river. There was ice running. On Christmas night we were all taken over, and Gen. Washington marched us right on towards Trenton. We went down the river road till we got near the town. We were then taken across the plantations to the Scotch Road leading from Pennytown to Trenton, & which intersected the main road from Trenton to Princeton a little above the town. We there halted about day break & fired a few shots down at the town with artillery & surprised the Hessians who were in Trenton. Gen. Washington before we left the river road had sent some men down along the river to get round behind the town.[28]

General Henry Knox, commander of the American artillery, reported that eighteen guns were ferried across the Delaware, and in accordance with the specific general orders for the campaign "artillery was

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[26] David McCullough, *1776*, p. 277; David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, p. 229. For the two earlier differing views of the march see John Milner Associates, Inc., "Phase 1A Archaeological Study Bear Tavern Road Bridge Over Jacobs Creek Hopewell Township, Mercer County, New Jersey," pp. 6 & 7. The dirrect road from the Bear Tavern crossroads to the upper road and Pennington was not opened until after the Revolitionary War, which would have required a detour north before heading south again [Robert Erskine, "Road from Pennytown to Slack's Ferry and from Do to Trenton and Howell's Ferry," *Erskine-DeWitt Series No. 87B*, 1779].

[27] Major Geroge P. Johnston to Colonel Leven Powell, December 29, 1776, publiched in R. C. Powell, ed., *A Biographical Sketch of Col. Leven Powell*, pp. 41-4; James Wilkinson, *Memoirs of My Own Times*, atlas plate 2..

[28] Revolutionary War File, Benjamin Titus, W-6287, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Information provided by local historian William Schleicher, who observed that the 1st Hunterdon Regiment recruited from the southern portion of Hunterdon County including Hopewell Township [email communication]. The Titus family was among the prominent early settlers of southern Hunterdon County, and its members presumably would have been familiar with the local roads [Cooley, pp. 270-273]. In his pension application, Benjamin Titus stated that his grandfather, mother and siblings lived on the main road between Princeton and Trenton, but did not give their names, and how he fits into the family genealogy is unclear.

placed at the head of each infantry brigade."[29] The divisions of Sullivan and Greene consisted of three or four brigades each and a like number of batteries.[30]

By all accounts the weather and roads were poor that Christmas night. As an anonymous "officer of distinction" noted in a letter dated December 27, 1776: "The night was sleety, and the roads so slippery that it was daybreak when we were two miles from Trenton."[31] Not only did the soldiers marching down the river road have to ford the cold, perhaps icy waters of Jacobs Creek but the artillery forces accompanying them, in accordance with their standard procedure, would have had to unharness the horses pulling the cannon and employ ropes to haul the guns down and up the steep slick slopes of the ravine, a challenging endeavor given the weather conditions that night.[32] One American soldier, Lieutenant Elisha Bostwick, provided a vivid recollection in his memoirs of the march and the artillery's role, as well a remarkable feat of horsemanship performed by General Washington and his words to the troops:

> Finally our march began with the torches of our field pieces Stuck in the Exhalters sparked & blazed in the Storm all night and about day light a halt was made at which time his Excellency & Aids came near to the front on the Side of the path where the soldiers Stood [.] I heard his Excellency, as he was comeing on Speaking to & Encouraging the Soldiers. The words he Spoke as he pass'd by where I stood & in my hearing were these ["]Soldiers keep by your officers for Gods Sake keep by your officers[,"] Spoke in a deep & Solemn voice[.] [W]hile passing a slanting Slippery bank his excellencys horse['s] hind feet both slip'd from under him & he Siez'd his horses Mane & the horse recovered. Our horses were then unharness'd & the artillery men prepared[.][33]

As John Greenwood, another young soldier, later recounted

> During the whole night it alternately hailed, rained, snowed, and blew tremendously, I recollect very well that at one time, when we halted on the road, I sat down on a stump of a tree and was so benumbed with cold that I wanted to go to sleep; had I been passed unnoticed I should have frozen to death without knowing it; but as good luck always attended me, Sergeant Madden came and rousing me up, made me walk about. We then began to march again in the old slow way, until the dawn of day, about half-past seven in the morning.[34]

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[29] Fischer, pp. 223 & 224.

[30] William S. Stryker, *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton,* p. 142. Stryker concluded from his research that Sullivan's division had three brigades and four batteries, while Greene's division had four brigades, as well as a troop of light horse, and three batteries.

[31] "Extract of a letter from an officer of distinction at Newtown, Bucks county, dated December 27, 1776," *The Pennsylvania Evening Post*, December 28, 1776. The anonymous author also related that "about 2,500 men, and 20 brass field-pieces, with his excellency Gen. Washington at their head, and Maj. Gen. Sullivan and Gen. Greene in command of two divisions, passed over, on the night of Christmas, about three o'clock, A. M., were on their march by two routes, towards Trenton."

[32] Fischer, p. 227.

[33] William S. Powell (ed.), "A Connecticut Soldier Under Washington: Elisha Bostwick's Memoirs of the First Years of the Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 1949. p. 102.

[34] Greenwood, Isaac J. (ed.), *The Wartime Services of John Greenwood, A Young Patriot in the American Revolution*, p. 81.

The historical significance of Bear Tavern Road as the route of the American troops to their victory at the battle of Trenton was commemorated in 1930 by two markers erected along the road south of the district. One of the fieldstone monuments, located about .1 mile south of Jacobs Creek Road and still extant, was dedicated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, General Mercer Chapter, at a ceremony held on October 10, 1930, during which two French fliers on an American good-will tour performed the unveiling (the other marker, sponsored by the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders, was located at Trenton Junction, as the 18th-century hamlet of Birmingham was then known).[35]

Historical Overview

The area comprising the Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing District formed part of the vast tract encompassing most of what are now Hopewell and Ewing Townships that was acquired from its native American owners and first surveyed for West Jersey proprietor Dr. Daniel Coxe in 1688-89. When Coxe, an English Court physician and wealthy land speculator, conveyed some of his extensive landholdings to the West Jersey Society a few years later, he excluded the "land lying above the falls of the Delaware" then estimated to contain 30,000 acres. Although both parties subsequently agreed to rescind the exception, no deed to that effect was ever executed, and Dr. Coxe included the tract in the property he conveyed to his son Col. Daniel Coxe in 1701. While the West Jersey Society disputed his right to the land, Col. Coxe had the tract resurveyed in his own right in 1707 (when it was found to contain 32,000 acres), and both parties engaged in selling land within the tract, leading to confused ownership titles. Coxe began "ejection suits" against individuals who had purchased land from the West Jersey Society in 1731, and several Hopewell Township inhabitants followed with a countersuit against Coxe. The disputed title was legally resolved in 1734, when New Jersey's governor, acting in his capacity as chancellor, issued a judgment in Coxe's favor. Although many who had acquired their land from the West Jersey Society, either repurchased title from Coxe or abandoned their holdings, there was at least one incident of violent resistance when in July, 1735 a small mob of men assaulted two individuals who had taken title from Coxe to farms whose previous owner's had been ejected by him.[36] Such title disputes were widespread throughout New Jersey during this period, but largely subsided during the middle of the 18th century.[37]

Ownership of property within the district can be traced to conveyances made by Col. Daniel Coxe and his executors, and subsequent deeds, along with other sources, provide information about its early

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[35] "French Fliers Will Dedicate Two Memorial Tablets Here; Luncheons Planned for Visit," *Trenton State Gazette*, September 21, 1930; "Famous French Fliers Unveil D. A. R. Plaque Here," *Trenton State Gazette*, October 11, 1930; General Mercer Chapter Meeting Minutes, October 4, 1930. John J. Cleary, editorial writer of the *Trenton Sunday-Times* and president of the Trenton Historical Society, prepared the inscriptions for the two markers

[36] Hunter and Porter, pp. 27-29. Col. Daniel Coxe died in 1739, and thereafter his son Daniel represented the family interest, continuing his father's insistence on local landholders obtaining a Coxe land title. Daniel Coxe III occupied his family's Bellmont plantation, which was located along the Delaware River in northern Hopewell.

[37] Peter O. Wacker, *Land and People: A Cultural Geography of Preindustrial New Jersey: Origins and Settlement Patterns*, p. 350-358.

residents and development. The earliest is a 1714 deed whereby Col. Cox sold a 722-acre tract, which stretched northwards from Jacobs Creek between the Delaware River and present-day Bear Tavern Road, to Pennsylvania resident Thomas Stevenson for £130. In the following year, Stevenson conveyed the parcel, less 110 acres subdivided from its southern end, to John Rodman, Jr., of Flushing, New York for £235.[38] That these deeds do not mention a road along the tract's eastern border may be evidence that the river road was not yet extant north of Jacobs Creek. Rodman's two daughters, Elizabeth, who married Richard Smith, a Burlington, NJ attorney, and Anna, wife of William Lister, a Burlington merchant, subsequently inherited the property, which they divided on November 22, 1762, the Smiths taking the northern half and the Listers, the southern.[39] Earlier that year, the owners had offered the whole tract for sale in a newspaper advertisement, which noted that three tenants ("Joseph Severns, John Severns, and Benjamin Severns") occupied the property.[40] These latter deeds mention the "great road," present-day Bear Tavern Road, as the eastern boundary. In December 1762, the 334-acre northern half owned by the Smiths was advertised for sale in a newspaper notice indicating that the land was valued for its suitability for growing wheat and its river frontage, which provided easy access to river shipping and urban markets. A start had been made to towards agricultural improvement, but much of the tract remained wooded:

> It is beautifully situated on the Delaware to the West, and adjoins the Lands of Gerrard Johnson to the North, John Hart and Joseph Boroughs to the East, and William Lister to the south. There is a small House on the Place, now tenanted by Daniel Severns, and about 80 Acres cleared, the rest all Wood. It is supposed to be as good Wheat Land as any in New Jersey. The Title is short and indisputable.[41]

Early in the following year, Richard and Elizabeth Smith sold the 344 acres to his brother John who paid £1,425 for the tract.[42] Shortly thereafter, the property was again offered for sale in an advertisement revealing that while improvements continued apace more than two thirds of the tract remained wooded:

> There is on it a Dwelling-house, and above 100 Acres cleared, and in Fence, which is chiefly strong Wheat land, and now rented by Daniel Severns. The rest of the tract hath an abundance of Wood upon it, and some Meadow may be easily got into order. It is supposed to be as good Wheat Land as any in New Jersey. The Title is clear. It has a large Front, with a bold Shore, and a fine Prospect on the River Delaware.[43]

Smith sold a 100-acre strip subdivided from the north side of the tract to another Burlington merchant in 1770, and a few years later the remaining 234 acres, which included the farmstead site at inventory #1, was acquired by Henry Mershon, who mortgaged the property to John Smith's executors in April, 1773

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[38] West Jersey Deeds, Book AAA, pp. 455 & 457.
[39] Ibid., Book S, pp. 331 & 333. A newspaper advertisement of around the same time gives the husbands' occupations ["To Be Sold," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 23, 1762].
[40] "To Be Sold," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 11, 1762. Wheat was New Jersey's most important commercial crop in the 18th century, for which there was always a market. [Hubert Schmidt, *Agriculture in New Jesey*, p. 91].
[41] "To Be Sold," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 23, 1762.
[42] West Jersey Deeds, Book S, p. 412.
[43] "To Be Sold," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 4, 1763.

for the sum of £600.[44] Mershon, whose family was of Dutch or Huguenot origins, evidently was the property's first owner/occupant. He appears on the 1778 Hopewell Township tax role, the earliest surviving for the municipality, assessed for 230 acres of land, six horses, eight head of cattle and eighteen hogs, but not the 1779 list nor those for 1780, 1785 or 1802, the only other years for which township tax roles survive.[45] The 1792 deed for property to the north describes the property to its south as belonging to Henry Mershon, but when his ownership ended remains unknown.[46]

Title to property on the east side of Bear Tavern Road also can be traced back to Coxe ownership. In 1749, Col. Coxe's executor sold an approximately 230-acre tract encompassing the southeastern portion of the district to Powell Hoff for £413, and eight months later Hoff conveyed the parcel to Joseph Burroughs for £436.12.0.[47] The latter deed refers to both men as yeomen and Hopewell residents. Whether or not Hoff ever occupied the tract, Burroughs was living there by 1763. A deed dated that year for property on the west side of the river road (Bear Tavern Road) describes its southeast corner as "a post on the northeast side of the road near Joseph Burroughs' house," a location on or near the site of the farmstead (inventory #5) long associated with him and his family.[48] Joseph Burroughs was of English descent, his grandfather John Burroughs having immigrated to New England in the 1630s, and subsequently relocated to Newtown, Long Island, and his father of the same name having moved to Hopewell in the early 1700s.[49] Joseph Burroughs prospered and expanded his landholdings around Jacobs Creek, purchasing a 48-acre tract on the south side of the creek in 1758 and acquiring additional land along the creek and the former Rodman/Lister tract on the west side of the river road.[50] On the 1778 Hopewell Township tax role, he was assessed for 461 acres of land, along with six horses, eleven head of cattle and nineteen hogs. On the February 1780 and September 1785 roles he was assessed, respectively for 461 acres and 400 acres of improved land, amounts indicative of a large farm operation. One of Hopewell Township's largest landowners, he was one of only five individuals to be assessed for between 450 and 500 acres in 1778, placing him in the top two percentile of township property owners.[51] Burroughs retained ownership until his death in 1798.[52] The property north of the Burroughs farm and east of the Mershon farm was acquired by John Hart sometime before 1762, as documented by a newspaper advertisement and deed for an adjoining tract dated that year, which named him as the owner.[53] Hart's father, also named John, was another emigrant of English stock from Newton, Long Island, settling in Hopewell

[44] West Jersey Deeds, Book AQ, p. 403; Hunterdon County Mortgages, Book 1, p. 166.
[45] Hunter and Porter, p. 26; New Jersey Ratables, Hopewell Township, 1778.
[46] West Jersey Deeds, Book AQ, p. 458. There is a break in the title until 1826 when a deed of that year indicates that property had belonged to the Stephen Titus deceased [Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 41, p. 269].
[47] West Jersey Deeds, Book W, pp. 1 & 3.
[48] Ibid., Book S, p. 412.
[49] Eli F. and William S. Cooley, *Genealogy of Early Settlers in Hopewell and Ewing, Old Hunterdon County.* Trenton: The W. S. Sharp Printing Co., 1883, pp. 17-20.
[50] West Jersey Deeds, Book W, p. 5; Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 65, pp. 88, 91, 93 & 98; NJ Wills 1825J.
[51] New Jersey Ratables, Hopewell Township, 1778, February 1780 and July 1785.
[52] NJ Wills 1825J.
[53] "To Be Sold," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 23, 1762; West Jersey Deeds, Book S, p. 412.

in the early1700s.[54] In his 1770 will, the younger John Hart devised one half of the "plantation" where he lived to his son Phillips and the other half to son Abner. He died in 1774, and his inventory, made by neighbors Joseph Burroughs and Henry Mershon, totaled £208.14.0, evidence that he had prospered on his farm.[55] Phillips received the southern half, encompassing inventory #s 3 and 4, presumably sometime after he reached age twenty-one around 1776, but first appears on the 1780 township tax role, when he was assessed for 100 acres of improved land, six horses, eight head of cattle and eighteen hogs.[56] He is listed on the two surviving later lists, for 1785 and 1802, and owned the farm until his death in 1831.[57] By the time of the Revolutionary War, well-established farms of up to several hundred acres of land valued for its suitability for wheat production fronted on the river road north of Jacobs Creek.

It was not until the 1790s, that a bridge replaced the Jacobs Creek ford. On August 5, 1796, Hunterdon County's Board of Chosen Freeholders met at the house of Joseph Burroughs and appointed a committee "for drawing a plan of the bridge, at or across Jacobs Creek and the creek called the great brook [Ewing Creek]; near their junction." The freeholders provided detailed specifications for the two bridges, which indicate that they were to be of wooden construction (heavy timber frame, plank road deck and hand rails), supported by stone abutments and pillars. Five men were appointed as "undertakers" for the constructing the bridges.[58] The project probably took almost a year to complete, since at its June 7, 1797 meeting the Freeholder Board voted to order its collector to remit £175 to one of the project managers, Stephen Titus.[59]

The house where the Freeholders met to discuss the proposed new bridge probably was not the impressive brick dwelling (inventory #5, photo #9) now standing on the Burroughs farm, which most likely was erected by John Burroughs shortly after he inherited the property from his father who died on October 29, 1798, at age seventy-three. In his will written less than a year earlier, Joseph Burroughs bequeathed his "home plantation lying on both sides of the river road" to John, subject to the stipulation that the son support his widowed mother and unmarried sister and pay other legacies.[60] On the 1802 Hopewell tax role, the only one surviving for the township after 1785, John Burroughs was assessed for 478 acres of improved land, seven horses, eight head of cattle and two slaves.[61] He evidently remained on the family homestead until his intestate death at age fifty-eight in 1817.[62] The inventory of the deceased's personal estate totaled $9,372.37, a large sum for rural Hunterdon County at the time, placing him among the county's wealthier residents. Notes and bonds valued at approximately $5,000 constituted his most valuable asset, followed by crops worth $2,924 and livestock worth $1,160, indicating that he farmed in a substantial way. Crops on hand included corn, oats, hay, rye, wheat and flax seed, the

[54] Cooley, pp. 5 & 6.
[55] New Jersey Wills Lib. 16, p. 357.
[56] New Jersey Wills ,Lib. 16, p. 357; New Jersey Ratables, Hopwell Township, February 1780.
[57] New Jersey Ratables, Hopwell Township, July 1785 and September 1802; New Jersey Wills, 3878J
[58] Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Minutes, I, 1796, pp. 234-235.
[59] Ibid., p. 246.
[60] Cooley, p. 20; NJ Wills 1825J.
[61] New Jersey Ratables, Hopewell Township, September 1802.
[62] Cooley, p. 21; NJ Wills 2860J.

most valuable being "wheat and rye in stack" worth $540 and "green grain in ground" worth $364. His livestock included seven horses, sixteen head of cattle, twenty-seven sheep and thirty-three hogs. The inventory indicates that his house was comfortably furnished in keeping with its architecture and his economic status, listing such items as silverware, mirrors, carpeting, a "lybra [sic] of books" and a clock. He also owned a female slave.[63] John Burroughs' assets passed to his widow and seven children, but it was not until 1836, four years after his widow's death, that the approximately 700-acre property was divided among six of his children, Joseph Burroughs and his unmarried sister Naomi receiving title to the homestead farm with 205.5 acres for which they paid $8,340.[64] Joseph died in 1864, leaving the farm to his two children Joseph, Jr., and Mary Ellen, having acquired his sister's half share in 1863.[65] His inventory totaled $7,856.93 –slightly half of which consisted of notes, bonds and cash, the remainder comprised of household goods, livestock, farm equipment and crops– indicating that he was a substantial farmer practicing the same traditional diversified agriculture, if not as wealthy as his father and grandfather. In 1880, his executors conveyed the property's title to his children as tenants-in-common, and in 1893 Joseph, Jr., conveyed his half interest to his sister Mary Ellen Burroughs McGonigal.[66] The homestead farm finally left the ownership of the Burroughs family upon the death of Mary Ellen in 1926 when her then husband and heir Samuel H. Edwards conveyed its title to the Bear Tavern Corporation.[67]

Sometime before 1802, title to Henry Mershon's farm on the west side of the river road (inventory #1) evidently passed to Stephen Titus. Titus, whose ancestors also were among the township's early settlers of English extraction via Long Island and New England, evidently was living in the neighborhood in the 1790s and early 1800s, since he was one of the managers appointed to oversee the construction of the Jacobs Creek bridge in 1797 and conducted John Burroughs' inventory in 1817.[68] In 1802, he was assessed for 230 acres of improved land, the same acreage for which Mershon had been assessed in 1778, along with four horses and six head of cattle.[69] By his will dated October 23, 1825, and probated on August 8, 1826, Titus devised the residue of his estate, which included "the farm I now live on," to his wife Mary and five sons to be divided among them, after his son Charles reached the age of twenty-one. The decedent's inventory totaled $1,023.62, a figure suggesting that he was a middling farmer, and indicates

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[63] NJ Wills 2860J.

[64] Cooley, p. 20; Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 65, pp. 88, 91, 93 & 98. The land on the west side of the river road extending to the canal, which had formed the southern half of the Rodman tract divided between his two daughters in 1762 [West Jersey Deeds, Book S, pp. 331 & 333] was divided into two parcels containing 145-acres each, the southern one conveyed to John H. Burroughs and the northern one to James W. Burroughs [Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 65, pp. 88 & 98].

[65] NJ Wills 1512K; Mercer County Deeds, Book 55, page 474.

[66] Mercer County Deeds, Book 127, page 57 and Book 190, page 239.

[67] Ibid., Book 595, page 175.

[68] Cooley, pp. 270-273 (According to this source, Stephen's grandfather, whose great grandfather immigrated to New England in 1635, relocated from Long Island to Hopewell in ther early 1700s, and Stephen's father Andrew, lived near Titusville, where he died in 1800.) ; Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Minutes, I, 1796, pp. 234-235 & 246; NJ Wills 2860J.

[69] New Jersey Ratables, Hopewell Township, September 1802.

that he practiced diversified agriculture like the Burroughs.[70] His house, presumably the extant dwelling at inventory #1 (photo #1), was conformably furnished with hallmarks of a middle class status during the period including an eight-day clock, desk and bookcase, dining and card tables, looking glasses, carpeting and Queensware ceramics. In October 1826, Aaron Titus (another one of Stephen's sons) and wife conveyed their undivided interest in the 234-acre farm "under and by the will of Stephen Titus, dec'd. late of Hopewell" to John Titus, Jr. of Trenton, and the boundary description of this conveyance indicates that the property was the same one mortgaged by Henry Mershon in 1773.[71] In 1833, Charles Titus and wife conveyed title to a portion of the farm to Aaron T. Burroughs (son of John Burroughs), who acquired the interest of George Titus, Charles' brother, later that year. By 1836 Aaron T. Burroughs appears to have acquired the entire tract, and the former Mershon/Titus farm remained in the Burroughs family until at least 1903.[72]

The Hart farm on the east side of the river road also remained in the hands of John Hart's descendants for several generations. Phillips Hart, who had inherited the southern half of his father John's property in 1773, appears on the Hopewell Township tax roles for 1780 and 1785, on which he was assessed for 100 acres of improved land, along with two horses, one head of cattle and seven hogs in 1780 and three horses and three head of cattle in 1785. In 1802, he was assessed for 138 acres of improved land, three horses and four head of cattle.[73] Phillips Hart died in 1831, aged seventy-six, bequeathing his homestead farm to his son Joseph, subject to Joseph providing for his widowed mother and other stipulations. Phillips' brief inventory totaled only $358, but reveals that oats, rye, wheat, corn and hay were grown on the farm. He owned few household goods, and his only livestock was a horse, which suggests that he had given up the farm operation, mostly likely to his son Joseph; the listing of crops in the inventory may be evidence that he received his rent in kind.[74] After Joseph Hart's death a few years later, his widow and administrator Catherine obtained a court order to sell the farm. At the auction held on April 19, 1836, her late husband's brother Abner P. Hart was the high bidder at $26 per acre, and title to the 140-acre farm was conveyed to him one month later.[75] In his will dated July 7, 1854, Abner P. Hart, in turn, devised the farm to his grandson Abner, son of his deceased son Noah, subject to the grandson's

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[70] NJ Wills 3512J. At his death Titus owned five horses, fifteen sheep and an unspecified number of cattle and swine. His crops included corn, rye, wheat and oats.

[71] Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 41, p. 269; Hunterdon County Mortgages, Book 1, p. 166.

[72] In February 1833, Cahrles Titus and wife sold the 112-acre farm on which he lived to Aaron T. Burroughs, subject to George titus's interest in the same [Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 54, p. 157]. In Agust of that year, Aaron T. Burroughs acquired a one sixth interest in the farm from the guardian of George Titus, "a lunatic" and one of Stephen Titus's sons [Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 56, p. 125]. A Septemebr 1836 for the property adjoining the Titus farm on the south and references its long north boundary as "Aaron T. Burroughs' line." The property to the south of the Titus farm was acquired by Aaron's brother James W. Burroughs in the division of their father's estate [Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 65, p. 96]. J. W. Otley, and J. Keily, *Map of Mercer County*, 1849; D.J. Lake and S.N. Beer. *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton,* 1860; Everts & Stewarts, *Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County,* 1875; Pugh & Downing,. *Map of Mercer County, New Jersey*, 1903.

[73] NJ Wills Lib, 16, p, 357; New Jersey Ratables, Hopewell Township, February 1780, July 1785 and September 1802.

[74] NJ Wills 3878J.

[75] Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 64, p. 68; Cooley, p. 95.

payment of certain legacies, and gave his unmarried daughter Eleanor the right to occupy the "west back room" on both floors of his house. He most likely built and occupied the brick dwelling on the property (inventory #4, photo #5). Like his neighbor Joseph Burroughs he was a substantial farmer possessed of moderate wealth. The inventory of Abner P. Hart's personal estate totaled $6,721.30, of which cash, notes and bonds worth $5,279.30 comprised the vast majority. The remainder consisted of livestock valued at $616, as well as crops, farm equipment crops and household goods.[76] Settlement of Abner's estate, required the farm's sale at auction in 1868. Abner T. Hart (presumably Noah's son Abner) was the high bidder at the sale, and the county sheriff deeded the property to him.[77] Abner T. Hart owned and occupied the farm until his intestate death, which evidently occurred sometime during the early 20th century.[78]

Mid-19th-century maps of Hopewell Townships reveal that the settlement pattern in the district had changed little since the 18th century, as regards road network and farmstead locations.[79] The 1849 Mercer County map (Hopewell Township became part of the newly created Mercer County in 1839) depicts one new addition to the road network, a road surveyed in the 1841 along the south side of Jacobs Creek between the old and new river roads, which facilitated access to the mills and Delaware and Raritan Canal, opened in 1834.[80] The Hunterdon County Freeholders minutes record repairs made to the Jacobs Creek Bridge in 1811, but include no mention of the span thereafter, and a lacuna in the Mercer County Freeholders minutes makes the mid-century history of the span obscure.[81] By 1860, the old river road had become know as Bear Road after the tavern of that name located at the crossroads just north of the district.[82] The Belvidere and Delaware Railroad, which paralleled the canal along the river, opened in 1851, and in the early 1870s the Morris and Somerville Railroad was constructed along Jacobs Creek. The Morris and Somerset had been open only a few years before it was replaced by another rail line a few miles to the south.[83]

In the early 1880s, a new road was opened along the east side of Jacobs Creek, replacing the 1841 road, at which time the intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads was realigned and a new bridge erected over Jacobs Creek. Surveyed in 1880, the new road utilized the abandoned right-of-way of the Morris and Somerville Railroad from the Delaware River eastwards to the Washington Crossing-Pennington Road and incorporated the railroad bridges, including the one over Ewing Creek at its confluence with Jacobs Creek (inventory #9). In September 1882 the old bridge over Jacobs Creek was washed

[76] NJ Wills 895K.
[77] Mercer County Deeds, Book 70, page 589.
[78] Ibid., Book 759, page 407; D.J. Lake and S.N. Beer. *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton,* 1860; Everts & Stewarts, *Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County,* 1875; Pugh & Downing,. *Map of Mercer County, New Jersey*, 1903.
[79] J. W. Otley, and J. Keily, *Map of Mercer County*, 1849; D.J. Lake and S.N. Beer. *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton,* 1860; Everts & Stewarts, *Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County,* 1875.
[80] J. W. Otley, and J. Keily, *Map of Mercer County*, 1849; James P. Snell (ed.), *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, p. 190; Hunter and Porter, p. 163.
[81] Milner, p. 31. The Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholder minutes are missing previous to 1887.
[82] D.J. Lake and S.N. Beer. *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton,* 1860.
[83] Hunter and Porter, pp. 179-182.

away in a flood; it was replaced by an iron truss bridge (inventory #7) erected later that year adjacent to the old bridge, and a short section of Bear Tavern Road, made redundant by the new road, was abandoned around the same time. The abandoned section of Bear Tavern Road extended from the south end of the Jacobs Creek bridge to the point where the road turns sharply to the south. A small piece of land was acquired from the to connect the new bridge to the realigned road, and another small pierce to create the T-intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek roads just south of Ewing Creek.[84]

Hopewell Township experienced limited suburban resident development during the early 20th century, growth made possible by the arrive of trolley service to the boroughs of Hopewell and Pennington in 1904, followed by the proliferation of the automobile and the gradual improvement of local roads. In the 1920s residential building spread northward along the Delaware River from Trenton with a sizable cluster occurring at Washington Crossing, and it is possible that the acquisition of the Burroughs Farm (inventory #5) in 1926 by the Bear Tavern Corporation of Trenton was in anticipation of the further residential development. However, as was the case throughout most of Hopewell Township, the Bear Tavern Road neighborhood retained its agricultural character.[85] The Depression presumably ended any plans the corporation may have had to develop the Burroughs Farms, which was sold at a sheriff sale in 1936.[86]

The district's circulation pattern underwent little change until the early 1930s when Bear Tavern Road was paved and improved between Jacobs Creek and intersection of Bear Tavern and Washington Crossing Roads. The county project was initiated in 1931 and, according to newspaper reports, "introduced in anticipation of heavy traffic next year to Washington Crossing during the bicentennial of George Washington's birth." [87] The work, which included paving the road, along with necessary grading and drainage improvements, was well underway by October 5, 1932, when increased funding was sought, $80,000 having been spent to date "due mainly to rock excavation and drainage needs."[88] The stone culverts and retaining walls just north of the bridge may have formed part of this work.

The Burroughs Farm was acquired in 1936 by Samuel K. Kerr, a Trenton porcelain company executive, who undertook renovations, established his residence there and commuted to Trenton, a circumstance presumably made possible by the recent improvements to Bear Tavern Road. The property remains in the Kerr family, occupied and farmed by Samuel Kerr's descendants, as is the Mershon-Titus-Burroughs Farm (inventory #1).[89] In 1937, Abner T. Hart's heirs conveyed title to the family farm (inventory #5) to his son George. George succeeded his brother Edwin, who at the time of the conveyance

[84] Mercer County Road Returns, Book A, p. 527; Milner, pp. 9, 10, 17, 24 & 25.
[85] Hunter and Porter, page 41; Mercer County Deeds, Book 595, page 175.
[86] Mercer County Deeds, Book 742, page 279.
[87] "Will Rebuild Bear Tavern Road," *The Hopewell Herald*, July 8, 1931.
[88] "Hopewell Township Aids County," *The Hopewell Herald*, October 5, 1932.

[89] Ibid., Book 751, page 148, Book 2656, page 131 and Book 3085, page 191; "Illness Fatal At Age of 53,"(Samuel Kisam Kerr obituary), *Trenton Times*, June 12,1953.

occupied and farmed the property.[90] The farm finally passed from the Hart family in 1955.[91] During the second half of the 20th century development in southern Hopewell Township greatly increased. Residential subdivisions were built to the south and west of the district, and scattered residential development occurred to the north and east. In the 1960s, a township school was constructed on Bear Tavern Road just north of the district, and two farms on the west side of the road were converted into an office park/research facility.[92] The Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing District survives today as an evocative remnant of the rural landscape that once characterized Hopewell Township.

[90] Ibid., Book 759, page 407; D.J. Lake and S.N. Beer. *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton,* 1860; Everts & Stewarts, *Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County,* 1875; Pugh & Downing,. *Map of Mercer County, New Jersey*, 1903.

[91] Mercer County Deeds, Book 1320, page 246.

[92] School date stone inscribed "1962," and information supplied by local resident Elizabeth Kerr.

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Hunterdon County Road Returns
Mercer County Deeds
Mercer County Road Returns
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New Jersey Wills
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West Jersey Deeds

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UTMs, continued

Zone = 18
#5. E: 513499 N: 4461357
#6. E: 512704 N: 4451317
#7. E: 511892 N: 4461162

NARRATIVE BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing Rural Historic District is delineated on the attached map Site Location and Boundary Map, and is verbally described in the following paragraphs. The site and boundary map was prepared based on current municipal tax maps of the Townships and Hopewell and Ewing.

The boundary of the district begins in Hopewell Township on the west side of Bear Tavern Road (County Route 579) at a northeast corner of block 98, lot 16, and proceeds west along the north side of lot 16 to that lot's northwest corner on the east side of block 98, lot 15. From there it runs north, west, south and east along the east, north west and south sides of lot 15 to that lot's southeast corner on the west side of Bear Tavern Road. The boundary next runs south along the west side of Bear Tavern Road, crossing that road's intersection with Maddock Road, to the northeast corner of block 99.01, lot 36.01, also the southeast corner of Block 99.01, lot 36.02, and turn west runs along the common boundary between those two lots to a southwest of lot 36.02, also a northeast corner of lot 36.01. From that point, the district boundary cuts across lot 36.01 to a southwest corner of that lot, which point is allocated on the municipal boundary between Hopewell and Ewing Townships in the middle of Jacobs Creek and is also the northwest corner of block 437, lot 1 in Ewing Township.

From the northwest corner of block 437, lot 1 in Ewing Township, the district boundary proceeds south along the west side of lot 1 to that lot's southwest corner, which point is on the north side of Bear Tavern Road, and crosses the road along a strait line continuation of the west side to lot 1 to the south side of Bear Tavern Road. The boundary proceeds northeast along east side of Bear Tavern Road, crossing the municipal boundary between Ewing and Hopewell Townships and Ewing Creek back into Hopewell Township, and continues northeast along the east side of Bear Tavern Road to the north corner of block 93, lot 15.02, which point is at the intersection of Bear Tavern and Jacobs Creek Roads. From that point the boundary crosses the intersection of the two roads to the north corner of the intersection of the two roads, which point is also the south corner of block 95, lot 3.

The district boundary proceeds northeast along the northwest side of Jacobs Creek Road and the southeast side of block 95, lot 3 to the southwest corner of block 95, lot 33, and continues northeast along the northwest sides of Jacobs Creek Road, and the southeast sides of lots 33 and 3 to another southeast

corner of lot 3. From that point the boundary runs northwest, north and west along northeast, east and north sides of lot 3 to a northeast corner of that lot, which is also a southwest corner of block 96, lot 6. From that point the boundary proceeds west across lot 3 to a northwest corner of that lot, also a southeast corner of block 95, lot 2. It then runs north and west along the east and north sides of lot 2 to a northwest corner of lot 2, also the northeast corner of block 95, lot 29. From there it proceeds south and west along the east and south sides of lot 29, to the southeast corner of that lot, also a northwest corner of block 95, lot 27 on the east side of Bear Tavern Road. It next follows a straight line continuation of the south side of lot 29 across Bear Tavern Road to the road's west and then runs south along the west side of Bear Tavern Road to the northeast corner of block 98, lot 16 and the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing Rural Historic District is delineated to include to the greatest extent possible the historic resources and landscape associated with the district, with the fewest non-contributing resources. In general terms the boundary follows the historic or current boundaries of the farms and excludes the modern residential development surrounding the district, as well as the research facility on the west side of Bear Tavern Road and the township elementary school to the north of the district on the east side of the road.

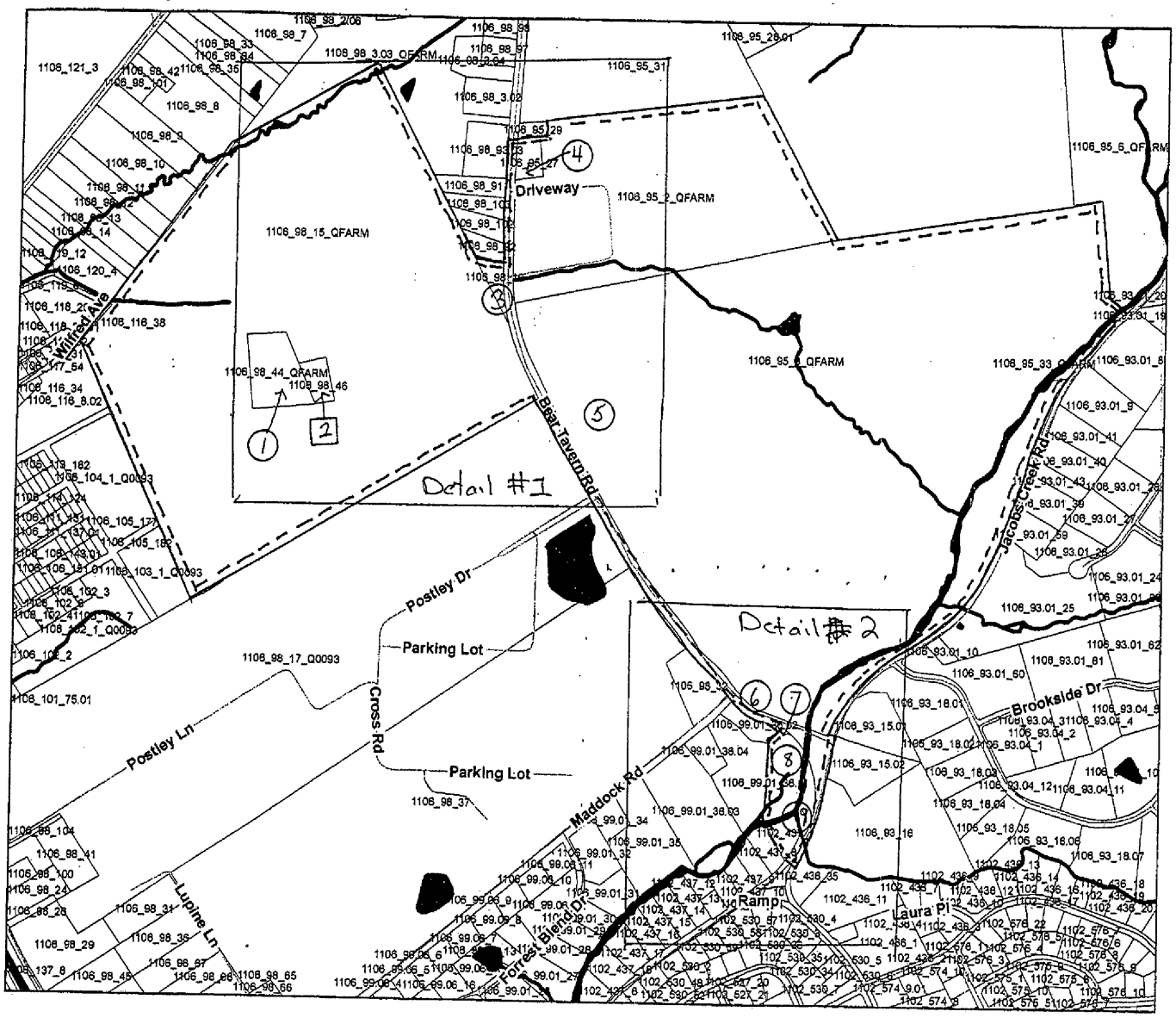
PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION:

The following information is the same for all of the photographs submitted:

Name: Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing Rural Historic District
Location: Hopewell & Ewing Townships, Mercer Co., NJ
Photographer: Beth Kerr
Date of photographs: Spring 2011
Digital repository: Dennis Bertland Associates
PO Box 315
Stockton, NJ 08559

Photograph direction of view:

#1 Inventory # 1, house, southeast view.
#2 Inventory # 1, wagon house, northeast view.
#3 Inventory # 1 & 2, landscape, northwest view.
#4 Inventory # 1 & 2, #1 lane, east view towards #3.
#5 Inventory # 1 & 4, house, southeast view.
#6 Inventory # 4, wagon house, northwest view.
#7 Inventory # 4, farmstead north view.
#8 Inventory # 6, Bear Tavern Road southeast view toward # 4.
#9 Inventory # 5, house, east view.
#10 Inventory # 5, smokehouse, southeast view.
#11 Inventory # 5, garage, northeast view.
#12 Inventory # 5, wagon shed, southeast view.
#13 Inventory # 6, Bear Tavern Road, south view towards Bear Tavern Road Bridge
#14 Inventory # 6, Bear Tavern Road, fieldstone "marker," west view.
#15 Inventory # 7, Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Bridge, northeast view.
#16 Inventory # 7, southwest view down the Jacobs Creek from bridge.
#17 Inventory # 8, Bear Tavern Road bypass segment, southwest view.
#18 Inventory # 8, Bear Tavern Road ford area, northeast view.
#19 Inventory # 9, Bear Tavern Road/Ewing Creek Bridge, southwest view.
#20 Inventory # 2, house, southeast view.
#21 Inventory # 4, outbuildings, southeast view.
#22 Inventory # 5, outbuildings, southeast view.
#23 Fields south of inventory # 5, southwest view towards Bear Tavern Road and Jacobs Creek.


Detail #1
Detail #2
Bear Tavern Rd
Jacobs Creek Rd
Driveway
Parking Lot
Parking Lot
Postley Dr
Postley Ln
Cross Rd
Maddock Rd
Brookside Dr
Laura Pl
Forest Blend Dr
Lupine Ln
Williams Ave
1106_98_15_QFARM
1106_98_44_QFARM
1106_98_46
1106_98_17_Q0093
1106_98_37
1106_95_2_QFARM
1106_95_6_QFARM
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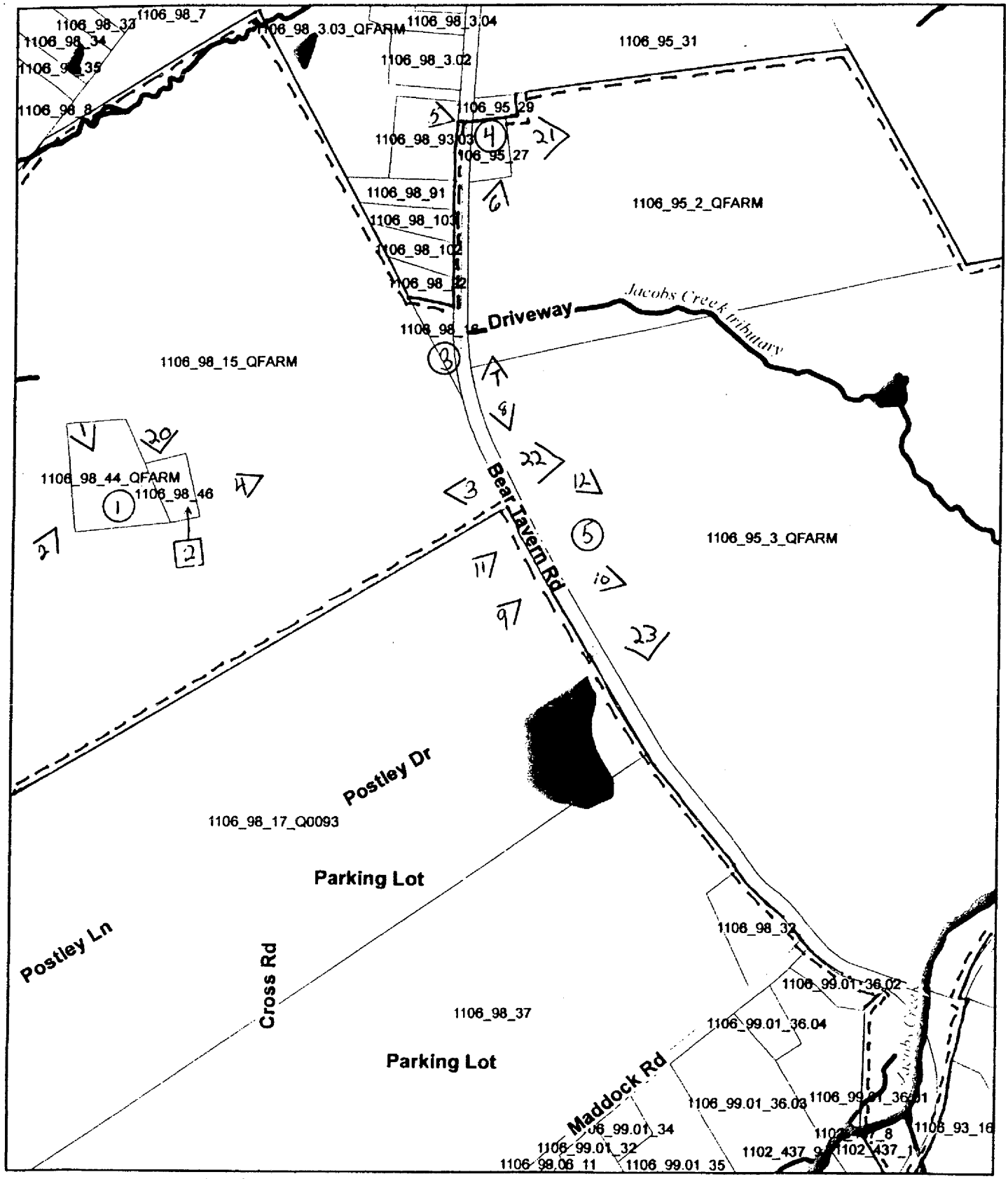


Detail #1

N

0 440 880 1,760 Feet

1 inch = 583 feet

Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing Historic District

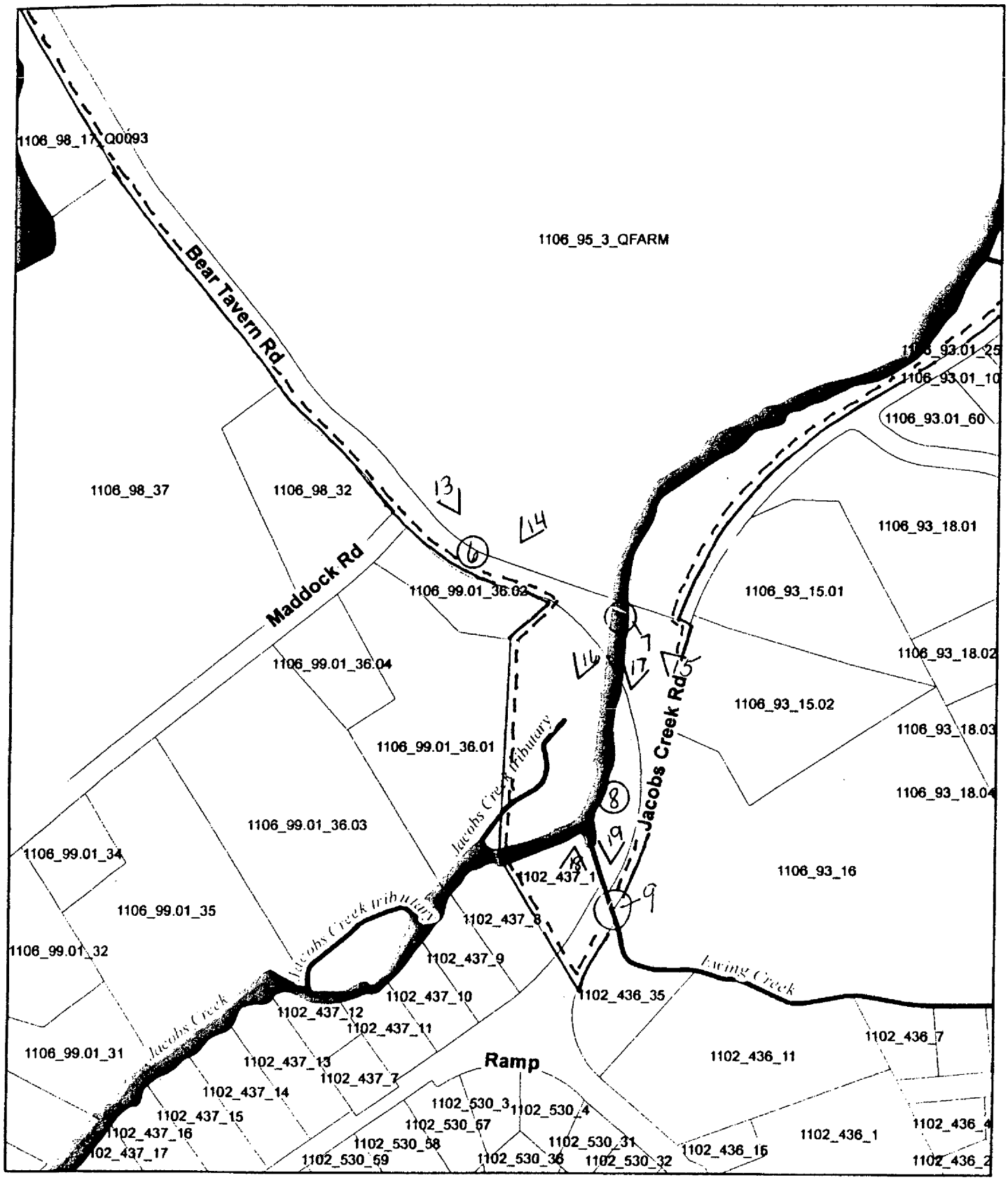
Photograph Identification Map

District Boundary ----------

Photo # & Direction of View >

Hopewell & Ewing Townships

Mercer County, NJ



N

Detail #2

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

1 inch = 321 feet

Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing Historic District

Photograph Identification Map

District Boundary ----------

Photo # & Direction of View >

Hopewell & Ewing Townships

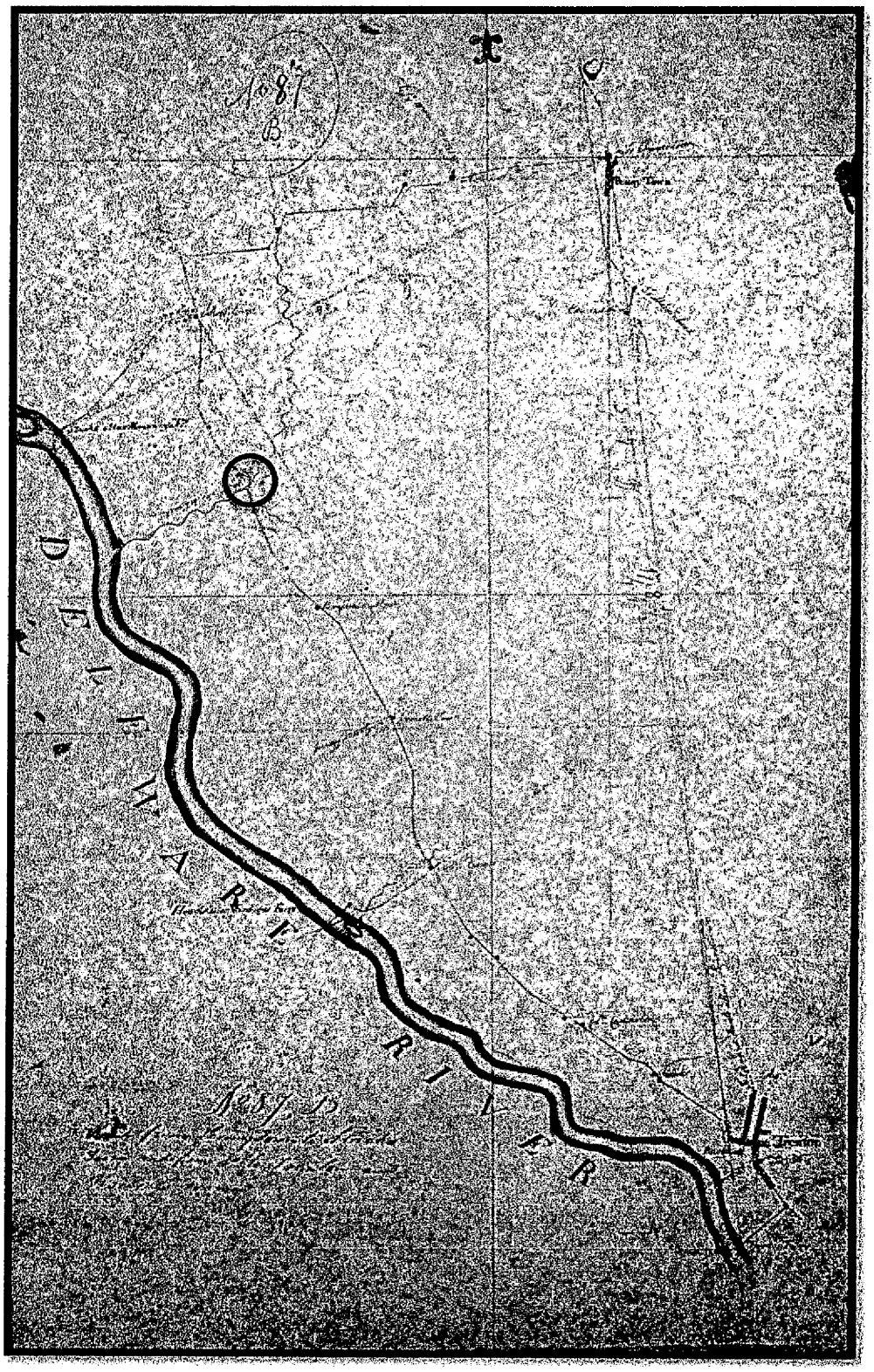


Figure 1. Circle designates Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing. Robert Erskine, "Road from Pennytown to Slack's Ferry and from Do to Trenton and Howell's Ferry," Erskine-DeWitt Series No. 87B, 1779 (NY Historical Society)

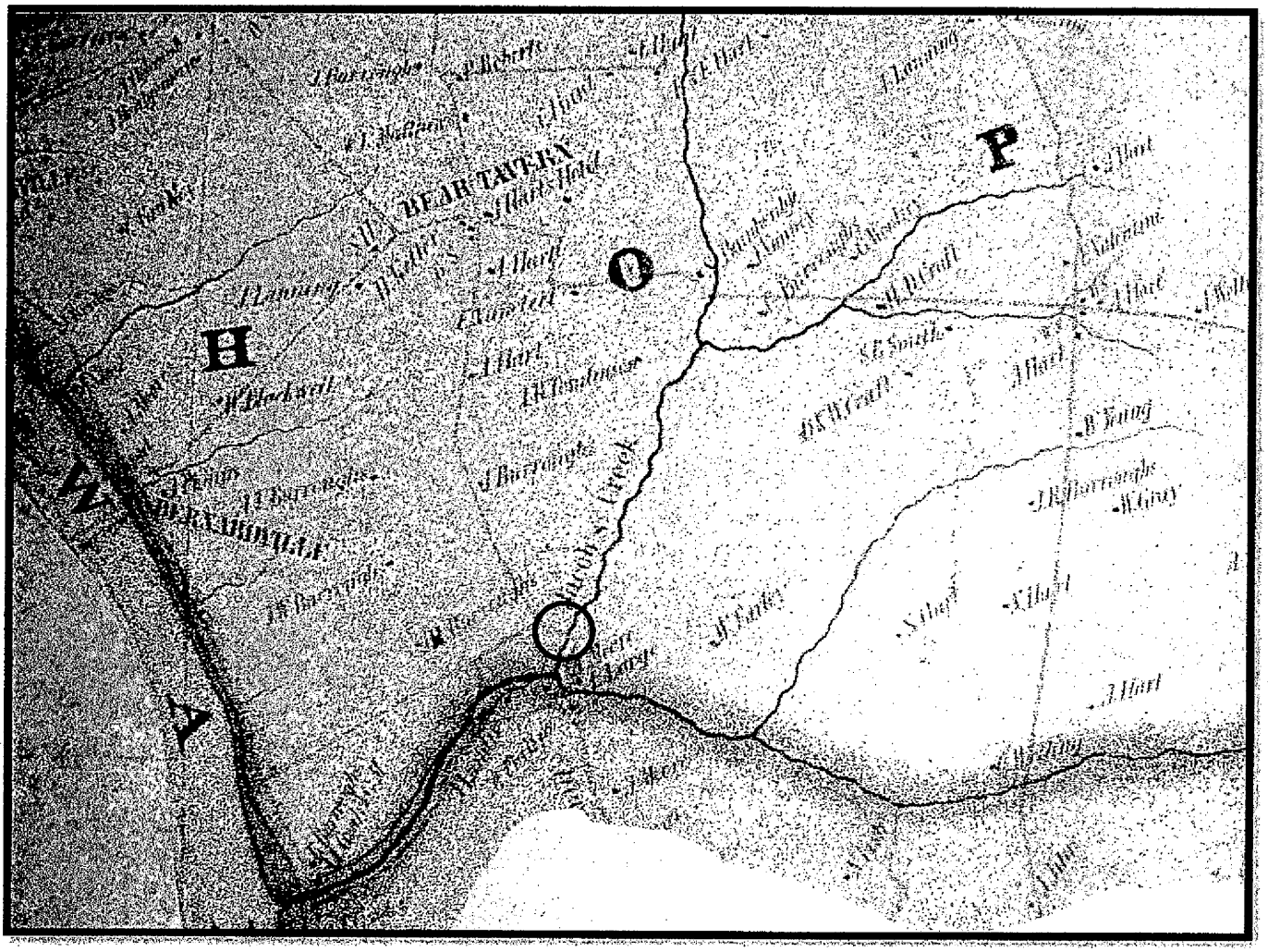


Figure 2. Circle designates Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing. W. Otley and J. Keily. *Map of Mercer County. Camden, NJ: Lloyd Van Der Veer, 1849.*

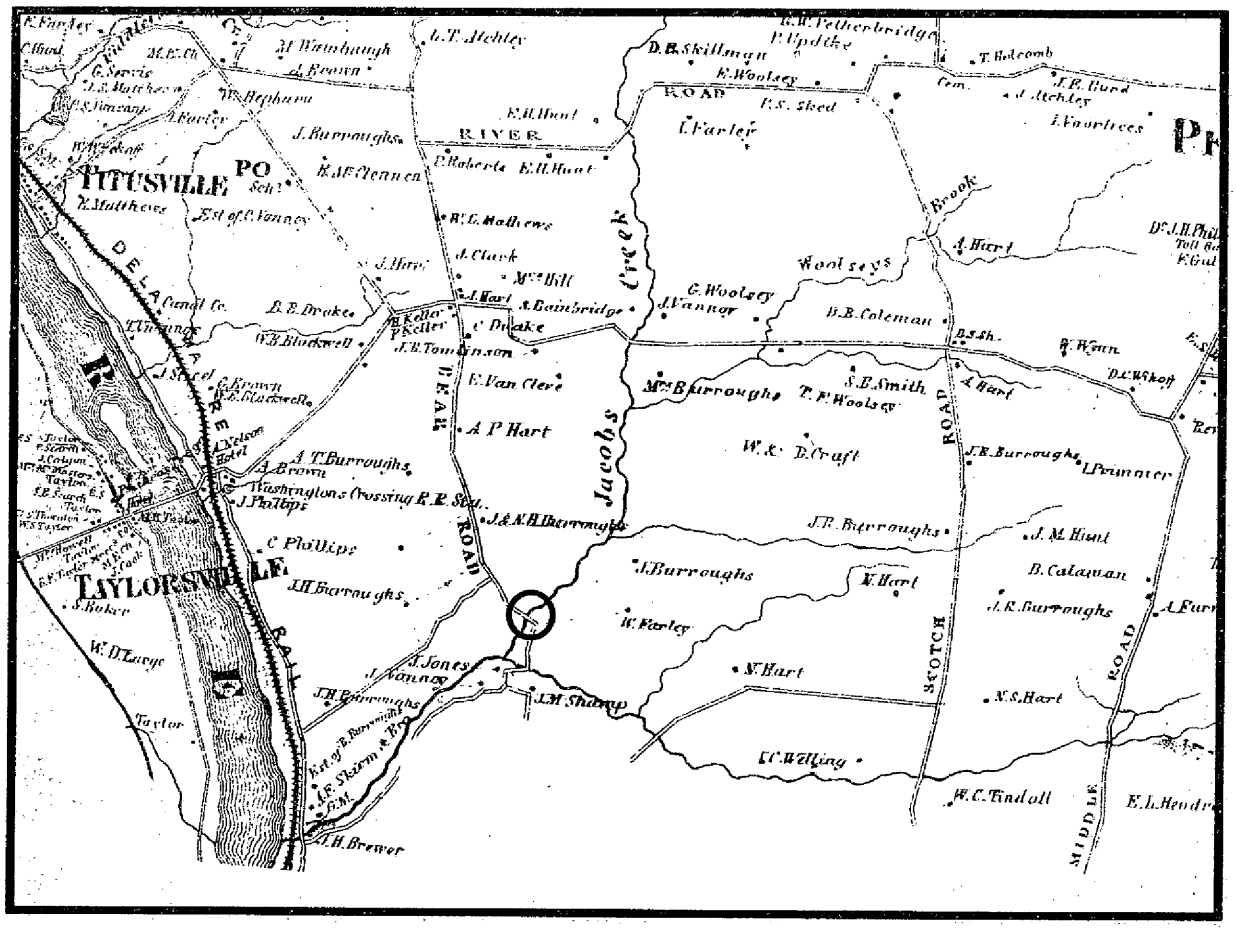


Figure 3. Circle designates Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing. Lake, D.J. and S.N. Beer. Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton. Philadelphia: C.K. Stone & A. Pomeroy, 1860.

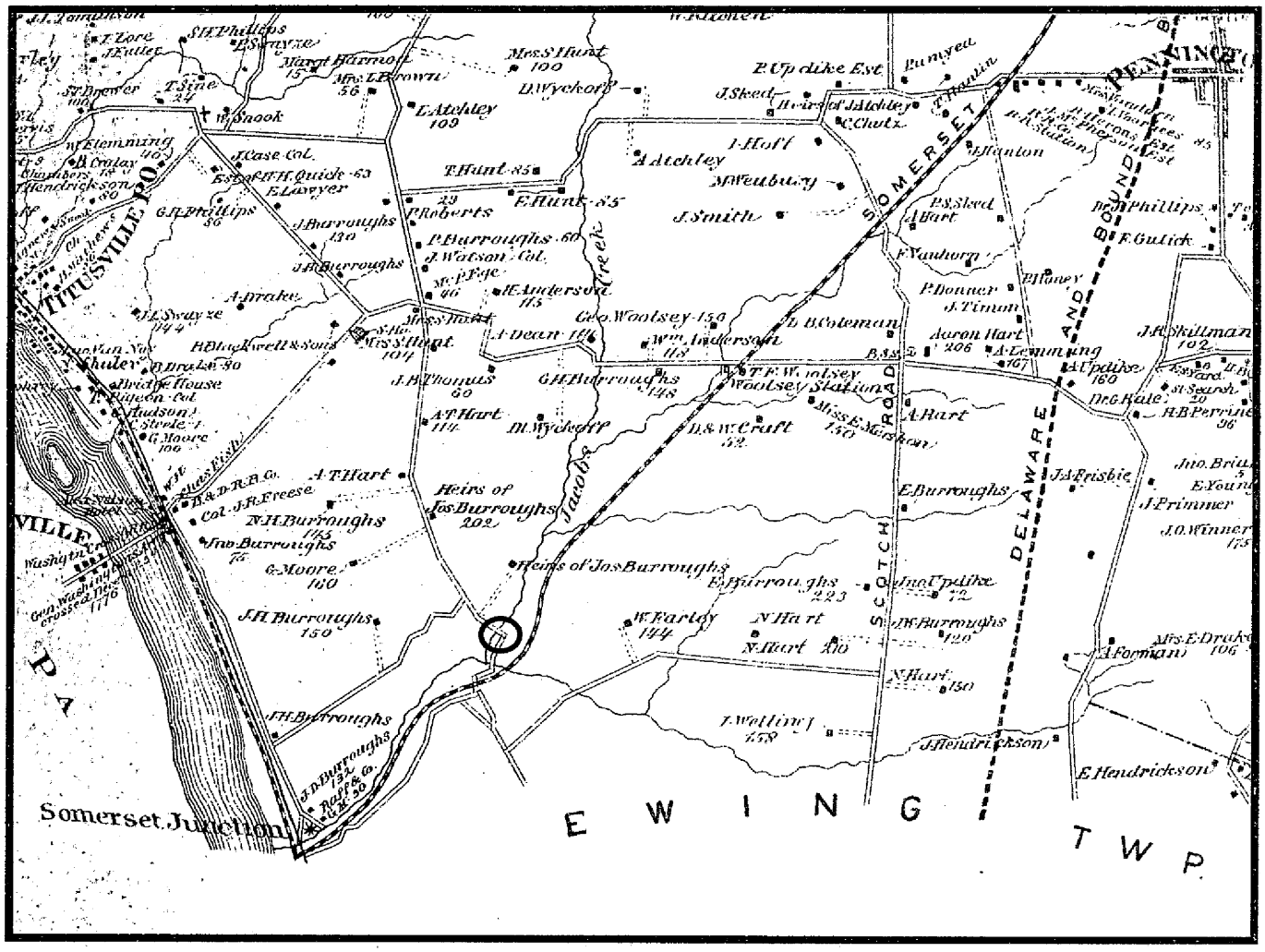


Figure 4. Circle designates Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing. Everts & Stewarts. *Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County. Philadelphia: Everts & Stewarts, 1875.*

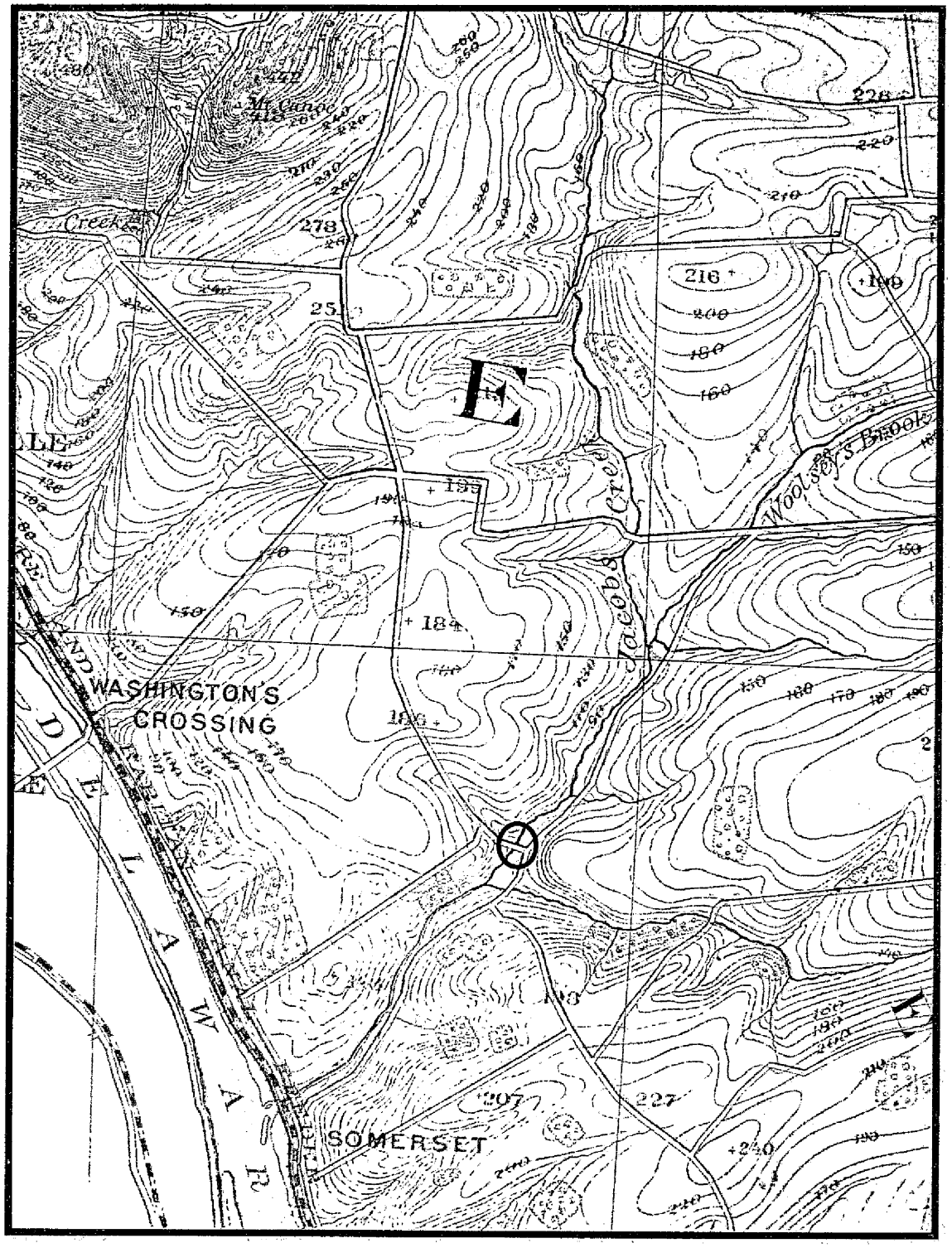


Figure 5. Circle designates Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing. George H. Cook, State Geologist, and C. C. Vermeule, Topographer. Geological Survey of New Jersey. State of New Jersey, 1888.

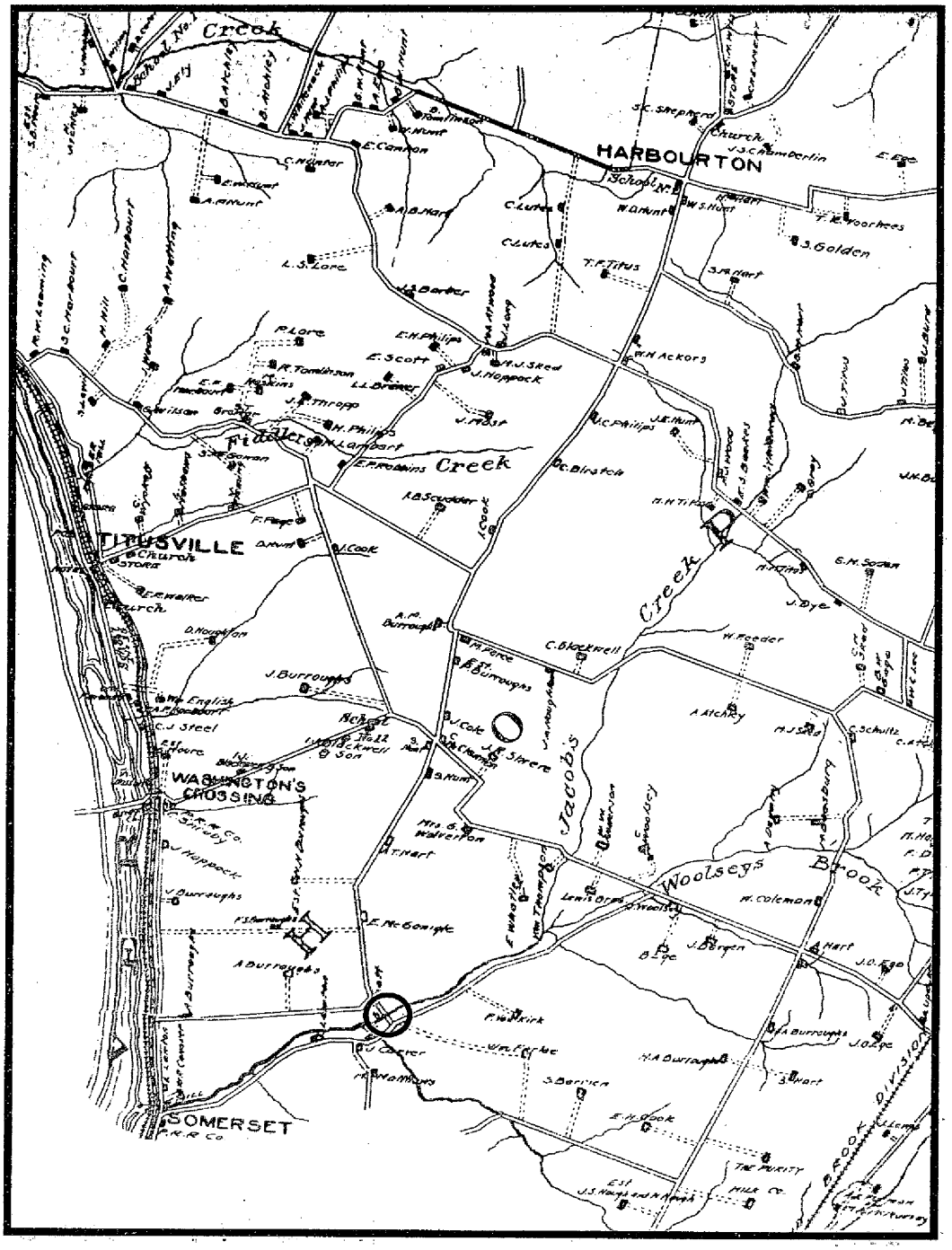


Figure 6. Circle designates Bear Tavern Road/Jacobs Creek Crossing. Pugh & Downing, Civil Engineers. *Map of Mercer County, New Jersey. Philadelphia: Hicks, 1903*

1139

12'2"
LOW
CLEARANCE
NO
DUMPING
VICTORY TRAIL
1776
VICTORY TRAIL
1776