NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED 2280
MAR 25 2014
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

204

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 Hixson-Mixsell House

other names/site number Springtown Stagecoach Inn

2. Location

street & number 157 County Route 519, Springtown ☐ not for publication

city or town Pohatcong Township ☐ vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Warren code 041 zip code 08865

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.

Rich Boornazian — Ass't Commissioner — 2/19/14

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

NJ. DEP

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:

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

[✓] entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet. — for Edson H. Beall — 5.12.14

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

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
2	3	structures
		objects
3	3	Total

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE/ department store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

FEDERAL
GREEK REVIVAL

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls BRICK
CLAPBOARD
roof SLATE
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.)

- [ ] **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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1790-1898

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 .38 acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	487450.00mE	4499667.00mN	3			
2				4			

☐ 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

organization Dennis Bertland Associates date August 2013

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 Sara Melvin

street & number P.O. Box 161 telephone 908-996-2825

city or town Little York state NJ zip code 08834

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.

Summary Description

Built in several stages over a half-century or more, the Hixson-Mixsell House occupies a small lot on the north bank of Pohatcong Creek in the small village of Springtown. Once the home of the local mill proprietor, the large dwelling encompasses a c. 1836-1840 brick main block, oriented to the road, and a frame rear wing, facing south to Pohatcong Creek, constructed in at least two phases between c. 1790 and 1840 (Photo #s 1 – 6). The two-and-one-half-story, gambrel-roofed main block has a double-pile, center-hall plan and paired chimneys within both gable ends and exhibits a combination of Federal and Greek Revival style exterior and interior detailing. It features a regular fenestration pattern on three elevations with 6/6 sash windows, as well as six entries on the first and second stories to accommodate the combination of residential and commercial uses for which it evidently was designed. Early fabric includes architrave and symmetrically molded woodwork, panel doors, columned mantels and a central staircase. The four-bay, gable-roofed, double-pile-plan rear wing, built in two sections, has an embanked stone ground story and frame upper story. A shed-roofed porch extends across the south front, and a brick cistern with cast-iron pump adjoins the southeast corner. Comprising the earliest portion of the house, the western two-bay section is of plank frame construction above the embanked ground story whose kitchen has a timber-linteled fireplace with intact bake oven. The eastern two bays evidently were constructed around the same time as the main block, connecting the latter with the plank frame house and providing a second kitchen with arch-linteled cooking fireplace. The rear wing's interior and exterior finishes are quite simple, and include clapboard and flush horizontal siding, 6/6 sash windows, batten and panel doors and simply molded trim. Despite alterations and deterioration over the years (especially the heavy-handed renovations made to accommodate the municipal garage in the 1940s), the Hixson-Mixsell House retains much early fabric, and the sensitive rehabilitation and restoration measures undertaken by the current owner have preserved and enhanced its historic character. As a result, although some work remains to be done (most notably restoring the finishes of the second-story hall and double parlors and reconstructing the south porch), the Hixson-Mixsell House possesses a high degree of historic integrity and retains the ability to convey its historic significance and associations.

Main Block:

The two-and-one-half-story, gambrel-roofed main block has a double-pile plan and paired chimneys within both gable ends (Photo #s 1 – 6). The exterior exhibits Federal and Greek Revival style detailing popular during the second quarter of the 19th century and resembles contemporary houses erected in Easton, Pennsylvania (including the dwelling built by David Mixsell's father Jacob in the 1830s, now owned by the Northampton County Historical Society; Figure 6), as well as buildings erected in Belvidere, the Warren County seat, around the same time.[1] The walls are constructed of brick (Flemish bond on the east and south sides, common bond elsewhere) with tooled bead-profile pointing, except for the first-story walls on the west and north sides, which are coursed rubble stone, the north wall being partially below grade. A blocked window

[1] "Mixsell Family Docent Guide," Northampton County Historical Society, page 9; the date "1833" is carved on a leader head of the Mixsell House, 171 South 4th Street, Easton; Dennis N. Bertland, *Early Architecture of Warren County*, pp. 70, 71 & 104 – 107.

on the west first-story wall near the end of the wing's porch may have been filled in when the east section of the wing was constructed, and it is possible that this wall may survive from an earlier stone structure incorporated into the southwest corner of the main block.[2]

The main block features a regular fenestration pattern on three elevations, as well as six entries to accommodate the historic combination of residential and commercial uses. The symmetrical four-bay east front, which faces the road, has paired inner-bay entries, which originally provided access to what presumably was the commercial space (Photo #2). The south front, facing the creek, features a regular but unsymmetrical fenestration comprised of central first and second-story entries, closely flanked on three stories by windows, and end-bay windows on both stories at the west end of the façade (Photo #3). The north façade has a similar fenestration pattern and central second-story entry. The north and south entries served the upper-story residential quarters, although the first-story south entry may also have provided secondary access to the commercial space. The 6/6 sash windows have timber lintels and sills, and their surrounds incorporate a distinctive molding resembling a lancet arch in profile, along with hardware for removed shutters (Photo #s 2 & 3).[3] The two reconstructed dormers on the south front have segmental-arched pediments and delicate flanking pilasters in contrast to the unadorned gabled dormer on the west side (Photo #2). The recessed, first-story south entry incorporates Greek Revival detailing (sidelights, transom and robust outer flanking pilasters) in contrast to the Federal round-arched fanlights and simple trim of the other entries, and might represent an early alteration (Photo #s 2 & 3). The original north second-story door has recessed horizontal panels with Grecian ovolo moldings; the south second-story door is a glass-and-panel replacement. Documentary evidence (Figures 5 and 8) reveals that there was a small two-story porch on the south side of the main block during the early 20th century, and ghosts on the adjoining brickwork, visible in a photograph (Figure 5), document the existence of an earlier full-width porch whose roof was hipped at both ends; the brickwork behind the porch was whitewashed, traces of which remain.[4] By 1925 a small appendage had been added to the north end of the east front, but the appendage and east porch had been removed by 1948.[5]

During renovations made to the building by Pohatcong Township in 1941-48, a concrete block shed appendage was added to the east front replacing the smaller appendage there, and a portion of the brick wall and one of the paired entries was removed to accommodate a garage bay.[6] As part of the restoration work undertaken by the present owner in the 1990s, the wall was rebuilt and the removed entry replicated and two-leaf doors with horizontal panels & Grecian ovolo moldings installed. Concurrent restoration work included

---

[2] Information supplied by owner Sarah Melvin.
[3] A presumably early 20th-century photograph (Figure 5) documents that the first-story windows had panel shutters; [Frank Leary (ed.), *Pohatcong: The Prologue*, page 61]; louvered shutters presumably removed from the windows are stored in the attic. The "lancet-arch" molding profile is perhaps more suggestive of the Gothic Revival, but a prototype has not been identified.
[4] Leary, page 61; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey*, (April 1925), Springtown, sheet 34.
[5] Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey*, (April 1925), Springtown, sheet 34; Ibid., (October 1948), Pohatcong Township (Springtown), sheet 34.
[6] Ibid.

replacing the slate roof in kind, repointing brickwork and reconstructing dormers, cornices and chimneystacks, based on physical and documentary evidence. A steel beam also was added to the south wall to arrest its outward deflection and to serve as a hanger for the future porch reconstruction.[7]

The first story of the main block features one large east room (two rooms originally), a finished southwest room and an unfinished northwest cellar or storeroom, now used as a utility room. A small foyer at the south entry provides access to the east and southwest rooms, as well as to an enclosed staircase rising between those rooms to the second story. The second story, whose ceilings are ten feet in height, has a center-hall plan, but, unlike the typical center-hall house, the hallway runs from side to side parallel to the roof ridge instead of from front to back. There are two rooms on each side of the center hall, those on the east side being paired parlors connected by double doors. An open staircase in the center hall rises to the third story, which has also has a center hall with two finished chambers to the east and an open attic on the west. The paired gable-end chimneys provide six fireplaces, one in each of the four second-story rooms, one in the southwest first-story room and one at the south end of the east first-story room.

The main block retains most of its original interior finishes, including tongue-and-groove flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, molded woodwork, panel doors, several fireplace mantels and the open staircase, which, like the exterior, reveals both Federal and Greek Revival influences (Photo #s 7, 8 & 18 – 23). The one exception is the first-story east room (Room 102), which was extensively altered during the 1940s, including removal of the partition that divided the space into two rooms (Photo #7). The partition that encloses the entry vestibule (Room 101) at its southwest corner appears to be an earlier alteration; constructed of vertical, tongue-and-groove boards, it is plastered inside the vestibule. The east room's Federal style mantel was installed during the recent restoration.[8] The other finishes are quite simple, in contrast to the southwest room (Room 103), which has elaborate Greek Revival woodwork unlike that of any other room in the house: large door and window surrounds with entablatures, paneled pilasters and panels below the windows. Other elements include six-panel doors, molded baseboards and a fireplace mantel with full entablature and flanking pilasters (Photo #8). During recent repairs, when the extant tongue-and-groove flooring was installed to replace deteriorated material, what appears to be a large stone hearth was uncovered beneath the present fireplace.[9] This feature apparently survived from the earlier building incorporated into the southwest corner of the main block. On the second story, the hall and flanking rooms (Rooms 201 – 205) retain most of their original fabric including tongue-and-groove floors, wall and ceiling plaster and molded woodwork (Photo #s 18 – 23). The latter exhibits a mix of Federal and Greek Revival style detailing that includes symmetrically molded door and window trim with corner rosettes in the hallway (Room 201), architrave trim in the flanking rooms (Rooms 202 – 205), horizontal-panel doors (recess-paneled on both faces) with butt hinges and mortise locks, prominent molded baseboards (but no chair rails) and incorporates both delicate and more robust Grecian ovolo moldings. Three fireplace mantels survive (Rooms 202, 204 & 205), all featuring full entablatures and attached columns;

---

[7] Emily Bundy, "Short History of Springtown Stagecoach Inn," no page; information supplied by present owner Sarah Melvin.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

the one in the second-story southwest room has a marbleized paint finish, and the north parlor mantel columns have Ionic capitals (Photo #s 18, 19 & 23). Both parlor fireplaces have narrow chimneybreast cupboards on one side. The open staircase has columnar newel posts, continuous round railing and round spindles (Photo #s 20 & 24). It continues up to the third story where the hall and two chambers (Rooms 301 – 303) retain tongue-and-groove floors, wall and ceiling plaster, simple woodwork, and four-panel doors (Photo #s 24 & 25). Transoms over the two chamber doors provide the hallway with some natural light. The attic and south chamber doors have horizontal panels; the north chamber door is a four-panel replacement.

Rear Wing

The four-bay, gable-roofed, double-pile-plan rear wing, which faces south to Pohatcong Creek, consists of two two-bay sections, each comprised of an embanked stone ground story and a frame upper story and attic (Photo #s 4, 5 & 6). The ground story is stuccoed, and the upper story planked, except on the south front above the porch roof which has flush horizontal siding (Photo #4). That latter appears to be a subsequent installation, since earlier siding and the seam between the two sections of the wing is visible beneath the porch roof. Other exterior features include flush eaves, 6/6 sash windows with (on the upper stories) plain trim, two ground-story front entries with glass-and-panel doors and molded trim, and a second-story rear entry with transom and batten door. The west ground-story south entry and window appear to have been reworked when the eastern half of the wing was built. The west window was enlarged and the west door replaced, and architrave surrounds with Grecian ovolo outer molding installed, matching those of the east window and door. The two windows have paneled shutters. The full-width porch on the south front has a shed roof, small square chamfer-cornered posts and concrete floor deck. The porch wall is plastered above a quirk-beaded baseboard.

The two-bay western half of the rear wing is of plank frame construction above the stone ground story, and the use of cut nails with hand-hammered heads, a nail type employed c. 1790-1820, for the exterior planking and attic flooring, as well as an interior vertical plank partition and plaster lath, is evidence that construction dates to that period. Although it has been hypothesized that the stone ground story may represent an earlier one-story stone building, no physical evidence clearly establishes this to have been the case.[10] Typical of plank frame construction as documented in New England, the upper-story frame consists of relatively small horizontal and vertical members (connected with mortise-and-tenon joinery) for the perimeter wall sills, plates and corner posts, along with horizontal girts at window sill level, several intermediate posts and diagonal corner braces, and the box created by this light fame is sheathed with thick vertical planks, visible in the attic (Room 305) and attic staircase (Photo #s 15 & 25). The east-gable sheathing, which comprises the largest visible area of the original siding, consists of random-width, tongue-groove boards, the largest plank measuring approximately eighteen inches in width (Photo #25). The framing members also are exposed to view in the second-story rooms, and the interior face of the planks covered with lath and plaster (Photo #s 14 & 16). In contrast to New England examples, the vertical planks are not let into a groove cut in the lower edge of the wall plates but, as can be seen in the attic stairwell, are nailed to the outer face of the plates (Photo #15).[11] The

[10] Information supplied by the present owner, Sarah Melvin.
[11] Abbott Lowell Cummings, *The Framed Houses of the Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725*, pp. 89 – 92.

wall plates support the ends of the attic floor joists, which in turn carry the rafter plates. The vertical planking extends up to the lower edge of the rafter plates. The common rafters are connected at the peak with pegged lap joints. Saw cut timber was employed for all framing members, including floor joists and roof rafters. A small rectangular opening in the east gable, which must have accommodated a removed window, provides evidence that window and door openings were cut out after the planking was installed (Photo #25).

Plank partitions subdivide the ground story into what was originally a kitchen (Room 105) and small rear storeroom (Room 106), and the second-story into larger front and smaller rear rooms with a hallway along the east side (Rooms 208 – 210). A stone chimney within the west gable-end wall provides a timber-linteled cooking fireplace with intact bake oven in the original kitchen (the domed brick oven, supported by a corbelled base and covered with mortar, protrudes into the adjoining storeroom) and small fireplace in the front room above (Photo #s 10 – 12). Enclosed staircases connect the kitchen and the second-story hall, and the latter with the attic. Walls and ceilings are plastered except in the storeroom, where the ceiling joists and partition planks were left uncovered. Plaster was applied directly to masonry and to lath nailed to wall planking and ceiling joists (Photo #13). A small section of hand-split lath on the kitchen-side of the first-story partition was exposed to view as a "window" during recent renovations (Photo #11). Cut nails with hand-hammered heads were used to attach the lath. Other early features include tongue-and-groove flooring on the upper stories, quirk-bead molded baseboards and door trim, batten doors (hung on butt hinges and fitted with lift latches or rim locks), bracketed mantel shelves, and a section of chair rail on the west wall of the original kitchen where it forms the window sill. The chair rail originally continued on the south wall, as documented by a ghost, but evidently was removed when the south window was enlarged. The first-story floors are 20th-century replacements (narrow tongue-and-groove flooring in the original kitchen and poured concrete in storeroom). During recent renovations the rear storeroom was converted into a kitchen, and plumbing, heating and electrical systems upgraded throughout the house.[12]

The two-bay eastern half of the rear wing appears to have been built to connect the plank frame house to the brick main block (although it is possible that the stone ground story may be earlier), and the upper-story front and rear walls presumably are of stud construction, judging by their thickness. However, the only visible framing is in the attic: small, closely spaced, saw-cut floor joists and saw-cut rafters connected at the peak with pegged lap joints. The ground story of the east section also has a front kitchen with cooking fireplace (Room 104) and smaller rear room (Room 107), and the second-story consists of a two rooms (Rooms 206 & 211) of roughly equal size (Photo #s 9 & 17). The kitchen fireplace combines stone jambs with a brick rear wall and segmental-arched lintel; its early 19th-century mantel replaces the missing original (Photo #9). An enclosed staircase rising along the west wall to the north of the chimney connects the two rear rooms; above it another staircase, now closed off, provided access to the attic (Room 305). While a doorway at the foot of the attic stairs that cut through to the hallway of the plank frame section has been blocked up, another connection opened between the two front rooms remains. The doorway between the ground-story front rooms was cut through the masonry wall during recent renovations.[13] The first-story front room features architrave door and window trim with Grecian ovolo outer molding, along with molded baseboards. Early fabric includes tongue-and-groove

[12] Information supplied by the present owner Sarah Melvin.
[13] Ibid.

flooring on the upper stories, plaster walls and ceilings, batten and panel doors and simple woodwork (plain trim with quirk-beaded edges). Modern alterations include the installation of bathrooms in the rear rooms on both stories of the east section, along with electricity and central heat. The floors on the first story are wooden replacements.

Site Features and Setting:

The house stands near the east end of a polygonal landscaped lot of about one third of an acre (Photo #s 27 & 28). The south side of the lot drops off steeply to the creek and is edged by a hedgerow of trees and shrubs, the most notable of which is a large sycamore opposite the southwest corner of the main block. An unpaved driveway running along the western side of the lot is supported, west and east of the house, by stone retaining walls that were built during renovations by the present owner and incorporate earlier stone rows. A brick cistern with cast-iron hand pump adjoining the east end of the porch is a 19th-century feature. Its concrete cap is a replacement dating to the first half of the 20th century, presumably contemporary with a concrete sidewalk that extends along the south side of the house to the rear porch. A short brick walkway extending from the end of the concrete walk to the southwest corner of the house probably dates to the 19th century. An underground concrete culvert, associated with Route 519, crosses the southeast corner of the lot and discharges into Pohatcong Creek at the abutment of the bridge carrying Route 519 over the creek. The brick sidewalk and cistern are contributing structures. The concrete sidewalk, concrete culvert and modern stone retaining wall are non-contributing structures.

The Hixson-Mixsell house is located at the southern end of the 19th-century village of Springtown, whose closely-spaced buildings –many of which have been extensively altered– line Route 519 for about a half mile north of the creek. The low-density development on the south side of the creek includes several 19th- and late 20th-century houses, along with one stone abutment of the earlier roadway bridge, a mid-20th-century auto repair shop near the site of the village gristmill, and the Alpha Water Pump Plant.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGIFICANCE

The Hixson-Mixsell House possesses local architectural significance for the ca. 1790-1820 western half of its rear wing, a rare northern New Jersey example of plank frame construction, a variant of English box framing in which vertical planks are employed instead of studs to support exterior cladding. The American hearth of this building practice appears to be New England, where early examples have been well documented and whence the method evidently was introduced to New Jersey in the decades before 1700. The house is also architecturally significant for its ca. 1836-40 brick main block, a good example of late Federal/Greek Revival style architecture, which appears to have been designed to accommodate commercial as well as domestic functions and clearly reflects the economic status of its builder David Mixsell as a successful mill proprietor and merchant in the village of Springtown. The period of significance extends from ca. 1790, the earliest construction date that can be established for the rear wing based on physical evidence, to 1898, when common ownership of the house and associated mills ended. Although the house suffered from neglect and inappropriate alteration during the 20th century, a remarkable amount of early fabric has survived, and the current owner has succeeded in preserving the building and restoring much of its historic architectural character.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The site of the Hixson-Mixsell House forms part of a 333-acre tract located along Pohatcong Creek a few miles upstream from its confluence with the Delaware River surveyed for William Pancoast, a West Jersey proprietor and Burlington County, New Jersey resident, sometime before 1741, in which year he conveyed title to the property to his son Seth who lived in Chester County, Pennsylvania.[1] For the Pancoasts, father and son, the property was an investment, and in 1758 the younger Pancoast sold a portion of the tract (located in what was then Greenwich Township, Sussex County) to Walter Cahoon, a Greenwich Township farmer who agreed to sell it to Michael and Henry Hendershot two years later, but died before the terms of the sales contract were fulfilled.[2] In the 1760s, the tract became the property of Joseph Hixson and Joseph Corwine, who divided it,

[1] West Jersey Deeds, Book E-F, page 237.

[2] As recited in a 1785 deed for a portion of the tract not recorded until 1833: Warren County Deeds, Book 11, page 125. This deed noted that on July 6, 1758, Seth Pancoast of Maplewood Township, Chester County, PA conveyed to Walter Cohoon a 236-acre tract, evidently intended to comprise a portion of the 333-acre tract, which upon resurveying was found to contain 335 acres. To secure his title, Cohoon had the tract resurveyed to include a proprietory right for 100 acres of unlocated lands which he purchased from Richard Lundy, yeoman, of Hardwick Township (purchase recorded at Burlington on May 1, 1758), the 100 acres forming part 1,000 acres of unlocated land, which Lundy had acquired from "Ebenzer Large, late of Burlington, merchant," part of a warrant granted by the West Jersey Council of Proprietors on August 2, 1749. On November 22, 1760, a few months before his death, Cohoon agreed to convey to Michael Hendershot of Morris County, NJ, and Henry Hendershot of Northampton County, PA, the 336-acre tract for £550 to be paid on February 1, 1763. Cahoon died in early April 1761 (his will is dated April 1 and his estate inventory, April 11); by his will, which referred to him as yeoman of Greenwich Township, he devised his plantation (located near the 336-acre tract) to minor his son John [New Jersey Wills, 83S].

Corwine receiving the eastern portion, leaving Hixson with the site of the future village of Springtown and the water power along the creek, as well as acreage to the south.[3]

Although it cannot be established with certainty, Joseph Hixson and Joseph Corwine may have been related by marriage and most likely came from southern Hunterdon County, where Hixsons and Corwines can be documented as early settlers and landowners; both families probably were of English ancestry. A 1722 survey of a road between Ringoes and Marshalls Corner mentioned "the cleared land of Joseph Hixson's," and a 1741 list of Hunterdon County Freeholders includes Joseph Hixson among the residents of Amwell Township.[4] He probably is the Joseph Hixson of Amwell Township, whose 1764 will named son Joseph and daughter Elizabeth Corwine among other heirs and appointed his "friend" Samuel Corwine as one of his executors.[5] According to family genealogists, the elder Joseph Hixson was the son of William Hixson, who settled in Maidenhead Township, Hunterdon County, where he died in 1722. The will of a William Hixson of Maidenhead, probated in that year, does include a son Joseph among his children, and deeds and other documents establish that a William Hickson or Hixson was living in central New Jersey as early as 1686.[6] Another genealogical source states that Joseph Corwin, the son of Bartholomew Corwin, married Elizabeth Hixson and that Elizabeth and her brother Joseph, were the children of Joseph Hixson and grandchildren of William Hixson, born in England in 1650.[7] Yet another genealogist claims that Joseph Corwin's father Bartholomew was born in Salem, Massachusetts, and moved first to Rhode Island, and then to Hopewell, New Jersey (then part of Hunterdon County) where he settled in 1717.[8] Joseph Hixson the younger and his brother-in-law Joseph Corwine are likely candidates for the two men who acquired the Cahoon property on Pohatcong Creek.

---

[3] Sometime between November 22, 1760 and April 1, 1766, Michael and Henry Hendershot assigned their purchase agreement bond with Walter Cohoon for the 336-acre tract to Joseph Hixson and Joseph Corwine, including all their right and title to the property, as well as their obligation to pay Cohoon £550 for the property. On March 3, 1768, Walter Cohoon's executors conveyed title to the 336-acre tract to Joseph Hixson and Joseph Corwine for £550, acknowledging that payment in accordance with the 1760 bond had not been made by the Hendershots and that the latter had assigned their interest to Hixson and Corwine. On April 1, 1766, Hixson released to Corwine his half interest in a 166.5-acre portion of the 336-acre tract, which parcel the 1785 deed description indicates comprised the eastern half of the original tract, thus leaving Hixson the western portion encompassing the site of the subject property and village of Springtown. Although no deed has been discovered, Corwine presumably released his half interest in the remainder of the 336-acre tract to Hixson around the same time. [Warren County Deeds, Book 11, page 125].

[4] Ralph Ege, *Pioneers of Old Hopewell*, pp. 9 & 13; "Hunterdon County Freeholders, 1741," *The Genealogical Society of New Jersey*," Vol. 37, (May 1962), page 53.

[5] NJ Wills, 960J. Joseph Hixson's will was dated April 24, 1764 and proved August 30, 1775.

[6] NJ Wills, Lib. 2, page 209. A 1686 deed records the conveyance of a 140-acre tract of land by "Jno. Pattison and wife Margrett of Crosswick Creek, West Jersey to their daughter Mary and her husband William Hickson of the same place," New Jersey Archives, 1st Series, Volume XXI, page 414, as referenced in the "Hickson Genealogy: The Hixson Family in New Jersey," http://www.hicksons.org/ByState/NewJersey.html.

[7] "Joseph Kelsey, b. 1673 – Killingsworth, Connecticut," http://bapresley.com/genealogy/hawkins/datafile/gp190.html

[8] Margaret Madara Free, *Hixson Trails: From New Jersey to Canada and Back*, as referenced in "Ancestors of Henry Estes Hawkins & Inez Hixson," http://bapresley.com/genealogy/hawkins/hixson/bartholomewcorwin.ht.

Joseph Hixson, who was living in Greenwich Township as early as 1761, is the first known occupant of the tract and, as its owner until his death in 1807, undoubtedly played a major role its 18th-century industrial and agricultural development.[9] His name appears on the 1774 Greenwich Township tax role, the only one surviving for the municipality, on which he is assessed for 140 acres of land, 13 horses and cattle, and a sawmill, one of only three assessed sawmills in the township.[10] Contemporary newspaper advertisements document that well into the middle decades of 18th century, sizeable tracts of woodland remained to be exploited throughout northwestern New Jersey and that pioneer agricultural settlement of the region was not yet over. One representative example is a 2,000-acre tract of land in Greenwich Township, Sussex County, with valuable timber and a sawmill offered for sale in 1754. The tract, located in what is now central Warren County, was described as about

> four mile[s] from a landing Place on *Delaware River* above *Robinsons* [Oxford] Furnace, 'tis well stored with Black walnut and other valuable Timber, which may be transported down said River, in Boats or Rafts, to *Trenton* and *Philadelphia.*...[and is improved] with two Tenements and Farms begun, a good Saw Mill built, and very good Streams for more Mills to be built…the Land, is exceeding good for Grass what is cleared, and likewise for Grain.[11]

Certainly, Hixson's property along lower Pohatcong Creek was well positioned for such development. An 1801 survey for the road along the route of present-day Route 519 establishes that Hixson had expanded his operations to include a gristmill in addition to the sawmill and that both were located on the south side of the creek, as was his residence, not far from the bridge crossing.[12] The plank frame portion of the subject property on the north side of the creek, if extant by this time, probably was occupied by one of Joseph's children or an employee. Exactly when Hixson's gristmill was established is unknown, but it may have been built to take advantage of the opportunity created by the destruction by fire of a nearby gristmill sometime before 1793.[13]

---

[9] On April 9, 1761 Joseph Hixson witnessed the will of William Scholey, of Greenwich Township, Sussex County, and on the 16th, along with David Hay, made the inventory of Scholey's personal estate, evidence that he was living in the lower Pohatcong neighborhood by this time [NJ Wills, 47S]. Joseph Hixson was one of the "surveyors of Greenage" who met on August 1, 1765 to survey a road "from Martins Mill [a mill site just downstream from Springtown on the Pohatcong] to the end of a lane by John Schooleys house [a point on or near Route 519 in Alpha]," indicating that Hixson was a property owner, as well as resident, of Greenwich Township by this time [Sussex County Road Returns, Book A, page 23].

[10] NJ Tax Ratables, Greenwich Township, Sussex County, 1774. Joseph Corwine presumably had died or moved away since his name does not appear on the tax role.

[11] *The N. Y. Gazette or the Weekly Post Boy*, January 28, 1754, as quoted in William Nelson, *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey XIX, Newspaper Extracts III 1751-1755*, pp. 334 & 335.

[12] Sussex County Road Returns, Book B, page 9. The survey begins at "the Great Road leading from Carpenter's Ferry…to Charles McHenry's Tavern near a Spring Run by Daniel Hixson" and proceeds south "to the bridge across Pohatcong Creek at Joseph Hixsons saw and grist mill," and crosses "said creek over the bridge to the southwest end of Joseph Hixsons house," a distance of three chains and fifty links (approximately 230 feet).

[13] Sussex County Deeds, Book B, page 384. This 1796 deed for a mill property about a mile upstream from the Hixson mill references a 1793 agreement between the owner Robert Kennedy and the Sussex County Freeholders for the repair of a bridge and "the mill dam and forebay at the late burnt mills of the same premises."

In his 1804 will Joseph Hixson bequeathed his "lands and mills with the appurtenances," a 136-acre property which he valued at £1,200, to his son Amos, subject to bequests to his seven other children, and title duly passed to Amos upon his father's death in 1807.[14] The inventory of Joseph's personal estate, valued at the modest sum of £23.14.9, included no livestock, crops or items related to milling, and only a few agricultural tools, suggesting that he had given up operation of his farm and mill by the time of his death, most likely to Amos who lived with and worked for his father after reaching adulthood.[15] About one year after his father's death, Amos sold an 8.5-acre lot encompassing the two mills and the subject property to Greenwich Township resident Abraham Arndt for £850, more than enough to satisfy his obligations to his siblings.[16]

In 1814, Arndt sold the 8.5-acre "lot of land and grist and saw mill" for $2,666.67 to his son-in-law John Mixsell and Mixsell's father Jacob (merchants from nearby Easton, Pennsylvania), who two days later acquired an adjoining 7.5-acre lot along the creek from Amos Hixson.[17] They evidently added a distillery to the former Hixson mills, since intra-family conveyances of the two lots in 1818 and 1819 between Jacob Mixsell and his sons John and David, at the end of which Jacob gained full title to the property, reference "a certain Grist Mill, Saw Mill, [and] distillery."[18] The 1820 Federal industrial census includes a distillery located in Greenwich Township on Pohatcong Creek operated by the firm of "Jacob Mixsell and Son," which produced 27,000 gallons of whiskey distilled from corn and rye with a market value of $8,910 and fed "150 hogs upon the slops of distillery" valued at $600. After expenses for raw materials, five employees, and "rent of distillery," the firm's profit for the year was $565.00.[19] While Jacob lived in Easton, his partner son (either David or John) may well have resided on the premises and operated the business.[20] The plank frame portion of the Hixson-Mixsell House might have been occupied by the resident partner or, perhaps more likely, by an employee of the firm.

---

[14] NJ Wills, 1142S. Joseph Hixson's will stipulated that his son Amos was to be credited £500 of the £1,200 valuation of the property "for his labor and time he lived with me after he was of age and for his childs share of my estate" and was to divide the £700 balance into seven equal shares to be paid over a period of seven years to Joseph's four daughters (Rachel Kitchen, Sarah Kitchen, Elizabeth Kitchen and Mary Hixson) and three other sons (Isaiah, Elijah (?) and Daniel Hixson).

[15] Ibid.

[16] Sussex County Deeds, Book L, page 355. Although divesting himself of the mills, perhaps to provide the money necessary to pay his siblings their share of his father's estate, Amos evidently occupied his father's homestead farm until his death in 1836; the property was inherited by his sons Isaac and Joseph Hixson who sold it to Samuel Plummer in 1848 [NJ Wills, 390U; Warren County Deeds, Book 29, page 107].

[17] Sussex County Deeds, Book C2, page 375 & Book E2, page 134. A subsequent deed for the property establishes that Jacob and John Mixsell were father and son [Sussex County Deeds, Book O2, page 372]. John Mixsell's wife Diana Arndt evidently was Abraham Arndt's daughter; the 1827 will of Abraham Arndt Sr., of Greenwich Township (probated in 1845) mentions his wife Anna and daughter Diana, wife of John Mixsell [NJ Wills, 764U].

[18] Sussex County Deeds, Book O2, pp. 368, 370 & 372.

[19] Industrial Schedule, Federal Census, Greenwich Township, Sussex County, NJ, 1820.

[20] Of the two brothers, David is the more likely candidate to have been his father's partner, since John Mixsell was licensed to operate a tavern in nearby Phillipsburg, NJ around this time [Sussex County Tavern Licenses, John Mixsell, 1821, 1822, 1823 & 1824]. However, it is possible that the tavern keeper may have been their cousin of the same name.

Of German descent, the Mixsells were prosperous merchants and millers who had lived in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, for several generations. According to family genealogy, Jacob Mixsell (1762-1841) was the son of Major Philip Mixsell (1731-1817), a militia officer during the Revolutionary War and a stonemason who resided in Northampton County, and the grandson of Johan Jakob Mixsell. Johan Jakob purportedly was born in Germany in 1705, and immigrated to America with his father Andreas Meiyssel, who settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he executed his will in October 1739 and died a few months later. Johan Jakob Mixsell evidently moved to Williams Township, Northampton County, where he died sometime after 1759.[21] Jacob Mixsell (1762-1841), who settled in Easton, Pennsylvania, prospered as a merchant and miller and acquired considerable real estate in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. By his first wife Elizabeth Wagener (1760-1830) he had five known children including John (1787-1832) and David (1796-1850). In 1833, Jacob built a substantial brick house in the late Federal/Greek Revival style in Easton, where he presumably resided at his death in 1841 (Figure 6).[22]

How long the firm of Jacob Mixsell and Son operated the distillery is unknown, Jacob retained ownership of the property until 1836, when he sold his "Grist Mill, distillery and two lots of land" in Greenwich Township to his son David for $9,000, the deed of conveyance describing Jacob as a merchant, David as a distiller and both as Easton residents.[23] The saw mill, not mentioned in the deed description, apparently had been discontinued by that time. According to the 1881 Warren County history, "David Mixsell, of Easton, purchased land [at Springtown], upon which he erected a distillery, mill, and store, all of which were conducted by him until his death."[24] Perhaps David renovated the extant distillery and gristmill, or replaced them with new buildings. However, there can be little doubt that within a few years of his acquisition of the property he erected the brick portion of the Hixson-Mixsell House, which apparently served as a combination store and residence and can be dated to that period based on architectural and historical evidence.[25]

By his will executed in July 1849 David Mixsell bequeathed "the Springtown property" to his minor son Jacob, deeding it in trust to his son's designated guardian John Tindall, a distiller and former partner.[26] The will describes his Springtown property as "one lot containing sixteen acres more or less conveyed to me by Jacob Mixsell with the Mill, distillery, tavern, brick mansion house, dwelling houses and other improvements thereon," along with several other houses and artisan shops and a nearby wood lot. David's will is the first mention of the both the "brick mansion house" and a tavern on the Mixsell property at Springtown, and later maps indicate that the tavern was located directly across the road from the brick house (the Hixson-Mixsell House). While David resided in Easton when he wrote his will, the 1840 Federal census establishes that he was

[21] Ardella M. Rohde, *Meiyssel Meixel Mikesell*, 1985, pp. 1-3.
[22] Ibid., pp. 42, 75, 79 & 153. Jacob Mixsell's five known children are John (1787-1832), who married Diana Arndt; Philip J. (1789-1839); Susanna (1793-1865) who married Peter Pomp; David (1796-1850) who married Ann Davidson Cyphers; and Charles Wagener (1799-1874) who married Mary Keiper. Jacob Mixsell's house (174 South Fourth Street) is now a house museum owned and operated by the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society.
[23] Warren County Deeds, Book 14, page 230.
[24] James P. Snell (ed.), *History of Sussex and Warren Counties, New Jersey*, page 602.
[25] One might postulate that David Mixsell erected the brick house soon after acquiring the property in 1836, since the panic of 1837 could have dampened his economic outlook.
[26] Northampton County Wills, Book 6, page 514 (Estate Record #5846); Warren County Wills, Book 2, page 391.

then living in Springtown, no doubt in his "brick mansion house," and the birth places given for his children by family genealogists suggest that he remained there until at least 1843.[27] In 1840 his household, as recorded by the Federal census, had five members: two white males (one aged between 40 and 49 and one under five years of age) and three white females (one aged between 20 and 29, one between 10 and 14, and one between 5 and 9).[28] The white female in her twenties must have been his wife Ann and the male child, his son Jacob Cyphers, who was born in New Jersey in 1839; the identities of the two female children are unknown since only two other children have been documented by genealogists: Ann Elizabeth, born in New Jersey in 1843, and David, born in Easton, 1849.[29]

After David Mixsell's death in 1850, his Springtown property evidently was rented to a number of individuals, and mid 19th-centry maps and census data are the best sources of information about Springtown and the Hixson-Mixsell House during that period. The 1852 Warren County map (Figure 1) depicts "Mixsell's G. Mill & Distillery, placing them incorrectly on the north side of the creek on the subject property with a "store" just to their north on the west side of the road. Although this map is schematic at best and lacks the accuracy of later maps, the "store" probably is meant to represent Mixsell's brick building, and presumably the one kept by merchants Ephraim Dalton and Charles Hixson who, together with Dalton's wife, comprised a single household in 1850 (the 1850 census identifies no other storekeepers in the neighborhood).[30] John Tindall's court-filed accounts for his ward Jacob Mixsell record "rent rec[eive]d of Hixson & Dalton for store" on May 24, 1851.[31] The 1860 Greenwich Township farm map (Figure 2) identifies the 16-acre lot straddling the creek at Springtown as the property of "J. C. Mixsell." It depicts one building on the site of the subject property, "Kinney & Butlers Store," and three buildings on the south side of the creek and west side of the road, the northernmost of which is the called the "distillery." The "hotel –J. Roseberry" is located on the east side of the road opposite the store.[32] The 1860 county map vignette of Springtown (Figure 3) locates and identifies the same buildings, but names the northernmost of the three buildings "Gmill distill" and the next one south as the "Store Ho."[33] The 1860 census lists the households of merchants Jesse Kinney and John C. Butler consecutively. Kinney, age 50, lived with his wife, three children, and young clerk. Butler, age 24, lived only with his wife whom he had recently married. Neither owned any real estate. Kinney may have lived in the brick house above the store, while Butler occupied the rear wing. Kinney's household was immediately preceded in the census by that of Jacob Roseberry, hotelkeeper.[34]

---

[27] United States Census, Greenwich Township, 1840. According to the family genealogy, David Mixsell and his wife Ann Davidson Cyphers had three known children: Jacob Cyphers (born in NJ, 1839) who married Martha Hill in 1860; Ann Elizabeth (born in NJ, 1843) who married Rev. T. Logan Murphy in 1867; and David (born in Easton, 1849) who married Mary Long Boileau in 1880 [Rohde, pp. 79].
[28] United States Census, Greenwich Township, 1840.
[29] Rohde, pp. 79.
[30] D. McCarty, *Map of Warren County, New Jersey*, 1852; United States Census, Greenwich Township, 1850.
[31] Northampton County Wills, Jacob C. Mixsell Guardianship Accounts (Estate Record #5846).
[32] Michael Hughes, *Farm Map of Greenwich Township, Warren Co., N. J.*, 1860.
[33] H. F. Walling, *Map of Warren County, New Jersey*, 1860.
[34] United States Census, Greenwich Township, 1860.

Jacob C. Mixsell became a farmer and in 1865, having gained control of his inheritance, sold the Springtown mill property, which three years later, and slightly reduced by the subdivision of a small parcel from its west side, was acquired by miller Daniel Schlabach.[35] The "Slabaugh" household, according to the 1870 census, had eleven members: Daniel, age 45, miller, who owned real estate worth $14,000 and personal property worth $800, his wife Anna, their seven children, and two young men whose occupations were not given but who presumably assisted Daniel with milling operations.[36] Schlabach conducted the gristmill and occupied the brick house until losing the property at a sheriff's sale in 1876. The map of Springtown in the 1874 county atlas (Figure 4) depicts the L-shaped house of "D. Sclabach" (the Hixson-Mixsell House) on the north side of the creek, the L-shaped "G. Mill" on the south side of the bridge on the west side of the road, and two other buildings owned by "D. S." to the south of the grist mill. South of the latter, along the road, are a number of narrow lots, presumably subdivided by Schlabach but unsold and undeveloped. Across from Schlabach's residence stands "J. Hulshizer Hotel," with a small building just to its south, undoubtedly the tavern stable; the "J. Vought sto[re] & P.O." are located at the corner of present-day Route 519 and Municipal Drive. One of the buildings south of the mill may have been the distillery, which apparently had been discontinued by this time. Schlabach's residence (the Hixson-Mixsell House) is not identified as a store, further evidence that the store at that location had closed, supplanted by the Vought store.[37]

Lopatcong Township farmer Jacob Paulus acquired the Schlabach property at the 1876 sheriff sale, and upon his intestate death in 1880 ownership passed to his children.[38] In 1880 the mill apparently was operated (and the brick house occupied) by miller Benjamin Wood, whose household was listed in the Federal census of that year immediately after hotelkeeper Joseph Hulshizer; by 1887 either Casper Gardner or Jacob Painter appears to have succeeded Wood as miller.[39] When the Paulus heirs sold a strip of land adjoining the old bridge to Warren County for the construction of a new bridge in 1888, they made provisions to protect and enhance the mill hydrosystem.[40] The mill remained in operation until at least 1894, when it was listed in the state waterpower report as Thomas Paulus's gristmill with a fall of 8 feet and 12 net and 25 gross horsepower

[35] Warren County Deeds, Book 61, page 579; Book 62, page 359 & Book 71, page 426. The 1860 census identified Jacob Mixsell as a farmer [United States Census, Greenwich Township, 1860].

[36] United States Census, Greenwich Township, 1870. Schlabach and his wife, Anna, age 43, were both born in Pennsylvania. Their seven children included five girls (Elizabeth, age 21, Lille, age 16, Laura, age 12, Jennie, age 7, and Anna, age 2) and two boys (William, age 9, and Howard, age 6/12 months). The two young men were Andrew Hay, age 26, and Charles Sharp, age 16.

[37] F. W. Beers, *County Atlas of Warren County, New Jersey*, page 73.

[38] United States Census, Lopatcong Township, 1880; New Jersey Deaths and Burial Index 1798 – 1971; Warren County Deeds, Book 98, page 313.

[39] *History and Directory of Warren County*, 1887, pp. 456, 458 & 462. The directory noted that Springtown "has two stores, blacksmith shop, grist mill and a Christian Church." Three residents of Springtown, Nathan Drunkenmiller, Casper Gardner and Jacob Painter, were listed as millers, and based on the evidence of 1894 state water supply report (see footnote 41), which indicates that Drunkenmiller operated the mill on Winter Road just downstream from the village, either Gardner or Painter must have operated the Paulus mill at Springtown, and the third individual the neighborhood's third mill located about a mile upstream from the village. The 1887 directory description of the village as having two stores raises the possibly that the store in the Hixson-Mixsell House had been reopened.

[40] Warren County Deeds, Book 139, page 121.

utilized.[41] In 1896 the mill was destroyed by fire, and two years later the Paulus heirs sold property on the south side of the creek to the Vulcanite Portland Cement Company, a firm in the region's new and burgeoning cement industry. The Vulcanite Company established a pumping station on the former mill site to supply water to its cement plant located a few miles to the north in the new town of Alpha (Figure 7).[42] Upon this conveyance, the Hinson-Mixsell House was no longer owned by the proprietors of the Pohatcong Creek waterpower. A 1925 map indicates that the pumping station remained until at least that time (Figure 7).[43] The pumping station and any surviving mill buildings probably were removed when Route 519 was realigned and the present bridge erected across the creek during the 1930s, but in any case had disappeared by 1948, as evidence by a map dating to that year (Figure 8).[44]

In 1910, the Paulus heirs sold the remainder of the Springtown tract to local resident Wilkes Kohl, who in 1926 conveyed a small lot on the north side of the creek "containing thereon a brick building" to John Zalinsky, another local resident.[45] The property changed hands several times before 1941, when it was acquired by Pohatcong Township for municipal purposes.[46] The Township made a number of alterations to the building, most notably the construction of a shed appendage along the east side before 1948 to accommodate the municipal garage (Figure 8), but sold the premises in 1954 to a private party.[47] It changed hands twice again before being acquired by its present owner Sarah Melvin in 1990.[48] Since then, the current owner and her husband architect Walter Melvin have succeeded in reversing the negative effects of decades of neglect and inappropriate alterations and restoring much of the building's historic architectural character. Under their stewardship, an important local landmark has been preserved.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Plank frame construction:

Plank frame construction has been documented as an alternative framing system used throughout early New England, where "an abundance of pine and the early development of saw mills" probably were more important than any building craft tradition in encouraging "widespread adoption of this distinctive form as a practical construction alternative."[49] Architectural historians have noted the existence of early plank frame houses in the Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Connecticut. The relatively few documented examples in the Massachusetts Bay Colony date mostly to the first quarter of the 18th century, and

[41] Cornelius Clarkson Vermeule, *Report on Water-Supply, Water-Power, The Flow of Streams and Attendant Phenomena, Vol. III of the final Report of the State Geologist*, Geological Survey of New Jersey, Appendix I, page 10.
[42] Frank Leary, *Pohatcong: the Prologue*, page 103; Warren County Deeds, Book 139, page 121; .
[43] Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey*, (April 1925), Springtown, sheet 34.
[44] Leary, page 81; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey*, (October 1948), Pohatcong Township (Springtown), sheet 34.
[45] Warren County Deeds, Book 176, pp. 196 & 199; Book 190, page 496; & Book 240, page 546.
[46] Ibid., Book 249, page 448; Book 272, page 385; Book 297, 453.
[47] Ibid., Book 378, page 85.
[48] Ibid., Book 417, page 344; Book 1074, 189; Book 1188, page 148.
[49] Abbott Lowell Cummings, *The Framed Houses of the Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725*, page 89.

none earlier than the mid-1680s.[50] By the late 17th century, "plank frame was a known variant in New England….though obviously the majority of carpenters….clung to the traditional English method of framing walls with stud and nogging."[51] The term itself was in use by the early 1700s, as documented by the town of Manchester voting in 1719 that its new meeting house "shal be planket and not studded."[52] Economics may have been a factor in the selection of plank frame over the more common traditional framing methods. In the Massachusetts Bay Colony there appears to have been a correlation between the highest concentration of plank frame construction and the existence of saw mills providing access to a ready supply of sawn lumber. The need for fewer mortise and tenon joints, as well as for smaller and fewer timbers, to construct plank frame buildings must have reduced their cost in terms of time and materials.[53]

Plank frame houses of later date also have been documented in Goshen, New Hampshire (c. 1800), and Cooperstown, New York (c. 1800-1860), areas where pioneer agricultural settlement did not occur until the second half of the 18th century and saw mills also proliferated. Plank frame construction evidently was introduced into these regions by emigrants from the older settled portions of New England.[54]

In New Jersey, eleven plank frame buildings (ten houses and one meetinghouse) have been identified in Cape May County, all dating to the county's first construction period of c. 1690 – 1730. Plank frame construction presumably formed part of the building traditions brought by the emigrants from Long Island predominating among the Cape's early settlers, whose fathers and grandfathers were from New England. In her comprehensive study of early Cape May architecture, Joan Berkey described the major difference between New England plank frame houses and the Cape May examples: "On the Jersey cape, the vertical boarding served as both the interior and exterior finish," instead of the more typical New England practice of applying clapboards to the exterior and lath and plaster on the interior, choices perhaps explained as a response to the milder climate of southern New Jersey.[55]

Plank frame construction evidently was employed by 18th-century builders in central New Jersey, where it was at least common enough to be noticed by Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm during his American travels between 1748 and 1751. In his diary Kalm commented: "in Trenton the houses are partly built of stone, though most of them are made of wood or planks, commonly two stories high."[56] Of New Brunswick dwellings, he observed that while some were constructed of brick:

---

[50] Cummings, pp. 89 – 92; Joan Berkey, *Early Architecture of Cape May County*, page 129; J. Frederick Kelly, *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut*, pp. 40 & 41; The "First Period Buildings of Eastern Mass. Thematic Resource Nomination," (1990) includes plank framing among the early constructions types of the region.
[51] Cummings, page 90.
[52] As quoted in Cummings, page 89.
[53] Cummings, pp. 90 & 91.
[54] "Plank Houses of Goshen, New Hampshire," National Register Nomination (1983), pp. 7-1, 7-2 & 8-1 to 8-3; "Mathewson-Brice Farmhouse & Family Cemetery," National Register Nomination (2013), pp. 7-1 to 7.4 & 8-1 to 8-7.
[55] Berkey, page 129.
[56] Adolph B. Benson (ed.), *The American of 1750: Peter Kalm's Travels in North American*, vol. 1, pp. 177 & 122, as quoted in Berkey, page 130.

> most of them are made either wholly of wood, or of brick and wood. The wooden buildings are not made of strong timber, but merely of boards or planks, which are joined within by laths.[57]

One can reasonably speculate that plank framing was introduced into northern and central New Jersey by settlers of English stock whose families had emigrated from Long Island and New England in the decades bracketing 1700 and that their sons and grandsons who migrated to northwestern New Jersey during the middle decades of the 18th century, like Joseph Hixson, had some knowledge of the framing method.[58] Plank framing techniques certainly were known to builders in northwestern New Jersey, where thick vertical planks nailed to widely spaced horizontal timbers between vertical posts at bay divisions often were used for the perimeter walls of barns and other outbuildings. A number of examples of such plank-clad barns dating from the late 18th and early 19th century have been documented in Warren County.[59]

The plank frame portion of the Hixson-Mixsell House conforms to the New England version of the construction type not the Cape May variant in that its external walls are clapboarded and internal walls are covered with lath and plaster (Photo #s 5, 14 – 16 & 26). But, like Cape May examples, the planking of the Hixson-Mixsell House is face-nailed to wall plates not let into a groove on the bottom side of the plates (at least where visible in the attic stairwell, photo #15).[60] Because most of the Hixson-Mixsell plank siding is covered by clapboards, it has not been determined if wooden pegs also were used to secure the planking as in Connecticut and Massachusetts examples.[61] The Hixson-Mixsell House also shares the New England association of the construction type with saw mills, having been erected within eyesight of the Hixson saw mill on the property of the mill's proprietor. One other possible plank frame house has been identified in northwestern New Jersey, but not confirmed, the c. 1780s Croxall House in Belvidere, which like the Hixson-Mixsell House is located near the site of an 18th-century saw mill, one of the enterprises on the estate of Major Robert Hoops at the confluence of the Pequest and Delaware Rivers.[62] Featuring a Georgian center-hall plan, the Croxall House is much larger than the original portion of the Hixson-Mixsell House. Unlike the Hixson-Mixsell House and New England examples, its exterior is covered with plaster instead of clapboards, and the wall framing is not exposed to view on the interior.[63]

How common plank frame houses were in northwestern New Jersey is unknown. It may be that plank framing was a less popular alternative to both notched log and (Dutch and English) heavy frame construction and never common, or it may be that, like log houses, relatively few have survived. Examples, perhaps obscured by later finishes, may yet remain to be identified.

---

[57] Ibid.
[58] Richard W. Hunter and Richard L. Porter. *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, page 26; Peter O. Wacker, *Land and People: A Cultural Geography of Preindustrial New Jersey: Origins and Settlement Patterns*, pp. 172-174 & 218-220.
[59] Dennis N. Bertland, *Early Architecture of Warren County*, pp. 142, 171 & 174.
[60] Kelly, pp. 40 & 41; Cummings, page 91.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Jay C. Richards, *Penn, Patriots and The Pequest The History of Pre-Victorian Belvidere: 1716 to 1845*, pp. 15 & 39.
[63] Bertland, page 103. Whether or not these features are original or represent later changes is unknown.

Late Federal/Greek Revival Design:

The first half of the 19th century was, in general, a prosperous time throughout northwestern New Jersey, a period when famers often improved their farmsteads with more substantial houses and barns, and villages and water-powered industries flourished to serve their immediate neighborhoods and in some instances more distant markets. Successive transportation improvements, first turnpikes, followed by canals and then railroads, facilitated growth and development. By the 1830s, the Federal style had been a popular choice for some decades for those who could afford the stylish embellishment of their dwellings, and local builders were starting to employ motifs of the newly fashionable Greek Revival style, widely disseminated by pattern books like the one published by Asher Benjamin in 1830 which includes examples of architraves, entries and mantels, among other elements in the Greek taste.[64] A number of Warren County houses erected during the 1830s exhibited a combination of Federal and Greek Revival elements, like the large stone dwelling built in Belvidere by James Maxwell (New Jersey Congressman and proprietor of the local Whig newspaper, the *Apollo*), which features a central Federal entry with elliptical fanlight, sidelights and engaged Tuscan columns that is sheltered by a Greek Revival entry porch with Doric entablature and large paneled pillars and pilasters. The Maxwell house exhibits the other elements not common before the second quarter of the century in Warren County: dormer windows and parapets between paired end-wall chimneys. These features are associated with two other masonry buildings erected by Maxwell in Belvidere, a stone duplex tenant house and a brick storehouse/newspaper office; Maxwell's residence and the storehouse have gambrel roofs, which increased useable attic space, and the latter building may also have incorporated residential quarters on the upper stories.[65]

While David Mixsell may have been familiar with Maxwell's impressive dwelling and other buildings in Belvidere, he had another prototype closer to home, the townhouse erected by his father Jacob in Easton, Pennsylvania, in the early 1830s (Figure 6). Jacob Mixsell's brick side-hall-plan dwelling (now 174 South Fourth Street) occupies a corner lot and, like his son's dwelling, employed the Flemish bond on the principal facades along with various Federal and Greek Revival motifs. The two dwellings exhibit a number of similar features: segmentally arched dormers with pilasters; recessed entry with transom, sidelights and outer surround comprised of a full entablature and flanking pilasters; symmetrically molded interior woodwork with corner rosettes; open staircase with columnar newel posts and round spindles and hand rail; and, perhaps most distinctively, the unusual "lancet-arched" molding of the exterior window frames.[66] A burgeoning canal and market center, Easton acquired other similar houses during the second quarter of the 19th century, like the nearby brick side-hall-plan house (54 South Fourth Street) which also has a Flemish-bond façade, segmentally arched dormers with pilasters and "lancet-arched" molded window trim, but in place of an impressive Greek Revival entry like that of the Jacob Mixsell House features a more modest fan-lighted entry in the Federal style, resembling the paired east entries of David Mixsell's house.[67] The construction of a substantial stylish house by

[64] Asher Benjamin, *The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter (1830),* plates XLV, XLVI, XLVII & XLVIII (architraves, symmetrically molded trim & corner blocks), LI (mantel with freestanding columns), & XXVIII (entry with entablature and flanking pilaster).
[65] Ibid., pp.70, 71 and 104-107.
[66] The "lancet-arch" profile perhaps more suggestive of the Gothic Revival, but a prototype has not been identified.
[67] Unfortunately, the names of the masons and carpenters who built these distinctive dwellings are unknown.

David Mixsell in a small Warren County village during the late 1830s attests to his prosperity or, at least, to his aspirations, in a time of optimistic expectations for economic growth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books, Pamphlets, & Reports

Barber, John W. and Henry Howe. *Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey*. Newark, New Jersey: Benjamin Olds, 1844.

Benjamin, Asher. *The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter (1830)*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988 (reprint).

Benson, Adolph B. (ed.). *The American of 1750: Peter Kalm's Travels in North American*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1937.

Bertland, Dennis N. *Early Architecture of Warren County*. Harmony, New Jersey: Harmony Press, 1976.

Berkey, Joan. *Early Architecture of Cape May County, New Jersey, The Heavy Timber Frame Legacy*. Cape May Court House, NJ: Cape May County Historical Society, 2008.

Boyer, Charles S. *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931.

Cummings, Abbott Lowell. *The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Cummins, George Wyckoff. *History of Warren County New Jersey*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1911.

Ege, Ralph. *Pioneers of Old Hopewell*. Hopewell, New Jersey: Race & Savidge, 1908.

Hunter, Richard W. and Richard L. Porter. *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*. Titusville, New Jersey: Hopewell Township Historic Sites Committee, 1990.

Kelly, Frederick J. *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963 (reprint, originally published in 1924).

Kern and Weaver. *History and Directory of Warren County, 1887*. Washington, New Jersey: Press of the Review, 1887.

Leary, Frank (ed.). *Pohatcong: the Prologue*. Pohatcong Heritage Commission, no date.

Nelson, William. *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey. XIX, Newspaper Extracts III 1751-1755*. Patterson, New Jersey: The Press Printing and Publishing Company, 1897.

Richards, Jay C. *Penn, Patriots and The Pequest: The History of Pre-Victorian Belvidere: 1716 to 1845*. Belvidere, New Jersey: Jay C. Richards, 1995.

Snell, James P. (ed.). *History of Warren and Sussex Counties, New Jersey*. Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1881.

Vermule, Cornelius Clarkson. *Report of Water Supply, Water Power, the Flow of Streams and Attendant Phenomena. Geological Survey of New Jersey, Final Report of the State Geologist. Vol. III*, Trenton, New Jersey: John L. Murphy Publishing Company, 1894.

Wacker, Peter O. *Land and People: A Cultural Geography of Preindustrial New Jersey: Origins and Settlement Patterns*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1975.

Weis, Harry B. and Grace M. Ziegler. *The Early Saw Mills of New Jersey*. Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Agricultural Society, 1968.

Interviews

Sarah Melvin (Property Owner). Spring, 2013.

Manuscripts

Northampton County Historical Society Library, Easton, Pa.

Mixsell Family File
Rohde, Ardella M. *Meiyssel Meixel Mikesell*. 1985 (unpublished)

Sarah Melvin, Little York, New Jersey

Bundy, Emily. “Short History of Springtown Stagecoach Inn.” (unpublished)

Maps and Atlases

Beers, F. W., *County Atlas of Warren, New Jersey*. New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1874.

Hammond, D. Stanton. “Hunterdon County, New Jersey, Sheet C,” Map Series #4.” Genealogical Society of New Jersey, 1965.

Hughes, Michael. *Farm Map of Greenwich Township, Warren Co., N. J*. Philadelphia: Michael Hughes, 1860.

McCarty, D., *Map of Warren County, New Jersey*. Philadelphia: Friend and Aub, 1852.

Sanborn Map Company. *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey.* New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1925.

_____. *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey.* New York: Sanborn Map Company, October 1948.

Walling, H. F., *Map of Warren County, New Jersey*. New York: Smith, Gallup & Co., 1860.

Periodicals

“Hunterdon County Freeholders, 1741,” *The Genealogical Society of New Jersey*,” Vol. 37, (May 1962),

Public Documents & Records

National Park Service, Washington, DC

“First Period Buildings of Eastern Mass. Thematic Resource Nomination,” National Register Nomination (1990).
“Mathewson-Brice Farmhouse & Family Cemetery,” National Register Nomination (2013).

"Plank Houses of Goshen, New Hampshire," National Register Nomination (1983).

New Jersey Archives, Trenton, NJ

New Jersey Deaths and Burial Index 1798 – 1971
New Jersey Tavern Licenses
New Jersey Tax Ratables
New Jersey Wills
Sussex County Deeds
Sussex County Road Returns
Warren County Deeds
West Jersey Deeds
United States Census
Population Schedules, Greenwich Township, Warren Co., 1840, 1850, 1860 & 1870
Population Schedules, Lopatcong Township, Warren County, 1880
Products of Industry, Greenwich Township, Sussex County, 1820

Northampton County Court House, Easton, Pennsylvania

Wills and Estate Records

Web Sites

"Ancestors of Henry Estes Hawkins & Inez Hixson," http://bapresley.com/genealogy/hawkins/. (generated Nov. 16, 2003 by Gary Welker)

"Joseph Kelsey, b. 1673 – Killingsworth, Connecticut," http://bapresley.com/genealogy/hawkins/datafile/gp190.html#head19 (generated Nov. 16, 2003 by Gary Welker)

"Hickson Genealogy: The Hixson Family in New Jersey," http://www.hicksons.org/ByState/NewJersey.html (Last updated February 26, 2010).

NARRATIVE BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes the small lot in Pohatcong Township: tax block 99 lot 13, that encompasses the house and related site features. The boundary of the nominated property follows those of the lot as depicted on the municipal tax map that accompanies this nomination. The boundary of the nominated property begins at the northwest corner of block 99, lot 13 on the west side of County Route 519, and proceeds west along the north boundary of the lot to its northwest corner, then south along the west side of the lot to its southwest corner in Pohatcong Creek, and then east along the south side of the lot and the creek to southeast corner of the lot and the abutment of the bridge carrying Route 519 over the creek. From there it runs north along the east side of the lot and the west side of the bridge abutment and Route 519 to the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property encompasses the one lot that constitutes the remainder of the property historically associated with the Hixson-Mixsell House.

PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION

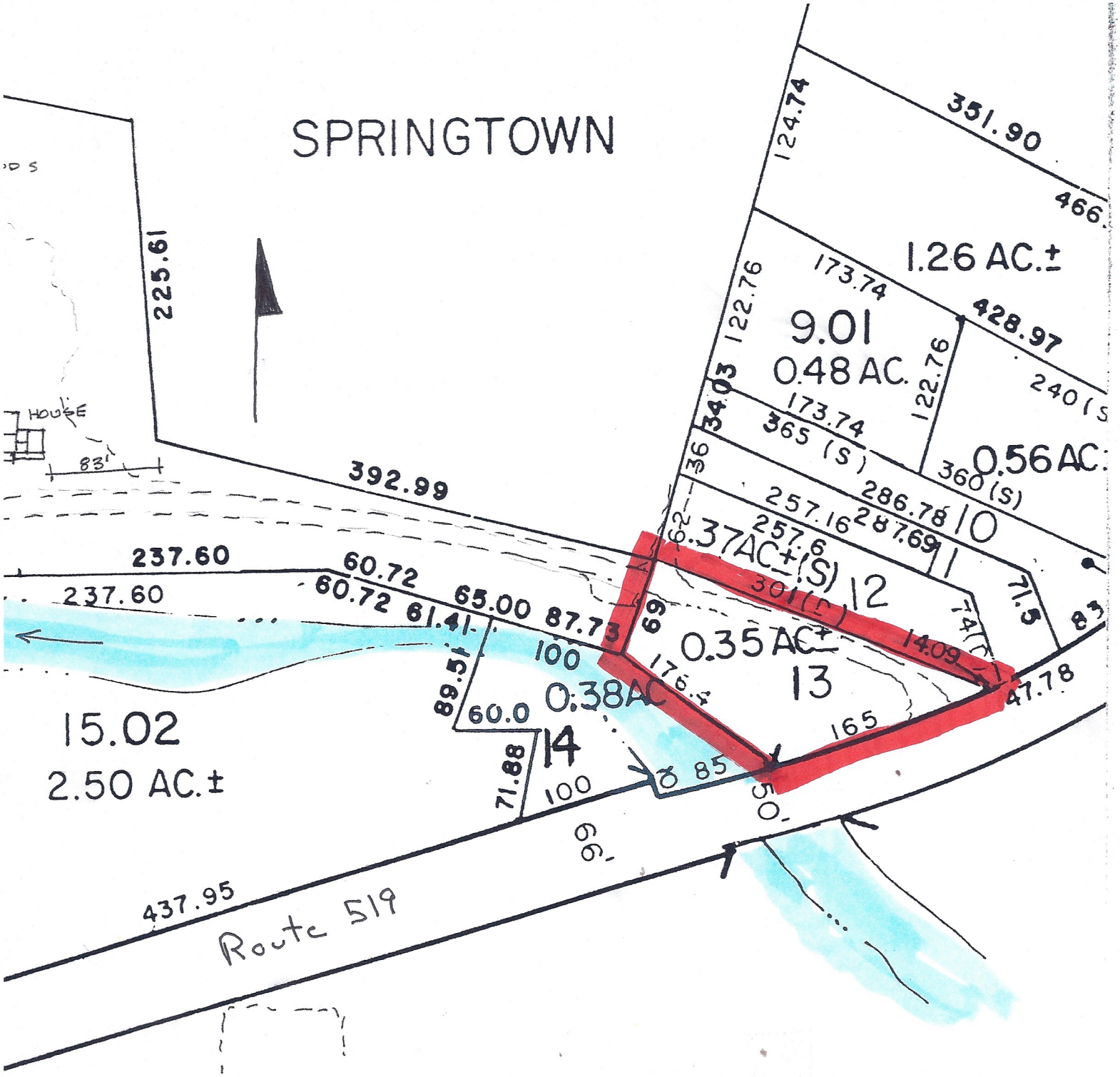
The following information is the same for all photographs submitted with the nomination:

Name:	Hixson-Mixsell House
Location:	Springtown (Pohatcong Township), NJ
Photographer:	Janice Armstrong, Dennis Bertland Associates
Date:	December 2012
Negative and Electronic file Repository:	Dennis Bertland Associates, Stockton, NJ.

PHOTO#	VIEW
1	House exterior, view to northwest
2	House exterior, view to northwest
3	House exterior, view to northwest
4	House exterior, view to northeast
5	House exterior, view to northeast
6	House exterior, view to southeast
7	Room 102, view to northeast
8	Room 103, view to northeast
9	Room 104, view to northwest
10	Room 105, view to northwest
11	Room 105, bake oven & “window” detail, NW view
12	Room 106, bake oven detail, southwest view
13	Room 106, partition & joist detail, southwest
14	Room 210, view to southwest
15	Room 210, attic stairs, frame detail, northwest view
16	Room 208, view to southwest
17	Room 206, view to southwest
18	Room 204, view to southeast
19	Room 205, fireplace detail, view to northwest
20	Room 201, view to southwest
21	Room 201, view to northwest
22	Room 202/203, view to northwest
23	Room 202, fireplace detail, view to northwest
24	Room 301, view to southeast
25	Room 303, view to southeast
26	Room 305, original exterior wall detail, NE view
27	Setting, northwest view from bridge to house
28	Setting, southeast view from bridge

Hixson-Mixell House
157 CR-519
Warren County, NJ
Site and Photo Identification Map
40.647638-75.148220

UTM Coordinates:
Zone 18
487450mE
4499667mN



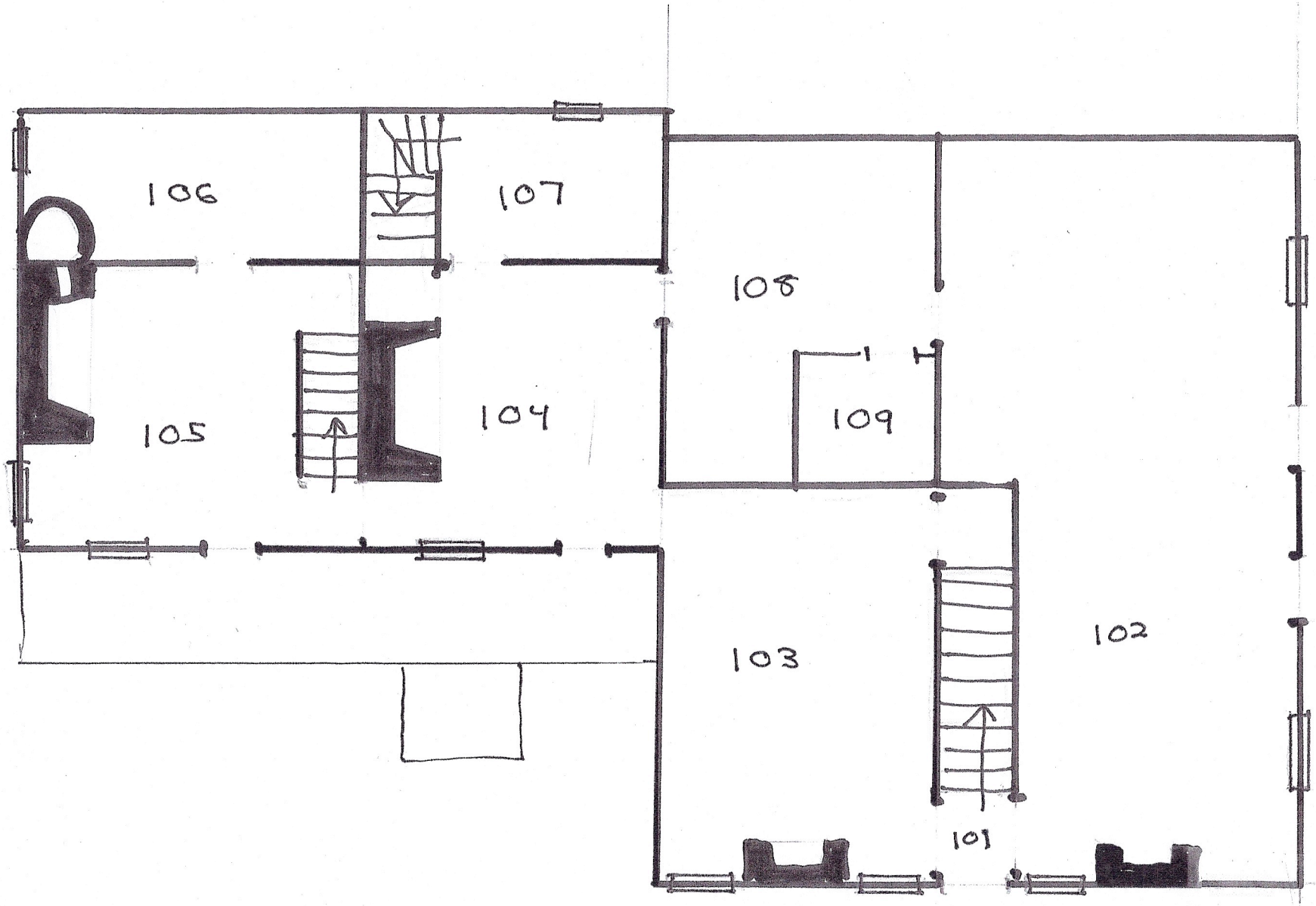
HIXSON – MIXSELL HOUSE
WARREN COUNTY, NJ

Pohatcong Township Tax Map

The boundary of the nominated property (block 99, lot 13) are delineated by the heavy line.

Springtown 3rd story

Sprinstown, 2nd story



Springston 1st story

Figure 1. McCarty, D., *Map of Warren County, New Jersey*. Philadelphia: Friend and Aub, 1852.

Figure 2. Hughes, Michael. *Farm Map of Greenwich Township, Warren Co., N. J.* Philadelphia: Michael Hughes, 1860.

Figure 3. "Springtown Greenwich" vignette from Walling, H. F., *Map of Warren County, New Jersey*. New York: Smith, Gallup & Co., 1860.

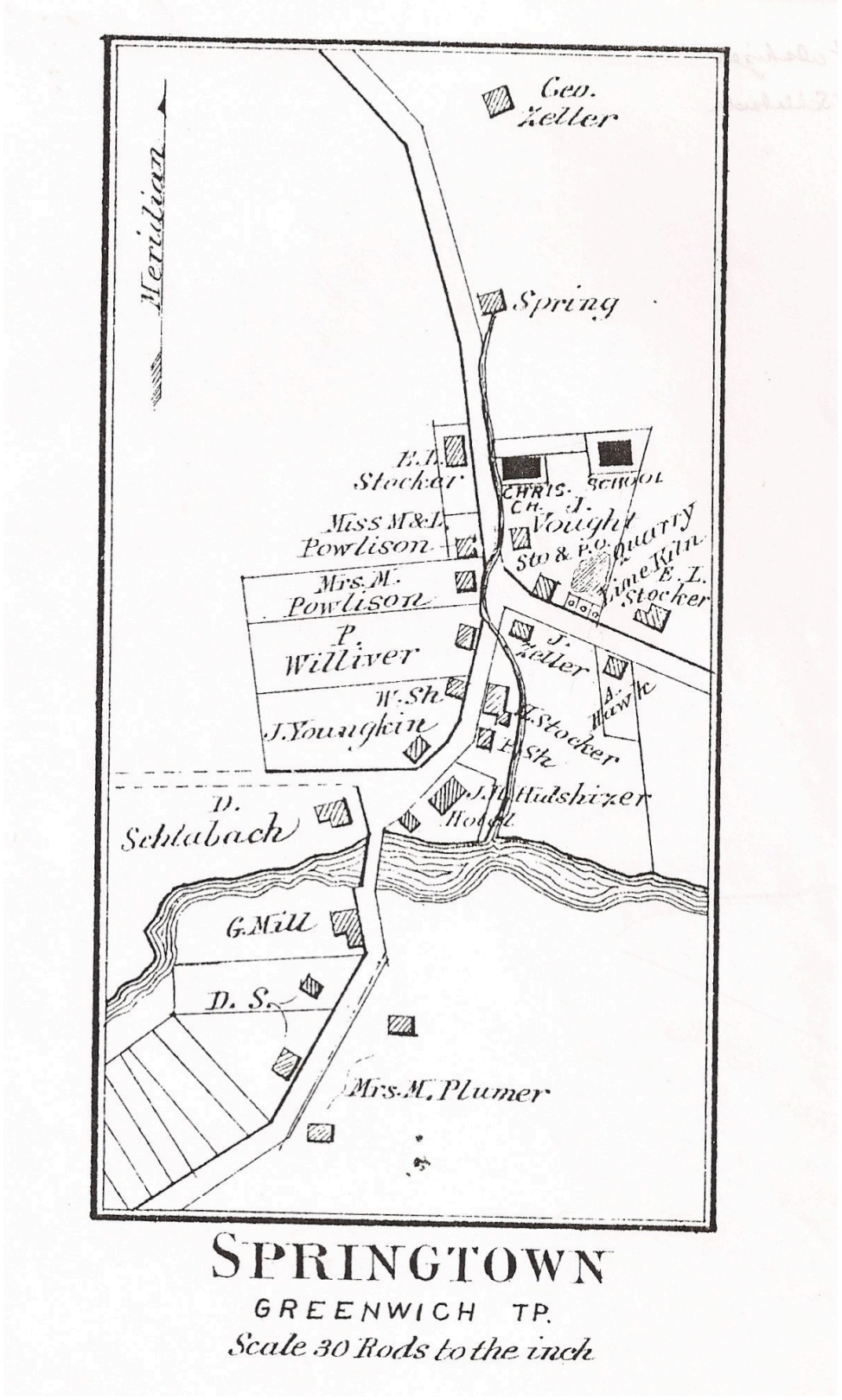


Figure 4. Beers, F. W., *County Atlas of Warren, New Jersey*. New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1874.

Figure 5. Hixson-Mixsell House, c. early 20th century. The ghost of an earlier full-width porch is clearly visible on the south facade. The paired entries and dormers on the east facade have been restored based on this photo and other evidence [Collection of Alice Hnat, as printed in Frank Leary, *Pohatcong: the Prologue, page 62]*.

Figure 6. Jacob Mixsell House, c. early 20th century. Built in 1833 by his father Jacob, this house, now owned by the Northampton County Historical Society, is stylistically similar to the "brick mansion house" erected by David Mixsell at Springtown, and no doubt provided him with a model [collection of Northampton County Historical Society].

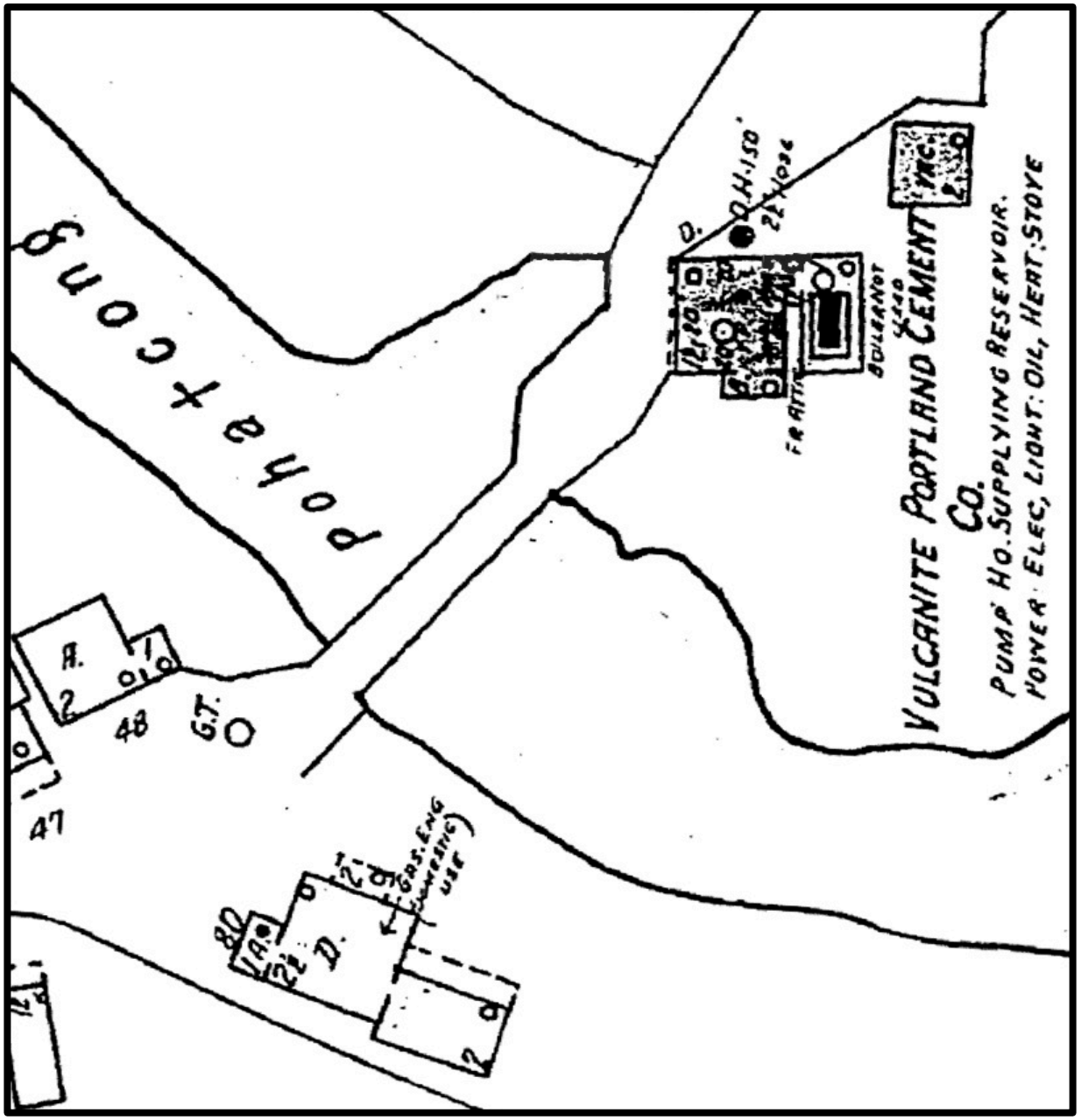


Figure 7. This 1925 map confirms the existence of the south main block porch of the Hixson- Mixsell House (Figure 5) and documents a small appendage on the east building's east front. The map also depicts the Vulcanite Company's pumping stations on grist mill site south side of the creek [Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey*, (April 1925), Springtown, sheet 34].

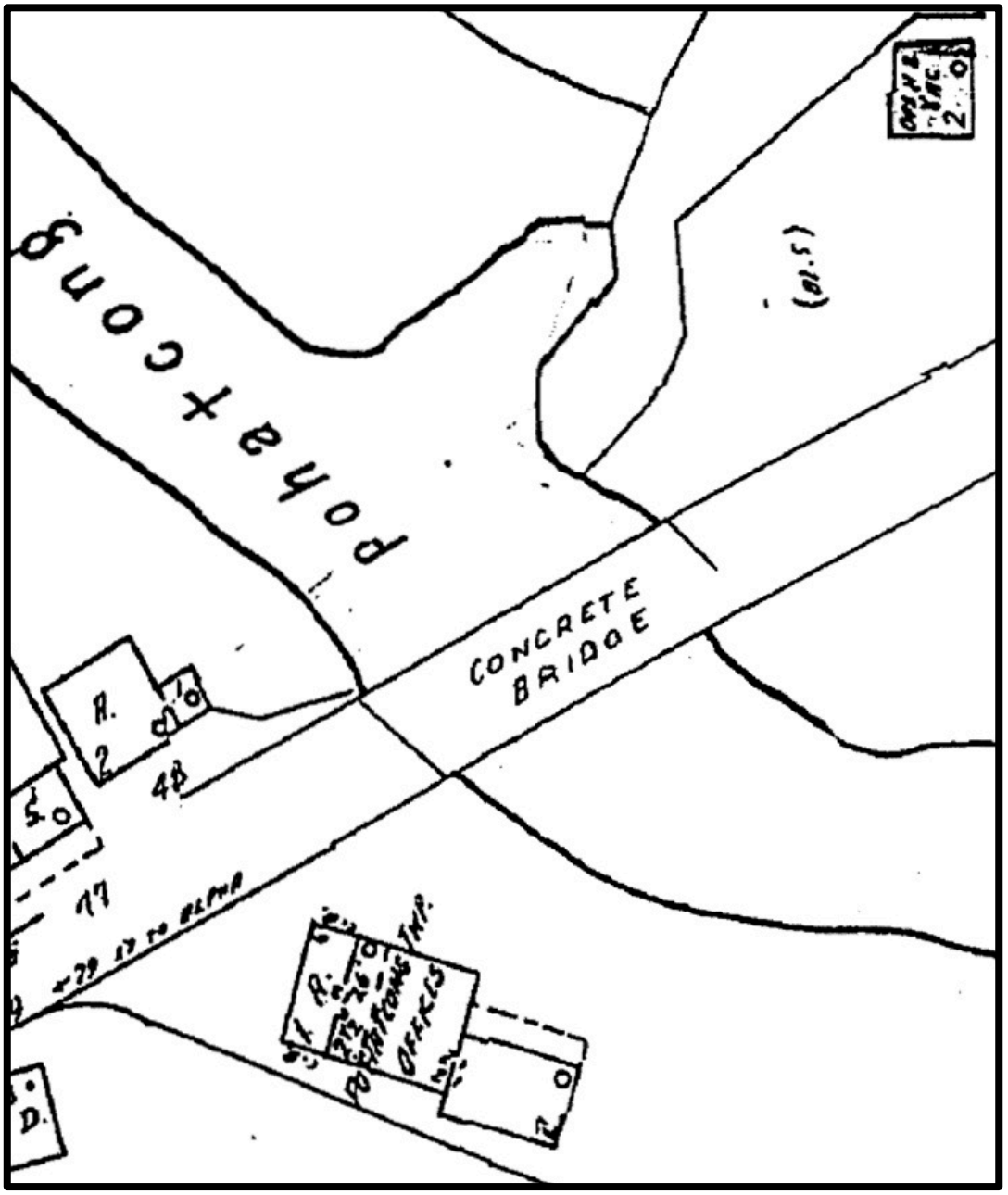


Figure 8. By 1948. the south main block porch of the Hixson- Mixsell House had been removed and a larger appendage added to the east front. The road had been realigned slightly to accommodate the new concrete bridge over Pohatcong Creek. The pumping stations on the south side of the creek also had been removed [Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps of Phillipsburg, New Jersey*, (October 1948), Pohatcong Township (Springtown), , sheet 34].

..

TOOL CHEST
LEGACY
Wasp &
Hornet

BROWN'S LANE
HANKOOK
SPEED LIMIT 35