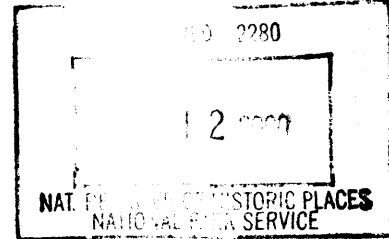


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and 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 from the instruction. 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: William A. Wittmer Lustron House  
other names/site number: Majorie Hiorth Lustron House

2. Location

street and number: 19 Dubois Avenue N/A not for publication  
city or town: Alpine Borough N/A vicinity  
state: New Jersey county: Bergen County zip code: 07620

3. State/Federal/Tribal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Signature of certifying official/Title: Caughey Date: 5/30/00  
Assistant Commissioner, Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau: American Indian Tribe

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 \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian Tribe \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other. (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)  
Signature of the Keeper: Patrick Andrus Date of Action: 7/25/00

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

Lustrons in New Jersey

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

**Historic Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

**Current Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Foundation      Concrete
- Walls              Other
- Roof                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.
- 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 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  
Industry

**Period of Significance**

1949-1950

**Significant Dates**

1949

**Significant Person**

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Beckman, Morris  
Better Living Homes Company  
Blass, Roy

**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
- See continuation sheet for additional HABS/HAER documentation.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- 
- 
- Local Government (Repository Name: Bergen County of Cultural and Historic Office, Closter Historic Preservation Commission, Closter, NJ)
- 
- 

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** .34 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	590160	4533225	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title: Patricia Garbe Morillo, Chairman

organization: Closter Historic Preservation Commission

date: 1/2/2000

street & number: 68 Taylor Drive

telephone: (201) 767-7974

city or town: Closter

state: New Jersey

zip code: 07624-

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name: Marjorie Hiorth

street & number: 19 DuBois Avenue

telephone:

city or town: Alpine Borough

state: New Jersey

zip code: 07620-

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**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 form 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.

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1993 O - 350-416 QL 3

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1

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**William A. Wittmer House, Majorie Hiorth House**  
19 DuBois Ave, Bergen County, Closter, NJ**Description**

The William A Wittmer/Majorie Hiorth House was built in 1949 and is located at 19 DuBois Avenue, Alpine, Bergen County, New Jersey. It is an example of the two-bedroom Westchester Deluxe model which measures 1,085 square feet, 31' x 35', and is constructed entirely of prefabricated porcelain enameled steel. The structural steel panels rest on a concrete slab foundation. The rectangular maize yellow enameled steel house with dark gray tile roof was one of 2,498 manufactured and sold in the United States by the Lustron Corporation between 1948 and 1950. It is one of 16 sold and constructed in the State of New Jersey. The house is located in an up-scale suburban residential neighborhood and the property retains a high degree of historic integrity and is in very good condition.

The Westchester Deluxe model was the most popular of all Lustrons manufactured and this is a good example of the most common two-bedroom type (photo1). The two-bedroom Westchester is distinguishable from all other Lustrons by the 6' x 12' cutout located on the gable front. The main entrance to the house is located under the cutout. The interior of the two-bedroom Westchester was originally constructed with built-in kitchen cabinets with a pass-through to the china cabinet in the dining room. Other features were the built-in bookcase and cabinets in the living room, combination dishwasher-clothes washer in the kitchen, automatic water heater, built-in vanity and storage cabinets in the master bedroom, seven large closets and a radiant panel heating system. Most bathrooms in the Westchester and especially the three bedroom Westchester Deluxe model were outfitted with all essential elements for storage like a built-in (antennae like) projection for a washcloth in the shower, swiveling tooth-brush holder, and built-in tissue holder. All that was needed from the owner was a refrigerator, stove and furniture.

The interior doors are enameled steel, sliding pocket doors, which continues the streamline appearance and decreases the need for the space a swing door requires (photo 10). The original floor covering which was resilient asphalt tiles remains in all the rooms except the kitchen which has been replaced with non-wax linoleum flooring. Because of the durability of the enameled steel, the majority of the original features have been retained in the Wittmer House. All of the original steel gutters remain although the down spouts have been replaced.

The house is a one-story, side gabled, ranch type erected on a concrete slab. The exterior of the house contains very little ornamentation. However, the exterior porcelain-enameled yellow steel panels which measure 2' x 2', the dark gray enamel tile roof, yellow enameled steel chimney panels, living room bay window and decorative spiral porch-roof support in the cutout, give this house its distinct appearance. The gable ends have 1' wide panels placed vertically. All windows have their original aluminum sashes and have been retained. They are operated by small crank windows. All enamel window surrounds and curved lintels are extant. There are two original gray doors with glass inserts, and original locks. The original entrance light fixture is also there. The one side of the porch cutout post with squiggle has been removed.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Wittmer House  
Bergen County, New Jersey

The front facade faces east and features two picture windows and the inset entrance cutout. The main entrance door is located in the cutout. The main picture window for the living room is the bay window which was one of the upgraded features of the "deluxe" package (photo 1 & 2). The other picture window is located in the master bedroom.

The north side features two, smaller, symmetrically-placed, multi-paned, crank aluminum windows. One in the master bedroom and the second in the second bedroom (photo 2). The west side is the rear facade and has a window in the second bedroom and smaller kitchen and bathroom windows flanking an original gray colored door with glass panel and door lock (photo 3).

The interior of the house features a living room/dining room area, a kitchen, a utility room, a bathroom, two bedrooms, and closet space. The interior is also covered with porcelain enameled steel panels measuring 2' x 8'. The panels are vertically scored to give a paneled appearance (photos 8-10). The kitchen, bathroom and utility room panels are yellow and all other wall panels are a beige color. Ceiling panels throughout measure 4' x 4' and are white. Panels in the kitchen, utility room, and bathroom are yellow and two-feet square. All cabinets in the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom are a light gray.

Design features include built-in wall furniture and closet space with sliding doors. Between the dining area and kitchen is a buffet with shelves and drawers on one side and kitchen cabinets with shelves and drawers on the other side (photos 6-8, & 11). The dining room side of the hutch has been repainted a shale blue. The built-in steel unit between the living room and front (master) bedroom contains a mirrored bookcase on one side and a mirrored vanity and counter top with drawers and doors for closet space on the other side. The original mirrored surface of the living room book case has been covered with wall paper. Exterior and interior wall corners are rounded and contribute to the clean, streamlined look of the Lustron home (photo 10).

The two bedrooms and bathroom have their original steel porcelain-enameled flush gray pocket doors which slide and roll on overhead tracks. All closet and storage doors are of the bypass sliding type (photo 10 & 12). All doors and cabinet hardware throughout the house is original. All of pocket doors facing the inner hall way and the cabinet sliding doors in this area have been painted a shale blue color. The bathroom retains the original stamped steel bathtub measuring 5' 1/2", built-in three drawer, free standing storage cabinet with counter, mirror and light fixtures, and soap dish (photo 13). The sink, vanity, toilet and towel racks have been replaced. In the kitchen all the cabinet doors have been removed, but are on site and in storage (photo 6). On the right hand side of the kitchen the lower cabinets, counter space, dishwasher-clothes washer and sink have been replaced.

In the utility room the original Lustron hooks for drying laundry and the round light fixture are still in place. The original furnace is located inside a rear panel and the black furnace venting machine on an outside panel are still in place in the Wittmer House (photo 4). All Lustrons came with an oil fired furnace which was attached to the ceiling to free up additional floor space. These are the most often replaced features in the Lustron and it is very rare that they survive. This system consists of a small generator supplying radiant heat through duct work

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number   7   Page   3  

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**Wittmer House**  
Bergen Co., New Jersey

contained in the attic space located directly above the ceiling panels and through a plenum chamber radiates the heat into the interior of the house. This type of heating system is unique to the Lustrons. It was engineered by the architectural firm of Blass & Beckman, designers of the Lustron prototype. The utility room has four easy access service panels along its side wall. These flush mounted panels open to reveal the electrical, plumbing and telephone hookups.

The Wittmer Lustron retains its original builder's plate, located in the utility room rear wall (photo 5). Similar to auto serial numbers, the Wittmer plate reads 02-2182; 02 is the model number, 2182 is the number of production of that model, meaning the Wittmer House was the 2,182<sup>nd</sup> Westchester Deluxe model built. Only 10% of all existing Lustrons are believed to have the builder's plate intact.

A one car cinder block yellow garage is located on the western boundary line of the property. This structure was built about 1950 and is a non-contributing building. The house is located on a corner lot with the main facade facing DuBois Avenue and the south side fronting on Haring Avenue. The lot size is .344 of an acre and the property is very threatened as a subdividable lot. The Wittmer House is located in an up-scale suburban neighborhood of recent large homes. Several neighboring houses on DuBois Avenue are enlarged late 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular homes. The Wittmer House is situated in close proximity to the Alpine Historic District, a 19<sup>th</sup> century hamlet on top of the Palisades cliffs which is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.



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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 4

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Wittmer House  
Bergen County, New Jersey**Significance**

The William A. Wittmer/Marjorie Hiorth House is an excellent example of the Westchester Deluxe model which was manufactured by the Lustron Corporation and built in 1949. It is significant under criterion A as a representation of the mass production of post-World War II housing. It is also significant under criterion C as an example of a new construction method for residential housing with its entirely enameled steel frame and body as well as its modern design and "ranch-type" open layout. In its day the Lustron house was touted as the most technologically advanced answer to the housing shortage after World War II.

The William Wittmer House retains almost all of its original historic fabric and it is an excellent example of the Westchester Deluxe model. Features such as the front bay window, easy-care enameled steel panels, space-saving shelves/bedroom vanity are some of the many architectural features used to create a comfortable, space-saving and modern home. Even the original builder's plate with model and serial number remains clearly visible on the rear wall of the utility room.

In 1949, Mr. William Wittmer, an engineer, and his wife Myrtle purchased this "Westchester Deluxe" model from Art Padula, owner of the North Jersey Better Living Lustron franchise in Maplewood, New Jersey. Mrs. Marjorie Hiorth purchased the house in 1967 and has lived here for the past 32 years. The northern sections of Bergen County such as Alpine and Closter were less developed at that time and offered more opportunities to build the novel construction of the all-metal, prefabricated house. Like Mr. Hess, Ms. Hiorth feels the only downside to owning a Lustron is finding people with enough problem solving creativity to make repairs to a steel house.

Lustron houses are significant under Criteria "A" because of their association with broad trends in United States architectural development. The origination of the Lustron Corporation and houses were the direct result of the housing shortage after World War II. Although the Lustron Corporation was not as successful as other companies, such as Levitt & Sons in Long Island and Pennsylvania, it played a major role in the development of post-war housing. In Bergen County their appearance parallels the explosion of development in suburban communities and settlement of former rural areas following the general use of the automobile. Lustron houses are also significant under Criteria "C." The Lustron home was an innovation in housing design that was developed to meet specific needs; low cost, quick production, and the employment of available post-war materials. The most important thing here was the application of porcelain steel enamel to the construction of the housing industry. Other novel design features were the open-space ranch design that combined with built-in cabinets, and sliding pocket doors that made more space available in a smaller and less expensive house.

Short lived and recently qualifying for the fifty year age criteria, all the Lustron's in New Jersey and the United States are now eligible under Criteria Consideration "G." They have exceptional importance as a contributing component in United States post-war housing history.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wittmer House  
Alpine, Bergen Co., NJ

## Section 9--Bibliography

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Geissler, Brian. "Lustron Homes: Did You Know . . . That there are Three Lustron Homes. . . . in New Jersey." Historic Preservation Planning Bulletin, NJSHPD, October-December, 1996.

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Keister, Kim. "Showing Its Metal." Historic Preservation. The Magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. January- February, 1995.

Lewis, Raphael. "Handwriting on Wall for Quirky House: Histroians Struggle to Preserve Lustron." The Record, Hackensack, NJ. 6/5/98.

Mitchell, Robert A. "What Ever Happened to Lustron Homes?" APT Bulletin, vol. XXIII, Number 2, 1991.

Raflo, Lisa. National Register Nomination: Lustron Houses in Georgia, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, 1995.

Saxman-Rogers, Michelle C. National Register Nomination: Lustron Houses in South Dakota. South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, 1997.

Wolfe, Tom and Leonard Garfield. "A New Standard for Living: The Lustron House, 1946-1950." Vernacular Architecture, Vol. 3, 1989, pp. 51-61.

Oral Interview and site inspection with Majorie Hiorth: Lustron owner, 19 Dubois Avenue, Alpine, New Jersey.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wittmer House  
Bergen Co., New Jersey

### Section 10—Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property consists of Block 41 of Lot 9 in the Borough of Alpine.

### Boundary Justification:

The Wittmer Houses resides on the lot which has been historically associated with the building and originally purchased for the Lustron.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 7

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Wittmer House  
Bergen County, New Jersey

**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all photos submitted with the application:

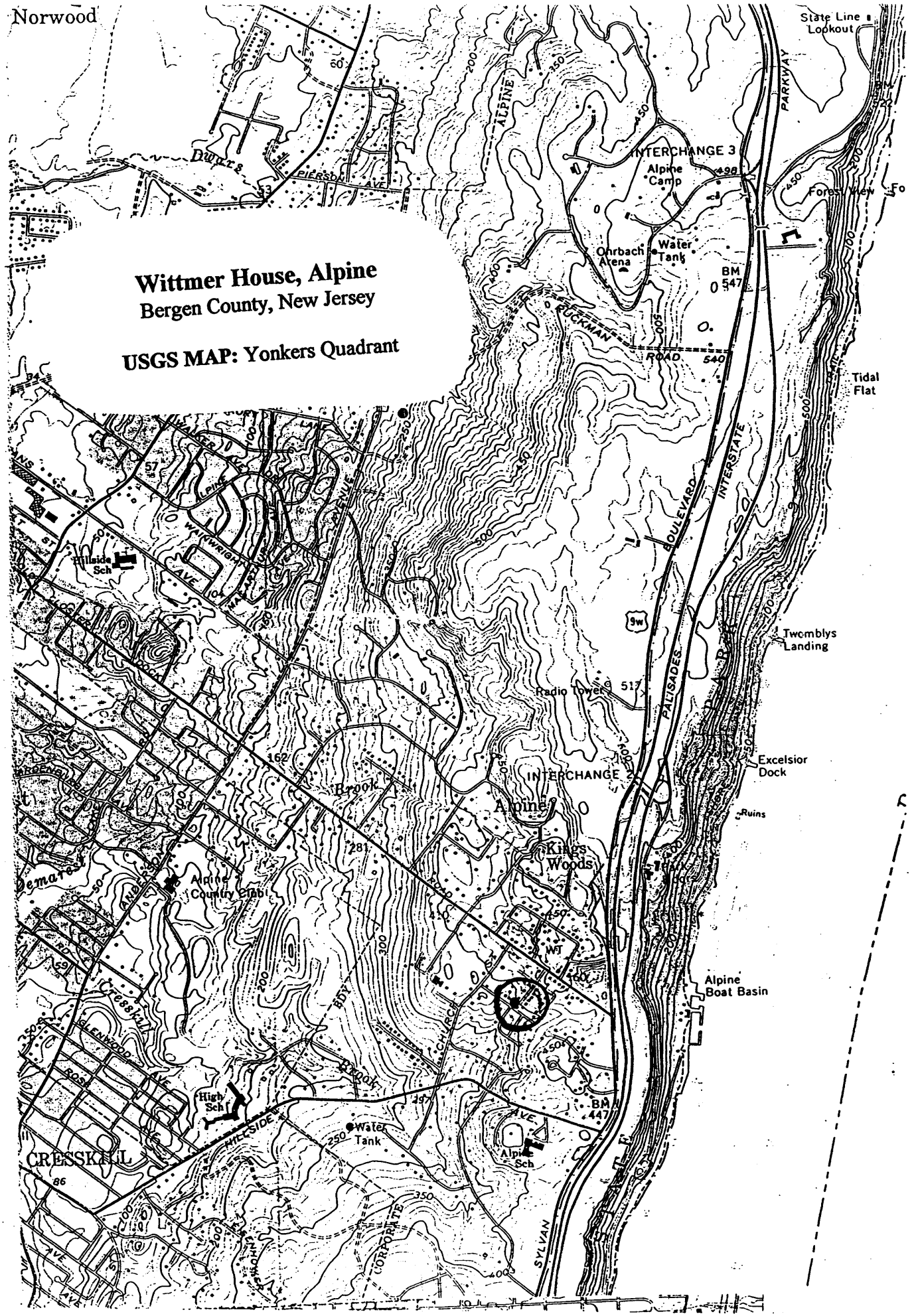
1. Name of property—Wittmer/Hiorth Lustron House, 19 DuBois Avenue, Alpine
2. County and state where located—Bergen County, New Jersey
3. Name of photographer—Uma Reddy
4. Date of photographs—12/99
5. Location of photo negs.—Uma Gallery, 20 West 57 St., NY, NY 10019

Description of each photo:

1. Front and south side elevation, camera facing north.
2. Front and north side elevation, camera facing southeast.
3. Rear west and south side elevation, camera facing northeast.
4. Utility room, camera facing east.
5. Utility room, builder's plate, camera facing east.
6. Kitchen, camera facing south.
7. Dinette and room divider with kitchen, camera facing southwest.
8. Living room, built-in book shelves, camera facing northeast.
9. Living room, camera facing northwest.
10. Hall way, camera facing north.
11. Master bedroom, mirrored vanity, camera facing southwest.
12. Master bedroom, camera facing north.
13. Bathroom, camera facing west.

Norwood

**Wittmer House, Alpine**  
Bergen County, New Jersey  
USGS MAP: Yonkers Quadrant



State Line  
Lookout

INTERCHANGE 3  
Alpine Camp

Ohrbach Arena  
Water Tank

BM  
0 547

RUCKMAN  
ROAD  
540

Tidal  
Flat

Twombly's  
Landing

Radio Tower  
517

INTERCHANGE 2

Alpine  
Kings Woods

Excelsior  
Dock

Ruins

Alpine  
Boat Basin

BM  
447

CRESSKILL

86

High Sch

Water Tank

Alpine Sch

ALPINE

SYLVAN

CORPORATE

HILLSIDE

CRESSKILL

Demarest

Brook

Alpine  
Country Club

Hillside Sch

WINDY

WINDY

WINDY

WINDY

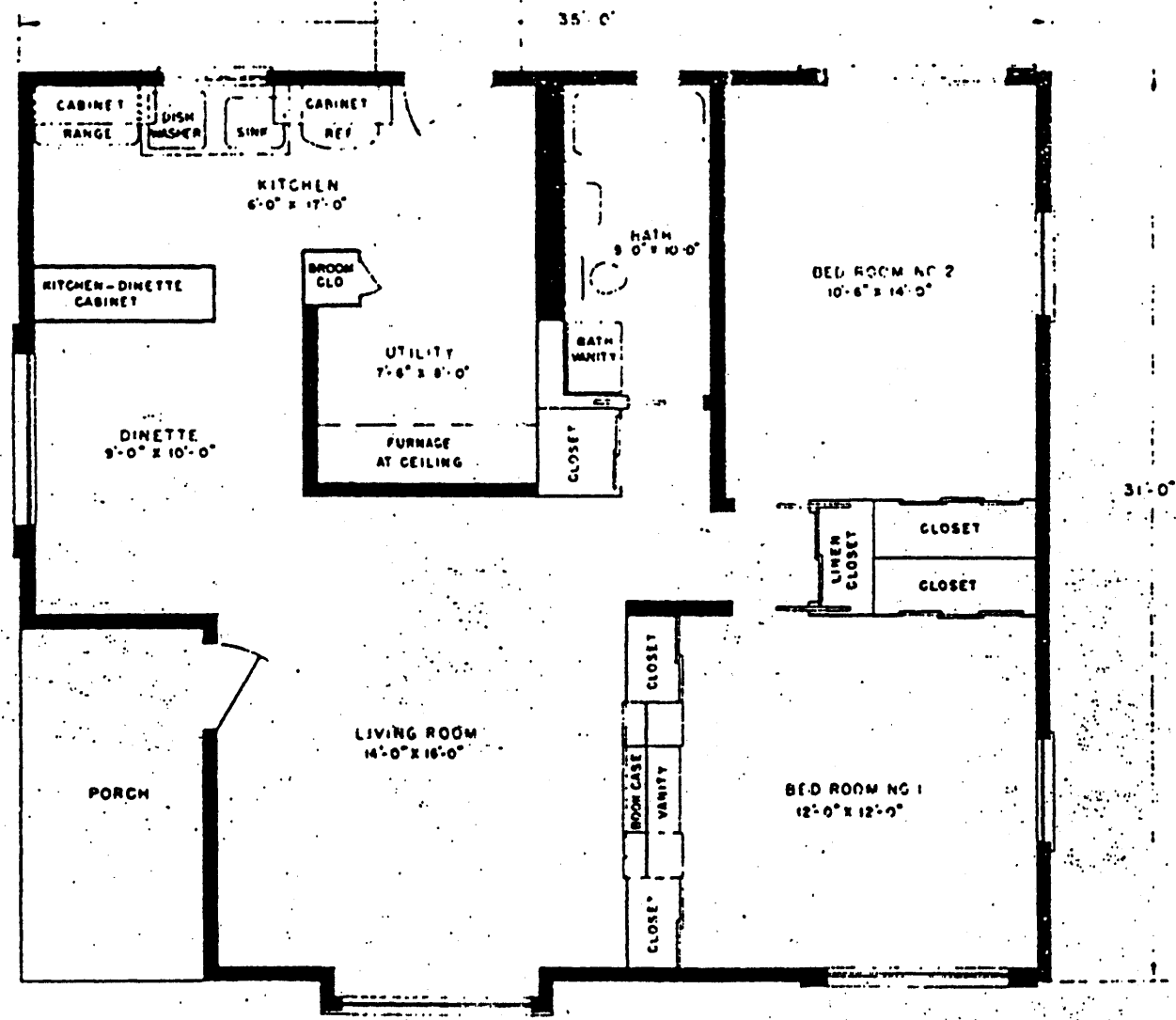
WINDY

WINDY

WINDY



RELEASE NO. DATE  
 NP 628 4-21-49



Wittmer/Hiorth House  
 19 Dubois Ave., Alpine  
 Bergen County, New Jersey  
 Floor Plan for Westchester  
 Deluxe Model

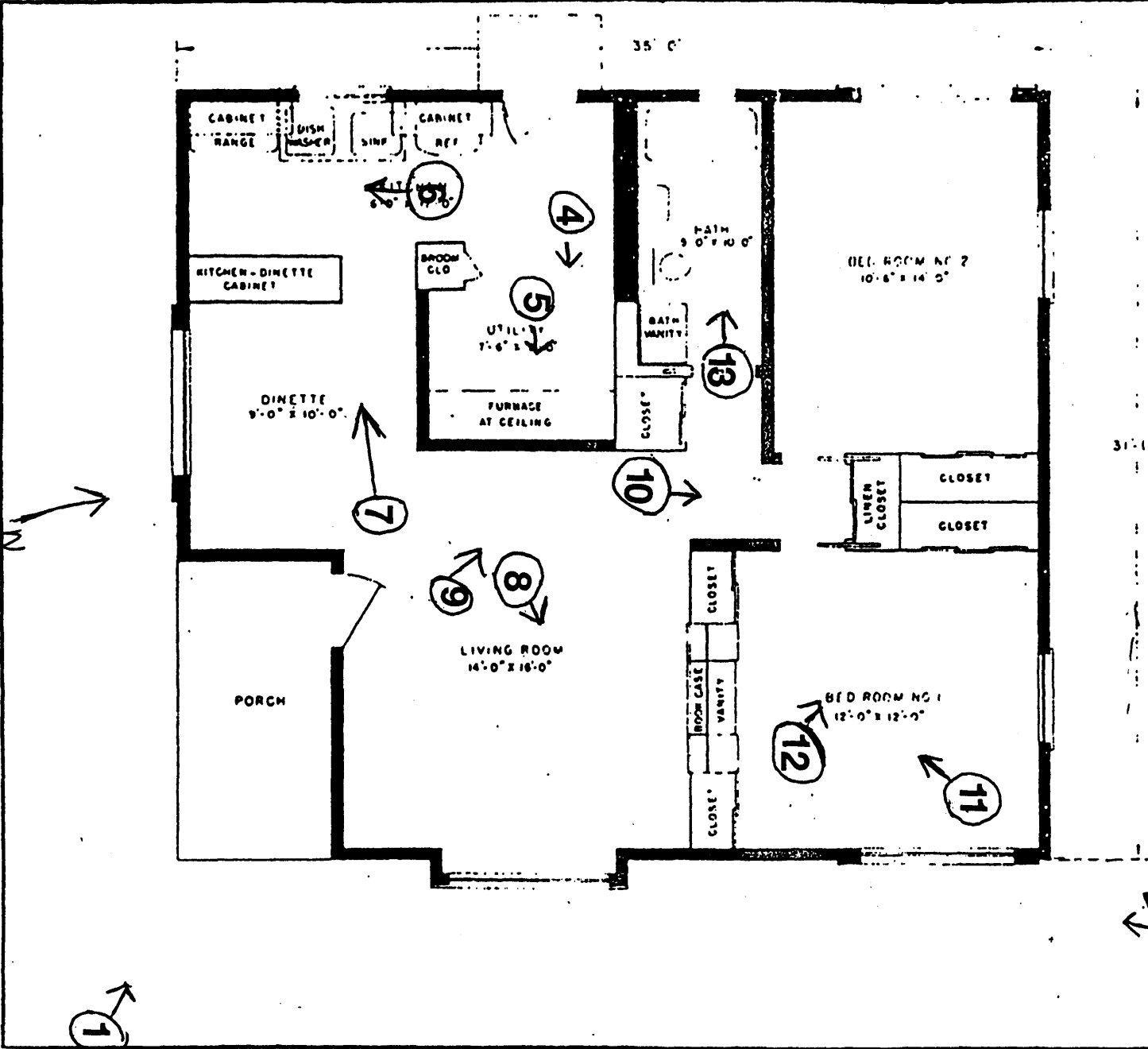
**Lustron**  
 CORPORATION

ERECTOR	MANUAL	
TITLE	FLOOR PLAN	
PREPARED BY G B E	DATE 4-21-49	EFF 426 THRU 3000 DRAWING NUMBER EM-02-B-11.1

Though small by today's standards, the Lustron homes were promoted as well-planned and efficient. This two-bedroom Lustron home provided approximately 1,000 square feet of living area. (Photo courtesy Robert A. Mitchell, AIA, State Historical Society of North Dakota)

Wittmer/Hiorth House  
 19 DuBois Ave., Alpine  
 Bergen County, New Jersey  
 Floor Plan for Westchester  
 Deluxe Model

**PHOTO MAP**  
 circled numbers correspond to photographs  
 and arrows indicate direction



ERECTOR TITLE		LUSTRON CORPORATION		MANUAL
		FLOOR PLAN		
PREPARED BY G & E	DATE 4-21-49	EFF	426 THRU 3000	
		DRAWING NUMBER EM-02-B-11.1		

Though small by today's standards, the Lustron homes were promoted as well-planned and efficient. This two-bedroom Lustron home provided approximately 1,000 square feet of living area. (Photo courtesy Robert A. Mitchell, AIA, State Historical Society of North Dakota)