OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior

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National Park Service

#### JAN 04 1994

#### **National Register of Historic Places** Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 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.

. Name of Property					
istoric name	Pleasant Valley	Historic Di	lstrict		
ther names/site number				<del></del>	
. Location		*			
treet & number	Mill Pond Road				NA ☐ not for publication
ty or town	Washington Town	nship			□ vicinity
ate New Jersey	code				
State/Federal Agency	y Certification		<del></del>		.,
Signature of certifying of	missioner for Nat	ural & Histo	ric Pecource	עמאטע\ י	
State of Federal agency					heet for additional
State of Federal agency In my opinion, the prope	erty  meets does not r				heet for additional
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Pleasant Valley HD		Warren County, NJ County and State					
Name of Property		County an					
5. Classification  Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of R (Do not include p	esources within Propert previously listed resources in the	y e count.)			
□ private     □ public-local     □ public-State     □ public-Federal	<ul> <li>□ building(s)</li> <li>□ district</li> <li>□ site</li> <li>□ structure</li> <li>□ object</li> </ul>	Contributing  11  1  3  5  20	Noncontributing  1  1  2	buildings sites structures objects Total			
Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part	Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  N/A		Number of contributing resources previously list in the National Register				
6. Function or Use				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Domestic/single family		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Domestic/single family					
Industry/energy faci	lity	Industry/manufacturing					
Industry/manufacturi	ng facility	Agricultural/agricultural field					
Transportation/air-r	elated						
Agricultural/agricul	tural field						
7. Description							
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories fro	om instructions)				
Federal		foundation	Stone				
Greek Revival		walls	Weatherboard				
Colonial Revival	·····		Brick				
		roof	Asphalt shingle				
		other					

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

•						
Pleasant Valley HD Name of Property	Warren County, NJ County and State					
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.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)					
To Pational Negister Isting.)	Engineering					
☐ A Property is associated with events that have made	Transportation					
a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Architecture					
☑ 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	Period of Significance					
distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	c. 1830 - 1942					
□ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	C. 1030 1742					
Criteria Considerations N/A						
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates					
Decreed to	1931					
Property is:	1930					
A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.						
□ B removed from its original location	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)					
☐ B removed from its original location.	Eckel, Earle S.					
☐ <b>C</b> a birthplace or grave.						
□ <b>D</b> a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation N/A					
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.						
☐ <b>F</b> a commemorative property.						
☐ <b>G</b> less than 50 years of age or achieved significance	Architect/Builder					
within the past 50 years.	Various					
,						
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)						
9. Major Bibliographical References						
Bibilography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on or						
Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A	Primary location of additional data:					
preliminary determination of individual listing (36						
CFR 67) has been requested  previously listed in the National Register	<ul><li>☐ Other State agency</li><li>☐ Federal agency</li></ul>					
previously determined eligible by the National	☐ Local government					
Register	☐ University					
designated a National Historic Landmark	☐ Other					
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	Name of repository:					

# \_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Pleasant Valley HD  Name of Property	Warren County, NJ County and State
10. Geographical Data	- County and State
Acreage of Property 40 acres	proximately Bloomsbury, NJ & Belvidere, NJ-PA Quads
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation s	et.)
1 Zone Easting Northing 2	Zone Easting Northing  4
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a contin	on sheet.)
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a con	ation sheet.)
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Dennis N. Bertlan	
organizationBertland Associat	March 1993
street & number P.O. Box 11	908-689-6356 telephone
city or townPort Murray	state zip code
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute se	s) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts	d properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white p	cographs of the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.	
name	
street & number	telephone
city or town	state zip code

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this 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.

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Pleasant Valley is located in the Highlands geographical province of northwestern New Jersey, in the Pohatcong Valley of southern Warren County, one mile west of Washington just off Route 57 and downstream from the confluence of Pohatcong and Shabecong Creeks. A water power site utilized by the 1770s provided the nucleus for the settlement which, clustered below a mill pond impounded by a dam/causeway, consists of several houses, a power house (built in 1930 on the foundation of a 19th-century grist mill) and two small aircraft hangers, remnants of an autogiro airport established there in the 1930s. The hamlet is surrounded by a mix of open fields and woodland with modern dwellings and commercial uses to the north along Route 57 and scattered modern dwellings to the south on Mill Pond Road.

The Pleasant Valley district encompasses all of the resources associated with the hamlet, including the mill/power house hydrosystem and some adjoining fields and meadow land critical to its rural setting. An inventory of district's resources forms part of this section, and the resources have been categorized as "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the district's historical significance. The twenty contributing resources include three 19th-century houses (#s 2, 3 & 5), several late 19th or early 20th-century outbuildings and site features associated with them, the 1930 power house (#4) and its hydrosystem (mill pond, dam/causeway, and raceway), a boat house (#4), and the two autogiro hangars (#1). There are two non-contributing resources: a 1950s ranch house (#6) and a swimming pool (behind house #3).

The district's buildings are, in general, simply detailed, vernacular, structures of moderate size that date to the 19th and early 20th-centuries. Except for the brick power house, the brick portion of one house (#5), and the poured concrete and cobblestone boat house (#4), they are of frame construction. Only one building, the Sherred/Warne/Eckel House (#3) exhibits any distinctive stylistic embellishment. Most have been enlarged or refurbished over the years. Modern improvements, while resulting in the loss or obscuring of early fabric and detailing in some cases, have been neither numerous nor disfiguring enough to mar the historic architectural character of the district. The buildings are generally in good condition and well maintained. Yards are landscaped and well kept.

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Pleasant Valley's most notable architectural resource is its proprietor's residence, the Sherred/Warne/Eckel House (#3), an early 19th-century dwelling exhibiting Federal/Greek Revival influences which was extensively remodeled in 1930 when it acquired its Colonial Revival embellishment. The most distinctive early feature of the house, which consists of a c. 1834 side-hall-plan main block, a perhaps somewhat earlier one-room-plan west wing, and later rear appendages, is the large cornice with modillion blocks and denticulated frieze on the front of the main block. other early features are several brick fireplaces with delicately molded mantels, the main hall's dividing archway with reeded pilasters, and the open staircase with tapered newel posts, square spindles and oval railing. The 1930 remodeling includes typical Colonial Revival work such as the main entry with sidelights and transom and the two sun porches with multi-pane glazing and classically detailed posts, and more unusual features like the Goodyear Rubber Tile flooring which resembles random width floor boards and the recycled trolley car electric heaters.

The district's two other early dwellings are modest tenant houses representative of the area's simple vernacular dwellings. The c. 1865 tenant house (#5) exemplifies the traditional, 2-story, gable-roofed, single-pile-plan types ubiquitous throughout the region in the 19th century. Its 4-bay main block consists of a brick, one-room-plan unit doubled in size by a frame extension to the east. The late 19th/early 20th-century farm house (#2) is of the gable-fronted type popular in the region's towns and villages in that period, and has a small projecting bay on its south side.

All three dwellings have small wagon houses or garages of late 19th/early 20th-century date, and the Sherred/Warne/Eckel House has as well a small early 20th-century chicken coop and a c. 1930 doll house which is now used as a pool house. A cobblestone retaining wall and fountain built in 1930 ornament the front yard of the Eckel House. Similar walls with pedestals supporting cast-stone pelicans are found at the powerhouse and the mill tenant house, and a small concrete and cobblestone boat house adjoins the headrace outlet on the mill pond. A large 19th-century barn complex located just west of the Eckel House garage was demolished about fifteen years ago.

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Pleasant Valley possesses important nonresidential resources: Eckel's power house (#4) and attendant hydrosystem and his two autogiro hangars (#1). Used to generate electricity for its owner's lighting and heating needs, the small 1-story brick power house, which features metal-framed multi-pane windows and frame, shingle-clad gables, was erected in 1930 on the stone foundation of a brick 19th-century grist mill destroyed by fire in the previous While the building remains largely intact, its two turbines (one salvaged from the grist mill) and other machinery were scrapped after World War II. The hydrosystem was extensively reworked in 1929-30, but preserves its earlier plan. Its principal element is the dam/causeway of reinforced concrete and rubblework construction which, extending several hundred feet and transversed by Mill Pond Road, incorporates three overflow outlets in addition to the headrace outlet and spillway from the pond. Reinforced concrete culverts carry Mill Pond Road over the outlets and spillway, except the easternmost outlet for which a pipe was used. The mill's wide tailrace features rubblework retaining walls with concrete capping. The mill pond, largely silted up in recent years, is fed by not only by the main channel of Pohatcong Creek but from a secondary channel, dug in about 1930, which runs along Route 57 and brings water from the Pohatcong, at a point upstream from its confluence with Shabecong Creek, to the pond.

The two autogiro hangars, located at the west end of the district to the north of the demolished barn complex, are frame, 1-story gable-roofed structures whose distinctive feature is the sliding track extensions of both sides of their gable-end entries which permits the sliding doors to completely clear the opening. The smaller of the two, erected in 1931, retains remnants of the inscription "Eckel's Autogiro Port" in the gable above the entry. The larger hangar, built in 1933, is set at a right angle to its neighbor.

An inventory of all structures and sites within the district has been prepared as part of this description. Each principal structure and site is identified by a number which locates it on the accompanying district map. All entries have been categorized as "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the significance of the district. All outbuildings included in the inventory are contributing unless individually identified with the designation (NC).

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Pleasant Valley District Inventory

Eckel's <u>Autogiro Port</u> Frame, 1-story, gable-roofed <u>aircraft hangar</u>.

Style: None <u>Date</u>: 1931

Exterior features include novelty siding, slightly overhanging eaves, west gable-end aircraft entry and small side entry with batten door hung on cross garnet hinges. The main entry, which extends the full width of the gable wall, has two batten sliding doors (constructed of narrow beaded boards) with metal strips on some edges; supported by diagonally braced wooden posts, the sliding track extends well beyond both sides of the hangar, allowing the open doors to clear the entry entirely.

The words "Autogiro Port" faintly discernible on the gable above the entry are remnants of an inscription which, as recorded by an early photograph, read "Eckel's Autogiro Port - First Exclusive Autogiro Air Port in America - Size 100-300 Yards - Erected 1931 - Pitcarn Autogiro."

Outbuildings: (1) frame, 1-story aircraft hangar (1933), set at a right angle to its smaller neighbor which it resembles in form and detailing, except that it has three sliding doors with 9-light window insets and a small batten door.

Contributing B68/L12 Neg. #

2 (15 Mill Pond Rd.) Frame, 2-story, <u>dwelling</u> with a 2-over-3-bay gable end principal facade and a 2-story gabled projecting bay on the south side with semi-hexagonal first-story profile.

<u>Style</u>: none <u>Date</u>: c. 1885-1910

Now covered with aluminum siding, it has a box cornice with returns that is carried on the raking eaves, 1/1 sash windows with plain trim, multi-pane glass front door,

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flat-roofed front porch with box cornice and square posts, and a shed-roofed rear porch, the north end of which has been enclosed.

Outbuildings: (1) frame, 1-story wagon house (early 20th/perhaps late 19th) with shed appendage on the east side, novelty siding, overhanging eaves, full-width, doorless south gable-end entry, north gable-end wagon entry with batten double doors (the south entry probably resembled it originally), and a batten-doored entry flanked by multipane windows on the east side of the appendage. It originally had a corn crib on the east side of the wagon way as evidenced by the vertical slats in that wall.

Contributing

B68/L15

Neg.#

Sherred/Warne/Eckel House (14 Mill Pond Rd.) Frame, 2 1/2-story, gable-roofed dwelling consisting of a 3-bay, double-pile, side hall-plan main block with paired east gable-end chimneys (brick stacks), a 2-bay, single-pile, one-room-plan west wing with gable-end chimney (exposed brick back and stuccoed brick stack), and a 2-story, rear wing.

Style: Federal/Greek Revival influences; Colonial Revival remodeling

Date: wing & main block early 19th, main block possibly 1834 (date & "built by William Warne" inscribed on brass plaque mounted on the front entry, probably by Earle Eckel c. 1930); remodeled in late 19th (possibly c. 1865 by Dr. John V. Mattison); rear wing late 19th/early 20th; remodeled c. 1930 by Earle Eckel.

Early exterior features of the clapboard-clad dwelling include the main block's box cornice with large corona molding, modillions, and denticulated frieze, the box cornice with corona and miter-ended bed molding on the main block rear and wing front, architrave window trim, one 9/6 and probably some 6/6 sash windows, and possibly some of the louvered and paneled shutters. Evidently reworked in the Victorian era, the two main block first-

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story front windows have Eastlake inspired surrounds: narrow trim with shallow grooves and corner rosettes. The main block front entry and porch both were altered in the While the 1-bay, flat-roofed Greek Revi-1930 remodeling. val porch retains square posts with molded capitals and bases and simple entablature, the latter's cornice with wide beaded-board soffit, the wrought iron roof railing, and the poured-concrete deck incised in a diamond pattern date to 1930, as do the entry's transom, corner lights, floor-length sidelights, six-panel door, and architrave surround matching the upper front windows, from the 1930 remodeling includes copper gutters and down spouts and the two Colonial Revival sun porches (one on the main block's east side & the other on the wing front) which have box cornices, square post with molded capital and bases, and multi-pane glazing. The gabled appendage over the main block sun porch dates to the 1950s.

The interior exhibits a mix of early 19th and 20th-century fabric. The three brick second-story fireplaces, typical of the early 19th century, have angled jambs and flat lintels of splayed stretchers supported by an iron strip. Their delicately molded mantels reveal Federal influences (such as reeded pilasters and frieze lozenges) as do the arch supported by reeded pilasters which divides the hall in two and the simply detailed open staircase with tapered newel posts, square spindles, and oval railing. early features include molded door and window trim and several six-panel doors. Distinctive features dating to the 1930s remodeling include the "Goodyear Rubber Tile" flooring which resembles random-width floor boards, three vaguely Art Deco cast stone or plaster mantels on the first story, and several electric heaters inserted in the walls which were recycled from abandoned trolley cars.

Outbuildings: (1) frame, 1-bay, gable-roofed garage (c. 1905-1914) with novelty siding, overhanging eaves, 4-light gable window, modern garage door, small rear shed appendage, and batten-doored side entry; (2) small frame chicken coop (early 20th) with asymmetrical gable roof, vertical siding, overhanging eaves, and multi-pane windows; (3) frame, 1-story, 2-bay doll house (1930s, originally located by the tailrace, moved and converted into a pool house) with clapboard siding, bracketed overhanging eaves,

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gable dormer with similar eaves, louvered cupola, and multi-pane windows; (3) in-ground swimming pool (c. 1980s) with metal picket fence (NC); (4) round cobblestone fountain basin (c. 1930) in the front yard; and (5) cobblestone retaining wall (c. 1930) along the front and east side of the property. A Mr. Banghart was the mason for the cobblestone work.

Contributing

B68/L12

Neg.#

Eckel's <u>Power House</u> Brick (Flemish bond), 1 1/2-story, gable-roofed <u>building</u> with frame gables and steel floor beams; built on the ashlar stone foundation of a large, brick, gambrel-roofed mill, built in about 1865 and destroyed by fire in 1929.

Style: none

Date: 1930 foundation c. 1865

The foundation is largely above grade on the south or downstream side and incorporates two raceway outlet arches with brick voussoirs and several blocked window openings. On the 1st-story above, the brick wall is pierced by eight large metal-framed, multi-pane windows with surrounds of dark glazed stretchers. On the other elevations similar window openings were infilled with brick a few years ago. A large vehicular entry in the west gable-end was similarly infilled after the insertion of a smaller overhead garage door. The gable above has central entry with double glass and panel doors surmounted by a hoist bar and flanked by 6/6 sash windows; the east gable has a double 9/9 sash central window flanked by 6/6 sash windows. Other features include wood shingled gables, box cornice with returns that is carried on the raking eaves, an entry at the west end of the north wall with small enclosed shed-roofed entry porch.

A bronze plaque set in the northwest corner is inscribed "Built 1790 John Sherred, Sold 1833 William Warne, Remodeled 1865 J. V. Mattison, Esq., Sold 1893 William Larrison, Sold 1921 Joseph Kreidel, Burned 1929, Rebuilt 1930 Earle Eckel."

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Outbuildings: (1) cobblestone retaining wall (c. 1930) extending from the SW corner of the building and terminating in a gateway pedestal with cast stone pelican (broken bill); (2) round cobblestone planter (c. 1930) with flag pole: (3) wide tailrace (19th century/reworked 1929/30) channeled by rubble-stone walls with concrete capping and spanned by an iron shaft which held an ornamental undershot water wheel; (4) long, narrow causeway/mill pond dam (rebuilt 1929/30), which carries Mill Pond Road over the short headrace and Pohatcong Creek, with one wide outlet to the creek, another to the headrace, and three small overflow outlets. The downstream causeway wall is mostly rubblework with concrete capping; the upstream wall and outlets are poured concrete. The main outlet's dam or spill wall features four buttresses, articulating four bays with large iron pipe drains at the bottom of the two end bays, and a reinforced concrete deck carries the road over the stream channel. Similar decks carries the road over the head race and two of the smaller reinforced concrete outlet culverts; the third and easternmost small outlet is severed by a pipe; (5) mill pond, now largely silted up, with a secondary inlet channel along Route 57 (dug in early 1930s) from Pohatcong Creek; (6) poured concrete and cobblestone, 1-story, gable-roofed boat house (early 1930s) with shingle-clad gables, gable-end boat entry, side entry, iron shaft along ridge with pulley which allowed the boat to be raised out of the water, and an overflow outlet at the west end; the roof shingles are gone exposing the frame.

Contributing

B68/L12.02 B67/66

Neg.#

5

Gable-roofed, 2-story, <u>dwelling</u> consisting of a 4-bay, single-pile main block (brick 2-bay unit with frame 2-bay east extension) with west gable end chimney (brick stack) and exterior east gable-end furnace chimney and of a frame rear ell with gable-end chimney (brick stack) and 1-story shed-roofed east appendage.

Style: none

It has clapboard siding, box cornice with returns that is carried on the raking eaves, 1/1 (replacement) sash win-

Date: c. 1865

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dows with timber lintels on the brick section, and paired inner-bay entries with modern doors. A Victorian porch with turned posts and spandrel brackets was removed in recent years.

Outbuildings: (1) Frame, 1-story, wagon shed/garage (late 19th/early 20th) with embanked stone foundation, novelty siding, boxed overhanging eaves, and gable-end entry with modern garage door; and (2) short cobblestone wall extending from the southwest corner of the garage and terminating in a pedestal with cast stone pelican.

Contributing

B67/L75

Neg.#

Frame, 1-story, gable-roofed, dwelling with garage.

Style: none

Date: 1950s

It has aluminum siding and brick facing on part of the front.

Non-Contributing B67/L74

Neg.#

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Pleasant Valley possesses significance in the areas of transportation, engineering, and architecture under criteria B and C because of its association with Earle S. Eckel, a local entrepreneur with pioneering business interests in automobiles, fuel oil, and aviation who made his home there in the 1930s. Pleasant Valley transportation significance stems from the autogiro airfield that he established on the property in the early 1930s (two of whose hangars survive), which probably was the first airport in the United States built exclusively for autogiros, and his commercial aviation pursuits which included advertising promotional tours for the Tidewater Oil Company. The district has engineering significance due to the hydroelectric generating plant built in 1929-30 by Eckel who designed the small facility to provide power for his own domestic consumption (which included the first local use of electric heat) utilizing the remains of a 19th-century grist mill and its hydrosystem. In addition to Eckel's power house and autogiro hangars, Pleasant Valley's architectural significance results from several 19th-century dwellings whose construction and detailing are representative of the rural region's vernacular architecture in One of these houses, the 19th century mill owner's residence which Eckel occupied, is also notable for the Colonial Revival remodeling and related improvements undertaken by him c. 1930.

While Pleasant Valley's resources date to the 19th and 20th centuries, the origins of the settlement can be traced to the 18th Its site forms part of property acquired by Thomas Van Horn before 1774, probably part of the large tract of land in the Pohatcong Valley which he purchased from John Moore in 1754 and upon which he settled (the Van Horn homestead is located about a half mile northeast of the district). Deed references indicate that Thomas Van Horn owned a mill on the Pohatcong Creek, and a 1772 road return establishes its location on the site of the Plea-In 1778, several years after Van Horn's intessant Valley mill. tate death (estate administrators were appointed in 1774), his son and heir-at-law Cornelius conveyed a 144-acre tract which evidently encompassed the mill seat to David Johnstone (or Johnson). A 1778 road return, however, makes reference to the "road to Mr. Court Johnson's mill, "suggesting that Court Johnstone (David's brother) was the mill's proprietor at that time. Court Johnstone inherited a 1 1/2-acre lot located "a little below Thomas Van Horn's mill" in 1777 from his father who had purchased it in 1775 and which had been originally subdivided from the Moore tract in 1765. Johnstone subsequently acquired his brother's 1 1/2-acre lot, another small lot near "Van Horn's mill," and a nearby 12-acre parcel,

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which, together with the 144-acre tract, he sold to John Sherred in 1791.

Although a hamlet may have coalesced at Pleasant Valley as early as the 1770s, as the existence of small lots near the mill suggests, documentary sources clearly establish that one had developed by the early 1800s through the enterprise of John Sherred (1738-1810), who previous to his 1791 purchase of the Johnstone property was a tenant on the Barker tract in nearby Greenwich Township, and his son Samuel (1765-1832), who acquired a one-acre portion of his father's new property in 1793 and evidently was living there by 1794.2 According to the 1881 county history, John Sherred "engaged in business pretty extensively for those times, carrying on a large farm, a store, and grist and saw mills," and the 1804 licensing petition for a nearby tavern makes reference to "John Sherred's mill and Samuel Sherred's store." 3 The store may have been newly established, since the petition of the previous year for the tavern mentions only the mill. The exact location of the store is unknown; it may have stood on the new turnpike road (opened in 1806 on the course of present day Route 57) at the Mill Pond Road corner, where a store is depicted on the 1860 county map. 4

John Sherred died in 1810, and in the following year his executors sold "his lands, mills, etc. in Mansfield," which comprised a 243-acre property, together with a 115-acre wood lot on nearby Scotts Mountain to his son Samuel for 4,000 pounds, thus complying with the directive of his will to fulfill the verbal agreement between father and son for the conveyance. Samuel Sherred remained on the homestead and carried on its enterprises. He and his wife, Ann Maxwell (daughter of Revolutionary War officer Captain John Maxwell and sister of Congressman George C. Maxwell), had two sons and eight daughters, several of whom married and settled in the vicinity. Upon the marriage of the elder son, John Maxwell, in 1818, Samuel provided him with a house and an office for his law practice. John Maxwell Sherred resided at Pleasant Valley until 1826 when, having been appointed as the first Surrogate of newly created Warren County, he moved to Belvidere.

Samuel Sherred was succeeded at Pleasant Valley by his daughter Susan and her husband William M. Warne who purchased the property from her father's other heirs for \$12,150 in 1833. William Warne (1800-69), who held public office as a county judge and township tax assessor, operated the farm and the mill which he is said

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to have rebuilt. He also is credited with erecting, in 1834, the present main house, a substantial frame dwelling with side-hall-plan main block and Federal/Greek Revival detailing which not only reflects his evident prosperity but illustrates the architecture of the region's elite in that era. Overshadowed by the growing nearby village of Washington which was more favorably located along the Morris Canal at the intersection of two turnpike roads, Pleasant Valley remained a small settlement during the Warnes' tenure. According to Gordon's 1834 Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey it was

a small hamlet in the valley, at which there is a grist mill, and several dwellings, upon the turnpike road to Easton. 9

That no growth occurred later in the 19th century is attested to by both the 1860 county map and the 1874 county atlas. 10 Although the 1860 map depicts a store on the turnpike corner, it does not appear in the 1874 atlas and presumably was abandoned by that time. The one notable improvement during the period was the reconstruction of the grist mill c. 1865 by Dr. J. V. Mattison, a local physician and businessman who purchased the 192-acre property from William Warne's son Stephen for \$28,875 in that year. 11 The rebuilt mill was a large, 4-story, gambrel-roofed, brick structure. While only the stone foundation of the mill survives today, the small brick tenant house standing across the road evidently dates to about the same time and remains a representative example of the area's 19th-century vernacular architecture.

Dr. Mattison lost the Pleasant Valley property due to financial difficulties, and its title was conveyed in 1875 to the New York Life Insurance Company who retained ownership until 1893 when, reduced in size to 140 acres, it was sold to William Larison for \$5,000, a substantial decrease in price. Larison owned the property until 1910 when it was sold to Oscar Roe who in turn conveyed the title in 1915 to John P. Larison (William's son) who, according to the 1914 Sanborn Insurance map, was operating the mill at that time. The 1914 Sanborn map also indicates that the farm tenant house, probably constructed by William Larison or Oscar Roe, was extant. In 1921, John Larison and his wife sold the property, except for twelve acres between the mill pond and the highway, to Joseph Kriedel. The Larisons sold the latter tract to Earle S. Eckel in 1926, and in the following year Eckel purchased the mill and farm from the Kriedels, thus reuniting the property in one

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ownership. The 1927 Sanborn maps reveals no change at Pleasant Valley since 1914, except for minor changes to outbuildings at the barn complex located west of the main house. Two years later, however, the mill was destroyed by fire, and Earle Eckel began the improvements which were to transform the property into his energy self-sufficient country residence and private airfield. 3

S ADDROVE NO. IVEN-UUTS

Earle S. Eckel (1891-1978) was born and raised in Washington, New Jersey, the son of local dentist Dr. Peter Judson Eckel and his wife Sarah Spangenburg. Demonstrating a precocious interest in mechanics and electricity in combination with an entrepreneurial nature, Earl Eckel commenced his varied business career at an early His boyhood pursuits included helping the local electric company superintendent to install house wiring after school and on week ends, engaging in his own door bell installation business at age twelve, building a steam engine to run his mother's washing machine (which used the exhaust to heat the water), and after being hired to operate the projector for the community's first motion picture theater, acquiring his own projector which he took to surrounding villages to show films. On his summer vacation at age sixteen he received the contract to string telephone wire the several miles between Phillipsburg and Stewartsville, NJ and install more than a dozen telephones. After taking an electrical engineering course, he secured a job with the Edison Cement Company in 1908, and upon the closure of the Edison plant a short time later formed his own firm, the Washington Gas & Electric Installation Company, which prospered doing local residential and commercial work. 14

Earle Eckel's interests also encompassed motor vehicles. entirely rebuilt his first automobile, a single-cylinder Oldsmobile with tiller steering (which purchased jointly with his father in New York City in 1906 broke down repeatedly on the trip home) and, thereafter, opened a well-patronized repair shop in his father's In 1908 he acquired his first motorcycle and, in the following year, began motorcycle racing, winning a gold medal in 1910 in an endurance run between New York and Atlantic City. While continuing his racing activities with professional board track racing and building his own racing machine, he opened a motorcycle dealership, selling fifteen Indian motorcycles in his first year. up motorcycle racing, he used his winnings to built a large automobile service garage at the west end of Washington on the old turnpike road in 1912/13, a substantial brick structure with an upperstory apartment where he lived upon his marriage to Harriet That-

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cher in 1915. In conjunction with conducting an up-to-date repair and service operation, which included power-driven machine shop and air pumps (a small generator was used to power the machines and air condenser independently of the local electric company), curb-side gas pumps, and the area's first wrecking car, Eckel opened an auto-mobile dealership which throughout the World War I era sold a variety of makes including Ford, Overland, Cadillac, Stanley Steamer, Studebaker, and Dodge. 15

AND ACCOUNT NO. 14549-4416

In the 1920s Earle Eckel moved from automobile sales and service into the gasoline and fuel oil business. He sold his garage in 1922 and built a modern "filling station" a short distance to the west which opened on August 5th of that year, the scheduled completion date of the concrete state highway from Washington to Phillipsburg. Modeled after a station which he saw on vacation in Florida, the elaborate, classically detailed building with drivethrough bays was constructed according to his own designs and specifications. His business plan for the new operation included buying gasoline wholesale in railroad tank car lots and piping it by gravity from a railroad siding installed for that purpose to storage tanks at the station. Taking his brother Wilmot as a partner in 1924, he formed the Eckel Oil Company whose wholesale and retail operations grew over the course of the decade to include nine service stations around the region, as well as several gasoline and fuel oil bulk tanks for its own supply and the wholesale Advertising was not neglected, and a number of billboards were erected, the most notable of which was the large sign located one mile west of Washington painted with a picture of the "flagship" station and illuminated with electric light at night. Eckel brothers sold their business to the Tidewater Oil Company in 1930, realizing a handsome price that allowed them to pursue other interests. 16

One of Earle Eckel's main interests in this period was the old Larison mill and farm which he had purchased a few years earlier with the intention of making his home there. He began with the renovation of the mill's hydrosystem in 1929/30, work which included dredging and enlarging the mill pond, rebuilding the mill pond dam/causeway in reinforced concrete and stone, and digging a supplementary channel from the creek to the pond with the object of utilizing the water power to generate electricity for his domestic use (and incidentally creating a pond large enough for a motor boat). 17 A blueprint for the dam/causeway, which includes several spillways and outlets, drawn by an engineer after its completion

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noted that Earl Eckel designed all the work. 18 After the destruction of the grist mill just before Christmas in 1929, Eckel erected a brick and steel building on the old mill foundation to house his hydroelectric plant and provide garage space. He salvaged the 30 horse power turbine from the burnt mill, which was rehabilitated and connected to 20 k. v. a. generator. He found this system to be inefficient for summer, when low flow allowed the large turbine to run only several hours each day, and in 1934 he installed a small new type of turbine and generator for summer usage. Thus modified the plant (which remained in use until the 1950s) met all of Eckel's domestic electric needs, including heat for which he recycled electric heaters scrapped from abandoned trolley cars. These heaters, which, although not now in use, remain as he installed them in the walls of the house, represent the first known instance in the area of the use of electricity to heat a dwelling. 19

Eckel's reworking of Pleasant Valley's hydrosystem inspired other prominent area residents to attempt similar projects: actor Harry Bannister (husband of actress Ann Harding), who had purchased an old stone mill which he converted into a summer residence about six miles downstream on the Pohatcong near Stewartsville, sought his assistance in installing a similar power system, and John C. Willever, a Warren County native who became vice president of the Western Union Telegraph Company, built a similar dam on the Pohatcong several miles upstream to create a small lake on his farm.<sup>20</sup>

In renovating the main house at Pleasant Valley, Earl Eckel evidently sought not only to upgrade its structure and systems for modern living, but to preserve and enhance its historic character. Upon rebuilding and leveling the floors, for example, he covered them with Goodyear rubber tiles resembling random width floor boards, a rather uncommon treatment, which along with the addition of more typical features like the classically detailed sun porches and front entry transformed the house into a Colonial Revival country residence, as was done elsewhere in the area in the early 20th century by prosperous individuals like industrialist Harry M. Riddle who remodeled the old McCullough house at Asbury in 1909.21

Earl Eckel's other main interest in the 1930s was aviation which, like his other endeavors, he approached with an entrepreneurial spirit. The acquisition of a small airplane (a four-place Stinson), while on another Florida vacation in 1930 led to the establishment of Eckel Air Service at the airport in nearby Easton, Pennsylvania which, expanded to a fleet of several other small

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planes, specialized in flight instruction and charter flights. While he disposed of this business which proved unprofitable within a few years, Eckel's involvement in aviation increased. to keep an airplane at Pleasant Valley resulted in his becoming the owner of a Pitcairn autogiro. 22 Developed by the Spaniard Juan de la Cierva in the 1920s, the autogiro, unlike conventional aircraft, has top-mounted rotary blades (whose spin creates lift as the airplane is moved forward by a conventionally mounted propeller) and consequently requires only a short runway for take off and can accomplish vertical landing, features which recommended it to Eck-The autogiro attracted the attention of aircraft manufacturer Harold F. Pitcairn who acquired the American rights to the plane in Pitcairn made certain improvements, most importantly the development of a mechanical starter which decreased the size of the area needed for take off, which were widely recognized and resulted in the production of an autogiro which he hoped would "lead to the general adoption by the public of flying for utility and pleasure."23

In the vanguard of the flying public, Earl Eckel purchased a Pitcairn autogiro in the fall of 1931 and immediately built a run-way with flood and boundary lights and a small hangar in the level field just west of the barn complex at Pleasant Valley; a second hangar was built in 1933 after the acquisition of another autogiro. As probably the first airfield exclusively for autogiros in the United States, Eckel's Autogiro Port has a small, but notable place in American aviation history. 24

One of the few individuals in the United States involved with autogiros in the early 1930s, Earl Eckel received three autogiro licenses (private pilot, industrial, and transport) in 1932, and in the same year secured a contract from the Tidewater Oil Company to conduct a promotional tour of the southern states for its product This five-state tour, which included guest rides, parades, Veedol. and musical programs at each stop, was followed by another tour of New York and the New England States the next year. Eckel calculated that he carried over 4,000 guest passengers during his promotional work for Tidewater and made over 800 takeoffs and landings without accident. Other activities included student instruction, banner towing, and carrying air mail from his airfield to Newark, New Jersey during National Air Week in 1938.25 For a short time in the 1930s he also was associated with National Air Shows of Columbus, Ohio in whose exhibitions he gained renown for his mastery of autogiro flying. Difficult stunts and maneuvers in his repertoire

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included the loop, hammerhead stall, and hover descents and landings. 26

Earle Eckel received an aircraft and engine mechanics license in 1932, and thereafter did consulting work for several aircraft manufacturers and the federal government. He was employed as an aeronautical expert by the Bureau of Air Commerce and was associated with the Skinner Motor Company of Detroit in the development of an "experimental slide valve, 4-cylinder, flat, all aluminum aviation engine." Filter problems on autogiro flights to the New Jersey shore lead to his development of an air filter that would not clog with sand, and during World War II he was hired by the federal government to do research on aviation filters. 27

His government research on aviation filters, however, did not take place at Pleasant Valley, which he sold to Paul Minton in 1942, but on the small property about one mile to the west where he subsequently moved and erected a small concrete block building for the purpose. Paul Minton was an engineer and used the upper story of the power house for the manufacture of pipe filters patented by him. The hydroelectric plant remained in operation until the 1950s when after Minton's death his executors sold the equipment for Eckel continued to keep his autogiros at Pleasant Valley for some time, but the airfield was eventually abandoned and plowed over for agricultural purposes. Helicopters supplanted autogiros in the 1940s, and after World War II Eckel focused on his old interest in steam engines (over the years he had owned and/or operated a variety of steam equipment and vehicles) and established a machine shop and small museum at his new residence. restored and rebuilt several steam engines, automobiles, and a fire A founder of the American Antique Automobile Club and the Steamer Automobile Club, he was well known in antique automobile circles and participated in parades and antique automobile exhibitions for many years before his death in 1978.28

While the airfield has been plowed over and the mill pond silted up, Pleasant Valley remains today much as it was in the 1930s under the ownership of Earle Eckel. The barn complex, however, was demolished some years ago, and the open fields to the west are currently slated for high density residential development which threaten one of the two surviving hangers. Aware of this threat and recognizing Pleasant Valley's unique and significant place in the community's history, township officials have sponsored this nomination for the National Register of Historic Places.

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#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Sussex County Deeds, Book B, page 215; Sussex County Road Returns, Book A, pp. 70 and 111; William A. Whitehead et al. (eds.). Archives of the State of New Jersey: Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Post Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey. First Series, Various Places: State of New Jersey, 1880-1949, Vol. XXXIV, page 545.
- <sup>2</sup> Richard P. McCormick, "The West Jersey Estate of Sir Robert Barker." <u>Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society</u>. LXIV (July, 1946), p. 35; Sussex County Deeds, Book B, page 221.
- <sup>3</sup> James P. Snell (ed.), <u>History of Warren and Sussex Counties</u>, <u>New Jersey</u>. Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1881, pp. 715; New Jersey Tavern Licences, Sussex County, Joseph Wilson, 1803.
- <sup>4</sup> New Jersey Tavern Licences, Sussex County, Joseph Wilson, 1804; H. F. Walling, <u>Map of Warren County</u>, <u>New Jersey</u>. New York: Smith, Gallup & Co., 1860.
- <sup>5</sup> Sussex County Deeds, Book Z, page 162; Warren County Deeds, Book 3, page 150.
  - 6 Snell, pp. 492 & 715.
- <sup>7</sup> Warren County Deeds, Book 10, page 490; Snell, page 715; Rev. George Warne Labaw, A Genealogy of the Warne Family in America. New York: Frank Alleben Genealogical Company, 1911, page 198.
- <sup>8</sup> A brass plaque mounted in the front entry of the house, presumably by Earle Eckel c. 1930, is inscribed "built by William Warne, 1834."
- Thomas F. Gordon, <u>A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey</u>, Trenton, Daniel Fenton, 1834, page 218.
- Warren, New Jersey, New York, F. W. Beers, County Atlas of Warren, New Jersey, New York, F. W. Beers & Co., 1873, p. 62.
- 11 Warren County Deeds, Book 64, page 443; "Fire Destroys Larison Mill." The Washington Star. December 29, 1929.

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- 12 Warren County Deeds, Book 95, page 428; Book 151, page 611, Book 190, page 279, Book 203, page 419, Book 222, page 483, Book 241, page 326, and Book 247, page 523, Sanborn Insurance Map Company. Maps of Washington, New Jersey. New York: Sanborn Insurance Map Company, 1914 and 1927.
- <sup>13</sup> "Fire Destroys Larison Mill." <u>The Washington Star.</u> December 29, 1929.
- <sup>14</sup> Barry D. Mueller, "Earle S. Eckel." <u>Washington Messenger</u>. Vol. VI, No. VII (July, 1987); "Biography of Earle S. Eckel, Washington, N.J." (undated typescript of c. 1938). Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington, NJ, chapters I & II.
- 15 Ibid., and "Biography of Earle S. Eckel...," chapters III, IV & V.
- 16 Ibid., and "Biography of Earle S. Eckel...," chapters VI & VII.
- 17 Revell Eckel, "The Grist Mill, Home, and Mill Pond at Pleasant Valley, Washington Township." Washington Messenger. Vol. VI, No. XII (December, 1987).
- 18 Maurice Radus, P. E., "Details of Construction, Vicinity of Mill One Mile West of Washington, N. J., Owner Earle Eckel." March, 1930. Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington, NJ.
- <sup>19</sup> Revell Eckel, "The Grist Mill...;" "Biography of Earle S. Eckel...", chapter IX.
  - 20 Ibid.
  - 21 Ibid.
  - 22 "Biography of Earle S. Eckel...," chapters X and XI.
- <sup>23</sup> Juan De La Cierva and Don Rose, <u>Wings of Tomorrow</u> <u>The</u> Story of the Autogiro. Brewer, Warren & Putnam, 1931, pp. 104-144.
- 24 "Biography of Earle S. Eckel...," chapters X and XI; "Eckel's Autogiro Port." (undated sketch site plan drawn on "Eckel's Air Service" letterhead). Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington,

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NJ; Interview with William Rhodie, NJ aviation historian, Wayne, NJ, April 14, 1993.

- <sup>25</sup> "Biography of Earle S. Eckel...," chapters X and XI; Mueller, "Earle S. Eckel;" Letter from Earle S. Eckel to Robert R. Longo, "My Autogiro Activities," January 20, 1955. Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington, NJ; Typescript list of Earle S. Eckel's pilot licences (no date), Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington, NJ.
- <sup>26</sup> Eckel/Longo letter; Bill Sweet, <u>They Call Me Mr. Airshow,</u> Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Ken Cook Transnational, 1972, page 63.
- <sup>27</sup> Typescript list of Earle S. Eckel's pilot licences (no date), Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington, NJ; "Biography of Earle S. Eckel...," chapters XII, XIII and XIV; Mueller, "Earle S. Eckel;" and Interview with Donald Eckel, grandson of Earl Eckel, February, 1993.
- <sup>28</sup> Warren County Deeds, Book 301, page 475; Letter form Jean Martin Fiore to Barry D. Mueller, January 29, 1988; "Earle S. Eckel;" and Interview with Donald Eckel, grandson of Earl Eckel, February, 1993.

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- Sussex County Court House, Newton, NJ.
  Sussex County Deed Books
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  Warren County Deed Books

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- "Eckel's Autogiro Port." (undated sketch site plan drawn on "Eckel's Air Service" letterhead). Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington, NJ.
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  January 20, 1955. Collection of Donald Eckel, Washington, NJ.
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#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Pleasant Valley Historic District is delineated on the attached map entitled "Pleasant Valley Historic District Site Location and Boundary Map", and is verbally described and justified in the following paragraphs. The site and boundary map is an assemblage of the following municipal tax maps: Sheets 25 and 38, Washington Township, Warren County, New Jersey, prepared by American Air Surveys, Inc. in association with Edward B. Van Nolte, L. S. dated September, 1961 and last updated in 1988.

Beginning in Washington Township at the northeast corner of block 67, lot 65, which point is on the south side of State Route 57 and the west bank of Pohatcong Creek, the district boundary runs west along the south side of Route 57 to the northwest corner of block 67, lot 67 (also the northeast corner of block 67, lot 69). It next runs south and west along the west and south sides of lot 67 (also the east and south sides of block 67, lots 69, 70, 71, 72 & 73) to the southwest corner of lot 67 and the southeast corner of lot 73. It proceeds west along the south side of lot 73 to that lot's southwest corner and Mill Pond Road and, crossing the road in a strait line to the southeast corner of block 68, lot 14, continues east and north along the south and west sides of lot 14 to that lot's northwest corner in the south line of block 68, lot 13. The boundary then runs west along the south side of lot 13 to that lot's southwest corner.

From that point the district boundary cuts south across lot block 68, lot 12 along at straight line continuing the west line of block 68, lot 13 to the middle of Pohatcong Creek. Turning southeast it continues across lot 12 in a straight line to the southwest corner of block 68, lot 16. It proceeds northeast and east along the south sides of lots 16 and 12.02 of block 68 to the southeast corner of the latter lot and then cuts northeast across lot 12, block 68 to the northeast corner of that lot (also the northwest corner of block 68, lot 12.02) and Mill Pond Road. It then runs east along the south side of Mill Pond Road to a point opposite the southwest corner of block 67, lot 62 (also a southwest corner of block 67, lot 65) and crosses the road along a straight line which is at a right angle to the segment of the south side of lot 65 east of the road. It proceeds east along the south side of lot 65 to that lot's southeast corner and turning north continues north along that lot's east side to the place of beginning.

MPS Form 10-900-a

## United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Pleasant Valley Historic District were delineated to include to the greatest extent possible the architectural and historical resources of the village, with not only the fewest non-contributing buildings but also with sufficient amounts of visually and historically critical open space.

On the north side of the district, Route 57 forms an obvious physical boundary. Modern commercial development fronts the north side of the highway, and the property on its south side is open agricultural and meadow land sloping down to the creek and mill pond (critical to the rural character of the district's setting), except to the west where modern residential development clusters at the Mill Pond Road intersection which the boundary jogs southward to exclude. On the west side of the district, the boundary follows a line of convenience across open agricultural land drawn to include the two autogiro hangers and provide a buffer from the high density residential development slated for the property. south and east sides of the district the boundary was delineated to include the dam/causeway which stretches eastward along Mill Pond Road and other elements of the hydrosystem, but exclude open land currently undergoing residential development.

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UTM Coordinates	(Zone = 18)	
	Easting	Northing
A	1 6 499860	4511080
В	18 499920	4510920
С	14 499760	4510700
D	/ <b>(</b> 499520	4510480
E	16 499420	4510500
F	<i>l</i>	4510720
G	/ 6 499300	4510760
H	14 499360	4510700
I	14 499440	4510740
J	(5 499460	4510880

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#### Photographic Identification:

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

Name: Pleasant Valley Historic District

Location: Washington Township, Warren County, NJ

Photographer: Marge Kline Date of photographs: April 1993

Negative repository: Washington Township Historic Preservation

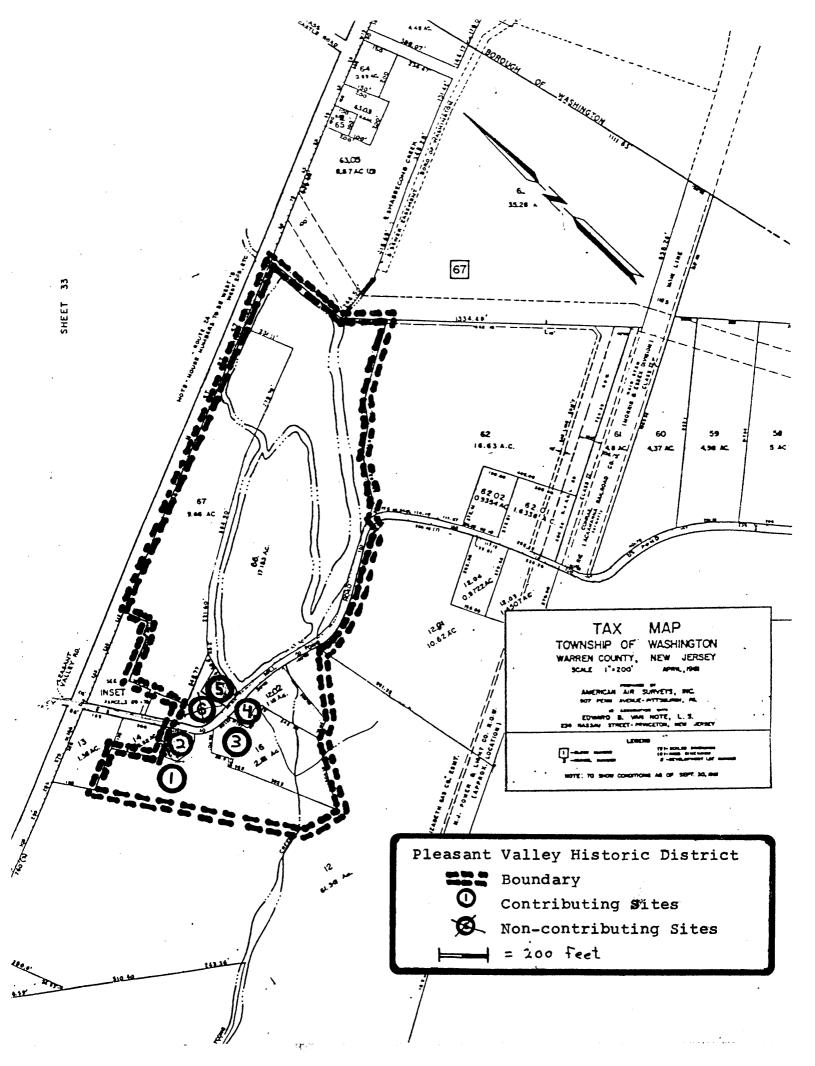
Commission

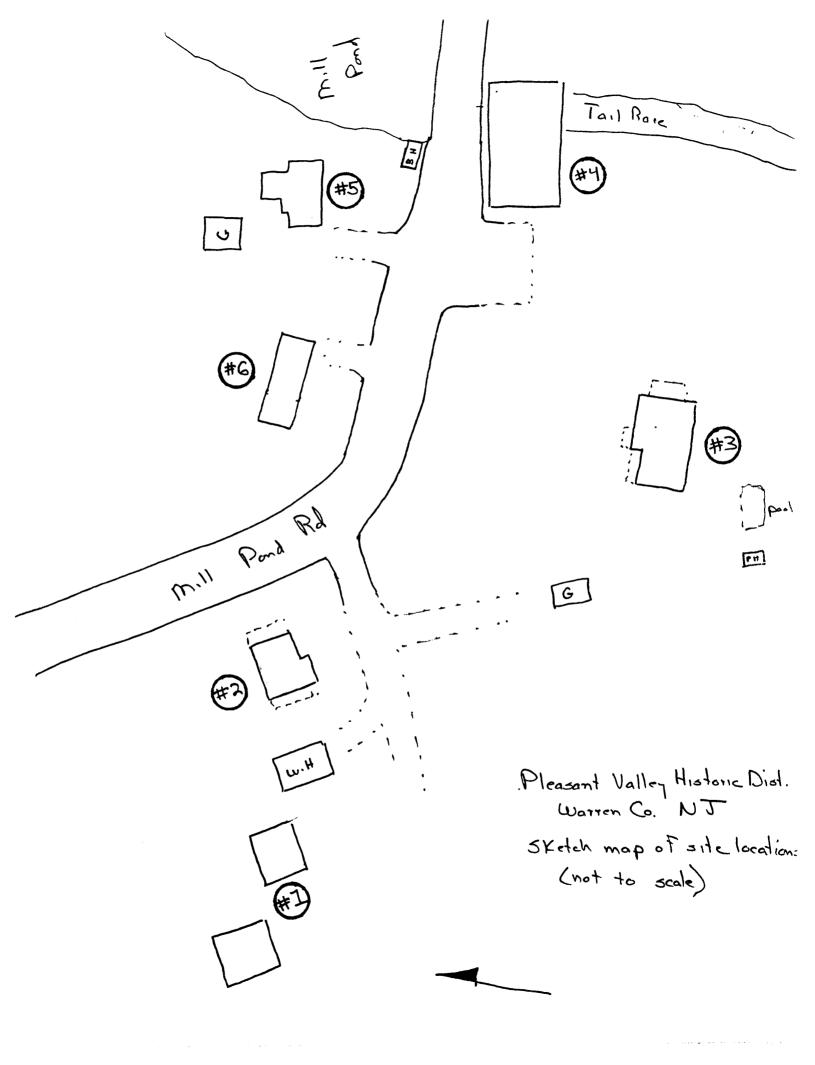
Washington Township Municipal Building

Washington, NJ 07882

#### Photograph direction of view:

```
Site #3, southeast view
#1
#2
     Site #3,
#3
     Site #3, cornice detail, southwest view
#4
     Site #3, electric heater detail (window is top of photograph)
     Site #3, wall, southeast view
#5
     Site #3, fountain, northeast view
#6
#7
     Site #3, garage, northwest view
#8
     Site #2, northwest view
#9
     Site #2,
     Site #1,
                  **
#10
     Site #6, northeast view
#11
#12
    Site #5,
#13
     Site #5, garage/driveway, north view
#14
    Site #4, boat house, northeast view
#15 Site #4, southeast view
#16
    Site #s 5, 2, & 6, west view
#17
     Site #5, raceway outlet, north view
#18
     Site #5, tailrace, southwest view
     Site #5, northwest view
#19
#20
     Site #5, mill pond dam, main outlet, northeast view
     Site #5, mill pond, northeast view
#21
#22 Site #5, mill pond dam, outlet, northeast view
```





rhone o/c

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Flying Instructions

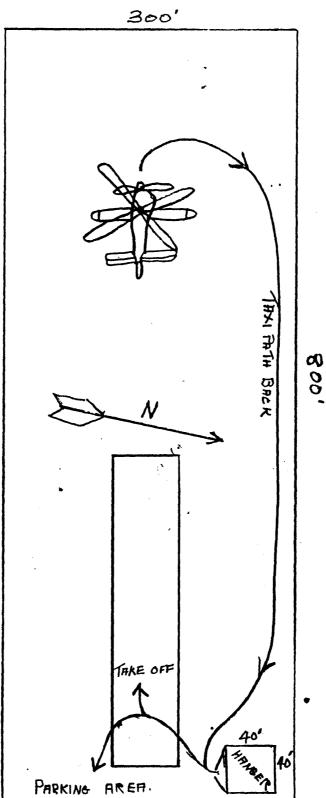
MYELDIN LACIRIR

• ECKEL'S AIR SERVICE, Inc. WASHINGTON, N. J., R.F.D. No. 1

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