

PH0356891

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 17 1976

DATE ENTERED DEC 13 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

** South Branch Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Sw of Raritan

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION ---
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN Hillsborough Township

VICINITY OF 13th Congressional District

STATE New Jersey

CODE 34

COUNTY CODE Somerset 035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

County Office Building

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Somerville

New Jersey 34

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1960-64

--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Sites Section/ Dept. of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Box 1420 Trenton

New Jersey code 34

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

John Barber and Henry Howe's Historical Collection of the State of New Jersey, written in 1844, describes the Township of Hillsborough as being "about 12m. long, 5m. wide, and is bounded N. by Raritan River, separating it from Bridgewater, S. by Montgomery, E. by Millstone River, dividing it from Franklin, and W. by Amwell, Hunterdon County". It goes on to state; "Weston, Flaggtown, Blackwells, South Branch, and New Shannack, contain respectively a few buildings....."

Today, the Village of South Branch looks little different than it did in the 19th Century - the majority of the structures dating from the 4th quarter of the 18th Century and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of the 19th Century.

Distinctive Qualities and General Description of District During Period of Significance

The village of South Branch looks little different today than it appeared in the last quarter of the 1800's.

In the 1870's South Branch, previously known by the name of Branchville, contained fifteen to twenty dwellings, a large store and a Reformed Dutch church. Spanning the South Branch River at that time was a wooden covered bridge, erected in 1830. It was removed in 1929 and replaced with the present concrete span.

With the few exceptions where there has been contemporary siding placed on houses, the village of South Branch retains the rural atmosphere it had well over a century ago.

With the development of commerce in the area & establishment of the various stage lines for travel between New York and Lambertville the village of South Branch played an important role as one of the centers of trade.

General Description of Natural and Man-Made Elements in District

The historic district of South Branch encompasses approximately 30 acres and twenty-five structures fall within its boundaries. This constitutes slightly ¹²⁵more than one structure per acre for density.

The present land use to be found within the district is single-family residential, commercial, institutional and open space.

Some of the prominent geographical features to be found within the South Branch district are: the South Branch of the Raritan River that forms the western boundary of the village; the moderate rise to the land in southeast end of the community; a modest bluff that overlooks the South Branch of the Raritan.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The village of South Branch in Hillsborough Township, Somerset County is representative of the numerous small river villages which dotted New Jersey's landscape in the 19th century. With its origins in the 18th century, South Branch is particularly important because of the few 20th century intrusions permeating its present-day environment. Despite the modern traffic which travels through the village, South Branch continues to provide an excellent insight into 19th century life.

Architecture

There are four structures in South Branch Historic District which warrant architectural recognition. Coincidentally, these 4 buildings each represent a different style and, consequently, period-colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate Victorian. As a group they span a period of some 125 years of building construction and represent some of the best extant efforts of the regions craftsmen.

The colonial structure is characteristic of the mid-18th century stone farmhouses built in New Jersey. Although currently covered with perma-stone this 1 1/2 story dwelling still clearly reflects its 18th century origins and its relatively isolated location and current landscaping continues to project an agricultural ambiance. The house is one of the few stone 18th century structures in the township as most dwellings appear to have been frame.

The rural character of New Jersey's landscape in the 18th century, Federal style architecture being of an urban influence, severely limits the number of Federal structures to be found in the state. Nonetheless, the Peter D. Vroom House, an imposing 2 1/2 story 5 bay Flemish bond brick edifice is clearly of the Federal style although not of the elegance which might be found in the major cities of the Northeast, but is a worthy example of New Jersey Federal with the state's characteristic craftsmanship and traditions. Of particular note is the Flemish bond brickwork, the double row belt coursing, the eaves, the 12/12 and 12/8 windows, and the center entrance with a semi-circular arched transom with a Dutch double door.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey. James P. Snell.
Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1881 (pp. 780,786).

Somerset County, New Jersey: 1688-1930. M. Mustin. Somerset County
Board of Chosen Freeholders, 1930 (p.28-photo of South Branch Bridge).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 30 acres

UTM REFERENCES

DA	18	525940	4488540	58	18	5261000	4487780
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
OC	18	5257200	4487550	BD	18	5255200	4487700
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on River Road 1100 feet S of the River Road-Orchard Avenue intersection, proceed NW to the South Branch River. Thence, proceed N along the River to the Studdiford Drive Bridge. Thence, proceed N another 1300 feet. Thence, proceed ESE 500 feet. Thence, proceed SSW to River Road. Thence proceed along River Road to a point 500 feet N of the intersection of River Road and Studdiford Drive. Thence, proceed ESE 500 feet. Thence, proceed SSW parallel to River Road 1300 feet (Con

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Wayne T. McCabe, Planner & Consultant

ORGANIZATION

(revisions by Terry Karschner, Historic Sites,
Dept. of Environmental Protection)

DATE

January, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 478

TELEPHONE

(609) 292-2023

CITY OR TOWN

Newton

STATE

New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

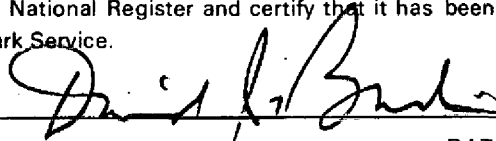
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



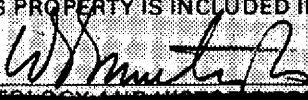
TITLE David J. Bardin

DATE July 6, 1976

Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

12/12/77

DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:



DATE

12-9-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Hillsborough Twp.
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Numerically, there are 25 major structures in the South Branch Historic District as delineated. This total does not account for numerous outbuildings. These smaller structures usually are dependencies to the residences and were incorporated as one tabulation. Of the major dwellings 3 are 18th century, 1 is 1st quarter 19th century, 8 are second quarter 19th century, 4 are 3rd quarter 19th century, 5 are last quarter 19 century, 3 are early 20th century, and there is one modern residence.

All buildings within the district are in a good to excellent state of repair. The major structures in the district are listed as follows:

River Road

1. P.J. Quick Farm. Block 147, Lot 9. circa 1835, 1860. This farmhouse was built in two sections. The main unit, circa 1835, is a 2 1/2 story frame building currently covered with asbestos shingles, rectangular in form, the front facade having four bays. The windows are 6/6 sash. The roof is gable with returns, scrolled eave brackets, and an intersecting center gable. Paired gable end chimneys. The second section, circa 1860, is appended to the gable end facade and is two bays by three bays with windows of 6/6 sash. This unit is also frame and similarly with asbestos shingles. The roof is gable with end returns and small brackets under the eaves. There is a center brick chimney. This section has a one story flat-roofed 20th century wing encompassing all three bays of the south facade. Numerous functional structures are on the property-barns, sheds, a modern silo, and an early 20th century windmill. (see photo M.)
2. Farmland of #1
3. Farmland of #1
4. Greek Revival Temple Farm House. Block 147, Lot 3. Second quarter 19th century. This house is a 2 1/2 story frame structure with four simple fluted Doric columns fronting the rectangular base. The front facade of this unit is 3 bays with a side hall entrance. The windows are 6/6 sash. The doorway has a rectangular transom light and narrow sidelights. The roof is a low pitched gable. On each side

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of this columned basic unit is a square frame appendage with windows of 6/6 sash and a nearly flat roof. Unfortunately, in recent years this building has had aluminum siding applied with little regard for original details or aesthetic integrity. (see photo I.)

5. House. Block 147, Lot 2. 3rd quarter 19th century. This structure is a 2 1/2 story rectangular frame dwelling covered with aluminum siding. The front facade has 3 bays and a side double-door entrance. The doorway has a round arch. The windows are 4/4 sash. The roof of the house is gable with an overhang and a return. There is an intersecting center gable. Surrounding the front and north facades is a one story late 19th-early 20th century porch. Rear additions. There is a late 19th century barn in the rear of the property. (see photo I.)
6. Munro House. Block 147, Lot 1. Circa 1870. At the corner of River Road and Orchard Drive, this house is clearly the most elegant in the district. The building is Italianate in style. Rectangular in its general form, the 3 bay by 2 bay formal structure is 3 stories topped with a square cupola. The roof with overhanging eaves is flat, but has barrel vaulted central sections on all facades. The cupola also repeats this characteristic. Ornate paired brackets along the main roof and cupola overhangs enhance the superior craftsmanship of this house. The front facade windows are double width extending from floor to ceiling. The central formal entrance has double doors. This is repeated on the second floor by double width windows and an ornate flat cornice capping the central bay. The flanking bays of the second floor, however, are narrower and have hooded arch cornices. A one story porch, original to the house, surrounds the front and north side facades. The porch roof is flat with an overhang which is bracketted at the eaves. The slender columns supporting the porch terminate in scrolls. The end facades of the building have two brick chimneys while the foundation is also brick. The entire structure is in excellent condition. (see photo I.)
7. House. Block 145, Lot 45. Circa 1790, 1840, 1900. This dwelling is a 2 1/2 story frame and clapboard rectangular structure with multiple additions.

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8. Parking area and open space for church.

9. South Branch Dutch Reformed Church. Block 145, Lot 13.
1850. This Greek Revival style church is a one story rec-
tangular frame structure with balcony and tower. The front
facade has a pent roof above a wide frieze accentuated by
a single dentil strip. The central recessed entrance has
two fluted Ionic columns in antis flanked on each side by
two pilasters. The side facades have four bays. The windows
of these sides are 20/20/20 triple-hung sash with louvered
shutters. The tower of the church has Italianate character-
istics, but in domestic architecture it was not uncommon
to have contrasting styles, particularly in transitional
periods. The spire was added in 1967. During the first
quarter of the 20th century, in the rear of the church a
large wing was added to provide additional facilities for
the congregation. (see photo D.)

10. Bowman House. Block 145, Lot 11. Circa 1840, addition
circa 1865. This 2 1/2 story frame and clapboard rectangu-
lar dwelling has a gable end front facade. This facade
has 3 bays and a side entrance. The doorway has Greek
Revival transom and sidelights. The windows are all 6/6
sash. A one story 3 bay flat-roofed porch, possibly 19th
century, protects the front facade. The roof is gable with
a slight overhang and return. A brick chimney projects
from the peak of the roof at the rear of the house. To the
rear facade is appended a one story wing, circa 1865. The
independent barn in the rear of the property was probably
erected sometime between 1860 and 1870.

11. House. Block 145, Lot 10. Modern 1 1/2 story, 3 bay dwell-
ing.

12. General Store and Post Office. Early 20th century 2 story
commercial building. While the date of this structure,
covered with aluminum siding, is not compatible with other
structures in the district, it is characteristic of the
general stores which became the cultural center of small
villages in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries before
the automobile.

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13. Lipka House. Block 145, Lot 8. Circa 1875. This 2 story frame residence has a mansard roof. Its form is a simple square clapboard unit with a 3 bay front facade. The windows are 2/2 sash. The mansard roof is shingles with modern rustic shakes. The eaves are bracketted. Projecting out over the first floor of the front and north facades is a flat-roofed ornamented porch. The slender roof support posts of the porch are enhanced by sawn scroll brackets. In addition to the rear was built circa 1905. (see photo F.)
14. House. Block 147, Lot 7. First quarter 19th century. This 2 1/2 story frame rectangular dwelling has 5 bays and a center entrance. The windows are all 6/6 sash with a simple cornice and louvered shutters. The doorway has domestic Greek Revival moldings. A one story flat-roofed wooden porch projects out over the center 3 bays. On the north gable end facade is a one story leanto shed. The south gable end has a brick chimney at the roof peak. The roof is gable with a slight overhang and return. There is a simple frieze beneath the eaves. The entire structure is covered with modern shake shingles, but the interior walls have brick nogging. (see photo G.)
15. House. Block 145, Lot 6. Early 20th century. This small dwelling is 2 bays by 2 bays and has a gable end front facade facing the road. The front facade also has a small porch. The foundation is pre-fabricated stone. (see photo G.)
16. Van Hoesen House. Block 145, Lot 5. Circa 1845, additions circa 1870. This 2 1/2 story frame and clapboard dwelling has a 3 bay front with a central double door entranceway. The windows are 2/2 sash protected by modern storm windows. The roof is gable with a bracketted overhang, an end return, and an intersecting central gable. Beneath the eave is a dentil molding completely surrounding the structure. Each gable end has a brick chimney at the roof peak. The south end chimney, however, has been sheared off so that only a small portion protruds while the north chimney has a corbelled top. (see photo H.)

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17. S. Wever House. Mid-18th century. This 1 1/2 story stone farmhouse is the oldest structure in South Branch. Currently covered completely with perma-stone (including the chimney and foundation) the mid-18th century form of this square structure is unmistakable. A small one story wing, possibly also 18th century, is attached to the rear gable end. (see photo K.)
18. House. Block 41, Lot 1. Circa 1840. This 2 1/2 story frame house currently has asbestos shingles. The first floor has two central entrances and one window on each side of the two doors. The windows are all 6/6 sash, most with louvered shutters. The double entrance suggests that the house was at one time a duplex. The roof, which is gable with a return has an intersecting central gable. The foundation is stone. A modern porch projects out over the two doors. Each gable end facade has a wing. In the rear of the property is an early 20th century milk-house and what may have been a 19th century wash house. (see photo C.)
19. House. Block 14, Lot 2. 2nd quarter 19th century. This is a simple 2 1/2 story frame dwelling unit 3 bays long. The windows are 2/2 Victorian sash with louvered shutters. The roof is gable with returns and has a corbelled top brick chimney at the peak on the north end. Also on the north gable end is a one story flat-roofed wing with bannister. (see photo C).
20. House. Block 14, Lot 3. 2nd quarter 19th century. This is a simple 2 1/2 story frame dwelling with four bays. Built in 2 sections the north 3 bays are separated from the last bay by a brick chimney. One room deep. (see photo C).
21. Peter D. Vroom House. Block 14, Lot 4. 1792, early 19th century additions. The Vroom House is a 2 1/2 story imposing 5 bay Flemish bond brick structure of the Federal style. The center entrance has a circular arch fanlight and a double Dutch door with hand wrought hardware. The first story windows are 12/12 sash while the second story has 12/8 sash. The first floor has panelled shutters, possibly original, but the second floor has louvered shutters. The floors are divided by a double belt coursing. The roof

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is gable with a return and under the eaves on the front facade is a dentil molding. Each gable end has a large brick chimney at the ridge. What appears to be an early 20th century porch projects out over the center entrance. To each gable end is attached an early 19th century wood frame large wing. The north wing has a gable roof, is 4 bays long, and has windows which are 6/6 sash. A 20th century one story enclosed portico surrounds the front and northernmost facade of this unit. The south clapboard wing has 3 bays, a gable roof, and was probably constructed at the same time as the north wing, or possibly earlier as suggested by the 9/6 windows. As in the north wing a 20th century one story enclosed porch encloses the front and end facades. Excellent condition. (see photo B).

Orchard Drive and Alley

22. Raritan Valley Grange Number 153. Built in the early 20th century this 1 1/2 story frame structure has an exposed full basement constructed of fabricated stone. The gable end front faces the street and is 3 bays wide with a center entrance. A one story porch projects over all three bays. Still functioning. Excellent condition. (see photo L.)
23. House. Block 147, Lot 4. Second or third quarter 19th century. This domestic dwelling is a 2 1/2 story clapboard structure with a gable end front facing the street. The front facade has two bays - a Greek Revival doorway with transom and sidelights and a window with 6/6 sash and cornice. A one story portico extends across the front facade. The slate gable roof has a characteristic return and an intersecting center gable. The rear facade has a one story late 20th century flat-roofed wing. In the rear of the lot is a carriage barn. (see photo J).
24. House. Block 147, Lot 5. Late 19th century. Vernacular. 2 story frame dwelling. Gable roof.
25. House. Block 147, Lot 6. 3rd quarter 19th century. This 2 1/2 story frame dwelling has a 3 bay gable end front facade facing the alley. The roof is gable with overhang and end returns. A circular window is in the attic. One story front porch. Addition to the rear. (see photo J)

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26. Sobol House. Block 147, Lot 7. Last quarter 19th century. This L form 2 1/2 story frame and clapboard dwelling has a central chimney arrangement. The foundation is random stone. All windows are 2/2 sash, with louvered shutters save the bay window on the first floor. Most windows have an exaggerated cornice. The gable roof has an overhang but no return. The combination hewn and sawn cut beams suggest that older building materials were incorporated in constructing the house. (see photo J).
27. House. Block 147, Lot 8. Late 19th century two story rectangular frame structure with hip roof and large dormers. Bracketted overhang. Front facade faces the street and has four bays. The windows are 2/2 sash with louvered shutters. The center two bays on the first floor are enclosed by a porch. Outbuilding.
28. House. Block 147, Lot 9a. Late 19th century. Two and 1/2 story rectangular frame dwelling. Gable end front facade facing the street with 3 bays and a side hall. The window panes are modern. The roof is gable with an overhang and end returns. The linear facade has an intersecting central gable. One story front porch. Outbuilding.

Restoration and Preservation Activities

There presently exists a very active Historic Commission that is playing a vigorous part in the decision making processes that have any effect on the historic districts within the township. The township of Hillsborough has had historic district zoning for several years and was revised recently. Many citizens that reside within the district take a great pride in the fact that this area of the region has the history that it does and so make a special effort to maintain their homes, garages and barns.

A map of the district delineating boundaries and historic properties is attached.

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Inventories of Historic Structures Located Within the South Branch Historic District

1. P.J. Quick Farm (River Road), c.1835, 2 1/2 stories, frame, asbestos shingles, c.1860 addition.
2. Farmlands of #1
3. Farmlands of #1
4. Greek Revival Temple Farmhouse (River Road), mid 19thc., 2 1/2 stories, frame, Doric columns.
5. House (River Road), late 19thc., 2 1/2 stories, frame, aluminum siding, 20thc., porch, late 19thc. barn in rear.
6. Munro House (River Road), c.1870, Italianate, 3 stories, cupola, porch.
7. House (River Road) c.1790, 1840, 1900, 2 1/2 stories, frame and clapboard, multiple additions.
8. Parking area for church.
9. South Branch Dutch Reformed Church (River Road), 1850, Greek Revival, 1 story frame, pent roof, two fluted Ionic columns in antis, 20thc. addition and spire.
10. Bowman House (River Road), c.1840, 2 1/2 stories, frame and clapboard, c.1865 addition.
11. House (River Road), mid 20thc., 1 1/2 stories, clapboard.
12. General Store and Post Office (River Road), early 20thc., 2 stories, aluminum siding.
13. Lipka House (River Road), c.1875, 2 stories, frame, mansard roof.
14. House (River Road), early 19thc., 2 1/2 stories, frame, one story leanto shed on north gable end, gable roof, shake shingle siding.
15. House (River Road), early 20thc., gable end front, clapboard.
16. Van Hoesen House (River Road), c.1845, 2 1/2 stories, frame and clapboard, c.1870 addition.
17. S. Wever House (River Road), mid 18thc., 1 1/2 stories, stone farmhouse.

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New Jersey 034
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Inventory of Historic Structures Located Within the South Branch Historic District
(Continued)

18. House (River Road), c.1840, 2 1/2 stories frame, asbestos shingles.
19. House (River Road), mid 19thc., 2 1/2 stories, frame.
20. House (River Road), mid 19thc., 2 1/2 stories , frame.
21. Peter D. Vroom House (River Road), 1792, 2 1/2 stories, Flemish Bond brick, Federal style, early 19thc., additions, 20thc. porch.
22. Raritan Valley Grange #153 (Orchard Drive), 20thc., 1 1/2 stories, frame, proch.
23. House (Orchard Drive), mid 19thc., 2 1/2 stories, clapboard, gable end front.
24. House (Orchard Drive), late 19thc., 2 stories, frame, gable roof.
25. House (Orchard Drive), late 19thc., frame, gable roof.
26. Sobel House (Orchard Drive), late 19thc., L-form, 2 1/2 stories, frame end clapboard.
27. House (Orchard Drive), late 19thc., 2 stories, frame, hip roof.
28. House (Orchard Drive), late 19thc., 2 1/2 stories, frame, gable end front.

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SIGNIFICANCE

The South Branch Dutch Reformed Church, a Greek Revival style structure with its two Ionic columns in antis flanked by two pilasters is typical of the rural church as constructed by a moderately well-to-do congregation in New Jersey in the mid-19th century. This church, the likes of which in numerous variations sprang up throughout the state, is reflective of the outward simplicity of the congregation, but is also indicative of the superior skill possessed by the appointed carpenters who constructed the church.

Building #4 on River Road was originally also an excellent example of the Greek Revival style of Architecture, but the integrity of this temple form residence with four simple fluted Doric columns has been undermined by recent renovations.

Situated on a knoll which oversees most of South Branch the Italianate structure represents the best in regional craftsmanship and landscaping. Stripped to its Basic form this rectangular structure is not unlike numerous earlier dwellings built in the state. Enlarged windows sizes, the cupola, the ornate porch, and multiple sawn scroll detailing, however thoroughly transform a simple house into an elegant upper-class residence, obviously the home of one of the village's most prestigious homeowners. The excellent maintenance this building receives further enhances the aesthetic appeal of this house.

Political

Peter D. Vroom (1791-1874) was elected Governor of New Jersey for two separate terms - 1829-31 and 1833-35. He was born in the Vroom Homestead and lived there most of his formative life until attending Somerville Academy and Columbia College. Seven years after his graduation in 1806 he became an attorney and practiced at Schooley's Mountain, Hackettstown, Flemington, and Somerville. Upon returning to Somerset County he became actively involved in politics being elected Assemblyman three times from Somerset. In 1829 he was New Jersey's Governor and served 2 different terms. Out of office in 1835 he resumed a legal practice in Somerville, but was soon selected by President Martin Van Buren as one of three commissioners to adjust land reserve claims under the Chocktaw Indian Treaty. Vroom was elected to Congress from New Jersey in 1838. At the end of his term Vroom moved to Trenton. He served in 1844 as the Somerset County delegate to New Jersey's State Constitutional Convention. While Vroom only

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SIGNIFICANCE

spent his youth in the house, no other structures are known to be standing which relates to the life of the one-time governor.

In addition, Vroom's father - Peter D. also a Revolutionary War militia colonel, County Clerk of Pleas, Sheriff, Justice of Peace, and Assembledlyman was a personage of some minor note, particularly in light of the impressive Federal house he erected.

Religion

The South Branch Reformed Dutch Church was formed out of families of Readington and Neshanic, with a few from those in Somerville. It grew out of the necessity of public worship in this expanding village, and was organized May 2, 1850, by a committee from the classes of Raritan consisting of Dr. Messler, Rev. J.R. Cambell, Rev. Goyn Talmage, and G.J. Van Nest. The first Consistory were John Van Dyke, Cornelius Bergen, Garret Beekman, and Henry P. Styker, elders, and Lucas H. Hoagland, Gilbert S. Amerman, John Vosseller, and John Vegnte, deacons.

Preparations to erect a suitable house of worship were immediately begun, and the corner-stone was laid amid a large gathering of people. The church was dedicated in 1850 and the entire cost was set at \$3,700.

Historical Narrative

The history and development of South Branch, New Jersey closely coincides with the development and improvement of transportation methods throughout the nation.

The earliest inland settlement of New Jersey in the late 17th and early 18th centuries was heavily dependent upon navigatable riverways as a convenient means by which to reach the virgin wilderness of potential raw industrial materials, timberlands, and farmlands in the state.

The South Branch of the Raritan River provided such a means creating the village eventually to be called South Branch.

The original name of the village was Branchville. The derivation of the name of the town itself seems to come from the fact that the Raritan River, forked slightly north of the community. The two new rivers appropriately were called the North Branch and the South Branch.

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SIGNIFICANCE

In 1692 the Twelve Proprietors of New Jersey sold 640 acres to Daniel Hooper, extending down the Raritan half a mile and up the South Branch a mile, embracing the present village of South Branch (then Branchville).

Originally, settlement was exclusively delegated to medium size farms but at least by the end of the last quarter of the 18th century several structures were clustered closely around the river to take advantage of any commerce potentials.

By the middle of the 1800's ~~century~~ there existed a stage stop, blacksmith, a general store and a postoffice.

There was a bridge at Branchville before 1775. In that year John Gaston was engaged to build a new wooden bridge at that place; cost 117 pounds sterling. In 1781 the board of freeholders and justices directed that a bridge with stone abutments be built across Neshanic River, in the northwestern part of the township. This bridge was replaced in the 19th century. A wooden covered bridge was replaced in 1929 by the present concrete span.

The first roads in Hillsborough would naturally be where the first settlements were made, and these were along the south side of the Raritan and the South Branch. While at first the inhabitants would use the river as a route of travel, a road would also naturally and quickly develop on the borders of the upland and meadows, corresponding in general to the one which presently runs along the northern border of the township.

From the mid-19th century until the present there has been negligible development occurring in the village-an excellent presentation of a second and third quarter 19th century community with intermittent examples of late 18th and early 19th century construction methods.

It is worth noting, in order to further evaluate the effect of transportation trends on South Branch, that what might be considered the center of the village has a modern gasoline pump to accommodate the most recent of transportation trends.

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SIGNIFICANCE

Agriculture was formerly the primary business of the township for some 175 years. In 1881 the township had some 389 farms and no incorporated towns.

At one point ~~in time~~ in the history of the township there ~~existed~~^{was} a considerable amount of distilling ~~being done~~. Abraham Spader build a still about 1806, near the union of the North and South Branches of the Raritan; it was taken down about 1845. There was also a still in the village of Branchville (South Branch), built about 1850, and owned by a Mr. Amerman, in which whiskey was made; it was dismantled about 1880. No evidences of this distillery were located. The village of South Branch, at one time, was able to boast of grist mill located there. ~~The location of this mill was not located, either.~~

Concise Statement of Significance

It was through what is now the village of South Branch that settlers passed to establish their farmsteads in Somerset County and other counties west of here. South Branch played an important role in the early shipment by river of farm products to New Brunswick and other centers of the new Republic. It is from the community that the only governor came representing Somerset County. The variety of architecture within the historic district runs the entire gamut of that experienced in the Northeast region of the United States. There is Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Mansard and Italianate.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION CONTINUED

to Orchard Street. Thence, proceed 900 feet ESE on Orchard Street. Thence, proceed SSW 400 feet. Thence, proceed, WSW parallel to Orchard Street 800 feet. Thence, proceed SSW 300 feet, ESE 400 feet, and SSW 500 feet. Thence, proceed WSW 500 feet to the point of origin.

South Branch N.D. - N.J.

Zone 18

- A) N/4487-610
E/ 525-550
- B) N/4487-700
E/ 525-520
- C) N/4488-220
E/ 525-700
- D) N/4488-540
E/ 525-940
- E) N/4488-480
E/ 526-090
- F) N/4488-420
E/ 526-030
- G) N/4488-330
E/ 525-850
- H) N/4488-230
E/ 525-950
- I) N/4487-880
E/ 525-770
- J) N/4487-780
E/526-000
- K) N/4487-660
E/ 525-940
- L) N/4487-780
E/ 525-720
- M) N/4487-700
E/ 525-680
- N) N/4487-650
E/ 525-760
- O) N/4487-560
E/ 525-720

Somerset County
New Jersey

Block 14

- ✓ Lot 1 - State of New Jersey
Dept. of Environmental Protection
- Lot 2 - " " " " " " " "
- Lot 3 - " " " " " " " "
- ✓ Lot 4 - Joseph & E. Curran
875 South Branch River Road
Somerville, N.J. 08876

Block 48

- ✓ Lot 16 - Helen Chamberlain Est.
c/o Harold Van Hoesen
South Branch, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 17 - Steve & T.G. Persurance
836 River Road So. Branch
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 18 - R. & A. Van Middlesworth
River Road
So. Branch, N.J. 08881
- ✓ Lot 19 - Joseph E. Lipka
Apt. C-14
200 West Webster Avenue
Roselle Park, N.J. 07204
- ✓ Lot 20 - State of New Jersey
Environmental Department

Block 145

- ✓ Lot 5 - Harold E. Van Hoesen
834 South Branch River Road
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 6 - Steve & T.G. Persurance
836 River Road South Branch
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 7 - R.H. & Ann Van Middlesworth
840 South Branch River Road
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 8 - Joseph E. Lipka
Apt. C-14
200 West Webster Avenue
Roselle Park, N.J. 07204
- ✓ Lot 9 - State of New Jersey
- ✓ Lot 10 - Odin A. & E. M. Severson
Box 854
So. Branch River Road
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 11 - Joseph & F. Bowman
860 South Branch River Road
Somerville, N.J. 08876
- ✓ Lot 12 - Joseph E. Lipka
Apt. C-14
200 West Webster Avenue
Roselle Park, N.J. 07204
- ✓ Lot 13 - South Branch Reformed Church
14 & 45

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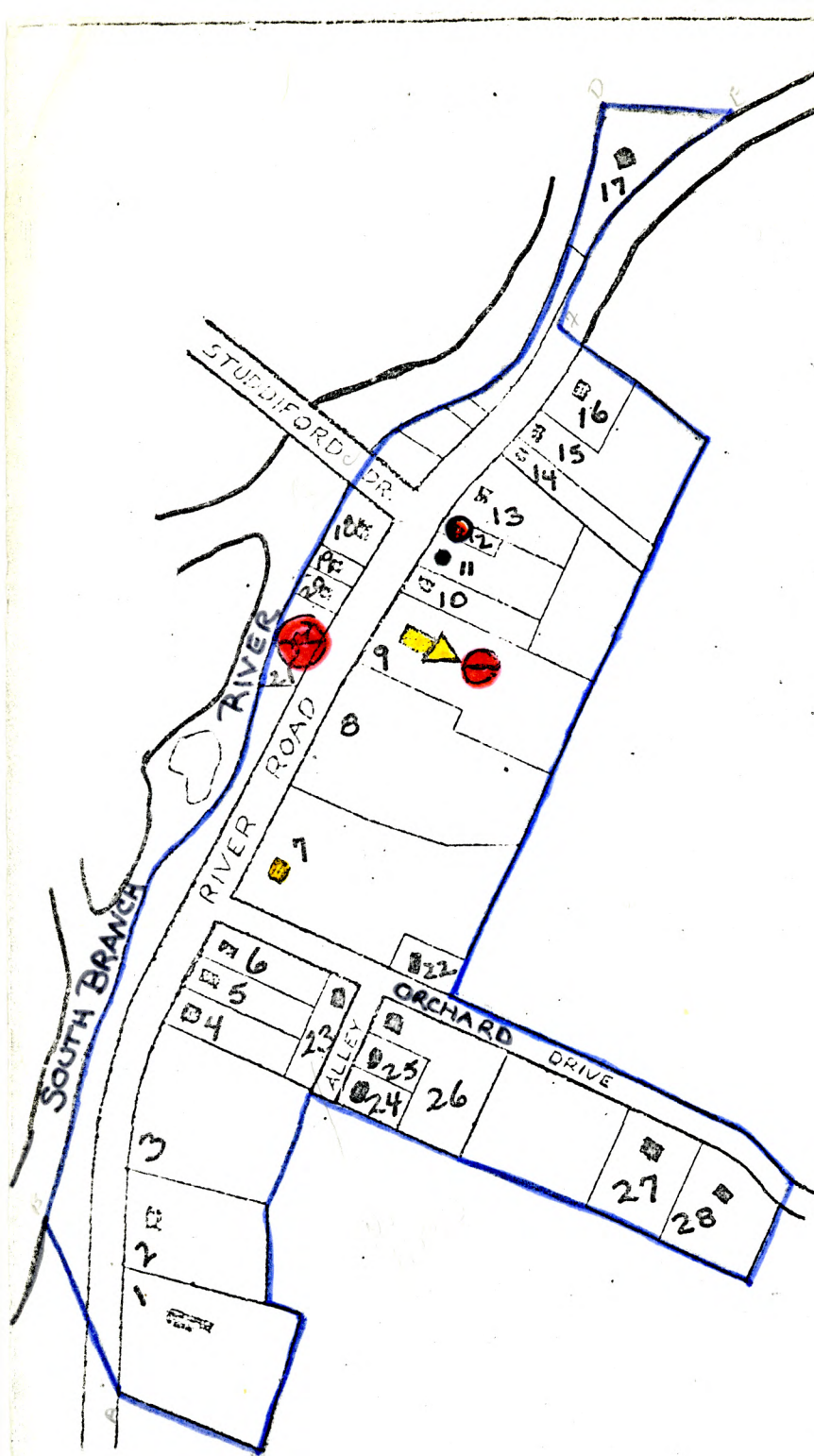
TAX REFORM ACT

Block 147

- ✓ Lot 1 - William & Elizabeth Munro
894 River Road So. Branch
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 2 - William & M.L. Fishburn
898 So. Branch River Road
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 3 - John P. & Joan Dismukes
902 So. Branch River Road
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 4 - Edwin & Claire Wallace
1334 Orchard Drive
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 5 - Edward S. & Rosemarie Brardsley
1324 Orchard Drive
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 6 - Frank J. Smith
1322 Orchard Drive
Somerville, N.J.
- Lot 7 - Virginia E. & S. J. Sobol
Orchard Drive 1320
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 8 - Walter L. Jr. & E.A. Weigele
1304 Orchard Drive
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 9 - Quick Lea Farms, Inc.
South Branch Road
So. Branch, N.J. 08881
- ✓ Lot 9A - Robert I. & M.L. Graham
Orchard Drive 1296
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 9B - William & E. Seaman
920 River Road So. Branch
Somerville, N.J.
- ✓ Lot 9C - Frederick D. & Marie L. Quick
15 So. Branch River Road
R.D. #3
Neshanic, N.J. 08853






TAX REFORM ACT

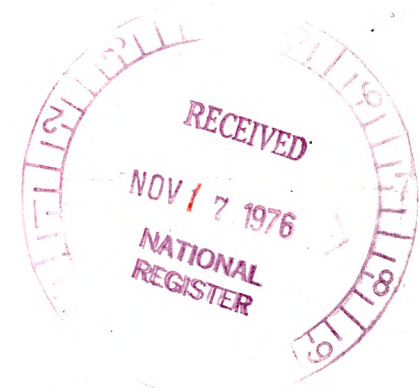
APR 19 1977



SCALE:
1" = 300 FT

Significant Sites and Events

-  District Boundary
-  Intrusions
-  Public Structures
-  Significant Sites and Events
-  Commercial



SOUTH BRANCH UNIFIED HISTORIC DISTRICT HILLSBOROUGH TWP., N.J.	
WAYNE T. McCABE CONSULTANT HISTORIC PRESERVATION	JAN. 1, 1975
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