

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
New Jersey

COUNTY:
Somerset

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE
DEC 31 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN BASKING RIDGE

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Six East Oak Street ~~at North Finley Ave.~~

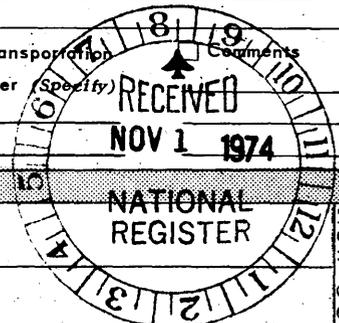
CITY OR TOWN:
(Basking Ridge) ~~Bernards Township~~

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
5th

STATE: New Jersey CODE: 34 COUNTY: Somerset CODE: 035

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Presbyterian Church in Basking Ridge

STREET AND NUMBER:
One East Oak Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Basking Ridge

STATE:
New Jersey

CODE:
07920 34

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Somerset County Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
Corner Bridge and High Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Somerville

STATE:
New Jersey

CODE:
08876 34

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey (NJ-97) (NJHSI # 237.2)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1939 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
District of Columbia

CODE:
11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Presbyterian Church in Basking Ridge is a classical Greek Revival style church building. The present building was built in 1839 on the site of two former church edifices dating back to about 1717. The 1839 structure has been altered very little on the outside. The building is 72' by 46'. The foundation of the building is stone masonry. The exterior walls of this rectangular structure are red brick to the eave line. The church is one story with a gallery. There are five bays on the long side and the windows are 14 feet high and extend to the wood cornice. The windows are 5' wide with 30 over 30 over 30 lights and three sashes. Much of the glass appears to be original.

The roof has a low pitch with the roof ridge running from front to back. Above the windows is a wide wood cornice. The roof cornice extends the entire length of the building and projects beyond in the front producing the classical Greek Revival temple form with portico. This portico is supported by four equally spaced fluted wood columns, and protects the double entranceways which enter into the church. The doors, both of which are double are surrounded by frame Greek Revival style door frames and probably original. They are separated by a center window identical to those on the sides.

Although the exterior of the church, save additions to the rear, has been little altered since construction the interior has been renovated several times.

The original sanctuary, dedicated in 1840, was nearly square and contained 52 pews on the main floor and 26 pews in the Gallery. The organ and choir were at that time located in the Gallery also. Each pew was sectioned off from the others by the typical 19th century boxes.

In 1869 a storm tore off nearly all the tin roof of the church. The roof was then covered with slate and at the same time the church was enlarged to accommodate a total of 118 pews. It is possible that the bell tower was also damaged at the time because in 1875 a new bell weighing 1000 pounds was erected.

The congregation purchased a new organ in 1886 and placed it on the main floor.

In 1892 the interior of the sanctuary was completely renovated at a cost of \$2,500. This was when the original box pews were removed and the present pews installed.

Further refurnishing was done during the ministry of Dr. John T. Reeve. The church porch received a new floor in 1901, tree experts pruned and repaired the old oak, the church-year was cleared and landscaped and, in 1907, an addition was

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7. Description (cont'd.)

made to the rear of the sanctuary. At the same time the east side of the church was determined to be unsafe and was rebuilt.

In 1949 a new church hall was constructed under the sanctuary in space which was formerly only partly excavated exposing the original hand hewn beams.

Growth in the 1950's again led to inevitable remodeling. The sanctuary was completely renovated in 1951, and again in 1960 in order to allow for a better arrangement of the choirs.

During this growth period numerous wings were added to the northeast end of the church. Among them were: Memorial Chapel, Westminster Hall, Chapel Vestry, and the kitchen.

The wooden beams supporting the belfry were found dangerously weak in 1965 and replaced with steel beams. In addition other repairs were made, the dome was covered with fresh gold leaf, and the ~~Witex~~ was renovated.

On the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church property is a white oak, or quercus alba, estimated to be 500 or 600 years old. This enormous tree was already a landmark in the early 1700's and numerous property deeds use it as a reckoning point. The tree has the dimensions of an 18 foot circumference, a 97 foot height, and a 176 foot spread.



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1839**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Presbyterian Church was gathered as a congregation in 1717 in Basking Ridge, a community which dates back to the same year. The building is an excellent example of Greek Revival architecture, and is located in an historic churchyard with an extraordinary oak as its crowning feature. The tree is not only unusual in size and symmetry, but also in age, as the tree experts gauge it to be from 500 to 700 years old. It continues to flourish in great vigor. Beneath this tree the noted English evangelist, George Whitfield, preached on November 5, 1740. Whitfield a contemporary and colleague of John Wesley, describes the event in his diary, and on other occasions notes that he passed through "Baskenridge" and led the worship here. Our second pastor, the Reverend Charles McKnight, who served here from 1742-44, was a trustee of the College of New Jersey for 20 years, and was a revolutionary firebrand who was seized by the British during the Revolution and imprisoned on The Hulk in New York Harbor. William Alexander, Lord Stirling, one of Washington's generals and trusted close associates, worshipped here with his family and supported the work of this church. His contributions appear in account books among the church's records. Our fifth pastor, Dr. Robert Finley, who served from 1795-1817, was responsible for the organization of the African Colonization Society which sought to establish colonies of freed American Negro slaves in Africa. A great number of prominent citizens in Washington, including members of the government, participated in this scheme as it was initiated in 1816. Dr. Finley also was one of the first to get away from catechetical instruction in religious education and to introduce instead the study of the Bible.

The church building itself, the historic churchyard, the ancient oak, and the line of distinguished clergy who have served the congregation here, all contribute the significance of this church as a noteworthy historic place.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Basking Ridge in Revolutionary Days" - Somerset County Historical Society
 "Historical Booklet of Bernards Township" - Fred W. Kampmier, Jr.
 "Memoirs of Rev. George Whitfield" - John Gillies, Whitmore & Buckingham 1834
 "A History of The Presbyterian Church" - Dorothy Loa McFadden (Local)
 "The Kirkpatrick Memorial" - edited by William Blackburn, Wescott & Thompson 1867

HM
N. UT

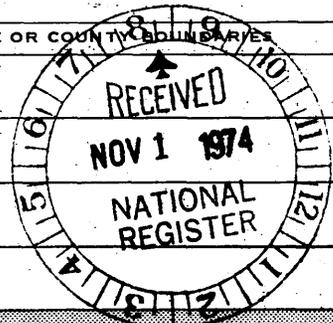
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40° 42' 25.5N	74° 32' 39.4W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1+ acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: William H. Felmeth, Pastor - Herbert K. Ryder, Jr., Reg. Architect; Arch W. Carswell-Custodian of Historical Records
 ORGANIZATION: The Presbyterian Church in Basking Ridge / Society DATE: April 3, 1974
 STREET AND NUMBER: One East Oak Street
 CITY OR TOWN: Basking Ridge STATE: New Jersey CODE: 07920 34

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: David J. Bardin
 Title: Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection
 Date: October 24, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: DEC 31 1974

ATTEST: [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: DEC 31 1974

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8. Significance (con't.)

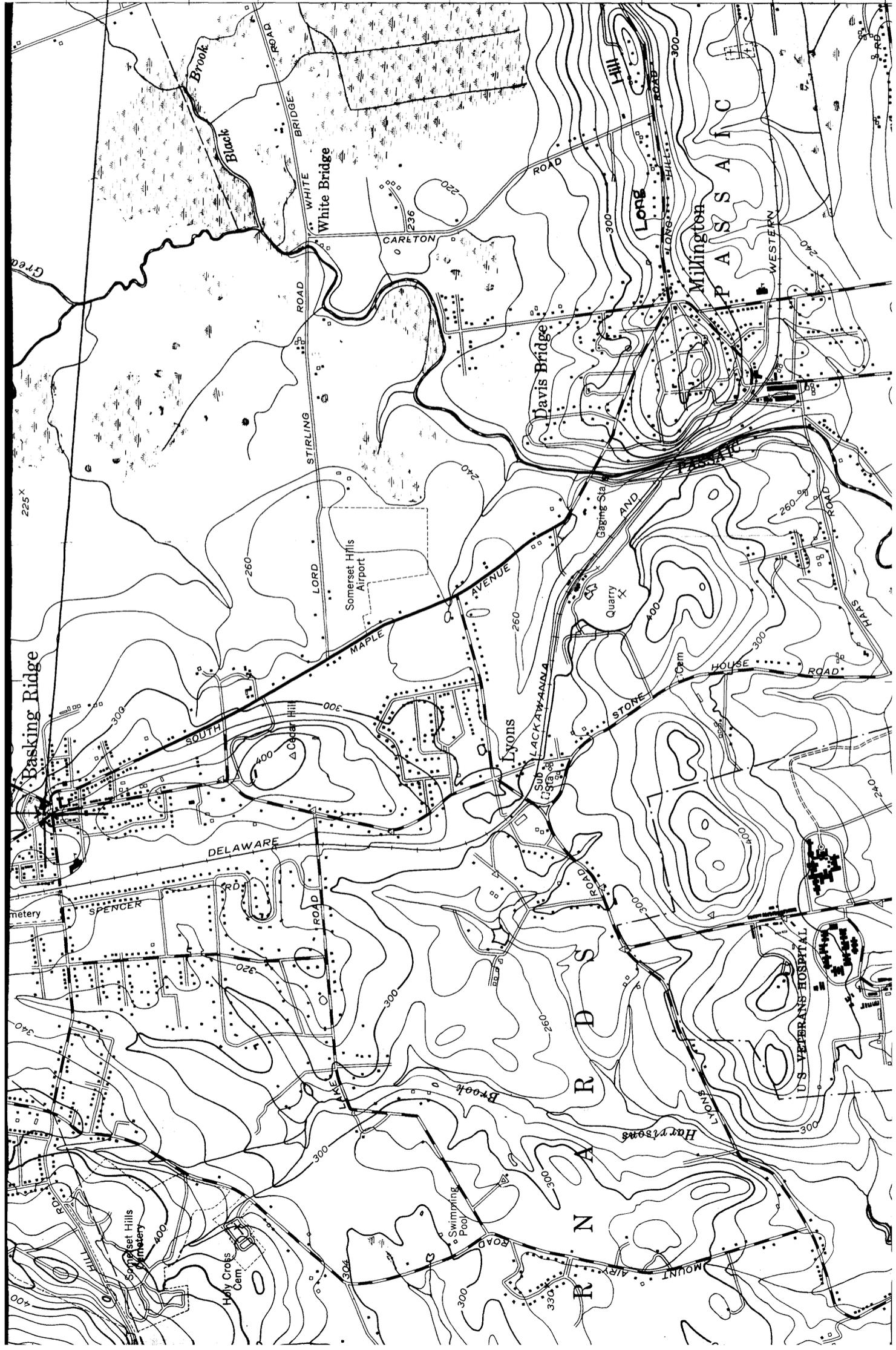
Presbyterian Church in Basking Ridge
Bernards Township
Somerset County, 035
New Jersey, 34

Architecture.

The Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church, built in 1839, is an excellent example of Greek Revival style architecture. William Kirk and Thomas Kirkpatrick of Essex County were the builders. Little is known of the Kirk & Kirkpatrick firm, but it is evident from the classical proportioned exterior exhibited by the church that they were first-rate builder/architects. Most of the original buildings exterior remains intact and unaltered except for the domed cupola.

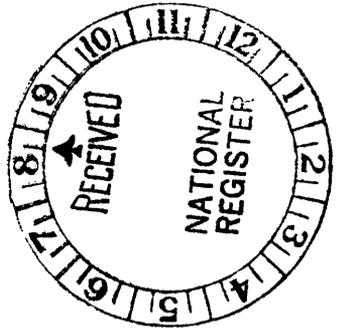


42°30'



Presbyterian Church in
Basking Ridge
Bernards Township (Basking
Ridge)
Somerset County, 035
New Jersey, 34
Longitude:
74-32-39.4
Latitude:
40-42-25.5

U.S.G.S. Map
Bernardsville Quadrangle
scale: 1:24,000
1954



GILLETTE 1.9 MI.
SUMMIT 7.5 MI.

(CHATHAM)