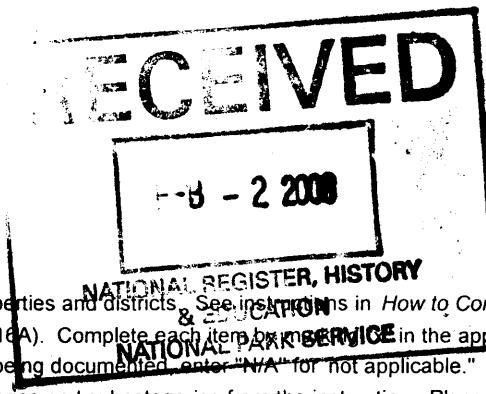


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by entering the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for not applicable. For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instruction. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Readingsburg Historic District
other names/site number: Stone Mill

2. Location

street and number: Cokesbury and Stone Mill Roads, Route 639 N/A not for publication
city or town: Clinton Township N/A vicinity
state: New Jersey county: Hunterdon County zip code: 08801

3. State/Federal/Tribal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally - statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Carlynn And

1/20/2000

Signature of certifying official/Title: Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources/DSHPO
Date: American Indian Tribe

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title: American Indian Tribe
Date: American Indian Tribe
State or Federal agency and bureau: American Indian Tribe

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

Carlynn
Signature of the Keeper: *Edson H. Beall* Date of Action: *3/3/00*

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
8	4	buildings
2		sites
2	2	structures
		objects
12	6	Total

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 listed
in the National Register**

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic
- Industry/Processing/Extraction
- Transportation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic
- Transportation

Historic Subfunctions

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

- Manufacturing Facility
- Road-Related
- Single Dwelling

Current Subfunctions

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

- Road-Related
- Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late Victorian
- Mid-19th Century
- Other

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| Foundation | Stone |
| Walls | Other |
| | Stone |
| Roof | Asphalt |

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is

- A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes..
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Community Planning And Development

Period of Significance

c. 1847-1906

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

See continuation sheet for additional HABS/HAER documentation.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 25.00

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	510140	4503440	3	18	510060	4503260
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	510300	4503480	4	18	510275	4502845

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dennis N. Bertland, Director

organization: Dennis Bertland Associates

date: 9/1/1999

street & number: P.O. Box 11

telephone: (908) 689-6356

city or town: Port Murray

state: New Jersey

zip code: 07865-

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name: multiple

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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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

DESCRIPTION

Readingsburg is located in New Jersey's Highlands geographical province, in northern Hunterdon County at the mouth of Lockwood Gorge in the narrow, heavily wooded valley cut by the South Branch of the Raritan River through the first hills rising above the Piedmont lowlands. The small hamlet hugs the east bank of the South Branch at the intersection of a road crossing the river with another following its east bank. A water power site first utilized in the second quarter of the 19th century provided the nucleus for the settlement which consists of several houses clustered around the crossroads, as well as mill sites up and down stream from the bridge and two houses on the west bank of the river. The community is surrounded mostly by woodland with scattered modern dwellings. The town of High Bridge is located about one mile south of Readingsburg; the village of Cokesbury lies several miles to the east.

The Readingsburg Historic District encompasses the entire hamlet, as well as some surrounding open space. An inventory of district resources forms part of this section, and all resources have been categorized as "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the district's historical significance. The contributing resources include eight 19th-century buildings, two structures, and two sites. There are six non-contributing resources: four buildings and two structures, all of 20th-century date.

The district contains six principal buildings, all houses, with attendant outbuildings. For the most part, they are gable-roofed vernacular structures of frame construction and moderate size dating to the middle decades of the 19th century and exhibiting simple stylistic embellishment typical of that era. There are, however, two stone dwellings (#s 1 & 5, photo #s 1 & 9), one house with a low-pitched hip roof (#6, photo #s 12 & 13) and another which dates to the middle of the 20th century (#2, photo #3). 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 historical character of the district. The district's houses are rather closely spaced on small lots and face the road with short setbacks, although one dwelling (#1) is sited perpendicularly to the road for a southern exposure, an orientation characteristic of the region's early architecture. In general, district buildings are in good condition and well maintained.

The architecture of Readingsburg is representative of the region's vernacular buildings and construction practices, illustrating the imprint of traditional forms and building methods as well as the influence of stylistic fashions. Two district dwellings

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exemplify the traditional 2-story, gable-roofed house type, known as the I-type, which is characterized by a single-pile two-room plan, regular three or four bay façade, and interior gable-end chimneys (#s 8 & 10, photo #s 16 & 17). A third house (#7, photo #14) with an end-bay entry appears to be a side-hall-plan variant of the type. Such dwellings are ubiquitous in northwestern New Jersey's 18th and 19th century housing stock. Traditional 1 and ½-story houses were prevalent at an early date throughout the region, especially in the hilly northern portions of Hunterdon County (and adjoining portions of Morris County) where 1 and ½-story types remained in favor well into the middle of the 19th century. The district has two examples of the 1 and ½-story type with one room or single-pile two-room plan and internal gable-end chimneys (#s 1 & 5, east wing, photo #s 1 & 4), a house type particularly common in the northern Hunterdon/southwestern Morris area. The main block of the later house, #5, is an example of gable-fronted type common in the region's towns during the mid/late 19th century period, but infrequently encountered in rural locations.

For the most part, district dwellings are quite simply detailed, with decorative embellishment, where present, generally limited to roof eaves and front entries. The pronounced impact of the classically based architectural styles of the 18th and early 19th centuries can be seen in the symmetrical fenestration patterns exhibited by most district dwellings. Several houses reveal the influence of architectural styles popular around the middle of 19th century. The sidelight-flanked entry of house #5 is suggestive of the Greek Revival style. With its blocky form and low-pitched hip roof, one house (#6, photo #s 12 & 13) evokes the Italianate cubical villa form, and the central cross gable with rosette window of another (#8, photo #s 16 & 17) derives from Gothic Revival motifs. The porches of both these houses evidence late 19th/early 20th-century remodeling. The turned posts and spindle frieze of the porch at #6 are characteristic of the Queen Anne style, and the heavy porch posts set on stone pedestals of #8 are Craftsman style in feeling.

Outbuildings of 19th- and 20th-century date are associated with district houses. Typically unadorned frame structures of small size, they include small barns and wagon sheds (#s 7 & 8, photo #s 15 & 17), as well as modern garages.(#s 1 & 5). The district contains two 19th-century mill sites. The large of the two, the upper mill (site #4), encompassed both saw and grist milling operations established between 1847 and 1860. It consists of the well preserved stone mill foundation in whose wheel pit survives a cast iron turbine wheel with drive shaft, the stone foundation of a smaller adjoining building, and extensive hydrosystem remains (photo #s 4-8). The hydrosystem includes a breached stone dam across the river, sheet iron-lined raceway inlet at the east end of the

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Section number 7 Page 3 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

dam, long head race running parallel to the river and partially lined with drystone walls, short underground cast iron flume connecting the south end of the head race to the mill, and partially underground bypass raceway with sheet iron-lined inlet flume into which water could be diverted from the headrace when the mill was not in use. The lower saw mill site (#11) consists of a long raceway formed by defined earth and stone berms which runs parallel to the river before making a short right-angle jog to discharge into the river and what may be the remnant of the mill foundation abutting the east side of the raceway just north of the right-angled jog.

The district also has three bridges. A 19th-century stone arch bridge (# 10, photo #18) consists of a single barrel vault outlined with cut-stone voussoirs on the downstream side and low parapet walls capped with stone slab. It has been widened on the upstream side with a concrete deck slab faced with stone. A mid 20th-century concrete slab, two span bridge (#11, photo #11) has stone-faced wing walls and parapets. A single span, prestressed concrete box beam bridge (#3, photo 12) with concrete abutments was constructed in the 1994 to replace a c. 1900 iron truss bridge.

In the following inventory a number that locates it on the accompanying district map identifies each principal structure and site. All entries are categorized as "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the significance of the district. All outbuildings, except for non-historic sheds, are included in the inventory and identified as contributing or non-contributing with the designation (C) or (NC).

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Section number 7 Page 4 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

INVENTORY

- 1 503 Cokesbury Road. Stuccoed-stone, 1 and ½-story, gable-roofed, single-pile dwelling with 2-over-3-bay façade, interior east-gable-end chimney (brick stack), and exterior west-gable-end chimney (modern); extending from the east gable end is a stuccoed-frame, 2-bay, 2-story addition with 1 and ½-story extension.

Style: Colonial Revival embellishment

Date: c. 1830-50; enlarged mid 20th

Exterior features include overhanging eaves, 6/3 and 6/6 sash windows with plain trim, paneled shutters with decorative cut outs (mid 20th), and a central entry with board-lined reveals and glass-and-panel door (mid 20th).

Outbuildings: (1) frame, 2-bay garage (mid 20th) with vertical siding (NC).

Contributing	B41/L1	Neg. # A 12, 21,22,28 & 29
		Photo #1

- 2 504 Cokesbury Road. Stone, 1 and ½-story, gable-roofed, 3-bay dwelling.

Style: Colonial Revival influences

Date: mid-20th

It has a box cornice with flush raking eaves, dormers and casement windows.

Outbuildings: (1) frame, 3-bay, gable-roofed, 1 and ½-story garage/studio (c. 1970-90) (NC); (2) frame, 1-bay garage (c. 1970-90) (NC).

Non-contributing	B38/L3	Neg. # B 24
		Photo #3

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Section number 7 Page 5 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

- 3 Hunterdon County Bridge #C 64. Single span bridge constructed of pre-stressed concrete adjacent box beams with concrete abutments and parapets walls composed of stone piers and metal rails.
- Style: none
- Date: 1994 replacement of 1900 metal truss bridge (Hunterdon bridge records)
- Non-contributing Neg. # A 25 & 46
Photo #2
- 4 Reading/Hoffman/Alpaugh Saw & Grist Mill Site. Coursed rubble stone mill foundation that is rectangular in plan and sited with longer sides perpendicular to the river, and whose wheel pit retains a cast iron turbine wheel with drive shaft.
- Style: none
- Date: 1847-1860
- Outbuildings: (1) extensive hydrosystem remains includes a breached stone dam across the river, sheet iron-lined raceway inlet at the east end of the dam, long head race partially lined with drystone walls and earth and stone berms, short underground cast iron flume connecting the south end of the head race to the mill, and partially underground bypass raceway with sheet iron-lined inlet flume into which water could be diverted from the headrace when the mill was not in use, the latter is open and lined with drystone walls to the south of the bridge (C); (2) the stone foundation of a smaller adjoining building (C),
- Contributing B37/L2
Neg. # A 13, 14, 3-32; B 7-24
Photo #4-8 & 10
- 5 2 Stone Mill Road. Stone, gable-roofed dwelling consisting of a 2-story, gable-fronted main block with 2-over-3-bay front fenestration and a 2-bay, 1 and ½-story, single-pile east wing with interior east-gable-end chimney (stone stack) and garage appendage.

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Style: Greek Revival influences

Date: mid-19th; east wing possibly earlier; garage appendage, mid/late 20th

Among the exterior features are overhanging eaves, 6/6 sash windows, end-bay front entry with sidelights and panel door and a 1-bay gable-roofed entry porch with square posts and stone base.

Contributing

B36/L23

Neg. # A 11, B 3 & 5
Photo #9

- 6 450 Cokesbury Road. Frame, 2-story, 4-over-5-bay dwelling/store with a low-pitched hip roof, double-pile plan, a stone basement story which is fully above grade on the south and west sides and a small rear shed appendage.

Style: Italianate influences, Queen Anne embellishment

Date: mid 19th, enlarged and/or rebuilt c. 1860-73

Exterior features include clapboard siding, box cornice with frieze, 2/2 sash windows with louvered shutters, two inner bay front entries with panel doors and a shed-roofed front porch with turned posts and spindle frieze. An internal stone cellar wall with window suggests that the house was originally single pile.

A wooden sign inscribed "Williams'/Stonemill/Store/Groceries/Notions/Candies/Soft drinks/Fishing tackle/Cigars tobacco/Amunition [sic]," which presumably dates to the 1920s, is mounted on the front of the building.

Contributing

B42/L1

Neg. # A 8, 9, 19, 33-35 & 37
Photo #12 & 13

- 7 443 Cokesbury Road. Frame, gable-roofed, 2-story, 3-bay dwelling with interior east gable-end chimney (brick stack), single-pile, presumably side-hall

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Section number 7 Page 7 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

plan, and a 2-story rear ell; the 2-bay, 1 and ½-story east wing features an interior gable-end chimney and a large rear appendage.

Style: none

Date: c. 1850-73

Now covered with aluminum siding; the exterior features a box cornice with returns and frieze that is carried on the raking eaves, 6/6 sash windows with modern shutters and an end-bay entry with 1-bay shed-roofed porch.

Outbuildings: (1) dry stone retaining wall (19th) along the road front (C); (2) small, frame, 1-story, gable-roofed barn/wagon shed (mid/late 19th) with bank cellar, board and batten siding, overhanging eaves and batten sliding door (C).

Contributing B34.06/L12 Neg. #A 4-6
Photo #14 & 15

- 8 441 Cokesbury Road. Frame, 2-story, gable-roofed, 3-bay, single-pile dwelling with central front cross gable and exterior gable-end chimneys (modern stove or furnace flues).

Style: Gothic Revival influences; Craftsman embellishment

Date: c. 1860-73

Exterior features include clapboard siding, box cornice with returns and frieze that is carried on the raking eaves, round window with tracery muntins in the front gable, 2/2 sash windows with louvered shutters, central entry and a hip-roofed porch with square posts on stone pedestals (20th century replacement).

Outbuildings: (1) small, frame, 1-story, gable-roofed barn/wagon shed (mid/late 19th) with bank cellar, novelty siding, overhanging eaves and batten sliding door (C).

Contributing B36.04/L11 Neg. # C
Photo #16 & 17

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Section number 7 Page 8 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

- 9 Hunterdon County Bridge #C 65. Stone, single-arch bridge with crude stone voussoirs outlining the downstream arch ring, stone abutments and wing walls, and flagstone capped parapets; a concrete slab span faced with stone widens the bridge on the upstream side

Style: none

Date: 19th; widened & repaired 1958 and 1971 (Hunterdon bridge records).

Contributing

Neg. # A 1-3
Photo #18

- 10 451 County Route 639. Frame, 2-story, 2-bay, gable-roofed dwelling with a single-pile plan, modern exterior chimney on the front and shed-roofed rear appendage.

Style: none

Date: mid 19th

It has clapboard siding, box cornice with returns and frieze that is carried on the raking eaves, and 6/6 sash windows with modern shutters; the modern chimney probably replaces the original front entry.

Contributing

B34.06/L15

Neg. # A 7 & 36; B 0 & 1

- 11 Hunterdon County Bridge #C 62. Concrete slab, double span bridge with stone parapets and wing walls.

Style: none

Date: mid-20th

Non-contributing

Neg. # B2; Photo #11

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- 12 Conover Saw Mill Site. The site consists of a long raceway formed by earth and stone berms which runs parallel to the river before making a short right-angle jog to discharge into the river and possibly mill foundation remnants. What appears to be a stone row abutting the east side of the raceway just north of the right-angled jog may be a foundation wall of the mill, which the 1860 Clinton Township map suggests straddled the raceway.

Style: none

Date: 1847-1860

Contributing

B37/L2

Neg. #

Photo #

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Section number 8 Page 10 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

SIGNIFICANCE

The Readingsburg Historic District possesses local significance under Criteria A and C under community development and architecture. The hamlet exemplifies the smallest of the agglomerate settlements that proliferated throughout the region in the 18th and 19th centuries to serve its dispersed agricultural population, but whose growth was limited by their isolation and lack of access to 19th-century transportation innovations. The district has architectural significance as an assemblage of modest, mostly 19th-century buildings whose construction, form, detailing and spatial organization are representative of the rural region's vernacular architecture in that era. Although the community's mills have not survived, the well-preserved remnants of their foundations and hydrosystems may have the potential to yield important archaeological information about the area's 19th-century industrial development. Archaeological resources relating to the area's 19th-century material culture also may be present in the environs of district buildings and sites.

While settlement occurred in the neighborhood around what became Readingsburg by the middle of the 18th century, the hamlet arose only after the harnessing of the South Branch's waterpower there for two saw mills and a grist mill in the middle of the 19th century. Readingsburg grew to include about a half dozen dwellings, in addition to its mills, by 1873 and acquired a store sometime thereafter, modest development that presumably was stimulated by the revival of the 18th-century iron works just downstream at High Bridge upon the construction of the Central Railroad of New Jersey across northern Hunterdon County in the 1850s. Although a branch railroad line was constructed up the west side of the South Branch in the 1880s, no station was established at Readingsburg. As a result, the community never developed into a local manufacturing center like High Bridge, and with the abandonment of its mills in the early 20th century had only its store to maintain its role as a minor local service center for several more decades.

Readingsburg consequently has managed to preserve much of its 19th/early 20th-century character despite the loss of its historic mills and the construction of a modern replacement bridge across the South Branch.. A majority of the district's buildings were erected c 1850-1873, although several are earlier or later. The distinctive historical character of the village results from the survival of these buildings, their rather tight spacing with short set backs, and their juxtaposition with the surrounding wooded countryside. These resources –mostly dwellings with attendant outbuildings, but including a combination house/store as well– are in general well preserved and exhibit relatively few modern alterations. Collectively they possess architectural significance.

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Section number 8 Page 11 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

Their form, construction, detailing and siting provide a representative illustration of the rural region's essentially vernacular architecture in the 19th century. Dwellings such as #s 1, 5 (east wing), 7, 8 and 10 and exemplify the modest traditional house types and construction practices found in the region (photo #s 1, 14-17), and the gable-fronted main block of #5 similarly is representative of the popular house types adopted by local builders beginning in the middle decades of the late 19th century (photo #9). The influence of popular architectural styles is readily apparent in the design and/or detailing of several district buildings. For example, a house like #6 (photo #s 12 & 13) with its blocky form and low-pitched hip roof evokes the Italianate cubical villa form, and the central cross gable with rosette window of another, #8 (photo #16), derives from Gothic Revival motifs. The porches of both these houses evidence late 19th/early 20th-century remodeling, exhibiting Queen Anne (#6) and Craftsman (#8) inspired detailing.

European settlement of the western New Jersey Highlands began in the second quarter of the 18th century, initiated largely by pioneer agriculturists of English, Scotch-Irish, Dutch and German stock. Throughout northwestern New Jersey, although freeholders were not unknown, the pioneers typically were tenants or squatters on property acquired by absentee owners through New Jersey's system of proprietary landholding.¹ One of northwestern New Jersey's single largest proprietary holdings, the 92,513-acre "Great Tract," which was surveyed for the West Jersey Society in 1711, stretched across northern Hunterdon County between the Delaware and Lamington Rivers. The West Jersey Society, a London-based joint stock company, had trouble managing its landholdings and disposed of them in 1752 to an American company that proceeded to subdivide and sell the property. Among the land subdivided from the "Great Tract" was a 10,880-acre parcel located at the confluence of the South Branch of the Raritan River and Spruce Run (including the site of Readingsburg within its east end), purchased by the wealthy and prominent Philadelphians William Allen and Joseph Turner and developed by them as the Union Iron Works. Established by Allen upon his leasing property from the West Jersey Society in 1742, the substantial works which included a furnace, forge and slitting mill were operated by a resident manager until sometime after the Revolutionary War. The operation relied on both slave and free labor, and tenants on the estate evidently made much of the necessary charcoal fuel, the production of which eventually depleted the surrounding hardwood forests and led to the abandonment of the works.²

Although William Allen was opposed American independence he managed to avoid confiscation of his extensive landholdings, and upon his death in 1780, and that of Joseph Turner in 1783, the Union Tract passed to their heirs. The court-ordered partition

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Section number 8 Page 12 Readingsburg Historic District, Hunterdon County, NJ

of the property among the heirs occurred in 1802, at which time it was divided into 52 plots ranging from 50 to 300 acres in size. The partition survey map indicates that the site of Readingsburg formed part of three parcels: lot #20, a 195-acre tract on the west side of the South Branch, lot #8, a 307-acre tract on the east side of the river encompassing what is now the upper mill site and crossroads, and lot #9, a 216-acre tract lying to the south of #8. The names appearing on the map ("Jon. Seals" on #20, a "Mr. Youngs" on #9 and "Harm. Lance" on #8) presumably identified tenants, although only one house is depicted, that of "Mrs. Youngs" located in the middle of lot #9 well away from the river. The survey map also reveals that the future mill site was rather isolated, depicting the nearest road as crossing the South Branch about a half-mile south of the present Readingsburg bridge.³

After the Union Tract's partition, the Allen and Turner heirs proceeded to sell the 52 lots to various purchasers, including a number of former tenants, over a period of some years. In 1807, for example, Andrew Bray purchased lot #8, and in 1815 John and William Seal acquired title to lot #20.⁴ Members of the Seal family are said to have lived in the neighborhood since before the Revolutionary War. According to local historians, John "Seale" was an English school teacher who emigrated to America around 1760, settling on the Union Tract where he rented a lot and followed his profession. His son Daniel became a charcoal burner, a common occupation of settlers in the vicinity of the iron works. The 1802 survey records "Dan. Seals" as the occupant of a house on lot #22 a short distance upstream from the Readingsburg site. William Seal appears to have acquired sole ownership of lot #20 and, by his 1827 will, devised it to his widow for her lifetime, thereafter to be divided among other family members. In 1838, one of William's heirs, Daniel Seal conveyed his inheritance, a 35-acre parcel fronting on the South Branch, to Daniel Seal, Jr., who may have built the stone house there, district site #1, which he evidently occupied for several decades thereafter.⁵

Unlike the Seals, Andrew Bray does not appear to have settled on his Union Tract purchase. Said to have been a tanner by trade, he may have acquired the property as a source for tree bark used in the tanning process. In 1830, Bray and his wife sold the east half of lot #8 to Casper Apgar (a member of a German family settled in the neighborhood since the middle of the 18th century), and in 1838 lost the remainder of the 307-acre property, as well as his homestead farm (located a few miles to the southeast), at a court-ordered sheriff's sale to satisfy a debt of over \$8,000 owed to William Van Deren. Van Deren, a resident of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, was high bidder at the sale and retained ownership of the property until his death in 1846, after which it was sold at public auction along with his other real estate. While the advertisements for the 1838 auction

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confusingly referred to the property as a 307-acre "farm," those for the 1847 sale described it as "150 or 160 acres of timber land" located "near Casper Apgar's."⁶

At the Van Deren auction, which took place on January 1, 1847, four lots of the timber land amounting to about 41 acres were struck off to James N. Reading, and it is Reading who must be credited with founding the mill hamlet which bears his name. James Newell Reading (1808-1884), a great-great grandson of New Jersey colonial governor John Reading, was a prominent and wealthy Flemington resident, engaged in property investment and development. Reading evidently constructed a saw mill on the property in 1847-49, the opening of Cokesbury Road in 1841 and the road down the east bank of the South Branch in 1847 south of the bridge crossing having made the site more accessible. He paid about \$500 for the property and sold it two years later for \$2,300 to Thomas B. and Conrad Apgar, the deed of conveyance describing the premises as "all that saw mill property."⁷

The 1851 Hunterdon county map identifies Readingsburg by name, providing the first documentation of that usage, and depicts a hamlet of three houses and two saw mills, the Apgar mill (site #4) and a short distance downstream that of E. (evidently a misprint for C.) Conover (site #12) which apparently was established a sometime earlier. Both mills appear in the 1850 industrial census of Clinton Township. Slightly the larger of the two operations, Charles Conover's saw mill produced 150,000 feet of lumber valued at \$1,500 with a work force of two men. Thomas Apgar's mill's production was given as 100,000 feet of lumber valued at \$1,000. It employed one male worker. Both mills had a capital investment of \$2,000.⁸ The Apgars do not appear to have had financial success with their saw mill. In 1853 Thomas Apgar and Joshua Apgar (who had acquired Conrad's interest) mortgaged the saw mill tract to James N. Reading and two years later executed a release and quit claim deed for the property to John G. Reading, James Reading's brother. Having cleared his title to the property by securing a release for the 1853 mortgage from his brother's assignee, Sarah Hay, early in 1859, John Reading sold the saw mill tract later that year, together with a 3-acre lot on the west side of the river, to Clinton Township resident Peter H. Hoffman for \$2,000.⁹

Peter Hoffman appears to have been responsible for establishing a grist mill at Readingsburg shortly after acquiring the property. The \$2,000 purchase price, \$300 less than what the Apgars' paid for the property in 1853, does not suggest that any substantial improvement had been made in the interim. The 1860 map of Clinton Township identifies "Hoffman's grist and saw mill," and Peter H. Hoffman is listed in the 1860 industrial census as the proprietor of a mill in which he had a capital investment of

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\$5,000. With a production of 500 bushels of flour valued at \$1,600 and a “country grinding” profit of \$500, the production of Hoffman’s mill was the smallest of the five Clinton Township grist mills listed in that year. While the 1860 census does not include any saw mills, Charles Conover’s saw mill is depicted on the 1860 township map just downstream from Hoffman’s mill at its 1851 location, and both saw mills presumably remained in operation. That Hoffman made substantial improvements to the property in the 1860s, including the construction of a second mill on the site (which is depicted in the 1873 county atlas, presumably the stone mill on the site in the early 20th century), is further suggested by \$10,000 that he received on selling it George N. Alpaugh, a resident of Tewksbury Township, in 1869.¹⁰

The construction of the Central Railroad of New Jersey across northern Hunterdon County in the early 1850s stimulated local economic development, most notably along the South Branch, the revival of the Union Iron Works by Lewis H. Taylor, the grandson of the enterprise’s 18th century manager Robert Taylor, on the old Union forge property about a mile downstream from Readingsburg, around which the thriving village of High Bridge arose. The rapid growth of High Bridge, so named after the railroad trestle across the river there, must have created a demand for flour and wood, which probably was met, at least in part, by the nearby Readingsburg mills. The construction of a new road along the east bank of the South Branch north of Cokesbury Road in 1870 made the mills more accessible to the timberlands around Lockwood gorge, as well as the farmlands of German Valley further upstream.¹¹ In addition to documenting the existence of separate grist and saw mills on the upper mill site, the 1873 county atlas reveals that the hamlet had grown to include six dwellings, and comparison of names listed in the atlas with those in the 1870 census population schedule for Clinton Township suggests that at least two of the houses were occupied by carpenters Nathan Apgar and Conrad Apgar. Other probable residents of the hamlet at that time include farmer Daniel Seal, miner Jason Apgar, and laborers Casper Apgar and Joseph Hockenbury. The mills evidently were rented in this period, and although names of saw mill operator Peter Bulmer and flour merchant John Durling appear in the census in conjunction with those listed above, whether or not they were associated with the Readingsburg mills is unclear, particularly in the case of Durling whom both the 1870 population and industrial census schedules describe as owning property worth \$10,000.¹²

Readingsburg’s period of growth and development appears to have ended by about 1873. That the 1873 atlas does not identify the community by name is perhaps an indication of the community’s loss of its separate identity to burgeoning High Bridge, as is the lack of mention of the hamlet and its mills in the 1881 Hunterdon County history.

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When branch line of the Central Railroad was constructed along the South Branch in the 1880s no station was established at Readingsburg, placing the settlement at a disadvantage to communities with those transportation connections. While Alpaugh's flouring and saw mills remained in operation in 1894, the lower saw mill, then owned by John Hockenbury, had been abandoned. In 1906, George Alpaugh sold the upper mill property to Abraham L. Beavers, who later the same year conveyed the premises to the Taylor Iron and Steel Company. While the mill evidently continued under the operation of Alpaugh's former tenant until April of the following year, the Taylor Iron and Steel Company's primary interest in acquiring the property presumably had been to protect its water supply and power, and sometime thereafter the upper mill was abandoned. According to local informants, the derelict mill collapsed or was torn down by the 1930s. Despite the loss of its mills, the hamlet retained something of its former role as a neighborhood focal point through the general store conducted under the name of "Williams Stone Mill Store" during the 1920s and 1930s, and perhaps for some years earlier, in a house at the crossroads by the bridge (#6). The store, however, closed sometime around World War II after which the locality's sense of identity was largely lost.¹³

Readingsburg exists today as a small cluster of 19th-century dwellings surrounded by a rural neighborhood of low-density residential development. Although its mill buildings have not survived, their sites remain largely intact and the hamlet retains much of its 19th-century character. Local officials and residents alike recognize the special qualities that establish the historical character and significance of Readingsburg and make it worthy candidate for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

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Footnotes

¹ Peter Wacker, *Land and People. A Cultural Geography of Pre-industrial New Jersey: Origins and Settlement Patterns*, pp. 127, 213–16 and 220.

² Hubert G. Schmidt, *Rural Hunterdon: An Agricultural History*, page 58; Charles S. Boyer, *Early Forges & Furnaces In New Jersey*, pp. 233–35; James P. Snell (ed.), *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, pp. 525–526.

³ Boyer, pp. 236–236; T. F. Chambers, *Early Germans of New Jersey*, page 162a; Hunterdon County Partitions, Book A, page 60.

⁴ Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 18, page 515 and Book 25, page 371; Stanton D. Hammond, *Hunterdon County, New Jersey, Sheet B, Map Series # 4*.

⁵ A. Van Doren Honeyman (ed.), *Northwestern New Jersey: A history of Somerset, Morris, Hunterdon, Warren, and Sussex Counties*. Vol. 2, page 864; Snell, page 528; Chambers, page 162a; Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 71, page 514 & Book 74, page 495; Samuel C. Cornell, *Map of Hunterdon County, New Jersey*; F. W. Beers, *County Atlas of Hunterdon, New Jersey*, page 29.

⁶ Snell, page 535; Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 48, page 405 and Book 68, page 435. "Sheriff's Sale," *The Hunterdon Gazette*, December 6, 1837.

⁷ Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 88, page 76 and Book 97, page 505; Josiah Granville Leach, *Genealogical & Biographical Memorials of the Reading, Howell, Yerks, Watts, Latham, and Atkins Families*, page 68; Snell, page 302; Hunterdon County Road Returns, 20-8-1 and 20-8-6.

⁸ Samuel C. Cornell, *Map of Hunterdon County, New Jersey*; United States Census, Products of Industry, Clinton Township, 1850.

⁹ Hunterdon County Mortgages, Book 25, page 46; Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 119, page 266, 284 & 305; and Book 121, page 135.

¹⁰ Mich^l. Hughes, *Farm Map of Clinton Township Hunterdon Co. N. J.*; United States Census, Products of Industry, Clinton Township, 1860; Hunterdon County Deeds,

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Book 121, page 135, Book 97, page 505 and Book 146, page 212; Interviews with Mr. And Mrs. Charles Summerill

¹¹ Snell, pp. 525–526 and 230–231; Hunterdon County Road Returns, 21-9-14.

¹² Beers, page 29; United States Census, Population Schedules and Products of Industry, Clinton Township, 1870.

¹³ Cornelius Clarkson Vermule, *Report of Water Supply, Water Power, the Flow of Streams and Attendant Phenomena. Geological Survey of New Jersey, Final Report of the State Geologist*. Vol. III, page 255; Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 285, page 577; Interviews with Mr. And Mrs. Charles Summerill and Mr. Ralph Lomerson.

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Hunterdon County Mortgage Books
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Hunterdon County Will Books

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Industrial Schedules, Clinton Township, 1850-70

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Readingsburg Historic District are delineated on the attached map entitled "Readingsburg Historic District Site Location and Boundary Map", and is verbally described and justified in the following paragraphs. The site and boundary map was assembled from current municipal tax maps of Clinton Township.

The boundary of the district begins in Clinton Township on the north side of Cokesbury Road at the southwest corner of block 38, lot 3 and proceeds north and east along the west and north sides of that lot to the southwest corner of block 38, lot 2. It continues north along the west line of block 38, lot 2 to the northwest corner of lot 2 which point is on the municipal boundary between Clinton and Lebanon Townships. It proceeds northeast along the municipal boundary crossing both the South Branch and Stone Mill Road to the northwest corner of block 36, lot 20 on the east side of Stone Mill Road. The boundary then runs south along the east side of Stone Mill Road to the northwest corner of block 36, lot 22. From that point it runs east along the north sides of lot 22 and block 36, lot 21, and then south along the east side of the latter lot to the latter lot's southeast corner of the north side of Cokesbury Road (Route 639).

The boundary continues east along the north side of Cokesbury Road to the northeast corner of the northeast abutment of Hunterdon County Bridge C-65 (site #9). From there it crosses Cokesbury Road to the southeast corner of the southeast abutment of Bridge C-65. The boundary then runs west along the south side of Cokesbury road to the northeast corner of block 34.01, lot 11. It proceeds south along the east side of block 34.06, lot 11 to the southeast corner of that lot, and then turns west along the south side of block 34.06, lots 11 and 12 to the northeast corner of block 34.06, lot 15. It then runs southwest along the southeast side of block 34.06, lot 16 to the southwest corner of that lot and the east side of County Route 639.

The boundary next crosses Route 639 along a straight line to the southeast corner of block 42, lot 2 and continues south along the west side of the road to the southeast corner of block 42, lot 3 to a point where at straight line continuation of the south side of block 41, lot 4 across block 41, lot 5, the South Branch and block 42, lot 3 would intersect with the east side of the latter lot, also the west side route 639. It then turns west following the said the continuation line to the southeast corner of block 41, lot 4, also a corner of block 41, lot 5. It then turns north along the west side of the latter lot to the south corner of block 41, lot 1. From there it runs north along the southwest side of block 41, lot 1 to the west corner of that lot on the south side of Cokesbury Road and continues

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that line across Cokesbury Road to the north side of the road, also the south side of block 38, lot 3. The boundary then runs west along the north side of the road and the south side of block 38, lot 3 to the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Readingsburg Historic District were delineated to include to the greatest extent possible the architectural and historical resources of the hamlet, with not only the fewest non-contributing buildings but also to protect the district's historic rural setting.

To the north and northeast, the district is constrained by modern residential development, and the boundary follows property lines to exclude those uses. The boundary extends to the north and south along the South Branch to include the resources associated with its mills.

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Photographic Identification:

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

Name: Readingsburg Historic District
Location: Clinton Township, Hunterdon County, NJ
Photographer: Dennis Bertland
Date of photographs: Spring, 1999
Negative repository: Dennis Bertland Associates
P.O. Box 11, Port Murray, NJ 07865

Photograph direction of view:

Photo #1, Site #1, SW view
Photo #2, Site #3, NW view
Photo #3, Site #2, SE view
Photo #4, Site #4, mill foundation, NE view
Photo #5, Site #4, mill turbine wheel, NW view
Photo #6, Site #4, raceway and iron flume, SW view
Photo #7, Site #4, raceway, SW view
Photo #8, Site #8, mill dam and pond outlet flume, NW view
Photo #9, Site #5, NW view
Photo #10, Site #4, bypass raceway, NW view
Photo #11, Site #11, NE view
Photo #12, Site #6, NE view
Photo #13, Site #6, SW view
Photo #14, Site #7, SE view
Photo #15, Site #7, SW view
Photo #16, Site #8, SW view
Photo #17, Site #8, SW view
Photo #18, Site #9, SW view

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Hunterdon County, New Jersey

UTM References (Continued)

<u>#</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
5	18	510140	4503440

NORTH

"EXEMPTED"
N.J.D.E.P.
(KEN LOCKWOOD GORGE)
"OPEN SPACE"

37

38

READINGSBURG

50' STREAM EASEMENT

SET-HIGH BRIDGE BRANCH

ROAD

DRAINAGE EASEMENTS

3.01 3.02 3.03 3.04 3.05

5.01 5.02 5.03

CENTRAL RAILROAD CO. OF NEW JERSEY

DRAINAGE EASEMENT

3.01

40

42

34.01

"EXEMPTED"
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
BOARD OF REC. COMM.

"OPEN SP

41

3406

**READINGSBURG
HISTORIC DISTRICT
BOUNDARY MAP**




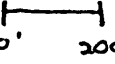
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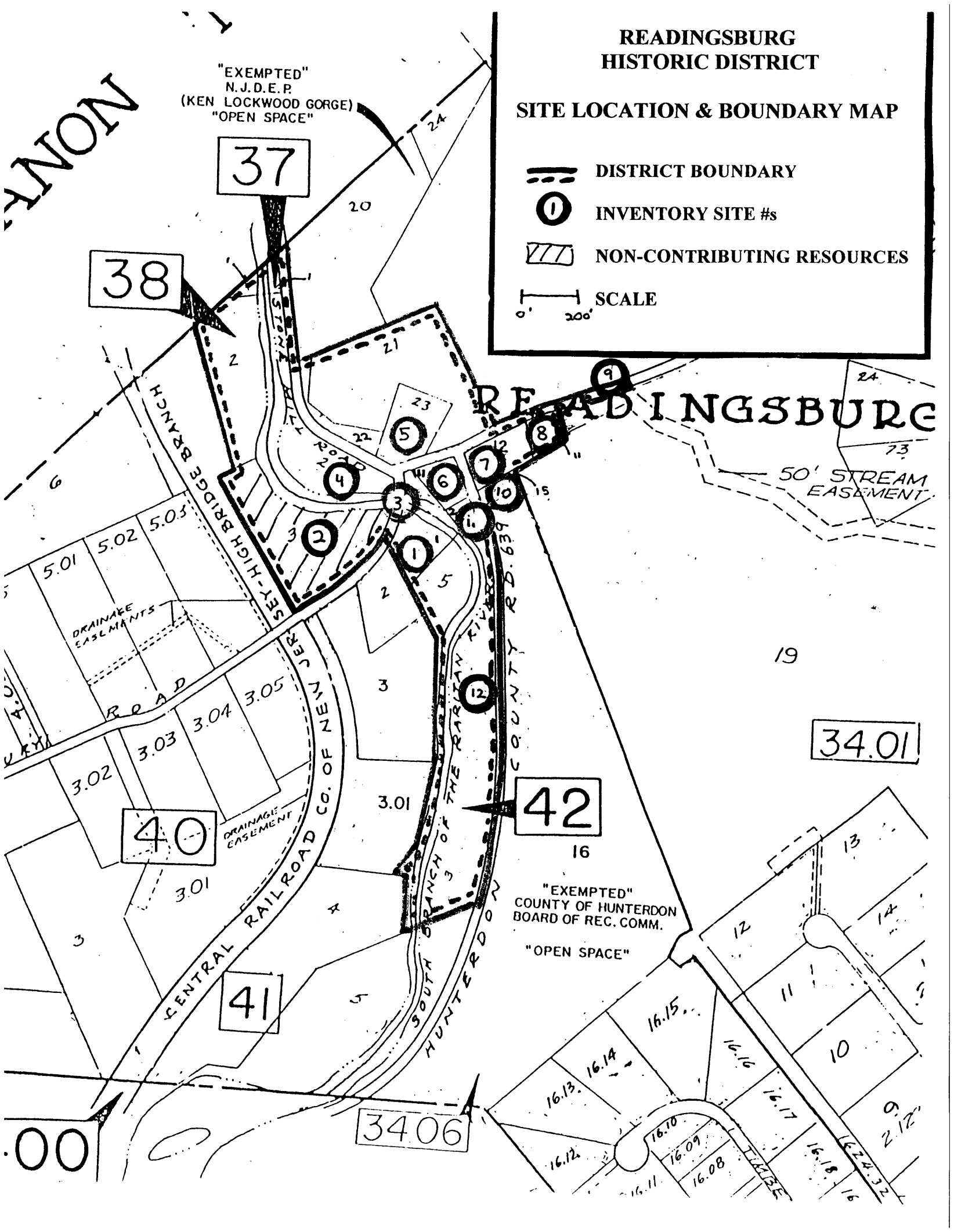
Scale
0' 200'

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READINGSBURG HISTORIC DISTRICT

SITE LOCATION & BOUNDARY MAP

-  DISTRICT BOUNDARY
-  INVENTORY SITE #s
-  NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES
-  SCALE



"EXEMPTED"
N.J.D.E.P.
(KEN LOCKWOOD GORGE)
"OPEN SPACE"

37

38

READINGSBURG

50' STREAM
EASEMENT

40

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34.01

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3406

"EXEMPTED"
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
BOARD OF REC. COMM.
"OPEN SPACE"

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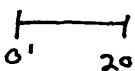
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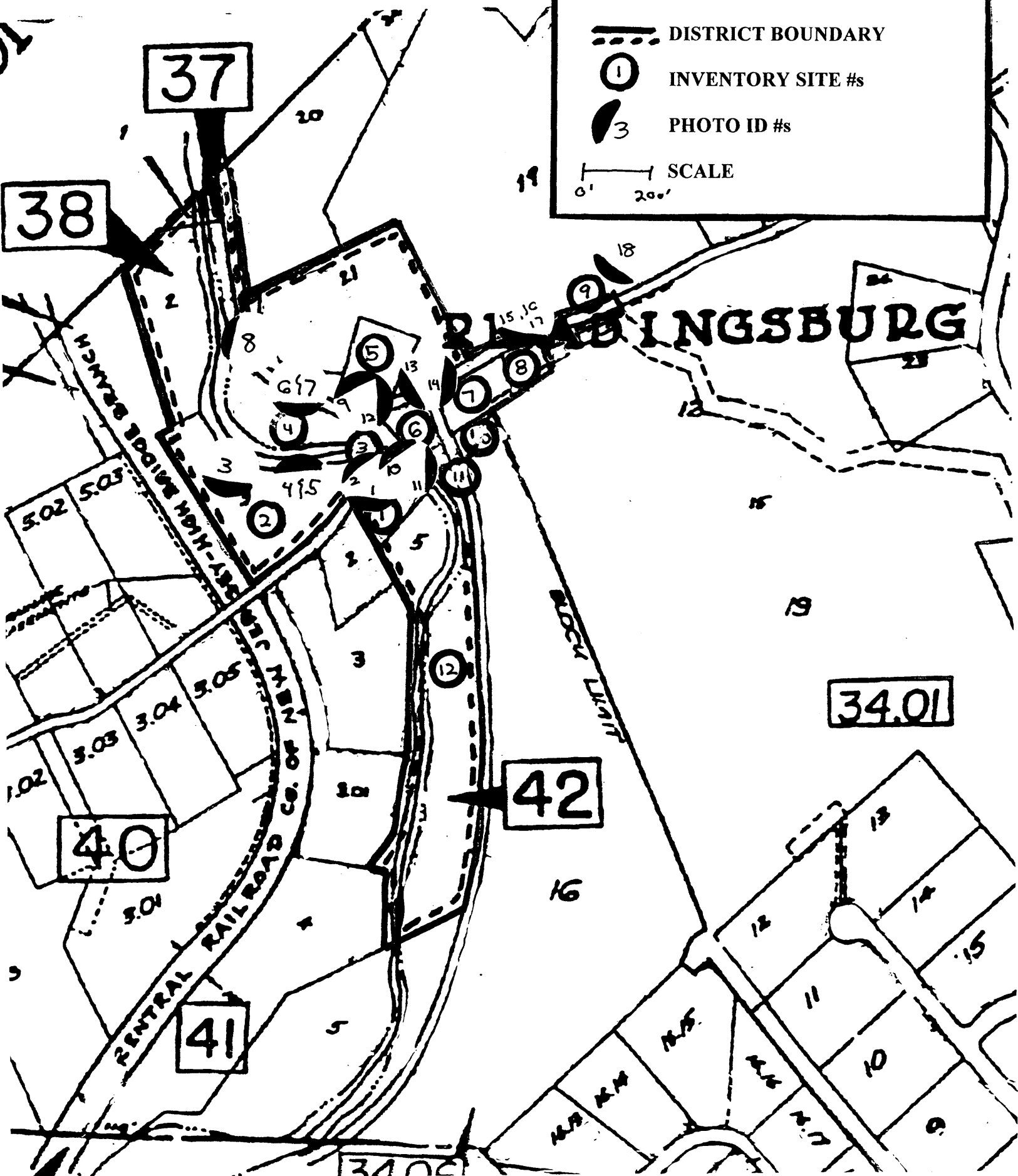
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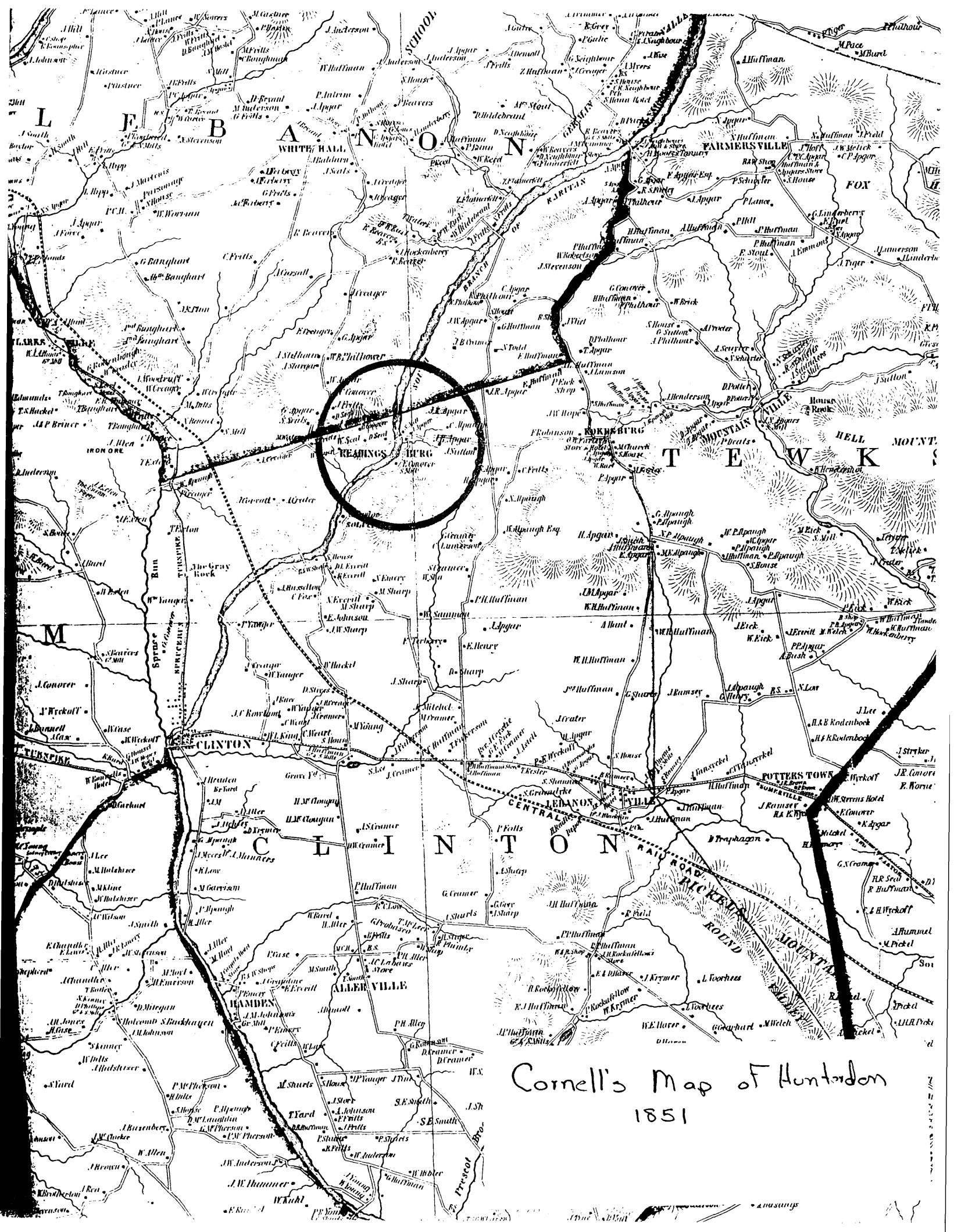
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 INVENTORY SITE #s

 PHOTO ID #s

 SCALE
0' 200'

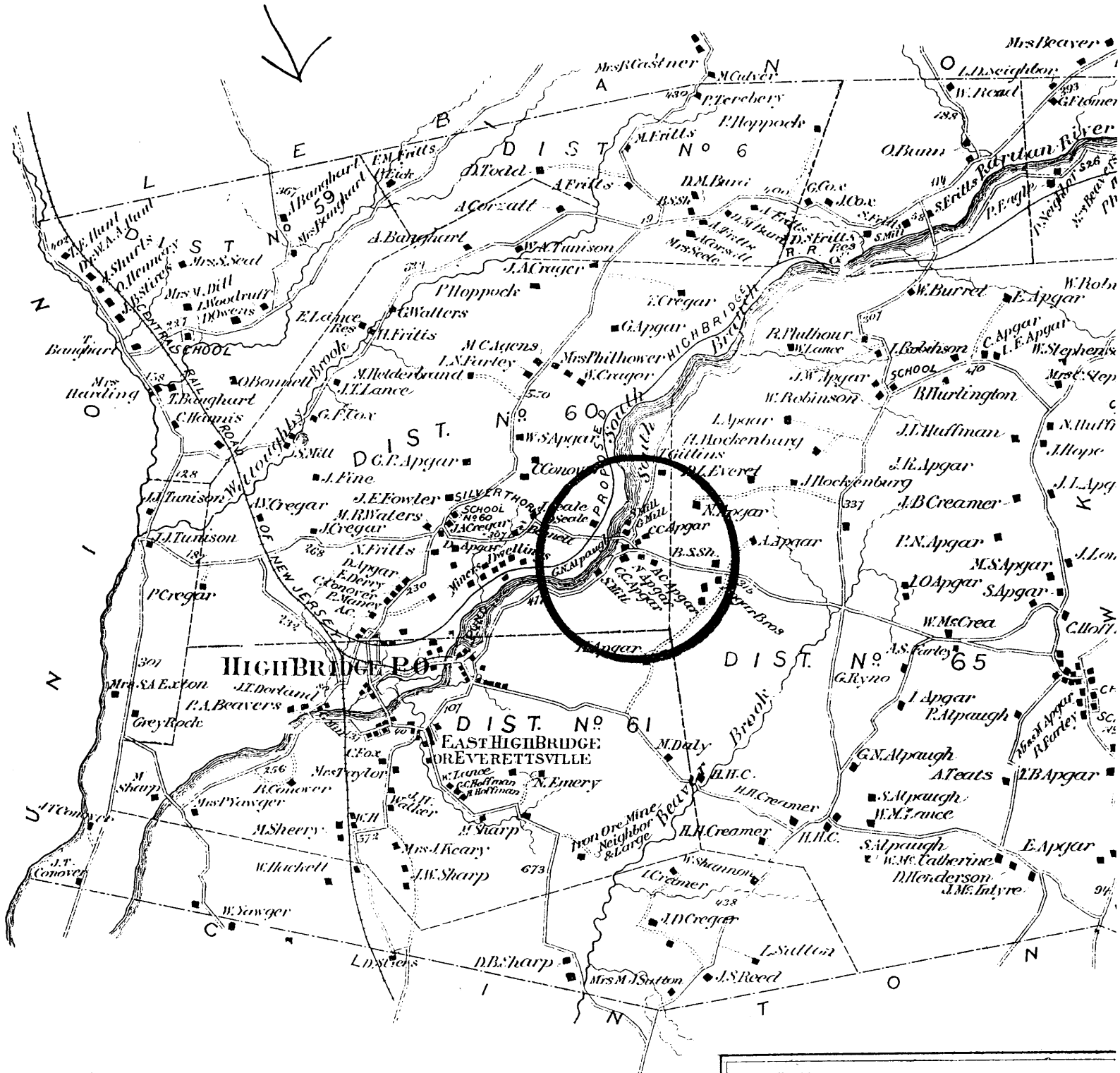




HIGHBRIDGE

Readingburg location

Scale 200 Rods to the inch



High Bridge Business Notices

- Apgar Amos A. Mason and Builder
- Alpaugh W. C. M. D. Physician and Surgeon
- Beavers Peter A. Justice of the Peace
- Cregar E. I. Dealer in Coal
- Devlin Mark. Propr. American House
- Dorland Jr. Dealer in Flour, Feed, &c., Wholesale and Retail
- Day E. H. Engineer, at Taylor Iron Works
- Everett D. L. Dealer in Iron and Steel Springs, Axles,
- Huba P. Shafts, Rims and Spokes, and Manu-

MOUNTAINVILLE TEWKSBURY TP.

Scale 20 Rods to the inch

Beer's County Atlas of
Hunterdon, 1873