

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received **JAN 6 1983**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Colonel John Van Cleve Homestead
and/or common (Hopewell Township Poor Farm)

2. Location

NW of Pennington on
street & number Poor Farm Road not for publication
city, town Hopewell Twp. Pennington vicinity congressional district 5th
state New Jersey code 34 county MERCER code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: unoccupied

4. Owner of Property

name Robert H. & Betty L. Liana (Block 31 Lot 83)
Morton E. & Sarah N. Grossman (Block 31 Lot 84)
street & number Address for both: Poor Farm Road
city, town Pennington vicinity of _____ state New Jersey 08534

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds, Mercer County Courthouse
street & number 640 South Broad Street
city, town Trenton state NJ 08650

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NJ Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1982 federal state county local
depository for survey records Office of Historic Preservation
city, town Trenton state New Jersey

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hopewell Township Poor Farm, created in 1821 from remnants of an 18th century farmstead, is located along Poor Farm Road in a rural section of north central Hopewell Township. There are three standing historic buildings--the Main Poor Farm House (1843), a Wash House (c.1858), and the mid-18th century Van Cleve farmhouse. Between these structures are the sites of numerous outbuildings, a 1960's modern house, and a storage shed.

A. Poor Farm Main House--Constructed in 1843, this is an embanked 5 bay, center hall, 2-1/2 story stucco covered fieldstone building with little detailing. Its longitudinal axis follows an east-west gradient with an exposed basement to the west. The front facade of the building has five bays and a center entrance. A simple entablature and fanlight caps the doorway. The door itself originally had five panels, but the upper panels have been replaced by a large panel of glass. The entrance porch is a simple masonry platform with seven steps. The windows are 6/6 sash with plain surrounds. The rear facade is essentially identical.

The gable ends are stark with two small windows in the attic and only a single 6/6 sash window on the first and second floors, providing light for the hallways. Just beneath the attic windows on the west gable end is an 1843 datestone. Because of the gradient of the land, the basement level of this wall is exposed. There are two irregular windows in the center and simple doorways at the corners of the cellar. The northwest corner door opens to a small seven foot one story leanto addition, now finished in aluminum. The door on the southwest corner now opens to the outside, but an L-shaped stone wall butted against the wall of the house suggests a one-time stone wing.

The house has an asphalt gable roof with a slight boxed overhang at the soffits and a plain undecorated frieze beneath the eaves. There are two interior end wall chimneys on the west gable end and a single chimney on the east gable.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates MAIN HOUSE 1843
1821-1951 **Builder/Architect** UNKNOWN

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In operation from 1821 until 1951, the Hopewell Township Poor Farm was one of the few municipal almshouses in New Jersey. As the last operating poor farm in the state it bears testimony to the varied history of poor relief in the 19th and 20th centuries. The history of the Poor Farm spans the development of poor relief from their treatment as social outcasts in the 18th century to the present era of large scale public assistance. By modern standards, treatment of inmates at the Poor Farm was harsh and unyielding; yet compared to the alternatives of starvation or begging, the Poor Farm marks a significant advance in the development of a social conscience in the United States. The Poor Farm stands as a symbol of the 19th century's attempt to treat the poor and infirmed humanely.

Prior to 1821, the poor of Hopewell were cared for under a system that had its roots in the Middle Ages. The infirm and able-bodied poor alike lost their rights as freemen and were placed under the direct control of Overseers of the Poor who "farmed" them out to private individuals charging the least for their annual care and upkeep. The first Overseers for the Poor for Hopewell Township were selected in 1709, the year in which the Assembly of the combined provinces of East and West Jersey required every township to select overseers to "take care that all poor were supplied with necessary maintenance and not suffered to wander abroad". The cost of maintaining the poor was met by special municipal appropriations. Such a system, which reduced the poor to virtual slavery, was open to abuse, and, depending upon local attitudes and economic conditions, could become a burden on local government.

In 1798, the New Jersey State legislature authorized the counties to erect county almshouses and shift the burden of local poor relief from the municipality to the county². It was not until 1821, however, when nationwide concern over earlier forms of poor relief began to emerge, that Hopewell Township opted to take advantage of an 1820 state statute exempting townships in counties such as Hunterdon, which failed to take advantage of the 1798 act, from being held liable for contributions to a county almshouse should the townships elect to build or lease their own³.

9. Major Bibliographical References

ATTACHED

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4.7

Quadrangle name Pennington

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	5	1	4	9	14	10	4	14	6	16	7	16	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

BLOCK 31, LOT 83 & LOT 84

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 BETSY A. ERRICKSON, CHAIRPERSON (minor revision by Terry Karschner Office of Historic Preservation).

organization HISTORIC SITES COMMITTEE OF HOPEWELL TWP. date AUGUST, 1982

street & number ROUTE 546 & Scotch Rd. telephone (609) 737-3196

city or town TITUSVILLE state NEW JERSEY

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Allen C. Genshe*

title _____ date 12/21/82

For HCRS use only

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

Thomas W. Dwyer date 2/16/83

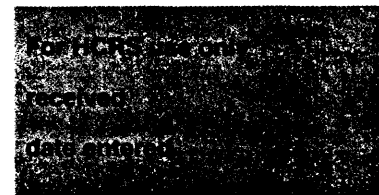
for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

Description (cont.)

The first floor interior has a through center hall with an unusual intersecting hall. The enclosed stair is in the west hall. There is a single square room in each quadrant. The room in the southwest corner is the formal inmate reflectory and the southeast room was a formal parlor. The walls throughout are plaster with simple wood moldings, beaded baseboards, and greatly simplified Greek Revival motif mantels in the kitchen and parlor rooms. The principal doors have five panels and still retain "Carpenter" style rim locks. The second floor was originally divided into five small rooms on either side of the long east-west hall. Each of these pauper rooms (approximately 7' x 14') had a single window and plain batten doors bearing "Blakes Patent" cast iron latches and wrought iron doorhooks. Presently, several of the wall partitions have been removed creating larger rooms. The lines of the original partitions, however, are clearly visible on the plaster walls, ceilings, and random width floors.

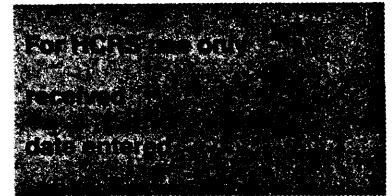
The garret is largely unfinished except for an enclosed chamber in the east gable. The sawn framing in the attic is queen post with mortise and tenon joints.

The basement level contains two storage rooms in the eastern end and full cellars on the west side. The original kitchen was in this section as evidenced by the kitchen fireplace in the southwest corner.

B. Wash House--Built around 1858, this is the sole surviving outbuilding on the Poor Farm property. It is a small 1-1/2 story brick structure on a stone foundation. The front, or eastern, facade has one single 6/6 sash window and a simple board and batten door. The western facade has two 6/6 windows and an exposed stone cellar, with a board and batten door and wooden louvered windows. On the north gable end is an attic window and a 6/6 sash window on the first floor. There are indications of a former small attached structure on this facade. The only fenestration on the south gable end is a small wooden door to the attic. This facade also has a small brick chimney at the roof peak.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

Description (cont.)

C. Old Van Cleve Farmhouse--Located northwest of the main structure and set back fifty feet from Poor Farm Road, this building, typical of mid 18th century construction, is a simple 1-1/2 story, 3 bay, stone dwelling. The corner stones are roughly finished, but the major part of the building is random fieldstone. The front facade has a center entrance flanked by single windows, all with segmented archs. The door is board and batten and the windows are 6/6 sash, all with plain board surrounds. The rear, or east, facade bears testimony of extensive modifications including a raised roof, and a partially removed and recently panelled second floor wall. A similar fieldstone addition was built onto the south gable end around 1830. To gain access from the original unit a doorway was broken through the wall at the stairs considerably shortening the fireplace. The later wing was in virtual ruins a few years ago when the owners found it necessary to remove all but the foundation wall.

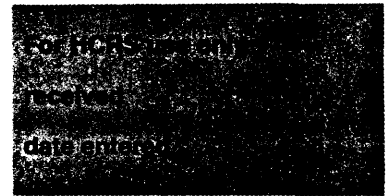
There is a single room on the interior of the house. Exposed beams and rough plaster stonewalls evidence the rudimentary nature of the dwelling. The fireplace and small winding stairway in the south gable end attest to the 18th century origin of the building. The attic, or loft, is unfinished and exhibits random width floors and exposed rafters. Although most of the roof rafters are intact, the roof itself has been recently replaced.

A photograph, circa 1900, and a subdivision map prepared in 1960 show numerous outbuildings between the Main House and the Van Cleve farmhouse. The photograph shows at least eight frame outbuildings--including two large barns, two small barns, a dairy barn, a carriage shed, and a corn crib--and several wooden fences on well maintained plots of land.

The present Hopewell Township Poor Farm consists of the remaining buildings and sites on two lots of land. Lot 83, 2.256 acres, is the location site of the Van Cleve Homestead ("the old house by the road"). It also contains a modern house built in the

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

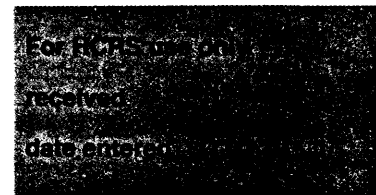
Description (cont.)

1960's, a storage shed and the former locations of most of the outbuildings. These barns and related farm buildings were torn down after 1951. The modern house was included in the application since it appears that portions of one of the outbuilding foundations were incorporated in the house.

Lot 84, 2.46 acres, is the site of the 1843 Poor House and the 1858 wash house. These houses are nestled in a beautiful quiet valley of rolling hills, ponds and farmland which is being slowly developed into an affluent upper-class community.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 3

Page 1

Significance (cont.)

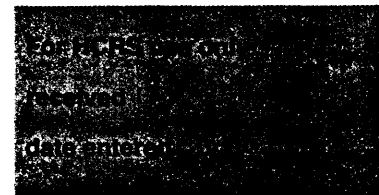
In April 1821, after being rebuffed by Trenton and other unnamed neighboring townships in an overture to establish a joint almshouse, Hopewell voted to go on its own and purchase a site for a local poorhouse. By May 21, 1821, a 128 acre property, the old Van Cleve Farmstead, was purchased as a Poor Farm, and preparations were begun to start receiving township indigents. While not certain, it is most likely that the "old house by the road" served as the original Poor Farm residence, although the number of people able to be housed comfortably must have been quite limited. By April 1822, the Township Poor Farm managers were again seeking other partners for the poor farm venture. This time it was Lawrence Township which chose not to join. By 1829, Hopewell Township had begun exploring the possibility of "repairing or rebuilding the poorhouse". In 1830, a committee was authorized to purchase material to rebuild the structure. This was conceivably the occasion when the rear roof line on Colonel Van Cleve's homestead was altered, the fireplace reworked and an addition built on to the north gable end, doubling the capacity of the original structure.⁴

Following the rebuilding, the Poor Farm seems to have become a more viable operation, and in 1841 Hopewell voted not to join in a proposed Mercer County almshouse. In April 1843, the Township authorized the construction of a new poorhouse, now the largest building on the site. It is curious that despite the proximity of the Hopewell Township Poor Farm to Trenton, Dorthea Dix in her Memorial (1848) to the Legislature on the condition of New Jersey's poor and insane does not mention the Hopewell Poor Farm, although it is inconceivable that her efforts on behalf of the indigent could not have in some way affected the treatment of the poor in Hopewell Township. Despite the establishment of the State Lunatic Asylum at Trenton in 1845, Hopewell continued to maintain the insane at the Poor Farm until 1869.⁵

The operating principle behind the Poor Farm was simple: inmates were expected to work for their keep. According to the Minutes of Hopewell Township Committee (Poor Book for Hopewell

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Significance (cont.)

Township, No. 2 1801), the Township made up the difference between the proceeds from the sale of produce from the farm and expenses, including the steward's annual salary. The system worked well so long as the number of inmates remained few and able-bodied. In some years, the Poor Farm was completely self-sustaining.⁶ The tendency of late 19th and earlier 20th century opinion to favor "indoor", as opposed to "outdoor" relief, permitted the retention of the almshouse for the care of the poor and chronically ill. Legislation of the poor relief, did much to strengthen the hand of local authorities in managing local assistance programs and enabled the perpetuation of the local almshouse as a local option. The passage of later legislation mandating foster care for children in public almshouses (1889), old age pensions (1935), and large-scale New Deal public assistance programs marked the end of the local poor farm. By 1941, only 14 counties and 10 municipalities including Hopewell, maintained a local almshouse. During its final days, the Hopewell Township Poor Farm was retained to take care mostly of "tramps", and then only because farming operations at the Poor Farm generated income for the supporting municipalities of Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough, and Pennington Borough. When the Hopewell Township Poor Farm closed in 1951, it was the last operating municipal almshouse in the state.

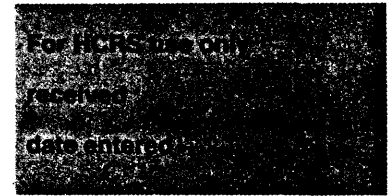
In addition to its significance as a 19th and 20th century municipal almshouse, the Hopewell Township Poor Farm is significant for its surviving 18th century stone house. The Van Cleve House is an example of a mid-18th century type stone dwelling with a typical front facade, single room and loft configuration and cooking fireplace next to a corner winding stair in the gable end wall. Prior to its incorporation in the Poor Farm, it was the home of Colonel John Van Cleve, an officer in the Hunterdon County Militia under Captain Henry Phillip during the America Revolution and later (1805) a Lieutenant Colonel in the same militia.

1,2

Stanton, Martin W. History of Public Poor Relief in New Jersey, 1609-1934 Dissertation, Fordham University, 1934

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

Significance (cont.)

3,4,5,6

Minutes of Hopewell Township Committee

7

Stafford, Paul T. Government and the Needy, Princeton 1941, p.1646
In 1883 the State Bureau of Statistics reported 41 poorhouses in operation; 12 were county-run, 29 municipal and 71 townships did not use poorhouses, but continued to "farm out" their poor (Martin W. Stanton History of Poor Relief in New Jersey, 1609-1934, diss. (New York, 1934), p.46.

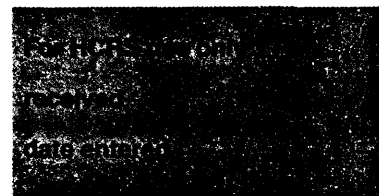
"By 1915 the New Jersey State Charities Aid and Prison Reform Association was able to report that the 'almshouse of tradition has practically disappeared from New Jersey'. There remain, however, a few unsatisfactory town and township almshouses...It is reported that the 12 county almshouses were well equipped and making constant progress, whereas only a few of the city almshouses, notably those of Newark, Trenton and Orange, were maintaining good standards." (Stanton, op. cit., p.50)

8

Ege, Ralph Pioneers of Old Hopewell Hopewell, N.J. 1908 (Reprint 1963 by Hopewell Museum)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

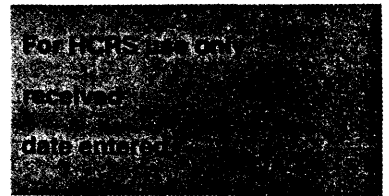
Page 1

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Charity and Correction in New Jersey New Brunswick, n.d.
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**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

Bibliography (cont.)

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N.J. Liber A-121

Minutes of Hopewell Township Committee, Hopewell Township Hall,
Titusville, N.J. 1721--1951 (Poor Farm Book of Hopewell 1801
is housed in Hopewell Museum). First Book of Hopewell
Township Minutes is housed in Special Collection, Rutgers
University, New Brunswick.

New Jersey Calendar of Wills, New Jersey Bureau of Archives and
History Files 939J, 862J, 2706J

Revolutionary War Records (MMS No. 732) Bureau of Archives and
History, New Jersey State Library, Trenton, N.J.

Survey: Proposed Minor Subdivision of Property of Charles E. Haynes,
Hopewell Township, Mercer Co., N.J. August 24, 1960

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Stanton, Martin W.
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Dissertation, Fordham University 1934

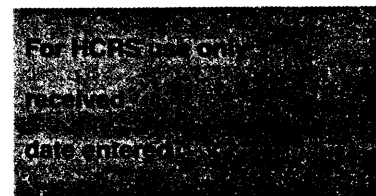
Town Records of Hopewell Compiled by Lida Cokefair Gedney, Reg-
istrar, Published by the New Jersey Society of the Colo-
nial Dames of America 1931

Trenton Federalist, March 26, 1821: Public Sale Notice for property
of the late Colonel John Van Cleve

Trenton Times, June 1951: Sale notice for the same property,
Hopewell Township Poor Farm

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 3

Bibliography (cont.)

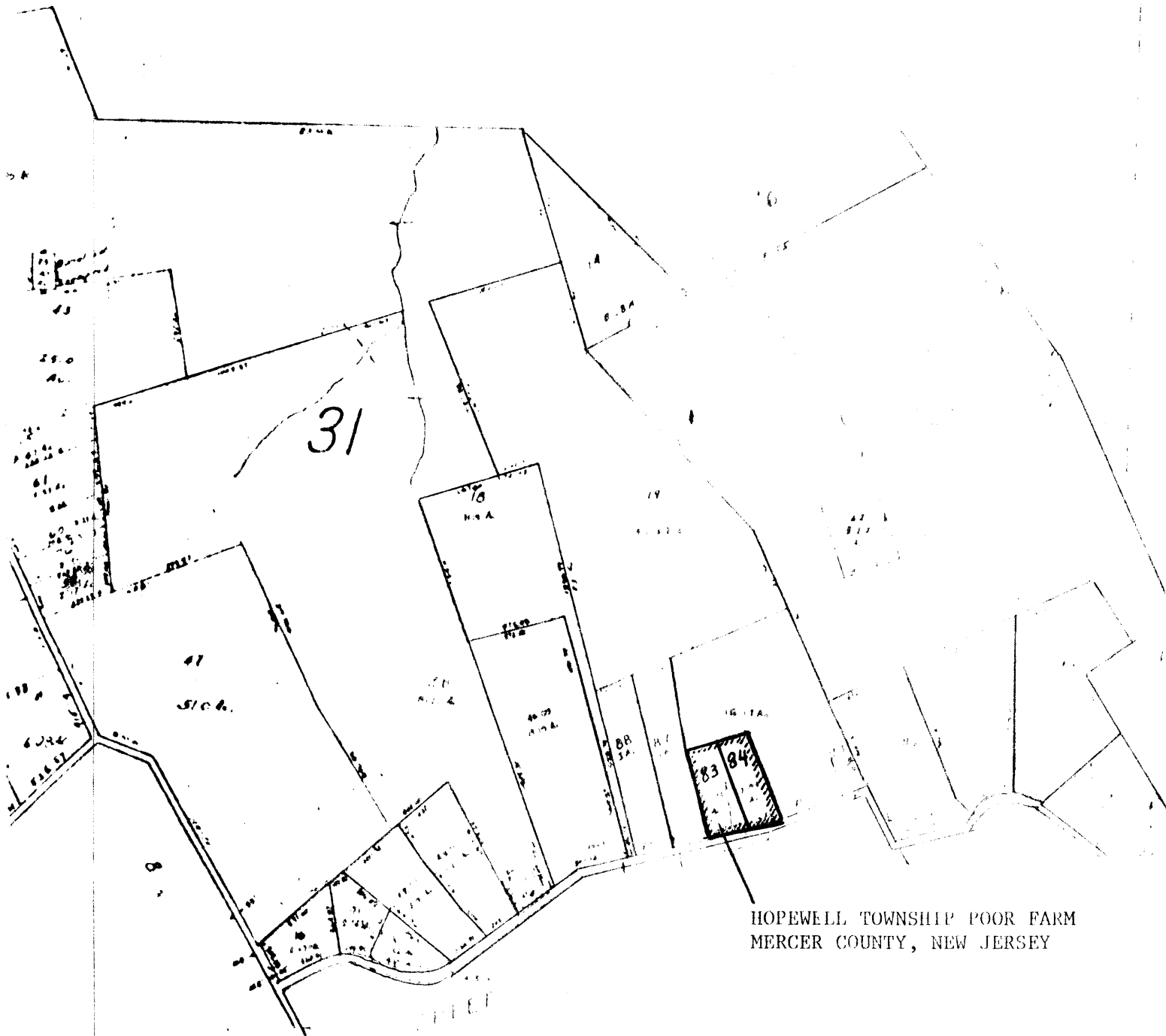
Maps

Map of Mercer County, Hopewell Twp., N.J. 1949

Map of Mercer County, Hopewell Twp., N.J. 1875 (Mercer County Atlas,
1875)

Map of Mercer County, Hopewell Twp., N.J. 1903



Map of Philadelphia & Vicinity 1860 (Princeton University Map
Division)

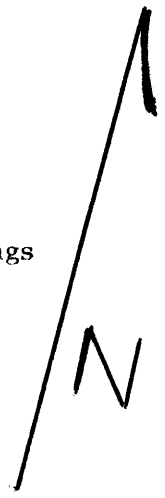


HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP POOR FARM
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP POOR FARM
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Site plan map.

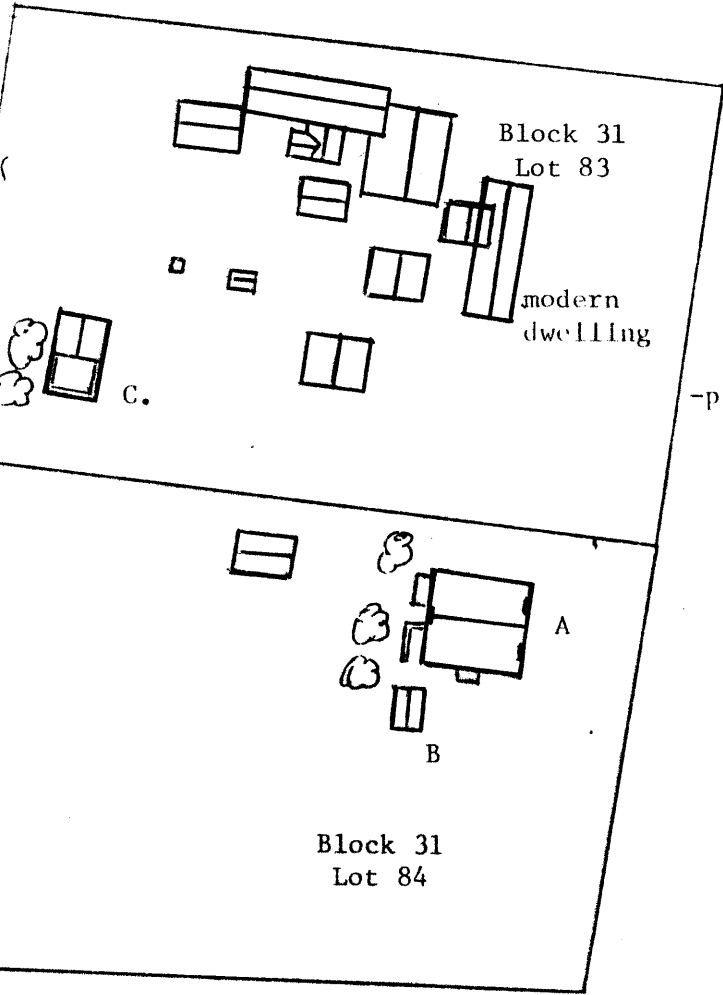
-  - Extant buildings
-  - Location of original buildings (approximate)



53' E 225.00'
205.00'

STRIP OF LAND TO BE DEDICATED TO
HOPEWELL TWP FOR ROAD WIDENING

301.75'
300' N 20° 03' W
712.30'
350'
700.20'



-property line

- A- Main house
- B- Wash house
- C- Old Van Cleve farmhouse

Scale 1" = 100'
Aug. 24, 1960

Surveyed by H.H. Lee, Jr.
N.J. Land Surveyor #7455

Buildings are not to scale.
Map revised 10/1982 by Terry Karschner

150
150 N 28° 04' W
225.00'

POOR TOWNSHIP ROAD

ROSEHILL TOWNSHIP POOR FARM
ROSEHILL TOWNSHIP
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Views of farm taken around 1900.

A. Main house c. 1843

B. Wash house c. 1830

C. Old Van Cleve farmhouse,
18th century.

All other buildings shown in
this view have been destroyed.

