

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0668460

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RECEIVED	MAY 10 1978
DATE ENTERED	DEC 14 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

John Parker Tavern

AND/OR COMMON

Bernardsville Library

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2 Morristown Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bernardsville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

5th

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

034

COUNTY

Somerset

CODE

037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER: Library

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Bernardsville Library Association

STREET & NUMBER

2 Morristown Road

CITY, TOWN

Bernardsville

STATE

New Jersey

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Somerset County Hall of Records, (Book of Deeds X19 p. 16)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1962

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation, 109 W. State Street

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John Parker Tavern is one of the earliest buildings in the Somerset Hills region. It is a 1 1/2 story gable roofed structure with a one story full length portico. The building is simple and austere and lacks ornamentation, yet it projects a pleasant appearance. It has chimneys which taper at the cap on each gable end, and the clapboards on the gable ends are original.

The front facade is 5 bays with 6 over 6 windows and louvered shutters. A later 19th century 2 bay dormer with 2 over 2 windows surmounts the center of the structure. The porch is supported by 6 reeded columns with capitals.

The structure has a center hall plan with one room on either side with enclosed end chimneys.

The building has had several extensions applied to the rear facade throughout the 20th century. Although they are rather large to accommodate a growing library, its current use, they are applied so as to be well screened when viewing the front facade of the tavern.

A one story two-bay, flat roofed stucco addition was applied to the rear in 1903. In 1969 a two-story 5 bay, flat roofed stucco addition was added.

The interior is disposed as follows: On the first floor there are two main rooms, one large, used now as a reading room and the other divided into two smaller rooms. The second floor was one large room used for travelers to the tavern for sleeping quarters. It is now used as office space for library personnel.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Parker Tavern is the oldest still extant tavern on record in Bernardsville. It is a representative example of crossroads community tavern styles. The Parker Tavern also is significant for its adaptive re-use as a town library, having been opened as such in 1903. The tavern was the scene of a theft by a Tory spy during the Revolutionary War and a regular stopping place by troops of the Continental Army.

COMMERCE

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the tavern was one of the most important institutions in the country. Called variously inns, taverns, ordinaries, victualling houses or hotels, these facilities provided rest, food, and libation for weary travellers passing through an area. The sight of a tavern was a most welcome one to a weary traveler.

The tavern was also the second most important building in the community. Next to the church, the tavern provided a town or village with a central focus in which businesses and people could conduct their affairs and exchange ideas, being among the few structures open to the public.

While an urban inn or tavern had a definite social hierarchy in which certain classes were excluded, the rural inns were not able to discriminate as freely and consequently entertained a more diversified clientele with merchants, travelers, and gentlemen often sharing the same room, if not the same bed.

Although the date of the tavern is not known, it was in operation during the Revolutionary War by a Captain John Parker of the 1st Battalion of Somerset County.

Parker Tavern was operated for many years by various owners until 1840, when it was again sold and the new owner chose to use it as a private residence.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Abstracts of New Jersey Colonial Documents. Vol. 35 p. 298.
 Among the Blue Hills - Bernardsville - A History. Bernardsville History Book Committee, 1973. p. 139-142.
 Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church Records.
 Somerset County Deed Books
 V-5 p. 389-391, P-4 p. 542-544, W p.600-601, L p.649-650, K p.856-857

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	536420	4507110	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies city Block 66, Lot 16 and is approximately 200' X 150' in size.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY (Nanci Kostrub Batchelor, Office of Historic Preservation, Trenton, 609-292-2023)

NAME / TITLE

Valerie Barnes Cavnar

ORGANIZATION

Bernardsville Library Association

STREET & NUMBER

Lloyd Road

CITY OR TOWN

Bernardsville

DATE

TELEPHONE

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 National Park Service.

Deputy

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

John Wilson

TITLE

Deputy Commissioner, Department of Environ. Prot.

DATE

4-15-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William Lebrich

DATE

2/14/78

ATTEST: *William Lebrich*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 2/14/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

John Parker Tavern
Bernardsville
Somerset County
New Jersey 034
CONTINUATION SHEET

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MILITARY

The tavern was a regular stopping place for Continental troops enroute from Pluckemin to General Washington's Headquarters in Morristown. It was also near the Jockey Hollow encampment in nearby Harding Township.

The tavern was also used by General Anthony Wayne for overnight stays when he was in the area. It was on one of those visits that he had some important documents and dispatches stolen. After making a careful investigation of the tavern habitues, it was discovered that an occasional guest known as Dr. Byram was really Aaron Wilde, a well known British spy in the area. He was eventually captured and hanged as a spy.

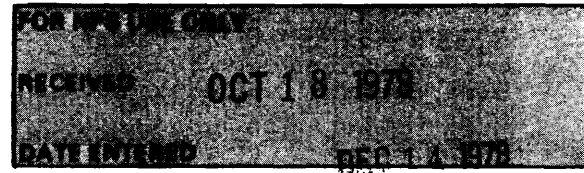
In 1902, Mrs. William Post and Mrs. Francis P. Magoun began a campaign to raise money to purchase and renovate Parker Tavern and turn it into a library. Through their efforts \$12,000 was raised, and the deed was signed February 3, 1903. The remainder of the money was spent for repairs and construction of a fire-proof stackroom. The Bernardsville Library opened October 2, 1903 and has remained in use ever since. Another addition was added in 1970. Instead of moving to new quarters, the tavern has remained in use as the main reading rooms. The addition is well-screened from view of the front facade of the tavern, and therefore demonstrates how a building can be revitalized and adapted to necessary changes.

The John Parker Tavern is a representative example of crossroads tavern construction of the mid-18th century. Simple and austere it is a building that served a specific purpose and yet was pleasing in form. Despite the additions and alterations, it still exhibits its early tavern form and as such merits inclusion in the National Register.

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The John Parker Tavern was built sometime prior to the Revolutionary War. It was owned and operated by John Parker until his death in 1781. In 1803 the tavern was run by Blicher Whitenack. Later it was operated by Peter Blair, followed by his son John. Several others followed until in 1840 the tavern was sold by Vincent Brees to Roderick Alexander Mitchell who decided to use it as a private residence. Mr. Mitchell operated a small post office from the house, at his own expense. In 1881, following Mitchell's death, the building passed to his daughter, Mrs. Robert Hanna, who, in turn, sold it to Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Ballentine. The Ballentines sold the building to the Bernardsville Library Association in 1903.

In 1902, Mrs. William Post and Mrs. Francis Magoun saw a need for a public library and found a vacant building that they felt would fill that need. After nearly a years work, they raised the money necessary to purchase the building and used the remaining funds for repairs and conversion to library spacing.

In 1932 the need for larger quarters became apparent. Instead of abandoning the former tavern and moving to a new structure, it was decided to add on to the existing structure so that it could continue in its function as the town library. In 1970, another addition was constructed in such a way so that it would not detract from the taverns setting and proportions. The tavern has become the main reading rooms, while the stacks have been removed to the additions.

The community of Bernardsville takes a great deal of pride in the Parker Tavern, in both its history as a Revolutionary tavern and its continuing vital role as the town's library.

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Somerset County Historical Quarterly. Vol. 1, p.217.

Stryker, William. Official Register of the Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Revolutionary War. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1967. p.403.

Tax Ratables - Bernards Township, 1788.