

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO. **8**

HISTORIC NAME: Joe Jefferson Clubhouse
LOCATION: 29 East Saddle River Rd.

COMMON NAME:
BLOCK/LOT 2002/7

MUNICIPALITY: Saddle River
USGS QUAD: Park Ridge

COUNTY: Bergen
UTM REFERENCES:

OWNER/ADDRESS: Joe Jefferson Club
East Saddle River Road, Saddle River

Zone/Northing/Easting

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: 1925

Source of Date: Chet Ranger

Architect:

Builder: Canadians

Style: log cabin/bungalow

Form/Plan Type: rectangular

Number of Stories: 1 1/2

Foundation: low, material not visible
American

Exterior Wall Fabric: chestnut logs, notched with projecting ends

Penetration: 3x2, metal casement windows

Roof/Chimneys: low pitched gable extending over porches; boulder end chimney at west

Additional Architectural Description:

Building faces N with porch wrapping around N and part of W facade. Recessed corner porch at SE corner. Central entrance at N opening into large room running full E-W length of building. Exposed log ceiling trusses, exposed log walls on interior. Rustic decoration with mounted fish, mounted animal heads, pictures of Joe Jefferson, large painting by Joe Jefferson. Appears to retain original lighting, rustic furniture, et on south side of building are the kitchen, bathrooms, storage rooms.

PHOTO Negative File No. 5-13, slides

Map (Indicate North)



8 **SITING, BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION, AND RELATED STRUCTURES:** Cabin faces north and the pond. Cabin is in woods near east edge of ravine of Saddle River. To west is river. To north down a steep slope are fresh water ponds improved for raising fish. To south is c. 1930's 1 story frame building of unobstrusive design. To north by fishing pond is a c. 1930's log lean-to.

9.5 acre property.
Block 2002, lot 7.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban Suburban Scattered Buildings
Open Space Woodland Residential Agricultural Village
Industrial Downtown Commerical Highway Commercial Other

SIGNIFICANCE: The Joe Jefferson Clubhouse, a log structure erected in 1925 for a private fishing club, is significant in regional architectural history and in social and recreational history. The property's association with Joe Jefferson, the name-sake of the club, is also of interest.

The clubhouse is a very well preserved example of early 20th century log cabin, an architectural type rare in Bergen County. It is the second most architecturally distinguished early 20th century log structure in the county. The first is the Teaneck Bahai Temple, located at 130 Evergreen Place, Teaneck (survey #0260-14). It is a 2½ story structure erected in 1916 which has decorative trim and railings of light branches and twigs. The Teaneck log building has overhanging eaves and projecting balconies of Swiss Chalet character. The Joe Jefferson Clubhouse has a sturdy unadorned bungalow appearance with one-and-one-half story massing and broad, low-pitched gable roof extending over porches. The employment of logs for the walls of both buildings represents the intentional use of rustic rather than traditional materials, in order to celebrate the beauty and wonder of nature. Log structures of this picturesque type originated in the Adirondack camps and hotels of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Such buildings were most often erected for wilderness recreational facilities. Magazines like House and Garden, Town and Country, the American Architect and The Craftsman (cont.)

ORIGINAL USE: fishing club

PRESENT USE: fishing club

PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Poor

REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes Possible No Part of District

THREATS TO SITE: Roads Development Zoning Deterioration
No Threat Other

COMMENTS:

Although the club does not appear currently threatened, the rising land-values in Saddle River are potentially a threat. During the Depression the club sold some of its property which was located on the east side of East Saddle River Road.

REFERENCES: NJHSI 0258-8

Interview with Chet Ranger,

October 1983.

Ho-Ho-Kus, 1908-1983, published by the 75th Anniversary Committee, Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ
1983 p. 147.

1887 Driving Map: Jefferson

RECORDED BY: TRB
ORGANIZATION: BCOC&HA

DATE: 10-1983

SIGNIFICANCE: (continued)

published designs for log buildings during the peak of popularity of the mode in the early 20th century. It is likely these published designs influence the design of the Saddle River building.

The Joe Jefferson Clubhouse has a wooded setting which enhances its architecture. The building according to club tradition was built by Canadians from local chestnut logs. It retains its original rustic furniture. Most of its interior is devoted to a single large reception room which retains the ambience of a 1925 interior with open, exposed log ceiling, exposed log walls, large boulder fireplace at one end, and mounted fish and animals.

The property on which the Clubhouse is located, known as "The Ponds", was purchased in 1874 by Joe Jefferson (1829-1905), the famous actor who lived nearby in the Terhune-Ranlett House at 933 East Saddle River Road in Ho-Ho-Kus (on State and National Registers is part of thematic nomination of early stone houses). Jefferson, famous for his portrayal of Rip Van Winkle in 1866, is one of America's most important late 19th century thespians. He was president of the Players Club and received honorary degrees from Harvard and Yale. Jefferson was also a painter, writer, gardener, and fisherman. This site represents his interest in gardening and fishing. Jefferson had a lily pond here and used the property for fishing in the Saddle River.

After Jefferson's death in 1905, this property was acquired by five men who formed a fishing club named after Jefferson. They turned the pond into a pond for raising fish. In 1925 the log clubhouse was erected. The club continues to use the clubhouse for its original function and have intentionally retained its 1925 appearance. The facility is an important survivor of Saddle River's early 20th century history when recreation was a significant factor in the borough's development.



View looking north from front yard of Clubhouse showing fish ponds. Neg. file #5-14.