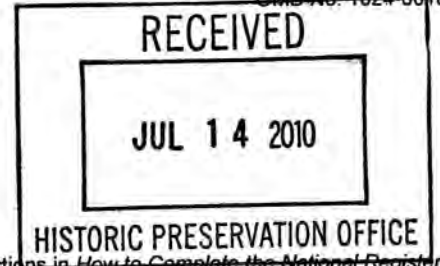


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any 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 instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

08-1574-51B

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church of Pennington  
other names/site number Hopewell Presbyterian Church

2. Location

street & number 13 South Main Street  not for publication  
city or town Pennington Borough  vicinity  
state New Jersey code NJ county Mercer code 021 zip code 08534

3. State/Federal 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.)

[Signature] Date 6/2/11  
Signature of certifying official

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 8.24.11  
Edson H. Beall

**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**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
3		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)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/ Gothic

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Brownstone/Brick
- walls Brick
- Brownstone
- roof Slate
- other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

See continuation sheets.

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First Presbyterian Church of Pennington  
Mercer County, New Jersey  
Description

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The First Presbyterian Church of Pennington is a religious institution in the center of the village of Pennington, New Jersey. It stands in close proximity to the village's principal intersection of Main Street and Delaware Avenue, a property that it has occupied continuously since 1725 (Photo 1).<sup>1</sup> The church, constructed in 1875, and the associated cemetery to its south, which dates to the original occupation of the property by the Presbyterian Church, comprise 1.35 acres of Block 601, Lot 20. The church is bordered to the north by several 20<sup>th</sup> century structures that accommodate two fellowship halls, classrooms, and offices. These structures are, in the majority, less than fifty years of age. A second, currently unrelated, cemetery borders the church to the east, and is separated from the nominated property by a paved parking area. The nominated property includes the church and its associated contributing resources: the cemetery to the south of the church, and an 18<sup>th</sup> century churchyard wall that extends along Main Street.

The Victorian Gothic style church was completed in 1875 (Photo 2). Alterations have been minor, and although portions of this building are currently in poor condition, it retains a high degree of architectural integrity and stands as an important and distinctive local landmark. It is a large, rectangular building, two-and-a-half stories tall and five bays wide. Constructed of red brick, it features brownstone trim that includes the foundation, stringcourses, pointed arched window and door heads, buttress caps, basement and water table, and front entrance platforms and steps (Photo 3). The building, capped by a broad, steeply pitched slate roof, is oriented with its gable end facing Main Street. The gable is flanked by two towers. The south tower is square in plan and is divided into three parts vertically by brownstone belt courses. It has three brownstone finials at the top surmounting octagonal brick corner piers with diagonal buttresses at their bases (Photo 4). The north tower has four vertical stages, and is surmounted by a flared, octagonal spire covered with slate shingles (Photo 5). It also has circular, louvered openings at the third level where a large bell is located. There are entrances facing the street through each of the towers, giving access to stairways and the sanctuary.

The central, gabled volume of the church is three bays wide and two and one half stories tall, and retains its original features (Photos 2-5). It contains a central, double-leafed entrance with three lancet windows above at the second level and a louvered oculus at the attic level. The central bay is flanked by additional triple lancet windows at the ground floor and double, engaged lancets at the second. All windows and doors are capped by pointed brownstone arches in the Gothic style. The gable is articulated by corbelled brick "drops" as is the north tower. The south tower is capped by simple brick panels and fascia between the corner piers and finials (Photo 4).

The side (north and south) elevations of the church are articulated by a corbelled, brick cornice and tall, lancet windows containing stained glass, which are capped with pointed arches built of

<sup>1</sup> The earliest building on the site was constructed in 1724-25, and located approximately 50 yards south of the present building. The first church building to occupy the exact location of the current church was constructed in 1848, and was the third building constructed by the congregation. ("Building for God, 1709-1952, Dedication Services May 18, 1952." First Presbyterian Church of Pennington Archives.)

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brownstone (Photos 6-8). The north elevation abuts a lower, two-story educational/fellowship wing (Photos 13-14). The south side is open to the driveway that leads to the back of the church property through its historic cemetery (Photos 9-10).

In 1891, the church was extended to the east to accommodate a new pipe organ (Photos 11-12). This one-story, one-bay addition has been the only change in the essential form of the building since its construction. The addition rests on a brick foundation and has been clad with vinyl siding; it is capped by a shed roof. On the interior of the building, a plaster arch decorates the opening of the organ loft at the sanctuary side.

The sanctuary is a large open space with a vaulted ceiling. The walls and ceiling are plaster. There are two aisles separating three sections of wooden box pews, and two choir boxes diagonally flanking a central raised altar area (Photos 20-24). Both side walls are detailed with stained glass lancet windows, decorative crown molding, and wood wainscoting. Two rows of pendant light fixtures hang from the ceiling over the aisles; recessed lighting has also been added (Photos 21 and 27). The rear wall of the sanctuary has a central entryway to the narthex with accordion divider walls which can be drawn across the opening to separate the spaces (Photo 19). To the left and right of this opening are doors to the narthex that provide direct access to the stairs leading to a balcony (Photos 26-27).

The balcony spans the width of the rear of the sanctuary. It is supported by four fluted columns with composite capitals (Photos 25-28). The balcony railing is ornamented with a blind Gothic paneled frieze (Photos 26-27). The balcony has additional seating space and is currently used by the bell choir. The area behind the balcony and over the narthex has been divided into two classrooms and storage closets (Photos 29-30). To either side of this area is a stair leading to the north and south towers.

The narthex is an open room with plaster walls and wood wainscoting. It is lighted by a chandelier hanging from a central ceiling medallion (Photos 18-19). The space serves as a reception area for the sanctuary with a registry book, couches, chairs, and literature displays. The side balcony stair halls are utilitarian in nature with coat racks and a small restroom (Photos 15-17).

As the congregation grew and needs changed, expansion campaigns were undertaken on the north side of the church building. These newer structures date to 1927 (renovated and expanded substantially in 1963-1965, and 1983) and 2000 (Photos 13-14).

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The south end of the lot comprises the First Presbyterian Church Cemetery, which dates to the earliest occupation of the property by the Presbyterians in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Photos 6-10).<sup>2</sup> The cemetery is separated from Main Street by the churchyard wall, which has been in place since the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Photos 6 and 9). A plaque affixed to a pier at the northern end of the wall notes "British Troops Exercised Their Horses Over This Wall, December 1776." (Photo 9) The wall appears to have been stuccoed and repaired a number of times, but its continuing presence makes it a significant landscape feature within the nominated property. The cemetery itself retains a number of older headstones dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, most of them simple with little ornament, although a small number of taller obelisk style markers are scattered throughout the cemetery (Figure 10).

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<sup>2</sup> Historic maps from the 19<sup>th</sup> century reveal that the Cemetery initially extended further to the east of the current boundary. Today that area is occupied by the Pennington Cemetery Association and is not affiliated with the Presbyterian Church.

**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 a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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

**Period of Significance**

1875

**Significant Dates**

1875

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

James Bird (Architect)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other  
Name of Repository:  
First Presbyterian Church of Pennington Archives

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Mercer County, New Jersey  
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### Summary

The First Presbyterian Church of Pennington was completed in 1875. Designed by Lambertville architect James Bird, it is a red brick building in the Victorian Gothic style, featuring decorative brownstone trim, narrow lancet windows, and a tall, four-story tower with a flared, octagonal spire. It is locally significant, and meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as one of the best examples of the Victorian Gothic style in the region, representative of a trend in Presbyterian church design during the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as the work of an important local architect.

### Early History

In 1706, the Presbytery of Philadelphia expanded to include congregations in New Jersey. The First Presbyterian Church of Pennington was originally established as the Hopewell Presbyterian Church by 1709. The formation of a Presbyterian congregation in Hopewell Township by this date makes it the oldest church organization within the township.<sup>1</sup> The present church building is the fourth to stand on this property. It was completed in 1875, on the foundations of the third, 1848 building that was destroyed by fire on January 25, 1874.

The congregation's first church was built in 1724-1725.<sup>2</sup> It was a frame building measuring 30'x 34,' with shingled sides and roof. The building was located in the center of the cemetery, approximately fifty yards south of the present building.<sup>3</sup> This building was not only used as a gathering place for worship, but also played an important role in the education of the town youth: the Presbyterian congregation "was responsible for establishing the schoolhouse in the village, and, throughout the colonial era, education in Pennington remained closely affiliated with the Presbyterian faith."<sup>4</sup>

The Great Awakening caused dissension within the congregation during the 1730s. Disagreements in the education of ministers caused the congregation to split into two groups who worshiped separately until the schism was healed in 1758. The reunion of the two separate congregations soon led to the need

<sup>1</sup> R.W. Hunter and R.L. Porter, *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, Township of Hopewell, 1990, 90. Families who formed the early congregation came from East and West Jersey, Long Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Scotland, and England. (York, "Highlights of Our Heritage," May 1985, 5.) The congregation became officially reincorporated as the Pennington Presbyterian Church in 1876 with the establishment of a new Hopewell Presbyterian Church in the village of Hopewell that same year (Hunter and Porter, 197). With respect to other local Presbyterian congregations, The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville is slightly older (organized in 1698), as is the First Presbyterian Church of Ewing (organized 1703-1708 and also originally known as the First Presbyterian Church of Hopewell Township). The First Presbyterian Church of Trenton is slightly younger (organized in 1712).

<sup>2</sup> Prior to the construction of their first building, the congregation met in area homes and barns, in the Pennytown schoolhouse, and at existing Presbyterian meeting houses at Maidenhead (Lawrence) and what later became known as Ewing. (York, "Highlights of Our Heritage," 6.)

<sup>3</sup> "Building for God, 1709-1952, Dedication Services May 18, 1952," First Presbyterian Church of Pennington, 1952 (First Presbyterian Church of Pennington Archives).

<sup>4</sup> Hunter and Porter, 90.

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for a larger meeting space, which in turn brought about the construction of a new building completed in 1766. The new building, just to the south of the first church, was a brick building topped with a bell tower. Two doors were located on the south side, with a wineglass-shaped pulpit located at the north end. This building was nearly two-and-a-half times the size of the earlier one, measuring 45' by 64'.<sup>5</sup> During the Revolutionary war, this building was occupied by British Troops who caused damage to the church interior and documents.

In the years after the war, the First Presbyterian Church of Pennington's congregation continued to grow and to influence the development of the local community. "In the years between 1825 and 1850, it was the development of three private educational facilities (two of which were associated with the Methodist Church, the third with the Presbyterian Church) that provided the principal stimulus for the growth of the village."<sup>6</sup> Specifically, the Presbyterians were associated with a new boarding school for girls (which was known by several names including the Pennington Female Seminary, Pennington Young Ladies Seminary, Pennington Female Academy, and Evergreen Hall Young Ladies Seminary) that was constructed in 1836 by a private individual but acquired by the Presbyterian Church in 1841. A high style brick building, it was converted for residential use in 1890.<sup>7</sup> The Presbyterian religion was having a continued influence on the development of education and economic growth within the town of Pennington. This period also brought another expansion of the church and the decision to build a third church building.

The third building was a brick, Gothic Revival building, completed in 1848 on the site of the present church. "The building is in the Gothic order, having in front a buttress and spire 160 feet high. The whole length of the building is 103 feet, and the width 54. The ceiling of the church is a Gothic arch, with purlins and brackets; and the pews, gallery, pulpit and windows conform finely to the order."<sup>8</sup> This building was designed by William Johnson, a Philadelphia architect, and built by Augustine Van Kirk of Pennington.<sup>9</sup>

Further evidence that the Pennington Presbyterian Church continued to grow and exert local influence in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century is found in the 1838 formation of the Titusville Presbyterian Church, which originated as an adjunct to the Pennington Presbyterian Church. The Titusville congregation incorporated as a separate organization in 1844, and completed construction of their own place of worship in the village of Titusville in 1855.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup>York, "Highlights of Our Heritage," 8.

<sup>6</sup>Hunter and Porter, 93.

<sup>7</sup>Hunter and Porter, 93, 221. The building remains in private use today.

<sup>8</sup>*State Gazette*, Trenton, NJ, 12 August 1848. (Pennington Presbyterian Church Archives, 01.17.05.01.)

<sup>9</sup>*State Gazette*.

<sup>10</sup>Hunter and Porter, 197.



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### Construction of the Present First Presbyterian Church of Pennington

On Sunday, January 25, 1874, following the worship service, a fire destroyed the 1848 building. The cause was not determined definitively, but the stoves to either side of the pulpit were suspected.<sup>11</sup> Photographs of the building following the fire show that it was completely gutted and only portions of the walls remained standing. The church leadership began planning for a new building immediately, and while work was underway the congregation gathered in the public school on Academy Street.<sup>12</sup>

The cornerstone for the new building was laid on May 5, 1874, and the church was dedicated on January 14, 1875. The building was constructed on the foundations of the earlier building, using the same building footprint, measuring 103 feet by 54 feet.<sup>13</sup> The new church cost \$27,000 to construct, and seated 550 on the main floor with 100 above in the balcony at the rear of the sanctuary. The building was also described as having a lecture room on the first floor within the Narthex, and a school room directly above it on the balcony level.<sup>14</sup>

In the year 1891, the church expanded to accommodate a pipe organ. This meant adding an organ loft to the east elevation of the church, behind the pulpit. In 1912, minor renovations, largely of an aesthetic nature, were made to the church interior. Work took two months and included finishes in the audience room, the Sunday school, and lecture rooms. A contemporary newspaper article described the interior: "The tints of the wall decorations of the church are in ecru, cream and brown, with gilt border effect on side walls and arch of columns in rear of pulpit platform. They harmonize with the woodwork and hardwood floor, the aisles being covered with rich green bordered carpet."<sup>15</sup>

In 1927, a new building to accommodate the growing Sunday School population was constructed to the north of the church.<sup>16</sup> As was common with many Presbyterian churches, windows in the sanctuary had historically contained clear glass, but in 1927, while the new church school building was under construction, they were replaced with stained glass memorial windows.

In 1949, following additional growth of the parish, a committee was formed to investigate the building needs of the church. It concluded that an addition to the 1927 building was needed to accommodate additional classrooms. New classrooms were also provided on the second floor (balcony level) of the church. Also included in the program were new toilets, electrification of the existing pipe organ and enlargement of the choir loft. Plans were drawn by Architect Martin Wing, a member of the congregation, and were presented in September 1950.<sup>17</sup> Although construction could not begin until the

<sup>11</sup> York, "Highlights of Our Heritage," 15.

<sup>12</sup> York, "Highlights of Our Heritage," 15. The church was uninsured at the time of the fire. ("Building for God.")

<sup>13</sup> York, "Highlights of Our Heritage," 15.

<sup>14</sup> "Pennington Presbyterian Church; Pastor Allen Favors Readers of 'The Post' with a Brief Sketch of Its Career, Extending Over Two Centuries." (First Presbyterian Church of Pennington Archives, 01.17.05.09.)

<sup>15</sup> "Presbyterians Reopen Church," clipping, September 18, 1912 (First Presbyterian Church of Pennington Archives).

<sup>16</sup> York, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Building for God."

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spring and until funds were appropriated, the Men's Bible class undertook construction on the new classrooms in the second floor balcony. The Men's Bible Class built and painted nine classrooms from January to May. Labor and some materials were donated by members of the congregation.

The Pennington Presbyterian Church's Building Fund Campaign booklet of June 10, 1951 listed contemporary improvements to the building: a new nursery and beginner's and choir rooms in the church basement; repairs to the church including roof, brickwork, painting, and redecoration of the church interior; conversion of the church balcony into nine modern classrooms and an assembly room; new ladies rest room in the main church building; new central heating plant and chimney; enlargement of choir loft and restoration and modernization of the organ.

The church was damaged during a wind storm in November 1950, requiring immediate repairs to the building's roof and ceiling. Van Lieu and Van Horne, a contracting firm from Flemington, NJ was hired based on their previous work on the church and repairs began in June 1951 with the demolition of the chimney. Salvaged bricks were used to construct a new 72' chimney on a concrete base.<sup>18</sup> The choir loft was enlarged and the new ladies room was installed at this time. John G. Carr, Inc. of Trenton provided the new heating plant for the church. The new system was an oil-fired boiler with automatic thermostatic controls. New piping throughout the building allowed for quick and even heat throughout. The new system was also designed to provide steam heat to the new wing once it was complete. Organ builder Chester A. Raymond, of Princeton rebuilt the pipe organ, incorporating new and old pipes. He also updated the organ with a new console, new blower, and electricity.

The building construction was not without difficulties. The Trenton Sunday paper on May 11, 1952 reported that "During a high wind and rain storm, the oil tank, which holds a year's supply of oil, rose from the cemetery, where it is located, floating on groundwater; weeks were lost due to bad weather; a forgotten cesspool near the center of the excavation not only had to be replaced but its wet effect on the ground forced delay and required wide reinforced footings under the walls; illnesses slowed the heating work and so delayed plastering. Instead of being finished in January it was late in April before the new classrooms could be used."<sup>19</sup>

The Board of Trustees met in April 1957 to discuss the church steeple. George P. Sohn, a consulting engineer, was called in to make recommendations. Sohn recommended that the steeple be removed, as he found it structurally unsafe. He also stated that the brick work of the tower was in need of repair and that if the steeple were to be repaired, it would need to be rebuilt entirely. Sohn recommended that the steeple be removed and replaced with a flat roof on the tower, and also recommended repointing the exterior brick. At the conclusion of the meeting it was decided to consult a steeple jack.

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<sup>18</sup> "Building for God."

<sup>19</sup> "Pennington Church Dedicates New Building On Next Sunday," *The Trentonian*. 11 May 1952. (First Presbyterian Church of Pennington Archives, 01.17.05.24.)

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The steeple was then examined by Harold A. Peterson Co., Professional Steeplejacks, in June 1957. Peterson sent two letters to the church, one reporting the findings, and the second one listing repairs and services. The interior structure was found to be in good condition but the brick walls inside the bell tower that supported the steeple were in poor condition. The mortar joints were open, to the extent that daylight could be seen. The letter also states that work will be done for eight dollars and fifty cents per man hour, consisting of an eight hour day and a five day week. Although costs for repairs were estimated at twelve to sixteen hundred dollars, by September 1957, the repairs totaled over \$5,000.

In January 1963, the church appointed a Building Committee to oversee renovation and restoration work within the sanctuary and the construction of a new Christian Education Building and reception hall. The building committee was responsible for raising the funds for the project, acquiring the property and hiring the architects and builders. By September, the church hired Richard Chorlton, a Princeton architect who developed plans for the renovations. The building plan included plans for a new 8,000 square foot building, which would house seven classrooms and a multipurpose room to seat 200 adults, new kitchen and a new adult classroom.<sup>20</sup> Ketchum, Inc., a public relations firm, was also hired to assist in the raising of building funds.

Over a year later, the church had raised the required funds for the necessary work. By October 1964, the pews were removed from the sanctuary. This made way for the reconstruction of the chancel area and new cork and carpet floors. The pews were refinished, the balcony restored, the interior redecorated, and the entrances and reception room were remodeled.

In 1983, the church undertook modifications to the buildings to its north, in addition to the repair and repainting of the sanctuary ceiling and the resurfacing of the driveway and parking lot. The church accepted the bid of architects Beverage and Kim to supervise the entire project. Seventeen years later, in 2000, a portion of the church education building was razed and replaced with a modern building. The new construction offered modernized classrooms and expanded and reconfigured administrative space.

### **Architect James Bird**

James Bird, a Lambertville architect, designed the First Presbyterian Church of Pennington in the Victorian Gothic style, of red brick with brownstone trim. Bird was also known as Captain James Bird for his role in the Civil War as a Captain in the Sixth Regiment of New Jersey Volunteers. He enrolled on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1861, and was discharged with a disability and resigned his position on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

Captain Bird was reputed to be the owner of the Lambertville House, a local inn, and as such was undoubtedly well known within the community.<sup>21</sup> He may also have been a member of the First

<sup>20</sup> "Steeple Talk," September 1963.

<sup>21</sup> York, 117.

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Presbyterian Church of Pennington's parish, or was at least known to the church leadership, as a 1909 article on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church recounts "The building was scarcely half consumed when Rev. Mr. Foster sought J.E. Burd, asked for an immediate meeting of trustees and offered half a year's salary towards rebuilding. A meeting on January 28 decided to rebuild, and \$6,000 was secured on the spot. The building committee was John E. Burd, Henry P. Welling, John G. Muirheid, John McPherson and Samuel B. Ketcham."<sup>22</sup>

Bird's career as an architect seems to have blossomed after the Civil War. All buildings now attributed to him postdate the war. At the time that he received the commission to design the new First Presbyterian Church of Pennington, he had already completed work in nearby Stockton, NJ, which included the small, stone Gothic Presbyterian Church (1868) and District 98 Schoolhouse (1872-73).<sup>23</sup> Bird is also credited with the design of the building at 82 North Union Street (1874), the modernization of the building at 44 Coryell Street (1874), and the design of a duplex at 153-155 North Union Street (1888), all in Lambertville. These three buildings were all described as "highly ornamented" and were within a contemporary stylistic range, including Queen Anne, Italianate, and Eastlake.<sup>24</sup> He may also have designed the Second English Presbyterian Church of Amwell in Mt. Airy (West Amwell Township), Hunterdon County. Completed in 1874, the Mt. Airy church is highly similar to that of the First Presbyterian Church of Pennington, although executed in wood.

At the time that Bird was designing the First Presbyterian Church, local architects, as well as those who commissioned architects in central and southern New Jersey, were inspired by the work of practitioners in Philadelphia, which would have been the closest significant urban center. At least two churches within close proximity to Pennington are known to have been designed by Philadelphia architects, including the First Presbyterian Church of Ewing (J.C. Sydney, 1867) and the First Baptist Church of Lambertville (David Gendell, 1868).<sup>25</sup> Bird himself, although based in Lambertville, may have had close ties to Philadelphia's architectural community. Bird, together with well known Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan (1815-1884), is credited with the design of Lambertville, NJ's Masonic Hall, completed in 1877.<sup>26</sup> This building was completed well after Sloan's most productive period in the 1850s, although his influence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was widespread due to the continued publication of various editions of his pattern books. It is not known if Sloan himself actually worked with Bird on the Masonic Hall commission, although he was certainly well known for his design of the Masonic Temple in Philadelphia (1853-55), a highly ornamented Gothic building located within Center City.

<sup>22</sup> "Presbyterians Celebrate 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," 1909, First Presbyterian Church of Pennington Archives, 01.17.05.03.

<sup>23</sup> The District 98 Schoolhouse is listed on the New Jersey(2004) and National Registers of Historic Places (2005); J. Nestor, "District 98 Schoolhouse," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2004 (on file, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office). Bird may also have designed the 1884 enlargement of this schoolhouse.

<sup>24</sup> York, Edwin G., *The Pennington Area Presbyterians, 1709-1984*. Princeton, NJ: LDH Printing Unlimited, 1986, 117.

<sup>25</sup> F.L. Greenagle, "An Architectural Debt to Philadelphia," *The New Jersey Churchscape*, No. 69, July 2008,

<http://www.njchurchscape.com/index-July08.html>, accessed 28 April 2009.

<sup>26</sup> "Bird, James (Capt.)," Philadelphia Architects and Buildings,

[http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display\\_projects.cfm/126487](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display_projects.cfm/126487), accessed 28 April 2009.

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**First Presbyterian Church of Pennington  
Mercer County, New Jersey  
Statement of Significance**

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The First Presbyterian Church of Pennington is an excellent regional example of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian Gothic, a style which was increasingly seen in the design of Presbyterian churches of the era. Presbyterians had long seemed to favor the simpler Greek Revival over all other styles, even when the popularity of Greek Revival had long since waned. The majority of the area Presbyterian churches constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Mercer and Hunterdon Counties were completed circa 1830s – 1860s, and were overwhelmingly Greek Revival in design.<sup>27</sup>

Presbyterians were likely influenced by the adoption of Gothic Revival design by Episcopal churches in New Jersey in the 1840s and 1850s. The Fourth Presbyterian Church (1859) in Trenton was one early response to this trend. It was followed in Princeton by the Second Presbyterian Church (1868), for which Henry W. Leard was the builder and possibly also the designer. Princeton College under James McCosh (whose presidency began in 1868) was moving in a Victorian Gothic direction (for example, Chancellor Green Library, 1873). Prospect Street Presbyterian Church (1875) in Trenton is seen as a “sophisticated” example of the Gothic Revival.<sup>28</sup> So, by the time that the Pennington church was built, an affinity for Gothic Revival architecture was well established among Presbyterians. Nevertheless, the use of brick for the new Pennington church was unusual; most churches of this period in the region were of frame or stone construction. The combination of the red brick and brownstone as utilized by Bird at Pennington was notable, providing contrasting texture and color, and distinguishing this building from its Presbyterian contemporaries.

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<sup>27</sup> Greenagle, <http://www.njchurchscape.com/index-July08.html>. Significant examples of Greek Revival style Presbyterian churches include Nassau Presbyterian Church (Princeton, 1839); Alexandria Presbyterian Church at Mount Pleasant (Holland Township, 1843); Lambertville Presbyterian Church (Lambertville, 1855); and Hamilton Square Presbyterian Church (Hamilton Square, 1867)

<sup>28</sup> Greenagle.

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National Park Service

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Approx. 1.35 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 18 517773 4464168  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 --- ----- -----

3 --- ----- -----  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 --- ----- -----

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 Nicole McKairnes and Meredith Arms Bzdak, PhD, Architectural Historians  
organization Farewell Mills Gatsch Architects, LLC date March 2010  
street & number 200 Forrestal Road telephone 609/452-1777  
city or town Princeton state NJ zip code 08540  
e-mail nicolem@fmg-arch.com; meredithb@fmg-arch.com

**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.)

organization  
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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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First Presbyterian Church of Pennington  
Pennington, NJ  
Verbal Boundary Description

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**Boundary Description**

The First Presbyterian Church of Pennington is located in the Borough of Pennington, Mercer County, New Jersey at 13 South Main Street, Block 601, Lot 20. The nominated property includes the 1875 Church Building and associated Cemetery only. The boundary lines of the nominated property follow the property lines as indicated on the attached Tax Map; the northern boundary is defined by a line of convenience drawn from the street to the eastern boundary beginning 179 feet south of the intersection of Main Street and Delaware Avenue.

**Boundary Justification**

Boundary lines on three sides follow legally recorded property lines; the northern boundary is a line of convenience that separates the nominated portion of the property from later additions to the complex to the north of the 1875 Church.

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Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs:

5. Location of Digital Files: New Jersey Historic Preservation Office

<u>Photo</u>	<u>Subject/Location</u>	<u>Photographer</u>	<u>Date</u>
Photo 1	View of Pennington Presbyterian from the west side of the street	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 2	West elevation, looking northeast	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 3	South entrance on the west elevation, facing south	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 4	Detail, west elevation, south tower	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 5	Detail, west elevation, north tower	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 6	View of Church and adjacent cemetery from east side of street, facing north	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 7	South elevation, facing southeast	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 8	South elevation from Cemetery at the south	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 9	Cemetery wall at entrance to Church parking lot	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 10	View of Cemetery adjacent to south elevation of Church	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 11	Rear of the church, facing northwest	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 12	Grave stone at east elevation marks where graves exist under the foundations	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 13	2001 office/meeting building to the north of the church	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 14	Courtyard and west entrance to 1985 Coates Hall addition	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 15	Interior view of north door on the west Church elevation	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 16	Interior view of south door on the west Church elevation, stairs leading to balcony	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 17	Stairs leading to balcony level in southern vestibule	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 18	Main entrance at the interior facing northwest	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 19	View of main entrance and narthex facing west from the sanctuary	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 20	View of sanctuary from door of narthex, facing east	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 21	View of sanctuary facing southeast	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 22	View of organ loft and sanctuary from balcony level	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 23	North wall of sanctuary from balcony level	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 24	South wall of sanctuary from balcony level	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009

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Photo 25	South wall of sanctuary showing balcony level and southern entrance	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 26	View of balcony showing southern entrance to vestibule and stairs to balcony	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 27	View of second story balcony facing west	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 28	Detail view of column capital in sanctuary	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 29	Door at second story balcony, detail view of sanctuary cornice	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009
Photo 30	Sunday school room at second floor balcony level, at the southwest corner of the building	Nicole McKairnes	February 17, 2009

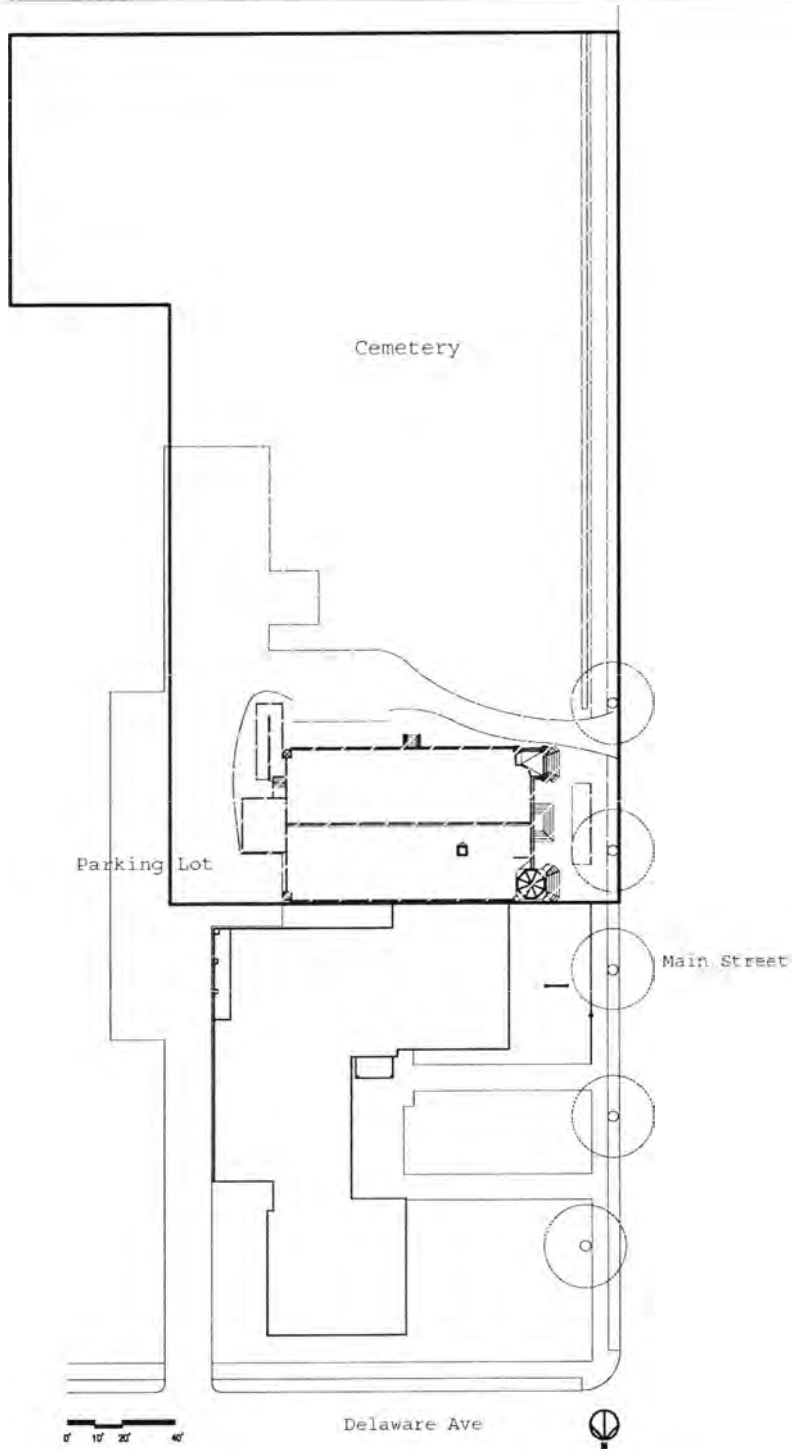
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Site Plan, not to scale (Farewell Mills Gatsch Architects, LLC). Nominated property is indicated with hatching.

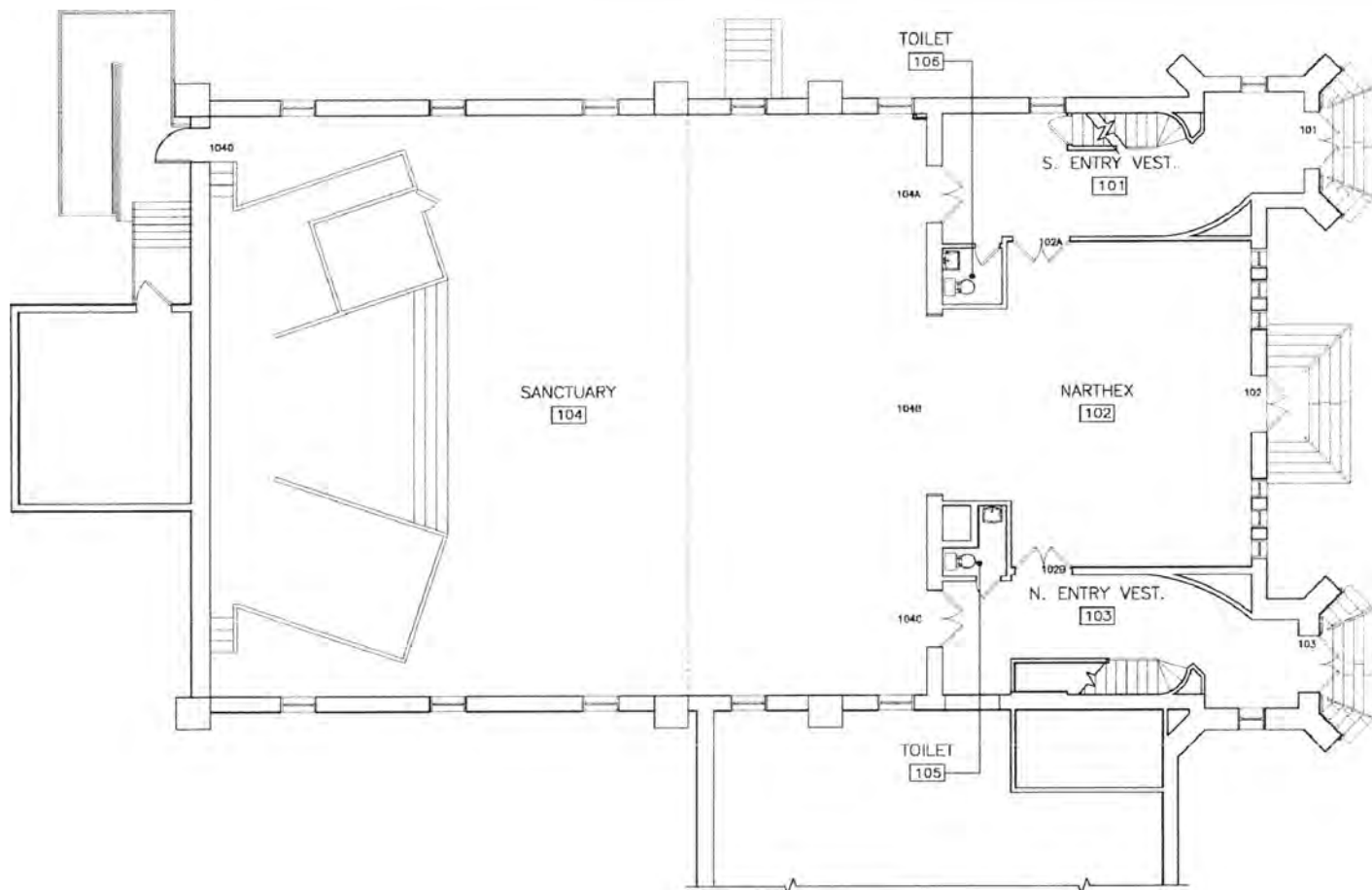
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First Floor Plan (Farewell Mills Gatsch Architects, LLC).

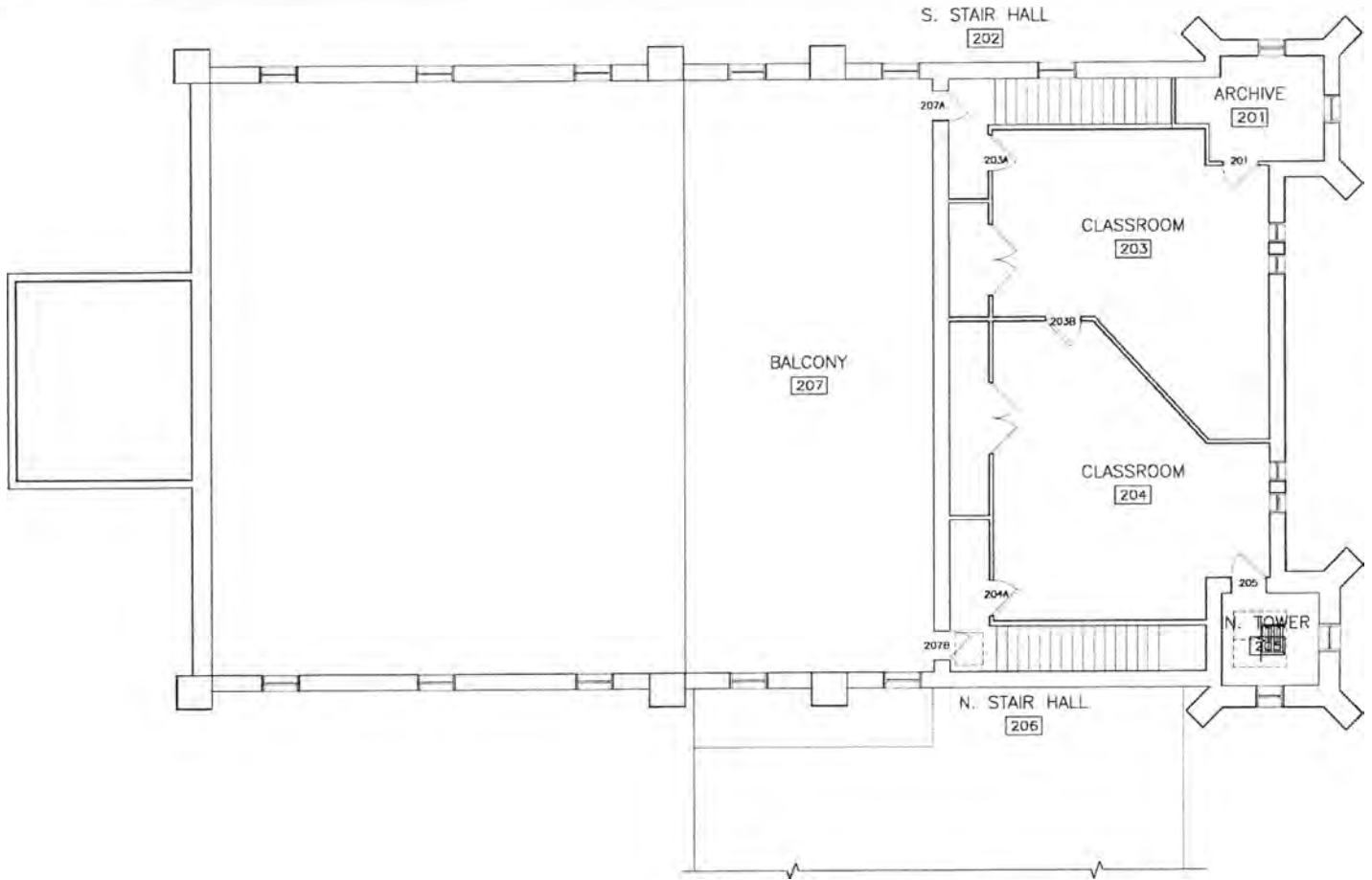
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Second Floor Plan (Farewell Mills Gatsch Architects, LLC).

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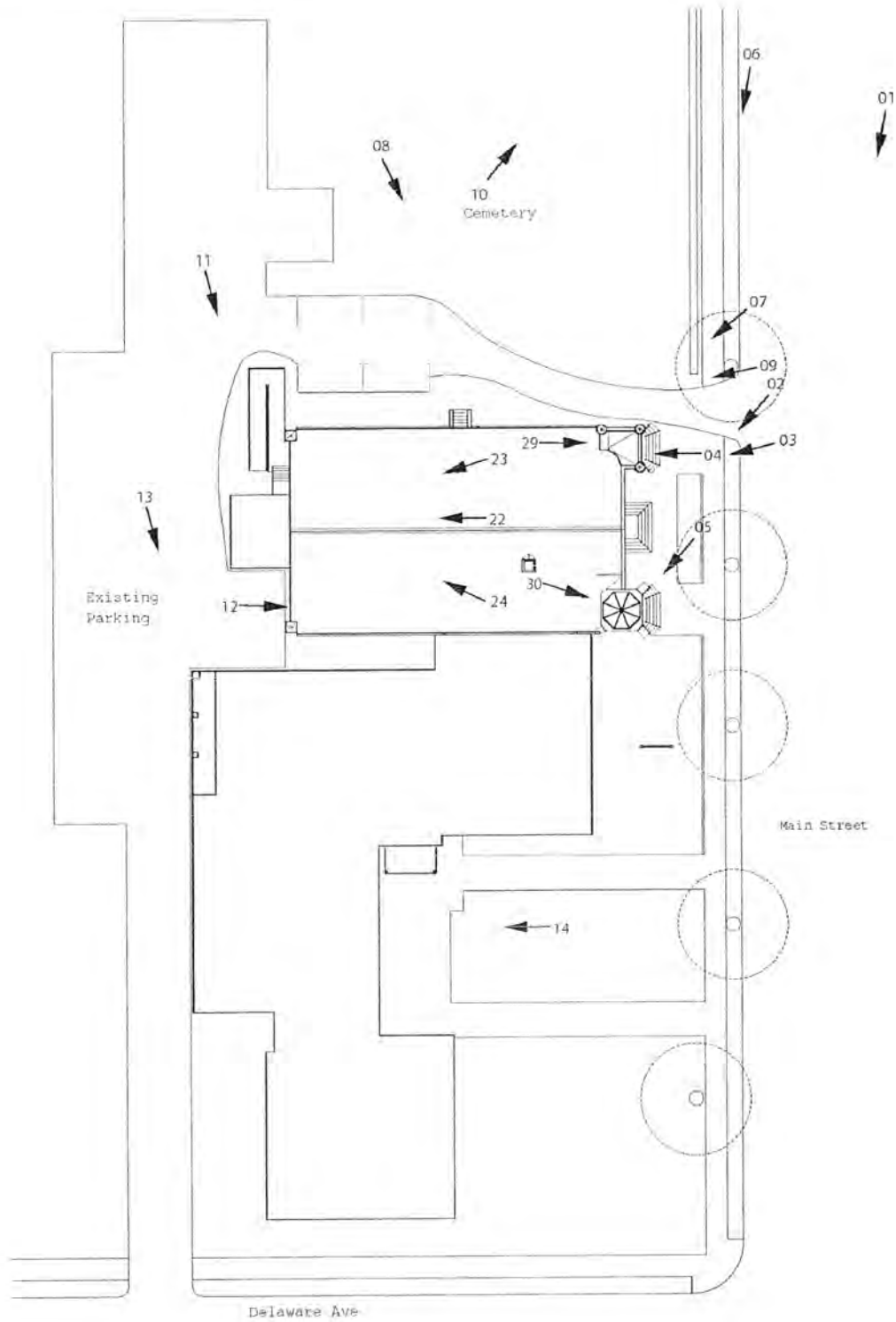


Photo Key Plan

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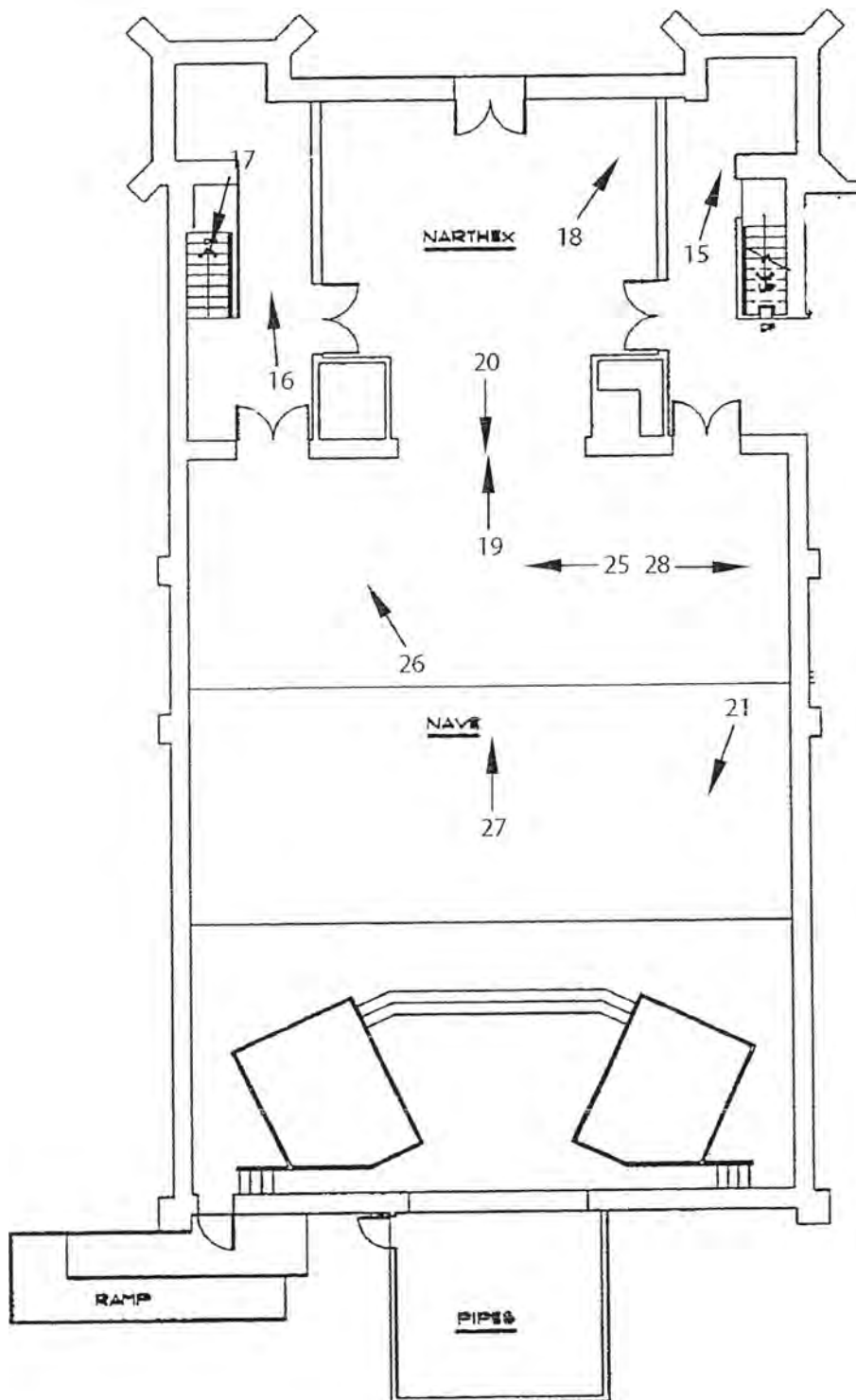


Photo Key Plan



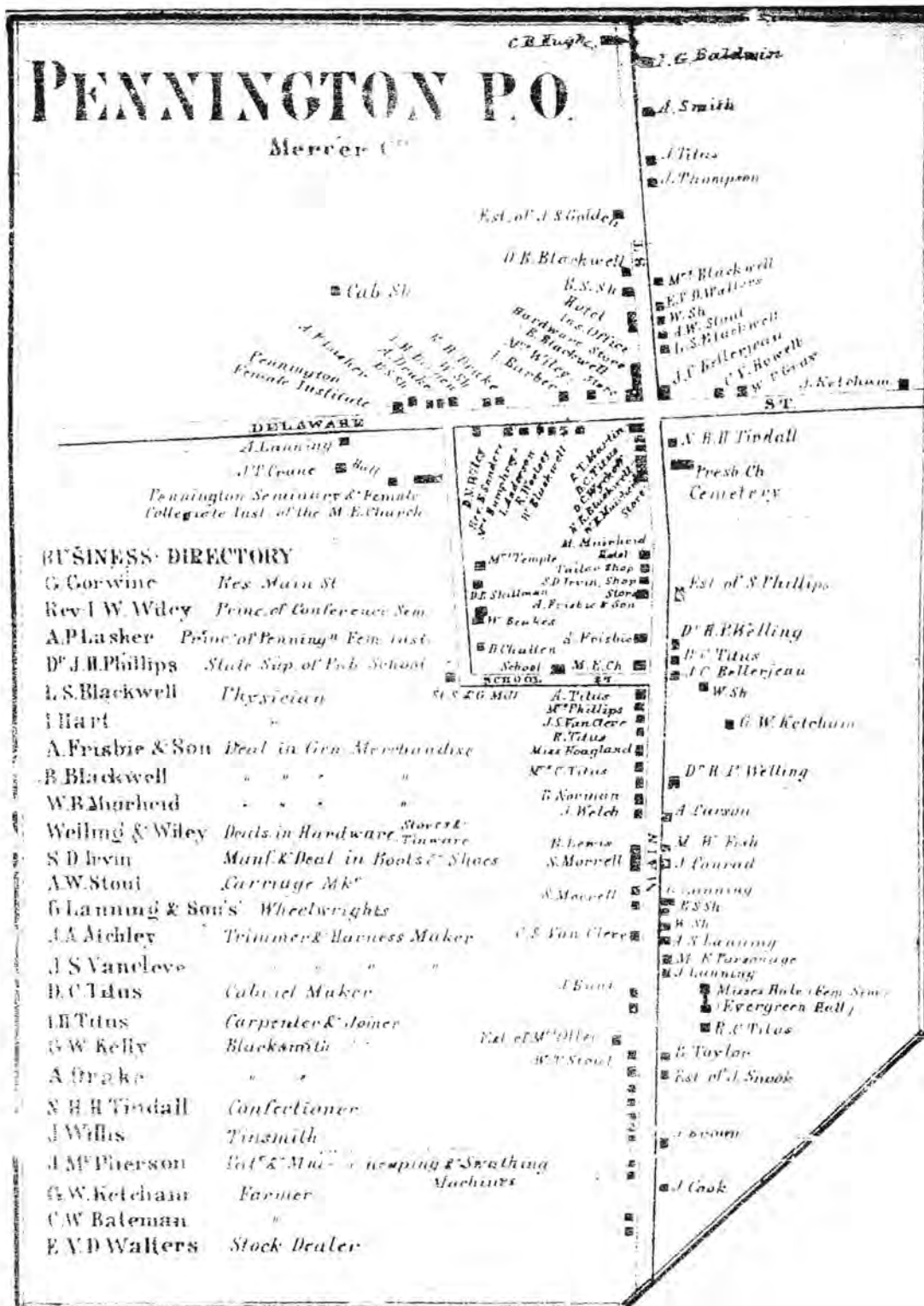
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"Pennington P.O.", Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton, D.J. Lake and S.N. Beers, 1860.

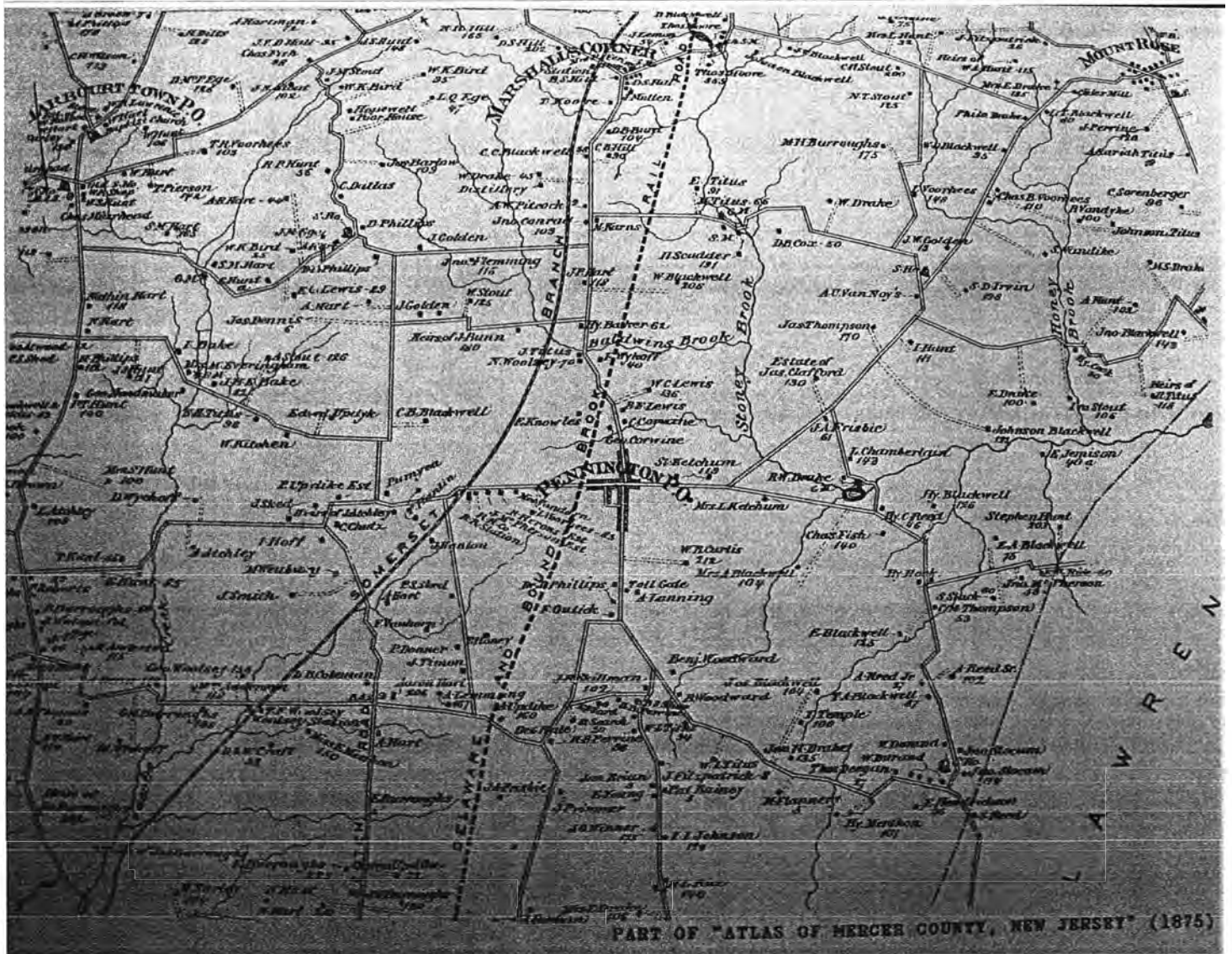
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Atlas of Mercer County from 1875 showing borough of Pennington. (Edwin G. York, *The Pennington Area Presbyterians, 1709-1984*, pg. 121)

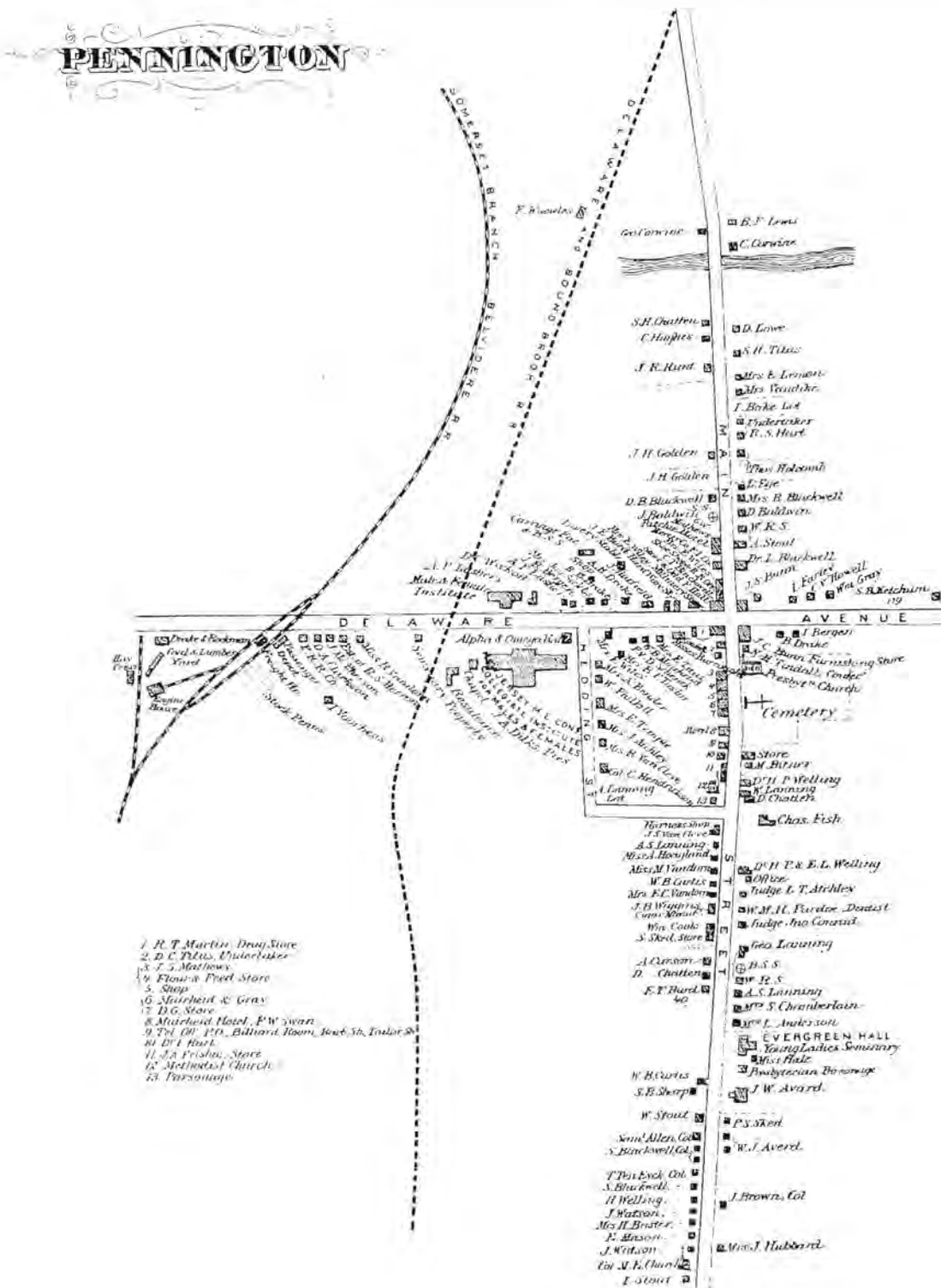
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"Pennington," Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County, Everts & Stewart, 1875.

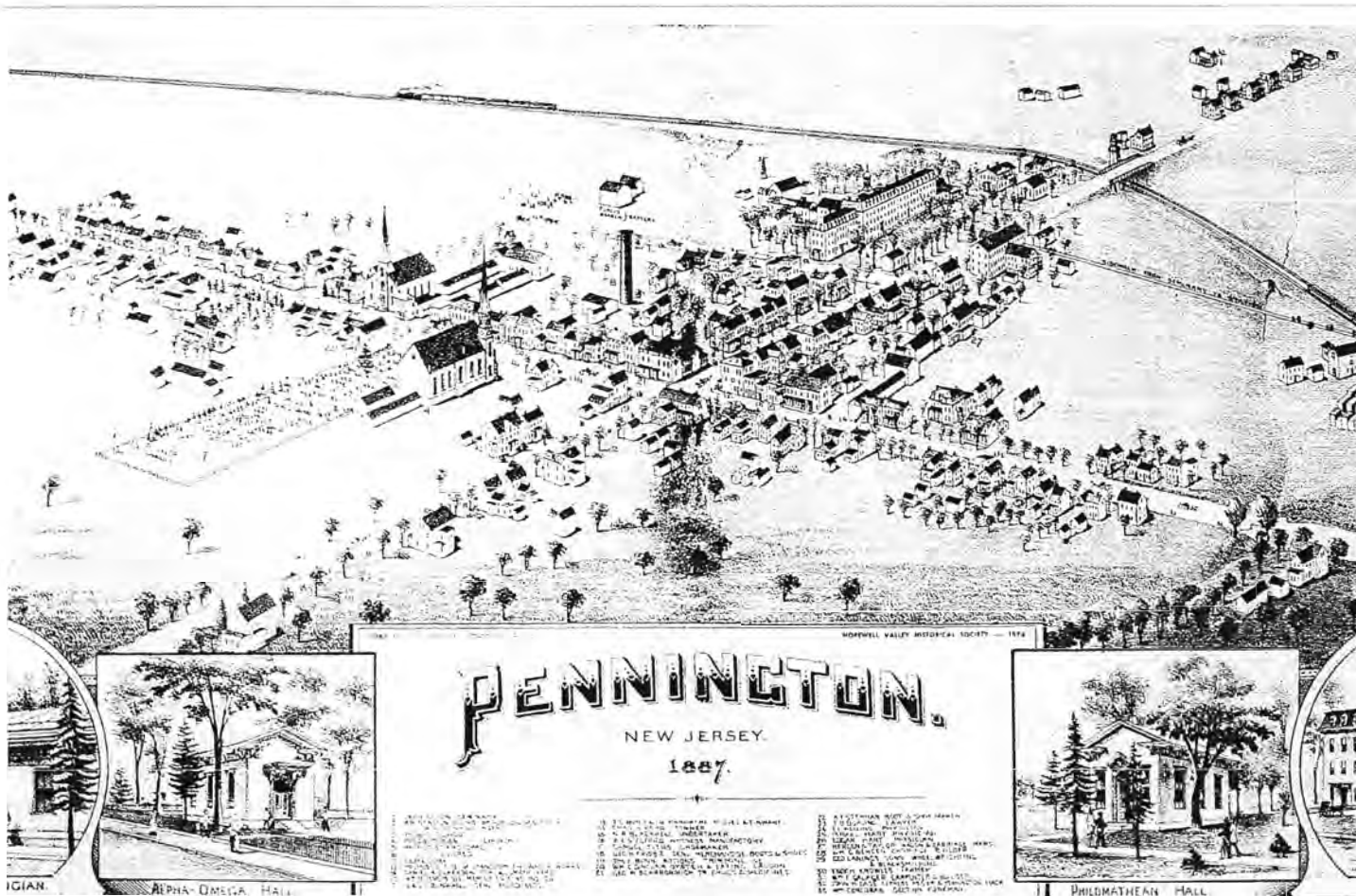
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"Pennington, New Jersey," T.M. Fowler, 1887. The First Presbyterian Church of Pennington is shown with associated Cemetery at center left.

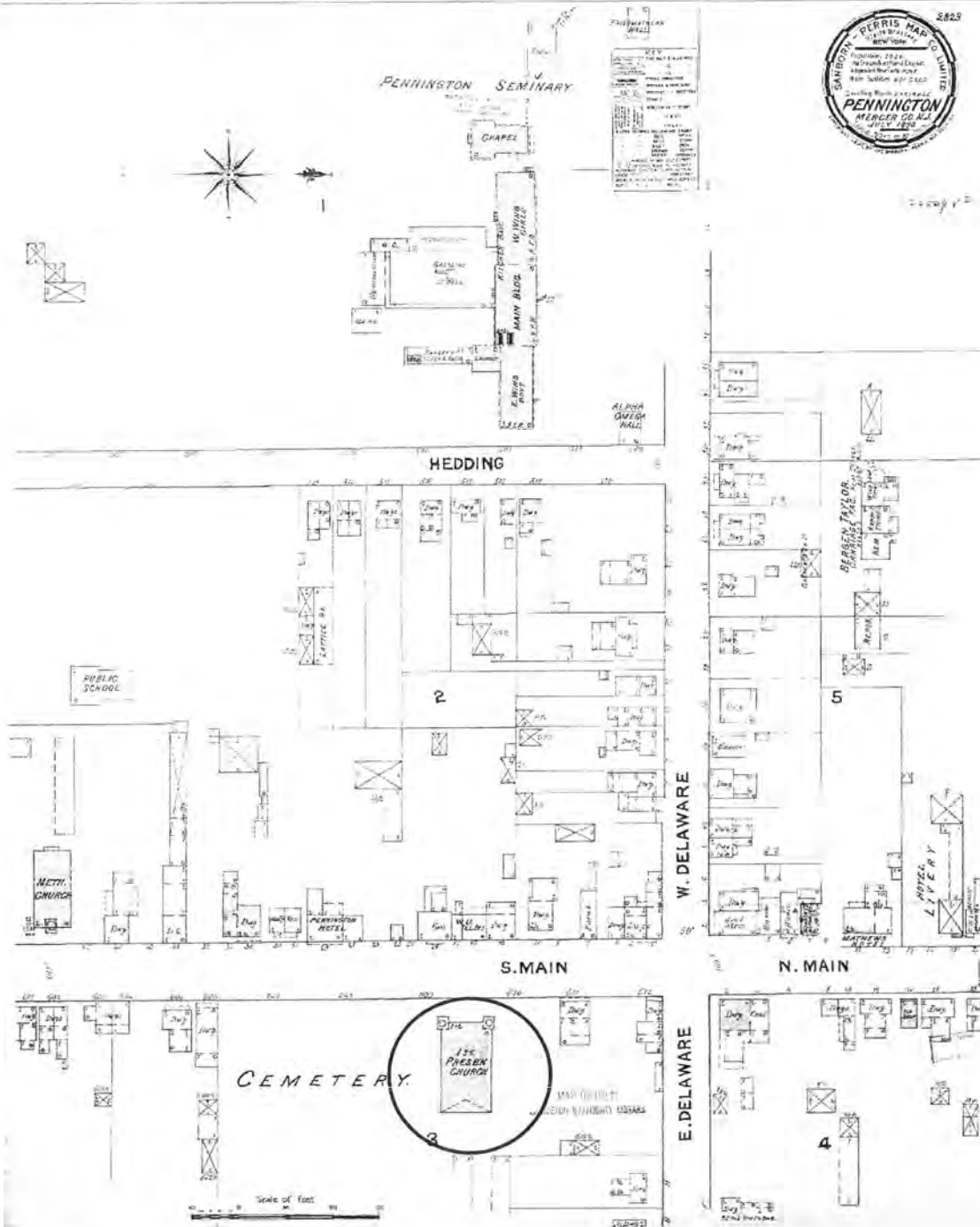
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Sanborn Map of Pennington in 1890 showing church as rectangular brick building.

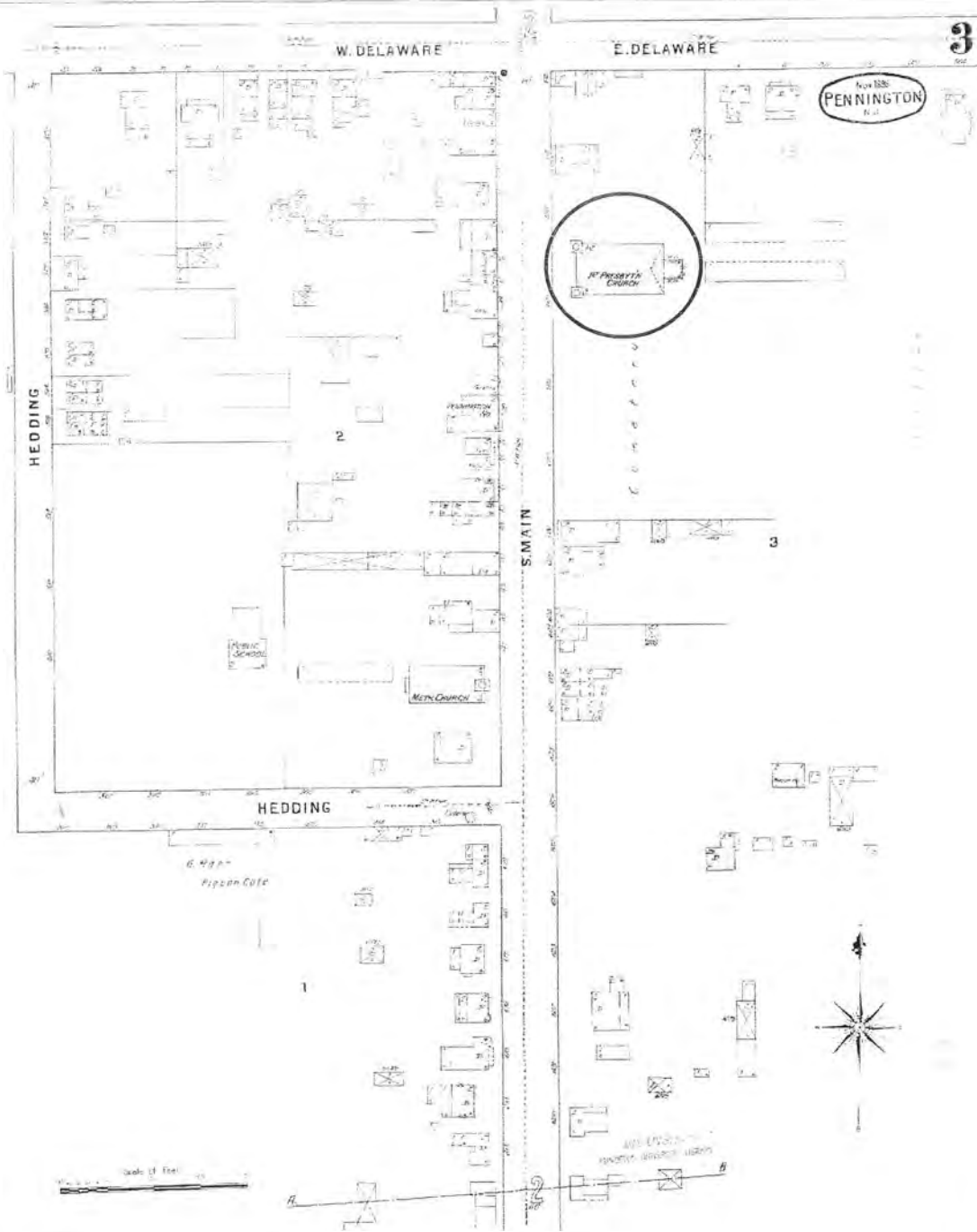
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Sanborn Map of Pennington in 1895 showing addition to organ loft.

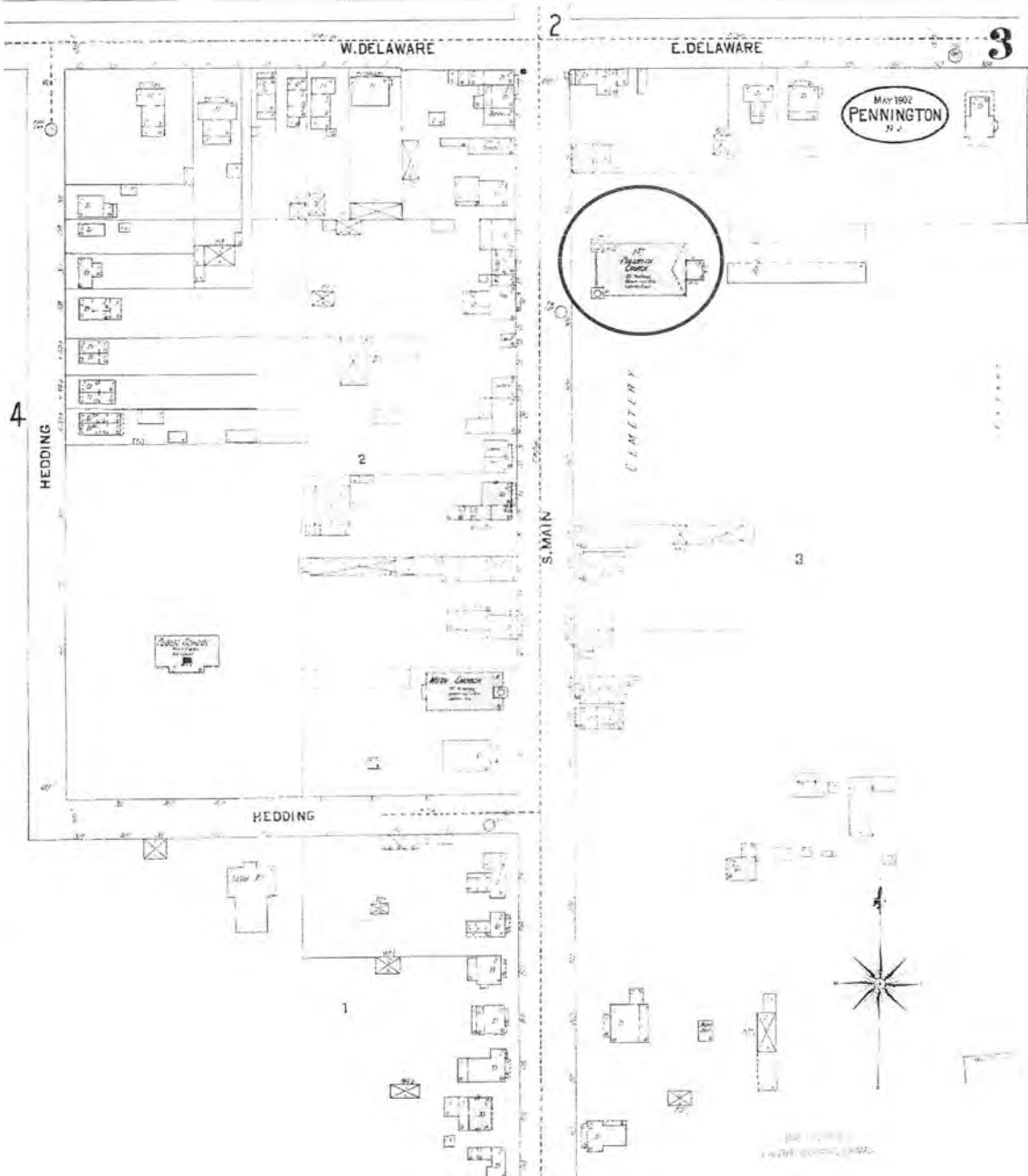
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Sanborn Map of Pennington in 1902.

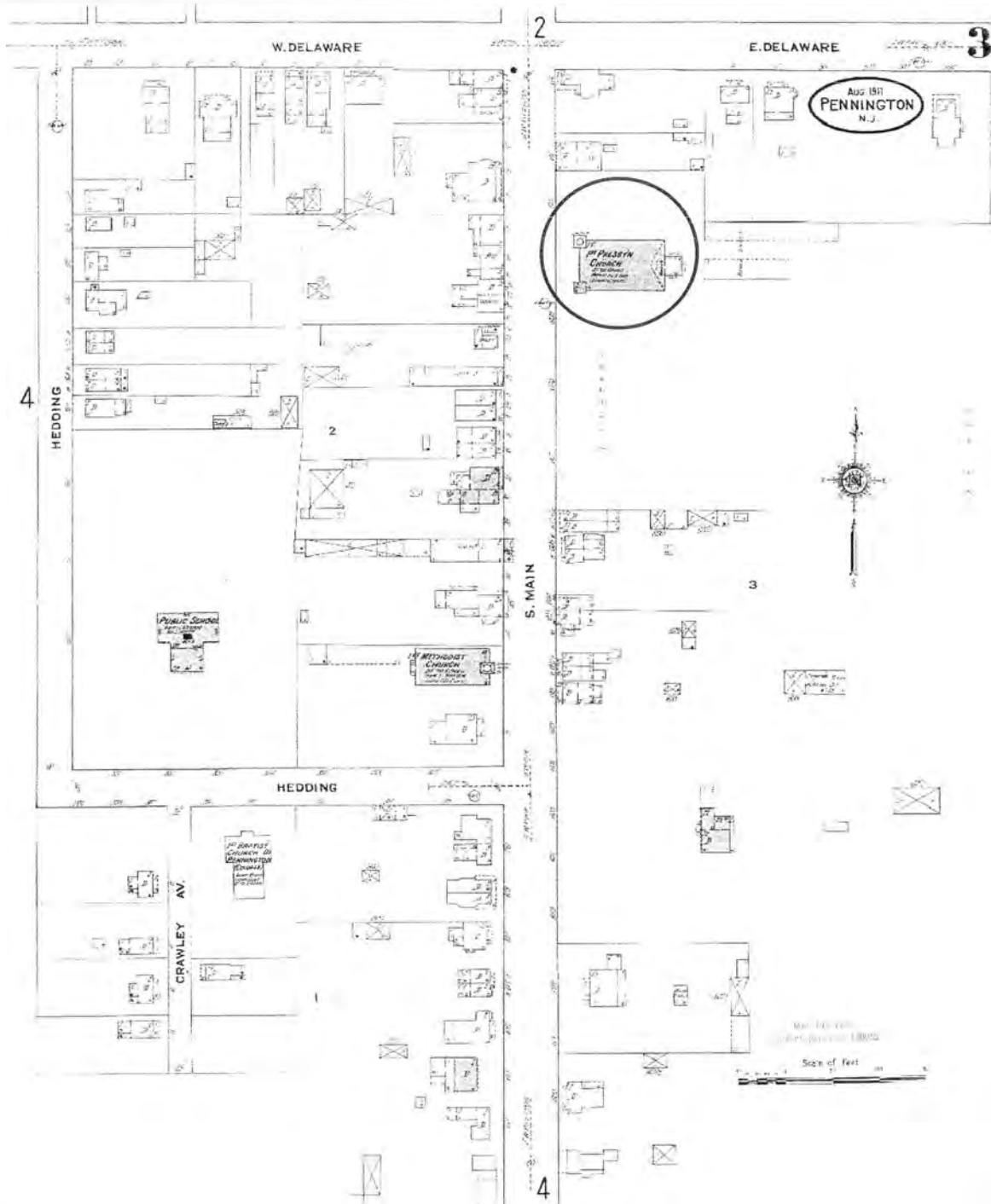
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Sanborn Map of Pennington in 1911.



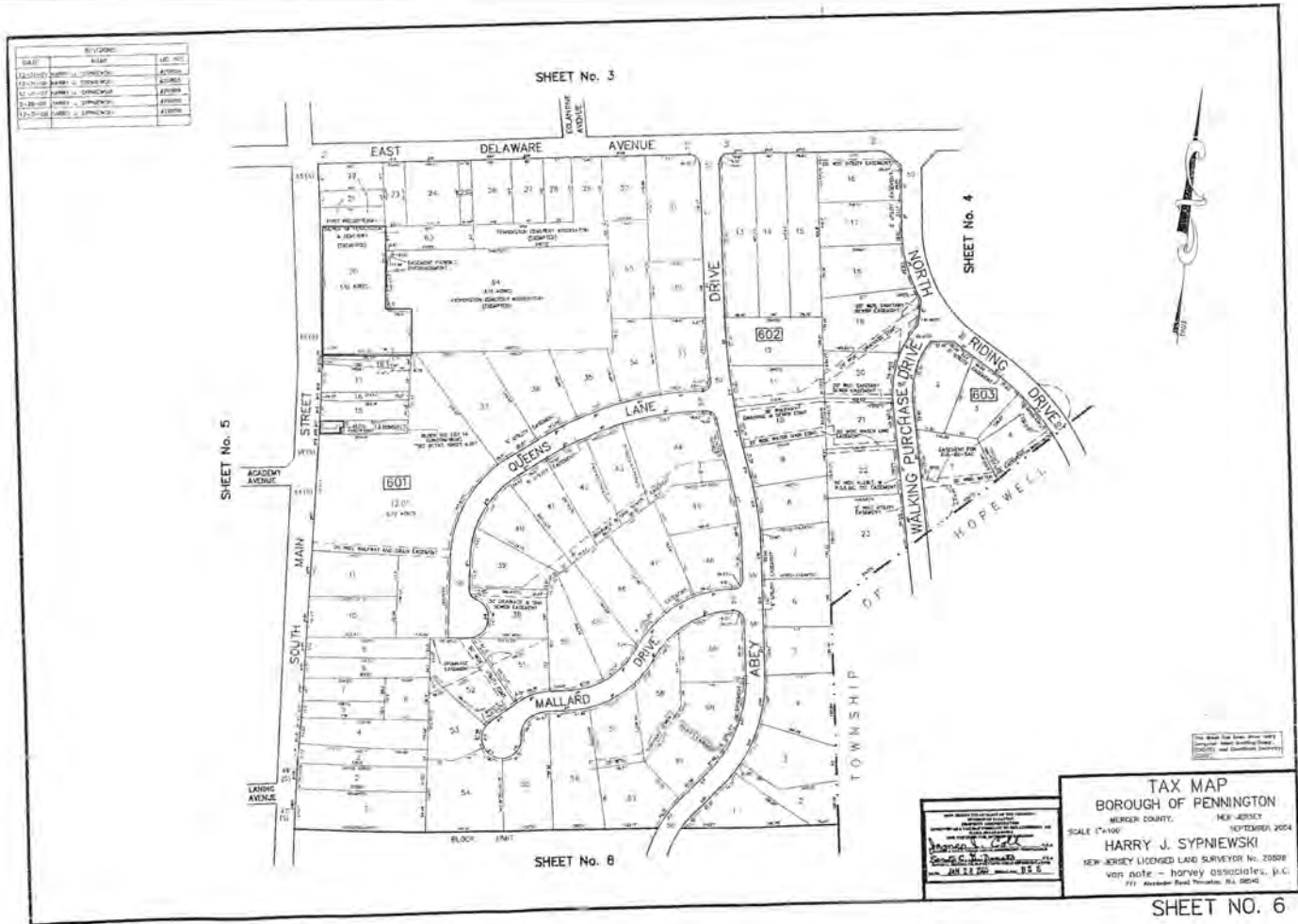
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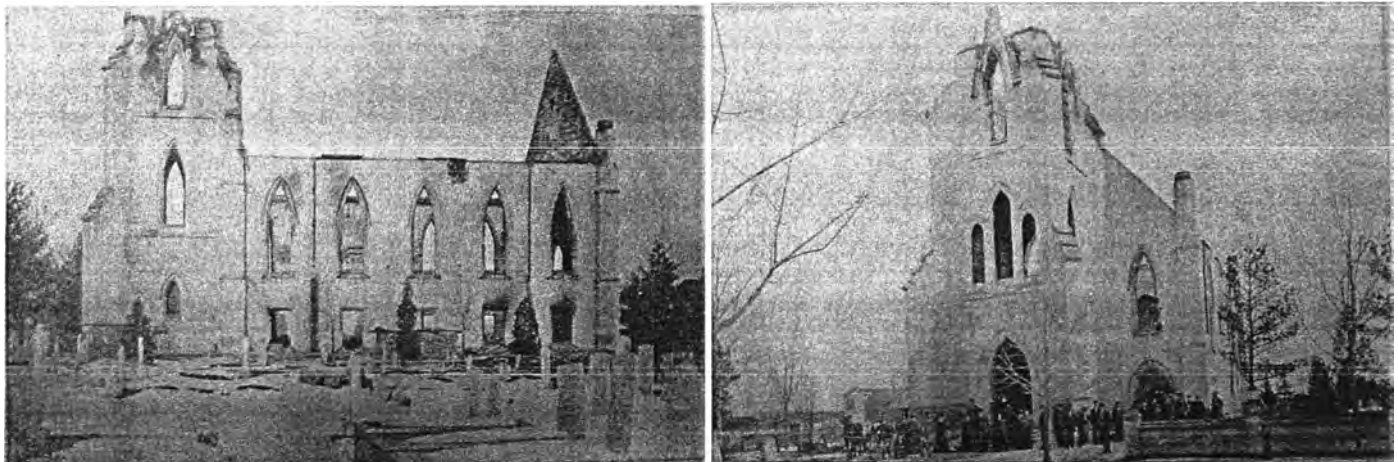
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Tax map of Pennington from 2004. Nominated property outlined in red



Ruins of the Pennington Presbyterian Church after the fire in 1874. (Pennington Presbyterian Church Archives)

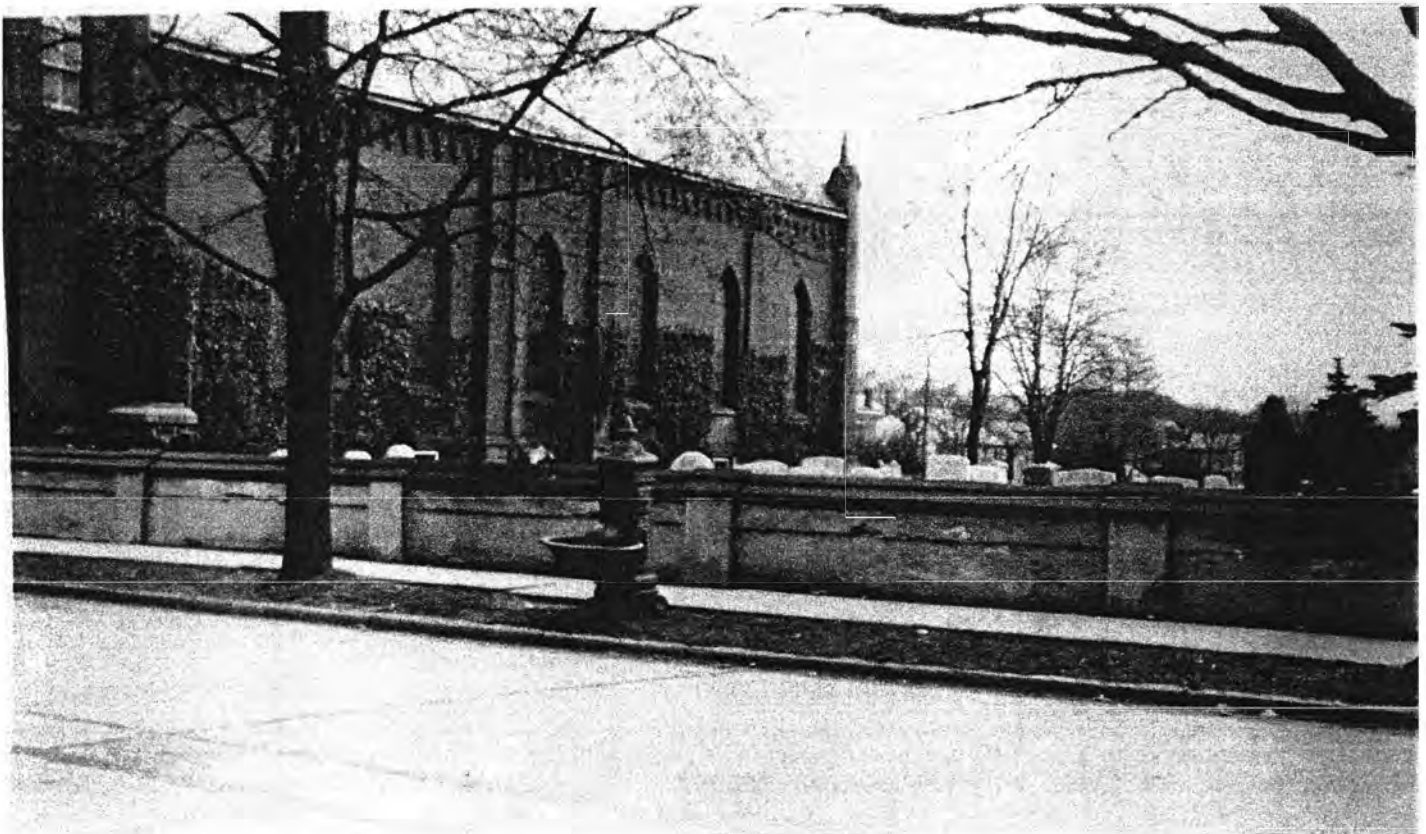
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Church, Cemetery, and Churchyard Wall, early 20<sup>th</sup> c. WCTU drinking fountain was located in front of the Cemetery in 1900 and was removed in November of 1942 for scrap metal during World War II (Pennington Presbyterian Church Archives).

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Photograph of Church from 1957. (Margaret J. O'Connell, *Pennington Profile: A Capsule of State and Nation*)

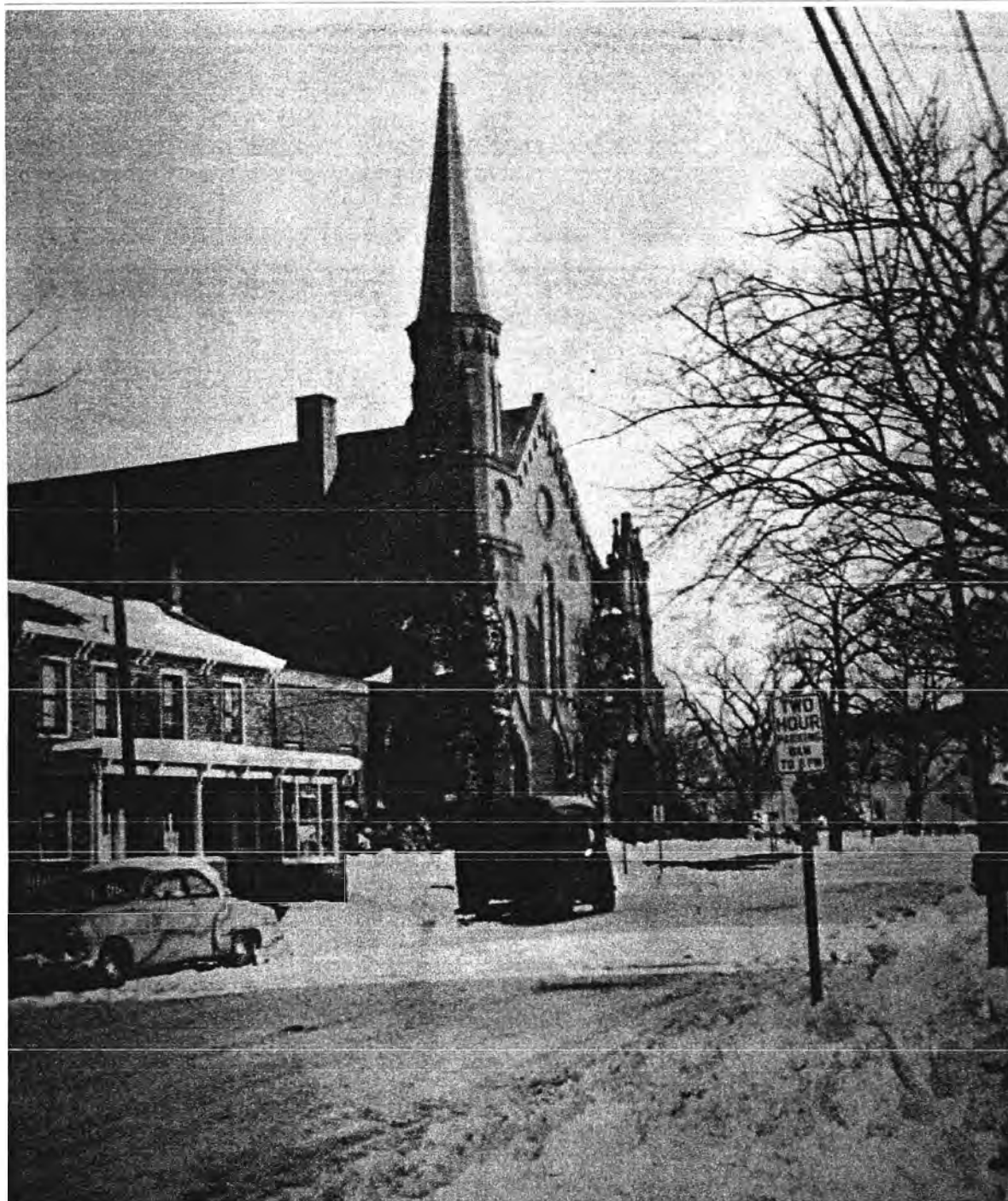
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Exterior of Church in 1962, looking south. (Margaret J. O'Connell, *Pennington Profile: A Capsule of State and Nation.*)

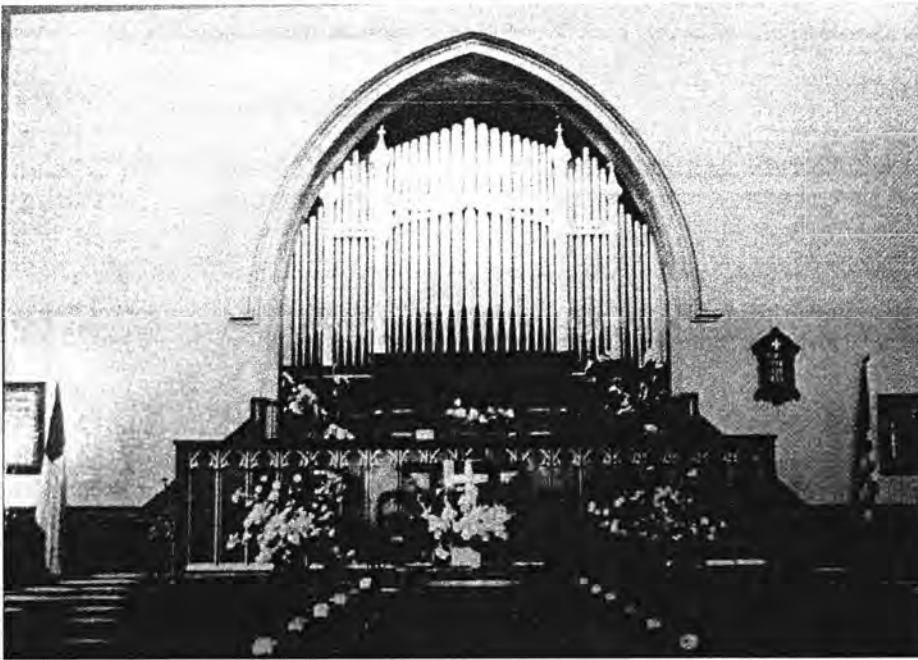
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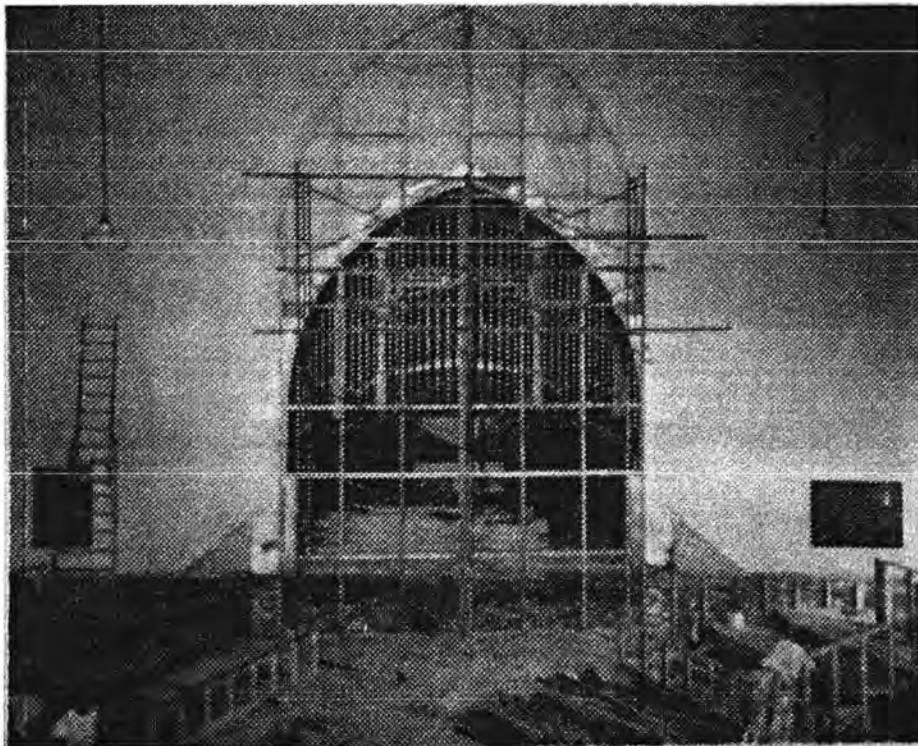
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Interior showing the Choir before the building renovations in the 1960s. (Pennington Presbyterian Church Archives).



Interior undergoing alterations in October of 1964. (Pennington Presbyterian Church Archives).

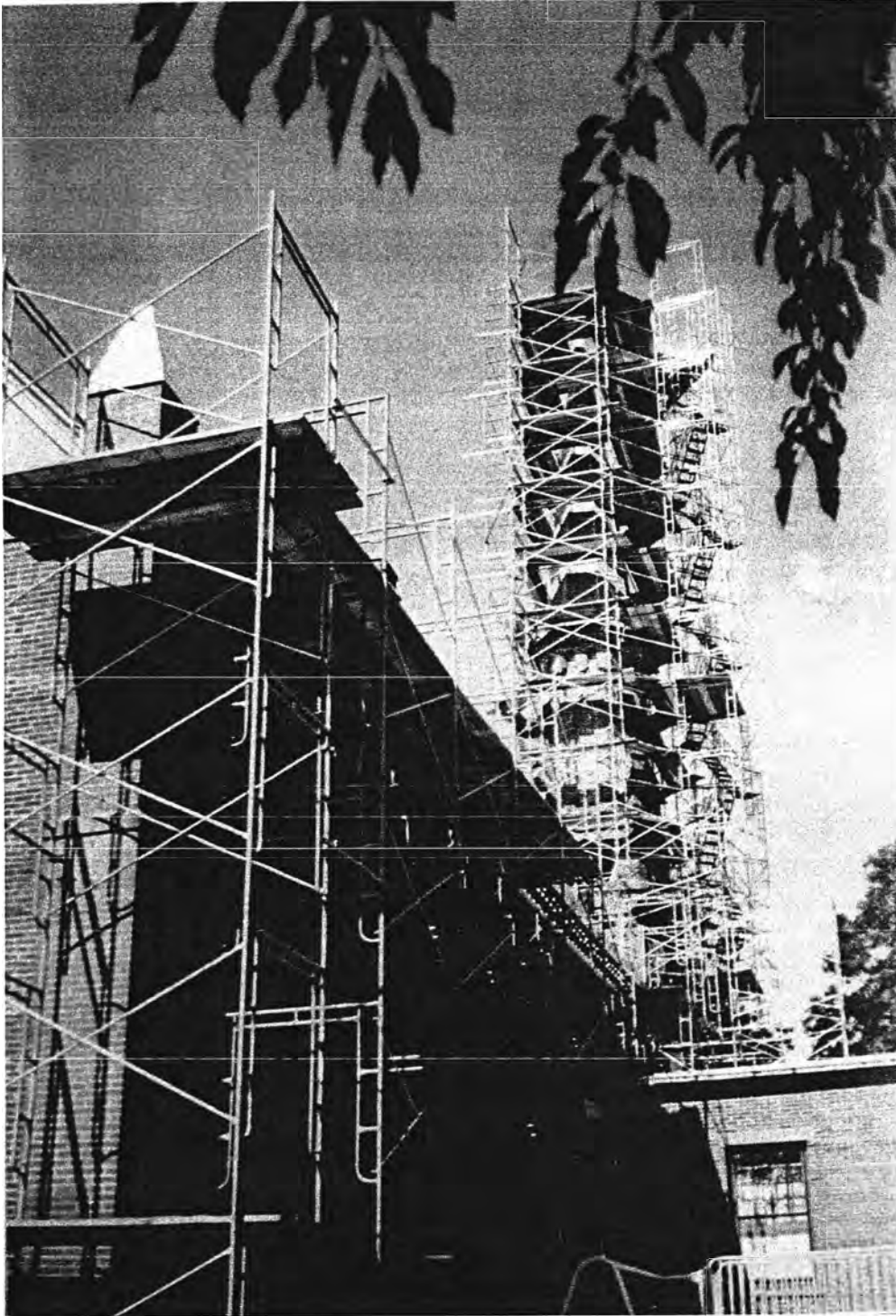
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Church under scaffolding during roof replacement, c1990. (Pennington Presbyterian Church Archives).

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James Bird, Architect, First Presbyterian Church of Stockton, Stockton, NJ, 1867.



James Bird, Architect, 82 North Union Street, Lambertville, NJ, 1874.

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James Bird, Architect, 44 Coryell Street, Lambertville, NJ, 1874.



James Bird, Architect, Masonic Hall, Lambertville, NJ, 1877.



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James Bird, Architect, District No. 98 Schoolhouse, Stockton, NJ, 1872-1884.



James Bird, Architect, 153 North Union Street, Lambertville, NJ, 1888.

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James Bird, Architect (?), Second English Presbyterian Church of Amwell, Mt Airy, West Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, NJ.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Presbyterian Church of Pennington  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Mercer

DATE RECEIVED: 7/15/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/08/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/23/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/30/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000591

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 8-24-11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





REVEREND  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
OF  
WYOMING  
1858  
WYOMING  
1858









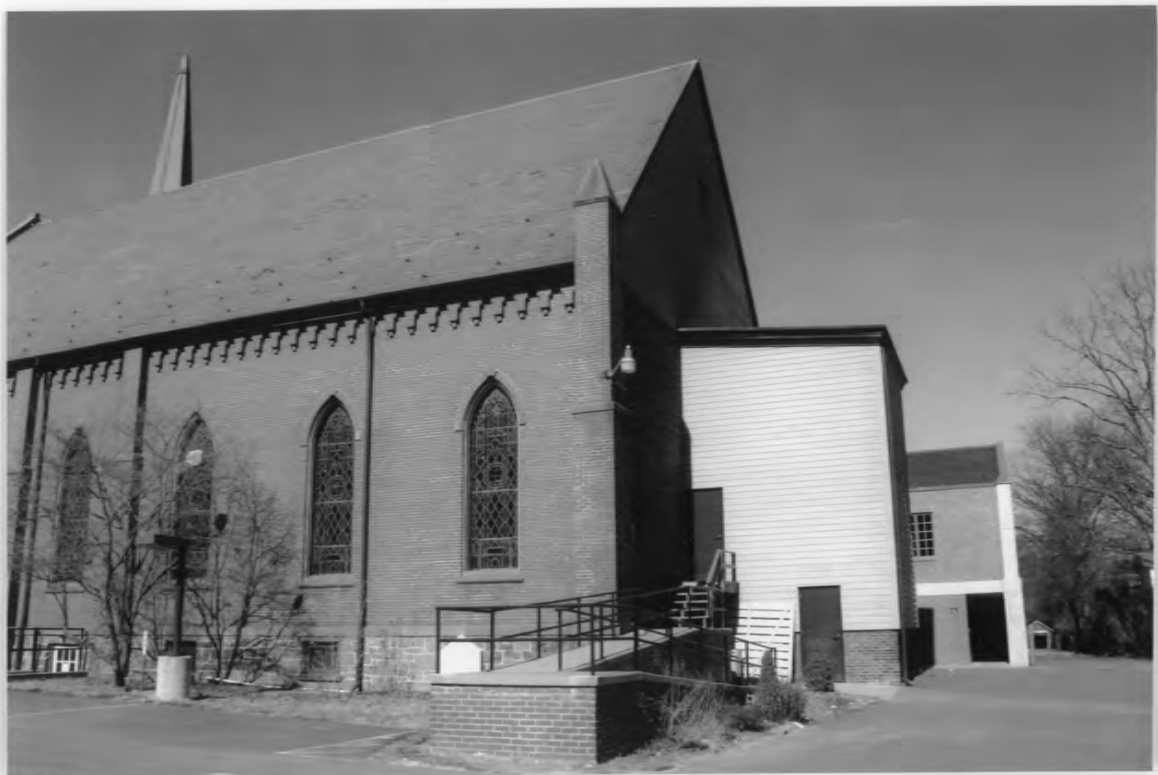















Here lies the Body of  
Miss Rebekah Benkes  
who departed this  
Life Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> An.  
Domini 1769. In y<sup>e</sup> 16<sup>th</sup>  
Year of her Age

































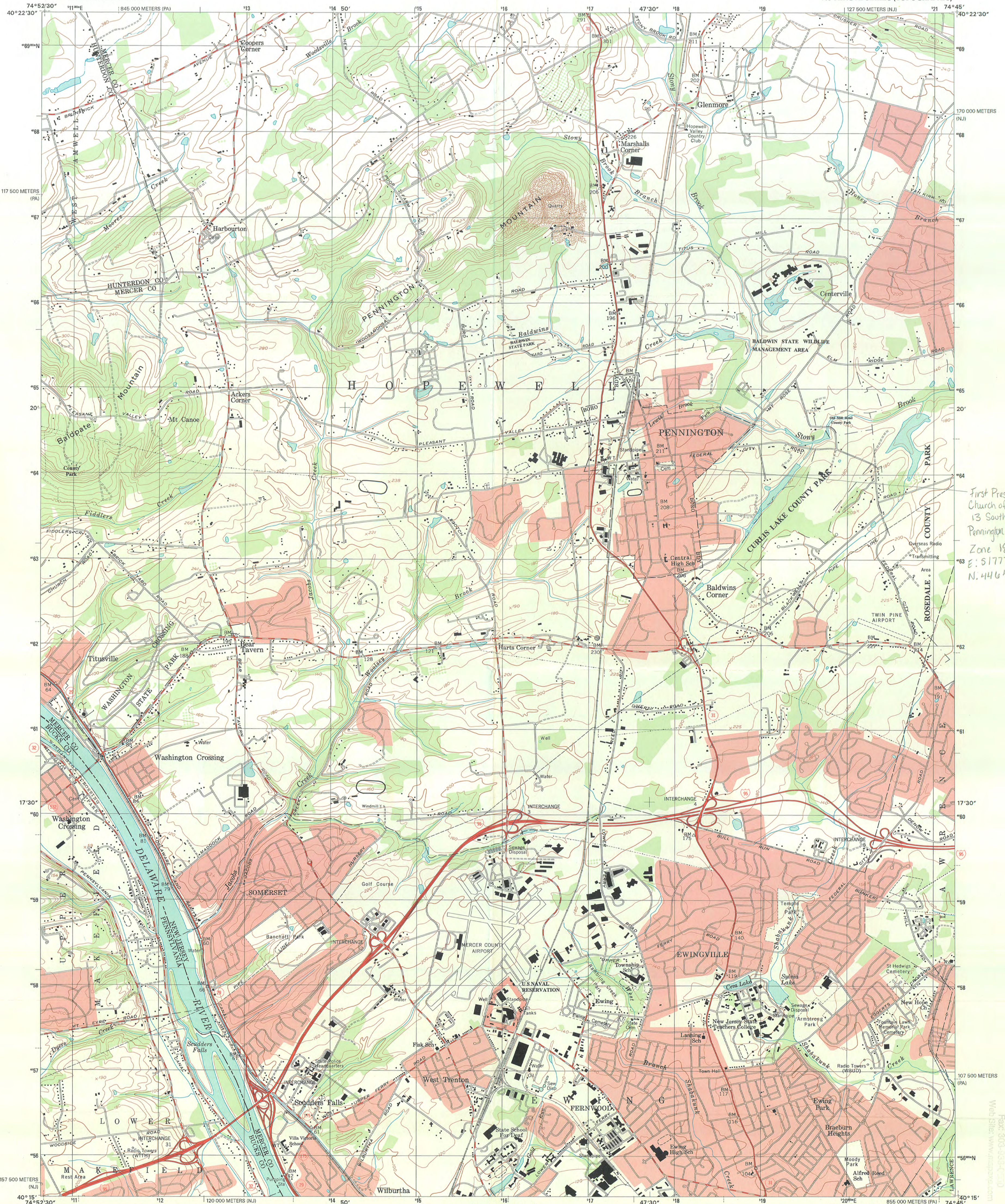






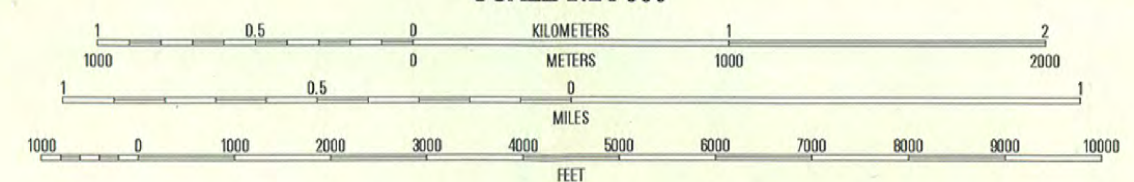
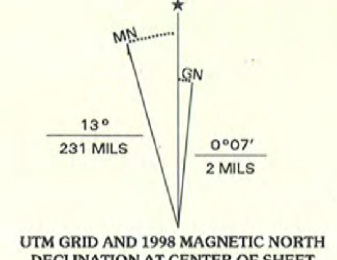






First Presbyterian Church of Pennington  
13 South Main St.  
Pennington, NJ, 08534  
Zone 18  
E: 517773  
N: 4464168

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Topography compiled 1942. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1995. Survey control current as of 1954  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18  
2 500-meter ticks: New Jersey Coordinate System of 1983 and Pennsylvania Coordinate System of 1983 (south zone)  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtained from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map  
Landmark buildings verified 1954



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

1	2	3	1 Stockton
2	3	4	2 Hopewell
3	4	5	3 Rocky Hill
4	5	6	4 Lambertville
5	6	7	5 Pinckton
6	7	8	6 Langhorne
			7 Trenton West
			8 Trenton East

PENNINGTON, NJ-PA  
1995

MAP EXPRESS INC.  
Ph: 800-827-4143  
Fax: 303-435-4330  
WebSite: WWW.MAPEXPRESS.COM



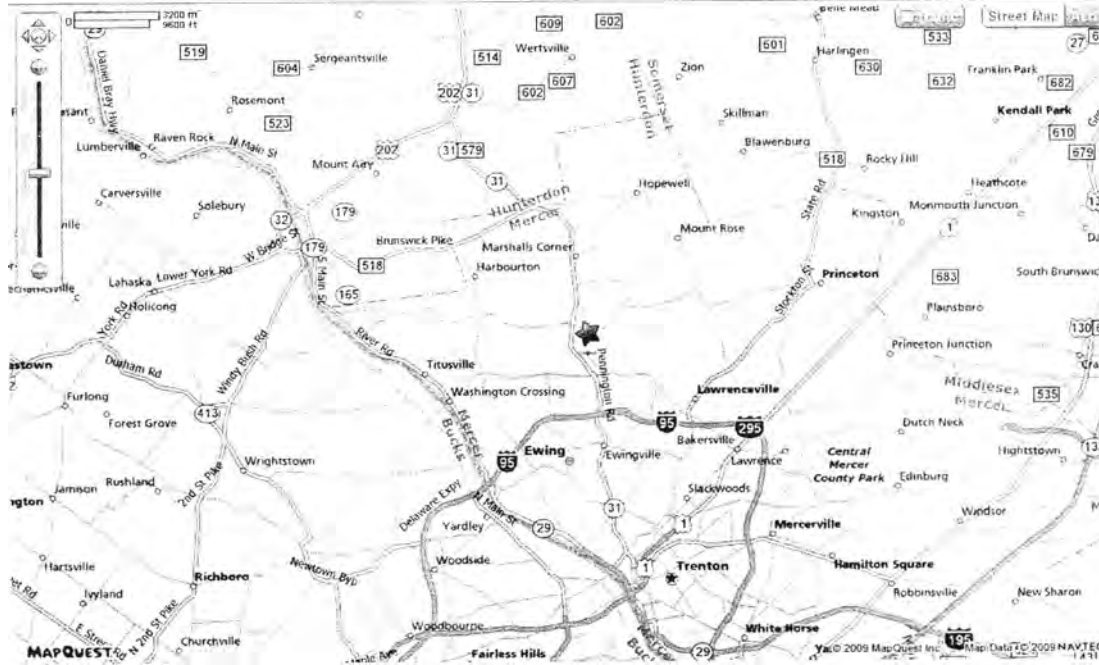
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

First Presbyterian Church of Pennington

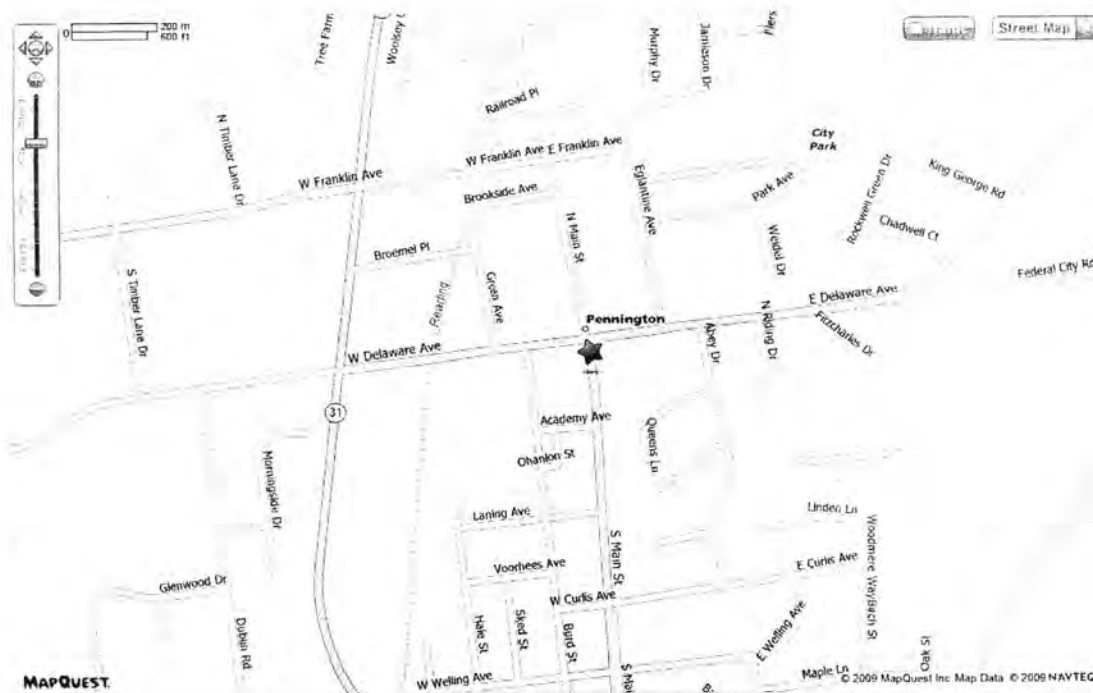
Mercer County, NJ

Section number 11

Page 1



Location of Pennington Presbyterian Church in Mercer County.



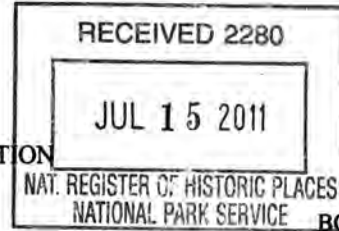
Location of Pennington Presbyterian Church within the borough of Pennington.



HPO E2011-177  
Log #08-1574-7

# State of New Jersey

MAIL CODE 501-04B  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
PO Box 420  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420  
TEL. (609) 984-0176 FAX (609) 984-0578



BOB MARTIN  
Commissioner

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

6/2/11

Paul Loether, Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am pleased to submit the nomination for the First Presbyterian Church of Pennington, Mercer County, New Jersey, for National Register consideration.

This nomination has received majority approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Daniel D. Saunders, Acting Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Mail code 501-04B, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420, or call him at (609) 633-2397.

Sincerely,

Amy Cradic  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer