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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Coward-Smith House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Burlington Path Road not for publication
city, town Upper Freehold Township vicinity
state New Jersey code 34 county Monmouth code 025 zip code 08514

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>7</u> | <u>2</u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ | _____ structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | _____ | _____ objects |
| | | <u>8</u> | <u>3</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: NA Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
[Signature] 05/31/89
Signature of certifying official Date
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. [Signature] Entered in the National Register 7/6/89
 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 of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling
Agriculture/agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling
Agriculture/agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian (vernacular)
New England colonial

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls wood
roof wood
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Coward-Smith House, located along the ancient Burlington Path in Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County, N.J., was built about mid-18th century on the homestead plantation of the Rev. John Coward, a farmer, sawmill owner, and sometime Baptist minister. A frame house two stories high of side hall plan with attached kitchen wing, it is pre-Georgian in style, having a steeply pitched roof and asymmetrical 4-bay facade. Erected at a time when early residents could afford to have a spacious "well-finished" house, it expresses a growing awareness of English style gleaned from nearby Philadelphia where they traded; at the same time it follows local building conventions, particularly in Dutch-style shingling. Situated deeply within a farm tract of 100 acres, it crowns a ridge, with a complex of outbuildings in its near environs. These include an English-type barn, a combined wagon house/corn crib, ice house, cook house, chicken house and privy, all of which contribute to the historical feel of the setting. The barn appears to date to the beginning of the 19th century, while the others represent replacements or additions of the latter half of the century. Two other buildings, a wellhouse/shed and a smoke house (reduced to its structural members) have lost their integrity and are no longer significant in portraying their functions. From the date of erection of the farmhouse until now, this resource has always been a working farm--presently a tree nursery. Originally a 200-acre farm, it was divided after 1832 into two tracts. The homestead tract of 100 acres, subject of this nomination, was given to the widow of Richard Smith and was later sold to John M. Bilyeu. Three generations of the Bilyeu family subsequently farmed the tract and were responsible in the main for the surviving outbuildings. The Coward-Smith House and barn, and its later assemblage of outbuildings depict farm life in Monmouth County over a two-century period.

The house and its complex of outbuildings, organized loosely as a U-shaped farmyard, are sited about a quarter mile back from the road on the highest point of land. The choice of site was undoubtedly made because the land was swampy, an economic asset at time of building, and secondarily provided a view downslope to pinelands, which were another resource. The house with 200 acres was sold by John Coward's son Thomas in 1770 to Gilbert Smith, a seemingly well-to-do farmer. It passed to Gilbert's son Richard shortly after 1800; after Richard's death in 1832, the farm was divided into two so that his widow could have her own farm and continue to live in the dwelling house. The division line was run south from the Burlington Path, setting off the homestead farm on the east segment. Shortly before mid-century, the farm was sold to Bilyeu, and remained within this family

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until 1954, continuously farmed. Rural electrification did not arrive until the 1930s. The owner between 1954-64 was also a local farmer. The current owner, a landscape architect, bought the farm in 1964 and has established the Black Pine Nursery on a portion of the tract. Much of the 18th-century farm environment remains intact, with swampy areas now ponded, woods, and open fields, through which weaves the original cart lane from Burlington Path, still in use.

The house in its basic features remains unchanged. The main block, which originally stood independently with detached kitchen, is an almost square double-pile two-story structure measuring 32½' by 20½'. It is of frame construction, with intersticing of daubed mud and straw. Original round-butt shingles, 16" to the weather, with rosehead nails, remain on the north (rear) elevation and a portion of the east gable wall. Replacement cedar shingles cover the remaining surfaces. The wood-shingled gable roof is steeply pitched. A molded box cornice of 18th-century profile trims front and rear roof lines and continues as a pentice across the west gable, making of it a triangular pediment. A rectangular brick corbeled chimney rises from within this end wall. The gable peak bows outward, said by an engineer to have been deliberate to accommodate the chimney but perhaps also attributable to other reasons, including earth settling.

Both longitudinal elevations are identical: four bays wide with the first three openings from the east tightly grouped and symmetrically spaced. The final bay is distanced. Front and back entrances are in the first bay. First-floor windows contain new 9/9 sash, with muntins outlined in paint on tape to create an impression of 18th-century width. The original sash had been 9/9, as seen in a photograph of 1881, but were replaced with Victorian 1/1 sash (as recorded in a HABS report of 1939/40). Windows of the upper story are of smaller scale, with 6/6 sash. Paired attic windows contain small 4/4 sash. Window lintels are of boards, some appearing slightly rounded on the upper story. Earlier recessed-panel shutters (one survives on the premises on strap hinges) have been replaced with like kind. Thick entry doors are composed of five recessed panels outlined by moldings on their face, flush on back. In recent times they were horizontally sawn in two to create "Dutch" doors and swung on bevel-edged strap hinges which an earlier owner had kept and stored away. A brass knocker with shell motif, specially mentioned in a mid-19th-century inventory and found in storage on the premises, has been put to use on the north door. A 4-pane transom is above each door. Being less wide than the framed opening, the transoms are incorporated for appearance' sake into the external molded architraves but not accorded the same treatment on the inner face.

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A late-19th-century hipped-roof porch on plain posts stands before the north (rear) entrance with a new stone floor. A similar porch before the first two bays of the principal facade has been removed, and now only a raised deck on stone retaining wall spreads before these bays. A bulkheaded cellar entrance concealed by the deck is centered in the foundation.

The foundation is of rubble stone. Cellar steps of stone blocks show the wear of two hundred years of use. The full cellar is partitioned into three storage compartments, leaving but one open quadrant. These divisions may be original to the house since it was a common 18th-century feature; they existed at least by 1807, when Gilbert Smith made mention of them in his will and were referred to in the inventory of his estate.¹

A narrow center aisle allows passage front to back from exterior steps. The southeast "cellar" is partitioned off by vertical boarding set in part on log sills. Each of its walls has a ventilation grille; the rear grille also has a solid board shutter to one side on horizontal wood slides.

Centered against the west gable wall are triangular chimney bases for back-to-back corner fireplaces that once stood on both stories. These are deep-cavities supports made of stone piers and concave brick vaulting. Two storage areas are walled off to west of the cellar aisle divided at the angle of the projecting bases. Some of the vertical boarding has been replaced, but the log sills remain as well as a door frame that is equipped with a pintle for a strap hinge. The inventory of Richard Smith's estate in 1832 indicated that he had stored three tubs of soap and sundries in the east cellar room and porks and hams, three bottles of whiskey and sundries of empty bottles in the room opposite and pork and empty casks in the back cellar.²

The visible structural components show a weight-bearing (summer) beam, 9" by 12" running longitudinally, into which are let timbers, 6" by 7", spaced 32" apart. Floor boards for the first story, now covered by another level of flooring, measure 10" on average.

The house is of a side-hall plan and seemingly has been so since at least 1800 if not originally so, going by a room inventory of that time. The hall has a majestic width of 11'8" befitting a mansion house of two-thirds or full Georgian style, such as nearby "Walnford," but the possibility exists that it once had a four-room layout as found in some Dutch houses of Monmouth County. The hall includes a window as well as entrance door at each end, which is atypical. An open staircase of one run is off the rear of the hall, tucked into a niche

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carved into the rear room. It runs rather steeply against the interior wall, beginning with winders. Turned balusters and square newel post are set into a molded, closed-string course. The handrail of mahogany is broad, with a molded under-edge. The under-stairs area is paneled vertically in a series of three raised panels. A passageway runs beneath the stair flight to give entry to the back room. A chair rail runs along the plastered wall.

Settling of the house on the local type of soil may explain the slope of the floor at the north end of the hall despite two layers of flooring, the second--also of wide boards--added at an unknown date. A broad chair rail encircles the outer walls, projecting as squared corners, the reason for which is unexplained. Baseboards have quirk and bead. The paired rooms are of good size, the front, presumed the "parlor," being slightly deeper. During Gilbert Smith's later years of occupancy, the parlor had become the "room where wife layes," and the rear room seemingly had become his office, with desk and clock. According to his will, his wife received her room, the chamber above, and cellar below.

Each room now has a flush-to-wall chimney against the gable wall, a replacement of mid 19th century for the original cater-cornered fireplaces. A mantelpiece of basic Greek Revival form ornamented with novel Gothic trim on its frieze and deeply channeled pilaster remains on the back chimney. A chimneyside cupboard is closed by a sunk-panel door. A similar mantelpiece has been removed from the front chimney and the hearth closed.

The rooms have a connecting doorway, which is framed with a shouldered architrave on parlor side and filled with a door of three raised panels hung on L hinges. The common wall between parlor and hall has in recent times been partly removed, along with its door way, which was framed in the same manner, in order to create a free flow of space. A lavatory has been built within the room against the remaining section of wall and fitted with the removed architrave. The south wall of this additional room has been given a period look by the placement of a two-sectioned paneled cupboard of probable 18th-century date, which had been relegated to kitchen use long ago and installed in the wing.

The interior hall wall terminates at its north end with two vertical segments of raised paneling, the top panels of which are incomplete. These paneled segments mark the enclosing of a closet that fronts on the understairs passageway to the back room. The paired doors of the two-part closet are also of raised panels and set in a bead-edged frame. H-L hinges, some with original nailing, remain in place. Opposite the closet is a doorway, formerly to a storage area, now to cellar stairs, in which an original H-L hinged, two-panel door now hangs,

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possibly recycled. A keyhole latch is on the outer face, a wood box lock on the reverse.

The door to the rear room is composed of six raised panels, double beaded. It is set in a stepped or double-face architrave, which appear to be original. These design details are usually associated with the last quarter of the 18th century. It may well be imagined that the Gilbert Smiths added refinements to the house after taking possession in 1770. The shouldered architraves, too, belong to this era, as they are more refined than the deeply profiled style of mid-century, such as found at the Powel House of Philadelphia.

Both rooms have segments of chair rail, but that in the front parlor is not entirely original. Simple bead-edged baseboards in the rear room are almost flush with the plastered wall.

The second story plan originally offered at least two bedrooms, but perhaps three. A room above the "entry" is mentioned in the inventory of 1832 for Richard Smith's estate.⁴ By 1939, when the HABS study was made, there were four rooms, one in the south end of the hall of the same depth as the master bedroom, and another created out of the remainder of the hall, allowing only a narrow passageway of 3+' to the entry to the attic stairs. This small narrow room is now a bathroom.

The two south rooms have been combined into one with the removal of the dividing wall and the entrance to the principal south chamber eliminated. The flooring of the latter room is of wider boards, actually a replacement which may date before the chimney change as the floor is diagonally patched at the location of the former corner fireplace.

Chimneys for the separate flues project from the walls of the original upstairs chambers, each with a window to one side. The chimney is now closed in the master bedroom but the other room sports a mantelpiece of same vintage and type of decor as the one remaining in the room below. Inexplicably, at one side of hearth opening is a narrow closet with a door composed of raised panels. It is assumed that it was "recycled" from another location at the time of major alterations, although it may just possibly have been incorporated in a paneled wall for the earlier corner fireplace.

The narrowed upper hall leads to a window, which seems ill-fitted above a chair rail, hinting at possible later addition of this feature. The stair well is enclosed by a balustrade of five panels, sunk face to hall, under a flat

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railing which joins the stair newel on the same plane. The attic stairs begin at the end of the hall. A two-panel door on H-L hinges with early-type wood latch encloses the flight. The door opening is squeezed against the outer wall, lacking a full frame on that side, and the stair flight beginning with winders is even steeper than the flight below it. An unusual feat is the addition of a board balustrade on west side of stairs, against which is a plain rail carried on square newel posts, one of which sits on the top stair.

The attic area above the hallway has been closed in with vertical boards, some overlain with batten strips. The central section is further enclosed to make a ceilinged room, which is plastered on lath. The name E.P. Bilyeu was incised in script into a fresh coat of plaster. It is thought that he might have been that "raisin'" boy who was given room and board for his labor sometime in this century. Judging by a lath nail, the room could have been constructed by mid-19th century. The door, however, is 18th century vintage. It is thin, with two raised panels on one face. It hangs on deteriorating H-L hinges. The latch is of wood.

The pitch of the roof over the large house area creates a feeling of great open space. The rafters have tie beams and are pegged at ridge. The construction of the cornices can be seen projecting from the plate. Two brick chimney flues merge at the ridge line from an inverted V ascent. Bricks of large size and pale color, commonly found in 19th century houses, serve as intersticing for a distance of about three feet from floor level. The floor boards are of the same width--10" to 12"--as those on other levels and are fitted together with tongue and groove. Inventories taken in 1809 and in 1832 indicate that bedding was kept in the attic; the latter also mentions a bed. By 1832 a spinning wheel had also landed there along with "old iron" and meal barrels.⁵

The Wing

The kitchen wing is attached to the east gable wall, and is recessed by four feet from the main (south) facade of the house. It is 1½ stories tall, measuring 20'9" by 25'5", and is adjoined by a rebuilt shed-roofed leanto which served as pantry and storage as late as 1940. Since 1964, the wing and attached leanto have undergone extensive remodeling to create one vast free-flowing space open to the rafters. As much as possible, original features were retained, and the HABS study of 1939-40 provides additional information, including alterations that had occurred by that time.

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By plan and dimensions this one-room cellarless structure containing a 12' lintel-logged cooking fireplace with beehive oven opening in the fire chamber appears always to have been intended as kitchen. It is clearly of the same era of construction as the dwelling house. As less important room, it had--until post-1964 remodeling--exposed hewn timbers supporting the garret floor. These were of considerable proportions, 5½" by 9", and spaced 40" on center. The now exposed free-standing chimney rises in stepped courses on one side to roof ridge. The beehive oven, once contained within the leanto, has been removed. The leanto was in existence by 1832, when an inventory of its contents was taken following the death of Richard Smith. Called the shed, no mention is made of spatial division, as existed in 1940. It contained lard and tallow.

The most unusual feature of the wing is its lack of its own interior wall; its gable end is merely framed against the outside shingled wall of the house. The framing includes gunstock corner posts of story-height, unmortised, since main girts are new, a replacement of deteriorating members. They may never have risen beyond that height, the half-story (5') garret above possibly represents a raising of the roof. This conjecture is based on the roof pitch, which is more shallow than that of the main block and the presence of large bricks as infill between remaining hewn studs that exceed the usual dimensions of 18th-century bricks. There seems no way of accounting for the fact that the wing was framed flush against the house in this manner, except for the surmise that it had once stood independently as a smaller structure and had then been enlarged, with roof raising possibly occurring at the same time. Usable timbers, such as the gunstock posts, could then have been reincorporated. As early as 1807, the garret contained bedding. The only trace of stairs to this level is seen as ghostmarks on the shingled wall of the house proper. This flight of stairs, originating in the south corner, was still in existence in 1964, with another flight of stairs beneath it to reach an entry through the foundation wall of the house into its cellar. The wing and leanto both have their own rubble stone foundations.

There appears never to have been a connection between wing and house on the garret level. Prior to 1964, the wing had been divided longitudinally into two rooms, with separate adjacent doors from the entrance hall. This opening has

- * The term was used by local old-timers to describe a youth taken into a household to be raised in return for his labor.

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been combined into one with a new pair of doors, replacing Greek Revival vertical-panel doors. Also hung at this opening, which is one step down to wing floor, are a pair of 18th-century exterior bead-edged doors of half width, containing four raised panels on face and diagonally laid boarding at back. These double-leaf doors intended for a single opening, with rectangular metal boxlock attached and strap hinges at top and bottom rails, were found on the premises and presumably once enclosed the principal entrance. They exhibit their original paint, never having been repainted: this is a pale green color. Also found were the sawn-off portions of a pair of pilasters, with fluted columns, molded capital on frieze, and a second capital with dartlike edging. These were painted the same color. The pair is now hung decoratively on one wall, along with a display of other artifacts discovered in outbuildings and dug from the ground.

Before remodeling, the wing had exterior doors on both its long walls, as well as a scattering of windows placed for convenience, which were of assorted sizes. The leanto had a side door. The north elevation remains unchanged, except for the elimination of the entry. The windows of unmatched size which flanked it have been left in place but made blanks. The wood shingling has been left intact.

The south and east elevations of the combined wing and leanto, however, have been totally rebuilt, with walls mainly of glass. Pairs of sliding glass doors open from both areas onto a new-built porch, which replaces one of Victorian era on turned posts. The tiled floor area continues to side of wing as a broad sweeping terrace. This is raised from the ground by a stone retaining wall, as the grade level falls gently away from the house. The new gable wall, with central section composed of ranges of glass panes, rises to the rafters. A continuous roof spans the total area on new rafters. A dormer window on the south slope has been retained.

The original wood floor has been replaced with square tiles. The fireplace which had been boarded up when the kitchen area had been divided, is now functioning. A pair of two-sectioned room-height cupboards, with raised-panel doors, which had stood to the north side of the chimney against the former end wall, have been removed, but one has been incorporated within the parlor wall of the house, as earlier noted. While the internal changes are major, some were dictated by structural decay. The interior, in any case, had lost its original character, with its subdivision into rooms and blocking of fireplace. Its proportions

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and height remain the same, except for the lean-to, and when viewed from the north, its public approach, it appears unaltered.

Outbuildings

This farm has a relatively good complement of surviving outbuildings, which mainly date from the 19th century, from which can be read farm activities and organizational scheme of that era. The original owner, John Coward, first described himself as yeoman and later as gentleman, possibly because of multiple business ventures. In his will, however, he looked to the profits from his plantation as source of income for educating his younger children.⁸ As owner of pinelands and cedar swamps, and also a sawmill, his revenue-producing activities were diversified. The next longtime owner, Gilbert Smith, seems to have been primarily a farmer, a rich one perhaps, because he had considerable money out on loan. The inventory of his estate in 1809 mentions only one building specifically, a barn, which may have served multiple purposes. He kept cows, horses, and pigs.⁹ For household and farm help he had the services of three black men and one girl.

The barn that remains on the farm, although altered, may be the same, as it appears to be of early construction. As sited, it bears no esthetic relationship to the farmhouse, being at right angles to it at the north westernmost corner of a loose arrangement of outbuildings that might be described as a "foldyard" behind the dwelling. Most of the remaining buildings, of mid-century or later time, do follow a usual layout, with the two-story structure--a cookhouse at one time--and attached woodshed to one side of the house, and chicken house and ice house aligned behind it, creating one side of an enclosure. The farmyard is stopped by the two-story double crib, wagon/carriage house, which conveniently has its gable entrance turned to the lane. Surprisingly, the smoke house and the privy were placed to the westerly front of the house. Possibly these are not in their original location.

The 5-bay barn is of English derivative plan, rectangular in shape, with principal opening centered on the east elevation. It is two stories in height, divided into floor levels. The interior has been modified by the walling off of the south two bays to create horse stalls. Flooring of considerable age, fastened with square-headed nails, covers the area of the open bays. The framing members seen at first and second floor levels are of very large hewn timbers, braced with diagonal struts, mortised in. Replacement siding of clapboards put up in 1969 covers the walls. The roof is of seamed metal and carries lightning

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rods. Three loft doors march in upward progression across the rear elevation, added also in 1969. Track doors slide across the main entrance. There is a second wide opening at north gable end, and two new openings at south gable for the horse paddocks added against its wall.

A one-story 3-bay addition is attached perpendicularly at the north end of the east facade extending under an asymmetrical gable roof northward beyond the barn. A deep shed-roofed canopy runs in front of barn and addition, as well as along its south gable wall (not original). A modern rail fence encloses the paddocks as well as the entire barn.

A small clapboarded, gable-roofed structure--a well house--on high rubble stone base stands to southwest of barn. Doorway, without steps, is on west long wall; a door on a track and window are on opposite wall. Another sliding door is on north gable end. (Since the alterations are severe, this is considered non-contributing.)

The gable-fronted wagon/carriage house, although of post-1850 construction, having circular-sawn components and butted rafters, follows a long convention of building form, matching a description in an advertisement of 1772 for a double-crib, wagon house and hay loft.¹⁰ The vehicular passageway runs through the center, with ladder-type stairs to loft along the east wall, and separate pedestrian entry from the south gable wall. Behind the stairs and on opposite wall are the slanted slats of corn cribs. Some slats, at least, appear to have been recycled, as there are traces of square-headed nails and nail holes in non-functioning positions. The exterior walls of the structure are vertical and closed by clapboards, a departure from the customary angling of corn cribs. Wagon doors on metal tracks span both gable walls, those on the north end having been added by present owner. Centered loft doors of wood planks are flanked by 6/6 sash windows. A metal rod and pulley extend outward above the south loft door. Windows have louvered blinds added by the owner. The structure is seated on a foundation of stone rubble. The ice house is of an interesting shape, its above-ground stone walls rising only 2 feet. Its main feature is the gable roof which rises from these walls; shingled, it has a slight overhang. More or less square in shape, its gable front faces into the farmyard, containing a plank door with a novelty circular wood latch. This elevation is clapboarded. The interior space is now used for other purposes, with a raised floor and internal partition. Squared timbers are used as sills.

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A chicken house of probable 20th-century construction has been enclosed and converted to other use. It is a clapboarded frame structure with gable roof of unequal slopes. There is an entry in the west gable end. Two new windows of 9-pane sash are on south long wall.

A two-story, post-1850 outbuilding, gable fronted, faces west to the house across the terrace. It measures 14' by 20' with attached 10' leanto along its south wall. A brick chimney stock emerges at the rear lower corner of the south roof slope. Stovepipe openings are found on the chimney on both floor levels. Within living memory, this building was known as the "cook house." It is clapboard-sided, with a late roofing of wood shingles. Rafter tails are exposed. The structure is raised from the ground on hewn sills at the gable end; elsewhere on stone rubble. A plank door with a patented Blake latch is centered in gable wall with one 6/6 sash window to left. A plank loft door is centered above. Two sash windows illuminate the north wall at ground story, and ladder-type stairs to the upper story fill the opposite wall. The loft area is also windowed.

The woodshed, now of three bays, formerly two, runs the full length of the building on its south wall and beyond, and terminates with a small room in which a 9/9 sash frame has been inserted, possibly one removed from the house when the Victorian sash was introduced.

A tall weathervane adorns the front gable peak installed by the owner. Previously he had mounted a unique piece with a 3-dimensional metal grasshopper ornament imported from Europe that he had purchased in Boston. It is now displayed in the wing of the house. A modern post and rail fence runs behind all but the last-mentioned outbuilding, as one side of an enclosure for a dog pen. A similar fence runs westward from the south gable wall of the wagon-carriage house for a short distance.

A privy, now concealed by a cluster of trees, stands to the southwest of the house. It is square in shape, and a two-seater. Of frame construction, it is sheathed with clapboards and has a pyramidal roof, wood-shingled. The door opening faces toward the house. A 4-pane window looks out eastward.

The skeletal frame of a square smoke house yields little information as to its original appearance. The members appear to be sawn. This is non-contributing.

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A locust cross-and-rail (snake) fence to southwest of house parallel with a farm lane on its south side survives in poor condition, having been overtaken by undergrowth of a hedge row.

The immediate environment of the house is open. The front elevation looks out upon a great field inhabited by deer and other wildlife, which lies below an embankment close by the house. A sycamore tree of enormous girth, estimated to be at least 250 years old, stands very near the front of the wing. Woods border the field to the east and south for some distance. Replacement pines have been planted in the south woods. One of a few surviving oaks, thought to be about 400 years old, stands in the east woods. What appears to be the path of an early road runs through the east woods. The original farm lane enters the property centrally, from Burlington Path Road, and courses through woods for a distance before winding westward on its southerly course to run back of the barn and wagon/carriage house. It then continues south and eastward for a short distance terminating in woods where the the other ancient oaks are to be seen. The swampland lies along the lane at about its midpoint.

The easterly boundary line is marked by a hedgerow. A second new dirt lane near it enters from the road and eventually joins with the driveway. More southerly along this boundary, the land falls off. It may have descended to one of the runs on the property mentioned as an east boundary line in the will of John Coward. It is now heavily wooded. At a considerable distance to the east can be seen another house, also sited on the ridge, from a vantage point near the barn.

A 19th-century farmer's lane now runs westward across the other half of the original 200-acre farm of 1770 in a tortuous path and exits on a side road, Emleys Hill-Prospertown Road. Within the nominated farm tract, along this lane, is a modern corral. A second corral stands along a dirt lane leading off this lane near the southern boundary line.

The remainder of the farm remains in open fields, with some land allocated to the tree nursery.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F GNA

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Exploration/settlement

Period of Significance

c. 1740-1900

Significant Dates

1760

1770

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Coward, Rev. John, Sr.

Smith, Gilbert

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Coward-Smith House on its 100-acre farm contributes to an understanding of the forces at work that helped shape a particular vernacular style of architecture in one environment. That environment included proximity to Philadelphia and trade routes and at the same time the prevalence of rural building customs brought by the settlers themselves. The economic base for settlement were the specific natural resources of the area. Wealth was gained from marketing wood products. Built during the middle of the 18th century, the house illustrates the evolving architectural taste of its area, falling between the settler's first small home and the mansion house drawn on Georgian principles. Largely unaltered from its time of construction, and without additions, the house displays its original fenestration and floor plan, shingling and pent roof, and contains much of its early elements of decor dating to the period of ownership of Gilbert Smith (1770-1807). Such minor changes that occurred were introduced by John M. Bilyeu (about mid-century) and his descendants (owners between 1846 and 1954). With the depletion of the wood supply, farming became the prime activity in the 19th century, and the pursuit of this occupation is illustrated by the number of outbuildings grouped at back as a farmyard. Of equal importance is the total setting, preserved as fields, swampy ponds, and woods with current use as tree nursery. Although it does not replicate the original planting fields and woodlots, it does retain boundary-defining hedgerows, the same farm lane from the old Burlington Path, and a few of the trees. The farm tract with house and outbuildings sited on a ridge deeply within the property, calling for a quarter-mile lane, still strongly conveys a sense of the layout devised in the 18th century to overcome topographical factors and at the same time provide a view. It functioned also for 19th-century owners and was left intact.

Settlement

This most southwesterly corner of Monmouth County, lying against the Province Line dividing the East New Jersey and West New Jersey provinces, was advantaged by its closeness to two ancient Indian trails, one coming from the north, beginning at the Raritan River and running partly on the Province Line, consid-

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation sheet #9.1)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data: NA

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 100 Roosevelt, NJ Quad

UTM References

A 11 8 5 4 4 6 2 0 4 4 4 4 0 0 0
 Zone Easting Northing

C 11 8 5 4 4 9 4 0 4 4 4 2 9 4 0

B 11 8 5 4 5 2 4 0 4 4 4 3 2 2 0
 Zone Easting Northing

D 11 8 5 4 4 3 0 0 4 4 4 3 7 0 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(See attached map)

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

(See continuation sheet)

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title ursula C. Brecknell
 organization Historic House Surveys date September 1987
 street & number 36 Ellis Drive telephone (201) 359-3498
 city or town Belle Mead state New Jersey zip code 08502

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ered a major route as early as 1695, when it was described as well maintained/and the best road between Inian's Ferry (New Brunswick) and Crosswicks Bridge, and another starting at the ocean, running through the 17th-century-settled Monmouth Patent from Shrewsbury to Freehold and southwesterly from there to Burlington, called in the 1680s the Burlington Path.¹¹ Two large brooks, Crosswicks and Doctor's Creeks flowed easterly into this corner, with endless feeder streams, promoting the growth of cedars (cypress) and white pines. A landing was on the Delaware River some 10-15 miles distant, making Philadelphia within relatively easy reach.

Under the East Jersey Board of Proprietors in the 1680s, shares and fractions thereof in the whole of the province had been sold to wealthy investors to encourage settlement. Familiar names in state history--Sonmans, Lyell, Johnston, Willocks, and others--staked out large tracts. Before 1686, one tract of some 5000 acres along the Burlington Path had passed from Thomas Rudyard to Robert Turner to John Throckmorton, as a portion of one-fourth share of the province. Out of this enormous parcel, he reserved 480 acres for himself, a tract almost two miles long fronting on the Burlington Path and running south for a mile at its western line, reaching almost to a stream of good water, Lahaway Brook.¹² He divided the remainder of the parcel into 10 other tracts, mostly of 480 acres, eight on the north side of the Indian path. Small runs of water flowed to the brook through Throckmorton's tract, creating bogs; pinelands fringed his southern boundary.

Throckmorton, who lived in Middletown, one of Monmouth County's two earliest settlements, sold the other tracts to his brothers Job and Joseph, and to friends from Middletown. This subdivision was immediately dubbed "the Middletown Men's Land."¹³ Most of the buyers were inter-related through marriage. Although they personally did not settle there, their purchases contributed to the opening up of the land, as other land speculators were also playing the same game. The attraction to this still remote area became its water power and rich crop of pines and cedars. Mills, especially sawmills, were the first structures to go up and became the nuclei of settlements. Within the vicinity, Nathan Allen had a mill on Doctor's Creek where it was crossed by the Lower Indian Trail, leading to the founding of Allentown, and Richard Salter had another on the same creek, the origin of the mid-18th-century trading center of Imlaystown. A surprisingly early awareness of a future need was the purchase in 1720 of 25 acres of land on or near the Burlington Path by the Baptists of Middletown. This is significant as an indication of the direction of one flow of settlers to this area. At the same time, there was another flow from Burlington County and the Philadelphia environs, leading to the founding of a Presbyterian and an Anglican Church at Allentown and a Quaker Meeting House at Crosswicks in the early decades.¹⁴

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Ownership of the 480-acre tracts changed often. Some of the older investors died, including Throckmorton in 1690. His own tract, as well as other holdings, fell to his children. Through quit claims among siblings in 1708, Throckmorton's daughter Patience, married to a New York mariner, Hugh Coward, along with her unmarried sister, came into possession of the 480-acre tract. There is no indication that they took up the land. Residents were still few in the second and third decades of the century, with only sparse references to them in the records, and those mentioned as actually living on the 11 tracts along the Path were tenants. John Coward, only son of Hugh and Patience Coward, married in 1727 a Staten Island woman, Alice Britten. In 1728, his name first appears as a resident of Freehold Township, which then included Upper Freehold. His first child was born that year. In 1731, after Upper Freehold was set off as a separate entity, Coward's name appears again leading to the belief that he had now come to₁₅ live on the Throckmorton tract, reported then, perhaps by error, as 430 acres.

It would appear that this southerly corner of the county, identified as Crosswicks in early advertisements, though some distance removed from the village of that name in Burlington County, assumed in the next 20 years its character, which has scarcely changed, having remained largely a rural unpopulated area. In the 1730s, two stage routes had been established, making connections between Philadelphia and New York possible. In 1748, Peter Kalm, the Swedish botanist, in his journal of his American visit commented on the daily flow of people and products between the cities.₁₆

From the time of his arrival, c. 1728, to his death in 1760, John Coward rose in rank from yeoman farmer to gentleman, as described in some records. Although brought up in the Anglican Church, he assumed the ministry of the Old Yellow Baptist Meeting House near his home in the 1750s, one indication of his and his neighbors' ties with Middletown.

There are two extant houses on Coward's home farm, and it is assumed that he built and lived in both of them. It has been convincingly argued in the nomination to the Registers of the Coward-Hendrickson House that the 1½-story stone house under gambrel roof that stands on another portion of the original Throckmorton tract dates to an earlier period of building than the second house, subject of this nomination. Both its fabric and roof type set it apart from the two-story house of brick or frame which became the local convention of the 1740s and following decades. This house was enlarged with a two-story frame addition at an unidentified time--perhaps before Coward's death but just as likely after it.

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Married in 1727, a young man might be expected to build a house of small scale--two rooms and garret--in an area still largely wilderness. In another 15 years, with economic status much improved, and family considerably enlarged, with at least one servant (advertised as a runaway), it is quite conceivable that he built anew. Soon himself to be regarded as a local squire, in the 1740s and '50s he saw a number of affluent men building large two-story houses, some of brick, within his immediate vicinity. These included members of the prominent Lawrence family (John Lawrence ran a survey of the Province Line in 1742) and Richard Stevens, Esq. Stevens put up a house of 8 rooms, 4 to a floor, 40' x 30', with adjacent kitchen, on the north side of Burlington Path opposite Coward's plantation. Described as new at the time of Stevens' death, 1745, the house was valued at 1200 with its improvements. This house was purchased with its 415 acres by Jeremiah Stillwell, and he sold it to John Coward, Jr., with financial help from his father, in 1754 for the sum of 1800.¹⁷ The Coward-Smith House easily fits the type of building erected in these decades; it is, in fact, smaller than a number of them.

Like many other early landholders in this well-watered and wooded area Coward, too, obtained a sawmill, buying the mill on Lahaway Creek advertised in 1730 by the widow of David Lyell, a New York City goldsmith and shareholder in East Jersey. In 1749, he bought additional parcels of land near the mill (located at Hornerstown), and in 1750 purchased from John Lawrence a 197-acre tract lying along the creek south of his plantation. The HABS study has mistakenly identified this latter tract as the homestead site for the Coward-Smith House, identified as the John Coward House, further stating that the house was built that same year. By 1758 Coward was land rich, being credited in the ratables with 1200 acres in Upper Freehold alone. Besides the above, he owned cedar swamps and pinelands.¹⁸

The importance of swamp cedars was remarked upon by Peter Kalm in 1748. The profligate consumption of wood had been observed, and there had already been a decline in cedar trees. The wood was light and rotted less than any other, and therefore was popular for roofs and would last up to 50 years. White cedar and pines, he noted, were also used by joiners for different sorts of work than furniture making. New Jersey was at the time a great shipper of cedar shingles to New York City, a distribution point, and the wood itself was exported in great quantity to the West Indies for shingles, pipe staves, etc. There was also a market in tar and pitch.¹⁹ Coward's sons John and Jonathan and sons-in-law also owned mills. Jonathan Coward's mill, at one time jointly owned with John Lawrence, was located on the Lahaway near Prospertown. It was indicated on the map made by Lt. John Hills in 1781.

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Monmouth County, New JerseyArchitecture

An earlier rather than later date can be argued for the Coward-Smith House by its construction and features. As a two-story side-hall house, of possible Quaker provenance in plan, Coward was apparently being inspired by Philadelphia houses. There is a compromise of symmetry, with an awkwardly placed fourth window on each floor, violating the classical rule of 3 or 5. The pitch of the roof is steeper than that of the incoming Georgian style. The use of mud and straw for intersticing rather than brick, which was so readily available, a brickyard being in Crosswicks, also suggests an early period of construction, as does the presence of gunstock posts in the wing. This latter feature is also found in the shed of the other Coward house. A New England building technique, it was seemingly introduced to New Jersey at a quite early time (found in John Harrison's "Rockingham" at Rocky Hill, c. 1710), but apparently abandoned, as it is not commonly seen in later houses. The Baptists, who came from New England, may have introduced it here.

The final argument for the existence of the house in Coward's lifetime comes from the purchase price it commanded in 1770. In his will, 1760, John Coward divided his farm into three tracts, leaving the most westerly segment to his youngest son Jonathan and the central segment to his next youngest child, Thomas, 14 years old at the time. The final easterly segment was willed to his five daughters along with his sawmill, his pines, and cedar swamps. In 1770, his daughter Rebecca Coward and her husband Tobias Hendrickson were living on her portion of her land, to which was attached a portion of Thomas' farm which the couple had bought from him in 1768. That year they sold their homestead to her brother Jonathan, and he in turn sold 255 acres out of his inherited farm to them for 1400. About the same time, Thomas sold 200 acres out of his inherited farm to Gilbert Smith for 1200.²⁰ The two houses are located on the portions of the farms sold by the brothers. It seems unlikely that Thomas Coward erected this substantial house while in his teen years, the decade of the '60s.

In style, this house falls between the other Coward House, the small stone gambrel-roofed dwelling of 1½ stories, and the exceptionally fine John Imlay House in Allentown of the 1790s, and predates "Walnford," Richard Waln's Georgian-inspired mansion of the 1770s. Waln, a Philadelphia trader, installed his son at Walnford, a mill center located a few miles from the Coward-Smith plantation. His account books indicate a lucrative business in shipping flour, planks, etc., from which wealth came the expression of success through architectural display. Coward, seemingly as successful, reached out in his generation

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for a touch of style. The house combines such Philadelphia elements as the continuous cornice around the west gable as a pent roof. Its presence is an oddity for the area, and has been documented on only two other houses in Upper Freehold, one of which was built by a member of the Holmes family, longtime neighbors of the Cowards.²¹ The inclusion of this design element (which appears only on the west gable) serves to document an acquaintance with the feature, common in the Philadelphia vicinity, dating back to earliest times, used by both Germans and English. The naturalist John Bartram's childhood home (existing in 1699) and Isaac Watson's house near Crosswicks, built 1708, both had this point of style. Its failure of adoption in this area points up the selective process of replicating high style architectural models.

The surviving double-leaf paneled doors and pilaster strips found on the premises and now used decoratively, not functionally, raise conjectures as to whether this grandiose note had been introduced, too. The currently used 5-panel doors do not appear to be the originals.

The scale of the windows, with 9/9 sash at ground floor, 6/6 above in rooms of lower ceilings, is another indication of an attention to stylish features. Many rural farmhouses were just introducing sashed windows about this time. The survival of the partitioned cellar helps to illustrate the references to separate "cellars" in contemporary advertisements. The grilles for air circulation in one storage room are original.

The floor plan with an almost 12' wide hall, if the original intent, may be taken as another indication of a taste for grandeur. Such hall widths did exist but usually in houses of full Georgian plan. "Walnford", of later date, had one of such width. The tucking away of the flight of stairs in an off-hall niche is an interesting aberration but not without other examples. The Dutch house of Hendrick Hendrickson in Monmouth County (1725-50) had a similar plan, although the hall, if such, was wider and divided into two. Since the Dutch had settled side by side with the English in the early Monmouth Patent, it is quite conceivable that Coward was aware of Dutch floor plans. (Another example that comes close to matching the treatment in the Coward-Smith House is the Taylor-Parke House (1768) in Chester County, Pennsylvania, a Quaker area.) The stairway, open on the hall side, contains an even simpler railing and is steeply pitched in order to allow an arched passageway beneath it to the adjoining room from whose floor area it was taken.²² Nonetheless, there remains an open question whether the stairway was changed, perhaps with the addition of the wing, in order to punch a hole through the hall's exterior wall for a through doorway. The stair pitch is far too steep for a house of this scale. The closed-string balustrade

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has no relationship in number of balusters per stair, and the total unit fits uneasily, obscuring the raised-panel reverse side of the upper hall balustrade. Yet as a piece, it is characteristic of the type of turned balusters, wide handrail, and molded string course of mid-18th century, and is similar to other balustrades to be seen in some Monmouth County buildings.²³

On the other hand, it is unsurprising at this date to find the use of cedar shingles for siding, although "more finished" houses of a decade or two later would have beaded clapboards. The fact that these shingles are rounded at butt makes for an interesting observation about the cultural influences on this New Jersey county. Far from being an isolated case, the records of existing as well as demolished houses indicate their common use, more so than in other parts of the state. They are thought to have been of Germanic origin, and have usually been associated with Lowlanders. For example, the William Covenhoven house (built 1752-53) in Freehold, Monmouth County, is similarly shingled; the Covenhoven family were of Dutch descent. In the rare instances when original sheathing has survived on Dutch houses of the Raritan Valley, such shaped shingles have been found.²⁴ With cedar readily at hand, both English and Dutch quite naturally hung shingles on their houses.

It is likely that the interior was embellished from time to time, as some of the panelwork and door surrounds, particularly the shouldered architraves, express the later refinements of the century.

Among the more unusual features found in the house, and even on the wagon house, are wood latches and handles, and even a box lock. Although not dated, and perhaps some are replacements for originals, it is surprising that they have remained to this day and still do service. It reveals a practical rather than style-minded view of 19th-century farmers. Similar wooden box, locks, or rim locks as they are termed, also survive in the Coward-Hendrickson House (See Register nomination).

Gilbert Smith, like others of his time, gained an income from ownership of pinelands as well as from farming on some scale. His son Richard, however, judging by the inventory of his estate in 1832, made his livelihood from farming. The woods may well have been depleted by that time. The use of the property as a working farm in the next century under the Smith and Bilyeu families--the latter purchasing it in 1846--is recorded by the several outbuildings, the arrangement of which reflects the customs of place and time. These tell of corn and hay crops, storage of ice cut from the frozen swamps, and housing of livestock and at

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a later time, the keeping of chickens. The all-but-sideless ice house documents the existence of a form perhaps uncommon but suited to its function. The conveniently located outbuilding of two stories may have served various functions, such as wash house or sleeping quarters for hired hands, but by this century it had been used as cook house. Although the barn has been considerably altered and the ice house and chicken house have been converted to other uses, all the outbuildings contribute to the significance of the property as a 19th-century farm. Their form and construction are characteristic of their period.

The house wing alone has lost its integrity, but its scale and proportions remain true, in general, and some of its original components, such as framing members and cooking fireplace, remain. Its most significant feature--its abutment against the house proper without internal wall--has been preserved, thereby revealing a building practice seen in few other houses, and still not entirely understood. In cases where this practice has occurred, it is unclear whether the wing represents later construction or an earlier building moved to the site (See National Register nomination for the Col. Joseph Glover House, Haddon Heights, New Jersey).

The Families Associated with the House

The owners were prosperous families, substantial people whose roots had long been planted in Monmouth County. Although of English stock, acculturation with Lowlanders had early occurred in the New York area as well as in the Monmouth Patent.

John Coward, Sr., steadily acquired real estate and was in a position to provide well for his children. Like him, his children and their spouses became millowners and fared well judging by their inventories. Young Thomas Coward alone, who inherited this property, seems not to have shared in this prosperity. Perhaps he was in ill health, not up to farming or other entrepreneurial activity, for he sold off acreage to his brother John and brother-in-law Tobias Hendrickson besides the 200-acre farm to Gilbert Smith. He died in 1775, leaving no will. His estate was valued at only 143. The inventory was made by his brother, brother-in-law Tobias and Smith, all neighbors. Although he had a wife in 1770, she did not take part in the administration, and perhaps was deceased.²⁵

It would appear that Gilbert Smith, who bought the plantation from Thomas, was already set up as a farmer, for he advertised a runaway slave several years before. He was married to Margaret Woodward, daughter of Anthony Woodward, who

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was living in Chesterfield at the time he wrote his will. Smith may have been related to the first family of that name who bought into the Throckmorton Tract west of Throckmorton (Smith Road is named after the family), but such a relationship has not been demonstrated. The Woodward family had first bought land at the end of the 17th century, in 1690. An early Woodward property was located near the Throckmorton holdings. Both families apparently were well-to-do by 1770. Shortly after obtaining the house, Smith and his wife furnished lodging for the local schoolmaster, John Braiden. This fact is known from the inventory of his goods, which was taken at Smith's house after his death in 1771. In which room he was lodged remains a matter of speculation, but raises the question whether the present attic room (or an earlier one) might have existed at that time; this might help to explain the installation of an attic stair balustrade. That part of the decor attributed to the Smiths speaks to the ambitions of a couple to add distinction and refinement to their home, particularly in the installation of shouldered architraves, not commonly found in rural New Jersey farmhouses and retardataire when compared with Philadelphia houses, their probable model. Gilbert Smith's wealth was revealed when he died in 1807. Not only did he own real estate--his plantation and two tracts of pineland--but also had considerable money to put out on loan.

The farm passed to his son Richard, and from him to his widow Ann and son Joseph, after his death in 1832. It was divided into two farms, north to south, with the widow remaining on the home portion. The widow sold her farm to John M. Bilyeu in 1846. It is thought that Bilyeu's wife Margaret may have been a Smith, and in that case the farm stayed within the family. There apparently was another connection between these families as well, for after Joseph's death in 1852, his heirs executed a further release of Ann Smith's property to Bilyeu, and among these heirs was a Peter Bilyeu, Jr.

The Bilyeus were also early settlers in Upper Freehold, arriving about 1800. Of Huguenot descent, they had first settled in the 17th century on Staten Island, where their original house still stands. One branch of the family had come to Monmouth County via Elizabeth, New Jersey. This was represented by a Peter Bilyeu, understood to be the father of John, the farm purchaser. John M. Bilyeu died in 1882, leaving the farm to his son Richard. He also lived out his life there and he undoubtedly had a hand in erecting some of the outbuildings. After his death, the farm passed to his daughter Lillian by will. Lillian Bilyeu, with her husband David Malsbury, continued the farm operation. A photograph of the Bilyeus in front of the north facade of the house in 1882 indicates its well-kept condition. A later photo inserted in the corner shows a beaming Lillian Malsbury standing by the present north portico which had been reroofed since her father's

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time. During part of her lifetime, the "raisin" boy was housed in the attic room. Dying in 1954, a widow, Lillian Malsbury turned over the property to Arthur Emley, a local farmer and apparent friend. Emley stayed on the farm for ten years before selling it to the present owner, Robert Zion, in 1964. Mr. Zion, a landscape architect, then purchased the other half of the original farm tract in 1969, thus reuniting the tract to its original size of 1770, although each farm can be distinctly determined by a boundary of hedgerows established long ago. The property today is farmed as a tree nursery specializing in black pines. The second farm tract purchased by Mr. Zion is not regarded as significant to this nomination, as it developed independently as a separate farm after 1850.

Although the Coward-Smith House serves as residence for a large farm, the agricultural operation is not of itself distinctive, being a typical occupation within the county during the period of significance. As a farm tract, however, it has been preserved since it has remained in continuous agricultural use from the time of its original purchase and settlement. As part of the settler John Coward's farm, it was under production. In his will, 1760, he referred to his produce as a source of income for educating his younger children, among whom was Thomas Coward. Gilbert Smith, owner from 1770 until 1809, also farmed the tract, an inventory of his estate indicating that he had plow and farming utensils, a covered wagon, and sundries in the barn. At the time of his death, he owned 5 cows, 2 horses, and a two-year-old heifer. Although not mentioned, he must have kept pigs as well, for his son was to provide the widow with 200 weight of pork each year.

Gilbert Smith was succeeded by his son Richard, who died in 1832. Changing times and economic markets perhaps explain the larger scale of farm operations during his lifetime, as the inventory of his estate lists a number of sows and pigs, colts and mares, sheep and lambs, cows and steers, as well as two horses. Although not specifically mentioned, he apparently had a wagon house, in which was kept a Dearborn wagon and a Jack wagon, a sleigh, and a hay rake, with "corn in the chambers." Forks and rakes were also kept in the barn, and hay in the cow house. Plows and harrows, a grind stone and lye tubs, and two old open wagons were also taken account of, although place of housing was not indicated.

With the exception of the barn, it is a fair assumption that the first farm buildings were lost for one reason or another; perhaps they burned down or needed extensive repairs and were replaced. The extant structures date to the ownership of the Bilyeu family in the second half of the 19th century. The wagon/carriage

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house with corn cribs, however, is representative of a style of construction that dates back to the 18th century, showing the weight of tradition. Some new types of outbuildings were also added, such as the adjunct two story "cookhouse," with woodshed, as a convenience and an improvement reflecting the times, and the chicken house, which records an added farm activity that became popular toward end of century.

Landscaping near the house, including the 250-year-old buttonwood tree, and the meadow on the downslope as part of its view, is casual. As a landscape architect, the owner describes it as typical of the English tradition of the 18th century, which featured grazing fields for cattle and deer and incidental planting of trees in scattered groupings.

Summary

The Coward-Smith House, still associated with and functioning as residence for the farm property, is significant as standing for a continuation of its history from the days of settlement two and a half centuries ago. It contributes to a knowledge and understanding of the why and how this well-watered and swampy geographical area came to be settled, the type of regional architecture that evolved, and the continuation of farming as a way of life by the same or related families through the next century into the present century. Taken together, the house and outbuildings document two periods of its history. Its preservation as a farm in future years has been provided for by Mr. Zion, who has arranged in his will for the property to be used as a shelter for stray or disabled animals and the land to remain undeveloped.

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1. Gilbert Smith, will and inventory, 8830 M. New Jersey State Archives [NJSA], Trenton, NJ.
2. Richard Smith inventory, Vol. I p. 352, NJSA.
3. Gilbert Smith inventory, *ibid.*
4. Richard Smith inventory, *ibid.*
5. Inventories of Gilbert and Richard Smith, *ibid.*
6. Richard Smith, inventory, *ibid.*
7. Photograph in possession of owner shows doors.
8. John Coward will, 2447-8M, G-295, NJSA.
9. Gilbert Smith inventory, *ibid.*
10. New Jersey Archives [NJA], First Series, Vol. 28, pp. 99f.
11. William Baker, MS. Baker cites the Middlesex County Road Returns, Book F, p. 120, Rutgers University Library [RUL], New Brunswick, NJ. NJA, Calendar of Records, 1664-1703, Vol. XXI, First Series, p. 106.
12. NJA, Calendar of Records, 1664-1703, Vol. XXI, First Series, pp. 101, 116, 136, 137, 139, 179, 213, 235, 245, 288, 299; Monmouth County Deed, G-116, Monmouth County Clevli's Office [MCCO], Freehold, NJ. Those who obtained tracts of land out of John Throckmorton's patent of 1685 besides his two brothers were John Smith, Philip Smith, Benjamin "Burdine" (Borden), John Stout, Joseph Grover, James Ashton, Jonathan Holmes, and James Bowne. The division line between the tracts was the Burlington Path itself or close to it, creating upper and lower lots, all with road access. The Path ran in a northeasterly direction although not a straight course, a large elbow or angle being mentioned in one lot. The final eastern lot had the path contained within it, with the pines rather than another lot to its south. It is possible that the Path swung more northerly at this point as Red Valley Road does today. Throckmorton's northeasterly corner was at today's Miller's Mill Road, a road opened in the 19th century. The location of

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 12Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Coward's tract on the Burlington Path has been determined to lie between this corner and Smith Road, perhaps a short distance to the east of it.

13. As early as 1689, the term was used in an Indian deed to John Baker for land adjacent NJA, 1st Ser., Vol. 21, p. 196; Franklin Ellis, History of Monmouth County, (Philadelphia: 1885), p. 614.
14. National Register nominations for Upper Freehold Baptist Meeting (1975); Salter's Mill (1979); Allentown Historic District (1979); Imlaystown Historic District (1983).
15. Charles Shephard, "Hugh Coward, Descendants to the Fourth Generation," typed notes; Ellis, History, p. 613.
16. Samuel Rogers' and Joseph Borden's stage lines. Adolph B. Benson, Editor, Peter Kalm's Travels in North America, I, 20, 220, 294f.
17. NJA, 1st Series, V. 30, p. 455; NJA, 1st Series, V. 12, p. 329.
18. NJA, 1st Series, V. 11, pp. 226f. That Coward bought this mill is confirmed in the will of his daughter Deliverance (Fitz) Randolph in Monmouth County Deed, L-419. Ellis identifies this mill with Goldy's mill in the 19th century at Hornerstown (p. 633). Ellis gives the ratables of 1758, p. 614.
19. Benson, "Hugh Coward," 27, 117; NJA, 1st Ser., V. 28, p. 90 (Brown/Waln mill).
20. NJA, Abstracts of Wills, 1st Series, V. 30, p. 113; Monmouth County Deed P-5, 567, MCCO.
21. N.J. Historic Sites Inventory, #1351. Jonathan Holmes purchased one of the lots in the Throckmorton Patent. By the 1750s, a James Holmes was living on one of the tracts north of Coward. The second house, "Eglinton," homestead farm of the Montgomery family in the 18th century, had a similar pent roof at cornice level in the west gable and a pent roof around three sides over the first story. After many years of neglect, Eglinton was demolished in 1975. This house is extensively documented in papers held by the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society.
22. Hendrick Hendrickson House, HABS, NJ-544; Arlene Horvath, "Vernacular Expression in Quaker Chester County, Pennsylvania," in Camille Wells, Ed.,

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Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II, pp. 150-60; photographs in Margaret Berwind Schiffer, Survey of Chester County, Pennsylvania, Architecture [Exton, PA: 1984), 88.

23. Robert F. Van Benthuyzen, and Audrey Kent Wilson, Monmouth County, A Pictorial History passim; HABS Reports for Monmouth County, N.J., NJSA.
24. Diana S. Waite, "Roofing for Early America," in Charles E. Peterson, Ed., Building Early America, (Radusr PA: 1976), 137f.
25. NJA, 1st Series, Vol. 24, p. 113.
26. Ibid., 60.

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Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Major Bibliographical References

Deeds: East New Jersey, K-2, p.41; K-2, p.44; Monmouth County deeds, E-48; G-55; G-116; G-227; G-295; Y-3; Y-16; Y-29; Q-3, p. 478; A-5, p"453; P-5, p. 567.

Monmouth County Road Returns: A-101, A-117, copies of NJSA.

Wills: John Coward 2447-8M G-295 (1760); Gilbert Smith, with inventory, 8830 M (1809) Inventory: Richard Smith, Monmouth County, V. 1, I, p. 352 (1832).

New Jersey Archives:

Calendar of New Jersey Records, First Series, Vol. XXI (1664-1705)
Newspaper Extracts, First and Second Series, covering years 1704-1782
Abstracts of Wills, First Series, covering 1730 through 1813

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) for New Jersey: surveys in Monmouth County numbered 227, 202, 498, 143, 544, 555, and 693. No. 555 is for the Coward/Smith House.

National Register nominations within Upper Freehold Township: Walnford Historic District (1975); Upper Freehold (Old Yellow) Baptist Meeting (1975); Salter's Mill (1979); Imlaystown Historic District (1983); and Coward/Hendrickson House (1983). Also Allentown Historic District (1979).

Monmouth County, N.J. Historic Sites Inventory No. 1351 (1980-84).

Genealogical sources:

Bilyeu Family; unpagged typescript, by Dorothy Fordyce Lucas, July 1942. Also letter from Benjamin C. Warneck of same time in files of Monmouth County Historical Association on "The Bilyeu Family."

Coward Family: "Hugh Coward, Descendants to the fourth Generation," notes from Charles Shephard, Troy, N.Y., 1922, in files of the Monmouth County Historical Association. Additional information in the Lyel Genealogical Files of the Association.

William Baker, typescript on early roads of Middlesex County, in South Brunswick Public Library, Middlesex County.

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Section number 9 Page 2

Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Maps:

(Lt.) J. Hills, "A Map of Part of the Province of Jersey," 1781
Jesse Lightfoot, "Map of Monmouth County, New Jersey," J.B. Shields, publisher, 1851
Chester Wolverton and Forsey Brown, "Wolverton's Atlas of Monmouth County," 1889

Secondary sources:

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Van Benthuyssen, Robert F., Historic Monmouth County (A Pictorial Guide). Norfolk, Va.: Donning, 1983.

Waite, Diana S., "Roofing for Early America," in Charles E. Peterson, Ed., Building Early America. Radnor, Pa.: Chilton Book Company for the Carpenters' Company of the City and County of Philadelphia, 1976.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries conform to those of Block 33, Lot 6, of the Tax Map for Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County, New Jersey.

Justification of Boundaries:

This nominated property, approximately 100 acres, represents one half of the farm sold by Thomas Coward to Gilbert Smith in 1770. The remaining 100 acres of this deed, lying to the west of this tract, were detached from it by terms of the will of Richard Smith. Although now reunited with the original tract through purchase by the present owner, this second tract is not included within the boundary lines of the nominated property because it is not significantly associated with the historic resources of the first tract. Its history developed independently as a separate farm complex after its sale. Prior to the sale, it was buildingless.

Since the eastern tract historically associated with the Coward-Smith House has never been subdivided, or otherwise developed, and remains as the 18th-century setting of the farmstead, and still has such environmental features as runs of water, swampy areas, pines and cedars which were its first attractions to the settling planter, and the owner's intent is preservation rather than development, it is proposed to keep the entire tract intact. In doing so, the original dirt lane that has always served as entrance to the deeply set farm complex from the Old Burlington Path will be included. In its tortuous path, to the farmhouse complex, past ponds and woods and open land for cultivation, it still records the way of life of farmers in ownership of large plantations dating back to the 18th century.

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Section number _____ Page _____

Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Photographs

Coward-Smith House
Upper Freehold Township
Monmouth County, New Jersey
Photos/Negs: Arthur W. Brecknell
36 Ellis Drive
Belle Mead, New Jersey 08502

Summer 1987

1. Principal elevation (south), camera facing north. Note pent roof on west gable.
2. North elevation, camera facing south. Note original round-butt shingles.
3. Wing, after alterations, camera facing west. Note the different pitches of roof on wing and house.
4. Center aisle created in cellar by partitioning of space and exterior stone steps. Camera facing south.
5. Detail of wall with ventilation grille for southeast "cellar." Camera facing SE.
6. Interior of southeast "cellar," showing second grille and floor joist. Camera facing north.
7. Shutter on wood slides to close ventilation grille and floor joists. Camera facing south.
8. Arched chimney support for a corner fireplace, showing construction of stone and brick. Note brick size. Photo taken looking north.
9. Entry hall, looking north to rear entrance. This hall had been furnished as a room, according to 1809 inventory, with easy chair, one cupboard with pewter and Queen's ware, one bed chest, and two tables.

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Section number _____ Page _____ Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

10. View of staircase and passageway under it to west rear room. Camera facing west.
11. Shouldered architrave (one of two) used to adorn front "parlor." Camera facing north showing view of back room.
12. Mantelpiece in back room, first floor. Camera facing west.
13. Upper hall showing paneled balustrade, door to attic stairway, and steep pitch of attic flight. Camera facing north.
14. Attic stairs showing simple balustrade, with newel post placed on top step, and wall and door for attic room. Camera facing east.
15. Chimneys in attic and large brick intersticing in wall. Pitch of roof is indicated; two tie beams visible. Camera facing west.
16. Thin raised-panel door on H-hinges, with wood latch and handle. Photograph taken from within attic room looking west.
17. Cooking fireplace within wing, now free-standing and exposed to roof ridge. Brick construction. Bake oven opening is at back, left. Continuous rafter system over former leanto area behind chimney is new. Camera facing east.
18. Rear view of cooking fireplace chimney. Oven shed was removed. Looking west.
19. External east wall of house (now an internal wall of wing), showing round-butt shingling and mud-hay daub.
20. One of four gunstock corner posts in wing. Front north wall and lower girt represents new construction. Beam contains a display of artifacts found on property. Facing NW.
21. Exterior wall of house, showing doorway cut through for opening to wing. Paired half-width exterior doors found on premises hung decoratively. Grasshopper-ornamented weathervane earlier decorated outbuilding opposite wing. Camera facing west.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____ Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold Township,
Monmouth County, New Jersey

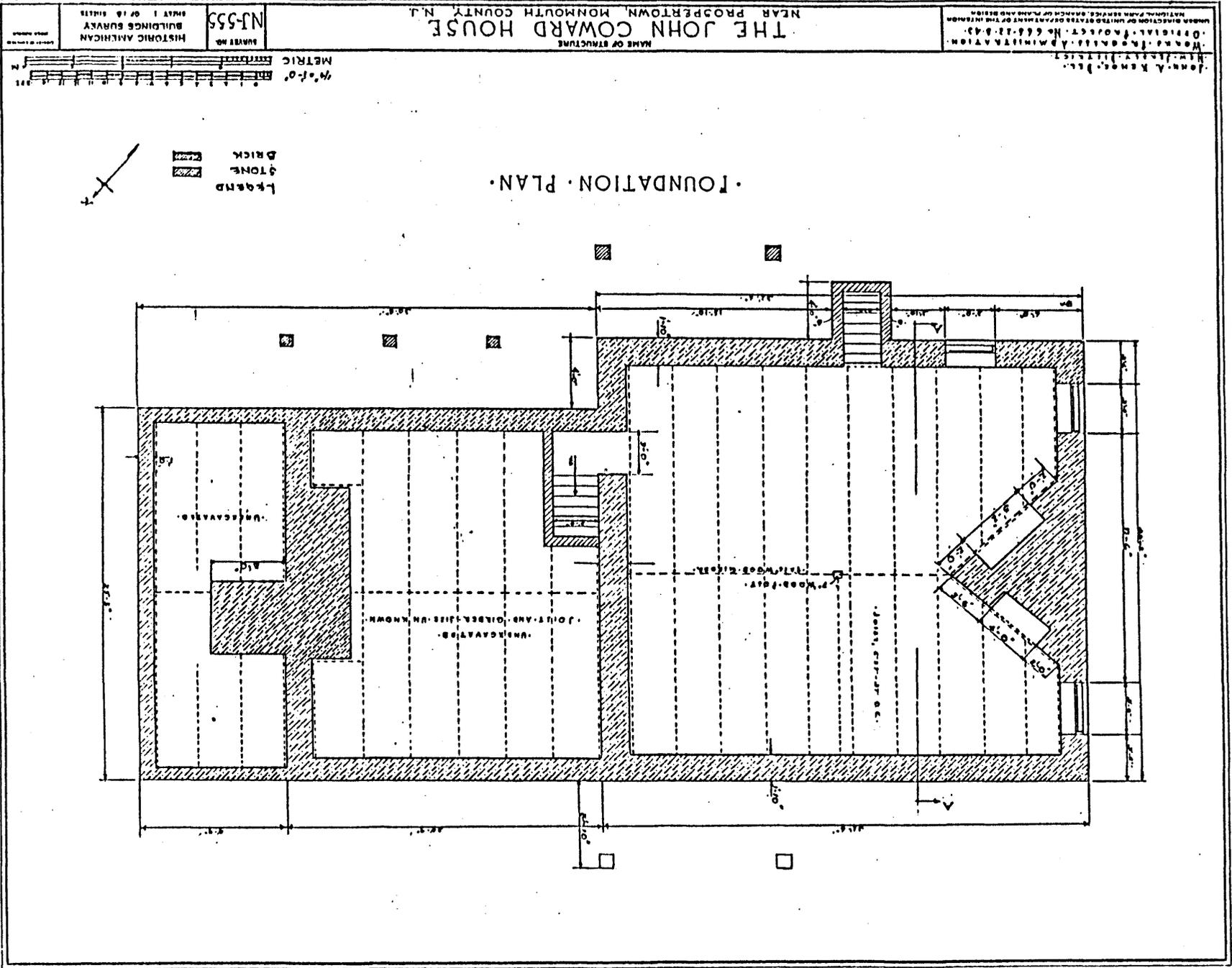
22. Outbuilding known as "Cook House" with attached woodshed; chicken house at left. Camera facing east. Woods at back extend to east boundary.
23. Ice house, with door shaped to fill gable peak. Modern fence encloses dog pen. View facing east.
24. Wagon-carriage house and double corncrib. Camera facing southeast from lane.
25. Barn/stable, facing westward.
26. Sycamore tree in front of house wing, with view of deep meadow. Vista of woods, with new planting of pines, recreates original landscape. Camera facing south.
27. Original dirt lane from the Burlington Path Road as it enters the farm. View facing south.
28. Original swamp which lies along the west side of farm lane. Camera facing north.

EXTERIOR VIEWS ARE KEYED TO SITE PLAN MAP.

INTERIOR VIEWS ARE KEYED TO SECOND SET OF HABS FLOOR PLANS

ENCLOSED (4 sheets)

The John Coward House is the name assigned by HABS to the Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.



NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE, BRANCH OF PLUMBING AND DESIGN
 OFFICIAL PROJECT No. 68-22-843
 WORKS REPAIRS ADMINISTRATION
 JOHN A. KNOX, INC.
 H. W. HENNING, ARCHITECT

NAME OF STRUCTURE
THE JOHN COWARD HOUSE
 NEAR PROPERTOWN, MONMOUTH COUNTY, N.J.

NUMBER NO.
NJ-555

HISTORIC AMERICAN
 BUILDINGS SURVEY
 SHEET 1 OF 18 SHEETS

1/4" = 1'-0"
 METRIC

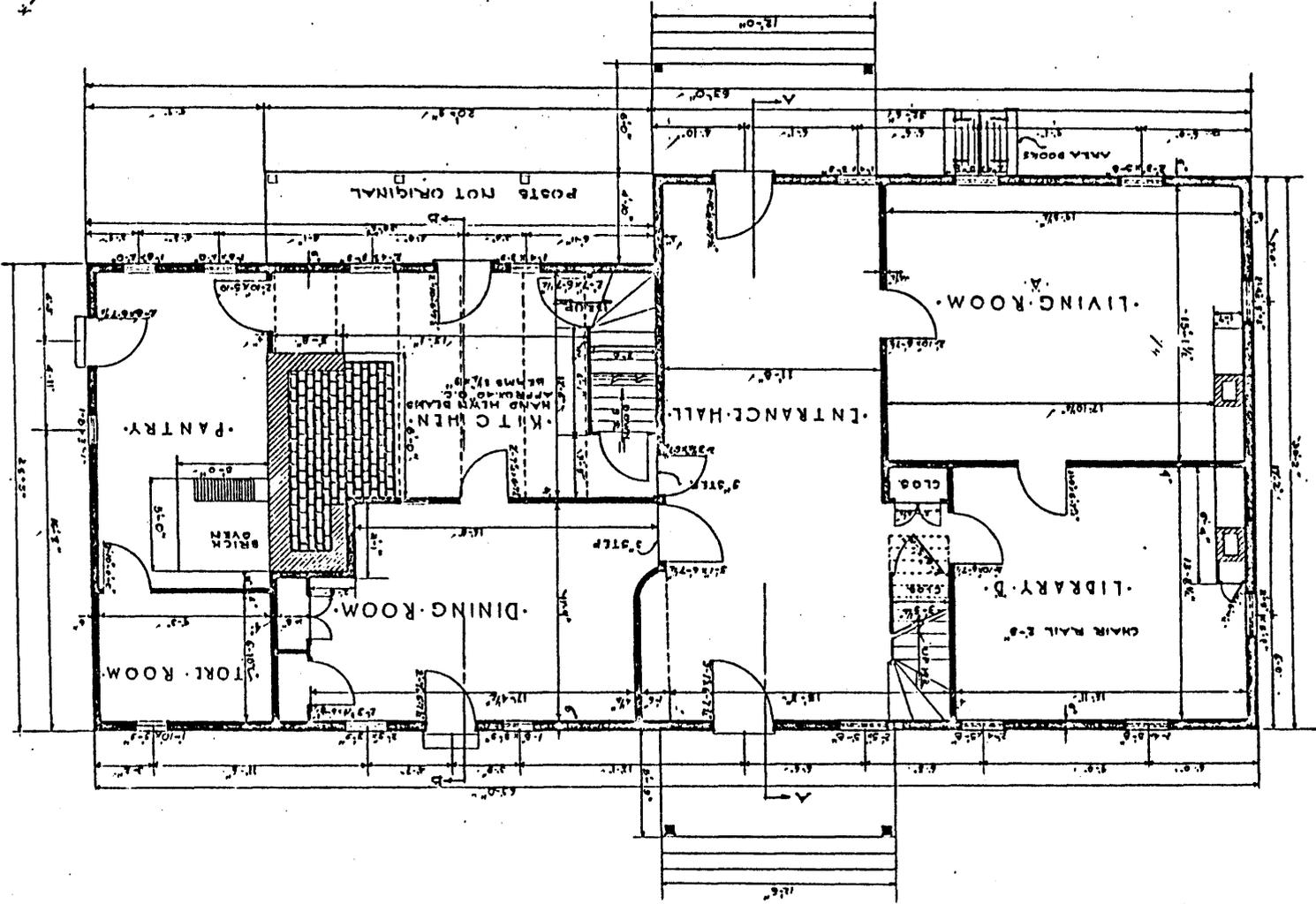
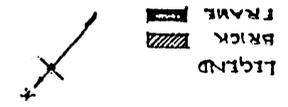
JOHN A. KINOR, B.S.
 ARCHITECT
 115 JERSEY STREET
 NEWARK, N. J.
 ADMINISTRATION
 OFFICIAL PROJECT No. 65-22-8 A. 1.
 UNDER DIRECTION OF UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

THE JOHN COWARD HOUSE
 NEAR PROSPERTOWN, MONMOUTH COUNTY, N. J.

NAME OF STRUCTURE
 SURVEY NO. NJ-555
 HISTORIC AMERICAN
 BUILDINGS SURVEY
 SHEET 2 OF 4 SHEETS

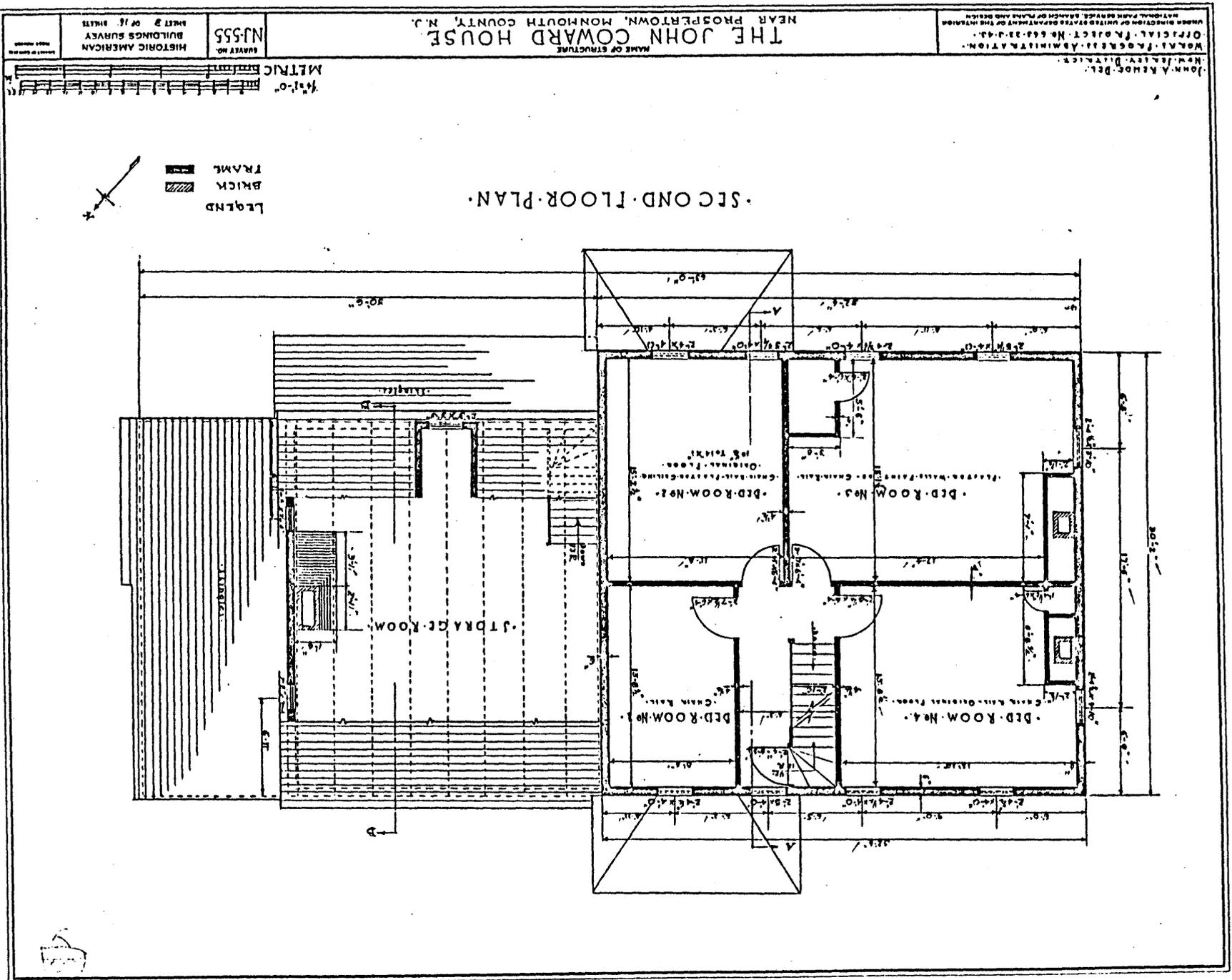
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 METRIC

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

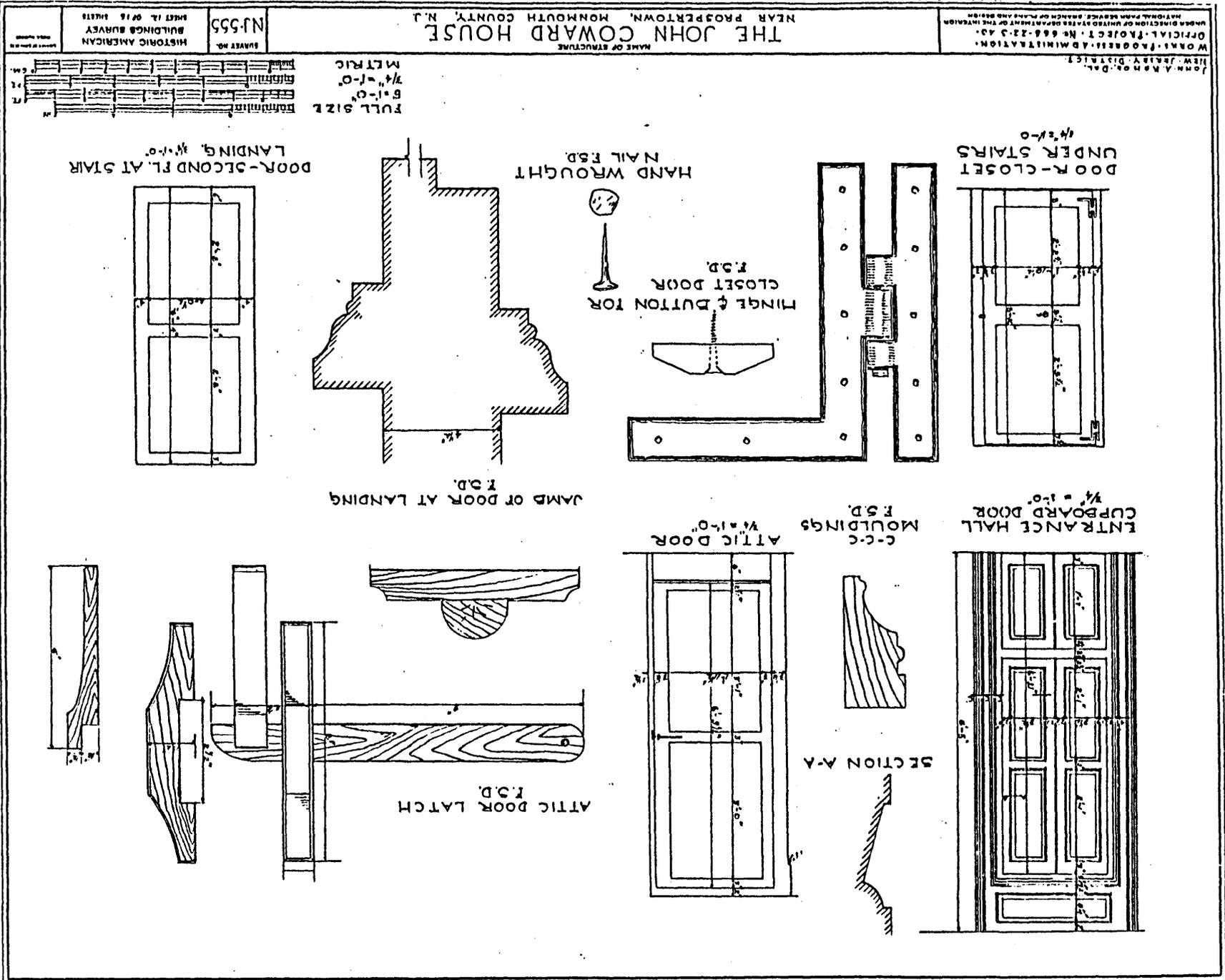


The John Coward House is the name assigned by HABS to the Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.

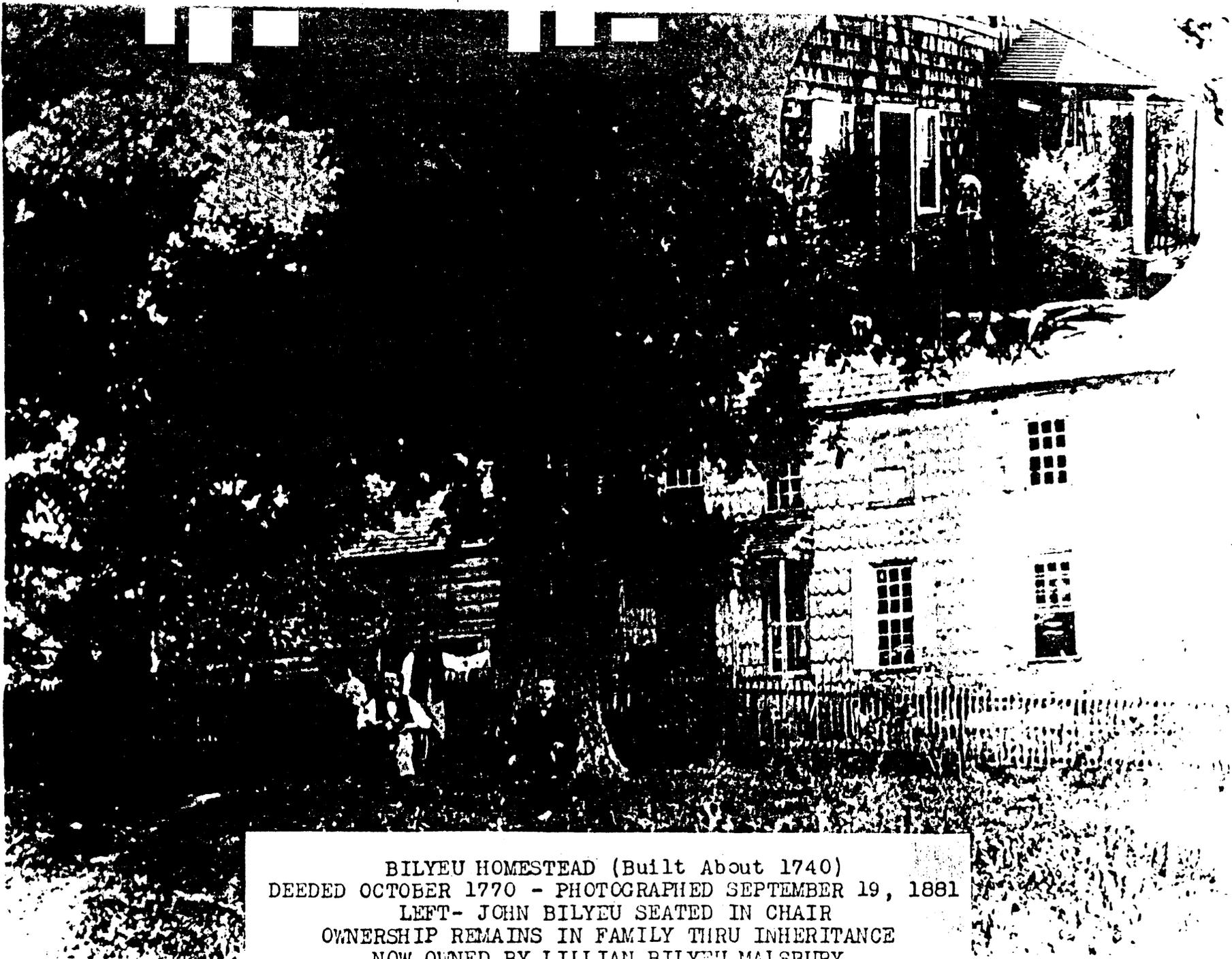
The John Coward House is the name assigned by HABS to the Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.



The John Coward House is the name assigned by HABS to the Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.



Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.



BILYEU HOMESTEAD (Built About 1740)
DEEDED OCTOBER 1770 - PHOTOGRAPHED SEPTEMBER 19, 1881
LEFT- JOHN BILYEU SEATED IN CHAIR
OWNERSHIP REMAINS IN FAMILY THRU INHERITANCE
NOW OWNED BY LILLIAN BILYEU MALSBUY

(Her photo see insert)

The Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.

BURLINGTON PATH ROAD

Approximately
1/4 mile lane

N

NOT TO SCALE
1987

WOODS

WOODS

WOODS

WOODS

DEEP FIELD

CORRAL
NON-CONTRIBUTING

WELL HOUSE
SHED
BARN
STABLE

WAGON/
CARRIAGE
HOUSE AND
CORN
CRIBS

DOG
PEN

ICE HOUSE

CHICKEN COOP

SMOKE
HOUSE FRAME
(NON-CONTRIBUTING)

HOUSE WING

TERRACE

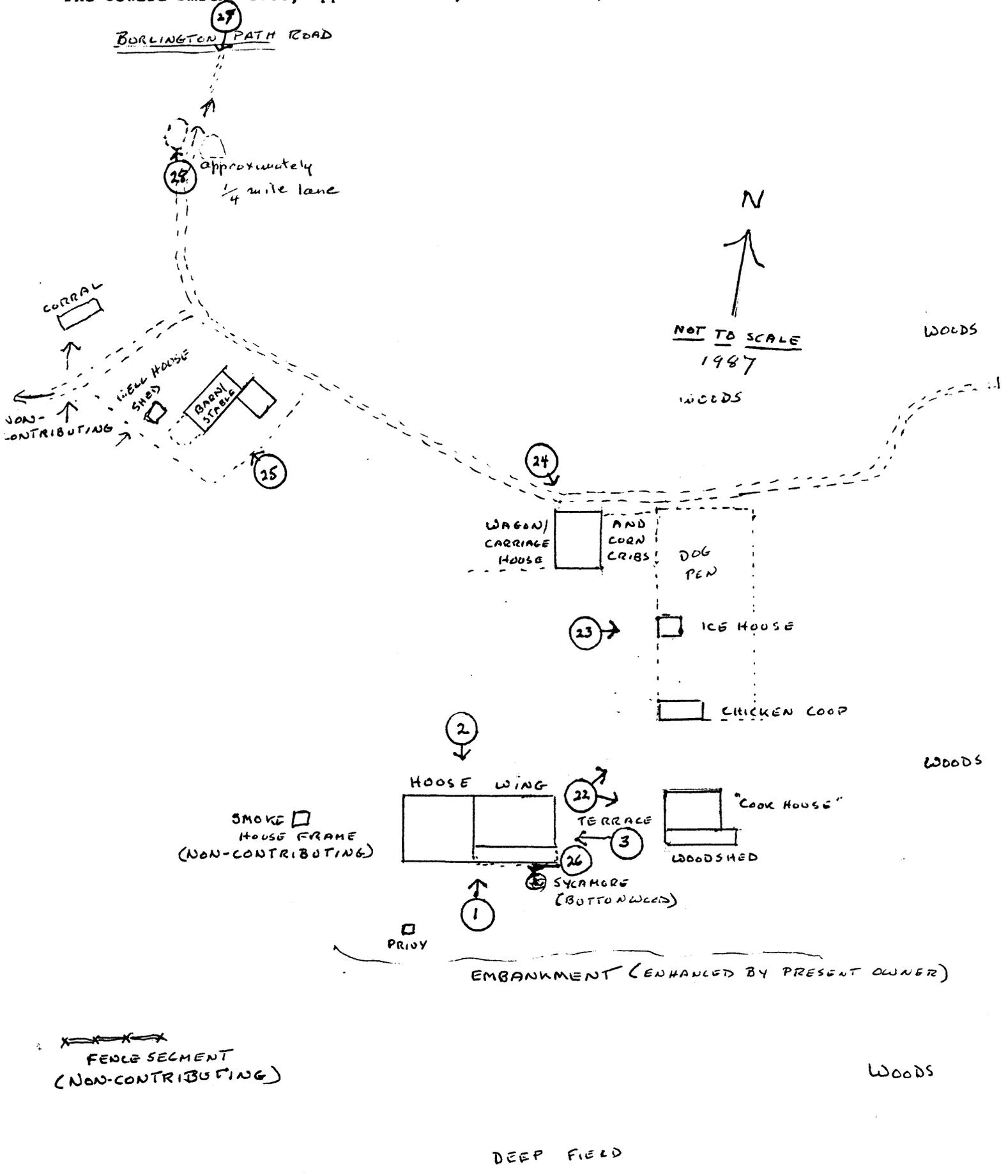
"COOK HOUSE"
WOODSHED

SYCAMORE
(BOTTOM WOODS)

PRIVY

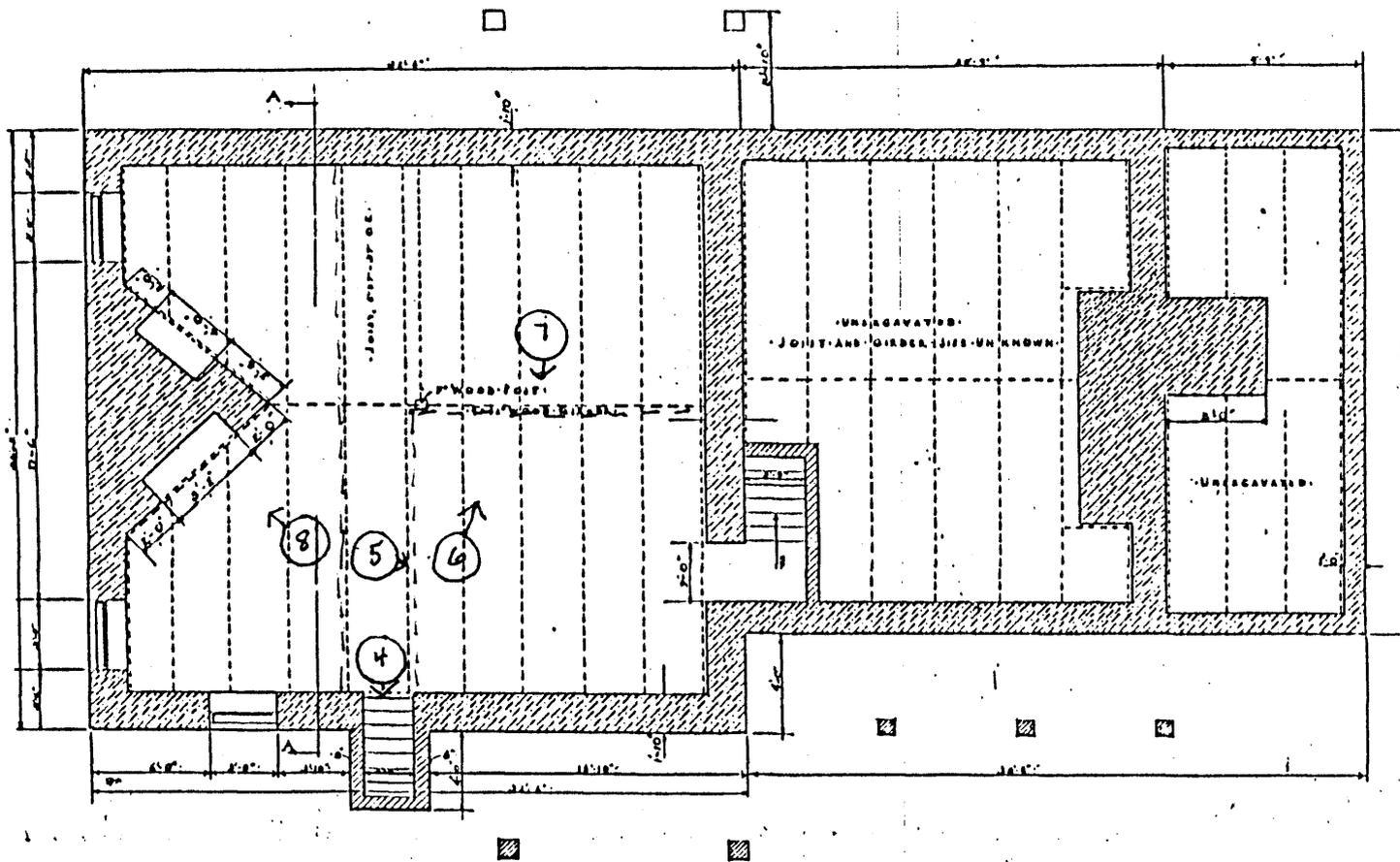
EMBANKMENT (ENHANCED BY PRESENT OWNER)

FENCE SEGMENT
(NON-CONTRIBUTING)



Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.

Numbers with directional arrows apply to photographs (floor plan from HABS, which failed to indicate cellar partitioning)



FOUNDATION PLAN

LEGEND
STONE
BRICK



John A. Ramey, Inc.
New Jersey District

WORKS IN CHARGE: ADMINISTRATION
OFFICIAL PROJECT No. 666-21-8-43
UNDER DIRECTION OF UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

NAME OF STRUCTURE

THE JOHN COWARD HOUSE
NEAR PROSPERTOWN, MONMOUTH COUNTY, N.J.

4" = 1'-0" METRIC

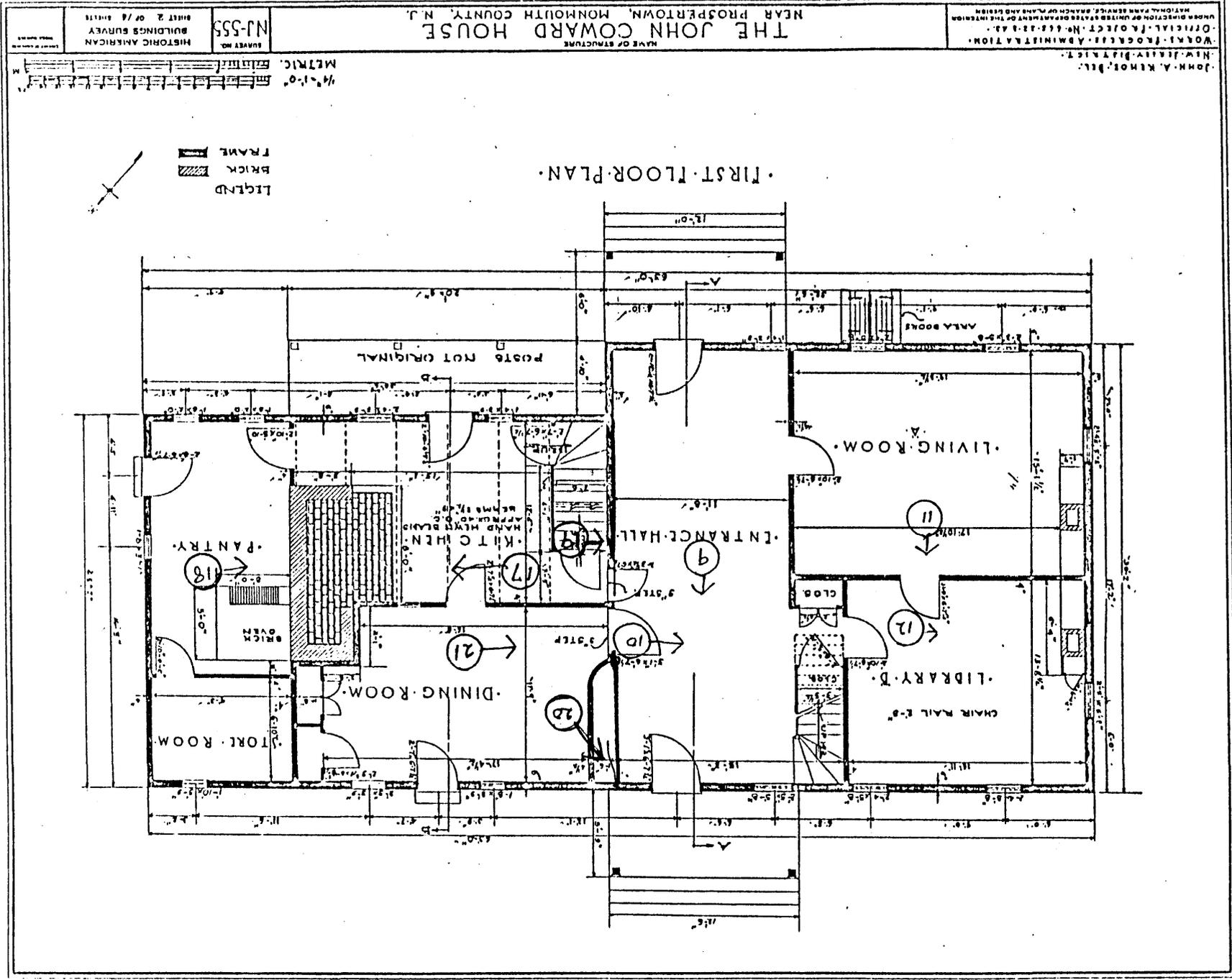
SURVEY NO.
NJ-555

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 1 OF 16 SHEETS

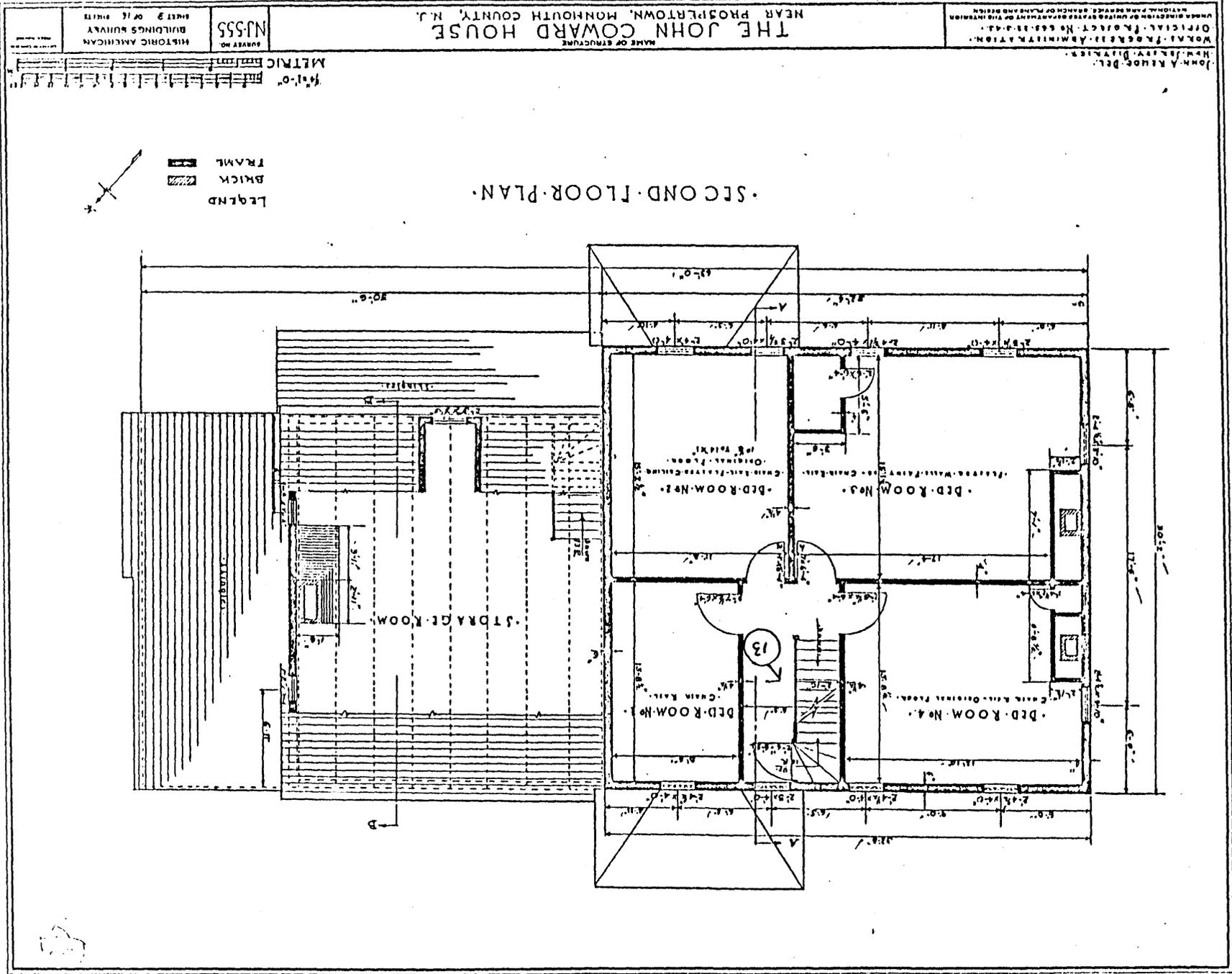
DATE OF SURVEY

SCALE

Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.
 Numbers with directional arrows apply to photographs (floor plans from HABS; some alterations made since, noted in text)



Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J. Numbers with directional arrows apply to photographs (floor plans from HABS; some alterations made since, noted in text)



Coward-Smith House, Upper Freehold, Monmouth Co., N.J.
Numbers with directional arrows apply to photographs. Drawn to scale used for HABS floor plans.

