

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

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

For HCRS use only  
received **AUG 23 1982**  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic First Presbyterian Church of Wantage

and/or common Old Clove Church

**2. Location**

street & number New Jersey Route 23, 1 7/8 mile north<sup>N</sup> of Sussex ~~Boro~~ <sup>on N J 23</sup> N/A not for publication

city, town Sussex ~~vic.~~ Wantage Township N/A vicinity of congressional district 5 th

state New Jersey code 34 county Sussex code 037

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Sussex County Historical Society

street & number 82 Main Street

city, town Newton N/A vicinity of state New Jersey

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sussex County Hall of Records

street & number 4 Park Place

city, town Newton state New Jersey

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N.J. Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1972  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Historic Preservation

city, town Trenton state New Jersey

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Built in 1829, the First Presbyterian Church of Wantage is a well preserved but simple 1 1/2 story rectangular clapboarded frame structure with a four bayside facade and a three bay gable front on a cut stone foundation with vernacular Greek and Gothic detailing. Approximately 1 7/8 miles north of the Borough of Sussex, the church is in a rural setting between Route 23 and Clove Brook. At the front facade a single Gothic arch window with louvered shutters is flanked by two double leaf four panel entrance doors with classical molding and entablature detail. There is a round window just beneath the roof peak. The longitudinal facades have four large Gothic arch windows, all 6/6/6 triple hung sash, also with louvered shutters. These windows have plain surrounds. A small apse-like addition, ca. 1887, projects from the rear facade of the church. This single bay addition has a gable roof. The windows have pointed arches. The roof of the main building has wooden shingles and is pierced on the front of the southwest plane by a small brick chimney.

The interior of Old Clove Church is especially well preserved. It has a rectangular plan with a gallery. The entrance vestibule has two heavy four-panel double leaf doors with Suffolk latches and a pair of center stairs to the galleries. There are two aisles and double center box pews flanked by single box pews beneath the galleries. The walls are wide board wainscot to the chair rail and plaster above. The floors are all wide board. An apse-like addition was created around 1887 for the altar. There is a gallery on the sides and rear supported by round wooden columns. The gallery has raised panels and pilasters. The pews in the gallery are identical to those on the ground level.

In 1887, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the congregation, a few changes were made. The fine late 19th century kerosene chandelier and altar sconces were installed about this time. Other late 19th century modifications include the pews slightly cut down and highlighted in black walnut, the introduction of a reed organ, Victorian altar furniture, and the purchase of two pot-bellied stoves. The church is still heated by the two cast-iron stoves—one labeled "Monarch, No. 30, 1890, Roberts, Winners & Co., Quakertown, Pa." and the other identified as "Stove No/Red/Hot/3, 1894, Roberts, Winners & Co., Quakertown, Pa."

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First Presbyterian Church of Wantage

Continuation sheet Wantage Twp., Sussex Co., NJ Item number 7

Page 1

Description (continued)

The drywall stone foundation on the property accomodated a horse shed. Constructed of native fieldstone, it has three sides, the open end facing north.

The surroundings of the First Presbyterian Church of Wantage are essentially rural and heavily wooded with a hilly terrain. The church itself is on a small plot of fairly level land which falls quickly beyond the rear of the building to the stream below. To the south and across Route 23, on a moderate slope, is the Clove Church cemetery (a separate property). About one mile north is a rambling late 18th century farmstead, once owned by Elias Van Bunschooten, first pastor of the Old Clove Church (National Register, 11/1974).

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates      N/A                              Builder/Architect                              N/A

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Built in 1829, the First Presbyterian Church of Wantage, more commonly known as the Old Clove Church, is a well crafted local vernacular expression of Greek Revival architecture with simple Gothic detailing. Used only intermittently since the early 20th century and virtually unaltered since the late 19th century, Old Clove Church is the best preserved of the earlier country churches in Sussex County.

An unusually large number of churches were built in the region between 1825-1840, probably reflecting the nationwide population growth and a religious re-awakening of the period. Surviving early 19th century area churches (especially Presbyterian) reveal a particular interest in classical forms and details with Gothic arch fenestration. When compared to his 1809 design for the Wall Street Presbyterian Church in New York, the influence of prominent New York architect John McComb is evident in many of these churches. Examples are the Parsippany Presbyterian Church (1828), Morris County; New Vernon Presbyterian Church (1833), Morris County; the Second Presbyterian Church of Wantage (1835), Sussex County, and the Stillwater Presbyterian Church, Sussex County. Old Clove Church, however, has little resemblance to these basically classical structures. In its simple dignity, rather, the Clove Church is probably the work of a local itinerant carpenter who was a polished craftsman, but had little real architectural training.

Contrary to Donald and Virginia Egbert's contention, the Old Clove Church does not appear to be modeled after McComb's vaguely Gothic Revival Presbyterian Church in Princeton (built in 1813 and destroyed in 1835) ("The Gothic Revival Comes to Princeton," p. 116-7). Their convincing argument is weakened by the absence of a first-hand investigation of the Clove Church. The large window panes and plain wooden surrounds of the pointed arches which contrast the molding profiles of the entrance door suggest a window modification. Documented changes to the church around 1887, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the congregation, include the addition of the apse-like wing to the rear, the slight modification of the pews, the installation of a kerosene chandelier and two cast-iron pot-bellied stoves and the acquisition of Victorian liturgical furnishings. Although there is no apparent record of the change, there probably was some change to the window profiles as well.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .86 acre

Quadrangle name Hamburg Quad, NJ

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>531600</u>	<u>4565380</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 39, Lot 7 - Wantage Township Tax Map

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

Revised by Terry Karschner, Office of Historic Preservation 6/1982

name/title Friends of the Old Clove Church

organization  date May 3, 1980

street & number R.D. #1, Box 472 telephone (201) 875-3555

city or town Sussex state New Jersey

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title \_\_\_\_\_ date 7/29/82

### For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register date 9/23/82

[Signature]  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

First Presbyterian Church of Wantage

Continuation sheet Wantage Twp., Sussex Co., NJ Item number 8

Page 1

Significance (continued)

Just following the American Revolution, the Reformed Dutch Church of New Brunswick (New Jersey) sent Reverend Elias Van Bunschooten to Wantage Township to conduct religious services. Van Bunschooten's efforts were rewarded in 1787 when the original congregation of the Old Clove Church was formed through the Classis of the Reformed Dutch Church of Brunswick. For a time the small congregation met in the barn of Helmos Titsworth until a log meeting house was built, just south of the church's original location.

In 1814, Dominie Van Bunschooten gave to the Trustees of Queen's College (now Rutgers University) a fund of \$17,000, the income from which was to be applied to the education of ministers. This fund, still active, continues to educate ministers and is one of the oldest such endowments in New Jersey. After Bunschooten's death in 1815, the church members voted to disband. On August 11, 1818, it was reorganized as a Presbyterian church under the direction of Reverend Gershon Williams.

In 1821, the Reverend Edward Allen was installed as pastor of the Wantage Presbyterian Church. There were two successful revival meetings during this time which added over 300 new members to the church. The log meeting house was too small to accommodate everyone and it was torn down. The present church was built in 1829 by Andrew McNish for \$3,300 with much of the labor contributed by members of the congregation. Allen, an 1815 graduate of the College of New Jersey (Princeton University) may have suggested that the Wantage Church be modeled after the work of John McComb, a prominent New York architect, who used Gothic features and was also active in the Princeton vicinity when Allen was an undergraduate there (Princeton University Library Chronicle. Winter, 1968. "The Gothic Revival Comes to Princeton." p. 115-17).

The country church was built with one hundred and twenty-six members pledging money and services. Several Revolutionary War participants were early church members and doubtless contributed toward the building's construction. One member, Dr. John Titsworth, a descendant of the area's first white settlers, supervised the work and kept thorough records which are in family hands to date.

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First Presbyterian Church of Wantage

Continuation sheet Wantage Twp., Sussex Co., NJ Item number 9

Page 1

Bibliography

The Princeton University Chronicle Egbert, Donald and Virginia,  
"The Gothic Revival Comes to Princeton" Winter, 1968, Pp. 107-117.

Dr. John Titsworth (b. 1796-d. ca. 1860) Day Book.  
Graduated from Yale in 1818, Dr. Titsworth kept a daily log of  
the construction of the Clove Church. Now in possession of Mrs.  
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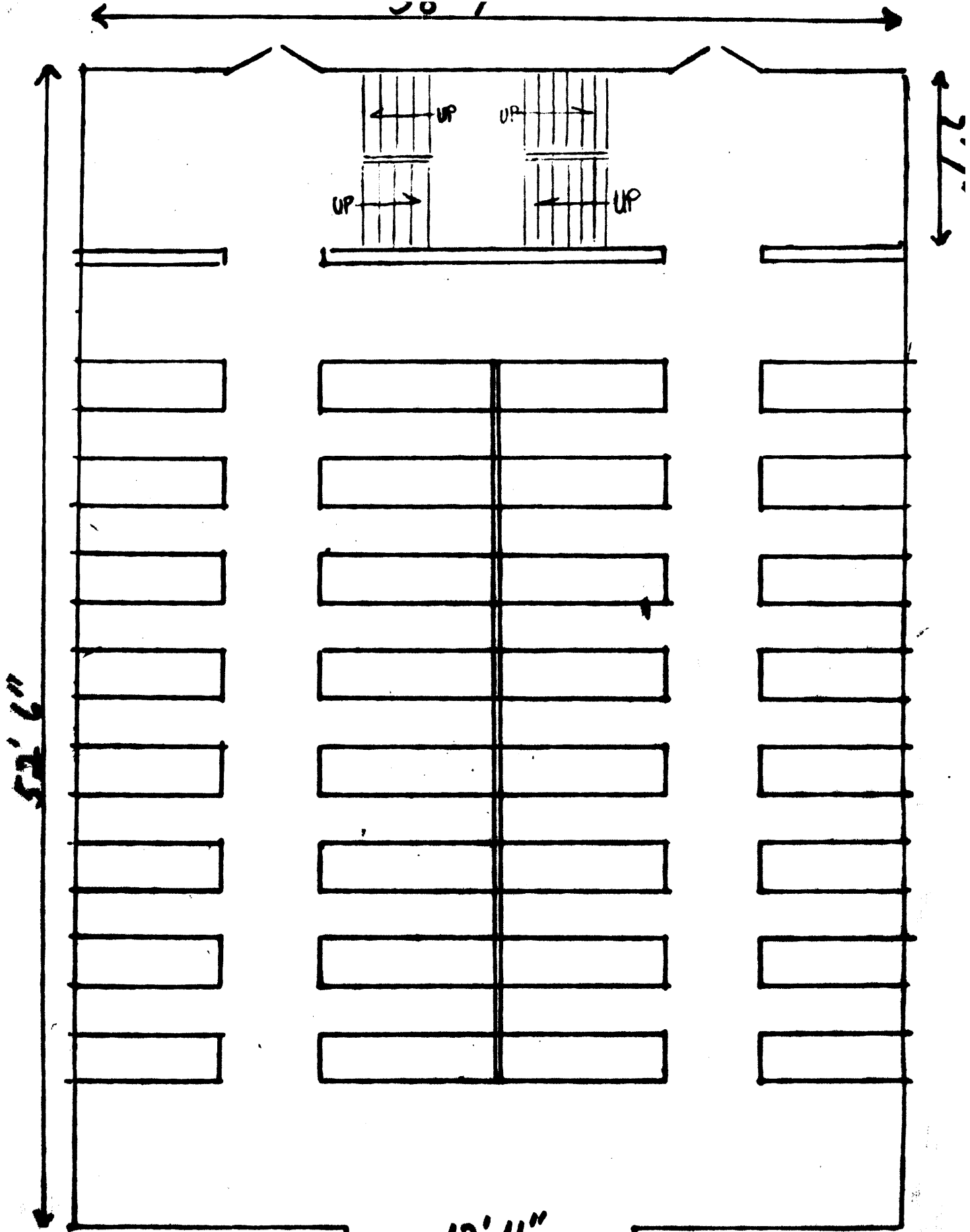
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Member, March 6, 1980.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF WANTAGE

Old Clove Church  
Wantage Township  
Sussex, New Jersey  
Sussex County

6' 2"

12' 11"

N S



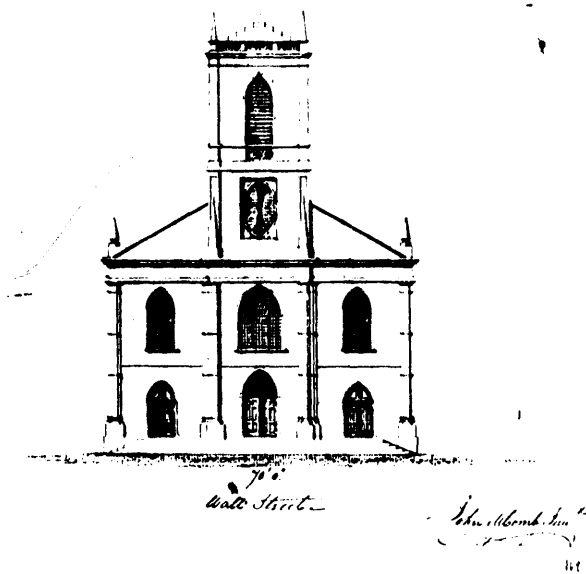


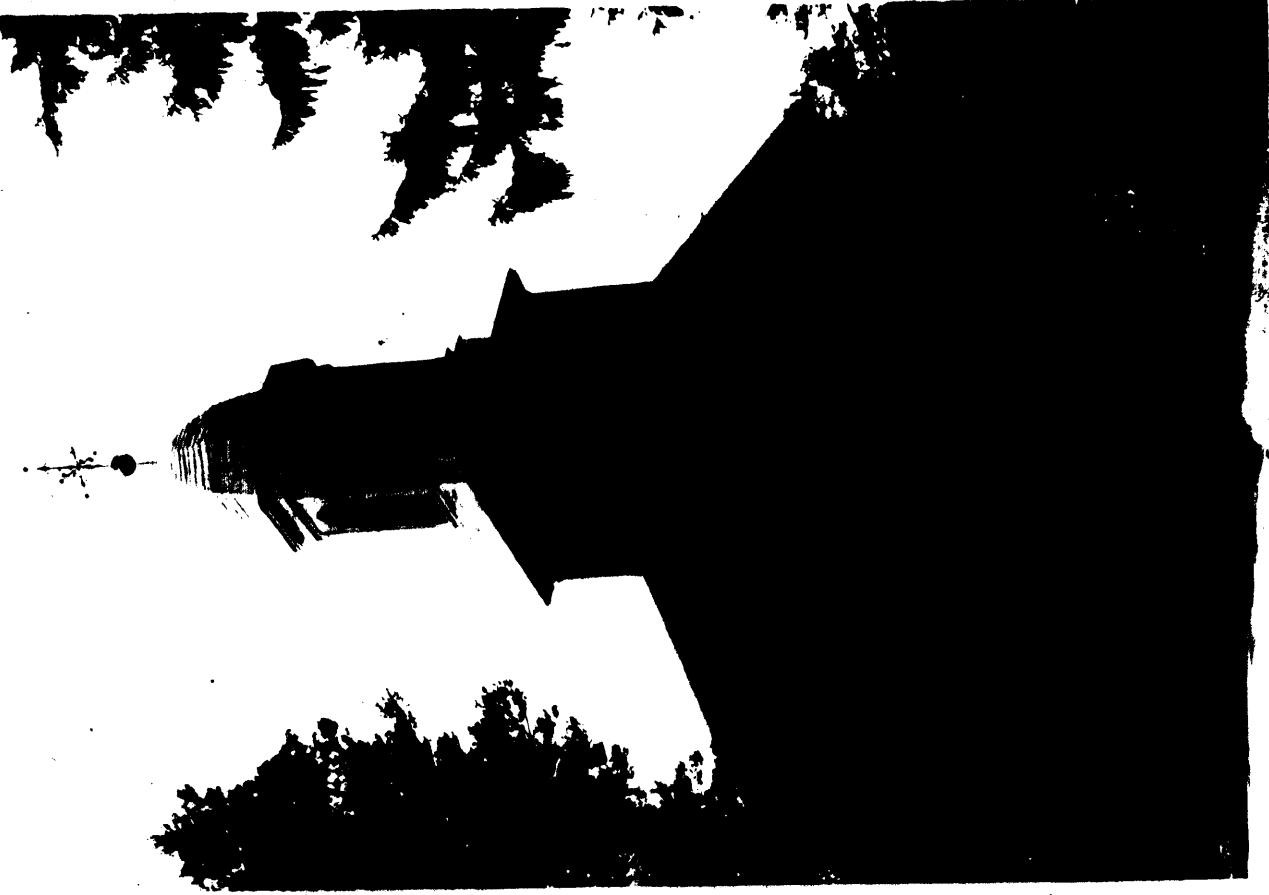
FIG. 5. JOHN MC COMB, JR. ELEVATION IN GOTHIC REVIVAL STYLE  
designed in 1809 for the Wall Street Presbyterian Church, New York City  
Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society

Reference: The Princeton University Chronicle. Donald & Virginia  
Egbert, "The Gothic Revival Comes to Princeton".  
Winter, 1968.



NEW VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

COMPARE WITH McCOMB'S DESIGN FOR  
1809  
STREET CHURCH IN NYC



PARSIPPANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Tax Map  
Wantage Township  
Sussex County  
New Jersey

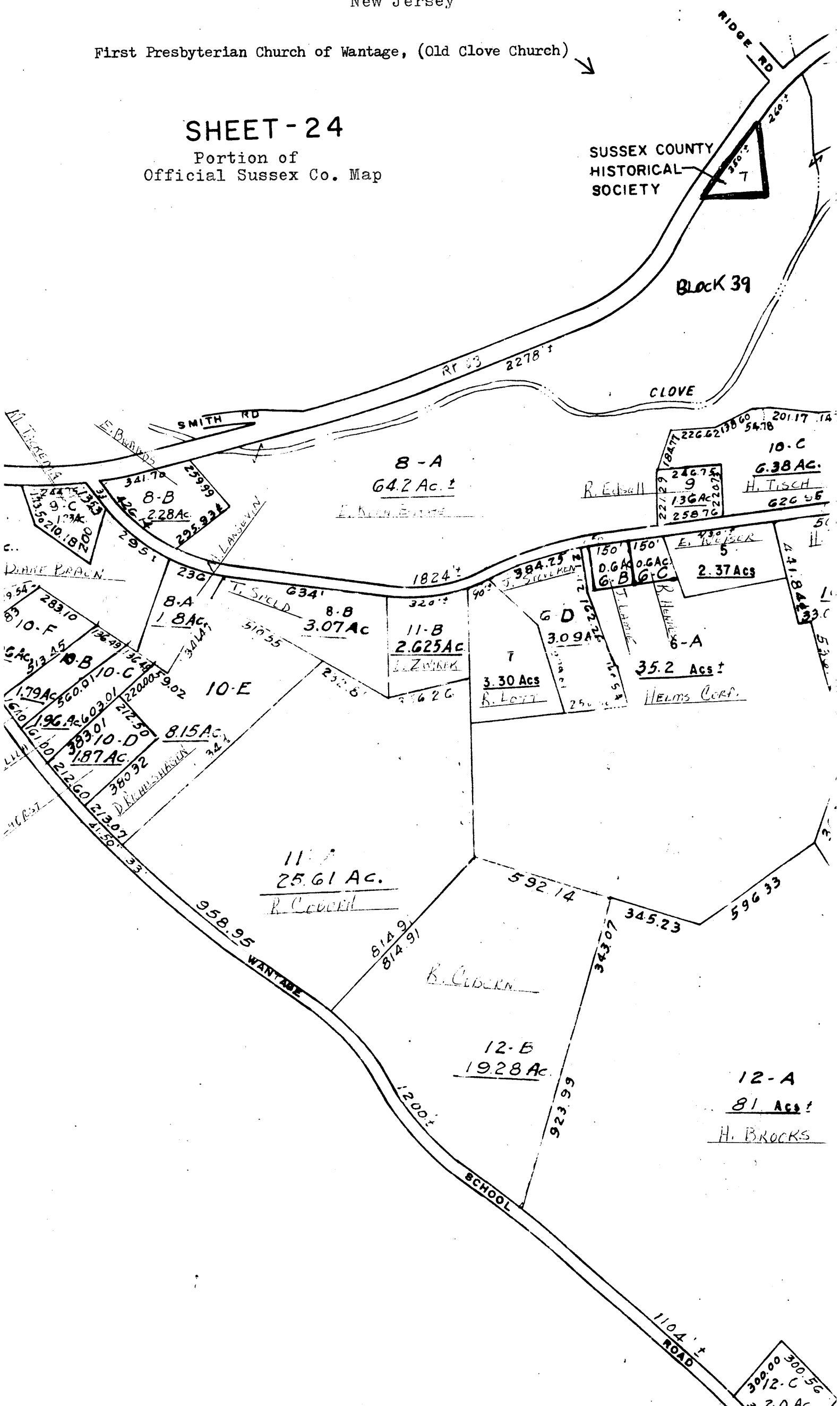
First Presbyterian Church of Wantage, (Old Clove Church) ↘

# SHEET - 24

Portion of  
Official Sussex Co. Map

SUSSEX COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

Block 39



8-A  
64.2 Ac. ±  
E. K. ...

10-C  
6.38 AC.  
H. TISCH  
620 55

11-B  
2.625 AC  
L. ZWIKER

35.2 Ac. ±  
HELMS CORP.

11-A  
25.61 AC.  
R. COBURN

12-B  
19.28 AC

12-A  
81 AC. ±  
H. BROCKS

7.0 AC.  
300.56  
300.00  
312.00