

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000676 Date Listed: 6/14/91

Pleasant Valley Hist. Dist. Mercer New Jersey  
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrus  
Signature of the Keeper

6/24/91  
Date of Action

===== Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination form does not clearly explain why 1925 is selected as the end of the Period of Significance. Sue Pringle with the SHPO explained that the development patterns of the district in the early 20th century are distinct from later in the century. The year 1925 was chosen as representing the end of this distinct early 20th century development. Also, Archeology is being added as an Area of Significance (since Criterion D is selected).

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Pleasant Valley Historic District  
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Valley Rd, Pleasant Valley Rd, Wooden's Ln, Hunter Rd NA not for publication  
city, town Hopewell and West Amwell Townships vicinity  
state New Jersey code 034 county Hunterdon and Mercer code 019, 021 zip code 08530 and 08560

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	58	9 buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	24	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	7	0 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	89	9 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 7

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 of certifying official: James Hall (James Hall) Date: 4/12/91 (04/12/91)  
Acting Assistant/Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
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.  See continuation sheet. Patrick Andrews 6/14/91  
 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)

~~agriculture: agricultural field~~  
~~agriculture: animal facility~~  
~~agriculture: agricultural outbuilding~~  
~~agriculture: processing~~  
 (see continuation sheet)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

~~agriculture: agricultural field~~  
~~agriculture: animal facility~~  
~~agriculture: agricultural outbuilding~~  
~~domestic: single dwelling~~  
 (see continuation sheet)

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

~~No Style~~  
~~Other: 18th C rural vernacular~~  
~~Other: 19th C rural vernacular~~  
 (see continuation sheet)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation ~~sandstone~~  
 walls ~~sandstone~~  
           ~~weatherboard~~  
 roof ~~slate~~  
 other ~~wood porches~~

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Pleasant Valley Historic District lies mainly in the northwest corner of Hopewell Township in Mercer County. It forms the central portion of Pleasant Valley, a fertile hollow approximately two miles in length tucked between two fingers of the diabase ridge that runs through Hopewell Township down to the Delaware River. The northern finger is known as Sourland Mountain. The southern ridge, known in the past as Moore's, Smith's or Strawberry Mountain, is now locally called Kuser's Mountain, although it appears as Baldpate Mountain on the USGS map. Although Pleasant Valley sounds as if it might be the product of a real estate developer's promotional department, it is, in fact, an old name, appearing on Otley & Keily's 1849 map of Mercer County.

A former mill stream, once known as Smith's Creek, and now as Moore's Creek, flows through the valley from northeast to southwest. Small tributaries run down to the creek from the ridges, increasing its volume as it nears the confluence with the Delaware River. A network of narrow roads traverses the valley. Many of the roads date back to the eighteenth century and some are still unpaved. They follow the creek or the hollow below Sourland Mountain, or provide a link between the valley floor and the ridge farms.

At the center of the district lies the Howell Living Historical Farm, which is individually listed on the National Register. The surviving farms around it form both the setting or viewshed for the Howell Farm and the context through which its evolution can be understood. (Figure 2) With one exception, the early farms are located on the north side of the major east-west roads, or on the southern slope of Sourland Mountain. They thus were developed to take advantage of three factors, pockets of good soil, water provided by Moore's Creek and its tributaries, and the more hospitable microclimate of the south slope of Sourland Mountain. (Figure 1) Two drawings, based on a composite of aerial photographs made in 1928 and 1982 (Figures 3 and 4) show that the valley has retained much of its original configuration of cleared fields and woodland, although, now that much farming activity has ceased, there is more woodland than there was sixty years ago.

**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  G NA

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

agriculture  
architecture  
exploration/settlement

Period of Significance

c. 1735 - c. 1925

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

none

Architect/Builder

none

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

Pleasant Valley is a well-preserved example of an isolated and somewhat marginal agricultural community that developed in the 18th and 19th centuries in the upper reaches of the Delaware Valley. The initial exploitation of large tracts of farmland is reflected in the relative size and decorative treatment of three of its 18th-century farmhouses. The gradual decline of agriculture in the valley, due to relatively poor soils and loss of markets, is revealed through the more modest scale of 19th-century development. The presence of numerous outbuildings, plus unpaved roads, hedgerows and fencing enhance the district's evocation of an agricultural community as it existed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Pleasant Valley Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. It meets Criterion A by revealing in its physical remains a broad pattern in state or local history. More specifically, the district illustrates the development of agriculture (and early industry associated with agriculture) in New Jersey's western Piedmont from the 18th through the early 20th century. The district and buildings within it are eligible under Criterion C for a number of reasons. The survival of the arrangement of natural and manmade landscape and buildings within the district give it a coherent and identifiable historic identity. At the same time, early buildings within the district illuminate construction types typical of at least two of New Jersey's predominant early cultural groups. Individually and collectively the buildings illustrate the retention and adaptation of these traditional forms through alterations and additions.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register Howell Farm
- 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:

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

Specify repository:

NJ Division of Archives and Records Management, Trenton, NJ

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of property approximately 1,565 acres Lambertville PA-NJ Quad

UTM References

A	<u>1,8</u>	<u>5,0,7,1,0,0</u>	<u>4,4,6,5,7,6,0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1,8</u>	<u>5,1,0,4,4,0</u>	<u>4,4,6,5,1,6,0</u>
E	1 8	5 0 8 2 0 0	4 4 6 3 7 0 0

B	<u>1,8</u>	<u>5,0,8,9,4,0</u>	<u>4,4,6,6,6,4,0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>1,8</u>	<u>5,1,0,5,4,0</u>	<u>4,4,6,4,2,6,0</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Constance M. Greiff, Director date July 11, 1990  
 organization Heritage Studies, Inc. telephone (609) 466-9606  
 street & number 20 Seminary Avenue state New Jersey zip code 08525  
 city or town Hopewell

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### Architectural Classification - continued

Other: English barn  
Other: Dutch barn  
Other: Georgian vernacular  
Other: Pratt truss bridge  
Other: modified bow-string arched truss bridge

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Of the resources in the valley 89 sites, buildings, and structures can be classified as contributing and 9 as non-contributing. But in Pleasant Valley such counts are really irrelevant. The character of the valley is defined primarily by the way in which its landforms have been adapted to human use, or, in the case of Baldpate Mountain, have largely defied that use. (Photos 1 through 5) The older buildings on the farmstead are the dominant ones. The majority of non-contributing buildings are later farm outbuildings that fall outside of the period of historical significance, but, for the most part, blend easily into their surroundings. Most of the buildings classified as non-contributing are located on land that does contribute to the valley's ambience. The only developments that can be considered major visual intrusions are a power line and the three new houses, with their outbuildings, at the corner of Valley Road and Wooden's Lane.

Six of the farmsteads in the district retain elements dating back to the period of initial settlement in the 18th century. The oldest of these may be the central portion of the Thomas Stevenson House (Property 1), where the first owner, William Stevenson, may have lived before turning this portion of his land over to his son Thomas. The structure has been so heavily altered that evidence of its early date is only visible in the attic. It appears to have been a two-story house, with one room to each floor, of a type well-known through 17th-century examples in Rhode Island, and referred to as a stone-ender. That is, the wall of one gable end, containing the chimney, is built of stone, while the remaining walls are timber-framed. Because of additions, this construction is only visible in the attic, not from the exterior. Surviving examples are rare in New Jersey. In the Pleasant Valley example the west wall was constructed of rubble stone masonry, while the remaining walls were of heavy timber framing, with shouldered corner posts. There may have been a leanto at the rear. The other building that incorporates an early frame house is the Smith House (Property 2), which also is so altered that its original appearance cannot be determined. The remaining four houses, the John Phillips (Property 7), William Stevenson (Property 5), Atchley/Hunter (Property 11), and Rose/Lanning (Property 12) incorporate early stone sections. All appear to have been one room deep and two stories high, with chimnies in one end wall. Other properties in the district, like the Howell Farm, were developed in the 19th century.

The district still maintains many of the characteristic elements of a 19th-century agricultural area, although more of it is forested than was the case fifty years ago. [Figures 2 and 4] Factors contributing to this appearance include cleared fields, fences, tree lines and hedgerows, and the unpaved roads leading up to the hill farms.

In addition to the farms, the district includes a 19th-century schoolhouse, successor to an even older school that stood nearby, a house, probably of 18th-century date associated with blacksmithing, an 18th-century family burying ground, and at least three identified archaeological sites, two of which are

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mills.

The following properties are located within the district. Although they are differentiated as to whether the main buildings located on them are contributing or non-contributing, all the land within the district is actually contributing. For it is the interrelationships between the buildings and the land that give Pleasant Valley its identity and sense of association with the past.

Contributing

1. Thomas Stevenson Farm, West Amwell Township, Block 29, Lot 16 (Photo 6). This farm is distributed in linear fashion along a ridge from which the land slopes away steeply to the south. The house, facing south, is a block-and-wing, with the wing the older section. (Photo 7) Despite considerable modern alteration, the 1 1/2 story, 2 over 3-bay wing retains the configuration of an 18th-century building. This section may have been built by William Stevenson in the mid-18th century. It is apparent in the attic that this wing was originally a stone-ender. The double pile main block, c.1765-1775, has also been altered, but retains, in the front room, a paneled fireplace wall with arched panel-door cupboards with butterfly shelves. Three old outbuildings survive, a stone and frame wagon shed, a double crib wagon shed, and a stone and frame basement barn. (Photo 8) These buildings are arranged in linear fashion along the ridge, to the west of the house. Later contributing outbuildings include a small stone milk house in front of the west wing of the house, and two large frame chicken houses situated considerably to the north. The property forms a prominent component of the view from the Howell Farm to the northwest. At the same time, this property enjoys views of the Howell Farm, the Atchley/Hunter Farm, and Kuser Mountain.

2. Smith Farm, Hopewell Township, Block 59, Lot 7. This property is located on a gentle rise above Moore's Creek. The most prominent feature of the property, either from the Howell Farm or from the road, is the 3-bay stone embanked barn with lateral frame stable ell (Photo 9). There is also a frame shed over the original ramp, which is built of stone with angled timbers supporting the wagon way. The barn resembles one on the Worth's Mill complex in Princeton Township, which bears a datestone inscribed 1741. The barn faces south and is set adjacent to and at a right angle to the west side of Valley Road. Because of its location the barn is the most conspicuous agricultural building in the valley and forms an important element of the viewshed from the Howell Farm. The house on this property is frame, with a rear ell and small wing. (Photo 10) Set well back from the road, it also faces south. Its main section is 2 stories high and one room deep, with irregular fenestration. The eastern room probably dates to the 18th century, but has been considerably altered. Also on the property is a contributing chicken house and non-contributing garage.

3. Blacksmith's House, Hopewell Township, Block 55, Lot 2 (Photo 11). This property is so identified on the 1849 Otley & Keily Map. Like all the early

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houses in Pleasant Valley, this faces south and is set at a right angle to the road. Originally it was a 2 1/2 story, 2 over 3-bay frame building, which appears to be of 18th-century construction. Not separated from the main Phillips' properties in the 18th or early 19th centuries, it may have been occupied by Lot Phillips. A son of John Phillips the settler, he died in 1179 or 1780. Although not listed as a property owner in Hopewell Township, he is known to have been a blacksmith. Bays to the rear and to the east side of the house appear to have been added in the 19th century. A small outbuilding, now used as a garage, may have been a shop. It appears to be of 19th century construction.

4. The Howell Farm is already individually listed in the National Register.

5. William Stevenson Farm, West Amwell Township, Block 30, Lot 14, Block 31, Lots 14 and 18. This property is bounded on the west by Hunter Road. It consists largely of open fields, but contains the remnants of apple and peach orchards. The house is set well back from the road, at the end of a tree-shaded lane. It is a stone block-and-wing, rehabilitated c. 1940 after having fallen into ruinous condition (Photo 12). The original wing is 2 over 3-bay, with a 2-bay addition to the east. The block is 3-bay with side entry. The house dates to the second half of the 18th century. West of the house is a Dutch barn, unusual for its location so far west in the state, and because it is embanked (Photo 13). The barn is covered in asphalt shingle, but its fine frame survives with extended tenons, finished in a "D-shape, and both pegged and wedged (Photo 14). Also on the property is a stone smoke house. There are a series of relatively recent outbuildings and tenant houses between the road and the main house. These are associated with a turkey-breeding operation carried out here c. 1940-1970. Although counted as non-contributing, they in no way disturb the property's historic agricultural ambiance. Below the house are open fields and a pond. The house and outbuildings are clearly visible from the Howell Farm and the John Phillips House, and both are visible from this property.

6. Burying Ground, Hopewell Township, Block 54, Lot 9. Situated at the intersection of Hunter and Pleasant Valley Roads just northwest of the schoolhouse, this was established by John Phillips in 1789.

7. Schoolhouse, Hopewell Township, Block 54, Lot 8 (Photo 15). This is a small rectangular building, with a stone porch and stone chimney at one end. Before conversion to a residence, this was a one-room school, with a small bell tower. Stylistically it was originally a vernacular Queen Anne/Shingle Style building with cupola, suggesting that it was built c. 1880, but there has been a school in this approximate vicinity since 1820. The present appearance, after conversion to residential use, is of a bungalow. Also on the property are two large frame chicken houses.

8. John Phillips House, Hopewell Township, Block 54, Lot 7 (Photo 16). This 18th-century building is one of the landmarks of Pleasant Valley. Located close

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to Pleasant Valley Road, it originally stood on the periphery of the Phillips' agricultural land, but almost directly opposite the site of the mill they operated on the opposite side of the road. The house is a block-and-wing, the 2-bay wing of stone, the 3-bay side-entry block of frame. Window sash is 12/12. The interior is well-preserved with original door frames and chairrails, stairs and paneled cupboards. Most notable are the arched cupboards flanking the fireplace in the front room on the first floor and the corner cupboard in the rear room. A small 1-story wing has been added to the east side of the house. Also on the property are a heavy timber frame barn, converted to use as a garage, a wagon house, and another contributing outbuilding.

9. T. Holt House (Bella Vista Farm), Hopewell Township, Block 54, Lot 3 (Photo 17). Again the house faces south, although in this case the orientation is clearly also to the road, from which it has a relatively small setback. Originally an early 19th-century block-and-wing house, at least pre-dating 1849, this was transformed after 1893 into a Queen Anne/Colonial Revival house. There is also a wagon house remaining. The property is characterized by mature shade trees around the house and rolling fields behind it, but the house and wagon house have recently suffered diminished integrity because of remodeling and additions. Nevertheless, the buildings retain their basic configuration and their interrelationships to one another and to the landscape.

10. Atchley Tenant House, Hopewell Township, Block 54, Lot 4 (Photo 18). Smaller than most of the farmhouses in the valley, this is a 4-bay brick house, of 5-course common bond, probably, on the evidence of exterior detailing, built in the first decades of the 19th century. It has 9/6 sash on the lower story, 6/6 on the upper, a molded cornice, and simple entrance with 6-panel door and a 4-light transom. A small barn on the property has been converted to use as a garage and apartment. Although this appears under the name of Brewer on the 1849 map, for most of the late 19th century and the early part of the 20th, it was part of the extensive Atchley family holdings.

11. Atchley/Hunter Farm, Hopewell Township, Block 60, Lot 4. This is one of the most intact farmsteads in Pleasant Valley, with a complement of 11 outbuildings. The house faces south, although the road runs to the north, and is reached by a long lane, bordered by overgrown hedgerows. (Photo 19) Although deeds for this property cannot be traced before the early 19th century, Thomas Atchley served in Henry Phillips' militia company during the Revolutionary War. The central portion of the house was originally a 2-story, 1-room stone building, probably of early to mid-18th century date, to which the eastern frame section was added later in the century. The western section of the house appears to be of 19th-century date. The major farm buildings are grouped in a U-shaped courtyard south and east of the house. (Photo 20) The main barn and the wagon house appear to date to the 18th or early 19th century, although many of the outbuildings are later. Also on this property is the site of a 20th century sawmill. According

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to the present owner, this mill was located on a brook that runs through the southern section of the property. Her recollections are confirmed by photographs in the Howell Farm Collection, although the site of the sawmill has not been located.

12. Rose/Lanning/Hunt Farm, Hopewell Township, Block 56, Lot 1. This property was occupied as early as 1776, when Ezekiel Rose's name appears on a Hunterdon County Road Return. Located relatively close to the road, it faces south. The oldest central section of the house was originally a 1-room, 2-story house of stone, with chimney at the eastern end, 3 bays on the first floor and 2 bays on the second. (Photo 21) There is evidence of a former beehive oven in the 1-bay addition to the east, which may have originated as a lean-to sheltering the oven. The large 2 1/2-story western section has the form and massing of a late 18th/early 19th century house, but has been heavily altered on the exterior and interior. There are two groups of outbuildings on the property. Close to the road are two rectangular structures, grouped to form an "L", one of which is a wagon shed/corn crib, the other of which was a corn crib/granary. Probably dating from the early 19th century, when corn production in Pleasant Valley increased, both have hewn major members and mill-sawn studs and furring strips. Northwest of the house is a complex of barns, the oldest component of which, to the east, is a 3-bay, 2-story English barn dating to the late 18th or early 19th century. (Photo 22) The central component is a larger English barn. Both are constructed of heavy hewn timbers. The third component, a stable ell, has circular-sawn minor members and probably dates from the second half of the 19th century. The last section is a 1-story chicken house, probably dating from the early 20th century. Although relatively small, the property retains remnants of an orchard.

13. J. Smith Farm, Hopewell Township, Block 59, Lot 6 (Photo 23). Located on part of the original Smith property, this house first appears on an 1860 map. According to local tradition, the original house on this property burned in the 1870s or 1880s and the present building was erected to replace it. Until 1983, this house was sheathed entirely, walls as well as roof, in patterned slate. Removal of this material, of the front porch and of interior finishes has damaged the building's integrity. Nevertheless, it retains the configuration of a simple 4-bay farmhouse, 1-room deep. Two barns and a wagon shed/corn crib, all of traditional form, but exhibiting late 19th-century construction techniques, are located to the east of the house. A small barn is southeast of the house. The entire complex is in poor condition. Set well back from Pleasant Valley Road, the farmstead is approached by a long lane, which crosses Moore's Creek on a small modified bowstring arch-truss iron bridge. The bridge was manufactured by the New Jersey Steel & Iron Company, Trenton, in 1893.

14. Bridge, Hunter Road (Photo 24). Located southeast of the Howell Farm, this is a small Pratt Truss bridge. Of riveted construction, it dates to the late 19th or early 20th century.

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Contributing Archaeological Resources

15. Site of Phillips' Mill, Hopewell Township, Block 60, Lot 5. This site is shown on both the 1849 and 1860 maps. The mill is believed to have ceased operations c. 1875. A large L-shaped depression is located north of a tributary of Moore's Creek directly opposite the John Phillips House (Property 8). Flanked by high mounds of earth, this may be the cellar hole of the mill. A high (10'-15') embankment of earth and stone fill extends east from this depression to another, larger depression, which may be the site of the mill pond.

16. Site of Smith's Mill, Hopewell Township, Block 59, Lot 6. The mill is shown on this property on the 1849 map. There are traces of the raceway along the north side of Moore's Creek just northeast of the driveway entrance.

17. House site, Hopewell Township, Block 60, Lot 5. This is the site of the Hart/Lawyer Farmstead, which appears on maps from 1849 to 1903. The foundation of the house has been located at a point approximately midway between Hunter and Barry Roads and 2,000' south of Pleasant Valley Road. Located 75' north of a tributary of Moore's Creek, the site consists of a stone cellar measuring approximately 16' by 50'. An extension to the west would have added an additional 12' to the length of the house. A stone spring house is located on the bank of the creek opposite the east end of the house foundation.

Contributing Sites with Non-contributing Buildings

18. Hopewell Township, Block 60, Lot 34. A modern one-story frame house with flat roof, board and batten siding and fenestration of casement and picture windows. In the context of the district the house is considered an intrusion, but the land is an important component of the historic ambience of Pleasant Valley, more particularly of the view from the Atchley/Hunter Farm (Property 11).

19. Hopewell Township, Block 60, Lot 2. A house is shown on this property on the 1849 and 1860 maps. Currently, however, all the buildings are relatively recent, with the exception of a stone spring house next to a pond. The property consists of cleared field and woodland. The buildings are not visible from the public way or from the other farmsteads in Pleasant Valley.

20. Hopewell Township, Block 60, Lot 61. The large stone Colonial Revival House on this property, built within the last 20 years, is approached by a long lane, which goes through cleared land and woodland. The house is not visible from the public way or from other farmsteads in Pleasant Valley.

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Contributing Landscape Features

21. Valley Road and Pleasant Valley Road. These roads were important factors in the early transportation system in western central New Jersey. Their location determined the placement of several of the houses in Pleasant Valley. Although now paved, their narrow width and winding contours are evocative of the valley's past.

22. Wooden's Lane and Hunter Lane. Originating as farm lanes, these roads remain unpaved, bordered by fences and the remains of Osage Orange hedgerows.

23. Kuser's (Baldpate Mountain). This landform defines the southern edge of the valley. It plays a strong visual role in isolating the valley from adjacent areas and enhances the qualities of feeling and association that make the valley a special place.

Other landscape forms that contribute to the valley's sense of the past include the northern ridge (Sourland Mountain), streams, and such man-made features as hedgerows, fences, and tree lines. These have not been counted separately because they occur within properties already described as contributing.

Non-Contributing Properties

24. Hopewell Township, Block 55, Lot 3. A small wooden bungalow, erected in the 1920s or 1930s, this building is considered non-contributing because no connection has been established between it and the agricultural or architectural significance of Pleasant Valley.

25. Hopewell Township, Block 56, Lots 2.01, 2.02, 2.03. These three houses, built within the past seven years, are visual intrusions in Pleasant Valley. (Photo 25)

26. West Amwell, Block 29, Lot 17. This small lot is occupied by a post-World War II Cape Cod house.

The remaining properties in the district, not otherwise specified above, are contributing open land, either cleared or wooded. (See Figure 4.)

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## HISTORIC CONTEXTS

New Jersey has identified twelve state-wide historic contexts, but has not yet developed those that would apply to Pleasant Valley. These are #7) Initial Colonial Settlement, 1630-1775; #8) Early Industrialization, Urbanization, and Agricultural Development, 1670-1840; #10) Immigration and Agricultural, Industrial, Commercial, and Urban Expansion, 1850-1920. Settlement in Pleasant Valley followed a pattern typical of Mercer County. As in the remainder of Hopewell Township and in neighboring Lawrenceville and Princeton Townships, the settlers were not immigrants, but were descended from families that had been established in the colonies for one or more generations. While uniformly British in origin, they were diversified in religious affiliation. Pleasant Valley is almost a textbook example of the development of agriculture in the western Piedmont as it evolved over a period of almost 200 years. This history, which can be pieced together from such evidence as the written record in inventories and censuses, personal reminiscences, and the physical evidence of Pleasant Valley's landforms and surviving buildings, follows the pattern described in Schmidt's Rural Hunterdon. Agriculture in Pleasant Valley, as in New Jersey's western Piedmont and Inner Coastal Plain, first concentrated on production of sufficient food for the farmer's own family. But it went well beyond subsistence farming with the cultivation of bread grains for export. In the 18th century, Philadelphia was one of the world's major ports for the export of grain products. The waterpower of almost every stream along the upper Delaware River was harnessed for the production of flour, and Pleasant Valley, with two grist mills, was no exception. The prosperity engendered is evident in late 18th and early 19th century additions to houses and farm buildings. By the early 19th century, however, the production of bread grains was losing viability in New Jersey's Piedmont. A combination of factors, including the deprivations of the Hessian Fly, soil depletion, and, above all, competition from the western territories, forced farmers to turn to other crops. Improved transportation (the Delaware and Raritan Canal and railroads) and the industrialization and growth of Trenton and Philadelphia made new markets available. By the mid-19th century Piedmont farmers responded by shifting to raising livestock for meat and dairy products. Although few houses were built or enlarged, outbuildings were erected or adapted to accommodate this shift. In the late 19th century fruit trees were also grown, an activity that ended when a blight attacked peach trees in the early 20th century. Dairying, however, continued to be viable until the Depression of the 1930s, and was supplemented by poultry. Increasingly, Pleasant Valley's farmers became retailers, with Trenton the prime market for butter and eggs. Now that Hopewell Valley, at the eastern end of the Township is undergoing development, Pleasant Valley is the most intact historic agricultural area in the Township, and, indeed, in Mercer County.

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## ARCHITECTURE

The earliest sections of several buildings in Pleasant Valley are typical of the early domestic vernacular of central New Jersey. Thomas J. Wertenbaker first noted the predominance of masonry construction in early buildings west of the division line between East and West Jersey, and of frame construction to the east. In Mercer County, especially in Hopewell, Lawrence and Princeton Townships, both strains can be found. Pleasant Valley is no exception, with at least four early stone houses (Properties 5, 8, 11, and 12), two of frame (Properties 2 and 3), and one anomaly, a stone-ender (Property 1). In both building materials, a typical plan, exhibited by six of the seven prevailed. This consisted of a 2-story dwelling with one room on the first floor and one or two on the second. The internal chimney was located at one gable end, often with a winding stair adjacent to it. Typically the arrangement of openings in the facade featured a central doorway with a window to either side and two windows in the second story, located above those in the first story. This arrangement is also typical of English-settled areas in Burlington County, New Jersey, and Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and is, to some extent, associated with Quaker settlement. Unlike several early houses in Bucks County and Hunterdon County, New Jersey, to the north, none of the houses in Pleasant Valley is embanked. The method of adding to these buildings is also typical. A larger house was built adjacent to the existing dwelling. In contrast to New England, where such additions generally share a chimney with the preexisting dwelling, additions in central New Jersey are almost invariably attached laterally to the gable wall opposite that containing the chimney. Although elsewhere in the region the new addition may take the form of a full 5-bay Georgian house, most of the additions in Pleasant Valley are of a 3-bay sidehall plan. So persistent were these forms that, when Henry Phillips II acquired the Howell Farm in the early 19th century, he repeated what his ancestors had done two generations before, first building a stone house with a single room on the first floor and later erecting a larger, lateral addition. While stone persisted as the preferred building material in the Hunterdon County section of Pleasant Valley, frame later became the construction material of choice in Hopewell.

All the surviving 18th and 19th century houses in Pleasant Valley are oriented to the south, regardless of their location in relationship to roads. In fact, with the exception of the six located along early east-west roads (Sites 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13), they are set perpendicular to the roads that serve them. Major barns also face south, as do poultry houses. Outbuildings are located to one side of the house, but otherwise there seems to be no discernible pattern to their disposition, except that, in general, wagon houses, where they exist, are closest to the road. The outbuildings at the Thomas Stevenson Farm (Property 1) are arranged in a distinctly linear fashion, while those at the Atchley Farm (Property 11) are grouped to form a court, but at other sites the arrangement is random. English barns prevail, but there is a Dutch barn at the William

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Stevenson Farm (Property 5). The westernmost Dutch barn identified in New Jersey, it poses as yet unanswered questions about the appearance of this form in a predominantly English-settled area. Wagon sheds and corn cribs are almost universally combined under a single roof, and are generally the outbuilding located closest to the road.

## EARLY SETTLEMENT

Pleasant Valley probably was not settled by Europeans until the second quarter of the century. This relatively rugged landscape was undoubtedly less attractive for farming than the broad reaches of the Hopewell Valley or the land around Maidenhead [Lawrenceville]. Indeed, it may have been the very difficulty of the surrounding terrain that led to the opening of access to the valley. To avoid the steep ridges, cliffs and outcroppings along the Delaware River's eastern bank the 18th-century road between Lambertville [then Coryell's Ferry] and Trenton ran inland below Sourland Mountain. Through Pleasant Valley this road, laid out before 1739, was composed of what is now Valley Road, from River Road up to the crossing of Moore's Creek, and Pleasant Valley Road eastward from that point. Pleasant Valley Road, from the intersection west to the Delaware, is also an early road, originally leading to the Sand Gully Fishery along the river.(1) It was not until 1820 that River Road was cut through in this area, thus shortening the overland trip to Trenton. (2) A map accompanying the 1820 road return indicates that Valley Road was still known as the Georgetown [Lambertville]-Trenton Road. The western section of Pleasant Valley Road is shown as the "old road" between Phillips Mill and the Sand Gully Fishery.

At least as old, if not older, than the roads through Pleasant Valley is the line between Mercer and Hunterdon Counties, an ancient division reaching back to the 17th century. It originated as the northern boundary of a 30,000 acre tract that Daniel Coxe of London purchased in 1685. North of this line Benjamin Field acquired 2,000 acres from the West Jersey Proprietors in 1701.(3) In the same year Field conveyed half the tract to his daughter, Charity Field Stevenson.(4) Charity Stevenson left her tract to her sons, William and Elnathan, who divided it in 1726, with William receiving the southwestern section. This tract encompassed what are now the Wooden Farm (Property 1) on Wooden's Lane and the Mazur Farm (Property 5) on Hunter Road. William Stevenson was then a resident of Burlington City. How early he occupied his Pleasant Valley land is uncertain, but he may have been in residence by 1753, when he had the property resurveyed, or even earlier.(5)

Below the 1685 division line the land, probably embroiled in the disputes over the Coxe family's title, appears to have been subdivided somewhat later. One of the early settlers in the valley bottom was John Phillips, a blacksmith. Phillips was already a resident of Hopewell in 1737, when he purchased 125 acres in that township from Joseph Phillips of Maidenhead, probably a member of the

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same family.(6) The configuration of this plot in part follows the distinctive bends of Valley Road. It included what is now the Birum property (Property 8) and much of what is now the Howell Living Historical Farm (Property 4).

Other families were also in the area well before the Revolution. The Smiths owned land west of Phillips at least as early as 1780, when John Smith witnessed John Phillips' will, but had probably been in the area sometime previously.(7) John Smith was the descendant of a family that had been established north of Trenton since the late 17th century, having moved into the area from Burlington.(8) John Smith's father, Jonathan Smith, owned, in the mid-18th century, several parcels that had come out of the Coxe tract, of which the Pleasant Valley tract may have been one.(9) The Smiths lived on what is now the Dale property on Pleasant Valley Road (Property 2). Another property in Pleasant Valley probably was also settled before the Revolution, based on the evidence of its house: the present Hunter Farm on Pleasant Valley Road (Property 11), which was in the possession of the Atchley family throughout the 19th century, and probably in the 18th century as well.

Ethnically the settlers in Pleasant Valley were a homogeneous group. All were of English origin, with the exception of the Atchleys, who may have been Scottish. This lack of diversity stands in contrast to other parts of Mercer and Hunterdon Counties, where settlers of Dutch, German and French origin mingled with the English stock. All the families migrated to Pleasant Valley from other parts of New Jersey. The Phillips family moved northwest from the Lawrenceville area, to which they had originally immigrated from Long Island. The Atchleys probably moved west from Middlesex County. The Stevensons and Smiths moved northward along the Delaware River from Burlington County. The chief difference lay in their religious affiliations. The Phillips and Atchleys were probably originally Presbyterians, the Stevensons Quakers, and the Smiths Quakers turned Anglican. In addition to the English-descended owners, there were black slaves or servants in the valley in the 18th century. William Stevenson owned eight slaves at his death in 1768, and an inventory made in 1805 after Henry Phillips' death lists one.(10)

## THE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Pleasant Valley farms were fairly large in the 18th and early 19th centuries, ranging in size from about 100 to over 800 acres. In addition to sufficient food to feed their own families, their owners, in common with most other farmers in New Jersey, raised surplus bread grains and meat for sale.(11) Quantities of wheat and rye figured in the inventories of William Stevenson and John Phillips, and Phillips also had supplies of buckwheat and corn. Both also owned more livestock than required to fill family needs. Stevenson had 16 cattle and 21 hogs, while Phillips had 8 of the former. Both also kept sheep, a less common practice in the colonies. These were probably maintained more for wool than for

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meat.(12) Stevenson may also have made cheese; a cheese tub is among the items in his inventory.

While land had been cleared for crops in the 18th century, much of it must have remained in woodland or uncultivated pasture. William Stevenson owned 250 acres at his death. (13) When his inventory was taken, in April 1768, only 24 of these were in cultivation for wheat and rye. Even assuming that other crops would not have been planted at that season and that there might have been as much as three or four times as much acreage under cultivation, much of the land must have remained uncleared. In addition to crop land, Stevenson had an "Apple Nursery." Apples, however, evidently did not figure as prominently in Pleasant Valley's agriculture as they would after the middle of the 19th century.

By the end of the 18th century several of the families in Pleasant Valley had prospered sufficiently to add to their dwellings or to build new houses. The Stevenson and Phillips families were undoubtedly the wealthiest in the immediate area. At least a portion of this prosperity was derived from non-agricultural pursuits. John Phillips, as has been noted, was a blacksmith. His son, Henry, to whom he bequeathed the "Plantation on which I now dwell," operated a mill across the road from his house prior to his death in 1805.(14) John Smith was also operating a mill on the creek below his dwelling before his death in 1819, when his inventory included "Sundries in the mill."(15)

Sometime before his death in 1768 William Stevenson turned over the western half of his property to his son Thomas. When William Stevenson died he was living on what is now the Mazur property (Property 5), and it is likely that he built at least the central section of the house. Since he was a wealthy man, leaving an estate valued at over 760 pounds, and already having conveyed portions of his property to his sons, he may also have built the larger western section of the house. Unfortunately, although now in excellent condition, the house had so deteriorated before the Mazurs purchased it, that it was an empty shell. Thus no architectural detail remains as a clue to its construction date. One argument against the large western block of the house having been built by William Stevenson is the relatively scanty quantity of furnishings described in his inventory. On the other hand these possessions included such luxurious items as a "Tea Table" and a "Leave Table," plus silver table spoons, teaspoons, sugar tongs and tankard. If the western end of the house was not constructed by Stevenson, stylistic evidence and the economic pattern in the valley suggest that it was probably built during the tenure of Theophilus Moore, who owned the property from 1773 to 1797.(16)

William Stevenson's son Thomas resided on what is now the Wooden property (Property 1) until 1774.(17) It was probably Thomas who added the large stone (now stuccoed) section to the east of the old stone-ender. Originally the plan of the two-and-a-half story addition would have consisted of an ample side hall, off which were two good-sized rooms. Although the interior has been heavily

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altered, the first floor rooms still maintain handsomely paneled east ends. The paneling is of a style that would be consistent with a construction date in the 1760s or 1770s.

The Phillips house (Property 8) was also enlarged sometime in the late 18th century. When John Phillips died in 1789 he left real property worth only 138 pounds. He had no fine furniture like that owned by William Stevenson, his most valuable possession being "Dresser, Pewter & Earthen[ware]," worth 1 pound 15 shillings. John's son Henry inherited his father's dwelling, but his sister, Polly, was entitled to live in the "two back rooms." These may have been located in a rear ell, which, according to an old photograph in the possession of the Birums, was formerly attached to the north side of the stone section of the house. The will also reserved from Henry's land two square rods, where John Phillip's wife was buried.(19) This is the small burial plot which still remains at the northeast corner of Pleasant Valley and Hunter Roads.

The Phillips house was added to laterally in much the same manner as Thomas Stevenson's house, with a two-and-a-half story block of side-hall plan dwarfing the old one-room house. The front room boasts a paneled fireplace wall, and the other rooms have well-molded mantels and window and door trim. The style of the paneling suggests that it could not have been executed much after Henry Phillips inherited the property in 1789. The moldings and panels are in a robust Georgian style, which had reached the height of popularity a decade or two earlier. Had the addition been constructed much after 1790, one would expect to find the more delicate moldings and oval motifs of the Federal period employed. Henry Phillips' inventory, prepared after his death intestate in 1805, shows that the house was well furnished. There were carpets and a "Paper Window Curtain," a dining table and six chairs worth \$6.00, and china and Queensware [creamware] worth \$6.66, silver candlesticks and teaspoons, books, and a clock worth \$26.66.

Other houses in Pleasant Valley, notably the Dale and Hunter properties, also appear to have been enlarged in the late 18th or early 19th centuries. One new house may have been constructed in this period, probably in the early nineteenth century. This is what is known as the Bogert Farm, but which, for much of its existence belonged to the Atchley family, (Property 10) on Pleasant Valley Road. Built of brick, laid up in five-course common bond, it is a simple unadorned rectangle. The four bays across the front and the position of the chimnies suggest that the original plan had no hallway. The choice of brick bond and the architectural details, consisting of a molded cornice, simple moldings around doors and windows, and a six-panel entrance door, are suggestive of an early 19th century date.

Several of the more notable outbuildings in the valley may also date to the 18th or early 19th century. The stone English barn on the Dale property (Property 2), with its extremely heavy interior framing, is similar to a barn on the Worth's Mill property in Princeton Township, which bears a 1741 datestone. A stone

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wagonhouse on the Wooden property and the frame main barn on the Hunter property are also early structures. Perhaps the most interesting of the outbuildings in Pleasant Valley is the fine Dutch barn on the Mazur property, now almost disguised by asphalt shingle siding. Both the location and the design are unusual for a Dutch barn. Although there were certainly Dutch families in the eastern part of Hopewell Township, especially in those areas bordering on Somerset County, there appear to have been none in the immediate vicinity of the valley. Indeed, no other Dutch barn has been found in an area so close to the Delaware River. Also, in contrast to other known Dutch barns in New Jersey, this example is partially embanked. The frame is a fine one, with shaped tongues, fastened with both pins and wedges, on the crossbeams.

These buildings and the holdings of men like William Stevenson and Henry Phillips attest to a high water mark of prosperity in Pleasant Valley in the last decades of the 18th and the first decade of the 19th century. Thereafter signs of economic decline are evident. Several factors probably contributed to this ebb. One was the system of inheritance, under which land was divided among several heirs. Sons thus tended to own less acreage than their fathers. By the mid-19th century farms of over 150 acres were rare in the neighborhood. Not only did individual farmers have fewer acres to cultivate, but those acres were less productive, because of past poor agricultural practices, which had depleted the fertility of the soil.<sup>(19)</sup> New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania also suffered from increasing competition in the grain market as the fertile lands of western Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio were settled and came into production. The gradual shift of the "bread basket" to the west was accelerated with the improved transportation available to western farmers after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825.

When Thomas Stevenson sold his property (Property 1) in 1774, it was acquired by George Holcombe. Holcombe appears never to have lived on the property, holding it, sometimes in partnership with others, until 1804.<sup>(20)</sup> He then sold it to one Samuel Brewer, who was forced to sell part of it to Thomas Holcombe in 1819. Holcombe acquired the remainder of the property at sheriff's sale in 1822.<sup>(21)</sup> It remained in the possession of Thomas Holcombe and his heirs until 1856, when it was purchased by Richard Burroughs, who held it until 1868. During this long period, the property probably continued as a tenant farm. It was located in West Amwell Township, of which neither Thomas Holcombe nor Richard Burroughs was a resident; the former lived in Alexandria Township, the latter in Hopewell.<sup>(22)</sup> At the end of the century the farm was once more sold at sheriff's sale, because the then owner was unable to make payments on his several mortgages.<sup>(23)</sup>

The William Stevenson property, now the Mazur farm (Property 5), had a similar history. Stevenson's heirs sold it to Theophilus Moore in 1773, who, still in the prosperous period, conveyed it to John Martindell in 1797 for the considerable sum of 1,660 pounds.<sup>(24)</sup> At the end of Martindell's tenure in 1843, however, it was sold at sheriff's sale for one dollar.<sup>(25)</sup> From then it went

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through a series of non-resident owners, with the exception of the period from 1857 to 1879, until the end of the century, when Elias Lambert's tenure again ended at sheriff's sale.(26)

While the Stevensons had left the area before the close of the 18th century, the descendants of other pioneering families remained. If they were alert in adapting to changing economic conditions they could keep their property and enjoy a degree of prosperity. These families responded to declining opportunities in several ways: by reducing their standard of living, by diversifying agricultural production to accommodate to changing markets, and by engaging in other forms of enterprise. After Henry Phillips died intestate in 1805, his property was divided among his sons.(27) John H. Phillips received the house his father had inherited from the first John Phillips, and the mill across the road. What is now the Howell Farm went to his brother, a second Henry. In the early 19th century, therefore, John H. Phillips was able to live in considerable comfort. This was probably due more to his inheritance of an existing house and milling enterprise than to his farming activities. Henry II, in contrast, started out in what was almost a repetition of pioneering conditions. Like his grandfather he built a two-story stone house with one room on each floor. It differed, however, from the earlier dwelling in its more generous proportions, its higher ceiling heights and its larger windows.

Both the first Henry Phillips and John H. Phillips not only operated the mill, but also diversified their agricultural production. Both grew flax, and the son ran a cider press and also ventured into beekeeping on a scale that suggests that beeswax or honey was a cash crop. John H. Phillips was also growing potatoes in some quantity. His inventory also lists clover seed, suggesting that he may have been adopting methods of crop rotation, in order to slow the depletion of the soil caused by over-intensive cultivation of bread grains.(28) Following John H. Phillips' death in 1832 his heirs sold the property to Ralph Schenck for \$5,491 in 1840.(29) This was in the midst of the great national depression that followed the Panic of 1837. Schenck was evidently unable to make a success of the property and was forced to sell it to Thomas Pidcock at sheriff's sale in 1846 for only \$1,510.(30) In turn Pidcock lost it for debt to one of the ubiquitous Holcombes, John, in 1851. By then economic recovery had raised its value. Holcombe paid \$3,998.(31) Thereafter the property maintained stability of ownership, passing to Holcombe's daughter, Caroline Holcombe Ely, in whose family it remained for the rest of the century.(32) The mid-19th century owners continued to maintain the grist mill.(33)

The Atchleys occupied what is now the Hunter property (Property 11) until almost the end of the 19th century. In the early years of the century Asher Atchley, like John H. Phillips kept bees, and was interested in "progressive" methods of agriculture, in his case evidenced by possession of a windmill. Whether this was a device to pump water, or what later was known as a fanning mill to winnow grain is unclear. Either would indicate that Atchley was using what was then the most

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modern of equipment. Atchley also had a large loom, and may have done some commercial weaving, perhaps using the wool from his sizeable flock of sheep. In addition, he may have supplemented his income by carpentry and cooperage. His inventory, made in 1823, lists carpenters' tools worth the then considerable sum of \$8.00, a workbench, and fourteen cider casks, as well as other casks presumably part of his stock in trade.(34) Taken together with John H. Phillips' cider press, this suggests that the cultivation of apples, for conversion to cider, may already have become an aspect of agriculture in Pleasant Valley.

The inventory of John Smith, made after his death in 1818, shows that, like his neighbors, he had engaged in a variety of agricultural pursuits. Like John H. Phillips he ran a mill, and in addition to grain crops, raised flax and potatoes, and kept bees. Like Asher Atchley he had a windmill. In addition to his other livestock, he had geese and "fowls," presumably chickens. These activities had enabled him to prosper, and probably to enlarge and modernize his house. He was heating it not by open fireplaces, but by a ten-plate and an open stove, the latter probably a Franklin fireplace. He owned such relative luxuries as a corner cupboard, carpeting and a valuable map.(35)

## NINETEENTH CENTURY CHANGE

Although the valley was not as prosperous in the 19th century as it had been in the late 18th, the economic situation was certainly not uniformly bleak, and the area did continue to grow. As early as 1826 there was a schoolhouse near the intersection of Pleasant Valley and Valley Roads.(36) Since this was long before state-mandated public education in New Jersey, the school must have been supported by the valley's residents. Although what is now known as the old schoolhouse is a building of late 19th-century date, it occupies a site in the same vicinity as the early school. By 1849 there was also a blacksmith's shop on the east side of Valley Road.(37) This was located near the 18th or early 19th-century house (Property 3) on Phillips property that became the Howell Farm, and may represent the site of much earlier blacksmithing activity by members of the Phillips family.

Improved transportation along the Delaware River also must have opened up new potential markets for Pleasant Valley's farm products. In 1834 the feeder of the Delaware and Raritan Canal was completed along the Delaware River bank, and in 1851 the tracks of the Belvidere-Delaware Railroad, later a division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, paralleled the canal. By 1860 there was a railroad station at the foot of Moore's Creek. At the same time the cities of Trenton and, further down the river, Philadelphia were industrializing and their population was expanding rapidly. With good transportation to these growing markets available, Pleasant Valley was positioned to supply them, especially with relatively perishable commodities.

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The agricultural censuses for 1850 through 1880 show that farmers responded by concentrating on raising livestock for both meat and at least one dairy product, butter. The production of "bread grains," such as wheat, rye and buckwheat declined. By 1875, probably because the produce of the Delaware Valley could no longer compete with western grains, and perhaps also because of functional obsolescence, both of the grist mills in the valley had ceased to operate.(38) In contrast the cultivation of feed grains such as oats and corn increased, presumably because farmers were raising more animals. Livestock included milk cows, other cattle, and swine. Pleasant Valley farmers, in common with those in Hunterdon County, and in contrast to other sections of New Jersey, continued to raise sheep and sell wool. The Smith family also continued to raise "fowls." When John Smith II died in 1882, his estate included chickens and chicken coops. Smith was also engaged in non-agricultural activity. Out of an estate appraised at \$4,142.39, over one-quarter came from quarrying. The City of Camden owed him a balance of \$1,451.38 for stone, and he had stone blocks and posts worth \$100.(39) By 1875 both a sand pit and a stone quarry had been opened on Kuser's (Baldpate) Mountain, or Moore's Mountain as it was then known.(40)

The population of the valley had also increased, although not dramatically. Where there had been half a dozen houses at the end of the 18th century there were about twenty in the third quarter of the 19th, most built outside of the core of the valley that constitutes the Pleasant Valley Rural Historic District. With the presence of non-farm enterprise connected with the canal, railroad and quarry, a few houses were built on the less hospitable southern side of Pleasant Valley Road, on the north slope of Moore's Mountain. However, few newcomers entered the valley. Most of the names on the maps of the period remained familiar -- Phillips, Atchley, Smith, Moore and Hunt. Undoubtedly these families by now were interrelated by ties of marriage going back for three or four generations.

Both this limited growth and changing agricultural practices are reflected in the valley's buildings. At least one of the older houses that survive in the area was probably built in the 1840s. This is on the property now known as Bella Vista Farm (site 9). It was a traditional house type; a three-bay sidehall house, with a lateral kitchen wing. Only details of trim characteristic of the mid-nineteenth century differentiated them from houses built fifty years earlier. The house has been considerably altered in the 20th century. The house at the Howell Farm was enlarged in this period, with a hall and parlor and rooms above, more than doubling it in size.

Even more striking was the expansion of outbuildings in the 19th century, especially in response to the increase in livestock. This required not only more stable room for the stock, but also larger areas to store feed grains. The large barn at the Howell Farm is thought to have been constructed around 1835-1840.(41) The barn at the Wooden farm also appears to be of mid-19th century date. Later it was raised to accommodate a large basement, in which cattle could be stabled.

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Most of the surviving outbuildings at the Hunter Farm, except for the main barn, also appear to have been constructed in the second half of the 19th century.

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A vivid picture of farm life in Pleasant Valley early in the 20th century is preserved in the memories of members of the Hunter family, recorded by Christine Howe when she was administrator of the Howell Living Historical Farm. They describe a well-kept landscape of neatly trimmed fencerows and cultivated fields, forming a close-knit community of family farms. Fields averaged eight to ten acres. Most of the fencing was barbed wire, strung on posts, although photographs show continuing use of both worm and post and rail fencing. The countryside was so much more open that neighbors' houses were clearly visible to one another, as many still remain despite the growth of trees.

Most farmers produced crops to feed their families and their livestock, plus surplus dairy and poultry products, fruit, and some vegetables for market. Farmers practiced crop rotation with corn, oats, clover and wheat. Grain was taken to mills in Titusville or Lambertville for grinding. Often the depleted soils of the valley could not produce enough feed grain, and farmers purchased extra corn and wheat. Most of the farmers in the valley kept from one to eight milk cows. The herds of larger dairy farmers in the area numbered from ten to fifteen milkers. Early in the century flocks of chickens ranged from fifty to one hundred birds. In later years, poultry increased in importance and the flocks grew larger, with up to 300 chickens, plus guinea fowl and geese. Pleasant Valley farmers also grew more fruit than they had previously. Both apple and peach orchards were planted. The apple trees were long-lived, but peach trees had to be replanted every ten to fifteen years. When the trees were young, corn or buckwheat was planted among them, in order to keep down the weeds. As the trees matured, hogs and young cattle were permitted to forage in the orchards. The peaches were sold for eating, but apples generally were used to make cider or vinegar.

Times were hard, however, except for the period of World War I. Farmers "made a nice living at that time, but it was impossible to make money or save money."<sup>(42)</sup> The Hunters managed to make a "nice living" out of what would have been a marginal subsistence farm because they became retailers, with a wagon route through Trenton. Among their staple products was butter. When they were unable to produce a sufficient supply for their customers, they bought butter from the creamery in Harbourton. Besides butter, they regularly sold eggs and dressed chickens and other poultry, and, depending on the season, peaches, cider and vinegar, tomatoes, corn, and Lima beans. Although the Hunters continued to raise some hogs, they were butchered for family use only.

The Cromwells, who operated the Howell Farm during the 1920s, were also

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retailers. They bottled milk, their own and that supplied by other farmers, and had their own truck route to sell milk and cream. The Lemings, who occupied the farm before the Cromwells, had a butter and egg route in Trenton. They also shipped whole milk via the milk train. The sale of whole milk had become significant at the end of the first decade of the 20th century as refrigeration and shipping methods improved. Around 1910 the milk train bound for Trenton and Philadelphia began to make regularly scheduled stops. A farmer with a large dairy herd would load milk on the early morning train at either Lambertville or Moore's Station. However, few of the farms in Pleasant Valley had large herds. Farming in the valley was, by this time, largely a means of getting by.

The hard times of the early 20th century are, in large part, responsible for the lack of change during that era. Only the Wooden Farm, for example, has that ubiquitous symbol of early 20th century agriculture, a cylindrical silo, although there once were two at the Howell Farm as well. Nor do the valley's older houses, with the notable exception of Bella Vista Farm, exhibit early 20th century alterations. Indeed, the greatest impact on the area, in terms of buildings, was in the construction of numerous large chicken houses, many of which survive.

## PLEASANT VALLEY TODAY

Despite considerable change, Pleasant Valley retains much tangible evidence of its past. The line, which marked the northern boundary of Daniel Coxe's Hopewell Patent in 1685, became the partition between Hunterdon and Mercer Counties in 1838. Always a property division, it remains marked on the landscape by a straight tree line extending across the ridge of Sourland Mountain. The major roads that serve the valley are those that were laid out in the early 18th century. Narrow and winding, they follow the contours of the land. Other 18th and 19th century roads leading north out of the valley follow early property divisions. Two, Wooden's Lane and Hunter Lane, remain unpaved, true country lanes, bordered by fencing and overgrown hedgerows of Osage orange.

Houses and farm buildings reflect the development of the valley as a farming community from the mid-18th through the early 20th century. The failure of agriculture as a viable economic activity by the middle of the century has left the farm complexes frozen in an earlier era. There are none of the prefabricated corrugated metal buildings, or large blue enamel silos that mark the modern farmstead. And, although less of the valley is under cultivation than was the case fifty years ago, much of it is still farmed. Family farms no longer exist, but owners of both large and small properties keep them in at least partial agricultural use in order to qualify for farmland assessment. The southern rim of the valley, Kuser Mountain, retains its heavy woodland cover, even denser now that pockets of fertile soil are no longer cleared for farming. The Woodens and Hunters no longer till their own soil, but the land is leased to other farmers

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for cultivation and grazing. At the Howell Farm crops are being grown and livestock raised as they were at the beginning of the century. The Mazur property is no longer cultivated, largely because of the depredations of herds of deer, but the fields are kept cleared.

Entering the heart of the valley in mid-summer, one can easily believe that more than half a century has fallen away. The corn is high in the fields and cattle graze in the meadows. The air is still; often the loudest noise is the crowing of a rooster or the bleating of a herd of sheep. Fields are defined by hedgerows or fences of various kinds, worm, rail or post and wire. The valley is green against the sky, the paler tones of wheat and corn set off by the deeper shades of the tree-clad ridges.

From each of the valley's surviving farms, one sees the imprint of 200 years of human occupation not only in the cultivated fields, but also in the buildings where farmers lived and housed their stock and crops. The Wooden and Mazur houses look down from the Sourland Ridge as they have since the 18th century. Both are clearly visible from the Howell Farm, as is the Dale's early barn. From the Woodens' farm, with its full complement of agricultural buildings, looking much as they did a century ago, it is possible to look across the valley at the Hunter farm, a view of fields and buildings virtually unchanged since the beginning of this century. The school house remains in its place next to the cemetery, although changed in appearance. With a little care, the sites of the two grist mills can be found, even though they ceased to grind the valley's grain over a century ago.

In the center, therefore, the history of Pleasant Valley can still be read on the face of the land. It is a history typical of agriculture in New Jersey, and more particularly in the west central part of the state. At the same time it is particular to the place, a pocket of cultivation in relatively inhospitable surroundings. The adaptation of generations of farmers to difficult conditions and changing markets made the survival of the unspoiled heart of the valley possible. Whether Pleasant Valley can retain its character in the face of the rapid suburbanization, and indeed urbanization, of its surrounding region remains moot. A study, completed in 1983 by the MSM Regional Study Council, Inc. and Heritage Studies, Inc. for the Rural Project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, recommended a number of protective measures for Pleasant Valley, including listing on the State and National Registers, an easement program, and land management guidelines to be incorporated in the Hopewell Township zoning ordinance.(43) Most of these recommendations remain to be implemented.

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NOTES

1. The earliest road returns for Hopewell Township date from 1739. No return for these two roads appears in subsequent years, so they are assumed to pre-date the returns.
2. Hopewell Township Road Returns, 23:400.
3. West Jersey Deeds, B:692.
4. Ibid., B:702.
5. Ibid., D:498; AF:498; West Jersey Surveys, S6:151.
6. West Jersey Deeds, E:284.
7. New Jersey Wills, 1476 J.
8. Ralph Ege, Pioneers of Old Hopewell, Hopewell: Race & Savidge (1908), pp.114-115.
9. West Jersey Deeds, R:135, 139, 141, 158.
10. Hunterdon County Letters of Administration, 1:103; New Jersey Inventories, 756J.
11. Hubert G. Schmidt Agriculture in New Jersey, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press (1973), p. 65.
12. Ibid., p.86.
13. Hunterdon County Deeds, 4:212.
14. New Jersey Wills, 1476J; Hunterdon County Letters of Administration, 3:139.
15. Ibid., 3032J.
16. Hunterdon County Deeds, 4:212.
17. Ibid., 2:195.

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18. New Jersey Wills 1476J.
19. Schmidt, Agriculture, p. 92.
20. Hunterdon County Deeds, 2:195; 6:145.
21. Ibid., 11:329; 32:388.
22. Ibid., 35:254; 114:325; Hunterdon County Letters of Administration, 2:114.
23. Ibid., 249:84.
24. Ibid., 4:212.
25. Ibid., 80:194.
26. Ibid., 82:428, 101:381, 116:30; 184:567; New Jersey Wills, 5675K.
27. Hunterdon County Letters of Administration, 1:14.
28. Hunterdon County Inventories, 1:103, 7:505.
29. Hunterdon County Deeds, 54:397.
30. Mercer County Deeds, C:6.
31. Ibid., K:224.
32. New Jersey Prerogative Court, Wills and Codicils, 161.
33. Otley & Keily, 1849; Lake and Beers, 1860; Everts & Stewart, 1875.
34. New Jersey Wills, 3239J.
35. Ibid., 3032J.
36. Hunterdon County Road Returns, 2:212.
37. Otley & Keily, 1849.
38. Everts & Stewart, 1875.
39. Mercer County Wills, 3544K.

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40. Everts & Stewart, 1875.

41. John Bruce Dodd and Cherry Dodd, "The Henry Phillips Barn: Howell Living Historical Farm," Mercer County Park Commission (1983), p. 24.

42. Taped interview with Howard Hunter, 1979, Collection Howell Living Historical Farm.

43. Heritage Studies, Inc., The National Trust for Historic Preservation, and MSM Regional Study Council, Inc., Rural Conservation in Pleasant Valley, April 1984.

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Hunterdon County Court House, Flemington, New Jersey.

Hopewell Township: Road Returns.

Hunterdon County: Deed Books.

Hunterdon County: Inventories.

Hunterdon County: Letters of Administration.

Hunterdon County: Road Returns.

Mercer County Court House, Trenton, New Jersey.

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New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management, Trenton, New Jersey.

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Hunter, Clara. Interview, March 15, 1983.

Hunter, Howard. Taped interview, 1979. Collection of Howell Living Historical Farm.

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Wooden, Clara. Interview, August 30, 1982.

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Beginning at a point on the division line between Mercer and Hunterdon Counties (and Hopewell and West Amwell Townships) that marks the southwest corner of Block 29, Lot 16 in West Amwell Township. Then northwest along the western boundary of Block 29, Lot 16 to the southern boundary of the New Jersey Power & Light Company easement. Then northeast along the southern boundary of the New Jersey Power & Light Company easement to the southern boundary of Block 30, Lot 13. Then east along the southern boundary of that lot and Lot 12 to the northeast corner of Block 31, Lot 14. Then south southeast along the eastern boundary of that lot and a line of convenience to the northeast corner of Block 31, Lot 18. Then generally south along the east boundary of that lot and a line of convenience made by extending it to the county line, crossing into Hopewell Township, Mercer County, and continuing south along the east boundary of Block 54, Lot 6 to the northern boundary of Block 54, Lot 7. Then generally east along that boundary and a line of convenience formed by an extension of that line to the west side of Barry Road. Then generally south along the west side of Barry Road to the south side of Pleasant Valley Road. Then generally east along the south side of the road to the northeast corner of Block 60, Lot 4. Then south, east and south southwest along the eastern boundary of Block 60, Lot 4 to its southeast corner. Then generally south southwest on a line of convenience extending the southern segment of the eastern boundary of Block 60, Lot 4 to the 400 foot contour line. Then generally west along the 400 foot contour line to a point made by extending the western line of Block 60, Lot 61 to the southeast. Then northwest along the line of convenience and the western boundary of Block 60, Lot 61 to the northern side of Pleasant Valley Road. Then westerly along the road approximately 325 feet to a point opposite the place where a small tributary stream enters Moore's Creek (approximately 25 feet west of the western border of Block 59, Lot 6). Then north northeast along the course of the stream to the southern boundary of a New Jersey Power & Light Company easement. Then easterly along a line of convenience to the southwest corner of Block 59, Lot 7. Then northeast along that property's northern line to the south side of Valley Road. Then westerly along Valley Road, crossing it at a point opposite the southwest corner of Block 56, Lot 1. Then north along the western boundary of that lot to the county line. Then easterly along the county line approximately 450 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary lines of the Pleasant Valley Rural Historic District were drawn for two reasons: a) to define those parts of the core of the valley that were least impacted by modern intrusions, and b) to define the interrelationships of historic landscape and buildings that form the visual and cultural context of the Howell Living Historical Farm. This context was determined in part by viewshed

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studies conducted by the MSM Regional Study Council, Inc. These accounted for properties highly visible from the Howell Farm (Properties 1,2,3,) and from one another (Properties 1-11, 2-4, 4-5, 5-8, 5-11). Another consideration was to interrelate those properties already in existence when the Howell Farm was developed (Properties 1, 2, 5, 8, 11, 12).

Boundaries were chosen to include land historically related to the built environment, as well as those lines pertaining to current property ownership. Visual factors were also considered. Thus most of the property lines or roads chosen as boundaries coincide with such visual delimiters as tree lines or hedgerows.

The most difficult choice involved the southern boundary. Consideration was given to drawing the entire boundary along Pleasant Valley Road. However, the decision was made to use a line paralleling the 400-foot contour line, the high point on Baldpate Mountain, which terminates the view from most of the farms and gives the valley its sense of enclosure. On the north the property lines chosen also coincide with high ground. At the east end of the valley a knob of Baldpate Mountain on Property 11 is an effective visual terminus. Consideration was given to including a large plot of vacant land east of Barry Road. By ownership and historical connections, however, this land is associated with estate properties northeast of the valley. Beyond the western boundary, the uses change from agricultural to residential, quarrying, and recreational. Land south of Valley Road, west of the intersection with Wooden's Lane, was excluded because it has been developed with relatively modern houses.

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West Amwell Township, Hunterdon County and Hopewell Township, Mercer County, New  
Jersey

Figures: (not submitted to National Register)

The first four figures are taken from "Rural Conservation in Pleasant Valley",  
April 1984

1. General Topographic and Vegetation Profile
2. Views
3. Historic Core of Pleasant Valley, 1930
4. Historic Core of Pleasant Valley, 1982
5. Otley and Keily, Map of Mercer County, 1849
6. Cornell, Map of Hunterdon County, 1852
7. Lake & Beers, Map of Philadelphia and Vicinity, 1860

Photographs:

Photographer: Constance M. Greiff

Date: June 1990

Negatives: Filed with Hopewell Township Historic Sites Committee, Hopewell  
Township Municipal Building, Washington Crossing-Pennington Road,  
Titusville, NJ 08560

1. View looking west into district from Atchley/Hunter Farm (Property 11).
2. View towards northwest from Barry Road. The Thomas Stevenson (Wooden) Farm (Property 1) is visible at upper left.
3. View towards southeast from Howell Farm. The farmstead is visible left of center, and the view is terminated by Kuser's (Baldpate Mountain).
4. View to south from William Stevenson (Mazur) Farm (Property 5).
5. View north on Moore's Creek from entrance driveway to J. Smith Farm (Property 13).
6. View of Thomas Stevenson Farm (Property 1) from south.

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7. House at Thomas Stevenson Farm from southwest.
8. Outbuildings at Thomas Stevenson Farm from east.
9. Barn at Smith Farm (Property 2) from southeast.
10. House at Smith Farm from southwest.
11. Blacksmith's House (Property 3) from south.
12. House at William Stevenson Farm (Property 5) from south.
13. Dutch barn at William Stevenson Farm from south.
14. Framing detail, Dutch barn.
15. Schoolhouse (Property 7) from southwest.
16. John Phillips House (Property 8) from southwest.
17. T. Holt House (Bella Vista Farm) (Property 9) from southwest.
18. Atchley Tenant House (Property 10) from southwest.
19. House, Atchley/Hunter Farm (Property 11) from north.
20. Outbuildings, Atchley/Hunter Farm from southwest.
21. House, Rose/Lanning/Hunt Farm (Property 12) from southwest.
22. Barns, Rose/Lanning/Hunt Farm from southeast.
23. J. Smith Farm (Property 13) from south.
24. Bridge on Hunter Road from southeast.
25. New houses at the northwest of intersection of Valley Road and Wooden's Lane from southeast.

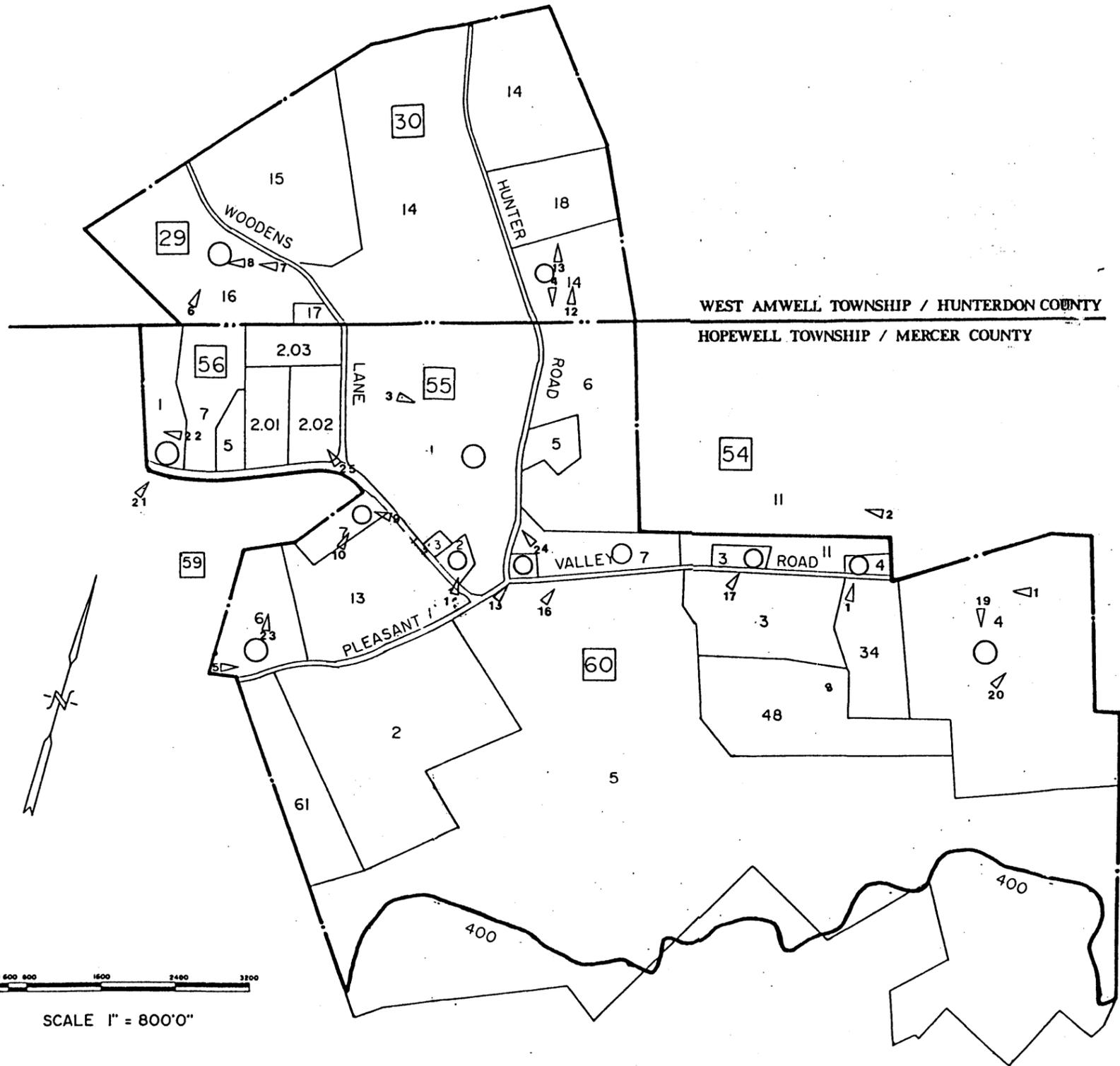
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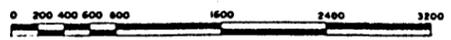
Property	Bldgs		Struc		Sites	
	C	NC	C	NC	C	NC
1. Thomas Stevenson Farm	7	-	-	-	1	-
2. Smith Farm	4	1	-	-	1	-
3. Blacksmith's	2	-	-	-	1	-
4. Howell Farm	6	-	-	-	2	-
5. William Stevenson Farm	3	3	-	-	1	-
6. Burying Ground	-	-	-	-	1	-
7. Schoolhouse	3	-	-	-	1	-
8. John Phillips House	4	-	-	-	1	-
9. T. Holt House	2	-	-	-	1	-
10. Atchley Tenant House	2	-	-	-	-	-
11. Atchley/Hunter	12	-	-	-	2	-
12. Rose/Lanning/Hunt	7	-	-	-	1	-
13. J. Smith Farm	5	-	-	-	1	-
14. Bridge	-	-	1	-	-	-
15.-17.	1	-	1	-	6	-
18.-20.	-	3	-	-	3	-
21.	-	1	-	-	-	-
22.	-	3	-	-	-	-
23.	-	1	-	-	-	-
Roads	-	-	4	-	-	-
Kuser Mountain	-	-	-	-	1	-
	58	9	7	0	24	-



WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP / HUNTERDON COUNTY  
 HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP / MERCER COUNTY

**KEY**

- Block ———— 
- Lot ———— 
- Contributing house or farmstead ———— 
- Boundary ———— 
- Photo ———— 



SCALE 1" = 800'0"

HERITAGE STUDIES INC.  
 20 SEMINARY AVENUE  
 HOPEWELL, NEW JERSEY  
 JULY 10, 1990

PLEASANT VALLEY RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT