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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Thomas Leaming House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1845 Route 9 North N/A not for publication

city or town Middle Township vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Cape May code 009 zip code 08210

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/3/97
Date

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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Patrick Andrews

8/1/97

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N /A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Postmedieval English

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation none

walls stucco

roof wood shake

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions regarding property significance.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) N /A

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions regarding property considerations.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Areas of Significance A, B, C with checkboxes and descriptions.

Period of Significance

- Period of Significance A, B, C with checkboxes and dates.

Significant Dates

- Significant Dates A, B, C with checkboxes and dates.

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Leaming, Thomas (1674-1723)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N /A

- Previous documentation on file (NPS) with checkboxes and descriptions.

Primary location of additional data:

- Primary location of additional data with checkboxes and descriptions.

Name of repository:

Thomas Leaming House
Name of Property

Cape May Co., NJ
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5 acres

Woodbine, NJ Quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan E. Berkey

organization _____ date January 9, 1997

street & number 1003 Bartlett Avenue telephone 609-927-7950

city or town Linwood state NJ zip code 08221

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Jack and Emily Aprill

street & number 1845 Route 9 North telephone 609-465-5871

city or town Cape May Court House state NJ zip code 08210

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Thomas Leaming House
Cape May County, NJ

Narrative Description

Built in 1706, the original portion of the Thomas Leaming House is two stories tall, modestly rectangular in plan, and features heavy timber frame construction. Two bays deep and three bays wide with a centrally placed doorway, the house has one interior end wall chimney, a cedar shake roof, and a stucco exterior which covers its original clapboards. Two later frame additions to the rear have created an L-shaped footprint: (1) the middle addition, built ca. 1780, is one and a half stories tall, rectangular in plan, and consists of a kitchen with a chamber above; and, (2) the westernmost addition, one-story tall, is a combination office/pantry/laundry room built in 1986. Both additions have cedar shake roofs and beaded clapboard exteriors, although clapboards on the rear wall of the middle addition are covered with stucco. Windows are predominantly 6/6 double-hung sash, with fixed upper sash, and all roofs are gabled. The house also has a screened porch, built ca. 1955, on its north elevation. Two contributing structures near the dwelling include a storage house/cellar and a barn, both of which appear to date from the first half of the eighteenth century. Located on the oceanside of the New Jersey peninsula in Cape May County, the Thomas Leaming House was once part of a 330-acre homestead plantation with frontage along nearby Stites Sound; the original tract stretched one mile from northeast to northwest and was a quarter-mile deep. The house faces east on a heavily-wooded, fifteen-acre lot approximately 100' west of NJ State Route 9. Although the house stands in Middle Township, part of its acreage is in Dennis Township to the north. The site also includes, to the north and west, Leamings Run Gardens and Colonial Farm, a four-acre annual garden and replication of a colonial farmstead which was established by the present owners in 1976 and which is not included within the nomination boundaries.

Current Appearance of the Thomas Leaming House: original portion

The original portion of the Thomas Leaming House measures 27' wide by 22' deep. (photo #1) The main, or east, facade and all elevations are covered with white stucco, placed overtop the original clapboards: the outlines of the clapboards can be seen through the stucco (photos #1 and #4) and their backsides are intact on the interior gable ends in the attic. Cornices on the front and rear elevations are boxed with returns and have crown and bed moldings. Corner boards on all elevations are approximately 8" wide and, where visible under the cornice, have a molded edge running their entire length. There is a corbelled interior end wall chimney at the south end which has also been stuccoed.

There is no basement; however, the crawl space under the house is accessed by raising unnailed floorboards in the dining room and hallway. The house's corner posts rest on ballast-like

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stones while the sills rest directly on the ground. Floor joists run east to west and are tied into a large girt which runs north to south through the middle of the house. Many of the floor joists are simply logs with the bark remaining on their unfaced undersides.

The east facade is three bays wide with a centrally placed doorway. (photo #1) The original 4-panel wood door has a reproduction thumb latch and later, applied moldings. The door is topped by an original, 2-light transom. Facade windows, and those on all elevations, are 6/6 double-hung sash with original brick moldings. Windows on the first floor are flanked by paneled shutters while those on the second floor have blinds.

The north elevation (photo #2) has two, 4-light single sash windows in the gable end. A modern dutch door in the middle of the first floor leads to a screened-in porch, built ca. 1955, set on a 9' x 13' concrete slab.

The rear, or west, elevation (photos #3 and #4) has two 6/6 windows on the second floor to the north and one 6/6 window on the first floor to the north.

The south elevation (photo #4) has two, 4-light single sash windows in the gable end. The second story has two 6/6 double-hung windows flanked by wood blinds while the first story has one 6/6 double-hung window to the west.

The interior of the original portion of the Thomas Leaming House features heavy timber framing which is exposed to varying degrees on both stories and in the attic.

The first floor features exposed corner posts, chimney posts, floor joists, and girts, and has original, random width pine floors running north to south. Windows have 3 1/2" wide astragal moldings while doors and doorways are framed with original, unmolded 3 1/4" wide trim.

The north parlor, or living room, has a closed string, straight run staircase located along its south wall. (photo #5) Its thick, square balusters and newel appear to date ca. 1930. Although the living room walls are plastered, the chimney girt and post along the south wall are exposed. The girt, which runs east to west, has a plain chamfer arrested with a lamb's tongue stop where the girt meets the chimney post near the front door. Only the lower portions of the ceiling joists are exposed in the living room: a plaster ceiling with wood moldings has been applied between the joists to conceal plumbing for the bathroom overhead. The joists are placed with 36" centers and are predominantly rough hewn without chamfers. Another girt, which runs east to west and which helps to frame the stair opening, is boxed in. (photo #5) It rests directly on the front and rear girts with no story post. The room's plastered walls leave only the tops of the corner posts, along with the tops of the front, rear, and end girts, visible on the north, east, and west walls. All walls have 5 3/4" wide beaded edge baseboard which appears to date from the first quarter of the 19th century.

While the exterior of the front door has applied moldings to its four sunk panels, the interior face consists of four flush panels edged with a 1/4" bead; the door appears to date from

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the eighteenth century and is possibly original. The door on the north wall leading to the screened porch is a modern "dutch" door, 9-lights over a crossbuck, with a reproduction thumbblatch.

The south parlor, or dining room, has plaster walls, modern wood wainscot topped with a chairrail, and 6" plain baseboard. This room's most notable features are its exposed framing members: chimney and corner posts, end and chimney girts, and front and rear girts. The chimney and end girts have a plain chamfer their entire length which ends with a lamb's tongue stop where the girts join with the upright posts. (photo #6) The girts are joined to the corner and chimney posts by a mortise and tenon held in place by three wooden pins. (photo #6) The ceiling joists run north to south, as they do in the living room, and are placed on 36" centers. They are hand planed smooth and have a plain chamfer. These joists support the exposed flooring of the chamber above which serves as the ceiling for the dining room.

A closed fireplace, with chimney closets on both sides but with no mantel, dominates the south wall. On the opposite wall, the closet door to the west end has four sunk panels, original iron "HL" hinges and a finely-crafted wrought iron thumbblatch. The door appears to date ca. 1800, while its hinges and thumbblatch may date to the early 18th century.

The most notable features of the second floor are the exposed vertical board walls which line the north and east walls of the hallway (photo # 8), and the decoratively-carved heads on the corner and chimney posts. (photo #7)

In the hallway, the railing which surrounds the stairwell has 1" square balusters and two turned newel posts, round in plan, which appear to date ca. 1800. (photos #8 and #10) The north and east walls of the hallway are comprised of hand-planed vertical pine boards between 10" and 14" wide, 1" thick, with an 1/8" inch bead and lap joints. The south and west walls are plastered and all baseboards are 4 1/2" wide with a 3/8" bead. Doors off the hallway appear to be original 2/2 raised panel with plain surrounds. The attic door, which also appears to be original, is 6 panels (2/2/2) with later "HL" hinges. It is framed into the west wall chimney post, and the chimney post is not carved like other posts on the second floor.

The bathroom, in the northwest corner, has as its south wall the reverse side of the beaded paneling which faces the hallway. (photo #9) The other walls of the bathroom are plastered; there is a carved corner post in the northwest corner and the ceiling joists, which are exposed, run east to west. Attic floorboards serve as the ceiling and several of the joists appear to have been replaced. The carved post has an "ogee with bead" profile like all other carved posts on the second floor. Because the length of the profile varies from one post to another (from 3 1/2" to 5 1/4"), each post appears to have been individually carved rather than executed with a hand plane.

The east bedroom has two carved posts, one at the northeast corner and the other on the east wall next to the southernmost window. (photo #7) All walls are plastered and have original beaded baseboards measuring 5 1/4" and 4 1/4" wide. All joists in this room appear to be original

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and, like the exposed end tie beam and front plate, are chamfered but have no stops. A clothes closet on the west wall is fronted with modern bifold doors.

The south bedroom occupies the southern third of the second floor and has two carved cornerposts in the southeast and southwest corners. This room has plaster walls, a plaster ceiling which entirely covers the joists, and a 5" beaded baseboard on all walls. A closed fireplace, with chimney closets on both sides but no mantel, is centrally placed on the south wall. The bedroom door is hung with original wrought iron "HL" hinges (like those on the dining room closet door) while the door to the closet tucked under the attic stairs has a different 4-panel profile and later "HL" hinges. Undulations in the plaster ceiling suggest that the ceiling joists in this room run east to west as they do elsewhere on this floor.

The attic is accessed by a straight, enclosed flight of stairs placed between the main stairs and the south bedroom. The attic is unfinished and appears to have always been that way. The roof framing consists of principal and common rafters, most of which are adzed, although two are vertical sawn. There is no ridge board and the rafters are joined at the roof peak with a mortise, tenon, and pin. There are no purlins; rather, there are 1 1/4" thick boards of varying widths placed directly on the rafters to serve as under-boarding, or nailers, for the cedar shake roof. The reverse side of the cedar shake roof is visible between the nailers and the original clapboards are visible at the gable ends. The original floorboards are now covered with 2" thick insulation panels. Evidence of a previous fire is seen in charred rafters and nailers on the west section of the roof, over the area where the stairs enter the attic.

Current appearance of the middle addition

The middle addition, built ca. 1780, consists of a 1 1/2 story frame building, rectangular in plan, with its attic story raised several feet to accommodate windows on the north and south elevations. Built against the southwest corner of the main block, this addition comprises a kitchen on the first floor and a bedroom on the second floor. (photo #4)

The south elevation, covered with replacement beaded clapboard, has a modern door and a 6/6 double-hung window to the west. The second floor has a 6-light, single-hung window placed directly over the window on the first floor. The north elevation has stucco placed over original clapboards, a single 6-light fixed sash window on the first floor and a 6-light, single-hung window on the second floor. The gable end of the west elevation is modestly exposed above the roof of the westernmost addition and has replacement beaded clapboards which are placed diagonally to follow the roofline.

The first floor room currently serves as a kitchen and features random width pine floors running east to west, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling placed between the ceiling joists which

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leaves the lower portion of the ceiling joists exposed. The windows and door have plain, unmolded surrounds, and the baseboard is 5" wide with a 1/2" bead.

The chamber above the kitchen is accessible only from the main block, and is entered through a vertical sawn, board and batten door (probably original) placed at the second floor landing of the attic stairway. The interior of this chamber features random width pine floors running east to west, plaster walls and ceiling, and a 4" unmolded baseboard. The 6-light, single sash windows on the north and south walls are set in tracks which allow them to slide open horizontally. The chamber has a modest 6'6" headroom at its peak.

A 5' x 5' cinder block mechanical room containing the heater, added ca. 1955, sits in the corner of the ell between the main block and the middle addition. (photo #3)

current appearance of the westernmost addition

Built in 1986, the westernmost addition is placed along the west wall of the middle addition. It is one-story tall, covered with beaded board siding, and has a gable roof. The south elevation is 2 bays wide with a 6/6 double-hung window placed west of a modern door. The west elevation has a 20-light, single sash, 5' wide boxed bay window. The interior has sheetrock walls and ceiling, and 7 1/2" wide pine floors running north to south. (photo #4)

original appearance and subsequent alterations

In his Anecdotes, Thomas Leaming wrote "in 1706 I built my house", thereby giving a definitive and unarguable date of construction for the house. (Surveys & Misc. Records, Aaron Leaming, p. 495) Although the original dimensions of the main block remain unchanged, the house has undergone numerous alterations to its exterior appearance and to its interior floor plan. When originally built, the house was probably clad with cedar clapboards, possibly those which have now been covered over with a coat of white stucco in the 1930's. The windows were probably of leaded glass as Thomas Leaming's inventory of 1723 notes an item of "glass and lead unmaid [sic] up". The front door, and windows on the east and south elevations, are probably in their original locations because their placement falls neatly within the spaces identified by the braces, the pins of which are easily visible on interior framing members.

The stucco covering has concealed any evidence of windows on the north elevation although it is unlikely there ever were windows on this elevation. On the west elevation, the windows in the living room and bathroom appear to be in their original locations, while the window at the top of the stairs on the second floor is a later intrusion. The ca. 1780 addition has

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obliterated any evidence of original door and window openings along that portion of the west elevation it now abuts.

Because of contradictory physical evidence on the interior of the house, it is difficult to discern the original location of the chimney, its fireplaces, and the stairs.

Possibly, the house was originally built with a central chimney, as suggested by the two girts running east to west in the center of the house. A 3 1/2' long portion of the southernmost chimney girt is deeply chamfered, possibly to accommodate the upper flue bricks of a fireplace that would have opened into the dining room. (photo #11) This treatment of the chimney girt is not without precedent as the cross-section of the William Haskell House, built ca. 1645 in West Gloucester, Massachusetts, illustrates. (attachment A) Additionally, adzed rafters in the center part of the attic have braces near the ridge which might have helped to stabilize the chimney as it emerged through the roof. The Benjamin Stites House (ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse) has similar bracing for its center chimney stack.

However, the interstice between the chimney girts is only 36" apart, certainly too small for back-to-back fireplaces, and barely wide enough to contain a fireplace on the first floor with possibly another on the second floor in the bedroom above. It is possible that the fireplace was located in the northwest corner of the dining room where vacant butt joint pockets in the joists, to accommodate a "sleeper", suggest the area in that corner was originally open to the second floor. This location for a chimney, however, would be rare and is not represented in any of the buildings described by Cummings in The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay: 1625-1725, nor is it found in any of the county's heavy timber frame buildings identified to date.

If this area in the dining room was originally open, it is similarly possible that it contained a stair to the second floor. If there was a central chimney, the 36" interstice between the chimney girts is too narrow to contain a winder placed in front of the stack, a site where most stairs in the Massachusetts Bay area are found, but where none are extant in Cape May County. And since vacant butt joint pockets along the south chimney girt (where the stairs rise) indicate that area was floored over from the start, one has to look elsewhere than in front of, or behind, the chimney stack for stairs.

Unfortunately, primary source documentation is inconclusive, as well. Thomas Leaming's will of 1721 directs that his wife is to have "use of the best fire room [a word used interchangeably with "hall" according to Cummings]". From this, the presence of two ground floor rooms from the start is confirmed, yet his inventory lists fireplace equipment only once, in conjunction with cooking utensils. The 1751 inventory of Thomas' eldest son Christopher, lists fireplace equipment twice, once with other kitchen implements and again in the proximity of beds and bedding. It is likely, then, that the house had two fireplaces, one in the dining room, which

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Thomas Leaming House
Cape May County, NJ

would have been considered the "hall", and perhaps another upstairs in the south bedroom or "hall chamber".

The room configuration on the second floor was different than that seen today. When the present owners removed the plaster ceiling from the east bedroom, they discovered that a vertical board partition wall had run the entire length of the floor joist located between the two windows in that bedroom. This suggests the presence of a "middle room" placed between the bedrooms on the north and south sides of the house. It may possibly have been the room cited in Christopher Leaming's 1751 inventory which itemized "sundry broken vessels & goard [sic] shells filled with some small quantities of seeds standing upon shelves and hanging upon the walls in the middle room".

Interior finishes probably consisted of exposed joists and other framing members, with the floorboards above serving as the ceiling (as they do now in several parts of the house), and vertical board paneling (like that on the second floor hall) on all walls. The present owners removed the plaster from the paneled walls in the hallway and were told by the Huttons, from whom they bought the house, that similar paneling was found on the north wall of the living room. There is no evidence that the joists or floorboards were ever whitewashed.

It is possible the house had a small lean-to, located perhaps where the middle addition now is, which served as a buttery or dairy. Christopher Leaming's 1751 inventory itemizes "6 ladles of different sizes, 2 old wooden vessels, and an old mousetrap and sundry other trifles standing upon the upper shelf in the milk room". The contents of this room are cited within the context of other things which would have been found in the house, as opposed to the barn, suggesting the presence of a lean-to.

Between 1780 and 1820 the house was "federalized": its original chimney stack was removed, and interior end wall chimneys with fireplaces, were erected in the living room and dining room. The present staircase was also added as evidenced by the vacant butt joint pockets in the south chimney girt which originally received the ends of the living room joists. Of these alterations, only the newels and banisters in the second floor hall, and the chimney on the south wall, with its closed fireplaces in the dining room and bedroom above, remain.

It is possible that these alterations were made by Thomas Leaming's grandson, Christopher III (1739-1788), who lived in the house from the 1760's until his death in 1788. His inventory, which was only summarized rather than itemized in legal documents, shows a separate listing for "carpenters and joiners tools". It is more likely that the alterations were undertaken by his son, Humphrey Leaming, Sr. (1780-1852), who received the property as an inheritance when it was divided in 1806 and who lived there until his death in 1852.

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The addition of plaster walls can probably be attributed to either Humphrey Leaming, Sr. or his son, Humphrey Leaming, Jr. (1813-1892) who lived there from 1865 until his death in 1893, since plaster was not in common usage in Cape May County until after the 1830's.

The middle addition was probably built by Christopher Leaming III (1739-1788), whose inventory showed not only "carpenter and joiners tools", but "kitchen furniture" as well. When built, this addition had a fireplace on the south wall which was removed by the current owners. A change in the flooring of the chamber above suggests there was a winder stair next to the chimney, to the north, although it had already been removed prior to the current owners' taking possession in 1957. At that time, the west wall had a 6/6 window south of the chimney and a single 6-light sash to the north. The middle addition was also fronted by an enclosed porch on the south elevation which has since been removed by the current owners. It probably dated to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and is possibly the "pantry" mentioned in the inventory of Humphrey Leaming, Jr. in 1893.

The stucco exterior was probably placed in the 1930's after Humphrey Leaming, Jr.'s daughter, Annie (1853-1926), died in 1926 and the property was bought from her administrator by Frederick Brodbeck one year later. In documents submitted to the Orphan's Court, the administrator noted that the house and outbuildings were very dilapidated at the time. Brodbeck probably also changed the appearance of the stairs on the first floor. The inventories of both Sarah Leaming (1892) and her husband Humphrey, Jr. (1893) mention a "hall" on the first floor, with carpet. This suggests that the stair was enclosed and had a doorway into the living room as it does into the dining room. Brodbeck probably removed the living room wall along the stairs and gave the stairs its present ca. 1930 appearance.

The Huttons, who owned the house from 1952 to 1957, were responsible for uncovering the joists and removing the fireplace in the living room, and adding the screened porch to the north wall of the main block. They also removed a flight of outside stairs that ran from behind the kitchen to the second floor stair landing, replacing an exterior door at the landing with the present 6/6 window. A small 5' x 5' cinder block mechanical room, which contains the furnace and hot water heater, was then placed where the stairs had been.

The current owners removed the enclosed porch and the fireplace in the kitchen, exposed the ceiling joists in the dining room, bathroom and east bedroom, exposed the vertical board paneling in the upstairs hallway, added the west addition to the house, and added the garage addition to the south wall of the barn.

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Cape May County, NJcontributing buildings: the storage house/cellar and barn

The storage house/root cellar (hereafter referred to as the cellar), with its heavy timber frame construction, may date as early as the house's 1706 construction and was probably cited in Christopher Leaming's (1712-1751) inventory of 1751 which noted "old lumber [the term for 'odds and ends'] and a new barrel in the cellar". (photo # 12)

The cellar is 10' square and has a gable roof covered with replacement cedar shakes. A shed-roofed projection on the east wall, probably added at a later date, encloses a stair leading to the underground storage area. The building has cedar clapboards, many of which are original, and a single 6-pane window on the west elevation. The south elevation has a board and batten door, not original, to the east. The board and batten door to the stairs on the east elevation may date ca. 1800.

The building rests on a brick foundation set about a foot above grade. The foundation has openings, fronted by a grille of wooden bars, on the south and west elevations (photo #14); brick infill on the north elevation suggests an opening used to be there as well.

The interior of the first floor consists of exposed framing members--rafters, corner braces, posts and studs, with exterior clapboarding serving as the interior wall cladding. All members are adzed and joined with mortise and tenons which are pinned. (photo #13) The floor is replacement pine.

The cellar portion of the building is 6'6" deep and consists of whitewashed brick walls, whitewashed adzed floor joists, and a dirt floor.

The two story, 2-bay, English-type foundation barn, with its heavy timber frame construction, may date to the first quarter of the 18th century. (photo # 15) While not specifically cited in Thomas Leaming's inventory of 1723, a barn possibly existed on the site because that inventory lists many things which would have been stored in a barn: 2 plows with irons, ox yokes, a wheelbarrow, a cart and wheels, and numerous cooper's tools. A barn is specifically mentioned in his son Christopher Leaming's inventory of 1751 which cites "some poor undressed flax in the barn".

Although the barn's integrity has been compromised by numerous alterations to its fenestration, and by a garage/shop addition to the south, it does retain many original features. The original, 2-story portion is 22' wide by 20' deep, has a replacement cedar shake roof, and its sills rest directly on the ground or are shored-up with modern cinder blocks.

The east, or main, facade has horizontal cedar clapboards, some of which are original. When built, there were two double wagon doors to the north; that space has been closed off and an original board and batten door (removed from the rear of the barn) has been placed there

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instead. The present owners added the triple window in the middle of the elevation and the door to the south. (photo #15)

The north elevation has original, vertical cedar siding on the first two stories and horizontal cedar clapboards in the gable end. A single, 6-light window was added to the first story in the past ten years. (photo #17)

The rear, or west, elevation is clad with vertical cedar boards although an original door opening (the door is now on the facade) at the first story level to the north has been infilled with horizontal clapboards around a pair of 6-light casement windows. There is a 6-light, single sash window, not original, to the south. (photo #17)

Although all of the barn's rafters were replaced by the current owners, most of the barn's posts, girts, and corner braces are original. (photo #16) They are adzed and joined with mortise and tenons held by pins. In plan, the interior of the barn features a loft, or mow, in the south half accessed by a modern flight of stairs located along the west wall. Of particular interest are the two "arched" girts, or swing beams, which run east to west and define the loft. Because of their shape and the presence of open mortise pockets which do not relate to the barn's present framing, they are thought to have come from a ship. Shipwrecks, a common occurrence along the nearby barrier islands to the east, were often scavenged for materials. (Dorwart, p. 68)

In 1978, a 26' x 20' one-story addition was built against the barn's south wall. The addition, covered with clapboard on the east wall and plywood on the west and south walls, comprises a one-car garage to the south and a gift shop to the north.

other contributing buildings no longer extant

There were several other contributing buildings on the farmstead which are no longer extant. In 1865, when Rachael Leaming Ludlam released to her brother Humphrey, Jr., her interest in the farmstead, she retained an interest in the "barn, corncrib, smokehouse, and oven" (Liber 32, p. 286). Research to date has been unable to determine the location of the three latter buildings and, although the "toolhouse/cellar" is mentioned in the 1893 inventory of Humphrey Leaming, Jr., the other buildings are not. (Box L, #67)

non-contributing buildings on the site

There are two non-contributing buildings near the house. North of the barn, and northwest of the house is a small greenhouse, approximately 10' x 18', built partially below grade; it was erected by the current owners ca. 1962. Just west of the barn is a one-story log structure

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which serves as a workshop/tool house and which also contains a flower drying room. (photo # 18)

Statement of Significance

The Thomas Leaming House, built in 1706, is significant in the area of exploration/settlement (Criterion A) as it represents the settling and development of Cape May County in the late 18th/early 19th centuries, and in the area of maritime history (Criterion B) as the residence of Thomas Leaming, a prominent Cape May County whaler, landowner and judge who built the house in 1706 and lived there until his death in 1723. The house is also architecturally significant (Criterion C) as an early example of New England-influenced heavy timber frame construction--a kind of construction that was once common in New Jersey, but has rarely survived. Of those that remain in New Jersey, Cape May County probably holds most of the surviving examples, although few have been identified or extensively studied. Within the county, the Thomas Leaming House is the earliest documented example of this method of construction and is, to date, the only extant pioneering whaler's house to be identified on the Cape May peninsula.

A Chronological History of the Property

In April, 1694, Christopher Leaming I (ca. 1635-1695) purchased 204 acres of land on the "sound side" of the Cape May peninsula from the West Jersey Society. (Surveys, Misc. Records, p. 93) The tract of land stretched one mile from northwest to northeast and was 1/4 mile deep from northwest to southwest. Located on the upper part of the peninsula, it had frontage on Stites Sound, a body of water between the mainland and the barrier island of Seven Mile Beach (later Avalon and Stone Harbor) to the east.

Christopher Leaming, who spelled his last name Leamyng, sailed from England for the colonies in 1670, landing in the Boston area, but later settling in Sag Harbor, East Hampton, Long Island. In 1691, he left his family there and came to Cape May County. "Here he went awhaling in the proper seasons and at other times worked at the cooper's trade, which was his occupation." (Aaron Leaming, Jr. Diary in Surveys & Misc. Deeds, p. 482) After his death in 1695, the property fell to his oldest son Thomas (1674-1723), who had joined him in the county in 1692.

Thomas Leaming wrote an accounting, or "anecdotes," of his life which were later copied by his nephew Aaron Leaming, Jr. into a large volume entitled Surveys and Miscellaneous Deeds.

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Found at the Cape May County Clerk's Office, this volume also includes surveys, early deeds, boundary dispute resolutions, and Aaron Leaming Jr.'s own accounting of the history of the Leaming family. Thomas Leaming, in his anecdotes, relates that "in 1706 I built my house," thereby giving a definitive date for the house's construction.

The Thomas Leaming House (hereafter referred to as the Leaming House) was not the first residence to be erected on the property, however. Thomas Leaming's detailed inventory of 1723 cites "one bed in ye west room of the new house" and the 1751 detailed inventory of his son Christopher mentions "the great room of the old house" and the "old house chamber". Since Thomas Leaming relates in his anecdotes that "in 1700 I lived at my own plantation", the earlier house was probably a simple, two-room structure offering modest housing until the larger dwelling was erected as his family increased in size.

Thomas Leaming, like his son, grandson, and most later owners, farmed the land with such crops as hay, corn, wheat, flax, rye, and tobacco. He also owned two slaves and raised cattle, sheep, oxen and horses. (Thomas Leaming inventory, 1723) It is possible that he was a cooper, too, as his inventory lists cooper's tools which would have been an adjunct of his whaling.

The structure Thomas Leaming built in 1706 is the 22' x 27' main block seen today. It probably had a lean-to addition, since removed, on the west wall as suggested by the "milk room" which appears in his son Christopher's inventory of 1751.

On Thomas Leaming's death in 1723, the property was devised to Christopher Leaming II (1712-1751), Thomas' eldest son. (State Archives #37E) Christopher died intestate and the land passed to his only child, Christopher III (1739-1788) in 1751. During Christopher III's ownership, the size of the property increased from 204 to 330 acres with the addition of adjoining land containing "marsh and fisheries" (Sarah Leaming will, Book A, p. 41, 1805). Christopher III's will of 1787 (Book 31, p. 82) divides the property between two of his sons, Humphrey and Christopher IV, with Humphrey getting that half to the north which contained the Leaming House.

At this time, the earlier house was probably still located on the property since Christopher III's will states: "to my son Humphrey, one half of all that plantation and tract of land and marsh whereon I now live as aforesaid (with the messuages)". Although Christopher III died in 1788, title transfers show that the property was not divided until 1806. (Deed Book E, p. 166) The division was probably prompted by the death of his wife, Sarah, (who never remarried) in September of that year, and the decision of his son Christopher IV to move to Ohio.

Humphrey Leaming, Sr. (1780-1852) cultivated grain, corn, hay and potatoes, and raised cattle, sheep and hogs on the property. (Humphrey Leaming inventory, 1852, Will Book A, p. 300). In 1831, he and a neighbor, Enoch Godfrey, sold a small parcel of land taken from both of their properties to the Asbury Church, located just south of the Leaming House. (Deed Book P,

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p. 60) He also served as the county surrogate from 1831 until his death in 1852. Humphrey's will gave each of his five children 1/5 of his estate. The farmstead was rented out until it was eventually divided in half, with Humphrey Leaming, Jr. (1813-1892) receiving the northern half in 1865. (Deed Book 32, p. 248) This parcel, comprised of 101 acres, was bisected by the present State Route 9 which runs roughly from north to south.

In 1865, Humphrey moved his family from Cape May City "to Townsend's Inlet, on the old Leaming farm and homestead, where he had spent his boyhood days". (Humphrey Leaming obituary, Star of the Cape, November 18, 1892) During his ownership, Humphrey and his wife sold a .33 acre lot on the east side of Route 9 to their youngest daughter, Emma Leaming Kandle. According to a newspaper article, Humphrey was a carpenter, and it is likely he was responsible for adding the enclosed porch (no longer extant) to the middle addition. (undated newspaper article by Edward L. Post in Leaming Family file at Cape May County Historical Society Library)

After Humphrey Leaming, Jr.'s death in 1892, the property passed to his daughter Annie Leaming (1853-1926). Annie was an eccentric spinster who taught music, sold produce from a truck farm on the property and mended "rail fences on the farm where she rented pasture for cows". (undated newspaper article by Edward L. Post)

Upon Annie Leaming's death in 1926, the property was bought a year later from her administrator by Frederick M. Brodbeck. (Deed Book 461, p. 106) Brodbeck rented the farm for nearly twenty years, then sold it to F. Frank Leibig in 1948. Leibig sold it to Margaret and Harry Colson in 1950; the Colsons then sold the fifty acre portion on the west side of Route 9, containing the house, to Richard and Leota Hutton in 1952.

The Huttons sold the house and its fifty acres in 1957 to the present owners, Jack and Emily Aprill. They sold approximately 35 acres, taken off the westernmost end, to the state for conservation purposes and created Leamings Run Garden and Colonial Farm in 1976 on approximately four acres of the property to the north and west.

Criterion A: Background and Historical Significance--Exploration/Settlement

The Thomas Leaming House, built in 1706 by whaler Thomas Leaming, is a material representation of the permanent settling of Cape May County which began in the late 18th century with the emigration of whalers like Thomas Leaming from New England.

Whaling has figured prominently in Cape May County history since the Dutch first explored, owned and managed the Delaware River Valley during the first half of the seventeenth century. The Dutch considered establishing a whale operation on the Cape May peninsula, similar to the one they built in 1631 in Swanendael, Delaware directly across the bay from Cape May. That year they bought sixteen square miles of land from several Native Americans who apparently

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resided on the peninsula. (Dorwart, p.3) However, when the whales were not as plentiful as expected and the Native Americans massacred the Swanendael inhabitants in 1632, the plan was abandoned. The area remained unsettled, by Europeans at least, and ownership of the county was transferred to the Dutch West India Company in 1635.

Cape May County tradition claims the first European settlement occurred at Portsmouth Town, a community supposedly founded by Long Island and New England whalers in 1640. Portsmouth Town was on the bayside in Lower Township; its purported location is now underwater, nearly a 1/2 mile into the bay, and historian Jeffrey Dorwart could find no real documentary evidence to support this claim. (Dorwart, p. 5)

Documented British expansion into the Delaware Valley began in 1694 after the restoration of Charles II to the throne four years earlier. He seized "New Netherlands" from the Dutch and gave his brother, James, the Duke of York, a patent to the territories between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers. James, in turn, rewarded his allies John Berkeley and George Carteret with a patent for lands that came to be known as the province of New Jersey. Although the northern half of the province, which came to be called East New Jersey, was readily promoted and settled, the development of West New Jersey, the southern half that included the Cape May peninsula, proceeded much more slowly.

In 1674, Berkeley sold his interest in this sparsely populated land to two Quakers, John Fenwick and Edward Billynge. For the next fifteen years, the large Quaker community that flourished in Burlington, New Jersey (seventy miles northwest of Cape May) was the administrative and judicial center for West Jersey and, in the 1680's, the Burlington Court appointed a company of officers for the Cape May area.

As it had to the Dutch a generation or two earlier, whaling continued to be the primary attraction of the Cape May peninsula. In 1683, the eminent Quaker William Penn wrote to the Commissioners of the Free Society of Traders, "...mighty whales roll upon the coast near the mouth of the Bay of Delaware; eleven caught and worked into oyl one season. We justly hope a considerable profit by a whalery, they being so numerous and the shore so suitable". (Whaling in New Jersey, p. 15)

By 1685, a small whaling community, called alternately Portsmouth, Cape May Town, New England Village, and Town Bank, was established a few miles north of Cape May Point on the shore of the Delaware Bay. The community, however, never developed beyond a collection of fewer than twenty buildings. Of the town, Aaron Leaming, Jr. wrote in 1752: "Christopher [I] Leamyngs remains were interred [in 1695] at the place called Town which Town was Situate next about New England Town Creek and then contained about 13 houses but on failure of the Whale Fishery in Delaware Bay is dwindled into Common farms...At the first Settlement of this country [the] Chief whaling was in Delaware Bay and that occasioned the Town to be built there.

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But there has not been one house in that town since my remembrance. In 1734...there were then some signs of ruin of the houses." (Surveys, p. 483)

The first, permanent settling of Cape May began when Dr. Daniel Coxe, an English court physician, acquired 22 of 100 shares of the West Jersey proprietorship by 1687.

Coxe, who never came to the New World, leased 100-acre tracts and gave the leaseholder the option to buy the land "fee simple" in three years. He introduced the first African Americans to the peninsula in 1688 and involved the settlers in a whaling enterprise. (Dorwart, p. 14-16) His development foundered by 1691, however, partly because of the unfavorable political climate in Britain, and in 1692, he sold his Cape May properties to a group of 48 London proprietors known as the West Jersey Society. (Dorwart, p. 17 and 18)

The West Jersey Society divided its new lands, including the Cape May peninsula, into 1600 shares. In November 1692, a legislative act passed by the Society's General Assembly formally created Cape May County and provided for the appointment of a body of justices and officials to maintain peace and order. In 1693, the General Assembly permitted Cape May County to hold its own court with quarterly sessions in December, March, June, and September, (Dorwart, p. 18) It was to this court that Thomas Leaming later served first as a justice of the peace, then as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas from 1713 to 1723. It was also during this period, in 1691, that Christopher Leaming (I) came to the county from East Hampton, Long Island.

By this time, whaling had become so successful that poaching led to governmental regulation and the following act was passed in 1693: "Whereas the Whalery in Delaware Bay has been in so great a measure invaded by Strangers and Foreigners, that the greatest Part of Oyl and Bone, recovered and got by that employ hath been Exported out of the Province...be it enacted...that all Persons not residing within the Precincts of this Province, or the Province of Pennsylvania, who shall kill or bring to shore any Whale, or Whales within Delaware Bay, or elsewhere within the Boundaries of this Government shall pay one full and entire Tenth of all the Oyl and Bone made out of the said Whale or Whales, unto the present Governor of this Province for the time being". (Whaling, p. 15)

In 1693, the West Jersey Society hired the future West Jersey governor Jeremiah Basse as its representative and land agent, and his land sales on the peninsula during the 1690's created what Dorwart calls a "community of whaler yeomen". (Dorwart, p. 20) These whalers had come to the Cape May peninsula from New England and Long Island, lured by the promise of lucrative whaling and the prospect of unencumbered land ownership. Dorwart identifies the founders of thirty-five original whaler yeoman families; cited as one of them is Christopher Leaming I, who came to the county in 1691 and in 1694 bought the 204 acre tract of land on which the Thomas Leaming House was later built. (Dorwart, p. 21, 273)

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This community of whaler-yeomen "became owners of modest plantations, most between 200 and 500 acres, where they raised small herds of cattle and planted fields of corn and wheat...The first landowners embodied the English concept of yeoman as an owner of a small landed estate who cultivated his own land and held a respectable standing in the community below the rank of gentleman. Indeed, they referred to themselves in wills and others documents as yeomen." (Dorwart, p. 21)

Within this context, then, Christopher Leaming I is cited as a "husbandman" in the 1694 deed to the property (Revels Book of Surveys, Liber A, p. 11), and his son, Thomas Leaming is listed as a "yeoman" in deeds dated 1709 (Liber B, p. 165) and 1716 (Liber B, p. 107).

Of the dwellings built by these whaler yeomen, the Leaming House is the only extant one to be identified to date in Cape May County. The only other extant whaler's house known in southern New Jersey is the Caesar Hoskins House in Cumberland County.

Dorwart considers these whaler yeomen as the "pioneering families" who founded Cape May County in the late seventeenth century. As the son of one of the original whaler yeomen, and as one who took title to the land after his father's death in 1695, Thomas Leaming can be considered as one of those pioneers. The raising of his house in 1706, then, represents this permanent settling of the county, and reflects the house's significance in the area of exploration/settlement.

Criterion B: Historical Background and Significance--Thomas Leaming

The Thomas Leaming House is significant as the residence of Thomas Leaming, a whaler from Long Island who was one of the early settlers of Cape May County. During the first decades of the eighteenth century, he became one of the largest landowners in the county and served first as a justice of the peace then later as a judge in the county courts from 1713 until his death in 1723.

A history of the Leaming family's arrival to and settlement in the county is found in two contemporary accounts. Thomas Leaming wrote a brief summary, or "anecdotes", of his life which were later copied by his nephew, Aaron Leaming, Jr. (1715-1780) into the Surveys and Miscellaneous Records book now held in the safe vault at the Cape May County Clerk's Office. This same book also contains part of Aaron Leaming, Jr.'s own diary, written ca. 1752, which describes the early history of the Leaming family and their settlement in Cape May County.

From these accounts we learn that the Leamings, both father and son, were whalers. Aaron Leaming, Jr. relates that Christopher I, the father, "went a whaling in the proper seasons, and at other times worked at the coopers trade, which was his occupation, and good at the time

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by reasons the great number of whales, caught in those days made the demand and pay for casks certain." (Surveys, p. 482)

Of his own whaling pursuits Thomas wrote: "The winter following [1693] I went a whaling, and we got eight whales, and five of them we drove to the Hoarskills [Lewes, Delaware], and we went to cut them up, and staid a month...Then I went to Long Island, staid that summer, and in the winter went a whaling again, and got an old cow and a calf. In 1696 I went to whaling again, and made a great voyage; and in 1697 I worked for John Reeves all summer, and in the winter I went to whaling again." (Surveys, p. 495)

As previously mentioned, the promise of lucrative whale fishing combined with attractive terms of substantial land ownership, lured whalers to the Cape May peninsula beginning in the 1680's. Although many of the whalers came from New England, they were predominantly from eastern Long Island, like the Leamings, and the plots they bought in Cape May were significantly larger than those they held on Long Island. For example, Christopher Leaming I owned 12 acres in East Hampton compared with 204 in Cape May, and Arthur Cresse held 30 on Long Island and 350 on the Jersey cape. Other whaler families from Long Island included the Carmans, Stites, Hands, Parsons, and Hughes.

The Cape May peninsula, bordered on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the Delaware Bay, was ideally located for whaling. Whales entered both areas in the winter months and the early settlers, like Thomas Leaming, launched their boats from either the bayside or the barrier islands. Whalers then used the barrier islands to process their catches into whalebone (used for stays, umbrellas, walking canes, and whips) and oil which was used for lighting. During the off-season, whalers farmed their land and raised livestock for additional income.

As the number of whales being caught declined over the first few decades of the 18th century, these off-season pursuits gained greater economic importance. In 1772, Aaron Leaming, Jr. testified that very few whales had been caught since 1723 and that whale finishing was no longer a viable, profitable venture. (Cape May County Magazine of History and Genealogy, Vol. VII, p. 487-490)

Within this context, then, Thomas Leaming emerges as a whaler who enjoyed that livelihood at its peak and who increasingly turned to the raising of crops and livestock for reliable income. Accordingly, the 1723 inventory of his estate showed him owing an interest in a boat, presumably a whale boat, valued at a modest 17 shillings, while his crops and livestock were valued at over 290 pounds, or more than 60% of his estate.

As the county developed, albeit slowly in the early 1700's, Thomas Leaming gained prominence as one of the area's leaders. He was a Quaker, one of the few to settle in the lower half of the peninsula when most of that faith settled in the northern half. His nephew, Aaron

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Leaming, Jr., recalled that the family was originally Presbyterian, but that Thomas and his wife were zealous adherents to the Quaker faith. Thomas noted in his "anecdotes" that he was fined with the seizure of a horse worth 7 pounds in 1706 because he would not train with the militia. (Surveys, p. 495)

In 1713 he was commissioned as a justice of the peace and appointed to the several courts of Cape May county; in 1716 he was specially commissioned a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, recommissioned in 1721, and probably held that position until his death in 1723. (Leaming family history, p. 1221) At the time of his death, he owned more than 860 acres in Cape May County, making him one of the largest landholders at that time.

Thomas Leaming, then, is significant as one of the first wave of pioneering whalers to settle and live permanently in Cape May County. In his later years, he amassed a large holding of land and, as a judge, held an esteemed position amongst his peers adjudicating laws early in the county's history.

Criterion C: Historical Background and Significance--Architecture

While much has been written about colonial heavy timber frame construction in the greater Boston area, notably in Abbott Lowell Cummings' The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725, a paucity of information exists on those found in Cape May County, New Jersey.

Historic American Buildings Survey architects recorded just one in the 1930's: the Friends' Meeting House, 1726, in Seaville. In the 1960's, they documented two: the Rising Sun Tavern (ca. 1826, Oceanview) and the Benjamin Stites House (ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse). Seven more were identified in the early 1950's by Helena Way Fitzpatrick in a three part series entitled "Some Old Houses of Cape May County" published in the Cape May County Magazine of History and Genealogy. Two historic sites surveys of the county, conducted in the early 1980's, identified several more. However, because the interiors of most of the buildings were not examined in the 1980's surveys, and Dennis Township has yet to be surveyed, there probably exist many more examples of New England framing than are currently identified.

More recently, the significance of the county's heavy timber frame structures has been addressed by professor Dr. Bernard Herman of the University of Delaware in a study of the "New Jersey Delaware Bay Special Resources".

Herman notes "the New England frame houses are the tangible remains of the seventeenth-century settlement of several southern New Jersey communities by religious dissidents from elsewhere in the American colonies...The architectural characteristics observed in these buildings, however, possess a level of significance beyond their illustration of resettlement migration internal to the American colonies." (draft, p. 6) He concludes by saying that because

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New England framing details were in use on both sides of the Delaware River by 1750, these buildings also describe a process of cross-cultural communication between different settlement groups.

Estimated to number less than two dozen by the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, Cape May County's heavy timber frame structures, like the Leaming House, nevertheless stand as significant examples which embody the architectural heritage and building traditions brought by the county's early settlers.

While Cummings concludes that heavy timber frame construction in Massachusetts Bay ended largely in the first quarter of the 18th century with the introduction of a "new renaissance vernacular style in New England" (p. 209), evidence suggests that this time-honored method of framing persisted for at least another fifty years in Cape May County and even longer in several instances. Its continued use stemmed, in part, from the fact that the county, as a remote maritime region peopled by independent seafarers and farmers, remained outside the mainstream of both New Jersey and Philadelphia life through most of the 18th century.

Regardless of this isolation, however, many of Cummings' observations can be applied to Cape May County's early frame structures, particularly since the county's first settlers emigrated from New England and Long Island where heavy timber frame construction had been used since the early 1600's.

East Jersey whaling families moved to the Cape May peninsula in the 1680's, completing a 17th century migration that had taken them from the British Isles to New England, to Long Island, and finally to East and West Jersey. (Dorwart, p. 9) The Leaming family was no exception: Thomas Leaming's father, Christopher I, landed near Boston in 1670 and later settled in Sag Harbor, East Hampton, Long Island. In 1691, he left his family there and came to Cape May County; his son, Thomas, joined him a year later, in 1692. The Leamings' migration from Long Island mirrors that of other Long Island families originally from England via New England, who relocated to Cape May County in the late 17th/early 18th centuries--the Stites, Cresses, and Hands among them.

These early settlers to Cape May County brought with them the building practices used in New England which reflected the 16th century East Anglia experience in building with timber. In the colonies, these practices were modified by physical conditions and practical concerns. Like those in the Massachusetts Bay area, Cape May County settlers found an abundance of pine, oak, and cedar with which to construct their homes. Thus, while continuing to use the familiar English tradition of timber framing for these structures, Cape May County's settlers, like those in the Massachusetts Bay area, adopted clapboards and shingles for exterior covering, and sawn pine for planking, sheathing and other finish details.

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The Leaming House, then, with its shouldered posts and chamfered beams of oak, reflects this tradition as translated and tempered by the colonial environment.

When comparing the Leaming House, as originally built, with other extant examples of heavy timber frame construction in Cape May County, it is important to note that many, if not most, of the construction dates cited in secondary sources are unconfirmed. The Leaming House, at 1706, is the earliest known heavy timber frame building, and its construction date is confirmed in Thomas Leaming's "anecdotes". The latest to be identified is the Rising Sun Tavern in Dennis Township, thought to date ca. 1826. Generally, the decades before and after 1750 are the most frequently cited periods of construction. Despite the broad range of dates, however, these examples provide ample basis for comparison in terms of plan, fenestration, and use of building materials.

In plan, the Leaming House, with its two first floor rooms possibly separated by a central chimney, varies significantly from the typical one-room plan found in the majority of the county's New England frame houses. Most of these 18th and early 19th century buildings, regardless of their method of construction, consisted of one room on the first floor with an interior end wall chimney and adjacent winder stair leading to a chamber above.

In New England, as well as in Cape May County, the one-room plan usually provided a starting point that would later be enlarged as the owner's situation in life improved. In New England, the later addition almost always created a 2-room central chimney plan; in Cape May County, only one such example--the Godfrey House (ca. 1740, Swainton)--has been clearly identified. More often than not, the county's one-room, heavy timber frame buildings were enlarged during the federal period into 2-room, center hall structures like the Richard Stites, Jr. House (ca. 1772, Lower Twp.), or they became a kitchen ell for the larger, federal structure. Interestingly, in the latter scenario, the ca. 1823 federal addition to the ca. 1755 kitchen ell of the Nathaniel Holmes House in Cape May Court House also exhibits, on the second floor, characteristic features of the earlier framing, although the members are of smaller dimension and are much more refined.

While the 2-room, central-chimney plan was immensely popular and fully developed in England and New England by the close of the 18th century (Cummings, p. 24), the Leaming House and the Benjamin Stites House (ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse) are the only two known heavy timber frame examples in the county that were originally built with a two room plan. The Benjamin Stites House has two, back-to-back central fireplaces and a "split" staircase placed behind the single chimney stack shared by the fireplaces.

For exterior wall finishes, Massachusetts Bay and Cape May County settlers almost always chose wood because of its abundance. Consequently, most of the county's New England frame buildings had cedar shake roofs like that seen on the Leaming House. The use of

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clapboards for exterior cladding seems to be almost universal in the county, as it was in the Massachusetts Bay area. However, the Nathaniel Holmes House and outbuildings (ca. 1755 and 1823, Cape May Courthouse) were clad with cedar shakes until 1949. Exterior vertical board sheathing was used, not as a finish material, however, on the Benjamin Stites House and on the Seville Friends Meeting House and still exists under the present clapboarding.

Cummings notes that the use of lath and plaster for an interior finish gave way ca. 1700 to the use of horizontal boarding in the Massachusetts Bay area. (p. 185) However, plaster and lath was not in general use in the Cape May County area during the 18th and early 19th centuries, mainly due apparently to a scarcity of lime. Historians Robert Alexander and Lewis Townsend Stevens both comment on the county's exposed framing and unplastered walls, and when the Mansion House opened in Cape May City in 1832, it was noted as the first hotel on Cape Island with plaster walls. (Dorwart, p. 73)

Given the absence of plaster walls, Cape May County builders frequently chose molded board sheathing for an interior wall finish. There are many extant examples of this treatment and the sheathing is found placed either vertically (as in the Leaming House), horizontally, or in combination (as in the Godfrey House, ca. 1740, Swainton). Other extant examples of this finish treatment are seen in the Rising Sun Tavern (ca. 1826, Dennis Twp.), the Isaiah Stites House (Beesley's Point, Upper Twp., ca. 1740-1812), the Wheaton House (undated, Ocean View), and the John Holmes House (ca. 1755, Cape May Courthouse).

It should be noted that the walls were often left unfinished, with the exposed framing members, and the back sides of the exposed clapboards given a coat of whitewash as in the Richard Stites, Jr. House (ca. 1772, Lower Twp.). Also, there are several Cape May County examples of paneled chimney walls, a stylistic carry-over from Massachusetts Bay building traditions (Benjamin Stites House, ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse; Nathaniel Holmes House, ca. 1755/1823, Cape May Courthouse).

In New England, Cummings found that molded, or carved, post heads, like those on the second floor of the Leaming House, tended to be regionally confined to houses with transverse summer beams supported by posts. (p. 160) In Cape May County, however, there seems to be no correlation between carved post heads and transverse summer beams. Of the three known examples of carved post heads in the county, the Leaming House has no summer beam; the Benjamin Stites House (ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse) has a longitudinal summer beam; and the Godfrey House (ca. 1740, Swainton) has a transverse summer beam. All three buildings have post heads with a similar ogee profile, and the Godfrey House has quarter round profiles as well.

Despite these similar profiles, it is unlikely that the carved posts can be attributed to one carpenter or builder because the construction dates for these three houses span seventy years. Further research would determine if one builder passed this "signature" technique onto his

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apprentice, or if the construction dates of the Stites and Godfrey Houses are earlier than supposed. Possibly, too, carved post heads were chosen as the whimsy of personal taste since not every heavy timber frame building in Cape May County has them.

In summary, when compared with those in the Massachusetts Bay area, Cape May County New England frame houses are smaller, later, and more simple expressions of heavy timber frame construction. Their one-room, exterior wall chimney plan was seldom expanded into the 2-room, central chimney configuration so popular in the Massachusetts Bay area. While both locales used clapboarding for exteriors, interior wall finishes in Cape May County were more simply executed with either exposed framing members or board sheathing; only occasionally was the chimney wall paneled and plaster walls were not in general use until after the 1830's. Whereas timber frame construction in New England ended roughly in the first quarter of the 18th century, its continued use for at least fifty years in Cape May County speaks to the isolated, economically static nature of this region throughout that century.

Seen in context, then, the Leaming House, with its heavy timber frame construction, significantly embodies and illustrates a method of construction characteristic of early Cape May County, but found rarely elsewhere in the state. Although heavy timber frame construction was once just as commonplace in other New Jersey counties, few examples have survived. As originally built, the house's two-room plan was atypical for the area, although its clapboard exterior, cedar shake roof, interior board sheathing, and exposed framing members are characteristic of this building type in the county.

When compared with other New England frame houses in the county, the Leaming House emerges as the earliest documented example of this method of construction, and is, to date, the only extant pioneering whaler's house to be identified on the Cape May peninsula.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Thomas Leaming House is that portion of Block 11, Lot 9 (as noted on the tax map for Middle Township, Cape May County, NJ) located south of Uncle Aaron's Creek. It is shown on the accompanying site plan, copied from a portion of a 1989 minor subdivision plan.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary for the nominated property has been drawn to include the house and contributing outbuildings which have historically been a part of the farmstead, and to exclude structures which have no significant historical association with the nominated property. Uncle Aaron's Creek was chosen as the dividing line because it separates the Leaming House and outbuildings from the Leamings Run Gardens and Colonial Farm, a site which contains buildings and structures not associated with or contributing to the House's significance and which possess no significance themselves. The remainder of the original 330-acre farm has been excluded because, since 1788, large portions of it have been subdivided, either by inheritance or outright sale, and therefore contain buildings not associated with Thomas Leaming.

Additional Documentation in Sequential Order

USGS Map, Woodbine Quadrangle (original) - scale=1:24,000'

USGS Map, Woodbine Quadrangle (partial photocopy)

Tax Map, Middle Township, scale 1" = 400'

Site Plan, scale 1" = 113'

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Additional Documentation (continued)

Plan of First Floor - scale: 1" = 5'

Plan of Second Floor - scale: 1" = 5'

Plan of First Floor annotated for photographs

Plan of Second Floor annotated for photographs

Photocopies of 3" x 5" photographs, (1 page), showing (1): original door and hinge in east bedroom; (2): horizontal board paneling in dining room closet; and (3): arched "ship's beam" in barn

Attachment A--cross section of Haskell House, West Gloucester, MA

Photographs, 18 black and white images, 5" x 7"

Typical Information for all photographs:

1. Name of Property: Thomas Leaming House
2. County and State: Cape May County, New Jersey
3. Photographer: Joan Berkey
4. Date of Photograph: September 1996
5. Location of Negatives: Mr. and Mrs. Jack Aprill
1845 Route 9 North
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
01 of 18	exterior: main (east) facade and south elevations, looking northwest
02 of 18	exterior: main (east) facade and north elevations, looking southwest
03 of 18	exterior: rear (west) elevation, looking east
04 of 18	exterior: south elevation, looking northeast
05 of 18	main block: living room, looking southeast
06 of 18	main block: dining room, southeast corner post, looking south
07 of 18	main block: east bedroom, carved post head, looking east
08 of 18	main block: second floor hallway, looking east
09 of 18	main block: looking southeast through bathroom into hallway
10 of 18	main block: newell on second floor, looking north
11 of 18	main block: north chimney girt, looking southeast from stairs
12 of 18	storage house/root cellar: east and south elevations, looking northwest
13 of 18	storage house/root cellar: storage house interior, looking northeast
14 of 18	storage house/root cellar: cellar interior, looking southwest
15 of 18	barn: main (east) facade, looking west
16 of 18	barn: interior, looking northwest

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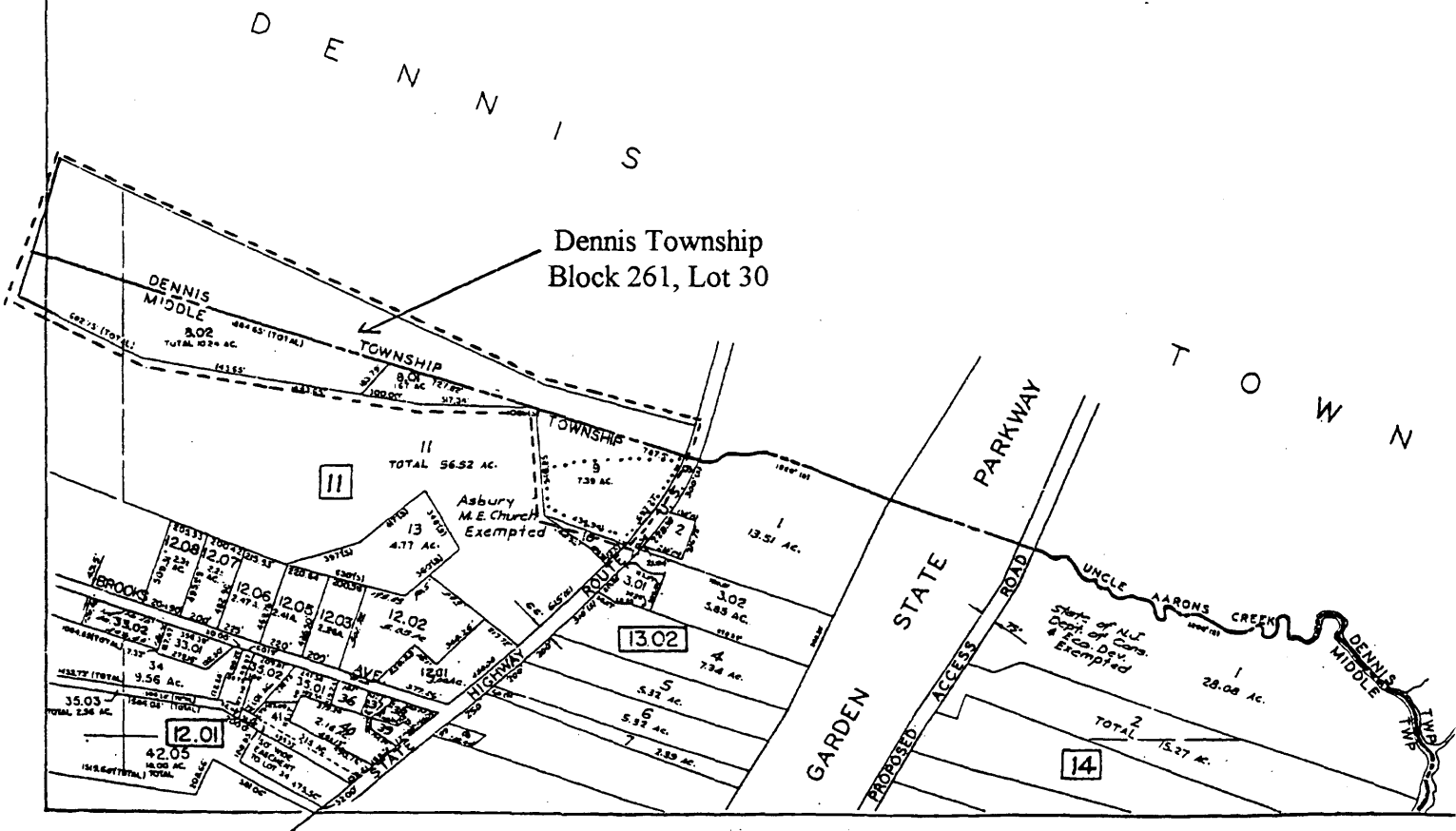
Section number -- Page 27

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photographs (continued)

17 of 18	barn: north and west elevations, looking southeast
18 of 18	workshop/tool shed (non contributing), west and south elevations, looking northeast

TRUE FOR
MAGNETIC



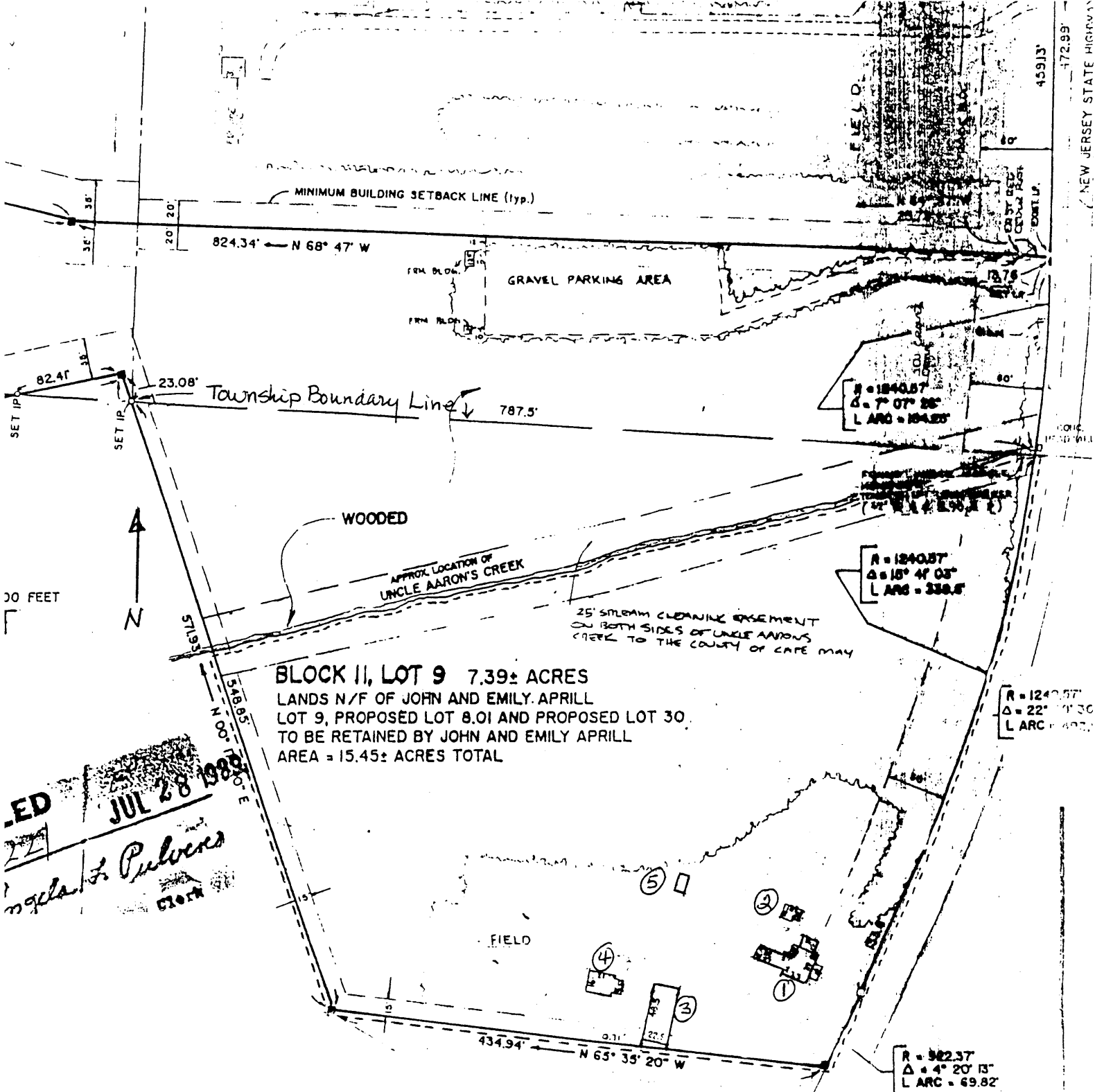
Thomas Leaming House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Middle/Dennis Townships Tax Map

Block and Lot Numbers Currently Associated with the Property (boundary shown as -----)
Middle Twp.: Block 11, lots 8.01, 8.02, 9
Dennis Twp.: Block 261, lot 30

Nomination Boundaries shown as

Scale 1" = 400'



BLOCK II, LOT 9 7.39± ACRES
 LANDS N/F OF JOHN AND EMILY APRILL
 LOT 9, PROPOSED LOT 8.01 AND PROPOSED LOT 30.
 TO BE RETAINED BY JOHN AND EMILY APRILL
 AREA = 15.45± ACRES TOTAL

Site Plan for the Thomas Leaming House
 Middle Township, Cape May County, NJ

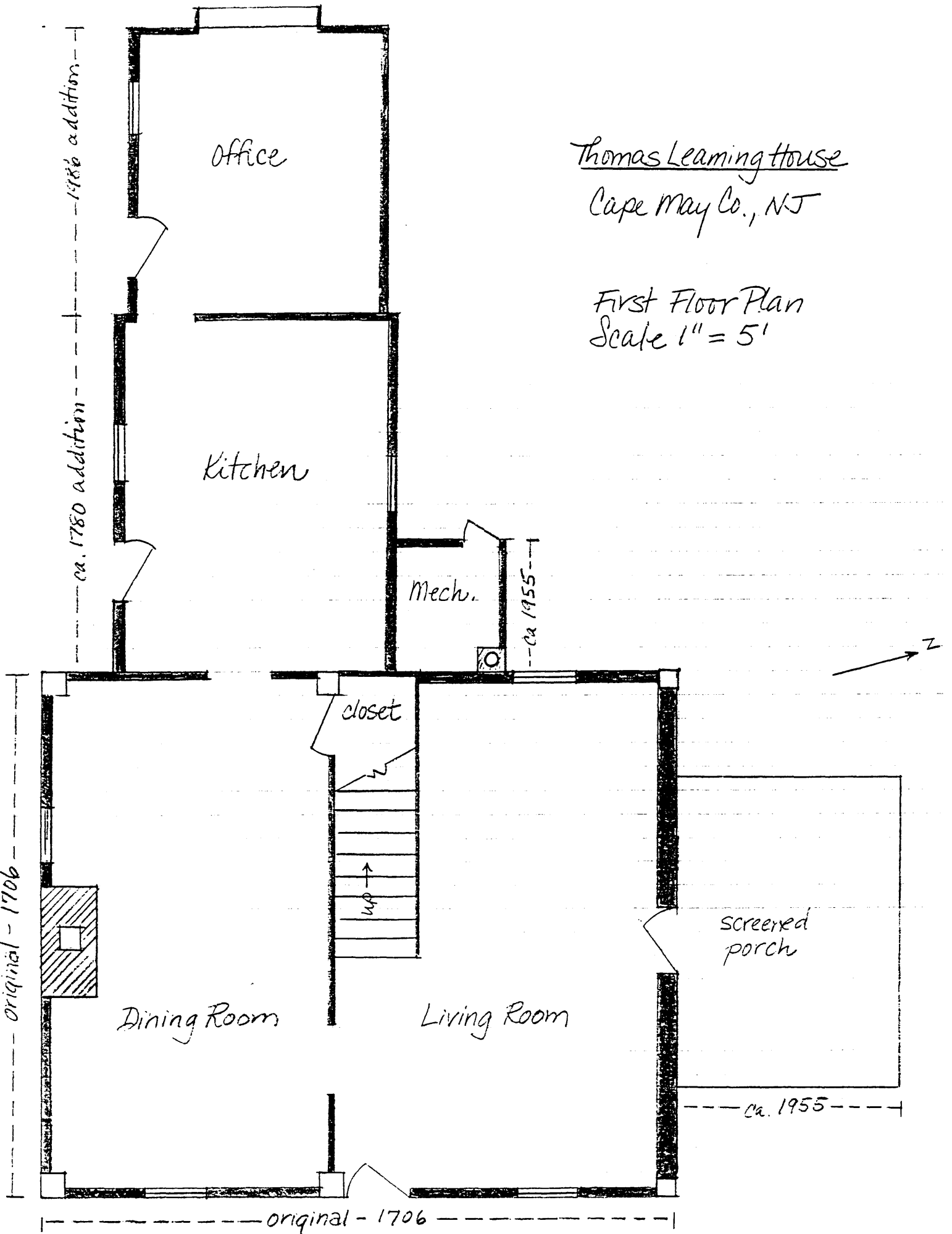
Key

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Thomas Leaming House | 4. Workshop (non-contributing) |
| 2. Storage House/Root Cellar | 5. Greenhouse (non-contributing) |
| 3. Barn | ----- Boundary Line |

SCALE 1" = approx. 113'

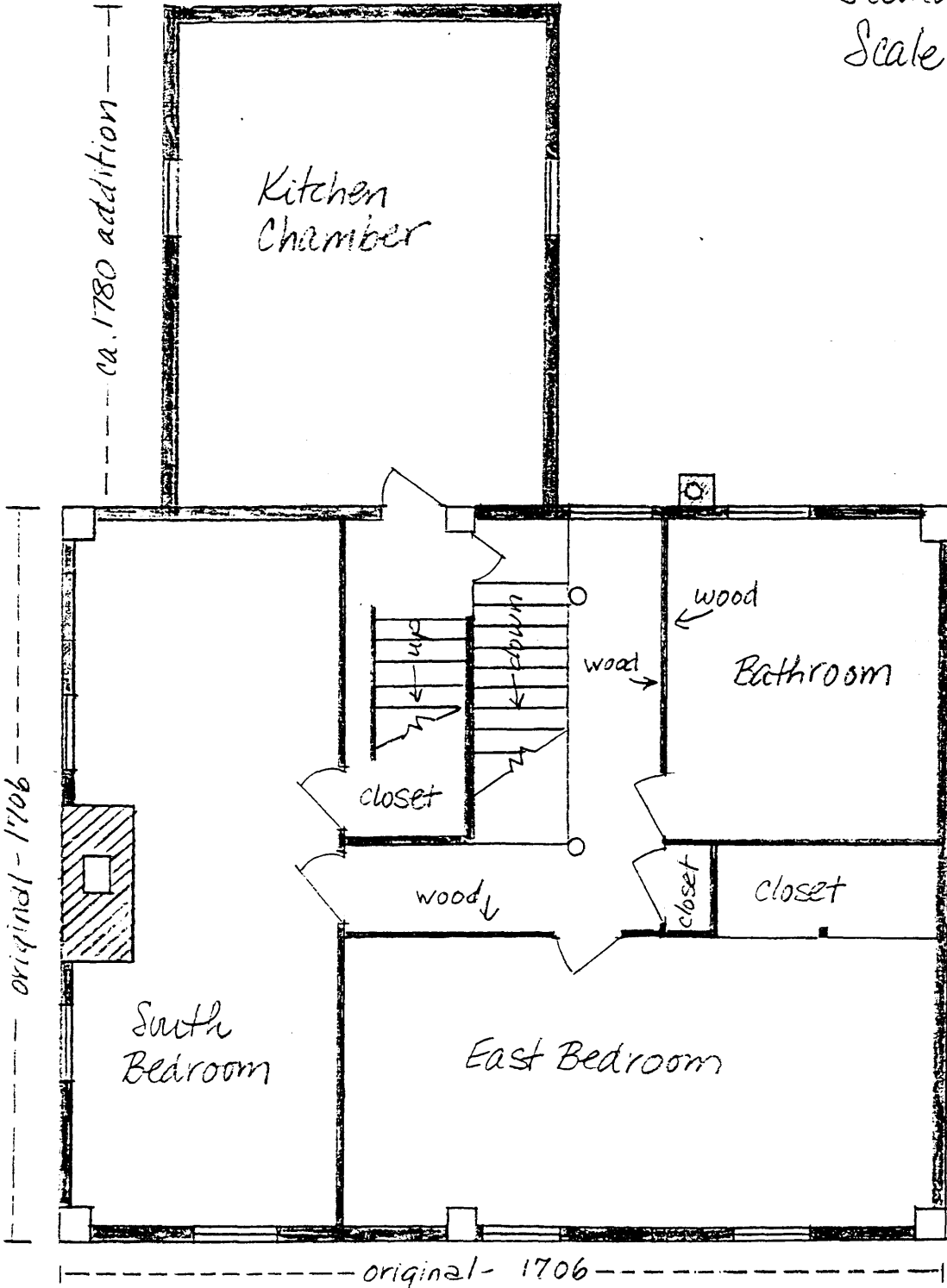
Thomas Leaming House
Cape May Co., NJ

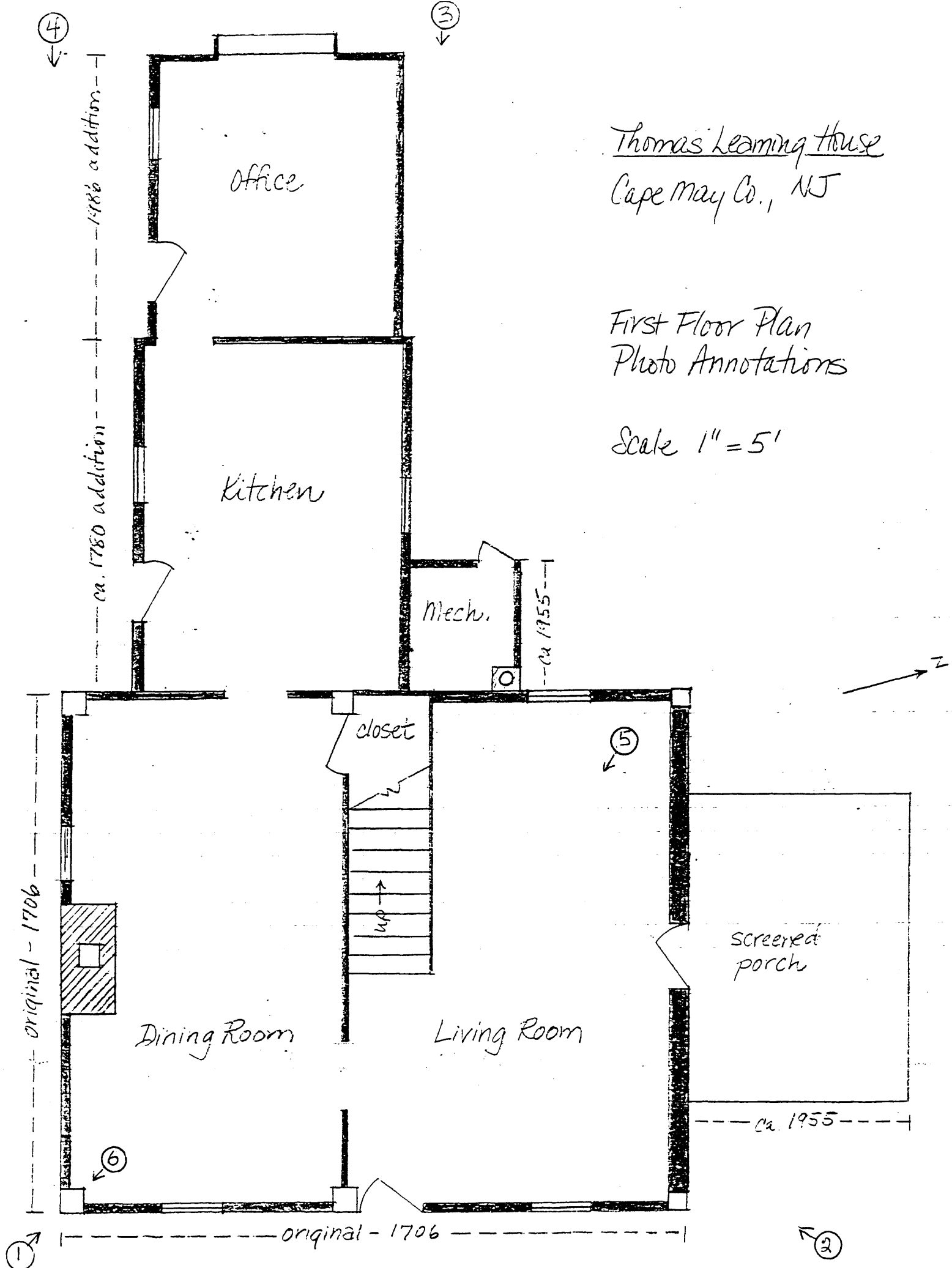
First Floor Plan
Scale 1" = 5'



Thomas Leaming House
Cape May Co., NJ

Second Floor Plan
Scale 1" = 5'





Thomas Leaming House
 Cape May Co., NJ

First Floor Plan
 Photo Annotations

Scale 1" = 5'

original - 1706

ca. 1780 addition

1986 addition

ca. 1955

ca. 1955

original - 1706

①

④

③

⑤

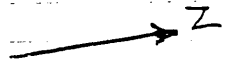
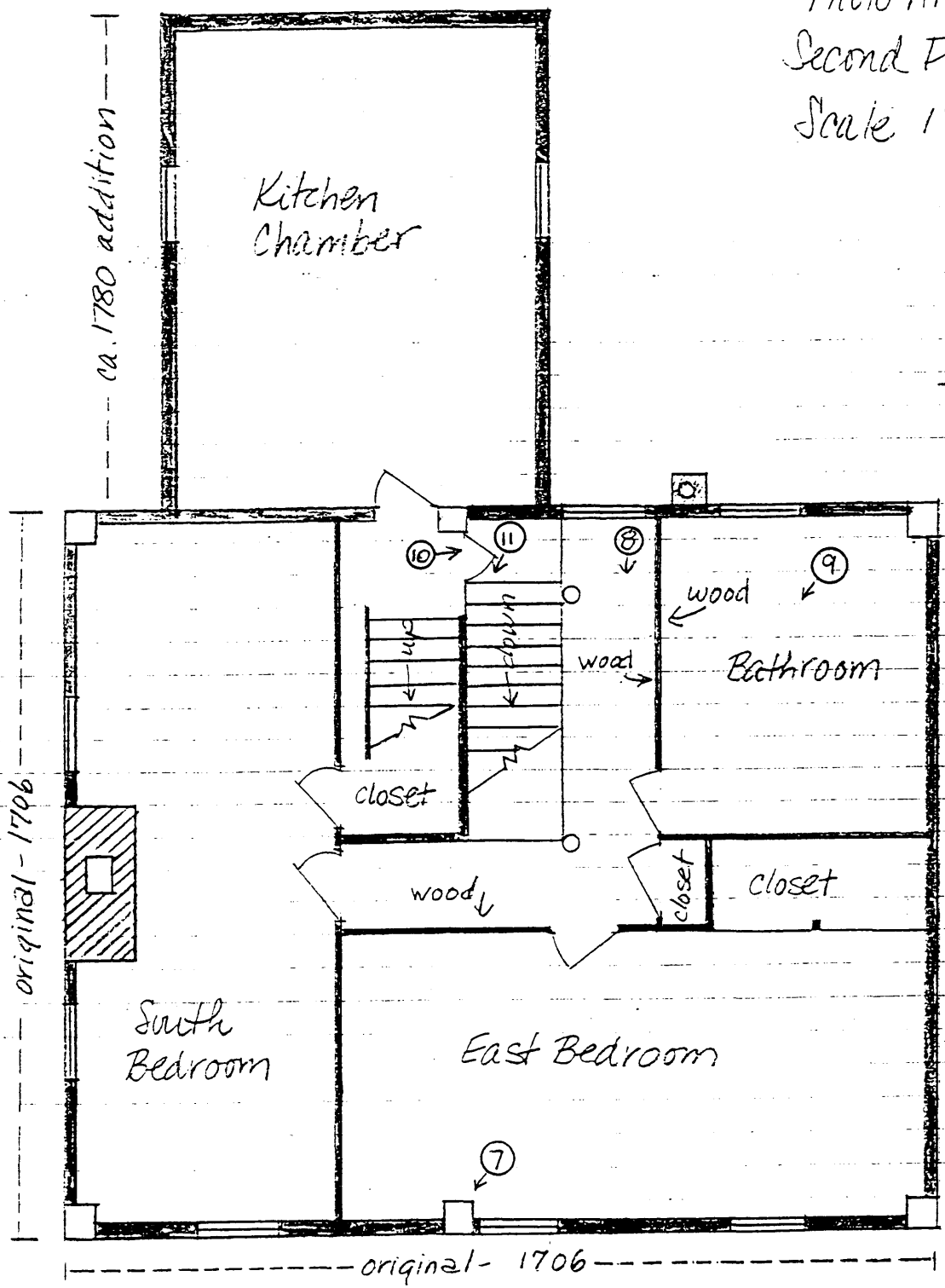
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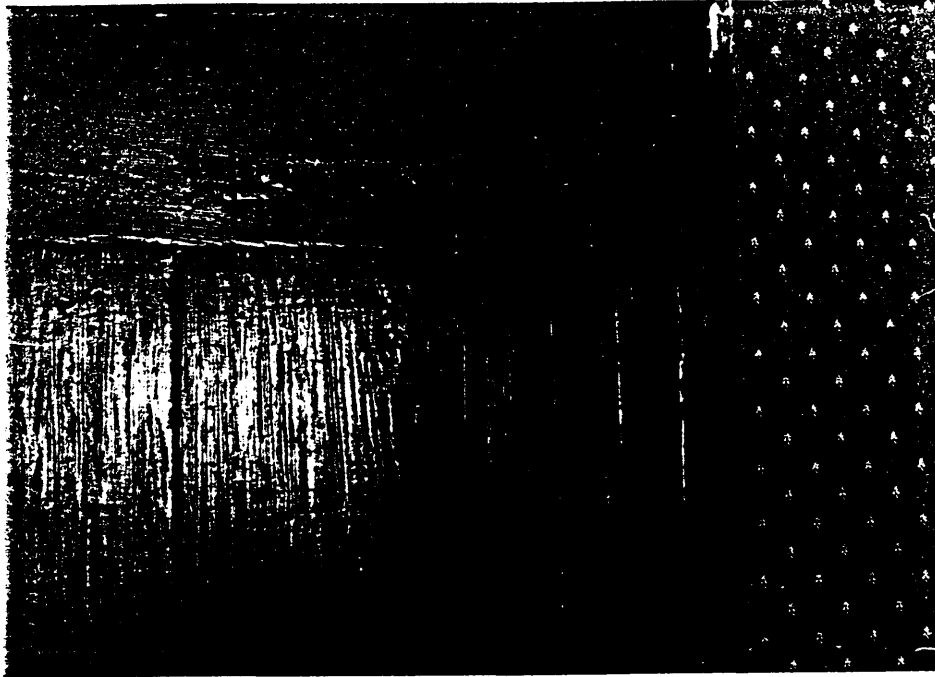


Thomas Learning House
Cape May Co., NJ

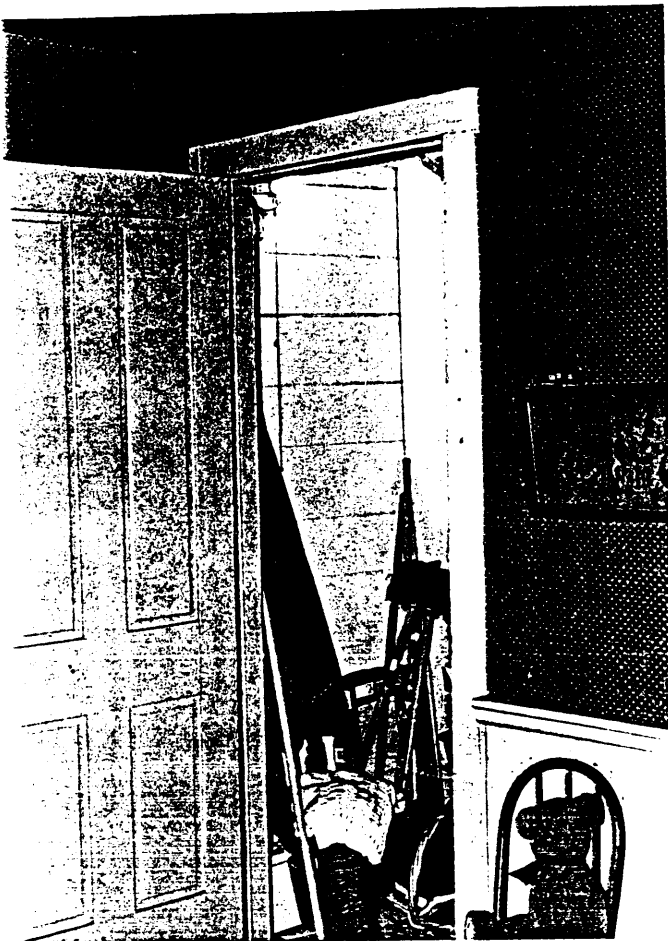
Photo Annotations
Second Floor Plan
Scale 1" = 5'



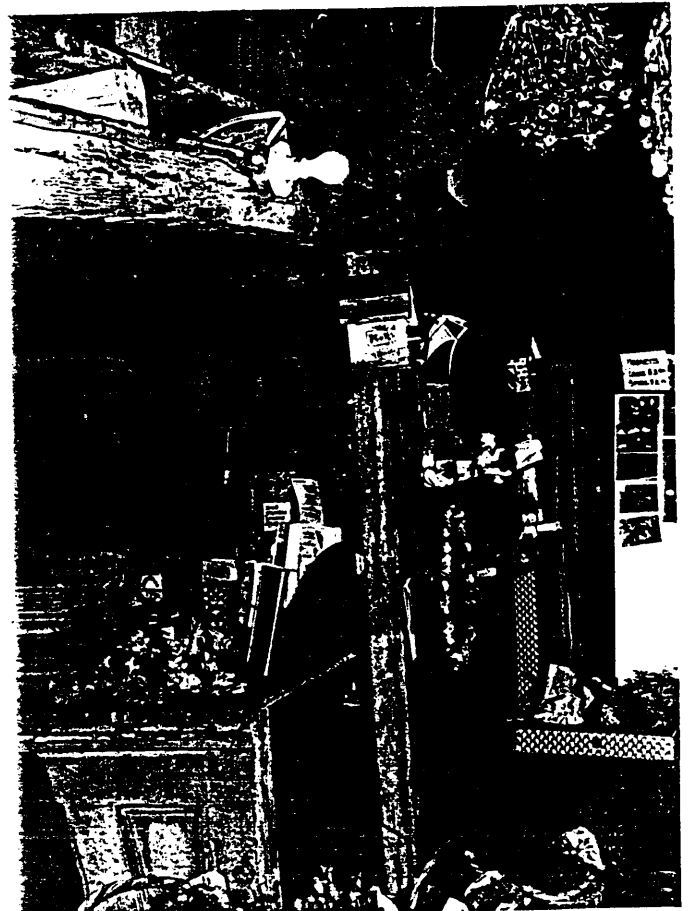
Supplemental Photographs
Thomas Leaming House Cape May County, NJ



East Bedroom: Original Door and Hinge



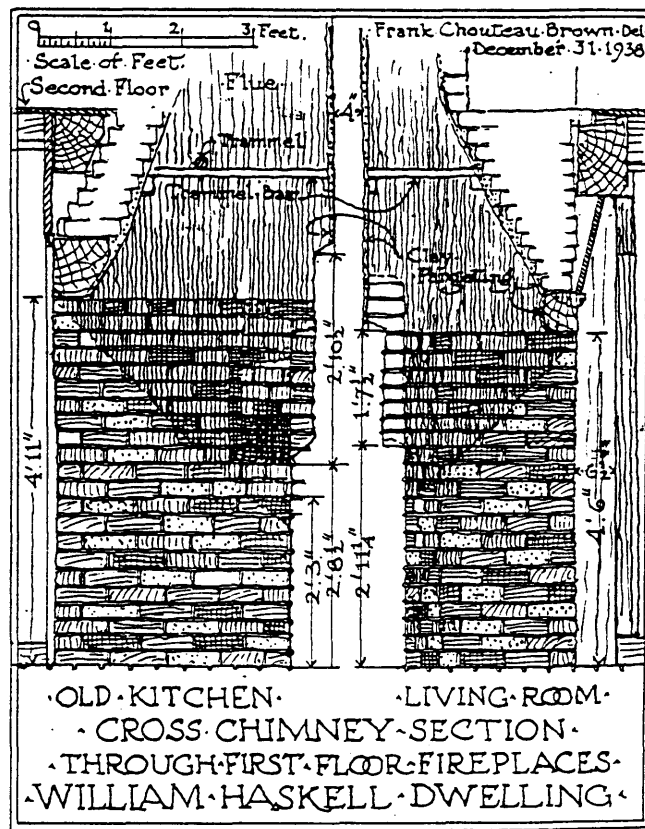
Interior of Dining Room closet
showing horizontal board molding



Interior of Barn
showing arched "ship's beam"

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Attachment A



Note cross chimney section for old kitchen (left) which shows how chimney girt was chamfered to receive bricks from chimney