

**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: 95001046 Date Listed: 9/6/95

Tunis R. Hooper House Bergen NJ  
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 Ardus  
Signature of the Keeper

9/6/95  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

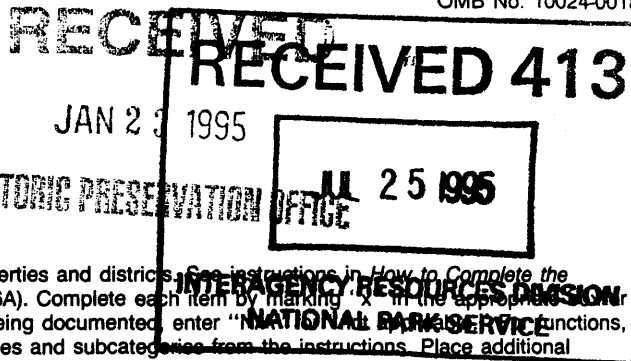
This SLR clarifies the Criterion under which the property is being nominated; the SHPO has notified us that Criterion D was checked through a typographical error, and that only Criterion A applies to the nominated property. The nomination form is officially amended to include only Criterion A.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A". 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 Tunis R. Cooper Property  
other names/site number Mill House on Cooper Pond

2. Location

street & number 83 Cooper Street NA  not for publication  
city or town Bergenfield  vicinity  
state New Jersey code 034 county Bergen code 003 zip code 07621

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] 7/13/95  
Signature of certifying official Title Date  
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
State of 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 Patrick Andrus Date of Action 9/6/95

Tunis R. Cooper Property

Name of Property

Bergen Co., NJ

County and State

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	
4		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
4	0	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

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

TRADE/professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/sandstone

walls WOOD/weatherboard

WOOD/shingle

roof ASPHALT

other chimneys: BRICK

house porch trim: WOOD

Narrative Description

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

Tunis R. Cooper Property

Name of Property

Bergen Co., NJ

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations NA
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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): NA

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance

1802-1945

Significant Dates

1802, 1840, 1893

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

NA

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Name of Property

Bergen Co., NJ  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 9.2 acres Hackensack Quad

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	583900	4531440
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	18	584080	4531420

3	18	584080	4531300
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	18	584060	4531160

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

5 1 8 5 8 3 8 8 0 4 5 3 1 2 8 0

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

Nancy L. Zerbe based on historic research and writing by Kevin Wright  
name/title and architectural description by Claire Tholl.

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date January 19, 1995

street & number 81 Rector Street telephone (908)549-6798

city or town Metuchen state NJ zip code 08840-1540

**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 Alec C. Marchbank

street & number 83 Cooper Street telephone (201) 384-0906

city or town Bergenfield state NJ zip code 07621

**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 Park Service

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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### TUNIS R. COOPER PROPERTY

#### 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Located in Bergenfield, Bergen County, the 9.16 acre Tunis R. Cooper Property complex consists of a mill pond and four structures: 1) a ca. 1802 house of late Federal style with Greek Revival improvements (ca. 1840/50) and Craftsman alterations (ca. 1910/40); (2) a mid-nineteenth century board-and-batten Gothic Revival barn; (3) a mid-nineteenth century stable; and (4) a ca. 1900 frame mill, which was partially restored following a 1965 fire. The four buildings, occupying the grassy slope of a hollow, are connected by a narrow lane that descends from the barnyard past a rectangular garden plot and well-house to the house and mill. The property is in excellent condition and, despite the intrusion of modern housing to the north and east, it maintains a strong sense of its original setting, primarily due to the site's orientation towards the mill pond. The view across the mill pond has been preserved as the land to the west of the pond is park land and the historic South Church property. In addition, the house, barn, stable and mature landscaping serve as a visual buffer from the modern housing.

#### MILL POND

The Mill Pond (photograph #7), commonly called Cooper's Pond, is formed by impoundment of Long Swamp Brook where it descends Teaneck Ridge onto a river plain (8-foot fall) on its northerly descent towards the Hackensack River.

#### MILL HOUSE

The main block of the house (photographs #2, 3, & 4) consists of a gabled, side-hall, two-story, three-bay, frame dwelling. To the east is a gabled, one-and-a-half-story, four-bay lateral frame wing, with a one-story shed at its eastern end. At the northwestern corner of the main block is a one-and-a-half story gabled ell with a rear shed.

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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

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### Exteriors

The main block of the house and the east wing are built on a continuous, neatly dressed sandstone foundation. In Late Federal style, the front facade of the main block is finished with narrow clapboards and beaded corner boards on the first floor and shingles on the second floor. The east side facade has wide clapboards on the first floor and shingles on the second floor; the west side and the rear facades have shingles. The windows and main doorway have simple, molded architrave surrounds without elaboration typical of the Greek Revival; the glazed door and door frame are modern. The east wing has a clapboard facade; on the front facade there are three six-over-six light, double-hung sash on the first floor and a door in the third bay to the east. The upper story of the east wing has eyebrow windows.

### Interiors

The main block of the house has a partition wall dividing the first floor into front and back rooms. The entry is situated in the right (east) bay. An enclosed staircase rises to the upper story in the northeast corner at the rear of the entry hall. Original architrave surrounds and paneled doors survive throughout this section of the house (photograph #9). A unique ca. 1820 Late Federal Revival mantle-piece (photograph #8) of the front parlor has recessed panels decorated with applied molded frames, while the stiles have tapered pilasters with cut-out shouldered panels in their capitals; it is uncertain whether this mantle is original to this house. A fireplace in the back room has been closed.

The interior of the east wing is divided longitudinally by a partition which divides two front rooms (dining room and kitchen) from three small rear chambers. The east front room includes an original kitchen fireplace. While the extant mantle-piece dates to about 1830/50, infill boards indicate the former existence of a larger hearth and possibly a jambless fireplace. The plaster ceiling makes it impossible to tell whether this section of the building had finished, exposed beams (and framing for a jambless fireplace). The kitchen walls are wainscoted with horizontal bead-edged boards. The back of

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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

the east chimney is exposed and framed on the east gable end of this kitchen wing. Brick infill suggests the former existence of a beehive oven.

The mill house furnishings include a significant collection of Cooper chairs manufactured at the site.

## Alterations

As evidenced by continuous foundation walls, the main block and east lateral (original kitchen) wing of the house were built at the same time, though both units have subsequently been raised in height. This original portion of the dwelling probably dates to Benjamin D. Demarest's ownership of the site between 1784 and 1804. It is probable that the house was constructed for Benjamin's son, Peter B. Demarest, at the time of his marriage in 1802.

Early photographs (circa 1870) show a one-and-a-half-story dwelling house with a steeply pitched roof. While the height of the ridge has probably not increased (as indicated by the chimney projecting at the west gable), additional headroom in the upper story has been gained by raising the front and rear walls. Whereas the house formerly had three gabled roof dormers, it now has three full windows in the upper story of the facade (partly occupying the former dormer openings). Consequently, the roof is now low-pitched.

It is difficult to tell from early photographs whether or not the original porch was a spring-eave extension of the roof. The present raised, one-story, wooden porch, with square columns and exposed shaped rafter tails in Craftsman style, spans the facade of the main block. It dates to the Bergman occupancy (1908-1948). Early photographs suggest that the porch may once have extended the full length of the east wing's facade.

Examination of the garret of the wing indicates that the roof has been raised about three feet in height and frieze windows set into the knee-walls (photograph #10). Reportedly, this additional space accommodated occupancy by apprentice chair makers. The shed attached to the east gable wall of the kitchen wing was probably used to cover the exterior portion of the oven, as well as to store cordwood. In the twentieth-century, a large iron cooking stove was installed in the shed for use as a summer kitchen.



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Seams in the foundation walls indicate that the ell at the northwest end of the main block was a later addition. It appears in the oldest known photographs, and was probably added ca. 1840-1850 when the east lateral wing was raised in height, thereby adding a new kitchen to the main house while converting the older kitchen wing to a self-contained dwelling for Tunis Cooper's son, Richard, and a dormitory for factory apprentices. Infill floorboards identify the former location of a large kitchen hearth along the rear wall of the ell. The shed extension (7' deep by 17' wide) was either a wood shed or cold pantry. Formerly, a narrow, steep staircase ran to the kitchen garret along the east side wall. A large, boxed bay window has been added to the west wall of the ell.

### BARN

To the east of the house is a large L-shaped, gabled roof, two-story barn (photograph #1). The barn has a rubble sandstone foundation, vertical Gothic Revival style board-and-batten siding and six-over-six, double-hung sash windows. The north end of the barn consists of an east/west projecting ell, with a three-bay gable end and a one-story, square shed entranceway. The projection to the south is five bays, with infill surrounding the doorway in the central bay of the facade indicating the former existence of a large wagon door. The south end of the barn was originally shingled and was changed to board-and-batten by the current owner. A shed on the rear has beveled siding and a false front forming a square-headed parapet at the south end. Six-over-six sash throughout may have been salvaged from elsewhere and installed subsequent to the original date of construction. On the first floor, the superstructure consists of wooden posts or columns nailed into the overhead joists, sometimes with wooden-boards for capitals. This barn appears in early photographs (ca. 1870).

### STABLE

A steeply pitched gabled, two-bay, one-and-a-half-story frame stable (photograph #1) with beaded board siding stands on the south side of the lane, nearly opposite the main barn. A wagon door occupies the center of the north facade. The stable appears in early photographs (ca. 1870).

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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

### MILL

The extant mill building (photographs #5 & 6), standing adjacent to the outlet of Cooper's Pond, is a two-story, gabled roof, frame structure, built on a rough-cut sandstone foundation. Entrance to the first floor is through double, wooden, paneled doors approximately centered in the east side-wall; a cellar door is located at the east end of the north gable end. Examination of the interior of the cellar indicates the foundation remains of an earlier (and probably the earliest) mill on the site. The west foundation wall shows evidence of an infill arch: it probably accommodated the main shaft from an exterior, high-breast waterwheel positioned immediately below the dam at the outlet of the mill pond. The present rough-cut sandstone foundation wall at the north gable end is situated north of the remains of an earlier foundation wall (visible within the cellar). The demolished brick remains of the Cooper Chair Factory Engine House are visible at the south end of the cellar. An irregular, five-sided wooden structure, surrounding the rebuilt chimney of the Engine House, is appended at the south gable-end of the mill. Entrance by double-doors is provided through a wall set at an angle from the southeast corner of the main block of the building. The adjacent wall angles southwest toward the pond.

The U. S. Coastal Survey of 1840 shows a grist mill standing on the east side of the outlet dam of Cooper's Pond (on the site of the extant building). Late nineteenth-century photographs suggest that the Cooper Chair Factory consisted of three distinct sections: (1) a two-and-a-half story frame building on the west side of the mill dam, probably built as a chair factory about 1841-1860; (2) the original grist mill, the site of which is now occupied by the extant two-story frame building on the east end of the dam, (reconstructed about 1900 and partly in 1965); (3) a two-story wooden hyphen, built (prior to 1876) across the mill race to join the original grist mill and chair factory during the heyday of chair manufacturing on the site.

The Cooper Chair Factory was supposedly destroyed by fire about 1896. A search of local newspapers, however, provide no confirmation of its destruction and it is possible that the building was destroyed in the 1902 flood. Late nineteenth-century photographs indicate that the extant brick chimney stack (possibly rebuilt) had been attached to a brick shed extension that was used as a steam engine and boiler room (Engine House); this engine may

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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

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have provided motive power to the saws and lathes (to supplement or replace water power) and steam pressing and bending of chair parts was probably done here. The extant two-story building was largely built (circa 1900) upon an earlier sandstone foundation, probably as a workshop for Oskar Martin, toy maker. It was partly reconstructed after a fire in 1965.

As part of a 1930's W.P.A. project, the pond was dredged and deepened, primarily in the southern part, and rip-rap was put around the edge of the pond. In addition, a park shelter was added to the south shore. In 1938, the Bergmans granted the Borough of Bergenfield an easement to the pond. As granting of this easement allowed the pond to be used as a public facility, a chain-link fence was added at that time. The fence runs across the dam's outlet and spillway and along the north shore of the pond to a gate on Cooper's Lane.

In 1981 - 1982, Dr. Joan Geismar conducted an archaeological investigation of the Cooper Chair Factory as mitigation for Bergen County's extension and alteration of the existing pond embankment. The data recovery provided information about the size, location, construction, and use of the factory building. In addition, the investigation revealed that after the factory burned, the site was used as a midden. The 1980's embankment work resulted in the loss of some, but not all, of the Chair Factory site (see diagram #1).

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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

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### **8. NARRATIVE SIGNIFICANCE**

From approximately 1802 to 1945, the Tunis R. Cooper Property functioned as a small residential / industrial complex which provided residence, sustenance, and employment to a succession of owners and workers. The site meets National Register Criterion A for its long residential / industrial history, representing several broad patterns including early milling the development of the mid-nineteenth century manufacturer / distributor, and the urbanization and industrialization of rural areas. While such mill farms were formerly a feature of the agrarian landscape of Bergen County, this property is cited by Bergen County historian Kevin Wright as being the last surviving example in Bergen County.

#### Early Settlement and Grist Mill

From the beginning of American settlement, water power was used extensively for grist mills and saw mills. Nationally, the 1840 census listed approximately 66,000 mills in the country, including 23,700 grist mills.<sup>1</sup> In New Jersey, one of the "Bread Colonies," flour was a major export with grist mills located in predominately agricultural areas.<sup>2</sup>

The Bergenfield area was originally settled as an agricultural area in the late seventeenth century by Dutch Huguenots under the leadership of David Demarest. By the time of David's death in 1693, his children and grandchildren had settled throughout the Hackensack Valley, including within the boundaries of present day Bergenfield. In 1723, the

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<sup>1</sup> Brooke Hindle and Steven Lubar, Engines of Change The American Industrial Revolution, 1790-1860 (Washington, D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986), p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Peter O. Wacker, "New Jersey's Cultural Resources: A.D. 1660 - 1810," in New Jersey's Archeological Resources from the Paleo-Indian to the Present: A Review of Research Problems and Survey Priorities, ed. Olga Chesler (New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, 1982), pp. 209-210.

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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

Schraalenburgh Dutch Reformed Church was established to serve the Dutch farmers of the area, and the community of Schraalenburgh, later changed to Bergenfield, developed around the church.<sup>3</sup>

For approximately the first one hundred years of its recorded history (until the early nineteenth century), the property belonged to the Demarest family. In the early eighteenth century, it belonged to Benjamin D. Demarest, who may have occupied the lot about the time of his marriage to Elizabeth DeGroot in November, 1713.<sup>4</sup> In 1784-85, Benjamin divided his land between his sons, passing 15 acres of land to his son David B. Demarest.<sup>5</sup> David's will, written in 1784 and probated November 19, 1795, devised 15 acres off the northwest corner of a lot of land at Schraalenburgh near the church, including the grist mill, to his son Benjamin.<sup>6</sup>

The first documented record of a grist mill on the property is in 1785 when Benjamin Demarest's name appears on the tax assessment records of Hackensack Township as the owner of a grist mill. His name appears on the tax lists as a mill owner until July-August 1802, when his son, Peter B. Demarest, is listed as proprietor of a grist mill and 10 acres. Peter B. Demarest, then 30 years old, married Hannah Volk at South Schraalenburgh Church on September 4, 1802.<sup>7</sup> It is probable that the mill house was constructed for Peter at the time of his marriage.

There is no recorded conveyance, either by will or by deed, whereby Benjamin or Peter Demarest disposed of the 15-acre mill lot near the Church. It is probable, however, that Peter B. Demarest remained upon the mill lot at Schraalenburgh until he moved to New York sometime between 1807 and 1813. The grist mill may have been idled by Thomas Jefferson's Embargo Act (1807-1809) or possibly incapacitated by fire.

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<sup>3</sup> Adrian C. Leiby, The Huguenot Settlement of Schraalenburgh (Rahway, N.J.: Quinn & Boden Company, Inc., 1964), pp. 6-21.

<sup>4</sup> The Demarest Family, vol. I (Hackensack: Demarest Family Association, 1964), #3-21.

<sup>5</sup> Bergen County Deed Book D, 248.

<sup>6</sup> New Jersey Archives, First Series vol. XXXVII, Abstracts of Wills, vol. VIII 1791-1795, p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> The Demarest Family, vol. I (Hackensack: Demarest Family Association, 1964), #6-336.

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Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

Frederick Mabie appears as owner of a grist mill in the Hackensack Township tax records in 1814, 1817, 1820, and 1822. The Bergen County Mortgage Books reflect that between 1825 and 1839 Mabie four times mortgaged and paid off the 15-acre mill lot.<sup>8</sup>

### Cooper Chair Factory and Mid-Nineteenth Century Mercantile Development

On May 2, 1840, Frederick Mabie and his wife, Bailey, of Hackensack Township conveyed the 15-acre mill lot to Richard T. Cooper for \$4,050.<sup>9</sup> Subsequent deed transactions and his will indicate that Richard Cooper remained a resident of New Medford (now Oradell) in New Barbadoes Township. According to a biographical sketch written in 1889, Richard Cooper was "a carpenter by occupation and eventually manufactured chairs for the New York market."<sup>10</sup> An inventory of his possessions, made on September 13, 1854, included \$86.50 worth of "Carpenter and chair maker's tools" and \$178.54 worth of "Chairs and chair stuff."<sup>11</sup>

On January 2, 1849, Richard T. Cooper and his wife, Eve, conveyed the 15-acre mill lot and 5.78-acre wood lot to their son, Tunis R. Cooper, for \$4,050.<sup>12</sup> Tunis R. Cooper lived on the property from 1849 until his death in 1887. The 1850 and 1860 Census for Hackensack Township show Tunis R. Cooper as living on the property, along with his children and some apprentices. The 1850 census listed Tunis R. Cooper, "chair manufacturer," his son, Richard, "chair maker," and three unrelated chair makers (aged 13 - 25) as living in the Cooper household, and listed two other chair makers residing in the immediate neighborhood. The 1860 Census for Hackensack Township listed the following people as living in the household: Tunis R., "farmer", his son Richard, "chair maker", three of Tunis' daughters, and two young apprentices. Eleven other chair makers resided in the immediate

<sup>8</sup> Bergen County Mortgage Books F(308), G (329), I (219,371).

<sup>9</sup> Bergen County Deed Book B4, 282.

<sup>10</sup> The Bergen Democrat, January 4, 1889.

<sup>11</sup> Bergen County Inventory Book F, 308.

<sup>12</sup> Bergen County Deed Book U4, 353.

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Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

neighborhood of the Cooper Chair Factory, occupying dwellings at Coopertown.<sup>13</sup>

Tunis Cooper became a successful chair manufacturer. He and his father introduced a prototypical "factory system" of relatively high-volume production and wholesale/retail merchandising, conducted largely by wage-earners for an inter-regional market, to what had previously been a folk craft suited to the tastes and demands of a localized rural clientele. In the 1983 archaeological investigation of the Cooper Chair Factory, Dr. Joan H. Geismar attributed the factory to representing two important trends in mid-nineteenth century mercantile history: the urbanization and industrialization within New Jersey of formerly rural areas, and the development of the combined manufacturer and distributor.<sup>14</sup>

Originally, Bergen Dutch chairmakers had used traditional skills, a folk knowledge of materials and forms, and hand-methods to craft wood and reeds into matted, turned chairs. By operating their own lathes, chair makers elaborated upon traditional patterns of wood turning so as to create a measure of individual style and artistic expression while generally conforming to basic folk forms. The industry was able to expand beyond local market demands through the proximity of city markets, convenient by water and land carriage, and through the naturally renewing resource of extensive cattail marshes, seasonally cut for matting seats. Beginning about 1820, however, water-driven lathes were added to several local sawmills which began to mechanically mass-produce several grades of chair stuff according to patterns. Certain local farmers then specialized in assembling chair stuff and matting seats in the fallow season, purchasing specific quantities of various grades to fill orders.

Beginning about 1840, Richard Cooper and his son, Tunis R. Cooper, brought these seasonal chair makers into the "factory" and paid them a wage to manufacture and assemble chair stuff and to mat or cane the seats. To stimulate demand for their output, the Coopers employed professional designers, painters, carvers and salesmen to mold and market Cottage chairs that cultivated changing popular tastes during a sequence of pseudo-historical

<sup>13</sup> 1850 and 1860 Census for Hackensack Township, New Jersey.

<sup>14</sup> Joan H. Geismar, Archaeological Investigation for the Cooper's Pond Dam Project, Bergenfield, New Jersey (County of Bergen, Community Development Program, 1983), p. 11.

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Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

Romantic Revivals of Greek, Gothic, Renaissance and Chinoiserie (principally a bamboo-turned ballroom chair) styles.

The production was sold wholesale and retail through local "furniture dealers" and through the company's own showroom on Pearl Street in New York City. Thus, the Coopers controlled the quantity and quality of the product from purchasing raw materials in bulk through manufacturing and marketing their productions at competitive prices in inter-regional markets to suit general standards of "taste" and quality. According to Dr. Geismar, the Coopers predated the trend of a combined manufacturer and distributor by about a decade.<sup>15</sup>

On June 6, 1852, James W. Christie of Hackensack Township conveyed an undivided half interest in a lot of Brackish Meadow on the east side of Teaneck Creek to Tunis R. Cooper for \$60.<sup>16</sup> On June 26, 1852, James W. Christie and David W. Christie, executors of John W. Christie, conveyed the other half-interest in this meadow lot to Tunis R. Cooper for \$60.<sup>17</sup> Cattail rushes were harvested annually from this meadow lot for matting chair seats.

According to an advertisement placed in the *Bergen Journal* in 1858, Tunis R. Cooper not only manufactured chairs, but was a wholesale and retail dealer in "Cottage, Office, Dining & Rocking Chairs."<sup>18</sup> Workmen in his enterprise resided in a neighborhood along Prospect Avenue known as Coopertown. In 1860, the Cooper Chair Factory utilized a six-horsepower overshot waterwheel to produce 100 dozen rush-bottom or cane-seated chairs with an estimated value of \$7,500. The factory operated for nine months out of the year. In 1860, Tunis Cooper employed about 25 workers in producing \$20,000 worth of furniture. Woods used included: maple (12,000 feet), walnut (3,000 feet), oak (1,000 feet) and all others (25 feet).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Bergen County Deed Book U4, 351.

<sup>17</sup> Bergen County Deed Book U4, 355.

<sup>18</sup> Bergen Journal, June 12, 1858.

<sup>19</sup> Products of Industry, Schedule 5, Hackensack Township, 1860.



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Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

The Coopers' business declined significantly during the 1860's, and the New York showroom was closed in 1863. In 1860, the factory was the largest industry in Hackensack Township, employing an average of 25 workers, while in 1870 it was only the third largest, employing an average of six workers.<sup>20</sup> Although the reasons for the decline are unknown, it was possibly due to the economics of the Civil War as well as several personal factors. Tunis' son-in-law, Peter Banta, who ran the New York showroom, is reported to have embezzled from his father-in-law in the early 1860's.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Richard T. Cooper, Tunis' son, died in 1867 at the age of 33.

The factory appears to have continued until at least the death of Tunis R. Cooper in 1887. In 1893, Richard W. Cooper proposed to erect a large edifice to accommodate a carpentry shop for himself and chair factory to be conducted by Teunis Bogert of Schraalenburgh, Tunis Cooper's grandson. The foundation was built on the banks of the Hackensack River by the middle of April 1893 and carpenters then raised the superstructure for a large building. Upon completion of the building, chair-making at Schraalenburgh ceased and operations shifted to the new factory at Oradell.<sup>22</sup>

On Saturday, September 23, 1893, auctioneer William E. Taylor offered to sell the estate of the late Tunis R. Cooper. As a result of the auction, the house and two acres were sold to Mrs. Ann Banta, and the bam, mill, and pond lots were sold to Henry Cooper.<sup>23</sup>

### Toy Manufacturing

Oskar and Helen Otilie Martin acquired the house, mill, and mill pond lots in 1897, and the barn lot in 1905.<sup>24</sup> Oskar Martin was a toy manufacturer, and probably re-built the mill for his use.

<sup>20</sup> Products of Industry, Schedule 5, Hackensack Township, 1870.

<sup>21</sup> Joan H. Geismar, Archaeological Investigation for the Cooper's Pond Dam Project, pp. 20-24.

<sup>22</sup> Betty Schmelz, Irene Fitzgerald, Catherine Marchbank, and Charles B. Szeglin, T.R. Cooper's Chair Factory: Early Industry In Rural Schraalenburgh (Bergenfield Museum Society, 1985), p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Bergen County Deed Books 371, 382, 418.

<sup>24</sup> Bergen County Deed Books 128, 440, 441, 485, 507, 613.

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Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

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### Piano Factory

On February 5, 1908, Oskar Martin and his wife, Helene O. Martin, conveyed the property to Amos C. Bergman of Manhattan.<sup>25</sup> The *Atlas of Bergen County, New Jersey*, published in 1912 by G. W. Bromley & Co., identifies the mill property as the "Bergman Piano Factory." Reportedly, the Bergmans produced "Soundless Pianos" for professional practice.

Amos C. Bergman died July 16, 1948. His resident housekeeper, Daisy Coringrato, was appointed executrix of his estate. Daisy Coringrato of Bergenfield, executrix of the Last Will and Testament of Amos C. Bergman, sold the property to Alec C. and Catherine (Leiby) Marchbank on April 18, 1949 for \$13,000.<sup>26</sup>

Alec Marchbank still owns the property, lives in the mill house, and uses the stable as a garage. Parts of the property have continued to be used by artists and artisans. According to Mr. Marchbank, the first floor of the barn has been continuously rented out for furniture refinishing from before 1949. In addition, the second floor of the barn and the two floors of the mill are rented out to artists.

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<sup>25</sup> Bergen County Deed Books 683, 628.

<sup>26</sup> Bergen County Deed Books 2985, 265.

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Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 76, Lots 46 and 57.

### VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes what is left of the 15 acres historically associated with the mill. The current property is bordered by the north and east by modern houses, and to the west and south by park land and private church property.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information applies to all of the photographs:

1. Tunis R. Cooper Property
2. Bergenfield, Bergen County, New Jersey
3. Kevin Wright
4. March 28, 1993
5. Negatives held by Alec C. Marchbank, property owner.
6. & 7. Description of views indicating direction of camera:

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Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ

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Photo 1 of 10: View of entrance to property, showing barn on the right and stable on the left. View looking west.

Photo 2 of 10: Side and rear facades of the house. View looking west.

Photo 3 of 10: Front facade of the house. View looking north.

Photo 4 of 10: Front and side facade of the house. View looking northeast.

Photo 5 of 10: Side and front facade of the mill. View looking northwest.

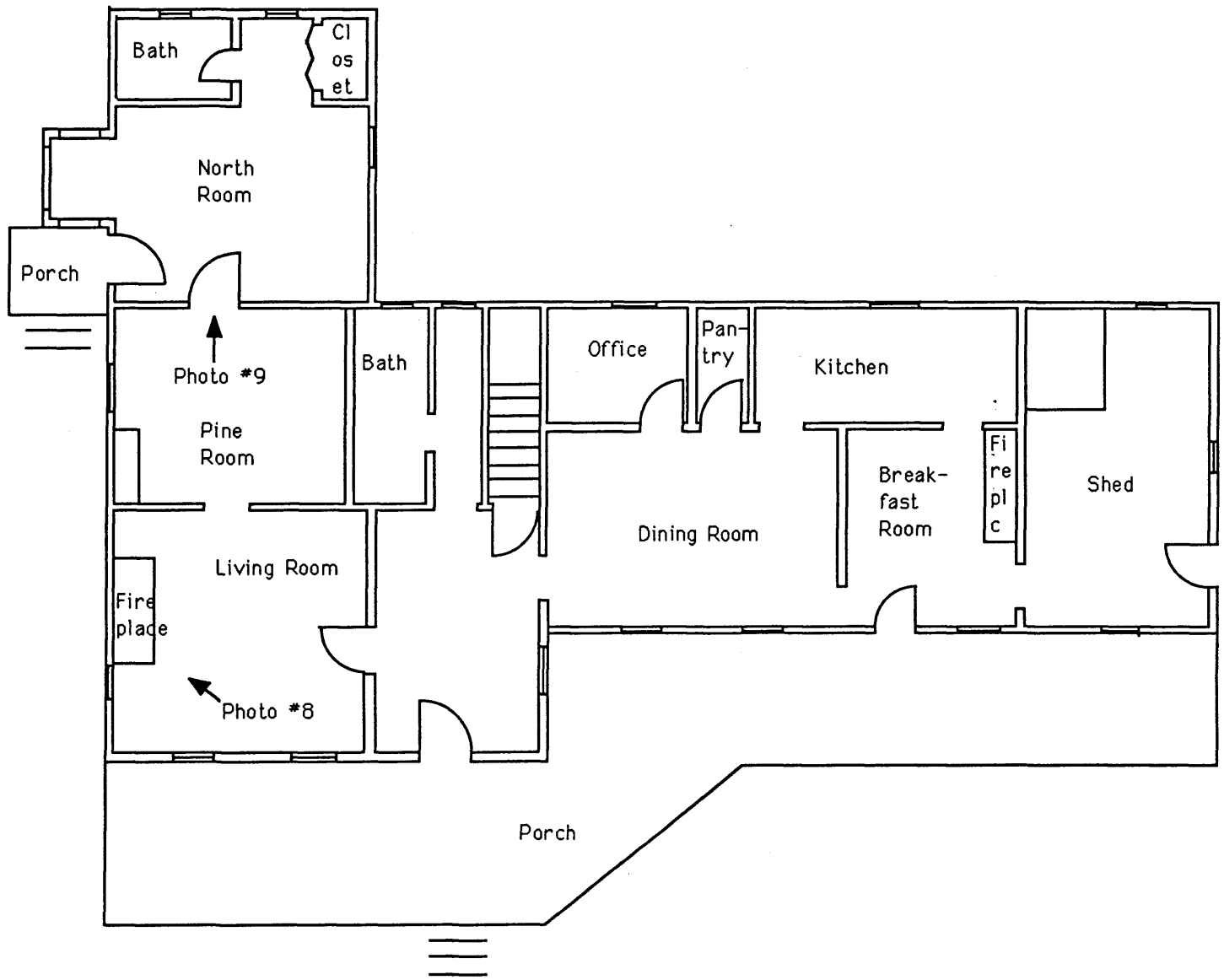
Photo 6 of 10: Side and rear facade of the mill. View looking southeast.

Photo 7 of 10: View looking across the mill pond to the mill at the left, house in the center, and barn and stable to the right. View looking northeast.

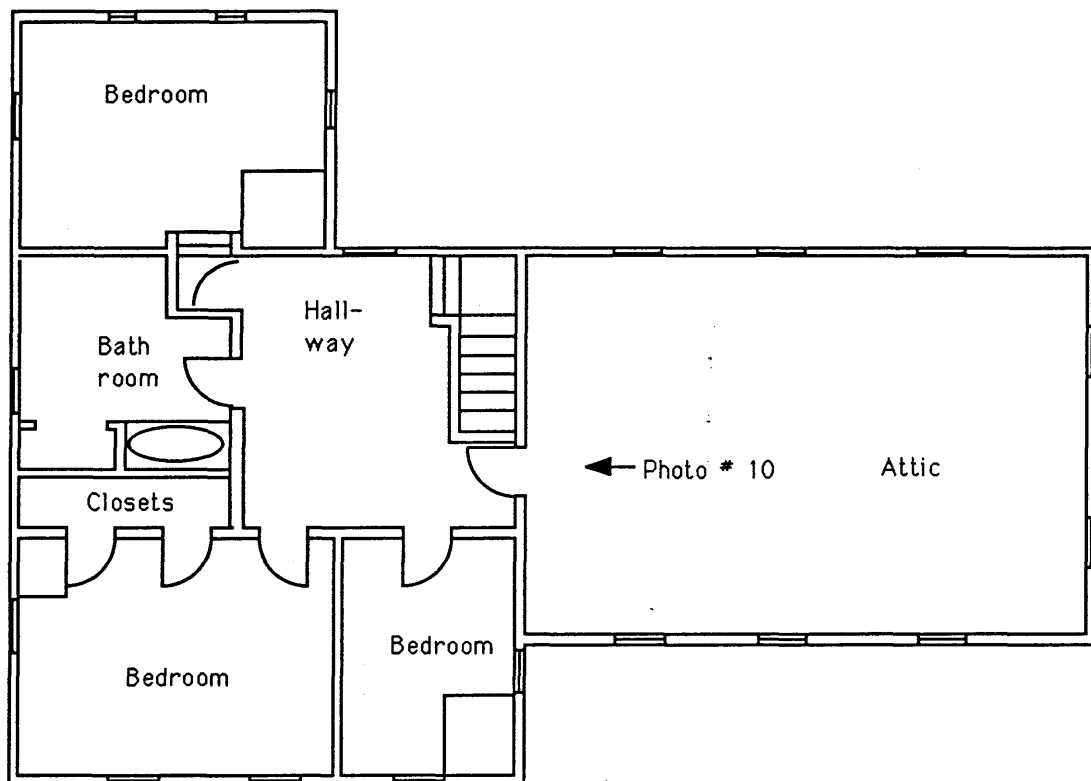
Photo 8 of 10: Living room fireplace. View looking west.

Photo 9 of 10: Door between the pine room and the north room. View looking north.

Photo 10 of 10: Shingles on the second floor of the east wing. View looking west.



House Floor Plan, First Floor  
Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ



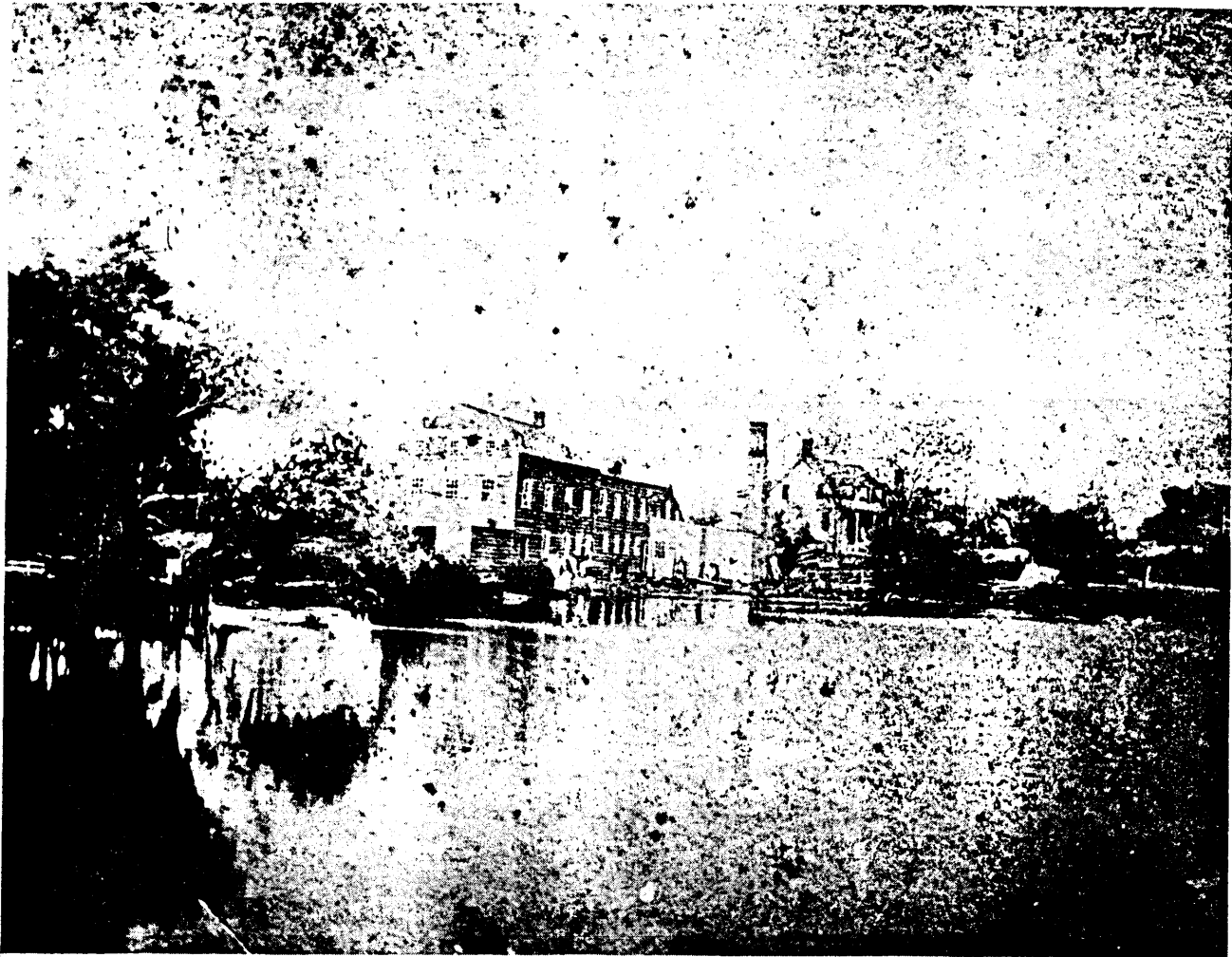
House Floor Plan, Second Floor  
Tunis R. Cooper Property  
Bergenfield, Bergen County, NJ



Tunis R. Cooper Property, Bergenfield Borough, Bergen County, NJ



Plate 1. The west facade of the Tunis R. Cooper chair factory ca. 1880. Note chimney and compare with Plate 7. Also note rock platform along the southern foundation wall (arrow), apparently constructed to level the embankment, and the post in the foreground. Evidence for both features was found in excavation (Photo courtesy of Betty Schmelz).

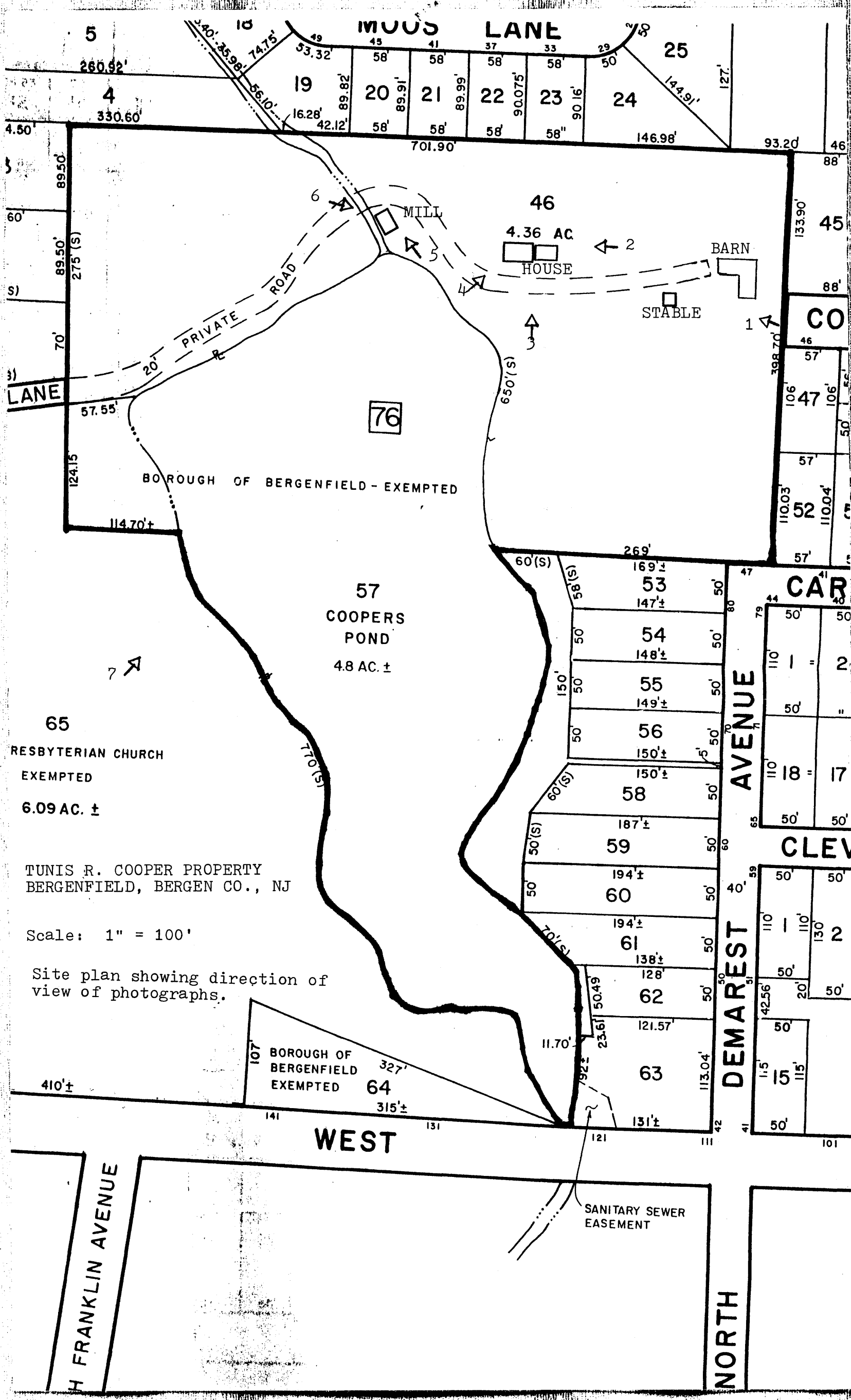


**Fig. 2 (Above)** *Panorama view of Cooper site, c. 1870's, looking northeasterly. Bergenfield Museum Society.*

Tunis R. Cooper Property, Bergenfield Borough, Bergen County, NJ



**Fig. 15**  
*Postcard view of Cooper Pond and Cooper property, c. 1900, showing mill, house and barns, following the fire which had destroyed the chair factory. Bergenfield Museum Society.*



5 260.92' 10 340.35 98' 74.75' 49 53.32' 45 58' 41 58' 37 58' 33 58' 29 50' 25 144.91' 127'

4 330.60' 19 16.28' 42.12' 89.82' 20 89.91' 21 89.99' 22 90.075' 23 90.16' 24 146.98' 93.20' 46 88'

65 RESBYTERIAN CHURCH EXEMPTED 6.09 AC. ±

60' 89.50' 275' (S) 70' 57.55' 124.15' 114.70' ±

76 BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD - EXEMPTED

46 4.36 AC HOUSE

MILL

BARN

STABLE

650' (S)

45 133.90' 88' 46

47 106' 106' 50' 50'

52 110.03' 110.04' 57' 57'

57 770' (S)

53 169' ± 147' ±

54 148' ±

55 149' ±

56 150' ±

58 150' ±

59 187' ±

60 194' ±

61 194' ± 138' ±

62 128' ± 121.57'

63 113.04' 131' ±

11.70' 23.61' 50.49'

792' ±

41 42 41 101

46 4.36 AC HOUSE

STABLE

BARN

45 133.90' 88' 46

47 106' 106' 50' 50'

52 110.03' 110.04' 57' 57'

57 770' (S)

53 169' ± 147' ±

54 148' ±

55 149' ±

56 150' ±

58 150' ±

59 187' ±

60 194' ±

61 194' ± 138' ±

62 128' ± 121.57'

63 113.04' 131' ±

11.70' 23.61' 50.49'

792' ±

41 42 41 101

Scale: 1" = 100'

Site plan showing direction of view of photographs.

107 BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD EXEMPTED 64 327' 315' ±

410' ±

141 131 121 111 41 101

WEST

DEMAREST AVENUE

CAR 41 40 50' 50' 110' 110' 50' 50' 18 = 17

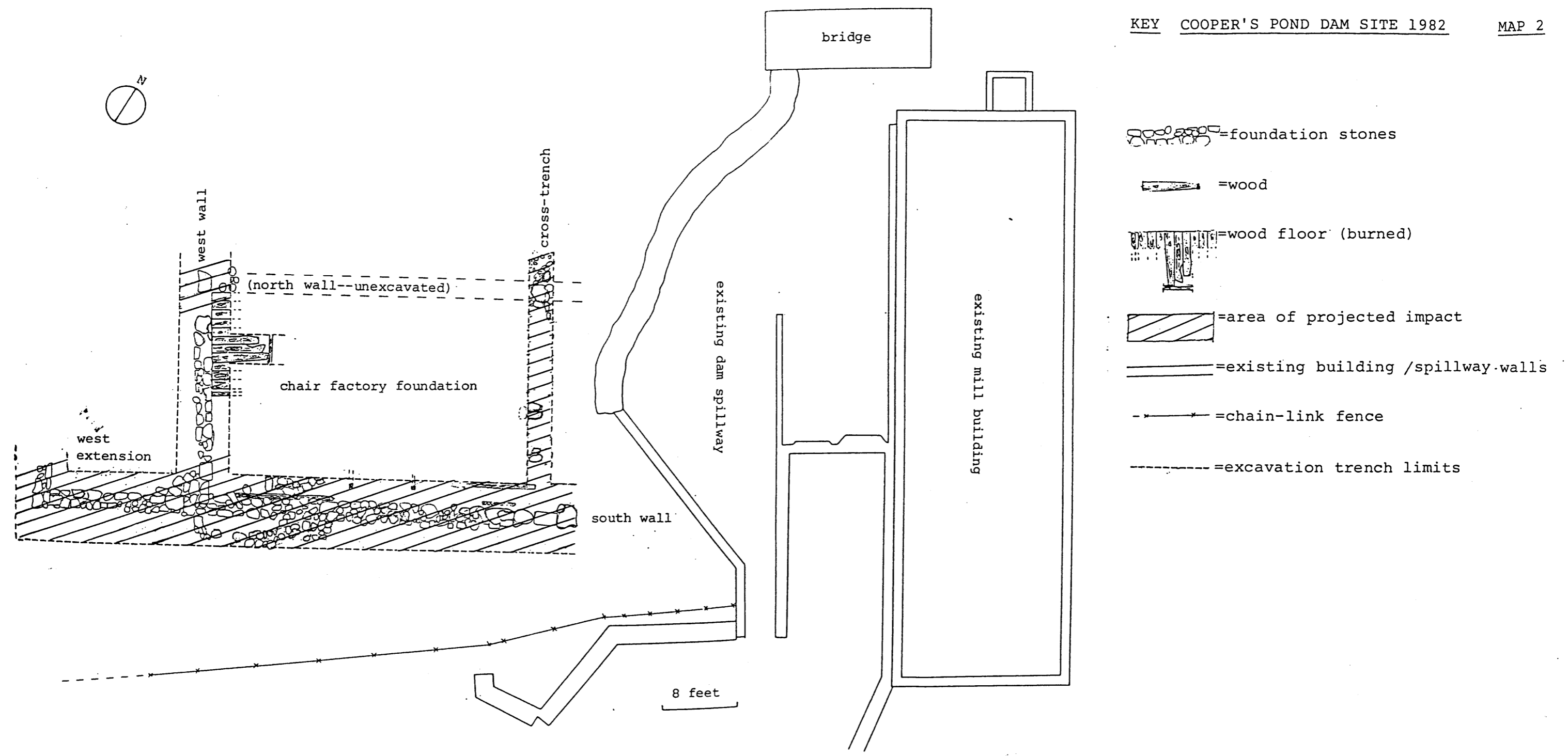
CLEV 50' 50' 110' 110' 130' 2

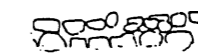


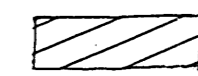
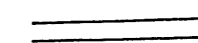
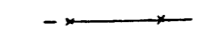

50' 50' 115' 115' 50'

H FRANKLIN AVENUE

NORTH

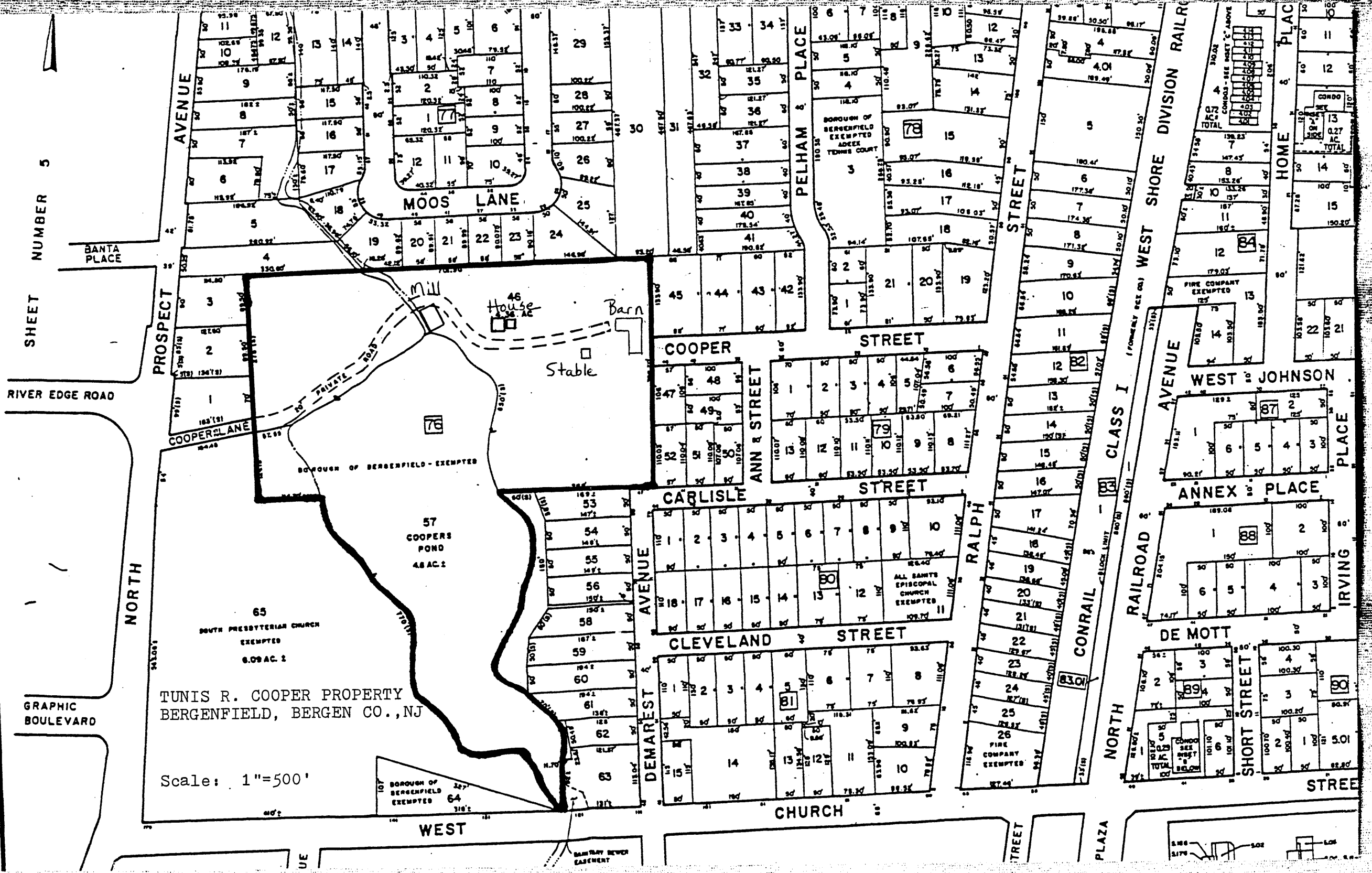
SANITARY SEWER EASEMENT



-  =foundation stones
-  =wood
-  =wood floor (burned)
-  =area of projected impact
-  =existing building /spillway-walls
-  =chain-link fence
-  =excavation trench limits

COOPER'S POND DAM SITE 1982: South and West Foundation Walls; Limit of Western Extension; Excavation Trench Area; Anticipated Area of Impact (preliminary map --November 24, 1982)

SHEET NUMBER 5



TUNIS R. COOPER PROPERTY  
BERGENFIELD, BERGEN CO., NJ

Scale: 1"=500'

GRAPHIC  
BOULEVARD

NORTH

WEST

NORTH

PLAZA

CLASS I

WEST SHORE DIVISION RAILROAD

RAILROAD

CONRAIL

DE MOTT

SHORT STREET

IRVING

ANNEX PLACE

WEST JOHNSON

AVENUE

HOME PLACE

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