

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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JUN 17 2014

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or 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 listed in 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 Judge Nathaniel Foster House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1649 Bayshore Road not for publication

city or town Lower Township vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Cape May code 009 zip code 08251

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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.

Rich Bowery Asst. Commissioner 6/28/14
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NJ DEP
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 this 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:)

Edson D. Beall 8.25.14
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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	
1	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	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)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL; Post-medieval English

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: clapboard

ASBESTOS

roof Asbestos

other _____

Narrative Description

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

--see 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.)

- 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

(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):

- 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)

C: architecture

Period of Significance

Ca. 1727 to ca. 1826

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Nathaniel Foster/Reuben Foster

Primary location of additional data

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

Name of repository:

Cape May County Historical & Genealogical Society

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.45 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	505608	4319043	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

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 Berkey, architectural historian

organization _____ date 11-29-2013

street & number 707 N. Delsea Drive telephone 609-861-2208

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

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society attn.: Howard Aaronson, President

street & number 504 Route 9 North telephone 609-465-3535

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary Description

The Judge Nathaniel Foster House is composed of a three-bay wide by two-bay deep two-story main block with a two-story rear kitchen ell, both built about 1727 and of heavy timber frame construction on a brick foundation. Both sections were heavily remodeled about 1826 in the Federal style with new fireplaces and mantels, a new main stair and other interior finishes, although much of the original rabbeted siding and some of the original interior flushboard walls remain. Tucked into the southwest corner of the house's L-shaped footprint is a ca. 1920 one-story frame enclosed porch with a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles. The main block has a rectangular footprint more wide than deep with the front (east elevation) door placed in the northernmost bay. In plan, it has a parlor and side hall on the first story with two chambers and a large hall on the second story. The two-bay wide rear kitchen ell has a nearly-square footprint with centered doors placed in the north and south elevations. In plan, it has a kitchen on the first story and two chambers with a bathroom on the second story. Both sections have ca. 1826 6/6 double-hung wood sash windows, ca. 1950 asbestos siding over original rabbeted boards and ca. 1826 clapboards, and roofs covered with ca. 1920 asbestos shingles. Behind the house are two non-contributing buildings, a ca. 1920 outhouse and a ca. 1920 storage shed. The Foster House stands on a 1.45-acre lot and faces east onto Bayshore Road, the main north-south highway through the heart of Villas, an unincorporated town in Lower Township, Cape May County, New Jersey that abuts the Delaware Bay. Neighboring buildings include a modern fire station to the north, a mix of commercial and residential buildings along both sides of Bayshore Road that date mostly from the mid- to late-20th century, and a neighborhood of single family dwellings to the west.

Exterior Description

The main block is three bays wide and two bays deep and has a side gable roof whose ridge runs parallel with the façade (east elevation). [photo #2] The roof, covered with diamond-shaped asbestos "Tilo" shingles, has a wood hatch on the west slope near the chimney at the south gable end. Shingles on the façade (east) roof slope are slate gray in color, except for a horizontal row of brick-colored shingles placed about two feet up from the lower edge. There is a modest, boxed cornice with no returns along the façade and slightly-tapered rake boards in both gable ends. Half-round gutters with downspouts (modern) are mounted on the front and rear (west) elevations. A large interior end wall brick chimney pierces the roof at the south gable end; it is parged. [photo #2 and #3]

The main block is covered with ca. 1950 asbestos siding. Under the asbestos siding on the façade and rear (west) elevation walls is the original, random-width wood siding, many with 8" to 10" exposure, that has rabbeted top and bottom edges with a bead along the rabbeted bottom edge. Unlike shiplap siding where the rabbets create a flush surface, in this siding the beaded bottom edge drops over the rabbeted top edge of the board below it, creating the look of ordinary beaded

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 2

clapboard. The boards are held with face-nailed rose head nails. [fig. 5,6, and 7 in the *Historic and Supplemental Images* section] Ca. 1826 unbeaded rabbeted siding, held with machine cut nails, is under the asbestos siding on the south side elevation. The composition of earlier, extant siding or clapboard under the ca. 1950 asbestos shingles on the north elevation is unknown.

Windows on the first and second stories are ca. 1826 6/6 double-hung wood sash without sash weights and having a fixed upper sash; all are fronted by modern aluminum triple-track storm windows. The south (side) elevation has two windows on each story while the north (side) elevation has one window on each story. The garret level of each gable end has 4-light single sash wood windows, two in the south gable end and one in the north gable end. All windows appear to date to the early 19th century. The two first story façade windows are flanked by modern aluminum shutters and although the original shutters and blinds are no longer extant, pintles and several holdbacks (shutter dogs) for them remain *in situ*. [photo #2 and #3]

The front door, which opens into a side hall/foyer, is placed in the northernmost bay on the façade. It has a ca. 1826 Federal style surround that is composed of molded pilasters supporting a broken pediment that frames a 6-light semi-circular fanlight. The ca. 1850 wood front door, sheltered by a modern aluminum storm door, consists of eight raised panels (2/2/2/2) with applied moldings. In front of the front door is a ca. 1950-60 two-step stoop of mortared slate placed on a concrete pad over a brick foundation. The front door is flanked by two ca. 1950 black metal, colonial-revival carriage style lights. [photo #2]

The main block stands on a brick foundation wall that is solid across the façade but was originally just brick piers along the side (north and south) elevations and was infilled with darker colored brick between the piers at a later, unknown date. [photo #2] That part of the west elevation foundation wall protected by the enclosed porch has its original piers that have not been infilled.

The rear kitchen ell, also covered with ca. 1950 asbestos siding, is attached to the northernmost portion of the rear wall of the main block. The gable roof ridge runs parallel with the façade (north elevation) and has a large, interior end wall brick chimney in the west gable end; like the chimney of the main block, it is parged. The roof covering is identical to that on the main block and has the same horizontal row of brick-colored tiles. There is a boxed cornice with no returns and the rake boards in the west gable end are slightly tapered and beaded. Rainwater is carried away by modern half-round gutters with on the north and south slopes. [photo #2 and #3]

The rear ell has an identical fenestration pattern on the north and south elevations consisting of two windows flanking a center door on the first story with two windows on the second story. Both doors appear to be original; they are double-thick with vertical boards on the interior and raised panels (2/2/2) on the exterior face. They are hung on strap hinges sandwiched between the two layers; the vertical boards of the interior extend beyond the panel door to create a weather tight "lip." The north door is fronted by a wooden storm door-like panel that is inoperable. The only

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 3

windows in the west gable end are two in the garret which are ca. 1826 4-light wood single sash. Windows on the ell are also 6/6 double-hung wood sash that appear to date to ca. 1826; they are fronted by modern aluminum triple-track storm windows. [photo #2 and #3]

There is no stoop or stairs providing access to the kitchen ell's north door. The south elevation door is accessed by wood steps sheltered by the back porch. A door on the west (side) elevation is covered over and concealed by the asbestos shingles.

The kitchen ell stands on a full brick foundation punctuated with two basement window openings on each elevation. Those on the north and west elevations have ca. 1960 two-light wood basement window sash fronted by screen frames. Those on the east elevation common with the crawl space under the main block have their original (ca. 1727?) horizontal wood bars and no sash, while the basement window openings on the south elevation are covered with plywood. [photo #2 and #3]

The ca. 1920 enclosed porch is covered with asbestos siding and has a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles. The roof has exposed rafter ends and a half-round aluminum gutter missing a downspout. The west side elevation has a 6/6 double-hung wood window fronted by a modern wood framed screen. The south elevation has a ribbon of five modern 1/1 aluminum single-sash windows and a ca. 1920 5-panel wood door topped with a 1-light transom. The fenestration pattern reads from east to west as: window-window-door-window-window-window. The windows are covered with mesh screening nailed directly to the window frames as is an interior window on the west elevation of the main block. The porch has a cinderblock foundation wall on the west elevation and dry-laid loose bricks on the south elevation. [photo #3]

Interior Description

Main Block

The main block has a rectangular footprint that is approximately 36 feet long by 28 feet wide. In plan, the first floor has a side hall/foyer to the north with a parlor to the south, and the second floor has two chambers with a hallway. Interior finishes, except where noted, appear to date to ca. 1826. Except where noted, walls and ceilings of the main block are plaster over hand-split or water mill sawn lath held with cut nails (head and shank). Floor boards on the first and second stories run east to west and are random-width hard pine between 6" and 13" in size. Those on the first story are narrower and appear to date to ca. 1826, while those on the second story appear to be original. The parlor and entrance hall are 8'8" tall, have baseboards that are 5" high topped with 1" high ogee molding, and a chair rail of complex molding that is 3½" high. [photo #6 and #7]

The parlor, roughly 17' square, features a heating fireplace on the south wall. The fireplace has a Federal style surround consisting of molded pilasters supporting an entablature decorated with bull's eye moldings below a heavily-molded, projecting cornice decorated with a band of alternating flutes

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 4

and filets. The back and both side jambs of the firebox are lined with a ca. 1826 decorative cast iron fireback marked "Mark Richards." The red brick hearth has been re-worked with newer bricks held with Portland cement. Both sides of the chimney have two ca. 1826 chimney closets with sunk panel doors hung on butt hinges. [photo #7, 8, 9]

The only framing member exposed in the room is a straight story post (9" wide and ½" deep), trimmed with beaded-edge boards on the west wall where it joins the south wall of the kitchen ell. Window and door trim is composed of 5½" wide complex molding with bull's eye corner blocks. The wood door leading into the hallway is composed of 6 raised panels (2/2/2) with integral moldings and has a ca. 1860 surface-mounted lock box with white porcelain knobs. [photo #8]

The entrance hall features an open string stair in the northwest corner. [photo #6] The 1"-wide turned balusters have a handrail that ties into a turned newel post, all of which appear to date to ca. 1826. The skirt board features hand-planed flushboards laid horizontally and decorated with raised panel triangles placed at the end of each step. Above the under-stair closet door is a panel composed of four sunk panels. The closet door has six sunk panels (2/2/2) with integral moldings; the door leading into the kitchen has 6 raised panels (2/2/2) with integral moldings and a surface mounted lock box with a brass knob on the hall side and a porcelain knob on the kitchen side. Trim around the door to the parlor and the door to the kitchen, and around the window on the north wall is 3" wide and includes 1"-wide face-nailed molding along the outer edge. Trim around the front door is 3 3/8" wide and consists of three square-cut channels running vertically with plain corner blocks at the header. The ca. 1850 front door has eight raised panels (2/2/2/2) with applied moldings and a surface-mounted box lock. [fig. 8]

Exposed straight posts wrapped with beaded-edge boards are found in the northeast and southeast corners of the hall; also exposed, but only in the stairwell, is the 12" tall north side girt. These are the only exposed framing members in this room. [fig. 8]

The hallway on the second story of the main block features a flared corner post, wrapped in beaded-edge boards, in the northwest corner. Also exposed are the north side and rear (west) wall plates which are faced in beaded edge boards. There is a 3½" wide molded chair rail on the north and west walls, below which is a wainscot of hand-planed flush boards. The wainscot is also found on the south and east walls. Walls above the wainscot are plaster. Baseboards are 5" high and include a ¾" simple molding on top. Door and window trim is 3" wide and includes 1"-wide face-nailed molding along the outer edge. Doors have 6 raised panels (2/2/2) with integral moldings and surface-mounted lock boxes with brown porcelain knobs. [photo #12]

The master chamber occupies the south end of the main block and has a 4" wide chair rail around all walls; below the chair rail is an original flush board wainscot. Flared corner posts, wrapped in beaded edge boards are found in the southeast and southwest corners; at their largest, they measure 6.25" x 9.25". Four-inch high baseboards are topped with a 1" high ogee molding. A story post, 9"

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 5

wide and faced with beaded edge boards, is located on the rear (west) wall. The front and rear plates, faced with beaded edge boards, are modestly exposed. The heating fireplace in the south gable end wall has a mantel that features reeded pilasters supporting an entablature decorated with reeded, projecting panels below a heavily-molded, projecting cornice decorated with a reeded band. The firebox appears to have been made smaller and has a brick hearth that may date to ca. 1826. The overmantel has a Georgian-style center panel with applied molding in the shape of a square with exaggerated corners; it is flanked by a sunk panel on each side.¹ Each side of the chimney has a pair of chimney closets with raised panel doors hung on butt hinges; they are identical to those on the parlor fireplace. Window trim is 3½" wide, including a 1½" wide molding applied to the outer edge; baseboards match that in the hallway. [photo #13]

The north chamber has a 4" wide molded chair rail on the north and east walls only. The front and north side plates are exposed and are faced with beaded edge boards. There is a flared corner post, wrapped with beaded edge boards, in the northeast corner; it measures 5" x 6.5" at the top. On the front (east) wall is a flared story post, also wrapped with beaded edge boards; it measures 5" x 9.75". Four-inch high baseboards are topped with 1" high ogee molding. Window trim is 3½" wide, including a 1½" wide molding applied to the outer edge. [photo #14]

The rear kitchen ell

The rear kitchen ell has a nearly-square 16' deep by 17' long footprint. In plan, the ell consists of a kitchen with a ca. 1826 cooking fireplace on the first story and two chambers (one with a fireplace) and a bathroom on the second story. Walls on both the first and second floors are of hand-planed, unbeaded flushboards; those on the second story are covered with wallpaper. Those on all stories of the west and north walls in the winder stair and in the walls of the west chamber closet are original, held with rose head nails and unpainted. The remainder, held with cut nails, date to ca. 1826. The kitchen has a plaster ceiling while the chambers and bathroom have exposed joists overhead that are wrapped in beaded edge boards and run from north to south. Floors on both stories are random-width hard pine that run north to south on the first story and east to west on the second story; those on the first story are narrower and appear to date to ca. 1826 while those on the second story appear to be original. [photo #10, 15,16,17]

In the kitchen, the hand-planed flush board walls, doors, windows, and all trim have a faux-grained, painted finish. The flushboards are laid vertically on the fireplace wall and horizontally on the other walls. A small, 1" high modestly molded chair rail is found on all but the fireplace walls. Baseboards are 4½" high, topped with a ½" bead. Window and door trim is 3½" wide and includes 1" wide surface-mounted molding along the outer edge. Straight corner posts are exposed in all but the northeast corner of the kitchen; they measure 3½" by 5" and all are chased with beaded edge

¹ The nails used for the panels over the mantel could not be observed to help date these details. The center panel is not typical of Federal period fireplace design in Cape May County and thus may be a hold-over from the original, ca. 1727 fireplace.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 6

boards. A ca. 1970 adjustable-height kitchen chandelier of brushed brass hangs from the center of the ceiling. Against the north wall in the northeast corner of the room is a ca. 1950 metal base kitchen cabinet with a porcelain counter top and sink; above it hangs a 2-door metal kitchen cabinet about the same age. [photo #10, fig. 9]

The fireplace wall consists of two doors to the south of the fireplace and two doors to the north of the fireplace. The southernmost door leads to a closet, while the door adjacent to it opens into a passageway leading to an exterior board and batten door that is now covered over on the exterior by asbestos shingles. The northernmost door opens to the winder stair leading to the second floor, and the door adjacent to it opens into a closet under the stair. Doors on the fireplace wall are hand-planed and have four raised panels (2/2) with integral moldings; some have ca. 1800-1826 Norfolk latches that are original to the door on which they are placed. All doors are hung on butt hinges. [photo #10]

The fireplace, placed in a 5' wide chimney bay, has a mantel that consists of a molded shelf over which is a panel of flush boards laid horizontally. The panels are pierced by two former stovepipe openings. The firebox measures 66" wide by 34" deep by 49" tall and has its original cooking crane *in situ*; the brick hearth appears to date to ca. 1826. [photo #10]

A small portion of the kitchen ceiling was removed, revealing unwrapped joists with a beaded-edge; these measure about 3.5" wide x 6.5" high and are joined to the girt with a tenon that is pegged from the bottom of the girt. The joists bear multiple coats of paint (green-ish yellow ochre predominating) and white wash. The 6 5/8" high south girt is also beaded and painted while the corner post is wrapped in beaded-edge boards and painted. [fig. 10]

The second floor of the kitchen ell has exposed ceiling joists, chased with beaded boards and spaced from 29" to 30" on centers. Also exposed, but faced with beaded edge boards, are the front, rear, and side plates. Flared cornerposts are exposed in all corners of the ell; those in the southwest, northeast, and southeast corners are wrapped with beaded edge boards, while that in the northwest corner (in the attic winder stair) is not wrapped and is of hand-hewn oak. The ceiling height, from the floor to the bottom of the joists, is 7'7". Walls are of hand-planed flushboards covered with wallpaper. Baseboards are 5 1/2" tall with a 1/2" bead on the top edge. Window trim is 3" wide and includes 3/4" wide applied molding along the outer edge. [photo #15, 16, 17]

The west chamber of the kitchen ell has a small heating fireplace on the west wall. The firebox appears to have been made smaller from its original 40" wide by 36" tall size and now measures 32" wide by 32" high by 13" deep. The front of the fireplace jambs have been covered with modern 4 1/2" square blue and white ceramic tiles. Doors to the winder stairs and to the closet located south of the fireplace are identical, date to ca. 1826, and consist of two raised panels (1/1) with integral moldings. The door to the winder stair has a ca. 1826 Norfolk latch while the door to the middle chamber has a ca. 1790-1826 keyhole-shaped surface mounted plate latch. All doors are hung on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 7

butt hinges. Evidence that the original chimney was reduced in size is seen in infilled floor boards and wall boards in the south closet, next to the present chimney. [photo #17]

The middle chamber of the kitchen ell has the same baseboards and window and door trim as the west chamber. An original flushboard wall, covered with wallpaper, creates a partition between the west and middle chambers while all other walls are also of flushboards; all are covered with wallpaper. [photo #15, 16]

A small bathroom with a stall shower is placed against the north wall of the middle chamber. The bathroom is accessed by a ca. 1826 4-panel door having a cast iron lock box with porcelain knobs. Walls on the north, south, and west are of ca. 1826 flushboard covered with wallpaper, while the south wall is of sheetrock. The floor is covered with ca. 1950 12" square linoleum tiles. Baseboards are 4³/₄" high topped with a 1/2" high beaded edge. Fixtures date to ca. 1950 and include a toilet, sink, and metal shower stall. [photo #16]

The attic

The attic above the main block and the kitchen ell has rafters that are pegged together with mortise and tenon joints at the ridge; the rafter feet have a small "birds mouth" that catches the interior edge of the 1" thick raising plate over which they are placed and then spiked. These rafters are also numbered (now always consecutively) with Roman numerals, and some of them have crude pit saw marks on the side faces created when the hewn timber was sawn in half to create two rafters. A few rafters over the main block at the junction of the kitchen ell are water mill sawn; these may be original because the studs supporting the rafter ends that were cut-off (for no apparent reason) several feet near the kitchen ell are held with rose head nails. Rafters in all three gable ends are replacements, showing the marks of a water mill saw and having gable end studs nailed with machine cut nails.

Rafters over the kitchen ell are spaced from 27¹/₂" to 32" on center, while those over the main block are spaced from 24" to 27¹/₂" on center. One-inch thick floor boards alternate male (tongue) and female (groove), and are random-width pine held with machine cut T-head nails. Since there are no other nail holes in the tops of the joists for an earlier floor, it appears that the attic floor boards were not originally nailed down. The two rafter pairs closest to the kitchen ell chimney at the west end were lathed for the plaster walls of a smoke closet, likely added about 1826 when the house was remodeled, but the plaster and lath have been removed. Similarly, a portion of the chimney has been parged to cover the hole in the base of the chimney that allowed smoke to enter the smoke closet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 8

The basement

Access to the basement under the kitchen ell is provided by a set of areaway doors located in the porch. The basement consists of brick walls and flooring; window openings are found on all walls, those on the east wall have their original square horizontal bars intact. The brick chimney support is arched and has a wood shelf between the brick piers. Floor joists are similar to the roof rafters in that they are primarily hand-hewn but have a few faces bearing the marks of a pit saw. The north and east sills are hand-hewn and appear to be original, while the south and west sills are water mill sawn and were likely replaced when the house was remodeled ca. 1826. The chimney girt and trimmers are also water mill sawn and were also replaced ca. 1826 when the kitchen fireplace was remodeled.

There is no basement under the main block, but its framing was observed through a barred basement window opening common with the crawlspace under the main block and through the gap in the main block's west foundation wall at the porch. Joists are 1/2-logs with the bark still showing, and they run from north to south. Their tops are hewn flat to receive the floor boards. Framing around the chimney base consists of water mill sawn members that tie into a large chimney girt mudsill; these also appear to have replaced the original chimney framing ca. 1826. The foundation for the chimney is extant; it is wholly of brick and it appears to have been built in two different sections, because the brick in the section under the firebox is a different color, and is separated from, the brick under the hearth.

The enclosed porch

The porch, added ca. 1920, has a dry-laid red brick floor. The west wall is covered with sheetrock (or similar composite) panels whose joints are covered with 1" wide wood battens. The north and east walls are the asbestos shingle covered exterior walls of the kitchen ell and main block respectively. The south wall is covered with ca. 1970 wood paneling. The ceiling consists of the exposed rafters and the narrow boards laid over them as the foundation for the roof. Placed on the north wall under the westernmost window of the kitchen ell is a ca. 1950 porcelain over cast iron kitchen sink basin next to a hand-pump well. [photo #11]

Non-contributing buildings

The ca. 1920 outhouse

The one-story outhouse, placed on a concrete pad, has a rectangular footprint and a gable front roof covered with asphalt shingles. The rafter ends are exposed and the building is covered with unbeaded wood clapboards. The door opening is covered with a plywood panel held with a single modern strap hinge. [photo #4]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 9

The ca. 1920 storage shed

This 1-story building has a footprint that is 8'-5" square. It has a side gable roof with extended eaves in the gable ends; the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The front door on the façade (east elevation) is composed of a board and batten door hung on strap hinges; it is sheltered by a 4' wide shed-roofed porch with exposed rafter ends. The porch roof is covered with asphalt shingles and is supported by square posts laid on top of the original wood deck. The wood windows on the north and south side elevations are 6-light single sash. Each is protected by a pair of solid wood shutters, likely original, with fleur-de-lis cut-outs. Interior walls are of Masonite panels and there is a narrow board floor. [photo #5]

Original Appearance and Subsequent Alterations:

The house originally consisted of the main block and rear kitchen ell, both of which were covered with random-width, beaded rabbeted siding face-nailed with rose head nails. Windows were probably 6/6 double-hung sash and the door and window fenestration patterns seen today appear to be original. The original floor plan of a hallway, parlor, and kitchen on the first floor with three or four chambers on the second story remains, except for the creation of a small bathroom at the north end of the middle chamber in the kitchen ell. Interior walls in the main block were likely originally sheathed with flushboards as they are still in the kitchen ell and the hewn joists overhead in all rooms were exposed. Corner posts, girts, and plates were also exposed and appear to have always been wrapped or faced with beaded edge boards. The front door may have been a double-thick door identical to the exterior doors in the kitchen, and was also likely hung on strap hinges. Interior doors were likely paneled and hung on H- or H-L hinges.

About 1826, the house was thoroughly remodeled, especially the interior of the main block. The main block was given plaster walls with chair rails, plaster ceilings, new doors, floors, and trim. Corner posts in the parlor were cut back so they would no longer be visible. The rear kitchen ell was remodeled, too, but in keeping with its less-formal function, its walls remained covered with flushboards; most were replaced in kind, although some original flushboards remain. Joists remained exposed in the kitchen but on the second story they were wrapped with beaded-edge boards. Interior doors and the front door were replaced with paneled doors that had keyhole-shaped, surface-mounted plate latches and were hung on butt hinges. The fanlight over the front door was installed, trim around all windows and doors was replaced (bull's eye corner blocks were used in the parlor trim only), new 6/6 double hung wood windows (with fixed upper sash) were installed, and the chimney and fireplaces were rebuilt to somewhat smaller dimensions and given new mantels. The cast iron firebox liner in the parlor fireplace was added at this time and floorboards on the first story were replaced. [photo #9] A smoke closet was installed in the attic.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 10

Around 1840-50 the front door was replaced with the present door. [photo #2, fig. 8] A few decades later, most of the keyhole-shaped plate latches were removed and replaced with the Victorian-era cast iron lock boxes (most with porcelain knobs) extant today. It is likely that a small winder stair to the basement (no longer extant) was created in the kitchen winder stair well at this time.

In the 1910s or 1920s, but no later than 1923 (the date of a historic photograph, see fig. 5), the Tilo roof was placed over a wood shingle roof. The open air porch, storage shed, and the outhouse were also built about this time. [fig. 6]

Around 1950, the house was covered with asbestos shingles, the bathroom on the second floor was added, metal kitchen cabinets and a plaster ceiling in the kitchen were added [fig. 9], and the porch was enclosed. Heat was never introduced into the building, but plumbing and electricity were added around 1950. No substantive changes have been made to the house since the mid-20th century.

Integrity:

The house retains a high degree of integrity, having its nearly original floor plan and most interior finishes that reflect the ca. 1826 remodeling including plaster and flushboard walls, wrapped joists, floor boards on the first story, most doors and windows, the semi-circular fanlight over the front door, the staircase, and most interior trim. The fireplaces retain their ca. 1826 configurations and mantels. Several ca. 1727 features remain including second story floor boards, wrapped corner posts, exposed and beaded joists in the kitchen (hidden by a later plaster ceiling), some flush board walls, and some exterior ship lap siding. Although ca. 1950 asbestos shingles cover the exterior, probes reveal that original and ca. 1826 ship lap siding is extant on at least three of the four elevations.

Setting:

The house stands on a 1.45-acre lot, facing east onto the heavily-traveled commercial section of Bayshore Road, a 2-lane wide road which runs roughly north-to-south through the unincorporated town of Villas. [photo #1] Villas adjoins the Delaware Bay to the west and the bay is 0.6 miles west of the house. The house is surrounded by grassy areas in the front, side, and immediate rear yards. The perimeter of the lot near the house is lined with a variety of trees, including old sassafras (*Sassafras*), linden (*Linden*), mulberry (*Morus*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) and paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*). The front of the house is modestly landscaped with small patches of ivy (*Hedera*). The area behind the house is heavily wooded and overgrown with ivy (*Hedera*), wisteria vines (*Wisteria sinensis*), and wild rose bushes (*Rugosa*). Trees include red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), dogwood (*Cornus*), and maple (*Acer*). Neighboring buildings include a late 20th-century firehouse to the north, as well as a variety of commercial and residential buildings mostly dating from the mid- to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 7 Page 11

late-20th century on both sides of the street. The rear (west) boundary of the site is accessible by the dead end of Rose Lane.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary Statement of Significance

The Judge Nathaniel Foster House, erected about 1727, is locally significant under Criterion C as an example of a well-preserved heavy timber frame house built during the first period of construction (ca. 1690 to ca. 1730) and remodeled about 1826 in the Federal style during the third period of construction (ca. 1780-90 to ca. 1845). The Foster House's first-period characteristics included face-nailed interior flush board walls, face-nailed rabbeted siding, exposed framing members (corner posts, joists overhead, and girts), flared corner posts, and an oak frame made mostly of hewn timbers. A ca. 1826 remodeling in the Federal style retained some of the first-period features and introduced many third-period features—including joists that were still exposed but were wrapped with beaded-edge boards, plaster walls and plaster ceilings, and smaller but still functional heating and cooking fireplaces—all commonly found in Cape May County during the third construction period. The Foster House is also notable for its atypical floor plan consisting of a comodious side hall and parlor with a rear kitchen ell. This plan is seen in only two of the county's 35 known first-period buildings.

Historical Background

The Judge Nathaniel Foster House, located on the bayside of Lower Township in Cape May County, New Jersey, stands on what was originally a 100-acre tract purchased in November 1727 by Nathaniel Foster (ca. 1700-1756) from the West New Jersey Society. The deed was not recorded in either Burlington or Cape May, but the archives of the Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society holds a photocopy. Nathaniel Foster (ca. 1700-1769) was the great-grandson of Christopher Foster (1603-bef. 1628) who left Surrey County, England in 1635, settling first in Lynn, Massachusetts then moving to Southampton, Long Island, New York about 1642.¹

Christopher Foster's grandson, Samuel Foster (1660-ca. 1721), was born in East Hampton, Long Island and bought 200 acres of land in the Fairfield section of Salem (now Cumberland) County, New Jersey in 1697. He was living in neighboring Cape May County by November 1703, the date he recorded his ear mark there. The earliest recorded deed involving his purchase of land in the Cape May County, also on the bayside in Lower Township (but a few miles south of this house), is dated 1706 and he is called a carpenter in that and later deeds.²

¹ Foster family vertical files, Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society; Isabelle Foster Sakewicz, *Christopher Foster Family, 1603-1992*, 1.

² Sakewicz, 5; Jeffrey Dorwart, *Cape May County New Jersey: The Making of an American Resort Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 273; M. Atherton Leach, *Annals of the Foster Family of Cape May County, NJ* (privately printed, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Gen Le 185), 21-24; Salem Deeds 6, 159; Aaron Learning, *Miscellaneous Surveys and Ear Marks* (Cape May County Clerk's Office), 14; Cape May Deeds, Liber B, 64.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 2

Samuel Foster's son, Nathaniel, appears to have built the house that bears his name about 1727, the year he purchased the 100-acre tract south of Fishing Creek on the bayside of the county. Nathaniel Foster, who is cited as a "carpender" [sic] in the 1727 deed, recorded his earmark in 1720 and was appointed a constable in 1724. He took out two mortgages on the property, one in 1738 for £19 and another in 1740 for £29. He married first Mercy Carll in 1728, with whom he had at least three children; in 1754 he married Mary Eldredge.³ Foster likely apprenticed with his father, but no records, letters, or account books for either him or his father are known to exist to prove or disprove it.

In 1739, Nathaniel Foster was appointed a justice of the peace and served in that position until 1768, presiding over cases that ranged from the occasional murder to unpaid debts. In 1751, he was taxed on 100 acres of land and livestock that included cattle, horses, and sheep. His will, proved in 1769, gave all of his lands to his oldest son, Salathiel, while his widow, Mary, received her dower right of one-third. The inventory of his estate, missing from the microfilm reel and the original estate sleeve at the state archives, was summarized in abstracts with a value of £90.⁴

Salathiel Foster (1725-1792) appears to have lived in the house his father built and served as an officer in a battalion of minute men organized in Cape May in 1775. During the Revolutionary War, he served as captain of the 3rd Company in a battalion also organized in the county in 1777. According to M. Atherton Leach, a Foster descendant, Salathiel Foster was a prosperous farmer who tilled his own lands, increased the acreage of his lands (although the deed was not recorded), and owned part of Five Mile Beach (now Wildwood) by deed of 1768. He was taxed in July 1774 on 100 acres of improved land, while his stepmother Mary (listed immediately after him in the tax list) was a householder taxed on 33 acres of improved land. In 1778, he was taxed on 130 acres of improved land; Mary was not listed.⁵

Salathiel Foster's will, written in 1792 and proved the same year, devised to his son Salathiel, Jr., one-half of his land, including the "dwelling house in which he [Salathiel Jr.] now dwells together with the barn" while the other half "together with the old house or what is called the shop" was devised to his grandson, Reuben (1780-1870), who was the son of Salathiel Sr.'s deceased son, Reuben Sr. When Reuben Jr. turned 21, he was to have "full liberty to remove the old house onto such part of the land as may fall to him in the division of the land." The legal description in a later deed shows that Reuben received the northeast half while Salathiel Jr. received the southwest half and it is on the southwest half that the Judge Nathaniel Foster House stands. In the Lower

³ Lewis Townsend Stevens, *The History of Cape May County, New Jersey* (Cape May: Star of the Cape Publishing, 1897), 85; Aaron Leaming, *Book of Surveys, Liber C (1765-1777)*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, collection (Phi) Am.842, 57; Isabelle Sakewicz, "The Christopher Foster Family History," *Cape May County Magazine of History and Genealogy* (Vol. VII, No. 1 (1981), 36-37; *New Jersey Marriages*, ancestry.com database accessed 10-15-2013.

⁴ Stevens, 102, 135, 140; *Cape May County Court Records 1723-1735, 1736-39, 1740-62* (Cape May County Clerk's Office), various; Frank Stewart, "Cape May County Ratables," *The Cape May County Magazine of History and Genealogy* (June 1940), 74; will of Nathaniel Foster, NJ State Archives file #291E; *Calendar of New Jersey Wills*, Vol. IV (1761-1770), 149.

⁵ Stevens, 188, 190; Leach, 34; Lower Township tax records, July 1772, 2; Lower Township tax records, May 1778, 2. A householder is typically considered as an adult person living in someone else's household.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 3

Township tax records for 1802, both Reuben and Salathiel Jr. appear with each owning 50 acres of improved land and 27 acres of unimproved land.⁶

Nothing definitive is known about the “old house or shop” willed to Reuben Jr. The 1850 Nunam map [see fig. 2 in the *Historic and Supplemental Images* section] shows L. [Leonard] Cummings’ “carpenter shop” north of the Foster House, while the 1872 Beers map shows it as Cummings’ wheelwright shop [fig. 4]. Cummings’ father, Jonathan, had purchased a ½-acre lot at this location from Reuben Foster in 1808 for \$40.50, a price that might suggest a small building, possibly the old house or shop, was on the lot.⁷ Its fate is unknown.

In 1804, Salathiel Foster, Jr. (1767-1812) sold his one-half of the tract, calculated at 60 acres, to his nephew, Reuben, for \$450. In 1806, Reuben is taxed for 100 acres of improved land and 27 acres of unimproved land, while his uncle Salathiel is listed as a householder only, with no land ownership.⁸ In the 1804 deed from his uncle, and in later deeds, Reuben is referred to as a “carpenter” and a “house carpenter.” After purchasing his uncle Salathiel, Jr.’s share of his grandfather’s farm, he became possessed of the entire landed estate of his Foster ancestors and “lived on the same throughout his life.”⁹

Reuben Foster, House Carpenter

Called a house carpenter in the 1860 census, Reuben Foster was likely responsible for the ca. 1826 remodeling of the house his great-grandfather Nathaniel Foster built about 100 years earlier. He mortgaged the farmstead in 1820 (\$670) and again in 1826 (\$2,000) and either mortgage, but more likely the larger one, could have been used to finance the work.¹⁰

Foster possibly worked in concert with his son, Downs Edmunds Foster (1807-1886), also a house carpenter. Collectively, they appear to be the master carpenters responsible for more than a dozen extant Cape May County homes from the third period of construction. Their sophisticated, Federal-style work, characterized by beautifully carved mantels, bull’s eye or diamond-shaped decorative motifs, and nicely executed door surrounds with broken pediments and semi-circular fanlights, is found in both new construction as well as in remodeling projects, most of which date from ca. 1815 to ca. 1845.

The parlor fireplace mantel in the Foster House is nearly identical, including the use of bull’s eyes in the frieze, to that in the parlor of the ca. 1829 Isaac Smith House (also in Lower Township) and in the parlor of a 2-story addition erected in 1835 by Richard Thompson Jr. adjoining the first-period

⁶ NJ State archives, file #570E; Deed book D, 424; Lower Township tax records, 1802, 3.

⁷ Deed book F, p. 169.

⁸ Deed book D, 424; Lower Township tax records, 1808, 3.

⁹ Leach, 47.

¹⁰ 1860 census, Cape May County, Lower Township, 165; Mortgage book C, 93, 247.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 4

section of the Shamgar Hand-Nathaniel Holmes Sr. House in Cape May Court House. In fact, entries in Thompson's account book for the construction show that the majority of the carpentry work for the addition was carried out by Reuben and Downs Foster, and it is through these entries and comparison with similar work in the county that attribution can be made to the Foster father and son team.¹¹

The details used in the Foster House remodeling are not as sophisticated as in other examples of their work, however. For example, bull's eye corner blocks are used only in the mantel and the parlor door, whereas in most other houses the Fosters built or remodeled they are used in door and window trim throughout the first story. Similarly, the door surround is lacking the heavier moldings, a more detailed fanlight, and a taller, more elaborated broken pediment that characterizes the majority of their work. For these reasons, the Foster House is not being considered significant under criterion C as representative of the work of a master.

In the 1850 census, Reuben Foster appears as a 71-year old farmer whose real estate was valued at \$4,000. In the 1860 census, he is cited as a house carpenter. Downs Foster appears in the 1850 and 1860 censuses as a house carpenter living in the Fishing Creek area of Lower Township, not far from his father.¹²

The Mark Richards' Fireplace Insert

Foster descendants believed that the cast iron fireplace insert marked with the name "Mark Richards" had been made at Batsto, an iron furnace and forge operated by the Richards family in the 18th and 19th centuries in Burlington County, just north of Atlantic County, New Jersey. However, Mark Richards (ca. 1784-1843) was not a member of that Richards family; rather, his surname was originally "Reichert" which was later Anglicized to "Richards." Mark Richards is cited in various early 19th-century Philadelphia city directories as an "iron and commercial merchant and manufacturer" with offices on Third and later Arch Street. He was also part-owner in several iron furnaces located in New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Gloucester Furnace, owned by him and two partners from 1825 to 1830, was located on the south side of the Little Egg Harbor River in Mullica Township, Atlantic County, and the Foster House fireplace insert may have been made there, although it cannot be confirmed. Richards advertised for sale such commodities as steel, sash weights, and tar in Philadelphia newspapers and an 1809 ad noted that "in a few weeks [I] will have backs and jambs of new and handsome patterns."¹³

¹¹ Joan Berkey, *The Early Architecture of Cape May County, New Jersey: The Heavy Timber Frame Tradition* (Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society, 2008), 227-229, 241; Nathaniel Holmes/Richard Thompson Jr. Account Book, #B-12, Cape May County Historical and Genealogy Society.

¹² 1850 census, Lower Twp., 65; 1860 census, 165.

¹³ Interview with Isabelle Foster Sakewicz, 9-23-2002; James Swank, *The Manufacture of Iron in All Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: The American Iron and Steel Association), 1891, 159. *Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide* (Philadelphia, PA: Wilson & Vandaun, 1825), 117; William McMahon, *South Jersey Towns, History and Legend* (United States: Rutgers University, 1973), 209; *Democratic Press* (Philadelphia, PA), 3-23-1809.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 5

Foster family ownership after 1865

In March 1865, local surveyor Nathan C. Price drew a map of Reuben Foster's lands; the house is clearly shown with its current "L" shaped footprint, and the farm extended all of the way to the Delaware Bay. [fig. 3] The map also shows how Reuben divided his land among his sons Robert and Downs, and in April 1865 he sold the house and 60+ acres to his son, Robert.¹⁴ Robert sold off parcels of the acreage over the years and in 1885 placed the house on a 2-acre lot in trust for his son, Samuel E., stipulating that after Samuel's death the house was to go to Samuel's heirs. Samuel, a painter, is enumerated in the 1880 census as living in the house with his wife and son Edgar.¹⁵ Samuel died around 1905 and the house was inherited equally by his daughter Ella V. Woolson and son, Edgar. Ella sold her one-half interest in the house to Edgar in 1921, who then sold it in 1925 to his son, Earl H. Foster of Philadelphia.¹⁶

Earl Foster installed electricity and plumbing into the house, but not heat, because he used it only as a summer residence. Foster, a house painter, may have done the faux-grained finish in the kitchen. On his death in 1973, the house was inherited by his daughter Isabelle Foster Sakewicz who continued to use it as a summer residence. The last of Nathaniel Foster's descendants to live in the house, she willed it after her death in 2006 to the Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society, the current owner.¹⁷

A Brief History of Heavy Timber Frame Construction

Simply defined, heavy timber frame construction is a method of building that uses large, wood framing members (6"-8" wide or larger), which are joined and held together with pegged mortise and tenon joints. The key components are a box frame composed of sills, posts, plates, girts, and bridging and/or binding beams; above the house frame itself is a roof constituting a separate structural system. Typically, the framing members—corner posts, floor joists, girts and beams—were meant to be exposed, and were sometimes decorated with molding that was either carved by hand or wrought by a molding plane.

This type of construction was brought first to the Massachusetts Bay area of New England by English settlers in the 17th century. Heavy timber frame, or post and beam, construction had been used in 15th and 16th-century East Anglia, and it was only natural for New England colonists to use the same building methods in the New World with which they had been familiar in their native land.

¹⁴ *NC Price Survey Book*, 35; deed book 31, 186.

¹⁵ Deed book 71, 67; 1880 census, Lower Township, 46C.

¹⁶ Deed book 354, 161; deed book 427, 251.

¹⁷ Sakewicz interview; 1920 census, Philadelphia, ward 46, district 1739, sheet 10B.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 6

The presence of a timber frame characterized all frame houses in America until the advent of the balloon frame in the nineteenth century, which came to most places in New Jersey in the 1850s at roughly the same time as the Italianate style. The balloon frame was composed of dimensional lumber (e.g. 2x4s and 2x6s), not timbers, hence it was not a “timber” frame. All frame building in New Jersey (and elsewhere) before the 1850s—for about 200 years—had a timber frame.

The techniques of building timber frames were not static across the two centuries. Methods evolved, in part to make erection of buildings simpler, faster, and cheaper, and in part because stylistic concerns demanded that the old ways which originally prevailed be abandoned. Generally, this evolution followed a course of a progressive lightening of the members themselves together with a simplification of their joinery. It is usually possible, even through casual inspection, to distinguish between early and late timber frames; with a more careful inspection it is sometimes possible to distinguish between “middle” and “late” frames.

As typically defined, the term “heavy timber frame” denotes only those frames that survive, generally speaking, from the “first period” of timber framing in New Jersey, a period that covers the 17th through the early 18th century. A more strict definition would include only those timber framed buildings with a summer beam. However, within the context of those houses which survive in Cape May County, the term is more broadly used to denote those heavy timber frame buildings with exposed framing members, held with pegged mortise and tenon joints, as found in Cape May County from ca. 1695 to ca. 1845.

The earliest examples of heavy timber frame construction in the United States are found in the Massachusetts Bay area of New England. Settled in the 1620s and 1630s by predominantly English religious dissenters, the Massachusetts Bay area contains more than three hundred extant examples that range in date from ca. 1640 to ca. 1750. These buildings were extensively studied by Abbott Lowell Cummings in the 1970s and he eventually published a well-documented and heavily illustrated book about them entitled *The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay: 1625-1725* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1979). This groundbreaking volume marked the first intensive level analysis of this construction type in the country, and set the standard for bringing together primary sources with physical evidence to document the derivational heritage, evolution, and eventual demise of a construction method. In 1990, 113 heavy timber frame structures in the Massachusetts Bay area were also recognized with a thematic nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

As Massachusetts Bay area colonists migrated to other parts of the eastern seaboard in the 17th century, they took their building traditions with them. In the 1640s and 1650s, they settled on Long Island, New York, many lured by the thriving whaling industry there. Long Island’s heavy timber frame buildings have also been studied, but to a lesser degree than those in the Massachusetts Bay area. The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documented eight of them between the 1930s and 1980s, and those studied have construction dates ranging from ca. 1649 to ca. 1740. HABS compiled brief histories of each house, took exterior photographs and sometimes interior photographs, and prepared measured drawings of them. These houses have also been written about

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 7

in several books--among them, *Long Island Landmarks*, published by the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities in 1971, and *Manor Houses and Historic Homes of Long Island and Staten Island*, published in 1928 and written by Harold Eberlein--but no book deals exclusively, or in-depth, with their construction type, nor are the buildings placed within historic contexts.

From Long Island, these Englishmen (or their descendants) moved to New Jersey in the last quarter of the 17th century, settling not only in East Jersey (including Essex, Union, and Middlesex counties), but in West Jersey as well, particularly in Salem (now Cumberland), Gloucester (now Atlantic), and Cape May counties. Those who moved to Cape May County were attracted by both the lucrative whaling industry there and the availability of large tracts of land which could be purchased relatively cheaply. More often than not, these new residents turned to heavy timber frame construction for their dwellings, not only because of their familiarity with it, but also because of the great availability of lumber with which to build.

Although heavy timber frame construction was once common in New Jersey, few first-period (ca. 1695-ca. 1730) examples remain. Because other early New Jersey settlers built with more lasting materials—the Pennsylvania-influenced Quakers with brick and the Dutch settlers with stone, for example—their buildings have survived to a larger degree than those built of wood, the latter of which were more easily lost to fire, rot, or demolition by neglect.

Because of the migration from New England to Long Island and New Jersey, there are strong physical ties between Cape May County's first-period buildings and the earlier precedents built beginning ca. 1650 on Long Island and ca. 1640 in the Massachusetts Bay area and continuing until ca. 1725.

The Heavy Timber Frame Tradition in Cape May County

The heavy timber frame buildings in Cape May County were intensively studied by architectural historian Joan Berkey who published the results of her research under the title, *The Early Architecture of Cape May County, New Jersey: The Heavy Timber Frame Legacy* (2008). Berkey's project marked the first time these structures were intensively studied, researched, and compared to earlier precedents and contemporaries on Long Island and in Connecticut and the Massachusetts Bay areas of New England. Berkey recently (2013) completed a book about the heavy timber frame buildings in neighboring Cumberland County (*The Early Wood Architecture of Cumberland County, New Jersey* [forthcoming]) and determined that Cape May County appears to have the most extant examples of exposed heavy timber frame construction in the state, and in numbers large enough that they cannot be considered as rare survivors of this construction type.

Cape May County's heavy timber frame buildings are smaller and more humble expressions than their New England counterparts, and despite their commonalities, there are subtle differences in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 8

way they were framed, with more obvious differences in their floor plans, their placement of stairs, the size of their chimney bays, and their choices of interior finishes.

Heavy timber frame buildings in all three areas have large, exposed framing members: in the Massachusetts Bay area almost all timbers were usually hewn from oak, while in Cape May County almost all upright posts were hewn from oak, while the horizontal framing members (joists, girts, plates) were often made from Atlantic white cedar, and occasionally from hard pine, gum, or poplar.

Generally speaking, Cape May's buildings were typically comprised of a single room on the first floor with a single bedroom or garret on the upper floor and a single, shallow end wall chimney, rather than two parlors or a kitchen and parlor on the first floor with a large center chimney and a stair hall. Winder stairs were accessed from the room they served rather than the hall or "porch" that was common in New England. Chimney bays were somewhat smaller and usually contained one fireplace rather than two. Lean-tos were placed to the side (in chimney gable end) rather than to the rear, and flush board walls were the typical interior wall finish until about 1820, even though board walls were superseded by plaster walls beginning ca. 1730 elsewhere in the state and in New England.

First-period buildings are defined as those built in Cape May County between ca. 1695 and ca. 1730. They most closely resemble those heavy timber frame buildings erected earlier on Long Island (ca. 1650-ca. 1730) as well as in Connecticut and in the Massachusetts Bay area (ca. 1640-ca. 1725). These houses are generally characterized by overly large, hand-hewn framing members (between 8" and 12" in size), some of which are carved or decoratively molded, flush board interior walls or no interior wall finish at all, exposed posts that are usually heavier at their tops, exposed floor joists often chamfered or beaded on the bottom edge, and a large chimney bay between 4.5' to 10' deep. Lamb's tongue stops were also commonly used to decorate framing members, and some of the county's first-period buildings have summer beams, which were also a common element in New England construction.

No single building height or fenestration pattern prevailed in the county during this period, rather 1, 1½- and 2-story houses were found, with both center and off-center door placement. Most were covered with wood clapboard, wood shingles, and wood planks, and only rarely with rabbeted siding if extant examples are indicative of prevalence. The most typical floor plan consisted of a single room with a large fireplace and winder stair at one end, and of the 35 first-period buildings examined, only six (6) 2-room wide/center chimney houses were identified. Although leaded glass windows may have been used on these first-period buildings, none were found extant in the houses examined.

Second-period buildings are defined as those built in the county between ca. 1730 to ca. 1780-90 and they reflect the gradual slimming of framing members that occurred as the 18th century progressed. Although corner posts were still exposed, they were usually enclosed, or "chased," with boards having a beaded edge on the corner. Since plaster did not come into general use until about 1820 in

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 9

Cape May County, interior walls were still covered with flush boards, usually vertically sawn and planed smooth, then laid vertically on the fireplace wall and partition walls, and horizontally on the perimeter walls. Floor joists continued to be exposed overhead; these were planed as well, and were often decorated with a beaded edge. Like the framing members, the chimney bay was also reduced in size, although the size of the fireplace opening itself remained large, running up to 6' wide in some instances. The single room floor plan continued to prevail, with no particular dominance between 1, 1½, and 2 story heights. On the exterior, wood clapboard was nearly universal.

Third-period buildings are those erected between ca. 1780-90 and ca. 1845, and they represent the final phase of heavy timber framing in the county. These buildings show the continued diminishing in the size of not only the framing members, but the fireplace openings as well. Although winder stairs adjacent to the chimney continued in their popularity, this period saw the introduction of the 5-bay wide Federal style dwelling, with its center hall/double parlor plan. As a building form, though, it was rarely used in the county and single room plan houses continued to predominate. As plaster walls came into common usage about 1820, surprisingly, corner posts and girts were still exposed, although modestly so, and were usually faced with beaded edge boards to dress them up.

Despite the introduction of plaster walls, flush board walls and exposed joists continued to be fashionable and are found being used as late as ca. 1832 in the Jesse Gandy House in Upper Township. The latest house to have both plaster walls and exposed corner posts and girts is dated at ca. 1847 (the Stillwell Smith House, Dennis Township) and its mid-19th century interior belies its mid-18th century exterior appearance. Exterior cladding continued to be almost universally composed of wood clapboard.¹⁸

Lean-tos in all three construction periods were typically placed against the chimney gable end, and are found with this placement as early as ca. 1695 (the Reeves-Iszard-Godfrey House in Upper Township) and as late as the previously mentioned ca. 1847 Stillwell Smith House (Dennis Twp.). In all three of Cape May's construction periods, no one story height predominated.¹⁹

The Significance of the Judge Nathaniel Foster House within These Contexts

When built about 1727, the main block and the kitchen ell had most of the characteristics found in Cape May County's first-period buildings, including exposed corner posts that are heavier at the top than at the bottom, exposed hewn floor joists overhead, exposed girts and posts, and a mostly hewn frame and rafters, with some pit-sawn in half. Joists overhead in the kitchen were beaded, but those in other probed areas—over the north and middle chambers—were not. The corner posts appear to have always been wrapped with beaded edge boards, except that in the attic winder stair which is not wrapped and was never wrapped, but is dressed. This treatment of wrapping corner posts is not characteristic of the first period, but became almost universal in the county during the second period

¹⁸ Berkey, 244-245, 248.

¹⁹ Ibid., 113-124.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 10

of construction; thus their appearance in the Foster House may exemplify the transition from the first period to the second period.

It is likely that both sections had flush board interior walls, but this can only be confirmed in the kitchen ell where original boards with face-nailed hand-wrought nails are extant on the west and north walls of the winder stair and in the walls of the west chamber closet.

The house's floor plan is atypical, however, and is seen only in one other Cape May County timber frame house, the first-period George Hand House (known locally as the Blue Pig) in Cape May City. Not only are the floor plans identical, but the tenons of the joists in the Hand House are also pegged as they are in the Foster House. Pegged joists are rarely seen in Cape May County and suggest that Foster may have built the Hand House as well.²⁰

Also significant is the original rabbeted siding, held with rose head nails, covering the Foster House. This siding has rabbeted top and bottom edges with a bead along the rabbeted bottom edge. [fig. 7] Unlike shiplap siding where the rabbets create a flush surface, in this siding the beaded bottom edge drops over the rabbeted top edge of the board below it, creating the look of ordinary beaded clapboard and the benefit of a drip edge. While commonly found in tidewater Maryland timber frame buildings dating from the mid-1700s until the early 1800s,²¹ this type of rabbeted siding is rarely encountered in Cape May County and is found to date in only one other building, the first-period ca. 1730 Memucan Hughes House in the City of Cape May. The Hughes House siding is also face-nailed with rose head nails.

The remodeling of the main block about 1826 exemplifies the transition from a vernacular style of domestic architecture to a more high-style architecture—for Cape May County at least—that draws on Federal themes and motifs which were nationally popular in the opening decades of the 1800s. In fact, the semicircular fanlights used by the Fosters closely resemble those illustrated in Asher Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion* (1827), their pedimented door surrounds are similar to those illustrated in plate 26 of Benjamin's *The Rudiments of Architecture* (1814), and the stepped panel motifs found in their later mantel designs are almost identical to those illustrated in Benjamin's *Practical House Carpenter* of 1832.²²

The main block was updated with plaster walls and ceilings that were just coming into fashion in Cape May County despite their widespread use since the 1730s elsewhere in the state. Corner posts in the Foster House parlor were cut back to accommodate the plaster walls, but as was typical in the county's third period, the remaining corner posts throughout the house continued to be exposed, as

²⁰ Ibid., 194.

²¹ Email correspondence with Dr. Bernard Herman, vernacular architecture professor at University of North Carolina, 11-11-2013.

²² Asher Benjamin, *American Builder's Companion* (1827; reprint, NY: Dover Publications, 1969), plate 38, p. 79; Asher Benjamin, *The Rudiments of Architecture* (Boston: Asher Benjamin, 1814), plate 26; Asher Benjamin, *The Practical House Carpenter* (Boston: R.P. and C. Williams, 1832), plate 49, p. 135.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 8 Page 11

were the plates, story posts, and girts. The kitchen ell retained its exposed joists in the chambers, but they were wrapped with beaded edge boards instead of being hidden entirely with a plaster ceiling; in the kitchen, the beaded joists overhead remained. Most of the ell's flush board walls were replaced in-kind, a gesture that shows how reluctant Cape May County carpenters were to embrace the "new" plaster walls that were just then gaining acceptance.

Within these contexts, the ca. 1727 Judge Nathaniel Foster House, as remodeled about 1826 in the Federal style, illustrates how Cape May County's timber frame buildings were as much backward-looking as they were forward-looking even as the first quarter of the 19th century was drawing to a close. Changing tastes demanded up-to-date mantels, plaster finishes, and door surrounds, but even talented carpenters like the Fosters, who were familiar with the Federal style through popular pattern books, did not entirely abandon the heavy timber frame traditions that had characterized the county's domestic architecture since the 1690s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, NJ

Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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Isabelle Foster Sakewicz, Foster descendant, 9-23-2002.

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Colonial Surveys, Deeds and Wills. [New Jersey State Archives]
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, NJ

Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Cape May County Court Minutes, 1697-1762. [Cape May County Clerk's Office, vault]

Cape May County Deeds, various. [Cape May County Clerk's Office]

Cape May County Tax Lists, Lower Township, various years. [microfilm, Cape May County Clerk's Office]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section number 10 Page 1

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary comprises block 238, lot 8.01 as shown on the current tax map of Lower Township.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property represents the lot which has been associated with the building since 1958 when approximately one-half of the lot was sold to the Villas Volunteer Fire Company.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
photographs**

Judge Nathaniel Foster House
Cape May County, NJ

Typical Information for All Photographs

1. Name of Property	Judge Nathaniel Foster House
2. County and State	Cape May County, New Jersey
3. Photographer	Joan Berkey
4. Date of Photograph	Fall 2013
6. Location of Digital Copies	Joan Berkey NJ State Historic Preservation Office

Photo # and Description of View

1 of 17: streetscape, view southeast down Bayshore Road
2 of 17: façade (east elevation) and north side elevation, view southwest
3 of 17: rear (west) and south side elevations, view northeast
4 of 17: out house: façade (south elevation) and east side elevation, view northwest
5 of 17: storage shed: façade (east elevation) and north side elevation, view southwest
6 of 17: foyer, view northwest
7 of 17: parlor, view southeast
8 of 17: parlor, view northwest
9 of 17: parlor, close-up of Mark Richards fireplace insert
10 of 17: kitchen, view northwest
11 of 17: enclosed porch, view northwest
12 of 17: second floor stair hall, view northwest
13 of 17: south chamber, view southeast
14 of 17: east chamber, view northeast
15 of 17: middle chamber, view southeast
16 of 17: middle chamber, view northeast towards bathroom
17 of 17: west chamber, view northwest



1649 Bayshore Road, Lower Township, nj 08251

Sign in
0 of 5

Directions My places Nearby

Road Bird's eye Traffic

1649 Bayshore Rd, Villas, NJ
08251

39 020561 -74 935585

Directions Send More
Not what you wanted?

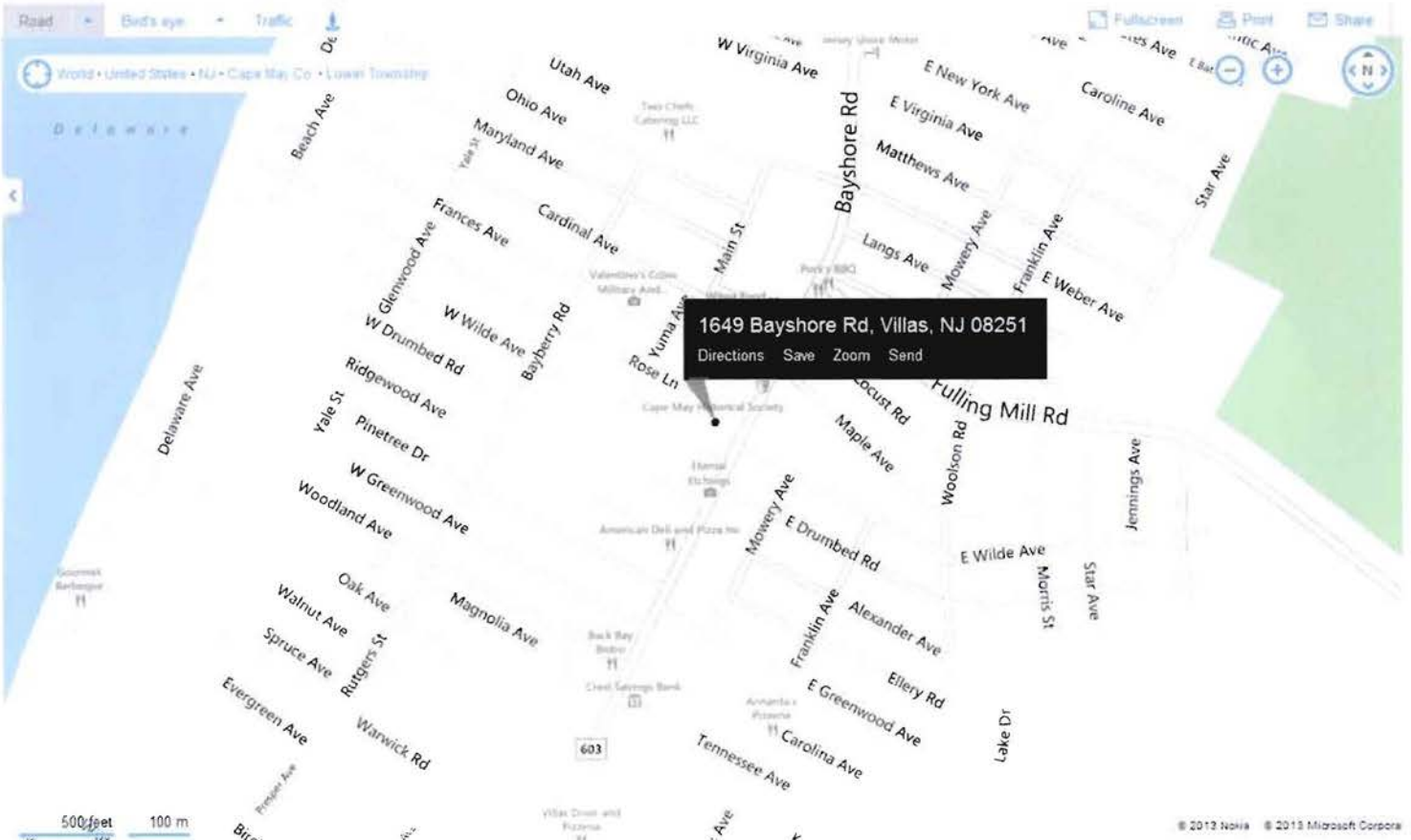
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BUSINESSES AT THIS ADDRESS

Cape May Historical Society

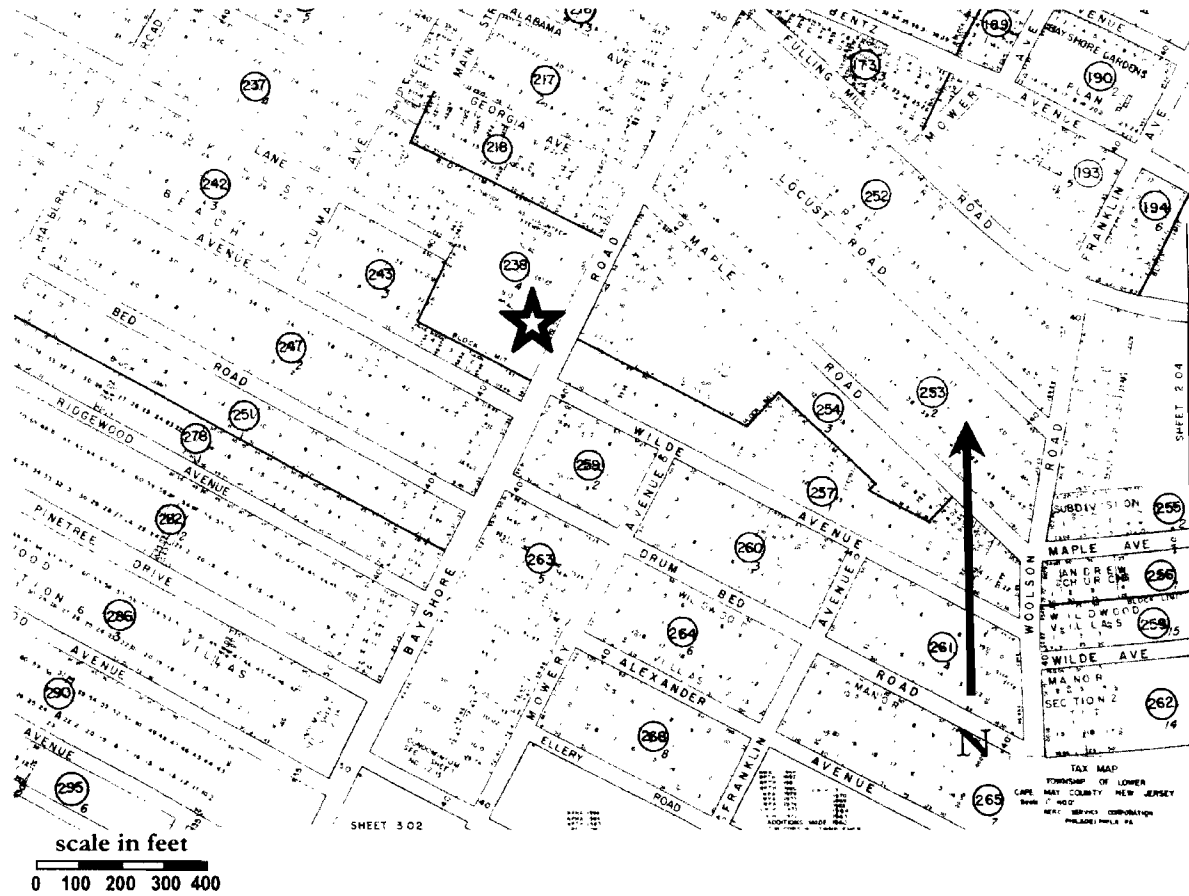
NEARBY

see+do
eat+drink
shop
picks for you



1649 Bayshore Rd, Villas, NJ 08251
Directions Save Zoom Send

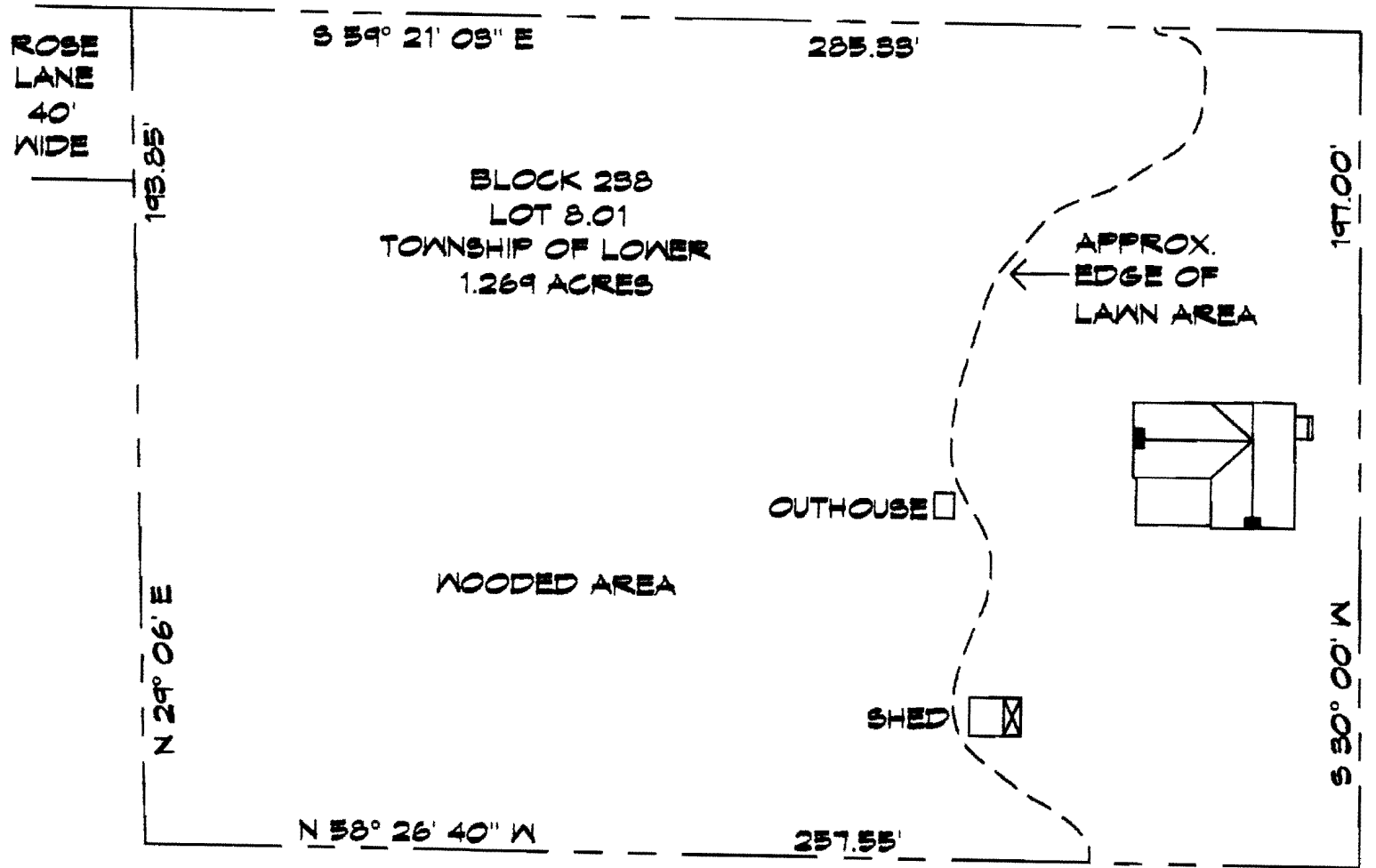




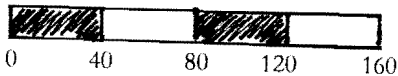
Tax Map of Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ

annotated to show the location of the
Judge Nathaniel Foster House

block 238, lot 8.01



SCALE IN FEET

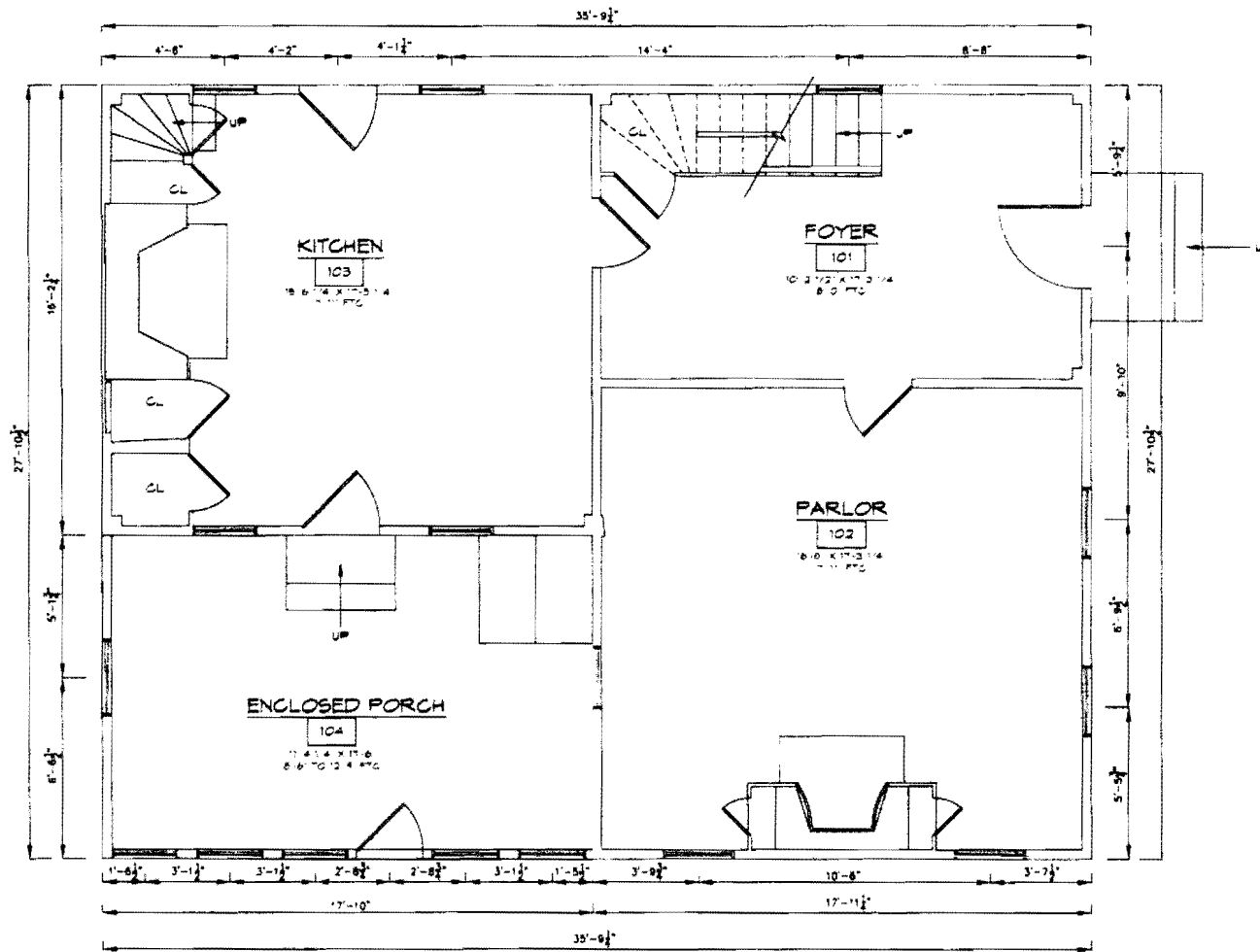


SITE PLAN

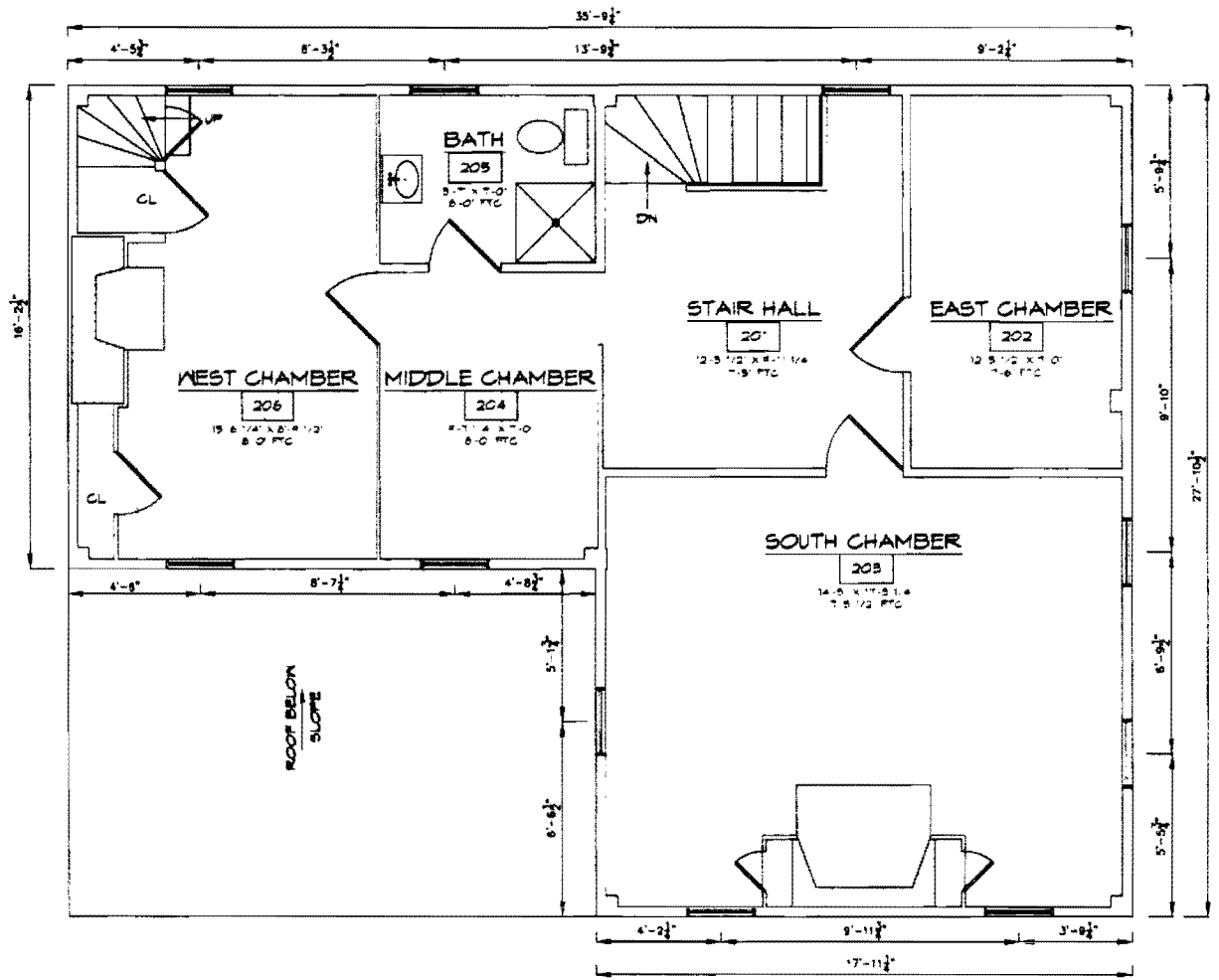
Judge Nathaniel Foster House

1649 Bayshore Road
 Villas, New Jersey 08251



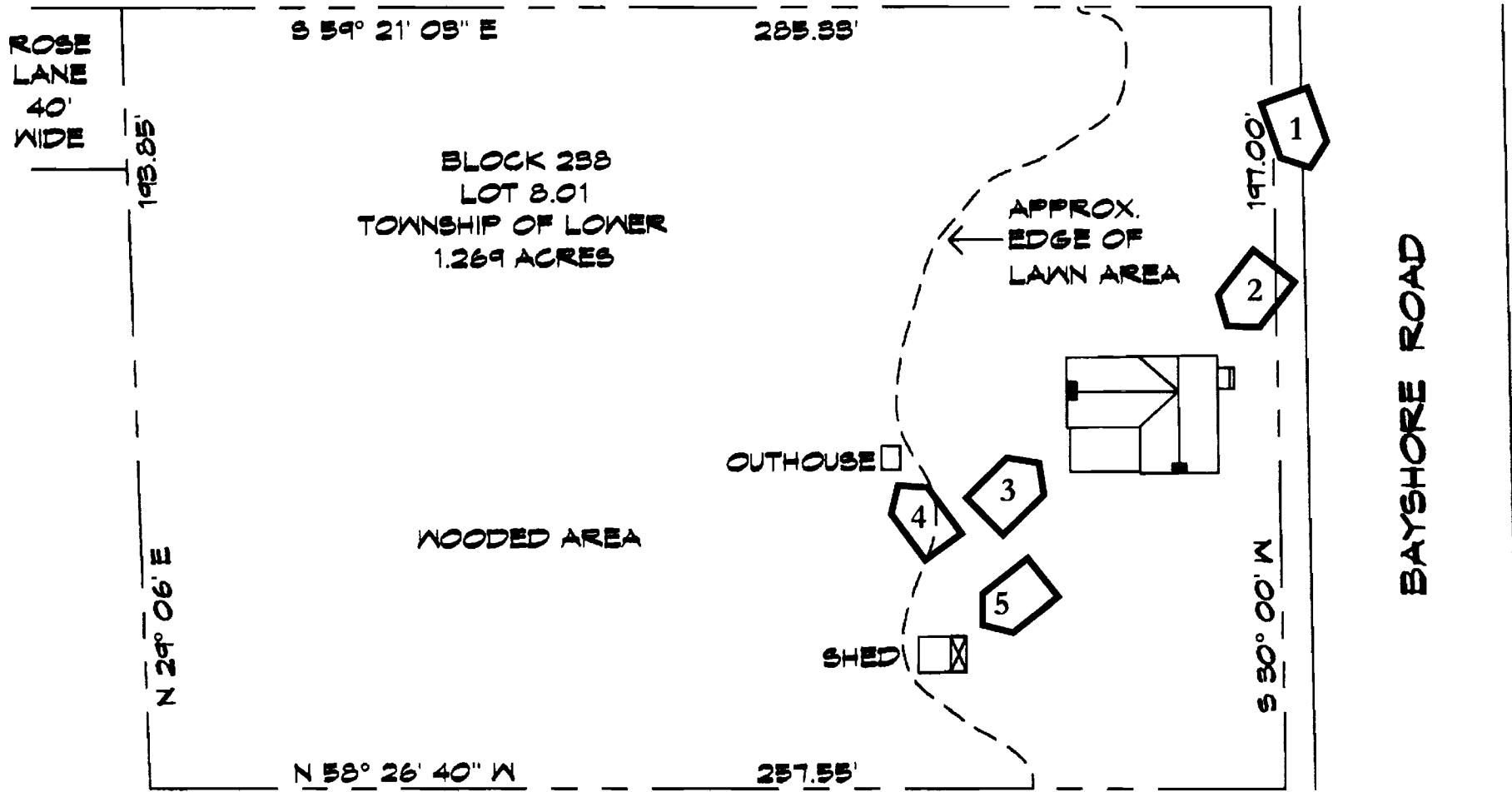


FIRST FLOOR PLAN
Judge Nathaniel Foster House
 1649 Bayshore Road
 Villas, New Jersey 08251



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
Judge Nathaniel Foster House
 1649 Bayshore Road
 Villas, New Jersey 08251



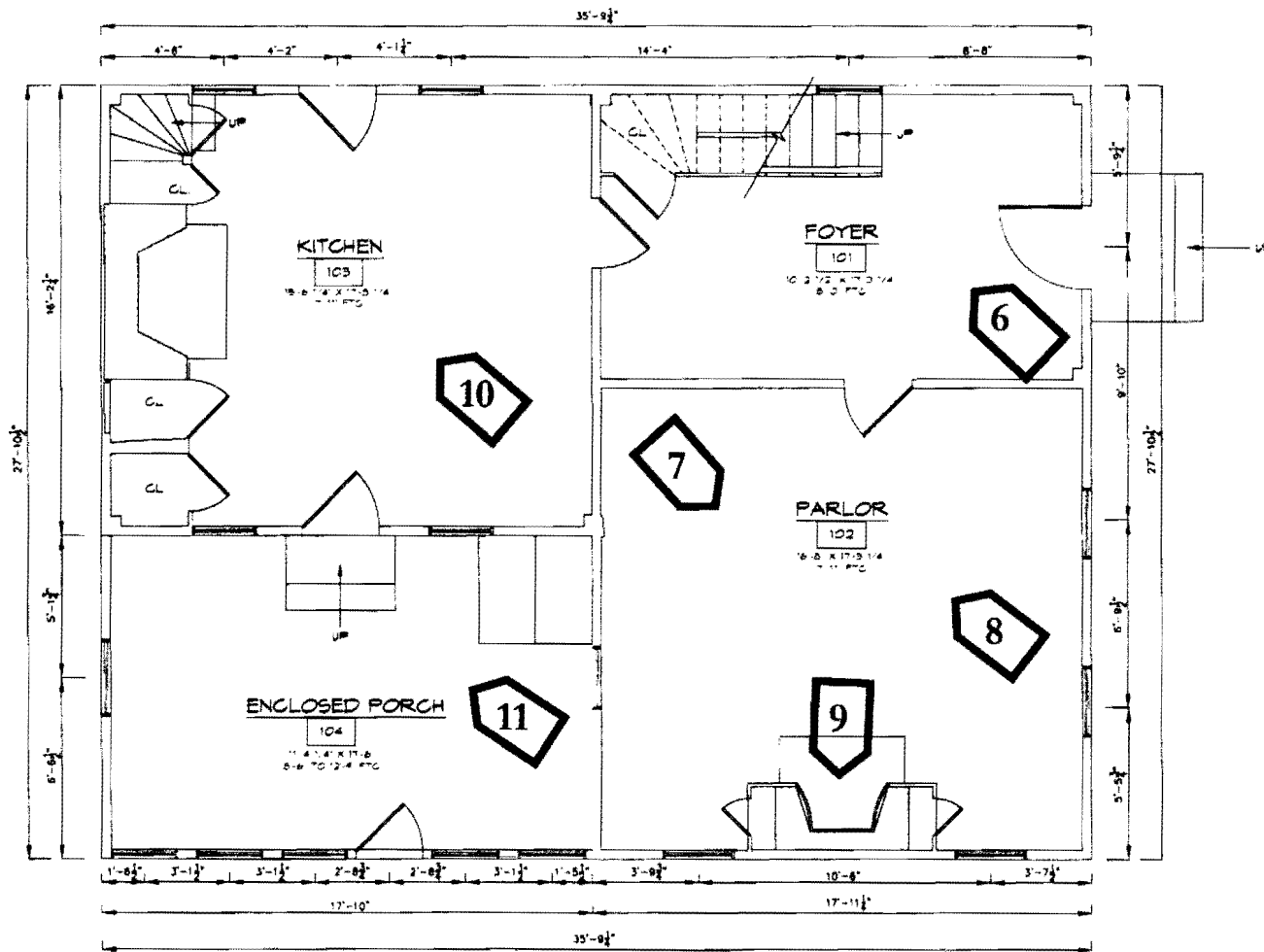


SITE PLAN ANNOTATED FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Judge Nathaniel Foster House

1649 Bayshore Road
 Villas, New Jersey 08251



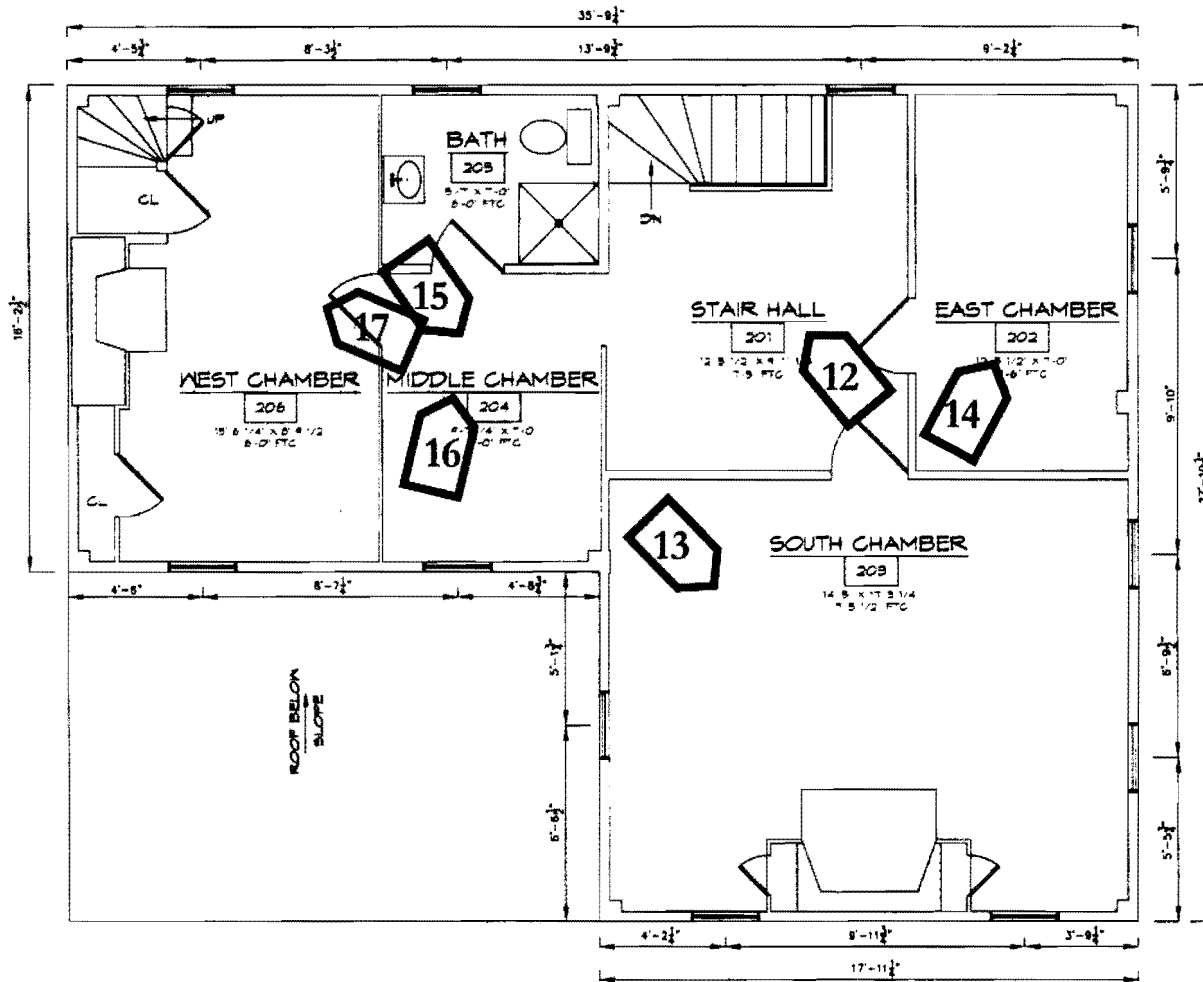


FIRST FLOOR PLAN
ANNOTATED FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Judge Nathaniel Foster House

1649 Bayshore Road
 Villas, New Jersey 08251





**SECOND FLOOR PLAN
ANNOTATED FOR PHOTOGRAPHS**



Judge Nathaniel Foster House

1649 Bayshore Road
Villas, New Jersey 08251

Judge Nathaniel Foster House Historic and Supplemental Images

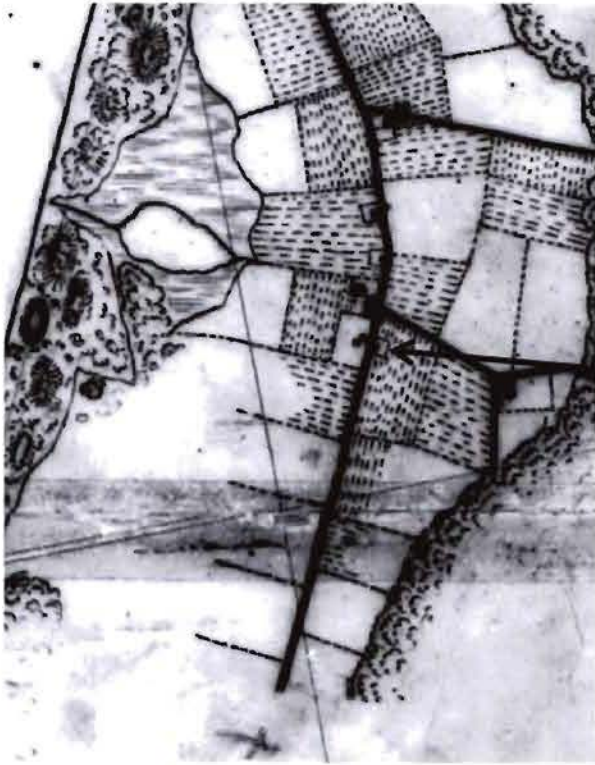


Figure 1: 1842 USGS Topographic map (#T-153) showing the Foster House just south of the intersection of Bayshore Road with Fulling Mill Road. The large pond is noted in the legal description when Nathaniel Foster purchased the 100 acre tract in 1727. [north top of image]

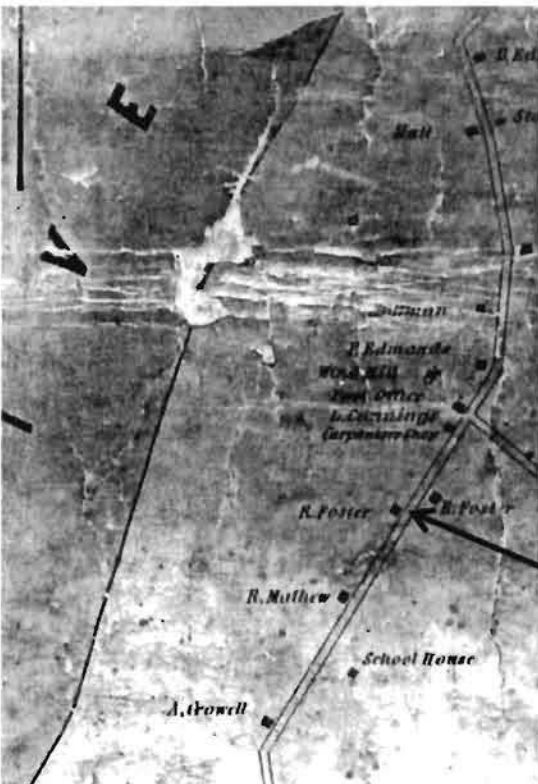


Figure 2: 1850 Nunan map of Lower Township showing the house under the ownership of R. [Reuben] Foster. [north top of image]

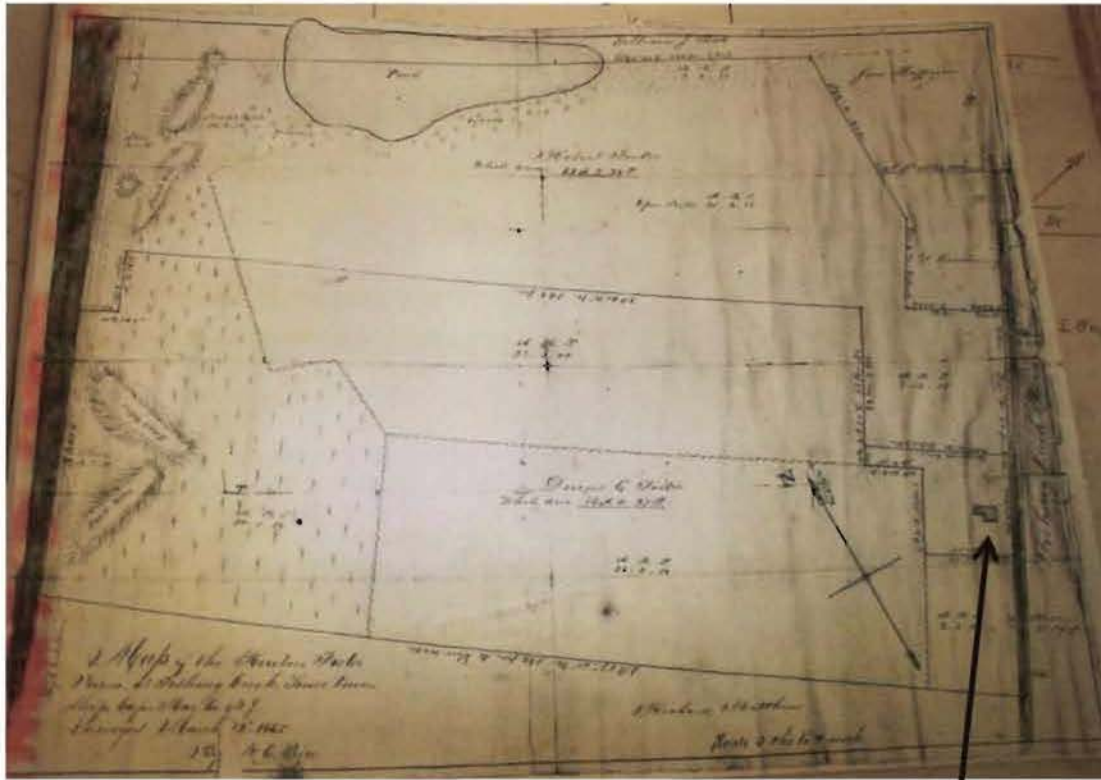


Figure 3: 1865 map of the Reuben Foster farm, drawn by N. C. Price, surveyor. This map, found in a book of Price's surveys held at the Cape May County Clerk's Office, shows how Reuben Foster divided his farm between his sons Robert and Downs, with Robert receiving the house and 62 acres on an irregularly-shaped lot. [north arrow show on map]



Figure 4: 1872 Beers Map showing the house under the ownership of R. E [Robert Edmunds] Foster. [north top of image]

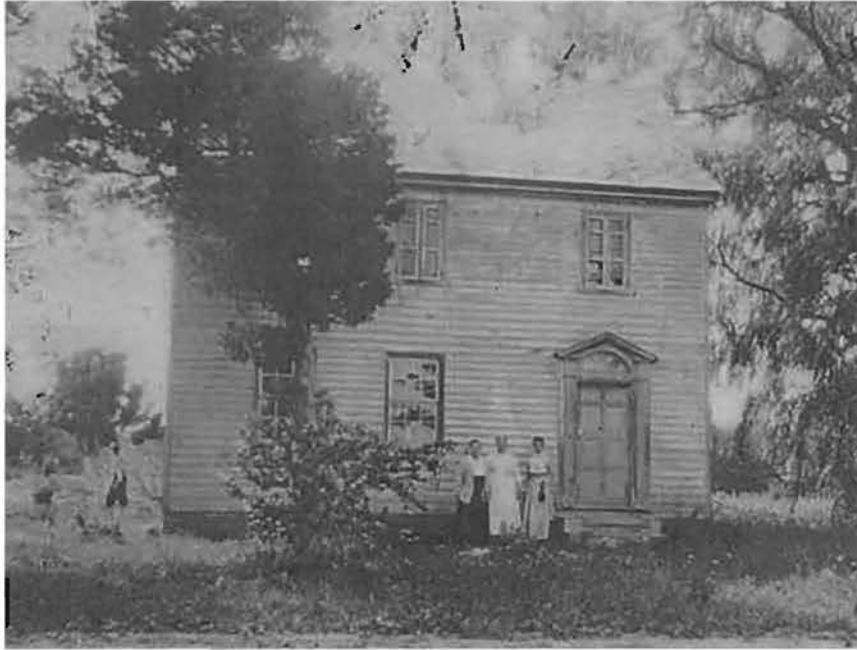


Figure 5: Taken in 1923, this historic photograph shows the “new” asbestos shingle roof and the original siding (extant under ca. 1950 asbestos siding) on the façade. [courtesy of the Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society]



Figure 6: ca. 1950 photograph of the house before the asbestos siding was added and showing the south side of the house with the ca. 1920 open air porch. [photo courtesy of Isabelle Foster Sakewicz]



Figure 7: piece of original ship lap siding with a rabbeted top edge and a beaded + rabbeted bottom edge.



Figure 8: entry hall, view east showing front door



Figure 9: kitchen, view northeast showing kitchen cabinets



Figure 10: southeast corner of the kitchen with some of the ceiling removed to show an original beaded joist (heavily painted) to the right and the wrapped corner post to the left. The arrow points to a peg in the girt that secures the tenon on the joist. View south.

















The Northampton House
In 1773, the Northampton House was built as a residence for the Northampton family. It was designed by the architect James O'Connell and built by the carpenter John O'Connell. The house was built in the Georgian style and is a fine example of the work of these two men.

The house was built in 1773 and is a fine example of the work of the architect James O'Connell and the carpenter John O'Connell. The house was built in the Georgian style and is a fine example of the work of these two men.

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W. RICHARDS



















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Foster, Judge Nathaniel, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Cape May

DATE RECEIVED: 7/09/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/04/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/19/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/25/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000516

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8.25.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



State of New Jersey

MAIL CODE 501-04B

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

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HPO-F2014-321



CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

BOB MARTIN
Commissioner

June 27, 2014

Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Judge Nathaniel Foster House, in Lower Township, Cape May County, New Jersey.

This nomination has received unanimous approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Daniel D. Saunders, Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Mail code 501-04B, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420, or call him at (609) 633-2397.

Sincerely,

Rich Boornazian
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer