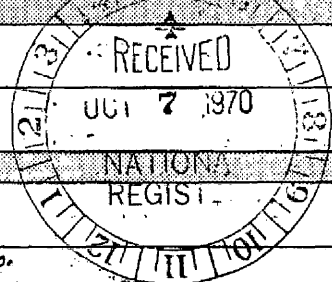


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Jersey	
COUNTY: Mercer	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.12.34.0014	12/18/70



H13 E 519670  
 2n18 N 4451900

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Douglass House (George Bright House)**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**John Kitch Way** *Corner of Spruce & Montgomery Sts.*

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Trenton** *(See letter of 12-2-72)*

STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: **34** COUNTY: **Mercer** CODE: **021**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	<b>Cultural</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<b>Art Council</b>	

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**New Jersey, Department of Treasury**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**State House**

CITY OR TOWN: **Trenton** STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: **34**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Mercer County Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**South Broad Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Trenton** STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: **34**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey NJ-237**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1936**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Library of Congress**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE: **08**

STATE: New Jersey  
 COUNTY: Mercer  
 ENTRY NUMBER: 70.12.34.0014  
 DATE: 12/18/70  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. Description

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a small frame building with beaded siding and pitch roof covered with slate. The interior walls are of plaster; the floors are random width pine. The chimneys are brick. The front section of the house is 2 stories the rear is 1½.

*moved three*

The house originally stood at 191-193 South Broad Street where the German Evangelical Lutheran Church now stands. It was moved in 1871 to 478 Center Street and then to the rear of the Old Barracks in 1917. In 1923 it was moved to its present location and dedicated in 1926.

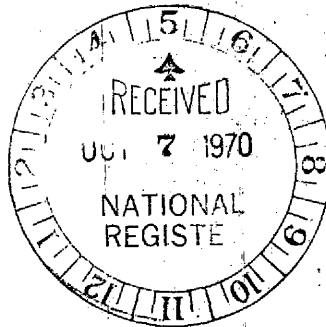
The building is presently used as offices and headquarters for the New Jersey Council for the Arts. The house is a small framed L-shaped structure typical of several that once existed in the city of Trenton, but one of the only remaining examples.

It is three bays wide with the door to the left as one faces the building. The doorway opens into a narrow hallway which also houses the staircase. To the rear is the original kitchen; to the right a small parlor.

This same pattern of rooms is repeated upstairs with an additional small room at the front of the house.

*side hall plan*

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. Significance

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1766( 1777 - Washington's Council of War)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

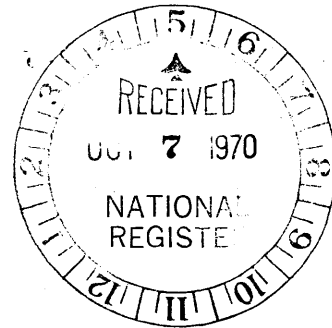
- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)<br><b>Historic</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In this house General Washington held a Council-of War on the night of January 2, 1777 after the Second Battle of Trenton also known as the Battle of the Assumpink Creek. The decision was made to evade Cornwallis' trap and march over the back woods to Princeton. This house was selected largely because it was situated farther from enemy fire than was Washington's Headquarters at the True American Inn.

Alexander Douglass who owned the house during the Revolution was a Quartermaster in the Revolutionary Army. The house became the headquarters of Brigadier St. Clair. It is an excellent example of a small 18th Century dwelling of the type common in Trenton during the Revolutionary War years.

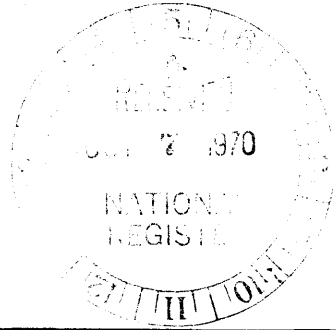
SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

New Jersey: A Guide To Its Present and Past:

W.P.A. Federal Writers' Project.



**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40 ° 13 ' 03 "	74 ° 46 ' 07 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1 acre (approximately)**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Charlotte Tomaszewski, Research Assistant**

ORGANIZATION: **Historic Sites Section, Department Environmental Protection**      DATE: **July 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Box 1390, John Fitch Plaza**

CITY OR TOWN: **Trenton**      STATE: **New Jersey**      CODE: **34**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name: *Richard Kulla*

Title: Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

Date: September 11, 1970

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

*Ernest A. Connally*  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**DEC 18 1970**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

*William J. Mumford*  
Keeper of The National Register

**NOV 27 1970**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

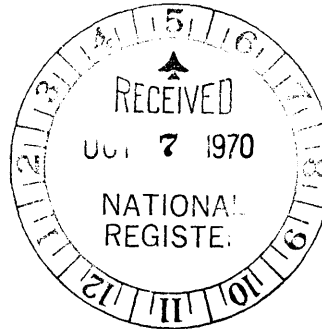
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

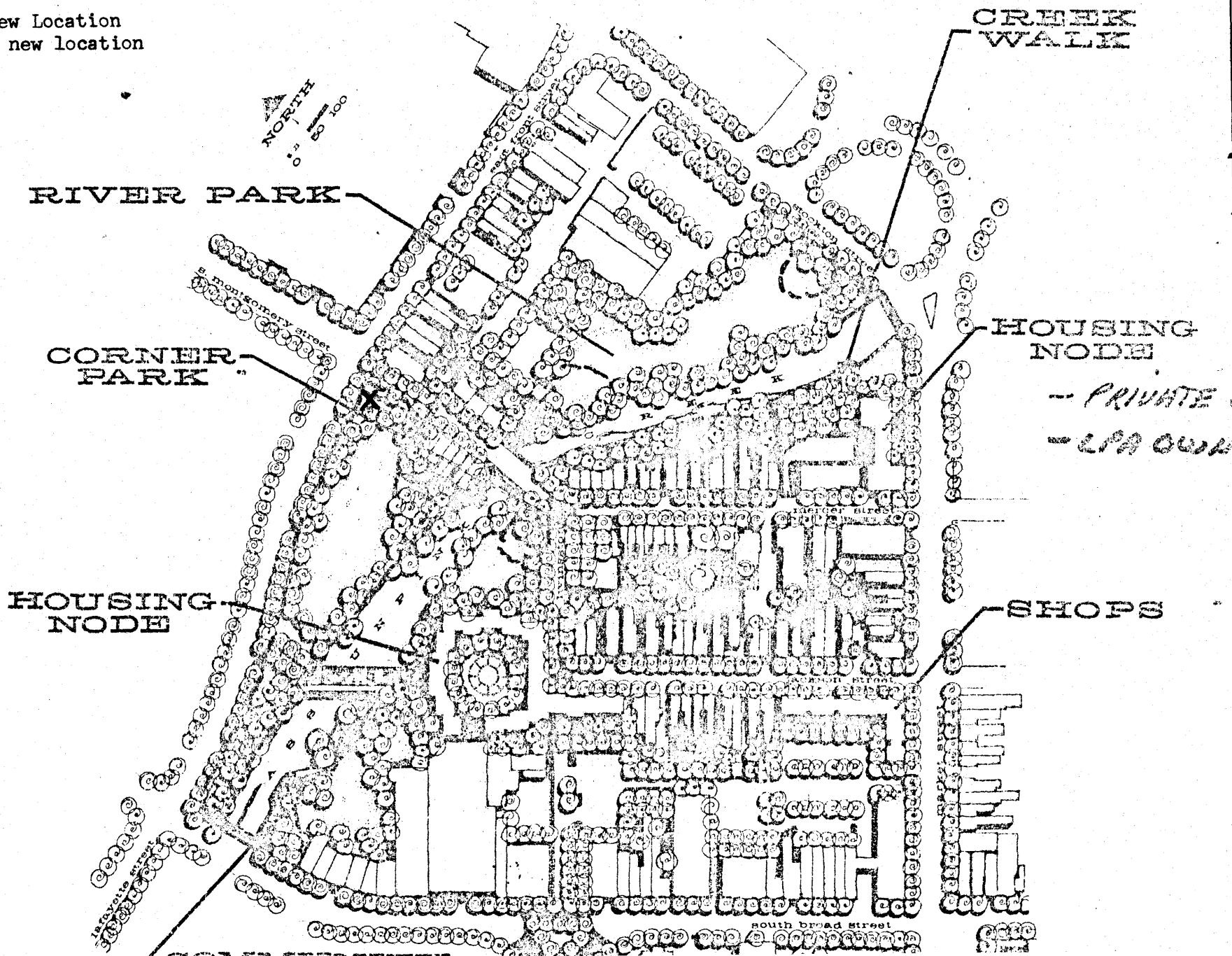
STATE <b>New Jersey</b>	
COUNTY <b>Mercer</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>70.12.34.0014</b>	DATE <b>12/18/70</b>

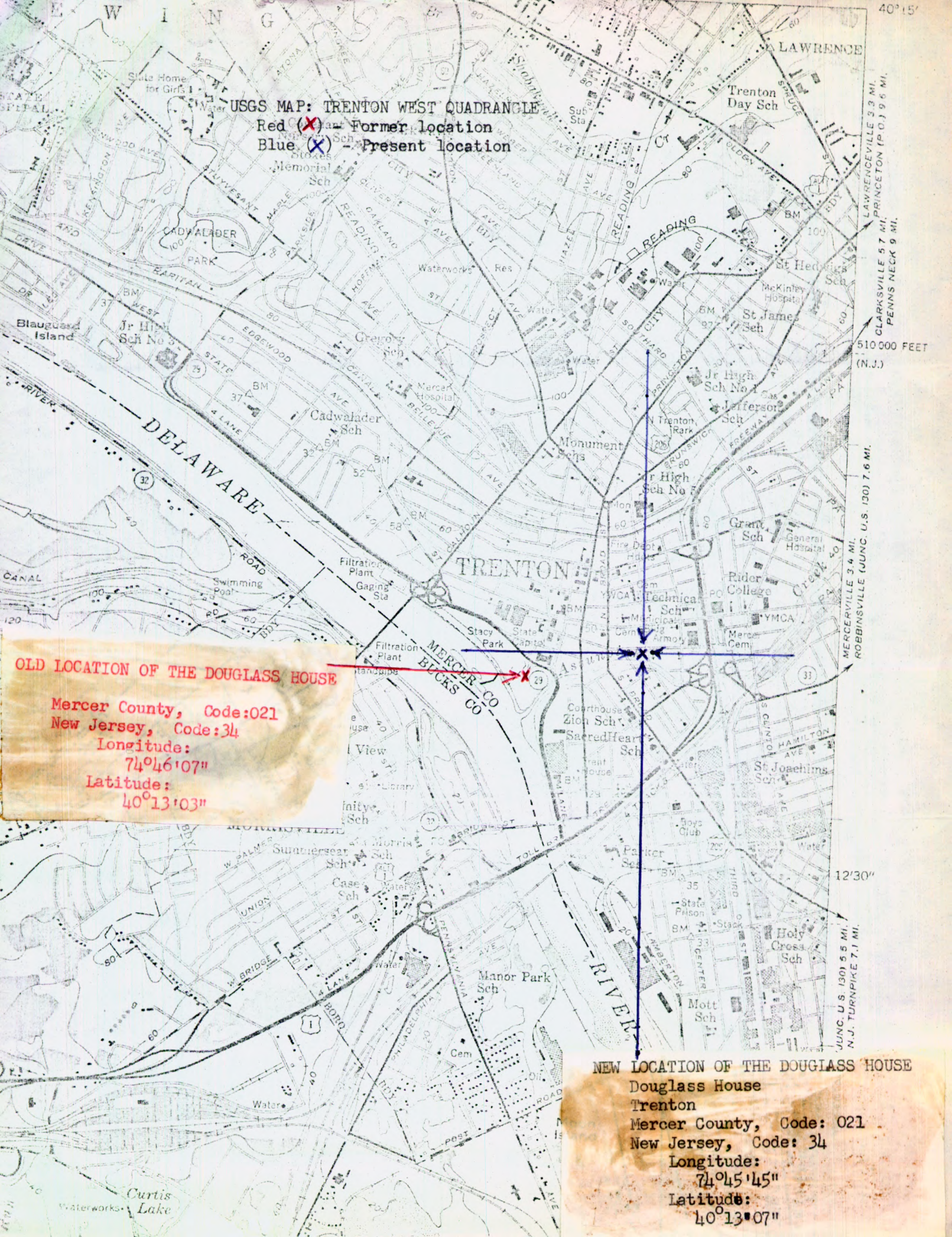
(Number all entries)

Douglas House  
Trenton, New Jersey  
Mercer County      Code: 34  
6.                      Code : 021  
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory      # 3074.18  
1961 State  
Historic Sites Office  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Box 1420, John Fitch Plaza  
Trenton, New Jersey      34



Douglass House: New Location  
Blue (X) marks new location





**USGS MAP: TRENTON WEST QUADRANGLE**

Red (X) - Former location  
 Blue (X) - Present location

**OLD LOCATION OF THE DOUGLASS HOUSE**

Mercer County, Code:021  
 New Jersey, Code:34  
 Longitude:  
 74°46'07"  
 Latitude:  
 40°13'03"

**NEW LOCATION OF THE DOUGLASS HOUSE**

Douglass House  
 Trenton  
 Mercer County, Code: 021  
 New Jersey, Code: 34  
 Longitude:  
 74°45'45"  
 Latitude:  
 40°13'07"

40°15'  
 LAWRENCEVILLE 3.3 MI.  
 CLARKSVILLE 5.7 MI. PRINCETON (P.O.) 9 MI.  
 PENNS NECK 9 MI.  
 510 000 FEET (N.J.)  
 MERCERVILLE 3.4 MI.  
 ROBBINSVILLE (UNCL. U.S. 130) 7.6 MI.  
 12'30"  
 UNCL. U.S. 130) 5.5 MI.  
 N.J. TURNPIKE 7.1 MI.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Douglass, Alexander, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, ~~Trenton~~ *Mercer*

DATE RECEIVED: 11/22/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 01/06/05  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 70000387

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA *Accept additional documentation*  
REVIEWER *Patrick Andrews* DISCIPLINE *Historian*  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE *1/6/05*

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 National Park Service.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Mercer Co., NJ  
Douglass, Alexander House

## AMENDMENT TO STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Introduction

Between August and December, 2002, Westfield Architects undertook significant repository research and physical investigations that revealed new information on the historical evolution of the Alexander Douglass House. This work was undertaken during the preparation of a Preservation Plan for the property.

### Historical Significance

The Alexander Douglass House is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of social history and architecture. It is representative of the early interest in Colonial history that led the citizens of Trenton to save, move, and restore this house over a 35-year period (1901-1936). It is also architecturally significant as a prototypical example of a c.1800 Trenton rowhouse executed in the Federal style.

The Douglass House has a long and complicated history that is intertwined with the development of Trenton, the Revolutionary War, and the renewed interest in the history of the United States of America that grew during the Colonial Revival period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1751, the Town of Kingsbury in the Township of Nottingham was laid out south of the Assunpink River (which at the time represented one of Trenton's borders) by Robert S. Hooper. Hooper sold lot no. 9 to Jacob Bright in 1756 for the sum of sixteen pounds proclamation money.<sup>1</sup> The deed between Hooper and Bright makes no mention of a house or structure on the lot.<sup>2</sup> In 1769, Bright and his wife sold the property to Alexander Douglass for 100 pounds. The deed specifically mentions the message or tenement, indicating that a house stood on the property.<sup>3</sup> Based on this reliable documentary information, the earliest section of the Alexander Douglass House can be dated to c.1760, during the period of Bright's ownership. Alexander Douglass is presumed to have lived in the house until his death in 1836.

During the Revolutionary War, when the fighting came to Trenton, Douglass, who was a quartermaster in the Revolutionary Army, housed General St. Clair in his home, a fact which is noted in numerous histories of Trenton and the Revolutionary War.<sup>4</sup> One extensive history on George Washington by historian James Thomas Flexner even describes the house: "His own headquarters at Trenton tavern having been overrun by the British, he called a Council of War in the combined parlor, dining room, and kitchen of the two-story shanty that was the headquarters of St. Clair."<sup>5</sup> This description is interesting in that it does not describe the building that currently stands in Mill Hill Park, where the parlor would most likely have been described as a parlor only or at most a parlor/dining room, since there is a back room that is presumed to have functioned as a kitchen. However, many early colonial buildings were simply one room over one room, which is what Flexner is describing, which suggests that perhaps the original rear section of the current building was at that time a free-standing structure (the front section not having been built yet). Unfortunately, Flexner did not provide a reference for his description and although he is still alive, he is 94 years of age and no longer able to provide that sort of information.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Mercer Co., NJ  
Douglass, Alexander House

Douglass continued to live in the house through and after the Revolutionary War. After the war, Douglass put in War Reparations claims for many household goods, including clothing, linens, a horse, a fence, a rake, bedtick and a pillow, flax, mirror, and wool cards.<sup>6</sup> In 1780, Douglass is listed in tax records as having one house and lot with a value of 15 pounds and seven acres of unimproved land. The next available records are for 1795, when Douglass is listed as having two houses with a value of 30 pounds.<sup>7</sup> This change is very significant and may represent the construction of the front section of the current house as an independent structure or the construction of another one room-over-one room house that could be the back portion of the existing building. Another suggestive change in Douglass tax records is a jump in the value of his house and lot between 1797, when it lists two houses at 26 pounds and 1802, the next available records, when two houses with a value of 70 pounds are listed.<sup>8</sup> This may suggest that if the previous change from one house to two does not represent the construction of the front section of the house, that one of the two houses may have been improved by the addition of the front section.

The remaining historic fabric in the front section of the house, including the two original doors (used in the two second floor closets), remaining original doorways between the hallway and the parlor and the hallway and the bedroom, the fireplace mantel and the size of the fireplace, the chairrail, the stair balustrade, and the use of six-over-nine windows on the second floor and six-over-six on the first are all consistent with construction details during the Federal period (1780-1820). There is no physical evidence to support a construction date prior to 1780. In fact, the most likely construction date, based on the physical evidence, is 1790 or later. In addition, construction for the most part came to a halt during the Revolutionary War. Based on the combination of the physical evidence and the documentary supporting evidence, it is believed that the front section of the building was constructed c.1800. This section would have been constructed by Douglass, who owned the property until his death in 1836.

Upon his death, Douglass willed the majority of his estate, which included the house, to his nephew Joseph.<sup>9</sup> Joseph in turn left the property to his only child, Ann Douglass, who never married. In 1852, Ann sold the house to Augustus Geissenhainer, who sold it to the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church in 1857.<sup>10</sup> The Church used the house as a rectory until 1876. In 1860, the house was photographed with a woman dressed in an authentic Revolutionary War era dress standing on the porch and with one of the first floor windows open. In a letter to the New Jersey Historical Society, the photograph is described by Sara Smith Stafford<sup>11</sup>. She states that the photograph was staged with a woman acting as a lookout for the British troops while the open window represents the Council of War taking place within the front parlor room. The photograph has a photographer's label on the back with the date May 14, 1860 on it. The house was still located at South Broad Street at that time. The photograph shows a two story configuration to the front section, with six-over-six windows on the first floor and six-over-nine on the second. The first floor windows have three-panel shutters, while shutter hardware is visible on the second floor windows. The clapboard seen in the photograph is not beaded and has varying exposures. An early porch, which appears to be Greek Revival in style, surrounds the front door, while the original roof slope and material (wood shingles) and the original cornice are also visible. Beneath the first floor windows, there is also a wood bulkhead. A second floor window is clearly visible on the right side elevation. The staging of this photograph represents an early revival of interest in the Revolutionary War.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Mercer Co., NJ  
Douglass, Alexander House

The house was occupied by the Reverend George F. Gardner and his family from 1859 to 1873. In 1870, the Church decided to improve the building for use by the pastor and his family by altering the slope of the roof, thereby providing room for a room in the attic. This room was then plastered and finished. In addition, it is written that an addition of two rooms, one to serve as a kitchen and one to serve as a study, were built onto the back of the house.<sup>12</sup> It is assumed, but not certain, that the house still retained its earlier rear section when this new addition was constructed. As a result of the alterations, the house has a different appearance in a c.1870 photograph. The roof slope is lower, but the front and rear walls of the front section are taller. Three small windows were inserted into the knee wall of the third floor to provide light to that room. The previous wood bulkhead was replaced with a flat panel at grade.

In 1876, the Lutheran Church decided to build a new church. The footprint of the new church would extend into the space occupied by the Douglass House, so the building, but not the lot, was put up for sale. It was purchased by J.J. Strasser on September 1, 1876, who had it moved to a lot that he had purchased at 478 Centre Street. According to a 1912 article, memories of older residents of Trenton varied regarding how the building was moved. It appears, but is not certain, that the rear section of the house was dismantled or torn down to accommodate the on-going work for the new church, but the front section was moved in one piece. This scenario accommodates the memories of those who say it was torn down, those who thought it was dismantled and taken over on wagons, and those who remembered it being moved in one piece. It is in accord with a physical examination of the building as well, which reveals no historic fabric in the rear section older than the late nineteenth century, as well as no signs that the woodwork in the front section had been dismantled and reassembled. It is also recorded in the article that material salvaged from the rear section, together with new material, was used to build a separate house on the alley behind the Douglass House. It is not clear from the article whether the salvaged material was from the 1870 addition alone, or whether material from the older rear section may have been used as well. Finally, the article also records that people took bits of the house away as souvenirs during this moving process and that a newspaper of the time noted the discovery of an old-fashioned fireman's hat "between the wall and the chimney" as the house was being dismantled. The hat had, among other things, a date of 1747 on it. If only the rear section of the house was dismantled, the discovery of this hat (if the information in the newspaper is correct) would further support the hypothesis that the rear section of the house was the older section.<sup>13</sup>

The house then stood at 478 Centre Street until 1924. Between 1876 and 1895, it was owned by J.J. Strasser. Strasser sold the property to J.J. Delp on October 1, 1895. Delp, in turn sold the property to The Douglass House Committee on February 10, 1914.<sup>14</sup> Until 1914, the house was apparently occupied by tenants. In his 1912 article, Backes notes that Frank Cassidy and his family were living in the house at the a time.<sup>15</sup> As often happens during periods of non-owner occupancy, the house deteriorated during this period. In a photograph taken while the house was on Centre Street, the woodwork has clearly deteriorated, the porch has been removed, and a side porch along the west elevation of the rear ell is crumbling. The second floor window on the right elevation has been removed. A standing-seam metal roof has been installed. The window on the west elevation of the rear ell is not the same window on the second floor now, being taller and being located closer to the south edge of the elevation. In lieu of a bulkhead in this location, two basement windows were installed in the new foundation. In the photograph, one of the basement windows is boarded over. The first floor shutters are closed as well, along with third floor shutters,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4Mercer Co., NJ  
Douglass, Alexander House

suggesting that the house may have been vacant at the time of the photograph. (If it were taken after 1914, the tenants may have moved out).

Interest in the house began to grow as early as 1901, when an article was published in the December 26, 1901 edition of the *Trenton Evening Times* on the 125th anniversary of Washington crossing the Delaware. Interest continued to grow thanks to the promotion of the house by William Backes, an attorney in Trenton. Soon after, Adjutant General William Sadler took an option to buy the property, which he passed on to the Trenton Catholic Club in 1913. School children from Trenton then raised funds to help the Catholic Club purchase the property. The Club paid \$5,000 for the house and land. They expected to recoup \$3,500 through the resale of the lot once the house had been removed. They raised nearly \$2,000 through a public campaign, of which nearly \$500 came from schools.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these efforts, the house was not moved until 10 years later. Interest was again revived in 1923, when William A. Wetzal, principal of Trenton High School collected \$14,699.18 from school children to move the building to Mahlon Stacy Park, which was owned by the City of Trenton.<sup>17</sup> At the same time articles on the history of the house began to appear again, along with an article on furniture purported to belong to Alexander Douglass at the time of the Council of War that would be brought back to the house for display, and another article regarding a woman who claimed to be a descendent of the Douglass family (Backes disputed this claim, noting that that branch of the Douglass line had died out with Ann Douglass).<sup>18</sup>

The building was moved the second time on January 24, 1924, as noted by a newspaper photograph with a caption of the house in the process of being moved. The roof had been removed prior to the move, perhaps to accommodate wires, and was reconstructed during the subsequent restoration at the new site. Based on Historic American Building Survey drawings and a HABS photograph, the restoration consisted of reconstructing the roof and cornice, installing new beaded clapboard siding, reconstructing the porch, reconstructing the bulkhead, reinstalling the second-floor side window, replacing the four-panel front door with a six-panel door, replacing the four-panel transom with a two-panel transom, replacing the six-over-six windows on the first floor front elevation with six-over-nine windows (creating an inappropriate historic aesthetic), and installing shutters. Alterations were also made to the rear section, as noted by the change to the south second floor window on the west elevation of the rear section from the previous photograph. The proportions and detailing on the porch are incorrect based on a comparison with the 1860 photograph. On the interior, based on physical investigation, the trim and plaster were repaired, two new doors were made — one for the basement and one for the bathroom, and the window frames and trim in the rear section appear to all date to that period as well. According to the HABS documentation, the house was opened to the public in 1936.<sup>19</sup>

The house remained in Mahlon Stacy Park until 1972, when development pressures due to the growing need for space to accommodate state buildings and associated parking led to the third and final relocation of the building to its current location in Mill Hill Park.<sup>20</sup> During a portion of its time in Stacey Park, the house was reportedly used by the Chief of the State House Police, who lived there before it was turned over to the Boy Scouts for use as a headquarters.<sup>21</sup> In 1974, the house was inspected by the fire inspector, who noted violations of the building codes

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5Mercer Co., NJ  
Douglass, Alexander House

in effect at that time, as well as other deterioration. He cited the wood shingle roof and frame construction, both of which violated the fire code, rot at the base of the left porch post, separating siding, holes in the roof, a framing problem, a rotted stair stringer (inside) and loose railing, poor plaster conditions throughout (except for the rear bedroom ceiling), and loose and missing floorboards in the attic. A cost estimate for repairs was then created which contained plastering, painting, wiring, flooring repairs, stair reconstruction, moving the basement door, removal of fluorescent lights and installation of period reproduction lighting, HVAC upgrades to a forced air system, and the purchase of a crane and andirons for the rear fireplace, installation of a damper in the rear fireplace, and the removal of the tiles on the hearth of the front fireplace.<sup>22</sup> Also, either when the house was moved in 1972 or in 1974, a new plywood deck was constructed for the front porch, the wood porch railings were replaced with metal railings, and the shutters were removed. The wall finishes in the rear ell section appear to be almost entirely drywall, which would suggest that the plaster was replaced in 1974 rather than repaired. The house has been used only for interpretation and small meetings of the Trenton Historical Society in the past thirty years. The house was recently closed due to the trip hazard created by holes in the floor boards.

Over the course of more than two hundred years, the Alexander Douglass House has undergone significant changes. It cannot be said with any certainty that any part of the building where the Council of War took place still remains. Certainly the rear portion does not retain its historical or architectural integrity to any period but 1925. The front section does retain its integrity on the interior to its c.1800 period of construction, and the exterior can be restored, based on historic documentation to that period as well.

Therefore, the National Register significance of this property should be expanded to reflect its association with the Colonial Revival movement under Criterion A in the area of social history, and its architectural significance as a intact example of a Federal period rowhouse under Criterion C.

## Endnotes

1. William J. Backes, "A Neglected Landmark of Great Historic Interest" (*Trenton Sunday Advertiser*, March 3, 1912)
2. Robert S. Hooper to Jacob Bright, Deed, Book T pp.20, 21, 22, found in *Colonial Conveyances, East and West Jersey, 1674-1794, vol. 1 and 2.*
3. Jacob Bright and wife to Alexander Douglass, Deed, Book U, pp.617, 618, 619, 620 (on file at Burlington County Court House)
4. Louise Hewitt (compiler), *Historic Trenton* (Trenton: The Smith Press, 1916), 50-51; William Stryker, *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898), 270; Edwin Robert Walker, et al. *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929: Two Hundred and Fifty Years of a Notable Town with Links in Four Centuries, Vol. 1*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1929), 178; and, Major E.M. Woodward and John F. Hageman, *History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, New Jersey, with Biographical Sketches of Many of their Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883), 670

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6Mercer Co., NJ  
Douglass, Alexander House

5. James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington in the American Revolution, 1776-1783* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 183
6. "Inventory of the Goods and Effects of Alexander Douglass Plundered and Destroyed by the Troops of the British Army in Dec. 1776" (War Reparations Records), 159, claim No.307 (on file at the New Jersey State Archives)
7. Tax Ratables, Books #290 and 291 (on file at the New Jersey State Archives)
8. Tax Ratables, Books # 293 and 294 (on file at the New Jersey State Archives)
9. Alexander Douglass, Will, October 9, 1835 (on file at the Burlington County Surrogates Office)
10. Ann Douglass to Augustus Geissenhainer, Deed, Book V, pp.516, 517 (on file at Mercer County Court House); Augustus Geissenhainer and wife to the German Evangelical-Lutheran Trinity Church of Trenton, NJ, Deed, Book 36 p.502, 503 (on file at Mercer County Court House)
11. Sara Smith Stafford to New Jersey Historical Society (printed in *Proceedings of New Jersey Historical Society*, Vol. 9, 140)
12. Backes, "A Neglected Landmark of Great Interest"
13. Ibid.
14. John J. Strasser to James Delp, Deed, Book 204, pp.154,155 (on file at Mercer County Court House); James A.H. Delp and wife to The Douglass House Committee, Deed, Book 365, pp.460,461,462 (on file at Mercer County Court House)
15. Backes; Sally Lane, "An oft-moved house that hosted history" (*Trenton Times*, July 19, 1981); "Committee Named on House Removal" (*Gazette*, November 26, 1913); and, "Title Taken to Douglass House" (no Name, no Date)
16. Lane, "An oft-moved house that hosted history"
17. "Strategic Move that Turned Revolutionary War and Gave to America Her Independence Was Decided Upon in Douglass House Here" (no Name, no Date); Elma Lawson Johnston, "Douglass House, When Removed, Will Contain Chair and Table Used During Trenton War Council"(no Name, no Date); and, "Woman Claiming to be Descendent of Alexander Douglass Lives Near Here" (*Sunday Trenton Advertiser*, March 2, 1924)
18. Lane, "An oft-moved house that hosted history"
19. Historic American Buildings Survey, "Douglass House, Stacy Park, Trenton, N.J.", 1936

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   7  

**Mercer Co., NJ  
Douglass, Alexander House**

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20. "Most Moved House" (*Sunday Trentonian II*, June 5, 1988), 9

21. Ibid.

22. Vincent DeSimone, to Mark Brown, Memorandum with Cost Estimate for Repairs, April 5, 1974 (on file at the Trentoniana Room of the Trenton Public Library)