

DATA SHEET

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| STATE: | New Jersey |
| COUNTY: | Mercer |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY DATE | MAR 4 1975 |

1. NAME

COMMON:
Ichabod Leigh House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Pennington-Rocky Hill Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Hopewell

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Thirteenth

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 type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | Public Acquisition: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | 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 type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |

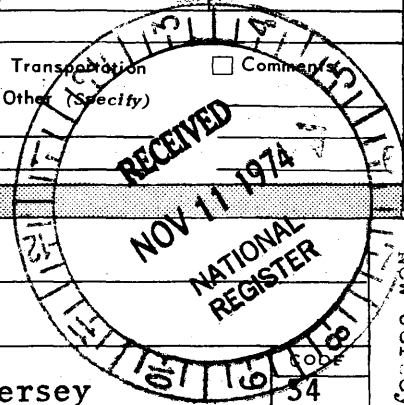
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. I. S. Rossiter

STREET AND NUMBER:
Pennington-Rocky Hill Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Hopewell

STATE:
New Jersey



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Mercer County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
209 So. Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Trenton

STATE:
New Jersey

CODE:
34

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Mercer County Architectural Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1971** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
640 South Broad St.

CITY OR TOWN:
Trenton

STATE:
New Jersey

CODE:
34

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| STATE: | New Jersey |
| COUNTY: | Mercer |
| ENTRY NUMBER | MAR 4 1975 |
| DATE | 1975 |

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a five-bay, center hall, two and a half story house with cupola. The pedimented facade is constructed of flush boarding, with a broad, undecorated entablature, and simple window frames, hung with paneled shutters on the first story and louvered shutters on the second. The facade is strongly centralized. A simple Tuscan portico, supported on two columns, with pilasters attached to the wall, flanks a double paneled door with side lights and elliptical fanlight. Above, a three-part "Venetian" window lights the hall, and a leaded lunette adorns the pediment.

The door provides entrance to a square vestibule, separated from the hall beyond by a side- and fanlighted doorway that repeats the entrance. The ceiling of the vestibule is adorned with plaster composition ornament in the style of Minard Lafever. Surprisingly, polychromy, which the present owner says is the only paint pattern to be found on the plaster, enriches this ornament.

Beyond the vestibule, the hall terminates in a graceful stair with cherry banister. Two the left are two parlors, each characterized by black marble Philadelphia mantels with original cast-iron firebacks adorned with Greek Revival motifs. Pilastered doorframes support broad flat entablatures, and there is more excellent Greek Revival plasterwork. Tublar moldings with oak leaf corner blocks bound the edges of the ceilings, while banded foliate rings surround fragile, thin-leafed rosettes at the centers.

To the right of the center hall, an arched opening leads to a narrow hallway separating the front and back rooms and leading to a lower-ceilinged wing that houses the kitchen. The floorplan is repeated on the second floor. All other rooms in the house contained simpler Greek Revival detailing.

The attic contains two unadorned rooms and a staircase leading to the cupola, which affords a fine view of the surrounding countryside.

In the past quarter-century, the present owner has developed the property with extensive gardens (approx. four acres) featuring broad-leafed evergreens, particularly azalea and rhododendron.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **c. 1835**

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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <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 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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The Ichabod Leigh House is significant as the most sophisticated and refined Greek Revival domestic structure in Mercer County. The Greek Revival never attained the popularity in New Jersey that it enjoyed in New England, the Hudson Valley or the South. Examples of any kind are rare and a building with the adornments of marble mantels and truly elegant plaster ornamentation is even more unusual.

The house was built c. 1835 for Ichabod S. Leigh, a descendant of a family prominent in Somerset County for several generations. It can be assumed that Leigh "imported" some of the newly available manufactured building materials -- mantels, plaster perhaps even some interior millwork -- from New York or Philadelphia. There is certainly a contrast between the sophistication of these details and the somewhat crude, "country" appearance of the execution of the exterior.

Leigh sold the property in 1853 and it changed hands several times in the next decade, eventually being purchased by James Howell of Brooklyn. Howell sold it to Thomas B. Jackson in 1870. The Jackson family occupied it until 1945 when it was purchased by the present owner. One history-minded member of the latter family enforced the tradition of having guests write their names in pencil on the plaster interior walls of the cupola. These have never been painted over.

In addition to its architectural merit, the house is also interesting, on the basis of the Howell-Jackson tenancy, in reflecting the choice of a suitable country seat on the part of the newly affluent post Civil War middle class. In contrast to the nostalgic twentieth-century interest in farmsteads, the prosperous Victorian lawyer or merchant was attracted to a rural retreat which, like this house, had some pretensions to elegance.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lewis, Alice Blackwell. Hopewell Valley Heritage.
Hopewell: Hopewell Museum, 1973, pp. 184-185.

Map of Mercer County. Camden: 1849. Archives and
History Bureau, New Jersey State Library.

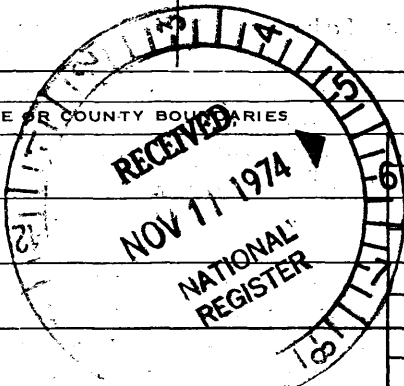
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| 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 | 0 | 0 | | 40 0 22 . 22 . | 74 0 43 . 55 . | |
| NE | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| SE | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| SW | 0 | 0 | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **7 acres**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Channing Blake, Architectural Historian**
Constance M. Greiff, Director

ORGANIZATION: **Heritage Studies** DATE: **Aug. 8, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER: **17 Clover Lane**

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

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 David J. Bardin
David J. Bardin
Title Department of Environmental Protection
Department of Environmental Protection
Date Nov. 1, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

A. B. Morse
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 3/4/75

ATTEST:
Charles Adams
Keeper of The National Register

Date 2-25-75