

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
JUN 30 1977  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED JAN 9 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

\*\*

AND/OR COMMON

Neshanic Mills

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Main Road and Mill Lane

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hillsborough Twp.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

13

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Somerset

CODE

035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

X DISTRICT <sup>JST</sup> <sub>12/15/77</sub>

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

X PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

X YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

X COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

X TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

County Office Building

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Survey

DATE

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation/Dept. of Env. Prot.

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                     DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                             RUINS  
 FAIR                              UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Neshanic Mills in Hillsborough Township on the east bank of the South Branch of the Raritan River is a small agri-industrial complex of the last quarter of the 19th century. The structures in the district are the mill, adjacent carriage barn, two dwellings, and two bridges within the district. There is also a fieldstone foundation south of the carriage barn.

James P. Snell's History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties refers to Neshanic Mills as "Neshanic Station". In his book he mentions Neshanic Station as follows: "Neshanic is situated at the northwest declivity of the Neshanic Mountain. It contains (1881) one Reformed (Dutch) Church, one hotel (temporance), a district school, two stores, and some twenty-five dwellings. About ten more are at Neshanic Station. The country around is undulating and beautiful".

The old grist mill is referred to later in Snell's book: "Andrew Lane is proprietor of a grist-mill on the South Branch, at Neshanic Station".

Today, the grist-mill, its carriage sheds, and the two residences opposite the mill (across Main Road) are as they might have looked in the late 1870's. The open space surrounding these structures and the railroad and vehicle bridges add to an atmosphere of an old country mill of the nineteenth century.

All buildings within the historic district are in a generally good state of repair with no exceptions.

There are only three dwelling structures within the district; the mill is no. 62, the house facing Main Road is no. 58, and the other house is no. 60.

### Number of Structures and Intrusions Within the District

There are a total of four (4) buildings within the district and no intrusions.

### Distinctive Qualities and General Description of District During Period of Significance

The area surrounding the district has remained untouched by "modernization". In the third quarter of the nineteenth century the area was busy providing the needed milling services to local farmers from both sides of the South Branch, but especially from the Neshanic area.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Settlement	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1876

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Neshanic Mills is the last remaining mill complex in the region and one of the few extant grist mills on the South Branch of the Raritan River in Somerset County. The three story frame mill building, adjacent carriage/storage barn, and millers houses, coupled with the vehicular and railroad bridges, project a clear image of a late 19th century small milling industry.

The Andrew Lane Gristmill, in 1880, was the second largest of four grist mills in Hillsborough Township. Lane had a capital investment in the mill of some \$25,000 ~~dollars~~. He employed from 3 to 5 workers all year round for \$2 per day for skilled labor and \$1.25 for unskilled. The mill had four runs of stone with a maximum potential 200 bushel per day production. Half of the milling completed was custom grinding. The source of power was a 50 horsepower iron turbine. (Tenth United States Census - 1880 Special Schedules of Manufacturers #'s 7 & 8. Hillsborough Township, Somerset County).

## Industry

The land for some distance around Neshanic was owned in 1683 by John Bennett. The tract embraced several hundred acres, extended to the division line between East and West Jersey, and was bounded on the north by the South Branch of the Raritan River.

As the adjoining community of Neshanic grew and the farms around it, there was a demand for various mills for the various markets. It was in 1770 that Bergen Huff built the first mill at Neshanic. It stood some distance below the present (1881) one, and was abandoned about 1810. Some of the remains of that mill were still visible in the late 1800's. Other mills were erected about 1810. In 1836 these mills were purchased from Cornelius and Peter Beekman by Judge Corle, and were thereafter referred to as Corle's Mills. They were again sold several years later by Judge Corle, and were owned by five or six different parties. During this period of transferring of title, the mills kept on producing the grist for market.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Barber, John W., and Howe, Henry, Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey, Newark, New Jersey, 1844
- Snell, James History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey, 1898
- Cawley, James & Margaret, Exploring the Little Rivers of New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1961

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>18</u>	<u>523170</u>	<u>4481050</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the west bank of the South Branch of the Raritan River at the north side of the Lenticular Bridge. proceed east along the bridge to the east bank of Main Road. Thence proceed south along Main Road to the north bank of Mill Lane. Thence proceed east on Mill Lane 250 feet. Thence, proceed south parallel to Main Road 550 feet. Thence, proceed west to Main Road, thence proceed south 100 feet along Main Road. Thence proceed west to the east bank of the river. Thence, proceed north along the river bank to the mill dam. Thence, proceed west along the dam to the bank of the river. Thence, proceed north along the

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

river bank to the point of origin.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

(Terry Karschner, Office of Historic Preservation, Trenton, 609-292-2028)

NAME / TITLE

Wayne T. McCabe

ORGANIZATION

Consultant - Historic Preservation

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 478

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Newton

STATE

New Jersey

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

Deputy

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Assistant

TITLE Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

DATE

6/13/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

DATE

1-9-78

DATE

1-6-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Hillsborough Township  
Somerset County  
New Jersey 034

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The mill is situated on the east bank of the South Branch of the Raritan River, and only about one mile from the village of Neshanic. It was erected in the year 1876.

In the year 1873 two railroads serviced this area and were responsible for transporting the farm produce and other products manufactured in the area to regional market centers (New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, and New York City). The line that used the present railroad bridge was the South Branch Railroad later the Central Railroad of New Jersey. The other line, the Easton and Amboy Railroad later the Lehigh Valley Railroad, crossed the South Branch a few hundred yards to the north of the South Branch R.R.

During the mid- to late-nineteenth century the area around the mill and bridges was primarily farms.

The present land use to be found within the district is single family residential and multi-family residential, open space, and commercial.

Some of the prominent geographical features to be found in Neshanic Mills are: the South Branch of the Raritan River that forms the western boundary of the district; a modest bluff that rises in the center of the district near the railroad easement; and a slight decline in the land running from south to north.

A few of the man-made features other than the buildings in the district are: the railroad truss bridge and the vehicular and pedestrian bridge.

The following is a description of the structures in the district:

1. Lane Grist Mill (Neshanic Mill), 1876, no. 62 Main Road. This is a 3-story mill typical of the post Civil-War period. Built in 1876, it straddles the river on stone and cement foundations. The windows on those sides not facing onto Main Road are all one on one double-hung. The windows on the side facing Main Road, with the exception of only one, are all six on six. The siding is clapboard. The roof is of a gambrel design and covered with slate shingles. The walls are of braced timber construction. On top of the roof and centered is a square cupola. There is a short, roofed protrusion from the roof's ridge line on the side facing Main Road. This arrangement was for the block and falls employed in lowering the various ground grains from storage. The structure is presently under restoration.

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2. Shepherd House, 2nd quarter 19th century, 3rd quarter 19th century, no. 58 Main Road. This is a wood framed two-story structure with later additions. The foundation is of random-coursed rubble construction. There are four chimnies in all: one at either end of the main section of the house, and two on the wing. The windows in the house are almost all one on one and double hung. There are shutters on the windows of the main section only and they are louvered. The siding is of the narrow-width clapboard type.
  
3. Levering House, c. 1850, 1880, no. 60 Main Road. This wood frame house is two stories with random width clapboard siding. There is a retaining wall to the rear of the structure that is of random-coursed rubble construction. The windows on the first floor are two on two while those on the second floor are nine on six. There are no shutters employed on the house at all. There is a chimney located slightly to the west of the center of the building. The roof is a simple gable and has slate shingles. There are two small windows directly below the eave of the roof on the west end and they are four on two sash.  

A porch is attached to the northern side of the house, and is a late nineteenth century addition. An addition was attached in the 3rd quarter of the 19th century to the west end, carrying over the basic exterior appearance of the structure.
  
4. Carriage/Storage barn. 3rd quarter 19th century. Two story frame mill barn. Floor on ground level has seven front carriage bays with enclosed storage bins in the rear. The second floor has a one bay front gable end sliding door entrance to storage facilities. The roof is gable covered with corrugated metal. The structure has clapboards. Built into a bank making the roadway entrance one story and the rear two stories. Interior not investigated.
  
5. Lenticular Truss Vehicular Bridge. (1896). Built by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company of East Berlin, Connecticut, this bridge has two spans, each 140' 7 1/2" in length. The width of the roadway bridge, from rail to rail is 17 1/2 feet. Each side has a pedestrian walkway. Basically intact as originally constructed minor alterations include reinforcement plates welded onto the original chords in the 1930's and the end sections encased in concrete. There is evidence of corrosion and deterioration in the bridge. A structural engineer's report in 1969 recommended its replacement. Instead the load limit was reduced to five tons and traffic limited to one way regulated by a traffic light.

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6. Central Railroad Through Pratt Truss Bridge (ca. 1900). Running between the mill and the vehicle bridge, this single track high through truss bridge is also two spans on piers of rock-faced cut stone. The approach to this railroad bridge has a girder truss on concrete foundation over Main Street. The concrete is dated 1916.

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New Jersey 034

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With the advent of the railroad as a major carrier of produce to the regional markets, the lines of the South Branch Railroad and the Easton and Amboy Railroad stretched out to the South Branch of the Raritan. In so doing they created a major link between the rural farm centers, the mills for those centers and the major wholesale and retail markets.

It was in the year 1876 that Andrew Lane erected and operated a grist-mill at "Neshanic Station". This new mill was on the site of the old Corle's Mills, since razed.

The Lane Grist-Mill (Neshanic Mill) is the last remaining mill in the area that once provided a very much needed service to the local farmers.

It was through what is presently referred to as the Neshanic Mills that local farmers processed their crops of corn, grain, etc. and from there was shipped to the various markets. It is in conjunction with the railroad bridge and vehicle bridge, that the mill helped in the further development of the area as a local center of commerce and trade.

Restoration and Preservation Activities

There presently exists a very active Historic District Commission that is playing a vigorous part in the decision making processes that have any effect on the historic districts within the township. The Township of Hillsborough has had Historic District zoning for several years and has been recently revised. The citizens that reside within the historic district take a great deal of pride in the fact that this area of the region has the history that it does and so make a special effort to maintain their homes. The old grist-mill is presently undergoing a complete restoration as are the other two houses opposite the mill.

Transportation/Engineering

The Lenticular Truss Vehicular Bridge at Neshanic Mills is the only known extant through lenticular truss in New Jersey. Further, it is, perhaps, the southernmost lenticular bridge built by the Berlin Bridge Company of East Berlin, Connecticut.

*No- there are 2-3 in San Antonio, TX.*

*Eric Delony  
09/19/83*



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Neshanic Mill's  
Hillsborough Township  
Somerset County

New Jersey 031

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The Berlin Iron Bridge Company was one of the giant bridge builders in America in the late 19th-early 20th century. Their exclusive speciality, the 'parabolic truss' was first designed and patented in 1878 by William O. Douglas of New York. Several crude examples of this type truss were built under the name Corrugated Metal Company, but Charles M. Jarvis in joining the company and changing the name made the company successful.

Jarvis and Douglas modified their bridge design in 1885. While not an original system, the Douglas patent introduced this form of bridge to the United States. Save for a few exceptions, all American bridges of this type were built by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company. Unlike most bridge fabricators, Berlin Company built mostly vehicular highway bridges. Between 1880 and 1895 they erected some 300 "parabolic" or lenticular trusses, mostly in New England and New York.

Property owners

Central Railroad of New Jersey  
1100 Raymond Blvd.  
Newark NJ 07102

Edith Slack  
223 E. Kennedy St.  
Syracuse NY

Mr & Mrs Daniel Cahill  
Grist Mill House  
Box 272A R.D.1  
Neshanic NJ 08853

Arthur R. Bothers & W. Eddy Heath  
25 Heath Drive  
Somerville NJ 08876

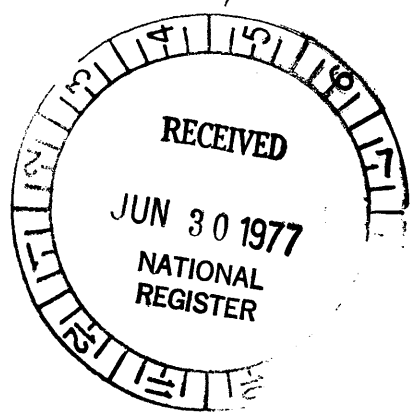
Rexall Drug & Chemical Co.  
8480 Beverly Blvd.  
Los Angeles, California

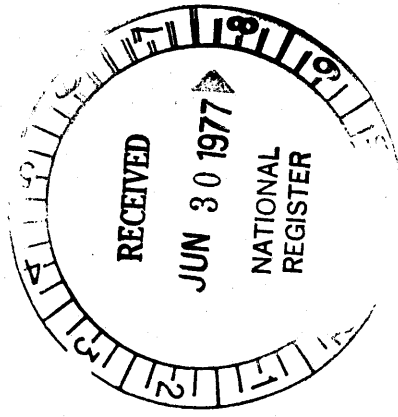
Mr & Mrs J Cyburt Firley St.  
567 Foothill Road  
Bridgewater NJ

Somerset County Board of Freeholders  
County Office Building  
Somerville NJ 08876

*New  
insurers  
Land and Tax Agent  
Central Railroad of New Jersey  
514 Chestnut Street  
Roselle Park, N.J.*

*Neshanic Mills  
Neshanic N.J.  
Somerset Co.*





JAN 9 1978

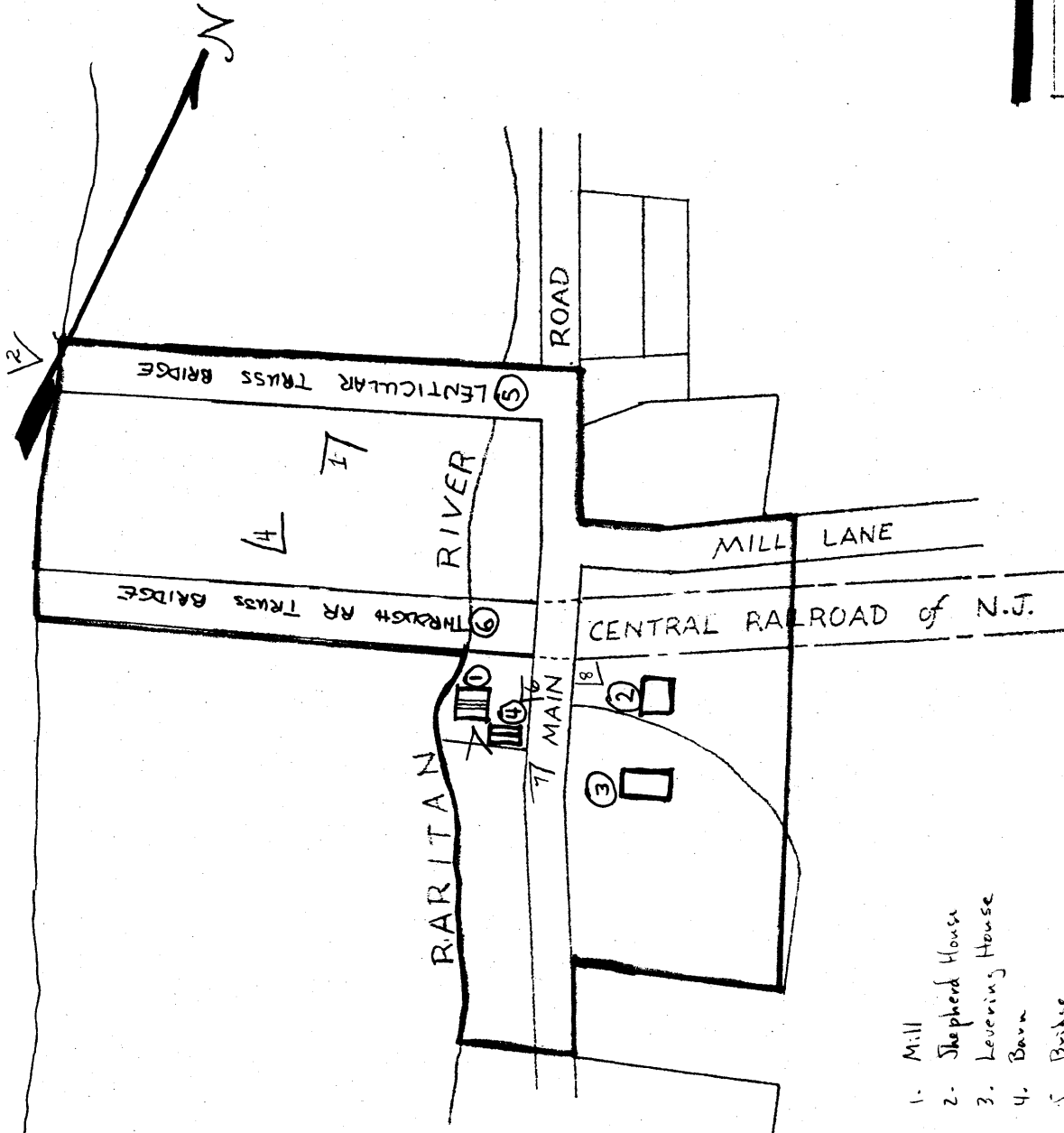
HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY

NESHANIC MILLS  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
HILLSBOROUGH TWP., N.J.  
SOMERSET COUNTY

WAYNE T. X ESCABE  
CONSULTANT  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

FEB. 1, 1975

of



- 1. Mill
- 2. Shepherd House
- 3. Leveering House
- 4. Barn
- 5. Building
- 6. Bridge

SCALE: 1 INCH EQUALS 200 FEET