

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED DEC 13 1976  
DATE ENTERED MAY 2 1977

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

Howell Farm *Phillips, Joseph, Farm*

Howell Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

*N. of Titusville on*

Hunter Road Box 464 A

CITY, TOWN

Titusville *vic.*

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

13

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Mercer

CODE

021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mercer County

STREET & NUMBER

Mercer County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Mercer County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Labor and Industry Building

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Howell Farm is a 19th Century farm yard complex set on a rise above Fidlers Creek. The farm itself rests upon flat land which falls away sharply to the east, leading to nearby Fidlers Creek. The land falls away gradually to the south, leading to a lower portion of the creek. North of the farm complex, the land continues to rise gradually for some distance, terminating in a high ridge which commands the surrounding countryside. To the west, the land falls and then rises in irregular folds leading to Valley Road with an old barn which can be viewed from the Howell Farm. Further west is a set of high tension wires which occur near the horizon. In the summer they are obscured by trees. East of Fidlers Creek are open rolling fields leading to forest land. Further south of the aforementioned lower portion of the creek is a road, and several open fields leading to heavily forested mountains.

The farm complex itself is formed around a large barnyard. On the south side of the barn yard is the farmhouse, (see sketch map) whose main entrance is on the south side. The house has vistas east, west and southwards. The most impressive vista is southward to Fidlers Creek with the mountains beyond. On the east side of the barnyard, is a small pitched roof shed with clapboard siding. (see sketch map) The shed dates from the early 20th century. The northeast corner of the barnyard is defined by the great barn, which was built in four sections. The western most section is the oldest. Once a separate building, it was moved to its present location in the early 20th century. Its old foundation, which appears today as stoney patch of ground, is still visable about 50 yards west of the great barn. It is outside of the barnyard complex. (see sketch map). The east side of the barnyard is defined by a 1 1/2 story horse shay. The shay is connected to a corn crib, which occurs about 15 feet to the north (see sketch map). West of the shay and corn crib is a small, 1 story linear shed, of concrete block with a pitched roof. The gables occur on the shorter sides.

The farm house, whose main facade faces south, is a 2 story building of 5 irregular bays, one room deep, with a wing out back. Today the house has a central hall plan with a parlor either side. The 2 western most bays, (the west parlor and the rooms above) constitute the oldest park of the house. This part is built of stone approximately 2 ft. thick. The west parlor has a fireplace with an interior chimney in the center of the west wall. There is also a double quarter turn winding stair against the west wall, between the chimney and the southwest corner. The stair is wainscotted in. There are no windows in the west wall.

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DESCRIPTION

The 2nd floor space above the west parlor is divided into an ante room, bedroom and bathroom. Both the ground floor and the second have 2 windows on the front facade. These form the 2 principal bays of the original part of the house. There is however, a small entrance door on the ground floor, between the 2 bays. It does not read as part of a 3rd bay because its lintel is lower than the flanking windows. The rear wall of the original house has one window near the west end of the house on each floor. There is also a door leading to the rear wing in the center of the north wall of the west parlor.

The eastern 3 bays of the farm house date from the early 19th century. This frame extension added a wide central entrance and stair hall, and an east parlor with corresponding rooms upstairs. The east parlor and room above each have a fireplace with a common interior chimney. Floors in the addition are approximately 2 ft. above the corresponding floors of the original section. The entrance and stair hall is entered from a one bay Italianate porch. Its frontal portion has side doors left and right, one leading into the old west parlor one leading into the east. Further back is the main stair, a half pace staircase with an extended half way landing. There is a large bedroom above the west parlor and a small den above the front portion of the entrance and stair hall. The main stair continues, half pace fashion, into the attic. It is positioned so that the rafters barely clear the banister, and the stair has about 4 feet of effective head room. This leads to the supposition that at one time there was a third floor, or one was planned. The latter is considered to be more likely as the rafters date from approximately the same time as the addition.

The rear wing dates from the later 19th century. The lower story is a large kitchen with a rear lean to storage extension, out back. The kitchen can be entered from the west parlor. There is also a straight stair framed against the south wall, which leads to a bedroom area above.

The interior detailing is worthy of note. The original portion has evidence, of random width flooring and hewn beams. There are also pegged window frames. These date the earliest portion of the house in the 18th century. The large bedroom in the early 19th century addition has a bed molded fireplace with a frieze and a simple molded

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DESCRIPTION

shelf. The windows and doors in the entrance and stair hall and the east parlor, are decorated with elaborated deep cut moldings with corner blocks. These doors and windows are framed in wide boards with molding around the inside edge and the outside edge. There is also a molded strip along the center of each board, and a rosette in each corner block. The ceiling of the frontal portion of hall is decorated with a large molded plaster rosette. As the half pace stair winds upward there is a turned newel post at the base, and at each point where the banister changes direction. The moldings and banister, which are in the Greek Revival mode, were obviously installed after the early 19th century addition was built.

The exterior of the 18th century section is stucco. The other sections are sheathed in aluminum siding. However, it is in character with the period, with a 4 inch gauge, corner boards, and gable end returns.

The barn contains 4 distinct periods of construction. The oldest section once stood upon a foundation which is northwest of the barnyard. (see sketch map). It has a heavy hewn swing beam structure with water mill sawn framing principals. In about 1920 this barn was moved and extended with a lean to. (see sketch map) The next oldest section is directly east of the old barn, (see sketch map). It has a heavier swing beam structure than the earlier section. This is due to its greater width. The structure is totally water mill sawn. In addition to the wide reaching swing beam there is a partial truss structure which connects the swing beam to the lateral posts. The 3rd section of the barn is located further south of the 2 older barn sections. It forms a right angle to the 2 older sections. This part has a light, swing beam which is watermill sawn. There is also an Italianate cupola at the ridge. In the late 19th century, a ballroom frame addition was built between the 3rd section and the second section forming the present "L" plan.

*Walton*

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Howell farm is an old farmstead whose appearance is essentially unchanged since the early 20th century, including the setting. Most of the structures are pre-Civil War. Prior to 1920, American agriculture differed little from its condition 100 years before. Then a series of inventions paved the way for the American agricultural revolution. The gasoline engines and electrification helped to complete it. Howell farm is vividly indicative of a farm economy based on horses, plows, and oil lamps, and a life style which was largely extinct by World War II.

In addition, in the Boston - Washington coridor it is unusual to find a farmstead so well preserved, not only in itself but also in its setting.

The farm enjoys historical significance owing to its association with Captain Henry Phillips, of the American Continental Army.

The barn is a fine example of English barn architecture, as indicated by the swing beam and bay construction. Moreover, the different periods of construction show development of the English barn type over a long period of time. The farmhouse is somewhat typical of other houses in the area, being a small 18th century stone house, with a 19th century frame addition. It also contains some fine Greek Revival decorative wood work. Taken together, this growth traces the increasing prosperity of farm families in the area during the 19th century. This aspect of farm development can be better appreciated at Howell Farm than at other surviving period farms awing to the integrity of its setting.

In 1732 Joseph Phillips, a blacksmith, purchased a 125 acre tract from William Bryant. This tract comprised most of the present Howell Farm. By 1800 Henry Phillips (the son of Joseph) had enlarged the farm by 100 acres. He served as a captain in the Hunterdon County Regiment in the American Revolution. Henry's improvements included a grist mill (no-longer extant) and a blacksmith shop. Henry Phillips died in 1805 and his son Henry inherited the aforementioned 125 acres, and the farm complex. An 1805 inventory of the father's possessions included: two teams of Oxen and two slaves, a Rockingham colt and flax in the ground.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Deeds in Mercer County Court House, Hunterdon County Court House, State Library Archives. Interview with Harold Leming

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 125  
UTM REFERENCES

D	A	1,8	50,7	6,7,0	4,4	6,5	4,5,0	A	B	1,8	50,9	1,9,0	4,4	6,5	6,3,0
		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING								
B	C	1,8	50,9	1,9,0	4,4	6,5	1,5,0	C	D	1,8	50,8	5,6,0	4,4	6,4	7,8,0
		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING								

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and Hunter Road, thence north along Hunter Road to the intersection with Moore Creek, thence east approximately 1930 feet. Thence north to the Mercer-Hunterdon County Border. Thence west to Wooden's Lane, thence south to Valley Road. Thence southwest approximately 1040 feet, thence northeast approximately 380 feet. Thence southeast approximately 480 feet, thence generally southwest back to Valley Rd. near a point approximately 200 ft. northwest of the intersection of Valley Rd. & Pleasant Valley Rd., thence to the aforementioned intersection, thence to

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

the intersection of Pleasant Valley Rd and Hunter Rd.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Staff

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Labor and Industry Building

(609) 292-2026 2023

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

# 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*David J. Biele*

TITLE

Commissioner Department of Environmental Protection

DATE

12/1/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

5/2/77

ATTEST:

*Charles A. ...*

DATE

4.28.77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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In 1858 the second Henry died and the property was sold to satisfy his heirs. Charles Miller owned the property 1860-1898. It was during this period that a pond was built and the winter ice was cut and stored in an ice house. During summer months, neighbors would come to buy ice for ice cream. The farm was commonly referred to as the "ice farm". Also during this period (1860-1900) a wagon house and a corn crib were built.

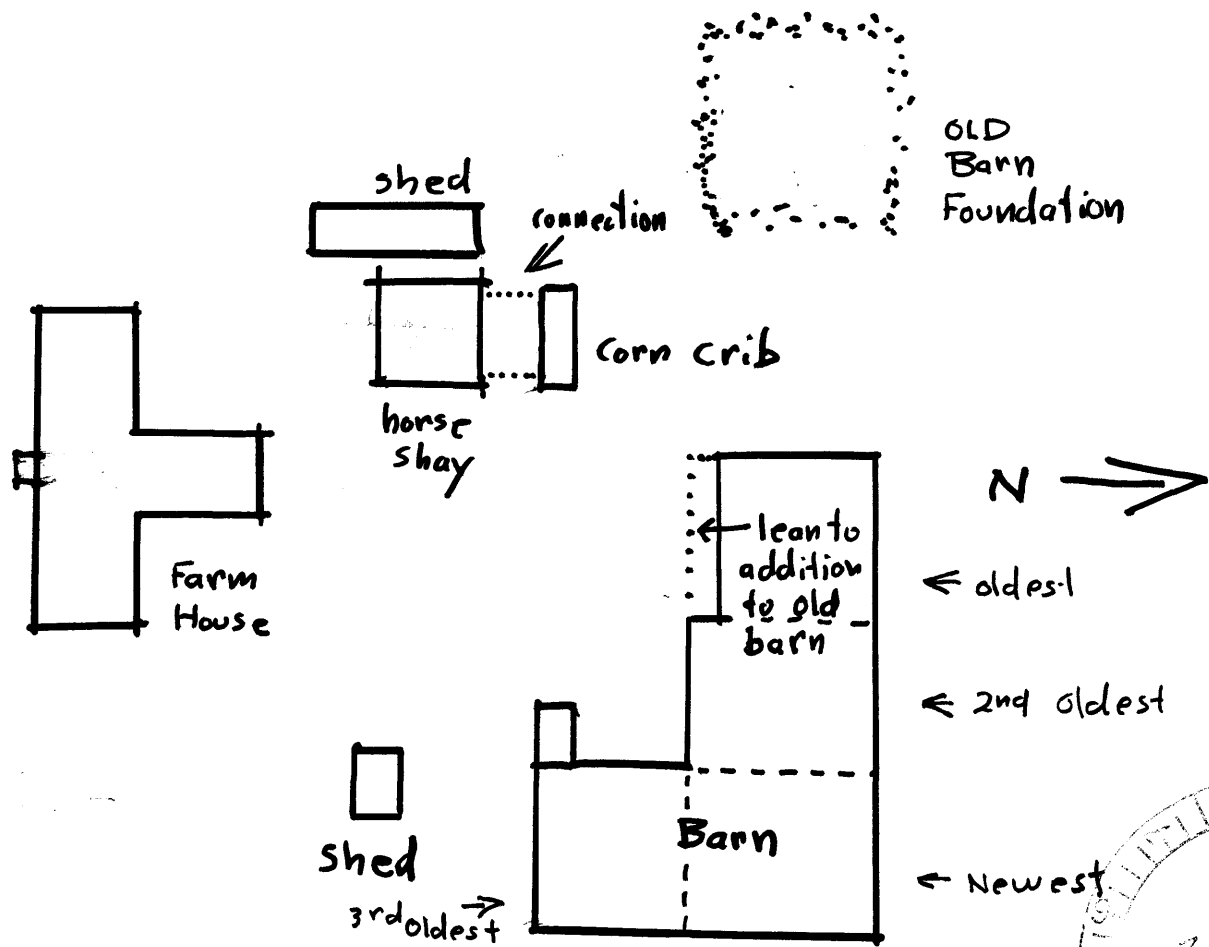
Although the records show that Wilson Leming purchased the farm in 1913, the Leming family moved on to the farm in 1909 and farmed it until 1919. The flu epidemic of 1918 caused the death of Mrs. Leming and a daughter. Wilson Leming left the farm to work in the ship yards. The farm was bought at a sherriff's sale by a neighbor Zenophone Cromwell, in 1920.

Harold Leming was eight years old when his family moved on to the farm. The Pleasant Valley Rural Telephone Co. was establishing its right of way in 1908 but there was no phone on this farm until later. His neighbors, the Cromwells, had a phone which they used occasionally.

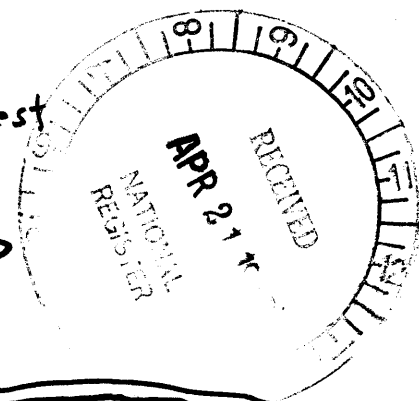
The barn was unpainted weathered wood with no openings on the east side (Hunter Road). The present pasture (along Hunter Road) and the barn was an apple orchard enclosed with a woven wire fence. The apples were loaded into a Penn. Rock Wagon and hauled to the Conover Mill (recently designated an historic site) to be made into cider.

Mr. Leming had a butter and egg route in Trenton that provided cash for the family. Sometimes he sold chickens or other produce. One other source of income was selling milk. Every morning the milk had to be at Moore's station by 6:00 a.m. to catch the train into Trenton and Philadelphia.

Zenophone Cromwell purchased the farm in 1920 and brought the telephone to the farm. There was now a deep well and the Cromwells built a building that was used as a bottling plant for Grade A Raw Milk. They bottled not only their own milk but milk from other farmers. Thus it became a specialized, commercial farm. The change was gradually made. In 1936 electricity came to the farm just as it did in many rural areas of the United States. Most local residents still refer to the farm as the Cromwell Dairy Farm. The farm was owned by Hart Cromwell until 1948.

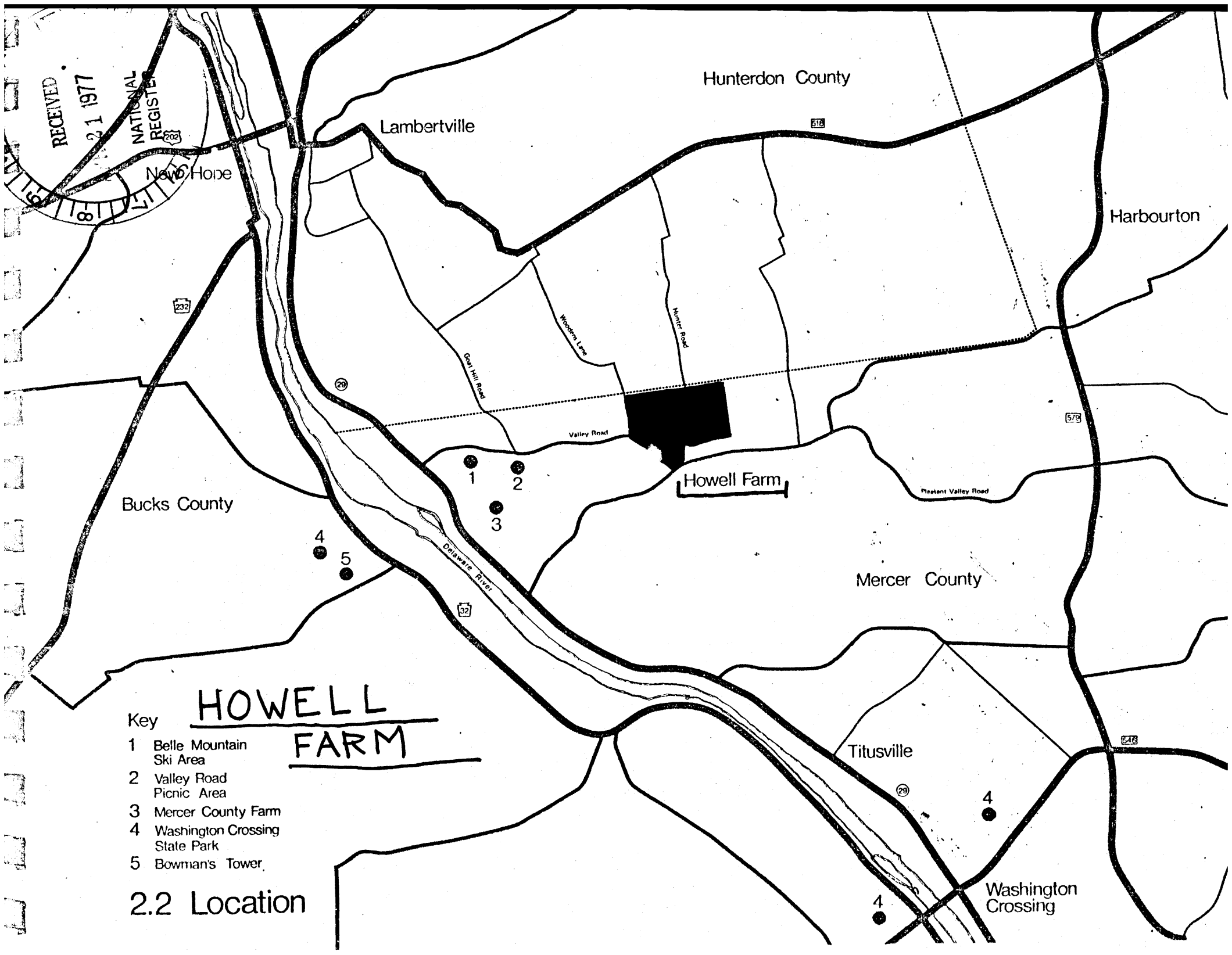


# HOWELL FARM SKETCH MAP



Fidlers Creek





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Hunterdon County

Lambertville

New Hope

Harbourton

Bucks County

Howell Farm

Mercer County

Titusville

Washington Crossing

Key

- 1 Belle Mountain Ski Area
- 2 Valley Road Picnic Area
- 3 Mercer County Farm
- 4 Washington Crossing State Park
- 5 Bowman's Tower

**HOWELL FARM**

2.2 Location