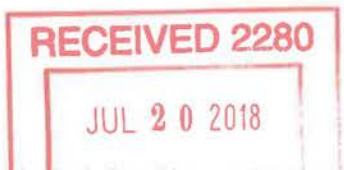


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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 Princeton Nurseries Historic District
other names/site number Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site

2. Location

street & number Along both sides of Mapleton Road, from D&R Canal to Greenwood Avenue and Ridge Road not for publication
city or town South Brunswick Township and Plainsboro Township vicinity
state New Jersey code NJ county Middlesex code 023 zip code 08540

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.

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 8/28/18

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.)

Table with columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total. Values: 40, 25, 1, 0, 3, 2, 0, 0, 44, 27.

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)

AGRICULTURE/horticultural facility, COMMERCE/TRADE/business, DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/conservation area, GOVERNMENT/government office, DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style, Colonial Revival, Mid-19th Century

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete, walls Wood, Concrete, roof, other Steel

Narrative Description

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

Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex County, NJ
County and State

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)

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

1913-1968

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bauhan, Rolf (architect)

Primary location of additional data

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

Name of repository:

South Brunswick Township Historic Preservation Commission

Princeton Nurseries Historic District

Name of Property

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County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 272

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A 18 534300 4468730
 Zone Easting Northing
B 532200 4467750
E 18 532390 4469200

C 18 531800 4467840
 Zone Easting Northing
D 18 531980 4469200

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 Revised nomination edited by Robert W. Craig, maps by Kinney Clark

organization NJ Historic Preservation Office date July 2018

street & number NJ DEP telephone (609) 984-0541

city or town Trenton state NJ zip code 08625-0420

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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.

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Princeton Nurseries Historic District
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Description Narrative

Summary Paragraph

The Princeton Nurseries Historic District, also known as the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site, is a 272-acre rural historic landscape in Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey, that includes 65 buildings (including approximately 31 outbuildings), three bridges (one on public roads), a nucleus of Princeton Nurseries, a vertically-integrated commercial tree nursery that operated here from 1913 until 1995 (although operations were expanded to Upper Freehold Township, near Allentown, beginning in the 1960s); the nominated property therefore contains within its boundaries the administrative and operational buildings associated with the production and sale of nursery stock, houses occupied by the nursery workers and owners (some of which were present when the nursery was established and the oldest of which dates from 1756), and the fields in which young trees were brought to marketable size. Of the 65 buildings present, 40 contribute to the property's significance and 25 are non-contributing. Some of these buildings were moved within the district during its period of significance. Also within the boundaries are two public roads, lined in places with mature trees grown at the nursery. All of these features combine to illustrate the operations of what was once one of the largest class of tree nurseries in the United States. A few buildings have been moved within the district since 2010, and several new houses have been constructed, but the latter are clustered in two small areas of the district.

General Description of the District

The local landscape had been shaped by three major public works projects before the nursery was established, two of which directly contributed to the founder's decision to locate here in 1913. Of the three, two have been previously listed in the National Register and the third has been found eligible. These are the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District (listed in the National Register on November 30, 1973), the Lake Carnegie Historic District (listed June 28, 1990), and the right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad Branch Line (found eligible by New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office opinion, most recently on May 21, 1991). The canal and the railroad both provided shipping in 1913, and today all three enhance the nursery's visual and historic environment although the railroad's tracks are no longer present.

The land is generally flat (another factor in its selection), ranging in elevation from about 60 to 120 feet above sea level and sloping down to Heathcote Brook on the north and the Delaware and Raritan Canal on the west. The soil is Sassafra loam, a very deep, well-drained soil with slow to moderate surface runoff found in the coastal plains of the Mid-Atlantic states and suitable for general crops, fruits and woodlands. Native species to the soil include mixed upland hardwoods with some Shortleaf and Virginia Pine. This combination of soil, nearby shipping and a location near the East Coast population centers made the site nearly ideal for a tree nursery.

The native landscape has been modified for nursery use, including the construction of lanes and berms and installation of an extensive subterranean irrigation system. All four of the original farms that were acquired for the nursery are within the nominated property, although their farmsteads are no longer discernible, as outbuildings were moved and fields were reorganized to meet the nursery's requirements.

Two roads traverse the Princeton Nurseries district. Mapleton Road (now a township road, but formerly Middlesex County Route 614) runs generally north and south, from the former Aqueduct Mills (Princeton Aqueduct) to Kingston (outside the district), where it becomes Academy Street. The second, known as both

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Division Street and as Ridge Road (formerly Middlesex County Route 522 and now a township road), near the northern edge of the district, continues easterly beyond the district to U.S. Route 1 and thence to Monmouth Junction. Within the nominated land there are also a number of nameless lanes providing access to the fields, plus three residential streets entirely within the former nursery: Railroad Avenue, alongside the former alignment of the Camden and Amboy Railroad, and its side street Greenwood Avenue. Both streets dead-end within the former nursery. Old Nursery Lane, formerly an unnamed driveway, was recently established off of Mapleton Road. (see district map) The majority of the buildings within the nominated property are on Mapleton Road, Ridge Road, Railroad Avenue and Greenwood Avenue, although the former nursery's principal operational buildings are arrayed along the former railroad alignment (near Mapleton Road).

Several of the houses within the nominated area were 19th-century farmhouses that predate the founding of the nursery. As these were acquired they were incorporated into the nursery's operations. Smaller, secondary buildings (such as small barns and tenant houses) from these farms were freely moved around the nursery to new locations and their uses changed, as is apparent from the individual descriptions that follow. Other small houses were purchased nearby, such as in Kingston, and moved onto the property, for worker housing. None of the houses—but all of the buildings relating to the nursery operation—were built by the nursery.

Non-contributing buildings include: a house built in 2007 at the southern end of the district (#1); a telephone company utility building (#20B); a 1960s-era house on Ridge Road (#29), and a few scattered outbuildings. Additionally, two areas of new construction have occurred since 2007: two properties north of Old Nursery Lane (#12 and #13), and a new development at the south end of Greenwood Avenue (#28-#33). The remainder of the buildings relate to the nursery operation and the housing of persons associated with it.

The former right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad (#41) exists as a level earthen berm, today in large part supporting unpaved nursery roads (and overgrown in other locations). It is a contributing structure, plainly discernible in the landscape, contributing to the significance of the nursery. Two *allées* of trees in the district date from the period of significance. The first, of London plane trees extends along both sides of Mapleton Road (#40). The other consists of two rows of towering oaks along the former roadbed of the Camden and Amboy Railroad west of Mapleton Road. These are not counted as separate resources, but should be considered features of the resources they line. Not visible but present is the nursery's water system, which also served the nearby village of Kingston. A water tower once stood on the property but has been removed, but a few scattered fire hydrants are physical evidence of the system. There is a non-contributing bridge over Heathcote Brook on Mapleton Road, built in 2001. While it does not contribute to an understanding of the resource, it does not seriously diminish the integrity of setting since it has a quite minor visual impact upon a large district. There are also two culverts: One near the foot of Greenwood Avenue providing access to the fields, and one on Railroad Avenue formerly used by the Camden and Amboy Railroad.

Finally, the majority of the land within the district remains open, as it was when the district achieved significance. While there are no structures in this component of the district, it is not undeveloped. The unpaved lanes created and maintained by the nursery provide access to the growing fields, which today are still separated by windrows. While some fields are fallow and are being overtaken by normal succession, the remains of nursery stock (untended for at least 12 years) are apparent in others. As a result, vistas south and east from the nursery's core, and east from Mapleton Road and south from Ridge Road are dominated by open land, but the views are not natural landscapes. Discrete rows of tall trees punctuate the scene, indicating human alteration of

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the land, not for aesthetic reasons but for the large-scale production of trees. West of Mapleton Road in the southern reaches of the district the land is much lower than east of the road and not as well drained. While this land is also open, it is bounded on the west by trees that line the adjacent Delaware and Raritan Canal.

The state of preservation of the Princeton Nurseries district is high. With regard to integrity of location, the district boundaries encompass the operational core of the Princeton Nurseries Kingston location and about 1/5th of the historic acreage. Lands along Route 1 and lands along Mapleton Road that have gone out of agricultural use have been excluded from the district. The district, with its surviving field locations, sizes, and boundaries, with their tree lines, and with the presence of the major nursery buildings and structures, supported by the presence of the canal, underground irrigation structures and piping, the pumphouse for the nursery operation, the pumphouse for the Water Company, and the former railroad right-of-way, strongly conveys the historic setting of the Princeton Nurseries operation. The presence of most of the buildings of the nursery operation on their original sites and their relatively high states of preservation convey integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The feeling and association of this property as a historic wholesale tree nursery have been compromised, but some of the acreage has been leased for a small nursery operation called Mapleton Nurseries, on which trees are still grown (see Section 8).

Individual Resource Descriptions

Resources within the nominated district are as follows. (All properties are located within South Brunswick Township unless otherwise noted.)

Mapleton Road

1. House, 80 Mapleton Road. (Plainsboro Township, Block 101, Lot 6.01). Non-contributing building (Photo 1)
A two-story house faced with stone, under construction in 2007.
2. Barn, Rear 80 Mapleton Road. (Plainsboro Township, Block 101, Lot 6.01). Contributing bldg. (Photos 1,2).
This is a frame building, 2 1/2 stories with cedar shingle siding. Built early in the 20th century to house horses used in the nursery operation, it is five bays wide on the gable end and about seven bays deep. A wing extended to the left (south) until its recent removal.
3. Van Dyke/Hoffman House, 84 Mapleton Road. (Plainsboro Township, Block 101, Lot 5.02). Non-contributing building (Photo 3).
Now in its fourth location, this house was constructed on the east side of U.S. 1, probably in the early 19th century. It is 2 1/2 stories tall, five bays wide and two bays deep with a central entrance. Siding is clapboard and the gabled roof is slate. To the rear of the house are a two-story gabled workshop, constructed in the 1960s to replace an earlier building that burned, and a garage. Both were until recently associated with the Mathias Van Dyke House (#4). The Van Dyke/Hoffman House was first moved to Princeton Nurseries property on the west side of U.S. Route 1 *circa* 1929, then to a site on Mapleton Road approximately opposite its present location in 1980. It was moved for the third time in the late 1980s. (Thus it was not present in the district during the period of significance.)

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4. Matthias Van Dyke House, 86 Mapleton Road. (Plainsboro Township, Block 101, Lot 4.01). Contributing building (Photo 4).

Built in 1756, the house is constructed of fieldstone laid in coursed ashlar. The main block is four bays wide, two bays deep and two and a half stories tall. To the left (south) of the main block is a two-bay kitchen wing, built circa 1917 to replace the original kitchen. The gable ends are stuccoed. Windows are primarily 9/1, and a classically-detailed gabled entry portico shelters the main entrance in the second bay from the left (south). A rear garage at basement level, with a patio on its flat roof, was added by Rolf W. Bauhan in 1963 following a fire. Outbuildings: Converted Barn (Contributing), and garage (Contributing); Six small sheds (not counted).

The Van Dyke house with its 85 acres was one of the first four farms purchased by William Flemer, Sr. when establishing the nursery. Matthias Van Dyke had the house built in 1756 on 200 acres he would later inherit from his father. It housed several British officers before the Battle of Princeton in January 1777.

5. Ziegerhofer House and barn, Rear 105 Mapleton Road (Formerly 252 Mapleton Road).(Block 99, Lot 3.211) Contributing building (Photo 5).

Used as employee housing by Princeton Nurseries, this building consists of a small two-story, five-bay house attached to the rear (east) of a barn. The house has wood clapboard siding and generally 6/6 windows. The barn also has a gabled roof, and the north façade has a double-leaf vehicular door. Siding is wooden shingle. A one-story former stable extends westward from the barn. The building predates the nursery, and was historically associated with the Higgins house next door (#6). The house was rented to nursery employees.

6. Higgins House, 105 Mapleton Road (Formerly 250 Mapleton Road) (Block 99, Lot 3.211). Contributing building (Photo 6).

The Higgins house is frame, five bays wide and two deep with a tall 2 ½-story gabled roof punctuated by a central cross gable with a round-headed attic window. Siding is clapboard and windows are 1/1. The central entrance is protected by a full-width one-story porch. There are two brick interior end chimneys. One of the most striking features of the house is its broad frieze at eave level, with paired brackets and cornice returns. A late 20th century one-story garage has been added on the left (north). The house was the farmhouse of one of the four original farms purchased by William Flemer Sr. when establishing the nursery. Stylistically it appears to date from *circa* 1880 based on its very tall profile.

7. Shennard House, 121 Mapleton Road (Block 99, Lot 3.112). Contributing building (Photo 7).

The Shennard House is composed of a three-bay wide, two bay deep, two story main block built in the 19th century, and a six-bay rear ell. The house is nearly devoid of architectural detail. Siding is now aluminum and the roof is standing seam sheet metal. The main entrance is within a one-bay, flat-roofed enclosed porch. Windows are 6/6 and 2/2. The house was the farmhouse of one of the original farms when the nursery was established. Outbuilding: Late 20th century concrete block garage (Non-contributing).

7A. Shennard Barn. Contributing building (Photo 8).

Built in two parts in the 1920s following a fire that destroyed its predecessor, the two-story, cedar shingle, frame section was a haybarn. The one-story masonry stable extending to the rear (south) was also used as a carpentry shop.

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Old Nursery Lane

(Properties now addressed as on Old Nursery Lane were formerly addressed to Mapleton Road, which continues below after #13, even though most of the buildings remain in their historic locations.)

8. Perez/Homan House, 1 Old Nursery Lane (Formerly 240 Mapleton Road) (Block 100, Lot 3.01).

Contributing building (Photo 9).

Although the house is older than the nursery, it was not one of the first four farms purchased when the nursery was established. It is frame, three bays wide and one bay deep with a gabled roof. There is a two-bay rear ell with a nearly flat roof. The roof is gabled and siding is wood clapboard. A one-bay open hip-roofed porch shelters the central main entrance. Windows are generally 6/6 although the central window on the second floor of the main façade is shuttered, apparently permanently. There is one brick chimney, centered on the roof ridge. There is a one-car garage behind the house (#8A). Based on its stylistic attributes, the house probably dates from the third quarter of the 19th century. It was rented to nursery employees. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Contributing).

9. Lofland House, 3 Old Nursery Lane (this location formerly known as 241 Mapleton Road) (Block 100, Lot 3.02). Contributing building (Photo 10).

Now a duplex residence, the Lofland house was a barn or carriage house on one of the farms purchased by the Flemers (possibly originally associated with #8). It is four bays wide, two stories tall, and is one of the few buildings on the nursery property with board and batten siding. There is a one-story shed-roof addition on the front (north) façade. There is one central brick chimney. Windows are generally 6/6. The two entrances are paired near the center of the building under an extension of the shed roof of the addition. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Contributing).

10. Cruz House, 5 Old Nursery Lane (Formerly 242 Mapleton Road) (Block 100, Lot 3.03). Contributing building (Photo 11).

Architecturally unpretentious, this house is frame, two bays wide on the front gable end and four irregular bays deep. It wears sheet metal roofing and vinyl siding. Windows are generally 6/6. A one-bay shed-roof porch shelters the entry. Although its date of construction is unknown, it was moved to 5 Old Nursery Lane by William Flemer, Jr. from one of the farms he purchased for incorporation into the nursery. The house was rented to nursery employees. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Contributing).

11. Pritchett House, 7 Old Nursery Lane (Formerly 243 Mapleton Road) (Block 100, Lot 3.04). Contributing building (Photo 12).

Similar to its neighbor (#10) in massing and finish, the Pritchett House is frame, two stories tall and two bays wide. It is two bays deep plus a one-bay shed-roof rear ell. The main entry is in the front gable end, sheltered by a one-bay shed-roof porch. Windows are generally 6/6. The house appears to have been raised several feet; the foundation is cement block above stone. Also like its neighbor, the house was moved here by William Flemer, Jr. at an unknown date during development of the nursery and rented to nursery employees. It is speculated that both this house and Building #10 may have been tenant houses on farms acquired by Flemer. Its date of construction is unknown.

12. Vik House, 8 Old Nursery Lane (Block 100, Lot 3.07). Non-contributing building (Photo 13).

Until early 2007 the Vik house stood alone on Nursery property east of Greenwood Avenue and south of Ridge Road. In that year it was moved to its new location within the "Princeton Nurseries Village," a housing

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development comprised of seven former nursery houses (buildings #8 through #14). Similar in scale and detail to its neighbors to the south and west, the Vik house is a two and a half story frame house with its entry in the gable end. It is three bays wide on the first floor and two on the second, and four bays deep (with attached shed-roof rear ell). A two story side-gable addition on the south side was constructed c2008 after the house was moved. The entrance is within a full-width hip-roofed porch. Siding is vinyl and windows are generally 1/1. The history of how and when the house came to be located on Greenwood Avenue is unknown, but it was occupied by Princeton Nurseries employees. [Moved to this location, ca.2007, from vicinity of Greenwood Avenue.]

13. Andujar House, 10 Old Nursery Lane (Block 100, Lot 3.06). Non-contributing building. The Andujar House was originally associated with the Higgins house farther south on Mapleton Road (#6), where it was the barn or carriage house until World War I, when William Flemer, Jr. converted it into Princeton Nurseries' first office building. After construction of the present office building (#15) in the 1920s, it was converted again for use as employee housing. In 2007 it was moved from its original site behind the Higgins house to its present location in Princeton Nurseries Village. The house is frame, two stories plus attic, with a gabled roof. It is irregularly three bays wide, with the entrance in the center bay. There is a one-bay wide, two-story ell to the right (now north). Siding is wooden shiplap on the main block and clapboard on the ell. Windows are generally 6/6. The building is presumed to be generally contemporaneous with the Higgins House, i.e. late 19th century. [Moved to this location, 2007 from the Higgins House property, south on Mapleton Road].

Mapleton Road (cont'd)

14. Rutherford House, 134 Mapleton Road (Block 100, Lot 3.05). Contributing building (Photo 15). A building at this location is identified on the 1876 Everts & Stewart map as "J. Rutherford," presumably this house. The 1850 Otley & Keily map of Middlesex County showed a store on the site.

The house was historically used as a duplex occupied by Nursery employees, divided front and rear. Of frame construction, the house is five bays wide and four bays deep with a gabled roof. The main entrance is centered in the front façade, under a gabled one-bay porch, and features sidelights and a fanlight. Windows are generally 6/6 although a tripartite window is centered in the second story of the main façade. Siding is clapboard. There is a two-story, four-bay wide shed-roof rear ell. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Contributing).

Nursery Operations Buildings

15. Princeton Nurseries Office/Headquarters, 145 Mapleton Road (Block 99, Lot 3.111). Contributing building (Photos 16, 17).

Built in 1917 after the fashion of a hunting lodge by an unknown architect, the style of the Office was radically changed by Princeton architect Rolf W. Bauhan in the 1960s to its present Colonial Revival exterior appearance. It faces east, away from Mapleton Road, into an enclosed yard created by buildings #16-18. It is one and a half stories tall above a cobblestone foundation and consists of a main block and an ell to the right (north). The entrance is in a projecting cross gable to the east; the main doorway is in a gable entry and features an arched fanlight and paired sidelights. The slate roof is punctuated by gabled roof dormers and the walls are stuccoed (with horizontally beaded boards in the gable peaks). Windows are generally 6/6 or diamond-pane upper sash above single-light lower sash.

Bauhan changed the rooflines from the original jerkinhead (sometimes called a hipped gable or a clipped gable) to full gable on the main roof, cross gable and dormer. He also removed a *porte-cochère* on the south end and

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added the roof dormers. The composition of the building as a group of masses of differing heights is illustrative of Bauhan's interpretation of Colonial domestic architecture. The interior of the building is not Colonial Revival. Its principal feature is a two-story central space with half-timber walls, a balcony and cobblestone fireplace.

16. Blacksmith Shop/Safety and Education Building (Block 99, Lot 3.111). Contributing building (Photo 18). Stylistic and material similarities to the Office (#15) suggest this building too was reconfigured by Rolf Bauhan, perhaps about the time its use changed. It is one and a half stories high with an offset gabled roof; the west side façade is taller than the east. The gabled peak is sided with wood shingles and there are there is a group of three 12-pane windows. A pedestrian door provides access from the south. Historic photos (Photos 40 and 41) show it to have had a jerkinhead roof and three windows on the east façade.

17. Large Packing Shed (Block 99, Lot 3.113). Contributing building (Photos 19, 20). The western end of this building is the original packing shed, built in 1917 adjacent to the tracks of the Rocky Hill Branch Railroad, when William Flemer, Sr. first established the nursery. In the nursery's scheme of identifying buildings it was known as Building 2. To this were added linearly along the railroad tracks additional sections known to the nursery as buildings 3,4,5,6 and 7 (all of which are part of Building #17 for the purposes of this nomination).

Building 2—the westernmost section—is a broad, 9-bay wide two-story wood frame building with a gabled roof. There is a *porte-cochère* on the south façade sheltering a loading door with overhead crane, and there is a vehicular entrance on the west. Siding is clapboard. The interior of the original section features columns fashioned from tree trunks, supporting a two-story space. Partitions retain their original vertically beaded paneling. Windows are 6/6 (now sealed by temporary exterior plywood panels).

The next three sections were so-called common storage, neither heated nor refrigerated, in which dormant plant stock was held from about November through April. The last two sections are insulated and were refrigerated so stock could be kept dormant for about two months longer; the goal was to ship plants before they began to leaf out in the Spring. An extension of the original building, these sections are similar in height and width to the original, the principal differences being the materials used. Walls are cement block and posts and beams are steel. Since these buildings were primarily used for storage and shipping, windows would be superfluous and there are few of them. Each section contains eight bays.

18. Tree Storage Building (Block 99, Lot 3.113). Contributing building (Photo 21). Similar in function to the insulated storage parts of #17 but with greater interior vertical clearance, this building was used for winter storage of harvested trees awaiting Spring shipment. Of modern building materials and lacking any style or ornament, it is a long, gable-roof building served by overhead vehicular doors on the north façade accessible to the nursery's delivery trucks or customers' trucks. The eastern end was built first, to which the western end was added. The roof of the latter is supported by steel trusses while the latter has steel columns. Walls are cement block.

Known to nursery workers as the Number 9 Building, functionally it was as much the heart of the operation as was #17 above.

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19. Greenhouse Complex (Block 99, Lot 3.113). Contributing building (Photos 22,23).

The greenhouse complex consists of a two-story frame Propagation House oriented east-west, from which greenhouses extended to both the north and south (originally eight in each direction for a total of 16), constructed so as to share their long walls with their neighbor. Eight survive, four to the north and four to the south. Benches in the greenhouses are poured concrete.

The Propagation House is lit on the first floor by the greenhouses and on the second by six groups of three 12-pane windows. Prominently attached to the Propagation House is a terra cotta smokestack, approximately twice as high as the building, bearing the letters "PN" in lighter-colored terra cotta. It served two coal-fired boilers, later replaced by oil burners. William Flemer, Jr. built the greenhouses in the 1920s.

20. The Cottage, 149 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photos 24, 25).

The Cottage is a one and a half story, two-bay wide vernacular house purchased by the nursery and used as employee housing. It is frame with clapboard siding on the first floor and wood shingle in the gable peak. A full-width one-story porch shelters the entry. There are gabled wall dormers on both side facades and a projecting bay on the first floor of the right (south) elevation. Windows are generally 2/2. Based on its style the house appears to date from the 1920s.

The one-story garage (#20A, Contributing), added by Rolf Bauhan before 1966, can hardly be called high-style. It is a two-car garage with a pedestrian door. The roof is gabled with cornice returns, and there are two 12-pane windows and one 6-pane window in the gable peak on each of the side façades.

20B. 153 Mapleton Road (Block 102, Lot 2.021) is an intrusion (Non-contributing building);
A late 20th century one-story cement block telephone service building.

21. Seed Department, 138 Mapleton Road (Block 100, Lot 3.09). Contributing building (Photos 26, 27).

Two buildings comprise the Seed Department, reached by the former right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad. The tracks had been removed in the 19th century and it is now an unpaved lane lined on both sides by towering oaks. The site is currently occupied by Mapleton Nurseries, founded and originally operated by William Flemer, IV on leased land destined to become permanent open space.

Building #21 (Contributing) was the work building for the Seed Department. It is a one-story gable-roof building, one bay wide and four bays deep. Siding is wood shingle and windows are 6/6. There is a brick gable end chimney at the back (west). A shed/ell extends to the right (north) from the main block. Although it cannot be said to have architectural style, the wood shingle siding, 6/6 windows and gable roof suggest it was built during the William Flemer, Jr. era.

Building #21A, Sand Building (Non-contributing building) dates from the 1970s. Located south across Heathcote Brook, it is a gabled barn-like building sided and roofed in fiberglass panels.

Building #21B, Pump house (Contributing), dates from the 1930s. Located adjacent to Heathcote Brook near a principal bend in the brook. A one-story stone and concrete block building with a gable roof, containing water pumping equipment, used to support field irrigation and the Kingston Water Company operation (see Section 8).

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Building #21C, Pump house (Contributing), probably dates from the about the 1950s, and was used in support of irrigation operations on Princeton Nurseries land, possibly associated with the Kingston Irrigation Company (see Section 8). A largely buried, concrete block structure with a small footprint and a flat roof.

Ridge Road

22. Fenwick House, 1011 Ridge Road (Block 99, Lot 3.114). Contributing building (Photo 28). Stylistically the Fenwick House appears to predate the establishment of Princeton Nurseries. It is a simple frame house, two stories tall, three bays wide and two bays deep with a gabled roof and a series of gabled rear additions constructed c2013. Siding is wood shingle and there are two interior end brick chimneys. Windows are generally 6/6. The house was used as employee housing by Princeton Nurseries.

A wooden barn stands near the house (#22A, Contributing building).

23. I. C. Withington House, 1004 Ridge Road (Block 98, Lot 10.031). Contributing building (Photo 29). Located on the north side of Ridge Road, the Withington House probably dates from *circa* 1860. It was owned by a son of Phineas Withington, one of the backers of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. In recent years it was owned by William Flemer, IV. It is frame, three bays wide and one bay deep with wood clapboard siding and a gabled roof. A central cross gable with exposed rafter tails and an unusual wooden diamond motif appears to be a later addition. There is a central brick chimney and an off-center one-story hip-roofed porch. A one-story ell extends to the rear, with another chimney at the gable end. Windows are irregularly spaced and are generally 6/6; small windows at the second-floor level are four-light, fixed pane sash. The lot is bordered on the north by the former right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad. The house was recommended as individually eligible for inclusion in the Register by the 2002 survey of South Brunswick Township. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Contributing).

24. Joyce House, 1007 Ridge Road (Block 99, Lot 7.011). Contributing building (Photo 30). Like the nearby Fenwick House which it resembles in scale and massing, this building predates the establishment of Princeton Nurseries but was later used as employee housing. It is frame, three bays wide and two bays deep with a gabled roof and a two-story gabled rear ell. A full-width one-story front porch shelters the first floor of the main elevation, which includes a one-story, three-part projecting bay. Windows are generally 1/1 or 2/2. Siding is vinyl. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Contributing).

Railroad Avenue

25. Braddock House, 7 Railroad Avenue (Block 109, Lot 1.01). Contributing building (Photo 31). The Braddock House also appears stylistically to predate Princeton Nurseries and was used as employee housing. It is a frame house, two stories tall, three bays wide and two deep with a two-story gable-roof rear ell added c2012. Siding is vinyl and windows are generally 2/2. The main entry is centered on the front (north) façade and is within a one-bay, one-story flat-roof porch with square posts. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Non-contributing bldg.).

26. Eugene Harvey House, 9 Railroad Avenue (Block 109, Lot 2.01). Contributing building (Photo 32). Located at the southeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Greenwood Avenue, the Eugene Harvey house is a 2 1/2-story, frame, gable-front house with vinyl siding. It is three bays wide and two bays deep, with a one-bay, two-story flat-roofed rear ell. A full-width, one-story, flat-roof porch spans the front (north) elevation. Windows are

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generally 2/2 although there is an unusual narrow 1/1 window above the front door. A box cornice with returns is supported by widely-spaced brackets. Stylistically the house appears to date from the last quarter of the 19th century. It was rented to nursery employees. Outbuilding: Frame garage (Contributing).

Greenwood Avenue

27. Harvey House, 6 Greenwood Avenue. Contributing building (Photo 33).

Architecturally the Harvey House appears to date from the end of the 19th century due to its applied detail, but the underlying massing suggests it may be an earlier side-hall house that underwent later alteration. It is frame, 2 ½-stories tall, two bays wide and two bays deep. The roof is gabled and there is a gabled two-story rear ell. The front (east) elevation contains, besides the main entry, a one-story, three-part projecting bay window and a one-story porch that continues around the right (north) elevation. The front door has paired round-arch panels, typical of the Italianate style. Paired brackets support a boxed cornice, and the gable peaks of the right elevation of the main block and the rear (west) elevation of the ell contain the most elaborate scrollsawn woodwork found anywhere on the nursery property. Siding is wood clapboard. Windows are generally 2/2 although there are some 6/6s on secondary elevations.

A small two-story barn stands west of the house is (#27A). [Contributing building]

Greenwood Avenue was created by Princeton Nurseries as an enclave of employee housing. At one time there were at least six more buildings on the street, one of which was a chapel. The street is accessible only from Railroad Avenue at the north end and by unpaved nursery lanes at the south. It is paved but there are no sidewalks or curbs.

The following properties were constructed between 2007 and 2013; all are Non-contributing buildings:

- 28. 5 Greenwood Avenue (Block 109, Lot 4.01). House and garage. [2 non-contributing bldgs.]
- 29. 7 Greenwood Avenue (Block 109, Lot 6.01). House and garage. [2 non-contributing bldgs.]
- 30. 9 Greenwood Avenue (Block 109, Lot 8.01). House and garage. [2 non-contributing bldgs.]
- 31. 10 Greenwood Avenue (Block 108, Lot 5.01). House and garage. [2 non-contributing bldgs.]
- 32. 11 Greenwood Avenue (Block 109, Lot 11.01). House and garage. [2 non-contributing bldgs.]
- 33. 12 Greenwood Avenue (Block 108, Lot 9.01). House and garage. [2 non-contributing bldgs.]

Ridge Road (cont'd)

34. Ten Broeck/Shope House, 983 Ridge Road (Block 99, Lot 8.02). Contributing building (Photo 34).

The Ten Broeck/Shope House is so called from its notation on the 1850 Otle and Keily map. On the 1876 Everts & Stewart map it is shown as "C. Sheppard." Formerly owned by Princeton Nurseries, William Flemer, Jr. sold it to a family named Shope. Architecturally it has Italianate detailing. It is frame with wood shingle siding, three bays wide and 2 ½ stories tall. The front (north) elevation is dominated by a central cross gable, in the peak of which is a characteristically Italianate paired round-arch window. A one-story hip-roof porch spans the front façade. Windows are generally 2/2. Outbuildings: Frame garage (Contributing) and Barn (Contributing).

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35. Goeke House, 979 Ridge Road. Non-contributing building (Photo 35).

Built in the 1960s, this is a one-story ranch house built on land which once belonged to the nurseries, but is otherwise unrelated to the nursery. Outbuilding: Brick garage (Non-contributing).

Bridges

36. Mapleton Road Bridge, Mapleton Road over Heathcote Brook. Non-contributing structure (Photo 36). Known formally as Middlesex County Bridge 4-B-68, the bridge was designed by Vollmer and Associates LLP and built in 2001. It features concrete parapets with cast panels.

37. Pedestrian Bridge, Unnamed farm lane over Heathcote Brook Tributary (vic. Greenwood Avenue). Non-contributing structure. This pedestrian bridge consists of a welded steel arch truss approximately 20' long by 10' wide manufactured by Contech Bridge Solutions Inc. with wooden plank deck set on concrete abutments. 2010.

38. Culvert, Railroad Avenue over Heathcote Brook Tributary. Contributing structure. Early twentieth century 24" concrete pipe culvert. Upstream (south) side faced with dry-laid sandstone.

39. Culvert, Former Camden and Amboy Branch Line over Heathcote Brook Tributary. Contributing structure. This culvert consists of three separate pipes placed adjacent to each other and faced on both sides with random trap-rock and broken concrete rubble. To the west is a cast iron pipe culvert, approximately 24" in diameter; In the center is a corrugated galvanized steel pipe culvert, approximately 36" in diameter; and to the east is a small concrete pipe culvert, approximately 12" in diameter. Together these three culverts carry the stream under the former right-of-way of the Camden & Amboy Branch Line, which continued to serve the nursery throughout the period of significance.

Roads

40. Mapleton Road. Contributing structure (Photos 38,39)

First surveyed in 1737, Mapleton Road achieved significance relative to Princeton Nurseries early in the 20th century when William Flemer, Jr. planted plane trees on both sides of it near the southern boundary of the nominated property. The entire length of Mapleton Road within the nominated area is considered contributing as the "main street" of Princeton Nurseries. Within the district, Mapleton Road consists of a 33-foot right-of-way from the Plainsboro border north to just south of Heathcote Brook, where it widens to 66 feet through to Basin Street, at the district boundary. The rural setting of the road is enhanced by the aforementioned *allées* planted within the right-of-way. The road includes a asphalt-paved cartway of one travel lane in each direction, without paved shoulders on either side. The road is striped with a double-yellow center line and single, white sidelines. Electric utility poles on the northeast side of the road carry electrical and telephone wires and provide some street illumination.

Railroads

41. Camden and Amboy Branch Line Alignment. Contributing structure. The former right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad exists as a variable width level earthen berm, today in large part supporting unpaved nursery roads (and overgrown in other locations). The alignment enters the district at Ridge Road and Railroad Avenue on the north, and continues south-west, across Mapleton Road, curving south and exiting the district on the west side near the Plainsboro Township line. It is a contributing structure, plainly discernible in the landscape, contributing to the significance of the nursery. This was an active branch rail line with a single track

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(and a siding for Princeton Nurseries), serving Kingston and Rocky Hill for passengers and freight until 1928, when passenger service was discontinued, and until about 1968, when freight service was discontinued (see Section 8).

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Summary Paragraph

The Princeton Nurseries Historic District, encompassing 272 acres, comprises the operational heart of Princeton Nurseries, of Kingston, Middlesex County, one of New Jersey's largest wholesale tree nurseries during the 20th century. At its peak, Princeton Nurseries occupied about 1,500 acres at its Kingston location, even before adding hundreds of additional acres in Upper Freehold Township, about 20 miles away, which it called its Allentown Site. Under the leadership of William Flemer, Jr., the nursery grew from one farm in 1913 to 800 acres during the early Depression years, to its peak acreage after World War II. William, Jr., helped form the New Jersey Association of Nurserymen (NJAN) in 1915, later serving as its president in the 1920s. He and other executives of Princeton Nurseries played recurring leadership roles in NJAN for several decades.¹ After World War II, when a study showed that more than more than 650 state-certified plant nurseries and plant dealers of all kinds operated in New Jersey (including those selling ornamental flowers), most were retail outlets that occupied only small parcels of land and sold their inventory locally. Tree sellers were in the minority, and tree nurseries that grew their own stock were far fewer. Princeton Nurseries operated at the extreme end of the range: it was one of about six New Jersey wholesale tree growers who occupied 100 acres or more, propagated their trees from seed, planted their own seedlings, and matured the trees on their own ground.² In acreage, it may have been the largest of the six. To foster the business's expansion, Princeton Nurseries developed a greatly enlarged irrigation infrastructure on a scale that must have been rare within the industry, including its own dedicated reservoir on higher ground in nearby Franklin Township. In addition, the company sank wells on its own land and created the Kingston Water Company, providing public water supply for the village. The revenue obtained by so doing helped finance the improvements. Princeton Nurseries was thus able to fill many of the largest orders in the industry, from such entities as state highway departments and urban park commissions. Princeton Nurseries hired both a seasonal workforce and had a year-round staff, together eventually totaling 300 persons, and it pioneered in improved living and working conditions for agricultural workers. Princeton Nurseries quite consciously sought to set itself apart from other plant nurseries. In a revealing 1931 publication featuring their trademarked "Princeton Products" logo, it announced its ambition to be a different kind of tree nursery: "that the policies which govern our business are different than those of most commercial nurseries serving the plant-buying public." It strove to be a nursery that "catered to those who desired ...the highest-grade nursery stock that modern equipment, skill, patience, and careful training can produce." The emergence of Princeton Nurseries was an event of statewide significance under National Register Criterion A in the field of horticultural history. The period of significance extends from 1913, in which land acquisition and planting began at Kingston and arbitrarily extends to 1968, fifty years ago, even though company management and nursery operations continued at Kingston until 1994.³ Throughout this period, Princeton Nurseries remained an important grower of ornamental trees and shrubs, and of street trees, for example, pioneering the Princeton Elm (*Ulmus Americana* 'Princeton') in the 1920s. Among landscapers, Princeton Nurseries became well-known, especially in the post-

¹ The historical impact of William Flemer, Jr., and William III are not examined in this nomination, and therefore whether the district also meets National Register Criterion B for its association with either of them or with other figures associated with Princeton Nurseries is likewise not examined. Statements about the actions of the Flemers and others are included only to strengthen the arguments made for the Criterion A significance of the district.

² Russell M. Bettes, *History of the New Jersey Association of Nurserymen* (n.p., NJ Assoc. of Nurserymen, ca.1972), 52. Evidence from a quick, online search of websites of tree nurseries in other states strongly suggests that Princeton Nurseries was among the largest class of tree nurseries nationally.

³ Future consideration should be given to extending the period of significance to 1982, which would enable more of the career of William Flemer III to be encompassed. Hopefully, with the passage of additional years, the historical literature about the tree nursery industry, both nationally and in New Jersey, will, itself, grow and improve, and the stature of Princeton Nurseries within that industry come into bolder relief.

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WW2 years, as the originator and principal source for the Shademaster Honeylocust, one of the most popular varieties of commercial shade trees in the eastern U.S, and a highly profitable product for the company. The Princeton Nurseries Historic District also embodies the distinctive characteristics of a nearly self-contained and well-preserved commercial nursery, where stock was raised from seed and grafts to marketable size by a workforce that largely lived on site in company-owned housing. The Princeton Nurseries Historic District also meets National Register Criterion A with local significance in agricultural history for the greater Kingston area. Until the early 20th century, the future home of Princeton Nurseries was a largely agricultural neighborhood of grain, vegetable, and dairy farms, and orchards. Over the course of a generation, Princeton Nurseries transformed more than 2 square miles in the Kingston area from farms that sold what plants produced to selling plants, themselves. In addition, Princeton Nurseries added a prominent new agricultural enterprise to the Kingston area and became a locally-important agricultural employer.

The Neighborhood Before Princeton Nurseries

The nominated district lies just to the southeast of Kingston, a small, unincorporated village that straddles both NJ Route 27 and the boundary line between Middlesex and Somerset counties.⁴ A sawmill was built along Heathcote Brook adjacent to the district about 1717, but ceased operations about 1760.⁵ Mapleton Road was laid out in 1737 to link Kingston with a gristmill upstream on the Millstone River. The nominated district is also associated in peripheral ways with two significant Revolutionary War battles. British officers were garrisoned at the Matthias Van Dyke House prior to the Battle of Princeton (January 3, 1777), and in June 1778 the American army camped briefly at Kingston and passed along Ridge Road en route to the Battle of Monmouth. In the 1750s, at least one substantial stone house was built, the Matthias Van Dyke House, located on the north side of Mapleton Road in the district (86 Mapleton Road). (Much later, this became the home of William Flemer, Jr., after the farm was acquired for the expanding nursery.) The neighborhood consisted of scattered small farms when the Delaware and Raritan Canal was built on the right bank of the Millstone River in the early 1830s. The Camden and Amboy Railroad laid tracks alongside the canal in 1838, creating a new main line between Trenton and New Brunswick that foreshadowed the Northeast Corridor line built in the 1850s and 1860s. Later, as a branch line, a portion of this track would provide rail access for Princeton Nurseries until the 1960s.

By 1840 the basic infrastructure of the nursery's neighborhood was in place (Figure 2). Four isolated farmsteads stood on Mapleton Road between Ridge Road and the southern limit of the nominated property. The four are labeled on a map made in 1850 (Figure 3): H. Van Dyke, W. Van Dyke, J. Van Duyn and J.B. Story; the general vicinity is labeled "Mapletown." There was a depot where the Camden and Amboy Railroad tracks crossed Mapleton Road and a store on the opposite side of the road. The Canal had been completed, including a basin just east of the village of Kingston.

The landscape changed little in the succeeding quarter century (Figure 4). Van Dykes were still numerous, but by 1876 the J.B. Story house appeared in the new county atlas under the name A.S. Meyrick. The railroad tracks along the canal were gone, having been removed in 1865 after the new main line between Trenton and New Brunswick (today's Northeast Corridor) was completed in 1864, although the east-west remnant of the old line remained as a branch line, connecting Rocky Hill, through Kingston, to Deans. A year later the junction was

⁴ Part of Kingston lies in South Brunswick Township, Middlesex County (as does nearly all of the nominated district), and part in Franklin Township, Somerset County.

⁵ No systematic archaeological attempts have been made to locate the remains of Leonard's Mills, and no surface remains are evident.

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changed to Monmouth Junction. Known as the Rocky Hill Branch, this line ceased passenger service in 1928, but continued to provide freight service the Kingston quarry and Princeton Nurseries into the 1960s.

Commercial Tree Horticulture in New Jersey and the Northeast U.S.

The distinction of being the first pioneering plantsman to focus on the raising of tree stock for sale in the American colonies is usually accorded to William Prince, founder of the first American nursery in Flushing, New York (now part of the borough of Queens) in 1737. American nurserymen at first concentrated on fruit trees. In a circular that Prince published in 1771, he advertised for sale 33 types of plums, two dozen varieties of apples, 42 pears and a dozen types of nectarines. Three years later his son William offered for sale magnolias, catalpas, almonds, gooseberries, strawberries, grapevines, mulberries and filberts. In 1789 the nursery was visited by President George Washington. Two years later Thomas Jefferson paid a visit and placed an order for sugar maples, cranberries, six "sumachs" and 12 pears. William Prince Jr., the third generation, established a second nursery nearby, later combined with the first. The Prince nursery remained in the family for four generations and was in business until after the Civil War.⁶

Less is known about the horticultural activities of two Middlesex County families that also apparently had botanical leanings. Colonel (and New Jersey Assemblyman) John Wetherill assembled landholdings of 1,700 acres near what is now Dayton in South Brunswick Township in the mid-18th century. Wetherill was selling stock in quantity in 1763 when he filled an order from Thomas Barton of Perth Amboy for 400 apple trees, 100 of which were grafted.⁷ The James Moon family in Oxford, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was selling apple tree seedlings in quantity as early as 1767.⁸ In 1806, Daniel Smith of Burlington had a catalog of his fruit trees for sale published in Philadelphia.⁹

Other New Jersey nurseries emerged in the 19th century. Isaac Pullen began a nursery in East Windsor Township in 1830, which evolved into the Black family nursery after the Civil War, and then was bought out, becoming Village Nurseries, which grew before 1900 to encompass about one thousand acres.¹⁰ Thomas Hancock published an abridged catalog of the trees and shrubs that he grew at Ashton in Burlington County as early as 1847.¹¹ At about this time horticulture was intersecting with landscape design and architecture, perhaps most notably in the person of Andrew Jackson Downing. Born in Newburgh, New York on the Hudson River in 1815, Downing was the son of a nurseryman who, with his brother, operated the nursery they inherited from their father. In addition to his well-known career in architecture, Downing was also an eminent horticulturist and pomologist; his 1845 book *Th Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* was the standard work on the topic for half a

⁷ (Hunter Research 2003).

⁸ Today this business is Snipes Nursery in Morrisville, PA. For more, see <http://www.snipesfarm.com/about/>

⁹ Daniel Smith, *A Catalogue of Fruit Trees for Sale, in the fall of 1806, by Daniel Smith and Company, at Burlington, near Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: United States Gazette Printing Office, 1806).

¹⁰ Village Nurseries, now a very much smaller enterprise, still operates today. At its peak, however, it was a large agricultural operation, a worthy, 19th-century predecessor of Princeton Nurseries. For an explanation of its history, see Charles S. Stults III, "Village Nurseries, East Windsor's Oldest Business," *Historical Society News* [Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society newsletter] (Spring 2017).

¹¹ *Thomas Hancock's Abridged Catalogue of Fruit, Forest and Ornamental Trees and Shrubs; also Green House Plants, Cultivated and for Sale at his Well Known and Established Nurseries, at Ashton, near Burlington, New Jersey* (Burlington, NJ: John Rodgers, 1847). Henry G. Gilbert Collection, National Agricultural Library, USDA, Washington, DC.

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century.¹² William Reid operated a tree nursery in Elizabeth, Union County in the middle of the 19th century; by 1867 that property was operated by a David Buchanan and encompassed 100 acres.¹³ The Elizabeth Nursery Company of Elizabeth, in its 1920 catalog, of trees, shrubs, and plants, indicated its founding date was 1866.¹⁴ The catalog did not make clear whether this firm was a successor to the Reid-Buchanan business.

J.T. Lovett, Sr. established Lovett's Nursery in Little Silver, Monmouth County in 1854, according to one source, and his nursery was incorporated in 1887. Lovett was an early member of the American Association of Nurserymen (AAN) in 1875. This firm, however, observed its 50th anniversary in 1928, indicating that at that time it recognized a founding in 1878. The Pomona Nursery, in Cinnaminson Township, Burlington County, was operated by a William Parry in the 1870s. [Note: These are a few of many tree and plant nurseries in 19th-century and early 20th-century New Jersey, most of whose histories are not well understood. A fuller recitation of these firms, however, would be beyond the scope of this document, and would be more redundant than instructive.] The largest of the wholesale nurseries in the late 19th century achieved some of the same elements that would later characterize Princeton Nurseries: possessing growing fields spread across hundreds of acres, marketing their product lines through catalogs that included color printing, shipping their products by rail, and dominating the volume handled by their local post offices.¹⁵

F&F Nurseries

William Flemer, Sr. was born in Aldene in what is now Roselle Borough in Union County, New Jersey, in 1861. His father Carl supported him in his efforts to learn the nursery business, and William opened his nursery in Roselle in 1882, with a partner, Theodore Foulk, a German-American nurseryman about 15 years older. The business was named Flemer & Foulk, or F&F. The initial choice of location was not good for raising trees, so a new and better location in Kenilworth was found. About 1895 the nursery moved again, this time to a 150-acre farm in Springfield, Union County.¹⁶

The Creation of Princeton Nurseries

In 1913 William Flemer, Sr. began acquiring farms along Mapleton Road for what would become Princeton Nurseries, initially as an expansion of F&F. The choice of Kingston resulted from an extensive scouting effort that considered many sites in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. William Flemer Jr. later recalled that the search extended from Long Island to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and started about 1910. Family farms and transportation facilities near "Mapletown" were among the places that father and son visited. His son recalled that the Kingston location had been chosen because it was midway between Philadelphia and New York City, and Boston and Washington, for the transportation opportunities afforded by its proximity to the railroad and the canal, and for its "...very fine Sassafras loam" soil.¹⁷

¹² Catherine M. Howett, "Andrew Jackson Downing," in *American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1989).

¹³ Reid's Nurseries. *Catalogue for 1867 and 1868, of Fruit and Ornamental Trees, Flowering Shrubs, Etc.* RUL.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Nursery Co., Elizabeth, NJ. *Descriptive Catalog of Trees, Shrubs, and Plants, Offered by the Elizabeth Nursery Co.* [n.p., 1920]. RUL.

¹⁵ Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, "Planting a Seed: The Nineteenth-Century Horticultural Boom in America," *Business History Review* 78, 3 (2004): 381-421.

¹⁶ *Lindenkohl – Flemer History, 1632-1972*. n.p. ca.1972. [Flemer family history]

¹⁷ William Flemer, Jr. "Flemer Nurtured Nurseries." *Princeton Recollector*. (1978). Princeton History Project, Princeton, NJ. So-called sassafras soils have long been recognized as being especially well suited to the growing of trees, and it abounds on the inner Atlantic

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Having settled on Kingston, William Flemer, Sr. in 1913 bought the Myrick farm of 65 acres for \$9,000. The following year he purchased the adjacent 65-acre Higgins farm for \$14,000, then the next adjacent farm, the 85-acre Matthias Van Dyke farm, for \$12,000. The last of the initial purchases was the Archibald Gulick farm, 70 acres for \$11,500. Thus, by 1915 William Flemer, Sr. owned 285 contiguous acres of fertile farmland, and four farmhouses with outbuildings, for a total investment of \$46,500.¹⁸ The FLEMERS suffered early losses as well. In January 1917, the barn that housed several of their horses burned, killing two horses in the blaze, and causing the need for an immediate rebuilding.¹⁹

In 1914, Flemer, Sr. assigned his son, William, Jr., then only 18, to manage the Kingston operation, and planting was evidently begun that year. By the American entry into World War I in 1917, the fields in Kingston comprised a flourishing diversity of many plant species. It is not entirely clear how soon the name Princeton Nurseries became attached to this branch of the F&F business, but it was not later than 1917. The company issued a “second” catalog in the fall of 1917, this one, at least, under the “Princeton Nurseries” name.²⁰ In the introductory remarks at the beginning of this publication, its author wrote of the business, “Our place is new and our business is young.” He promised that Princeton Nurseries was going to be purely a wholesale nursery whose customers were other nurserymen, against whom it would not compete for the retail customer. It would produce “for the Trade” only.²¹

The 1917 catalog extolled the Princeton Nurseries location, proving the value of William Sr’s extensive search of a few years before.

Here, in Princeton [*sic*], we have what we consider the best nursery land in the country—for our purposes. We are growing ... the better class ... of stock not always easiest to produce and yet for which a demand exists. As to location, we are in a half-way situation: we can grow many desirable plants not hardy further North, and we can also grow the hardier varieties, having this a large assortment suitable to a wide territory.²²

In 1917, after the United States entered World War I, William Flemer, Jr. enlisted in the Army as an ambulance driver, an event that would eventually influence the landscape of central New Jersey. Flemer was in France from the fall of 1917 until early 1919, and it was there that he encountered tree-lined rural roads. He also saw French fields separated by windbreaks of tall poplars, and he would plant both upon his return to Kingston. He also recalled spending his free time in Europe planning other improvements to the nursery.²³

During his son’s absence, Flemer Sr. had the original office (#15) and packing house (now the western end of #17) built. Prior to this event the office had been housed in the Andujar House (#13), which at the time was the carriage house of (and stood behind) the Higgins House (#6). The architect of the new office is unknown, but its

coastal plain in New Jersey. For a technical explanation of the Sassafras series of soil types, see https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/OSD_Docs/S/SASSAFRAS.html.

¹⁸ “Growing Princeton Nurseries,” History Girl Blog. <http://www.thehistorygirl.com/2013/10/princeton-nurseries.html> viewed Feb. 9, 2018.

¹⁹ *Trenton Evening Times*, January 23, 1917.

²⁰ “Princeton Nurseries, Princeton, New Jersey 1917.” [catalog, unpaginated]. The catalog contains a final item dated September 1, 1917, indicating that it went to press shortly thereafter. This author has not seen the first catalog.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Hand.*

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design was reminiscent of a Bavarian hunting lodge (see historic photos), with a jerkinhead roof and dormers and, on the interior, a two-story half-timbered space with a balcony and a cobblestone fireplace. It also had a *porte-cochère*. It was remodeled in the 1960s to its present Colonial Revival appearance by Princeton architect (and Flemer family friend) Rolf W. Bauhan. The Andujar House was moved to its present location *circa* 2006. Also while the younger Flemer was abroad, his father removed the one-story kitchen wing of the Matthias Van Dyke house (#4), believed to have been the earliest section, and an outbuilding. The kitchen wing had been damaged by water entering the stonework.

The 1920s

After the war, William Flemer, Jr. returned to Princeton Nurseries. He planted poplar trees along the lanes of the Princeton Nurseries lands as windbreaks after his return from the war. and allees of shade trees along the sides of Mapleton Road and the other roads that coursed through or on which the on which the Princeton Nurseries' lands fronted.²⁴ Hand quoted Flemer, "I also planted rows of sycamores along the roads after I got out of the army."(ibid.) He was not the only American who had contemplated closely-spaced roadside tree plantings. Mercer County accomplished such plantings, planting an allée of 180 trees on Nottingham Way between Hamilton Square and Robbinsville as a memorial to the County's men who had died in the war.²⁵ (Hand 1998).

In the decade after Flemer's return from Europe, America witnessed a great surge in demand for nursery stock, especially shade trees. Several related forces contributed to this trend. One was the quarantine that was placed on foreign nursery stock entering the U.S. in 1919. This quarantine was strengthened in 1921.²⁶ With the door thus shut "to our regular supply of European material, those who were in production could sell almost anything that they were able to produce."²⁷ Another was the post-war construction boom of the 1920s, in which cities began aggressively spreading outward, fueled in part by widespread automobile ownership. The new houses that sprang up would all need a variety of trees and shrubs to landscape their lots, and the growing towns would need shade trees for their new streets and landscaping for their parks. Also, the 1920s would witness an explosion of highway construction, quickly followed by cries for roadside beautification. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the concept of planting trees along streets was not new, but in the 1920s "...the road beautification movement took a popular and well-established design idea...from the city and suburban street and moved it to the open road."²⁸ A few local examples will illustrate: in 1924 the New Jersey legislature authorized the creation of county Shade Tree Commissions; in 1926 Mercer County's Commission asked the County Freeholders to plant trees along new roadways and the Freeholders budgeted \$8,500 for this purpose. The New Jersey Federation of Shade Tree Commissions was organized in 1926.²⁹ Several years later a state law made it illegal for shade tree commissions to act as nurseries.³⁰ The Washington Road elms were planted in 1925 or 1926. In 1930, Brunswick Pike (U.S. Route 1) from Trenton to New Brunswick was to be planted with more than 4,500 trees, and these trees were in fact supplied by Princeton Nurseries.³¹ Princeton Nurseries became a popular

²⁴ Ibid., p.7.

²⁵ Ibid. This highway, then a part of New Jersey's original "Route 1," was the state's first concrete-paved highway, and it was being completed in 1920, as the planting was begun. Considering the size and age of the trees that line this road today, only a few of these trees apparently survive, but they no longer form an allée. In some areas, younger trees have been planted to replace the older ones.

²⁶ Bettes, 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Hand.

²⁹ Bettes, 22.

³⁰ Ibid., 29.

³¹ Ibid.

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supplier of trees to the New Jersey Highway Department.³² Hand also cites Mercer County Freeholder minutes as a source, and suggests that Princeton University became a customer for PN trees in the early 1920s. Shade tree planting along roads in the county got another boost in the Mercer County master plan of 1931, written by urban planner Russell V. Black, nephew of the family that operated Village Nurseries in East Windsor, where he called for more streetside plantings and for the creation of a Mercer County central park.³³

William Flemer, Sr. died in 1925, which led within the next several years to the establishment of Princeton Nurseries as a fully independent business. Even though William Jr. had operated Princeton Nurseries autonomously since the 'teens, it was legally still a branch of the F&F Nursery, his father's business. F&F Nurseries had maintained both of its locations, with production in Kingston under William Jr.'s direction and sales from Springfield handled by his brother Carl. In 1931 the firm divided into separate entities with each brother continuing to operate his respective nursery. Princeton Nurseries finally became an independent business, fourteen years after its name first appeared.

It was during this period that the greatest strides were made in transforming the disparate collection of farms outside Kingston into a single nursery, with results still visible today. William Flemer, Jr. built the first greenhouses and installed the first water system for irrigation. By the 1950s, Princeton Nurseries would have twenty greenhouses. Flemer organized the nursery operations into separate departments. He began relocating the smaller houses and other outbuildings he had acquired with the farms he purchased, and began renting the houses to his employees. He created the precursor of the streetscape west of Mapleton Road (today known as Princeton Nurseries Village) by moving buildings #9, #10 and possibly #11 behind #8 and adjacent to the Rutherford House (#14). The Railroad Avenue/Greenwood Avenue neighborhood was created. Finally, in a single stroke he visually unified almost all of the nursery buildings—residential and operational alike—by painting them a pale Colonial Revival yellow with white trim, a color scheme that has largely been maintained. The nursery became the second largest account at the local paint store in Princeton, after Princeton University (Flemer 2007).

It was also during the 1920s that William Flemer, Jr. developed the Princeton Elm, a variety of American Elm that would prove resistant to Dutch Elm disease when that disease arrived with a vengeance in the 1930s. The disease was already ravaging elms in Europe, a fact of which Flemer was undoubtedly aware, and he apparently anticipated its eventual arrival in the United States. It is this tree that lines both sides of Washington Road in West Windsor Township, creating an arched living entranceway to Princeton from the east. In 1999 the Washington Road Elm Allée was placed on the National Register of Historic places. Other rows of Princeton Elms survive in Plainsboro Township, Middlesex County on Plainsboro Road near U.S. 1.³⁴

The Depression Years

Princeton Nurseries won a contract to supply 4509 trees for the Brunswick Pike (later renamed U.S. Route 1).³⁵ Princeton Nurseries became a leader in the new field of the patenting of new plant discoveries. The U.S. Plant Patent Act was signed into law in 1930.³⁶ William Flemer, Jr. received the first plant patent issued under this

³² Sprinkled through the Department's annual reports from the 1920s and beyond, reports of contracts awarded to Princeton Nurseries identify the highways along which the nursery's trees were planted.

³³ Russell V. Black, *Mercer County Master Plan* (Trenton, NJ: Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 1931).

³⁴ Hand contains an excellent discussion of the Washington Road *allée* and its context in the roadside beautification movement.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7; *Courier-News* [Bridgewater, NJ], October 22, 1930.

³⁶ Plant patenting is explained in "Plant Patent: Everything you Need to Know" <https://www.upcounsel.com/plant-patent>.

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new law on August 18, 1931. In time, especially through the career of William III, success with plant patenting would further set Princeton Nurseries apart from other wholesale tree growers [see below].

In 1931 Princeton Nurseries published a new small booklet advertising its products and its practicing philosophy. This booklet was not a catalog in the traditional sense, since it did not include a product list with prices. It did represent a continuation of William Flemer, Jr's efforts at marketing the firm. It was produced and printed by the L.W. Ramsey Company of Davenport. Iowa, an advertising and public relations firm that had come to the attention of the AAN a decade earlier and had already become popular with other nurseries around the nation.³⁷ The language is rather too decidedly felicitous to have been that of William Flemer, Jr., but probably reflects his sentiments in words better than he, himself, could produce.³⁸ "We do not consider this modern nursery of ours as just another nursery. Rather do we feel that the "Princeton Ideal," as expressed in our whole plan of growing is decidedly unique."³⁹

The 1931 booklet refers to Princeton Nurseries as the 800-acre nursery, which means that it had more than doubled in size since 1917. William Jr. had continued buying nearby properties, with houses when possible. The catalog reproduced images of the company's propagating beds and an aerial view of its growing fields, the office, and the packing buildings.⁴⁰

In the 1930s, the company's physical expansion required more irrigation; new wells and piping. Princeton Nurseries responded by creating the Kingston Water Company to provide public water supply throughout the village of Kingston, while generated cash flow during the Depression to finance the cost of these improvements.⁴¹ In 1932 the water system was constructed, including a water tower, 125 feet tall, and cast-iron distribution mains. The nursery continued to be the supplier of public water in Kingston until about 1980.

The Delaware and Raritan Canal (D&R Canal) survived, after its takeover by the State of New Jersey and the closure of the waterway to navigation, on the revenue derived from selling its water. The company held a permit to use Delaware & Raritan Canal water, for which it would pay a flat rate per million gallons, and was contracted to pay a minimum amount monthly.⁴² Princeton Nurseries would use canal water each year, at least enough to keep its permit in force, but the amount of the required payments meant that this source was relatively expensive compared to having its own wells, so the use of canal water was limited, chiefly to be used when irrigation requirements demanded it.⁴³

³⁷ For the involvement of the Ramsey company in AAN affairs as early as 1922, see the [Proceedings of the] *American Association of Nurserymen Incorporated Forty-Seventh Annual Convention, Detroit, Michigan, June 28,29,30, 1922*
<https://books.google.com/books?id=kMdFAAAAYAAJ&pg=RA6-PA87&lpg=RA6-PA87&dq=L.W.+Ramsey+Company,+Davenport,+Iowa&source=bl&ots=nKPD4UTkC7&sig=4OYAGm8-4tL8lljO7jdgQT7oY2k&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi9o9Cg0NbbAhUS3FMKHaQYARgQ6AEwB3oECAEQTQ#v=onepage&q=L.W.%20Ramsey%20Company%2C%20Davenport%2C%20Iowa&f=false>

³⁸ The language of the publication would seem to have been word-smithed by the Ramsey company, the expertise of which was in advertising and public relations.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5,8-9.

⁴¹ William Flemer IV, personal communication, Feb. 22, 2018.

⁴² Julie Shelly (NJ Water Authority) communication, June 15, 2018. The water authority holds the contracts issued to the canal's users.

⁴³ Wm. Flemer IV, personal communication, February 22, 2018.

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In the early 1930s, Dutch Elm Disease (DED), which had been spreading through Europe for years, finally reached the United States, being discovered in Ohio in 1930. It was found in Maplewood, New Jersey in 1933.⁴⁴ Princeton Nurseries had pioneered the Princeton Elm in the 1920s, as noted above, but did not discover its value for DED resistance until the 1950s. Princeton Nurseries suffered nonetheless. “Nurseries who had elms were quarantined for shipment out of the area. Even within the zone, people were reluctant to plant elms with the risk of someday having them infested.”⁴⁵ Princeton Nurseries was more heavily invested in elm inventory stock and so suffered a double loss: a percentage of diseased trees and an inability to sell the healthy ones.⁴⁶

Private demand for nursery stock collapsed during the Depression. William Flemer III later recalled that Princeton Nurseries weathered this period by raising vegetables on some of its land, including tomatoes, peas, and green beans, which could be trucked and marketed immediately when ready. “He had an orchard, and he trucked it all to a wholesale market upstate, where he’d get 75 cents for a bushel of peaches.”⁴⁷ Strategems such as this helped the company hold onto its acreage and retain their workforce, to be able to handle large orders when they did come. For a time, the company also operated a local store in Kingston, but discontinued it during World War II.⁴⁸

Newspaper publicity in the 1930s emphasized the capabilities of Princeton Nurseries and its important place within the industry. At Christmas 1936, the Garden Club of America chose to make a reciprocal good-will gesture to Japan--which one story called “The Flower Kingdom.” The Club chose Princeton Nurseries to provide 5,000 ornamental plants, enough to fill a refrigerated boxcar, to be shipped to Japan via Vancouver, British Columbia. The story called Princeton Nurseries, “one of the largest growers of ornamental plants in the country.” Company president William Flemer, Jr. was quoted in the article, saying “30 men were engaged for a week in selecting, packing, and loading the trees on the refrigerator car.”⁴⁹ The *Chicago Tribune* picked up the story for a filler item, but reported the number of plants as 50,000. “Included in the shipment are sweet peas, sweet gum, red and white dogwoods, weeping dogwoods, pin oaks, and rhododendrons.”⁵⁰

Public demand for nursery stock rose during the second half of the 1930s, especially with New Deal public works projects and state and local highway projects. “Trees for Roads, Parks In Many Public Works Projects Now Planned” headlined a March 1936 article in the *Central New Jersey Home News*. “Public works projects in an attempt to beautify roadways, parks and other places of recreation, have looked toward shade trees and shrubbery as a solution to a vexing problem.” The article focused on Princeton Nurseries, “which has on hand one of the largest stocks of shade trees in the United States.” The reporter quoted a company salesman, E.W. Peterson, saying, “One reason we find business better ... is that we were prepared to meet the demand for shade trees when it was made. During the years of the Depression we continued our propagation of trees while many others discontinued, so that now there are shortages in various parts of the country.” Princeton Nurseries was described

⁴⁴ For a chronicle of the fight against Dutch Elm Disease, see Richard J. Campana, *Arboriculture: History and Development in North America* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1999).

⁴⁵ Bettes, 32.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ William Flemer III, recollections, quoted in Watson & Henry Associates. “Preservation Plan, Princeton Nurseries, Propagation House and Attached Greenhouses,” p.9.

⁴⁸ *Central New Jersey Home News*, June 21, 1964.

⁴⁹ *Trenton Evening Times*, December 26, 1936.

⁵⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, December 29, 1936.

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as encompassing 1,200 acres, in the article.⁵¹ The company's continuing ability to handle large orders was evident in 1940 when the New Jersey Peach Council placed an order with Princeton Nurseries for "200,000 peach trees in new named varieties."⁵² That year, Princeton Nurseries hosted the summer meeting of the NJAN. Over 200 attended, and Princeton Nurseries footed the entire bill.⁵³

World War II

Wm. Flemer, Jr. participated in a NJAN committee that lobbied the legislature to adopt a law over Governor Edge's veto, that made nursery stock growing in the field non-taxable until the plants were sold. According to Bettes, this action led to the coining of the expression, "A nursery plant has no value until it is sold."⁵⁴ "This one action," Bettes added, "could in itself, be considered the most important accomplishment of the New Jersey Association of Nurserymen in the fifty years of its existence." Bettes wrote that that law "saved the nursery industry from destruction."⁵⁵

The war brought to New Jersey's nurserymen what it brought to everyone else: tire shortages and gasoline rationing. It also brought labor rationing, and even deliveries by rail were restricted. Toward the end of the war, German POWs were assigned to work at Princeton Nurseries. The company received some business, however, from the War Department. William Flemer, Jr. was involved at the start of the war studying the uses of plant material for camouflage purposes, even before William III joined the Army's 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion, to implement camouflage tactically. In 1952 a reporter wrote, "The natural camouflage growing around many of the military installations from end to end of the United States also comes from Princeton Nurseries. They supplied abundant nursery stock for this camouflage during World War II."⁵⁶

The Postwar Years

The end of the war left Princeton Nurseries in an optimistic position. Before the ink was dry on the Japanese surrender in the Pacific, Princeton Nurseries advertised for stenographers. The ad stated, "With large volume of orders already booked for as long as three years ahead our post-war prospects are exceptionally good." The company described itself as "the largest wholesale nursery in the Eastern United States."⁵⁷ After his wartime service, William Flemer III went to Yale University on the GI Bill and completed a bachelor's degree in botany in 1946, then stayed and taught at Yale for a year while earning a master's degree in the same field. He returned to Princeton Nurseries afterward.

1950s

In the early 1950s, surveys of the commercial nursery industry in New Jersey were made by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. These reported an industry composed of about 625 certified nurseries, of which "perhaps 60 (or 10 percent) were wholesalers and about 6 (or 1 percent) wholesalers with large acreages in

⁵¹ *Central New Jersey Home News* [New Brunswick, NJ], March 29, 1936.

⁵² New Jersey Peach Council, Inc. *New Twentieth-Century Peaches Bred and Tessed in New Jersey* (pamphlet, n.p., 1940). copy at NJ Historic Preservation Office.

⁵³ Bettes, 35, 38.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Central New Jersey Home News*, August 23, 1945.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

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production.”⁵⁸ Clearly, by this metric, Princeton Nurseries was one of a very small number of large, wholesale growers. The New Brunswick *Sunday Times* featured Princeton Nurseries in a short, 3-column article in September 1952, headlined “1500-Acre Princeton Nurseries Grows 1,000 Varieties of Trees.” The article’s author, probably using company-supplied information, described Princeton Nurseries as

one of the four largest nurseries in the nation. Trees and shrubs from Princeton Nurseries are found throughout the eastern half of the United States. They grow in the parks of New York City, alongside Connecticut’s Merritt Parkway, and are found in other parks, housing developments, and parkways from Providence, [Rhode Island] to Richmond, [Virginia], and from Baltimore, [Maryland] to Pittsburgh, [Pennsylvania] and Cleveland, [Ohio].⁵⁹

The more successful of these enterprises were likely to be members of NJAN, which reported more than 100 member firms in 1951. Princeton Nurseries was actively involved in NJAN on a continuing basis. William Flemer III, rose through the leadership of NJAN from 2nd vice-president in 1956, 1st vice-president in 1957, and president in 1959.⁶⁰ William III also chaired the NJAN legislative committee at that time, and Princeton Nurseries again hosted the NJAN annual summer meeting that year.⁶¹

In the 1950s, Princeton Nurseries under William Jr., expanded its irrigation capacity by developing a storage pond in Franklin Township, and using an old underground oil pipeline (which it purchased from the Sun Oil Company when it built a new, larger, pipeline), pumped water to the pond and, when needed, let it flow by gravity all the way back to irrigate its Kingston fields. This was an ambitious piece of hydraulic engineering, for which Princeton Nurseries incorporated a separate enterprise, the Kingston Irrigation Company.⁶²

The 1960 catalog proudly stated that “Princeton means the best in new plants. We are continually adding new shrub and tree varieties to our list after proper testing and evaluation. Our own tree breeding program, which has already produced the famous Shademaster Locust ... and Summershade Maple ... is continuing at an accelerated rate.”⁶³

New Generation of Flemers

The 1950s and ‘60s witnessed the ascendancy of the new generation of Flemers, brothers John W. and William III, as William, Jr., by this point in his 60’s, gradually withdrew. William III had entered the business in 1945 upon his return from wartime service. He earned a bachelor’s degree in botany from Yale in 1946, followed by a master’s degree the following year.⁶⁴ He was the grower while his brother John was the firm’s business administrator. The suburban construction boom of the 1950s once again fueled demand for nursery stock, virtually repeating the 1920s, but William Flemer III’s propagation expertise brought national and international acclaim. While his father had introduced the ‘Euclid’ Linden and the ‘Sinclair’ Ginkgo (in addition to the Princeton Elm), William Flemer III introduced the ‘Shademaster’ Locust, ‘October Glory’ Red Maple, ‘Greenspire’ Linden, ‘Green Vase’ Zelkova and ‘Green Mountain’ Sugar Maple. Ultimately, he patented at least

⁵⁸ Bettes, 52.

⁵⁹ *Sunday Times*, September 21, 1952.

⁶⁰ Bettes, 58, 63, 65, 69.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶² Wm. Flemer IV, personal communication, February 22, 2018.

⁶³ *Princeton Nurseries Wholesale Price List, Spring 1960*. copy privately owned.

⁶⁴ Wm. Flemer IV, personal communication, Feb. 22, 2018.

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47 trees, shrubs and vines.⁶⁵ During this period, the ShadeMaster Honeylocust was a ‘cash cow’ for the company.

William Flemer III also patented a “Plant Digging Machine” in 1958, “...a machine for removing trees etc. from the earth with the roots thereof substantially dirt-free so as to facilitate handling and minimizing transportation costs in the transplanting of such plants.” The machine was a digging fork on the end of a hydraulic arm, all mounted on a tractor. The digging fork would be extended into the ground beneath a tree which was then lifted; a work crew would then remove the tree to a truck. Flemer claimed in his patent application that four men and a digging machine could remove 1200 trees per day, compared to 500 trees per day by a crew of ten men without the machine.⁶⁶ In the course of his career he also received numerous professional awards and medals, listed earlier.

William III also rose through the leadership ranks of local organizations, then statewide ones. He was president of the local Stony Brook-Millstone Watersheds Association for a decade, from 1956 to 1966, and was an officer of the NJAN in 1959, as noted above. In 1964 he was elected president of the Eastern Regional Nurserymen’s Association, which had its headquarters in Connecticut. A year later he headed the National Association of Plant Patent Owners, a trade association formed in 1941 that had its headquarters in Washington, DC. Four years later he followed that with a term as president of the American Association of Nurserymen [AAN].⁶⁷

Labor Relations and Living Conditions at Princeton Nurseries

From the beginning of the company, Princeton Nurseries adopted the practice of not demolishing the houses that existed on the farms that they acquired, to preserve them for worker housing.⁶⁸ William Flemer, Jr. set the tone, as he tried to make the company as self-contained as was practical. Princeton Nurseries hired its own carpenters, welders, and plumbers. The nursery operation grew to the point where it resembled a small company town. Several sources have attributed to William Flemer, Jr. a comment that he was presiding over a “feudal domain.”⁶⁹ Besides the houses, barns, packing sheds, and office, there were at various times a dormitory, water tower, woodshop, swimming pool, truck shop and blacksmith shop. There was also a chapel on Greenwood Avenue. Of these, only the blacksmith shop survives (see Section 7, bldg. #16). Horses were used in the fields until the late 1950s, after which the blacksmith shop became the Safety and Education Building. When the company finally announced that the nursery would close, one long-time employee who had been at various times a driver, mechanic, laborer, and shipper, was quoted in news coverage saying, “It was like Princeton Nurseries Town.”⁷⁰

In the postwar era, the ethnic composition of seasonal agricultural workforces on New Jersey farms shifted from primarily African American to increasingly Puerto Rican. Princeton Nurseries followed this trend, and by the early 1950s this transition was underway. In 1952, the company told a reporter that the year-round workforce consisted of a total of 110 persons, split between “Puerto Rican migrants and a number of veteran workers who have been there upwards of 25 years. The employment roll, however, will rise to a peak of about 150 workers during the nurseries’ busy transplanting and sales season, which begins with the fall’s first frost, and continues

⁶⁵ Joseph Sapia, “Princeton Nurseries to Sell Land, Close Doors,” *McClatchy-Tribune Business News* [Washington,DC], Sept. 20, 2007.

⁶⁶ United State Patent Office, “Plant Digging Machine,” Patent no. 2,835,992, (patented May 27, 1958)

⁶⁷ Obituary of William Flemer III, *Town Topics* [Princeton, NJ], May 2, 2007.

⁶⁸ Wm. Flemer IV, personal communication, Feb. 22, 2018.

⁶⁹ Robert vonZumbusch, personal communication, May 2018.

⁷⁰ Joseph Sapia, “Princeton Nurseries to Sell Land, Close Doors,” *Tribune Business News* [Washington, DC], September 20, 2007.

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until the ground is too frozen for digging out nursery stock.”⁷¹ Princeton Nurseries negotiated with a company called the Glassboro Service Association (GSA), in Gloucester County, New Jersey, to provide Princeton Nurseries with contract labor from Puerto Rico.⁷² By this means the workers, themselves, received free air fare from the island and health insurance while in New Jersey. Princeton Nurseries had an arrangement with GSA, which permitted the company to retain the same workers year-after-year who worked out well in their previous employment with the company. Princeton Nurseries paid their workers by check, and issued each worker a personal ID card.⁷³ The seasonal workforce, which exceeded what could be accommodated in the company-owned houses, was housed in a dormitory. The company hired a janitor and two cooks. The company aimed to be a model employer for farmworkers, not only to enhance its own reputation and to ensure labor peace, but also as a defense against the risk of unionization.⁷⁴

Princeton Nurseries after the Period of Significance – Still a Force within the Nursery Industry

The 1960s also witnessed the first steps toward a transition away from Kingston as the heart of the company’s operations. In 1962, Princeton Nurseries made its first purchases of land at its “Allentown site” in Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County, about 20 miles from Kingston, although it would be years before the quantity of production on those lands began to challenge that from the Kingston-area properties. The first purchases closely coincided with the first sale of Princeton Nurseries property in the Kingston area. In April 1962, commercial realtors announced that they had reached agreement to buy 527 acres of land from Princeton Nurseries, primarily along the east side of U.S. Route 1, for \$4 million. This land was acquired to provide the site for the Princeton Center for Industrial Research, and New Jersey Governor Richard J. Hughes presided over the press conference at which the deal was announced.⁷⁵ New Jersey agriculture was in a steep decline during the 1950s and ‘60s, and while farmland prices remained quite low in the Upper Freehold area, they were rising faster near Kingston, where suburban development was approaching with greater force. The per-acre price that was settled on was much higher than the land was worth for agricultural purposes.

From the perspective of another generation, it appears that in the 1980s, the trajectory of Princeton Nurseries in Kingston crested, and began to decline. In December 1982 John W. Flemer, only 52 years old, died.⁷⁶ The long list of boards and associations that he led showed that he was a lofty figure in the nursery world, and paralleled the achievements of his older brother William III. John did not live long enough to see William receive the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s highest honor, its Distinguished Achievement Award, in 1983. In 1984 the Elizabethtown Water Co., of Elizabeth, NJ, bought the Kingston Water Company from Princeton Nurseries, and thereafter supplied Kingston’s public water.⁷⁷ In June 1985, William Flemer, Jr. died at age 89. He had turned over the company to William and John in 1972, but his death was followed less than two years later by another large land sale of about 500 acres, made necessary to pay the inheritance taxes levied on John’s estate.⁷⁸ This

⁷¹ [New Brunswick] *Sunday Times*, September 21, 1952.

⁷² Wm. Flemer IV, personal communication, Feb. 22, 2018.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Trenton Evening Times*, April 5, 1962.

⁷⁶ Flemer’s obituary appeared in the *Trenton Times*, December 12, 1982.

⁷⁷ *Trenton Times*, June 11, 1985.

⁷⁸ *Trenton Times*, January 19, 1987. Robert VonZumbusch, personal communication, July 10, 2018.

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Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

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sale, also to the Forrestal Center, came with a leaseback agreement, so the impact on the business's continuing operations in Kingston was not immediate.⁷⁹ This did, however, lay handwriting on the wall.

With respect to annual revenue, Princeton Nurseries actually reached its high-water mark at Kingston in the late-1980s, with \$14 million in sales in its best year.⁸⁰ In the early 1990s, however, a time of economic recession, the company began to go downhill, financially. It became slow to adapt to changing market conditions and found itself on the wrong side of a boom-and-bust cycle, which nurseries can be prone to, when they fail to anticipate market demand, and plant too much of the wrong species that leave them with excess amounts of unsellable inventory at the point of their plants' maturity.⁸¹ In the summer of 1994, the company's administrative operations were shifted to Upper Freehold, which at more than 1800 acres, had surpassed the peak acreage at the Kingston location. To the extent that new facilities were planned, they were constructed in Upper Freehold. Functions that had been performed in Kingston were shifted there. Shortly afterward, further operations were suspended at Kingston.

In response to the threat of further real estate development, a group called the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands (FPNL) formed in 1997 to encourage the preservation of Princeton Nurseries lands as protected open space.⁸² Advocacy and negotiations were protracted, and approvals to develop some portions of the land yielded arrangements for the preservation of other portions. Princeton University's Princeton Forrestal Center (PFC) agreed to preserve 30 acres along the Delaware and Raritan Canal. "In 2003 PFC offered to donate 200 of the remaining 500 acres of open land to the Township of South Brunswick. In return, PFC wanted 75 acres of the former nursery lands to be rezoned to allow more room for the construction of a large office complex and conference center."⁸³ In the event, 75 acres were rezoned, Princeton University donated 127 acres to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and to South Brunswick Township, the DEP's Green Acres Program purchased an additional 60 acres from William Flemer's Sons, Inc. Princeton University leased 12 acres along the canal for a period of 20 years, to become Mapleton Nurseries, but with the provision that at the end of that term the property would be donated to DEP. Today, the headquarters building of Princeton Nurseries now houses the central offices of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park.

William Flemer III died in April 2007, after more than 60 years in the nursery business. Among the leaders of the Princeton Nurseries firm, it was arguably he who had the greatest impact on commercial horticulture. He achieved international renown through his plant introductions and led several professional nursery associations. Ultimately, he patented nearly four dozen plants. His life's work was acknowledged by numerous medals and awards; among these were the Veitch Memorial Medal awarded by the Royal Horticultural Society, the Hall of Fame award from the American Association of Nurserymen, the Medal of Honor award from the Garden Club of America, the Thomas Roland and Jackson Dawson medals from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden Award and the Catherine H. Sweeney Award from the American Horticultural Society.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ William Flemer IV, personal communication, February 22, 2018.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² The content of this paragraph is drawn from the careful explanation in Heritage Landscapes, "Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site: Cultural Landscape Report," November 2011. copy at HPO.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ *Town Topics*, [Princeton, NJ], May 2, 2007.

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Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

The company's board of directors privately decided in June that year to close the company, including its Upper Freehold property, estimating a 3-year timetable to complete all operations. That September, the decision was publicly announced. Princeton Nurseries' then president, Ivan Olinsky, acknowledged that there was sadness in closing a nearly 100-year-old business. "It's the end of an era," he was quoted.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Joseph Sapia, *McClatchy-Tribune Business News*, [Washington, DC], September 20, 2007.

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Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Princeton Nurseries Historic District is shown on the map entitled "Princeton Nurseries Historic District, 'Boundary and Tax Map,' included in this nomination, and in finer detail in three supporting, detail maps, 'PNHD Detail [Map] 1 of 3,' '...2 of 3,' and '...3 of 3.'

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Princeton Nurseries Historic District was drawn to include the historic core of the nursery operation, including the four farms that formed the nursery by 1917, when the business began to use the name "Princeton Nurseries." This ground encompasses the headquarters building, packing and shipping facilities, and plant propagation buildings (seed buildings and greenhouses). Equally important to the district's identity is the housing stock, both the workers' and the owners' houses are within the nominated district. A representative area of open fields, in which the nursery stock was raised to marketable size, is included, although the surviving lands are greatly reduced from the area operated by the nursery at its peak. The eastern boundary of the district is a line of convenience, separating the district from developed lands that front along U.S. Route 1, east of Mapleton Road, and north of Seminary Road in Plainsboro Township.

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Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number **Photos** **Page** **1**

Current Photographs

Photos 1-39 were taken in 2007 for the original nomination. Photos 40-42 are historic photographs that have been grouped with other historic photos. Photos 43 through 55 were taken in March 2008. Photos were supplied by Hunter Research, Inc., of Trenton, NJ.

Current Photographs

1. Building 1. Modern house, 80 Mapleton Road.
2. Building 2. Barn, 80 Mapleton Road.
3. Outbuilding originally associated with Building 3 (Van Dyke/Hoffman House, 325 Mapleton Road).
4. Building 4. Matthias Van Dyke House, 323 Mapleton Road.
5. Building 5. Ziegerhofer House and barn, 252 Mapleton Road.
6. Building 6. Higgins House, 250 Mapleton Road.
7. Building 7. Shennard House, 119 Mapleton Road.
8. Building 7A. Shennard Barn.
9. Building 8. Perez/Homan House, 1 Old Nursery Lane.
10. Building 9. Lofland House, 3 Old Nursery Lane.
11. Building 10. Cruz House, 5 Old Nursery Lane.
12. Building 11. Pritchett House, 7 Old Nursery Lane.
13. Building 12. Vik House, 8 Old Nursery Lane.
14. Building 13. Andujar House, 10 Old Nursery Lane.
15. Building 14. Rutherford House, 134 Mapleton Road.
16. Building 15. Princeton Nurseries Office, 145 Mapleton Road.
17. Interior of Building 15.
18. Building 16. Blacksmith Shop/Safety and Education Building.
19. Building 17. Large Packing Shed.
20. Building 17 interior, in the original western section.
21. Building 18. Tree Storage Building.
22. Building 19. Greenhouse Complex.
23. View inside Building 19; gable ends of greenhouses are visible.
24. Building 20. The Cottage, 149 Mapleton Road.
25. Building 20B. Telephone utility building (intrusion).
26. Building 21. Seed Department.
27. Building 21A. Sand building.
28. Building 22. Fenwick House, 1011 Ridge Road.
29. Building 23. I. C. Withington House, 1004 Ridge Road.
30. Building 24. Joyce House, 1007 Ridge Road.
31. Building 25. Braddock House, 7 Railroad Avenue.
32. Building 26. Eugene Harvey House, 9 Railroad Avenue.
33. Building 27. Harvey House, 6 Greenwood Avenue.
34. Building 28. Ten Broeck/Shope House, 983 Ridge Road.
35. Building 29. Goeke House, 979 Ridge Road. Intrusion.
36. Mapleton Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook.
37. Ridge Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook.

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Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number **Photos** **Page** **2**

38. Allee on Mapleton Road near the Mathias Van Dyke House. Structures visible at right are outside the district.
39. View south on Mapleton Road.
- 40-42. [see Historic Photos, below]
43. View of the former Camden and Amboy Railroad roadbed west of Mapleton Road.
44. General view of nursery houses on Mapleton Road; left to right: buildings 14, 13, 9, and 10.
45. Overview at Railroad Avenue and Greenwood Avenue. Building 26 at left, 27 at right.
46. Rows of nursery stock, north side of Ridge Road.
47. Rows of nursery stock, west side of Mapleton Road.
48. Typical windrow, east of Mapleton Road near headquarters complex.
49. Typical windrow, east of Mapleton Road and south of headquarters complex.
50. View west showing ginkgoes lining field road; headquarters complex (l-r buildings 18 and 19) visible at rear.
51. View north of headquarters complex from field. Buildings 19, 18, and 17 visible.
52. View north across nursery fields south of headquarters complex.
53. View north showing rows of nursery stock west of Mapleton Road with building 9 visible at rear.
54. View west in seedling field west of Mapleton Road; trees at rear indicate Delaware and Raritan Canal.
55. View from seedling field east toward Mapleton Road. Building 7 is visible.

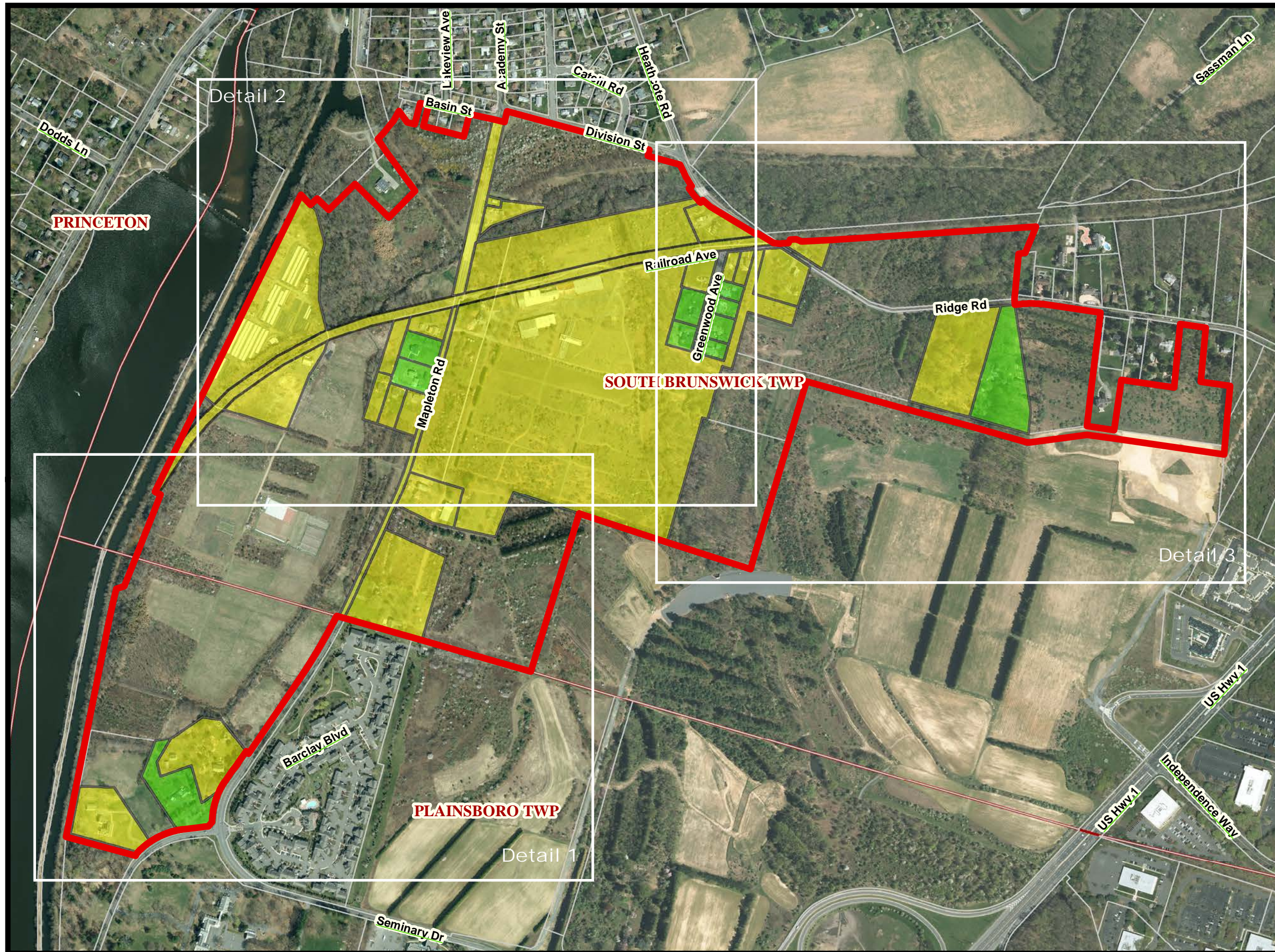
Historic Photographs:

40. 1920s photo showing the headquarters building (#15) in its original configuration.
41. 1920s photo of Princeton Nurseries. The headquarters building (#15) is at left, the packing shed (#17) is at right.
42. Undated aerial photograph of Princeton Nurseries, looking east. Ridge Road is visible at upper left, Mapleton Road is parallel to and near the bottom of the picture. The greenhouses and packing building are visible at left center.

(Note: see also five other historic photos provided but not included in this numbered sequence.)

**Princeton Nurseries
Historic District**
National Register Nomination
South Brunswick, Plainsboro,
Middlesex County, New Jersey

Boundary and Tax Map



Legend

Princeton Nurseries HD



Historic District Status

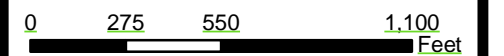
Contributing

Non-contributing

Parcels (Block and Lot)



Scale: 1:6,639



272 Acres

PNHD OVERVIEW



**Princeton Nurseries
Historic District**
National Register Nomination
South Brunswick, Plainsboro,
Middlesex County, New Jersey

Boundary and Tax Map

Legend

Princeton Nurseries HD



Resource Type/Status

- Contributing Building
- Non-contributing Building
- Contributing Structure
- Non-Contributing Structure

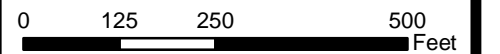
Historic District Status

- Contributing
- Non-contributing

Parcels (Block and Lot)

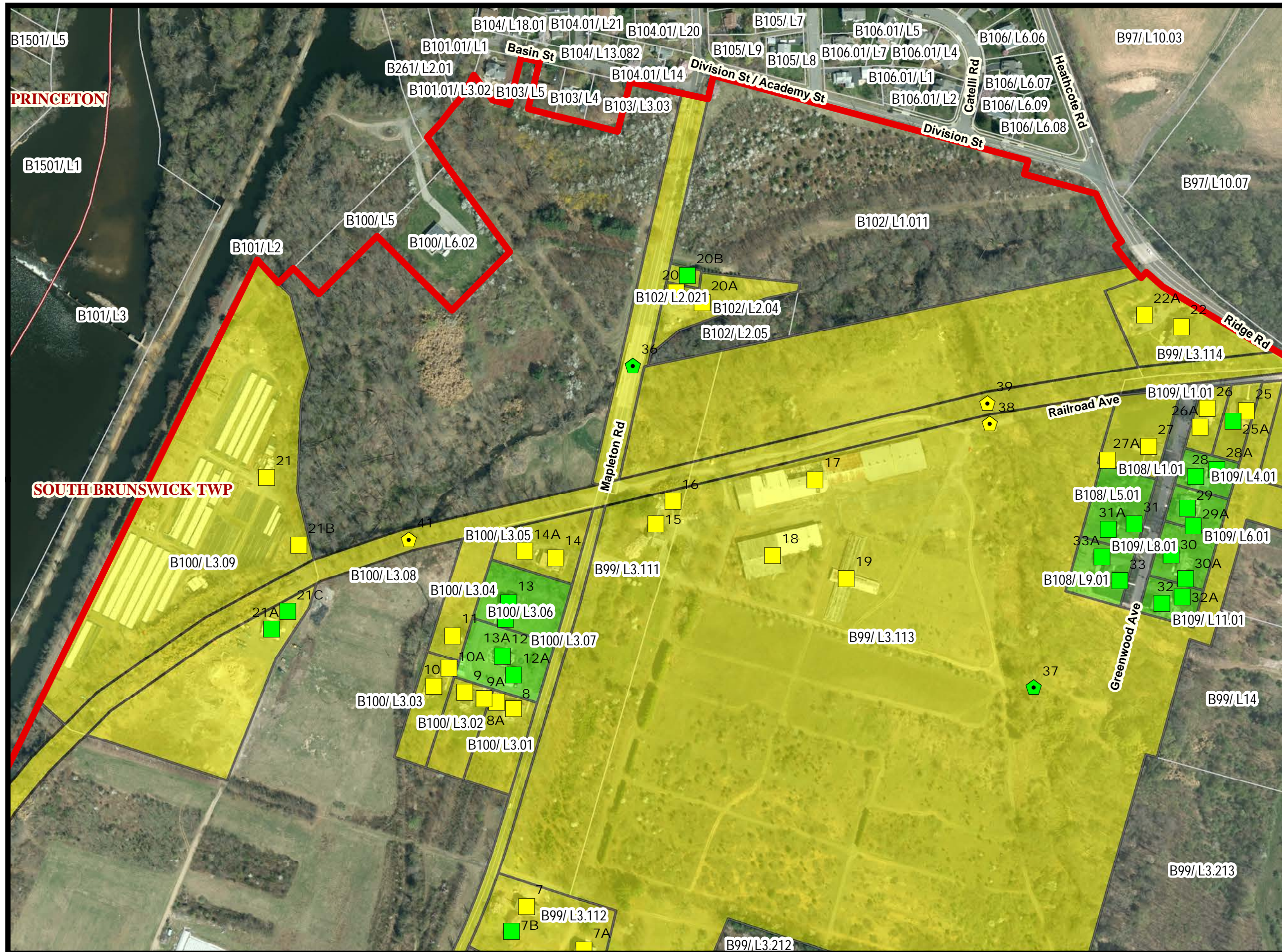


Scale: 1:3,000



272 Acres

PNHD DETAIL
1 of 3



**Princeton Nurseries
Historic District**
National Register Nomination
South Brunswick, Plainsboro,
Middlesex County, New Jersey

Boundary and Tax Map

Legend

Princeton Nurseries HD



Resource Type/Status

- Contributing Building
- Non-contributing Building
- Contributing Structure
- Non-Contributing Structure

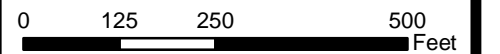
Historic District Status

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- Non-contributing

Parcels (Block and Lot)

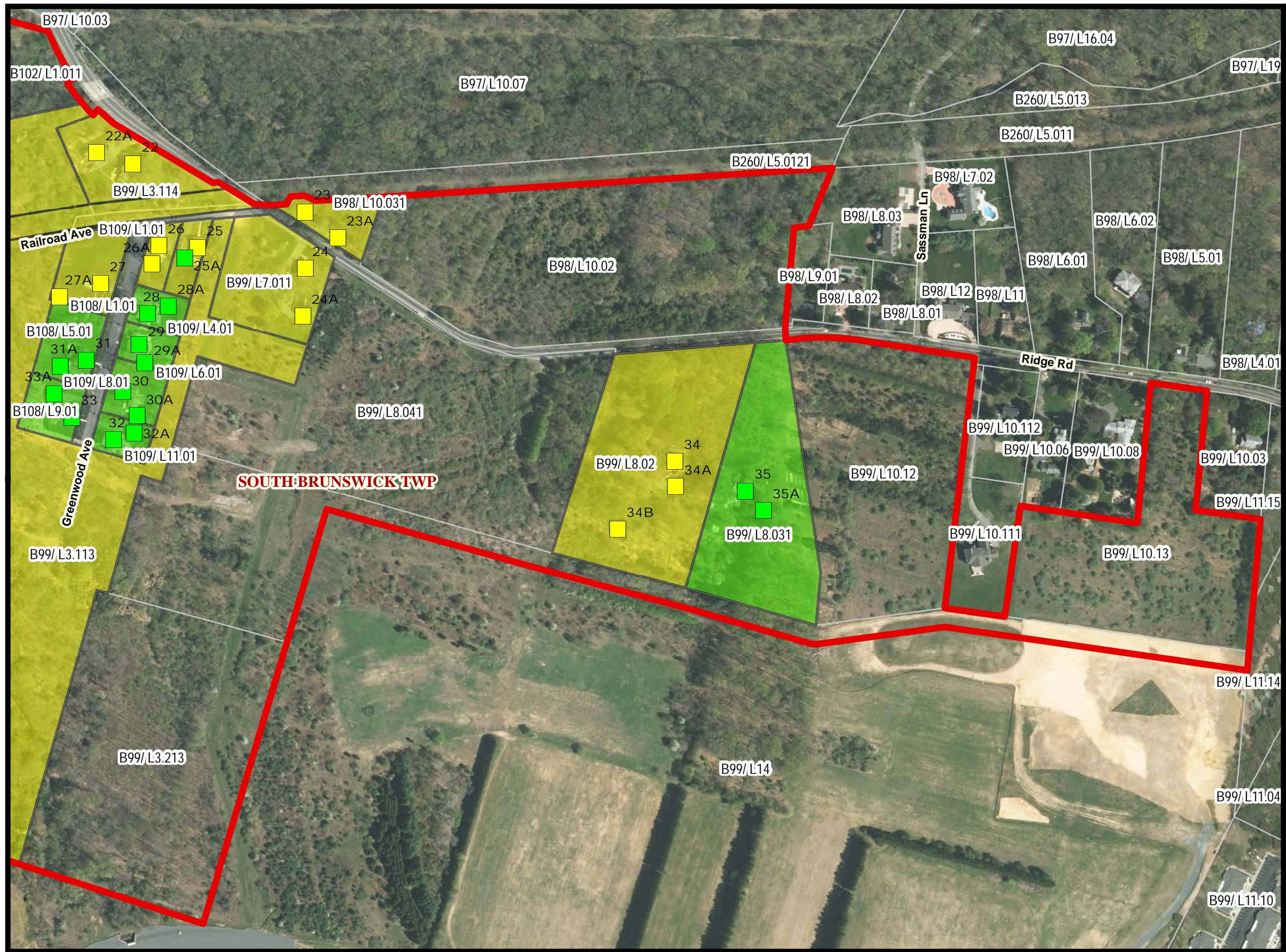


Scale: 1:3,000



272 Acres

PNHD DETAIL
2 of 3



**Princeton Nurseries
Historic District**
National Register Nomination
South Brunswick, Plainsboro,
Middlesex County, New Jersey

Boundary and Tax Map

Legend

Princeton Nurseries HD



Resource Type/Status

- Contributing Building
- Non-contributing Building
- Contributing Structure
- Non-Contributing Structure

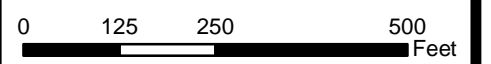
Historic District Status

- Contributing
- Non-contributing

Parcels (Block and Lot)



Scale: 1:3,000



272 Acres

PNHD DETAIL
3 of 3

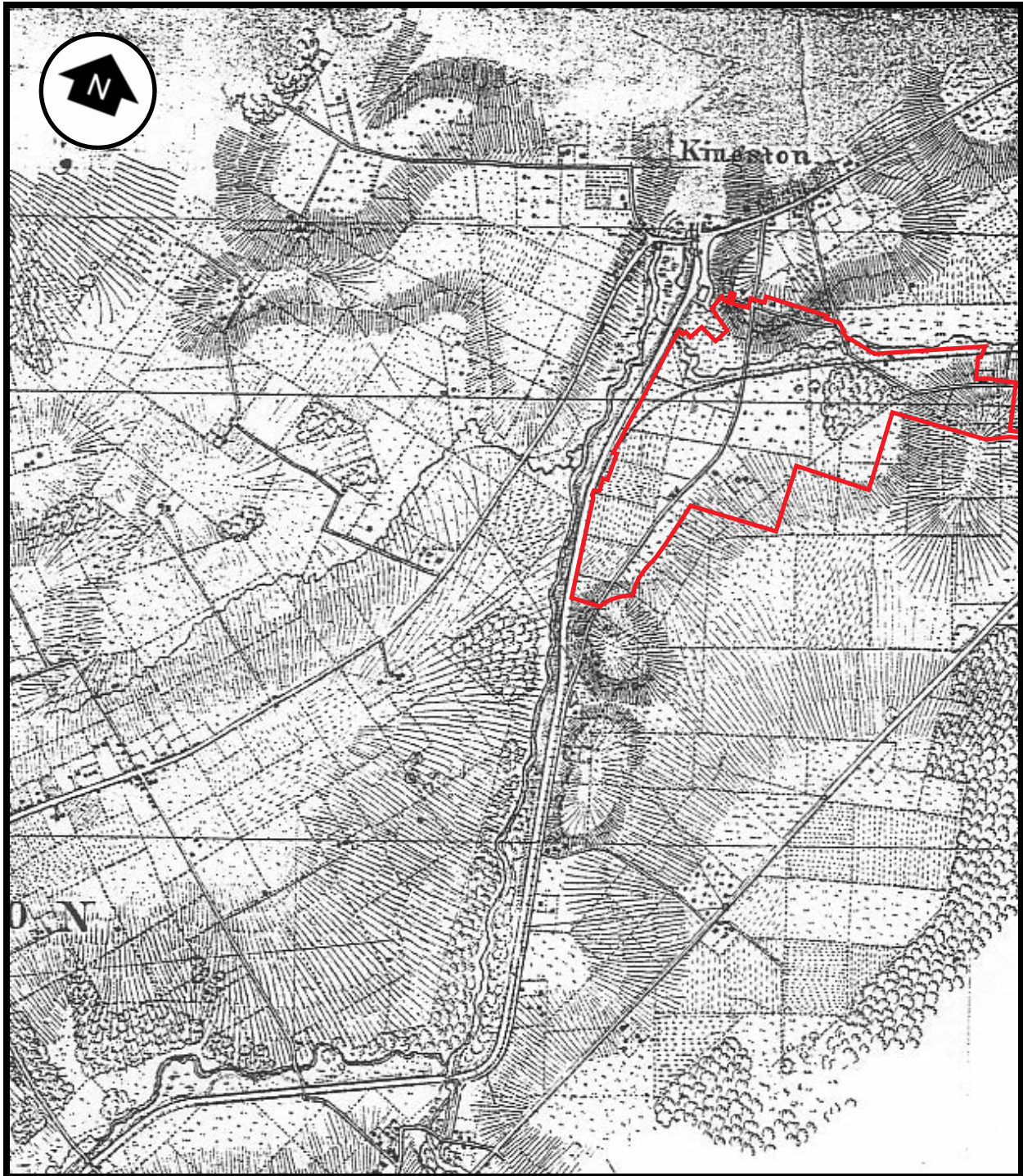


Figure 2. A portion of *Princeton and Vicinity*, Sheet 127, United States Coast Survey, 1840. Scale: 1 inch=2000 feet (approximately). Historic district boundary in red.

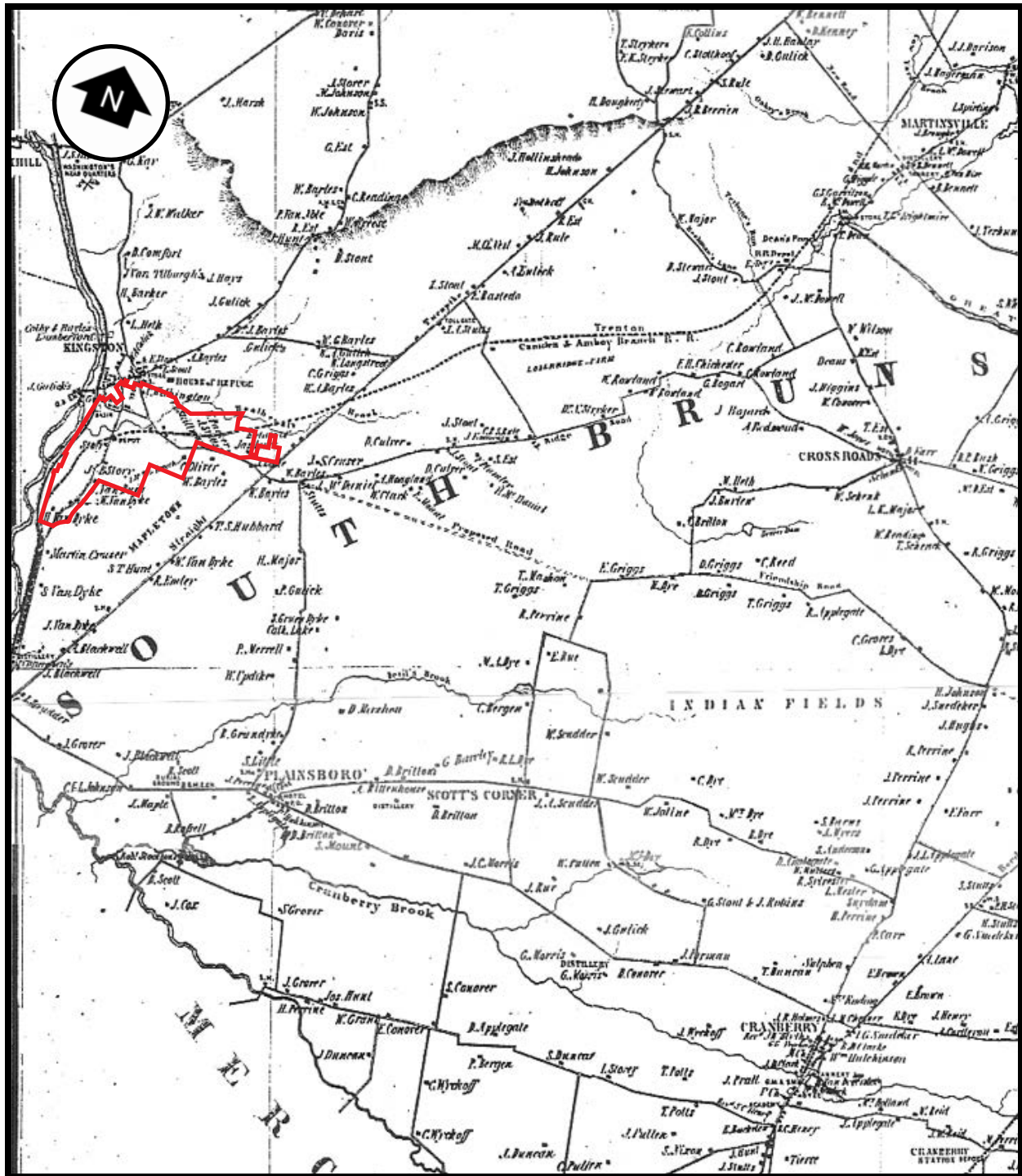


Figure 3. A portion of Otley and Keily's *Map of Middlesex County*, 1850. Scale: 1 inch= 1.1 miles (approximately). Historic district boundary in red.

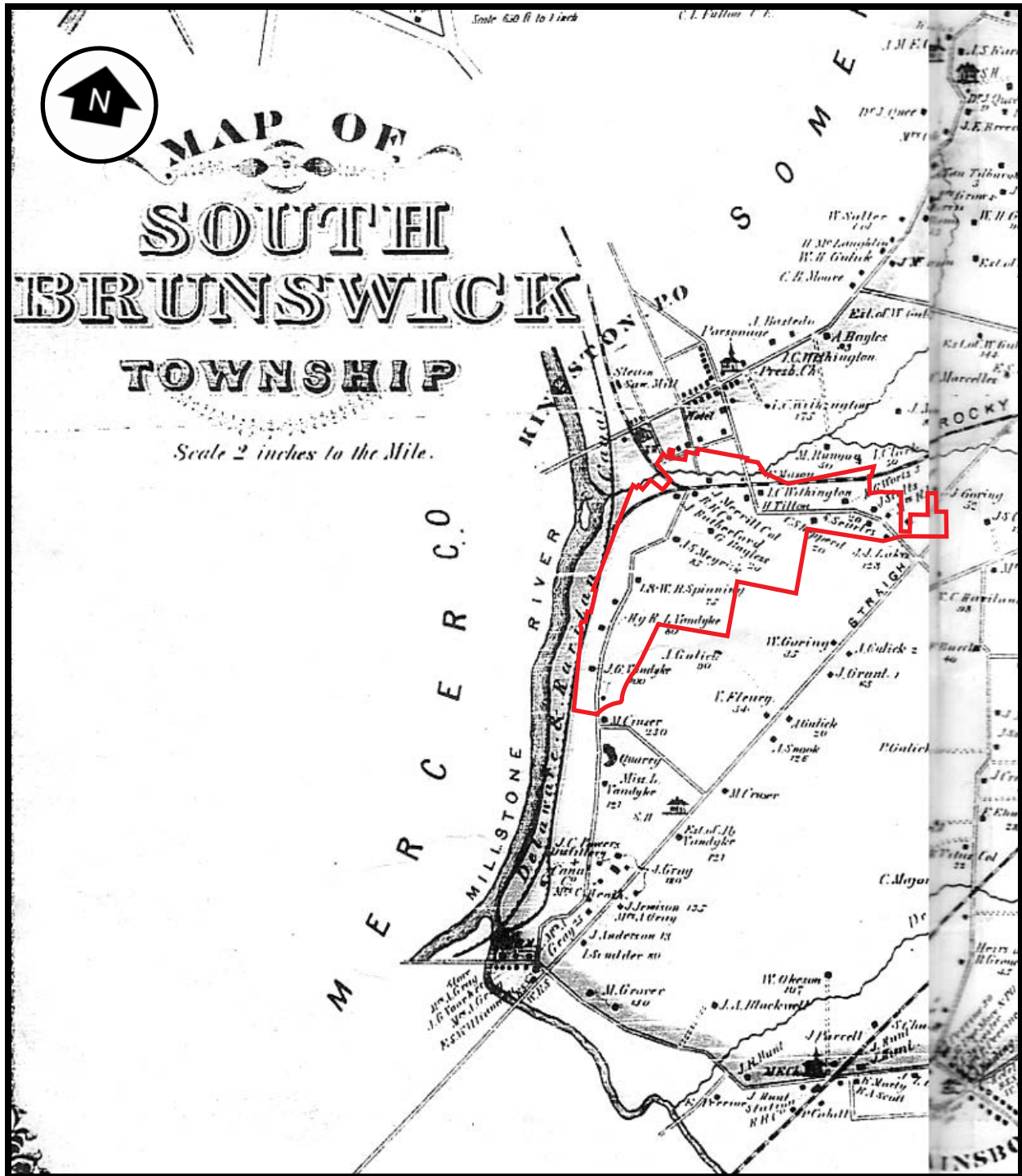


Figure 4. A portion of Everts & Stewart's *Combination Atlas Map of Middlesex County, New Jersey*, 1876. Scale: 1 inch= 2,000 feet (approximately). Historic district boundary in red.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 40. 1920s photo showing the headquarters building (#15) in its original configuration.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 41. 1920s photo of Princeton Nurseries. The headquarters building (#15) is at left, the packing shed (#17) is at right.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 42. Undated aerial photograph of Princeton Nurseries, looking east. Ridge Road is visible at upper left, Mapleton Road is parallel to and near the bottom of the picture. The greenhouses and packing building are visible at left center.



Photo taken 1919 of Main Sales Office in Kingston, NJ. The office was built in 1916.

Team of horses used to dig BR trees.



Inspection of Ilex Opaca, 1961

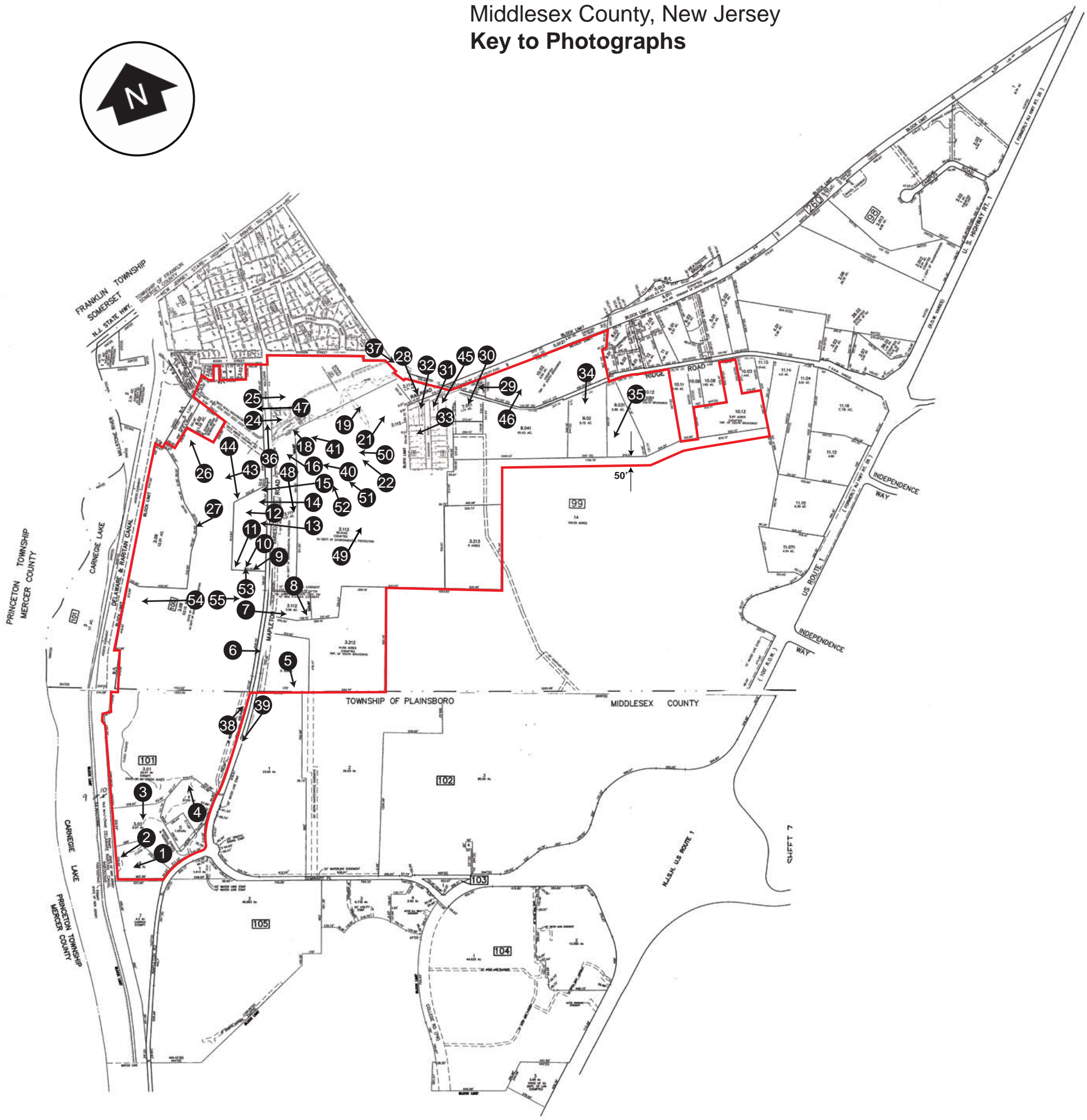
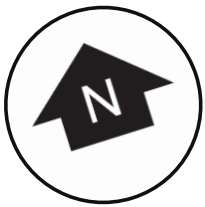
Fleet of Princeton Nurseries Trucks, 1926.



Princeton Nurseries Truck, 1926.

Last Updated: May 11, 2007 09:54 AM

Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships
Middlesex County, New Jersey
Key to Photographs





Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 1. Building 1. Modern house, 80 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 2. Building 2. Barn, 80 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 3. Building 3. Van Dyke/Hoffman House, 325 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 4. Building 4. Matthias Van Dyke House, 323 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 5. Building 5. Ziegerhofer House and barn, 252 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 6. Building 6. Higgins House, 250 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 7. Building 7. Shennard House, 119 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 8. Building 7A. Shennard Barn.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 9. Building 8. Perez/Homan House, 1 Old Nursery Lane.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 10. Building 9. Lofland House, 3 Old Nursery Lane.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 11. Building 10. Cruz House, 5 Old Nursery Lane.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 12. Building 11. Pritchett House, 7 Old Nursery Lane.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 13. Building 12. Vik House, 8 Old Nursery Lane.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 14. Building 13. Andujar House, 10 Old Nursery Lane.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 15. Building 14. Rutherford House, 134 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 16. Building 15. Princeton Nurseries Office, 145 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 17. Interior of Building 15.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 18. Building 16. Blacksmith Shop/Safety and Education Building.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 19. Building 17. Large Packing Shed.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 20. Building 17 interior, in the original western section.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 21. Building 18. Tree Storage Building.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 22. Building 19. Greenhouse Complex.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 23. View inside Building 19; gable ends of greenhouses are visible.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 24. Building 20. The Cottage, 149 Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 25. Building 20B. Telephone utility building (intrusion).



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 26. Building 21. Seed Department.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 27. Building 21A. Sand building.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 28. Building 22. Fenwick House, 1011 Ridge Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 29. Building 23. I. C. Withington House, 1004 Ridge Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 30. Building 24. Joyce House, 1007 Ridge Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 31. Building 25. Braddock House, 7 Railroad Avenue.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 32. Building 26. Eugene Harvey House, 9 Railroad Avenue.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 33. Building 27. Harvey House, 6 Greenwood Avenue.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 34. Building 28. Ten Broeck/Shope House, 983 Ridge Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 35. Building 29. Goeke House, 979 Ridge Road. Intrusion.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 36. Mapleton Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 37. Ridge Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 38. Allee on Mapleton Road near the Mathias Van Dyke House. Structures visible at right are outside the district.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 39. View south on Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 43. View of the former Camden and Amboy Railroad roadbed west of Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 44. General view of nursery houses on Mapleton Road; left to right, buildings 14, 13, 9 and 10.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 45. Overview at Railroad Avenue and Greenwood Avenue. Building 26 at left, 27 at right.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 46. Rows of nursery stock, north side of Ridge Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 47. Rows of nursery stock, west side of Mapleton Road.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 48. Typical windrow, east of Mapleton Road near headquarters complex.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 49. Typical windrow, east of Mapleton Road and south of headquarters complex.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 50. View west showing ginkgos lining field road; headquarters complex (l-r buildings 18 and 19) visible at rear.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 51. View north of headquarters complex from field. Buildings 19, 18 and 17 visible.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 52. View north across nursery fields south of headquarters complex.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 53. View north showing rows of nursery stock west of Mapleton Road with building 9 visible at rear.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 54. View west in seedling field west of Mapleton Road; trees at rear indicate Delaware and Raritan Canal.



Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Photograph 55. View from seedling field east toward Mapleton Road. Building 7 is visible.





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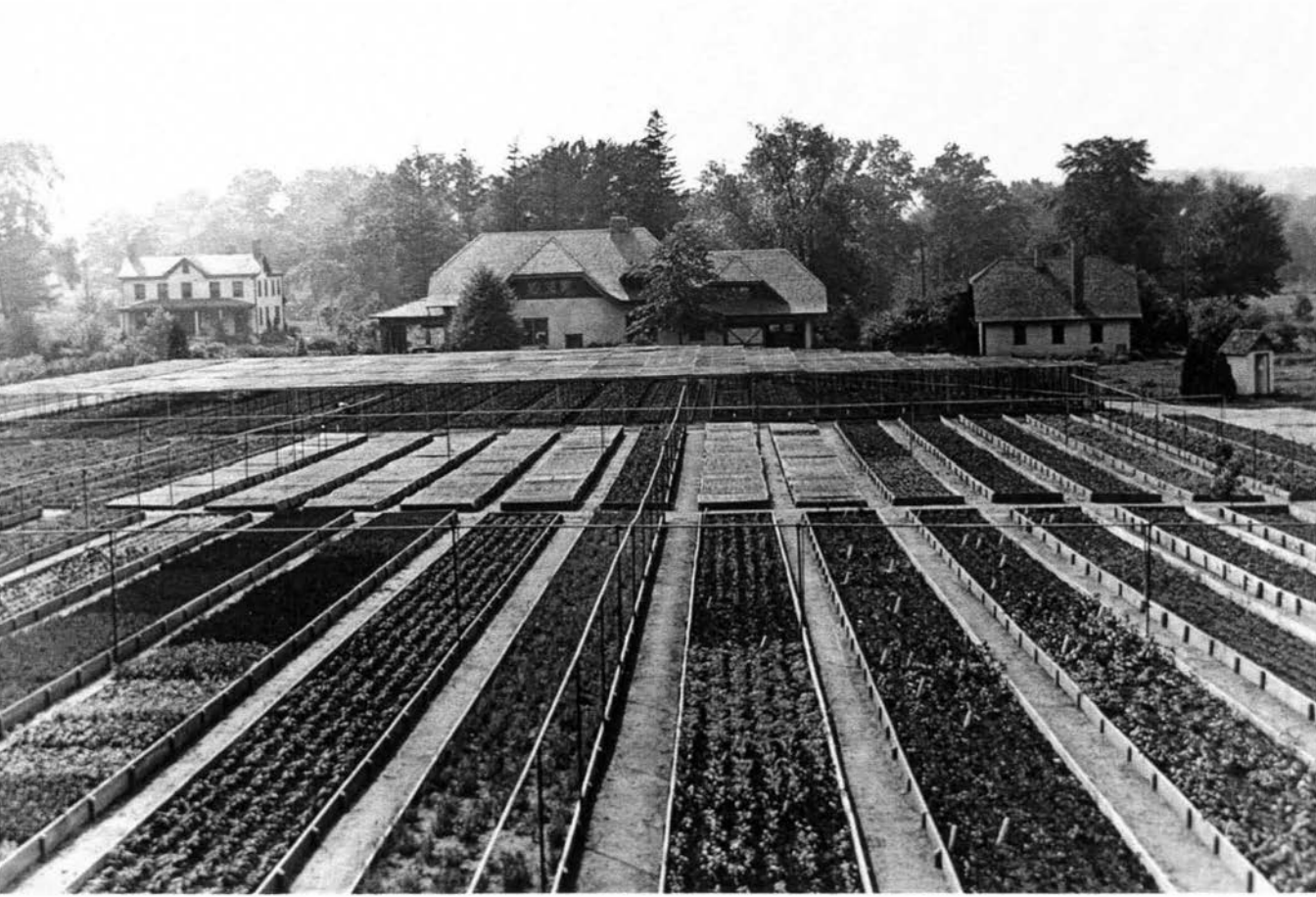
















from 1960s to 1970s ←



























National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Resubmission
Property Name: Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Multiple Name:
State & County: NEW JERSEY, Middlesex

Date Received: 7/20/2018 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 9/4/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: RS08000899
Nominator: State
Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 8/28/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Areas of Significance: Agriculture, Architecture. POS: 1913 - 1968, LOS: State and local.
Comments: One of New Jersey's largest wholesale tree nurseries encompassing 272 acres. Significant in horticultural history pioneering the Princeton Elm and Shademaster Honeylocust.

Recommendation/ Criteria Criteria A and C.

Reviewer Lisa Deline Discipline Historian
Telephone (202)354-2239 Date 8/28/18

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



JON S. CORZINE
Governor

State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES
Office of the Assistant Commissioner

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
LISA P. JACKSON
Commissioner

P.O. Box 404
Trenton, New Jersey 08625
Tel: (609) 292-3541
Fax: (609) 984-0836

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

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am pleased to submit the Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Middlesex County, New Jersey for National Register consideration.

This application has received majority approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register. The Princeton Nurseries Historic District is being nominated at National level significance.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Terry Karschner, Acting Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 404, Trenton, New Jersey 08625 or call her at (609) 984-0176.

Sincerely,

Amy Cradic
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Princeton Nurseries Historic District (Middlesex County, NJ)
Reference Number: 08000899

Reason for Return: This nomination is being returned for substantive and technical problems.

Statement of Significance: The nomination claims National significance for the Princeton Nurseries Historic District but does not provide sufficient contextual information to evaluate that claim. The Statement of Significance (Section 8, p. 1) says that the Princeton Nurseries is nationally significant "because of its place in the history of commercial horticulture, the contributions to horticulture of the founding Flemer family (most notably William Flemer, III) and because it typifies the characteristics of an early 20th century self-contained nursery." The nomination notes that "Princeton Nurseries gained fame as the source of dozens of patented plants that were sold wholesale to landscapers, parks, and municipalities throughout the East Coast and far west as Chicago and Milwaukee," and that William Flemer, III, "achieved international renown through his plant introductions and led several professional nursery associations," and that he patented nearly four dozen plants. Additional contextual information on horticulture, and specific information on Princeton Nurseries, is needed to evaluate whether these achievements rise to the level of national importance.

Role of Princeton Nurseries: The nomination does not provided details, other than of the most general kind, of the operation of Princeton Nurseries, nor does it place it into the context of other commercial nurseries of its defined Period of Significance (1913-1962). Please provide information on the Princeton Nurseries business; what was the volume of their business, how did they operate (did they advertise nationally?), how were the plants shipped, which municipalities and park systems did they sell to, how did their business compare in size, sales and workforce to other commercial nurseries of the period?

Importance of William Flemer, III: Please provide additional information on William Flemer, III's importance in horticultural history. The nomination lists seven national and international awards

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

Property Name: Princeton Nurseries Historic District (Middlesex County, NJ)
Reference Number: 08000899

p. 2

and medals given to Flemer, but provides no specifics of when they were awarded or what they were acknowledging. Please provide the dates of the awards and detail what the awards cited as Fleming's achievements.

The nomination lists 41 plants patented by William Flemer, III, but of these, 36 were patented after the defined period of significance, and some as recently as 2001-2002. The nomination does not explain whether the plants patented by Flemer were developed at the Princeton Nurseries site or at another of the family's commercial properties. Please explain what plants were developed here and describe and evaluate the significance in horticulture of the plants patented during the period of significance. The Princeton Elm is mentioned in the nomination, but it is not explained why the development of this Dutch Elm-resistant tree is important. When was it confirmed that the Princeton Elm was resistant to Dutch Elm disease? Has the Princeton Elm been widely adopted as a replacement for the Dutch Elm population? The nomination also lists a 1958 patent for a plant digging machine. Was this the first of its type? What impact has this machine had on horticulture?

The recent date of some of his patents raises the question of whether William Flemer, III, is still alive and still actively practicing? If so, please explain how this property meets the exception for association with a living person (refer to the National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years, p9, "Associations with Living Persons," and the National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons, pp. 12-13, for guidance).

Development of the Site: The nominated area includes a new housing development (Princeton Nurseries Village) consisting of seven nursery buildings (buildings #8 through 14) which were moved into an artificial assemblage in 2007. The nomination does not provide an evaluation on the historic district's integrity resulting from the moving of this substantial number of buildings and their artificial assemblage. Please provide.

Building 15. Princeton Nurseries Office/Headquarters. This is one of the major buildings in the historic district and it was radically changed in the 1960s (no specific date given). In order for

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

Property Name: Princeton Nurseries Historic District (Middlesex County, NJ)
Reference Number: 08000899

p.3

this building to contribute to the historic district, its radical alteration must have occurred during the defined period of significance (that is, prior to 1962). What year was the building transformed into its current Colonial Revival appearance?

Photographs: The photographs included with the nomination are not dated and the name of the photographer is not given. Please provide.

Map: The map which serves as the boundary description does not meet National Register standards because of its scale (1 inch = 1,000 feet). Because of its scale the text on the map (tax parcel information) is illegible. If the nominated area includes a series of undivided tax parcels, then a list of the parcels can serve as the official boundary.



Patrick Andrus, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
202-354-2218
patrick_andrus@nps.gov
9/12/2008

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

899



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 Princeton Nurseries Historic District

other names/site number Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site

2. Location

street & number Generally along Mapleton Road and Ridge Road

not for publication

city or town Plainsboro Township and South Brunswick Township

vicinity

state New Jersey

code NJ

county Middlesex

code 023

zip code _____

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.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Amy Cradic, Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources, DSHPO
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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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): _____

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	
28	3	buildings
		sites
1	2	structures
		objects
29	5	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

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/horticultural facility

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

DOMESTIC/single dwellings

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/conservation area

GOVERNMENT/government office

DOMESTIC/single dwellings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof

walls Wood, concrete

other Steel

Narrative Description

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

Returned

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)

- Criteria A, B, C, and D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce
Agriculture

Period of Significance

1913-1962

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Flemer, William, Jr.; Flemer, William III

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Bauhan, Rolf W.; Flemer, William Jr.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

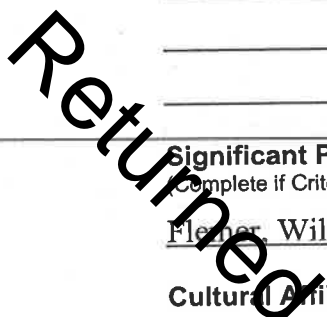
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository:

South Brunswick Historic Preservation Commission



10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 269

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	534300	4468730	C	18	531800	44678440
B	18	532200	4467750	D	18	531980	4469200
E	18	532390	4469200				

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 Charles H. Ashton Architectural Historian

organization Hunter Research, Inc.

date December 2007 (revised March 2008)

street & number 120 West State Street

telephone (609) 695-0122

city or town Trenton

state NJ

zip code 08608

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 See attached list.

street & number

telephone

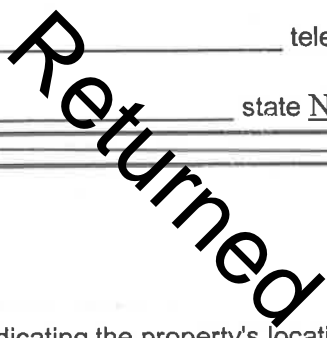
city or town

state

zip code

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 1

The Princeton Nurseries Historic District, also known as the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site, is a 269-acre rural historic landscape in Plainsboro and South Brunswick Townships, Middlesex County, New Jersey, that includes 31 buildings (of which approximately 10 retain outbuildings), three bridges (two on public roads), a former railroad right-of way and extensive fields. Historically the land was the nucleus of Princeton Nurseries, a vertically-integrated commercial tree nursery that operated here from 1913 until 1995 (although operations were transferred to Allentown, New Jersey beginning in the 1960s); the nominated property therefore contains within its boundaries the administrative and operational buildings associated with the production and sale of nursery stock, houses occupied by the nursery workers and owners (some of which were present when the nursery was established and the oldest of which dates from 1756), and the fields in which young trees were brought to marketable size. Of the 31 buildings present, 28 contribute to the property's significance and three are non-contributing. Also within the boundaries are two public roads, lined in places with mature trees grown at the nursery. All of these features combine to illustrate the operations of what was once one of the largest nursery operations in the United States.

The local landscape had been shaped by three major public works projects before the nursery was established, two of which directly contributed to the founder's decision to locate here. Of the three, two have been previously listed in the National Register and the third has been found eligible. These are the Delaware and Raritan Canal (listed in the National Register on November 30, 1973), Lake Carnegie (listed June 28, 1990) and the right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad Branch Line (found eligible by New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office opinion, most recently on May 21, 1991). The canal and the railroad both provided shipping in 1913, and today all three enhance the nursery's visual and historic environment although the railroad's tracks are no longer present.

The land is generally flat (another factor in its selection), ranging in elevation from about 60 to 120 feet above sea level and sloping down to Heathcote Brook on the north and the Delaware and Raritan Canal on the west. The soil is Sassafras loam, a very deep, well-drained soil with slow to moderate surface runoff found in the coastal plains of the Mid-Atlantic states and suitable for general crops, fruits and woodlands. Native species to the soil include mixed upland hardwoods with some Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*) and Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*). This combination of soil, nearby shipping and a location near the East Coast population centers made the site nearly ideal for a tree nursery.

The native landscape has been modified for nursery use, including the construction of lanes and berms and installation of an extensive subterranean irrigation system. All four of the original farms which were acquired for the nursery are within the nominated property, although they are no longer discernible as family farmsteads following their inclusion within the larger nursery operation, as outbuildings were moved and fields subsumed into the nursery.

Two roads traverse the nominated property. Mapleton Road (now a township road, but formerly Middlesex County Route 614) runs generally north and south, from the former Aqueduct Mills (Princeton Aqueduct) to Kingston, where it becomes Academy Street. Division Street/Ridge Road (formerly Middlesex County Route

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

522 and now a township road), near the northern edge of the nominated property, runs easterly to U.S. Route 1 and Monmouth Junction; U.S. Route 1 intersects Mapleton Road. Within the nominated parcel there are also a number of nameless lanes providing access to the fields, as well as two residential streets entirely within the former nursery: Railroad Avenue, alongside the former alignment of the Camden and Amboy Railroad, and its side street Greenwood Avenue. Both streets dead-end within the former nursery. The majority of the buildings within the nominated property are on Mapleton Road, Ridge Road, Railroad Avenue and Greenwood Avenue, although the core of the former nursery operational buildings are arrayed along the former railroad alignment (near Mapleton Road).

Several of the houses within the nominated area were farmhouses that predate the founding of the nursery. As these were acquired they were incorporated into the nursery's operations. Smaller, secondary buildings (such as small barns and tenant houses) from these farms were freely moved around the nursery to new locations and their uses changed, as is apparent in the following section. Other small houses were purchased nearby, such as in Kingston, and moved onto the property. None of the houses—but all of the buildings relating to the nursery operation—were built by the nursery.

Remarkably, there are only three non-contributing buildings, a modern house under construction in 2007 at the southern end of the district (#1), a telephone company utility building (#20B) and a 1960s-era house on Ridge Road (#29). The remainder of the buildings relates to the nursery operation and the housing of persons associated with it.

There are bridges over Heathcote Brook on both Mapleton and Ridge Roads, built in 2001 and 1989 respectively. While they do not contribute to an understanding of the resource, they do not seriously diminish its integrity since they are such minor elements and unrelated to the nursery. There is also a culvert near the foot of Greenwood Avenue providing access to the fields.

The former right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad exists as a level earthen berm, today in large part supporting unpaved nursery roads (and overgrown in other locations). It is a structure plainly discernible in the landscape and contributes to the significance of the nursery.

There are two examples of *allées*, rows of trees lining both sides of a traveled way, within the nominated area dating from the period of significance; one is an array of London plane trees on Mapleton Road, the other consists of two rows of towering oaks along the former roadbed of the Camden and Amboy Railroad west of Mapleton Road. Not visible but present is the nursery's water system, which also served the nearby village of Kingston. A water tower once stood on the property but has been removed, but a few scattered fire hydrants are public evidence of the system.

Finally, the majority of the land within the district remains open, as it was when the district achieved significance. While there are no structures in this component of the district, it is not undeveloped. The unpaved lanes created and maintained by the nursery provide access to the growing fields, which today are still separated by windrows. While some fields are fallow and are being overtaken by normal succession, the remains of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Princeton Nurseries Historic District
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 3

nursery stock (untended for at least 12 years) are apparent in others. As a result, vistas south and east from the nursery's core, and east from Mapleton Road and south from Ridge Road are dominated by open land, but the views are not natural landscapes. Discrete rows of tall trees punctuate the scene, indicating human alteration of the land, not for aesthetic reasons but for the large-scale production of trees. West of Mapleton Road in the southern reaches of the district the land is much lower than east of the road and not as well drained. While this land is also open, it is bounded on the west by trees that line the adjacent Delaware and Raritan Canal.

The district retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Integrity of setting has been somewhat diminished through the reduction in acreage, some of which has been developed for commercial and residential use, and the loss of several buildings that existed during the nursery's prime years. These losses have likewise eroded (but not destroyed) the integrity of feeling, but the surviving acreage and buildings are sufficient to convey the essence of the nursery operation. The historic setting to the west is intact, consisting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal (listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 11, 1973).

Resources within the nominated property are as follows:

1. Modern house, 80 Mapleton Road. Non-contributing (Photo 1)
A two-story house faced with stone, under construction in 2007.

2. Barn, 80 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photos 1, 2).

This is a frame structure, 2 ½ stories with cedar shingle siding. Built early in the 20th century to house horses used in the nursery operation, it is five bays wide on the gable end and about seven bays deep. A wing extended to the left (south) until its recent removal.

3. Van Dyke/Hoffman House, 325 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photo 3).

Now in its fourth location, this house was constructed on the east side of U.S. 1, probably in the early 19th century. It is 2 ½ stories tall, five bays wide and two bays deep with a central entrance. Siding is clapboard and the gabled roof is slate. To the rear of the house are a two-story gabled workshop, constructed in the 1960s to replace an earlier structure that burned, and a garage. Both were until recently associated with the Mathias Van Dyke House (#4).

The Van Dyke/Hoffman House was first moved to the west side of U.S. 1 circa 1929, then to a site on Mapleton Road approximately opposite its present location in 1980. It was moved for the third time in the late 1980s.

4. Matthias Van Dyke House, 323 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photo 4).

Built in 1756, the house is constructed of fieldstone laid in coursed ashlar. The main block is four bays wide, two bays deep and two and a half stories tall. To the left (south) of the main block is a two-bay kitchen wing, built early in the 20th century to replace the original kitchen. The gable ends are stuccoed. Windows are primarily 9/1, and a classically-detailed gabled entry portico shelters the main entrance in the second bay from the left.

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(south). A rear garage at basement level, with a patio on its flat roof, was added by Rolf W. Bauhan in 1963 following a fire.

The Van Dyke house with its 85 acres was one of the first four farms purchased by William Flemer, Sr. when establishing the nursery. Matthias Van Dyke built the house in 1756 on 200 acres he would later inherit from his father. It housed several British officers before the Battle of Princeton in January of 1777.

5. Ziegerhofer House and barn, 252 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photo 5).

Used as employee housing by Princeton Nurseries, this building consists of a small two-story, five-bay house attached to the rear (east) of a barn. The house has wood clapboard siding and generally 6/6 windows. The barn also has a gabled roof, and the north façade has a double-leaf vehicular door. Siding is wooden shingle. A one-story former stable extends westward from the barn. The structure predates the nursery, and was historically associated with the Higgins house next door (#6). The house was rented to nursery employees.

~~6. Higgins House, 250 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photo 6).~~

The Higgins house is frame, five bays wide and two deep with a tall 2 ½-story gabled roof punctuated by a central cross gable with a round-headed attic window. Siding is clapboard and windows are 1/1. The central entrance is protected by a full-width one-story porch. There are two brick interior end chimneys. One of the most striking features of the house is its broad frieze at eave level with paired brackets and cornice returns. A modern one-story garage has been added on the left (north).

The house is one of the four original farms purchased by William Flemer Sr. when establishing the nursery. Stylistically it appears to date from *circa* 1880 based on its very tall profile.

7. Shennard House, 119 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photo 7).

The Shennard House is composed of a three-bay wide, two bay deep, two story main block and a six-bay rear ell. The house is nearly devoid of architectural detail. Siding is now aluminum and the roof is standing seam sheet metal. The main entrance is within a one-bay, flat-roofed enclosed porch. Windows are 6/6 and 2/2.

The house was in existence and was one of the original purchases when the nursery was established.

7A. Shennard Barn. Contributing (Photo 8).

Built in two parts in the 1920s following a fire that destroyed its predecessor, the two-story, cedar shingle frame section was a haybarn. The one-story masonry stable extending to the rear (south) was also used as a carpentry shop.

8. Perez/Homan House, 1 Old Nursery Lane. Contributing (Photo 9)

Although the house is older than the nursery, it was not one of the first four farms purchased when the nursery was established. It is frame, three bays wide and one bay deep with a gabled roof. There is a two-bay rear ell with a nearly flat roof. The roof is gabled and siding is wood clapboard. A one-bay open hip-roofed porch shelters the central main entrance. Windows are generally 6/6 although the central window on the second floor

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of the main façade is shuttered, apparently permanently. There is one brick chimney, centered on the roof ridge. There is a one-car garage behind the house (#8A). Based on its stylistic attributes, the house probably dates from the third quarter of the 19th century. It was rented to nursery employees.

9. Lofland House, 3 Old Nursery Lane. Contributing (Photo 10).

Now a duplex residence, the Lofland house was a barn or carriage house on one of the farms purchased by the Flemers (possibly originally associated with #8). It is four bays wide, two stories tall, and is one of the few buildings on the nursery property with board and batten siding. There is a one-story shed-roof addition on the front (north) façade. There is one central brick chimney. Windows are generally 6/6. The two entrances are paired near the center of the building under an extension of the shed roof of the addition.

10. Cruz House, 5 Old Nursery Lane. Contributing (Photo 11).

Architecturally unpretentious, this house is frame, two bays wide on the front gable end and four irregular bays deep. The roof is sheet metal and the siding is vinyl. Windows are generally 6/6. A one-bay shed-roof porch shelters the entry.

Although its date of construction is unknown, it was moved here by William Flemer, Jr. from one of the farms he purchased for incorporation into the nursery. The house was rented to nursery employees.

11. Pritchett House, 7 Old Nursery Lane. Contributing (Photo 12).

Similar to its neighbor (#10) in massing and finish, the Pritchett House is frame, two stories tall and two bays wide. It is two bays deep plus a one-bay shed-roof rear ell. The main entry is in the front gable end, sheltered by a one-bay shed-roof porch. Windows are generally 6/6. The house appears to have been raised several feet; the foundation is cement block above stone.

Also like its neighbor, the house was moved here by William Flemer, Jr. at an unknown date during development of the nursery and rented to nursery employees. It is speculated that both may have been tenant houses on farms acquired by Flemer. Its date of construction is unknown.

12. Vik House, 8 Old Nursery Lane. Contributing (Photo 13).

Until early 2007 the Vik house stood alone on Nursery property east of Greenwood Avenue and south of Ridge Road. In that year it was moved to its new location within the "Princeton Nurseries Village," a housing development comprised of seven former nursery houses (buildings #8 through 14). Similar in scale and detail to its neighbors to the south and west, the Vik house is a two and a half story frame house with its entry in the gable end. It is three bays wide on the first floor and two on the second, and four bays deep (with attached shed-roof rear ell). The entrance is within a full-width hip-roofed porch. Siding is vinyl and windows are generally 1/1. The history of how and when the house came to be located on Greenwood Avenue is unknown, but it was occupied by Princeton Nurseries employees.

13. Andujar House, 10 Old Nursery Lane. Contributing (Photo 14).

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The Andujar House was originally associated with the Higgins house farther south on Mapleton Road (#6), where it was the barn or carriage house until World War I, when William Flemer, Jr. converted it into Princeton Nurseries' first office building. After construction of the present office building (#15) in the 1920s, it was converted again for use as employee housing. In 2007 it was moved from its original site behind the Higgins house to its present location in Princeton Nurseries Village. The house is frame, two stories plus attic, with a gabled roof. It is irregularly three bays wide, with the entrance in the center bay. There is a one-bay wide, two-story ell to the right (now north). Siding is wooden shiplap on the main block and clapboard on the ell. Windows are generally 6/6. The building is presumed to be generally contemporaneous with the Higgins House, i.e. late 19th century.

14. Rutherford House, 134 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photo 15).

A building at this location is identified on the 1876 Everts & Stewart map as "J. Rutherford," presumably this house. The 1850 Otley and Keily map of Middlesex County showed a store on the site.

~~The house was historically used as a duplex occupied by Nursery employees, divided front and rear. Of frame construction, the house is five bays wide and four bays deep with a gabled roof. The main entrance is centered in the front façade, under a gabled one-bay porch, and features sidelights and a fanlight. Windows are generally 6/6 although a tripartite window is centered in the second story of the main façade. Siding is clapboard. There is a two-story, four-bay wide shed-roof rear ell.~~

15. Princeton Nurseries Office/Headquarters, 145 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photos 16, 17).

Built in the 1920s after the fashion of a hunting lodge by an unknown architect, the style of the Office was radically changed by Princeton architect Rolf W. Bauhan in the 1960s to its present Colonial Revival appearance. It faces east, away from Mapleton Road, into an enclosed yard created by buildings #16-18. It is one and a half stories tall above a cobblestone foundation and consists of a main block and an ell to the right (north). The entrance is in a projecting cross gable to the east; the main doorway is in a gable entry and features an arched fanlight and paired sidelights. The slate roof is punctuated by gabled roof dormers and the walls are stuccoed (with horizontally beaded boards in the gable peaks). Windows are generally 6/6 or diamond-pane upper sash above single-light lower sash.

Bauhan changed the rooflines from the original jerkinhead (sometimes called a hipped gable or a clipped gable) to full gable on the main roof, cross gable and dormer. He also removed a *porte-cochère* on the south end and added the roof dormers. The composition of the building as a group of masses of differing heights is illustrative of Bauhan's interpretation of Colonial domestic architecture.

The interior of the building is not Colonial Revival. Its principal feature is a two story central space with half-timber walls, a balcony and cobblestone fireplace.

16. Blacksmith Shop/Safety and Education Building. Contributing (Photo 18).

Stylistic and material similarities to the Office (#15) suggest this building too was reconfigured by Rolf Bauhan, perhaps about the time its use changed. It is one and a half stories high with an offset gabled roof; the west side

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façade is taller than the east. The gabled peak is sided with wood shingles and there are there is a group of three 12-pane windows. A pedestrian door provides access from the south. Historic photos (Photos 40 and 41) show it to have had a jerkinhead roof and three windows on the east façade.

17. Large Packing Shed. Contributing (Photos 19, 20).

The western end of this building is the original packing shed, built adjacent to the tracks of the Rocky Hill Branch Railroad, probably around World War I when William Flemer, Sr. first established the nursery. In the nursery's scheme of identifying buildings it was known as Building 2. To this were added linearly along the railroad tracks additional sections known to the nursery as buildings 3,4,5,6 and 7 (all of which are part of Building #17 for the purposes of this nomination).

Building 2—the westernmost section—is a broad, 9-bay wide two-story wood frame structure with a gabled roof. There is a *porte-cochère* on the south façade sheltering a loading door with overhead crane, and there is a vehicular entrance on the west. Siding is clapboard. The interior of the original section features columns fashioned from tree trunks, supporting a two-story space. Partitions retain their original vertically beaded paneling. Windows are 6/6 (now sealed by temporary exterior plywood panels).

The next three sections were so-called common storage, neither heated nor refrigerated, in which dormant plant stock was held from about November through April. The last two sections are insulated and were refrigerated so stock could be kept dormant for about two months longer; the goal was to ship plants before they began to leaf out in the Spring. An extension of the original building, these sections are similar in height and width to the original, the principal differences being the materials used. Walls are cement block and posts and beams are steel. Since these buildings were primarily used for storage and shipping, windows would be superfluous and there are few of them. Each section contains eight bays.

18. Tree Storage Building. Contributing (Photo 21)

Similar in function to the insulated storage parts of #17 but with greater interior vertical clearance, this building was used for winter storage of harvested trees awaiting Spring shipment. Of modern building materials and lacking any style or ornament, it is a long, gable-roof building served by overhead vehicular doors on the north façade accessible to the nursery's delivery trucks or customers' trucks. The eastern end was built first, to which the western end was added. The roof of the latter is supported by steel trusses while the latter has steel columns. Walls are cement block.

Known to nursery workers as the Number 9 Building, functionally it was as much the heart of the operation as was #17 above.

19. Greenhouse Complex. Contributing (Photos 22,23).

The greenhouse complex consists of a two-story frame Propagation House oriented east-west, from which greenhouses extended to both the north and south (originally eight in each direction for a total of 16), constructed so as to share their long walls with their neighbor. Eight survive, four to the north and four to the south. Benches in the greenhouses are poured concrete.

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The Propagation House is lit on the first floor by the greenhouses and on the second by six groups of three 12-pane windows. Prominently attached to the Propagation House is a terra cotta smokestack, approximately twice as high as the building, bearing the letters "PN" in lighter-colored terra cotta. It served two coal-fired boilers, later replaced by oil burners. William Flemer, Jr. built the greenhouses in the 1920s.

20. The Cottage, 149 Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photos 24, 25).

The Cottage is a one and a half story, two-bay wide vernacular house purchased by the nursery and used as employee housing. It is frame with clapboard siding on the first floor and wood shingle in the gable peak. A full-width one-story porch shelters the entry. There are gabled wall dormers on both side facades and a projecting bay on the first floor of the right (south) elevation. Windows are generally 2/2. Based on its style the house appears to date from the 1920s.

~~The one-story garage (#20A), added by Rolf Bauhan before 1966, can hardly be called high-style. It is a two-car garage with a pedestrian door. The roof is gabled with cornice returns, and there are two 12-pane windows and one 6-pane window in the gable peak on each of the side facades.~~

#20B is non-contributing, a modern one-story cement block telephone service building.

21. Seed Department. Contributing (Photos 26, 27)

Two buildings comprise the Seed Department, reached by the former right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad. The tracks along the canal were removed *circa* 1865, but a short section between the canal and the junction of the Kingston Branch and the Rocky Hill Branch (just east of Mapleton Road) remained until the early 20th century; it is now an unpaved lane lined on both sides by towering oaks.. The site is currently occupied by Mapleton Nurseries, founded and originally operated by William Flemer, IV on leased land destined to become permanent open space.

Building #21 was the work building for the Seed Department. It is a one-story gable-roof building, one bay wide and four bays deep. Siding is wood shingle and windows are 6/6. There is a brick gable end chimney at the back (west). A shed/ell extends to the right (north) from the main block. Although it cannot be said to have architectural style, the wood shingle siding, 6/6 windows and gable roof suggest it was built during the William Flemer, Jr. era.

Building #21A dates from the 1970s. It is a gabled barn-like building sided and roofed in fiberglass panels.

22. Fenwick House, 1011 Ridge Road. Contributing (Photo 28).

Stylistically the Fenwick House appears to predate the establishment of Princeton Nurseries. It is a simple frame house, two stories tall, three bays wide and two bays deep with a gabled roof and a shed-roof rear ell. Siding is wood shingle and there are two interior end brick chimneys. Windows are generally 6/6. The house was used as employee housing by Princeton Nurseries.

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Near the house is a collapsing wooden barn (#22A).

23. I. C. Withington House, 1004 Ridge Road. Contributing (Photo 29).

Located on the north side of Ridge Road, the Withington House probably dates from *circa* 1860. It was owned by a son of Phineas Withington, one of the backers of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. In recent years it was owned by William Flemer, IV. It is frame, three bays wide and one bay deep with wood clapboard siding and a gabled roof. A central cross gable with exposed rafter tails and an unusual wooden diamond motif appears to be a later addition. There is a central brick chimney and an off-center one-story hip-roofed porch. A one-story ell extends to the rear, with another chimney at the gable end. Windows are irregularly spaced and are generally 6/6; small windows at the second floor level are four-light, fixed pane sash. The lot is bordered on the north by the former right-of-way of the Camden and Amboy Railroad. The house was recommended as individually eligible for inclusion in the Register by the 2002 survey of South Brunswick Township.

24. Joyce House, 1007 Ridge Road. Contributing (Photo 30).

Like the nearby Fenwick House which it resembles in scale and massing, this building predates the establishment of Princeton Nurseries but was later used as employee housing. It is frame, three bays wide and two bays deep with a gabled roof and a two-story gabled rear ell. A full-width one-story front porch shelters the first floor of the main elevation, which includes a one-story, three-part projecting bay. Windows are generally 1/1 or 2/2. Siding is vinyl.

25. Braddock House, 7 Railroad Avenue. Contributing (Photo 31).

The Braddock House also appears stylistically to predate Princeton Nurseries and was used as employee housing. It is a frame house, two stories tall, three bays wide and two deep with a one-story shed-roof rear ell. Siding is vinyl and windows are generally 2/2. The main entry is centered on the front (north) façade and is within a one-bay, one-story flat-roof porch with square posts.

26. Eugene Harvey House, 9 Railroad Avenue. Contributing (Photo 32).

Located at the southeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Greenwood Avenue, the Eugene Harvey house is a 2 ½-story, frame, gable-front house with vinyl siding. It is three bays wide and two bays deep, with a one-bay, two-story flat-roofed rear ell. A full-width, one-story, flat-roof porch spans the front (north) elevation. Windows are generally 2/2 although there is an unusual narrow 1/1 window above the front door. A box cornice with returns is supported by widely-spaced brackets. Stylistically the house appears to date from the last quarter of the 19th century. It was rented to nursery employees.

27. Harvey House, 6 Greenwood Avenue. Contributing (Photo 33).

Architecturally the Harvey House appears to date from the end of the 19th century due to its applied detail, but the underlying massing suggests it may be an earlier side-hall house that underwent later alteration. It is frame, 2 ½-stories tall, two bays wide and two bays deep. The roof is gabled and there is a gabled two-story rear ell. The front (east) elevation contains, besides the main entry, a one-story, three-part projecting bay window and a one-story porch that continues around the right (north) elevation. The front door has paired round-arch panels, typical of the Italianate style. Paired brackets support a boxed cornice, and the gable peaks of the right elevation of the

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main block and the rear (west) elevation of the ell contain the most elaborate scrollsawn woodwork found anywhere on the nursery property. Siding is wood clapboard. Windows are generally 2/2 although there are some 6/6s on secondary elevations.

West of the house is a small two-story barn (#27A).

Greenwood Avenue was created by Princeton Nurseries as an enclave of employee housing. At one time there were at least six more buildings on the street, one of which was a chapel. The street is accessible only from Railroad Avenue at the north end and by unpaved nursery lanes at the south. It is paved but there are no sidewalks or curbs.

28. Ten Broeck/Shope House, 983 Ridge Road. Contributing (Photo 34).
The Ten Broeck/Shope House is so called from its notation on the 1850 Otley and Keily map. On the 1876 Everts & Stewart map it is shown as "C. Sheppard." Formerly owned by Princeton Nurseries, William Flemer, Jr. sold it to a family named Shope. Architecturally it has Italianate detailing. It is frame with wood shingle siding, three bays wide and 2 ½ stories tall. The front (north) elevation is dominated by a central cross gable, in the peak of which is a characteristically Italianate paired round arch window. A one-story hip-roof porch spans the front façade. Windows are generally 2/2.

29. Goeke House, 979 Ridge Road. Non-contributing (Photo 35).
Built in the 1960s, this is a one-story ranch house built on land which once belonged to the nurseries, but is otherwise unrelated to the nursery.

30. Mapleton Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook (Photo 36)
Known formally as Middlesex County Bridge 4-B-68, the bridge was designed by Vollmer and Associates LLP and built in 2001. It features concrete parapets with cast panels.

31. Ridge Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook (Photo 37)
Middlesex County Bridge 4-B-54, designed by Purcell Associates, Inc., was built in 1989. It has low concrete parapets topped by extruded aluminum railings. Ridge Road itself is a South Brunswick Township road although the bridge remains under County jurisdiction.

32. Mapleton Road. Contributing (Photos 38,39)
First surveyed in 1749, Mapleton Road achieved significance relative to Princeton Nurseries early in the 20th century when William Flemer, Jr. planted plane trees on both sides of it near the southern boundary of the nominated property. The entire length of Mapleton Road within the nominated area is considered contributing as the "main street" of Princeton Nurseries.

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The Princeton Nurseries Historic District, also known as Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site, is nationally significant because of its place in the history of commercial horticulture, the contributions to horticulture of the founding Flemer family (most notably William Flemer, III) and because it typifies the characteristics of an early 20th century self-contained plant nursery, thus meeting National Register Criteria A., B. and C. In the early 20th century this neighborhood of farms underwent major transformation to a new use that would persist in earnest until the 1960s. In 1913 William Flemer, Sr. began acquiring farms along Mapleton Road for what would become Princeton Nurseries. Eventually growing to encompass over 1,000 acres in three contiguous municipalities and employing more than 300 workers, Princeton Nurseries gained fame as the source of dozens of patented plants that were sold wholesale to landscapers, parks and municipalities throughout the East Coast and as far west as Chicago and Milwaukee. Nursery operations were transferred to Allentown, New Jersey beginning in 1962 and ceased entirely in Kingston in 1995. The nominated property is also associated with the Revolutionary War: British officers were garrisoned at the Matthias Van Dyke House prior to the Battle of Princeton (January 3, 1777), and in June of 1778 the American army passed along Ridge Road en route to the Battle of Monmouth. With respect to Criterion B, the nursery was the product of and is closely associated with the Flemer family, of whom it was arguably William Flemer, III who had the greatest impact on commercial horticulture. He achieved international renown through his plant introductions and led several professional nursery associations. Ultimately he patented nearly four dozen plants. His life's work was acknowledged by numerous medals and awards; among these were the Veitch Memorial Medal awarded by the Royal Horticultural Society, the Hall of Fame award from the American Association of Nurserymen, the Medal of Honor award from the Garden Club of America, the Thomas Roland and Jackson Dawson medals from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden Award and the Catherine H. Sweeney Award from the American Horticultural Society. As a district, Princeton Nurseries meets Criterion C, embodying the distinctive characteristics of a nearly self-contained commercial nursery, where stock was raised from seed and grafts to marketable size by a workforce that largely lived on site in company-owned housing. Surviving features illustrative of this process include the headquarters building, propagation building, two packing and shipping buildings, greenhouses, workers' houses, and of course the extensive fields reached by unpaved lanes and separated by windbreaks (often poplar trees), known locally as "windrows," planted to conserve soil moisture.

The area was settled early in the 18th century and by mid-century was home to a mill and at least one substantial stone house, the Matthias Van Dyke House, both located on Mapleton Road. The neighborhood consisted of scattered small farms when the Delaware and Raritan Canal was built through it on the right bank of the Millstone River in the early 1830s. The Camden and Amboy Railroad laid tracks through the area *circa* 1839, along the canal from Trenton and, avoiding the high ground where the village of Kingston is located, turned northeast to Major Road (near Deans Pond) from where it followed the route now used by the Northeast Rail Corridor to New Brunswick..

Taken together, the surviving buildings and patterns of land use form a rural historic landscape, defined as "...a geographical area that historically has been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features" (U. S. Department of the Interior

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1999). The landscape - a considerable portion of which has been preserved either by ordinance or preservation covenant - bears the signs of four generations of commercial horticulture (all in the Flemer family), principally in the survival of the buildings associated with the nursery operations, all built by and for the nursery. Shaping of the landscape is also evidenced by the relocation of various buildings, primarily small houses that the company rented to nursery employees, and the survival of demarcated fields in which the nursery stock was raised.

Although the nominated property is much reduced in acreage from the extent of Princeton Nurseries at the peak of its production here, the district nonetheless encompasses the heart of the operation, including all of its major buildings and the fields that surrounded them.

The period of significance begins in 1913, the year in which land acquisition and modification began, and extends until 1962, when nursery operations were moved to Allentown, New Jersey. The district can be seen as nationally significant for its role in shaping landscapes far beyond central New Jersey: Princeton Nurseries was ideally (and purposely) positioned geographically to participate in the large-scale planting of street trees that occurred in the United States after World War I and the suburbanization following World War II. Stock introduced by Princeton Nurseries was used throughout the Eastern United States and was used to landscape the suburbs that thrived in (and to a large extent shaped) the post-World War II period. Among the best-known of Princeton Nurseries' introductions is the disease-resistant Princeton Elm (*Ulmus americana* 'Princeton'), specimens of which line Washington Road in nearby West Windsor Township, Mercer County, forming the Washington Road Elm Allée (listed in the National Register on January 14, 1999).

Commercial Horticulture in America

Commercial horticulture in the United States can be traced to the efforts of avocational Colonial botanists, working principally in the New England and Mid-Atlantic colonies. Besides the well-known botanical interests of Thomas Jefferson,¹ these included Philadelphia's John Bartram and his son William. However, the raising of plant stock for sale was not the primary focus of these pioneering plantsmen. That honor is usually accorded to William Prince, founder of the first American nursery in Flushing, New York (now part of the borough of Queens) in 1737.

American nurserymen at first concentrated on fruit trees. In a circular Prince published in 1771 he advertised for sale 33 types of plums, two dozen varieties of apples, 42 pears and a dozen types of nectarines. Three years later Prince's son William offered for sale magnolias, catalpas, almonds, gooseberries, strawberries, grapevines, mulberries and filberts. In 1789 the nursery was visited by President George Washington. Two years later Thomas Jefferson paid a visit and placed an order for sugar maples, cranberries, six "sumachs" and 12 pears. William Prince Jr., the third generation, established a second nursery nearby, later combined with the first. The Prince nursery remained in the family for four generations and was in business until after the Civil War (Anon. 2004, DeWan 2007).

¹ Jefferson began his nursery at Monticello in 1778. Eventually he grew over 170 varieties of fruits (The Thomas Jefferson Foundation 2007).

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Less is known about the horticultural activities of two Middlesex County families that also apparently had botanical leanings. Colonel John Wetherill assembled a plantation of 1,700 acres in what is now South Brunswick Township in the mid-18th century, and his brother George owned a similar-sized tract nearby. In 1754 Thomas Wetherill, possibly a nephew or cousin of Col. John Wetherill, asked in a letter to his neighbor Thomas Lawrence of Longbridge Farm if he would send "...a few sions of your best & largest pairs..." Both men clearly were cultivating pear orchards and Wetherill apparently was planning to graft Lawrence's scions. John Wetherill was selling stock in quantity in 1763 when he filled an order from Thomas Barton of Perth Amboy for 400 apple trees, 100 of which were grafted (Hunter Research 2003).

While the Princes were joined and followed by other nurseries on Long Island, one of the earliest in New England was founded by John Kenrick in Newton, Massachusetts. In 1790 he planted two acres of peaches, and in 1794 began advertising trees for sale. Ornamental trees were added in 1797, including Lombardy poplars, among the first available in America. In the 1830s Kenrick's son William continued and expanded the business; in 1838 he offered (among other items) 228 varieties of apples and 317 types of pears (Marchione 1998).

At about this time horticulture was intersecting with landscape design and architecture, perhaps most notably in the person of Alexander Jackson Downing. Born in Newburgh, New York on the Hudson River in 1815, Downing was the son of a nurseryman who, with his brother, operated the nursery they inherited from their father. In addition to his well-known career in architecture, Downing was also an eminent horticulturist and pomologist; his 1845 book *The Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* was the standard work on the topic for half a century (Howett 1989).

The lands that would become Princeton Nurseries were mapped as early as 1745, when the Dalley map depicted a short stretch of "Mapletown Road" extending south from Kingston (Figure 1). Mapletown took its name from Benjamin Maple whose extensive landholdings were south of Kingston and east of the Millstone River; the name would persist at least to the middle of the 19th century. The Dalley map also indicates "Thos. Leonards Mills" where Mapletown Road crossed Heathcote Brook, within the nominated area. This mill had been established by 1717 but ceased operations about 1760.²

The full length of Mapletown Road was surveyed in 1773, and by 1840 the basic infrastructure of the nursery's neighborhood was in place (Figure 2). Four isolated farmsteads stood on Mapletown Road between Ridge Road and the southern limit of the nominated property. The four are labeled on a map made in 1850 (Figure 3): H. Van Dyke, W. Van Dyke, J. Van Duyn and J. B. Story; the general vicinity is labeled "Mapletown." There was a depot where the Camden and Amboy Railroad tracks crossed Mapletown Road and a store on the opposite side of the road. The Canal had been completed, including a basin just south of Kingston.

² No systematic archaeological attempts have been made to locate the remains of Leonards Mills, and no surface remains are evident.

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The landscape changed little in the succeeding quarter century (Figure 4). Van Dykes were still numerous, but the J.B. Story house was now labeled A.S. Meyrick. The railroad tracks along the canal were gone, having been removed *circa* 1865 after the line was realigned, following the straighter route of today's Northeast Rail Corridor, from Trenton to Major Road (in South Brunswick) was completed in 1864. The east-west remnant of the railroad remained east of the canal as the Kingston Branch; in 1866, it was realigned from New Road to extend southeast to join the main line at Monmouth Junction (rather than Major Road.) Later, just east of Mapleton Road a line was extended northwest to Kingston Basin and thence, along the canal, by the Rocky Hill Railroad and Transportation Company, to Rocky Hill; at one time the Rocky Hill Branch extended to the Terra Cotta Plant (0.6 mi. north of the Rocky Hill Station.) After 1928, the northern segment was abandoned, but into the 1970s the track existed as far as the quarry (0.6 mi. south of the former Rocky Hill Station.) In the mid 1970s the remaining tracks of both the Kingston and Rocky Hill Branches were removed..

Princeton Nurseries

Against this historical backdrop of multi-generational tree and plant nurseries in the Northeast, William Flemer Sr. founded F&F Nurseries in 1868 on a farm in Roselle, New Jersey that his father had taken in payment for a debt. Soon outgrowing the Roselle site, he moved the operation to Springfield, New Jersey, but continuing development and relatively poor soil in Springfield sent him and his son William Flemer, Jr. searching for new lands. William Flemer Jr. later recalled that the search extended from Long Island to the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

The canvas of family farms and transportation facilities near "Mapletown" was among the places visited by William Flemer, Sr. and his son William Jr. starting about 1910. In 1913, having settled on Kingston, William Flemer, Sr. purchased the 65-acre Myrick farm for \$9,000. The following year he purchased the adjacent 65-acre Higgins farm for \$14,000, then the next adjacent farm, the 85-acre Matthias Van Dyke farm, for \$12,000. The last of the initial purchases was the Archibald Gulick farm, 70 acres for \$11,500. Thus, by 1915 William Flemer, Sr. owned 285 contiguous acres of fertile farmland, and four farmhouses with outbuildings, for a total investment of \$46,500. His son recalled that the location had been chosen because it was midway between Philadelphia and New York, and Boston and Washington, for the transportation opportunities afforded by its proximity to the railroad and the canal, and for its "...very fine Sassafras loam" soil (Flemer 1978).

William Flemer, Jr., at 18, was sent to Kingston by his father in 1914 to live on and manage what was then still part of F&F Nurseries. In 1917, after the United States entered World War I, he enlisted in the Army as an ambulance driver, an event that would eventually influence the landscape of central New Jersey. Flemer was in France from the fall of 1917 until early 1919, and it was here that he encountered tree-lined rural roads. He also saw French fields separated by windbreaks of tall poplars, and he would plant both upon his return to Kingston. He also recalled spending his free time in Europe planning other improvements to the nursery.

During his son's absence, Flemer Sr. had the original office (#15) and packing house (now the western end of #17) built. Prior to this event the office had been housed in the Andujar House (#13), which at the time was the carriage house of (and stood behind) the Higgins House (#6). The architect of the new office is unknown, but its design was reminiscent of a Bavarian hunting lodge (see historic photos), with a jerkinhead roof and dormers

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and, on the interior, a two-story half-timbered space with a balcony and a cobblestone fireplace. It also had a *porte-cochère*. Its exterior was remodeled in the 1960s to its present Colonial Revival appearance by Princeton architect (and Flemer family friend) Rolf W. Bauhan. The Andujar House was moved to its present location in 2007.

Also while the younger Flemer was abroad, his father removed the one-story kitchen wing of the Matthias Van Dyke house (#4), believed to have been the earliest section, and an outbuilding. The kitchen wing had been damaged by water entering the stonework.

Flemer returned from Europe in 1919, just before a decade that would see a great surge in demand for nursery stock, particularly shade trees. Two related forces contributed to this trend. One was the post-war construction boom of the 1920s, in which cities began aggressively spreading outward, fueled in part by widespread automobile ownership. The new houses that sprang up would all need a variety of trees and shrubs to landscape their lots, and the growing towns would need shade trees for their new streets and landscaping for their parks. Second, the 1920s would witness an explosion of highway construction, quickly followed by cries for roadside beautification. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the concept of planting trees along streets was not new, but in the 1920s "...the road beautification movement took a popular and well-established design idea...from the city and suburban street and moved it to the open road" (Hand 1998). A few local examples will illustrate: in 1924 the New Jersey legislature authorized the creation of county Shade Tree Commissions; in 1926 Mercer County's Commission asked the County Freeholders to plant trees along new roadways and the Freeholders budgeted \$8,500 for this purpose. The Washington Road elms were planted about 1926. In 1930, Brunswick Pike (U.S. Route 1) from Trenton to New Brunswick was to be planted with more than 4,500 trees, and these trees were in fact supplied by Princeton Nurseries (Hand 1998).

William Flemer was not the only young American soldier who had noticed the French habit of closely-spaced roadside tree planting, and tree-lined roadways were sometimes created as living war memorials. Mercer County accomplished this in 1920, planting 180 trees on Nottingham Way between Hamilton Square and Robbinsville as a memorial to the County's men who had died in the war (Hand 1998).

As a result, the 1920s were good to the Flemers. William Jr. continued buying nearby properties, with houses when possible, until the operation exceeded 1,000 acres. F&F Nurseries maintained two locations, with production in Kingston under William Jr.'s direction and sales from Springfield handled by his brother Carl. In 1931 the firm divided into separate entities with each brother continuing to operate his respective nursery.

It was during this period that the greatest strides were made in transforming the disparate collection of farms outside Kingston into a single nursery, with results still visible today. William Flemer, Jr. built the first greenhouses and installed a water system for irrigation (that also provided domestic water service to residents of Kingston). Perhaps drawing on his military experience, he organized the nursery operations into separate departments. He began relocating the smaller houses and other outbuildings he had acquired with the farms he purchased, and began renting the houses to his employees. He created the precursor of the streetscape west of Mapleton Road (today known as Princeton Nurseries Village) by moving buildings #9, #10 and possibly #11

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behind #8 and adjacent to the Rutherford House (#14). The Railroad Avenue/Greenwood Avenue neighborhood was created. Finally, in a single stroke he visually unified almost all of the nursery buildings—residential and operational alike—by painting them a pale Colonial Revival yellow with white trim and black shutters, a color scheme that has largely been maintained. The nursery became the second largest account at the local paint store in Princeton, after Princeton University (Flemer 2007).

It was also during the 1920s that William Flemer, Jr. developed the Princeton Elm (*Ulmus americana* 'Princeton'), a variety of American Elm that would prove resistant to Dutch Elm disease when that disease arrived with a vengeance in the 1930s. The disease was already ravaging elms in Europe, a fact of which Flemer was undoubtedly aware, and he apparently anticipated its eventual arrival in the United States. It is this tree that lines both sides of Washington Road in West Windsor Township, creating an arched living entranceway to Princeton from the east. Other rows of Princeton Elms survive in Plainsboro Township, Middlesex County on Plainsboro Road near U.S. 1.³

~~Demand for nursery stock declined sharply during the Depression and through World War II. Princeton Nurseries weathered this period by raising vegetables.~~

William Flemer III entered the business in 1945 upon his return from wartime service. With degrees in botany from Yale, he was the grower while his brother John was the firm's business administrator. The suburban construction boom of the 1950s once again fueled demand for nursery stock, virtually repeating the 1920s, but William Flemer III's propagation expertise brought national and international acclaim. While his father had introduced the 'Euclid' Linden (*Tilia cordata* 'Euclid') and the 'Sinclair' Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba* 'Sinclair') in addition to the Princeton Elm, William Flemer III introduced the 'Shademaster' Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Shademaster'), 'October Glory' Red Maple (*Acer rubrum* 'October Glory'), 'Greenspire' Linden (*Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire'), 'Green Vase' Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata* 'Green Vase') and 'Green Mountain' Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum* 'Green Mountain'). Ultimately he patented at least 47 trees, shrubs and vines (Princeton Nurseries 2007). William Flemer III also patented a "Plant Digging Machine" in 1958, "...a machine for removing trees etc. from the earth with the roots thereof substantially dirt-free so as to facilitate handling and minimizing transportation costs in the transplanting of such plants." The machine was a digging fork on the end of a hydraulic arm, all mounted on a tractor. The digging fork would be extended into the ground beneath a tree which was then lifted; a work crew would then remove the tree to a truck. Flemer claimed in his patent application that four men and a digging machine could remove 1200 trees per day, compared to 500 trees per day by a crew of ten men without the machine (United State Patent Office 1958). In the course of his career he also received numerous professional awards and medals, listed earlier.

The nursery operation grew to the point where it resembled a small company town (Photograph 42). Besides the houses, barns, packing sheds and office there were at various times a dormitory, water tower, woodshop, swimming pool, truck shop and blacksmith shop. There was also a chapel on Greenwood Avenue among the

³ Hand 1998 contains an excellent discussion of the history of the Washington Road *allée* and its context in the roadside beautification movement.

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houses. Of these, only the blacksmith shop survives (#16). Horses were employed in the nursery until the late 1950s, after which the blacksmith shop became the Safety and Education Building.

Sales of the nursery land began in 1962, the year William Flemer Jr. retired, starting with parcels east of U.S. 1. More land was sold in 1990, and in 1995 all nursery operations were transferred to Allentown, New Jersey.

At least three of the district's buildings were designed or remodeled by Princeton architect Rolf Bauhan (1892-1966). Born in New York City, he graduated from Princeton University in 1914. After an interlude of six years that included a tour of Europe, he enrolled in Princeton University's new School of Architecture in 1920. In 1921 he earned the first Master of Fine Arts degree awarded by the school. Bauhan did not stray far from his alma mater. In 1924 he opened an architectural office in Princeton, and over the course of his career his work was centered on the town and its immediate vicinity. The majority of his output in the four decades that followed was residential; ultimately he designed over 70 new houses locally and worked on another 150. He favored the Colonial Revival style, although he was fluent in other revival styles such as Tudor and Dutch Colonial.

Bauhan and William Flemer Jr. were friends, and the architect did "extensive restoration work at Princeton Nurseries" (Croll 1997: 30). This work is known to have included alterations and additions to Flemer's residence, the Matthias Van Dyke house, where he added the front portico and rear garage and probably the two-story wing to the south (where the original kitchen wing had stood) in 1963; conversion of the nursery office from a Bavarian hunting lodge to a Colonial Revival office building and similar renovations to the blacksmith shop, both *circa* 1960; and design of a new garage behind 149 Mapleton Road (#20A). Bauhan died in 1966 at the age of 74.

Although its acreage today has been diminished by land sales, and a number of buildings are no longer present, the nominated property and its buildings are protected by a web of public ownership, municipal preservation ordinances and preservation covenants. Bauhan's Colonial Revival office (#15), its hunting lodge interior largely intact, today is the headquarters of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, and the former blacksmith shop/safety and education building next door (#16) is used by the park for natural and historic programs. The spatial organization of the property is intact; the nursery's major operation buildings are intact and in their original locations (although some greenhouses are gone), and surviving houses are clustered into small neighborhoods on Mapleton Road and Greenwood Avenue. Almost all the houses in the district that are in private ownership have preservation covenants and are in a South Brunswick Township historic preservation district protected by municipal ordinance. The nominated property is largely within a designated HCS/ CES (Historic and Cultural Site/Critical Environmental Site) area in the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Perhaps most significantly, the surviving open space, still divided into fields by berms, lanes and hedgerows, unmistakably conveys the nursery's presence in the landscape, enhanced by the nearby canal and William Flemer Jr.'s *allées* of plane and oak.

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Patents issued to William Flemer, III
(Sorted by date issued)

<i>Patent no.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Issued</i>
2835992	Plant Digging Machine	5/27/1958
PP1752	Honey Locust Tree	9/16/1958
PP2038	Thornless Honey Locust Tree	3/21/1961
PP2086	Linden Tree	9/5/1961
PP2087	Linden Tree	9/5/1961
PP2116	Maple Tree	12/26/1961
PP2338	Pagoda Tree	1/1/1964
PP2339	Maple Tree	1/1/1964
PP2675	Ginkgo Tree	10/1/1966
PP2679	Hawthorn Tree	10/11/1966
PP2795	Hackberry Tree	2/6/1968
PP2801	Crab Apple Tree	3/12/1968
PP2821	Crab Apple Tree	7/23/1968
PP2912	Crab Apple Tree	7/29/1969
PP2935	Yellow-Wood Tree	10/28/1969
PP2936	Oak Tree	10/28/1969
PP3092	Shadblow Tree	4/1/1972
PP3108	Elm Tree (With William J. Flemer)	4/1/1972
PP3400	Korean Mountain Ash Tree	9/18/1973
PP3817	Maple Tree	12/1/1975
PP4119	Vine -- <i>Campsis Radicans</i>	10/4/1977
PP4458	<i>Hydrangea Quercifolia</i>	9/4/1979
PP4540	<i>Prunus Subhirtella</i>	5/27/1980
PP4632	Flowering Crab Apple Tree	1/27/1981
PP5080	Zelkova Serrata Tree	8/2/1983
PP5524	<i>Sophora Japonica</i> Princeton Upright	7/30/1985
PP5730	Flowering Cherry Tree	4/29/1986
PP5800	Flowering Crab Apple Tree	11/18/1986
PP6727	Princeton Gold	4/11/1989
PP7072	<i>Amelanchier Candensis</i> "White Pillar"	12/12/1989
PP7147	<i>Malus Hupehensis</i> Named 'Cardinal'	2/13/1990
PP7203	<i>Amelanchier Laevis</i> "Majestic"	3/27/1990

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PP7217	<i>Acer Palmatum</i> "Crimson Prince"	4/10/1990
PP7731	<i>Robinia</i> 'Purple Crown'	12/3/1991
PP9093	<i>Quercus Palustris</i> 'Pringreen'	3/28/1995
PP10481	<i>Clethra Alnifolia</i> Plant Named 'September Beauty'	7/7/1998
PP10557	<i>Maackia Amurensis</i> Plant Named 'Starburst'	8/18/1998
	<i>Prunus Sargentii</i> Plant Named 'Princeton	
PP10989	Snowcloud'	6/29/1999
PP11055	Forsythia Hybrid Plant Named 'Princeton Gold'	9/7/1999
PP12079	<i>Viburnum Dentatum</i> Plant Named 'October Glory'	9/4/2001
	<i>Hamamelis Virginiana</i> Plant Named 'November	
PP12100	Glow'	9/18/2001
PP12549	<i>Hamamelis Mollis</i> Plant Named "54/3"	4/16/2002

Source: U.S. Patent Office

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Princeton Nurseries Historic District is shown on the enclosed map entitled "Princeton Nurseries Historic District, Plainsboro and South Brunswick Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey." The map is a compilation of current tax maps, originally drawn at 1" = 100' and 1" = 200'.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Princeton Nurseries Historic District was drawn so as to include the historic core of the nursery operation, including the four farms that formed the original core of the nursery, the headquarters building, packing and shipping facilities, and plant propagation buildings (seed buildings and greenhouses). Equally important to the district's identity is the housing stock both the workers' and the owners' houses are within the nominated district. A representative area of open fields, in which the nursery stock was raised to marketable size, is included, although the surviving lands are reduced from the area operated by the nursery at its peak and some former nursery land adjacent to the district has been developed. Accordingly, while much of the eastern boundary is a line of convenience, modern housing east of Mapleton Road and north of Seminary Road in Plainsboro Township dictated the eastern boundary in the southern portion of the district. As a whole, these resources—the administrative buildings, the housing and the fields—are sufficient to convey the significance of the nursery.

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Owners:

Bldg. No.	Name	Street Address	B/L	Munic.	Owner
1	Modern house	80 Mapleton Rd.	101/6	Plainsboro	DuFour, Joseph 80 Mapleton Road Princeton, NJ 08540
2	Barn	80 Mapleton Road	101/6	Plainsboro	DuFour, Joseph 80 Mapleton Road Princeton, NJ 08540
3	Hoffman House	325 Mapleton Road	101/5	Plainsboro	Haeuber, Douglas & Devora 325 Mapleton Road Princeton, NJ 08540
4	Matthias Van Dyke House	323 Mapleton Road	101/4	Plainsboro	Wm. Flemer's Sons, Inc. P. O. Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)	Mapleton	101/3.01	Plainsboro	State of NJ Green Acres Program 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625
	(vacant land)	Mapleton	101/3.02	Plainsboro	Trustees of Princeton University/Real Estate 22 Chambers St. Suite 200A Princeton, NJ 08540
	(vacant land)	982-1002 Ridge Road	98/10.02	S. Brunswick	Township of South Brunswick PO Box 190, 540 Ridge Road Monmouth Jct., NJ 08540 [sic]
5	Ziegerhofer house and barn	252 Mapleton Rd.	99/3.211	S. Brunswick	Trustees of Princeton University 105 College Road East Princeton, NJ 08540
6	Higgins (Crane/Lowe) house	250 Mapleton Rd.	99/3.211	S. Brunswick	Trustees of Princeton University 105 College Road East Princeton, NJ 08540
7	Shennard House	119-121 Mapleton Rd.	99/3.112	S. Brunswick	Flemers, Wm. & Sons Inc. P. O. Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)	113-115 Mapleton Rd.	99/3.212	S. Brunswick	Township of South Brunswick PO Box 190, 540 Ridge Road

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Section number	Owners	Page	2	Princeton Nurseries Middlesex County, NJ
	(vacant land)	119 Mapleton Rd.	99/3.213	S. Brunswick Monmouth Jct., NJ 08852. Trustees of Princeton University 105 College Road East Princeton, NJ 08540
8	Perez/Homan house	1 Old Nursery Lane	100/3.01	S. Brunswick Princeton Nurseries Village, LLC PO Box 7787 Princeton, NJ 08543
9	Lofland house	3 Old Nursery Lane	100/3.02	S. Brunswick Princeton Nurseries Village, LLC PO Box 7787 Princeton, NJ 08543
10	Cruz house	5 Old Nursery Lane	100/3.03	S. Brunswick Princeton Nurseries Village, LLC PO Box 7787 Princeton, NJ 08543
11	Pritchett house	7 Old Nursery Lane	100/3.04	S. Brunswick Princeton Nurseries Village, LLC PO Box 7787 Princeton, NJ 08543
12	Vik House	8 Old Nursery Lane	100/3.07	S. Brunswick Daniella & Brian Sassman 185 Red Cedar Road Levittown, PA 19055
13	Andujar house	10 Old Nursery Lane	100/3.06	S. Brunswick Princeton Nurseries Village, LLC PO Box 7787 Princeton, NJ 08543
14	J. Rutherford House	134 Mapleton Rd.	100/3.05	S. Brunswick Nardi, Alfred J Julianne 134 Mapleton Rd. Princeton, NJ 08543
15	Headquarters Building	123-145 Mapleton Road	99/3.111	S. Brunswick NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625
16	Blacksmith Shop	123-145 Mapleton Road	99/3.111	S. Brunswick NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625
17	Large Packing Building		99/3.113	S. Brunswick NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625

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18	Small Packing Building/ Tree Storage Building	99/3.113	S. Brunswick	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625	
19	Propagation House	99/3.113	S. Brunswick	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625	
	(vacant land)	1019-1035 Ridge Road	102/1.011 S. Brunswick	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625	
20	The Cottage	149 Mapleton Ave.	102/2.04 S. Brunswick	Mazzucato, Jacopo 149 Mapleton Rd. Princeton, NJ 08540	
20B	AT&T utility shed	153 Mapleton Ave.	102/2.021 S. Brunswick	Amer Telephone & Telegraph Co. PO Box 7207 Bedminster, NJ 07921- 7207	
	(vacant land)	147 Mapleton Ave.	102/2.06 S. Brunswick	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625	
	(vacant land)	100-22, 140-60 Mapleton Rd.	100/3.08 S. Brunswick	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection 401 E. State Street Trenton, NJ 08625	
21	Mapleton Nurseries house	138 Mapleton Rd.	100/3.09 S. Brunswick	Trustees of Princeton University 105 College Road East Princeton, NJ 08540	
21A	Sand Building	138 Mapleton Rd.	100/3.09 S. Brunswick	Trustees of Princeton University 105 College Road East Princeton, NJ 08540	
22	Fenwick House/Wesley Harvey house	1011 Ridge Road, SB	99/3.114 S. Brunswick	Flemers, Wm. & Sons Inc. P. O. Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
23	I.C. Withington House	1004 Ridge Road	98/10.031 S. Brunswick	Listig, Jonathan 1004 Ridge Road Monmouth Jct., NJ 08852	
24	Joyce/Boring House	1007 Ridge Rd.	99/7.011 S. Brunswick	Flemers, Wm. & Sons Inc. P. O. Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
25	Braddock house	7 Railroad Ave.	109/1.01 S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185	

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Allentown, NJ 08501

26	Eugene Harvey House	9 Railroad Ave. Ave.	109/2.01	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/4.01	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/6	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/7	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/8	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/9	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/10	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/11	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		109/12	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
27	Harvey House	6 Greenwood Ave.	108/1	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		108/2	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501
	(vacant land)		108/3	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185

Returned

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number	Owners	Page	5	Princeton Nurseries Middlesex County, NJ	
(vacant land)		108/4	S. Brunswick	Allentown, NJ 08501 Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
(vacant land)		108/5	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
(vacant land)		108/6	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
(vacant land)		108/7	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
(vacant land)		108/8	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
(vacant land)		108/9	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
(vacant land)		108/10	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
(vacant land)		108/11	S. Brunswick	Wm. Flemer's Sons/Princeton Nurseries PO Box 185 Allentown, NJ 08501	
28	Ten Broeck House	983 Ridge Rd.	99/8.02	S. Brunswick	Woodworth, Samuel T. & Johanna W. PO Box 567/983 Ridge Rd Kingston, NJ 08528
29	Goeke house	979 Ridge Rd.	99/8.031	S. Brunswick	Smith, Mark G.R. & Katharine C.N. PO Box 343 Kingston, NJ 08528
(vacant land)		987-1001 Ridge Rd.	99/8.041	S. Brunswick	Trustees of Princeton University 105 College Road East Princeton, NJ 08540
(vacant land)		969-977 Ridge Rd.	99/10.12	S. Brunswick	Township of South Brunswick

Returned

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

Princeton Nurseries
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number Owners Page 6

(vacant land)	957 Ridge Rd.	99/10.13	S. Brunswick	PO Box 190, 540 Ridge Road Monmouth Jct., NJ 08852. Township of South Brunswick PO Box 190, 540 Ridge Road Monmouth Jct., NJ 08852.
(vacant land)	4405 U.S. Route 1	99/14	S. Brunswick	Trustees of Princeton University 105 College Road East Princeton, NJ 08540

Returned

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

Princeton Nurseries
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number Figures Page 1

Figure 1. A portion of Dalley's *Map of the Road from Trenton to Amboy*, 1745

Figure 2. A portion of *Princeton and Vicinity*, Sheet 127, United States Coast Survey, 1840.

Figure 3. A portion of Otley and Keily's *Map of Middlesex County*, 1850.

Figure 4. A portion of Everts & Stewart's *Combination Atlas Map of Middlesex County, New Jersey*, 1876.

Figure 5. Princeton Nurseries in 1972, near its peak. Historic district boundary shown in red. U.S. Route 1 is at the top of the map. The lower right part of the map, below the line marked "Pennsylvania Railroad," is discontinuous and is located near Monmouth Junction, New Jersey, between two and three miles east of the core of the nursery (see Figure 6).

~~Figure 6. Lands in production by Princeton Nurseries were not confined to the Kingston site nor was all the land owned by Princeton Nurseries. This map shows the location of the three components of Figure 5 (with the district boundary) and a portion of a map from Breese, *Princeton University Land* (labeled 7, 8, 11 and 12), also cultivated by the nursery, all superimposed on parts of the Princeton, Hightstown and Monmouth Junction USGS quadrangles.~~

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Princeton Nurseries
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number Page 1

Photographs:

1. Building 1. Modern house, 80 Mapleton Road.
2. Building 2. Barn, 80 Mapleton Road.
3. Building 3. Van Dyke/Hoffman House, 325 Mapleton Road.
4. Building 4. Matthias Van Dyke House, 323 Mapleton Road.
5. Building 5. Ziegerhofer House and barn, 252 Mapleton Road.
6. Building 6. Higgins House, 250 Mapleton Road.

7. Building 7. Shennard House, 119 Mapleton Road.
8. Building 7A. Shennard Barn.
9. Building 8. Perez/Homan House, 1 Old Nursery Lane.
10. Building 9. Lofland House, 3 Old Nursery Lane.
11. Building 10. Cruz House, 5 Old Nursery Lane.
12. Building 11. Pritchett House, 7 Old Nursery Lane.
13. Building 12. Vik House, 8 Old Nursery Lane.

14. Building 13. Andujar House, 10 Old Nursery Lane.
15. Building 14. Rutherford House, 134 Mapleton Road.
16. Building 15. Princeton Nurseries Office, 145 Mapleton Road.
17. Interior of Building 15.
18. Building 16. Blacksmith Shop/Safety and Education Building.
19. Building 17. Large Packing Shed.

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

Princeton Nurseries
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number _____ Page 2

20. Building 17 interior, in the original western section.
21. Building 18. Tree Storage Building.
22. Building 19. Greenhouse Complex.
23. View inside Building 19; gable ends of greenhouses are visible.
24. Building 20. The Cottage, 149 Mapleton Road.
25. Building 20B. Telephone utility building (intrusion).
26. Building 21. Seed Department.
27. Building 21A. Sand building.
28. Building 22. Fenwick House, 1011 Ridge Road.
29. Building 23. I. C. Withington House, 1004 Ridge Road.
30. Building 24. Joyce House, 1007 Ridge Road.
31. Building 25. Braddock House, 7 Railroad Avenue.
32. Building 26. Eugene Harvey House, 9 Railroad Avenue.
33. Building 27. Harvey House, 6 Greenwood Avenue.
34. Building 28. Ten Broeck/Shope House, 983 Ridge Road.
35. Building 29. Goeke House, 979 Ridge Road. Intrusion.
36. Mapleton Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook.
37. Ridge Road Bridge over Heathcote Brook.
38. Allée on Mapleton Road near the Mathias Van Dyke House. Structures visible at right are outside the district.
39. View south on Mapleton Road.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Princeton Nurseries
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number Page 3

40. 1920s photo showing the headquarters building (#15) in its original configuration.
41. 1920s photo of Princeton Nurseries. The headquarters building (#15) is at left, the packing shed (#17) is at right.
42. Undated aerial photograph of Princeton Nurseries, looking east. Ridge Road is visible at upper left, Mapleton Road is parallel to and near the bottom of the picture. The greenhouses and packing building are visible at left center.
43. View of the former Camden and Amboy Railroad roadbed west of Mapleton Road.
44. General view of nursery houses on Mapleton Road; left to right, buildings 14, 13, 9 and 10.
-
45. Overview at Railroad Avenue and Greenwood Avenue. Building 26 at left, 27 at right.
46. Rows of nursery stock, north side of Ridge Road.
47. Rows of nursery stock, west side of Mapleton Road.
48. Typical windrow, east of Mapleton Road near headquarters complex.
49. Typical windrow, east of Mapleton Road and south of headquarters complex.
50. View west showing ginkgos lining field road; headquarters complex (l-r buildings 18 and 19) visible at rear.
51. View north of headquarters complex from field. Buildings 19, 18 and 17 visible.
-
52. View north across nursery fields south of headquarters complex.
53. View north showing rows of nursery stock west of Mapleton Road with building 9 visible at rear.
54. View west in seedling field west of Mapleton Road; trees at rear indicate Delaware and Raritan Canal.
55. View from seedling field east toward Mapleton Road. Building 7 is visible.

Recommendation: SLR Return

Action: SLR Return None

Documentation Issues-Discussion Sheet

State Name: VJ County Name Middlesex Resource Name Princeton Nurseries HD

Reference No. 299 Multiple Name _____

Solution:

PS Problem: - National significance.
- Need CD w/ images.

Resolution:

SLR: Yes No

Database Change:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Princeton Nurseries Historic District

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 7/30/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/14/08
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/29/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/12/08
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000899

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: Y~~

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9/12/2008 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See attached Return Sheet for detailed comment.

RECOM./CRITERIA Return

REVIEWER Patrick Andrus

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 9/12/2008

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.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240



United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Princeton Nurseries Historic District (Middlesex County, NJ)
Reference Number: 08000899

Reason for Return: This nomination is being returned for substantive and technical problems.

Statement of Significance: The nomination claims National significance for the Princeton Nurseries Historic District but does not provide sufficient contextual information to evaluate that claim. The Statement of Significance (Section 8, p. 1) says that the Princeton Nurseries is nationally significant "because of its place in the history of commercial horticulture, the contributions to horticulture of the founding Flemer family (most notably William Flemer, III) and because it typifies the characteristics of an early 20th century self-contained nursery." The nomination notes that "Princeton Nurseries gained fame as the source of dozens of patented plants that were sold wholesale to landscapers, parks, and municipalities throughout the East Coast and far west as Chicago and Milwaukee," and that William Flemer, III, "achieved international renown through his plant introductions and led several professional nursery associations," and that he patented nearly four dozen plants. Additional contextual information on horticulture, and specific information on Princeton Nurseries, is needed to evaluate whether these achievements rise to the level of national importance.

Role of Princeton Nurseries: The nomination does not provided details, other than of the most general kind, of the operation of Princeton Nurseries, nor does it place it into the context of other commercial nurseries of its defined Period of Significance (1913-1962). Please provide information on the Princeton Nurseries business; what was the volume of their business, how did they operate (did they advertise nationally?), how were the plants shipped, which municipalities and park systems did they sell to, how did their business compare in size, sales and workforce to other commercial nurseries of the period?

Importance of William Flemer, III: Please provide additional information on William Flemer, III's importance in horticultural history. The nomination lists seven national and international awards

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Princeton Nurseries Historic District (Middlesex County, NJ)
Reference Number: 08000899

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and medals given to Flemer, but provides no specifics of when they were awarded or what they were acknowledging. Please provide the dates of the awards and detail what the awards cited as Fleming's achievements.

The nomination lists 41 plants patented by William Flemer, III, but of these, 36 were patented after the defined period of significance, and some as recently as 2001-2002. The nomination does not explain whether the plants patented by Flemer were developed at the Princeton Nurseries site or at another of the family's commercial properties. Please explain what plants were developed here and describe and evaluate the significance in horticulture of the plants patented during the period of significance. The Princeton Elm is mentioned in the nomination, but it is not explained why the development of this Dutch Elm-resistant tree is important. When was it confirmed that the Princeton Elm was resistant to Dutch Elm disease? Has the Princeton Elm been widely adopted as a replacement for the Dutch Elm population? The nomination also lists a 1958 patent for a plant digging machine. Was this the first of its type? What impact has this machine had on horticulture?

The recent date of some of his patents raises the question of whether William Flemer, III, is still alive and still actively practicing? If so, please explain how this property meets the exception for association with a living person (refer to the National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years, p9, "Associations with Living Persons," and the National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons, pp. 12-13, for guidance).

Development of the Site: The nominated area includes a new housing development (Princeton Nurseries Village) consisting of seven nursery buildings (buildings #8 through 14) which were moved into an artificial assemblage in 2007. The nomination does not provide an evaluation on the historic district's integrity resulting from the moving of this substantial number of buildings and their artificial assemblage. Please provide.

Building 15. Princeton Nurseries Office/Headquarters. This is one of the major buildings in the historic district and it was radically changed in the 1960s (no specific date given). In order for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Princeton Nurseries Historic District (Middlesex County, NJ)
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this building to contribute to the historic district, its radical alteration must have occurred during the defined period of significance (that is, prior to 1962). What year was the building transformed into its current Colonial Revival appearance?

Photographs: The photographs included with the nomination are not dated and the name of the photographer is not given. Please provide.

Map: The map which serves as the boundary description does not meet National Register standards because of its scale (1 inch = 1,000 feet). Because of its scale the text on the map (tax parcel information) is illegible. If the nominated area includes a series of undivided tax parcels, then a list of the parcels can serve as the official boundary.

Patrick Andrus

Patrick Andrus, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
202-354-2218
patrick_andrus@nps.gov
9/12/2008



HPO Project #: 08-0539
HPO-G2018-103

State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
MAIL CODE 501-04B
P.O. BOX 420
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420
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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

CATHERINE R. McCABE
Commissioner



July 17, 2018

Lisa Deline
NPS - National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Deline:

The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office is re-submitting the National Register Nomination for the Princeton Nurseries Historic District, in Middlesex County, New Jersey - National Register reference number 08000899, for National Register consideration. The nomination was returned for technical and substantive reasons. Changes have been made in order to comply with your review comments.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Bob Craig of the Historic Preservation Office staff by email at bob.craig@dep.nj.gov or by phone at (609) 984-0541.

Sincerely,

Katherine J. Marcopul
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer