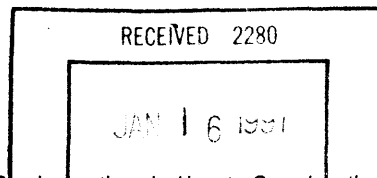


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item 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 from 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 Richard Stites Jr. House

other names/site number Lindenwood

2. Location

street & number 609 Sea Grove Avenue NA not for publication

city or town Lower Township vicinity

state New Jersey code 034 county Cape May code 009 zip code 08212

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby 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 [Signature] Date 12/30/96
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
State of 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 the 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: Edson H. Beall] Date of Action 2.14.97

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	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
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL: postmedieval English

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls wood: weatherboard

roof cedar shake, asphalt, metal

other chimneys: brick

Narrative Description

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

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.) N/A

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

B: commerce
 maritime history
 C: architecture

Period of Significance

B: 1839-1883
 C: 1772

Significant Dates

1772

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Edmunds, Downs Jr. (1813-1890)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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): N/A

- 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:

Stites, Richard Jr., House
Name of Property

Cape May, NJ
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.33 acres

Cape May NJ Quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 8 | | 5 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 0 |
Zone Easting Northing
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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 Joan Berkey, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization date July 3, 1996

street & number 1003 Bartlett Avenue telephone 609/927-7950

city or town Linwood state NJ zip code 08221

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. and Mrs. David Clemans

street & number 609 Sea Grove Avenue telephone 609/884-2738

city or town Cape May state NJ zip code 08204

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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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 The Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Narrative Description

The Richard Stites, Jr. House consists of a heavy timber frame residence, built ca. 1772, that was enlarged in the early 1800's into a 2-story, 5-bay wide frame house predominantly Federal in style, with later alterations and additions to the rear. The main block is rectangular in plan, with a gable roof, interior end wall chimneys and a small stoop fronting a Federal style entry. The western half of the main block features heavy timber frame construction. There is a 2-story, 3-bay deep frame addition to the rear (hereafter referred to as the middle addition) which appears to date from the late 18th/early 19th century. A later, one-story frame addition containing a kitchen, garage and maid's quarters (hereafter referred to as the north addition), was added to the north of the middle addition in the 1940's. The foundation is brick; the walls are original wooden clapboard, beaded on the main block; the chimneys are stuccoed brick; the roof of the main block is asphalt shingle over cedar shake on the north side and cedar shake on the south side. Although windows are predominantly 6/6 double-hung sash with wood muntins and mullions, those on three elevations of the first floor of the main block are Italianate style French doors. The interior of the main block features shouldered posts, chamfered beams with stops, original Federal style carved wood mantels, simple moldings and an enclosed staircase. Once part of a 600 acre, waterfront farmstead located on the southernmost tip of the Jersey cape, the house now stands at the southwest corner of a 2.33 acre lot in a low density neighborhood. It faces south onto Sea Grove Avenue, overlooking the Cape May Point State Park and is surrounded by mature plantings, the most notable being a Linden tree in front, more than 200 years old. [photos #1 and #2]

the main block: current appearance

The front, or south, facade of the main block features a centrally placed doorway flanked by multi-paned sidelights detailed with an alternating pattern of ovals and circles, and topped with a 17-light elliptical fanlight. [photo #2] The raised-panel door has applied ogee moldings and a porcelain knob. Windows on the

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main block: current appearance (continued)

first floor are French doors flanked by raised panel shutters; second floor windows are original 6/6 double hung sash with wooden blinds. All windows have original brick molding and the upper sash is fixed, with no sash weights. There are two interior end wall brick chimneys; both have been stuccoed and painted white and the easternmost one is corbelled. The roof line features a molded, boxed cornice with returns. The roof is framed with common purlins and no ridgeboard; the rafters are pegged at the top and have incised roman numerals.

The east elevation has a first floor French door to the south and two, 4-paned single sash windows at the attic level. [photo #3]

The west elevation has a French door on the first floor to the south, a 6/6 window on the second floor to the north, and two, 4-paned single sash windows at the attic level.

The rear, or north, elevation features two original 6/9 wood sash windows with blinds and a door to the west on the first floor, and three 6/6 windows with blinds on the second floor. The westernmost window on the second floor is partially obscured by the middle addition. [photos #3 and #4]

The interior of the main block features predominantly Federal details. The east parlor, used as a living room [photo #6], has a carved wooden mantelpiece comprised of sunk-panel pilasters supporting a molded entablature. The entablature is enhanced with sunk-panel bull's eyes in its center and above each pilaster. Between the fireplace opening and entablature is a panel of seven faux marble tiles, each decorated with flowers found on the property; they were painted by David Clemans, the present owner, and placed there in 1990. [photo #7]

The west parlor, used as a dining room, has a similarly styled fireplace surround, although it is not as tall nor as detailed and its opening is now plastered over. Its pilasters are reeded and the entablature's only decoration is a 4" wide, slightly convex, reeded band running horizontally from pilaster to pilaster. The ceiling of this room has two girts (binding), boxed in, running from north to south. [photo #8]

The small entry hall features an enclosed staircase and a chairrail on the north wall.

The hall and west parlor have molded door surrounds and an 8" baseboard capped with ogee molding. The east parlor has original, 6" wide baseboards with quirk ovolo molding; window and door the

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main block: current appearance (continued)

surrounds have original greek ovolo with astragal moldings. All rooms have random-width pine floors and plaster walls. Modern ceiling crown moldings were added by the current owners in 1990. Fireplaces in both parlors have built-in closets, although the hardware on the one in the west parlor is Victorian as opposed to Federal in the east parlor. Interior doors have 5 raised panels (original) in the east parlor, 4 flush panels with applied ogee moldings in the west parlor (Victorian), and the front door has 5 raised panels with applied ogee moldings (Victorian).

The second floor of the main block has many of the same details as the first floor, namely plaster walls, original random width pine floors, and identical 5 raised-panel doors, although it has original, 6" wide quirk ovolo baseboards and unmolded door surrounds.

The east bedroom has a small fireplace on the east wall with an original, simply-executed wooden surround consisting of plain pilasters supporting a sunk-panel entablature with no further adornment. [photo #11] There is a closet on the east wall, north of the chimney, and a chimney closet.

There are two modern bathrooms in the central portion of the second floor but only the easternmost one has original baseboards.

The west bedroom's most notable features are its exposed corner posts, story posts, and beams on the north and south walls. [photo #12] The beams have a plain chamfer and are decoratively notched, or stopped, where the corner braces were pegged to them. [photo #14] Corner posts and story posts in the bedroom on the north and south walls are shouldered and rough hewn; the two on the north wall of the hallway and the two on the south wall of the westernmost bathroom are planed smooth, shouldered and chamfered. [photo #13] The west bedroom has a closed-over fireplace with no mantel or built-in cupboards. There is a closet built along the west wall south of the chimney.

The attic floor consists of two finished rooms, on either side of the staircase, with plastered walls, original random width pine floors, original handrails, and the same original baseboard moldings as those on the second floor.

The basement is located under the western half of the main block only. Its floor consists of bricks laid in sand and it has brick walls. The north wall was opened to accommodate the basement stairs leading from the middle addition. Cellar windows on the

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The Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, New Jersey

main block: current appearance (continued)

north, east and south walls have wooden bars; windows on the north and east walls overlook crawl spaces of the later additions.

the middle addition: current appearance

The middle addition, nearly square in plan, is two stories high and has a modestly-pitched metal roof pierced by a tall, brick interior wall chimney on its north wall. The main, or west, facade is three bays wide on the first floor and has a centrally-placed doorway; it is one bay wide on the second floor. [photo #5] The rear, or east, elevation has a centrally-placed door with a window to the north on the first floor and one window on the second floor. [photo #3] All windows are original, 6/6 double-hung wood sash; those on the first floor, west facade only, have shutters while the second floor windows have blinds. As on the main block, the upper sash is fixed and there are no sash weights.

The interior of the first floor has Federal details, most notably a mantel comprised of plain pilasters supporting a molded entablature with reeded triglyphs. [photo # 9] The fireplace has a built-in closet and the fireplace opening is closed over. All interior and exterior doors are original board and batten; floors are original random width pine, and walls are plaster. Door and window surrounds, which appear to be original, are trimmed with wood and have no decorative moldings. The 6" wide baseboard, also original, has a small, plain chamfer along the top edge. An enclosed stair leading to the second floor runs along the south wall; a door on the south wall opens to stairs leading into the basement under the main block.

The second floor of the middle addition is a single room with random width pine floors and plaster walls. A row of modern closets and raised paneling along the north wall were added by the present owners in 1996.

the north addition: current appearance

Added in the 1940's, this one-story, shed-roofed addition comprises a kitchen, one-car garage, and a family room. [photos #3 and #5] A bedroom was added to the north of the family room in the

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The Richard Stites, Jr. House
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the north addition: current appearance (continued)

early 1950's. L-shaped in plan, the northernmost addition features modern, 6/6 double-hung wood sash, modern doors, wood clapboard painted white, and an asphalt shingled roof.

The addition has rockwall and plasterboard walls and yellow pine floors. The kitchen has a fireplace on the south wall which uses the middle addition's chimney; the fireplace is topped with a simple wood mantel and a cooking crane, both of which appear to be original. [photo #10]

Also added in the 1940's was an enclosed, one-story porch on a concrete slab which runs, perpendicular to the main block, along the east wall of the middle addition and a portion of the east wall of the northernmost addition. [photo #4] Running along the east side of this porch is a screened-in porch, overtop a brick patio, added after 1946 and replaced in 1991 by the present owners. [photos #3 and #4]

other buildings on the site

The current owners have added two buildings to the site: a one-story frame building used as an artist's studio built in 1994 on the northeast corner of the property, and a one-story frame building used as a woodworking shop built in 1995 on the northwest corner.

the Richard Stites, Jr. House: original appearance

Although the main block presents a unified appearance to the casual passerby, it consists of a pre-Revolutionary dwelling which was nearly doubled in size in the early 1800's.

The original portion, the westernmost section, was built ca. 1772 by Richard Stites, Jr. who referred to "the chimney of the new house I now live in" in his will dated September 23, 1772. Its heavy timber frame construction combined with the fact that cellar windows in the basement under this section now overlook the crawl spaces of both the easternmost section and the middle addition, give adequate proof that the westernmost section of the main block was the first to be erected.

This section of the house was originally served by a winder

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The Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, New Jersey

original appearance (continued)

stair running from the basement to the second floor along the west wall, north of the chimney. Ghosts on the basement's stuccoed wall in the northwest corner show evidence of the winder's treads and risers. Originally, there were steps leading from the basement to the outside located on the west wall south of the chimney supports; they have been removed and the wall opening has been closed with brick.

Flooring in the west parlor, or dining room, originally ran from north to south, rather than the present east to west, as evidenced by empty butt joist pockets seen in the basement sills. Fireplaces in both the west parlor and the bedroom above were originally open and were probably closed off when central heat was added.

The original interior appearance of this section contrasted greatly with that seen today. Renovation undertaken by the current owners revealed the walls were not plastered at first; rather, the posts, beams, ceilings and back sides of the exterior weatherboards were painted white. In the dining room and hall, the current owners discovered a whitewashed, tongue and groove board ceiling nailed to the floorboards above. The board ceiling had been covered with a flowered paper, then covered over with plaster and lath. They also found fragments of a hand-painted wallpaper border placed around the perimeter of the dining room on the plastered-over beams.

On the second floor, ghosts in the plaster ceiling of the west bedroom and a break in the west wall hall baseboard suggest this level was comprised of at least three rooms instead of the present two.

Examination of the placement of the wooden dowel pins left in situ after corner braces were removed from the beams on the second floor, support conjecture that the original building was probably three bays wide on the first floor and two bays wide on the second floor.

The original roof was pitched differently than the present one, as evidenced by vacant, shouldered toe joints in the front and rear attic plates. It was probably changed to match the pitch of the east section when that was added.

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Cape May County, New Jerseythe Federal Expansion

The main block assumed its present Federal appearance under the ownership of Richard Stites' son, John, who inherited the property from his father in 1772 and who lived there almost until his death in 1841. During John Stites' tenure, the easternmost section was added and the central, Federal-style entry and hallway with stairs were created in the original portion. The winder stair was probably removed at this time. Windows on the first floor were 9/6 as evidenced by the ghosts of shutterdogs; only two of these windows, on the north wall of the east parlor, remain.

The same 5-panel doors used in the Federal "make-over" are also found on the entire second floor of the main block. These doors are hung with cast iron butt hinges marked "Carr & Son, Philadelphia, Patented." According to Robert Ball of Ball & Ball Hardware in Exton, Pa, Carr & Son was a firm in operation from ca. 1805. Examination of the tax records for Lower Township suggests either a 1797-1802 date or an 1806-1807 date for the Federal addition; John Stites' tax assessment on "improved land" increased 59% from 17 pounds, 10 schillings in 1797 to 40 pounds in 1802, and in 1807 increased 20% from 40 pounds to 50 pounds.

other alterations

Beyond the Federal expansion undertaken by John Stites, the Richard Stites, Jr. House has had other alterations to its appearance over the years. The 4-panel doors, ogee moldings, and Victorian fireplace closet in the west parlor, and the French doors throughout the first floor of the main block, probably date to the tenure of Downs Edmunds, Jr., who lived there from 1839 to 1883.

Clearly, the middle addition post-dates the 1772 portion of the main block since a window on the north wall of the cellar now overlooks the crawl space under this addition. It is possible the middle addition was moved to the site during the residence of Downs Edmunds Jr. who leased the farmstead in 1839 and lived there for 44 years. Through three marriages, he fathered fourteen children and would have needed the additional rooms. Also, he was cited as a "general contractor ...taking contracts for the construction and moving of buildings" in the book Biographical History of the First Congressional District of New Jersey.

A historic photograph of the house taken ca. 1915 [additional

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other alterations (continued)

documentation, Douglass Hospital Sanitarium] shows several items worth noting. First, a one-story, columned veranda "wrapped around" the front and side elevations of the main block; it was probably added at the same time as the French doors, but is no longer extant and does not appear on a 1946 landscape plan drawn for the house. Second, the west wall chimney on the main block had the same corbelling as that presently on the east wall; and third, a small, one story shed-roofed addition appears on the north wall of the middle addition, suggesting that part of the present kitchen pre-dated the 1940's addition and was originally an integral part of the middle addition.

The north addition, dating to the early 1940's, added a two-car garage and extended the kitchen. In the early 1950's, the northernmost bay of the garage was converted into another kitchen and bathroom, and a small bedroom was added to the north, creating maid's quarters. The current owners removed the maid's kitchen and part of the bathroom to create a sitting room and laundry room, and created a door between the sitting room and present kitchen.

There were other buildings associated with the house: a sheriff's sale ad in the Cape May County Gazette dated June 3, 1892 notes a tenant house and barn. They are no longer extant and it cannot be proven that they were located on the 2.33 acres on which the house is presently sited.

landscape plan of 1946

A landscape plan was drawn for the house in 1946 by the Trenton-based landscape architecture firm Abram L. Urban. [see additional documentation] Some of the plan's landscape elements and plants are extant, notably, the boxwood-lined brick patio and paving leading to a brick border around a rectangular grass panel in the back yard [photo #4], a brick terrace to the west of the middle addition, and several trees and shrubs. Perennials indicated in an 8' wide bed around the grass panel, however, are no longer there. Brick paving leading beyond that bed to a grape arbor is still extant, although the arbor was in ruins when the present owners purchased the property and it has since been removed and replaced with a modern pergola having Federal detailing.

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Cape May County, New Jersey**Statement of Significance**

The Richard Stites, Jr. House, built ca. 1772, is significant in the areas of commerce and maritime history (Criterion B) as the residence of Downs Edmunds, Jr., a prominent businessman, shipping agent, entrepreneur, farmer, and politician in the greater Cape May area during the mid-1800's. The house is also architecturally significant (Criterion C) as a late example of early heavy timber frame construction--a kind of construction that was once common in New Jersey, but has rarely survived. Cape May County probably holds most of the surviving examples, of which there may be as many as two dozen, although few have been identified or extensively studied.

Criterion B: Historical Background and Significance

The Richard Stites, Jr. House (hereafter referred to as the Stites House) was erected ca. 1772 on a 600 acre farmstead located at the southwest end of the cape of New Jersey with frontage on both the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Richard Stites, Jr.'s grandfather Henry (1662-1733) purchased 300 acres of "land and marsh" in 1712 and six years later sold it to his son, Richard Stites, Sr. (ca. 1696-1739). Upon Richard Stites, Sr.'s death in 1739, the property passed, by will, to his son Richard Stites, Jr. (ca. 1725-1773). Richard Stites, Jr. then purchased an additional tract of 200 acres of adjoining land from his cousin John Stites in 1741. The farmstead of marsh, beach, and land also included the large, fresh water lake, Lake Lily.

The Stites family had emigrated from England to Plymouth, Massachusetts, and then in 1685 to Hempstead, Long Island. Henry Stites (1662-1733), a whaler, came to Middle Township, Cape May County in the late 1680's where he married and had six children. One of his sons, the above-mentioned Richard Stites, Sr., settled in Lower Township, Cape May County.

At the time, and through most of the 1700's, Cape May County was a sparsely-populated, rural area, settled by whaling families who had come there via New England and Long Island. These families, like the Stites', became owners of modest plantations, 200-500 acres in size, where they raised cattle and farmed corn and wheat. Jeffrey Dorwart, in his book Cape May County, New Jersey, explains "the first landowners embodied the English concept of yeoman as an owner of a small landed estate who cultivated his own land and held a respectable standing in the community below the

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Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion B significance (continued)

rank of gentleman. Indeed, they referred to themselves in wills and other documents as yeomen. (Dorwart, p. 21) Accordingly, the deeds of 1712 and 1718 cite Henry Stites as a "yeoman".

Richard Stites, Jr. farmed the land throughout his ownership. New Jersey Tax Ratables for October 1768 show him possessing cattle, horses and sheep; that year, with 400 ratable acres, he was the second largest land owner in Lower Township, but had the highest valuation in livestock.

Richard Stites, Jr.'s will, written September 23, 1772, helps to establish a definitive construction date for the Stites House. The will divides the farm between two of his three sons, with the northerly portion going to his middle son, Richard Stites III (1758-1822). To his oldest son, John, he gave the southerly portion, "that part of my said lands whereon I live..." The metes and bounds description begins at a point "north 87 degrees east from the chimney of the new house I live in..."

John Stites (1756-1840) continued to farm the 300 acres bequeathed to him from his father. Tax records for the first decade of the 19th century show him paying the highest taxes in Lower Township and also list him as a shopkeeper/merchant for the years 1802 to 1810. However, research to date has been unable to determine the location or type of shop he kept. John Stites was also active in the Cold Spring Presbyterian Church, serving as an elder for forty-nine years.

During his ownership, the farmstead increased in size to 561 acres and the original 1772 house was enlarged in the early 1800's to its present, predominantly Federal appearance. In 1822, John and his wife Jane also deeded one acre of their land at the "southwest point of Cape May at the mouth of the Delaware River" to the federal government for a lighthouse.

When John Stites died intestate in 1840, the farmstead passed equally to his two children, John K. F. Stites (1821-1883) and Jane G. (1819-1886), who was married to her neighbor, Alexander Whilldin. John, in a quit claim deed, gives his interest in the property to his sister in 1841. She, in turn, relinquishes her interest in six other properties their father had acquired. After this time, the Richard Stites, Jr. farmstead becomes locally-known as "Whilldin Farm."

One year prior to John Stites' death in 1840, however, the farmstead was leased to Downs Edmunds, Jr. (1813-1890), a locally

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Criterion B significance (continued)

prominent businessman, entrepreneur, politician, and judge who lived there for 44 years, from 1839 to 1883. Although no lease was ever recorded, Edmunds' residency there is indisputable for his occupancy is mentioned in the 1841 quit claim deed from John K. F. Stites to his sister Jane, is cited in a road return of 1848, appears on the maps of 1850 and 1872, and is mentioned in his Cape May Wave obituary.

Although Edmunds farmed the land his entire tenancy, he quickly turned to other profitable ventures. During the middle of the 19th century, the city of Cape May, some two miles east of the Stites House, was already a highly popular summer resort serviced by a steamboat landing located on the bay less than a mile west of the Stites House. Edmunds, living on Whilldin farm, was thus perfectly located between two destination points ripe with opportunity for the shrewd, astute investor.

According to one obituary, Edmunds' first business was shipping wood to Philadelphia by Cape May packets. He then became involved with shipbuilding and the management of steamboat lines plying from Cape May. (Cape May Wave, 4/1/1890)

A newspaper article credits him with establishing an immensely profitable shipping line between Cape May and New York in 1857, transporting produce in summer and fall from area farmers (Cape May Star & Wave, 2/5/1887). During the 1850's he managed the Sanford Line, which ran packets between New York and Philadelphia, year long, stopping at Cape May each way. An obituary also credits him with being "a prime mover in the building of the steamer Republic" (Star of the Cape, 4/4/1890). The Republic was the last of the luxury, side-wheeled steamers that carried vacationers between Philadelphia and Cape May from 1878 to 1903. For the cost of \$1 round-trip, up to 3,000 passengers could dine, listen to bands, or promenade one of the Republic's three decks during the leisurely ride on the Delaware River.

Edmunds was active in promoting other means of transportation as well. The same obituary credits him with helping establish two turnpikes, one from Cape May City to Cape May Courthouse (roughly the path of present day Route 9), the other from the previously-mentioned Steamboat Landing to the city of Cape May along what is now Sunset Boulevard. For many years, he was also president of the Delaware Bay & Cape May Railroad and the Delaware Bay & Sewell's Point Railroad, both which serviced passengers at Steamboat

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Section number 8 Page 4

The Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion B significance (continued)

Landing.

Edmunds was also a general contractor in the greater Cape May area. With David and Andrew Reeves, he took "contracts for the construction of and moving buildings, building bridges, light houses, teaming and the wrecking of vessels". (Biographical History, p. 114)

Politically, he was very active, serving first as a member of the county Board of Freeholders in 1854. A Whig turned Republican, he then served from 1856 to 1858 in the State Assembly and was later elected to the State Senate where he served from 1859 to 1861.

While in the Senate, he sat on the Commerce & Navigation joint committee and the Municipal Corporations standing committee. Newspaper accounts show him actively introducing legislation on behalf of his constituents: securing pensions, regulating the size of seine nets in Lower and Middle Townships, advocating railroads to the area, and supplementing legislation which chartered the Cape Island Turnpike.

In his later years, he was a gubernatorial-appointed judge of the Common Pleas Court for Cape May County from 1884 to 1889. He, too, was an active member of the Cold Spring Presbyterian Church, serving for many years as a trustee.

Downs Edmunds, Jr. is also significant as a founding member of the Sea Grove Association, an organization formed in 1875 to develop the planned community of Sea Grove on the western half of Whilldin farm. Founded by Presbyterians, but open to all denominations, Sea Grove was intended to be a seaside resort offering "physical health, morality, religion and temperance". (Historical Address, p. 38) Accordingly, Alexander and Jane Whilldin deeded 266 acres of Whilldin Farm to the Sea Grove Association in 1875.

This huge tract of land lay to the west of the Stites House, included all of Lake Lily, and had frontage on both the bay and ocean. The 266 acre parcel was subdivided into small lots on streets radiating out from a grand, octagonal pavilion at the center. Although the waterfront lots were quickly sold and built upon with hotels and lavish summer residences, the venture as a whole failed to succeed and Whilldin, along with the other investors, lost over \$1.7 million in resort development. (Dorwart, p. 160) Edmunds served on Sea Grove's board of directors as the

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Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion B significance (continued)

organization's assistant secretary; Alexander Whilldin was president and treasurer.

In 1881, Alexander and Jane Whilldin sold the remainder of Whilldin Farm--the 235 acres on which the Stites House stood--to a Philadelphian, Israel Johnson. Less than two weeks later, Johnson sold the farm along with 300 Sea Grove lots and several hotels to another Philadelphian, Anson Hamilton. Hamilton and Johnson, with Johnson holding the mortgage to the parcel, planned to improve the streets and hotels, and later subdivide the farm into building lots. (Cape May Wave, 11/12/1881) Hamilton, however, went bankrupt and the farm, which had not been subdivided, was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1892 to yet another Philadelphian, William Y. C. Anderson. In 1904, the Cape May Improvement Company assumed title to the farmstead and created an 800 lot subdivision in 1905.

The subdivision languished until the entire tract was bought out in 1913 by J. H. Weatherby (1873-1930), a Philadelphia lawyer. A year and a half earlier, Weatherby had purchased the 25' x 100' subdivided lot on which the Stites House stood, along with twenty three others bordering it, to create a holding of 300' x 200'.

Now in possession of the Stites House, and the 800 lot subdivision around it, Weatherby first sought African-American buyers for the lots. A similar planned "Negro town" called Whitesboro had been established ten years earlier in Middle Township, eight miles north of Cape May City. Promotional literature proclaimed the house would be "enlarged and donated to the Douglass Hospital" and "used as a Sanitarium for the convalescent colored patients of that institution." [additional documentation, Douglass Hospital Sanitarium brochure] The venture, called "Douglass Hospital Sanitarium" in conjunction with Douglass Hospital in Philadelphia, failed, so Weatherby took another approach to selling the lots.

In 1916 he then established the Cape May Point Chautauqua and Summer Bible School, seeking to attract investors wanting to settle in a religious, and temperate, seaside community similar to the now-defunct Sea Grove which had been re-named Cape May Point and incorporated as a borough in 1878. Promotional literature prominently featured a photo of the Stites House labeled as "J. Howard Weatherby's colonial home" and announced that the 25' x 100' lots could be purchased for \$150 each. [see additional documentation, Cape May Point Chautauqua and Summer Bible School

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Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion B significance (continued)

brochure] Although approximately one-half of the lots were sold between 1915 and 1928, this venture, like the others before it, failed to establish a viable religious community.

In 1940, Weatherby's widow deeded the house to their daughter Adele, who, that same year, sold the property to Walter and Margaret Main. Under the Main's ownership, the house gained its present size and footprint; they also named the house "Lindenwood" after the large Linden tree in front. The property changed ownership again in 1979, and acquired its present 351' x 290' lot configuration when the current owners took title in 1984.

Criterion C: Historical Background and Significance

While much has been written about colonial heavy timber frame construction in the greater Boston area, notably in Abbott Lowell Cummings' The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725, a paucity of information exists on those found in Cape May County, New Jersey.

Historic American Buildings surveyors recorded just one in the 1930's: the Friends' Meeting House, 1726, in Seaville. In the 1960's, they documented two: the Rising Sun Tavern (ca. 1826, Oceanview) and the Benjamin Stites House (ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse). Seven more were identified in the early 1950's by Helena Way Fitzpatrick in a three part series entitled "Some Old Houses of Cape May County" published in the Cape May County Magazine of History and Genealogy. Two historic sites surveys of the county, conducted in the early 1980's, identified several more. However, because the interiors of most of the buildings were not examined in the 1980's surveys, there probably exist many more examples of New England framing than are currently identified.

More recently, the significance of the county's heavy timber frame structures has been addressed by professor Dr. Bernard Herman of the University of Delaware in a study of the "New Jersey Delaware Bay Special Resources". Herman notes "the colonial domestic and religious architecture that survives throughout the study area describes a settlement culture distinct from those associated with New England and the South" (Draft, p. 3).

While recognizing the predominance of pattern end brick houses in the study area, Herman also cites the significance of the New

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The Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion C significance (continued)

England frame houses found in Cape May County. "The New England frame houses are the tangible remains of the seventeenth-century settlement of several southern New Jersey communities by religious dissidents from elsewhere in the American colonies...The architectural characteristics observed in these buildings, however, possess a level of significance beyond their illustration of resettlement migration internal to the American colonies." (p. 6) He concludes by saying that because New England framing details were in use on both sides of the Delaware River by 1750, these buildings also describe a process of cross-cultural communication between different settlement groups.

Estimated to number less than two dozen by the State Historic Preservation Office (Dept. of Environmental Protection), Cape May County's heavy timber frame structures, like the Stites House, nevertheless stand as significant examples which embody the architectural heritage and building traditions brought by the county's early settlers.

While Cummings concludes that heavy timber frame construction ended largely in the first quarter of the 18th century with the introduction of a "new renaissance vernacular style in New England" (p. 209), evidence suggests that this time-honored method of framing persisted for at least another fifty years in Cape May County and even longer in several instances. Its continued use stemmed, in part, from the fact that the county, as a remote maritime region peopled by independent seafarers and farmers, remained outside the mainstream of both New Jersey and Philadelphia life through most of the 18th century.

Regardless of this isolation, however, many of Cummings' observations can be applied to Cape May County's early frame structures, particularly since the county's first settlers emigrated from New England and Long Island where heavy timber frame construction had been used since the early 1600's.

East Jersey whaling families moved to the Cape May peninsula in the 1680's, completing a 17th century migration that had taken them from the British Isles to New England, to Long Island, and finally to East and West Jersey. (Dorwart, p. 9) The Stites family, from whom Richard Stites, Jr. descended, was no exception. Genealogical records show that his great-great-grandfather, Dr. John Stites (1595-1717) was born in England, fled to Holland, then to Plymouth, Massachusetts (not on the Mayflower), and lastly to

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Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion C significance (continued)

Hempstead, Long Island in 1685. Two of Dr. John Stites' grandsons, both whalers, moved from Hempstead to Cape May County: Henry (1662-1733) before 1689, and Benjamin Sr. (? - 1733) around 1705. It is Henry, Richard Stites, Jr.'s grandfather, who purchased in 1704 the first 300 acre tract of land upon which the Stites House stood when built in 1772.

Dorwart also lists Henry as one of the original, thirty-five whaler-yeoman settler families to purchase large tracts in Cape May County from the West Jersey Society in the 1690's. (Dorwart, p. 274)

The Stites' emigration from Long Island mirrors that of other Long Island families originally from England via New England, who relocated to Cape May County in the late 17th/early 18th centuries: the Leamings, Cresses, and Hands among them.

These early settlers brought with them the building practices used in New England which reflected roughly a thousand years of English experience in building with timber. In the colonies, these practices were modified by physical conditions and practical concerns. Like those in the Massachusetts Bay area, Cape May County settlers found an abundance of pine, oak, and cedar with which to construct their homes. Thus, while continuing to use the familiar English tradition of timber framing for these structures, Cape May County's settlers, like those in the Massachusetts Bay area, adopted clapboards and shingles for exterior covering, and sawn pine for planking, sheathing and other finish details.

The Stites House, then, with its shouldered posts and chamfered beams of oak, reflects this tradition as translated and tempered by the colonial environment.

When comparing the Stites House, as originally built, with other extant examples of heavy timber frame construction in Cape May County, it is important to note that many, if not most, of the construction dates cited in secondary sources are unconfirmed. These construction dates range from 1706 (the Leaming House, according to primary source documentation) to 1826 (Rising Sun Tavern) with the decade before and after 1750 being the most frequently cited. Despite the broad range of dates, however, these examples provide ample basis for comparison in terms of plan, fenestration, and use of building materials.

In plan, the Stites House appears to be typical of most of the county's original, 2-story New England frame houses which were

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Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion C significance (continued)

predominantly one room on the first floor with an interior end wall chimney and adjacent winder stair. Most of the county's 18th and early 19th century buildings, regardless of the method of construction, were of this plan and were usually 3 bays wide on the first floor with 2 or 3 bays on the second floor.

Although the 2-room, central-chimney plan was fully developed in England and New England by this time (Cummings, p. 24), the one-room plan was immensely popular in the Massachusetts Bay area and usually provided a starting point that would be later enlarged as the owner's situation in life improved. In New England, the later addition almost always created a two-room, central-chimney plan, but this happened rarely in Cape May County. Only two such examples have been identified to date: the Benjamin Stites, Jr. House (ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse, n.b.: Benjamin Stites' father, Benjamin Sr., and Richard Stites, Jr.'s grandfather, Henry, were brothers) and the Godfrey House (ca. 1740, Swainton). When expanded, Cape May County's New England frame houses usually became 5-bay wide, center hall structures that, like the Stites House, had chimneys in each end wall.

For exterior wall finishes, Massachusetts Bay and Cape May County settlers more often than not chose wood because of its abundance. Consequently, most of the county's New England frame buildings had cedar shake roofs like that seen on the Stites House. The use of clapboards for exterior cladding seems to be almost universal in the county, as it was in the Massachusetts Bay area. However, the Nathaniel Holmes House and outbuildings (ca. 1755, Cape May Courthouse) were clad with cedar shakes until 1949, and vertical board sheathing was used on the Benjamin Stites House and still exists under the present clapboarding. Further research would determine if this sheathing served as underboarding, as Cummings notes occurred in the Massachusetts Bay area, or was, in fact, exterior cladding.

Cummings notes that the use of lath and plaster for an interior finish gave way ca. 1700 to the use of horizontal boarding in the Massachusetts Bay area. (p. 185) He also cites examples of houses illustrating the absence of any interior wall covering such as that seen originally in the Stites House with its exposed, whitewashed framing members. However, plaster and lath was apparently not in general use in the Cape May County area during the 18th and early 19th centuries, mainly due to the scarcity of

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Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion C significance (continued)

lime. Historians Robert Alexander and Lewis Townsend Stevens both comment on the county's exposed framing and unplastered walls, and when the Mansion House opened in Cape May City in 1832, it was noted as the first hotel on Cape Island with plaster walls. (Dorwart, p. 73)

Given the absence of plaster walls in Cape May County, it appears that vertical, and sometimes horizontal, sheathing was often used for an interior finish on more than just the chimney walls. Extant examples of this finish treatment are found in the Benjamin Stites House (ca. 1776, Cape May Courthouse), the Rising Sun Tavern (ca. 1826, Dennis Twp.), the Isaiah Stites House (Beesley's Point, Upper Twp., ca. 1740-1812, n.b.: Isaiah was Richard Stites, Jr.'s uncle), the Wheaton House (undated, Ocean View), the John Holmes House (ca. 1755, Cape May Courthouse), the Godfrey House (ca. 1740, Swainton), and the Leaming House (1706, Middle Township). It should also be noted that there are several Cape May County examples of panelled chimney walls, a stylistic carry-over from Massachusetts Bay building traditions.

In summary, when compared with those in the Massachusetts Bay area, Cape May County New England frame houses are smaller, later, and more simple expressions of heavy timber frame construction. Their one-room, exterior wall chimney plan rarely expanded into the 2-room, central chimney configuration so popular in the Massachusetts Bay area. While both locales used clapboarding for exteriors, interior wall finishes in Cape May County were more simply executed with either exposed framing members or board sheathing; only occasionally was the chimney wall panelled.

Seen in context, then, the Richard Stites, Jr. House, with its heavy timber frame construction, significantly illustrates and possesses the distinctive characteristics of a method of construction indigenous to Cape May County, but found rarely elsewhere in the state. As originally built, its 2-story, one-room, end wall chimney plan with adjacent winder stair was typical for the area, as was its clapboard exterior, cedar shake roof, and exposed whitewashed framing members.

When compared with other New England frame houses in the county, the Stites House also emerges as representative example of this method of construction erected at the later end of its popularity, which seemed to peak in the 1750's. Whereas timber frame construction in New England ended roughly in the first

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The Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Criterion C significance (continued)

quarter of the 18th century, its continued use for at least fifty more years in Cape May County speaks to the isolated, economically static nature of this region throughout that century. It is also a reflection of what Cummings calls the "tenacious persistence of inherited traditions" which were handed down from the transplanted Englishmen to their sons and grandsons. (Cummings, p. 202)

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Verbal Boundary Description

Blocks 8.01 and 8.02 as noted on the Tax Map for Lower Township, County of Cape May, New Jersey.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary for the nominated property is the parcel which has been associated with the Stites House since the most recent subdivision and change of ownership in 1984. The remainder of the original 600 acre farm has been excluded because: (1) some of it now lies underwater; (2) small portions of it were sold in 1822 and 1847 to the US Government to erect a lighthouse; and (3) since 1875, large portions of it were subdivided into residential and commercial lots, some of which are now incorporated into the Cape May Point State Park directly south of the nominated property. To include any other adjacent or surrounding lots around the Stites House would incorporate structures which have no known historical association with the nominated property.

Additional Documentation in Sequential Order

USGS Map, Cape May Quadrangle (original) - scale=1:24,000'

USGS Map, Cape May Quadrangle (partial photocopy)

Tax Map, Lower Township

Tax Map, Lower Township

Plan of First Floor - scale: 1/8" = 1'

Plan of Second Floor - scale: 1/8" = 1'

Plan of First Floor annotated for photographs

Plan of Second Floor annotated for photographs

Opening Announcement, Cape May Point Chautauqua and Summer Bible School, dated 1916, photocopy

Sales Brochure, Douglass Hospital Sanitarium, not dated, reduced photocopy

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Cape May County, New Jersey

additional documentation (continued)

Landscape Plan, dated 1946

Photocopies of 3" x 5" photographs, (3 pages), showing (1):
wallpaper fragments and wrought nails; (2): peg with tenon and
cast iron butt hinge; and (3): rotted corner post and attic
floorboard

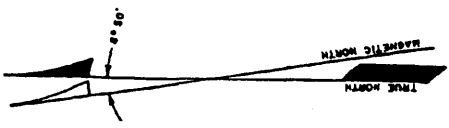
Photographs, 14 black and white images, 5" x 7"

Typical Information for all photographs:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Name of Property: | Richard Stites, Jr. House |
| 2. County and State: | Cape May County, New Jersey |
| 3. Photographer: | Joan Berkey/David Clemans |
| 4. Date of Photograph: | April, 1996 |
| 5. Location of Negatives: | David Clemans
609 Sea Grove Avenue
Cape May, NJ 08224 |

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
01 of 14	exterior view showing setting, looking northeast
02 of 14	exterior: main (south) facade, looking northeast
03 of 14	exterior: north and east elevations, looking southwest
04 of 14	exterior: rear (north) elevation, looking south
05 of 14	exterior: west elevation, looking east
06 of 14	main block: living room, showing original 6/9 windows on north wall, looking northeast
07 of 14	main block: living room, fireplace, looking east
08 of 14	main block: dining room, showing mantel, French doors, and girt, looking southwest
09 of 14	middle addition: sitting room mantel, looking southeast
10 of 14	north addition: kitchen fireplace, looking south
11 of 14	main block: east bedroom, looking southeast
12 of 14	main block: west bedroom, showing rough hewn, shouldered story post, looking southeast
13 of 14	main block: west bathroom, showing shouldered and chamfered finished corner post, looking southeast
14 of 14	main block: west bathroom, detail of chamfer and stop on beams, looking south

Richard Stites, Jr. House Cape May County, NJ
 Key Map, Lower Township
 Scale: 1" = 200'

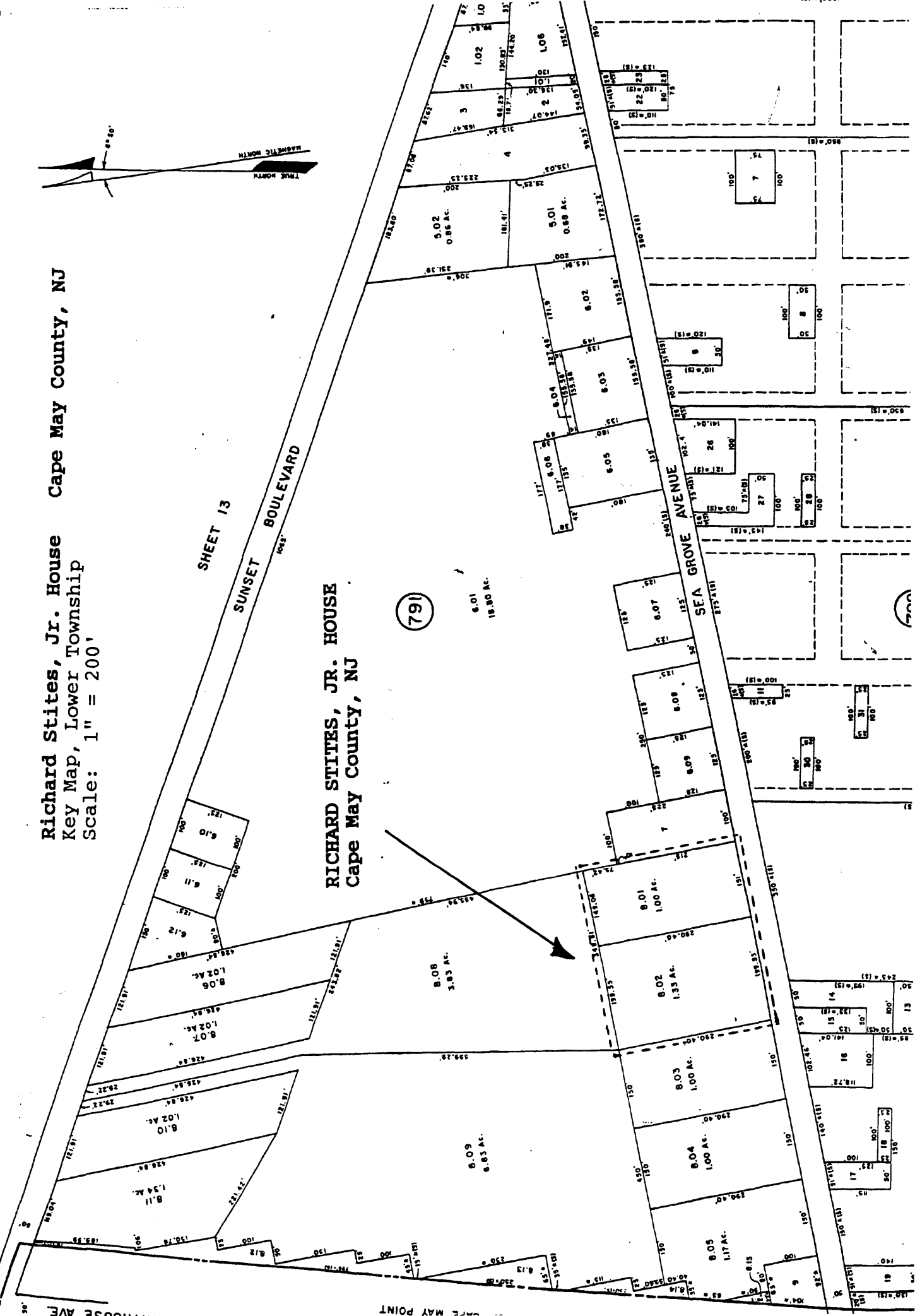


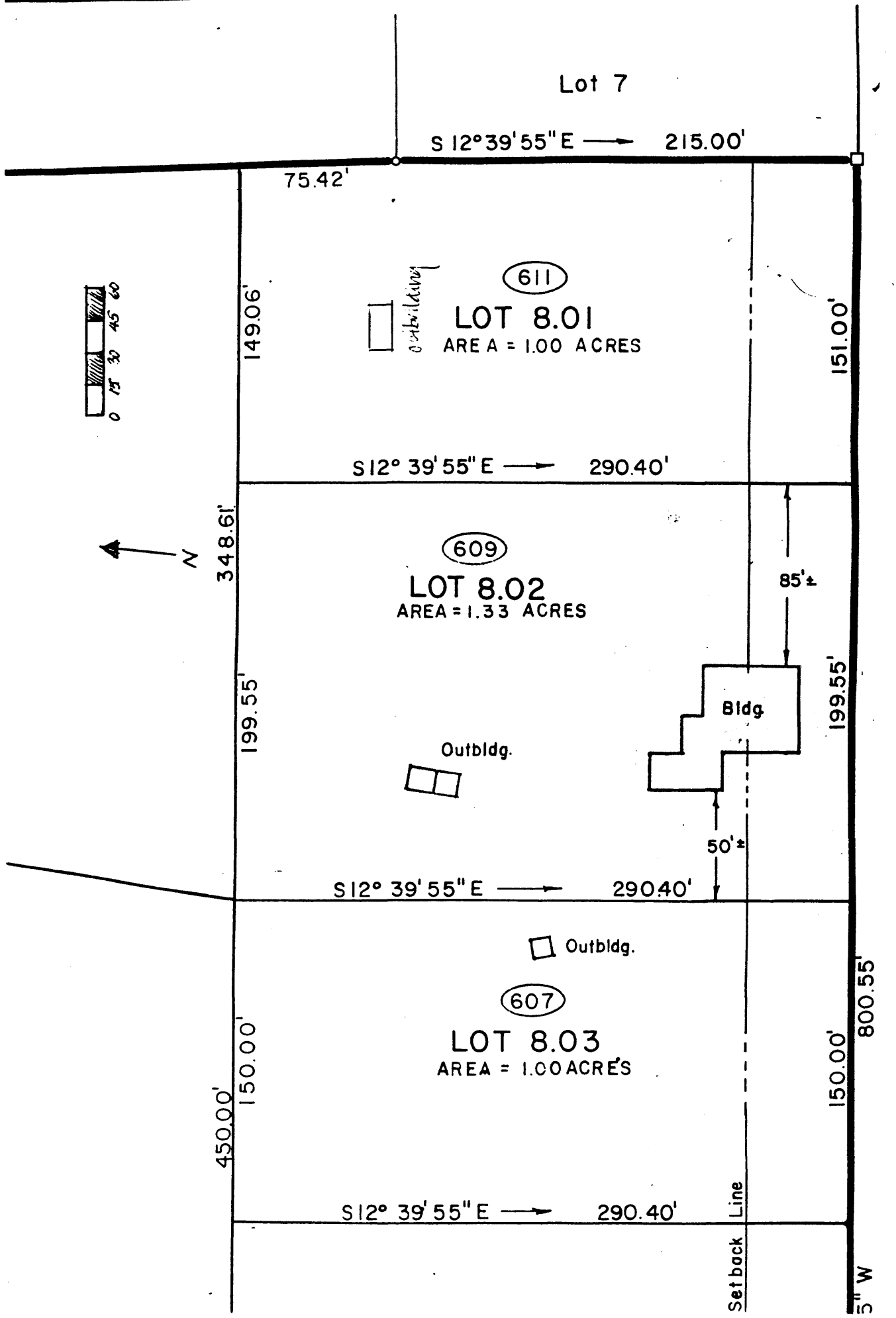
SHEET 13
 SUNSET BOULEVARD

RICHARD STITES, JR. HOUSE
 Cape May County, NJ

(791)

SEA GROVE AVENUE





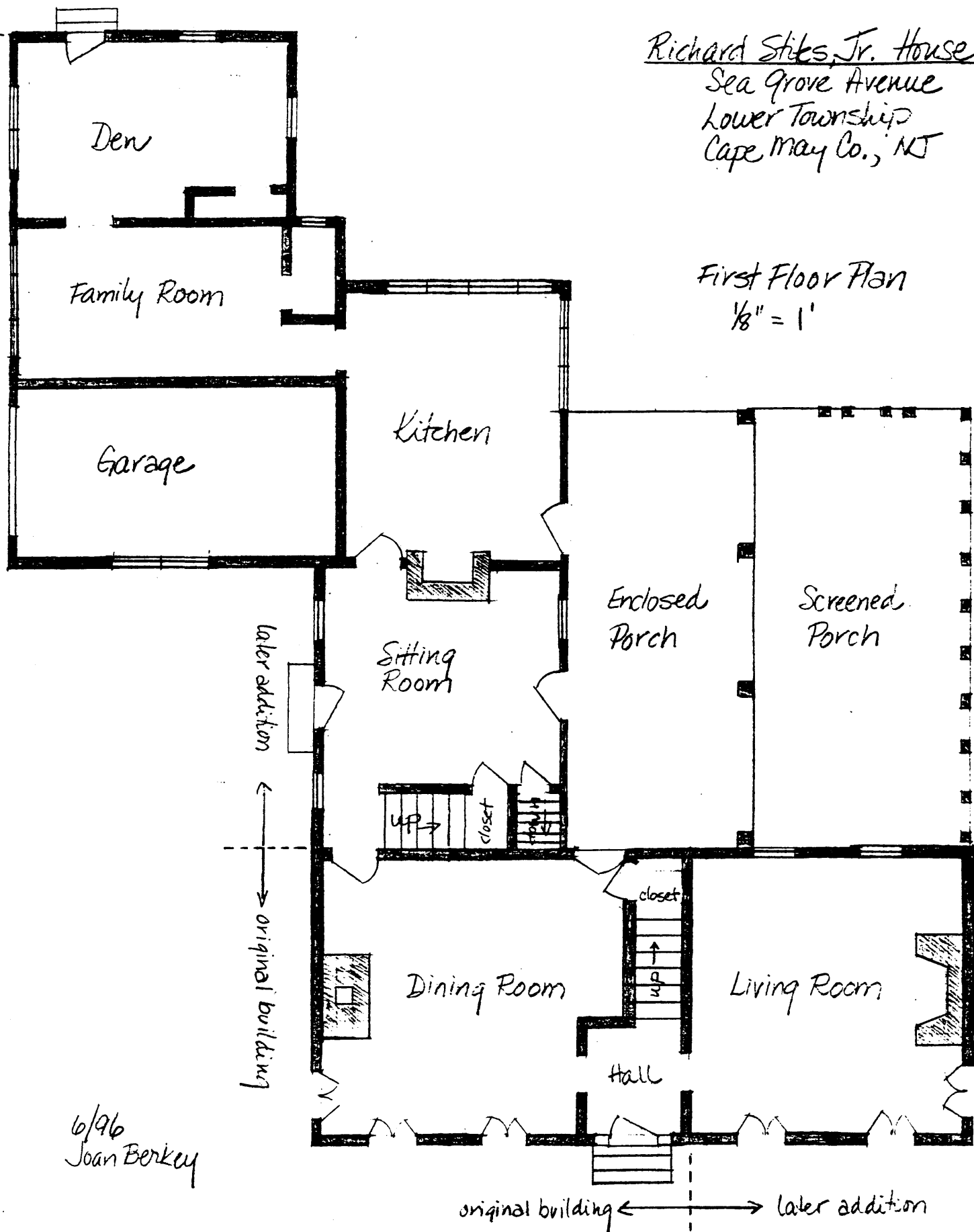
AVENUE

Richard Stites, Jr. House Cape May County, NJ
 Site Plan, Lots 8.01 and 8.02
 Scale: 1" = 60'

IDE)

Richard Stits, Jr. House
Sea Grove Avenue
Lower Township
Cape May Co., NJ

First Floor Plan
1/8" = 1'



6/96
Joan Berkeley

Richard Stiles, Jr. House

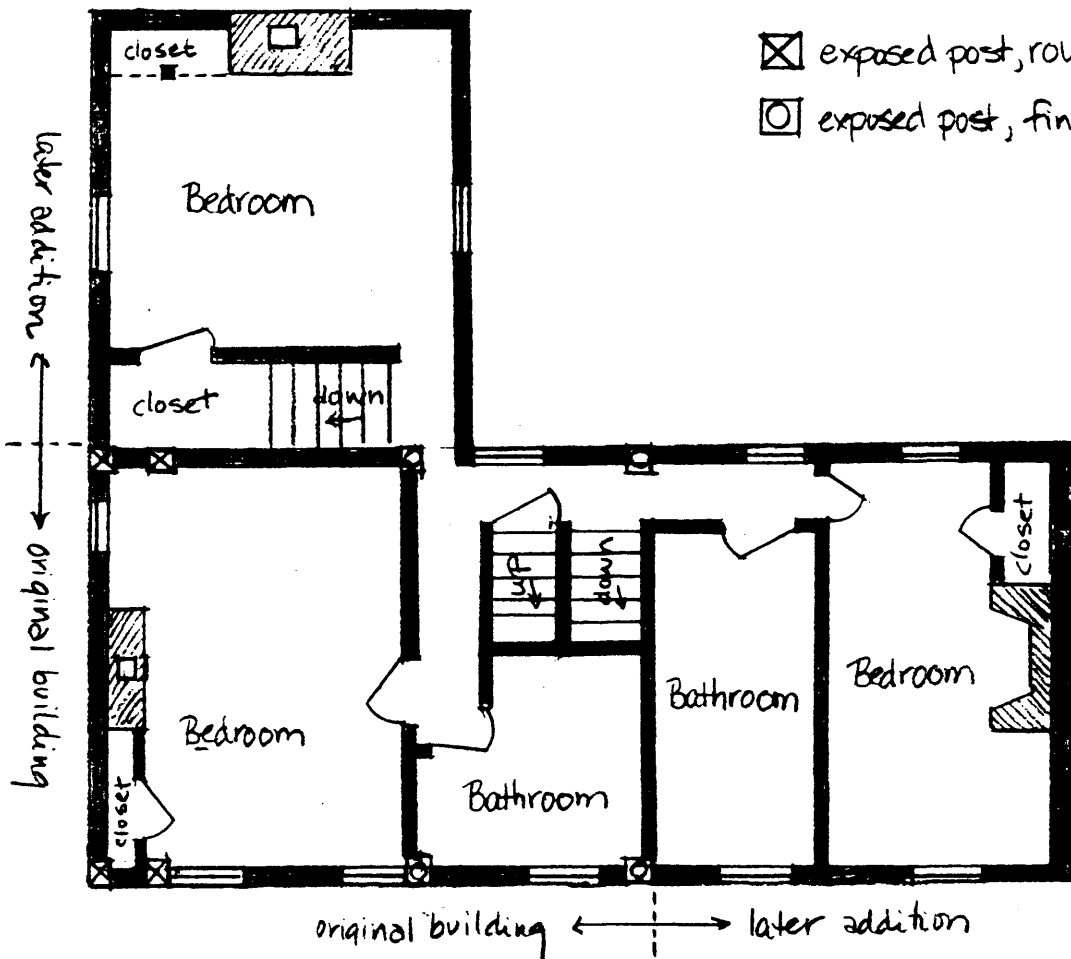
Sea Grove Avenue
Lower Twp.
Cape May Co., NJ

Second Floor Plan

1/8" = 1'

⊠ exposed post, rough hewn

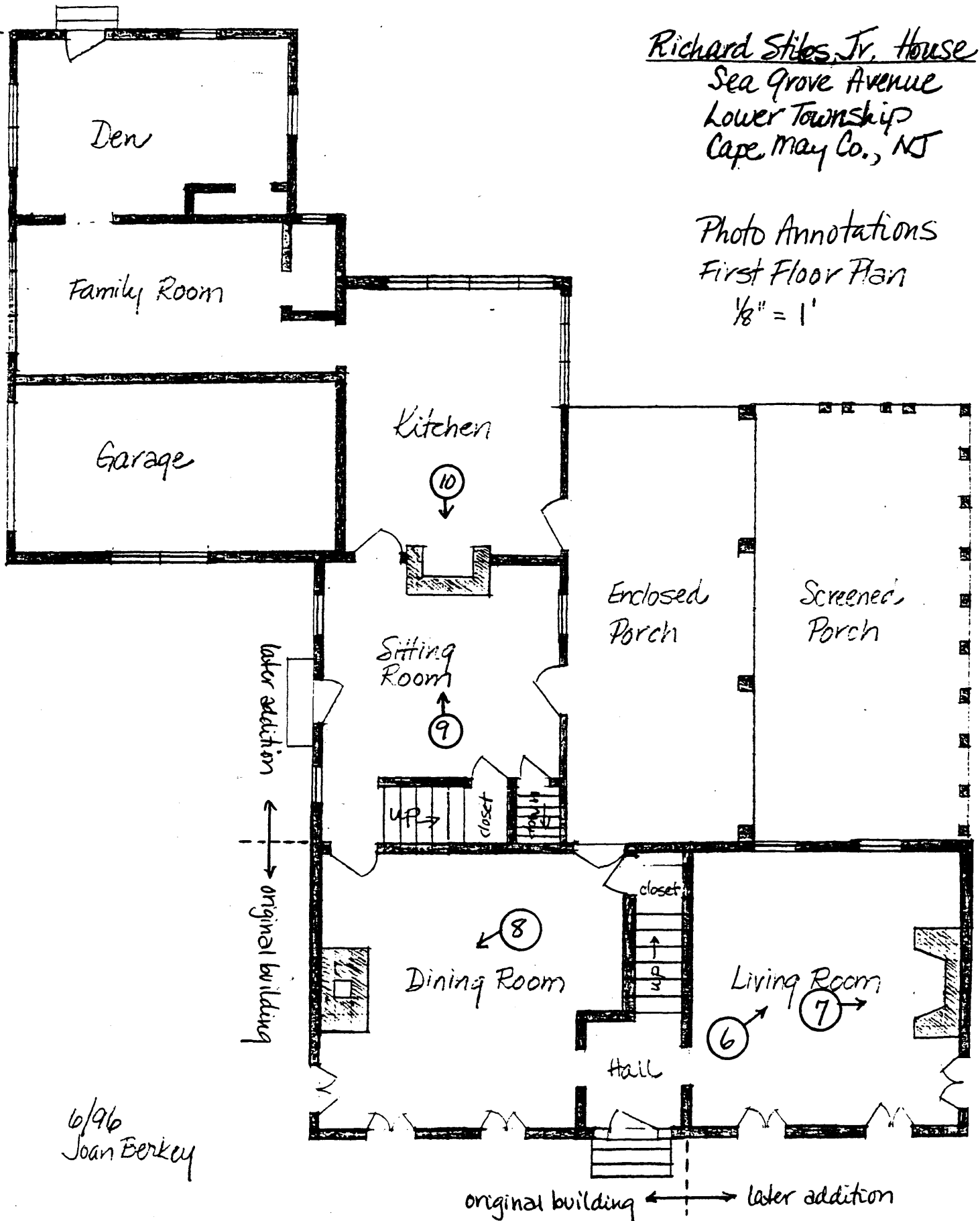
⊡ exposed post, finished



Joan Berkeley 6/96

Richard Stiles, Jr. House
Sea Grove Avenue
Lower Township
Cape May Co., NJ

Photo Annotations
First Floor Plan
1/8" = 1'



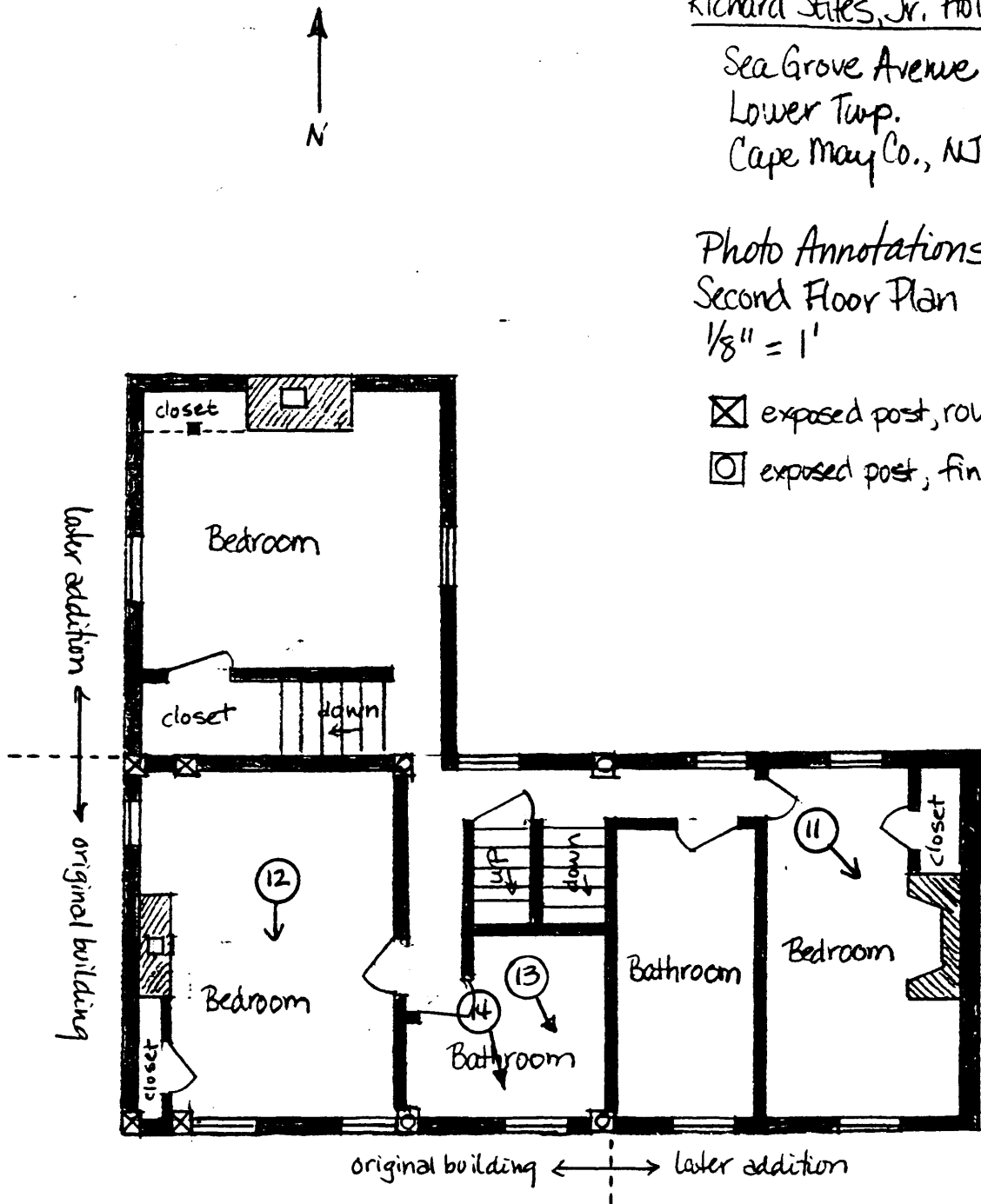
6/96
Joan Berkeley

Richard Stiles, Jr. House

Sea Grove Avenue
Lower Twp.
Cape May Co., NJ

Photo Annotations
Second Floor Plan
1/8" = 1'

- ⊠ exposed post, rough hewn
- ⊙ exposed post, finished

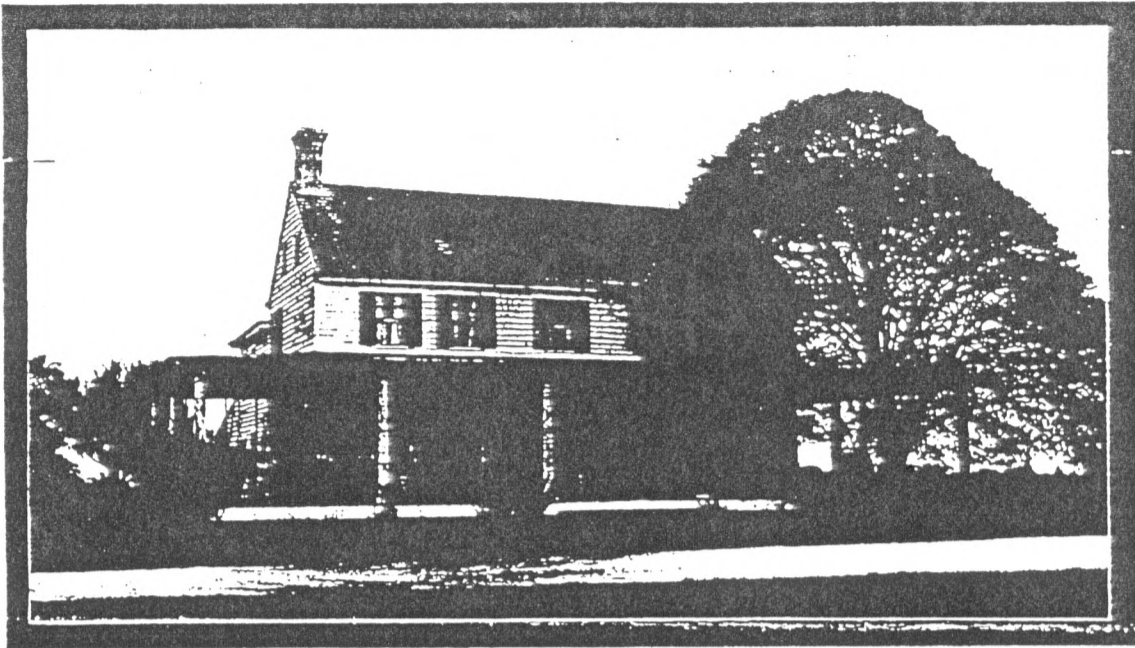


Joan Berkeley 6/96

*Beautiful
Buildings
and Grounds
Secured at
Cape May*

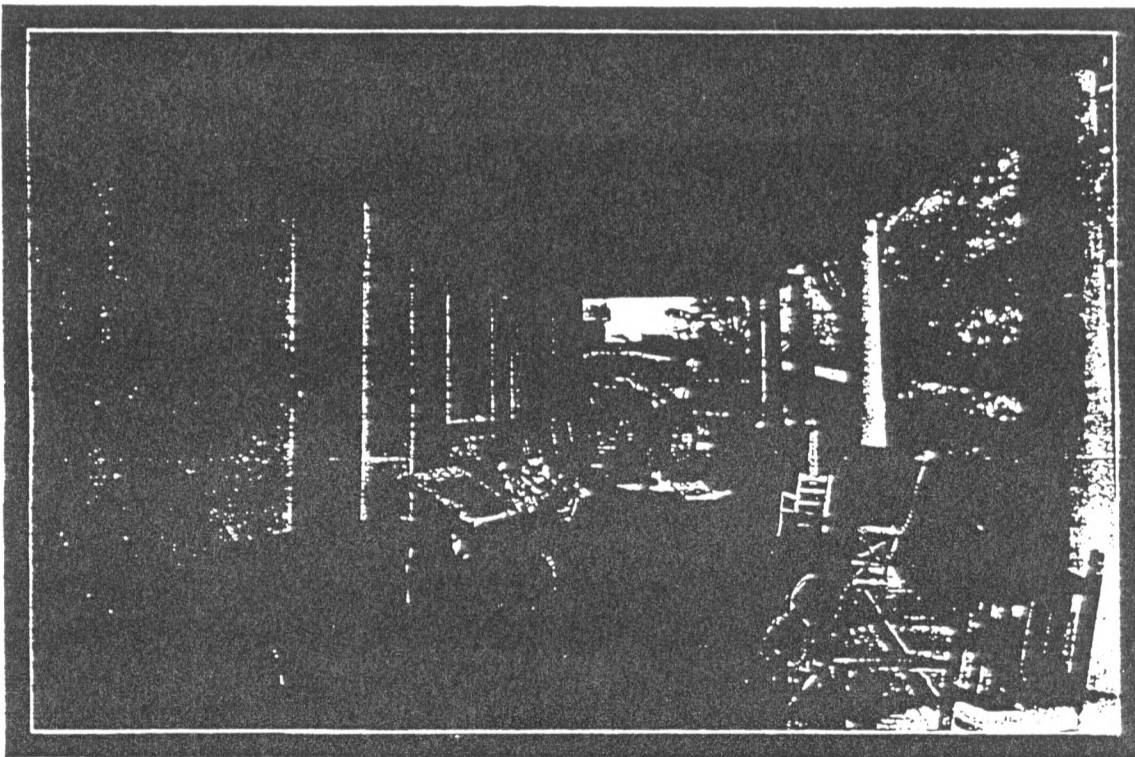
Douglass Hospital Sanitarium

*A Wonderful
Opportunity
for every
Colored Man
and Woman*



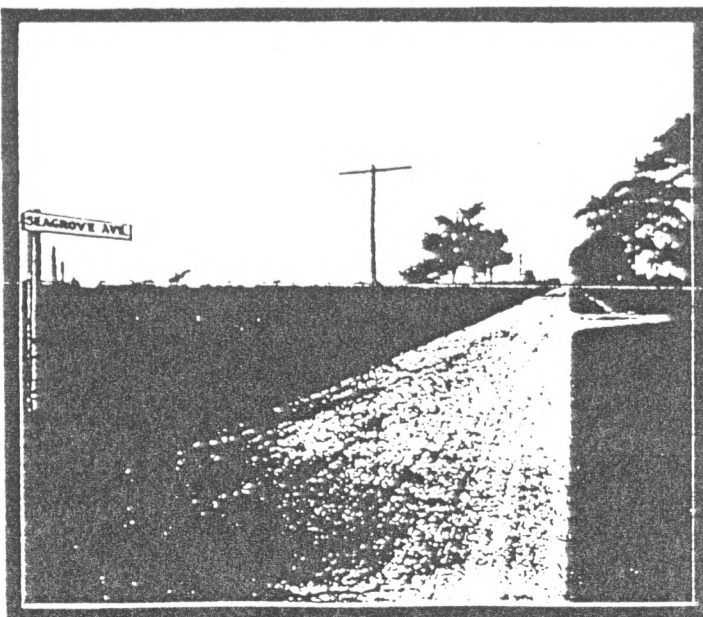
DOUGLASS HOSPITAL SANITARIUM

This spacious old Colonial homestead at Cape May will be enlarged and donated to the Douglass Hospital. It will be used as a Sanitarium for the convalescent colored patients of that institution. It is to be hoped that all colored people who can afford to do so will avail themselves of the exceptional opportunity here offered.



COMMODIOUS PORCH OF DOUGLASS HOSPITAL SANITARIUM AT CAPE MAY

The Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, NJ



SEAGROVE AVENUE IN FRONT OF SANITARIUM

THE LOTS offered for subscription surround the Sanitarium. These lots are high and dry, as can be seen from the photograph of Seagrove Avenue, which passes through the tract nearly in the centre. In fact, the United States Coast Geodetic Survey shows that the land is seventeen feet above the sea, being the highest point in this section and higher than the city of Cape May, which is about eleven feet.

Read on the other side of this circular how any colored man or woman can get a real seashore lot at Cape May.

Every Colored Man and Woman Should Take Advantage of this Offer

Douglass Hospital Sanitarium

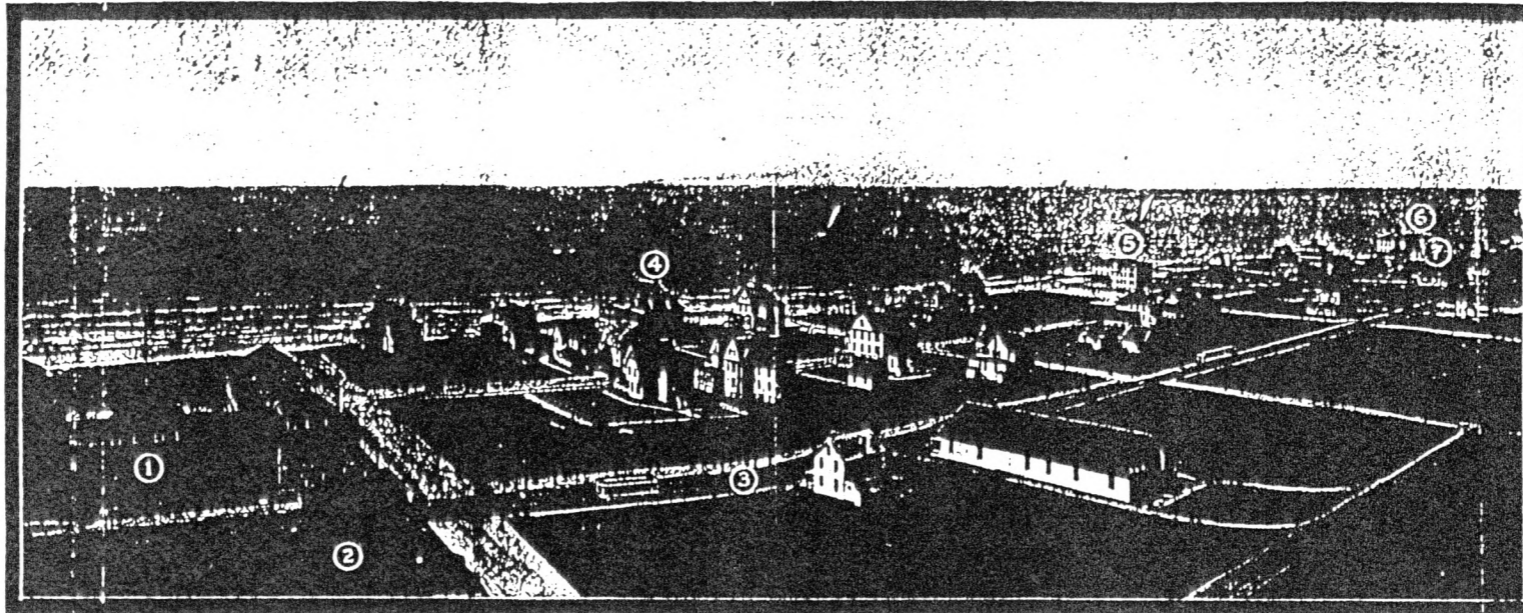
PREMIUM LOT SUBSCRIPTION

Mr. J. Howard Weatherby has agreed to enlarge and donate his summer home at Cape May Point, New Jersey, to the Douglass Hospital as a Sanitarium, provided the lots in the neighborhood of the Sanitarium are subscribed for by friends of the institution.

These lots are about 800 in number and lie between Oxford Avenue, Cape Island Turnpike, Twenty-second Avenue and Light House Avenue near the Light House. The Sanitarium and the lots surrounding it are beautifully located, overlooking the sea, and close enough to the ocean to put on your bathing suit at the house and walk to the beach.

This offer of Mr. Weatherby's gives an opportunity for the better class of colored people to obtain a real seashore home at a mere nominal cost.

The special price of \$125 per lot, including cement sidewalks and curbs, which Mr. Weatherby has made to our friends is so exceptional that anyone who can at all afford to do so should sub-



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CAPE MAY POINT, PHOTOGRAPHED FROM UNITED STATES LIGHTHOUSE

The building at the left of the picture marked No. 1 is St. Mary's-by-the-Sea; No. 2 is the new standpipe, with capacity to supply Cape May Point and our tract; No. 3 is the trolley line running from Cape May City to the Point; No. 4 is the large, airy summer residence of John Wasmaker, which was at one time the hot weather home of President Harrison; No. 5 is Lankensau Villa, now used as a home in the summer time for the nurses of the German Hospital and the teachers of the Mary J. Drexel Home; No. 6 is the Hotel Carlton, and No. 7 the Episcopal church, St. Peter's-by-the-Sea.

scribe without hesitation. So far as we know the lots cannot be duplicated anywhere else on the New Jersey coast at the price.

The colored people have never before had a real location at a summer resort offered to them. There are only about 800 lots set aside for these subscriptions and they are being rapidly taken up. Such an opportunity will not come soon again.

If you are so situated that you cannot use the lots for a summer home, surely at the price, they are a good investment.

The subscription price is \$125 per lot, payable monthly at \$5 per month, if desired. No additional charge is made for corner lots, but the subscriber is required to purchase not less than two lots in order to get a corner.

Provision has been made that in case of death of the subscriber before the completion of the payments the lots subscribed for will be deeded to the heirs of the subscriber without further payment.

Subscriptions and all payments should be sent to J. Howard Weatherby, Stephen Girard Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

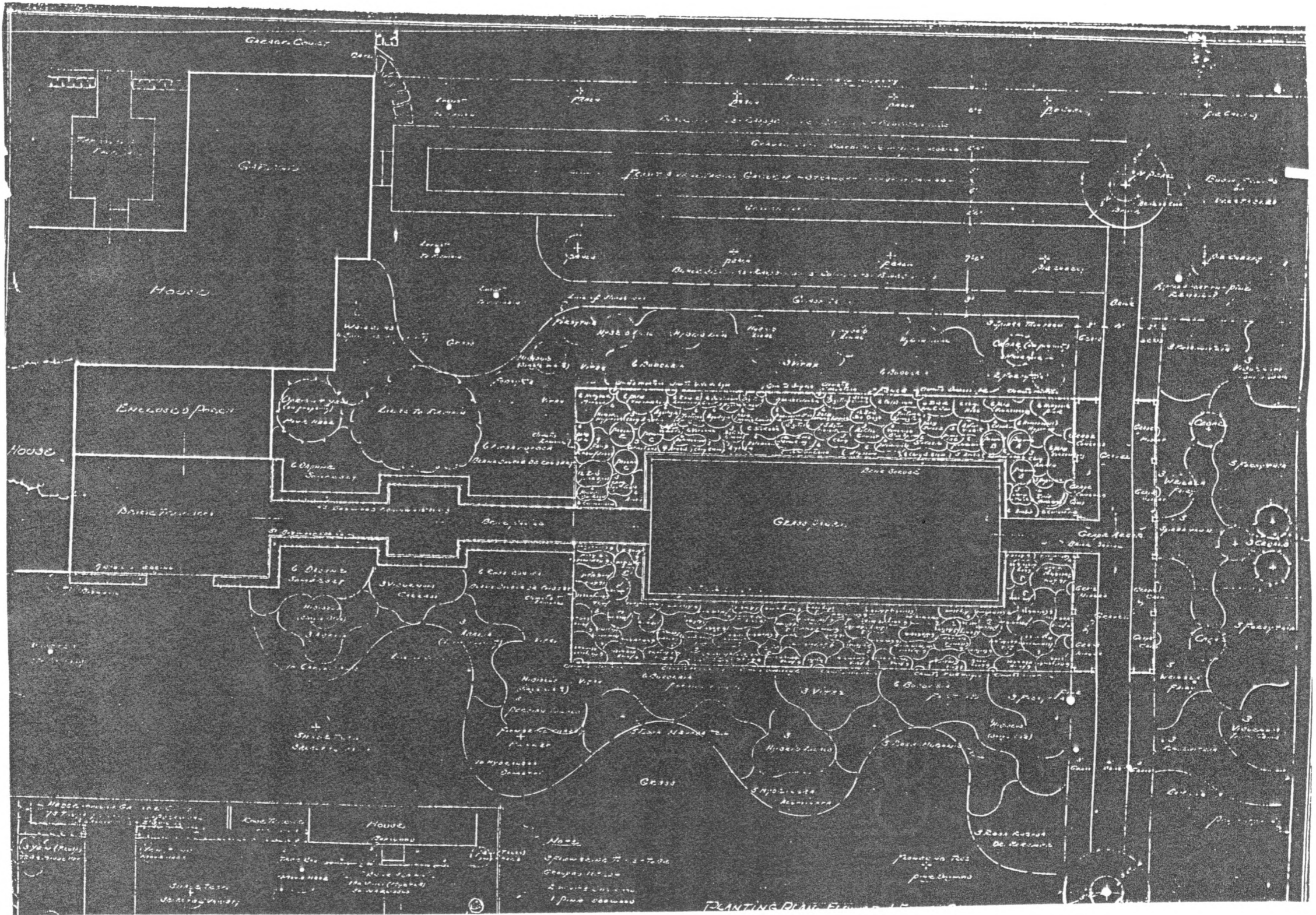
If further information is desired, address either of the undersigned.

J. Howard Weatherby
Stephen Girard Building
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dr. Nathan F. Mossell
Douglass Hospital
16th and Lombard Streets
Philadelphia, Pa.

Your Only Opportunity to Own a Real Seashore Home at a High-Class Resort

The Richard Stites, Jr. House Cape May County, NJ



Richard Stites, Jr. House Cape May County, NJ
 Landscape Site Plan, August 1946
 Abram L. Urban, Landscape Architect, Trenton, NJ
 not to scale

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Pyne, Jonathan, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Cape May

DATE RECEIVED: 6/30/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/13/06
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 97000061

NOMINATOR: STATE

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: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

additional Documentation Accepted

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Jonathan Pyne house
Cape May County, New Jersey

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page _____

State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination (amendment) 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.



Signature of certifying official/Title

4/28/06

Date

Amy Cradic, Assistant Commissioner Natural and Historic Resources/DSHPO

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Section number 1

Richard Stites, Jr. House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section 1. Name of Property:

Change of historic name:

delete Richard Stites, Jr. house; *add* Jonathan Pyne house

Change other names/site number:

add Richard Stites, Jr. house

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Section number 8 Page 1

Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)
Cape May County, New Jersey

Section 8. Statement of Significance: (changes to registration form)

Period of Significance:

delete C: 1772; add C: ca. 1694- to ca. 1840

Significant Dates:

delete 1772; add ca. 1694

Revised documentation—October 2005

Purpose for Submission of Revised Documentation for Significance under Criterion C:

The Jonathan Pyne House (formerly known as the Richard Stites, Jr. House) was originally thought by this researcher, and others, to have been built about 1765. As such, it was believed that the oldest part of the main block was a well-preserved example of heavy timber frame architecture in Cape May County, New Jersey dating to the 1760s and 1770s.

Since the nomination was filed in 1996, this researcher conducted an intensive level survey in 2003 that documented 69 of the county's heavy timber frame buildings which range in date from ca. 1690 to ca. 1845. This year-and-a-half long project marked the first time these structures were intensively studied, researched, and compared to earlier precedents and contemporaries on Long Island and in Connecticut and the Massachusetts Bay areas of New England. More recently, a re-examination and re-evaluation of the Jonathan Pyne house's construction details and techniques within the contexts of the survey, and a plotting of early deeds and 18th century estate division lines, suggest a highly defensible construction date of ca. 1694 and possibly earlier.

Thus, the purpose for submitting the revised documentation is to rename the house after its first owner, to change the dates of significance and the significant date, and to provide additional documentation (below) that: (1) supports a ca. 1694 construction date, (2) further defines the building's architectural significance under criterion C, and (3) places the building within local, state, and national contexts. Supplemental photographs and historic images are also included.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Section number 8 Page 2

Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)

Cape May County, New Jersey

(section 8 continued)

Summary Statement of Significance/Criterion C:

The oldest section of the main block¹ of the Jonathan Pyne House has many of the characteristics of first period (ca. 1690-ca. 1730) heavy timber frame construction as found in Cape May County, New Jersey: on the first floor it has a transverse summer beam, and on the second floor it has decorated front and rear plates that have a chamfer ending in a stop and large (9" x 11") chamfered posts with decoratively carved heads. It is also one of three known first-period timber framed buildings in Cape May County with a rare "second plate" roof framing system. The Pyne House is particularly notable for the slanted tops on its upright posts, and for the way the chamfers on its front and rear plates terminate with a stop at the corner brace pegs, then resume along the plate until the peg for another corner brace is encountered. It is the only house known in the county to have both these slanted tops and this unusual form of what might be termed "interrupted chamfering." Those details, combined with the carved post heads, the transverse summer beam, and the rare roof framing system, make this building eligible for listing under criterion C/architecture as a well-preserved and somewhat unique example of first period, heavy timber frame construction as expressed in Cape May County, New Jersey.

Historical Background:

The house stands on land that was originally a 300-acre tract purchased by Jonathan Pyne (ca. 1661-1694) from the West New Jersey Society sometime in the mid- to late-1680s. The exact date of Pyne's purchase is unknown because the deed was not recorded, but the transaction was cited in a 1712 deed for the property.² Lands near this house are mentioned as belonging to Jonathan Pyne in an unrecorded Indian deed dated 1687, but the vagueness of the legal description precludes determining if the land purchased from the Indians included Pyne's property. His 300-acre tract is, however, specifically mentioned in an adjoining neighbor's deed dated 1692.³ Pyne first appears in the public records in 1685 when he was appointed a constable at Cape May County, making him among the first to permanently settle on the Jersey cape.⁴ His 300-acre tract, located at the southernmost tip of the peninsular county, was about three-quarters of a mile from the Delaware Bay to the west, and about one-half mile from the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Pyne also owned a "town lot" of approximately 20 acres sited in New England Town,

¹ The west half.

² The deed of 1712 was also not recorded in Burlington, but is quoted—apparently from the original—in A Brief of Title: Sea Grove Association, ca 1875.

³ Lewis T. Stevens, The History of Cape May County, New Jersey, (Cape May, NJ: 1897), p. 12.

⁴ Stevens, p. 29; Liber of Deeds A, p. 47, Jeremiah Basse to Ezekiel Eldredge.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Section number 8 Page 3

Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)

Cape May County, New Jersey

(section 8 continued)

also known as Town Bank or Portsmouth Town, a village (no longer extant) located about 3 miles to the north on the bayside; the deed for that property was also not recorded.

Pyne was the son of James (1630-1687) and Susannah Armitage Pine/Pyne of Hempstead, Nassau County, Long Island, New York. James was born in Exeter, Devonshire, England and with his parents immigrated to Stamford, Connecticut in the 1640s. By 1667, the family was located in Hempstead, Long Island.

In the 1680s, several families from Hempstead—the Carmans, Osbornes, Jacocks, Willits, and Formans among them—migrated to Cape May County, New Jersey. Many of them were lured by the lucrative whaling industry carried out along the coast, while others were attracted by the large tracts of land that could be purchased cheaply. Jonathan Pyne married Elizabeth Carman about 1684 (probably on Long Island) and, as previously mentioned, settled on the Jersey cape as early as 1685 when he was made constable there.⁵

Pyne died in 1694 and willed his “house and Land at ye Cape” to his son, Jonathan Jr.⁶ His inventory shows he owned a “share of a Crafte” (possibly a whale boat), pewter, horses, cows, calves, a “house and town lot” valued at £20 and “300 acres of land at ye Cape & improvement” valued at £40.⁷ It is the latter house “at ye Cape” that still stands today; the fate of the house at Town Bank is unknown.⁸

In 1712, Jonathan Pyne’s son, Jonathan Jr., sold the 300 acre-tract to Henry Stites (1662-1733) for £100.⁹ The Stites family had emigrated from England to Plymouth, Massachusetts in the mid-1600s and then in 1685 to Hempstead, Long Island. Henry Stites (1662-1733), a whaler, came to Cape May County in the late 1680’s where he married and had six children. In 1695, Stites purchased 200 acres in what is now Middle Township and he settled there.¹⁰

Stites sold the farmstead six years later to his son, Richard Stites, Sr. (ca. 1696-1739), for £40 and he was the only one of Henry Stites’ sons to settle in Lower Township. Upon Richard Stites, Sr.’s death in 1739, the property passed, by will, to his son Richard Stites, Jr. (ca. 1725-1773).

⁵ Hempstead Town Records, The Pine Family <<http://www.billputnam.com/Pine.pdf>>

⁶ Liber of Deeds A, p. 58-59.

⁷ Liber of Deeds A, p. 61.

⁸ The site of Town Bank/New England Town is now under the waters of the Delaware Bay.

⁹ Brief of Title, p. 3. This deed was also not recorded; however, it was abstracted in the ca. 1875 Brief of Title. The purchase price seems high and may be explained as either a transcription error, or additional tracts that were not cited in the abstract were included in the purchase.

¹⁰ Colonial Deeds, Liber B, p. 450.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)

Cape May County, New Jersey
(section 8 continued)

Richard Stites, Jr. then purchased two additional adjoining tracts totaling 400+ acres from the West New Jersey Society in 1740 and 1741. The Stites farmstead of marsh, beach, and land now encompassed the entire southwest end of the Jersey cape, had frontage on both the Delaware Bay (to the west) and the Atlantic Ocean (to the south) and also included the large, fresh water lake, Lake Lily.¹¹ [see fig.11 for a map showing the extent of his land holdings]

At the time, and through most of the 1700's, Cape May County was a sparsely-populated rural area, settled by whaling families who had come there via New England and Long Island. These families, like the Stites', became owners of modest plantations typically between 200 and 500 acres in size where they farmed corn and wheat and raised cattle. Jeffrey Dorwart, in his book Cape May County, New Jersey: the Making of an American Resort Community (1992), explains: "the first landowners embodied the English concept of yeoman as an owner of a small landed estate who cultivated his own land and held a respectable standing in the community below the rank of gentleman. Indeed, they referred to themselves in wills and other documents as yeomen."¹² Accordingly, the deeds of 1712 and 1718 cite Henry Stites as a "yeoman."

Richard Stites, Jr. farmed the land throughout his ownership. New Jersey tax ratables for October 1768 show him possessing cattle, horses and sheep; that year, with 400 ratable acres, he was the second largest land owner in Lower Township, but had the highest valuation in livestock.

Richard Stites, Jr.'s will, written September 23, 1772, divided the farm between two of his three sons, with the northerly portion going to his middle son, Richard Stites III (1758-1822). To his oldest son, John, he gave the southerly portion of "that part of my said lands whereon I live..." The metes and bounds description begins at a point "north 87 degrees east from the chimney of the new house I live in..." This legal description and another mentioned in the will are highly significant because, when plotted, it is seen that the "new house" (which went to Richard III) was located on Sea Grove Avenue to the east of the Pyne House, while the older house was this one built by Jonathan Pyne.¹³ [fig. 11] Further confirmation that John Stites received the original house is found in a quit claim dated 1841, in which the house inherited by John Stites was referred to as "the Old Homestead or Cape Place."¹⁴ The "new house" is no longer standing, but a ca. 1875 drawing of it exists. [fig. 7]

¹¹ Brief of Title, p. 4.

¹² Jeffrey Dorwart, Cape May County, New Jersey: The Making of an American Resort Community (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 21.

¹³ NJ State Archives, file #338E.

¹⁴ Deed Book S, p. 400.

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Continuation Sheet
Section number 8 Page 5

Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)
Cape May County, New Jersey
(section 8 continued)

It should be noted that the division line given in the will was not plotted in 1996 when this nomination was first submitted, and at that time it had been erroneously assumed that the “new house” referred to in the will was this house. Similarly, this researcher had not yet undertaken the *Intensive Level Survey of the Heavy Timber Frame Buildings of Cape May County* (2003), a study of 69 heavy timber frame buildings in Cape May County which now provides a context for re-evaluating the construction date and significance of this dwelling.

A Brief History of Heavy Timber Framing

Simply defined, heavy timber frame construction is a method of building that uses large, wood framing members (6”-8” wide or larger), which are joined and held together with pegged mortise and tenon joints. The key components are a box frame composed of sills, posts, plates, girts, and bridging and/or binding beams; above the house frame itself is a roof constituting a separate structural system. Typically, the framing members—corner posts, floor joists, girts and beams—were meant to be exposed, and were sometimes decorated with molding that was either carved by hand or wrought by a molding plane.¹⁵

This type of construction was brought first to the Massachusetts Bay area of New England by English settlers in the 17th century. Heavy timber frame, or post and beam, construction had been used in 16th century East Anglia, and it was only natural for New England colonists to use the same building methods in the New World with which they had been familiar in their native land.

The presence of a timber frame characterized all frame houses in America until the advent of the balloon frame in the nineteenth century, which came to most places in New Jersey in the 1850s at roughly the same time as the Italianate style. The balloon frame was composed of dimensional lumber (e.g. 2x4s and 2x6s), not timbers, hence it was not a “timber” frame. All frame building in New Jersey (and elsewhere) before the 1850s—for about 200 years—had a timber frame. In common parlance many of these structural systems have been loosely referred to as “heavy” timber frames, to distinguish them from “light” balloon frames.

The techniques of building timber frames were not static across the two centuries. Methods evolved, in part to make erection of buildings simpler, faster, and cheaper, and in part because

¹⁵ The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Robert Craig, Principal Historic Preservation Specialist with the NJ State Historic Preservation Office, for his comments regarding the history and evolution of heavy timber frame construction.

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Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)

Cape May County, New Jersey
(section 8 continued)

stylistic concerns demanded that the old ways which originally prevailed be abandoned. Generally, this evolution followed a course of a progressive lightening of the members themselves together with a simplification of their joinery. It is usually possible, even through casual inspection, to distinguish between early and late timber frames; with a more careful inspection it is sometimes possible to distinguish between "middle" and "late" frames.

As typically defined, the term "heavy timber frame" denotes only those frames that survive, generally speaking, from the "first period" of timber framing in New Jersey, a period that covers the 17th through the early 18th century. A more strict definition would include only those timber framed buildings with a summer beam. However, within the context of those houses which survive in Cape May County, the term is more broadly used to denote those heavy timber frame buildings with *exposed* framing members, held with pegged mortise and tenon joints, as found in Cape May County from ca. 1695 to ca. 1845.

The earliest examples of heavy timber frame construction in the United States are found in the Massachusetts Bay area of New England. Settled in the 1620s and 1630s by predominantly English religious dissenters largely from East Anglia, the Massachusetts Bay area contains more than three hundred extant examples that range in date from ca. 1640 to ca. 1750. These buildings were extensively studied by Abbott Lowell Cummings in the 1970s and he eventually published a well documented and heavily illustrated book about them entitled The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay: 1625-1725 (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1979). This groundbreaking volume marked the first intensive analysis of this construction type in the country, and set the standard for bringing together primary sources with physical evidence to document the derivational heritage, evolution, and eventual demise of a construction method. In 1990, 113 heavy timber frame structures in the Massachusetts Bay area were also recognized with a thematic nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁶

As Massachusetts Bay area colonists migrated to other parts of the eastern seaboard in the 17th century, they took their building traditions with them. In the 1640s and 1650s, they settled on Long Island, New York, many lured by the thriving whaling industry there. Long Island's heavy timber frame buildings have also been studied, but to a lesser degree than those in the Massachusetts Bay area. The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documented eight of them between the 1930s and 1980s, and those studied have construction dates ranging from ca. 1649 to ca. 1740. HABS compiled brief histories of each house, took exterior photographs and sometimes interior photographs, and prepared measured drawings of them. These houses have

¹⁶ *First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts Thematic Resource Nomination*, 1990. A copy of this National Register nomination is available at the NJ State Historic Preservation Office.

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Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)
Cape May County, New Jersey
(section 8 continued)

also been written about in several books (among them, Long Island Landmarks, published by the Society for the Preservation of Long Antiquities in 1971, and Manor Houses and Historic Homes of Long Island and Staten Island, published in 1928 and written by Harold Eberlein), but neither book deals exclusively, or in-depth, with their construction type, nor are the buildings placed within historic contexts.

From Long Island, these New Englanders (or their descendants) moved to New Jersey in the last quarter of the 17th century, settling not only in East Jersey (including Essex, Union, and Middlesex counties), but in West Jersey as well, particularly in Salem (now Cumberland), Gloucester (now Atlantic), and Cape May counties. Those who moved to Cape May County were attracted by both the lucrative whaling industry there and the availability of large tracts of land which could be purchased relatively cheaply. More often than not, these new residents turned to heavy timber frame construction for their dwellings, not only because of their familiarity with it, but also because of the great availability of lumber with which to build.¹⁷

Although heavy timber frame construction was once common in New Jersey, few examples remain. Because other early New Jersey settlers built with more lasting materials—the Pennsylvania-influenced Quakers with brick and the Dutch settlers with stone, for example—their buildings have survived to a larger degree than those built of wood, the latter of which were more easily lost to fire, rot, or demolition by neglect.

Because of the migration from New England to Long Island and New Jersey, there are strong physical ties between Cape May County's first period buildings (ca. 1695 to ca. 1730) and the earlier precedents built beginning ca. 1650 on Long Island and ca. 1640 in the Massachusetts Bay area and continuing until ca. 1725. Heavy timber frame buildings in all three areas have large, exposed framing members: in the Massachusetts Bay area almost all timbers were usually hewn from oak, while in Cape May County almost all upright posts were hewn from oak, while the horizontal framing members (joists, girts, plates, and sills) were often made from Atlantic white cedar, and occasionally from hard pine.

In comparison, Cape May County's heavy timber frame buildings are smaller and more humble expressions than their New England counterparts, and despite their commonalities, there are subtle differences in the way they were framed, with more obvious differences in their floor plans, their placement of stairs, the size of their chimney bays, and their choices of interior

¹⁷ It should be noted that large stones for building were not locally available in Cape May County.

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Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)

Cape May County, New Jersey
(section 8 continued)

finishes.¹⁸ Generally speaking, Cape May's buildings: (1) typically consisted of a single room on the first floor with a single bedroom or garret on the upper floor and a single, shallow end wall chimney, rather than two parlors on the first floor with a large center chimney and a stair hall; (2) placed their winder stairs so they were accessed from the room they served rather than from a hall or "porch;" (3) used a smaller chimney bay that usually contained one fireplace rather than two; (4) placed their lean-tos to the side rather than to the rear, and (5) used flush board walls as an interior wall finish until ca. 1820, even though boarded interior walls were superceded by the use of plaster walls beginning ca. 1730 elsewhere in the state and in New England.¹⁹

The Heavy Timber Frame Tradition in Cape May County

The heavy timber frame buildings in Cape May County were the subject of an in-depth intensive level survey of 69 buildings conducted by Joan Berkey under the auspices of the Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society and published under the title, *A Survey of the Heavy Timber Frame Buildings of Cape May County* (2003).²⁰ This year-and-a-half long project marked the first time these structures were intensively studied, researched, and compared to earlier precedents and contemporaries on Long Island and in Connecticut and the Massachusetts Bay areas of New England. The survey determined that Cape May County appears to have the most extant examples of exposed heavy timber frame construction in the state, and in numbers large enough, within Cape May County at least, that they cannot be considered as rare survivors of this construction type.

According to the survey, the following three distinct building periods were identified in the county.

First period buildings are defined as those built in Cape May County between ca. 1695 and ca. 1730. They most closely resemble those heavy timber frame buildings erected earlier on Long Island (ca. 1650-ca. 1730) as well as in Connecticut and in the Massachusetts Bay area (ca. 1640-ca. 1725). These houses are generally characterized by overly large, hand-hewn framing

¹⁸ For an in-depth discussion of these similarities and differences, consult *A Survey of the Heavy Timber Frame Buildings of Cape May County* (Joan Berkey, Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society, 2003), copies of which are available at the NJ Historical Commission, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society, and the Cape May County Public Library.

¹⁹ Joan Berkey, *A Survey of the Heavy Timber Frame Buildings of Cape May County* (Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society, 2003), p. 10-69.

²⁰ Ibid.

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Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)

Cape May County, New Jersey

(section 8 continued)

members (between 8" and 12" in size), some of which are carved or decoratively molded, flush board interior walls or no interior wall finish at all, exposed posts that are usually heavier at their tops, exposed floor joists often chamfered or beaded on the edge, and a large chimney bay between 4.5' to 10' wide. Often, such framing members as studs, floor joists, and rafters are pit sawn. Lamb's tongue stops were also commonly used to decorate framing members, and some of the county's first period buildings have summer beams, which were also a common element in New England construction.

No single building height or fenestration pattern prevailed in the county during this period, rather 1-, 1½- and 2-stories houses were found, with both center and off-center door placement. The most typical floor plan consisted of a single room with a large fireplace and winder stair at one end, and of the 20 first period buildings surveyed, only six (6) center chimney/double parlor plan houses have been identified. Although leaded glass windows may have been used on these first period buildings, none were found extant in the houses examined in this survey.

Second period buildings are defined as those built in the county between ca. 1730 to ca. 1780-90 and they reflect the gradual slimming of framing members that occurred as the 18th century progressed. Although corner posts were still exposed, they were usually enclosed, or "chased," with boards having a beaded edge on the corner. Since plaster did not come into general use until about 1820 in Cape May County, interior walls were still covered with flush boards, usually vertically sawn and planed smooth, then laid vertically on the fireplace wall and partition walls, and horizontally on the other walls. Floor joists continued to be exposed overhead; these were planed as well, and were often decorated with a beaded edge. Like the framing members, the chimney bay was also reduced in size, although the size of the fireplace opening itself remained large, running up to 6' wide in some instances. The single room floor plan continued to prevail, with no particular dominance between 1-, 1½-, and 2-story heights.

During this construction period, particularly in the 1760s, there was a revival, or survival, of the first period framing characteristics of gunstock or molded corner posts, summer beams, and decorative lambs tongue stops on framing members. Of the 69 buildings surveyed, five are thought to represent this revival/survival, possibly spurred by the construction in 1763 of the Seaville Friends Meeting House (#30 in the *Survey*), which has these characteristics.

Third period buildings are those erected between ca. 1780-90 and ca. 1845, and they represent the final phase of heavy timber framing in the county. These buildings show the continued diminishing in the size of not only the framing members, but the fireplace openings as well. Although winder stairs adjacent to the chimney continued in their popularity, this period saw the introduction of the 5-bay wide Federal style dwelling, with its center hall/double parlor plan. As

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Richard Stites, Jr. House (now the Jonathan Pyne House)

Cape May County, New Jersey
(section 8 continued)

a building form, though, it was rarely used in the county and single room plan houses continued to predominate. As plaster walls came into common usage ca. 1820, surprisingly, corner posts and girts were still exposed, although modestly so, and were usually faced with beaded edge boards to dress them up.

Despite the introduction of plaster walls, flush board walls and exposed joists continued to be fashionable and are found being used as late as ca. 1832 in the Jesse Gandy House in Upper Township. The latest house in the survey to have both plaster walls and exposed corner posts and girts is dated at ca. 1847 (the Stillwell Smith House, Dennis Township) and its mid-19th century interior belies its mid-18th century exterior appearance.

Lean-tos in all three construction periods were typically placed to the side, not to the rear, and are found with this placement as early as ca. 1695 in the Reeves-Iszard-Godfrey House (moved from Middle to Upper Township) and as late as the previously mentioned ca. 1847 Stillwell Smith House (Dennis Twp.)

The Significance of the Jonathan Pyne House Within These Contexts Under Criterion C

Within the context of this survey, the oldest section of the Jonathan Pyne House is an excellent example of first period (ca. 1690-ca. 1730) heavy timber frame construction as expressed in Cape May County. The house's chamfered framing members given a decorative stop, the presence of a transverse summer beam (seen in only three other first period houses in the county), the original exterior vertical board sheathing, the large carved and/or gunstock posts, in addition to the original use of the exterior cladding for an interior wall finish are all elements typically found in first period dwellings on the Jersey cape. The house also has several decorative details that are not found elsewhere in the county's first period buildings. Specifically mentioned in Pyne's 1694 inventory, it is the earliest house to be dated with such convincing documentation so far.

Other first period houses in the survey with a summer beam include the ca. 1695 Reeves-Iszard-Godfrey House (#25, Upper Township), the ca. 1700 rear portion of the Nathaniel Holmes, Sr. House (#58, Middle Township), and the ca. 1700 Seagrave-Stites House (#61, Middle Township). Those first period houses with carved corner posts include the 1706 Thomas Leaming House (#19, Middle Township), the ca. 1700 Seagrave-Stites House, the ca. 1695 Reeves-Iszard-Godfrey House, the ca. 1711-1718 Whilldin-Miller House (#7, Lower Township) and the ca. 1704-1706 Garretson House (#69, Upper Township). Since the survey was

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completed, another first period house with carved corner posts has been identified in Lower Township (Cox Hall, so-called).

Several construction details found in the Jonathan Pyne House are of particular interest because they are rare or one-of-a-kind examples in the county, and possibly within the greater New England area, as well.

The roof of the oldest section is framed with a double plate system found in only two other first period houses in Cape May County, both of which are also in Lower Township. This system consists of a "second plate" placed on top of the typical first plate, and into which the rafters are mortised and tenoned. [see fig. 1 and 2] In Cape May County, the ca. 1690-1700 Carman-Norton House (#13, fig. 3) and the first period Teal-Foster House (#29, fig. 4) have a roof structure almost identical to that in the Pyne House.

The similarity in roof framing between these three houses in Cape May County, then, suggests the work of one builder, or framer, but so far this person's identity is unknown. At least three house carpenters settled in Cape May County in the late 17th century--George Taylor and Samuel Matthews who lived in Lower Township (exact location not yet determined) and Arthur Cresse, who settled in Middle Township. Further research might determine if one of them built all three of these first period houses that have the double plate system.

Initial research indicates that the double plate roofing system was rarely used in colonial America, with the possible exception of Connecticut. The ca. 1689 Cooper-Frost-Austin House in Cambridge, Massachusetts has an almost identical roof system [see fig.5], but it is the only example cited in Cummings' The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725. A similar system framing method is illustrated by J. Frederick Kelly in the "older Williams House" (ca. 1680) in Wethersfield, Connecticut. Kelly calls it a "somewhat common arrangement of two front plates," inferring that it is not as rare in that area as it is Cape May.²¹ Henry Chandlee Forman cites three Maryland examples in Old Buildings, Gardens and Furniture in Tidewater, Maryland (Cambridge, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1967), but does not comment on how prevalent the framing system is among historic houses there.

Two decorative construction details of interest in this house are the chamfers, with stops, along the front and rear plates and the unusual slant given to the top of each post on the second floor. While chamfers are a common method of dressing, or decorating, the plates and girts (as well as

²¹ HABS-CT-390; J. Frederick Kelly, The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut (Yale Press, 1924; Dover Reprint, NY, 1963), p. 127.

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other framing members) in first period buildings on the Jersey cape, on Long Island, and in the Massachusetts Bay area, the chamfer typically runs the entire length of the girt or plate before ending with a decorative stop (e.g. lamb's tongue) at the junction of a post. In the Pyne House, the chamfers along the plates end—and have a decorative stop—where the corner braces are pegged to the frame, but resume and continue until the next corner brace is encountered. [fig. 9 and 9A] The Pyne House is the only house in Cape May County found with this unique decorative treatment; no similar examples in the Massachusetts Bay area were illustrated or discussed in Cummings' *The Framed Houses of the Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725*, nor were any examples seen by this researcher during a recent research trip to Long Island.²²

The slanted tops on the posts are another peculiarity not seen in the Massachusetts Bay area or on Long Island in houses built contemporaneously with the Pyne House. Indeed, the treatment has not been observed by this researcher in Cummings' book, in houses she has visited on Long Island, or in various books about heavy timber frame buildings in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Thus, these two details are an anomaly, significantly illustrating the unique way in which this first period house was decorated, and pointing to a departure from traditional techniques used on the Jersey cape and elsewhere.

Within the context of the *Intensive Level Survey of the Heavy Timber Frame Buildings of Cape May County* (2003), the Jonathan Pyne House is one of twenty-two first period buildings among the 69 that were studied. Of those twenty-two first period buildings, the Pyne House is one of twelve that were built as 2-story dwellings; four were originally built with a one-room, one-story floor plan and the remaining six were 1½-stories tall. The original floor plan of fourteen of the twenty-one first period buildings—including this one—consisted of a single room per floor regardless of story height and on the whole, that floor plan was the most popular in Cape May County regardless of story height or construction period.

As previously mentioned, Cape May County's heavy timber frame buildings are typically smaller and more humble than contemporary examples on Long Island and in the Massachusetts Bay area. In the latter two areas, flush boards or plaster over lath were the most common interior wall finishes in the decades just before and after the turn of the 18th century.

In Cape May County, however, six of the twenty-one known first period houses—including the Jonathan Pyne House—exhibit signs of having no interior wall finish at the time of construction,

²² Architectural historian Greg Huber (from Macungie, Pa.), notes the presence of an interrupted chamfer on the summer beam of the ca. 1702 Latting's Hundred House in Huntington, Long Island, NY, per email communication with this researcher 10-17-2005.

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with the backsides of the exterior clapboards or vertical flush boards providing the interior finish. The others are the ca. 1700 Seagrave-Stites House (Middle Township, #61), the ca. 1695 Reeves-Iszard-Godfrey House (moved from Middle to Upper Twp, #25), the ca. 1695-ca. 1720 Garretson House (Upper Township, #69), the ca. 1710 John Corson, Jr. House (Upper Township, #12), and the ca. 1700 rear portion of the David Cresse-Clinton Hand House (Lower Township, #59). Of these, all but the rear portion of the Cresse-Hand House have some decoration—bead, chamfer, carving—on the corner posts and/or the corner braces, and all of these buildings, again except for the Cresse-Hand and the Corson houses, are two stories tall.

The Jonathan Pyne House may also have the oldest basement found among the 69 buildings comprising the survey. While it cannot be proven that the house was not first located elsewhere on the site then moved at an early date (at least before the ca. 1805 addition was built) onto its present basement and foundation, the full brick basement does show evidence in the form of now vacant mortise pockets for floor joists and large brick piers supporting what appears to be the original firebox framing [fig. 10] that might suggest the basement is either original or was at least built in the 18th century. The original chimney sill/girt has been removed (although the tenons are extant in the front and rear sills) and the original joists have been removed and replaced with circular sawn joists running in an opposite orientation from the originals. However, three of the original four wood barred basement windows are extant as are the ghosts of the original winder stair to the basement from the parlor above. Also, the original basement stairs leading to the outside are extant (but are now covered over along the west exterior wall at the south corner and filled in), and they may have originally led to and been sheltered by the lean-to that is hypothesized to have been located against the west wall of the original section.

Recent Investigation of the Historic Fabric of the Original Section

The owner recently exposed several parts of the original house's framing by removing selected clapboards on the exterior and some interior finish boards. Observed on several posts are open mortise pockets, or gains, approximately 3' off the floor on both the first and second floor levels to accommodate a horizontal nailer board. These gains confirm that the house was originally sided with vertical boards, a treatment found in four other first period buildings in the county.²³ The nailers were held with large rose head nails, some of which remain, along with a fragment of the nailer, *in situ*. The absence of horizontal nailer mortises on the west (side) wall at the first and second floor levels suggests this side of the house originally had a lean-to. Extant nail

²³ The John Corson, Jr. House (#12), the rear section of the Cresse-Hand House (#59), the Garretson House (#69), and the Owen Coachman House (#1—Batts Lane Whaler's Cottage).

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patterns show that the house retained its vertical board siding until the ca. 1805 east addition was built and the entire structure was sheathed then in extant beaded clapboard.

Also observed is the fact that there are no corner braces, not even pegs or peg holes for corner braces that might have been removed, on the first floor of the original section. [fig. 12] The only comparable Cape May County example is the ca. 1695-ca. 1720 Garretson House (#69, Upper Township) which has no corner braces observable in its completely exposed frame. Interestingly, the HABS drawings for the ca. 1649 "Old House" in Cutchogue, Long Island, show that it, like the Pyne House, also has corner braces only on its second floor.²⁴

While part of the west gable end was open, one hand-hewn oak stud was uncovered; it was pegged to the west end girt at the second floor level with a mortise and tenon joint. Both the stud and the girt are numbered with the Roman numeral XII. [fig. 8]

Additional Historic Image Documentation

Since the nomination was prepared in 1996, a detailed sketch of the house drawn in 1875 has been found in the collection of maps done by 19th century county surveyor, Nathan C. Price. [see fig. 6 and 7] This drawing shows a 2-story house with several details that are no longer extant: dormers, a front porch, and Victorian-type gingerbread trim along the cornice and eaves. The rear kitchen addition and the door transom, both of which are extant, are also shown. Although there is no evidence extant in the roof framing to confirm the presence of the dormers seen in the 1875 drawing, the following story related in 1913 about the War of 1812 suggests they were present on the house and its ca. 1805 east addition at the time of the war:

Tradition says this ditch [running north to south on the eastern end of nearby Lake Lily] was dug to let salt water into Lake Lily to prevent the British from getting supplies of fresh water therefrom. Note well the grit, determination, patience and perseverance of our patriot ancestors. Once when ashore here stealing cattle and getting water, one of the British asked a patriot what kind of buildings were two houses nearby that had dormer windows? Oh, replied the American, who like so many others in this country, ready at all times to outwit the British even when they could not whip them, "they are houses used for army quarters and those windows in the roof are port holes, and in a few minutes you'll be mown down with shot from the guns which the soldiers there have nearly ready

²⁴ HABS-NY-546.

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to fire.” Such hustling of the casks of water and the hurrying of cattle and sheep to the small boats and then to the ship was laughable to behold.²⁵

In Summary

The oldest section of the main block of the Jonathan Pyne House has many of the characteristics of first period (ca. 1690-ca. 1730) heavy timber frame construction as found in Cape May County, New Jersey. It has a transverse summer beam on the first floor, in addition to decorated front and rear plates that have a chamfer ending in a stop and large (9" x 11") chamfered posts with decoratively carved heads on the second floor. Its "second plate" roof framing system is found in only two other first-period timber framed buildings in the county. The Pyne House is particularly notable as the only timber frame house in the county (found to date) with slanted tops on its upright posts and with interrupted chamfers on its front and rear plates. Those details, combined with the carved post heads, the transverse summer beam, and the rare roof framing system, make this building eligible for listing under criterion C/architecture as a well-preserved example of first period, heavy timber frame construction as expressed in Cape May County, New Jersey.

²⁵ Charles Tomlin, Cape May Spray (Philadelphia, PA: Bradley Brothers, 1913), p. 29.

*Jonathan Pyne House (formerly the Richard Stites, Jr. House)
Lower Township, Cape May County, New Jersey*

Supplemental and Historic Images



Figure 1: double plate roof framing on the front of the house, view north

Secondary plate

Primary plate

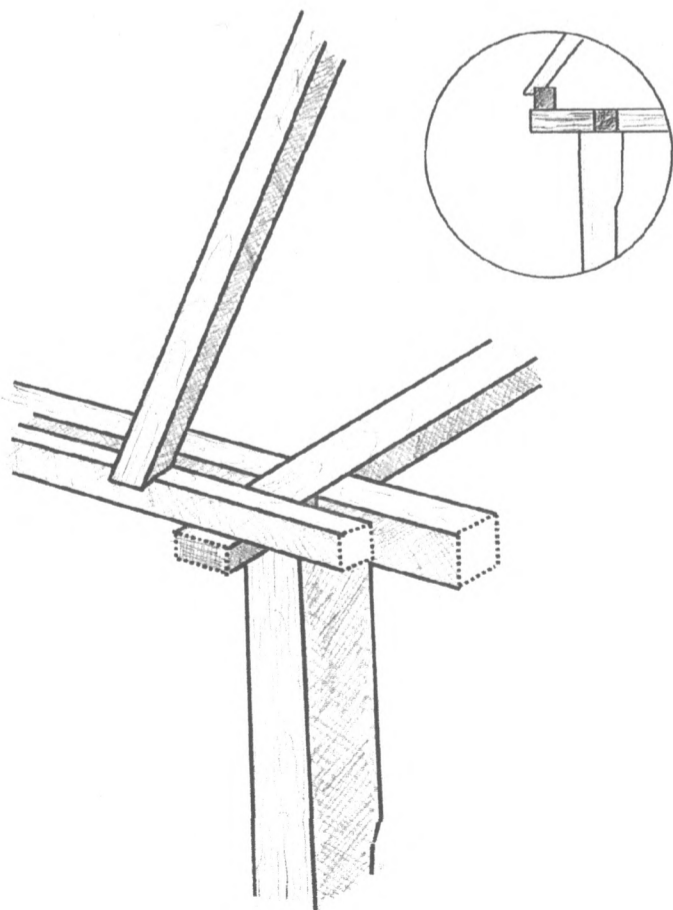


Figure 2: schematic drawing of the Pyne House roof framing system

Figure 3: (below) roof framing of the ca. 1690-1700 Carman-Norton House

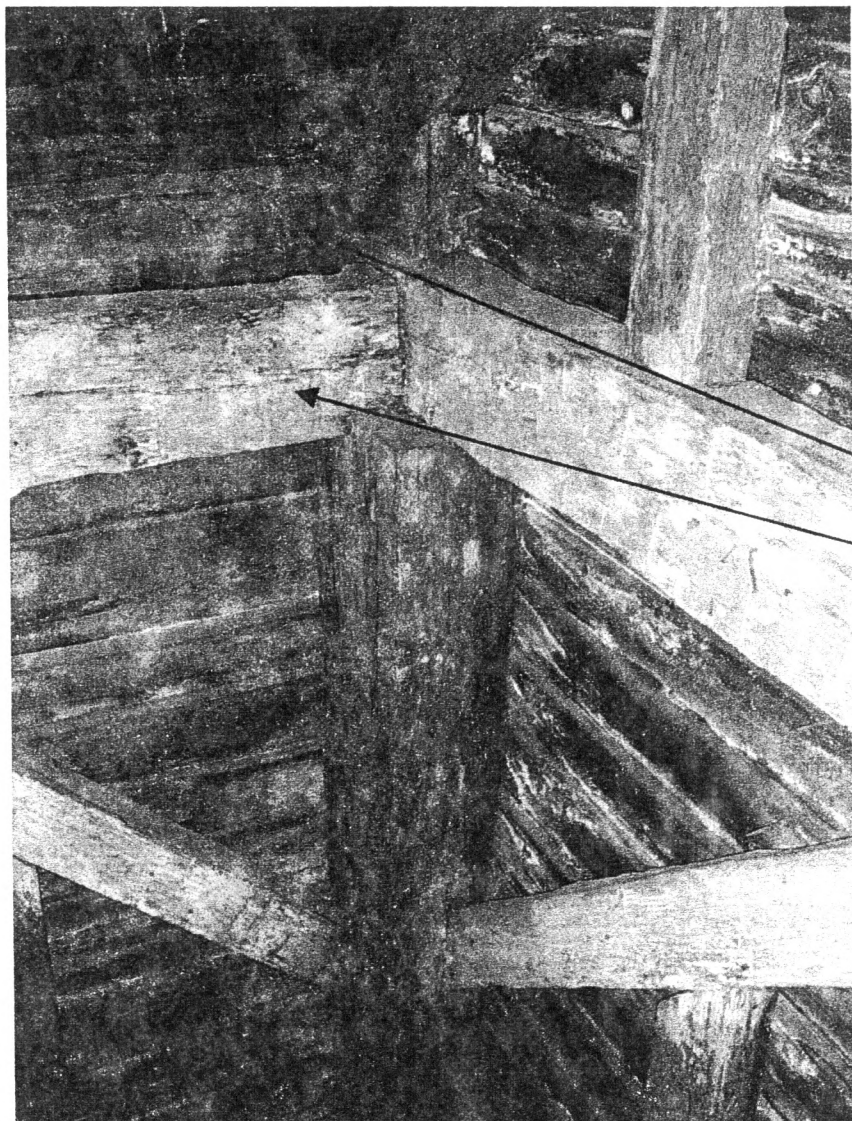
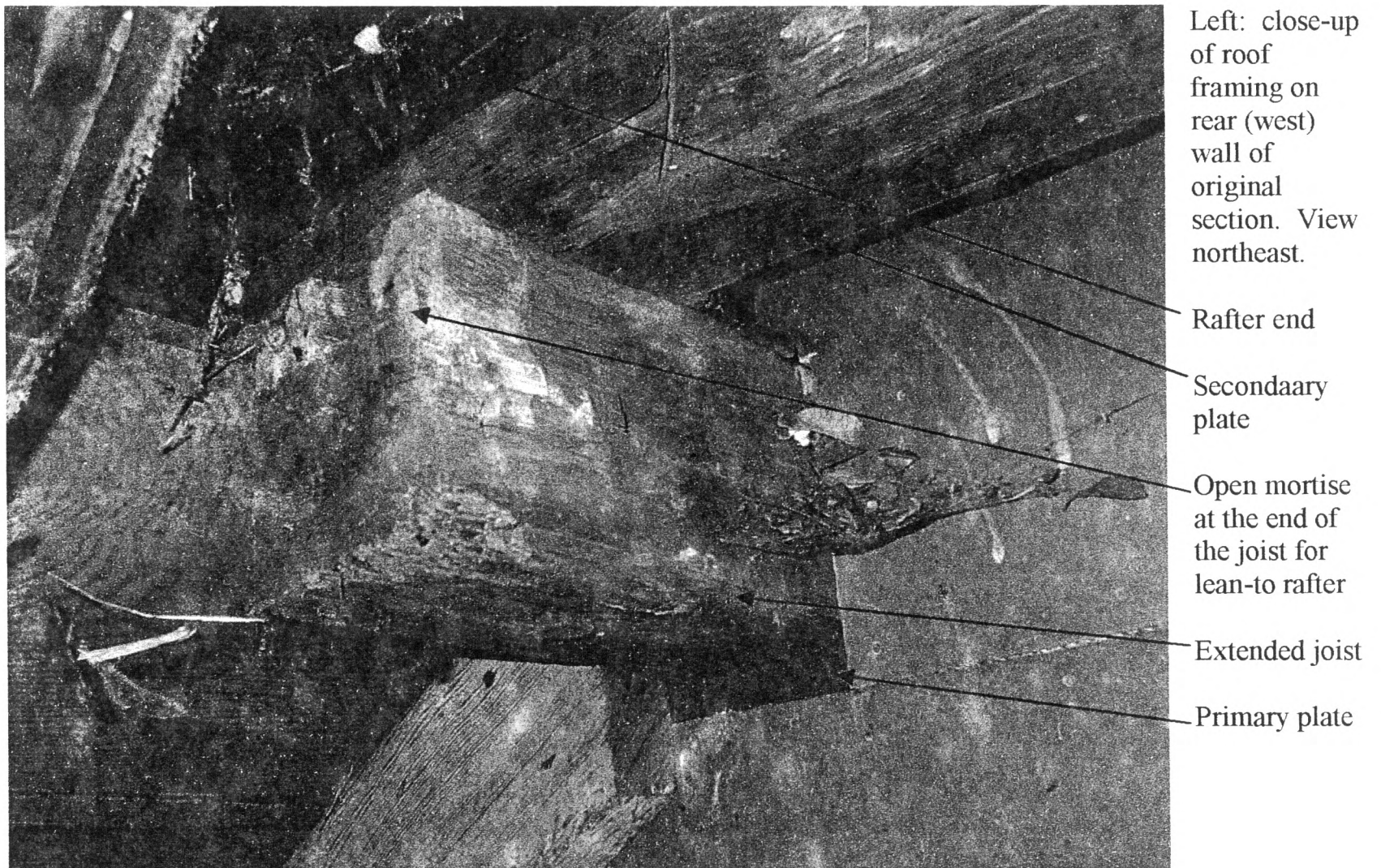


Figure 4: Teal-Foster House--roof framing as seen inside the winder stair to the attic

- secondary plate
- primary plate (front)

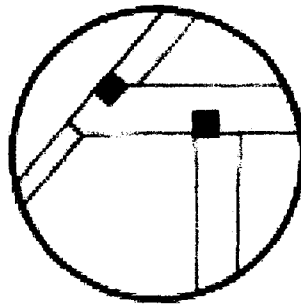
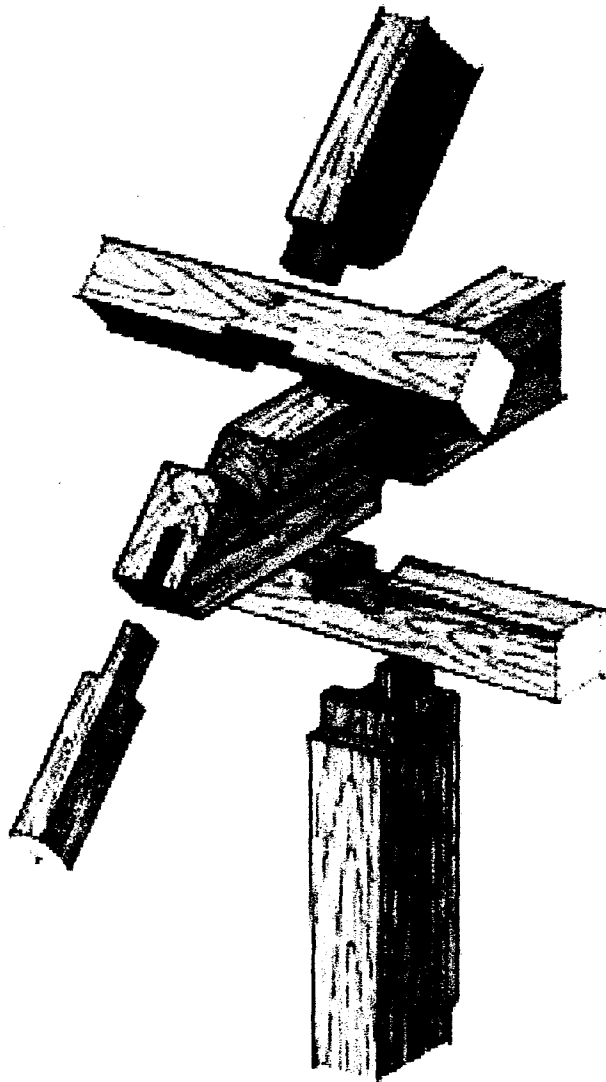


Figure 5: roof framing of the ca. 1689 Cooper-Frost-Austin House in Cambridge Massachusetts

This house has a tilted second plate.
 [Cummings, The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725, p. 87]



Figure 6: 1875 drawing of the Pyne House

The drawing is found on a real estate promotion map drawn in 1875. Note the dormers, the gingerbread trim, and the front porch, none of which are extant.

[N.C. Price Survey Book]

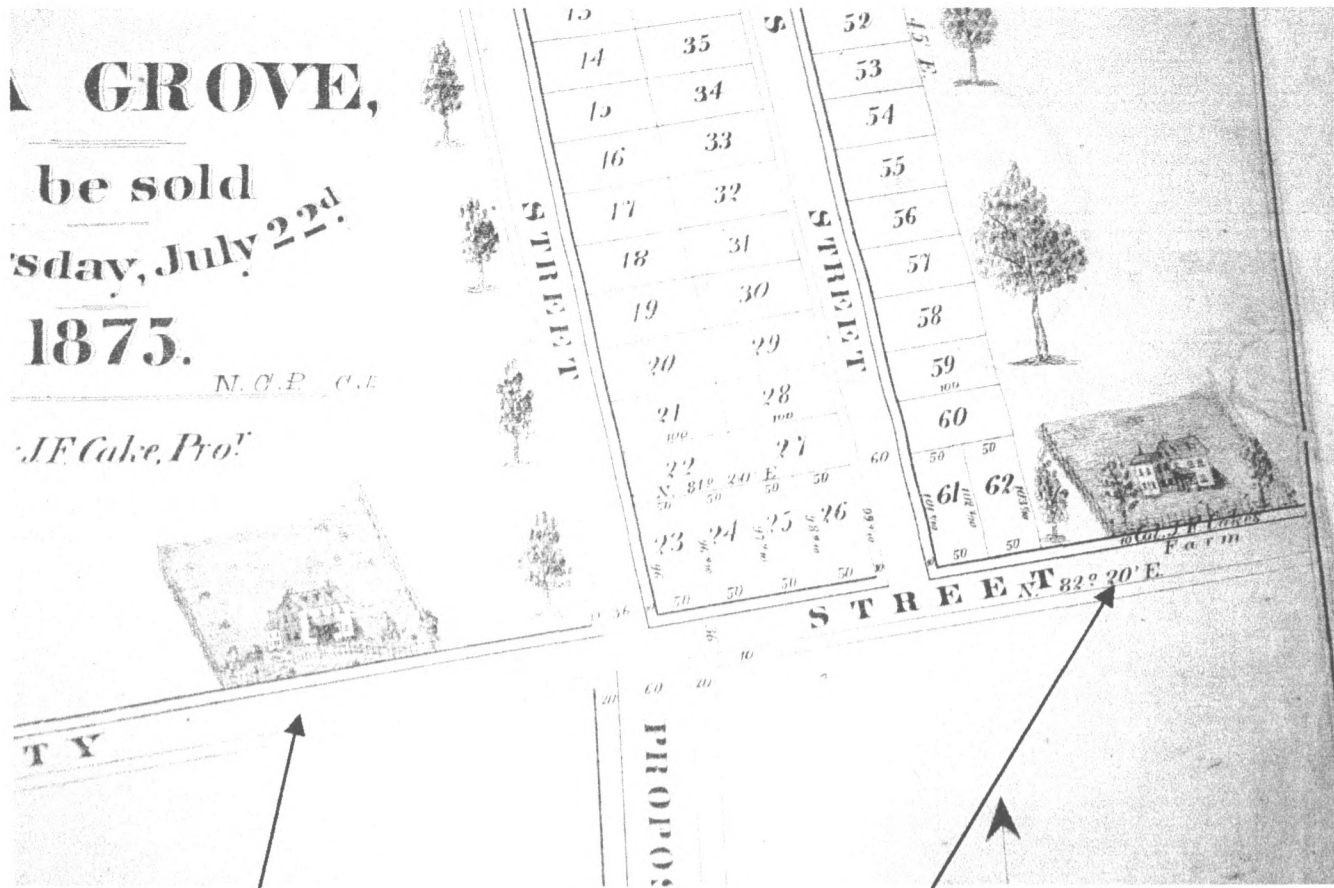


Figure 7: 1875 plan of lots showing the Jonathan Pyne House (to the left) and the "new house" built by Richard Stites, Jr. about 1765

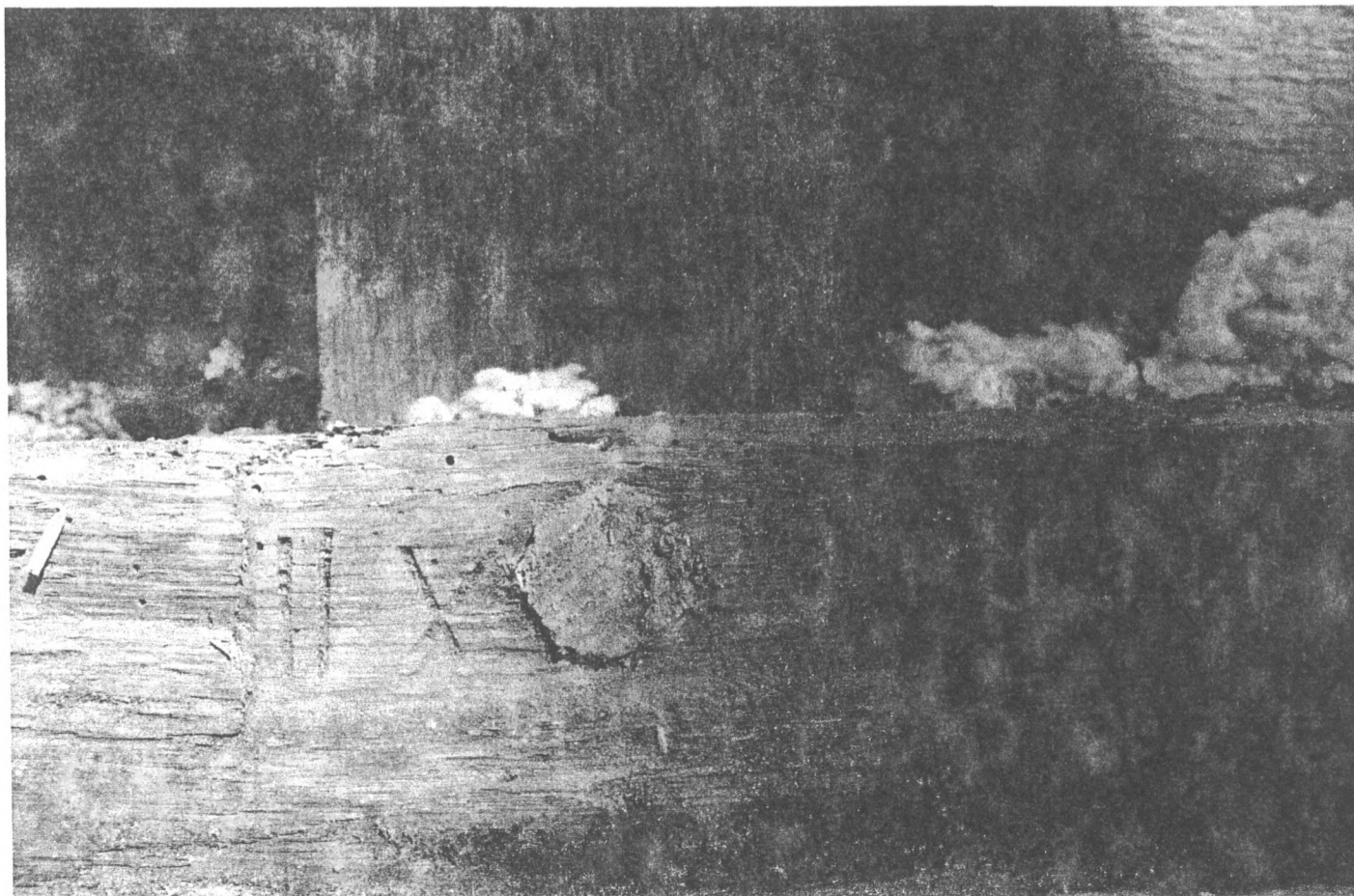
The ca. 1765 house is no longer standing.

Jonathan Pyne House

"new house" mentioned in 1772 will

Figure 8: original second floor stud

As found on the west wall, the stud is mortised, tenoned and pegged into the west end girt; view east.



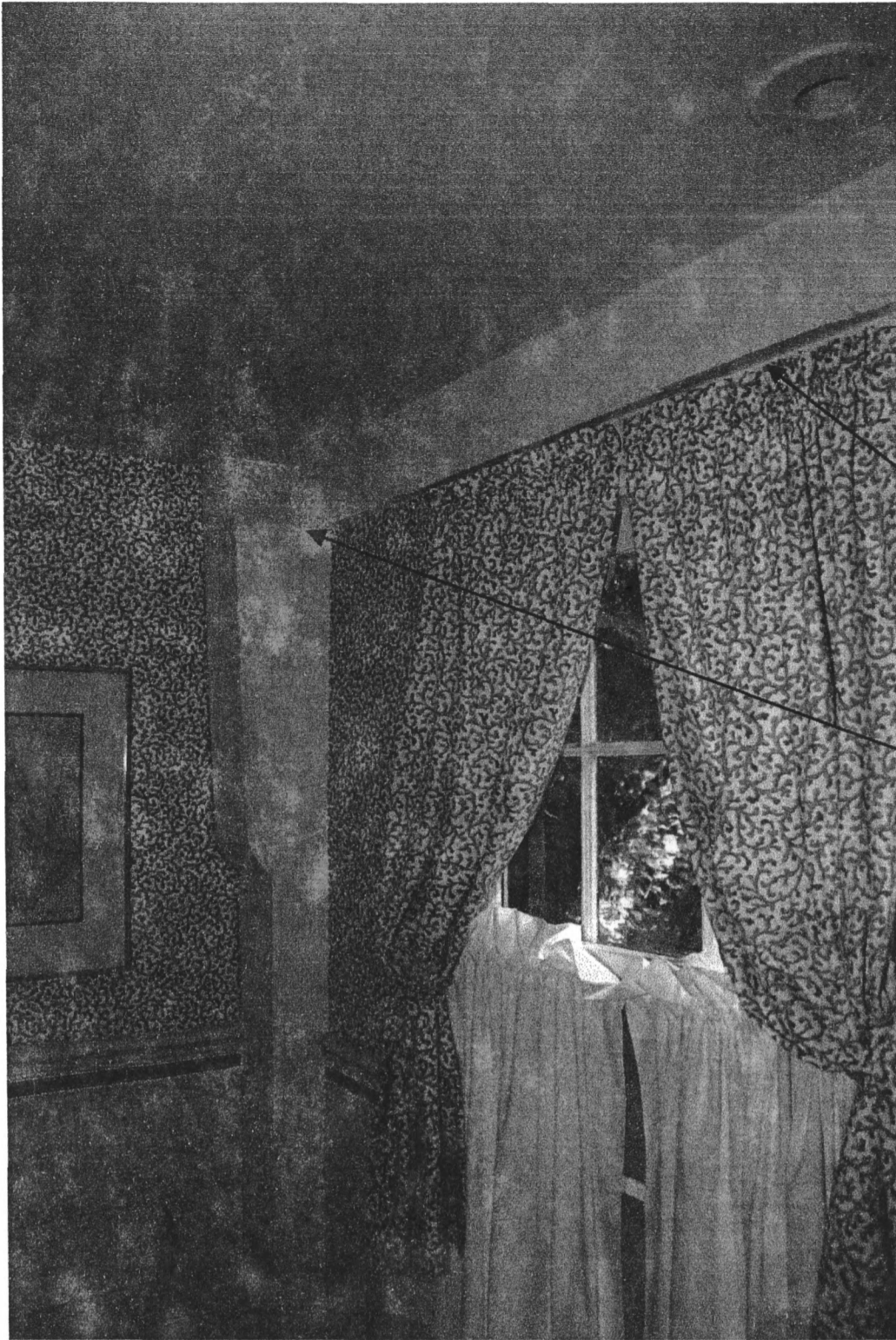


Figure 9: interrupted chamfer on the front plate and slanted post head

peg for corner brace (since removed)

slanted post head

Fig. 9A: below: close-up of interrupted chamfers

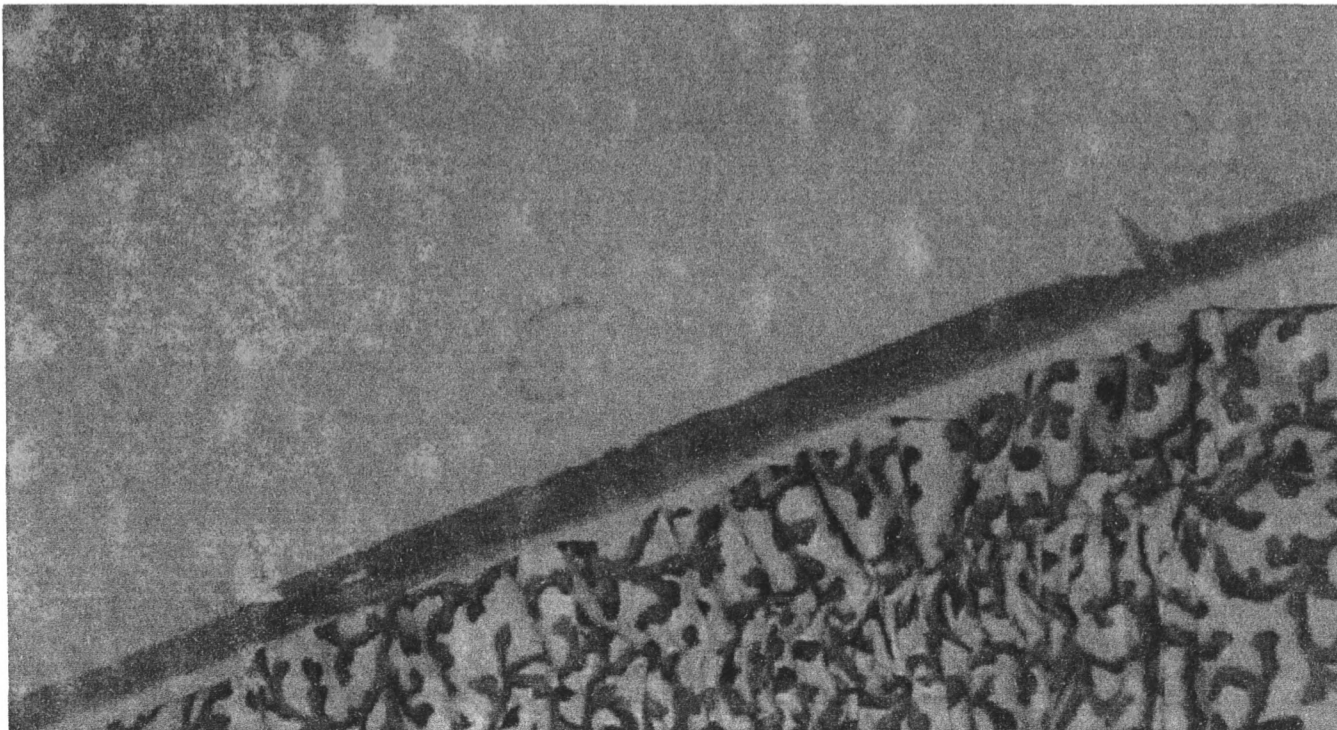
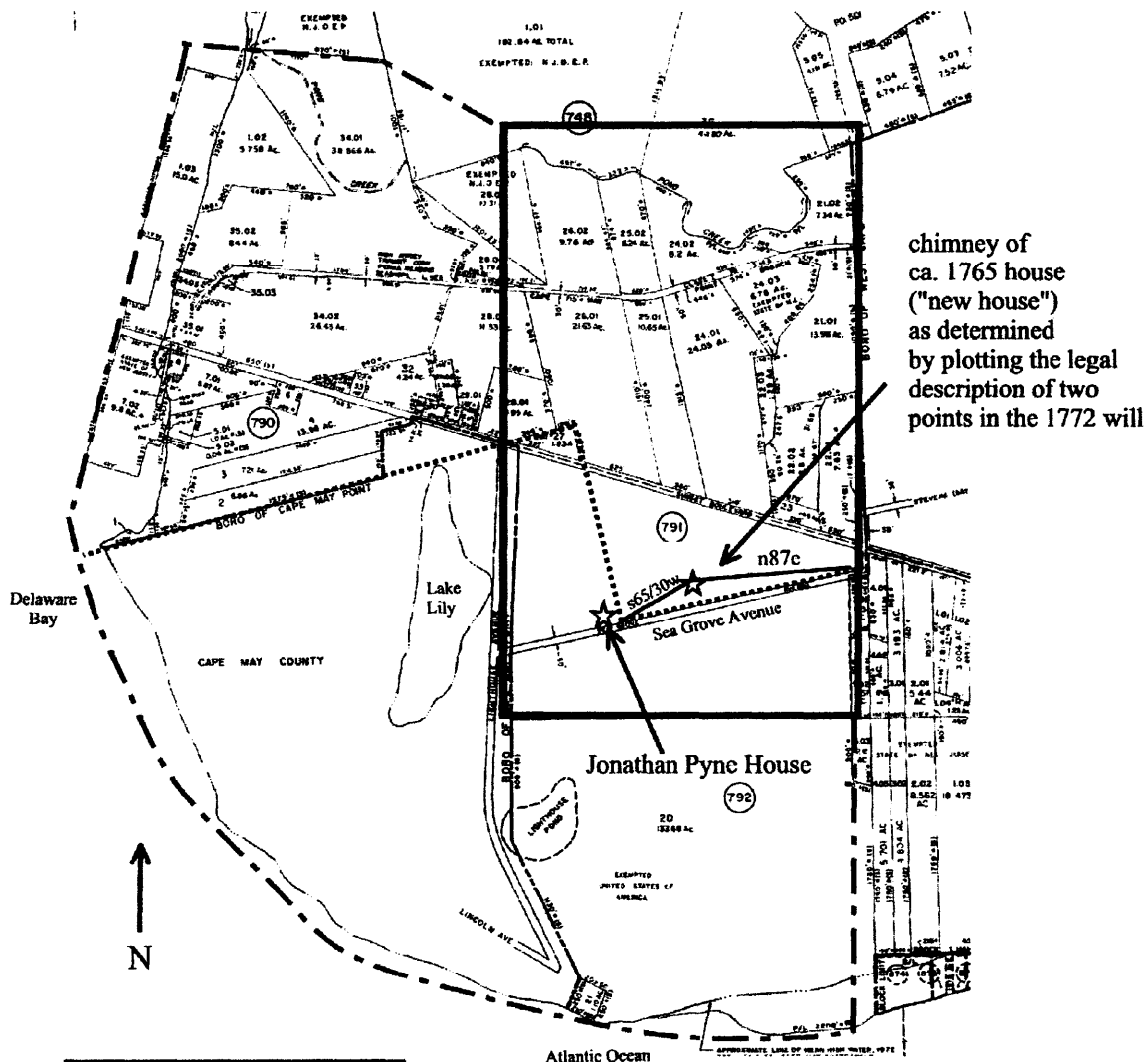


Figure 10: fireplace framing in basement under original section of the house

View southwest. The massive brick supports mark the original 5'2" wide configuration of the original fireplace.



Figure 11: tax map annotated to show historic boundaries and 1772 division line



chimney of ca. 1765 house ("new house") as determined by plotting the legal description of two points in the 1772 will

- original 300-acre tract
- 400+ acres bought in 1740 and 1741
- division line of 1772 will

Scale 1" = approx. 1,250'

0 625 1250 1875

Tax Map of Lower Twp., Cape May County, NJ
 annotated to show the location of the Jonathan Pyne House, the "new" house described in the 1772 will, the original Pyne purchase of 300 acres, the 400+ acres purchased in 1740, and 1741, and the division line established in the 1772 will of Richard Stites, Jr.

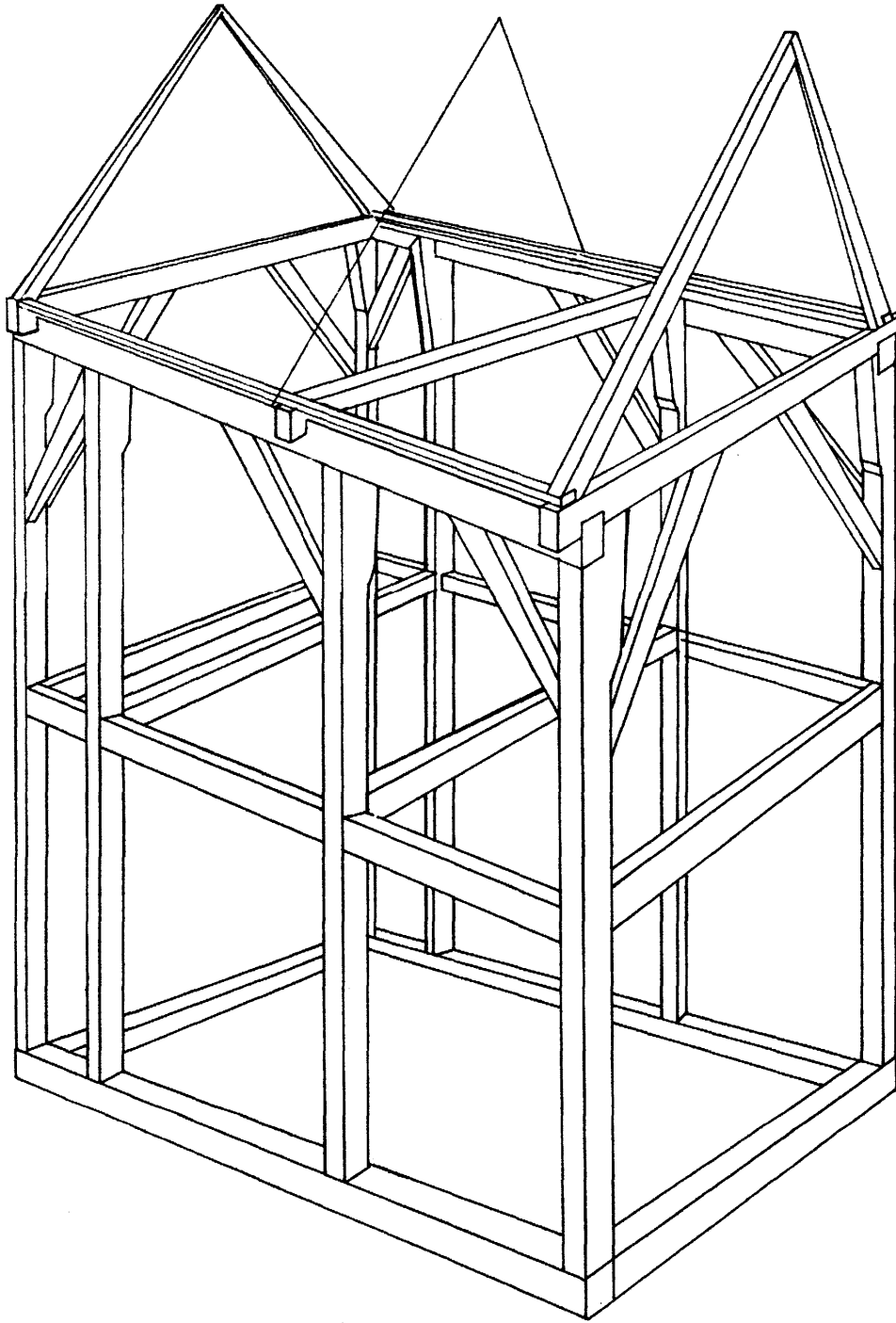


Figure 12: framing of the ca. 1694 section of the Jonathan Pyne House

[drawn by Dave Clemans]