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 by marking X in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter N/A for not applicable. For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories 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 ____________________

other names/site number ________________

2. Location

street & number Moore Avenue at Gloucester Avenue

city or town Lawnside Borough

classification NA not for publication

state New Jersey code 034 county Camden code 007 zip code 08045

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 X does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature of certifying official]

[Title]

[Date]

[Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO]

[State or Federal agency and bureau]

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature of certifying official]

[Title]

[Date]

[State or Federal agency and bureau]

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain) ____________________

[Signature of the Keeper]

[Date of Action]

[Edson H. Bedell]

[Entered in the National Register]

[9-9-94]
### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
- **Private**
- **Public-local**
- **Public-State**
- **Public-Federal**

**Category of Property**
- **Building(s)**
- **District**
- **Site**
- **Structure**
- **Object**

**Number of Resources within Property**

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<th>Noncontributions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</table>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**
- DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**
- WORK IN PROGRESS

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
- **Mid-19th Century**

**Materials**
- **Foundation** Brick, stone
- **Walls** asphalt, shingle
- **Roof** asphalt
- **Other**

**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

(Enter categories from instructions)

- **Ethnic Heritage:** Black
- **Social History**
- **Architecture**

#### Period of Significance

Ca. 1845 - 1879

#### Significant Dates

- Ca. 1845
- Ca. 1870

#### Significant Person

Mott, Peter (1807-1881)

#### 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.)

- primary 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
  - Record #
- 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:**

Camden County Cultural & Heritage Comm.
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than 1 acre. Runnemede NJ Quad

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 8 4 1 6 9 2 0 4 4 1 2 8 2 0
Zone Easting Northing
2 3 4

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: Gail Greenberg, County Historian
organization: Camden County Cultural & Heritage Commission
date: September 10, 1993
street & number: 250 South Park Drive
telephone: (609) 858-0040

city or town: Haddon Township
state: NJ
zip code: 08108

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: Lawnside Historical Society
street & number: P.O. Box 608
telephone:
city or town: Lawnside
state: NJ
zip code: 08045

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.
THE PETER MOTT HOUSE
LAWNSIDE, CAMDEN COUNTY, NJ

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION: ARCHITECTURAL

The Peter Mott House located within the King's Court subdivision of the Borough of Lawnside, NJ, [Photo #1] is in close proximity to Interstate Route 295, the New Jersey Turnpike and the White Horse Pike. Oriented toward the latter road, it is a small, rectangular, two story wood frame structure, one room deep, with a gable roof, approximately 15' by 40' in plan. Built in two stages, c.1845 and c.1870, the older section has a full basement with brick and rubble stone masonry foundation walls; the newer section has only a shallow crawl space and brick masonry foundation of unknown depth. The Mott House is the oldest known house in the borough. The older part of the building is on the south; the later one-room addition maintains the lines of the original house. The interior of the house reflects the simplicity of its exterior. The overall building condition is poor but stabilized.

The exterior fabric of the gable-roofed house consists of asphalt roofing shingles over wood shingles [§2] and asphalt wall shingles (east face) [§ 3] over wood shingles atop the original clapboard. Six-over-six sash single-hung windows, originally shuttered, punctuate the walls and a five-panel entrance door is centered on the west facade. A simple box cornice runs the length of both east and west walls and a single-flue stuccoed brick chimney extends above the ridge line. The roof framing consists of a single gable of simple rafters; in the older portion they meet at the ridge in a pegged mortise-and-tenon connection; in the newer portion they are mitred and nailed together.

The older part of the building features a full basement, first floor parlor, two second floor bedrooms and a fenestrated attic. The one-room wide north addition maintains the lines of the original house but was built over a shallow crawlspace. All the floor and roof framing members span in the east-west direction and bear on the front and rear walls of the building. A framed-out opening at the south end of the basement exhibits pegged mortise-and-tenon connections probably contemporary with the original framing.

Subsequent alterations have included substitution of deeper joists and beams inside the east and west foundation walls to re-support rotted joist ends. Second floor framing, also probably in its original configuration is composed of 3" x 6" joists, 24" on center spanning the entire 15' depth of the building.

The first-floor plan consists of two rooms separated by a narrow stair. The original "south" room contains a beaded baseboard, evidence of a two-piece molded chair rail, and simple door and window trim. The room has a window on the east and south walls and a window and door on the west wall. The walls and ceiling are plastered; the wood floor boards painted. A board-and-batten door to the basement retains 19th century hardware. The "north" room [f. 4 & 5] has one window on the west wall, one window on the north wall and a door on the east wall. A built-in cupboard, contemporary with the addition (c. 1870), has survived in the southeast corner of the "north" room.

The second floor is divided into three rooms and a stair. The room to the south is square and contains a window in the west and east walls. The middle room, adjacent to the stair, also has one window in each of the east and west walls. This room was converted into a bathroom and has a bathtub, toilet, sink and small closet. The north/addition room [f.6] has one window in each of the east and west walls.
Access to the attic is through a winding stair entered from the bathroom. The attic space is unfinished although insulated. The south gable end wall is punctuated with a 4/4 single-hung window. All structure is exposed and mortise-and-tenon joinery is used at the ridge on the south end of the house. A brick chimney adjoins the original end wall framing. The rafters of the south addition are joined with cut nails. The exposed roof framing reveals second generation cedar shingles above spaced roof lath.

The basement located under the original portion of the house has a dirt floor; three foundation walls are of brick, one foundation wall is composed of stone and brick. Stonework on the north wall provides evidence of the past existence of a fireplace vault. The joists span from east to west with a central girder. Although an interior stairway once existed, at present access is only through an exterior bulkhead opening.

Vacant and neglected since the death of its last occupant in 1987, the property on which the Peter Mott House stands was purchased and subdivided by a local developer who erected 20 semi-detached homes and planned to demolish the Mott House. Local residents united to prevent demolition, incorporated as the Lawnside Historical Society and secured funding for a feasibility study by Westfield Architects of Haddon Heights, New Jersey. Finally, the developer donated the house to the Historical Society for a museum.

While the overall condition of the building is poor; it has been stabilized for the time being and a preservation plan has been developed and agreed to by the Lawnside Historical Society. The Historical Society was awarded $97,900 in matching funds from the New Jersey Historic Trust. The ensuing agreement requires that a condition survey be completed by November, 1993 and that an archaeological survey be done before there is further disturbance of the ground.
THE PETER MOTT HOUSE
LAWSIDE, CAMDEN COUNTY, N.J.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Peter Mott House is a rare surviving example of a housing type associated with the early development of Lawnside, the only ante-bellum African-American community to later become an incorporated municipality in the State of New Jersey.

The house was the residence of Peter Mott (c. 1807 - 1881) between c. 1844 when he acquired the first of three parcels of land on which it was erected and 1879 when he sold it to Levis Moore; it was here on a tract of land previously owned by Jacob C. White, Sr., a black Philadelphian prominent in the Underground Railroad movement,\(^2\) that, according to impressive circumstantial evidence and oral testimony, Mott and his wife, Elizabeth Ann Thomas, lived and provided sanctuary to runaway slaves. Mott, a free black farmer, also served as a minister at Snow Hill Church.\(^3\) He founded its Sunday School in 1847, becoming the first Superintendent of what is the second oldest African-American Sunday School in the area\(^4\), organized c. 1792. Today it is known as the Mount Pisgah African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Peter Mott House meets National Register Criterion B for its association with Mott, an important early settler in Snow Hill, Criterion C as a rare example of an ante-bellum black landowner's home in Snow Hill and, Criterion A for a property associated with the Underground Railroad. Forceful circumstantial evidence, and oral traditions within the borough of Lawnside strongly suggest that Mott was involved with Underground Railroad activities and used his home as a "station".


\(^4\)Ibid.
THE PETER MOTT HOUSE
LAWNSIDE, CAMDEN COUNTY, NJ

The house is associated with the history of resistance, individualism and achievement by blacks and whites in the abolition movement. In spite of the harsh penalties provided against aiders and abettors of runaways in the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, Peter Mott is said to have been actively involved in the effort to promote freedom for members of his race trying to escape bondage.

Lawnside, an early nineteenth century African-American community was first known as "Snow Hill", a name appearing in maps as early as c. 1847. The name may have been taken from Snow Hill, Maryland, reputed to be the place of origin of many of its early residents. In 1840 Ralph Smith, a white, Philadelphia abolitionist gave to the residents land he owned along Warwick Road between the present-day boroughs of Barrington and Haddonfield and designed a formal village plan. He laid out lots naming the locale "Free Haven", to signify its role as a refuge from slavery. The lots were sold at low prices to provide homesites for free blacks.

5 See 83.90.405 "Map of the State of New Jersey within Ten Miles of Philadelphia, c. 1847. Map Collection of the Camden County Historical Society, Camden, NJ. Snow Hill is shown and identified as "colored settlement".

6 See 86.110.3.446. "A Tract of land at Snow Hill as laid in lots and called Free Haven, then owned by Ralph Smith. William Watson, esq., Surveyor, 1840. Map Collection of the Camden County Historical Society, Camden, NJ."
THE PETER MOTT HOUSE
LAWNSIDE, CAMDEN COUNTY, NJ

Smith may have been a Quaker with Haddonfield connections, cognizant of neighboring "Snow Hill". African-Americans had settled in the area long before Smith's efforts; he sought to develop the community and protect the property rights of those who had established new lives there.

In 1844 property adjacent to the Smith tract was purchased by Jacob C. White, Sr., a wealthy and influential Philadelphia African American dentist, from the estate of Dr. Bowman C. Hendry of Haddonfield, and added to the plan of Free Haven. Jacob White may have known Ralph Smith and been encouraged by him to acquire the land. The fact that White knew of the village is prima facie evidence that "Free Haven" played a role in White's anti-slavery activities. Lawnside's oral traditions have always included talk of the mix of free blacks, manumitted slaves (presumably of nearby Quakers) and runaways. In 1907 the village became known as "Lawnside"; the name had been used for the nearby Reading-Atlantic City Railroad station since 1883.

When the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee (PVC), the first organized society of the Underground Railroad, came into existence in 1838, Jacob C. White, Sr. was chosen as its Secretary. Financial support came from those who were sympathetic to its cause including White, William Still and Robert Purvis, all of whom were also actively engaged in its clandestine work. White's purchase of additional land for "Free Haven" came 6 years after the inception of the PVC giving weight to the statement made by the authors of The WPA Guide to 1930s New Jersey that the borough "...began as a station on the Underground Railroad."  

In the 1840 census, Mott is listed as a free colored person between the ages of 24 and 36, employed in agriculture. A female in the same age category, probably Elizabeth Ann Thomas whom he married in New Jersey on November 2, 1833, was part of his household. Ten years later, in 1850, Mott was recorded as a 40 year-old laborer owning real estate valued at $600, born in New Jersey and unable to read or write. Eliza Ann Mott [sic] was also entered as illiterate and born in New Jersey.

The 1860 census reiterates the Motts' birthplace as New Jersey, indicates he is a farm worker owning real estate worth $200; however, the pair are not denoted "illiterate". In the 1870 enumeration, some years after the Civil War, Peter Mott, age 60 is a farmer with real estate valued at $1000. and a personal estate of $250., establishing him as one of the wealthier members of Free Haven. At this time, he and his wife, now called Ann are again classified as illiterate but Peter's birthplace is identified as Delaware and that of Ann as Virginia.

In 1880, at the last census taken during Mott's life time he was registered as a widowed plaster mason born in a slave state. He died the following year of "valvular heart disease" and is buried in Snow Hill Church (Mount Pisgah) Cemetery.

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8Gloucester County Historical Society, Woodbury, NJ. The marriage was performed and recorded by Justice of the Peace, John Core.
There can be no doubt that Mott was quite literate: his signature appears on deeds he signed in 1850 and 1852; Elizabeth Mott's signature, however, is represented by an "X". Mott's important role in the community as a minister and Sunday School official indicates that he was able to read. The contradictions may be explained either by careless census-takers or Mott's reluctance to admit he was a person of education from a slave state. Indeed, since Mott's name does not appear in any New Jersey records until his 1833 marriage, it is entirely possible that he, himself, was one of the "contraband" led out of Delaware to freedom via the Underground Railroad.

The history of this "transit system" is largely undocumented even in the journals and writings of William Still, Robert Smedley and Wilbur H. Siebert. It was a loosely connected system which relied on the secrecy and commitment of those who participated. "Conductors" and "agents" often appeared spontaneously; the work was performed by volunteers acting according to their own instincts; private homes served as "stations" and hiding places. Few records were kept, many fugitives were illiterate. By the end of the Civil War, the Underground Railroad ceased to function and former operatives shifted their dedication to improving the status of freed men; what we have learned about its system has largely been acquired from written and oral accounts given at a later date. Oral history in the black community provides a very strong chain of evidence which cannot be discarded.

Miss Doris Scott, now in her late 70s, recalled, in a film produced by Muneerah Higgs, Lawnside: The Haven To Freedom, her grandmother telling her that Peter Mott used to take [fugitive] slaves in his wagon to the Quakers in Haddonfield and Moorestown. Miss Scott's grandmother, Mary Williams Bell (1850-1938) may have been passing on information told her by her parents. Deeds and maps in the possession of Miss Scott show that the Bell place bordered the Mott property. Because of the proximity of their homes, Mary Williams Bell undoubtedly knew Mott; in addition, her family also attended Mount Pisgah Church before joining a breakaway congregation.

\footnote{Wilbur H. Siebert, The Underground Railroad From Slavery To Freedom. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1898, p. 11.}
Wilbur H. Siebert points out, "New Jersey was intimately associated with Philadelphia...in the underground system...from Philadelphia ...runaways were taken across the Delaware River to Camden...thence...to Burlington and...Bordentown." And, once a slave was led away to freedom, "...[he was] more likely to trust a black face...[because] a prominent feature of the Negro underground was providing of overnight accommodations...["10

New African American arrivals in Snow Hill in the years prior to the Civil War would never have caused suspicion and wariness; hospitality and warm welcome would have been awaiting them.

The Lawnside Historical Society which owns the Peter Mott House has been awarded $97,900. in matching funds from the NJ Historic Trust's Preservation Bond program because the significance of the Peter Mott House to the local community is so great that it is of the utmost importance to revitalize the building.

10Ibid., p. 123.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS


Pennsylvania Abolition Society Manuscript Collection, Volume II. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.


PUBLISHED MATERIALS


Gopsil's Philadelphia Directory. 1870


PETER MOTT HOUSE
LAWNSIDE, CAMDEN COUNTY, NJ

BIBLIOGRAPHY (Continued)

The Philadelphia Colored Directory, 1907.

Prowell, George R. The History of Camden County, New Jersey.


Smedley, R.C., M.D. A History of the Underground Railroad. 1883.


THE PETER MOTT HOUSE
LAWNSIDE, CAMDEN COUNTY, N.J.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 44; Lot 19
Lawnside Borough, Camden County, NJ

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entire parcel containing the Peter Mott House.
The Peter Mott House, Lawnside, NJ  

Camden County

Chain of Title:

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<td>10/31/41</td>
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<td>Joseph E. Moore</td>
<td>1169/295</td>
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<td>Lewis [Levis] Moore</td>
<td>Peter Mott</td>
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<td>L. Phifer, Esq.</td>
<td>I/22</td>
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<td>Thos. Stephenson</td>
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<td>Jacob C. White</td>
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Gloucester County Register of Deeds

B: 7/15/1806  Thos. Stephenson  Jacob Jennings (Lot #6) None
     1/15/1806  Thos. Stephenson  Jacob Jennings (Lot #5) M, 295
C: 9/23/1844  Jacob C. White  Estate/Dr. Bowman C. Hendry B/352
     11/18/1813  Dr. Bowman C. Hendry  Isaac Burrough BB/371
     1/15/1806  Isaac Burrough  Jacob Jennings  None
Peter Mott House
Lawnside, Camden County, New Jersey

PHOTOGRAPHS
The following is the same for all photographs:

1.) Peter Mott House
2.) Camden County, New Jersey
3.) Martin Shore, Photographer
4.) April, 1992
5.) Negatives held by Margaret Westfield, R.A.
   Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants
   425 White Horse Pike
   Haddon Heights, NJ 08035
   (609) 547-0465
6.) View of Peter Mott House, looking southwest
    Photograph 1 of 7
7.) View of north and east elevations, looking southwest
    Photograph 2 of 7
6.) View of south and west elevations, looking northeast
    Photograph 3 of 7
6.) Interior view of first floor northern room, looking southwest
    Photograph 4 of 7
6.) Interior view of first floor northern room, looking northeast
    Photograph 5 of 7
6.) Interior view of second floor northern room, looking southeast
    Photograph 6 of 7
6.) Interior view of south attic room, looking south
    Photograph 7 of 7
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PETER MOTT HOUSE

Lawnside Borough, Camden County, New Jersey
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

H.T.S.

PETER MOTT HOUSE

Lawnside Borough, Camden County, New Jersey
ATTIC FLOOR PLAN

Lawnside Borough, Camden County, New Jersey