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JUL 27 2005

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 Owen Coachman House

other names/site number Batts Lane Whaler's Cottage

2. Location

street & number 1019 Batts Lane not for publication

city or town Lower Township vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Cape May code 009 zip code 08204

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] Date 7/22/05
Signature of certifying official/Title
John S. Watson, Jr., Assistant Commissioner 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

Date of Action

Patrick Andrews

9/9/2005

Owen Coachman House
Name of Property

Cape May County, NJ
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	4	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)

Postmedieval English

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK (piers)
walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof WOOD/shingle
other _____

Narrative Description

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

see attached continuation sheets

Owen Coachman House
Name of Property

Cape May County, NJ
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

A: ethnic heritage/Black

C: architecture

Period of Significance

A: 1846-1850

C: ca. 1700 to ca. 1855-60

Significant Dates

A: 1846

C: ca. 1700

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

see attached continuation sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Cape May County Historical & Genealogical Society

Owen Coachman House
Name of Property

Cape May County, NJ
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .63 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	5 0 6 1 0 9	4 3 1 2 3 6 5
	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.) see attached continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) see attached continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan Berkey, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization _____ date April 5, 2005

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

city or town Linwood state NJ zip code 08221-1137

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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Owen Coachman House
Cape May County, NJ

Narrative Description

Summary Description

The Owen Coachman House is a wood frame residence comprised of a modestly rectangular two-story main block that was originally built ca. 1695 to ca. 1730 (first period) as a one-story dwelling with heavy timber framing consisting of exposed flared corner posts, exposed front and rear girts, and exposed, hand-hewn floor joists. In 1846, the house was moved to its present site and was raised to two stories. Between 1855 and 1860, a one-room one-story kitchen addition was built to the rear and around 1890-1900 a porch was added to the rear of the main block and the south side of the kitchen addition. At the same time, the interior of the main block was remodeled with new interior door and window trim and new windows. Sometime in the early to mid-1900s, the porch was enclosed to create a bathroom and utility room. In 2004-2005, the house was restored with a new wood shingle roof, new clapboard, new 6/6 wood sash windows, and some new interior finishes, all of which are historically appropriate.

The Owen Coachman House stands on a .63 acre lot in a rural section of Lower Township, Cape May County, New Jersey. [photo 1] The Cape May Canal is located about 1,500' to the northeast, the City of Cape May is located about 1.5 miles to the southeast, the Delaware River is about 2 miles to the south, and the Delaware Bay is about 2 miles to the west. Set back about 12' from Batts Lane, the house faces west and stands on level ground that is modestly landscaped with mature trees and shrubs near the house. The rear of its very deep lot is heavily treed. Also on the site are three non-contributing buildings (a workshop/tool shed, a privy, and a chicken coop) and one non-contributing structure (a grape arbor), all of which date to the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Neighboring houses range in date from ca. 1850 to the late 20th century and include vernacular two-story, bungalow, and ranch styles.

Exterior Description:

The exterior of the 2-story main block and both additions are clad in new white cedar clapboard and have new 2' long red cedar roof shingles. All windows are new wood 6/6 double hung sash that replicate the originals in size and light configuration.

The façade (west elevation) of the main block has a central door flanked by two windows on the first floor, and two windows on the second floor. [photo 2] In the gable ends, there is one attic window on the south elevation and another on the north elevation. There are no windows on the first and second floors of the north (side) elevation. There is one window on the second floor of

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the east (rear) elevation and two windows on the south (side) elevation of the first floor. A tall brick, interior end wall corbelled chimney pierces the gabled roof ridge at the northernmost end of the main block, and the roof ridge runs parallel to the façade (west elevation). There is a boxed cornice with modest returns on the front and rear elevations and new rake boards in the gable ends. [photos 2, 3, and 4] The main block stands on a foundation of brick piers that appear to date to the mid-19th century.

A one-story, gable-roofed kitchen addition is placed against the rear of the house and its gable roof runs perpendicular to that of the main block. It has two windows on the north (side) elevation and a single window on the rear (east) elevation. A tall brick interior end wall chimney flue, which serves a kitchen stove, rises from the easternmost end of the gable roof. This addition appears to date from ca. 1855 to 1860 and in plan it measures approximately 11'5" wide by 15' deep. [photo 3]

Also attached to the rear elevation and a portion of the south (side) elevation of the main block is another later addition, also one-story tall, which was originally a porch, but was later enclosed and now contains a room and a bathroom. [photo 4] It is one bay wide and three bays deep, with a door on the rear (east) elevation, three windows on the south (side) elevation, and one window on the north (front) elevation. Part of the south wall is modestly angled to follow the lot line. This addition was probably built about 1890-1900 and was then enclosed around 1930.

The front and back doors are modern replications 18th/early 19th century board and batten doors and feature antique rim locks and antique lift latches; both are hung from antique strap hinges. All hardware placed in the house, including turn-buttons and Blake's latches, is antique and matches ghosts in the paint or wear patterns found on the doors and jambs.

Interior Description:

In general, the interior plaster walls in the main block and the kitchen addition remain *in situ* but have recently been covered with an acrylic resin finish coat (Senergy®) that simulates a plaster surface while hiding such surface irregularities as cracks, holes, and patches. Floors in the two rear additions consist of random width pine placed during the 2004-2005 restoration, while the original floors in the main block were retained.

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Main block

In plan, the main block of the house has a footprint approximately 16' wide and 15' deep. The first floor contains a parlor, which has exposed hand-hewn corner posts with an exaggerated flare. [photo 7] The posts have a true dimension of 8" x 8" at the top. Floor joists overhead are also exposed, are roughly hand-hewn, and are not finished with a bead or chamfer on the edges. There are facing boards between the joists at ceiling level on the front (west) and rear (east) walls. Random width pine floors, that appear to date ca. 1846, run east to west. The fireplace is located on the north wall; it has a winder stair to the east with a closet underneath and a closet to the west. The fireplace may be original and has a wood lintel; the lintel is made from a partially dressed log and the log end is still visible in the closet to the east. The overmantel and a small portion of the wall to the west of the fireplace are plastered, but the remainder of the wall is paneled with hand-planed flush boards that are painted. A mantel shelf, which replicates the profile seen in ghosts in the paint, was recently added by the current owners. [photos 5 and 6]

Doors to both closets are hand-planed board and batten and appear to date from the 18th to early 19th centuries. The door to the winder stair is also hand-planed board and batten and is fronted by a wood step that extends into the parlor. Baseboards are topped with a 1/2" bead, walls are plaster, and there is a new 6/6 double hung wood window on the east (rear) wall near the winder stair which overlooks the kitchen addition. [photo 5] Trim around doors and windows consists of simple wood moldings, 3 1/2" wide, placed during the restoration. The floorboards overhead are exposed and show an infilled section near the chimney, which probably marks the location of a ladder that provided access to the garret before the building was raised to two stories in 1846.

Exposed on the east wall under the winder stair in the closet are the 1 1/8" thick vertical flush boards that were placed on the first floor of the building in the early 1800s as an exterior sheathing.

The second floor is comprised of a hall and two small bedrooms. [photo 8] The ceiling and walls are plaster, and the flooring is random width pine, machine sawn, that appears to date to the early 1800s. Baseboards appear to date to ca. 1846, are 4" high, and have a modest chamfer on top, while unmolded door and window trim matches that in the parlor. Located in the northeast corner of the east bedroom next to a duct chase is a small fireplace chimney cupboard that was found in one piece in the storage barn. The timber framing of the northeast corner of the second floor is exposed in the stairs leading to the attic [fig. 8], and there is a closet in the northwest corner of the hallway. Both the stairs and the closet are fronted by ca. 1846 board and batten doors.

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Rafters in the attic are hand-hewn and also have sides that bear marks of a pit saw, indicating that each was hewn from a log by hand first, and then divided with a pit saw. The rafters are numbered with Roman numerals and are joined with mortise and tenon joints held by overly-large pegs. Typical for the houses in Cape May County, the rafters are tapered, going from wider at the floor to narrower at the ridge. One rafter is notched for purlins (roof lath), but since it is the only one so notched, it was probably crowned, and the notch was created to make the rafter and lath sit even with the others. Attic floor boards are random width pine, alternating male (tongue) and female (groove) held with machine-headed, machine-cut nails. Purlins, or roof lath, are vertical, machine-sawn, and are spaced for 24" long wood shingles.

Kitchen Addition

A one-story rear addition, built around 1855-1860, houses a kitchen. [photos 9 and 10] The north, south, and east (rear) walls are plaster, while the west wall consists of ca. 1800 vertical board sheathing that was the original exterior wall covering of the main block. [photo 9] The exposed, new ceiling joists have no bead or chamfer on the edges, and the room has new random-width pine floors. Also exposed are the front, rear, and side girts, and all of the new exposed framing members are modern replacements of the insect-infested original beams. Window and door moldings are of simple, 3½" wide wood and the ceiling consists of new random-width pine floorboards (vertical sawn and circular sawn) that replicate the originals. In addition to the windows on the east, west, and north elevations, there is also a new 6/6 double hung wood window on the south (side) wall which overlooks the porch/bathroom addition. [seen in photo 11]

Porch/Bathroom Addition

This addition was originally an open porch built around 1890-1900 and enclosed ca. 1930. The north wall is sheathed in the original clapboard of the kitchen addition, while the remaining interior walls are covered with new narrow, beaded boards laid vertically. The ceiling is also covered with new narrow beaded boards. Both the ceiling and board walls replicate the deteriorated early/mid-20th century beaded board finishes. There are no baseboards. [photo 11]

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Original Appearance and Subsequent Alterations:

The physical characteristics of the Coachman House suggest that it was built between ca. 1695 and ca. 1730. As evidenced by its one-story corner posts, the main block was originally built as a one-story, heavy timber frame house. [photo 7] The infilled floor boards (on the second floor) in front of the chimney stack show the likely location of ladder access to the garret before the house was raised to 2-stories tall, and their placement in front of—rather than to the side of—the chimney suggests that the fireplace wall on the first floor was originally built with closets on both sides of the fireplace.

It is likely that the wall over the mantel on the first floor was originally finished with flush boards rather than the plaster seen today, since flush boards were typically used on houses as an interior finish, especially on the fireplace wall, until ca. 1820-1830 in Cape May County. Similarly, it is likely that the original 18th century wall finish on all other walls in the parlor consisted of either flush boards, or just the backsides of the exterior siding.

Windows at the time of original construction were likely 6/6 double hung wood sash. Examination of the framing shows that the house was originally built with only a center door and the window to its north. It is not known when the corner brace in the southwest corner on the facade was removed and the present window south of the door was inserted. The exterior finish of the original one-story house consisted of flush boards laid vertically and nailed to a horizontal nailer mortised into the corner posts. Parts of the horizontal nailer are *in situ* on the north and east walls and part of the vertical board siding is exposed on the west wall of the kitchen. [photo 9]

Sometime in the early 1800s--while the house was still one-story tall--the exterior vertical board siding was replaced, at least on the east (rear) wall of the main block, with new vertical board siding as evidenced by the hammer-headed machine cut nails which still hold the extant boards on the east (rear) wall.

The house was moved to this location in 1846, likely from elsewhere in Lower Township. Confirmation of the move is seen in the brick piers which support the main block; the county's earliest houses, in fact most until about 1800, rested on foundation stones placed at the corners and under the front and back doors.

After the house was moved, the hand-hewn and pit-sawn rafters were removed, a second story was added, and a winder stair was built to provide access to the new second floor and new garret.

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This new second floor was built with vertical sawn framing members, but still in the timber framing tradition (third period), and the original rafters were replaced on top of the new second floor plates. The attic and first floor floorboards appear to be original to the date of the second story addition (1846), while the second floor floorboards appear to date to the 18th or early 19th century. The plaster walls in the parlor were probably added at the time the house was raised to its present 2-story configuration. The new second floor addition was sided with wood clapboards, a portion of which are extant on the east (rear) wall above the kitchen ceiling. The first floor remained sheathed in vertical boards, which are also extant on the same wall.

Around 1855-1860, the one-room, one-story kitchen was added to the rear of the main block. At this time, the window on the rear wall of the main block (which overlooked the new kitchen) was probably also removed and covered over.

Around 1890-1900, a one-story porch was added to the rear in the corner created by the main block and kitchen addition. Around the same time, the parlor was "modernized" with wide Victorian style moldings and bull's eye corner blocks around the doorways and windows. The original windows (likely 6/6 double hung wood sash) were removed about this time also and replaced with 1/1 double hung wood sash windows. About 1930, the porch was enclosed and a bathroom was created in the westernmost part of the space. At the same time, the north wall of the kitchen addition was altered with the insertion of a double window. [fig. 7 and 10]

Sometime in the 1950s, a window on the south wall of the kitchen, which overlooked the porch, was removed and in-filled, while baseboards and door and window trim were modernized.

The original 1846 clapboards of the second story of the main block can still be seen on the rear wall in the attic space above the rear kitchen ell; these clapboards are of an unusual size (6" x 7/8" thick), as opposed to the thinner (1/2" – 5/8") siding usually seen in the area after the mid-1800s. These clapboards are also weathered, which supports the theory that the rear ell was added some time after the second story was built. Around 1880, the clapboards on the main block (both stories) and the kitchen addition were replaced with 6" x 1/2" clapboards fastened with machine made cut nails. These were in place when the present owners purchased the house in 2004. Similar-sized clapboard, held with round head nails, was extant on the bathroom/utility room addition. Cedar shingles 4" x 24" were extant under a modern asphalt shingle roof in place on the main block in 2004.

Restoration of the building undertaken by the current owners in 2004-2005 has revealed several details about the construction of the main block: (1) vertical board siding, 1 1/8" thick and held with hammer-headed machine cut nails, is extant on the entire rear (east) wall of the main block;

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a portion of these are visible under the winder to the second floor and are exposed on the west wall of the kitchen; (2) the nailer for the vertical board siding is extant on the north wall of the main block—it is 1” thick, is placed into open mortise pockets on the corner posts, and is held with hammer-headed machine cut nails; and (3) the stud behind the chimney stack (on the north wall) is mortised into the sill while the other studs are nailed on top of the 1846 floor.

These findings suggest that the one-story house was originally sheathed in vertical board siding, which was then replaced in the early 19th century as evidenced by the hammer-headed, machine cut nails which hold it in place. It appears that this vertical board sheathing was retained during the 1846 remodeling, and that clapboards were used to sheath the newly-built second floor. It also appears that the studs along the north (side wall), except for that behind the chimney, were replaced in 1846 when the interior was re-done with plaster walls and this side of the house received a winder stair.

Restoration in 2004-2005

When the current owners purchased the house in 2004, the exterior clapboard was deteriorated and had no backing to protect the structure’s frame. There was no insulation, several sills and corner posts in the kitchen addition were rotted beyond repair, and Victorian-era alterations to the interior of the main block had obscured its colonial and mid-19th century appearances. Similarly, because the house had been used only as a summer residence for the past 45+ years, the electrical and plumbing systems were sub-code. [see figures 9 and 10]

The current owners removed the ca. 1880 wood clapboard and replaced it in-kind with cedar clapboard (over tar-paper); the exposure placement used for the new clapboard replicates that found on the 1846 clapboard of the main block which is extant on the second floor of the east (rear) wall. The exterior walls were insulated at the same time. Modern roofing materials were removed and replaced with new 2’ long red cedar shingles. New wiring, plumbing, and HVAC systems were introduced, and insulation was added below the attic floorboards in the main block and above the ceilings of the additions. All 20th century windows were removed and replaced with new 6/6 double hung wood windows (Thermopane) that match the size of the window openings and are historically appropriate for the time period. The mid-20th century double window on the north wall of the kitchen was removed and replaced with two separate windows appropriately spaced apart. Former window openings on the rear wall of the main block and the south wall of the kitchen were re-opened and given new historically-appropriate 6/6 wood window sash. Early 20th century exterior doors on the front and rear were replaced with historically-appropriate replicated board and batten doors, and a ca. 1920 door on the south

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elevation of the enclosed porch (that opened into the bathroom) was removed and its opening infilled.

On the interior, Victorian and early to mid-20th century window and door trim was also removed and replaced with historically-appropriate 3.5" wide simple wood moldings in the main block and kitchen addition. Baseboards in the kitchen were removed and replaced with simple 5" high wood baseboards with a 1/2" bead; this treatment matches that in the parlor. Baseboards in the main block were not changed.

As previously mentioned, the interior plaster walls in the main block and the kitchen addition remain *in situ* but have been covered with an acrylic resin finish coat (Senergy®) that simulates a plaster surface while hiding such surface irregularities as cracks, holes, and patches. Floors in the two rear additions consist of new random width wide pine planks (between 9" and 16" wide) placed during the restoration to replace mid-20th century flooring, while the original floors in the main block were retained. Deteriorated framing members in the kitchen addition were replaced as needed and as many original framing members as possible were retained. No framing members in the main block were removed; some insect damage and decay had occurred in the oldest section, but the affected members were treated *in situ* with an epoxy consolidant.

Setting:

The house stands on a .63 acre lot that has 59' frontage on Batts Lane and a long, narrow depth of 740+ feet. [photo 1] Set back almost 12' from Batts Lane, the building faces west. The lot immediately to the north contains a ca. 1840-1850 two-story vernacular house with modern additions, while the lot immediately to the south is farmland. In front of the house is a crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) to the north; to the south are a mature lilac (*Syringa*), a holly (*Ilex opaca*), and a euonymus bush (*Euonymus*). Remnants of a wood picket fence define part of the west lot line near the road.

Several mature red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) line the south (side) lot line near the house. Behind the house is a mature sycamore tree (*Platanus occidentalis*), a sweet gum tree (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and a large pussy-willow (*Salix chaenomeloides*). The grape arbor is covered with grape vines (*Vitis*); underneath the arbor is a ground cover of Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*). There are several more mature red cedar trees near the outhouse and chicken coop. A wisteria (*Fabaceae*) stands west of the storage/tool shed and another pussy willow stands east of the shed. The rear of the lot is heavily treed with black cherry trees (*Prunus serotina*) interspersed with a few red cedar trees.

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Non-contributing Buildings and Structure on the Property

Also on the property are three buildings and one structure which are excellent and well-preserved examples of simple, utilitarian outbuildings that were once common in the county's rural areas. Because they were built after the period of significance, however, they are considered as non-contributing.

Non-contributing Buildings on the Property:

Chicken coop: Just large enough for a few chickens to roost, this gable-fronted ca. 1900 coop is covered with wood clapboards held with round nails and is fronted by an original board and batten door made of narrow boards. Its interior features two roosting shelves. [photo 14]

Workshop/tool shed: This ca. 1870-1880 shed-roofed workshop/tool shed is sheathed in board and batten siding held mostly with round head nails, although some original machine-headed, machine-cut nails were observed. The boards range in width from 11" to 12". This building has a dirt floor and is built with a balloon frame. The interior is unfinished and is illuminated by a 4-light fixed single sash window on the facade (south elevation). A board and batten door that appears to be original is located to the west of the window; it is hung on ca. 1900 strap hinges. An open-air shed-roofed porch was added to the south wall of the building around 1960 using lumber that had washed up on the Delaware Bay shore line. [photo 15]

Privy: This gable-fronted 2-hole privy, which appears to date to ca. 1900, is sheathed in wood clapboard held with round head nails. The roof is covered with clapboards and the rafter ends are modestly exposed. The unfinished interior is illuminated by a 2-light fixed wood sash window on the south (side) wall. A board and batten door made of narrow boards and decorated with a half-moon cut-out provides entry; it also has an original rim lock with a porcelain knob. The privy has no rear clean-out panel. [photo 13]

Non-contributing Structure on the Property:

Grape arbor: This structure is approximately 3' wide by 4' tall by 12' long; it is made of dimensional 2x4s placed on top of round wood posts. Although difficult to date, it was on the property when it was purchased by the Barnes family in 1957 and was probably erected in the early to mid-20th century. [photo 12]

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(Section 7 continued)

Integrity:

The Owen Coachman House retains a high degree of integrity. The ca. 1695-ca. 1730 first floor of the main block retains a high degree of integrity in terms of its exposed framing members, including flared corner posts, hand-hewn girts and plates, doors of hand-planed wood boards, and hand-hewn floor joists, all of which appear to be original. The 2-story main block, as constructed/alterd by Owen Coachman in 1846, also retains a high degree of integrity since its appearance is almost identical to what it was in 1846. It has the same massing, room configurations, exposed structural members, plaster walls, floors, and baseboards. The windows, while not original, are historically-appropriate replacements with the same size and number of lights as those the house would have had from the early 1700s to the mid-1840s. Similarly, the cedar clapboard siding and cedar roof shingles, while not original, are historically appropriate for the time period and the exposure of the clapboard matches that of the 1846 clapboard extant on the east (rear) wall. Although the house was altered ca. 1855-1860 with a kitchen addition, and again in the late 19th century with a porch that was later enclosed ca. 1930 to create a bathroom and utility room, those alterations can also be considered historic in their own right as they illustrate the change in taste and lifestyles through the 19th and early 20th centuries.

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Owen Coachman House
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Summary Statement of Significance

The Owen Coachman House, built between ca. 1695 and ca. 1730 then altered in 1846, is of statewide significance under Criterion A in the area of ethnic heritage as a rare surviving example of free black land owner's home erected before the Civil War. The house significantly represents the ante-bellum free black community that was established in Cape May County in the first half of the 19th century. During this time, freed slaves and possibly runaway slaves from other areas settled in pockets of remote Cape May County woodlands. One of these was the area around Batts Lane, the road on which this house stands; the lane received its name from John Batteast, a free black from the West Indies who settled here in 1829.

The Owen Coachman House is also locally significant under criterion C/architecture as a well-preserved example of first period (ca. 1695-ca. 1730) heavy timber frame construction in Cape May County, New Jersey. It has many of the hallmarks of that method of construction as it was expressed earlier on Long Island and in the Massachusetts Bay area, including exposed flared corner posts and exposed hand-hewn floor joists. The house is also notable for its wood lintel over the fireplace opening and it is the only known house in Cape May County with one made of wood rather than of iron.

Although the building has been moved (possibly twice) from its original location, it derives its significance under criterion C from its architecture rather than from the local and historical associations it possessed before being moved to its present location. Thus, the fact that the house no longer stands on its original site, nor retains its original setting, does not diminish its greater significance under this criterion.

Historical Background:

The earliest known transaction for the land on which the house stands is represented in the sale of an 8-acre tract of land conveyed by Major John Hand (ca. 1740-?) to Jeremiah Eldredge (ca. 1745-1795) sometime prior to Eldredge's death in 1795. Eldredge, who lived nearby on what is now Seashore Road in Lower Township, Cape May County, New Jersey, willed the southern half of the tract (4 acres) to his nephew, Aaron Eldredge, who then sold it to Israel Hughes, another Lower Township resident. Neither of the deeds was recorded in either Burlington or Cape May, but the transactions are cited in a later deed.¹

¹ Cape May County Deeds, Book V, p. 430.

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In 1829, Israel Hughes sold the 4 acre tract to James R. Hughes for \$20.² That same day, James R. Hughes sold the northernmost two-thirds of the 4-acre tract to John Batteast, a “colored man,” for \$58.33³ and in 1843 sold the southernmost one-third (1.3 acres) to Daniel B. Hughes for \$16.50.⁴ In 1846, Daniel Hughes sold the 1.3 acre tract to Owen Coachman for the same price he (Hughes) had paid, \$16.50.⁵

Coachman (ca. 1819-1864), also African-American, was possibly related to Batteast’s wife, Nancy Coachman (ca. 1785-1866), whom Batteast had married in 1826. Both the Coachman deed of 1846 and the Batteast deed of 1829 refer to this area in Lower Township (one mile south of Cold Spring) as “York Town.” The origin of the place name is not known and its usage did not last because later 19th century deeds refer to the area as the “Cold Spring Neighborhood.” By the time the Beers map of Cape May County was drawn in 1872, this section of Lower Township was the site of an African-American community populated primarily by descendants of the county’s slaves who had been manumitted in the early 1800s.

A Brief History of Slavery and Free Blacks in Cape May County

It is not known when the first enslaved African Americans were brought to Cape May County. Elsewhere in the state, it is thought that the first African slaves in New Jersey were associated with the early Dutch settlements where slavery was initiated by the Dutch West India Company in the Middle Colonies as early as 1625 or 1626.⁶ Blacks were most valued for their addition to the agricultural labor force and a report written in 1644 recommended the importation of more blacks to the Dutch colonies because “negroes would accomplish more work for their masters and at less expense than [Dutch] farm servants, who must be bribed to go thither by a great deal of money and promises.”⁷ The great 17th century migration of Dutch farmer/slaveholders from New York to the New Jersey counties of Bergen, Monmouth, Middlesex, and Somerset established a basic pattern of black population distribution in the state that lasted well into the 19th century.

² Deed book N, p. 528.

³ Deed book N, p. 453.

⁴ Deed Book T, p. 23.

⁵ Deed Book V, p. 430.

⁶ Peter Wacker, Land and People: A Cultural Geography of Preindustrial New Jersey: Origins and Settlement Patterns (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1975), p. 189; Giles Wright, Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988), p. 18-19.

⁷ As quoted in Wacker, p. 190.

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In 1680, there were supposedly about 120 black slaves in East Jersey, which had a white population estimated at about 3,500.⁸ Slaves were in Cape May County at least by 1688 when Daniel Coxe, a West Jersey proprietor, wrote, "I have either at Cape May or Burlington four stout Negroes."⁹ A 1696 estate inventory of Cape May County resident Joseph Holdin showed that he owned "a Negro sarvant [sic]," and the first African American marriage in the county was held in 1697, when George Taylor's slave Peter married Elizabeth Donkan. The terms of their marriage contract required that "in case they should have any children, [they must] serve until they were 31 years of age or as the Law Directs &c."¹⁰

Distributional data on the state's African-American population was first available with the census of 1726 which showed a total of 2,581 slaves; of these, the East Jersey counties of Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Somerset held 54% of the white population, but 74% of the black population, a figure that reflected the Dutch migration. The West Jersey counties of Burlington, Hunterdon, Gloucester, Salem, and Cape May held only 26% of the black population, possibly because of the heavy concentration of Quaker residents, many of whom eschewed the bondage of any human being. Of these West Jersey counties, Cape May held the lowest number of white residents (654) as well as the lowest number of slaves—14—the latter comprised of 8 males above the age of 16, 5 females above the age of 16, and one male under the age of 16.¹¹

In 1738, Cape May County had 962 white residents and 42 slaves and in 1745 had 1,136 white residents and 52 slaves. During this time, Middle Township resident Aaron Leaming, Sr. (1678-1747) owned ten slaves who were valued in the inventory of his personal estate taken in 1747; Leaming, his son Aaron Jr., and his grandson Thomas Jr. were the largest slave owners in Cape May County history.¹²

In 1772, Cape May County had 1,648 white residents and 111 "negroes", and in 1790 had 2,430 white residents and 141 slaves.¹³ Cape May County traditionally held the lowest number of both

⁸ Wacker, p. 191.

⁹ G.D. Scull, "Biographical Notice of Doctor Daniel Coxe of London," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 7 (1893), p. 317, as quoted in Jeffery Dorwart, *Cape May County, New Jersey: The Making of an American Resort Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 16.

¹⁰ "First Public Records of Cape May County," *Cape May County Magazine of History and Genealogy*, Vol. 1, p. 322, p. 329-330.

¹¹ Wacker, p. 413-416; Lewis Townsend Stevens, *The History of Cape May County from the Aboriginal Times to the Present Day* (1897, reprint Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Company, 1997), p. 96.

¹² Dorwart, p. 173; Wacker, p. 413-416; Aaron Leaming inventory, file #133E, NJ State Archives.

¹³ Stevens, p. 101

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white and slave residents throughout the 18th century with the exception of 1790 when Cumberland County (which had been formed from Salem County) was enumerated with 120 slaves. The 141 slaves enumerated in 1790 represent the greatest number of slaves to live in the Cape May County: in the 1800 census, 98 were documented, and in the 1810 census 81 were cited.¹⁴ Interestingly, although Cape May County held the lowest total number of slaves, it held the highest percentage of slaves per total population during the post-Revolutionary War era of any of the original West Jersey counties.¹⁵ The 1820 census showed the slave population in the county had dropped to 28, while the “free colored” population was given as 205.¹⁶

According to the federal censuses, Lower Township held the highest number of free black residents in the mid-1800s; in 1830, the township had 101 free blacks, while Middle Township had 77, Dennis Township 10, and Upper Township had 35. In 1840, Lower Township had 107, while Middle had 60, Dennis had 7, and Upper had 23. The disparity grows even greater with the 1850 census: Lower Township, 155; Middle Township, 51; Dennis Township 5; Upper Township, 5. The historically lower figures for Upper Township probably result from the greater number of Quakers who lived there.

The earliest documented free black found to date in Cape May County is Thomas White, a “free negroe” who purchased “one Male Negro child named John, reputed to have been begotten by the said Thomas White on the Body of a Female Negro Slave named Savorie” in 1789. White purchased his son for 3£ 10 shillings from Savorie’s owner, David Johnson, a “yeoman” who owned extensive land and a sawmill in Dennisville, then in Upper (now Dennis) Township. In 1791, White manumitted his son “when he arrived at the age of 21.”¹⁷ White appears in county tax records as a householder living in Upper Township for the years 1791 through 1797 and he is possibly the same Thomas White who, with 20 others, purchased a 1-acre lot of ground north of Dennisville for a school house in 1801.¹⁸ After that date, he does not appear on the tax rolls; no estate was filed for him in Cape May County and the fate of him and his son are unknown.¹⁹

¹⁴ Wacker, p. 416-417.

¹⁵ Dorwart, p. 59.

¹⁶ Stevens, Appendix F.

¹⁷ Cape May County Mortgage Book A, p. 185. It should be noted that one researcher believes that the Samuel Trus who appears in the Lower Township tax records for 1778 is the earliest documented free black in the county, and is the ancestor of the African-American Trusty family of Cape May County, but it cannot be definitively proven. See Emma Marie Trusty, The Underground Railroad--Ties that Bound Unveiled: A History of the Underground Railroad in Southern New Jersey from 1770 to 1861 (United States: Amed Literary, 1999), p. 185.

¹⁸ Deed Book B, p. 202.

¹⁹ Cape May County Tax Records, on microfilm at the Cape May County Clerk’s Office.

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(criterion A continued)

Free blacks, like Thomas White, appear as taxable residents in the county as early as 1791 when “Prince Negro” was taxed in Lower Township. In 1792, Abraham Taylor and Dick Cooper, both of whom are identified as “black,” are each taxed 5 shillings and 6 pence in Lower Township. None are shown as owning any land or buildings, and the latter two appear as householders in the 1802 tax list for Lower Township. Presumably, all three are part of the 14 “all other free persons” who were enumerated in the Cape May County federal census of 1790. In several instances in the county tax records, these free blacks have no last name and are merely indicated with a first name followed by Negro, e.g. “Prince Negro” or “Ben Negro.” A search of other census and tax records on-line, shows that this practice was followed in other states as well.²⁰ In the 1802 tax list for Middle Township, a handful of free blacks are taxed on a house and lot (probably as tenants), while one—identified only as “Paul”—is taxed on 200 acres which he appears to own. “Paul” is the earliest free black landowner identified to date, but no deed for him is found at the court house, and it is possible he was only renting the farmstead.²¹

New Jersey outlawed the further importation of slaves in 1786 and authorized their manumission under certain restrictions. By 1790, approximately 20% of the state’s 14,185 blacks were free.²² The state passed a Slave Act in 1798 that detailed the process for manumitting slaves and their manumission in Cape May County began in earnest in 1802 according to county records. In 1804, the state passed another act which provided that children born of slave parents after 1804 should be freed when the female reached the age of twenty-one and the male the age of twenty-five.²³ Between the years 1802 and 1819, thirty-five (35) Cape May County slaves—many with no last names—were given their freedom.²⁴ By 1846, Cape May County slave owners had manumitted all of their slaves with the exception of Dorothy Jackson, an 81-year old slave still owned by Amariah Corson of Upper Township in 1860.²⁵

These free men and women, mostly kin of the earliest slaves in the county, formed groups of families and a community that through intermarriage resembled, in some respects, the whaler yeoman families who had first settled the Jersey cape in the late 1600s. Before the middle of the 19th century, most of the county’s free blacks had settled in clusters located in the wooded

²⁰ Ancestry.com census databases

²¹ Cape May County Tax Records, on microfilm at the Cape May County Clerk’s Office.

²² Wright, p. 22-23; D.H. Gardner, “The Emancipation of Slaves in New Jersey,” *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, Vol. IX (January 1924), No. 1, p. 10.

²³ Dorwart, p. 82; Wright, p. 25.

²⁴ Dorwart, p. 277; Charles Tomlin, “Some Slaves of Cape May County,” *Cape May Spray* (Philadelphia, PA: Bradley Brothers, 1913), p. 9-12.

²⁵ Dorwart, p. 82.

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interior of the peninsula. Some, like the Turner family, supposedly intermarried with local native Americans, while others were mulattos, like “Caleb Knight Mulatto Bastard Child of Catherine Hutchinson other wise called Catherine Scull” who was placed in the charge of the Overseer of the Poor for Upper township in 1793.²⁶

Very few of the county’s free blacks owned land in the first half of the 19th century, and those who did purchased small tracts, usually between 1 and 3 acres in size. The earliest recorded deed involving a free black land owner is dated 1814, when James Conover sold a 1-acre lot in Middle Township for \$20 to William Coachman, a free black.²⁷ The lot is located outside of Goshen on the Swainton-Goshen Road, but its exact location has not been determined because the legal description does not match any of the current lot sizes.

In Lower Township, where the Owen Coachman House is located, the earliest deed to a free black is dated 1819, when Jeremiah and Sarah Bennett sold a 1-acre tract on the “southwest side of the New Cape Road” (probably what is now 6th Avenue in the Borough of West Cape May) to Robert Cox, “coloured man.”²⁸

By the second quarter of the 19th century, Lower Township’s free black population had become large enough to support a church; consequently, the first African American church was established in 1831. Located on the south side of Tabernacle Road, between Shunpike Road and Fishing Creek Road, a 2.3-acre lot was purchased from Thomas and Prudence Hughes by the trustees of the First Methodist Coloured Church of Lower Township for “erecting a meeting house and a burying ground for the coloured people of the County of Cape May.”²⁹ [see fig. 11] The church, which was also used as a school for free black children, was called Union Bethel and its founders represented many of the earliest free black surnames in the county—Cox, Turner, Murkins, Trusty, and Armour.³⁰

Another free black church, known as Mt. Zion, was established in 1859 apparently as an outgrowth of the Union Bethel congregation.³¹ According to the 1872 map, its first location was

²⁶ William Moore, “Early Negro Settlers of Cape May County,” *Cape May County Magazine of History and Genealogy*, June 1955, p. 20-22; Elisha Smith Account Book, 1773-1798, #B-16.

²⁷ Deed book H, p. 189.

²⁸ Deed Book K, p. 475.

²⁹ Deed book O, p. 367.

³⁰ John Merrill, “The Remaining History of the Union Bethel Cemetery of Lower Township in Cape May, New Jersey, undated, p. 2; LuAnn Cherry, “A Key to the Past—Local Black History,” unpublished high school research paper, 1984, p. 1-2

³¹ Cape May County Clerk’s Office, Miscellaneous Book B, p. 316.

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just outside of Cold Spring (not far from Union Bethel, see fig. 11) on the Shunpike Road. In 1876, the congregation purchased a ½-acre lot on the east side of Shunpike Road, about 1.5 miles further south and close to the Owen Coachman House.³² According to Morgan's History of the New Jersey Conference of the AME Church, a "church building" was purchased in Cold Spring and was moved onto the ½ acre lot.³³ Regrettably, none of these early churches are extant today (2005) and only the cemeteries remain.

According to 19th century census listings, Cape May County's manumitted slaves, free blacks, and their descendants typically worked as farm laborers, mariners, servants, hotel workers (in the resort of Cape May City) and teamsters. The 1800-1809 account book of Jesse Hand, a Middle Township resident, shows that free blacks William and Benjamin (Sr.) Coachman bartered for their goods, rather than paid in cash.³⁴ Similarly, the 1826-1848 account book of Lower Township carpenter and coffin maker, Samuel Ware, shows that Lower Township regularly assumed the cost of coffins for deceased free blacks (sometimes cited as "paupers" in his entries), while other free blacks often paid for their coffins through labor (e.g. mowing) instead of cash. Other free blacks simply did not pay for the coffins at all, and it appears that Ware made no attempt to make them pay.³⁵

Many of the county's 19th century free blacks, most of whom lacked an education and a skill or trade, had a difficult time supporting their families and at first were not allowed in the county poor house. In 1821, however, they were admitted and by 1850 they made up 45% of the poorhouse's permanent residents, even though free blacks represented less than 5% of the total county population.³⁶

Shortly after Owen Coachman settled in Lower Township in 1846, the 1850 census shows that of the 36 free black or mulatto heads of house living in the township, only 4 owned property and their real estate was modestly valued between \$100 and \$200. The occupation most often cited was laborer, but there was also one blacksmith, one bar keeper, several mariners, and one waiter.³⁷

³² Deed Book 43, p. 115.

³³ Joseph Morgan, Morgan's History of the New Jersey Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church from 1872 to 1887 (Camden, NJ: S. Chew, Printer, 1887), p. 50.

³⁴ Jesse Hand Account Book A, p. 3.

³⁵ Samuel Ware Account Book 1826-1848, various pages and dates.

³⁶ Dorwart, p. 81.

³⁷ 1850 U.S. Census, Lower Township, Cape May County, New Jersey, p. 61-80.

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By the middle of the 19th century, isolated free black communities had developed in Cape May County in the Cold Spring area of Lower Township (around the location of the Owen Coachman House), in the section above Cold Spring in the present-day Erma, and in Middle Township between Goshen and Townsend's Inlet. A study of the census records and the Beers 1872 map shows that the county's free blacks were located in clusters like this one in the Batts Lane area.

Towards the end of the 19th century, a free black community—comprised of many who worked in the popular resort of nearby Cape May City—was established in present-day Borough of West Cape May. Others who settled within Cape May City were the subject of a vicious anti-black campaign in 1901 to remove all African-American residents from the city. That same year, the Colored American Equitable Industrial Association was formed to establish institutions for the care and welfare of African-Americans in Cape May and to purchase land for a town. A syndicate of wealthy, well-known African-American investors from Washington, D.C., Maryland, and North Carolina purchased 1,700 acres in Middle Township expressly for the development of an agricultural and industrial African-American community. The town was heavily promoted to African-Americans living in North Carolina and Virginia, and was originally called White—later Whitesboro—after George White, a former education, state legislator, and lawyer from Washington, D.C. who was the syndicate's largest investor.³⁸

Today both Whitesboro and the Borough of West Cape May remain populated with African-American families.

Cape May County and the Underground Railroad

Stories abound, both written and oral, about Cape May County's involvement in the Underground Railroad. One legend claims that a cave near Cape May Point in Lower Township was a station used to hide fugitives, while another claims that Lower Township free black Edward Turner (1818-1905) operated a station in the forest near his home. Most stories cannot be proven, but at least two instances of slaves passing through or just off-shore of Cape May County have been documented

The earliest documentation is found in a coroner's inquest of 1831. Thomas J.W. Hand (?-1831) and several other Cape May County residents including African-American Prince Turner, saw a boat offshore filled with "11 black deserters" from Virginia. The Cape May men pursued the

³⁸ Dorwart, p. 171-173; Herb Beitel and Vance Enck, Cape May County: A Pictorial History (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Co., 1995), p. 96.

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boat filled with runaway slaves, hoping to capture them and return them to their masters; in the fray that ensued, one of the slaves shot and killed Hand, and the entire boat of fugitives escaped capture.³⁹ Other documentation is provided in the following article which appeared in the *Cape May Ocean Wave* on July 1, 1858:

Runaway Slaves—the runaway slaves which we noticed last week, who landed at Fishing Creek [Lower Township], have not since been heard of in these parts. The owners from Delaware came over in pursuit of them, but they were among the missing. We glory in the spunk of our ebony friends: we would do the same if placed in the like situation, and he who wouldn't, when a good opportunity presented, is a fool, and not worthy the name of a man. The boat with which they escaped has been rescued by the pilot boat *Leonidas*. It was a government revenue boat.

We have since heard that they had been heard from, taken care of by a Quaker, in Gloucester. There were four in number; the owners will be lucky if they catch them.⁴⁰

Owen Coachman and the House He Built

As previously mentioned, Owen Coachman purchased the 1.3 acre lot on which the house stands in 1846.⁴¹ His neighbor to the immediate north was John Batteast (1766-1866), a free black born in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. Family history claims that Batteast “roamed the world as a mate on a pirate ship” then settled in Lower Township. Later, his former ship was captured in New York and he was given a pardon in return to “turn state’s evidence and identify the crew.” Records show that Batteast purchased the lot in 1829 from James R. Hughes and he appears to have built a house upon the lot.⁴² Because he owed \$393 on a loan he could not repay, Batteast lost it in a sheriff’s sale in 1849, but his son, Benjamin, purchased the house for his father two years later.⁴³ Today, Batteast’s 2-story house is extant, but has been altered from its original appearance.

Since at least the 1950s, when Jim and Grace Barnes purchased the house, oral tradition has called the Owen Coachman House the “whaler’s cottage,” inferring that it was built in the late 17th or early 18th century by a group of whalers from Long Island who first settled in a small

³⁹ Coroner’s Inquests, 6-1-1831.

⁴⁰ *Cape May Ocean Wave*, 7-1-1858, p. 2, col. 3.

⁴¹ Deed book V, p. 430.

⁴² Deed Book N, p. 530.

⁴³ Deed Book X, p. 231; book X, p. 435.

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town known as Town Bank on New England Creek; this area is located about 2 miles to the northwest of the house's present position.⁴⁴ Aaron Leaming, Jr. (1715-1780) commented in 1734 that the area of this early settlement contained about 13 houses, was being encroached by water, and that "there were then some signs of the ruin of the houses."⁴⁵ It is possible that the house was built there, was then moved to a second, undetermined location as the water came nearer, and was then placed on its current site by Owen Coachman in 1846. It is also possible that it was already on the site when Coachman purchased it, but the low purchase price of \$16.50 combined with the fact that the house is not shown on the 1842 topographical map⁴⁶ which shows structures (see fig. 1 in *Historic Maps and Supplemental Images*) suggest the lot was vacant when Coachman bought it in 1846. In the absence of a diary, a letter, or a newspaper account from that time period, it cannot be proven or dis-proven that the house was a whaler's cottage, although it does have framing characteristics typical of the county's first period (ca. 1695 to ca. 1730) houses.

Because of the presence of third period (ca. 1780-90 to ca. 1845) timber framing in the second floor, it is highly likely that Coachman was responsible for raising the building to 2-stories in height in 1846. This is certainly suggested by the wording of his 1846 mortgage, which refers to "the lot of land...where the said Owen Coachman has lately built himself a house and now lives in."⁴⁷ His house does show as a two-story building on the 1846 road return (fig. 2), but these depictions are not always reliable.⁴⁸

Samuel Ware, a Lower Township carpenter, did several days of work for Owen Coachman in August of 1848; his account book shows a sale of "16 lites of sash @ 8¢ per lite" and one window frame (valued at \$1.00) to Coachman. Coachman owed Ware a total of 8.90 1/2; he paid part of the balance in cash and the remainder in "2 days cutting wood."⁴⁹

Coachman appears to have left the vertical board siding on the exterior of the first floor, (which, by the presence of hammer-headed machine cut nails, had replaced an earlier exterior covering—probably also vertical boards—in the early 1800s) and used clapboard as an exterior siding on the new second floor. He plastered the interior, but left the corner posts and overhead joists on

⁴⁴ Interview with Jim Barnes, August 2004.

⁴⁵ John Stillwell, M.D., *Historical and Genealogical Miscellany, Early Settlers of New Jersey and their Descendants* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing, 1970), Vol. III, pp. 428 – 442.

⁴⁶ U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, 1842, sheet T-149, "Map of the Peninsula of Cape May."

⁴⁷ Roads Book B, p. 275 and Mortgage Book D, p. 408.

⁴⁸ Cape May County Roads Book B, p. 275.

⁴⁹ Samuel Ware Account Book, August 5, 1848 entry for Owen Coachman.

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the first floor exposed. He also built a winder stair that provided access to the newly built second floor.

It was not uncommon for the American poor—both white and black—to re-use buildings and/or building materials. Morgan's History of the New Jersey Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church cites at least several instances where old buildings were moved from another location to serve as a church. At least 4 churches in southern New Jersey—Swedesboro (Salem County), Port Elizabeth (Cumberland County), Mt. Zion (Cape May County), and Mt. Laurel (Burlington) all re-used buildings in the early to mid-19th century.⁵⁰ As John Vlach, professor of American Studies and Anthropology at George Washington University, explains:

The comment about the African-American re-use of buildings is more a statement about financial status than about culture. Poor people have to scavenge. If you're poor and black, you have to scavenge twice as much and be happy with less. It isn't necessarily an emblematic trait of black architectural performance but it happens. Compare the ad-hoc results of pulling miscellaneous house parts together with the kind of house found in Lawnside that was built by Peter Mott. There we see a community leader with resources building a modest but substantial building that has endured since the middle of the nineteenth century despite considerable abuse and neglect for the great[er] part of the 20th century.⁵¹

The genealogical information on Owen Coachman is scant and his parentage is not known because no death record was filed for him. The earliest Coachmans found in the county are William and Benjamin, Sr. who are taxable residents in Middle and Lower Townships as early as the first decade of the 19th century. There was a prominent white Coachman family in South Carolina, many of whom were large slaveholders. Because there was active trading during this time period, primarily in timber products, between Cape May County and the Carolinas, it is possible that these early African-American Coachmans came from the south. Several Coachmans—Amy, Nancy, Benjamin Jr. and Francis—were manumitted in the county in the early 1800s, and it is interesting to note that among the white Coachman family members in North Carolina the names William and Benjamin are common.⁵²

⁵⁰ Morgan's History, p. 50, 88, 247; email correspondence, Bob Craig to Joan Berkey, 1-3-2005.

⁵¹ email correspondence, John Michael Vlach to Joan Berkey, 1-12-2005.

⁵² Cape May County tax records; Dorwart, p. 277-278; several Coachman family trees on-line at RootsWeb's Worldconnect project: <http://worldconnect.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi>

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Owen Coachman appears in the 1850 census as a 31-year old black laborer, living in the house with his wife, Susannah (maiden name unknown), age 32, also black.⁵³ The census was taken in August of 1850, one month before Coachman sold the house, yet he appears as owning no real estate. Many of his neighbors are either "black" or "mulatto" who own little or no real estate and most of whom are laborers.

For unknown reasons, Coachman sold the "house and lot of land" to Silas Church (1830-1898) in 1850 for \$200, paid off his \$50 mortgage, and then in 1851 bought a 1-acre tract of land also in the same area for \$45.⁵⁴ This lot was probably located on what is now Socs Lane, sited about ½ mile southwest of Coachman's first house; the house may be extant, but has been highly altered from its original appearance with numerous, taller rear additions and a ca. 1960 exterior brick chimney which runs up the façade wall.⁵⁵ The Cox family and other free black families lived nearby.

Owen Coachman, cited as a laborer, and his wife appear in the 1860 census living in Lower Township with real estate valued at \$400 and a personal estate valued at \$50.⁵⁶ He died intestate in 1864.⁵⁷ After his death, his estate was sued for non-payment of a \$100 mortgage held by Lower Township carpenter, Samuel Ware. The defendants in the lawsuit were Coachman's widow, Susannah, Downs Edmunds (the administrator of Coachman's estate) and Benjamin and John Batteast, sons of John Batteast, Sr.; the inclusion of the latter two suggests a familial relationship and they were possibly Coachman's half-brothers.⁵⁸

Silas Church and Subsequent Owners

Silas Church (ca. 1830-1898), who was white and who lived as a farmer on the property until his death in 1898, probably built the kitchen addition sometime in the mid-1850s or early 1860s. Church is enumerated as a laborer in 1860 and 1870 and as a farmer in the 1880 census.⁵⁹ He is enumerated in only the 1880 agricultural census and is shown as owning \$20 worth of livestock (4 sheep and 11 chickens); his farm produced \$100 of products including 20 gallons of milk and

⁵³ 1850 census, Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ, p. 70.

⁵⁴ Deed book X, p. 303; Mortgage Book D, p. 408, and Deed Book X, p. 434.

⁵⁵ Title work, which had to be followed in reverse, dead-ended in the late 19th century and the present lots on Socs Lane do not correspond with the legal description contained in the original deed.

⁵⁶ 1860 census, Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ, p. 174.

⁵⁷ Cape May County Surrogate's Office, roll 88, p. 2921.

⁵⁸ Cape May County deeds, book 30, p. 623.

⁵⁹ 1860 census, Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ, p. 180; 1870 census, p. 87; 1880 census, p. 50c.

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50 dozen eggs.⁶⁰ After his death in 1898, he willed the 1.3 acre tract equally to two of his children, Linda/Melinda Church Matthews and George Church.⁶¹

Sometime between 1900 (when the Matthews' are enumerated in the 1900 census as renting a house elsewhere in Lower Township) and 1905 (when the Matthews are enumerated in the 1905 state census as living next door to George Church), Linda Matthews and her husband, Clement, moved a house onto the same lot, placing it just north of the Owen Coachman House. The house appears to date to ca. 1845-50; its fenestration and interior characteristics suggest it was probably part of a house that was cut in half.

George Church, who appears in the censuses as a gold beater, was probably responsible for building the utility/laundry room and bathroom addition to the Owen Coachman House around the turn of the last century.⁶²

In December 1922, Linda Matthews and her brother, George Church, formally divided the property with each giving the other a deed to the half each occupied.⁶³ The division line was drawn in an irregular shape because a straight line would have gone through a portion of the Matthews House. [see site plan]

The tool/storage shed was probably built about 1870-1880 during Silas Church's ownership, while the remainder of the buildings—outhouse, chicken coop, and possibly the grape arbor—appear to have been built after Silas Church's death in 1898 when the property was owned jointly by two of his children and the Coachman House was occupied by his son, George.

In 1957, in two separate deeds, the Matthews and the Churches each sold their properties to the Cape May County Welfare Board.⁶⁴ In September of that year, Jim and Grace Barnes purchased the Matthews' house, and then three months later purchased the Owen Coachman House, thus returning ownership of the original 1.3 acre tract to a single family.⁶⁵ Jim, a former school teacher from Philadelphia, and his wife, Grace (a nurse, retired), spent their summers in the Matthews House until selling both houses to the current owners in the summer of 2004. Jim's

⁶⁰ 1880 Agricultural Census, Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ, p. 7C

⁶¹ Cape May County Surrogate's Office, Will Book E, p. 160.

⁶² NJ State Census, 1905, Lower Township, Cape May County.

⁶³ Deed book 376, p. 8; deed book 376, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Deed book 932, p. 108; deed book 945, p. 109.

⁶⁵ Deed book 946, p. 181; deed book 952, p. 242.

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mother lived for a while in the Coachman House; she reportedly stripped the whitewash from the exposed joists in the parlor and applied a coat of varnish to them.⁶⁶

According to Mr. Barnes, there was another small barn on the property behind the Coachman House which was abandoned and in ruinous condition. He tore down what remained of it and put a large vegetable garden in its place.⁶⁷

It should also be noted that the division line between the two houses on the tax map shows as a straight line (which is incorrect), whereas the division line cited in the 1922 deeds is irregular. (see site plan in attachments)

That the house Owen Coachman lived in was this dwelling on the southernmost part of the 1.3 acre lot (as opposed to the Matthews House on the northernmost part of the lot) is confirmed by the 1856 Cook Map of Cape May County and the 1879 U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey Map, both of which clearly show a vacant area where the Matthews house now stands. [see fig. 4 and fig. 6]

Significance and Context Under Criterion A

The best known house in New Jersey associated with a free black is the Peter Mott House, erected in the Borough of Lawnside, Camden County. Listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places, Mott's house was built about 1844 in a mid-19th century African-American community called "Snow Hill." The community was begun in 1840 by Ralph Smith, a white Philadelphia abolitionist who laid out lots and sold them at low prices to provide homesites for free blacks.⁶⁸

Both the Mott and Coachman Houses are frame dwellings that share a very similar, almost identical floor plan: the original main block of each is 15' deep, with a single parlor on the first floor and two small bedrooms on the second floor. The Peter Mott House is somewhat wider, approximately 20' wide as compared to the 16' width of the Coachman House. Both reflect a simplicity of design, with a lack of ornamentation inside and out. Mott was substantially wealthier than Coachman since Mott's real estate was valued at \$600 in the 1850 census, while Coachman's was worth \$200 that same year when he sold it to Silas Church. The less well-to-do Coachman either purchased or was given the one-story structure which, at the time, was about

⁶⁶ Interview with Jim Barnes, August 2004.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ National Register Nomination, Peter Mott House, section 8, p. 5

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120+ years old. By moving it to his lot and by adding a second floor, he substantially increased the living space while keeping his overall costs to a minimum. Mott, on the other hand, had enough material resources to build his house from scratch and he was considered “one of the wealthier members” of Lawnside.⁶⁹

While Mott’s involvement in the Underground Railroad is bolstered by “forceful circumstantial evidence and oral traditions within the borough,”⁷⁰ the same cannot be said of Owen Coachman. Oral histories related to Cape May’s participation in transporting fugitive slaves do not mention any Coachman family members or the use of the house as a station before the Civil War. Regardless, both the Coachman and Mott houses have a strong association with their respective free black, ante-bellum communities and both significantly represent the more humble dwellings erected by those free blacks who had enough money to purchase a lot and build a house upon it.

Within the context of other houses in Cape May County that were built by a free black before the Civil War, the Owen Coachman House appears to be the best preserved of the handful that have been identified to date in Lower Township. The ca. 1830 John Batteast House to the north of the Coachman House has been heavily altered from its original appearance with substantial additions to the rear and changes to the interior. John Batteast, Jr.’s ca. 1850 house to the north of the John Batteast, Sr. House is also extant, but has been Victorianized with a gable peak on the façade and Victorian trim. A large group of free black houses that were located on New England Road in Lower Township (at the north terminus of Batts Lane) were eliminated when the canal was built in the 1960s, and many of the other free black houses seen on the 1850 map do not appear to be extant today. Although some may have been moved, it is more likely that they were demolished as the value of land outside of the resort of Cape May City became more valuable.

Within these contexts, then, the Owen Coachman House is of statewide significance under criterion A for its association with the establishment of free black communities in New Jersey before the Civil War. Its austere style reflects, in a tangible way, the simple buildings erected by those free blacks who could afford to purchase a lot and build a house.

Nomination of this property would fill a significant gap in Cape May County’s Register-listed buildings, of which none to date are associated with the county’s free black community.

⁶⁹ National Register Nomination, Peter Mott House, section 8, p. 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid., section 8, p. 4.

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Significance Under Criterion C/Architecture

The house is locally significant under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of first period (ca. 1695 to ca. 1730) heavy timber framing in Cape May County. It has several of the hallmarks of that method of building as it was expressed earlier on Long Island and in the Massachusetts Bay area, including flared corner posts, a wood lintel over the fireplace, and exposed ceiling joists. As such, it exemplifies a building form that was once common in New Jersey, but of which few examples remain. Of those that are extant, the most appear to be located in Cape May County in numbers large enough not to be considered as rare survivors.

Although the building has been moved (possibly twice) from its original location, it derives its significance under criterion C from its architecture rather than from the local and historical associations it possessed before being moved to its present location. Thus, the fact that the house no longer stands on its original site, nor retains its original setting, does not diminish its greater significance under this criterion.

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.⁷¹

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.

⁷¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Robert Craig, Senior 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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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 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, 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 level 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

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structures in the Massachusetts Bay area were also recognized with a thematic nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.⁷²

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 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.⁷³

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

⁷² *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.

⁷³ It should be noted that large stones for building were not locally available in Cape May County.

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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) 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 finishes.⁷⁴ Generally speaking, Cape May's buildings: (1) were typically comprised 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 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.⁷⁵

The Heavy Timber Frame Tradition in Cape May County

The heavy timber frame buildings in Cape May County were recently 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).⁷⁶ 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

⁷⁴ 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.

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

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most extant examples of exposed heavy timber frame construction in the state, and in numbers large enough 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 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. 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 were 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

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decorative lambs tongue stops on framing members. Of the 69 buildings surveyed, six are thought to represent this revival/survival, possibly spurred by the construction in 1763 of the Seaville Friends Meeting House (#30), 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 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, and are found with this placement as early as ca. 1695 in this nominated house and as late as the previously mentioned ca. 1847 Stillwell Smith House (Dennis Twp.).

In all three of Cape May's construction periods, no one story height predominated, and numerous examples of 1-, 1½-, and 2-story houses were examined.

The Significance of the Owen Coachman House Within These Contexts

The earliest part of the main block (the first floor) has most of the characteristics found in Cape May County's first period buildings, including exposed corner posts that are heavier at the top than at the bottom, exposed floor joists overhead, and rafters that were first hewn from a log then pit-sawn into the proper size.

Within the context of the *Intensive Level Survey of the Heavy Timber Frame Buildings of Cape May County*, the Owen Coachman House is one of twenty first period buildings included in the survey. Of those twenty, the Coachman House is one of four that were originally built with a

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one-room, one-story floor plan, while five were 1½ stories tall and eleven were built as 2-story dwellings. The original floor plan of fourteen of the twenty first period buildings 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. The Coachman House is most similar to the ca. 1710 John Corson Jr. House (#12, Upper Township), which has gunstock corner posts, was also originally sheathed in vertical board siding, and was raised to two stories around 1820. The Coachman House is also similar to the early 18th century rear portion of the Cresse-Hand House (#59), also in Lower Township, which is still sheathed in vertical board siding, is still one story tall, and has a garret that is still accessed by a hatch in the floor overhead.

The Coachman House also exhibits several interesting differences when compared to other first period houses in the survey. Its flared corner posts have a profile not typically found in Cape May's earliest houses, where the earliest posts are usually "notched" with a gunstock profile or are carved where the post makes its transition from wide to narrow. That its exposed joists are hand-hewn, rather than planed smooth, and are not beaded or chamfered is another significant way in which the Owen Coachman House differs from others identified in the 2003 survey. While at least a dozen of the houses in that survey (from all three construction periods) have hand-hewn joists, most of which were smoothed with a plane, only the early 18th century rear section of the David Cresse-Clinton Hand House (#59, Lower Township), the ca. 1695-ca. 1730 Garretson House (#69, Upper Township) and the ca. 1730 Teal-Foster House (#44) also in Lower Township have no decorative edge (e.g. chamfer, lamb's tongue stop, or bead) on the joists. Holes for hand-forged nails in the bottom face of the joists at the Garretson House suggest that the house had a board ceiling, perhaps originally; no similar holes are found in the joists of the Coachman, Cresse-Hand, or Teal-Foster houses, which means they were always exposed despite their lack of decoration or smoothing by a plane.

Another indication of the house's first period construction date is its wood log lintel, and the house is the only building among the 69 which comprise the *Intensive Level Survey* to have this kind of lintel; the rest have an iron plate that is either cast or hand-forged.

Thus, within these contexts, the Owen Coachman House significantly represents a well-preserved example of first period heavy timber frame construction in Cape May County and has many of the characteristics commonly found during that construction period.

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Cape May County, NJ
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Historic Preservation Office]

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Historical Society]

New Jersey State Census Records, Cape May County, various years. [microfilm, Cape May
County Public Library, Cape May Court House, NJ]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Section number 9 Page 4

Owen Coachman House
Cape May County, NJ
(bibliography, continued)

Elisha Smith Account Book, 1773-1798. (#B-16) [Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society]

Samuel Ware Account Book, 1826-1848. (#doc. 564) [Winterthur Library, Winterthur, DE]

United States Population Census, various years. [available on-line at ancestry.com]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**
Section number 10 Page 1

Owen Coachman House
Cape May County, New Jersey

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary comprises block 752.01, lot 40 in Lower Township, Cape May County and has a legal description as follows:

Beginning at a point on the southeast side of Batts Lane which point is also a corner to land now owned by Shepperd Taylor (lot 8.01) and running (1) north 91 east, 59.02' then (2) south 39/50 east, 42.24', then (3) north 80/49 east, 23.76', then (4) south 68/29/46 east, 663.38', then (5) south 30/25/12 west, 33', then (6) north 69/18/41 west, 744.92' to the point of beginning.

This legal description is given in a *Plan of Survey for block 752.01, lot 40, Township of Lower, Cape May County*, prepared by William P. Sweeney, licensed land surveyor, June 20, 2004.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property is the one with which the property has been associated since the original 1.3 acre lot was subdivided in 1922.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
photographs**

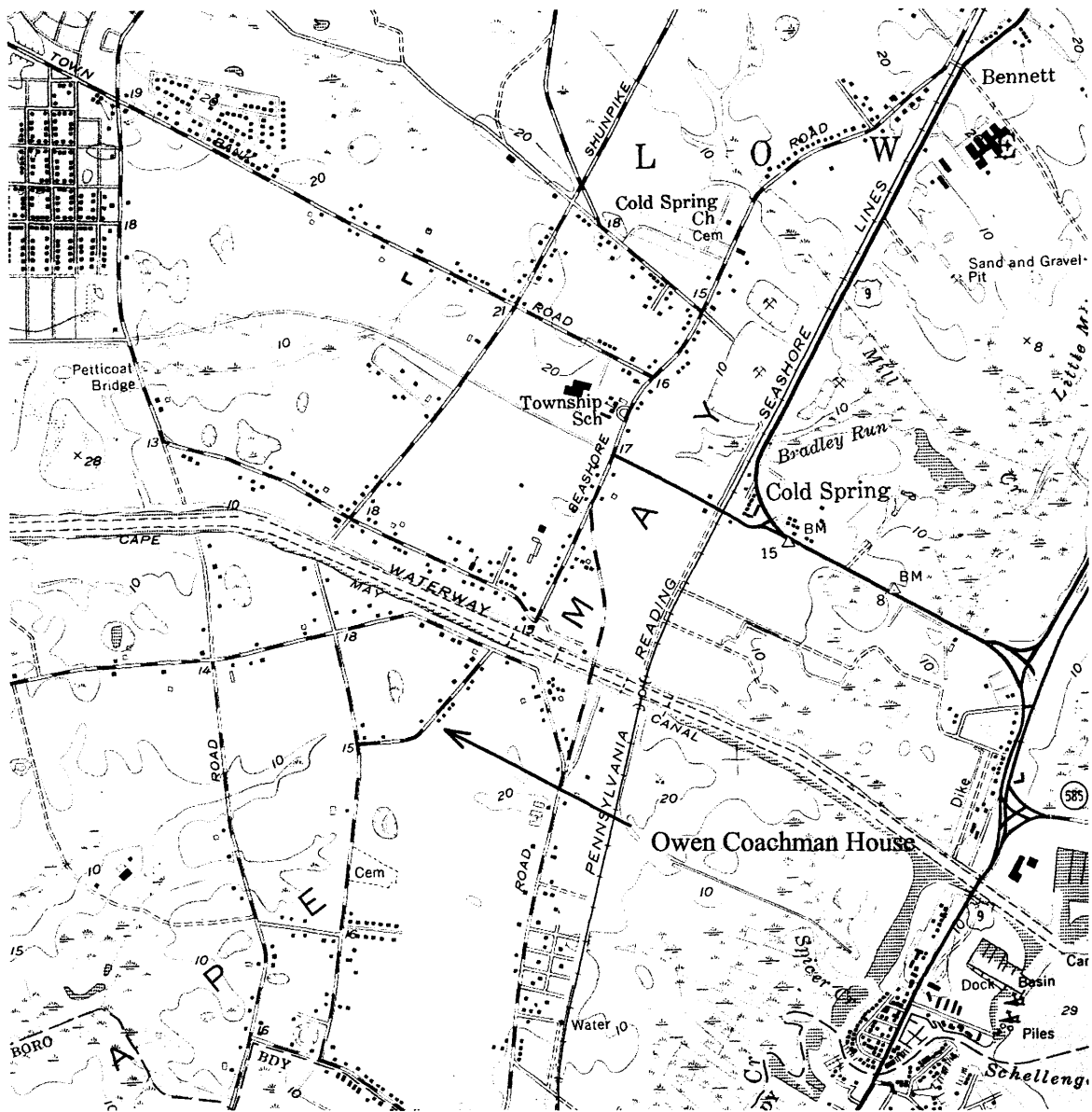
Owen Coachman House
Cape May County, NJ

Typical Information for All Photographs

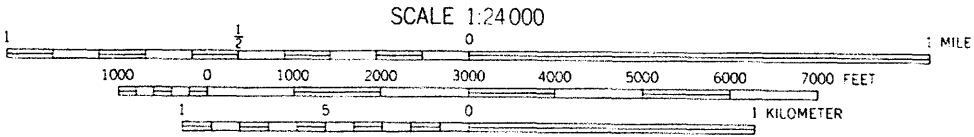
1. Name of Property	Owen Coachman House
2. County and State	Cape May County, New Jersey
3. Photographer	Joan Berkey
4. Date of Photograph	March 2005
5. Location of Digital Copies	Joan Berkey 1003 Bartlett Avenue Linwood, NJ 08221 and NJ State Historic Preservation Office

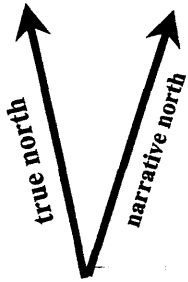
Photo # and Description of View

1. Exterior view showing setting and streetscape; looking northeast along Batts Lane
2. Exterior: façade (west elevation); looking east
3. Exterior: north (side) and east (rear) elevations; looking southwest
4. Exterior: south (side) and west (façade) elevations; looking almost north
5. Interior: parlor, first floor; looking northeast
6. Interior: parlor, first floor; looking northwest
7. Interior: exposed corner post in winder to second floor; looking north
8. Interior: second floor hallway; looking almost east
9. Interior: kitchen; looking northwest
10. Interior: kitchen; looking northeast
11. Interior: enclosed porch; looking northwest
12. Grape Arbor (non-contributing); looking southeast
13. Privy (non-contributing): west (façade) and south elevations; looking northeast
14. Chicken Coop (non-contributing): east (façade) and north elevations; looking southwest
15. Tool/Storage Shed (non-contributing): south (façade) and east elevations; looking northwest

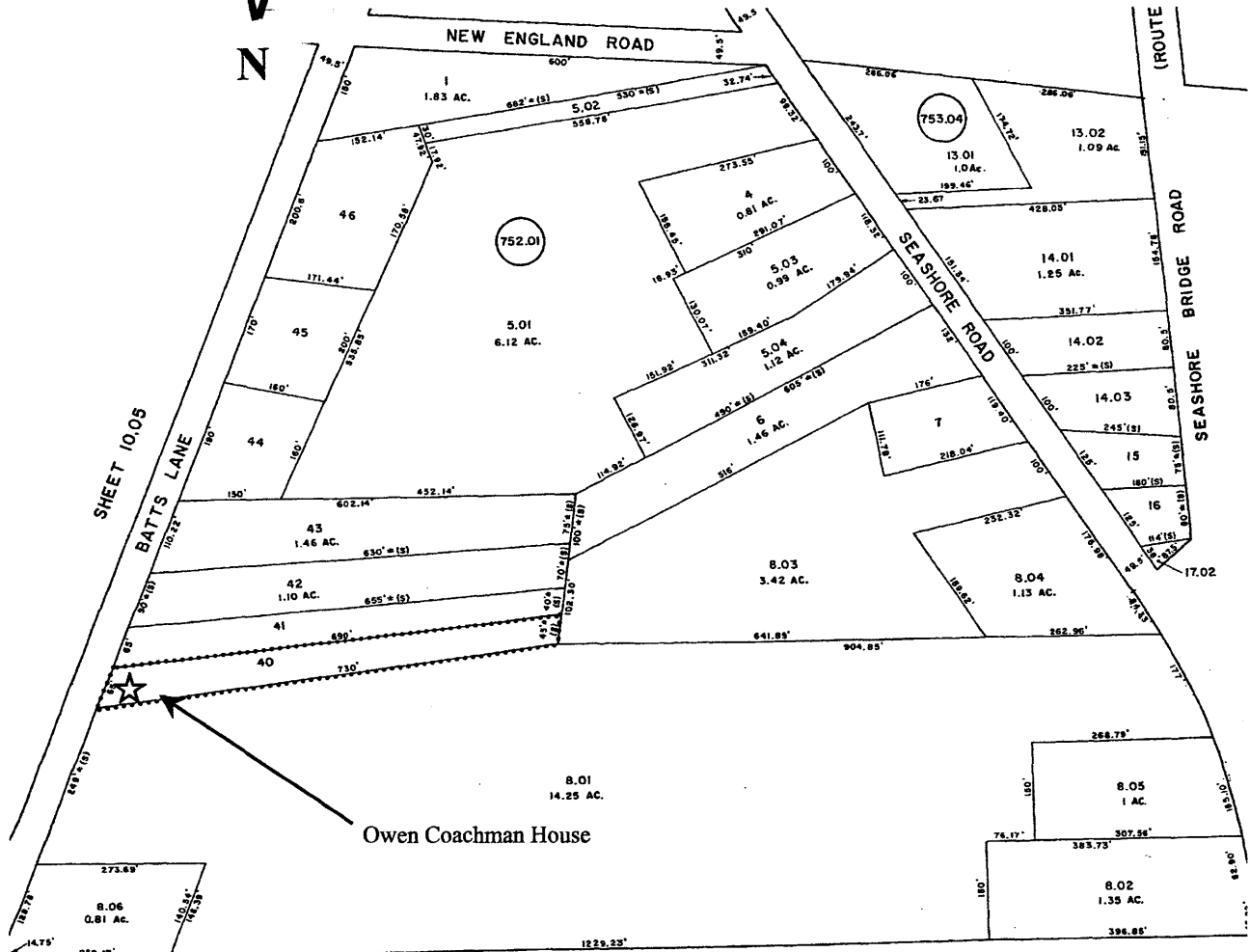
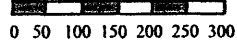


USGS Map
Cape May Quad
 partial photocopy
 showing the location of the
 Owen Coachman House





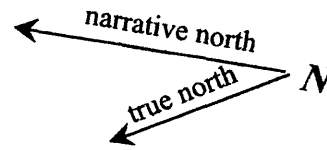
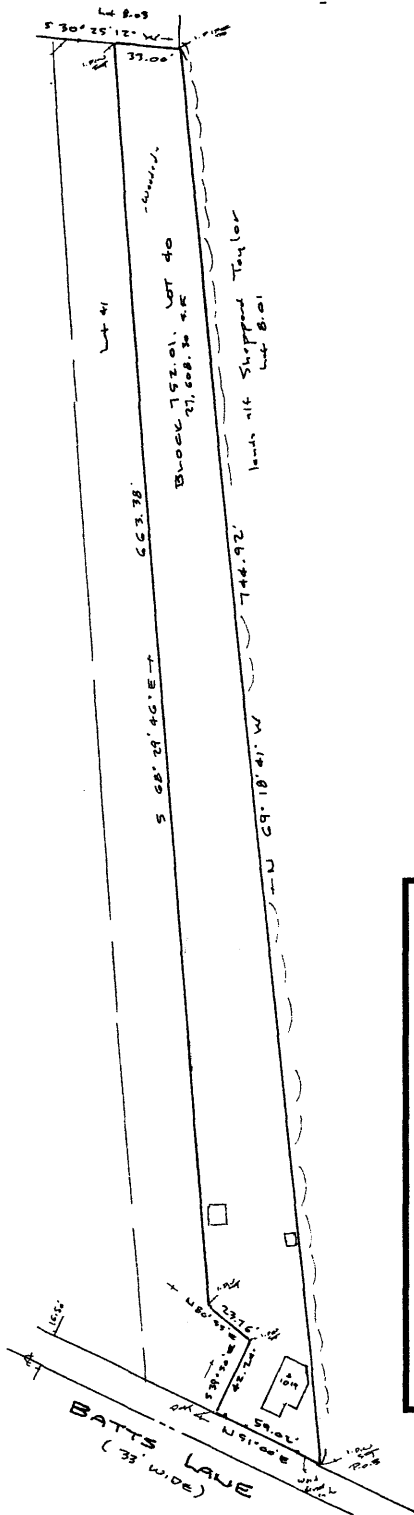
SCALE IN FEET



**Owen Coachman House
Tax Map, Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ
annotated to show location of the nominated property*
(identified as block 752.01, lot 40)**

..... boundary of nominated property

*note that the north lot line does not represent the true legal description
(see site plan for true property boundary)



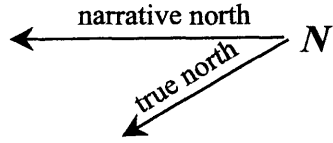
Owen Coachman House
Lower Township, Cape May County
New Jersey

Site Plan**
showing boundary lines

scale 1" = 100'

— boundary

**source: Plan of Survey for block 752.01, lot 40, Township of Lower, Cape May County, [NJ] prepared by William P. Sweeney, licensed land surveyor, June 20, 2004.

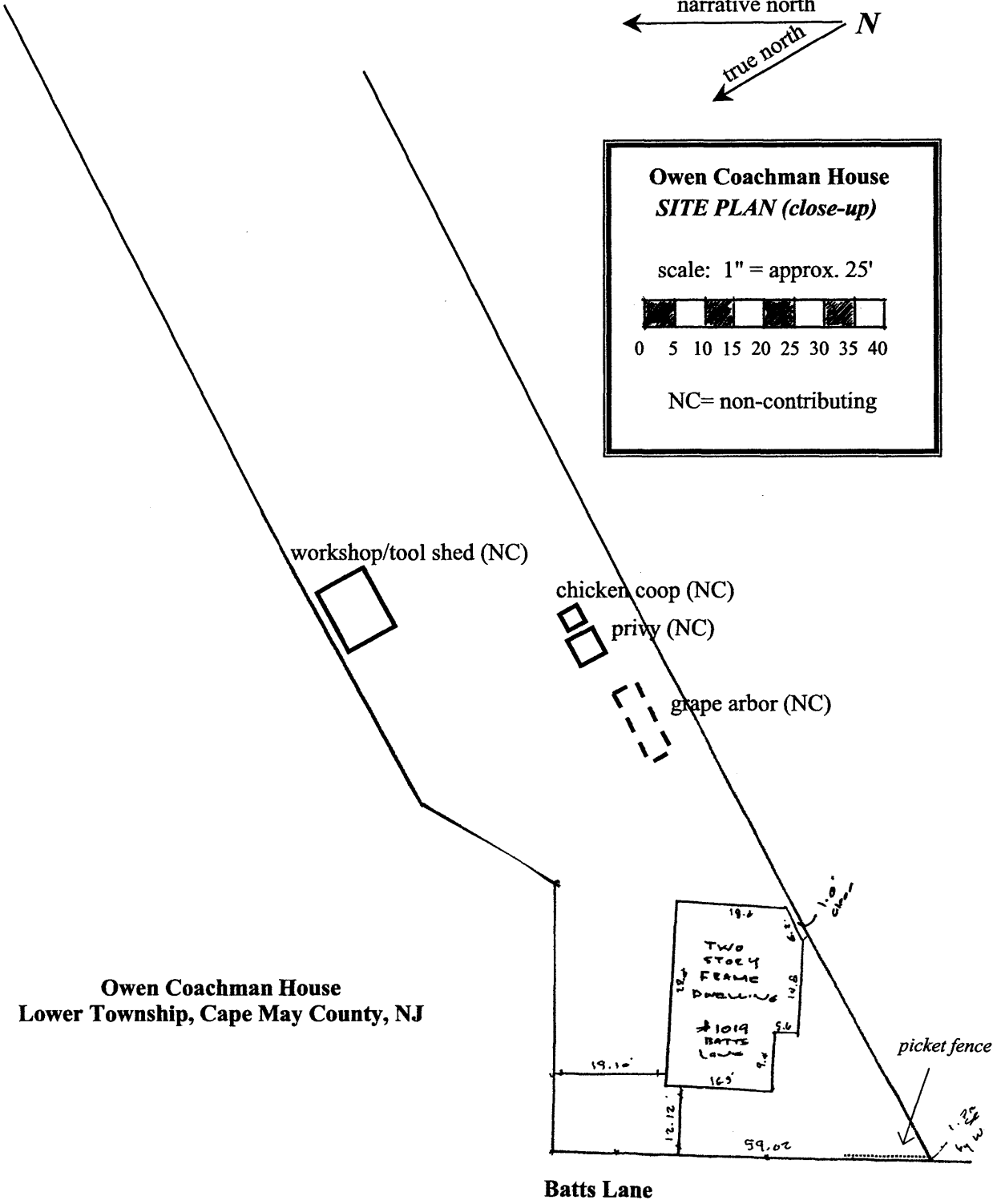


Owen Coachman House
SITE PLAN (close-up)

scale: 1" = approx. 25'

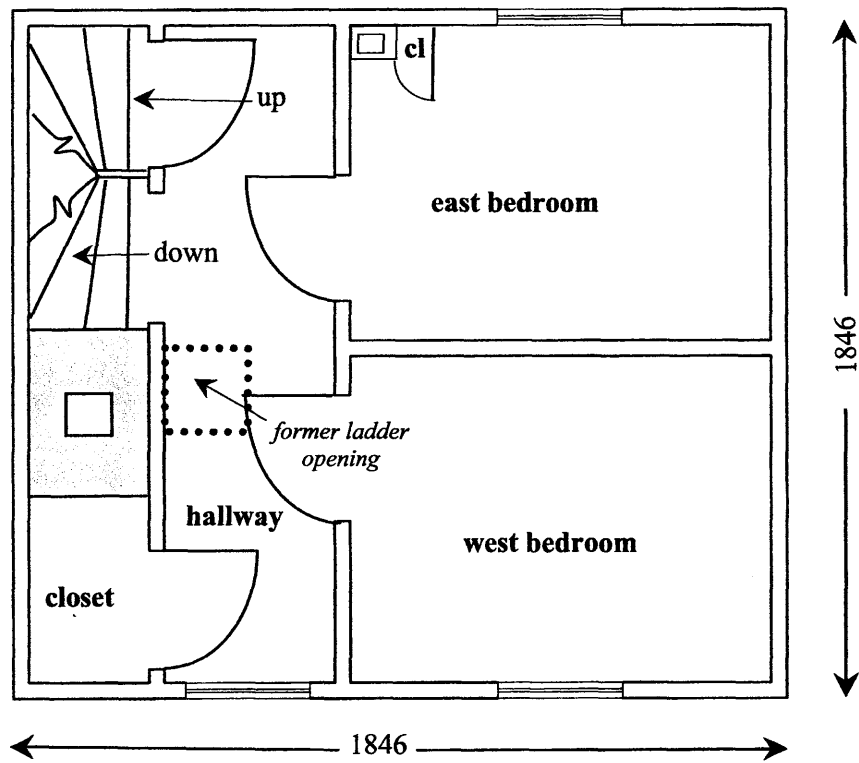
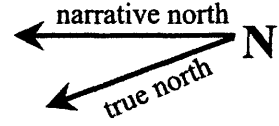
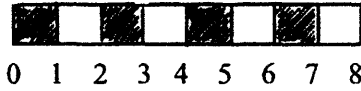
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

NC= non-contributing



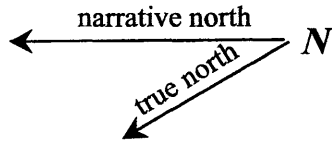
SCALE IN FEET

1" = approx. 5.5'



Owen Coachman House
Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Owen Coachman House
SITE PLAN (close-up)
 annotated for photographs

scale: 1" = approx. 25'

NC= non-contributing

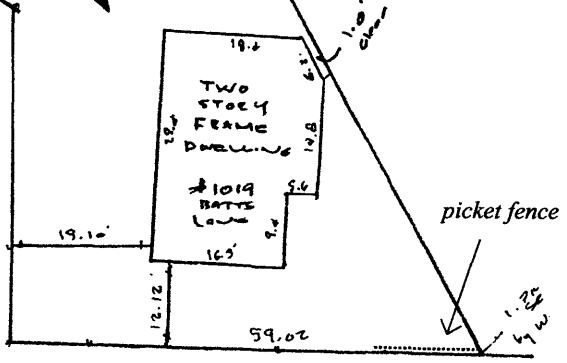
Owen Coachman House
 Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ

workshop/tool shed (NC)

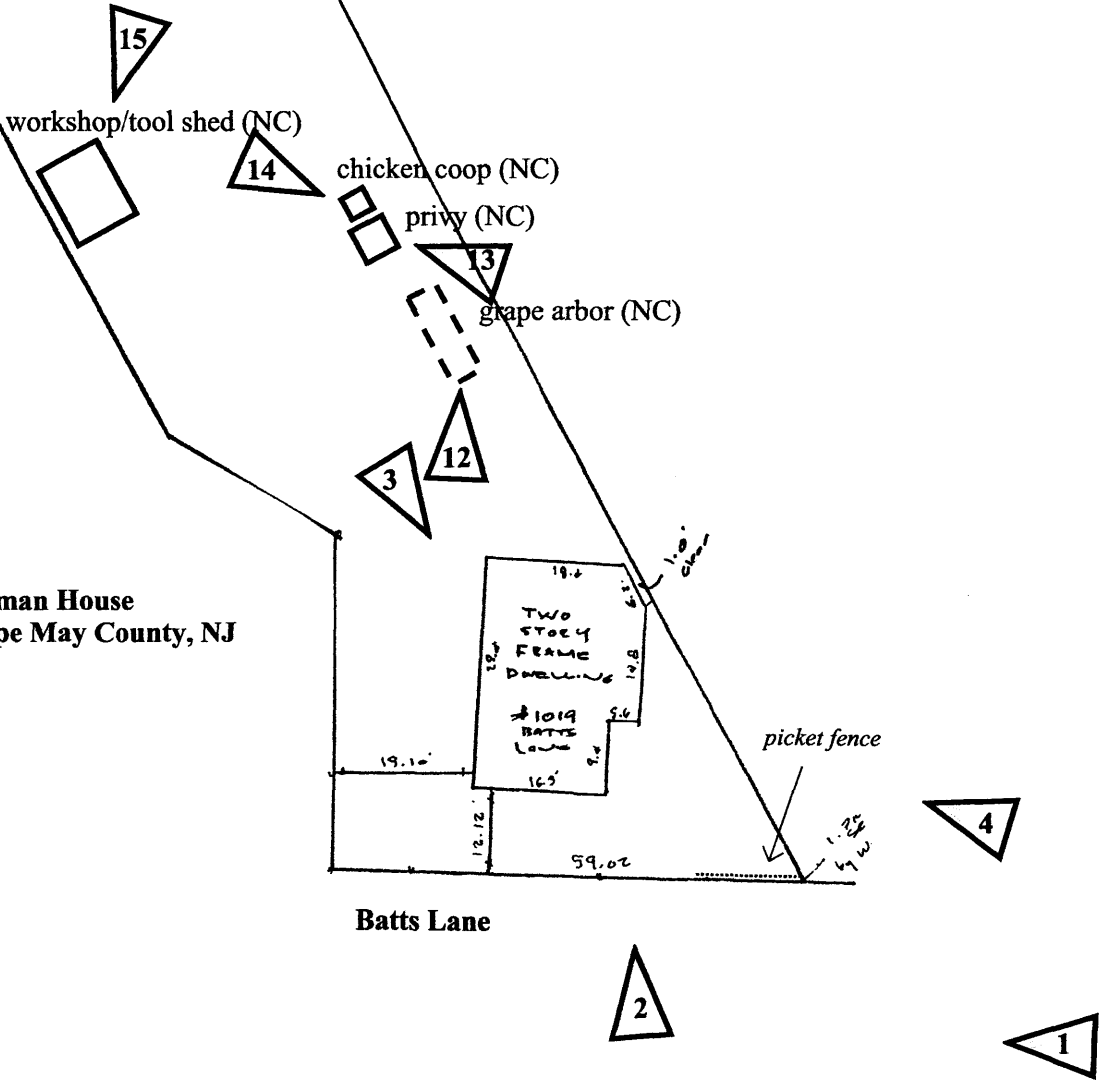
chicken coop (NC)

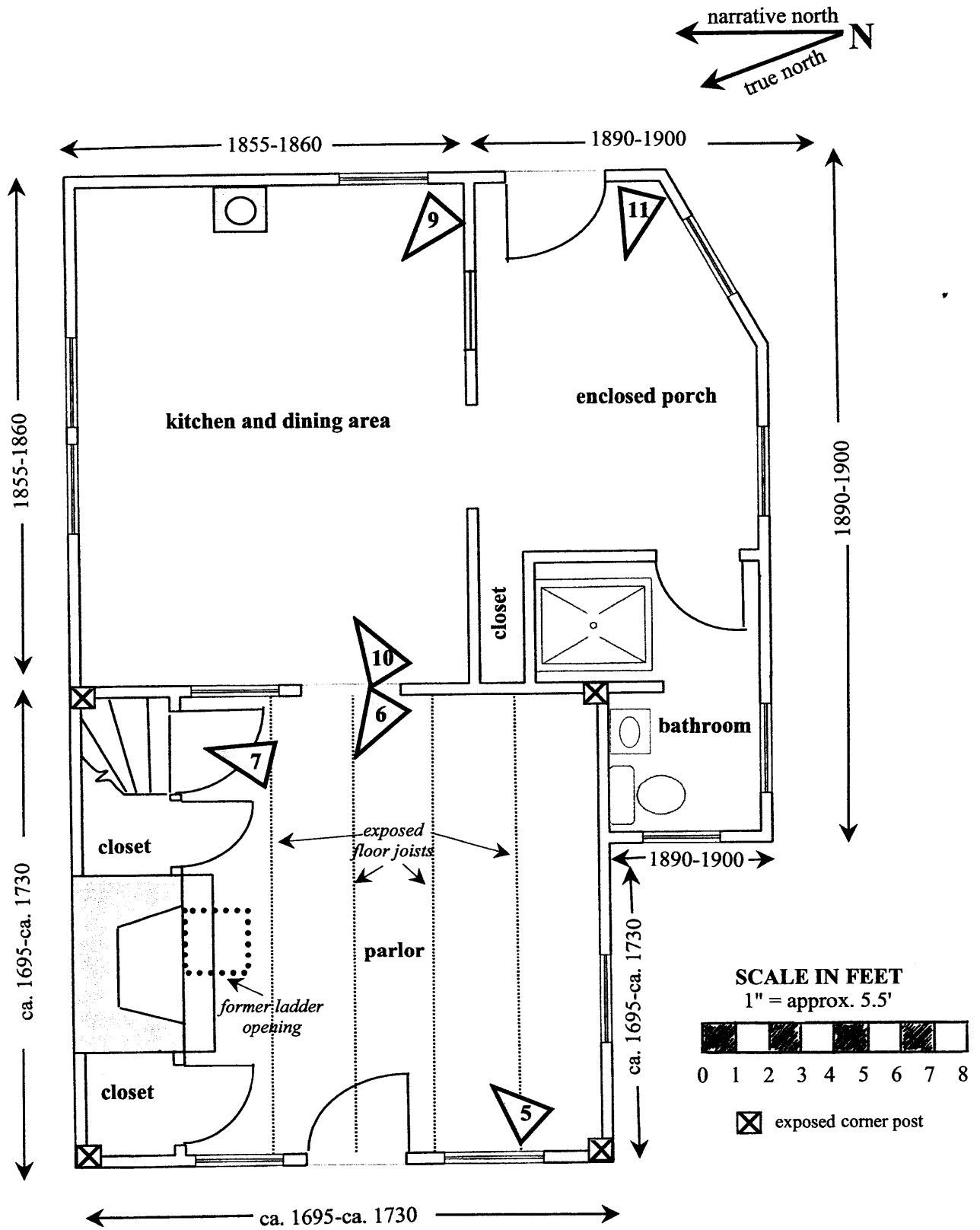
privy (NC)

grape arbor (NC)



Batts Lane

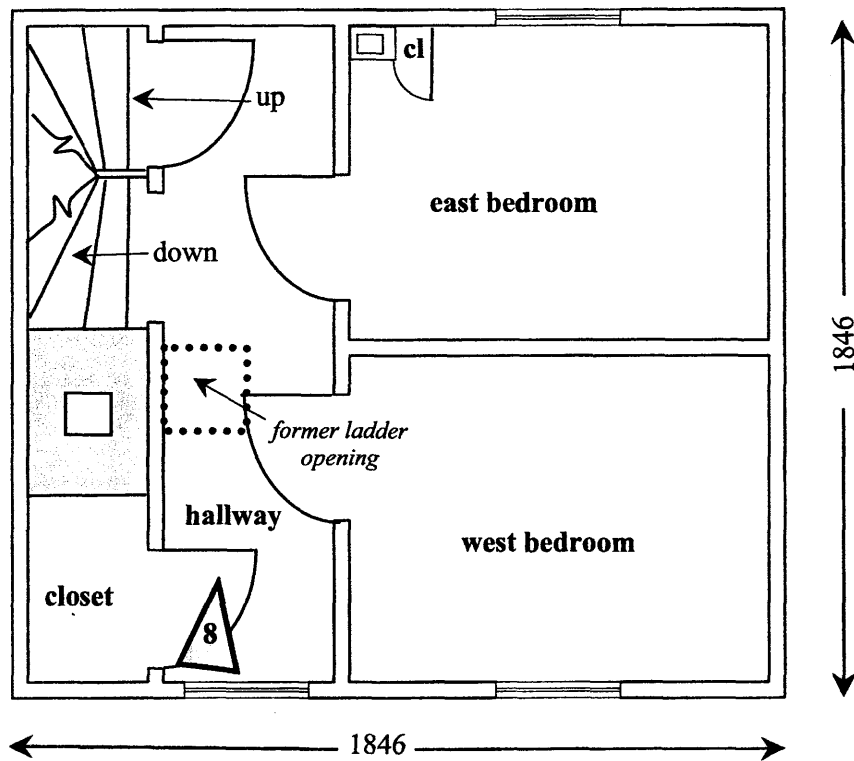
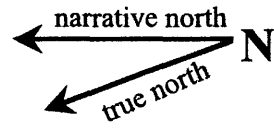
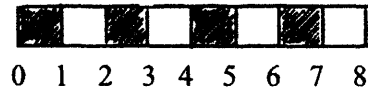




Owen Coachman House
 Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ
FIRST FLOOR PLAN ANNOTATED FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

SCALE IN FEET

1" = approx. 5.5'



Owen Coachman House

Lower Township, Cape May County, NJ

SECOND FLOOR PLAN ANNOTATED FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Owen Coachman House
Lower Township, Cape May County, New Jersey

Historic Maps and Supplemental Images

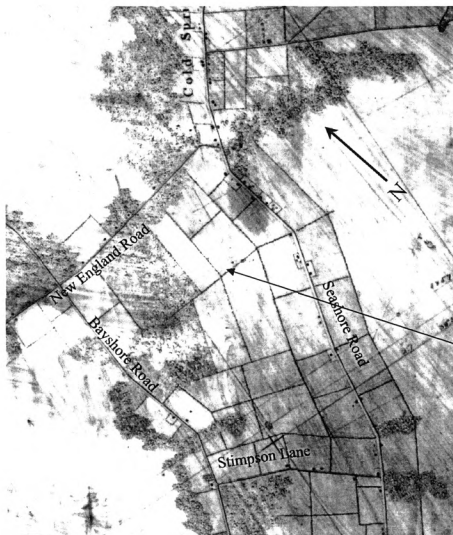


Figure 1: 1842
Topographical Map, section
of Lower Township

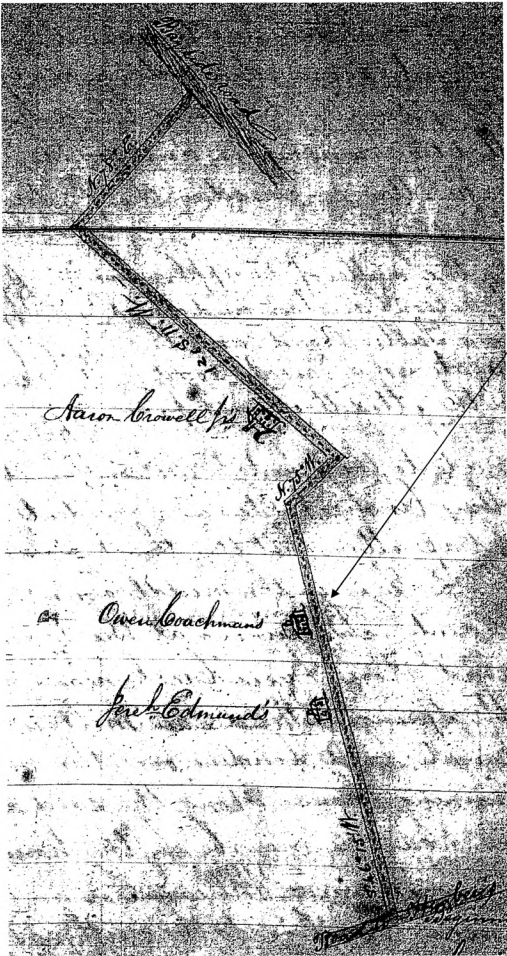
Neither the Coachman House
nor Batt's Lane (which was
laid out in 1846) show on this
map, further bolstering the
argument that the house was
moved to this location by
Coachman in 1846. Street
names and the north arrow
were added by this researcher.

The Owen Coachman House
is approximately located here.

[U.S. Coast & Geodetic
Survey, 1842]

Figure 2: 1846 road return showing the Owen Coachman residence on what is now called Batts Lane

It is not known why John Bateast's house, which was located between the Coachman and Edmunds houses, is not shown. Neither the Crowell or Edmunds houses are extant.



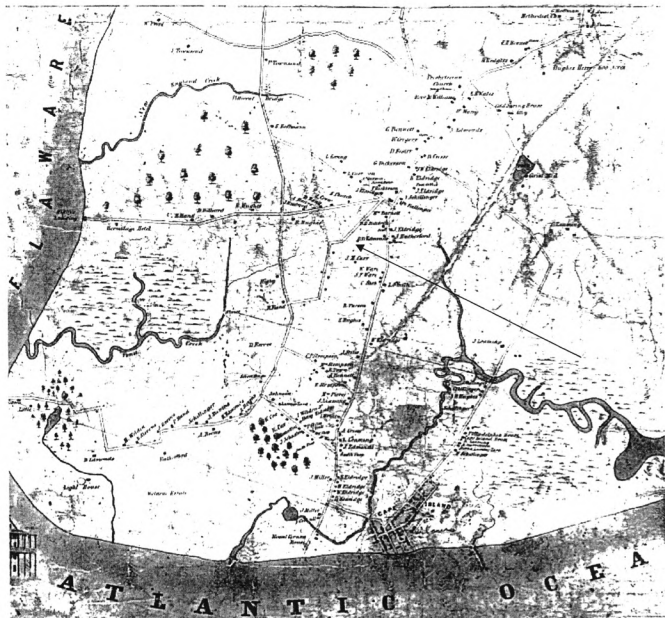


Figure 3: 1850 Nunan Map of Lower Township

Although Batts Lane is shown on the map (designated by the arrow above), neither its houses nor the names of the African-American residents are.

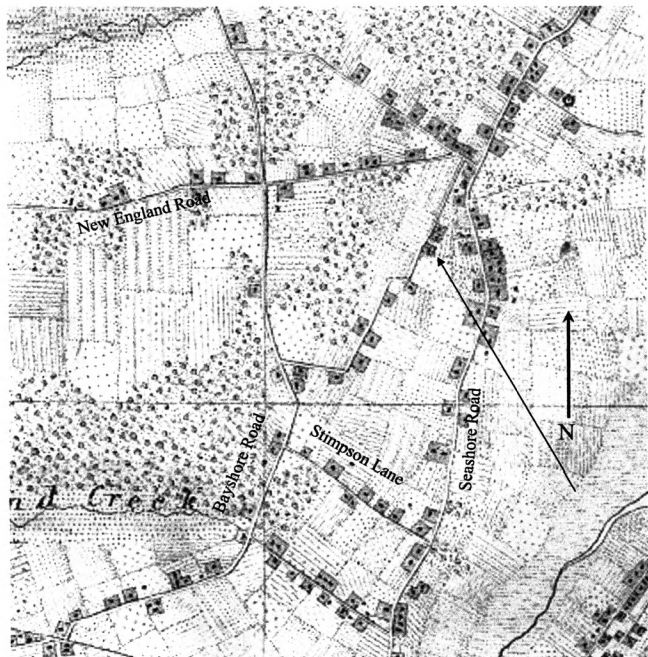


Figure 4: 1856 map of Cape May County showing Batts Lane and the Owen Coachman House

The arrow points to the Owen Coachman House. [street names and north arrow were added by this researcher]

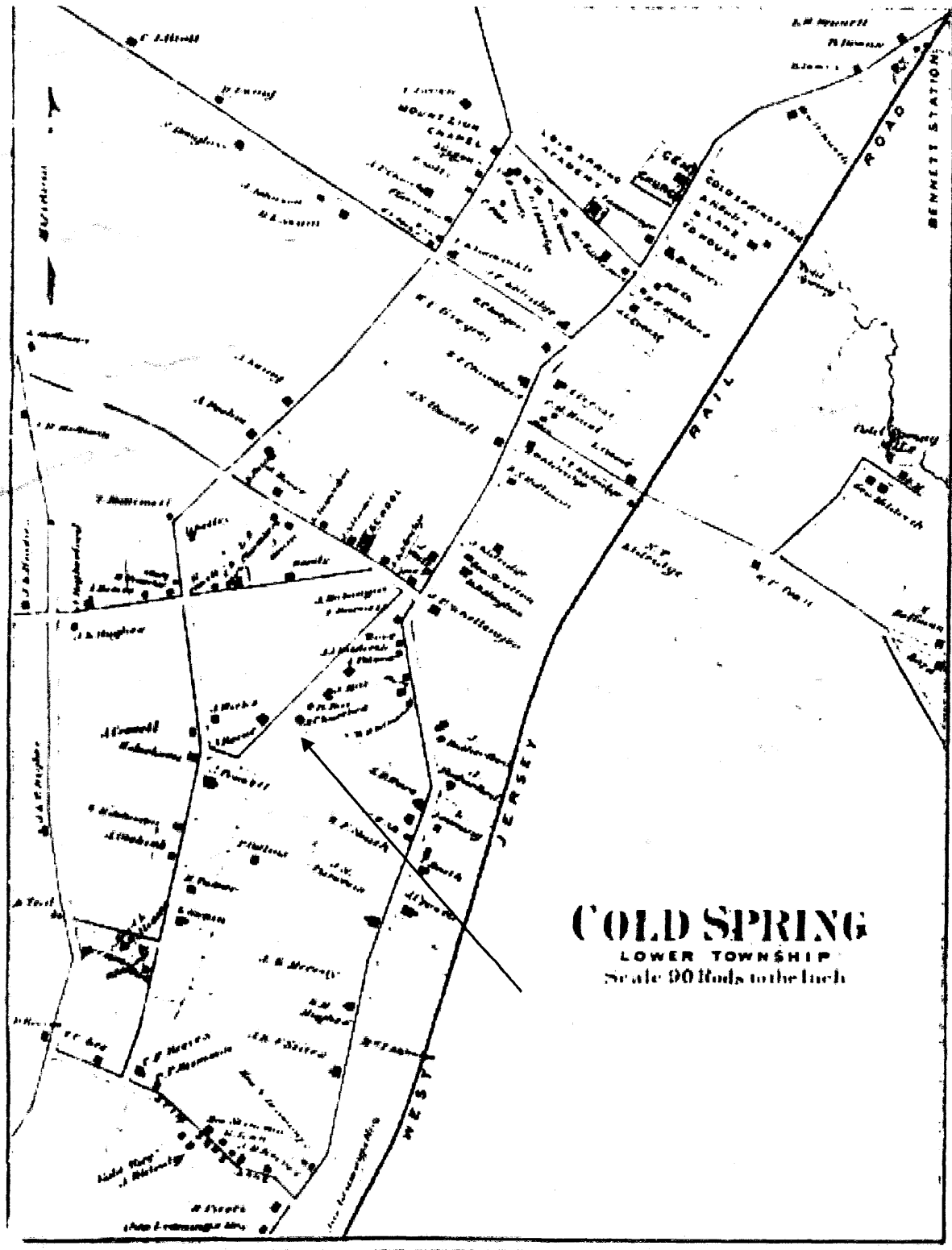


Figure 5: 1872 Beers map of Cape May County, inset map of Cold Spring
 The house is shown as the residence of S. [Silas] Church.



Figure 6: 1879 Map/United States Coast and Geodetic Survey

This map clearly shows the absence of the Matthews House to the north of the Owen Coachman House. Seen (from southwest to northeast along Batts Lane) are the Owen Coachman House, the John Batteast, Sr. House (extant), the Benjamin Batteast House (extant), and the Edmunds House (not extant).



Figure 9: the house before restoration, 2002

Looking southeast.



Figure 10: the house before restoration, 2002

Looking southwest



Figure 7: 1963 photograph showing the rear of the Coachman House

This is a photocopy of a photograph taken in 1963 showing the rear and north (side) elevations of the houses. The Coachman House is seen to the left and the Matthews House is to its right. View southwest.



Figure 8: timber framing of second floor

As seen in the winder stair to the attic on the second floor of the main block. View northeast.

