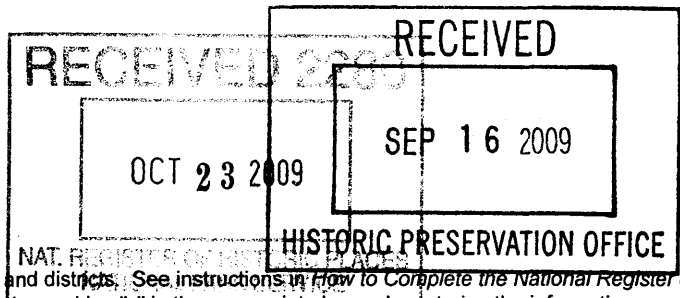


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

971



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 any 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 Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 1451 Raritan Road  not for publication

city or town Township of Scotch Plains  vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Union county code 039 zip code 07076

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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] 9/28/09  
Signature of certifying official Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature 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 commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Patricia Andrews 12/7/2009  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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		_____ buildings
		_____ sites
		_____ structures
		_____ objects
1		_____ 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. Historic Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Work in progress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
walls Wood: Shingle, Weatherboard  
roof Wood shake; Asphalt  
other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

See Continuation Sheet.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
Industry
Military

Period of Significance

Ca. 1761-1815

Significant Dates

Ca. 1761
1791

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Gershom Frazee
Elizabeth Frazee

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gershom Frazee, builder

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 a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See Continuation Sheet

(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

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
X Other
Name of repository: Rutgers University Special Collections

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property 0.925 acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>553560</u>	<u>4496180</u>	3 _____
2	_____	_____	4	_____
_____ See continuation sheet.				

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title Stacy E. Spiesorganization Stacy E. Spies, Historic Preservation Consultantdate February 2009street & number P.O. Box 434telephone (908) 889-0161city or town Hopkintonstate Massachusettszip code 01748**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Township of Scotch Plainsstreet & number 430 Park Avenuetelephone (908) 322-6700city or town Scotch Plainsstate NJzip code 07060

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Union County, New Jersey

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The Frazee house is a 2-story frame dwelling of 18<sup>th</sup>-century origin, with a 1 ½-story frame wing (Photographs 1 and 2). The rectangular-plan building has a gable roof with close eaves and parged brick chimneys at the gable ends. The walls are covered with wood shingles over beaded weatherboards and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles over wood shakes. The building rests on a fieldstone foundation. The interior of the building displays mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century design features, including beaded-edge beams, wide floor boards, and hand-planed cabinetry. The house faces south toward Raritan Road and is located at the base of a hill near the intersection of Terrill Road and Raritan Road. The house is located approximately 20 feet north of the edge of the current roadway on an open .925-acre lot. Suburban dwellings are located north, east and west of the house. The house is in poor condition. While the building has been altered with the partial removal of interior plaster finishes and the addition of a single-story frame addition to the front of the house, the building retains an unusually high number of early windows, including 12-light sash and reworked 18<sup>th</sup>-century sash, and vertical board doors.

**Setting**

The Frazee House is located near the intersection of Raritan Road and Terrill Road, two heavily-traveled 18<sup>th</sup>-century roads (Photograph 2). The Frazee House is located at the northwest corner of this intersection at the northern edge of the Ash Swamp and at the eastern edge of the Short Hills, a glacial moraine. The Short Hills are a small series of hills that run north and south roughly between Rahway Road and Woodland Avenue in Plainfield and from Oak Tree Road in Edison to the Netherwood section of Plainfield. The hills, which are 160 feet high at their peaks, cover an area roughly 1.2 miles east to west and 3.4 miles north to south. Ash Swamp is mostly contained within the present-day Ash Brook Reservation at the southern boundary of the Township of Scotch Plains. Robinson's Branch of the Rahway River, which here runs roughly parallel to Terrill Road, is located 180 feet east of the house. Land now in use as the Ash Brook Golf Course is located across Raritan Road to the south. This land was part of the Frazee property until the 1950s. An asphalt-paved area is located along the east elevation. Partially demolished concrete pads are located immediately adjacent to the house to the north-northwest. The remainder of the sloping property is covered with grasses and scattered mature trees.

**Exterior** (N.B. Some doors and windows have been removed from their frames and placed inside the building due to vandalism. Plywood covers the openings.) The house is of mortise-and-tenon timber construction connected with wood pegs and insulated with hand-made brick nogging. The 1 ½-story lateral wing was constructed before 1761, and contains a single room with a chamber above. Interior evidence indicates that the wing was extended one structural bay to the east and the chimney stack (re)laid in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The 2-story main body of the house was constructed ca. 1761-1766 (Photograph 3). The building is clad with modern wood shingles over beaded weatherboards secured with wrought iron nails. On the main house, the original, unpainted weatherboards measure approximately 5 ½ to 6 inches to weather. On the east wing, the weatherboards measure 6 to 10 inches to weather. Interior framing evidence suggests that pent roofs were located on the north and south elevations of both sections of the house. The side-gabled roofs have close eaves and are covered with asphalt shingles over wood shakes. Interior chimneys with exposed exterior chimneybacks are located at the east and west gable ends. The east chimney stack contains an oven. The exterior oven dome was removed before the 1940s.

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Union County, New Jersey

The main (south) elevation of the main body of the house is dominated by a shed-roof appendage constructed during the 1980s that rests on a poured concrete foundation. The building's somewhat altered, original south façade remains inside this room (Photograph 4). There, the original center doorway is flanked by early, perhaps original, 12/12 wood sash windows with heavy mortise-and-tenon frames. The 18<sup>th</sup>-century six-panel front door has Roman ovolo moldings, wrought iron strap hinges and a Suffolk latch (Photograph 5). Physical evidence indicates that a transom was originally located over the door. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the transom was covered over and the 12/12 sashes were altered. The lower sash were cut down to 12/8. Later, the sashes were again altered (pre-1940s) when the muntins were removed from the lower sash. An 1880s photograph of the house features a hip-roof porch on the south elevation, which would have likely been constructed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The porch construction may have been undertaken concurrently with the cutting-down of the first-floor windows and the creation of two kneewall windows at the second floor.

18<sup>th</sup>-century 6/6 windows with heavy 1 ¼-inch muntins flank the center entrance on the main (south) elevation of the wing (Photograph 6). Muntins on the lower sash have been removed, leaving behind mortise pockets. An overhanging roof with a very slight flare forms the porch roof. A poured concrete porch floor replaced an earlier wood floor during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A wood closet located at the west end of the porch abuts the east elevation of the main body of the house. The closet was likely constructed shortly after construction of the main body of the house and appears in a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century photograph of the house. The closet door is constructed of wide, beaded vertical boards and is hung from strap hinges. The door is secured with a wood turn button. Flush vertical boards form the wall above the door. The closet's south wall and the portion of the east wall adjacent to the door are constructed of weatherboards. (See Photograph 1). The original beaded weatherboards on the east elevation of the house are visible inside the closet.

Two small window openings are located on the east elevations of the wing and the main sections; the openings contain modern jalousie windows (See Photograph 1). The wing's east elevation contains a bay window of repurposed 4/4 wood sash windows that was added between 1940 and 1970. The east elevation is dominated by the exposed Flemish bond chimneyback, where the outline of the oven dome is visible. A small rectangular attic window opening is empty.

A center doorway and an 18<sup>th</sup>-century 6/6 wood sash window are located on the north (rear) elevation of the wing (Photograph 7). Early 19<sup>th</sup>-century 6/6 wood sash windows with narrower, ¾ inch muntins are located in the first and second floors of the west and north elevations of the main house. Although one window opening on the north elevation of the main house has been shingled over, the window's 18<sup>th</sup>-century 4/4 wood sashes with 1¼ inch-wide muntins are stored on site. Rectangular openings are located in the kneewalls of both sections, perhaps originally constructed to access pent roofs. The west elevation of the main house contains 6/6 wood sash windows with rippled glass at the first and second floors. The narrow muntins indicate a likely early 19<sup>th</sup>-century construction date. The arrangement of the muntins in these windows is irregular, indicating they were reworked from an earlier configuration. A narrow, common bond exposed chimneyback is located at the first floor.

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Union County, New Jersey

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**Interior – Cellar**

The foundation is constructed of uncoursed rubble fieldstone. An earthen crawlspace is located under the wing. Under the main portion of the house, a cellar is lit by four three-light windows: three in the west elevation and one in the north elevation. Whitewashed masonry piers with a semi-circular arch support the chimney stack at the west elevation. A masonry corbel supports the diagonal corner fireplace in the rear first-floor chamber. The two chimney flues are separate at the first floor level, but join together into a single stack in the second story. The cellar floor is constructed of cobblestones, with larger pavers used in the north end of the basement and smaller pavers in the south end, possibly indicating that the basement was paved over time. A stone-lined drainage channel encircles the basement floor. (Photographs 8-10.) This channel may have also fed a shallow pool, allowing the basement to function as a springhouse, as mentioned in secondary source materials.<sup>1</sup> Installation of 20<sup>th</sup>-century mechanical systems appears to have damaged evidence of such a pool. A small area in the northeast corner of the basement, measuring approximately 5 ½ by 8 ½ feet, is paved with handmade brick. Whitewashing visible on the stone walls is limited to the area abutting the brick floor and terminates with a clear line at the edge of the brick, giving the impression that the area was once enclosed as a distinct area, possibly for food storage.

**Structural System**

Both sections of the house, the main body and the lateral wing, are constructed of a series of braced H-bents constructed of hewn ash and placed approximately 4 feet apart. In the earlier wing, the 16-foot-long anchor beams serve as girts to support the second floor. The exposed beams have beaded edges. 30-foot anchor beams in the main body of the house support the second floor with the assistance of posts set at approximately mid-span. At the first floor, the exposed beams have beaded edges. On the second floor, the now-exposed beams are rough-hewn. The posts on the second floor have beaded edges. Scribe marks and Roman numerals visible throughout the main body of the house at the mortise-and-tenoned joints provide information about the manner of assembly.

**Interior – East Wing**

Originally functioning as a stand-alone dwelling, with the construction of the two-story house ca. 1761, the east wing would have become the kitchen and more formal activities were moved to the new portion of the house (Photograph 11). The wing consists of a single room on the first floor with a garret above. The wing was extended by one bay to the east, most likely ca. 1761. On the first floor, the location of the original exterior east wall is indicated by empty stud mortises in the exposed chimney girt. The exposed beams and plank floors were common in much of eastern New Jersey among houses of the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The center two beams have beaded edges; the east and west beams are rough-hewn, indicating that they would have likely been covered with paneling. A beaded vertical board-and-batten door leading from the kitchen to the main house, with its wrought iron strap hinges and Suffolk latch also fits within this time period (Photograph 12). The second-floor floorboards are visible and form the ceiling of the first floor. The boards are planed smooth on their undersides.

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<sup>1</sup> Scotch Plains Junior Women's Club, "Historic Scotch Plains" [guidebook accompanying house tour] (1964), 7-8.

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
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Although the brick "beehive" oven has lost its exterior extension, the kitchen fireplace on the east elevation retains its interior oven door (with inner arched opening) and overall 18<sup>th</sup>-century form, with its wrought iron crane and trammel. The oven's ash chute to the fireplace is an unusual feature suggesting its frequent use for baking. The ash pit below the oven is characteristic of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The fireplace opening contains a central iron reinforcing rod that carries the wrought iron lintel and hangs from an upper wood lintel. The chimney was constructed and likely cased by Frazee at the time the room was extended one bay to the east. This casing, as well as a probable architrave surround, mantel shelf, and overmantel plaster has been removed. A small cupboard opening dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century remains above the oven at the upper left of the fireplace opening. (Photograph 11)

The stair to the upper floor, located in the northwest corner of the wing, has been rebuilt more than once. Fragments of the original winder stair and sections of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century beaded vertical board partition enclosing the stair survive under later coverings. A wide basement stair opening in the west wall leads from the wing to the cellar under the main house. The cellar doorway, although missing its doors, has evidence of double-leaf batten doors, arranged with one wide and one narrow leaf mounted on strap hinges. The pintle holes from the double doors remain, as does a wooden turn button at the top of the opening. The crawl space under the kitchen reveals that the original hewn joists and plank floor remain under later coverings, including the extant flagstone and concrete floor added in the 1970s.

The second floor of the east wing contains a single room with plank floors that average 18 inches in width (Photograph 13). Diagonal braces that originally supported an exterior wall extend into the house at floor level. The end bay roof plates, which are spliced with scarf joints, also demonstrate that east bay was not original. The rough-hewn rafters are exposed. Early plaster remains on portions of the east and south walls; the structural members are all rough-hewn, indicating that they were not intended to be exposed. The stair at the northwest corner of the room is bordered by a mortise-and-tenon railing and post (Photograph 14). The square-section post has beaded vertical edges and the post has rounded upper edges.

#### **Interior – Main House**

The front parlor fills the south half of the main body of the house (Photograph 15). The walls are covered with mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century knotty pine paneling over plaster. The main house retains its original wide ash or red gum floorboards that average 18 inches in width. The second-and-attic-floor floorboards are visible and form the ceiling of the lower floors. The boards are planed smooth on their undersides. A large chimney is centered on the west wall. Although covered with stone facing in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the chimney retains its original brickwork, cast iron fireback, and crane. An 18<sup>th</sup>-century china cupboard is located at the south end of the west parlor wall. The cupboard has a curved vertical board back, curved shelves with plate grooves, and lower paneled doors with wrought iron H-L hinges. The upper doors are no longer extant. The lower doors have been covered with knotty pine paneling and the original hinges reused.

The rear half of the house presently contains a single chamber that was used most recently as a kitchen (Photograph 16). Physical evidence indicates that a small room measuring approximately 7 feet square was partitioned from the northeast corner of this larger room. Paint and finish evidence visible on the ceiling



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indicates that the partition wall was constructed of vertical boards likely during the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A large corner fireplace is located in the southwest corner of the room. The original, 18<sup>th</sup>-century fireplace paneling was salvaged ca. 1972 and placed on display in the Cannonball House Museum in Scotch Plains, where it remains today. The failing plaster and brick nogging in this room was removed ca. 1972. At that time, the brick nogging was re-laid into the walls, unfortunately with modern concrete.

On the second floor of the main house the framing with much of the original brick nogging remains (Photograph 17). 18<sup>th</sup>-century plaster with whitewash remains in some areas, along with fragmentary later wallpaper finishes. Unlike the first floor, the beams are rough hewn. The vertical posts at the center of the house do, however, have beaded edges. Many of the floorboards at the second floor and attic levels are 24 inches wide (Photograph 18).

The second floor of the main house is presently divided into two rooms by a vertical board partition that parallels the gable ridge (Photograph 19). This partition, which contains two doorways, has early ochre-colored and black paint. The southwest chamber retains paint evidence that indicates the former location of a bed box and a possible second chamber along the south elevation (Photograph 20). The bed box location adjacent to the chimney stack would maximize heating during the cold months, as there are no fireplaces on the second floor. The rear chamber appears to have been divided into two rooms as well. Wear marks, changes in finish, and scribe lines on the floor indicate the location of the original partition location perpendicular to the ridge. This evidence may also indicate the presence of a second bed box or closet in the northeast chamber.

The attic retains its original hewn framing with all rafters intact. The roof framing is deteriorated and some have failed wooden pegs with weakened mortise-and-tenon connections. Some of the original north roof rafters have sagged and been reinforced by later, "sistered," rafters (See Photograph 20). The original exterior weatherboards are visible from the attic interior.

### **Doors and Hardware**

Early hardware and doors have been repurposed throughout the house. Ghost marks in the door finishes provide clues to their original locations and many of the doors, windows, and hardware can be matched to their original locations. These include three 18<sup>th</sup>-century vertical board-and-batten doors with hardware located on the second floor, one of which is re-used at the rebuilt attic stair (Photograph 21). One second-floor door preserves evidence of its old wooden latch, of which a photograph exists from the 1970s. Wrought-iron pintles are located on nearly all of the doorways.

### **Subsequent Alterations**

The Frazee house remained largely unchanged from its 18<sup>th</sup>-century appearance until the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At some point between 1900 and 1940, the hipped-roof porch was replaced with a shed-roof porch that stretched the length of the south elevation of the west section of the house. Square wood posts supported the roof and a square-section balustrade enclosed the porch. Wood steps were added to the south and east elevations of the porch. At the porch along the length of the east section of the house, a single wood post was

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added to the southeast corner and wood steps were added along the south porch elevation. Shingles were nailed over clapboards on all elevations. The beehive oven was removed during this time period.

Between the 1940s and ca. 1970, the porch along the west section was removed. Brick veneer was added at the first-floor level of the west section. Jalousie windows were installed during this time, as was the bay window at the east elevation. A shed-roof addition was added to the north elevation. This addition was removed in early 2007. On the interior, the wood fireplace surround in the southwest parlor was removed and replaced with a stone veneer surround. The shed-roof frame addition along the south elevation, which rests on a concrete foundation, was added during the late 1970s or early 1980s.

The interior experienced its most dramatic changes during the 1970s. Much of the failing interior plaster was removed ca. 1972. The brick nogging behind the plaster was removed and relaid with modern concrete. A flagstone floor laid in concrete was installed over the original floorboards in the east section of the house. The fireplace surround in the northwest chamber was removed during this time and installed in the Osborne Cannonball House on Front Street in Scotch Plains, a house museum operated by the Historical Society of Fanwood-Scotch Plains. A bathroom containing a toilet and sink was created in the wood closet on the south elevation. A full bathroom was created in the northeast corner of the second floor of the west section of the house. A kitchen was created in the northeast corner of the first floor of the west section of the house. Installation of wall-hung cabinets there required removal of a window on the north elevation. A raised floor was created in this area to accommodate plumbing.

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

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**STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE**

The Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House is the product of the work of joiner and furniture maker Gershom Frazee, who constructed the house ca. 1761-1766. The Frazee House is significant under Criterion A for its association with the Battle of the Short Hills (also known as the Battle of Ash Swamp) during the Revolutionary War and especially as a representative example of the war's impact on civilian life throughout the colonies. Skirmishes and pillaging became a part of everyday life here during the Revolutionary War and had a substantial effect on the local populace. Gershom Frazee and his wife Elizabeth were among those local residents whose farms were emptied after the Battle. However, amid the destruction caused by retreating British troops emerged a story of Elizabeth's defiance of Lord Cornwallis that illustrates the conditions of civilian life amid prolonged warfare. Gershom Frazee's contributions to architecture and industry in the skilled trades community of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century are also reflected in the building. The Frazee House is significant under Criterion B for its association with Frazee, a nearly unknown but well-documented carpenter and joiner whose work ranged from constructing houses and mills to creating cupboards, desks, cradles and coffins for regional customers. Frazee's uncatalogued and unpublished papers provide us with an unusually detailed look at the breadth of work of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century carpenter and joiner. The Frazee House meets criterion C as a Deep East Jersey cottage that features an unusual hybrid of the Dutch and English construction methods occurring in Central New Jersey during the colonial period. The period of significance for the house spans the years 1761-1815, which is the duration of Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee's association with the property.

**Summary History of the Frazee House**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the crossroads location of the Frazee House was known as Two Bridges for the spans over two tributaries of the Robinson's Branch of the Rahway River that come together here. Located nearly three miles south of the village of Scotch Plains, Two Bridges had its own schoolhouse and farming community along the heavily-traveled north-south Road to Rahway (now Terrill Road) and the east-west Raritan Road. The Frazee House is located near the northwest corner of this intersection at the northern edge of the Ash Swamp and at the eastern edge of the Short Hills.

Construction of the Frazee House began ca. 1761, when carpenter and joiner Gershom Frazee (1735-1791) purchased nine acres that included a small house, presumed to be the extant east wing of the Frazee House, from Jacob Winans, a fellow carpenter and joiner.<sup>2</sup> Winans was of Dutch origin and came with his family from Staten Island.<sup>3</sup> Gershom enlarged the kitchen wing and constructed the larger two-story addition between 1761 and 1766 for himself and his wife, Elizabeth Lee Frazee (ca. 1738-1815), known in local history as "Aunt Betty" Frazee. Gershom and Elizabeth Frazee lived in the house and raised their nephew Gershom Lee, son of Elizabeth's brother Thomas and his first wife.

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2 Deed, Jacob Winans to Gershom Frazee, 1761. Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers at the Historical Society of Plainfield and North Plainfield, New Jersey in Frederic C. Detwiller, "An Eighteenth-Century Craftsman: Gershom Frazee – Carpenter and Joiner," Undergraduate paper, Columbia University, January 1972, 28. Some of the papers in this collection have since been transferred to Rutgers University Special Collections.

3 Frederic C. Detwiller, "Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House Preservation Plan," 2.

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The Frazee family weathered the Revolutionary War and the Battle of the Short Hills and continued their residence on the property after Gershom Frazee's death in October 1791. Gershom Frazee left a will, but died in debt. His brother-in-law, Thomas Lee, handled the sale of property on the east side of Raritan Road to help pay off the debts.<sup>4</sup> Widow Elizabeth Frazee continued to live in the house with her nephew until her death in December 1815. Nephew Gershom Lee married Sarah Hetfield and continued to live on the family farm. Gershom and Sarah had two sons, Daniel H. Lee and Matthias Frazee Lee, known as Frazee Lee. Gershom Lee died intestate in 1845 and the Essex County Surrogate Court granted the estate to his sons that year. Sarah Hetfield Lee lived with her bachelor sons on the farm until her death in 1880.<sup>5</sup>

The Lee brothers were primarily farmers. "Their business ventures were in the main made jointly, and their property was held in common even to a joint bank account. The most devoted and brotherly affection existed between them. By close economy and persistent industry, combined with business sagacity, they succeeded in amassing considerable fortunes"<sup>6</sup> through numerous real estate transactions and loans.<sup>7</sup> The brothers died within five weeks of one another in 1888, with Daniel Lee's estate going to his brother. According to their inventories, the brothers' combined estate was valued at \$119,990.08 with very little value resting in their physical possessions.<sup>8</sup> In spite of their significant holdings, the brothers left only very modest bequests to close family and friends. Surviving brother Frazee Lee left his residual estate to the Scotch Plains Baptist Church in order to help it pay off the debt incurred through the recent completion of a new church, which is still standing on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains, and to help in "spreading the Gospel." Twenty-seven would-be heirs, including individuals who owed the Lee brothers substantial sums of money, contested the will and eventually won in Prerogative Court. Depositions were gathered from those who knew Frazee Lee, some of whom who stated that he was a drunkard and others who stated that he was an upstanding citizen and shrewd businessman. Some of the contestants were members of the Scotch Plains Baptist Church themselves, and the resulting infighting caused a great deal of strife within the congregation.<sup>9</sup> A quit-claim from the church was filed in 1890 and the church was given a sum of money sufficient only to pay off its debt. In 1893, a Chancery Court ruling ordered the remaining property, including the Frazee House, to be sold in order to divide the profits equally among the 27 remaining "heirs."<sup>10</sup>

As part of the liquidation, the Frazee house was sold at public auction to Albert Ryno in 1893 for \$675.00. His family farmed the land until 1949 when his sons sold the property to Franklyn Tuttle Terry and Ella Louise Terry of South Plainfield. The Terrys lived in the Frazee House and operated the Terry Lou Zoo on the property. The Terrys made extensive changes to the property including the addition of barns, a silo, and large animal pens to house "New Jersey's largest privately-owned zoo," according to their promotional materials.

4 Deed, Thomas Lee to Jonathan Woodruff, May 29, 1793, M.G. 25, New Jersey Historical Society.

5 Depositions, Frazee Lee 1888/1890, Docket B, case 52A, p. 3a, D-02-04-05, R.G. Prerogative Court, N.J. State Archives.

6 Depositions, Frazee Lee 1888/1890, Docket B, case 52A, p. 3a, D-02-04-05, R.G. Prerogative Court, N.J. State Archives.

7 Inventory of Frazee Lee, 1888, Book A Inventories, D-02. R.G. Prerogative Court, N.J. State Archives.

8 Inventory of Frazee Lee, 1888, Book A Inventories, D-02. R.G. Prerogative Court, N.J. State Archives; and Inventory of Frazee Lee, pp. 229-230, 288-292, Series: Inventory of Estates 1881-1904, RG: Prerogative Court, New Jersey State Archives.

9 Rev. J.H. Parks and Judge James D. Cleaver, *Scotch Plains Baptist Church: History from its organization August 5, 1747 to its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on August 5, 1897*. (Scotch Plains, N.J.: Privately printed, 1897) 39-41.

10 Deed, John H. Jackson, excrs. et. al., to Daniel H. Hetfield, et al., Sept. 11, 1893. Union County Deed Book 221, page 184.

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Resident animals included lions, tigers, chimpanzees, hippopotamuses, kangaroos, zebras, and giraffes, and were often castoffs from other zoos due to age or deformity. All of these outbuildings have been demolished.

The Terrys sold the property and zoo to Harold and Deborah Kafka in 1994. The Kafkas operated the establishment as the Scotch Plains Zoo until 1997. The property passed through two owners in 1997 and 1998. The property was acquired through eminent domain by the Township of Scotch Plains in 1998 and remained in arbitration until 2000. The Township presently owns the property. The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Frazee House, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation created to restore the Frazee House began a long-term lease on the property in 2006.

**Criterion A**

The Frazee House is significant under Criterion A for its association with the Revolutionary War, particularly with the Battle of the Short Hills (also known as the Battle of Ash Swamp), and especially for its association with the impact of the fighting on civilian life and the sacrifices made therein. During the winter and spring of 1777, Colonial and British armies skirmished across present-day Union and Middlesex Counties as General Howe attempted to lure General Washington into a general engagement. While no large-scale battles took place here during that time, skirmishes and pillaging became a part of everyday life, and had a substantial effect on local residents.

**The Battle of the Short Hills / The Battle of Ash Swamp**

Nearing the end of 1776, George Washington and the Continental army were in retreat from General William Howe, the highest-ranking British official in the colonies during the Revolutionary War. Washington's success at the Battles of Princeton and Trenton, however, reversed the course of the war, and Washington brought the troops to Morristown for winter camp. Between January and late May of 1777, Washington regularly sent detachments to the plains below the Watchung Mountains, i.e. Scotch Plains and environs, where his troops engaged elements of the British army that were posted between New Brunswick and Perth Amboy. Continental troops attacked foraging parties and outposts of Howe's troops who spent the winter in New Brunswick. Continued harassment, while having its desired intent on the British troops, produced similar effects on the residents.

By late May 1777, Washington dispersed the winter camp and moved most his army to the Middlebrook encampment in the Watchung Mountains, a natural stronghold, and waited for Howe's next move. By the middle of June 1777, Howe had assembled his main army of 17,000 troops in the Raritan Valley, intending to defeat Washington and his army of 8,000 troops. Howe intended to lure Washington down into the open lowlands and engage his troops by feigning an overland advance toward the Delaware River and Philadelphia. Washington, however, refused to leave the heights and engage Howe. Howe recalled his troops to New Brunswick from the surrounding countryside and began to move them from New Jersey by way of Perth Amboy.

Beginning on June 20, Howe began the withdrawal from the New Brunswick encampment. The army marched to Perth Amboy and crossed over to Staten Island. Washington moved several divisions down from the

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mountains and established headquarters at Quibbletown in order to support Lord Stirling. Lord Stirling, also known as Major General William Alexander, and his division were to retake ground being vacated by the British troops and to annoy their rear as they departed for Staten Island. Washington wrote to Congress that on June 24 he had "advanced Lord Stirling's Division and some other troops lower down in the neighborhood of Metuchen Meeting House"<sup>11</sup> at the southern end of Ash Swamp and the Short Hills. Howe's removal had finally succeeded in drawing out Washington from the protection of the mountains.

On the evening of June 25, after receiving intelligence that the Americans had moved to the low ground at Quibbletown, Howe is reported to have stated, "It was thought advisable to make a movement that might lead to an attack."<sup>12</sup> According to Hessian soldier Captain Johann von Ewald, "General Howe presumed the advance of the enemy corps could signal no other intention than that of falling upon our rear guard when the army crossed [to] Staten Island."<sup>13</sup> The British troops were abruptly returned from Staten Island, some of them having only just arrived. Howe divided his army into two columns heading northward and "flanking on either side the low chain of the Short Hills in which the American advanced detachment under Stirling and Maxwell was posted."<sup>14</sup> As recounted by British Major John Andre, the strategy was for "the right hand Column should by turning Washington's left, get behind his Army and the mountains, whilst the left marched straight to Quibbletown and attacked him."<sup>15</sup> In this way, Washington would be forced to fight on the plains.

General Charles (Lord) Cornwallis commanded the right-hand (east) column of approximately 5,000 troops. Cornwallis left Perth Amboy before sunrise on the morning of June 26, to travel "the route by Woodbridge to Scotch Plain [*sic*]"<sup>16</sup> via the Short Hills. The left-hand (west) column of nearly 12,000 troops, under the command of General John Vaughan and accompanied by Howe, left Perth Amboy at sunrise.<sup>17</sup> Vaughan's course toward Scotch Plains from Perth Amboy followed present-day Plainfield Road in Metuchen to join the rear of Cornwallis' column. Howe hoped to cut off the American army's avenue of retreat from Quibbletown and force Washington to battle the British in the open ground.

Washington learned of the British advance from Perth Amboy shortly after it began. Washington needed to avoid a general engagement due to his troops' inferior numbers and insufficient training and organization. Washington "gave orders for the main body of his army to fall back to the safety of the defensive mountain position. In order to accomplish this troop movement ahead of the British advance, he needed time. The Battle

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11 George Washington to Continental Congress, June 25, 1777, Letterbook 2, No. 89, in Fitzpatrick, John C., editor, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources*, <http://memory.loc.gov>, accessed January 31, 2008.

12 Abraham Messler, *Centennial History of Somerset County* (Somerville, N.J.: C.M. Jameson Publisher, 1878), 90-91. Also, A. Van Doren, Honeyman, ed. *History of Union County 1664-1923* (New York: Lewis Historical Publications, 1923), 504, citing Howe letter of July 5, 1777.

13 Joseph P. Tustin, editor and translator, *Diary of the American War: A Hessian Journal, Captain Johann von Ewald, Field Jäger Corps* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 1979), 69.

14 Leonard Lundin, *Cockpit of the Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 323.

15 John Andre, *Major Andre's Journal* (New York: The New York Times and Arno Press, 1968), 32.

16 Andre, 31.

17 Ibid.

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of the Short Hills gave him that time.”<sup>18</sup> While Washington and his troops headed back to the mountains, Stirling’s Division near Metuchen delayed the British approach.

The first skirmish of the day occurred near 7 a.m. west of Woodbridge as Cornwallis’ division fell against American pickets. As the pickets retreated, the sound of gunfire alerted the American camp, which sent out Conway’s Brigade of about 700 men to support the pickets. Conway’s brigade clashed with the British near Wood Avenue and Oak Tree Road in Edison Township but was pushed back due to overwhelming enemy numbers. The first massed resistance by American troops began at Oak Tree began at approximately 8:30 a.m. at the junction of Oak Tree Road and Tingely Lane in Edison. An American detachment under the command of Colonel Charles Armand, known as Ottendorff’s Corps, attempted to hold off the British. Armand lost 32 out of 80 soldiers but saved an American cannon while slowing the British advance.

Howe’s columns joined the rear of Cornwallis’ column and they proceeded together toward Scotch Plains. The remaining American forces, consisting of the New Jersey Brigade (approximately 1,000 men and four cannons) under Stirling’s command, gathered near the vicinity of the Short Hills Tavern (at Raritan Road and Inman Avenue, 1 ½ miles west of the Frazee House). The New Jersey Brigade moved south and came into contact with the combined British and Hessian troops. After 9 a.m., Stirling moved his troops into battle formation on a bare hill along Raritan Road near its intersection with Rahway Road in Scotch Plains. As described by Andre,

The front soon reached Ash Swamp, where they came up with a considerable body of the Rebels, commanded by Lord Stirling, who had taken post on a rising ground, in order (it was supposed) to cover the retreat of about seventy wagons, which they had begun to draw off on the news of our approach, and the hindermost of which were discovered by the head of the Column. They made very little resistance, but dispersed as the Grenadiers of the Guards and a few companies of Light Infantry advanced upon them.<sup>19</sup>

Accounts by Andre and Hessian Captain von Meunchhausen place the main engagement at the western border of Ash Swamp at the high ground along Raritan Road between Rahway Road and Terrill Road in Scotch Plains. The Frazee House is located at the eastern edge of this ridge at Terrill Road. The high ground offered a view across the Ash Swamp and approaches to the east and south. “Strategically, Stirling’s deployment at this hill gave him the optimum high ground to defend any British movement toward the Scotch Plains Gap or beyond.”<sup>20</sup> The primary action took place at the southern edge of the hill overlooking Rahway Road.<sup>21</sup>

Much of the fighting involved three French field pieces, which were first taken by the British, recaptured by Armand’s men, and then lost once again. Von Meunchhausen described the main engagement at the battle as follows,

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18 Dorothy Guzzo, Administrator, Historic Preservation Office to Richard Kropp, Land Use Regulation Program, Memorandum regarding Middlesex County, Edison Township, Block 545-R, Lot 17-N, JSM at New Dover, LLC, Proposed Oak Tree Plaza Project Site, LUR file 1205-97-0016.3,.4, March 23, 2001.

19 Andre, 32.

20 William Fidurski, Homestead Farm, Clark, New Jersey, Nomination to National Register of Historic Places, 8:23.

21 Fidurski, Ibid.

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We took two 12-pounders and several 6-pounders to our left flank, where we had some rising ground. From our right flank the Hessian grenadier battalion von Minnigerode ascending the slop in deployed formation, attacked their left flank. Our battalion had to move considerably to the right in order to outflank their left flank. The rebels continued a strong but not very effective fire upon us. They finally fired grape-shot at von Minnigerode's battalion, but after that, they ran away into the woods. On this occasion the von Minnigerode battalion took two, and the English Guards one of [the rebels'] new French brass 3-pounders, which are very good cannon. General Lord Stirling, who was in command, had his horse shot, and General Maxwell as almost captured by the Hessian grenadiers, missing him only by a hair's breadth.<sup>22</sup>

The outnumbered and outgunned Americans faced overwhelming odds. One American observer described the scene, "A smart engagement ensued, and our men stood their ground manfully for a considerable time; but the amazing superiority of numbers obliged them to retreat, the enemy having outflanked them."<sup>23</sup> The New Jersey line was forced to retreat eastward towards Westfield and northward toward the gaps in the Watchung mountains. The battle cost the Americans in casualties,<sup>24</sup> prisoners and the loss of three valuable cannons. However, the battle provided Washington with invaluable time to elude an engagement at Quibbletown and to avoid being cut off from the Watchungs by Cornwallis' column.

Washington recounted the battle in a letter sent from the Middlebrook encampment to the Continental Congress on June 28, 1777:

On Thursday Morning Genl Howe advanced with his whole Army in Several Columns from Amboy, as far as Westfield. We are certainly informed, that the Troops sent to Staten Island returned the preceding Evening and, it is said, with an Augmentation of Marines, so that carrying them there was a feint with intention to deceive us. His design, in this Sudden movement, was either to bring on a General Engagement upon disadvantageous Terms, considering matters in any point of view, or to cut off our light parties and Lord Stirling's Division, which was sent down to Support them, or to possess himself of the Heights and passes in the Mountains on our left. The two last seemed to be the first objects of his attention, as his March was rapid against these parties and indicated a strong disposition to gain those passes. In this situation of Affairs, it was thought absolutely necessary, that we should move our force from the low Grounds, to occupy the Heights before them, which was effected. As they advanced they fell in with some of our light parties and part of Lord Stirling's division, with which they had some pretty smart Skirmishing, with but very little loss, I believe, on our side, except in three Field Pieces which unfortunately fell into the Enemy's Hands; but not having obtained Returns yet, I cannot determine it with certainty, nor can we ascertain what the Enemy's Loss was. As soon as we had gained the passes, I detached a Body of Light Troops under Brigadier General Scott, to hang on their Flank and to watch their Motions and ordered Morgan's Corps of Rifle Men to join him since. The Enemy remained at West field till yesterday afternoon, when, about Three O'Clock, they moved towards Spank Town with our light Troops in their Rear and pursuing.<sup>25</sup>

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22 Ernst Kipping and Samuel Stelle Smith, *At General Howe's Side* (Monmouth Beach, N.J.: Philip Frenau Press, 1974), 19, cited in Fidurski, 8:24.

23 Schuyler M. Cady, "The Movements of our Revolutionary Troops in Union County," *Proceedings of the Union County Historical Society 1921-1923* (December 1922), 64, citing letter from Middlebrook dated June 28, 1777, N.J. Archives 2 Series, Vol. 1, 415.

24 The numbers of casualties reported in several sources range widely between 35 and 200 for either side.

25 George Washington to Continental Congress, June 28, 1777, Letterbook 2, No. 90, in Fitzpatrick, John C., editor, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources*, <http://memory.loc.gov>, accessed January 31, 2008.



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The Americans were able to withdraw to Westfield and then on to the Scotch Plains and the gap in the Watchung Mountains at New Providence Road. Even though the British troops beat the Continental troops at the Short Hills, Washington's troops held the high ground and protected the gaps in the mountains, prompting the British to abandon their efforts to rout Washington. Washington was able to keep his forces intact so that they could fight when conditions were favorable. Within days of the Battle of Short Hills, British forces left New Jersey entirely, thereby abandoning plans for the occupation of New Jersey. General Howe, in a testimony before the House of Commons, later stated that "To have attacked Gen'l Washington in that strong post, I must necessarily have made a considerable circuit of the county, and having no prospect of forcing him, I did not think it advisable to lose so much time as must have been employed on that march, during the intense heat of the season."<sup>26</sup>

By noon on June 26, the battle was over, but the damage was yet to continue. The extreme heat and humidity that rose along with the sun afflicted soldiers from both sides of the conflict. Howe reported that three Continental captains and 60 men were killed and "upwards of 200 officers and men wounded and taken." Accounts state that nearly as many British troops died from heat stroke as did those that died from battle wounds. After a short rest, the two columns of British troops turned east and began marching toward Westfield along Raritan Road, where, as legend has it, they would soon meet Elizabeth Frazee.

**Aftermath of the Battle of the Short Hills and Aunt Betty Frazee**

As related by Washington three days later, after the battle the British "marched as far as Westfield, plundering and burning Houses and driving off what little stock remained."<sup>27</sup> The deprivation of the local population was so great that Washington noted "The Enemy has plundered all before them and it is said burnt some houses..."<sup>28</sup>

"The distress of many of the Inhabitants, who were plundered not only of the effects, but of their provision of every kind, was such, that I sent down several Waggon loads of Meat and Flour to Supply their present Wants."<sup>29</sup>

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee were among those local residents whose farms were emptied after the battle. Amid the destruction caused by the retreating British troops emerged a story of defiance. As colorfully recalled in secondary source materials,<sup>30</sup> after the Battle of Short Hills on June 26, 1777, Cornwallis and his troops passed by the Frazee house as they headed for Westfield.

It was about noontime when the army came up to her residence. "Aunt Betty" was baking bread for the Continentals, who were stubbornly falling back before the enemy. The hungry Cornwallis caught the appetizing odors coming from the large dome shaped bake oven. As the line halted he

26 William Howe, *Narrative Before the House of Commons*, 29 April 1779: 15, cited in Frederic C. Detwiller, *War in the Countryside: The Battle and Plunder of the Short Hills, New Jersey, June 1777* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Interstate Printing Company, 1977), 16.

27 George Washington to General Israel Putnam, June 29, 1777, Letterbook 3, No. 419, in Fitzpatrick, accessed January 31, 2008.

28 George Washington to Continental Congress, June 28, 1777, Letterbook 2, No. 90, in Fitzpatrick, accessed January 31, 2008.

29 George Washington to Continental Congress, July 4, 1777, Letterbook 3, No. 431, in Fitzpatrick, accessed January 31, 2008.

30 Marion Nicholl Rawson, *Under the Blue Hills* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Interstate Printing Company, 1974), 175-176; Frederick W. Ricord, *History of Union County* (Newark, New Jersey, 1897), 513; Honeyman, *History of Union County...*, 502.

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dismounted, went to the door of her home, and with a courtly air requested, "My lady may it please you to give to Lord Cornwallis the first loaf that comes from your oven of baking bread." On saying this he confidently betook himself to a shade tree in the yard, for the day was unusually hot. When the bread was ready to be taken from the oven, Aunt Betty, with a steaming loaf, unhesitatingly complied with the general's request; but on presenting it to him retorted, "Your lordship will please understand that I give this bread in fear, and not in love." Standing before her in military salute with admiration for her courage, Cornwallis replied, "Not I, nor a man of my command, shall accept a single loaf."<sup>31</sup>

The encounter has not yet been substantiated by primary source documents, although evidence does suggest that it was generally known that Elizabeth Frazee was a baker. Elizabeth and Gershom did own three dough troughs, three flour casks, and one chest for bread.<sup>32</sup> An ordinary household would not have had use for so much baking equipment, indicating that Elizabeth could have baked on a commercial scale. Also, Cornwallis' troops were not the first to have come to Elizabeth Frazee for food. On February 4, 1777, and for several days preceding, Gershom and Elizabeth Frazee housed and fed Captains Littell and Potter of the New Jersey Militia along with 16 other officers and men.<sup>33</sup> The Frazees also provided feed and keeping of their horses. Presuming that the encounter with Cornwallis did occur, it is unclear why Elizabeth Frazee had not evacuated, to head west through the passes in the Watchungs to safer ground, or hide in Ash Swamp, as did many of her neighbors.<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Frazee's reported reluctance to leave her home can perhaps be attributed to the fact that she was pressed into service.

The crossroads location of the house made interaction with troops likely; the house was identified as that of Gershom Frazee in Erskine's maps of the region.<sup>35</sup> British and Continental troops were an ongoing presence in the Ash Swamp area six months before the Battle of Short Hills took place. Numerous accounts of activity in the Ash Swamp/ Short Hills area provide a picture of the ongoing military presence between January and June of 1777. During January 1777, "Maxwell's brigade of Jerseymen and the militia... established a firm line of defense, hemming Cornwallis in on the north and west. It ran along the Essex-Middlesex line from Rahway to Ash Swamp and the Blue Hills fort, thence along the Mountain to Bound Brook and up the Millstone to Princeton."<sup>36</sup> On January 23 of that year, British Captain Archibald Robertson reported that the 35<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Regiments "marched towards Metuchen to the Short Hills where they fell in with about 400 Rebels whom they drove off. The 28<sup>th</sup> has 14 men killed and wounded and one officer."<sup>37</sup> The American pension account of John

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31 Honeyman, *History of Union County*, 502.

32 Probate inventory of Gershom Frazee, October 15, 1791. Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers at the Historical Society of Plainfield and North Plainfield, New Jersey in Frederic C. Detwiller, "From Cradle to Coffin: The Resurrection of a Country Craftsman," Undergraduate paper, Columbia University, May 1972

33 Gershom Frazee. "Day Boock," Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

34 Edgar Vail, ed., *The American Revolution in New Jersey* (Neshanic, New Jersey: Neshanic Printing Co., 1972), 10.

35 The Gershom Frazee house is depicted and labeled as the house of "Garshom Frazey" in two Robert Erskine maps: 75C, "Road from Rahway Meeting House to Westfield, from Westfield towards the Short Hills" and 106A "Contraction in the Jerseys."

36 Cornelius C Vermeule, "The Revolutionary Campground at Plainfield," Address delivered before Continental Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1923, reproduced in Vail, 12-13.

37 Archibald Robertson, 23 January 1777, cited in Detwiller (1977), 5.

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Hall relates that he was participated in this skirmish “around the end of January” as well as later in the spring when he “had some fighting at Short-Hills, Ash Swamp... and Martins Wood.”<sup>38</sup>

On February 4, and for several days preceding, Gershom and Elizabeth Frazee housed and fed Captains Littell and Potter of the New Jersey Militia along with 16 other officers and men.<sup>39</sup> The Frazees also provided feed and keeping of their horses. A skirmish on the east side of Ash Swamp took place on February 23<sup>40</sup> and General Washington approved the courts martial of three officers and one enlisted man held at Ash Swamp on May 14.<sup>41</sup> On May 24, the “*Pennsylvania Evening Post*” printed a report of military activities as “a letter from Ash Swamp, dated May 20, 1777.”<sup>42</sup> Certainly, a military presence had become commonplace for the Frazees.

Secondly, the event also brings to light the effects of looting on civilians during the conflict. As documented by damage claims filed by Gershom Frazee, Cornwallis may have not eaten Elizabeth’s bread, but his troops pillaged the farmstead, emptying the house of its contents, taking Gershom’s woodworking tools, ruining crops and a beehive, taking livestock, and even removing the garden fence to burn.<sup>43</sup> The Frazees’ damages totaled £85-13-0, which was on average with those reported by their neighbors. Damage claims for June 26 and 27, 1777 have also been identified for their nephew Gershom Frazee, a son of Gershom’s brother Abraham, for £32-10-0 for livestock, and two neighbors, William Terry of Terrill Road for £20-6-0 (livestock) and John DeCamp of Raritan Road (£260-12-8 for livestock, harnesses, household goods including linens and tableware, clothing, bushels of grain, and other food such as butter and molasses).<sup>44</sup> Looting – by both armies -- was commonplace and often left local residents without materials for sustenance or a livelihood. Both Washington and Howe forbade plundering, however, this proved unenforceable. In the majority of instances, continental troops’ taking of property was undertaken in order to feed and clothe the troops, who were chronically under-equipped. This, too, was true for British troops, but the scope of the plundering and the burning of crops and houses during the march after the Battle of Short Hills implies a vengeful intent.

The story of Cornwallis and Elizabeth Frazee has become an example of the conditions through which civilians endured during the American Revolution. Battlefields and troop activities have traditionally been recognized as significant elements in relaying the events of the American Revolution. However, the threat of violence, extensive loss of property, and the conditions under which daily life was conducted are equally significant

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38 John Hall, “Record,” *Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society*, v. VII, cited in Detwiller (1977), 5.

39 Gershom Frazee. “Day Boock,” Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

40 Vermeule, 16.

41 General Orders, Letterbook 2, May 23, 1777, in Fitzpatrick, accessed January 31, 2008.

42 William S. Stryker, *Documents Relating to the Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey: Extracts from American Newspapers 1776-1777* (Trenton, New Jersey: John L. Murphy Publishing Company, 1901), 384-385 cited in Fidurski, 8:19.

43 “Inventory and appraisal of the Effects ... plundered and taken away by the British Army on the 26 June 1777,” filed 14 May 1789. Revolutionary War Damage Claims, New Jersey State Archives, Military Records Microfilm, War Damages by British, Essex Co., Reel 3, vol. 5. Gershom Frazee Junr.: No. 16, Westfield.

44 Inventory and appraisal of the Effects ... plundered and taken away by the British Army on the 26 June 1777,” filed 14 May 1789. Revolutionary War Damage Claims, New Jersey State Archives, Military Records Microfilm, War Damages by British, Essex Co., Reel 3, vol. 5. Gershom Frazee: No. 5, Westfield; Gershom Frazee Junr.: No. 16, Westfield; William Terry No. 8, Westfield; John DeCamp: No. 88, Westfield.

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elements in the American Revolution. The Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee house is a fine example of those domestic sacrifices.

**Criterion B**

The Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House is also significant under Criterion B for its association with Gershom Frazee, Jr., an unknown but well-documented carpenter and joiner whose work ranged from assembling a house in New York City, to constructing a mill on the Blue Brook above Scotch Plains, to creating cupboards and cradles for neighbors. Although heretofore largely unknown, Frazee's versatility sheltered and supported his neighbors and was a significant contribution to the local trades and economy.

Many of Gershom Frazee's work-related papers have survived and are now located at Rutgers University's Special Collections.<sup>45</sup> The collection of more than 160 items mostly consists of promissory notes and agreements binding Frazee to his lenders. The collection also includes deeds, invoices, orders, lists, receipts, and recipes related to Frazee's work, providing us with an unusually detailed look at the scope and form of the work of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century carpenter and joiner. These uncatalogued and unpublished papers also document Frazee's relationship with his fellow tradesmen and provide an idea of the extent and scope of Frazee's work in terms of product as well as geography.

The Frazee family sold their house and farm property in Rahway in 1727<sup>46</sup> and moved to Ash Swamp near Vine Brook.<sup>47</sup> Gershom, Sr., a weaver, and his wife Abigail had four sons, of whom Gershom was the youngest. At the age of 18 in 1753, Gershom was apprenticed for three years to Peter Pain of Elizabeth "to learn his art of trade of a Carpenter and Joyner." In addition to laying out the behavioral rules of the contract, including being forbidden to visit "taverns Tipling houses or play houses," Pain provided one woolen and one linen suit, a beaver hat, a bible, and tools to start Frazee in his profession: "a broad ax, hand saw, square and compass, two augers, two chisels, a Jack plane, a fore plane, a Smothing [*sic*] plane & plowe [*sic*] and [tongue] planes."<sup>48</sup>

Frazee's apprenticeship ended three years later in 1756 and shortly thereafter, Frazee was pressed into service in the French and Indian War.<sup>49</sup> His term of service was short and by the spring of 1758, Frazee was able to begin work as a carpenter and joiner. On August 2, 1758, Frazee billed neighbor Dr. Benjamin Littell for several projects:

To Mending of Chairs	-0-11-0
To Mending of the harrow twice	-0-3-6

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45 The papers were originally part of the Lee family and were given to the Historical Society of Plainfield and North Plainfield. Frederic Detwiller examined 160 manuscript items at the historical society in the early 1970s and documented them in two papers he wrote while at the architecture program at Columbia University in the early 1970s. Since that time, many, although not all, of the papers have been given to Rutgers University Special Collections. Study of the manuscript items was conducted on site at Rutgers and through Detwiller's academic papers.

46 Deed, Essex Co. Book B, page 107, N.J. State Archives

47 Detwiller, January 1972, 2.

48 "Agreement for Apprenticeship," Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers in Detwiller, January 1972, 3.

49 "Prest on Expedesen 1757," Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers in Detwiller, January 1972, 4.

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To Making of a harrow	-0-7-0
To a days Work on harvest	-0-5-0
To a Stand	-0-10-0
To a part of a days work	-0-1-0
To Making of Cartridging	-0-6-6
To Mending the Slay	-0-1-6
To Mending the ax Head	-0-2-6 <sup>50</sup>

Littell also commissioned Frazee for “work about his house” and a bread trough.<sup>51</sup> The Littell house is located on the north side of Raritan Road approximately 1/3 mile east of the Frazee House.

On August 15, 1758, Frazee began work on a larger project. In partnership with James Coberly of Elizabethtown, Frazee was contracted to construct a house frame for cabinetmaker Samuel Prince of New York City.<sup>52</sup> In the agreement, Frazee and Coberly would share equally in constructing the frame locally, and share “half Carting and boating and to assist in Raising the Same” on site at William Street in Manhattan.

Once established in his career, Frazee began acquiring land. Upon reaching age 21 in 1756, Frazee inherited ten acres from his father’s estate.<sup>53</sup> In November 1760, Frazee purchased fourteen acres at Ash Swamp for £109 from Jeremiah Pangborn, a local blacksmith.<sup>54</sup> Three months later, in February 1761, Frazee purchased a second, adjacent tract of nine acres from fellow joiner and relative Jacob Winans for £63 in cash and a bond of £66.<sup>55,56</sup> It is this tract on which the Frazee house is located. Based on physical evidence, the smaller, east wing of the house was extant when Frazee purchased it. Frazee likely began construction of the larger portion of the house between 1761 and 1766. In addition to dating based on architectural evidence, documents indicate that Frazee was undertaking a large project at this time that required financing: in December 1760, Frazee and his brother Moses borrowed £146 from Joseph and Mary Frazee<sup>57</sup> and in March 1761, Frazee borrowed £22 from Benjamin Watkins.<sup>58</sup> In May 1766, Gershom and Moses Frazee borrowed £130 from Samuel Marsh.<sup>59</sup>

From 1760 to 1790, with a hiatus during the war years of the late 1770s, Frazee worked steadily on projects in a range of sizes. In 1764, Frazee was busy enough to take on apprentice Recompense Stanbury.<sup>60</sup> Documented

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50 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Deed, Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

54 Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers in Detwiller, January 1972, 7.

55 Deed cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers in Detwiller, January 1972, 28; “Gershom Frazee Bound to Jacob Winans” 1761. Frazee-Lee Papers, “ Accn. 2742, Rutgers University Library Special Collections.

56 Frazee and Winans are signatories along with 9 other declared “relatives” in a 1762 Petition for a guardian for Gershom Frazee, Jr. (son of Abraham Frazee, Gershom’s brother) cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers in Detwiller, January 1972, 7. The familial relationship between Frazee and Winans is unknown.

57 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 “Apprenticeship of Recompense Stanbury to Gershom Frazee, Carpenter 1764,” Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers in Detwiller, January 1972, 8.

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large joining projects and supply orders include constructing a mill in 1775, known as the Falls Mill, for David Morris on the Blue Brook in the gap in the Watchung Mountains above Scotch Plains.<sup>61</sup> An undated pencil sketch is labeled with dimensions and “the hopper” and “the shaft,” possibly for the Falls Mill or perhaps the Jonathan Marsh mill on Vine Brook at Ash Swamp or the Marsh mill in Bridgetown (Rahway).<sup>62</sup> As noted in his “Day Boock” of 1772 and 1773, Frazee billed James Lambord on June 13, 1772 for fourteen days work by Frazee and another man, billed Caleb Maxfield for three days work on October 20, 1772, and billed David Stanberry for thirty days work by Frazee and another man on June 13, 1773.<sup>63</sup> In addition to these three large projects, the exact nature of which is unknown, exists a bill to Dr. John Griffith of Rahway for 119 days’ work (3 men), timber, and carting for which was billed £115.<sup>64</sup>

An undated note lists the dimensions for building sills, giving an indication of the size of the project.

- 2 sels [sills] 38-foot long timbers, 6<sup>inch</sup>x8<sup>inch</sup>
- 2 26-foot long sels, 6<sup>inch</sup>x8<sup>inch</sup>
- 1 44-foot long sil [*sic*], 6<sup>inch</sup>x7<sup>inch</sup> <sup>65</sup>

On other occasions, Frazee purchased

- 549 feet of inch and a half plank @10/0<sup>d</sup> per hundred
- 832 feet of inch bords at 6/0<sup>d</sup> per hundred
- inch bords and weather bords
- Sawing 300 feet of inch bords at 3/0<sup>d</sup> per hundred
- Sawing 355 feet of weather bords at 2/9<sup>d</sup> do
- Sawing 187 feet of three quarter bords
- Inch bords and weather bords
- 160 feet of inch bords at 36 feet of plank
- Scantling <sup>66</sup>

Carpentry work included making a wagon and supplying timber for neighbor Jesse Dolbeer in April 1783.<sup>67</sup> Dolbeer lived on the west side of Terrill Road approximately 3/4 mile north of the Frazee house.

Throughout the duration of his 30-year career, Frazee also worked as a cabinet and furniture maker, although he referred to himself in documents as a “joyner.”<sup>68</sup> Smaller projects included: a table for James Boune in 1763;<sup>69</sup> a “graning bord” and “sash’s” for Matthias Hetfield in 1767;<sup>70</sup> and a “gum bedsted with [four] long posts,” a

61 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

62 Ibid.

63 “Day Boock,” Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

64 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

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cupboard, and two tables for Nathaniel Pike, a reedmaker, of Woodbridge in 1774.<sup>71,72</sup> In November 1760, Frazee purchased in New York rare or imported lumber, as implied by the expensive price.

60 Inchs for Plank at 1/6  
13 Inch Do at 1/ <sup>73</sup>

These boards were likely used for fine furniture work like the work Frazee completed for James Ross of Westfield. Ross was one of Frazee's largest clients with orders spanning the years 1773-1783. Articles made for Ross include:

Carving a set of eagles claws (5 April 1773)  
Turning a set of table legs (18 August 1773)  
Turning a set of pillars & Balls for Clock case (8 December 1773)  
A set of do (23 December 1773)  
Straping [?] a set of table legs and Turning a set of Do (8 March 1775)  
Making a Dining Table (3 May 1775)  
Making a clockcase (10 February 1776); and,  
Frame for a Dining Table (10 June 1778)<sup>74</sup>

One undated work list provides further insight into the scope of his work making furniture:

hanging three table [*sic*] tops  
making one brecfast tabel  
making one set of stand feet  
putting in one set of tabel feet  
makeing one dusk [desk]  
makeing one lume [loom] beam  
making two bedsted  
making three tabel frames  
making one Cobard  
making one Cradel  
puting [*sic*] on the bras on a Dusk [brass on a desk]  
makeing one tabel top  
makeing one Clockcase, etc.<sup>75</sup>

Frazee's employee James Grimstead logged his project hours worked between October 9 and December 15, 1785: Grimstead worked on two Gum clockcases, a Black Walnut Desk, a coffin, and a Black Walnut

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71 Ibid.

72 Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers at the Historical Society of Plainfield and North Plainfield, New Jersey in Frederic C. Detwiller, "From Cradle to Coffin: The Resurrection of a Country Craftsman," Undergraduate paper, Columbia University, May 1972, 10.

73 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

74 Ibid.

75 "Furniture Work," Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

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clockcase.<sup>76</sup>

Work was disrupted by the Revolutionary War, which moved into the Ash Swamp area during the first half of 1777. In addition to the disruptions in work due to ongoing skirmishes and the Battle of the Short Hills on June 26 of that year, the British Army's pillaging made work difficult through the loss of tools. War damages did, however, provide work opportunities. An undated bill gives an indication of the extent of the damage inflicted by the Battle of the Short Hills:

- Making book case desk
- Making desk and table
- Making frames, sashes and shutters for rear five windows
- 36 lites @ 4 ½...
- 5 doors @ 6sh
- 20:6 120 lites 4 ½
- war work<sup>77</sup>

This work may have been done for John DeCamp, whose house still stands on the north side of Raritan Road approximately 1 mile east of the Frazee house. John DeCamp filed a damage claim for £260 for June 26. Damage listed included household items and livestock loss, but also "30 lights of window glass 7 by 9 inches," "24 Sash Lights" and other "Damage done to the House and to a Desk."<sup>78</sup> This claim is a close match for Frazee's bill above.

The damage claim filed by Frazee for damages incurred on June 26, 1777 includes, in addition to household and farm items, an extensive list of woodworking tools taken by the British.<sup>79</sup> This list provides us with a look at the typical tools used in his profession. The tools taken included:

Two Jointers	£1: 0: 0
Four Long Plains 4 Smoothing d°	1: 16: 0
Four upright Smoothing Plains	0: 15: 0
Three Jack Plains	0: 10: 6
One Hollow & Bead Two Beads	0: 11: 3
Seven Hollows & Rounds	1: 6: 3
Two P <sup>f</sup> Grooving plains 1 odd d°	1: 5: 0
One Rabit Plaine 2 Philisters	0: 12: 0
One Sash Plain	0: 5: 0
Two Moulding Plains 3 Ogees	1: 0: 0
One Strike Block & Small quarter Round	0: 7: 6
Two Augers	0: 5: 0
Three Broad and three Narrow Chisels	0: 12: 0

76 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

77 Ibid.

78 Revolutionary War Damage Claims, Military Records Microfilm, War Damages by British, Essex Co., Reel 3, vol. 5., No. 88. New Jersey State Archives.

79 Ibid., Essex Co., Reel 3, vol. 5., No. 16. New Jersey State Archives.



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Two Large Gouges	0: 5: 0
Three firmers [type of chisel]	0: 4: 0
One Handsaw one Compass d°	1: 0: 0
One framing Tennon Saw	1: 0: 0
One Broad Axe & 1 Adze	0: 15: 0
Two Turning Tools	0: 7: 0
Two Hammers	0: 7: 0
One Drawing Knife & Iron Square	0: 7: 6

This list is complemented with an undated bill among his papers itemizing tools Frazee purchased for £6-2-0, perhaps to replace the stolen tools:

8/6 Hollow & rounds & spring plane  
1 bolection  
1 quarter round  
1 cornish and bed mold  
1 groove plane  
1 Rabbet plane  
1 spring sash plane  
1 nosing  
1 ovolo 3/4  
2 beads  
1 inch ovolo & Sash plane  
1 turning chisel  
2 irons<sup>80</sup>

An undated bill also exists for an adze and drawing knife (as well as for quilting a coat).<sup>81</sup>

A rare find is located among Frazee's papers are bills and recipes for finishes applied to his work. Four undated lists provide insight into materials and methods he used:

"28 lb white lead, 4 lb whiting, Pot,"<sup>82</sup>

"Part of a box of glass, 2 gallons of oil, 5 lb red lead;"<sup>83</sup>

"11 lb white lead, 1 gallon of oil, 5 lb [broun], 1 jug, 1 brush"<sup>84</sup>

"4 ounces Logwood, 3 ounces gum arrabic...  
3 ounces sap green... 2 ounces blue Sope, 2 ounces isinglass..."<sup>85</sup>

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80 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

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A recipe for combining these materials is also included.<sup>86</sup>

Frazee's work was based in the Ash Swamp area. However, Frazee depended upon a larger network of tradesmen and merchants in Scotch Plains, Elizabethtown, Samptown, Rahway, Plainfield and Woodbridge. Frazee also depended upon a network of people from whom he could borrow money, some of them these same tradesmen, to fund building projects or to carry Frazee and his family through lean times. The amounts Frazee borrowed range from £1 to £146. There are also a few instances of Frazee loaning out small sums. Some of these relationships spanned decades. In addition to the people who loaned Frazee money between 1761 and 1766, ostensibly for the construction of the house, family and fellow tradesmen formed the core of his lenders. Frazee borrowed money from Joseph Shotwell on 5 occasions between 1763 and 1771 and from shopkeeper Jacob Shotwell of Bridgetown (Rahway) on 4 occasions between 1773 and 1790. In the 1773 transaction, Frazee was bound in a joint project with Corbet Scudder, a Samptown miller, to Jacob Shotwell for £60. In June 1790, Frazee purchased handles, escutcheons, "table butts," screws and brads from shopkeeper Jacob Shotwell.<sup>87</sup> Frazee also had a lending relationship with neighbor William Smith, who lived on the south side of Ash Swamp at Homestead Farm in Clark Township.<sup>88</sup> On 10 occasions between 1766 and 1783, Frazee borrowed £155 in amounts ranging from £2 to £40.

Frazee had a long-term relationship with members of the Marsh family, who likely lived in Rahway or Scotch Plains; Marsh was a common Scotch Plains surname in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and a Marsh's Mill was located in Bridgetown (in Rahway) in the 1770s and 1780s.<sup>89</sup> In addition to the £130 Gershom and Moses Frazee borrowed from Samuel Marsh in 1766, Frazee borrowed £30 from Peter Marsh in 1769. In 1775 Frazee borrowed £11 from William Marsh. (William Marsh is noted in Frazee's will as a "trustworthy friend" and appointed Executor along with his brother-in-law Thomas Lee.) In 1775, 1776, and 1781, Frazee borrowed small amounts (less than £10) from Mordecai Marsh of Woodbridge. However, Frazee borrowed £46 in 1782 and £13 in 1783 from Mordecai. In 1788, Frazee borrowed £5 from Simeon Marsh. On November 17, 1786, Frazee purchased drawer handles, locks and keys, cupboard locks, a desk lock, two pair brass desk hinges, two brass knobs, four escutcheons, two dozen screws, one dozen small brass knobs, two cupboard escutcheons, three pair brass hinges, 1 small brass hinge, brads, five dozen screws and six handsaw files from Isaac Martin, also of Rahway.<sup>90</sup>

Frazee also had a relationship with tradesmen in nearby Plainfield. In 1763, Gershom and Isaac Frazee borrowed £32 from William Webster. In 1786, Frazee purchased nine dozen screws and glue from Hugh Webster of Plainfield.<sup>91</sup> Frazee also purchased 354 feet of Gum boards from Taylor Webster of Plainfield.<sup>92</sup> Bills for merchandise from 1786 through 1788 provide evidence that Frazee was working with Ambrose

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86 Cited as being part of the Frazee-Lee Papers at the Historical Society of Plainfield and North Plainfield, New Jersey in Detwiller, May 1972, 21.

87 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

88 Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge listed on National Register in 1995, Reference# 95001185.

89 Detwiller, *War in the Countryside*, Map M12.

90 "Furniture Hardware Bought of Isaac Martin 1786" and "Furniture Hardware Bought of J. Shotwell 1790," Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

91 Frazee-Lee Papers, Plainfield Historical Society Collection, Accession 2742, Rutgers University Special Collections.

92 Ibid.

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Copeland. A bill for "table butts," and glue from John Marsh is directed to Copeland and Frazee. In 1787, a bill from Abraham Draik is directed to Copeland, as is an account dated 1787-1788 that includes the purchase of glue. William Webster and Ambrose Copeland were among the trustees for the construction of the Plainfield Quaker Meeting in 1788.

Frazee's records indicate that he continued to work into 1791, but that he may have become injured or ill and unable to work. On June 28, 1790, "your friend" James Smalley wrote Frazee a letter begging for payment of his debt. In August 1791, Frazee loaned a table to Benjamin Littell, "to be returned when called upon." In October 1791, Frazee died at the age of 54. Carpentry-related items in Frazee's probate inventory of October 15<sup>th</sup> provide a detailed look at an 18<sup>th</sup>-century joiner's workshop., too extensive to quote in full here. Gershom Frazee, while largely unknown today, made a significant contribution to the local economy and trades and his work intersected with prominent tradesmen throughout present-day Union County. His versatility served a large cross-section of the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century population through his production of fine cabinetry along with the rougher construction of mills and houses.

**Criterion C**

The Frazee House meets criterion C as a Deep East Jersey cottage that features an unusual hybrid of the Dutch and English construction methods occurring in Central New Jersey during the colonial period. In the Frazee House, Dutch H-bent framing is used to create a 1 ½-story dwelling with a two-room-deep floor plan that resembles a two-thirds Georgian plan associated with English construction methods. At the same time, the house also presents the low profile, close eaves, interior end chimney, and flared roof (here, very slight) associated with the Dutch culture region. The choice of Dutch framing here is unexpected given Gershom Frazee's training by Peter Pain in Elizabethtown, a predominantly English settlement area.

The Frazee House is constructed of a series of braced H-bents placed approximately 4 feet apart. In the lateral wing, the H-bents consist of two vertical posts connected by a 16-foot-long anchor beam; in the main body of the house, the 30-foot-long anchor beam is supported mid-span by an additional post. Horizontal plates located on top of the posts support the roof rafters. The common rafters are reinforced by collar beams and joined at the peak by mortise and tenon joints with no ridgepole. Interior chimneys are placed at the gable ends. (The New England framing method, in contrast, resulted in a box constructed around a chimney stack.) In addition, the Frazee House presents unusual double bracing in all of the corners of the frame. In the east wing, down braces are located at the gable ends; Diagonal braces are located throughout the remainder of the house.

The main section of the Frazee House is a Deep East Jersey cottage consisting of two rooms that connect directly to the lateral wing without the side hall that would have constituted the expected two-thirds Georgian plan. The building type's association with English culture regions in New Jersey is appropriate to Elizabethtown and Scotch Plains, a village at the western boundary of colonial-period Elizabethtown. Scots and English settled Scotch Plains during the third quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and by 1680 members of the Frazee

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family had arrived.<sup>93</sup>

The Peter Berrien House in Rocky Hill, New Jersey<sup>94</sup> is a contemporary example of the two-thirds Georgian floor plan. From the exterior, the ca. 1740 Berrien House is very similar in scale and arrangement to the Frazee House. However, the more formal Berrien House has a full second story and an entrance with transom and sidelights that leads to a center reception hall. On the interior, the Berrien House takes the form of a two-thirds Georgian plan with an added kitchen wing. Front and rear parlors with gable end chimneys are located at the west end of the house.

The Frazee House bears a strong resemblance to a contemporary house in Monmouth County, the ca. 1752-1756 Holmes-Hendrickson House in Holmdel, New Jersey.<sup>95</sup> Like the Frazee House, the Holmes-Hendrickson House has a 1 ½-story main section and a 1-story lateral kitchen wing. Here, the floor plan is a doubled version of the Frazee House in that the Holmes-Hendrickson house contains two sets of front-and-back parlors without a side hall, constructed during a single episode. The distribution of corner fireplaces, doorways and fenestration is also similar to the Frazee House.

Gershom Frazee's choice to use Dutch framing techniques in spite of his likely training in English construction methods may best be attributed to the influence of Jacob Winans, the joiner from whom Frazee purchased the property. Winans likely constructed the Dutch-framed 1 ½-story portion of the house before 1761. It has been reported that Winans was of Dutch origin and emigrated with his family from Staten Island. Winans and Frazee were related, as evidenced by their 1762 court petition with seven other relatives asking the court to appoint a guardian for Gershom Frazee, Jr., the son of Abraham Frazee, Gershom's brother. Their shared profession and family connection may be the source of the unusual construction decisions.

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93 Marion Nicholl Rawson, *Under the Blue Hills, Scotch Plains, New Jersey* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Sachar Foundation, 1956, 1974 reprint), 29.

94 Historic American Buildings Survey NJ-91; Rosalie Fellows Bailey, *Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968 reprint), Plate 129.

95 Historic American Buildings Survey NJ-544, Bailey, Plate 124.

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- "Inventory and appraisal of the Effects ... plundered and taken away by the British Army on the 26 June 1777," filed 14 May 1789. Revolutionary War Damage Claims, New Jersey State Archives, Military Records Microfilm, War Damages by British, Essex Co., Reel 3, vol. 5., Nos. 5, 8, 16, 88.

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National Park Service

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

Deeds and Wills

Deed	1727	Gershom and Abigail Frazee to Samuel Brant, Essex Co. Book B, page 107, N.J. State Archives.
Will	1754	Gershom Frazee, Sr., Docket No. 2111, Book F, page 157, N.J. State Archives.
Will	1791	Gershom Frazee, Jr., Docket No. 7250, Box 377, N.J. State Archives.
Will	1808, recorded 1816	Elizabeth Frazee, Essex Co. Book B, p. 106, Docket No. 1381.
Application for Probate	1845	Gershom Lee, Essex Co. Book B, p. 118, Docket No. 6095.
Will	1888	Daniel H. Lee, Union Co. Book I, p. 584, Docket No. 4593.
Will	1888, probated 1890	Matthias Frazee Lee, N.J. State Archives, RG: Prerogative Court, Series: Will Books 1830-1903, Liber E Oct. 1880-Sept. 1896, pp. 150-155.
Quit Claim	1890	Daniel Hetfield & al., Deed, Union Co. Book 221, p. 184.
Deed	1893	Frank Bergen, "one of the Special Masters in Chancery of the State of New Jersey to Albert Ryno, Union County Book 264, p. 91.
Will	1919, recorded 1933	Albert Ryno, Union Co. Book I-3, p. 64.
Deed	1949	Edward T. Ryno, Exec...to Franklyn Tuttle Terry and Ella Louise Terry, Union Co. Book 1747, p. 597.
Deed	1994	Franklyn Tuttle Terry and Ella Louise Terry to Harold P. Kafka and Deborah A. Kafka, Union County Book 4078, p. 48.
Deed	1997	Harold P. Kafka and Deborah A. Kafka, to Scotch Plains Realty Investors, Inc., Union County Book 4535, p. 344.
Deed	1997	Scotch Plains Realty Investors, Inc. to Sunrise Scotch Plains Assisted Living, LLP, Union Co. Book 4631, p. 350.

**Maps**

Erskine, Robert. Map 75C, "Road from Rahway Meeting House to Westfield, from Westfield towards the Short Hills" and Map 106A "Contraction in the Jerseys."

**Published Materials**

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Cady, Schuyler M. "The Movements of our Revolutionary Troops in Union County," December 1922 in *Proceedings of the Union County Historical Society 1921-1923*.

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
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Honeyman, Abraham Van Doren. *History of Union County, New Jersey: 1664-1923*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1923.

Lee, Francis Bazley. *New Jersey as a Colony and A State*. Vol. II. New York: The Publishing Society of NJ, 1902.

Lundin, Leonard. *Cockpit of the Revolution*. London: Oxford University Press, 1940.

Messler, Abraham. *Centennial History of Somerset County*. Somerville, N.J.: C.M. Jameson Publisher, 1878.

Nelson, Paul David. *William Alexander, Lord Stirling*. University of Alabama Press, 1987.

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Ricord, Frederick W. *History of Union County*. Newark, New Jersey: East Jersey History Co., 1897.

Tustin, Joseph P., editor and translator. *Diary of the American War: A Hessian Journal, Captain Johann von Ewald, Field Jäger Corps*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

Vail, Edgar and Betty Bradbury Vail, eds. *The American Revolution in New Jersey: A Pictorial Essay*. Neshanic, New Jersey: Neshanic Printing Co., Inc., 1972. Includes Reprint of Vermuele, Cornelius C. "The Revolutionary Camp at Plainfield, An address delivered before Continental Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1923."

**Online Sources**

Fitzpatrick, John C., Editor. "The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799." George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress. <http://memory.loc.gov>. Accessed January 31, 2008.

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Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the .925-acre site is defined as Block 14802, Lot 1.01 and follows existing property lines. Raritan Road bounds the property to the west and south.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary is formed by existing property lines. The boundary includes the likely location of former outbuildings associated with the house. Additionally, this property conveys the agricultural setting appropriate to the period of significance 1761-1815.



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Section Photographs Page 1

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs 1-7, 11-21

Photographer: Stacy E. Spies

Date: April 2008

Photographs 8-10

Photographer: Kristofer M. Beadenkopf, Louis Berger Group

Date: November 2006

Photograph No. 1 of 21:

View: South and east elevations. View looking northwest from Raritan Road.

Photograph No. 2 of 21:

View: View looking east showing setting. Row of trees in foreground is approximate location of north property line. White trailer at left is approximate location of east property line. Terrill Road visible at distant left. Raritan Road visible in distant center.

Photograph No. 3 of 21:

View: West and south elevations. View looking northeast.

Photograph No. 4 of 21:

View: Original south elevation of main section of house. This elevation is sheltered by the 1-story shed-roof addition added to the house in the 1970s.

Photograph No. 5 of 21:

View: Original front door from south elevation of main section of house.

Photograph No. 6 of 21:

View: 6/6 window with heavy 1 ¼-inch muntins located on south elevation of the wing.

Photograph No. 7 of 21:

View: East and north elevations. View looking southwest.

Photograph No. 8 of 21:

View: Northwest corner of cellar showing stone drain at corner fireplace support and stone paving. View looking southwest.

Photograph No. 9 of 21:

View: Southwest corner of cellar showing stone drain and stone paving. View looking west.

Photograph No. 10 of 21:

View: Detail of stone drain at northwest corner of cellar. View looking north.

Photograph No. 11 of 21:

View: Kitchen at first floor of wing. 6/6 wood sash visible at left. 2/2 sash in bay window partially visible at right. View looking northeast.

Photograph No. 12 of 21:

View: Vertical board-and-batten door that led from kitchen to main section of house.

Photograph No. 13 of 21:

View: Attic chamber in wing. Braces visible at left and right. Early plaster finishes visible at right and rear walls. View looking east.

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Section Photographs Page 2

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

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Photograph No. 14 of 21:

View: Railing post in attic chamber alongside stairwell opening. View looking northeast.

Photograph No. 15 of 21:

View: Front (south) chamber, first floor of main section of house. Original window and door openings visible at left. Curved cabinet visible at center. Original lower cabinet doors visible underneath added paneling. Beaded beams and wide floorboards visible at ceiling. View looking southwest.

Photograph No. 16 of 21:

View: Rear (north) chamber, first floor of main section of house. Corner fireplace at left. Early door used to board up window at center. Early sash at right. View looking west.

Photograph No. 17 of 21:

View: Front (south) chamber, second floor of main section of house. Opening at left may have allowed access to pent roof. Kneewall window visible at center. View looking southwest.

Photograph No. 18 of 21:

View: Framing in front (south) chamber, second floor of main section of house. Roman numerals visible at connection in foreground. View looking northwest.

Photograph No. 19 of 21:

View: Vertical board partition that divides second floor of main section of house. View looking northeast.

Photograph No. 20 of 21

View: Rear (north) chamber, second floor of main section of house. Opening at center rear may have allowed access to pent roof. Door to attic visible at left. Sistered rafters visible at roof. View looking northwest.

Photograph No. 21 of 21:

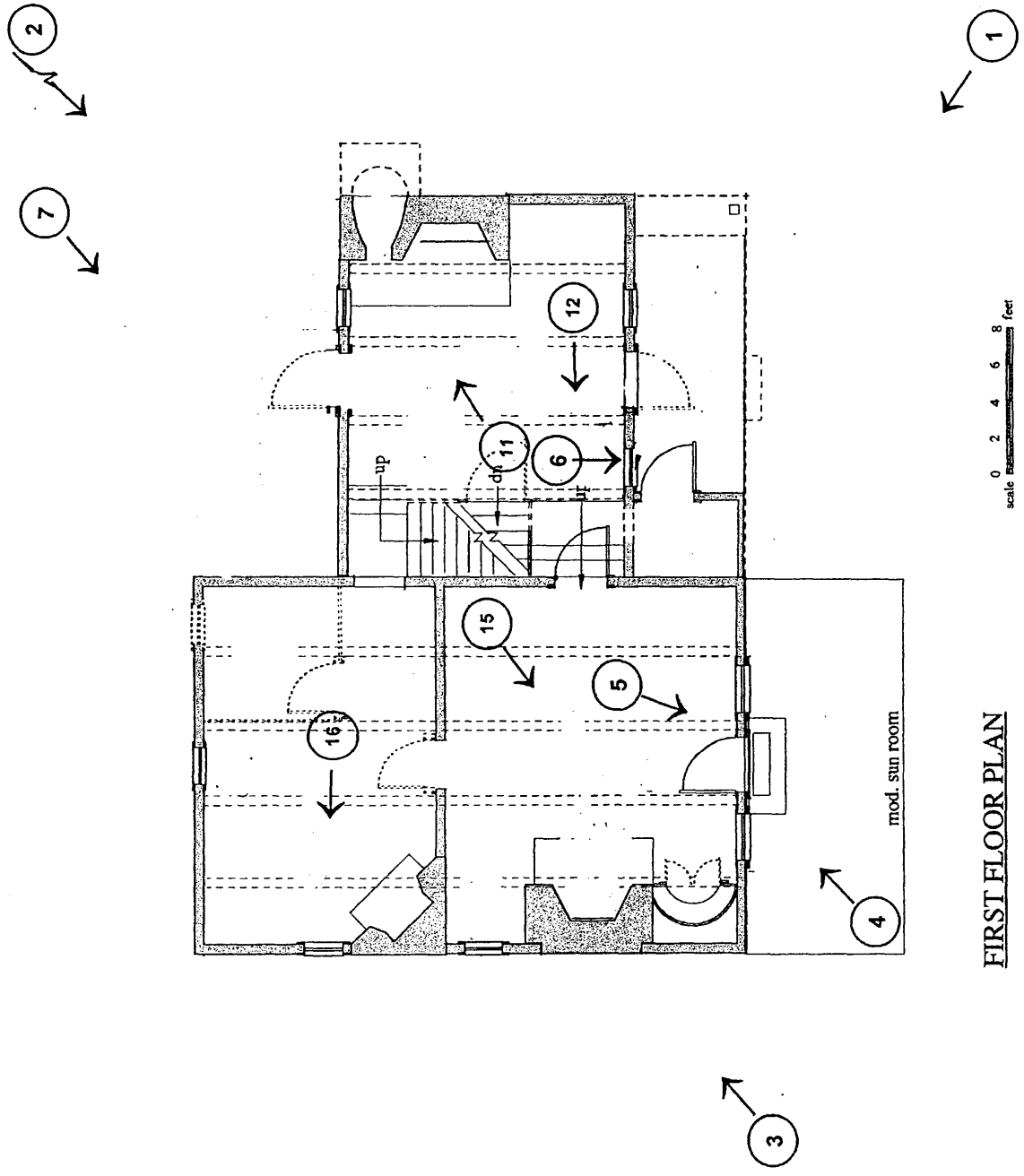
View: Door to attic showing evidence of use in a different location. View looking west.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 3

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey



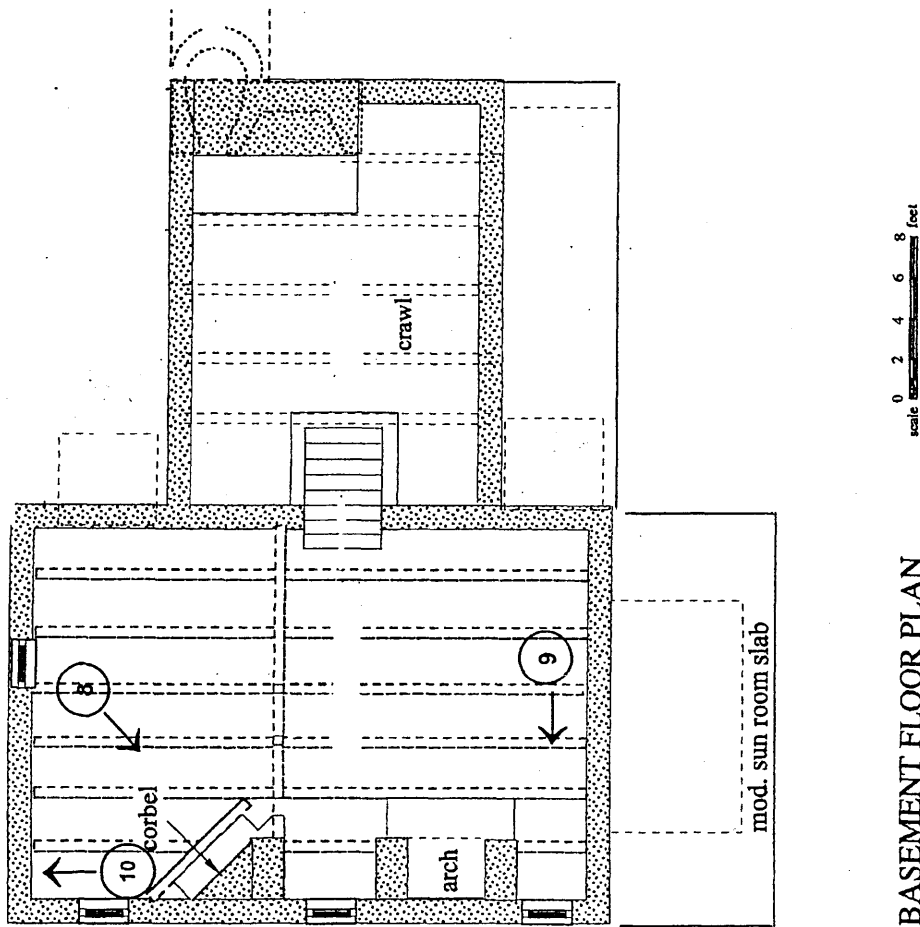
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 4

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

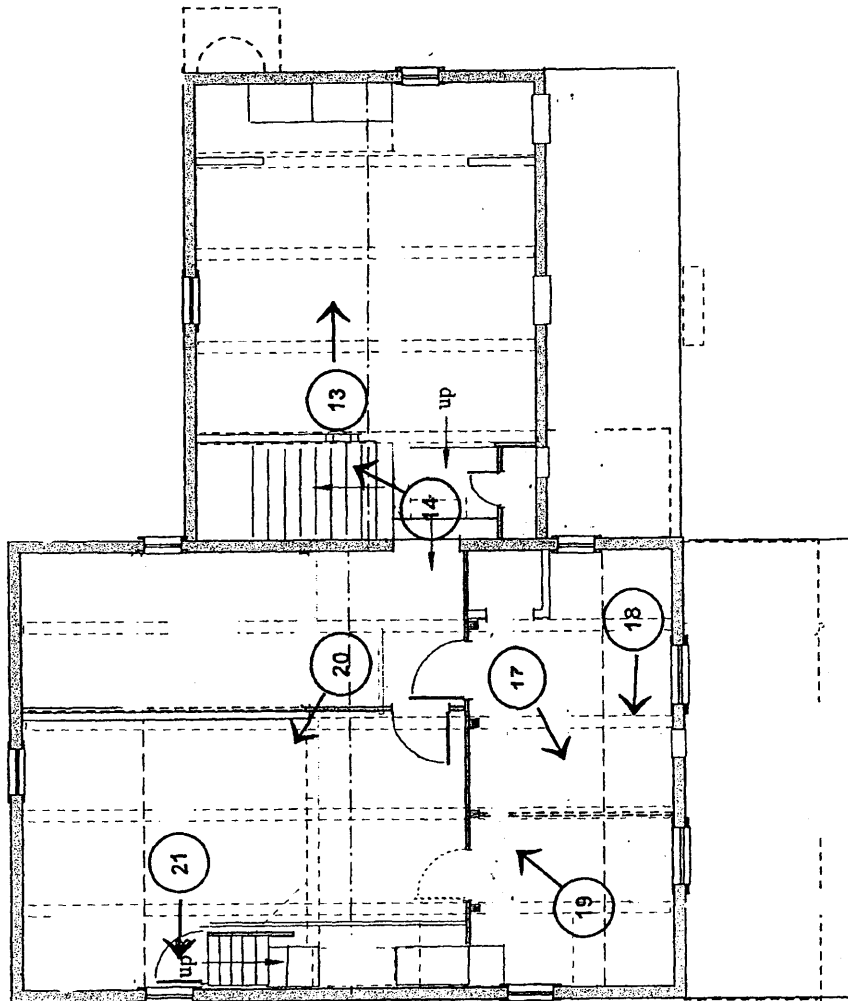


**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photographs Page 5

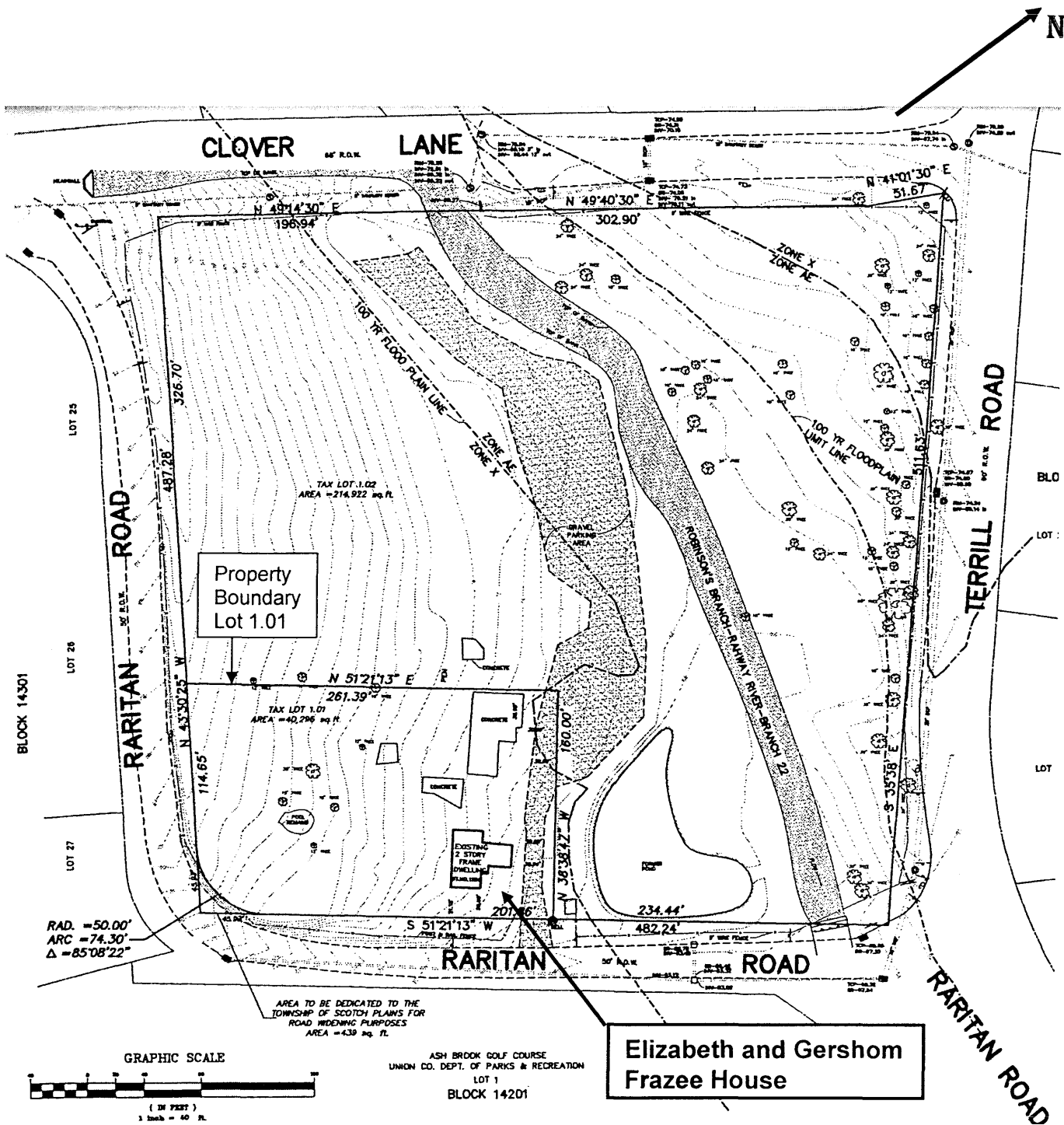
Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey



0 2 4 6 8  
feet  
scale

**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey



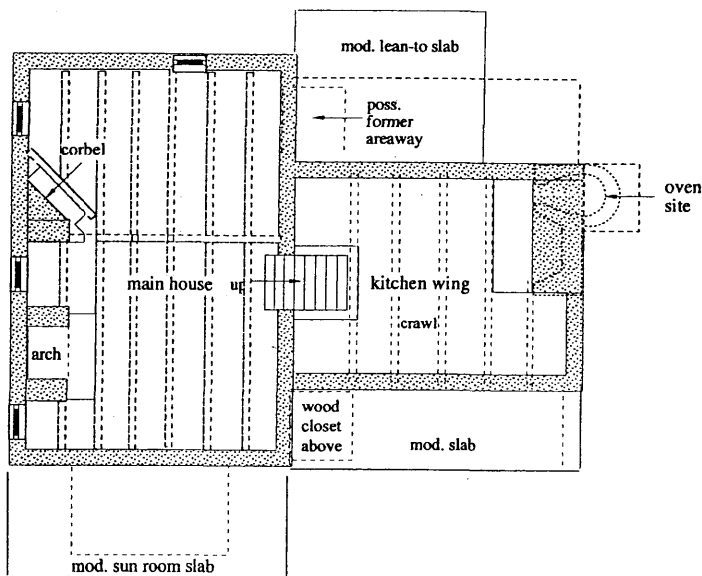
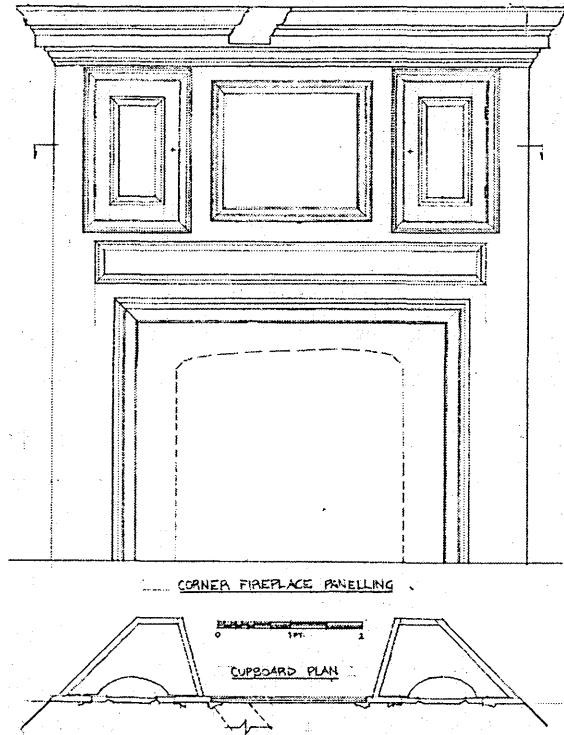
Site Plan

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

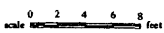
Accompanying Documentation

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

Paneling on corner fireplace *in situ*. Drawn 1972 by Frederic C. Detwiller. Paneling now located at Historical Society of Scotch Plains-Fanwood.



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

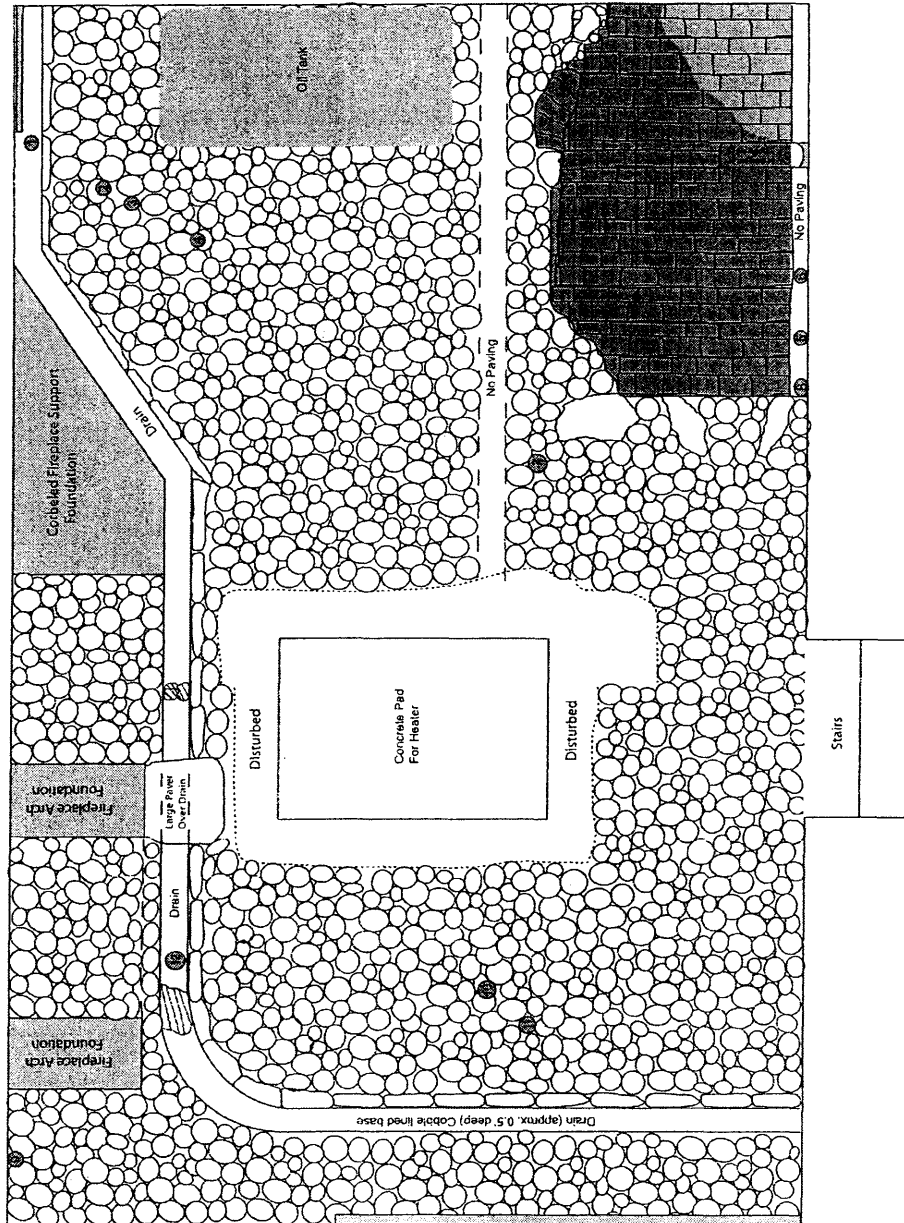


Drawn by Frederic C. Detwiller  
2006

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Accompanying Documentation

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey



**Key:**

- Cobble Stone Paving
- Brick Paving
- Unexcavated
- Pipe
- Cobble Stone Drain "Dum"
- Artifact Point Plotted

Scale (feet)  
0 1.0 2.0  
0.2

N

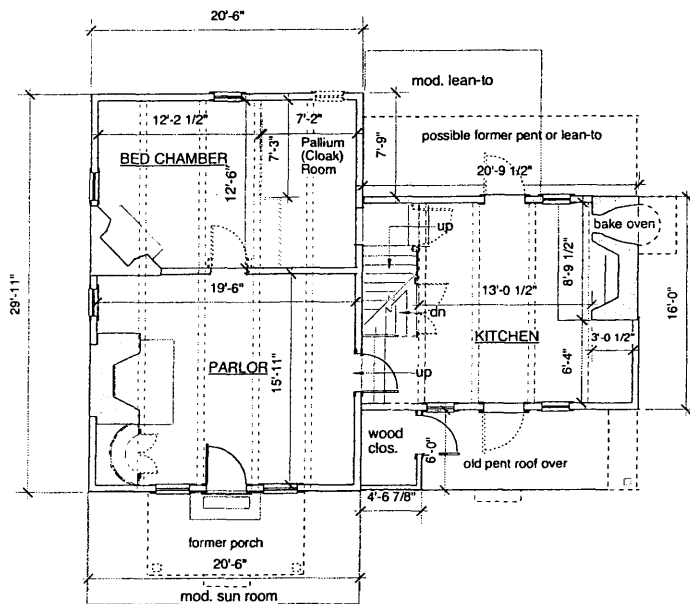
Plan View of Basement, West Section  
The Louis Berger Group 2006



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

## Accompanying Documentation

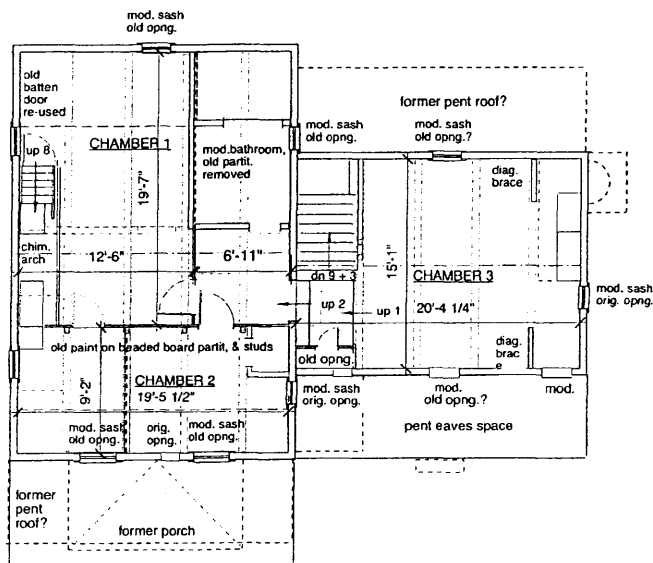
## Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Drawn by Frederic C. Detwiller  
2006



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



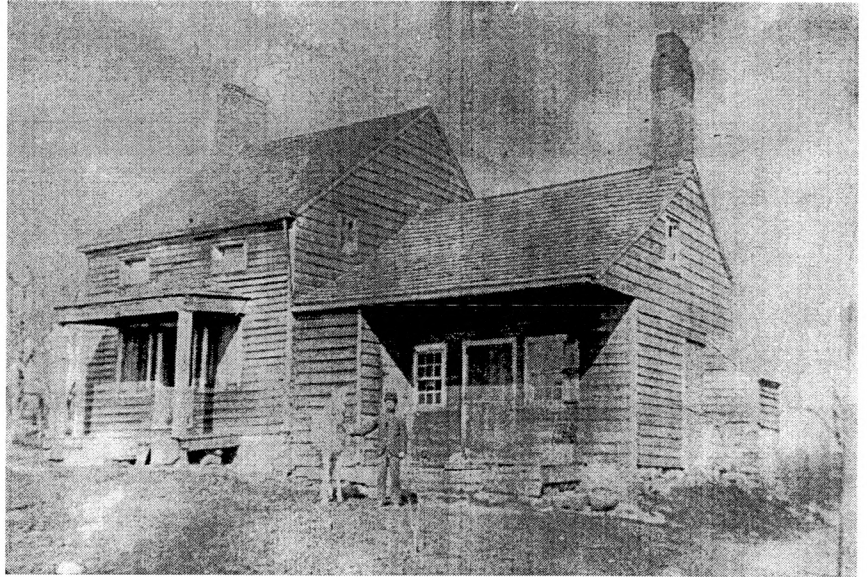
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Accompanying Documentation

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

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Frazee House, ca. 1880s.  
In the collection of the  
Historical Society of  
Fanwood-Scotch Plains.



Frazee House, ca. 1900.  
Photographer: Arthur Krom.  
Reproduced in Vail, Edgar and  
Betty Bradbury Vail, eds. *The  
American Revolution in New  
Jersey: A Pictorial Essay*.  
Neshanic, New Jersey:  
Neshanic Printing Co., Inc.,  
1972. Note well sweep at right.



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Accompanying Documentation

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey

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*Gershom and Betsy Frazee House, Scotch Plains, NJ ca. 1940s.  
Photo by Charles H. Detwiller, Jr.*

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Accompanying Documentation

Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House  
Township of Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey



*Gershom and Betsy Frazee House, Scotch Plains, NJ ca. 1970.  
Photo by Frederic C. Detwiller*

