

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received DEC 29 1987
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Hunt Farmstead

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 197 Blackwell Road NA not for publication

city, town Hopewell Township vicinity of

state New Jersey code 034 county Mercer code 021

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | NA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Mercer County Department of Parks & Recreation

street & number Court House, South Broad Street

city, town Trenton vicinity of state New Jersey 08650

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mercer County Court House

street & number South Broad Street

city, town Trenton state New Jersey 08650

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Hopewell Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of New Jersey Heritage, CN 404,

city, town Trenton state New Jersey 08625

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located in Mercer County's Rosedale Park, off Blackwell Road, in Hopewell Township, the Hunt Farmstead consists of an 18th and 19th century frame house and several modern cement-block farm buildings. Set back from the road about 700 feet on a dirt lane, the complex is surrounded by a gently rolling landscape of open fields and woods. A pond on the west side of the farmstead feeds a small tributary of Stony Brook which flows eastward about one half mile to the north.

House, exterior and construction: (Contributing)

The principal element of the farmstead is the house, a linearly massed, 2-story, gable-roofed structure which faces south. Constructed in sections over as long a period as 100 years (c. 1760-1860), it consists of a 5-bay double-pile main block with paired gable-end chimneys and a smaller, 2-bay, single-pile west wing with gable-end chimney and lean-to. The main block was built in two parts. Its three eastern bays comprise a side-hall-plan unit for which structural and stylistic evidence (nails, moldings, etc.) suggests a construction date of c. 1760-90. The fabric of its two western bays similarly appears to date c. 1790-1825, although several features suggest that this section incorporates a smaller, earlier structure (perhaps a 1 1/2-story unit) which was enlarged and remodeled. While the first story of the western section may predate the side-hall unit, the attic story clearly post-dates the latter's construction. Both physical and documentary evidence indicates that the one-room-plan west wing and its apparently integral lean-to were added in the mid-1800s, possibly after 1862.

Although poorly maintained and subject to 20th-century alteration, the exterior of the Hunt House retains much early fabric. Early features include the rubble stone foundation, clapboard siding on portions of all three sections, nearly all of the door and window frames, some of the windows and doors, the brick chimney stacks, and the eaves treatments. Among the 20th-century alterations are asbestos shingle siding on the north and west sides of the house, the asphalt shingle roofing, the main front porch and the hoods of the rear entries.

The south front of the main block retains original siding, quirk-beaded and hand-wrought-nailed clapboards on the east unit and plain boards attached with hand-wrought-headed cut nails on the west. The narrower wire-nailed clapboarding on the main block's east gable end, however, dates no earlier than the late 19th century. The siding of the north and west walls is concealed by asbestos shingles.

Both the south and north sides of the main block exhibit a regular fenestration, except that window levels of the two western bays are markedly lower than those to the east because of the difference in floor level between the two sections. The east gable end is blank except for a small attic window, reworked and now boarded over, below the gable peak. The west gable has two attic windows. The southern window is concealed by the west wing; the other one

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is boarded over. The narrow, pegged-timber window frames on both the front and rear are original fabric. Cyma reversa moldings edge the frames of the eastern windows; ovolo moldings those to the west. The west gable windows retain early architrave trim with Grecian ovolo outer moldings. A number of window frames have spike pintles, and several pairs of paneled shutters mounted on strap hinges are stored in the cellar. The 6/6 sashes probably are mid-19th century replacements. Each section of the main block has a small cellar window in front with a quirk-bead-edged timber frame; the west one is fitted with a wooden grill and the east an iron grill.

Each section of the main block has a front and rear entry. The east unit's front or south entry has a shouldered and stepped architrave surround with cyma reversa moldings; its glass and panel door and one-light transom probably date c. 1900-10. The east unit's north entry has a similar surround and retains an 18th-century door and an early, if not original, transom. Faced with six raised panels and backed by diagonally run, quirk-beaded boards, the door appears to be hung on H-L hinges whose L-shaped portions are sandwiched between its two layers. The transom with its diamond-patterned muntins is Federal in style. The south entry of the main block's west section has an architrave surround with quirk-beaded inner edge and ovolo outer molding, a 4-light transom, and a panel door which matches the west wing's rear door and may be a mid-19th century replacement. The door's two lower panels are recessed with applied outer molding on the front and flush with quirk-beaded edges on the back; a large pane of glass replaces the upper panels. The corresponding north entry has a matching surround, but its door is a modern replacement and its transom was blocked during the construction of the small modern entry porch.

While the raking eaves on both gable ends of the main block are flush, the eaves on the front and rear feature box cornices of Georgian-style derivation with modillion brackets and, in the front only, a dentil course. These cornices extend the full width of the main block. Although it is possible that they were not installed until after the main block's west section achieved its present form, mitered joints in both at the junction of the two sections, which correspond with the mitered returns at their east ends, suggest that they are original to the side-hall portion and were replicated for the eaves of the west section.

The main block's four chimneys have tall, stuccoed-brick stacks with drip caps. The chimneys are of rubble-stone construction and three of them have exposed, stuccoed backs and solid masonry bases. The back of the fourth or

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southwest chimney is concealed by the west wing; unlike the others, its much larger base consists of stone piers spanned by a lintel of heavy timbers.

The main block is of braced-frame construction. Hewn timber appears to have been used for only the largest members and saw-cut timber for the others. Brick nogging is visible in several places between the studs of the outside walls. Only in the cellar and attic, however, is the frame entirely exposed to view. The first-floor frame of both sections consists of a large hewn summer beam running east/west about mid-way with smaller saw-cut joists joined at a right angle, except under the east section's side hall where the joists parallel the summer beam. There is no foundation wall between the two sections of the main block (only a whitewashed wooden grill at the north end) and the inner ends of both summer beams, each framed into the sill of a separate wall partition, are supported by a massive stone pier of an irregular cross shape. Although the common wall between the two portions of the main block appears to be framed as two separate partitions, on the first floor level at least, within the cellar staircase (located in the northwest corner of the east unit) the east unit's partition is unfinished and plaster is applied directly to the exposed brick nogging of the west section's partition. This suggests that the first story of the west section predates the construction of the east section.

The roof of the east half of the main block is framed with principal and common rafters, lap-jointed and pegged at the peak, with small queen posts and short purlins between the principals which carry the common rafters. The west half's roof is framed with only common rafters. They are supported by long purlins which form part of the wall partitions of the small room built within that portion of the attic. In the attic, the common wall between the main block's two parts consists of only one partition which is integral to the east unit. The west roof's rafter plates are framed into the partition, whose west side was once clapboarded, as evidenced by clapboard ghosts and protruding nails (both hand-wrought and cut with hand-wrought heads). Even if the first story of the west section was built before the east unit, the attic story clearly post-dates the construction of the latter.

The mid-19th century, 2-bay west wing is much more simply detailed than the main block. It retains cut-nailed clapboard siding on its south side. Other original exterior features include flush eaves, the stuccoed-brick stack of the west gable-end chimney, 6/6 sash windows, plain window and door trim, and a recessed porch on the front. The latter provides access to two entries, one opening to the wing itself and the other to the lean-to, both of which have

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4-panel doors hung on butt hinges. The porch screening is a 20th-century installation. Asbestos shingles cover the wing's north and west sides.

The north facade of the wing has a 2-over-3-bay fenestration pattern. Its central entry has a 4-panel door similar to that of the south entry of the main block's west section. The panels are flush with quirk-beaded edges on the front and recessed with applied outer molding on the back. This entry has a modern gabled hood. The wing's west gable has two 4-light windows; there are three windows on the lean-to's west side and one on its front.

The construction of the west wing is visible in the attic. Its saw-cut framing members are small in comparison with those of the main block. The roof is framed with widely spaced common rafters which are connected at the peak with a spiked miter joint.

House, interior:

Although it has been converted into three apartments and also has been subject to some modern alterations, the interior of the main block retains a remarkable amount of early fabric. Among the surviving features are random-width flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, fireplaces, paneled fireplace walls, staircases, paneled doors, early hardware, and molded door and window surrounds, chair rails, baseboards, and cornices. Modern alterations include modified partitions in two areas, several acoustical-tile ceilings and linoleum floors, a number of modern doors, a rebuilt staircase, and the bathroom and kitchen fittings.

The east section has a side-hall plan on the first story with two rooms, originally of about equal size, opening from the full-depth hall. The staircase, located at the back of the hall, rises southwardly in one run along the west wall to a small, irregularly shaped hall on the second story. The upper hall provides access to four rooms (the larger two to the east and the smaller two over the front and rear of the hall below) as well as the enclosed attic staircase. The east rooms on both floors have fireplaces. The north first-floor room presently is a kitchen; the northwest room upstairs is a bathroom.

Throughout the east section, the woodwork is typical of the second half of the 18th century. It includes ovolo-molded window surrounds with cyma reversa-molded "sash holders," stepped architrave door trim with cyma reversa moldings and quirk-beaded inner edges, molded chair rails, and quirk-beaded baseboards. Except for several modern doors on the first story, the east section

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retains raised 6-paneled doors. Most of them are hung on early H-L hinges. With the notable exception of the early wrought-iron attic door latch and lock, however, the door knobs and locks are late 19th and 20th-century replacements.

The most notable decorative feature of the east section is the Georgian raised-panel fireplace walls found in the north first-floor room and the two east rooms above. Each has a central fireplace flanked by closets and/or built-in cupboards with raised-panel doors. The fireplaces and flanking doors have stepped, and in two rooms shouldered, architrave surrounds. A molded cornice shelf surmounts the fireplace in the north first-floor room; its installation over the fielding of the chimney breast paneling suggests that it is a subsequent addition. In both the first-floor room and the upper front room, the fireplace walls have denticulated cornices at the ceiling. There is a small molded cornice in the upper back room. Only the fireplace in the upper front room is open; constructed of brick, it has a fairly deep opening with slightly splayed jambs and flat lintel of splayed stretchers.

The first-floor front room has been subject to considerable alteration. While it also probably had a paneled fireplace wall, it now features a Victorian grain-painted slate mantel with cast iron coal grate (installed in front of the original fireplace opening) and a built-in bookcase on one side that is probably of 20th-century date. Other modern changes include removal of the chair rail, reconstruction of the hall partition about 12" to the east, and installation of decorative ceiling "beams" in a grid pattern.

Probably around the same time that these alterations occurred, an L-shaped partition was built at the south end of the staircase, closing off the door to the cellar stairs and the door to the west part of the main block from the hall. Otherwise, the staircase is unaltered. Typical of 18th-century work, it has an open string course with stepped architrave, scrolled brackets on each step, simple turned balusters, a round newel post with square top and base, and a molded handrail. The wall below the steps is sheathed with raised paneling.

The western part of the main block has two first-floor rooms of which the front one is larger and has a modern, single-run staircase along its east wall. The back room currently is used as a kitchen. Both rooms have fireplaces, as does the front room upstairs. A small passageway at the top of the stairs provides access to this room and a small rear room, to the west of which is a bathroom and closets entered from the front room. An attic chamber above can only be reached from the east section of the main block. Beside the staircase connecting the first and second floors, modern alterations include

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acoustical-tile ceilings and several panel doors with plain trim on the second floor, which suggest that the partitions in the bathroom area were reworked.

The original fabric of the west section is characteristic of early 19th-century work and reveals Federal-style influences. It includes architrave door and window trim with delicate outer moldings, raised 6-panel doors (small moldings on the panels) hung on butt hinges, ovolo-molded chair rails, and quirk-beaded baseboards. The mantelpiece in the first-floor front room has plain pilasters, wide frieze with reeded end and center blocks, and an intricately molded cornice. Those of the upper front room and the rear room below have architrave surrounds, friezes with plain end and center blocks, and molded cornices. All three brick fireplaces are of the Rumford-type, shallow with markedly splayed jambs and sloping rear wall. The one in the first-floor front room apparently was built within a much larger fireplace (probably a cooking fireplace) to judge from the evidence of its considerably wider brick hearth and the timber-linteled base below. To the south of this fireplace is a built-in, 4-door cupboard. The room above has a similar cupboard to one side of the fireplace and a closet on the other. The latter has a batten door like those of the west wing.

The least altered room in the entire house is the long-unused attic chamber at the west end of the main block. Probably occupied by servants, it has plastered walls and ceilings (hand-split lath attached with hand-wrought-headed cut nails), architrave door and window trim, molded chair rail, and quirk-beaded baseboard.

The west wing has one first-floor room from which an enclosed winder staircase to the east of the recessed porch provides access to two small chambers upstairs. Original finishes include plaster walls, quirk-beaded door and window trim, bevel-edged baseboards, both batten and panel doors hung on butt hinges, and random-width flooring upstairs. The narrow wooden flooring downstairs is modern, as is the acoustical tile ceiling.

While originally a kitchen, the main room does not appear to have had a fireplace despite the presence of a simple pilastered mantel on the chimney breast. The chimney is only deep enough to accommodate the open fireplace in the lean-to. The main room probably had a stove which was vented into the chimney above the vestigial mantel.

The finishes of the lean-to (linoleum floor, plain trim, and new plaster and sheet rock walls) reflect its conversion into a modern kitchen in this century.

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The lean-to must have been an out kitchen. Its deep brick fireplace has a timber lintel and angled jambs, faced inside with modern firebrick. Perpendicular to the west end of the fireplace is a brick wall, extending half the width of the lean-to, which accommodated a bake oven. While the cast iron oven door survives, only the ghost of a domed oven remains on the north side of the wall. This portion of the lean-to has been partitioned off as a storage area.

Site and Outbuildings:

The Hunt House has front and rear yards of moderate size that are planted with a variety of trees and shrubs. Overgrown evergreen shrubs obscure the front of the house and several pine trees overhang the west side of the lean-to. Smaller foundation plantings border the north and east sides of the house.

A well^{*} is located in the front yard, about 25 feet from the main block's porch; it is capped with large flat stones. There was a three-seat privy in the back yard, about 50 feet north of the wing's rear entry. A short distance behind it stood a corn crib. Both structures were removed in recent years. A c. 1930 aerial photograph suggests that barns were located farther to the north on or near the site of the present barns. The well is certainly an archaeological feature; the other outbuilding locations are potential archaeological sites.

The farmstead's only extant outbuildings are located just northeast of the house at the end of the dirt driveway which runs along the east side of the house. The principal structure is a cement-block dairy barn with high, curved roof and clapboard-clad frame gables. Its main entry is in the east gable end; the west end has a door and overhanging hoist at the gable peak. A silo abuts its northwest corner; a small hip-roofed milk or pump house adjoins its south side. It probably dates c. 1930-50. Between the house and the barn, and probably contemporary with the latter, is a 1-story, cement-block, 3-car garage whose shed roof replaces a pitched roof. Several courses of rubble stone at the base of its north wall suggest that it was built on the foundation of an earlier outbuilding. East of the barn stands what appears to be a mid-20th century equipment shed whose curved superstructure is covered with corrugated metal. Alongside of it is a small trailer. The barn, garage, and shed are all non-contributing buildings.

*(contributing structure)

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates c.1760-1860 **Builder/Architect** Unclear

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Picturesquely sited in Mercer County's Rosedale Park, a gently rolling landscape of fields and woods, the Hunt Farmstead is an unusual survivor from Hopewell Township's agricultural past, and possesses considerable local architectural and historical significance. Although evidencing some modern alterations and suffering from poor maintenance, the house remains an important document of the area's substantial 18th and early 19th century domestic architecture. There are few early frame houses in Hopewell Township which retain so much original fabric. From the 18th century until the early 1900s, the property was owned and occupied by the Hunt family, whose members for several generations were among Hopewell Township's largest landowners and most prosperous and prominent citizens. In addition, despite the loss of the farmstead's early outbuildings, the site --particularly the immediate environs of the house-- may have archaeological potential to provide information about local material culture of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Built in sections by a prosperous farm family over as long a period as 100 years (c. 1760-1860), the Hunt House illustrates changing building practices and stylistic fashions during that time. The robust Georgian-derived features of the 18th-century side-hall portion of the main block present an interesting contrast to the more delicate and subdued, early 19th-century, Federal-style detailing of the main block's west section and the utilitarian finishes of the mid-19th century west wing. When built, the side-hall portion of the main block must have been one of the neighborhood's most impressive dwellings. With such features as modillion cornices and paneled fireplace walls, the sidehall house, albeit provincial compared to more "high-style" contemporary work in the region, can be considered as a relatively sophisticated architectural expression in the context of its somewhat isolated, rural New Jersey community.

The historical significance of the property stems from its long association with the Hunt family, prominent early residents of Hopewell Township. Although secondary sources and family genealogies give conflicting details, the Hunts appear to have been a family of English stock who, emigrating from Long Island, settled in the Hopewell Township area early in the 18th century. The prolific family had several branches, and became landowners and participants in local affairs at an early date. While its chain of title can only be traced back continuously to the ownership of Noah Hunt in 1805, the farmstead site appears to have been in his possession as early as the third quarter of the 18th century. The 1770 mortgage for the adjoining land of Stephen Laning indicates that the property in question belonged to Noah Hunt at that time. Hunt also was one of six petitioners in 1763 for the realignment of the road from Maidenhead to "Polhamu's Mill," which apparently included a portion of present-day Blackwell

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 12

Quadrangle name Princeton

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| A | 1 8 | 5 2 1 7 0 0 | 4 4 6 4 1 4 0 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| B | 1 8 | 5 2 1 7 6 0 | 4 4 6 3 7 6 0 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| C | 1 8 | 5 2 1 5 4 0 | 4 4 6 3 7 4 0 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| D | 1 8 | 5 2 1 5 2 0 | 4 4 6 4 1 0 0 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| E | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| F | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| G | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| H | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries NA

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dennis Bertland (Historical research provided by Pamela Cain of the Hopewell Valley Historical Society)

organization Dennis Bertland Associates date April 1987

street & number P.O. Box 11 telephone (201) 689-6356

city or town Port Murray state New Jersey 07865

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Walter C. Senick*

title Asst. Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources date 12/03/87

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Diana McClelland date 10/28/88
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Road: the road providing access to the Hunt Farmstead. On the 1778 and 1779 Hopewell Township tax ratables lists (the earliest that survive), he was assessed for 284 acres of land, which later deeds and estate records strongly suggest was his homestead farm.²

How and when Noah Hunt (c. 1724-1805) acquired the property is a matter of conjecture. Two 19th-century secondary sources³ claim that he succeeded his father John (1685-1749) on the family homestead. In his 1749 will John Hunt bequeathed to Noah the northern half of the 200-acre "plantation on which Richard Hudnutt now dwells" and to three of his other sons, Gershom, Daniel, and Enoch, "the plantation on which I now dwell."⁴ If the assertion of the secondary sources is true, unless the farm occupied by Hudnutt was his father's original homestead, Noah would have had to acquire the property inherited by his three brothers. Unfortunately, there are no deeds or other records clarifying the early history of the site.

Noah Hunt was succeeded on the property by his only son Stephen (?-1825). Noah appears to have conveyed one half of the 284-acre tract to Stephen before 1802, since in the township ratables list of that year father and son are each assessed for 142 acres of land.⁵ Stephen evidently inherited that other half in 1805, along with the bulk of his father's substantial estate. Among several other specific bequests to family members, Noah's 1792 will gave his wife Sarah "one equal half of my house" and his granddaughter Sarah Smith (the child of one of his two daughters) "a bed and furniture complete that is now standing in the southeast room on the second story of my house."⁶ Clearly, the side-hall portion of the main block was extant by 1792.

Stephen married his cousin Ruth Hunt (c. 1750/60-1837) and upon his death in 1825 left almost his entire estate to her. Although Ruth and Stephen Hunt had at least two children, none of their offspring appears to have been alive at the time of their deaths. Nevertheless, they evidently had a large household of relatives and servants, and the main block must have reached its present form by 1830 when Ruth headed a household of fourteen.⁸ In her 1837 will Ruth divided her substantial assets among a number of relatives and friends. She appointed her cousin Asa Hunt (c. 1794-1852) her executor and left him "the farm or plantation on which I now live" as well as all of her livestock, crops, vehicles, farm equipment, and household goods.

Asa Hunt died intestate leaving a widow and two minor sons, Stephen (c. 1841-1918) and John B. (born c. 1844). In 1862, court appointed commissioners divided Asa's real estate into equal shares for the two boys, as heirs-at-law.

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As his share, Stephen received 249.98 acres of his father's homestead farm (John B. was awarded the remaining 69.18 acres of that property, as well as another farm and a small wood lot). The survey map accompanying the division depicts on the larger portion of the homestead farm a 5-bay center-entry dwelling, which from its location must be the Hunt House, and across the road on the southern portion of the smaller tract a 3-bay side-entry house, which is no longer extant. While these drawings may be only stylized representations, the depiction of the Hunt House may indicate that the dwelling's west wing had not yet been built.¹⁰

After 1862, Stephen Hunt II evidently farmed and occupied the premises until his intestate death in 1918. Four years later his three heirs-at-law (probably his daughters) sold the farm to Fernando Blackwell, thus ending its long ownership by the Hunt family.¹¹

Property tax, surrogate, and census records attest to the prosperity of the Hunts and the long history of their homestead as one of Hopewell Township's most substantial working farms. On the 1778 tax ratables list, Noah Hunt's 284-acre farm was assessed as the twelfth most valuable property in Hopewell Township and he paid the sixth highest tax in the township. In that year, the assessors found that his chattels included 6 horses, 15 cattle, 7 hogs, and 2 slaves and that he held notes in the amount of 709 pounds. The following year the value of his notes jumped remarkably to 2,107 pounds. One of his horses was a stallion whose stud services he advertised in 1780.¹² In 1802, if one combines Noah's property with that of his son, the Hunts were again the sixth highest tax-payers. For his estate, the elder Hunt's personal assets were valued at slightly more than \$12,000. At his death in 1805 he owned five slaves, ample household goods, including a clock worth \$40 and a silver tankard worth \$35, and about \$8,700 worth of notes and bonds.¹³ The substantial construction and detailing of the side-hall portion of the house also document Noah Hunt's wealth.

Stephen Hunt benefited financially not only by his father's will, but also by his marriage to his cousin Ruth who inherited almost one half of the property of her prosperous father, Captain John Hunt.¹⁴ At Stephen's death in 1825, his estate, exclusive of land, was valued at around \$29,000, of which over \$24,000 comprised notes and bonds. He also owned a carriage and "servants of color." By 1830, however, the slaves evidently had all been manumitted, as the census of that year lists eleven free colored people in the household of fourteen headed by his aged widow.¹⁵ The black adults presumably were domestic servants and farm workers; the whites probably were relatives. In 1836, Ruth Hunt paid the second highest tax in Hopewell Township. At her death the following year, she left a greater estate than had her husband or his father. Her personal assets were

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valued at slightly more than \$39,000 including "bonds, notes and book accounts" of \$32,000. In addition to her homestead, she owned at least two other farms and a house and lot in Princeton.¹⁶ Ruth and Stephen Hunt clearly were people of substance. A major portion of their wealth was inherited, and while they owned and occupied a working farm, the larger part of their income must have come from invested capital (interest on money lent to neighbors and relatives) and property rents.

Although Ruth Hunt's money was dispersed by her will, her successor on the home farm, Asa Hunt, also appears to have lived there in comfort and prosperity. In 1840 and 1850 he headed households of about one dozen people, about half of whom were black. The 1850 census identifies two of the blacks as laborers; in addition to his immediate family, Asa, like Ruth, had other relatives living with him. In the agricultural schedule of the 1850 census, his farm had the second highest valuation in the township and his livestock the third highest. Asa Hunt also left a considerable estate, amounting to about \$20,000 in addition to two farms.¹⁷ In 1870, the home farm, then owned and operated by his son Stephen, had about the same value. In that year, Stephen's household of nine, beside his small immediate family, contained three male laborers and a female domestic, none of whom was black.¹⁸

There also is evidence of the Hunts' participation in local affairs. Noah Hunt served on the building committee for the brick Presbyterian meetinghouse erected at Pennington in 1765-66. Noah's son Stephen was a trustee of the nearby Presbyterian Church, of which his wife Ruth and their cousin Asa were noted benefactors. Ruth Hunt is reputed to have been concerned with the plight of enslaved blacks, not only freeing her own slaves, but taking "great interest in helping others." Popular lore holds her house to have been a station on the underground¹⁹ railroad. Asa Hunt was one of the founders of the private schools in Pennington.

In 1930 Fernando and Jennie Blackwell conveyed title to the Hunt farm, which they had purchased eight years earlier, to their son and his wife. The Blackwells, members of another old Hopewell Township family who continued to farm the property, are responsible for the construction of the present outbuildings. It remained in their possession until 1968, when A. Cornell Blackwell (Fernando's son) and his wife Helen sold it to Mercer County to become part of Rosedale Park.²⁰

Notes

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1. For genealogical data on the Hunt family and its early history see the following sources: Pamela M. Cain, Hunt Farmstead - Hopewell Valley Historical Society House Lineage Report; Eli F. and William S. Cooley, Genealogy of Early Settlers in Trenton and Ewing -- Old Hunterdon County, New Jersey, pp. 141-42; Rev. George Hale, A History of the Old Presbyterian Congregation of "The People of Maidenhead and Hopewell", pp. 39-42; E. M. Woodward and John F. Hageman, History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, page 818; and Edwin York, The Pennington Area Presbyterians. pp. 73-74.
2. Hunterdon County Mortgages, Vol. 1, page 107; Hunterdon County Road Returns, Book 1, page 29; Hopewell Township Tax Ratables, 1778 and 1779; and Pamela M. Cain, Hunt Farmstead - Hopewell Valley Historical Society House Lineage Report.
3. Rev. George Hale, A History of the Old Presbyterian Congregation of "The People of Maidenhead and Hopewell", pp. 39-42; and E. M. Woodward and John F. Hageman, History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, page 818.
4. New Jersey State Archives, Will file #215J.
5. Hopewell Township Tax Ratables, 1802.
6. Hunterdon County Wills, Vol. I, page 90.
7. Hunterdon County Wills, Vol. 4, page 266.
8. Hopewell Township Census Schedule, 1830.
9. Hunterdon County Wills, Vol. 7, page 10.
10. Mercer County Surrogate Records, Estate file of Asa Hunt, Daily Docket #14-3.
11. Everts and Stewart, Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County, (1875); Pugh and Downing, Map of Mercer County, (1903); Woodward and Hageman, History of...Mercer Counties, page 818; and Mercer County Deeds, Vol. 490, page 272.
12. Hopewell Township Tax Ratables, 1778 and 1779; Archives of the State of New Jersey (first series) - Newspaper Extracts, Vol. IV, page 340; and Cain, Hunt Farmstead ... House Lineage Report.

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13. Hopewell Township Tax Ratables, 1802.
14. Hunterdon County Wills, Vol. 1, page 244.
15. Hunterdon County Inventories, Vol. 1, page 266; and Hopewell Township Census Schedule, 1830.
16. Hunterdon County Inventories, Vol. 8, page 425; and Hunterdon County Wills, Vol. 7, page 10.
17. Alice B. Lewis, Hopewell Valley Heritage, page 71; Hopewell Township Census Schedules, 1840 and 1850; and Mercer County Inventories, Vol. 8, page 199.
18. Hopewell Township Census Schedules, 1870.
19. Edwin York, The Pennington Area Presbyterians, pp. 73-74; Hale, A History of the Old Presbyterian Congregation... pp. 39-42; Lewis, Hopewell Valley Heritage, page 169; and Cain, Hunt Farmstead...House Lineage Report.
20. Mercer County Deeds, Vol. 1805, page 668.

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Hunterdon County Inventory Books.

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Hunterdon County Mortgage Books.
Hunterdon County Road Return Books.
Hunterdon County Will Books.

Mercer County Court House, Trenton, New Jersey.
Mercer County Deeds.
Mercer County Surrogate Records.

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New Jersey Wills.

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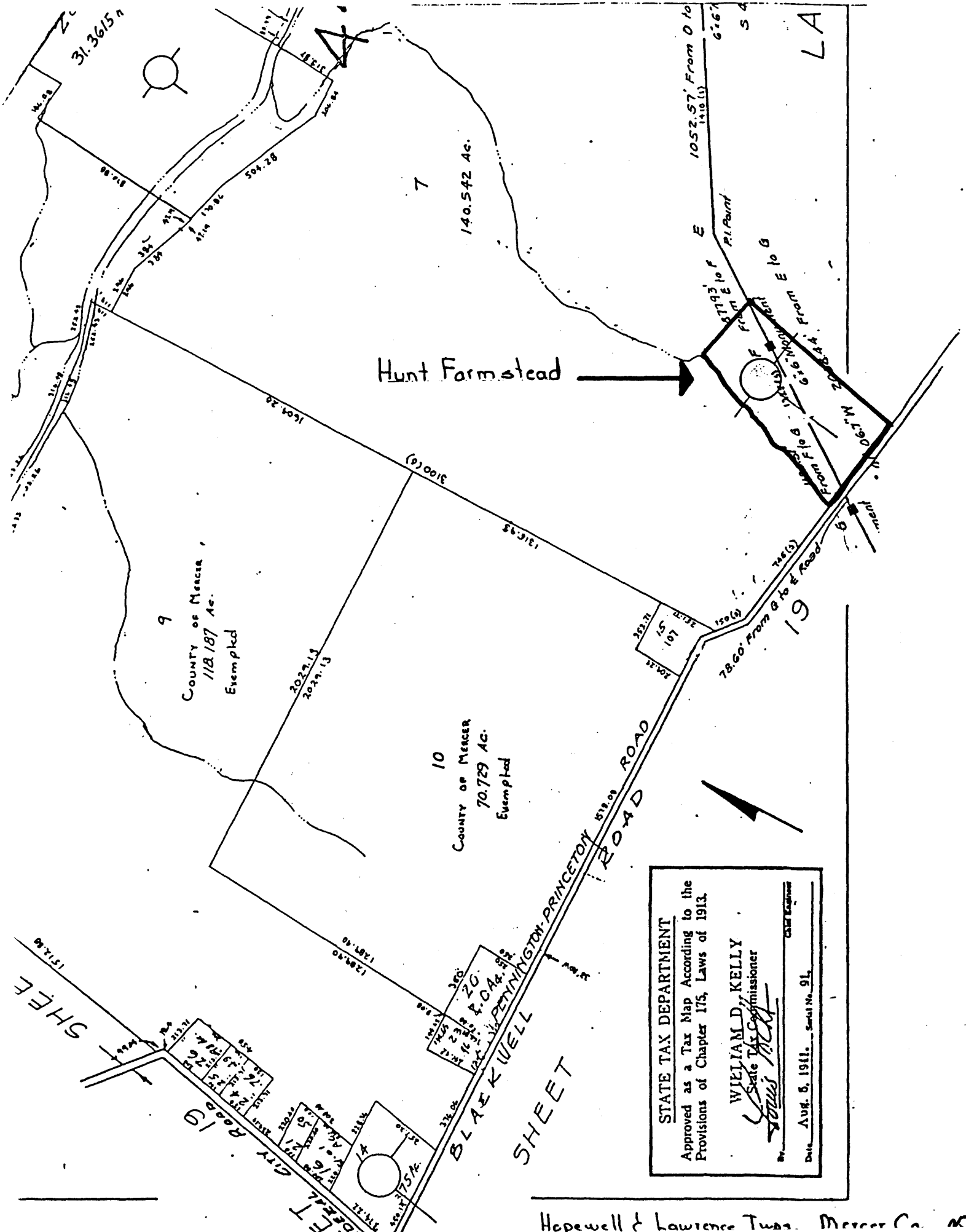
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Hunt Farmstead, Hopewell Township,
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Boundary Description and Justification

The nominated property includes portions of two lots in Rosedale Park, Lot 7 of Block 44 in Hopewell Township (on which the buildings are located) and Lot 15 of Block 4 in Lawrence Township. The boundary of the nominated property was drawn to encompass enough of the land in the immediate environs of the farmstead (in particular the open fields between the house and the road) to protect its historical character and to ensure a visually appropriate setting.

The boundary of the nominated property begins at the Hopewell/Lawrence line on the north side of Blackwell Road and runs eastward along the north side of the road to a point 100 feet east of the driveway leading to the Hunt farmstead. From that point, the boundary turns north and follows a line parallel to the driveway until it again intersects the Hopewell/Lawrence line. At that point, the boundary makes a 90 degree turn and runs westward in a straight line to the tributary of Stony Brook on the west side of the farmstead. The boundary then follows the west bank of the small creek, the west side of the pond, and again the west bank of the creek south to Blackwell Road, where it turns east along the north side of Blackwell road to the place of beginning.



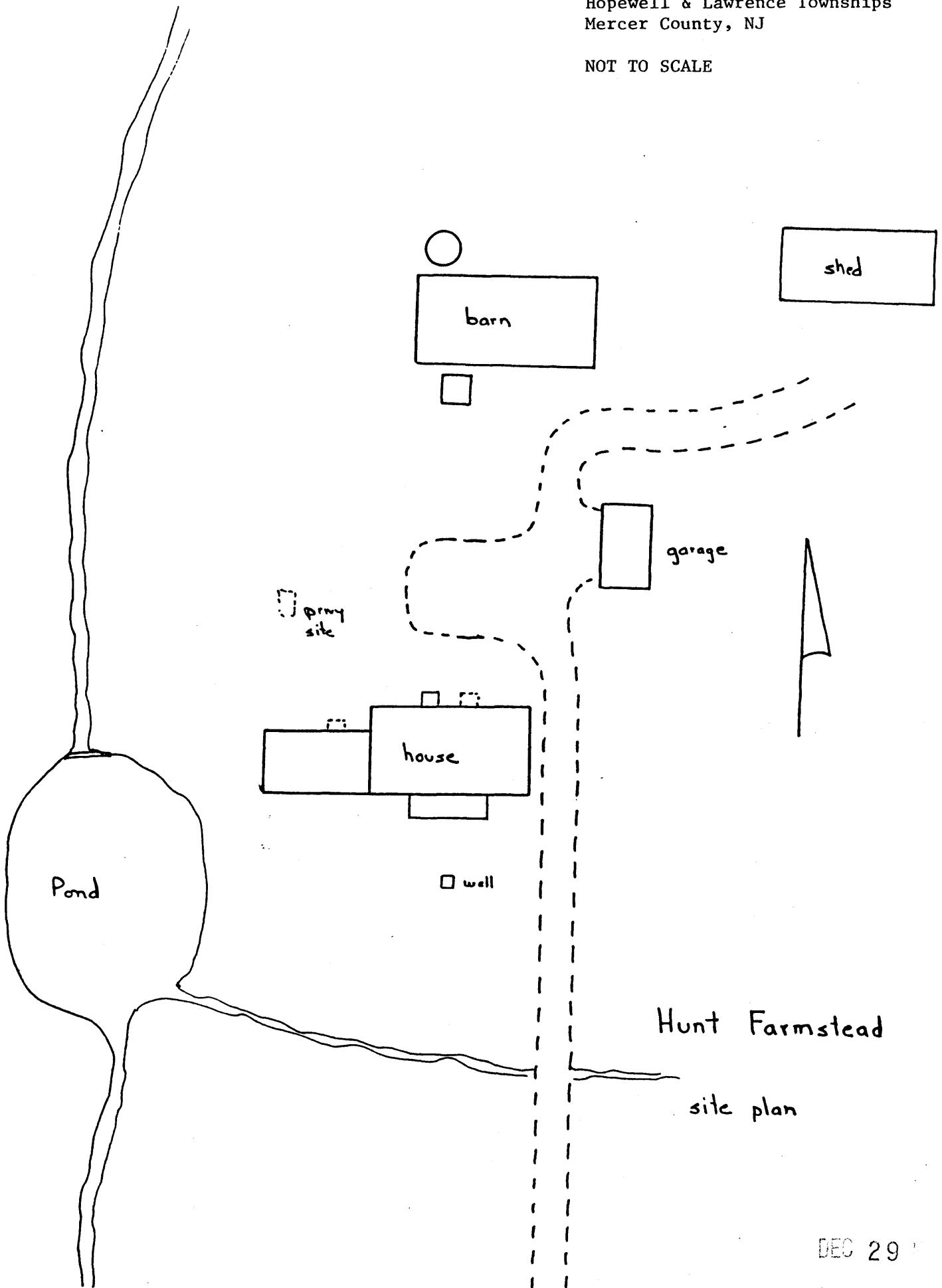
STATE TAX DEPARTMENT
 Approved as a Tax Map According to the
 Provisions of Chapter 175, Laws of 1913.

WILLIAM D. KELLY
 State Tax Commissioner

Date AUG. 5, 1911. Sealing No. 91.

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Hopewell & Lawrence Townships
Mercer County, NJ

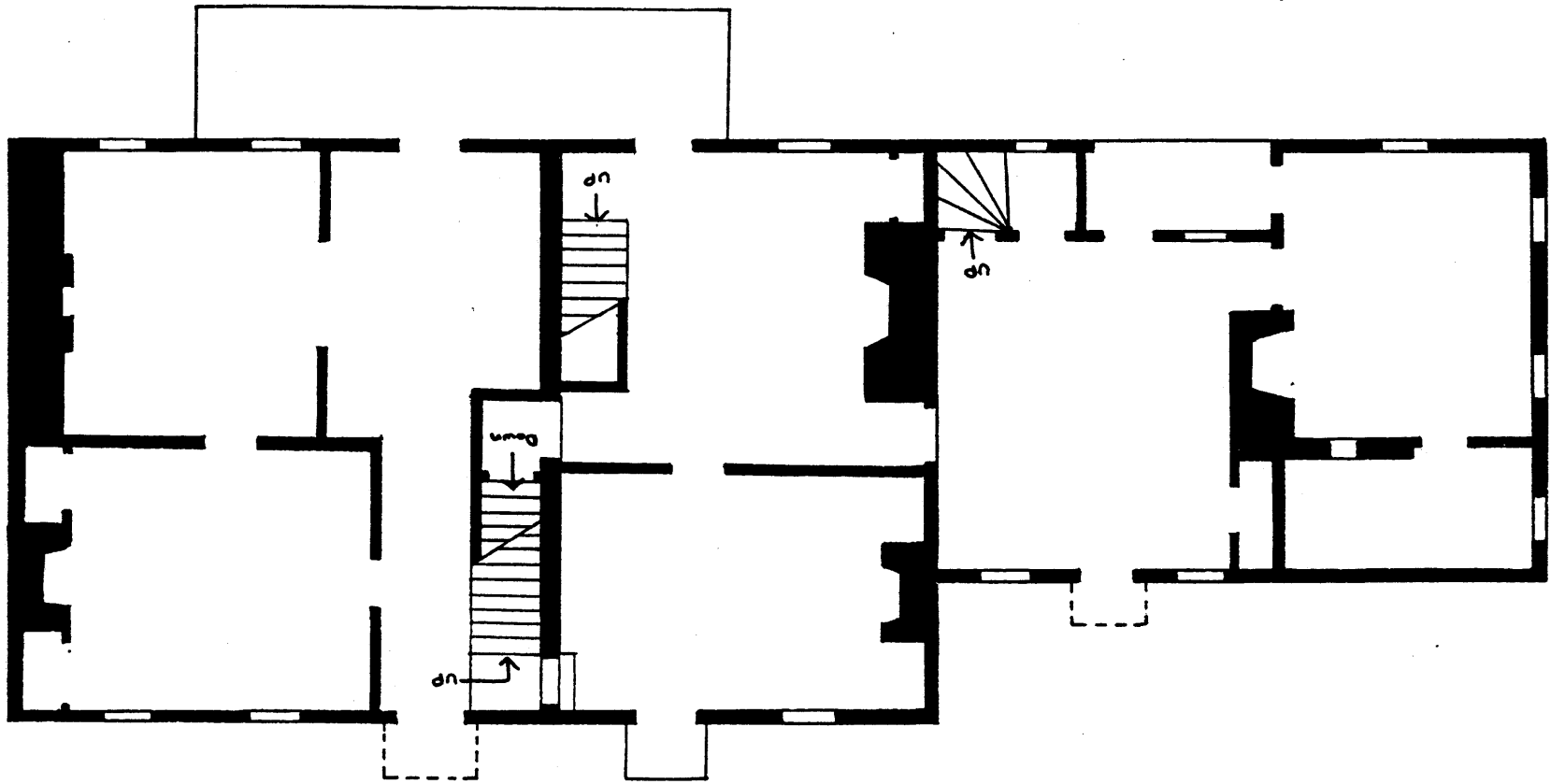
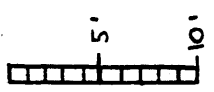
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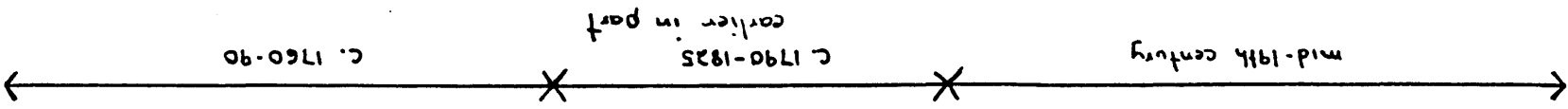
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to be v u n

Scale



Hunt House
1st. floor plan



c. 1760-90

c. 1790-1825
earlier in part

mid-19th century

Howell Township Museum Co. MS