United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic East Millstone Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number		ad.and Delaw	are & Rar	itan Cabal	not for publication
city, town	East Mi Franklin-Townsl	C .	ricinity of	congressional district	
state New	Jersey	code 34	county	Somerset	code 035
3. Clas	sificatio	n			
Category X district building(s) structure site object	Ownership X public X private both Public Acquisiti in process being conside A	on Accessit	cupied in progress ble	Present Use agriculture X commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum X park X private residence X religious scientific X transportation other:
4. Owr	er of Pro	perty			
name Mu	ltipleSee a	attached lis	t		
street & number					
city, town Ea	ast Millstone	ev	icinity of	state	New Jersey
5. Loca	ation of L	.egal Des	criptio	n	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc.	Franklin To	ownship H	all	
street & number		DeMott Land	e		
city, town		Middlebush		state	New Jersey
6. Rep	resentati	on in Exi	sting S	Surveys	
titie 2. NJ 1. St	R Canal Nati <u>HSI - D&R Ca</u> ate Register 79-1981	anal	has this prop	ic District erty been determined el Register 5/11/7 federal _X_sta	3
depository for su		J Office of H	Historic	Preservation	-
city, town	.09 West Stat	e Street	Tre	nton state	NJ

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7. Description

Condition		Check one
<u>X</u> excellent	deteriorated	unaltered
<u>X</u> good	ruins	X altered
fair	unexposed	

Check one _X__ original site ____ moved date __

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The East Millstone Historic District is situated on the eastern bank(s) of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and the Millstone River. The town has a strong village character. The high density of houses, mature trees, fences and walks and a variety of outbuildings on the lots separate its character from its rural surroundings. There are 115 structures in the district, six of which are intrusions and most of which are residential. Most of the structures are two stories, wood frame residences (many with synthetic artificial siding) with open front porches and minimal setbacks. Although some vernacular farm structures are extant from the late 18th century, the majority of the town's buildings date from the 19th century when it served as a transportation center for the area. At least one high style example of Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, and Eastlake architecture exists, although the majority of the town's structures are vernacular adaptions of these styles. The construction of 20th century homes has been limited to a small area east of the district and inside the district only when replacements for houses burned or demolished. Fortunately, because of East Millstone's isolation from the larger urban centers, its recent economic decline and its limited building space within the district, the effects of suburban sprawl have been minimal.

The oldest structures in town are situated along Amwell Road, a 19th century route connecting Middlebush, to the east, with the town of Millstone across the Millstone River. By 1738 a bridge crossed the Millstone at Amwell Road! Two structures appear in East Millstone on Berthier's 1781 and 1782 maps of encampments at Millstone (known then as Somerset Courthouse). Both are north of Amwell Road. Hill's map of 1781 shows only one house in East Millstone, sout of Amwell Road in the approximate location of the two structures on Berthier's Map.

The Van Liew farmhouse (45.79.02), later adapted as an inn known as the Franklin House² may be one of the two houses extant in 1781-82. The Probasco farmhouse, probably built in the 1760's, was remodelled in the 1870's and demolished in the 1930's. Deed research has determined that portions of 45.78.06 were also extant in the late 18th century, although it has had many alterations and additions since that time.

The first building boom took place in East Millstone shortly after the Delaware and Raritan Canal was built through the town in 1834. Housing construction started slowly and was primarily situated around the canal boat basin (now filled in) at Market Street and Amwell Road. By 1850, there were approximately 20 houses here (according to Otley and Keily's Map) all clustered along Canal and Market Streets. Those extant are small vernacular structures, one brick, one stone, the others wood frame. Structures of this period had included a store, hotel, the Flax and Husk Factory, a lime kiln, J.H. Olcott's house, J. Smith's house and other residences. The 1850 map shows that Amwell Road, which previously ran north of Franklin Inn, was moved south of the building

Three churches, a nursery school, a lodge hall, a firehouse and rescue squad building, one factory complex, and four commercial buildings are included in the district. The commercial areas are along Market Street, the Canal and Amwell Road, as they had been historically. Several commercial buildings have been connected to residences and all of the several railroad related structures

Franklin Township

Somerset County, N.J.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory_<u>Nomination</u> Form

Page 1

7

(Description continued)

Continuation sheet

erected in the 1850's and 60's have been demolished. The other non-residence sites include the Laurie Rubber Factory on the canal at the south end of Market Street and a graveyard at the southeastern corner of the district.

Item number

The Federal and Greek Revival styles are best represented in East Millstone by two large churches. The clapboard Methodist Church on Elm Street (45.40.02, 1855) has a large triangular pedimented front with four Doric pilasters and a single central entrance with splayed surrounds. It is very similar in style to the First Presbyterian Church of Lambertville on North Union Street. The Baptist Church on Franklin Street (C.1855, 45.66.58), originally built by the Dutch Reformed Congregation, is more ornate. Its four pilasters and two Ionic columns <u>in antus</u> support a full-width pediment and form a recessed entry porch. Similar Greek Revival churches are the Dutch Reformed Church on Canal Road in Griggstown, C.1842, and the Harlingen Church, Hillsborough Township, c.1827. Many residences on Elm, Franklin, and Livingston Avenues are vernacular Federal and Greek Revival and date from the area's subdivision in the 1850's.

The coming of the Millstone and New Brunswick Railroad in 1855 left quite a mark on the landscape of East Millstone--its tracks cutting diagonally through town. Today, with the tracks removed, the right of way is a vacated open space. The railroad company also constructed a building on William Street and a passenges station and engine house on Railroad Avenue at the south side of the canal basin. South of the tracks at the canal were two hotels. One, noted as the Railroad Hotel in 1911 Sanborn Maps, faced onto Livingston Avenue which at that time extended to the canal.

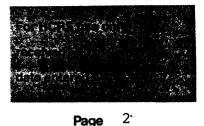
The prosperity brought by the railroad is reflected in the greater sophistication of district buildings constructed in the 1860's. Several Italianate houses were erected in East Millstone between 1860 and 1875. One is the A.T. Vroom house on Elm Street (45.40.01), c.1865, a brick, three-bay side-hall house. The wrap-around porch with arched braces, the bracketed cornice and the entrance and windows with the wide center mullions are typical features of the style. The H.L. Olcott house, 2358 Amwell Road (45.78.04), c.1860, is an excellent example of an Italian Villa. The three-bay, center hall house has more elaborate porch than the Vroom house. From 1859 to 1875 Olcott ran a distillery where the Laurie Rubber Company is now located (45.66.01).

Town buildings are abundant with Italianate and Queen Anne detailing. Though predominantly vernacular in form, many are embellished with Victorian ornament, bracketed cornices, window hoods, porch rails, brackets and posts. Several L-shaped houses, most of which are located on Franklin Street, were built around the 1860's. Only one structure in the district, a house at 46 Livingston Avenue (45.66.76) reflects the French Second Empire style. Currently the rectory for St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church has been greatly altered--only its original shape remains. FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service National Register of Historic Places

Inventory-Nomination Form E. Millstone H.D., Franklin

Township, Somerset County, NJ Item number 7



(Description continued)

From 1875 to 1900 few structures were built. Most were vernacular. The N. Wilson house, 13 Market Street (45.66.12), c.1888, however, is one example of High Victorian Eclecticism with its Eastlake porch and entrance and extremely large bracketed cornice. The house was built by Nathanial Wilson, a local entrepreneur who operated a hardware store across Market Street from the canal basin.

The commercial buildings in the district are on Market Street. Most appear to be 20th century, like 30 Market (45.66.09) which has a pressed-tin, dentilled cornice and parapet with swags. Like the adjacent 45.66.07, (c.1930) the building is brick with decorative brick at the corners. Two outbuildings associated with and opposite the Laurie Rubber Factory, 66.02 and 66.03, also have decorative corners and carriage door surrounded by glazed brick. The Laurie Rubber Factory (45.66.01) has been used for industrial purposes since 1849.

New construction ceased after the Depression and only resumed in the mid 1950's. The later houses consist largely of small "developer" houses, concentrated east of Welsh's Lane. These new buildings are predominantly one-story ranch or Cape Cod houses with deeper setbacks than earlier district houses. One land parcel between Livingston and Welsh's Streets was held in 1873 by Morren and Kerney. This parcel appears to have been held as one lot until it was quickly developed in the 1950's.

A large 1960's Colonial house is an intrusion within the district.

A wooded cemetery surrounded by a chain link fence forms the southeast corner of the district. Within the cemetery are not only the graves of prominent Millstone Valley founders and descendants, but of canal and rail workers from the mid-19th century.

Though the potential archaeological resources remain to be identified, the entire Millstone River Valley is rich in potential pre-historic archaeological resources.³

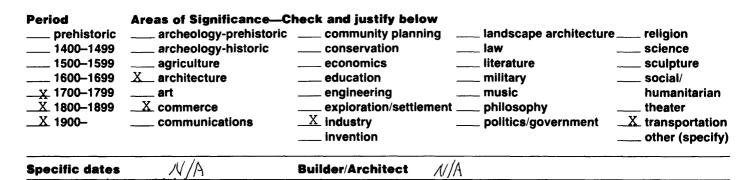
Parenthetical numbers throughout this nomination refer to building #'s on the enclosed H.D. Map and to individual survey form #'s as recorded in the NJHSI: D&R Canal 1979-1980, OHP, 109 State Street, Trenton, NJ.

¹Millstone National Register Historic District Nomination on file, NJ Office of Historic Preservation

²Menzies, Elizabeth G.C.: <u>Millstone Valley p.71</u>.

³Grossman, Joel W., <u>An Archaeological and Historical Survey of the Proposed</u> <u>Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor Complex, Forrestal Campus, Princeton University</u>, Plainsboro Township, New Jersey, August 1977, PP.12-30.

8. Significance



Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The East Millstone Historic District is comprised of 18th and 19th century structures which grew with the development and the intersection of three major transportation links. The district is adjacent to Amwell Road, an 18th century route connecting Somerset Courthouse (Millstone) and New Brunswick. This route was heavily travelled during the Revolutionary War and remains a major east-west county road. With the construction here of the Delaware and Raritan Canal in 1834 and the New Brunswick and Millstone Railroad in 1855, East Millstone became a dominant regional transportation center for the surrounding farms. Though only a shadow of its former bustling self, the district retains a strong village character with small well-maintained, vernacular structures densely site and visually differentiated from the surrounding open agrarian land.

The earliest settlers in the East Millstone area were Stoffel Probasco and Cornelius Van Liew, who came to the area in the mid-18th century. Their farms were divided by Amwell Road (State Route 514), an 18th century road which crossed the Millstone River in 1738. The Probasco farm and farmhouse were located on the north side of the road, northeast of and outside the proposed The house is shown on Erskine-Dewitt Rough Map #74-Feof 1779. district. The Van Liew farm lay south of Amwell Road and extended to Elm Street on the south. The original Van Liew farmhouse is extant (45.79.02) and is probably the oldest house in the district. It is believed to be one of the two structures shown on Berthier's maps (of 1781) across the "Mills" River from Somerset Courthouse on the north side of Amwell Road². Berthier refers to the building as Ponte Caffé on another map³. South of Elm Street was another farm later owned by Peter Wycoff.

In 1801 John Wycoff purchased the Probasco farm from Stoffel's grandson, Heinrich We learn from Wyckoff's will that he also purchased the Van Liew farm, for at his death he left the Probasco farm to his son John Van Cleef Wyckoff, and the Van Liew farm to his daughter, Mrs. L.T. Howell.

and the system of the

For almost a hundred years after it was first settled, the area along the east side of the Millstone River memained farmland with no commercial activity. The small town of Millstone just across the river provided all that was needed. The opening of the Delaware and Baritan Canal in 1834, however, brought prosperity to East Millstone. The Canal basin there allowed the import of coal and lime for fireplaces and industry, wood for sawmills and the lumberyard, and commercial goods for town, and the export of farm produce and locally manufactured products. 2.2

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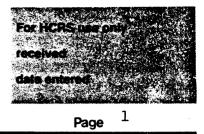
A loading basin (now filled) constructed at the Amwell Road crossing made East Millstone the commercial focus of the small town of Millstone and the surrounding area. It is not known if the basin was built by the canal company hoping to provide service to Millstone or by J.V.C. Wyckoff and his brother-in-law, L.T. Howell, who could spot a good investment when they saw one. In any case, some

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached cont	inuation she	et		
10. Geographic	al Data			
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Verbal boundary description an	d justification			
See attached conti			- A	
List all states and counties for state	code	county	nty boundaries	code
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11. Form Prepa	rod Ry	county	·····	code
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name/title David Gibson &	Steven Baue	r (Revisions	by the NJ	OPH Staff)
organization D & R Canal C	ommission	date	November	c 1, 1981
street & number 25 Calhoun	Street	teiep	ohone 609 ;	292 2101
tity or town Trenton		state	e NJ	
12. State Histor	ric Prese	rvation O	fficer C	ertification
The evaluated significance of this pr	operty within the sta	ite is:		
national	stateX	locai		
As the designated State Historic Pres 665), I hereby nominate this property according to the criteria and procedu	for inclusion in the	National Register an	d certify that it has the set of	as been evaluated
State Historic Preservation Officer si	ignature 🖌 🦯 🕧	ulun.	K Oli	rhe
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State Historic Preservation Officer si title For NPS use only I haraby cortify that this proper Automotive		Malional Replater tered in the	date	-he 02/03/83 3/11/10

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form East Millstone H.D.



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

(Significance continued)

of L.T. Howell's portion of the Van Liew farm was sold to the Canal Company about 1830 and Howell built a new house on Amwell Road (45.78.06). His old house, the Van Liew farmhouse (45.79.02), was sold and remodelled in 1836 to the Franklin Inn, which served canal boatmen and passengers travelling down the Canal. Otley's 1850 map clearly marks the building as a "Hotel"⁴.

Between 1834 and 1850, the town developed slowly, with only a handful of houses built. The Canal Company built a bridgetender's house (45.79.01) and a small station across Amwell Road, (this since has been moved to the west side of the bridgetender's house lot). The nucleus of a small commercial center had already started by 1834 when parts of the old Van Liew farm were subdivided into lots and Canal and Market Streets, were laid out. Another important addition was the flax and husk mill on Market Street (45.66.01), built in 1846 to prepare husks for mattresses.

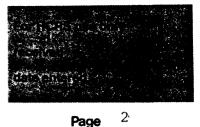
On the 1850 Otley Map of Somerset County the town's name was Johnsville, named after John Wyckoff. In 1855, however, the name was changed to East Millstone. This change was the result of the decision to build a railroad from New Brunswick to Flemington. The Millstone and New Brunswick Company was formed and track laid from New Brunswick to Johnsville. Abutments were constructed between the Canal and the Millstone River for a link with the Mercer-Somerset Railroad which was to run from Millstone to Flemington. Unfortunately, rail traffic between Johnsville and New Brunswick did not warrant the extension of the line at the time. Rather than change the name of the rail line to reflect the new terminus in Johnsville, they simply changed the name of the town. The termination of the tracks in East Millstone completely isolated Millstone from further 19th century industrial development.⁵ In 1872 rail lines were extended across the River but by the end of the 19th century the Canal was economically failing. The New Brunswick and Millstone Railroad was never completed from Millstone westward across New Jersey; the town's prosperity faded.

The railroad's arrival in East Millstone in 1855 sparked an economic boom and the town eclipsed Millstone as the dominant regional center. Between 1850 and 1860, the Peter Wycoff farm (south of the old Van Liew farm) was subdivided creating new building lots along the south side of Elm Street. William and Franklin Streets were also cut through and developed as evidenced by the many similar vernacular Queen Anne houses with Italianate detailing. (The majority of the houses are L-shaped with gable ends to the street, 2-½ stories with first level porches and decorative trim.) Four additional streets were also laid out and by 1860 there were over 30 new houses.

The flax and husk factory located on Market Street (45.66.01) was converted in 1858 to a distillery which burned in 1859. The Olcott Brothers quickly rebuilt and operated it as a winery. The name changed in 1872 to J.H. Olcott and Company and 1880 Fleischman and Company began operation in the factory, producing yeast as well as spirits. In 1912 a disastrous fire destroyed the complex of buildings The site, however, was quickly rebuilt by the Harmer Reclaiming Rubber Work.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

East Millstone H.D. Franklin Township Item number 8



(Significance continued)

Eventually the Laurie Rubber Company purchased the factory which they still operate today.

Prosperity and growth prompted local residents to build three distinct churches. The Methodist Episcopal Church on Elm Street (45.40.04) and the Dutch Reform Church on Franklin Street (45.66.58) were both built between 1855 and 1856 in the prevalent Greek Revival style. A church school for the Methodist Episcopal Church shown at the northwest corner of Elm and Williams Streets in 1873, is no longer extant. The Catholics had built their church in 1864 on Livingston Avenue (45.66.77) and had to enlarge the building around 1875 to meet the increased number of parishoners.

The final denomination to organize in town was the African Methodist Episcopal Church. They met first in 1902 in members' parlors and in the first floor of the old high school on Welsh's Lane (45.66.64). In 1954 they built their present church (45.66.69) outside the district boundaries.

In 1873 a private "high school" was erected on Henry Street (now Welsh's Lane) (45.66.64) to meet the educational needs of those who wished (or could afford) further schooling. The district school continued only until the eighth grade. In addition, there was a one room brick school house, c.1880, on Wortman Avenue (45.66.94) which was enlarged to two rooms around 1900 and presently serves as a nursery school.

Prosperity in East Millstone began to fade in the early years of the 20th century. Canal and railroad traffic was declining and the 1921 fire at Fleischman's Distillery added to the economic malaise. The Depression, the closing of the canal, and the abandonment of the railroad all came in quick succession. As this happened, the small businesses closed and the town became largely residential, relying on New Brunswick, Somerville, and Princeton for its needs and jobs. East Millstone remains a ghost of its former self when it was a vibrant commercial center for the surrounding area.

¹Menzies, p.229
²Rice and Brown, maps 68 and 138.
³Ibid, map 53.
⁴Otley, Map of Somerset County, 1850.
⁵Millstone National Register Historic District nomination.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

East Millstone H.D., Franklin Twp.-

Continuation sheet Somerset County, NJ Item number

East Millstone Historic District Bibliography - page 1

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FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form

Continuation sheet East Millstone H.D. Franklin Township Somerset County, NU

Item number

10



Page

Verbal Boundary Description

See enclosed map.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the East Millstone Historic District were drawn to include the most concentrated area of well-preserved, historically and architecturally significant structures and sites. The southern boundary includes the lot on which sits Peter Wycoff's well-preserved farmhouse. A portion of Wycoff's land was subdivided on the south side of Elm Street for residences in the 1850's. Although somewhat altered through the application of synthetic sidings, these houses have been included. Their construction resulted from the economic boom brought about when the New Brunswick Millstone Railroad came to East Millstone in 1855.

The eastern boundary encompasses a graveyard where early and prominent Millstone Valley families and canal and rail personnel are buried. Its wooded setting differentiates it and the homes on the southern district boundary from open farmland outside the district to the south. The eastern boundary jogs around several intrusions--small "developer" homes dating from the 1950's and one house (45.66.81) which dates from the 1870's but has been drastically altered. The eastern boundary does include one house (45.66.93) and a school (45.66.94) which contribute historically to the district and visually to the streetscape on Wortman Street.

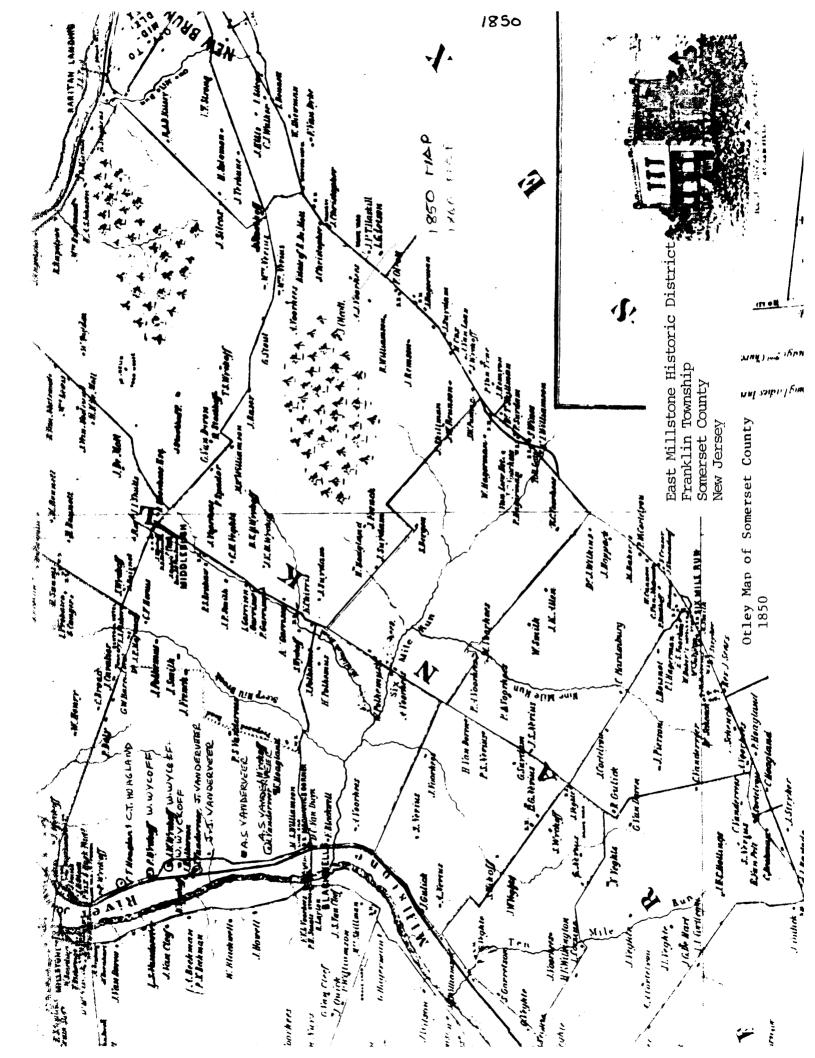
The northern boundary runs along the south side of historic Amwell Road, which is canopied by large shade trees. Houses on the south form a cohesive streetscape with consistent setbacks and spacing. West, down Amwell Road, the homes within the district contrast with the one-story ranch homes and tiny "developer" houses outside the district to the east. North of Amwell Road and south and east of the district, open farmland and woods reflect the original 18th century landscape. They are not connected, however, within the significance of this village district and are excluded.

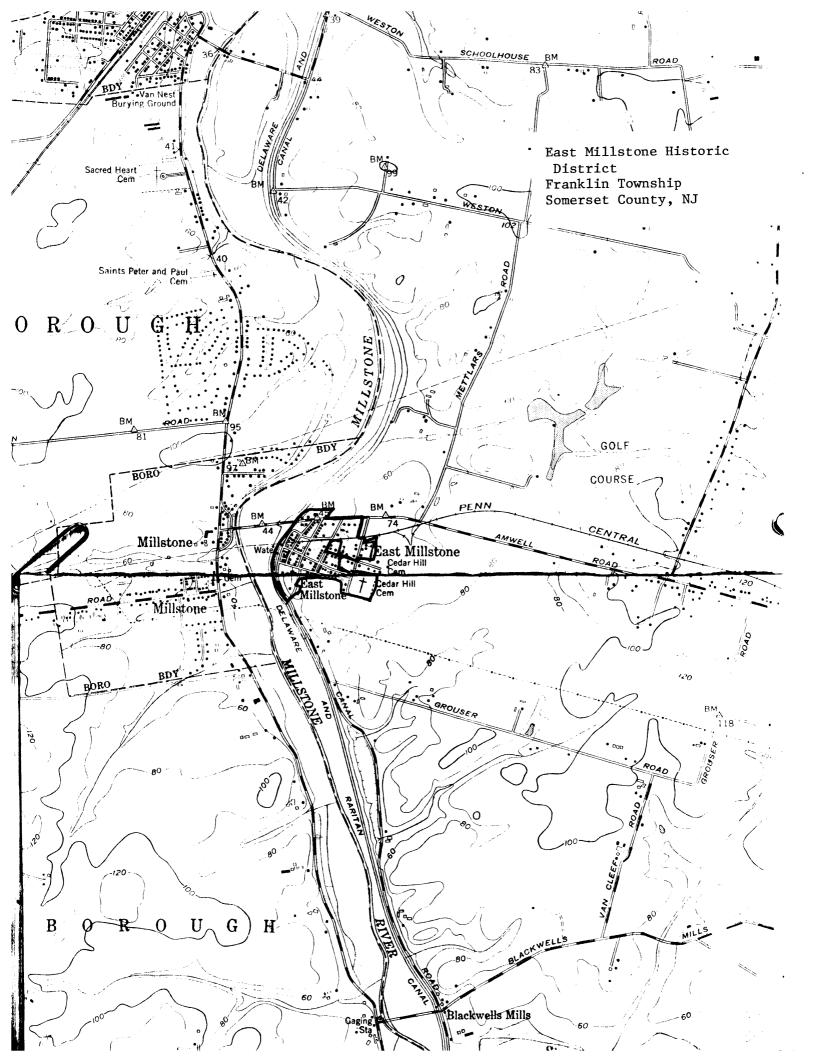
The Van Liew farmstead, later the Franklin House (an inn) for canal and rail workers and travelers at 45.79.02, Onka's Service Station, c.1920, (45.79.03) and the Canal's Bridgetender's House (45.79.01) are included within the district to the north of Amwell Road. They are each associated with the commerce and transportation significance of the district and its architectural integrity. A modern firehouse with no architectural significance (45.79.04) is outside the district.

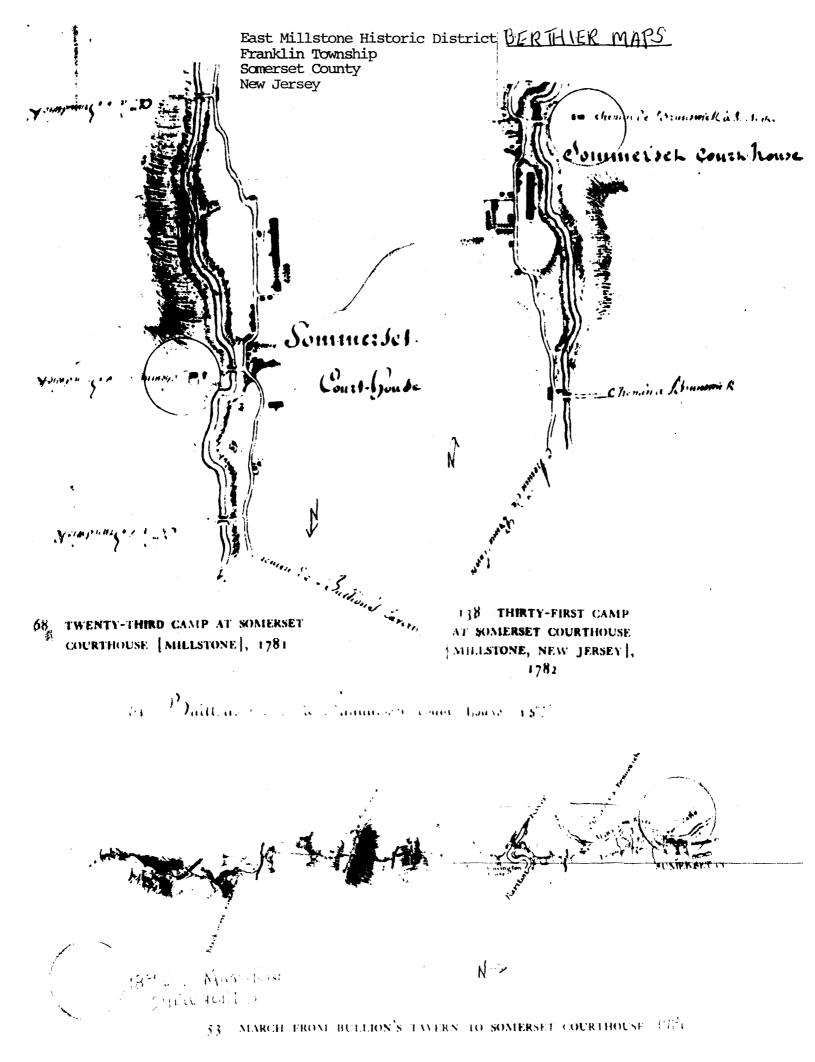
The western boundary of the district overlaps the extant Delaware and Raritan Canal National Register Historic District and the proposed boundary revisions for that district. The canal is included because of its impact on and historical significance to the town of East Millstone. Inclusion of the canal also assures inclusion of potential archeological sites along the eastern bank and the structural remains of the railroad trussle that carried the New BrunswickUnited States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory___Nomination FormContinuation sheetFranklin Township
Somerset County, NJItem number10Page 2

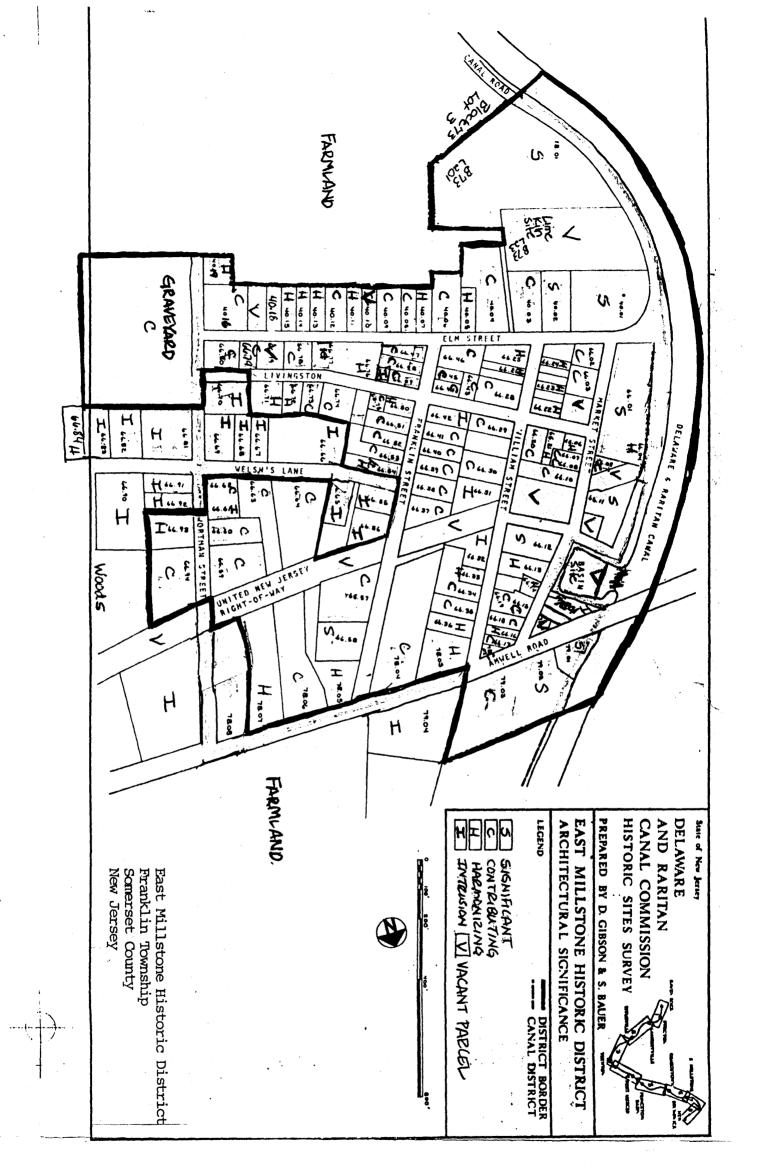
(Verbal Boundary Justification continued)

Millstone Railroad to Millstone in the 1870's. The bridge at Amwell Road is also included. Block and lot lines were used to delineate the southern, eastern and northern boundaries, while the western bank of the Delaware and Raritan Canal serves as the western boundary.









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