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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Potterstown
other names/site number Potterstown Rural Historic District

2. Location

street & number County Route 78, Potterstown & Hall's Mill Roads not for publication
city, town Readington & Clinton Townships vicinity
state New Jersey code 034 county Hunterdon code 019 zip code 08889/08801

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>38</u>	<u>10</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 4/10/92
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 7/2/92

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ Single family dwelling

Commerce/ General store

Education/ School

Agriculture/ Subsistence: agricultural field
see continuation sheet #6-1

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ Single family dwelling

Commerce/ Store

Ruin

Agriculture/ Subsistence: agricultural field

7. Description

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

COLONIAL/ Dutch Colonial

MID -19th CENTURY/ Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN/ Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone/ clapboard

roof synthetic

other slate

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Potterstown Rural Historic District in Readington Township, Hunterdon County, is composed of the small surviving village of Potterstown and the farmsteads and farmlands lying to its north and east that it has served for three centuries.

The village is tucked into the southwest corner of the District, lying on the northern side of Route 22, and spanning north-flowing Potterstown Road to include a few buildings in Clinton Township. The remainder of the District--some 450 acres evenly divided between cultivated fields and woodland--lies to the east of Potterstown Road and extends north to a major new development. Taylor's Mill Road encloses the District on its eastern edge, as far south as Hall's Mill Road, where the boundary line swings west taking in early farmsteads on its south side before rejoining Potterstown Road to include outlying village houses. Essentially, the District resembles a peninsula, a finger of land extending northward set apart topographically by the Cushetunk Mountain range just south and by streams north and east, and politically by ancient division lines. Highway building has always had its impact on the Potterstown area, first by relaying the main thoroughfare through the village three times over, and recently by the construction of the 200'-wide Interstate Route I-78 across the waist of the District. This highway, however, is depressed through this section, and visually, the historic landscape remains the same. There are 14 contributing frame buildings in the village, including former wheelwright and blacksmith shops, hotel, and store. Two houses possibly have some 18th-century fabric, one of which follows the Dutch vernacular plan (Site #1). The remainder date from the 1820s through the 1870s, and are expressions of I-style plan, ranging in bays from 2 to 7. The farmsteads offer a variety of styles. There are a number of buildings of masonry construction, including three houses that are embanked, one with intact kitchen and oven (Site #s 26, 29, 41). A stone-arched bridge, and the burnt-out 1828 stone schoolhouse, along with various outbuildings add to the collection of sites. Altogether the District includes 31 contributing buildings, 5 structures, and 9 sites, and 10 noncontributing resources.

The village is sited along old New Jersey Route 28, which had replaced the Easton Turnpike begun in 1806. It is now twenty feet below the newer U.S. Route 22, constructed this century as a four-lane highway that buried farmland directly associated with village houses.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Development

Period of Significance

c. 1750 - c. 1926

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Multiple/ unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Potterstown Historic District captures the rural landscape and conditions of life of 19th-century New Jersey in one relatively self-contained farm area in the northwest corner of Readington Township. Geographically and politically set apart by mountain, stream, and highway, the symbiotic relationship of village center to outlying farms existed from early 18th century and continued well into this century. The village never developed outside relationships, being a way station at best for the passer-through, and after the end of decades of tenancy, the farms merely changed hands without seriously multiplying in number, being held mainly by descendants of a few families. The village still displays the character of a century and a half ago, and the countryside round about appears unchanged, an aspect of fields fallow and in cultivation, woodlots and woodland, springs, ponds, and runs of water, with just a scattering of farmsteads over the several hundred acres. The District meets Criterion A under the category of Community Development and Criterion C under architecture. The District reflects in its earliest buildings both the influence of the incoming Dutch and the neighboring Germans who coalesced to create the community. The surviving village itself is 19th century, exhibiting architectural styles common in the region.

The origins of Potterstown are most unusual, and also significant to both the founding of the Lutheran Church in New Jersey and to black history in identifying the role of a free slave in this step.¹ Aray Van Guinee (from Dutch Guinea, Africa) became part of a Dutch family, it is surmised, in New York City in the first decade of the 18th century and was given his independence by them. Having been converted to Lutheranism while in New York,² he appears to have been enlisted in some sense to serve a missionary outreach after his departure to the Dutch settlement of Middlebush in Franklin Township, Somerset County.³ His house became the place where the first German Lutheran service in New Jersey took place.⁴ Among those present at this baptismal service was Baltus Pickel.⁵

See continuation sheet

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Potterstown Rural HD, Readington & Clinton
Townships, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

6. Function or Use (historic)
Agriculture/Subsistence: animal facility

Agricultural/Subsistence: storage

Current Functions
Agriculture/Subsistence: vacant or
 in storage use
Agricultural/Subsistence: vacant,
 not in use

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Perpendicular to old Route 28 and crossing the Turnpike Road, which survives as a fragment, is Potterstown Road. This road rolls gently upward in a northerly direction, crossing the township's northern boundary on the Rockaway Creek and eventually terminates in the village of Oldwick, Tewksbury Township, to which the Potterstown Lutheran Church removed c. 1750. This road runs along the historic boundary of the West Jersey Society's "Great Tract" of 92,500 acres surveyed in 1711. In a fashion, it was a barrier line for those who wanted to hold land in their own right. As the road flows northward, it becomes evident that the outlying district is agrarian and tied to the village historically, by the presence, for example, of two schoolhouse sites.

The main visual impression of the District to the north is rural, a continuing vista of open fields, some still being farmed, and woods of considerable age. The limited road network defines the district; one provides a direct route to the church in Oldwick, and the other provided a pathway to the first mill, built on the Rockaway. The feeling of an earlier era is conveyed also by these roads' narrow width; one is accommodated by a single-arched stone bridge that crosses the little run of spring-fed water called Cold Brook. Close to its banks the one-room schoolhouse named after the brook was built some 175 years ago.

The village cluster thins out along the northerly route of Potterstown Road in typical fashion, with most dwelling houses close to roadside, and in general, south oriented. As often found in villages, the majority of buildings date from early to late 19th century, reflecting population growth that occurred at that time and change in needs, with increase of services.

Opportunity to have a "house in the woods" on several acres in the countryside was discovered by ex-suburbanites in recent decades of this century. Tracts of land were purchased for houses along the Potterstown Road, up to Halls Mill Road intersection, and turning its corner, represent, in a sense, an ongoing extension of the village boundary, but are less visible being deeply set back on large acreage. Two new housing developments north of the district establish a clear boundary delineation.

Between Rockaway Road and Hall's Mill Road, most of the area's large farmsteads, as seen on 19th-century maps, are still to be found. Always few in number, they date back to settlement in the 18th century, in some cases as tenants of absentee land investors. The architecture of the District is entirely vernacular. It is typical of forms found in the broad environs of Central New Jersey. The earliest examples exhibit the 1-1/2 story cottage, two rooms deep, favored by the Dutch of Somerset County, numbers of whom

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settled in Readington Township. The immigrant Germans, who founded Potterstown as a Lutheran Church community c. 1730, arrived via Somerset County where they first resided for some twenty years. Site #1 is associated with the Wyckoff family, originally of Somerset, who became early land investors in the Potterstown area.

In choice of fabric, stone appears to have been as much in use as wood. The availability of stone in the nearby mountains may have entered into the choice, but it may also have come about through cultural influence of German settlers. There are three houses partly or entirely of masonry on farmsteads that could date from 1750s to 1810. All are associated with members of the Covenhoven family. Site #29 is on a farm traced to that family's ownership since c. 1750. The original first dwelling, which is of stone with embanked kitchen, is now incorporated into a house that has been greatly increased in size with frame additions. Site #26 is entirely of stone blocks, neatly coursed, with keystone lintels, under a hipped roof, which possibly was added later. An I-style house (Site #41) also semi-embanked, and oriented south, gable end to road, likewise is of masonry construction. The 1820s schoolhouse is of stone as well, but this seems to have been a relatively common choice for schools in the first quarter of the 19th century.

All of the village buildings are of I-form, many with additions. The most interesting of these, still having its 9/6 window sash, occupies "the store house lot" on the Clinton Township side of Potterstown Road, one elevation facing the former path of Route 28, with traces of its apple orchard at back facing the old Turnpike Road of 1807. To one side are the remains of a collapsed stone well. Unfortunately, this site (#16) is in deteriorated condition, following the death of its elderly occupant. Also on this side of the road is the hotel (#7), as identified on the 1860 map, an I-form with additions, with its large barn and wagon house at rear, facing the Turnpike Road. Still surviving with its mid-19th-century storefront is the second store building of the village (#5), to which has been added a recessed lateral addition. The blacksmith shop is combined with the house (#3), and the wheelwright shop, on a new site, is now used as an antiques shop. (#4) Village houses are clustered on small lots with very short setbacks. There are no sidewalks. Two houses face the unpaved, abandoned Turnpike Road, which looks more like a dirt driveway than a once important highway. The buildings are well-maintained. Vegetable and flower gardens are informally laid out around large old trees and a collection of barns, wagon houses, privies and well kerbs.

These houses all have gable roofs, interior end chimneys, and regularly spaced fenestration, but not always with a centered entrance. There is little

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of stylish embellishment, and Greek Revival entries and porticoes are in the main lacking. Porches, as such, are plain, shed-roofed, with square columns. Site #4 has flush siding on its ground story, which distinguishes it from others. A few of the earlier buildings have exposed chimney backs.

Victorian elements of style appear as lintel details on the hotel and at Site #12, where a shingled cross gable is featured on a house of I-form, to which an addition placed at back of another I-form extends sidewise with a two-story semi-hexagonal bay. After the opening of Hall's Mill Road in the 1830s, a new farmhouse was erected (Site #30), with some hint of Italianate style, the sole instance of the introduction of this style. The limited appearance of mid- to late 19th-century architectural styles undoubtedly relates to the slowdown of growth. White House, three miles removed, which was on the Central Railroad line, grew apace in the same period.

Barns mainly comprise the stock of outbuildings, the most interesting of which, with a forebay, on the older Covenhoven farm has since come down. Although the Covenhovens were Dutch, there was ample opportunity in this region to be exposed to German building practices. Extant barns tend to be small, some of English form, some embanked with ramp.

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An inventory of all buildings, structures, and sites within the nominated district has been prepared. Each is numbered. All have been categorized as contributing and non-contributing. Consecutive numbering is interrupted as the result of excluding numerous non-contributing properties and a new housing development from the district.

1. Block 4, Lot 16: Wyckoff House, early 19th century
Route 22
Contributing

A 2-room-deep form, 1-1/2 story, 3-bay frame building with a one-bay entrance porch. The westerly gable wall has an exposed chimney back. At rear is 1-1/2 story kitchen ell with fireplace. Windows have 9/6 sash.

Once located on the 250-acre farm of George Wyckoff, this house is on a ridge above the old Turnpike Road (1807). Facing south, this property has an excellent view of Pickel's Mountain, located in the Cushetunk Range.

A well house stands to east of kitchen ell. Contributing

2. Block 4, Lot 15: 3-bay one-story modern house, c. 1965
Route 22
Non-contributing
3. Block 4, Lot 14: blacksmith shop/house
Old Turnpike Road
Contributing

South-facing, this house, too, is located on the Old Turnpike Road. A 2-story, 3-bay I-style house, with internal end chimneys. East gable has an exposed chimney back of rubble stone. Window sash of 6/6.

4. Block 4, Lot 12: Wyckoff house # 2, early 19th century
Old Turnpike Road
Contributing

This is a 5-bay, 2-story frame I-style house with two internal end chimneys. Porch across facade. On first floor level, siding is of flush clapboards. Windows have 6/6 sash. A 1-story shed-roofed leanto is attached to east end. This house too is located on Old Turnpike Road and faces south to it.

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- 4.1 Barn, frame, 2-story height, to west of Site #4, is former Wheelwright Shop. It was moved to this location in the 1930s in a switch with the village store, a move of about 100 feet. Now used for antique shop. Contributing
5. Block 4, Lot 13: early 19th-century house
Old Turnpike Road
Contributing

One of only two houses in the District that do not face south. This house, too, is located on the "Turnpike Road." It is a frame, I-style house with 5 bays, two of which represent a later extension. Clapboard-sided, this house has external chimneys on south and west elevations. A shed-roofed porch on turned posts spreads before east two bays. End (west) bay provides second entry. Windows have 6/6 sash and blinds.

- 5.1 same block and lot:
Potterstown Store, mid-19th century
Contributing

Part of this property is the Potterstown Store. Now used as a furniture display room and upholstery shop, this building faces south on former Route 28. Gable end to the road, it is 2 stories, 3-bay, with center entrance flanked by over-sized windows to 6/6 sash. A porch across the front is shed-roofed, supported on simple square posts. Roof overhangs with gable returns, and eaves are bracketed.

The switch of sites for wheelwright shop and store referred to above was probably instigated by the opening of the new road, Route 28, south of the turnpike, in order to take advantage of passing trade. By this time, wheelwright shops were becoming obsolete as the traveling public was automobile- and train-oriented. Even earlier in the history of Potterstown, in the 18th century, the land between these two buildings had purportedly been used as a burial ground, doubtless associated with the Lutheran Church, since reports have been made of tombstones there. There are no grave markers now.

In Clinton Township

6. Block 4.02, Lot 1; Store House Lot, early 19th century
Old Turnpike Road
Contributing

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Frame I-style house, 5 bays plus 2 bays for additional entrances on ground story, 3 bays and 2 bays thus grouped on upper story. Lower story sash is 9/6, upper is 6/6. Corner pilasters and plain fascia board. Foundation is of rubble stone. Brick nogging fills interstices. Simple shed-roofed porch and one-bay extension on north facade. In dilapidated condition now, following death of elderly owner.

House is now about 20' below road grade of Route 22. It is also below abandoned Route 28. Its north elevation looks across remains of an orchard to the former Turnpike Road. The land on which this house stands is referred to in ancient deeds as the "Store House Lot" and was part of the John Stevens holdings in the Society's Great Tract.

7. Block 4.03, Lot 21: mid-19th century, hotel
Old Turnpike Road
Contributing

Now a two-family house, this Early Victorian building appears on 1851 county map as the hotel. The main block of 5 bays faces south upon the Old Turnpike Road, with an ell, possibly older, at rear, facing east to Potterstown Road. Cross-gable, outlined with sawtooth trim, is centered on principal facade; window lintels are triangular in shape. Roof is of slate; eaves are extended with returns. A masonry porch was thrown across the front in 1924. The ell is 2 stories, with two rooms in single file. This house has a "gray lady" ghost, according to legend.

Outbuildings: Frame, ramped barn banked on the south side. Has three track doors. This is behind house and fronts on turnpike route. There is a 2-story addition under a shed roof. Raised on a stone rubble foundation. Contributing

To west of barn is wagon house, which has been re-sided but still reflects its function. Contributing

8. Block 4.02, Lot 2: first half 19th century house
Old Turnpike Road
Contributing

Built in two sections, this house faces east on the end of the Turnpike Road, at place it swings south. Main block is an I-style house of five bays with entrance centered, under a 2-pane transom. Architrave outlined as panels. Windows have 6/6 sash. Foundation is of rubble stone. Believed to be older unit, the section at north gable has former internal end chimney that is

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now in interior position against main house. This unit is 2 bays wide, 2 stories, a one-over-one plan. Roof is flat.

Outbuildings: 20th century barn, gable roof. Non-contributing

Remainder of sites are in Readington Township

9. Block 4, Lot 11: early 19th century house
Potterstown Road
Contributing

A small I-style house that has been doubled in size by an addition. Oriented to the south, this 2-story, 2-bay house has gable end to road. Chimneys are in internal end position. Windows now have 1/1 sash. Located on a hill, this house has views to south and east, overlooking the Cushetunk Hills. Near porch stands an ancient maple tree.

Outbuildings: 20th-century garage, gable-roofed, one bay. Non-contributing

10. Block 4, Lot 10: early 19th century house
Potterstown Road
Contributing

I-style house, gable end to road, south-facing, has internal end chimneys. Three bays wide. Shed-roofed leanto on east gable has been incorporated into living space of main block. Window sash are 6/6 and 2/2.

11. Block 4, Lot 9; 1970's ranch house
Potterstown Road
Non-contributing

12. Block 4, Lot 4: late 19th century house
Potterstown Road
Contributing

Seemingly last addition to Potterstown as building lots were claimed climbing the hill on Potterstown Road, this is the sole example of a house of Victorian styling. Consists of two blocks of single depth, one angled behind the other in order to extend beyond it at one end, with addition behind this running perpendicular to it. Main facade composed of 2 bays, one the entry with 3-pane transom above. Cross-gable on roof, porch across front with turned posts and balusters and spindle frieze. Interior chimney with corbeled cap. Roof of slate; has vintage lightning rods. Eaves are returned.

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Clapboarded; cross-gable has square butt and fishtail shingles arranged geometrically. Windows have 2/2 sash and molded cornices; shutters are in place. Attic window filled with tracery. First addition has semi-hexagonal bay of two stories at south gable end, and windows have 1/1 sash. Gable peak is shingled. The rear extension is modern, 3 bays across east end; slate pent roof placed over entry. Windows have 1/1 sash.

Outbuildings: early 20th century dairy barn, gambrel-roofed. Lower story is cinderblock while upper story has board/batten siding. Roof is of corrugated metal. Milkroom projects from south wall. Contributing

Partial remains of another barn remain, being the banked stone foundation. It is now used as part of a pole barn. Non-contributing

Formerly a working dairy, farmstead was part of a larger tract which fanned out to the east. Farmhouse and outbuildings stand today on 3 acres. As with most farmhouses, huge trees surround and shade the house. Fields surrounding the barns are mowed.

13. Block 4, Lot 7; first half, 19th century house
Potterstown Road
Contributing

A 4-bay, frame I-style house, clapboarded, with a Greek Revival entry. Sidelights are narrow. Across the front is a shed-roofed enclosed porch, which rests on square posts supported by spindle-filled brackets. The shuttered windows have 2/2 sash. Two gable-end internal chimneys. Gable end is parallel to Potterstown Road. House is oriented south. An addition, at back, c. 1970, is clapboarded. It is 2 stories, 3 bays wide, with roof overhang.

Outbuildings: Small 2-story barn, vertical siding, track doors, 2 bays, corrugated metal roof. Open leanto on right gable wall. Along with the barns, farmyard has modern chicken house (not counted), remnants of an old orchard and fenced gardens. Contributing

14. Block 4, Lot 6: vacant land (See attached sheet for #015-17)
15. Block 4, Lot 5: modern 3-bay, 1 story house, c. 1960
Potterstown Road
Non-contributing

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16. Block 4, Lot 4.01: open farmland
Potterstown Road and Hall's Mill Road
21. Block 4, Lots 3 and 113: vacant land
Hall's Mill Road
26. Block 4, lot 102: Garret Covenhoven House, late 18th century
Hall's Mill Road
Contributing

Set back from Hall's Mill Road, this coursed stone-rubble house is unusual for this area in that it has a low-pitched hipped roof. Banked to the south, the lower cellar level has kitchen fireplace fitted with crane. Since Hall's Mill Road was cut through after this farm and its neighboring farm of a family member were built, it explains why the houses face away from it to the south, as was usual in their era of construction.

A 2-1/2 story house, the half story represented by small rectangular windows cut into a wood fascia, with heavily quined corners and keystones in lintels above openings. This 4-bay house is two rooms deep. Entry has been given Greek Revival styling. Second story windows are now casement style. Window sash on ground story are 1/1. Hipped roof is constructed of hewn timbers with king post.

Outbuildings: deep gable-fronted spring house. Contributing

Garage seemingly made of re-used beams and erected on embanked level of a barn, has a hipped roof. Non-contributing

3-story, frame banked barn, rubble-stone foundation, located about 100 feet south of house. Contributing

A large pond adds to the historical feel of farmstead complex.

27. Block 4, Lot 101.01: PSE&G powerline easement
Hall's Mill Road
28. Block 4, Lot 103: early 20th-century house
Hall's Mill Road
Contributing

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Built about 75 years ago, this frame house is most compatible with the District's architectural styles. It is built over a surviving early stone rubble foundation (possibly of a barn). 1-1/2 stories tall, it is 3 bays, with gable roof. Windows are 6/6 sash on ground story; 3/3 above. It was built on house tract, Site #26 above (then separated out) for a mother-in-law cottage.

29. Block 4, Lot 101: Roelifson/Covenhoven House, 18th century; 19th century
Hall's Mill Road
Contributing

Perhaps one of the most interesting houses in Potterstown, it incorporates original dwelling and additions of two periods, bringing it to its present substantial size. It has embanked stone section (earliest) with cooking fireplace and interior beehive oven, a ground story of coursed stone rubble with corner quoins, and upper levels of frame, shingled. A verandah wraps around the main facade, with a shed roof supported by Doric columns. The embanked level is the only cellar for the entire enlarged structure. Above this were originally two rooms seemingly, now combined. First extension was built on sawn wood sills with used beams. It is over a crawl space and presents clear evidence of being added on. This brought the new building to 2-story height, the lower story being continued in stone, with all windows given keystoned lintels. This addition may have taken place as late as 1839, when Hall's Mill Road was opened. The orientation of the house was then changed from south to north. The next changes came with an enlargement at the east gable end, a cross gable given to attic, and the verandah. A cornice has been continued across the west gable wall as a pent roof. Attached to this same wall is a 1-story shed-roofed unit that serves as today's kitchen.

Property deed for this house dates back to 1750, when it was acquired by Abraham Van Horn, grandfather of Cornelius Roelifson, from James Logan of Philadelphia. In 1816, Roelifson sold "the message, tract of land and premises" to Garret Covenhoven.

Outbuildings: To south and east of house, facing south. These include a stone spring house with 1882 datestone
Contributing

A barn with forebay and stone supports has been taken down and replaced with new barn on the remaining foundation.
Non-contributing

A large farm pond, perhaps used for ice, lies between house and barn.

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30. Block 2.01, Lot 9; mid-19th century house
Hall's Mill Road
Contributing

2-story frame house, cubical in form, embanked at back. Has 4-bay facade with shed-roofed porch on square columns on concrete pedestals across front. Clapboard skin, with cornerboards. On upper story, centered, are paired round-headed windows under heavily molded undulating cornice. Flanking windows are square-headed with segmental cornices. Sash is 2/2. Two entries on ground floor, each with 4-panel door. Outside vestibule has been added in front, which has fish-scale shingles and sawtooth trim.

Outbuildings: barn to front, west, of dwelling, near road, with gable end to it. Two stories, novelty siding. In deteriorated condition. Contributing

Large cowbarn, quonset type, with milkhouse on south side, and silo attached. First quarter, 20th century. Contributing

Small outbuilding at side of house, gable-fronted, 1-1/2 stories, clapboard with slate roof. Gable peak shingled, exposed rafter tails, sawtooth trim. Rests on boulder stacks. Contributing

The farm property associated with this dwelling house surrounds it for some distance and also lies across the road.

31. Block 101, Lots 9.01, 10, and 11: open land and cornfields
Hall's Mill Road

32. Block 2 Lot 7: Cold Brook School House ruin, 1828
Potterstown Road
Contributing

In 1828 this stone one-room school house replaced an earlier school, said to have stood nearby. Named for the Cold Brook which meanders about 100' away from its door, this 3-bay-deep school, gable-fronted, for many years served as a private home until a fire destroyed the interior in the 1970s. Plans are now in process to restore it.

41. Block 2, Lot 13: David G. Covenhoven House, early 19th century
Taylor's Mill Road
Contributing

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I-style house of stone masonry, plastered, with two end chimneys. The cooking fireplace containing bake oven and crane is on ground floor in the one major room at this level. Additions have brought this house into today's need for more space and comforts. These are sympathetically done and not noticeable.

Addition #1: plastered cinderblock construction, for dining room and utility room at one side.

Addition #2: plastered cinderblock construction, for three rooms built into the hill at back.

Outbuildings: clapboarded frame garage, with living quarters above under gable roof. Non-contributing

42. Stone-arched bridge over the Cold Brook
Potterstown Road
Contributing

Coursed stone construction. Such bridges were built in Hunterdon County during the 1840s and 1850s. They may have been built earlier, too, as in neighboring Somerset County some date to early 19th century, with the two earliest, formerly in this county, at Princeton and Kingston, dated to last decade of 18th century.

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Though little is yet known of an early German Palatine population in this area being settled at this time by Lowlanders, it appears that a small congregation was formed "at the Millstone" river, according to the description in the records. A flow of Germans into Somerset County was occurring following the arrival c. 1710 of Palatines from England to New York, and the Lutheran minister of New York formed at least two congregations on a circuit. The groups associated with Aray Van Guinee moved on to the particular corner of land against Readington Township's (then part of Amwell Township) western boundary to become Potterstown, where they established themselves as a Lutheran congregation, built a church, and laid out a burial ground.⁶ Van Guinee gave the land for the meeting house and Baltus Pickel was responsible for its building.⁷ As time went on there were, for various reasons, divisions within the church.⁸ They remained active at this site, putting down roots; however, the pressures of the times in the buildup of new immigrants brought about the relocating of the church, first to "Leslysland" (White House), not at that time a village, and next to "New Germantown," Oldwick today. Van Guinee, as devoted church leader, leased or gave to the congregation a 50-acre lot. He continued to live on his 139-acre farm up to his death. Toward century-end, his children and grandchildren moved from Potterstown to a farm near the village of Readington, where they joined the Dutch Reformed Church.

At first look, the choice of site itself seems curious. It would appear that it was a push west to unclaimed land as far as was feasible, both for price and perhaps to keep together as a community. Eastern Readington (Amwell) was receiving pioneer settlers making their way westward from Somerset County a little after 1715, some departing from settlements at the Raritan River confluence, others following in part the Indian trail along the South Branch of this river. There may also have been a trail west from the present village of North Branch, on which a road was later laid (approximating today's Highways 28/22), which would have led directly to the site chosen. Potterstown lies at the division line between townships today, this line reflecting the original boundary line between great landholdings dating back to initial investors in West New Jersey Province. To the west of this line lay the West Jersey Society's "Great Tract" of thousands of acres, purchased in 1711. To the east lay another large tract given to James Logan, a wealthy Philadelphia merchant, major political figure in Pennsylvania and sometime secretary to William Penn. "The Society's Line," as it came to be called, was an effective barrier for those pushing westward for farmsteads, as purchase or lease of small tracts of land was not encouraged, whereas lands could be obtained in Logan's holding. To this day, the "Society's Line" is clearly seen as the boundary line it became when Readington Township was erected at the early date of 1730. Logan's tract amounted to 3275 acres and took in all of the Potterstown area of Readington Township. As an absentee owner, he

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leased and sold lands, always extracting quit rents at the rate of "Three Pistoles per year" per 100 acres.⁹

About 1725, land was taken up at Potterstown. Van Guinee had a 139-acre farm, apparently at the future village site. Baltus Pickel's 1000-acre farm extended southward, leading to the naming of the mountain after him. His stone vernacular house of 1-1/2 stories stood until early this century.¹⁰ Some farms reached eastward to what later became White House.¹¹ Names of those early associated with this settlement were German: Hendershot, Roelifson, Reiter, Appelman, as examples.

In 1731, a church building for the congregation called the "Racheway" (Rockaway), was dedicated on Sept. 11, on an acre of land provided by Van Guinee¹² and the building paid for by Pickel. Associated with it was a burial ground said to have been in existence until late in the 19th century in the heart of the village.¹³ No trace of the church edifice survives. It has been thought that its site lies buried under one of the later highways laid through the area.

Of the scattered Lutheran congregations serving Palatines, called in broad terms "the Raritans," Potterstown appears to have taken the lead, which was recognized by the patriarch of German pastors in America, the Rev. Henry M. Muhlenburg of Philadelphia. In 1748, he summoned four congregations together to discuss unifying their efforts in one central location. The outcome was agreement to erect a commodious building at New Germantown (Oldwick), the Zion Church which still stands.¹⁴ At this time, Van Guinee gave or leased a 50-acre lot to the church. Records of this church during its founding period indicate how very German was this membership, but after this unification it included settlers who traveled from Pluckemin, Long Valley, and other locations. After various problems with pastors, Muhlenberg himself decided to take over the ministry (1756-60; also 1767-75, with his sons in actual residence). Baltus Pickel, of Potterstown, was one of Zion Church's greatest supporters, willing it a legacy of 1000 pounds, English currency. He is buried within the church structure. Van Guinee's grave site is unknown, but may have been in the now vanished cemetery.

By the time--mid-century--that the major institution of the community, the church, moved up the road a couple of miles across the Rockaway into Tewksbury Township, Potterstown had become a known hamlet on an established major crossroads from the Delaware to Raritan Landing near New Brunswick. On the Clinton Township side of the Society's Line, there was what was known as the "Potterstown 50-acre town lot," owned in the 1750s by James Alexander (who had bought into the Great Tract) and the Hon. John Stevens; in the late 1770s, it

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was then being offered for sale by William Alexander, James' son.¹⁵ The 1754 Alexander Maps of the Great Tract refer to Potterstown by name as well.¹⁶ By 1761, the name Potterstown was used to describe the location of a road: "...the county road, leading from Potterstown to Landing." Further evidence of its familiarity to travelers is found in newspaper advertisements: In 1754, "Matthew Wright, a traveling peddler, was robbed 2 miles from Potterstown...on the road that leads from Messers Allen and Turners iron works."¹⁷ On another occasion (1756) there was advertised for sale a "good house and lot in Potterstown...about one half (of its 4 rooms) well adapted for tavern or merchant."¹⁸ Its advantage was that it "stands upon a very public road leading to and from the several forges and furnaces in Hunterdon and Morris, to New Brunswick and the Landing." There was such a population at that time that a subscription to the "New Jersey Post" was offered by resident Andreas Aghmuck.¹⁹

During the Revolutionary period, Potterstown was shown on more than one military map. One drafted by Robert Erskine shows the hamlet in detail with six buildings, one labeled the Starr Tavern, another the store house lot. As a core for the countryside, this is a cluster of typical size for the time. A further picture of this "corner" comes from the rueful fact that William Alexander, Lord Stirling, went bankrupt, and was forced to sell most of his real estate. The event was held at "John Wyckoff's Tavern, at Potterstown."²⁰ Five very fine well-improved farms near Potterstown were listed in occupancy of individuals of German and English names. Two, one of 420 acres, another of 183, adjacent, lay along "a great publick road." These were still being advertised for sale in 1782. A later tavern keeper holding the vendue had the English name of William Davison. The Dutch name Wyckoff reflects the presence of Dutchmen in this vicinity as well, this family in particular having become large landholders, with farms under lease at the edge of the village. One early Wyckoff house (Site #1) survives.

While Potterstown rose as a community center because of its 1731 meeting house, typically the area was laid out in farms round about it, those of Pickel and Van Guinee having been already identified. Many others were obtained under lease from absentee owners, such as Lord Stirling, but the greater extent of the farm district bounded by the Rockaway remained in the hands of James Logan and heirs for much of the century. The small embanked stone portion of the Roelifson/Covenhoven house (#29) may date back to a mid-century leasehold.

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Townships, Hunterdon County, New Jersey19th-Century Potterstown, an Evolving Self-contained Neighborhood

The age of the turnpike left an impress on the village core, though this was more a continuation of the services it was accustomed to offer passers-through than a challenge to growth. With the approval of the New Jersey (Easton) Turnpike in 1806 and its construction thereafter, running through Potterstown near the earlier "great road" of the advertisements, new buildings did appear but not in great numbers, some replacing the original structures. The difference between this small village and others that rose in the countryside in great numbers during the period 1820-1870, is the very small scale of growth, for which there appears no present explanation except for competition from other nearby population concentrations to east and west on the same turnpike.

By 1850, it could be said that no substantial growth had taken place. The tavern had been replaced with a hotel (#7), and another store (#5) had been added. The village, however, had begun to spread out along the road northerly in typical growth pattern, with a number of I-form houses, facing south, on small tracts, with gable end to road (#s 8,9,10,12,13). As for services, the village had a blacksmith and a wheelwright. Potterstown survived with such limited services available to travelers.²⁵ In turn, the community benefited from turnpike traffic. Farmers were able to purchase goods formerly made at home from city merchants who could ship to them. The spinning wheels of colonial days were being packed away in favor of milled cloth.²⁶ The artisans could fix farm machinery and have it back in use in a short time, a necessity in farm areas. Food for travelers could be provided to the tavern (hotel) on short notice by the surrounding farms. Each entity depended on the other for survival. Reportedly, there was a school established at an early time,²⁷ but the first which can be confirmed is the Cold Brook School, dated 1828, whose stone walls still stand.²⁸ This one-roomer served as weekday school as well as Sunday School. Each fall "protracted" prayer meetings were held with ministers and lay people officiating. Continued as a Sunday School long after the opening of the White Pidgeon School²⁹ a short distance away near the village, it finally closed its doors in 1920. After becoming a private residence, it was gutted by fire in the 1970s.

During the first half of the 19th century, the limited road system was developed. It is clear, if not documented, that Potterstown Road ran along the "Society's Line" to the Rockaway and beyond to Oldwick, where the Lutheran Church had been relocated in 1750. A driftway--which still exists in part--across the 1750s Eicke farm from this road to the 1760s Taylor gristmill became a right-of-way, until Rockaway Road was opened as late as 1848. The route to the mill was indeed limited by this one path until Taylor's Mill Road

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was opened in 1847, paralleling Potterstown Road. This road provided, furthermore, a connection with another emerging community, White House, which eventually would be responsible in part for Potterstown's failure to grow.³⁰ Hall's Mill Road (a 20th century name) describes the opening of another mill to east of the District. This road, which crossed the District at about mid-point, was opened in 1839 and served the early farms of the Covenhovens (Site #s 26, 29). The number of farms was limited, hardly more than the preceding century. Maps of the third quarter of the 19th century indicate no more than a dozen at best, with more than one farm under the same surname.

If there can be a reason cited additionally for the failure of Potterstown to follow a typical 19th-century growth, it is the construction of the Central Railroad through this area in the 1840s. A railroad station was established at White House, located two miles southeast on the same turnpike, with a history dating back to the 18th century as well. There was also a station and depot established three miles west at Lebanon. For the Potterstown farmer, this was close enough for him to ship his perishable crops to the greater markets of Newark and New York.³¹

Outbuildings of this period, however, are mainly barns, but the Dutch barracks and Dutch barns that once must have stood on this landscape are gone. Most barns are embanked, with two stories above, framed out. The most interesting barn on the Roelifson-Covenhoven farm, possibly of German influence, has been taken down. Stone spring houses, of unknown date, survive on several farms. At least one dairy barn and silo document the last stages of acting farm life this century.

Other traces of habitation over two and a half centuries are reflected in the huge hardwood trees. Maples, walnut, hickory, beech, and oak stand as sentinels in front of houses along lanes. Old barbed wire is firmly imbedded in those that served as hedgerow and property line markers. Aged apple and pear trees remind of the prosperous orchards of yesteryear.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE VILLAGE

The buildings that would have related to the founding period of Potterstown and its early success as stopping point on a major road are unfortunately but not unexpectedly gone. These include the church and cemetery, tavern, and store, along with the typical few residences grouped nearby. These might possibly have illustrated a German influence, since their builders had been born in the Palatinate. Real estate advertisements for the Potterstown vicinity mention both stone buildings and log houses. As it is, the village, scarcely larger in size, is composed of replacement buildings of

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a century later. These serve to illustrate the pervasive stylistic influences of central New Jersey, chiefly the I-style, the single-depth two-story unit of any number of rooms, perhaps originating as one over one, but again perhaps not, but quite likely to have been extended at one end with an additional bay or two. Number of rooms speaks to the age, family size, and wealth of the owner/occupant, a mix of these considerations expected to be found in a village. Even the third-quarter hotel is of this plan, with rear wing, perhaps an older section. From the earliest to latest dwelling in the core and straggling along the Potterstown Road up the hillslope, all have bought this plan, even to the final addition, a house of Victorian stylistic references in multiple fabric, bay windows, irregular lines, and decorative porch (#12). These are all sided with clapboard. Only one has 9/6 sash; this house, situated on the "store house lot," facing an early highway, may be the earliest at the crossroads (#6). Decorative detail seems almost lacking, though this house has corner pilasters. Both the blacksmith shop (#3) and the corner store (#5.1) are attached to other buildings. The former appears as an add-on to an I-house, but given at some time a perky cross-gable to draw attention to itself. The general store fits the category of architectural type for country stores of the region: a gable-fronted building with center recessed entrance flanked by windows and spanned with a porch. It has been modified over time and not quite so rich now in attributes, but it is still recognizable for its function and does indeed still fill a commercial purpose for the business in the adjoining unit. What is perhaps most striking because it is unique is the preservation of the 19th-century village street, with buildings relating to it, which gives the viewer a sense of the narrowness of the "highway" and spatial relationships, side by side and opposite each other, the mix of buildings, almost an intimacy with the intermingling of artisan shops, store, and outbuildings in a small area. The old road suddenly ends in a crisp swing south, with a final more substantial village house (#8) facing on its turn. All these village houses, apart from having been enlarged in most cases, have appendages of every kind in form of porches, sheds, leantos, and the like tacked on to any or all of the elevations, which far from detracting, witness to the kind of "improvements" people made a century ago.

There is one exception to the village cluster. It is the first house along the present Route 22, just before the remnant of the old road is encountered. This dwelling (#1) is identified as a Wyckoff house and dates to an earlier period of time when the Wyckoff family were large landholders at Potterstown, with land under lease. This is a 1-1/2 story, deep frame structure, three bays wide with center entrance, and end internal chimneys, with exposed base on one wall. If built by a lessee, it need not reflect the Dutch vernacular traditions of the property owner, but it is not particularly expressive of any one cultural style. There were on the large farms

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surrounding the village center tenants of all national backgrounds--Dutch, English, and German. This house is best categorized as a hybrid of late 18th-century construction, still carrying forward many of the traditions of 18th-century settlers in height, depth, chimney placement, and fabric, although in the last instance had it been of an earlier date it might well have been of masonry. The latter material, however, seems to have an association with German settlers; and wood frame with Dutch.

AGRICULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE ON THE FARMSTEAD

A description of farms in Hunterdon County toward the end of the 18th century, once they had been established, was given by John Rutherford. His account of 1786 indicates the growing of corn, oats, flax, and buckwheat, winter wheat and grasses. Besides arable land, each farm had an orchard, natural meadow ground and one quarter of the property set aside with timber land for fencing, buildings, utensils, and firewood. He noted but a small number of cattle, but he estimated from 20 to 40 sheep (perhaps too many), 3 to 10 cows besides young stock, and 3 to 8 horses, but not many oxen. There were also great numbers of hogs kept for the winter meat supply.³² It may be presumed that the Potterstown farmers whose homesteads are herein described once fit this picture.

Farms #26 and #29 were Covenhoven holdings.³⁴ One of the earliest Dutch families in America, Covenhoven is today Conover. Conovers occupied and farmed this land from 1807 until 1959 when it was sold out of the family. Land on which this house sits was originally acquired in two tracts. In December, 1807, 40-3/4 acres and 32 perches were sold to Garret Covenhoven by Cornelius Ruliffson (Roeliffson).³⁵ On 1 June 1816, Ruliffson again sold to Garret Covenhoven, this time 15-7/100 acres including "message and tract of land and premises . . ." being "part of a plantation in occupation of Cornelius Ruliffson." Ruliffson's grandfather, Laurens Ruliffson, migrated west with the "Society's Line."³⁶ Roeliffson had leased from Abraham Van Horn. Van Horn's daughter Margaret married Laurens' son.³⁷ In 1807, 1817, and 1819, Cornelius Ruliffson sold several tracts of this land including 56-1/2 acres to Garret Covenhoven and 36-9/10 to David Covenhoven.³⁸ One hundred acres he gave to his daughter Lydia, who married the miller John Hall, and whose mill was built on Covenhoven land. This house (#29), older of the two, is of coarsely dressed native stone and wood shingles. An imposing structure of 12 rooms, it clearly started as a smaller banked house with cellar kitchen and two rooms above. Enlarged greatly c. 1840, when a cellarless addition was completed, this house became a three-generation homestead. In 1875 John R. Conover sold to his son Garret Conover, the dwelling house and 126 acres, reserving to himself for life "2 rooms below the

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stairs in the dwelling house. Joint use of the parlor and the hall . . . and two rooms on the north side of the house." Also reserved to John R. Conover was "stable room for one horse in the barn . . . hay and pasture for 2 cows and one horse, also wood for 1 fire. . . joint use of the cellar and milk house . . . and 1/4 of the garden."³⁹ Again altered in 1915-20, when it was materially changed and added to, at that time a workman found an old floor board marked "Covenhoven."

Adjoining this farm on the west is another of the same family name (#26). This dwelling is singular in its architectural style for this outlying area of no pretensions, unless one chooses to attribute to this old distinguished Dutch family in America just such a motive. It has a classical stance, almost a cube in configuration, of coursed large stones with quoins at corners, keystoned lintels on all facades, and a somewhat flattened hipped roof. Inserted in a wood fascia on both front and rear elevations are equidistantly spaced small windows. Erected before the public road was opened, it faces south away from it. A former gabled portico has been removed from the entrance, the first bay left of three. It looks upon a handsome large three-story embanked barn of stone and frame construction that faces to east. Other outbuildings for this farm include a banked garage, spring house and pond surrounded by pastured open and wooded fields.

Adjoining the Garret Covenhoven property to the north is the 36-9/100-acre "farm and message" of David G. Covenhoven,⁴⁰ sold to him in 1817 by Cornelius and Mary Ruliffson for \$974.43. This stone house possibly originated as a one-over-one plan, banked to the south. The massive kitchen fireplace with crane still in place, and well-worn hearth stones are the main feature of the ground floor room. It marks the early appearance of the I-form in this countryside, while Dutch and German commingled traditions were still being followed. Two 20th-century additions undertaken with praiseworthy consideration for the character of the house have made this a spacious country home. A stone spring house and a clapboard barn complete the complex. After the death of David G. Conover in 1840⁴¹ it was found that the next owner would also be subject to the "ground rent" of "3 pistoles per 100 acres" to be paid to the heirs and assigns of James Logan per the original leases.⁴²

About 3/4 mile west on Hall's Mill Road is the only Italianate style farmhouse in the District (#30). Surrounded by cornfields this almost cubular two-story house exhibits some motifs of this style in window treatment, with paired round-headed openings centered on the upper story under a single undulating cornice and segmental heads over flanking windows. Built c. 1850, this farmer's residence seems to be the first in Potterstown to depart from customary traditional building practices by the introduction of a new stylish

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note. It might be observed that the greater attention to stylistic features was found among the possibly well-to-do owners of large farm tracts. Although it is a clapboard house, its walls are filled with the native rubble stone, the insulation of yesteryear in this stony area. Because there are no longer dairy cows on this property, the large cow barn with its milk house and silo, as well as wagon house, are falling into disrepair.

These few extant farm complexes now serve to document the settlement and development of this isolated corner of Readington Township. Stone foundations of houses and barns dot the district. Standing in the middle of the field (Block 2 Lot 7) is the stone spring house of mid-19th century Ramsey farm, its drains long clogged with mud, the troughs constantly filled with water. Everywhere huge trees abound. One cannot help but notice the enormous size of these hardwoods. Maples, walnut, hickory, beech, and oak stand as sentinels in front of houses and long lanes. Old barbed wire is firmly embedded in those that served as hedge row and property line markers. Ancient apple and pear trees remind one of the prosperous orchards of yesterday.

These farms remained productive well into this century, although economics dictated changes in crops and livestock from time to time. Peaches were a big cash crop from 1870 through the 1920s. These rolling hills provided just the right soils and air drainage for excellent peaches. Auctioned off at the New Germantown (Oldwick) Store for transport to the city, the railroad got them to market quickly.⁴³ Peaches were grown by many Potterstown farmers.⁴⁴ Peach growing began to decline as a cash crop around 1900 when other regions provided competition. Eventually the trees were completely destroyed by the San Jose scale which swept the county, and today we see no sign of the peach orchards that flourished on the Potterstown hills. In some cases apple orchards were planted over the peach stumps,⁴⁵ and they produced excellent apples well into this century.⁴⁶

By 1870 beef cattle became less profitable and Potterstown farmers like most of their Hunterdon counterparts, switched to raising dairy cattle plus all the grain necessary for feed. In 1914, there were 2900 farms in Hunterdon County, of which 70 per cent were in family ownership. At that time the average farm size was 85 acres. Farming was on the decline, however, because of competition from Western farms. Personal wealth declined, more so in Hunterdon than in neighboring Somerset County, being at \$5200 per farm in the former. At that time, nonetheless, grain crops were still the major product, followed by hay and forage, then dairy products, and finally poultry and eggs. The viewpoint of the publishers of the Farm and Business Directory for these two counties that year remained that these farms were prospering. This

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seems to be confirmed by the business directory, which contains advertisements for plumbers, paperhangers, and pianos, for example.

During the early 20th century, neighborhood creameries made their appearance, and Potterstown was no exception.⁴⁷ The rolling hills provided good soils and climate for successful growing of oats, wheat, corn and fine hays such as alfalfa and timothy.⁴⁸ The flood plains of both Cold Brook and Rockaway Creek provided excellent meadows for grazing cows as well as the constant clean water supply so necessary for milk production.⁴⁹ Herds were comprised mainly of Holsteins (for amount of production) with a few Guernseys, Brown Swiss, and Jersey (for cream content). In 1927 the Liechti Brothers built their creamery (now gone) along Hall's Mill Road. Their motto "Pure Milk" can still be seen on the milk bottles salvaged today from farm "bottle dumps." Set amongst the large dairy farms that dominated the rolling landscape, the creamery processed milk from their own 170-cow herd.⁵⁰ During the 1920s to the 1940s, Liechti Brothers' dairy delivered milk on routes to White House, Clinton, Centerville, Three Bridges, Oldwick, Somerville, Raritan and North Branch and as far away as Linden and Elizabeth. By the 1950s they delivered 100 cases of milk on a daily basis to Raritan and Somerville.⁵¹ This dairy was located just outside the District. In the 1950s, the milk routes were sold to Durling Farms, still in business, and the creamery closed.

The Liechti Brothers' history illustrates the rise and decline of the dairy business, which at first prospered in central New Jersey counties. During the 1960s, however, new government regulations had their impact. One demanded that bulk milk tanks be used for milk storage. Economic factors associated with that regulation as well as the advanced years of the farmers and the state of farm supports added to the dilemma. Dairy herds were sold. Fields were returned to crops or were returned to nature in the form of woods.

Today Potterstown farms continue in farm use. In 266 years they have come full cycle. Absentee land speculators were the first owners. Intensive agriculture in all its forms held sway for the next 250-plus years; now we have once again, absentee owners.⁵²

Since farming on the former scale of 50 or 100 years ago will never return to the area, the farmsteads of Potterstown will not resume their robust life. They are at present in occupancy and such farming activity that will take place will be concerned with crops for which there is a current market. As they yet appear, they preserve the layout of building complexes established between 1750-1850 for farms ranging between 100 and 400 acres. The open landscape associated with such occupation, with planting fields once separated by fences or hedgerows, with pastures and woodlots, is still there--an

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unchanged rural vista. This somewhat isolated corner of Readington Township, pushed back by Highway 22 and now bisected by Highway 78, has by and large escaped the developer's land grab to date, and zoning, too, may have played a role. The number of surviving outbuildings of various functions is limited, but the District is but a microcosm of farming in Readington Township in particular, and of Hunterdon County as a whole.

Readington Township has sponsored this nomination and has included Potterstown District in its newly revised "Historic Element" of the Master Plan.

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23. Office of the Hunterdon County Clerk, Affidavits, Mundert Farley vs. John Taylor, Esq., Ephraim Bush #52, May 1783. John Hoffman, #903; Dorothy Boss, #903, Joseph Insler, #903, Hunterdon Pleas, October Term, 1783.
24. Henry Race, The Jerseyman, p. 35.
25. Atlas of Hunterdon County, 1873.
26. Hubert Schmidt, Rural Hunterdon.
27. Snell, op. cit., p. 501.
28. Freeman Leigh, Outlines of the History of Potterstown, p. 14.
29. Interviews with Esther Lance Rodgers of Oldwick in 1984 and 1985.
30. Hunterdon County Road Returns, Book 3, p. 208; also listed under #38-7-2.
31. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 8.
32. John Rutherford, "Notes on the State of New Jersey," Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society, 2nd Series, I.
33. Hunterdon County Deed Book, 15:339; 15:339, "...Andrew Craig of Burlington died Seized of 10 L 10s annual rent...."
34. Ibid., 26:121;, 25:140.

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Townships, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

35. Ibid., 42:6.
36. Wittwer, op. cit., p. 8.
37. Will of Abraham Van Horn, of White House, New Jersey. Copy is in possession of Stephanie Stevens, Readington Township.
38. Hunterdon County Deed Books, 11:214; 23:212; 27:315; 43:523.
39. Leigh, op. cit., p. 5.
40. Hunterdon County Deed Book 43:523.
41. Hunterdon County Wills, Book 7:290.
42. Hunterdon County Deed Book 86:241.
43. Interview with Ruth Voorhees, 1979.
44. Ibid., also interview with Esther Lance Rodgers, Oldwick, 1985.
45. Ibid., Rodgers, 1986.
46. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 8.
47. Ibid.
48. See soils maps, Office of Planning Board, Readington Township.
49. Interview, Rodgers, 1986.
50. Interviews in 1986 with Rodgers; W. Lincoln Armagast, Oldwick; Joseph Wade, Readington; Robert Hendershot, Lebanon; Dorothy Radomski, White House Station.
51. Interview, Rodgers, 1986.
52. Readington Township Assessor's Office.

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Interviews

Esther Lance Rodgers
Ruth Voorhees
W. Lincoln Armagast
Joseph Wade
Robert Hendershot
Dorothy Radomski

New Jersey State Library Archives

1. Will of Abraham Van Horn of White House, New Jersey, 1759
2. Map of the New Jersey Turnpike - 1807
3. Auditor's Accounts - Revolutionary War, pg. 181

II. BOOKS

1. Hunterdon County Master Plan - Sites of Historic Interest. Flemington, New Jersey, 1979.
2. Lee, Francis B., New Jersey as a Colony and as a State. New York, 1903.
3. Leigh, Freeman, Outlines of The History of Potterstown. 1922
4. Mott, George S., The First Century of Hunterdon. Flemington, New Jersey.
5. Newspaper Extracts, Vol. III pp. 415, 416. New Jersey Archives. 1st Series.
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6. Race, Henry M.D., The Jerseyman. Flemington, New Jersey, 1892
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8. Snell, James P., History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. Philadelphia, Everts & Peck, 1881.

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MAPS AND ATLASES

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- Beers, S.N. and Lake, D.J. - Map of The Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- CK Stone and A. Pomeroy, 1860, publishers, Cornell, Samuel C. Map of Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Philadelphia: S.C. Cornell and Lloyd Vandervere, 1851.
- Erskine, Robert, Revolutionary Period maps, 1778-79, showing Potterstown. Originals in the New York Historical Society.
- Map of Northern New Jersey, 1775, by John P. Snyder
- John Stevens' Papers, "Town Lots" (Potterstown) 1775, in Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society

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Townships, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Commencing in Clinton Township, the District boundary begins at the north-east corner of Lot 21, Block 4.03 and runs westerly across the rear line of said Lot 21, thence northerly around the perimeter of Lot 22, Bl. 4.03. Thence it runs South to the Old Route 28, thence easterly encompassing Lots 1 and 2 of Bl. 4.02 in Clinton Township. Thence proceeds east on old Route 28 into Readington Township up to the intersection of Route 22. Continues easterly along the front (south) lines of lots 12, 14, 15 and 16 in Bl. 4, thence following the east line of lot 16 to the rear line of said lot 16 and running west on it and west on rear line of Lot 15, to the rear lines of Lots 10 and 9. Thence northerly along these lot lines and the westerly line of Lot 8, Bl. 4. Thence by a line of convenience across Lot 4.01, Block 4 in a northeasterly direction to the rear line of Lot 102, Bl. 4 and along it. Thence North along the side line of Lot 102 to the rear line of Lots 101.01 and 101, Block 4 and along them. Thence along the east side line of Lot 101 to its intersection with Hall's Mill Road. Thence easterly along Hall's Mill Road to its intersection with Taylor's Mill Road. Thence north on Taylor's Mill Road crossing Route 78. Westerly along the south boundary line of Lot 13, Block 2. Thence northwesterly along the northern property line of Block 2, Lot 7 to the rear property line of Block 2, Lot 4. Proceed southwesterly, then northwesterly along the rear and side lines of Block 2, Lot 4 to the Readington Township side of Potterstown Road. Proceed southwesterly to Block 2, Lot 5. Thence proceed southeasterly along the northern boundary of Block 2, Lot 5, thence southwesterly along the rear property lines of Block 2, Lots 5, 6 and 6.01. Proceed northwesterly along the southern property line of Block 2, Lot 6.01 to the Readington Township side of Potterstown Road. Thence proceed southwesterly along the said line of Potterstown Road to the northwestern corner of Block 4, Lot 1. Proceed southeasterly along the front (northern) property lines of Block 4, Lots 1, 111, 110, 109, 108, 106.01, and 107. Thence proceed southwesterly along the side line of Lot 107; northwesterly along the rear property lines of Lots 107, 106.01, 108, 109 and 110 in Block 4; southwesterly along the rear (eastern) property line of Block 4, Lot 3.01; thence northwesterly along the side (southern) line of Lot 3.01 to the Readington Township side of Potterstown Road. Thence proceed southwesterly along the said line of Potterstown Road to the point of beginning.

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Townships, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Potterstown Rural Historic District were drawn to include all the historic buildings within the village complex itself and the outlying agrarian area with which it was directly related.

Geographical features, political boundaries, and topography all contributed to the development of the district. The western boundary is a political one, based on a 1711 survey which shaped the settlement pattern. In more recent times, the Clinton Township properties to the west along Potterstown Road have been more heavily developed than their Readington Township counterparts across the road.

The southern boundary, including the village of Potterstown, provides a strong sense of community or hamlet. Route 22 is built some 20 feet above the surface of the old road bases of Route 28 and Potterstown Road, thereby effectively cutting off and preserving the village. Hall's Mill Road is incorporated into the district in order to include three significant farmsteads along its path. Nine modern properties along Hall's Mill Road have been excluded.

The eastern boundary is based on current block and lot lines that allow for inclusion of open space critical to the rural character of the district. Likewise, property (Block 2, Lot 7) immediately north of the recessed Interstate Highway Route 78 is included in the district to provide the rural vista historically associated with the village of Potterstown. The ruins of the 1828 Cold Brook School House (#32), the early-nineteenth century David G. Covenhoven House (#41) and a mid-nineteenth century stone arch bridge (#42) are contributing resources located on this land. Four modern properties located along this section of Potterstown Road have been excluded. Also excluded are number of farm properties that have been recently developed for residential purposes.

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Potterstown Rural HD, Readington & Clinton
Townships, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

UTM REFERENCES

A - 18/ 518220/ 4500700
B - 18/ 519800/ 4499960
C - 18/ 519560/ 4499380
D - 18/ 518480/ 4499000
E - 18/ 517460/ 4499080
F - 18/ 517220/ 4498680
G - 18/ 516780/ 4498880
H - 18/ 516900/ 4499080
I - 18/ 517020/ 4499020

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Potterstown Rural HD, Readington & Clinton
Townships, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

The following information is the same for all of the photographs submitted with the nomination:

Potterstown Rural Historic District
Readington & Clinton Townships
Hunterdon County, New Jersey
Photographer: Stephanie Stevens
Date of Photographs: February 1990
Negative Repository: Readington Township Archives
105 County Route 523
White House Station, NJ 08889

- #1 - Wyckoff House (Site #1), facing northwest
- #2 - Modern house (Site #2), facing north
- #3 - Looking westward on old turnpike road, (site #s 2, 3, 4, 5)
- #4 - Second Wyckoff House in village (Site #4), facing northeasterly
- #4.1 - Former wheelwright shop (Site #4.1), facing north
- #5 - Store (Site #5.1), on corner, Potterstown Road to the left, facing eastward along old Route 28
- #5.1 - Facing southeastward
- #6 - Site #6 on 18th century "store house lot", looking northward
- #7 - The former hotel (Site #7), looking northwestward
- #8 - Looking westward, end of old highway leads to door of Site #8
- #9 - Site #9, facing south
- #10 - Site #10, facing northeasterly on Potterstown Road
- #11 - Intrusion (Site #11), facing east on Potterstown Road
- #12 - Site #12, facing northerly on Potterstown Road
- #13 - Site #13, facing to east on Potterstown Road
- #13.1 - Barn at Site #13
- #14 - Open space along Potterstown Road, facing east

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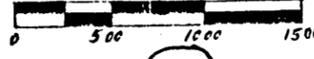
Potterstown Rural HD, Readington & Clinton
Townships, Hunterdon County, NJ

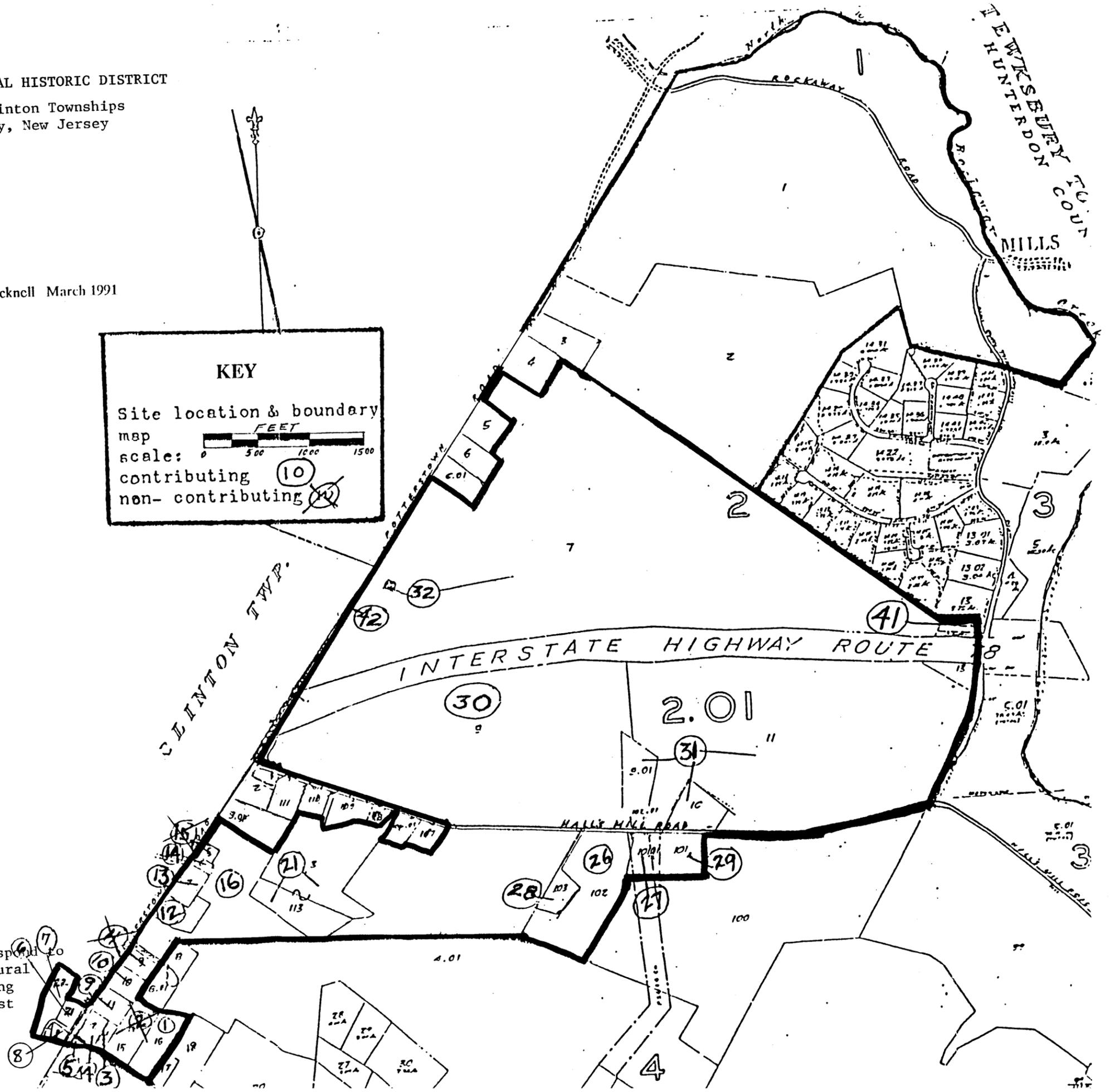
- #15 - Corn field along Potterstown Road, facing east
- #16 - Garrett Covenhoven House (Site # 26), facing south
- #16.1- Barn at Site #26, facing south
- #17 - Open land along Hall's Mill Road, facing east
- #18 - Site #28, facing south
- #19 - Roelifson/Covenhoven House (Site #29), Hall's Mill Road,
facing north
- #20 - Site #30, Hall's Mill Road, facing north
- #20.1- Barn at dairy farm (Site #30), facing west
- #20.2- Dairy barn (Site #30), facing northeast
- #21 - Cold Brook School House (Site #32), built 1828, facing
northeastwardly, to be restored
- #22 - David Covenhoven House (Site #41), Taylor's Mill Road,
facing west
- #22.1- Barn for Site #41, facing southwesterly
- #23 - Stone arch bridge (Site #42), over Cold Brook, facing west

POTTERSTOWN RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
 Readington & Clinton Townships
 Hunterdon County, New Jersey

S. Stevens/U. Brecknell March 1991

KEY

Site location & boundary
 msp
 scale:  FEET
 contributing (10)
 non-contributing (12)



NOTE: The site numbers on this map correspond to the inventory of the Potterstown Rural HD nomination. Consecutive numbering has been interrupted to exclude most modern development.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000806 Date Listed: 7/2/92

Potterstown Rural Historic District
Property Name:

Hunterdon NJ
County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
for _____
Signature of the Keeper

9/22/92
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

The resource count for this nomination had to be clarified. The NJ SHPO has provided the following information: 26 contributing buildings, 4 contributing structures (#1 - well house, #26 - spring house, #29 - spring house, #42 - bridge), 8 contributing sites (#s 12, 13, 14, 16, 26, 29, 31, 32), 9 non-contributing buildings, and 1 non-contributing structure (#27 - powerline easement). The form is officially amended to include this clarified resource count.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic/ Single family dwelling
 Commerce/ General store
 Education/ School
 Agriculture/ Subsistence: agricultural field
 see continuation sheet #6-1

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic/ Single family dwelling
 Commerce/ Store
 Ruin
 Agriculture/ Subsistence: agricultural field

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL/ Dutch Colonial
 MID -19th CENTURY/ Greek Revival
 LATE VICTORIAN/ Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
 walls stone/ clapboard
 roof synthetic
 other slate

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Potterstown Rural Historic District in Readington Township, Hunterdon County, is composed of the small surviving village of Potterstown and the farmsteads and farmlands lying to its north and east that it has served for three centuries.

The village is tucked into the southwest corner of the District, lying on the northern side of Route 22, and spanning north-flowing Potterstown Road to include a few buildings in Clinton Township. The remainder of the District--some 450 acres evenly divided between cultivated fields and woodland--lies to the east of Potterstown Road and extends north to a major new development. Taylor's Mill Road encloses the District on its eastern edge, as far south as Hall's Mill Road, where the boundary line swings west taking in early farmsteads on its south side before rejoining Potterstown Road to include outlying village houses. Essentially, the District resembles a peninsula, a finger of land extending northward set apart topographically by the Cushetunk Mountain range just south and by streams north and east, and politically by ancient division lines. Highway building has always had its impact on the Potterstown area, first by relaying the main thoroughfare through the village three times over, and recently by the construction of the 200'-wide Interstate Route I-78 across the waist of the District. This highway, however, is depressed through this section, and visually, the historic landscape remains the same. There are 14 contributing frame buildings in the village, including former wheelwright and blacksmith shops, hotel, and store. Two houses possibly have some 18th-century fabric, one of which follows the Dutch vernacular plan (Site #1). The remainder date from the 1820s through the 1870s, and are expressions of I-style plan, ranging in bays from 2 to 7. The farmsteads offer a variety of styles. There are a number of buildings of masonry construction, including three houses that are embanked, one with intact kitchen and oven (Site #s 26, 29, 41). A stone-arched bridge, and the burnt-out 1828 stone schoolhouse, along with various outbuildings add to the collection of sites. Altogether, the District includes 26 contributing buildings, 4 contributing structures, 8 contributing sites, and 9 non-contributing buildings and 1 non-contributing structure.

The village is sited along old New Jersey Route 28, which had replaced the Easton Turnpike begun in 1806. It is now twenty feet below the newer U.S. Route 22, constructed this century as a four-lane highway that buried farmland directly associated with village houses.

See continuation sheet