Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Trenton

FOR NPS USE ONLY RECEIVED 8 0 AUG 1979 8 1979

New Jersey

INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM NOV DATE ENTERED SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS 1 NAME HISTORIC Van Syckel Corner District AND/OR COMMON **2 LOCATION** STREET & NUMBER Van Syckels Corner Road and Norton Road S. NOT FOR PUBLICATION Clinton Vicinity CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Union-Township VICINITY OF STATE CODE COUNTY CODE Hunterdon 019 34 New Jersev CLASSIFICATION CATEGORY OWNERSHIP **STATUS** PRESENT USE <u>X</u>DISTRICT. X_OCCUPIEDPUBLIC X_AGRICULTURE __MUSEUM __BUILDING(S) **XPRIVATE** __UNOCCUPIED __COMMERCIAL __PARK _STRUCTURE _вотнWORK IN PROGRESS ___EDUCATIONAL * PRIVATE RESIDENCE __SITE **PUBLIC ACQUISITION ACCESSIBLE** _ENTERTAINMENT X.RELIGIOUS __OBJECT _IN PROCESS X_YES: RESTRICTED __GOVERNMENT _SCIENTIFIC _INDUSTRIAL ___BEING CONSIDERED ___YES: UNRESTRICTED _TRANSPORTATION __NO __MILITARY -- __OTHER: 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY NAME Multiple Ownership STREET & NUMBER CITY, TOWN STATE 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Records Office, Hunterdon County Courthouse STREET & NUMBER <u>Main Street</u> CITY, TOWN STATE Fleminaton New Jersey **6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS** TITLE New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory __FEDERAL XSTATE __COUNTY __LOCAL 1962,1975 **DEPOSITORY FOR** SURVEY RECORDS Office of Historic Preservation, Dept. of Env. Protection CITY, TOWN STATE



CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

_EXCELLENT

__FAIR

__DETERIORATED
__RUINS
__UNEXPOSED

__UNALTERED

X_ORIGINAL SITE
__MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Less than a mile north of Interstate Route I-78 and immediately west of Spruce Run Reservoir, the legal protection of this agrarian region is essential to the perpetuation of the 19th century character. There are some 30 major structures in the district of which only three are modern intrusions. The modern buildings are all small residences.

The landscape of the Van Syckel District is very gently rolling farmland interrupted occasionally by small wooded areas.

Following is a comprehensive inventory of the buildings in the district. The numbers correspond to mapping codes established for the application:

- Reynolds/Van Syckle Tavern. 1763. This 2 1/2 story 1. fieldstone building is one of the best preserved 18th century buildings in Hunterdon County. The tavern has a five bay, center entrance front facade onto which has been added an additional two bays in frame. windows of the stone portion are 9/6 sash as is the clapboard appendage. Interestingly, while the entire building was erected at once, a number of the windows have segmental brick arches while others are flat. roof is gable with a boxed cornice. At the peak on the west gable end is a broad brick chimney. There is a narrower chimney outside the east gable end of the stone unit within the frame portion. There is a smaller narrow two story, three bay wing on the east gable end. The windows on the first level of this unit are 9/6 sash and 6/6 sash at the second level. small wing has a small one story leanto addition at the rear.
- 2. J. Van Syckel Farm. 1829. This house is a 2 1/2 story T-form frame and clapboard dwelling. The front facade has a 5 bay, center hall. The windows are all 6/6 sash. The doorway has sidelights and rectangular fanlight framed by pilasters. The house has pilasters at the corners. The roof is gable, covered with trim, has a box cornice and return with a simple entablature. There are brick chimneys at the peak of each gable end. The gable end facades have exposed stone firebacks, are two bays wide, and have 4/2 sash windows in the attic.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Commerce

Van Syckel's Tavern stands at the crossroads of Van Syckels and Norton Roads, important 18th century roads leading to Philadelphia and Trenton. The tavern, built by David Reynolds in 1763, has "D.R. 1763" roughly chisled in the southwest cornerstone. Known as Reynolds Tavern then, it was one of the most substantial structures in the county and certainly a landmark building.

The proprietor, David Reynolds, caused quite a scandal during the Revolutionary period. While other citizens of the British Crown were battling British domination, Reynolds was engaged in an active counterfeiting ring. With the assistance of others he flooded northern New Jersey with bogus paper currency. It is quite possible that some of the counterfeiting activity was conducted in the tavern itself. Eventually, the counterfeiting ring was broken and Reynolds and his partners were arrested and convicted. Of the four implicated in the crime only Reynolds was hanged.

The tavern played an active part in the political affairs of the surrounding area in the 18th century. Of particular note was a town meeting held at the request of the "Sons of Liberty". Three delegates were chosen at this meeting to go to Ringoes Tavern and meet with other delegates from southern Hunterdon County to adopt measures opposing the Stamp Act.

David Reynolds was succeeded by his son, Robert, as tavern keeper in 1767. The tavern was next kept by John Dawson. For a short time his widow ran the tavern. Daniel Bushkirk took over and ran the tavern until 1795 when it was purchased, along with a number of surrounding farms, by Aaron Van Syckel.

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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#2

DESCRIPTION

One window, on the south end, has its original batten board shutters intact. Out of the rear of the house is a small two story frame kitchen wing. Original to the main facade, this unit has 6/6 sash windows. A one story appendage is off the kitchen wing. The front porch covers the center three bays of the house and fits well, but was added later in the 19th century.

This porch has sawn octagonal posts, decorative bracketing forming archways, patterned railing and below level lattice work.

In the rear of the property, or perhaps part of a later addition to the adjacent tavern, is a small one story brick hip-roofed square outbuilding. Atop the peak is a louvered cupola. This building, its usage uncertain, is probably contemporary with the farmstead. Alongside is a 19th century small vertical board sanitary facility.

Immediately north of the farmhouse is an early 19th century English form 3 bay barn. This barn has hewn beams and full length lean-to sheds on both linear facades. The main barn has a center threshing bin flanked by animal pens and a loft above. Another 19th century English form barn is situated at a right angle with the first. Both barns and the leanto sheds have vertical board siding.

The house A. Van Syckel, Jr. House and Barn. ca.1810. 3. of this farmstead is a 2 1/2 story frame and clapboard dwelling with a 2 story frame kitchen wing. facade, although long, has only two bays on the second There is a fulllevel, and three bays on the first. length front porch. The barn is an excellent example of an English form barn which still has its horizontal clapboarding. The barn has a center sliding door which opens onto a threshing area. Flanking the threshing bin are animal pens and a hay loft above. A later barn, but also 19th century, has been added at a right angle with the earlier barn creating an L-form. This barn has vertical board siding.

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DESCRIPTION

- 4. Van Syckel Tenant House. First quarter 19th century. This 2 1/2 story frame and clapboard dwelling has a four bay front with an offset center entrance. The roof is gable with a box cornice. The chimneys are at the peaks on the gable end. Each gable end facade has a one story modern addition.
- 5. Van Syckel Farm. Mid-19th century. The farmhouse is a 2 1/2 story clapboard T-form dwelling with a four bay front. The windows are 6/6 sash. At the roof peak, which is gable, is a brick chimney on each gable end. To the rear is a 2 story clapboard kitchen wing. While the form of this structure is similar to the Van Syckel House next to the tavern, its plainness and severity mandates a later date of construction. Numerous functioning outbuildings include a barn, small sheds, and storage buildings. Most every outbuilding appears over 50 years old.

There are foundations visable - the shell of a spring house, a smoke house, and the ruins of a tenant house.

6. John Van Syckel Farm. First quarter 19th century. The house is a 2 1/2 story frame and clapboard dwelling with a 3 bay, center entrance front. The roof is gable with a box cornice. The windows are 9/6 sash. On the gable end is a 2 story two bay kitchen wing. The windows of this section are 6/6 sash. All shutters are batten board. Off the gable end of the kitchen wing is a screened-in porch.

There are single chimneys on each end of the main unit and on the open gable end of the kitchen wing. The stone fireback is exposed on the open facade. This property is surrounded by Mulhockaway Creek and formerly used private early 20th century bridges to reach the farm. These bridges still exist, but are deteriorating into ruins.

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DESCRIPTION

- 7. Modern house built upon old foundation.
- 8. Workers House. Late 19th century. 2 story frame and clapboard dwelling with 3 bay front facade. Gable roof with brick chimneys at the gable ends. Front and side porches with turned posts. Extension to the rear.
- 9. Judge Samuel Johnson House. 18th century. The house was built in three sections. The first was probably 3 bays separated by the brick chimneys. The windows of this unit are 9/6 sash on the first floor and 6/6 sash on the second level. The roof is gable with boxed cornice and return. The fireback is exposed on the gable end. The foundation is stone. The second section a two bay unit appears to have been done shortly after the first and follows the lines of the original closely. The final addition is a box-like 19th century two bay flat-roofed unit.

There are some modern one story appendages. Several ruins and foundations are within the property's boundaries.

- 10. Norton School. Early 20th century. Two story square public building.
- 11. Workers House. Mid-19th-late 19th century. Two story frame building. Originally 3 bay, side entrance dwelling. Windows are 6/6 sash. Addition on gable end follows original lines. This section has 2/2 Victorian sash.
- 12. Workers House. Early 19th century. 2 1/2 story three bay frame and clapboard dwelling. Gable end chimneys. Stone foundation.
- 13. Modern 1 1/2 story Cape Cod residence.
- 14. Norton Methodist Church. 1855, 1881, 1908. The main form of the Norton Church is mid-19th century, with its simple lines, pent roof, and corner pilasters. The side tower and stained glass window, however, belie numerous alterations.

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DESCRIPTION

- 15. Gano Store. Third quarter 19th century. This is a 2 1/2 story Victorian structure with a 3 bay, center hall facade with full length porch. The roof has a center cross gable. The windows are Victorian 2/2 sash. Presently a private residence.
- 16. Gano House. Early 19th century. This house is a 2 story clapboard dwelling with a 3 bay, center hall front facade on the first floor. The second level is four bays. The windows are 9/6 sash on the first floor and 6/6 on the second. A nice Greek Revival portico once enhanced the doorway, but now only the pilasters and entablature remain. Numerous modern additions to the rear.
- 17. Blacksmith Shop. 19th century. 1 1/2 story barn-like outbuilding which functioned as the blacksmith shop.

 Now a garage and storage building. Located at the rear of the Gano House.
- 18. Tannery. J. Gano also had a tannery business to which these buildings have associations. Small 1 to 1 1/2 story shed buildings. Frame with vertical board siding. Altered.

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#2

SIGNIFICANCE

The tavern provided a stopping place for many prominent travellers, among whom were the Chews and Cogwallers of Philadelphia, and Joseph Bonaparte, of Bordentown. Near the tavern Aaron Van Syckel built a large store where he and his son, Aaron, Jr. maintained a thriving business. As many as 500 head of fat Kentucky cattle were on sale at one time. Flax seed and all kinds of country produce were exchanged at this store. Hundreds of fine mules and horses were sold here. The store was discontinued in 1855 and the tavern closed soon afterward. The property and buildings are still owned by Van Syckel descendents.

The Van Syckel Tavern provided for an important need in 18th and 19th century New Jersey. Located on an important crossroad, this hotel supplied food and lodging to the weary travellers who, after spending long hard days on the roads, looked forward to a place where they could eat, drink and sleep. Taverns, places of public accommodation in sparsely settled areas, were obliged to provide bed and board to all travelers. Sometimes several men were placed in the same bed.

In addition to travel accommodations, taverns served as neighborhood gathering places for drink and companionship. Being among the few buildings easily accessible to the public, taverns also fulfilled the need for a place to conduct business for town officials. Men from all over Hunterdon County came to Van Syckel Tavern to trade horses, sell cattle or trade goods.

Agriculture

Essentially an early 19th century agrarian region, Van Syckel's District has remained virtually unchanged since the late 19th century. The area represents the rural lifestyle common in the 18th and 19th centuries in New Jersey. The farms, with their numerous outbuildings, project an ambiance for the 19th century countryside matched by few areas in the county. Prior to the American Revolution the area was one

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SIGNIFICANCE

which primarily focused on iron production with supplementary farming. After the war, however, farmers began establishing full-time farmsteads as the iron industry collapsed. The most prominent family was that of Aaron Van Syckel (1764-1838) who came to run the tavern late in the 18th century and became the areas dominant citizen. He was a farmer and storekeeper in addition to being a tavern owner. Van Syckel's sons later established farmsteads of their own and by the last quarter of the 19th century most of the farms surrounding the old tavern were owned and operated by a Van Syckel. (Descendents continue to own the homestead into 1977).

The land was principally used for agriculture. Well provided with water from Mulhockaway Creek at Van Syckel's and adequate soil nutriments, the land "when properly tilled, produces good crops of grass, corn, wheat, and other grains." (Snell, p. 508). The abundance of nearby limestone, which was processed and distributed as a fertilizer in the 19th century, further increased the productivity of the land for grain, vegetables, and fruit. Raising livestock was also common.

Just north of the Van Syckels farms is a small village called Norton. The name was elicited from the nearby 18th century Norton Furnace. The derivation of Norton Furnace, however, is uncertain. This tiny village which is resultant of a 19th century iron mining operation has no more than ten buildings including the Union Methodist Episcopal Church, the Gano Store, and the Gano Blacksmith Shop. George L. Gano was the area's sole industrialist in the second half of the 19th century. Acquiring small bits of land in the 1850's Gano went on to establish Norton's only businesses—a tannery, a blacksmith shop, and a small store. At present day the blacksmith shop, store, and tannery are still extant in some form or another.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Architecture

The structures of the Van Syckel Corner District range from the colonial period to the late 19th Century with most buildings dating from the first half of the 19th Century.

Undoubtedly the best buildings in Van Syckel Corner are the Reynolds/Van Syckel Tavern (#1) and the J. Van Syckel Farm (#2).

The stone portion of the tavern is vernacular Georgian in style and one of the finest examples in Hunterdon County. The original unit of the frame Samuel Johnson House (#9) could also be classified as a simple Georgian dwelling.

The J. Van Syckel House, built in 1829, is Greek Revival with a 3rd quarter 19th Century porch across three of the five bays of the front facade. This house is especially noteworthy in association with its large complement of extant outbuildings. Another simple Greek Revival house is the Van Syckel Farm (#5). The main unit of this house is a 5 bay center hall structure with a single story Greek Revival portico over the door. The John Van Syckel House (#4) and the A. Van Syckel House are both composite Federal - Greek Revival style dwellings.

The Victorian dwellings in Van Syckel Corner District are quite simple as exemplified by the gable end front 3rd quarter of the 19th Century L-form workers house (#11) and the 3 bay cross gable Gano Store building (#15).

The Norton Methodist Church was originally constructed in 1885 and altered in 1881 and 1908. This building still exhibits architectural features of the original building, primarily reflecting an ecclectic appearance.

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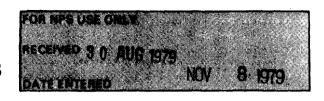
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Hunterdon County Deeds. Joseph Van Syckel from Aaron Van Syckel. 1877, Book 286, p. 123.

George Gano from Peter B. Srope. 1853, Book 112, p. 445. 1857, Book 213, p. 210.

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10. Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of Van Syckels Corner Road and County Road 26 proceed NE along the north curb of Van Syckels Corner Road to the eastern property line of block 6, lot 5. Thence, proceed NW along said road to the property line of block 6, lot 4-1 and follow that line (initially NE) until it leads back onto Van Syckels Road (the west curb). Thence, proceed SW to the NW property line to block 5, lot 4. Thence, proceed west along this property line to its NW corner. Thence, proceed south along the same property line to block 5, lot 17 continuing south across Mulhockaway Creek to the SW corner of property line to the Van Syckels Road. Thence, proceed NE along the north R.O.W. of Van Syckels to Mulhockaway Creek. Thence, follow the path of the creek east to property block 12, lot 5. Thence, proceed south along this property line to the county road. Thence, proceed north along the highway to the point of beginning.

The boundaries of the Van Syckel Corner District were drawn to project the best physical portrayal of the area as an agrarian district and also with consideration for political boundaries. The northern boundary is the municipal line between Union and Bethlehem Townships. Most of the cultural resources of the small village of Norton , which is at this end, are within the district. The road which divides the center of Norton has historic structures to the west and modern buildings to the east thereby justifying the boundary along the west bank of the road. The three small lots excluded at the southern end of the districtare modern dwellings.

The large amount of land nominated has always historically functioned as farmland and continues to do so today [1979]. This land and its spatial quality adds significantly to the ambiant rural quality of the district.

Fred Fritsche
BD 1
Hampton, NJ 08827
Block 12, Lot 17

Joseph & Janet Conry RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 10 George & Patricia Orrok RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 4A

Fred & Vondel Plushanski RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lots: 4,5,16A,17 D.S. Duncan RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 4B Robert Everett RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 6, Lot 4-1

United Methodist Church RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lots: 6, 9 Gunter & Elsa Wolschina RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 12, Lot 4 Joseph Martin RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 B 5, L 13 & B 6, L 5

Evelyn & Rudolph Herbert RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 11 William Cordis RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 7 John & Arlene Blanchard RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 15

Harry Dillon RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 12 Essie Mae Gerard, estate 20 Yomans Avenue Washington, NJ 07882 Block 5, Lot 16

John & Louisa Halstead RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 5, Lot 8

Marcia Toll Saunders Star Route 1362 Corrales, NM 87048 Block 5, Lot 14 Anthony & Susan Cimino RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 12, Lot 5A

Anton & Elizabeth Staub RD 1 Hampton, NJ 08827 Block 12, Lot 5

Updated 6/1979.

PROPERTY OWNERS IN THE VAN SYCKEL CORNER HISTORIC DISTRICT

The New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation has notified all property owners in the district of the Registration process.

