

Hopewell Township Historic Sites Bookmarks

The Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has published two sets of bookmarks describing local historic properties. The first set of sixteen bookmarks was done in 2004, and the second set of eight in 2020 (with a couple expansions of the earlier set).

Each bookmark highlights a particular historic site, with information on its history and whether it is listed on the National, New Jersey, and/or Hopewell Township Registers of Historic Places.

Hopewell Township HPC website:

<https://www.hopewelltpw.org/325/Historic-Preservation-Commission>

2004 Hopewell Township Historic Site Bookmarks

- Bear Tavern Road Bridge (1882), Route 576 at Jacobs Creek [Twp 2001]
- Upper Belmont Farm (1700s), Route 29 at Valley Road [NJ 1980]
- Harbourton Village Store (1768), Harbourton-Rocktown Road [Site NR]
- Harts Corner Schoolhouse (1906), Scotch and Pennington-Washington Crossing roads

- Noah Hunt House (1700s), Blackwell Road / Rosedale Park [NR 1988]
- Wilson Hunt Farm / Woodward Farm (1730), Marshalls Corner-Woodsville Road [Twp 2001]
- Ichabod Leigh House (1835), Cherry Valley Road [NR 1975]
- Marshall's Corner Schoolhouse (1825), Pennington-Hopewell Road near Marshalls Corner-Woodsville Road

- Old Methodist Cemetery / New Light/New Side Presbyterian Cemetery (c1750), Pennington-Titusville Road
- Mine Road Bridge (1885), Mine Road at Stony Brook [Twp 2001]
- Mount Rose Distillery / Whiskey House (1860), Pennington-Rocky Hill Road [Site NR]
- Phillips/Howell Farmstead / Howell Farm (1750s), Valley Road and Woodens Lane [NR 1977]

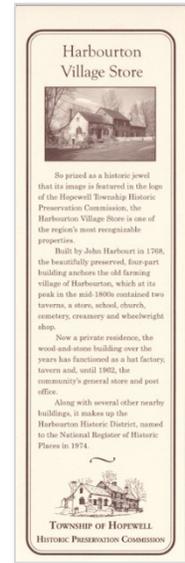
- Hopewell Township Poor Farm / Col. John Van Cleve (1843), Pennington Mountain [NR 1983]
- Somerset Roller Mills (1840s), Jacobs Creek meets Delaware River [NR 1974]
- John Stout House / Hunt House (1725/1850s), Province Line Road
- Jeremiah Woolsey House (1768), Washington Crossing-Pennington Road [NR 1975]

2020 Hopewell Township Historic Site Bookmarks

- Harbourton Rural Historic District (pre 1765/1800s), Route 579 and Mt. Airy Road [NR]
- Jacob's Creek Bridge (1882/2018), Bear Tavern Road -> Valley Road at Moore's Creek [Twp 1991]
- Knowles House and Store / Titusville Store (pre 1819), River Drive & Church Road [Site NR]
- Samuel Moore Sr. House / John Welling (pre 1770), Curlis Lane [NR]

- Mount Rose Distillery Archaeological Site / Whiskey House (1870), Pennington-Rocky Hill Road [NR]
- Mount Rose General Store (c1831), Carter Road and Cherry Valley Road [Site NR]
- Andrew Titus House (1760), Church Road
- Enos Titus Farmstead (c1805), Pennington-Rocky Hill Road

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Bear Tavern Road Iron Truss Bridge



The Bear Tavern Road Iron Truss Bridge, built in 1882, is the oldest of its type in Mercer County and is an extremely rare, surviving example of a type of bridge construction that became popular in the late 1800s.

Crossing Jacobs Creek, it serves busy Route 579, known locally as Bear Tavern Road, a thoroughfare laid out around 1700 and which carried both British and American troops in the days before the pivotal Battle of Trenton.

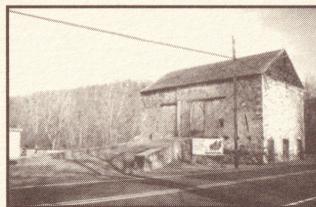
To engineers, it is a half hip, pin-connected, thru truss Pratt bridge; to historians, it represents a successful technology pioneered by the notable King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, one of the largest, most successful and innovative U.S. bridge makers of its day. Just two of King's thru truss bridges are known to survive in New Jersey; the other is in the northern part of the township, on Mine Road.

Despite heavy use and proximity to new residential construction, the wooden-decked Bear Tavern Road Bridge endures in a wooded setting that is still largely rustic and pristine. It was listed in the Hopewell Township Register of Historic Places in 2001.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Upper Bellemont Barn



Few country estates in the American colonies matched the scale and grandeur of the Upper Bellemont Farm, a 504-acre property held by the family of Gov. Daniel Coxe, the English physician who in the late 1600s owned much of western New Jersey.

Sprawling along the Delaware River near present-day Valley Road, the farm served as the retreat of Coxe family members for nearly a century before passing in 1765 to another prominent Hopewell family of the era, headed by Samuel Stout.

Today, all that remains of the massive plantation is the stone barn that sits rather idly at the intersection of Valley Road and state Route 29. A 1762 newspaper ad described a "mansion-house . . . convenient for either gentlemen or farmer" as standing here at the time, and several outbuildings. Colonial-era maps indicate a ferry also operated here.

The 13-foot square stone tomb of Samuel Stout, now collapsed, lies to the east of the house foundation, along with depressions suggesting a larger burial ground.

For its association with these important landholders and its depiction of a type of barn construction more popular on the other side of the Delaware, the Upper Bellemont barn was listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places in 1980.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Harbourton Village Store



So prized as a historic jewel that its image is featured in the logo of the Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission, the Harbourton Village Store is one of the region's most recognizable properties.

Built by John Harbourt in 1768, the beautifully preserved, four-part building anchors the old farming village of Harbourton, which at its peak in the mid-1800s contained two taverns, a store, school, church, cemetery, creamery and wheelwright shop.

Now a private residence, the wood-and-stone building over the years has functioned as a hat factory, tavern and, until 1962, the community's general store and post office.

Along with several other nearby buildings, it makes up the Harbourton Historic District, named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Harts Corner Schoolhouse



The tiny, brick Harts Corner School has had one of the shortest lives as a schoolhouse in the Hopewell Valley, but its continued service to the community distinguishes it as an important local landmark.

Built in 1906 at the corner of Scotch and Pennington-Washington Crossing roads as part of Bear School District No. 12, forerunner of the present-day Bear Tavern Elementary School, the one-room schoolhouse was the daily destination of youngsters from as far away as Titusville, who were ferried there by horse-drawn wagon.

Some 30 years after opening, the schoolhouse shuttered its doors to students and reopened as the new seat of Hopewell Township municipal government. Town meetings were held here beginning in 1928 and municipal court was conducted every Monday night for decades at this site. These functions continued until 1963 when the current town hall opened just to the west of the building.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Noah Hunt House



Built by one of Hopewell Township's wealthiest and most prominent families in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Noah Hunt house off Blackwell Road is a symbol of agricultural prosperity and comfort in the post-colonial period.

The sprawling farmhouse was constructed over a 100-year period by Hunt and his descendants, whose 284-acre farmstead was dominant in the local agrarian economy that produced huge amounts of grain for export to England and the West Indies.

Census records from 1830 indicate the house alone was served by a staff of 14.

The family's wealth is reflected throughout the house, including paneled fireplace walls in the house's 18th century Georgian core and denticulated cornices on the house's exterior. The survival of so many expensive original features is one of the reasons it was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

Mercer County bought the house and 440 adjoining acres in 1968 for what is now Rosedale Park. Although in an advanced state of disrepair, funding has recently been procured for restoring the building to its original grandure.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wilson Hunt Farm



The Wilson Hunt Farm, also known as the Woodward Farm, along Marshalls Corner-Woodsville Road, is one of the most historically significant farmsteads in Hopewell Township.

Boasting a long lineage of colorful and important figures in local and colonial history, the 90-acre farm also is notable for its finely-preserved architecture. The centerpiece is its farmhouse, crafted about 1730 from native stone and built into a slope, one of the few so-called "bank" houses left in the township. Despite a series of additions, the house escaped modernization. An 1858 stone and wood bank barn, plus 11 other outbuildings, complete the farmstead.

A continuously working farm for 260 years and a major force in the local commercial peach industry in the 1800s, the property won expansive protections from development under the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Act in 1998. It was listed in the Hopewell Township Register of Historic Places in 2001.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Ichabod Leigh House



Considered the finest example of Greek Revival architecture in Mercer County, the Ichabod Leigh house on Cherry Valley Road stands as a rare example of elegance and sophistication in the rural Hopewell Township landscape.

Built in 1835 and situated just east of the village of Mount Rose, "Fairview," as it was christened in the late 1800s, spent many of its years as a country manor house, serving as the retreat of the mayor of Brooklyn and other New York dignitaries at the close of the 19th century. The plaster walls of the cupola bear the penciled autographs of generations of guests to the country estate.

Leigh, a Philadelphia carpenter with ties to a prominent Somerset County family, fashioned a rather simple exterior to his home, compared to the exquisite plasterwork and millwork of the interior, rich details presumably acquired in New York or Philadelphia.

Once an active horse farm, the property was bequeathed to the Historical Society of Princeton in 1982 by owner Ivan S. Rossiter who is credited with restoring it and planting four acres of specimen azaleas and rhododendrons.

The house was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Marshalls Corner Schoolhouse



The first organized efforts to educate children in the Hopewell Valley began in the early 1700s, along the river near present-day Titusville and farther east, in the tiny hamlet of Marshalls Corner. Here, on the corner of Pennington-Hopewell and Marshalls Corner-Woodsville roads, the area's farmers built their first schoolhouse around 1720, a tiny stone building that was used for the next 100 years.

The roadside, building that today stands to the east of that intersection, along Pennington-Hopewell Road, was built in 1825 and is actually the community's third schoolhouse. One of the best-known fixtures of the village landscape, it served students for little more than a century.

Long before its last students passed through its door in 1930, the tiny building had begun serving the broader community. For many years in the early 1900s it opened on Sunday afternoons to the younger members of the Pennington Presbyterian Church for Sunday School services.

In 1935, it became the clubhouse for a local social group. Over the years, it has provided office and meeting space for the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association and the Lions Club of Hopewell Valley.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Old Methodist Cemetery



Also known as the New Light/ New Side Presbyterian Cemetery, the Old Methodist Cemetery along Pennington-Titusville Road serves as the final resting place of James Davenport, an important national figure in the Great Awakening of the mid-18th century.

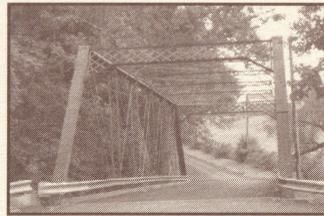
The Connecticut-born Davenport was one of several itinerant preachers who traveled throughout the colonies, whipping up religious revival. He moved to Hopewell in 1750 and was installed as pastor of the New Side church of Hopewell and Maidenhead.

Davenport's brand of spiritualism caused a major schism within the Presbyterian Church. Locally, a splinter group of the Pennington Presbyterian congregation broke away and organized its own meeting house and burial ground at the current site of the Old Methodist Cemetery.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Mine Road Bridge



A sister span to the historic Bear Tavern Road Iron Truss Bridge in the southern end of Hopewell Township, the 1885 Mine Road Bridge over Stony Brook is a rare, surviving example of a type of bridge construction popular in the late 19th century.

A pin-connected, thru truss Pratt bridge, the single-lane Mine Road span is considered an important survivor of a style and a company noted for major developments in modern bridge history. A pioneer in bridge design, construction and marketing, the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland was one of the largest and most successful U.S. bridge makers in the late 19th century.

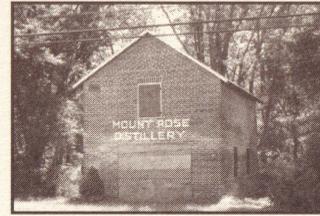
Its designer was famed engineer Thomas Pratt, who revolutionized the industry with his patented use of wrought iron, which made bridges stronger, more durable and easier to maintain than their wooden predecessors.

The bridge was listed in the Hopewell Township Register of Historic Places in 2001.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Mount Rose Distillery



Applejack distilleries abounded in the fruit-rich New Jersey countryside of the 1800s, and Hopewell Township was no exception. An enduring example of this rural industrial heritage is the Mount Rose Distillery along Pennington-Rocky Hill Road.

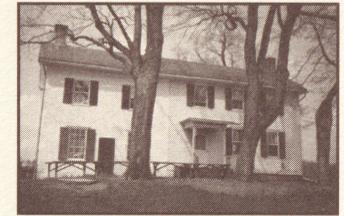
Opening around 1860 and operating until Prohibition, it drew farmers and apple growers from miles around the tiny hamlet of Mount Rose, churning out hundreds of barrels of applejack, cider and peach brandy every season. All that survives today of this once-bustling complex is the two-story, brick building that served as the office and numerous foundations of auxiliary buildings no longer standing. Alert visitors to the site can also spot well-worn wagon tracks and the obvious remains of a water circulation system.

Acquired by the township in 1995, the once-crumbled building known as the "Whiskey House" was stabilized in 2000 with the aid of a state grant and local donations. For its survival as one of the few vestiges of Hopewell's 19th century agricultural industry, it has been listed in the local, state and national registers of historic places.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Phillips/Howell Farmstead



Popularly known as the Howell Living History Farm, the historic Phillips/Howell farmstead traces its roots to one of the region's pioneering families and serves as the keystone of the picturesque Pleasant Valley Historic District.

Blacksmith Joseph Phillips was among the first to buy land here in 1732. His son, Henry Phillips, a major with First Company, Hunterdon Regiment, in the Continental Army, established the valley's first gristmill and blacksmith shop.

A continuously working farm for more than 250 years, it is anchored by a late 18th century farmhouse and a fairly intact complex of 10 pre-Civil War era barns and outbuildings.

A commercial dairy operated here in the 1930s and 1940s, and in 1974, it was given to Mercer County to be operated for public educational purposes as a 1900-era working farm.

Today the 130-acre farm is worked by horses and oxen and houses an important collection of vintage tools, equipment and household goods. It offers free weekend events to the public year-round and is a popular destination for school groups from a wide area.

It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Hopewell Township Poor Farm



For more than a century Hopewell Township's poor found sanctuary on the 140-acre Col. John Van Cleve farmstead on Pennington Mountain.

Purchased by the township in 1821, the farm was housing 30 paupers a decade later and by 1843 the need was so great that the municipality added a new, stuccoed stone, two-story dormitory to accommodate its growing number of poor.

There the residents grew their own fruit and vegetables and raised cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens. Township meetings often were held there, well into the 20th century, as municipal leaders moved away from conducting business in Pennington's taverns.

Records from the Civil War era suggest the farm also may have been a stop on the Underground Railroad.

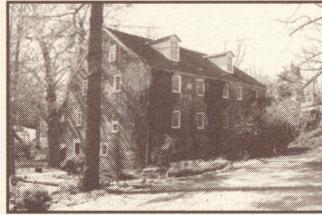
Just a portion of the original 18th-century Van Cleve stone dwelling survives, but the 1843 dormitory, along with an interesting washhouse/ smokehouse structure added on in 1857, remain today.

When it passed into private hands in 1951, the Poor Farm Road property was the last active municipal poorhouse in New Jersey. It was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Somerset Roller Mills



The last remaining mill in Hopewell Township, the Somerset Roller Mills is considered one of the finest examples of its kind in the central Delaware Valley. Its imposing stone building dates mostly to the 1840s, but there is clear evidence a mill was working here in 1730.

Wheat, corn, oats, buckwheat, rye and limestone were ground at this site, where the tranquil Jacobs Creek meets the Delaware River. The mill was modified several times over the years as technology improved – the “Roller” in its name is taken from the 1903 installation of rollers and silk screens as part of a refinement in flour processing – and operations continued there until about 1930.

The original part of the miller's house is believed to date to the 1700s. The three-story Greek Revival wing was probably added by owner Jonathan T. Comly in the 1840s at the same time he enlarged the mill to its current configuration.

The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Joseph Stout House



The Joseph Stout house, also known as the Hunt House, carries the distinction of being the site where Gen. George Washington huddled with advisers to plan the Battle of Monmouth in 1778.

An imposing three-story stone house built into Pheasant Hill and overlooking the Bedens Brook Valley outside Hopewell Borough near Province Line Road, the house was originally built in 1752 and almost totally rebuilt in the 1850s.

Washington spent just a few days at the property he referred to in his correspondence as “Hunt's House.” While it was the residence of John Price Hunt, a relative of the Stouts, the three-story house was owned by the family of Joseph Stout.

Legend holds that Stout built his grand house to spite the leadership of the First Baptist Church of Hopewell which rebuffed his attempts to build their place of worship on his property. He vowed to build a house larger than the church.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Jeremiah Woolsey House



One of the finest examples of Dutch Colonial architecture locally, the historic Jeremiah Woolsey house is a remarkably intact dwelling that epitomized high style in the countryside of 18th century Hopewell Township.

Built in 1768 by Woolsey, a prominent lawyer, the well-preserved house, situated off Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, is a one-and-a-half story, brick structure featuring Flemish bond masonry and arched windows. Three gabled dormers peer out from its stylish front facade, which includes two pairs of windows and doors set inside slightly recessed bays and highlighted by brick arches.

The property also includes an architecturally significant small brick shed, possibly a privy at one time, and the ruins of a stone barn.

The site was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Harbourton Rural Historic District



At the junction of Route 579 and Mt. Airy Road, the colonial village of Harbourton remains as an enduring tribute to rural New Jersey's earliest communities. Contributing significantly to this crossroads cluster is the sweep of open farmland on both the northeastern end and at the southern end, as well as the Baptist Church and Harbourton Cemetery.

The six key structures forming the village are intact and provide an unsullied glimpse of the crossroad's importance as a place of commerce, community, and worship.

Harbourton General Store (1768)
Wilson-Hart House (pre-1830)
Ege/Dilts Farmstead (pre-1765)
Harbourton Baptist Church (1879)
Cornell/Hart House (1800)
Henry Rosco House (1825)

Contributing structures include the Cornell/Hart farm, located on the northern end of the District, and the Sears Kit house (c.1925), located on the southwestern end in front of the Ege-Dilts Farmstead.

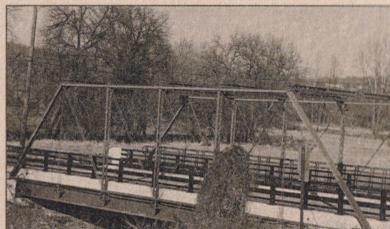
All of the structures, with the exception of the Henry Rosco house, are listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and the New Jersey State Register of Historic Places.



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Jacob's Creek Bridge



Built in 1882 by the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company, the 75-foot bridge crossing Jacob's Creek on Bear Tavern Road is the oldest through-truss bridge in Mercer County.

In 1991, the bridge was determined eligible for inclusion on both the New Jersey and the National Register of Historic Places. It was designated a local historic landmark.

In its original location, the crossing is considered to be part of the trail on which George Washington and his troops marched after crossing the Delaware River in 1776, proceeding to Trenton where they ultimately defeated the Hessian soldiers garrisoned there.

Dismantled in 2011, the bridge was restored and re-erected in 2018 on Valley Road spanning Moore's creek. The location once had a truss bridge and the relocation of the Jacob's Creek Bridge, although not preferable to keeping the bridge in its original location, at least restores the sense of the Valley Road bridge and makes it viewable to those traveling to the Howell Living History Farm.



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Knowles House and Store



The Knowles House and Store is a Federal style stone-and-frame structure facing the scenic Delaware River. It was built prior to 1819 by the John and Levi Knowles family.

In 1831, it was acquired at auction by Uriel Titus, and later bequeathed to his son, Joseph. This early building in what was to become the village of Titusville is a good example of early 19th-century Delaware Valley domestic architecture. The three-section L plan house has two stone sections with a frame ell added later in the same century. Joseph Titus continued to operate a store here along with two sawmills, a log basin, a lumberyard, and a grist mill, all located nearby. Because of his influence in the expansion of the village, he is considered the true developer of Titusville. The house is currently being restored after decades of neglect. Titusville is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



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Samuel Moore, Sr. House



The best-known Dutch timber-framed house in Hopewell is the Samuel Moore, Sr. House located on Curlis Lane just outside of Pennington Borough. This house is a blend of the Dutch and English building traditions that influenced architectural ideas in Hopewell Township during the first half of the 18th century. Typical Dutch features include the one-and-a-half-story form and two doors on the front façade.

Samuel Moore, Sr. was active in the civil and religious leadership of the Township. He was Surveyor of Roads from 1770-1775 and participated in the engineering of road layouts in Hopewell and surrounding townships. For many years he received and managed funds for the Presbyterian Church including the construction of a new church in 1776. Moore was also Overseer of the Poor in 1762 and collected taxes for the benefit of poor residents of Hopewell Township.

The house and 176 acres were sold to Charles Welling in 1839 and remained in the Welling family for over eighty years. This long Welling ownership has led to the incorrect assumption that the first owner was a Welling.

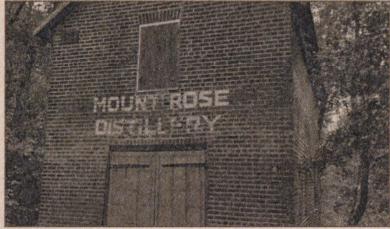
The Samuel Moore, Sr. property is listed in the National and New Jersey Register of Historic places as the John Welling House.



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The Mount Rose Distillery Known Locally as "The Whiskey House."



The Mount Rose Distillery, dating from 1870, is an artifact of Hopewell Valley's agricultural past. It operated as a distillery to process the fruits of local orchards, usually apples, into cider and whiskey (hard cider). One of several in the valley operated by the Drake family, Frost Blackwell, a freed slave, worked at the distillery during the earlier days of the Drake ownership.

This building was likely the storehouse for the finished product - the tin coated doors and brick construction assured security while the double doors enabled wagons to pull up close during loading.

Abandoned in the 1960's, the derelict building was resurrected by the efforts of the Historic Site Committee (precursor to the HPC) in 2000, spearheaded by Landis Eaton. The building is being repointed with a grant by the New Jersey Historic Trust.



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The Mount Rose General Store



The Mount Rose General Store, located at the intersection of Carter Road and Cherry Valley Road, is an excellent example of a vernacular general store characteristic of rural New Jersey. These buildings were usually frame with two stories and situated with the gable end to the street. The first story was the store itself, the cellar was used for storage and the second floor had additional storage, meeting rooms and living quarters for the shopkeeper.

The Mount Rose General Store was built ca. 1831 under the ownership of John Savage and Josiah Cook. The building began as a general store and eventually housed the post office in the burgeoning crossroads community of Mount Rose. The general store served not only as a place for residents to obtain their mail and household necessities, but also as a central meeting place where local residents could meet and socialize with neighbors.

By 1860, the Mount Rose General Store became a private residence and the store and post office were relocated next door. The building continued as a residence through the twentieth century and now houses an architect's office.



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Andrew Titus House



Nestled in the countryside along Church Road and hidden from view is the Andrew Titus House. This house was built for Andrew Titus (1750-1770), son of John and Rebecca Titus, who settled in the eastern part of Hopewell Township prior to 1722. Andrew's brother, Samuel Titus ((1727-1778), built a near duplicate of this house on property he purchased in 1756 in the eastern part of the township. The year of construction of these houses is reasonably fixed at 1760.

The two houses represent a house plan particular to the 1750-1770 period and predate the true advent of Georgian design. They represent the blending of details in Dutch and English house types.

The surrounding acreage, which includes a small stream and stone springhouse, provides an impressive rural backdrop for the Andrew Titus House.



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Enos Titus Farmstead



The Enos Titus property on Pennington-Rocky Hill Road carries the name of one of Hopewell Township's leading citizens in its formative years. Enos Titus, a blacksmith and farmer, was also an elder of Pennington Presbyterian Church for several decades. He built his home around 1805, a few years after purchasing the property from his brother, Samuel.

The two-story Federal frame house with its four bays and two-parlor plan, retains significant Federal detailing and original fabric including beaded siding, frieze boards, crown molding, and original 6/6 and 9/6 windows.

Surrounded by preserved farmland and private open land tracts, the Enos Titus Farmstead anchors a nearly two-square-mile panorama of the Township's historic rural landscape.



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