

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory
MORRIS COUNTY CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

prepared for
The Morris County Heritage Commission

by



ACROTERION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANTS

funded by
The County of Morris
The Office of New Jersey Heritage

1986

MORRIS COUNTY CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

Street Index

Municipal Name: Riverdale (1)

8/86

Municipal Code: 1433

MAP #	ADDRESS/NAME	NR	USE	PERIOD	STYLE
18	2 Arlington Place	-	R	1/19	X
12	Greenwich Street - Streetscape	-	R	1/20	B
	Mathews Avenue				
03	2	+	R	1/19	V
01	Streetscape	-	R	2/19	V
02	Industrial Building	?	R	2/19	X
04	4 Mullins Avenue	-	C	1/20	B
	Newark Pompton Turnpike				
13	2	-	R	2/19	IT
14	5	-	R	2/19	QA
17	10	-	R	2/19	X
19	11	-	R	2/19	SS
16	12	-	R	2/19	X
21	21	-	R	2/18	F
20	30	?	R	1/19	GRR
22	47	-	R	2/19	V
29	82	-	R	1/19	SS
15	Richards Funeral Home	-	C	1/20	CR
05	Van Ness Gristmill	-	C		V
26	Riverdale Public School	-	I	1/20	X
27	(at Cedar Street terminus)	-	C	2/19	SS
28	George Pearson Walker House	-	R	1/20	V
	Paterson Hamburg Turnpike				
11	Simon Van Ness House	-	R	2/18	X
09	24	-	R	2/19	V
08	34	-	R	2/18	V
07	96	+	C	2/19	V
06	211	?	R	2/18	V
	Post Lane				

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS: Yes (+); No (-); Possible (?)

USE: Residential (R); Commercial (C); Institutional (I); Other (X)

PERIOD: In the absence of specific date, 1st or 2nd half 18th, 19th c., etc. (1/18, 2/19)

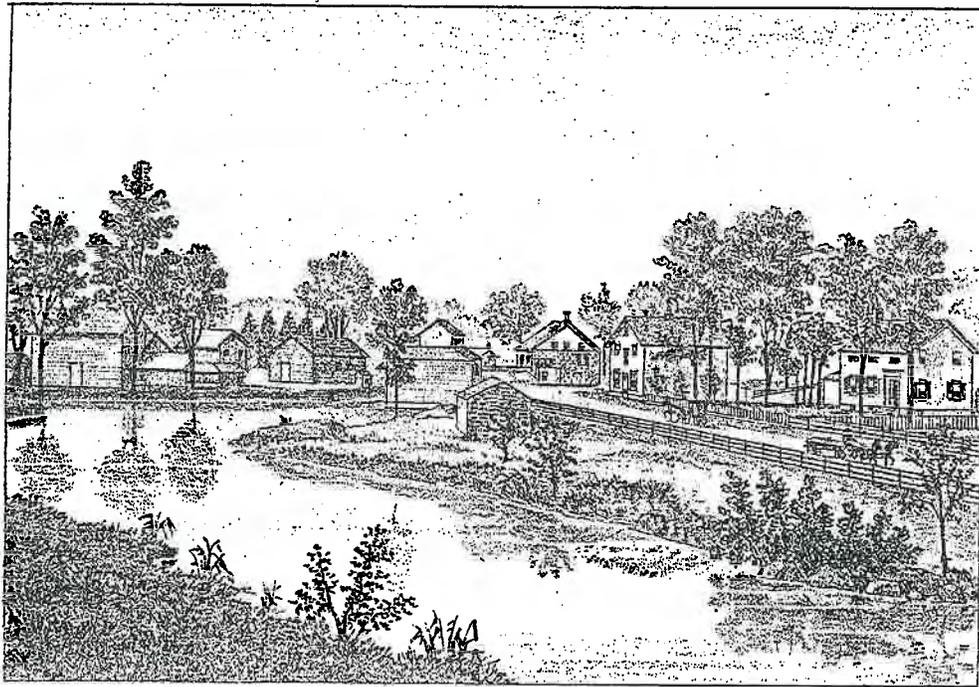
STYLE: Vernacular (V); Federal (F); Greek Revival (GRR); Italianate (IT); Gothic Revival (GR); Romanesque (R); Shingle Style (SS); Colonial or Classical Revival (CR); Bungalow (B); Craftsman (C); Foursquare (FSQ); Queen Anne (QA); Other (X)

RIVERDALE

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Riverdale was part of the huge land mass that in 1740 became one of the four constituents of Morris County. When the county was created in that year, Pequannock Township was the largest of the four. It encompassed all the lands measured from the Pequannock River on the north to Lake Hopatcong on the west, and extending to the Rockaway River on the south. Its size was reduced considerably by 1844 with the removal of Jefferson and Rockaway Townships, and again in 1867 when Boonton and Montville gained township status.

The Indian name Pompton was adopted by European settlers to refer, in general, to the areas now incorporated as Pequannock and Riverdale. Henry C. Pitney, Jr. in A History of Morris County, published in 1914, maintains that settlements were established as early as 1700 "By a few families of Hollanders who came from Bergen and New York, purchasing a tract from the proprietors of the Eastern Division of New Jersey..." The earliest family names found in the vicinity are Dutch and Huguenot, and scattering of stone houses in the "Netherlandish" building tradition can still be found in Riverdale (Simon Van Ness and the small stone Post house are the most typical), although in far fewer numbers than in other parts of what was then Pequannock Township.



RESIDENCE TANNERY, STORE AND SAW MILL OF JOHN F. POST, POMPTON, N.J.

Fig.1 Post Lane Corner, as depicted in Munsell's History of Morris County, 1882. The three buildings to the right still stand.

Apart from these water powered operations, industry does not thrive in Riverdale as it did in neighboring Butler. There is some evidence that mining was carried out in the Northwestern part of the borough (the 1868 map refers to "David's Lead Works" there), but it seems never to have been very profitable. Late in the 19th century Mathews Avenue grew into an industrial area of limited scale, due largely to a graphite mine and the lead works. The small frame houses (#1) still scattered along the road are typical of the simplest working-class dwellings found in Morris County, similiar to the miner's houses of Chester and Mine Hill.

Cottage industry was also found on Mathews Avenue according to a 1973 interview with Frances Mathews Young, who remembers her grandparents looming carpets and her grandfather making charcoal, but by 1901 the Industrial Directory of New Jersey listed a labor force of only ten for all of Riverdale's industry--statistics that are somewhat misleading, since they fail to recognize the bustling lumberyard and feed-and-grain supplier that was established around the railroad depot. This complex of frame buildings still serves its original purpose, although the small wooden depot has been abandoned by the railroad (#10).

Because nearby towns with larger populations provided many of the goods and services that Riverdale needed, no downtown of any substance was ever developed. By 1853, when the first map of Morris County had been published, fewer than a dozen buildings were delineated near the intersection of the two turnpikes, a condition that still pertained in 1868(Fig.2.).

The land these settlers found was richly arable on "the plains," and rewarded the agriculturist. Because of its volume and power, the Pequannock River became the site of numerous mills for carrying on all kinds of operations. It seems to have been this water-power potential that gave Riverdale a reason for being, but its early growth was very limited. The Reformed Dutch Church of Pompton was organized (in what is now Passaic County) in 1736. Local historian Mead Stapler claims that around this same time "Peter Post started a small industrial complex at the bend of Post Lane." (Fig.1) Of the three buildings surviving at the location, none has been dated conclusively, but the 1853 Morris County Map notes that Post's property included a tannery, a bark mill and a saw mill.

Only two of the Pequannock River's many mills survive, both in Riverdale. The 1868 county map depicts one of these in operation by Samuel Van Ness (Survey #5). Claims have been made for its existence much earlier (ca. 1726) but its present greatly altered state yields no conclusive evidence. The second mill site is mentioned in 1757 description quoted by Pitney as "Nathaniel Foard's (i.e. Ford's) mill". Ford's gristmill was replaced eventually (ca.1860) by Joseph Slater, whose felt-processing mill is extant (#7), although its mill pond has vanished (mill and pond can be seen in a ca. 1880 photo reproduced in the Borough's 50th anniversary book).

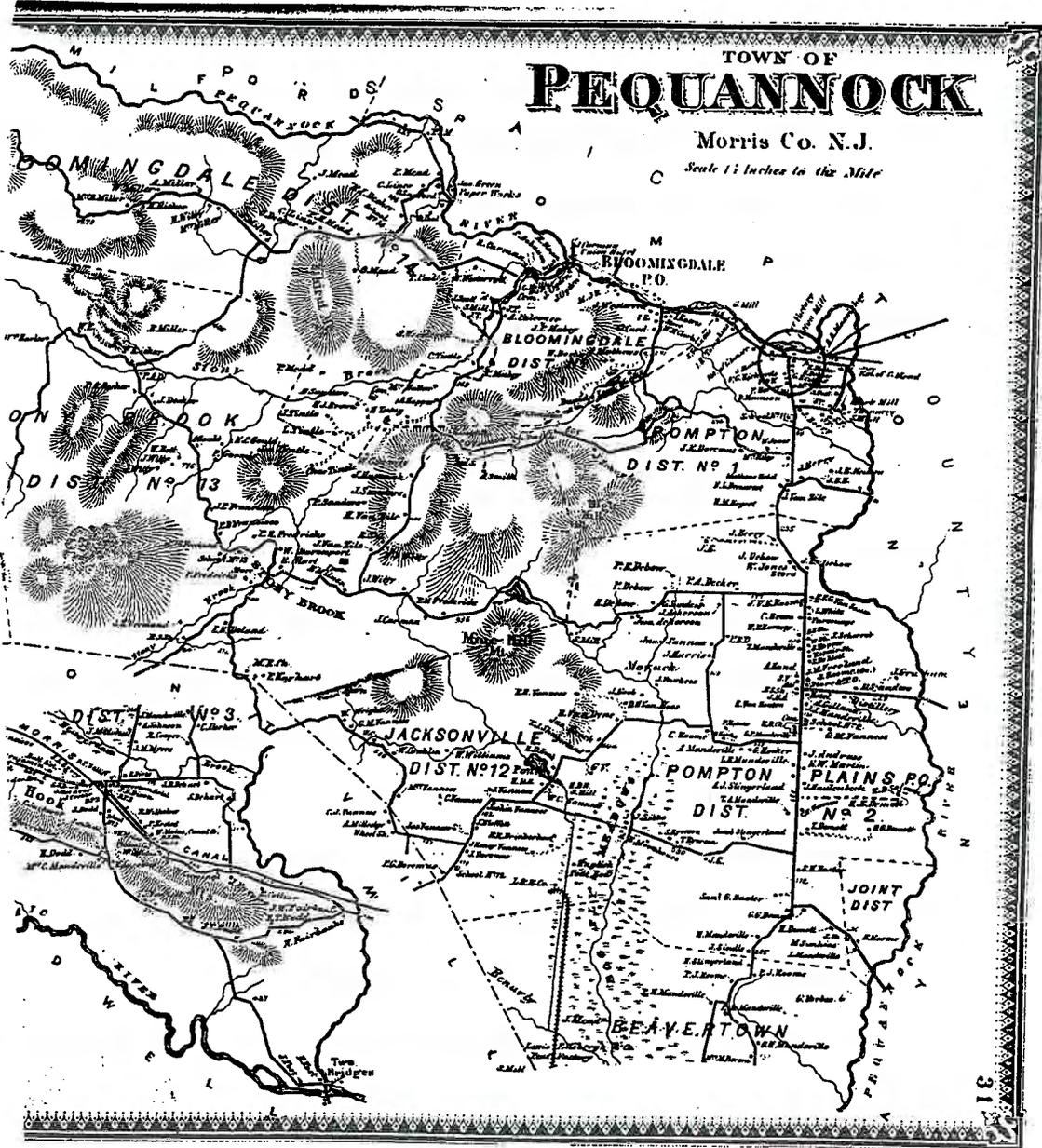


Fig. 2 Detail from 1868 Morris County Atlas, showing the small number of buildings clustered near the intersection of the two turnpikes in Riverdale.

The turnpikes that had thrust other villages into prominence produced no such comparable growth here, even though the Patterson-Hamburg and Newark-Pompton turnpikes, both authorized in 1806 by the New Jersey legislature, confirmed "Pompton's" significance as a road junction. Throughout the 19th century the future Riverdale remained without a name on maps (and thus without a distinctive identity separate from Pompton, across the river), although it was known briefly in local circles as "Townsha" and "New Greenwich".

The few houses that had been built between the end of the 18th century and the middle of the 19th century followed vernacular forms familiar throughout the county, with Riverdale examples displaying no special peculiarities. At least four houses (Post, Piatt, Howard and Reeve) were built or altered with Greek Revival features, probably in the 1840's. For the most part the classical influence they exhibit is decidedly modest: the larger wing of the Post House (#24), for example, is entered through a pilastered doorway, and the Piatt House (#20) has a similar entry and a partially flushboarded facade. No gable-front Greek Revival houses are found in Riverdale.

By the end of the 19th century a handful of late Victorian eclectic buildings appeared in the village, several built by the Richards family, including an imposing carriagehouse group (#15) and the original Richards Funeral Parlor, an unusual example for its period of specialized building (#16). The house at #24 Patterson-Hamburg Turnpike (Survey #9) proves that a few local people were expressing their prosperity through fashionable architecture.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the familiar pattern of suburbanization and immigration, both spurred by improved rail access, began to make a few changes in the appearance of what by then had become known unofficially as Riverdale. Italians arrived, chiefly to work in the quarries on Patterson-Hamburg Turnpike, and a neighborhood of small houses grew up on the land between Post Lane and Arlington Avenue. The most striking evidence of this suburban trend is Greenwich Street (#12), a development of 26 small bungalows, tightly sited and unusually uniform in design. Greenwich Street appears to have been built about a decade before Riverdale asserted its identity by breaking away from Pequannock Township in 1923 to become its own autonomous unit of government.

Despite this obvious growth, Riverdale was not transformed in architecture and population. Its "downtown" remained no more than a short stretch of Patterson-Hamburg Turnpike, a condition that still pertains today. Further growth did not occur until after World War II, and never assumed the proportions of other Morris County municipalities, where suburbanization became a major force.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMENT

Riverdale's most important concentration of historic buildings is found on the northern half of Newark-Pompton Turnpike, where surviving houses illustrate architectural trends over a period of more than a hundred years, from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century.

This group of buildings is threatened for two reasons. The road bears heavy traffic volume, creating air and noise pollution and the likelihood that pressure for road widening may occur in the future. These factors may also make residential use less desirable, and encourage conversion of houses for office/commercial purposes. Such adaptive use is no cause for alarm in itself, but experience proves that the loss of residential use often leads to insensitive treatment. Take the case of two nearly identical houses on Newark Pompton Turnpike as indicative. Number 1, still a residence, has nearly all its detailing and wall fabric intact, while the second house (opposite Cedar Street), now a professional office, has lost architectural integrity.

The Reeve Homestead at the corner of Patterson Hamburg Turnpike and Mathews Avenue merits special attention because it has survived in a remarkable state of architectural integrity together with several accessory buildings and structures. Because it is not a spectacular piece of architecture its merits may not be immediately apparent, but it is precisely such buildings that deserve preservation because they can evoke the past powerfully. The same might be said of the neighboring brick industrial complex on Mathews Avenue.

Historic preservation in Riverdale will continue to be primarily a matter of individual owners caring for their houses sensitively, but special note should be taken of these properties that might not seem "historic"-- like the lumberyard, the Mathews Avenue industrial buildings and even the Reeve Homestead.

REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Borough Of Riverdale, N.J.: 50th Anniversary Commemorative Book. 1973.

The following individuals provided facts invaluable to the survey:
Zana Ball, Eleanor & Charles Bogert, Carolyn J. Espie, Edward Hiller,
Mead Stapler.

STREET NAME: Mathews Avenue

CROSS STREETS: Linden to and including
De Graw Road

MUNICIPALITY: Riverdale

COUNTY: Morris

DESCRIPTION/SIGNIFICANCE:

On this curving rural road with wooded hillside on the west, and its two short side-roads, are about a dozen frame houses. Most are late-19th-century worker's dwellings of the simplest kind, a mixture of end-gable, side-gable and L-plan types, and three early 20th century Bungalow houses. At the end of the road is a large vernacular Victorian house with poor architectural integrity that has been divided into apartments (and may originally have been a multi-unit dwelling). Scattered among these buildings are a number of modern houses, and at the north end of the road a group of shed-like modern light-industrial buildings. At the terminus of Linden is a modern folk-art fantasy - an older house transformed with fanciful masonry additions. The housing stock here appears always to have been associated with industry.

PHYSICAL CONDITION OF BUILDINGS: Excellent ___% Good 50% Fair 20% Poor 30%
REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes ___ Possible ___ No X ___ Part of Larger District ___
THREATS TO STREET: Roads ___ Development ___ Zoning ___ Deterioration x ___
No Threat ___ Other ___

COMMENTS:

MAP:
SLIDES/PHOTOS A8:4-7
REFERENCES:

RECORDED BY: Robert Guter
ORGANIZATION: ACROTERRION

DATE: March-July 1986



PHOTO A8:6
Number 17 Mathews Avenue, a typical end-gabled worker house.



PHOTO A8:7
Number 35 Mathews Avenue, the worker house with the best architectural integrity but the poorest condition

1986

MORRIS COUNTY CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory Number 1433-001

CONTINUATION SHEET

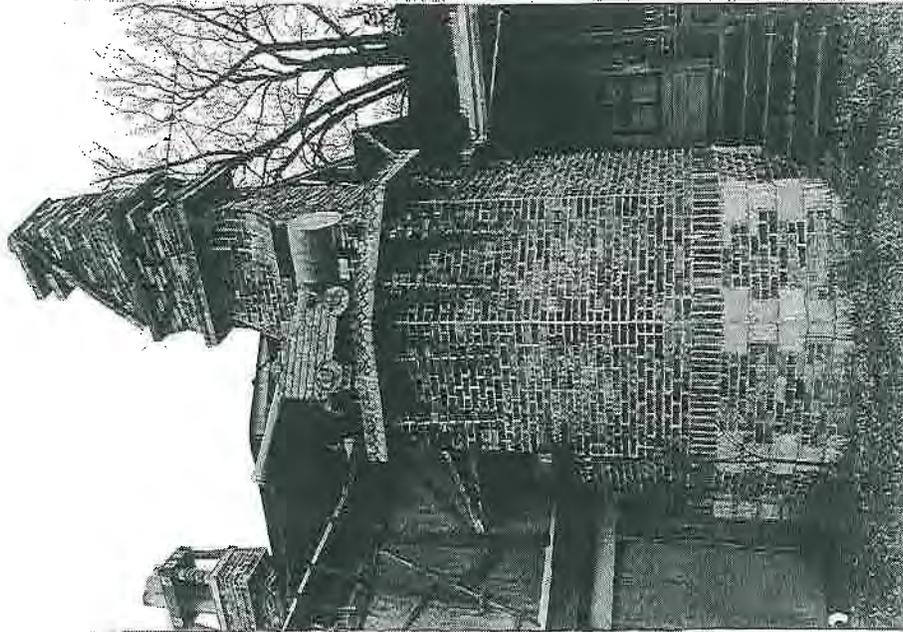


PHOTO A8:4
Detail of house on Linden Street, in process of being covered with a masonry fantasy



PHOTO A8: 5
House on DeGraw Road at terminus of Mathews Avenue.

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION, 109 WEST S
E STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625 (609) 292-2023

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO. 1433-002

HISTORIC NAME:
LOCATION: Mathews Avenue
(south of railroad)
MUNICIPALITY: Riverdale
USGS QUAD: Pompton Plains
OWNER/ADDRESS:

COMMON NAME: Mathieu Inc.
BLOCK/LOT
COUNTY: Morris
UTM REFERENCES:
Zone/Northing/Easting

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: ca. 1890s
Source of Date: does not appear on 1887
Morris County Atlas

Architect: Builder:

Style: Industrial Vernacular
Form/Plan Type:

Number of Stories: 2

Foundation: Common Bond brick

Exterior Wall Fabric: Common bond brick

Fenestration: 6/6 with corbeled elliptical arches.
Several large vehicle bays with wooden doors survive.

Roof/Chimneys: Asphalt gable. Main building has gabled wooden clerestory centered on ridge.

Additional Architectural Description:
Running along the railroad track-side of the building is a long shed-roofed frame structure with shiplap siding and cinder block foundation. Large double-leaf wooden freight doors punctuate the facade. The main building is decorated with raised brick panels, pilaster strips and corbeling, although the overall impression is decidedly vernacular and unornamented. Some of the windows have been blocked down and replaced with modern sash. The original one story brick office wing now has a small modern frame entry.

PHOTO Negative File No. A8:3

Map (Indicate North)
See municipal survey map



SITING, BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION, AND RELATED STRUCTURES:

The buildings occupy a large asphalted service yard which contains some ca. 1950's-1960's cinder block and metal service buildings, and a collection of metal storage tanks.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban Suburban Scattered Buildings
Open Space Woodland Residential Agricultural Village
Industrial Downtown Commercial Highway Commercial Other

SIGNIFICANCE:

Despite the prominent appearance of this small industrial complex, local documentary, oral and map sources do not identify it. Further research is needed.

ORIGINAL USE: Industry
PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Poor
REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes Possible No Part of District
THREATS TO SITE: Roads Development Zoning Deterioration
No Threat Other

COMMENTS:

Despite the kinds of alterations one might expect in a building that continues to serve successive industrial uses, integrity is good.

REFERENCES:

RECORDED BY: Robert Guter
ORGANIZATION: ACRITERION

DATE: March-July 1986

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO. 1403-003

HISTORIC NAME:	Reeve Homestead	COMMON NAME:	
LOCATION:	2 Mathews Avenue	BLOCK/LOT	
	Riverdale		
MUNICIPALITY:	Pompton Plains	COUNTY:	Morris
USGS QUAD:		UTM REFERENCES:	
OWNER/ADDRESS:	Schuyler and Zana Ball		Zone/Northing/Easting
	5 Woodward Avenue, Bloomingdale	07403	

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: First third 19th century with Source of Date: see "Significance"
later additions

Architect: Builder:

Style: Vernacular, and Vernacular Greek Revival and Gothic Revival elements Form/Plan Type: Five-bay center-hall, double-pile plan

Number of Stories: 1 1/2 and 2

Foundation: Rubblestone

Exterior Wall Fabric: Clapboard

Fenestration: 2/2 and 6/6, blinds and shutters

Roof/Chimneys: Gable with projecting eaves and boxed gutter. Standing seam metal;
Two interior brick gable-end chimneys.

Additional Architectural Description:

Carpenter's Gothic entry porch with jigsaw balustrade, posts and King-post detail. This porch shields a Greek Revival door with two vertical panels surrounded by simple transom and sidelights. Diversity of clapboard widths can be seen on facade and two-story rear wing. Two full-height pilasters frame the three bays of the west section.

PHOTO

Negative File No. A7:36

Map (Indicate North)

See municipal survey map



JER DEP/ ENVT ENVI MEN PRO ION ICE JLT ANI /IRC NTA VIC
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION, 109 WEST ST STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625 (609) 292 - 2023

SITING, BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION, AND RELATED STRUCTURES:

19th century fence survives. Early 20th century well house and garage. 19th century privy with lattice screen. House sits about 30 feet from river.

Railroad track runs behind house.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban Suburban Scattered Buildings
Open Space Woodland Residential Agricultural Village
Industrial Downtown Commercial Highway Commercial Other

SIGNIFICANCE:

Owners claim house has been in the Reeve family since 1837, at which point a recent deed search stopped. It is identified as a Reeve property on the 1853 map. An interior examination is needed to chart the evolution of the house, but it could date, in small part, from the end of the 18th century. It is locally significant as the home of the Reeve Mad Dog Bite Cure (see continuation sheet). It is architecturally significant for its well-preserved amalgamation of vernacularized stylistic elements.

ORIGINAL USE: Residence

PRESENT USE: Residence

PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent Good

Fair Poor

REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes Possible

No Part of District

THREATS TO SITE: Roads Development

Zoning Deterioration

No Threat Other

COMMENTS:

House, grounds, and accessory buildings present an ensemble of rare integrity. The combination of architectural and local associative significance supports Register status.

REFERENCES:

1853 map
Communication from owner
Undated newspaper article (attached)

RECORDED BY: Robert Guter
ORGANIZATION: ACROTHERION

DATE: March-July 1986

By Emil R. Salvini

Bloomingdale's claim to fame in the last century was the Reeve Mad Dog Bite Cure. If you were bitten by a rabid dog in those days, (and this not have been uncommon) the Reeve cure might have been your only hope. This is the story of the cure.

It was first brought to the public by Mr. David H. Reeve, who was born in 1787 and lived in the Bloomingdale/Butler area. He discovered the cure when his son Israel was bitten by a rabid dog, although it is not clear as to where he secured the formula. In a newspaper interview with the "World Reporter" in 1888, Israel reported, "We do not know where father got his secret, he was a man of few words, and to my knowledge never told any one where he heard of the cure." Mrs. Hetty Ball of Butler, says that it was said that David received the cure from the local Indians. She is David's great-granddaughter.

After David administered the cure to his son, the word spread around and after awhile David was selling the cure to local inhabitants. A rabid dog was a terrifying and common sight in those days.

David Reeve died in 1874 and for three years after that, his wife Sophia administered the cure. She passed on the secret to their son Israel and upon her death, he became the third member of the family to market the Reeve Mad Dog Cure.

Research shows that Israel sold the cure for almost 20 years until he died in 1895. In a newspaper article dated 1890 Israel said, "Father, mother and myself have treated over 500 cases."

Another article from a New York paper circa 1885 reads:

"Pasteur's Rival in New Jersey"

The Reeve family of Bloomingdale has a cure for Hydrophobia

Over 500 people bitten by dogs have been treated by father, mother and son...

Israel C. Reeve is the third and present physician using the remedy. He has had the secret for 6 years. The medicine taken is a yellow powder. A tablespoon is taken in molasses each morning for 9 days. The stomach, it is claimed, should be empty and nothing is to be eaten for 6 hours after taking the drug. The Reeves stipulate that for a period of 3 weeks after that, no grease, pepper, or salt shall be eaten. Nothing cold should be taken and the patient's diet should be



HOME OF THE FAMOUS
REEVE MAD DOG BITE CURE
Established 70 Years
This Remedy Has Never Failed
P. O. Box 80
BLOOMINGDALE, NEW JERSEY
Telephone 26 11

The Dog Bite postcard.

limited to buttermilk, gruel, bread and molasses with a drink of warm tea for 3 months. No liquor or tobacco should be taken for six months.

The patients come from New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson, Montclair, Hacketstown, Bloomfield etc. Several have come from Rockland,

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Orange, and Westchester Counties. The cure was also sought out from people as far as Detroit and St. Louis.

I have come across many newspaper articles of that era about Israel and his cure. One amusing account told of a Mr. T. Smith from Montclair, N.J. His horse was bitten by a mad dog and he sought to secure the remedy. Mr. Reeve did not want to degrade his secret so he refused. When Mr. Smith explained to Israel that he truly loved his horse, Mr. Reeve gave in and sold him the magic powder. The horse was cured.

Upon Israel's death in 1886, his widow sold the cure until 1904 when she passed away. At that time her daughter, Camilla, began to sell the cure. Camilla W. Reeve De Bow advertised the cure in many local papers. The cure had several advantages over Mr. Pasteur's. One was that it was taken orally and not through inoculations. The second was that it took only nine days while Pasteur's took 24 to 28 days.

Mrs. De Bow also produced a brochure that tells about the cure, and had a list of testimonials. The brochure was printed around 1910, and had a matching post card and envelope. All three pieces showed a picture of the house where Camilla lived and made the cure. The house still stands today and is owned by Mrs. Helly Ball, Camilla's daughter. Mrs. Ball said that when she was a child her mother would prepare the mixture in a second floor room. It was a very secretive affair and she was never allowed to see it produced.

She remembers that the mixture was sold in a plain brown bottle and was accompanied by a small instruction sheet. The price? In 1910 it was yours for \$25.

Mrs. Ball also said that in 1910 her mother met in New York with Mr. Pasteur. That fact has not been confirmed at the writing of this article.

When Camilla Reeve De Bow died, the Reeve Mad Dog Bite Cure died with her. Why didn't her daughter carry on the tradition? She said that the last few years that her mother sold the cure there was very little interest or demand. Like many "granny" cures of the previous century it no longer had a place in a changing world. It's a part of our past and worth remembering.

Emil Salvini is the current president of the North Jersey Highlands Historical Society and will contribute articles that will appear regularly concerning the Trends' area's history and "the way we were."