

~~W. R. R. R. R. R.~~ Cranbury

1980

- National Register of ~~Historic~~ Historic Places Inventory -  
Nomination form

pgs. 10

no p.l.

ML000009 Z

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Cranbury Historic District

AND OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main Street, Symmes Court, Scott Avenue, Park and Wesley Place,  
Westminster Place, Maplewood Avenue, Bunker Hill Road, and  
Prospect Street

CITY TOWN

Cranbury Township

VICINITY OF

-- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
15th

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

023

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Multiple - see list of owners

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Middlesex County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

John F. Kennedy Square

CITY TOWN

New Brunswick

STATE

New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

Environmental Protection Agency  
Determination of Eligibility

DATE

1973, 1977

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation - 109 West State Street

CITY TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cranberry Village was established in the colonial period and functioned as a stage stop along the Philadelphia - Amboy (New York Harbor) route. A real estate advertisement in 1775 describes a 400 acre property "situate in the town of Cranberry, in the county of Middlesex, adjoining the stageroad leading to Amboy ferry..." (New York Journal 1/5/1775.)

Another property advertisement for Cranberry in the Pennsylvania Gazette in 1775 discusses advantages of the house in specific, but is applicable to the town in general - "land at Cranberry... which is situated along the public road, about the center between this city (NY) and Philadelphia. It is a good stand for trade, a store having been kept there many years with advantage, which is likely to increase by the establishment of a weekly stage through Cranberry." (Pennsylvania Gazette, 1/4/1775.)

The Cranberry Mills, erected by Thomas Grubbs about 1737, established the nucleus of the village. Up for sale in 1777 the mill is described as being "on a good stream, within twelve miles of water carriage to New York, and fifteen to Philadelphia, is an excellent stand for county work, well situated, and in good order for merchants work, having two pair of stones, one pair which is very good for making flour... The lot...consists of about three acres and a half of the best meadow in the county, on which are erected, besides the mills, a comfortable dwelling home, convenient shop for a cooper, and a still and a malt house which are not quite finished." (Pennsylvania Evening Post, 8/23/1777.) The mill was destroyed by fire in 1860, rebuilt, and subsequently destroyed again. The site of the mill is on the west side of Main Street, south of Cranbury Brook, within the Firehouse property and Memorial Park.

The village developed around the mills and as late as 1810 contained only 18 houses.

The major development of Cranberry was during the second and third quarters of the 19th century in the Jacksonian period.

Gordon's Gazetteer indicates that in the 1830's Cranberry was "on the turnpike road leading from Bordentown to South Amboy, sixteen miles from the former, 185 miles from W.C. (Washington City, and 15 miles from Trenton; pleasantly situated in a level county, and light sandy soil; contains a Presbyterian church with cupola and bell, an academy, a grist mill, two tanneries, three taverns, two stores, and from 60 to 80 dwellings. Cranberry brook, tributary of the Millstone river, flows through the town." (Gordon, Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey. 1834, p. 124)

# SIGNIFICANCE

RPOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

CIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cranbury is the best preserved 19th century village in Middlesex County. Its collection of fine frame buildings ranging from the late 18th century to the early 20th century project an excellent portrayal of the 19th century.

While there are many small 19th century cross-road villages or small mill towns in New Jersey, few are in such an undisturbed environment as that of Cranbury.

Most of the buildings in Cranbury can be portrayed as vernacular Greek Revival or Victorian although many exhibit features which appear to have been influenced, if not directed, by the masters. Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles and details are all in evidence throughout the town - albeit sometimes in awkward dimensions.

Rather than just reflecting the quality of an architect/builder, however, Cranbury embodies the hopes and aspirations of the nation in the mid-19th century. Optimism, faith, and reasoned growth are part of what Cranbury represented and continues to represent.

It is this assemblage of buildings - historically and architecturally - which makes Cranbury an attractive entity unique from any other contemporary villages. It is this identity which sets Cranbury aside from its nearby surroundings of look-alike suburbs and modern commercial developments creating a significant historical village.

### Architecture

The architectural styles in Cranbury range from the Federal period to the 20th century bungalow. Primarily vernacular in design the buildings nonetheless project an aesthetic appearance and many fine details.

NR-8-300A  
11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Cranbury Historic District, Middlesex County, NJ

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Description (continued)

About ten years later Cranbury is described thusly: "The village is principally built on a single street and contains two Presbyterian churches, two academies, 73 dwellings and about 600 inhabitants." (Barber and Howe. Historical Collections of New Jersey. 1844, p. 319.)

Today there are some 218 major buildings in the Cranbury Historic District. Less than 20% of these structures were built after the 1930's. Twenty-one houses were constructed around the beginning of the 19th century, 87 in the mid-19th century, 21 in the late 19th century, and 49 in the early 20th century. The major period of construction in Cranbury was from 1840 to the 1880's.

R-8-300A  
11/78)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Cranbury Historic District, Middlesex County, NJ

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

1

**Significance (continued)**

The Federal style buildings in Cranbury are best identified by the elliptical doorway motif. The Brainerd Institute, 53 and 85 North Main and 47 South Main Streets all exhibit this feature in Cranbury and date from the mid-19th century - quite late for Federal details. Earlier buildings such as the Cranbury Inn, 68 North Main Street, 16 and 49 South Main Street do not have this feature although their form and interior detailing does suggest the Federal period. The house at 43 South Main Street has an early Federal form, but also features an added pattern-book Greek Revival entrance portico.

The Greek Revival building is the most predominant form in Cranbury. Fine examples such as the First Presbyterian Church, 10 Park Place, 26 Maplewood Avenue, and 11 North Main Street rival the best Greek Revival buildings in New Jersey. Numerous other mid-19th century dwellings in Cranbury represent the vernacular of the Greek Revival style at its best. The building as constructed in Cranbury was a five bay, center hall building or a small three bay, side hall unit. The side and fanlight doorways are typical as are the simple paneled frieze and corner boards. Examples are at 6 Westminister Place and 5 South Main Street. Other Greek Revival buildings in Cranbury are at 1-5 Scott Avenue; 11, 31, 42, and 54 North Main and 12, 16, 41, and 57 South Main.

Carpenter Gothic features are not uncommon in Cranbury, but generally are incorporated in buildings with other features. Two of the clearest Victorian Gothic buildings are at 5 Prospect and 10 South Main Streets.

The Italianate form is represented by 1 Prospect Street, 39 South Main Street, 95 North Main Street, and the S. Jernee House at 9 Park Place.

Conservative building forms held true in Cranbury for nearly half a century and as a result fanciful later Victorian buildings are uncommon in the village. Two exceptions are the Queen Anne style buildings erected for the Silvers in the 1880's. The one is at 1 North Main and the other at 46 North Main. A simpler example of the style is the house at 101 North Main Street. Colonial Revival buildings are represented by 40 South Main Street and the Old Cranbury Schoolhouse.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Cranbury Historic District, Middlesex County, NJ

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

**Significance (continued)**

Several 20th century bungalows are also in the district. Two particularly fine examples are side by side at 86 and 88 North Main Street and were built in the 1920's.

In total, Cranbury has a fine collection of architecturally significant buildings. Not all of them have been pinpointed in this essay which singles out the finest and the most representative. The major visual impact of the Cranbury District, however, is its overall ambiance. Although differences in styles and details are common from building to building the overall scale and massing of the structures are uniform providing aesthetic streetscapes throughout the village.

Commerce

Main Street in Cranbury has functioned as the commercial center of the village from the 19th century. Many of the mid and late 19th century buildings are still extant, although the integrity of some have been jeopardized over recent years with unsympathetic alterations to the first floor store front facades. Examples of these commercial buildings include 60 North Main Street, 11 North Main Street, 13 North Main Street, 31 North Main Street, 33 North Main, 55 North Main, Wayfarer's Inn at 77 and 79 North Main Street, and 14 South Main Street, in addition to the 18th - 19th century Cranbury Inn, a functioning inn and tavern for nearly two hundred years.

Originally owned by Colonel Richard Hardley of the New Jersey Militia in 1800, Peter Perrine built a house next to the tavern. This house was converted into the U.S. Hotel in 1808 by Captain Timothy Horner. Around 1920 the name became the Cranbury Inn.

The First National Bank was organized in April 1884 and occupied its present building since 1898. The Cranbury Savings and Loan Association was founded in 1921.

The first newspaper in Cranbury was the Cranbury News by R. M. Stults on January 5, 1882. The Cranbury Press established in 1885 was founded by George W. Burroughs and is located at 13 North Main Street.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Cranbury Historic District, Middlesex County, NJ

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

3

**Significance (continued)**

The firehouse is built on the property where the old grist mill and a saw mill stood. In 1948 the site next to the brook became the Memorial Park. Cranbury has another new park off Maplewood Avenue.

Over the years Cranbury has had its share of blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and carriage manufacturers; grocery shops, bakeries, shoe and boot shop of Daniel Hoagland, and the Spice Mill established in 1865 by John S. Davison and later known as the J. S. Silvers Bros. and Co. which was destroyed by fire.

**Military**

**GEORGE WASHINGTON IN CRANBURY**

Before the Battle of Monmouth, General LaFayette wrote to General Washington on June 25, 1778: "The detachment is in a wood covered by Cranberry Creek, and I believe extremely safe." A letter from Colonel Alexander Hamilton which LaFayette enclosed in the foregoing, was dated "Doctor Stile's House, Cranberry Town 9 o'clock".

Early the following morning LaFayette wrote again to General Washington before proceeding. During the day General Washington came to Cranbury where he wrote to LaFayette and General Lee. The intense heat of the weather from which the troops were suffering and a storm that came on prevented General Washington from advancing beyond Cranbury on June 26, 1778.

**Religion**

With the Dutch, the Friends, and French Huguenots in this section, the Presbyterians made an agreement to join the church of England persuasion, and a building was erected and used for services by the various groups. In 1738, the Presbyterians sold their interest in the building.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

4

**Significance (continued)**

In July 1739 James Rothead conveyed to Coert Van Voorhees and Thomas Story a lot adjoining the mill property "to be the use of the Elders and Deacons of the Presbyterian Church of Cranbury for erecting a house of worship."

A church was erected in 1740. A new building was built in 1788 on the site of the present church which was built in 1839 and enlarged in 1859. The first chapel was built in 1878 and brought to its present state in 1960.

The Second Presbyterian Church of Cranbury was founded in 1838. The two churches were joined in 1935. The Second Church building was razed and a monument erected on the site. Its Westminster Cemetery continues to be the burying ground for many families.

The lake, and cemetery adjoining the First Church have been named for David Brainerd who preached to the Indians in or near Cranbury during the summer of 1745.

The cornerstone of the present Methodist Church was laid in 1848. Prior to that occasional services were held from 1817 to 1848 in private homes.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see continuation sheets)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA 175

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

QUADRANGLE NAME Hightstown

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1: 24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 | 5,4,0 | 5,4,0 | 4,4 | 6,1 | 4,6,0

B 1,8 | 5,4,0 | 6,3,0 | 4,4 | 6,1 | 9,7,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,8 | 5,4,0 | 8,1,0 | 4,4 | 6,1 | 9,6,0

D 1,8 | 5,4,1 | 0,3,0 | 4,4 | 6,2 | 5,4,0

E 1,8 | 5,4,0 | 7,2,0 | 4,4 | 6,2 | 6,5,0

F 1,8 | 5,4,0 | 7,6,0 | 4,4 | 6,2 | 7,6,0

G 1,8 | 5,4,0 | 8,9,0 | 4,4 | 6,2 | 7,2,0

H 1,8 | 5,4,1 | 5,5,0 | 4,4 | 6,3 | 8,2,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

I 1 8 5 4 1 7 3 0 4 4 6 3 8 4 0

J 1 8 5 4 1 5 0 0 4 4 6 2 6 9 0

K 1 8 5 4 1 6 2 0 4 4 6 2 6 6 0

L 1 8 5 4 1 0 4 0 4 4 6 1 6 7 0

M 1 8 5 4 1 3 5 0 4 4 6 1 6 5 0

N 1 8 5 4 1 3 4 0 4 4 6 1 5 6 0

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

O 1 8 5 4 0 9 4 0 4 4 6 1 5 7 0

P 1 8 5 4 0 8 9 0 4 4 6 1 4 2 0

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ruth Walsh

Terry Karschner, Historic Preservation Specialist  
Office of Historic Preservation

ORGANIZATION

Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

DATE

3/1975, 1/1979

STREET & NUMBER

4 Park Place

TELEPHONE

(609) 292-2023

CITY OR TOWN

Cranbury

STATE

New Jersey

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS

NATIONAL     

STATE   x  

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE *Acting* Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection *8/9/79*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

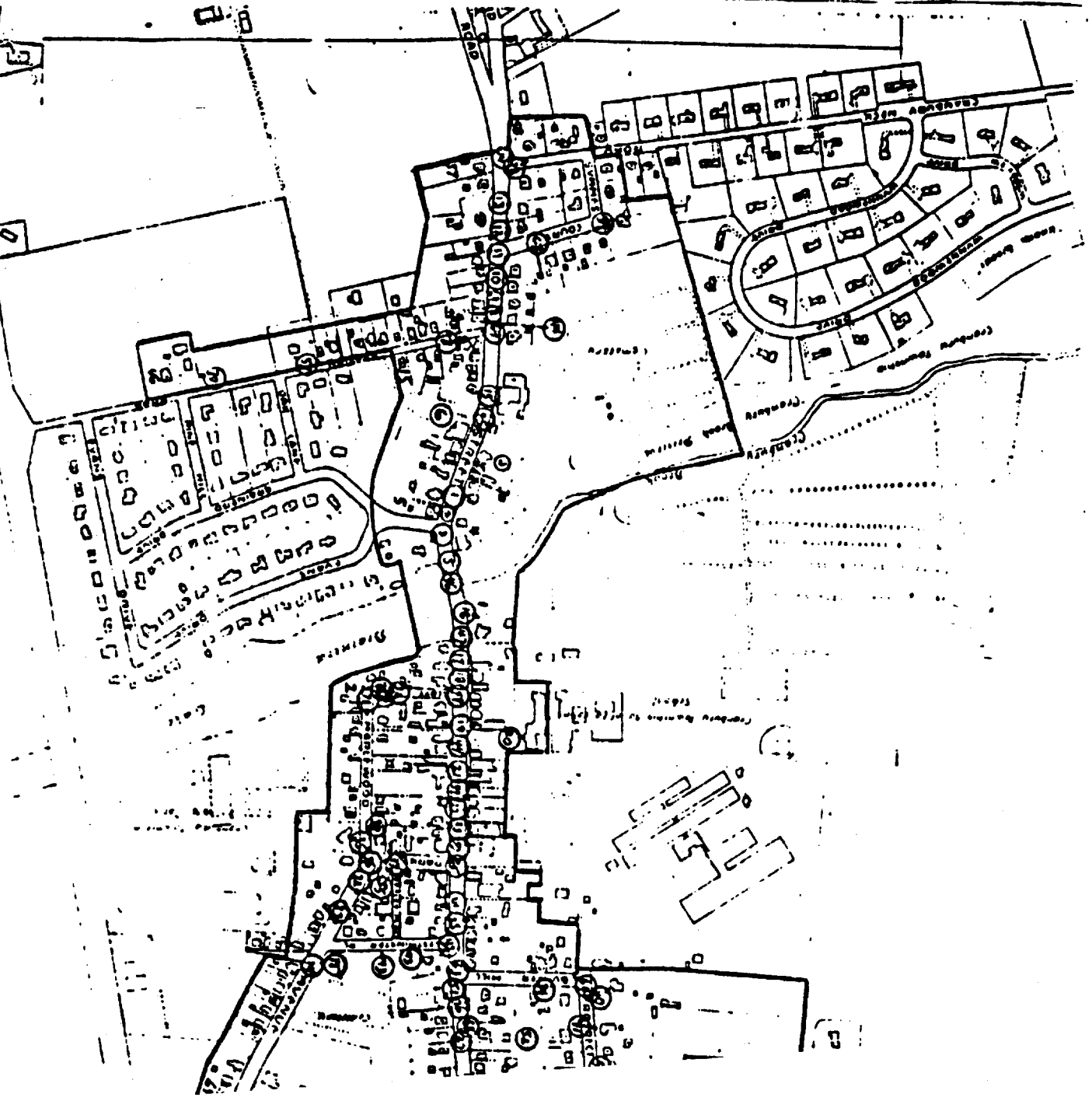
DATE

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

N. 3/4 U.S. ROUTE N 130



MOUNTAIN VIEW  
COUNTRY CLUB

COUNTRY CLUB  
MOUNTAIN VIEW

COUNTRY CLUB

100