

Five interpretive signs were installed around the Hopewell Valley in 2018, courtesy of the Hopewell Valley Historical Society. Intended to inform, educate, and raise awareness among local residents and tourists, these National Park Service-style signs were placed at choice landmarks in highly visible and easily accessible locations around Hopewell Township.

The signage program was funded by a bequest from the late Catherine Hoch and by a grant from the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission. These signs will help Hopewell Valley residents and visitors travel back through time and see how these areas looked and functioned in the past for a better understanding of life here in the present.

Hart's Corner Schoolhouse

From 1907 until 1936 the one-room Hart's Corner Schoolhouse served students of Bear District No. 12. From the late 1920s until the mid-1960s, when the adjoining municipal complex opened, the schoolhouse also functioned as a meeting hall, office space and occasional courtroom for the township government. Its final use in the 1970s was as the office of the Township's Superintendent of Roads.



In 2000 Hopewell Township moved the building some 200 feet to the north to allow for enlargement of the Scotch Road/Washington Crossing-Pennington Road intersection.

Located at the intersection of Scotch Road and Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, close to the Hopewell Township municipal building.

Woolsey Park

Hopewell Township created the 167-acre Woolsey Park in 1998 on land purchased through the State of New Jersey's Green Acres Program. Named in 2016 for the local Woolsey family who settled the property in the early 18th century, the park contains a Veterans Memorial, a 9/11 Memorial, and hiking trails developed by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space.

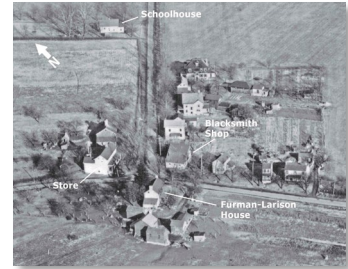


In the park you also can trace the old right-of-way for the Mercer and Somerset Railroad and see the earthen abutments for a trestle which formerly carried the tracks across Woolsey Brook. The M&S Railroad was completed in 1873 and included a stop nearby at Woolsey Station where the railroad crossed Washington Crossing-Pennington Road. Jacobs Creek Road is laid on top of the abandoned railroad bed.

Located on Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, near Jacobs Creek Road.

Marshall's Corner

Known as Furman's Corner in the 18th century, this road intersection took on the name of Marshall's Corner around 1820, when William Marshall purchased land and established a general store here. The village of Marshall's Corner reached its peak as a focal point in the township in the mid- to late 19th century, with a stone schoolhouse, a store, and a blacksmith shop. While several of the village's older buildings are no longer present, four 19th-century and two early 20th-century houses still survive in the settlement's historic core.



In June 1778, the Continental Army halted here on its march from Valley Forge, and then turned and headed for the momentous pitched Battle of Monmouth Courthouse where they forced the British off the field.

Located at the intersection of Pennington-Hopewell Road (Route 654) and Marshalls Corner-Woodville Road (Route 612), just off Route 31.

Mount Rose Distillery

The "Whiskey House" is the only surviving building of the cider and applejack distillery operating at this site from before 1840 until 1920, when Prohibition closed the operation down. The distillery site originally was part of a 166-acre farm.



This brick building and its associated archaeological site were entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1996, and Hopewell Township acquired the property in 1998. The age and identity of the building are uncertain. It most likely dates from the late 19th or early 20th century, and to have been used for storage and office space.

Located adjacent to the Lawrence-Hopewell Trail on Pennington-Rocky Hill Road, west of Hopewell-Princeton Road.

St. Michael's Orphanage

St. Michael's Orphanage was operated as a children's orphanage by Catholic Diocese of Trenton from 1898 until 1973. In addition to the Gothic-style main building, the orphanage expanded over the years to include a farm operation covering almost 500 acres, a chapel, a nursery, a gymnasium and a boys' building. At its peak in the 1930s, up to 450 children were in residence, but as foster homes came into vogue in the 1940s the orphanage took in fewer children. In 1948, only 250 children lived there and by 1973, when the facility closed, just 56 remained.



The diocese demolished the imposing brick and stone buildings soon afterward, leaving just bulldozed foundations and overgrown driveways in their wake. The property is now owned and stewarded by the D & R Greenway Land Trust.

Located on Hopewell-Princeton Road just north of Hopewell Borough.



HART'S CORNER SCHOOLHOUSE

Teacher Bessie D. Sked pictured with her class next to the Hart's Corner Schoolhouse on June 19, 1912
[Hopewell Valley Historical Society]

30 Years A Neighborhood Classroom

Rural Hopewell Township at the turn of the 20th century boasted as many as 14 separate school districts. From 1907 until 1936 the one-room Hart's Corner Schoolhouse served students of Bear District No. 12. It was the sixth in a series of schools that existed in this part of the township beginning in the 1770s. Erected in 1906, this schoolhouse replaced the old Bear School located roughly two miles west of here on Washington Crossing-Pennington Road.

Most of the school's pupils lived within walking distance. Initially, the Hart's Corner Schoolhouse accommodated children from kindergarten through 8th grade, but with public school education increasingly consolidated in larger village-based schools, only kindergarten through 4th grade students attended here in the early 1930s. The last classes met in the spring of 1936.

From the late 1920s until the mid-1960s, when the adjoining municipal complex opened, the schoolhouse also functioned as a meeting hall, office space and occasional courtroom for the township government. Its final use in the 1970s was as the office of the Township's

Superintendent of Roads. In 2000 Hopewell Township moved the building some 200 feet to the north to allow for enlargement of the Scotch Road/Washington Crossing-Pennington Road intersection.



ABOVE: This school bus, owned and operated by Paul Astalosh, transported Hopewell Township schoolchildren in the mid-20th century; photograph of 1949 [Warznak family]



RIGHT: The Hart's Corner Schoolhouse in the process of being moved in 2000 [Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission]



A class photograph, circa 1910, shows the schoolhouse with its original pair of front doors before these were enclosed with a porch and then replaced by a single large door with transom and sidelights [Hopewell Valley Historical Society]



The Hart's Corner Schoolhouse, circa 1930, with an enclosed front vestibule and a cast-iron, hand-press well pump nearby outside [Hopewell Valley Historical Society]



HOPEWELL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This sign was funded in part by a bequest from Catherine Hoch and by the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Department of State.



WOOLSEY PARK

Woolsey Park and the Woolsey Family

Hopewell Township created this 167-acre park on land purchased through the State of New Jersey's Green Acres Program in 1998. Named for the Woolsey family in 2016, the park presently contains a Veterans Memorial, a 9/11 Memorial and hiking trails developed by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. The park derives its name from the local Woolsey family who settled the property in the early 18th century.

It is a portion of the 218-acre tract that George Woolsey settled in about 1699 after arriving from Jamaica, Queens County in the Colony of New York. Woolsey's purchase was one of the earliest of several made by local settlers migrating to Hopewell Township from Long Island. Purchases were arranged through the West Jersey Society, a group of London Quakers and intermediate land speculators.

After George Woolsey's death six more generations of the Woolsey family continued living on the land. The family sold the farm in 1929, making it one of the longest tenures of a single family on any tract of land in Hopewell Township. Around 1765, George Woolsey's son Jeremiah built the brick house which still stands nearby on privately owned land and is listed in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. Jeremiah Woolsey served the American cause in the War of Independence as a recruiter and provisioning official. His son Ephraim also served during the war as a private in the Hunterdon County militia.



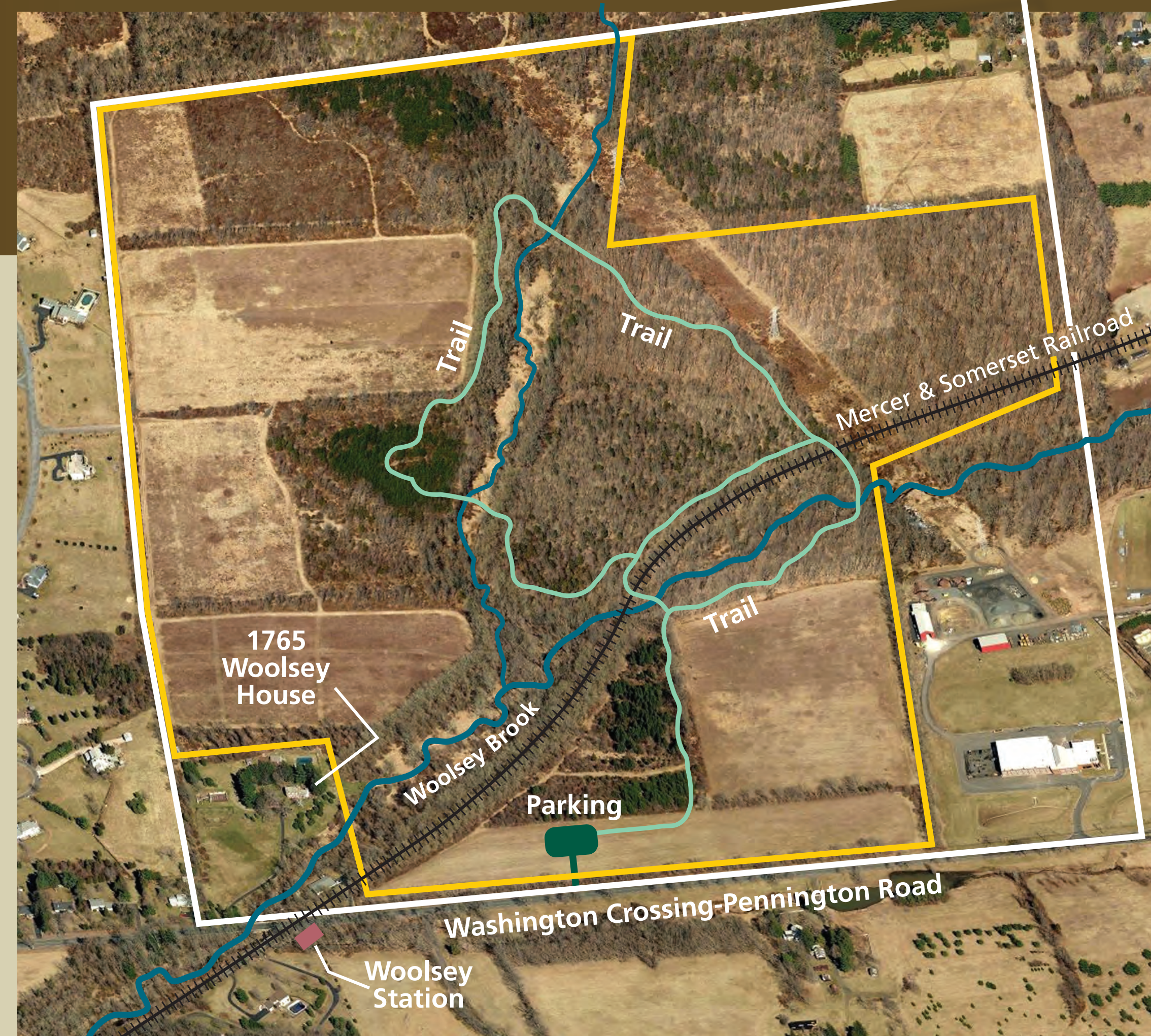
Captain Henry Harrison Woolsey (1836-1864) joined the New Jersey Volunteer Infantry, 5th Regiment, New Jersey Volunteer Infantry, in 1861 and was killed at the siege of Petersburg, Virginia, on June 19, 1864

[New Jersey State Archives]



Jeremiah Woolsey House, built circa 1765, photographed by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936

[Library of Congress]



An aerial view of Woolsey Park showing the park boundary (gold), the original Woolsey farm tract of 1700 (white), the location of the Woolsey House, circa 1765, and the abandoned course of the Mercer & Somerset Railroad that operated from 1873 to 1880. [Bing Maps Aerial]

Mercer and Somerset Railroad

The Mercer and Somerset was the next railroad to be built in Hopewell Township after the 1854 Belvidere line along the river. Chartered by the State Legislature in 1870, the M & S was an attempt by the Pennsylvania Railroad system to capture Philadelphia-New York traffic. The line ran from Somerset, near the confluence of Jacobs Creek and the Delaware River, to the village of Millstone on the Millstone River. It was completed in 1873 and included a stop nearby at Woolsey Station where the railroad crossed Washington Crossing-Pennington Road.

The Mercer and Somerset operated for roughly five years, carrying many passengers to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. Its rival, the

Reading Railroad, also transported Exposition visitors after forcibly crossing the M & S tracks near Hopewell in early January 1876 in an episode known as the Frog War. By 1879, competition from the Reading system had put the M & S out of business. In the following year the right-of-way was sold and the tracks were removed.

Many vestiges of the Mercer and Somerset survive in Hopewell Township today, including Jacobs Creek Road which is laid on top of the abandoned railroad bed. In this park you can trace the old railroad right-of-way and see the earthen abutments for a trestle which formerly carried the tracks across Woolsey Brook.

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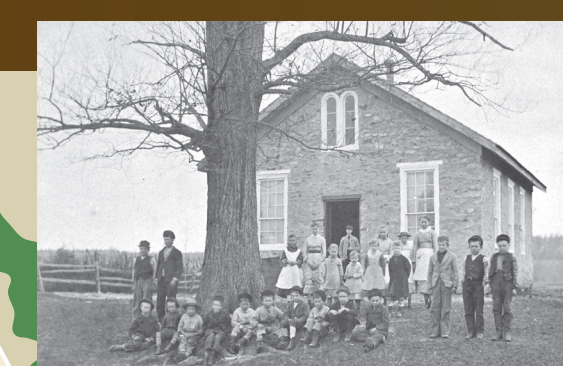
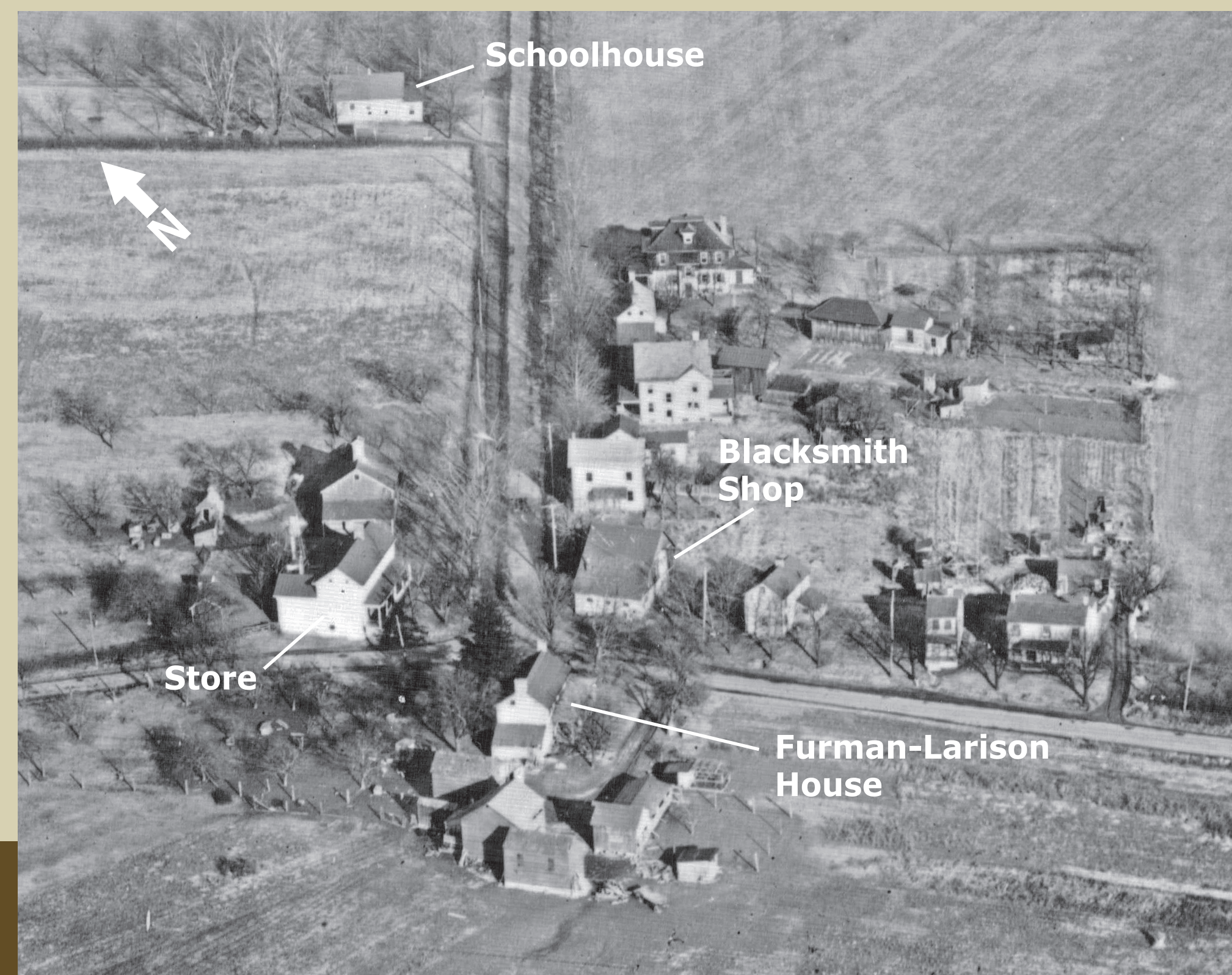
MARSHALL'S CORNER

The Village of Marshall's Corner

The village of Marshall's Corner developed around the intersection formed by three early 18th-century roads: Roger's Road (named for Dr. Roger Parke, owner of land just north of here as early as 1697), heading northwest to Ringoes; the road south to Pennington and Trenton; and the road northeast to Hopewell and the Province Line.

Still standing at the west side of the intersection is the Furman-Larison House, an early 18th-century stone building to which an early 19th-century extension has been added. A stone schoolhouse once stood nearby in the northern corner of this intersection as early as 1752. The present stone schoolhouse at the eastern end of the village, erected in the mid-19th century, is the third one in the village.

With its schoolhouse, a store and a blacksmith shop, the village reached its peak as a focal point in the township in the mid- to late 19th century. While several of the village's older buildings are no longer present, four 19th-century and two early 20th-century houses still survive in the settlement's historic core.



A class photograph at the Marshall's Corner schoolhouse, November 4, 1880
[Hopewell Museum, Alice Blackwell Lewis Collection]



Washington and the Continental Army in Hopewell Township in July 1778

Washington Rallying the Troops at Monmouth
[Emanuel Leutze, circa 1851-54, Doe Memorial Library, UCLA]

In the spring of 1778, the Continental Army was encamped at Valley Forge and the British occupied Philadelphia. France entered the American Revolution on the American side. The British immediately chose to evacuate Philadelphia. In mid-June they crossed into New Jersey on their way to New York. The Continental Army left Valley Forge and crossed the Delaware at Coryell's Ferry, now Lambertville. On June 23 they left their camp at Mount Airy and marched towards Princeton. En route, the 12,000-strong, four-mile-long column halted at Furman's (now Marshall's) Corner, while they awaited further intelligence on British movements.

The day before this march, General Charles Lee had surveyed the ground around Furman's Corner and wrote General Washington that it was a favorable site for a battle. However, then hearing that the British were moving east toward Allentown, the Continental Army turned northeast at Furman's Corner by the "stone school house on the road that led to Rocky Hill." They camped that night and the next night in the vicinity of the Baptist Meeting House in Hopewell. On June 28 they forced the British off the field at the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse.



The Marshall's Corner blacksmith shop, circa 1920
[Hopewell Museum, Alice Blackwell Lewis Collection]

The Marshall's Corner store, circa 1910
[Hopewell Valley Historical Society]



This aerial view of Marshall's Corner taken in the late 1920s shows two important buildings that are no longer standing: the store of William Marshall, established around 1820; and the blacksmith shop of John M. Simmons, also dating from the early 1820s
[Fairchild Aerial Survey Maps, New Jersey State Archives]

Named for William Marshall, Esq.

Known as Furman's Corner in the 18th century, this road intersection took on the name of Marshall's Corner around 1820, when William Marshall purchased land and established a general store here. From 1830 until 1836, Marshall served this district as a State legislator and local Justice of the Peace. In 1844 Marshall led a westward train of wagons to the banks of the Mississippi River where his Hopewell friends and relatives founded the towns of Rock Island and Cordova in Illinois. William Marshall was the uncle of James Marshall, who gained national notoriety as the one of the first discoverers of gold in California in 1848.

HOPEWELL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MOUNT ROSE DISTILLERY

This brick building and its associated archaeological site were entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The township acquired the property in 1998 through a land gift from Toll Brothers, the developer of nearby Hopewell Hunt. It subsequently became the first local landmark designated by Hopewell Township under its 2000 historic preservation ordinance. The age and identity of the brick building are uncertain. It is thought most likely to date from the late 19th or early 20th century and to have been used for storage and office space.

The distillery site was part of a 166-acre farm which included the farmhouse standing across Pennington-Rocky Hill Road. Randal Drake acquired the property from his brother Andrew B. Drake, also a distiller, in 1840. The distillery had been previously owned by the Drakes' uncles, Benjamin, Andrew, and Jacob Blackwell, who owned taverns in Trenton and Hopewell. Nathaniel H. Drake, a nephew of Randal, purchased the property in 1876 and operated the distillery until his death in 1908. Thereafter, George Savidge was the proprietor until 1920, when Prohibition closed the operation down.



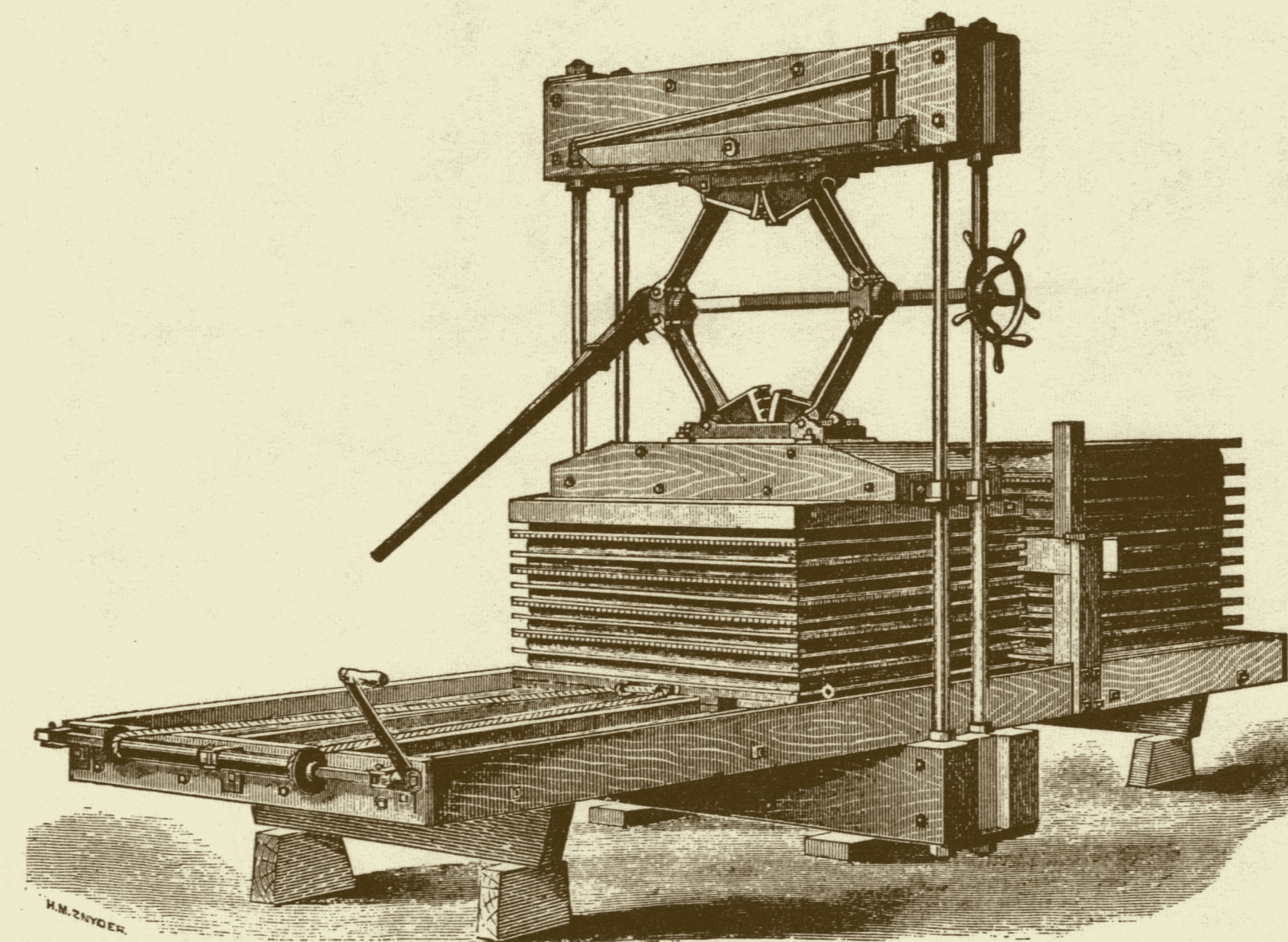
A view of the so-called "Whiskey House," the only surviving building at the distillery, prior to its restoration by local craftsmen in 2004
[Hopewell Township Historic Preservation Commission]

Contents of Cider Still House viz	
Nine casks of Peach Brandy	36000
Fifty gallons of Wine	10 00
Fourteen empty Barrels	13 00
Lot of empty Barrels	9 00
House power & Box in Cider House	35 00
Three Cider presses	50 00
Twelve Cisterns	60 00
Empty Casks	30 00
One Still and fixtures	150 00
amount	\$ 4,064.42
appraised by us	Josiah Cook
	Walter A. Hunt

The two farms near Mount Rose belonging to the late Nathaniel H. Drake were sold by T. D. Durling, executor, on Thursday last. The farm heretofore known as the Liscomb T. Blackwell farm, comprising 80 acres, brought \$19.20 per acre and was purchased by Israel Wright. The homestead, where Mr. Drake resided, comprising 185 acres, brought thirty-five dollars per acre and was purchased by George Savidge of Mount Rose.

CHAMPION CIDER PRESS,

MEDIUM SIZE (SINGLE), FOR HAND OR POWER, WITH



PATENT STATIONARY DOUBLE PLATFORM.

LEFT: An excerpt from the inventory of distillery owner Randal Drake's estate in 1852 which lists the contents of the "cider and still house"
[New Jersey State Archives]

BELOW: A newspaper account of the sale of Nathaniel Drake's two adjoining farms following his death in 1908; the more valuable property bought by George Savidge included the distillery
[Hopewell Herald, February 5, 1908]



COPPER, TIN-PLATE AND SHEET IRON SMITHING.

CATHARINE FAUSSETT respectfully informs her friends and the public generally, that she continues to carry on the above business at the old stand, for many years in the occupancy of her late husband, opposite the Episcopal Church, Warren Street, Trenton, where any thing in the above line will be furnished at the shortest notice and upon the most reasonable terms. The public may be assured that she will employ none but experienced workmen in her establishment.—A quantity of ready made ware always kept on hand.

STILLS made and repaired in the very best manner.

N. B. Cash or trade given for old Copper, Brass, Pewter, Lead and Iron.
Trenton, Oct 21, 1833.

ABOVE: An advertisement for a copper still of simple design similar to what may have been in use at the Mount Rose Distillery
[Daily True American, October 21, 1833]

LEFT: An advertisement for a common type of cider press in use around the time Nathaniel Drake took over the Mount Rose Distillery in 1876
[Weiss, Harry B., The History of Applejack, 1954]

Apples & Distilling

From the earliest settlement of New Jersey, orchards of grafted apple trees were an important component of most farms. Because apples did not keep very long, farmers converted most of the crop to cider, also distilling much of it into apple whisky or brandy. Farmers would typically bring their apples to a local distiller each fall and exchange the crop for cider or spirits already made at the site. A popular drink of the colonial period was "syder royale," which was a mixture of cider and rum. Jersey cider, particularly from Newark, enjoyed widespread notoriety and was exported overseas. Other orchard fruits, such as peaches, were also distilled into brandy.

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ST. MICHAEL'S ORPHANAGE

Caring for Homeless Children in the Countryside



The graduating class of 1937 poses on the orphanage front steps holding their diplomas and accompanied by nuns and a priest [Hopewell Museum]

For much of the 20th century, St. Michael's Orphanage stood in these peaceful surroundings as one of the region's largest charitable facilities. In 1890, Michael J. O'Farrell, the first bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Trenton, conceived of a children's orphanage for the diocese and led efforts to acquire a 180-acre tract on the outskirts of Hopewell. However, O'Farrell died four years later, and responsibility for completing the project shifted to his successor, Bishop James A. McFaul. Construction of the main orphanage building began in 1896 and it opened on July 2, 1898 with an initial group of 80 children from St. Mary's Home in New Brunswick.



The orphanage complex would expand over the years to include a farm operation covering almost 500 acres, a chapel (built in 1904), a nursery (1914), a gymnasium (1922) and a boys' building (1933). At its peak in the 1930s, up to 450 children were in residence, but as foster homes came into vogue in the 1940s the orphanage took in fewer children. In 1948, only 250 children lived there and by 1973, when the facility closed, just 56 remained. The diocese demolished the imposing brick and stone buildings soon afterward, leaving just bulldozed foundations and overgrown driveways in their wake. The St. Michael's property is now owned and stewarded by the D & R Greenway Land Trust.



ABOVE: A vintage postcard view of staff and children lining the driveway at St. Michael's Orphanage, circa 1920 [Hopewell Museum]



ABOVE: An undated photograph showing a group of orphan boys decked out in sailor suits posing on the front steps of the main building [Hopewell Museum]

The St. Michael's Orphanage Band was invited to perform at events all around the local area in the 1920s and 1930s [Hopewell Valley Historical Society]



The Gothic-style main building of St. Michael's Orphanage around the time of its opening in July of 1898 [Hopewell Valley Historical Society]

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