

Kennedy Martin Stelle Farmstead National Register Nomination 2001

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1. Overview and Significance

Picturesquely sited on the banks of the Passaic River only minutes north of Interstate Route 78, the Kennedy–Martin–Stelle Farmstead remains a tranquil, and historically significant, vestige of Bernards Township's rural past amidst the commercial and residential development now engulfing the area.

The property is noted for two prominent 18th-century owners: Rev. Samuel Kennedy, renowned local minister and educator, and Col. Ephraim Martin, American Revolutionary War soldier and New Jersey legislator.

However, its significance is primarily architectural and due to its **large early barn**, the centerpiece of a diverse complex of vernacular frame buildings that range from the 1700s to the 1900s in date. The four-bay eastern half of the main barn (possibly constructed as early as the 1760s and certainly no later than about 1800 when the property was owned by Oliver Stelle), is a notable early example of the English barn type, exhibiting two rare surviving features: hewn common rafters with pegged wind braces and a “dropped” or lower level stable at one end. A four-bay extension to the west, also of mortise-and-tenon, hewn-timber construction, was added c. 1840 utilizing the frame of a smaller English barn. Despite this addition and other alterations contemporary with the construction of the adjoining dairy barn in the early 20th century, the original English barn can be readily distinguished and remains relatively well preserved.

Five other structures built before 1850 contribute to the property's architectural significance: the farmhouse, the wagon house, the cowshed, the icehouse and the well.

With its double-pile, laterally expanded plan and Dutch framing system, the one and one-half story farmhouse typifies the region's early domestic architecture. Its main block may date in part to before the Revolutionary War and is undoubtedly no later than the early 1800s. Despite extensively remodeling in the Victorian era and again in the Colonial Revival mode around the middle of the last century, the house retains some notable early fabric like the beaded clapboards attached with hand-wrought nails visible in the attic, and more may remain intact behind later finishes.

The **wagon house** and **cowshed** similarly exhibit some 20th-century alterations but remain good examples of the small outbuildings once characteristic of the region's farmsteads. Featuring gable-end entries and upper-level loft with built-in grain bins, the mostly hewn-timber wagon house displays a combination of Dutch and English framing techniques and appears to date c. 1790-1820. The small 5-bay cowshed, also of mortise-and-tenon construction, was built in two parts around the second quarter of the 19th century.

Likewise, representative of the ancillary structures once common on area farms, **the stone well** and **brick ice pit** probably predate 1850, although the latter subsequently was converted into a pump house, and the frame superstructures of both appear to be 20th-century work.

The farmstead's other buildings date to the 20th century and do not contribute to its architectural significance. The complex underwent extensive renovations as a dairy operation during the first third of the 20th century when William R Codington and his wife Rachel, Oliver Stelle's great-granddaughter, owed the property.

Outbuildings dating to that period include the frame gambrel-roofed dairy barn and concrete silo adjoining the main barn, along with three small frame sheds. Although the dairy barn/silo assemblage is representative of its type, period and construction, subsequent remodeling of the barn, work which encompassed changing the roof profile on one side from gambrel to gable, has compromised its original design integrity and its ability to express the evolution of the farmstead as an early 20th

century dairy operation. The three outbuildings contemporary with the dairy barn (equipment shed, work shop and pump house) exhibit little that is distinctive as regards type, period or construction and are insufficient by themselves to evoke the property's early 20th-century use as a dairy farm. While these buildings are neither individually nor collectively significant, they distract little from the farmstead's historical character and, in their form, scale and materials, harmonize with its earlier buildings. The farmstead acquired two more outbuildings in the mid-20th century, a small workshop and cottage of concrete block and frame construction, and a number of other changes were made to the complex then and more recently. These undistinguished buildings and alterations have had relatively little negative impact on the farmstead's overall historical integrity.

Although the property now comprises only a fraction of its historic acreage, enough land remains to convey a sense of its original agricultural character, as do the presence of open fields to the south and west, the riverside meadow on the east and several hedgerows. The latter also provide screening from adjoining modern land uses. The present entrance lane evidently is the historic one, and the linear arrangement and southern orientation of the farmstead along its axis survive intact. Two small, presumably 19th-century outbuildings, located off-site on the north side of the driveway opposite the main barn, help buffer the complex from the modern residential development just to its north. Originally forming part of the farmstead, the two buildings (one of which is a double-crib wagon shed) are now within the boundary of house lot subdivided from the farm some years ago.

Despite the loss of some early fabric to modern alterations and the presence of several non-contributing buildings, the Kennedy–Martin–Stelle Farmstead possesses the historical significance and integrity necessary for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

Significant for its architecture during the period c. 1762-1852 and retaining its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, the property clearly meets one National Register eligibility criterion: Criterion C, which references those properties "that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction."

While the property was in agriculture use from the 18th century until recent years, extant research does not indicate that its agricultural association is sufficiently important to meet Criterion A which addresses the properties that "are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history."

As previously stated, the property is noted for its connection with two 18th-century individuals of some prominence, Rev. Samuel Kennedy and Col. Ephraim Martin, and might be eligible under Criterion B for its "association with the lives of persons significant to our past."

However, additional research and investigation beyond the scope of an historic preservation plan will be necessary to establish significance in this area and confirm that the property's extant resources date to the period of ownership of either man.

Finally, archaeological resources relating to the neighborhood's 18th and 19th-century material culture may exist in the immediate environs of the farmstead, particularly around the house. Investigation of such resources might establish the property's eligibility under Criterion D which references properties "that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history."

2. Historical and Architectural Development

The site of the Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farmstead forms part of a large tract of land encompassing the southeastern portion of present-day Bernards Township that was acquired by **John Harrison in 1717**.

Reportedly acting as agent for the East Jersey Proprietors to extinguish Native American land claims, Harrison obtained title to the property from "Nowenoik, an Indian chief," by deed dated June 24, 1717. Bordered on the east by the Passaic River and on the south by the Dead River, the 3,000-acre parcel became known as "Harrison's Neck." The 1717 deed, as recounted by 19th-century Somerset County historians, describes Harrison as a resident "of Rockie Hill," New Jersey. No evidence that he ever settled on the tract has come to light.

The local historians also surmised that Harrison died sometime before 1720, by which time title to most of Harrison's Neck had passed to four individuals: **Daniel Hollingshead, George Risarick, Col. John Parker and James Alexander**. This may be in error since a will survives for a "John Harrison, gentlemen," of Pert Amboy, dated March 2, 1723/24 and probated June 11, 1725, which names Col. John Parker as one of two executors. The property purportedly was surveyed into farms ranging from 150 to 200 acres in size in 1727 and, in the following year, divided by lot among Parker and his co-owners. However, Harrison's estate or heirs may have retained ownership of portions of the Neck, as suggested by the 1766 Morgan map of Somerset County, which lists a 300-acre tract just northwest of the farmstead under his name. [1]

An 83-acre lot encompassing the farmstead site became the property of **Nathaniel Rolph in 1740**, although from whom he acquired it has not been established. As recorded in the third schedule of the "Elizabethtown Bill of Chancery" (a 1747 list of East Jersey land titles) Rolph received title to lot #117, a tract of 83 acres "on Harrison's Purchase," on March 28, 1740, and the map accompanying the schedule locates lot #117 at the confluence of the Passaic and Dead Rivers. The 1766 Morgan map would appear to confirm Rolph's ownership of the property. Evidently reflecting earlier ownership patterns, the map delineates a long, narrow 83-acre tract stretching along the Passaic north of the Dead River, which it identifies as lot #138, the property of "Nathaniel Ralph." Nathaniel Rolph (or Rolfe as his name appears in a later deed) may have lived on the property, perhaps in the house which the Morgan map depicts on or near the site of the present farmstead. He probably was the Nathaniel, born c. 1712, identified by genealogists as the son of Moses Rolph, a New Englander who migrated to Woodbridge, New Jersey, in the late 1600s. Nathaniel had an older brother Samuel, probably the Samuel Rolfe who was one of the seven trustees receiving title to the lot occupied by the pioneer Presbyterian house of worship at Basking Ridge in 1731. The Henry Rolfe cited by local historians as a pioneer settler of the community might have been their cousin. [2]

Portions of Harrison's Neck lying north and west of the Rolfe tract along the Passaic became the property of James Alexander, an East Jersey proprietor who was appointed Surveyor General of the province in 1715. The Elizabethtown Bill of Chancery memorializes James Alexander's title to lot #121, "6 tracts in Harrison's Neck" comprising 785.48 acres of land, under the date September 17, 1741, the date of the "return of survey" filed by Alexander for the property. The Morgan map identifies several parcels as the property of James Alexander, one of them a 351-acre parcel (lot #137) abutting the west side of Rolfe's property at its southern end, which lot a later deed indicates formed part of the fourth tract of the six surveyed in 1741. Alexander retained ownership of much of his Harrison's Neck property, the subsequent inheritance of his son General William Alexander, Lord Sterling, but sold off some of his holdings there including lot #137. [3]

Nathaniel Rolfe appears to have kept his Harrison's Neck property until 1747, it no doubt being the 87.25-acre tract adjoining the Passaic River (containing 83-acres after "allowance for highways") which **he sold to Moses Doty on March 31st of that year** for 180 pounds. The deed of conveyance describes both men as residents of Somerset County, and historical sources indicate that Doty was

living in the vicinity of Basking Ridge as early as the 1730s. Family history notes the birth of a son there in 1730, and records of the local Presbyterian church first mention his name in 1732. That Doty moved to the property acquired from Rolfe is clear from a later newspaper advertisement, which refers to it as “the Plantation on which Mr. Moses Doty formerly lived.” [4] He evidently was a farmer (a later deed calls him a “yeoman”) and expanded his holdings by lease and purchase. He purportedly leased land from James Alexander in 1747 and four years later acquired from him the eastern half of lot #137 (described in the 1751 deed as a 204-acre “Tract of land and meadow ...lying upon Pasick [sic] river and dead river”) for 204 pounds, subject to the yearly payment of “an ear of Indian corn,” if demanded. That Doty received 1,200 pounds for his 300-acre farm upon selling it in 1762, more than triple the purchase price for the two lots combined, suggests that he had made considerable improvements to the premises. [5]

The **purchaser of Doty’s farm was the Rev. Samuel Kennedy**, the Scottish born minister of the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church. Before acquiring the Doty property in 1762, Rev. Kennedy evidently occupied the parsonage farm belonging to the church. One of the first entries in the church minute book, begun in 1763, notes that the congregation had agreed to take “the parsonage place in its own care, and, instead thereof, pay Mr. Kennedy 20 [pounds] yearly as an addition to his salary.” [6] Kennedy must have moved from the parsonage to his own farm at this time, if he had not done so already. He certainly was residing there by August of the following year when he placed the following advertisement in a New York newspaper:

The Rev. Samuel Kennedy, of Baskinridge [sic], or Bernard’s Town, in the County of Somerset, and Province of New-Jersey, designs to have the learned Languages, and liberal Arts and Sciences, taught under his Inspection, in a School-House now built on his own Plantation; where Persons may be fitted to enter any Class in College; Any convenient Lodgings may be had near the said School-House. N. B. There are Scholars now learning the Latin and Greek Languages in said School. [7]

The exact location of Rev. Kennedy’s schoolhouse is not known.

Born in Scotland in 1720, Samuel Kennedy was educated at the University of Edinburgh before coming to America in the 1740s and settling in New Jersey. He pursued theological studies in New Jersey under the auspices of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, receiving a license to preach from the Presbytery in 1748 and ordination as a minister a few years later. Rev. Kennedy became the minister of the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church on June 26, 1751 and served the congregation in that capacity until his death on August 31, 1787. An evidently energetic clergyman, he was a well-regarded preacher and concerned himself with the theological controversies attracting the attention of many Presbyterians in the mid-18th century, aligning himself with the “New Lights” who embraced the evangelical and revival movement known as “Great Awakening” in contrast to the more conservative “Old Light” Presbyterians. [8] He also was a practicing physician of some distinction, acquiring a “reputation in the treatment of disease,” and joined the Medical Society of New Jersey in 1768 two years after its founding. The “classical school” which he established and carried on for many years gained local renown. According to an unnamed source quoted by the 1881 county history, Rev. Kennedy “being a highly accomplished scholar and possessing great wisdom and energy as a disciplinarian, his school was extensively patronized, and sent many of its pupils to the College of New Jersey [Princeton].” [9] Samuel Kennedy and his wife, the former Sarah Allen of Philadelphia, reportedly had at least seven children, the eldest of whom Samuel, presumably educated by his father, also became a doctor, settling near what is now Johnsonburg, New Jersey, about 1768. [10]

Operation of a large farm may have proved onerous for such a busy man as Rev. Kennedy, or perhaps its distance from the church and center of the community proved inconvenient. For these, or other reasons, he offered the property, along with his livestock and farming

equipment, for sale at auction less than three years after the announcement of his school. The auction advertisement of April, 1767, provides detailed documentation as to the well-established character of the farm at that time and its substantial improvements, which encompassed seventy-two acres of “plough land” (more than one third planted in Timothy and other meadow grasses) and over two hundred apple trees, along with a small house and “good barn” with stables. At the same time a considerable portion of the farm, including 100 acres of “very rich bottom” land, appears to have remained undeveloped, probably either woodland or scrub:

To be sold at public Venue, on Wednesday the 17th Day of June next, by the Revd. Samuel Kennedy, of Bernard's-Town ... his Plantation on which he now lives, containing 300 Acres of Land, more or less, well-watered and timbered, ... on which Plantation there is a Dwelling-House with three Rooms and two fireplaces on the lower floor, situate at a small Distance from the Brink of said Passaic-River, and a good Quarry for building may be opened at the Distance of a few Poles from said House: There is also on the said Plantation, a good Barn, and a Stable at each End of it, and an Orchard containing 57 old Apple Trees, and 136 young Ones, some of which are grafted; there is about 72 Acres of plough Land cleared, 12 and half of which have been mowed for a considerable Number of Years, and about 2 Acres of it has been mowed for two Years past, and about 11 Acres the sowed with Timothy Seed, together with one and half Acre more, are expected to be mowed this Summer, 100 Acres more of good Meadow may be made on a very rich Bottom, being the Plantation whereon Mr. Moses Doty formerly lived. On said Day Samuel Kennedy proposes to sell Horses, Cattle, Sheep, and Utensils of Husbandry, &c &c. when good Attendance will be given, and the Conditions of Sale made known.” [11]

The western, and earliest, portion of the house, with its three first-floor rooms and two fireplaces, conceivably is Kennedy's dwelling. The eastern half of the main barn with its dropped east end-bay stable (along with the physical evidence of an appendage at its west end predating the extant west addition) similarly could be the “good Barn, [with] a Stable at each End” noted in the advertisement. Certainly, features like the bead-edged clapboards surviving on what was the original east gable of the western portion of the house (visible in the attic) and the hewn-timber common rafter/pegged wind brace framing assemblage present in the east half of the barn are suggestive of an early construction date.

Whether or not the sale took place as advertised on June 17, 1767, is unknown. However, one can infer from various sources that the Kennedy plantation **became the property and residence of Col. Ephraim Martin by the late 1770s**, although no recorded or unrecorded deed of conveyance to him has been found. While he may have acquired the property earlier, Ephraim Martin most likely moved there sometime between June, 1776, when he received a militia commission in Sussex County, New Jersey, and May, 1778, when he appears on the Bernards Township tax role, the earliest surviving for that municipality.[12] Genealogical sources suggest that Martin, a native of central New Jersey, may have been living in Sussex County as early as 1760.[13] That he was in Sussex County as late as the spring of 1776, is clear from a May newspaper advertisement, describing property for sale in Hardiston Township, Sussex County, as located “about one mile from ... Col. Ephraim Martin's,” as well as his June Sussex County militia commission. That in 1778 he was assessed for 340-acres of “improved land” in Bernards Township, along with livestock, one slave and a riding chair, establishes his residency in the township by that time. [14] Furthermore, military maps of 1779 and 1780 depict a house on the subject property as that of “Col. Martins.” [15]

Ephraim Martin, the son of Ephraim and Keziah Runyon Martin, was born in 1733, either in Piscataway, New Jersey, or in Somerset County, where his parents had settled near the confluence of the Passaic and Dead Rivers in what is now Warren Township about that time. He appears to have moved to Sussex County as a young man and raised a family,

genealogical sources claiming the birth of a son there in September, 1760. [16] He evidently prospered and became sufficiently well established to assume a role in public affairs during the Revolutionary War when he served the America cause in military and political capacities. Martin was one of five deputies from Sussex County who attended the Provincial Congress of New Jersey held in Trenton in October, 1775. He was commissioned as a colonel of the Second Regiment, Sussex County Militia on June 14, 1776 and appointed as colonel of the new fourth New Jersey Battalion of the Continental Army on November 28th of that year. Stationed at Princeton in the autumn of 1777, he advertised the desertion of a soldier from his "quarters" there on November 20th, and passed some portion of the following winter with his regiment at Valley Forge. [17]

Resigning his army commission in 1779, Col. Martin embarked on a life-long career of government service, which encompassed both elected and appointed positions. He was chosen in the general election of October 12, 1779, to represent Somerset County on the New Jersey governor's council, the upper house of the new state legislature, and thereafter served many terms on the council until 1806, the year of his death, first as representative for Somerset County and beginning in 1795, after moving to New Brunswick, for Middlesex County. He was appointed by the state legislature in 1783 as one of the commissioners for draining the "drowned lands" along the Walkkill in Sussex County and by Congress in 1786 as surveyor under director of Thomas Hutchins, Esq., to survey the Western Territory of the United States. [18]

In 1789, Ephraim Martin had a prominent role in securing the approval of the first amendments to the U. S. Constitution by the New Jersey legislature. The state legislative council appointed Martin and three other councilors to a committee to discuss the proposed amendments on November 4th. The state assembly having appointed a similar committee, the two committees quickly issued a joint report recommending the adoption and ratification of the amendments within a few days. Consideration of the report by the legislature began on November 6th, and final approval occurred on November 20th, making New Jersey the first state to ratify the Bill of Rights. [19]

A prosperous landowner, Ephraim Martin acquired property in Sussex County and the Ohio country, in addition to his Bernards Township farm, which he appears to have owned and made his residence until 1794. Surviving Bernards Township tax records indicate that his local landholdings reached 375 acres of "improved land" in 1784, although his taxable acreage declined in subsequent years. They also provide some evidence as to the nature of his farm operation. In 1778, for example, he was assessed for four horses, seven hogs and seventeen head of cattle, and between 1778 and 1792 his livestock assessment included four horses in most years and averaged 12.5 head of cattle. In various years throughout the period he was taxed for a riding chair, sleigh, chaise and covered wagon, and in most years for two or three vehicles. [20] While the historical record provides almost no information about the physical character of the farm during his ownership, his livestock and vehicles suggest the existence of a substantial barn and wagon house. A prominent man with his resources may not have been satisfied with a small house like the one described in the Kennedy sale advertisement, and it is quite possible that he enlarged or replaced the earlier dwelling. In addition to their double pile, one-and-one half-story plan and Dutch framing system, the west and east portions of the main block both exhibit features typical of 18th century construction such as corner fireplaces, Georgian style mantel, raised panel doors and other woodwork.

Although genealogical sources differ, Ephraim Martin appears to have married three times and had at least four children. His first marriage to Martha (last name unknown) mostly likely took place c. 1756 and produced four sons (Absalom, born c. 1758, Jeremiah, Ephraim, born in September, 1760, in Sussex County, and Squire). Upon Martha's death about 1767, he evidently married Keziah Carmen who purportedly died in 1788. She must have been the "Mrs. (Col.) Martin," whose name appears on a list of participants in a statewide effort of patriotic women to promote "a subscription for the relief and encouragement of those brave Men in the Continental Army." [21] For his third marriage, thought to have occurred c. 1789, Martin wed Catherine Wall Green Stelle, the widow of the Reverend Isaac

Stelle, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Piscataway, who had died in 1781. Ephraim Martin belonged to the Mount Bethel Baptist Church, located a few miles south of his Bernards Township farm, and became a deacon of that congregation in 1786. Martin also was a slave owner; his 1778 tax assessment lists one male slave, and his 1805 will provided for the manumission of three females. Martin died on February 26, 1806, evidently having lived in the vicinity of New Brunswick since moving from Bernards Township in the 1790s. [22]

Ephraim Martin evidently **sold his Bernard Township farm to brothers Oliver and Samuel Stelle**, the stepsons of his wife, the former Catherine Stelle, in 1794. According to family history recounted in 1881 “Oliver Stelle...removed from Piscataway, Middlesex Co., N. J., about 1794, and settled on the farm [the subject property] now owned by Isaac S. Runyon.” Another historian pinpoints his removal from Piscataway to Bernards Township to April, 1794. [23] The two brothers’ acquisition of the Martin farm must have occurred around that time, since they executed a mortgage, proved and recorded on May 19, 1794, for a 269.25-acre tract of land comprising the property to Ephraim Martin for 575 pounds. The assessment listing of Samuel Stelle for 266 acres of land on the August, 1794, Bernards Township tax role offers additional confirmation of the title transfer. The burial of Oliver Stelle’s infant daughter Anna in the nearby Mount Bethel Church cemetery in December, 1794, provides evidence that he had moved from Piscataway by that time. [24]

Within several years Oliver Stelle became the sole owner of the property, which he held until his death in 1832. Family history recounts that “Samuel remained but a few years in the country [Bernards Township],” and Oliver probably acquired his brother’s interest by the time of his removal. In May, 1797, Oliver Stelle and his wife Mary mortgaged a 232-acre tract of land to David Ayers for “200 pounds York money,” the same property that the brothers had acquired from Ephraim Martin minus small lots subdivided from the north and south ends and sold by Oliver to Ephraim’s son Squire. Oliver may have used the money realized from the second mortgage to buy out his brother or possibly to finance improvements. [25] He did not finish paying off the original mortgage until years later. Ephraim Martin’s 1806 estate inventory lists as an asset “Oliver Stelles Bond” valued at \$976.07, presumably the balance due on the 1794 mortgage, which was not canceled until three years later. [26]

Born on August 1, 1756, Oliver Stelle was one of nine children of Rev. Isaac and Christiana Stelle. He married Mary Runyon in 1778, and they had at least eleven children: Christiana (1779-1854), Ephraim (1780-54), Isaac (1782-1816), John (1790-1850), Anna (1793-94), Mary (1794-1815) Clarkson (1797/98-1850), Rachel (1800-1818), Sarah, Harriet, and Ruth. Oliver’s wife died on February 22, 1813 at age 54, and sometime before 1823 he remarried, as documented by a deed reference in that year to his wife Sarah. [27] Of his children who survived to adulthood, most married and settled in the Basking Ridge neighborhood. The 1830 census lists John and Clarkson Stelle immediately before and after their father, indicating that they lived in close proximity to him, probably on his farm or on land that he had sold to them. Maintaining the religious affiliation of his forebears, Oliver joined the Mount Bethel Baptist Church, serving the congregation as a trustee and acquiring two pews. A slaveholder, he was taxed for one slave in 1818 and registered slaves “born in his family” in that year and 1820. [28]

The 1830 census documents the composition of Oliver Stelle’s household towards the end of his life. The census enumerates six members: one white male (aged between 70 and 79); three white females (one aged between 60 and 69, one between 40 and 49, and one between 15 and 19); one free black male and one free black female (both aged between 10 and 23). Oliver must have been the white male in his seventies; the oldest female probably was his second wife Sarah and the middle-aged female his unmarried daughter Christiana, mentioned by name in his will as residing at home. The teenaged girl may have been one of the granddaughters also mentioned in his will or perhaps a servant; the free blacks presumably were former slaves, employed as domestic servant and farm laborer. [29]

Oliver Stelle prospered in Bernards Township. Evidently a successful farmer and investor, he acquired extensive holdings in Bernards Township and vicinity including farmland adjoining his homestead, along with several house lots and a distillery and cider mill. Five of the six Bernards Township tax records surviving for years between 1797 and 1818 give his taxable land as 224 acres, and his 1829 will includes bequests for considerably more than 312 acres of land. Tax and estate records provide additional information about his farm and other assets. Between 1797 and 1818, his livestock assessment included five horses in all but one year and averaged 11.8 head of cattle. In 1818, he was taxed for a “top” wagon and two riding chairs. Stelle’s 1832 estate inventory gives the total value of his personal property as \$2,519 including \$610 in notes and \$84 cash. Livestock worth \$1,192 constituted his most valuable asset: 11 horses (7 horses and 4 colts) valued at \$580, 24 head of cattle (15 cows, 5 steers, 3 calves and 1 bull) worth \$287, 2 “yokes” of oxen valued at \$148, 7 pigs and their shoats worth \$148, and 28 sheep worth \$42. The herd of sheep, along with a mention of “loom and tackling” and a “lot broad cloth,” documents domestic cloth manufacture. [30]

Oliver Stelle’s will and inventory also identify several rooms and features of his house. His 1829 will mentions the “west front room,” the “west back room,” the “middle back room,” and the “entry” and/or “entry chamber,” as well as the kitchen, cellar and well, indicating that his residence had a double-pile first-floor plan with a range of at least three rooms front and back, and thus establishing the configuration of the present house by that time. His inventory names two rooms in the house: the “west chamber” and the “milk room.” The latter, which contained a “lot of crockery,” presumably was a cold storage room, probably located in the cellar. The reference to “old casks and gums [?] in west chamber” suggests that this room was being used for storage. While the “west chamber” may have been either of the west rooms mentioned in the will, it might also have been located on the upper story. [31]

Although the upper stories of the region’s early one-and-one-half-story houses typically were unfinished or partially finished, the presence of a stairwell railing with an apparently late 18th/early 19th-century provenance in the upper hall certainly suggests that upper story was finished, at least in part, as living space during this period. Other features of the house that, based on physical or stylistic evidence, can be dated to c. 1800-1830 include the pilastered, late Federal style mantel in the present living room and brick cooking fireplace and bake oven in the southeast room. Oliver Steele may well have been responsible for remodeling the house and possibly for enlarging it to the east.

Oliver Stelle’s inventory indicates that the house was comfortably, but simply furnished with tables and chairs, several beds, two “clothes cupboards,” a corner cupboard, a desk and a “looking glass.” The single most valuable item listed was an “8-day clock” worth \$25. With the exception of the clock, Oliver Stelle’s household goods included no indicators of elite lifestyle, although three lots of books may reflect some level of household education. The listing of “Andirons Shovel & Tongs” and “Andirons...Shovel & Trammel” implies that open fireplaces were still in use for heating and cooking. The inclusion of few kitchen items and textiles in the inventory suggests that it may be only partial listing of items in the house, excluding property belonging to Oliver’s widow and unmarried daughter. [32]

The inventory identifies three other buildings by name, one of which the “wagon house,” mentioned in three entries relating to the storage of lumber, scythes and “old harnesses,” presumably is the one extant for which physical evidence suggest a late 18th/early 19th-century construction date. The inventory also lists the “stove at the School House,” as well as “lot of old iron at Still house” and “Barrels & hogsheads in Still house.” Stelle’s will indicates that his cider mill and distillery were not part of his farmstead but located on another property. The location of the schoolhouse remains unknown. While it is possible that Samuel Kennedy’s schoolhouse had survived, the inventory item more likely refers to a neighborhood schoolhouse for which Oliver had provided a heating stove. An 1823 deed records the existence of another farm building on the Stelle property, a hay barracks located near the road and the boundary of a 56-acre tract conveyed by Oliver to his son Clarkson. [33]

Upon Oliver Stelle's death on June 3rd 1832, at age seventy-six, his son **Clarkson inherited the homestead** farm (located between the Passaic River and present-day King George Road) and an adjoining tract to the south on the west side of the road. Clarkson also received an undivided one third share of the lots "purchased of Oliver Woodward" and of the "cider and still works with the appurtenances thereunto belonging" (sharing the same with brothers John and Ephraim), along with his father's "small black boy" and one third of the estate remainder. John Stelle's inheritance included property lying west of the road and the homestead, which adjoined land previously deeded to him by his father; Ephraim Stelle similarly inherited the "remainder of the farm whereon helives" (located west of John's property on the road to Liberty Corner). Later maps corroborate the location of the three brothers' farms. [34]

Oliver Stelle's provisions for his unnamed widow and unmarried daughter Christiana included, among other bequests, the use of specified portions of his house. His wife was to have "the use in common with the others of my west front room and west back room [,] the entry [,] kitchen [,] well and cellar for one year after my decease," along with \$70 a year as long as she did not remarry. She was also to receive for the same period "a sufficiency of grain [,] meat and necessary provisions...and of firewood cut up at the door suitable for a stove or fireplace" to be supplied by Clarkson. The widow was "to live with my daughter Christian[a] or if she should elect to live with Clarkson," the latter's two brothers were to share the costs of her support for the one year. The will confirms the widow's possession of "all the linnin [sic] Bedding, etc." that she brought to the marriage, as well as that which she made subsequently and "all and every description of goods that she brought" in accordance with "an agreement made with her before our marriage." Lastly, two new woolen blankets were to be provided for her one year after his decease "should she be living." In addition to a bequest of \$650, Christiana received her choice of one of the "cows on the home farm," half of her father's linen, her choice of "two Beds and Bedding," as well as two "bedsteds [sic] & cords," her father's "black girl, Amy," his "riding chair and harness" and the use of a horse. She also was to have "the use of [his] middle back room and the use in common with the others of the entry chamber, cellar [,] kitchen and well so long as she shall remain single and wish to occupy them her self." The cow was to be kept by Clarkson as long as she remained unmarried. [35]

Clarkson evidently made his father's homestead his residence sometime after inheriting the property and lived there with his family until his death in 1850. His wife, Lucinda, died in 1838, leaving him with several young children. In 1840 his household had eight members: two white males (one aged between 5 and 9 and one between 40 and 49), five white females (one aged between 0 and 4, one between 5 and 9, two between 15 and 19, and one between 50 and 59) and one free black male aged between 10 and 23). Clarkson must have been the white male in his forties, the four girls and one boy his children and the oldest female his unmarried sister. Clarkson and the free black male undoubtedly were the two household members given as agriculturists. [36]

The black household member probably was the individual mentioned in a December, 1841, entry in the minutes of the Mount Bethel Baptist Church, which notes that "Our colored brother Bill, living with Clarkson Stelle, having left his master and having been guilty of immoral conduct, such as getting drunk, the church voted that he be excluded from the privilege of the church." In the following April "Colored William, Clarkson Stelle's boy, came before the church to make acknowledgements [and the] church voted that he be restored." [37]

In 1850, the year of his death, Clarkson Stelle's household contained five members: Clarkson, age 52, a farmer who owned real estate valued at \$9,000; his three daughters, Mary Ann, age 25, Mercy, age 22, and Adaline, age 15; his son Thomas T., age 19; and his sister, Christian[a], age 72. No longer a member of his household, fourth daughter Rachel had married Isaac S. Runyon in 1843. [38]

The agricultural schedule of the 1850 census indicates that Clarkson Stelle was the proprietor of a general farming operation. The farm, consisting of 156 acre of improved land and 50 acres of unimproved land, was valued at \$9,000, and the farm equipment, \$500. His livestock, worth \$1,000, included 5 horses, 9 milk cows, 7 other head of cattle, 2 oxen, 27 sheep, and 13 swine. Farm production encompassed 120 bushels of wheat, 90 bushels of rye, 700 bushels of corn, 250 bushels

of oats, 200 bushels of buckwheat, 40 bushels of Irish potatoes, \$30 worth of "orchard products," 6 bushels of peas, 8 bushels of clover seed, 6 bushels of other grass seeds, 40 tons of hay, 600 pounds of butter, 60 pounds of cheese and 40 pounds of wool. The value of "home manufactures" was \$75 and the value of "slaughtered animals," \$250. [39]

Clarkson Stelle died intestate on July 13, 1850, at the age of 52, having "committed suicide by hanging himself in the wagon-house." His inventory, made on August 9th, provides limited information about his residence, naming only the "kitchen," "kitchen chamber" and "milk room and cellar." The reference to "lumber etc. kitchen chamber" suggests that this room, presumably located either behind or above the kitchen, was being used for storage, and the listing for the "milk room and cellar" appears to confirm the location of this cold storage room in the cellar. The inventory identifies three other buildings by name, one of which the "wagon house," mentioned in an entry relating to the storage of lumber, presumably is the one extant and the one mentioned in Oliver Stelle's 1832 estate inventory. The two other buildings are the "new barn" and the "cow shed," both mentioned in reference to hay storage. Three stacks of hay also are listed, suggesting the presence of hay barracks. The "new barn" may have been the west half of the present barn (which physical evidence suggests was a subsequent addition to the larger, east section, recycling the frame of a smaller barn) or another building which has not survived. In any case, it presumably is one of the "two large Barns" mentioned in an 1852 sale advertisement for the property, and the "cow shed" may well be the "Cow House" noted in the add, and possibly the extant cow shed/stable for which physical evidence suggest a c. 1825-50 construction date. [40]

The inventory gives the total value of Clarkson Stelle's personal property as \$2,359.66 (slightly less than that of his father), including \$860.66 in notes and \$100.90 cash. Livestock worth \$608 constituted about 25% of his assets: 5 horses (3 mares and 2 colts) valued at \$280, 18 head of cattle (8 cows and 10 calves or young cattle) worth \$208, 1 "yoke" of oxen valued at \$65, 10 pigs worth \$38 and 9 sheep (5 ewes and 4 lambs) valued at \$17. The inventory includes \$395 in harvested crops: 10 bushels of buckwheat worth \$4, 240 bushels of oats valued at \$72, 100 bushels of corn worth \$50, 150 bushels of wheat worth \$150, 50 bushels of rye valued at \$25 and an unspecified amount of hay worth \$94. The inventory suggests that the house remained comfortably, but modestly, furnished with such items as tables and chairs, several beds, a "looking glass and wash stand," several other mirrors, two "clothes presses," a corner cupboard, and a "bureau." The listing of 120 yards of carpeting (one lot of 80 yards and another of 40 yards) suggests that at least several rooms were carpeted. The inclusion of three stoves, one of them in the kitchen, indicates that stoves had supplanted fireplaces for cooking and heating. [41] Clarkson may well have updated the house after his father's death, and the late Federal mantel in the present living room could have been added by him, instead of by his father.

The Stelle family remained staunch Baptists throughout the 19th century, and in the year after Clarkson Stelle's death his heirs were instrumental in the founding of the Millington Baptist Church. In August, 1851, Stelle's heirs-at-law (his children, Rachel & her husband, Isaac S. Runyon, Thomas T. Stelle, Mary Ann Stelle and Mercy Stelle) subdivided a half acre lot at the northwest corner of his homestead farm for the newly formed Millington Baptist Society to build a "meeting house." The present church was finished and dedicated in October, 1852. [42]

To settle Clarkson Stelle's estate, his farm was sold at a court-ordered auction in 1852, and the newspaper advertisement of the sale gives a general description of the property:

Splendid FARM for Sale.the Real Estate whereof Clarkson Stelle died seized, comprising the HOMESTEAD FARM of the said deceased, known as the "Oliver Stelle Farm," containing about 200 acres of first rate Plough, Meadow and Grazing Land. About 30 acres of very heavy Timber on said Farm. The improvements are a large and good Frame House, two large Barns, Cow House, and every desirable out building, all in good condition. A road running through,

divides the Farm, and will be divided or sold together. There is a great variety of fruit on said Farm. It is also well watered, and the Passaic River runs on the east side of said Farm. [43]

The farm was still divided into cropland, meadows and orchards as in 1767 when Rev. Kennedy advertised it for sale. However, little, if any, unimproved land appears to have remained, and its 30-acre wood lot was a significant asset in the mid-19th century, by which time the region had become much deforested. [44]

At the auction, the 199.79-acre **property was sold to Isaac S. Runyon**, Clarkson Stelle's son-in-law, the high bidder at \$41 per acre, for a total of \$8,191.39, and on March 1st of the following year the property was conveyed to him. A few weeks later Isaac and wife Rachel deeded the portion of the property lying west of King George Road, which contained 111.52 acres, to Thomas J. Stelle, Rachel's brother. Thomas evidently occupied and farmed that tract until his death in 1856, after which his unmarried sisters Mary Ann and Mercy lived there for a few years, followed by Mercy and her husband Thomas Terrell. The Runyons retained the 88.27-acre tract east of the road and the farmstead, which they made their residence and farmed throughout their lives. Possessing life rights to a portion of the house, Rachel's aunt Christiana presumably lived there until her death in 1854 at age seventy-two. [45]

The 1860 and 1870 censuses reveal that German immigrants had supplanted slaves and free blacks as laborers on the farm. In 1860, Isaac Runyon's household contained five members: Isaac, age 40, a farmer with real estate worth \$6,000; his wife Rachel, age 38; their two sons, "Reuna" [sic], age 4, and Clarkson, age 1; Adam Smith, age 45, a German born farm laborer; and Harriet Ames, age 26, no occupation given, but possibly a domestic servant. The 1870 census lists seven household members: Isaac, age 51, a farmer with real estate worth \$12,000 (double the valuation of 1860); his wife, Rachel, age 50; their son, "Runy Runyon" [sic], age 14; three girls, Josephine, age 16, Julia, age 12, and Rachel, age 6; and Adam Smith, age 60, the German born farm laborer. The two oldest girls, surnamed Runyon but not listed in the 1860 census, must have been relatives; son Clarkson listed in 1860 presumably had died. [46]

The agricultural schedule of the 1870 census indicates that the farm remained a diversified operation. Sheep raising had been abandoned since 1850 and the dairy herd had grown by roughly 25%. While no cheese was being made, the farm's production of butter had increased from 600 to 900 pounds. The census describes the farm as consisting of 120 acre of improved land and 10 acres of woodland, valued at \$12,000, Runyon evidently having enlarged his land holdings since acquiring the property. The farm equipment was worth \$345. Farm wages "during the year" were \$300 including "board." His livestock valued at \$1,200 included 2 horses, 2 mules, 13 milk cows, 4 other head of cattle, and 3 swine. Farm production included 150 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of corn, 750 bushels of oats, 60 bushels of Irish potatoes, 8 bushels of clover seed, 40 tons of hay and 900 pounds of butter. The value of slaughtered animals was estimated at \$325, and the figure given for the "estimated value of all farm products" is \$2,620. [47]

The agricultural schedule of the 1880 census documents an increase in the size of the dairy herd by one third since 1870, among other changes. Butter evidently was no longer made on the farm; milk instead was sent to a creamery. Chickens and egg production were mentioned for the first time. With only thirty bearing trees, the orchard was much reduced in size. In 1880 the Runyon farm, valued at \$10,000, contained 120 acres of improved land, 25 acres of "meadows, permanent pastures, orchards [and] vineyards" and 5 acres of unimproved land other than woodland. Runyon's farm equipment was worth \$500 and his livestock \$1,200. The 1879 cost of farm labor hired for 52 weeks was \$500; and \$60 was spent on fertilizer in that year. His livestock in 1880 included 7 horses, 2 mules, 20 milk cows, 2 other head of cattle, 3 pigs and 30 poultry. In 1879, 18 "calves dropped," 12 calves were purchased, 12 were sold living, and 1 was slaughtered. In that year, the farm had 52 acres of grasslands of which 40 acres were mown producing 60 tons of hay, as well as a one-acre orchard with 30 bearing apple trees. Other farm production in 1879 included 300 bushels of wheat from 10 acres, 700 bushels of corn from 16 acres, 350 bushels of oats from 12 acres, 30 bushels of rye from 2

acres and 40 bushels of Irish potatoes from one half acre. In 1879, the farm produced 7,300 gallons of “milk sold or sent to butter and cheese factories” and 300 eggs; the total estimated value of the farm’s 1879 production was \$2,000. [48]

A prosperous and successful farmer, Isaac Runyon had the means to improve his property, and he probably was responsible for the Victorian cross gables and contemporary alterations to the house. Something of the physical character of house during his ownership, if not its furnishings, can be learned from the cursory inventory of personal property made upon his death in 1892, which identifies twelve rooms or areas in the house:

Sitting-room contents/ Hatrack in hall/ Parlor and contents/ Room back of parlor/ Bed-room back of sitting-room/ Stair carpet, table in hall and contents of small bed-room up-stairs/ Contents of cellar/ Dining room and contents/ Store-room and contents/ Attic and contents/ room back of kitchen/ kitchen and contents. [49]

The inventory indicates that the upper story contained at least one bedroom by this time, as well as an attic and possibly a hallway. However, the number of rooms and their configuration cannot be construed definitively; one of them might have been the storeroom mentioned. One can safely assume that the parlor, sitting room and two rooms to their rear occupied the western half of the first story. For the east half of the first story two arrangements can be considered: (1) kitchen occupying the southeast room with cooking fireplace and bake oven, the “room back of kitchen” to its rear, dining room immediately to its west occupying the east end of the present living room, and the hall with hat rack the entry at the foot of the stairs; the store room could either occupy the east-end shed appendage or be located on the upper story. (2) hall with hat rack occupying the east end of the present living room, dining room the southeast room with cooking fireplace; and the kitchen and the “room back of kitchen” located in the east-end shed appendage; this scenario leaves the northeast room (the modern kitchen) unaccounted. The only furnishings identified are stair carpeting and a table and hat rack in the hall or halls.

The “granary” is only other building mentioned, presumably the extant wagon house, in whose upper-story feed bins the wheat, oats and shelled corn listed in the inventory undoubtedly were stored.

As inventoried, the total value of Isaac Runyon’s personal property was \$5,465.48, including \$3,695.80 in cash, notes, interest and book accounts, which comprised the bulk of his assets. Livestock worth \$663 constituted only about 12% of his assets: 5 horses valued at \$250, 14 cows, 1 heifer and a bull worth \$400, 4 turkeys worth \$5 and “about 50 fowl” worth \$8. The inventory included \$390 in harvested crops: 100 bushels of wheat worth \$100, 250 bushels of oats valued at \$90, 200 bushels of shelled corn worth \$100, and 8 tons of hay worth \$100, as well as \$8 worth of smoke meat. It also listed a carriage and “phaeton” as well as various other wagons, sheds, and farm equipment.

Isaac Runyon died intestate on February 9, 1892, at age 73, of bronchitis and “La Grippe” after a two-week illness, leaving **his daughter Rachel Codington as his only heir**, his wife having died some years earlier. Rachel, who had married William R. Codington at the Millington Baptist Church in 1883, lived with her husband in Plainfield, New Jersey, where he practiced law. William Rueben Codington, the son of George W. and Jane Codington, grew up a neighbor of the Runyons, and his family descended from early settlers of the neighborhood. In addition to his law practice, he played a role in political and business affairs at the local and state level, including the directorship of several companies, twenty-five years as attorney for Union County, and two terms in the state assembly in the 1890s. [50]

While Codington acquired considerable property in the Millington neighborhood during the early 20th century, including large portions of Oliver Stelle’s original holdings, he and his wife evidently continued to live in Plainfield until sometime in the 1920s, when they made the farm inherited from her father their principal residence. Until then, the farm probably was tenanted. Codington established a dairy operation at his Bernards Township property (which he named River-Edge Farm) and took a

special interest in the raising and breeding of Guernsey cattle. [51] Physical evidence indicates that the main dairy barn and several other sheds and improvements can be dated c.1920-1940, and it seems likely that this work mostly occurred in the 1920s in conjunction with his making the farm his primary residence. The house also was updated around this time by Codington in the Colonial Revival style, as evidence by such embellishments as the quadrant gable windows and the classically detailed screen porch overlooking the river which was later replaced by the existing east gable-end appendage. He may also have been responsible for rebuilding the living room fireplace from its original corner configuration, perhaps concurrently enlarging the room by the removal of partitions.

William R. Codington died on January 22, 1935 aged 81, after suffering a heart attack at his Bernards Township home. He willed his entire estate, after specific bequest to family members and employees, in trust for his wife, Rachel, for life, and thereafter to their two children, Martha and Albert. Rachel also received "all the household furniture and personal property contained at my residence at River-Edge Farm" [52]

The inventory made shortly after his death gives the total value of his personal property as \$105,261.02, the major portion of which consisted of notes, bonds, mortgages, stocks and cash. The farm equipment at River-Edge Farm (including a milk delivery truck) was valued at \$749. Listed livestock consisted of 28 pedigree-registered cows at "Rive-Edge Dairy" worth \$2,975, as well as three old horses valued at \$225. The inventory also gives limited information about the house, indicating that electricity and plumbing had been installed by that time. The listing of two lots of fireplace implements suggests that the fireplaces were being used. The set of wicker porch furniture probably graced the screened porch; a mix of braided and oriental rugs covered the floors. A "maid's bureau, old" was valued at 50 cents; a "mahogany bureau, antique," \$10. [53]

Rachel Codington died on November 12, 1936, less than two years after her husband, **leaving all of her property to her two children.** Her personal property, valued at \$12,030.61 in her estate inventory, included \$8,640.86 in cash, mortgage, interest and uncollected debts, notes, interest and book accounts, jewelry worth \$499, a wrist watch worth \$18, a 1929 Cadillac valued at \$50 and the household goods inherited from her husband worth \$140. The inventory provides considerable information about the house at River-Edge Farm and its furnishings. Eight rooms are named: telephone room, living room, dining room, kitchen, hall, north bedroom, south bedroom and southwest bedroom. The living room, dining room and kitchen mentioned presumably are the present ones, and the telephone room must have been one of the two rooms to the north of the living room. The hall might have included the east end of the present living room, judging from the number of furnishings it contained, or the listing may refer to both the lower and upper stair halls. The three bedrooms identified probably were upstairs. The inclusion of items such as a brass kettle and brass candlestick in the telephone room, an "old churn, painted wood" in the dining room, and an "old cradle" and an "old stand" in the hall suggest the presence and appreciation of antiques, possibly passed down through the family. [54]

Upon the death of Rachel Codington, in accordance with the terms of her husband's will, River-Edge Farm (along with other real estate) passed to their two children, Martha C. Dascombe and Albert I. Codington.

In 1942, Martha conveyed her half interest in the family homestead and three other tracts to her brother. [55]

The property passed from the ownership of Oliver Stelle's descendants in the following year when Albert I. Codington, **sold it to the Arlington Investment Corporation of Kearny, New Jersey.**

Arlington developed the Sun and Crest Roads neighborhoods but in 1945 sold the remaining property on the east side of the King George Road **to Gerald L. Pearson**, a scientist at Bell Laboratories, and his wife Mildred, who made it their residence.

Fifteen years later, the Pearsons conveyed a 36.7-acre tract including the farmstead, along with an adjoining 7.1-acre lot, **to George and Ingrid Geier**, who lived there until the 1990s. While operating his marine-maintenance company in Brooklyn, Mr. Geier continued limited farming on the Basking Ridge property, first haying the fields and later growing Christmas trees. Alterations made by the Geiers include replacing the Codington's screened porch with the family room appendage in 1961-62, removing the plaster ceiling in the living room, adding the bookcases to left of the fireplace, adding vinyl siding to the exterior of the house in 1989, and installing recycled ship planking as flooring in the main barn. [56]

Mrs. Geier died in 1994, and in the following year her husband transferred title of the two tracts to a limited liability corporation, presumably controlled by him.

On October 13, 1999, the Geier corporation sold the two tracts to the Sterling Properties Group, LLC, for \$5,000,000. On the same day, **the Township of Bernards purchased** the portion of the property containing the farmstead from Sterling for \$3,500,000 using funds raised by the municipal open space tax, the remainder being retained by Sterling for development as senior citizen housing. Recognizing the historical importance of the property to the community, as well as its open space and recreational value, the township currently is engaged in planning for the farmstead's preservation and adaptive reuse as a cultural facility. [57]

3. Chronology

1717 John Harrison “of Rockie Hill,” reportedly acting as agent for the East Jersey Proprietors, obtains a title deed (dated June 24, 1717) from “Nowenoik, an Indian chief,” for a tract of 3,000 acres, bordered on the east by the Passaic River and on the south by the Dead River, which encompassed the southeastern portion of Bernards Township, along with the site of the subject property [J. P. Snell (ed.), *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, 1881, pp. 735 & 736].

1740 Nathaniel Rolph acquires from “the proprietors or their heirs,” (as recorded in Schedule No. 3 in the Elizabethtown Bill of Chancery) title to lot #117, a tract of 83 acres of land “on Harrison’s Purchase” on March 28th [J. P. Snell (ed.), *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, 1881, pp. 562 & 736].

Nathaniel Rolph (or Rolfe) probably was the Nathaniel, born c. 1712, identified by genealogists as the son of Moses Rolph, a New Englander who migrated to Woodbridge, New Jersey, in the late 1600s. Nathaniel had an older brother Samuel, probably the Samuel Rolfe who was one of the seven trustees receiving title to the lot occupied by the pioneer Presbyterian house of worship at Basking Ridge in 1731. The Henry Rolfe cited by local historians as a pioneer settler of the community might have been their cousin [Snell, 1881, page 742; email communication, Ann Parsekian, June 17, 2002].

1741 James Alexander acquires from “the proprietors or their heirs,” (as recorded in Schedule No. 3 in the Elizabethtown Bill of Chancery) title to lot #121, six tracts comprising 785.48 acres of land “in Harrison’s Neck” on September 17th [J. P. Snell (ed.), *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, 1881, pp. 562 & 736; the survey dated September 17, 1741, being recorded in Book S, page 206 of East Jersey surveys].

1747 Nathaniel Rolfe of Somerset County conveys to Moses Doty of Somerset an 87.25-acre tract property in Somerset adjoining the Passaic River (presumably encompassing the above mentioned 83-acre tract) on March 31st for 180 pounds [Secretary of State’s Deeds, Book A-3, p. 206]. Moses Doty (c. 1702 – 1775) was already settled in Basking Ridge. His name first appears in 1732 in church records, and family records indicate that his son, Moses Doty, Jr., was born in Basking Ridge in 1730 [Ann Parsekian, “A Preliminary Report on the Reverend Kennedy Parsonage Farm, Bernards Township, New Jersey,” p. 3].

1751 James Alexander (Surveyor-General of New Jersey, and father of General Lord Stirling) conveys to Moses Doty “of Baskinridge [sic]” on June 4th for 204 pounds a 204-acre “Tract of land and meadow at Baskinridge [sic] lying upon Pasick [sic] river and dead river,” and subject to the yearly payment of “an ear of Indian corn,” if demanded; [Secretary of State’s Deeds, Book A-3, p. 208]. The deed further describes the tract “being part of the fourth tract in a return of Survey to said James [Alexander] dated the seventeenth of September 1741 and recorded in Lib: S. fol. 206” and its boundary running in part by “a corner of Nathaniel Rolfes Survey thence along Rolfe’s land.”

1751 Reverend Samuel Kennedy (1720-1787) becomes the minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Basking Ridge on June 26th [Snell, page 743].

1762 Moses Doty “Yeoman” of Bernards Township conveys to Samuel Kennedy “Minister of the Gospel” of the same place a 300-acre tract bordering the Passaic River on the east and the Dead River on the south, which presumably includes the subject property, on June 14th for 1,200 pounds [East Jersey Deeds, Book H3, page 301].

1764 Reverend Samuel Kennedy advertises a school to be conducted “under his Inspection in a School-House now built on his own Plantation.” [The New York Mercury, August 27, 1764, as quoted in New Jersey Archives, 1st Series, XXIV, Newspaper Extracts, V, 1902, page 407].

The complete advertisement is as follows:

The Rev. Samuel Kennedy, of Baskinridge, or Bernard's Town, in the County of Somerset, and Province of New-Jersey, designs to have the learned Languages, and liberal Arts and Sciences, taught under his Inspection, in a School-House now built on his own Plantation; where Persons may be fitted to enter any Class in College; Any convenient Lodgings may be had near the said School-House. N. B. There are Scholars now learning the Latin and Greek Languages in said School.

1767 Reverend Samuel Kennedy of Bernards Township advertises his 300-acre "Plantation on which he now lives." The advertisement describes the property's improvements as including a "Dwelling house with three rooms and two fireplaces on the lower floor" located near the Passaic River bank, "a good Barn, and a stable at each end of it" [The New York Mercury, No. 807, April 20, 1767, as quoted in New Jersey Archives, 1st Series, XXV, Newspaper Extracts, VI, 1903, page 350].

The complete ad, given as follows, makes no mention of his school:

To be sold at public Vendue, on Wednesday the 17th Day of June next, by the Revd. Samuel Kennedy, of Bernard's-Town, in the County of Somerset, and Province of New-Jersey; his Plantation on which he now lives, containing 300 Acres of Land, more or less, well-watered and timbered, bounded on one Side by Dead-River, & on the other by the River Passaic, having the public Road that leads to the City of Perth-Amboy going through it; it is 20 Miles from said City, 8 from Bound-Brook, 5 from New-Brunswick, 3 from Lord Sterling's Buildings, not quite four along a public Road to Baskinridge Meeting-House, and about 1 Miles and a half of Mr. Solomon Boyle's Mill, on which Plantation there is a Dwelling-House with three Rooms and two fireplaces on the lower floor, situate at a small Distance from the Brink of said Passaic-River, and a good Quarry for building may be opened at the Distance of a few Poles from said House: There is also on the said Plantation, a good Barn, and a Stable at each End of it, and an Orchard containing 57 old Apple Trees, and 136 young Ones, some of which are grafted; there is about 72 Acres of plough Land cleared, 12 and half of which have been mowed for a considerable Number of Years, and about 2 Acres of it has been mowed for two Years past, and about 11 Acres sowed with Timothy Seed, together with one and half Acre more, are expected to be mowed this Summer, 100 Acres more of good Meadow may be made on a very rich Bottom, being the Plantation whereon Mr. Moses Doty formerly lived. On said Day Samuel Kennedy proposes to sell Horses, Cattle, Sheep, and Utensils of Husbandry, &c &c. when good Attendance will be given, and the Conditions of Sale made known

It is possible that the western portion of the house, with its three first-floor rooms and two fireplaces, may comprise the original Kennedy dwelling.

1767-78 Col. Ephraim Martin (1733-1806) presumably acquires the Kennedy plantation sometime during this period, although no deed of conveyance to him as been found; perhaps the deed was never recorded.

Ephraim, son of Ephraim and Keziah Runyon Martin, was born in 1733, either in Piscataway, Middlesex County or in Somerset County. He presumably was living in Sussex County by 1760; genealogical sources recounting that his son Ephraim was born there in September of that year [Jay W. Thornal, "Colonel Ephraim Martin (1733-1806) His Wife or Wives," Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey, Vol. 58, pp. 16-18].

1775 Ephraim Martin serves as one of five deputies from Sussex County attending the Provincial Congress of New Jersey held in Trenton in October [Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey, 1879, page 197].

1776 Advertisement, dated May 1776, describes property for sale in Hardiston Township, Sussex County as "about one mile from the Sharpsborough iron works, and the same distance from Col. Ephraim Martin's" [The

Pennsylvania Journal, June 19, 1776, as quoted in New Jersey Archives, 2nd Series, I, Newspaper Extracts, I, page 552].

Ephraim Martin is commissioned as a colonel of the Second Regiment, Sussex County Militia on June 14th and appointed as colonel of the new fourth New Jersey Battalion the Continental Army on November 28th [Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During the War of the Revolution, 1914, revised 1932, reprinted 1973, page 381; William S. Stryker, Official Register of the Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Revolutionary War..., 1911, reprinted 1967, pages 26, 27 & 37]. Check sources.

1776-78 Martin presumably moves from Sussex County to Bernards Township, Somerset County, sometime between June 1776, when he receives his Sussex County militia commission and May 1778, when he appears on the Bernards Township tax role, the earliest surviving for that municipality (see 1776 and 1778 entries).

1778 Ephraim Martin is assessed for 340 acres of improved land valued at 1,870 pounds, 4 horses, 17 cattle, 7 hogs, 1 slave and 1 riding chair [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, May, 1778].

1777 "Ephraim Martin, Col. 4th Jersey Regt." advertises the desertion of a soldier from his "quarters at Princeton" on November 20th [New Jersey Gazette, December 2, 1778, as quoted in New Jersey Archives, 2nd Series, II, Newspaper Extracts, II, 1903, page 573].

1778 Ephraim Martin, colonel of the 4th New Jersey in Brigadier General William Maxwell's Brigade; brigade included among troops wintering at Valley Forge [Fred Anderson Berg, Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units, 1972, page 148].

1779 Robert Erskine's map of the "Road towards Morristown past Baskinridge [sic] Meeting House..." depicts a house on the subject property as that of "Col. Martins" [Erskine Map "No 70. C," the "Road towards Morristown past Baskinridge [sic] Meeting House...., 1779].

Col, Martin resigns his army commission and is chosen in the general election held on October 12th to represent Somerset County on the New Jersey governor's council, the upper house of the new state legislature [newspaper?, as quoted in New Jersey Archives, 2nd Series, III, Newspaper Extracts, III, 1914, page 701].

1780 Erskine maps numbers 106A and 106B depict a house on the subject property as that of "Col. Martins" [S. DeWitt, Contractions in the Jerseys 1 mile to the inch, Erskine Map 106A and 106B..., 1780].

1780 "Mrs. (Col.) Martin" is one of five Somerset County ladies listed in a notice dated July 4th as chosen to coordinate local participation in a state-wide effort of patriotic women to promote "a subscription for the relief and encouragement of those brave Men in the Continental Army" [New Jersey Gazette, July 5, 1780, as quoted in New Jersey Archives, 2nd Series, IV, Newspaper Extracts, IV, 1914, page 486].

1781 Ephraim Martin is chosen in the general election held on October 9th to represent Somerset County on the New Jersey governor's council, the upper house of the new state legislature [New Jersey Gazette, October 17, 1781, as quoted in New Jersey Archives, 2nd Series, V, Newspaper Extracts, V, 1917, page 310].

1783 Col. Martin is appointed by state legislative act (passed on June 16th) as one of the commissioners for draining the "drowned lands" along the Walkkill in Sussex County [Public notice place by Ephraim Martin, Esq., Political Intelligencer, February 2, 1784, as quoted in Thomas Wilson, Notices From New Jersey Newspapers 1781-1790, 1988, page 186].

1784 Col. Ephraim Martin is assessed for 375 acres of improved land “value \$15 [per 100?] acre[s],” 2 horses and 8 cattle [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1784].

1786 Col. Ephraim Martin is appointed by Congress as surveyor under director of Thomas Hutchins, Esq., to survey the Western Territory of the United States [New York Gazetteer, June 30, 1786, as quoted in Thomas Wilson, Notices From New Jersey Newspapers 1781-1790, 1988, page 465].

1788 Col. Ephraim Martin is assessed for 264 acres of land “value \$15 per 100 [acres],” 3 horses, 17 cattle and a riding chair [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1788].

1789 Col. Ephraim Martin is assessed for 264 acres of land “value \$15 [per 100 acres],” 4 horses, 10 cattle, 1 sleigh and 1 riding chair [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1789].

Ephraim Martin of Bernards Township, advertises a reward for a mare strayed or stolen [New Jersey Journal, September 9, 1789, as quoted in Wilson, 1988, page 276].

Ephraim Martin has a major role in the approval of the first amendments to the U. S. Constitution by the New Jersey legislature. The state legislative council appoints Martin and three other councilors to a committee to discuss the proposed amendments on November 4th. The state assembly having appointed a similar committee, the two committees issued a joint report recommending the adoption and ratification of the amendments, which report is considered by both houses on November 6th. Final approval occurs on November 20th, making New Jersey the first state to ratify the Bill of Rights [Mary Alice Quigley and Mary R. Murrin “New Jersey and the Bill of Rights,” no date, pages 6 & 7].

c. 1789 His second wife, Keziah Carmen, having died in 1788, Col. Ephraim Martin marries his third wife, Catherine Wall Green Stelle, the widow of the Reverend Isaac Stelle, pastor of the First Baptist church of Piscataway, who died on October 9, 1781 [Thornal, pp. 16-19; New Jersey Archives, V, 1781, page 320; Ann Parsekian, “Col. Ephraim Martin c. 1733-1806,” page 1].

1790 Col. Ephraim Martin is identified as a “freeholder” of Bernards Township and “Representative in Council” on a list dated April 24th [Rev. A. Messler, First Things in Old Somerset, 1889, page 160].

Col. Ephraim Martin is appointed one of the commissioners to affect a court-ordered division of land in Bridgewater Township, Somerset County [Brunswick Gazette, September 7, 1790, as quoted in Wilson, 1988, page 351].

Col. Ephraim Martin is assessed for 254 acres of land at \$15 “value per 100 [acres],” 4 horses, 10 cattle, 1 sleigh and 1 riding chair [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1790].

1791 Col. Ephraim Martin is assessed for 154 acres of improved land at \$15 “value per 100 [acres],” per acre, 4 horses, 12 cattle, 1 sleigh and 1 “chaise” [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1791].

1792 Col. Ephraim Martin is assessed for 100 acres of land at \$16 “value per 100 [acres],” 4 horses, 14 cattle, 1 sleigh, 1 riding chair and 1 covered wagon [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1792].

1793 Col. Martin is not listed in the 1793 Bernards Tax ratables.

c. 1794 Brothers Oliver and Samuel Stelle presumably acquire the Kennedy/Martin farm from Col. Ephraim Martin, the husband of their stepmother, the former Catherine Stelle. According to one local history “Oliver Stelle...removed from Piscataway, Middlesex Co., N. J., about 1794, and settled on the farm [the subject property] now owned [in 1881] by Isaac S. Runyon” [J. P. Snell (ed.), History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey, 1881, Freeman Stelle biography after page 738]. Another family history pinpoints his

removal from Piscataway to Bernards Township to April 1794 [John Littel, Families Records; or Genealogies of the First Settlers of the Passaic Valley and Vicinity above Chatham..., 1851, page 403]. The purchase of the property evidently occurred around that time, since the two brothers mortgage the property in May of that year, and in Samuel Stelle is assessed for 266 acres on the August, 1794 Bernards Township tax rolls [see 1794 entry below].

Oliver, son and one of nine children of Rev. Isaac and Christiana Stelle, was born on August 1, 1756; his brother Samuel was born in 1758 [Littel, 1851, page 403; Oliver B. Leonard, Outline Sketches of the Pioneer Progenitors of the Piscataway Planters, 1890, page 15]. Christiana Stelle died on September 27, 1778, and "by license dated January 5, 1780," the Reverend Stelle was married again to Katherine Green [New Jersey Archives, 2nd Series, II, 1778, page 464; Thornal, pp. 16-19].

Oliver Stelle married Mary Runyon in 1778 and they had at least eleven children, including Christiana (1779-1854), Ephraim (1780-54), Isaac (1782-1816, John (1790-1850), Anna (1793-94), Mary (1794-1815) Clarkson (1797/98-1850), Rachel (1800-1818), Sarah, Harriet, and Ruth [Leonard, 1890, page 19; Littel, 1851, page 403; Alan A. Siegel, Cemetery Records of Warren Township Somerset County New Jersey, 1998].

1794 Oliver Stelle and Samuel Stelle mortgage a 269.25-acre tract of land encompassing the subject property to Ephraim Martin for 575 pounds. The mortgage is proved and recorded on May 19th [Somerset County Mortgages, Book D, page 52].

Samuel Stelle is assessed for 266 acres of land at \$13 "value per 100 [acres]," 6 horses and 18 cattle [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1794].

Anna Stelle, daughter of Mary and Oliver Stelle, dies on December 10th aged 1 year, 7 months, according to her gravestone inscription in the nearby Mount Bethel church, evidence that Oliver Stelle had moved from Piscataway by that time [Siegel, Cemetery Records of Warren Township Somerset County New Jersey, 1998].

1795 Ephraim Martin joins the Baptist Church in Piscataway on May 27th, presumably having moved from Bernards Township by this time [Edmund J. James, "Notes on the Baptist Church at Mount Bethel," Somerset County Historical Quarterly, VII, page 119].

1796 Oliver Stelle is assessed for 224 acres of land valued at \$17 [per 100 acres?], 3 horses and 8 cattle [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, September 1796].

1797 Oliver Stelle and wife Mary mortgage a 232-acre tract of land encompassing the subject property to David Ayers for "200 pounds York money" on May 3rd, (recorded on June 27th) [Somerset County Mortgages, Book E, page 131]. It is the same 269.25-acre tract which Oliver and Samuel mortgaged to Ephraim Martin in 1794, the smaller size acreage explained by the apparent subdivision from its southwest corner of a lot "Oliver Stelle sold to Squire Martin" and from its south end along the Passaic of another lot "said Oliver sold to Squire Martin" [Ephraim's son; see NJ Wills, 10112S].

That Oliver Stelle and his wife, Mary, are the mortgagors implies that Oliver had acquired his brother Samuel's interest in the property. Oliver may have used the money realized to acquire his brother's interest in the property or possibly to finance improvements. In fact, according to family history, "Samuel remained but a few years in the country [Bernards Township]" [Snell, 1881, Ephraim R. Stelle biography after page 738].

Oliver Stelle is assessed for 224 acres of improved land valued at \$17 [per 100 acres?], 3 horses and 4 cattle [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, September 1797].

1797/98 Clarkson Stelle, son of Oliver and Mary Runyon Stelle, evidently is born sometime during this period since, despite the 1795 birth date given in one family genealogy, the 1850 census gives his age as 52 and his gravestone gives his age as 52 at his death on July 13, 1850. [Leonard, 1890, page 9; US Census, Bernards Township, 1850, Siegel, 1998].

1802 Oliver Stelle is assessed for 224 acres of improved land valued at \$17 [per 100 acres?], 47 acres of [unimproved?] land valued at \$6 [per 100 acres?], 5 horses, 14 cattle and 1 dog [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, 1802].

1803 Oliver Stelle is assessed for 224 acres of improved land valued at \$42 per 100 acres?], 47 acres of [unimproved?] land valued at \$20 [per 100 acres?], 5 horses, 14 cattle, 1 still, 1 covered wagon and 1 Windsor chair [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, 1803].

Oliver Stelle serves as one of the trustees of the Mount Bethel Baptist Church [Alan A. Siegel, The Baptist Meeting House Cemetery and Church, 1992, page 15].

1805 Oliver Still [sic] is assessed for 224 acres of improved land valued at \$42 per 100 acres?], 5 horses, 12 cattle, 1 still, 1 covered wagon and 1 dog [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, 1805].

1806 Oliver Stelle is assessed for 224 acres of improved land valued at \$42 per 100 acres?], 22 acres of [unimproved?] land valued at \$20 [per 100 acres?], 5 horses, 15 cattle, 1 still, 1 covered wagon and 1 dog [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, August 1806].

Ephraim Martin, resident of North Brunswick Township, Middlesex County, dies on February 28th [An Account of Colonel Ephraim Martin," Somerset County Historical Quarterly, VII, 1918, page 233]. His inventory, dated March 6th, lists as an asset "Oliver Stelles Bond" valued at \$976.07, presumably the balance due on the 1794 mortgage [NJ Wills 10112L].

1809 The Stelle/Martin 1794 mortgage is canceled in the county clerk's office on June 21st [Somerset County Mortgages, Book D, page 52].

1812 Squire Martin of New Brunswick, son of Col. Ephraim Martin, and wife Susan convey to Oliver Stelle of Bernards Township three lots of land in said township for \$5,000: lot 1 containing 100 acres "bounded north by land owned by Charles Saxton and the road to dead river [,] on the east by said road and Oliver Stelle land [,] on the south by said Stelles land and west by widow Randolph;" lot 2 containing 11.7 acres located between the road to the Dead River bridge and the Passaic River; and lot 3 containing 25.3 acres whose border begins "at the northeast corner of a Ditch on the west side of the road between Oliver Martin and Squire Stell" [Somerset County Deeds, Book F, page 776, New Jersey Wills, 10425G].

1813 Mary, wife of Oliver Stelle, dies on February 22nd at age 54, according to her gravestone inscription in the Mount Bethel church cemetery [Siegel, Cemetery Records of Warren Township, Somerset County, New Jersey, 1998].

1813-23 Oliver Stelle remarries during this period, as his will dated December 21, 1829 mentions his "beloved wife," and an 1823 deed records the sale of land by "Oliver Stelle and Sarah his wife" [NJ Wills, 2389R; Somerset County Deeds, Book Q, page 178].

1815 Mary Stelle, daughter of Oliver Stelle and his late wife, Mary, dies on August 26th in his 21st year, according to her gravestone inscription in the nearby Mount Bethel church cemetery [Siegel, 1998, p. ?].

1818 Oliver Stelle is assessed for 232 acres of land at \$50 "value per 100 acre," 3 horses, 12 cattle, 1 still, 1 top wagon, 2 riding chairs, 1 slave, and 1 dog [NJ Archives, Bernards Township Ratables, 1818].

Oliver Stelle purchases two pews in the Mount Bethel Baptist Church, #s 5 and 9, paying \$24 and \$40, respectively, for each, the congregation holding the sale to raise funds to renovate the church [Siegel, 1992, pp. 15 & 16].

Rachel Stelle, daughter of Oliver Stelle and his late wife Mary, dies on September 7th, aged 18 year, 4 months and 29 days, according to her gravestone inscription in the nearby Mount Bethel church cemetery [Siegel, 1998].

1818 & 1820 Oliver Stelle registers slaves “born in his family” in these two years [“Additional slaveholders’ List in Somerset,” Somerset County Historical Quarterly, VI, 19??, page 96].

1823 Improvements on Oliver Stelle’s property evidently include a hay barrack: the September 12th deed recording his sale of a 56-acre tract to his son Clarkson which describes the parcel’s boundary as “Beginning at a stone in the road near the barrack and running with Oliver Stelles other land” [Somerset County Deeds, Book Q, page 178].

1830 Household of Oliver Stelle, as listed in the 1830 census, contains six members: one white male (1 aged between 70 and 79), three white females (one aged between 60 and 69, one aged between 40 and 49, and one between 15 and 19); one free black male and one free black female (both aged between 10 and 23) [US Census, Bernards Township, 1830].

Oliver must have been the white male in his seventies; the oldest woman probably was his second wife and the middle-aged woman his unmarried daughter Christiana, mentioned by name in his will as residing at home. The teenaged girl may have been one of the granddaughters also mentioned in his will (see 1832 entry), or perhaps a servant; the free blacks presumably were former slaves, and employed as a domestic servant and farm laborer [NJ wills 2389R; US Census, Bernards Township, 1830].

Households of John and Clarkson Stelle, two of Oliver’s sons, are listed in the 1830 census immediately before and after Oliver, respectively, indicating that they lived in close proximity to him, perhaps on their father’s property or on land which he had sold to them. An 1823 deed recording Oliver’s sale of a 56-acre tract to Clarkson describes it as “Beginning at a stone in the road near the barrack and running with Oliver Stelles other land” [Somerset County Deeds, Book Q, page 178].

The 1830 census lists John’s household as containing eight members: five white males (one aged under 5, two between 10 and 14, one between 15 and 19 & one between 30 and 39), two white females (one aged between 10 and 14 and one between 30 and 39); and one free black male (aged between 10 and 23). Clarkson’s household contains five members: one white male (aged between 30 and 39) and four white females (one aged under 5, two aged between 5 and 9, and one between 30 and 39) [US Census, Bridgewater Township, 1830, page 56].

1831 Thomas Terrell Stelle, son of Clarkson and Lucinda (Terrell) Stelle, is born on January 11th [Siegel, 1998; Snell, 1881, page 738].

1832 Oliver Stelle dies on June 3rd, aged 76 years, according to his gravestone inscription in the Mount Bethel Church cemetery [Siegel, 1998]. His will, dated December 21, 1829, is probated on June 15th and an inventory taken on June 28th. Oliver’s will divides his real estate (excepting one small lot) among his three surviving sons John, Ephraim and Clarkson (who are named executors) and bequeaths money and personal property to his widow, three of his four surviving daughters (Christian[a], unmarried, Ruth, wife of John Worth, Harriet, wife of Peter F. Randolph, and Sarah, wife of Isaac F. Randolph) and two granddaughters, Mary and Clarissa, the daughters of his deceased son, Isaac [New Jersey Wills, 2389R]. His unmarried daughter, Christiana evidently was living at home.

Oliver Stelle's will also identifies several rooms and features of his house by name: the "west front room," the "west back room," the "middle back room," and the "entry" and/or "entry chamber," as well as the kitchen, cellar and well, indicating that his residence has a double-pile first-floor plan with a range of at least three rooms front and back, and thus establishing the configuration of the present house by that time.

The inventory names two rooms in the house: the "west chamber" and the "milk room," and the reference to "old casks and gums [?] in west chamber" suggests that this room was being used for storage. While the "west chamber" might have been either of the west rooms mentioned in the 1829 will, it might also have been located on the upper story, although the upper stories of the region's one-and-one-half-story houses typically were unfinished or partially finished. The inventory lists a "lot of crockery" in the "milk room," presumably a cold storage room, probably located in the cellar. The inventory identifies three other buildings by name, one of which the "wagon house," mentioned in three entries relating to the storage of lumber, scythes and "old harnesses," presumably is the one extant for which physical evidence suggest a late 18th/early 19th-century construction date. The inventory also lists the "stove at the School House," as well as "lot of old iron at Still house" and "Barrels & hogsheads in Still house." Oliver Stelle's will indicates that his cider mill and distillery were not part of his farmstead but located on another property. The location of the schoolhouse remains unknown. While it is possible that Samuel Kennedy's schoolhouse had survived (see 1764 entry), the inventory item more likely refers to a neighborhood schoolhouse for which Oliver had provided a heating stove.

The inventory gives the total value of Oliver Stelle's personal property as \$2,519 including \$610 in notes and \$84 cash. Livestock worth \$1,192 constitutes his most valuable asset: 11 horses (7 horses and 4 colts) valued at \$580, 24 head of cattle (15 cows, 5 steers, 3 calves and 1 bull) worth \$287, 2 "yokes" of oxen valued at \$148, 7 pigs and their shoats worth \$148, and 28 sheep worth \$42. The herd of sheep, along with a "loom and tacking" and a "lot broad cloth," documents domestic cloth manufacture. The inventory indicates that the house is comfortably, but simply furnished with tables and chairs, several beds, two "clothes cupboards," a corner cupboard, a desk and a "looking glass." The single most valuable item is an "8-day clock" worth \$25. With the exception of the clock, Oliver Stelle's household goods include no indicators of elite lifestyle, although three lots of books may indicate some level of household education. The listing of "Andirons Shovel & Tongs" and "Andirons...Shovel & Trammel" suggests that open fireplaces are still in use for heating and cooking. The inclusion of few kitchen items and textiles in the inventory suggests that it may be only partial listing of items in the house, excluding property belonging to Oliver's widow and unmarried daughter (see discussion of provisions of Oliver's will below).

Clarkson Stelle inherits the subject property from his father, his father's homestead: "all the residue and remainder of the Farm whereon I now live [in 1829] bounded on the westerly side by the highway on the south by the land bequeathed to my son John on the east by the Passaic river and on the north by the road and land of Peter F. Randolph," containing about 160 acres, and another nearby lot "bounded on the east by the middle of the high way that passes over the dead river, and on the south by the dead river, on the west by land herein bequeathed to my son John and again on the west and north by land deeded to my said son Clarkson, as wells as an undivided one third share of the lots "purchased of Oliver Woodward" and others and of the "cider and still works with the appurtenance thereunto belonging and a privilege of carrying them on by my three sons Ephraim, John & Clarkson." Oliver also left Clarkson "my small black boy that now [in 1829] lives with me," and one third of the remainder of his estate [New Jersey Wills, 2389R]. Clarkson presumably makes his father's homestead his residence sometime after inheriting the property.

John Stelle inherits the portion of his father's property lying west of the road and the homestead, adjoining land previously deed to him by his father and containing about 82 acres, as well as two lots of 15 and 14 acres each, undivided third shares of the Woodward lots and the "cider and still works, and "the black boy that he now has" [New Jersey Wills 2389R].

Oliver Stelle's unnamed wife (perhaps his wife, Sarah, identified in the 1823 deed, see 1823 entry) is left \$70 a year as long as she remains his widow, along with "the use in common with the others of my west front room and west back room [,] the entry [,] kitchen [,] well and cellar for one year after my decease," and is to receive for the same period "a sufficiency of grain meat and necessary provisions...and of firewood cut up at the door suitable for a stove or fireplace" to be supplied by Clarkson; the widow is "to live with my daughter Christian[a] or if she should elect to live with Clarkson" the latter's two brother's were to share the costs of her support for the one year. The will confirms the widow's possession of "all the linnin [sic] Bedding etc. that my said wife brought to me," as well as that which she made subsequently and "all and every description of goods that she brought to me" in accordance with "an agreement made with her before our marriage." Lastly, two new woolen blankets are to be provided to her one year after his decease "should she be living" [NJ Wills, 2389R].

In addition to a bequest of \$650, Christiana receives her choice of one of the "cows on the home farm," half of her father's linen, her choice of "two Beds and Bedding," as well as two "bedsteds [sic] & cords," her father's "black girl, Amy," "riding chair and harness" and the use of a horse. She also is to have "the use of my middle back room and the use in common with the others of the entry chamber, cellar [,] kitchen and well so long as she shall remain single and wish to occupy them her self." The cow is to be kept by Clarkson as long as she remains unmarried [NJ Wills 2389R].

1834 Clarkson Stelle and his wife, Lucinda, convey a 3.17-acre lot adjoining the Dead River to his brother, John, on April 10th for \$36.75, probably a portion of the land he had inherited from his father [Somerset County Deeds, Book S, page 298].

1838 Lucinda, wife of Clarkson Stelle and daughter of Thomas and Mary Terrell, dies on January 22nd, aged 40 years, 6 months and 15 days, according to her gravestone inscription [Siegel, 1998].

1840 Household of Clarkson Stelle, as listed in the 1840 census, contains eight members: two white males (1 aged between 5 and 9, and one between 40 and 49), five white females (one aged between 0 and 4, one between 5 and 9, two between 15 and 19, and one between 50 and 59) and one free black male aged between 10 and 23); two members of the household are employed in agriculture [US Census, Bernards Township, 1840].

Clarkson must have been the white male in his forties, and the oldest female probably was his unmarried sister, Christiana. The four girls and one boy presumably were his children (including Thomas T., Mary Ann, Mercy, and Adeline; see 1850 entry). Clarkson and the free black male undoubtedly are the two household members given as agriculturists [US Census, Bernards Township, 1840].

The free black male member of Clarkson Stelle's household presumably is the "colored brother, Bill," attending the nearby Mount Bethel Baptist church. A December 23rd entry in that church minutes notes that "Our colored brother Bill, living with Clarkson Stelle, having left his master and having been guilty of immoral conduct, such as getting drunk, the church voted that he be excluded from the privilege of the church" [Siegel, 1992, pp. 18 & 19].

The 1840 census lists John Stelle's household (enumerated just before brother Clarkson's) as containing five members: two white males (one aged between 20 and 29, and one between 40 and 49), two white females (one aged between 5 and 9 and one between 40 and 49); and one free black female (aged between 10 and 23). Ephraim Stelle's household (enumerated just after brother Clarkson's) total seven members: two white males (one aged between 10 and 13, and one between 50 and 59), four white females (three aged between 20 and 29, and one between 40 and 49) and one free black female aged between 10 and 23 [US Census, Bridgewater Township, 1840, page 215].

1841 The Mount Bethel Baptist Church minutes note on April 13th that “Colored William, Clarkson Stelle’s boy, came before the church to make acknowledgements. The church voted that he be restored” [Siegel, 1992, page 19].

1843 Rachel, daughter of Clarkson Stelle and his late wife, Lucinda, marries Isaac S. Runyon on October 25th [Somerset County Historical Quarterly, VIII, 1917, page 61].

1845 The 1845 Passaic Valley map identifies “C[larkson]. Stelle” as the owner of property on the west bank of the Passaic River south of what became Millington with boundaries conforming to later deed descriptions (see 1852 entry) and with his house depicted on the site of the subject property. It identifies property and house on the west side of the what is now called King George Road as that of “John Stelle,” land to the north at the junction of the that road and Valley Road as that of “P. Randolph” and a small parcel to the south of Clarkson Stelle’s land on the east side of the road just north of the confluence of the Dead and Passaic rivers as belonging to “W. Boyle” [John Littel, A Map of Passaic Valley from Stone House Village to Chatham N. J..., 1845].

1850 The 1850 county map depicts the house of “C. Stelle” on the subject property and that of “J. Stelle” on the west side of the present-day King George Road a short distance to the north; to the northwest on either side of the road as the houses of “G. Randolph” and R. Randolph,” forming part of a loose cluster of dwellings named both “Stone House” and “Millington.” To the west of G. Randolph on the road to Liberty Corner is the property of “E[phraim]. R. Stelle [J. W. Otley and J. Keily, Map of Somerset County, New Jersey, 1850].

Household of Clarkson Stelle, as listed in the 1850 census on August 22nd, contains five members: Clarkson, age 52, a farmer who owned real estate valued at \$9,000, his three daughters Mary Ann, age 25, Mercy, age 22, and Adaline, age 15, his son Thomas T., age 19, and his sister, Christian[a], age 72 [US Census, Bernards Township, 1850; Snell, 1881, page 738].

The agricultural schedule of the 1850 census enumerates Clarkson Stelle as the proprietor of a general farming operation with an important dairy component. The farm, consisting of 156 acre of improved land and 50 acres of unimproved land, is valued at \$9,000, and the farm equipment is worth \$500. His livestock valued at \$1,000 includes 5 horses, 9 milk cows, 7 other head of cattle, 2 oxen, 27 sheep, and 13 swine. Farm production includes 120 bushels of wheat, 90 bushels of rye, 700 bushels of corn, 250 bushels of oats, 200 bushels of buckwheat, 40 bushels of Irish potatoes, \$30 worth of “orchard products,” 6 bushels of peas, 8 bushels of clover seed, 6 bushels of other grass seeds, 40 tons of hay, 600 pounds of butter, 60 pounds of cheese and 40 pounds of wool. The value of “home manufactures” is \$75 and the value of slaughtered animals is \$250” [US Census, Agricultural Schedule Bernards Township, 1850].

Household of Ann Stelle, widow of John Stelle, as listed in the population schedule of the 1850 census, contains seven members: Ann, age 56, identified as a farmer with real estate valued at \$9,000, her three son, Freeman, age 30, his wife Martha, age 26, and their sons, Renne, age 7, and Abel, 9 months, and daughters Sarah, age 5, and Esther, age 3 [US Census, Bernards Township, 1850; Snell, 1881, page 738].

Household of Ephraim Stelle, as listed in the 1850 census, contains nine members: Ephraim, age 69, a farmer who owned real estate valued at \$9,000, his wife Hannah, age 61, their daughter, Mary, age 36, son, Oliver, a 24-year-old farmer, and their presumably orphaned Terrell grandchildren (Mary Ann, 16, Ephraim, 13, Elizabeth, 8, and Margaret, 7) the children of their daughter Elizabeth and her husband Drake Terrell [US Census, Bernards Township, 1850; Snell, 1881, after page 738].

Clarkson Stelle dies intestate on July 13th at the age of 52 [Siegel, 1998, no page]. His death by suicide is noticed by a local newspaper:

We regret to learn that Mr. CLARKSON STELLE, a very respectable and wealthy farmer residing near Millington, Somerset Co. committed suicide by hanging himself in the wagon-house. He was assisting to unload hay in the barn, when he remarked that he felt dizzy headed and would go to the house. The hands finished unloading and were about returning for another when they found him dead. He was about 52 years of age [Plainfield Gazette, July 18, 1850, as quoted in Somerset County Genealogical Quarterly, IV, page 339].

Clarkson Stelle's inventory, made on August 9th, provides limited information about his house, naming only the "kitchen," "kitchen chamber" and "milk room and cellar." The reference to "lumber etc kitchen chamber" suggests that this room, presumably located either behind or above the kitchen, was being used for storage, and the listing for "milk room and cellar" appears to confirm the location of this cold storage room in the cellar. The inventory identifies three other buildings by name, one of which the "wagon house," mentioned in an entry relating to the storage of lumber, presumably is the one extant and the one mentioned in Oliver Stelle's 1832 estate inventory (see 1832 entry). The two other buildings are the "new barn" and the "cow shed," both mentioned in reference to hay storage. Three stacks of hay also are listed, suggesting the presence of hay barracks [New Jersey Wills, 3211R].

The "new barn" conceivably could be the west half of the present barn, which physical evidence suggests was a subsequent addition to the larger, east section, or another building which has not survived. In any case, it presumably is one of the "two large Barns" mentioned in an 1852 sale advertisement for the property (see 1852 entry), and the "cow shed" may well be the "Cow House" noted in the ad, and possibly the extant cow shed/stable for which physical evidence suggest an early 19th-century construction date ["Commissioners Sale of Real Estate,...June 15, 1852" Somerset Messenger, July 23, 1852, page 3].

The inventory gives the total value of Clarkson Stelle's personal property as \$2,359.66 (slightly less than that of his father), including \$860.66 in notes and \$100.90 cash. Livestock worth \$608 constitutes about his 25% of his assets: 5 horses (3 mares and 2 colts) valued at \$280, 18 head of cattle (8 cows and 10 calves or young cattle) worth \$208, 1 "yoke" of oxen valued at \$65, 10 pigs worth \$38 and 9 sheep (5 ewes and 4 lambs) valued at \$17. The inventory includes \$395 in harvested crops: 10 bushels of buckwheat worth \$4, 240 bushels of oats valued at \$72, 100 bushels of corn worth \$50, 150 bushels of wheat worth \$150, 50 bushels of rye valued at \$25 and an unspecified amount of hay worth \$94. The inventory suggests that the house remains comfortably, but modestly furnished with such items as tables and chairs, several beds, a "looking glass and wash stand," several other mirrors, two "clothes presses," a corner cupboard, and a "bureau." The listing of 120 yards of carpeting (one lot of 80 yards and another of 40 yards) suggests that at least several rooms are carpeted. The inclusion of three stoves, one of them in the kitchen, indicates that stoves had supplanted fireplaces for cooking and heating.

1851 Clarkson Stelle's heirs-at-law (his children, Rachel & her husband, Isaac S. Runyon, Thomas T. Stelle, Mary Ann Stelle and Mercy Stelle) sell a half acre lot at the northwest corner of his homestead farm to Ephraim Stelle (Clarkson's brother) and John Worth for \$50 on August 13th, and seven days later Ephraim R. Stelle and John worth convey the same to the newly formed Millington Baptist Society for \$50 with the provision that if the society did not build a "meeting house" for its use on the property within three years the lot would revert to the grantors [Somerset County Deeds, Book N2, page 438; Snell, 1881, Ephraim R. Stelle biography after page 738].

1852 Somerset County Orphans Court issues an order, dated April 30th, appointing commissioners to sell the real estate of Clarkson Stelle in order to settle his estate [Somerset County Deeds, Book Q2, page 361]. The three commissioners, Joseph DeCoster, Alvah Lewis and Daniel Annin, advertise on June 15th the sale of the "HOMESTEAD FARM of the deceased, known as the 'Oliver Stelle Farm'" at public auction to take place of August 10th ["Commissioners Sale of Real Estate,...June 15, 1852" Somerset Messenger, July 23, 1852, page 3].

The advertisement describes the property as follows:

Splendid FARM for Sale.the Real Estate whereof Clarkson Stelle died seized, comprising the HOMESTEAD FARM of the said deceased, known as the "Oliver Stelle Farm," containing about 200 acres of first rate Plough, Meadow and Grazing Land. About 30 acres of very heavy Timber on said Farm. The improvements are a large and good Frame House, two large Barns, Cow House, and every desirable out building, all in good condition. A road running through, divides the Farm, and will be divided or sold together. There is a great variety of fruit on said Farm. It is also well watered, and the Passaic River runs on the east side of said Farm.

The 199.79-acre property is sold at auction to Isaac S. Runyon, Clarkson Stelle's son-in-law (see 1843 entry), the high bidder at \$41 per acre, for a total of \$8,191.39. The orphan court confirms the sale on December 31st [Somerset County Deeds, Book Q2, page 361].

1853 In accordance with court orders, the Commissioners convey the Clarkson Stelle property by deed to Isaac S. Runyon of Morristown, N. J. (husband of Clarkson's daughter Rachel) on March 1st. Corresponding to the two parcels which Clarkson had inherited from his father Oliver (see 1832 entry), 199.79-acre property consists of two tracts: #1 located between the road and the Passaic River, containing 88.27 acres and the farmstead, and #2 located on the west side of the road on the north side of the Dead River to the south of the former John Stelle farm, containing 111.52 acres [Somerset County Deeds, Book Q2, page 361].

Isaac S. Runyon & wife convey a 111.52-acre tract (parcel #2 of the property conveyed to Runyon by Clarkson Stelle's Commissioners) to Thomas J. Stelle (his wife Rachel's brother) on March 23rd [Somerset County Deeds, Book Q2, pages 375 & 361].

1854 Christiana Stelle, unmarried daughter of Oliver Stelle, dies on December 15th, aged 72 years, 11 months and 5 days, according to the inscription on her gravestone [Siegel, 1998, page ?].

1856 Freeman Stelle purchases "the real estate lately belonging to [his father] John Stelle deceased," from his brothers Jephtha M. and Jacob K. for \$5,532 on October 10th; conveyance includes the 138.68-acre "homestead farm of the deceased," and other property inherited from Oliver Stelle [Somerset County Deeds, Book N2, page 438; Snell, 1881, Freeman Stelle biography after page 738].

Thomas T. Stelle, son of Clarkson and Lucinda Stelle, dies on May 11th aged 25, according to his gravestone inscription [Siegel, 1998].

Thomas T. Stelle's executors sell his 111.52-acre farm, in accordance with the dictates of his will, to his unmarried sisters Mary Ann and Mercy Stelle for \$3,680.16 [Somerset County Deeds, Book A2, page 82].

1860 The 1860 map depicts one house on the subject property as belonging to "I. S. Runyon," the house of "Miss M. & M. Stelle" on west side of the present-day King George Road a short distance to the south, that of "F. Stelle" to the north (the former John Stelle property), another house belonging to "F. Stelle" just north of the Passaic bridge road corner and the "Baptists church" on its present site. The property of "G. W. Coddington" is depicted to the west of the second F. Stelle [D. J. Lake & S. N. Beers, Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton, 1860].

Household of Isaac Runyon, as listed in the 1860 census, contains 5 members: Isaac, age 40, a farmer with real estate worth \$6,000 (no figure given for personal property), his wife Rachel, age 38, their two sons, "Reuna" [sic], age 4, and Clarkson, age 1, Adam Smith, age 45, a German born farm laborer, and Harriet Ames, age 26, no occupation give, but possibly a domestic servant [US Census, Bernards Township, 1860].

Household of Freeman Stelle, son of John Stelle as listed in the 1860 census (just after Isaac Runyon), contains 8 members: Freeman age 40, a farmer with real estate worth \$10,000 and personal property worth \$2,000; his wife Martha A., age 36; their children, Reuna R., age 17, and Sarah, age 15, Esther R., age 13, Abel, age 10; his mother, Ann, age 66; and Emanuel Keister, age 20, a German born farm laborer [US Census, Bernards Township, 1860]. Freeman Stelle evidently had acquired title to property which his father, John, had inherited from his father, Oliver.

Household of Mary Ann Stelle, daughter of Clarkson Stelle, as listed in the 1860 census (two entries before Isaac Runyon), contains 4 members: Mary Ann, age 36, presumably unmarried with real estate worth \$2,750 personal and property worth \$250; her presumably unmarried sister, Mercy, age 34, with real estate worth \$2,750 personal property worth \$250; Thomas Terrell, age 20, a farmer with personal property worth \$600; and Oscar Goltra, age 14, occupation unknown [US Census, Bernards Township, 1870]. Mary and her sister occupy the portion of their father's property acquired from their brother's executor's in 1856, and have engaged Thomas Terrell as their farmer (see 1856 entry).

1870 Household of Isaac Runyon, as listed in the census, contains 7 members: Isaac, age 51, a farmer with real estate worth \$12,000 (no figure given for personal property), his wife, Rachel, age 50, their son, "Runy Runyon" [sic], age 14, three girls, Josephine, age 16, Julia, age 12, and Rachel, age 6 and Adam Smith, age 45, a German born farm laborer [US Census, Bernards Township, 1870]. The two older girls, not listed in the 1860, probably were relatives living with the Runyons; son Clarkson listed in 1860 presumably had died.

The agricultural schedule of the 1870 census enumerates Isaac Runyon as the proprietor of a general farming operation with an important dairy component. The farm, consisting of 120 acres of improved land and 10 acres of woodland, is valued at \$12,000, and the farm equipment is worth \$345. Farm wages "during the year" are \$300 including "board." His livestock valued at \$1,200 includes 2 horses, 2 mules, 13 milk cows, 4 other head of cattle, and 3 swine. Farm production includes 150 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of corn, 750 bushels of oats, 60 bushels of Irish potatoes, 8 bushels of clover seed, 40 tons of hay and 900 pounds of butter. The value of slaughtered animals is estimated at \$325, and the figure given for the "estimated value of all farm products" is \$2,620 [US Census, Agricultural Schedule, Bernards Township, 1870].

Household of Thomas Terrell (listed just after Isaac Runyon in the population schedule of the 1870 census) contains 6 members: Thomas, age 38, a farmer with real estate worth \$9,000 and personal property, his wife, Mercy (Stelle), 43, their children, Walter, age 7, and Anna M., age 4, and two laborers, German-born William Morris, age 21, and Napoleon Snell, age 14 [US Census, Bernards Township, 1870]. Thomas Terrell evidently married Mercy Stelle in the 1860s and acquired the interest of his sister-in-law, Mary Ann Stelle, in the property the sisters had jointly owned. The 1873 county atlas locates his farm on the west side of the road south of Freeman Stelle's farm (see 1856, 1860 and 1873 entry).

1873 The 1873 county atlas identifies the house on the subject property as that of "I. S. Runyon." On the west side of the road are the Res. of "F. Stelle" to the north and that of "T. Terrell" slightly further to the south. Freeman Steele owed his father's farm (see 1856 entry) and Thomas Terrell property to the south forming part of Oliver Stelle's landholdings (see 1860 and 1873 entries) [F. W. Beers, Atlas of Somerset County, 1873].

1880 The agricultural schedule of the 1880 census enumerates Isaac Runyon as the proprietor of a general farming operation with an important dairy component. The farm, consisting of 120 acres of improved land, 25 acres of "meadows, permanent pastures, orchards [and] vineyards" and 5 acres of unimproved land other than woodland, is valued at \$10,000. The value given for farm equipment is \$500 and that for livestock is \$1,200. The 1879 cost of farm labor hired for 52 weeks was \$500; and \$60 was spent on fertilizer in that year. His livestock in 1880 includes 7 horses, 2 mules, 20 milk cows, 2 other head of cattle, 3 pigs and 30 poultry. In 1879, 18 "calves dropped," 12 calves were purchased, 12 were sold living, and 1 was slaughtered. In 1879 the farm had 52 acres of grasslands of which 40 acres were mown producing 60 tons of hay, as well

as a one-acre orchard with 30 bearing apple trees. . Other farm production in 1879 included 300 bushels of wheat from 10 acres, 700 bushels of corn from 16 acres, 350 bushels of oats from 12 acres, 30 bushels of rye from 2 acres and 40 bushels of Irish potatoes from one half acre. In 1879, the farm produced 7,300 gallons of “milk sold or sent to butter and cheese factories” and 300 eggs; the total estimated value of the farm’s 1879 production was \$2,000 [US Census, Agricultural Schedule, Bernards Township, 1880].

1883 Rachel, daughter of Isaac and Rachel (Stelle) Runyon marries William Rueben Codington, son of George W. and Jane Codington at the Millington Baptist Church on November 29th. Codington grew up a neighbor of the Runyons, and his family was among the early settlers of the neighborhood [“Judge Codington Succumbs at 81,” The Bernardsville News, January 24, 1935].

1885 Having studied law in the offices of Suydam and Jackson in Plainfield, William Codington is admitted to the New Jersey bar and forms a partnership with J. H. Jackson to practice law with office in Plainfield [“Judge Codington Succumbs at 81,” The Bernardsville News, January 24, 1935].

1892 Isaac Runyon dies on February 9th at age 73, according to death records of bronchitis and “La Grippe” after a two-week illness [NJ Death Registers 1891-92]. He death is intestate with daughter Rachel Codington as his only heir-at-law [Somerset County Deeds, Book P21, page 194]. Rachel’s husband William R. Codington is granted administration of his estate, and the inventory of his personal property is “sworn and subscribed” to the county court on March 17th [NJ Wills, 6157R].

The inventory provides considerable information of about the house but little about its furnishings. Twelve rooms are named in the following entry listings: “Sitting-room contents/ Hatrack in hall/ Parlor and contents/ Room back of parlor/ Bed-room back of sitting-room/ Stair carpet, table in hall and contents of small bed-room up-stairs/ Contents of cellar/ Dining room and contents/ Store-room and contents/ Attic and contents/ room back of kitchen/ kitchen and contents.” The inventory indicates the upper story contained at least one bedroom by this time, as well as an attic and possibly a hallway. However, the number of rooms and their configuration cannot be construed; one of them might have been the storeroom mentioned. One can safely assume that the parlor, sitting room and two rooms to their rear occupied the western half of the first story. For the east half of the first story two arrangements can be considered: (1) kitchen occupying SE room with cooking fireplace and bake oven, the “room back of kitchen” to its rear, dining room immediately to its west occupying the east end of the present living room, and the hall with hat rack the entry at the foot of the stairs; the store room could either occupy the east-end shed appendage or be located on the upper story. (2) hall with hat rack occupying the east end of the present living room, dining room the SE room with old cooking fireplace; and the kitchen and the “room back of kitchen” located in the east-end shed appendage; this scenario leaves the NE room (the modern kitchen) unaccounted. The only furnishings identified are stair carpeting and a table and hat rack in the hall or halls.

The “granary” is only other building mentioned; presumably the extant wagon house, in whose upper-story feed bins the wheat, oats and shelled corn listed in the inventory undoubtedly were stored.

The inventory gives the total value of Isaac Runyon’s personal property as \$5,465.48, including \$3,695.80 in cash, notes, interest and book accounts comprising the bulk of his assets. Livestock worth \$663 constitutes only about 12% of his asset: 5 horses valued at \$250, 14 cows, 1 heifer and a bull worth \$400, 4 turkeys worth \$5 and “about 50 fowl” worth \$8. The inventory includes \$390 in harvested crops: 100 bushels of wheat worth \$100, 250 bushels of oats valued at \$90, 200 bushels of shelled corn worth \$100, and 8 tons of hay worth \$100, as well as \$8 worth of smoke meat. It also includes a carriage and “phaeton” as well as various other wagons, sheds, and farm equipment.

1892-1920s The farm presumably is rented by the Codingtons throughout most of the period. While William Codington acquires considerable property in the Millington neighborhood during the early 20th century, including large portions of Oliver Stelle’s original holdings, he and his wife Rachel evidently live in Plainfield until sometime in the 1920s at which time, they made the farm inherited from her father, their principal

residence. Codington establishes a dairy operation at the Bernards Township property (which he names River Edge Farm), taking special interest in the raising and breeding of Guernsey cattle. [Somerset County Deeds, Book F10, page 138, Book T11, page 466, Book W20, page 149 and Book P21, page 201; "Judge Codington Succumbs at 81," The Bernardsville News, January 24, 1935]. Physical evidence indicates that the main dairy barn and several other sheds and improvements can be dated c.1920-1940, and it seems likely that this work mostly occurred in the 1920s in conjunction with his making the farm his primary residence.

In addition to his law practice, William Codington was active in political and business affairs at the local and state level during the period, including the directorship of several companies, 25 years as attorney for Union County, and two terms in the state assembly in the 1890s ["Judge Codington Succumbs at 81," The Bernardsville News, January 24, 1935].

1900 William R. Codington, age 47, is listed as the head of household consisting of his wife, Rachel, age 38, daughter, Martha, age 15 and son, Albert, age 11, and residing at 44 Sandford Avenue, Plainfield, NJ [US Census, Plainfield, NJ, 1900. Vol. 65, sheet 8].

1909 Freeman J. Stelle (Freeman Stelle's son and John Stelle's grandson) conveys to William R. Codington of Plainfield an 11.7-acre lot that John Stelle had inherited from his father Oliver Stelle and the latter had acquired from Squire Martin in 1812 [Somerset County Deeds, Book F, page 776, Book N2, page 438 and Book T11, page 466].

1920 William R. Codington, age 66, is listed as the head of household consisting of his wife, Rachel, age 56, daughter, Martha, age 35 and her husband, Colin Dascombe, age 41, who was born in Maine and residing at 41 Sandford Avenue, Plainfield, NJ [US Census, Plainfield, NJ, 1920, Vol. 114, sheet 5].

1927 Freeman J. Stelle conveys to William R. Codington of Plainfield a 30.55- acre lot comprising the north portion of the land on the west side of the road which John Stelle had inherited from his father Oliver Stelle and Freeman Stelle (father of Freeman J. and son of John Stelle) had purchased from his father's other heirs [Somerset County Deeds, Book N2, page 438 and Book W20, page 149].

1929 Freeman J. Stelle conveys to William R. Codington of "King George Road, Millington" another portion of the land on the west side of the road which John Stelle had inherited from his father, Oliver Stelle [Somerset County Deeds, Book P21, page 201].

Bernards Township tax map indicates that William R. Codington owns 122.86 acres between the Passaic River and King George Road and 146.83 acres on the west side of the road [Bernards Township tax map].

1935 William R. Codington dies on January 22nd, aged 81, after suffering a heart attack at his Bernards Township home, ["Judge Codington Succumbs at 81," The Bernardsville News, January 24, 1935]. His will, dated January 24, 1934, Plainfield, and approved for probate on February 2nd, leaves the residue of his estate, after specific bequest to family members and employees, in trust for his wife, Rachel, for life, and thereafter to their two children, Martha and Albert. Rachel receives "all the household furniture and personal property contained at my residence at River-Edge Farm" [Somerset County Wills, Book E1, page 200].

His inventory provides some information of about the house and its furnishings, indicating that electricity and plumbing had been installed by that time. The listing of two lots of fireplace implements suggests that fireplaces were being used; that of a set of wicker porch furniture suggests the existence of a porch. A mix of braided and oriental rugs covered the floors. A "maid's bureau, old" was valued at 50 cents; a "mahogany bureau, antique" \$10.

The inventory gives the total value of William Codington's personal property as \$105,261.02, the major portion of which consists in notes, bonds, mortgages, stocks and cash. The farm equipment at

River-edge Farm (including a milk delivery truck) is valued at \$749. Listed livestock consists of 28 pedigree-registered cows at "Rive-Edge Dairy" worth \$2,975, as well as three old horses valued at \$225 [Somerset County Inventories, Book W, page 136].

1936 Rachel Codington dies on November 12th. Her will, probated on November 23rd, leaves her property to her two children [Somerset County Wills, Book F1, page 344]. In accordance with the terms of her husband's will, river-Edge Farm passes to her two children, Martha C. Dascombe and Albert I. Codington.

Her inventory, recorded February 27, 1937, provides information of about the house at River-Edge Farm and its furnishing. Nine rooms are named: telephone room, living room, dining room, kitchen, hall, north bedroom, south bedroom, southwest bedroom and maid's room. The inventory indicates the upper story contained at least one bedroom by this time, as well as an attic and possibly a hallway. The inclusion of items such as a brass kettle and brass candlestick in the telephone room, an "old churn, painted wood" in the dining room, and an "old cradle" and an "old stand" in the hall suggest the presence and appreciation of antiques, possibly passed down through the family [Somerset County Inventories, Book W, page 201].

The inventory gives the total value of Rachel Codington's personal property as \$12,030.61, including \$8,640.86 in cash, mortgage, interest and uncollected debts notes, interest and book accounts; jewelry worth \$499, a wrist watch worth \$18, a 1929 Cadillac valued at \$50 and the household goods inherited from her husband worth \$140.

1942 Martha C. and Colin H. Dascombe of North Plainfield, NJ, convey to her brother Albert I. Codington of Millington for \$1 on June 19th four tracts of land in Bernards Township; #1, an 88.27-acre tract located between the Passaic River and King George Road encompassing the subject property and is tract # 1 of the land conveyed by Clarkson Stelle's heirs to Isaac Runyon in 1853 (see 1853 entry & Somerset County Deed, Book Q2, page 361); #2 a .9-acre lot to its south known as the Boyle lot; #3 1853 (see 1853 entry & Somerset County Deed, Book Q2, page 361), a 11.7- acre lot acquired by William Codington in 1909 from Freeman J. Stelle (see 1909 entry and & Somerset County Deed, Book T11, page 466; and #4a 5.27-acre lot bordering the road from running east to the River bridge acquired by William Codington in 1922 (see Somerset County Deed, Book X18, page 476) [Somerset County Deeds, Book X22, page 372].

1943 Albert I. Codington and wife, Margaret I. of Bernards Township to the Arlington Investment Corporation of Kearny, NJ, for \$1 on September 21st two tracts of land: #1, 101.7 acre tract between the Passaic River and King George Road and including the subject property and evidently tract #s 1, 2 and 4 of the lands conveyed by Martha and Colin Dascombe to Albert Codington in the previous year (see 1942 entry) [Somerset County Deeds, Book 636, page 261].

1945 The Arlington Investment Corporation conveys to Gerald L. Pearson and his wife Mildred O. Pearson the subject property on July 7th [Somerset County Deeds, Book 641, page 168].

1960 Gerald L. and Mildred O. Pearson convey a 36.7-acre tract and a 7.1-acre parcel encompassing the subject property to George E. Geier and his wife, Ingrid L. Geier by separate deeds on July 1st and October 3rd [Somerset County Deeds, Book 970, page 123 and Book 976, page 235].

1994 Ingrid E. Geier dies on July 4th [Somerset County Deeds, Book 2029, page 856].

1995 George E. Geier, executor of the estate of Ingrid L. Geier of 430 King George Road in Bernards township convey a 36.7-acre tract and a 7.1-acre tract encompassing the subject property to Geier's River Bend Farm, L. L. C of the same place for \$1 on October 1st [Somerset County Deeds, Book 2029, page 856 and Book 2029, page 860].

1999 Geier's River Bend Farm, L. L. C., of 430 King George Road in Bernards Township convey the two tracts encompassing the subject property to the Sterling Properties, Group, L. L. C., of Livingston, NJ. For \$5,000,000 on October 13th [Somerset County Deeds, Book 2262, page 156].

On the same day, Sterling Properties, Group, L. L. C., conveys to the Township of Bernards for \$3,500,000 the portion of the Geier lands comprising the subject property [Somerset County Deeds, Book 2262, page 178].

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[29] NJ wills 2389R; US Census, Bernards Township, 1830.

[30] NJ Tax Ratables, Bernards Township, Somerset County, 1797, 1892, 1803, 1805, 1806 & 1818; New Jersey Wills 2389R.

- [31] New Jersey Wills 2389R.
- [32] Ibid.
- [33] Ibid., Somerset County Deeds, Book Q, page 178.
- [34] New Jersey Wills 2389R; John Littel, A Map of Passaic Valley from Stone House Village to Chatham N. J..., 1845; J. W. Otley and J. Keily, Map of Somerset County, New Jersey, 1850.
- [35] Ibid.
- [36] Siegel, Cemetery Records of Warren Township Somerset County New Jersey, no page; US Census, Bernards Township, 1840.
- [37] Siegel, The Baptist Meeting House Cemetery and Church, pp. 18 & 19.
- [38] US Census, Bernards Township, 1850; Snell, page 738; Somerset County Historical Quarterly, VIII, page 61.
- [39] US Census, Agricultural Schedule Bernards Township, 1850.
- [40] Plainfield Gazette, July 18, 1850 as quoted in Somerset County Genealogical Quarterly, IV, page 339; New Jersey Wills, 3211R; "Commissioners Sale of Real Estate,...June 15, 1852" Somerset Messenger, July 23, 1852, page 3.
- [41] New Jersey Wills, 3211R.
- [42] Somerset County Deeds, Book N2, page 438; Snell, Ephraim R. Stelle biography after page 738 and page 747.
- [43] "Commissioners Sale of Real Estate,...June 15, 1852" Somerset Messenger, July 23, 1852, page 3.
- [44] Hubert G Schmidt, Agricultural In New Jersey, pp. 118-121.
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- [46] US Census, Bernards Township, 1860 and 1870.
- [47] US Census, Agricultural Schedule, Bernards Township, 1870.
- [48] US Census, Agricultural Schedule, Bernards Township, 1880.
- [49] NJ Wills, 6157R.
- [50] New Jersey Death Registers, 1891-92; NJ Wills, 6157R; "Judge Codington Succumbs at 81," The Bernardsville News, January 24, 1935.
- [51] Somerset County Deeds, Book F10, page 138, Book T11, page 466, Book W20, page 149 and Book P21, page 201; "Judge Codington Succumbs at 81," The Bernardsville News, January 24, 1935; NJ [US Census, Plainfield, NJ, 1900 & 1920.

[52] Somerset County Wills, Book E1, page 200].

[53] Somerset County Inventories, Book W, page 136.

[54] Somerset County Wills, Book F1, page 344 Somerset County Inventories, Book W, page 201.

[55] Somerset County Deeds, Book X22, page 372 & Book 636, page 261.

[56] Ibid. Book 641, page 3168 & Book 970, page 123 & Book 976, page 235; Parsekian, "A Preliminary Report on the Reverend Kennedy Parsonage Farm, Bernards Township, New Jersey," page 6; Ann Parsekian "Notes from Farmstead Tour with George Geier, Meg & Phil, July 31, 2002.

[57] Somerset County Deeds, Book 2029, page 856 & 860; Book 2262, pp. 156 & 178.