

**THE ALMSHOUSE AND INSANE ASYLUM:
SALEM COUNTY'S LANDMARKS AND LEGACY OF POOR RELIEF**

By

Janet L. Sheridan
Graduate Research Assistant
Center for Historic Architecture and Design
University of Delaware

For

The Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders

October 25, 2007

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Figure 1. Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum, March 30, 2007. Photo by the author.

INTRODUCTION

Salem County possesses a tangible legacy of public poor relief. This legacy is embodied in a landmark building known as the Salem County Insane Asylum. It is the survivor of a pair of brick buildings known in more recent times as the Lakeview Complex and the County Home, situated on the County Farm in Mannington Township. The Salem County Almshouse was the other of these two significant, related buildings, but it was lost in April, 2007. Late efforts to let a stabilization contract and raise funding were met with disappointment, and it began collapsing in on itself after years of neglect. The surviving Insane Asylum has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, and that nomination documents that building primarily. This paper evolved out of an effort to nominate both buildings which preceded the demolition of the Almshouse. It documents the broader historic context and the architecture of both buildings.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Summary of Significance

The Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum and their site, known as the Lakeview Complex in more recent years, was the locus of county poor relief efforts between 1796 and 1971. These plain brick buildings stood side-by-side on the county farm in Mannington Township between 1870, the year of the construction of the Insane Asylum, to 2007, the year the Almshouse was demolished (Figure 1). They stood on a bluff facing north over Major's Run, a tributary of the Salem River, on the east side of the Salem-Woodstown Road, or State

Route 45. Today, the Insane Asylum stands as the lone reminder of the county's ongoing efforts to take care of the needy (Figure 3). The Salem County Almshouse, built in 1845, was one of the earliest surviving almshouse in New Jersey in 2007. The Insane Asylum was the second or third county insane asylum built in New Jersey, and possibly the only one left.

The Salem County Almshouse, a linear, three-story, eleven-bay brick building, was constructed in 1845 in the Greek Revival style on the foundation of an earlier almshouse built in 1808, which was destroyed by fire in 1845. The Insane Asylum, a three-story, three-bay brick Italianate house, was constructed fifteen feet to the west in of the Almshouse in 1870. Three rear additions to the Almshouse built in the 1960s—a laundry, a nursing ward and an elevator—extended the usefulness of the complex as a care facility through the 1970s.

The Salem County Almshouse was significant for its association with the nineteenth-century nationwide and statewide trend of institutionalizing poor relief in local poor houses. Further, the Insane Asylum was a forerunner in a trend of county-built insane asylums in New Jersey, one of a very few states that resorted to county insane asylums in lieu of, or in addition to, state asylums.

Architecturally, the Almshouse and the Insane Asylum reflected prevailing ideas about the relationship between architecture and the treatment of the poor and the insane—that the right design could facilitate treatment. In its form, style and integrity the Almshouse was significant for exemplifying a trend in sturdy but plain institutional poor relief architecture common in the Delaware Valley and the eastern United States in the nineteenth-century. The Almshouse typified the “linear plan” that evolved out of colonial prototypes into the “Kirkbride” plan, which dominated the design of mid- to late-nineteenth-century state hospitals for the insane. However, Salem County's domestic-like Insane Asylum, executed in an unadorned Italianate style, suggests a possible relationship to a different, emerging idea of the 1860s, called the “cottage plan.”

European Context of Poor Relief

The Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum were created within a context of evolving public policy for poor relief that extended back into colonial New Jersey and to antecedent European social practices. The idea of building almshouses and other specialized buildings to house various categories of poor people goes back to medieval times, accelerated in Renaissance Europe and was carried to America by Dutch and English colonists. The largest colonial cities built almshouses throughout the eighteenth-century, followed by rural counties in the early years of the republic.

Poor relief in the American colonies was rooted in English and Dutch practices. In England and the Netherlands, charitable facilities including almshouses increased in number and specialization after 1500 due to increasing numbers of poor and vagrants, a phenomenon going on all over Europe.¹ Poor laws were established beginning in the sixteenth-century—a

¹ Paul R. Huey, “The Almshouse in Dutch and English Colonial North American and its Precedent in the Old World: Historical and Archaeological Evidence,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 5: 2 (2001), Ibid, 123.

response to a chain of events that began with the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church had taken care of the poor since the feudal Middle Ages with income from its large landholdings and generous bequests from wealthy parishioners. In addition, craft guilds, under patronage of the church, took care of their members and their families in time of need. Guilds provided education for children and built almshouses, which housed its aged members.

Several factors contributed to the breakdown of this system. The Black Death plague wiped out half the English population, causing a labor shortage and increasing the cost of living. Wages by law stayed the same, forcing farming serfs to leave their home manors and beg for a living.² Wars created many widows, orphans and disabled men.³ As England and Holland abolished Catholicism, the poor under the care of monasteries and guilds were turned out to fend for themselves, begging and causing annoyances.⁴ In England, common pastures in villages traditionally open to all were seized by private landowners, excluding poor families from the means to provide food and clothing for themselves.⁵ Finally, the shift in land ownership from many to few put the means of production into the hands of those few who paid workers barely enough to subsist on and caused great unemployment.⁶

In the Netherlands, Amsterdam's House of Correction was established in 1553, setting a precedent for combining workhouses with penal institutions and inspiring London's Bridewell in 1556.⁷ The former palace of King Henry VIII, Bridewell was abandoned in 1530 and in 1553 Edward VI allowed the City of London to use it to house homeless children and punish disorderly women. In 1556 the city took ownership and turned it into a combined prison, hospital and workhouse. After that, the name Bridewell became a colloquialism for such facilities elsewhere in the British Isles and America.⁸

The idea of the workhouse grew out a sentiment that "undeserving poor" who could work but did not care to could be reformed by compulsory work in a public facility. "Deserving poor" were people who, through no fault of their own, could not work. In England, poor laws passed throughout the sixteenth-century reflected new attitudes about the deserving and undeserving poor, emphasizing the county workhouse as a solution to the undeserving sort,

² Martin Walter Stanton, *History of Public Poor Relief in New Jersey, 1609-1934* (New York : [s.n.], 1934.), 4.

³ Huey, 124.

⁴ Stanton, 8-9.

⁵ Ibid, 10.

⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁷ Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood, "Introduction and Historical Context to the Archaeology of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Almshouses," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 5: 2 (2001), 118.

⁸ Wikipedia (<http://www.mkheritge.co.uk/nppm/briedwell.html>) (accessed December 2006)

lest they live off alms meant for the helpless sort.⁹ In the Netherlands, almshouses, workhouses and orphanages were built or expanded in the seventeenth-century.¹⁰

A 1572 English law required parishes to care for their own poor, send strangers back to their own towns, provide work for the able-bodied, and punish the unworthy poor. The law created the office of overseer of the poor. Raw materials were to be provided to the poor so they could manufacture finished products to sell. The poor law of 1601 went further by establishing a tax for poor relief, since voluntary giving had failed under the first law. It also provided for putting poor children and idle persons to work, and providing for the apprenticing of children. Parishes that did a good job of poor relief attracted people from parishes that did not, leading to the 1662 Act of Settlement. The settlement law allowed parishes to reject poor persons who were moving around looking for work.¹¹ These laws, attitudes and practices were the recent memory of the English colonists who came to America. They were promptly emulated in the New World.

Poor Relief in the Colonies

Poor relief in Salem County had been a public concern since its founding in the late seventeenth-century. But attitudes about the poor at that time were much different than the early nineteenth-century ideas that lead to the construction of the Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum. In eighteenth-century America, religious notions about the inevitability of poverty and the moral obligation to relieve it were very influential. The Protestant outlook saw poverty as a God-given opportunity for the better-off to do good works. These attitudes replaced fear and distrust with sympathy for the needy neighbor. In colonial America, “the poor” were an undifferentiated group that included widows, orphans, the aged, the sick, the insane, and the disabled. The issue of concern was need, not specific condition, but colonists, as did their European predecessors, drew a moral distinction between the deserving and undeserving, and between their own deserving poor and vagrant outsiders. The former received help, the latter, punishment. Authorities minimized disruption in their lives by keeping the poor with their own or with neighboring families.¹² In major colonial cities, however, almshouses, workhouses, orphanages and hospitals for the poor were built and rebuilt during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—Boston (1662, 1685), Albany (1653, 1655, 1686), New York (1701, 1736, 1771), Williamsburg (1755), Savannah (1733), and Philadelphia (1702, 1713, 1752, 1767, 1774).¹³ These works set the examples for what would come much later in rural counties after the Revolution.

⁹ Huey, 128.

¹⁰ Huey, 126.

¹¹ Stanton, 11-12.

¹² David J. Rothman, *The Discovery Of The Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2002), 4-8

¹³ Huey, 138-146.

New Jersey Poor Law

In colonial New Jersey counties the poor were cared for in households in their communities with funds collected from the public and distributed to their caretakers by local authorities.¹⁴ This authority was the board of the Justices and Freeholders who were the county elected governing officers. The townships put poor people out to whoever would take care of them for the lowest sum.¹⁵

The Province of West Jersey passed the first poor law in New Jersey in 1676. Commissioners were to appoint caretakers for orphans at public expense. A 1681 law established workhouses as part of the jail system where criminals were compelled to work for their keep. Further, under a 1683 law, vagabonds without a certificate from their last home town could be arrested. As a result, criminal people and simply poor people were mixed together in jails and workhouses.¹⁶

When the provinces of West and East Jersey were surrendered to Queen Anne in 1702, she decreed that “You are to endeavor with the Assistance of the Council, to provide for the raising of Stocks, and building of public Workhouses, in convenient places, for the employing of poor and indigent People.”¹⁷

After that, New Jersey upgraded their poor law numerous times. In the 1704 law, overseers of the poor were charged with receiving fines for disorderly crimes, and in 1709 every township or precinct was authorized to select overseers as well as assessors. The overseers’ duty was to find care for children of poor parents or without parents so that they would not need to wander about in search of care themselves. Subsequent laws in 1740 and 1774 added to overseers’ duties, including collecting and recordkeeping, levying fines on citizens for not paying poor assessments or for refusing to care for relatives, and requiring that recipients of outdoor relief wear a badge of poverty—a large red or blue capital letter “P.”¹⁸

The Settlement Laws of 1740 and 1774 pertained to poor people without “legal settlement,” including “rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars and other idle persons.” Relocating was not a right in colonial times. People wandering into a place had to be examined before a magistrate and could be returned to their former place of settlement. Men who defied being returned could be whipped, but a woman who refused settlement would be either sent away again or imprisoned on bread and water and then sent away. People giving hospitality to such persons without notifying authorities could be fined and held liable for their care if they could not be

¹⁴ Ibid, 1.

¹⁵ Charles W. Casper, “A Historical Account of the Founding and Maintaining of the Salem County Almshouse,” handwritten paper dated March 2, 1885. Salem County Historical Society, 1.

¹⁶ Stanton, 16.

¹⁷ Ibid, 17, quoting Leaming and Spicer’s *Concessions and Agreements*, 642.

¹⁸ Ibid, 17-19.

returned. A person wanting to relocate could obtain a certificate from their place of settlement in order to go elsewhere for work, but never could a person on a certificate, nor his children, obtain legal settlement in the new place.¹⁹

No workhouses were built after Queen Anne's order of 1702 until a 1748 law authorized Middlesex County to build a poorhouse, workhouse and house of correction at Perth Amboy. The law's purpose was to maintain and employ dependent persons and children and put to work and punish all "Vagrants, Vagabonds, Pilferers, and all idle and disorderly Persons, Servants, and Slaves" in the county. A workhouse committee could compel poor and unemployed people to live and work in the workhouse and justices could sentence idle troublemakers to up to thirty days at hard labor. At the age of fourteen, children could be indentured out to masters anywhere in the colony.²⁰ The committee was also empowered to assign corporal punishment in the form of whipping. A second workhouse was authorized in Elizabeth, New Jersey in a law passed by the provincial assembly in 1754. This law required that children be taught to read and write, set limits on the time of indenture to eighteen and twenty-one for girls and boys, respectively, and gave parents the right to select and negotiate terms of service with a master. Townships had to pay for the maintenance of the workhouse in proportion to how many people they sent there. Outdoor relief also continued.²¹

Debtors were jailed in the eighteenth-century in New Jersey, and in that sense jails were also places for the poor. However, because this concept was a self-perpetuating problem (an imprisoned debtor was unable to resolve his problem because he could not work), in 1761 a new law provided that a debtor owing less than fifty pounds could indenture himself as a servant to one who was willing to assume his debts.²²

Salem County History of Poor Relief

Minutes of the Salem County Justices and Freeholders meetings from the eighteenth-century reflect ongoing efforts to care for the poor. The earliest history of poor relief in Salem County is intertwined with the history of incarcerating criminals. An early reference to a facility that may have been related to poor relief was in the minutes of March 25, 1729, in which the board "ordered that a pair of Stairs of white oak planck be made to go up to ye Bridewell and a Convenient Shedd built over them and that Richard Smith and James Whitten be managers to see the work done."²³

The reference to a "Bridewell" implied the existence of a workhouse that, according to the minute above, was upstairs in a building. In all likelihood this building was the jail, because

¹⁹ Ibid, 22.

²⁰ Ibid, 23.

²¹ Ibid, 26.

²² Ibid, 27.

²³ *Justices and Freeholders Minutes*, Apr 13, 1724 to Aug 7, 1750, Salem County Clerks Office.

in 1717 the county court ordered that the upper part of the jail be used as a “house of correction.” Salem’s “goal”²⁴ at this time was a stone building constructed in 1709 to replace a jail built in 1689.²⁵ It stood at the corner of Market Street and Broadway in the center of town. Adjacent to it on the north was the courthouse, which survives today in altered form. Therefore, the house of correction in the jail was probably a workhouse established under the 1681 law and called the “Bridewell,” according to English tradition. Thus Salem had inherited this English practice by 1729 and possibly as early as 1689, long before New York City built its more noted Bridewell in 1775. The workhouses of colonial times actually served as almshouses, putting undeserving paupers to work. Salem’s Bridewell could have been the kind of combined poorhouse, workhouse, and house of correction intended to house several classes of poor: those who did not fit into the system of outdoor relief and boarding out, vagrants, petty criminals and misbehaving servants.²⁶

Physical and operational improvements ensued. On March 23, 1730/1731 it was “ordered that Steps of Brick and Stone be made to ye bridewell in the ensuing year and Benjamin Acton and Joseph Gregory are Appointed Managers to See that the work be Well Done.” In May it was “ordered that 5£:0s:0D be annually paid to a Bridewell keeper and Col John Rolfe Mr Frances Gandoutte Mr John Cudgen are appointed to agree with such a man as they Shall think fit to Serve in that office.” Further, it was ordered that the “Bridewell keeper” be paid in quarterly installments. Next, a schedule of fees in addition to salary were set for the “Bridewell keeper” for various duties, including (in British pounds, shillings and pence)

For every Commitment	0:2:6
for ye first whipping	0:2:6
for Every whipping more	0:1:0
for victuating the offender and ye Diem	0:0:6
which said fees Shall be paid by the offender or if a Servant by his her or their master or Mistress – ²⁷	

In 1733 William Siddens was appointed Overseer of the Poor “in ye Room of Nathⁿ Hedge dec” meaning Siddens was taking the place of Nathan Hedge who had died, and Ranier Gregory was appointed the same “for ye Town of Salem in ye room of Jn^o Rolfe ## Dec^d” Overseers distributed outdoor relief, paying families who bid to keep paupers. The practice of outdoor relief continued in Salem County into the twentieth-century, though auctioning paupers to the lowest bidder seems to have ended in the late eighteenth-century.²⁸ In 1929

²⁴ This was not spelled “gaol,” as was the customary spelling.

²⁵ Roger E. Nathan, *From Proprietary Rule to Democracy: A History of Salem County Government* (Salem, N. J.: Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 2003), 13.

²⁶ James Leiby, *Charity and Correction in New Jersey: A History of State Welfare Institutions* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 8, 19.

²⁷ *Justices and Freeholders Minutes, Apr 13, 1724 to Aug 7, 1750*,

²⁸ Letters to the editor in 1845 refer to such abusive practices of “fifty or sixty years ago.” *National Standard*,

the amount of outdoor relief was \$3.00 per week. The office of Outdoor Relief Clerk was abolished in 1958, but outdoor relief was not actually discontinued until 1974.²⁹ Almshouse records list "pensioners" in monthly reports through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, in 1855, \$0.50 was allowed to each of twenty-two persons.³⁰

The distinction of prison versus Bridewell is made on March 22, 1736 when a brick floor was ordered built in the "Goal," and two brick walls between it and the Court House. On October 3, 1738 was an order for work on a "Goal Keepers House" The following year the jail is called a prison.³¹ Facilities and their maintenance were evidently a growing public concern, for on May 14, 1740, John Pledger and Robert Hart were appointed paid commissioners "to Manage the Publick Buildings" in Salem.

The practice of public punishment is evidence by the May 21, 1746 order to pay Elizabeth Jones for "Getting a Pillory Erected" and the August 7, 1750 order to pay Peter Broomberry "for ye Branding iron making marked with ye Letter M," hinting at the medieval penal practice of human branding, in which a "malefactor" or criminal was branded on a visible part of the body such as the hand or forehead.

Salem County's First Poor House, 1796

In New Jersey, not only was West Jersey first to set down poor laws, but Salem County, in 1796, was the first county to establish an almshouse. Salem was followed by Burlington in 1798, Gloucester in 1799, Cumberland in 1809 and Cape May by 1818.³² Salem County was also the first county to appropriate funds for the building of a county almshouse.³³

The first poor house was at Samuel Bassett's Tavern in rural Pilesgrove Township, about seven miles from the town of Salem, the county seat, on the road from Salem to Woodstown. The tavern was a one-and-one-half story frame house with three bedrooms and a small "card room" upstairs.³⁴ A series of purchases for the purpose of institutional poor relief, beginning with the tavern, began after an act of the state legislature "for the better relief and employment of the poor of the County of Salem" passed on March 12, 1796. A corporation called "The Trustees of the Poor of the County of Salem" was formed consisting of a trustee

Salem, New Jersey, February 4, 1845 and February 18, 1845. As quoted in *Preservation Salem News*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Summer 1995), 5, and Vol. VII, No. 2 (Fall 1997), 5.

²⁹ Nathan, 79, 80.

³⁰ *Almshouse Committee Minutes and Accounts, 1856-1880*. February 5, 1855.

³¹ *Justices and Freeholders Minutes*, May 9, 1739.

³² Leiby, 19.

³³ R. Craig Koedel, *South Jersey Heritage: A Social, Economic and Cultural History*, (Washington, D. C.: United Press of America, Inc., 1979. http://www.westjersey.org/sjh/sjh_title.htm (accessed January 31, 2005)

³⁴ Casper, 4.

from each township annually appointed by the Freeholder Board and empowered to hold, sell or use property and to receive donations for the support of the poor. The following land parcels were purchased between 1796 and 1836: September 17, 1796: Samuel and Elizabeth Bassett, 76 acres and 64 square perches in Pilesgrove with buildings ("the Tavern Property"), £800; deed recorded November 12, 1796; August 24, 1809: John Wallace, 20 acres and 3 rods in Pilesgrove, \$360; 1815: Abraham Sharp, 6 acres, one rod, and 3 perches, \$298.03; 1822: property of Edward Sharp, 21 acres and 2 rods of timber land in Pilesgrove, \$900; 1836: Elijah Griffith and wife and Joseph D. Murray and wife, 91.63 acres, \$3665.20; and a number of small purchases to straighten lines and exchanges made for opening new roads.

Upon purchasing Bassett's Tavern in 1796 a wing "making it L shaped" for women was added, but by 1798, the Trustees requested of the Freeholders "some further Provision made for the Accomodation of the Poor, as the present house is too small, and several persons are now placed out at a very considerable additional expense to the County, who ought to be maintained in the Poor House."³⁵ On June 20, 1804, the Board of Chosen Freeholders decided to build a new poor-house: "John Wistar and Isaiah Shinn were appointed commissioners to provide materials for the purpose of Building a Poor House and they are empowered to draw upon the County Collector for the amount of Expense pursuant to the foregoing Order."

Delaware Valley Almshouses

As Salem County set to planning its first poor house construction project, there were other others already built in the Delaware Valley which may have served as models. Several built between 1767 and 1801 resembled each other in floor plans and architectural style.

Gloucester County in New Jersey, Wilmington in Delaware and Chester and Lancaster Counties in Pennsylvania had almshouses predating Salem County's.³⁶ These are believed to be modeled after Philadelphia's almshouse, built in 1767, which was characterized by a pedimented, Palladian-style central pavilion with flanking wings.³⁷ Philadelphia, in turn, found its architectural model in England, where the Palladian style in domestic architecture was peaking in the mid-eighteenth-century. That a domestic style was being adapted to hospitals, prisons, asylums and colleges made sense because these institutions functioned as households. Other characteristics of the style include a symmetrical façade, a hipped roof, dormer windows and a cupola.³⁸

Salem County's decision to build a new poor house was part of a trend in the Delaware Valley and elsewhere in the United States starting in the late eighteenth-century to build

³⁵ "At a Meeting of the Trustees for the Poor of the County of Salem held the 7th of 5th Mo. (May) 1798" in Salem County Almshouse File 000.020.406, Salem County Historical Society.

³⁶ Nancy Kay Zeigler, *"Built in a Strong Plain and Workmanlike Manner": The Almshouse of the Delaware Valley, 1767-1801*. M. A. Thesis, University of Delaware, 1991, 25-28.

³⁷ Zeigler, 35.

³⁸ Ibid, 36-37.

county-funded institutions to house and maintain not only the poor but the insane and criminals. Large numbers of first-generation almshouses, insane asylum and penitentiaries were built between 1790 and 1820.³⁹ By the middle of the nineteenth-century most counties in the northeastern United States had built an almshouse.⁴⁰ Scholars recognize a shift in public policy and attitudes in this period, but opinions vary as to the reasons for the sudden appearance of large facilities like prisons, mental hospitals, reformatories, orphanages, and almshouses to house populations of dependent people.

After the Revolution, fresh notions of equality and freedom made the public less tolerant of poverty, more likely to believe that its causes were rooted in a person's laziness or immorality, and thus distrustful of the poor. This, along with increasing levels of poverty in the countryside and the view that outdoor relief was no longer effective, is thought to be a reason behind the nationwide trend of county almshouse building in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. Almshouses would correct the behavior that bred poverty.⁴¹

One view, which is actually focused on 1820s and 1830s, is that:

Jacksonian Americans experienced a crisis of confidence in the social organization of the new republic, fearful that the ties that once bound citizens together – the ties of community, church and family – were loosening and that, as a consequence, social disorganization appeared imminent. Their fears were confirmed and exacerbated by the extent of the crime, poverty, delinquency and insanity that they saw around them. In response to these perceptions, to an anxiety about the extent of deviancy and dependency, they discovered the solution of the asylum. This institution would at once rehabilitate the inmates, thereby reducing crime, insanity, and poverty, and would then, through the very success of its design, set an example for larger society. The good order of the asylum, its routine of punctuality and steady labor, would act both a cure and a preventative – reforming its charges and serving as a model to the community. It was a grand and utopian vision, one that sought to ensure the safety of the republic and promote its glory.⁴²

Another view, combining both practical and moral concerns, is that the “adoption of a county almshouse system combined concern for efficient administration of relief funds and better care for those paupers being abused by private households with whom they were boarded.”⁴³

³⁹ Monique C.-E. Bourque, “Virtue, Industry, and Independence: Almshouses and Labor in the Philadelphia Region, 1791-1860.” Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1995. 40.

⁴⁰ Zeigler, 19.

⁴¹ Zeigler, 15-17.

⁴² Rothman, xxiv.

⁴³ Bourque, 41.

In the new republic, officials were under public scrutiny to make the best use of the public's tax money. An institution was thought to be more efficient than outdoor relief and the treatment of inmates could be improved in a controlled environment. Another factor leading to the establishment of almshouses was the increasing commercialization of local economies, which lead to periods of unemployment for increasing numbers of people, especially men.⁴⁴ The almshouse was a place some people would return to repeatedly to weather lean times.⁴⁵

In New Jersey, the establishment of almshouses was one of three significant developments in public welfare after the Revolution (the others being the moves to abolish slavery and set up public education) brought on by several trends that began even before the Revolution: the growth in humanitarianism, the weakening of the influence of the churches and their inability to organize charity, and the democratizing of the social and political order.⁴⁶ After 1789 there was frequent litigation among localities over settlement of wandering paupers. Post-war prosperity and security allowed local authorities to begin long-term planning. The almshouse was a solution to the expensive bickering and to the inhumane practice of auctioning the poor.⁴⁷

The 1808 Poor House

There is no record of a building committee sent to visit area almshouses, but it is likely that one did. Perhaps they looked to nearby Gloucester County's new 1801 almshouse that was 75 feet by 35 feet in footprint, two stories high on a stone basement and built in a "strong, plain, and workman-like manner" for an example.⁴⁸ There is no record of the architectural design for the new Salem County almshouse other than its overall size. In August 1805, the Freeholders ordered that "the Commissioners for building the poor house are directed to build on the most eligible plan, not to exceed forty-five feet in width nor sixty or sixty-five feet in Length and three stories high including the cellar." A footprint not to exceed 65 feet by 45 feet was then agreed upon. Construction was in progress on May 14, 1806 when John Wistar and Isaiah Shinn were authorized "to go on with the building agreeably to the Draft proposed, always allowing them to make such small variations within as they may from time to time think beneficial and convenient to keeping in view strength and plainness in finishing the House."

The poor house was still under construction a year later when the Freeholders considered two proposals for "finishing all the Carpenter work of said House" — either \$1,700 or by "days work" (charging by the day). The Freeholders opted for "the contract by the day." The

⁴⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁵ See attachment "Steward's Monthly Population Reports, 1858-1873" showing seasonal fluctuations, which peaked in the winter months.

⁴⁶ Leiby, 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 19.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 28.

carpenter was Jonas Freedland of Mannington.⁴⁹ Still another year later, on May 11, 1808, the Freeholders ordered Gervas Hall, John Thompson, Thomas Thompson, Jeremiah Wood, Benjamin Tindall and Joseph Borden “to view the Poor House when finished” and report to the Board. On August 9 the committee reported

that the building was completed they have attended and examined the same and that in their opinion the said building is in strict conformity with the instructions of the board, to the commissioners — plain strong and good in every point of view and conveniently pland for its intended purpose.⁵⁰

An accounting of the total expense of building the Poor House was reported to be \$6,405.50½. At the same meeting John Wistar and Isaiah Shinn were directed to have the Poor House painted

and build a Smoak House and two suitable Necessaries at said Poor house and fence in the yard and plan the same with trees at their discretion, it is further ordered that they be authorized to rent the old poor House in the best manner they can for the benefit of the County.⁵¹

The “old poor house” at that time was Bassett’s Tavern, still standing and useful in 1808. It was rented to Jonathan Kelty, a weaver, who operated there until 1822.⁵² In 1813 Isaiah Shinn was again charged with building another smoke house “for the use of the Poor House of such materials and dimensions as in his opinion is most suitable for that purpose.” In 1814, “the old buildings formerly used as a poor house” were ordered sold. The reason was not given, but the public road from Salem to Woodstown was widened and straightened in 1812, after which the old poor house was “nearly one-half in the public road” as a consequence.⁵³ But it was not until August 14, 1822 they were reported sold for \$62.

On May 10, 1820, the Freeholders considered an “additional building or wing to the poorhouse to accommodate the insane and lunatics to prevent disturbance of the aged and infirm...” Despite agreement to the proposal, the project was put off until May 18, 1822 when it was order that

an additional building of brick or stone be erected at the poor house for the accommodation of the insane poor of such size and dimensions for

⁴⁹ Casper, 5.

⁵⁰ *Freeholder Minutes, 1798-1844*, 9 August 1808.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵³ Casper, 5. The building shows on “New Road to Woodstown” (*Salem County Banks and Roads Book C, Page 79-80*, Salem County Clerks Records) along with the route of the earlier road.

convenience as to the trustees of the poor house may direct and that the trustees superintend the building of same.⁵⁴

The trustees were further charged with building sheds and making yards for the accommodation of the poor on August 13, 1823. They were given "leave to erect a washhouse or cooking house for the reception of the boilers" on May 12, 1824, though that order was discontinued in August. The projects was revived in January 1825, ordering Joseph Bassett and Reuban Woolman "to superintend erection of a brick building not exceeding eighteen feet square and one story high to contain the boilers at the poorhouse and purchase two dozen rush bottom chairs for use of sd poorhouse." The bill for the washhouse came in at \$212.90 ½ on August 9, 1826 at which time Matthew Morrison was ordered to procure a frame for an addition to the barn at the poorhouse "and also erect a hog pen during the ensuing winter." Matthew Morrison was again enlisted in 1835 to build a brick addition "to the county's poorhouse for the purpose of a spring house in such manner and of such size as the Trustees of the poor may deem advisable..."⁵⁵

Despite quarters for the poor, orphaned children were typically indentured to outside masters who employed them at least through 1878.⁵⁶ In this way they could learn a trade and thereby avoid the poor house as adults. They also escaped the bad moral influences that were common among poorhouse inmates. The Freeholders routinely sent deaf and dumb children away by requesting approval from the state Governor to admit them to the state training school.⁵⁷

On a windy night on February 1, 1845, the Salem County poor house was totally destroyed by fire. Salem's *National Standard* reported the "Burning of the Salem Co. Alms House" on February 4, 1845:

We regret to state that on Saturday morning last, between nine and ten o'clock, the roof of the above building took fire from the chimney, and burning downwards, soon enveloped the whole establishment in flames. So rapidly did the fire spread that all efforts to arrest its progress proved unavailing, and the building was soon burnt to the ground. The provisions and goods however were principally saved, although a portion is said to be damaged. The number of paupers on hand was eighty-nine, many of whom were old and decrepit and all more or less laboring under some infirmity, rendered the scene distressing in the highest degree. Fifty-three of the unfortunates were brought to Salem, and lodged in the Court House and Jail, where they were made comfortable by the liberality and kind attentions of our

⁵⁴ *Freeholder Minutes, 1798-1844*, 18 May 1822.

⁵⁵ *Freeholder Minutes, 1798-1844*, 12 August 1835.

⁵⁶ *Indentures of Children, 1812-1845, Indentures 1864-1878*.

⁵⁷ *Freeholder Minutes, 1798-1844*, 14 May 1828, 12 August 1835, 14 May 1845.

citizens. Among the number taken from the burning building were seven lunatics, several of whom had been in confinement upwards of twenty years, where, from the violence of their ravings, it was found necessary to keep them chained within the closest limits.

But the most lamentable part of the affair was the falling of a portion of the wall upon a son of Mr. Jacob Taylor of Woodstown, (who was merely a spectator) by which he was almost immediately killed. There were rumors afloat during the day of others being buried under the ruins, or otherwise injured, but we believe them to be without foundation.

The Alms House was an extensive brick building, and from its size and convenience, a proud monument to the benevolence of the citizens of this county. The estimated loss is from six to eight thousand dollars, upon which there is no insurance.

A follow-up article in February 18 reported that the adjoining farm, "the old Sharp Place," was rented for temporary accommodation of many of the paupers and that the Freeholders were to meet that day regarding "that matter of the Alms House." In that special meeting shortly after the fire they ordered an investigation and passed resolutions about rebuilding. With a mind to economy, they ordered that the old bricks be salvaged for reuse.⁵⁸

The Almshouse of 1845

The destruction of the almshouse triggered public debate about rebuilding, though that debate was not apparent from Freeholder minutes. Though the Freeholders immediately decided to rebuild, newspaper records reveal opposing opinions on the economy and humanity of approaches to poor relief. One position questioned the economic efficacy of institutional housing and favored traditional outdoor relief in which poor people were housed with local families, to which others responded, "There are those among us whose memories can look back some fifty or sixty years and full well remember the tales of woe, oppression, imposition and injustices that system had in its train..." and "...humanity should be the predominant motive. If unfeeling *economy* is to govern, then the poor are *degraded*—not *relieved*." "Is not the support of the poor essentially a human institution? Then what a shameful perversion of the spirit of charity to suffer pinching economy to render its tenderest mercies cruel..." Some people wanted social improvement, objecting to "the promiscuous mingling of black and white, male and female," causing such misery that "cleanliness, morality and decency demand the different classes of paupers to be separated."⁵⁹

A legal question immediately arose regarding which Board had the legal authority to build another almshouse. Two attorneys, whose opinions were published in the newspaper, concurred that it was the Freeholders who had the authority, not the Trustees of the Poor. True to Delaware Valley custom, in an emergency meeting after the fire, the Freeholders

⁵⁸ This is the first record that the first almshouse was built of brick.

⁵⁹ *National Standard*, Salem, New Jersey, February 4, 1845 and February 18, 1845. As quoted in *Preservation Salem News*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Summer 1995), 5, and Vol. VII, No. 2 (Fall 1997), 5.

ordered a committee to visit other almshouses to determine a suitable design.⁶⁰ By this time there were other almshouses in the region, such as Bucks County, Pennsylvania (1806), Montgomery County, Pennsylvania (1808), Berks County, Pennsylvania (1825), Cumberland County, Pennsylvania (1830) and Lebanon County, Pennsylvania (ca. 1830).⁶¹

After a month of visiting other unspecified almshouses the committee presented their findings to the Freeholders on March 12:

...that they have visited many of the neighboring institutions to obtain a suitable plan for said Poor house, to be hereafter erected — They have seen no building after which they could plan said house entirely — from their observations they would recommend said building to be heated by flues, the fuel to be stone coal, that, in their opinion being the most pidious [expedicious?] and economical mode of heating said building — the said committee would recommend to this Board, the examination of certain drafts for said building, which will be hereafter exhibited—The said committee also recommends a tin roof, and are of the opinion that the dimensions of said poor House should be 120 feet by 50 feet in order, more conveniently and effectually to distribute the different sexes and casts of its inmates—said dimensions will also admit the residence of the keeper of the Poor house to be placed in the centre of said building —”

A site selection committee recommended that the new house be built on the site of the old one. A later Freeholder resolution fixed the specifications as such: heated by flues with stone coal, of brick, 110 feet by 50 feet, three stories above the basement with tin roof, clear heights to be eight feet for basement, ten feet for first and second stories, eight feet for the third story. Apparently site selection was an issue, for the Freeholders took it upon themselves, acting as a committee of the whole, to “to meet upon the Poor house ground and select a position for the erection of said Poor house.”⁶² The order of recommendations and decisions indicate a major concern with how the house would be heated, perhaps in order to reduce fire hazards to avoid the kind of disaster they were then dealing with. The choice of tin roof is another clue. The building committee was Benjamin Acton, Jr., Dr. William C. Mulford, and Joshua Madara. The contract for carpentry work was given to Levi Dubree and Charles Sharp, the mason was Richard Ballinger, and Joseph Inskip and Joseph Moore did the plastering. The final cost was \$11,100.59.⁶³

Almshouse Style and Plan

Whether or not the 1808 poor house had been built in the Palladian style, the 1840s was the

⁶⁰ *Freeholder Minutes, 1845-1866*. 18 February 1845.

⁶¹ Bourque, Monique, et al, *Both Ornamental and Useful”: The Lancaster County Almshouse and Hospital*, 41.

⁶² *Freeholder Minutes, 1845-1866*, 12 March 1845.

⁶³ Casper, 7.

heyday of Greek Revival in Salem County, and the new almshouse was built in this style. William Jeffers was credited with drafting the plan adopted at the March 1845 meeting.⁶⁴ Expressed plainly, its major Grecian feature was the wooden front portico with its square, tapering Doric pillars and molded capitals. The four-course brick eave cornice contained a Grecian ovolo profile and a Roman cove profile. The building's long, narrow footprint with the presence of a longitudinal corridor bisecting the building on all or most floors was shared by many regional almshouses, such as Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (1801); Lebanon County, Pennsylvania (circa 1830); Montgomery County, Pennsylvania (1808); Chester County, Pennsylvania (1800); New Castle County, Delaware (circa 1806).⁶⁵ Often in these examples, basements contained cells for the insane, kitchens, and workrooms where inmates could engage in manufacturing. First floors were used for public and common areas, such as reception, dining and wash rooms and an apartment for the steward and his family. Upper floors served as dormitories for the paupers. Large rooms would house several inmates, and the sexes were segregated.⁶⁶ Despite similarities, no two almshouses were alike, with each county inserting its own particular preferences to lend operational effectiveness.

Room-by-room inventories taken in 1853 and between 1876 and 1924 survive for the Almshouse. The inventories list rooms by name and what furniture and other items were found in each room. Rooms were described in the order they were approached but it is not always clear what pathway the inventory takers took. Rooms were variously referred to by a room number, a name, or a relative location, but relative to what is often not discernible. Room names and the items found in them reveal how space was used, how uses were segregated, how the buildings functioned in everyday life and how use changed over time. In 1900, for example, the inventory lists a Parlor, a Trustees Room, a Hall, a Setting Room, a Drug Room, a Dining Room, five numbered rooms, a second Hall, a Men's Setting Room, a Bath Room, and a "Sell" on the first floor. The Parlor, Trustees Room, and Hall would have been close to the front entrance and finished and furnished better than others. The Drug Room was where drugs were kept and where the visiting doctor could see patients. There was a "case of drugs" in addition to "three barrels of sweets," four chairs, carpet, a lounge, a rocker and a stand. The presence of a "Mens Setting Room" on the first floor indicates that the first floor of the almshouse was assigned to men in addition to visitors and certain common activities like dining and visiting with the doctor. The "Women's Department" was located in the "second story on right" in the Almshouse. It contained two rooms, one with four beds and one without beds. Another list for the second floor, perhaps on the other side of the hall partition, lists only four rooms. Thus male and female living areas were segregated but a very small area was set aside for women. This description makes sense in the light of a hall partition at the west end of the house that was removed in 1951. The accounting for the third floor has two separate lists for rooms and cells on the right and left. This distinction

⁶⁴ Jeffers was a Salem attorney who built and occupied a temple-form Grecian-style mansion at Market and Griffith Streets in Salem built around 1830 of unknown architectural authorship. (Westfield Architects and Preservation Consultants, *Telegraph Building Preservation Plan*, 1995.)

⁶⁵ Bourque, *Ibid*, 25, 27, 31-34.

⁶⁶ Zeigler, 56.

may have to do with the central dividing partition seen on the 1950 drawings as a feature to be removed. A section on the "Insane Department" says only "this house and sells." All together, in 1900, the third floor contained fifteen rooms, including at least four cells. "Sellers" for meat, coal, potatoes, soap and provisions probably occupy the basement. It should be noted that "cells," presumably rooms designed for restraint, are listed on first and third floors, but not on the second floor or the basement. A more thorough analysis of the many inventory lists would throw more light on the changing uses of the rooms in the Almshouse over time.

Apparently the Almshouse design fell short of ideal at least in terms of comfort. Only five years after construction, the Freeholders ordered a committee "to make all necessary alterations by ventilation or otherwise in four rooms at Alms House" in 1850. The committee reported that ventilation was necessary but the Freeholders halted further action.⁶⁷ "There seemed to be a great desire to get it put up cheap and if that was the object they certainly succeeded, as very little attention was paid either to warming or ventilating, or to any other convenience," noted Almshouse historian Charles Casper in 1885.⁶⁸ The "A. A. Griffing Iron Co. N.Y. Patent Sept 22, 1874" steam radiators are artifacts of the heating system retrofit accomplished in 1885, when the Freeholders ordered the house to be heated by steam.⁶⁹ The contract was given to M. Anderson from Bridgeton at a final cost of \$1,890.⁷⁰

By the 1880s and 1890s physical conditions had deteriorated. Several "much-needed improvements" were made in 1883: upgrading the water supply and checking it for good quality and quantity, a new and much larger cooking range and boiler "giving sufficient hot water for all purposes, saving much Labor, and fuel burned in furnaces in Cook House," cleaning of the tanks on the fourth floor, moving one from the second floor to the fourth, "making three large tanks holding about 2500 gallons. The room has been partitioned off and made entirely separate – so that it can be kept clean." However, the matter of closets for the third and fourth floors was deferred on account of time and expense.⁷¹ In 1885 the trustees found the "the house very poorly supplied with beds and bedding and in fact their [sic] is no excess of any goods, everything being in constant use."⁷² The population was at an all time

⁶⁷ *Freeholder Minutes*, May 10, 1845 to Feb. 10, 1866, 8 May 1850 and 14 May 1850

⁶⁸ Casper, 7. Casper owned a plumbing and heating business in Salem. (Thomas H. Bowen, "Poorhouse: The insane lived in underground cells," *Today's Sunbeam*, April 30, 1987, A-3.)

⁶⁹ This same model of ornate radiator has been observed in several other Salem County buildings that were either built or retrofitted about that time (author's experience). Buildings include the Salem Municipal Building, Salem; Broadway Methodist Church, Salem (formerly); 159 7th Street, Salem; 142-144 7th Street (formerly); and 26 Oak Street, Salem.

⁷⁰ *Trustee Minutes 1880-1903*, November August 3, August 17, November 2, 1885.

⁷¹ *Trustee Minutes, August 1880-August 1903*, November 5, 1883, 59. First floor referred to basement, fourth floor to third floor

⁷² *Trustee Minutes, August 1880-August 1903*, May 4, 1885, 87.

high of 86 inmates.⁷³ By 1897 sanitary conditions had worsened. Water closets were “vile” and sewage water from the cesspool in the yard was found to be “full of the most poisonous germs directly traceable to the sewage.” An overhaul of the system was ordered.⁷⁴

Farming and Industry

Many counties in the Delaware Valley, including Gloucester County, started their almshouses by buying an existing building on a farm. The prevailing attitude was that such a setting would have a variety of benefits. Not only could the institution raise its own food, but putting the paupers to agricultural work would have a moral benefit as well.⁷⁵ The frequent purchases of land around the Salem County Almshouse site in the nineteenth-century suggest that the Freeholders’ plan was to establish a farm. The 1808 and 1813 construction of smoke houses imply that pork was being processed for food at the Poor house, and probably grown there as well. Freeholder and Trustee records frequently contain reports of the farm products and work on farm buildings. The Almshouse steward, S. B. Sheppard, reported on the farm and domestic work at the county farm in an 1848 letter to the editor, evidently in response to public criticism of its operations:

The Farm consists of eight fields of about twenty acres each. There are, this year, about thirty acres in corn (20 of it new ground), twenty d.o. of Oats, eighteen d.o. of Wheat, eight acres of new ground in Buckwheat and Rye, and mowed 40 acres of grass. There will be sufficient raised this year, and I presume hereafter of all kinds of grain, vegetables, &c., for the institution, and all the pork, beef, &c., can be fattened on the farm. The labor on this farm is performed by two hired men; assisted by some of the inmates that are able to work, but we have received very little assistance from them the present Summer, and have paid out some fifteen or twenty dollars for labor by the day. The average number of inmates for the year is about 60; for them there is no small amount of sewing, washing of clothes &c, baking of bread, making beds, cleaning rooms, milking, &c., assisted by the female inmates, which sometimes do considerable work, and at other times scarcely nothing.

Some feel disposed to censure the Steward and Trustees for incurring unnecessary expense, they say, for labor on the farm and in the house; but it is believed that those who find so much fault, would visit the institution and see what necessarily must be performed, they would, perhaps, think differently. It is our aim to be as economical as possible.⁷⁶

That the Trustees took the farm operation seriously is shown by an 1885 report which listed a

⁷³ Casper, 10.

⁷⁴ *Trustee Minutes, August 1880-August 1903*, May 3, 1897, 377.

⁷⁵ Bourque, *Virtue, Industry, and Independence*, 103-104.

⁷⁶ *National Standard*, August 16, 1848.

number of deficiencies in condition of the farm. Farm implements were observed to be worn out and nearly worthless, the stock of horses was inadequate for the size of the farm and they were either too old or too young, the cows were too old and there were not enough for "so large a family as there is in this institution." But the stock of hogs was deemed "in good condition and of fine quality." The total value of farm land, stock, grain, buildings, and implements was \$39,643.35.⁷⁷ In 1885 the farm consisted of 235 acres.⁷⁸

Delaware Valley Almshouses commonly contained workrooms for carrying on industrial activities like sewing and weaving which took advantage of inmates with artisan skills and helped make the house more self-sufficient. Both because the paupers generally did not have sufficient aptitude and because work was more of a moral, reforming imperative than an economic one, output was minimal and inconsistent, as noted by Sheppard above.⁷⁹ An 1819 bill for yards of cloth "Wove for the Poorhouse" from Jonathan Keltz (whose weaving shop was in the former poor-house nearby) suggests that someone at the poor house was making clothing for the inmates. In each of February, April, May, June, July, September, October, and November Keltz delivered a total of 333 yards of cloth, including cotton, wool, "striped linning," and "coverlids" but mostly an unspecified type.

Inventories reveal the means of production at the Salem County Almshouse. The 1842 inventory notes a "small wheel" in four rooms, which may refer to a spinning wheel, though no loom was listed. In the "Doctor's Room" were "42 yards of cotton & linen, 1 piece of satinette, 35 yds of cotton and wool, 30 lbs of toe yarn, 28 d.o. of linen yarn, 5 ¾ lbs of lot of wollen yarn, 50 lbs (about) of carpet yarn." These may have been products or raw materials for making textile products. In the "Men's Garret" is a shoemaker's bench, hammer, pincher & knife, small lot of leather" for either making or repairing shoes.⁸⁰ In 1900, a sewing machine and a lot of clothing were noted in one room of the Almshouse, but whether this was a sign of pauper labor or outside paid labor is undeterminable.⁸¹

The farm also provided a place to bury paupers who died but were not taken away by relatives for burial elsewhere. In 1873 the Trustees ordered a half-acre of ground fenced for burying the dead.⁸² (See attached site plan for locations of pauper cemeteries.)

Farming continued well into the twentieth-century. In 1931, "the county farm was at peak operation, providing work for male inmates and food for the tables." Due to new state laws

⁷⁷ *Trustee Minutes, August 1880-August 1903*, May 4, 1884.

⁷⁸ Casper, 3.

⁷⁹ Bourque, *Ibid*, 243-244.

⁸⁰ "Inventory of Goods in the Almshouse," March, 1842, File #4023-A, Salem County Clerks Records.

⁸¹ *Inventories, 1876-1924*, March 20, 1900, Book #4024A, Salem County Clerks Records.

⁸² *Committee Minutes and Accounts, 1854-1880*, May 19, 1873. Book #4009, Salem County Clerks Records.

regarding dairy operations, it was necessary to build a new dairy barn in that year.⁸³ A traditional annual dinner for freeholders and other politicians carried on prior to the 1930s featured inmate-grown and prepared food from the county farm and almshouse kitchen. Inmates raised vegetables, cows, pigs and chickens. Hogs were slaughtered on the farm and grease would get tracked throughout the almshouse.⁸⁴

World War II created a farm labor shortage at the county farm, causing the Steward to take a greater role in that work, so he was given extra compensation for doing farm work in 1942.⁸⁵ In 1951, along with other major changes going on at the Almshouse (see below), the farm operation was separated from the almshouse operation. On March 6, 1963, the Freeholders ceased the operations of the county farm upon advice that it had been illegal to operate a county farm since 1951. On March 20, a special committee recommended that live-stock, farm equipment, all wood-frame structures and the concrete-stave silos be publicly auctioned. Further recommendations on October 2 were that the dairy barn, milk house, cinder block shed, and hog house be taken over by the Road Department, that alterations be made in the dairy barn (remove stanchions and feed mangers) and that the County Farm be under the control of the Road Department.⁸⁶

The Problem of Insanity

In 1820, the Trustees of the Poor reported to the Board of Chosen Freeholders the need for new accommodations for the insane at the 1808 Poor-house:

The Trustees of the Poor house of the county afores^d after mature deliberation and experience beg leave to recommend that an Addition or wing be added to the Poor house of such dimensions as will make five or six cells sufficiently secure and comfortable to confine the Insane and refractory, so as to restrain them from doing Injury to themselves or others.

From the present situation of the house, it is found to be unavoidably necessary to chain such to the floor in apartments where many of the aged and infirm have to occupy, thereby rendering their situation much more uncomfortable adding distress to their many infirmities by their continual moaning, hollowing or rattling of their chains, and other disagreeable nuisances which must necessarily occur.⁸⁷

⁸³ Thomas H. Bowen, "County seat in Mannington? 1819 voters said 'no,'" *Today's Sunbeam*, May 7, 1987, A-3.

⁸⁴ Thomas H. Bowen, "In old Almshouse: Hog killings, grease everywhere," *Today's Sunbeam*, May 12, 1987, A-3.

⁸⁵ Nathan, 109.

⁸⁶ Nathan, 164-165.

⁸⁷ "To the Board of Chosen Freeholders," [no date], Document #17, Salem County Almshouse File 000.020.406, Salem County Historical Society.

Despite agreeing to this proposal, the Freeholders put off the project for two years when they ordered that:

an additional building of brick or stone be erected at the poor house for the accommodation of the insane poor of such size and dimensions for convenience as to the trustees of the poor house may direct and that the trustees superintend the building of same.⁸⁸

The concern was about consideration for the non-insane poor, rather than about better treatment of the insane. The solution to an obviously difficult and unpleasant situation was separation. Historian Charles Casper reported that at this time insane inmates were being kept in “damp, underground cells,”⁸⁹ He was probably referring to cells in the basement, but if this was true, then they were accomplishing separation in the only way they could, absent a separate building.

This act is consistent with an early nineteenth-century trend of increasing segregation of the classes of poor housed in almshouses. In 1845, when the Salem County almshouse burned and debate ensued about its rebuilding, some people wanted social improvement, objecting to “the promiscuous mingling of black and white, male and female,” causing such misery that “cleanliness, morality and decency demand the different classes of paupers to be separated.”⁹⁰ Differences of all kinds lead to physically separate accommodations, from separate buildings on the same site for gender, race, and insane, to separate institutions to take people with disabilities—deaf and dumb, feeble-minded, physically ill, and insane. For insanity, there was a particular urgency to exclude them from the nation’s poorhouses over the course of the nineteenth-century and into the twentieth-century. The profession of asylum medicine was growing in response to the problem of insanity, and the profession advocated their ability to cure it, and in order to cure it, to build separate institutions.

In Salem County, despite having an insane asylum, or rather a wing for the insane, the Steward, in 1837, requested that new cells be built “for the accommodation of disorderly and insane persons.” His request was turned down, however.⁹¹ Physical restraint of violent inmates to prevent injury to themselves and others was the inevitable practice, as Dorothea Dix’s observations inside the Salem County almshouse later illustrated. Salem County’s accommodations for the insane were probably much like those at the New Castle, Delaware almshouse in 1843—cells with iron window grates, masonry partitions, heavy doors, and

⁸⁸ *Freeholder Minutes, 1798-1844*. 18 May 1822.

⁸⁹ Casper, 5-6. The wing, of unreported design, was completed in 1825.

⁹⁰ *National Standard*, Salem, New Jersey, February 4, 1845 and February 18, 1845. As quoted in *Preservation Salem News*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Summer 1995), 5, and Vol. VII, No. 2 (Fall 1997), 5.

⁹¹ *Freeholder Minutes, 1798-1844*. 10 May 1837, 9 August 1837.

especially thick, board flooring.⁹²

Dorothea Dix in Salem County

In 1844, social reformer Dorothea Dix visited Salem County's poor-house. Dix agitated for state insane asylums in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey.⁹³ She toured New Jersey county asylums late in 1844 and delivered a report to the state legislature on January 23, 1845, shaming them for not following up on their own investigation of 1839-1840 which demonstrated a clear need for a state hospital. She reported increased numbers of insane and idiots who were being kept in state prisons, county jails, county poor-houses and state hospitals in New York and Pennsylvania. She pleaded:

I come to ask *justice* of the Legislature of New Jersey, for those who, in the Providence of God, are incapable of pleading their own cause, and of claiming redress for their own grievances. Be patient with me — it is for your own citizens I plead; it is for helpless, friendless men and women, in your very midst, I ask succour — into whose broken minds hope and consolation find no entrance — the foul air of whose dreary cells still oppresses my breath — the clanking of whose heavy chains still sounds upon my ear. Have pity on them! have pity on them!⁹⁴

Dix began her journey through New Jersey in Salem County where first of all, she found no insane inmates in the jail. Her description of Salem County's 1808 poor-house is the longest of any in her Memorial. It offers a rare and detailed glimpse into the everyday life and operations of the place:

The County Poor-house is several miles from Salem, near Sharptown; attached is a well-managed farm, and the cost for each individual averages about eighty cents per week. The establishment seemed, in general, very well conducted; the inmates, who in November numbered eighty, were comfortably and decently clad, and the food, as far as I could learn, was well prepared and of good quality. It is the custom to bind out the children at a very early age, therefore no school is provided. Religious meetings are seldom holden, and religious counsel or consolation rarely imparted by visitors. There are here, beside several epileptics and persons of infirm minds, eight insane. One woman of middle age has been crazy seventeen years. Two of the patients were in chains; one man, very crazy for nearly thirty years, has been out of his small apartment but "ten times for more than

⁹² Monique Bourque, et al, "'Both Ornamental and Useful': The Lancaster County Almshouse and Hospital." Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1990, 27.

⁹³ Frederick M. Hermann, "Dorothea Dix and the Campaign to Create a State Lunatic Asylum," *New Jersey Heritage* 3, 1 (Spring 2004), 10.

⁹⁴ Dorothea L. Dix, "Memorial to the Honorable the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey," *Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the State of New Jersey*. Trenton, N.J. : [s. n.], 1845-1847. 176

nineteen years.” He is considered very dangerous, and is so. No appropriate care can be rendered here to lessen his frenzied excitement, or diminish the terrible horrors of madness. The master said, if he could “take him out daily for exercise in the open air, it would do him good; but with the care of a farm, which he is expected and required to keep under profitable cultivation, with a family of paupers—often exceeding one hundred—to manage and provide for, he has not the time to nurse madmen, or to give them any degree the care they need.” The propensities of this poor wretch are homicidal; he is dreaded by all save the master of the house, whose only safety, as he thinks, consists in governing him through the principle of fear. In illustration of this, I give his own account of the manner by which this influence is gained, and, utterly horrible and revolting as it is, I believe it only justice to the keeper to add that in his circumstances, with his limited means, he does not what he approves and wishes, but that to which he considers himself compelled. “Going to his room one day, not long since,” said the keeper, “in order to shave him, my hands both being full, as I came near, he suddenly sprang upon me, and dealt a violent blow at my chest; his being chained, alone prevented his killing me. I knew I must master him now or never: I threw down the shaving tools, caught a stick of wood from the entry, and laid upon him until he cried for quarter: I beat him long enough to make him know I was his master, and now he is too much afraid of thrashing to attack me; but you had better stand off, ma’am, for he won’t fear you.” Brute force is the cruel alternative left for those who are compelled to a charge for which they lack both time, and means, and knowledge. A letter, some time since, reached me from a stranger, relating to this very madman, round whose limbs these, so many long and sorrowful years, have weighed the heavy chain and fetters!—“There are many,” says my correspondent, “whose sufferings are greatly augmented for want of proper treatment and attention. In our poor-house is a man who has been chained by the leg for more than twenty years; and the only warmth which can be introduced into the cell, is from a small stove-pipe, which passes through one corner of it!” The history neither needs, nor will hear comment.

In one apartment I found an epileptic, bleeding from fresh wounds inflicted by falling, in a fit, his mental faculties much impaired, and his condition very sad. He was placed on the floor for safety, giving already fallen from a raised bed. This class of patients are often peculiarly dangerous; as the fit passes off, becoming highly excited, often malicious and disposed to violence; this terrible and unmanageable disease, so warps the natural dispositions, that, from being mild and gentle, they become irritable and furious.

On a level with the cellar, in a basement room, which was tolerably decent, but bare enough of comforts, lay, upon a small bed, a feeble aged man, whose few gray locks fell tangled upon his pillow. As we entered, he addressed one present, saying, “I am all broken up, all broken up!” “Do you feel much weaker than Judge?” “The mind, the mind is going—almost gone,” responded he, in tones of touching sadness: “Yes,” he continued, murmuring to himself, “the mind is going.” This feeble depressed old man—a pauper,

helpless, lonely, and yet conscious of surrounding circumstances, and not now wholly oblivious of the past—the feeble old man—who was he? I answer as I was answered;—but he is not unknown to many of you. In his young and vigorous years he filled various places of honor and trust among you; his ability as a lawyer, raised him to the bench. As a jurist, he was distinguished for uprightness, clearness, and impartiality; he also was judge of the orphan's court. He was for many years a member of the Legislature. His habits were correct, and I could learn, from those who had known him for many years, nothing to his discredit, but much that commends men to honor and respect.—The meridian of an active and useful life was passed; the property, honestly acquired, on which he relied for comfortable support during his declining years, was lost through some of those fluctuations which so often produce reverses for thousands. He became insane, and his insanity assumed the form of frenzy; he was chained “for safety;” in fine, he was committed to the county jail for greater security! Time wore away, excitement gave place to a more quiet, but not a rational state; he was after a considerable period, placed in a private family—When the little means left of the small remnant of his once sufficient property was consumed, he was removed to the poor-house, receiving his share of that care and attention that must be divided and subdivided among the hundreds of feeble, infirm, and disabled inmates. For such men as Judge S., is not hospital needed? Or if too late for him, hasten—it may be finished only to open its merciful shelter for yourselves of your children.⁹⁵

Dix recorded eleven county poor-houses: Salem, Cumberland, Cape May, Gloucester, Burlington, Monmouth, Hudson, Passaic, Morris, Sussex and Warren. Monmouth County also had a township poor-house at Shrewsbury. Four counties had only township poor-houses: Middlesex (at North Brunswick, Piscataway and Woodbridge), Essex (at Newark and Elizabethtown), Somerset (at Somerville and Franklin), and Mercer (at Trenton).⁹⁶ Dix's emphatic conclusion was that insane people suffered inordinately in jails and poorhouses where special treatment could not reach them. She deplored the cruel restraint and isolation of dangerous inmates in cells and dungeons. A universal problematic experience was mixing insane and other classes of poor, which was disruptive to safety and order in a poor-house. This Salem County had tried to address this with the 1822 construction of a separate insane department at the Poor-house. A report on the conflagration at the Salem County Almshouse

⁹⁵ Dix, 178-180. The experience of “Judge S.” was described again in 1887: “I have seen in our old county house men that had enjoyed good homes for three score years, brought here to die. I have seen the aristocratic man drive his span of bays along the Salem streets; I have seen him, year after year, sit on the Judge's bench in our courts; I saw him, old, poor, friendless and almost homeless; then I saw him in the Poor House, galled and chagrined by the contact of the ignorant and vile, that in his inmost soul he despised. I saw him die, and his old emaciated body prepared for its burial by the rough hands of the paupers. Such are the ups and downs of life.” Newspaper clipping dated 1887, Patterson scrapbook #1, 126, Salem County Historical Society. Signed “W. P.” (presumably William Patterson).

⁹⁶ Ibid, 178-193.

on February 1, 1845 illustrated the kind of treatment Dix objected to:

“Among the number taken from the burning building were seven lunatics, several of whom had been in confinement upwards of twenty years, where, from the violence of their ravings, it was found necessary to keep them chained within the closest limits.”⁹⁷

The county rebuilt a larger almshouse on the same foundation in 1845, and added new cells between 1847 and 1848.⁹⁸

The legislature, convinced by Dix, authorized the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum in Trenton which opened on May 15, 1848. Prior to this, insane persons from Salem County had either been kept in the county poor house or sent to the “Pennsylvania Institute” (the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane in Philadelphia established in 1841) under care of a special committee appointed by the Freeholders who would visit and report on their condition and progress. Martha Draper and Lewis Elben were sent to the Pennsylvania Institute by order of the Freeholders on 14 May 1845. Two years later the committee “to have the charge of the Lunatics” reported that “the condition of the lunatics sent from this county to Pennsylvania has improved but that there is not the probability of their complete [illegible]—station.” One year later, in May, 1848 the committee reported that “one lunatic” was still in Pennsylvania, without noting what became of the other. The committee was then authorized to remove Martha Draper to the new state asylum. However, in August they reported that they had found her condition no better and had left her in Philadelphia because there would have been no cost savings in transferring her to New Jersey. In response, nevertheless, the Freeholders ordered her moved to the new facility in Trenton. At the same time the committee reported no lunatics at the Salem County poorhouse.⁹⁹

New Jersey’s state asylum served only a minority of mentally disturbed patients—the acute, so-called “curables.” Most mentally ill in the state were without any institutional care. The state asylum was designed to house two hundred patients, though there were at least seven hundred afflicted people documented in the state in 1850. Admission was restricted to curable cases, under the then-current philosophy that insanity was curable, and a stay was limited to three years. Though county poorhouses were sending select cases to Trenton, they were compelled to continue to keep insane persons not regarded as “curable”—the chronic, pauper insane.¹⁰⁰ Salem County was sending selected patients away—by 1861, two more persons had been committed to the state asylum.¹⁰¹ However, typical treatment methods at

⁹⁷ *National Standard*, “Burning of the Salem Co. Alms House,” February 4, 1845.

⁹⁸ *Freeholder Minutes*, May 10, 1844 - Feb. 10, 1866, 13 May 1847, 11 August 1847, 10 May 1848.

⁹⁹ *Freeholder Minutes*, May 10, 1844 - Feb. 10, 1866, 14 May 1845, 13 May 1847, 10 May 1848, 9 August 1848.

¹⁰⁰ Leiby, 44, 56.

¹⁰¹ *Almshouse Committee minutes and accounts, 1856-1880*, November 5, 1860.

the Salem Almshouse may be illustrated by an 1861 Trustee order for a set of handcuffs, as well as by Dix's observations in 1844.¹⁰² Restraint was the rule, with no time "to nurse madmen, or to give them any degree the care they need."

Architectural Ideas and Treatment of the Insane

In the nineteenth-century, asylums doctors believed in the curability of insanity through "moral treatment," that is, methods that applied to the mind. This idea originated with reformers such as Englishman William Tuke and Frenchman Philippe Pinel who were known for their humane methods of non-restraint in the late eighteenth-century.¹⁰³ They also believed in environmental determinism—that environment, and therefore the asylum itself, held the cure to insanity. Treatment of the insane in America during the nineteenth-century was heavily influenced by the ideas of Thomas Story Kirkbride, the Quaker physician who founded and operated the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane. He advocated an architectural design for insane asylums based on earlier, linear plans that was a bilaterally-symmetrical, shallow-V plan, forming a series of short, setback, linear pavilions in one large building. The design facilitated segregation of patients by type and degree of mental illness, as well as by gender and social class (because, unlike poorhouses, the asylum was inclusive of all classes, not just the poor). His ideas dominated the growing professional field of asylum medicine.¹⁰⁴ By 1866 there were 30 asylums nationwide built on the Kirkbride plan, and there were 70 by 1890. Other architectural plans were also being used, though, such as the radial, the quadrangle, the U-shaped, and the E-shaped.¹⁰⁵ The rules propagated by Kirkbride and the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane in 1851 set a desirable maximum capacity of 250 patients, but by 1877, asylums were being built to house up to 900 patients and had become architecturally extravagant.¹⁰⁶ The size and expense of these institutions caused a growing reaction against large, monolithic asylums, which, combined with a debate on treatment methods, brought about new architectural ideas for the accommodation and treatment of the insane.

In the mid-nineteenth-century the profession of asylum medicine was debating moral treatment methods at national meetings and in journals. The conversation was about "free-air asylums" versus "claustral asylums." The latter were the conventional types which espoused the use of mechanical restraints, such as shackles, chains and straitjackets. The "free-air" concept was fueled by the discovery of an insane colony which spontaneously developed in Gheel, Belgium, first reported on in the 1840s. There, the insane were housed with families

¹⁰² *Almshouse Committee minutes and accounts, 1856-1880*, August 5, 1861.

¹⁰³ Carla Yanni, *The Architecture of Madness: Insane Asylums in the United States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 24.

¹⁰⁴ Nancy Tomes, *The Art of Asylum-Keeping: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the Origins of American Psychiatry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984, repr 1994),

¹⁰⁵ Carla Yanni, "The Linear Plan for Insane Asylums in the United States before 1866, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 62, No. 1. (March 2003), 31, 34.

¹⁰⁶ Yanni, *The Architecture of Madness*, 105, 165. These were state institutions for the most part.

in their homes, and had freedom of movement in the community. The approach was variously referred to as “Belgian non-restraint in open asylums,” the “Belgian free-air system,” or simply, the “free-air system.” England and Scotland were experimenting with the idea, such that it was also referred to as “English non-restraint.” Dr. John Conolly, a physician in charge of the Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum at Hanwell, England, instituted non-restraint policies beginning in 1839. Conolly had been influenced by such practices that he had seen at the York and Lincoln insane asylums. Moved by humane considerations and scientific theory, he published books about and aroused public sympathy for his ideas.¹⁰⁷ Dr. John M. Galt, an Englishman, and Dr. Julius Parigot, who had served as the physician at Gheel before coming to the U. S., were later advocates of this reform method of treatment in the professional literature of asylum medicine in the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁰⁸

The old system placed all violent or troublesome patients in the position of dangerous animals. The new system regards them as afflicted persons, whose brain and nerves are diseased, and who are to be restored to health, and comfort, and reason. This simple difference of view it is which influences every particular in the arrangement of every part of an asylum for the insane.¹⁰⁹

Non-restraint as practiced by Conolly at the Hanwell Asylum in England, eschewed mechanical devices and emphasized the use of padded cells, individualized attention, good diet, hygiene, kindness and solitude.¹¹⁰

Another aspect of the free air philosophy was the kind of building that should be used to house the insane. John M. Galt had criticized the profession's focus on building monumental, prison-like asylums and promoted the idea of keeping the insane in a farm colony or in groups of cottages, like the colony in Gheel, Belgium, because it was more homelike and the patients would benefit by farm work and freedom of movement. He also proposed that a farm in France that was purchased to employ insane patients, the Farm of St. Anne, serve as a model for the United States.¹¹¹ The cottage plan became known as the “segregate system,” versus Kirkbride's “congregate system.”¹¹² Physician Edward Jarvis of Massachusetts, who boarded patients in his home, advocated the construction of cottages on the grounds of

¹⁰⁷ John Conolly, *The Construction and Government of Lunatic Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane* (1847; repr. with an introduction by Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine, London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968), 22-25.

¹⁰⁸ J. Parigot, “The Gheel Question,” *Journal of Insanity* Vol 19, 1862-1863 (Utica: Utica State Hospital Press), 332.

¹⁰⁹ John Conolly, *The Treatment of the Insane without Mechanical Restraints* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1856. repr New York: Arno Press, 1973), 53.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ John M. Galt, “The Farm of St. Anne,” *Journal of Insanity*, Vol XI, No. 4, 1855, 352-357.

¹¹² Yanni, Ibid, 79.

existing asylums.¹¹³ Traditionalists like Kirkbride opposed these new segregate ideas as impractical—such arrangements would require more supervision than could be economically provided. But the segregate idea opened possibilities for reusing old houses, varying plans, and clustering smaller buildings near existing linear facilities. Cottage-building at insane asylums began around 1860 and became increasingly popular after that, catching on with vigor after Kirkbride's death in 1883.¹¹⁴

An Insane Asylum for Salem County

The Trustees of the Poor approached the Freeholders in 1860 “in regard to building a place detached from this house for idiotic persons,” and met with them about “erecting of a building for the better accommodation of the insane and idiotic paupers,” but the Freeholders deferred the idea “for another year.”¹¹⁵ In the nineteenth-century, “idiocy” was considered a category of insanity.¹¹⁶ In 1840 New Jersey, idiocy and lunacy were distinguished but not understood well enough to define them.¹¹⁷ However, it was not considered curable as insanity was.¹¹⁸ In 1866 the Trustees ordered the insane paupers removed to “warmer quarters” and “to remove the building and convert it to a Bath House for the use of the House,” which suggests that they had been separately housed in an unheated outbuilding.¹¹⁹ This may have been in response to an 1866 inquiry and report on the numbers and treatment of the insane around the state by the newly created state Sanitary Commission. Among the conditions decried in the report was the keeping of the insane in “some dark, unhealthy cell” or “subjected to the gaze and torment of others,” and the mingling of the insane and idiotic with each other and with others in the “township and county houses” because of the harmful influences of one class upon the other. This report, indicating a growing awareness of the distinction between these classes by 1866, called for accurate statistics on the numbers of the insane versus idiotic, information on treatment methods appropriate for both classes, measures to differently house these two classes, and the enactment of a general health code that would improve the powers of local health authorities.¹²⁰

¹¹³ Abraham S. Luchins, “The Rise and Decline of the American Asylum Movement in the 19th Century,” *The Journal of Psychology*, 122 (5), 481.

¹¹⁴ Yanni, 79, 142.

¹¹⁵ *Almshouse Committee minutes and accounts, 1856-1880*, August 6, 1860, September 6, 1860.

¹¹⁶ Yanni, “The Linear Plan,” 25.

¹¹⁷ “Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the Governor of New Jersey, to Ascertain the Number of Lunatics and Idiots in the State” Newark, 1840, repr in Grob, Gerald N., ed., *The Origins of The State Mental Hospital in America* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 11. This study recommended the construction of a state mental asylum but the legislature failed to act upon it.

¹¹⁸ Leiby, 47.

¹¹⁹ *Almshouse Committee minutes and accounts, 1856-1880*. Salem County Clerk Record #4009.

¹²⁰ New Jersey State Sanitary Commission, *Report of the State Sanitary Commission to the Governor of New Jersey for the year 1866* (Trenton: Office of the State Gazette, 1867), 8, 12.

The one-year delay in 1860 became a ten-year delay before the idea of a separate insane asylum for Salem County came to fruition. The Freeholders authorized the construction of a standalone asylum at a cost not to exceed \$5,000 in May 1870. Dunn, Wistar & Co. of Salem was awarded the construction contract of \$4,794. The final cost was \$5,180.14. Although the front façade carefully matched the Almshouse in height, stories, rhythm of openings and window proportion, the floor plan was fundamentally different from that of the Almshouse. At 32' wide by 25' deep, it lacked the traditional linear plan of the Almshouse and Kirkbride-inspired insane asylums. Sitting fifteen feet to the west of the Almshouse, the three-bay, center hall Italianate-style house has an identical plan on each of three floors, with two large front rooms, a center hall, a small rear room and a rear stair hall. The basement contained five brick-walled rooms, each with a chimney flue for heat. Interior brick walls forming the center hall partitions carried the flues up to the roof.

Its form fits the image of the “three-story cottage” being promoted in alternative ideas of managing the insane, such as what was built at the Williard Asylum for the Chronic Insane in New York State. Planned in 1866, the Williard Asylum was conceived differently from the conventional single Kirkbride block. Not only was it revolutionary in terms of its mission of care for only the chronic insane, it was a forerunner in utilizing the segregate idea of cottages on a farm colony. A central administrative block had wings for the physically ill and the more agitated patients, but a series of detached cottages were for “harmless, industrious and tranquil” cases, so they could live more independent lives and also work on the associated farm. From Willard’s example, other states adopted a modified version of the idea, building detached cottages next to traditional facilities to house the quiet, chronic insane in order to give them more normal, independent lives.¹²¹ At Williard and other state asylums, however, the “cottage” assumed rather large proportions in comparison to Salem’s—housing up to 200 patients. A New Jersey version of the idea occurred at Marlboro State Hospital, built between 1929 and 1931. A campus of numerous small buildings, including a series of residential cottages, was intended to classify the patients and provide them with more pleasant surroundings. A farm colony at Annandale, Hunterdon County, was established in 1913 to relieve overcrowding at the Morris Plains state hospital. But this was the only farm colony the state of New Jersey ever established.¹²²

The cottage idea was also initiated at Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts after its superintendent, Dr. Merrick Bemis, visited Gheel in 1868. He purchased several houses near the hospital and set up a family-type environment in them. Though he resigned prior to fully carrying out his plan, other reformers picked up on his ideas after 1872. Frederick Wines, secretary of the Illinois State Board of Public Charities, organized a national conference in

¹²¹ Ellen Dwyer, *Homes for the Mad: Life Inside Two Nineteenth-Century Asylums* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 45, 48, 137. The idea was at the insistence of Dr. John Chapin, who served as superintendent from 1869-1884. Besides being known for the “segregate” architectural idea, he designed a work program which reduced the costs of patient care (72). He also introduced non-restraint treatment in 1881 (140).

¹²² Leiby, 225, 220.

1869 which debated the issue of segregate versus congregate systems.¹²³

Did word of this conference reach Salem County in 1869? The form of the Salem County Insane Asylum suggests a cottage or farm colony, or was it so configured because the projected population was so small, and just happened to be at the county farm? Gloucester County's insane asylum was also small—built to house six patients.¹²⁴ But if the capacity was intended to be small, the fact that it was designed as a separate small building only fifteen feet away, in lieu of a more economical attached wing, suggests the cottage idea. Its distance of only fifteen feet from the Almshouse, versus Gloucester County's one hundred, may point to an administrative concern for efficient operation by a shared staff.¹²⁵ The actual idea behind this design is elusive—official records do not indicate the architectural thinking on the county level at this time. Nevertheless, the cottage idea was widespread in the field of asylum medicine by 1870, so it is possible that it influenced Salem County's design through some innovative and well-informed local doctor. In any event, it would have facilitated a finer segregation of classes of insane than ever before possible, with four total levels of two or three rooms.

Statewide Trend in Asylum Building

Salem County's Insane Asylum appeared on the cusp of public realization that insanity could not always be cured, and that, unlike other states such as New York and Ohio, New Jersey did not adopt a public policy to accommodate every insane citizen in state asylums. By default, the counties had to act. By October 1871 the state asylum, by this time expanded to accommodate five hundred, held seven hundred, and it was refusing new patients the following year. In response to this overcrowding by the chronically insane, and the unwillingness of the state to house all the state's insane, county insane asylums, though custodial rather than curative in purpose, started appearing in the late 1860s and early 1870s. In 1870, this statewide trend for care of the chronic insane is reflected in a Salem newspaper account: "An asylum for insane people who are not dangerous is to be built in Essex County. Ditto in Salem County. Ditto in Cumberland."¹²⁶ Three New Jersey counties were building asylums for this class of insane simultaneously. Social welfare historian James Leiby assigned "first" status to Essex County in 1872 followed by Hudson County in 1873, and Camden County's in 1879.¹²⁷ However, apparently unbeknownst to him, some southern New Jersey asylums predated these. Gloucester County, again one-step ahead of Salem County, had built one by 1867 one hundred feet away from their almshouse and with a capacity for six patients, and Cumberland County also built one in 1870.¹²⁸ Salem County was therefore

¹²³ Yanni, *The Architecture*, 89-91.

¹²⁴ See note 46.

¹²⁵ See note 46.

¹²⁶ *Salem Sunbeam*, August 26, 1870, 3.

¹²⁷ Leiby, 44, 59-60, 112, 114.

¹²⁸ Thomas Cushing and Charles E. Sheppard, *History of The Counties Of Gloucester, Salem, and*

on the leading edge of the post Civil-War statewide trend to provide local specialized care for the chronically insane in county asylums.

In New Jersey the county asylums came – and stayed. Experts considered them a step backward, because they were frankly custodial and political, more like a specialized almshouse than a hospital. County asylums developed and flourished in New Jersey because they gave shape to what most interested people had really wanted. They provided specialized custodial care for people too difficult to keep at home or in the poorhouse; this was a service to people who had to take care of “lunatics.” They were located near where they were needed. They opened new jobs and contracts for local politicians. Withal, they were notably cheaper in the short run (and perhaps in the long run) than the state institutions. In short, they served the sane, rather than curing the insane.¹²⁹

Thus this state trend began with Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland counties in the southern part of New Jersey. The state began building a new asylum in 1873 at Morris Plains in Morris County, but it did not open until 1876.¹³⁰ Though it eased the pressure on the counties, it still left the southern counties with no nearby state facility. By 1880, there were six county asylums (Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Camden, Essex and Hudson) in addition to two state asylums, Trenton and Morris Plains. Overcrowding was still a crisis statewide. Morris Plains was expanded in 1924 and renamed “Graystone Park,” and Marlboro State Hospital was built in Monmouth County in 1931. But not until 1953 did southern New Jersey get a regional state hospital—Ancora State Hospital, midway between Atlantic City and Camden in Camden County.¹³¹

New Jersey was slow to act, so the counties provided custodial care for the chronic cases. The survival of Salem County's Insane Asylum is rare in the state and even rarer in the nation as a county insane asylum. In fact, Wisconsin was the only state to adopt an alternative to state-level care, that is, state-supervised county-level management of the insane. There, county asylums were the norm.¹³² So it was in New Jersey, but not by design.

Cumberland New Jersey (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883),
<http://www.accessible.com/amcnty/NJ/gloucester/Gloucester27.htm>;
<http://www.accessible.com/amcnty/NJ/gloucester/Cumberland83.htm> (accessed July 9, 2007). Gloucester County's first newly-built almshouse predated Salem's also—1803 versus 1808.

¹²⁹ Leiby, 60.

¹³⁰ Leiby, 110-111

¹³¹ Leiby, 340-341.

¹³² Dwyer, 49; Thomas George Ebert, "Treatment of the Insane in Wisconsin: A Case Study of Two County Asylums, 1890-1933" (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, 1998).
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=737692681&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.

Architecture of the Salem County Insane Asylum

The architectural style of the Insane Asylum reflects the contemporary taste for the Italianate in Salem County in 1870. Also known as the “American Bracketed” style, Italianate styling usually incorporated elaborate brackets under wide overhanging eaves and against a tall frieze. On the Insane Asylum, however, bracketing is absent and the frieze is minimized. Other characteristics of the style are present, however, such as the squarish plan, a low-slope hipped roof, a rooftop belvedere, and round-arch windows in the belvedere. The simplicity in style may relate to economical use of public funds, or a taste preference by local leaders. Records seen thus far do not reveal the reason.

Charles Casper described the Salem County Insane Asylum in 1885 as containing “twelve cells and rooms beside halls and bath and tank rooms,” “warmed by heaters,” and “fairly adapted to its purpose.”¹³³ In 1883 the water closet in it was reconstructed “it being in a very filthy condition, also new zinc has been put in three cells, which was found in a very foul condition, also new bedsteads in four cells and three others need them. Also the iron doors have been put in much to the comfort of the inmates.”¹³⁴ The 1884 expense report shows a line item of \$333.96 for “Iron doors and Locks for the Asylum.”¹³⁵ The records unfortunately do not indicate what part of the asylum the iron doors were for—the basement cells or the upstairs rooms, and it may be that all the bedrooms were referred to as “cells.” The records are silent about the method of treating insane inmates in Salem’s insane asylum. If “non-restraint” was practiced as the means of treatment, there would have been indications of frames built in the rooms to support padding made of coconut fiber encased in heavy ticking, and wire-blinds covering the interior of the windows to prevent injury to violent inmates.¹³⁶ However, twentieth-century alterations to the rooms of the first through third stories have obliterated any evidence of padding applied to walls and floors, but evidence does exist for some kind of window barrier.¹³⁷

A 1900 room-by-room inventory noted “cells” without specifying how many or what they contained in the “Insane Department.” At the same time, the Almshouse also contained cells—one beside the bathroom on the second floor of the Almshouse, containing two beds, and two cells on the third floor, one with one bed and the other with two beds. No cells are noted in the basement of the Almshouse.¹³⁸ The presence of cells in the Almshouse may be a

¹³³ Casper, 8.

¹³⁴ *Minutes Book (Trustees), August 1880–August 1903*, Salem County Clerk Record #4026, November 5, 1883, 59.

¹³⁵ Casper, 12.

¹³⁶ Conolly, 44.

¹³⁷ The original lath and plaster was removed and replaced with twentieth-century gypsum board. See Description section for evidence of window barrier.

¹³⁸ *Inventory Book of Salem County Almshouse near Woodstown, N. J., 1876-1924*, Salem County Clerk Record #4024A. Records refer to the facility variously as the “insane asylum” and the “insane department.” The

verification of Casper's comment on overcrowding in the insane asylum.

By 1885 the Salem County insane asylum was overcrowded.¹³⁹ Insufficiencies in managing the insane and overcrowding must have continued, because in 1906 the Freeholders approved the construction of a new "lunatic asylum" on recommendation of a committee that had visited several examples. However, though approved, it was not actually carried out. The language is curious, as a state law in 1893 had changed the designation of the state insane asylums to "state hospitals for the insane." This was indicative of a trend away from almshouse-type care by political appointees to hospital-type medical care by trained physicians. The Essex County asylum, unique among the counties due to its size and progressive management, became a "hospital" under a special law of 1894.¹⁴⁰ Evidently the proposed new Salem County asylum was not intended to be a hospital but a custodial-type facility.

Large insane asylums since the eighteenth-century had featured "airing courts" or "pleasure gardens" where inmates could go outside and enjoy fresh air—believed to be healing under the ideas of moral treatment and stemming from the concept of environmental determinism.¹⁴¹ In 1891, Dr. Charles Newton, the attending physician at the Salem Almshouse, "made remarks concerning the better treatment of the inmates of the insane department—and suggested that they be taken out carriage riding or have exercise in the open air—the Board ordered the farm committee to arrange a yard with a high fence where they could be kept secure in the open air with an attendant to have oversight of them."¹⁴² Here is evidence of a knowledgeable staff doctor advocating for the moral treatment of the insane of Salem County, with a positive result.

The Changing Roles of the Almshouse and Insane Asylum

By 1900, across New Jersey, many classes of people—insane, feeble-minded, deaf and dumb, blind and epileptic—were no longer residents of almshouses because specialized state institutions had been established to care for them, and a 1911 law required temporary outdoor poor relief. In 1915 the State Charities Aid and Prison Reform Association reported that the traditional almshouse had practically disappeared, with the twelve county almshouses "well-equipped and making progress." But, the 1918 report of the New Jersey Commission to Investigate State Charitable Institutions (the "Earle Report") listed the following under "County Institutions for the Insane": "Insane Hospitals in the following Counties: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester (almshouse),

inference of the latter term is that it was managed integrally with the Almshouse.

¹³⁹ Casper, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Leiby, 115.

¹⁴¹ Yanni, 8, 23-24, 31, 36.

¹⁴² *Trustee Minutes 1880-1903*, February 3, 1891.

Hudson, Passaic (almshouse), Salem (almshouse).”¹⁴³ Therefore nine counties had either a hospital for the insane or an almshouse serving to keep the insane, but Gloucester, Passaic and Salem County's facilities were in actuality, “specialized almshouses” and not hospitals at all.¹⁴⁴ In other words, they were custodial, not curative. The 1918 report claimed the “the defects in the present system of administering the state's charities are both obvious and serious,” because the Commissioner of the state Department of Charities and Corrections had no power to correct any problems in the management of any institution. The boards of county institutions had the prerogative of responding, or not, to recommendations from state inspectors, a situation conducive to perpetuating abuses.

After 1924, almshouse populations were trending more toward the aged and infirm.¹⁴⁵ By 1931, when New Jersey's third state asylum Marlboro State Hospital was built in Monmouth County, the three almshouse asylums referred to in the 1918 Earle Report (which included Salem's) had closed, and the six county hospitals remained. Yet there was no statewide resolution of how the state and counties should manage care of the insane. The state did not enact any control over the county asylums, though it paid for half of the upkeep of indigents in a county or a state asylum.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, by 1931, the Salem County Insane Asylum was not longer being used to house insane persons. Its function as an insane asylum actually ended in 1925, when the Salem County Freeholder Charities and Corrections Committee reported that they had taken over the care and management of the Almshouse and Insane Asylum from the Trustees of the Poor because of the burden of having to care for not only the poor but incurables, insane and epileptics. Thereafter the insane were to be sent to the State Hospital at Trenton and the epileptics sent to the State Village for Epileptics.¹⁴⁷ So, in 1925 the county gave up trying to house their insane citizens near home. The fact that between the construction of the State Asylum in 1848 and Salem County's decision of 1925 the county persisted in caring for them locally speaks to their strong preference for local care. This may have been more cost effective, or ease of administration, but was probably not about getting the best care for the insane. The local doctors annually appointed to service the facility were not full-time on site and probably not expert in treating the insane. “The moral system of treatment can only be properly carried out under the constant superintendence, and by the continuous assistance of the physician.”¹⁴⁸ This was not likely the case in Salem

¹⁴³ “New Jersey Commission to Investigate State Charitable Institutions,” Report, 1918 (ms, New Jersey State Library), 2. This report is referred to by Leiby as the “Earle Report” after the chairman of the investigation, E. P. Earle.

¹⁴⁴ Leiby, 219.

¹⁴⁵ Stanton, 50-52.

¹⁴⁶ Leiby, 225.

¹⁴⁷ Nathan, 46, 70.

¹⁴⁸ “Visiting Physicians to County Asylums,” *The Asylum Journal*, 1854, vol. 1, no. 3, 33-36. in Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry 1535-1860: A History Presented in Selected English Texts* (Hartdsale, N. Y.: Carlisle Publishing, 1982.), 1012.

County, but records are scant concerning treatment methods.

The changing role of the county almshouse/asylum is illustrated by a 1927 study of general conditions in almshouses in four northeastern states: Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania by the Women's Department of The National Civic Federation. The visiting committee, with the aid of the state Department of Institutions and Agencies, toured seven county (Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Hudson, Salem, and Sussex) and five municipal (Newark, Paterson, Passaic, Perth Amboy, and Plainfield) almshouses in New Jersey. The report criticized the caliber of the local overseers of the poor, who were empowered to dispense public charity in New Jersey, as unqualified, untrained and often illiterate. Years of the same management, in their view, had "produced an attitude of indifference and irresponsibility and a point of view which frankly declares that the maintenance and standards of the Salem County Almshouse are the personal concern of the people who have the job of running it."¹⁴⁹ Salem and Sussex were alone in not providing an infirmary and Salem had no fire protection. No children were present but there was an insane "negro" woman despite the 1925 order to send all insane patients to Trenton.¹⁵⁰ They reported:

In Salem County, the rooms occupied by the sick are depressing and repellant, and more uncared-for than are the other rooms in that dreary place. Four bedridden men occupy one room, lying on lumpy, uncared-for beds with ragged bedding. All the care they receive comes from other inmates. A bathroom with very old fixtures in poor repair occupies one corner of the sick room.

A paralyzed woman occupies a bed in the women's sitting-room, thus making its use as a recreation room for the other women distinctly unpleasant, while on the floors above are any number of pleasant single rooms with good beds and bedding which are not used at all. One of the well furnished and well kept rooms on the second floor is occupied by a chronic bed case, who is looked after by one of the inmate women in odd moments between her other numerous duties.¹⁵¹

The Salem County plant is one of the very old buildings. The walls throughout have always been merely whitewashed. It was stated that that work is no longer done, hence has been no recent application and the walls are streaked, scaling and cracked. The floors, however, are clean, as most of the effort put into housekeeping is expended apparently on scrubbing. The inmate kitchen is a lean-to next to the staff kitchen, miserably equipped and in charge

¹⁴⁹ Women's Department of The National Civic Federation, *Study of a Group of Almshouses in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania*, ([n. c.]: [n. p.], 1927), 40.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 41, 43, 45.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 45.

of two young colored girls who serve as cooks for the inmates. A large kitchen with a big range is used for the superintendent's family, and a white woman of responsible years is employed as staff cook.

The officials of the institution regard visits by outsiders as interference in their personal affairs and strongly resent them, being perfectly frank in the declaration that the conduct of the Salem County Almshouse is nobody's business. It is merely a job to them, and everything about the institution reflects that point of view. Neat, habitable rooms on the women's side of the house are unused while the women inmates live huddled together in the old detention cells in the insane asylum. Blue checked gingham is used on the beds for sheets and pillow cases.

Two sick women who could be put in rooms upstairs are housed in the women's sitting room, thus depriving the other women of a day room. Accordingly they crowd into the narrow hall from which their rooms open, sitting just outside the doorways of their tiny cells on straight kitchen chairs, while in the unused rooms above are large and comfortable rockers. Two colored women occupy a room on the third floor, on which floor there is no toilet.

The men's side is wholly neglected. The beds are wretched, with hoarded articles under the straw ticks or blankets. Bedding consists of ragged, dirty quilts and blue sheets.

The room used by four bedfast men is dirty, stifling and immeasurable depressing, and the men themselves are wholly dependent upon their fellows for service and care.¹⁵²

Thus, by 1926, the Salem County insane asylum was being used as a women's wing despite reportedly better quarters in the Almshouse. The report portrayed Salem County's poor facilities as among the worst-managed, if not the worst-managed, in the state. It was not until 1952 that Salem County first provided an actual medical facility for the elderly poor.

To that end, a major architectural, electrical and mechanical renovation of both buildings occurred in 1951. The drawings of John A. Fletcher, a Vineland architect, are entitled "Alterations to Almshouse," indicating that the name of "Almshouse" was still in use. While not mentioned, the old Insane Asylum was part of the project, as the two buildings were considered one complex. But, by proclamation of January 17, 1951, the Freeholders officially declared that its name would be "The County Home." The Freeholders also decided at this time that the primary function of the home would be to care for aged persons who were invalids, in light of welfare programs like Old Age Assistance and Social Security that

¹⁵² Ibid, 50-51.

enabled elderly poor people to remain in their homes.¹⁵³ By 1952, as a consequence of the major change in operation, the State approved the entire first floor as a public medical institution of 30-bed capacity. The Insane Asylum rooms are referred to on the 1950 drawings as “Nurses Quarters,” and the work included two new bathrooms in the house, so it had become a nurses’ residence either previously or at that time.

Despite the 1925 decision to send insane patients away, the 1951 renovation called for two new or re-built cells in the basement of the Almshouse, but perhaps they were for temporary purposes. These were definitely designed for restraint, with steel doors, a toilet and a lavatory, a concrete platform for a bed, and glass-block windows. Curiously, and ironically, in 1953, the new officially designated holding place for the insane became the county jail—the very situation that Dorothea Dix had railed against in 1845.¹⁵⁴

In the 1940s, elderly senile patients swelled the state mental hospitals.¹⁵⁵ In 1953, the year Ancora State Hospital opened, a leader of the New Jersey Association for Mental Health observed that county asylums were persistent in New Jersey due to the failure of the state to comprehensively plan for mental health.¹⁵⁶ By this time, however, Salem County no longer had an asylum *per se*, but a home for the chronic sick who had no family to care for them.

On June 19, 1968 the Public Nursing Home Facilities Study Committee reported that the Salem County Home was inadequate for providing nursing home care for the number of county’s elderly and infirm citizens who needed it.¹⁵⁷ May 6, 1970 name changed from the “Salem County Home” to “Lakeview Home of Salem County” in light of a “complete transformation both in appearances and personnel...a vast diversification of services...” in order to enhance its “beauty and atmosphere” and “add to the betterment of all interested in serving and being served.”¹⁵⁸

The End of the Home

In 1971, there was a move to build a new county home on the county farm, but instead the county purchased the privately owned Salem Nursing Home, Inc. and moved the operation out of the Almshouse/Insane Asylum to that facility just north of the city of Salem.¹⁵⁹ In 1972 the county farm lands were rented out with a public bid, a practice continuing to the present.

¹⁵³ Nathan, 123.

¹⁵⁴ Leiby, 127.

¹⁵⁵ Leiby, 360-361.

¹⁵⁶ Leiby, 345.

¹⁵⁷ Nathan, 184.

¹⁵⁸ Nathan, 188.

¹⁵⁹ Nathan, 192-193.

Various county offices and non-profits used the Almshouse and Insane Asylum buildings after they no longer served as a nursing home complex. In 1974, the old Insane Asylum housed an addictive disease office on the first floor and bedrooms on the second and third floors.¹⁶⁰ SODAT of New Jersey, Inc., an addiction treatment organization, occupied the Insane Asylum in the 1980s.¹⁶¹ Public health programs to aid the afflicted continued to occupy the Insane Asylum into the 1990s.

By 1995, the leaking and uncomfortable Almshouse and Insane Asylum were emptied of all tenants. A local non-profit organization, Preservation Salem, Inc. began agitating for their preservation and adaptive reuse. The Salem County Freeholders hired Vitetta Group of Philadelphia in 2004 to plan a stabilization project to be funded under several forms of funding, including a New Jersey Garden State Preservation Trust Fund grant applied for in 2006. In March, 2007, bids were solicited for the work, but none came in. In April the grant was denied. On April 11, 2007, part of the rear wall at the third story fell to the ground, and the county initiated demolition of the Almshouse (Figure 2). The Insane Asylum remains (Figure 3).



Figure 2. The Almshouse during demolition, April 13, 2007. Photo by the author.

¹⁶⁰ "Lake View Complex" drawings, May, 1974, Salem County Buildings and Grounds Department.

¹⁶¹ Sam Willis, Buildings and Grounds employee, personal communication, March 27, 2007.



Figure 3. Insane Asylum, June 23, 2007. Photo by the author.

Summary

From 1845 into the 1970s, Salem County provided for the changing social needs of its poor population with the Almshouse and Insane Asylum, the County Home and the Lakeview Complex. From sheltering a diverse population of poor—homeless, disabled, out-of-work, fatherless, husbandless, aged, “idiots,” “lunatics,” and epileptics—in the nineteenth-century, to a narrower group of needy—the aged and ill—in the twentieth-century, the Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum served the county’s desire to care for the needy close to home in an efficient, controlled and humane environment for well over a century, and stands as testimony to the successes as well as the failures of local poor relief. Within the context of poor relief in America, New Jersey, and the Delaware Valley, the Salem County Insane Asylum is significant for its role in the treatment of the insane, for being among the first county institutions for the insane, and possibly for the expression of emergent ideas in architectural solutions to treatment. The Insane Asylum reflects its original form and contemporary architectural style with integrity. Within the context of the prevailing institutional architectural trends in the Delaware Valley, New Jersey and the nation, the Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum signify both a shared vision of poor relief and locally individualized and economically-built character.

Summary of Uses

The following periods define major changes in the physical plant or use of the facilities. They are not necessarily the same as the Builds indicated on the attached drawings.

Period I: 1845-1870

During this period, the Almshouse was constructed on the foundation of the burned 1808 poor house and was the only residential building for the poor on the site.

Period II: 1870-1925

During this period, the Insane Asylum was constructed and coexisted with the Almshouse, and both were used for their original purposes.

Period III: 1926-1950

After 1925, all insane persons were to be taken to the state hospital in Trenton and the Insane Asylum was no longer in use for its original purpose. Both buildings continued to house the poor, but fewer classes of poor lived here in this transitional period between almshouse and nursing home due to increasing federal social-aid programs.

Period IV: 1951 - 1974

After a major renovation in 1951, the complex became a state-certified nursing facility for the elderly poor. The John A. Fletcher drawings created in 1950 for the major renovation executed in 1951 was a key source of documentation. The drawings show partitions, stairs, doorways and doors that existed in 1950 that were removed in the 1951 renovation. It is not known whether or not these particular features were original in 1845, but because there is no other known renovation on this scale, it is likely that many were. However, those removed features will be referred to as "historic" but not "original." This period also includes the physical changes made in the 1961 renovation, which are known from Freeholder and Trustee minutes and a set of drawings made in 1974.

Period V: post 1974

The complex was no longer used as a nursing home but was converted for use by county offices and non-profit agencies. Physical changes are not shown on any drawings or known to be from any earlier renovation.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following description was written prior to the demolition of the Almshouse in April 2007. The present tense was used at the time of its writing and is here retained.

Summary

The Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum is an assemblage of two laterally connected brick buildings facing north on State Route 45 in rural Mannington Township, Salem County, New Jersey.¹⁶² They occupy a 165-acre parcel called the County Farm, the site of institutional poor relief since 1796 and today the site of a variety of county facilities. The Almshouse, built in 1845, is a symmetrical three-story, eleven-bay Greek-Revival style brick building with a one-story wood portico centered in the front façade. It was demolished in April, 2007. The surviving Insane Asylum, added fifteen feet to the west in 1871, is a symmetrical three-story, three-bay brick building in the style of an Italian cubical villa with a wooden belvedere centered upon the roof. Both are restrained, economical versions of their styles.

Setting

The Almshouse and Insane Asylum sit on a knoll above and facing an impoundment on Major's Run, the division between Mannington and Pilesgrove Townships. From Route 45, also known as the Salem-Woodstown Road, a driveway leads to and passes in front of the buildings. The ground slopes down from front to rear, so that the basements are only slightly below ground level in the rear. The ground continues to slope down to the south to a streamlet that drains under the driveway into Major's Run above the Route 45 bridge. Continuing south, the land slopes steeply upward to a treeline at the boundary of the county vocational-technical school.

The historic setting also included various outbuildings, farm fields and the pauper cemeteries. Today, the Almshouse is no longer standing though its foundation is extant. A twentieth-century (1931) dairy barn is extant nearby but is no longer being used for its original purpose—it houses the county mosquito commission. A modern brick garage sits between the Almshouse site and the barn and they are surrounded by a paved parking lot. The Almshouse site and the yard behind it are being used as a concrete drainage pipe storage area by the county road department. The area behind the Insane Asylum is grassy and contains one extremely large sycamore tree and two smaller ones. It is likely that a poor-house garden and the airing court established in 1891 were located in the low areas behind the Almshouse and Insane Asylum. The hill above the streamlet is lawn. Between the Insane Asylum and Route 45 to the northwest is a small sewage treatment plant. Directly in front of the Insane Asylum is the historic driveway and the pond created in 1952. To the northeast are two modern, one-story modular buildings. Beyond the pond is the county veterans' cemetery, and beyond that on Cemetery Road are two pauper burying-grounds separated by the county road department facilities and Major's Run. Between the Insane Asylum and the cemetery on

¹⁶² The buildings were investigated in February, 2007 and is written in the present tense though the Almshouse was since demolished.

the south side of Major's Run are the county fire training school and emergency preparedness facilities. The historic integrity of the setting is therefore fragmented by development since the 1950s.

Almshouse

Exterior

The brick building walls were constructed with a seven and eight-course common bond. At the basement level, the walls are five wythes thick and step down to three at the third story. The gable roof has a very low slope, and one of the five original chimneys is extant. The original windows are all six-over-six double hung wood sash and most are intact. They lack evidence of shutters on the front and side elevations, but screwed-on pintels are extant on the rear or south elevation. The window sills are stone and the lintels are flat iron bars. The north and south roof eaves are decorated with a three-course corbelled cornice of molded brick of Grecian ogee profiles.

The north, or front, elevation has a central doorway under a wood portico, eleven bays and three full stories above the ground. The front doorway, under a recent plywood cover, contains a double-leaved door, sidelights and a transom. Each door leaf is two-paneled. The upper panels have glass lights with a reeded stool and a wood apron incised with a leaf motif. The lower panels have a decorative raised and reeded wood panel with bolection moldings. As such, they appear to be of a late nineteenth-century vintage. The sidelights contain four glass lights and a lower wood panel. The transom contains one light. The portico is supported by square pillars. The shaft and moldings of the capital are original. The concrete steps and aluminum and glass storm panels are modern. At the eave is a corbelled, four-course molded brick cornice with Grecian ovolo and Roman cove profiles. The ten basement floor window openings are capped with a brick flat-arch lintel. One opening, third from west, is filled in with brick.

The east elevation has three bays including a center door and a Grecian portico with brick-faced concrete steps and ramp and a concrete deck. Above the concrete deck the portico, including columns, roof and eave cornice, is original. The portico was altered in 1951 by raising the elevation of the deck to the elevation of the top of the stone door sill with concrete and cutting off the base of the original columns. Previously there were steps on the north and south sides as shown on the 1950 construction drawings. On the south side of the door is a bricked-up door opening with a stone door sill extant in the wall. The south basement window has a steel frame with bars in front of it at a cell location, added in 1951. At the roof rake is a paint-line suggesting a former wood molding under the edge of the roof.

The south or rear elevation has four stories above the ground level. This facade contains several alterations. Three brick-clad concrete block additions project from the rear wall and all share the same brick material and five-course common bond. From the west, a three-bay, two-story rectangular wing built as a women's ward in 1971 is adjacent to the west wall of the Almshouse and behind the Insane Asylum. It has a flat roof with roof parapet, six-over-six metal double-hung sliding sash and a short lateral projection that overlaps the rear wall of the Almshouse. Next is an elevator shaft, built in 1971, which stands a story taller than the

Almshouse in the third bay from the west. At the base is a doorway with a hood and at the top is a nine-light steel window. Last is a four-bay, one-story square wing built as a laundry prior to 1950 with a flat roof and a roof parapet with a tile coping. The east and west elevations contains three large windows and a door. Two steel fire escapes that pre-date 1950 hang on the rear wall at each end of the building at the third and second floors, where a window was altered into a door at each floor. On the south façade of the Almshouse, four metal shutter pintels are attached to each window frame. These pintels are not original as the minutes note a move to add shutters on the south elevation after construction, but it is not known when that was actually accomplished. The east-most basement window was altered with glass block fill and steel bars at a cell location in 1951. Most window sashes are intact. At the eave is a corbelled, four-course molded brick cornice with Grecian ovolo and Roman cove profiles.

The west elevation has three bays, and contains a one-story brick passage to the Insane Asylum around a central doorway. This was the new “breezeway” described on the 1950 drawings. At the roof rake is a paint-line suggesting a former wood molding under the edge of the roof. In the peak of the gable end is a white limestone date plaque inscribed with “Salem County Almshouse 1845.”

The roofing material is not accessible or discernible from the ground. It is some form of membrane roofing. Two ventilators and one chimney protrude above the roof.

Interior

Overall

The Almshouse is arranged on a longitudinal axis with a line of rooms on the north and south side of a central corridor on each of four floors. The house has one extant chimney (the northwest one) out of five original chimneys designed to heat the house with parlor stoves. There were three chimneys embedded in the south hall wall and two in the north hall wall. Their locations imply how heated rooms were laid out originally. Former or existing room partitions fall at chimneys, allowing two rooms to be served by one chimney. Ten rooms on each floor could have received heat from these chimneys. Ornate radiators marked “A. A. Griffing Iron Co. NY Patent Sept 22, 1874” are found in several rooms and represent an upgrade in the heating system made in the late nineteenth-century. This new heating system would have facilitated more partitioning as more rooms could be heated.

Basement

Most rooms have a concrete floor. Rooms 001 and 002 are cells containing concrete beds, a toilet, a sink and a glass block window with steel bars. The walls and ceiling are historic lath and plaster, the ceilings have a modern dropped ceiling underneath, and a steel door with a barred window is in each room. They were constructed in 1951. Older, wood doors made with vertical beaded board, stand at the end of the corridor (003) and may be from the walk-in freezers described below (Rooms 015A and 015B). In 1951 this corridor was created from part of the 1951 employees’ dining room (005) with a modern partition. Room 005 contains a chimney and is lined with cedar weatherboard over historic lath and plaster. Two original exterior six-over-six windows are in the south wall. The ceiling is historic lath and plaster

and the wall between it and Room 006 is a stud wall with lathe and plaster, likely original. Room 006 is a kitchen and probably always was, as it contains the largest chimney. Two closets on the west wall were removed and a dumbwaiter to the first floor added in 1951. A large, original door in the rear wall leads to the laundry addition to the rear, but originally led outside. Of the two original windows, one survives intact, the other is blocked up. Other finishes such as baseboard (plinth with cap molding), door and window casings and lath and plaster walls are of the Greek Revival period (typical in the county). Rooms 007 and 008 just to the west of the kitchen, have a thin, beaded board partition and door between them, and may have served as pantries. Between Rooms 007 and 009 is a stud partition with lath and plaster. Room 009 and 010 were once one large room with a chimney, and in 1950 was a dining room. The partition between them was built sometime after the 1951 renovation and before 1974. Its ceiling is historic lath and plaster. Room 011 is the west stair hall containing the 1951 steel stair tower with a glass partition and fire doors to the main corridor (012). The outline of the original staircase on the south wall is visible in the plaster wall. From Room 011 is a door in the west wall that leads into a subterranean space under the "breezeway" connector between the Almshouse and the Insane Asylum in which is a old stone retaining wall. The corridor (012) walls are brick covered with stucco. The corners of all the door openings are rounded. The ghost of the central historic staircase is evident in front of Room 018. Room 013 contains the east stair tower. The original staircase removed in 1951 is outlined against the south plaster wall. Room 014 was altered after 1974 with a stud partition around the perimeter perhaps in efforts to create a dry room, as there is a sump pit behind it. The 1974 plan notes "TV and Electronic Equipment." The stone foundation is visible through the deteriorating partition. The foundation is stone up to the bottom of the windows. Old six-light wood window sashes are in place. The floor is carpet on plywood on a wood frame. The ceiling is wood pulp tile over wire mesh and plaster on the wood joists. The floor framing is 3" x 12" joists on 16" centers with block bridging halfway across the room (typical entire building). Room 014 was made from two original rooms (014 and 015) after 1951 and before 1974. Rooms 015A and 015B were made as walk-in freezers out of a portion of the original Room 015 (storage in 1950) before 1974. They have a raised concrete floor and plaster on wire lath walls and ceiling. Room 016 was a Pump Room in 1950. The door has a wood lintel and the two window sashes are in place. It contains one very large horizontal tank, one large vertical tank, and one small vertical tank. The ceiling is plaster on wire lath placed after 1951. The west wall is brick and contains an opening with a wood window frame (30" x 30", 4'-6" above the floor) into Room 017. Floorboards above are random width. The door to Room 017 is extra wide and reduced with a short wood partition for a modern standard door. This room is noted as "Food Storage" in 1974 and just "Storage" in 1951. Historic lath and plaster are intact. The concrete floor was placed in 1951. Room 018 also has a concrete floor but it predates 1950. Both side walls have modern gypsum wall board but the historic ceiling is intact. There is a former door, now closed up, to Room 019. Room 019 is a boiler room which contains a very old boiler in a pit, labeled "Pacific Steel Boiler, Bristol, Pa." The north wall is lined with a stud wall supporting electrical panels. The window behind this is filled in with brick. The other window is extant. There is a small pit in the floor in front of the chimney. The ceiling is a ¼" thick rigid tile, possibly asbestos. The door has a wood lintel. The door and door frame are steel. Room 020 contains a building electrical generator that was installed after 1951 and before 1974. The brick floor has a herringbone pattern floor and contains a 10' x 12' pit. The exposed stone foundation reaches

to the window sills where it changes to brick.

First floor

All doors have been replaced with modern flush ones. In most areas, historic plaster has fallen off ceilings and walls due to moisture. In some areas the lath has fallen off as well.

On the south side, all door and window casings have been altered into plain, flat boards. In 1950 there were six rooms on the south side of the corridor served by three shared chimneys. The four on the east end became one large men's infirmary (Room 101), a men's room (102) and a linen closet (103) in 1951. By 1974 the large men's infirmary (101) was partitioned into ten small examination rooms and a lengthwise corridor. These partition walls do not reach the ceiling. The ceiling is modern wallboard. Of five pre-1950 partitions on the south side, one remains. Room 101 is distinguished by having, under wire mesh and plaster, horizontal, 4" wide beaded boards lining the south wall. This may have been a late-nineteenth or early-twentieth-century change. The pre-1950 Room 101A at the eastern end of Room 101 did not have hall access, but had access from Room 101B and from the exterior (bricked-up doorway noted under exterior, east elevation). In 1951, the door to 101B was blocked up and the door to 101C was widened into a double door. On the west end, two pre-1950 rooms became a women's infirmary (Room 109), a public rest room (107), a women's bathroom (106), an invalid bathroom (104), a bed pan flush room (105) and a dumbwaiter (in 105). By 1974 the women's infirmary (109) had become a health department office. Room 110 is the west stair tower with glass and steel partition and fire doors. A door in the west wall leads to the breezeway and Insane Asylum.

On the north side, four pre-1950 rooms served by two shared chimneys were split into eleven between 1950 and 1974. Rooms 117 and 118, with doorways on both the front entry hall and the main corridor, may have been public reception rooms and/or the Steward's quarters. Rooms 113, 113B, 114, 115, and 116 were partitioned out of one large room at the east. Rooms 119, 120, 121, and 122 were partitioned out of one large room at the west end. In these rooms, extant finishes include historic lath and plaster walls and ceilings, and baseboards. Some windows retain original casings, but no original doors are extant.

In the corridor (Room 111) historic lath and plaster wall and ceilings and baseboards are extant. Fluorescent ceiling light fixtures line the hall. The flooring is linoleum over the original wood. Doored partitions at each end near the original stairs were removed in 1951.

Second floor

The rooms on the south side have been extensively altered, with only one full pre-1950 partition and part of another surviving out of out six main room partitions. The north side, however, retains much more historic fabric with five of seven pre-1950 partitions extant. Room 201 was enlarged into a large men's ward from three smaller, possibly original, rooms and a closet in 1951 (201A, B, C and D). The doors to 201A and 202 were closed off and the doorway to 201D was enlarged at that time. Historic lath and plaster finishes remain on the walls in 201, but some ceiling was replaced with modern wall board. Most plaster has fallen off due to moisture. Portions of the inner wythe of the south wall in Room 201 has fallen down and the outer wythe is bowing outward. Where the brick wall is exposed, wood nailing

strips can be seen embedded in the wall. At the chimney in the corridor wall, the framing header is connected to the joists with a pinned mortise and tenon joint. Rooms 203, 204 and 205 were partitioned out of one large room to serve as men's bathrooms and a linen closet in 1951, with the wall between 203 and 204 dating after 1951 but before 1974. Room 202 was partitioned off as a kitchen with a new door after 1951 and before 1974. Part of the chimney was cut away to construct the doorway. While the doors to 203 and 205 were added in 1951, the door to 204 appears to be from Period I. At the west end of the large room (205) was a bank of closets removed in 1951. The Period I wall remains between 205 and 207. Rooms 207, 207A, 208 and 209 existed prior to 1950. The partitions associated with the historic layout have been removed. A stub of the historic wall between 207 and 207A is extant. Room 206 and 207 were built as a utility room and women's bathroom in 1951. Rooms 208 and 209 became a women's ward in 1951, with 208 partitioned off before 1974. The west end was inaccessible due to the collapsing floors above. On the central corridor (211), beaded baseboard and lath and plaster walls and ceiling are extant throughout. Two partitions with doorways were removed in 1951. These may have functioned to separate classes of inmates as well as the Steward and his family from each other. Room 213 was historically two rooms. Both the partition and the historic doorways were removed in 1951. The extant partition dates from period

Third floor

The third floor has fewer alterations than the other floors in terms of room partitioning. Doors are all modern replacements but the door casings are historic with the Greek-Revival profile (quirk-and-ogee with cap-mold). The historic ceiling framing over the stair towers was replaced with steel beams, likely in 1951. Wire lath and plaster finishes have fallen due to moisture entry. Most of the room alterations are on the south side of the hall and relate to the 1951 bathrooms construction. All of the north rooms appear to be in their configurations prior to 1950 with historic lath and plaster walls and ceilings, with a small exception in Room 323, where a vestibule and a closet were added in 1951. Room 325 has a small interior room that predates 1950. Room 321 and most of the hall is intact, whereas in Rooms 318, 319, and 320, plaster ceilings have fallen due to moisture entry. Room 318 has ceiling framing built of modern lumber. Rooms 322, 323, and 325 and the west end of the hall are in a state of collapse. In 1951 the hall doors to Rooms 301, 312, 318, and 325 was closed off due to the construction of the fire stair towers. On the south side, partitions in Rooms 301, 302, 305, 312 and 313 were removed in 1951. Room 301 contained two smaller rooms at the east wall in 1950 and one window opening was converted to a fire escape doorway. Rooms 311, 312 and 313 were one larger room with a small room in its northwest corner in 1950. Rooms 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, and 310 form a bathroom complex constructed in 1951. Prior to that, the space formed two rooms. Room 310 leads to the elevator doors, which is a historic window location. In the hall, a partition in the center of the building was removed in 1951. Historically, this may have divided the men's and women's parts of the house. The historic central stair serving the basement through second stories did not extend to the third story.

Insane Asylum

Setting

Built in 1870 fifteen feet to the west of the 1845 Almshouse on the county farm, the Salem County Insane Asylum is a symmetrical three-story, three-bay brick building in the style of an Italian cubical villa with a wooden belvedere centered upon the roof. It faces north on a bluff on a 165-acre county-owned parcel called the County Farm next to State Route 45 in rural Mannington Township, Salem County, New Jersey. It was sited fifteen feet to the west of the 1845 Salem County Almshouse, which was demolished in April 2007. The County Farm was the site of county institutional poor relief between 1796 and 1971. Today the farm is also the site of the county jail, the mosquito commission, the road department, the fire training center, and the veterans cemetery.

Exterior

The Insane Asylum is a plain Italian cubical villa built in a seven- to nine-course common brick bond. The square plan, flat roof, belvedere with pairs of round-arch windows, and wide roof overhang define the Italianate character, even though there are no brackets on the plain frieze board. This style was popular locally when the house was built. The windows above grade are original, six-over-six, double-hung sash over a gray marble sill, while the basement windows are half-size with three-over-three, double-hung wood sash over a wood sill. A steel bar supports the masonry over each opening.

The three-story, three-bay symmetrical front façade faces north. The central front doorway contains a boarded-over single-leaf door with sidelights and a transom. The front stoop consists of six stone treads and a stone landing on a foundation of brick. One tread is broken in half. There was never a porch. Steel pipe railings are of recent origin. A brick basement bulkhead entrance, in ruins, is centered in the south wall. The east side has one central bay with a window in each story and a doorway that was cut into the southeast corner to connect to the “breezeway” that was built to the Almshouse in 1951. The connector was removed in the 2007 demolition of the Almshouse. The opening is covered with plywood. The south (rear) elevation has three-bays and a fire escape in the center bay. Fire escape doors were created out of the second and third-story center windows. A steel fire escape tower is attached to the center of the façade and predates 1950. Paint lines on the wall ghost a former set of steps to a landing at the first-floor door. The west side has one central bay with a window at each level.

The belvedere on the roof is flush-wood-sided and painted white. It has a wide, overhanging, corniced eave. The north and south elevations each contain a pair of round-arch window openings; the east and west contain a single round-arched window. The original window sashes have been replaced with a single piece of clear glazing. The low-slope hipped roof is covered with standing seam metal painted silver, and is possibly the original roofing. The eaves form gutters and downspouts once penetrated the eaves. No chimneys are visible.

Interior

The basement contains five brick-walled rooms flanking a central hall on a north-south axis. Each room contains one exterior window that is a short, three-over-three double-hung sash.

All original windows are in place, and in Room 006 modern chain link mesh covers the window on the inside. There are three chimneys embedded in the central basement hall (003) walls. In the east wall one chimney protrudes into Rooms 001 and 002. In the west wall, a small chimney of one flue protrudes into Room 006. A double chimney protrudes into Rooms 004 and 005 and its east wall has been taken down, exposing the interior of the chimney. All chimney flues open into the hall, not the rooms. There are no doors or door casings on the room doorways, but there are three dovetail-shaped nailing blocks in both walls of each doorway. It is not clear whether or not anything was ever attached to these blocks. A tilting wood stairway to the first floor in the southeast corner has an old stringer with replacement treads and risers. An historic, grain-painted four-panel door with ogee panel moldings is extant in the exterior doorway in the south wall. A beaded-board and batten door hangs in the doorway of Room 001.

The first, second and third floors had identical original floor plans. A center hall and connected stair hall created an L-shaped space, two front rooms, each two-thirds the depth of the house, were placed aside the center hall and a small room with hall access occupied the southwest corner adjacent to the stair hall. The center hall walls, continuous with the basement walls, are load bearing brick masonry, contain the chimney flues, and reach the third floor. No chimneys or flue openings are visible above the basement from the interior. The stair hall interior wall is also load-bearing brick masonry.

The first floor contains a center hall (102), two parlors aside it, a bathroom in the south west corner (104) and a stair hall in the southeast corner (105). The original open stair case winds in dog-leg fashion to the third floor. The opening to the east parlor (101) was modified in 1951 into a wide plaster arch. All other door and all window openings have entablature wood casings and a plinth-and-cap baseboard. All doors are the modern flush type. The center hall (102) was converted into a kitchen in 1951 with a new partition at the stair hall and a counter with sink. The historic front door was replaced. Rooms 103 and 104 became a bedroom with new closet and bathroom at that time. An original doorway from 104 into the stair hall (105) was closed off at that time. The floors were covered with linoleum in 1951; the present covering is carpet. The bathroom tile floor and walls and pulpboard tile ceiling are consistent with 1951 construction.

The second floor is laid out the same as the first floor, with two rooms on the east and west sides of a central hall. Room 204 is a tiled bathroom constructed in 1951. It has a door into the hall (206). Two closets were constructed in Room 201 in the north corners. Their entablature door casings match the rest in the house, but the baseboard cap molding differs. The number and colors of paint layers on the closet door casings and the hall door casings indicates that the closet door casings are newer but replicated the old. On the window casings in this room are putty-filled holes about ¼ inch in diameter, spaced at 2½ inches, 3 inches or 5 inches. One hole contains the remains of a threaded stud. These holes may be evidence of iron grate placed over the window as would be expected in an insane asylum. Deteriorating plaster on the north wall and elsewhere indicate that the walls were gutted and replaced with a wet-plastered, papered gypsum wallboard. Plaster lines on exposed ceiling joists indicate the prior presence of nineteenth-century lath and plaster. The 1950 drawings do not account for this work, but this type of construction could very well date to that time. In the stair hall

(205) a partition was added in 1951 to separate the fire exit (206). In the ceiling of Room 203 is a plaster-covered beam spanning east-west at the mid point of the room. The wood floor framing consists of 3 inch x 10 inch joists spaced 16 inches apart.

The third floor mimics the second floor plan. The floors are covered with linoleum. A partition built around 1980 divided room 303 in half (over the beam observed below). The finishes are consistent with the floors below. At the stair landing between second and third floor is a ledge where the exterior wall thickness diminishes. Above the central hall (Room 302), the belvedere is open above, without a floor or stair to it. This appears to have been altered, probably after 1951.

The original spaces are largely intact. Significant historic features such as window sashes, belvedere, roof eaves, staircase, exterior doors, stone steps and window sills, and interior window and door trim are intact. Losses include original plaster finishes, the rear stoop, and the original access-way to the belvedere. Alterations include the fire escape and associated doors and partitions, modern bathrooms, some interior doorway alterations, and replacement interior doors. The overall historic integrity of the building is therefore good, though it is in poor condition from deferred maintenance.

CHRONOLOGY OF CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS ON THE COUNTY FARM

- 1796 Purchase of Bassett's Tavern and addition of a wing for women
- 1806 Construction began on brick Poor House three stories high including the cellar, 65 feet long x 45 feet wide with shingle roof
- 1808 Poor house completed, painted, smoke house and two necessities built, old poor house rented
- 1822 Addition of Insane Department begun, Bassett's Tavern sold
- 1823 Sheds and yards built
- 1825 Insane addition complete, brick boiler building (cookhouse) eighteen feet square and one story high (standing in 1885)
- 1826 Frame addition to the barn and new hog pen
- 1833 Shed or sheds erected
- 1835 Brick spring house addition
- 1845 Almshouse burns to ground, new almshouse built 110 feet long x 50 feet wide, three stories above basement with tin roof
- 1859 New wagon house
- 1863 Dumbwaiter installed from "kitchen to dining room" in Almshouse
- 1865 Water tanks installed on top floor and filled from roof. Pipes run to kitchen
- 1870 Insane Asylum construction started
- 1873 New barn
- 1878 Wagon sheds built
- 1879 Ice house built
- 1885 Steam heating system installed, wind pump constructed prior to this year
- 1900 Electricity installed
- 1930 Coal furnace converted to oil
- 1931 New dairy barn built
- 1951 Alterations to the Almshouse and Insane Asylum: partitions removed and added, wood stairs removed, steel and concrete fire towers constructed, linoleum flooring installed throughout, tile bathrooms with new fixtures installed, tile ceilings installed, complete rewiring, new kitchen equipment
- 1952 Lake created for fire protection
- 1955 Laundry addition constructed and equipped
- 1958 One-story addition for day room constructed
- 1960 Elevator to service all four floors installed, medical section including a treatment room constructed on second floor
- 1962 Day room furnished with chairs, tables, and chests purchased from State Use Division of Institutions and Agencies
- 1963 Medical section of 50 beds equipped with new vari-height hospital beds, tables, and cabinets
- 1965 Fire detection system installed throughout
- 1966 Chrysler station wagon purchased¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Chronology in part from "History of Salem County Almshouse," Document #20, Almshouse file 000.020.406, Salem County Historical Society

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Insane Asylum is a significant county landmark that tells a story that no other building can tell. Preserving this sole survivor of Salem County poor relief history is the best way to teach future generations this forgotten history. Listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places is both appropriate and advantageous. Listing brings attention, supports education by making documentation publicly accessible, and draws funding. The county is currently undertaking tourism planning; this landmark would be a highlight of visitation for the social history it can share.

The present condition of the building demands immediate attention if this building is to survive. The roof is seriously leaking on the east side, and this water entry should be immediately stopped. The county should enlist a qualified preservation architect to prepare a contract for stabilization, which should include the following measures at a minimum:

- Secure the roof and repair downspouts.
- Trim tree branches overhanging the roof.
- Affix plywood closures over all openings to keep out weather, animals, and vandals, and to protect the original windows.
- Provide ventilation in selected openings.
- Provide burglar and fire detection systems.

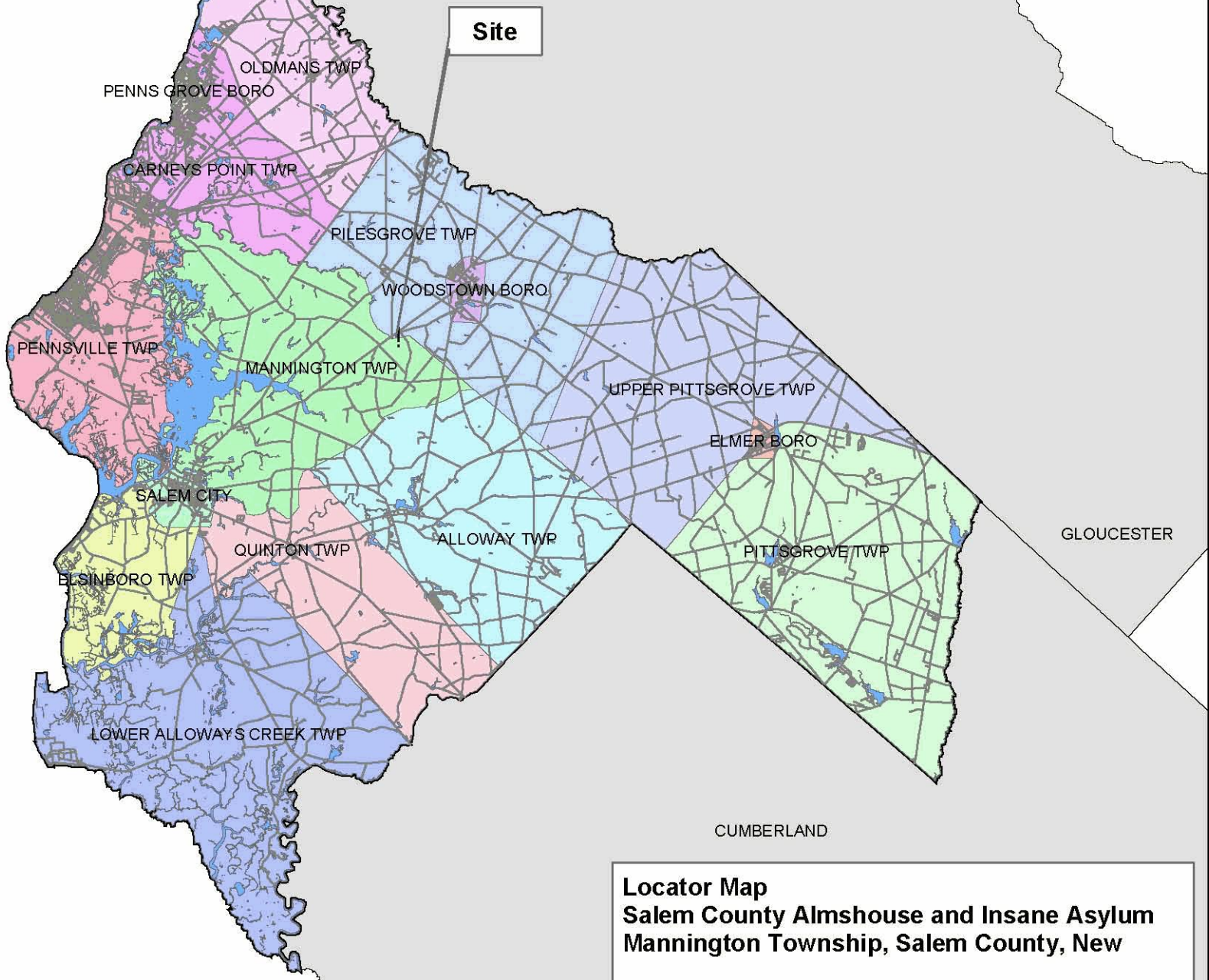
Consult this National Park Service technical publication for how to correctly mothball a building: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief31.htm>

It has been fortunate that so many of the Almshouse and Insane Asylum documents, as well as early Freeholders' minutes, survive in the Salem County Clerks Office. They provided vital primary evidence for this study. There is a growing scholarly literature on the history and architecture of nineteenth-century poor-relief institutions, so if these records continue to be preserved, they can continue to answer research questions about everyday life at these institutions. However, the condition of the many books of records should be evaluated for conservation, and microfilming would provide access without causing more wear to the books.

The 1950 John A. Fletcher architectural and electrical/mechanical drawings also require conservation as well as reformatting. These two sets are a very important record of the buildings' history. But as blueprints they are light-sensitive and unstable, and should be stored flat in darkness. They should be reproduced full-size onto archival material and perhaps also microfilmed. The county engineer would know where to get them reproduced as described.

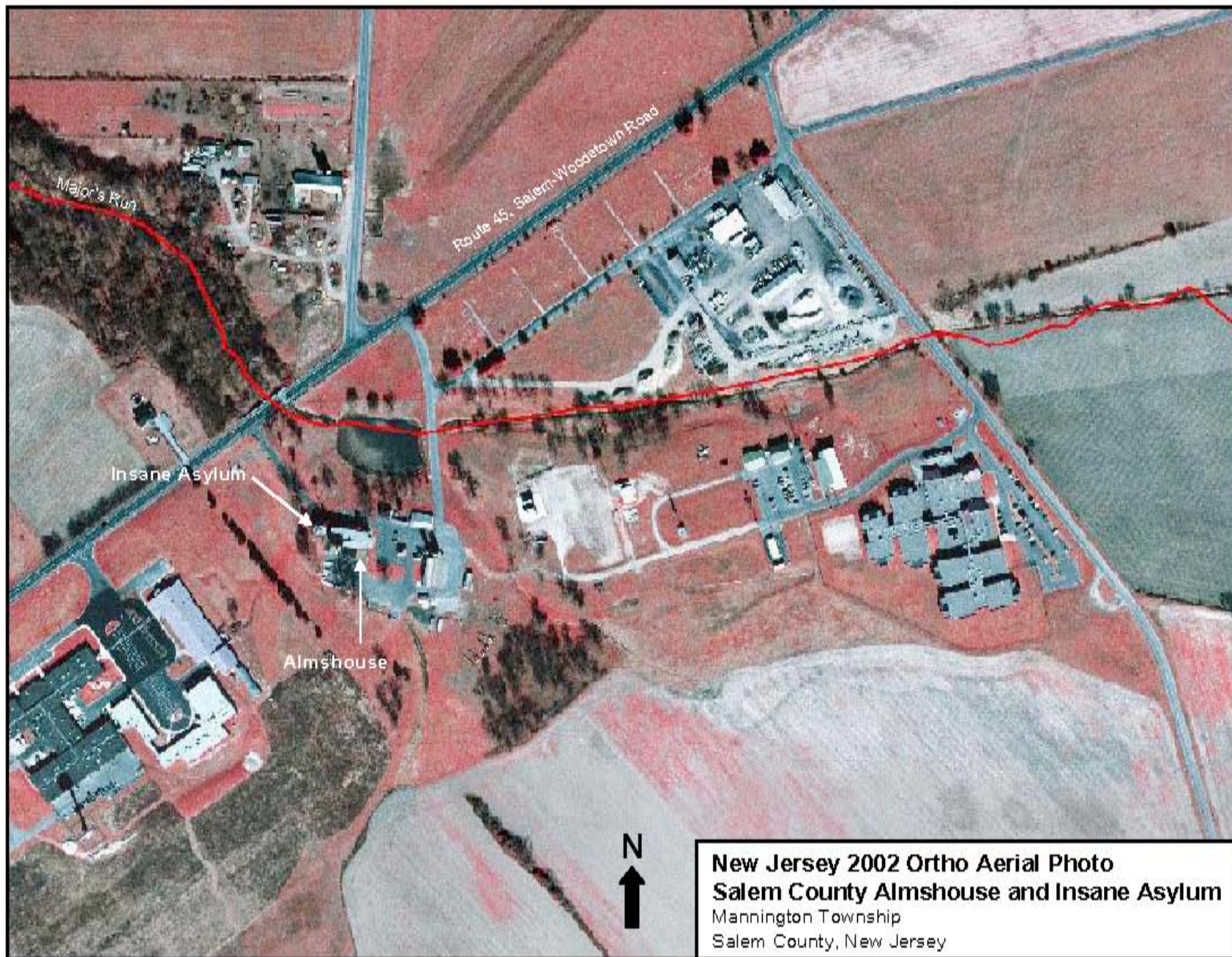
APPENDIX A

LOCATION MAP



APPENDIX B

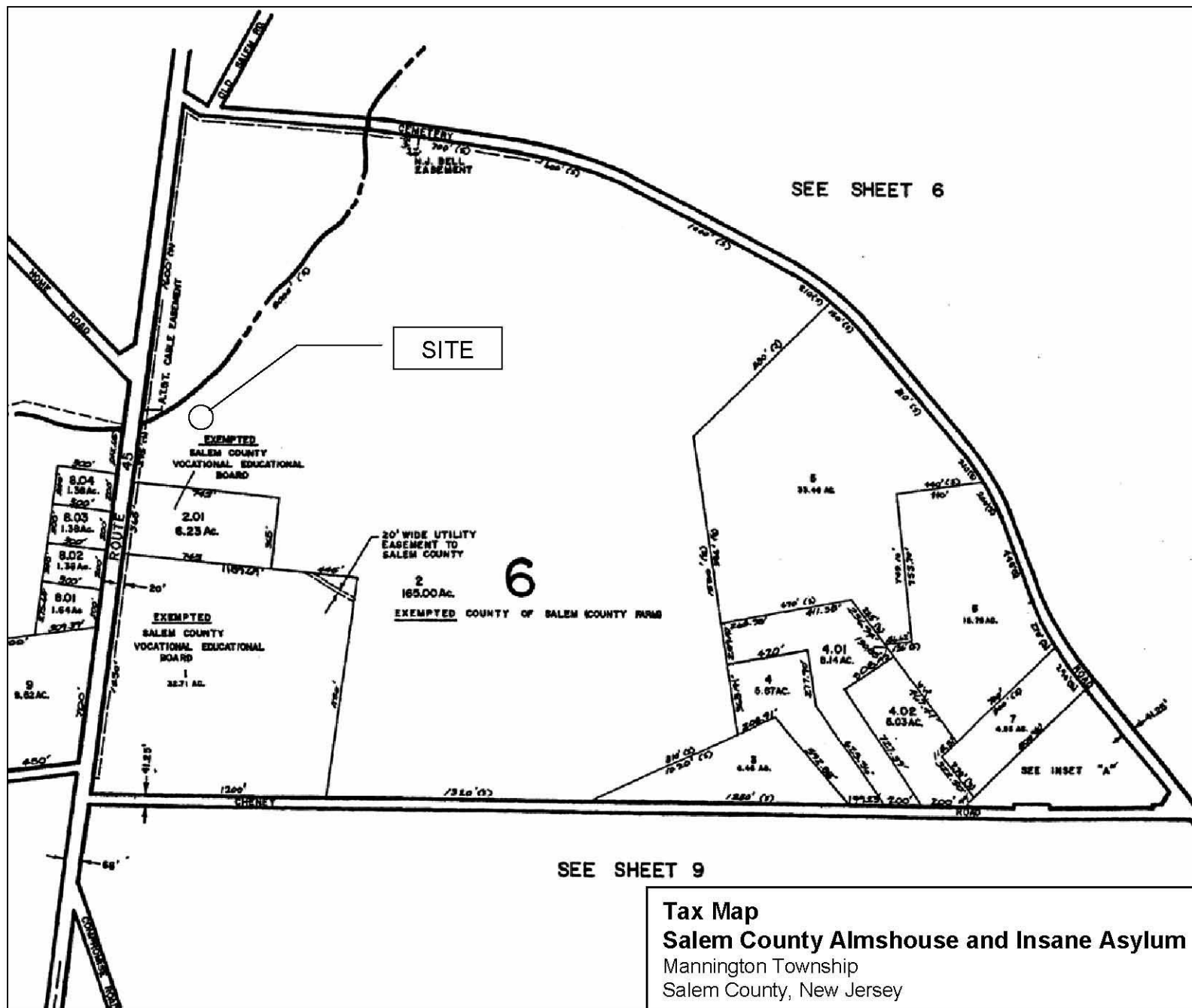
2002 ORTHOPHOTO



New Jersey 2002 Ortho Aerial Photo
Salem County Almshouse and Insane Asylum
Mannington Township
Salem County, New Jersey

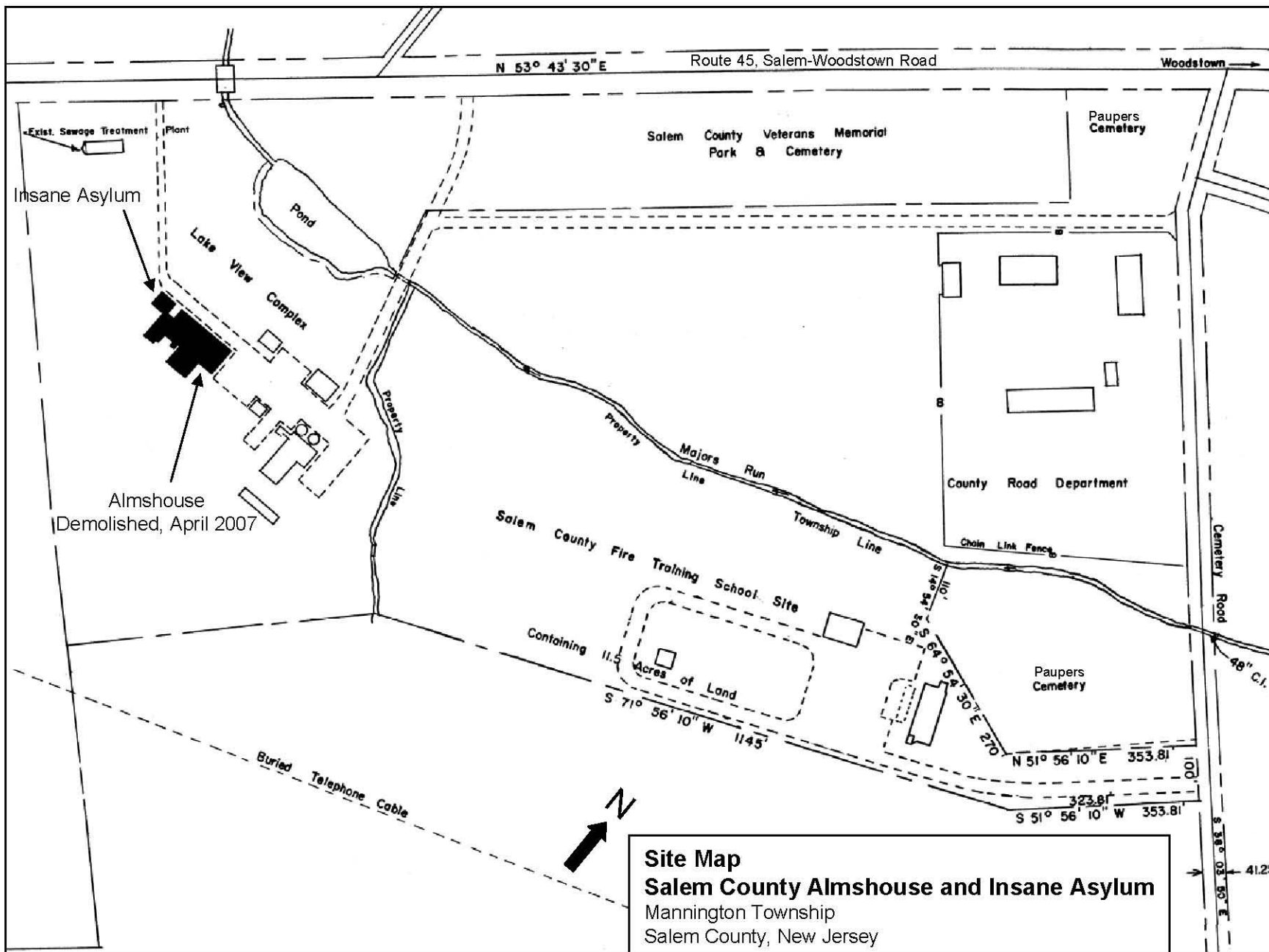
APPENDIX C

TAX MAP



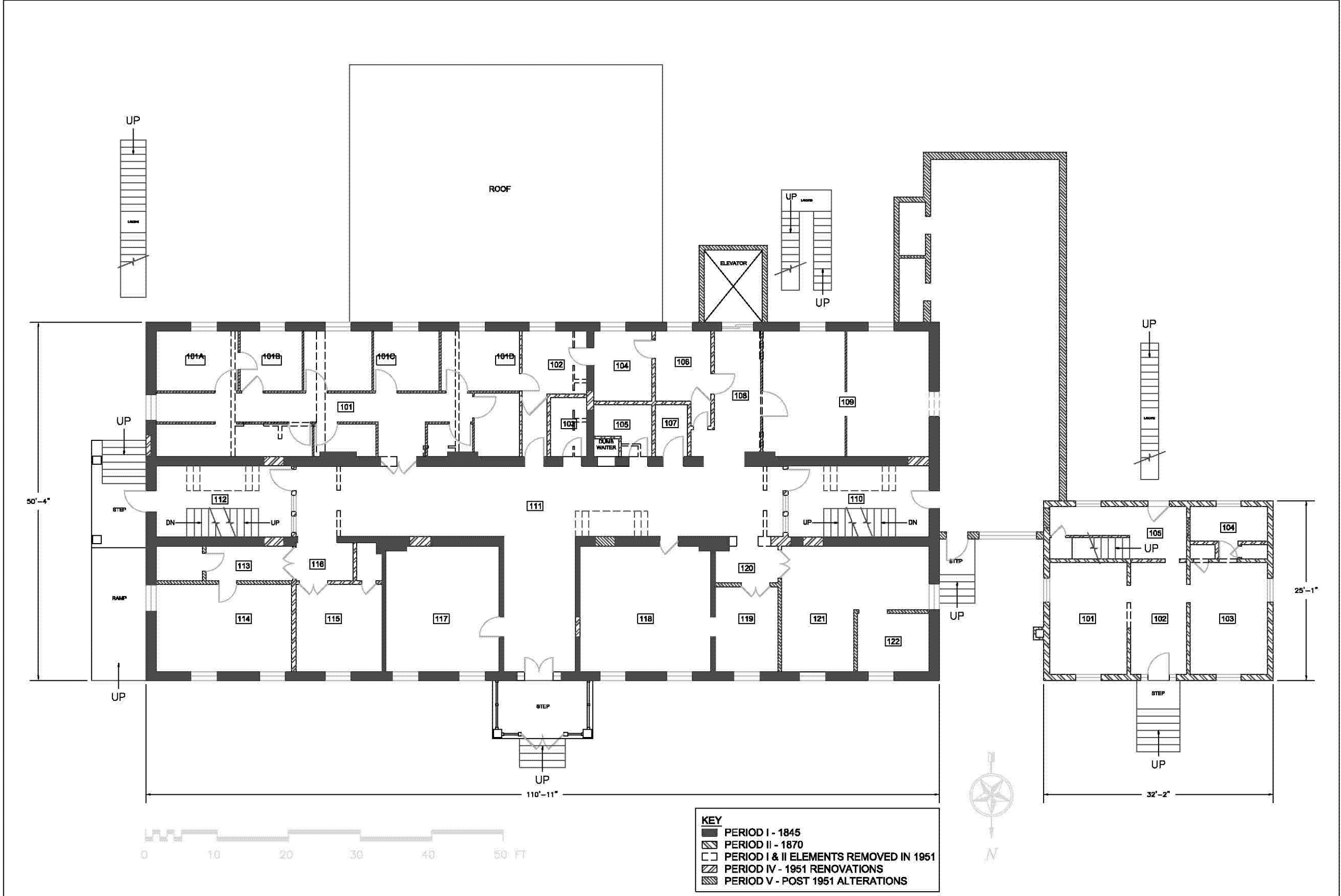
APPENDIX D

SITE MAP



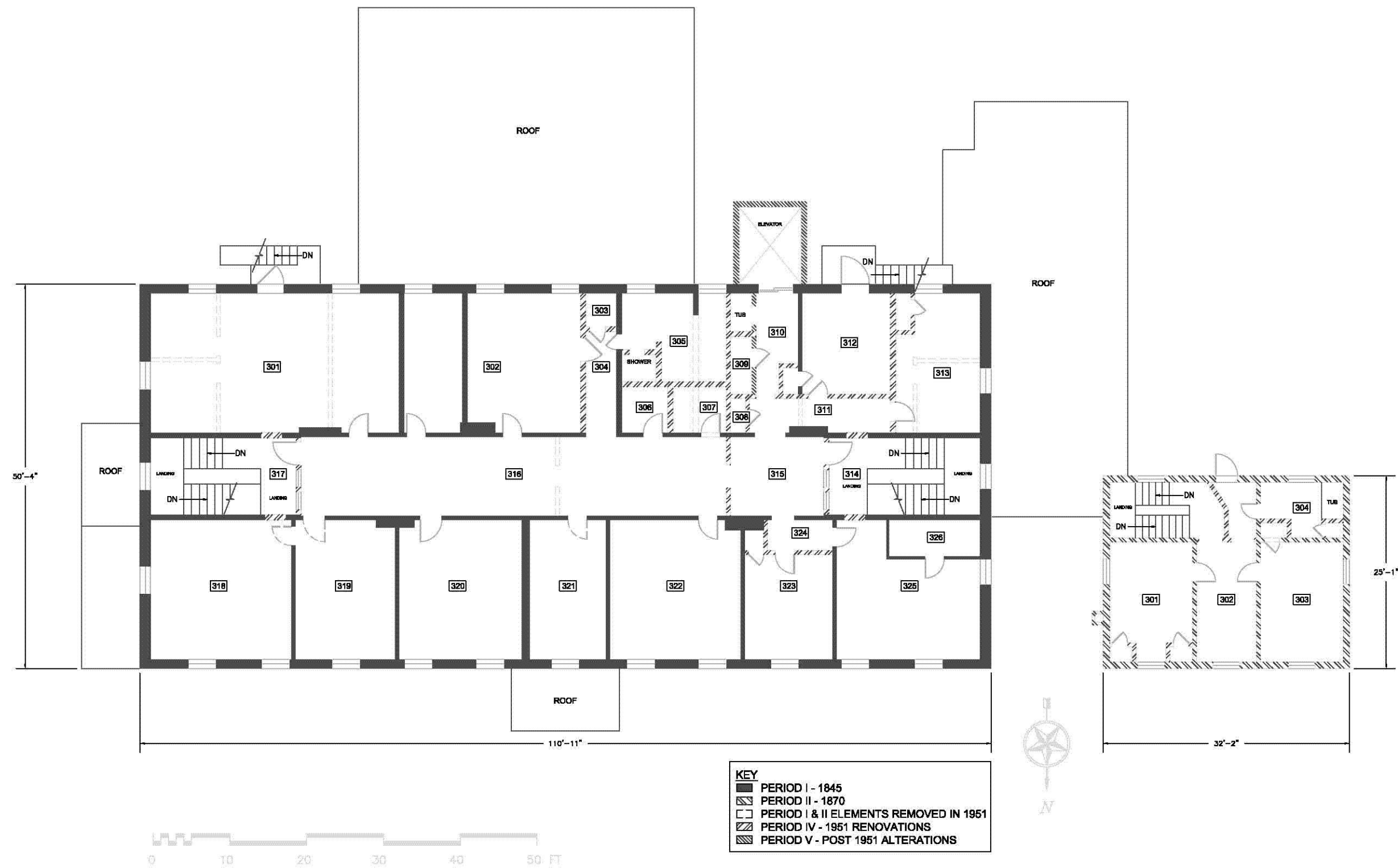
APPENDIX E

FLOOR PLANS



Based on drawings by the Vitella Group (12/14/2006), John A. Fletcher, Architect (8/16/1950), Salem County Engineer (1974), and field documentation by Janet Sheridan & Jeroen van den Hurk

<div>THE CENTER FOR HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN</div> <div>UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE</div> <div>ALISON HALL ACADEMY STREET NEWARK, DE 19716</div> <div>Phone (302) 831-8097 ■ ■ ■ Fax (302) 831-4548</div>	<div>Project Name:</div> <div>Salem County Alms House</div> <div>and Insane Asylum</div>	<div>Location:</div> <div>Salem Woodstown Road (Rt. 45)</div> <div>Mannington Township</div> <div>Salem County, New Jersey</div>	First Floor Plan	
			<div>PROJECT #:</div>	<div>SCALE: As noted</div>
			<div>DRAWN BY: J. van den Hurk</div>	<div>DATE: 2-22-2007</div>



Based on drawings by the Vitetta Group (12/14/2006), John A. Fletcher, Architect (8/18/1850), Salem County Engineer (1874), and field documentation by Janet Sheridan & Jeroen van den Hurk

APPENDIX F

HISTORIC MAPS



Almshouse and Insane Asylum

Salem County, New Jersey

Historic Map of Mannington Township

Everts and Stewart, *Combination Atlas of Salem and Gloucester Counties*, 1876

APPENDIX G

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS



Historic Photo circa 1905. Almshouse on left, Insane Asylum on right.
by E. W. Humphreys, Pilesgrove-Woodstown Historical Society Collection



Historic photograph from a postcard, circa 1905.
Copied from copy in Salem County Buildings and Grounds Department.

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