

John G. Reading House  
151-153 Main Street  
Flemington  
Hunterdon County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-731

HABS  
NJ  
10-FLEM  
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NJ-731

JOHN G. READING HOUSE

Address: 151-153 Main Street, Flemington, Hunterdon County,  
New Jersey

Present Owner: Alfred A. Dorf

Present Occupants: 153 Main Street - Alfred A. Dorf--Use: Residence  
151 Main Street - Car Skin Corporation--Use: Business office.

Brief Statement of Significance: A representative example of a Greek Revival double house built about mid-19th century by Mahlon Fisher, designer and master builder.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Original and Subsequent Owners:

151 Main Street

<u>Date</u>	<u>Deed Book</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>
3/23/1852	117	423	John G. Reading	Miller Kline
12/3/1870	147	381	Miller Kline	George Bartles
1/23/1885	207	306	Richard S. Kuhl (Special Master of the Court of Chancery)	Mary Kline
3/30/1911	298	670	James A. Kline (exr. of LW&T of Mary Kline, dec'd)	Bethania Moffett
6/21/1918	325	399	Bethania Moffett	A. O. Robbins and Marian B., his wife
9/27/1918	326	343	A. O. Robbins and Marian B., his wife	Ignatz L. Rosenbaum and Ethel, his wife
10/29/1927	369	555	Ethel Rosenbaum, widow	Margaret Hall/widow
5/8/1942	434	272	Margaret Hall/widow	Flemington National Bank and Trust Company
11/5/42	-	-	Flemington National Bank and Trust Co.	Alfred R. Dorf and Josephine, his wife

153 Main Street

N.J.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Deed Book</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>
No date given-- perhaps prior to 1850	114	693	John G. Reading	Joseph H. Reading
6/1/1859	124	141	Samuel Evans & John C. Hopewell - exrs. of the LW&T of Joseph Reading, dec'd	Charles Tomlinson
4/30/1923	349	480	Willard Parker - adm. with the will annexed of Charles Tomlinson	Joseph Alvater and Annie, his wife
2/24/1926	361	384	Joseph Alvater and Annie, his wife	Robert R. Hall
6/5/1942	-	-	The Sheriff obtained the property	
10/22/1942	-	-	Zeph C. Drumm, Sheriff of the County of Hunterdon	The Flemington National Bank and Trust Company
11/5/1942	-	-	The Flemington National Bank and Trust Company	Alfred R. Dorf and Josephine, his wife

B. Date of Erection: c. 1845.

C. Builder: Mahlon Fisher.

D. Notes on Known Alterations: Minor interior alterations only--the one-story rear wing was remodeled to accommodate modern kitchens (one for each dwelling).

E. Sources of Information:

1. Hunterdon County (New Jersey) Hall of Records. Chain of title extracted from deed books.

2. Secondary and published sources: Plan of Raritan Township - Hunterdon County; Surveyed by N. C. Sidney; published by Richard Clark, 1850. A building owned by J. G. and J. H. Reading and of identical plan and location to the present building appears on the above map.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

10-FLEM

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- A. General Statement: Condition of fabric is excellent.
- B. Technical Description of Exterior
1. Over-all dimensions: Main block, 53'-6" x 35'; rear wing, 18' x 20'; front porch, 10' x 20'.
  2. Number of stories: Three-story front section; one-story rear wing.
  3. Layout, shape: Rectangular main block with one-story rear wing at center and small front porch (plan generally T-shaped).
  4. Wall construction: Frame wall construction with brick nogging, wood clapboard siding painted yellow with white trim and green shutters and doors.
  5. Structural system: Frame construction with joists spanning north-south.
  6. Porches, stoops: Raised front porch two bays wide and one bay deep. Three fluted Doric wood columns across front and three fluted Doric 3/4 engaged wood columns at the building line. Wood entablature with denticulated architrave and simple molded cornice. Frieze decorated with carved wood wreaths (eight across front, three on each side). Access to porch from ground level by divided stair.
  7. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys on both the north and south sides.
  8. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: Two doorways on east elevation (one for each section of the double house). Paneled doors, 2-3/4" thick, flanked by side lights with three-light fixed sash and denticulated architrave above (spanning between the engaged columns). Wood pilasters with carved wood consoles flank the doorway. Modern doorway in the south wall of the rear portion with modern stair to grade. Door to spring house in south wall of rear section at ground level, and door to basement in west wall of main section at ground level. (The door arrangement of the northern dwelling of the double house is identical but reversed.)
    - b. Windows and shutters:

Basement: Four windows on the east elevation, two on each side of the porch, six-over-three light,

double-hung wood sash with plain plank head, no shutters. Two windows on both the north and south elevations (at the corners of the building), six-over-six light set into a shallow well, double-hung wood sash with plain plank head.

First floor: Four windows in the east elevation, two on each side of the porch, six-over-one light, double-hung wood sash with louvered shutters and small wood entablature above (similar in character to porch entablature but with plain frieze). Two windows in both north and south elevations (at the corners of the building), six-over-six light, double-hung wood sash with louvered shutters and no entablature.

Second floor: Six windows on the east elevation (identical to those on the first floor). Second floor arrangement on the north and south elevations is identical to the first floor.

Third floor: Decorative metal grills on frieze (six on east elevation and two on both the north and south elevations) with glass behind; plain three-light wood sash on the west elevation.

9. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Low hipped roof--covering not determined.
- b. Cornice: Large entablature with denticulated architrave and projecting molded cornice. The frieze on both the east and west elevations contains six decorative metal grills, which serve as window openings for the third-floor rooms. Both the north and south elevations have two such grills, which serve the same function.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: (Only the interior of 153 Main Street was investigated. The plan of 151 Main Street is identical but reversed.)

Basement: Two large rooms under main section of the house with a doorway between. Original kitchen with large fireplace and bake oven (now concealed) at west end, with fruit cellar and stair along the north wall. Spring house under rear section with access from the exterior.

First floor: Main hall along north (party) wall extending from front to back of main section with two large rooms to the south. One room in the rear section with access from the main hall. Curving stair to the second floor at the rear of hallway.

Second and third floors: Narrow hall (open to the stair well on the south) along the north (party) wall with two large bedrooms to the south and a bathroom to the east.

2. Stairways: Main stair to the second and third floors is on the south wall to the rear of the hallway; straight run with U-turn and short return. Simple early Victorian railing and balusters with scroll newel and decorative scroll string. Simple straight run stair to basement located under the main stair.

3. Flooring:

Main Hall. First floor, 1-3/4" matched hardwood flooring (over original random width pine).

Basement: Rear room, modern vinyl floor covering; front rooms, modern tile.

Original (random width 5" - 12" tongue-and-groove pine, face nailed) flooring remains throughout the rest of the house.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Modern pine paneling in basement. Painted or papered plaster finish on all remaining wall surfaces.
5. Doorways and doors; Basement: Simple beaded board and batten door to fruit cellar.

First floor: Large doorways with flanking pilasters; richly carved rosettes on doorways in the first-floor hall. Large double doorway with sliding doors (1-3/4" thick, two vertical panels) between the two main first floor rooms.

Second floor: Large doorways, plain Greek Revival trim (no pilasters), two-panel doors.

Third floor: Plain beaded board trim with 1-1/4" thick paneled doors.

6. Decorative features and trim:

First floor: Plaster cornice in two main first floor rooms with deep frieze showing evidence of original plaster wreaths. First floor windows and doorways flanked by flat pilasters with carved capitals. Handsome paneling beneath windows.

7. Hardware: Simple polished metal doorknobs with box locks.

8. Lighting: Modern.
9. Heating: Modern central heating.

D. Site

1. Orientation and general setting: Situated on west side of Main Street. Neighboring buildings were originally residential in nature and have recently been tastefully altered for commercial use.
2. Landscaping: Simple residential landscaping with shrubbery around the foundation walls.

Prepared by John D. Milner, Architect  
National Park Service  
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