

Mauricetown Academy
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
118 High Street
Mauricetown
Cumberland County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1152

HABS
NJ
6-MAUR,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MAURICETOWN ACADEMY

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Location: 118 High Street, Mauricetown, Cumberland County, New Jersey

Significance: This late nineteenth-century vernacular Classical Revival-style school building is, in form and material, a common type throughout South Jersey.

Description: This two-story, gable-roof, front-facing frame building is a type found throughout South Jersey, especially for schools and churches. The three-bay wide and three-bay deep rectangular block is on a masonry foundation. Fenestration is six-over-six-light double-hung wood sash in wood frames. A projecting pediment and continuous cornice with dentil molding define the roofline; a semi-lune window is in the pediment. The main gable-end entry is composed of double, paneled doors set into a molded frame with architrave. A secondary door on the side facade is on the second floor; this is accessed by a set of steep, narrow stairs.

Inside, there is one room on each floor. In interior stairway between the floors is in the front-left corner; the front-right, second-floor corner contains a small bathroom.

History: Built in 1860. Almost every small, South Jersey town contained its own school. There were five in Cumberland County (excluding Millville) built between 1870-76. Greenwich, Dividing Creek, Fairton, and others had one each, some erected like this, around the Civil War.

Prior to the 1880s when the oyster industry boomed in Port Norris, Mauricetown (pronounced *Morris-town*) was the largest and most active center in Commercial Township. In 1780 Luke Mattox bought acreage, constructed a dock, and called the area Mattox's Landing. He and others shipped cord wood and lumber from the wharves along the river. In 1814 the Compton brothers bought land here, platted out a town, sold lots, and erected houses. By then it was called Mauricetown, due to its riverside location, and as such became the home to several shipyards. One of the first belonged to Joseph W. Vannaman and the captains of ocean-going schooners. The latter dealt some in the oyster trade, though they were more likely to have been associated with shipping lumber and other goods.

In the mid to late nineteenth century, Mauricetown was known for its population of wealthy sea captains whose well-preserved Italianate houses parallel the river on Front Street. Today, the collection of dwellings, churches, and a school are uninterrupted by modern intrusions. Mauricetown warrants listing as a National Register of Historic Places district.

Sources: Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991.

Project Information: The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, Director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Kimberly R. Sebold (University of Delaware). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.