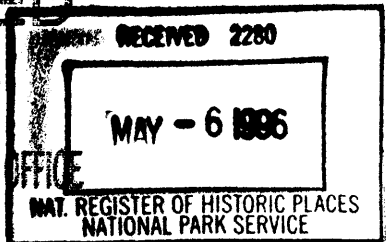


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OCT 27 1995

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Riegel Ridge Community Center

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number County Route 519 NA  not for publication

city or town Holland Township  vicinity

state NJ code 034 county Hunterdon code 019 zip code 08848

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official/Title

4/24/96  
Date

Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper

6/7/96  
Date of Action

Edson A. Beall  
Entered in the  
National Register.

Riegel Ridge  
Name of Property

Hunterdon, NJ  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
		sites
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
		objects
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & culture/sports facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete block

walls stone

wood

roof slate

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Riegel Ridge  
Name of Property

Hunterdon, NJ  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** N/A  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/recreation

Architecture

Social history

**Period of Significance**

1938-45

**Significant Dates**

1938

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Riegel, Benjamin DeWitt

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Rogers, James Gamble

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Riegel Ridge  
Name of Property

Hunterdon, NJ  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 22 approx. Frenchtown Quad

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	490280	4495420
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	18	490360	4495140
Zone	Easting	Northing	

3	18	490140	4495080
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	18	490080	4495200
Zone	Easting	Northing	

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

5 1 8 4 8 9 8 4 0 4 4 9 5 1 0 0  
6 1 8 4 8 9 8 4 0 4 4 9 5 2 2 0

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Dennis N. Bertland

organization Dennis Bertland Associates date October, 1995

street & number P. O. Box 11 telephone 908-689-6356

city or town Port Murray state NJ zip code 08765

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Township of Holland

street & number 61 Church Road telephone 908-995-4847

city or town Milford state NJ zip code 08848

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 7 Page 1

Occupying an approximately 23-acre property on the southern crest of Musconetcong Mountain in Holland Township, the Riegel Ridge Community Center encompasses a large, Colonial Revival community house erected in 1937-38, a baseball field and grandstand built around the same time, and a large swimming pool with adjoining pool house installed in 1955. A fieldstone gateway demarks the entrance to the property from which a paved driveway, passing to the north of the grandstand and athletic fields, extends about 400 yards to the community house. From the park-like grounds of the community house terraced lawns descend southwards to the pool complex. (photo #s 1-3, 10 & 36)

Community House

Designed by noted New York architect James Gamble Rogers, the community house evokes the region's early domestic architecture in its linear, asymmetrical massing, stone and wood siding, and simple detailing. The Colonial Revival building has been subject to relatively minor alterations, especially on the exterior, and retains much of its original appearance and fabric. It consists of a large, 5-bay, 2-story main block and a slightly lower and narrower, 5-bay, 2 and 1/2-story west wing, both of which have gable roofs and small gable-end appendages. The walls of the main block and the hipped roof extension to its east are constructed of coursed rubble fieldstone over concrete block. On the main block's gables, the masonry is carried up into paired chimney stacks connected by parapets which conceal the roof's flat, truncated ridge. The first story of the west wing is also stone faced, and the wing's internal chimney has a large stone stack. The frame upper stories of the wing and the shed-roofed, 1-story appendage on its west end are clad with hand-split wood shingles. The main block and wing retain slate roofs; those of the building's appendages have been replaced with asphalt shingles. (photo #s 3-10)

The north side of the community house is its front elevation, and, as do the other facades, exhibits a largely regular fenestration pattern. The multi-pane sash windows (now mostly covered with plywood as a security measure) have architrave trim. Five large 20/20 sash windows light the first story of the main block. The corresponding ground-story windows, entirely below grade, originally opened into small wells; they have been blocked up and the wells filled in. The west wing's windows feature 8/8 and 16/8 sashes and retain shutter hinges and decorative shutter dogs (several of the removed paneled shutters survive). A gabled, 1 and 1/2-story bay

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 7 Page 2

projecting from the west end of the north facade is balanced by a small, stone-faced, gabled entry porch at the north end of the main block's hipped extension. The entry, reach by one step, has a 6-panel door and narrow molded trim. The building's main entry, however, is from a shed-roofed porch (now enclosed with aluminum-framed glass doors and windows) extending along the north front of the west wing between the main block and the projecting bay. This entry's sidelights and aluminum-framed glass doors are recent replacements. Both the main block and wing feature molded cornices with built-in gutters and small gable returns. A hipped dormer with slate-clad side walls breaks the west roof slope of the wing's gabled projecting bay. (photo #s 3-5)

The south facade of the building resembles the north front with several notable differences. The main block's ground story, more fully above grade than on the north side, has five window bays, of which the center bay has been converted into an entry with modern, hollow core door. There is an enclosed gabled entry porch on the south end of the hipped extension corresponding to the one on the north side. Because of the change in grade, however, it has a ground story, and a flight of dog-leg-turned stone steps are required to reach the first-story entry. Instead of a projecting bay, the south side of the wing has a shed-roofed, 1-story extension with an open porch to its east continuing the shed roof line. The porch has attenuated Tuscan columns and a flagstone-paved floor. From the porch two steps descend to a wide, stone-paved, stone-walled terrace which wraps around the southwest corner of the building. A short flight of stone steps leads from the terrace to the lawn, and aligned with these steps, an off-center entry on the south wall of the wing opens onto the porch. The entry has 6-panel double doors and multi-pane sidelights and transom. Transomed, multi-pane, French double doors centered on the south side of the shed appendage open onto the terrace. Three small hip-roofed dormers pierce the south slope of the wing's roof. (photo #s 6-9)

The east and west ends of the building are quite simply detailed. The east side of the hipped extension has four regularly spaced 20/20 sash windows, one of which retains a fixed louver, and small sash windows pierce side walls of both gabled entry porches. The west wing's west gable features a lunette window, below which are three 8/8 sash windows, the central one flanked by narrower 4/4 sashes creating a tripartite effect. The east upper window retains its paneled shutters. The wing's west gable-end appendage has a small service entrance near the south end of its

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

NJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
Center

Section number 7 Page 3

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west side. The entry has a shed-roofed, 1-bay porch which, originally open with square posts and lattice side screens, has been enclosed. The main block and wing roofs have gable flush eaves with bead-edged raking boards. (photo #s 6 & 10)

While subject to more alterations than the exterior has been, the interior of the building preserves its original floor plan and much of its original character. A gymnasium/auditorium occupies the first story of the main block with the stage and dressing rooms in the east appendage and a former bowling alley and game room on the ground story below. The first story of the west wing features a lobby (which originally extended the full depth of the building) with a small foyer proying access to the gynasium and paired staircases to the east and a large lounge and smaller cafeteria to the west, beyond which a kitchen and service areas occupy the west appendage. The ground story of the wing contains locker and shower rooms for both men and women, a modern sauna, weight room, furnace room, and several storage rooms. A small staircase in the southwest corner connects the ground story to the service area above. The second story of the wing encompasses several small offices and a projection room opening from a corridor at its east end and a large staff apartment to the west which also has access to the first story by means of a secondary staircase descending to the service area below. From the east cooridor another staircase ascends to the attic floor which contains one long, narrow, finished room. (photo #s 11-33)

Although a number of changes have been made to the interior of the community center over the years, the most extensive renovations occurred in 1980 when the ground story and portions of the first story were remodeled. The main block's ground story retains the wooden floor of the bowling alley area, but what was originally one large room has been subdivided into two smaller rooms on the north with a long, relatively narrow area to the south. While the concrete block perimeter walls largely remain uncovered by modern finishes, drop ceilings have been installed throughout, concealing the steel I-beams supporting the floor above which originally were exposed to view. The remodeling of the locker and shower rooms in the west wing was evidently part of the 1980 work, as was the installation of the sauna. These areas are characterised by drop ceilings, sheet rock or panel walls, linoleum or concrete floors, and hollow core wooden doors with plain trim. Earlier finishes may remain in places beneath the modern work, especially on perimeter walls and ceilings. (photo #s 11-13)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

NJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
Center

Section number 7 Page 4

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The paired staircases at the east end of the wing which rise from the ground floor to the first story, and in the case of the south staircase continue up to the second floor, are of utilitarian, "fire proof" design. They are constructed with steel, I-beam string boards, concrete treads and metal risers, and an iron railing. The latter has square newel posts and spindles and round railings. The walls of the stairwells are exposed concrete block. The enclosed apartments stairs feature wooden steps and risers and a simple handrail attached to the wall. (photo #s 22-23 & 31)

The first story retains much more of its original character than does the ground story. The gymnasium/auditorium features a hardwood floor, lined for various court games, and concrete block walls, articulated by a string course which serves as a sill for the windows and above which the walls are covered with sheet paneling. The windows have architrave trim, and radiators are set into the wall below each one of them. The roof is supported by four steel trusses which are exposed to view. Batten insulation has been installed beneath the roof, and the segmentally arched stage proscenium has been walled up. The stage and its curtain hoist, however, remain intact. Doorways flanking the stage provide access to the backstage area, as well as the two vestibules. The north doorway retains a wide surround with molded edge, but has lost its door. The south doorway evidently was widened to comply with code requirements. While the north dressing room and the steps leading to it are intact, those to the south have been removed. Partitions have been installed on the stage creating a small room. The storage areas for scenery and athletic equipment behind the stage also remain. (photo #s 14 & 15)

In the 1980 renovations, the main lobby was partitioned creating a small office along its east side with a U-shaped reception desk to its front replacing the original information desk. Aluminum-framed glass doors and wall panels were incorporated into this partition, and matching doors and panels were installed in the doorways leading to the cafeteria, gymnasium foyer, and gymnasium, as well as to enclose the two staircases flanking the foyer. Associated alterations include the installation of drop ceilings, sheet paneling, and carpeting in the lobby, cafeteria, and kitchen. Serving hatches on the cafeteria's south and west walls have been removed, the latter replaced by a door. A small restroom was installed in the area behind the south serving hatch and an adjoining closet. Despite these changes, these rooms retain much original



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 7 Page 5

fabric including baseboards, architrave door trim, several panel doors, trimless window surrounds, chair rails in the lobby, and vinyl tile flooring in the service hall off the kitchen. The cafeteria had a similar floor which probably survives intact under the carpeting as may other early floor, wall and ceiling finishes in these rooms. (photo #s 16-17 & 20-21)

A bronze plaque installed on the wall of the lobby c. 1980 is inscribed "In recognition of the Riegel Family for services to the community center under the leadership of Benjamin DeWitt Riegel whose vision brought this facility into being in 1938, his wife Mrs. Benjamin DeWitt Riegel for the swimming pool in 1955 and to John L. Riegel for continued faith through major renovations in 1980."

Of the wing's first story rooms, the lounge is the most architecturally impressive and intact. The large square room features random width flooring, plaster walls above "knotty-pine," horizontal-board wainscot, and a plaster ceiling with two exposed "beams" (presumably steel I-beams which have been encased with pine boards). The north wall, covered with vertical, "knotty-pine" sheathing above the wainscot, is dominated by a large stone fireplace with herringbone-patterned brick back wall and simply molded mantel shelf. The door and window trim matches that of the other first-story rooms, and all woodwork retains its original cherry stain. The eight-branch brass chandelier whose light sockets resemble oil lamps with glass chimneys also are original, as are the matching wall sconces and probably the fireplace's elaborate wrought iron andirons. (photo #s 18 & 19)

The main block's second story also presents a mix of original and modern finishes. Original features include most of the apartment and hall partitions, hardwood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, panel doors, architrave door and window trim, and baseboards. An early alteration occurring before June 1941 (as it was described June 14, 1941 issue of the Spotlite, the center's newsletter) was the partitioning of a room adjoining the director's office at the north end of the east corridor into a small office for the assistant director and a dark room. The projection rooms to the east of the corridor retain a small hatch with sliding glass window through which movies could be projected onto a screen on the auditorium stage. These rooms, however, were used principally for printing the community center newsletter and other materials on a mimeograph machine, and the built-in shelves and cupboards probably were

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 7 Page 6

installed in conjunction with that use. What are now two small offices at the south end of the corridor were originally the ladies' rest room and adjoining lavatory. Sometime after 1958, possibly during the 1980 renovations, the plumbing fixtures were removed from the latter room. Sheet paneling has been installed on the walls of these two rooms and in several places in the apartment. Modern florescent light ceiling fixtures are present throughout much of the second story. The long, narrow attic room was designed as a craft workshop and has built-in shelves and cupboards above drop leaf work tables along the two side walls. Four brass chandeliers with "candle" sockets, probably removed from elsewhere in the building, are stored there. (photo #s 24-33)

Site features and grounds

Sloping gently southward from the crest of Musconetcong Mountain, the Riegel Ridge property was terraced to provide level areas for development. From the entrance gates, the driveway runs along the northern edge of the property, past several athletic fields, to the community house in front of which it encircles large ovoid island and passes on to parking areas to the east of the building which extend southwards towards the swimming pool. The expansive lawns surrounding the community house are planted with large trees and mature shrubs. The terraced lawns to south are quite open, providing expansive views of the countryside. The more wooded area to the north served as a picnic grove and features a fieldstone barbecue grill in the middle of the island. Individual site features are discussed in more detail below.

1. Entrance gateway

Flanking the driveway entrance to the property is a pair of square piers constructed of coursed rubble fieldstone with stepped stone caps which support large, wrought iron, electric lanterns. Square in section, the lanterns have C-scroll bases, a trapezoidal glass lights on each face, and pyramidal caps with squat finials. Low stone walls extend outward for some distance from each pier. The gateway, presumably built c. 1938, is a contributing resource. (photo # 1)

2. Grandstand and baseball field

Evidently erected in time for the 1938 baseball season, the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

NJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
Center

Section number 7 Page 7

grandstand is a frame structure, semi-hexagonal in plan, consisting of three seating sections. The rear walls are sheathed with board and batten siding and pierced by a number of window and door openings. The low-pitched shed roof, covered with asphalt shingles, is supported by heavy timber posts at both ends and intermediate interior posts. Simple wooden benches serve as the seating, beneath which are storage areas and team rooms. Adjoining both ends of the structure are low, concrete block dug outs. The grandstand is a contributing resource. (photo #s 2, 33-34)

3. Outbuilding

Standing a short distance northeast of the community center is a small rustic frame outbuilding or storage shed which presumably dates to c. 1940. It has "split-log" siding and its gable roof is clad with wood singles. One of the gable-end windows is fitted with a wooden louver, the other two are covered with plywood which may replace similar louvers. The shed is a contributing resource. (photo #33)

4. Swimming pool and pool house

Constructed in 1955 on a level terrace at the south end of the property, the large swimming pool is trapezoidal in shape with concrete perimeter decking. The pool house adjoining to the east is a long, 1-story, concrete block building with a low-pitched hip roof. A gabled entrance pavilion and porch are centered on the west side, and a clerestory window band encircles the walls below the roof eaves. It was design by the New York firm of Adams and Woodbridge, according to a floor plan drawing dated May 5, 1955. Because of their construction date, the pool and pool house must be considered as non-contributing resources. (photo #36)

5. Barbecue grill

Constructed of fieldstone c. 1940, the grill consists of a fire box or hearth, open to the front for tending the fire and on top for the grill, and a small chimney with raked shoulders. The barbecue grill is a contributing resource.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 8 Page 1

Built in 1937-38 by the Riegel Paper Corporation as a recreational and social center for the employees of its four northwestern New Jersey mills, the Riegel Ridge Community Center is significant under Criteria A, B and C. Exemplifying the voluntary efforts made by many employers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to improve the life of their workers (thus, hopefully, ensuring a better, more loyal and cooperative work force), Riegel Ridge was not only a resounding success for the company, greatly used and enjoyed by its employees and their families, but became an important community institution for the surrounding rural neighborhood. One individual can be credited with the creation of the center, Benjamin D. Riegel, Chairman of the Board of the Riegel Paper Corporation since 1921 and a progressive industrialist, who, having established such a facility at the South Carolina cotton mill developed by him in the early 1900s, convinced the Riegel Paper directors to undertake a similar project in New Jersey. The Riegel Ridge Community Center also has architectural significance. Designed by prominent New York architect James Gamble Rogers, who achieved distinction with his eclectic, revival style work during the first half of the 20th-century, the Colonial Revival community house is a sophistication evocation of the region's early domestic architecture.

At the dedication ceremony for the Riegel Ridge Community Center in 1938, Benjamin D. Riegel was praised as the originator of the idea of building the center by his cousin John L. Riegel, president of the Riegel Paper Corporation.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps inspired by the example of his father and grandfather, Benjamin DeWitt Riegel (1878-1941) appears to have had a strongly rooted sense of paternalism and philanthropic family heritage. His grandfather John L. Riegel (1819-93), the founder of Riegel Paper's predecessor the Warren Manufacturing Company in 1873, sought to improve Riegelsville, the community where he lived and his oldest mill was located, by the establishment of an academy and library. His father Benjamin Riegel (1846-1918), who had sole management of the company for a few years after John L. Riegel's death, was described as a "particularly kind and lovable man" who was remembered by employees many years later with "affection and regard."<sup>2</sup> Historians of Ware Shoals, the South Carolina mill town developed by Benjamin D. Riegel, noted that one of his most outstanding characteristics was

his compassionate concern for the employees who helped build the Ware Shoals and Trion [Georgia] complexes. Therefore, as the industries expanded, he saw to it

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

NJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
Center

Section number 8 Page 2

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that comforts, conveniences, and enrichments of the communities kept pace.<sup>3</sup>

Like his grandfather, Benjamin D. Riegel was an industrial entrepreneur. Shortly after graduating from Lehigh University at the age of twenty he purchased a paper bag factory in Jersey City, New Jersey and in 1905 acquired the nascent Ware Shoals Manufacturing Company. Moving to South Carolina to oversee the construction of the new cotton factory at Ware Shoals, he became president of the company and founded what has been described as "one of the most complete mill-town developments of the South."<sup>4</sup> Although he lived there only for two years, Benjamin Riegel's interest in the improvement of the community was varied and long lasting. His efforts ranged from the establishment of a model dairy farm in 1916-18 to supply milk for the families of the mill workers to the construction of a recreational and educational center in 1912-13. Named Katherine Hall after his only child, the three-story building housed a movie theatre, library, pool room, bowling alley, lodge and club rooms, and bathing rooms for both men and women, a special "object of pride" for the community. In 1922 the facility was expanded with the addition of a swimming pool. Upon observing efforts to grade an athletic field near the Ware Shoals school while visiting there in 1933, he immediately became interested and took charge of the project, contributing the money and materials necessary to build a stadium and field house.<sup>5</sup>

During his own remarks at the 1938 dedication ceremony for the Riegel Ridge center, Benjamin Riegel, according to press accounts, expressed "his gratitude to his fellow workers for their loyalty" and observed

that one prime factor in the success of his company, was the fine spirit of cooperation from the employees through all these years, which is equally appreciated by them, he thought.<sup>6</sup>

Another speaker, general superintendent and vice president George L. Bidwell, was quoted as "humorously remark[ing] that he wanted the employees 'to play and enjoy themselves but not to play at their work'."<sup>7</sup> The principal address that day was given by Hunterdon County prosecutor C. Lloyd Fisher, who in speaking of past and present threats to the nation's liberties observed

that so long as employer and employee joined together

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 8 Page 3

in common interest as had been done in developing Riegel Ridge, America would be safe.<sup>8</sup>

The construction of a recreational center by the Riegel Paper Corporation for its employees, as well as the earlier efforts of Benjamin D. Riegel in South Carolina, was typical of the activities, known collectively as "welfare work," undertaken by employers for their workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in response to such factors as the growing size of the factory work force, "the impersonal quality of labor-management relations," and the threat of labor unrest. Welfare work was

based on the belief that voluntary efforts by employers to improve the lot of the workman encouraged individual self-betterment, loyalty, and cooperation -that they inspired the employee to become a better person and a better worker.<sup>9</sup>

While Benjamin Riegel's compassion and gratitude towards his employees were, no doubt, heartfelt, such efforts as his for the betterment of his workers were increasingly seen after 1900 as more than just time honored paternalistic and philanthropic gestures, but as sound investments in business success.

Welfare work encompassed a wide variety of activities ranging from the provision of recreational and educational facilities, the construction of sanitary housing and other components of "model" factory towns, and the improvement of the work place environment to the institution of profit sharing, pension, health care, and other benefit programs. Libraries, social halls, and recreational facilities established by employers became increasing common in late 19th-century America, and after 1900 were the most typical employee benefit provided by manufacturers with plants in rural locations where such amenities were often non-existent. An early example in rural southern New Jersey was the construction of a "men's club house complete with gym, bathroom, club room, library, and auditorium" by the Whital-Tatum Company, glass manufacturers, at Millville around 1880.<sup>10</sup> In a somewhat more urbanizing area of central New Jersey, the brick making company of Sayre and Fisher erected a library, the Sayre and Fisher Reading Room, for their workers in 1883.<sup>11</sup> In northwestern New Jersey, however, the provision of such facilities by employers for their work force appears to have been unknown before the construction of the Riegel Ridge Community Center.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 8 Page 4

At the Riegel Ridge dedication ceremony, Benjamin Riegel spoke of the conception of the project and how its development had occurred in "but a few months."<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, newspaper accounts of his remarks did not elaborate, and surprisingly little information about the planning and construction of the facility has come to light. The project must have been authorized by the Riegel Board of Directors before the spring of 1937, since on April 1st. of that year Gorge Bidwell (the general plant superintendent) purchased the center's site, a 143-acre farm on the southern crest of Musconetcong Mountain in Holland Township.<sup>13</sup> The conveyance was reported by the local paper along with the rumor that "the purpose was to make a golf course and use it as a club resort."<sup>14</sup> While the idea may have been Benjamin Riegel's, George Bidwell evidently was responsible for the successful completion of the project, which included besides the community center a lodge elsewhere on the property for corporate officials and their guests (the stone, Colonial Revival lodge is a separate parcel in private ownership). Bidwell not only chose the location of the community center but "put his untiring efforts in[to] planning and constructing the building."<sup>15</sup> Construction drawings for the project were produced by the firm of Jas. Gamble Rogers, Architect, during the second half of 1937, and the earliest of the extant drawings appears to be a survey map, dated August 17th., depicting the location of the community house on its present site.<sup>16</sup> While the property was transferred from Bidwell to the Riegel Paper Corporation on November 11, 1935, exactly when construction began is unknown. Work appears to have been underway by the winter of 1938, and both the community house and the baseball field evidently were completed by the time of the dedication ceremony in early June of that year.<sup>17</sup>

The involvement of James Gamble Rogers in the project was probably due to Benjamin Riegel who lived in New York City, where the corporate offices of the Riegel Paper were located, and in Southport, Connecticut. The two men belonged to several of the same New York clubs, and Riegel may well have been personally acquainted with Rogers besides being aware of his professional reputation and perhaps familiar with his work. Mrs. Riegel may have influenced the selection of an architect since, according to her daughter Mrs. Emory, she was particularly interested in architecture and building.<sup>18</sup> How directly Rogers was engaged in the design of the community center is unknown. While his firm was one of the largest in the country and the extant drawings bear the initials of other firm members, Rogers actively participated in design work until his

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number   8   Page   5  death.<sup>19</sup>

A Kentucky native and graduate of both Columbia and Yale Universities as well as the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, James Gamble Rogers (1867-1947) established his own architectural firm in New York in 1906, after several years in Chicago. First attracting national recognition with his design for the New Haven, Connecticut post office in 1911, he "became one of the most adept and creative of a group of American architects designing in the eclectic style."<sup>20</sup> His subsequent commissions included many important projects around the country. Among the most notable in the New York area were Yale University's Memorial Quadrangle, Sterling Memorial Library, Law School, and School of Graduate Studies, and six residential colleges; Low Library at Columbia University; and the nearby Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in upper Manhattan. In addition to such institutional commissions, he also designed office buildings and many large private residences.<sup>21</sup> Roger's architectural approach has been described by critic Paul Goldberger as romantic conservatism:

[Rogers] sought not to challenge established taste but to follow it. He was deeply committed to what we might call the corporate design process, and it was his remarkable gift to have been able to make the creation of highly romantic, sensual buildings a part of that process. It was a process based on loose associations styles contained, and on the overall romantic appeal of historicist architecture much more, really, than on the pull off of any specific style.<sup>22</sup>

The design of the Riegel Ridge Community Center clearly reflects this approach. While efficiently accomodating the modern use program of Roger's corporate client, the building evokes the region's early domestic architecture in a romantic, non-academic manner through a simple, but sophisticated use of massing, materials, and detailing. Such an approach would appear to have appealed to the sensibilities of a client like Benjamin Riegel, a successful and progressive businessman whose family and business ties to the area were of several generations standing.

The dedication ceremony held on June 4, 1938 certainly was a harbinger of the community center's success. Despite rain, the event attracted around 3,000 people, many of whom crowded into the gymnasium to witness the program which in addition to several



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 8 Page 6

speeches and the presentation of life membership cards to Benjamin D. Riegel and his wife included band music, hymn singing, and an indoor flag raising ceremony. After the dedication, the first baseball game was held on the new field. Later that evening, members enjoyed dancing and inaugurated the indoor recreational facilities.<sup>23</sup>

Membership in the community center was open to all employees of Riegel Paper's four local mills for a nominal yearly fee of \$2.<sup>24</sup> The center was run by a small staff under the management of a resident director responsible to the company's general superintendent. Staff salaries and the center's operating costs were paid by Riegel Paper. A general supervisory committee consisted of eight individuals elected by employees of the four mills from among themselves, plus two staff members: the director and the newsletter editor who served as secretary. The General Committee had a variety of duties and responsibilities including formulating policy for such matters as membership, rules and discipline, instituting programs and activities, developing fund raising and publicity, and overseeing building and grounds.<sup>25</sup>

From the first, Riegel Ridge offered an ambitious variety of programs and activities run by the staff and several members committees. In addition to indoor and outdoor athletics, of which baseball and bowling were the most popular, a dramatic group was formed which produced several plays, craft and dances classes were organized as were men and women's choral groups and a bridge club. Particularly popular were the dances, for both ballroom and square dancing, held periodically throughout the year. Educational programs for adults and children also were offered. Of the many children's activities, perhaps the most successful were winter and summer camping programs. A newsletter the Spotlite was published to chronicle and promote the activities of the center, as well as other matters of interest to the Riegel community. While not all of the activities and programs were popular, use of the center by Riegel employees and their families and guests was widespread. The center provided recreational, social, and educational opportunities not readily available to the inhabitants of rural areas at the end of the Depression, and became a focus of community interest and pride in northwestern Hunterdon County.<sup>26</sup>

After World War II, tax considerations led to the incorporation of the Riegel Community Foundation by the Riegel Paper Corporation, and the property was transferred to the Foundation which

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetNJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
CenterSection number 8 Page 7

opened membership to all residents of the surrounding community. The facility continued to be supported by the Riegel Corporation and family.<sup>27</sup> In 1955, the swimming pool and pool house were constructed through the generosity of Mrs. Benjamin Riegel. The non-profit Foundation owned and operated the center until 1970 when, reduced in size to about twelve acres, the property was sold to the WMCA.<sup>28</sup> Major renovations were undertaken by the WMCA in 1980, made possible by support from John L. Riegel. Citing operating costs, the YMCA closed the center in 1994, and in the following year sold the what remained of property to the Township of Holland (the baseball field had been purchased by the Township some years earlier) who hopes to reopen it for the use of the local community.<sup>29</sup> In recognition of the historical importance of the Riegel Ridge Community Center, Township officials have sponsored this nomination.

Footnotes

1. "Riegel Ridge Coporation Dedicates Its Community Center Saturday, June 4," The Milford Leader, June 9, 1938, page 1.
2. Walton Advertising & Printing Company (ed.), Fifty Years of Paper Making - A Brief History of the Origin, Development and Present Status of the Warren Manufacturing Company 1873 -1923, The Warren Manufacturing Company, 1923, pp. 9 & 12-14.
3. From Hill to Dale to Hollow - Ware Shoals, South Carolina, Ware Shoals, South Carolina: Town Appointed Publishing Committee, 1983, page 98.
4. Ibid; Fifty Years of Paper Making, page 33.
5. From Hill to Dale, pp. 4 & 26.
6. "Riegel Ridge Dedication Attracts Large Gathering," Easton Express, June 6, 1938, page 1.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Daniel Nelson, Managers and Workers - Origins of the New

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

NJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
Center

Section number 8 Page 8

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Factory System in the United States 1880-1920. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975, page 101.

10. Ibid., pp. 102 & 117.

11. "Sayre and Fisher Reading Room," National Register nomination, September 12, 1979.

12. "Riegel Ridge Dedication Attracts Large Gathering," Easton Express, June 6, 1938, page 1.

13. Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 413, page 344.

14. "Around Home," The Milford Leader, April 1, 1938, page 1.

15. Spotlite, May 29, 1940, page 4.

16. "Community Building for the Riegel Paper Co. Jas. Gamble Rogers, Architect. 156 East 46 Street, New York City," Various design and construction drawings including plans, elevations, and details, various dates in 1937.

17. Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 413, page 344; Interviews with Frank Stull, Summer, Fall 1995; "Riegel Ridge Coporation Dedicates Its Community Center Saturday, June 4," The Milford Leader, June 9, 1938, page 1.

18. "James G. Rogers, Architect, Is Dead," The New York Times, October 2, 1947; "Benjamin Riegel, Maker of Paper," The New York Times, November 7, 1941; Interview with Katherine Riegel Emory (Mrs. German H. H.), October 23, 1995; Interview with William Riegel, October 20, 1995.

19. "James G. Rogers, Architect, Is Dead," The New York Times, October 2, 1947; Edward T. James, (ed.), Dictionary of American Biography - Supplement Three, 1941-1945, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973, page 697.

20. Ibid. and Adolf K. Placzek, (chief ed.), Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1982, page 602.

21. Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

NJ, Hunterdon County,  
Riegel Ridge Community  
Center

Section number 8 Page 9

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22. Patricia D. Pierce, Sparing No Detail - The Drawings of James Gamble Rogers for Yale University, 1913-1935, New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, February, 1982, pp. 1 & 2.

23. "Riegel Ridge Coporation Dedicates Its Community Center Saturday, June 4," The Milford Leader, June 9, 1938, page 1; "Riegel Ridge Dedication Attracts Large Gathering," Easton Express, June 6, 1938, page 1.

24. "Riegel Ridge Coporation Dedicates Its Community Center Saturday, June 4," The Milford Leader, June 9, 1938, page 1.

25. Spotlite, May 29, 1940, page 19 & June 14, 1941, page 24.

26. Spotlite, May 29, 1940, pp. 7-8, 39 & 59 and June 14, 1941, page 51.

27. Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 471, page 405; Interview with Frank Stull, Summer, Fall, 1995; Interview with William Riegel, October 20, 1995; "Pool House, Riegel Ridge Community Center. Adams and Woodbridge, Architects. 204 East 39th Street, New York City," Floor plan drawing dated 1995.

28. Hunterdon County Deeds, Book 471, page 405;

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

N. J. Hunterdon County

Riegel Ridge Community Center

Section number 9 Page 1

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Katherine Riegel Emory (Mrs. German H. H.), daughter of Benjamin DeWitt Riegel, October 23, 1995.

William Riegel, son of John L. Riegel and cousin of Benjamin DeWitt Riegel, October 20, 1995.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

N. J. Hunterdon County  
Riegel Ridge Community Center

Section number 9 Page 2

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Frank Stull, son of George W. Stull and grandson of Sidney Stull,  
Riegel Co. employees, various dates summer and fall in 1995.

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"Community Building for the Riegel Paper Co. Jas. Gamble Rogers, Architect. 156 East 46 Street, New York City." Various design and construction drawings including plans, elevations, and details, various dates in 1937.

"Pool House, Riegel Ridge Community Center. Adams and Woodbridge, Architects. 204 East 39th Street, New York City." Floor plan drawing dated 1995.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

N. J. Hunterdon County  
Riegel Ridge Community Center

## Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of nominated property are those of the two contiguous lots (block 6, lots 2 and 2.01) on which the resources associated with the Riegel Ridge Community Center are located and which are in the public ownership of the Township of Holland. The boundary line follows the perimeter of the two adjoining lots as depicted on the attached map.

## Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property encompasses the two contiguous lots (block 6, lots 2 and 2.01) on which the resources associated with the Riegel Ridge Community Center are located and which are owned by the Township of Holland. It is the remainder of the property originally purchased by the Riegel Paper Corporation for the facility in 1938. The other lands have been subdivided and sold over the years. Single family residential subdivisions adjoin the nominated property on the north and south, but are not visible from the site. The area to the east remains heavily wooded.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

N. J. Hunterdon County  
Riegel Ridge Community Center

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photo ID \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

Photographic Identification:

The following information is the same for all of the photographs submitted with the nomination:

Name: Riegel Ridge Community Center  
Location: Holland Township, Hunteon County, NJ  
Photographer: Dennis Bertland  
Date of photographs: Spring 1995  
Negative repository: Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission  
Holland Township Municipal Building  
61 Church Road  
Milford, NJ 08848

Subject & direction of view:

#1	gateway	SE view
#2	ball field	SE view
#3	community center	SE view
#4	west wing	South view
#5	main block	SE view
#6	comunity center	NW view
#7	main block	NE view
#8	west wing	NW view
#9	"	NE view
#10	south lawn	West view
#11	ground story, bowling area	East view
#12	ground story, south room	West view
#13	ground story, locker room	West view
#14	gymnasium	SE view
#15	"	NW view
#16	lobby	SE view
#17	"	NW view
#18	lounge	NE view
#19	"	SE view
#20	cafeteria	West view
#21	kitchen	East view
#22	south staircase	South view
#23	"	South view
#24	second story hall	SW view
#25	second story office	SW view
#26	projection room	East view



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

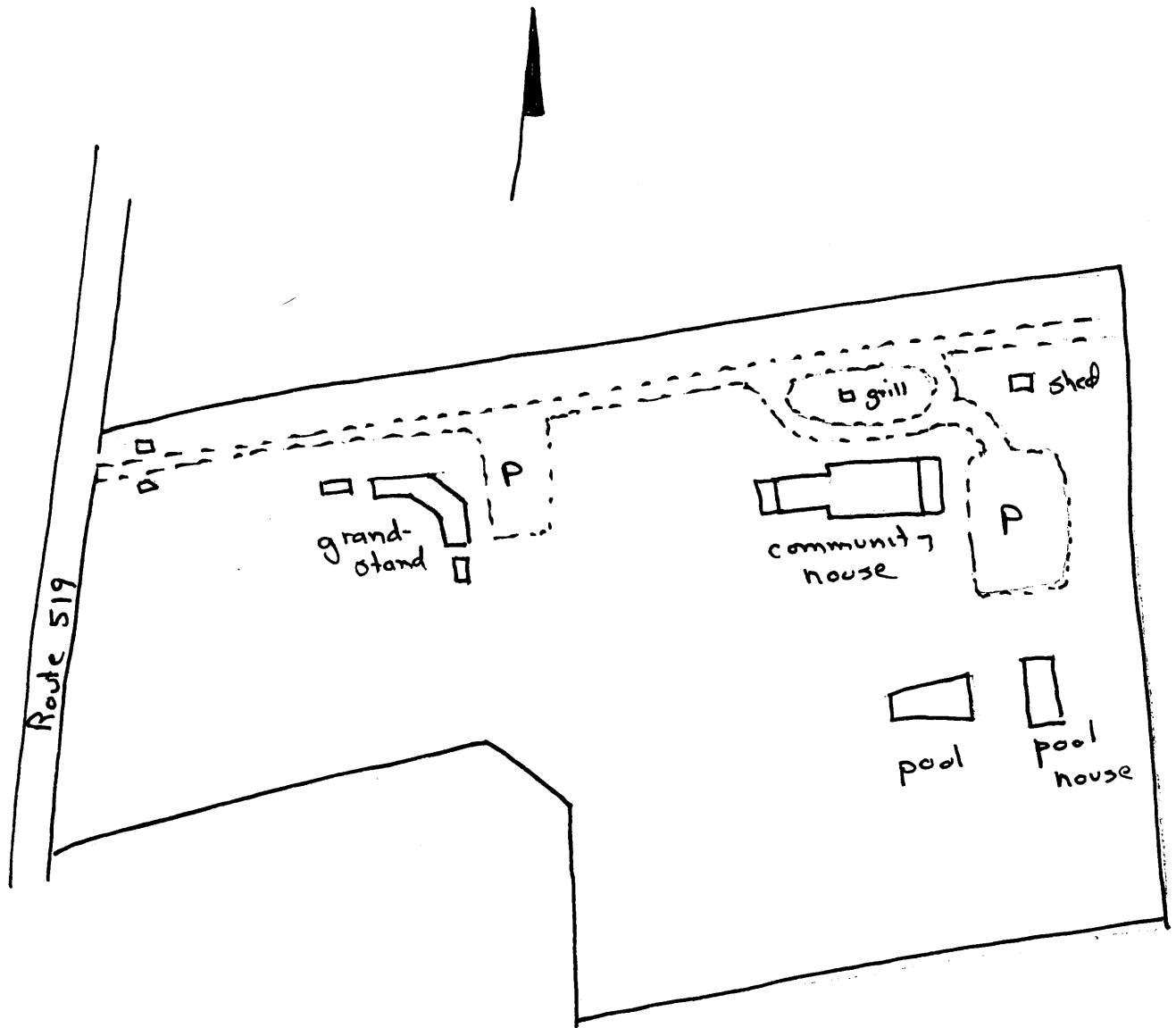
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

N. J. Hunterdon County  
Riegel Ridge Community Center

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photo ID \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2

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#27	apartment kitchen	SE view
#28	" living room	SW view
#29	" dining room	NW view
#30	" bed room	NW view
#31	service stairs	West view
#32	Attic craft room	West view
#33	grandstand	NE view
#34	"	SE view
#35	outbuilding	NE view
#36	pool & pool house	SE view



# Riegel Ridge Community Center

Sketch site plan  
(not to scale)

Hunterdon County, NJ

THE FACILITIES OF RIEGEL RIDGE (continued)

is the entrance to the cafeteria of which we will say more about later. On the right hand wall is the Honor Roll of Riegel Paper Corporation along with pictures of the four New Jersey mills. Hanging on the left wall is a painting and various safety awards.

As already mentioned, leading off from the lobby is the cafeteria. Originally, when the Ridge first opened, this cafeteria served lunches and suppers every day with full course dinners being served on week-ends. However, at present the cafeteria is only open from 8 to 11 on week day nights and from 8 to 11:30 on Saturday nights during the winter. It now serves only as a snack bar having such things as milk shakes, hamburgers, etc. on the menu. The kitchen facilities are used, however, for banquets which are frequently held at the Ridge. The cafeteria itself was just recently done over, with a new coat of paint and new wallpaper. On the walls are pictures of the various athletic teams and day camps. Also, in addition to the snack bar facilities there is a cigarette machine, a candy machine, a soda machine, and a public telephone.

Leading off from the southwest

corner of the main lobby is the lounge. Also recently redecorated, the lounge is finished in green block wallpaper, knotty pine finished in cherry, and a huge stone fireplace over which hangs a portrait of Mr. B. D. Riegel, founder of Riegel Ridge.

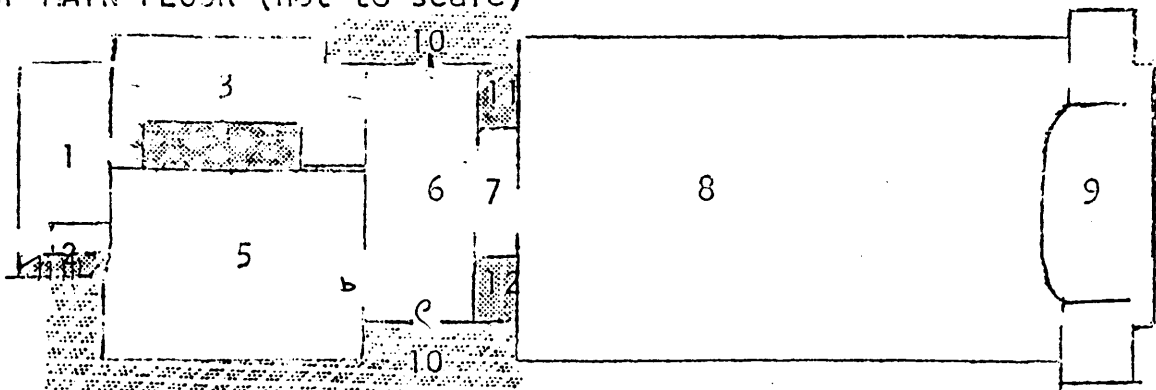
Among the fine furnishings of this room are some shelves of books, a spinet piano, and a recently acquired color television set.

Leading from the east end of the main lobby is a small sub-lobby which in turn leads into the gymnasium-auditorium. The walls of the gymnasium have also recently been refinished, with plywood panels replacing the wall board. A new electric scoreboard for basketball was installed in 1957 as a gift of the General Committee that year. A Public Address system using eight speakers has also been installed.

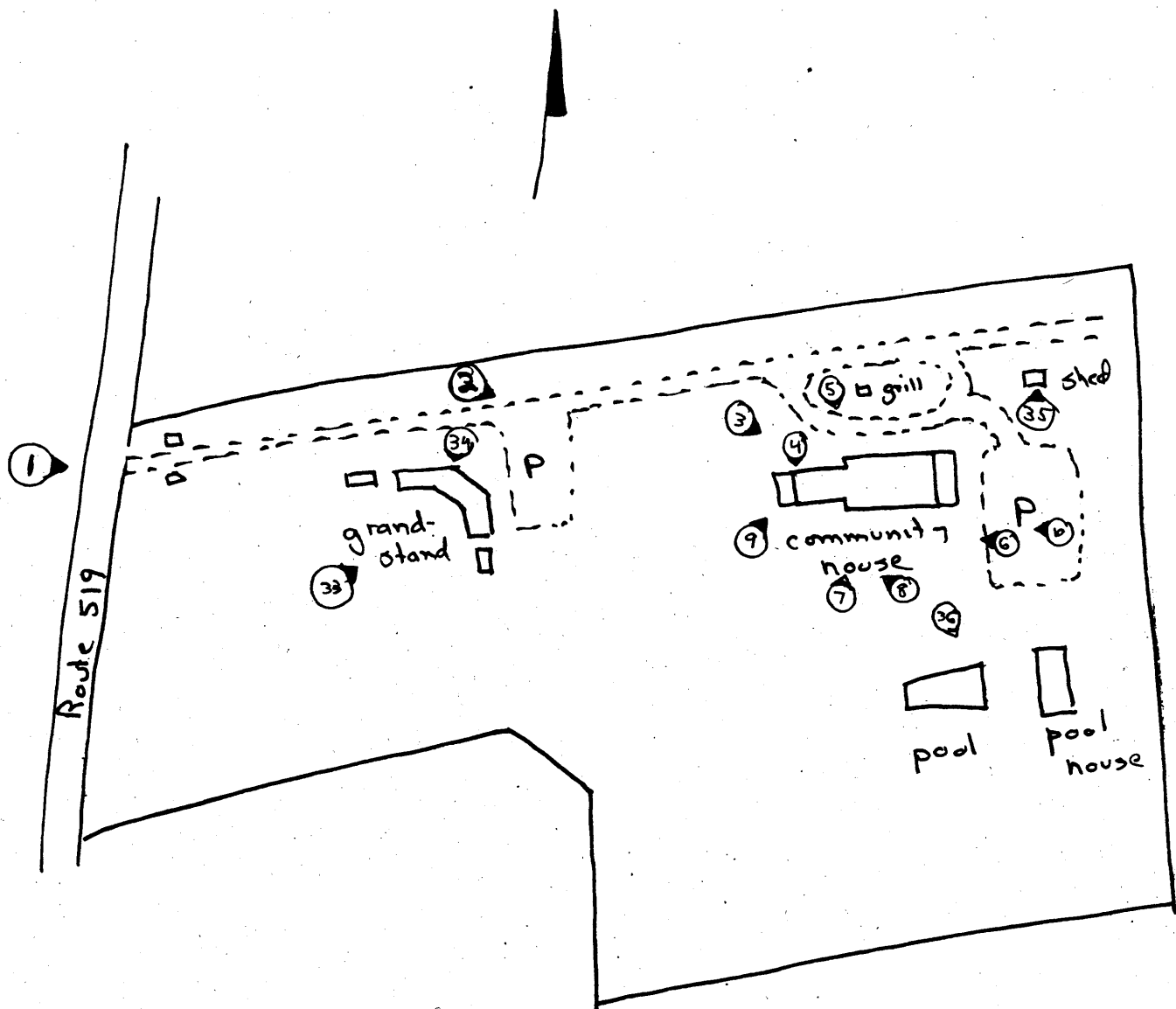
At the east end of the gym is a very fine stage having excellent lighting arrangements. Also a cyclorama has been installed allowing many useful effects with curtains. On either side of this stage are dressing and storage rooms. Part of the stage equipment includes a Steinway Medium Grand Piano.

(continued on the following page)

SKETCH OF MAIN FLOOR (not to scale)



- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Cafeteria Kitchen      | 7. Sub-Lobby                           |
| 2. Stairs to Furnace Room | 8. Gymnasium-Auditorium                |
| 3. Cafeteria              | 9. Stage with adjoining dressing rooms |
| 4. Private Stairs         | 10. Porches                            |
| 5. Lounge                 | 11. Stairs down                        |
| 6. Lobby                  | 12. Stairs up and down                 |



Riegel Ridge Community Center

Sketch site plan  
(not to scale)

Photo ID

①  
direction of view

Hunterdon County, NJ

THE FACILITIES OF RIEGEL RIDGE (continued)

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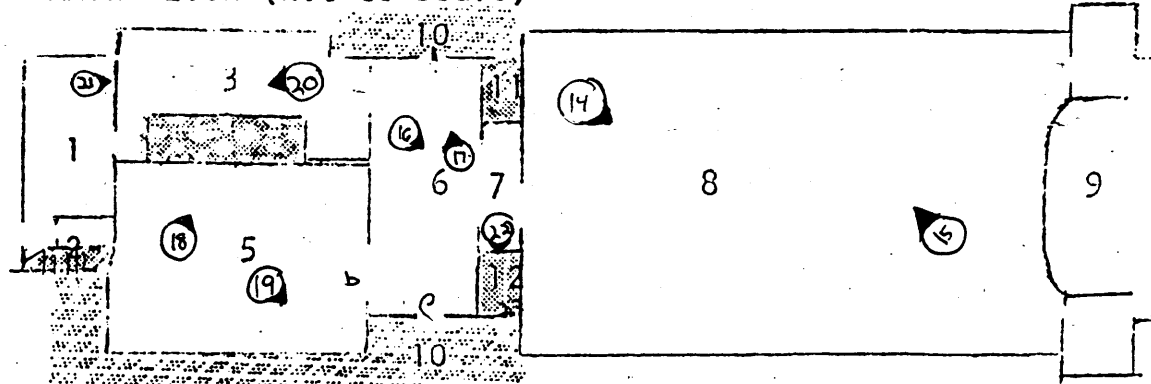
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(continued on the following page)

SKETCH OF MAIN FLOOR (not to scale)

Photo ID  
direction of view



- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Cafeteria Kitchen      | 7. Sub-Lobby                           |
| 2. Stairs to Furnace Room | 8. Gymnasium-Auditorium                |
| 3. Cafeteria              | 9. Stage with adjoining dressing rooms |
| 4. Private Stairs         | 10. Porches                            |
| 5. Lounge                 | 11. Stairs down                        |
| 6. Lobby                  | 12. Stairs up and down                 |

# TAX MAP

## HOLLAND TOWNSHIP

### Hunterdon County, N.J.

Scale: 1" = 400' May, 1976

*Frank W. Bohren, P.E., L.S.*  
N.J. LICENSE NO. 3090

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DATED JUNE, 1959 — REVISED THROUGH JANUARY, 1976

REVISIONS: JULY 1976, OCTOBER 1976, APRIL 1977, MARCH 1978, DEC. 1978  
NOV. 1979, JAN. 1981, JAN. 1982, FEB. 1983, FEB. 1984, JAN. 1985, JAN. 1986  
MAY 1987, JUNE 1988

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
DIVISION OF TAXATION  
LOCAL PROPERTY AND PUBLIC UTILITY BRANCH  
APPROVED AS A TAX MAP PURSUANT TO THE  
PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 178, LAWS OF 1913, AND  
FOR THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF TAXATION  
*J. H. Deane*  
BY: J. H. Deane, P.E. & L.S. CHIEF  
DATE: MAR 7 1977 SERIAL NO. 562

