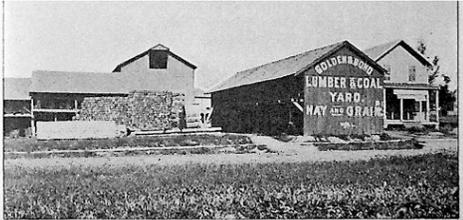
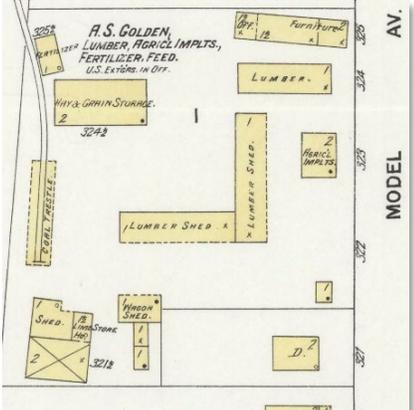


24 Model Ave., Hopewell - Lumberyard (1892)

Rev. 10/7/2022 b - D. Dixon

The lumberyard at #24 Model Avenue across from Vorhees Avenue was begun in 1892 by A. S. Golden and Amos C. Bond, and also sold coal, feed, fertilizers, agricultural implements, and even furniture. The business was acquired in 1923 by J. C. Van Doren, and later focused on lumber and building materials as it transitioned to his sons, Robert and George Van Doren. The property was sold in 2005 to Sawdust Construction / Henry Wittman III and operated as JMAT Supply.

<p>1889 - L. H. Reed & J. M. Ege - Hay Press</p>	 <p>A. S. GOLDEN'S LUMBER AND COAL YARD.</p>
<p>Purchased property and built hay press buildings</p>	
<p>1892 - A. S. Golden - Coal, Feed, Fertilizers</p>	
<p>Abram Stout Golden (1848-1923) Rented Holcombe & Bro. coal yard Rented L. H. Reed hay press on Model</p>	<p>Golden & Bond [HHH 1897]</p>
<p>1892 - Golden & Bond - Lumber, Coal, and Fertilizers</p>	
<p>Amos C. Bond (1860-1942) Bought Randolph Stout lumber yard, moved to Model Bought Model property from L. H. Reed Coal, feed, hay, grain, mason supplies</p>	
<p>1895 - A. S. Golden Lumber Yard Golden & Bond dissolved partnership</p>	
<p>1899 - W. E. Golden - Furniture (southeast building) William E. Golden (1879-1908) Fine furniture, and house furnishings</p>	
<p>1900s - A. S. Golden - Lumber, Coal, Building Materials Also Agricultural and Implement Warehouse, repairs</p>	<p>A. S. Golden [Sanborn 1912]</p>
<p>1923 - Van Doren - Coal, Lumber, Feed</p>	
<p>Purchased from Golden</p>	
<p>1923 - J. C. Van Doren - Coal, Lumber, Feed</p>	
<p>Jacob C. Van Doren (1870-1951)</p>	<p>JC Van Doren Sign [2021]</p>
<p>1946 - J.C. Van Doren and Sons Lumber Yard</p>	
<p>Robert A. Van Doren (1916-2013) George Hough Van Doren (1917-1999) Van Doren's fires: 1935, 1974, 1991, 2004</p>	
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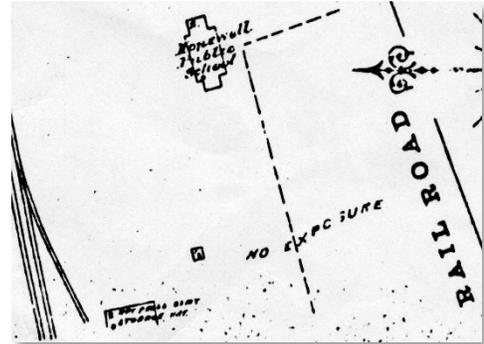
1889 - Reed and Ege - Hay Press

The lumberyard property was first used in 1889 as a hay press, with an associated railroad siding.

1889 - L. H. Reed and J. M. Ege - Hay Press

In 1889, Levi H. Reed and J. Mason Ege bought the land "adjoining the public school" from Joseph M. and Mariatta Phillips for \$350 in order to construct hay press buildings. [HH 11/10/1914; DB 167-475, 1889-11-11] Later in 1891, Ege quit claimed the property to Reed for \$1325. [DB 176-325, 1891-02-04]

The 1890 Scarlett map shows a Hay Press building on the lumberyard property, with a railroad siding angling over to it, but omits other details on this property.



Hay Press (bottom left) [Scarlett 1890]

Levi H. Reed

Levi Hixson Reed (1841-1914) was born in Glen Moore and had been a farmer in Hopewell. [U. S. Census 1880] In 1899 he joined William H. Kessler for a few years in the dry goods business that later became Kessler & Bellis (33 West Broad). [HH Souvenir 1900, HH Progress 1914] In the 1900 U. S. Census, Reed's occupation is listed as "Capitalist."

J. Mason Ege

J. Mason Ege (1866-1919) came to Hopewell at age 21 and entered the hardware business, which he continued for the rest of his life. His hardware store and associated residence (now gone) were at 31 West Board (later Rorers). He served as president of the Hopewell Building and Loan Association, vice president of the Farmer's Mutual Fire Insurance Company, director of the Hopewell National Bank, superintendent of the water company, treasurer of the Hopewell Fire Department, and was elected a member of the Borough Council and member and director of the county Board of Freeholders. [TET 2/25/1919, 2/28/1919]

J. Mason Ege, Ex-Freeholder

No name has been more prominently associated with the public, political and business life of Hopewell and this section of Mercer County generally than that of J. Mason Ege. Mr. Ege, who has built up one of the largest and most prosperous business enterprises in Hopewell, is a native of Woodsville ... The Ege establishment was started on a small scale by its present owner, and by good business ability has been developed until it has reached its present commercial importance. Heavy stocks are carried of hardware, stoves, paints, implements and farmers' supplies, and plumbing and heating is also done. ... [He] is the Hopewell representative of the Buick automobile.

- Hopewell Herald Progress Edition - 5/1914



J. Mason Ege
[HH 1914]

1892 - 1923 - A. S. Golden - Lumber, Coal, and Fertilizers

In 1892, A. S. Golden combined multiple businesses into the beginning of the lumberyard.

Early 1892 - A. S. Golden - Coal, Feed, Fertilizers

By March 1892, A. S. Golden rented the coal yard of F. F. Holcombe & Bro. (location unclear) and the hay press building of L. H. Reed (on the lumberyard site), and began a business dealing in coal, feed, fertilizers, "and kindred articles." [HH 3/30/1892]

Farley F. Holcombe

Farley F. Holcombe (c1854 - 1932) ran a general store in Hopewell (at 47 West Broad, across from Mercer Street), was postmaster for 16 years, and was one of the organizers of the Hopewell National Bank. [TET 2/17/1932]

—A. S. Golden has rented Holcombe & Bro's coal yard, and the hay press building and its appertenances of L. H. Reed, and is dealing in coal, hay, straw, grain, fertilizers, and kindred articles. He invites the patronage of the public through an ad. in the columns of the HERALD.

Golden from Holcombe & Reed
[HH 3/30/1892]

F. F. Holcombe & Son, General Merchandise

[F. F. Holcombe & Son] ... was established by the senior member of the firm and a brother who came from Hunterdon county in March, 1881. The firm was successful from the first, and F. F. Holcombe has since played a very active part in the business and public life of the borough. ... He was one of the first to suggest the organization of a bank here, and has been a director since it was started in 1890. He also helped to start two building and loan associations, and was made president of the Hopewell Valley [Building and Loan]. He served two years in Council and fifteen years and a half as postmaster, and at one time operated the creamery, and was in the coal business. The store, which now carries a large line of general merchandise, is now almost entirely in charge of his son Russell...

- Hopewell Herald Progress Edition - 5/1914



F. F. Holcombe
[HH 1914]

Late 1892 - Golden & Bond - Lumber, Coal, and Fertilizers

In November 1892, Abram S Golden and Amos C. Bond purchased the lumberyard property from Levi H. and A. Sarepta Reed for \$2700, and entered into business under the name of Golden & Bond. [HH 11/16/1892] Golden and Bond also bought the lumber yard of Randolph Stout and moved it to the Model Avenue lumberyard property "near the school house." Stout had built the building that is now used as the Hopewell Museum in 1877 as his home (28 East Broad), which was initially associated with his lumber yard on the adjacent lot to the east (and behind). [Scarlett 1890, Cultural Survey 1985]

—A. S. Golden and Amos C. Bond, under the firm name of Golden & Bond, have bought the old established lumber yard of Randolph Stout, and will remove it to the property on Model avenue which they have bought of L. H. Reed. The members of the new firm are successful business men and will no doubt drive a brisk trade.

Golden & Bond [HH 11/16/1892]

A. S. GOLDEN,  A. C. BOND.

LUMBER, COAL AND FERTILIZERS.

To the reader: A. S. Golden, who has been in business in Hopewell the past year, has associated with him Amos C. Bond, and the firm now trades under the name of Golden & Bond. They have purchased the Old Established Lumber Yard of Randolph Stout, and will keep on hand at all times, at their new yard on Model avenue, near the school house, a full stock of

—LUMBER—
OF ALL KINDS, SIZES AND PRICES. THE BEST VARIETIES OF

◀LEHIGH AND READING COAL▶

THE LEADING BRANDS OF

FERTILIZERS!

LAND PLASTER.

ALL KINDS OF BUILDING MATERIAL.

Lime, Sand, Cement & Hair, Appleton Feed Mills, &c.

ALSO DEALERS IN

HAY, GRAIN, STRAW, BRAN, SPROUTS, COTTON SEED MEAL, and the BEST FAMILY FLOUR.

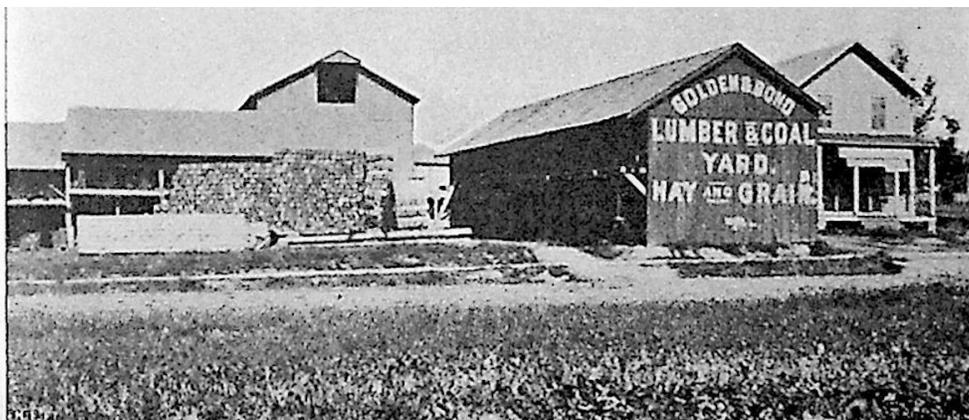
☞We respectfully solicit a share of the patronage of the vicinity, and guarantee fair dealing and satisfaction.

GOLDEN & BOND,
MODEL AVENUE, HOPEWELL, - - NEW JERSEY

Golden & Bond [HH 8/14/1893]

Golden & Bond sold lumber, coal, and fertilizers, plus "all kinds of building material - lime, sand, cement & hair, Appleton feed mills, &c." - and were also dealers in "hay, grain, straw, bran, sprouts, cotton seed meal, and the best family flour." [HH 8/14/1893]

In December 1894, A. S. Golden and A. C. Bond dissolved their partnership, and the business continued under the name of A. S. Golden.



A. S. GOLDEN'S LUMBER AND COAL YARD.

Golden & Bond Lumber and Coal Yard [HHH 1897]

Abram S. Golden

Abram Stout Golden (1848-1923) was born on the farm owned by his father west of Hopewell, and continued as a farmer until moving to Hopewell and buying the lumber business, which he continued to his death. "He was of retiring disposition, and never sought public office." [HH 6/6/1923]

A. S. Golden, Bldg. Material, Coal, Furniture, Etc.

The size, facilities, character and management of concerns from which building material, coal and farmers' supplies can be secured is a matter of serious consideration to a community such as this and it can be said with a degree of certainty that in the plant of A. S. Golden Hopewell is well provided. The name of A.S. Golden has been an influential commercial factor here for the past twenty-two years. Since he started in 1892 the business has greatly expanded in every way, and its owner has made as much real progress as any business man in the borough. The energies of Mr. Golden are devoted to handling rough and dressed lumber and building material of all kinds, farm machinery and wagons, fertilizers, grain, seeds, coal. etc.

- Hopewell Herald Progress Edition - 5/1914

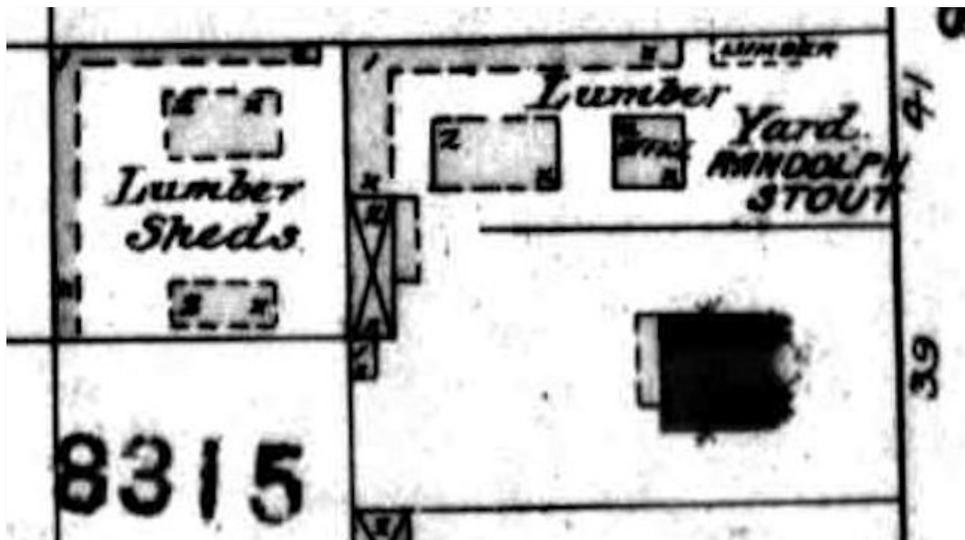


A. S. Golden
[HH 1914]

Randolph Stout

Randolph Stout (1820-1906) was born in Skillman, lived on a large farm in Stoutsburg for 20 years, and came to Hopewell in 1877.

Stout built the large brownstone that is now used as the Hopewell Museum as his home [28 East Broad]. He then started the lumber yard business on the lot to the east and behind, which he later sold to Golden & Bond when he retired in 1892. [HH 1/31/1906, Scarlett 1890]



Hopewell Museum building (bottom right, 28 East Broad)
with Stout Lumber Yard to the east and behind (Broad on right) [Scarlett 1890]

A. C. Bond

Amos C. Bond (1860-1942) was born in Ringoes and lived in West Amwell. After dissolving the partnership with A. S. Golden in 1894, he was known as a dealer in farm machinery and in horses [U.S. Census 1900, 1910, 1920]. He was a member of the borough council, a justice of the peace, and a director of the Hopewell National Bank and the Hopewell Valley Canning Company. [HH Progress 5/1914]

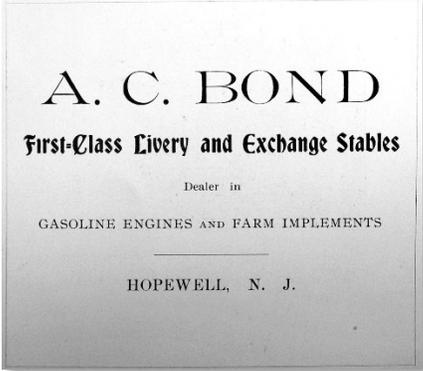
In 1900, Bond sold his farm to St. Michael's Orphanage and built a home on West Broad Street (97 West Broad, at Lanning). [HH 12/23/1942] By 1907, he had his own horse stables where he held sales of Virginia horses (25 head in February). [TET 2/22/1907] In 1909, Bond was described as "first-class livery and exchange stables dealer in gasoline engines and farm implements." [Hw 1909]

Amos C. Bond, Agricultural Implements, Stock Dealer, &c. - Seminary Ave.

Among the leading business men and most reputable citizens of Hopewell is Mr. Amos C. Bond, who conducts and implement business in the Bond Building, on Seminary avenue. Mr. Bond handles all kinds of farming machinery, windmills and gasoline engines, and his facilities enable him to offer these goods at prices which should attract the current of patronage in his direction. During the winter season he also deals in horses. Mr. Bond is regarded in commercial circles as one of or most substantial business men. Beside a handsome residence here, he owns several fine farms in the immediate vicinity, and is identified with numerous other interests.

- Hopewell Herald Souvenir Edition, 9/19/1900

By 1914 Bond also had a stone "crushery" (now the Hopewell Quarry), and in 1916 he won the contract to deliver 500 tons of crushed stone for Hopewell streets. [TET 11/25/1914, TET 7/16/1916]

 <p style="text-align: center;">A. C. BOND First-Class Livery and Exchange Stables Dealer in GASOLINE ENGINES AND FARM IMPLEMENTS HOPEWELL, N. J.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bond stables [Hw 1909]</p>	<p>MARCH 22, 1928—Public sale. The undersigned Trustee in Bankruptcy of the estate of Amos C. Bond, bankrupt, will sell at public auction on the 22d day of March, 1928, at 12 o'clock noon, on the farm, situate about one mile west of Hopewell, on the road leading from Hopewell to Pennington and the road from Hopewell to Woodville, personal property consisting of farm machinery, corn by the bushel, hay by the ton, two good work horses, four cows, two Chester White hogs, gasoline engine, several riding corn plows, two farm wagons, mowing machine, 10-spring tooth and spike tooth harrows, land roller, lime spreader, hay rake, one spring wagon, several disk harrows, one binder, three grain drills, feed mills, manure carriers, fodder shredder, several other machines and machine parts. A great deal of the machinery is new. At three o'clock the farm containing 88 acres with good house and full equipment of outbuildings will be offered for sale. Terms on personal property, cash. Terms and conditions on real estate will be made known at sale. Charles L. Conard, trustee, Box 467, Trenton, N. J.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[TET 3/21/1928]</p>
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Bond filed for bankruptcy in 1928, listing liabilities of \$31,233 and assets of \$26,073, including real estate worth \$22,700. [TET 1/19/1928] He was described as a farmer in Marshalls Corner. The bankruptcy sale was held on his 88 acre farm, about one mile west of Hopewell on the Hopewell Pennington Road, and included farm machinery, grain, and animals, plus the farm, house, and outbuildings. [TET 3/21/1928] Then in the 1930 U.S. Census, Bond was living in his own house, and working as a school bus driver.

1895 / 1900s - A. S. Golden - Agricultural Implements

After A. S. Golden and A. C. Bond dissolved their partnership at the end of 1894, the business continued under the name of A. S. Golden. Golden expanded the business into agricultural implements by adding agricultural machines and tools and repair services. [HH 10/29/1895]

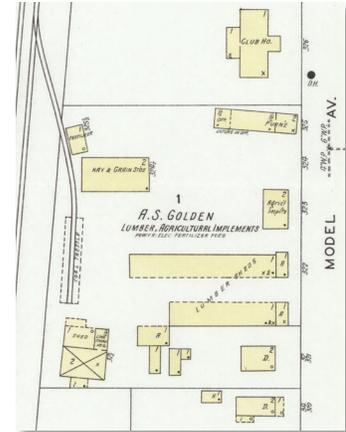
A. S. Golden, Building Materials, Coal and Agricultural Implements

The enterprise of A. S. Golden ranks high among the solid business concerns of Hopewell and has been closely identified with the history, growth and development of our borough for many years.

Large yards are utilized on Model avenue, on which have been erected sheds and buildings for the housing of heavy stocks of rough and dressed lumber, agricultural implements, coal, fertilizers and farmers supplies. Mr. Golden is sole agent in this locality for the justly celebrated Johnston Harvester Co. machinery, the Hamilton & Evans corn planters and Russell's fertilizers. All machinery is set up by experienced men and fully guaranteed to give perfect satisfaction.

Mr. Golden has been in business here for the past 9 years, and by energy and enterprise has placed on a solid financial basis one of the largest concerns in Hopewell. The facilities enjoyed are of such a character that it enables him to supply contractors and builders with materials in any desired quantity promptly, and to figure as close as any man in the business. Personally Mr. Golden enjoys a high standing in the community and is regarded as one of Hopewell's most successful business men.

- Hopewell Herald Souvenir Edition, 9/19/1900



Golden Lumber Yard
with train siding
Sanborn 1927

A. S. GOLDEN :::

Dealer in -

LUMBER, COAL, FERTILIZERS

LAND PLASTER,

Building Materials, Lime, Sand, Cement and Hair.

I have added to my business a full line of

JOHNSTON HARVESTING CO.'S MACHINES AND REPAIRS

Also Bickford & Huffman Grain Drill, Springtooth Harrows,
Corn Plows, Hay Rakes, Tedders, Kemp Manure Spreader, etc.

BINDER TWINE AT LOWEST PRICES.

I have procured the services of Mr. J. H. Piggott, who will pay especial attention to repairing all kinds of machinery. Call and see me.

Thanking the public for past favors I merit a continuance of the same.

MODEL AVENUE HOPEWELL, - - NEW JERSEY.

A. S. Golden [HH 10/29/1895]



Coal Comfort

means a warm, cozy home. Something you cannot have with coal of inferior quality. It means a brisk, blazing fire when you wish it hot and a delightful glow after you are warmed up. It also means heat. You should get your coal here.

LUMBER, LIME, CEMENT, MASONS' MATERIALS, Etc.

FEEDS AND SEEDS.

A. S. GOLDEN

Model Avenue, - HOPEWELL

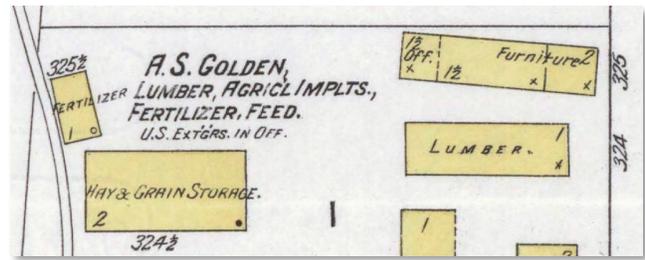
A.S. Golden [4/21/1920]

After the death of A. S. Golden in 1923, the lumber and coal business was purchased by J. C. Van Doren later that year.

1899 - W. E. Golden - Furniture

A. S. Golden's son, William E. Golden (1879-1908), started a furniture business in 1899, based in a building on the southeast side of the lumberyard property, closest to the school house.

He sold fine furniture, house furnishings, carpets, and other related products. [HH 9/27/1899] The store sold products including couches, sideboards, and bedroom suites, and was open evenings to 8 pm. [HH 3/27/1901, etc.]



Golden Furniture - Sanborn 1912 (also 1902, 1927)

W. E. Golden, Furniture and Carpets - Model Ave.

... Mr. W. E. Golden, on Model avenue, where may be seen a heavy stock of fine furniture, carpets, side boards, porch rockers, lawn settees, baby carriages, etc. It would be impossible to describe the many different styles, shapes, colors and patterns of goods carried, a visit being necessary to form the least idea of its size and variety. The establishment is representative of all that is first-class and the most particular are sure to find something to suit, while the house has always been noted for reasonable prices, the facilities of its proprietor enabling him to sell much cheaper than Trenton dealers who have heavy rents and other expenses to meet.

- Hopewell Herald Souvenir Edition, 9/19/1900

<p>Rugs! Rugs! Rugs!</p> <p>The housewife of today considers her house incomplete without rugs. And furthermore rugs are not what you might call a luxury. They are not only ornamental but useful. My rugs cannot be equalled for size, style and price. Prices from 98c. to \$2 10.</p> <p>W. E. GOLDEN * * * THE * HOME * FURNISHER. Model Ave., HOPEWELL, N. J.</p>	<p>Sideboard Display.</p> <p>Come in and look at the exquisite line of sideboards I have in stock. Everyone a beauty. Fine wood, prettily carved and the best of mirrors. The price is the only cheap thing about them, which is the aim of this store continuously. A sideboard is something that is needed in every household. The handsomest and most useful piece of furniture in the house.</p> <p>W. E. GOLDEN, Model Ave. HOPEWELL. <small>Open evenings until eight o'clock.</small></p>
<p>W. E. Golden Furniture [HH 2/6/1901]</p>	<p>W. E. Golden Furniture [3/30/1906]</p>

William Golden was born in the Hopewell area, and was diagnosed with tuberculosis around 1898. He then started and built up the furniture business, and married the former Etta Van Fleet Blackwell. They had a two-year-old daughter when he died in 1908 at age 29. "He had been a patient sufferer of that dread disease for about ten years, fighting hard for recovery. ... His death has brought the bitter cup of sorrow to the lips of friends and relatives." [HH 1/17/1908]

After the death of his son, A. S. Golden continued the furniture business until at least the late 1920s, with "a full line of furniture and house furnishings, which are sold as cheap and oftentimes cheaper than Trenton dealers." [HH Progress 5/1914]

1923 - J. C. Van Doren - Coal, Lumber, Feed

1923 - J. C. Van Doren - Coal, Lumber, Feed

After the death of A. S. Golden in May 1923, the lumber and coal business was purchased by J. C. Van Doren in September, with the intension to "carry on the business along the lines established and to make improvements where possible." [HH 9/12/1923]

For example, in 1927, J. C. Van Doren advertised coal, building materials, feeds, and feed grinding, and building products including cement, roofing, lathing, and lumber. The ads featured Ful-O-Pep Egg Mash for chicken feed, made by The Quaker Oats Company, which results in "15 eggs to the dozen." [HH 10/26/1927]

A 1931 article in the Hopewell Herald headlined "Van Doren Lumber Considered Best" extolled the "integrity and fair dealing" of Jacob C. Van Doren, his "modern and completely equipped" yards on Model Avenue, and his stock of lumber, building materials, and "only the finest of anthracite coal." [HH 11/4/1931]

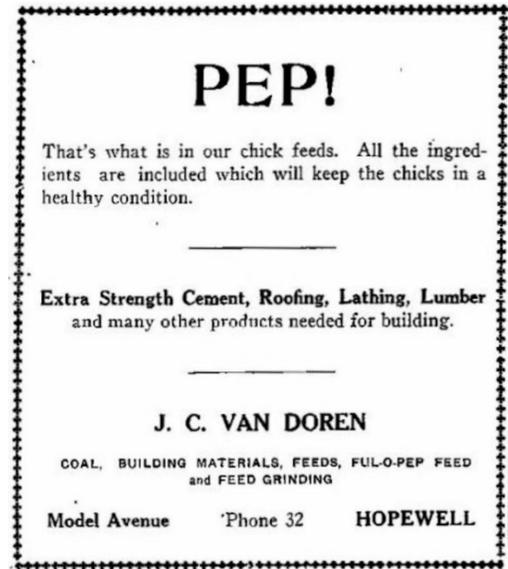
Jacob C. Van Doren

Jacob C. (Jake or JC) Van Doren (1870-1951, age 81) was a lifelong resident of the Hopewell area. He originally was a farmer in Wertsville.

In Hopewell, Van Doren was remembered as a "prominent lumber, coal and feed dealer," and also for the "retail ice enterprise" that he operated for many years. [HH 12/12/1951]

In 1910, Van Doren purchased the farm of J. Hervey Stout near Stoutsburg, and continued the ice and grain business which had been conducted there. [TET 3/12/1910] In 1918, Van Doren reported a "record ice crop" for the year, filling four ice houses with ice from his pond that was 14 to 18 inches thick. [TET 1/13/1918]

Van Doren insisted on going down to the office until the end of his life. He was carried down to the office on a chair by his sons, crossing the tracks from his home on Hart Avenue. [Hepburn]



J. C. Van Doren [HH 10/26/1927]



JC Van Doren in office, c1940s
[Hepburn]

1946 - J. C. Van Doren and Sons Lumber Yard

In 1946, Jacob C. & Catherine F. Van Doren passed the property to their sons, Robert A. & George H. Van Doren, who had begun working full-time with their father. [DB 936-442, 1946-08-20] In 2000, after the death of George Van Doren, his wife Virginia E. Van Doren sold her interest in the property to Robert Van Doren. [DB 3915-296, 2000-09-27] Robert and George Van Doren jointly ran the business, each into their 80s.

Robert and George Van Doren

Robert A. (Bob) Van Doren (1916-2013, age 97) graduated from Rider College cum laude at age 19 in 1935. He served in the Marine Corps during World War II in the Pacific, served in the National Guard, and was commander of American Legion Post 339. He was president of the Hopewell Fire Department and served on the Highland Cemetery Association. [Hepburn, TT 1/29/2013]

Robert worked six full days a week until he retired due to health reasons at 89 years of age. He never owned or used an adding machine, calculator or computer - doing invoice and pricing calculations in his head. [Hepburn]

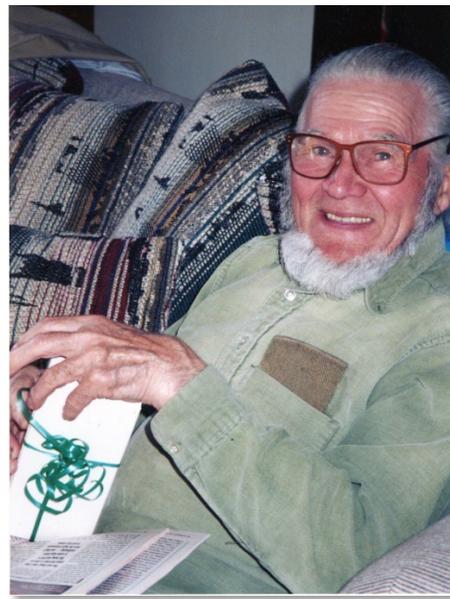
George Hough Van Doren (1917-1999, age 82) also graduated from Rider, served in the National Guard, and was active in the Fire Department. He was also an experienced hunter, an accomplished ballroom dancer, and worked until his death at 82 years of age. [Thompson, Hepburn]



Bob Van Doren outside office with J.C. Van Doren sign, 2000 [Hepburn]



Bob Van Doren in the office, c1995 [Hepburn]



George Van Doren c1995 [Thompson]

Over time, the Van Doren business transitioned away from coal to focus on lumber and building supplies. Coal was still an important fuel in the 1940s during World War II, with deliveries onto the railroad sidings at J. B. Hill & Sons and Jacob Van Doren's. [Humble 1947] J. B. Hill still had a handful of coal customers in the early 1960s. [Central Jersey 8/1/2006]



Sign at lumberyard entrance
[DD 2021]

"JC Van Doren Lumber
& Building Materials"

By the 1970s, Van Doren's apparently was no longer using the railroad siding into its yard, and was instead taking deliveries along the siding to the east of the train station, in front of the then FCA building. Large stacks of this lumber are visible in photographs from 1974 and 1978.



[5/1974, DD]



[Gary Saretzky 1978]

Lumber Yard Fires

The combination of flammable wooden buildings and stacks of lumber meant that the Van Doren lumberyard was at risk of serious fires.

At least four such major fires occurred, in 1934, 1974, 1991, and 2004, with the middle two being the most serious.

1934 Van Doren's Fire

On the afternoon of February 14, 1934 a fire endangered the Jacob C. Van Doren lumberyard, a jewelry factory (the former Model School Annex), and the Model Avenue apartments (the former Model Ave. School).

The blaze started in the lumber yard office due to an overheated stove. However, damage was confined to an estimated \$1000. "Office records contained in filing cabinets were damaged." [TET 2/15/1934]

<p style="text-align: center;">Hopewell Buildings Threatened by Fire</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Special to the Times.)</i></p> <p>HOPEWELL, Feb. 15.—Fire endangered the Jacob C. VanDoren lumber yard, a jewelry factory and Model Avenue apartments yesterday afternoon, but damage was confined to a loss estimated at \$1,000.</p> <p>The blaze started in the lumber yard office, due to an overheated stove. Firemen laid three lines of hose. Dense smoke hampered their efforts. Chief Charles E. Williamson directed the volunteers. Office records contained in filing cabinets were damaged.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I desire to thank the Hopewell Fire Department and all others who aided in extinguishing my recent fire</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J. C. VAN DOREN.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Advertisement)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">1934 Fire [TET 2/15/1934]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">[HH 2/21/1934]</p>

1974 Van Doren's Fire

The 1974 fire at the J. C. Van Doren & Sons lumber yard broke out around 10:30 in the evening of October 23, 1974. The fire burned a "30 x 40 foot wooden barn of pegged hemlock where cement, lime, and nails were stored." Damage was estimated in the thousands of dollars. [TET 10/24/1974]

More than 100 firemen from Mercer and Somerset were needed to bring the fire under control. Flames shoot more than 50 feet into the air. One large lumber storage house was destroyed along with an estimated 30 percent of the lumber supply. Two other storage houses and surrounding lumber supplies were saved.

Residents of three adjacent homes were evacuated, but were able to return to their homes shortly after midnight.

"We were lucky because this thing could have gone out of control if there had been any wind," said Fire Chief Jerry Fenton. [Courier News 10/24/1974]



Firemen battle a blaze that destroyed a main building in the J. C. Van Doren Lumber Co., Model Avenue, Hopewell, last night.

1974 Fire [Courier News 10/24/1974]

The 1974 Van Doren's fire is described in the Hopewell Fire Department 100th Anniversary Booklet from 2011, and summarized here:

On Wednesday, October 23, 1974, at 10:30 PM, "a fire with disastrous potential for Hopewell Borough" occurred at J.C. Van Doren's Lumber Yard on Model Ave. The efforts of Hopewell's firemen were successful in preventing the fire from spreading, aided by ten other companies including Pennington, Union of Titusville, Blawenburg, Belle Mead, Ringoes, Rocky Hill, Lawrenceville, Upper Makefield, Hillsborough, and Kingston.

The fire was under control by 12:30 AM in the morning, but firefighters remained on the scene through Thursday and Friday wetting down piles of lumber. "Embers and sparks flew all over town as the sky was lit up by the spectacular blaze, but the exertions of the fire fighters aided by the absence of a strong wind contained the fire and saved the surrounding town from any damage."

1991 Van Doren's Fire

The major 1991 fire at the Van Doren lumber yard occurred on the evening of February 21, 1991, and consumed several storage buildings along the west side of the property (the left side from the street).

Flames reportedly shot over 75 feet into the air, and some 29 local fire companies were eventually called in to control the blaze. This included stopping Conrail railroad traffic to place one company on the tracks behind the property, and using some 30 tankers to shuttle water from the Quarry and other sites to temporary tanks, as the fire was depleting the town water supply.

The fire started in a "30 x 40 foot lean-to type storage shed," and quickly escalated to 10 alarms, with flames shooting over 75 feet into the air. More than 150 [or 300?] firefighters from 29 area fire companies responded. The fire consumed a majority of the buildings on the site, as well as thousands of board feet of lumber. [TET 2/22/1991, 2/23/1991]

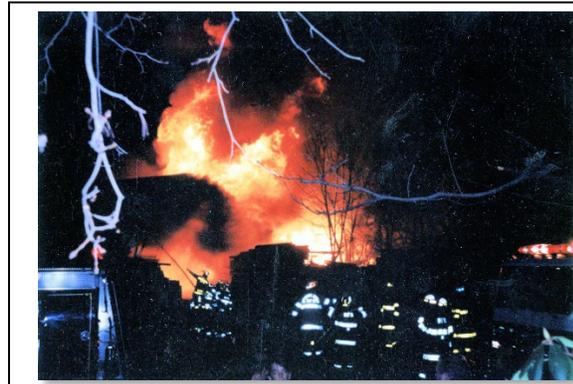
Arson suspected in 10-alarm blaze



Staff photo by Paul Savage

Firefighters battle a raging blaze at the J.C. Van Doren & Sons lumber yard in Hopewell Borough last night. No one was reported injured in the fire that is of suspicious origin.

1991 Fire [TET 2/15/1934]



1991 Fire [Sudlow]



1991 Fire [DD]

The photos show the nighttime flames, and the aftermath and clean-up the next day. The long wooden sheds on the left side of the property were destroyed, and the concrete storage building behind was reduced to partial walls. Amazingly, the fire companies saved the immediately adjacent home and garage, which were separated by only a driveway.

The fire was one of at least ten suspected cases of arson fires to buildings in Hopewell Borough and Township in 1991, along with 55 brush fires. In addition to the Van Doren's fire, the Hopewell fires included the Creative Classics building and Tomato Factory center on Railroad Place. In total, an estimated 100 suspected arson fires hit buildings, fields and brush in Mercer, Hunterdon, and Somerset counties in 1991. [TET 10/26/1991]

A suspect for the arson fires was arrested in October 1991, who was a volunteer firefighter with the 75-member Hopewell department. [TET 10/26/1991]

The 1991 Van Doren's fire is described in an article by Chief John Novak in the Hopewell Fire Department 100th Anniversary Booklet from 2011, and summarized here:

On February 21, 1991 at 8:35 PM the Hopewell Fire Department along with the Pennington and Union Fire Company were dispatched to a fire at Van Doren's Lumber Yard.

The first truck on the scene was Rescue 52. The firefighters went to the rear northwest end of the lumber yard. They unsuccessfully tried to put out the fire, and had to back out as the fire continued to rapidly spread. An engine crew arrived to spray water on the house located next to the lumber yard.

Trucks from Pennington then arrived, followed by more engines from West Trenton and Montgomery. Montgomery laid lines to three Fold-A-Tanks. The Tanker Task Force from Somerset County was then called in as the Hopewell water system did not have the capacity to handle a fire of this magnitude.

By then over half the lumber yard was fully involved and flames were over 100 feet high. At that point, the balance of Ewing, all of Lawrence, Belle Mead, Rocky Hill, and Kingston were dispatched to the scene. Engine 32 Pennington Road was sent to the Quarry to draft out of the lake.

The water reserves from town were low. The CSX Railroad located behind the lumber yard was closed and Lawrenceville was placed on the tracks.

By this time, the fire had been burning out of control for about an hour. The firefighters were using approximately 2200 gallons of water a minute. To prevent the fire from spreading to neighboring homes, Hamilton Fire Companies Decou, Colonial and Whitehorse also were dispatched. They had never been in Hopewell.

After three and half hours, the Borough water system was running dangerously low. More tankers were called to relay water from a new water drop site on Greenwood Avenue at Broad Street. At that point, there were 30 tankers shuttling water from the various locations.

The fire finally came under control around midnight. At 1 AM, all the fire fighters who had been onsite from the start were sent to the Hopewell Fire House for a break. Fresh firefighters were brought on the scene.

The challenge then was to overhaul the site. The fire was, for the most part, extinguished. A loader from J. Vinch and Sons, a demolition company, arrived at 7:30 AM. Then began a long day of overhaul.

"I walked around the yard with some of the chiefs looking at what was left of the lumber yard. Where originally there were six large buildings in the lumber yard, two were left untouched. A nearby house had minor smoke damage and some broken windows. All in all, the site demonstrated the hard work and enormous contribution given by all. No one had been hurt and under the circumstances the damage had been contained to the lumber yard. It was a tribute to all involved. I would like to thank all the fire departments that helped save the town of Hopewell. It has been over 20 years since the largest fire the town has ever experienced and the lumber yard is still in existence."

2004 Van Doren's Fire

The 2004 fire occurred during the day on January 14, 2004, and destroyed the two-story building on the east side of the property (to the right from the driveway). The far end of the building was the office for the lumberyard, and the remainder of the building closer to the street was used for storage of construction materials, along with the second floor. The fire reportedly started from a wood stove inside the office.

"The building is a total loss," said Capt. George Meyer of the Hopewell Township Police Department. "The fire is not regarded suspicious at this point. It's still under investigation."

The alarm for the fire was called in at 11:15 am, and it was declared under control less than an hour later. In addition to Hopewell Fire Department, the Pennington, Union, Montgomery, and Lawrence fire companies responded to the blaze. Ed Van Doren, chief of the Hopewell Fire Department and Bob Van Doren's nephew, directed the firefighting. [Central Jersey.com 1/15/2004]



2004 Fire [Johnson]



2004 Fire [Johnson]

The photos show flames first engulfing the far end of the building and a near-by tree. The fire department moved in to control the blaze and prevent it from spreading to the adjacent lumber piles and the building next door.

2005 - JMAT Supply - Wittmans

In 2005, Robert Van Doren sold the lumberyard property to Henry Wittman III as JC Van Doren LLC [DB 5095-101, 2005-07-05] In 2013, Wittman then transferred the property under Sawdust Construction LLC. [DB 6169-1834, 2013-05-13]

Henry Wittman's son, Henry Wittman IV, purchased the Van Doren Lumber business, which eventually became JMAT Supply LLC:

CEO Henry Wittman IV started at a young age in the business. He frequented Van Doren Lumber at the age of 15 to purchase wood for building tree houses and bike jumps. At age 16, he started working at Van Doren Lumber while attending high school through a work/school program. One day, Wittman asked the owner, Bob, if he was interested in selling. Then, Wittman talked his Dad into purchasing the property and acquired a loan to purchase the leftover lumber.

In 2005, JMAT Supply purchased Van Doren Lumber. When Wittman started the company, he had just a pickup truck for deliveries. JMAT has grown their building supplies inventory, and [in 2021] has two boom trucks and three flatbeds.

- NRLA Lumber Co-operator, 5/2021

The business then continued under the Van Doren name. In 2010, the website was under the name JC VanDoren Lumber & Building Materials:

Located in friendly Hopewell Boro, New Jersey, JC VanDoren Lumber has been family owned and operated since the 1800's. We pride ourselves on top quality products and top quality service. We offer delivery of materials to the surrounding area, and are happy to quote any job for you.

We carry top quality building products such as KD Douglas Fir, Light-Weight Block and Masonry Supplies, Blue Stone, Cedar, Trex Trimboards and Azek Mouldings, MicroPro Treated Wood, ThermaTru Doors, Simpson Doors, and also a wide variety of mouldings, pine, and also custom millwork and mouldings. We can also order anything we don't stock in a timely manner. Lead times usually vary from same day to 3 days.

- VanDorenLumber.com, 12/8/2010, from archive.org



[VanDorenLumber.com
12/8/2010]



By 2014, the website was using the name JC VanDoren Lumber, and by 2016 it was using the name JCV Supply:

Your #1 provider for Commercial and Residential Building Material in NJ, Eastern Pa and NYC markets.

Located in friendly Hopewell Borough, New Jersey, JC VanDoren Lumber has been supplying the needs of neighbors and contractors since the late 1800s. As we strive for excellence in every area of our company, we pride ourselves on providing superior customer service and top quality products.

We carry Lumber, Drywall, Steel Framing, Insulation, Waterproofing, Soundproofing, Acoustical Ceiling, Siding, Masonry, Decking, Stairs, Windows, Doors, Nails & Fasteners, Connectors, Moulding, and much more. We can also order anything we don't stock in a timely manner.

We deliver materials to the surrounding area, including New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and are happy to quote any materials list you have for any job big or small

- VanDorenLumber.com, 3/25/2016, from archive.org

By 2017, the VanDorenLumber.com website was changed to redirect traffic to the JMAT Supply site at JMAT.com.



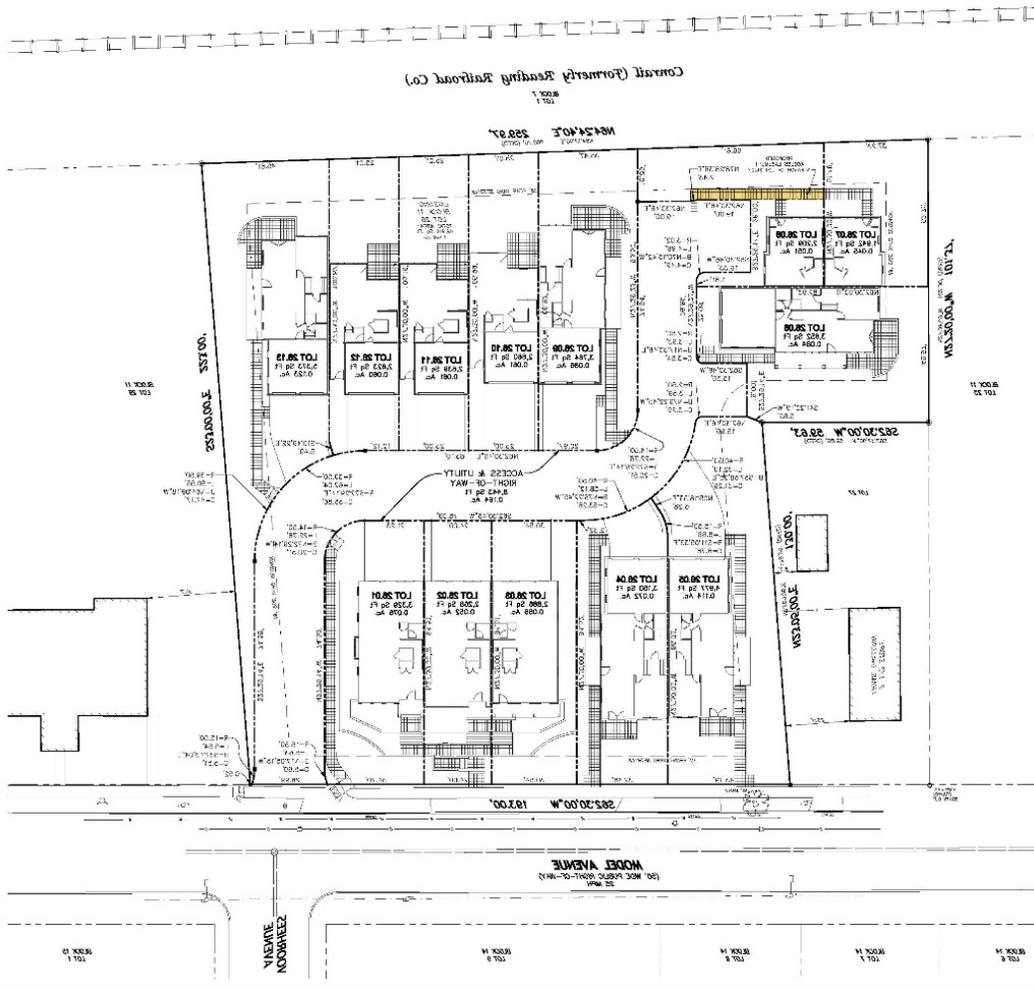
JMAT currently offers distribution of lumber, drywall and metal framing to large residential and commercial contractors. "Full-service facilities and a regional network of inventory locations enable JMAT to meet the most demanding schedules. We will have the material on site when it is needed. Delivering whole trucks, mixed loads and daily fill-in quantities directly to the job site." [JMAT.com]

2022 - Lumberyard Townhouse Redevelopment

In August 2022, the Hopewell Borough Planning Board approved a proposal by Henry Wittman III for the redevelopment of the lumberyard property with 13 residential townhouses, including two affordable housing units, one low income and one moderate income. [Mercerme 8/9/2022]



Building Elevations - Model Ave. - 12/10/2020 [Hw Boro Planning Board]



Townhouse Plan - 6/2020 [Hw Boro Planning Board]

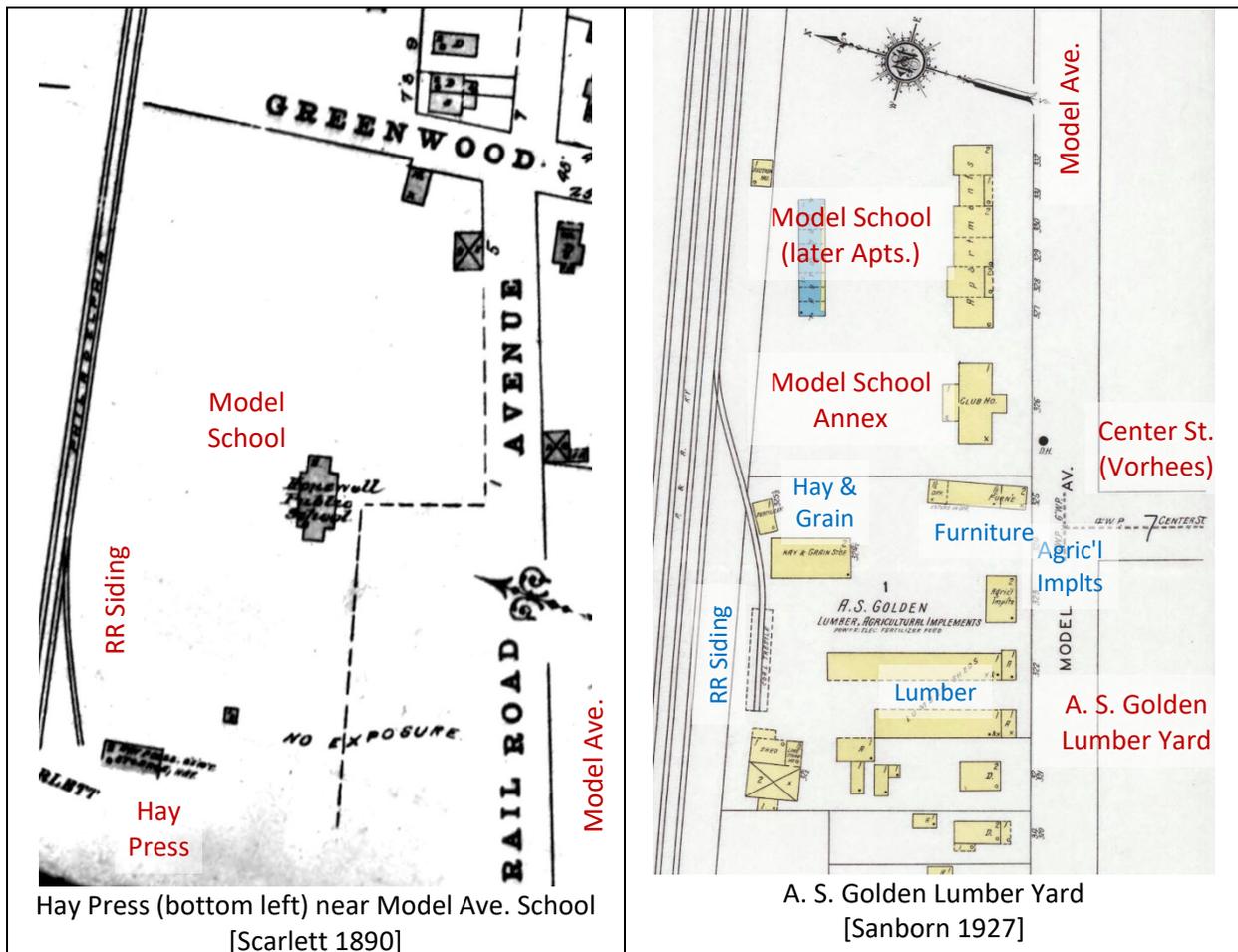
Model Avenue Streetscape

The lumberyard at 24 Model Avenue in Hopewell began in 1892 by A. S. Golden, who ran his lumber, coal, feed, and fertilizer business there until it was sold to J. C. Van Doren in 1923. The site also included a separate furniture business, starting by his son, W. E. Golden.

Model Ave. School and Annex

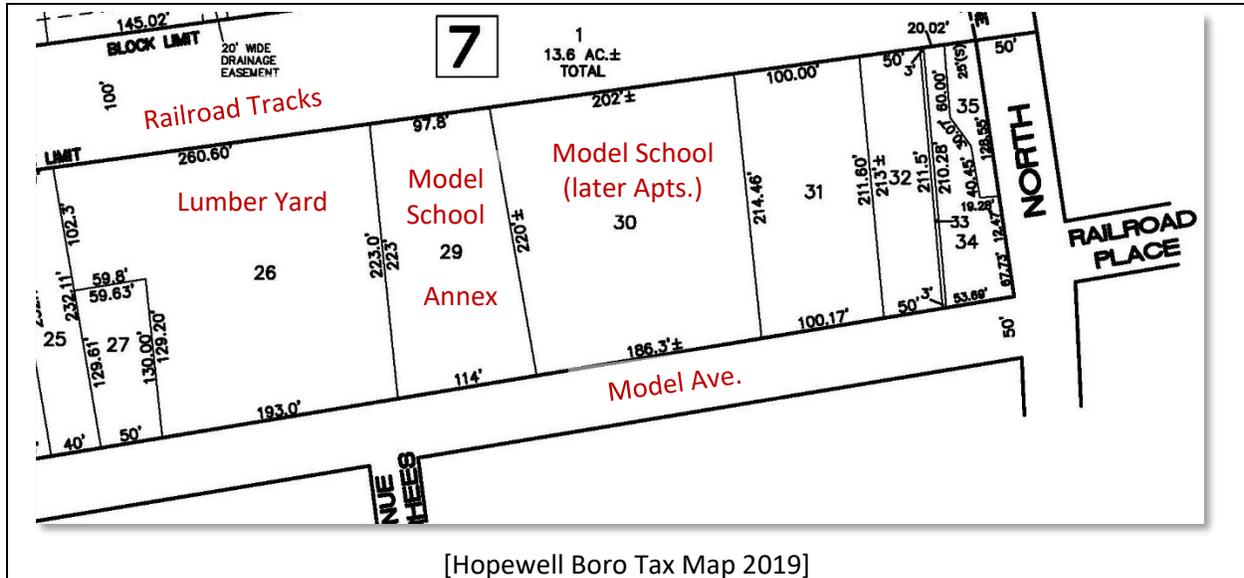
The lumberyard property (24 Model Ave.) is across from Vorhees Avenue (earlier Center St.), immediately west of the Model Ave. Public School property. The original Model Ave. School (12-14 Model) was built in 1888, with two-room wings on each side added in 1899 and in 1907. The school moved out of the building in 1926, and it was converted into residential apartments.

The two-room Model Ave. School Annex building (20 Model) was added in 1915 in the southwest corner of the school property. After 1926, it was used for a variety of businesses and shops. Confusingly, in some official records, the lumberyard also is still identified as 20 Model.

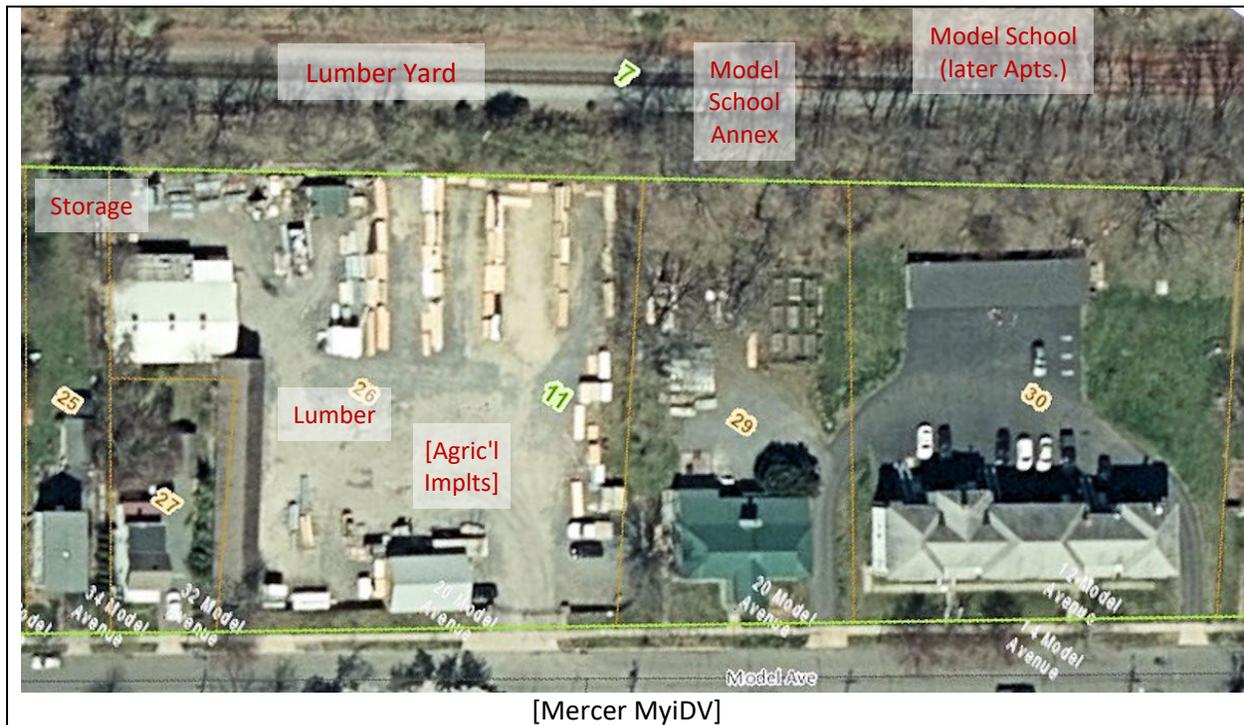


Lumberyard Property

The lumberyard property is identified on current tax maps as Block 11, Lot 26 (previously 28-42). It is an average of about 223 feet wide, extending back behind the adjacent property to the west (left), and 226 feet deep to the railroad right of way, or approximately 1.15 acres.



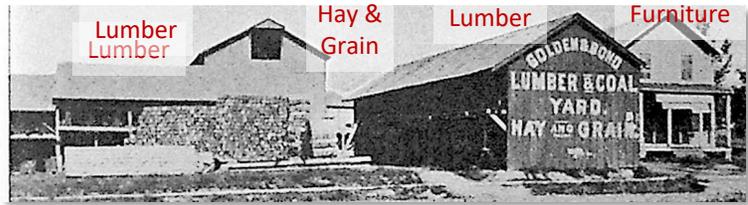
The lumberyard property currently contains three buildings: a large lumber shed on the west (left) side, with a storage shed to the north (top), and the original "Agricultural Implements" shed by the entrance on the road.



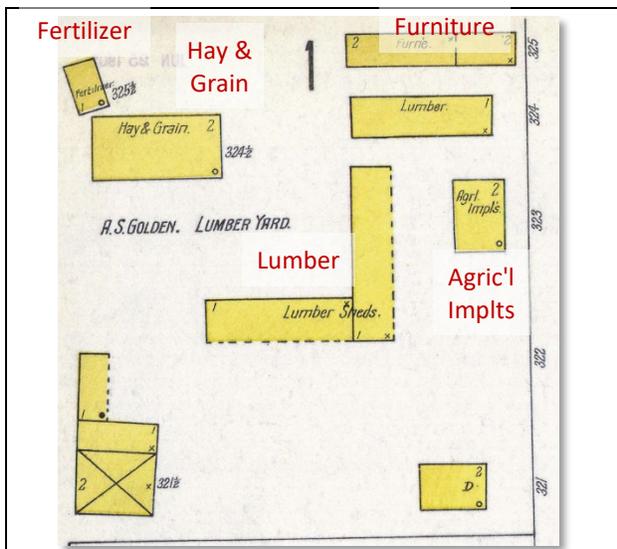
Lumberyard Site

1900-1937 Sanborn Fire Maps

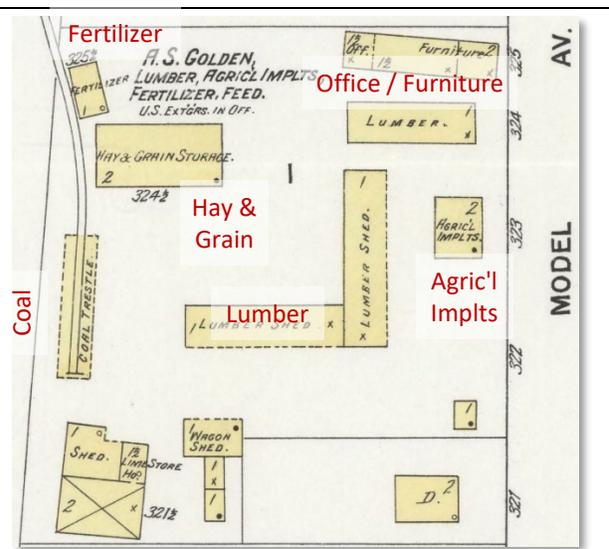
As shown on the Sanborn Fire Maps, the lumberyard site had a consistent layout from A. G. Golden in 1900 to J. C. Van Doren in 1935. On the east side (top), were the Fertilizer and Hay & Grain storage next to the railroad siding (with the coal trestle further down), and the Furniture business building close to the street. In the middle were lumber sheds and other smaller sheds, including Lime storage. (The north end later became the office.) In the middle were lumber sheds and other smaller sheds, including Lime storage.



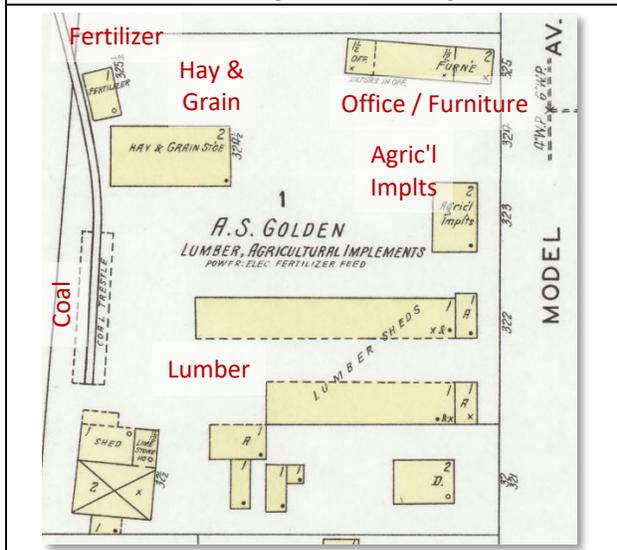
"Golden & Bond" (no Agric'l Impls) [HHH 1897]



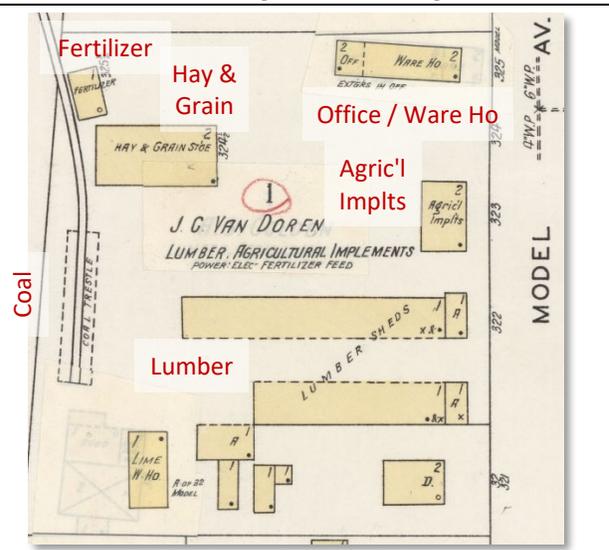
Golden [Sanborn 1902]



Golden [Sanborn 1912]



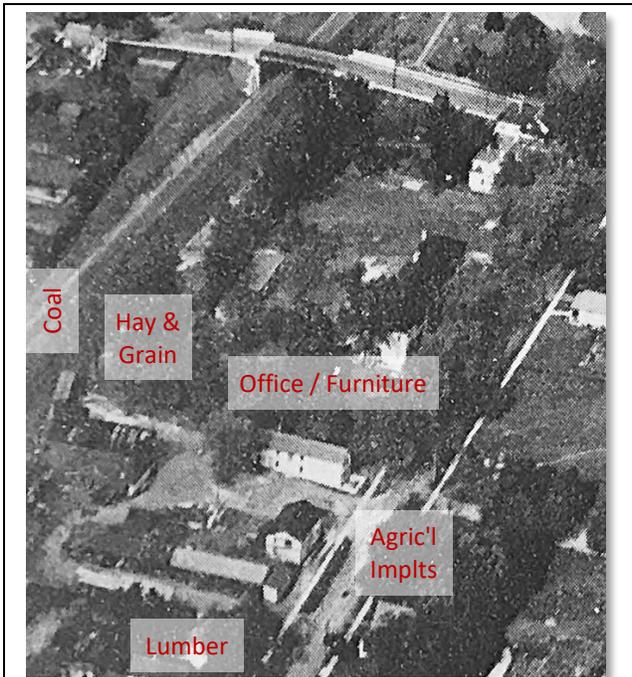
Golden [Sanborn 1927]



Van Doren [Sanborn 1935]

1930s-1970s Aerials

These 1930s and 1972 areas show Model Avenue from the Greenwood Railroad Bridge, past the Model School & Annex buildings, to the Lumberyard.



[Mercer Master Plan 1931]



[Sudlow 1972]



[1932 (Lindbergh)]



References

Information extracted and summarized from sources including books, reports, maps, deeds, newspapers, and photos.

Many of the original materials (i.e., documents, maps, aerials, and photos) come from the many contributors to the Hopewell Valley History Project and are shared on the site - see the Acknowledgements page (HopewellHistoryProject.org).
Comments, additions, and corrections are welcome.

Thanks to the contributors to the site who kindly provided information and materials, especially:

- Kate Hepburn and Carole Thompson for Van Doren family information, photos, and artifacts
- The Sudlows and Johnsons for lumberyard fire photos

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Ancestry.com - Family history records (\$) - <https://www.ancestry.com/>