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# Preservation in Ridley Creek State Park: Documentation of the Historic Farmsteads

Jeffrey Robert Barr  
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## **Disciplines**

Historic Preservation and Conservation

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PRESERVATION IN RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK:  
DOCUMENTATION OF THE HISTORIC FARMSTEADS

by


JEFFREY ROBERT BARR

A Thesis  
in  
Historic Preservation

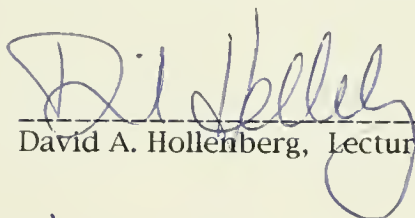
Presented to the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

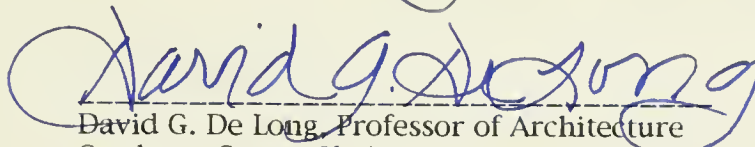
1993



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## Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the involvement of a number of individuals. I would like to thank John T. Graham, the Park Manager at Ridley Creek, for recognizing the value of this study and allowing access to all of the park properties. I would also like to thank the staff of Ridley Creek State Park and the Bishop's Mills Historical Institute for their assistance. Thanks to all of the park residents who tolerated my numerous visits. I particularly appreciate Norman Glass for sharing his ideas and insight with me, as well as his genuine interest in many of my projects.

I would like to thank Nancy Webster at the Delaware County Planning Department for sharing her knowledge and experiences concerning the local preservation community. Thanks to David Hollenberg for providing many valuable suggestions and John Milner for his guidance, interest and invaluable assistance. Finally I would to thank my family for their love and support, especially my wife and her incredible patience.



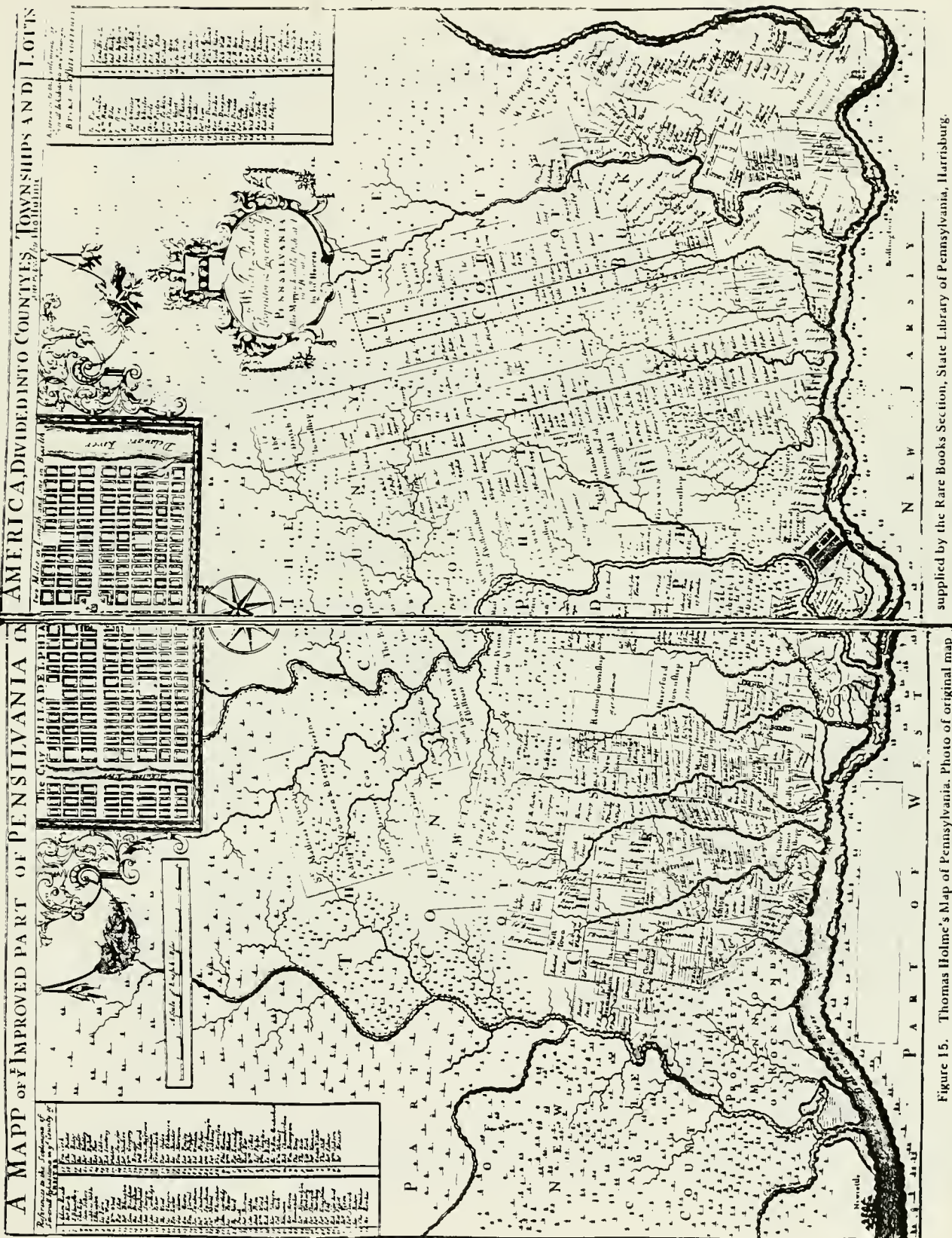
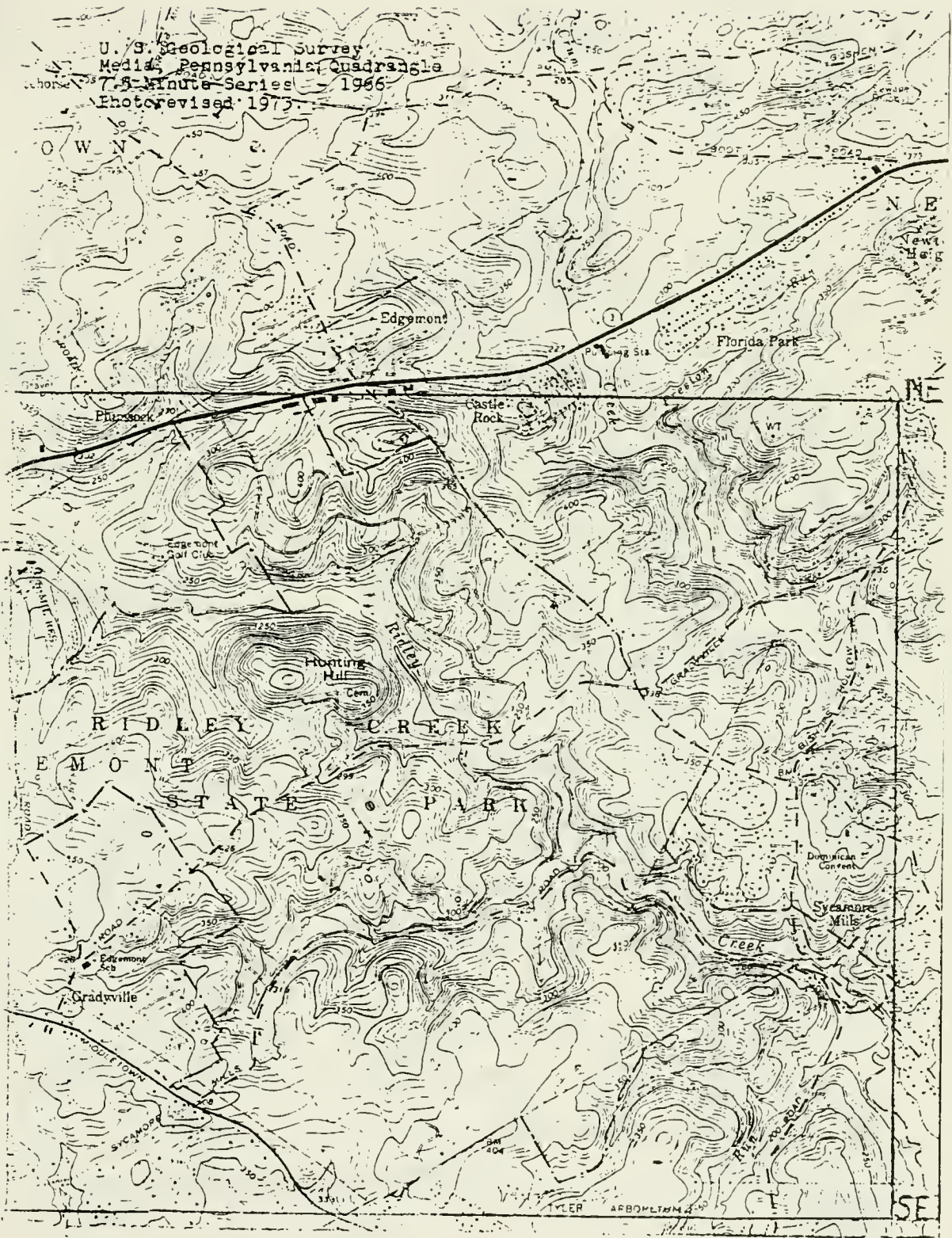


Figure 15. Thomas Holme's Map of Pennsylvania. Photo of original map supplied by the Rare Books Section, State Library of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg.



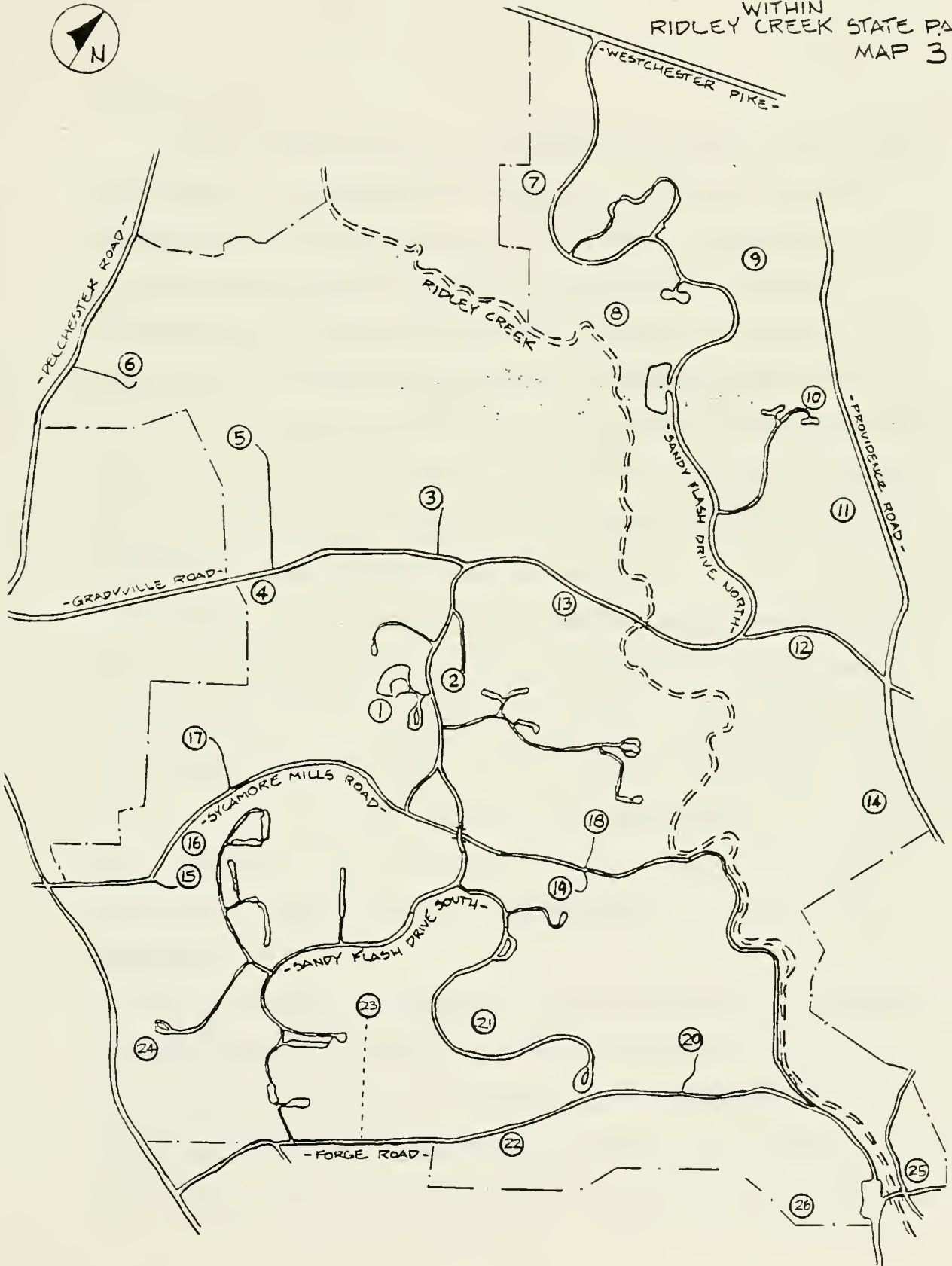
U. S. Geological Survey  
 Media, Pennsylvania, Quadrangle  
 7.5 Minute Series 1966  
 Photorevised 1973







# HISTORIC FARMSTEADS WITHIN RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK MAP 3





## Introduction

Ridley Creek State Park is located in Edgmont Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania purchased the property through a series of transactions in 1966-67 to preserve increasingly valuable open space and to establish a recreational facility within an expanding metropolitan area. The park, which officially opened to the public in 1972, is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Bureau of State Parks. It has been designated, managed, and heavily utilized as a day-use, recreational facility. Visitors are attracted to the relatively unspoiled setting and scenery of the landscape. Popular passive recreational activities within the park include hiking, jogging and biking.

Ridley Creek Park is also rich in seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century rural vernacular architecture. These significant historic resources are representative of the first permanent English settlers in Pennsylvania. Historic preservation is not the stated objective of the D.E.R., but the creation of the park has, nevertheless, preserved an eighteenth and nineteenth-century community of farmsteads within an undisturbed context. The Department of Environmental Resources has, therefore, assumed the challenging task of historic property management.

The undisturbed concentration of original farmsteads, and the quantity and quality of early vernacular architecture is extraordinary. However, most of the significant cultural resources within the park are uninterpreted and inadequately maintained. The entire park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places as an Historic District in 1976. But an appropriate management



policy, to protect the structures from alteration and neglect, has not been clearly established. The existing public ownership of these properties provides a rare opportunity to insure their preservation. A coordinated effort by the appropriate state and local agencies, the occupants of the historic houses, and the local community is necessary to encourage and insure the preservation of these resources.

There are twenty-five early farmsteads, along with an eighteenth-century mill village, within Ridley Creek State Park. A substantial country manor house, designed in 1914 by the noted Philadelphia architect, Wilson Eyre, now serves as the park office and is one of the few twentieth-century structures on the property. The farmsteads and individual structures are distributed throughout the park along four eighteenth-century road alignments, two of which are now closed to vehicular traffic. Although most of the farmlands have reverted to woodlands, some of the buildings are preserved within an early agricultural context. The creation of the 2600 acre park has essentially prohibited development and protected the vestiges of this original eighteenth-century agricultural community. Modern intrusions are limited to a few new access roads, parking areas, picnic tables and small comfort stations or utility buildings.

Many of the historic structures within the park have fallen into disrepair since state acquisition due to a lack of funding, as well as an inadequate prioritization of maintenance needs. Apparent in the management policies of the Bureau of State Parks is a philosophy of letting the landscape return to its natural state. State Parks and Forests, which are administered by the Department of Environmental Resources, are maintained as multi-use recreational facilities. State-owned historic sites and museums, on the other hand, are administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The PHMC, unlike the D.E.R., is responsible for, and directly involved with, the preservation of historic



architecture. Both agencies have been faced with shrinking budgets and cutbacks in recent years, a situation which has influenced very different management policies. The significance of numerous historic resources within the Pennsylvania State Park system has not been adequately recognized, and many are suffering from neglect and deterioration.

In the early 1970's, the D.E.R. and its Ridley Creek staff realized the potential cost of maintaining the historic farmsteads and a decision was made to rent a number of the houses to the general public as private residences. This program was believed to be a cost effective method of maintenance, but failed to recognize the historical and architectural significance of the buildings. The character and integrity of many of the structures has been sacrificed because the tenants have been relatively free to renovate and maintain the houses as they deemed appropriate. Little documentation was initially performed by D.E.R. and changes in the architectural fabric of these houses was not sufficiently monitored. In addition, the barns and outbuildings, which are vital to the interpretation of the early agricultural landscape, have received virtually no maintenance in the past twenty five years. The maintenance of the outbuildings, unless specifically designated in a lease agreement, has not been the responsibility of the tenants and most are in a rapid state of deterioration or ruin.

Today, all proposals for residential improvements are reviewed by the Park Superintendent. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects* is currently consulted by management, but was only distributed to tenants within the last three years. An incentive for tenant maintenance is provided by the reduction of the monthly rent equal to the amount invested in the property. This has been relatively successful, but in some cases, the incentive has promoted unnecessary renovation work and the alteration of original architectural fabric.





In theory, the rental program has the potential to be an effective method for the preservation of many of the historic houses. But the insufficient historical and architectural documentation of the structures and the non-existent maintenance of the outbuildings has gradually and negatively affected the integrity of the farmsteads. The generic lease agreements have not addressed the historic significance of the properties, the individual buildings, or their specific architectural details and fabric.

Over the years, some research on the park properties has been conducted by local historians. The Bishop's Mills Historical Society was essentially created, in the early 1970's, to nominate the properties to the National Register. The Bishop's Mills Historical Institute, a component of the Historical Society, has conducted research on the Sycamore Mill village as well as its own leased property within the park. Various courses in material culture and archaeology from the University of Pennsylvania and Villanova University have also investigated and documented certain sites. Jane Carter, a well-known local resident and historian, conducted substantial research on the history of the area for her book *Edgmont, The Story of a Township* which was published in 1976.

The documentation that was done for the National Register District, as well as the statewide Historic Resource Survey, maintained by PHMC, contains only brief architectural descriptions of the buildings. These surveys also focused primarily on the structures which are, or were, in good condition. The park staff does maintain an inventory of structures, with locations and status, along with some photo-documentation and building dimensions. But it is apparent that to properly monitor the structures in the rental program, and record the structures that are being lost, building-specific, architectural and historical documentation is necessary. Comprehensive documentation in the manner of a Historic Structures Report is appropriate for many of the buildings and would establish the potential



for proper and accurate restoration work. This documentation could be consulted by the park staff when evaluating work proposals and by tenants interested in the history and significance of their properties.

The primary goal of this thesis is to establish a methodology for the documentation of the historic farmsteads within the park. By recording the present condition, structural evolution and property history, this documentation could be used to enhance the appreciation and management of these resources. First, an historic context will be established through a discussion of the early architecture and settlement of southeastern Pennsylvania. Recommendations for an improved rental program will also be suggested through a discussion of various resource management policies.

In recent years, as a general awareness and support for historic preservation has increased, the resources within our state parks are being re-evaluated and the Pennsylvania State Park system is facing the challenge of an expanded and changing role. This thesis is intended to serve as a resource for both park management and residents and can hopefully promote the preservation and maintenance of these significant historic structures.

In a series of Case Studies, the evolution of three of the significant historic farmsteads within Ridley Creek State Park have been documented and analyzed. Because the study of the architectural fabric itself must be viewed within its historical context, the property histories and chain of title were also researched. With twenty five farmsteads and over one hundred individual structures, complete documentation was beyond the scope of this study. Hopefully, with the standardization of an appropriate format and the continued involvement of the University of Pennsylvania and the Bishop's Mills Historical Institute, this documentation can be continued.



## Early Settlement of Southeastern Pennsylvania

Unlike the pure English colonies in New England and the South, the mid-Atlantic region, with its colonial origins in the Delaware Valley, was characterized by the diversity of its settlers. The folk-culturalist Henry Glassie in his book *The Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* states :

"The Mid-Atlantic, the major region last settled and initially least homogeneous, was the most important of the material folk culture regions, for both the North and South were influenced by practices which had their New World source in southeastern Pennsylvania."<sup>1</sup>

The first period of settlement in the Delaware Valley, and southeastern Pennsylvania in particular, can be defined as extending from the mid-seventeenth century to approximately 1740. Settlements in the territory now known as Pennsylvania were initially focused along the banks of the Delaware River and gradually radiated out into the rural back country of what is now Chester and Delaware counties. Southeastern Pennsylvania, or "The Pennsylvania Culture Region", according to Joseph Glass, not only helped define a new American culture, it was the prototype for American architectural forms and agricultural practice.<sup>2</sup>

A distinct Pennsylvania culture was gradually established during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the Dutch, Swedes, English, Welsh, Germans and Scotch-Irish settlers assimilated over time. Some cultural traditions were lost, others were maintained or adapted to the new environment. But all of the settlers, regardless of nationality, faced the same challenges. In Pennsylvania, this mix of cultures and traditions influenced new agricultural practices, settlement patterns and architectural forms.

Most of the early settlers that came to the Delaware Valley in the seventeenth-century arrived in Upland, an early Swedish settlement on the



Delaware River, located in present Delaware County, Pennsylvania. The Swedes were the first to establish a permanent colony in the region. Their original settlement was located on the Christiana Creek in what is now New Castle County, Delaware. By 1643, settlements were also established further north at Upland and on Tinicum Island in the Delaware River.

Relatively small populations of Dutch and Swedes claimed territory and clashed over control of the Delaware River throughout the seventeenth-century. These claims were disregarded by the English who began to colonize the Delaware Valley towards the end of the century. The province of Pennsylvania was created in 1681 when Charles II granted territory to William Penn to pay off a family debt. Penn had a grand scheme of creating a rationally planned and ordered colony based on political and religious freedom. He created his new colony in the spirit of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, who led a simplistic, virtuous and tolerant way of life. Settlers were drawn to the New World to make a fresh start and to escape persecution, and Pennsylvania offered them freedom and opportunity. During this time, England was still operating on the feudal or manorial system of land management and the potential for individual land ownership in Penn's colony was inviting.

William Penn, the Proprietor of the colony, envisioned a structured society and an orderly pattern of occupation. The land was organized into the three original counties of Bucks, Philadelphia and Chester. A land office was established in the colony and surveyors portioned the counties into townships. Penn's original plan was for cooperative village settlement within townships, whereby the settlers would reside together in a small community and cooperatively farm the surrounding countryside. The townships were intended to be the primary entities in the political structure of each county. In 1685, Penn wrote, "We do settle in the way of townships or villages of which contains five





thousand acres in square, and at least ten families. The regulation of the country being a family to each five hundred acres."<sup>3</sup>

Penn executed some land grants, typically in parcels of five thousand acres or more, while still in England. These original land titles, or patents were acquired by "first purchasers", who were predominantly English Quakers. The Thomas Holme map of the "Improved Part of Pennsylvania" is a valuable early document illustrating the counties, townships and landholdings and includes names of many of the first purchasers. (see map 1)

The plan for an orderly settlement pattern and a structure of semi-autonomous townships was never fully realized. The counties instead emerged as the organizing political bodies in the colony. In addition, there was resistance to "quitrents" and other vestiges of a manorial land management system that the Proprietor attempted to institute. Many early deeds refer to "quitrents" of one shilling to be paid to the Proprietor, or his representatives, on an annual basis. Some of the land was claimed by squatters and officials had a difficult task collecting taxes and settling boundary disputes in the early years. The distinct rectilinear townships and properties on the Thomas Holme map indicate the land that was surveyed before settlement.<sup>4</sup> Land was usually sold by Penn's agents in tracts of one hundred to five hundred acres, and over time, land grants increasingly met the needs of an individual purchaser not a township survey.

The majority of immigrants who came to Delaware Valley were farmers of the "middling" or yeoman class. They were seeking freedom from the restrictive agricultural system still in place in Europe. From the outset, the people who emigrated to southeastern Pennsylvania tended to settle on separate farms, which is significant as it represents a desire for individual land ownership. This desire to occupy and control one's own parcel of land undermined Penn's plan for settlement and was a reaction to the traditional feudal system of land management



in Europe.<sup>5</sup> Such dispersed farm settlement was the first indication of the emergence of an American identity in southeastern Pennsylvania. The early subsistence farms also influenced and evolved into a tradition of general mixed farming throughout the region.<sup>6</sup>

Another practice indicative of the emerging culture in Pennsylvania was a new system of land inheritance. The traditional primogeniture system of land division common in England, and the rest of Europe, was not sustained in Pennsylvania. Rather than bequeathing one's estate to the eldest son, properties were often divided equally between the sons. This was possible due to the large initial sizes of the tracts, and was frequently practiced in the region until reaching a minimum threshold of farmable acreage.<sup>7</sup>

William Penn arrived in his new colony at Upland, on October 28, 1682 and promptly renamed it Chester, after Cheshire County in England. The town, located on the Delaware River, served as the temporary capital and primary port for the new colony until Penn's "great town" of Philadelphia was founded upriver. Immigrants flowed into the new colony from Europe and the earliest organized settlements radiated out from the established town of Chester throughout the countryside of Chester County. By 1684 there were permanent settlements at Marcus Hook, Darby and Haverford. The region of earliest settlement that now comprises Delaware County was created out of Chester County in 1789. Delaware County is traversed by the Darby, Crum, Ridley and Chester Creeks which not only provided an abundant water source but also served as natural property boundaries. Many settlements were concentrated along these creeks and at early crossroads.

Many factors were involved in the choice of land and the siting of the homestead. Obviously the availability of sufficient acreage was a factor. As the land was progressively settled, back from the Delaware River, new immigrants had



to travel further north and west to find available land. Water supply was a critical factor and all of the early farms included a spring or were sited adjacent to a creek or its tributary. The quality of the soil had an influence on settlement and it is acknowledged that the land was generally more fertile in the Delaware Valley than elsewhere in the colonies.<sup>8</sup> Accessibility to markets and ports was a consideration and is evident in the early concentration of settlement around Chester and Philadelphia, the two focal points of activity. Accessibility both to and from the towns also influenced the laying out of roads. Lastly, nationalities and religious denominations were a factor in the geography of settlement. The Welsh, Germans and Scotch-Irish immigrants either bought huge tracts of land as a group or were drawn to concentrations of their countrymen.

The English, and Quakers in particular, were the first to emigrate in large numbers and settled on the first available land. The region that now comprises Delaware County, in the southeasternmost corner of the state, was largely settled by English Quakers. This is apparent on the early maps and in the names given to the villages and townships. The number of early Quaker meetings established in present Delaware County also indicates a concentration of English settlers.

## The Township of Edgmont

The township of Edgmont in Delaware County is one of the first regions to be settled and farmed by English Quakers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries. It is representative of the early family, mixed farming operations that once characterized the region. It is also significant because many of the original farmsteads survive today, undisturbed by modern development.

Edgmont is one of the original townships mapped out by Thomas Holme in the 1680's. (see map 1) The 5000 acre township is located approximately six miles north of the town of Chester. Willistown and Middletown townships



border on Edgmont to the north and south and the Chester and Crum creeks define its boundaries to the east and west. The township, which is traversed by the Ridley Creek, still maintains its modest agricultural character since its origin in the late seventeenth-century.

The tract of land lying between the Ridley and Chester Creeks was originally referred to as "Gilead". One of the first documented settlers in the township was Joseph Baker who had purchased 500 acres and been appointed constable of Gilead by 1686.<sup>9</sup> Baker is presumed to have been responsible for renaming the township after the manor of Edgmond in his home county of Shropshire, England. The Edgmont Great Road, present day Route 352, was one of the earliest roads leading into the countryside from Chester. It originally ended at Joseph Baker's property but soon continued on to Willistown Township. Like many of these first roads, Edgmont Road followed an established Indian route, known locally as the Minquas Indian Trail. Edgmont Road was officially surveyed in 1687 and was a well travelled route going both to and from the town of Chester and into the hinterland.

Permanent settlement of Edgmont township began about 1685 and all of the parcels of land, totalling 5000 acres, were bought up and occupied by 1727. The early tax records indicate that, in addition to Baker, some of the first resident landholders in the township included Thomas and John Worolaw, Philip Yarnell and John Worrall among others.<sup>10</sup> The records and maps suggest that many of these early families remained in the township for generations. Names like Minshall, Regester, Bishop, Worrall, Pratt, Russell, Yarnell and Baker remain associated with the farms and farmsteads in Edgmont Township throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many of the structures constructed on these original family farmsteads still survive today and are among the earliest existing buildings in Delaware County.





At first, settlement was concentrated along the Edgmont Great Road which passed through the township from north to south. By 1710 there is mention in the records of Delchester and Providence Roads.<sup>11</sup> Delchester Road originally intersected Edgmont Road just below the present village of Gradyville. Originally referred to as Howellville, the village that evolved at this early crossroads influenced the laying out of Gradyville Road in the nineteenth-century. Gradyville Road travels east to west and connected Edgmont Road to Providence Road which run parallel. (see map 3)

Since the late seventeenth-century, Edgmont has been characterized by moderate sized, family farms. The average Pennsylvania farm in the early eighteenth-century varied from 100 to 500 acres. A variety of crops were cultivated, with wheat being the primary grain. Livestock was raised in limited numbers mainly for the use of the individual farm. Dairy farming did not become a major industry until the nineteenth-century and the farms in Edgmont are representative of the "mixed husbandry" of the first yeoman farmers in the region.

In 1718, John and Jacob Edge established a gristmill on the Ridley Creek in the southeastern corner of the township.<sup>12</sup> The rubble stone structure was actually situated in Upper Providence township but the dam and other related buildings extended into Edgmont. In 1720 residents of both townships petitioned the Court of General Sessions in Chester for the laying out of a roadway from the Edgmont Road to the Providence Mill.<sup>13</sup> The twenty six signatures that included John Worrall, David Register and the Yarnells among others emphasizes the value of the mill to Edgmont residents. According to the properties mentioned in the original petition, this road exists today as Forge Road. (see map 3)

In 1746, a sawmill was established adjacent to the gristmill. There is no mention of another sawmill in Edgmont township until 1805 when George Green



established a mill along a small tributary on his property.<sup>14</sup> Therefore it can be assumed that many of the structures constructed in the township during the last half of the eighteenth-century relied on lumber cut at the Providence Mill. By 1785 the mill complex was known as Bishop's Mills. In 1810 a rolling and slitting mill was established which was soon followed by a nail factory in 1812.<sup>15</sup> Concurrent with this expansion, a number of related structures were built in the area now known as Bishop Hollow. This mill village included a large millowners house and barn, multiple tenant houses, a blacksmith shop, a lumber shed, and a community bakehouse. In 1812, a small two story bankhouse was built which is believed to have served as the mill office and later a village library. By 1868, the complex was known as Sycamore Mills and in 1901 a fire in the grist and sawmill terminated production at the site.

The original townships of Edgmont, Upper Providence and Middletown intersect at the Sycamore Mill village on the Ridley Creek. The services provided at this busy mill complex would have been heavily utilized by residents of all three townships throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Up until the present century, agriculture remained the principal industry in the area. Small villages evolved at the major crossroads and around the inns and taverns along the Baltimore Pike and the WestChester Pike, which were laid out in the nineteenth century. The town of Media, in Upper Providence township, was established as the county seat soon after Delaware County was created in 1789. But the rural atmosphere of northwestern Delaware County was maintained until the railroad and trolley lines were laid out in the latter half of the nineteenth-century.

With the local rail lines came rapid suburban development during the post-Civil War period. Many boroughs and towns were established or dramatically expanded along the rail and trolley lines in Delaware County, both of which went through Media. Housing density and population increased throughout the



twentieth-century, along with reliance on the automobile, all of which were a major factor in the changing character of the County. Chester County as well as the western townships in Delaware County, including Edgmont, Concord, Birmingham and Thornbury, have maintained a relatively rural atmosphere.

Many of the farms in the township were in continuous use until very recently and only within the past twenty five years have they undergone changes in use. A few are in fact, still operating today but the subdivisions and housing developments evident in the township are representative of the transformation of the landscape throughout the Delaware Valley. Agriculture is no longer the primary use of the land in this area but through conservation efforts, planning and involvement of local property owners, some of the open land and early architecture has been saved from development.

## Early Architecture in Southeastern Pennsylvania

The significance of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century architecture in Delaware County is clear, as it was the initial region to be settled in the state. For an area that has been experiencing rapid and constant development since the nineteenth-century, any surviving early structures deserve study and recognition.

Architecture is among the most easily researched expressions of material culture because of its immobility and permanence. Buildings, as well as objects, are artifacts that can be evaluated and interpreted. As Henry Glassie stresses, artifacts, and architecture in particular, provide information about the skills and techniques of their builders and subsequent insight into their way of life.<sup>16</sup>

Much of the rural colonial architecture constructed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is believed to have been owner-built. This is undoubtedly the case in rural areas, but as Abbott Lowell Cummings maintains in



his landmark text *The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625 to 1725*, regional architectural forms and construction technologies were determined by skilled local craftsmen and builders.<sup>17</sup>

In New England, the traditional timber frame construction techniques were imported by the skilled English carpenters and joiners who settled the area. Interestingly, there was an abundance of suitable building stone as well as timber in both New England and the mid-Atlantic region, but two distinctly different construction techniques emerged. In southeastern Pennsylvania a tradition of masonry construction evolved which was influenced by the availability of rubble fieldstone and suitable clays for brickmaking. But again, this technology was dictated by the skilled English craftsmen who first settled the area and built much of its architecture during the early periods of settlement.

American vernacular architectural forms are a product of "culture regions" and reflect the tastes and traditions of different communities. These forms are dictated by the traditions, skills, requirements and materials available to each individual builder. Vernacular structures frequently exhibit change, additions and an evolution over time. This evolution often reflects a functional expansion or modernization following the current, local fashion of the day. The study of vernacular architecture reveals and defines regional construction techniques forms and patterns. These forms can also provide information on property development, changes in use as well as family and local history.

Early rural Pennsylvania architecture was primarily farm architecture. Many vernacular "Pennsylvania" forms, such as bankhouses and bankbarns, have been recognized as significant in the development of American architecture. A number of these individual buildings, and even some early farmsteads, survive today throughout the Delaware Valley. A few have been preserved as historic sites, but they all contribute to the rich heritage of the area.







Fig. 1. The Lower Swedish Log Cabin. Darby, PA.



Fig. 2. The 1683 Caleb Pusey House. Chester, PA.



Many of the earliest shelters in the Delaware Valley were small, one room houses or huts. The Lower Swedish log cabin, located in Darby, (see Fig. 1) and the John Morton Homestead in Prospect Park, Delaware County both date from the mid-seventeenth century and are good examples of early log construction. Both have been restored, in part on speculation, but are typical of the first generation shelter constructed during this period. But contrary to popular legend, early construction technology was not limited to log structures.

The 1683 Caleb Pusey house, in the Borough of Upland, is considered the oldest surviving English house in the state.<sup>18</sup> (see Fig. 2) The original portion of the house is a single room with a loft, built of rubble field stone with a wood shingle roof. This simple form and its construction technique became the standard for rural Pennsylvania architecture. The Caleb Pusey house is the earliest documented example of the rubble fieldstone architecture that is now associated with Chester County and once characterized the entire region.

The construction of the Pusey house indicates that not all of the initial shelters in the region were built of log. The settlers were striving to establish permanent new homes for their families and appropriate building stone was abundant in the area. The granites, sandstones and schists suitable for construction were simply collected while clearing the fields or available from local outcrops. Lime mortar was produced by burning limestone or oyster shells in large open kilns. Rubble masonry construction was employed in all forms and types of structures, from the simple one room cottage to the local meetinghouse. Many of the early houses, mills, and farm buildings that survive today were built of the durable, rubble fieldstone masonry.

There was also a tradition of brick masonry construction that evolved in certain areas throughout the mid-Atlantic region. (see Fig. 3) Early brick structures are typically identified by the irregular hand molded bricks and the





Fig. 3. The Samuel Levis House (late 17th c.). Springfield, PA.



Fig. 4. The 1696 Thomas Massey House. Broomall, PA.



checkerboard pattern of the flemish bond construction. During the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, the walls were often laid up in an alternating header and stretcher pattern. The double thickness of the wall was bonded together by the header bricks which were laid perpendicular to the face of the wall. Often the headers were glazed, which created a checkerboard effect, or were utilized for more complex decorative patterns. (see Fig. 4)

Brick construction was dependent on the availability of suitable clays for brick manufacture. Brick kilns, as well as limekilns, could be constructed on site, and the material produced as needed. Similar to the widespread log cabin theory, the romantic notion of bricks being transported from Europe as ballast in ships has been largely disproven. It is true that many of the rural brick farmhouses found in southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey were constructed by wealthy landholders, but the time, labor and cost for the transportation of bricks would not have been practical. The wide dispersal of rural brick houses constructed in the first period of settlement affirms the existence of local brick manufacturing.

Although a variety of building materials were used in the region, most of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century architecture that has survived in rural southeastern Pennsylvania was constructed of rubble masonry. Chester County in particular is characterized by its early masonry architecture. (see Fig. 5) *Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania*, by Eleanor Raymond, is an wonderful survey of rural vernacular architecture in the region and reinforces the predominance of rubble masonry construction. (Raymond, it should be noted, recognized as early as 1930 the significance of these "Pennsylvania" forms and the value of documentation)

Vernacular structures have traditionally been classified by form or plan as opposed to style. The single room, one and one half story form built of log, stone,







Fig. 5. The John Chad House (c. 1720). Chadds Ford, PA.

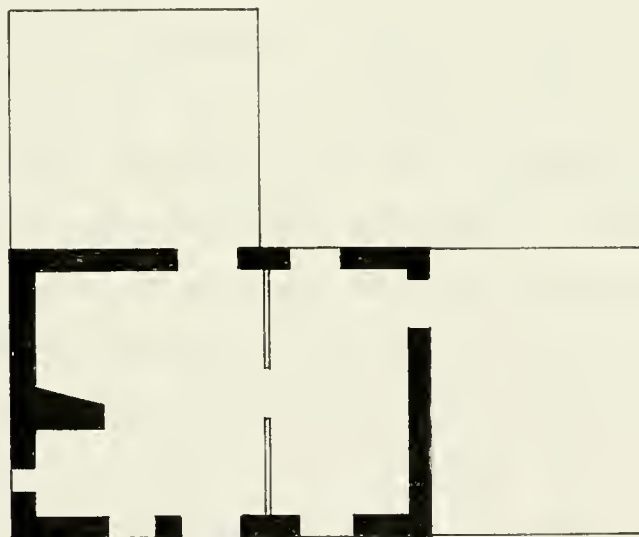


Fig. 6. Typical Hall and Parlor Plan. With Linear and Ell Additions.



brick or frame was the most common initial residence in the mid-Atlantic region. (see Fig. 2) These structures contained a common room or "hall" with a loft above. "Hall" is a medieval term used to describe a space which housed all of the activities of domestic life. Often the original structure was added onto, and expanded over time and can be referred to as a vernacular evolution.

The two room, or hall and parlor, plan was also common and evolved with the desire for more specialized spaces. (see Fig. 6) Hall and parlors separated the cooking space from sitting and sleeping area. This design was common throughout the colonies and, according to Cummings, was based on English precedent.<sup>19</sup> Hall and parlors in Pennsylvania were typically divided by a wood framed partition with a gable end fireplace and chimney. Sometimes the two room plan was achieved by adding a second room to an existing one room structure. These linear additions follow the direction of the existing roofline and often doubled the size of the house while maintaining the single room width. (see Fig. 6)

Ell additions were frequently built onto an existing structure and often indicate an evolution over time. These additions were connected perpendicular to the main portion of the structure and substantially altered their form. Often, ell additions housed a new kitchen with an additional cooking fireplace and the original was then converted to a smaller parlor fireplace. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, with the increased specialization of spaces, kitchen ells were sometimes constructed as part of the original structure, but they most often indicate an evolution over time. (see Fig. 6)

The two story, hall and parlor with a single room width and two over two plan is commonly referred to as an I-house.(see Fig. 7) I-houses have a characteristic solid gable end with an occasional attic window and are a very common form in Pennsylvania.



The gable end fireplace and interior chimney mass was a regional characteristic of houses in the mid-Atlantic region. The interior fireplace elevation was often embellished with wood panelling. Box winder staircases, closets, and cupboards typically flanked the fireplace itself and were integrated into the panelled wall. This feature and the large size of the early walk-in fireplaces did not allow for standard windows in the gable end. The tall, thin casement windows, offset on the gable end facade, are a typical characteristic of seventeenth and early eighteenth-century houses in southeastern Pennsylvania. (see Fig. 3)

By the middle of the eighteenth-century, the English Georgian form was influencing rural vernacular architecture.<sup>20</sup> The symmetry and formality of the form had previously been reserved for the wealthy class and was expressed in many high-style townhouses and country estates. (see Fig. 8) The full Georgian form was a two story, four over four plan with a central stair hall. The primary facade typically had five bays with a center door. The gable end expressed the double pile, or two room width, with a symmetrical window placement. During the eighteenth-century, the form became fashionable and desirable to the common population and many vernacular houses were modified and transformed to achieve the Georgian ideal.. The form was also built in two thirds, or even one third versions, on smaller lots, or for people who could not afford and did not need a large house. The Georgian style took hold in the Delaware Valley after 1750 and its influence is critical to the understanding of vernacular architecture.

The family farmstead that originated and evolved in southeastern Pennsylvania typically included a large multi-use bank barn and a varied collection of outbuildings. Typical seventeenth and eighteenth-century farmsteads included a dwelling house, a barn and a springhouse. Many farms also included a summer kitchen, bakehouse, milkhouse or smokehouse.





Fig. 7. The William Russell house. Typical I-house form. Ridley Creek State Park.

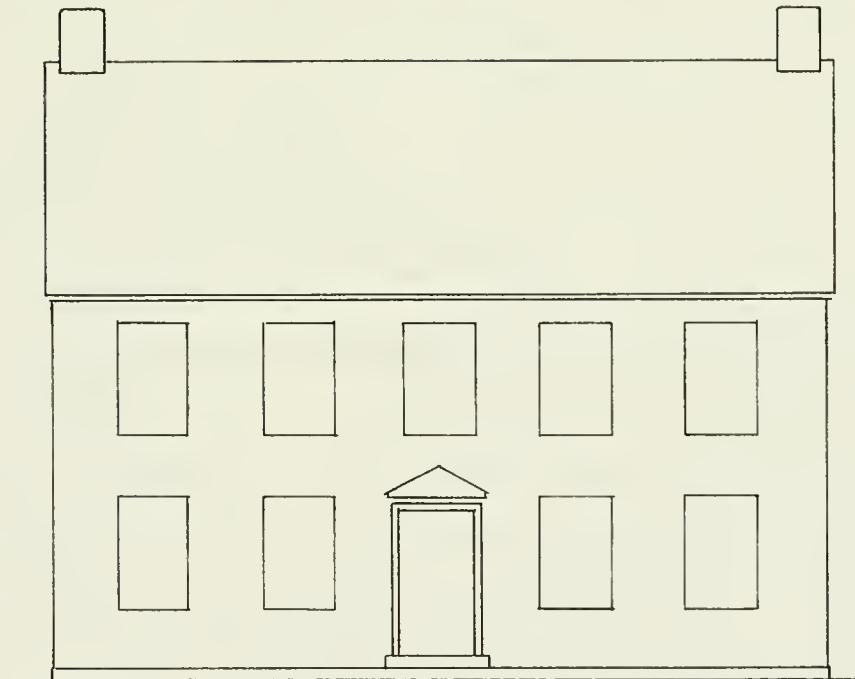


Fig. 8. Typical "Full" Georgian form.





Other common utilitarian buildings from the eighteenth-century include ice houses, corncribs, chicken coops, pigpens, wagon houses and privies.

To a certain extent, the English practice of multiple barns and sheds was consolidated in the Pennsylvania barn. The barn was the most important structure on the farmstead. It was the functional center of agricultural activity and housed the farm machinery, livestock, as well as feed and grain. The mixed farming character of the early family farms was manifested by this consolidation of activity under one roof. On most eighteenth-century Pennsylvania farms, the barn is the dominant structure.

The common "Pennsylvania" two level, bank barn was built of rubble stone with a cantilevered wood-framed fore bay. (see Figs. 9, 10) This form evolved over time and its two primary ancestors were the Germanic bank barn and the English, three bay, wood framed barn. The "Pennsylvania" barn maintained the three bay plan with a central threshing floor and flanking haymows. The banked construction of the barn, just as in bankhouses, allowed multi level access. Animals were housed on the lower level with access to and from a barnyard beneath the forebay. The main threshing floor was accessed by an earthen ramp or wooden bridge on the high side of the structure opposite the forebay.

The forebay is the characteristic feature of the classic "Pennsylvania" barn form.<sup>21</sup> It was an extension of the upper floor level and typically cantilevered over the lower level entrances. This provided weather protection for both the farmer and the livestock and allowed convenient transfer of feed and grain from above. The forebay usually contained granery bins and either access doors opening into the barn yard, or trap doors in the floor. A forebay that extends off of the barn and creates an asymmetrical gable end elevation is referred to as an open forebay. (see Fig.10) Closed forebays, on the other hand, have a recessed lower level. (see Fig. 1.5.) The closed forebay is contained within the body or





Fig. 9. Typical "Pennsylvania" Bank Barn. Ridley Creek Farm. Ridley Creek S. P.



Fig. 10. Open Forebay. (Goldwater /Link) Bank Barn. Ridley Creek State Park.



massing of the barn, producing a symmetrical gable end. Chester County barns typically feature large masonry columns or timber posts supporting an open forebay.<sup>22</sup>

A reliable source of water was critical to the farmsite and land was often chosen because of its proximity to a spring or creek tributary. Springhouses were typically constructed of rubble stone over a water source. The spring then flowed out of the structure through arched openings in the masonry walls. The building protected the spring from contamination and was also used for cold storage. Farms that lacked a springhouse often had a well or were located adjacent to a more substantial stream.

Cold storage was also a design consideration in the vernacular "Pennsylvania" bankhouse. This common farmhouse type utilized the natural slope of the site to create a relatively cool cellar space. Similar to the bankbarn the basement level of the bankhouse could be accessed from grade. (see Fig. 16) Many early farmhouse basements are dominated by large masonry arches which often function as foundations for the first floor fireplaces. Interestingly some of the larger arches that have been documented do not relate to a fireplace structure and cold storage seems to have been their only function. (see Case Study I)

Over time, other structures were constructed as the eighteenth-century farm grew and prospered. To remove the odors and heat generated from cooking, separate summer kitchens were often constructed. The construction of exterior kitchens was concurrent with the increased specialization of domestic spaces in the eighteenth century. The typical succession of cooking spaces moved from the single room or "hall" of the earliest houses to the kitchen ell addition to separate summer kitchens, bakehouses and smokehouses. Various other function-specific outbuildings were built as needed as domestic spaces were formalized and service areas were shifted out of the main house.



The internal arrangement and orientation of the buildings within the Pennsylvania farmstead varies from site to site but can be categorized in a general sense. The ridgelines of the two primary buildings, the farmhouse and the barn, can be aligned parallel, perpendicular or rarely, diagonal to each other. The secondary structures or outbuildings were always oriented towards or clustered around the primary buildings according to their function. In most of the early English farmsteads, the ridgelines of the house and barn run parallel and face south. The primary structures are often in a linear relationship but at times they are staggered with the barn set slightly behind the farmhouse.

The arrangement of the farmstead usually defined a central outdoor farmyard where routine chores and maintenance tasks took place. This area was most likely between the house and barn and directly accessed by the farm lane. The barn and its utilitarian outbuildings were typically clustered around this area. In medieval England, farmyards or courtyards were defined by a formal rectilinear arrangement of buildings.<sup>23</sup> This rectilinear approach to design was maintained throughout the colonies in the shapes of buildings, fields, barnyards and farmsteads. But on the Pennsylvania farmstead, order and organization was less formal, and often evolved through the vernacular design process.

Due to the variety of design influences, vernacular architecture can be very difficult to analyze and interpret. Obviously, the existing architectural fabric, or the artifact itself, must be examined and documented to determine its origin and evolution. But to fully understand the evolution of a vernacular structure or property, the local history must first be researched. The study of related family genealogies and property histories also contributes to the interpretation of historic structures. Researching the colonial development of the rural counties and townships in southeastern Pennsylvania establishes a context for the seventeenth and eighteenth-century architecture in Ridley Creek State Park.





## Ridley Creek State Park

Edgmont Township is unique to Delaware County because over half of the Township has been protected from development and preserved within Ridley Creek State Park. The 2600 acre parcel is one of the largest, contiguous, undisturbed areas in the Delaware Valley. Contained within the park is a rich collection of seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth-century farmsteads and significant vernacular structures that are representative of the first English settlers in rural Pennsylvania. Due to a long, singular succession of ownership, these early farmsteads and landscapes have been virtually undisturbed by modern development.

Twenty five original farmsteads along with the eighteenth-century Sycamore Mills village are contained within Ridley Creek State Park. (see map 3) This collection and concentration of colonial, English agricultural architecture is unparalleled in the mid-Atlantic region. The farmsteads and their buildings represent more than 300 years of rural agricultural activity dating back to the establishment of the province of Pennsylvania. These state-owned resources provide an opportunity to investigate, interpret and understand the lives, architecture and agricultural practice of southeastern Pennsylvania's earliest English settlers.

The stewardship of these properties has been under the direction of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Bureau of State Parks since 1967. To understand the administration and management policies of Ridley Creek State Park it is first necessary to understand the system as a whole.

Pennsylvania's State Park system originated in 1893 with the establishment of Valley Forge State Park. Today this park system is second only to systems in Alaska and California in total acreage. The Pennsylvania Department



of Environmental Resources administers and maintains the facilities which, in 1989, consisted of 114 parks totalling nearly 280,000 acres of land and water.<sup>24</sup> The objectives for the Pennsylvania parks are defined in state legislation. This "state park mission statement" with its broad, general terms outlines the purposes and visions of the park system. The longrunning debate over preservation and usage of our natural resources on public lands has its origin in the interpretation of these types of statements.

According to the Pennsylvania State Park Mission Statement, "D.E.R.'s mission is to ensure the wise use of Pennsylvania's natural resources; to protect and restore the natural environment; protect public health and safety; provide opportunities for outdoor recreation; and enhance the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians."<sup>25</sup> The philosophy of the Department of Environmental Resources is defined in these statements. Recreation or use seems to be the primary focus and function of the state park system in Pennsylvania. Protection of resources has traditionally referred to the natural landscape or "scenic beauty". Typically, resources are maintained in or allowed to return to their "natural" state. Over time, as more facilities were created, the state park resources have diversified, use has increased and maintenance has suffered. Recently, as budgets have tightened this preference for the natural landscape has been reinforced by necessity. In Pennsylvania, the park system has preserved increasingly valuable open space, protected various wildlife habitats and preserved significant historic sites. Many of the parks have been specifically established to protect, or may just happen to contain, significant cultural resources. But the historic significance of these resources is all too often unrealized and uninterpreted. As the park system has expanded and diversified, awareness and concern for the natural and built environment has increased and the role of our state parks is in need of re-examination.



In the 1950's, during a time of economic prosperity, goals were set to establish recreational areas within twenty five miles of every citizen in Pennsylvania.<sup>26</sup> In 1964, state legislators approved "Project 70", a \$70 million program for park land acquisition. This bond program and a similar program entitled "Project 500" with matching grants from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund enabled the state to establish 64 new facilities between 1960 and 1980.<sup>27</sup>

Ridley Creek State Park was created in the late 1960's with Project 70 funds. In an act of eminent domain the state was able to acquire more than 2000 acres. More land has since been purchased from private owners along Providence Road to the east and from the Tyler Arboretum, which borders the park to the south. Close to 2000 acres were acquired, between 1966-67, from the heirs of Walter M. Jeffords who had amassed a large contiguous estate during the early part of this century. At this time of his death, the "Hunting Hill Estate" was the largest single, private, landholding in the Philadelphia area.<sup>28</sup> Jeffords died in 1960 and his wife, Sarah Dobson-Fiske, passed away in 1966. The following year, Walter (Jeff) Jeffords Jr. announced a plan to subdivide the 2000 acre estate for development. The state realized the opportunity to preserve open space and create a recreational park within an expanding suburban area. The property was assessed by the state and the Jeffords were offered its market value. Apparently there was a substantial difference in the perceived value of the land and Jeffords resisted the state action. In the meantime, the contents of the Jeffords mansion was sold at auction in June of 1967. Against the Jeffords wishes, the state eventually appropriated the land in five transactions totalling \$5.6 million.<sup>29</sup>

Walter M. Jeffords had initially amassed his estate by buying up struggling farms in the township before and during the Depression. Many of these farms



were then rented out to tenant farmers who maintained the properties and the agricultural tradition of the area. Some of the historic properties were eventually used for employee housing or storage by the Jeffords family. Mr. Jeffords had one of the eighteenth-century farmhouses on his property redesigned and expanded in the manner of an English manor house. This mansion, designed by Philadelphia architect Wilson Eyre and completed in 1918, now houses the state park offices. (see Fig. 11) Interestingly, the original 1789 George Green house was carefully incorporated in the design by Eyre and the southern exterior facade and some interior details are still evident.

Walter Jeffords and his wife Sarah Dobson-Fiske acquired approximately 800 acres of their estate from Sarah's uncle Samuel Riddle as a wedding gift in 1911. Riddle was a millionaire and noted socialite businessman in the Philadelphia area. He had acquired 800 acres of farmland in Edgmont township towards the end of the nineteenth-century. This succession of ownership and lack of development on this large parcel of land, have been the principal factors in the preservation of the historic farmsteads and landscapes.

The properties fronting on Providence Road (see map 3) were also acquired in eminent domain actions between 1967 and 1970. These acquisitions created a contiguous 2489 acre parcel bounded by Middletown and Delchester Roads to the west and Providence Road to the east. The Tyler Arboretum borders the Park on the south side and a portion of the WestChester Pike borders the property to the north. Gradyville Road is the primary east/west route into and through the park. The eighteenth-century Forge Road and Sycamore Mills Road were closed to traffic when the Park was created and now serve as bike/jogging paths. This has preserved the undisturbed, isolated atmosphere of the landscape as well as the context for much of the historic architecture in the southern portion of the park.

When developing the land for public use in the late 1960's, the state





constructed a number of comfort stations and picnic areas throughout the park. To provide better access, a new north/south road with multiple spurs and parking areas was constructed. Sandy Flash Drive North created a new entrance off of WestChester Pike and connected to the existing Gradyville Road. Sandy Flash Drive South provides access to the park headquarters and connects Gradyville Road to Sycamore Mills Road. This new access road then continues beyond the bike path and circles around to various parking and picnic areas in the southern portion of the park. (see map 3)

Throughout the twentieth-century, many of the properties on the estate were occupied and maintained by tenant farmers or the Jeffords' employees. Although many of the historic farmsteads on the estate were no longer farmed during the Jeffords ownership, most of the houses and many of the outbuildings were still maintained. Farming activity continued on some of the properties and sustained the agricultural tradition of the area until the park was created. Today, most of the original farmland within Ridley Creek State Park has reverted to woodlands and the many of the historic structures are in ruins or have completely disappeared. Much of this deterioration has occurred since the park was established in 1966-67. The barns and other outbuildings have received little maintenance in over twenty five years. Photographs indicate that certain houses, recently habitable, were also left to deteriorate during this period. (see Fig. 12)

Although many of the structures have been neglected since the park was established, a number of the individual historic houses are rented and maintained by tenants. Two of the farmsteads within the Park are leased to private concessions and one private family farm has a lifetime tenancy agreement. One eighteenth house is occupied by the superintendent and his family. Twenty five other individual historic structures are rented to the general public as residences. Most of these rental properties are eighteenth century





Fig.11. The Jeffords Mansion/Park Offices. Ridley Creek State Park.



Fig. 12. The Jesse Green House. Ridley Creek Farm. Ridley Creek State Park.



vernacular farmhouses and are elements within distinct individual farmstead complexes. At least two of the houses date from the nineteenth century. There is also an eighteenth-century springhouse and a nineteenth century schoolhouse that have been converted into residences.

A complete inventory of the structures within Ridley Creek State Park is included in Appendix A of this thesis. A survey of the structures was conducted by the author to assess their condition, and in some cases, their existence. This survey was based on the building inventory maintained by the park staff. A map of the farmsteads prepared for the 1976 National Register nomination was also consulted to determine building locations. Further comparison to the 1966 "Assessment of the properties of Walter M. Jeffords" by Albert M. Greenfield & Co., a real estate appraiser, revealed the severe deterioration and disappearance of many of the structures.

For the purposes of this thesis, each historic farmstead has been given a reference number which complements the existing, individual inventory numbers used by the D.E.R. (see Appendix A) The historic names associated with each property are used only if they are common knowledge or have been determined by primary research. Where in doubt, or not known, the name of the current tenant is used in parentheses to identify properties. The houses in the rental program are noted in the inventory as under "occupant agreement". It should be stressed that the tenants, unless specifically mandated in the lease, have not been held responsible for the upkeep of the barns and outbuildings. On the other hand, some tenants are using the associated carriage barns, garages and sheds and have performed maintenance on these structures. Many of the tenants have resided in the park for a considerable length of time and have expressed a genuine interest in the history of the properties. Just as there is a wide variety of



structures within the park , the tenants also have a variety of ideas concerning the use, maintenance and interpretation of these resources.

One of the properties under long term lease is the early nineteenth-century Jesse Green farmstead which operates as a riding stable. The classic Pennsylvania barn, stables, blacksmith shop and wood framed tenant house are occupied and maintained as the "Ridley Creek Farm". The main farmhouse, on the other hand, has been neglected and is deteriorating quickly. (see Fig. 12) Still, the roof and windows are relatively sound, and the structure is protected from the weather. There is evidence of a structural failure in the east gable end wall where a basement door was cut into the foundation. Otherwise, the house does not appear to be beyond the point of salvage and restoration. A more detailed architectural analysis has been conducted by a group of students from the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, under the direction of John Milner A.I.A. Their research, conducted in conjunction with this thesis, is an example of the level of documentation appropriate to most of the structures in the Park.

The other property that is under long term lease is the eighteenth-century Joseph Pratt farmstead. The Bishop's Mills Historical Institute, a private non-profit group, operates a living history farm on this property. Through first person interpretation, the "Colonial Plantation" demonstrates life on a typical Pennsylvania farm in the late eighteenth-century. The Institute has researched and restored many of the buildings on the property and today it is the most intact farmstead in the park. Not all of the buildings are original however and some have been restored, in part, on conjecture. A comprehensive Historic Structures Report was done in the mid-1970's on the Joseph Pratt farmhouse which dates from 1715. (see Fig. 13) The Plantation also contains a rubble stone bank barn, a stuccoed masonry springhouse, a stone cabin, wagon shed, icehouse and various





wood-framed sheds. The Institute maintains a small library that is located in the park headquarters and contains a collection of documents and publications mostly relating to the Pratt farmstead and local history.

The Bishop's Mills Historical Institute was established in the early 1970's and evolved out of the Bishop's Mills Historical Society. The Society was essentially created to nominate the Sycamore Mills village to the National Register of Historic Places. This group of local historians recognized the significance of the structures within the park and intensively researched the history of many of the properties. Individual nominations for the John Worrall House (see Case Study I) and the mill village were prepared in 1975. During this process, the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission apparently suggested that all of the historic properties within the park be included in the nomination.<sup>30</sup> The entire park was put on the Register as a Historic District in October of 1976. Much of the research however, appears to have concentrated on the Sycamore Mill village, the John Worrall house, and the Pratt farmstead.

The Sycamore Mills area contains a variety of structures in a small village-like community. The original mill buildings were destroyed by fire and are no longer extant. Other associated service buildings have not been maintained and are in an advanced state of deterioration. A huge rubble stone bank barn, along with a shed that was apparently used for storing lumber from the sawmill, and a community bakehouse are all in ruins. This last structure is intriguing. It is located on Thomas Minshall's original Middletown tract and could be associated with the Roundtop farm. Jane Carter, in her history of Edgmont Township, refers to the structure as the "original Thomas Minshall Tract house" but its location, design, and orientation towards the mill village suggest otherwise.<sup>31</sup> The two story, banked structure is missing its roof and floor system but contains evidence





Fig. 13. Joseph Pratt House. Colonial Plantation. Ridley Creek State Park.



Fig. 14. Sycamore Mills Bakehouse. Ridley Creek State Park.



of a fireplace and a very large, well constructed bakeoven on its lower level. (see Fig. 14)

One of the more interesting structures in the mill village that survives in good condition is the 1812 mill office. During the late nineteenth-century this building apparently contained a small library on its upper floor.<sup>32</sup> It is a three story, single room plan or "trinity", with a later shed addition, and now serves as a residence in the rental program. (see Fig. 15) Most of the other historic houses in the mill village are also rented by tenants. There are three small millworkers or tenant houses of identical original design, now differentiated by various modern additions. The other structures in habitable condition include a large double farmhouse and another house referred to as the "wheelwright" or "blacksmith" shop.

The Clonmel Farm on Providence Road is occupied by the Barnes family who have a life tenancy agreement with the state. This horse farm existed before the park was created and although the state now owns the land, an occupancy agreement was established with the Barnes family. The main farmhouse was renovated and expanded in the 1950's by Brognard Okie, a local Colonial Revival architect. Similar to Wilson Eyre's design of the Jeffords mansion, Okie respectfully incorporated an earlier eighteenth-century farmhouse into the design. The property also contains an early barn and springhouse. An early carriage barn on the property has also been converted to a guest house.

Two of the most architecturally and historically significant properties in the park are documented in Case Studies I and II of this report. The John Worrall house is the oldest structure in the park and among the oldest in Delaware County. The original brick portion of the house was constructed in the 1680's and doubled in size, in rubble stone, in 1703. Today, there are no additions and few exterior changes that disfigure the substantial early form but the interior has



been substantially remodeled. The property is also significant because of its 200 year association with the prominent local Worrall family. The house is also believed to have been used as field hospital after the Battle of Brandywine in 1777.<sup>33</sup> The 1835 barn on the property is in good condition and is significant example of a small Pennsylvania bank barn.

The Jacob Minshall house and the Roundtop farm is documented in Case Study II of this report. This property, in the far southeastern corner of the park, is actually situated in Middletown Township and was part of the Tyler Arboretum until 1978. The 1711 house is in ruins but contains much original detail and is also among the most significant structures in the County. Jacob Minshall was the son of Thomas Minshall, a first purchaser and prominent seventeenth-century resident of Upper Providence Township. The original 373 acre tract in Middletown Township was purchased from William Penn and remained in the family until 1946 when it was bequeathed to a foundation to create the Arboretum.<sup>34</sup>

The Regester/Black Farm at 440 Gradyville Road has one of the most complete collections of original early buildings in the Park. (see Case Study III) The house, originally built by Robert Regester between 1720 and 1750 has a complex vernacular evolution with at least three eighteenth and nineteenth century additions. The property also contains a springhouse, a two story summer kitchen and an early frame barn. The stone and frame wagon shed is believed to have been used by Abraham Regester for his chair or furniture business.<sup>35</sup> This is a rare surviving example of a nineteenth-century home industry in the area and adds another dimension to the interpretation of the site.

Other properties that provide an overview of the resources in the park include the Abel Green farmstead on Sycamore Mills Road. The main house is a significant example of an historic structure that has been well maintained and







Fig. 15. The Sycamore Mills. Mill Office and Wheelwright Shop. Ridley Creek S.P.



Fig. 16. The 1754 Abel Green House. Ridley Creek State Park.



contains much original detail and character. (see Fig. 16) The original 1754 western portion is a one and one half story single room plan. The larger portion was apparently added in the late eighteenth-century and is a full two story, Penn plan, bankhouse with cellar and attic. The house was apparently used and maintained by the Jeffords family as a "playhouse".<sup>36</sup> The impressive stone bank barn dating from the early nineteenth-century is an interesting early variation of the classic "Pennsylvania" form. Rather than a cantilevered forebay, a pent roof protects access on the lower level. (see Fig. 17) On the opposite side, a wood framed bridge/ramp accesses the upper level, which is a typical feature for Chester County barns.<sup>37</sup> The relatively good condition of the barn, the concrete silo, as well as a modern photograph of cattle on the property indicates an agricultural use until very recently.

The farm at 351 Gradyville Road is believed to be another eighteenth century Register family property. The stuccoed masonry farmhouse was constructed in two distinct sections and is believed, by the current tenant, to date from 1760 and 1780 respectively.<sup>38</sup> (see Fig. 18) The property also contains a numerous collection of early outbuildings including a large barn and ice house, now in ruins, and a carriage barn. An early masonry mounting block, for mounting horses, survives at the east end of the farmhouse. There is also a modern corn crib and two sheet metal grain bins on the property. The large two and one half story springhouse/residence on Gradyville Road was destroyed by fire since the park was created. The number of structures that are surviving is rare and indicates a large, early prosperous farm. The barn and house are currently being rehabilitated by an Artists Co-Operative group whose unconventional restoration work could be aided by proper documentation.

The barn on the (Goldwater/ Link) property, sometimes referred to as "Cornog's Bottom", is an impressive and significant structure. The eighteenth





Fig. 17. Barn on Abel Green Farmstead. Ridley Creek State Park.



Fig. 18. House on (Artist Co-op) property. Ridley Creek State Park.



century farmstead was associated with the Issac Hoopes family and contains a farmhouse, built in 1770 with a 1807 linear addition, and a springhouse that has been recently expanded for residential use. The barn, with a 1828 datestone, is a large, classic "Pennsylvania" type that exhibits a vernacular evolution over time with multiple shed and ell additions. (see Fig. 19) It is one of two existing Chester County types in the park with masonry columns supporting an open cantilevered forebay. Unlike the barns on the Ridley Creek Farm and the Colonial Plantation, this structure has received little maintenance in recent years because of its neglected status within the rental program. The roof on a primary shed addition collapsed during the summer of 1992 and the deteriorated condition of the other roofs will lead to further failures unless stabilization measures are taken.

The two Russell family residences on Gradyville Road are representative of two distinct Pennsylvania farmhouse types. The eighteenth-century William Russell house at 300 Gradyville Road is a two story I-house apparently built in two sections. (see Fig. 7) This is a very common early form and was built throughout the region. The John Russell house at 66 Gradyville Road appears to have been built in the early nineteenth-century. (see Fig. 20) There have been no additions and little alteration to this structure and its double door arrangement, a Pennsylvania German characteristic, is similar to the Jesse Green house at the Ridley Creek Farm. This classic form is a representative of the nineteenth-century emergence of a distinct Pennsylvania house type. It reflects a synthesis of the balanced, symmetrical Georgian influence with a Pennsylvania German influence in the door and window arrangement of the east facade.

Today, only six early barns remain standing in good condition within Ridley Creek State Park. Two of the barns, at the Ridley Creek Farm and the Colonial Plantation, have been well maintained and are actively used today. Two other eighteenth-century barns on the Clonmel Farm and the Henry Howard







Fig. 19. "Pennsylvania" Bank Barn on (Goldwater/Link) property. Ridley Creek S.P.



Fig. 20. The John Russell House. Ridley Creek State Park.



farmstead on Providence Road have been converted to residences. The (Goldwater/Link) barn, the John Worrall barn and the Abel Green barn represent three distinct subtypes of the rubble stone "Pennsylvania" bank barn. The wood-framed Register/Black barn does not appear to be as early, but upon investigation of the framing, it was discovered that a very early, smaller, three-bay timberframe is encompassed within the larger form. The ruins of many other barns are visible on the other farmsteads within the park and unless stabilization measures are taken, these last standing barns will be lost as well.

The variety of house types, barns, springhouses and other outbuildings contained within Ridley Creek State Park is remarkable. A virtual survey of early Pennsylvania vernacular architecture and a 300 year continuum of history has been preserved by the creation of the park. The barns and outbuildings that have been allowed to deteriorate are vital in the interpretation of this early agricultural landscape. The variety of architecturally significant farmhouses is representative of the historic evolution, distillation and creation of Pennsylvania vernacular architecture. It is essential to preserve these valuable resources and the existing management policies of the Department of Environmental Resources need to be re-examined and possibly modified to address this need.

This issue is not unique to Ridley Creek State Park and it is apparent that management of historic cultural resources within the entire state park and forest system is in need of a statewide re-evaluation. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has recently drawn attention to this issue by recognizing the historic significance of the 1930's era Civil Conservation Corps architecture on state land. This numerous collection of structures will significantly increase the amount of historic resources under the stewardship of the D.E.R. New or improved methods of preservation and management policies must be investigated and adopted to insure their preservation.



## Historic Resource Management

Although the historic resources within Ridley Creek State Park have been recognized by placement on the National Register, and have been protected from development within an undisturbed setting, they have still lost much of their character and integrity. Due to the philosophy and structure of the state land and resource management system, as well as a lack of funding, these significant historic resources have not been adequately maintained. Most of the structures within Ridley Creek State Park are in a rapid and perpetual state of deterioration. Many of the structures have been inappropriately altered or modernized and much of the original architectural fabric has been destroyed. Interpretation of these resources as a collection of farmsteads is being lost as the structures fall into disrepair and the natural landscape reclaims historic open space.

There is a substantial financial burden related to the stewardship of an increasing number of historic properties owned and operated by public or non-profit groups nationwide. The rental of the historic houses in Ridley Creek State Park has attempted to address the formidable and costly issue of protection and maintenance. This is an issue that confronts any owner or steward of cultural property. But the intentions and goals of public agencies, non-profit groups and historical societies, for example, can be very different and the purpose or chartered mission of these groups influence a variety of preservation methods.

The National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission both use historic property leasing as a preservation strategy. The use and treatment of the properties are regulated by strict stipulations and guidelines and spelled out in lengthy, building-specific lease agreements. The National Park Service "Historic Property Leasing Guideline" (NPS -38), requires that "a Historic Structure Preservation Guide... be prepared for all leased historic structures and attached to the lease to set forth specific responsibilities



for carrying out of preservation maintenance".<sup>39</sup> It is also required that a Historic Structures Report be prepared by a NPS Historical Architect for any major construction treatment. In addition, all of this activity should be in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects*. A key aspect of this program is that all proceeds from the leases are to be reinvested in the property. The guideline specifically states that this "reimbursable income" is to be used for maintenance, stabilization and restoration as well as the preparation of Preservation Guides and Historic Structure Reports.<sup>40</sup>

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has also chosen to lease historic structures through a placement program due to the number of properties under its stewardship. Today, nearly half of the Commission's 60 properties are operated by local museum or historical organizations.<sup>41</sup> The Commission maintains control over how the properties are to be used and treated through specific lease agreements. Chapter 7, section 701 of the 1978 State Historic Preservation Act concerns the leasing of historic property and states that all lease agreements "shall contain restrictions protecting the historical integrity of the site, insuring that appropriate historical preservation standards are maintained". The Commission also maintains a "subvention program" that provides financial assistance to the organizations managing state historic sites.<sup>42</sup> These funds are allocated in annual grants and intended to offset the cost of operations and maintenance.

Other alternative methods of historic resource management are discussed in a 1991 Master's Thesis, by Alexis H. Shutt, also for the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania. This thesis outlines an approach by two local historical societies that, due to financial burden, chose to deaccession, or sell off, donated properties. After much negotiation and controversy, both the Chester County Historical Society and the Germantown





Historical Society concluded that this was their only alternative for "saving" the properties that they could not afford to maintain.<sup>43</sup>

In all of these approaches, the selection of capable, responsible and sympathetic tenants or occupants is a major consideration. The leasing or privatization of historic properties is an effective method of sharing or shifting the responsibility of preservation if proper stewardship can be insured.

The Department of Environmental Resources, like any other rental property manager, uses the lease agreement as its primary tool for regulating tenancy. In the current occupancy agreement for the rental of the properties within Ridley Creek State Park, the Pennsylvania Department Of Environmental Resources cites section 1906-A (4) of the "Administration Code of 1929" which states:

"WHEREAS, The Department ... has the power and duty to lease a portion of any State park as may be suitable as a site for buildings to be used for recreational or educational purposes; and,

WHEREAS, certain lands acquired for use as state parks include existing buildings suitable for use as dwellings; and,

WHEREAS, it is deemed to be in the best interest to the Commonwealth in connection with the Department's work in the supervision, maintenance, improvement, regulation, policing and preservation of the park in which certain of such buildings are situated, that such buildings be rehabilitated and occupied to prevent further deterioration or destruction of such buildings through the presence of responsible persons; and,

WHEREAS, the building forming the subject matter of this Agreement is such a building for which rehabilitation and occupancy is deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth."<sup>44</sup>

Nowhere in this mandate is there any reference to historic resources. But the initial statement that the Department "has the power and duty to lease a portion of (the park) ...for... educational purposes" can be interpreted as an endorsement of historical uses. The statement that it is "in the best interest of the Commonwealth ... and (the) preservation of the park ... that (the) buildings



be rehabilitated and occupied to prevent further deterioration or destruction" obviously indicates an understanding of the problem. And the suggestion that "it is in the interest of preservation" does acknowledge, to a degree, the value and significance of the "buildings".

There is a wide variety of structures in the Ridley Creek State Park rental program, from tiny millworkers houses to five bay, Georgian farmhouses. The rental program has the potential to be an effective resource management system but the significance of the properties must be respected and their preservation must be clearly stated as a goal. Guidelines and regulations insuring proper treatment and use must then be included in and enforced by the management policy and individual lease agreements.

Twenty five houses within Ridley Creek State Park are rented to the general public with a standard annual lease and unlimited tenancy. Rents are apparently based on the assessed value of the house, and the tenants are responsible for insurance and all utilities. Once settled, tenants tend to remain in the houses and the turnover rate is very slow. The current waiting list is 8 - 10 years. In the early 1970's, rents were very affordable and little attention was given to issues of integrity or historic significance. Tenants were relatively free to rehabilitate the properties as they saw fit. Many of the interiors have been renovated and modernized and much significant historic fabric has been lost due to ignorance. Certainly some of the rehabilitation occurred before 1967, but a considerable amount of work has been done over the past twenty five years.

There is a substantial incentive for tenants to perform "repairs and improvements" on their houses. The present work exchange agreement provides a credit towards the monthly rent for the amount invested in each property up to the gross annual rental fee.<sup>45</sup> Each tenant must pay a minimum of \$50.00 per month and must verify expenditures with receipts or cancelled checks. The only



measure insuring appropriate "repairs and improvements" is approval from the park superintendent. Today, all work proposals, and estimates from contractors must be submitted and approved before work can commence. This, however, does not guarantee quality craftsmanship and many tenants appear to be doing work on their own. Much of the repair and cosmetic work that includes minor rehabilitations, does not require a building permit and therefore, eliminates this municipal process of regulating changes.

The work-exchange agreement is a powerful incentive for tenants to invest in their properties. One problem is that some tenants are constantly making improvements which are not always appropriate or necessary. It is apparent that the existing lease agreements and work proposal review is not sufficient to regulate the work and prevent inappropriate alterations. Article 8 of the common D.E.R. occupancy agreement specifically addresses repairs and improvements and states:

"(The) Department shall not be responsible or liable for any repairs and improvements upon the premises. Any repairs and improvements made shall be at the sole expense of Occupant and in conformance with BOCA requirements and comply with "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historical Restoration".<sup>46</sup>

Unlike the National Park Service leasing program, where maintenance and preservation measures are carefully directed, and the PHMC property placement program where maintenance is partially funded by the state, the D.E.R. is essentially exempt and uninvolved in the maintenance of the properties.

According to park staff, more attention has traditionally been given to the preservation of the exteriors of the rental houses. The "appearance" of the historic structures seems to be a consideration in management policy. Still, on a number of houses, asphalt shingle roofs, modern replacement windows and storm



doors have been installed. (see Fig. 21) Some of this work may have been performed out of necessity (i.e. weather penetration or heat loss) but there are more sensitive methods for addressing these problems. Some of the most visible and obviously inappropriate modifications have been the installation of skylights and picture windows. (see Figs. 18, 22-23)

Much of the work that has been done has not complied with the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards" and it is apparent that this has only been enforced within the last three years. Still, even today, some of the houses are being stripped of their character by insensitive alteration. A recent interior renovation of the John Worrall house, for example, involved the removal of the original seventeenth and eighteenth-century mantles from the back to back cooking fireplaces. (see Fig. 1.9.) This was done without approval of the superintendent, but is typical of the activity that can occur within the present system.

A larger, general problem is the neglect of the outbuildings on the historic farmsteads. Tenants have not been held responsible for the associated buildings and as a result, most of the barns, springhouses and other structures have deteriorated into ruins. (see Fig. 24) Many of these structures are listed in the building inventory as under "occupant agreement" but maintenance, unless specifically designated in the lease, is generally left up to the individual tenant. Obviously with no incentive for their upkeep, most of these structures have been neglected. A few of the carriage barns, garages and sheds are in fact used by tenants. Some tenants have expressed interest in the preservation of these associated structures and many of the residents have a genuine interest in the property histories. As more of the buildings fall into ruin, there is an increasing awareness by park residents and visitors of their significance in the historic landscape.







Fig. 21. Thomas Minshall II House (mid 18th c.). Ridley Creek State Park.



Fig. 22. (Donaldson) House. Ridley Creek State Park.





Fig. 23. (Wood) House. Ridley Creek State Park.



Fig. 24. John Russell Springhouse. Ridley Creek State Park.



Interpretation of the historic resources is an issue that must be addressed. There is potential for an improved visitor experience concerning the historic structures and farmsteads. The privately operated Colonial Plantation is promoted on the park map leaflet and with signage on the entrance roads. Numerous ruins are posted with signs that acknowledge their "early American charm" and the Sycamore Mills area has a short historical summary posted on a bulletin board near the south entrance. The mill village is only briefly mentioned in the park leaflet. But for an area so rich in history and resources, its historical interpretation is minimal.

It is apparent that the preservation of historic structures has not been a priority in the management policies of the Department of Environmental Resources. In general, due to the lack funding, a difficult problem exists in the maintenance of state owned historic resources. But it should also be understood that the stated mission of the D.E.R., unlike the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, is not to restore historic sites. The division of responsibility among the various state agencies creates a distinct categorization of state owned property and sometimes significant historic resources like those within Ridley Creek State Park are not sufficiently recognized.

Both the Bureau of State Parks, which operates over one hundred recreational facilities, and the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, which manages over fifty historic sites, have been faced with budget cuts and a lack of funding for years. Both the D.E.R. and the PHMC partially rely on a finite maintenance fund for state-owned properties. The State Maintenance Fund has been traditionally and increasingly used by the State Parks for landscape management, road repair and other basic tasks. State Parks 2000, a 1989 assessment of the park system, conducted by the D.E.R., identified funding as a



problematic issue.<sup>47</sup> Citing a gradual decrease in state and federal support, the report concluded that new sources of revenue should be investigated. Apparently statewide funding from the Federal Land Water and Conservation program decreased from \$12.5 million in 1980 to \$940,000 in 1993.<sup>48</sup> This situation has contributed to the neglect of public resources within the State Parks.

Currently there is a bill pending in the State Senate that contains a bond issue known as the "Key '93" proposal, which would provide a stable source of funding for "recreation, parks, conservation, historic preservation, and public library purposes."<sup>49</sup> The \$93 million bond program would be distributed over three years to the various state agencies, communities and non-profit land trusts. It would provide money for grant programs and increase funding for acquisition, development, rehabilitation, and maintenance. \$34 million is targeted for the Department of Environmental Resources and \$16 million to the PA Historic and Museum Commission. This bill identifies historic preservation of state properties as a critical issue and would provide substantial assistance to this need.

In 1987, possibly as a result of increased awareness and concern for historic preservation issues, an agreement was reached between the D.E.R. and PHMC concerning the significance of historic resources within the State Parks. This "Memorandum of Understanding" acknowledged the potential significance of over 1000 individual buildings within the State Park system and reinforced the significance of 11 parks with resources already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Memorandum directs, in reference to the Historic Preservation Act of 1978, that "all agencies, departments, bureaus... of the Commonwealth shall consult the (PHMC) before demolishing, altering, or transferring any property under their jurisdiction that is or may be of historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural significance."<sup>50</sup>

Some of the specific stipulations that were agreed upon include:





-Historic preservation objectives for significant historic buildings will be developed and included in any agency or park plans developed. The PHMC will assist and cooperate in developing such documents.

-Projects which may affect buildings identified in (the state) survey or previously in National Register nominations or in other information as potentially significant will be treated as follows:

- a.) Routine maintenance, performed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and as suggested in "*Repair and Preservation Maintenance for Historic and Older Homes*" which does not alter the setting, materials, or design of an identified building will be considered to have no effect. No Commission review of such projects is required.
- b.) Rehabilitation of identified buildings will be planned and executed in accordance with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Projects will be submitted to the Commission for review and comment. If Commission does not respond with comments within 30 days, the project may proceed.
- c.) Prior to undertaking any alteration not in conformance with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards* or demolition of an identified building, D.E.R. will consult with the Commission and investigate all alternatives to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of such an undertaking. <sup>51</sup>

It is apparent that since this agreement, no "historic preservation objectives for significant historic buildings" within Ridley Creek State Park have been developed. All of the work that has been done cannot be considered "routine maintenance" because in some cases the "setting, materials and design" of the historic structure has been altered. In many cases, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* have not been followed either.

This "memorandum of Agreement" and the restatement of existing procedures from the Historic Preservation Act of 1978 was an attempt to address problems associated with the preservation and maintenance of state owned historic resources. But a more comprehensive and sympathetic program with even tighter controls is necessary to prevent further deterioration of the resources within Ridley Creek State Park.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

The typical historic preservation planning process involves the identification, evaluation, documentation and treatment of resources. Treatment refers to either the conservation, restoration or protection of an identified resource. In order to properly design a treatment, documentation of that resource must be completed and examined. Additional documentation of the resources within Ridley Creek State Park is necessary and could enhance both the management policies as well as tenant and visitor appreciation.

The properties within Ridley Creek State Park have been identified and evaluated by the National Register Nomination and the Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey. But due to present condition and potential alteration or even loss, these buildings deserve more intensive historical and architectural documentation. Documentation of all the structures is essential for a meaningful historical interpretation of the site as a community of farmsteads. At present, the history and evolution of many of the properties is clouded by legend and rumor.

Documentation of the physical fabric, in the form of measured drawings and photographs, would record present condition and assist management in monitoring changes over time. Historical documentation in the form of property histories and chain of title can enhance interpretation and educate tenants and staff. Additional descriptions can summarize the evolution and significance of each farmstead and its individual structures with references to photos and drawings. The Case Studies in this thesis are intended to initiate a series of Historic Structure Reports which could be consulted by both management and park residents.

The 1976 listing on the National Register established Ridley Creek State Park as a Historic District. Significance was identified in areas of Architecture,



Agriculture, and Industry spanning a 300 year period. In reference to Agriculture the statement of significance included the following:

"The present physical remains of these once thriving farm complexes are unique documents from which to study the evolution of agriculture in Southeastern Pennsylvania and the nation as a whole."<sup>52</sup>

In a passage specifically relating to Architecture the statement reads:

"Many of the buildings are excellent examples of architectural styles or adaptations and many would qualify for listing on the National Register by themselves."<sup>53</sup>

While the nomination to the National Register establishes significance, it offers little protection. Protection of these resources must be regulated by the management policies of the Department of Environmental Resources. The primary tool for protection of the historic houses in the rental program is the occupant agreement or lease. These leases contain some language acknowledging historic significance and establishing guidelines for "repairs and maintenance", but there is the potential for strengthening this language to insure more careful treatment of the houses. At the very least, the guidelines established by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and included in the present lease must be enforced.

Today, most of the houses are rented with an open ended lease. As tenants remodel and make changes, a sense of attachment, or even ownership, is established. The posting of "no trespassing" or "private property" signs has isolated certain houses, made them inaccessible for visitors and should not be permitted. The rental of the houses should be on a short term basis and should be recognized as a maintenance method, not a preservation solution. Tenants should be placed that demonstrate an understanding of historic preservation issues and an interest in restoring the farmsteads.



Long term leases are a better method because a maintenance commitment and investment in the property is more likely. The Colonial Plantation and the Ridley Creek Farm are successful examples of this. Other organizations or individuals with the resources to maintain an entire farmstead should be placed. This would be similar to the National Park Leasing program by establishing a long term interest and commitment to a property.

Another option for the state would be to deaccession certain buildings while maintaining ownership of the land. Transfer of ownership to non-profit groups or similar organizations with restrictions on use would not significantly detract from the park. Many of the farmsteads are relatively isolated or located on the fringes of the property. Ideally, the properties should be available for visitors to enjoy, but the more isolated farmsteads could be targeted for deaccession and park visitation would not be affected.

The potential loss of secondary structures within the park is as much an issue as the inappropriate alteration of the historic residences. There are over 100 individual historic structures in the park, and only 28 are maintained and occupied as residences. This situation could potentially be corrected by requiring tenants to maintain additional structures on the farmstead properties by inclusion in lease agreements. The entire work-exchange program could be refocused on the outbuildings to encourage maintenance of the farmsteads as a whole. At the very least, the work-exchange program could be modified to emphasize "restoration" rather than "improvements" and qualified restoration contractors could be selected to achieve an appropriate level of craftsmanship.

The work proposal review system could be improved by the establishment of a full or partial Historic Architectural Review Board. In addition to the park superintendent, a preservation architect, historian or knowledgeable park resident could assist in the evaluation of work proposals. This could insure more





careful control over alterations and ideally, focus the work towards restoration and preservation goals. During the course of this study, a park resident, and knowledgeable restoration contractor, was appointed as an unofficial consultant for tenant rehabilitation and maintenance activity. This is a positive step, but it is crucial to improve and enforce preservation policies.

Funding is the primary issue. Ideally, with sufficient funding the park could target specific structures for stabilization and restoration. Preservation plans could be designed and executed by either park staff, tenants or put up for bid. Another option would be to set up a revolving fund and grants could be dispensed through work proposal evaluation. In any case, alternative funding sources need to be secured. The revenue that is earned from rental fees should be reinvested in the properties. Other funding sources such as the Community Development Block Grant program and the Federal Historic Preservation Fund could be investigated.

Another action which would be beneficial is to establish a partnership with a non-profit "friends" group or historical society. This group could raise money, secure grants, conduct research and generate awareness. Involvement of the park residents in this area would be ideal. Interpretation of the historic resources is another area that an associated non-profit could address. The Bishop's Mills Historic Institute could potentially fulfill this role and has indicated an interest in researching the property histories surrounding the Pratt farmstead.

Lastly, as agreed in the 1987 Memorandum of Understanding, the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission should be consulted for the development of a comprehensive preservation plan. With a coordinated effort, the valuable historic resources within Ridley Creek State Park can not only be appropriately recognized but preserved and maintained as a community of farmsteads displaying a 300 year continuum of history.



## The Case Studies

The format of the following three case studies is derived from the Historic American Buildings Survey, or HABS program. HABS was founded in the 1930's to document and "preserve" America's historic architecture through measured drawings, photographs and historical data gathering. These processes will not only record the condition of the resources in the park, they will identify significant architectural fabric which should be respected and preserved.

Each Case Study is organized by a Historic Farmstead Inventory Form that has been developed by the author for this study. This form includes basic information about the property and lists the documentation that has been conducted. Each inventory form is complemented by a Historic Structure Survey Form for each individual structure on the property. The property descriptions that follow are derived from primary archival research as well as architectural investigation work. Measured drawings have been prepared of each historic residence that document existing floorplans as well as a primary elevation. In addition the structural evolutions of each residence is depicted by a series of smaller-scale elevations and a conjectural original floorplan. Finally, photo-documentation is included for all of the structures on each farmstead researched. Detail photographs identify significant features and are keyed into the text.

This format is meant to be a model for further documentation of the historic farmsteads. A number of the properties listed in Appendix A of this thesis are unoccupied and deteriorating. Because all of the structures are contributing to the Historic District, they should be documented before they disappear. Ideally, this research could be used to develop a proper maintenance and preservation plan for the historic resources within Ridley Creek State Park.



Case Study I  
The John Worrall Farm  
#24



HISTORIC FARMSTEAD INVENTORY FORM

RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK  
EDGMONT TOWNSHIP  
DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

Date: 3/8/93

Surveyor: J. Barr

Historic Name:

*John Worrall Farmstead  
(24)*

Address/Location:  
*1059 Middletown Rd.*

Current Tenant:

*Helbeka/Ryan*

General Condition:

*good*

Documentation:

Measured Drawings

Floorplans   
Elevation   
Site Plan

Photographs

General   
Detail   
Chain of Title   
other \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

(inventory of structures,  
site and landscape features)

*Two story farmhouse with full basement and attic, constructed in two sections. The original portion is built of hand molded brick in an irregular flemish bond. Apparently was constructed in the 1680's and is a single room plan, measures 23' by 23'6". Second section is a linear addition of rubble stone, constructed in 1703. The addition Maintained the roof line and 23 foot width and added 28' in length.*

*There is a classic "Pennsylvania" bank barn on the property of rubble stone with a closed forebay and an earthen ramp. Has a datestone of 1835.*

*Existing gravel driveway appears to be original alignment providing access from Middletown Rd. (Rt. 352).*

HISTORICAL DATA:     *see attached*

SIGNIFICANCE:       *see attached*





SUPPLEMENTARY HISTORIC STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK  
EDGMONT TOWNSHIP  
DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

Date: 3/8/93

Surveyor: J. Barr

PARK I.D. NUMBER: 3650-120

Building Type: *Residence*

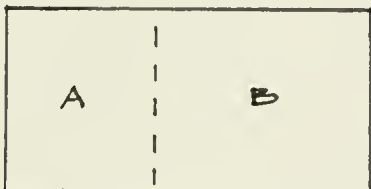
Condition: *good*

Historic Name: *John Worrall House*  
(or Associated Property)

Status: *occupant agmt*

Date(s) of Construction: c. 1683  
1703

Keyplan



Structural Evolution:  
*A-1683, B-1703*

Form:

No. of Stories: *two stories*  
*with attic and full basement*

Bays: *six*

Roof Form(s): *steep continuous gable*

Porches: *none*

Construction Materials:

Foundation: *rubble stone*

Walls: *A-brick, B-stone*

Roofing: *wood shingle*

Wall Treatment/Finish:  
*exposed masonry*

Significant Exterior Features:

*String course across south facade and brick portion of north facade indicates location of original pent roof. Massive stone step at front door could be original. Dimensions of window openings and early date of construction suggest leaded glass casement type. Evidence of bakeoven on north facade, stone section.*

INTERIOR

Evolution of Plan: *Originally a single room plan, addition was a distinct hall and parlor, possibly operated as a double house for a period.*

Modern Alterations: *Interior has been renovated several times.*

Significant Interior Features: *Original 17th c. woodwork in second floor chamber.*



## The John Worrall Farm

The John Worrall House, sometimes referred to as the "Hospital house" is the most significant structure in Ridley Creek State Park. Documentary and architectural evidence suggest that the original brick portion of the house was constructed in the 1680's and the rubble stone linear addition was added in 1703. It is located just off of Middletown Road in the southwestern corner of the Park. The original property extended to the Middletown Township border and was one of the earliest occupied parcels in the area, predating the official survey of the Edgmont Great Road in 1687. The house has been substantially and repeatedly remodeled but the exterior form retains its early eighteenth-century appearance. It is an extraordinary structure and a significant example of seventeenth-century English construction. The characteristic roof pitch, framing system and window size and arrangement are indicative of its seventeenth and early eighteenth-century origin. The Worrall house is among the earliest existing structures and one of four known seventeenth-century brick houses in Delaware County.

The only other houses in the county of this type include the 1696 Thomas Massey House in Broomall which is similar to the Worrall house in form. (see Fig.4) It is a two story single room plan with a gable end fireplace and pent eave on opposite sides. Apparently, the brick portion was an addition to an earlier log structure indicated by the absence of a front door. The Massey House has been restored to its original appearance with the two stone additions that replaced the frame section in the eighteenth-century. The 1696 Samuel Levis house in Springfield is a more substantial two and one half story bank house. (see Fig. 3) Its impressive original form is not compromised by the small wood-framed shed additions. The exact date of construction for the gambrel-roofed Mark Salter



house in Middletown Township is unknown but it is also considered late seventeenth-century. All four of these houses are believed to have had leaded glass casement windows, typical of the period. The bricks for the construction of these houses would have been manufactured locally or on site, due to their dispersed rural locations.

The John Worrall house was associated with the Worrall family for over 200 years and is believed to have been used as a field hospital by the British Army after the Battle of Brandywine in 1777. Legend holds that blood stains from the wounded were visible on the flooring in front of the first floor fireplace. It is, in fact, documented that British soldiers did visit and steal from several Edgmont farms at this time. On September 15, 1777, John Worrall submitted a claim for 35 pounds worth of goods lost to the British soldiers.<sup>54</sup> The Worrall's were a prominent and wealthy local family. The "mansion house" and original 380 acres of land constituted only part of the landholdings of John Worrall I. The tax records indicate that he was the wealthiest landowner in Edgmont Township from 1695, when he purchased the property, to 1741 when he died.

The deed citations indicate that the original brick structure was constructed before Worrall obtained the property in 1695. In 1681, while still in England, James Kennerly and Henry Maddock purchased 1500 acres of land with 380 acres in Edgmont Township. By 1682, James Kennerly was living in Springfield Township. Henry Maddock is believed to have constructed the brick house in Edgmont between 1682 and 1690. In 1695 the 380 acre property is conveyed to John Worrall with "all and singular housing, edifices, buildings, barns...etc."<sup>55</sup> This indicates that there was a dwelling house and probably a complete farmstead on the property by this time.

John Worrall was a first purchaser of land in Middletown Township and was living just south of Henry Maddock's land when the Edgmont Great Road



was laid out in 1687. Worrall retains this first farm after he purchased the Edgmont tract and it is later mentioned in his will in 1741. In the will, John Worrall conveys two "message plantations" and over 400 acres to his two younger sons, Peter and Thomas. He conveys 300 acres "together with all of the buildings" in Edgmont to his oldest son, John. To his wife Sarah he bequeathes "the use and privilege of the stone end of the dwelling house in which I now live".<sup>56</sup> This indicates that the farm buildings and the brick portion of the house were left to his son John.

A passage from the Old Court House Record Book, Vol. II from Chester County places construction of the stone addition to late 1702 or early 1703. The Record Book registers a case on March 25, 1703 between Thomas Butterfield and John Worrall. Butterfield, the plaintiff, "declares for a debt of twenty six pounds, fifteen shillings and six pence for work and labor done in building the defendant a house." John Worrall then states that he has already paid the plaintiff "the sum of seventeen pounds".<sup>57</sup> The court awards Butterfield the difference plus two pence damages. This is an extremely informative document and in conjunction with the existing architectural evidence, conclusively dates the addition to 1703.

The original portion of the house measures 23' by 23'6", and is a full two story, single room plan with a cellar and attic. The original plan and elevation is depicted in the structural evolution. (see Dwg. 1.1.) The exterior walls are hand molded brick masonry laid up in an irregular flemish bond. There are two doors directly opposite each other on the north and south facades. The flat arch detail in brick above the doors and windows indicate the original openings. The 3' and even 4' wide window openings suggest that they originally contained leaded glass casements. The string course of brick above the first floor windows is similar to the Massey house and indicates the location of a pent roof on opposite sides of the structure. On both houses, the string course changes in height on the gable end





and is purely decorative. On the Worrall house, evidence of framing members, which were actually the second floor joists that extended through the walls, also supports the location of a pent roof. On the west gable end, a clear differentiation in the pointing, and existence of pockets for scaffolding, indicates that the upper portion was rebuilt at some point (see Fig. 1.2.) The slightly off center location of the gable end attic window suggests that it is not original. It is possible that without the window, the upper gable originally contained decorative brickwork similar to the Massey house and very typical to the period.

The cellar of the Worrall house is dominated by two large masonry arches. (see Fig. 1.7.) Arches were typically constructed as foundations for the first floor fireplaces and doubled as cold storage areas. Similar to the Levis house, these arches are located opposite the fireplace wall and do not support anything above. The first floor joists extend across the tops of the arches, but cold storage appears to have been their primary function. The pit sawn joists are original, indicated by the irregular saw marks and support original flooring now covered by a secondary floor above. (see Fig. 1.8.) Apparently the joists originally mortised into a massive transverse girt, now missing. (see Dwg. 1.2.) There are pockets on opposite sides of the rubble masonry foundation indicating the location and size of the girt. This member would have also supported the brick masonry corbelling that is still evident below the first floor hearth. The hearth was apparently removed when the cooking fireplace was made smaller, and its support has been completely reframed.

The single, first floor room or "hall" was the primary, all purpose space. The original walk-in cooking fireplace was later filled in to create a smaller parlor fireplace, but its size can be determined by the support in the basement as well as the location of the mantle. (see Fig. 1.9.) The original seventeenth-century mantle was tragically removed during a recent renovation and is a worst case example of



what can occur in the tenant maintenance program. The only original detail that survives in the room is the summer beam with a decorative chamfered edge and lambs tongue. The original box winder stairs, as was typical in Pennsylvania houses of the period, would have been located adjacent to the fireplace. The second floor joists may have been exposed with a chamfered or beaded edge which could be determined by investigation above the existing plaster ceiling.

The second floor of the original brick portion contained two chambers and a small stair hall. Evidence of an early board partition exists on the original flooring which would have defined a small room in the southwest corner. Again the summer beam is visible and would probably have had a feather-edged board partition running along its length. The current room arrangement of modern fiberboard partitions is similar to the original plan but without the winder stairs. The larger north chamber had a fireplace on the east wall which has been enclosed. The original lintel for this fireplace is evident and its secondary flue is visible in the attic. The only original woodwork in the house survives around the closet door adjacent to this fireplace. (see Fig. 1.10. ) The door itself may be original, and the door trim, the raised panel above, and the feather-edged board that extends from floor to ceiling all appear to date from the seventeenth-century. The location of the closet with a small interior window is a typical feature of the period. It can be assumed that this panelling detail was originally applied to both fireplace elevations which would also have incorporated panelled doors for the winder stairs.

The framing system for the steeply pitched, wood shingled roof, is a rare and significant example of early English, timber construction. (see Fig. 1.11.) The major rafter and purlin system is continuous across both portions of the house. This suggests that the roof was either entirely reframed in 1703 or the system was replicated when the stone portion was added. The major rafters are hand hewn



and spaced approximately eight feet on center. Horizontal purlins with diagonal knee braces and collar ties tie are all connected to the major rafters by mortise and tenon joinery. Sawn common rafters, pegged at the peak, rest on the purlins and support the lath and shingles. Evidence of the original east gable end wall is visible in the attic at southeast corner and adjacent to the chimney mass.

The gable end wall was partially removed when the rubble stone portion was added in 1703. As built, the stone portion maintained the same twenty three foot width and added twenty eight feet in length to the house. Two opposing central doors accessed a small hall and parlor plan in this portion. The dimensions of the window openings indicate that they were originally leaded glass casements. The characteristic early, tall, narrow casements in the gable end are located off center from the fireplace. There was originally a datestone in this east gable wall which is now missing. The pent roof was continued across the front facade which is indicated by the stone flashing course and the framing members that protruded through the wall.

The stone portion of the house is a hall and parlor plan. It is possible that the structure operated as a double house for a period when multiple generations of the Worrall family were living there. The original pit sawn first floor joists survive in the basement but have been supplemented with modern framing. (see Fig. 1.12.) The original summer beam is missing in this section but would have been located in the middle of the floor system running east/west. Simple vertical masonry foundations, indicate the existence of two first floor fireplaces on opposite ends of the addition.

On the first floor a second cooking fireplace was constructed directly behind, and backing up to the original. Apparently there was an exterior bakeoven adjacent to this fireplace on the north facade. This is evident by the disturbance in the exterior brickwork and the recently remodeled niche on the



interior that suggests the location of the oven door. The wall which divides the present kitchen from the middle room does not appear to be original, but may indicate the location of the earlier board partition. The parlor fireplace on the east gable wall is now closed up and would have been flanked by a closet, panelling and possibly a winder stair in the southeast corner. A circular opening in the chimney breast, now patched, indicates that a stove was connected to this flue. This was a common occurrence in the mid to late nineteenth-century when cast stoves became available to the general population. Fireplaces were typically closed up and converted to the more efficient heating system.

The summer beams in the second and third floor framing systems are mortised into perpendicular chimney girts. These beams are all visible and extend below the existing plaster ceilings. The second floor has also been remodeled extensively and no interior details survive. It probably contained two or three rooms and had small fireplaces at either end.

The attic winder stairs adjacent to the central chimney appear to be original. Its location and fabric suggest an early, unaltered origin. In the attic, the flues of the original and additional fireplaces are all evident on the chimney mass. The flooring and the roof framing are all continuous across the attic and were probably reworked when the stone portion was built.

The barn on the property has a datestone of 1835 and would have replaced an earlier, possibly wood-framed, structure. There is indication in the records of early farming activity on the property and the deed transactions specify farm buildings as early as 1695. The present barn measures 40' x 45' and is an impressive example of a Chester County, Pennsylvania barn form. (see Fig. 1.5.) The closed forebay is sheathed with vertical siding and supported by rubble masonry columns. The stonework is impressive, with the quoins, lintels and arches being particularly noteworthy. The earthen ramp which accesses the





threshing floor is supported by an original rubble stone retaining wall that is currently in a state of collapse. Otherwise, the structure is in good condition, the roof is sound and it is one of the finest barns in the Park.





Fig. 1.1. John Worrall House. General View.



Fig. 1.2. John Worrall House.  
West Facade.





Fig. 1.3. John Worrall House. North Facade.



Fig. 1.4. John Worrall House.  
East Facade.





Fig. 1.5. John Worrall Barn. General View.

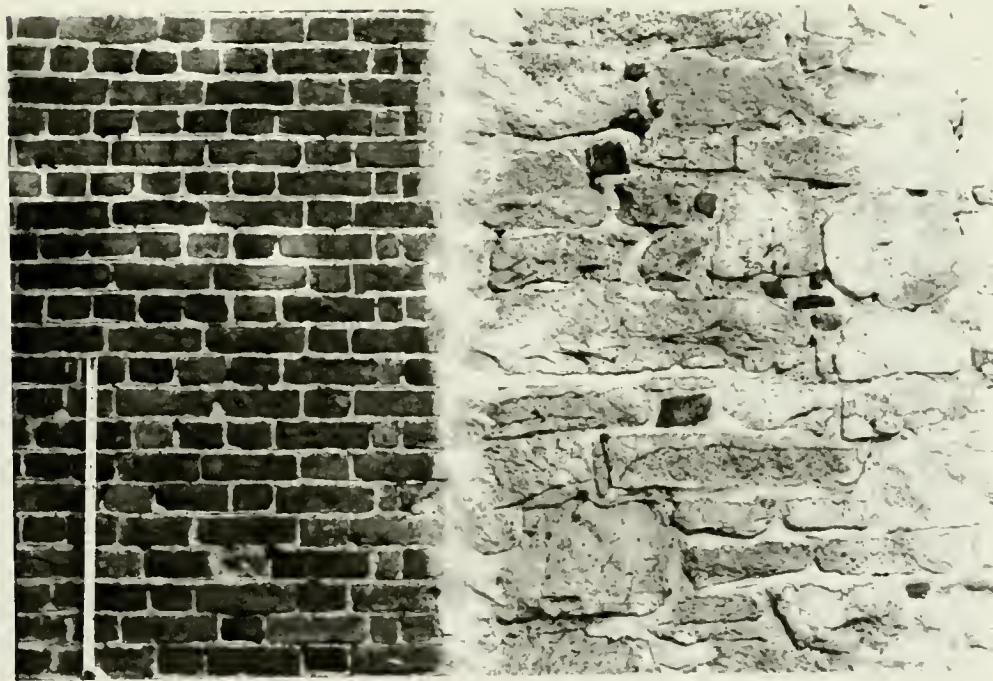


Fig. 1.6. John Worrall House. Detail of Exterior Masonry. South Facade.







Fig. 1.7. John Worrall House. Detail of masonry arches in basement.



Fig. 1.8. John Worrall House. Detail of original pit sawn floor joists.





Fig. 1.9. John Worrall House. Detail of renovated fireplace elevation.



Fig. 1.10. John Worrall House. Detail of original 17th c. woodwork. Second Floor.



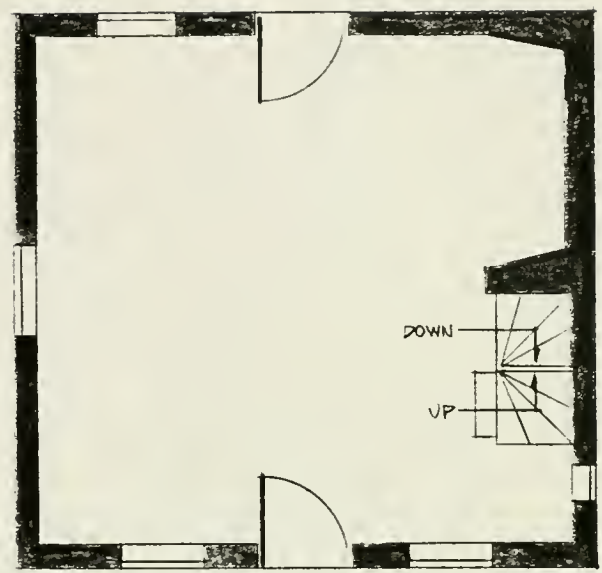
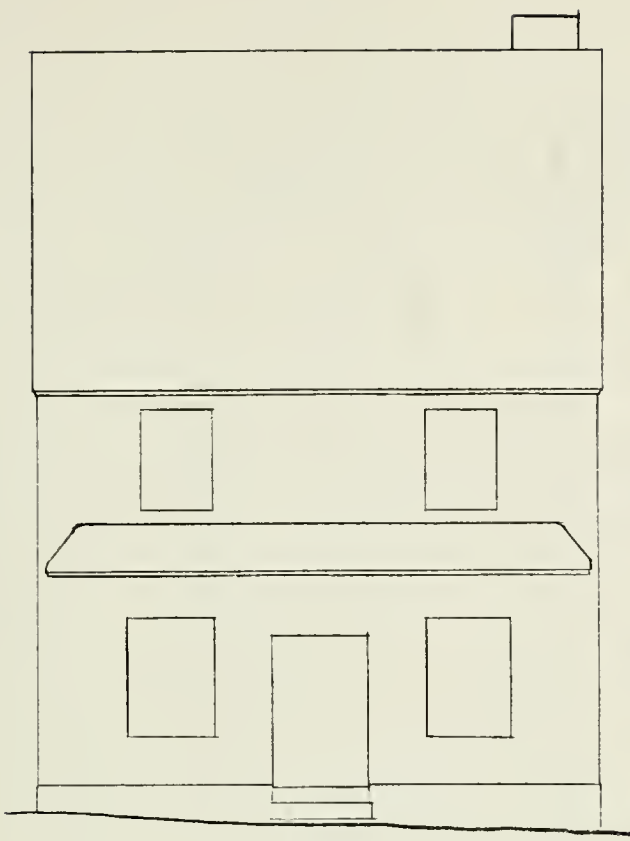


Fig. 1.11. John Worrall House.  
Detail of roof framing.

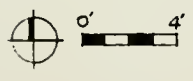
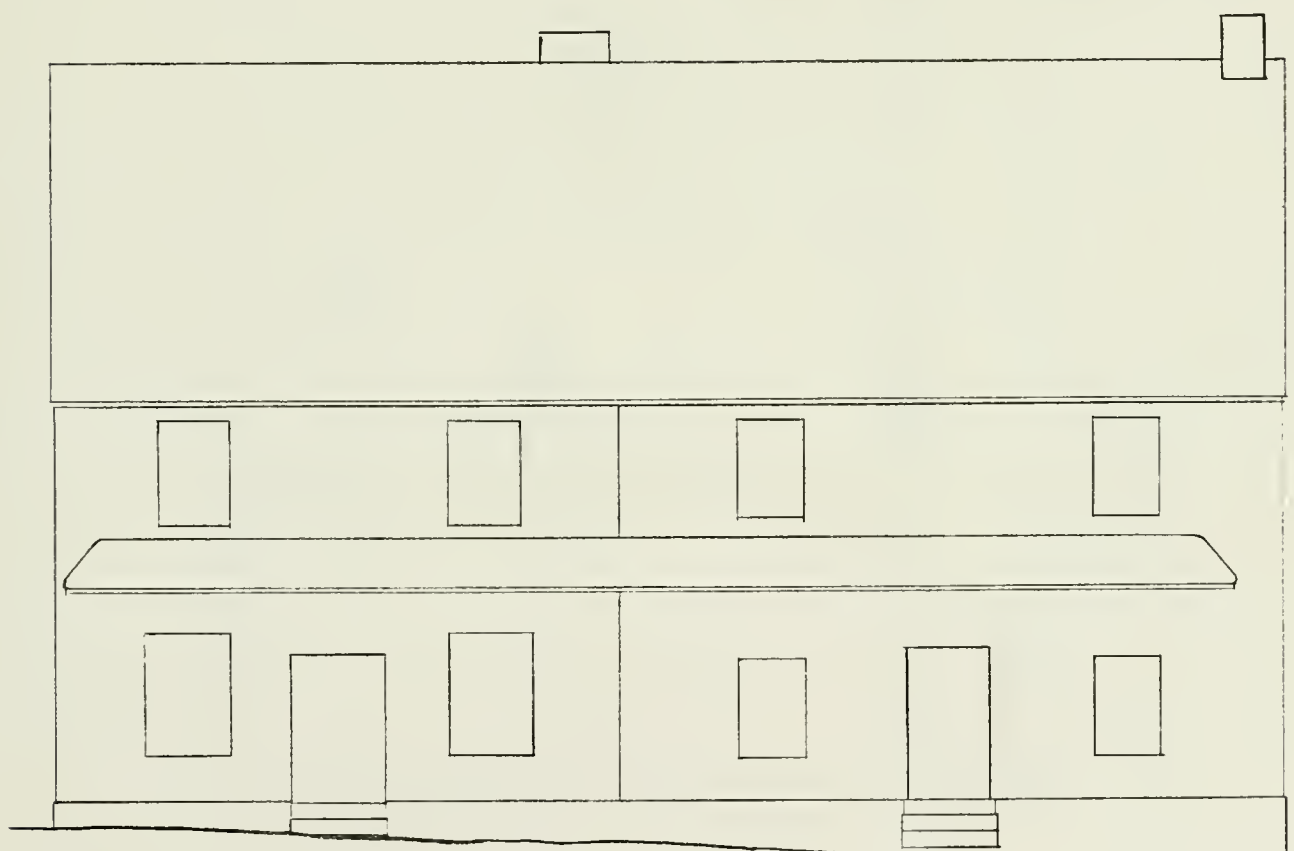


Fig. 1. 12. John Worrall House. Detail of original joists in 1703 section.





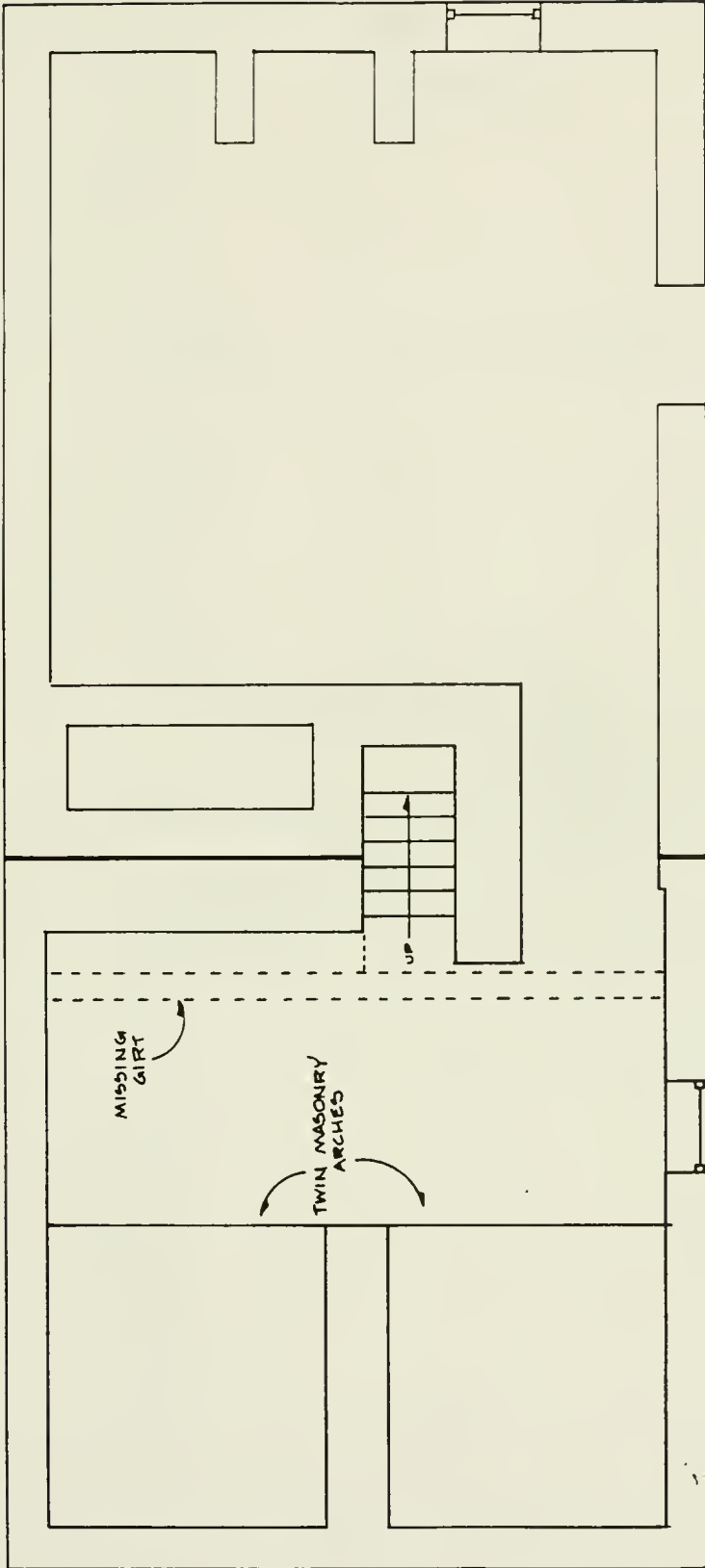
(c. 1683)



JOHN MORRALL HOUSE (c. 1703)  
DWG. 1.1.



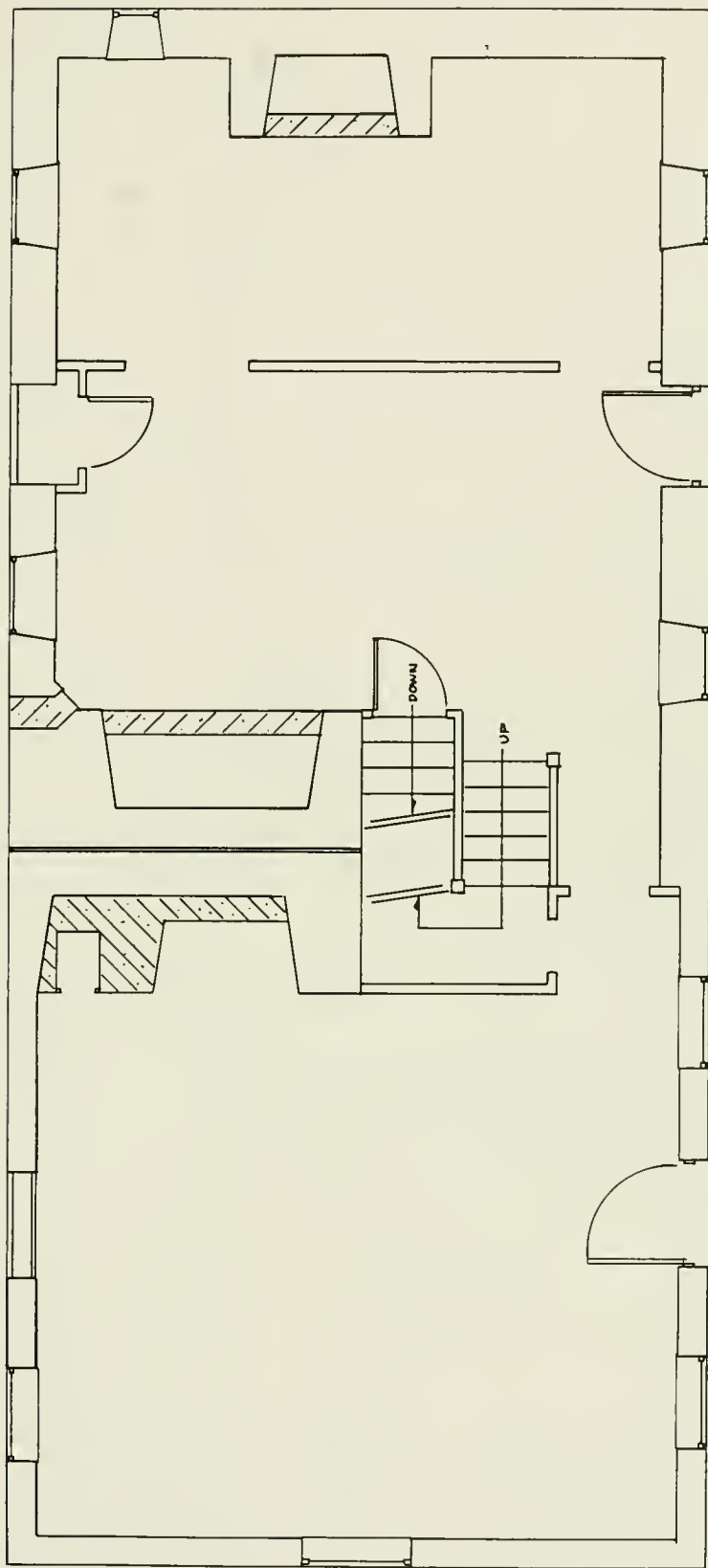




JOHN WORRALL HOUSE  
BASEMENT  
DWG. 1.2



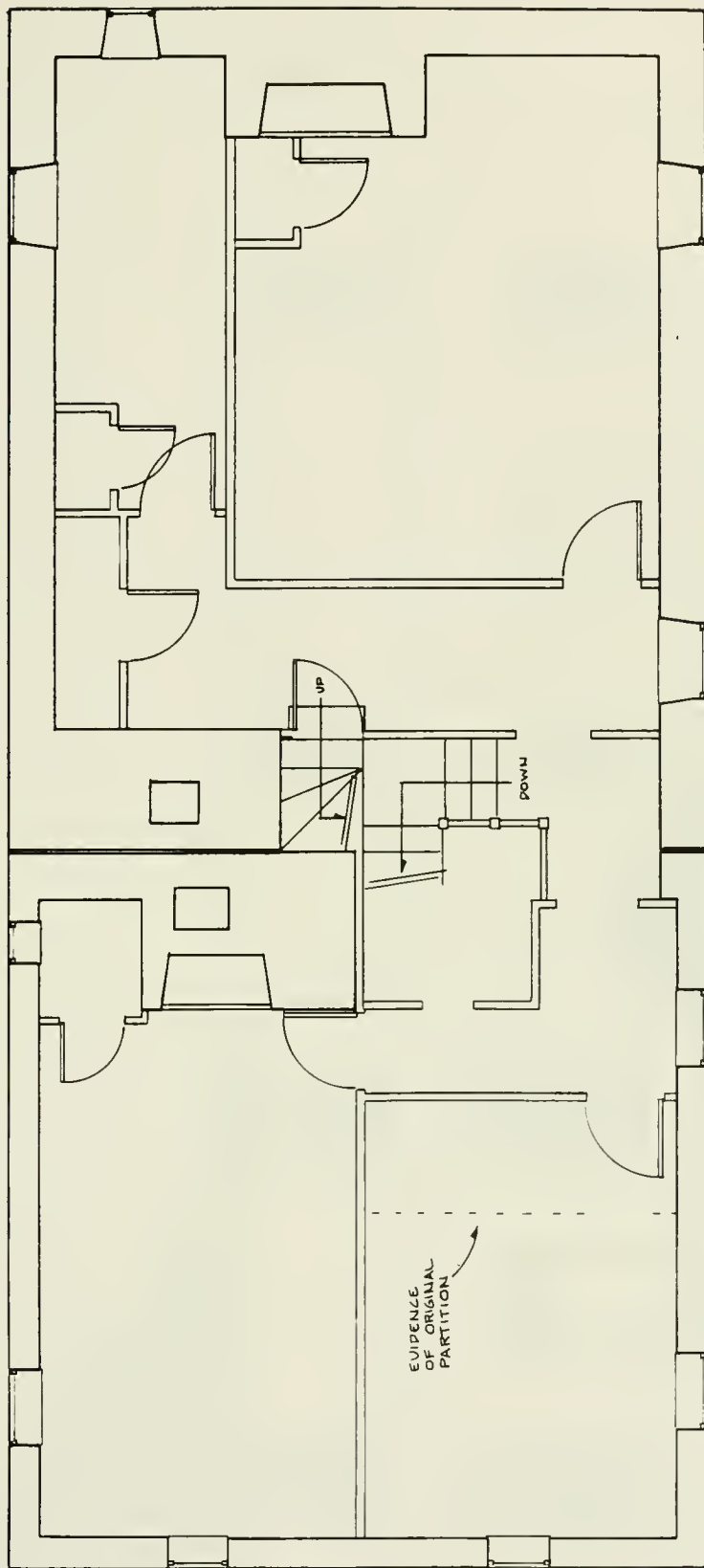




JOHN WORRALL HOUSE  
FIRST FLOOR  
DWG 1.3.







JOHN WORRALL HOUSE  
SECOND FLOOR  
DWG. 1.4

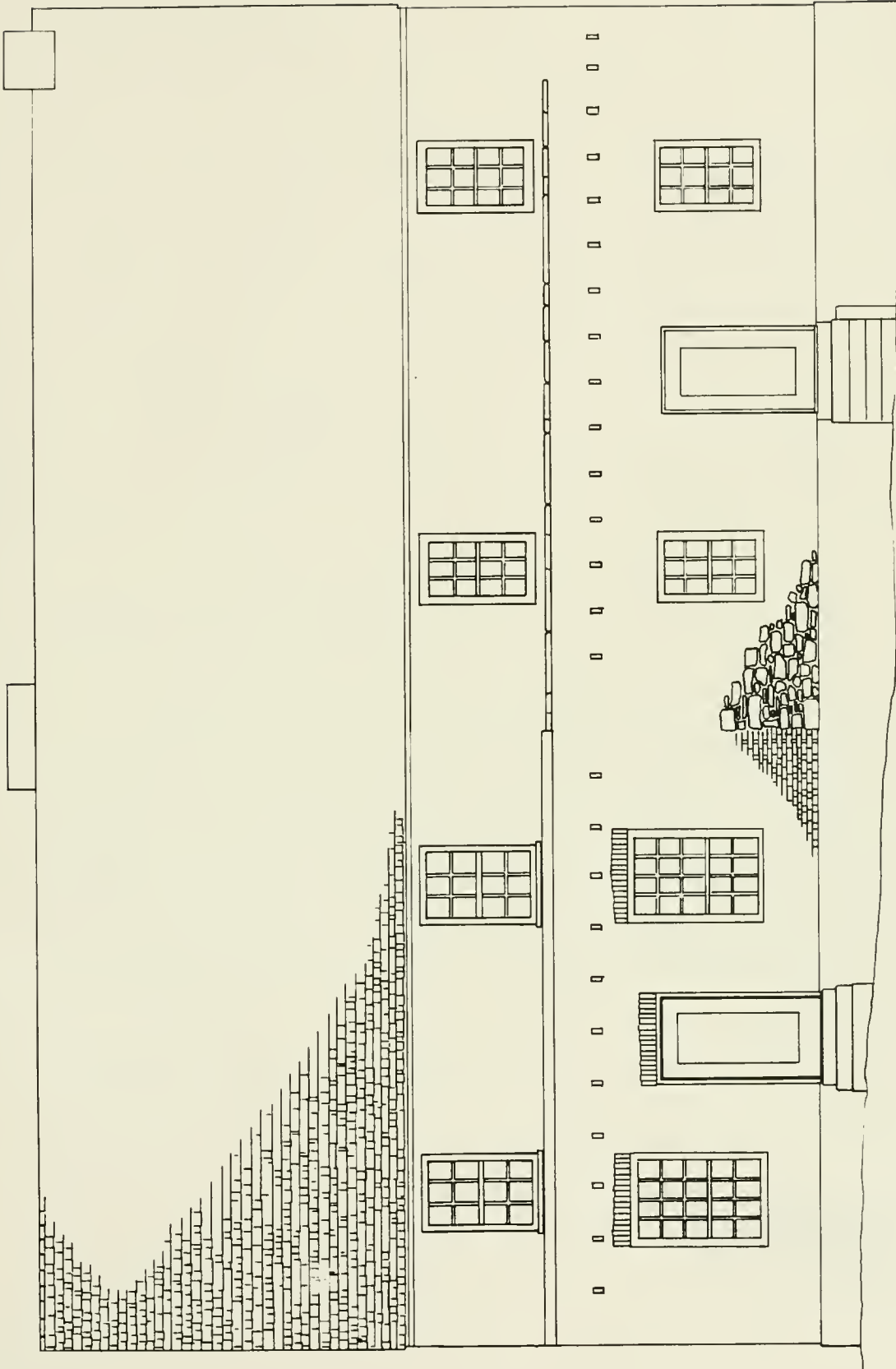


EVIDENCE  
OF ORIGINAL  
PARTITION

DOWN

B





JOHN WORRALL HOUSE  
SOUTH ELEVATION  
DWG 1.5.







Case Study II  
The Roundtop Farm  
#26



HISTORIC FARMSTEAD INVENTORY FORM

RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK  
EDGMONT TOWNSHIP  
DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

Date: 3/8/93

Surveyor: J. Barr

Historic Name:

*Roundtop Farm  
(26)*

Address/Location:

*above Sycamore Mills Road  
overlooks the Arboretum*

Current Tenant:

*vacant*

General Condition:

*ruins*

Documentation:

Measured Drawings

Floorplans   
Elevation   
Site Plan

Photographs

General   
Detail   
Chain of Title   
other \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

(inventory of structures,  
site and landscape features)

*The eighteenth-century farmstead is sited on a ridge overlooking a private house and the Tyler Arboretum property. An early roadbed provides pedestrian access from Sycamore Mills Road to the east. A popular blazed trail from within the park passes the ruined house to the west. The property consists of a very significant two and one half story house with partial basement, originally constructed in 1711 with a large eighteenth-century two and one half story kitchen ell. A linear addition was built in the mid-nineteenth-century and the house now measures 33' 6" by 18" with a 23' by 24' kitchen ell.*

*Also on the property is the ruin of a large rubble stone Pennsylvania bank barn. The buildings are situated in a staggered linear arrangement and oriented north/ south.*

HISTORICAL DATA: *see attached*

SIGNIFICANCE: *see attached*



SUPPLEMENTARY HISTORIC STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK  
EDGMONT TOWNSHIP  
DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

Date: 3/8/93

Surveyor: J. Barr

PARK I.D. NUMBER: none

Building Type: Residence

Condition: ruin

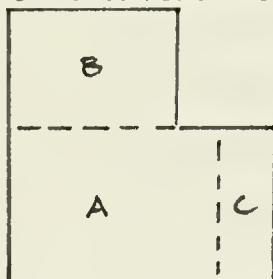
Historic Name: Jacob Minshall House  
(or Associated Property)

Status: vacant

Date(s) of Construction: orig.: 1711

additions: mid 18th c. and mid 19th c.

Keyplan



Structural Evolution:

(A)-1711, (B)- mid 18th c.

(C)- mid 19th c.

Form:

No. of Stories: two stories

with attic and partial basement

Bays: three

Roof Form(s): steep gable with dormers

with perpendicular kitchen ell -gable

Porches: none

Construction Materials:

Foundation: rubble stone

Walls: rubble stone

Roofing: wood shingle

Wall Treatment/Finish:  
stucco-partially failed

Significant Exterior Features:

Three surviving original leaded glass casement window frames on second floor of original section. Evidence of pent roof on three sides and a double pent on west gable end. Originally a second thin casement and a fireplace window on west gable end.

INTERIOR

Evolution of Plan: Originally a hall and parlor with a large cooking fireplace on west gable wall. Kitchen ell and center hall plan were later modifications.

Modern Alterations: Cooking fireplaces and chimneys were removed when heating stoves were installed. No other modern systems were ever introduced into structure.

Significant Interior Features: Original window frames, flagstone kitchen floor and pit sawn joists and rafters.



## Chain of Title - Roundtop Farm

9/12/1684	William Penn to Thomas Minshall  ...373 acres...	Phila Patent Book A2 p. 231
June, 1707	Thomas Minshall to Jacob Minshall  ...500 acres...	ChesCo. Deed Book B p. 105 or 205
1734	Jacob Minshall to John Minshall -son  ...370 acres...	By Will
1784	John Minshall to Moses Minshall -son  ...360 acres...	By Will
1798	Moses Minshall to Thomas Minshall  ...360 acres...	
1813	Thomas Minshall to John Minshall  ...180 acres...	By Will
1820	Samuel Anderson, High Sheriff to Enos Painter  ...79 acres...	Delco Deed Book N p. 534
1857	Enos Painter to Minshall and Jacob Painter-sons  ...527 acres...	By Will





1875	Jacob Painter to Ann Tyler-sister  ...79 acres...	Delco Deed Book B4 p. 33
1914	Ann Tyler to John J. Tyler	
10/ 29/1930	John J. Tyler to Laura Tyler and the "John J. Tyler Foundation"	Will Book 550 p. 340
11/10/1944	Laura Tyler to Trustees of the John J. Tyler Arboretum	Delco Will Book 982 p. 60



## The Roundtop Farm

Located in the southeastern corner of Ridley Creek State Park, the eighteenth-century Roundtop farm is actually in Middletown Township. The land was originally part of the Minshall/Painter/Tyler property which evolved into the present day Tyler Arboretum. In 1978, the Arboretum exchanged some land, which included the Roundtop farm, with Ridley Creek Park.<sup>58</sup> The ruined house and barn are all that remain from the once prosperous Minshall family farmstead. The original portion of the house was apparently constructed in 1711 by Jacob Minshall and is among the most significant structures in the park.<sup>59</sup> It has been unoccupied since the Arboretum was established and, although in ruins, it contains a great deal of original detail. Evidence suggests that the house was stabilized on at least two occasions. Apparently in the 1950's, Walter Jeffords, a trustee and neighbor of the Arboretum, provided money to re-roof the structure.<sup>60</sup> More recently the first floor windows and doors were enclosed with cinderblock in an unsuccessful attempt to keep vandals out. (see Figs. 2.1. - 2.4.)

The house is significant because of its association with the prominent local Minshall family. Thomas Minshall was a first purchaser of 373 acres in Middletown Township in 1684.<sup>61</sup> The property remained in the same family until 1946, when the Tyler Arboretum was created. Thomas Minshall was also a first purchaser of land in Upper Providence Township where he settled with his family in 1684. Minshall donated the land for the original Providence Meeting House on Providence Road in 1686.<sup>62</sup> The existing 1750 Thomas Minshall house in Media is considered the oldest house in the borough and now functions as a house museum. Apparently the seventeenth-century main house was located across the road, and this later structure was a tenant house or a related building within the farmstead complex.



The original, undeveloped Middletown tract, with an additional 127 acres, was inherited by the youngest son, Jacob Minshall, in 1707. Jacob was married and listed on the tax records as living in Middletown by 1711.<sup>63</sup> The deed transactions do not indicate a house on the property before 1707, and the architectural evidence suggests a very early date of construction. Therefore, it can be assumed that the original portion of the house was completed by 1711. In 1734, Jacob's son, John Minshall, inherits the "message plantation" and 370 acres.<sup>64</sup> He held the property for fifty years and is believed to have built the additions and the Roundtop barn.

The original portion of the house is the west end of the front section and had a hall and parlor plan. (see Dwg. 2.1.) This two story structure with a basement and attic has a very steep 13" in 12" roof pitch and, like the Worrall house, indicates an early date of construction. The original structure measured 27' wide by 18' deep. Its single room depth and 24' interior length suggests a two room, hall and parlor plan. A rubble masonry pier divides the basement into two rooms and indicates the original plan of the first floor. An interior partition, defining the original hall and parlor plan was, most likely, located above this foundation wall. The original, 9' x 5', pit sawn, first floor joists are visible from the basement and run in opposite directions. The floor joists under the west room, or hall, of the Minshall house run parallel to the front facade and rest on the intervening pier. The first floor joists below the parlor run in the conventional direction and are let into the front and rear rubble masonry walls. The flooring on the first floor would have run opposite the joist systems and is further indication of a two room plan. Under the west room of the present center hall plan, a solid masonry wall lines up 5' inside the exterior gable end wall. This was a typical technique for supporting the first floor fireplace and is similar to that found in the 1703 section of the Worrall house.



The original first floor cooking fireplace has been removed but would have been located on the west gable end. Evidence of small 2' square window, typically found in the back wall of walk-in fireplaces, survives on the west wall. (see Fig.2.7.) Two additional niches survive that would also have been within the cooking fireplace. The characteristic 6" round holes in the present brick chimney indicate its function as a flue for heating stoves. The original fireplace and chimney was probably removed in the nineteenth-century when cast iron heating stoves were introduced into the house.

The most significant detail in the Jacob Minshall house is the survival of three original, leaded-glass, casement window frames. (see Fig. 2.8.) This type of window had multiple small square or diamond panes of glass held together by lead cames. This English window construction was prevalent in the colonies during seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Evidence suggests that the large 4' by 5' openings on the south facade would have been similar to the restored windows in the Thomas Massey house. While that reconstruction was based on a single surviving window frame, there are three intact frames within four original openings in the Minshall house. The two large frames on the second floor of the south facade and the 1'6" by 5' west gable end casement frame contain a rabbetted groove which originally held the glass units. (see Fig. 2.9.) The round holes that are mortised into the sides of the frames is evidence of the dowels or stiffening rods that helped hold the glass in place. (see Fig. 2.10.) All of the frames contain some of the original wrought nails and evidence of nail holes that affixed the glass within the rabbet. (see Fig. 2.10.) The square mortises in the sides and top of the frame are evidence of the original mullions. (see Fig. 2.11.) Although the first floor windows have been blocked up, the southwest room would also have had a large casement, with mullions, in the south wall. It is apparent that the existing door in the gable end is a modern installation and replaced an





original narrow casement window. (see Fig. 2.2.) This would have created a similar gable end elevation and window arrangement to the Thomas Massey house and the John Worrall addition. (see Fig. 1.4.)

The chain of title and architectural evidence suggests that the two story kitchen ell was added in the mid-eighteenth century by Jacob's son John Minshall. On the west facade, a vertical seam in the stonework delineates the addition from the original portion. On the second floor of the kitchen addition, the attic floor joists, or outlookers, can be seen extending through the north wall of the original portion. (see Fig. 2.12.) The existence of an angled outlooker at the northwest corner of the house indicates that the soffit returned along the west facade creating a second floor pent eave.

The hand hewn floor joists and the massive walk-in cooking fireplace support an eighteenth-century date of construction for the kitchen ell.. The most significant and amazing detail is the survival of the original flagstone floor in the kitchen. (see Fig. 2.13.) There is no basement under this section and the massive, 3" thick stones are laid directly on grade. This was a fairly common English practice but is extremely rare to have survived in this country. The north gable end wall of this room originally featured a huge cooking fireplace with an exterior bakeoven. Evidence of this original bakeoven exists in the disturbed stonework of the exterior wall. At some point, a brick bakeoven was built within the cooking fireplace and a section of the massive lintel was removed. To the right of this infill, two brick basins would originally have contained iron pots for rendering meat. A board and batten wall divides the kitchen into two rooms and stone steps access the basement of the original structure. A box winder stair accesses the second floor which contains two chambers. Similar to the original portion, the chimney in the kitchen ell was removed and replaced with a smaller brick flue.



Two round stovepipe holes on the second floor confirm that this modification was contemporary with the installation of heating stoves.

The installation of stoves also dates the short linear addition on the east end of the original house. Evidence suggests that in the nineteenth-century, the gable end wall was removed and the original structure was extended five feet to the east. There is no chimney mass or foundation on the east gable end and flues for two stoves are built into the wall itself. On the south exterior facade, a flashing course of brick indicates the location of the original pent eave. This flashing course does not extend completely across the facade on the front or back of the structure. This suggests that, along with the smaller dimensions of the windows in the third bay, that this area was modified with the addition. Although a definite seam is not apparent on the exterior facade, it may be obscured or intentionally hidden by the application of stucco. (see Fig. 2.14.) A seam in the foundation wall and dimensional changes in the floor joists and roof rafters confirm the smaller footprint of the original structure.

Early pit sawn rafters can be seen in the original section of the attic. (see Fig. 2.15.) Inspection of the framing reveals that the dormers were added and the attic was converted into a living space when the linear addition was built. The exterior dormer trim is consistent with this theory. The entire interior of the house also went through a renovation in the nineteenth-century. All of the baseboards, door and window trim dates from the nineteenth-century. It is possible that all of these changes and the creation of a center hall floor plan is contemporary with the linear addition.

No other structures survive on the farmstead other than the barn which is in ruins. (see Fig 2.6.) Apparently, the name of the farm was derived from this structure which was constructed in the mid-eighteenth-century. The rubble masonry walls that survive indicate a large typical Pennsylvania bank barn. There



is no indication of a round roof but the name could relate to a cupola or similar structure atop the barn.





Fig. 2.1. Jacob Minshall House. South Facade.



Fig. 2.2. Jacob Minshall House. West Facade.







Fig. 2.3. Jacob Minshall House.  
North Facade.



Fig. 2.4. Jacob Minshall House. East Facade.





Fig. 2.5. Jacob Minshall House. General View.



Fig. 2.6. Ruins of Roundtop Barn. General View.





Fig. 2.7. Jacob Minshall House. Original cooking fireplace location.

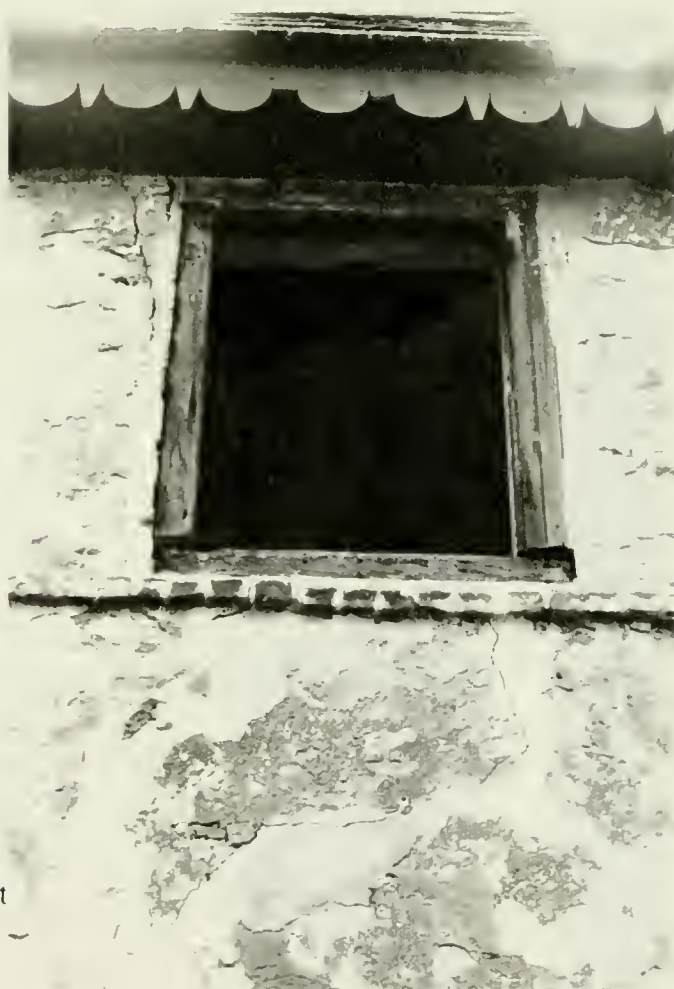


Fig. 2.8. Jacob Minshall House. Detail of original leaded glass casement window frame on second floor. South facade.



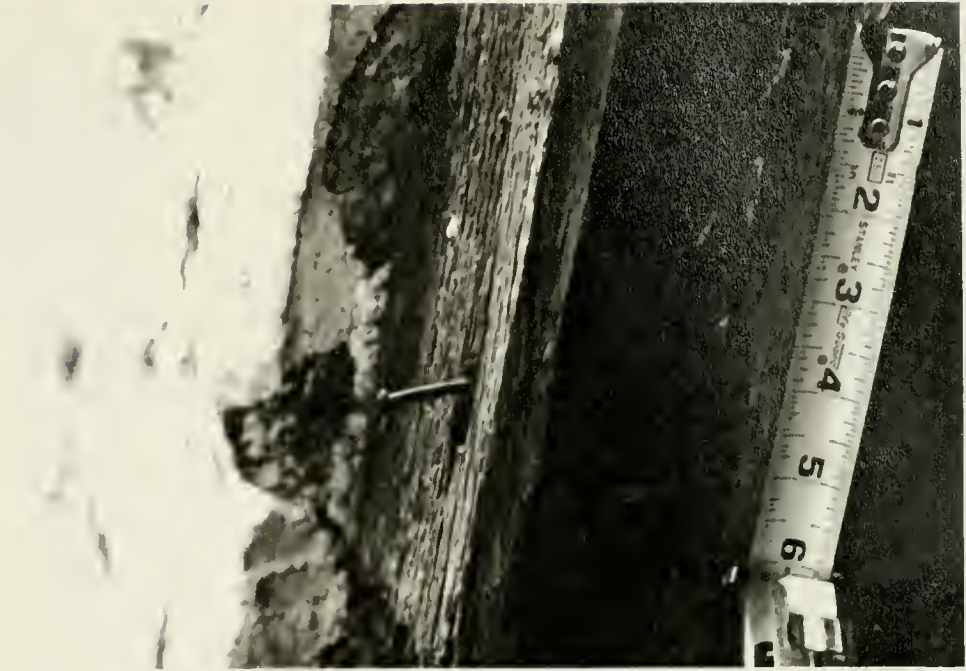


Fig. 2.9. Jacob Minshall House. Rabet that held leaded glass casement windows. Second floor. South facade.

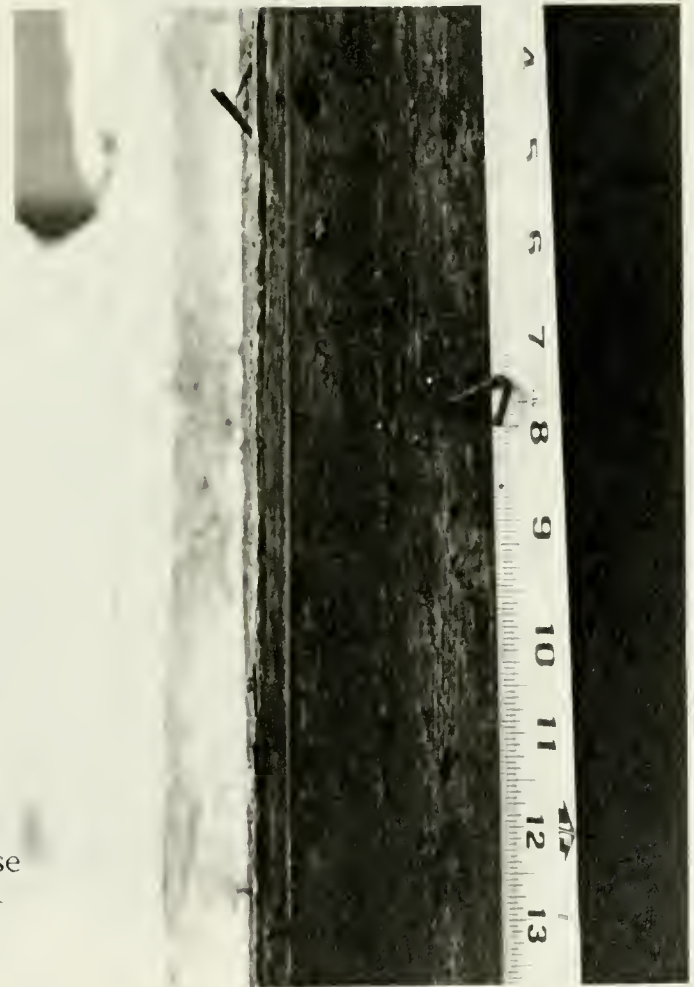


Fig. 2.10. Jacob Minshall House. Mortise for stiffening rod and original wrought iron nails that held leaded glass units in place.





Fig. 2.11. Jacob Minshall House.  
Mortise for horizontal  
mullion.



Fig. 2.12. Jacob Minshall House. Outlooker framing for original soffit on north facade.





Fig 2.13. Jacob Minshall House. Original flagstone floor in kitchen ell.



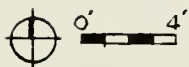
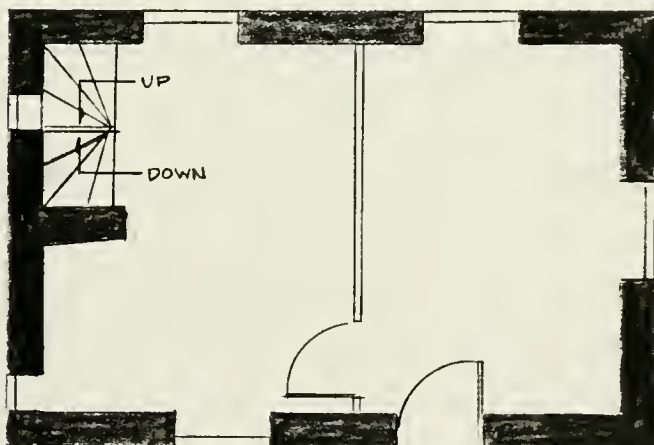
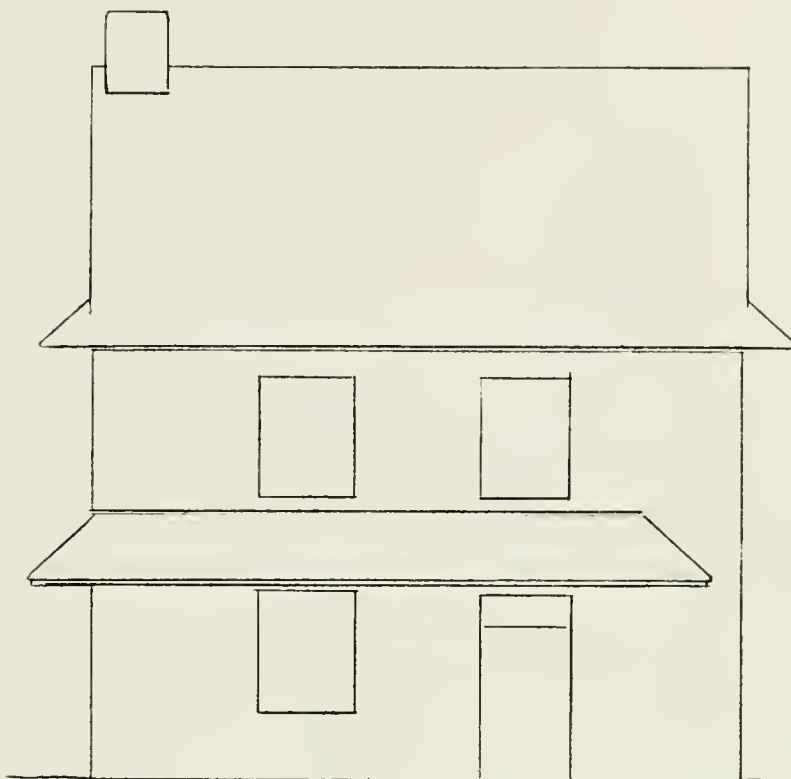
Fig. 2.14. Jacob Minshall House.  
Detail of south elevation.





Fig. 2.15. Jacob Minshall House.  
Detail of pit sawn rafters.

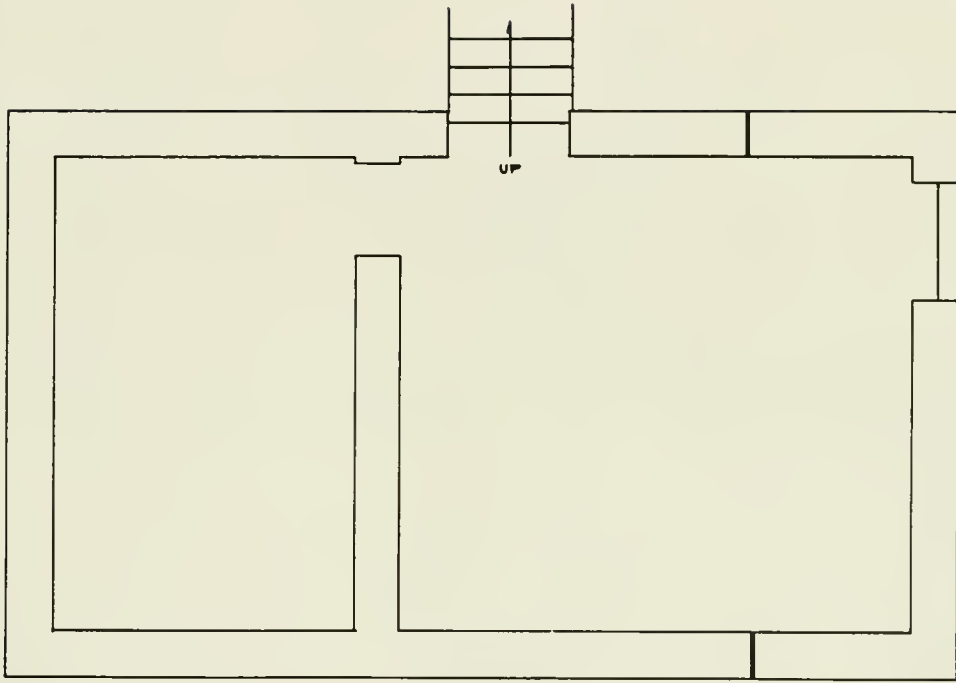




JACOB MINSHALL HOUSE  
(c.1711) DWG. 2.1.

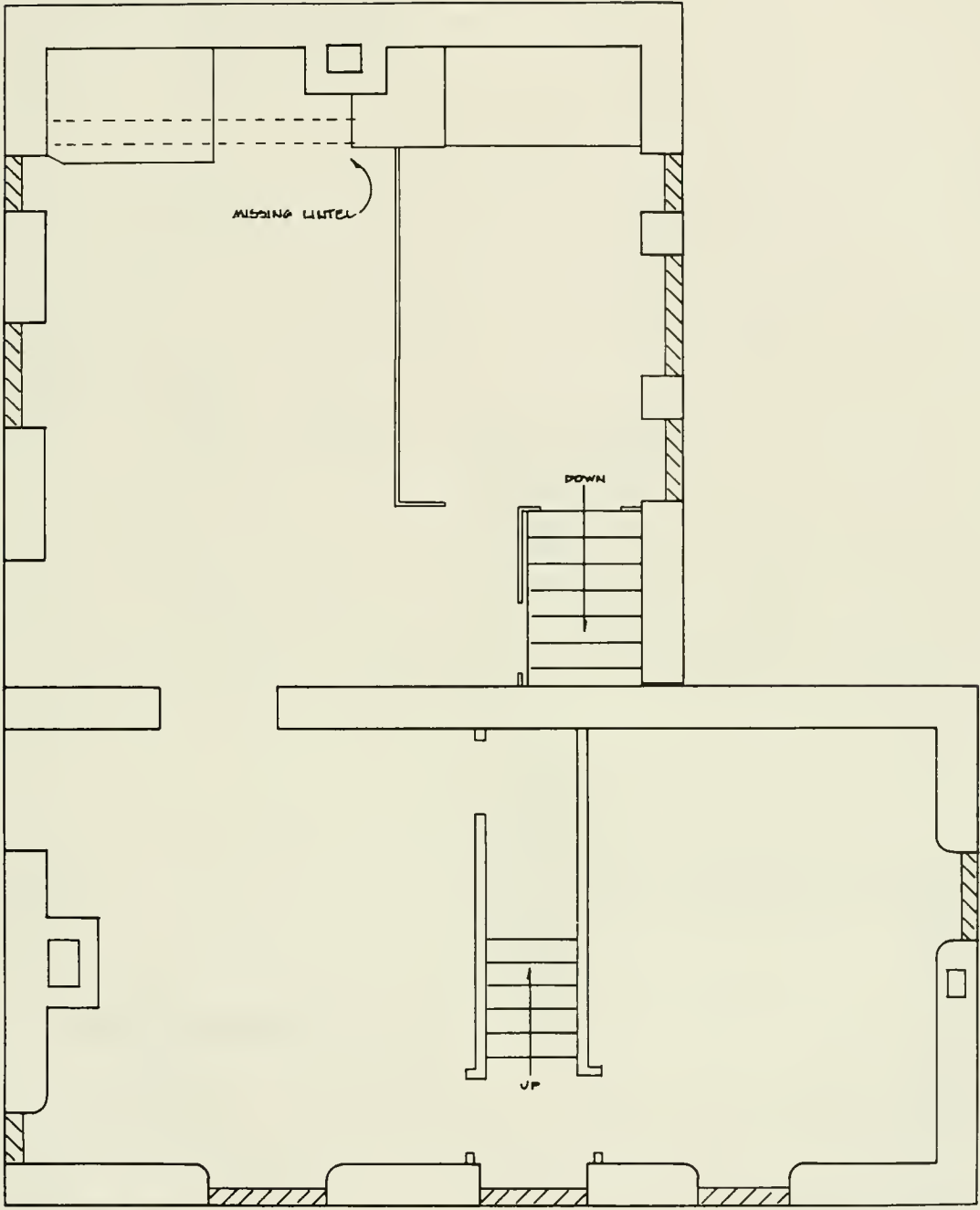






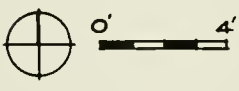
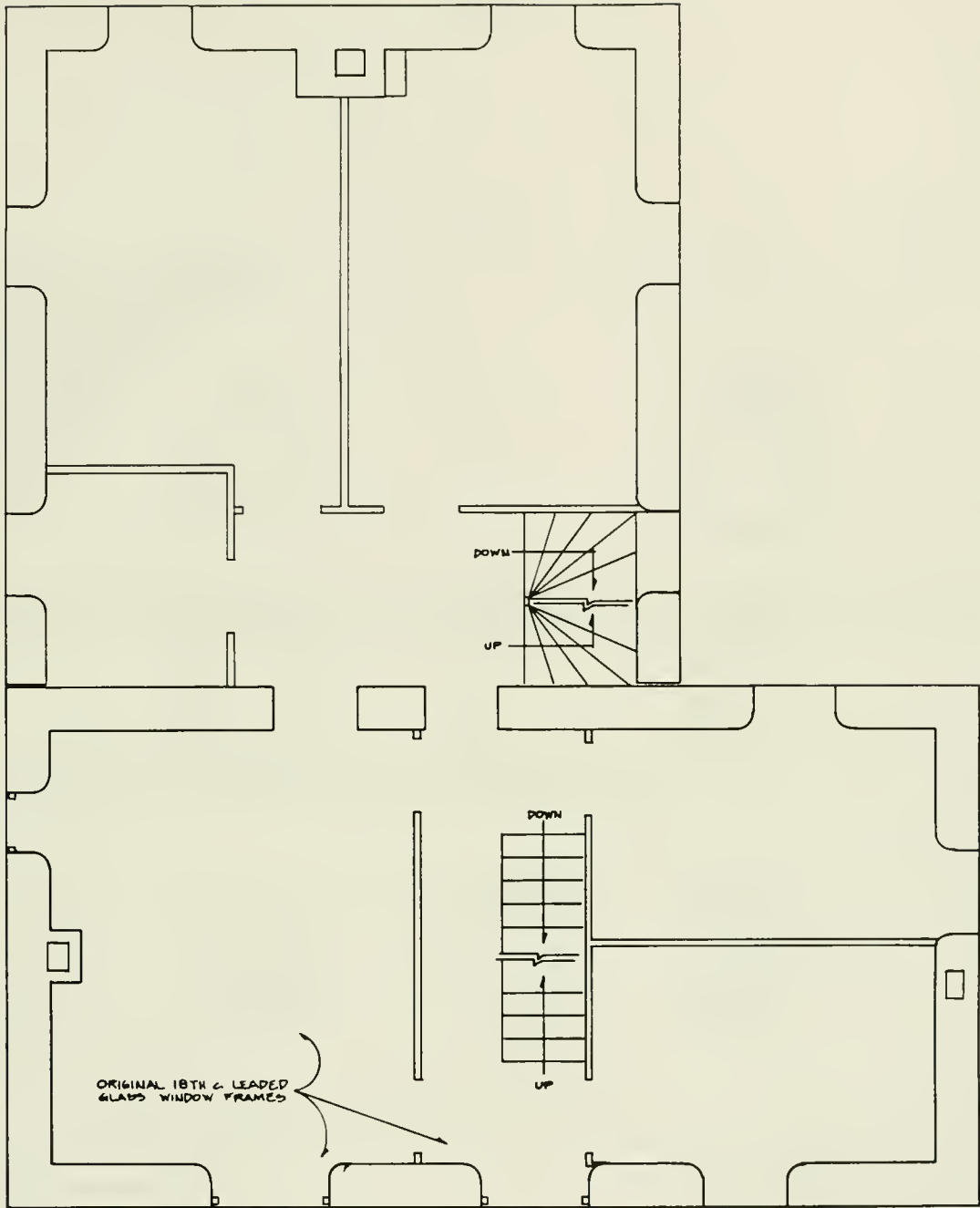
JACOB MINSHALL HOUSE  
BASEMENT  
DWG 2.2.





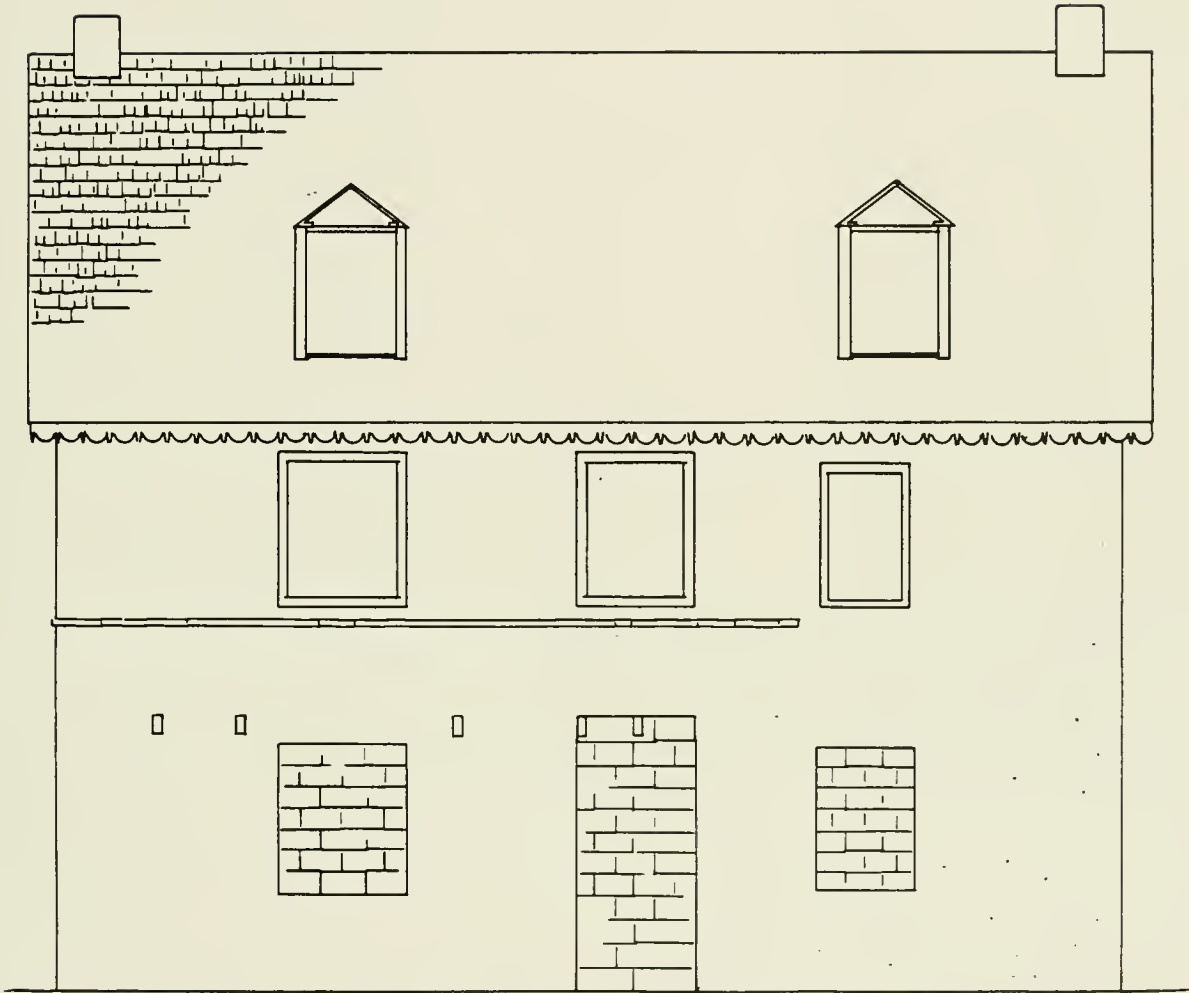
JACOB MINSHALL HOUSE  
FIRST FLOOR  
DWG. 2.3.





JACOB MINSHALL HOUSE  
SECOND FLOOR  
DWG. 2.4.





JACOB MINSHALL HOUSE  
SOUTH ELEVATION  
DWG 2.5.





Case Study III  
The Regester-Black Farm  
#4



HISTORIC FARMSTEAD INVENTORY FORM

RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK  
EDGMONT TOWNSHIP  
DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

Date: 3/8/93

Surveyor: J. Barr

Historic Name:

*Regester - Black Farm  
(4)*

Address/Location:

*440 Gradyville Rd.*

Current Tenant:

*Norman T. Glass*

General Condition:

*Fair  
restoration in progress*

Documentation:

Measured Drawings

Floorplans

Elevation

Site Plan

Photographs

General

Detail

Chain of Title

other \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY:

(inventory of structures,  
site and landscape features)

*The property contains a large number of original structures. In addition to the main farmhouse there is a ruined springhouse, a rubble stone summer kitchen, a stucco and frame carriage barn/shop and a ruined frame barn. The farm complex predates Gradyville Road which passes directly behind the farmhouse and would not have been the original approach. Landscape around the house features a number of early rubble stone retaining walls.*

HISTORICAL DATA: *see attached*

SIGNIFICANCE: *see attached*



SUPPLEMENTARY HISTORIC STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK  
EDGMONT TOWNSHIP  
DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

Date: 3/8/93

Surveyor: J. Barr

PARK I.D. NUMBER:

Building Type: *Residence*

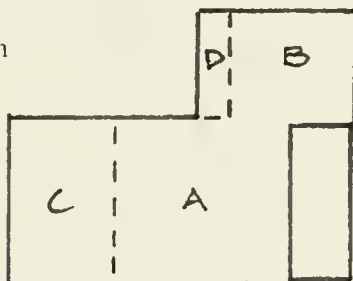
Condition: *good*

Historic Name: *Regester - Black House*  
(or Associated Property)

Status: *occupant agmt*

Date(s) of Construction: *c. 1720, c. 1755 and 19th c. additions*

Keyplan



Structural Evolution: *A1720  
B-1755, C-early 19th c.  
D-mid 19th c.*

Form: *I-house  
w/ shed additions*

No. of Stories: *two stories  
w/attic and partial basement*

Bays: *three*

Roof Form(s): *continuous gable  
w/ shed additions*

Porches: *across  
south facade*

Construction Materials:

Foundation: *rubble stone*

Walls: *stone*

Roofing: *wood shingle/asphalt*

Wall Treatment/Finish: *stuccoed on north & east*

Significant Exterior Features:

INTERIOR

Evolution of Plan: *Originally small hall and parlor, later kitchen ell and linear,  
single room additions.*

Modern Alterations: *multiple renovations*

Significant Interior Features: *Some original flooring, substantial 19th c. detail*



## Chain of Title - Regester-Black Farm

7/31/1712	William Penn to Randal Vernon  ...531 acres	Patent Book A Column 4, p. 302
10/26/1712	Randal Vernon to Paul Sannders  ...531 acres	
10/26/1712	Paul Sannders to Joseph Baker  ...502 acres	Deed Book C, Vol. 4 p. 429
5/25/ 1713	Joseph Baker to John Broomal  ...127 acres	Deed Book C, Vol. 4 p. 429
10/10/1720	John Broomal to David Regester	
1/13/1750	David Regester to John Regester  ...his messuage plantation...and 100 acres	by Will
6/6/1754	John Regester to Thomas Bishop  ...100 acres	by Will
2/22/1755	Thomas Bishop to Joseph Black  ...100 acres	Deed Book X 22 p. 72
12/8/1802	Joseph Black to Joseph Black	Deed Book F p. 273





4/6/1803	Joseph Black to Robert Regester  ...100 acres	Deed Book F p. 618
6/23/1804	Robert Regester to John Regester  ...100 acres	Deed Book H p.246
1870	Sarah Regester	?



## The Regester-Black Farm

The Regester - Black Farm complex has the most complete collection of original structures of any farmstead in the park. Located at 440 Gradyville Road, just inside the west park entrance, it has a very visible location. The property includes the main farmhouse, a summer kitchen/bakehouse, a ruined springhouse, a frame bank barn, a ruined frame chicken coop and a carriage house. (see Figs. 3.1. - 3.8.) This last structure is commonly referred to as the "Regester Chair House" relating to its nineteenth century use as a woodworking shop.<sup>65</sup> This small home industry and the variety of other buildings within the farmstead suggest a high level of activity throughout the property history.

The main house was built in three distinct sections and two portions of the roof appear to have been raised as well. (see Dwgs. 3.1. a -b) The deed transactions indicate that the original portion of the house was constructed between 1720 and 1750 by David Regester. Physical evidence suggests that this structure, now the central portion of the house, was a single room, or a small hall and parlor, one and one half story bank house. Originally measuring 24' 5" by 18' 5", this structure apparently had a second floor loft space as well as a full basement with exterior access. Examination of the first floor fireplace indicates that it has since been converted to a smaller parlor fireplace. The front door, now located within the kitchen ell, was centrally located on the south facade between two windows. The three bay, hall and parlor house, common throughout the region, is now concealed and incorporated into the present structure. Little of the original structure remains due to multiple changes and additions as well as the evolution of the use of space.

Evidence of the original one and one half story form and subsequent roof raising exists in the attic. It is apparent that the massive stone chimney originally



ended approximately six feet below the current height. (see Fig. 3.9.) Often the top portions of chimneys deteriorated from exposure to the weather and were rebuilt in brick. But in this case the height of an earlier roofline can be determined by the existence of a flashing course of stones.

Differences in the joist systems also confirm the raising of the original structure. Many of the original first floor oak log joists are evident in the basement and the wide oak flooring survives in the existing first floor stair hall. The second floor joists in the central section appear to be hewn poplar with a lambs tongue. The framing around the stair, on the other hand, is sawn pine with a bead. This suggests that there was a change in the orientation of the stairs. The stairs were more likely located adjacent to the fireplace on the east gable wall. The attic floor joists which are visible from the second floor are also sawn pine with a bead. This is evidence of the change in the stairs occurring simultaneously with the raising of the roof and the creation of a full second floor.

According to the 1798 Direct Tax of Edgmont Township, the one story kitchen ell was the first addition to the structure.<sup>66</sup> In this detailed tax assessment, the stone dwelling house is listed with a single story, 13' by 15' "roomeajoining" of stone. This room was apparently used as a kitchen. The masonry projection (currently concealed by modern kitchen cabinets), the fireplace foundation and chimney is evidence of a second cooking fireplace. (see Figs. 3.1.&3.10.) It can be assumed that cooking activities were shifted into this "roomeajoining" and the original fireplace was made smaller at this time. Also, disregarding the more recent wood framed extension of this space, the kitchen addition, as originally built, would not have covered the front door.

The wood framed, shed addition on the west gable end of the house has replaced an earlier structure. The continuous foundation and original door frame which swings into the space suggests a similar wood framed structure



contemporary with the kitchen ell. There was also evidence of an early lime floor uncovered during the current rehabilitation.

The next addition was a two story, single room extension on the west gable end. This structure has no basement and contains a small corner fireplace, which has been recently and inaccurately reconstructed. An additional door and window were added to the primary south facade. Originally the roofline of this addition would have been slightly higher than the central portion of the house and its height is evident at the horizontal seam above the second story window of the south facade. (see Fig. 3.11.) The unusually tall ceiling of the second story room and the reworking of the corner chimney, evident in the attic, also substantiates this theory. (see Fig.3.12)

At some point, the two main roofs were raised to a uniform height creating a full second story. The second floor six over six windows were probably added at this time. The stucco on the north facade was most likely applied to conceal changes and seams in the stonework resulting from this additive evolution. The stucco on the east end and below the porch roof on the south facade were applied by the last tenant within the past 20 years. The non-original and severely deteriorated porch on the north facade was removed during the current rehabilitation.

Today, the rear or north facade of the Black - Register house faces Gradyville Road. This orientation and its proximity to the road suggest a construction date which predates the establishment of Gradyville Road. The original access to the property would not have approached in this manner. It is likely that access was from a small lane off of Delchester Road and Gradyville Road did not continue through. Early maps of the Township do not delineate Gradyville Road, and the first reference to a "public road" in the property descriptions does not occur until 1819.





Due to the multiple additions and renovations, little of the original house remains. But aside from the modern systems that have been introduced, the framing, woodwork, flooring, doors, windows and shutters all appear to date before 1850. Original or not, the Black - Register house contains significant architectural fabric that must be respected. One interior door has a weathered side as well as an early wooden latch, raising the possibility that it could be the original front door. This same latch type exists on the basement door. Original doorjamb survive in the basement and in the kitchen. The Federal mantle on the central fireplace is an example of an early renovation indicating a desire to update to the fashion of the early 19th century. The succession of types and treatments of the floorjoists supports the structural evolution. All of these elements are examples of significant fabric and evidence which is representative of the evolution of the house. It should be noted that unlike many of the properties within the park, the tenant performing the current rehabilitation is capable and knowledgeable in preservation and has a genuine interest in the history of the property.

The banked, rubble stone structure on the south side of the main house appears to have been a summer kitchen and bakehouse. (see Fig. 3.5.) Evidence of the bakeoven exists on its south facade and the flue and large cooking fireplace can be seen on the interior. At some point the building was re-roofed and the top of the chimney was removed. The upper room, with separate access and a large six over six window, could have been occupied by a tenant or used as a shop. The stonework suggests an early construction date, possibly concurrent with additions on the main house.

The rubble stone springhouse, located below the house is in a state of ruin. The masonry walls are standing, and in fair condition, and the original timber door jamb is still in place. The roof structure, on the other hand, has



disappeared. The stonework, as well as the obvious need for an early source of water, places an early construction date on this building also.

The present barn which at this writing is facing imminent collapse, encompasses a very early four bent, three bay, English timber frame. At some point the barn was enlarged, re-roofed and sided but the early frame survives within the larger structure. This is a significant example of a very early frame barn, possibly dating to the original settlement of the property in the 1720's. The large board and batten barn, a typical 19th century construction, is in very poor condition and ready to collapse. The frame of the smaller barn could easily be the earliest of its kind in the area and deserving of documentation if not salvage.

The garage or "chair factory", as it has been referred to, is a combination frame and masonry structure. The stuccoed, rubble stone walls extend up to the eaves and the gables are framed and sided with vertical boards. There are photographs from the 1970's showing a plaque on the building which reads "Abraham Regester's Chair House 1801 - 1873" but no other evidence survives confirming this use.

The complexity of the vernacular evolution of this house and property is significant within the park. Along with the Colonial Plantation, which has been significantly reconstructed, the Black - Regester farm and its multiple original buildings is a fine surviving example of an early rural Pennsylvania farm.





Fig. 3.1. Regester - Black House. South Facade.



Fig. 3.2. Regester - Black House. West Facade.





Fig. 3.3. Regester - Black House. North Facade.



Fig. 3.4. Regester - Black House.  
East Facade.







Fig. 3.5. Summer kitchen/Bakehouse  
on Regester - Black farm.



Fig. 3.6. Springhouse on Regester - Black farm.





Fig. 3.7. Barn on Regester - Black farm.



Fig. 3.8. Carriage House/ Chair Factory on Regester - Black farm.





Fig. 3.9. Regester - Black House. Original terminus of chimney.



Fig. 3.10. Regester - Black House.  
Detail of fireplace foundation  
in kitchen ell.





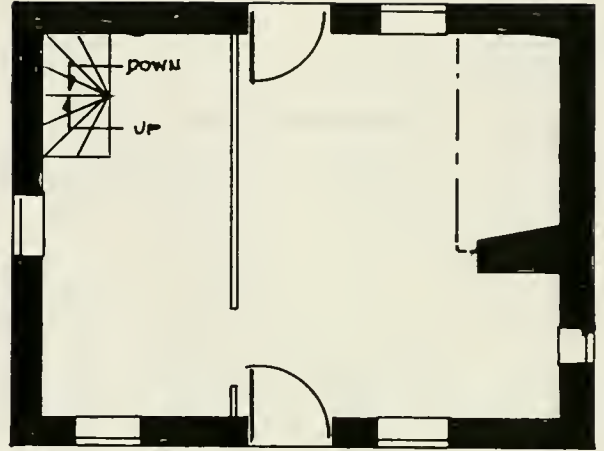
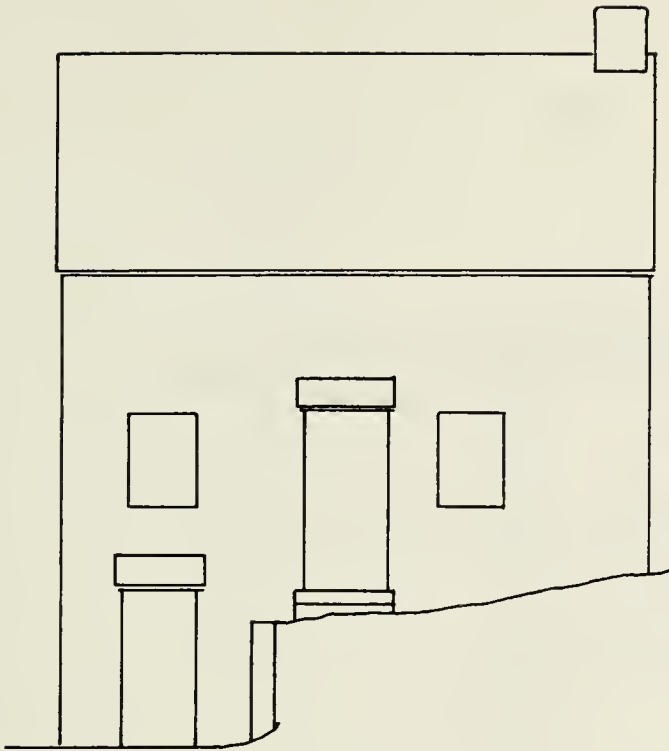
Fig. 3.11. Regester -Black House. Detail of vertical and horizontal seams.  
South facade.



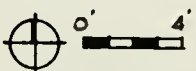
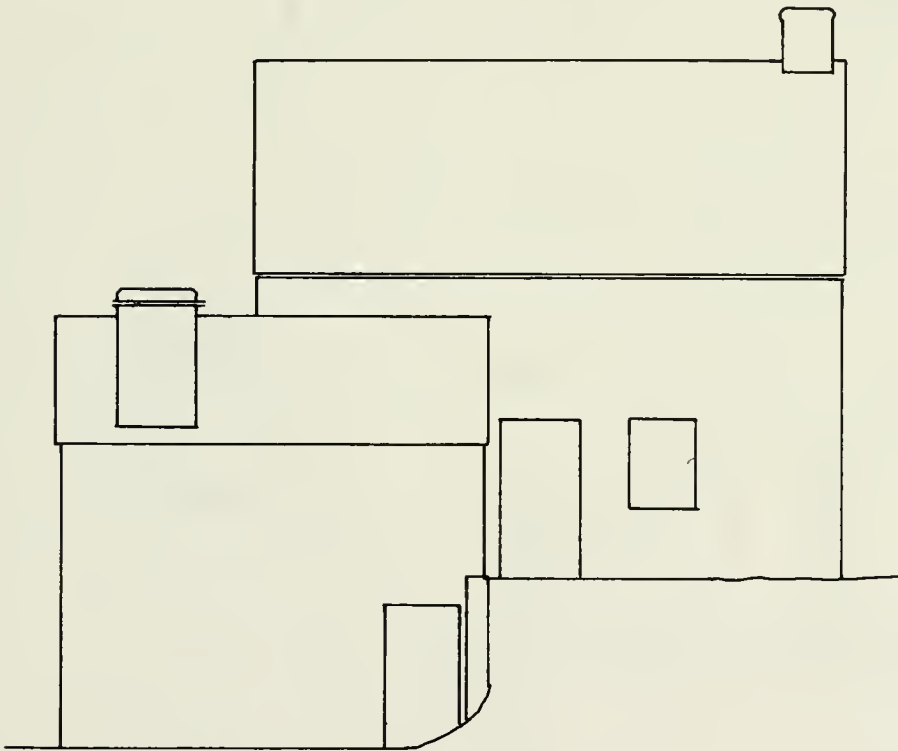
Fig. 3.12. Regester - Black House. Original terminus of corner chimney.





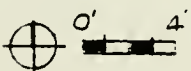
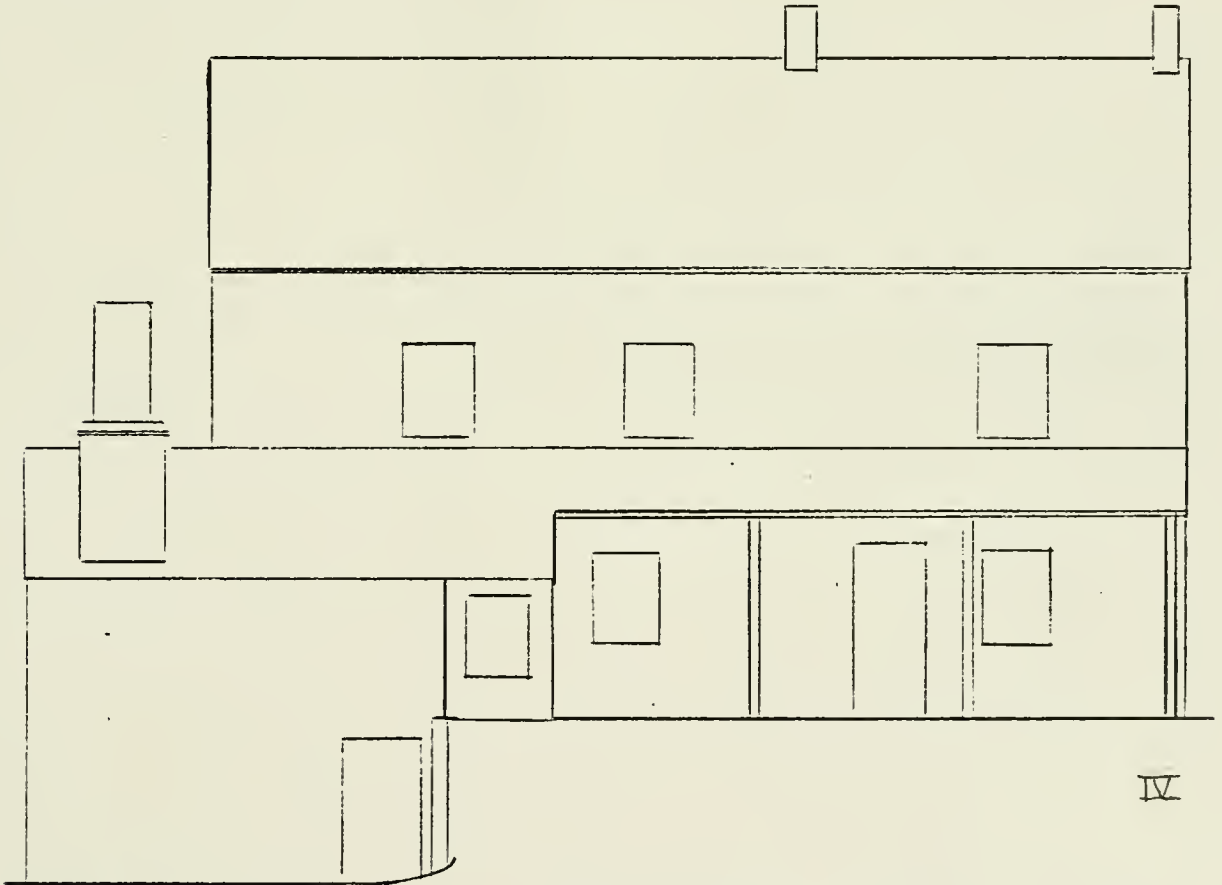
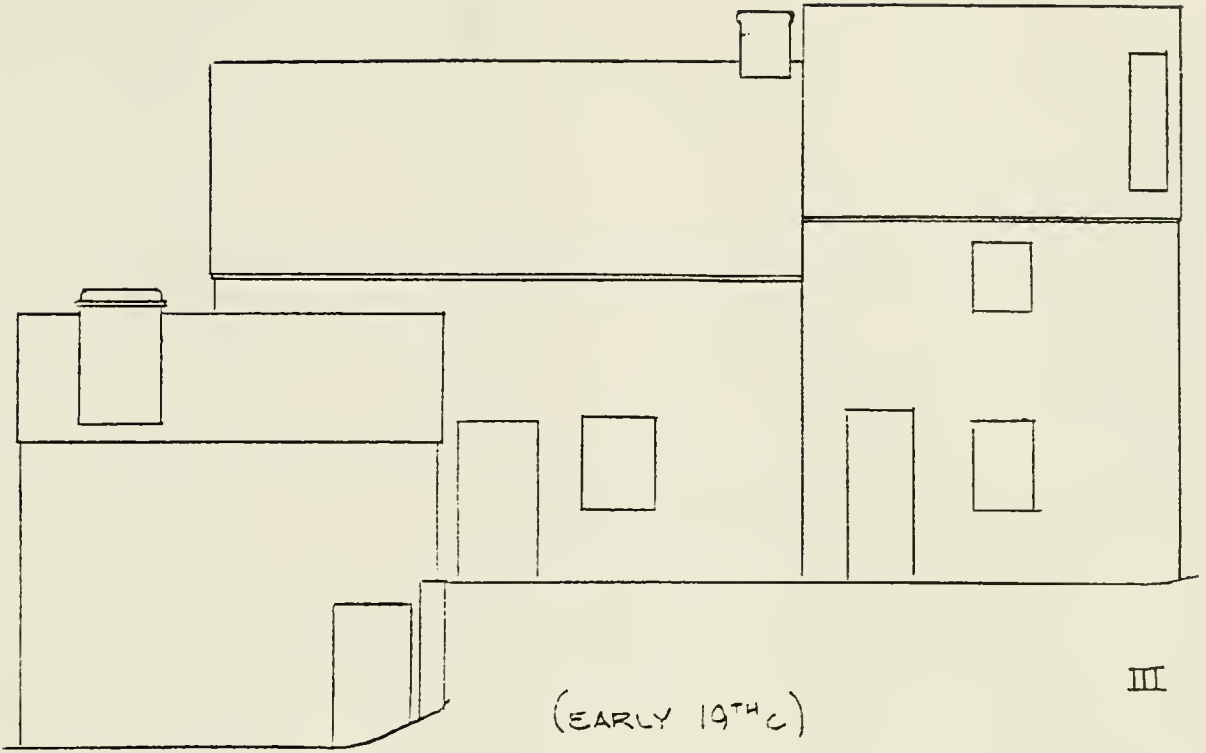


I. c.1720



REGISTER - BLACK HOUSE  
II c.1755  
DWG. 3.1.



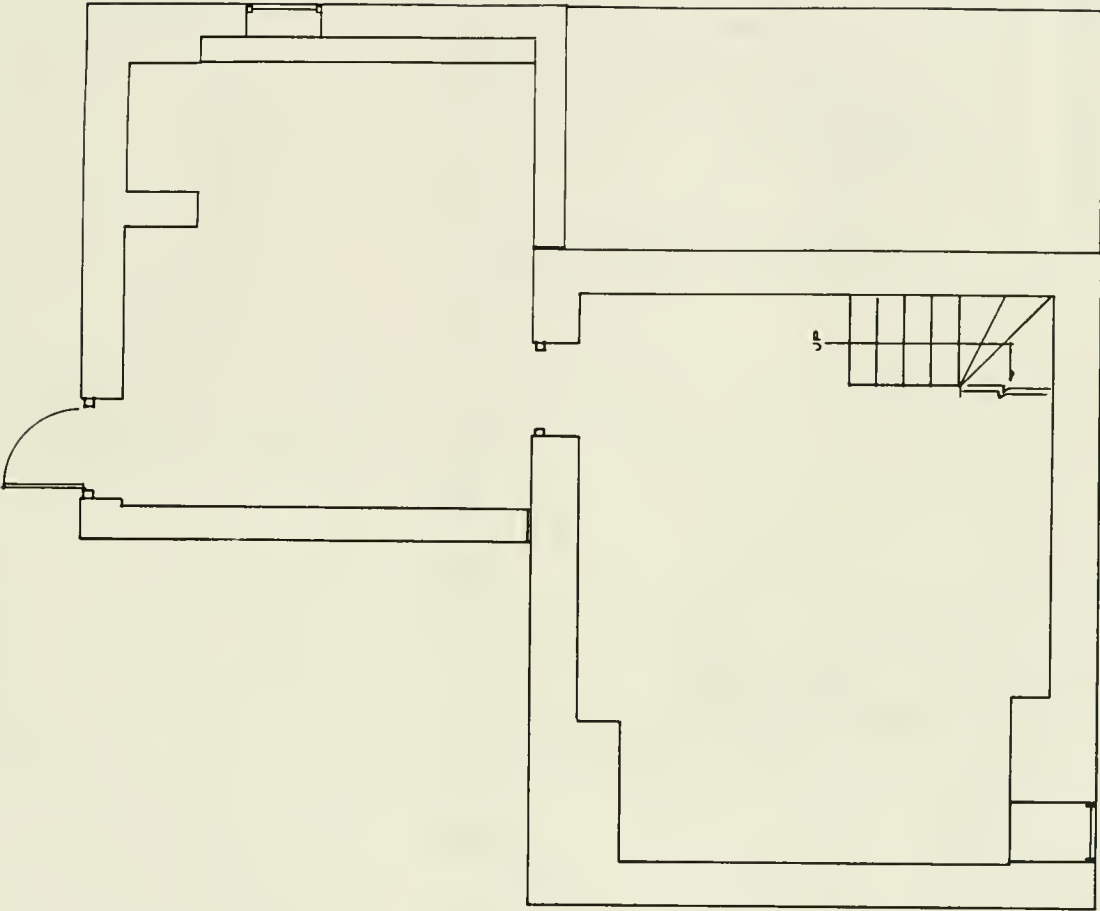


REGISTER - BLACK HOUSE  
(MID 19TH C.)

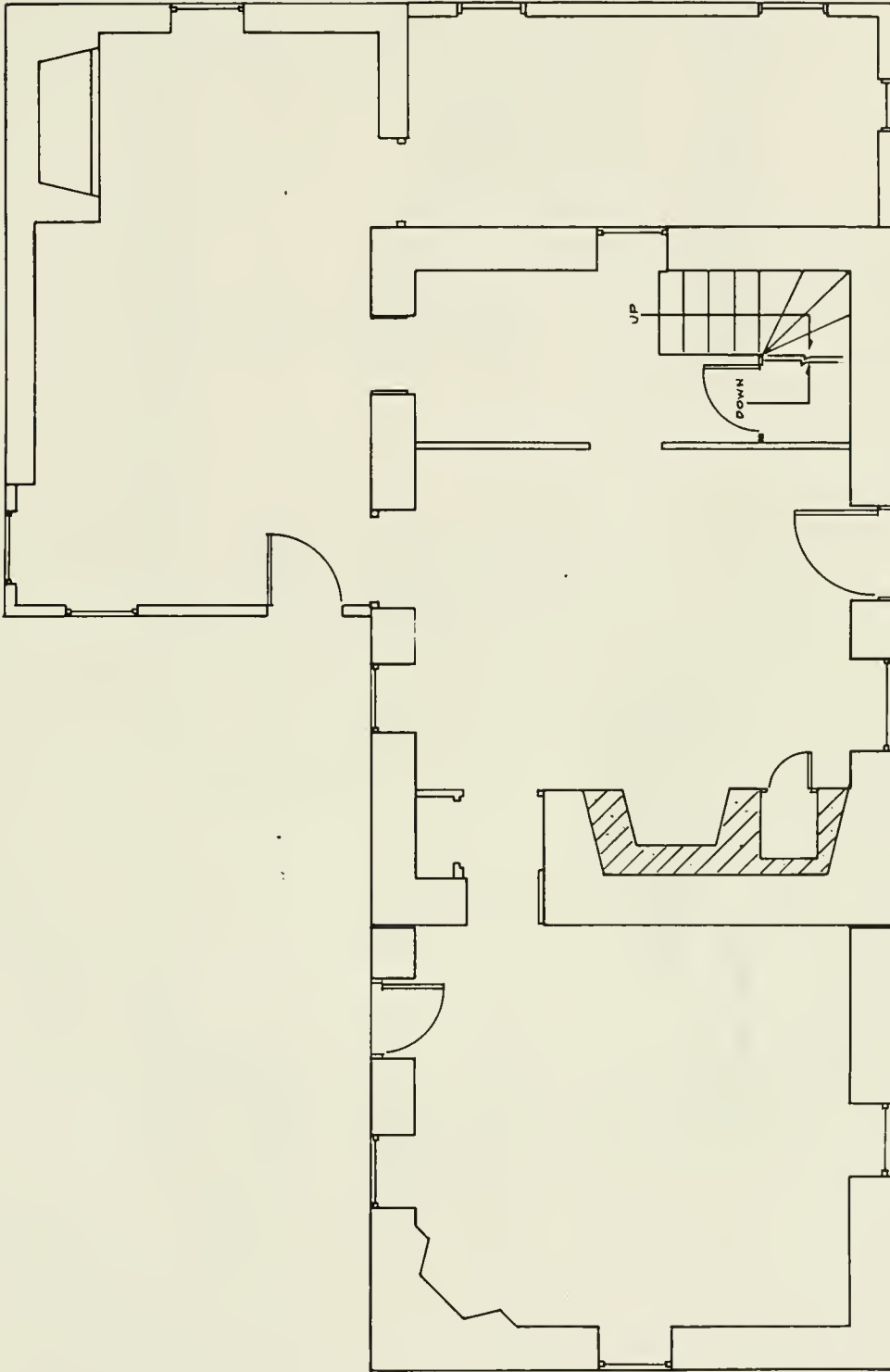
DWG 3.1.B



REGISTER - BLACK HOUSE  
BASEMENT  
DWG 3.2





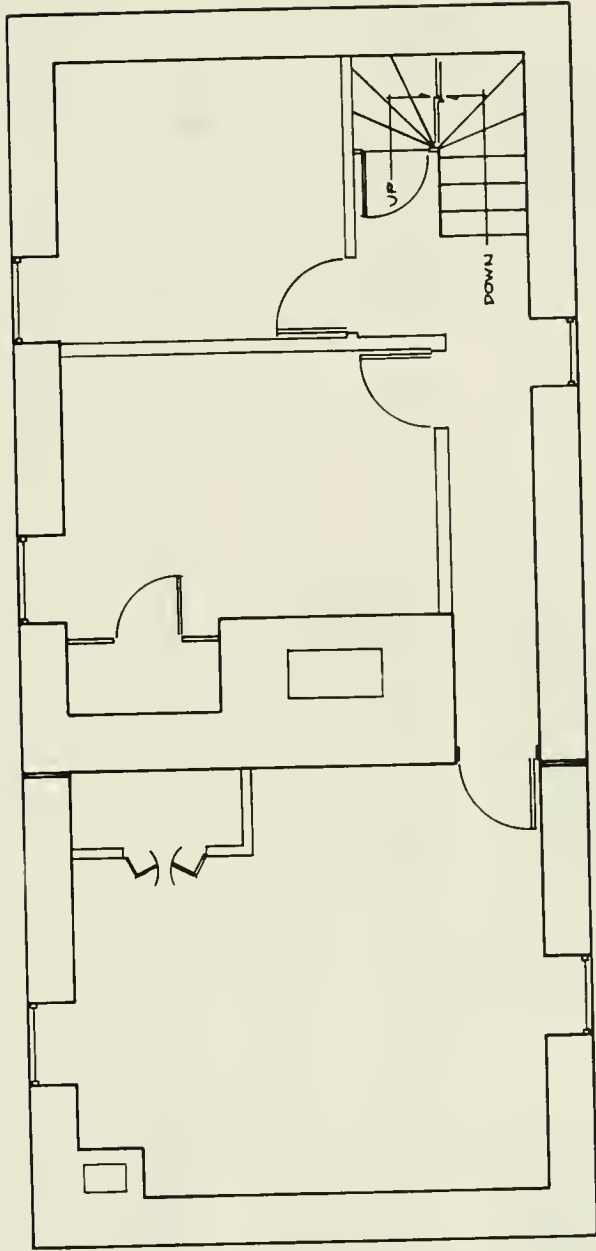


REGISTER - BLACK HOUSE  
FIRST FLOOR  
DWG. 3.3.



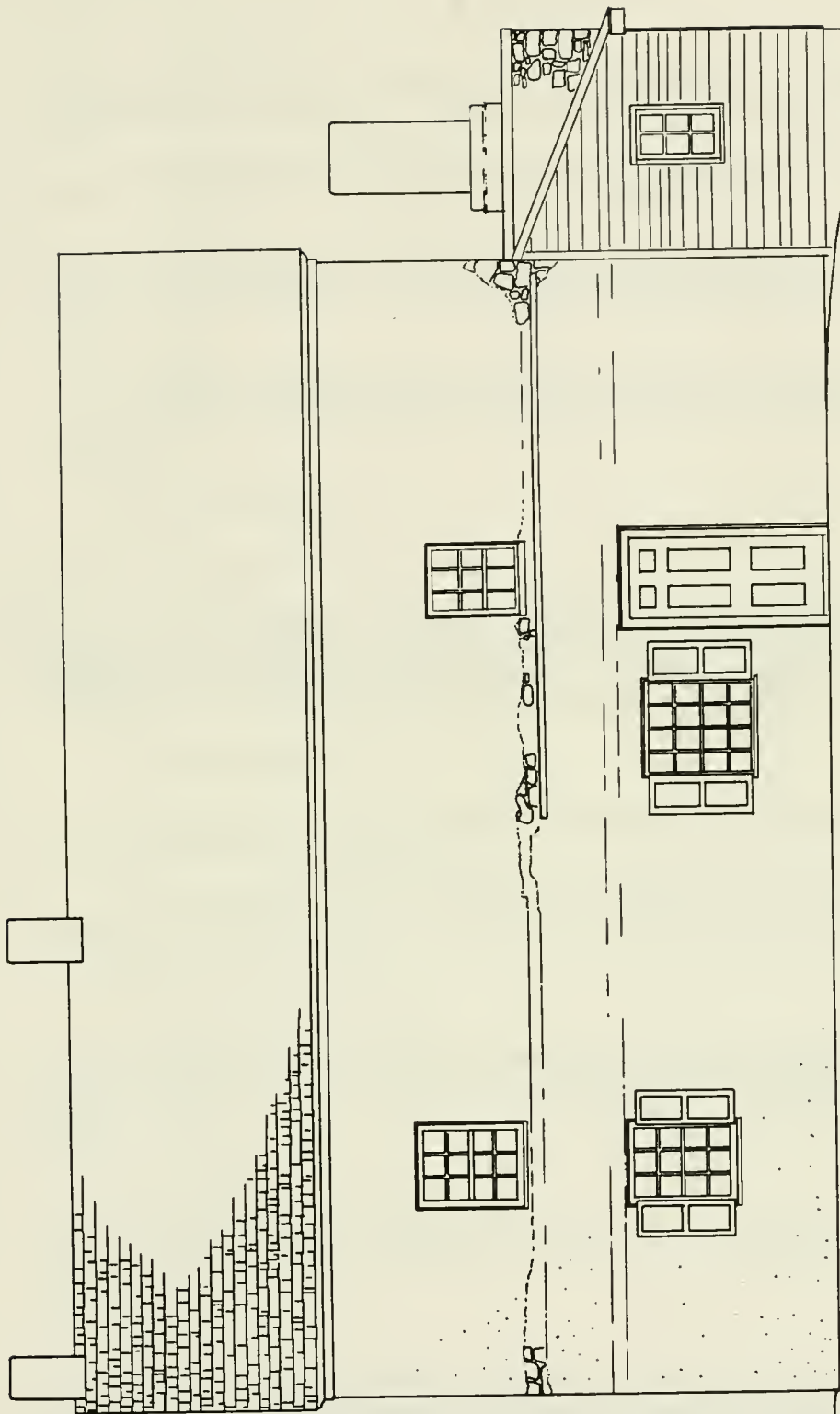






REGISTER - BLACK HOUSE  
SECOND FLOOR  
DWG 3.4.





REGISTER-BLACK HOUSE  
NORTH ELEVATION  
DWG. 3.5.



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Appendix A  
The Farmsteads:  
Inventory of  
Historic Structures



<u>Farmstead Status</u>	<u>Inv. No.</u>	<u>Historic Name or Type</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Condition</u>
1. public	3650-018	The Jeffords Mansion/ George Green house (c. 1798)	Sandy Flash So.	good
	3650-020	Springhouse	behind mansion	ruin
	3650-021	Springhouse	east of mansion	vacant
2. lease	3650-024	Isaac Green house	stables	vacant
	3650-025	barn	stables	good
	3650-026	blacksmith shop	stables	good
park use	3650-027	residence/shop	stables	fair
	3650-022	springhouse	stable pasture	vacant
3. occ agmt	3650-030	(artist co-op)house	351 Gradyville Rd.	rehab
	3650-029	springhouse/residence	same-on road	ruin
	3650-031	barn	same	rehab
	3650-032	carriage house	same	good
	3650-033	icehouse	same	ruin
	3650-034	corn crib	same	fair
	3650-035			
	3650-036	modern grain bins	same	good
4. occ agmt	3650-037	Regester/Black house (c. 1720)	440 Gradyville Rd	rehab
	3650-038	barn	same	ruin
	3650-039	carriage barn/shop	same	good
	3650-040	springhouse	same	ruin
	3650-041	chicken coop	same	ruin
	3650-041A	summer kitchen	same	good





5. occ agmt	3650-042	Thomas Minshall house (c. 1777)	Gradyville Rd.	good
	3650-043	barn	same	ruin
	3650-044	springhouse	same	ruin
	3650-045	modern shed	same	good
6. occ agmt	3650-046	Baker? (Ryan) house	1555 Delchester Rd	good
	3650-046A	barn	same	ruin
	3650-047	carriage barn	same	good
	3650-048	springhouse	same	fair
7. lease	3650-049	late 19th c. house (plantation staff)	Sandy Flash North	good
	3650-050	barn	same	?
	3650-051	garage?	same	?
8. lease	3650-052	Joseph Pratt house (c.1715)	Colonial Plantation	good
	3650-053	barn	same	good
	3650-054	carriage barn	same	good
	3650-055	springhouse	same	good
	3650-055A	icehouse	same	ruin
	3650-056	cabin	same	good
9. occ agmt	3650-057	(Chain) house	3740 N. Providence	good
	3650-058	barn	same	ruin
	3650-059	carriage barn	same	good
	3650-060	springhouse	same	good
10.occ agmt	3650-061	(Desantis) house	3672 N. Providence	good
	3650-062	barn	same	good
	3650-063	chicken coop	same	good?



11. life tenancy	3650-064	(Barnes) house	Clonmel Farm	good
	3650-065	guest house	3606 N. Providence same	good
	3650-066	barn	same	good
	3650-067	springhouse	same	good
	3650-068	conv. barn/house	same	good
12.occ agmt	3650-069	Russell ?(Kilburn) house	66 Gradyville Rd.	good
	3650-069A	barn	same	ruin
	3650-070	springhouse	same	ruin
13.occ agmt	3650-071	William Russell house	300 Gradyville Rd.	good
	3650-072	springhouse	same	ruin?
	3650-073	shed ?	same	good?
14.occ agmt	3650-077	(Dougan) house	3432 N.Providence	good
	3650-074	conv. barn/(Fifer) house	3430 N.Providence	good
	3650-075	springhouse	same	fair
	3650-076	icehouse	same	fair
	3650-078	garage	same	good
15.occ agmt	3650-079	(Gropp) House Issac Worrall Cabin?	1120 SycamoreMills	good
	3650-080	Garage	same	good
	3650-081	springhouse	same	fair
	3650-081A	barn	same	ruin
	3650-082	corn crib	same	ruin
16.	3650-083	"yellow" house	Sycamore Mills Rd.	ruin
	3650-084	springhouse	same	ruin



17.occ agmt	3650-085	Abel Green house	1107 Sycamore Mills	good
	3650-086	barn	same	fair
	3650-087	springhouse	same	ruin
	3650-088	carriage barn	same	was removed
* occ agmt	3650-090	1875 school house	1000 Sycamore Mills	good
* occ agmt	3650-092	wood-framed cottage	971 Sycamore Mills	good
18.occ agmt	3650-093	(Wood) house	841 Sycamore Mills	good
	3650-094	barn	same	ruin
	3650-095	springhouse/tenant house	same	ruin
	3650-095A	summer kitchen/shed	same	fair
19.occ agmt	3650-101	Hoopes?(Goldwater)house	838 Sycamore Mills	good
	3650-102	barn	same	fair/ruin
occ agmt	3650-103	(Link)springhouse	same	good
20.park use	3650-109	Superintendant's house	East Forge Rd.	good
	3650-110	garage	same	good
occ agmt	3650-108	(Donaldson) house	same	good
21.	3650-111	Mosser house	off Sandy Flash S.	?
	3650-112	barn	same	?
	3650-113	summer kitchen	same	?
	3650-114	springhouse	same	?
22.	3650-115	Mullen house	Forge Rd	ruin
23.	3659-119	Worden farm complex Yarnell?	off Forge Rd	?
24.occ agmt	3650-120	John Worrall house	300 Gradyville Rd	good
	3650-121	barn	same	good
25.occ agmt	3167-001	Sycamore Mill farmhouse	290 Bishop Hollow	good
	3167-002	barn	Chapel Hill Rd.	ruin
	3167-003	springhouse	same	ruin



3650-104 thru 107 }  
 3166-001 thru 003 } Sycamore Mill Village  
 3167-005,006 }

26.	none	Jacob Minshall house	off Sycamore Mills	ruin
	none	Roundtop barn	same	ruin





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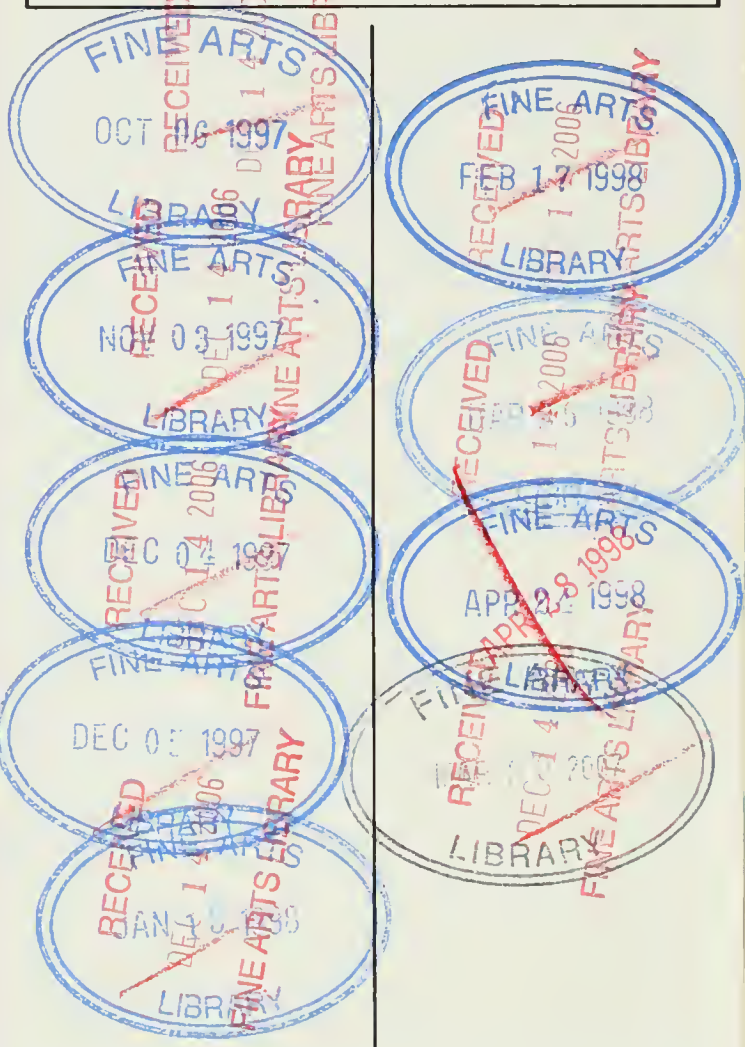


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