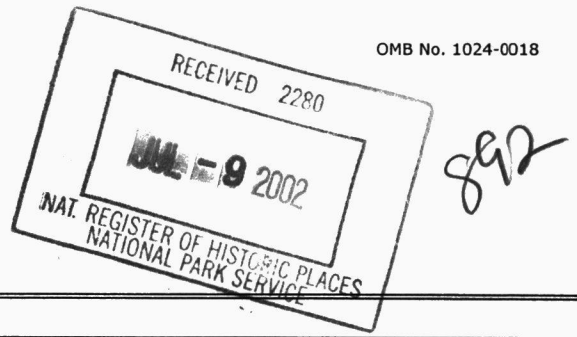


United States Department of the Interior  
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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



#### 1. Name of Property

Historic name Berkley Historic District

Other names/site number n/a

#### 2. Location

Street & number Section of Snyder Road between SR 61 and Berkley Road; Berkley Road south of Snyder Road to Tax Parcel 68 5400 14 33 3703 not for publication n/a  
City or town Ontelaunee Township vicinity n/a  
State Pennsylvania Code PA County Berks code 011 zip code 19533

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

June 30, 2002

Signature of certifying official

Date

PA Historical & Museum Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of Keeper

8/22/02

Date of Action

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### 5. Classification

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#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

#### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>14</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>14</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing

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

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

N/A

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### 6. Function or Use

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#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic Single Dwelling  
Commercial Hotel  
Agriculture/Subsistence Storage  
Industry/Processing Manufacturing Center  
Transportation Road-related

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic Single Dwelling  
Commercial Restaurant  
Transportation Road-related

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### 7. Description

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#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial: Georgian  
Early Republic: Federal  
Other: Early Pennsylvania Standard Barn

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: stone  
walls stone, wood  
roof Metal; Asphalt shingle  
other     

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

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**DESCRIPTION**

**Abstract:** Located in Ontelaunee Township in central Berks County, north of the City of Reading, the Berkley Historic District sits on a knoll above the Maiden Creek. The district is comprised of four historic residential properties that demonstrate the vernacular adaptation of colonial and early Republic architecture in a landscape of expansive lawns lined by mature trees. Each of the four colonial-style homes with Georgian and Federal features has a core built in the eighteenth century that was expanded and enlarged in the nineteenth century. Three of the homes have contributing outbuildings. The district contains two previously listed contributing resources located on Property 2 (Davies House); three non-contributing twentieth century garages; a non-contributing commercial building and 14 contributing buildings. Despite a fire in April 2000 that destroyed the Berkley Inn and the addition of a modern building on its site, the district's resources exhibit integrity of design, layout, scale and setting.

**Physical Description:** The Berkley Historic District is at the junction of the Willow Creek and the Berkley Road. The Francis Parvin homestead, Property #1, encompasses the entire portion of the district north of the creek. The English colonial stone house is surrounded by auxiliary farm buildings, which still in their original configuration convey the layout and orientation of an early farmstead. The remainder of the district consists of one non-contributing commercial building and three homes facing the road south of the Willow Creek. Tall evergreen trees line the road providing a buffer for the lawns that surround each home. Two of the three homes have contributing outbuildings. Grassy slopes and a stone-reinforced streambed define the western boundary of the district. Beyond this, out of sight from the district, are water filtration beds. Outside the district but prominently visible on Berkley Road is a two-story, limestone, Colonial Revival building built in the 1920's with design elements similar to the neighboring houses. This building houses administration offices for the water filtration plant that surrounds the Davies House, Property #2. The district is isolated from the surrounding countryside to the east by SR 61, which is mostly obscured from view by vegetation.

The most impressive collection of historic resources exists on the Parvin homestead, Property #1. This stone, 2½-story, side-gabled house was built in 1758 (date stone) on the highest point in the surrounding landscape. The original section was five bays wide, one room deep, with a center hall design. In 1856, Jacob Parvin increased the size of the home to nine rooms, extended the basement and added a second fireplace to each floor (Homan). Following construction of the new addition, the façade of the house was plastered for the first time (Photo #1). A front porch was added *circa* 1880 that spans the center four bays, has turned posts, fairly plain brackets, and a low-pitched hipped roof. Auxiliary buildings to the rear of the house include a stone summer kitchen over an underground meat cellar, an icehouse and an outhouse. The house sits 50' from the township road known as West Snyder Road and appears on the 1876 Historic Atlas (Map3).

During the 1856 construction period a second semi-subterranean cold cellar was built in the front lawn (Photo #2). In the year 2000, a previously hidden tunnel entrance in the main house basement was found that appeared to lead forward to the 'cellar' by the side of the road. No excavation of the tunnel from the house was pursued, but the area around the cold cellar and the barn was investigate. A Franklin & Marshall College anthropology project produced evidence to support the theory that the abolitionist Quakers that lived here used this cellar to hide fugitive slaves seeking passage northward through the Underground Railroad (Shellenhamer, 2001). An excavation of what was believed to be the opening to a system of tunnels between the cold cellar, the house and the barn led to the discovery of a previously hidden alcove within the cold cellar.

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The 'alcove' is 120 cm high, 90cm wide and 150 cm deep, stone-lined and built into the foundation of the cold cellar. The alcove floor was close to 15cm higher than the cold cellar floor, a design that would keep the cellar water out and the contents of the alcove dry. Artifacts found at this excavation include pieces of undecorated redware that were used as utilitarian food storage containers. Four other redware containers were determined to be chamber pots, whose presence in the cold cellar suggests people spent time in the structure. Many fragments of medicine bottles, cups, plates and bowls were also found as well as animal bones that were butchered and intended for human consumption. A single blue glass fragment was recovered from this excavation. Examination under a microscope showed the fragment was from a faceted bead of the type specifically associated with Africans. These discoveries combined with the abolitionist history of the Parvin family (Homan) led Jason Shellenhammer a student at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster under the supervision of James Delle, PhD. to conclude that this alcove was not created for storing additional food but may have been used to hide escaped slaves. The entire Parvin homestead may be suitable for further archaeological investigation.

Circa 1800, a 35' x 61' barn (Photo #3) was constructed on the south side of West Snyder Road. The barn has three hewn interior bents, masonry gable walls with vertical slits for ventilation in the mow area, a stone stable wall and the *Leigender stuhle* roof support system consisting of a truncated principal rafter with double courser tie and braces at either end that characterize the Classic Switzer construction methods prevalent in this area from 1750-1850. A new evolution of barn construction method identified as the Standard Pennsylvania Barn emerged in this area while the classic Switzer was still being built (Ensminger, 67). Symmetrical gable walls, symmetrical interior bents and an enclosed forebay are identifying features of the Standard Pennsylvania Barn and are all present in the Parvin barn making this a rare hybrid of the two construction methods. Circa 1850 an 8' deep extended forebay was added to the south face of the barn that accounts for the current asymmetrical silhouette of the roofline. Crossbeams supported by posts were added to support the extended forebay.

Adjacent to the barn is a nineteenth century drive-in wagon shed roughly 30' x 40' with an internal corncrib. To the west are the remains of a wooden 'bark house', used in the tannery operated at this location between 1735 and 1916. Behind the barn at the edge of the Willow Creek is a large sycamore tree that is at least one hundred years old. The remaining resources in the district lie to the south of the Parvin homestead along Berkley Road.

On the west side of Berkley Road, a decorative wrought iron fence lines the eastern and northern property line of Property #2. The Davies House, listed in the National Register in 1982, is a 2-½ story, Georgian-style, stone house that sits back 50' from the road. The original core was rectangular, 2 ½ stories and three bays facing north to the Willow Creek. This portion was built before the death of William Parvin in 1772 as it was described in his estate. The Davies family acquired the property in 1806. Circa 1830, an addition on the south side of the original building created the existing five bay façade facing the Berkley Road. A front porch supported by four hexagon columns spanning the three middle bays was also added to the east face. The addition date is based on a newspaper from 1831 found under the floorboards of the attic addition and a pencil drawing from 1835 showing the house virtually as it stands today (Photo 4). A change in the roofline and subtle differences in the stonework indicate the line between the original and the later sections. Dentil cornice moldings adorn the entire roofline. All windows have their original six over six configurations with unadorned lentils and no shutters. The front door is a pair of paneled doors beneath a simple four pane rectangular fan light.

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To the rear of the Davies property an outhouse and a stone smokehouse over a subterranean cold cellar are the two contributing resources remaining from the period of significance. The only non-contributing resource on this property is a wood frame horse barn built circa 1900 that was converted to a garage in the mid-twentieth century.

On the other side of Berkley Road, two stone residences with original door and window configurations contribute to a district interpretation of vernacular architectural adaptations. Designed in the fashionable style of the time, the classical features and Georgian detailing mirror the tastes and income of prosperous merchants that operated businesses here. The rear wing of Property #5, the Robert Schmehl house, was the original two-bay residence with plain six-over-six windows that was built circa 1790. Approximately 1830, a three bay, 2-½ story, stone, side gable extension was erected on the west side of the original. This became the formal facade of the home and the new front door with its simple Adam-style low pitch pediment opened to the Berkley Road. Windows on the addition have keystone lentils with six over nine panes. Shutters on the lower windows are paneled and the second story windows have louvered shutters. The intricately carved cornice has curved modillions and sculpted dentils. A detached, stone summer kitchen from the early 1800s was incorporated in the early twentieth century into the rear portion of the house by building a brick breezeway. From the street, the home looks much as it did at the end of the period of significance.

Property #4, known as the Dunkle House, is a contributing 2-½ story stone dwelling with unadorned six over six paned windows and painted wooden shutters. Three of the seven bays on the first floor are doors. Each paneled door has a modest door surround. The windows have been replaced with single paned double hung windows, but the paneled shutters on the first floor and louvered shutters on the second match those of the Schmehl house. A one-story porch roof spans the center five bays supported by square posts and simple cornice brackets. The original T-shaped layout of the house has been augmented with a one-story enclosed frame addition on the north, rear side that has seven double hung windows and one door. This twentieth century addition is not visible from the street and does not distract from the historic interpretation of the building. This property also has a non-contributing, three bay, wood frame garage built in the 1970's. This property was an adjunct to the Berkley Inn that was situated a few feet to the north.

The Berkley Inn was destroyed by fire in April 2000. The site of the inn is now occupied by a one-story concrete block building used as a tavern. The original Inn building represented the last commercial enterprise from the period of significance. The construction and design elements matched the neighboring properties but its loss does not reduce the district's ability to demonstrate residential styles from the period. The setback and low visibility of the new building creates only a minimal disruption of the historic streetscape.

The buildings in the Berkley Historic District's that were built between 1758 and 1856 represent an unusual collection of domestic and farm buildings that have not been substantially altered since 1880. The properties have few modern alterations. One enclosed frame porch and a brick breezeway from the twentieth century are not prominently visible from the street. Two late twentieth century garages and the non-contributing horse barn that was converted to a garage are visible but do not distract from the interrelationship of the other outbuildings. The village focus has changed from commerce and industry to residential. The landscape outside the district has changed from agriculture to industry and commerce, but the resources in the district still reflect the characteristics of a mid-nineteenth century rural village whose businesses prospered when a major road brought increased traffic through the community.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- a** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b** removed from its original location.
- c** a birthplace or a grave.
- d** a cemetery.
- e** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f** a commemorative property.
- g** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

### Period of Significance

1758—c.1856

**Significant Dates** N/A

### Significant Person

(if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

**Architect/Builder** - Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
See continuation sheet.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Bibliography

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

See continuation sheet.

### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- Designated a National Historic Landmark
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Berks County Conservancy

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### Narrative Statement of Significance:

#### SUMMARY

The Berkley Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criterion A (Social History) and Criterion C (Architecture). The Berkley Historic District is a collection of buildings that illustrate the materials, design, and workmanship typical of northern Berks County villages in the colonial and early Republic eras. The period of significance begins in 1758 when the Francis Parvin House was built (date stone). The auxiliary buildings that remain on the Parvin farmstead convey not only typical layout and local materials but also a rare combination of Pennsylvania barn construction methods that evolved in this area. Although the Parvins were of English descent, settlers from Germanic nations far outnumbered the English in this region after 1780 and were renowned for their skilled craftsmanship. It was not uncommon for the Quakers to hire German builders, although there is no direct evidence in this case. The resources in the Berkley Historic District are examples of the Anglo-German Renaissance that dominated architecture across Berks County in the early 1800s. During the period of significance the small colonial cores of the other village homes were enlarged. These additions have a variety of Federal and Georgian design elements. The period of significance ends in 1856 when the last major additions were completed to the Parvin house. After this time the focus of the village shifted to the east where the Berks Lehigh Railroad station was situated. The mill was torn down and a water treatment facility was begun in 1882. After 1856, there were few significant alterations made to the exterior of the contributing resources in the district. Under National Register Criterion A (Social History) the Berkley Historic District is locally significant for association with the Underground Railroad. The Parvin homestead remained in the family from 1732 until 1998. Most of the descendants were members in good standing of the Exeter Meeting Society of Friends and worshiped at the local Maiden Creek Meeting (an indulged meeting of Exeter). Records of the Exeter Meeting corroborate oral family history about the Quakers' abhorrence of slavery. Findings from an archaeological investigation completed in 2001 support the theory that the Parvins aided escaped slaves on their journey to freedom and that this property may have been a station on the Underground Railroad.

#### BERKLEY HISTORY

Francis Parvin, an English Quaker arrived in Pennsylvania in 1729. He acquired a five hundred acre land grant in central Berks County where the Willow and Maiden Creeks enter the Schuylkill River. Trained as a tanner in England, Parvin promptly established a tannery along the Willow Creek and built a log cabin for his young family. Francis Parvin was a well-respected, influential man, who was one of several petitioners who succeeded in establishing the County of Berks in 1752. He also served as Berks County Representative to the provincial Assembly in 1755. (Montgomery 1886, p 491). Thomas and Richard Penn appointed Parvin, Conrad Weiser and William Harley commissioners for the purpose of selling lots in their newly proposed town where the Tulpehocken Creek joined the Schuylkill River. The first surveyed road in the county was from Parvin's home in Berkley to the new village of Reading.

Francis Parvin, Jr. built a stone house of locally quarried limestone in 1758. The original center-hall core is easily recognized as a distinguishable component of the present home. Original window and door configurations remain. Interior features include original floor planks and staircase plus fireplace surrounds from the early nineteenth century. In 1856, a two-story addition was completed on the east side of the building (Montgomery, 1030). These rooms also exhibit many original features including an enclosed stairway and fireplaces. At the rear of the home an icehouse and a summer kitchen with an underground meat cellar tell the story of 19<sup>th</sup> century domestic food preparation and storage.

The barn, originally constructed circa 1790, exhibits elements of eighteenth and nineteenth century building traditions in Berks County. The existence of 200-year-old *Liegender Stuhle* trusses makes this an

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exceptional example of colonial joinery techniques. The *Liegender Stuhle*, or lying chair in German, is a rare roof support whose form came from Germanic Europe. It consists of a truncated principal rafter with double courser tie and braces at either end. By 1825, this distinctive roof framing was no longer used (Ensminger). The Standard Pennsylvania Barn evolved in this region, and the Parvin barn exhibits the symmetrical interior bent support, symmetrical gable walls and During the period when Jacob Parvin expanded the house in 1856, an eight-foot deep wooden straw shed was also added to the south face of the barn. Although there is no direct evidence that the English Parvins hired German craftsmen to build their barn, settlers from Germanic nations far outnumbered the English in this region after 1780 and were renowned for their skilled craftsmanship. The resources in the Berkley Historic District are examples of the Anglo-German Renaissance that influenced building design across Berks County in the early 1800s (Foley, 65).

Research completed by descendants of the Parvin family confirms that most of their ancestors continued to be active members of the Exeter Meeting of the Society of Friends and attend worship at the Maiden Creek Meeting House (an indulged meeting of Exeter Meeting). Local histories, census records and minutes of the Exeter Meeting all substantiate that the Quakers in Berks County did not own slaves and were ardent abolitionists. Jacob Parvin (1815-1895) was noted in Montgomery's *History of Berks County* for his 'interest in the welfare of the colored people'. Participants in the 'Underground Railroad'--a series of safe places for escaped slaves traveling north to freedom--did not keep written records of their illegal activities. Oral family history does support this type of involvement by the Parvin family at Berkley. An archaeological dig in the summer of 2000 unearthed evidence that a cold cellar on the property was used to shelter human occupants (Shellenhamer). The homestead's proximity to major 19<sup>th</sup> century transportation routes such as the Schuylkill River, the Centre Turnpike and the King's Highway (Route 73) and the presence of other suspected Underground Railroad stations in Berks County contribute to the case for the cold cellar's use as a hiding place for fugitive slaves. The Central Pennsylvania African American Museum at the Old Bethel A.M.E. Church (another station on the Underground Railroad) in Reading recognizes the Parvin property as important in the local history of African Americans. Free blacks living in Berkley later became leaders of the African community in the City of Reading. Other members of the Parvin family began operating a mill downstream from the tannery circa 1760. The miller's house in Berkley (Property 2, Davies House) was originally built for a Parvin circa 1770. In his description of Ontelaunee Township industries, Morton Montgomery explains that

“below the tannery, on the same stream, the Parvins built a mill which in the early part of this century [nineteenth] became the property of Mark Davies, who afterward rebuilt the mill. It has been further improved by the present owner, Reese Davies, and is now one of the best mills in that part of the county.”

(Montgomery 1886, p. 1032)

After Davies acquired the property in 1810, he expanded the original stone home to the stately five bay Georgian residence we see today. A pencil drawing dated 1835 shows the very ironwork fence, window alignment, double hung door, and cornice treatment evident in Photo #4. The change in stonework and a break in the roof alignment indicate the point of expansion and how building methods had improved over time. The Davies House, listed in the National Register in 1982, displays Georgian details

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throughout and remarkable integrity in its wealth of original detail. Of special interest is a bulls-eye window and ornate cornice molding with modillions on the north gable face.

The Berkley Road was incorporated into the Centre Turnpike in the first decade of the 1800s. This major road connecting Reading with Pottsville in Schuylkill County was completed in 1812. The tannery and mill business flourished and several shops and a hotel were established at this important junction. Two contributing resources in the district underwent significant changes in the decades following the opening of the turnpike.

The Robert Schmehl house, Property 5, illustrates the evolution of a colonial residence expanded to incorporate Federal scale and decoration. Before 1800, a small, two-story, stone home was built facing the creek. The original wood-shingled roof still exists under a tin roof and asphalt shingles. A summer kitchen and cold cellar provide additional insight into early construction methods. After 1812, a large two story, three-bay addition was made to the original core. This portion was oriented to the road and had far more decorative details. The keystone lintels, pedimented doorway, and carved cornice brackets gave this façade a statelier, Federal appearance. These buildings retain integrity of materials and design from their respective construction periods allowing us to see the progression of craftsmanship and fashion from 1780 – 1830.

The Dunkle house, Property 4, was a public house that fed and lodged those traveling the Berkley Road. The first floor facing the road has three paneled doors more suitable to a multi-use commercial dwelling than a private home. Immediately adjacent to this building was the Berkley Inn, a larger hotel that served as the main sleeping and eating quarters. Food was prepared in the Dunkle House and served in the Berkley Inn. Remains of a large bake oven are still evident in the rear of the building. "The Berkley Inn had a large patronage and a number of summer boarders before 1825", (Montgomery 1886, p1031). William Dunkle operated the inn from 1812 and was succeeded by his son James, who conducted the hotel business until his death in 1860. James was also a prominent Democrat in Ontelaunee Township and filled a number of important township offices (Montgomery 1909, p770). His son, Allen H. Dunkle, born in Berkley in 1837, continued the operation of the inn after his father's death. He was recognized in Montgomery's History of Berks County as one of the best-known hoteliers and distillers in Berks County. He operated a distillery, recognized for its fine rye whiskey, on the property from 1880 until its destruction by fire in 1899. Allen retired from the hotel business in 1905.

The 1876 Ontelaunee Township map (Map 3) shows the Parvin, Davis, and Dunkel properties as well as a railroad line and railway station that was built in 1874 and a school that was built circa 1850. The railroad station and school were present at the close of the period of significance. The station and school were destroyed in the 1960s; the rail line is still an active Norfolk/Southern freight line. Berkley's commercial role was greatly diminished by the turn of the twentieth century. The nearby town of Leesport, founded in 1840, grew over time to become the commercial and social center for the township. After 1824, the Schuylkill Canal competed with the Centre Turnpike for the transport of goods. When the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad was built on the west bank of the Schuylkill River was finished in 1842, West Leesport grew and Berkley stagnated. The location of Pennsylvania Rail line east of the Berkley village core in 1874 shifted the focus of commerce away from this historic cluster of homes. Changes in industry made the tannery obsolete; it ceased operation in 1913 and fell into ruin. The gristmill was demolished in the early twentieth century when the City of Reading built a water filtration plant on the site. This water facility consumed much of the acreage on the west side of Berkley and destroyed the potential for further archaeological study along the creek. In the 1960's, the

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major road, now known as State Route 61 was diverted around the district and eliminated any remnants of the post office and railway station shown on the 1876 Atlas (Map 3). The construction of Lake Ontelaunee as the primary water supply for the City of Reading, the growing commercial and industrial development along the Route 61 corridor, and suburban housing developments have dramatically changed Ontelaunee Township's historic landscape. The village of Berkley is a tree-lined residential hamlet that continues to evoke the feeling and historic context of the homes once associated with the businesses created along this stream and historic road.

### SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTEXT

The Berkley Historic District reflects the evolution of vernacular architecture from the colonial period through 1856. The two residences opposite the Davies House were originally built in the late 1700s. However, the completion of the Centre Turnpike, from Reading to Pottsville in 1812, prompted the prosperous owners of these homes to expand and reorient their homes toward the road. The homes still have the original Georgian and Federal decorative elements and were never Victorianized as were buildings from this period in other villages in the area. Many homes in the Oley Township Historic District are of similar design and construction. However, the village of Oley experienced considerable growth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and has a distinctive Victorian appearance. The homes in the Berkley Historic District are similar in design and integrity to the National Register listed Henry Fisher House. The Fisher House was featured in *The American House* as an example of the Anglo-German Renaissance that occurred through this region of Pennsylvania in the early 1800s (Foley, 65). The Knabb-Beiber Mill in Oley Township and the Hunter's Mill Historic District in Hereford Township are other examples of Anglo-Germanic architecture listed in the National Register. The Berkley Historic District is unique, however, because nowhere else in Berks County is there a concentration of homes from this period in a village setting. Similar villages that existed in the immediate area have been destroyed by highway expansion projects.

The original land grant holder, Francis Parvin, was a prominent figure in the early history of Berks County. His son, Francis built the first stone home in 1758. The Parvin house exhibits exceptional integrity of design, layout, materials, and workmanship. The icehouse foundation, summer kitchen and cold cellar behind the house are excellent examples of early Republic stone construction. The 1856 addition to the main house also has original fireplaces, wood floors and enclosed stairway. A stone cold cellar built on the front lawn during the same period may have been used as a hiding place for fugitives on the Underground Railroad. It has an alcove with an elevated floor designed to keep occupants above the water level. The wood barn on the south side of Berkley Road is a rare hybrid of the classic Switzer barn and the standard Pennsylvania barn construction method that emerged in this region circa 1800. The presence of 200-year-old *Liegender Stuhle* roof supports provides an opportunity for future study. Expanded and adapted circa 1850, this barn is one of the few remaining barns in Berks County that exhibit both Switzer and Standard Pennsylvania Barn construction techniques.

*"The stone gable barn is rare in that it is a transitional from the smaller Classic Sweitzer [Switzer] PA Barn prototype incorporating Germanic joinery to a very early standard PA Bank Barn."*

John McFarland

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Berks County, PA

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The hamlet of Berkley was home to prominent Berks County citizens in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first Francis Parvin served as representative to the Provincial Assembly in 1755 and along with his better-known contemporary, Conrad Weiser, served as justice and commissioner for the sons of William Penn. Future generations of Parvins served humanity in a much less visible way. As members of the Society of Friends, the Parvins condemned the holding of slaves and promoted the welfare of free blacks in their employ. The Parvin homestead has been recognized by the Central Pennsylvania African American Museum in Reading as a probable station along the Underground Railroad. The museum is located in Reading at the Old Bethel A.M.E. Church, itself listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and another station on the Underground Railroad. Subsequent owners of the land once owned by the Parvins, including the Davies and Dunkle families, contributed to the economy and prosperity of central Berks County throughout the nineteenth century. The Berkley Historic District is locally significant for its architecture and the role the residents and buildings played in the social history of Berks County.

### SUMMARY

The Berkley Historic District exhibits original materials, layout, setting and scale that convey the residential design preferences and the quality craftsmanship prevalent in northern Berks County from 1758 to 1856. This collection of resources is the last village from the eighteenth century that was not modernized in the Victorian era or destroyed by highway expansion. The Davies House, Property 2, was listed in the National Register in 1982. An archaeological study at the Parvin property has uncovered a hidden alcove within a cold cellar that may have been used as a hiding place for slaves escaping along the Underground Railroad. The Parvins were Quakers and abolitionist, known for their association with free blacks in Berks County. Located along one of the early turnpikes connecting Reading with Schuylkill County, the Berkley Historic District played an important role in the economy and social history of Berks County in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 1

Berkley Historic District

Berks County, PA

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**Section 9: Bibliography****Works Cited -**

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- Montgomery, Morton L.; *History of Berks County in Pennsylvania*; Philadelphia: Everts, Peck & Richards, 1886.
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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 5 acres

**UTM References**

(See continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1	18 480180 1175520	3 18 420480 4475460
2	18 420480 4475100	4 18 420180 4475100

: See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

See continuation sheet.

**Boundary Justification**

See continuation sheet.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/title Cyndie Fuhrer, Land and Cultural Resource Specialist

Organization Berks County Conservancy date March 7, 2002  
Street & number 25 North 11<sup>th</sup> Street telephone 610-372-4992 x109  
City or town Reading state PA zip code 19601

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items) 35mm color slides of resources

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**Property Owner**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street & number \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

City or town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 2

Berkley Historic District

Berks County, PA

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**Boundary Justification**

The northern boundary of the Berkley Historic District is the property line of the Parvin homestead (Property 1). To the north of this lot are homes built in the twentieth century which have no connection to the residential, commercial, or transportation history of the district. On the eastern boundary of the district, State Road #61 forms a visual, functional, and hazardous edge to the district due to the heavy volume of high-speed traffic. The Willow Creek forms the southern boundary of the Parvin homestead. As the boundary proceeds due west, the district includes the entire stream bed which was the focus of the village.

Here, the rear line of Properties 3 and 4 delineates the district boundary. The properties between this line and Route 61 contain resources that post-date the period of significance. A driveway south of the Willow Creek provides access to three twentieth century houses between the district and Route 61. Two buildings adjacent to the Willow Creek were originally part of the Berkley Inn parcel, were constructed after the period of significance, and divided from the Inn parcel in 1950. Their architecture does not contribute to the significance of the district.

To the south of Property 5 is a large trucking facility whose crushed stone parking lot also forms the eastern and southern boundary of the district.

At this point, the boundary continues north on the edge of Berkley Road to a point opposite Property 2, which is surrounded by the City of Reading Water Works. After surrounding the property line of Property 2 the boundary returns to the eastern edge of Berkley Road and north to the northern boundary of the Parvin homestead property. Immediately surrounding Property 2 are manicured lawns, wooded areas, aeration tanks, and the stone-reinforced streambed of the Willow Creek. Beyond this lawn, an 1889 brick pumping station is not visible from the property or the Berkley Road. The entire water works property is fenced off by a 10' chain-linked fence and not accessible to the public. The Reading Water Works has an office building on Berkley Road opposite the Parvin homestead that postdates the period of significance.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Inventory Page 1

Berkley Historic District, Ontelaunee Township  
Berks County, PA

The first column of the inventory includes the property numbers (NR #) assigned during preparation of the National Register Nomination, which correspond to the Sketch Map (see Map 2). The second column includes the property name (when appropriate), and tax parcel number. The third column consists of primary resource descriptions followed by brief descriptions of secondary resources. Properties featured in attached photographs are noted as appropriate.

- |  |                                   |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>1.</b>                              | <b>Parvin, Francis,<br/>House</b> | <b>Building – House - Contributing<br/>1758 DS; 1856 addition</b>  |
| Snyder Rd<br>(North side)              | Tax Map #<br>68 5400 14 43 4813   | The original, two and one-half story stone, 5 bay home with center hall plan; two story, stone, 2 bay addition.<br><i>Photo 1</i>  |
| <b>1a.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Building - Outhouse –Contributing<br/>c.1800</b><br>Stone foundation c. 1800 with subsequent frame construction.  |
| <b>1b.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Building – Ice house – Contributing<br/>c.1800</b><br>Stone foundation with frame construction.   |
| <b>1c.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Building – Butcher Shop – Contributing<br/>c.1800</b><br>Stone foundation with frame construction.  |
| <b>1d.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Building - Summer kitchen-Contributing<br/>c. 1856</b><br>Stone building with cold cellar   |
| <b>1e.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Garage – Non-contributing c. 1990</b><br>Concrete block, three bay garage   |
| <b>1f.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Building - Root cellar –Contributing<br/>c.1800</b><br>Subterranean storage area with stone arch door opening onto Snyder road- may have had tunnel connected to buildings on south side of Snyder Road. <i>Photo 2</i> |
| South side of Snyder Rd.<br><b>1g.</b> |                                   | <b>Building- Barn -Contributing<br/>c. 1800 addition c. 1850.</b><br>Pennsylvania bank barn, stone ends, vertical wood plank with gable roof 35' x 61'. Extended forebay added c. 1850.<br><i>Photo 3</i>                  |
| <b>1h.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Building - Wagon Shed-Contributing<br/>c.1800</b><br>Vertical board siding with drive in bay and corncribs: in fair condition, currently used for storage: 30' x 40'.   |
| <b>1i.</b>                             |                                   | <b>Building - Bark House - Contributing<br/>c.1800</b><br>Vertical plank siding, gable roof, shed used at tannery to store bark for dyeing hides. Deteriorated condition.  |

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

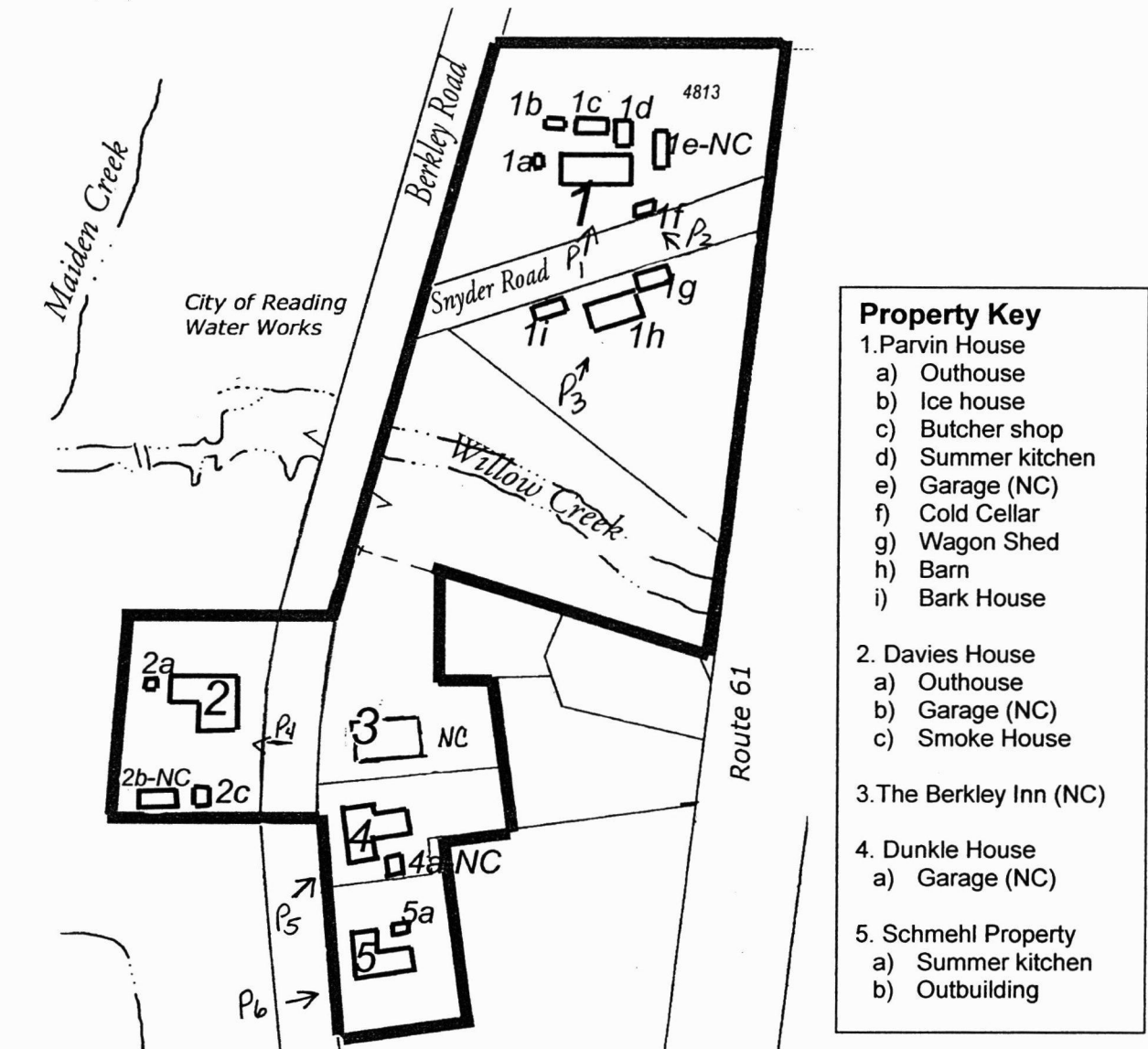
Inventory Page 2  
Berkley, Ontelaunee Township  
Berks County, PA

- 
- 2. Davies' House Building - Residence - Contributing**  
NR # 82001530 - 1982 **c.1770; c.1830**  
90 Berkley Tax Map # 2½ story, 5 bay, stone house built in two sections -  
Rd 68 5400 14 33 9269 features Georgian and Federal details.  
Listed National Register 11-14-1982. *Photo 4*
- 2a. Building - Outhouse - Contributing**  
**c. 1770**  
4' x 6' wooden outhouse, stone-lined pit from late 1700's,  
vertical wood siding replaced 1950's.
- 2b. Building - Garage-Noncontributing**  
**c. 1900**  
Wood frame horse barn converted to garage.
- 2c. Building - Smoke House, Cold Cellar- Contributing**  
**c. 1800**  
10' x 12' stone with exterior entrance to cold cellar.  
*\*The Davies House is currently listed in the National Register with a resource count of two contributing resources. One contributing and one non-contributing resource have been added to the resource count in the present nomination.*
- 3. Building - Commercial - Restaurant-Non-Contributing**  
**2001**  
85 Berkley Tax Map #  
Rd 68 5400 14 43 1362 On this site was the Berkley Inn, a 2 ½ story, 7 bay, stone  
building built circa 1810 but destroyed by fire, then  
bulldozed in April 2000. A one story cinder block building,  
30' x 50" occupies the site now.
- 4. Dunkle House Building - Residence -Contributing**  
Tax Map # **c. 1830**  
83 Berkley 68 5400 14 43 1187 2 ½ story, seven bay, stone house with large kitchen T in  
Rd rear. House has three front doors, used as an adjunct to  
the adjacent inn. Good condition/good integrity. *Photo 5*
- 4a. Building - Garage - Non-contributing**  
**c. 1970**  
Three bay wooden frame garage.
- 5. Schmehl, Robert, Building - Residence - Contributing**  
**property c. 1790; c. 1830**  
81 Berkley Tax Map #  
Rd 68 5400 14 43 1073 2½ story, three bay, side hall house with keystone lintels,  
9/6 windows, shutters, and pediment over door. Rear wing  
is the original two bay 2 ½ story unit with 6/6 plain frame  
windows *Photo 6*.
- 5a. Building - Summer Kitchen - contributing**  
**c. 1790**  
Summer kitchen in good condition. Connected by a brick  
breezeway in the ear.
- 5b. Building - Outbuilding- Contributing**  
**c. 1790**  
Detached stone outbuilding.
-

# Berkley Historic District

Berks County, PA

# Map 2 Sketch Map



Property Key	
1.	Parvin House
a)	Outhouse
b)	Ice house
c)	Butcher shop
d)	Summer kitchen
e)	Garage (NC)
f)	Cold Cellar
g)	Wagon Shed
h)	Barn
i)	Bark House
2.	Davies House
a)	Outhouse
b)	Garage (NC)
c)	Smoke House
3.	The Berkley Inn (NC)
4.	Dunkle House
a)	Garage (NC)
5.	Schmehl Property
a)	Summer kitchen
b)	Outbuilding

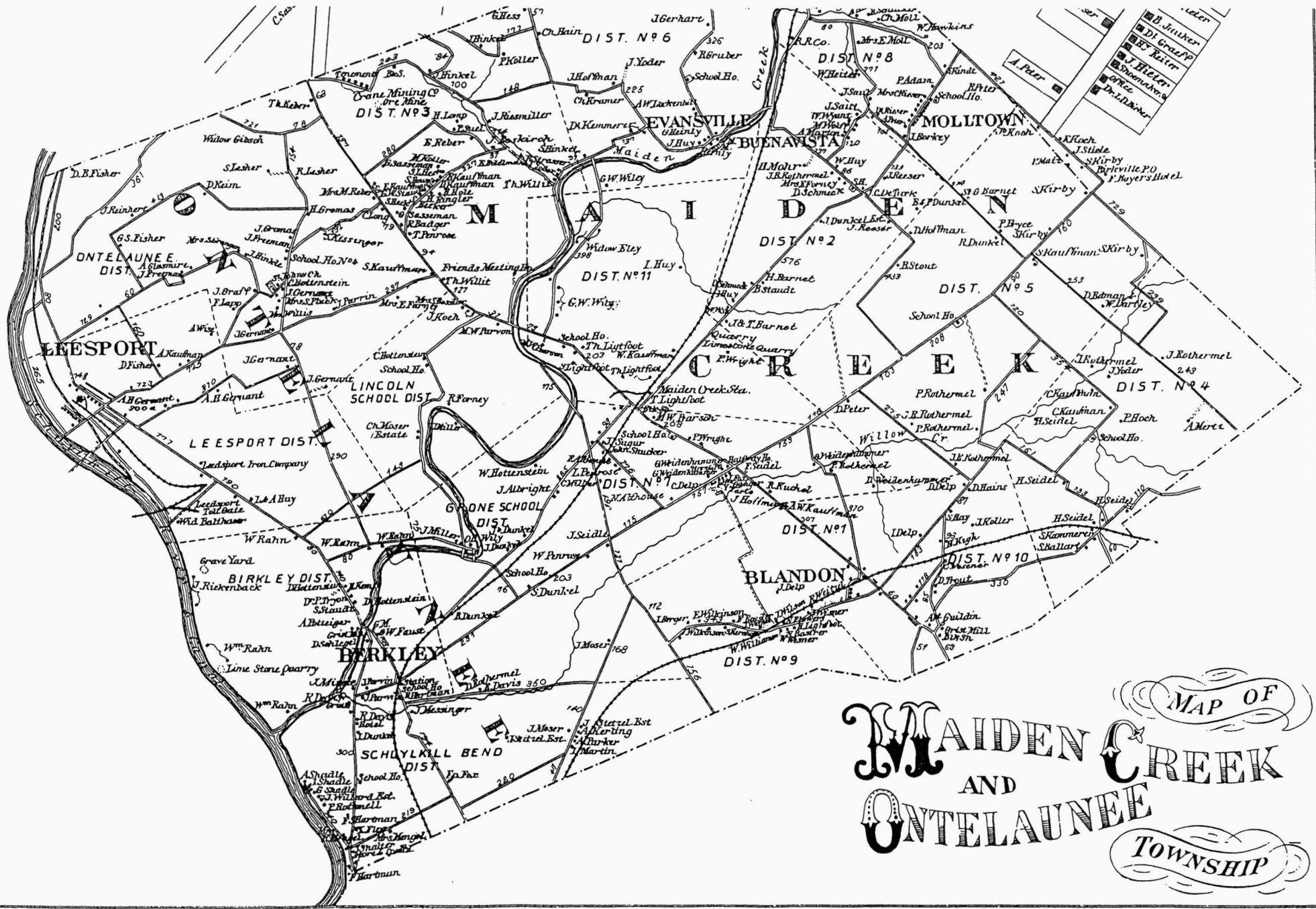


Scale: 1" ≈ 200'

## Legend

- P1 → Photo Location & Direction
- ▬ Road Edge
- ▬ Property Line
- - - - - Creek Edge
- ▬ Historic District Boundary

Created by the  
**Berks County Conservancy**  
 February 2002



Map 3 – 1876 Historic Atlas

Berkley Historic District; Berks County PA

MAP OF  
**MAIDEN CREEK**  
 AND  
**ONTELAUNEE**  
 TOWNSHIP

From the Illustrated Historical Atlas of  
 Berks County, Pennsylvania; Reading:  
 Reading Publishing House; 1876.  
 Reprinted by George M. Meiser IX, 1978.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Berkley Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: PENNSYLVANIA, Berks

DATE RECEIVED: 7/09/02                      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/06/02  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/22/02                      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/23/02  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02000892

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    8/22/02 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the  
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



1. Parvin Homestead - Berkley Historic District
2. Berks County, Pennsylvania
3. Cyndie Fuhrer
4. July 1999
5. Berkley Historic District Nomination File  
Berks County Conservancy
6. South face of home from Snyder Road looking North.
7. Photo #1



1. Parvin Homestead  
Berkley Historic District
2. Berks County, Pennsylvania
3. Cyndie Fuhrer      4. July 1999
5. Berkley Historic District Nomination File  
Berks County Conservancy
6. Entrance to root cellar from Snyder Road facing north.
7. Photo #2



1. Barn at Parvin Homestead  
Berkley Historic District
2. Berks County Conservancy
3. Cyndie Fahrer 4. July 1999
5. Berkley Historic District Nomination File  
Berks County Conservancy
6. South and East face of barn from barnyard  
facing North.
7. Photo #3



DAVIES HOUSE, BERKLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT

BERKS COUNTY, PA

CYNDIE FUHRER

JULY, 1999

BERKS COUNTY CONSERVANCY, READING PA

EAST FACADE OF HOUSE, CAMERA FACING NW

PHOTO # 4



DUNKEL HOUSE, BERKLET HISTORIC DISTRICT  
BERKS COUNTY, PA

CYNDIE FUHRER · JULY 1999

BERKS COUNTY CONSERVANCY, READING PA

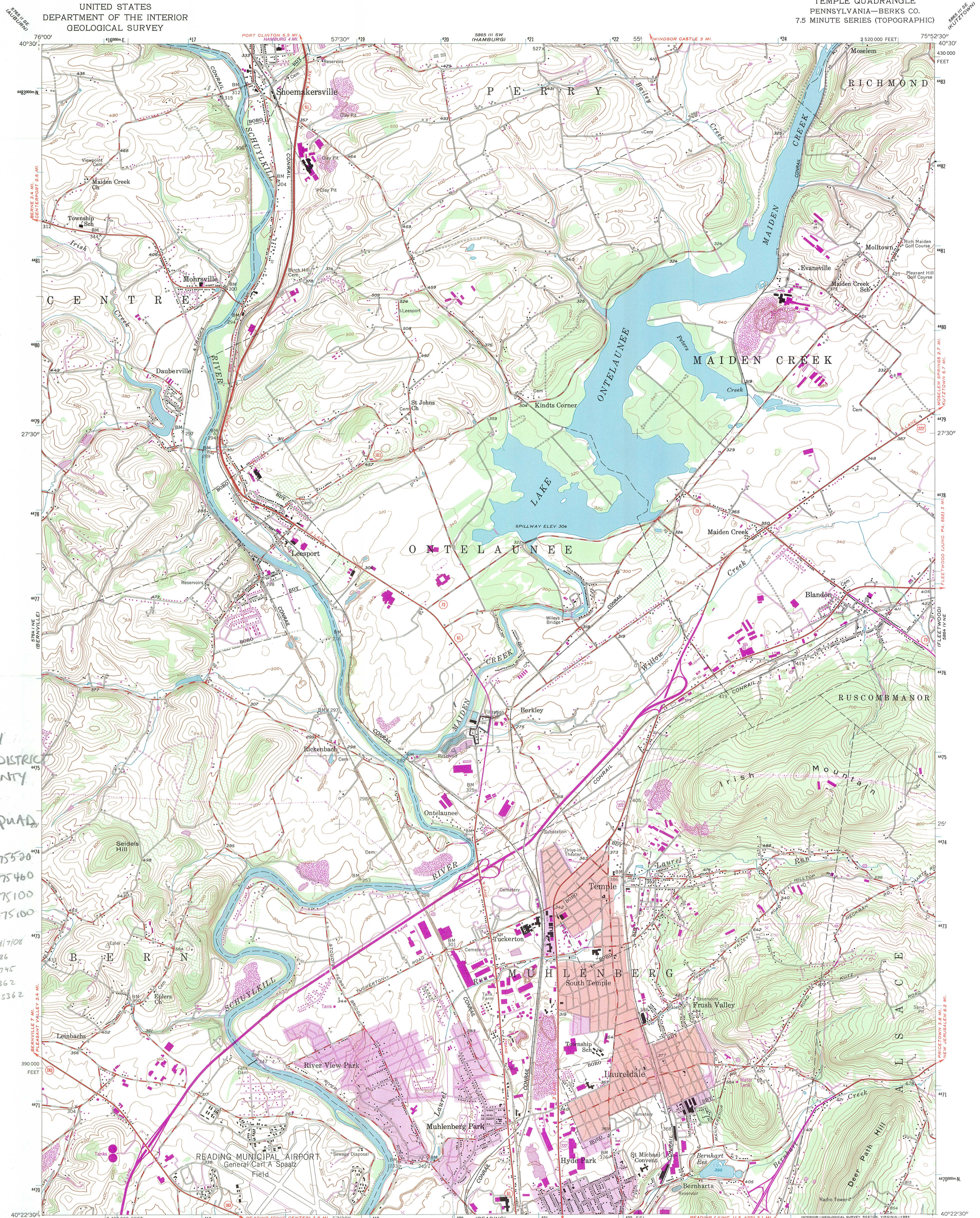
SOUTH AND WEST FACADES OF HOUSE

PHOTO # 5



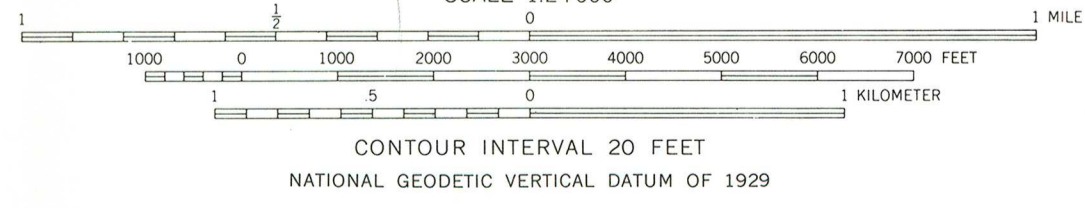
1. Schmehl Property, Berkley Historic District
2. Berk County, Pennsylvania
3. Cyndie Fuhrer
4. July 1999
5. Berkley Historic District Nomination File  
Berks County Conservancy
6. East and south face of house from Berkley Rd  
facing west.
7. Photo # 6

979  
3.17.99



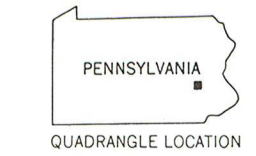
BERKLEY  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
BERKS COUNTY  
PA  
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2) 420480 447540  
3) 420480 4475100  
4) 420180 4475100  
UTM correction 41708  
1) 181 420246 4475786  
2) 181 420524 4475745  
3) 181 420519 4475362  
4) 181 420234 4475362

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and USCE  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1947. Field checked 1956  
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Pennsylvania  
coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
Zone 18, shown in blue  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 6 meters south and  
30 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown



YOAS SERVICES, INC.  
509 W. 4th St.  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
1 800-222-2546

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
U.S. Route ——— State Route ———



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

TEMPLE, PA.  
40075-D8-TF-024  
1956  
PHOTOREVISED 1983  
DMA 5864 IV NW—SERIES 9831

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agencies from aerial photographs  
taken 1981 and other sources. This information not field checked  
Map edited 1983  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

