



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
Bureau for Historic Preservation  
Commonwealth Keystone Building, 2nd Floor  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093  
www.phmc.state.pa.us

March 15, 2002

Jackie Melander  
Centre County Historical Society  
1001 East College Avenue  
State College, PA 16801-6898

Re: Penns Valley and Brush Valley Rural Historic District, Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, Potter and parts of Harris and College Townships, Centre County, BHP File #119404

Dear Ms Melander:

The Bureau for Historic Preservation has reviewed your completed Historic Resource Survey Form documenting the above named area. It is our opinion that the area is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district.

This evaluation will be confirmed with a site visit by a Bureau for Historic Preservation staff member and a member of the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board. Please contact our office to schedule a site visit. At the site visit, final district boundaries will be established. The site visit is also an opportune time to discuss the preparation of the National Register form and public participation strategies. In addition, the enclosed Specific Evaluation provides basic guidance which should be followed in preparing your nomination.

It is Bureau policy that applicants for National Register historic district designation must carry out a public-participation plan in their community prior to the nomination's review by the Historic Preservation Board. The strategy must include a public meeting to which district and community residents and property owners, local public officials, and state senators and representatives are invited. For districts with more than 50 property owners, or where it has been determined that nomination may be controversial or misunderstood, a representative of the Bureau for Historic Preservation will participate in the meetings. The meeting must explain what the National Register is, the effects of National Register listing, what the district is, why it is significant, why it is being nominated and how the nomination was developed. For guidance on National Register nominations and publicizing a proposed district, call the Bureau for Historic Preservation at (717) 783-8946.

Sincerely,

  
Jean H. Cutler  
Director

Enclosure  
cc: Township Supervisors  
JHC/gr

**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM — DATA SHEET**  
 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

89B

**IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION**

Survey Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Parcel/Other No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 County: 1. Centre 0 2 7 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Municipality: 1. Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, Potter & 2parts of Harris, College  
 Address: Nittany Mt-County Line-Tussey/Seven Mts-Lemont  
 Historic Name: Penns Valley  
 Other Name: Penns/Brush Valley  
 Owner Name/Address: Multiple  
 Owner Category: ☒ Private ☒ Public-local ☒ Public-state ☐ Public-federal  
 Resource Category: ☐ Building ☒ District ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object  
 Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 1200  
 USGS Quad: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 UTM A. \_\_\_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_\_  
 References: B. \_\_\_\_\_ D. \_\_\_\_\_

**HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS**

Historic Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single dwelling</u>	0 1 <u>A</u>
B. <u>Agricultural/subsistence</u>	<u>Agricultural field</u>	0 9 <u>C</u>
C. <u>Transportation</u>	<u>Road- related</u>	0 16 <u>D</u>
D. <u>Other</u>	<u>Contiguous landscape</u>	9 9 <u>X</u>

Particular Type: A. farm houses  
 B. barns  
 C. highways - early roads  
 D. contiguous landscape - remains of landscape as was 200-250 years ago

Current Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single dwelling</u>	0 1 <u>A</u>
B. <u>Agricultural/ subsistence</u>	<u>Animal facility</u>	0 9- <u>D</u>
C. <u>Landscape</u>	<u>Valleys - mountains</u>	0 15 <u>E</u>
D. <u>Transportation</u>	<u>Road related</u>	0 16 <u>D</u>

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification: A. <u>Georgian</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
B. <u>No style</u>	0 1	C. <u>Gothic revival</u>
D. _____	— —	Other: <u>PA 4/4</u>
Exterior Materials: Foundation <u>Stone</u>	4 3	Roof <u>Asphalt</u>
Walls <u>Weatherboard</u>	2 1	Walls <u>Stone</u>
Other <u>Brick</u>	3 0	Other <u>Log</u>
Structural System: 1. <u>Timber - Light frame</u>	1 4	2. <u>Masonry</u>
Wid: <u>5 bays</u>	<u>E</u>	Depth: <u>2 rooms</u>
		B. Stories/Height: <u>2-2.5 story</u>

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: \* C. 1800 to \* C. 1940 Additions/Alterations Dates: \_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_

Basis for Dating: \_\_\_ \* Documentary \_\_\_ \* Physical

Explain: Dating based on: Architectural features/ construction methods, deed, tax and other records.

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. German 2. Scots-Irish  
Associated Individuals: 1. Potter, J 2. Miles, S  
Associated Events: 1. Early settlement 2. Agriculture  
Architects/Engineers: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Builders: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

## MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

List attached

## PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

Centre County Historic Sites Survey - 1979-1989

## EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No Context(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Contributes to Potential District \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No District Name/Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain:

## THREATS

Threats: 2 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other

Explain: Highway Study Area and Surrounding Impact

## SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: J. Melander, S. McMurray, B. Alexander Date: 2/28/02  
B. Ricker

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: Centre County Historical Society Telephone: (814) 234-4779

Street and No.: 1001 E. College Ave.

City, State: State College, PA Zip Code: 16801

Additional Survey Documentation: Pomeroy Atlas of Centre County, 1874

Associated Survey Codes: \_\_\_\_\_

Survey Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Parcel/Other No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 County: Centre Municipality: Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, Potter  
 Address: Nittany Mt-County Line-Tussey/Seven Mts-Lemont  
 Historic/Other Name: Penns Valley

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

**Summary**

The natural context of the Ridge and Valley landscape played a significant role in the cultural development of Penns Valley and Brush Valley, Centre County, Pennsylvania. Early paths and later roads were located along the fertile limestone valley floor, or through ridges cut by gaps. Fast moving streams or underground fed springs provided the water resources needed for the settlement of crossroad communities. And the agricultural landscape of the valley was, and still is, defined by the vertical edges provided by the forested mountains.

A great deal of the proposed district's historical vernacular landscape fabric is still intact within its natural context. Agricultural patterns still persist and are visible on the landscape — farms delineated by historic hedgerows; crop lands and open fields framed by old roads; and the views and vistas from the valley and the ridges that reflect nineteenth and early twentieth century features. While farms may have changed in their operations over the last two hundred years, they have retained their visual property characteristics — farmsteads can still be identified; their overall spatial pattern perpetuates the area's historic character.

**Location**

The proposed PennsValley/Brush Valley Rural Historic District identified in this resource survey is located within the boundaries of five Centre County, Pennsylvania Townships — Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, and Potter, and portions of two others, College and Harris — in a Ridge and Valley rural farmland setting east and slightly south of the Borough of State College.

District boundaries have been determined by the natural features of the Nittany Mountain ridge to the north, the parallel Tussey and Seven Mountains ridges to the south, and the closing-in of the mountain ridges at the eastern end of the two valleys, at the Union/Centre County line. The western edge extends to the National Register village of Lemont, where Penns Valley meets Nittany Valley at the base of Mount Nittany, a community once called the End of the Mountain "... an important point in the early days of the county, being on the trail leading from the settlements on the West Branch and Bald Eagle to those in Penns Valley and being at the junction of the two valleys" (J.B. Linn, 1883). The boundary then links the western Penns Valley villages of Oak Hall and Boalsburg (both on the National Register) with the proposed district.

**Physical Land Features**

The relatively broad limestone and narrower shale valleys of Penn/Brush Valley's Ridge and Valley terrain are enclosed by sandstone mountain ridges rising fairly steeply a few hundred feet high from the valley floor. Midway through Penns Valley, Brush Mountain and Egg Hill stretch from east to west, creating two smaller valley areas within the proposed district. The limestone valley to their north, called Brush Valley, is relatively flat and linear, approximately a mile wide and running parallel to the mountains on either side. To the south, Penns Valley, also enclosed by mountain ridges, is shorter and broader with a more rolling, and hilly terrain.

The east-west ridges are occasionally broken by gaps cutting across their grain, where swift-moving spring-fed creeks and runoff from the mountains join larger above-ground streams in both the Spring Creek and Penns Creek Watersheds. Or they move to an underground water network of streams through the bedrock into sinkholes, caves, or caverns. Some air-filled caves, Penns Cave and Woodward Cave are two of the largest and used commercially, have formed at shallow depths, but most are deeper and often are filled with limestone breakdowns and silt from flooding.



## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION – 2

### Spring Creek and Penns Creek Watersheds

The Penns/Brush Valley proposed district is part of two watersheds — Spring Creek, flowing west and north to Bald Eagle Creek; and Penns Creek, moving east to the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Spring Creek has as part of its easternmost headwaters, Cedar Run Spring near Linden Hall and another headwaters spring west of Tusseyville. They are joined along the way by Mackey Run and other tributaries, and then by larger runs, that merge with Spring Creek west of Lemont in the Nittany Valley. Penns Creek emerges at Penns Cave, already a substantial stream as it comes out of the ground. At Spring Mills, originally called Rising Spring, it is joined by Sinking Creek and several other sizeable springs. Elk Creek crosses from Brush into Penns Valley through the Millheim Narrows, and then follows the length of the valley along First Mountain. At Coburn, historically called The Forks, Penns Creek receives the combined flow of Elk and Pine Creeks and their tributaries as it heads eastward.

Spring, Elk and Pine Creeks have been identified by PA's Department of Environmental Protection as Class A Wild Trout streams; Penns Creek, the state's longest limestone stream, has been classified as a High Quality Cold Water stream.

### Natural Heritage Inventory

The proposed district is literally speckled with sites that have been identified in *The Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory*. Approximately fifty of them have been highlighted as being exemplary natural areas, habitats for species of special concern, significant natural communities, or are generally recognized as important for open space, recreation, and as wildlife habitat. A few of the mountain examples: Bear Meadows Natural Area is a high mountain bog that has been designated a National Natural Landmark; the Detweiler Run Natural Area has what is considered to be a virgin stand of hemlock and white pine, some of which are 36 inches in diameter; and also within the Thickhead Mountain Wild Area, Detweiler Run is classified as a Priority 1 "C" Scenic River.

### The Great Plains/Potters Plains

The Scull Map of 1770 identified an area in the valley south of Nittany Mountain as "The Plains." And when Reverend Philip Vickers Fithian visited the area in August of 1775 he described it this way:

*... In this Valley [Penns Valley] are large open Plains, cleared either by the Indians, or by accidental Fire, hundreds of Acres covered with fine grass, mixed with small Weeds and great Variety of Flowers. ...*

A small remnant of a relic limestone prairie community can still be located and identified. A more complete plant inventory of the Penns Creek Watershed is currently underway, funded by the Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener program.

### Cultural Landscape Features

#### Penns/Brush Valley — An Identified Place

*... I hereby certify that the Valley at the heads of Penns and Bald Eagle Creeks on the South side of the Nittany Mountain, commonly known by the Name of Penns Valley ... by the Valley I mean the Center of the Valley ... [And] Further that I have been in a part of the Brushey Valley, ... which lies on the south side of Nittany Montain, and cannot strictly speaking be considered as a Distinct Valley from Penns Valley, part of it communicating with Penns Valley and part separated by a Ridge, which might be said without any Impropriety to rest in the middle of the great or Penns Valley, ...*

James Potter – August 17, 1773

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### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION — 3

When, in the last half of the eighteenth century, members of the Penn family set aside their proprietary manors — the Manors of Nottingham and Succoth; when James Potter discovered his valley ‘empire’ while viewing it from Mount Nittany; when Samuel Miles and Reuben Haines established the area’s first roads (now routes 192 and 45), and Aaron Levy the first town and called it Aaronsburg; and when Andrew Gregg and others developed their plantation holdings, these southeastern Pennsylvania entrepreneurs recognized the agricultural potential of Penns/Brush Valley in what became the eastern portion of Centre County. Philadelphia merchant Thomas Cope, while visiting his Penns Valley “wild lands” in 1812, noted: “. . . well cultivated rich, limestone soil. I never saw more beautiful wheat.” “. . . timber land for the valleys and [an] abundance of good water. There are several streams large enough for mills.”

Permanent settlement did not occur until after the ending of Indian uprisings and the Great Runaway of 1776. But within the next decade and for more than 200 years agriculture has been Penns/Brush Valley’s principal activity.

#### Settlement Patterns

The historic character and appearance of the proposed district is represented by a broad pattern of historic farming-related resources and features in the fertile limestone valleys, “one of the richest and most beautiful valleys of Pennsylvania.” (Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society, 1863) They include croplands and open fields framed by old roads, trees stands and hedgerows; and nineteenth and early twentieth century farmsteads, some of them connected to tenant properties by farm lanes. The mountains are essential land features that define and reinforce the historic agricultural characteristics and appearances of the valleys, providing a sense of cohesiveness to the rural character. Other old farmsteads, some of them still in operation, were located in high mountain valleys. .Traces of logging, charcoal making, and limestone quarrying also are evident and are related to the county’s significant nineteenth century ironmaking industry located in Nittany Valley along Spring Creek. In the early twentieth century many of the high valley farms and industrial locations were converted into recreational uses as hunting and fishing facilities.

The proposed district also includes former small market towns and post villages (i.e., Aaronsburg, Rebersburg, Coburn); and some of them were established as mill seat locations along fast-moving streams within the Penns Creek and Spring Creek Watersheds. Their names give evidence of their past roles: Centre Mill, Millheim, Poe Mills, Potters Mills, Red Mill, and Spring Mills are just a few examples.

The farms of Brush Valley are aligned with and have frontage on the straight main road, their fields have been planted to reflect the linear characteristics of the valley. Whereas, in Penns Valley with its more rolling topography, farms often have been tucked in amongst the hills, with steep wooded hillsides as their backdrop. Crop strips are more contoured, more swirling, resulting in a more irregular landscape patchwork. (**#1 and 2**)

Outstanding vistas abound in this proposed district — whether from the valley floor looking toward the wooded ridges of hardwood and conifers of Nittany Mountain, of Rothrock or Bald Eagle State Forest, or from the ridges or “winter roads” along the sides of the mountains that reveal expanses of hedge-rowed fields in the valleys below. (**#3 and 4**)

There are nearly 140 reported prehistoric sites in just the Harris-Potter Township portion of the study area. Further information is needed for the remainder of the proposed district.

There also are extensive archaeological remnants relating to the role Penns/Brush Valley has played in Centre County’s development — traces of building foundations, old road and railroad beds, evidence of mill and mill races, to mention just a few.



## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION — 4

### Circulation

Many of the old circulation patterns are still intact and in use in the resource area, with their development as transportation routes closely related to the landscape configuration of the valleys. In some cases, these roads trace Native American paths and/or the earliest days of settlement. Three examples:

In 1771, Philadelphia land speculator Reuben Haines built the first road west of the Susquehanna River into central Pennsylvania. He extended it from the Sunbury-Lewisburg area through the Woodward Narrows to the westernmost point of his land at the confluence of Sinking Creek and Penns Creek, near what would become Spring Mills. This road provided a major means of access to the west, and particularly it allowed Haines to open his Great Springs tract to potential settlers. The road closely followed the earlier Iroquois' Karondinhah or Penns Creek path; it now closely parallels modern-day Route 45.

Brush Valley Road (part of it now Route 192) represents a second example. It follows the route of a road designed and built by Samuel Miles in 1794. "... viewers were appointed to lay out a road in Potter and Bald Eagle from the Centre Furnace, through what was commonly known as the Back Plains near Nittany Mountain, and on the south side thereof, to intersect the great road from the West Branch of the Susquehanna through Brush Valley to the line of Mifflin [now Union] County. This is the road through Linden Hall, Centre Hall, to Madisonburg, and its object was to enable Col. Miles' tenants and those to whom he sold lands to haul wood and the products of their farms to Centre Furnace. (Henry Meyer, 1883) Cut straight along the center of the valley, it is still remarkably intact and is, perhaps, the most scenic major road in Centre County.

The general location of Pennsylvania Route 144 was originally the route taken by Reverend Philip Fithian in 1775 when he traveled from Bald Eagle's Nest, now Milesburg, to General Potter's home at Potter's Fort, now Old Fort. Fithian continued his travels through the Seven Mountains to Lewistown, on this path, originally the Kishacoquillas Path, that later became the Lewistown – Bellefonte Turnpike.

### Rural Roads/Scenic Roads/Civic Landscape

Some of the tree-lined roads within the proposed district undoubtedly still reflect the efforts toward rural beautification that were in place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the Pennsylvania General Assembly of 1879 passed this legislation:

*Any person liable to road tax, who shall transplant to the side of the public highway, on his own premises, any fruit, shade trees or forest trees, of suitable size, shall be allowed . . . in abatement of his road tax, one dollar for every four trees set out.*

And later at the urging of farmers, rural dirt township roads were paved over during Governor Gifford Pinchot's term in office in the early 1930s to "Take the farmers out of the mud". But for the most part, the paved roads kept their narrow and sometimes curving alignment. (#5)

A significant civic landscape still expressing its important historical function is the Grange Fairground, located in Centre Hall. And, there still is evidence of the awareness of the rural landscape beautification movement, promoted to farmers, rural communities, and schoolchildren in Centre Hall and other communities in the proposed district, as well as on a number of farmsteads.

### Railroads

The first of the railroads added to the valley came in 1877, when the Lewisburg and Tyrone Railroad Company connected Lewisburg with Spring Mills. James Coburn was a major player in this enterprise that offered both passenger and freight service, including the bringing of timber down from the surrounding mountains; the



## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION — 5

community of The Forks was renamed Coburn to honor his entrepreneurial involvement. Coburn became the main distribution terminal for the Valley, and most products were then channeled by rail from that town to Lewisburg and points east. In 1885 the railroad was extended from Lewisburg to Lemont. (#6)

### Railroads and Lumbering

A second kind of rail line was established in the 1890s to reach large timber tracts in the surrounding mountains, and a brisk lumbering trade became the core industry of some communities. Linden Hall is a good example, and the mountain community of Poe Mills in Penn Township is another. Poe Mills, now nearly forgotten, once had a population of more than 300 and provided employees with houses, stores, and a post office.

To replenish the forests, two CCC camps were located in the proposed district in the 1930s. Penn Roosevelt serves as a state park; Colyer, now privately owned, still has architectural and landscape features relating to its past. (#7 and 8)

### Hedgerows/Lanes/Windbreaks/Fence Lines

Historic hedgerows and other delineation's are still visible in the proposed district. Along Route 192 east of Rebersburg, for example, some 200-year-old fencerows and lanes today still mark the boundaries between the original warrants established in the eighteenth century. And in another example, trees and shrubs identified on Rimmey Road at the Leonard Rhone farmstead in Potter Township include: American elm (30' trunk), Norway and sugar maple, shagbark and pignut hickory (30' trunk), black walnut, hawthorn, gray dogwood, Russian olive, honeysuckle, raspberry, and Virginia creeper. Examples of windbreaks, using locust trees or conifers, are prevalent in the area of the proposed district. And while materials and patterns for fencing have changed, there still is evidence of some old fences – including stone. (#9 – 12)

### Woodlots

The prevalence of still existing woodlots reinforces S.W. Fletcher's observations in *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life* that, "Almost every farm had a woodlot . . . Historically, they were the chief supply of fuel, building materials, and fencing; sheltered game and sometimes produced maple syrup and nuts. . . . [and] a continuing source of income for sale of sawn logs." In the 1880s *The Centre Reporter* had several references regarding a lumber market available to local farmers, including requests for "white oak, rock oak, and chestnut" for railroad ties, or "fine walnut logs . . . shipped to England."

### Old Orchards – Residential Trees

When Samuel Miles offered tracts of land in Brush Valley in 1792, he included in the terms of his lease that settlers should "plant within four years an orchard of apple trees containing at least 100 trees." While it is not likely that any of those trees have survived, remnants of an orchard planted 100 years later by Leonard Rhone, Master of the Grange, are still in place and providing apples each fall at Rhone's Potter Township farm home, Rhoneymeade. Other trees planted by the Rhones at the farmhouse in the 1890s that are still in place include a Norway maple, the largest recorded in Centre County; a larch; horse chestnut; hemlock; and a Norway spruce, a favorite of many farm families in the area.

## Notes

1. A comparison of the number of farms located in five of the proposed district townships in 1850 and in 2001 indicates that farms are smaller but in greater number. It provides strong evidence that the agricultural role played by this eastern section of Centre County continues.

<b><u>Number of Farms:</u></b>	<b><u>1850</u></b>	<b><u>2001*</u></b>
Potter Township	124	238
Haines and Penn	121	224: Haines:147; Penn: 77
Miles	64	119
Gregg	93	148

\* Farm Service Agency Center, Clinton/Centre County

2. Since the Penn/Brush Valley proposed district includes only portions of College and Harris Townships, those comparative farm numbers were not included.
3. At least two-thirds of Potter Township land is still in agriculture/open space despite non-contributing development along Route 322 and 45.

## Inventory

### **Fergus Potter Farmstead (Harris Township) Photos: # 13-17**

Fergus Potter, a cousin of Penns Valley discoverer General James Potter, acquired this farm in 1793 from the Potter holdings. He built a log dwelling, no longer standing, and began to farm this slightly rolling land along the Brush Valley Road, at what is now the Harris-Potter Township line. A spring on the property serves as the headwaters to Mackey Run which, in turn, joins Cedar Run near Linden Hall and eventually Spring Creek near Lemont.

Fergus Potter's son, Joshua, took over the property in the 1860s and built a new house, barn, and a collection of outbuildings. Components of this still very much intact mid-nineteenth century farm complex include:

- A two-story, five-bay Georgian house and back ell, built of plank with clapboard siding, set back from the road, down a farm lane. Its central entranceway has a paneled door, sidelights, and transom; the windows are 6/6 with paneled shutters on the first floor and louvered ones on the second. Corner pilasters, eave returns, and an open front porch with gingerbread trim provide extra detail.
- A three-gable Pennsylvania bank barn with ell, located to the west of the house and just beyond the spring/run. Built on a stone foundation, it has vertical siding and louvered openings; huge beams extend across and support this large barn. A corn crib and machine shed are to the north, and three more small buildings, including a woodshed and privy are behind and to the east of the house.
- A woodlot and hedgerows define the field boundaries; Nittany Mountain serves as a visual backdrop in the distance to the north. Willows and other trees line the farm lane to Brush Valley Road; two large trees, a Norway spruce and a maple, and stump remnants of other old trees, offer shade and evidence of past plantings to the yard.
- The vista from this farm is outstanding, surrounded by cultivated fields in all directions.

This 182 acre farm has been in the Potter family for more than 200 years and is now owned by Taylor Potter, Fergus Potter's great, great grandson. It has been designated both as a Century Farm, and for inclusion in Centre County's Agricultural Easement program.

### **Van Tries Tenant House (Harris Township) #18-21**

The Van Tries property is located down a farm lane on the south side of Upper Brush Valley Road, near the Harris/Potter Township line. It looks out over extensive croplands and Tussey Mountain to the south.

Not all property owners lived near their tenant houses. The Van Tries were large landowners who resided in Bellefonte. Susan Van Tries, a relative of James Potter, may have been the inheritor of these Potter lands. Not all tenant houses were small log or plank structures. This two-story, three bay frame with a two story ell, has extra detailing of a center roof gable, over-window lintels, eave returns, and a small Victorian-style porch.

The barn, silo, and other agricultural-related buildings on this 103 acre working farm date from the twentieth century. The farm has been included in Centre County's agricultural security program.

In addition to good farmland, the Van Tries owned large woodlots, with substantial amounts of timber sold for railroad building. The property also contained an iron ore bank, according to the Pomeroy Atlas of 1874. There are several newspaper references to the Van Tries farm during the 1880s, including information on the selling of a variety of mechanized pieces of farm equipment by the property's tenant farmers.

### **Ashton Heath (Harris Township) #22-24**

Ashton Heath, now a 41 acre farm, is located on Cedar Run Road, just west of the road's intersection with Route 45 in Harris Township. Cedar Spring, adjacent to the intersection, serves as the headwaters of Cedar Run — and Spring Creek. The house faces what was once known as the Earlstown Road (now Route 45).

George Aston held the original warrant for this farm of 258 acres, probably acting as an agent for General James Potter in his acquisition of Penns Valley land. The two-story, five bay brick Georgian house was built on a squared stone foundation. It has chimneys in the gabled ends, a back ell, and dates from c. 1816. Six-over-six windows with paneled shutters are located on either side of a central entranceway; five evenly spaced windows

with louvered shutters are above them on the second floor. This early house has a combination of brickwork — Flemish bond for the front, and common bond for the sides and rear.

A bank barn and two small sheds are located behind the house, with the barn facing southeast toward the stream. A large Norway spruce is to the left of the front door, reflecting a favorite tree choice of area farm families as they beautified their properties at the turn of the century.

The property adjacent to Ashton Heath along Cedar Run Road served as its tenant farm. The tenant house is a c. 1820 simple three bay log, with a two-story frame addition. The large bank barn with an ell and two silos is similar in size and design to barns located on many of the large farm properties in the valley. Both of these properties are in an agricultural security program.

Nearby across Route 45 is the Cedar Creek Cemetery. Originally part of the Catherine Potter warrant, General James Potter donated a two acre parcel for the location of a church and cemetery. The Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church was never built, but while many of the stones have been removed from this early cemetery, it is believed to be the burial location of James Potter's second wife, Mary Chambers Potter, who died in 1791 or 1792, along with other early settlers including members of the King and the Jack families.

#### **G.W. Campbell Farm (Harris Township) #25-27**

The G.W. Campbell farm and tenant house is located on the south side of Cedar Run Road, to the west of the village of Linden Hall. Campbell was an active valley farmer and involved in the development of the Grange. While the main house is set back and down a winding lane, the tenant house and a small outbuilding are just off the road. Both are relatively simple in style. The two story main house is of plank construction in a three bay vernacular style. In contrast to the rest of the house, however, the entryway is in the Greek Revival style with a pediment and doric pilasters surrounding an intricate fanlight and paneled door. A shed roofed porch spans the front of the house. The tenant house, also two story and three bay, has a two story ell and a hipped roof porch. The farm complex is a large one and includes two barns, three silos, and a full complement of accessory buildings. Both houses face south; the barns face southeast. The backdrop for this 81 acre rural property is Nittany Mountain, rising just at the edge of the farm field. The two properties continue to be under a single owner; the farm is in Centre County's agricultural security program.



## **Manor of Nottingham (Potter Township)**

### **• Stanford House #33-34**

The Penn family proprietary holdings of 1035 acres in Potter Township, the Manor of Nottingham, were surveyed in 1766; settlement began early. According to tax assessment records, the Jacob Stanford family built a log house west of Old Fort, along present day Rimmey Road, in the 1770s. However, on May 9, 1778, the Standfords were massacred in the first of several attacks on Penns Valley settlers by Indians angered by the colonists' encroachment on their hunting lands. Two months later, in what was called the "Great Runaway", valley settlers fled to safety over the Seven Mountains to the south. They did not return for nearly a decade.

The existing log house on the Stanford property is probably not the original dwelling, but it does represent an example of early v-notched log construction used by frontier settlers. Symmetrical, two stories, three bays, and with a two story ell, the Stanford house and its story represent a local link with the area's past. A bank barn, corn crib, poultry house, milk house, and implement shed are nearby across the road.

### **• Rhoneymeade #35-38**

South on Rimmey Road is Leonard Rhone's home, Rhoneymeade, on land first settled by his grandfather in 1794. Rhone, founder and master of the Pennsylvania Grange and a Pennsylvania State College trustee, built his five bay Georgian brick house in 1853. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property also includes a large dairy barn and a full complement of outbuildings. The property contains a large collection of trees and other vegetation planted by Rhone and his father, or by its current owner. All 148 acres have been placed in a permanent agricultural easement.

### **• George M. Boal Farm #39-42**

The George M. Boal farm, whose land was also part of the Penn family's Manor of Nottingham, is located on Route 45 west of Centre Hall in Potter Township. The house is to the right of Rimmey Road, once called Blackhawk Road; the barn and other outbuildings are on the left. A portion of this 96 acre farm extends to the south side of Route 45, as well. Boal was a prominent farmer and active member of the Grange, the organization founded by his neighbor, Lenoard Rhone. Rhone lived on the next farm north of Boal on Rimmey Road.

The house is believed to have been built by a Durst, probably its earliest owner. Members of the Durst family are credited with having built several nearby fine brick houses of the same style and time period in both Potter and Harris Townships. The house, c. 1850, is a two story, five bay, three- bricks-thick Georgian with a one story ell, and a noteworthy entryway fanlight, sidelights and paneled door. It is laid out in a four over four arrangement with a large central hall and a winding staircase to the attic. Interior chimneys are at each gabled end; windows are 6/6, and interior doors have been grained.

A brick summer kitchen, dating to c. 1850, burned in 1960. It has been rebuilt with the original bricks and walk-in fireplace in the east end are still in place.

There is a spring about 600 feet north of the house and the water still flows continuously into a concrete tank in the spring house attached to the main house. The overflow from this tank once was piped to the barnyard to water the animals, and to provide a watering place for travelers along the old Blackhawk Road that extended up and over Nittany Mountain to the north. The position of the road is believed to be unchanged from an early Indian trail called the Blackhawk Path, except where it has been relocated at the old Blackhawk limestone quarry, to allow for quarrying along the old route.

The PA bank barn west and south of the house is 40 x 80 feet in size, with two 40 foot hewn logs supporting the main barn flooring system. The framing was drilled and is pinned together with wooden pins. Decorative early iron hinges on the barn door reflect the availability to area

farmers of iron products from nearby forges. Other outbuildings include a machinery shed, hay storage, and corn crib, and a more modern small barn. A woodlot is west of the property. Both the house and the barn face south. An evergreen windbreak is located behind the house, and a group of walnut trees are at its eastern edge. Lilacs and other older trees and shrubs surround the property; two large Norway spruce flank either side of the front entrance. The current owners have placed this excellent example of a mid nineteenth century farmstead in the County's agricultural security program.

#### **Plum Grove/Samuel Houston Farm (Potter Township) #43-45**

Plum Grove, located on Manor Road near where it intersects with Decker Road in Potter Township, was the name given to this part of a nearly 1000 acre tract of land owned by James Houston at the time of his death in 1800. Houston left a widow and six children. Sixteen years later his oldest son, Samuel, took over the estate, made up of warrants that had been held by J. Houston, Benjamin Jones, William McKee, and Seth Matlack. By 1821 Samuel Houston had built a six-bay, limestone farmhouse near a spring on the property for himself and his mother, on what had been the Benjamin Jones tract.

There are two distinct three-bay sections to this ashlar cut stone house, with two paneled doors, and three 6/6 windows in each section. Interior chimneys are at each of the gabled ends. Historical documentation indicates that Samuel Houston and his mother, Catherine, each lived in one of the separate sections.

The property also consists of a large, three-cupola bank barn that faces south on the property, along with a shed, smoke house, and garage. The current owner has restored the house, barn, and remaining outbuildings, and owns 10 plus acres including the spring.

Two tenant farms across Route 192 were also part of this property. Now privately owned, the first was listed in the 1870 Pomeroy Atlas with the name John Emerick. It is an 1840s four-bay log house, with an accompanying log barn. The second, listed in the Atlas as "J.H. McCormick, occupant", is a five-bay plank or frame residence built about 1850, with an ell shaped bank barn. Both have a full complement of accessory farm buildings. Still visible is the road or lane that connected Samuel Houston's farm with his tenants.

#### **Alexander Johnston Property — Fort Johnston (Potter Township) #46-48**

Colonel Alexander Johnston, a very early settler, came to the area from New Jersey in the 1780s, undoubtedly to take advantage of his opportunity to claim land as a military officer. He began to acquire a substantial amount of land from James Potter, and by 1805 had built a house on one of his parcels, calling it Fort Johnston. The property is located south of Route 45 and west of Route 144, near the intersection of Goodhart and Airport Roads.

This stone house, built as a five-bay Georgian but not in a totally symmetrical way, suggests that it may have been constructed in two parts, beginning as a one-half Georgian with a side hall. The stucco covering is probably over a fairly rough stone finish, an indication that stone masons were few and far between in this early period of settlement. Other house details include a two-story ell, 6/6 windows, a paneled door, and interior chimneys on each of the gabled ends. The house does not face the road that runs alongside the property, but rather, shielded in the back by a windbreak of large trees, looks out over the rolling valley below. The road separates the house from a large south-facing Pennsylvania bank barn. The current owners have restored the house and barn and have re-acquired nearly forty acres of Johnston's once large estate.

In 1801 Johnston became involved in the petitioning of two roads that would eventually connect Lewistown with Bellefonte and Milesburg, now nearby Route 144. And in 1805, he sold a portion of his land for a Presbyterian church and burial ground at Centre Hill. Sinking Creek Presbyterian Church disbanded in the late 1800s and the church building was torn down about 1900, but the one-acre walled cemetery is still evident. Early names associated with the cemetery include Boals, Greggs, Hustons, Irvins, Pattons, and Potters, including Judge James Potter, the son of the general. There are approximately 300 graves — the oldest is Judge John Barber's wife, Sarah, who died September 9, 1801; the most recent is Nancy Benner, who died in 1930.

**William Rishel Farm (Potter Township) #49-52**

A particularly good example of a large farm – tenant farm combination is the William Rishel property, just north of Route 322 and off Church Road near Colyer Lake. The two adjoining farms on this 195 acre property are still under one owner; 86 acres are in the County's agricultural security program. Their contiguousness, both in location and use, strongly support the cohesive quality of the Penns/Brush Valley proposed district.

The main house, down a farm lane from Cemetery Road, is a fashionable mid nineteenth century two story, five bay brick Georgian. It has a Greek Revival-style entranceway with a pediment over and iambic columns flanking a paneled door, and six-over-six windows with lintels. There is an attached summer kitchen with a walk-in fireplace. The property also includes a large bank barn in excellent condition, a machine shed, and a corn crib.

**Tenant house #53-55**

The tenant house can be reached by a private farm lane or directly from Route 322. It is a simple two story, three bay log structure, c. 1820, of board and batten exterior and a small front stoop with original trim. In addition to the c. 1860s bank barn, outbuildings include a summer kitchen, spring house, smoke house, corn crib, machinery shed, poultry house, and other equipment buildings. A hand pump and old fencing add to the details of this nineteenth century tenant farm. Both the main and the tenant house have a collection of large trees in the yard, particularly Norway spruce. There are hedgerows of locust and walnut, as well as evergreen windbreaks. While the tenant farm is close to route #322 and under restoration, it is very vulnerable to any planned highway widening project; the main farm is nestled behind it with open fields and Tussey Mountain in the distance.

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:**

### **Summary**

The rural landscape in Penns Valley and Brush Valley, Centre County, PA is clearly related to important currents in the state's economic and social history. More specifically, agriculture in central PA -- and thus the rural landscape itself -- was initially shaped by the presence of local markets (first the iron industry, later by State College) and by the institution of share tenancy. From early on the local ironworks supplied important markets for beef, pork, feed grains, and hay. They also likely contributed to the high level of mechanization in the valleys. A substantial portion of farmers -- perhaps as many as thirty to fifty percent -- were actually tenants, farming on shares. By the mid-19th century a mixed grain-and-livestock economy had taken root, and this was the staple of agricultural production in the valleys well into the twentieth century. By the 1930s State College became a major local outlet, and its rural environs became part of Eastern urban milksheds. Tenancy, however, outlasted the iron era and persisted to the very end of the period of significance.

The significance of the extant historic rural landscape in these interconnected valleys is twofold: first, in the extent to which it conveys this agrarian past, and second in its high level of integrity. The overall pattern of farmstead location and composition clearly illustrates the important social-economic institution of farm tenancy: a ride along the main roads reveals clusters of farm buildings consisting of a "Big" house and related, but distinct, more modest tenant housing. The makeup of farmsteads themselves reflects the highly mechanized nature of farming here, especially in the period from about 1855-1950. For example, the "L" shaped barns accommodated threshing machinery, and ancillary buildings sheltered other machinery. Many standard Pennsylvania barns were also fitted with machine-shed extensions. These barns also indicate the predominance of the grain/livestock enterprise, since they were especially well suited to the shelter and feeding of beef animals. Only later did silos indicate the rise of dairying, and even today more farms report beef cattle than dairy animals. Finally, this essential continuity is also reflected in the strong persistence of historic field patterns, stone fencing, wood lots, windbreaks, plantings, and boundary lines.

This agrarian and landscape history falls into three periods.

### **I. EARLY DEVELOPMENT, c. 1790 to 1830:**

#### **Agriculture:**

Division of land occurred in the late 18th century and was accomplished by subdividing larger tracts belonging to speculators or large landholders. Samuel Miles, for example, sold or leased farms in what is now an entire township to Pennsylvania Germans from Dauphin, Lebanon, and Northumberland Counties. The section between Oak Hall and Centre Hall had a mixture of Anglo/British and Germanic settlers, with the Germanic element becoming more pronounced as you move eastward.

This period of agrarian development was characterized by small scale farming, dominated by the tasks of clearing and fencing. A system of farm family "competency" was built around products that could be both consumed on the farm and sold or exchanged. By this period in the wider economy, global markets were vigorously healthy, and domestic markets showed signs of their future importance. In Pennsylvania agriculture, the late 18th century was a period of reform and rebuilding. These developments affected even remote Centre County, as markets were important almost from the beginning. Thus it is important to think not of a transition from "subsistence" to "market" production, but rather to think about farm families as aiming for a "competency" -- a comfortable standard of living -- accomplished not through self-sufficiency (rarely achieved in any period of American history) but through production for both use and exchange.



## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 2**

Corn, oats, potatoes, turnips, butter, and pork were locally consumed, either by the households that produced them or in barter exchange with nearby households. Landlord Andrew Gregg's accounts, for example, mention meat, potatoes, buckwheat, wool, maple sugar, and oats as products of the farms he oversaw. Maple sugar and wheat often served as local "currency." Livestock were one component in this system, but as yet there weren't elaborate accommodations for them. Most of these animals would run free most of the year, then they would be butchered when they were wanted for family consumption (or in the case of hogs for meat to smoke), or driven to the ironworks where they would be butchered on the spot. Indeed, the ironworks were an important local market; the 1832 McLane Report noted that the Centre County iron furnaces' human workers consumed significant amounts of pork and beef, while the mules that toiled on the iron plantations were fed grain and hay, and bedded on straw from local farms, either from the ironmasters' own tenanted farms, or from independent farms.

Other Brush Valley and Penns Valley farm products, usually those with high value in proportion to bulk, such as clover seed, reached more remote markets. Accounts such as landlord Andrew Gregg's indeed show whiskey, flaxseed, and maple sugar as trade items. These items went to Philadelphia, Lewisburg, and Reading via pack animals over rudimentary roads. In 1830 the county exported 200,000 bushels of wheat, 600 bushels of clover seed, and 1,500 barrels of whiskey. In 1840 there were 141,000 bushels of rye produced, most of it going to whiskey. 43,000 gallons were produced; that's two gallons for every man, woman, and child in the county in 1840. In the early 1800s there were 8 distilleries. These products were exchanged for goods that linked local residents to the wider economy -- such as tobacco, cloth, or ceramic wares.

Tenancy was a prominent feature of early Centre County agriculture. It is difficult to determine actual rates of tenancy in the early period, but by the time tax records noted landlords and tenants the rate was already as high as twenty-five or thirty percent. Early agreements, such as a seven-year agreement made in 1822 between landlord Phillip Benner and one Brower, specified merely that the tenant would clear land and erect buildings, rather than pay any kind of rent. Andrew Gregg's accounts show that his tenants paid rent in the form of part of their crops, usually in wheat or maple sugar. Terms of rental often were for several years, and records show that tenants were not always able to pay on time each year. Tenants were often responsible for supplying tools, fencing in land, etc.

Work was shared across gender, kin, and community lines. People regularly exchanged work for each other; one person might work "grubbing in the clearing" in exchange for the loan of a tool, or for work on his own farm. Women were often found in the fields; Andrew Gregg's account book credited William George for three days' reaping "of your wife" in 1790. Many, if not most, people followed more than one occupation; thus there are entries which refer to a weaver who also tutored school children. At least 20 tanneries were in the valley in this period, and some of them were likely operated by farmers.

### **Landscape:**

Building activities of course focused on clearing, fencing, and housing. Among the first early landscape features to be defined were small clearings. If crops were planted, then fences would be erected to protect the crops from meandering livestock. Gregg's accounts credit various workers for "work at the Turnip Patch fence", "sundry work at paling the garden," and making rails and cutting logs. Many days were credited for "clearing a piece of ground" or "grubbing". Some land was treated as meadow. Later, buildings were erected; among the buildings or structures mentioned in Gregg's accounts (1790-1814) were log barns; stables; a storehouse; a spring house; and houses. Likely the barns and stables were small; they would store part of the hay crop and a few animals. However, since farm families raised grain and made whiskey and drove out their livestock before winter set in, there was little need for a large, fancy barn. The 1822 lease between Benner and Brower stipulated that Brower is to build a log barn of 54 by 18 feet; it also dictated that Brower must fence in his new clearings, and that no field should be bigger than ten acres. Remaining buildings from this period include a few stone, early brick, and log houses found

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 3**

throughout the proposed district. Some boundary tree lines, wood lots, and rock fence lines also remain., most evident in Miles township where the warrant lines are still discernable.

### **II. 1830-1920: A HIGH-POWERED GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK ECONOMY**

#### **Agriculture:**

In the early part of this period, even stronger local markets emerged (Brush Valley Road was originally intended for Miles's tenants and owners to get produce to Centre Furnace, which was in operation from 1792 to 1809 and 1826 to 1858) and it also became easier to move goods to markets farther away. The county's population was growing, and more iron furnaces were in operation around the county and in the immediate region. Not only did the ironworks provide a market, they also facilitated farm mechanization. With substantial acreage now cleared, farmers began to create a highly mechanized, integrated, grain/livestock system. By 1860 farms in the valleys collectively showed some distinctive characteristics. First, (on a per-farm basis) they had more horses than average, and a well above average value of implements. The local newspapers contain rich and extensive accounts of the farm machinery that was available in the valleys by the 1850s and 1860s. These included threshing machinery, grain drills, cornfodder cutters, horse rakes, corn shellers, and many more, often produced locally, probably with locally available iron. By the 1880s many farms had a full range of agricultural implements. (This high mechanization level may be tied to the tenancy rate; perhaps farmers put their money into equipment rather than land.)

There is also evidence of a rising livestock industry. Great herds of hogs were driven east to market from Centre County in the 1850s, and also by that time Harris Township was noted as the county's leading cattle feeding township. Animals were stall-fed over the winter for the spring market; they were either slaughtered for the home trade or driven out of the county by dealers. This emphasis on horse power and stall feeding meant that production of feed grains such as corn and oats rose sharply (though most farms would still only have a few acres of each). These supplanted rye by 1850, and hay production also rose dramatically in this period, thanks partly to improved "tame" varieties of grass and clover. Third, between 1840 and 1850 wheat production rose dramatically; thereafter it remained steady.

This period also witnessed an unprecedented enrichment of the farm family's "competency." In other words, families raised more varieties of more items, especially fruits and vegetables. They also made on average a couple of hundred pounds of butter, enough for household use with a small surplus. They cured, pickled, dried, salted, and otherwise processed many different foodstuffs. Jams, jellies, preserves, sausages, and other delicacies became common. Changes in household technology made this possible. It's likely that the gender division of labor shifted, with women spending less time in the fields (though certainly not abandoning field work, especially at haying and harvest time). Neighborly cooperation continued, perhaps even intensifying.

Farming in the district was still characterized by a high rate of tenancy, from 40% to over half in some spots. Almost all of them were sharecroppers, usually paying one-third of the grain and keeping the rest. Tenants typically paid the taxes on the property, were obliged to put up fences, etc. It seems as if many tenancy agreements were for one year only. The Samuel Gramly diary, for example, shows how his tenants changed every single year. In March or April "flitting time," families all over the valley changed houses for a new contract year.

These 19th century developments set a pattern which persisted into the early decades of the 20th century. The total number of farms reached a peak sometime between 1910 and 1920, while the average farm acreage dipped to about 100 acres. The extension of rail lines to Centre Hall, Linden Hall, Oak Hall, and Lemont after 1885 meant

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 4**

that local farmers had many more marketing options. Farm mechanization continued to be higher than average; by the turn of the century a full-blown horse- and steam-power agriculture was the norm. Henry Meyers's 1892 estate proceedings mention (besides plows and cultivators and wagons) a fanning mill, straw cutter, hay rope and pulley, spring harrow, corn planters, cultivators, hay rake, Osborne self-rake, mower, wheat binder, and steam thresher. Though the product mix showed some signs of changing (farmers sold more hay off the farm, and creameries for making butter appeared), the emphasis on a mixed livestock economy continued, as it was still popular to stall-feed beef animals for local consumption or to ship out. Tenancy rates continued to be very high, and sharecropping was still the typical form of tenancy. A new group of people — retired farmers — became more numerous and visible, and agricultural organizations such as the Grange had a heightened presence in local life. Villages like Centre Hall and Oak Hall grew and became more active focal points for rural communities.

### **Landscape:**

During the first part of this period, farm families in the valleys erected more permanent buildings or at least upgraded their older log buildings. In housing, a mix of the emphatically regional (such as the double door house and the locally distinctive brick farmhouses) coexisted with more generic "national" influences as seen in simple center-gable houses, "L" or "bent" houses, and village Victorians. The residential landscape reflected tenancy: modest, largely un-ornamented three- or four-bay, single- or double-pile tenant houses contrasted noticeably with the "big" houses, which tended to resemble one another and to be more ostentatious, through construction material (stone or brick), ornamentation (cornice decoration, door transoms for example), and scale. The same contrasts could be seen within the villages of Centre Hall and Linden Hall, or Millheim and Rebersburg. By the early twentieth century, regionalism was disappearing as a basis for architectural choice; new housing was more typically drawn from nationally popular types such as the foursquare. However, the landscape of tenancy persisted.

Field patterns began to assume their modern contours, as more acreage was cleared and fenced and probably fields became more regularly shaped, in order to accommodate machinery. Every farm had a woodlot. Ornamental, shelter, and orchard plantings nearer the house came to maturity. One very notable visual difference between 19th century field patterns and their modern counterparts would be in the amount of fencing. Nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century farms were much more heavily fenced and subdivided than they are today. Types of fencing ranged from the traditional "worm" fence, to post-and-rail fencing, to picket fencing closer in to the house. Historic farmsteads also had extensive orchards, mainly of apple trees, of which little survives today. However, significant portions of stone fencing, tree lines, windbreaks, woodlots, and fields retain their original qualities.

Substantial barns were erected during this period. Sequentially, the "Pennsylvania barn" came first. The Pennsylvania barn should be interpreted as an outgrowth of the highly mechanized grain and livestock economy. The Pennsylvania barn was ideal for the new grain/livestock/market oriented farming, because it was a multipurpose barn which had a lower level for livestock and an upper level (reached by ramp) for threshing, grain and implement storage, and hay. Some had large granary "outshoots" on the bank side, reflecting the importance of grain in this economy. Moreover, attached machine sheds frequently housed implements, reflecting the high level of local mechanization. Late in the 19th century and early in the 20th century, farmers began to add large wings onto their barns, and even to build new barns that formed an "L" shape from the beginning. Geographer Alan Noble interprets these as "raised three-gable barns". He argues that when machine threshing made it possible to process all the grain at once, (rather than in dribs and drabs throughout the winter), there was no longer any need for threshing doors, so a large wing at right angles to the main barn accommodated the huge piles of straw (which now were carefully sheltered instead of being thrown out into the yard to decompose). The loft was used for hay, the basement for livestock or manure. The basic contours of this analysis are plausible, but they



## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 5

need some refinements. Threshing machinery was available in the valleys in the mid-nineteenth century, but it was horse-powered and not always with winnowing capabilities. It's likely that the change in barns was prompted not by horse power threshing but by the faster and more productive steam power that not only threshed (that is, separated the grain from the stalk) but also winnowed (separated grain from the chaff), thus eliminating the need for cross ventilation in barns and creating a need for straw sheds. Another interesting feature of these barns is the way they adapt the conventional Pennsylvania barn. On the upper (bank) level, the threshing floor faces the extra gable, so if the barn is "L" shaped, the floor would be on the extreme right or left rather than in the center as was usual. The hay mows and machinery storage are displaced accordingly. In the new "ell", on the upper level there's the straw storage place and the granary (which in the PA Barn used to be in the forebay). However, the full workings of these "L" barns have yet to be fully explained; for example, some have long sliding doors on both sides of the straw shed's lower level. Was this to facilitate manure storage, straw storage, or livestock?

Many new ancillary buildings also went up on farms during this period, such as smokehouses and summer kitchens. A diary kept by a local landlord, E. W. Hale, mentions corn house, hog pen, smoke house, and summer kitchen in 1880. These spaces had important meanings for the division of labor in rural society. The summer kitchen, most obviously, was a site of women's work in the expanding subsistence economy, and likely also reflected the rise of an important new domestic technology, the cookstove. Hog pens were related to domestic spaces, in that hogs were often fed on kitchen slops and skimmed milk. Smoke houses can be considered a mixed-gender, community workspace, as most often neighborhood men and women cooperated at butchering time. The wagon shed was another common outbuilding.

### III. 1920-1950: THE RISE OF MOTORIZED FARMING, DAIRYING, AND POUNTRY RAISING

#### **Agriculture:**

During this period, horse power farming gave way to motorized farming, as the auto and tractor appeared; the county continued to be a state leader in the per-farm level of mechanization. In this period there was a noticeable shift away from the grain and livestock economy that had dominated agriculture in the valleys for almost a hundred years, as dairying and poultry raising challenged the older enterprises. As road and rail transportation improved, Centre County was drawn into the orbit of the New York City "milkshed." Creameries in Bellefonte, Spring Mills, and Howard were in operation by 1930; they made butter and shipped milk to New York City. By the 1930s a "milk depot" in Centre Hall had 100 patrons. The numbers of milk cows rose and numbers of beef animals declined. Alfalfa, silage corn, regular corn, and hay were important crops; from being a cash crop, hay shifted to being an important fodder crop for local dairy production. Centre Hall became an important center for poultry production of young hatchlings, shipping all over the country. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Kerlin Hatchery shipped literally millions of chicks. In turn this had an impact on local farming, as the hatcheries encourage local farm families to supply them with eggs. Rates of tenancy continued high, and as before sharecropping was the major form of tenancy, though sometimes tenant leases were modified to reflect the regular milk check.

The old subsistence base showed some signs of eroding; the number of swine, for example, dropped sharply as people were less inclined to butcher their own meat. But most farm families still raised their own food and conducted a variety of small side enterprises, especially during the Depression years. Farm women continued to engage in farm production, and also took leadership roles in rural social organizations. Overall, however, a trend toward "de-feminization" of farm production was occurring, as fields such as dairying and poultry production came to be dominated by men.



## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 6**

### **Landscape:**

With respect to overall landscape patterns, the patterns of woodlot, crop, pasture, and meadow fields did not vary significantly from the earlier period. The advent of wire fencing brought a new look, as did the tendency to confine animals close to the barn (which resulted in less fencing within fields and meadows).

Penns Valley and Brush Valley farm families tended to make do with older buildings during this period. A national agricultural depression, coupled with a tendency to put scarce financial resources into new technologies such as automobiles and electricity, ensured that few new farm houses were erected during this period.

Existing barns, perhaps extended or internally altered with stanchions, sufficed to accommodate dairy herds. Very occasionally, a rainbow-roof dairy barn would be erected, but silos were the most notable new feature of the farmstead complex. First used in the US in the 1880s, silos were adopted when farmers turned to dairying, because they provided the winter food that helped to extend the milking season. In the 1920s and 1930s they became a standard part of the farmstead repertoire in Penns and Brush Valleys. With the proximity of Centre Hall "chicken ranches," poultry facilities became a common sight on valley farmsteads. Some took the form of small, freestanding chicken houses, while in other cases existing buildings were renovated to provide for poultry or egg production. After 1930, concrete-block milk houses appeared, usually near the barn. For all of these construction projects, the use of milled lumber, sheet metal, and concrete signified an important change in the origin and nature of building materials.

### **Conclusion:**

The historic agricultural landscape of Penns Valley and Brush Valley derives significance from its clear relationship to key economic and social patterns of the area's past, chiefly the main local industries (iron and then PSU) and the institution of farm share tenancy. These trends are embodied in the existing landscape, in the form of a differentiation between landlord and tenant housing; farmsteads which reflect architectural equipment for highly mechanized grain/livestock farming, followed by dairying; and a consistent pattern of farmland use and layout, reflected in the persistence of fields, stone fencing, tree lines, windbreaks, farm plantings, and rural roads.

The landscape is also significant for its high degree of integrity. Integrity in a rural landscape should be somewhat differently assessed than in a village or urban district. Since so much of the landscape's significance derives from such features as open fields, field and property boundaries, and orientation of buildings with respect to roadways and natural features, we must consider larger issues of overall visual integrity, rather than consider buildings in isolation. According to this way of thinking, the Brush Valley and Penns Valley district has a high degree of integrity. Approximately 85 per cent of its total land area is in open land, still in agricultural use. Forest still covers a substantial part of the areas originally used as woodlots (usually on the mountain slopes). Field sizes and shapes retain to a high degree their earlier configuration, even if crops have changed. The intrusions that do exist are located in clusters, or on the edges of open areas, so even if modern buildings make up a percentage which would be considered large for a village district, in the context of the rural district they do not compromise its integrity. This is especially evident when one views the district from a high vantage point, for example on Mount Nittany; from above, the overwhelming view is of a patchwork of fields, boundaries, historic roadways, and historic farmsteads.

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### **A note on the evidence for farm tenancy**

The high level of farm tenancy came as a surprise as we researched this nomination. However, researchers in other counties (especially Cumberland, Franklin, Dauphin, Lebanon, Mifflin, Blair, Union, and Northumberland)

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 7

are likely to encounter more of this. Here we offer suggestions for finding evidence of tenancy. Actual rates of tenancy are difficult to determine before 1880.

n        in the county landownership maps or atlases, the appearance of the same name in different places suggests that this person is a landlord. For example, in Centre County's 1874 atlas, Moses Thompson's name appears next to many different properties. In his case, we know where he resided, so we can reasonably assume that the others are tenant properties. Note that this means that in areas where tenancy has a significant presence, one shouldn't assume that the name next to a property denotes the *resident* on the property. Another way in which landownership maps indicate tenancy is through the use (inconsistently) of designations such as "res" (residence) and "oc" (occupant). In Centre County, J. H. McCormick (check) is an "occupant" of land actually owned by someone else; by contrast, where several properties bear the name "Neff," one notes "J. Neff (res)."

n        The 1880 agricultural census manuscripts clearly state whether the farmer is a tenant or owner, and whether he rents for cash or shares.

n        In the case of Centre County, tax records from 1850 onward clearly separate "owners of real estate," "tenants," and "single freemen," and they indicate how landlords and tenants are connected, i. e. they list the name of the landlord along with the names of his tenants. One caveat is that these records are most clear when landlord and tenant reside in the same township.

n        Family or corporate papers often contain "articles of agreement" or leases which spell out terms of tenancy. They are usually filed with financial and legal papers.

n        Day books and farm account books often give clues as to tenancy, for example when they list receipt of crop rent.

n        Probate records of landlords often contain evidence about tenancy, for example in the form of receipts for "rent grain," or items in a will which dictate how to dispose of tenanted property, probate records which contain receipts for construction work on tenant farms, etc.

n        Reports of observers (for example in the transactions of the state agricultural society or the reports to the U. S. Patent Office, before the USDA was a separate department) often describe tenancy arrangements.

n        Agricultural extension bulletins, for the later period, contain useful information on tenancy. In Centre County, for example, local agricultural extension workers were concerned that old-style contracts did not work for dairy farmers, and they published alternative sample contracts.

n        Local newspapers (in this case, the *Centre Reporter* published in Centre Hall) often mentioned tenants in their local columns.

The historical and social significance of tenancy is difficult to assess at this point. In the postbellum South, of course, tenancy has been extensively analyzed as one means by which the planter class continued to wield power over impoverished freedpeople and poor whites. But so little scholarly work exists on northern tenancy in either the colonial period or the 19th century that conclusions must be tentative at best. Historical debate about northern tenancy has revolved around the issue of whether it was a sign of a malfunctioning economic system, or (conversely) whether it was a viable "rung" on the "agricultural ladder" to full ownership. However, almost all of the studies to date have taken Midwestern states as their area of study. In central Pennsylvania, tenancy seems to have been unlike Midwestern tenancy in at least one crucial respect: landowners were not absentee speculators, but rather members of the local elite who lived in the area and kept close tabs on their tenants. One thing is clear: the landscape itself testifies to an unmistakable social gap between landlords and tenants in central Pennsylvania. Whether this gap was a generational one, or a sign of more permanent class differences, remains to be seen.

**Photographs — 2001**  
**(Photographers: J. Melander and S. McMurry)**

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Farm alignment, Potter Township — view to north from #192             | JM |
| 2. Farm alignment, Gregg Township — view to southwest                    | JM |
| 3. Valley view of Nittany Mountain — view to north from #192             | JM |
| 4. View, Nittany Mountain to valley — to south from Mt. Nittany Inn      | JM |
| 5. Curving road, Gregg Township — view to south                          | JM |
| 6. Railroad bed, Potter Township — view to east from Rimmey Road         | JM |
| 7. Manager's house, CCC Camp, Colyer — view to southwest                 | JM |
| 8. Road remnant, CCC Camp, Colyer — view to south                        | JM |
| 9. Fields and hedgerows, view northeast from Rimmey Road, Potter         | JM |
| 10. Windbreak, conifers, view northeast from Rimmey Road, Potter         | JM |
| 11. Windbreak/treeline, locust, Wm. Rishel farm, Potter — view southeast | JM |
| 12. Fences, Wm. Rishel farm, Potter — view east                          | JM |

**Fergus Potter Farmstead, Upper Brush Valley Road — Harris Township**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 13. House and barn — view northeast       | JM |
| 14. Potter house — 5 bay — view north     | SM |
| 15. 3 gable barn — view west              | SM |
| 16. Outbuildings behind house — view west | JM |
| 17. Potter Spring — view northeast        | JM |

**Van Tries Tenant House — Harris Township**

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 18. Van Tries house and barn complex — view south          | SM |
| 19. Side view, tenant house — view north                   | JM |
| 20. Fields and Tussey Mountain — view from farm lane south | JM |
| 21. Farm lane to Van Tries property — view south           | JM |

**Ashton Heath — Harris Township**

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 22. Georgian 5-bay, barn, outbuildings — view north from #45   | SM |
| 23. Ashton Heath tenant house, off Cedar Run Road — view north | SM |
| 24. Ashton Heath tenant barn — view east from Cedar Run Road   | SM |

**G.W. Campbell Farm — Harris Township**

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 25. Farm house, barn, lane to house — view northwest from Cedar Run Road | JM |
| 26. Barns, silos — view north from Cedar Run Road                        | JM |
| 27. Tenant house, on Cedar Run Road — view northwest                     | JM |

**Miscellaneous — Harris Township**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 28. John Irvin barn & mill pond, Linden Hall — view north, Cedar Run Road | SM |
| 29. 3-gable barn, Linden Hall Road — view northwest                       | SM |
| 30. Aspen Heights Development, Harris Township — view northwest           | SM |
| 31. 4-bay house & farm complex, #45, Harris/Potter line — view north      | SM |
| 32. Tussey Mountain across field, #45, Harris/Potter line — view south    | SM |

## Photographs – continued

### Standford House — Potter Township #33-34

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 33. Stanford House — view northwest from Rimmey Road     | SM |
| 34. Barn & outbuildings, Stanford house — view southeast | SM |

### Rhoneymeade — Potter Township #35-38

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 35. Leonard Rhone home — view northwest from Rimmey Road                 | SM |
| 36. Rhone dairy barn — view north from Rimmey Road                       | SM |
| 37. Rhone property — view south across valley to Tussey Mountain         | JM |
| 38. Rhone property — view northeast toward Nittany Mountain/Brush Valley | JM |

### George M. Boal Farm — Potter Township #39-42

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 39. Entrance, Boal brick house — view north | JM |
| 40. Boal bank barn — view to southwest      | JM |
| 41. Iron hinges, Boal barn                  | JM |
| 42. Barns, woodlot in distance              | JM |

### Pine Grove-Samuel Houston Farm — Potter Township #43-45

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 43. Houston house and barn — view to northeast | JM |
| 44. Houston tenant farm — view north           | JM |
| 45. Connecting lane, tenant farm               | JM |

### Alexander Johnston Farm — Potter Township #46-48

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 46. Johnston house and barn — view north     | JM |
| 47. View from Johnston property — view south | JM |
| 48. Centre Hill graveyard — view southwest   | JM |

### William Rishel Farm & Tenant Farm #49-55

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 49. William Rishel farm, view east            | JM |
| 50. William Rishel residence, view southwest  | JM |
| 51. William Rishel barn, view northeast       | JM |
| 52. View from Rishel farm to south            | JM |
| 53. Rishel tenant house, view south from #322 | JM |
| 54. Rishel tenant barn, view northwest        | JM |
| 55. Smokehouse, Rishel tenant farm            | JM |

### Miscellaneous Potter Township

#### Properties — North side, Brush Valley Road

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 56. 5-bay frame house, bank barn, sheds, silo — view northwest | JM |
| 57. Double door log house, Neff farmstead — view northwest     | SM |
| 58. Neff barn — view northwest                                 | SM |
| 59. 3-bay brick farmhouse — view northeast                     | SM |
| 60. Farmstead with two silos — view northeast                  | SM |
| 61. Farmstead — view northeast                                 | SM |
| 62. 3-bay brick with 4-bay addition — view northwest           | SM |
| 63. 3-gable bank barn — view north                             | SM |
| 64. Brush Valley Road — view west and north                    | SM |



### Photographs – continued

#### Properties — North side, Route #45

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 65. Log farmhouse along road, Harris-Potter line — view northwest         | SM |
| 66. Brick 5-bay farm house (one of several north of #45) — view northwest | SM |
| 67. Brick 5-bay farm house — view north                                   | SM |
| 68. Brick 5-bay farm house — view north                                   | SM |
| 69. 3-gable barn — view northwest   | SM |

#### Properties — South side, Route #322

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 70. Colyer Lake — south side of lake, view north           | JM |
| 71. Looking north above Colyer Lake, Treaster Kettle Road  | JM |
| 72. Farm pond, Treaster Kettle Road — view north           | JM |
| 73. Above Colyer Lake — view north                         | JM |
| 74. Tusseyville and Nittany Mountain — view north          | JM |
| 75. Lingle Road, near Colyer — view north                  | JM |
| 76. Church Hill Road — view south                          | JM |
| 77. Bethany church cemetery, Church Hill Road — view south | JM |
| 78. School house, Taylor Hill Road — view northwest        | JM |

#### ~~Grange Fairgrounds, Centre Hall — #79-81~~

~~SM~~

#### Gregg – Miles Townships

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 82. Andrew Gregg house, Middle Road, Potter/Gregg line — view north | Kenton Shaffer |
| 83. Miles stone house, Gregg Township — view north from #192        | JM             |
| 84. Road south to Egg Hill, Gregg Township — view south             | JM             |
| 85. Sinking Creek near Egg Hill, Gregg Township — view south        | JM             |
| 86. Centre Mill, Elk Creek Road, Miles Township — view north        | JM             |
| 87. Farm south of Elk Creek Road near Centre Mill — view northwest  | JM             |

## Notes on Sources for Penns Valley and Brush Valley History

### I. PRIMARY SOURCES

-- Manuscript schedules for agriculture, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1927 (McMurry personal microfilm and photocopies)

#### ■ From PSU Special Collections:

Pennsylvania maps in Historical Collections, PSU Special Collections: many 19<sup>th</sup> century maps including Henry Walling, *New Topographical Atlas*, 1872; *Mitchell's New Traveller's Guide*, 1851; *Johnson's Pennsylvania and new Jersey Almanac*, 1808; etc. These indicate stage routes, internal improvements, post routes, townships, etc.

*Eleventh Census of the population of the US... Bellefonte, PA, 1890*, In Special Collections. Basically a directory for 1890.

Cope, Thomas P. *The Diary of Thomas P. Cope, 1800-1851*.

Fithian, Philip Vickers: *Journal, 1775-1776*

Gordon, Thomas F. *A Gazetteer of the State of Pennsylvania*, 1833

Gregg, Andrew, account books, 1814-1827.

Rupp, *History and Topography of Northumberland, Huntingdon,... Centre Counties*, 1847

*Brush Valley Association for the Apprehension of Horse Thieves*, constitution and ledger book, 1853.

Maynard, D. S. *Industries and Institutions of Centre County* 1877

Gramly, Samuel, diaries, in Special Collections. Extensive commentary on Brush Valley, 1850s to 1900

Central Pennsylvania Ledgers and Daybooks, in Special Collections. Many, including Kerlin Poultry in Centre Hall, and lots of others.

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Henry W. Popp collection, Special Collections

Illingworth, Ralph. *A Passing Glance at Penn's Valley* 1896

Linn, John Blair, *History of Centre & Clinton Counties, Pennsylvania*, 1883.

Community Program Studies, PSU Department of Ag economics and rural sociology. Detailed, rural sociology survey of Centre Hall and vicinity. 1920s and 30s

PSU Ag extension records for Centre County beginning in the early 1920s

Report of the Transactions of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society for the years 1861-1862-1863, Singerly & Meyers, 1863.

Wolfe's Store records, 1883-1888. (Wolfe's Store is a crossroads in eastern Brush Valley)

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Published materials available in PSU Libraries:

*Greevy & Renner's Directory of Lock Haven, Bellefonte, and Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, 1874-5.* Misleading title, includes many valley towns as well.

*Map of Center (sic) County, showing rural delivery service*, PSU maps room, 1910, PSU Libraries

J. E. McCord, "Farm Tenancy and Lease Forms in Pennsylvania," Pa Ag experiment Station Bulletin # 232, 1932 I think.

McCord, J. E. "Farm Practices and Management in Central PA," PA Ag Experiment Station Bulletin # 379, 1939

Josephson, H. B., et al, "A Farm Machinery Survey of Selected Districts in Pa," includes several in eastern Centre County, Pa Ag Experiment Station Bulletin 237, 1937

Hamilton, Prof. J. "Tenant Farming." Annual Report of the Pennsylvania State Board of Agriculture for 1887, pp. 351-358.

Hood, George W. "Farm Fences and Ways over the Farm," *Pa Board of Agriculture* annual report for 1880, pp. 105-110

Annual Report of the State Board of Agriculture for 1878. Data on tenancy and farm crops and wages.

Annual Report of the State Board of Agriculture for 1877. "The Forests of Our State." Page 61-77.

Annual Report of the State Board of Agriculture for 1876. Prof. J. Hamilton, "Farm Fencing," pp. 47-58. Describes and critiques Centre County fencing.

McIntire, George B "Management and Practices on 261 Farms in Centre County, PA 1931." PSU thesis, PSU 1940

Keller, William Carl. "A Survey of Volume and Condition of Farm Woodlands in Centre County," PSU M of Forestry thesis, 1951

Weaver, F. P., et al. "Farm Adjustments in Market Hay Areas... of Pennsylvania." Penn State Ag Experiment Station Bulletin # 223, April 1928

"Milk Marketing in Pennsylvania." PA Ag Experiment Station bulletin # 208, December 1926

John Rishel Zubler, "The Development of Agricultural Organizations and Agricultural Education in Centre County, PA" PSU thesis, 1949

*Centre Reporter*, Centre Hall, Pa, 1864-1930s. Local newspaper.

From other archives:

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Centre County tax assessment records, 1801--. Centre County Historical Library. Information on tenancy and landownership.

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<http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/pasdc/> -- Pennsylvania state data center

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/llhhtml/llhhome.html> -- HABS/HAER searchable database

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html> -- Library of Congress "American Memory" website (maps, photos, archival collections, searchable by location, subject, etc.)

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/> -- National Register of Historic Places home page

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~pacentre/chistjml.htm> Centre County history

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/> US Census data browser. Historical data, can be manipulated and searched down to the county level

## II. REFERENCE TOOLS

Lee, Joan E. *Centre County, PA, bibliography and guide to sources of information*. Old but useful

## III. SECONDARY SOURCES

(12/5/00, this is incomplete)

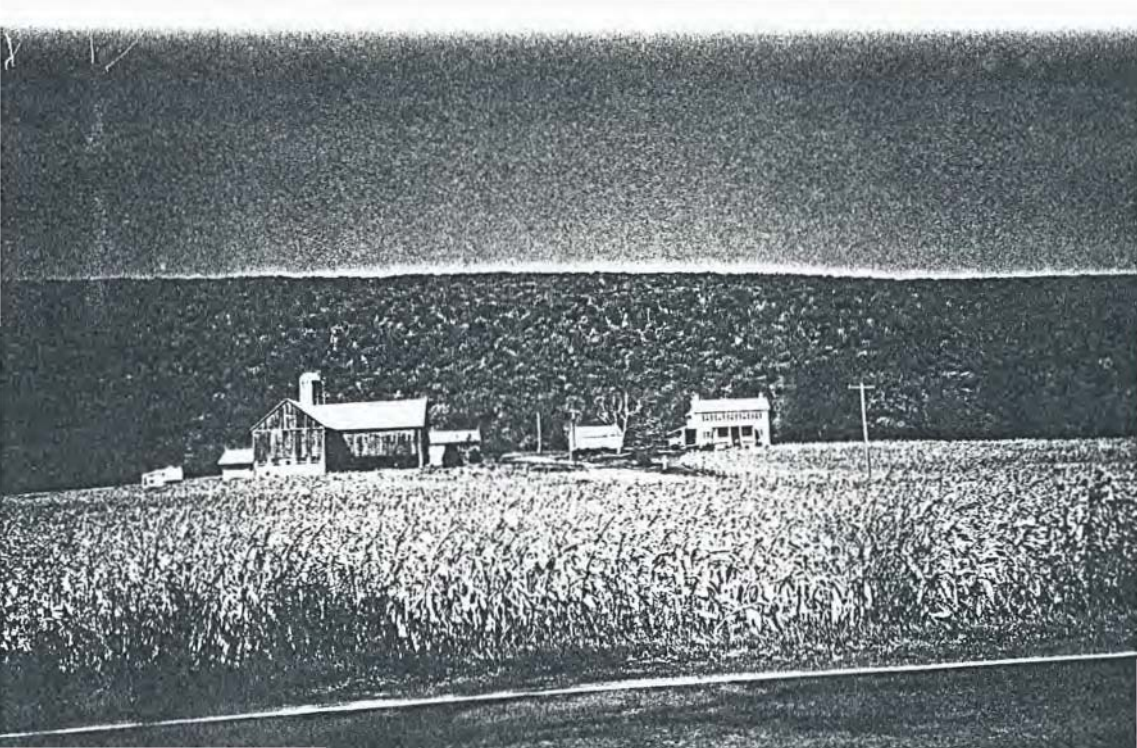
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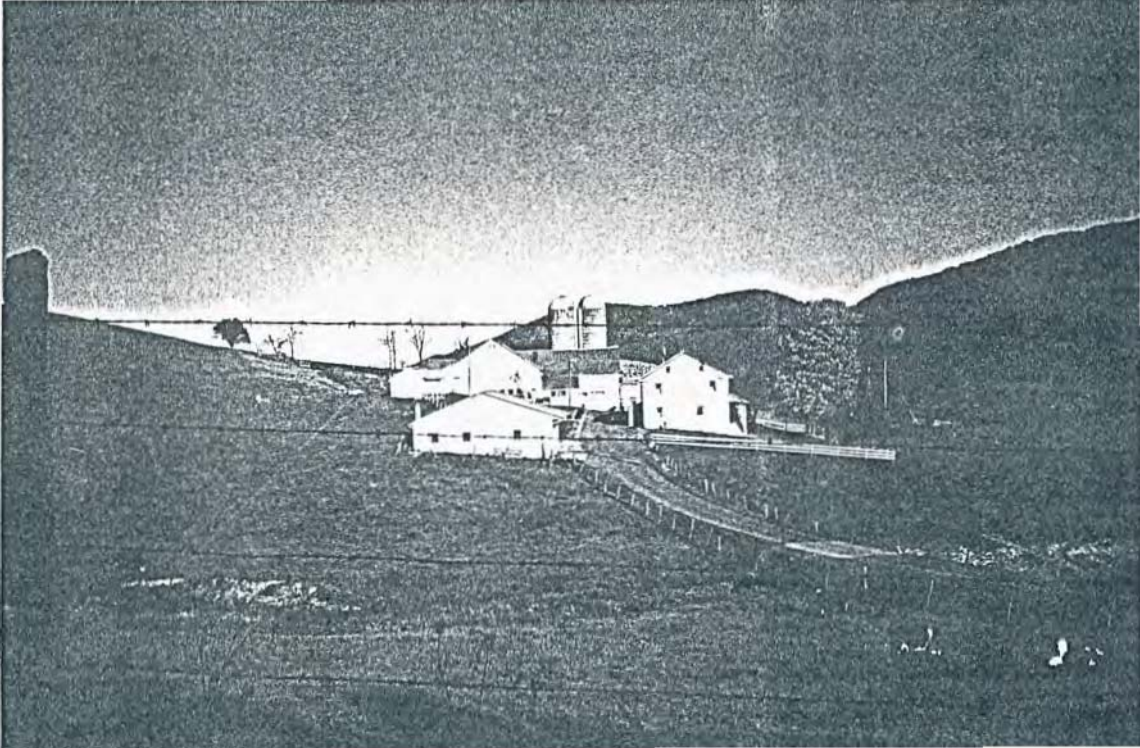
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----- "Introducing Edward Heary's Connected Warrants Map of Centre County," *Centre County Heritage* vol. 31, 1995.

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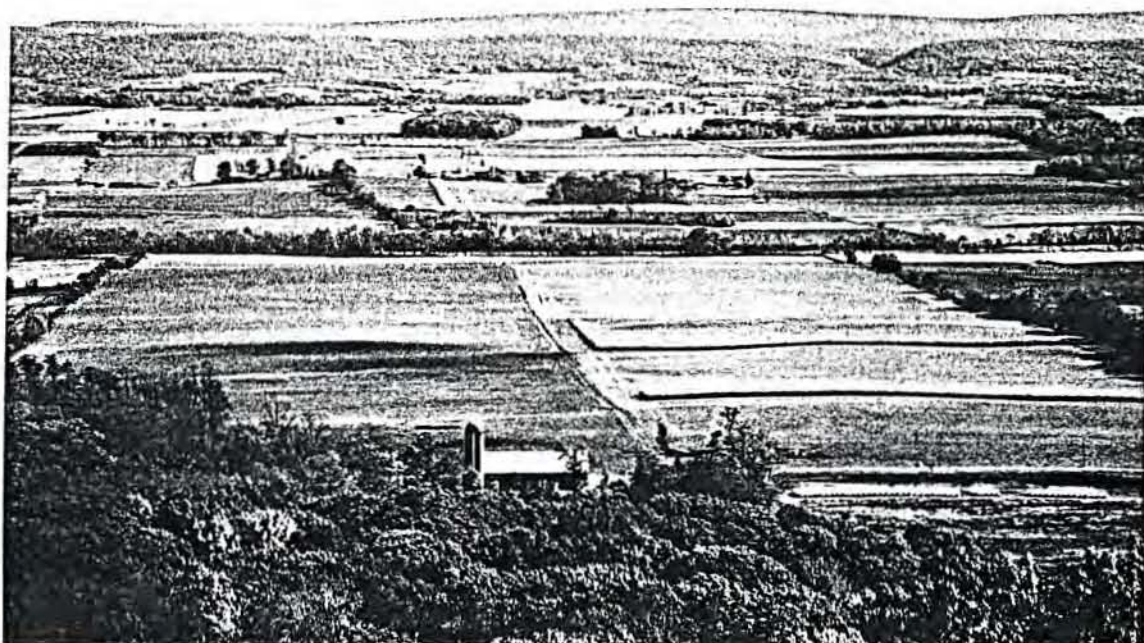




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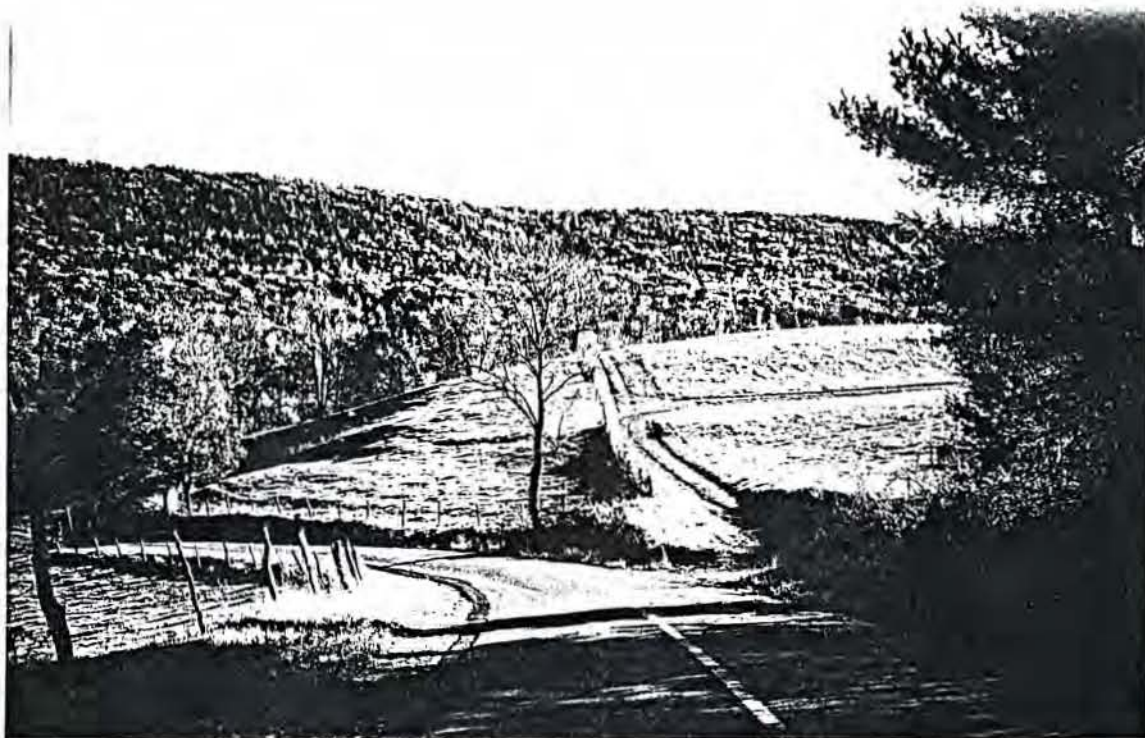


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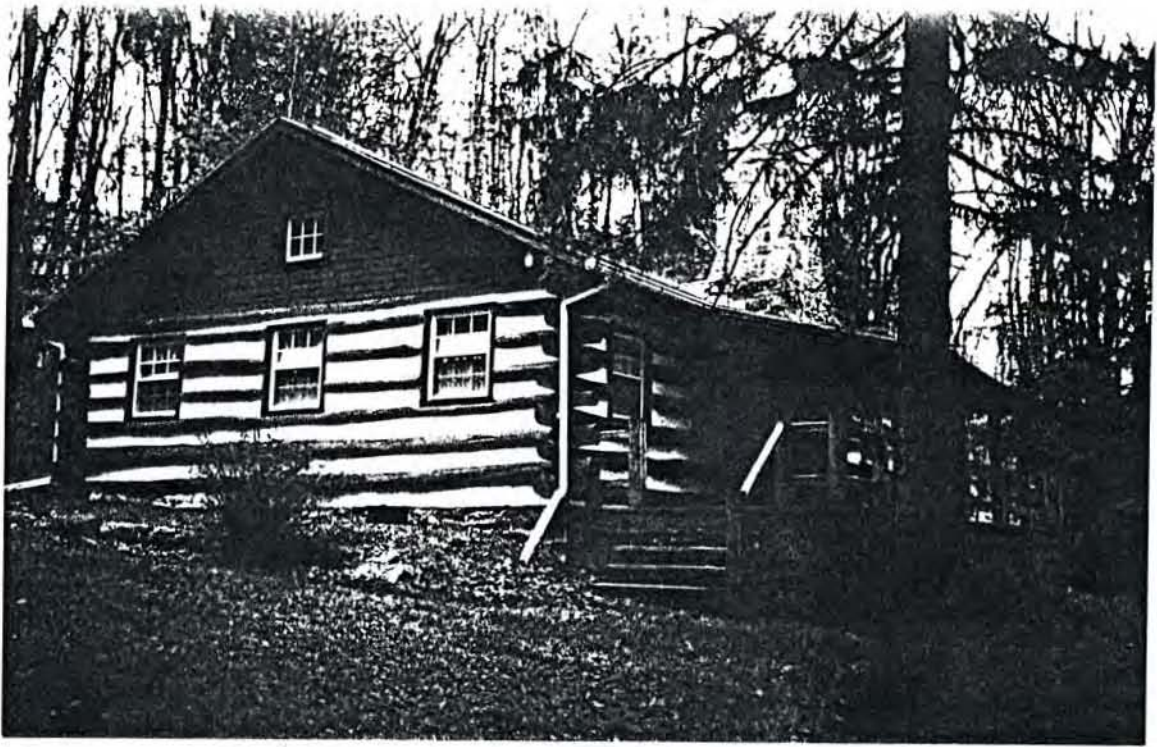


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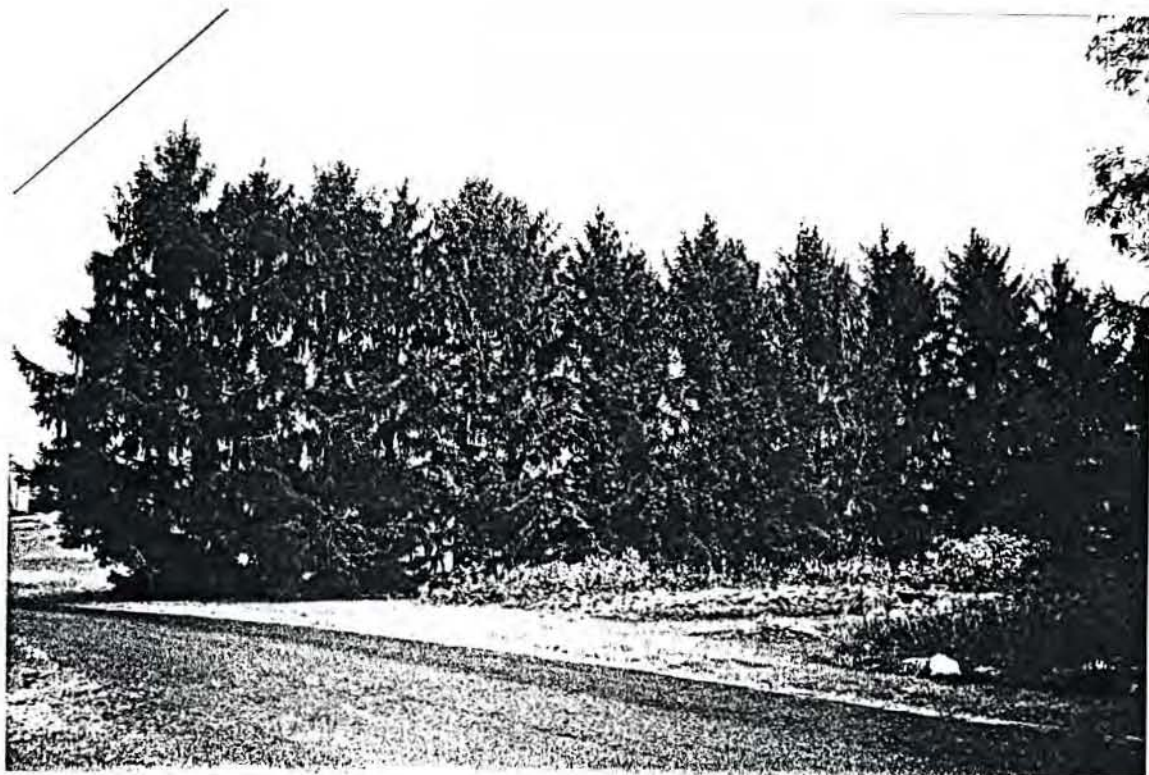




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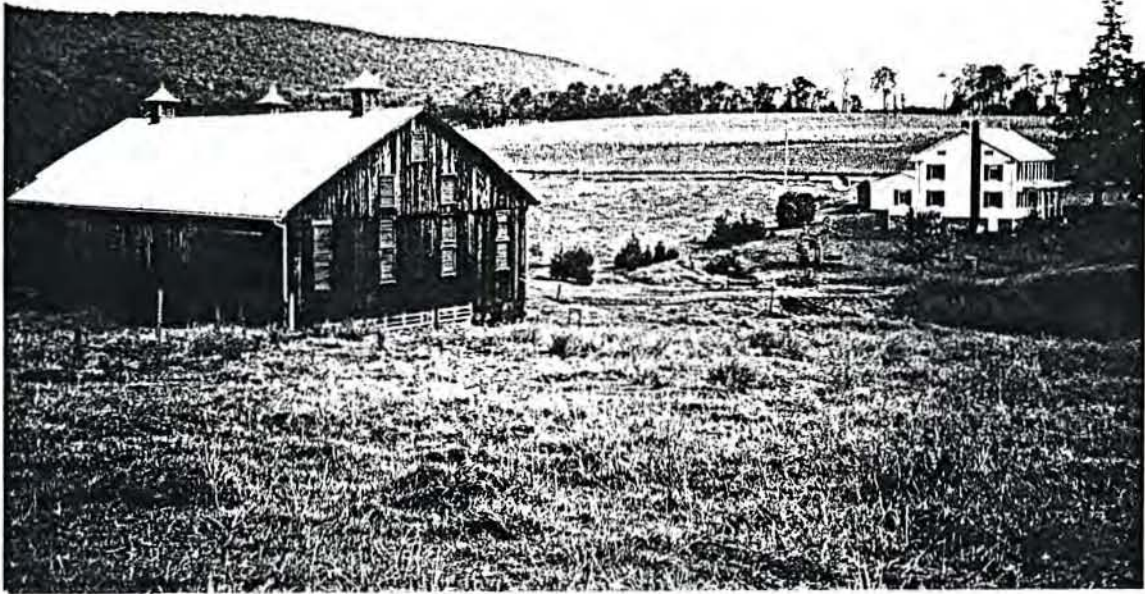
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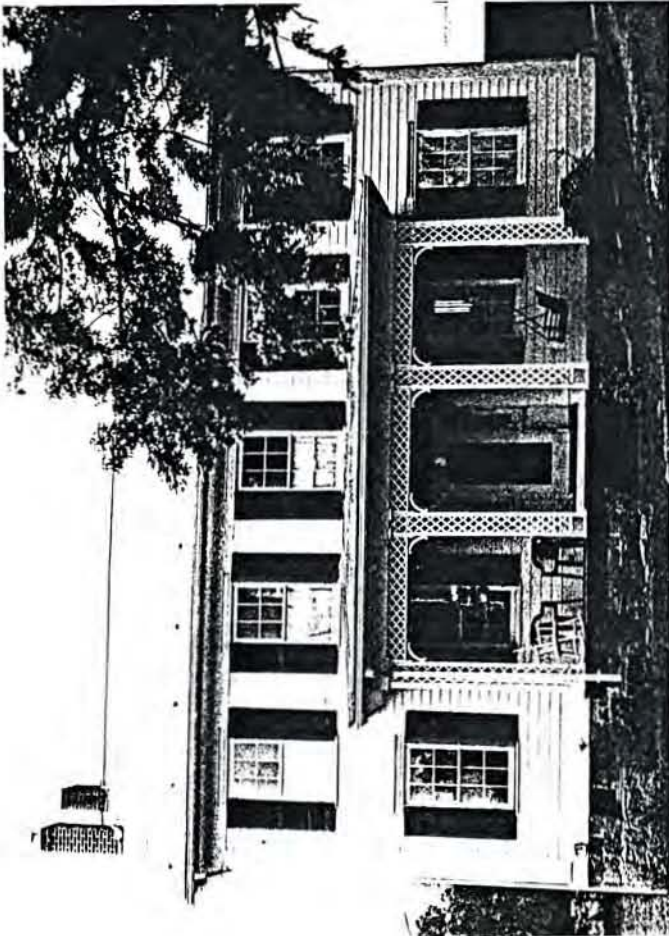
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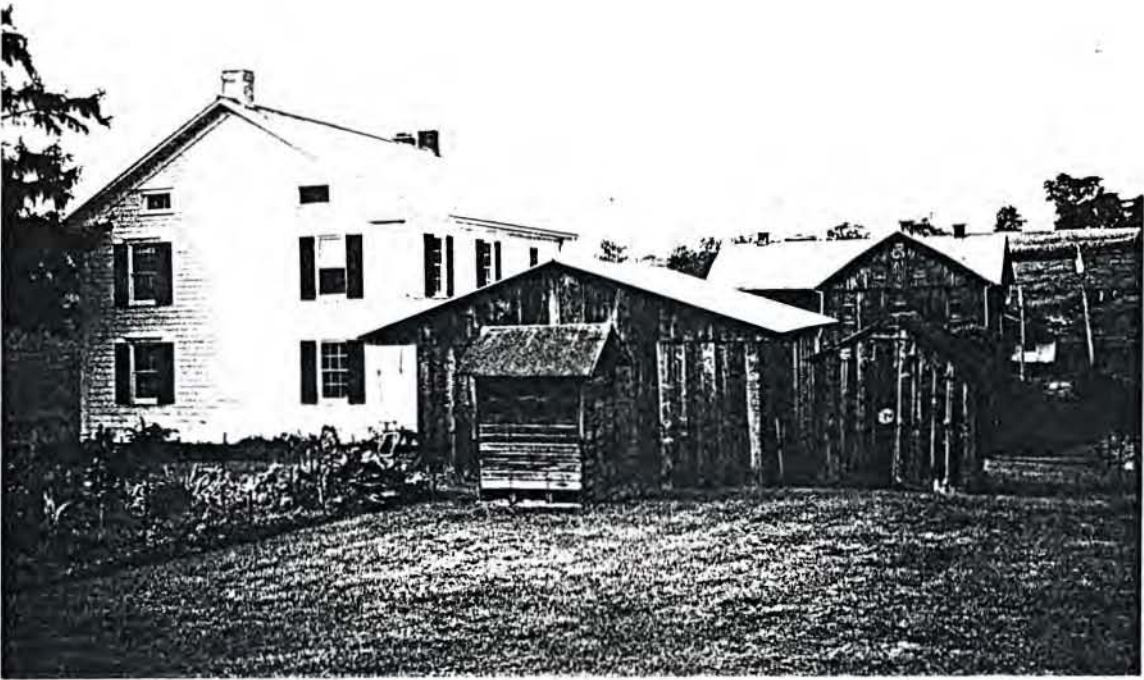
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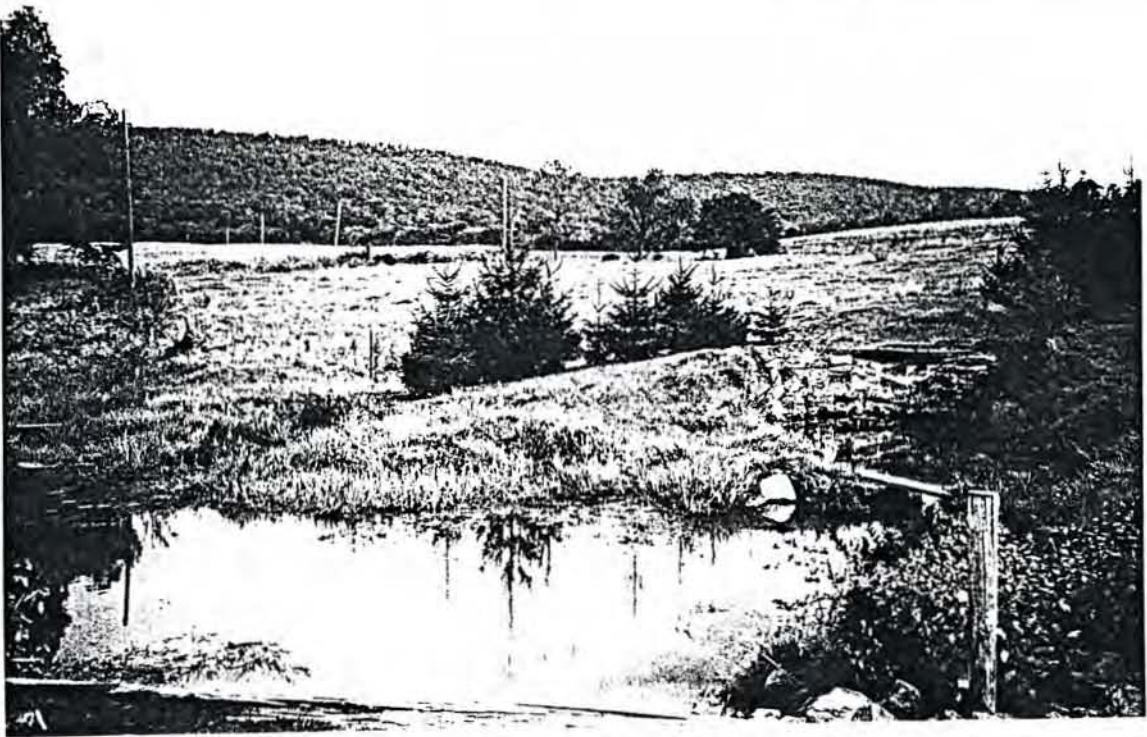
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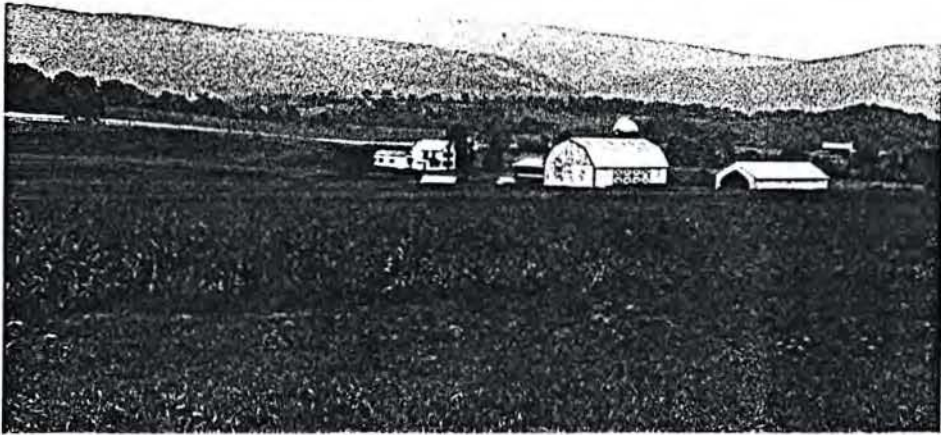
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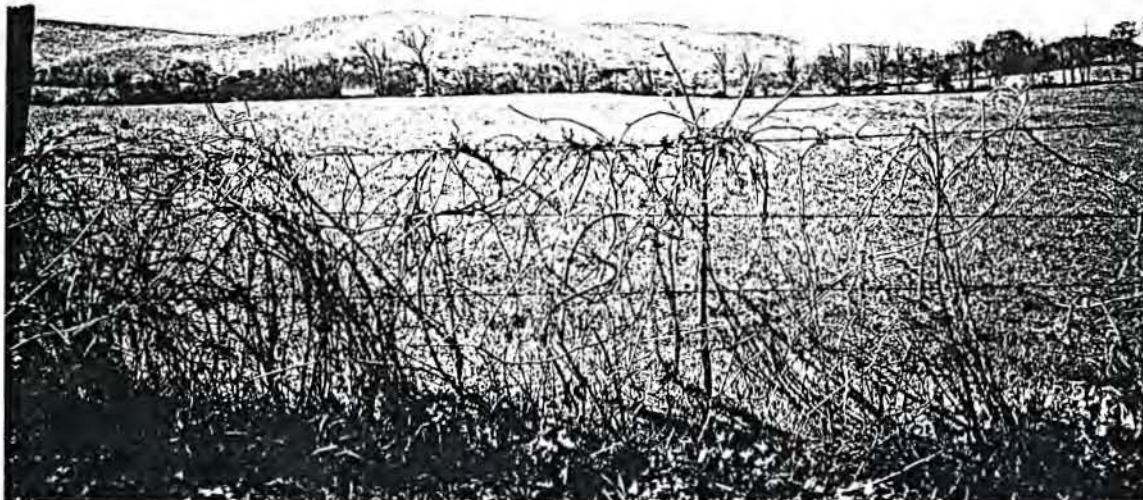


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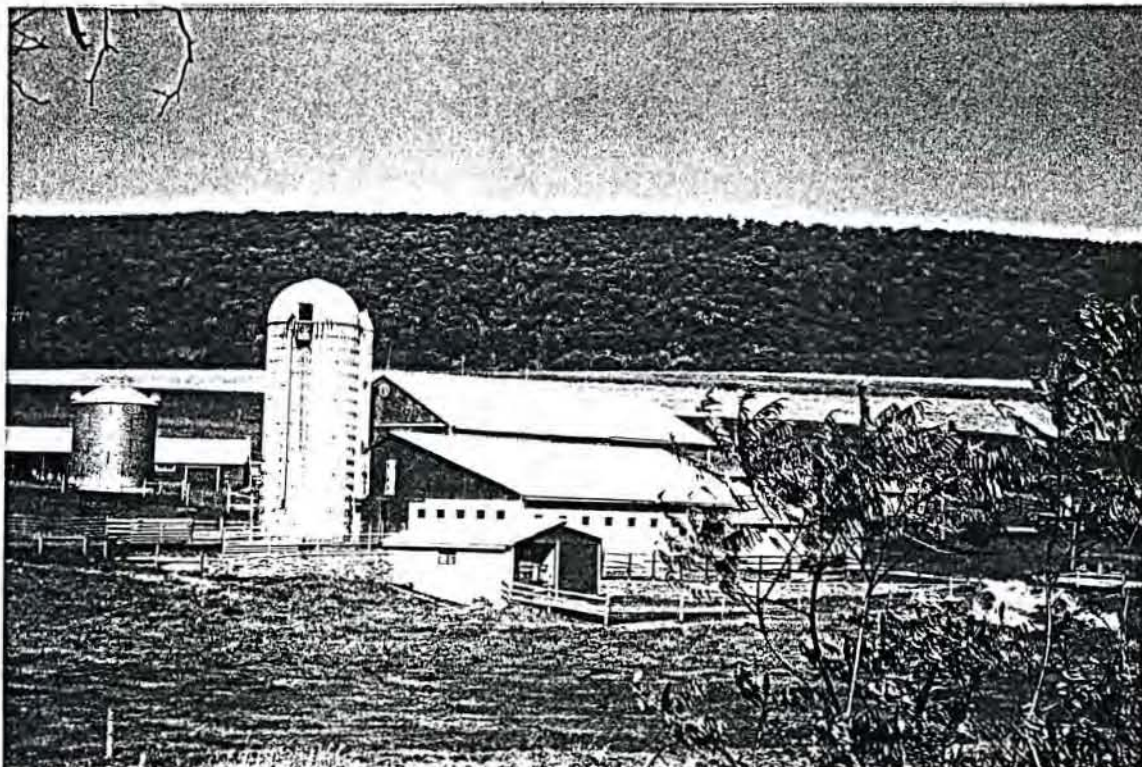




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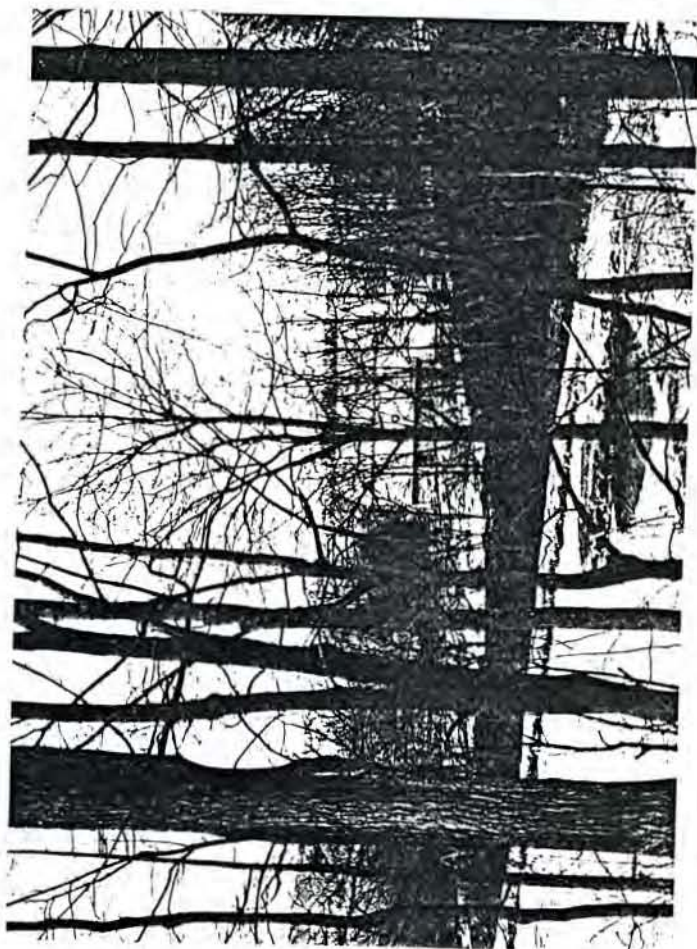
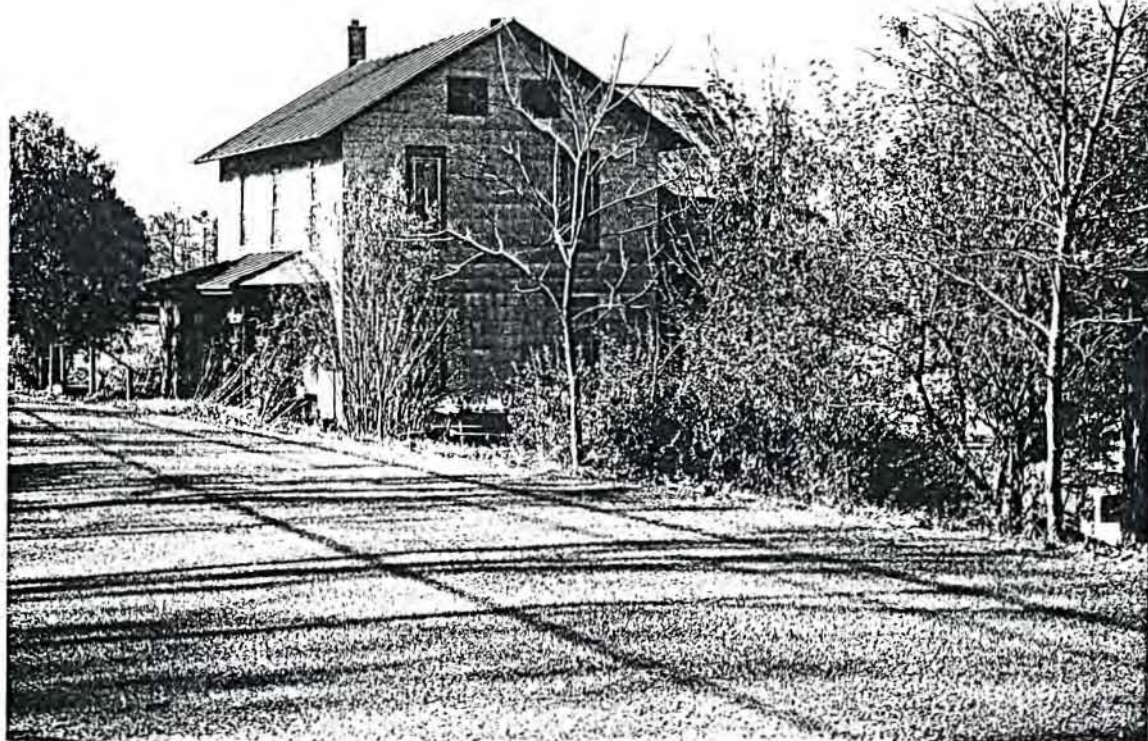


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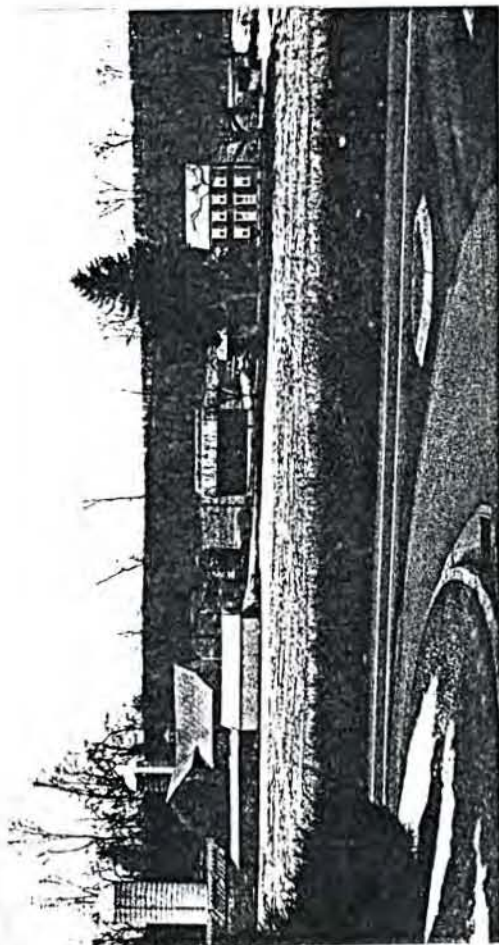
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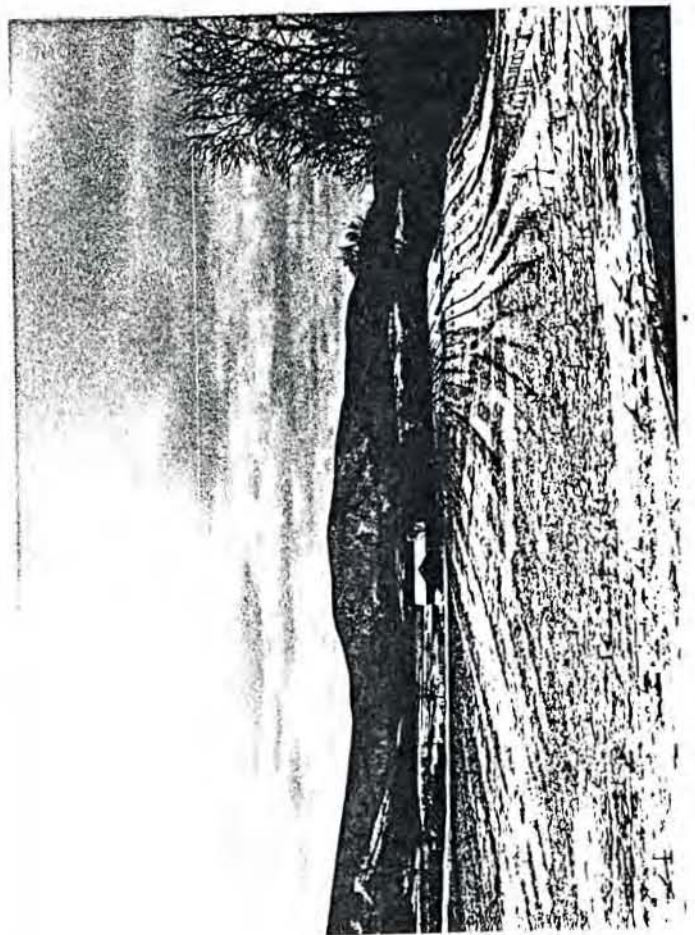
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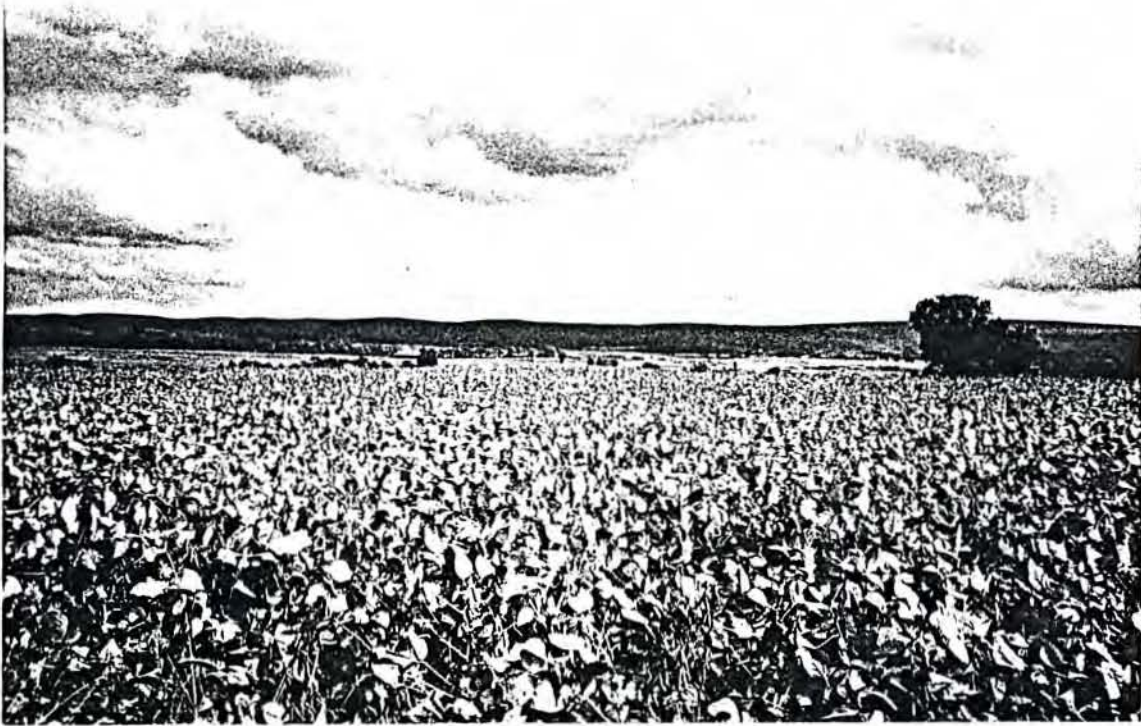
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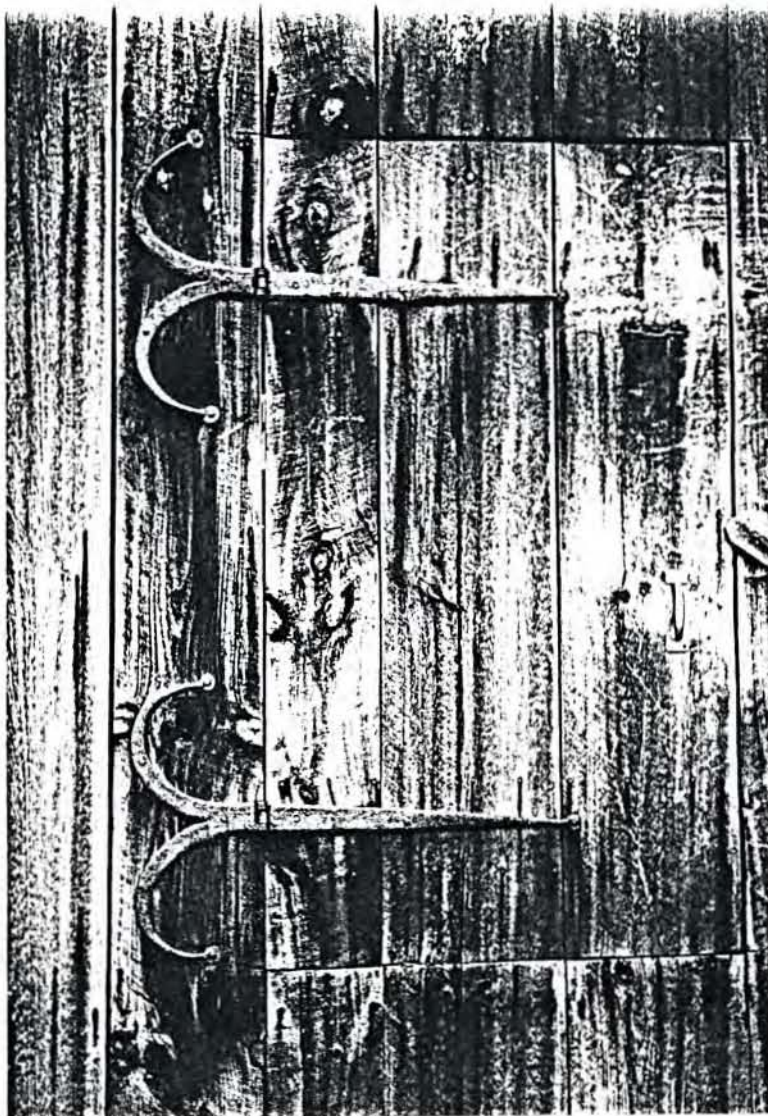


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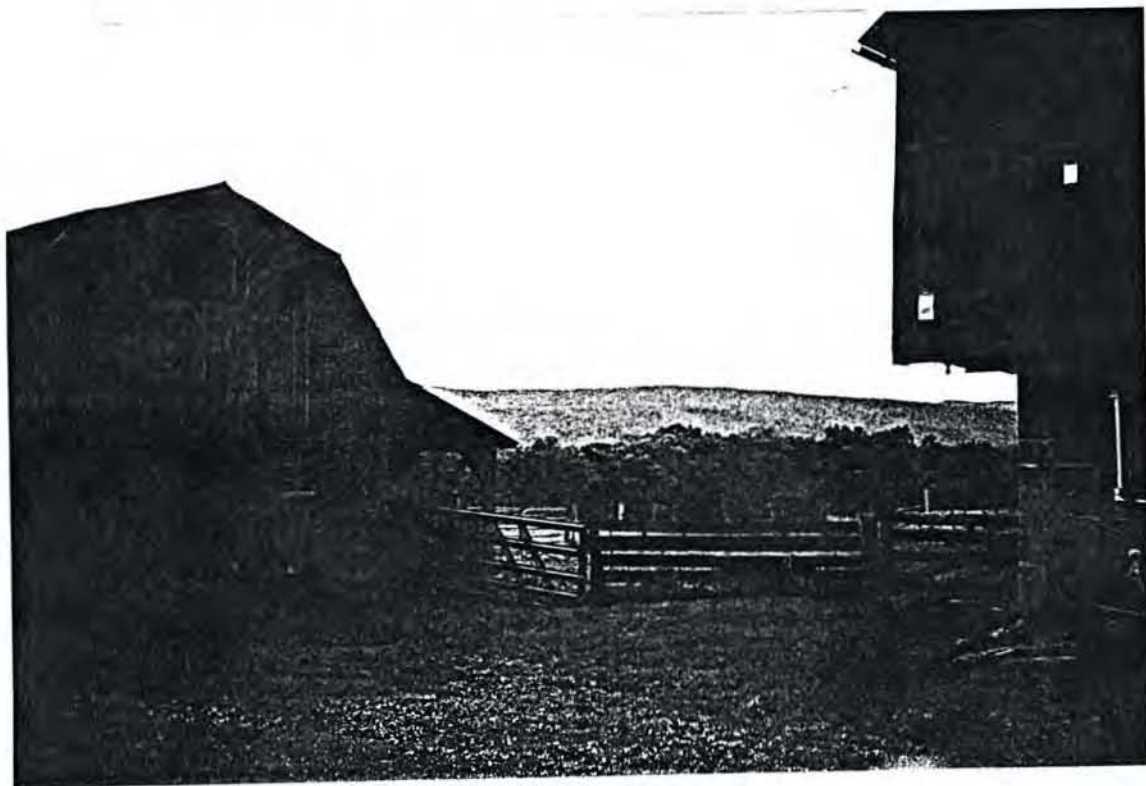




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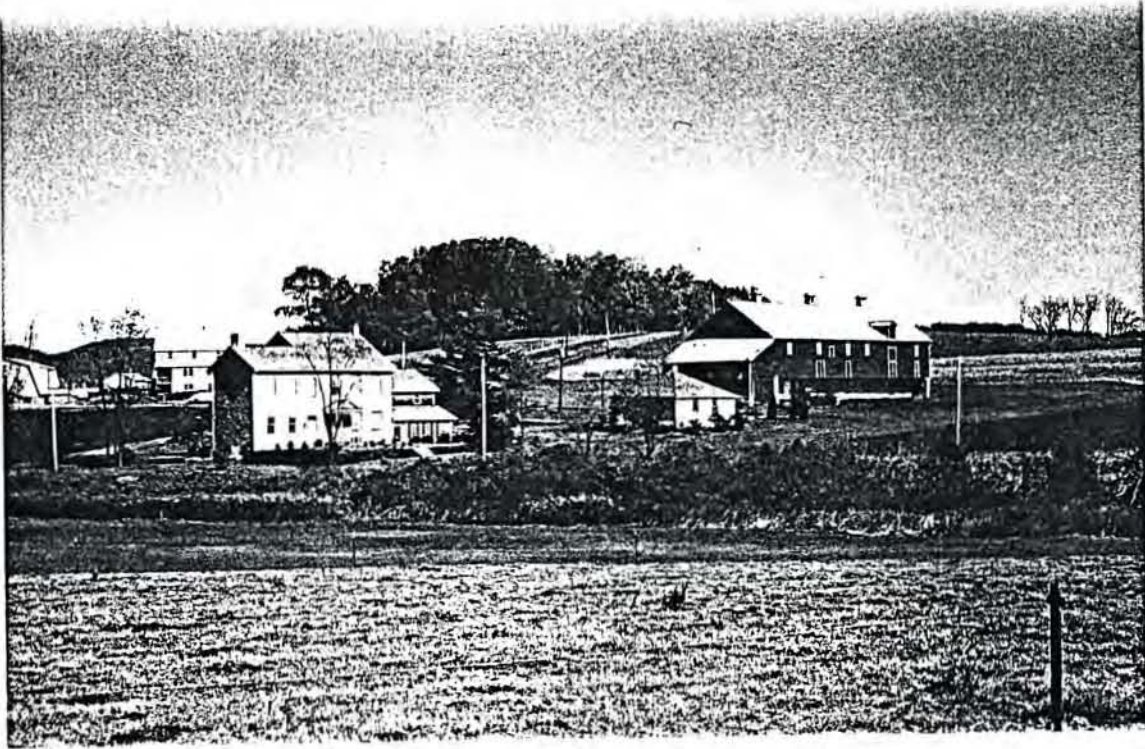


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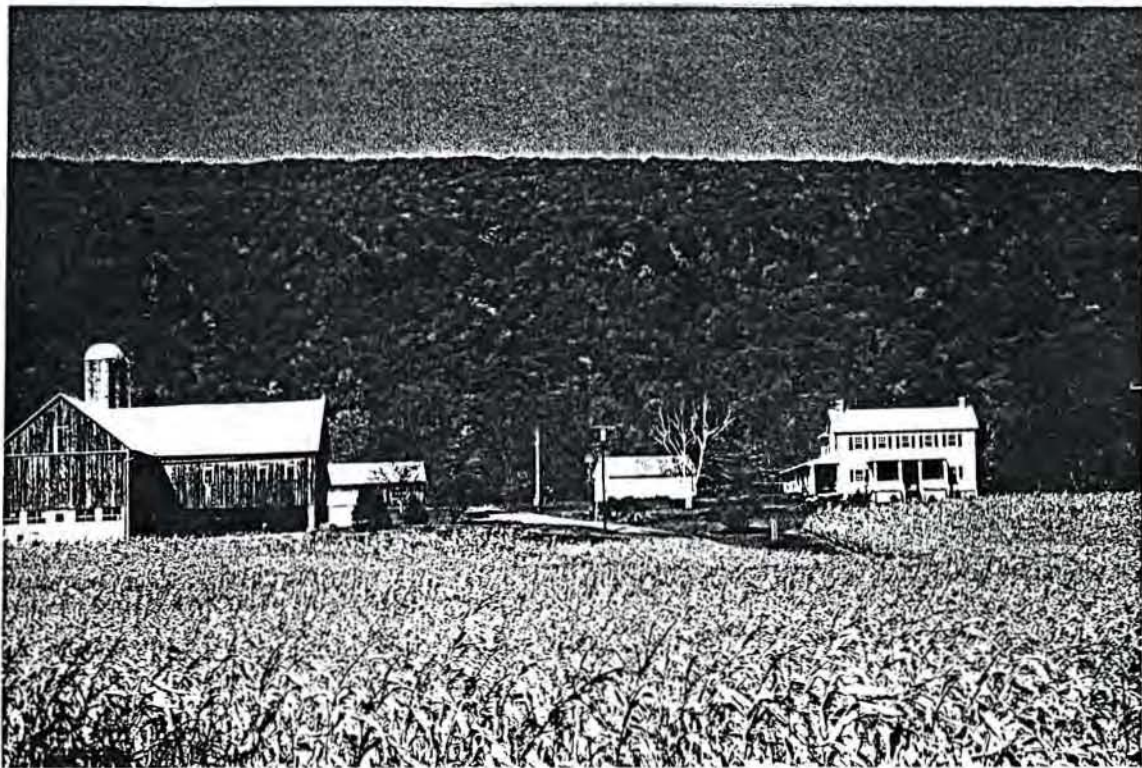




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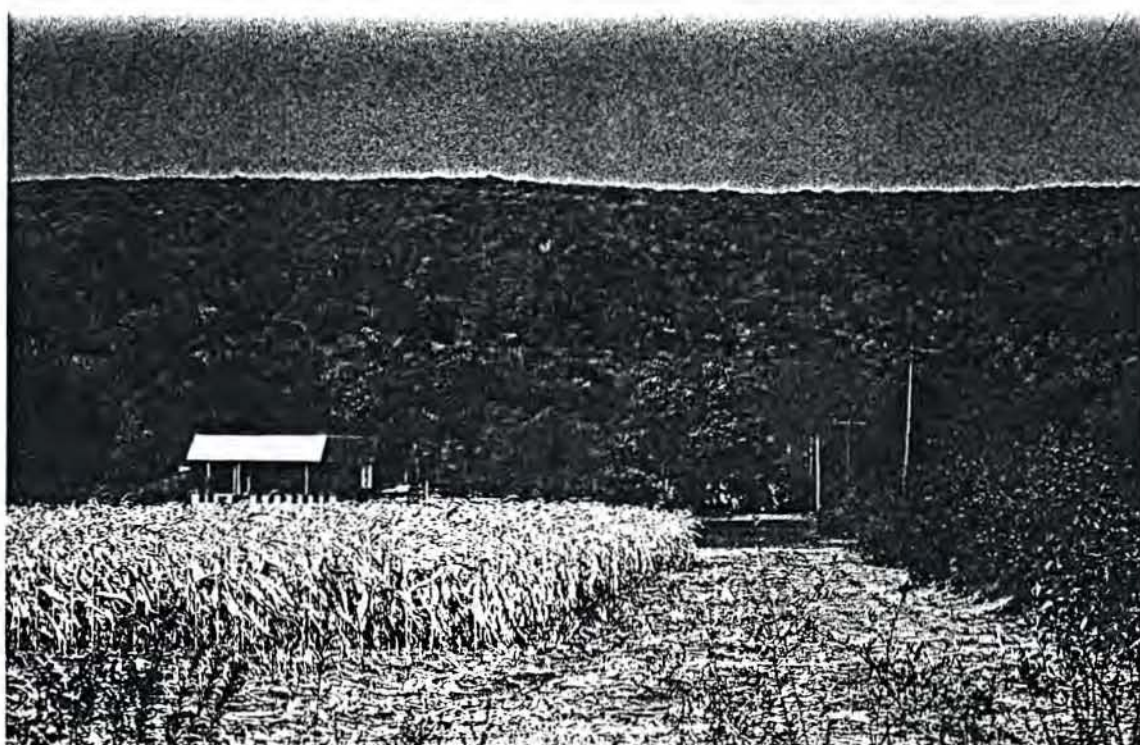


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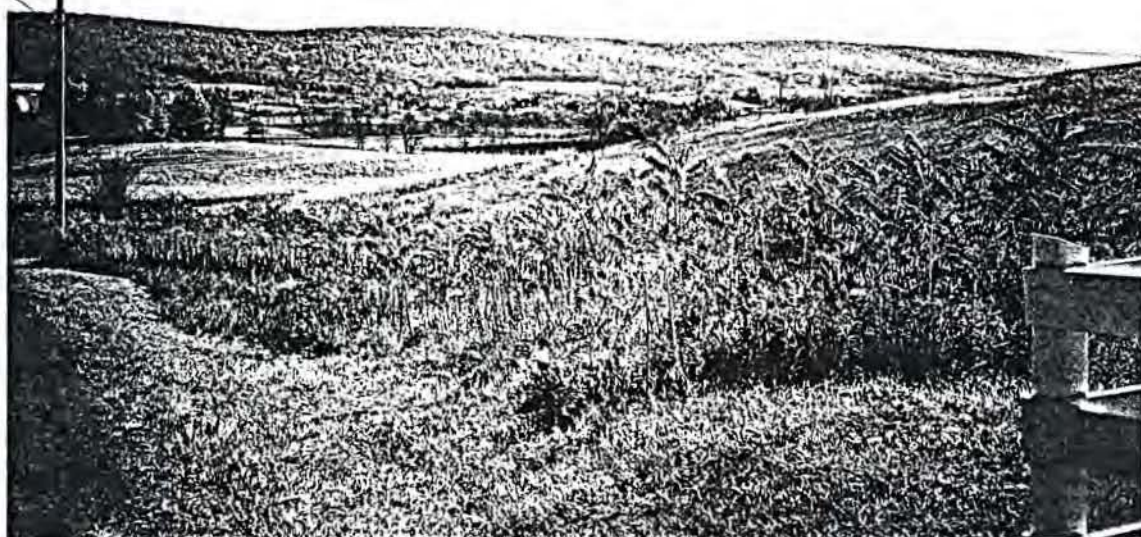


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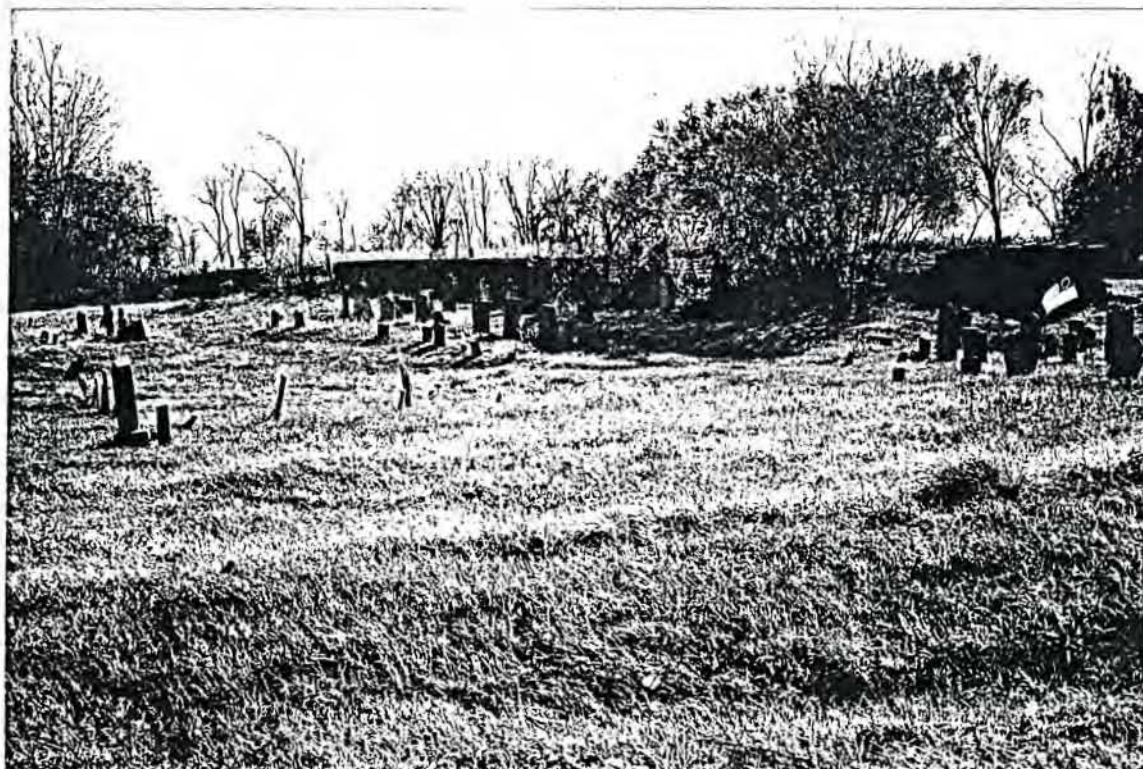




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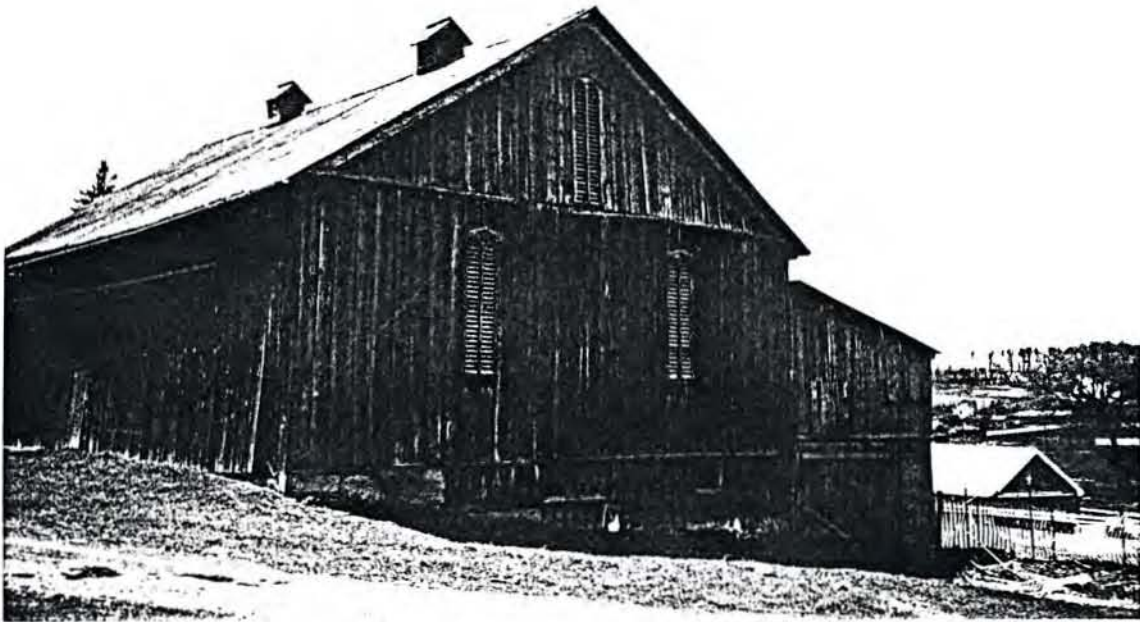
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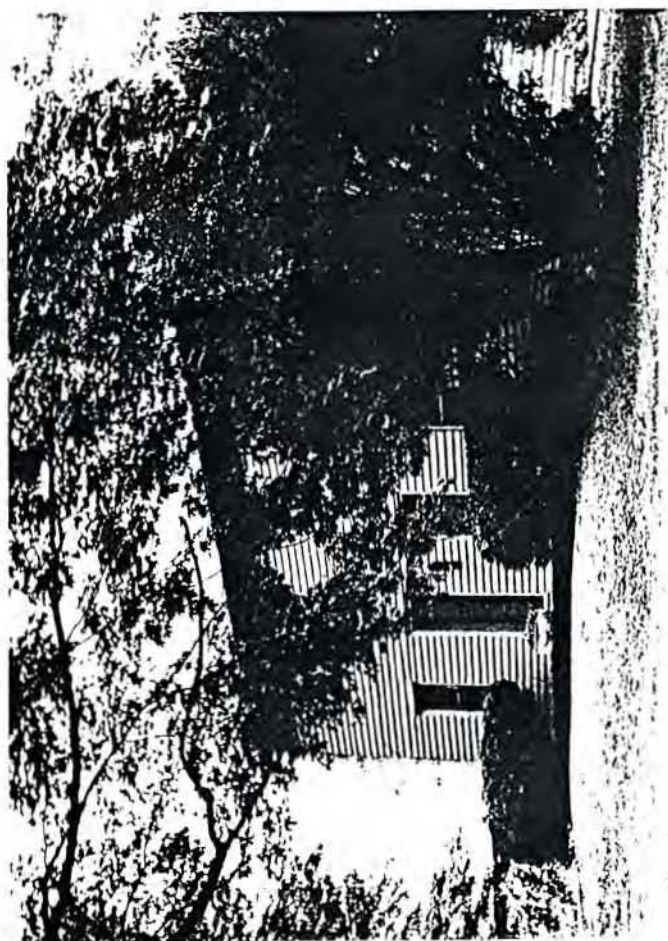




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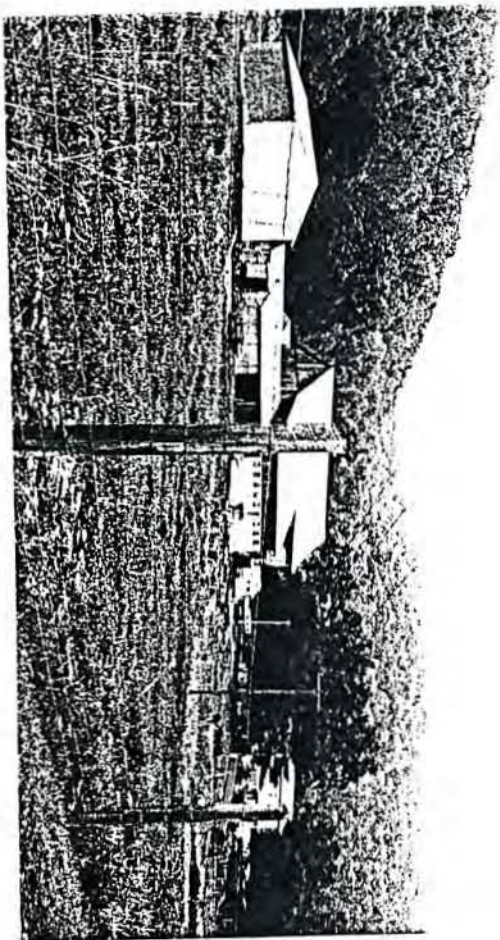


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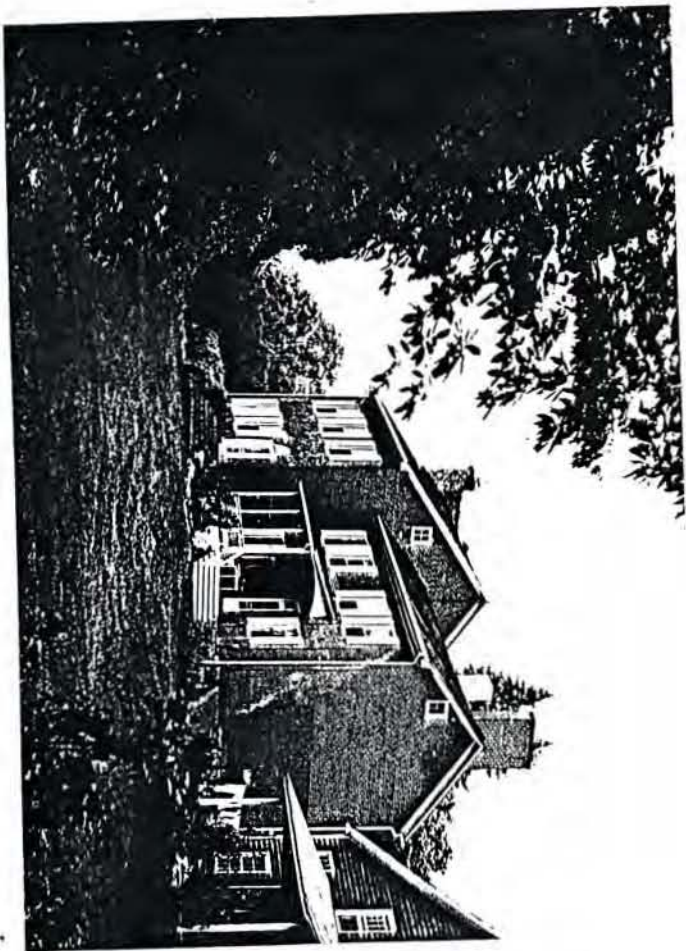


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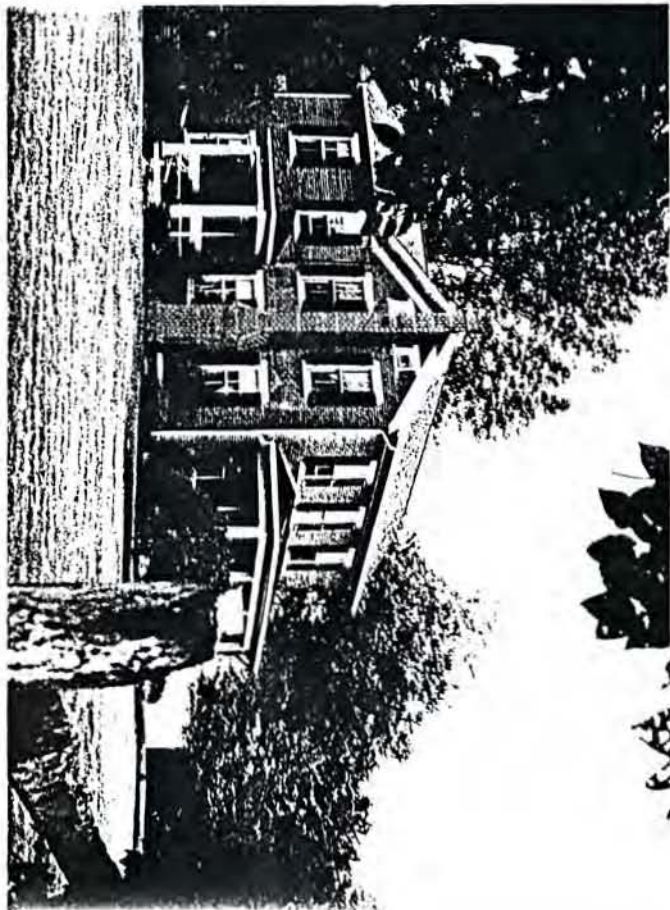




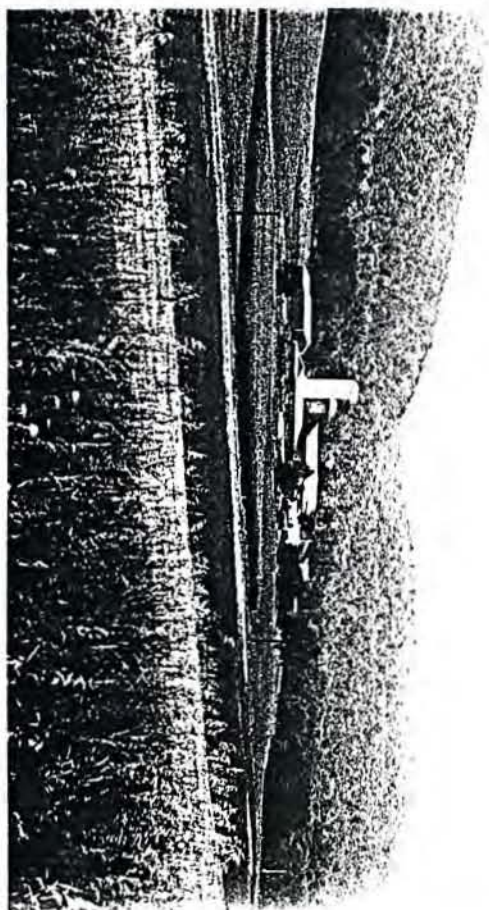
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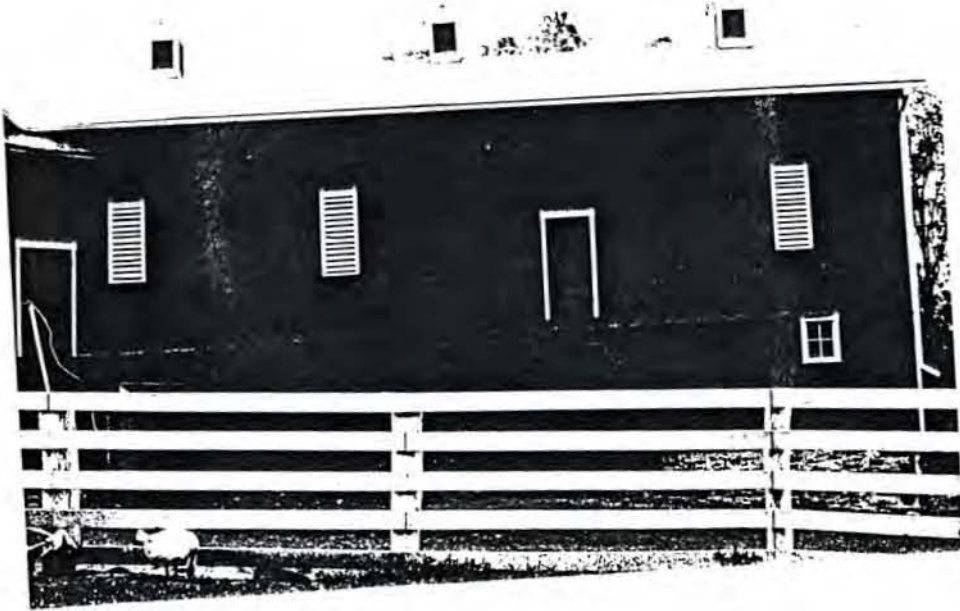
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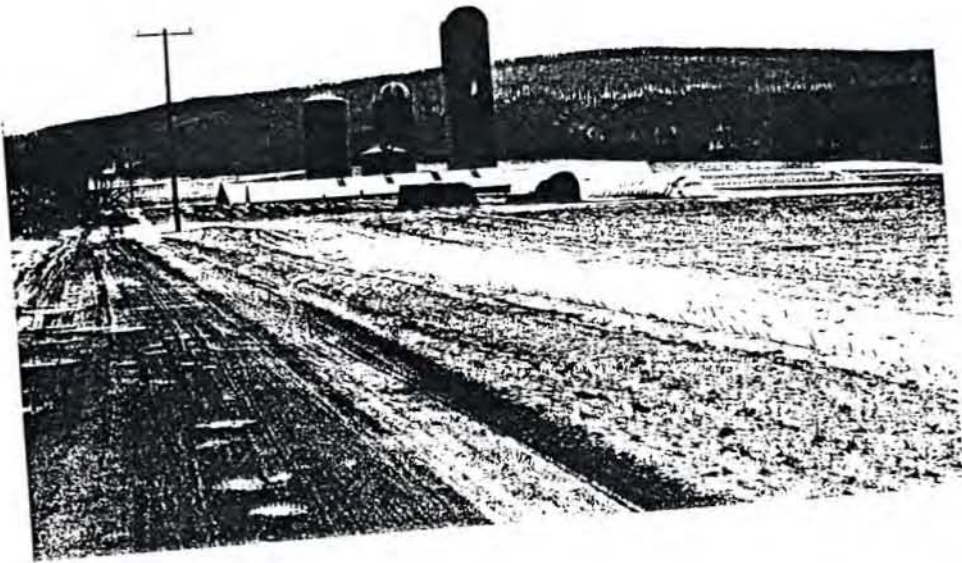
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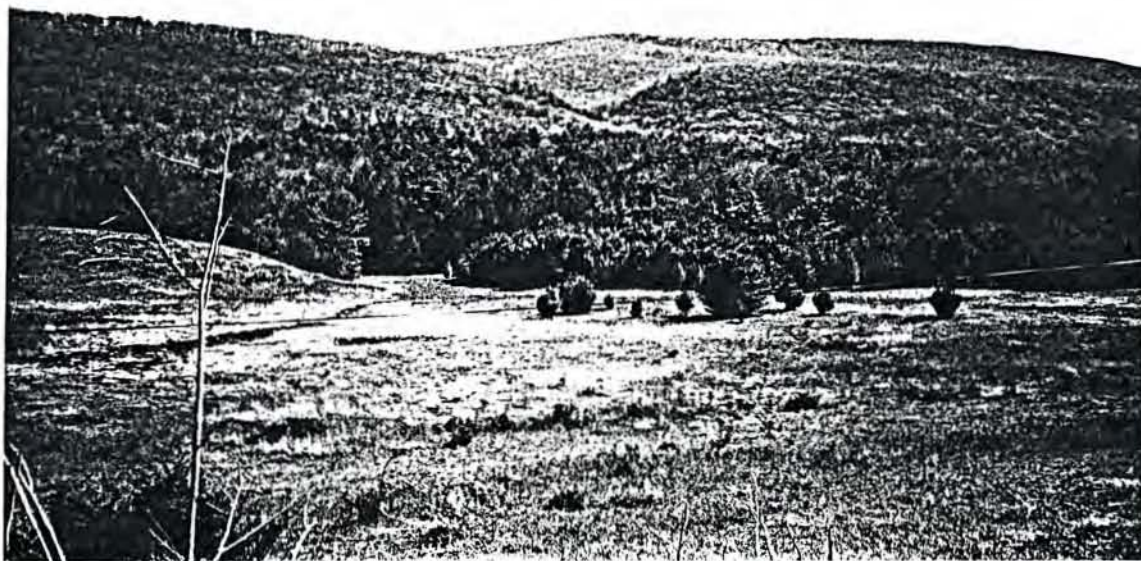
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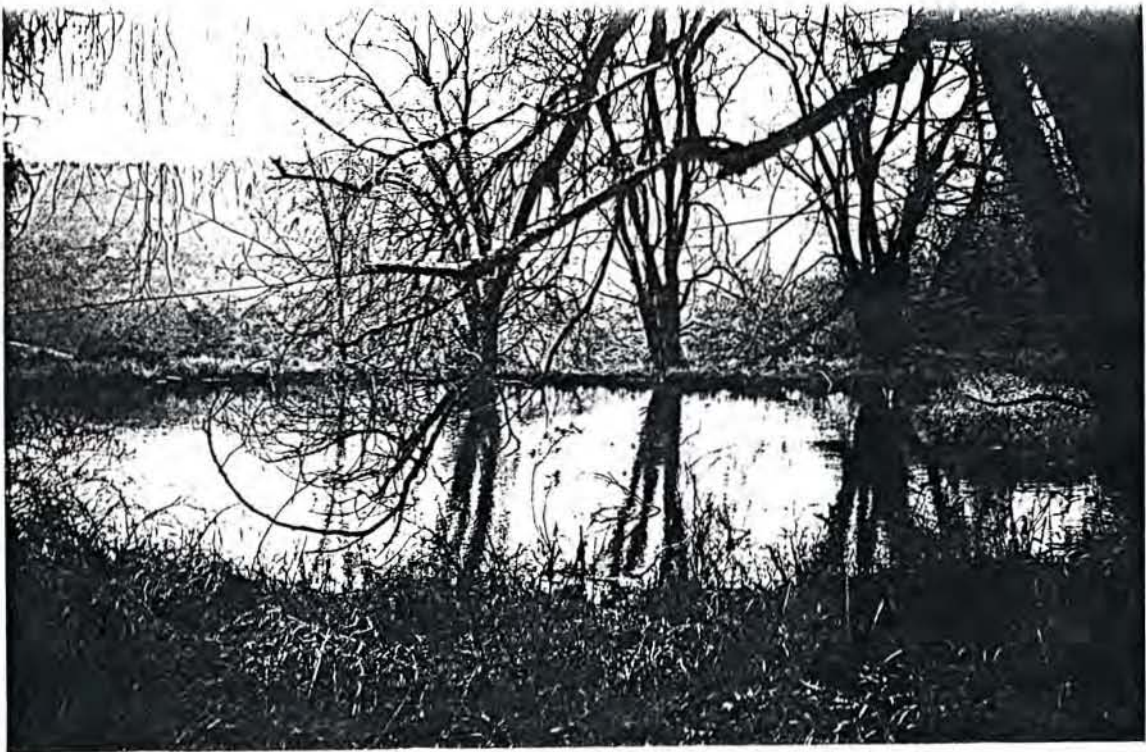


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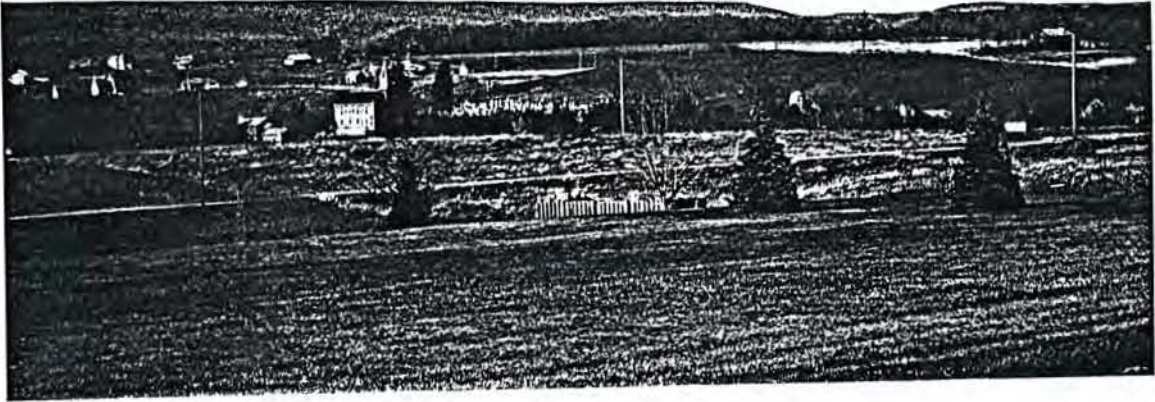
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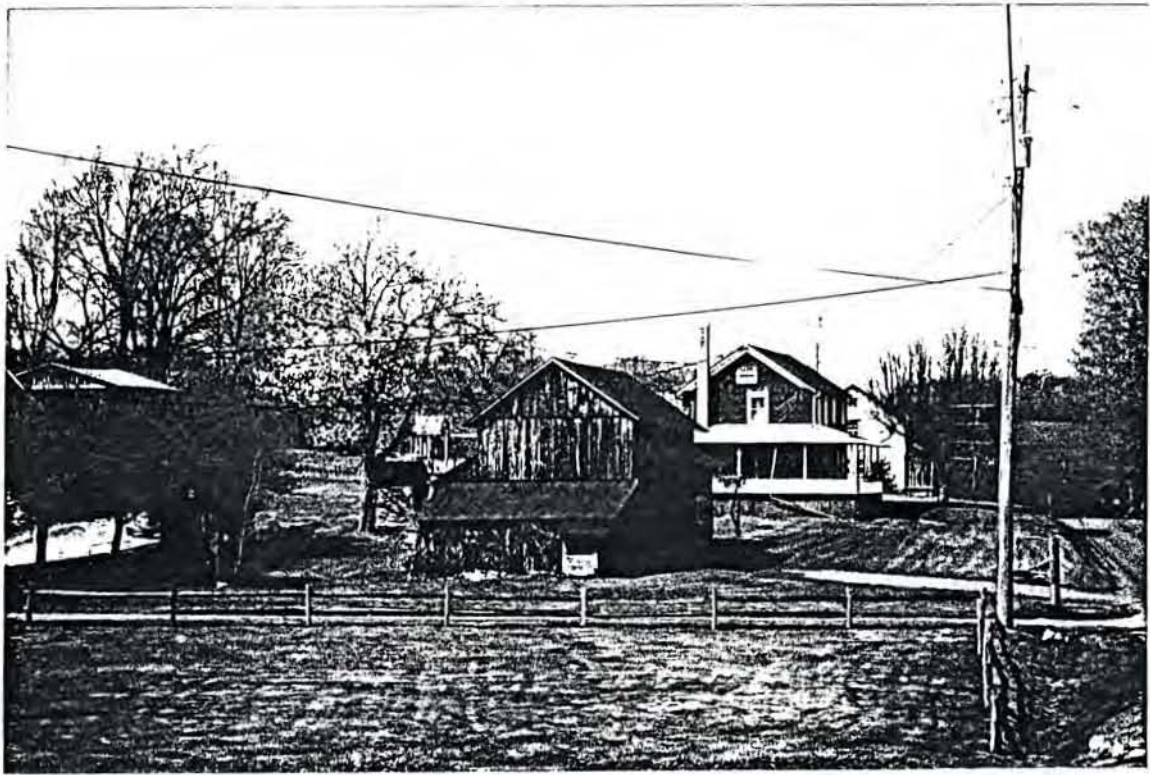




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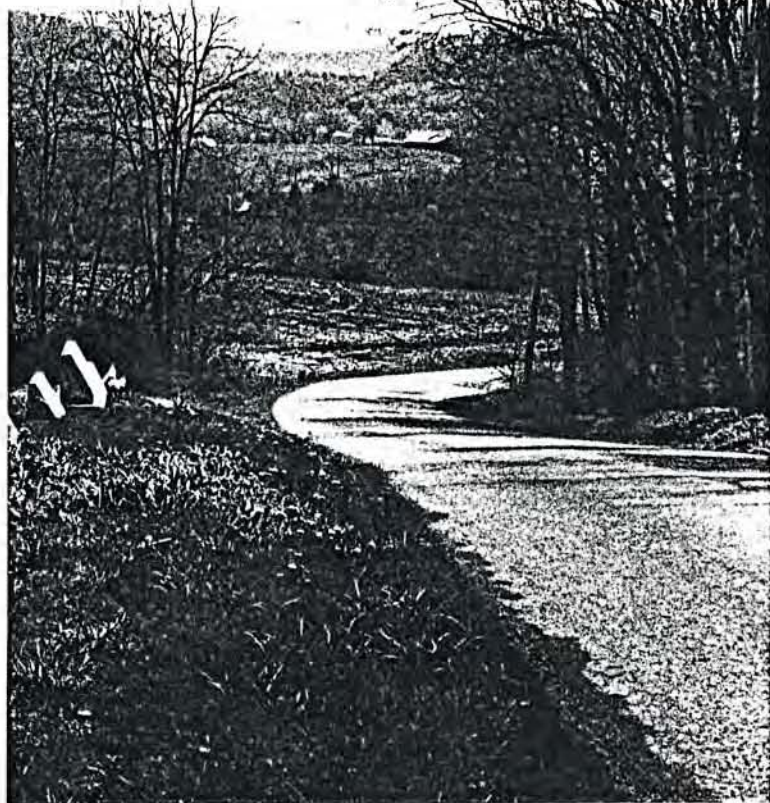


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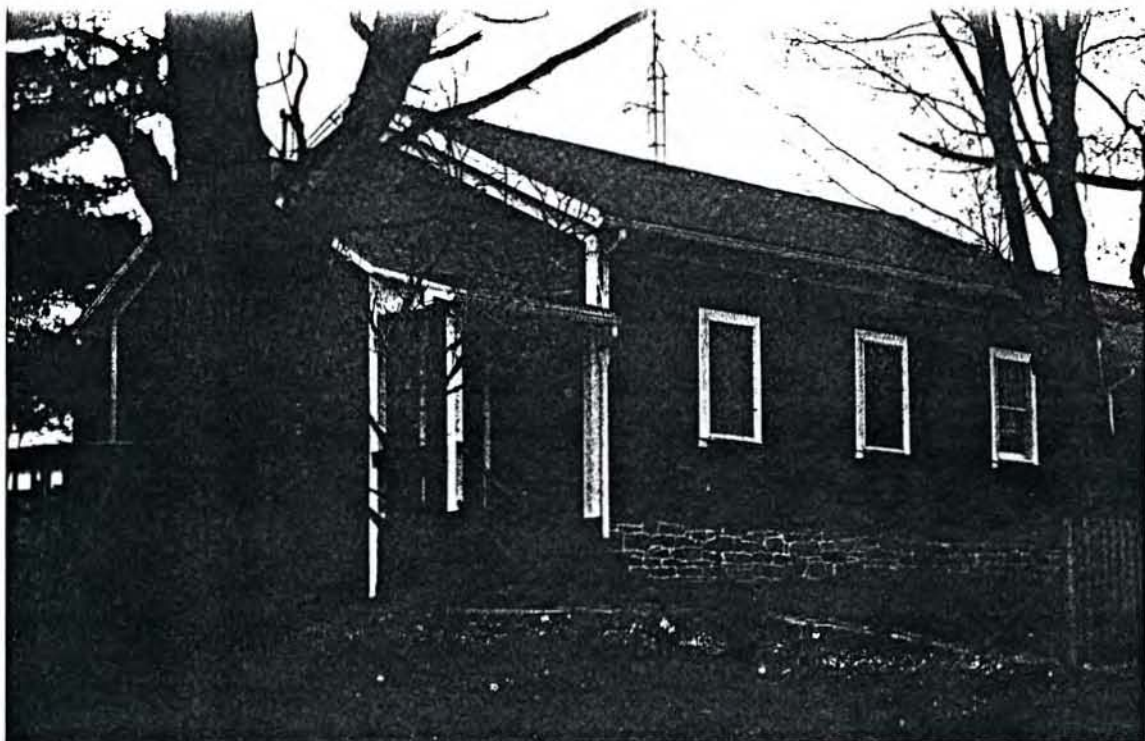


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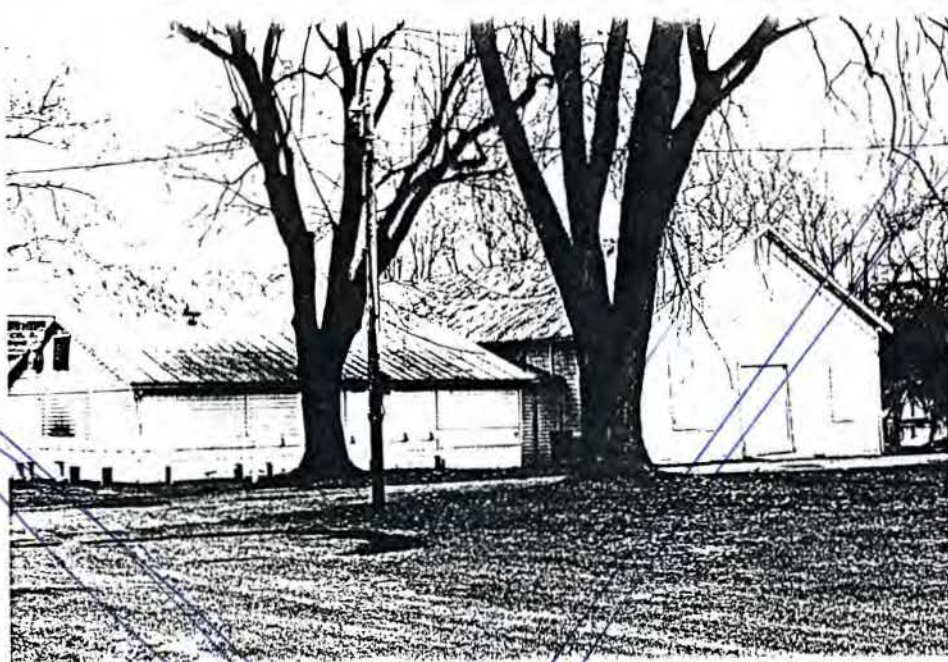




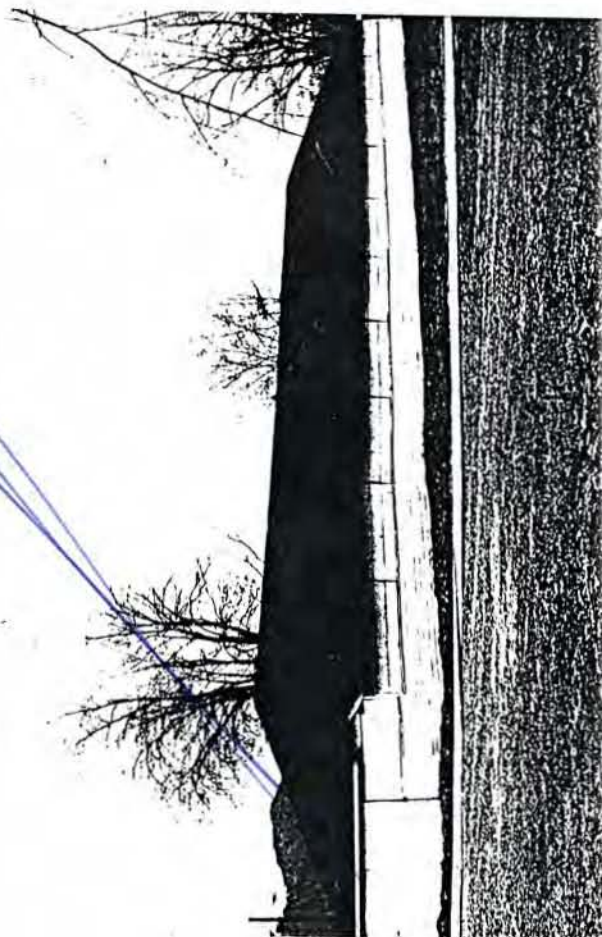
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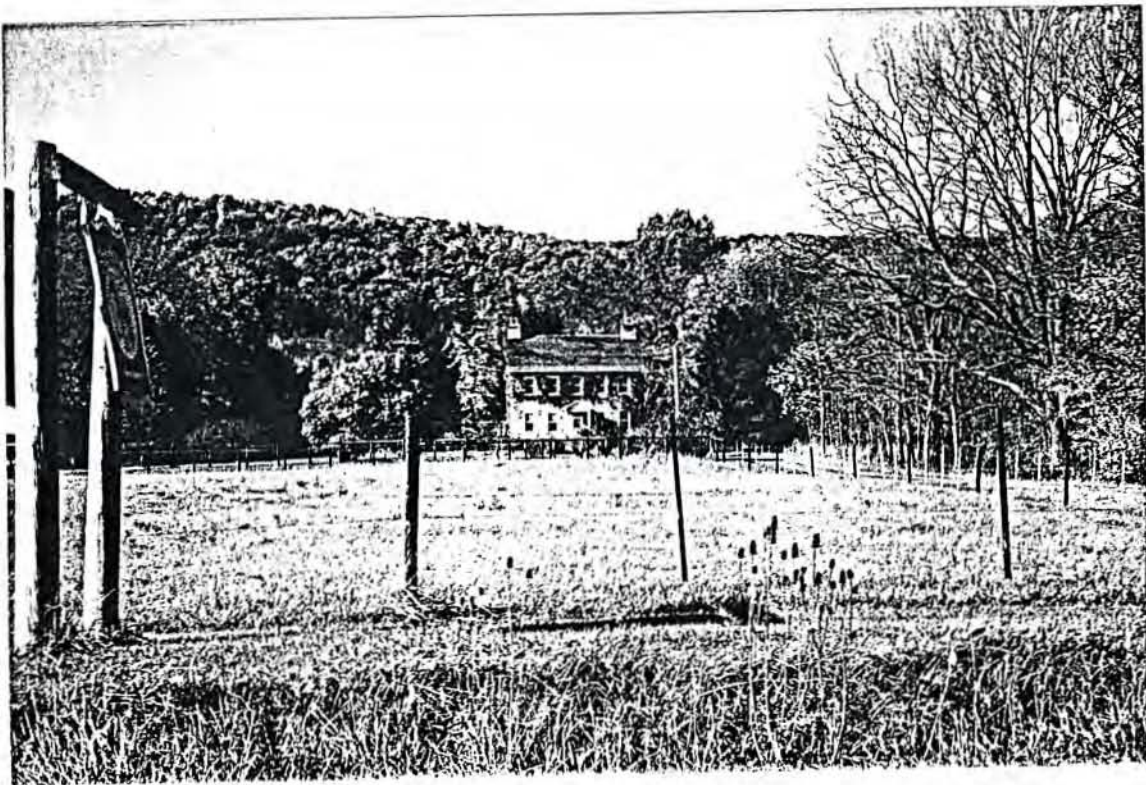


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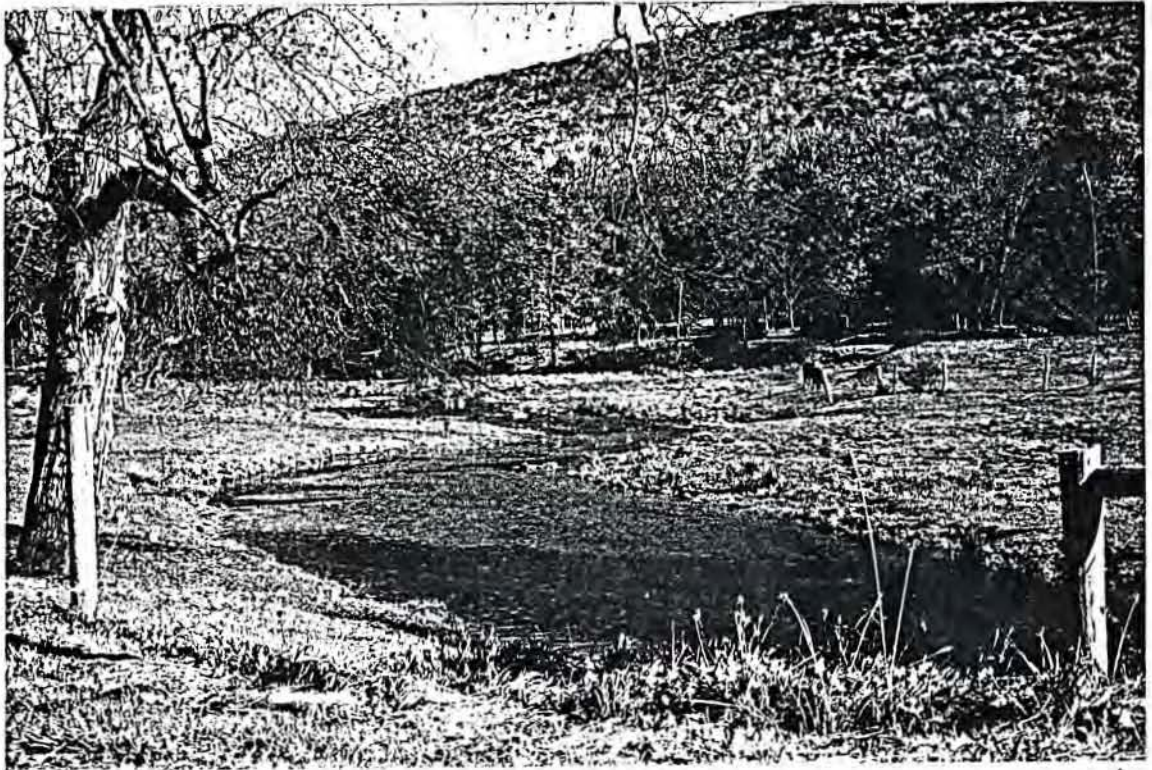




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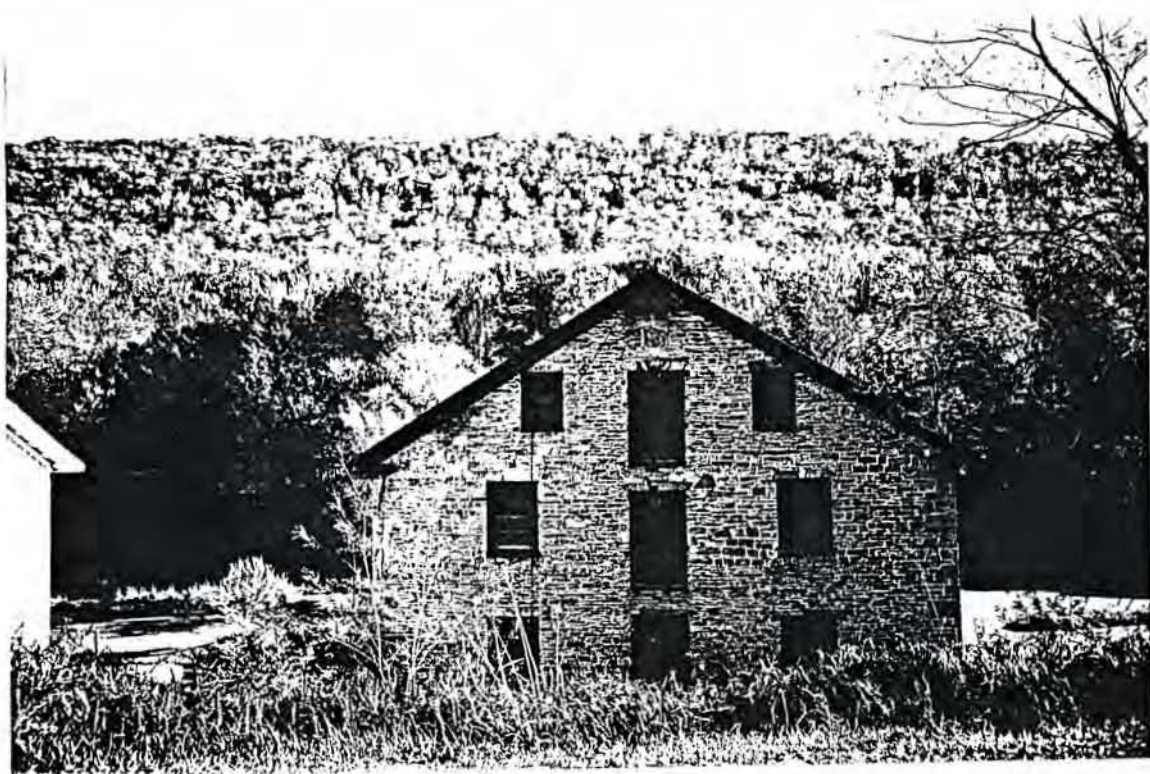


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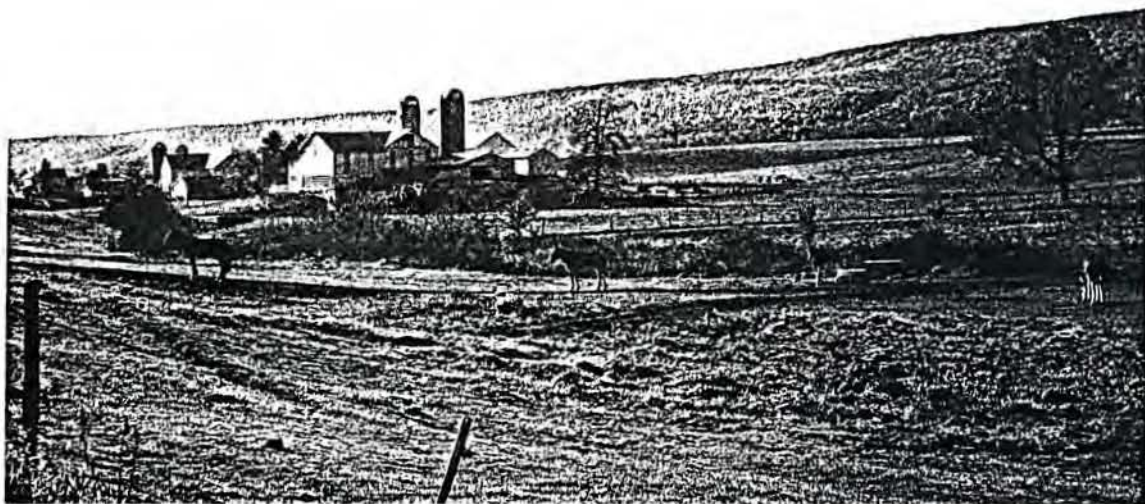




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### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: \* C. 1800 to \* C. 1940 Additions/Alterations Dates: \_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_

Basis for Dating: \_\_\_ \* Documentary \_\_\_ \* Physical

Explain: Dating based on: Architectural features/ construction methods, deed, tax and other records.

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. German 2. Scots-Irish  
Associated Individuals: 1. Potter, J 2. Miles, S  
Associated Events: 1. Early settlement 2. Agriculture  
Architects/Engineers: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Builders: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

List attached

### PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

Centre County Historic Sites Survey - 1979-1989

### EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No Context(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Contributes to Potential District \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No District Name/Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain:

### THREATS

Threats: 2 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other

Explain: Highway Study Area and Surrounding Impact

### SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: J. Melander, S. McMurray, B. Alexander Date: 2/28/02  
B. Ricker

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: Centre County Historical Society Telephone: (814) 234-4779

Street and No.: 1001 E. College Ave.

City, State: State College, PA Zip Code: 16801

Additional Survey Documentation: Pomeroy Atlas of Centre County, 1874

Associated Survey Codes: \_\_\_\_\_



**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM — DATA SHEET**  
 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

89B

**IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION**

Survey Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Parcel/Other No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 County: 1. Centre 0 2 7 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Municipality: 1. Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, Potter & parts of Harris, College  
 Address: Nittany Mt-County Line-Tussey/Seven Mts-Lemont  
 Historic Name: Penns Valley  
 Other Name: Penns/Brush Valley  
 Owner Name/Address: Multiple  
 Owner Category: \* Private \* Public-local \* Public-state \_\_\_\_\_ Public-federal  
 Resource Category: \_\_\_\_\_ Building \* District \_\_\_\_\_ Site \_\_\_\_\_ Structure \_\_\_\_\_ Object  
 Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 1200  
 USGS Quad: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 UTM A. \_\_\_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_\_  
 References: B. \_\_\_\_\_ D. \_\_\_\_\_

**HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS**

Historic Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single dwelling</u>	0 1 A
B. <u>Agricultural/subsistence</u>	<u>Agricultural field</u>	0 9 C
C. <u>Transportation</u>	<u>Road- related</u>	0 16 D
D. <u>Other</u>	<u>Contiguous landscape</u>	9 9 X

Particular Type: A. farm houses  
 B. barns  
 C. highways - early roads  
 D. contiguous landscape - remains of landscape as was 200-250 years ago

Current Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single dwelling</u>	0 1 A
B. <u>Agricultural/ subsistence</u>	<u>Animal facility</u>	0 9- D
C. <u>Landscape</u>	<u>Valleys - mountains</u>	0 15 E
D. <u>Transportation</u>	<u>Road related</u>	0 16 D

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification: A. <u>Georgian</u>	1 1
B. <u>No style</u> 0 1	C. <u>Gothic revival</u> 3 2
D. _____	Other: <u>PA 4/4</u> 8 0
Exterior Materials: Foundation <u>Stone</u>	4 3 Roof <u>Asphalt</u> 6 3
Walls <u>Weatherboard</u>	2 1 Walls <u>Stone</u> 4 0
Other <u>Brick</u>	3 0 Other <u>Log</u> 2 3
Structural System: 1. <u>Timber - Light frame</u>	1 4 2. <u>Masonry</u> 2 0
Wid: <u>5 bays</u> E Depth <u>2 rooms</u>	B. Stories/Height <u>2-2.5 story</u> B.

Survey Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Parcel/Other No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
County: Centre Municipality: Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, Potter  
Address: Nittany Mt-County Line-Tussey/Seven Mts-Lemont  
Historic/Other Name: Penns Valley

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

**Summary**

The natural context of the Ridge and Valley landscape played a significant role in the cultural development of Penns Valley and Brush Valley, Centre County, Pennsylvania. Early paths and later roads were located along the fertile limestone valley floor, or through ridges cut by gaps. Fast moving streams or underground fed springs provided the water resources needed for the settlement of crossroad communities. And the agricultural landscape of the valley was, and still is, defined by the vertical edges provided by the forested mountains.

A great deal of the proposed district's historical vernacular landscape fabric is still intact within its natural context. Agricultural patterns still persist and are visible on the landscape — farms delineated by historic hedgerows; crop lands and open fields framed by old roads; and the views and vistas from the valley and the ridges that reflect nineteenth and early twentieth century features. While farms may have changed in their operations over the last two hundred years, they have retained their visual property characteristics — farmsteads can still be identified; their overall spatial pattern perpetuates the area's historic character.

**Location**

The proposed Penns Valley/Brush Valley Rural Historic District identified in this resource survey is located within the boundaries of five Centre County, Pennsylvania Townships — Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, and Potter, and portions of two others, College and Harris — in a Ridge and Valley rural farmland setting east and slightly south of the Borough of State College.

District boundaries have been determined by the natural features of the Nittany Mountain ridge to the north, the parallel Tussey and Seven Mountains ridges to the south, and the closing-in of the mountain ridges at the eastern end of the two valleys, at the Union/Centre County line. The western edge extends to the National Register village of Lemont, where Penns Valley meets Nittany Valley at the base of Mount Nittany, a community once called the End of the Mountain "... an important point in the early days of the county, being on the trail leading from the settlements on the West Branch and Bald Eagle to those in Penns Valley and being at the junction of the two valleys" (J.B. Linn, 1883). The boundary then links the western Penns Valley villages of Oak Hall and Boalsburg (both on the National Register) with the proposed district.

**Physical Land Features**

The relatively broad limestone and narrower shale valleys of Penn/Brush Valley's Ridge and Valley terrain are enclosed by sandstone mountain ridges rising fairly steeply a few hundred feet high from the valley floor. Midway through Penns Valley, Brush Mountain and Egg Hill stretch from east to west, creating two smaller valley areas within the proposed district. The limestone valley to their north, called Brush Valley, is relatively flat and linear, approximately a mile wide and running parallel to the mountains on either side. To the south, Penns Valley, also enclosed by mountain ridges, is shorter and broader with a more rolling, and hilly terrain.

The east-west ridges are occasionally broken by gaps cutting across their grain, where swift-moving spring-fed creeks and runoff from the mountains join larger above-ground streams in both the Spring Creek and Penns Creek Watersheds. Or they move to an underground water network of streams through the bedrock into sinkholes, caves, or caverns. Some air-filled caves, Penns Cave and Woodward Cave are two of the largest and used commercially, have formed at shallow depths, but most are deeper and often are filled with limestone breakdowns and silt from flooding.



## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION – 2

### Spring Creek and Penns Creek Watersheds

The Penns/Brush Valley proposed district is part of two watersheds — Spring Creek, flowing west and north to Bald Eagle Creek; and Penns Creek, moving east to the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Spring Creek has as part of its easternmost headwaters, Cedar Run Spring near Linden Hall and another headwaters spring west of Tusseyville. They are joined along the way by Mackey Run and other tributaries, and then by larger runs, that merge with Spring Creek west of Lemont in the Nittany Valley. Penns Creek emerges at Penns Cave, already a substantial stream as it comes out of the ground. At Spring Mills, originally called Rising Spring, it is joined by Sinking Creek and several other sizeable springs. Elk Creek crosses from Brush into Penns Valley through the Millheim Narrows, and then follows the length of the valley along First Mountain. At Coburn, historically called The Forks, Penns Creek receives the combined flow of Elk and Pine Creeks and their tributaries as it heads eastward.

Spring, Elk and Pine Creeks have been identified by PA's Department of Environmental Protection as Class A Wild Trout streams; Penns Creek, the state's longest limestone stream, has been classified as a High Quality Cold Water stream.

### Natural Heritage Inventory

The proposed district is literally speckled with sites that have been identified in *The Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory*. Approximately fifty of them have been highlighted as being exemplary natural areas, habitats for species of special concern, significant natural communities, or are generally recognized as important for open space, recreation, and as wildlife habitat. A few of the mountain examples: Bear Meadows Natural Area is a high mountain bog that has been designated a National Natural Landmark; the Detweiler Run Natural Area has what is considered to be a virgin stand of hemlock and white pine, some of which are 36 inches in diameter; and also within the Thickhead Mountain Wild Area, Detweiler Run is classified as a Priority 1 "C" Scenic River.

### The Great Plains/Potters Plains

The Scull Map of 1770 identified an area in the valley south of Nittany Mountain as "The Plains." And when Reverend Philip Vickers Fithian visited the area in August of 1775 he described it this way:

*... In this Valley [Penns Valley] are large open Plains, cleared either by the Indians, or by accidental Fire, hundreds of Acres covered with fine grass, mixed with small Weeds and great Variety of Flowers. ...*

A small remnant of a relic limestone prairie community can still be located and identified. A more complete plant inventory of the Penns Creek Watershed is currently underway, funded by the Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener program.

### Cultural Landscape Features

#### Penns/Brush Valley — An Identified Place

*... I hereby certify that the Valley at the heads of Penns and Bald Eagle Creeks on the South side of the Nittany Mountain, commonly known by the Name of Penns Valley ... by the Valley I mean the Center of the Valley ... [And] Further that I have been in a part of the Brushey Valley, ... which lies on the south side of Nittany Montain, and cannot strictly speaking be considered as a Distinct Valley from Penns Valley, part of it communicating with Penns Valley and part separated by a Ridge, which might be said without any Impropriety to rest in the middle of the great or Penns Valley, ...*

James Potter – August 17, 1773

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION — 3

When, in the last half of the eighteenth century, members of the Penn family set aside their proprietary manors — the Manors of Nottingham and Succoth; when James Potter discovered his valley 'empire' while viewing it from Mount Nittany; when Samuel Miles and Reuben Haines established the area's first roads (now routes 192 and 45), and Aaron Levy the first town and called it Aaronsburg; and when Andrew Gregg and others developed their plantation holdings, these southeastern Pennsylvania entrepreneurs recognized the agricultural potential of Penns/Brush Valley in what became the eastern portion of Centre County. Philadelphia merchant Thomas Cope, while visiting his Penns Valley "wild lands" in 1812, noted: "... well cultivated rich, limestone soil. I never saw more beautiful wheat." "... timber land for the valleys and [an] abundance of good water. There are several streams large enough for mills."

Permanent settlement did not occur until after the ending of Indian uprisings and the Great Runaway of 1776. But within the next decade and for more than 200 years agriculture has been Penns/Brush Valley's principal activity.

### Settlement Patterns

The historic character and appearance of the proposed district is represented by a broad pattern of historic farming-related resources and features in the fertile limestone valleys, "one of the richest and most beautiful valleys of Pennsylvania." (Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society, 1863) They include croplands and open fields framed by old roads, trees stands and hedgerows; and nineteenth and early twentieth century farmsteads, some of them connected to tenant properties by farm lanes. The mountains are essential land features that define and reinforce the historic agricultural characteristics and appearances of the valleys, providing a sense of cohesiveness to the rural character. Other old farmsteads, some of them still in operation, were located in high mountain valleys. Traces of logging, charcoal making, and limestone quarrying also are evident and are related to the county's significant nineteenth century ironmaking industry located in Nittany Valley along Spring Creek. In the early twentieth century many of the high valley farms and industrial locations were converted into recreational uses as hunting and fishing facilities.

The proposed district also includes former small market towns and post villages (i.e., Aaronsburg, Rebersburg, Coburn); and some of them were established as mill seat locations along fast-moving streams within the Penns Creek and Spring Creek Watersheds. Their names give evidence of their past roles: Centre Mill, Millheim, Poe Mills, Potters Mills, Red Mill, and Spring Mills are just a few examples.

The farms of Brush Valley are aligned with and have frontage on the straight main road, their fields have been planted to reflect the linear characteristics of the valley. Whereas, in Penns Valley with its more rolling topography, farms often have been tucked in amongst the hills, with steep wooded hillsides as their backdrop. Crop strips are more contoured, more swirling, resulting in a more irregular landscape patchwork. (#1 and 2)

Outstanding vistas abound in this proposed district — whether from the valley floor looking toward the wooded ridges of hardwood and conifers of Nittany Mountain, of Rothrock or Bald Eagle State Forest, or from the ridges or "winter roads" along the sides of the mountains that reveal expanses of hedge-rowed fields in the valleys below. (#3 and 4)

There are nearly 140 reported prehistoric sites in just the Harris-Potter Township portion of the study area. Further information is needed for the remainder of the proposed district.

There also are extensive archaeological remnants relating to the role Penns/Brush Valley has played in Centre County's development — traces of building foundations, old road and railroad beds, evidence of mill and mill races, to mention just a few.



## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION — 4

### Circulation

Many of the old circulation patterns are still intact and in use in the resource area, with their development as transportation routes closely related to the landscape configuration of the valleys. In some cases, these roads trace Native American paths and/or the earliest days of settlement. Three examples:

In 1771, Philadelphia land speculator Reuben Haines built the first road west of the Susquehanna River into central Pennsylvania. He extended it from the Sunbury-Lewisburg area through the Woodward Narrows to the westernmost point of his land at the confluence of Sinking Creek and Penns Creek, near what would become Spring Mills. This road provided a major means of access to the west, and particularly it allowed Haines to open his Great Springs tract to potential settlers. The road closely followed the earlier Iroquois' Karondinhah or Penns Creek path; it now closely parallels modern-day Route 45.

Brush Valley Road (part of it now Route 192) represents a second example. It follows the route of a road designed and built by Samuel Miles in 1794. "... viewers were appointed to lay out a road in Potter and Bald Eagle from the Centre Furnace, through what was commonly known as the Back Plains near Nittany Mountain, and on the south side thereof, to intersect the great road from the West Branch of the Susquehanna through Brush Valley to the line of Mifflin [now Union] County. This is the road through Linden Hall, Centre Hall, to Madisonburg, and its object was to enable Col. Miles' tenants and those to whom he sold lands to haul wood and the products of their farms to Centre Furnace. (Henry Meyer, 1883) Cut straight along the center of the valley, it is still remarkably intact and is, perhaps, the most scenic major road in Centre County.

The general location of Pennsylvania Route 144 was originally the route taken by Reverend Philip Fithian in 1775 when he traveled from Bald Eagle's Nest, now Milesburg, to General Potter's home at Potter's Fort, now Old Fort. Fithian continued his travels through the Seven Mountains to Lewistown, on this path, originally the Kishacoquillas Path, that later became the Lewistown - Bellefonte Turnpike.

### Rural Roads/Scenic Roads/Civic Landscape

Some of the tree-lined roads within the proposed district undoubtedly still reflect the efforts toward rural beautification that were in place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the Pennsylvania General Assembly of 1879 passed this legislation:

*Any person liable to road tax, who shall transplant to the side of the public highway, on his own premises, any fruit, shade trees or forest trees, of suitable size, shall be allowed . . . in abatement of his road tax, one dollar for every four trees set out.*

And later at the urging of farmers, rural dirt township roads were paved over during Governor Gifford Pinchot's term in office in the early 1930s to "Take the farmers out of the mud". But for the most part, the paved roads kept their narrow and sometimes curving alignment. (#5)

A significant civic landscape still expressing its important historical function is the Grange Fairground, located in Centre Hall. And, there still is evidence of the awareness of the rural landscape beautification movement, promoted to farmers, rural communities, and schoolchildren in Centre Hall and other communities in the proposed district, as well as on a number of farmsteads.

### Railroads

The first of the railroads added to the valley came in 1877, when the Lewisburg and Tyrone Railroad Company connected Lewisburg with Spring Mills. James Coburn was a major player in the enterprise that offered both passenger and freight service, including the bringing of timber down from the surrounding mountains; the

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION — 5

community of The Forks was renamed Coburn to honor his entrepreneurial involvement. Coburn became the main distribution terminal for the Valley, and most products were then channeled by rail from that town to Lewisburg and points east. In 1885 the railroad was extended from Lewisburg to Lemont. (#6)

### **Railroads and Lumbering**

A second kind of rail line was established in the 1890s to reach large timber tracts in the surrounding mountains, and a brisk lumbering trade became the core industry of some communities. Linden Hall is a good example, and the mountain community of Poe Mills in Penn Township is another. Poe Mills, now nearly forgotten, once had a population of more than 300 and provided employees with houses, stores, and a post office.

To replenish the forests, two CCC camps were located in the proposed district in the 1930s. Penn Roosevelt serves as a state park; Colyer, now privately owned, still has architectural and landscape features relating to its past. (#7 and 8)

### **Hedgerows/Lanes/Windbreaks/Fence Lines**

Historic hedgerows and other delineation's are still visible in the proposed district. Along Route 192 east of Rebersburg, for example, some 200-year-old fencerows and lanes today still mark the boundaries between the original warrants established in the eighteenth century. And in another example, trees and shrubs identified on Rimmey Road at the Leonard Rhone farmstead in Potter Township include: American elm (30' trunk), Norway and sugar maple, shagbark and pignut hickory (30' trunk), black walnut, hawthorn, gray dogwood, Russian olive, honeysuckle, raspberry, and Virginia creeper. Examples of windbreaks, using locust trees or conifers, are prevalent in the area of the proposed district. And while materials and patterns for fencing have changed, there still is evidence of some old fences – including stone. (#9 – 12)

### **Woodlots**

The prevalence of still existing woodlots reinforces S.W. Fletcher's observations in *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life* that, "Almost every farm had a woodlot . . . Historically, they were the chief supply of fuel, building materials, and fencing; sheltered game and sometimes produced maple syrup and nuts. . . . [and] a continuing source of income for sale of sawn logs." In the 1880s *The Centre Reporter* had several references regarding a lumber market available to local farmers, including requests for "white oak, rock oak, and chestnut" for railroad ties, or "fine walnut logs . . . shipped to England."

### **Old Orchards – Residential Trees**

When Samuel Miles offered tracts of land in Brush Valley in 1792, he included in the terms of his lease that settlers should "plant within four years an orchard of apple trees containing at least 100 trees." While it is not likely that any of those trees have survived, remnants of an orchard planted 100 years later by Leonard Rhone, Master of the Grange, are still in place and providing apples each fall at Rhone's Potter Township farm home, Rhoneymead. Other trees planted by the Rhones at the farmhouse in the 1890s that are still in place include a Norway maple, the largest recorded in Centre County; a larch; horse chestnut; hemlock; and a Norway spruce, a favorite of many farm families in the area.



## Notes

1. A comparison of the number of farms located in five of the proposed district townships in 1850 and in 2001 indicates that farms are smaller but in greater number. It provides strong evidence that the agricultural role played by this eastern section of Centre County continues.

<b><u>Number of Farms:</u></b>	<b><u>1850</u></b>	<b><u>2001*</u></b>
Potter Township	124	238
Haines and Penn	121	224: Haines:147; Penn: 77
Miles	64	119
Gregg	93	148

\* Farm Service Agency Center, Clinton/Centre County

2. Since the Penn/Brush Valley proposed district includes only portions of College and Harris Townships, those comparative farm numbers were not included.

3. At least two-thirds of Potter Township land is still in agriculture/open space despite non-contributing development along Route 322 and 45.

## Inventory

### **Fergus Potter Farmstead (Harris Township) Photos: # 13-17**

Fergus Potter, a cousin of Penns Valley discoverer General James Potter, acquired this farm in 1793 from the Potter holdings. He built a log dwelling, no longer standing, and began to farm this slightly rolling land along the Brush Valley Road, at what is now the Harris-Potter Township line. A spring on the property serves as the headwaters to Mackey Run which, in turn, joins Cedar Run near Linden Hall and eventually Spring Creek near Lemont.

Fergus Potter's son, Joshua, took over the property in the 1860s and built a new house, barn, and a collection of outbuildings. Components of this still very much intact mid-nineteenth century farm complex include:

- A two-story, five-bay Georgian house and back ell, built of plank with clapboard siding, set back from the road, down a farm lane. Its central entranceway has a paneled door, sidelights, and transom; the windows are 6/6 with paneled shutters on the first floor and louvered ones on the second. Corner pilasters, eave returns, and an open front porch with gingerbread trim provide extra detail.
- A three-gable Pennsylvania bank barn with ell, located to the west of the house and just beyond the spring/run. Built on a stone foundation, it has vertical siding and louvered openings; huge beams extend across and support this large barn. A corn crib and machine shed are to the north, and three more small buildings, including a woodshed and privy are behind and to the east of the house.
- A woodlot and hedgerows define the field boundaries; Nittany Mountain serves as a visual backdrop in the distance to the north. Willows and other trees line the farm lane to Brush Valley Road; two large trees, a Norway spruce and a maple, and stump remnants of other old trees, offer shade and evidence of past plantings to the yard.
- The vista from this farm is outstanding, surrounded by cultivated fields in all directions.

This 182 acre farm has been in the Potter family for more than 200 years and is now owned by Taylor Potter, Fergus Potter's great, great grandson. It has been designated both as a Century Farm, and for inclusion in Centre County's Agricultural Easement program.

### **Van Tries Tenant House (Harris Township) #18-21**

The Van Tries property is located down a farm lane on the south side of Upper Brush Valley Road, near the Harris/Potter Township line. It looks out over extensive croplands and Tussey Mountain to the south.

Not all property owners lived near their tenant houses. The Van Tries were large landowners who resided in Bellefonte. Susan Van Tries, a relative of James Potter, may have been the inheritor of these Potter lands. Not all tenant houses were small log or plank structures. This two-story, three bay frame with a two story ell, has extra detailing of a center roof gable, over-window lintels, eave returns, and a small Victorian-style porch.

The barn, silo, and other agricultural-related buildings on this 103 acre working farm date from the twentieth century. The farm has been included in Centre County's agricultural security program.

In addition to good farmland, the Van Tries owned large woodlots, with substantial amounts of timber sold for railroad building. The property also contained an iron ore bank, according to the Pomeroy *Atlas* of 1874. There are several newspaper references to the Van Tries farm during the 1880s, including information on the selling of a variety of mechanized pieces of farm equipment by the property's tenant farmers.

### **Ashton Heath (Harris Township) #22-24**

Ashton Heath, now a 41 acre farm, is located on Cedar Run Road, just west of the road's intersection with Route 45 in Harris Township. Cedar Spring, adjacent to the intersection, serves as the headwaters of Cedar Run — and Spring Creek. The house faces what was once known as the Earlostown Road (now Route 45).

George Aston held the original warrant for this farm of 258 acres, probably acting as an agent for General James Potter in his acquisition of Penns Valley land. The two-story, five bay brick Georgian house was built on a squared stone foundation. It has chimneys in the gabled ends, a back ell, and dates from c. 1816. Six-over-six windows with paneled shutters are located on either side of a central entranceway; five evenly spaced windows



with louvered shutters are above them on the second floor. This early house has a combination of brickwork — Flemish bond for the front, and common bond for the sides and rear.

A bank barn and two small sheds are located behind the house, with the barn facing southeast toward the stream. A large Norway spruce is to the left of the front door, reflecting a favorite tree choice of area farm families as they beautified their properties at the turn of the century.

The property adjacent to Ashton Heath along Cedar Run Road served as its tenant farm. The tenant house is a c. 1820 simple three bay log, with a two-story frame addition. The large bank barn with an ell and two silos is similar in size and design to barns located on many of the large farm properties in the valley. Both of these properties are in an agricultural security program.

Nearby across Route 45 is the Cedar Creek Cemetery. Originally part of the Catherine Potter warrant, General James Potter donated a two acre parcel for the location of a church and cemetery. The Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church was never built, but while many of the stones have been removed from this early cemetery, it is believed to be the burial location of James Potter's second wife, Mary Chambers Potter, who died in 1791 or 1792, along with other early settlers including members of the King and the Jack families.

#### **G.W. Campbell Farm (Harris Township) #25-27**

The G.W. Campbell farm and tenant house is located on the south side of Cedar Run Road, to the west of the village of Linden Hall. Campbell was an active valley farmer and involved in the development of the Grange. While the main house is set back and down a winding lane, the tenant house and a small outbuilding are just off the road. Both are relatively simple in style. The two story main house is of plank construction in a three bay vernacular style. In contrast to the rest of the house, however, the entryway is in the Greek Revival style with a pediment and doric pilasters surrounding an intricate fanlight and paneled door. A shed roofed porch spans the front of the house. The tenant house, also two story and three bay, has a two story ell and a hipped roof porch. The farm complex is a large one and includes two barns, three silos, and a full complement of accessory buildings. Both houses face south; the barns face southeast. The backdrop for this 81 acre rural property is Nittany Mountain, rising just at the edge of the farm field. The two properties continue to be under a single owner; the farm is in Centre County's agricultural security program.

## **Manor of Nottingham (Potter Township)**

### **• Stanford House #33-34**

The Penn family proprietary holdings of 1035 acres in Potter Township, the Manor of Nottingham, were surveyed in 1766; settlement began early. According to tax assessment records, the Jacob Stanford family built a log house west of Old Fort, along present day Rimmey Road, in the 1770s. However, on May 9, 1778, the Standfords were massacred in the first of several attacks on Penns Valley settlers by Indians angered by the colonists' encroachment on their hunting lands. Two months later, in what was called the "Great Runaway", valley settlers fled to safety over the Seven Mountains to the south. They did not return for nearly a decade.

The existing log house on the Stanford property is probably not the original dwelling, but it does represent an example of early v-notched log construction used by frontier settlers. Symmetrical, two stories, three bays, and with a two story ell, the Stanford house and its story represent a local link with the area's past. A bank barn, corn crib, poultry house, milk house, and implement shed are nearby across the road.

### **• Rhoneymeade #35-38**

South on Rimmey Road is Leonard Rhone's home, Rhoneymeade, on land first settled by his grandfather in 1794. Rhone, founder and master of the Pennsylvania Grange and a Pennsylvania State College trustee, built his five bay Georgian brick house in 1853. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property also includes a large dairy barn and a full complement of outbuildings. The property contains a large collection of trees and other vegetation planted by Rhone and his father, or by its current owner. All 148 acres have been placed in a permanent agricultural easement.

### **• George M. Boal Farm #39-42**

The George M. Boal farm, whose land was also part of the Penn family's Manor of Nottingham, is located on Route 45 west of Centre Hall in Potter Township. The house is to the right of Rimmey Road, once called Blackhawk Road; the barn and other outbuildings are on the left. A portion of this 96 acre farm extends to the south side of Route 45, as well. Boal was a prominent farmer and active member of the Grange, the organization founded by his neighbor, Leonard Rhone. Rhone lived on the next farm north of Boal on Rimmey Road.

The house is believed to have been built by a Durst, probably its earliest owner. Members of the Durst family are credited with having built several nearby fine brick houses of the same style and time period in both Potter and Harris Townships. The house, c. 1850, is a two story, five bay, three-bricks-thick Georgian with a one story ell, and a noteworthy entryway fanlight, sidelights and paneled door. It is laid out in a four over four arrangement with a large central hall and a winding staircase to the attic. Interior chimneys are at each gabled end; windows are 6/6, and interior doors have been grained.

A brick summer kitchen, dating to c. 1850, burned in 1960. It has been rebuilt with the original bricks and walk-in fireplace in the east end are still in place.

There is a spring about 600 feet north of the house and the water still flows continuously into a concrete tank in the spring house attached to the main house. The overflow from this tank once was piped to the barnyard to water the animals, and to provide a watering place for travelers along the old Blackhawk Road that extended up and over Nittany Mountain to the north. The position of the road is believed to be unchanged from an early Indian trail called the Blackhawk Path, except where it has been relocated at the old Blackhawk limestone quarry, to allow for quarrying along the old route.

The PA bank barn west and south of the house is 40 x 80 feet in with two 40 foot hewn logs supporting the main barn flooring system. The framing was drilled and is pinned together with wooden pins. Decorative early iron hinges on the barn door reflect the availability to area



farmers of iron products from nearby forges. Other outbuildings include a machinery shed, hay storage, and corn crib, and a more modern small barn. A woodlot is west of the property. Both the house and the barn face south. An evergreen windbreak is located behind the house, and a group of walnut trees are at its eastern edge. Lilacs and other older trees and shrubs surround the property; two large Norway spruce flank either side of the front entrance. The current owners have placed this excellent example of a mid nineteenth century farmstead in the County's agricultural security program.

**Plum Grove/Samuel Houston Farm (Potter Township) #43-45**

Plum Grove, located on Manor Road near where it intersects with Decker Road in Potter Township, was the name given to this part of a nearly 1000 acre tract of land owned by James Houston at the time of his death in 1800. Houston left a widow and six children. Sixteen years later his oldest son, Samuel, took over the estate, made up of warrants that had been held by J. Houston, Benjamin Jones, William McKee, and Seth Matlack. By 1821 Samuel Houston had built a six-bay, limestone farmhouse near a spring on the property for himself and his mother, on what had been the Benjamin Jones tract.

There are two distinct three-bay sections to this ashlar cut stone house, with two paneled doors, and three 6/6 windows in each section. Interior chimneys are at each of the gabled ends. Historical documentation indicates that Samuel Houston and his mother, Catherine, each lived in one of the separate sections.

The property also consists of a large, three-cupola bank barn that faces south on the property, along with a shed, smoke house, and garage. The current owner has restored the house, barn, and remaining outbuildings, and owns 10 plus acres including the spring.

Two tenant farms across Route 192 were also part of this property. Now privately owned, the first was listed in the 1870 Pomeroy Atlas with the name John Emerick. It is an 1840s four-bay log house, with an accompanying log barn. The second, listed in the Atlas as "J.H. McCormick, occupant", is a five-bay plank or frame residence built about 1850, with an ell shaped bank barn. Both have a full complement of accessory farm buildings. Still visible is the road or lane that connected Samuel Houston's farm with his tenants.

**Alexander Johnston Property — Fort Johnston (Potter Township) #46-48**

Colonel Alexander Johnston, a very early settler, came to the area from New Jersey in the 1780s, undoubtedly to take advantage of his opportunity to claim land as a military officer. He began to acquire a substantial amount of land from James Potter, and by 1805 had built a house on one of his parcels, calling it Fort Johnston. The property is located south of Route 45 and west of Route 144, near the intersection of Goodhart and Airport Roads.

This stone house, built as a five-bay Georgian but not in a totally symmetrical way, suggests that it may have been constructed in two parts, beginning as a one-half Georgian with a side hall.

The stucco covering is probably over a fairly rough stone finish, an indication that stone masons were few and far between in this early period of settlement. Other house details include a two-story ell, 6/6 windows, a paneled door, and interior chimneys on each of the gabled ends. The house does not face the road that runs alongside the property, but rather, shielded in the back by a windbreak of large trees, looks out over the rolling valley below. The road separates the house from a large south-facing Pennsylvania bank barn. The current owners have restored the house and barn and have re-acquired nearly forty acres of Johnston's once large estate.

In 1801 Johnston became involved in the petitioning of two roads that would eventually connect Lewistown with Bellefonte and Milesburg, now nearby Route 144. And in 1805, he sold a portion of his land for a Presbyterian church and burial ground at Centre Hill. Sinking Creek Presbyterian Church disbanded in the late 1800s and the church building was torn down about 1900, but the one-acre walled cemetery is still evident. Early names associated with the cemetery include Boals, Greggs, Hustons, Irvins, Pattons, and Potters, including Judge James Potter, the son of the general. There are approximately 300 graves — the oldest is Judge John Barber's wife, Sarah, who died September 9, 1801; the most recent is Nancy Benner, who died in 1930.

**William Rishel Farm (Potter Township) #49-52**

A particularly good example of a large farm – tenant farm combination is the William Rishel property, just north of Route 322 and off Church Road near Colyer Lake. The two adjoining farms on this 195 acre property are still under one owner; 86 acres are in the County's agricultural security program. Their contiguousness, both in location and use, strongly support the cohesive quality of the Penns/Brush Valley proposed district.

The main house, down a farm lane from Cemetery Road, is a fashionable mid nineteenth century two story, five bay brick Georgian. It has a Greek Revival-style entranceway with a pediment over and iambic columns flanking a paneled door, and six-over-six windows with lintels. There is an attached summer kitchen with a walk-in fireplace. The property also includes a large bank barn in excellent condition, a machine shed, and a corn crib.

**Tenant house #53-55**

The tenant house can be reached by a private farm lane or directly from Route 322. It is a simple two story, three bay log structure, c. 1820, of board and batten exterior and a small front stoop with original trim. In addition to the c. 1860s bank barn, outbuildings include a summer kitchen, spring house, smoke house, corn crib, machinery shed, poultry house, and other equipment buildings. A hand pump and old fencing add to the details of this nineteenth century tenant farm. Both the main and the tenant house have a collection of large trees in the yard, particularly Norway spruce. There are hedgerows of locust and walnut, as well as evergreen windbreaks. While the tenant farm is close to route #322 and under restoration, it is very vulnerable to any planned highway widening project; the main farm is nestled behind it with open fields and Tussey Mountain in the distance.



## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:**

### **Summary**

The rural landscape in Penns Valley and Brush Valley, Centre County, PA is clearly related to important currents in the state's economic and social history. More specifically, agriculture in central PA -- and thus the rural landscape itself -- was initially shaped by the presence of local markets (first the iron industry, later by State College) and by the institution of share tenancy. From early on the local ironworks supplied important markets for beef, pork, feed grains, and hay. They also likely contributed to the high level of mechanization in the valleys. A substantial portion of farmers -- perhaps as many as thirty to fifty percent -- were actually tenants, farming on shares. By the mid-19th century a mixed grain-and-livestock economy had taken root, and this was the staple of agricultural production in the valleys well into the twentieth century. By the 1930s State College became a major local outlet, and its rural environs became part of Eastern urban milksheds. Tenancy, however, outlasted the iron era and persisted to the very end of the period of significance.

The significance of the extant historic rural landscape in these interconnected valleys is twofold: first, in the extent to which it conveys this agrarian past, and second in its high level of integrity. The overall pattern of farmstead location and composition clearly illustrates the important social-economic institution of farm tenancy: a ride along the main roads reveals clusters of farm buildings consisting of a "Big" house and related, but distinct, more modest tenant housing. The makeup of farmsteads themselves reflects the highly mechanized nature of farming here, especially in the period from about 1855-1950. For example, the "L" shaped barns accommodated threshing machinery, and ancillary buildings sheltered other machinery. Many standard Pennsylvania barns were also fitted with machine-shed extensions. These barns also indicate the predominance of the grain/livestock enterprise, since they were especially well suited to the shelter and feeding of beef animals. Only later did silos indicate the rise of dairying, and even today more farms report beef cattle than dairy animals. Finally, this essential continuity is also reflected in the strong persistence of historic field patterns, stone fencing, wood lots, windbreaks, plantings, and boundary lines.

This agrarian and landscape history falls into three periods.

### **I. EARLY DEVELOPMENT, c. 1790 to 1830:**

#### **Agriculture:**

Division of land occurred in the late 18th century and was accomplished by subdividing larger tracts belonging to speculators or large landholders. Samuel Miles, for example, sold or leased farms in what is now an entire township to Pennsylvania Germans from Dauphin, Lebanon, and Northumberland Counties. The section between Oak Hall and Centre Hall had a mixture of Anglo/British and Germanic settlers, with the Germanic element becoming more pronounced as you move eastward.

This period of agrarian development was characterized by small scale farming, dominated by the tasks of clearing and fencing. A system of farm family "competency" was built around products that could be both consumed on the farm and sold or exchanged. By this period in the wider economy, global markets were vigorously healthy, and domestic markets showed signs of their future importance. In Pennsylvania agriculture, the late 18th century was a period of reform and rebuilding. These developments affected even remote Centre County, as markets were important almost from the beginning. Thus it is important to think not of a transition from "subsistence" to "market" production, but rather to think about farm families as aiming for a "competency" -- a comfortable standard of living -- accomplished not through self-sufficiency (rarely achieved in any period of American history) but through production for both use and exchange.

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 2**

Corn, oats, potatoes, turnips, butter, and pork were locally consumed, either by the households that produced them or in barter exchange with nearby households. Landlord Andrew Gregg's accounts, for example, mention meat, potatoes, buckwheat, wool, maple sugar, and oats as products of the farms he oversaw. Maple sugar and wheat often served as local "currency." Livestock were one component in this system, but as yet there weren't elaborate accommodations for them. Most of these animals would run free most of the year, then they would be butchered when they were wanted for family consumption (or in the case of hogs for meat to smoke), or driven to the ironworks where they would be butchered on the spot. Indeed, the ironworks were an important local market; the 1832 McLane Report noted that the Centre County iron furnaces' human workers consumed significant amounts of pork and beef, while the mules that toiled on the iron plantations were fed grain and hay, and bedded on straw from local farms, either from the ironmasters' own tenanted farms, or from independent farms.

Other Brush Valley and Penns Valley farm products, usually those with high value in proportion to bulk, such as clover seed, reached more remote markets. Accounts such as landlord Andrew Gregg's indeed show whiskey, flaxseed, and maple sugar as trade items. These items went to Philadelphia, Lewisburg, and Reading via pack animals over rudimentary roads. In 1830 the county exported 200,000 bushels of wheat, 600 bushels of clover seed, and 1,500 barrels of whiskey. In 1840 there were 141,000 bushels of rye produced, most of it going to whiskey. 43,000 gallons were produced; that's two gallons for every man, woman, and child in the county in 1840. In the early 1800s there were 8 distilleries. These products were exchanged for goods that linked local residents to the wider economy -- such as tobacco, cloth, or ceramic wares.

Tenancy was a prominent feature of early Centre County agriculture. It is difficult to determine actual rates of tenancy in the early period, but by the time tax records noted landlords and tenants the rate was already as high as twenty-five or thirty percent. Early agreements, such as a seven-year agreement made in 1822 between landlord Phillip Benner and one Brower, specified merely that the tenant would clear land and erect buildings, rather than pay any kind of rent. Andrew Gregg's accounts show that his tenants paid rent in the form of part of their crops, usually in wheat or maple sugar. Terms of rental often were for several years, and records show that tenants were not always able to pay on time each year. Tenants were often responsible for supplying tools, fencing in land, etc.

Work was shared across gender, kin, and community lines. People regularly exchanged work for each other; one person might work "grubbing in the clearing" in exchange for the loan of a tool, or for work on his own farm. Women were often found in the fields; Andrew Gregg's account book credited William George for three days' reaping "of your wife" in 1790. Many, if not most, people followed more than one occupation; thus there are entries which refer to a weaver who also tutored school children. At least 20 tanneries were in the valley in this period, and some of them were likely operated by farmers.

### **Landscape:**

Building activities of course focused on clearing, fencing, and housing. Among the first early landscape features to be defined were small clearings. If crops were planted, then fences would be erected to protect the crops from meandering livestock. Gregg's accounts credit various workers for "work at the Turnip Patch fence", "sundry work at paling the garden," and making rails and cutting logs. Many days were credited for "clearing a piece of ground" or "grubbing". Some land was treated as meadow. Later, buildings were erected; among the buildings or structures mentioned in Gregg's accounts (1790-1814) were log barns; stables; a storehouse; a spring house; and houses. Likely the barns and stables were small; they would store part of the hay crop and a few animals. However, since farm families raised grain and made whiskey and drove out their livestock before winter set in, there was little need for a large, fancy barn. The 1822 lease between Benner and Brower stipulated that Brower is to build a log barn of 54 by 18 feet; it also dictated that Brower must fence in his new clearings, and that no field should be bigger than ten acres. Remaining buildings from this period include a few stone, early brick, and log houses found



## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 3**

throughout the proposed district. Some boundary tree lines, wood lots, and rock fence lines also remain, most evident in Miles township where the warrant lines are still discernable.

### **II. 1830-1920: A HIGH-POWERED GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK ECONOMY**

#### **Agriculture:**

In the early part of this period, even stronger local markets emerged (Brush Valley Road was originally intended for Miles's tenants and owners to get produce to Centre Furnace, which was in operation from 1792 to 1809 and 1826 to 1858) and it also became easier to move goods to markets farther away. The county's population was growing, and more iron furnaces were in operation around the county and in the immediate region. Not only did the ironworks provide a market, they also facilitated farm mechanization. With substantial acreage now cleared, farmers began to create a highly mechanized, integrated, grain/livestock system. By 1860 farms in the valleys collectively showed some distinctive characteristics. First, (on a per-farm basis) they had more horses than average, and a well above average value of implements. The local newspapers contain rich and extensive accounts of the farm machinery that was available in the valleys by the 1850s and 1860s. These included threshing machinery, grain drills, cornfodder cutters, horse rakes, corn shellers, and many more, often produced locally, probably with locally available iron. By the 1880s many farms had a full range of agricultural implements. (This high mechanization level may be tied to the tenancy rate; perhaps farmers put their money into equipment rather than land.)

There is also evidence of a rising livestock industry. Great herds of hogs were driven east to market from Centre County in the 1850s, and also by that time Harris Township was noted as the county's leading cattle feeding township. Animals were stall-fed over the winter for the spring market; they were either slaughtered for the home trade or driven out of the county by dealers. This emphasis on horse power and stall feeding meant that production of feed grains such as corn and oats rose sharply (though most farms would still only have a few acres of each). These supplanted rye by 1850, and hay production also rose dramatically in this period, thanks partly to improved "tame" varieties of grass and clover. Third, between 1840 and 1850 wheat production rose dramatically; thereafter it remained steady.

This period also witnessed an unprecedented enrichment of the farm family's "competency." In other words, families raised more varieties of more items, especially fruits and vegetables. They also made on average a couple of hundred pounds of butter, enough for household use with a small surplus. They cured, pickled, dried, salted, and otherwise processed many different foodstuffs. Jams, jellies, preserves, sausages, and other delicacies became common. Changes in household technology made this possible. It's likely that the gender division of labor shifted, with women spending less time in the fields (though certainly not abandoning field work, especially at haying and harvest time). Neighborly cooperation continued, perhaps even intensifying.

Farming in the district was still characterized by a high rate of tenancy, from 40% to over half in some spots. Almost all of them were sharecroppers, usually paying one-third of the grain and keeping the rest. Tenants typically paid the taxes on the property, were obliged to put up fences, etc. It seems as if many tenancy agreements were for one year only. The Samuel Gramly diary, for example, shows how his tenants changed every single year. In March or April "flitting time," families all over the valley changed houses for a new contract year.

These 19th century developments set a pattern which persisted into the early decades of the 20th century. The total number of farms reached a peak sometime between 1910 and 1920, while the average farm acreage dipped to about 100 acres. The extension of rail lines to Centre Hall, Linden Hall, Oak Hall, and Lemont after 1885 meant

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 4**

that local farmers had many more marketing options. Farm mechanization continued to be higher than average; by the turn of the century a full-blown horse- and steam-power agriculture was the norm. Henry Meyers's 1892 estate proceedings mention (besides plows and cultivators and wagons) a fanning mill, straw cutter, hay rope and pulley, spring harrow, corn planters, cultivators, hay rake, Osborne self-rake, mower, wheat binder, and steam thresher. Though the product mix showed some signs of changing (farmers sold more hay off the farm, and creameries for making butter appeared), the emphasis on a mixed livestock economy continued, as it was still popular to stall-feed beef animals for local consumption or to ship out. Tenancy rates continued to be very high, and sharecropping was still the typical form of tenancy. A new group of people -- retired farmers -- became more numerous and visible, and agricultural organizations such as the Grange had a heightened presence in local life. Villages like Centre Hall and Oak Hall grew and became more active focal points for rural communities.

### **Landscape:**

During the first part of this period, farm families in the valleys erected more permanent buildings or at least upgraded their older log buildings. In housing, a mix of the emphatically regional (such as the double door house and the locally distinctive brick farmhouses) coexisted with more generic "national" influences as seen in simple center-gable houses, "L" or "bent" houses, and village Victorians. The residential landscape reflected tenancy: modest, largely un-ornamented three- or four-bay, single- or double-pile tenant houses contrasted noticeably with the "big" houses, which tended to resemble one another and to be more ostentatious, through construction material (stone or brick), ornamentation (cornice decoration, door transoms for example), and scale. The same contrasts could be seen within the villages of Centre Hall and Linden Hall, or Millheim and Rebersburg. By the early twentieth century, regionalism was disappearing as a basis for architectural choice; new housing was more typically drawn from nationally popular types such as the foursquare. However, the landscape of tenancy persisted.

Field patterns began to assume their modern contours, as more acreage was cleared and fenced and probably fields became more regularly shaped, in order to accommodate machinery. Every farm had a woodlot. Ornamental, shelter, and orchard plantings nearer the house came to maturity. One very notable visual difference between 19th century field patterns and their modern counterparts would be in the amount of fencing. Nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century farms were much more heavily fenced and subdivided than they are today. Types of fencing ranged from the traditional "worm" fence, to post-and-rail fencing, to picket fencing closer in to the house. Historic farmsteads also had extensive orchards, mainly of apple trees, of which little survives today. However, significant portions of stone fencing, tree lines, windbreaks, woodlots, and fields retain their original qualities.

Substantial barns were erected during this period. Sequentially, the "Pennsylvania barn" came first. The Pennsylvania barn should be interpreted as an outgrowth of the highly mechanized grain and livestock economy. The Pennsylvania barn was ideal for the new grain/livestock/market oriented farming, because it was a multipurpose barn which had a lower level for livestock and an upper level (reached by ramp) for threshing, grain and implement storage, and hay. Some had large granary "outshoots" on the bank side, reflecting the importance of grain in this economy. Moreover, attached machine sheds frequently housed implements, reflecting the high level of local mechanization. Late in the 19th century and early in the 20th century, farmers began to add large wings onto their barns, and even to build new barns that formed an "L" shape from the beginning. Geographer Alan Noble interprets these as "raised three-gable barns". He argues that when machine threshing made it possible to process all the grain at once, (rather than in dribs and drabs throughout the winter), there was no longer any need for threshing doors, so a large wing at right angles to the main barn accommodated the huge piles of straw (which now were carefully sheltered instead of being thrown out into the yard to decompose). The loft was used for hay, the basement for livestock or manure. The basic contours of this analysis are plausible, but they



## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 5

need some refinements. Threshing machinery was available in the valleys in the mid-nineteenth century, but it was horse-powered and not always with winnowing capabilities. It's likely that the change in barns was prompted not by horse power threshing but by the faster and more productive steam power that not only threshed (that is, separated the grain from the stalk) but also winnowed (separated grain from the chaff), thus eliminating the need for cross ventilation in barns and creating a need for straw sheds. Another interesting feature of these barns is the way they adapt the conventional Pennsylvania barn. On the upper (bank) level, the threshing floor faces the extra gable, so if the barn is "L" shaped, the floor would be on the extreme right or left rather than in the center as was usual. The hay mows and machinery storage are displaced accordingly. In the new "ell", on the upper level there's the straw storage place and the granary (which in the PA Barn used to be in the forebay). However, the full workings of these "L" barns have yet to be fully explained; for example, some have long sliding doors on both sides of the straw shed's lower level. Was this to facilitate manure storage, straw storage, or livestock?

Many new ancillary buildings also went up on farms during this period, such as smokehouses and summer kitchens. A diary kept by a local landlord, E. W. Hale, mentions corn house, hog pen, smoke house, and summer kitchen in 1880. These spaces had important meanings for the division of labor in rural society. The summer kitchen, most obviously, was a site of women's work in the expanding subsistence economy, and likely also reflected the rise of an important new domestic technology, the cookstove. Hog pens were related to domestic spaces, in that hogs were often fed on kitchen slops and skimmed milk. Smoke houses can be considered a mixed-gender, community workspace, as most often neighborhood men and women cooperated at butchering time. The wagon shed was another common outbuilding.

### III. 1920-1950: THE RISE OF MOTORIZED FARMING, DAIRYING, AND POUNTRY RAISING

#### **Agriculture:**

During this period, horse power farming gave way to motorized farming, as the auto and tractor appeared; the county continued to be a state leader in the per-farm level of mechanization. In this period there was a noticeable shift away from the grain and livestock economy that had dominated agriculture in the valleys for almost a hundred years, as dairying and poultry raising challenged the older enterprises. As road and rail transportation improved, Centre County was drawn into the orbit of the New York City "milkshed." Creameries in Bellefonte, Spring Mills, and Howard were in operation by 1930; they made butter and shipped milk to New York City. By the 1930s a "milk depot" in Centre Hall had 100 patrons. The numbers of milk cows rose and numbers of beef animals declined. Alfalfa, silage corn, regular corn, and hay were important crops; from being a cash crop, hay shifted to being an important fodder crop for local dairy production. Centre Hall became an important center for poultry production of young hatchlings, shipping all over the country. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Kerlin Hatchery shipped literally millions of chicks. In turn this had an impact on local farming, as the hatcheries encourage local farm families to supply them with eggs. Rates of tenancy continued high, and as before sharecropping was the major form of tenancy, though sometimes tenant leases were modified to reflect the regular milk check.

The old subsistence base showed some signs of eroding; the number of swine, for example, dropped sharply as people were less inclined to butcher their own meat. But most farm families still raised their own food and conducted a variety of small side enterprises, especially during the Depression years. Farm women continued to engage in farm production, and also took leadership roles in rural social organizations. Overall, however, a trend toward "de-feminization" of farm production was occurring, as fields such as dairying and poultry production came to be dominated by men.

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 6**

### **Landscape:**

With respect to overall landscape patterns, the patterns of woodlot, crop, pasture, and meadow fields did not vary significantly from the earlier period. The advent of wire fencing brought a new look, as did the tendency to confine animals close to the barn (which resulted in less fencing within fields and meadows).

Penns Valley and Brush Valley farm families tended to make do with older buildings during this period. A national agricultural depression, coupled with a tendency to put scarce financial resources into new technologies such as automobiles and electricity, ensured that few new farm houses were erected during this period.

Existing barns, perhaps extended or internally altered with stanchions, sufficed to accommodate dairy herds. Very occasionally, a rainbow-roof dairy barn would be erected, but silos were the most notable new feature of the farmstead complex. First used in the US in the 1880s, silos were adopted when farmers turned to dairying, because they provided the winter food that helped to extend the milking season. In the 1920s and 1930s they become a standard part of the farmstead repertoire in Penns and Brush Valleys. With the proximity of Centre Hall "chicken ranches," poultry facilities became a common sight on valley farmsteads. Some took the form of small, freestanding chicken houses, while in other cases existing buildings were renovated to provide for poultry or egg production. After 1930, concrete-block milk houses appeared, usually near the barn. For all of these construction projects, the use of milled lumber, sheet metal, and concrete signified an important change in the origin and nature of building materials.

### **Conclusion:**

The historic agricultural landscape of Penns Valley and Brush Valley derives significance from its clear relationship to key economic and social patterns of the area's past, chiefly the main local industries (iron and then PSU) and the institution of farm share tenancy. These trends are embodied in the existing landscape, in the form of a differentiation between landlord and tenant housing; farmsteads which reflect architectural equipment for highly mechanized grain/livestock farming, followed by dairying; and a consistent pattern of farmland use and layout, reflected in the persistence of fields, stone fencing, tree lines, windbreaks, farm plantings, and rural roads.

The landscape is also significant for its high degree of integrity. Integrity in a rural landscape should be somewhat differently assessed than in a village or urban district. Since so much of the landscape's significance derives from such features as open fields, field and property boundaries, and orientation of buildings with respect to roadways and natural features, we must consider larger issues of overall visual integrity, rather than consider buildings in isolation. According to this way of thinking, the Brush Valley and Penns Valley district has a high degree of integrity. Approximately 85 per cent of its total land area is in open land, still in agricultural use. Forest still covers a substantial part of the areas originally used as woodlots (usually on the mountain slopes). Field sizes and shapes retain to a high degree their earlier configuration, even if crops have changed. The intrusions that do exist are located in clusters, or on the edges of open areas, so even if modern buildings make up a percentage which would be considered large for a village district, in the context of the rural district they do not compromise its integrity. This is especially evident when one views the district from a high vantage point, for example on Mount Nittany; from above, the overwhelming view is of a patchwork of fields, boundaries, historic roadways, and historic farmsteads.

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### **A note on the evidence for farm tenancy**

The high level of farm tenancy came as a surprise as we researched this nomination. However, researchers in other counties (especially Cumberland, Franklin, Dauphin, Lebanon, Mill Blair, Union, and Northumberland)



## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE — 7

are likely to encounter more of this. Here we offer suggestions for finding evidence of tenancy. Actual rates of tenancy are difficult to determine before 1880.

n in the county landownership maps or atlases, the appearance of the same name in different places suggests that this person is a landlord. For example, in Centre County's 1874 atlas, Moses Thompson's name appears next to many different properties. In his case, we know where he resided, so we can reasonably assume that the others are tenant properties. Note that this means that in areas where tenancy has a significant presence, one shouldn't assume that the name next to a property denotes the *resident* on the property. Another way in which landownership maps indicate tenancy is through the use (inconsistently) of designations such as "res" (residence) and "oc" (occupant). In Centre County, J. H. McCormick (check) is an "occupant" of land actually owned by someone else; by contrast, where several properties bear the name "Neff," one notes "J. Neff (res)."

n The 1880 agricultural census manuscripts clearly state whether the farmer is a tenant or owner, and whether he rents for cash or shares.

n In the case of Centre County, tax records from 1850 onward clearly separate "owners of real estate," "tenants," and "single freemen," and they indicate how landlords and tenants are connected, i. e. they list the name of the landlord along with the names of his tenants. One caveat is that these records are most clear when landlord and tenant reside in the same township.

n Family or corporate papers often contain "articles of agreement" or leases which spell out terms of tenancy. They are usually filed with financial and legal papers.

n Day books and farm account books often give clues as to tenancy, for example when they list receipt of crop rent.

n Probate records of landlords often contain evidence about tenancy, for example in the form of receipts for "rent grain," or items in a will which dictate how to dispose of tenanted property, probate records which contain receipts for construction work on tenant farms, etc.

n Reports of observers (for example in the transactions of the state agricultural society or the reports to the U. S. Patent Office, before the USDA was a separate department) often describe tenancy arrangements.

n Agricultural extension bulletins, for the later period, contain useful information on tenancy. In Centre County, for example, local agricultural extension workers were concerned that old-style contracts did not work for dairy farmers, and they published alternative sample contracts.

n Local newspapers (in this case, the *Centre Reporter* published in Centre Hall) often mentioned tenants in their local columns.

The historical and social significance of tenancy is difficult to assess at this point. In the postbellum South, of course, tenancy has been extensively analyzed as one means by which the planter class continued to wield power over impoverished freedpeople and poor whites. But so little scholarly work exists on northern tenancy in either the colonial period or the 19th century that conclusions must be tentative at best. Historical debate about northern tenancy has revolved around the issue of whether it was a sign of a malfunctioning economic system, or (conversely) whether it was a viable "rung" on the "agricultural ladder" to full ownership. However, almost all of the studies to date have taken Midwestern states as their area of study. In central Pennsylvania, tenancy seems to have been unlike Midwestern tenancy in at least one crucial respect: landowners were not absentee speculators, but rather members of the local elite who lived in the area and kept close tabs on their tenants. One thing is clear: the landscape itself testifies to an unmistakable social gap between landlords and tenants in central Pennsylvania. Whether this gap was a generational one, or a sign of more permanent class differences, remains to be seen.

## Notes on Sources for Penns Valley and Brush Valley History

### I. PRIMARY SOURCES

-- Manuscript schedules for agriculture, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1927 (McMurry personal microfilm and photocopies)

#### ■ From PSU Special Collections:

Pennsylvania maps in Historical Collections, PSU Special Collections: many 19<sup>th</sup> century maps including Henry Walling, *New Topographical Atlas*, 1872; *Mitchell's New Traveller's Guide*, 1851; *Johnson's Pennsylvania and New Jersey Almanac*, 1808; etc. These indicate stage routes, internal improvements, post routes, townships, etc.

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*Brush Valley Association for the Apprehension of Horse Thieves*, constitution and ledger book, 1853.

Maynard, D. S. *Industries and Institutions of Centre County* 1877

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PSU Ag extension records for Centre County beginning in the early 1920s

Report of the Transactions of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society for the years 1861-1862-1863, Singerly & Meyers, 1863.

Wolfe's Store records, 1883-1888. (Wolfe's Store is a crossroads in eastern Brush Valley)



Published materials available in PSU Libraries:

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Annual Report of the State Board of Agriculture for 1878. Data on tenancy and farm crops and wages.

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Keller, William Carl. "A Survey of Volume and Condition of Farm Woodlands in Centre County," PSU M of Forestry thesis, 1951

Weaver, F. P., et al. "Farm Adjustments in Market Hay Areas... of Pennsylvania." Penn State Ag Experiment Station Bulletin # 223, April 1928

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<http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/pasdc/> -- Pennsylvania state data center  
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/hllhtml/hllhome.html> -- HABS/HAER searchable database  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlhome.html> -- Library of Congress "American Memory" website (maps, photos, archival collections, searchable by location, subject, etc.)  
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/> -- National Register of Historic Places home page  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~pacentre/chistjml.htm> Centre County history  
<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/> US Census data browser. Historical data, can be manipulated and searched down to the county level

## II. REFERENCE TOOLS

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## III. SECONDARY SOURCES

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----- "A History of Centre Furnace Lands," *Centre County Heritage* vol. 32 (Spring/Fall 1996)

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