

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Montgomery	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Hovenden House, Barn and Abolition Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
No. 1 East Germantown Pike

CITY OR TOWN:  
Plymouth Meeting

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42 COUNTY: Montgomery CODE: 091

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Nancy Corson

STREET AND NUMBER:  
4006 Butler Pike

CITY OR TOWN:  
Plymouth Meeting

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Airy and Swede Streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Norristown

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 6/68 and 3/69  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN:  
Harrisburg

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Pennsylvania

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The first mention of the house on the northeast corner of Germantown and Butler Pikes is recorded in a deed dated February 3, 1794 (Norristown Deeds, Book #9, page 180). In this deed, Samuel Maulsby (great, great grandfather of the present owner) bought for 137 Pd "a messugge and a lot of land in Whitmarsh Township beginning at a post in the middle of the great road leading to Philadelphia..."

The small original two-storey stone house has been enlarged through the years to its present size (three floors, fourteen rooms). The exterior walls and interior walls where new sections were added to old outer walls are of 18" thick white-washed rubble and mortar, typical of this area. Many of the windows have the original glass and the doors have the original locks and hinges. In most rooms, the floor is the original randomwidth planking. In the kitchen is a large open fireplace with built-in warming well and ovens.

Outside the kitchen door is an underground root cellar with an arched roof of brick, which originally housed the well. This was filled in many years ago. The steps leading down to the root cellar are of the local blue marble.

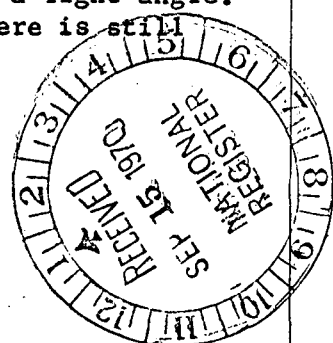
In 1957, the house was converted to two apartments...a change which did not alter the outer appearance; nor appreciably the inner.

On the grounds, behind the large barn (which has been converted to a dwelling and is the home of the present owner) stands Abolition Hall. This building was originally a one-storey open carriage house...three 18" stone walls with two 4' diameter rubble and mortar pillars supporting the roof. In 1856, the lower portion was enclosed and a full length hall added as a second storey. This construction was the work of George Corson (son-in-law of Samuel Maulsby), who was an ardent abolitionist. A great number of meetings and lectures were held here prior to the Civil War.

From 1881-1895, Abolition Hall was used as a studio by the artist, Thomas Hovenden, N.A., at which time a large 8' square window was cut in the north-east wall of the hall overlooking the fields. During this period the front of the ground floor room was completely lined with 5' high windows.

Abolition Hall and the barn stand corner to corner, forming a right angle. The old stone wall which originally enclosed the barnyard here is still standing and creates a courtyard for the two buildings.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art      | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce            | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                             |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |  |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historic

The original building, diagonally across from the Friends Meetinghouse in Plymouth Meeting, may well have been standing when the British troops halted here for an hour and a half on their way to attack Lafayette at Barren Hill (May 20, 1778).

In appearance today, it is a typical Pennsylvania dwelling of the Federal Period.

Art

This property, from 1881 to 1895, was the home and studio of the artist, Thomas Hovenden, N. A. His work includes:

- "Breaking Home Ties" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art
- "Last Moments of John Brown" at the Metropolitan Museum, New York
- "The Founding of the State" at the Montgomery County Historical Society
- "Elaine" at Peabody Institute, Baltimore
- "Bringing Home the Bride" in a private collection

Sculpture

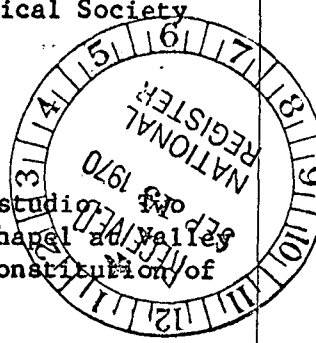
From 1920 to 1941, Martha Hovenden used Abolition Hall as a studio. Her marble bas-reliefs are in the Washington Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge; namely, "The Declaration of Independence" and "The Constitution of the United States".

Political-Social

George Corson (1803-1860) bought the Hovenden House, as it is now called, from the estate of his father-in-law, Samuel Maulsby in 1839. He was an active member of the anti-slavery society and built Abolition Hall as a place in which to hold meetings and present lectures. Speakers in the hall included William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, John Greenleaf Whittier and Mrs. Stephen Foster.

Another of his anti-slavery activities was participation in the "underground railroad". The barn on the property sheltered many slaves in that period. They would lie low there during the day and then, under cover of darkness, continue their journey to freedom in Canada.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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(Continuation Sheet)

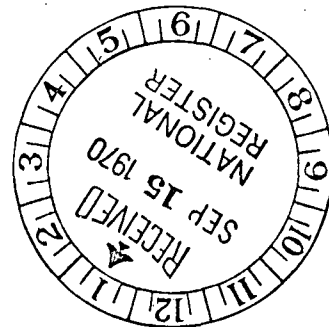
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8. Significance

Urban Planning

This property is currently threatened by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation proposed re-routing of Germantown and Butler Pikes. The Department's latest map shows Germantown Pike cutting through the property and destroying Abolition Hall completely. Butler Pike is shown as two separate one-way streets slashing through green fields below the barn. In the interest of preserving both historic and natural resources, this entire property should be registered as a Historic Place by the National Park Service.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bean's, History of Montgomery County  
 Barnard, Ella K., The Maulsby Genealogy  
 Corson, Hiram, The Corson Family  
 Livezey, Helen C., Life and Works of Thomas Hovenden, N.A.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40° 06' 10"	75° 16' 42"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 9 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Nancy Corson, Treasurer**

ORGANIZATION: **Plymouth Meeting Historical Society** DATE: **4/30 69**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**4006 Butler Pike**

CITY OR TOWN: **Plymouth Meeting** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **42**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: *S. J. Stevens*

Title: Executive Director

Date: September 8, 1970

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# HOVELDON HOUSE & BARN

NORFOLK TOWN QUADRANGLE  
PENNSYLVANIA

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
SE/4 NORRISTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE

5964 II NW  
(CAMBLER)

POTTS TOWN 22 MI.  
PENN SQUARE 1.9 MI.

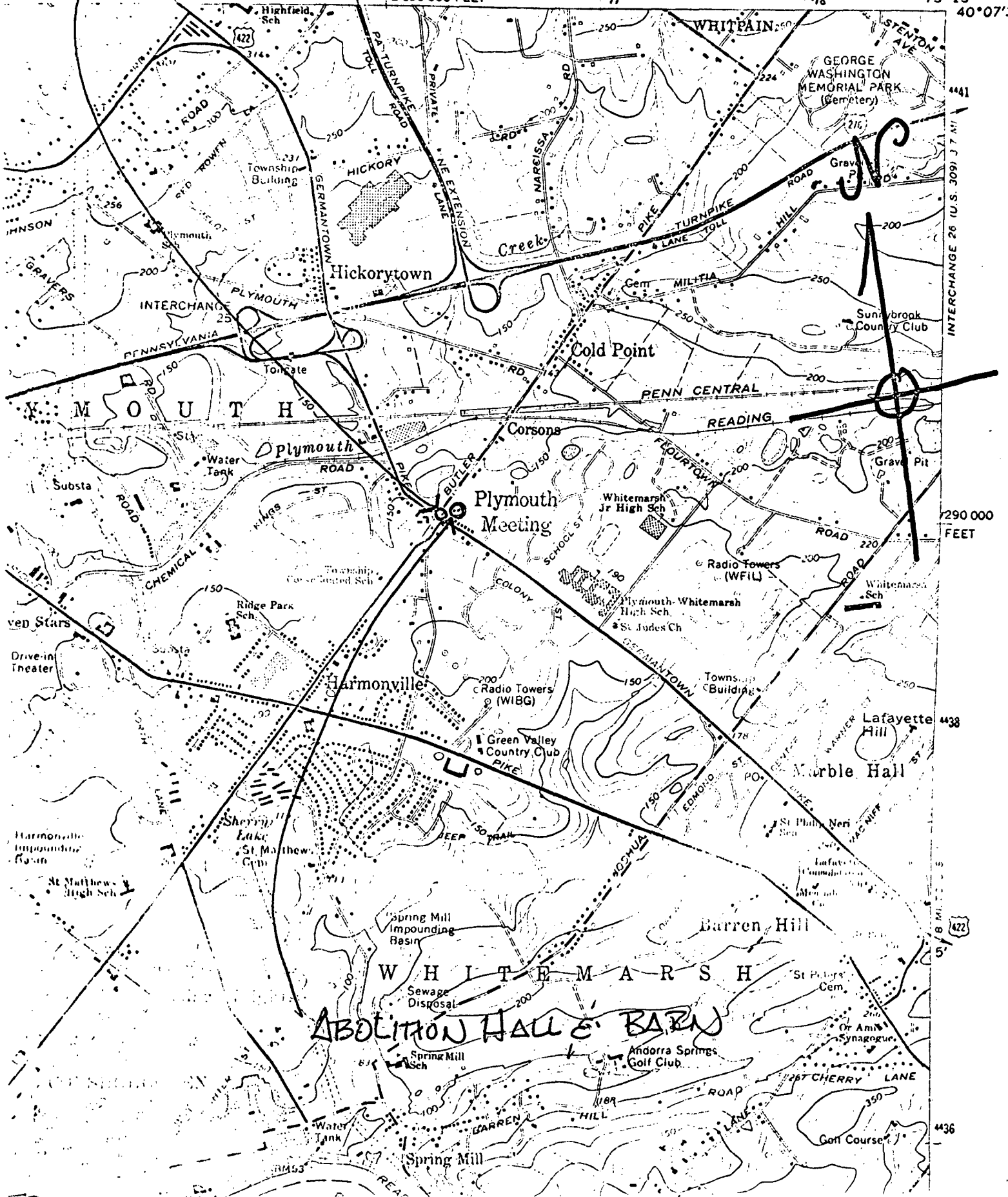
ALLENTOWN 37 MI.  
INTERCHANGE 31 (PA. 63) 10 MI.  
2 690 000 FEET

477

478

75° 15'

40° 07' 30"



INTERCHANGE 26 (U.S. 309) 3.7 MI

290 000  
FEET

438

422

436