

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Montgomery	
FOR HIS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
71549	0015-3/11/71

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Mount Joy

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Legaux (Peter) Mansion

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
North Lane and Hector Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Conshohocken

STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE: 42	COUNTY: Montgomery	CODE: 091
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work In progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
(Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Comments			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Lee Tire and Rubber Company

STREET AND NUMBER:  
East Hector Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Spring Hill, Conshohocken

STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE: 42
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Montgomery County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Airy and Swede Streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Norristown

STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE: 42
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Box 1020

CITY OR TOWN:  
Harrisburg

STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE: 42
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Pennsylvania  
COUNTY: Montgomery  
FORM NPS 10-209  
ENTRY NUMBER: 71549  
DATE: 3/11/71

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

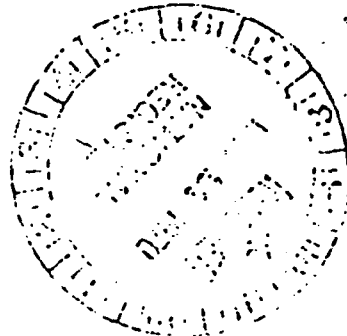
Peter Legaux invested quite a large sum of money in, making the building and grounds around it impressive. Very little of the original woodwork survives, Legaux himself, made changes. There are 10 fireplaces one of which has tile surrounding it. Some iron firebacks survive in the fireplaces. The original flooring has been covered with hardwood in some instances. The second floor has many of the original doors and woodwork. G. Edin Rumbach, the noted architectural historian, claims the house is restorable as there is enough surviving of the original 1740 house and the changes made by Legaux to warrant a good project.

The house, a fine mansion of the day, was according to an early record, "a 3-story marble house with 10 large fire rooms and 5 cellars," and was built in 1735 by Anthony Morris, later being occupied by Colonel Miles, a valiant officer of the Revolution, then by George Hifflin, and subsequently being transferred to Prevost and then to Legaux.

Externally the house is little altered since the late 18th century other than porches.

*Check Gold*  
*George Hifflin*

*5/1/47*



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1790

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

This house, although not built by Peter Legaux, has since his occupancy in the late 1700's and the first third of the 1800's borne his name, which is indicative of his position and influence in the early days of our country. The following is an account of the Life of Peter Legaux:

Born in Fort <sup>1727</sup> Meisson in the Province of Lorraine, in France, on March 7, 1727, Pierre LeGaux (he took the Anglo-Saxon spelling and pronunciation of his name on coming to America) became a skilled physician and statesman. By the age of 29 he was serving as a councillor at the Parliament in Metz, and later was sent to the Supreme Tribunal at Nancy. In August of 1770 he married Mlle. Harbi Jorbal by whom he had one daughter. After his marriage he filled several diplomatic posts in Caribbean countries, but little is known of this period in life. It is said he was Governor of Martinique and was active in other countries and politics, and that a prominent man of the day in order to suppress proof of his own complicity in dubious enterprises and moves against the crown set out to destroy Legaux, not only politically but even by attempted assassination. Apparently he fled to America for asylum, arriving in Philadelphia, where there was a substantial colony of French on August 10, 1785.

In December of 1785 Pierre Legaux bought from Major Augustine Prevost the plantation of 206 acres along the Schuylkill at Spring Mill. This plantation was established prior to 1690 by Major Joseph Farmer who owned 5000 acres in the Whitmarsh Valley. The plantation then consisted of 116 acres on the west bank of the Schuylkill in Lower Merion, 64 acres and the house which had been named "Mt. Joy" by Colonel Miles, on the west bank and 25 acres along the river, specifically to protect the shore line, as this was the site of the new long extinct shad fisheries. Here, Legaux later established a ferry to Lower Merion. He laid out the grounds surrounding Mt. Joy in terraces, following the pattern of many gardens of France. He was always an enthusiastic cultivator of flowers and plants and was greatly interested in beekeeping and established a section of the plantation for his hives.

The large room or vault under the terraces of Mt. Joy was connected with Legaux later wine industry as he himself had noted that the temperature of this vault, 75' long, was consistently 54½ degrees F.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

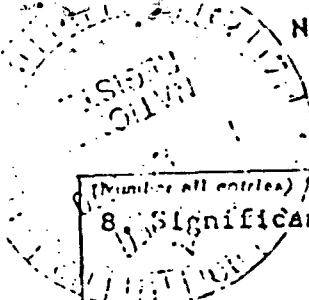
Form 10-190a  
(July 1967)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Pennsylvania	
COUNTY	Montgomery	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
713-120015	3/1/77	



(Number all entries)

8. Significance

Friend and associate of Franklin, Tighman, Genet and a host of other notables, Legaux was a man sufficiently well-known to have had Jefferson, Washington, Mifflin, and other prominent men of the day visit at Mt. Joy. On July 17, 1787, shortly after his arrival in America, he was elected to membership in the most learned and exclusive society of its day, the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. He was an active associate, giving many papers upon his favorite study, Meteorology. His election to membership would indicate that his fame had preceded him. Here he was in regular companionship with Franklin, Jefferson and other learned men of that date. Legaux often manufactured his own instruments and had set aside one room in the mansion as a laboratory where he kept his instruments and did his mathematical work. Another room he had set up as a joiner's shop, where he had a turning lathe. Needing unobtainable glassware for his experiments, he blew his own.

His enterprise was far reaching. He established a lime furnace on his property which became a profitable business. Within a year of his purchase of Mt. Joy, he had petitioned the legislature to permit him to run a public ferry at Spring Mill. This was also a very successful enterprise. He was a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, and corresponded regularly with Latin countries on matters of meteorology.

As a naturalist, Legaux had noted the growth and prolific fruitage of the wild grape of Pennsylvania, and by his own experiments conducted successfully at Mt. Joy, demonstrated his theory that the soil and climate was suited to grape culture on the same scale as in his native France. George Washington was sufficiently interested in his experimentation and theories as to pay a visit to Mt. Joy on July 22, 1787, in company with General Mifflin and other prominent Philadelphians. Encouraged by many influential citizens of Philadelphia, Legaux set out his vineyards on the terraced slopes of his house and farm (the farm being separated from the house by a roadway, probably to the ferry and to the mill at Spring Mill). Dunlap's Daily American Register of May 1, 1793, reported on the grape culture. For several years experiments went well and the enterprise was considered a success, but the cost of production was greater than anticipated. Eventually the stockholders, became annoyed at the lack of success and profits. The Pennsylvania Vine Company collapsed and Peter Legaux was forced into bankruptcy. The property, Mt. Joy, was eventually purchased by John Righter, husband of one of Legaux's daughters. Legaux died on September 25, 1827.

Iron furnaces eventually replaced Legaux bees and gardens and now even all traces of the iron furnaces too are gone. Of the vineyards only the terraces are left.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

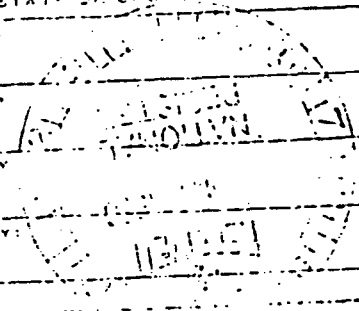
The Historical Society of Montgomery County, The Ketchen, Coluam II, 1909  
 page 96, Norristown, Pa., Coluam IV, 1910; Volume VII, 1925.  
 Brief of Title - deeds of Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties  
 Other primary and secondary sources in The Historical Society of Montgomery  
 County, Norristown, Pa.  
 American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pa. Papers of Peter Legaux  
 Montgomery County Court House, Norristown, Will made in both English and  
 French dated July 1, 1826. Inventory No. 4053  
 Woes of Peter Legaux, Montgomery County Histories, S. Gordon Smythe,  
 Norristown

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				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	Seconds		
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	40°	04'	37"	75°	17'	15"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SF	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LESS THAN 2 ACRES

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



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Pennsylvania Historic Sites and Landmarks

ORGANIZATION:  
 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN:  
 Norristown

STATE:  
 Pennsylvania

DATE:  
 Oct., 1970

CODE:  
 42

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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: [Signature]  
 Title: Pa. Historical and Museum Commission  
 Date: 1/23/70

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

[Signature]  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
 FEB 22 1971

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

ATTEST:  
[Signature]  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

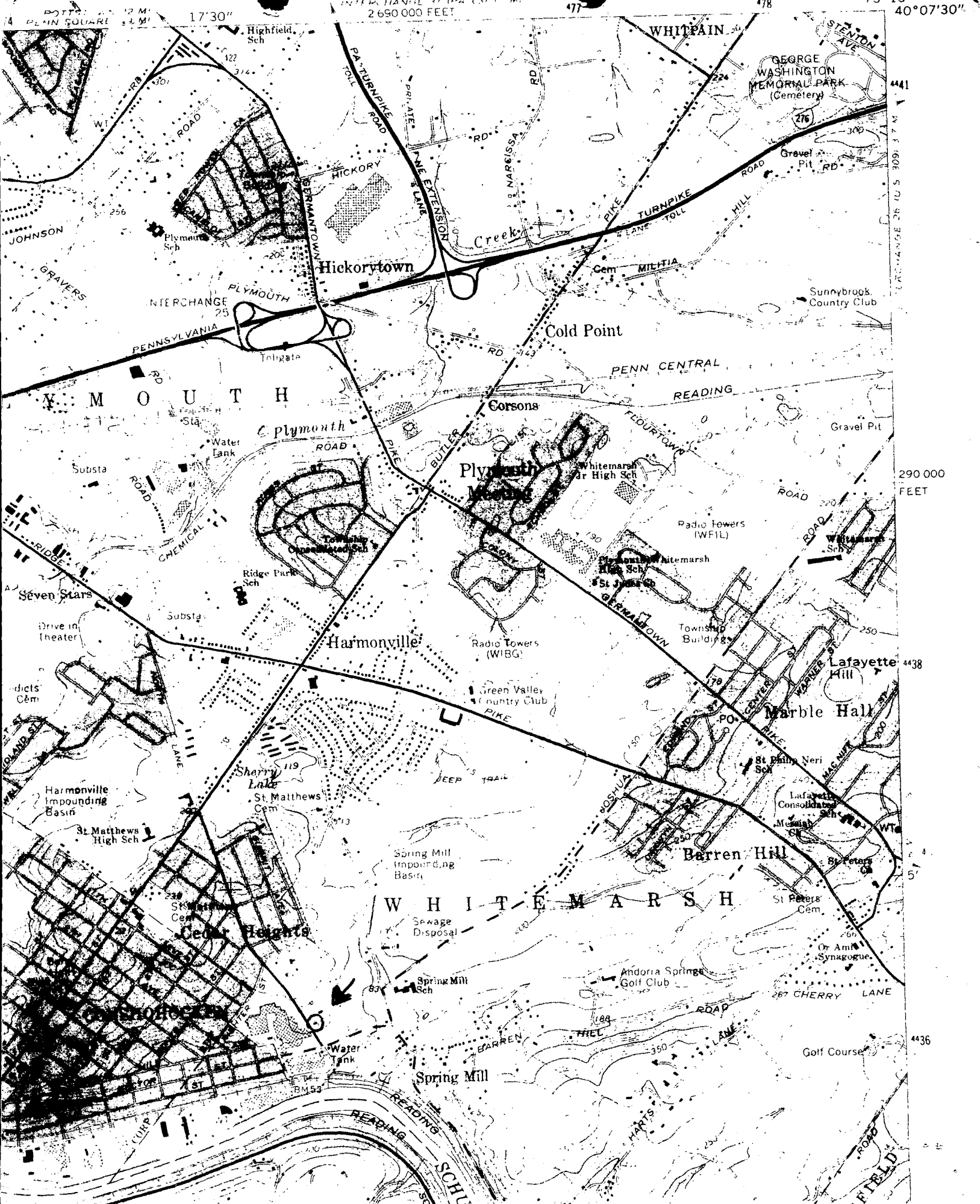
ALLEN TOWN 3.1 MI  
INTERCHANGE 21.04 (3.1 MI)  
2 690 000 FEET

477

478

75° 15'

40° 07' 30"



290 000 FEET

4438

4436