

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS (USE ONLY)
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

POPLAR LANE (1757 - 1843)

AND/OR COMMON

Ballygomingo (1843 - 1977)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1000 Boxwood Court

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

King of Prussia

VICINITY OF

13th

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

COUNTY

Montgomery

CODE

091

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

W. Graham Arader III

STREET & NUMBER

1000 Boxwood Court

CITY, TOWN

King of Prussia

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Airy and Swede Streets

CITY, TOWN

Norristown

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

9/20/77

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

## The Original House built in 1758

The house known as Poplar Lane or "Ballygomingo" currently occupies 1.5 acres of land in Upper Merion township near to Pennsylvania route 320 at Dechert Road, Gulph Mills, Montgomery County. The present house stands alone in a grove of trees, and is the sole surviving structure and main house of the once productive farm of 100 acres bought by J. Hughes c. 1760. The building represents the results of three expansive building programs, each in the form of an addition to the original structure. The size and scope of the original eighteenth century house is partially discernible from the current floorplan and the exterior facade.

The structure commissioned by John Hughes for his son Col. Isaac Hughes is thought to be the two story area to the left of, and including, the front door. A look at the plan of the basement suggests an original floorplan with two large rooms (15 x 17 and 15 x 20'), and a kitchen in an ell at the southwest corner of the house on the first floor. The fireplace in the present library (at the right of the front door in the rear of the house) appears to be the only visible appointment remaining from this first period.

Colonel Hughes' house was of two stories, with two dormers in the roof above. It featured a central hallway and two rooms to the left of the front door, a smaller kitchen room at the back as described above completing the ell plan of the house at the southwest corner. Whether or not the present facade is original or not remains unclear. There are now 3 windows and a doorway on the ground floor, four windows across the second floor and two dormers above in what is assumed to be the original house. At the back there must have been a back door to the hall and two windows on the first floor, three on the second and two dormers above. In plan the second floor of the house consisted of two rooms (14 x 15 and 15 x 17') a hallway and possibly the staircase in the same position as it occupies today. In the two rooms on the second floor a substantial amount of panelling and flooring survives from the original structure.

## The Lowry Addition to the Hughes House

Isaac Hughes occupied the house between 1763 and 1782 when he fell ill and died in the spring. The property was left to his family, and by 1804 the four Hughes' daughters had sold the farm to their brother John, who was already in possession of his Grandfather's estate at Walnut Grove Farm just down the road. In 1804 Thomas Lowry bought the house, outbuildings and 78 acres of land. In 1816 Thomas Lowry and Mary added the section immediately to the right of the front door. There is a date stone extant which identifies this addition. The two windows on the first floor enclose a room which is now a library and above there are two rooms with two windows each facing the front and the back, separated by a transverse hallway running the whole length of the house on the second floor. A single dormer was added to each side of the new roof. This addition served to nearly double the floorplan of the house and create a larger nearly symmetrical stone and stucco facade. The large porticoed entrance may also date from this period.

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POPLAR LAND

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The Nugent Addition c. 1821

In 1821 "Poplar Lane", with its very new addition, again changed hands. The buyer was a prosperous Philadelphia merchant named John Nugent, who bought the house and 78 acres of land for \$8000.00. With a family of nine children Nugent required more space and so built the large porticoed wing at the southern end of the house adjoining the Lowry addition of 1816. The portico, it is said, was designed to please Nugent's southern wife. The dimensions of this two story addition are 24 x 30', and added a large room on each of the lower two floors. The room on the first floor opens on three sides to the outdoors, and this room is the current living room of the house. Above, the main room is the master bedroom and there are bathrooms and built-in closets in the northern section of the addition on this floor.

On the exterior the facade was finished in stucco as the rest of the house, and on the ground floor there are three windows and one door (far left). On the second floor there are four windows, one of which is converted into a door to give access to the second story porch which is modern. At the back there is a single door on the first, two windows on the second floor and a single dormer in the roof. At the end there are two windows on each floor for southern exposure.

The Dechert Modernization of "Ballygomingo."

The latest additions to the house took place in the early 1930's when Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dechert occupied the farm. The present kitchen at the north end of the house, as well as the garages and large library complete the ell at the northeastern corner of the original structure. The library was formerly paneled and housed the rare book collection of Mr. Dechert now at the University of Pennsylvania.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1758 1860 1821

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Hughes

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of Ballygomingo is not only architectural, the house has played a leading part in the local history of Gulph Mills and King of Prussia since Revolutionary times.

Architecturally Ballygomingo has a fine eighteenth century stone and stucco facade with two nineteenth century additions, as well as a number of panelled rooms on the first and second floors, and the original kitchen hearth built in 1758. The additions made to the house in the first quarter of the nineteenth century detracted little from its original charm, and remained faithful, both in appearance and construction, to the original. The interior of the first floor is a wealth of period detail, windows, panelling, doors and locks all date from the building period of 1821-30, when the last wing was added by George Nugent. The central breezeway, double doors and matching double fireplaces in the dining room to the right of the breezeway are characteristic of the period and reminiscent of Mt. Pleasant in Fairmount Park. So too, there is a fine early winding staircase.

### History of the land and farm:

1681 the area was deeded by William Penn to Samuel Nedicott, and the region was settled by Swedes, Welsh and Pennsylvania Germans. Poplar Lane Farm was a part of one of the large tracts of land which belonged to Letitia Aubrey, daughter of William Penn.

1761 The farm was approximately 100 acres in size, and it was sold by Guilema Marie Penn to John Stephens in 1761, who bought the land and the buildings for 30 pounds sterling. The same year the property passed to one Jacob Weigerline, "...yeoman, of Upper Merion, County of Philadelphia.", and he in turn sold it to John Hughes, "...merchant of Philadelphia, the 90 acres for 394 pounds sterling." As a result of this the farm became part of "Walnut Grove Farm" for many generations the Hughes homestead, and the probable location of General Washington's headquarters while his army was encamped at Gulph Mills during the week of December 1219, 1877.

John Hughes was a close friend of Benjamin Franklin, and he was also the King's Stamp Officer at the outbreak of the Revolution. When he bought the land from Wiegerline, it would appear that he was already at work on the house, a dwelling intended for his son Colonel Isaac Hughes when he married.

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- 1769 In a letter dated September 5, 1769, John Hughes writes to his son concerning the house. "Piscataque. . . On my return I expect to find you married, when you may expect to receive a deed for the Weigerline place." The house we must assume was being used by one of Hughes' tenants at the time as Isaac was managing the estates from Walnut Grove, just down the road.
- 1776 After the war had begun, Isaac Hughes joined the Pennsylvania Militia and rose to the rank of Colonel by the end of the war.
- 1777 After the Battle of Germantown, Washington's army retreated to a camp at Gulph Mills, just below Poplar Lane, and camped here for a week before moving on to Valley Forge. According to the Diary of Anna Holstein, the family historian (sister of Mrs. John Hughes, Sr.), the commander of the Continental Troops lodged with Isaac Hughes at Poplar Lane" . . . because the house was on a knoll across the lane from the Walnut Grove and was nearer to the Continental campgrounds on 'Rebel Hill'." (Pinkowski, E. Washington's Officers Slept Here, Historic Homes of Valley Forge and Its Neighborhood, Philadelphia 1959, p. 159). The specific headquarters has not yet been identified with certainty, though there is little doubt that the resources of Poplar Lane were used to the fullest during this bivouac.
- 1782 Col. Hughes dies at 34, and the land and house pass to his family. His son John Hughes eventually bought all the other shares of the property from his sisters and in 1801, when Isaac's widow re-married, John began to partition the land.
- 1804 Most of the land and the house were bought by Thomas Lowry, who made the first major addition to the fabric in 1816. Lowry built up the fabric to two stories and an attic, the part on the right of the front door, and his date stone survives.
- 1821 George Nugent, a retired Philadelphia merchant bought the house and 78 acres from Lowry for \$8000.00. He developed the property extensively with enormous barns, sheds and a school. The Collegiate Institute, known as "Nugent's Folly". He also added the final wing to the right and enlarged the ice house.
- 1843 The land passed from George Nugent, Jr., who became bankrupt, to his partner Bethel Moore, who named the place "Ballygomingo" after his birthplace in Wales.
- 1850 The land and house passed to one Colonel Wharton who married Ellen Elizabeth Nugent, and they remained its occupants until 1900.
- 1935 The property was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dechert who added the final wing and ell at the back and on the north end of the house, consisting of a kitchen, garage and a large panelled library.



# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE

Faris, John T. Old Roads out of Philadelphia. Philadelphia, 1917. pp. 158-60  
 Historical Society of Montgomery Co., Pa., Historical Sketches Vol. III, pp. 320 - 331.  
Inventory of Cultural and Historic Resources, Montgomery Co. Planning Commission.  
 Norristown, 1975. p. 102, no 32.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	8	4	7	1	1	2	0	4	4	3	5	4	2	0
ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

B 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. Graham Arader, III

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1000 Boxwood Court

CITY OR TOWN

King of Prussia

TELEPHONE

STATE

Pennsylvania

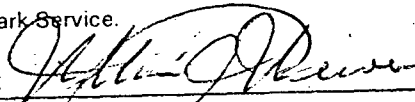
## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

WILLIAM J. WEWER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
 PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION

DATE 1-12-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

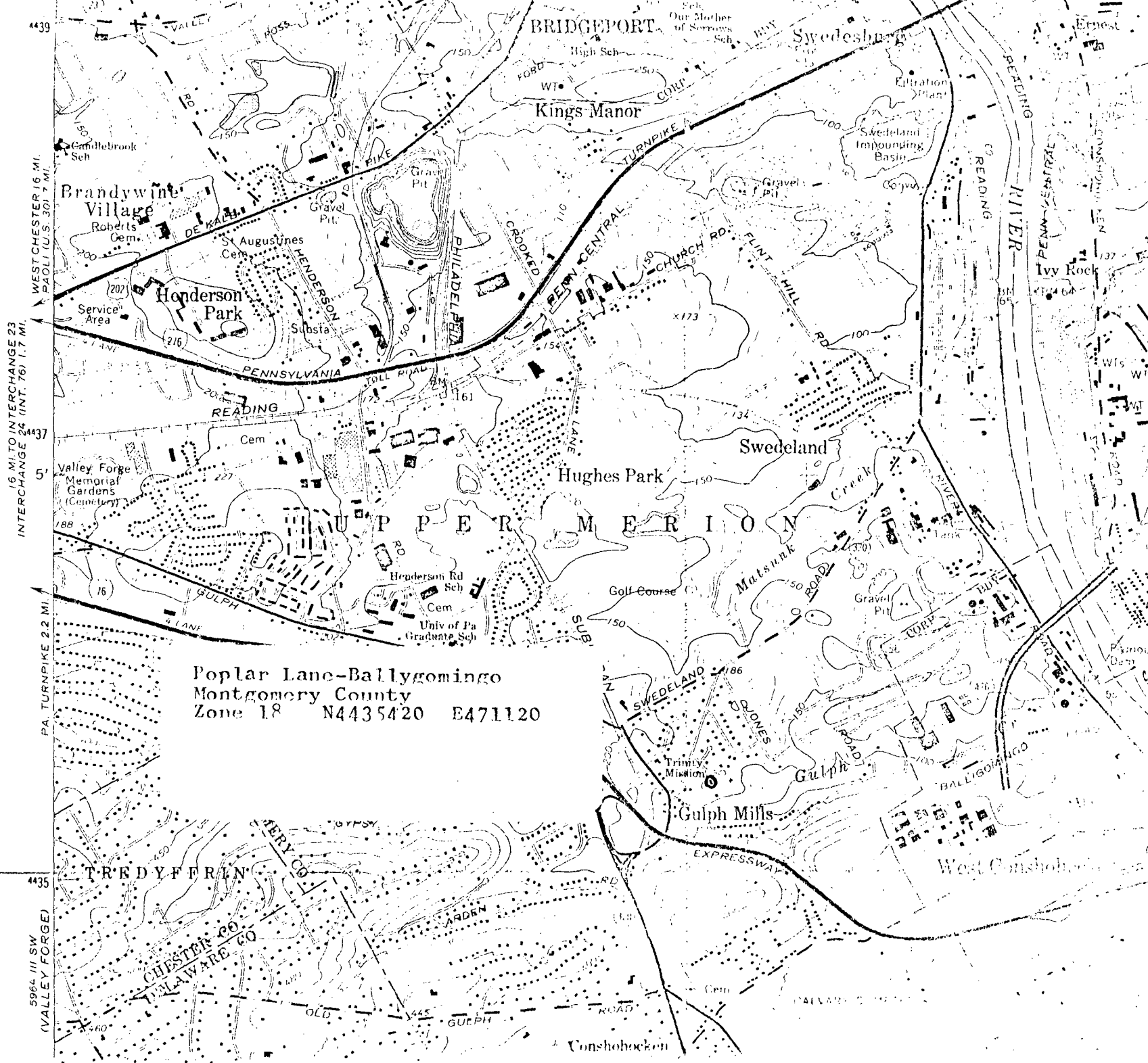
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Poplar Lane-Ballygomingo  
 Montgomery County  
 Zone 18 N4435420 E471120

4439  
 WESTCHESTER 16 MI.  
 POLY U.S. 50 7 MI.  
 16 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 23  
 INTERCHANGE 24 (INT. 76) 1.7 MI.  
 4437  
 5'  
 PA. TURNPIKE 2.2 MI.  
 4435  
 5964 III SW  
 (VALLEY FORGE)

BRIDGEPORT  
 Kings Manor  
 Brandywine Village  
 Henderson Park  
 PHILADELPHIA  
 PENN. CENTRAL  
 SWEDESHURTS  
 Swedeland  
 HUGHES PARK  
 UPPER MERION  
 GULPH  
 GULPH MILLS  
 WEST CONSHOHOCKEN  
 TRIDYFFRIN  
 CHESTER CO.  
 DELAWARE CO.  
 Conshohocken