

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
Morton Homestead

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
100 Lincoln Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Prospect Park

STATE Pennsylvania	CODE 42	COUNTY: Delaware	CODE 045
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Pa. Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Wm. Penn Memorial Museum & Archives Building

CITY OR TOWN: Harrisburg	STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE 42
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
County Court House (see also PHMC files, Harrisburg)

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Media	STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE 42
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission: Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE OF SURVEY: 1968-69 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Pa. Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: Harrisburg	STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE 42
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STATE: Pennsylvania
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<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 type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

[Faint, illegible text describing physical appearance]

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. 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 type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

1654;1698;1798?; 1835

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 type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input 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"/> 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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Morton Homestead is doubly significant: First for its architecture, and also for its association with the Morton family, which was prominent in Pennsylvania in colonial times.

Architecturally, the Morton Homestead represents the type of dwelling the very earliest settlers in Pennsylvania built. Its oldest part is a Swedish-Finnish log cabin built in 1654. An adjacent building of similar design was constructed in 1698. Both were originally of one story. In the late 1790's the two buildings were connected by stone walls and the whole roofed over with clapboard, forming a second story. The last changes were made in 1835, these being alterations to the upstairs room. The building contains late 17th furniture.

Morton Homestead was started by Morton Mortonson, a Swedish settler of 1654. The property remained for a long time in the hands of his descendants, the most noteworthy of whom was John Morton (1725-77), chairman of Pennsylvania's delegation to the convention which adopted the Declaration of Independence, and a signer of that document.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lewis, Frank G., ed. The First Arrival of William Penn in Pennsylvania, 1682. Chester, Pa.: The Delaware County Historical Society, 1934.

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	° ' "	° ' "		39° 52' 37"	75° 18' 20"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Harry A. Overholtzer Jr. Historian I

ORGANIZATION: Pa. Historical & Museum Commission DATE: June, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: Wm. Penn Memorial Museum & Archives Building

CITY OR TOWN: Harrisburg STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: _____

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 S. L. [Signature]

Title Executive Director

September 8, 1970

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

PENNSYLVANIA

Swedish Cabin (Morton Homestead)

Location: Delaware County, Prospect Park, on State Route 420

Ownership-Administration: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
Administered by Pennsylvania His-
torical and Museum Commission,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Significance: This hewn-log structure is the best preserved and most carefully documented of the few known remains of Swedish settlement in the 17th century. The oldest portion of the house is believed to date from the middle of the 17th century, perhaps as early as 1654, one year before New Sweden fell to the Dutch. A second cabin was erected a few feet distant in 1698, the date being inscribed inside the fireplace. At some later date the two 17th century sections were connected by a third structure, this one of stone. The long-time tradition that the house was the birthplace of John Morton, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, is not verified, although a patent of 1672 does establish that the land on which the cabin stands was once owned by Morton's great-grandfather.

Throughout its precarious existence New Sweden clung close to the Delaware, lifeline of trade and the avenue to the Atlantic and the Mother Country. Following the initial Swedish settlement at Fort Christina (the site of Wilmington) in the spring of 1638, settlers scattered up and down the Delaware, some going north to the vicinity of the Schuylkill, which flows into the Delaware at the site of modern Philadelphia. In February, 1643, the new

Governor of the colony, Johan Printz arrived in New Sweden and soon decided to move his capital northward from Fort Christina to Tinicum Island on the west side of the Delaware at the southern edge of today's Philadelphia. During the spring Fort Gothenburg was established on Tinicum, and Printz built his dwelling and headquarters on the Island. It was natural that this "capital" of New Sweden would attract other settlers, and as the few years of New Sweden's sovereign existence passed a Swedish community grew up in the vicinity of Printz's settlement.

Among the Swedes who settled near the Schuylkill was one Morton Mortonson who came out to New Sweden in 1654, or, some sources indicate, a few years earlier. At a site about a mile north of Tinicum Island Morton built his rude log home, of the type common to Swedish settlement on the Delaware and later widely adopted by the frontiersmen who pushed American settlement westward. Morton and his Swedish neighbors lived under Swedish rule only a short time, for in 1655 the Dutch under crusty Peter Stuyvesant conquered New Sweden in a brief and bloodless campaign. The Swedish settlers, especially those north of Fort Christina were little disturbed by the shift in their political fortunes. They continued to live in peace with the Indians, the Dutch, and finally the Englishmen, Germans, and others who came to the colony granted to William Penn.

The cabin built by Mortonson, and the later addition of the 17th century, is one of few surviving links with the Swedish settlement of 300 years ago. Even in its restored form it graph-

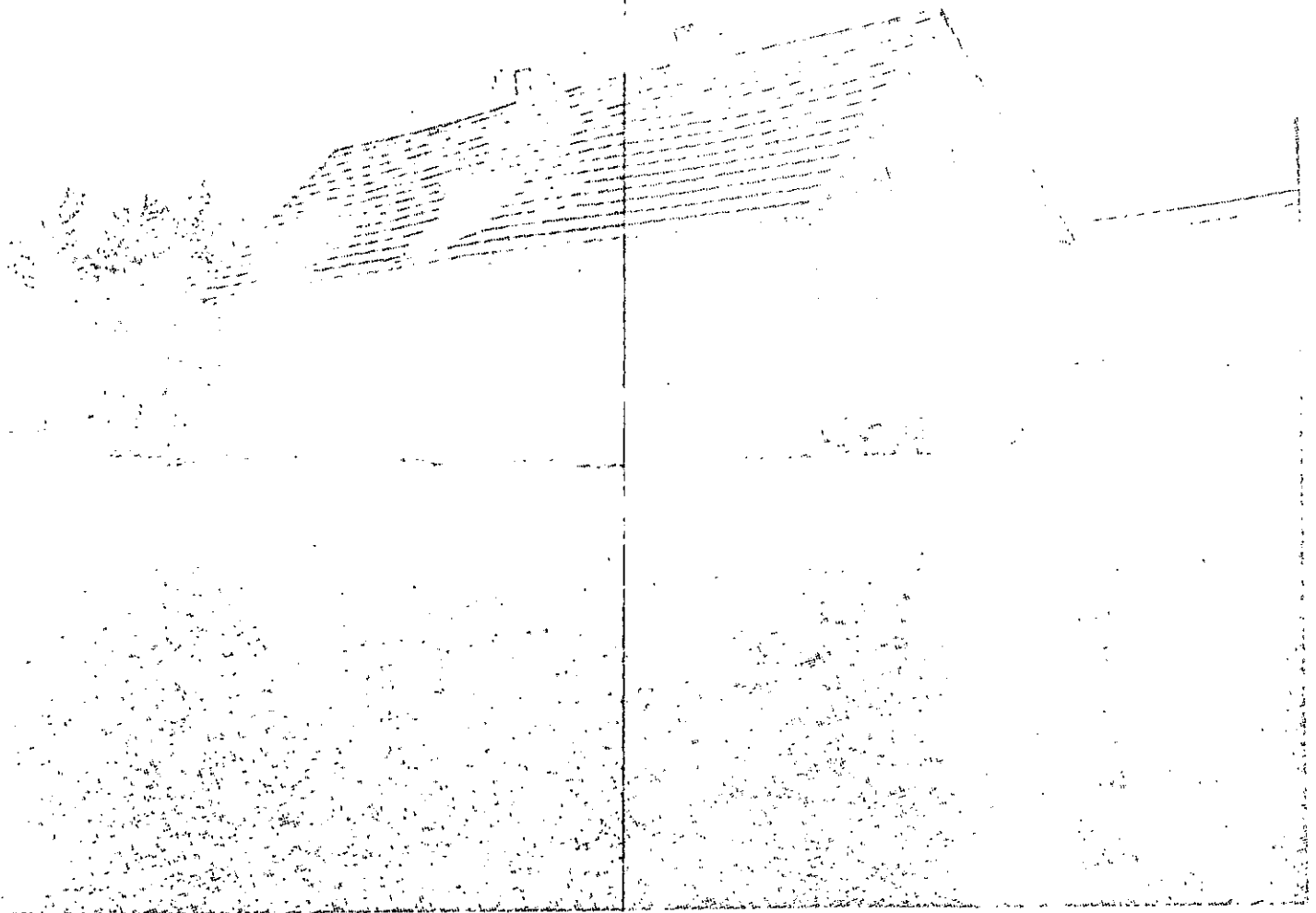
ically exemplifies the role of the settlers of New Sweden and their descendants in shaping the colony, and later the Commonwealth, which was the keystone of settlement in the Middle Atlantic region.

Features and Condition: In 1935 an earlier act of the Pennsylvania Legislature authorizing a monument to John Morton was amended to provide for the preservation of his alleged birthplace. Unverified tradition places this event in the home built by Morton's great-grandfather soon after his arrival on the Delaware in the mid-17th century. Careful investigation by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission turned up no evidence to support the birthplace tradition. The Commission now evaluates the structure primarily in terms of its significance as an architectural example of the Swedish log cabin, and as an illustration of the way of life of the early settlers on the Delaware. At the time of its acquisition by the Commonwealth the property was in a dilapidated condition and was surrounded by relatively modern frame houses. The unsightly intrusions have been removed and the three-section house restored.

The timber sections of the house are constructed of hewn, squared logs, with dovetailed corners, characteristic of the Swedish cabin. The building is furnished in primitive fashion in keeping with its period and story, and the setting of the house is preserved by a small park of approximately three acres. The cabin is open to visitors throughout the year.

References: Adolph B. Benson, "John Morton," in The Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 13 (New York, 1934); Esther Chilstrom Meixner, Swedish Landmarks in the Delaware Valley (Bridgeport, Pa., 1960); Donald H. Kent, "Preliminary Report on the Morton

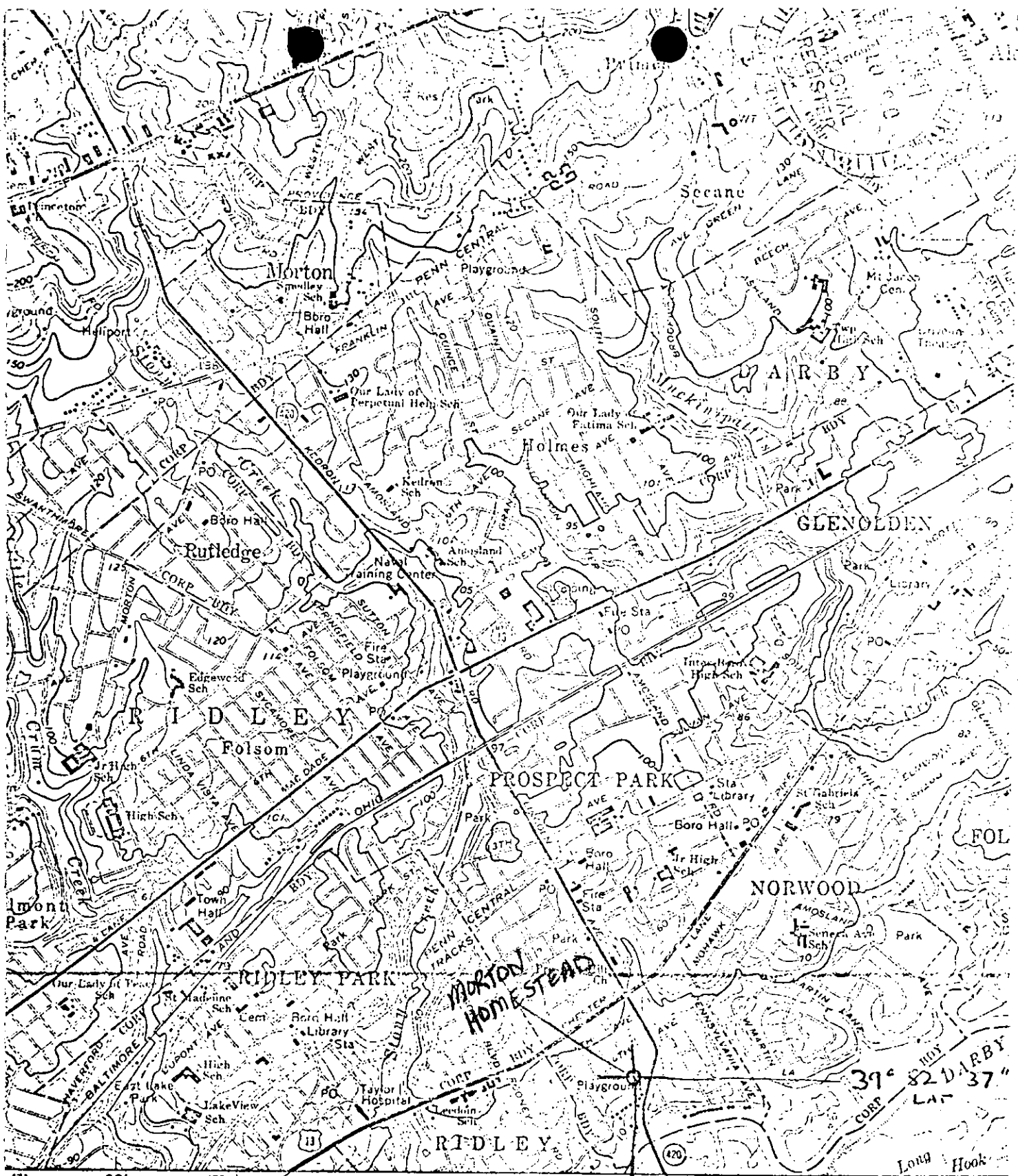
Homestead and Its Connection With John Morton," Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Report, November 28, 1956; Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, Conserving Pennsylvania's Historical Heritage, pamphlet (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, 1947).



One of few authenticated dwellings of Swedish settlers in the 17th century is preserved by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at Prospect Park, south of Philadelphia. Unverified tradition identifies the house as the birthplace of John Morton, descendant of Swedish settlers and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

March, 1961

NPS Photo



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 WNE, PA QUADRAWT SCALE 1:24 000 75° 18' 20" LONG 39° 52' 30"
 N. 3952.5
 W 7515/7.5
 — 1967 —
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 Long Hook

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

LINDEN