

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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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

RECEIVED

historic Barley Sheaf Inn

JUN 1 1980

and/or common Barley Sheaf Farm

PH & MC
Historic Preservation

2. Location

street & number 420 West Germantown Pike not for publication

city, town East Norriton Township vicinity of congressional district 13th

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Montgomery code 091

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	*Prof. Offices
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Joseph Russell

street & number 2960 West Germantown Pike

city, town Norristown vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Court House

street & number Swede and Airy Streets

city, town Norristown state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 7/27/80 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Barley Sheaf is a 2½ story natural fieldstone, plastered structure. A 19th century frame addition, 10' X 20', has been built onto the rear of the building and a 10' X 40' concrete porch added on the second floor. A gothic style dormer window has been added on the third floor front and a double pitched dormer with 6/6 double hung sash at rear. The overall size is 60' across the front and 46' deep, with a chimney on either end. There are two windows, 6/6, on the right of the center door and three 9/6 windows on the left. A tern metal roof covers the entire rectangular shaped structure. The stone walls are 18" and the deep set windows have no ropes or chains, the upper window being stationary. There are random width floors throughout (with the exception of the addition) and a corner fireplace in two rooms on the first floor with original mantels; these rooms have original beamed ceilings. The three "old" rooms on the first floor, hall and stairway to second floor have panelled wainscoting 36" from the floor. The addition on the first floor contains a kitchen, one other room and a lavatory. There are six rooms and bath on the second floor; four rooms are original.

The main structural/^{hand hewn}beam in the basement is a tree, cut on two sides, with bark remaining; one stone wall is 4' thick.

The original portion of the back barn of field-stone construction has not been altered. It is 46'5" across the front and 60' deep, with a corrugated metal roof, original barn floor and pegged beams. For use as a jail, a portion on the left side of barn is sectioned off to create two wooden cells with no fenestration. The lower level contains the horse and cow stalls and a fieldstone wall surrounds the barnyard. A frame addition has been built onto either side of the barn.

The wagon shed is constructed of field-stone, with mud plaster pointing, and hand hewn beams. On the right an early stone addition has been made and a frame addition on the left at a later date. The entire building is 60' X 25', has a steeply pitched roof with front gable of frame and rear gable of stone.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"Barley Sheaf" is significant as one of the early Inns of Colonial times and the scene of the first court and jail when Montgomery County was formed in 1784.

Robert Shannon emigrated to Pennsylvania prior to 1734 and acquired 200 acres of land in Norriton in 1737 from Isaac Norris, being part of the manor lands of William Penn's Williamstadt. He made the first improvements on the site and operated it as an Inn.

When Montgomery County was formed it was carved out of Philadelphia County by an Act of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, passed September 10, 1784. As the Courthouse and jail were not built for several years after the formation of the County, the first court was held on the premises owned by John Shannon, grandson of Robert Shannon, then known and licensed as the "Barley Sheaf Hotel," situated in Norriton on what is now the Germantown Turnpike.

The minutes of the first court in Montgomery County, culled from the record of Quarter Sessions Docket 1/1, is as follows:

"Minutes of a Court of Quarter Sessions, in and for the County of Montgomery, held at the house of John Shannon, on Tuesday, the 28th day of December, 1784. Present, Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, James Morris, John Richards, Henry Sheetz and William Dean, Esquires. The court opened at 12 o'clock."

To show the spirit of the times we learn from the records of the court that one person, for committing two larcenies, was sentenced, September 28, 1785, to receive on his bare back fifteen lashes, well laid on, and on the following October 8th the same number to be repeated for the second offense.

It is logical and reasonable that the site chosen to hold the temporary court sessions should be located on the most passable and traveled road. The justices and other delegates came from great distances from all parts of the county. The main road of travel was the Germantown Pike of today and was referred to as early as 1709 as the "Great Road." It was one of the few passable roads leading to Philadelphia during that early period.

Barley Sheaf served as the County Courthouse for just a short time. In 1787 the county completed a new courthouse in Norristown and the frequenters of John Shannon's Tavern no longer had to share it with the justices.

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"Barley Sheaf Tavern" not only provided welcome food, drink and shelter for travelers and weary wayfarers but the farmers gathered here to hear news of the day from travelers who were staying for the night and discuss neighborhood events. Business concerning public welfare and intercommunications were discussed, before steamboats, railroads or telegraphs were known. All public notices were posted here and elections and public meetings of nearly all kinds were held here. The products of Pennsylvania are stated to have required in 1760 between 8,000 and 9,000 wagons for their transportation to Philadelphia. From the location of this County it is very probable that 2/3 or 3/4 of this great number must have actually passed through this territory, thus requiring Inn accomodation.

Robert Shannon, the patriarch of the Shannon family, was born in Great Britain in 1667 and died in 1747. At his death he bequeathed the "Plantation in Norriton, upon which I now reside, to my son James." The children of their two sons, James and John, intermarried with the first families of Colonial Montgomery County, all socially and politically powerful. James Shannon's death occurred in 1765. His son Robert, named after his grandfather, inherited 120 acres, while his son John inherited the Inn on the northwest side on the opposite side of Stony Creek. Barley Sheaf remained in the tenure of the Shannon family until 1795 when it was bought by Jacob Miller who held title only two weeks and sold to George Leonhart, who continued to operate it as an Inn. It served this purpose until after the tenure of Arnold Baker when, in 1826, the meetings of the Pennsylvania Militia are being held at the "Sign of the Barley Sheaf." The deed in the name of Benjamin Baker, son of Arnold, contains no mention of a tavern. It appears, in 1861, to have become a private residence.

Today it stands at the intersection of Germantown Pike and North Wales Road and is used to house professional offices.

The Shannons were a prominent and influential family and were among the first to give aid and encouragement to the cause of education. When the first post office was established here in 1823 the village was named Shannonville.

The History of Montgomery County, T.W. Bean, Philadelphia, 1884, p.455, 535, 100
The Historical Society of Montgomery County Sketches, Volume I, 1895, page 126
Volume IV, 1910, pages 58-60, 140, 160-161; Volume VI, 1920, pages 343-350

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 1/2 acres
Quadrangle name Lansdale Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	18	471500	4444100	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Starting at a point on the southside of W.Germantown Pike moving SW 209 ft, then west 209 ft, then north 209 ft, then SE along southside of W.Germantown Pike for 209 ft to starting point,

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dorothy S. Conard

organization _____ date June 9, 1980

street & number 1400 Blue Bell Road telephone 215-643-1442

city or town Blue Bell 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

ED WEINTRAUB, State Historic Preservation Officer date _____

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register date _____

Keeper of the National Register date _____

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

9. Major Bibliographical Reference

The History of Montgomery County, T.W. Bean, Philadelphia, 1884, p.455, 535, 1001
The Historical Society of Montgomery County Sketches, Volume I, 1895, page 126.
Volume IV, 1910, pages 58-60, 140, 160-161; Volume VI, 1920, pages 343-350

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Acreeage of nominated property 1 acres

Quadrangle name Lansdale

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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A

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Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

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D

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F

Zone	Easting	Northing

G

Zone	Easting	Northing

H

Zone	Easting	Northing

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ED WEINTRAUB, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11/13/80

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Keeper of the National Register

Chief of Registration

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Judiciary of Montgomery County. Historical Series Reprinted from the Times Herald, Norristown, Pa., 1929, pages 11-15, also Edward W. Hocker, pen name "Norris", Scrap Book B-7/8, page 221.

The Montgomery County Story, E.Gordon Alderfer, Norristown, 1951, pages 147-246.

Souvenir Dedication Program, Montgomery County Court House Annex, Feb. 8, 1930.

Pennsylvania Archives, 3rd Series, Volume 14, 15, 16, Taxables, Norriton, 1769-1783

Original Assessments, Norriton Township, 1785-1850.

The Political Hand-Book of Montgomery County, Augustus G. Feather, Philadelphia, 1899, pages 12-13.

Edward Matthews Scrap Books (1895-1910), Nos. 91, page 147; 93, page 65, 66, 130.

Norristown Weekly Register, June 1, 1825. Sheriff Sale—Philip Boyer, Sheriff. Tavern Stand and 134 acres, Norriton Township, adjoining lands of the late Daniel Craig, Daniel St. Clair, Esq., and others. Improvements are a large two story stone house occupied as a tavern, known by the name of the Barley Sheaf, a stone barn, a stone tan-house, an orchard, about 18 acres of woodland, about 3 acres of meadow, 2 wells of good water with pumps, and stone sheds for 50 horses.

Norristown Weekly Register, April 26, 1826. Public House of Arnold Baker, Sign of the Barley Sheaf, Norriton Township. The 63rd Regiment of Pennsylvania Militia to meet for Court of Appeal. Major John Wentz, Captain Lawrence and Captain Henry Beyer.

Pennsylvania Archives, 6th Series, Volume I, pages 885, 886, 895, 897. Associators and Militia, County of Philadelphia, 6th Battalion, Captain John Wentz, 5th Company, Norriton Township, 1780. John Shannon, 5th class. Revolutionary service.

Property Owner's Map of Montgomery County, W.E. Morris, 1848. Arnold Baker shown as owner of site, Germantown Pike, Norriton Township.

Property Owner's Atlas of Montgomery County, Beers and Lake, 1861. B. Baker shown as owner of site, Germantown Pike, Norriton township.

Property Owner's Atlas of Montgomery County, G.M. Hopkins, 1871. Benjamin Baker shown as owner of site, Germantown Pike, Norriton township.

Property Owner's Atlas of Montgomery County, J.D. Scott, 1877. B. Baker shown as owner of site, Germantown Pike, Norriton township.

Montgomery County Will Book 1, Page 541. Lilly Shannon, Norriton township, made June 25, 1793; proved March 14, 1797. Will Book 2, page 158, Thomas Shannon, Norriton township, made February 1, 1800, proved June 2, 1800. Will Book 2, page 160, James Shannon, Jr., Norriton township, made May 17, 1800; proved July 21, 1800

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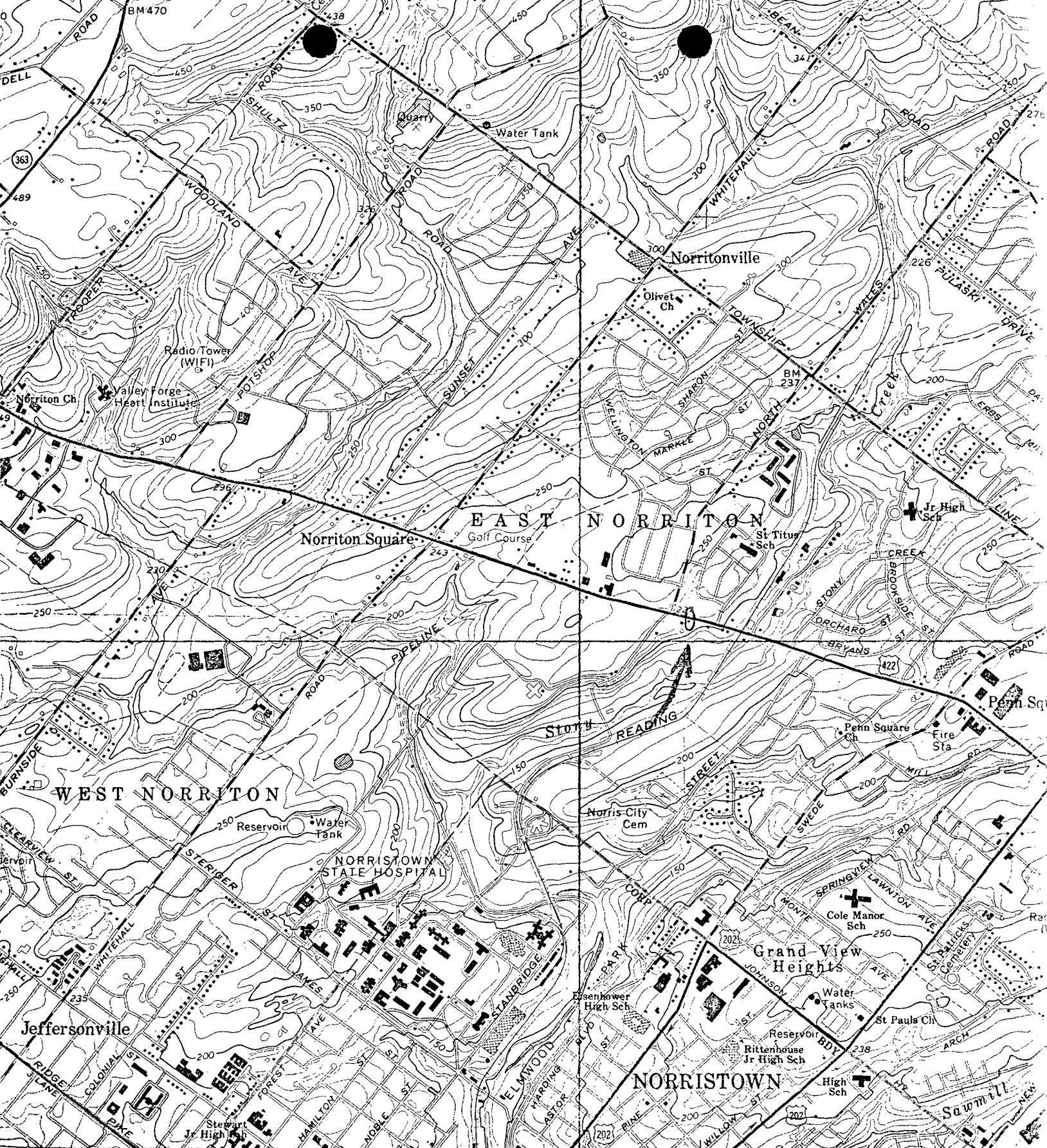
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Montgomery County Deed Book 1, page 412. Robert Shannon to Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, February 8, 1785. Lots of land for erection of Court House, Norristown. Deed Book 2, page 550, Robert Shannon and wife Hannah to Joseph McCrea, Norriton township, dated April 22, 1772; recorded August 10, 1786. Witnesses, Robert Shannon Jr., and Andrew Knox. Deed Book 12, James Shannon from Charles Norris.

Historical Background of Mural Paintings, Court Rooms, A, B and C, Montgomery County, as incorporated in address at unveiling by George M. Harding, Mural Artist, 1950-51.



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 Affairs, Topographic and Geologic Survey
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 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
 taken in 1950. Field checked 1951. Revised from aerial
 photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1966
 Conic projection, 1927 North American datum

