

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

LeVan Farm

AND/OR COMMON

Issac LeVan Tract, Jacob LeVan Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

St. Lawrence, Exeter Township

VICINITY OF

6th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Pennsylvania

42

Berks

011

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

William P. LeVan Estate (Multiple)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Berks County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Sixth and Court Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Reading

Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

9/28/77

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Harrisburg

Pennsylvania

DESCRIPTION

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

There are three main structures on the LeVan Farm, a farmhouse, a barn and a spring house as well as several auxillary structures.

1. Farmhouse

The farmhouse, constructed in 1837, is a two-story, Georgian style house. The facades of the structure are fieldstone, sealed together with lime mortar. The front facade stones were all carefully chipped into rectangular blocks, while the side and back facade stones are irregularly shaped and arranged more randomly than the front. To the top left center of the front facade is a light colored, carved date stone denoting the family builders and date of construction. The corners of the house are quoined with light colored stones and an occasional block of red sandstone (brought to the farm from Baumstown, located about 10 miles northeast of the farm). The roof consists of metal sheets covered with scalloped shingles.

The house is five bays by two bays. Windows are 12 over 12 and have panelled shutters.

The interior of the house is organized around a central stairway, with brick chimneys at opposing ends of the house.

Shortly after the main body of the house was built, a 1½ story addition was joined to the rear of the house. A porch was extended out from this addition and although the base remains, the roof has since collapsed. A wooden "necessary" is located about 20 feet behind the addition.

The house has been unoccupied for about 20 years and its condition has slowly deteriorated. There is much debris lying about the rear of the house; windows, shutters and eaves all need some repair, and in some places the spaces between the facade stones need re-mortaring. However, the house is structurally sound and with the necessary restoration, could be occupied.

2. Barn

The barn is a typical four bay structure, banked into the hillside with storage above and animals kept below.

Two construction materials were used; the lateral walls are fieldstone (such as that used in construction of the farmhouse) and the transverse walls are wood. The roof is metal sheeting (not original) and the supporting beams are held together with wooden pegs. The lateral walls are pierced by five vertical ventilation slits and the corners of these walls are quoined with light colored stone.

The barn is in good condition, with only slight superficial wood deterioration. It is presently used by the farmer who leases the land -- the top for feed and equipment storage and the bottom for animal shelter.

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LeVan Farm

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

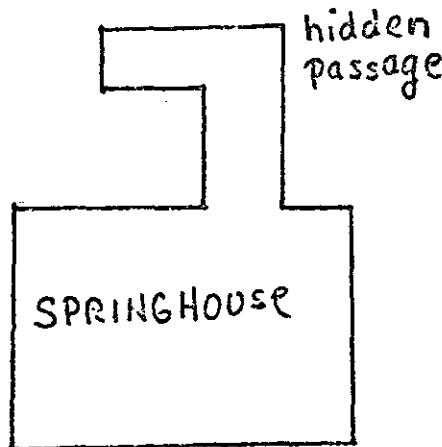
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2

3. Springhouse

Immediately to the side rear of the farmhouse is a springhouse, constructed of fieldstone and wood. The structure is accessible on two levels: directly on the ground level and at the spring level (via two sets of descending steps.) The upper level of the springhouse was used for storage of less perishable foodstuffs and the spring level was where meats, cheeses and other perishables were stored.

On the spring level, a peculiar passageway leads from the north wall and continues directly north for several feet before making an abrupt 90 degree turn to the west. The length of this passageway is approximately 30 feet. The passage is only about three feet wide and the semi-circular ceiling reaches a maximum height of three feet; entrance into it is only possible by carefully crawling along the ledges that extend along both sides. Family legend reveals that this was not a storage area, but a hiding place for the family from the Indian attacks frequent in the area during the 18th and early 19th centuries. The springhouse is in an extreme state of deterioration.



4. Auxiliary Structures

4a. Lime kilns - Two lime kilns are located in the steep bank immediately fronting the farmhouse, and one of these kilns is in excellent condition. These kilns are simply irregular fieldstones carefully arranged (no mortar used), with bricks lining the actual oven area. These kilns were used by the Levan family in making the mortar used to seal the stones on the various other farm structures. The limestone kilned was quarried about 30 feet away from the kiln in the same steep bank.

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The presence of the quarry and the accompanying kilns adds significantly to the overall preservation value of the LeVan farm. Besides exhibiting the near self-sufficiency of the pioneer farm, the quarry and kilns also exemplify how the established available materials were a chief determinant in the construction and appearance of the farm structures.

4b. Granery - Another intact auxiliary structure is the granery, located immediately to the side (west) of the barn. Wooden beams, fastened with wooden pegs, support a tin roof (not original) and the walls are field stone. This is the only auxiliary structure, except for the kilns, that has stone walls -- an indication of its importance to the owner. The grains cultivated on the farm were milled for consumption by the family and for market in this building.

4c. Cornerrib - A wooden cornerrib is located in the area behind the farmhouse. Its base is cement block, an indication that it was built much later than the other farm structures. This crib is no longer used and the walls are severely rotted.

4d. Wagon Shed - The wagon shed, located directly behind the barn, has its main axis perpendicular to that of the barn, facilitating easy pulling-in and pulling-out. The wood walls are extremely weathered, but almost wholly intact.

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 checked="" 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/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The LeVan farm began on a 1,000 acre tract of land in Exeter Township, Berks County, granted to Issac LeVan circa 1730 by Thomas and Richard Penn. The land has remained in the LeVan family ever since the time of the initial land grant, although most of the acreage has been sold. Today the LeVan farm comprises 54 acres of the original 1,000 acres.

The LeVan family was an old French family whose wealth was derived from the manufacture of fine brocades and taffetas. They lived in Picardy, France (now in Germany) and were zealous members of the Reformed Church. The LeVan family fled France after the Edit of Nantes in 1598 and fled to Amsterdam. In 1715 the oldest sons of Daniel and Maria LeVan, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and Jacob, immigrated to America. In 1731 they settled in Berks County on the lands granted to them from the Penns.

From this early beginning in 1731, the LeVan family has been developing and farming their land for 246 years. The collection of farm structures help to make the LeVan farm a good example of a working, self-sufficient farm.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 54

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	4,2,7	1,8,0	4,4,6,3	8,9,0	B	1,8	4,2,7	1,7,0	4,4,6,3	5,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C	1,8	4,2,6	6,1,0	4,4,6,3	1,6,0	D	1,8	4,2,6	9,9,0	4,4,6,3	9,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			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

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Van M. Potteiger

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

18 LeVan Street

CITY OR TOWN

Reading

TELEPHONE

STATE

Pennsylvania

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST: DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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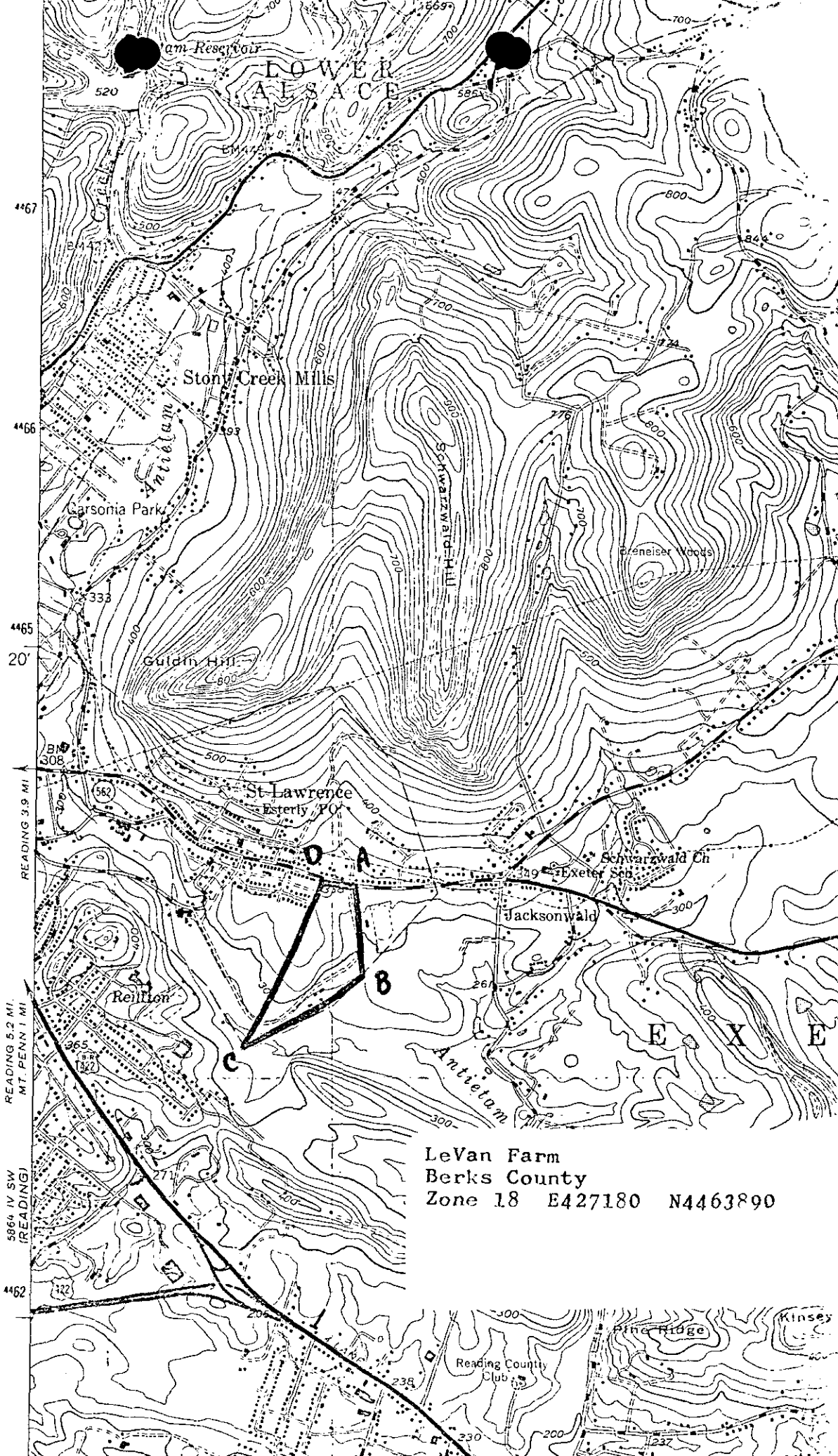
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Verbal Boundary Description

Acreage: 54 acres

UTM: Zone 18	A	E427180	N4463890
	B	E427170	N4463500
	C	E426610	N4463160
	D	E426990	N4463900

Starting at Point A (E427180 N4463890) on the southside of Rt. 562 moving south along the eastside of unpaved road for 750 feet to Point B (E427170 N4463500) then southwest along the St. Lawrence borough lines for 1250 feet to Point C (E426610 N4463160) then northeast for 1375 Feet to the southside of Rt. 562 or Point D (E426990 N4463900) then east along southside of Rt. 562 for 187 feet to starting point (A).



LeVan Farm
Berks County
Zone 18 E427180 N4463890