

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCERS use only  
received  
date entered

**1. Name**

historic

and/or common Shank's Ferry Site 36La2

**2. Location**

street & number [redacted]  not for publication

city, town Martic Township vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 16

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Lancaster code 071

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 Pennsylvania Power and Light Company

street & number c/o George R. Aukamp

city, town Holtwood vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Pennsylvania 17532

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lancaster County Courthouse

street & number 50 North Duke Street

city, town Lancaster state Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Pennsylvania State Museum Archaeological Site Survey & Recording Program has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date May 30, 1967  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

## 7. 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**

The Shenks Ferry Site(36La2) is a multi-component Late Woodland site located on the edge of a knoll overlooking Grubb Creek in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Situated approximately 3/4 mile east of the Susquehanna River, the site is bordered on the north by the Conrail Railroad tracks. A Pennsylvania Power and Light Company powerline runs through the site, which is currently in a 50 year old secondary forest growth, east of the powerline, and in a low bush and grass growth along the powerline right-of-way. The site had been farmed prior to 1930, and the original forest vegetation was probably oak-hickory, with yellow poplar( Carey 1959). The soil on the site is developed from limestone parent material, with a high proportion of graphite, and is classified as a Pequea silt loam soil type, 15-25 per cent slope, moderately eroded phase. Pequea soils are fertile, but shallow and steep, with a low moisture holding capacity.

The site was originally tested in 1930-1931 by Donald A. Cadzow of the old Pennsylvania Historical Commission. At the time of this research, the site vegetation was one of a long fallowed field, with infant pine. The total area covered by Cadzow was approximately a block, 50 meters on a side(2500 square meters), although the exact proportion of this area excavated, as well as location of test holes, unknown, due to the lack of recorded site methodology. In all, 43 "storage" and "fire" pits were recorded, as well as 13 burials, most of which were in very good to excellent preservation. Animal bone and plant remains were found in several of the pits. The most important find on the site was a burial(number 12), of the Shenks Ferry cultural form, containing a later contact period(Susquehannock) brass coil ear ornament. A brass bead was also found in pit 36. Subsequent work at the site was undertaken in 1973, under the direction of Barry Kent of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. This two week excavation uncovered four additional features as well as Shenks Ferry type pottery, similar to that found by Cadzow.

Pottery found at the site covers three phases of occupation. For the earlier Shenks Ferry culture, Shenks Ferry Incised pottery shows the presence of a Blue Rock phase occupation (1300-1450 A.D.). Later Lancaster Incised period pottery is absent from the site, but related and slightly later Funk Incised pottery shows a Funk phase occupation(1500-1550 A.D.). Some sherds, of a Funk form, but with shell tempered paste, characteristic of the Susquehannock culture, have been argued as imitative of Susquehannock cultural ceramics (Heisey 1971:66). This, along with the presence of Susquehannock combs, trade brass, and Susquehannock pottery(1550-1600 A.D.) would argue for a continual occupation of the site from Funk phase time period(1500-1550 A.D.) through early Susquehannock(1550-1575) (Kent n.d.).

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Shenks Ferry Site, 36La2, Lancaster County  
Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 2

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

The Shenks Ferry cultural settlement pattern is thought to be of two types: villages; and seasonal campsites (Kinsey and Graybill 1971). The earlier Blue Rock phase occupation at the site appears to be anomalous in that the site is located on a high knoll away from the Susquehanna River, while typically, Blue Rock phase sites are usually on or in close proximity to alluvial floodplains of major river courses. The later Funk phase occupation conforms to the ideal in being on an easily defended position on elevated ground. The later Susquehannock occupation of the site again fails to conform to the usual expectation of sites from that period, in being located away from good expanses of good agricultural soil. Whether the Susquehannock occupation represents a farming hamlet or not is unclear, as the soil on the site is fertile, but droughty and would not have been productive unless the climate of that period had been wetter, which it may have been.

The site boundary has not yet been determined by archaeological testing, however it is clearly demarcated to the south, west, and east by a very steep sloped down to the Creek. The northern boundary is less certain, but is arbitrarily restricted to the southern half of the knoll the site rests on. The boundary is defined, beginning at a point 130 meters south of the Railroad tracks and 30 meters west of the Powerline. From there the boundary runs for 180 meters at a bearing of 141 degrees, then 135 meters at a bearing of 37 degrees, then 160 meters at a bearing of 309 degrees, then 95 meters at a bearing of 226 degrees, back to the origin. The area enclosed is 1.9 hectares (4.6 acres).

At the present time, no further changes are expected to occur to the site through farming or modification of the landscape.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Shenks Ferry Site lies primarily in the presence of material culture on the site likely dating to the interfaces of two separate episodes of culture change. The site is currently the only clear example of Shenks Ferry peoples being acculturated by Susquehannocks, as evidenced in Funk Incised pottery, with shell temper, and in a clearly Shenks Ferry burial type, with later trade brass burial furniture, uncommon in traditional Shenks Ferry mortuary practice (Kent n.d.). The site also represents an unusual settlement pattern for Susquehannock, in the location of the occupation on a high knoll away from agricultural soil. This documented cultural change can elucidate specific historical processes of cultural change in the lower Susquehanna Valley during the 16th century, as well as the question of acculturation in general.

The mechanisms of the shift from Blue Rock phase Shenks Ferry to Lancaster/Funk phase Shenks Ferry is poorly understood at the present time. Pottery that is clearly transitional to forms of Blue Rock versus Lancaster/Funk phases is not known, and there is a strong possibility that if such a type existed, it would be found at the Shenks Ferry site, which contains ceramics from both phases (Kinsey and Graybill 1971). The shift in settlement pattern from hamlets to large stockaded villages for the two phases may also be reflected in the Shenks Ferry site, as part of a larger settlement system, and in the shifts in subsistence patterns that a settlement change might bring. The preservation of floral and faunal remains at the site is very good, and would be expected to yield strong dietary information for the reconstruction of these subsistence patterns.

Finally, the presence of abundant charcoal at the site may permit the tying of the ceramic chronology to absolute dates, through Radiocarbon dating techniques. At present, the dating of the major types for Shenks Ferry phases is vague, at best (Kinsey and Graybill 1971), and such a radiocarbon based chronology would alleviate the problem.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4.3

Quadrangle name Conestoga, Pa.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A [redacted]  
Zone Easting Northing

B [redacted]  
Zone Easting Northing

C [redacted]

D [redacted]

E [redacted]

F [redacted]

G [redacted]

H [redacted]

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point 130 meters south of the Railroad tracks and 30 meters West of the Powerline, the boundary runs for 180 M. at a bearing of 141 degrees, then 135 M at a bearing of 37 Degrees, then 160 M at a bearing of 309 degrees, then 95 M at a bearing of 226

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries** degrees, back to to origin.

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ira Becherman

organization [redacted] date [redacted]

street & number 630 Humphrey Court #202 telephone 717-545-5698

city or town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania 17109

# 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  
title Preservation Officer date [redacted]

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [redacted] date [redacted]

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Shenks Ferry Site, 36La2, Lancaster County  
Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

1

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Carey, John Breniser

1959 Soil Survey, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. USDA Soil Conservation Service. Series 1956, No. 4. Washington.

Cadzow, Donald A.

1936 Archaeological Studies of the Susquehannock Indians of Pennsylvania. Safe Harbor Report No. 2. Publications of Pennsylvania Historical Commission. Volume 3. Harrisburg. pp. 43-61.

Kinsey, W. Fred, III and Jeffrey R. Graybill

1971 Murry Site and its role in Lancaster and Funk Phases of Shenks Ferry Culture. Pennsylvania Archaeologist 41(4):7-44.

Kent, Barry C.

n.d. Susquehanna's Indians. Manuscript on file at William Penn Memorial Museum, Harrisburg.

Heisey, Henry

1971 An Interpretation of Shenks Ferry Ceramics. Pennsylvania Archaeologist 41(4): 44-70.