

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Birchrunville General Store

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Birchrunville

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Chester

STATE

Pennsylvania

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE USGS map, updated and revised by the Chester County, PA Planning Commission (property lines 1964, roads 1965) Pottstown Quad.

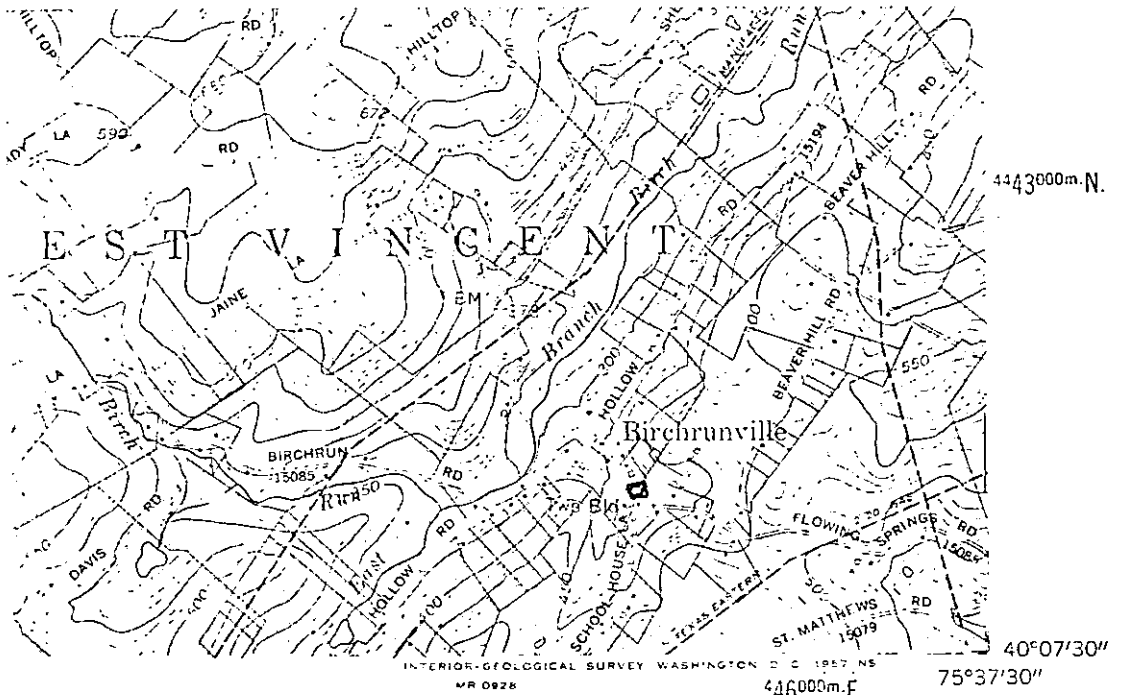
SCALE 1:24000 or 1"=2000 ft. DATE 1955 original--1965 partial revision

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

INT: 3464-75



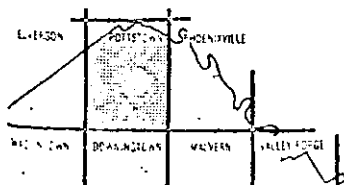
INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON D C 1957 NS  
MR 0926

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- |             |     |                 |       |
|-------------|-----|-----------------|-------|
| Heavy-duty  | ==  | Light-duty      | ---   |
| Medium-duty | --- | Unimproved dirt | ----- |

U.S. Route

State Route



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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**

HISTORIC

Birchrunville General Store

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Hollow and Flowing Springs Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Birchrunville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

COUNTY

Chester

CODE

**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

C. Allen Houck and Anna Mae Houck

STREET & NUMBER

Beaver Hill Road

CITY, TOWN

Birchrunville

STATE

Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Chester County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

High and Market Streets

CITY, TOWN

West Chester

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# [2] 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

This two-story ~~fieldstone~~ and frame structure with mansard roof is an example of late Victorian imagination and styling. The emphasis is on total use of ~~the building~~ from basement to second floor: It is situated on a corner lot and faces to the south.

The building is set on a slope steep enough that the front of the store, 4 steps above ground level, is one full floor above ground at the rear. The second floor overhangs the store front providing a deep porch shelter for the display windows which are on either side of the canted doorway. Each display window has a large plate glass in the center surrounded on four sides by small panes. The left plate-glass is surrounded by 16 variously colored small panes. The right window, shortened by a frame addition to the basic structure, has only eleven panes surrounding the center plate glass. Each display window has a similarly arranged glass side canted at approximately 135 angle toward the recessed double-entrance door. Each door has one panel on the bottom with glass above, the panel being about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the door height. Each display window is backed by two large, double-hung, heavy sash, each section containing 35 lites (15/20).

The second floor has two dormer bays with a marble date stone (roofed to match the dormers) in between. The datestone reads "Creamery, P.O., Hall & Store, Built by T.B. & I.L. Dewees, 1898". The window on the right has been converted into a door at a more recent date and is reached by an outside wooden stairway.

The western exposure is broken by a receiving offset and a jutting, short, wooden baywindow. At the basement level, there is a functional, double utility door, of battened tongue and groove construction, on the left. There are two windows separated by the receiving platform, the left window being a 4-lite full window (2/2). The window on the right is a nine lite sash.

The receiving platform is at half level between the basement and first floor. It has, at receiving height, a sliding door to the road side, a regular door to the north, and one 9-lite sash to the south. There is a utility room beneath which is entered by a low board and batten door on the north side. There are two half-circle windows (now closed) at ground level on the south exposure of this offset.

The wooden bay window is to the right of the receiving platform. It is two bays wide and one bay deep with no extra space between the windows which are 1/1 double-hung sash. The second floor has five equally spaced dormer bays, with double-hung sash of four lites (2/2).

The basement is fully exposed to the north(rear) giving the appearance of a three-story building. At ground level there is one large utility double door of battened tongue and groove construction. There is one 4-lite (2/2) window to the right of the door. The first floor is also two bays wide,

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the right bay being a door from which a wooden stairway descends. The second floor has two dormer bays. All windows on the first and second floor levels are 2/2. All basement windows are, or have been, shuttered. All dormers have a steep, pitched roof with a wooden, triangular, pierced and sawed decorative pattern inserted at the apex.

There is a stone offset of matching height to the left of the main structure and recessed the depth of one bay behind the main structure. It is one bay wide and two bays deep. There is another utility door at basement level, and one 2/2 dormer window at the second floor level. The first floor level is blank.

On the east side of this stone offset, there are two bays each at basement, first and second floor levels, the second level being dormers. There is one 2/2 dormer at the second level to the south of the offset. Two more dormers at the same level face east, these being part of the main structure.

A German-sided, frame, single-story addition in two parts completes this eastern exposure. The stone basement level is completely exposed and has one 2/2 window in the linking recessed section. There is a matching 2/2 window above it in the frame first story. The remaining part of the frame addition, on high stone foundation, juts forward having no windows to its northern exposure. It has a cluster of 3 modern windows to its eastern exposure and no windows to its southern exposure. There is one tall, tongue and groove utility door- divided into three stacked sections on the southern exposure. This section flows forward from the main stone structure to become even with the front edge of the entrance porch. The room is entered by a door on the porch. In this frame wall there is also another door which leads up an inside stairway to the Hall on the second floor. Although it looks like an afterthought, at least several feet of this frame section was part of the original construction.

There is a stoned cave and early cold locker room under the porch, entered through the basement. Part of the frame section housed a steam engine to power the locker, store and ice cream machines. The remainder of the frame section was intended for an ice house, which effort aborted since its level was below the nearby stream and it partially filled with water.

The mansard roof is tin on the top. The vertical portion is a pattern of square-edged and fish-scale slates. The cornice is deep with square modillions and sawed ornamental supports, the two corner supports being larger than the others. There are two tall brick chimneys piercing the tin roof.

# [3] 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input 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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Birchrunville General Store, a fine example of Victorian architecture and a reflection of the innovative character of its builder, Thomas B. Dewees, bears the following datestone:

Birchrunville  
 Cremery,  
 Post Office,  
 Hall & Store  
 Built by  
 T.B. & I.L. Dewees  
 1898

The building was erected to house the general store and post office, with a meeting hall above and a creamery below. An addition between 1898 and 1905 created an ice house to provide ice for making ice cream. The creamery made butter and processed milk obtained from local farmers.

The Hall upstairs, complete with stage, provided a meeting place for the Gananouqua Tribe, Number 232, Improved Order of Red Men, organized there in 1903. The Post Office, which was established by Thomas B. Dewees in 1868, and the general store business were moved to the new building from the old location across the road. The store became the social meeting place for the men of the community.

The land on which the General Store was built was a vacant piece of property which Dewees inherited, along with other properties, from his mother-in-law (the mother of his first wife) Margaret Templin, in 1896. In 1915 Thomas B. Dewees sold the General Store to his wife, Ida L. Dewees. Upon her death in 1920 the property was sold to a cousin, J. Hause Dewees. The present owners purchased it in 1966 when J. Hause Dewees died and the property was reduced to its present size.

Thomas B. Dewees was a direct descendent of Colonel William Dewees, part owner of Mt. Joy Forge, later known as Valley Forge. Colonel Dewees lived in the "Bake House", then the ironmaster's house at Valley Forge. It was after the British burned the Forge in 1777 that Dewees moved his family and built the bake ovens.

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Thomas was born in 1844 in West Vincent Township and at the age of 16 enlisted in Co. F., 12th Penna. Militia for emergency men. In 1864 he reenlisted as a first Lt. in Co. E, 45th U.S. colored infantry and was later sent to Sabine Pass, Texas, doing duty on the Rio Grande. He had a great respect for the black people under his command and referred to them as "Gentlemen of Color". He was discharged in 1865 and returned to Pennsylvania.

After teaching school for a couple of years, Thomas began his business ventures which were numerous. At various times he owned a grocery business in Philadelphia; the General Store and shoe business in Birchrunville; a men's clothing store in West Chester; a stove and tin-ware business and a marble and granite business in Phoenixville and also had stock holdings in several electric light plants in the West. In 1904 he built a steam bakery at the site of the old store and had the first telephone in the area installed in the General Store shortly thereafter.

With his own land holdings and the properties he inherited from Margaret Templin, Thomas B. Dewees virtually became owner of the entire hamlet of Birchrunville. An article on Birchrunville in the Phoenixville Messenger alludes to this fact.

There is a town between this place and the city of Reading that heretofore I have considered unique, for the reason that one man is alleged to own everything in sight. It occurred to me as I stood upon the front porch of the finely appointed mansion of Mr. Dewees, and relized his ownership of that delightful home, of the store property opposite which includes the store, creamery and capacious lodge room occupied by a TRIBE OF RED MEN; the old store now including the new steam bakery; the grist and saw mill across the valley, with farm land attached, and the other lands and house designated as Mr. Dewee's property that Birdsboro is not alone in its close ownership. But better than these: Mr. Dewees is a valued member of the Baptist Church; a sterling Republican, he never used liquors as a beverage, and has his second cigar to smoke.

[9] MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheets.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1/4 (one-quarter) acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	445430	4442260	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet.

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

Mrs. Violet Tucci and Mrs. Estelle Cremers

ORGANIZATION

DATE

French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

R.D. 2, Box 360

460-6287

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Pottstown

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

DATE

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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PAGE 1

Primary

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P 15, vol. 362, p. 493; Q 14, vol. 338, p. 591; D 7,  
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12993. Will Book 43, p. 389.

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La Munyan, Mrs. Philip. The Dewees Family. Norristown, Pa.:  
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PAGE 2

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Beginning at a point in Hollow Road and at a corner of lands now or late of Guy R. & Elizabeth Johnson; North 35 degrees, West 109 degrees; thence South 50 degrees, West 19.6 degrees; thence North 60 degrees, West 63 degrees to a point in the center of Flowing Springs Road; thence along the center line of said Flowing Springs Road South 37 degrees 30 min. East 146.5 degrees to a point in center of junction of Flowing Springs Road and Hollow Road; thence along center line of Hollow Road North 65 degrees, East 96.5 degrees to the place of beginning.