



Nominated acreage: Less than  
ten

Pottstown

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Pennsylvania</b>
COUNTY: <b>Chester</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: <b>Coventry Hall</b>
AND/OR HISTORIC: <b>Oakleigh</b>

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: <b>Coventryville</b>			
CITY OR TOWN: <b>South Coventry Township</b>		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: <b>Fifth</b>	
STATE: <b>Pennsylvania</b>	CODE: <b>42</b>	COUNTY: <b>Chester</b>	CODE: <b>029</b>

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 type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: <b>Samuel W. Morris, J. David Jackson, Linwood Romig</b>		
STREET AND NUMBER: <b>R. D. 2</b>		
CITY OR TOWN: <b>Pottstown, Montgomery County</b>	STATE: <b>Pennsylvania</b>	CODE: <b>42</b>

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: <b>Chester County Court House</b>		
STREET AND NUMBER: <b>High and Market Streets</b>		
CITY OR TOWN: <b>West Chester</b>	STATE: <b>Pennsylvania</b>	CODE: <b>42</b>

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: <b>None known</b>		
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: <b>Pennsylvania</b>
COUNTY: <b>Chester</b>
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Construction of Coventry Hall took place in three major phases; Robert and Rebecca Grace's original house built between 1740 and 1760, an addition to its east gable end after 1798, and Robert May's second addition in 1803 to the east gable end of the earlier addition.

The original two-and-one-half story structure was of random fieldstone construction later covered with cut stone on the front and stucco on the rear and sides. The south(front) elevation is three bays wide, including three window compartments, and the gable ends are two bays deep. Throughout both the first and second floors the original eighteen-light windows have been removed and replaced with six-over-six sash windows. The second story west gable end windows are unusual in that the lights decrease in height from the bottom to the top of each sash. Use of four light windows at the attic gable ends has been retained on the west end.

A stairway at the rear of the hallway, forming the east bay, is marked on the exterior by a window located between the second and first floor levels. Two rooms to the west of the hallway fill the remaining two bays. A single fieldstone chimney running east-west is located in the center of this section and serves back-to-back fireplaces on the common wall between the two western rooms. Of particular note is the fireplace in the first floor's southwestern room or parlor. Built within a fully panelled fireplace wall of Georgian style, it was the spot where Benjamin Franklin's newly invented stove, a gift to Robert Grace, was first tested.

A second addition dating between 1798 and 1803 is two and a half stories high and was, likewise, constructed first of random fieldstone and later covered with cut stone and stucco. The front and rear elevations are two bays wide and the gable end is two bays deep. Windows on both the first and second floors are six-over-six with the first floor windows distinguished by three piece keystone flat arches. A north-south oriented chimney was built on the east gable end.

The final major phase, constructed in 1803, increased the building approximately the same width as the first addition. On the east gable end two four-over-four sash windows and a datestone are visible at the attic level. The rear has two six-over-six sash windows positioned one above the other, in the manner of the earlier sections. On the front a first floor window topped with a semi-circular arch of radiating voussoirs and keystone provides a fine unusual touch to the exterior. Directly above this window is another six-over-six sash window. The interior plan includes a fireplace on the western wall and a stairway in the southeastern corner.

Today these colonial and federal sections, similarly covered with cut stone and stucco, are joined by a continuous molded cornice which forms partial pediments at both gable ends.

A two-and-one-half story four-bay frame structure was added to the eastern gable end of the 1803 structure, sometime in the nineteenth century. One bay deep, the addition is connected to the northern bay of the 1803 section. Three gable dormers on the front and a gable end chimney mark this section. A one story shed-roofed porch encloses the lower front three bays of the

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Pennsylvania	
COUNTY	
Chester	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

original section, while a one-story, single-bay, flat-roofed, stuccoed-brick addition was made to the northern bay of the west gable end of the original house during the nineteenth century.

**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 type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input checked="" 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

Robert and Rebecca Grace, the original owners of Coventry Hall, were prominent in colonial iron industry and Philadelphian society. Subsequent occupants who were responsible for the later major additions were also significant to American history.

Rebecca Savage Nutt Grace descended from several families connected with the iron industry and became heiress to considerable iron interests. Through her step-father Samuel Nutt, builder of Coventry Forge, and a short lived marriage to his nephew Samuel Nutt, Jr., Rebecca acquired the Coventry area land. She and her second husband Robert Grace built the original section sometime after their marriage in 1740.

Trained in metallurgy Robert Grace was well suited to manage the iron operations. Raised in Philadelphia, Grace was a devoted friend of Benjamin Franklin and an original member of the latter's club, the "Junto."

Grace's generosity was evidenced by his unsolicited offer of funds to Franklin when Franklin's printing business was the subject of a lawsuit. Franklin later demonstrated his gratitude by giving Grace, without patent limitations, his design for a new fireplace stove. The first plates, supports, and damper controls were cast at Coventry Forge, and the prototype of the famous stove was successfully tested in the south-west parlor fireplace at Coventry Hall. The Franklin stoves produced at Warwick Furnace (also a property of Robert and Rebecca Grace) and sold at Coventry, proved highly popular.

Ownership of Coventry Hall was retained by descendants of Rebecca Grace for some years after her death in 1800. They were responsible for the additions and architectural innovations. One of the latter owners, Colonel Caleb North, had distinguished himself during the Revolutionary War at Brandywine, Paoli, and Germantown.

In addition to the importance of Coventry Hall's builders and early owners within the colonial iron industry and the Revolutionary effort, the house itself is of interest due to its retention of many fine and original architectural features. Significant features include the fireplace where the Franklin stove was tested, other fireplaces and mantelpieces, deep panelled window recesses, and the semi-circular arched window.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chester County Historical Society. Miscellaneous papers. South Coventry Township, Chester County.

Bining, Arthur Cecil. Pennsylvania Iron Manufacture in the Eighteenth Century. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1938.

Futhey, J. Smith and Gilbert Cope. History of Chester County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1881.

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
NW	40°	10'	30"	75°	41'	15"	40°	10'	30"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than ten acres.

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Natural and Historic Resource Associates, Inc./ Mrs. Eleanor W. Winsor**

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: **10-23-72**

for the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trusts, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**313 South 16th Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Philadelphia** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **42**

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 William J. Wewer

Title Executive Director

Date PA. Historical and Museum Comm.

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS