

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Coventryville Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

STATE

R.#2, Pottstown, Pa.

Chester

Pa., 19464

## 3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE

USGS map, Chester County Planning Comm. (prop. lines from 1964, roads-1965)

SCALE

1"=2000'

DATE

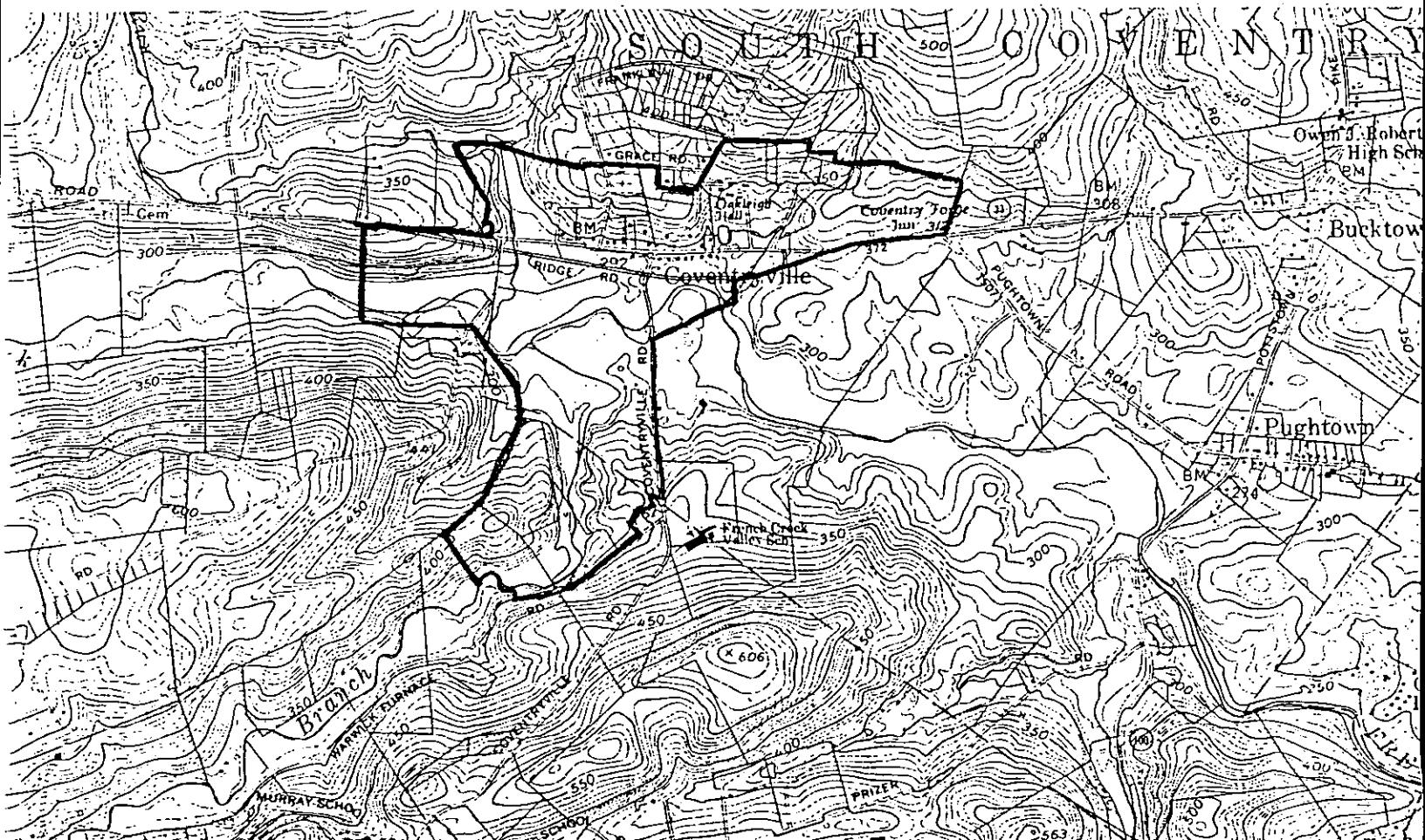
1966

## 4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

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

INT: 3464-7



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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

Coventryville Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

South Coventry, Warwick, East Nantmeal Townships

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th and 16th

STATE

Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF

CODE

COUNTY

Chester

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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 19380

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**77 DESCRIPTION**

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE		
<input checked="" 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**

The area known today as Coventryville was a peaceful, quiet place in 1700 with a few inhabitants living on small cleared acreages, separated from each other by virgin forests, and totally dependent upon themselves for their basic needs. The valley lying between the steep Nantmeal hills to the south and the more even, gentler rise of the hills to the north was very like those of Samuel Nutt's native Coventry, England.

In 1717, Nutt established the first iron forge in Chester County, and the second in the Commonwealth, at the confluence of the north and south branches of French Creek. A catalan type forge, this small beginning was joined by others. With ebb and flow, it flourished for over 150 years to birth and promote the iron industry in Pennsylvania and, indeed, "early America".

The sites of Coventry Forge #1 (A), Coventry Forge #2 (C), Redding Furnace #1 (B), also known as Kristeen Furnace, and the later mills of George Chrisman are all that remain of these courageous, early industrial enterprises which gave impetus to the growth of the area and paved the way for the agricultural pursuits which followed the age of the ironmaster.

One of the earliest houses built for the forge, other than workers' cabins, was the house Samuel Nutt built on a gradual rise above the forge to the north. It is described in The Potts Memorial as having been constructed after the manner of the old houses in Coventry, England, a half-timber house framed with immense hewn logs between which were mortared stones.

An early house still standing is Coventry House. (See Coventry House, National Register of Historic Places) The first part was of random fieldstone with cut stone on the front. (photo. 4,4a,4b) It is two and 1/2 stories high three bays wide and two bays deep at the gable ends. Especially notable is the southwestern parlor with its fine Georgian panelling on the deep window reveals and on the fully panelled north fireplace wall. Tradition holds that it was in this fireplace about 1742 that the stove designed at Warren Point by Benjamin Franklin and cast at Warwick Furnace was first tested. The second part, added between 1798 and 1803, is a substantial stone two bay addition to the east gable end. This addition has fine fireplaces, one on the first floor of black and white variegated marble flanked by panelled cupboards. The second floor of this section has interior shutters and a Federal punchwork mantel.

In 1803, Robert May, husband of Rebecca's granddaughter, made the final one bay addition to the east gable end of the second addition. The most remarkable feature of the 1803 addition is a full-size, arched window on the south elevation. The window is topped by a cut stone arch accented by larger keystone and voussoirs. The cut stone facade carries through on the later addition.

One of the oldest remaining structures within the Historic District is The Inn. (photo. #3) Originally, it was a two and 1/2 story log house, 18'x36'. In the 18th. century, before the 1798 Glass Tax, a stone addition, 18'x20', was attached to the eastern end. This northeastern room contains fine Georgian woodwork, including a fireplace wall with panelled corner cupboards and chimney breast. The southwestern room, probably reworked at the same time, has panelled corner cupboards with arched doors topped by carved keyblocks. Soon after 1798, a second addition was made to the

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house's northwest corner making the enlarged house nearly 36' square.  
(1960 HABS survey)

One other structure of certain eighteenth-century origin remains in today's village (photo. #25) along with its barn, now a house (photo.#26). The original eighteenth-century house, two and one-half stories high, two bays wide on the north (front) elevation and one bay deep at the gable ends, later received a larger three-bay addition to its east gable end. Architecturally, the house is representative of a characteristic pattern of growth among area houses - the addition of a much larger nineteenth century wing to an existing house.

To the east of the village, Samuel Savage, Jr. built a home for his bride of 1731. (Photo. #6, 6a, 6b) Facing his building south, and in the middle of a goodly acreage, Savage's stone house with its later additions barn, wagon shed, corn crib, and springhouse remain today outwardly very little changed. (See Registration Savage-Hockley-North Farm)

Across the valley on the south side of French Creek lies another farm known as Coventry Forge Farm. (photo. #7, 7a) This property includes the site of the original Coventry Forge. The house may be the one referred to in a 1724 document relating to the Forge. Built of fieldstone with massive corner quoins for a small house, structural evidence shows that the west wing of the present house incorporated an earlier one and one-half story building.(See Registration Coventry Forge House)

Lying northwest of Coventry Forge Farm on a fast moving little stream called Rock Run, Nutt and his partners constructed a dam and built the first Redding Furnace. (Site D) Later it was rebuilt and called Kristeen, or Christeen, Furnace. This was a small attempt at melting the raw ore into bars which could be used in the forge. It was only mildly successful and was replaced in 1736 by Redding Furnace #2 about three miles west on French Creek. However, Kristeen Furnace turned out many items for trade in the years roughly from 1725 to 1765. Pieces of ore can still be dug up around the site. At one point a grist mill and a house were erected on either side of the furnace. (photo. #8, #9) and a farmhouse, barn and outbuildings were constructed on the furnace land between the furnace and the village. (photo. #10, 10a, 10b)

The 19th century introduced the George Chrisman family to Coventryville Coming from Kimberton in 1807. Chrisman bought Coventry Forge and adjacent land. He operated the Forge and prospered so that in 1826, he rebuilt the forge and enlarged its capacity. Iron forges of these early days needed constant repair. This was due to the intense heat to which the stone chimney was subjected, and the fact that, except for the charcoal house and a few other smaller buildings, the building itself was usually built of rough lumber.

Later, in 1849, the Chrisman sons erected on the south branch a rolling mill to produce boiler plate. It was powered by a dam above the mill and some say by water from a larger dam known as Frogtown Dam on the north branch of French Creek. The Rolling Mill, called "California" because it was established in the year of the Gold Rush, operated only five years. A few

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ruins are all that remain of the mill structure since it was dismantled and moved to New Jersey for economic reasons. However, the paymaster's house located in the area of the "2 tenant houses" on the Chrisman Survey, 1898, has remained, being visibly incorporated inside a present house.

The influence of the Chrisman family caused the village to grow. From 1807 to the turn of the century, George Chrisman or his sons were responsible for most of the building in the village. (photo #12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) The Chrisman style is not repetitive. Each house carries something of its own personality and is built with a specific purpose or family in mind. All are of stone and all are two story, gable structures. All, except the Workers' Houses (photo. #22, 23) are roomy, pleasant examples of late Georgian-Early Federal style. Gable roofs with partial returns, often a hooded doorway, a few attractive embellishments such as graceful punchwork under the eaves are found in the larger houses. The Workers' Houses are sturdily built, but without ornamentation or embarrassment among their larger neighbors - an honest statement of their times.

The store (photo. #19), built between 1826 and 1849 and operated by a relative of the Chrismans, is a practical building for its purpose, but seems to lack the craftsmanship of other Chrisman buildings. Other structures within the district relating to the life of the village include the Methodist Church (photo. #15) (1860) which replaced the early 1812 Chapel on the hill and the Band Wagon House (photo #24) built in 1888 to house the Franklin Cornet Band. The "Sow Belly Railroad" which ran for only two years and had a station stop in Coventryville traversed the meadow below the village on its way to St. Peters from Phoenixville.

Coventryville was erected in so methodical a fashion as to almost arrange its own district. Very little space was allowed for lawns except on the farms. With the exception of two houses (photo. #18 and h), and one of those is on existing walls, there is little 20th century building.

The Coventryville Historic District remains a concentration of original eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings. It includes several individual buildings ;of particular architectural and historic interest, notably Coventry House.

The relocation of Route #23 in the 1950's obliterated the last of the Chrisman Mills and put the site of the second Coventry Forge many feet under its embankment. It also created the island which modern man could only envisage as a gasoline station.

Today the four dams so necessary to the early iron industry and later to the farming have burst their walls and the mill races now serve as foot paths for hikers. The sky is no longer lit with leaping fire of furnace heat and the grist mills no longer turn. The high powered automobile takes man and woman out of the valley to earn a living. The end of the day brings them back, however, to the same soft sounds that settled the quiet hills in 1717 when Samuel Nutt dreamed a dream.

Margaret Bennett  
Estelle Cremers

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 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 type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the early 18th century, Coventry sprang up in the wilderness as a thriving industrial community. The village, located on high ground above (Friends) French Creek in what is now Northern Chester County, Pennsylvania, was closely connected to Warwick Furnace. Coventry Forge and Warwick Furnace were at the core of the iron industry that developed in the upper reaches of French Creek and in Berks and Philadelphia (Montgomery) Counties. Together they constituted an early industrial complex of great significance to the American Revolution and to the economic growth of the country. (See Warwick - Furnace Farms Complex, National Register of Historic Places)

The men and women who were associated with the early history of Coventryville - Samuel and Anna Nutt, William Branson, Mordecai Lincoln, Robert and Rebecca Grace, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Savage, Caleb North and Thomas and Anna Potts were energetic, resourceful, creative persons with marked leadership qualities. In the 19th century, these characteristics and the iron making tradition of the village continued under the aegis of the George Chrisman family, another notable group.

Coventry Forge, the second iron manufactory in the colony of Pennsylvania and the first in Chester County, was established in the years between 1717-19 by Samuel Nutt just below the confluence of the north and south branches of French Creek. Nutt, an English Quaker and a man of means, had come to this country in 1714 bringing with him a certificate of transfer from the Coventry Friends Monthly Meeting and a purchase title to certain lands in the French Creek Region.

With remarkable initiative and speed, Nutt set out to enlarge his enterprise and acreage. He opened ore mines at St. Mary's, purchased 300 acres adjacent to his Coventry holding and obtained two large tracts in East Nantmeal Township on one of which the Warwick Furnace was later built. Using his own funds, Nutt also built a road from Coventry to Philadelphia, now known as #23 which still bears his name in places.

In 1720 Nutt moved his forge to higher ground and in 1723 he formed a partnership with William Branson and Mordecai Lincoln, the great-great-grandfather of Abraham Lincoln. Branson, a Philadelphia merchant, was also acquiring large amounts of land in the French Creek Region and showing interest in investing in iron works. Through the partnership Redding Furnace I, sometimes called Kristeen, was constructed on Rock Run just west of the forge.

In 1725 Lincoln sold his part in the partnership to Branson for 500 pounds, but the partnership continued through the construction of Redding Furnace II on the south branch of French Creek. (See Redding Furnace II, Pa. Inventory of Historic Sites and Landmarks) In 1732, experiments were made at Redding I which led to the first production of steel. That same year Branson bought Vincent Forge (later known as Vincent Steel Works) and further refined the steel making process.

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Shortly after starting the forge at Coventry, Samuel Nutt married Anna Savage, daughter of Thomas Rutter and the widow of Samuel Savage, founder with Thomas Potts in 1716 of the Forge on Manatawny Creek, the first in Pennsylvania. Branson was one of several investors in this forge in the early years.

After her marriage to Samuel Nutt, Anna and her Savage children came to Coventry. The family lived in a house constructed by Nutt which was known as Coventry Hall. The building no longer exists, but is described in The Potts Memorial. There were six Savage children. John, the youngest, died of a rattlesnake bite, others were more fortunate. In 1733, Rebecca, a favorite of her step-father, married his English nephew, Samuel Nutt, Jr. Ruth, another daughter, married John Potts, founder of Pottstown and builder of Pottsgrove while Samuel Savage, Jr. "for his better preferment in this world" received from his mother and step-father 215 acres and the house in which he then lived. (See Savage, Hockley, Showalter, Pa. Inventory of Historic Sites and Landmarks)

Samuel Nutt was not only a successful Ironmaster, but a prominent member of the Colony. From 1723-1726 he represented Chester County in the Assembly and he was also justice of the King's peace. Nutt shared with Branson the restlessness and vision of a pioneer. His mind was continually fermenting new projects. At the time of his death in 1737, he was planning a second furnace on the south branch of French Creek. Instructions were left in his will for the construction of this furnace by his wife, Anna, and her Savage sons. The furnace, completed in 1738 was called Warwick Furnace.

Nutt left the Coventry part of his estate to Samuel Nutt, Jr. and Rebecca. When the nephew died the year following his uncle, the young widow, beautiful and bright, and only twenty at the time was left with extensive property and responsibility. It was not long before, Robert Grace, a prominent young Philadelphian, met and married "the loveliest Savage in America". Grace then entered the family business. Warwick Furnace and Coventry Forge were joined and operated together as the Anna Nutt and Company.

Robert Grace, described by his friend, Benjamin Franklin, as "a young gentleman of some fortune, generous, lively, witty" came from Ireland. He lived in Philadelphia with his grandmother and her second husband, Hugh Lowden, in their finely appointed house on High Street below Second. At seventeen, he inherited this house and it was here that the first meetings of the Junto and the Library Company were held.

In 1729 when Franklin and his partner, Meredith, were sued for 100 pounds, Robert Grace and another friend offered to lend money. In his Autobiography, Franklin speaks of "two true friends whose kindness I have never forgotten, nor ever shall forget". The spontaneous generosity made a great impression on Franklin and prompted him to give Grace, without patent limitations, the rights to his new invention, an improved fireplace stove. To promote the demand of the stoves, Franklin wrote a pamphlet entitled "An Account of the Newly Invented Pennsylvania Fireplaces". The stoves were cast at Warwick and were highly successful.

After Anna Nutt's death in 1744, the Warwick and Coventry properties continued to prosper under new management techniques established by Robert

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Grace. Weekly production of five tons of pig iron at Warwick was sufficient to supply Coventry and four other forges. In addition to this and the stoves, there was a steady production of kettles, andirons and clockweights.

In 1765, Robert and Rebecca Grace turned over their interests in Warwick Furnace and Coventry Forge to Thomas Potts, Rebecca's son-in-law. Thomas, eldest son of Ruth and John Potts, had married his first cousin, Anna, the only child of Rebecca and Samuel Nutt, Jr., in 1757. At the time, Thomas lived in Philadelphia where he represented the family business interests and participated in the cultural life of the city. He was one of the original members of the American Philosophical Society.

Although Thomas kept his house in Philadelphia on Front Street after his marriage and later purchased Pottsgrove from his father's estate, most of his married years were lived in Coventryville in the house known as Coventry House. (See Coventry House, National Register of Historic Places) Here ten children were born and raised.

The marriage of Thomas and Anna was a fortuitous one. Thomas, combining outstanding qualities of Samuel Nutt and Robert Grace, gave Coventry distinguished leadership. A member of the Assembly from 1775 until his early death in 1785, Thomas also participated in the Revolution. In 1776, he was commissioned Colonel of a Battalion of men from Chester and Berks County that he raised, armed and equipped at his own expense. He was also a member of the Convention assembled at the State House on July 9, 1776 to decide upon a government for Pennsylvania.

After the Revolution on a hunting trip in Schuylkill County, Thomas discovered anthracite coal seams. Recognizing their future value, he arranged for the purchase of 2800 acres in 1784. At the time of his death the following year, he was working with Benjamin Franklin on plans for the construction of the Schuylkill Canal so that the coal could be brought to market and "to the forges and furnaces near the Schuylkill".

Thomas Potts was also interested in continuing the manufacture of steel which Great Britain had thwarted in 1750 by prohibiting the erection of steel and slitting mills. Only those mills which had existed before that time were permitted to operate. As Redding Furnace I fell into this category, Potts was able to reactivate it.

As the Revolution approached, increasing responsibilities led Thomas to transfer both Coventry and Warwick to his brother, Samuel, and Thomas Rutter III. The properties continued to expand under the new ownership and management of Thomas Bull. During the Revolution, Rutter and Potts had an agreement with the Council of Safety to supply munitions for the Continental Army. That Washington and his troops came to the Warwick and Redding Furnaces (Sept. 18-19, 1777) after the defeat at the Battle of Brandywine is indicative of the importance of French Creek iron to the Continental Army.

The iron families and their houses also played a noteworthy part during the Revolution. Thomas and Anna lived at Pottsgrove at the time where they entertained Washington on more than one occasion. Thomas' brother owned the house that Washington occupied in the winter at Valley Forge and Rebecca's hospitality to Continental officers at Coventry Hall is recorded in The Potts Memorial.



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In her later years, Rebecca lived in Coventry House with her granddaughter, Ruth, and her husband, Robert May, who was managing the forge at the time. Here, tradition holds, Benjamin Franklin visited her. The story is told that Franklin asked to see the lively widow just before his death and that "she made the forty mile trip over bad roads in March, and was the last one, outside his family, to be with him."

Rebecca was deeply interested in Methodism. Through her, George Whitfield and other well known ministers preached at Coventry. On one occasion, she rescued the visiting preacher from overwrought iron workers. Rebecca encouraged the organization of the Coventry Methodist Congregation, the second in Chester County, and left land for the erection of a church building, Grace Chapel, built in 1812.

After Robert May's death, Coventry House was sold to Col. Caleb North, a descendant of Samuel Savage and a "kinsman" of Rebecca. Later, the house and farm (250 acres) was purchased by the Chrisman family and then by Joshua Bingaman, a cousin. The last Bingamans to occupy the house were five sisters Mary, Sally, Leidei, Phoebe and Emma, maiden ladies all but one.

Coventry Forge was purchased by John Davis in 1793 and transferred to his son four years later. While the main production of the forge under Robert May had been bar iron, the elder Davis added a boring and grinding mill for the production of gun barrels. The younger Davis diverted the waters from the South Branch of French Creek with the help of a dam and thereby greatly increasing capacity.

In 1807, Davis sold the Forge tract to George Chrisman who came from Kimberton where his family had a mill. Chrisman built for himself, his family, and his workers most of the houses which stand in the village today. The Chrismans - three generations of George Chrismans were connected with the iron industry in Coventry - were a remarkable family. They were people of integrity and standards who left their imprint on the community. One member, John Buckwalter, read Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and Macauley's History of England each winter.

While Chrisman came to Coventry in 1807, it was not until 1826 that the Forge was enlarged and reequipped. At Warwick Furnace quantities of pig iron could be obtained. Using the old charcoal process, Coventry rendered the metal into blooms. These were hauled to Pottstown, loaded onto canal boats, and shipped to Philadelphia and New York. To ensure an adequate supply of charcoal, Chrisman purchased thirteen farms in the area.

In 1849 it was thought that the railroad proposed from Philadelphia to Lancaster would come up the French Creek Valley. Mindful of this, George Chrisman, Jr. and his brother, John, erected a rolling mill on the south branch for the production of boiler plate. As this was the year of the Gold Rush, the mill was called "California". When the Pennsylvania Railroad took another direction, the location of the mill proved remote. In a few years, it was dismantled and moved to Jersey City.

In 1888, the Delaware River and Lancaster Railroad connecting the Pickering Valley Railroad with the Wilmington and Northern branch of the Reading Railroad was constructed. The line passed through the village and caused

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considerable excitement in its short life. Two buildings were added to the village at the end of the 19th century, the Coventryville Church in 1861 replacing the earlier Grace Chapel, and in 1888 a structure to house the village Band Wagon. The building had six stalls below for the Band Wagon horses and it also provided a meeting place for Lodge Members of the Independent Order of Americans, Lodge 363.

A grist mill in the lower part of the village, once used by George Chrisman to store charcoal, burnt down in 1885 and was rebuilt along modern lines. Flour was ground on steel rolls instead of stones. Later the new building was used as a window shade factory. A second grist mill, known as James' Mill, was built in the middle of the 19th Century close to the side of Redding Furnace I.

The use of Rock Run water to power a grist mill rather than a furnace is illustrative of the changing scene at Coventryville. In the first part of the 19th Century, as coal replaced charcoal, as transportation centers developed, and new techniques for the manufacture of iron and steel were devised, the early iron making communities became obsolete and the separation between agriculture and industry complete. The Coventryville which once flourished with its farms, Church, cemeteries, school, Band, Lodge, and Rising Sun Inn ceased to be self contained.

Coventryville was the center of the American metal industry, both at its birth in the colonial period and during its growth in the early nineteenth century. Colonial Coventryville was the site of Coventry Forge, the first in Chester County and the second in Colonial Pennsylvania, of the first steel furnace in the country, and of one of the early rolling mills. It was also the home of Samuel and Anna Nutt, Robert and Rebecca Grace and Thomas and Anna Potts, who dominated the colonial iron industry through the entire region and of the Chrisman family who continued the iron making tradition in the 19th Century.

Eleanor M. Morris

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheets

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 338.054 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

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 Margaret Bennett, Mary L. Busenkill, Estelle Cremers, J. David Jackson, Elizabeth Miller, Eleanor M. Morris, J. Kelly Murphy III

ORGANIZATION French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, Inc. DATE August 1977

STREET & NUMBER Box 360 TELEPHONE 215-469-6287

CITY OR TOWN R.D. 2, Pottstown STATE Penna. 19464

## 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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