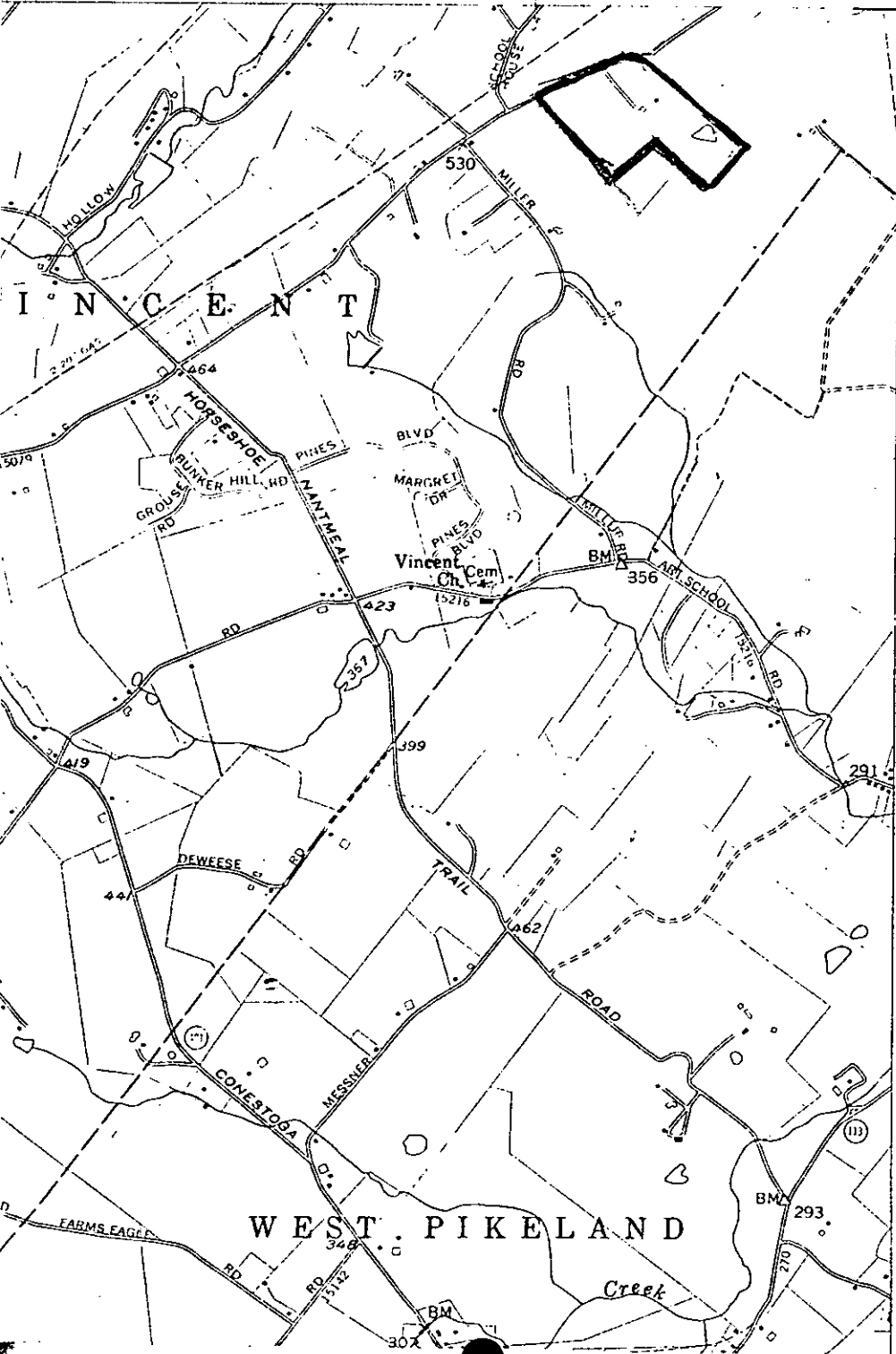


DOWNINGTOWN QUADRANGLE
PENNSYLVANIA—CHESTER CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 PHOENIXVILLE 15' QUADRANGLE

(PHOENIXVILLE)

2 590 000 FEET

75°37'30"
40°07'30"



290 000
FEET

WEST PIKELAND

Creek

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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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
STRICKLAND-ROBERTS HOMESTEAD

AND/OR COMMON
Bryncoed Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
St. Matthews Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
West Vincent Township

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
5th

STATE
Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF
CODE

COUNTY
Chester

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ludens Inc.
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Reading

VICINITY OF

STATE
Pennsylvania 19600

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chester County Court House

STREET & NUMBER
High Street

CITY, TOWN
West Chester

STATE
Pennsylvania 19380

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Pickering Creek Valley: A Preservation Opportunity. Prepared for the
French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust by Hartzog, Lader & Richards

DATE
June 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, Inc.

CITY, TOWN
Box 360, R. D. #2, Pottstown Pennsylvania 19464

17 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
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

BRYNCOED

This farmstead consists of a plastered stone farmhouse which was renovated and extensively expanded in 1929; a large barn, with a variety of stone and frame appurtenant structures; and several small stone outbuildings.

The old portion of the house was built in two sections, and probably dates from the early 1800's. The oldest portion is three bays wide, one room deep and two stories high, with a chimney structure at either end. The second section extended the length to five bays, has an internal chimney structure at the corner, and two small four light windows in the gable end at the loft level. A gable roof, which extends the length of the old portion, has a plain box cornice. Stone chimney superstructures appear to be enlarged from their original form.

The front has a door in the center bay, and all windows are 6 over 6. In the back, there are two doors, in the second and fourth bays, and first floor windows are 8 over 12. These latter were probably changed during the restoration. On the interior, window sills were altered to receive radiators, and additional woodwork was installed. A small frame shed porch roof has been added over a portion of a terrace at one end.

The house is set on a gentle bank, and there is a stone terrace at the back, also a later addition. A small room with, vaulted ceiling under the terrace opens to the outside, but does not connect through to the basement level of the old house.

The 1929 addition is of random fieldstone, and consists of a four bay, 2½ story section offset from the east gable end, another 2 bays with a ridgeline at right angles, and an additional four bays, one story at the front and two in the back. To this the present owner has added another small section, in a perfectly matched fieldstone. All masonry work is of a very high quality.

The barn is a large stone bank barn, with two center bays. A frame forebay, supported by conical stone piers, faces south to a stone-walled courtyard, and stone and frame gable-roofed outbuildings are attached at either end, forming a very pleasing articulated complex. A circular plastered recess in the peak of one gable end bears the inscription "W & MF 1873". There is said to have been an earlier frame barn, which is no longer standing.

18 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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 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

This property is of historical interest in that it has been the home of two state legislators and one United States Supreme Court Justice. A farm of approximately 32 acres, it was broken off from a larger tract owned by Hugh Strickland and sold to his son William in 1797. It has remained definably in tact since that date.

The first recorded owner of the land was Hugh Strickland, the grandson of an Englishman who emmigrated to Philadelphia in the late 1600's. Hugh Strickland's name first appeared in Vincent Township on a 1764 Tax Poll as a singleman whose occupation was listed as "Tailor". Shortly thereafter he married Catherine O'Neal and by 1774 was listed as "landowner" - in actuality a lessee with the right of purchase as were all residents of the southern part of Vincent Township. (See paper "Vincent Township") From 1785 to 1793 he was a Vestryman at St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley from which he resigned in order to participate in the Whiskey Rebellion (1791-1794). He was a member of the 1st. Battalion of the 44th. Regiment of the Pennsylvania Militia - a light infantry company. He voted by absentee ballot on October 14, 1794.

Strickland had been renting his farm from the West New Jersey Society. When the company decided to sell its lands in Vincent Township, Strickland exercised his option to purchase. He paid \$1240.61 (approximately £248.12) for 143.093 acres.

In 1797, Hugh Strickland sold 31½ acres 29 perches to his son, William, who was a weaver by trade. It is this portion of the larger acreage that is followed as it becomes the home of United States Supreme Court Justice, Owen J. Roberts.

In 1798, William Strickland was taxed for a one story log house, 18' x 30', kitchen included, one small "old" log barn, and 29 acres assessed at \$340.00. His house had one six-lite window and the kitchen had three 4-lite windows. Local legend declares that the earliest house in the area (a one room dwelling) was built on this land in 1701. Another voice says 1709. There may be truth in these reports but records have not come to light to verify the legends.

William Strickland held the farm until 1810 when he sold it to Conrad Shearer (a/k/a Cunrode Sharer). Shearer paid 575 for the 31¼ acres 20 perches. Strickland had paid 125. This is a large increase.

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Land was too available to greatly change in price; therefore, it is safe to assume that a 360% rise was due to an improvement in buildings. It would be reasonable, then, to suppose that during the thirteen years of Strickland's ownership, the log house had been replaced with the two story stone dwelling we see today. In the same line of thought, subsequent sale prices did not make another large jump until 1955 by which time Justice Roberts had vastly improved and enlarged the dwelling house.

Shearer had six children. Two sons, John and Samuel, became Pennsylvania State Legislators being elected on the Republican ticket. Samuel was also post master in Kimberton in 1830 and at that time advertised for the return of a 19 year old slave, David Williams. The reward was six cents. He was also a part owner or investor in Margaret Holman's Inn at the Yellow Springs. Samuel and John died within 10 days of each other in September, 1873, John in Montgomery County and Samuel in Berks County.

The farm stayed in the Shearer family until 1838 when Jacob Rhoads, a shoemaker, bought it. In 1860 James Whitesides became owner, and he in turn sold it to William Friday, a farmer, in 1869. The Friday family held it for 48 years, the longest ownership in the farm's history.

The stone house we see today, presumably built before 1810 by William Strickland, is three bays wide and one bay deep with a chimney on the east and west end walls. An addition was made not long after the first construction extending the house length to five bays. There is a root cellar in the bank just outside the back door facing south. This house stands today very much as it did in the early 1800's.

In 1873, William Friday built the present stone barn, replacing the "old" log barn. It is a typical Pennsylvania bank barn with frame forebay supported by three round tapered stone pillars; the barnyard is enclosed by a stone wall and two stone and frame gabled outbuildings. Friday sold to Henry Gooding in 1917. Gooding sold to Owne J. Roberts in 1927. Owen Roberts, then a Philadelphia lawyer and law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, added considerably to the house in 1929, not, however, disturbing the original stone dwelling. The large addition was built to plans made by architect R. Broghard Oakie and is of random field stone.

This property has been the unpretentious home of artisans, farmers, and legislators, as well as the beautiful estate of a noted and highly

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regarded United States jurist. That it has been able to accept so many different roles attests to the gentle graciousness and quiet charm of its rolling terrain. A small farm, it none the less could inspire men to want to serve their nation and fellow man.

Owen J. Roberts

The fame of Owen J. Roberts as a brilliant attorney first spread beyond his native Philadelphia when he was appointed by President Calvin Coolidge in 1924 as one of the prosecutors in the Teapot Dome oil scandal cases. Again, in 1941, President Roosevelt named him chairman of a five-man commission to fix responsibility for the Pearl Harbor disaster. In Washington, Chief Justice Earl Warren, speaking on behalf of the Supreme Court, praised Mr. Roberts as "a skilled and respected jurist and a great American".

Born in Germantown on May 2, 1875, Roberts was the son of Josephus and Emma Lafferty Roberts. He was educated at Germantown Academy and the University of Pennsylvania. He was valedictorian at his graduation in 1895 and he received his law degree with first honors in 1898. He won a fellowship and continued studying after his admission to the Philadelphia Bar. Then he began teaching law at Penn, serving successively as instructor, assistant professor and full professor for an accumulated 20 years.

In 1901, he was named first Assistant District Attorney and served in that post until 1903. After the first World War he was appointed a special Deputy Attorney General by the Government to prosecute cases growing out of violation of the Federal Espionage Act.

After the prosecution of the espionage cases and later the Teapot Dome cases there followed years devoted to private practice, mostly in corporation law. From 1920 to 1929, he served as a director of the Board of City Trusts.

His appointment of the Supreme Court in the fall of 1930 came at a time when the court was divided, unofficially, between the conservatives Van Devanter, McReynolds, Sutherland and Butler, and the liberals, Holmes, Brandeis, Stone and Chief Justice Hughes. In this situation he had a peculiarly important position since it was often his vote which decided a case between the evenly divided viewpoints of his eight colleagues,

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and which earned him his tag, "the great dissenter". The court decided the constitutionality of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation in 27 instances. On the bench, Roberts leaned to the conservative side, but frequently his own opinions had a strong liberal tinge. It was during his latter years on the bench that he became known as the leading dissenter, showing increasing disagreement with the viewpoint of the majority dominated by Roosevelt-appointed liberals.

After his retirement in 1945 from the Supreme Court "to make room for younger men", he was named in 1946 by President Harry S. Truman as head of an amnesty board to review the cases of some 11,000 persons convicted of Second World War draft violations. In that same year he became the first layman elected president of the 650-man House of Deputies of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Honors had a way of seeking him out - this tall, affable jurist with the phenomenal memory. He received honorary degrees from a dozen colleges and universities, including Oxford, and served as chairman of various civic and charitable groups.

A life trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, he was called back to active service at the Law School in 1948 to serve as dean, a post he filled until 1951. He was the author of a number of books and magazine and newspaper articles, mostly dealing with the Constitution and its relation to the courts.

He founded and headed the United Nations Council of Philadelphia but in later years devoted much of his talents as a speaker and writer to the furtherance of the Atlantic Union. He was national president and founder of the Atlantic Union Committee.

Mr. Roberts left behind a reputation as an independent and unpredictable jurist who frequently cast the deciding vote in the country's highest tribunal. His reputation was that of being fair, capable and vigilant.

(Reduced from obituary notice in Philadelphia Inquirer, May 18, 1955)

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PAGE 1

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Personal interview with Mr. Lee Hoffman, a Strickland descendant, and others in the family.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 42 acres

UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Starting at a point in St. Matthew's Road in West Vincent Township between Miller Road and Flowing Springs Road southeast 68 perches, thence the three following courses along other lands of Ludens north-east 40½ perches, southeast 37½ perches, and northeast 34 perches, each being a right angle more or less, thence northwest 75 perches to a point in St. Matthews Road, and thence southwest along said road to the place of beginning.

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

Virginia Stoudt, Estelle Cremers, Kelly Murphy, III

ORGANIZATION

DATE

French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, Inc

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Box 360

R.D. #2

(215) 469-6237

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Pottstown, 19464

Pennsylvania 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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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