

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**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 Bucher Ayres Farm

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Whitehall Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Pennsylvania Furnace

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE Pennsylvania

CODE
42COUNTY
CentreCODE
027**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Elwood and Aileen Homan

STREET & NUMBER Whitehall Road

CITY, TOWN Pennsylvania Furnace

VICINITY OF

STATE
Pennsylvania**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Centre County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Allegheny Street

CITY, TOWN Bellefonte

STATE
Pennsylvania**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE 1. Pennsylvania Furnace Homecoming 1972: A Short History
2. Historical Reflections of Centre County

DATE 1. 1972
2. 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Centre County Library
Centre County Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN Bellefonte

STATE
Pennsylvania

7 DESCRIPTION

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

Four buildings make up the complex known as the Bucher Ayres Farm; a large dwelling, a carriage shed/ice house, a smoke house and an outhouse. Aesthetic considerations are apparent in the layout, construction, and detailing of each building. Functional planning is seen in the placement of the outbuildings west of the residence. Because the original architecture and layout of the buildings remain intact, the complex presents itself as a visual indicator of well-to-do rural life in the mid-nineteenth century.

The main house, erected in 1858, is composed of three sections, in parallel alignment, which diminish in size from the residence to the pumphouse. Each section is a rectangular building with a single gable roof, and these wood-frame elements are sheathed in weatherboard with the corners finished in thin vertical boards. Fenestration consists mainly of twelve-light, six-over-six sash windows. The windows are flanked by paneled shutters on the first floor and louvered shutters on the second, a traditional arrangement. The gable ends have a pronounced overhang. Below the overhang is a cornice and wide barge board. The eaves, gable end, and gable returns are supported by scroll brackets.

The largest section of the house, which encloses the main living area, displays a traditional Georgian facade. The main block is two stories plus an attic story high, and five bays wide. The central bay is larger than the two end bays. The front (north) facade is complemented with a Greek Revival three bay portico with a hipped roof supported by fluted Ionic columns. The massive shafts of the columns are constructed of wood, while the base and capitals are made of cast iron. The entrance is modest Greek Revival, flanked by three sidelights above narrow panels. Surmounting this is a six-light transom. The end lights of the transom are separated from the central lights by a pair of wooden scroll brackets, lending an increased verticality to the sidelights. The broad horizontal span of the facade is effectively counterbalanced by the verticality of the windows and columns, while the portico adds depth to the facade.

The rear (southern) facade of the block is similar to the front with the exception of the central bay. A twelve-light gabled dormer window is placed in the attic story. Below this is a half flight window that corresponds to the landing of the central staircase. The three bay portico originally located on this elevation (identical to the front portico, see historic Photograph) was dismantled during the Depression years due to severe deterioration and the corresponding lack of funds to make the repairs. The entrance is now flanked by a pair of fluted Doric pilasters, surmounted by a simple pediment which effects a crisp appearance, and is another reference to Greek Revival. The resulting impression of the rear facade is largely two dimensional.

On the west gable end of the main block an unusual feature appears. Two sash windows have the upper third of the window cut across by the gable barge board; creating a severed window.

On the west side of the main block (or residence) is the block that originally housed the servants' quarters. This block displays a two-story, four bay facade. On the south elevation both first and second floors open onto simply detailed porches. The shed roof of the porch is emphasized on the gable end by the gable return, supported by brackets. The two central bays on the north and south sides are narrower than the end bays.

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The third section of the Bucher Ayres farm is the pumphouse and cistern. One story in height, with a simple gable roof, the pumphouse lacks the ornate brackets seen along the cornice lines on the other two sections. Unbroken wall surfaces give way to a south side completely faced with lattice-work, punctuated by a pair of six light windows and a central entrance. The enclosed pumphouse is evidence of the well-thought-out planning of the Ayres home.

The exterior of the three sections work well from an aesthetic standpoint, as they all match in terms of proportion and detailing and create a pleasant visual progression. The house also works well functionally, with the porch off the servants' quarters providing covered circulation to the outbuildings and pumphouse.

The interior of the main block is a traditional Georgian centerhall four-over-four plan. On the first floor there are two rooms on either side of the central hall. The grand staircase, complemented by a continuous cherry bannister, is on axis with the entrance, but slightly offset to allow passage to the back rooms. There are four interior fireplaces on the first floor, two placed back to back, on the walls separating the front and rear rooms. The mantles, faced in white marble veined with grey, are fine examples of the stonecutter's craft. The curved marble mantlepiece is supported by a carved marble modillion. On each of the fireplaces this is slightly different.

The second floor plan is similar to the first floor plan in layout, with the exception of a sewing room (now a bathroom) over the entrance, and a hall that connects the servants' quarters with the main house. There are fireplaces in four rooms and they are faced with wood. The attic is finished, and was originally used for storage of smoked meat and vegetables. The hooks for hanging meat are still intact.

The interior of the second block (or servants' quarters) is a side-hall plan. The hall runs along the north side of the building and the rooms off the hall look onto the porch at the rear. A narrow stair connects the first floor with the second floor.

The outbuildings are easily accessible from the middle block with a minimum of exposure to the weather. The outbuildings are faced with weatherboard, and the corners are finished with thin vertical boards, consistent with the finish on the house. Each outbuilding has slatted vents for circulation, instead of windows. On the roof peak of two buildings there are curious and wonderful vent stacks. The third building has a small bell tower.

The outhouse is unusual and indicative of the wealth of the Ayres family. It is a large outhouse as outhouses go, and contains seven facilities. The outhouse is partitioned off into three sections, one containing two facilities for the servants, one containing four facilities for the family, and one con-

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taining one facility for the master of the house.

The Bucher Ayres home shows consideration not only in the aesthetic layout and detailing of the house, but also the functional concerns that dictate constraints on the layout according to the daily routines of the inhabitants of the house. It is an excellent example of the blending of form and function. The Bucher Ayres farm is one of the best preserved examples of an affluent historic farm in Centre County.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE		CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	X AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1858

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George Reynolds

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bucher Ayres farm is one-and-one-half miles east of Pennsylvania Furnace on Whitehall road in Ferguson Township, western Centre County. Comprised of four individual buildings, the Ayres farm displays a working combination of sound planning and fine architectural character. Today the farm's presence as a unit provides insight into the workings of a large and successful nineteenth century farm and its household. The farm's historic significance can largely be linked to two prominent figures who contributed to the development of early Ferguson Township; John Lyon and Bucher Ayres.

John Lyon, a native of Harrisburg, arrived in Centre County in 1813 and settled in Centre Hall. He moved to the area to begin work on an ironworks that would be known as Pennsylvania Furnace. When Pennsylvania Furnace was completed it had the largest capacity in the County to date. The furnace remained in operation until well after 1850.

The land on which the Ayres farm is located was purchased from Col. John Patton, an ironmaster and land speculator, by John Lyon. The purpose of the purchase was to fuel the furnace, as the land was originally covered by large stands of timber. Lyon converted the timber to charcoal fuel, and later adapted the land to farming purposes. Today traces of charcoal circles can still be found where the wood, after being cut, was converted to charcoal.

Bucher Ayres was awarded the title of Colonel when he served under Secretary of State Daniel Webster as secretary to the Maine/Massachusetts commissioners, who were negotiating the boundary between the U.S. and Canada. Colonel Ayres also had the distinction of being the first conductor to be employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1849. It was during this time that he met and married Jane Lyon, daughter of John Lyon. As a wedding gift, Lyon presented the couple with the farm tract, and proceeded to have a house built for them.

Construction of the house took place while Ayres and his wife were living in Memphis, Tennessee, where Bucher Ayres was employed as superintendent of the Memphis/Charleston Railroad. Correspondence between Ayres and the Contractor, George Reynolds, indicates that construction began in 1858. Just before the Civil War broke out the Ayres family moved to their new home in Pennsylvania Furnace. The Ayres family lived there from 1860 to 1870. During this time Bucher Ayres concentrated his efforts on farming and other related activities, in addition to retaining stock in many railroad companies, including Pennsylvania Railroad, Lehigh Valley Railroad, and Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.

During the period that Ayres lived in Pennsylvania Furnace, John Lyon passed away. Lyon had moved his office to Pittsburgh, a good place to funnel the products of the many iron furnaces he owned in Centre county into the rolling

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mills he owned and had built with R.T. Stewart in 1825.

Apparently Bucher Ayres' interest in farming had subsided, perhaps because it was not as profitable after the war, and possibly because he wished to return to the railroad business. In 1870 the Ayres family moved to Philadelphia where Ayres resumed his career with the railroad. Bucher Ayres remained in Philadelphia until his death in 1898, and was survived by his wife and large family.

While the Ayres had been living in Philadelphia the farmhouse had been rented to various people. Finally in 1913, the farmhouse was sold by descendants of Bucher Ayres and Jane Lyon to Mary Homan. Descendant of Mary Homan have occupied the house since that time and still continue to reside there today.

Although the Bucher Ayres home is historically significant, its greatest importance lies in its architectural consistency, style, and the unusual functional considerations. All these factors are evident in the planning, and make it possible to point to the home as an excellent example of fashionable living in a rural setting.

The house itself is a blend of aesthetic standards and functional requirements. The three masses of the home are all related to each other aesthetically in terms of proportion and detail. Somewhat Academic in terms of fenestration and execution of details, the house is a fine example of 1850's styling. The materials used, and the execution of the detailing, are all of the highest quality and will endure as good examples of aesthetic workmanship.

The Bucher Ayres farm is an unusual example of the influence of Greek Revival architecture in Centre County. Not much Greek Revival architecture can be found in Centre County.

A diagram of daily life can be seen as the complex is functionally reviewed. For example, the servants' quarters are located between the residence, the cistern/pumphouse and the outbuildings, the three places where many of their chores must have originated, allowing them easy access to their concerns. Since the servants' quarters were in effect housed in a separate section, more privacy was afforded for both parties involved.

The most innovative thinking as pertains to function is the use of the porches off the secondary or servants' quarters. Porches are highly suited to Pennsylvania's climate, but because porches were not conceived as functional elements previous to this time, this example is unique. It is safe to postulate that these porches were intended to serve as covered circulation space to the outbuildings as well as service spaces to remove muddy shoes, store farm implements, etc.

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The Bucher Ayres farm is an architectural example of fashionable rural living in the mid-to-late 1800's. Functional considerations apparent in the layout indicate the importance of spatial efficiency in relation to the planning of the buildings. Seen within an aesthetic framework, the buildings, particularly the house, are excellent specimens of design. The Bucher Ayres farm today allows an accurate view of the patterns of rural life in early Centre County.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kocher, A.L. The Character and Development of Colonial Architecture in Centre County. Master's dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1916.

Linn, Johnm Blair. History of Centre and Clinton Counties, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 22.22

UTM REFERENCES Pine Grove Mills

A	18	24931610	4511131610	B	18	2495210	4511111010
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	18	24921610	4511091410	D	18	24911210	4511112110
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Cont. 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 Sarah Rose

ORGANIZATION

Historic Registration Project

DATE

March, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

203 N. Allegheny St.

TELEPHONE

814-355-3249

CITY OR TOWN

Bellefonte

STATE

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

Ed Weintraub

TITLE Ed Weintraub, Director
Office of Historic Preservation

DATE 9/25/79

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Bibliographical

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Mitchell, J.T. The Iron Industries of Centre County, Pennsylvania. Bellefonte: private, (1936?)

Pillsbury, Richard. "Patterns in the Folk and Vernacular House Forms of the Pennsylvania Culture Region." Pioneer America, July, 1977. pp. 13-31.

Pennsylvania Furnace Homecoming. private, 1972.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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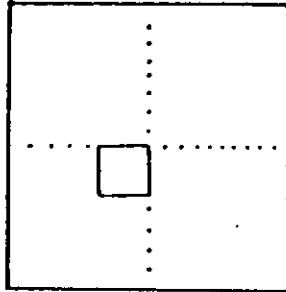
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The open rural landscape surrounding the Bucher Ayres Farm continues in all directions without interposing man-made or landscape features that would help to define an edge to the National Register property. Therefore, the best method of identifying an appropriate setting for preservation was to postulate a geometric figure containing the immediate area of the house and outbuildings, the charcoal circles, and a small amount of farm land. Defined as a square of 100 meters per side, the figure centers on the NE corner of the Ayres House as depicted in the following sketch:

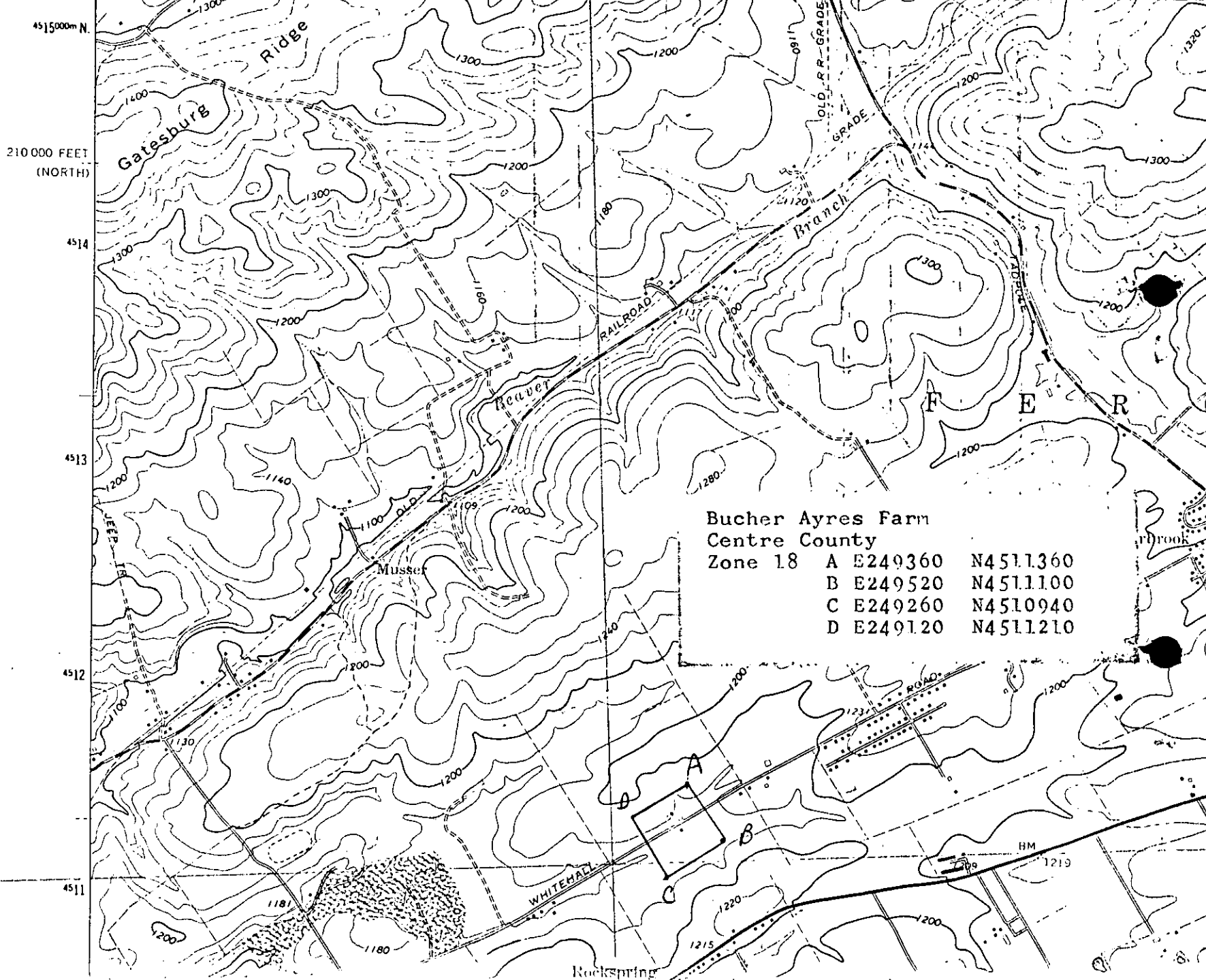


3305 1 SE
PORT MATILDA

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
TOPOGRAPHIC AND

78°00' 247000m E. 248 1940000 FEET (NORTH) 6 MI. TO U.S. 322 57'30" - 251



Bucher Ayres Farm
Centre County
Zone 18

A	E249360	N4511360
B	E249520	N4511100
C	E249260	N4510940
D	E249120	N4511210