

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

32

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
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DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC THE POTTER-ALLISON FARM

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

R. D. (Potter's Mills), Potter Township

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Spring Mills

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

23rd

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

COUNTY

Centre

CODE

027

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

Fred A. Strouse, David B. Lee and Frederick J. Kissinger

STREET & NUMBER

245 S. Allen Street

CITY, TOWN

State College

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Centre County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

High Street

CITY, TOWN

Bellefonte

STATE

Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

July, 1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

P.O. Box 1026, Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 Potter-Allison Farm presents several historic features pertinent to a working farmstead. Although the farm must be considered as a unit, certain components may be picked out for ease of discussion:

1. Tilled and tillable farm fields (approx. 100 acres)
2. House, barn, yard, outbuildings, and contiguous pasture (about 13 acres)
3. Low ground traversed by Potter's Run and containing archeological features pertaining to 19th century farm related industry (approx. 20 acres)

I. FIELDS:

The farm lands here are typical of the rolling Karst topography of the Penn's Valley agricultural region. The fields have been worked year-after-year since the early days of settlement.

II. HOUSE, BARN, ...OUTBUILDINGS:

A. House:

The Potter-Allison house is a large, two and one-half story, brick building which consists of a Georgian component (c. 1817) and a Victorian addition (1850's). The wall fabric is brick laid common bond.

The house offers many 18th and 19th century design characteristics common to Georgian building; symmetrical facade, side hall plan, two-deep room arrangement, low gable roof, and internal gable-end chimneys. Unlike many Georgian buildings in Centre County, however, the Potter-Allison house maintains stricter Georgian guidelines typical of earlier structures along the East coast. This is betrayed in the use of the spacious stair hall, in finely detailed trim treatment, in windowless gable-ends (typical of Philadelphia row house construction), in the magnificent 12-over-12 facade windows, and in the remarkable 9'6" by 4'6" panelled front entrance door. Also of particular interest are the details of craftsmanship exhibited both in the fireplace mantle and hearth cover design and in the ornamentation of the open string stairs.

The Victorian addition of the 1850's was built under the direction of William Allison, who had received the Potter Farm from James Irvin. This addition was needed to accommodate the growth of his family. Stylistically, this addition anticipates the coming of full-blown Victorian romanticism which would surface in this region later in the century. Early manifestations of Victorian design are evident in the styling of the side porches, in the Gothic high-pitched cross gable dormer construction on the eastern elevation and in the bracketing of the eaves. Turning to the interior, Victorian detailing is found in beautiful cabinet work and trim detail (including full-length dining room cabinets with built-in entranceway), parlor wall cabinets, bay window area framed with arched molding, and unusual ear-capped door-and-

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Description:

window moldings. Finally, there is a striking Victorian mantled fireplace in the rear of the parlor. The fireplace has a semi-circular hearth and is similar to fireplaces seen at Centre Furnace Mansion and the Miles-Humes House (National Register, 1976), both in Centre County.

The eastern elevation deserves special attention as it most graphically illustrates the manner in which the older Potter house was enlarged in the Victorian era. In comparing the left (c. 1817) and right (1850's) portions of this elevation, we note a contrast between the breadth and simplicity of the older portion and the compacted, intricate grouping of the Victorian porch, bay, and cross-gable dormer. The insertion of the tall windows into this end of the older house and the provision of porches (E, W, and main elevation) and eaves bracketing are elements of the 1850's work which helped to integrate the Georgian and Victorian designs.

The Potter-Allison house possesses exceptional integrity on both the exterior and the interior. Elements of the earlier and later construction are primarily distinct. The house stands in excellent condition.

B. Barn:

The barn is principally a wooden building and is one of the largest old barns in the area. The main section (76' by 39') is a bank barn with forebay. Hand-hewn timbers and the manner of construction of the stone foundation suggest that this section is contemporaneous with the house. Later in the 19th century the barn was lengthened and an addition was constructed perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the original barn.

C. Outbuildings:

The outbuildings represent typical, diverse farm functions and offer a fine collection of these folk building types. Included here are a hog barn, an equipment building with corn cribs, a slaughterhouse built of stone, two miscellaneous small wooden outbuildings, and one "Two-level Outbuilding with Overhang." This latter building is quite comparable to Glassie's (1968), Fig. 25 (p. 87) and Fig. 11 (p. 42) and must be considered a significant folk building. Several of the outbuildings manifest hand-hewn construction, betraying an early date.

III. LOW GROUND ... FARM-INDUSTRY ARCHEOLOGY:

The area along Potter's Run retains significant evidence of mill (grist, saw, and woolen) and tanning industries which occupied the site from the earliest days. Physical remains include prominent

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Description:

unbroken contours of mill races and roadways, vestiges of foundations and arched stone culverts intact. A small spring house survives in this area as the only complete historic building.

From this area one is offered a startling view of the house as it sits on the hillside across Potter's Run.

Walnut and butternut trees on the Farm must relate to the need for dyes in the Potter and Allison woolen mill industries. According to Linn (1883) nut hulls gathered in this vicinity were explicitly used for dye-stuffs (p. 411).

8 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" 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

The Potter-Allison Farm represents one of Centre County's oldest and best preserved farm complexes. It obtains significance for the following reasons (in no certain order):

1. ASSOCIATION OF OWNERSHIP - The land of the farmstead descends from a large tract owned by early settler General James Potter (Exploration/Settlement). Potter, a soldier of the Revolution (1), was a leader amongst the first settlers in the area, arriving c. 1768 (2). His log cabin and grist mill formerly stood on the Potter-Allison Farm. The sons and grandsons of General Potter significantly improved the property. The Potter estate was sold at Sheriff's sale in 1849 and would later fall into the hands of the locally prominent Allison family (3).

2. AGRICULTURE - The Potter-Allison Farm was in use as a large scale farming operation continuously from the early 19th century down to recent years. Significant historic farm buildings survive as do archeological remains of related milling and tanning enterprises. The farm today offers exceptional suggestion of the growth and range of farm activities.

3. EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT, INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, & TRANSPORTATION - Potter's Mills was founded by General Potter and grew as a commercial and post village. Known as "Potter's Bank" in the early days, it was the first permanent settlement in Penn's Valley (Mitchell, 1941, p. 11). It was entirely contained on the Potter plantation and existed as a largely self sufficient entity akin to contemporaneous iron plantations. The site on Potter's Run provided ample power for milling and other small industry and the situation at a significant mountain gap (known today as the Seven Mountains region) lent itself to commercial development. A road passing through the plantation later became the Bellefonte-Lewistown turnpike.

General Potter led a vigorous life amassing land holdings in the area and encouraging additional settlement. He erected a log house here in 1788 and started grist and saw mill operations in log buildings.

James Potter, Jr. (2nd), who is also known as "Judge James Potter" being a judge of one of the several courts of Centre County (and commissioned in the year 1800) replaced the grist mill of log with one built of stone and built two "mansion houses"

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Significance:

of brick (the Potter-Allison House and the former VFW building which burned in our century) before his death in 1818. His sons, James (3rd) and John, formed a partnership known as "J. & J. Potter" and continued to develop family enterprises (4). They added a woolen mill in 1822, a store in 1823, a brick tavern/inn (surviving today as the Eutaw House and listed on the Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places in 1976). Subsequent owners, notably James Irvin and William Allison, continued these and similar commercial and small industrial enterprises.

4. ARCHITECTURE - The Potter-Allison house is one of the paramount historic houses in Centre County owing to its excellence of craftsmanship, exceptional integrity and condition, and particularly to its graphic illustration of merging of two distinct building traditions. It may be considered one of the most pleasing hybrid structures in the County. Its reflection of early aspects of Georgian architecture should be useful in studying diffusion of buildings traditions outward from the Mid-Atlantic Culture Region hearth. Similarly, the barn and outbuildings are significant examples of building traditions and should also provide evidence of diffusion. The "Two-level Outbuilding with Overhang," in particular, is a rare example for typological comparison.

The Potter-Allison Farm is potentially threatened by subdivision or by possible changes in the contiguous, busy PA Routes 144 and 322. It is historically the richest and most varied property remaining related to the Potter empire and should be scrupulously preserved as a whole.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:

1. Potter was commissioned as colonel of the 2nd battalion of the Northumberland County militia in 1776. He was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general under the command of General George Washington and served him in the battles of Trenton, Germantown, and Brandywine and during the encampment at Valley Forge. Due to the illness of his wife Potter obtained a leave in the winter of 1778 but never returned owing to the fact that his services were needed in the Centre County area (then Northumberland) to quell Indian rebellion.

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SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES (continued):

2. Maynard (1877, p. 4) describes Potter's arrival: "Soon after the treaty of 1768, James Potter...came up the West Branch and Bald Eagle Creek, to seek for choice lands. He crossed the Nittany mountain at Logan's Gap, and for the first time set his eyes upon lovely Penn's Valley, afterward his happy home. After reconnoitering the valley he descended Penn's Creek in a canoe; but he soon returned again, took up a large body of land, made settlement there, and erected a stockade fort."

3. In 1855 William Allison succeeded James Irvin in the ownership of the Potter properties. Like General Potter in his day, William Allison became the "great man" of Penn's Valley. His sons, William and Edward, carried on their father's business after his death in 1877. Edward lived in the Potter-Allison house and became a leading farmer in this area.

4. The will of William Allison indicates that James Potter (3rd) lived in the Potter-Allison house. His younger brother John lived in the other mansion, the former VFW building.

#10.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA: (continued)

Linn, Mary Hunter. "General James Potter, his life and times," In Northumberland County Historical Society, Proceedings and Addresses, Volume XII, March 1, 1942, p. 5ff.

Maynard, D. S. Industries and Institutions of Centre County. Bellefonte, Pa., Richie and Maynard, 1877.

Mitchell, J. Thomas. The Life of William Ashbridge Thomas, Iron Master. Bellefonte, Pa., Private printing by the Author, 1941.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Commemorative Biographical Record of Central Pennsylvania. Chicago, J. H. Beers & Co., 1898.
 Glassie, Henry. Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968.
 Linn, John Blair. The History of Centre & Clinton Counties. Philadelphia, Louis H. Everts, 1883.

(See Continuation Sheet)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA 163 acres

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A

18	278400	4520600
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B

18	278470	4519140
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

C

18	277920	4519260
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

D

18	277340	4520260
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael J. Halm, William L. McLaughlin and Gregory Ramsey

ORGANIZATION

Historic Registration Project, Centre Co. Library

DATE

814-355-3249

STREET & NUMBER

203 North Allegheny Street

TELEPHONE

June 30, 1977

CITY OR TOWN

Bellefonte

STATE

Pennsylvania

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 WILLIAM J. WEWER, Executive Director
 Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

DATE

9/13/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

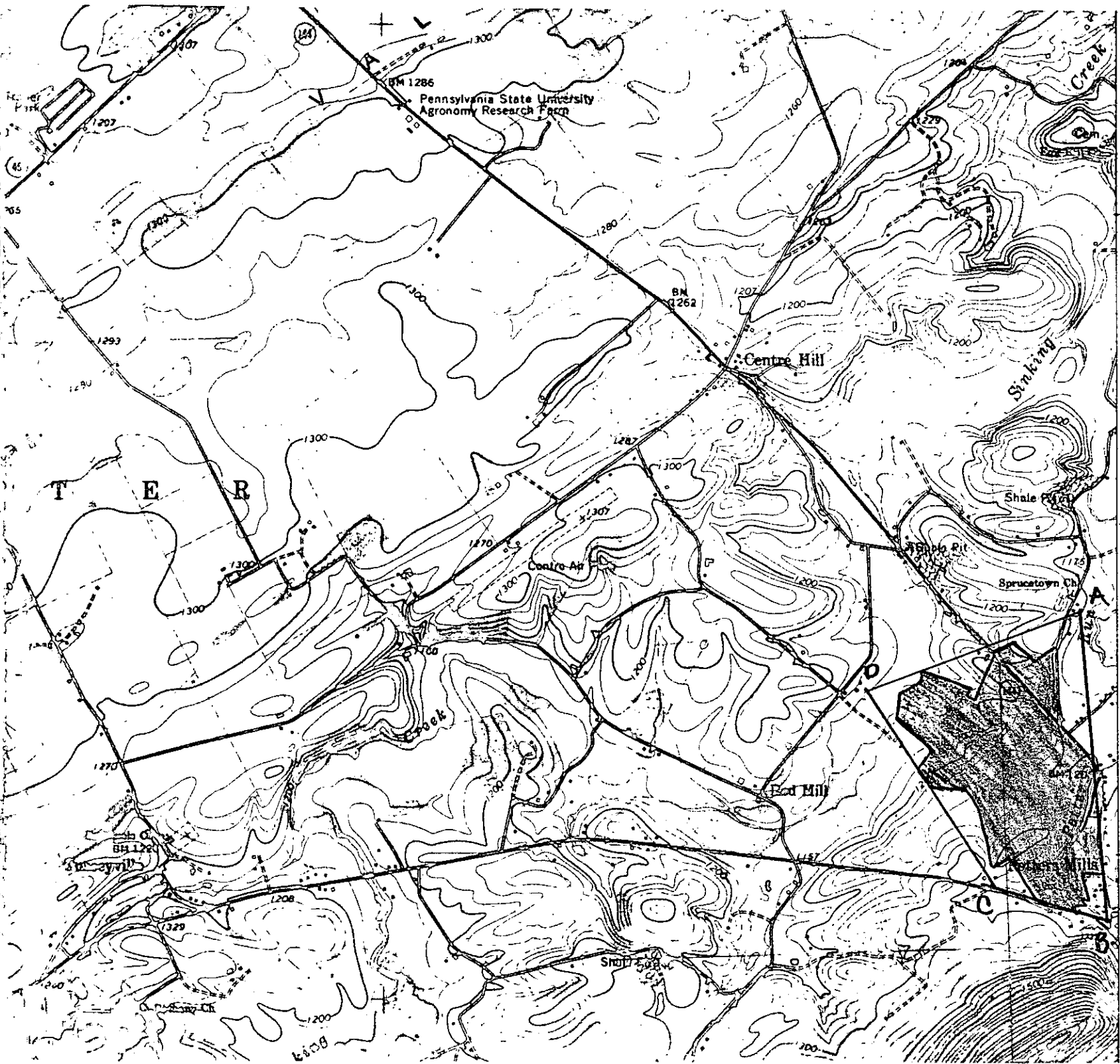
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE _____

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: _____ DATE _____

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



POTTER-ALLISON
FARM

- A- 1278400/4520600
- B- 1278470/4519140
- C- 1277920/4519260
- D- 1277390/4520260

(SPRING MILLS)
3465 1 SE

4520

MILROY B MI.
LEWISTOWN 16 MI

47'30"