

CORRECTED 10/81

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic George Wilson Homestead

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number PA Rt. 550 \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Centennial  vicinity of congressional district

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Centre code 027

## 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Hugh L. Wilson

street & number RD

city, town Warriors Mark \_\_\_ 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 Pennsylvania  
Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

date March 3, 1979 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

# 7. Description

## Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

## Check one

unaltered  
 altered

## Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wilson Homestead, erected in 1810, is situated along Route 550, between Centennial and Warriors Mark. The 2 1/2 story limestone and sandstone Georgian house measures approximately 40 ft. by 25 ft. and has 18" thick walls. Its medium-pitch gable roof overhangs on all sides. Adjacent to it on the right is a 1 1/2 story addition built in 1870, measuring about 16 ft. square, and a small extension to the addition, added 10 years ago. The addition is covered with aluminum siding and has a gable roof. Though several alterations were made to the house at the time the addition was built, it continues to retain its character and high quality of workmanship. Today the house is in excellent condition. Its rural atmosphere has also been preserved through the presence of farm land, woodland areas, and Bald Eagle Ridge to the west. Situated in a sparsely settled area, very few houses are within view. A pond and several outbuildings long associated with the farm activities are located behind the house, and a barn stands across Route 550.

The house is constructed with rough cut, randomly coursed stone and has a five-bay facade. Along the facade and the north elevation is a string course of darker colored stone directly beneath the second story bays. The first floor bays consist of a central doorway with shallow panels and a simple frame pegged at the corners. Above it is a four-light rectangular transom. The door is flanked by two nine-over-six sash windows on either side. Their frames match that of the door and their shutters are original. Above the first story bays is one row of coursed stone. The second story contains five six-over-six sash windows with the original louvered shutters. Some of the original window glass still remains.

The facade appears essentially unaltered from its early appearance. The house originally had a one-story porch running across the facade and wrapping halfway around each side elevation, but it was removed in 1870 and replaced by a smaller portico which surrounded only the door. An 1898 photograph, owned by the Wilson family, shows the portico with two piers at each front corner with rails connecting them to the facade. The portico was removed during the early 1900's.

The rear elevation has a three-bay arrangement on both floors. The first floor rear bays consist of a central doorway, one nine-over-six window and a three-sided window with 40 small panes which projects two feet from the facade. Second story windows have six-over-six panes. The south elevation contains two nine-over-six windows on the first story while the same area on the north elevation has just one window. Its remaining wall space is covered by the addition. On both the south and north elevations are two small square windows in the attic story, each having one shutter.

The house has a full basement with a concrete floor. The present owner believes that it once contained a fireplace, for there is a large, deep indentation at one end which is now partially filled in with plaster. A large beam runs the length of the basement, supporting joists which run across.

The main interior has changed slightly in plan since its construction. When first built, the house featured a central hall plan with two rooms on each side. It first functioned as a two-family house - for the families of both Wilson and his son - and contained two sets of stairs, one in the hallway and one parallel to these in the back right room. The second floor contained five bedrooms rather than the present four. Around 1870, some interior changes were made. The left front wall of the hallway was removed, thus causing the main entrance to open into the front room. The back wall of the room was extended across the hallway area with a doorway leading to the hall behind it. The dividing wall between the rooms on the right side was removed and the second stairway was removed.

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

CONTINUATION SHEET Wilson Homestead ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The present interior includes three rooms and a small hallway on the first floor. The front room on the left side, measuring 10'3" by 20'4", has a chairrail and papered wall surfaces. The ceiling was plastered in recent years. The corner fireplace, now completely blocked up, is surrounded by a modestly styled, shallow mantelpiece containing two flat rectangular paneled areas above the fireplace opening. One of the interesting original details of this room is a wooden triangular step in the corner. It was built to hold a clock which the Wilson family had brought with them from southeastern Pennsylvania. The clock still stands in working order on the step.

The back room measures 12' by 14'9". The ceiling shows exposed beaded boards and joists. The original flooring material is wide boards remains here. A simpler mantelpiece, consisting of a narrow frame and mantle, surrounds the fireplace in this room.

To the right side of the house is one long room, formed when a dividing wall was removed in 1870. It measures approximately 22'6" by 14'9". A large beam and a wide floor board running the width of the room indicate where it was divided. The original flooring of each room was removed and narrow floor boards were laid in a diagonal pattern on either side of the central wide board in 1926 and 1931. A large stone fireplace in the back section of the room stands out as one of the main features (photo #4). It is 8'6" wide and 5'8" high. Above the opening are narrow stones arranged in a flat arch. A simple beaded beam protrudes above the fireplace, forming a mantle. The fireplace was closed up and plastered in 1870 and was reopened in the 1930's. Today it is used as a main source of heat. To the left of the fireplace is a wide six-paneled door which was cut through the thick stone wall of the house in 1870 to lead to the addition.

All three rooms lead into the hallway, which contains a rear doorway and a stairway. The closed string staircase has a simple rounded handrail which is slightly raised in the center, a straight newel post, and no balusters. The wall of the hallway and the staircase are made of vertical planks; above the staircase they are covered with wallpaper. A window provides light at the stair landing.

The original plan of the second floor included five rooms. The fifth room, which stood at the center front area, was converted in recent years to a bathroom and closet space. The four bedrooms remaining share many features. All outer walls are plastered and have chairrails, while the partitioning walls (with one exception) consist of wide vertical planks. All rooms have wide board floors with the exception of one room which contains narrow floor boards in a diagonal arrangement. The second floor fireplaces are closed up.

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

CONTINUATION SHEET Wilson Homestead ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

In 1870 an addition was constructed on the right side of the house and rested on a stone foundation (see Photo #5, from about 1940). It served as a kitchen and had a fireplace on the end which was used for heavy work. A summer kitchen was also added to the back of the addition but was later removed. The addition, when first built, had a central doorway with a six-over-six sash window on each side. Above the first story were three six-paned windows for the small loft. In the 1930's and 1940's the interior of the addition was remodeled and the fireplace was closed off from the inside, though the chimney still stands. Today the facade exterior has been changed to include a doorway to the right side, a picture window, and aluminum siding. A gable roof with a wide front overhang replaced the earlier gable roof. Over 100 years old itself, the addition in its present form does not detract from the appearance of the stone house.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Wilson Homestead ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

The outbuildings, located to the north and east of the house, represent typical and diverse farm functions and offer a fine collection of simple Quaker-oriented building types. Arranged together with the well preserved stone house and the undisturbed backdrop of the Bald Eagle Ridge, the setting of a rustic homestead is maintained and appears much the same as it did 150 years ago.

The outbuildings include:

- 1) The barn, which is principally an "L" shaped building with a stone foundation. The north section of the "L" (70' by 50') is a bank barn with a forebay. The eastern section is a frame barn composed of timber members connected by mortise and tenon joints, covered by vertical weatherboards. It measures 96' by 55' and also has a stone foundation. The significance of the barn lies in the fact that it contains some logs which came from the original house that stood on the site of the present Wilson house. The barn was built ca. 1820, that date being given by Mrs. Hugh Wilson, an 83 yr. old resident of the Wilson house.
- 2) The carriage shed, which is a frame structure covered by vertical weatherboards. It has a stone foundation and a gable roof. It is in a state of disrepair, and it is also said to contain logs from the original Wilson log house. (1800's).
- 3) A storage garage, constructed of yellow brick and measures 21' x 32'. The front of the building faces the southwest with that wall containing a tripartate window (each 6-over-6) and a paneled garage door. The northeast wall contains a 6-over-6 window. The building dates from ca. 1930.
- 4) A saltbox shed, which is a frame structure covered with vertical boards built on a stone foundation. The low wall, which faces north-northeast, is an open bay. The building, which has the appearance of an early saltbox barn, now houses farm machinery. This shed dates from the 19th century and may contain logs from the original log house.
- 5) A gable shed, which is a frame structure covered with vertical boards. It houses farm equipment and probably dates from the 19th century.
- 6) The two corn cribs which are simple square, frame structures covered with chicken wire. They have concrete block foundations and hipped roofs. (1900's).
- 7) The automobile garage, which is a simple concrete block structure probably dating from the 1940's. It measures approx. 15' x 20', has two windows of 6 lights each and a door with a multi-lighted window over two panels. It has a flat roof.
- 8) The ice house, which is a concrete structure measuring approx. 14' x 14'. It has three walls and a gable roof of horizontal boards. It is now used to store firewood. It probably dates from the early part of the 20th century.
- 9) The hog shed which is a comparatively large (50' x 20') frame shed with horizontal boards and a gable roof. The SE wall has an opening. The foundation is concrete.
- 10) The wood house which is a small (8' x 12') frame structure with a gable roof. It is in fair condition. Built in the early 20th century.
- 11) A rectangular aluminum barn with a rounded barrel vault roof, measuring approximately 100' by 40'. Built ca. 1970's.

# 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1810

Builder/Architect George Wilson

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Wilson Homestead in Halfmoon Valley is the earliest structure which relates to the development of the Quaker faith in Centre County. Its builder, George Wilson, was the pioneer of this first Quaker settlement in the valley, and it was to him that the many Quaker settlers who followed looked for leadership. Through his initiative the first Friends Meeting House in Centre County was built, and the Halfmoon Valley area became the most important Quaker settlement in the county. Wilson's stone house of 1810 is an outstanding example of the ingenuity and craftsmanship of the valley's early inhabitants, and its stylistic simplicity reflects the basic Quaker belief of simple living. Today the house remains in an excellent state of preservation with only minor alterations. The house, along with George Wilson's original tract of land, has never left the family.

George Wilson brought his family from Chester County to Halfmoon Valley in the winter of 1792 and settled on 160 acres of land obtained from Henry Drinker of Philadelphia. On the original deed dated April 18, 1806, the land was called "Lynchpin". (The Wilson family still possesses this deed, written on sheepskin.) Following his lead, many Quaker families began to move from southeastern Pennsylvania to Halfmoon Valley, and by 1797 Centre Meeting was established. In 1800 Wilson built the first meeting house in the area on land not far from his house (now occupied by the Friends cemetery). While it was under construction some non-Quaker settlers who disapproved of their ways burned the logs they had cut for the meeting house and burned Wilson in effigy. However, with perseverance the building was completed and the Quaker community in Halfmoon Valley continued to grow, numbering 40 families by 1825.

Upon arriving in Halfmoon Valley, George Wilson began farming full time, giving up his trade as a weaver. For the first eighteen years he and his family lived in a log cabin which David Elder, an earlier settler, had built on the property in 1785. Wilson erected the stone house in 1810 near the site of the cabin. Some of the logs from the cabin were saved and later used in a barn building which still stands on the Wilson farm. The new eight-room stone house was built to accommodate two families and thus had the unusual characteristic of two stairways side by side separated by a wall. One was in the main hallway while the other was located in the back room to the right of the hallway. The house served the functional needs of the family quite comfortably, yet its style and detail were of a simple type often found in the early rural architecture of the area. Simplicity in all aspects of life was one of the main tenets of the Society of Friends. The founder of the religious sect, George Fox, wrote in 1767: "Do not strive about outward things, but dwell in the love of God, for that will unite you together..." Some of the stylistic details of the house reflected these beliefs, and the continued impact of the religion on those succeeding generations rendered few changes toward more "modern" styles and ornamentation. Areas such as the door and window frames, mantelpieces, and the stairway bespeak the attitude toward simplicity.

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

CONTINUATION SHEET Wilson Homestead ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The Wilson Homestead was one of the first in the area to offer such a large size and fine quality of construction. John Blair Linn stated that "...when raised (the house) was regarded with much admiration as by far the handsomest and most imposing residence in these parts."<sup>2</sup> One of the main features of the house was its large stone fireplace on the right side of the house. Traditional family history includes a story about local Indians, who on several occasions, were found warming themselves in front of the fireplace in the early morning. Although Quakers did not believe in using locks on their doors, they felt it necessary to begin using them after these incidents. In 1870 a frame addition was constructed adjacent to the right side of the house. It also contained a large fireplace which was used for all of the household needs. In recent years the fireplace has been closed up and the addition modernized, but its presence does not alter the essential integrity of the main house.

The house has passed down in neat progression from son to son over the last 170 years. Robert Wilson, one of five children of George and Esther Wilson, inherited the house from his father. It was next willed to his son John, who had three sons and two daughters. His son, Newton I. Wilson, well-known in the area as a county commissioner, inherited the house from his father. Today his son, Hugh Wilson, continues to live on the homestead of his great-great-grandfather.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Bliss Forbush, A History of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends (Sandy Spring, Md.: Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1972), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>John Blair Linn, History of Centre and Clinton Counties (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), p. 310.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HGRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

CONTINUATION SHEET Wilson Homestead ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

---

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

Magargel, Myrtle. The Friends of Halfmoon Valley. State College, Pa.: Centre  
Daily Times, 1941.



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Centre County Library and Historical Museum. The Spangler Collection, being a collection of notebooks of Centre County genealogical information, compiled by Mrs. Newton Spangler.  
 Forbush, Bliss. A History of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends. Sandy Spring, Md.: Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1972. (continued)

# 10. Geographical Data

**ITEM NOT VERIFIED**  
**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Acreege of nominated property 12.4 acres  
 Quadrangle name Port Matilda, Pa. Quadrangle scale 7.5

### UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	D	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached 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 Martha P. Birshenall  
 organization Historic Registration Project date February 13, 1979  
 street & number 203 North Allegheny Street 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Larry E. Tise*  
 title Larry E. Tise, Executive Director date 1/15/82  
Pa. Historical & Museum Comm.

For HCRS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
 date  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: date  
 Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Wilson Homestead ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION

Due to the absence of any pronounced topographic features, historical associations, or appropriate property lines, the boundaries of the Wilson Homestead have been delineated by the formation of a rectangle 200 yards in breadth and 300 yards deep. The approximately 12.4-acre area is centered on the Wilson farm house, and includes various barns and other outbuildings associated with the farm operation, and a portion of a 379 acre farm presently owned by the Wilson family.

Having been in continuous use since 1792, the surrounding farmland plays an integral role in forming the historic and visual setting of the house. A sufficient portion of land has been included within the boundaries to retain the essential integrity of the house and its setting and to form an area representative of activities which have been associated with the Wilson Homestead throughout its history.

GEORGE WILSON HOMESTEAD SITE MAP, CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

List of outbuildings:

- 1) Bank Barn
- 2) Carriage Shed
- 3) Storage Garage
- 4) Saltbox Shed
- 5) Gable Shed
- 6) Corn Cribs
- 7) Automobile Garage
- 8) Ice House
- 9) Hog Shed
- 10) Wood House
- 11) Barn

UTM References:

Quadrangle Name Port Matilda, Pa.

Zone 17

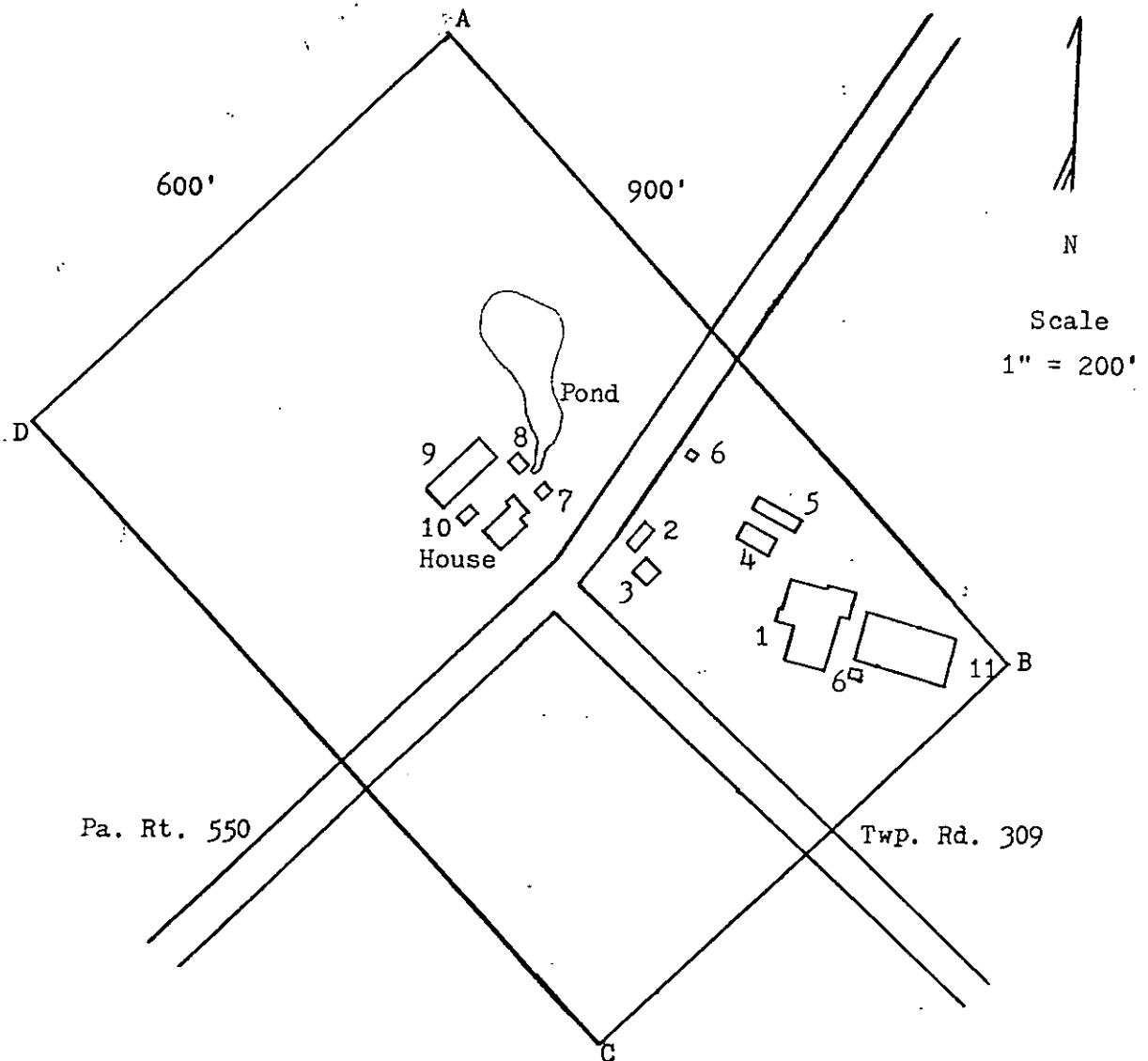
A 747 430 45 15 700

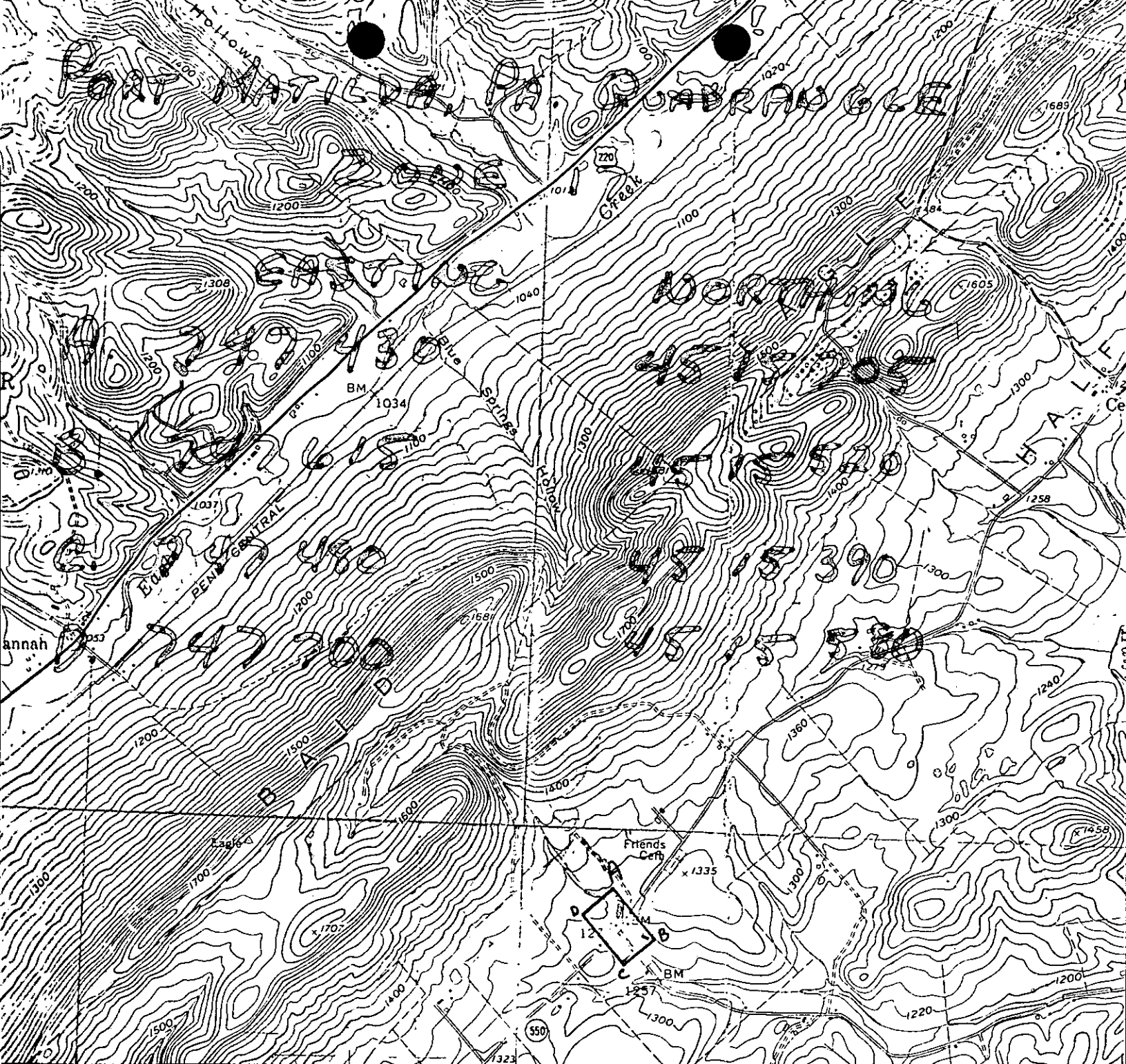
B 747 610 45 15 520

C 747 480 45 15 390

D 747 700 45 15 580

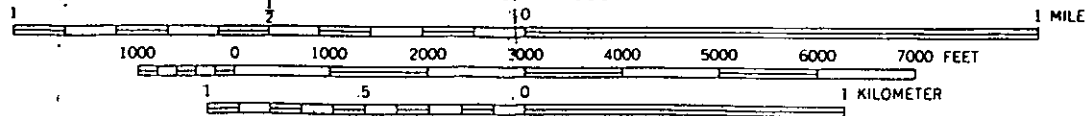
Quadrangle Scale 1:24,000



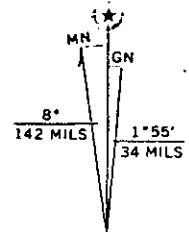


WARRIORS MARK 4.9 MI. (FRANKLINVILLE) 5365 11 NE  
 TYRONE 12 MI.

SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



UTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST