

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic JOSEPH T. ROTHROCK HOUSE

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 428 N. Church Street

not for publication

city, town West Chester n/a vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Chester code 029

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input 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 Ralph A. and Susan Picard

street & number 450 Colwell Lane

city, town Conshohocken n/a vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chester County Courthouse

street & number Market and High Streets

city, town West Chester state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title West Chester Historic Site Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau for Historic Preservation,
PA 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

A three-bay wide, two-and-one-half-story Gothic Revival dwelling whose main block is 22' by 43.6' with a two-and-one-half-story gabled ell, 28' by 20.6', extending west of the core. The structure, built in 1858-1859 by Addison May, features painted brick facades, one over one and two over two lights, asphalt shingled roofs and three corbelled brick chimneys. Attached to the ell are two additions: (1) on the west a two-story 14 x 10.6' rectangle built of brick on the first floor and frame on the second floor, topped with a flat roof; and (2) a small, 10.6' x 6' shallow shed roofed one-story rectangle.

Attention is drawn to two 4' x 8' one-story, brick appendages on the southeast elevation with a complimentary, one-story enclosed sun porch also located on the same elevation. The most outstanding architectural component is a five-sided, two-story bay built of common bond painted brick, pressed brick block, rosettes and lable lintels.

A veranda extends the full width of the front facade with chamfered posts supporting an asphalt shingled, hipped roof featuring a smaller decorative gable over the main entrance. The balustrade includes original balusters on the northwest and southeast sections of the veranda as well as on either side of the main entrance. The remainder of the balusters have been replaced with a simple and stylized sunburst balustrade system.

All bargeboards and cross gables retain their original decorative cut-work which is typical of the Gothic Revival architecture. Louvered shutters have been maintained on the majority of the windows.

A fire escape system has been added on the southeast elevation for the protection of the occupants.

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 checked="" 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/
<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 type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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 1858-1859 **Builder/Architect** Sharp and Ingram - library

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Joseph T. Rothrock House, constructed in 1858-1859 by Addison May, Esq., and located at the northwest corner of Church and Lafayette Streets, West Chester, is historically significant for its association with Dr. Joseph Trimble Rothrock who served as the first Commissioner of Forestry in Pennsylvania. He was instrumental in organizing the preservation and wise usage of many valuable acres of Pennsylvania's timber lands.

Rothrock and his wife Martha lived in the house during the latter part of the nineteenth century, having moved to West Chester in 1877. His father-in-law Addison May, who built the house, was also prominent in his own right.

A native of McVeystown, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, Rothrock studied under the tutelage of Dr. Asa Gray and Louis Agassiz at Harvard University. For several years after graduating as a physician he practiced medicine in Wilkes Barre and was instrumental in founding the Wilkes Barre Hospital. He enlisted as assistant surgeon to Lt. Wheeler's Corps of Exploration whose commission was to investigate the botany of Arizona, New Mexico and California. The three year sojourn supplied valuable biological research data for his report; that after being evaluated by leading naturalists in America and Europe was declared a paper of rare value and ranked Dr. Rothrock among leading botanists of the age. The doctor rose in the scientific world to fill the chair of Botany at the University of Pennsylvania, having previously served as the first Professor of Botany at what is now Pennsylvania State University.

It was while he was a professor of Botany that Rothrock became impressed with a need for a state forestry system because he observed needless timbering losses in Pennsylvania that could never be repaired or recovered. He advocated a general plan which included planned timbering for commercial use in relation to conservation of moisture in the soil and development of the Commonwealth's forest areas for recreational uses.

In 1893 Governor Robert E. Pattison appointed Rothrock as the first head of the State Forestry Commission. With the assistance of Engineer Shunk, Rothrock traveled several thousand miles inspecting the forest lands in the state. The journey provided the documentation for the initial purchase of the State Forest Reserve. While a Commissioner he lectured throughout the Commonwealth on the benefits of timber land preservation and was known as "one of the most distinguished botanists in the United States." (West Chester. Daily Local News, January 8, 1892.)

continued...

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Continuation sheet SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page 2

During Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker's administration he stepped down as Commissioner, but was made Secretary of the Commission. By the time he retired from the agency in 1913, Pennsylvania owned over a million acres, thanks to Dr. Rothrock's foresight, commitment and dedication to preserve one of Pennsylvania's most valuable natural resources.

Upon announcement of his death in 1922, the Chicago Evening Post recognized him for his invention of pemmican, a food combination used by Arctic explorers, as well as denoting him as a botanist of international fame.

Today Dr. Joseph Trimble Rothrock is known as the father of forestry in Pennsylvania because through his efforts the State Forestry Commission continues as the Bureau of Forestry under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Resources and consists of twenty districts.

A Pennsylvania State Historical Marker designates his home in West Chester while a bronze plaque in the state's capitol exemplifies his contributions to mankind as one of Pennsylvania's distinguished citizens.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Schooler Alice Kent. West Chester Historic Site Survey. Harrisburg; Bureau for Historic Preservation.
2. West Chester. Chester County Historical Society. Clipping File.
3. West Chester. Daily Local News, January 8, 1892.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 14,728 square feet

Quadrangle name West Chester

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	4	7	9	0	0	4	4	2	3	6	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jane L. S. Davidson, Chester County Historic Preservation Officer

organization County of Chester

date March, 1984

street & number 17 N. Church Street

telephone (215) 431-6917

city or town West Chester

state Pennsylvania 19380

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 _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration