

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Griesemer/Brown Mill Complex  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number Brown's Mill Road  not for publication N/A  
city, town Amity Township  vicinity N/A  
state PA code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19518

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Cristmills in Berks County  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/processingDomestic/single dwellingAgriculture/outbuildings

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in useDomestic/single dwellingAgriculture/outbuildings**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: gristmillOther: vernacular dwelling and agriculture  
outbuildings

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls stonewoodroof steelother asphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Griesemer-Brown mill complex is located in open farmland along the Monocacy Creek in Amity Township. The Monocacy flows south of the mill after crossing Brown's Mill Road. The mill is part of a 485 acre farm, operated by F.M. Brown's Sons, Inc., owners of a large milling and farming enterprise in Berks County. The nominated property consists of the approximately four acres on which the buildings are located. The historic resources consist of eight contributing vernacular style buildings; a banked 1 1/2 stories plus basement stone mill built 1843, a c 1830 2 1/2 stories stucco over stone farmhouse, a c 1830 1 1/2 stories stucco over stone, brick and frame summer kitchen, a c 1850 stone and frame barn, a c 1900 small barn with frame vertical siding and a tin roof across the road from the mill, a c 1900 barn with frame vertical siding and tin roof adjacent to the larger barn, a c 1920 frame transverse wagonshed and corncrib with a gable tin roof and a shed type addition on the north side and a c 1920 frame garage with shed type tin roof. The historic resources have few changes that interfere with their ability to portray the significant time period.

The house of the miller/farmer is located across from the mill on Brown's Mill Road. The c 1830 2 1/2 stories, stucco over stone farmhouse has seven windows on the second floor and six windows and a door with an entry porch on the first floor of the front or north facade. There is an interior chimney on each of the gable ends, a plain cornice, pent roof, porches on the south and east facades, and an asphalt shingle roof. The windows on the front are plain frame 1/1 with shutters. There is a frame addition to the rear of the building. According to the owner the house was originally three dwellings although built at the same time.

The c 1850 barn has a stucco over stone foundation, and vertical board upper walls and a gable tin roof. The barn has several additions some of frame and others of cement block.

The rear section of the c 1830 smokehouse is stucco over stone, the middle section brick and the front frame vertical siding. There is a door on the front gable end, a window with paneled shutters on each side, a tin gable roof and a brick center chimney.

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Griesemer-Brown Mill Complex

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The mill measuring 36'6" by 48'4" is built of red sandstone stuccoed on the outside. The west or front end has a window on either side of a door on both levels, and is stone to the attic level, but the gable end is vertical boarded. The hood roof for the bag hoist, on the west facade, is an extension of the roof ridge. There is a one story frame addition with a shed type roof on the north side of the mill and three 6/6 windows on the second floor. The mill has a simple box cornice and is covered with a channel drain steel roof. The east stone wall is almost entirely covered with a 1 1/2 story plus basement frame addition measuring 14'3" by 30'6". The south wall has three doorways one on top of the other--the two lower being Dutch doors, the door in the dormer, projecting through the roof, has a paneled solid door and a hood roof for a bag hoist. This wall has two 6/6 windows on the first level and three 6/6 windows on the second level. In the southwest corner are two chimneys one of brick and one of cement block. There is no indication of water wheel arches for the head or the tailrace on the outside of the building. However, inside there is a tailrace arch below grade.

The turbine is encased in a large steel housing in the water wheel pit area, its vertical shaft driving directly into the hurst frame. The hurst frame is in place over the water wheel pit. There is an internal bag hoist opening framed into the floor of the first floor. The first floor is a large open area and is one single level throughout.

The office located in the southwest corner is made up of a partition of vertical, random width tongue-and-groove boards, beaded on the outside. The miller's desk remains in the office. There is a three bay arrangement created by the summer beam running the long dimension of the mill. There is an internal bag hoist properly framed into the second floor structure directly above the one leading to the basement. There is knob and tube wiring throughout the mill.

The mill was most recently operated with a diesel engine located in the mill addition. Flat belts drove the power into the mill proper. One pair of millstones and hoop is in place the hoop is of the barrel stave type, there is a horse on top with a hopper. These stones were last used by Alton Brown for making cornmeal and were used only for that purpose during the last sixty years. The stone crane is in place. The cracked corn separator was manufactured by Sprout-Waldron. Also located on the first floor is an attrition mill manufactured by Robinson Manufacturing Co., Muncy, Pa., used for grinding cob chop, oats, and corn for animal feed. There is a Fitz cornmeal roaster installed in the basement of the addition.

The attic contains many bins. It has a one-foot high plastered knee wall. There is a semi-trussed roof and the trussing elements of the roof are morticed and tennoned and pegged together.

The changes in the basic mill building are few, a large roof was added to the front west gable end covering the loading area. There are frame additions on the

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north and east side. The mill is structurally very sound, the alterations to the interior are those made in accordance with the changeover from the millstone technology to the roller milling system. The house has had greater changes over the years; it is now one dwelling instead of the original three, the original windows have been replaced with 1/1, porches have been added, and the interior modernized. The barn has had several additions over the years but the original portion is intact. These changes do not interfere with the essential physical features that enable the historic resources to convey their past identity and character and portray the significant time period 1830 to 1939 the cut-off date for National Register eligibility.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Industry  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1830 to 1939  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1843  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Griesemer-Brown mill complex is significant under National Register criteria A and C. This complex is important for its association with the county gristmill industry as it is representative of a pattern of mills which were part of family farms. Architecturally, this mill is a good representative of a country custom mill of the mid-nineteenth century.

The Greisemer/Brown, Weidner, Thompson and Geiger mills illustrate an interesting finding of the survey: the majority of early mills were part of working farms. The building functions on these properties were, therefore, inter-related - the mill, house and outbuildings serving the mill and farm. The house in the Greisemer/Brown complex served as the home of the miller until 1950. Additionally, the buildings have all been part of the property since their construction. These factors give the buildings historical associations to one another and the Berks County milling industry. At present the property is a working farm.

Architecturally, this mill is a good representative of a country custom mill; one of the last of the type to be constructed. Of the 104 mills in The Berks County Gristmill Survey eleven of this type survive intact. These eleven mills have certain characteristics in common: stone construction, 1 1/2 stories plus basement, rectangular configuration, constructed prior to 1850, small compared to the larger merchant type mills. This mill and the Long/ Howerter Mill also have another rather unusual feature a hoist hood in the dormer on the long side of the mill.

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This mill was designed and built for the millstone technology for both flour and feed milling. Later it was converted to the roller milling system for wheat flour but retained a pair of millstones for feed production and a cornmeal operation. Finally, discontinuing the milling of flour and adding modern feed milling machinery, retaining one pair of millstones for cornmeal production. The making of cornmeal and animal feed were continued until the mill ceased operating in 1957.

This property has been the site of mills from an early date. Grieseemers are shown as owning a mill on the map of 1816, 1854, and 1862. Brown is shown as the owner of the mill on the atlas of 1876.

The owner on the 1850 Census of Manufactures is Samuel Grieseemer, the mill had a capital of \$7,000., with two pair of millstones, processing 8,000 bushels of corn and rye, with a product value of \$6,000. One man operated the mill and earned \$15 a month.

County historian Morton Montgomery in his History of 1886 writes, "On the Monocacy, near the Exeter line, the old Grieseemer mill, so long operated, is still carried on as the property of George Brown."

This mill is the starting place of the Brown family milling business. George Brown started the business in 1871. Sixteen years later in 1887, he passed the business to his son, Franklin M. Brown, who in 1920 passed it on to his four sons. Around 1900 Franklin expanded the business by buying the "Brooke Mill" in Birdsboro. In 1920 the Brooke Mill was torn down and a new mill was constructed. The business branched out in 1917 to Shillington, 1932 to Sinking Spring and in 1947 to Fleetwood. The Brown family at present operate three commercial mills in the county, in Sinking Spring, Fleetwood and Birdsboro.

This mill and the Grieseemer and Brown families have provided milling service to the farmers and residents of the area for over 100 years, first as a custom country mill grinding the farmers grain into flour for their families and feed for their animals, and later grinding cornmeal and feed for the market. Alton Brown, great grandson of George operated the mill between 1945 and 1957. The success of this mill enabled the Brown family to expand the enterprise into what is now the largest milling concern still operating in Berks County employing approximately 140 people.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Berks County Conservancy Multiple Property Nomination and Survey: Gristmills in Berks County, 1989

Morton L. Montgomery, History of Berks County in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Evert, Peck & Richards, 1886).

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Berks County Conservancy

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of property Approximately 4 acres

UTM References

A	1, 8	4, 3, 3	4, 1, 5	4, 4	6, 1	4, 9, 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
C	1, 8	4, 3, 3	4, 8, 5	4, 4	6, 1	3, 3, 5

B	1, 8	4, 3, 3	5, 2, 5	4, 4	6, 1	4, 5, 5
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
D	1, 8	4, 3, 3	4, 7, 0	4, 4	6, 1	3, 7, 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Louise Emery, Consultant  
 organization Berks County Conservancy date June 1990  
 street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone 215-372-4992  
 city or town Wyomissing state PA zip code 19610

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Griesemer/Brown Mill

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point along Browns Mill Road 50' east of the southeast corner of the mill building, continue south 50', thence westerly 500' thence northerly 500', thence easterly 500', thence southerly 450' to the place of beginning.

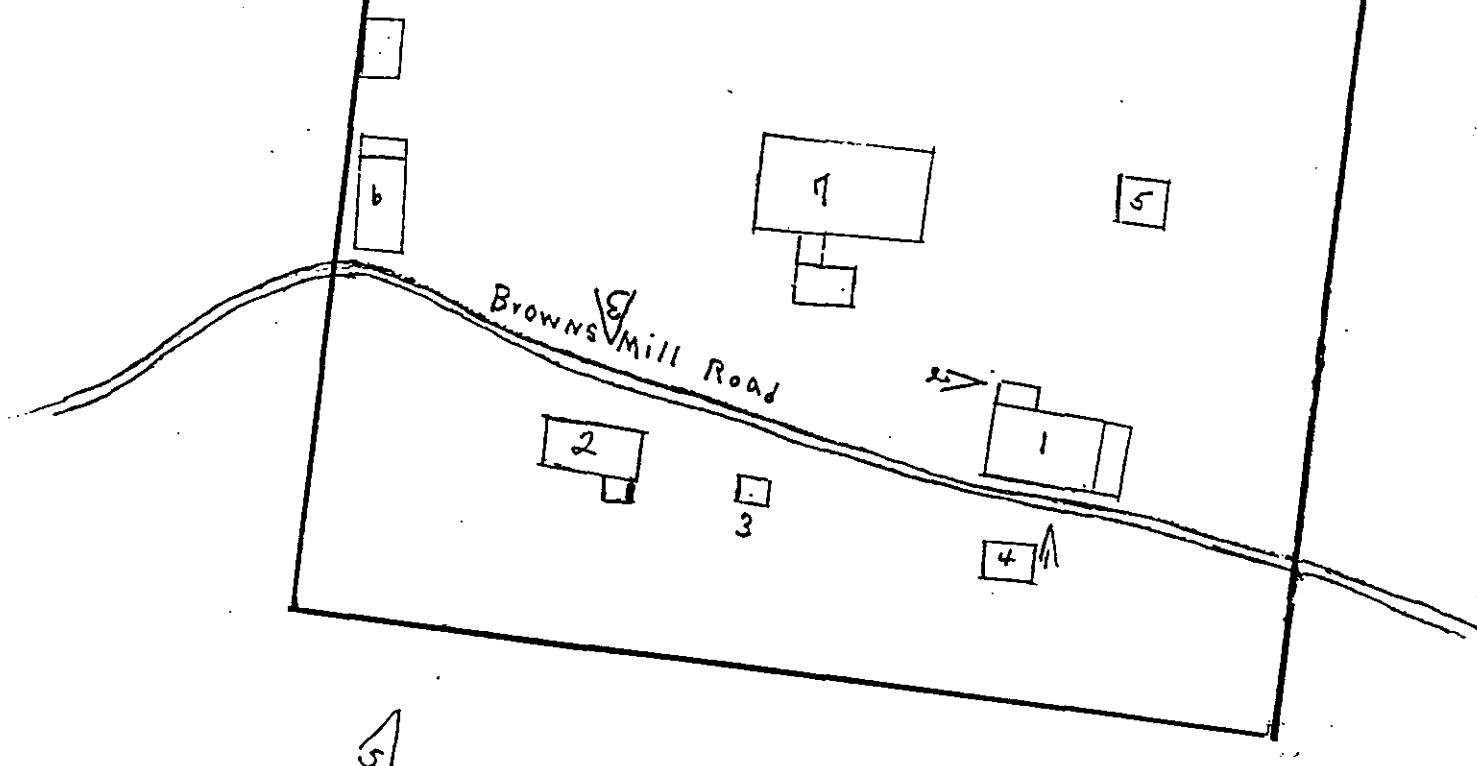
Boundary Justification

The boundaries have been drawn to include the eight contributing buildings in the complex. The farm house, barns and outbuildings are included in the nomination because the mill was historically part of this working farm. Excluded were the fields and farmland and the farm buildings that are less than fifty years of age.



GRIESEMER/BROWN MILL

BERKS COUNTY, PA



- 1. Gristmill
- 2. Farmhouse
- 3. Summer Kitchen
- 4. Small Barn
- 5. Barn
- 6. Wagonshed
- 7. Large Barn with additions
- 8. Gavage

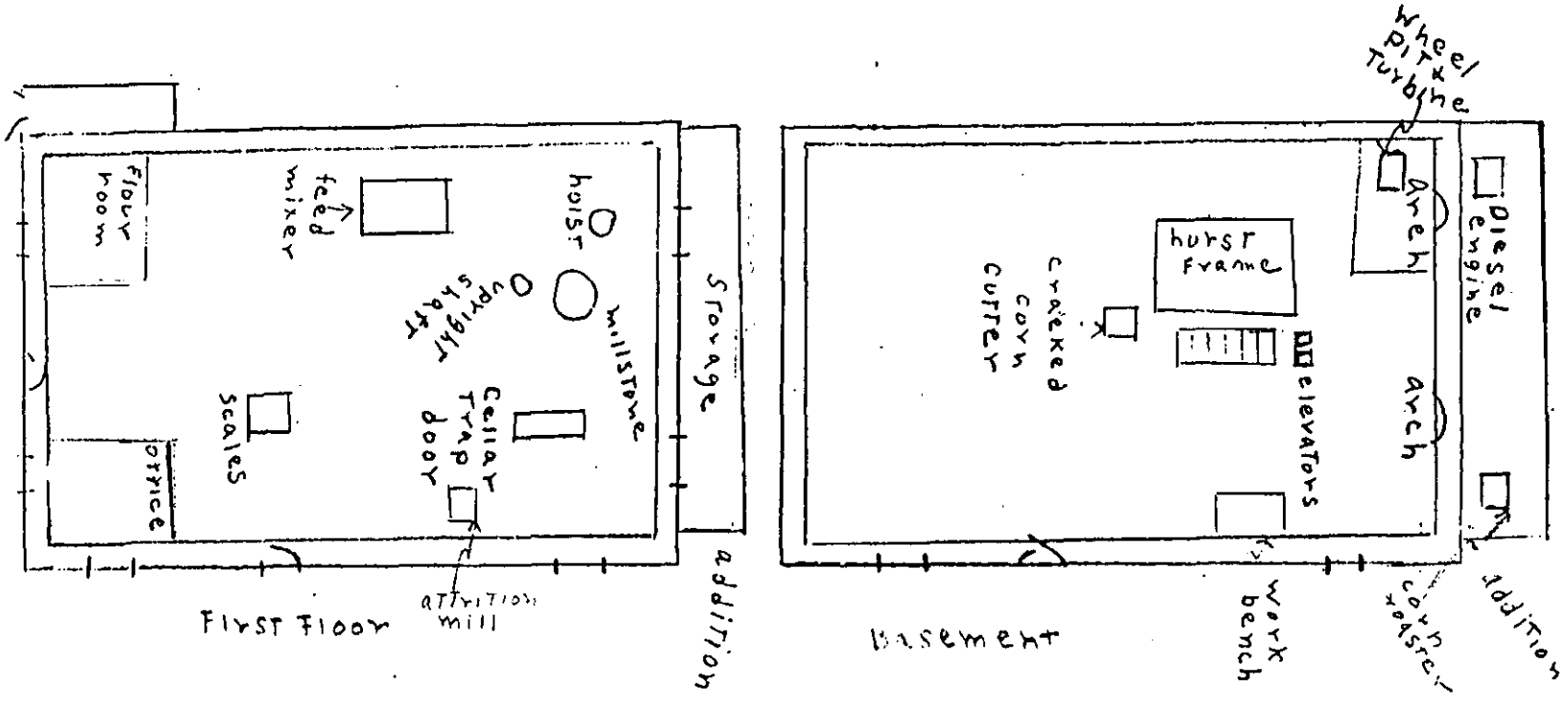
Not to Scale

Key

\_\_\_\_\_ Boundry  
<Photo Direction

GRIESEMER/BROWN MILL

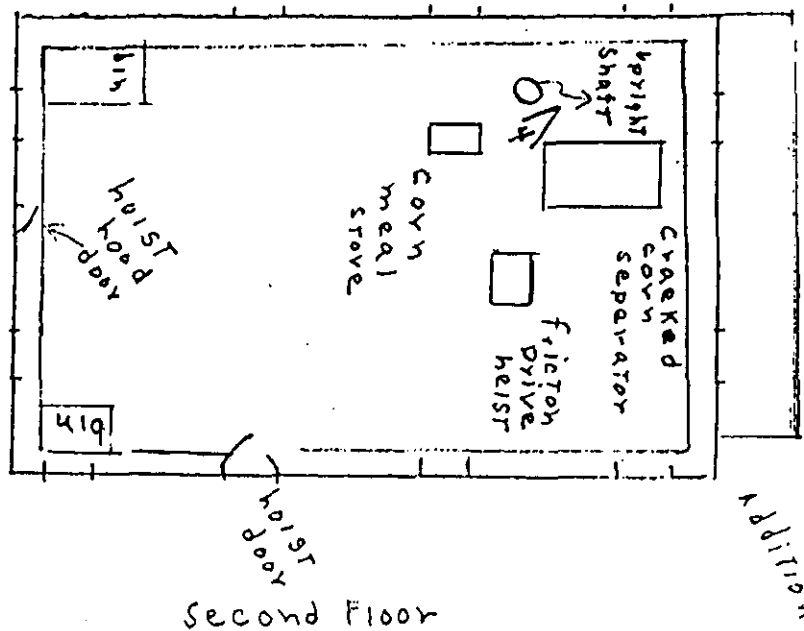
BERKS COUNTY, PA



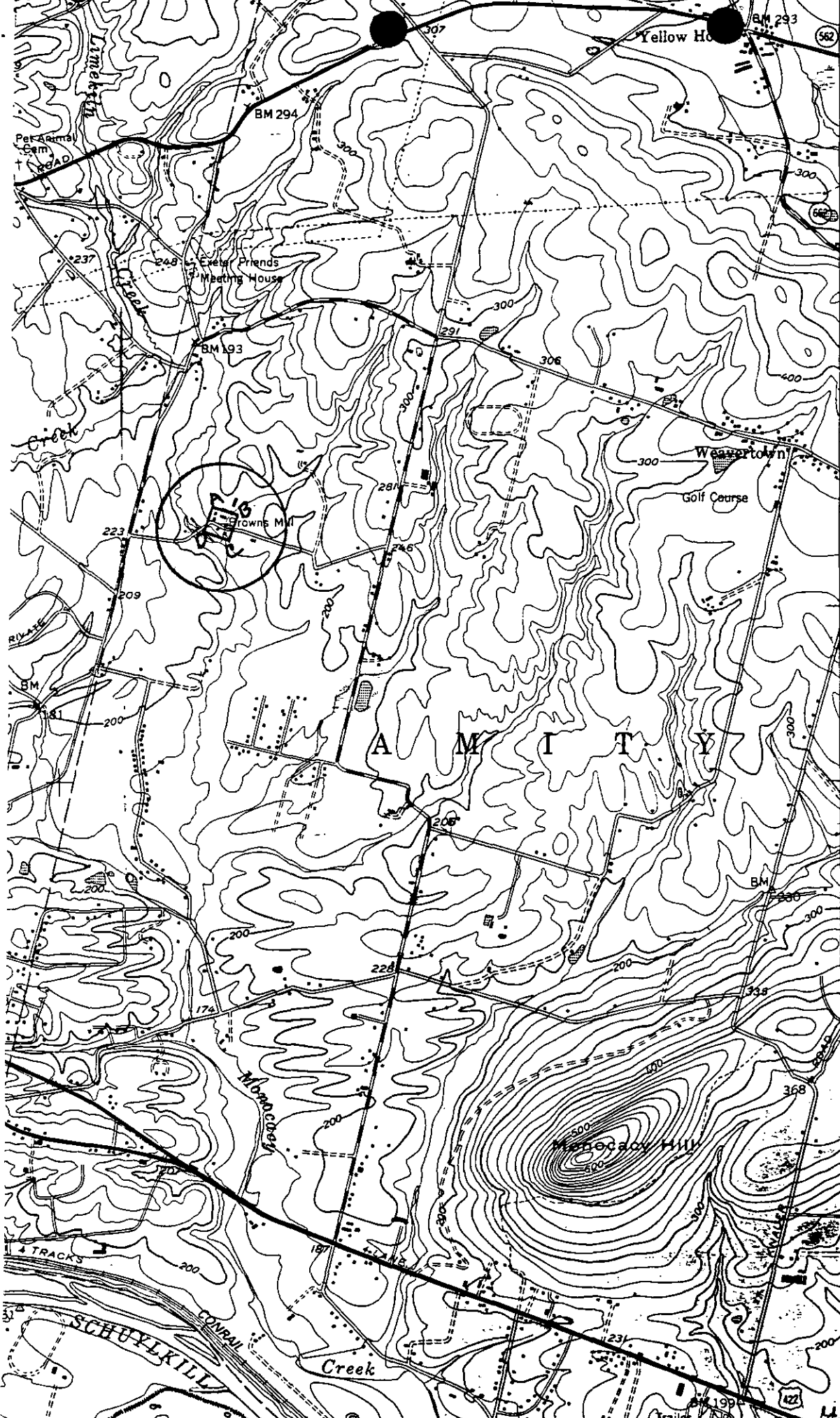


GRIESEMER/BROWN MILL

BERKS COUNTY, PA



← Photo Direction  
Not to Scale



EARLVILLE  
BOYERTOWN  
DOUGLASSVILLE (JUNC. U.S. 422) 4.5 MI.  
BOYERTOWN (BOYERTOWN) 5864 T SW  
DOUGLASSVILLE 1.5 MI.  
NORRISTOWN 24 MI.

Griesemer/Brown P.  
Benks County  
Bundshoro Aus  
zone 18

- A 433415 446149
- B 433525 446143
- C 433485 446133
- D 433470 446137

A M I T Y

17'30"

4460

4459

4458