

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 "Old Congress"

and or common The Byecroft Farm Complex

2. Location

street & number "Old Congress" 2320 Byecroft Road  
"Old Bye Barn" 2310 Byecroft Road N/A not for publication

city, town Holicong, PA 18928  vicinity of Buckingham 8th district

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Bucks code 017

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name for "Old Congress" Mr. Gerard H. Bye for "Old Bye Barn" Dr. & Mrs. A. Thomas Richie

street & number 3504 Hamilton Street 2320 Byecroft Rd. Holicong, PA 1892

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds Office: Bucks County Courthouse

street & number E. Court Street

city, town Doylestown state PA 18901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Register of Historic Places Bucks County Conservancy has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date December 21, 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Bucks County Conservancy

city, town 11 North Main Street, Doylestown state PA 18901

# 7. Description

## Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

## Check one

unaltered  
 altered

## Check one

original site main house, 1702, 1732, 1775, c. 183  
 moved date 1934

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

The Byecroft Farm Complex is located along a two lane country road, Byecroft Road, in Bucks County and is set in a small farm and residential area. The Georgian vernacular house was built on a slight hill and faces southeast. The complex also contains two barns, two carriage houses that have been converted to dwellings and a corn crib. The complex encompasses the remaining land originally deeded to Thomas Bye in 1699.

The farmhouse consists of a central bloc and three wings, two on the southwest and one on the northeast. Built of coursed fieldstone, the house is rectilinear in plan and is nine bays long and one pile deep. The windows on the first floor are 9 over 6 and have panelled shutters. The windows on the second floor are 6 over 6. The house has a gable roof with three dormers on its principle or southeastern facade, and four chimneys.

Built in 1732 the central bloc is a 2½ story, three bay section which includes on both facades pedimented entrance gables with dentilated friezes, panelled doors and relieving stone arched windows on either side of the entrances. On the roof directly above the southeast entrance is a gabled dormer. There are chimneys on both ends of the central bloc.

The two story wing northeast of the central bloc is the oldest section of the building. Built in 1702, the wing was originally one story in height. In 1775 another story was added to the northeast wing, making it two stories. The wing is two bays wide, has slightly projecting rafter beams and a single projecting course of stone between the first and second stories. At the gable end is a chimney with a hooded cap.

Immediately southwest of the central bloc is a slightly recessed, two bay wing. When built in 1775, the wing was two stories in height. During the 1830's the roof was raised to 2½ stories. The wing has a gabled dormer on the roof and a chimney at the gable end. The most southwestwardly wing was built in 1934. The 1½ story, two bay wing has a fieldstone base, an enclosed porch and a steeply pitched gable roof with a gable dormer.

The interior of the Byecroft farmhouse reflects a rustic elegance. The first floor of the 1702 structure is now a library with an open-beamed ceiling of hand-hewn oak and a large walk in fireplace. Also on the first floor are two living rooms with fireplaces. The 1775 addition is now a dining room which features wainscoting and a fireplace. The most recent addition contains a modern kitchen. All four upstairs bedrooms have wood panelling, three of the bedrooms have a fireplace, and the master bedroom has an open-beamed ceiling. Much of the original hardware, including door locks and hinges, is still used throughout the house.

Old Bye Barn - Built in about 1730, the Old Bye Barn is a 2½ story, stucco over fieldstone building. It is 3 bays wide and one bay deep, has a pedimented entrance that resembles the farmhouse entrance, and has a gable roof. There is a chimney located at the peak of the roof above the entrance. The barn was converted to residence in 1961.

Carriage House/Studio - Built in 1775, the original section of the carriage house/studio is 1½ stories, with lateral walls of uncoursed fieldstone and has a gable roof. The exposed gable end has vertical flush siding and has three bays. A one story, one bay addition was added to the other gable end in 1946. The addition projects slightly from the original structure. The carriage house/studio is used as a dwelling.

Barn - The barn is a large 2 story frame structure with an uncoursed fieldstone base. Rectilinear in plan, the barn is three bays wide and four bays long & has a gable roof. The barn was built in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Small Carriage-house/Cottage - The cottage is a one story, three bay frame structure with two additions. The first addition, which is now the central portion of the cottage, is two bays and is slightly recessed from the original section. The second addition is recessed from the central section and is used as a garage. All three sections have gable roofs and aluminum siding. The cottage was originally used as a shed for farm equipment. Its date of construction is not known. Additions and alterations have compromised the structure's integrity.

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Bucks County

Continuation sheet The Byecroft Farm Complex

Item number 7

Page 2

Corncrib - The corncrib is a 1½ story, frame structure and has a gable roof. The corncrib is used as a garage.

Pumphouse & Well House - There is a pumphouse just southeast of the farmhouse and a well house near the barns. Both are small, stone buildings with gable roofs.

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1702, 1732, 1775, 1830 <sup>to 1840</sup> <sup>1934-1935</sup> Builder/Architect N/A

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Byecroft Farmstead is a fine example of the add-on character of many eighteenth century dwellings in eastern Pennsylvania. Owned for almost three centuries by descendants of the first occupant, an early Pennsylvania settler, the farmstead also offers an important record of the evolution of an ancestral seat.

The Byecroft farmhouse is an example of an architectural style that was once very common in eastern Pennsylvania. Built in stages over a period of almost three hundred years the structure, nevertheless, displays a sense of planned symmetry. The interior reinforces the country flavor of the exterior. Most of the rooms have fireplaces, including one walk-in chimney that was used for cooking. Two rooms have original open-beamed ceilings, one which is hand-hewn oak, and the upstairs bedrooms have handsome wood panelling. Original hardware, including door locks and hinges, add to the authenticity of the house. Unadorned and almost simple in appearance, the house reflects the rural elegance of colonial Pennsylvania.

The original occupant of the farmhouse was Thomas Bye. Bye came to Pennsylvania in 1699, purchased a 600 acre tract of land from William Penn, and built a log cabin. Since that time a portion of Bye's tract has remained in the possession of Bye descendants. Three years after Bye's purchase, his wife and children joined him in Pennsylvania. To accommodate his family, Bye built a stone addition to the cabin. It is this addition, built in 1702, that now forms the oldest part of the Byecroft farmhouse (a fire destroyed the log cabin in 1708).

Between 1702 and 1710 the house gained local prominence as a temporary Quaker meeting house. Because of the distance to a permanent place of worship, Bye allowed nearby Quakers to use his home for their weekly meetings until the congregation was able to build a meeting house of its own. It was during this eight year period that the house became known as "Old Congress" by the Quakers who met there.

After inheriting the house in the late 1720's, Bye's son, Nathaniel, added on to the structure a stately 2½ story, three bay, stone section. A successful skinner, trapper and farmer Nathaniel was also responsible for building a substantial barn, "Old Bye Barn", on the property. These additions established the Bye farmhouse as one of the premier homes in the area. Nathaniel's son, Thomas, further expanded the structure in 1775. Thomas built a 2 story stone section onto the gable end of his father's addition. The father of seven children, Thomas also added a bedroom above his grandfather's section.

Later generations of Byes continued to make important additions to the property. In the 1830's a third floor was added to the section of the house built in 1775. In the last half of the eighteenth century a large frame barn with a stone base was built adjacent to the "Old Bye Barn." Other buildings, including two carriage houses, were also added, and a few outbuildings were removed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The last important addition to the house was a 1½ story section at the gable end of the 1775 addition. Now a modern kitchen, this addition was made in 1935.

The Byecroft Farmstead offers a rare lesson in the evolution of one family's home over almost three centuries of use. Reflecting the rustic elegance that typified many early Pennsylvania homes, the structure is also a good example of add-on architecture.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bye, Arthur Edwin, Ph D. History of the Bye Family, Ch. 16,17,18; references passim in Shirley Barker, Fire and the Hammer, passim.  
History of the Old York Road, Rev. S.F. Hotchkin of Bustleton, PA  
Bucks Co. Historical Society Papers: Vol. 4, p. 563 Vol. 2 P. 232, 299 plus 22 other references to the Bye Family of Buckingham in other volumes. Volumes 1 - 8.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property total 29.81 A.  
Quadrangle name Buckingham Quadrangle scale 1.24,000

### UTM References

A	1,8	4,9,6,5,2,0	4,4,6,5,0,0,0	B	1,8	4,9,6,7,2,0	4,4,6,5,2,0,0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1,8	4,9,6,9,5,0	4,4,6,5,0,4,0	D	1,8	4,9,6,6,4,0	4,4,6,4,6,9,0
E	1,8	4,9,6,4,9,0	4,4,6,4,8,2,0	F	1,8	4,9,6,5,6,0	4,4,6,4,9,1,0
G				H			

### 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 Margaret Bye Richie

organization Property Owner date May, 1983

street & number Byecroft Road telephone 215 794-7652

city or town Holicong state Pennsylvania 18928

# 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

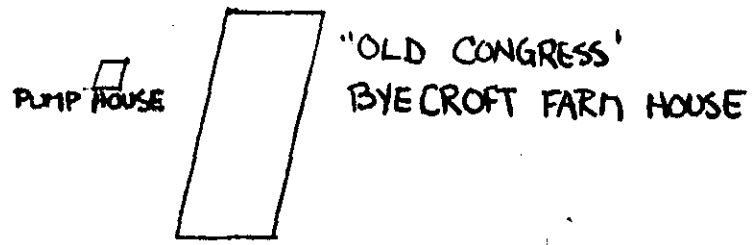
title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

SITE MAP OF  
BYECROFT FARM COMPLEX



Site Map  
Byecroft Farm Complex  
Bucks County (PA)

