



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 Star Gazers House

and or common Harlan House or Star Gazer Farm (Preferred)

2. Location

street & number Route 162 and Star Gazer Road

n/a not for publication

city, town Embreeville

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

code

county Chester

code

3. Classification

Category

district

building(s)

structure

site

object

Ownership

public

private

both

Public Acquisition

in process

being considered

n/a

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 (1) Dr. Kate A.W. Roby

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

street & number 382 W. Street Road

city, town Kennett Square

n/a vicinity of

state PA 19348

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chester County Courthouse

street & number Market and High Streets

city, town West Chester

state PA 19380

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Chester County Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979-82, Survey Code: 029-04-49-008 federal state county local

depository for survey records Chester County Historical Society

city, town 225 N. High Street, West Chester

state PA 19380

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 N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Star Gazer Farm is located at the corner of Route 162 and Star Gazer Road, just north of the Brandywine Creek and east of Embreeville, in the rolling hills of south-central Chester County, Pennsylvania. The nominated property includes two buildings: a historic, detached dwelling and, to its northeast, a newly-constructed frame barn. The property also includes a historic object, the Star Gazers' Stone. This stone marks the meridian north of the site where astronomers Charles Mason & Jeremiah Dixon set up a temporary observatory near the house in 1764 in order to make astronomical observations. These observations enabled them to accurately survey the boundary between Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware, later known as the Mason-Dixon Line. The Star Gazers' Stone, located 700 feet north of the farmhouse, is a one-foot high oblong piece of Setter's quartzite which was set in concrete and enclosed in a low, square wall by the Chester County Historical Society in 1931. The dwelling, known as Harlan House or Star Gazers House, consists of three major sections: the original 25' x 16' two-bay core, constructed c. 1724 in field-stone; a stone 25' x 13' two-bay addition to the east, built c. 1758; and a one-story frame wing, added to the southeast corner of the main block in the 19th century. The main block, which has two stories with an attic and basement, is a fine example of Colonial vernacular architecture.

Architectural Analysis:

The main block of the farmhouse has been subjected to a moderate amount of alterations over the years, with the original c. 1724 core having undergone the most changes while the c. 1758 addition has remained largely unaltered. The most significant alteration in the core has been the removal of the stone, endwall double fireplace and chimney, and its replacement with a small, brick fireplace and chimney in the 1950s. All that remains of the original fireplace in the core is the vaulted and corbelled fireplace supports in the basement. The addition still contains its original double fireplace, which follows closely the design of the core's removed fireplace. It is a large walk-in cooking fireplace, with a flagstone floor and a small four-light sash window to one side and a cooking crane to the other. Connected with this fireplace is a smaller corner fireplace in the adjacent north room. The first floor of the core originally was divided into two rooms by a thin wooden partition wall, separating the corner fireplace from the connected larger fireplace. This is the arrangement still found in the addition. The core is now one large room.

Exterior features that have been altered in the core include the original door in the south wall (now a window) and a window which was enlarged into a door in the west wall. The fact that the first-floor windows of the core are larger than those of the later addition suggests that at one point the windows in the core were enlarged. The openings in the south wall of the addition have also been remodeled. Here, the present window was originally a door, and the present door was probably a window.

The first-floor ceiling in the core appears to have been raised and then plastered over. Oddly, the floor level of the core is about one foot lower than in the addition.

The attic of the core is one room with a small four-light window in the west gable end. The rafters are not original, and the roof is tin over wooden shingle. In the attic one can clearly discern the exterior and interior face of the wall that was originally the east gable of the core, but which became the interior wall when the addition was built. The rafters of the addition could be original. There are two six-light windows on either side of the east gable chimney.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input 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 c.1724, 1764-68

Builder/Architect George Harlan ? (Initial Owner)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Star Gazers house in Chester County is architecturally significant as an excellent example of early 18th-century Colonial Folk architecture in Mid-Atlantic America. Its well-preserved masonry and joinery exemplifies the construction skill of early agricultural settlers in the colony of Pennsylvania. The house also possesses significance in the areas of engineering, exploration/settlement, and science due to its association with the surveying of the Mason-Dixon Line, a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. As the beginning point for the 18th-century survey of the Pennsylvania-Maryland boundary by the British astronomers and mathematicians, Mason and Dixon, this farmstead played an important part in the exploration and eventual settlement of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. Their survey also made a significant contribution to the science of surveying and to man's knowledge of the size and shape of the earth.

Historical Background:

Star Gazers house has been the residence of the Harlan family from its construction in c.1724 until 1956. The Harlans were one of the earliest Quaker families to follow William Penn to the Pennsylvania colony, having immigrated in 1687. In 1724, the Free Society of Traders sold approximately 7,000 acres in Chester County to Nathaniel Newlin. He immediately sold at profit part of what would become Newlin Township to various purchasers, including George Harlan, to whom Newlin sold 169 acres. Also in 1724, genealogical records show that a son, Joel was born to George and Mary Harlan in Newlin Township. This circumstantial evidence is the basis for the c.1724 date of the original section of the house. This date suggests that the Harlan or Star Gazers house was probably the first house in Newlin Township, and among the oldest houses in Chester County.

Newlin Township tax records begin in 1739, and they show that George Harlan's oldest son John paid taxes on the property from 1739 to 1756. Then in 1758, ownership appears to have been transferred to John's younger brother, Joel. John is listed in Newlin Township as an inmate or jobber from 1758 to 1766. After living in East Marlborough and Londonderry Townships, Joel is listed as a landowner in Newlin Township in 1760. This evidence indicates that between 1758-60, Joel Harlan moved back to Newlin Township and took over the family farm from his brother John. Consequently, since John's family still lived in the house at the time, it is likely that Joel built the stone addition to the house for his own family to live in when he returned home c. 1758.

The land tax records for Newlin Township in 1764 show Joel Harlan being taxed for "Buildings and 169 acres." In the same year, the British surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon visited the Harlans for the first time. Their journal for January 8, 1764 reads: "Fixed on the house of Mr. John Harland's (about 31 miles west of Philadelphia) to bring our instruments to--." During the next 4½ years that Mason and Dixon spent in the colonies, the Harlan farm became a home away from home for the two surveyors. According to their journal, Mason and Dixon returned to the Harlan's home at the forks of the Brandywine more than a dozen times for periods of several days or several months. They returned to take more measurements or simply to rest and prepare for the next season's work while enjoying the Harlan family's hospitality.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chester County Deed Books, Will Books, Land Tax Books.
 The Churchman Papers: Early Land Grants and Surveys in Southern Chester Co. pp. 242-48.
 (At Chester Co. Historical Society).
 "A Nomination to Designate the Mason-Dixon Line a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark." By the West Virginia and Pittsburgh Sections of the American Society of Civil

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 9 acres

Quadrangle name Unionville, PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	118	4317340	44210160
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	118	437540	442108210
E			
G			

B	118	43175010	44211080
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	118	431731610	442108010
F			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas C. Roby
 organization N/A date June 17, 1984
 street & number Route 1, Box 321 telephone (703) 554-8595
 city or town Bluemont state Virginia 22012

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 [Signature]
 title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/19/85

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

Keeper of the National Register
 date

Attest:
 Chief of Registration
 date

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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Chester Co., PA.

Continuation sheet Star Gazers House and Stone Item number 10

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Beginning at the point where Embreeville Road and Star Gazer Road intersect and proceeding along the east side of the Star Gazer Road north to a point approximately 800 feet from the starting point; then, at a right angle approximately 550 feet east to a point; then, at a right angle to the south in a straight line to the intersection with Embreeville Road; then, along the north side of Embreeville Road to the starting point. These boundaries encompass all the lands historically associated with the Star Gazers House and the Star Gazer Stone.