

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only

received JUL 28 1983

date entered

1. Name

RECEIVED

historic Benjamin Evans Residence House

APR 8 '83

and/or common N/A

PHMC

2. Location

off PA 93

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

S.E. side of Pa. State Highway L.R. #40017 approximately 3/4 miles from the D&H street & number railroad grade crossing at Broad St. in Nescopeck N/A not for publication

city, town Nescopeck Township N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Luzerne code 079

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" 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 Robert E. Lindquist

street & number Box 311

city, town Nescopeck N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania 18635

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Luzerne County Courthouse

street & number North River Street

city, town Wilkes-Barre state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Unknown has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Benjamin Evans Residence is a two-story frame house built in the Italian Villa style between 1850 and 1860. The house body contains two cubes offset to share part of one wall in common, resulting in eight exterior walls. Major exterior features are: a finial capped rectangular belvedere; a projecting main roof cornice supported by large brackets; three porches with roofs supported by Italianate columns, brackets, and arches; and door and window frames topped with a crown cornice. Except for the loss of original outbuildings and picket fence, the house and rural setting appear virtually unchanged since the date of construction. Although the original porches were gone by 1950, a careful restoration has now returned the house to its original appearance and design integrity.

The foundation of the house is built of cut stones and extends three feet above ground level. Outside cellar steps give access to a cellar under the rear cube. The front cube foundation contains only a crawl space. Four windows, two in each cube, are set slightly above ground level and covered with ornamental iron gratings. The body of the house was constructed by the western platform frame method which allowed the structure to be built one story at a time. The exterior siding is a 1" by 8" variation of German siding nailed to 1.75" vertical planks. These vertical planks are nailed to 1" thick horizontal planks which carry the studs, wood lath, and horsehair plaster to finish the interior walls.

Twenty two brackets support the main roof cornice which projects 28" beyond the exterior walls. A decorative frieze covers the wall sections between the brackets and a bed molding connects the frieze and brackets to the reflected cornice soffit which contains recessed panels and panel moldings between the brackets. The roof, which now has asphalt roll roofing over the original soldered tin, slopes gently away from the belvedere to an internal gutter in the cornice. The rectangular glazed belvedere, which measures 12' by 12', is centered over the common wall of the two body cubes. The belvedere roof is only slightly pitched and crowned with a finial. The main roof cornice design is repeated with reduced scale on the belvedere.

The house has thirty nine windows and seven transoms which employ two sizes of glass--12" by 36" and 12" by 30". The second story and belvedere windows are two-over-two and use the smaller lights. The first story has eight two-over-two windows and three transoms above the outside doors, using the larger glass, and five French windows two-over-two-over-two, using the smaller glass. All of the second story windows are set close to the floor and only the North and South facing center Belvedere windows are counterbalanced--the others are held open by a device that engages stops at several positions in the window track. Altogether the windows and transoms contain 459 sq. ft. of glass, about half of which is original and contains waves, bubbles and other imperfections.

Three porches have gently pitched roofs supported by eleven Italianate columns and six pilasters. The porch cornice is similar in size and scale to the belvedere cornice. Arches with heart shaped leaves at the keystone position span the areas between the tops of the columns. Brackets on the top fronts of the columns support the reflected cornice soffit. The porch ceiling is tongue and groove with plough and bead design. The floor is supported at the columns by brick piers, with diagonal lattice filling the spaces between the piers.

The first story has four large rooms with 10.5' ceilings. The parlor and reception rooms in the front of the house have more elaborate molding and baseboard treatments than any of the other rooms. Also, these rooms contain the five French windows which have inside folding shutters. An open stairway with oak spindles, walnut bannister and newel post leads from the reception room to the second story. The rear of the house contains the kitchen, pantry, and dining room. The kitchen has tongue and groove wainscot capped with a chair rail. Structural evidence shows that a large cooking fireplace once occupied one corner of the kitchen, however, it was removed--probably within twenty years of the completion of the house.

(See continuation sheet).

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) individuals
Association with locally significant individuals				

Specific dates      C. 1855                      Builder/Architect      Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Benjamin Evans Residence is an architecturally significant building embodying the distinctive characteristics of a pattern book inspired Italian Villa style house built in the middle years of the 19th century. The visual impact of its style is increased by the bold proportions of the roof cornice, belvedere and porches compared to the modest size of the house body. The interestingly detailed decorative features and asymmetrically grouped spaces possess complete integrity of the Italian mode design. Located in an unspoiled rural valley, the house and setting uniquely convey the picturesque quality advocated by A. J. Downing, whose writings possibly influenced its builders. The house gains additional significance through its close association with Benjamin Evans, a locally prominent citizen active in the commercial and political affairs of Nescopeck, who built the house about 1855 and resided there until his death in 1902.

All of the design elements found in the house conform to the Italian Villa style. The house body is composed of two rectilinear blocks asymmetrically grouped. A glazed belvedere surmounts the roof and is placed off-center relative to each cube. The roof has a slight pitch and terminates in eaves of considerable projection which are supported by massive brackets. The windows are framed with a flat architrave topped with a simple crown cornice. Although no round headed windows are present, this shape is introduced into the design through reflecting panels in the exterior doors and on the sides of the belvedere. Three porches, with slightly pitched roofs supported by Italianate columns, are asymmetrically arranged about the house body. The pattern of brackets supporting a projecting cornice containing reflecting panels in the soffit is repeated with varied scale on the belvedere, roof and porch. The floor plan and interior finish of the house are generally typical of the Italian mode, however the absence of a belvedere floor and resulting combination of its internal space with the room below represents a significant variation to the usual pattern. The arrangement is part of the original design and provides surprisingly modern lighting and ventilation advantages. The reception room receives light and sunshine through the belvedere windows and open stairwell, thus adding to the natural light in a northeast room whose windows are hidden from direct sun by the porch roof and house body offset. In summer, hot air rises through the open stairwell and hall/sitting room to escape through the open belvedere windows. Cool night air is thus drawn into the house and the effect is like a large attic fan. Also, the transoms above the bedroom doors allow these rooms to be ventilated without loss of privacy.

Although Luzerne County contains a wealth of surviving Victorian domestic architecture, the later 19th Century styles predominate. As anthracite coal, railroads, and other supporting industries brought great new wealth to the county after 1860, the earlier Italian mode was neglected in favor of the newer Mansardic styles. Only Benjamin Evans' residence and one other Italian Villa style house are included among the 53 etchings of prominent citizens' houses shown in History of Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming Counties. (Munsell, 1880, facing page 251). The other 51 etchings show either simple farm houses, some with fancy trim applied to an earlier structure, or the later Victorian styles.

(See continuation sheet).

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bradsby, H. C. History of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Selections, Chicago: S. B. Nelson & Co., 1893. P. 608, 877 & 878.  
 Munsell, W. W. History of Luzerne, Lackawanna & Wyoming Counties, Pa., New York: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1880. Facing P. 251, 322A, facing 322A, 323. (See continuation sheet).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.04

Quadrangle name Berwick, Pennsylvania

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	8
---	---

3	9	7	3	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	4	4	0	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
 Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

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 Robert E. Lindquist

organization N/A

date April 1, 1983

street & number 2009 Delancey Place

telephone (215) 977-5541

city or town Philadelphia

state Pennsylvania

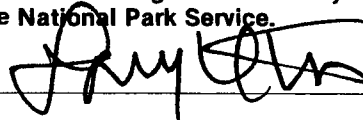
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 2/18/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  
 Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
 National Register

date 8/25/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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

Benjamin Evans Residence, Luzerne County

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Description	Item number 7	Page 2
--------------------	-------------	---------------	--------

The second story contains four bedrooms (one now is converted into a bathroom) placed around a central hall/sitting room. The belvedere, which is not a separate room, surmounts the hall/sitting room and extends it vertically to a height of 21'. Ceiling height in other areas of the second story is 9.5'. A small door just below the North facing belvedere windows gives access to the crawl space under the roof. All of the second story doors are topped by transoms which provide light and ventilation when the doors are closed. Each of the three remaining bedrooms has a docked chimney arrangement in which the pipes from stoves on the first floor pass through the second story rooms to enter the chimney two feet below the second story ceiling. All of the floors are yellow pine with boards of narrower width being used in the more formal parlor and reception rooms.

All of the original outbuildings are gone from the setting, including the gristmill which was sold about 1920 and moved to Berwick where it is still in use. About 1933 the Works Progress Administration changed the alignment of the state highway to alleviate the sharp turn in front of the house. This change moved the road away from the house and destroyed the remaining outbuildings. To compensate, WPA built a new barn and coal shed which remain today, set well to the rear of the house. Although these outbuildings are not original, neither are they intrusive. The basic character of the site is unchanged and is readily conveyed by the rugged land contours, creek, millrace, ruins of the gristmill foundation, and abandoned road which crosses the millrace on a stone arch bridge. Although the original Evans tract of land contained 162 acres, 25 of which remain with the house, only 3.04 acres are included in this nomination, this amount being sufficient to contain all of the present outbuildings and remaining historical features associated with the house, and to protect the visual integrity of the picturesque setting.

Although well maintained until 1920, the house deteriorated steadily thereafter until the 1950's when all but small vestiges of the original porches were removed, the belvedere windows were partially boarded over, and the exterior of the house and belvedere were covered with asphalt and fiber composition siding styled to look like stone. Major restoration work, undertaken between 1968 and 1982, utilized original materials to return the house to strict conformity with its original design. Fifteen percent of the exterior siding and main roof cornice were replaced with new parts specially milled to match the original portion. Although the porches contain no original material, their historical accuracy is assured by: paint markings on the original siding that revealed the exact locations and dimensions of the pilasters; brick pier foundations that defined the porch floor shape and dimensions; pre 1920 photographs and interviews supplied by former residents that provided overview and detail confirmation of other findings; and, most importantly, original porch columns, pilasters, arches, brackets, lattice and other trim stored in the barn loft after the original porch was removed. These parts, although too deteriorated to use, served as models for exactly reproduced duplicates. Inside the house, little modification or deterioration had occurred, and restoration efforts consisted of plaster repairs, paint, wallpaper, and the unobtrusive installation of modern conveniences. Carefully restored based on the ample historical evidence available, the Benjamin Evans Residence now possesses a high level of design integrity.

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

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

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Benjamin Evans Residence, Luzerne County

Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

In 1838 the Evans family purchased the gristmill that generated prosperity sufficient for the construction of a new house after 1850. Unlike many of their neighbors, whose wealth also derived from the agricultural sector of the local economy, the Evans family did not expand their earlier house, adding porches and trim. They chose instead to build a completely new house in the stylish Italian mode which was then being recommended by various plan books. Thus, the house represents a rare survivor of a style which was never very prevalent in Luzerne County.

Benjamin Evans' grandfather, John Evans, was a Welsh Quaker from near Philadelphia. A millwright by trade, he moved to nearby Salem Township prior to 1790 and constructed several mills before moving to Canada where he continued to build mills until his death. His son, David Evans, purchased the mill in Nescopeck (ironically not built by his father) which he operated until his death in 1875. David Evans' eldest son, Benjamin, was born in 1819 and became one of the most prominent and respected citizens in Nescopeck. In addition to continuing the operation of his father's mill, he was elected justice of the peace in 1850 and, "...is now serving his ninth consecutive term in that office, the longest term filled by any official in that county." (Bradsby, 1893, P. 878). Benjamin Evans was also an F. & A. M. and although originally a Whig he became a Republican after that party was organized.

Although preferring the "pointed" and "high roofed" styles in rural settings, Downing admired the adaptability of the Italian mode to either town or country. In The Architecture of Country Houses he writes, "... the Italian style is one that expresses not wholly the spirit of country life nor of town life, but something between both, and which is a mingling of both." (Downing, 1850, P. 286). Because many of the Italian style houses were built in towns or have been engulfed by the outreach of urban sprawl, added significance attaches to survivors in settings that have remained rural. Located beside a creek in a narrow valley framed by hills on either side, the setting of the Evans house has changed little since the 1850's. Thus, the ample windows, French doors, and porches present charming pastoral vistas which the viewer may enjoy without abandoning the civilized comforts of chamber, parlor or veranda.

The Benjamin Evans Residence presents a uniquely authentic example of the Italian Villa style in a rural setting. Built of local materials, the fine original workmanship, design, and faithfully restored exterior convey the feelings of the era which produced such houses. Benjamin Evans, a locally significant individual contributed to the industry and government of his community, and built the house in which he resided for nearly fifty years.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Major Bibliographical References

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Downing, A. J. The Architecture of Country Houses, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1850 P. 286

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Benjamin Evans Residence, Luzerne County

Continuation sheet

Geographical Data

Item number

10

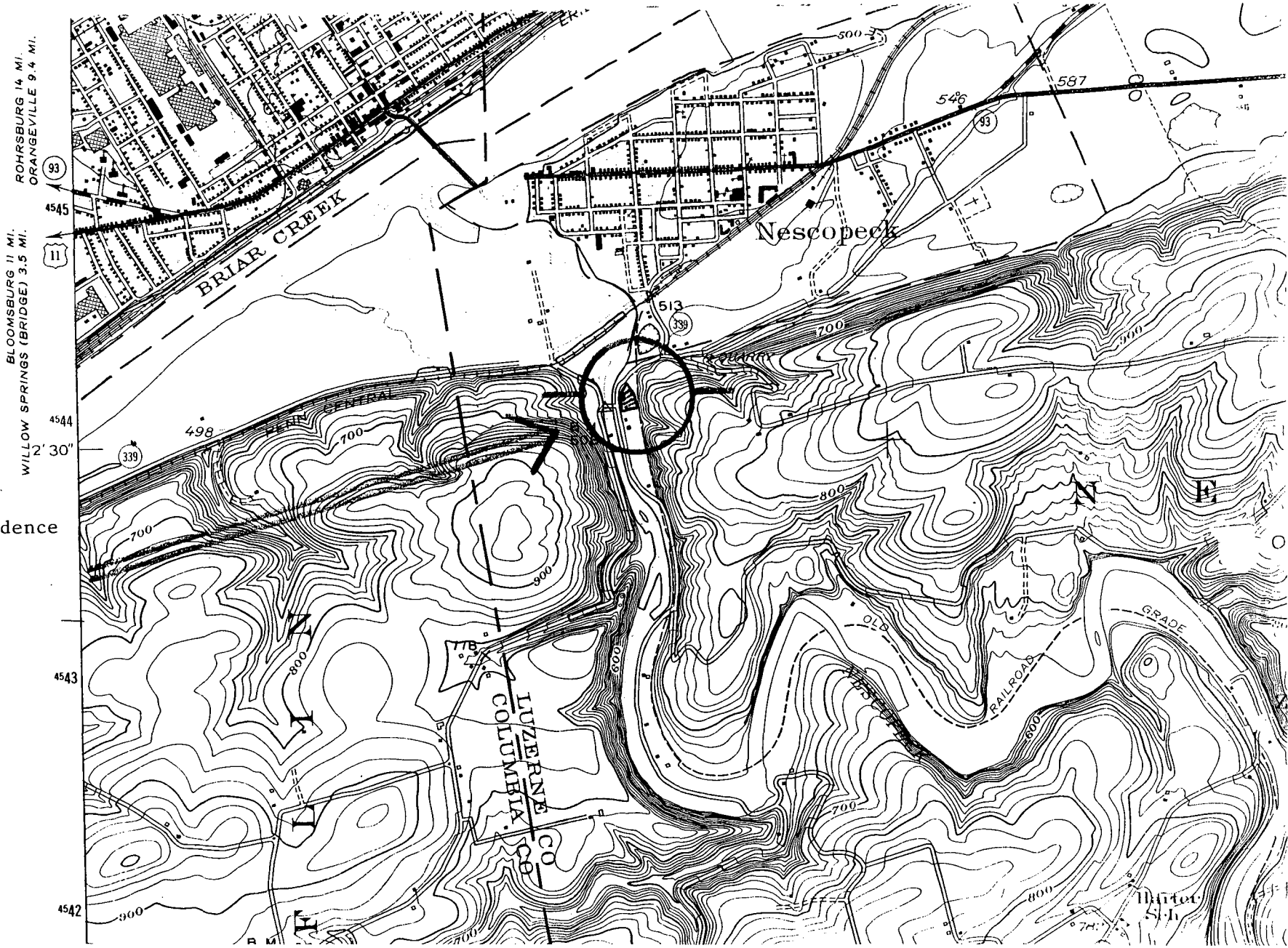
Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

This description encompasses the nominated portion of the 23 acres conveyed to Robert E. Lindquist, Luzerne County Deed Book No. 1764, Page 561.

Beginning at a point on the easterly right-of-way of Pennsylvania State Highway Legislative Route No. 40017 leading from Nescopeck to Pennsylvania State Highway Legislative Route No. 40016 said point being on the northerly line of lands now or formerly of Leonard E. and Helen Mensinger; thence, along the easterly right-of-way of said Pennsylvania State Highway Legislative Route No. 40017 the following courses and distances; North 00 degrees 42 minutes 57 seconds West 190.47 feet to a point; North 08 degrees 40 minutes 08 seconds East 93.72 feet to a point; North 18 degrees 05 minutes 56 seconds East 98.13 feet to a point; North 35 degrees 35 minutes 43 seconds East 79.44 feet to a point; North 46 degrees 07 minutes 49 seconds East 73.77 feet to a point and North 48 degrees 54 minutes 02 seconds East 190.91 feet to a point on a curve on the westerly line of the former Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way (abandoned); thence, along said Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way on a curve to the right in a southerly direction having a Radius of 2546.60 feet, a Delta angle of 04 degrees 54 minutes 24 seconds, a Tangent of 109.11 feet for an Arc Length of 218.08 feet to a point of tangent; thence, along the same South 02 degrees 04 minutes West 382.00 feet to a point; thence, along line of other lands of Robert E. Lindquist, Jr., and line of lands of aforementioned Leonard E. and Helen Mensinger South 86 degrees 16 minutes West 273.80 feet to the place of Beginning.

Containing: 3.04 acres of land in all. (See attached site map).



ROHRSBURG 14 MI.  
ORANGEVILLE 9.4 MI.

BLOOMSBURG 11 MI.  
WILLOW SPRINGS (BRIDGE) 3.5 MI.

93

11

4544

4543

4542

BRIAR CREEK

Nescopeck

LUZERNE CO  
COLUMBIA CO

RAILROAD  
GRADE

Market  
St.

enjamin Evans Residence  
uzerne County  
one 18  
39730 N454409