

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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received
date entered

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Square Tavern

and/or common John West House

2. Location

street & number Newtown Street Road and Goshen Road

not for publication

city, town Newtown Square

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

code

county Delaware

code

3. Classification

Category

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

Ownership

- public
 - private
 - both
- Public Acquisition**
- in process
 - being considered

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 Atlantic Richfield Company, c/o ARCO Chemical Company, H. A. Sorgenti, President

street & number 1500 Market Street, Box 7258

city, town Philadelphia

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Delaware County Courthouse

street & number P. O. Box 198

city, town Media

state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title WPA Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1936

federal state county local

depository for survey records Delaware County Historical Society; Widner University

city, town Chester

state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> restored	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The following descriptions of the original and subsequent appearance of the Square Tavern are based on detailed architectural investigation of the building undertaken in 1979 by John Milner Associates, Architects, Archeologists, and Planners. The findings of this investigation are documented in an illustrated report, Restoration of the John West House (Square Tavern), prepared for The Arco Chemical Company (the owners) following the restoration in 1981.

Original Appearance (building completed 1742)

The two-and-one-half story gable roof building was rectangular in plan, 32 feet wide and 28 feet deep, with the principal (front) elevation facing east, parallel to Newtown Street Road. The exterior bearing walls were constructed of flemish bond brick (headers not glazed) with a brick water table, all set on an exposed rubble stone foundation. The roof ridge ran north-south and the molded cornice (crown, fascia, soffit, bed) was continuous across both gable ends. A pent roof also wrapped all four elevations below the second floor windows and above the first floor windows.

The principal elevation was divided into three bays with the central first and second floor doorways flanked on each side by a window. A balustraded balcony was located at the second floor doorway interrupting the pent roof. A chimney was contained within the plane of each gable end wall.

The first floor plan contained four rooms and a stairway (see Plate No. 1). An east-west brick bearing wall, located just south of the front door, ran the full depth of the building. A second brick bearing wall divided the north portion of the building into two rooms, a kitchen in the northwest corner (with full width cooking fireplace on the north wall) and a "tavern" or public room in the northeast corner (with a corner fireplace adjacent to the kitchen wall). A small "pass-through" window (shuttered) was located in the wall between the kitchen and tavern room. The southern portion of the plan was divided into two rooms by a board partition running north-south. Only the southwest room had a fireplace (placed on the south wall). A stairway to the second floor was located at the south end of the kitchen (enclosed with a board partition) with access from the tavern room. Access to the basement was gained by a stairway located under the second floor stair, accessible from the kitchen. A rear door, in the south elevation, was located in the kitchen adjacent to the basement stair.

The second floor plan was similar in configuration (with interior bearing walls), except that there was no fireplace in the room above the kitchen. A full basement was located under all first floor rooms except the kitchen. A bulkhead entrance to the basement was located at the west end of the south wall.

Appearance at the Time of the 1798 Direct Tax (Federal)

At some time prior to 1798, a small two-story kitchen addition (12 feet by 18 feet) was built to the west (rear) of the original building, apparently between the two first floor windows and incorporating the first floor doorway. The seven 24-pane windows (12/12) and five 18-pane windows (9/9) contained in the original building were listed in the Tax and, therefore, not altered by the addition. By this time, the use of the building as a tavern had apparently ceased. No details about the construction of this wing are known.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input 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 1742 **Builder/Architect** Francis Elliot

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1742, the Square Tavern is one of the rare purpose-built taverns to have been constructed outside of Philadelphia prior to 1750. It is also the only known surviving eighteenth century brick building in Newtown Township, and thus is an important example of early brick construction located west of the so-called Wertenbaker line. The tavern is the last vestige of the townstead plan for Newtown, conceived in the late seventeenth century as the first inland town west of Philadelphia, but never fully realized thereafter. It symbolizes a significant phase in eighteenth century social, political, and commercial life at a major crossroads in Philadelphia's hinterland. In addition, the Square Tavern represents the entrepreneurial instincts of a builder-craftsman at a time when Pennsylvania was undergoing a major rebuilding stimulated by a more self-conscious lifestyle, and it provides a reference to a brief period in the life of Benjamin West, Pennsylvania's foremost painter, whose father, John West, operated an inn here on two separate occasions prior to 1760.

The building was actively maintained as a tavern from 1742 until about 1790. In petition #23, 1742, Francis Elliot requested permission to operate a tavern in Newtown "at the intersection of Darby and Goshen Great Roads." From 1744 to 1748, John West did likewise. In 1748, Jonathan James, in petition #23 for that year, explained that he "hath rented the House where John West lately dwelled in the Township of Newtown where an Inn and Tavern hath been kept for these six years last part." John Morris, in petition #111, 1750, indicated that he had rented the house where Jonathan James lately kept tavern "and whereas the said house hath ever since it hath been built been a Public house of Entertainment for Travellers [sic] standing in a convenient place, until you were pleased not to grant James accommodation." Morris again applied in 1752, and in 1755 John West, who had operated a store elsewhere at the crossroads, returned as proprietor until 1758.

In 1758 West was succeeded by John Hamilton who, in petition #114, explained that he "hath taken the house where John West formerly kept tavern in the Township." John Jarvis continued the tavern from 1767 to 1774, succeeded by Benjamin Powell. In 1778, Andrew Williamson held the house on the square, followed in 1783 by James Elliot who carried on the business for a short period, after which there is no further documentation to establish tavern use.

The phasing out of the building's tavern occupancy in the late eighteenth century was the result of increased competition from other inns and taverns in the area, and of the emphasis of new development along the West Chester Road in lieu of the earlier crossroads. By 1775, the Fox Chase Inn, a more commodious establishment, with barns and extensive corrals for sheep and goats, had opened on the West Chester Road east of Darby-Paoli Road. Subsequently, another tavern opened at the intersection of West Chester Road and Darby-Paoli Road. The increased importance of West Chester Road as a transportation artery (to and from Philadelphia) and a developmental focus effectively terminated the viability of the original Newtown "Square."

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet Square Tavern

Item number 7.

Page 7A

Appearance Circa 1830-1840

No historical documentation has been found to establish the appearance of the building in the early nineteenth century. Architectural investigation, however, provided evidence that the building underwent modifications about 1830-1840, when it was used as a tenant house. These modifications included removal of the pent roof and gable-end cornices, stuccoing of the exterior, reduction in width of the original 12/12 windows, and replacement of certain woodwork (fireplace surrounds, baseboards, doors, etc). The basic floor plan of the building was largely preserved.

Appearance 1897

In 1897 the building had been recently "rough cast" and was well maintained (Hotchkin, 1897, p. 384). At some time between 1840 and 1897, probably about 1870, the earlier kitchen addition was replaced by a brick two-story wing, 15 feet wide and 22 feet deep, which was immediately stuccoed with the rest of the building (representing a second coat of stucco for the original building). This wing was utilitarian in nature and modest in detail, containing a fireplace on the first floor. The placement of the wing, at the south end of the west wall, required conversion of the original 9/9 window to a door and the cutting through of a new door on the second floor.

Appearance 1897-1980

At some time in the early twentieth century, a porch was added across the full width of the east (front) elevation. A small porch was also added to the south side of the rear wing. The original cooking fireplace in the kitchen had been removed (date unknown) as well as the fireplace on the south wall of the first and second floors (date also unknown). Minor interior changes were made, but the 1742 floor plan was essentially preserved.

The Restoration

The historical documentation and architectural investigation clearly establish that the significant period in the Square Tavern's evolution is 1742 - circa 1790. This is the time during which the building was actively used as a tavern; in subsequent years it served as a non-descript tenant house. The architectural configuration and detail during this period reflected tavern occupancy; thereafter the architectural character was greatly diluted by a series of modifications to accommodate residential use.

On the basis of detailed information generated during the documentary research and physical investigation phases, it was decided to restore the Square Tavern to its appearance following its construction in 1742 and to interpret the building as an important landmark in the region's eighteenth century social and commercial history. Components of the building which obscured or otherwise did not relate to its eighteenth century significance were removed (late nineteenth century rear wing, stucco, non-original window frames, nineteenth and twentieth century trim, several minor twentieth century partitions). Missing architectural features, dating from the mid-eighteenth century period, were re-constructed and installed (pent roof and balcony, gable end cornices, two missing fireplaces, interior wood trim, certain window frames and doors). In all cases, clear physical evidence existed on which to base the design and construction of these missing features. That evidence is documented in the aforementioned report. In the few instances where conjectural

**United States Department of the Interior
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Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

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Continuation sheet Square Tavern

Item number 7.

Page 7B

design of a feature was required, sound historical and architectural precedent was employed. Since architectural and archeological evidence for the appearance of the eighteenth century kitchen wing was inconclusive, no attempt to reconstruct this feature was made. In all cases, a concerted effort was made to preserve and restore all surviving eighteenth century building fabric. The exterior brick restoration was a major challenge since surface areas were deteriorated and/or damaged. Extreme care was exercised in cleaning original brick surfaces with non-abrasive methods and in repairing and replacing damaged brick.

Complete restoration of the Square Tavern was completed in 1981.

The building now serves as a museum and offices for the Delaware County Tourist Bureau.

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

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

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Continuation sheet Square Tavern ,

Item number 8.

Page 8A

The property was owned by John Lewis from 1784 to 1850 when it was transferred to his daughter, Ruth Lewis Pratt (OL Docket E. Adm. #2351). Two generations of Pratts succeeded Ruth Lewis Pratt as owners until David Pratt sold to Lewis Bard in 1910. From 1917 to 1942, the building served as a tenant house for an adjacent estate, and from 1942 to 1978 as a tenant house for the Ellis School.

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

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

For NPS use only
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Continuation sheet Square Tavern

Item number 9.

Page 9A

- Ashmead, Henry G. History of Delaware County (1884), p. 635.
- Faris, John T. Old Roads Out of Philadelphia (1917).
- Hopkins, Henry W. Atlas of Delaware County (1970), plate 45.
- Hotchkin, S. T. Rural Pennsylvania (1897), p. 384.
- Lindburg, Carl. "Benjamin West's Father's Inn," manuscript on file, Marple-Newtown Historical Society.
- Lippincott, Horace Mather and Thornton Oakley. Philadelphia (), pp. 74-81.
- Lucas, Susan L. A Brief History of Newtown Township (1970), p. 31.
- Mueller, A. H. Atlas of Delaware County East of Ridley Creek, vol. II (1913).
- Paschall, Elizabeth. "Taverns and Houses," Some Delaware County History (1954), pp. 95-99.
- Shaver, Erne. "Distinguished Painter Spent Formative Years in Newtown," Delaware County Daily Times, October 9, 1963, p. 9.
- Smith, E. W., and A. H. Mueller. Atlas of Delaware County (1892).
- Wertenbaker, Thomas J. The Founding of American Civilization (1963), p. 236.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Attached Continuation Sheet 9A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Media

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title John D. Milner, President, and Alice Kent Schooler, Principal Architectural Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc.

date July 5, 1984

street & number 309 North Matlack Street

telephone (215) 436-9000

city or town West Chester

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	date
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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Attached Continuation Sheet 9A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Media

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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 Zone

4	6	5	1	5	0
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 Easting

4	4	2	7	1	9	0
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 Northing

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 Zone:

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 Easting

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 Northing

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 Zone

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 Northing

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 Northing

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 Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification Starting at the western edge of Newtown St. Rd then moving NW 370 ft, then 185 ft to the south edge of Goshen Rd. then E. 160 ft then south 106 feet then south 321 feet to the startin point.

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 John D. Milner, President, and Alice Kent Schooler, Principal Architectural Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date July 5, 1984

street & number 309 North Matlack Street telephone (215) 436-9000

city or town West Chester state Pennsylvania

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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Larry E. Tisr, State Historic Preservation Officer
State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date 7/10/84

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

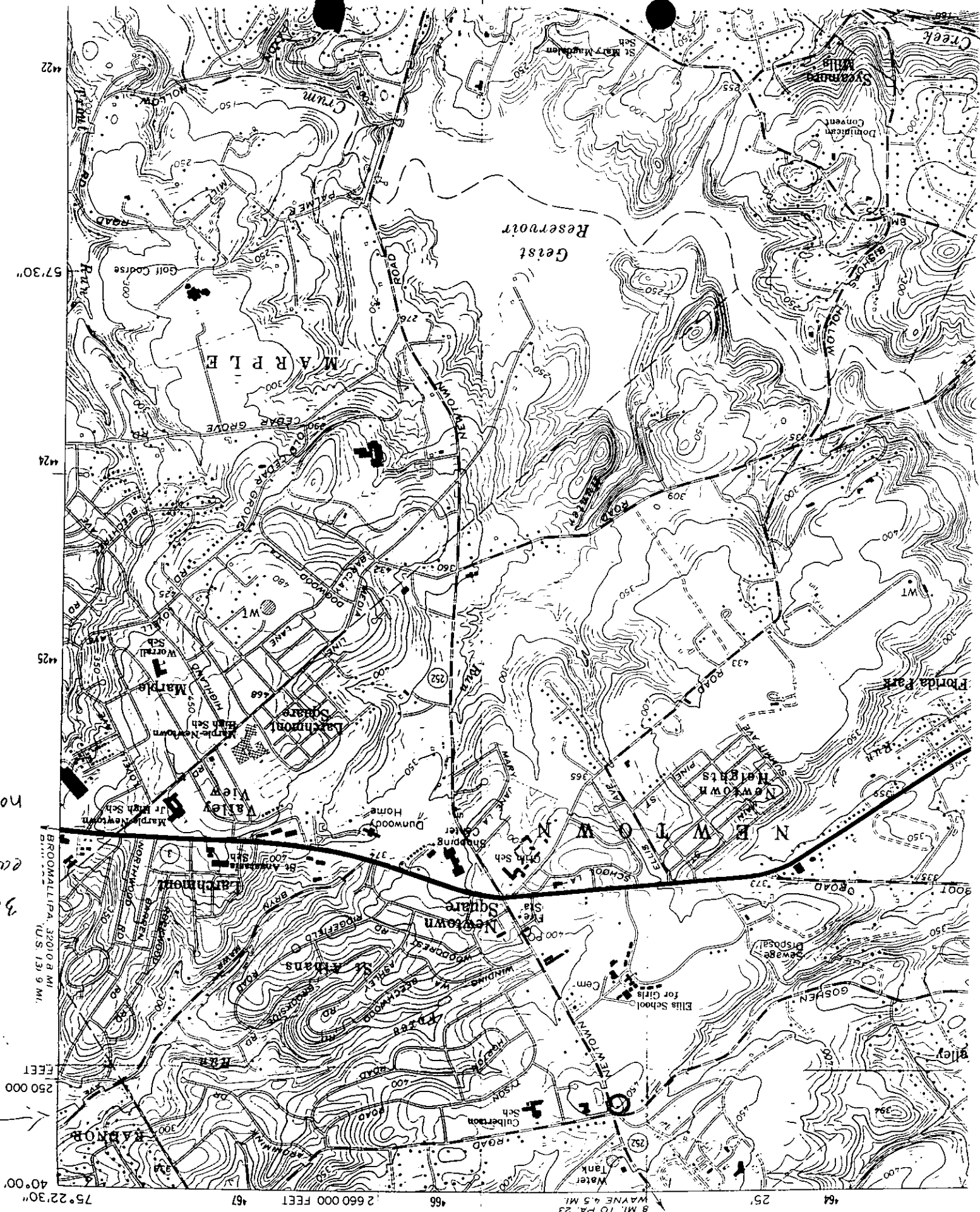
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

MEDIA QUADRANGLE
PENNSYLVANIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5984 1115
NORLIST



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east
1011

BROOKLYN, PA. 32010.8 MI.
U.S. 13.9 MI.

FEET

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46'

46'

25'

44'

8 MI. TO PA. 23

4.5 MI.

250 000

40° 00'

75° 22' 30"

25'

44'

42° 30'

44° 22'

250 000

FEET

BROOKLYN, PA. 32010.8 MI.
U.S. 13.9 MI.

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