

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE aka PETTIT'S BRIDGE

and/or common EIGHT-ARCH BRIDGE

**2. Location**

street & number Adjacent Route 263 bridge over Neshaminy Creek on  
abandoned section of Old York Rd. (PA LR 155) — not for publication

city, town Warwick Township  vicinity of Jamison P.O.

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Bucks code 017

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park passive
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation foot
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Bucks County Conservancy, Inc.

street & number 11 North Main Street

city, town Doylestown — vicinity of state Pennsylvania

**5. Location of Legal Description**

(currently at the office of the Bucks County Conservancy)  
courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. to be filed at the Bucks County Recorder of Deeds Office

street & number Main & Court Street

city, town Doylestown state Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title PA Historic Resource Survey; Bucks  
County Register of Hist. Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date PA- May 1983  
BC- December 12, 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission  
Bucks County Conservancy

city, town Harrisburg PA  
Doylestown PA

# 7. Description

BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, Warwick Twp., Bucks County, PA

## Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

## Check one

unaltered  
 altered

## Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE spans the Neshaminy Creek in a broad valley known as Bridge Valley on an abandoned spur of Old York Road. The bridge lies in a shadow of the four-lane highway, Route 263, the present Old York Road constructed c.1970. The village flanked the bridge with the principal structures McMicken's or Ryan's Mill c.1773 to the north and Pettit's Tavern c.1787 to the south. These buildings and a store and wheelwright and blacksmith shop comprised the very active 19th century village. Today the bypass covers the site of the tavern, and the mill ruins were disassembled a number of years ago.

The subject bridge is constructed of eight segmental Roman arches in field and quarried stone, rough ashlar on the surface and rubble with dirt infill. The four foot high approach and side walls are approximately 1.7 feet wide and are capped with concrete in a gable fashion. The macadam roadway has a width of 20.9 feet with one foot wide flanking earthen curbs. The approximately height above the streambed to the top of the capped walls is 26.3 feet. Each of the eight arches is 27 feet in span with at least six arches over the water and the remainder supporting the height of the roadway over dry and flood-plain ground. A drip-ledge originally extended above the arches along the entire length of the bridge. The total span of the arches is 218 feet.

Severe floods throughout the 19th century damaged the bridge and the stone-work shows repairs to the walls and arches. The one-hundred year flood is said to cover (or nearly so) the bridge. The wedge stones in the arches have been capped in concrete as well as the vaults underneath. The deterioration of the bridge is increasing through the exposure of the rubble interior walls and footings to weather and water erosion. The overall integrity of the BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, however, remains intact despite its continued official vehicular use from 1804 until 1970.

In July 1983 the Bucks County Commissioners turned the title to the bridge over to the Bucks County Conservancy with 50% of the funding necessary to repair and restore the bridge. It is anticipated that within three years the bridge will be restored and opened for pedestrian and bike traffic.

## Photographic Index

1. The west face or upstream side of the Bridge Valley Bridge showing the eight arches. Photograph taken from near the new Route 263 bridge.
2. The west face showing the deterioration of the stone walls in greater detail.
3. The east face or downstream side of the Bridge Valley Bridge showing four arches, original stonework and dripledge.
4. Detail of one of the arch footings on the west (upstream) side showing construction and deterioration.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

SUPPLEMENTARY BRIDGE RECORD

County Bucks  
Twp. WARWICK  
Boro. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_

OMB No. 1024-0018  
Exp. 10-31-84

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received \_\_\_\_\_  
date entered \_\_\_\_\_

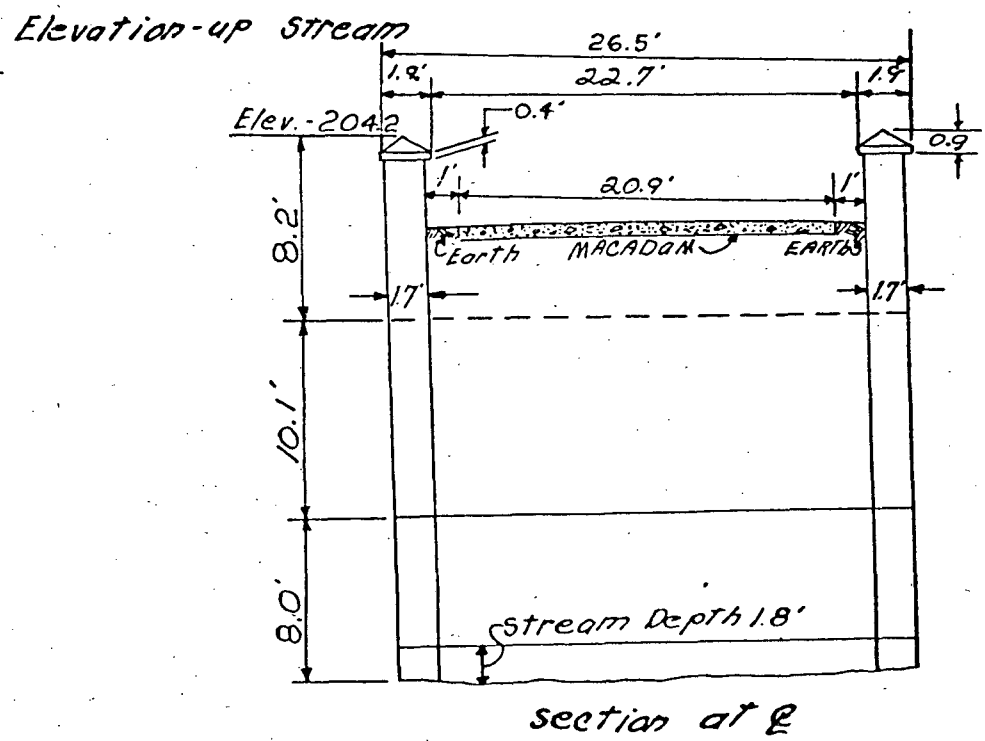
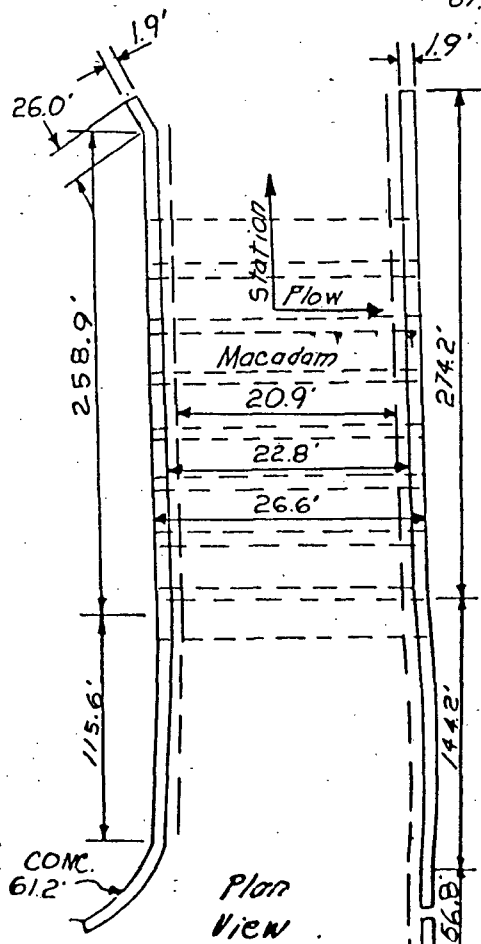
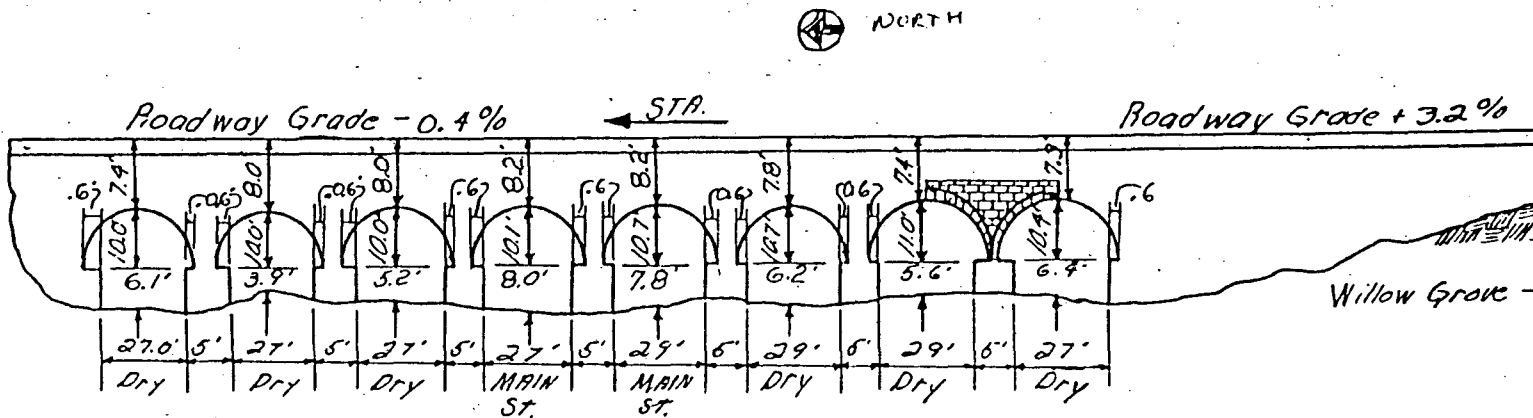
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, Warwick Twp., Bucks County, PA  
Continuation sheet  
DESCRIPTION

Item number 7



Field Measurements By \_\_\_\_\_ On \_\_\_\_\_ Sket

# 8. Significance

BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, Warwick Twp., Bucks County, PA

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input 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** 1804                      **Builder/Architect** Phillip Millar, Superintendent

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE or PETTIT'S BRIDGE is a quality example of the solid and traditional bridge engineering of the early 19th century. Being highly visible on the historical path of the York Road (now abandoned) the bridge is significant architecturally for its scale and symmetry and historically for its long associations with the primary route from Philadelphia to New York.

While examples of stone arch bridges of the late 18th and early 19th centuries remain, there are no other recorded over seven arches in Pennsylvania. Two seven-arch stone bridges in Montgomery County are contemporary with the BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, dating from 1797 and the early 19th century. Later bridges, such as the mid-19th century ten-arch bridge in Starrucca and the 1901 Rockville bridge in Harrisburg exceed the EIGHT-ARCH in height and length.<sup>1</sup> Other long stone arch spans in Bucks County have since been replaced.

The technology of the segmental stone arch dates to the time of the ancient Romans and was a popular architectural motif of the early "Republic." In Bucks County a number of houses and barns exhibit this feature in sections dating to the Federal period, used as open loggias or supports for the barnyard overhang. While the stone arch is a logical structural method of spanning water or an opening, its Roman origins made it appropriate as a symbol of the new independent government. Thomas Jefferson was one of the most noted proponents of Roman Classicism (or Neo-Classicism), c. 1790-1830, acknowledging its philosophical associations with the United States. As a public project, the BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE represented the high quality service the democratic government could provide the directly-taxed residents. Previous to the Revolution, such a project could not have been undertaken. Its pure symmetrical design, extraordinary length, and massive scale made it a monument in and of its day.

Records for a bridge over the Neshaminy Creek on Old York Road (opened c.1710) date back to 1753. Recollections of an 18th century resident of Buckingham Township indicate that in 1784 "there were two bridges only over the Neshaminy..." on the York Road to Philadelphia. "They were pillar bridges and seldom used except in time of high water and ice."<sup>2</sup> In November 1802 inhabitants of Warwick Township petitioned for a stone arch bridge to replace the stone and timber bridge "built long since."<sup>3</sup> According to the accounts of superintendent Phillip Millar, the construction lasted 290 days and totaled \$15,561.42, including board and whiskey at the nearby tavern of Elnathan Pettit.<sup>4</sup>

The York Road or Old York Road was a major thoroughfare through Bucks County and facilitated not only the initial growth of a number of townships in this central portion of the county, but also many commercial enterprises, primarily taverns. It was a key stage-coach route in the 18th and 19th centuries and also the route of Washington's Revolutionary War troops and the 104th Pennsylvania Regiment of the Union Army in the Civil War.

The BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE is not only the premier example of the stone arch bridge form in Bucks County but also one of the county's oldest standing structures of public architecture. The detailed records of its construction add to its significance historically and

(continued)

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BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, Warwick Twp., Bucks County, PA

Continuation sheet

SIGNIFICANCE

Item number

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Statement of Significance (cont.)

architecturally. The bridge's preservation today is also the preservation of a significant portion of the Old York Road, which, in this area, has been bypassed by the four-lane highway Route 263.

- <sup>1</sup> Vance Packard, Director, Drake Well Museum (PHMC), Titusville, Interview 1982
- <sup>2</sup> Bucks County Historical Society, Manuscript Collection: #164 Folder 16. Spruance Library, Doylestown, Pennsylvania.
- <sup>3</sup> Bucks County Historical Society, Clerk of Quarter Sessions:Docket #1- 1801 to 1804, page 65, November Session 1802. Spruance Library, Doylestown, Pennsylvania.
- <sup>4</sup> Bucks County Historical Society, Manuscript Collection: #193 Folder 5, Spruance Library, Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.12 acre (approximate)

Quadrangle name Buckingham, PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References See Continuation Sheet #2 for USGS Map

A 

1	8	4	9	2	8	9	0	4	4	5	8	1	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

## 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 N/A code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathryn Ann Auerbach, Historical Programs Staff

organization Bucks County Conservancy

date November 1983

street & number 11 North Main Street

telephone (215) 345-8966

city or town Doylestown

state Pennsylvania 18901

# 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

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, Bristol Twp., Bucks County, PA  
Continuation sheet BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1. Bucks County Directors' Association, Old York Road. Doylestown, Pennsylvania. September 1950.
2. Bucks County Historical Society, Spruance Library- Manuscript and Quarter Sessions Collections. Doylestown, Pennsylvania.
3. MacReynolds, George, Place Names in Bucks County. Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Bucks County Historical Society. 1942, reprinted 1976.
4. Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture. New York: Oxford University Press. 1952.
5. Packard, Vance, Drake Well Museum, Titusville, PA. Interview 1982.

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BRIDGE VALLEY BRIDGE, Warwick Twp., Bucks County, PA  
Continuation sheet GEOGRAPHICAL DATA Item number 10

Page 3

Verbal boundary description and justification

All that certain stone arch bridge and appurtenances situated in the Township of Warwick, County of Bucks, and State of Pennsylvania located over the Neshaminy Creek on abandoned LR 155 at highway station 320 + 00 bounded on the northwesterly side by lands now or late the Bucks County Park Foundation, Bucks County Tax Parcel #51-10-11-2; on the northeasterly side by lands now or late the Neshaminy Water Resources Authority, Bucks County Tax Parcel #51-10-28; and on the southeasterly side by same, Bucks County Tax Parcel #51-10-27-1; and on the southeasterly side by same, being Bucks County Tax Parcel #51-10-14.

Containing approximately twelve one-hundredths of an acre (0.12 acre).

The verbal boundary description is limited to the actual land upon which the bridge, walls, and approaches are constructed.

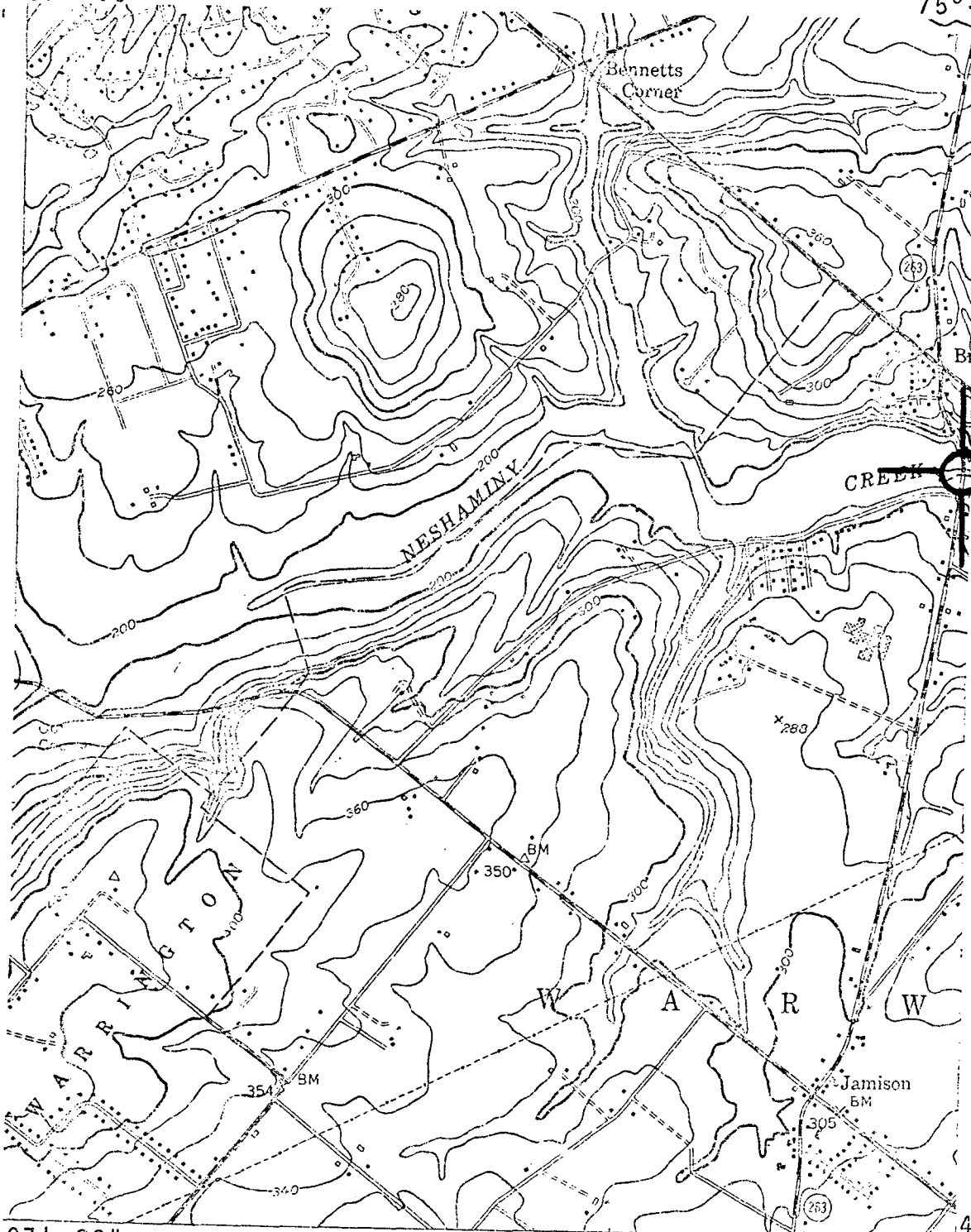


75°-07'-30"

75°-05'-00"

40°-17'-30"

40°-17'-30"

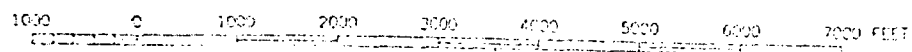


0°-15'-00"

75°-07'-30"

40°-15'-00"

75°-05'-00"



SCALE 1:24000

BRIDGE VALLEY/PETTIT'S/  
EIGHT-ARCH BRIDGE

Neshaminy Creek  
Warwick Township  
Bucks County  
Pennsylvania

TM# 51-10-14 etc.

Adjacent

BUCKINGHAM, PA.

N4015-W7500/7.5

1953

