

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 Stouchsburg Historic District

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 12 to 153 Main Street, Water Street N/A not for publication

city, town Stouchsburg N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Berks code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership (see attached building inventory)

street & number N/A

city, town Stouchsburg N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Berks County Court House

street & number 6th & Court Streets

city, town Reading state PA 19601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1983-84 Marion Township  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Berks County Conservancy 960 Old Mill Road

city, town Wyomissing state PA

# 7. Description

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

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

Stouchsburg is the only village in Marion Township, an important farming area of western Berks County. It is located along the former Berks and Dauphin Turnpike, old route 422, about 1½ miles west of Womelsdorf and one mile east of the Berks-Lebanon County line. Both Stouchsburg and Womelsdorf are by-passed to the north by "new" route 422, a modern three-lane concrete highway.

Not only the highway has by-passed Stouchsburg, so has 20th century growth and modern development. The setting remains as a vestige of the mid-nineteenth century. Houses are built close together in a .7 mile stretch along its one main street with lots extending 250 feet to alleys which form the rear boundaries. As a group, these houses typify Pennsylvania German village architecture. Nearly all are 2½ stories high, three or four bays wide, with gable roofs. There is little space between houses, but in the rear there are generous yards, long and narrow with room for gardens. Close to the houses are auxiliary structures - summer kitchens, smoke houses, outhouses, arbors, pumps, cisterns - while at the rear of the lot are tool sheds, chicken houses, barns, carriage houses, and workshops. Alleys on either side of Main Street define the boundary of the village. It is an orderly plan for a small town.

Stouchsburg exhibits remarkable integrity as a 19th century linear village. Of its 97 major buildings, 95 front Main Street. The exceptions are its school, built on a centrally located side street in 1877 and a frame house, now abandoned, built nearby. Regarding dates, 84 major buildings were built in the 19th century, two in the 18th century, four in the 1900-1930 period, and only six since 1930. The modern houses were built in the 1940's and 50's on the site of an old orchard (Snitzville) at the eastern end of town, following traditional lot patterns and conforming to the overall village design. Concerning materials, 19 structures were built of logs, 33 brick, 4 stone and 39 frame. In addition, some 150 outbuildings are located "out back" including more than 39 frame sheds, 32 barns, 38 outhouses, 8 summer kitchens, and 9 smokehouses. Twenty-nine garages are also situated along the alleys, most of which are converted 19th century carriage sheds. Although the past fifty years has brought change in the form of street paving, use of modern siding on houses, and the conversion of buildings from commercial to residential use, the nineteenth century design of the village is intact. The impact of change is relatively minor when viewed within the scope of twentieth century progress throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania.

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A building inventory conducted by local citizens lists 97 primary structures - all but six contributing to the historic character of the district. Fourteen were rated significant in representing the development of the community. Descriptions and photos follow:

The Peter Spycker House c.1750 marks the western boundary of the district. It predates the village, having been built along the early road from Reading to Harrisburg. Being the first building, it was actually a rural homestead of the 18th century. Its three sections depict the transition of Germanic to Georgian architecture. This house is listed on the National Register.

The more typical village houses built by the first lot holders were the log buildings of Henry Grabey, Jacob Burkholder, Daniel Hackman, and Samuel Moore, tradesmen who established businesses along the Berks-Dauphin Turnpike constructed in 1815-17. These are 1½ or 2½ story three-bay structures with assymetrical window placement and original center-chimney design. Like other log buildings, these houses were covered with "German" siding of horizontal boards. In recent years, other materials (asphalt shingle and aluminum siding) have been installed over the wood siding, except in the Grabey House, 70 Main Street. In an 1825 sketch of the village by a travelling French naturalist, Charles Alexander Lesueur, about 15 buildings are portrayed, all seemingly of log construction. Most of the 19 log structures in the village today date from this early period.

At least four of Stouchsburg's buildings have served as inns or taverns. Two of these were established before 1830. The Marion House, first operated by William Dieffinbach, has retained its name and its function as a tavern. The Eagle Hotel, built by Henry Bennethum, is now a two-family dwelling. In 1871, a larger, more elaborate hotel, the American House, was constructed by Isaac Moyer. The scale of this three story brick building and its fashionable Italianate trim made it the most prominent gathering place for over 100 years. The hotel was recently closed to business, although the P.O.S. of A. Lodge continues to occupy the third floor. A less pretentious three story frame structure, known historically as Reed's Saloon and Hotel, dates from the late 1800's.

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Most of the brick houses in Stouchsburg date from the 1850-1870 era. Examples are the Samuel Keiser General Store and Post Office, c.1866, a combined commercial/residential property, now a three unit residence; the four-bay, two-front-door house at 117 Main Street, built c. 1860 on the site of the Andrew Stouch Tavern; and the five-bay L-shaped house at 140 Main Street, built c. 1870. Typical brick houses are four or five bay, 2½ story rectangular buildings exhibiting some Victorian wood trim in window and cornice treatment.

Many of the buildings of the 1870-1900 period were connected with the cigar manufacturing industry. In exterior appearance, the cigar factories cannot be distinguished from the dwellings built at the same time. Buildings at 47 Main Street, 66 Main Street, 76 Main Street and 100-104 Main Street, were used as cigar factories, as was the small frame outbuilding at 110 Main Street. These are all plain featured buildings of frame construction. Two are three stories high. The homes of cigar company owners were among the most stylish village buildings. These include the Smaltz house at 110 Main Street, a brick Victorian house with handsome carved sandstone lintels, and the Reilly Zerbe House at 103 Main Street, the only Queen Anne style home to be built here.

Two buildings were formerly schools. The house at 43 Main Street served as a private school of higher education, known as the Stouchsburg Academy from 1839 to 1877. Originally a one-story limestone building, its second floor was added by Samuel Reed, who converted it to a dwelling. The brick building on Water Street was a public school for Marion Township from 1877 to 1970. The front portion was added in 1931. This is still a public building, used for township offices and equipment storage.

Another important building is the new Reeds' Church, the fourth to serve its congregation, relocated in the village from a site near the Tulpehocken Creek. It was built in 1895 utilizing many cut sandstones from the locks of the Union Canal which had been abandoned in 1884.

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The most recent addition to central Stouchsburg was the Marion Township Fire Hall, erected in 1916 at a cost of \$6,700. In addition to its primary function of housing fire equipment, it has met a variety of community recreational and civic needs.

Stouchsburg today is a quiet residential community with a strong 19th century sense of place. Its six 1950's buildings, the only intrusive elements along Main Street, represent a filling-in of some open space rather than an interruption of the overall design. The construction of the Route 422 by-pass in 1951, has diverted traffic from the village and provided a place for commercial development, protecting the integrity of the historic district.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
X 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
X 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
X 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect N/A

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Stouchsburg is significant as a remarkably intact 19th century Pennsylvania German linear village. It exemplifies a predominant development pattern in rural Pennsylvania during the early 1800's - the growth of one-main street towns along major transportation routes. Its period of growth from the 1820's to the 1880's corresponds with the period of commerce on the Union Canal, illustrating the importance of the canal trade to communities along their tow-paths. When the Canals were replaced by the railway systems, towns such as Stouchsburg, that were not located directly on the rail lines simply stopped growing. Stouchsburg may be unique, in that it has hardly grown since then. Its buildings, its setting, and its overall design exhibit a strong sense of its 19th century heritage. As an entity, it signifies a typical Pennsylvania German village of another era.

Because so much of Stouchsburg remains intact, its development can be traced through the analysis of its buildings. Its oldest site, the Peter Spycer House, c. 1750, was part of a farm property in the Tulpehocken Settlement located on an early roadway. It is best known historically as a meeting site during the French and Indian War period, when Peter and his brother Benjamin, who lived across the road, helped organize a local militia unit and served under Conrad Weiser in attempting to protect their community from attack by the marauding Indians.

The Georgian wing of the Spycer House was probably built by Peter's son, Henry, c. 1800. In 1793, Henry sold the western section of his property, which was later divided into lots for "Stouchs' Town." These lots along the south side of Main Street were sold by Peter Shitz in the 1820's for gold and silver money. They measured 50' X 250' extending from the road to a rear alley, a pattern that has persisted to this day. Although a number of land transfers took place between 1793 and 1816, the only known building of that period was the Andrew Stouch Tavern, c.1808. Further development did not occur until the Berks and Dauphin Turnpike was completed in 1817. Between 1817 and 1825, twelve to fifteen buildings were erected.

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A record of the early lotholders identifies them as innkeepers, merchants, farmers, drovers, wheelwrights, a blacksmith and a saddler. It seems likely that many of these tradespeople located here not only to serve the local farming community and the travellers along the turnpike, but also because of the opening of the Union Canal in 1827.

Undoubtedly, the canal commerce was a primary factor in the development of Stouchsburg. From a settlement of about 15 homes in 1830, it grew to a village of 86 properties in 1876. Grain, flour, lumber, gypsum, farm products, and local hand-crafted goods were shipped to Reading and Philadelphia, while supplies for the town's merchants, businesses, and taverns were brought in return. Competition for the canal trade emerged when the Lebanon Valley Railroad constructed its tracks several miles south of Stouchsburg through Sheridan, Lebanon County in 1858. Although the canal was enlarged to meet this challenge, this effort was not successful in overcoming the advantage of rail transportation's speed and efficiency.

{The development of a number of local cigar factories in 1870-80 provided the stimulus for continued village growth during that period. Prominent cigar makers included M.H. Smaltz, Adam S. Valentine, H.W. Cooper, and Reilly Zerbe. Some of these businessmen also operated large establishments in Womelsdorf. Smaltz, Cooper, and Zerbe built homes here. The cigar industry [was the major local employer through the early 1900's.]

Our building survey shows that the expansion of Stouchsburg ceased when the canal was abandoned in 1884.} Since then, only four 1890's buildings were constructed: the church, parsonage, Reilly Zerbe house, and Cooper cigar factory. Three early 1900's properties were added: the fire hall, school, and one 1920's cottage. Later, six 1940-50's structures filled in the open space at the eastern end of town.

The architectural significance of Stouchsburg derives from its preservation of overall village design and its conservation of historic structure, rather than the examples of style it offers in individual buildings. Compared with the nearest linear towns along Route 422, Womelsdorf, Robesonia and Wernersville to the east, and Myerstown to the west, it seems to have been characterized by less progress, less wealth, less variety, and less change.

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It symbolizes the tastes of the common man - the tradesperson, storekeeper, and factory worker of the 19th century. These people built sturdy houses with plain features, not unlike the homes on the rural Pennsylvania German farmsteads of the same period. Behind their homes they built frame outbuildings. Because of the problem in obtaining water from dug wells in the porous limestone beneath the village, they collected rainwater in cisterns. This pattern is evident today.

The major difference between mid-19th century and mid-20th century Stouchsburg is the change from a somewhat self-sufficient community of tradespersons & shopkeepers to a residential village whose inhabitants work elsewhere. The buildings that formerly served as shops, inns, and cigar factories have been converted to single or multi-family dwellings. Interior modernization, the installation of plumbing, heating, closets and interior decoration have affected most buildings. Exterior maintenance has also seen a trend toward modern methods in application of aluminum siding and other so-called maintenance-free materials to many of the log and frame buildings traditionally covered with wood siding. Nevertheless, the total aspect of the village today is not unlike the postcard views of 1910.

Beneath the facades, the structure of each major building tells its own story of village growth. The nineteen log houses represent the beginning of the community during the 1820's and 1830's, the time when William Dieffenbach operated a tavern, Samuel Moore opened a general store, and Daniel Hackman worked in his Saddler's shop along the turnpike. During the late 1830's, Eli Klopp established a lumber yard along the Canal, obtaining logs and boards from several nearby sawmills along the Tulpehocken Creek. This had an impact on construction activity and methods. Between 1835 and 1850, nearly all houses were of frame construction. The 1850-70 period was the era of the most rapid growth, and brick was the favorite material. The Cherington brick yard was located just north of town. Samuel Keiser built a large general store, Dr. Newcomet constructed a fine home and office, and Isaac Moyer built the American House, the town's largest structure. The brick buildings at both the east and west ends of Stouchsburg date from this period. The 1870's brought a return to frame construction with the emergence of the cigar industry. This was the last trend in 19th century growth.



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Stouchsburg is so solidly mid-19th century Pennsylvania German vernacular in character, that its later Queen Anne style house seems a novelty. It is so attuned to its past that our Village Survey group "remembered" as major events the dynamite factory explosion of 1884, the canal boat wreck of 1879, and the Tulpehocken Confusion, a Lutheran Church Controversy of 1734. It is so imbued with a conservation ethic that its church is built from the stones from canal locks, its water comes from cisterns, and most of its original buildings still stand. Through the years, Stouchsburg's residents have been satisfied with their traditional way of life. They have seen no need to change.

# 9. Major Bibliographical Reference

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 47 acres

Quadrangle name Strausstown, PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
-------	------------	------	--------	------------	------

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Phoebe L. Hopkins

organization Berks County Conservancy date June 18, 1984

street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone 215-372-4992

city or town Wyomissing state PA

# 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

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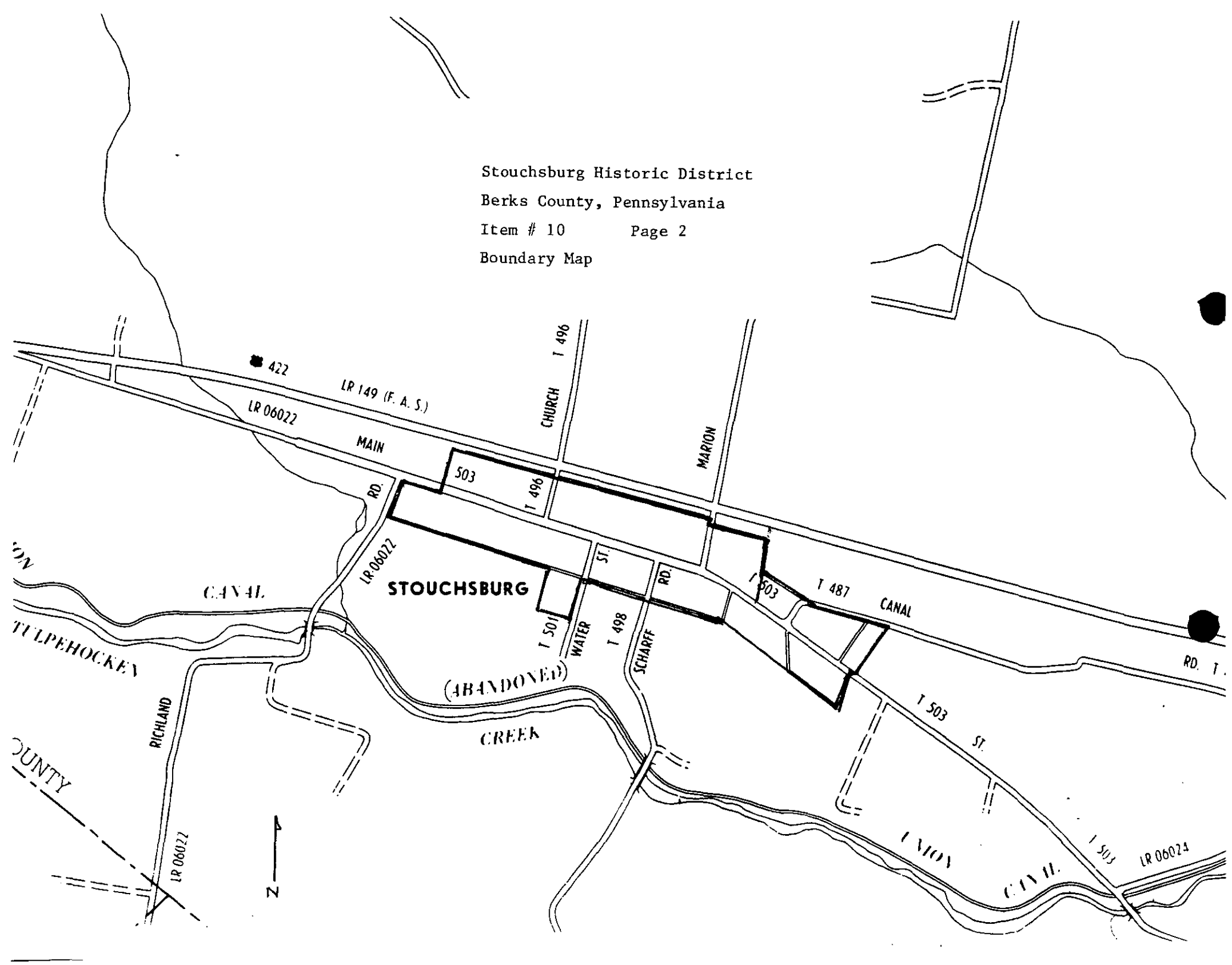
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date entered

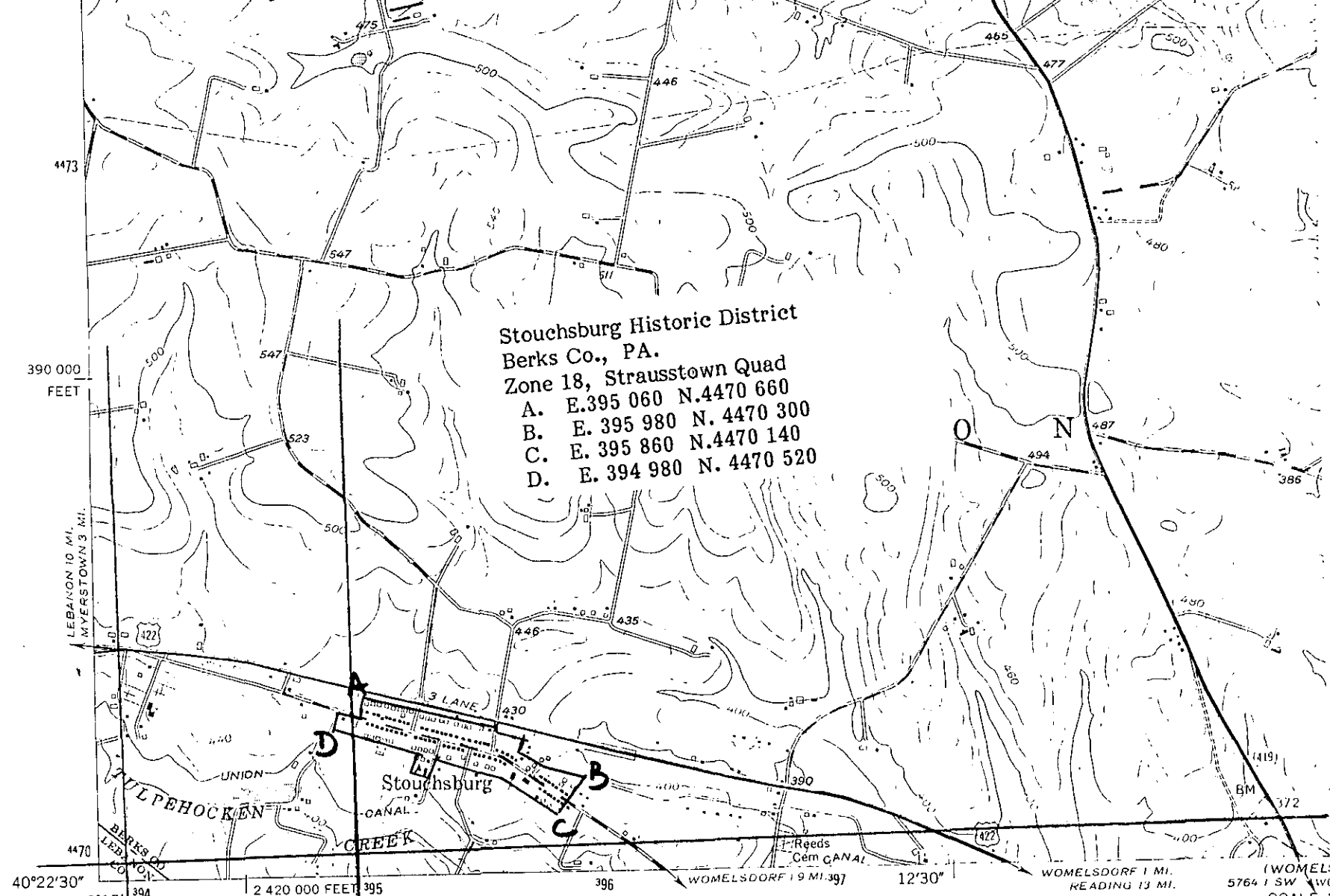
Continuation sheet Stouchsburg Historic District Boundary Descrip.  
Berks County Item number 10-8 Justification Page 1

The Stouchsburg Historic District includes all the properties fronting Main Street from 15 Main Street to 153 Main Street on the north side, and from 12 Main Street to 150 Main Street on the south side, and the two adjacent buildings and their lots on Water Street, including the Township Municipal Building. The district is bounded by the alleys north and south of Main Street, the metal sign "Stouchsburg" at the east end, and LR-06022, Richland Road, on the west end. This includes virtually the whole village with the exceptions of commercial establishments fronting on Route 422 adjacent to the town, and several modern houses east of the village marker. These boundaries consist of existing alleys and rear property lines that are easily observed and well defined.

Beginning at a point along Main Street at the eastern end of Stouchsburg where the metal marker "Stouchsburg, Founded 1832" is located, thence to the southeastern corner of 15 Main Street, thence northeasterly along the eastern boundary of this lot to T 487 Canal Road, thence westerly along the southern edge of Canal Road to the bend in the road, thence northwesterly along rear property lines of lots 79, 81, and 83 Main Street to a connecting road, thence northeasterly to the alley marking the rear boundary of the lots along Main Street, thence northwesterly along the alley to its end, continuing to the northwest corner of 153 Main Street, thence southeasterly along the western boundary of said lot to Main Street, thence westerly along the southern boundary of Main Street to LR-06022 Richland Road, thence southwesterly along the eastern boundary of Richland Road 250 feet, thence southeasterly to the western end of the alley south of Main Street, thence along the alley to the north west corner of the lot fronting Water Street, thence southwesterly along the rear line of this lot and the lot including the Township Municipal Building, thence southeasterly to Water Street, thence northeasterly along Water Street to the alley south of Main Street, thence southeasterly along this alley, continuing along the rear lines of Zion's Lutheran Church 38 Main St. and the Zug Implement Shop 36 Main Street to connect with the alley and rear lot lines behind 28, 26, 24, 22, 20, 18, 16, 14, and 12 Main Street, thence northeasterly to Main Street, continuing to the north side of Main Street at the place of beginning.

Stouchsburg Historic District  
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Boundary Map





**Stouchsburg Historic District**  
**Berks Co., PA.**

**Zone 18, Strausstown Quad**

- A. E. 395 060 N. 4470 660
- B. E. 395 980 N. 4470 300
- C. E. 395 860 N. 4470 140
- D. E. 394 980 N. 4470 520

(RICHLAND)  
 5764 IV SE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

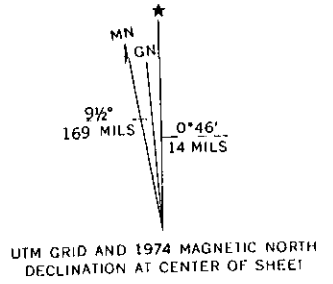
Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods  
 Aerial photographs taken 1951. Field check 1955

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Pennsylvania coordinate system,  
 south zone

Unchecked elevations are shown in brown

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 18, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of  
 Pennsylvania agency, from aerial photographs taken 1969 and 1974



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERVAL  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VE

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATI  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP