

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 Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex

and or common D. W. Coombs Textile Machinery Company

2. Location

street & number 1101 Third Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Whitehall

N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

code

042

county

Lehigh

code 077

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Michaels Development Company

street & number One Stow Road, Post Office Box 994

city, town Marlton

N/A vicinity of

state New Jersey

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lehigh County Courthouse

street & number Hamilton Street

city, town Allentown

state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August 20, 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex is a largely intact collection of manufacturing buildings constructed in several phases during the period from about 1894 to 1913. The complex is located in Fullerton, a small town just north of Allentown in Whitehall Township, Lehigh County. The complex possesses a particularly high degree of integrity. It consists of eight large and three small buildings, most constructed of reinforced concrete, all of which contribute to the character of the complex. Only one major building, the iron foundry, originally located just west of Building D, is no longer extant. Individual building descriptions are as follows:

Building A: Building A is a two and one-half story gable-roofed building measuring 45 by 460 feet. This building developed in three distinct phases, with the easternmost 100 feet constituting the firm's original factory building. The original portion of the building predates the 1894 establishment of the Dent Hardware Company. It is a brick building, presently covered with rough-textured stucco. The stucco partially obscures corbelled brickwork at the east gable end and pilasters that articulate the north and south facades. The window openings in the side (north and south) elevations are segmentally arched openings with 9/9 sash. The front (east) facade has paired window openings in the first and second stories and smaller openings at the attic level. These openings are presently infilled with fiberglass panels. In about 1901 an addition extended this building approximately 150 feet to the west. The addition is reinforced concrete, scribed to imitate masonry. Window openings are segmentally arched, and fitted with paired 9/9 double-hung sash. A second reinforced concrete addition to this building, constructed c. 1911, extended the structure to its present 460-foot length. This addition's scribed exterior continues the earlier vocabulary. The window openings in this second addition also continue the earlier vocabulary. They are segmentally arched openings with 9/9 double-hung sash. The regularity of the fenestration is occasionally broken by a large doorway and by a passageway that extends clear through the building at a point approximately 250 feet west of the east facade. The interior is open space, with wooden floors and ceiling structures. Wooden posts divide a portion of the building into three bays. The building has good overall integrity. Building A housed a number of departments. The second addition comprised the machine shop. Extending to the east, from the point where the passageway divided the building, were the polishing, plating, assembly, and shipping departments. The box making department occupied the second floor of the building.

Building B: Building B is located parallel to, and directly south of, Building A. It is a single-story reinforced concrete structure measuring approximately 50 by 265 feet. In keeping with the rest of the complex the concrete is scribed to resemble masonry. The building has a gabled roof with a monitor that runs its entire length. The openings in the monitor are infilled with fiberglass panels. The remaining window openings in the building continue the vocabulary established by Building A. They are segmentally arched openings with paired 9/9 double-hung sash. The interior is open space, with wooden floors and ceiling structures. The building's overall integrity is good. Building B functioned principally as a warehouse.

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- Building C: Building C is located directly west, and at right angles to, Building B. It is a single-story reinforced concrete structure, measuring approximately 50 by 230 feet. In keeping with the rest of the complex, the concrete is scribed to resemble masonry. The building has a hipped roof, with a hip-roofed monitor extending the length of the building. The openings in the monitor are infilled with fiberglass panels. Window openings are segmentally arched, and infilled with fiberglass panels. The interior is open space, with an exposed roof truss. The building's overall integrity is good. This building originally served as the firm's brass foundry.
- Building D: Building D is attached to the west facade of Building C. It is a single-story reinforced concrete building, measuring approximately 40 by 140 feet. The concrete is scribed to imitate masonry. The building has a hipped roof, covered in slate and pierced by skylights and three large corbelled brick chimneys. Window openings are segmentally arched, and are infilled with fiberglass panels. The interior is open space. The building's overall integrity is good. Building D houses the furnaces for the adjacent brass and iron foundries.
- Building E: Building E is located at the western end of the site. It is a tall, single-story, reinforced concrete building, measuring approximately 60 by 106 feet. The concrete is scribed to imitate masonry. The building has a gabled roof, covered in slate, with a gable-roofed monitor extending the length of the building. The monitor openings are infilled with fiberglass panels. The large, segmentally arched window openings are infilled with fiberglass panels. The interior is open space, with an exposed roof truss. The building's overall integrity is good. Building E housed the blacksmith shop and the tumbling department, where castings received an initial polishing.
- Building F: Building F is located at the northern end of the site, parallel to Building A. It is a tall, two-story, reinforced concrete building, constructed in 1911, that measures approximately 55 by 100 feet. The concrete is scored to imitate masonry. It has a slate-covered, gabled roof. The large window openings are segmentally arched, and are infilled with fiberglass panels. Some window openings have been altered and enlarged to serve as doorways. A datestone is located in the east gable end of the building, directly above a palladian window. A tall smokestack is located at the northwest corner of the building. The stack's red brick base is octagonal.

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Above this base the stack is circular, and is constructed of buff brick. The interior is open space, with an exposed wooden roof truss. The building's overall integrity is good. This building served as the powerhouse for the entire complex.

Building G: Building G is located at the northeast corner of the site. It is a two-story buff brick building constructed about 1910. The neo-classically styled building measures approximately 40 by 60 feet. It has a reinforced concrete base, pierced by segmentally arched window openings with three-light sash. The first story consists of buff brick, with deeply recessed courses designed to lend an appearance of masonry. This treatment is also evident in the segmentally arched brick lintels of the first story window openings. These openings have stone sills and a stone keystone within the lintel. The sash consist of a large single light topped by a three-light sash. A stone beltcourse separates the first and second stories. The brickwork of the second story does not contain the deeply recessed courses found below. The rectangular window openings of this story are fitted with 1/1 double-hung sash, frequently paired. The building has a modillioned metal cornice and a flat roof. The east entry has a segmentally arched hood, supported on brackets, above a paneled and glazed door with a multi-light transom sash. The principal (north) entry has an elaborate metal and glass canopy extending over the stoop. The glazed two-leaf entry doors are surmounted by a transom sash. The interior consists of offices arranged along double-loaded corridors. Original doors and trim survive. The building's overall integrity is excellent. Building G housed the firm's offices.

Building H: Building H is located to the north of, and parallel to, Building A. It is a single-story reinforced concrete building measuring approximately 30 by 150 feet. The concrete is scored to imitate masonry. It has a slate-covered, hipped roof with a hip-roofed dormer at the west elevation. On the south elevation the roof extends beyond the line of the building to form a cantilevered porch roof extending the length of the building. The entire south elevation consists of a series of handsome wooden garage doors. The lower half of each door is X-braced, while the upper half has a diamond-shaped window glazed with numerous, small, diamond-shaped lights. The interior consists of open space originally used for truck storage. The building's overall integrity is excellent. Building H dates from after 1913. It housed the firm's delivery trucks.

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Building I: Building I is located in the northwestern part of the site, between Building E and Building F. It is a single-story reinforced concrete building measuring approximately 20 by 40 feet. The concrete is scored to imitate masonry. The building has a slate-covered hipped roof topped by an octagonal lantern. Each face of the lantern has a 6/6 double-hung sash. The south face of the roof extends beyond the building plane to form a porch roof supported by two posts. A large wooden door, with fifteen small lights, is located in the south facade. The interior is open space. The building's overall integrity is good. Building I served as an oil house and paint shop.

Building J: Building J is located to the south of, and parallel to, Building A. It is a single-story reinforced concrete building with a slate-covered hipped roof. The concrete is scored to imitate stucco. Small window openings are located high on the walls underneath the building's eaves. The interior consists of a locker and shower room. The building's overall integrity is good. Building J served as a wash house for the foundry workers.

Building K: Building K is located between Building D and Building J. It is a single-story reinforced concrete building that is virtually identical in appearance to Building I. The interior is open space. The building's overall integrity is good. It appears to have been used for storage and was likely associated with the nearby brass and iron foundries.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1894-1913 **Builder/Architect** Henry P. Newhard

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex is a significant collection of industrial buildings located in Fullerton, Whitehall Township, Lehigh County. The buildings have both architectural and historical significance. They constitute a large collection of early reinforced concrete industrial buildings, having been largely constructed during the first decade of the twentieth century, and are the most intact group of industrial architecture in Fullerton, a community that once boasted the presence of several large industrial concerns. The resource's historical significance stems from Dent Hardware Company's position, in the first decades of the twentieth century, as the nation's leading producer of brass refrigerator hardware and a major manufacturer of cast iron toys.

In 1894 Henry H. Dent, Henry P. Newhard, Charles C. Kaiser, C. W. Wackernagel, and George H. Brightbill established the Dent Hardware Company. The two minor partners, Wackernagel and Brightbill, withdrew from the firm about 1900, leaving Dent, Newhard, and Kaiser to run the business. The company initially operated out of a 45 by 100 foot building (the easternmost portion of Building A) located on land owned by Newhard. In 1894 the firm employed thirty workers and produced specialty hardware for four customers.

The business proved profitable, and the firm greatly expanded its facilities in about 1904 and 1911. Following the 1904 expansion the company employed 200 workers in a factory that covered two acres. The chief product of the company remained specialty hardware, specifically brass and iron hardware for refrigerators and cold storage units. In 1904, only a decade after its founding, the Dent Hardware Company produced 50,000 sets of refrigerator hardware each month, fully ninety percent of the nation's output. The firm's product reached an international market.

Following the 1911 expansion the factory complex included nine major buildings, including fully equipped brass and iron foundries. The firm, which employed 400 workers, continued to produce virtually all of the refrigerator hardware used in the United States. The firm held patents on the designs for many of its products. Charles Rhoads Roberts, in his History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, called the firm "one of the principal industries of Lehigh County."

During this period the Lehigh Valley constituted one of the most important industrial regions in the United States. The coal, iron, and steel industries formed the foundation of the region's industrial strength. A variety of other industries, which utilized the products of the mines and furnaces, capitalized upon the region's concentration of heavy industry and established their own factories in the area. Whitehall Township, which bordered the western shore of the Lehigh River just north of Allentown, served as home to both famous examples of the region's heavy industries and a variety of smaller firms producing more specialized products.

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Whitehall Township entered the Industrial Revolution in 1854, when David Thomas established the Thomas Iron Company at Hokendaqua, north of Fullerton. By the 1860s this firm, which produced pig iron, operated the largest furnaces and most powerful blast machinery in the United States, and was one of the nation's largest iron works. The Thomas works are now either deserted or destroyed. A variety of other iron works and iron-related industries operated in Whitehall Township during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Fullerton these businesses included Frederick & Company, manufacturers of railroad cars, McKee, Fuller & Company, producers of railroad car wheels, a rolling mill operated by the Catasaqua Manufacturing Company, and the Dent Hardware Company. Only the Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex survives with any degree of integrity.

Dent Hardware's position within the regional economy was not unique. A large number of industrial firms established themselves in the Lehigh Valley in order to be near their sources of raw materials. Many of these firms, like Dent Hardware, took the raw materials of the mines and furnaces and further refined those materials into producer or consumer products. Although Dent Hardware's position within the local and regional economy can scarcely be considered unique, the survival of the factory complex in an essentially unaltered state is rare. None of the major industrial establishments in either Fullerton or Whitehall Township survive with a comparable degree of integrity, and most exist only as ruins.

In addition to its national position as a manufacturer of specialty hardware, the Dent Hardware Company was a major producer of cast iron toys, principally horse-drawn vehicles, still banks, and cap pistols. Manufactured between 1898 and 1937, these toys are avidly sought by collectors and are considered to be of the highest quality in terms of casting and finish.

Dent Hardware was one of the nation's leading producers of cast iron toys. Its only significant rival in Pennsylvania was the Hubley Manufacturing Company in Lancaster. The Hubley factory has been either completely replaced or altered to such an extent that the original appearance of the buildings is not apparent. As a result the Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex is the major surviving example, in Pennsylvania, of the cast iron toy industry.

Although Dent Hardware quit producing cast iron toys in 1937 the firm remained in business until 1973. Specialty hardware remained the firm's most important product. During World Wars I and II the firm polished and plated hardware and ordnance for the military. The Dent Hardware Company went out of business in 1973. Since that time the complex has been principally used as warehousing.

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Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex
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The three principal partners in Dent Hardware occupied important positions within the local community. Henry H. Dent emigrated to the United States from England in 1866, at the age of five. Dent arrived in Allentown in 1889 and obtained work as a book-keeper. In 1894 he worked as the superintendent of the Allentown Hardware Company, a local manufacturing firm established in 1890 and extinct in 1899. All three of the principal founders of Dent Hardware worked for Allentown Hardware immediately prior to their organization of the new firm. Dent served as president of Dent Hardware.

Charles C. Kaiser emigrated to the United States from Germany as a child. He worked in the dry goods business before arriving in Allentown in 1888. In 1894 he worked as the foreman of Allentown Hardware, a position he left in order to help found Dent Hardware. Kaiser served as treasurer of the Dent Hardware Company.

The only native born member of the partnership, Henry P. Newhard, came from one of the oldest families in Lehigh County. His ancestors settled in Whitehall Township about 1737, and Newhard was born there in 1862. Trained as a machinist, he worked for several of the area's major industrial firms, including Lehigh Car Wheel & Axle Works and Bethlehem Steel. In 1894 he left a position as foreman at Allentown Hardware in order to found Dent Hardware with Dent and Kaiser. Newhard served as superintendent and secretary of the new firm. He prepared the plans and supervised the construction of the company's iron foundry (no longer extant), brass foundry (Building C), machine shop (the second addition to Building A), and boiler house (Building F).

The architectural significance of the Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex stems from the fact of its survival as one of the few intact industrial complexes left in Whitehall Twp. The complex is a rare reminder of the days when the Lehigh Valley epitomized the industrial strength of the United States. It is the last large intact factory complex left in Whitehall Township, an area that once supported a thriving iron, steel, and cement industry. The other major industrial complexes in the area appear to have been demolished or altered beyond recognition.

The Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex also appears to be architecturally significant as the only group of reinforced concrete industrial buildings constructed in Whitehall Township prior to c. 1917. Every industrial building constructed on the site by Dent Hardware is of reinforced concrete. These buildings are relatively primitive examples of early reinforced concrete construction. They utilize reinforced concrete only for the exterior walls. The internal supports and floor systems are of traditional wooden construction. Although reinforced concrete construction generally remained a pioneering and experimental building technique in the United States until about 1910, the Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex Buildings are neither pioneering nor experimental examples of reinforced concrete construction. Their significance lies in their survival as an intact collection of reinforced concrete industrial architecture constructed before the use of this material became widespread. Research in primary and secondary sources, as well as a preliminary reconnaissance survey of the area, has identified no comparable collection of early reinforced concrete buildings in the Lehigh Valley.

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The Dent Hardware Company Factory Complex appears to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The firm was the nation's leading producer of refrigerator hardware, one of the two largest producers of cast iron toys in Pennsylvania, and a major local employer. Its three principal founders were all significant figures within the community. The complex is also a remarkable intact example of turn-of-the-century industrial architecture. No other industrial complex from this period, with a comparable degree of integrity, survives in Whitehall Twp. The complex is the earliest collection of reinforced concrete industrial architecture yet discovered in the Lehigh Valley.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 8.68

Quadrangle name Catasaqua

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	5	9	8	3	0	4	4	9	8	6	8	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

Please 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 Patrick W. O'Bannon, Principal Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc.

date May 1, 1986

street & number 309 North Matlack Street

telephone (215) 561-7637

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

Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

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Lehigh County Deeds, Lehigh County Courthouse, Allentown.

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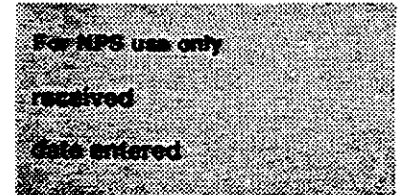
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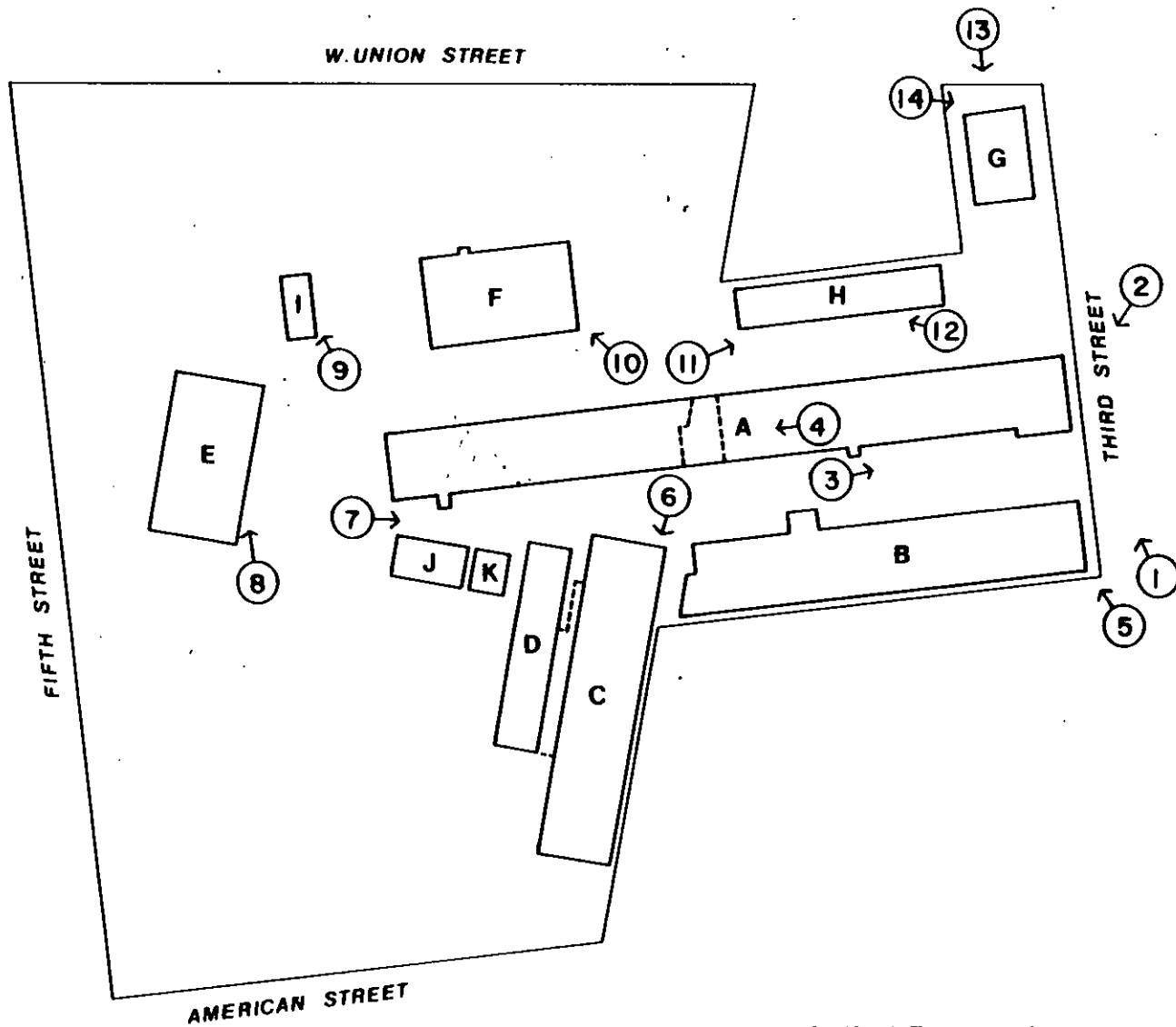
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Starting at a point at the Southwest corner of West Union Street and Third Street, thence along the South curb of West Union Street approximately 80 feet to point. Thence South $0^{\circ} 22'$ West 185 feet to a point. Thence South $74^{\circ} 31'$ West 120 feet to a point. Thence North $0^{\circ} 22'$ East 190 feet to a point on the South curb of Union Street. Thence West along the South curb of Union Street 517 feet to a point. Thence South $11^{\circ} 19'$ East 618 feet to a point. Thence along the South curb line of American Street (extended) approximately 350 feet to a point. Thence along the West side of an alley approximately 213 feet to a point. Thence North $74^{\circ} 31'$ East approximately 290 feet to a point on the West side of Third Street. Thence North, along the West side of Third Street, approximately 330 feet to the start. These boundaries contain the factory buildings and office of the Dent Hardware Company.



DENT HARDWARE COMPLEX
 WHITEHALL, PA.
 MARCH, 1986
 LEHIGH COUNTY

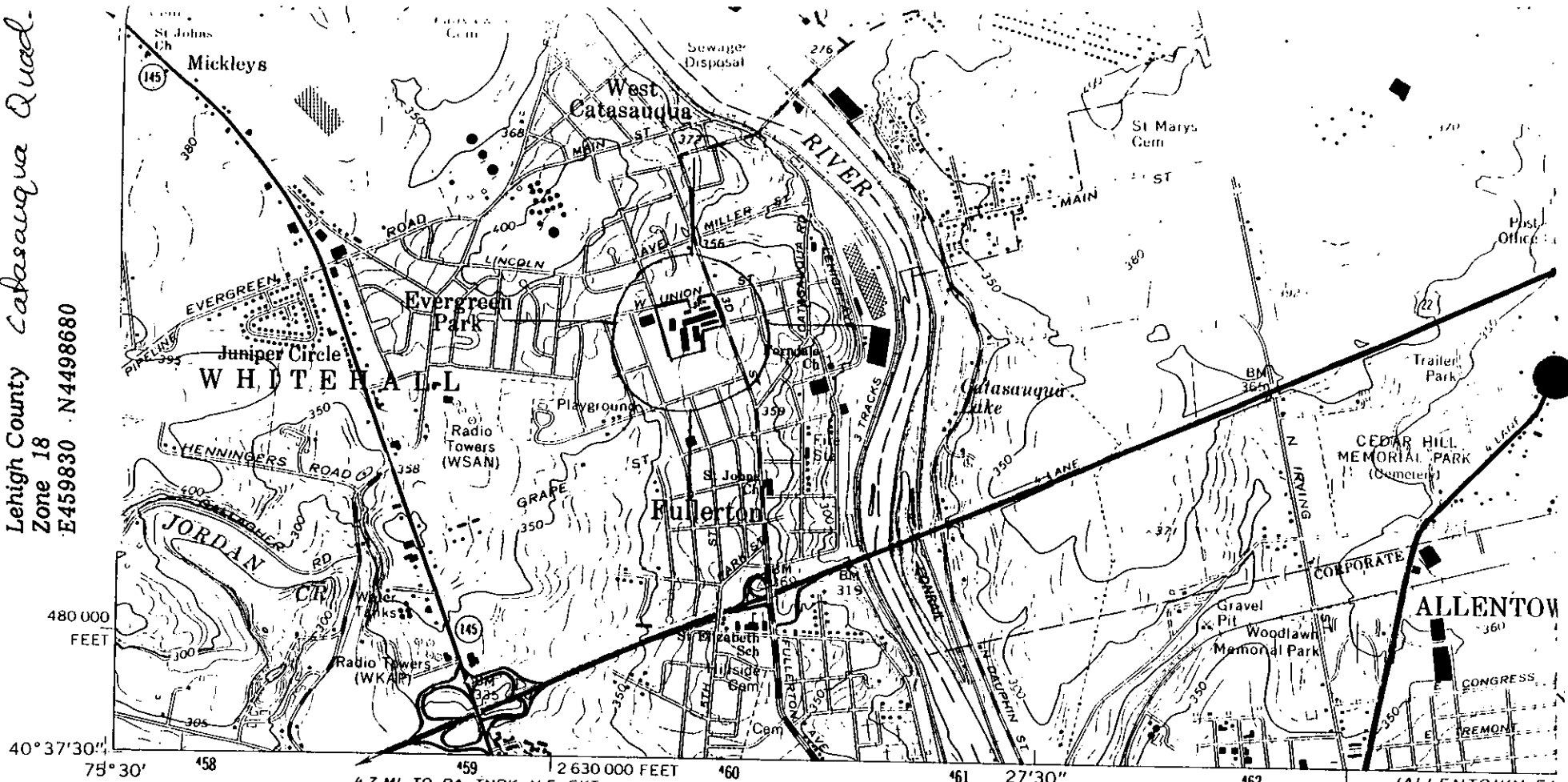
DENT HARDWARE COMPANY FACTORY

COMPLEX

Lehigh County Catasauqua Quad

Zone 18

E459830 N4498680



ALLENTOWN WEST
5965 11 SE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Field checked 1964

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue

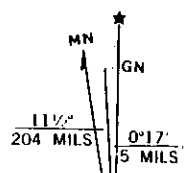
1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and 31 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

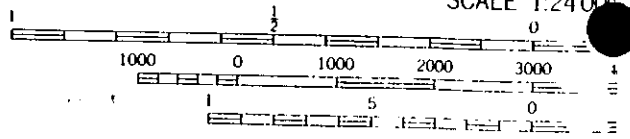
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE 1:24000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACT
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY,
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS