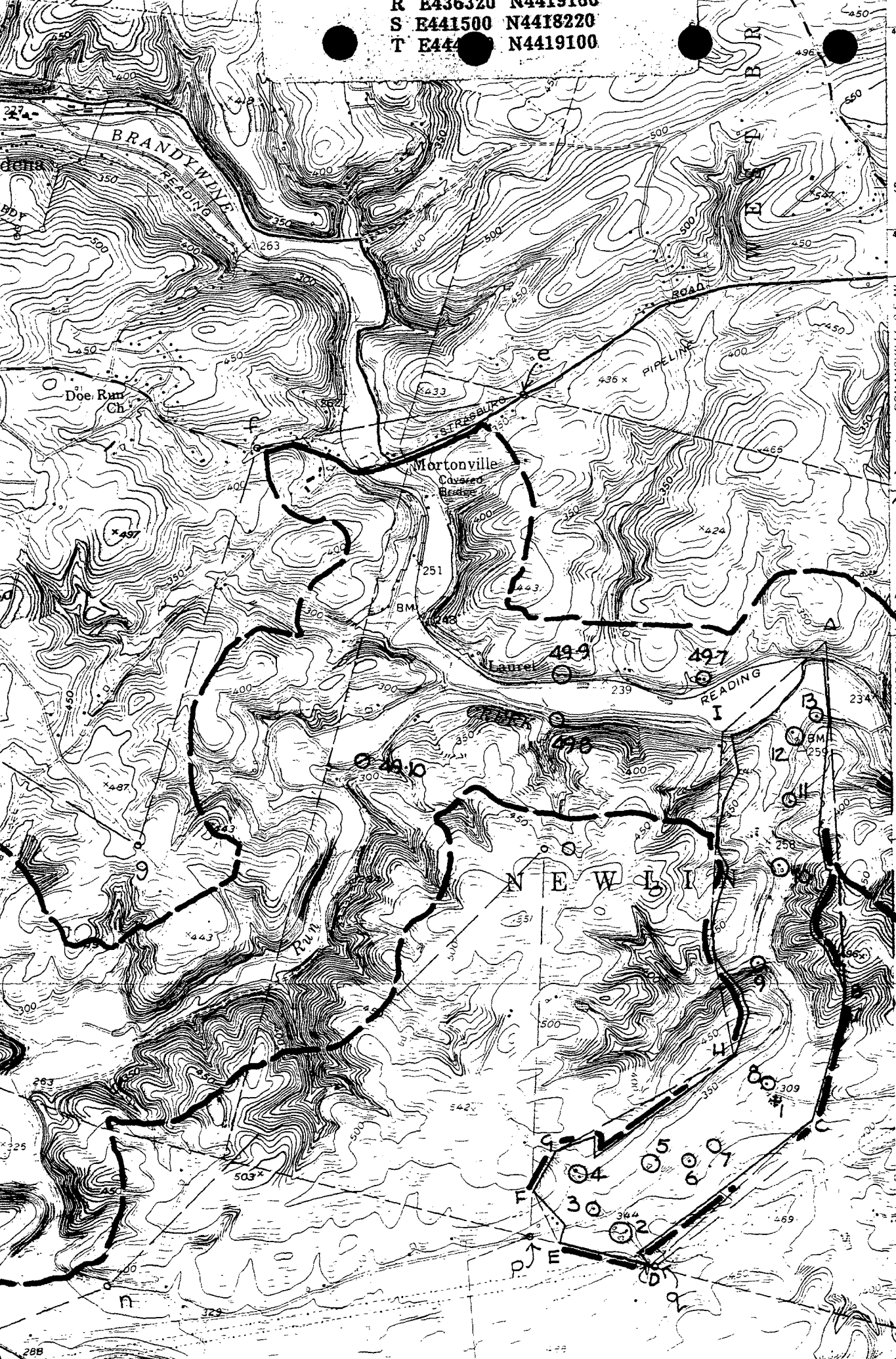


R E436320 N4419100
S E441500 N4418220
T E441500 N4419100



4424
57'30"
4423
TOMANVILLE 0.5 MI.
5863 1 NW
(UNIONVILLE)
4420
4419
55'
4418

Coatesville
Quad
49-9
House at
Lower Laurel
IRON WORKS
Newlin
Twp.

E436320 N4419100
E434700 N4417930
E434270 N4418900
E431000 N4418000

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
 OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

7. Local survey organization

Brandywine Conservancy

8. property owners name and address

Robert and Dorothy E. Lee, Jr.
 R.D. 4
 Coatesville, PA 19320

9. tax parcel number / other number

49-1-16.1

10.

U.T.M. Zone 118 Easting 41343110

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)

4141210181510
 Northing

usgs sheet: Coatesville

12. classification
 site () structure () object ()
 building (X)
 in N.R. district yes () no ()

13. date(s) (how determined)

C. 1870

14. period
 1850-74

15. style, design or folk type

19. original use
 120202P, 130201A

20. present use
 010302P Residence

16. architect or engineer

17. contractor or builder

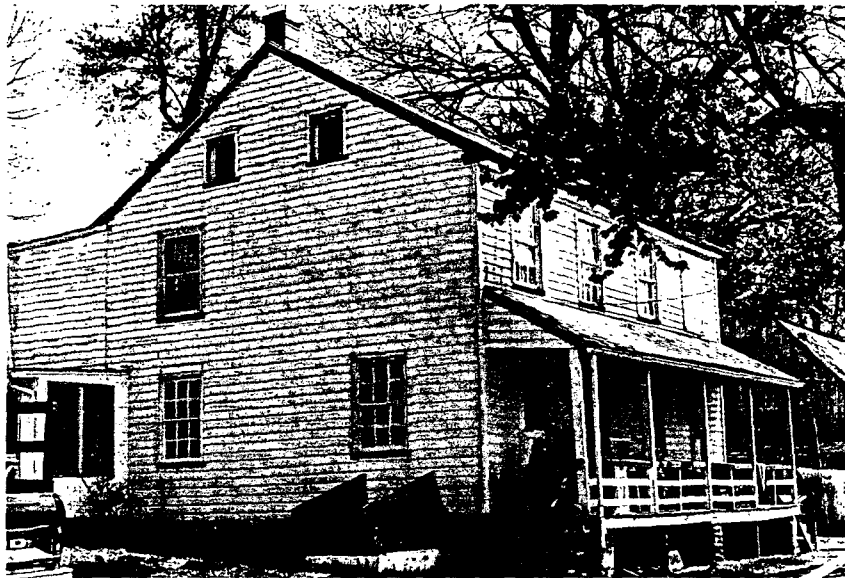
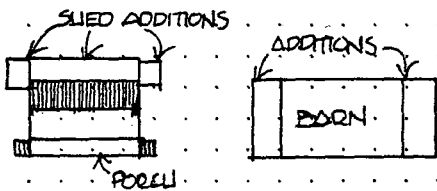
18. primary building mat./construction

Frame

21. condition
 Good

22. integrity
 Good

23. site plan with north arrow



24. photo notation

PC: Martha Wolf
 PD: 1984
 PV: Southwest elevation

25. file/location

Brandywine Conservancy

26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings)

The House at Lower Laurel Iron Works faces south, toward the Brandywine Creek Road and the tracks of the former Wilmington and Reading Railroad, both of which parallel the West Branch Brandywine River. A hill rises rather abruptly behind the house. On it and not far from the house is an 18th-century Baptist Cemetery.

Unlike most of the nominated properties in the Scenic River Corridor, the House at Lower Laurel Iron Works is from the second half of the 19th century, is of frame (not stone) construction, and had modest origins as a double house. Built to accommodate two worker families at the Iron Works which was situated just across the road, the house is plain and practical. It is two stories with an attic and full basement, a gable roof, simple box cornice, and small brick chimneys at each gable end. The siding is horizontal German siding. Two doors to the separate units within

(continue on back if necessary)

27. history, significance and/or background

The House at Lower Laurel Iron Works is significant for its association with an iron works established across the road in 1872. Built in the same period as the works as a double house for company workers, it is a surprisingly well-preserved example of worker housing. This type of housing is not common to the Scenic River Corridor, but rather is found more readily in the County's boroughs which grew significantly in the second-half of the 19th century following the Industrial Revolution. Most of the

(continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information

Chester County Historical Society--Clipping Files; Laurel by L.S. McKinstry, 1928; "The Laurels" in Antiques Show 1984 by Nancy Mohr; letters in possession of the Stone family

(continue on back if necessary)

29. prepared by:

M. L. Wolf

30. date
 1984

revision(s)

5. present name

Worker's House at Lower Laurel Iron Works

3. other name (historic name if any)

1. County

029-Chester

2. municipality

Newlin Township

3. street address or specific location

Creek Road

4. survey code (029-49-9)

MAP 49-9

26. Continued

are located in the symmetrical four-bay facade. A two-story shed-roofed addition is found on the rear (north) elevation and small sheds are located at each rear corner. A porch with a shed roof and plain posts rests on stone piers, spanning the full facade. The fenestration is identical in each unit; windows are six-over-six in plain rectangular frames.

The house was built as and still is used as a double house. It still is heated by stoves, as it was originally. The current owners have lived here 51 years. As a result, the house has retained those original features which distinguish it as a double dwelling, i.e., the stone wall in the basement dividing it into separate units; a plaster wall serving the same purpose in the attic; and the identical floor plan of each unit. The house has remarkable integrity, from its original exterior walls to its attic and basement.

Adjacent to the house is a small barn with additions to each side. Because of these additions and the generally poor condition of the building, it cannot be considered a contributing structure.

The boundaries for the House at Lower Laurel Iron Works are its legal metes and bounds description on file at the Chester County Recorder of Deeds in Deed Book B50, page 133. A copy of page 133 is attached.

Acres: 1.5

Outbuilding
BARN: Intrusion

Area of Significance
x Industry
Period
x 1800-1899

EVALUATION



27. Continued Worker's House at Lower Laurel Iron Works

resources in the corridor, in fact, predate the Revolution which had little impact on the corridor, other than to pull population and industry away from it. This lone house is evidence that an attempt was made to bring new technology to the corridor in the 1870s and that it failed.

The early history of the Laurel Iron Works is described on card 49-10. This house at Lower Laurel Iron Works dates from the 1870s expansion of that company by Hugh E. Steele.

In 1872 Steele built a rolling mill and some workers' dwellings on the north side of the West Branch Brandywine River and within easy access of the Wilmington and Reading Railroad which was laid through here in 1870. By December of 1872, the mill was in full operation. Raw materials arrived at the port of Wilmington and were then shipped by rail to the Laurel Works and on to another iron mill Steele owned in Coatesville.

In 1874 Steele's partner, Sheshbazzar B. Worth, died and Steele took out a \$100,000 mortgage on the property. A year later, the bonds which Steele had purchased for the Wilmington and Reading Railroad became worthless and the railroad was sold in 1876. Steele tried to prop up his sagging company but was unsuccessful. He leased the works to other firms and left the area. After his death in 1885, the iron works continued to operate intermittently, but were sold at Sheriff's sale in 1890. The property was acquired by Lamot duPont in 1929 and most of the buildings deteriorated.

Despite his troubles, Steele was a man beloved by his family and employees. Every year he threw a huge Christmas party for his worker's children. His other kindnesses towards family and friends are described in The Laurels. In 1878, even though Steele was unable to keep the iron works open, a local newspaper still called him "the best man in Chester County" saying he treated "his workmen as he would his children, and work or no work they get their 'grub' regularly, and himself and most estimable lady will share with their humble followers as long as there is a shot in the locker."

Hugh Steele's house at Laurel is gone; his forges are now heaps of stones. This little house is the last of the workers' housing which was built at both the Upper and Lower Laurel Iron Works. Given Steele's concern for his employees' well-being, perhaps this is a most appropriate building by which to remember the Laurel Iron Works and the achievements of Hugh E. Steele.

Slightly to the west of the house and on the south side of Creek Road adjacent to the tracks of old Wilmington and Reading Railroad are the scant remains of the Iron Works established in 1872. Traces of a large stone foundation and a fair quantity of slag are evident. According to a map published in 1873, there was a siding and station here at Laurel. In the meadow to the south of the house there should be traces of the stone foundations for the suspension bridge which crossed the West Branch Brandywine from the Spruce Grove School House. Long-time residents of the area remember using the bridge to reach the train stop. To date, no formal archeological investigation of any kind has been conducted at either the Lower or Upper Laurel Iron Works. Given that there is so much apparent even to the untrained eye, it appears that an archeological survey of this area combined with the available historical data would yield enough additional information to obtain a fairly clear picture of Laurel's 19th century appearance.

This Deed, made this 2nd day of December, 1976.
Between ROBERT E. LEE, SR. and ALICE M. LEE, his wife,

(hereinafter called the "Grantor S").

of the one part, and ROBERT E. LEE, JR. and DOROTHY M. LEE, his wife,
(hereinafter called the "Grantee S"). of the other part.

Witnesseth. That in consideration of One Dollars,
(Transfer from parents to son and daughter-in-law)
in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, the said Grantor S do hereby grant and convey unto the said
Grantee S, their heirs and assigns, as tenants by the entireties,

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of land situated in Newlin Town-
ship, Chester County, Pennsylvania, more particularly bounded and described
according to a survey made by Edgar Laub, R.S. on July 10, 1974 as follows:

BEGINNING at a spike in Creek Road (T-373) in line of lands of
the Strasburg Corporation; thence by said Strasburg Corporation, North
twenty-three degrees East, two hundred fifty-four and sixty-eight one-
hundredths feet to a rock wall corner of the existing graveyard; thence by
said rock wall the following two courses and distances: (1) South eighty-
one degrees forty-seven minutes ten seconds East, eighty-four and twenty-
seven one-hundredths feet to a stone; thence (2) North seven degrees fif-
teen minutes twenty seconds East, one hundred thirty and sixty-eight one-
hundredths feet to other lands of Robert E. Lee; thence by said land of
Robert E. Lee, South sixty-nine degrees thirty-five minutes East, twenty-
five and eighty-six one-hundredths feet to an iron pipe; thence still by
land of Robert E. Lee, South fifteen degrees twenty-five minutes thirty
seconds East, three hundred eighty-nine and nine-tenths feet to a spike in
Creek Road; thence by said road, North eighty-four degrees sixteen minutes
West, three hundred twenty-nine and three one-hundredths feet to the point
of beginning.

CONTAINING 1.5 Acres of land, be the same more or less.

BEING the same premises which was the subject of an Action to
Quiet Title in the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County, Pennsylvania,
being Number 318 July Term, 1974, between Robert E. Lee, Sr. and Alice M.
Lee, Plaintiffs vs. Arma Baptist Church, Hepzibah Baptist Cemetery and
Hepzibah Baptist Church, Defendants, in which Final Judgment was entered
in favor of Robert E. Lee, Sr. and Alice M. Lee on December 10, 1976.
And the said Robert E. Lee, Sr. and Alice M. Lee are the same persons as
the Grantors herein.