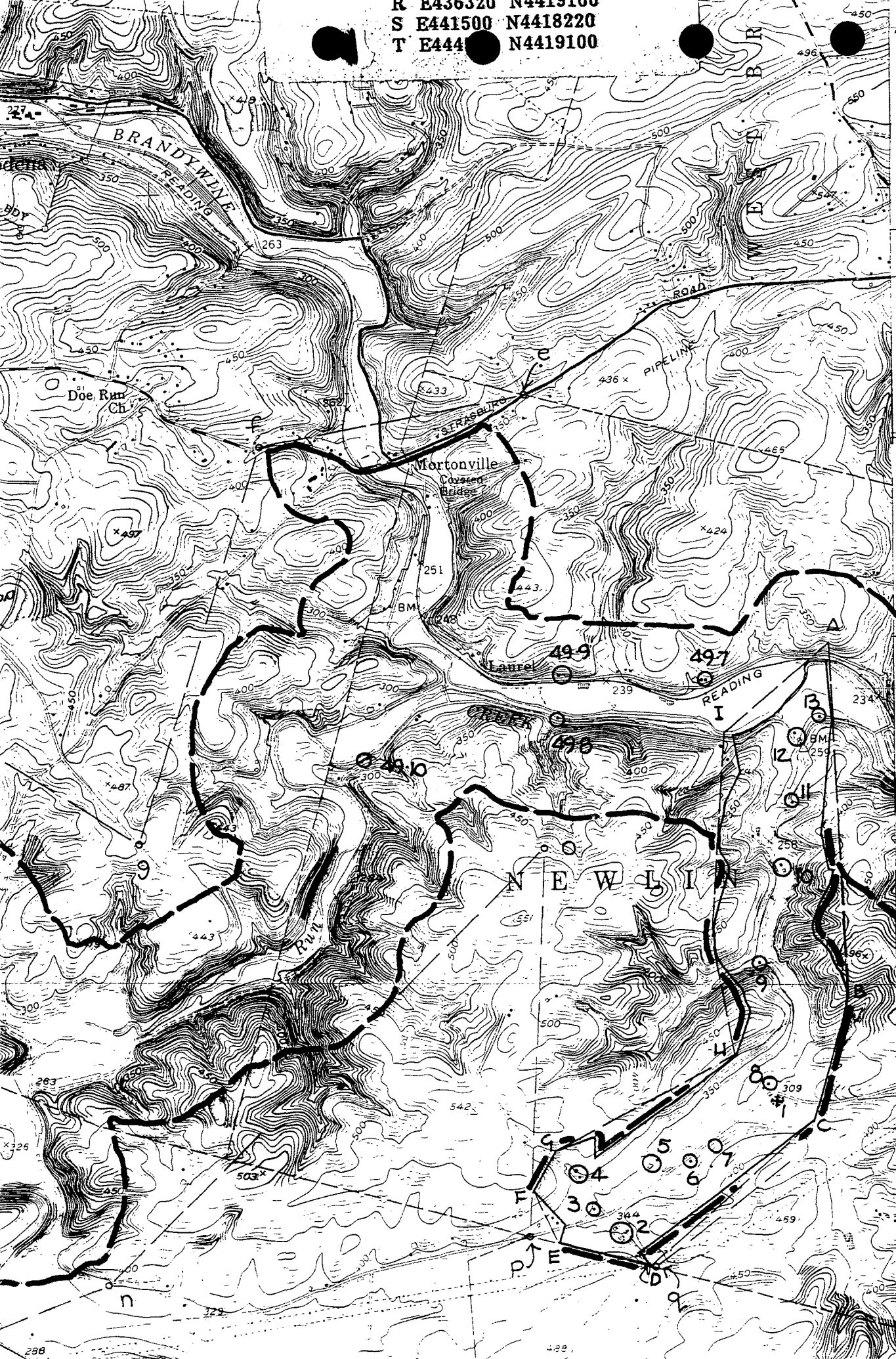


R E436320 N4419100
S E441500 N4418220
T E444100 N4419100



57'30"
4423
ROMANVILLE 0.5 MI.
UNIONVILLE 5863 1 NN 1 NW 1

Coatesville
Quad
49-8
SPRUCE
GROVE
SCHOOL
HOUSE
Newlin
Twp.

4419
55'
4418

C	E436320	N4419100
D	E434270	N4417930
E	E434270	N4418300
F	E434270	N4418600
G	E434270	N4418900
H	E436100	N4418900
I	E435100	N4420050

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

Anthony J. Obara
 Box 205
 Unionville, PA 19375

9. tax parcel number / other number
 49-1-35

10. U.T.M. zone 18 43 43 10 10
 easting

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)

4 4 2 0 6 4 0
 northing

usgs sheet: Coatesville

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

13. date(s) (how determined)
 1839

15. style, design or folk type

19. original use
 080301 Education

14. period
 1825-49 (04)

20. present use
 010200 Pr. Residence

16. architect or engineer

17. contractor or builder

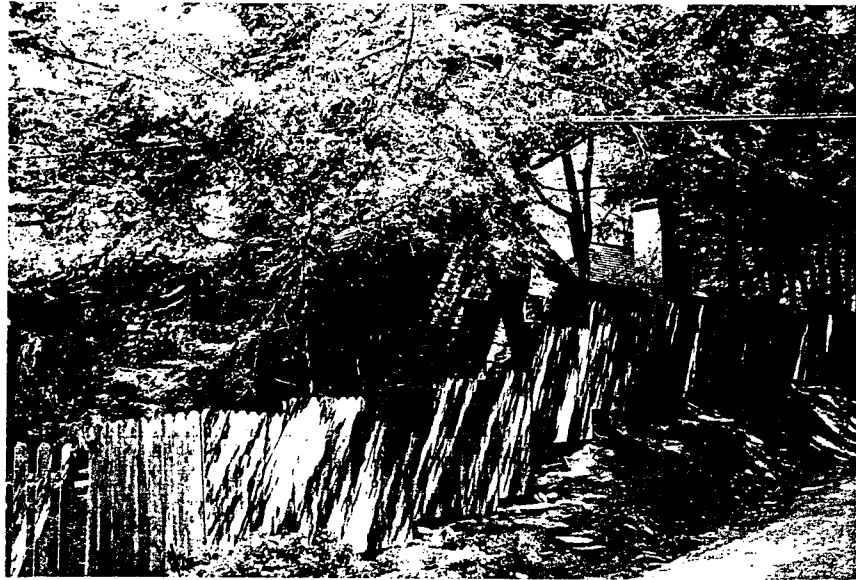
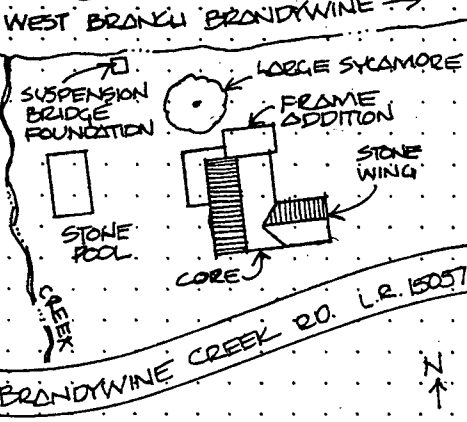
18. primary building mat./construction

21. condition Fair

02 - Stone

22. integrity
 Excellent

23. site plan with north arrow.



24. photo notation

PC: Emily Hart
 PD: 1984
 PV: SW elevation

25. file/location

Brandywine Conservancy

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

It would be safe to claim that no one-room schoolhouse in Chester County commanded a more dramatic setting than the Spruce Grove School House. Wedged on a 1/2 acre lot between Brandywine Creek Road and the West Branch Brandywine River, it must have seemed to young students to be almost suspended above the river. Its location combined with the lush vegetation and solid wooden fence currently surrounding it make the school extremely difficult to photograph properly. Only an on-site visit can reveal the unusual charm and drama of its riverside setting.

Since the Spruce Grove School House was converted to a dwelling about 1924, it has undergone a number of changes to accommodate various residents. Given its modest size--approximately 24-feet square--these changes were probably necessary and unavoidable. Fortunately the stone core has been left reasonably intact and is not

(continue on back if necessary)

27. history, significance and/or background

The Spruce Grove School House was built in 1839 on 1/2 acre of land obtained from Solomon and Hannah Connor for 30 dollars by the Directors of Common Schools of Newlin Township. The school house was built in response to a law passed in 1834 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly providing for a free school system for state residents. Once adopted by each county and then by each municipality, this legislation spurred the

(continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information

Chester County Historical Society - Clipping File; Chester County Recorder of Deeds; Local 11-6-1937.

29. prepared by:

M. L. Wolf

30. date
 11/1984

revision(s)

(continue on back if necessary)

1. County 029-Chester
 5. present name
 Spruce Grove School House

2. municipality Newlin Township
 6. other name (historic name if any)

3. street address or specific location
 Brandywine Creek Road

4. survey code
 (029-49-8)
 map 49-8

26. Continued

dwarfed by any large additions. Only one story with a plain gable roof of wood shake, the school's original main entrance has been retained on the south gable end, centered and flanked by small windows. These and other six-over-six paned double-hung windows are set in rather crudely fashioned pegged rectangular frames. Original shutters found on the property are paneled on the exposed sides and faced with vertical boards in the closed position. Although the school is slightly banked into a hill, it has only a low crawlspace beneath it. Architecturally, the school is noteworthy for its corbeled stone cornice, rarely seen in Chester County. Within the West Branch Brandywine Scenic River Corridor, however, there are two buildings nearby featuring similar stone cornice work, the Hayes Mill House (49-4) and the Young House (49-7). As a group, it would appear these three buildings are worthy of further research and study.

Additions made to the core include dormer windows (to provide light and ventilation for upstairs sleeping quarters), a one-story, one-room stone wing off the east end, and two small frame additions off the south and west walls.

Also found on the property is the stone foundation for a suspension bridge which had been built across the Brandywine by c.1870. The bridge was used by students, travelers on the Wilmington and Northern Railroad which paralleled the north bank of the river, and workers at the Laurel Iron Works which was located on both sides of the river. A stone pool located to the west of the school was built in 1940 and at one time was spring-fed. Both the school building and bridge foundation should be considered contributing resources on this property.

The boundaries for the Spruce Grove School House are its legal metes and bounds description, established in 1839, and on file at the Chester County Record of Deeds in Deed Book G46, page 252. A copy of that description is attached.

Acres: .605

STONE Pool: Intrusive by age
Bridge Abutment: Contributing

Area of Significance
x Education

Period
x 1800-1899
x 1900-

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

27. Continued

construction of hundreds of one-room schoolhouses throughout the state. Newlin Township had adopted the common school system by 1841. Construction of the Spruce Grove School was one of the school system's first orders of business.

School opened in the summer of 1839 with Hannah Buffington as its teacher. Approximately 45 students were enrolled, many of them siblings and all bearing names associated with the history of this portion of the corridor: Connor, Steen, Rubicam, Baldwin, Clayton, Coates, and so on.

In 1894 there were five public schools operating ⁱⁿ Newlin. Spruce Grove was reported to be the best attended, its average attendance ranging from 20 to 30 students. Spruce Grove drew many of its students from the nearby Laurel Iron Works (49-9, 49-10) which employed about 75 workers and had a worker's village.

With the failure of the Iron Works about 1890, attendance gradually declined. The school was operational until at least 1916.

In 1920 the townships of East and West Marlborough, Pocopson, and Newlin consolidated their individual school systems. A Joint Consolidated Elementary and vocational high school was built in Unionville in 1923 and the various one-room local schoolhouses were sold to private owners.

Spruce Grove School House was sold to Warren Powell in 1924 and changed hands rather frequently until it was acquired by Horace Paul in 1938. Paul is assumed to have made the major changes to the building and lived there until 1971. Its current owner, an artist, is slowly rehabilitating the house with care and imagination.

Spruce Grove School House is a representative example of a one-room school building from the first period of the common school system. A great number of public schools from the 1860s and 1870s (which were as a rule much larger and more easily adapted as dwellings) can still be found in Chester County. The early schools, however, are much less evident. This particular school is a particularly appropriate example from the Scenic River Corridor, in light of its truly matchless setting on the banks of the West Branch Brandywine River.

Excepting there from property of Anthony Obara recorded in D.B. G 46, Pg. 52 containing 0.605 acres as shown on Survey Map #2 described as follows:

Beginning at a nail on the title line in Brandywine Creek Road at the intersection of said road with Hilltop View Road; thence extending along the title line in Brandywine Creek Road North 42 degrees 18 minutes 35 seconds West - 96.22 feet to a point; thence leaving said road North 26 degrees 31 minutes 25 seconds West - 40.00 feet to a point on southerly side of West Branch of the Brandywine Creek; thence along the southerly side of said creek the two following courses and distances to wit:

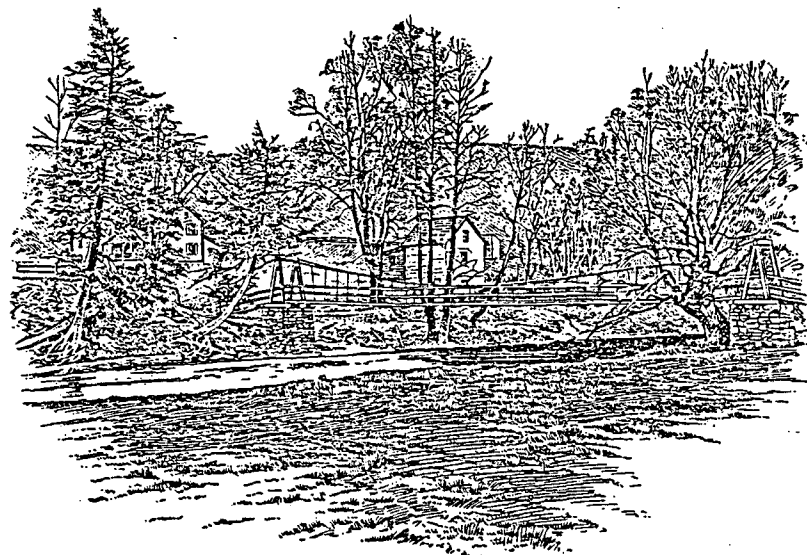
(1) South 76 degrees 16 minutes 35 seconds East - 102.02 feet to a point; thence (2) South 80 degrees 51 minutes 20 seconds West - 198.00 feet to a large rock; thence leaving said creek South 04 degrees 24 minutes 10 seconds North - 71.90 feet to a point on the title line in Brandywine

L

landscape; in summer, when the moon is full, their sombre shadows on the road and in the water, inspire just that kind of tender melancholy that makes lovers sigh and dream and fear.

I know of nothing like it along the stream except "The Spruces," near Bernardtown, and unfortunately, at that point the hemlocks have suffered greatly, almost irremediably, from the axe of the Hun.

Emerging from the pleasing gloom of Hemlock Road, a walk of a few minutes brings you within sight of Laurel Station, a little wooden eight by ten, without an operator, without a time table, in short, without any conveniences; where each passenger is expected to look for the engine as it rounds the curve and flag it with his handkerchief.



If your waiting period is a long one, or the train is behind time, you may either amuse yourself with the foot-bridge to the right, that crosses the Brandywine, or climb the hill to the left and solemnize your thoughts by entering a country graveyard on the hillside.