

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 "Melrose"

and or common President's House, Cheyney State University

2. Location

street & number Hill Drive, off the NW corner of Creek and
Cheyney Roads

n/a not for publication

city, town Thornbury Twp.

n/a vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

code 042

county Delaware

code 045

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"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	n/a being considered	<input 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 Cheyney State University, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

street & number Creek and Cheyney Roads

city, town Cheyney

n/a vicinity of

state Pennsylvania 19319

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Delaware Count Registrar of Deeds

street & number New Government Center

city, town Media

state Pennsylvania 19063

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware County Historic
Resources Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 1984 #045-TH-59

federal state county local

depository for survey records Delaware County Planning Dept.

city, town Media

state Pennsylvania 19063

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

"Melrose" is a 2½ story stone vernacular residence built in three main sections. A central two-bay section was constructed prior to 1785, an eastern three-bay portion was erected in 1807, and a western two-bay addition was built c. 1850. The house is located atop a knoll looking south over the valley of the East Branch of Chester Creek. The dwelling anchors the southern edge of Cheyney State University's original quadrangle and is one of the first structures visible upon entering the grounds. The farm for which this was the principal residence now forms the University's campus.

The central single pile stone section was probably built prior to 1785*, in 2 bays of irregularly coursed roughcut fieldstone with quoins. The footing for a pent eave exists on the main (southern) facade; the porch from the eastern section now overlaps the central facade and shelters the southern door. The quad (northern) facade is now almost completely covered by a 2 story, 4 bay frame sleeping porch of vertical channel siding and 9 light windows. The brick chimney with drip moulding is offset interior to the section's western gable. When the mid-19th century (western) section was added, the roof pitch on this section was raised (it now partially covers the 1807 western gables), a box cornice was extended across the two sections and the pedimented, pilastered gable dormers were added. The central section has a single such dormer on each roof slope. The gable roof is of rectangular composition shingle. The main facade has two 6 over 6 windows on the second story and one 6 over 6 window on the first floor. The door on the main facade is a c.1960 replacement, as is the entrance door to the sleeping porch.

To the east gable end of the above original section was added a 3 bay, 2 pile section built of regularly coursed and quoined granite ashlar. The east gable elevation is stuccoed and has a date lozenge with the initials "P" "T" and "C" incised at the east gable peak. This section has a centered interior brick chimney with drip moulding at the east gable, box cornices with returns, rectangular composition shingle and a pedimented, pilastered double gable dormer on each of the gable roof slopes. The floor levels in this section were 3 steps higher than in the rest of the house. Across the main (southern) facade stretches a deep frame open porch with hip roof, Doric columns with entablature and plank floor laid on a fieldstone foundation. This porch partially covers the central section and its entrance door. Over the eastern section's door on the quad (northern) facade is a pedimented, bracketed hood. The windows of this 1807 section are 6 over 6, with a pair of 6 light awning sash gables on the eastern elevation. Window placement is symmetrical on the south and east and asymmetrical on the north.

The third stone section was attached to the west gable end of the central section sometime in the mid-19th century, presumably to replace the log kitchen mentioned in 1798 Direct Tax. This section is a 2 story, single pile, 2 bay addition of quoined masonry. The two facades are of roughcut (the western gable is of uncut) rubble, irregularly coursed. As stated above, the box cornices and gable roof for this section were extended across the central section as well. A single pedimented, pilastered gable dormer is on the southern roof slope. A brick chimney with drip moulding is at the interior gable end. The windows of this section are 6 over 6, with paired 3 over 3 gables. The fenestration is symmetrical on the southern facade and irregular on the northern.

*Note: Cheyney's internal records, architectural evidence and the incised datestone all indicate that the central stone section is the oldest part. However, the dimensions listed for this building in the 1798 Direct Tax (Thornbury Township #274) appear to describe the eastern section. Nevertheless the preponderance of information supports the central section as being the oldest section.

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Attached to the western gable's exterior and covering the west entrance door for the above section is a one story frame utility room with inset porch having a beveled column at the northwestern corner. This addition is of clapboard with a hipped roof of composition shingle, and was added in the early 20th century, probably at the same time as the sleeping porch.

Although the interior of the residence has been renovated for several Presidents of the University, the interior retains its basic integrity and the floor plan that evolved with the growth of the house. Built as a modest single family vernacular Pennsylvania farmhouse, the structure continued as a residence, housing Cheyney's Presidents from 1903 to 1968. Following that, the building was used as the infirmary and currently is vacant.

The 18th century (central) section is single pile, the first floor being the kitchen and the second floor a large bedroom. It has a cooking fireplace, reduced in size and manteled in the same period as the 1807 section's interiors (see picture). There are drawers under the window sills and a full basement with a broad arched vault to support the cooking hearth.

The 1807 (eastern) section has floor levels 3 steps higher than the other sections and some original flooring in the attic. The floor plan on each of the two floors is a full front (southern) room with smaller rear (northeastern) room and a two-flight stairway (in the northwestern corner). Part of the second floor rear room has been turned into a bathroom. Most of these rooms have corner fireplaces with plain shallow mantels (see photograph), chair rails and some original hardware. There is a full basement with quarter groined fireplace supports.

The 19th century section (western) has no basement. It is single pile, with the first floor being the later kitchen and the second floor being Dr. Hill's study/office. The fireplace in this section, presumably the replacement kitchen, is now covered over and has a wall oven inset. Next to this is an enclosed winder stairs (in the northwestern corner) which leads to the study/office above.

Throughout the interior the walls and ceilings are plastered with no exposed beams; most of the plaster is modern. Most of the baseboards, flooring and hardware are recent, but the interior window and door surrounds are original. Many of the windows, sashes and all the doors are replacements, although the only apparent fenestration changes are for the 1807 section's second floor bathroom, and a double window set into the 19th century section's northern facade. A second bathroom is partitioned off on the sleeping porch.

The 122 acre farm for which the building was the main residence has served since 1903 as the Cheyney State University campus. The farm road has been paved, named Hill Drive in honor of Dr. Leslie P. Hill, and now serves as the access road for the southern end of the college quadrangle. The farm outbuildings mentioned in the 1798 Direct Tax (frame barn, frame shed, stone and frame granary) were removed before 1920, while the stone springhouse survived until the late 1960s. The present walkways, landscaping and plantings were installed by the University's grounds department.

Although the farm and its outbuildings no longer exist, the house remains largely intact on its exterior. The interior has been renovated since Cheyney State University acquired the property, yet the floorplan and window and door surrounds still survive.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) black history

Specific dates c.1785,1807, c.1850 **Builder/Architect** Jacob Vernon, farmer (attributed)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"Melrose" is significant for its association with a locally prominent female doctor, a leading black university, and a nationally prominent black educator and social reformer. In the second half of the nineteenth century "Melrose" was the home of Mary H. Cheyney, a pioneering woman doctor in the local area. In 1903, "Melrose" and the farm on which it stood became the site of the school now known as Cheyney State University. This building was the home and office for the presidents of the university. During the administration of Dr. Leslie Pinckney Hill (1913-1951), Cheyney was transformed from a small local training institute to a nationally respected liberal arts college. Dr. Hill was also a national leader in race relations and social reform.

The farmstead on which "Melrose" stood was carved from the very substantial 1724 landholdings of John and Thomas Cheyney, Quaker farmers. Thomas's widow Sarah received a bequest of 60 acres, which she brought to her subsequent marriage with Jacob Vernon. He evidently built a stone house on the property before 1785, as the Vernons sold the lands and house in that year to Abraham Williamson and carpenter Jesse James. Williamson married James's sister Esther, and left the house and 122 acres to her when he died in 1807. His widow retained the property and married Samuel Painter. From his death in 1823 until her death in 1854, the farm was rented¹.

The farm gained prominence after the mid-nineteenth century as the residence of Mary H. Cheyney. The farm was acquired in the mid-nineteenth century by George D. and Elizabeth Cheyney, who probably built the western stone section. Their daughter Mary H. Cheyney (d. 1907) grew up in this house. Raised in the Friend's tradition of equal education for women, she pursued a medical career, graduating from the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia in 1885². Mary Cheyney chose to practice outside of a major city at a time when most of her fellow graduates were working in metropolitan hospitals and clinics where women physicians were less of a novelty. She maintained an office in West Chester, the population center for a large agricultural area. As far as is known, she was the only women doctor in the area. Mary Cheyney is also credited with going beyond the treatment of individual ailments to teaching fundamental hygiene and simple preventive health measures to the blacks and whites in the West Chester area.

In 1902, the Cheyney farm was sold at a sheriff's sale to Hannah R. Llewellyn, apparently a middleman for the Board of the Institute for Colored Youth to whom she sold the property five months later. The Institute, now known as Cheyney State University, already had an extensive history. In 1828, Quaker philanthropist Richard Humphrey left a bequest of \$10,000 for a school "to fit and prepare teachers for the descendants of the African race, that they might be trained and educated as to become fitted and qualified to become teachers and instructors in school learning, in the various branches of the Mechanik Arts and Trades and in agriculture⁴." The trustees of this bequest developed plans for such a school, starting a training farm in 1837 and becoming the Institute for Colored Youth in 1842, the oldest such school for higher education in the United States.

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The Institute moved to the Cheyney farm due to limitations of the site on York Road, Philadelphia where the school was located before 1903. The city's growth made it difficult to continue the agricultural part of the Institute's curriculum at the York Road location. High real estate costs made it even more difficult to obtain a larger campus in Philadelphia. The Institute chose the Cheyney farm because the land was relatively cheap. The farm was also near the West Chester branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad which made Cheyney accessible to students commuting from Philadelphia.

The former farmhouse served as the President's House from 1903 until 1968, with its period of greatest significance during the administration (1913-1951) of Dr. Leslie Pinckney Hill (1880-1960), a noted educator, scholar and humanitarian. Dr. Hill had graduated cum laude from Harvard in 1903 (Phi Beta Kappa and class orator) and had headed the English Department of Tuskegee from 1904 to 1907 under his mentor Booker T. Washington. While at Tuskegee, he married Jane Ethel Clark, the Dean of Women and an Oberlin graduate. Their mutual dedication to black education caused them to decide to help other schools expand and improve the opportunities for their race. Dr. Hill directed the Manassas (VA) Industrial Institute from 1907 to 1913. Recommended as principal for the Institute for Colored Youth by Booker T. Washington and other black leaders, Dr. Hill accepted that post on July 10, 1913.

Dr. Hill transformed Cheyney from a small training institute to a well-respected liberal arts college within several decades after coming to Cheyney. He greatly diversified the curriculum of the agricultural and industrial arts programs at Cheyney. He also significantly expanded the physical plant and enrollment of the University. In addition, from his home at "Melrose" he fostered humanitarian organizations that aided blacks across the nation.

Dr. Hill greatly changed the agricultural curriculum the school had previously offered by stressing cultivation of new crops and opening new opportunities for women in agricultural training. In 1915 he created the school's model, student-run farm and agricultural program to steer students away from Southern sharecropping practices. Utilizing suggestions from his Tuskegee colleague, botanist George Washington Carver (1864-1943), Hill had new crops tested and recommended for use on the depleted cotton lands of the south, and later on the eroded Midwest plains during the Depression. He also placed emphasis on dairying and other viable occupations for small, single-family farms. In addition, Dr. Hill was particularly sensitive to women's livelihoods in agriculture, noting that in dairying "as well as in poultry raising, gardening, bee culture, horticulture and landscape gardening, Cheyney would seem to offer the finest opportunities to young women who aspire to become teachers as well as to young men". Supported by the activities of his wife and their six daughters, he consistently advocated women's rights in the schools and in the economy, especially during the 1930s.

The industrial arts program, like the agricultural one, shifted under Dr. Hill's leadership from menial hired labor to teaching advanced craft skills. Dr. Hill managed to convince many Delaware Valley industries to provide work experience for his students and to hire them to teach other workers on location despite opposition by many unions. The region's industrial expansion during World War I provided such placement on a large scale, and Dr. Hill used this temporary gain to establish permanent links between Cheyney and the region's heavy industry.

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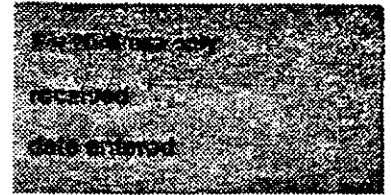
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Dr. Hill succeeded in greatly expanding the enrollment and campus of Cheyney. The school's diversified curriculum and the acceptance of its graduates in the public sphere led to a doubling of the enrollment by the 1920s. Notable Cheyney graduates went on to prominence in education, medicine, business and public service. Dr. Hill also pursued an extensive building program, and despite the Depression, greatly expanded the campus with seven new buildings in time for Cheyney's centennial in 1937.

In addition to all his other efforts for the school, Dr. Hill gained national recognition for Cheyney as a teachers' college. In 1914, at his recommendation, the Board of Managers changed the original name of the school from the Institute for Colored Youth to the Cheyney Training School for Teachers. Dr. Hill persuaded Philadelphia's Shelter for Colored Orphans to relocate to Cheyney's campus where it served as a model school for practice teaching. In 1920 Cheyney was recognized as a state normal school, permitting its graduates to teach in Pennsylvania public schools. The state accepted Cheyney as a state-supported school in 1922 and certified it as a state teacher's college in 1932. When Cheyney was accredited in 1942 by the American Association of Teachers' Colleges, Dr. Hill concluded that accreditation "represents a long reach from the struggling little school...organized more than one hundred years ago out on York Road, up to the dignity of a teachers college, nationally considered now worthy of the name."

In the livingroom of "Melrose" (which derives its name from Mrs. Hill's fondness for Melrose, Scotland), Dr. Hill hosted many informal meetings which led to the organization of social improvements such as musical, theatrical and literary programs in area churches and "moral missionary work" in the ghettos of Chester and Philadelphia. He spearheaded the creation of the West Chester Community Center and used the impetus of the outreach to launch an effort to establish integrated YMCAs and YWCAs nationwide. After two decades, he was successful. He worked unceasingly to maintain blacks' awareness of their cultural roots and articulated the need for any group to develop self-direction and native leadership by working within itself. This brought occasional segregationist charges against Dr. Hill, but he was supported in his stand by a wide range of black leaders including W.E.B. DuBois. Advocating those "artistic qualities which are recognized as race traits," Leslie P. Hill also wrote poetry recounting the experiences and hopes of American blacks, organized and led the award-winning Cheyney Chorus which was praised by Leopold Stokowski and other world musicians, and wrote a drama about Jethro, the Biblical Ethiopian who brought the world the idea of representative government.

Perhaps Dr. Hill's greatest legacy is his lifelong fulfillment of a commitment he made in 1913, "to keep myself in close connection...with all really important movements among, or in the interest of my people by attending all meetings of unquestioned importance, both state and national...". By doing so, he brought both the needs and the fruits of black achievement to the educational community's attention and the country's. A gifted speaker since his college days, Dr. Hill gave hundreds of speeches across America, often to predominantly white audiences. He served as an invaluable bridge within a racially segregated country and posed an active challenge to the 1920s revival of the Ku Klux Klan and the economic racial strife of the Depression. His inspirational speeches, conferences, and correspondence were formulated in the small second floor study at "Melrose" and many of the manuscripts are preserved in the Cheyney State University Archives, along with a file of newspaper clippings which document beyond question his national standing. To "Melrose" came the leading black educators and achievers of his day to discuss ideas, renew flagging spirits and share inspirations and moral leadership with his college students.

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Thus, "Melrose" has a long, close association with Dr. Hill and his important contributions to the oldest black institution for higher education in America and to humanitarian efforts for black Americans. This residence was also the home of Mary H. Cheyney, a locally prominent, pioneering female doctor.

Footnotes

- ¹ Goodman, Charlotte K. (Professor, Cheyney State University) Chain of title research, Cheyney family information, etc.
- ² Jerrido, Margaret, Assistant Archivist, Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Interview on June 5, 1986.
- ³ Chester County Historical Society, West Chester. Cheyney family manuscript material.
- ⁴ Dr. Leslie Pinckney Hill: A Rememberance. A commemorative booklet published for the June 1960 commencement by Cheyney State College, Cheyney, PA. P.6.
- ⁵ Cheyney State University. Alumni/alumnae records and archives. Also, Blockson, Charles. Pennsylvania Black History. Philadelphia, Portfolio Assoc. Inc., 1975. P. 34.
- ⁶ Hill, Leslie Pinckney. Point D in his original "18 points" manuscript of 1913, in the Hill Papers, Cheyney State University Archives.
- ⁷ A Rememberance, op. cit., p. 14.
- ⁸ "18 Points" mss., op. cit., Point O.
- ⁹ Ibid., Point R.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abram, Ruth, ed. "Send Us a Lady Physician," Women Doctors in America, 1835-1920. N.Y., Norton, (1985).

Cheyney State University, Cheyney, PA. General archives, Leslie Pinckney Hill collection, records of the buildings and grounds department, etc.

Goodman, Charlotte K. Chain of Title, Cheyney family research, landmarks notes, etc. (see attached)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.434 acres

Quadrangle name West Chester

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	5	4	9	4	0	4	4	2	0	1	6	5
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(see attached)

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 Nancy V. Webster, Senior Planner, with Charlotte K. Goodman, professor at Cheyney State University

organization Delaware County Planning Department

date June 6, 1986

street & number 350 N. Middletown Road

telephone 215 891-5656

city or town Lima

state Pennsylvania 19037

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 Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer 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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Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. Cheyney Family Manuscripts

Dr. Leslie Pinckney Hill: A Remembrance. A commemorative booklet published for the June 1960 commencement by Cheyney State College, Cheyney, PA.

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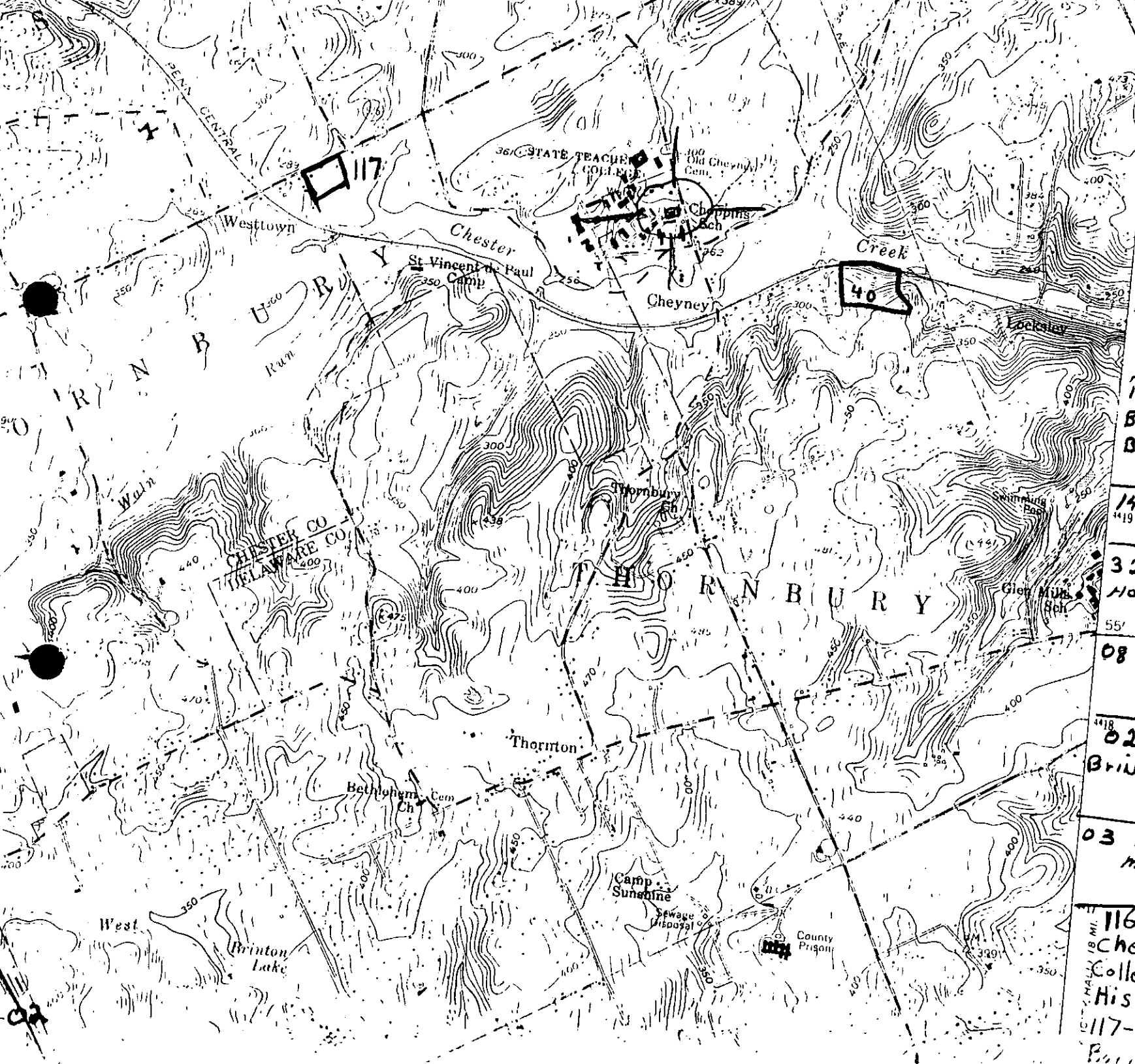
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A rough parallelogram, starting from a point in the intersection of Hill Drive and Library Walk, thence along the side of the walk 120° 50' NNW for 108 ft. to a point, thence 162° NW for 193.5 ft. to a point, thence 170° SE for 109.5 ft. to a point in Hill Drive, thence 166° SSE for 201 ft. to the point of beginning.

This property includes the nominated building and the immediately adjacent land.



- 17 Chester
- 95-Warner Theatre
- Chester
- 99-Goodwin Acres
- 101 Botlee House Chester Co.
- 420 27 Strode's mill chester
- 18 East Brad Ford Boarding School for Boys chester
- 419 14 Edgewood chester
- 55 32 Daniel Davis House and Barn chester
- 08 Collins MANSION chester
- 418 02 Edward Brinton's House chester
- 03 Brinton's mill chester
- 116-West Chester State College Quad. Hist. District
- 117-William