

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

RECEIVED
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME
 HISTORIC "Pleasant Hill Plantation"
 AND/OR COMMON Isaac Van Leer house

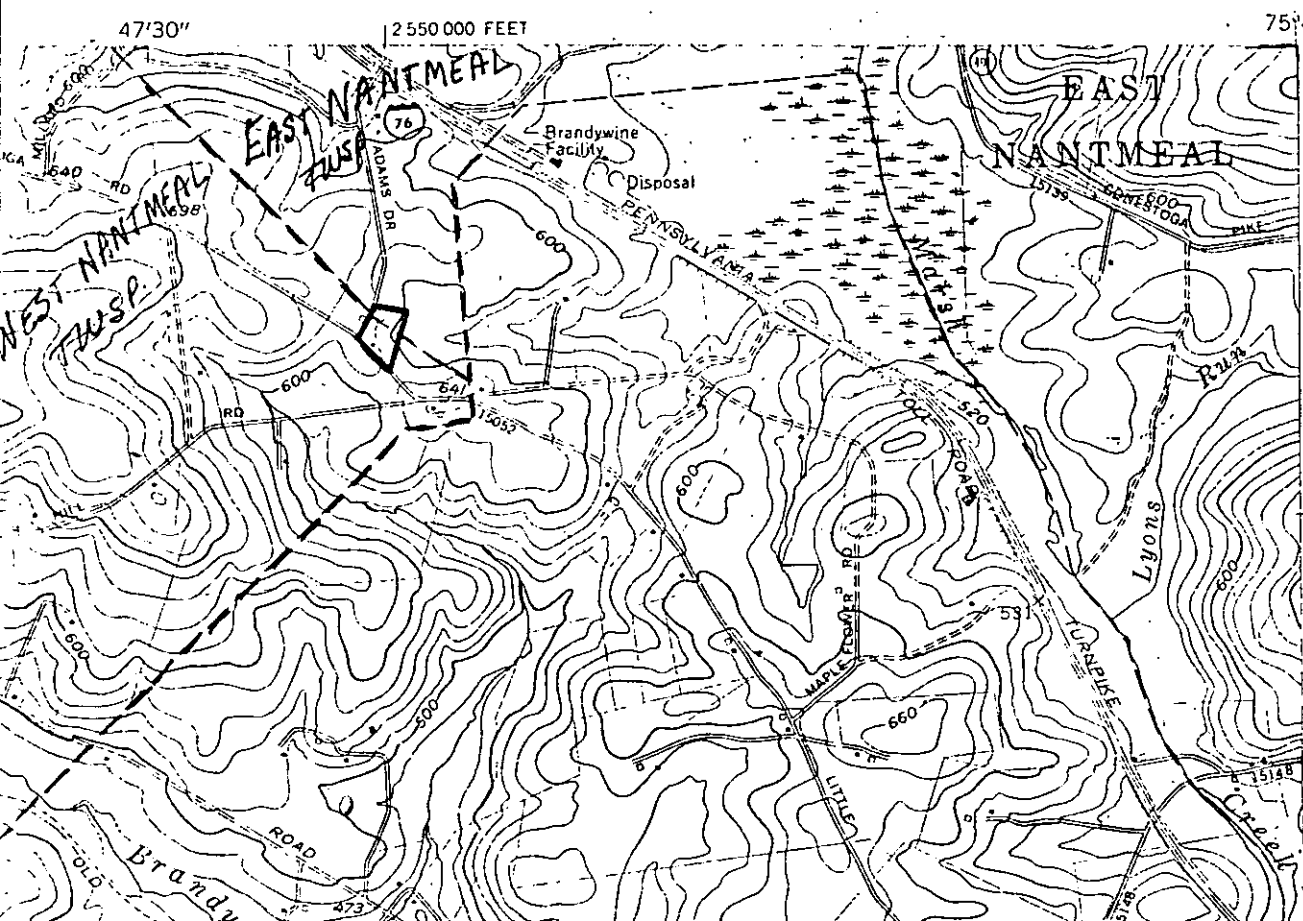
2 LOCATION
 CITY, TOWN: Glen Moore VICINITY OF: East & West Nantmeal Twsp.-Chester COUNTY: Chester STATE: Pa.

3 MAP REFERENCE
 SOURCE: USGS Wagontown Quad.
 SCALE: 1"=2000' DATE: 1965 - Rev.1975

Map #1

- 4 REQUIREMENTS**
 TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
 2. NORTH ARROW
 3. UTM REFERENCES

WAGONTOWN QUADRANGLE
 PENNSYLVANIA - CHESTER CO.
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
 SE 1/4 HONEYBROOK 15' QUADRANGLE



(POTTSTOWN)

250 000
FEET

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic "PLEASANT HILL PLANTATION"

and/or common Van Leer Place

2. Location

street & number Little Conestoga Road N/A not for publication

city, town Glen Moore N/A vicinity of East & West Nantmeal Twps

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Chester code 029

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" 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 Mrs. Dorothy Adams

street & number 505 Main Street

city, town Phoenixville N/A vicinity of state PA 19460

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number High Street

city, town West Chester state PA 19380

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

(Registration, however, already in process)

date 1980-81 federal state county local

depository for survey records Ch.Co.Hist.Soc. and Penna. Hist. & Museum Comm.

city, town West Chester Harrisburg state PA

7: Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

Pleasant Hill Plantation, known locally as the Isaac VanLeer house, is a fine example of the affluent building style in an agrarian community. Built in three sections, its original portion, a three bay, two story structure was probably erected by Matthew Robinson before the Revolution. This section is 27'x 32' divided between two rooms and a wide hall on the west side. The hall has a front door to the south and a back door. The front door remains in its original condition with wrought iron strap hinges spanning the battens behind a six panel door. A four lite transom gives light to the hall. The rear door (originally similar to the front door) has been replaced with a 6-lite raised panel door. There is a full cellar under this section with an extensive vaulted wine cellar and root cellar at a still lower level. The vault is dug into the ground in front of the house and is entered through the cellar only. A hand dug well is also in the wine cellar.

The second building phase probably came in the late 18th century or early 19th century, possibly during the Lewis ownership. There is local hearsay indicating that there was a tavern in this house at one time. If so, this addition, with an entrance toward the well travelled Little Conestoga Road, would have been the Tavern. It had a separate stairway to lodgings above. There are various and numerous changes in the floor of this room. According to ownership records the tavern could not have been located at the farm later than 1824 and was probably there before the Lewis ownership. Since no tavern license appears on record, it did not dispense hard liquors. This two bay 20'x 32' addition to the west side of the first house is clearly identified in the attic. The addition extended the house to a five bay Georgian rectangle. The new west wall - a gable wall - accommodated on the first floor level a wide door at the extreme southwest end and a window more or less in the middle of the wall. Both of these apertures have been closed. The third floor gable has been updated to two round headed Italianate windows which accompanied an early 1843 remodelling at which time ornate wooden brackets were attached to the cornice. These brackets have been removed. There is no cellar beneath this addition.

The third addition appears on the east side of the original dwelling and is recessed from the front line by seven feet. The rear line is flush with the original house line. It is possible that this section was recessed to allow a double porch on the front of the addition which would have brought it flush with the original wall. There is a full cellar beneath the third addition which is entered both from inside and from the front outside. This tends to substantiate the existence of a porch front. The dimensions of the basement differ from the addition above. (See floor plan) This difference suggests that the third addition may have replaced an original log house or log kitchen. A one-story wash house (now Laundry) is attached to the east wall of this third addition. It held two iron pots or cauldrons with a place to build a fire beneath them and had a cupola on top to let out the smoke and/or steam.

The original core has a datestone which does not seem to be original. It is peculiar in that it is not incised but appears to be cement applied to the stone and some has fallen away. It appears to read 1843 which would be a remodelling date as mentioned earlier.

The interior of the house retains its early character in most details, although some changes have occurred. The door to the outside of what may have been the tavern has been closed as mentioned. Each fireplace in this wing is graced with a handsome

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Chester County

Federal pierced mantel. The third addition has a tall cooking fireplace and a bake oven. It is conceivable that this fireplace was the cooking area for a log attached kitchen prior to the stone kitchen. The foundations in the basement do not match the dimensions above ground.

A large barn stood close to the house on the east side, built by VanLeer about 1825 or 1830. It has deteriorated to ruins in this century from disuse. A carriage house has been turned into a garage. A small house used for butchering nestles between the house and barn. A two floor spring house, deteriorating, stands below the barnyard wall and to the east by several hundred yards.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 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) cultural

Specific dates Core-preRevolutionary **Builder/Architect** Matthew Robinson
 1st Addition-c.1780 Remodelling - 1843 Isaac VanLeer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built before the American Revolution, Pleasant Hill is a fine example of the rural 18th century "add-on" architectural style that was typical of backcountry homes. For over two centuries the house has retained its original setting and mirrors the early owners' concern for building materials and quality workmanship. The house is representative of a distinctive architectural awakening in the region between Philadelphia and Lancaster. Pleasant Hill also symbolizes the extension of the cultural influence of Philadelphia society into the Lancaster area. During the nineteenth century, Pleasant Hill, then under the able guidance of Isaac Wayne Van Leer, was recognized for its progressive methods of horiculture and animal husbandry. Finally, the farm gained a degree of prominence as the birthplace of George Howard Earle, Jr., Pennsylvania's 33rd Governor.

By the time that Isaac VanLeer gained possession of Pleasant Hill in 1824, the farm had already been owned by a number of others. Matthew Robinson, the first owner, built a three bay, two story, stone structure shortly before the American war for independence. Active in politics and a member of many local commissions, Robinson brought an early reknown to the property. At about the turn of the 18th century, two brothers, John and Samuel Lewis, purchased Pleasant Hill. The Lewis's opened an iron mine on the southeast corner of the farm. They also added a two bay section to the west side of the house. It is speculated that this addition was used as a tavern. The Lewis' retained possession of Pleasant Hill until 1824 when Van Leer purchased it at a sheriff's sale.

Under VanLeer, Pleasant Hill became a thriving farm and beautiful home. Accustomed to his father's elegant estate at Redding Furnace, VanLeer enlarged the house and rearranged rooms. Fashionable gilt paint was used in light touches to adorn the house and in 1843 a new stone wing was added to replace the outmoded, log kitchen. A new, 100 foot barn, which incorporated an earlier building, was built and a 60 foot cow barn was later added to it. Calling upon his associations from Lancaster & Philadelphia to Virginia and Tennessee, VanLeer also planted an arboretum of rare and unusual plants and trees. As president of the County Agricultural Society for many years, VanLeer became a locally respected horiculturist and his farm was regularly visited by progressive farmers and land conservationists from throughout the east.

After VanLeer left the property in the late 19th century, successive owners allowed Pleasant Hill to deteriorate. In the 1930's the house became a rental property and, at one point, was ransacked by vandals. Fortunately since 1948 the farm has been restored to the grace of its earlier days.

Today, Pleasant Hill stands as a fine example of the rustic elegance that typified the backwoods gentry from the late 18th through the late 19th centuries. The additions and alterations to the core building do not detract in any way from the significance or integrity of the structure. On the contrary, they enhance its architectural interest as they point up the element of continuity and growth through generations who sucessively

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made their contributions but never discarded the original. Its style and proportions are not commonly found in this area and Pleasant Hill, for generations, enjoyed a choice and individual recognition.

