

**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 George Diehl Homestead

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number Approximately 2 miles East of US Rte 422  
on Diehl Road, Rte 633

N/A not for publication

city, town Cherryhill Township ~~vicinity of~~ Penn Run

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Indiana code 063

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> 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 Robert B. and Jane L. Schultz

street & number 26511 Dunwood Road

city, town Rolling Hills Est. N/A vicinity of state California

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Indiana County Register's and Recorder's Office

street & number Philadelphia Street

city, town Indiana state Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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>1985</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The George Diehl Homestead is a two-and-a-half story rectangular house constructed of logs hewed square in the Germanic tradition utilizing corner-post construction. The log structure has two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. The house is situated on a slight elevation overlooking a 50 acre field. The house is located on a dirt road approximately two miles east to the junction of US Route 422 and TR 633(Diehl Road). The log structure is abutted by a shed-roofed addition of frame and plank construction, which presently houses a kitchen and bedroom downstairs and a half story bedroom/storage space upstairs. This addition spans the entire northern exposure of the log structure. The two story log structure is 18'-6" wide by 28'-4" long. The shed-roofed addition is 14'-0" wide by 28'-4" long. The log building was built c. 1840 and the shed-roofed addition was built c. 1850.

The first story has a front door in the facade and two doors in the north log wall. The facade contains five identical 12 pane windows. The east side of the log building contains two of the same size windows, and the west side contains one window in the attic. The western end of the log structure contains a stairway from the first floor to the basement, an enclosed stairway from the first floor to the second floor, and an enclosed stairway from the second floor to the attic. There are doors at the bottom of the second floor and attic stairways. There is also a door at the top of the cellar stairway. The attic contains four pane windows at both ends. The remains of a brick chimney rest on the attic floor. The chimney extends to the roofline at the center of the gable. There is a hole in the attic floor and in the second floor near the center of the house where a stove pipe passed through the second story from a stove located in the livingroom on the first floor.

The log structure was extended on the north side by a shed-roofed addition some time after 1850. The addition contains two rooms of equal size on the first floor and two small bedrooms on the second floor. A brick chimney was located in the kitchen near the center of this addition. The chimney was removed in 1985 to prevent collapse and has not been replaced.

Clapboard siding covers the logs on the east side. This siding has deteriorated extensively and will have to be removed or replaced in the near future. This siding continues to provide a measure of protection to the clay chinking between the logs. The logs on the facade and west elevation were re-chinked in 1985 with mortar of the same color and texture as the original whitewashed clay chinking. The west elevation contains two large diagonal braces which were morticed into the logs. The north side has one twelve pane window in each of the two rooms, and has new siding which has been stained to match the weathered siding which was replaced in 1985.

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The interior walls of the log structure are of lath and plaster, covered with many layers of wall paper. Much of the paper on the upstairs walls has come off due to water intrusion. Interior walls of the addition are tongue and groove paneling.

The interior details of the house are very plain and simple. Door and window openings are framed by plain boards across the top butted at the ends by plain vertical boards. None of the window and door trim strips are mitered at the corners. Window sills are made of plain boards which were cut to fit into the openings. Windows in the house are twelve pane, and many of the original panes are extant. Floors of the log building are random width planks. Floors in the shed-roofed addition are tongue and groove flooring. The ceiling of the first floor is lath and plaster. The ceiling of the two second floor bedrooms in the log portion has exposed hand hewn rafters which have been whitewashed. Interior doors are of the simple plank type with external horizontal bracing. Exterior doors are of the paneled type. The original door hardware is largely extant.

Walls of the stone basement are nearly two feet thick, and are of local sandstone which is coursed and dry-laid with remarkable precision. Great care was taken to place larger stones at the corners, quoin-like and at stress-points alongside door and window openings. These massive stone foundation walls have stood the test of time, and after approximately 140 years are remarkably plumb and square. The basement at one time contained a stone fireplace with a chimney external to the north side of the shed-roofed addition. Portions of the basement walls are blackened by smoke. The location where the fireplace penetrated the roofline can be seen in the existing structure of the roof overhang on the north side.

The specific method of construction used in the Diehl Homestead is its most unusual and notable feature. The house employs a mortise and tenon joint system rather than the V-notch or dovetail notching systems found in other log houses in the area. The mortise and tenon construction is also known as corner-post construction. In this construction, vertical beams including one centered in the house's facade, are mortised into the foundation beams, and secured with wooden pegs. Ends of horizontal logs are hewn square and inserted into the slotted vertical posts, and secured in the same manner. The log house is believed to have two bays. If a vertical post is present in the north wall, it is covered on both sides and cannot be verified.

The construction sequence of a corner-post log structure is of interest. The vertical posts and the horizontal logs were pre-fitted on the ground laying flat, prior to being erected into the vertical wall. Roman numerals were incised with an axe on the vertical posts and the

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matching horizontal logs. The Roman numerals start with number I on the ground level, and continue to number XIII on the top log. After fitting the logs on the ground in the horizontal orientation and matchmarking each log with its proper position, individual logs were lifted and dropped into their proper position in the individual slots in the vertical posts. Once in place, a dowel hole was drilled using an auger bit, through the vertical post and the tenon on the horizontal log. A wooden peg was then driven into the dowel hole. The space between the horizontal logs was shimmed using wedge-shaped shims of varying thickness, depending on the size of the space between the logs. These shims were typically two to three inches thick, and four or five inches wide, and one to two feet long. The shims were driven in place along the length of each course of logs, providing a load carrying path uniformly distributed along the entire length of the log. After shimming between the logs, the remaining space was chinked with a mixture of clay, straw, horse hair, and hog bristle. The chinking was carefully troweled to provide an outward slope from top to bottom to assure drainage of water outward to each successive lower log. The outside surface of the chinking was coated with what appears to be whitewash. The whitewash coat provided an additional moisture barrier. Clapboard siding was nailed to the exterior to provide additional weather protection for the clay chinking. The siding was nailed with wrought nails.

The roof of the log structure is of the gable type. The design of the roof structure is unusual because the rafters are fastened together at their apex by wood pegs. This type of construction with no ridgepole was common before 1800, whereas most structures of a later date utilize a ridgepole the full length of the ridge. The gables are framed with rough hewed studs and covered with planks.

A shed-roofed addition was attached to the north side of the log house by extending the roof line of the log house with a roof of the same pitch. The north wall of the addition was constructed with 4" x 4" studs. Random width tongue and groove siding is nailed to both outside and inside of the studs. The east and west walls were constructed with two layers of 2" thick planks of random width. The outside layer of planks runs from floor to roofline. The inside layer runs horizontally. Many of the studs in the north wall were replaced in 1985 due to extensive rot. The east and west walls have been saved.

The Diehl Homestead had a large front porch extending the full width of the facade. The floor joists of the porch were dovetailed into the plate at both ends of the facade. Similar dovetail openings can be seen in the face of the facade beneath the second story windows for attaching the porch rafters. The porch appeared to be about eight feet deep in an oil painting of the Homestead, which was painted around 1870 by the Decker Brothers. Photographs taken around 1915 indicate

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that the front porch had been removed and replaced by a small stoop. Neither the porch nor the stoop survives.

The porch on the west side was replaced in 1985 by a new one with three vertical posts and a sloping roof of the same type as the old porch. The depth has been increased by approximately two feet. The new porch has been stained to match the color of the old weathered boards which could not be salvaged.

The integrity of the log house and the shed-roof addition is good. The floor plan and interior details have been little changed since construction. Replacement of the rotting wood "sleepers" under the kitchen in 1985 with a new foundation has stabilized the structure from further deterioration. Rebuilding the north wall to the same dimensions and configuration as the original has prevented the addition from collapsing. Re-chinking of the south and west walls of the log house should preserve this structure. No environmental factors appear to threaten the integrity of the house. However, its isolated location leaves it vulnerable to vandalism and break-ins when it is not occupied.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates**      c. 1840      **Builder/Architect**      Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The George Diehl Homestead, located in a rural region of Indiana County, represents the only example of corner-post log construction known to exist in the County, and is one of the few known to exist in the Western part of the state. All other known log structures in the County exhibit the V or dovetail notching system. The homestead is associated with the family of George Diehl, who was a prominent farmer and land owner of the region.

Built around 1840, the house is the only known example of corner-post log construction in Indiana County. There are approximately 20 existing log structures in Indiana County, and all but the Diehl Homestead utilize the V notch or dovetail method of construction. Many of these other houses come close to the Diehl house in terms of integrity and craftsmanship, but not in method of construction. Recent research indicates that there are approximately 100 houses of the corner-post type of construction in the 20 counties which have been surveyed in the eastern part of the state. None has been located in any county west of Indiana County. The Diehl family came to America in 1830 from Darmstadt of the Duchy of Hesse, Germany. They first settled in the town of Woodbury in Bedford County, and then moved to Indiana County. Although it is not known who built the log house, there is a strong connection with the German settlers which tends to confirm that corner-post log construction originated in Germany or Switzerland.

George Diehl purchased the property March 10, 1850 from Martin Brechbill. He moved into the house with his wife and their first two children about six years later. Six more children were born and reared in the homestead. George Diehl was a prosperous farmer and a good business man. He acquired several parcels of land in Pennsylvania and in the state of Indiana. When George Diehl died in 1890, the homestead was passed along to his second son, A. Lincoln Diehl, who was of scholastic ability and attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania in nearby Indiana, Pennsylvania. For a number of years he taught school and did accounting work. Lincoln and his wife Jenny reared two daughters, Belle and Ila on the Homestead. They inherited the property upon the death of their parents. The house has not been lived in since about 1927, except for part-time use as a summer camp. This long period of part-time use is responsible for the interior remaining almost unchanged from the way it was almost ninety years ago. The house is currently owned by Jane Schultz, daughter of Bell Diehl Lucas. Jane and her husband are presently restoring the homestead.

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<sup>precise</sup> The date of construction of the George Diehl Homestead is unknown. However, a search of deeds and wills in the Indiana County Court-house reveals that the property was sold by Samuel and John Cowan to Martin Brechbill, April 2, 1835, for the sum of \$524. Records fail to indicate the existence of structures on the property at that date. Martin Brechbill sold the property to George Diehl March 10, 1850 for the sum of \$2500. This increase in value between 1835 and 1850 would indicate that improvements were made on the property during those 15 years. Thus it appears that the log structure was probably built around 1840. The shed-roofed addition appears to have been hastily constructed on log sleepers. Perhaps this was to accommodate a growing family of George and Nancy Ober Diehl some time after 1850. The design and workmanship of the shed-roofed addition does not compare with the excellent design and craftsmanship exhibited in the older log structure. There is little doubt that the shed-roofed addition was built by someone other than the craftsman who built the log house.

The Diehl Homestead at one time had a large barn, a carriage house, and a small house enclosing the well. None of these buildings has survived. A five-foot diameter, 33-foot deep hand dug, stone lined well, has survived and continues to deliver cold clear water by a hand pump. The well is located off the northwest corner of the building. The homestead at one time had an outside stone-in-ground oven located near the northeast corner of the house. This oven has not survived; however, a large hearthstone from this oven has been recovered.

The primitive folk log architecture of the Diehl Homestead creates a feeling of beauty and permanence by its simple lines, its practical floor plan, and its simple but well executed details. The house is the only example of corner-post log construction in Indiana County, and care should be taken to preserve this unique and handsome structure. This primitive log home provided a warm and comfortable home for the early pioneer family of George and Nancy Diehl and their eight children. The Diehl family played an important role in the development of the local church and school in this rural farm community. The house remains in the ownership of the descendants of George Diehl and is being restored by them.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Preliminary Research Report, Comprehensive Historic Site Survey of Indiana County, Pa. Gloria Berringer, Directory, September 7, 1979

Stephenson, Clarence David, Indiana County 175th Anniversary History. Indiana Pa.: A. G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1978 (See continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.063

Quadrangle name Strongstown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

17	670996	4496992
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

--	--	--

F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Robert B. Schultz, Professional Engineer

organization Owner of George Diehl Homestead date April 28, 1986

street & number 26511 Dunwood Road telephone (213)-373-5339

city or town Rolling Hills Estates state California 90274

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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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Deed Number 511 Indiana County Court House dated April 2, 1835

Deed Book No. 31 Page 71 Indiana County Court House. Deed dated  
March 10, 1850

Deed Book No. 54 Page 135 Indiana County Courthouse. Deed dated  
December 13, 1890

Behrens, Ilif Deihl, The Relatives of George and Nancy Ober Deihl (Deal)  
Howe, Indiana: c. 1984

Shedd, Nancy S., Corner-Post Log Construction  
Petersburg, Pennsylvania, March 10, 1986, A report to Early American  
Industries Association

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by a polygon whose vertices are marked and situated as follows:

	E	N
B	670988	44 97000
C	671004	44 97000
D	671004	44 96984
E	670988	44 96984