

**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 Donegal Presbyterian Church Complex

and or common

2. Location

street & number Donegal Springs Road, L.R. 36002 ___ not for publication

city, town East Donegal Twp. ___ vicinity of

state PA code 042 county Lancaster code 071

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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 Presbytery of Donegal

street & number 201 Greenfield Road

city, town Lancaster ___ vicinity of state PA 17601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lancaster County Courthouse

street & number 50 North Duke Street

city, town Lancaster state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1/17/80 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records PHMC

city, town Harrisburg state PA

7: Description

Condition

excellent deteriorated
good ruins
fair unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

CHURCH

The Donegal Presbyterian Church complex is located in western Lancaster County amid an expanse of rolling farmland and is surrounded by tall trees. There is a spring and creek to the west of the church building and a two lane country road to the east.

The main structure, the church, built in 1732 by immigrant Scots Irish, exhibits the basic structural form and gambrel roof common to buildings in Irish settlements. At the same time the building is similar in layout and size to the parent church built in 1674 in County Donegal, Ireland. The original section is one-and-a-half stories in height with walls of rough hewn stone covered with stucco. The three-by-five bay structure is topped by a wooden shake gambrel roof. Two identical recessed double-panelled doors crowned each by transoms with three lights, are placed at extreme ends of the front facade. A central plaque proclaims the age of the church. Five vertically fenestrated nine-over-six pane, double-hung-sash windows, flanked on either side by four panel shutters (identical to the entrance doors), adorn the sides of the building. Strap-work hinges with corresponding latchwork attach the shutters to the stuccoed surface. A one story dog-trot connects the original structure to the educational wing. Added in 1958 to benefit expansion, the wing is an exterior duplicate of the 1732 section. Straying only in the fenestration, six-over-four pane double-hung-sash windows flank a single central recessed double doorway of corresponding panel construction to the main entranceways.

Donegal's interior consists of one rectangular room and a partitioned Narthex with two openings corresponding to the exterior entranceways. A plank floor covers what was once earthen brick. The chapel remains much the same since a major remodeling occurred in 1851.

At that time the chapel was realigned from the original east/west direction to the present north/south arrangement. The pulpit was repositioned to correspond with the new arrangement. Pillars which once supported the ceiling were removed, and a partition was placed at the entrance to create the narthex. Window casements were replaced by the present rectangular sash and wooden blinds were added. In later years kerosene lamps replaced with electric chandeliers.

In 1958, with the addition of the educational wing, a hot water central heating system was installed and located in the basement of the new wing. The educational wing is connected to the original section by the narthex. The area consists of an enclosed hallway connecting the narthex to the main floor loft and basement/activity area of the new wing. The main floor contains two study rooms connected by a side hallway, while the basement area contains a dining area and kitchen.

CEMETERY

Much of the history of Donegal Springs is reflected in Donegal Church and its cemetery. The emergence of Scots-Irish and American religious ideals, resultant internal strife, and the upsurge of loyalty at the onset of the Revolution, is apparent in Donegal's history, and visible in the more than thirty marked graves of Revolutionary War soldiers. Flat sarcophagi lying flush with the ground, mark the burial sites, and recall the names of Colonel Bartram Smith and Colonel Alexander

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Lowry, men who epitomize the loyalty proclaimed that day in 1777 at the foot of the Witness Tree. Stone tablets mark the graves of Donegal's ministry for over two-hundred years. The grave of Reverend James Anderson who, according to legend, cut his sermon short that Sunday in 1777 and joined Colonel Lowry's brave recruits under the Witness Tree bidding them well with a blessing, lies just within the stone wall.

Surrounded by a wall of rough hewn stone (18" thick and measuring 155 x 308') the cemetery built in 1732, encased more than thirty families by 1800. Built in a basic grid pattern, the cemetery was surrounded by the present stone wall in 1791. By 1900, one-hundred-sixty-three families' markers rested within its stone walls. The most prevalent of stone styles found in the cemetery fall within the period of the late 18th and 19th centuries. 18th century script and simple scroll design are overshadowed by a more elaborate scroll and swag pattern which emerged in the 19th century. Full standing sandstone tablets with intricate relief cover most of the area, and suffer minor damage due to age and weathering. The later 19th century brought in several oval beveled patterns with simple phrase recorded in fine script. The pre-Victorian/Gothic design can be seen in carved arch relief and inverted cross patterns of intricate filigree.

Transition into the 20th century was and is gradual, only a few polished granite tablets intrude in a random fashion. The most recent burials (61 by 1983) have been restricted to the far end of the cemetery, so as not to detract from the overall view. Eight huge oak trees randomly spaced, accentuate the beauty of the yard. And bushes, landscaped in a half-circle pattern to the far left of the entrance, mark the cemetery's newest advancement: crematorial pots.

STUDY HOUSE

The William Kerr Study House, located between the church and educational building, was built in 1810 as a resting quarters for the travelling clergy. Named in honor of the Reverend William Kerr who served the Donegal congregation from 1807-1821, the one-and-a-half story, five bay structure of English/Dutch bond, is crowned by a gabled shake pent roof. Two interior end wall chimneys flank either side of the original gabled ends attesting to the vernacular Federal style of the building.

Originally three bays, the two bay clapboard addition was added in the early 20th century to house a caretaker. The addition is connected to the southside of the original brick structure causing an asymmetrical appearance. However, one continuous roof extends over both sections. This addition also places the original end chimney at the asymmetrical center of the structure. A shed roof overhang extends outward over the crude wooden entranceway, and three beveled wood "columns" support its weight.

Apparently restored in 1976, the building saw the loss of exterior bathroom facilities on the clapboard side, and the replacement of an original concealed doorway on the northside. Interior changes included the removal of modern living facilities, and the re-opening of an original fire box and hearth. A bath facility was relocated to the interior of the clapboard section, and this side was restricted to secretarial use. Original tongue and groove wood flooring was left intact and the loft area was adapted for the future installation of a library and archival facility.

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WITNESS TREE

A white oak, approximately 340 years old, standing seventy-five to one-hundred feet in height, is the center of the Witness Tree tradition. A monument in front of the tree preserves a tradition of loyalty and honor that was pledged in a time of great indecision. In 1930 the tree was treated by experts who prescribed the present iron fence and planting of the pachysandra to preserve moisture around the base of the tree. The tree is also protected by concealed lightening rods. A plaque underneath the tree proclaims its importance, and recalls September 1777 and the instant this simple oak became a symbol of liberty to, and a new nation for new people.

WAR MEMORIAL

A sandstone memorial, dedicated to those soldiers that served in the colonial and Revolutionary Wars, was erected in 1899. Located in the center of the driveway area, the fifteen foot shaft bears the names of the officers from Donegal who fought in the Indian Wars prior to the Revolution, the officers who took part in the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown, delegates to the convention at Carpenter's Hall in 1776, members of two companies attached to the Flying Camp in the Battles of Long Island and Kings Bridge, and officers of the 3rd Battalion of Penn Militia.

This monument along with the Witness Tree recalls the loyalty felt at the time when not only America was at a point of change but Donegal Church, itself, was at a turning point.

Spring

The spring is located at the foot of a hill that is just west of the church building. The spring empties into an oval shaped pond. The pond is rimmed with local limestone and flows through a narrow neck into a creek which forms the rear boundary of the nomination.

Utility Shed

There is a one story one room utility shed just north of the study building. The shed has a gable roof and is stuccoed. The date on the shed is unknown, but probably dates to the mid nineteenth century.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
1500-1599	agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
X 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration-settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
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 1732, 1851

Builder/Architect Not known

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Donegal Presbyterian Church building was one of the earliest Presbyterian church buildings in the Pennsylvania backcountry and became the headquarters for the first western Presbyter in the colony. Built by immigrant Presbyterians in a dominant Scots-Irish village, this church has survived for 253 years and reflects the religious fervor of its founders. The church structure, built in 1732, is an architectural tribute to the Ulster-Scots who came to America so many years ago seeking freedom of religion and of expression.

During the early 1700's, Pennsylvania became a haven to an influx of Scots-Irish. Driven from Ireland at the onset of the potato famine, and discouraged by religious and political suppression from the British government, these Ulster-Scots sought refuge in America. Settling in what was then the Pennsylvania back-country, the Scots-Irish immigrants around Donegal instigated the creation of a new township, and named it in honor of their home, County Donegal, in Ireland. Almost exclusively Presbyterian these immigrants played a major role in determining the social fabric of the Donegal area.

Between 1710 and 1721, the numbers of Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the Donegal Township had grown to such an extent that there was a recognized need for a permanent minister, and a church building for the burgeoning congregation. Several ministers were sent from the Presbytery of New Castle, Delaware to the people at "chikens longus" (Chiquesalunga) now Donegal Springs. Unfortunately, for the Donegal settlers, the new ministers lost their way and ultimately returned to New Castle.

Six years later, in 1727, the congregation recieved its first full-time minister, the Reverend James Anderson (his gravestone rests in the cemetery adjoining the church) and erected Donegal's first meeting house. Constructed of logs and standing just inside the walls of the present cemetery, the cabin meeting house served the congregation until the present church structure was built in 1732.

Though the seed of church organization had been planted in 1721, a formal church was not founded until 1732, when the Donegal church became the first western judicatory for the United Presbyterian Church in America. This established the Donegal congregation as the second highest court in the Presbytery, encompassing the northwest area of Octarara Creek, and northward to the Schuylkill, embracing almost the entire state of Pennsylvania and a large part

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of Maryland and Virginia. With the formal founding of the church came the construction of a new church building following along the architectural lines of the mother church in Ireland. This new building replaced the congregation's 1721 log structure. Built of stone gathered from the fields and quarried nearby, this building housed worshipers for over two-hundred years.

At the time of Donegal's induction as a Presbytery, no other regularly operating churches were organized out of the Donegal Presbytery. (All but the Conewago still remain .) During the years 1745 and 1758 the United Presbyteries in New Castle, New York, Philadelphia and, to a lesser degree, Donegal experienced a period of indecision and conflict concerning Presbyterian Doctrine. Donegal, unfortunately was caught in the middle of the schism. Choosing the more conservative Westminster tenets, the Donegal Presbytery was involuntarily split between the New Castle and the Philadelphia Presbytery. In 1765, due to the internal strife, Donegal's period as Presbytery was briefly suspended and a new Presbytery at Carlisle across the Susquehanna was formed. However, due to lack of support the Carlisle Presbytery failed. Regaining it's Presbytery in 1766, the Donegal congregation was soon faced with another crisis, the Revolutionary War.

Used as much as a local meeting house, as it was for religious worship, the church building served as a focal point for military and political discussions during the Revolutionary War years. Continuing their tradition of insurgence, Scots-Irish from the Donegal congregation served as officers and volunteers during the Revolution. Legend has it that during the Battle of Brandywine Colonel Bartram Galbraith received marching orders for local militia. Word was sent to Colonel Alexander Lowry, attending church that fateful Sunday at Donegal. It is said that Lowry disrupted the service, and requested that all able-bodied men gather around the old white oak tree (which still stands outside the church today) and pledge "...eternal hostility to a corrupt king and parliament, and unswerving loyalty to the colonies..." Lowry and his recruits then rode off to join General Washington's army. As a result of these events and the church's location, Donegal became a meeting place for local patriots during the early days of the revolution. Accordingly, the tree became a local symbol of liberty. (A sandstone war memorial, erected in 1899 at the church entrance, honors the bravery of those men who pledged allegiance to the new nation, and then marched off to war.) Today, a stone tablet adorns the Witness Tree, bearing the inscription "Beneath this Witness Tree a new Patriotism found notable expression."

The war period and accompanying westward growth fostered a need for additional Presbyteries to deal with the expansive territory under the Donegal jurisdiction. The inevitable division of the Donegal Presbytery came in 1785. Dividing into three presbyteries, Donegal, Carlisle, and the Baltimore Presbyteries, the original Donegal judicatory was reduced to more workable limits.

With the closing of the 18th century Donegal ended a period of birth, rebirth and indecision, and entered a period which saw stability and little change in the

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congregation and church edifice itself. Retaining a lesser rank within the newly named Presbytery, the Donegal congregation remained constant and loyal to its church. In 1810 the church area expanded, and a study house was built, named in honor of the Reverend William Kerr, minister 1807-1821. The church complex continued to function as a community center within the quiet and sparsely populated area of Donegal Springs.

Today, surrounded by a lush expanse of green farmland, the church and cemetery (both dating to 1732), the study house, and the ever-flowing spring are all remnants of the struggles of those early immigrants and a salute to their role in this nation's early history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Loetscher, Lefferts A., A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press); 1978.

The Centennial Memorial of the Presbytery of Carlisle, (Harrisburg: Myers Pr. and Pub); 1889 pp.48-142. (A series of historical and biographical papers in relation to the Pa. Presbytery)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4,39

Quadrangle name Columbia West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8
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3	66	6	40
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4	4	4	00	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

1	8
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3	6	68	2	0
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4	43	9	86	0
---	----	---	----	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	8
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3	66	64	10
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4	43	9	76	10
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Zone Easting Northing

D

1	8
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3	6	6	46	10
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4	43	9	76	10
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Zone Easting Northing

E

1	8
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3	66	3	80
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4	4	0	05	0
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Zone Easting Northing

F

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Zone Easting Northing

G

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--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

H

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Zone Easting Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
PA			
	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lise Catharina Ritsch/Intern

organization Pa. Bureau for Historic Preservation

date 7/26/84

street & number Box 1026

telephone 717-783-8946

city or town Harrisburg,

state PA

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 Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/21/85

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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

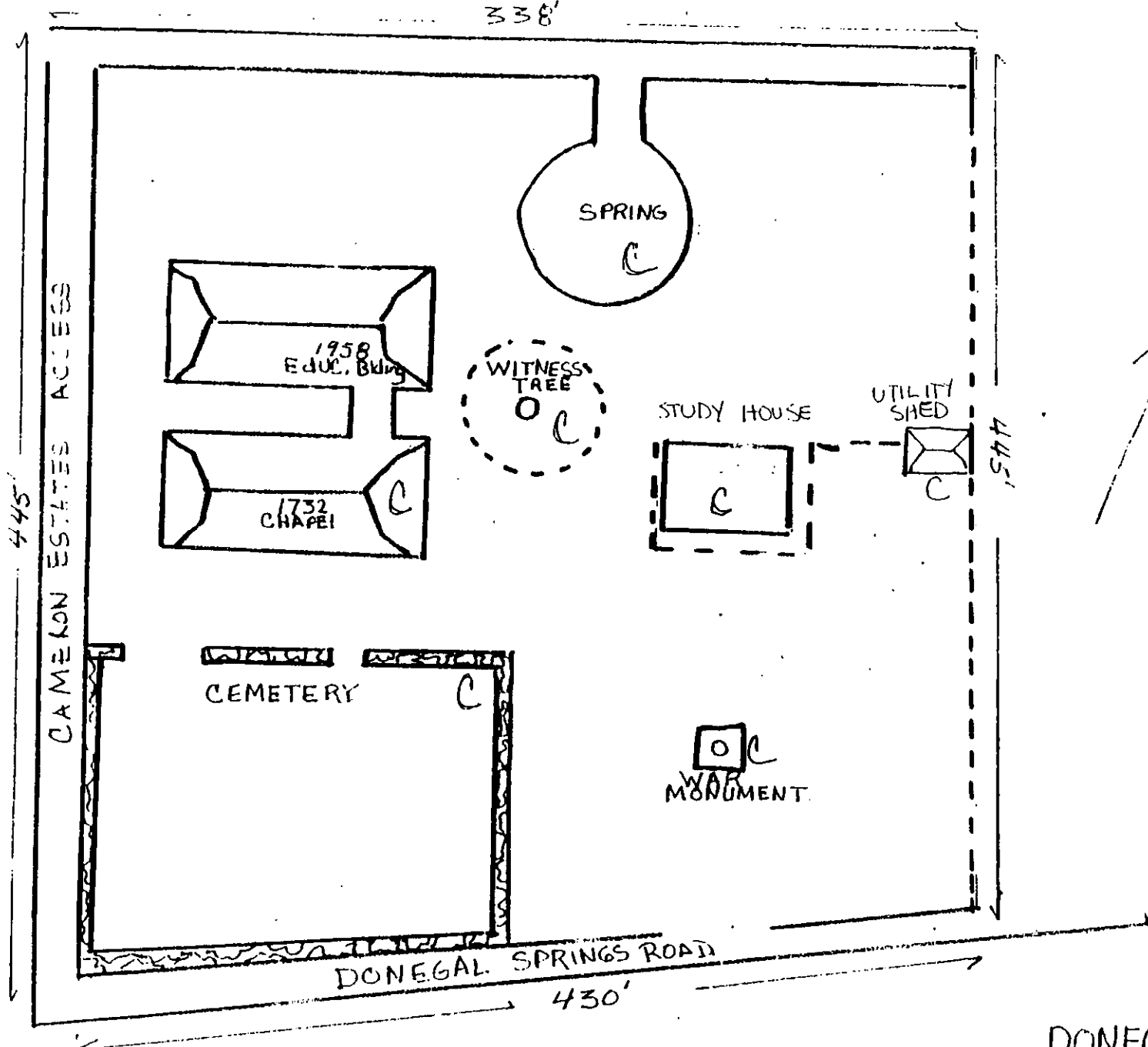
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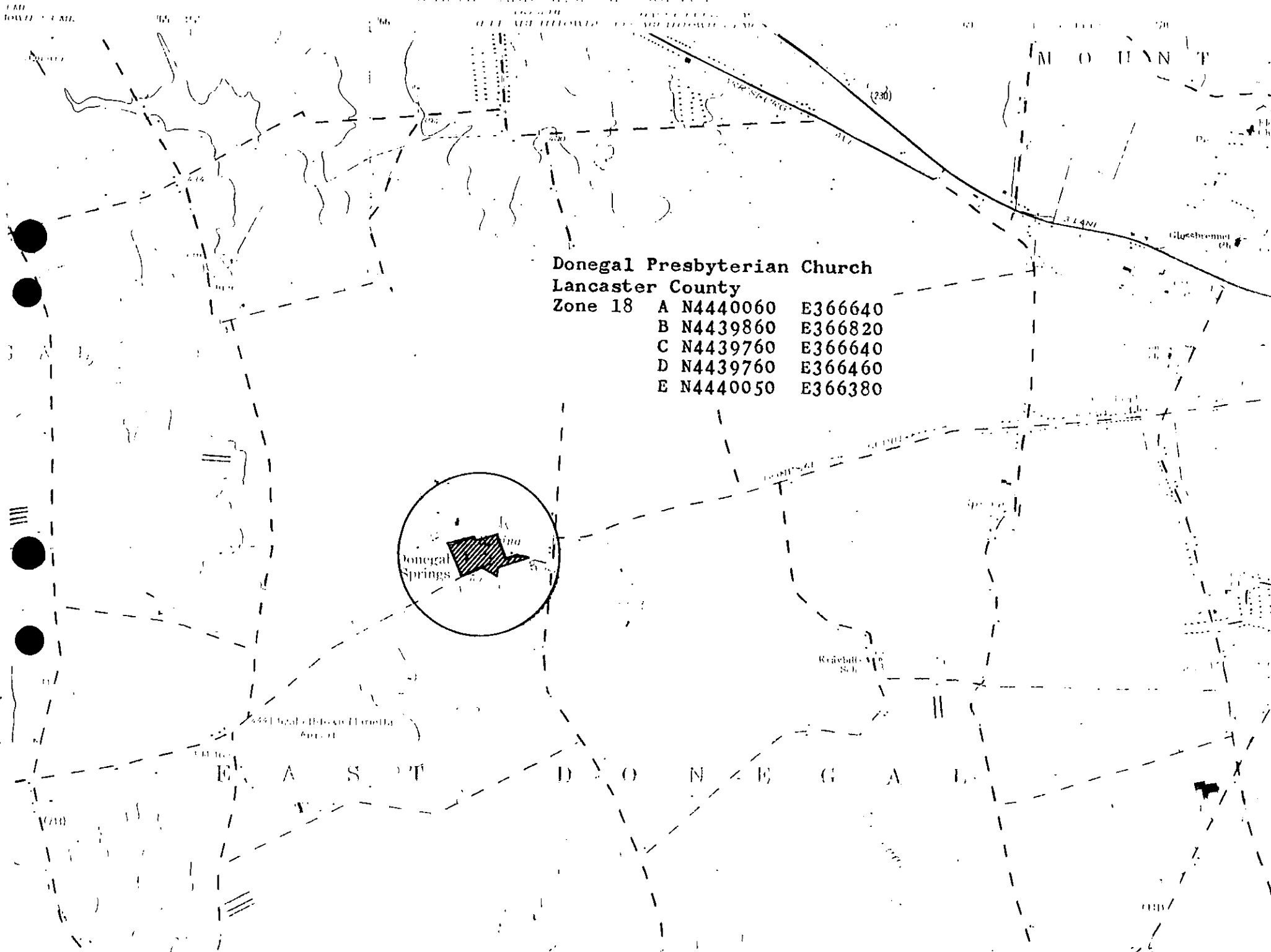
Page 1

Beginning at a point at the north corner of the intersection of Donegal Springs Road and the Cameron Estate Road and traveling northwest 445' along Cameron Estate Road to a point; then, at a right angle traveling east 338' along the crest of the ridge that constitutes the property line between the Cameron Estate and the Donegal Presbyterian Church to a point; then, at a right angle, traveling south east 445' to Donegal Springs Road; then west along Donegal Springs Road approximately 430' to the starting point.



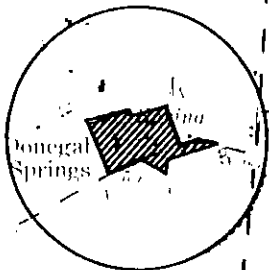
DONEGAL PRESBY.
CHURCH
COMPLEX

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
TOPOGRAPHIC AND GEOLOGIC SURVEY



**Donegal Presbyterian Church
Lancaster County**

Zone 18	A	N4440060	E366640
	B	N4439860	E366820
	C	N4439760	E366640
	D	N4439760	E366460
	E	N4440050	E366380



Donegal Springs
PA 17024

D O N E G A L