

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 O'Donel House and Farm

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 3 1/2 miles west of New Germantown on Rt. 274 N/A not for publication

city, town Toboyne Township N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Perry code 099

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Dept. of Environmental Resources

street & number Bureau of Forestry P.O. Box 1467

city, town Harrisburg N/A vicinity of state Pa. 17120

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Perry County Courthouse

street & number East Main Street

city, town New Bloomfield state Penna.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title PA Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau for Historic Preservation, Wm. Penn Memorial Museum

city, town Harrisburg state PA

7. Description

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

Located in rural Toboyne Township, Perry County, the O'Donel farm is situated on the north side of State Route 274, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of New Germantown. The immediate vicinity was formerly cleared fields and pasture land, and is presently part of Tuscarora State Forest.

The farm complex is composed of a house, bank barn, wood shed, outhouse, and combination washhouse/smokehouse. The house provides the focus of the farmstead, as its nearly pristine condition reveals significant aspects of mid-nineteenth century farm life in Perry County.

The two bay house, erected ca. 1863, is built in the log corner post style (pièce sur pièce) and rests on a foundation of uncoursed fieldstone. It is two stories with a large exterior fieldstone chimney on the west end of the house which is covered by a gable roof of standing seam.

The basement of the house is entered through an exterior bulkhead on the northwest corner of the house, and by means of an interior stairs located in the southwest corner of the kitchen. It is a full basement with a dirt floor and contains a large fireplace on the west wall forming the base of the chimney stack.

Four windows light the front facade, two on the first floor and two on the second. The rear of the house has an identical window arrangement. One window on the east end of the house lights the parlor, while the west end is unfenestrated.

The first floor has a three-room floor plan with a kitchen on the west side of the house, a parlor (living room) in the southeast corner and a bedroom (currently a storage room) in the northeast corner. The partitions separating the rooms are formed by wide, vertical beaded boards of tongue and groove construction. Floor boards are random width and the smoothed ceiling joists have never been covered.

Interior doors in the house are board and batten type and utilize a dovetailed batten secured in a receiving groove in the vertical boards. None of the finished woodwork in the house has ever been painted, and the interior of the log walls are whitewashed. There is a large fireplace on the west wall of the kitchen. Located between the fireplace and south wall, the dogleg type staircase is enclosed by vertical beaded boards.

The second floor is composed of three bedrooms, based upon the same room arrangement as the first floor and has room partitions of the same type. Floorboards are random width and the smoothed ceiling joists are exposed. The attic staircase is located in the southwest corner and also is enclosed with vertical beaded boards.

The attic roof is constructed of eleven pairs of rafters which are morticed, tenoned and pinned at the peak. At the eastern end of the attic is a small brick chimney stack resting on the floor. The stack vented the stovepipe from the stove which formerly sat in the first floor parlor. A four-paned, fixed window lights the attic from the east.

The house, by the turn of the century, had been covered with vertical board and batten siding, as documented by an O'Donel family photograph. However, the house may have been sided from the time of its initial construction. This photo also reveals that the present front porch had not been added to the house yet.

The back porch was added to the house ca. 1910. It consists of four chamfered posts pinned into the plate of the shed roof and resting on cement. The front porch was built in 1934. Its four chamfered posts rest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet O'Donel House and Farm

Item number 7

Page 2

on a wooden floor supported by log pilings.

The only major changes that have occurred to the house are superficial. Among these is the 1949 addition of asbestos siding over the board and batten siding. This, however, does not mar the integrity of the building and could be easily removed. The other significant changes are the replacement of the original 6/6 sash windows on the front of the house by 3/1 sash (the 6/6 sash on the rest of the house have survived), and the replacement of the original front door with a wood and glass pane door. The original front door has survived and is stored in the roof of the porch. This door is constructed with two vertical raised panels.

The other buildings on the property date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The bank barn, measuring 40 by 50 feet, has a cantilevered forebay and is constructed with a heavy timber frame covered with vertical siding. According to family history, the barn was built in 1893. Foundations of a small milk house are located on the north end of the barn.

The other outbuildings are clustered to the rear of the farm house and are of light frame construction. Of particular note is the combined wash house/smokehouse. The wash house, measuring 20 feet by 11 feet, is a one story, rectangular structure entered from the east. The smokehouse, measuring about 3 feet by 7 feet, forms an ell to the north side of the wash house and is entered from inside the wash house. The buildings are covered with vertical board and batten siding. Behind the west end of the wash house are the foundation ruins of a bake oven.

The wood house, measuring 16½ feet by 18 feet, is a one and a half story, rectangular structure with an entrance in the southwest corner. There is a large cutout about halfway up the north side of the building. This was where the wood was thrown into the building. This structure is also covered with board and batten siding.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

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Continuation sheet 0'Donel House and Farm

Item number 8

Page 2

The O'Donel farm was once part of a twenty acre tract that David Yocum purchased from Thomas Campbell in 1865.⁶ Although the deed was not signed until 1865, the O'Donel family has a draft which shows the twenty acre tract was conveyed in 1862 from Campbell to Yocum. In 1871 Yocum purchased an adjoining six acre tract on the east from E.A. McLaughlin.⁷ This land extended south to the bank of the Sherman's Creek. Tradition states that David Yocum built the O'Donel log house. Yocum was registered as a farmer in the 1870 census. His wife and two children are buried in the nearby Fairview Methodist Churchyard. Soon after his wife's death, Yocum sold his two tracts to James O'Donel in 1873.¹⁰

James O'Donel came to Perry County at age ten with his parents,¹¹ William and Sarah, from the Welsh Mountain area of Lancaster County. The O'Donel family was drawn to Perry County by their friends the Gring family, who were prominent in the lumber and railroad business in Perry County. James worked for the Gring family in the lumber business. He later became foreman of workers who built the road bed of a railroad for the Perry Lumber Company. David Gring was president of this railroad, which connected with the Newport and Sherman's Valley Railroad at New Germantown.¹²

James O'Donel died in 1930 at age 81, and in 1932 his heirs sold the entire property to his son Lee O'Donel. In 1939 Lee O'Donel sold this property to the United States Government. The U.S. Government transferred this property by deed to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1955. Lee O'Donel, aged 91 years, continues to occupy the dwelling under a building lease with the Commonwealth.

¹Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie, "Building in Wood in the Eastern United States, a Time-Place Perspective," Geographical Review, Vol. LVI, No. 1 (January 1966): 50-57.

²Nancy S. Shedd, "Corner-Post Log Construction: Description, Analysis, and Sources," unpublished manuscript, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1986, p. 10.

³Kniffen and Glassie, "Building in Wood," p. 51; Shedd, "Corner-Post Construction," p. 10.

⁴Robert C. Bucher, "The Continental Log House," Pennsylvania Folklife Vol 12, No. 4 (Summer 1962): 14-19.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1863

Builder/Architect David Yocum

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The O'Donel House and Farm contains buildings that are both unusual and typical of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architecture in Perry County. The O'Donel house, with its pièce sur pièce log construction and combination of Pennsylvania German and English building traditions, is a fairly rare example of such construction in the county. On the other hand, the outbuildings on the farm, such as the bank barn, are fairly typical of such buildings in rural Perry County.

Built approximately 1863, the O'Donel house utilizes pièce sur pièce construction, a technique that allows tenoned, horizontal logs to be held in place between vertical corner posts that contain mortise holes. Pièce sur pièce construction is somewhat atypical in Perry County where notched log construction is more commonly used.

The O'Donel house is one of only six corner post log houses known to survive in Perry County. Two other corner post log houses existed in the county, but they have been dismantled. Of the six known remaining houses, three have suffered from various stages of renovation.² The O'Donel house remains as one of the few corner post log houses with good integrity in the county.

Pièce sur pièce construction in Pennsylvania is thought to originate from Germany and Switzerland. German and Swiss immigrants apparently brought this particular form of log house construction to Pennsylvania when they settled in the Commonwealth during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.³ The construction of the O'Donel house, however, shows influences of English building traditions as well as Germanic or Swiss traditions. The arrangement of three rooms on each floor is very similar to the common Pennsylvania German "Continental" House.⁴ Yet the O'Donel house lacks the central chimney which is characteristic of the Pennsylvania German "Continental" House. The chimney is located on the external west wall of the house suggesting an English building tradition noted by the architectural scholar Henry Glassie.⁵

The other buildings of the farm have good integrity, although they are not as unique as the farm house. The late nineteenth-century barn is a fine, representative example of bank barns found in Perry County. The barn's heavy timber frame construction is the most common form for these structures in the county, with log, brick and stone barns appearing considerably less frequently. Similarly, the wash house/smokehouse and woodshed are typical of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century outbuildings that are still found on many farms throughout the county.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

Date entered

Continuation sheet O'Donel House and Farm

Item number 8

Page 2

⁵Henry Glassie, "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building," Winterthur Portfolio (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972), 7: 32.

⁶Original deed, David Yocum to James O'Donel, 1873, in the possession of Lee O'Donel.

⁷Original deed, E.A. McLaughlin to David Yocum, 1871, in the possession of Lee O'Donel.

⁸Interview, Vera O'Donel Robinson, November 18, 1984.

⁹Tombstone Inscriptions, Fairview Methodist Churchyard, Toboyne Township, Perry County.

¹⁰Original deed, David Yocum to James O'Donel, 1873, in the possession of Lee O'Donel.

¹¹Interview, Lee O'Donel, November 18, 1984.

¹²Richard Steinmetz and Frederick Kramer, Bells and Whistles in Old Perry (Morristown, New Jersey: Compton Press, 1974), p. 30.

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Blain

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	2	7	7	0	9	0	4	4	6	2	0	9	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

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 Jerry A. Clouse, Vice President

organization The Perry Historians

date October, 1985

street & number P.O. Box 12

telephone (717) 566-0990

city or town Hummelstown

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 Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date

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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**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet O'Donel House and Farm

Item number 9

Page 1

Robert C. Bucher, "The Continental Log House," Pennsylvania Folklife Vol 12, No. 4 (Summer 1962): 14-19.

Henry Glassie, "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building," Winterthur Portfolio (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972), 7: 32.

History of the Susquehanna and Juniata Valleys (Philadelphia: Everts, Peck and Richards, 1886), 2: 991.

Interview, Vera O'Donel Robinson, November 18, 1984.

Interview, Lee O'Donel, November 18, 1984.

Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie, "Building in Wood in the Eastern United States, a Time-Place Perspective," Geographical Review, Vol. LVI, No. 1 (January 1966): 50-57.

Nancy S. Shedd, "Corner-Post Log Construction: Description, Analysis, and Sources," unpublished manuscript, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1986, p. 10.

Original deeds 1865-1918 in the possession of Lee O'Donel.

Richard Steinmetz and Frederick Kramer, Bells and Whistles in Old Perry (Morristown, New Jersey: Compton Press, 1974), p. 30.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet O'Donel House and Farm

Item number 10

Page 1

The nominated property consists of the O'Donel farm composed of a house, bank barn, wood shed, outhouse and combination wash house/ smokehouse situated on less than one acre beginning at a point on a line 20 feet west of the barn at the intersection of State Route 274 and heading in a northwesterly direction for 150 feet, then proceeding in a northeasterly direction for 220 feet, then proceeding 150 feet in a southeasterly direction to State Route 274, then proceeding 220 feet in a southwesterly direction to the place of beginning.

This boundary contains the buildings and the immediately adjacent land.

O'DONEL HOUSE AND FARM
Perry County
Blain Quadrangle
Zone 18
E277090 N4462090

