

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Hunsberger, Isaac House

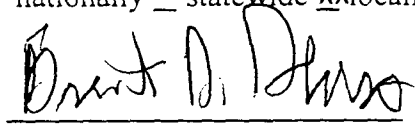
Other names/site number: NA

2. Location

Street & number:	545 West Ridge Pike	not for publication	NA
City or town:	Limerick Twp	vicinity	NA
State	Pennsylvania	code	PA
county	Montgomery	code	91
zip code	19468		

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this xx nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property xx meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide xx locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



MAY 17, 2000

Signature of certifying official

Date

Brent D. Glass, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register _____
(See continuation sheet).
- determined eligible for the _____
National Register
(See continuation sheet).
- determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	___	buildings
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
<u>2</u>	___	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: single dwelling
Domestic secondary structure

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Recreation & Culture Sub: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial/Georgian
Late Victorian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
roof shingle
walls stone, brick, stucco, wood

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1827 - ~~1926~~

Significant Dates 1827
1893

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	18 455140	4453480	3	
2			4	
<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.				

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Estelle Cremers	Date	2/3/00
organization	Historical Land Research	Phone	610-469-6977
street & number	1801 Ridge Road	zip code	19465
city or town	Pottstown	state	PA

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Limerick Township Historical Society

street & number 545 West Ridge Pike

telephone 610-495-5229

city or town Limerick state PA

zip code 19468

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHUNSBERGER, ISAAC, HOUSE
Montgomery County, PA.Section number 7 Page 1

The Isaac Hunsberger House stands close to old Route 422 in Limerick Township, Montgomery County, a short distance northwest of the village of Limerick Square. It is a two-and-one-half story, L-shaped, brick and stone, vernacular Georgian 5-bay building with Victorian alterations. Built in 1827 and modified in 1893 with elongated first floor windows across the front, there is one room on either side of a central hall, and a kitchen to the rear behind them, making an ell-shaped house. The second and third floors follow the same floor plan. A minor addition was attached to the rear in 1926 and is considered part of its historic evolution. The facade is early, locally-fired brick, set in a Flemish bond pattern, clearly quoined into coursed native stone gable end walls. The rear wall is also native stone. The 1926 addition, not seen from the highway, is stucco over frame siding. The house stands on a gentle rise of ground along present Ridge Pike (old 422). The road has been so cut down and widened as to put the house on a seeming higher elevation than was original to the site, and eliminated the front yard. The house is important to the local architectural history of the township as the earliest known example of mixed brick and stone masonry anywhere in the township or the larger area. The design of the building is strongly that of the 1827 period with Victorian period and early 20th century alterations. A contributing one-story and loft frame bakehouse/summer kitchen stands close to the southeast rear corner of the house and is included in this nomination.

Facing northeast and located on the south side of old Route 422, the original center hall floor plan lays one room on each side of the hall, each room being the full 2-bay depth of the front section. An almost square kitchen forms the ell behind the west room of the front section and is also 2-bays deep. The front section measures 44'x23' and the kitchen measures 19'x20'. A porch, said to have been added about 1860, but possibly part of the 1893 modifications, extended across the full front and the northwest gable side, but it is now only across the full front. Iron support hooks appear across the gable to verify the once-existing wrap-around porch. The remaining part of the porch retains its original chamfered posts and cut-out sawn brackets of the 1860s period. A geometrically decorated fascia board is evident across the front under the box cornice. All main roofs are gables with a brick chimney atop each gable wall. These chimneys are fully brick from basement up but are externally faced with native stone. The northwest chimney has been recently capped at the gable due to deteriorating brick work. Internally, the brick flue remains. Walls throughout the stone building are 18" thick, making deep window sills. The walls of the brick facade are 8" thick.

First floor windows on the gable ends of the house are 6/9 double-hung sash. The first floor Victorian windows are 1/1 floor-length double-hung sash. The front door is probably a feature of the 1893 alteration, although it may have been introduced in the 1860s with the porch. All second floor windows are 6/6 in the original part of the house, and modern 1/1 windows in the 1926 addition. All original sash are without sash weights, and only the lower sash opens. On the right side of each frame is a flat, flexible, appropriately bent piece of metal which acts as a locking device. Each sash has two notches cut into the side edge, spaced one-third and two-thirds up the sash. When the sash is raised, this device locks in either notch, thus holding the sash in place. All 1827 window frames are hand-peggged oak. Attic windows are 4-pane casements, two per each side

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

HUNSBERGER, ISAAC, HOUSE
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Section number 7 Page 2

gable and one in the rear gable. An elliptical datestone pocket is in both the southeast and northwest gables which pockets held wooden plaques reading, "Built by I. Hunsberger, 1827". One plaque now hangs inside the house; the southeast plaque remains in its pocket. A new plaque was installed in place of the removed plaque recognizing Limerick Township Historical Society as present owner of the property in 1991.

In 1926, the rear niche formed by the original kitchen ell of the three-room-per-floor nine room house was enclosed in frame adding one room to both the first and second floors. The 1926 addition is without attic or cellar. It is shed-roofed and sides are stuccoed. A shed-roofed porch extends along the east and south walls of the addition. At the time of this addition, the original walk-in fireplace in the 1827 kitchen ell was shortened to provide a door directly to the back yard. The rest of the fireplace was turned into a closet. The early box-winder stairway that wrapped around the fireplace chimney wall from cellar to attic remains intact.

Internally, the house follows a Georgian center hall plan with an open, straight stairway. The stairway rises to a landing nearly at second floor height, then turns left into the hall above. Stair risers are low. A railing is supported by thin square spindles, ending in slender round newel posts at the bottom and at each upper turn in the stairway. There are exit doors at the front and rear of the hallway. The main front door has two long oval panels with heavy Victorian molding on the outside. It is backed with three plain, flat boards centered in a beaded section that covers most of the inside of the door, and is finished with a flat frame around it. It hangs on butt hinges. The front door is recessed from the outer wall and surrounded with four geometric panels per reveal that match the panelling on internal doors, indicating that the original front door matched the internal doors. There is a transom.

A single room flanks each side of the hallway both downstairs and upstairs. A chair-rail, designed as a flat board with three parallel beads on the lower edge, is found in every room. The same motif is found around the inside window frames and door trims except for the 1893 long front windows which feature bullseye corner blocks and molded trim. Window cheeks in the core are straight (rather than flanged or rounded) and are trimmed with wood on the room edge. Windows in the 1926 addition are plastered straight from the sash to the inside wall where they are rounded but without trim. Inside doors have eight geometric panels of square and rectangular shape. Chimneys, with the exception of the old kitchen fireplace, are sized for stoves and are presently sealed, but ornamented with decorative wooden mantels.

All flooring in the house is mainly original. The floor in the addition, having been laid without a cellar, had rotted by 1984 so badly that it was replaced, in 1989, by the Limerick Township Historical Society. Floors in the second floor hallway and the three original bedrooms are laid with random width pine boards, some 17" wide, and each board usually spanning the width of the room. They are tongue-and-groove native white pine and are tapered as they came from the log. When laid, the mating board had to be reversed end-for-end. Bible boxes or wall safes are found in three rooms, two in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

HUNSBERGER, ISAAC, HOUSE
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Section number 7 Page 3

bedrooms and one in the downstairs east room. Clothes-hanging iron hooks are found on 3" boards in bedrooms and in a small clothes-hanging room at the front of the second floor hall. There are no room closets.

The attic is divided into three unfinished rooms on the original plan. The roof rafters are hand-pegged beams identified with Roman numerals. The flooring is rough sawn lumber, originally covered with an insulated firebreak of a clay mud mixture two-and-one-half inches thick. Where not crumbling, portions of this material have been preserved in place by the Limerick Township Historical Society as part of their preservation plan.

The bakehouse/summer kitchen was built as a companion building to the farmhouse in 1827. It is a simple one story and loft, frame, gable-roofed building with a stone chimney. Evidence remains of a brick beehive bake oven that connected into the large fireplace. The building is clad in German siding. Inside walls are plastered. There is a north gable entrance door and a south gable end doorway. One 6/6 lite double-hung sash is found in the east wall and one in the west wall. There is a similar window in the north-facing main entrance facade. The south gable end wall is the back of the stone fireplace where evidence of the beehive bake oven can be seen. A capped well remains between the house and the bakehouse. Another capped well is on the west side of the original kitchen.

The Isaac Hunsberger House and its bakehouse/summer kitchen reflect very strongly the 1827 building date and the Victorianizing of the first floor facade in 1893. Floor plan, 6/9 windows on the gable walls, interior details, relationship of house to bakehouse/summer kitchen, and return of use from a two-family house to its original one-family intent work together to preserve a true 19th century farmhouse aura. The Victorianizing of the front facade is in itself an often repeated modification in local architecture that was practiced after the Civil War in many farmhouses of Southeast Pennsylvania. The 1926 addition is a typical early 20th century addition and is integral to the building's evolution but does not factor large in the general appearance of the house, being to the rear and smaller rather than larger than the original stone/brick house. Retention of the auxilliary bakehouse adds to the authenticity of the site and memory of a thriving agricultural endeavor practiced here for many generations.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

HUNSBERGER, ISAAC, HOUSE
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Section number 8 Page 1

The Isaac Hunsberger House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion "C" for architecture as a vernacular Georgian-type farmhouse articulated in an unusual combination of brick and stone masonry. The period of significance extends from 1827 to 1926 to encompass the building's architectural history from construction through Victorian era and early 20th century modifications. It is a significant example of vernacular architecture as interpreted in rural 19th century Limerick Township. The nomination includes the Isaac Hunsberger House and its accompanying bakehouse/summer kitchen, which are the only standing buildings on the site.

Isaac Hunsberger purchased the 61 acre farm in 1813 for \$3,699 in two adjoining tracts. The property had been pioneered by the Brooke family and sold to John and Elizabeth Koons in the 18th century. A log house, log barn and stone springhouse stood on the property when Hunsberger purchased it. The family lived in the log house ten years before building the brick and stone house. They also replaced the log barn with a typical Pennsylvania stone-and-frame barn which was razed in 1998 to make way for a multi-housing development.

Isaac Tyson Hunsberger was born October 12, 1780, in the Limerick area of Montgomery County. He died January 23, 1854, on this farm, having built the complex of brick, stone, and frame buildings known as the Isaac Hunsberger Farm. Isaac was the eldest son of Abraham Hunsberger, and grandson of Ulrich Hunsberger, who was one of three brothers that immigrated to Franconia Township, Philadelphia County, in 1731. Isaac inherited his father's Limerick Township farm on Swamp Pike. He purchased this separate 61 acres in 1813. (The inherited farm and purchased farm were not adjacent tracts.) For reasons unknown, Hunsberger chose to live on the newly acquired tract which lay along the heavily trafficked road from Philadelphia to the town of Reading.

Known over the years by many names - The Great Road, the Philadelphia to Reading Turnpike, Ridge Pike, Old Route 422 - the road is still one of the most traveled in Montgomery County. It was officially opened in 1718. From 1781 to 1880, it was used by a stage line out of Philadelphia. Between 1810 and 1815, the period when Hunsberger purchased the property, the surface and width of the road was improved to make it a Toll Road, 29 miles in length and at a cost of \$7000 per mile. It was again improved in 1890 with rolled stone and a hardtop surface. Although a modern Route 422 By-Pass route has been built, old 422 is still a major thoroughfare to Reading or Philadelphia, carrying much inter-county traffic and still exerts a strong influence on use of this property.

The 61 acres purchased by Hunsberger in 1813 included several walled-in springs, the log house and log barn. Isaac made improvements such as the bakehouse, a smokehouse, icehouse, wagonhouse, cistern, and other farm buildings, as well as the brick and stone house and a stone-and-frame barn. At Isaac's death, the heirs sold the farm to Ezekias Krause in 1856 for \$5,629.93, and in 1884, it was purchased by Horace Kohl for \$7000. During ownership of Krause, a porch that wrapped around the western gable was built, and in 1893, the Kohl family lowered the four first floor facade windows

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2HUNSBERGER, ISAAC, HOUSE
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

to full length Victorian sash. This was at the wish of Mrs. Kohl who wanted a better view of the traffic on the newly improved road. Either Krause or Kohl replaced the front door and added the Victorian screen door shown in the accompanying photograph. In 1926, a daughter-in-law, Mrs. Bertha Kohl, had the frame two-floor addition built into the niche created by the kitchen ell. She also removed the west porch, and it was at her direction that the original walk-in fireplace was reduced for a more direct exit to the back yard and farm buildings.

Deaths in the Kohl family led to sale of the farm in 1940 to John J. Yeakle, a neighboring chicken farmer, who rented the farmhouse to a widow, Mrs. Stella Astheimer, for a number of years. After 1950, the house, with its two stairways, was rented as two units to two unrelated families. It was again sold in 1972 as a vacant property to Stanley L. Schlichter who lost it to bankruptcy sale in 1982. It was purchased by Limerick Golf Club Estates, Inc., for an 18 hole golf course centering off Lewis Road at the back end of the Hunsberger farm. The land fronting on Old 422, reduced to 16 acres including the house and farm buildings, was planned for a high density development of condominiums and townhouses. Fearing the house would be razed, The Limerick Township Historical Society, on September 28, 1984, leased the house and bakehouse on less than one acre of ground from Limerick Golf Club Estates, Inc., for \$1.00 a year on a 75-year lease with the intention of eventual purchase.

When Limerick Township Historical Society leased the property, it had had at least ten years of vacancy during which time it had become overgrown and dilapidated. The 1926 ground floor, without cellar, had rotted beyond repair, vines were climbing in windows. There were holes in the roof, and a general condition of abandonment held sway. The road was again widened, taking the front lawn and most yard trees. For the next several years, the Society reroofed, replaced rotted supports with deep concern for keeping original elements wherever possible, upgraded electrical, plumbing and heating systems, installed fire and smoke alarms, and generally secured the building against vandalism, and repainted inside and outside. No changes were made to the floor plan or basic features. The Society moved into the Hunsberger House as their headquarters in 1995.

Finding they, as renters, were ineligible for grants, the Society struggled with township ordinances and the Golf Club owners until a solution was worked out whereby the township allowed the Golf Club a variance on total acreage so that the club could donate the house and bakehouse to the Society, which happened in 1994. The Society uses the two main floors of the dwelling for offices, a museum, a library, display and conservator rooms, and the attic for storage. It is open to the public regularly one day a week and by appointment at other times. Their long range plans will restore the bakehouse/summer kitchen and a reminder of the bake oven. The very limited area given them, and the positioning of the bakehouse, precludes complete reconstruction of the bake oven.

The Isaac Hunsberger House and its accompanying bakehouse is a significant example of rural vernacular Georgian architecture which can be found in many farm homes in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3HUNSBERGER, ISAAC, HOUSE
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Southeastern Pennsylvania. This style, ranging locally from the 1790s through the 1840s, is characterized in Montgomery County by a 2-story, 5-bay front, 2-bays deep with fairly steep gable roof that allows considerable standing space in the attic for additional rooms. They were frequently ell-shaped, the kitchen being a full rear room with separate box-winder stairway to the upper floors. A rural vernacular Georgian house will differ from the classic Georgian house in size and proportion, and in lack of pediments or architectural decoration both inside and outside.

The main internal element found in the rural vernacular Georgian house is a central stair hall that has an outside door both front and rear. It is flanked by one room on each side of the hall. Ceiling heights will be a moderate 7-8 feet high, rarely higher in the country form. The front door will not have sidelights, nor transom, and usually is a six or eight paneled door backed with heavy planks on the inside. The Hunsberger House meets this description except in the front door which has two full-long panels with heavy moldings and rounded top and bottom instead of the usual 6 or 8 smaller panels. The front door most probably was changed in 1893 when the full length windows were installed, although its design is somewhat earlier. The door reveals, however, display the smaller, squarish panels of the 1827 period of the interior doors, declaring that the front door is a replacement of an earlier door.

The unusual feature of the Isaac Hunsberger House is its early use of a combination masonry of brick into stone. Essentially a stone house, Hunsberger individualized his dwelling by using a more expensive material (brick) on the full facade and joining it into the less expensive native stone. Brick was more expensive in labor, for in 1827, brick was generally fired on the spot or at best in a nearby kiln. It took time and expended labor far in excess of other building materials, and, therefore, was more expensive at that period. There were no brick companies in Limerick Township at 1827 although there was a great quantity of clay soil with which to make brick; therefore, it is probable that Hunsberger built his own kiln to burn the bricks for his house. This would account for some of the ten years between purchase and building.

After 17th century use of logs, the building material of choice in Limerick Township and surrounding townships before 1850 was predominantly stone. Brick was almost exclusively reserved for Philadelphia and more urban centers, rarely for farmhouses until mid-century. As brick companies began to proliferate after 1850, it became both economical and stylish to build in brick. By the end of the century, it was more upscale to build three sides in brick with a cut stone facade.

The Isaac Hunsberger House is an outstanding and unique example of early combination masonry. The use of Flemish bond brick work for the facade, and the quoining of brick into finely laid native stone end walls are unusual features at 1827, or even much later. It is indicative of high quality construction with a desire for artistic expression. No other examples have been found anywhere in the area of brick fronts on stone houses at 1827, nor at any later dates. There are many vernacular Georgian farmhouses and townhouses that have accommodated Victorian windows and stylish porches, even introducing cross-gable roofs and Gothic windows, but no other example of combined brick and stone masonry has been found in the area of Limerick Township either before or after 1827.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Hunsberger, Isaac, House
Montgomery County, PA**

Section number 9 Page 1

Astheimer, Grace. Personal interview. 21 July 1999.

Bean, Theodore W., History of Montgomery Township, "Limerick Township by William Buck," 915-919.

Court Records. Montgomery County Courthouse, Airey and Swede Streets, Norristown, PA.

Hunsberger, George S. The Hunsbergers: A Portion of the Genealogical History of a Few Swiss Hunsbergers, 1969. Chapters I, V, IX.

Kelley, George. History of Limerick Township. Private Publication, 1986.

Kirland, Marion Kohl. Personal interview. 22 July 1999.

Lichtenwalner, Muriel E. Limerick Township: A Journey Through Time, 1699-1987. Limerick: Limerick Township Historical Society, 133-4.

Thomas, George, of Clio Group, Inc. "Limerick Township." Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey, 1980.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

HUNSBERGER, ISAAC, HOUSE
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Tax Parcel Number is 37 000409 3505. The less-than-one-acre property follows the tax parcel number boundaries exactly.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries for the Isaac Hunsberger House nomination are defined by the legal description of the deed. The house and bakehouse are all that remain of the 61 acre farm. Modern development has closed in around the dwelling, and a golf course has taken the back end of the farm. Nothing is left other than the two nominated buildings that could possibly meet criteria.

HUNSBERGER
HOUSE

PHOENIXVILLE QUADRANGLE
PENNSYLVANIA
75 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5964 IV SW
(PERTIOMENVILLE)

