

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rieser-Shoemaker Farm
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Cross Keys Road not for publication N/A
city, town Leesport (Bern Township) vicinity N/A
state PA code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19533

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>7</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Agriculture in Berks County: 1700-1945

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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 the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)**

Domestic: single dwelling
 Agriculture: animal facility
 Domestic: secondary structure
 Agriculture: agricultural outbuildings

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
 Agriculture: storage
 Domestic: secondary structure
 Agriculture: agricultural outbuildings

7. Description**Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)**

Federal
 Other: bank barn

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: stone
 walls: brick, stone, wood
 roof: tin
 other:

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Rieser/Shoemaker Farm consists of 137 acres, including level farmland, woods, meadows and a stream. The farm is located in the Schuylkill River Valley in Bern Township near the borough of Leesport. At present the land is leased to a nearby farmer who raises corn and a variety of crops. The house and barn are oriented to the south linear with Cross Keys Road and the stream to the rear. Auxillary dependencies and outbuildings stand in similar linear fashion behind the house and barn. The nine historic resources include seven vernacular style buildings and two contributing structures, dating from ca. 1820-1940. The principal buildings include a 2 1/2 story Federal style brick farmhouse ca. 1820, a stone bank barn ca. 1820, a group of brick, stone and frame outbuildings ca. 1820-1930, and a stone walled spring. The resources have few changes that interfere with their ability to portray the significant time period ca. 1820-1940.

The farm has 137 acres with 115 acres tillable and 16 acres of woodland. A fast flowing small stream runs through meadowland located north of the farmstead. The farmland is located on both sides of Cross Keys Road. The buildings are clustered among trees at the end of the lane which runs from the road. The five fields produce a variety of crops including, corn, wheat and oats. Tractor lanes lead to the fields north of Cross Keys Road. As with many modern farms the smaller fields needed for non-mechanized equipment have been replaced with fewer but larger fields to accommodate the larger mechanized equipment, but many of the older landscape features remain. The boundary of the farm is edged by trees and fencerows. The woods are located south of the road along the western edge of the field. Although the land at present is rented to a tenant farmer, the overall farm plan, the landscape and land use patterns have varied little since the Shoemakers purchased the property in 1938.

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The two-and-one-half story vernacular style brick house faces south and consists of three sections. The original three bay Federal section ca.1820 features Flemish bond design, 12/12 window sash, a doorway with Ionic pilasters and a shelf pediment, side-hall plan, end chimney. A two bay two-and-one-half story addition was added to the east ca.1850 and has 6/6 window sash, plain lintels, end chimney, same roof line and tin channel roof as main section. Both sections have a denticulated and molded fascia board on the front and rear of the house which architecturally unites both sections. A two bay two-and-one-half story brick kitchen was added later to the northwest corner of the house and has a lower tin channel gable roof line.

The main section and the 1850 addition have a double pile plan upstairs and down. The entrance hall of the main house is original with Federal details, an elegant curved stairway to the top floor, and chair rail with paneled dado. However, at the time of the addition Greek Revival details were added to the main house, and the trim on the outside of the main entrance and that on the parlor fireplace were made almost identical; both have the Ionic pilasters, pediment and other Greek Revival details. The chair rail remains throughout the main house, but the dado is intact only in the hall and on the front parlor wall. The door surrounds are molded with rosettes in squares. The parlor windows have molded trim and reveals. The upstairs trim is plain and has a fireplace in each of the two front bedrooms.

The 1850 addition was later made into a separate apartment with private kitchen and bath. This section has plain trim. The kitchen fireplace has been removed (now used as a stove alcove), but the room retains the narrow Victorian tongue-and-groove ceiling and wainscoting.

The kitchen addition has 6/6 window sash with one room downstairs and two on the second floor. The kitchen has wide tongue-and-groove wainscoting. The original fireplace has been removed although from the placement of the support arch it is possible to determine it was located in the northwest corner of the kitchen. The house has three separate attics and basements. There are back porches on the two additions.

The five bay, Standard Pennsylvania Barn (Ensminger) with closed forebay is banked to the south, has stone gable ends, cut stone facade a tin roof and louvered windows. The standard roof truss system has canted queen posts, a metal haytract is located on the roof ridge. The second level or threshing floor has two hay lofts and a forebay granary. The ground or stable level exhibits double summer beams, original stalls, troughs, hayracks, walkways and ladders to the hay lofts, the

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partitions have stone foundations. Painted on one walkway partition - S. H. Spatz - 1844 & H.L., C.W., "WFN-1858". There is a two story rear shed type addition with a wire corn crib attached-- equipment room on the bottom level and a granary on top. A frame milk house with shed type tin roof is attached to the west side.

The two bay one-and-one-half story stone summer kitchen located north of the main house, has pegged windows 6/6 window sash with a spring channel in the basement and a low walk-in fireplace with wooden crane on the ground level. The first floor has a vertical board fireplace wall containing the fireplace a storage closet and winder stairway to the floor above. The molded trim and chair rail are intact.

The date of the auxiliary dependencies and outbuildings is difficult to determine, the brick spring house probably being built about the same time as the original portion of the house ca. 1820. The remainder of the buildings were built between 1870 and 1930. The garage being the last building constructed.

Spring house - brick one-and-one-half story west of the summer kitchen has a brick retaining wall on two sides. The spring channel is located on the west side of the lower level. There are doors on both levels and a grape arbor over the lower doorway.

Wagonshed/corn crib - frame, vertical sided, two levels, original hardware, a tin gable roof and a stone foundation located northwest of the barn adjacent to the garage. There is a corn crib on each end with entrances to the cribs from the outside.

Wagonshed/pig sty/chicken house - two story frame vertical siding and a tin gable roof located northeast of the barn. Pigs on bottom chickens on top.

Garage - one story, two car garage constructed of corrugated tin with a gable roof located adjacent to the wagonshed, and painted the same dark red color. It has 6/6 window sash and paneled shutters.

There are two contributing structures; one is a walled spring located east of the summer kitchen. This spring has waist high stone walls and is partially roofed with frame vertical siding. A white wood picket gate provides entry. The second structure is a two level frame vertical sided chicken house with a shed type tin roof west of the spring house.

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This farmstead, as others in Berks County has had changes over the years: outbuildings have been torn down and new ones added. The barn has had a bank end addition, however, the interior, as far as can be determined, is basically intact. The alterations to the house have been more complicated taking place over a period of over a hundred years. The Federal core is basically intact with Greek Revival trim added later. However, a solid wall replaced a door from the second floor hall to the front bedroom. A portion of this bedroom was then made into a bath. In the kitchen addition a portion of one of the bedrooms was also made into a bath. It is not possible to date the two additions to the house with certainty, although ca. 1850 for the larger seems plausible with the smaller kitchen addition being later. The three house basements were all cemented. The two kitchens were also remodeled with the fireplaces being removed and new sinks and cabinets installed. The remainder of the buildings seem to be intact, changed very little inside or out. In the spring house and the summer kitchen the spring rooms were cemented and the water channeled. The landscape portion of the district has had several changes over the years, as with many modern farms the smaller fields needed for non-mechanized equipment have been replaced with fewer but larger fields to accommodate large mechanized equipment. But as explained earlier many of the older landscape features remain including treelined boundaries, woodland, fencerows, meadows, stream and indicate the integrity of the landscape is intact. These changes do not interfere with the essential physical features that enable the historic resources to convey their past identity and character and portray the significant time period ca. 1820 to 1940, the cut-off date for National Register eligibility.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture
Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1820-1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Rieser/Shoemaker Farm is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, and C. This farm is significant for its long, continuous association with agriculture in Berks County being representative of a pattern of diversified family farms in the county. This farmer chose not to comply with the new regulations and go into large scale dairy operations. As a result the farm continued general farming raising a variety of crops, chickens and pigs but enlarging fields and adding and enlarging buildings to accommodate the era of farming mechanization. The property is an architecturally significant example of a farm complex possessing excellent integrity of its building and landscape features; the farmhouse with its beautiful Federal detailing, its intact ca.1820's barn with outbuildings and dependencies, its landscape including lanes, fields, meadows, woodland and streams. It is a well preserved example of what was, at the turn of the century, a prosperous Berks County farm.

Originally at the time of the land grant the property contained 162 acres. The proprietaries granted the land to Henry Rieser in 1725. It was one of several Penn patents obtained by the family. The Riesers were millers, and selected land on a small fast running stream eight miles north of the Indian trading post which later became the City of Reading. On one of the land parcels, approximately 1/4 mile from this farm is the Rieser house and mill (National Register (1989)). Although the Riesers were millers by trade, operating a commercial business in flour and or feed, they also farmed the land providing the food needs of the family.

See continuation sheet

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The farm was owned and passed down in the Rieser family approximately 175 years. In 1899 it was sold by Sara the widow of Jonathan Rieser to Howard Latschaw. William Schlappich purchased the property in 1933 at a sheriff sale. He sold the property to his daughter and son-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Breneiser. In 1938 it was again put up for sheriff sale, and was purchased by Luther and Anna Shoemaker, who continued the long tradition of farming by operating the farm during WW II.

The buildings in this complex represent a complete farm property constructed over a period of 100 years. The barn has one of the most intact stables found in the survey. It is virtually unchanged since its construction ca. 1820. Unlike many of the barns surveyed it was never altered to conform to dairy codes, and it has dirt floors, wood stalls troughs and other details of an early barn. The other outbuildings and dependencies exhibit, except as noted, the same unchanged appearance inside and out.

The Rieser/Shoemaker Farm has similar characteristics, and land use of other farms that were surveyed. The house and barn are oriented to the road. Its stream and several springs provided a more than adequate water supply for the farm. Although all of the farms have circulation networks, the patterns of each are suited to the needs of the individual farm. The buildings on the Rieser/Shoemaker farm are clustered roughly in the center of the farm. A lane leads from Cross Keys Road to the farmstead buildings. Another lane leads north from the buildings, fords the stream crossing the meadow where it branches east; it then continues north to the farm boundary providing access to the northern fields. The road provides access to the field on the south side of Cross Keys Road. The boundaries of the farm are lined with trees and fencerows.

Although, the farmhouse in its details is unique, it is typical of the fact that many farmers, including the Dreibelbises (Richmond Township), and the Mertzs (Maxatawny Township) wanted their farmhouses to reflect, what they felt, was currently fashionable. (In truth their tastes were often dated.) All of these farmhouses were basically brick vernacular with high style details. The outbuildings on these farms are the simple vernacular "form follows function style". The same basic building types are found on all of these farms including banked forebay barns, chicken houses, pig stys, wagonsheds, corn cribs, milk houses, equipment sheds, combination wagonsheds/corn cribs. They complement one another in workmanship, in the use of brick and frame as their

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predominant construction materials and in their setting. (The farmstead buildings, surrounded by farmland are clustered among trees at the end of a lane.) The original Rieser/ Shoemaker farm buildings seem to be constructed earlier in the 19th century rather than later in that century as are the Dreibelbis and those of the Mertz-Boyer farm.

The Rieser/Shoemaker Farm, in its architecture and setting, in its long agricultural tradition is a fine example of a farm in continuous use, changing to meet modern diversified farm practices while retaining the integrity of its buildings and landscape features.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Berks County Conservancy

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 137 acres

UTM References

A	1 8	4 1 7 1 3 0	4 4 7 6 1 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	4 1 7 1 8 0	4 4 7 5 1 3 0

B	1 8	4 1 7 0 1 0	4 4 7 6 2 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 8	4 1 7 1 3 0	4 4 7 5 1 5 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Louise Emery, Consultant
 organization Berks County Conservancy date June 1991
 street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone (215) 372-4992
 city or town Wyomissing state PA zip code 19610

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Berks County Agricultural Survey 1990-1991. Records at Berks County Conservancy, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania.

Berks County Township Map, M.S. Henry and M.K. Boyer, 1854.

Berks County Township Map, H.F. Bridgens, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1862.

Deeds, Recorder of Deeds Office, Berks County Court House, Reading, Pennsylvania.

Ensminger, Robert S., PENNSYLVANIA BARNS, An Examination of the Origin, Evolution, Form and Distribution of Forebay Bank Barns in North America, Kutztown University, Kutztown, Pennsylvania, an unpublished manuscript.

Illustrated Historical Atlas Of Berks County , Pennsylvania, Reading Publishing House, Reading, Pennsylvania, 1876.

Mongomery, Morton L., History of Berks County Pennsylvania, Philadelphia: Evert, Peck and Richards, 1886

Van Dolsen, Nancy, CUMBERLAND COUNTY, An Architectural Survey, Cumberland County Historical Society, Science Press , Ephrata, Pennsylvania, 1990.

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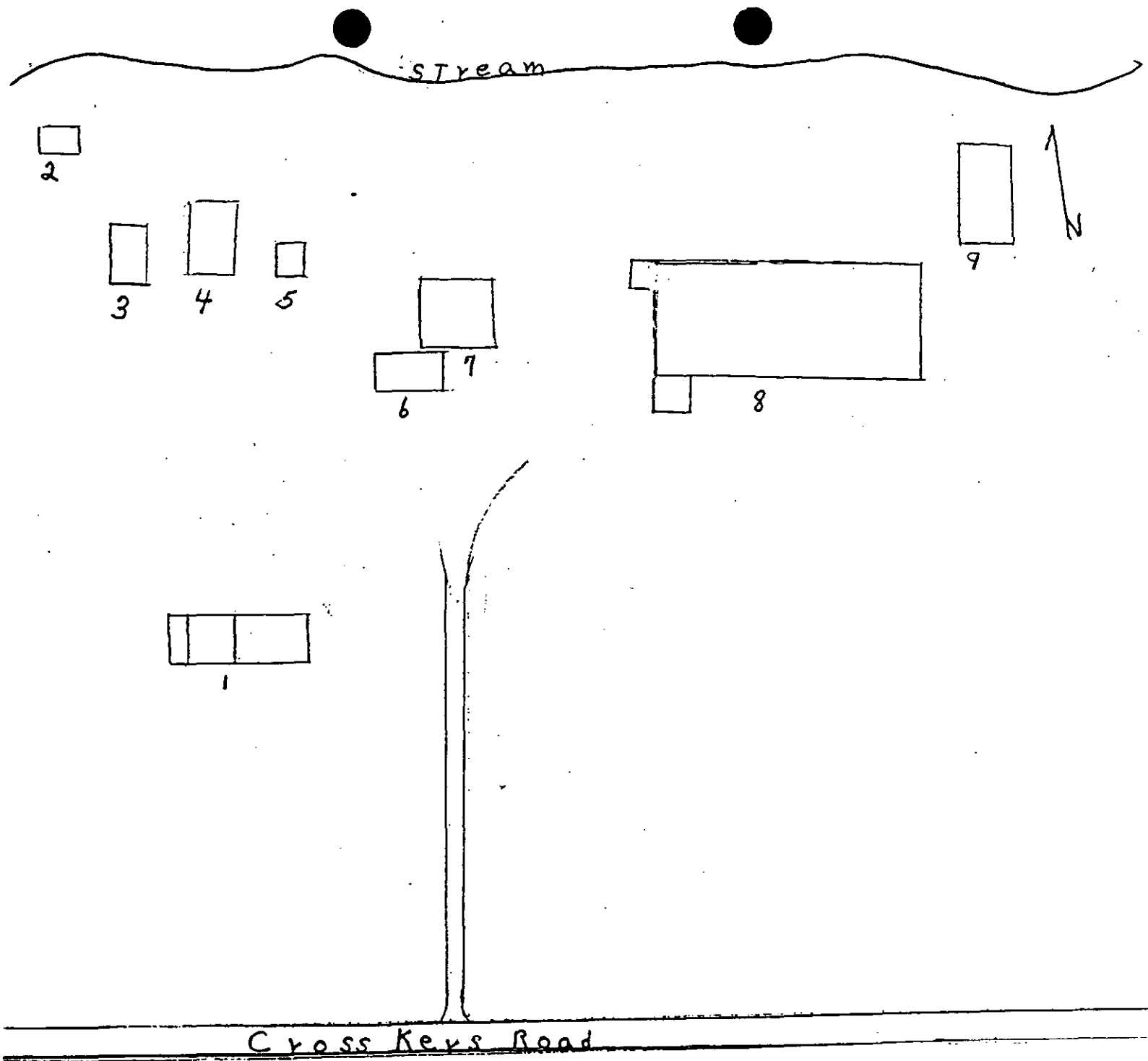
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Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is the same as the farm boundary. The boundary of the farm is tree lined. The boundary description is found in Berks County Deed Book 763, page 685, dated February 18, 1938.

Boundary Justification

The present boundary of the farm is the historical boundary of the farm for the past 50 years. It includes the buildings and landscape features representative of a nineteenth century farm. The nominated acreage is the known property to be associated with the farm. Research failed to determine what additional land may have been associated with the farm. The entire farm qualifies for the National Register under the criteria set forth in this nomination. Because the nomination is based primarily upon the historical and agricultural values of the entire property, the farm boundary is proposed as the boundary of the historic district.

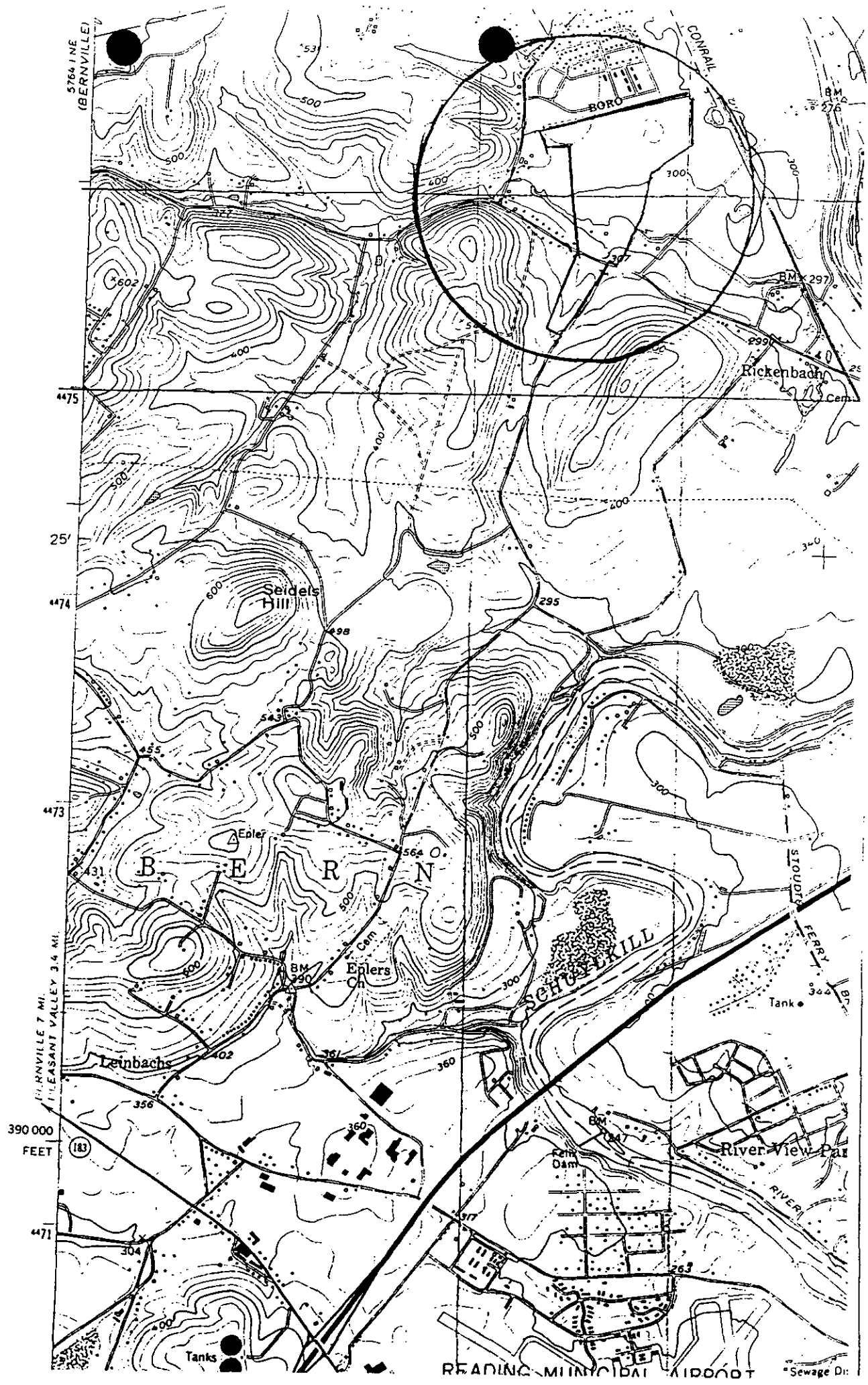


THE RIESER/SHOEMAKER FARM - BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Farmstead Plan

- 1 - Farmhouse
- 2 - Chicken House
- 3 - Brick Spring House
- 4 - Summer Kitchen
- 5 - Walled Spring
- 6 - Garage
- 7 - Wagonshed/corncrib
- 8 - Barn
- 9 - Wagonshed/pig sty/chicken house

not to scale



5764 INE
(BERNVILLE)

4475

25'

4474

4473

390 000
FEET

4471

READING MUNICIPAL AIRPORT Sewage Di: