

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 Merkel Mill
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Dreibelbus Station Road not for publication N/A
city, town Greenwich Township vicinity N/A
state Pa code Pa county Berks code 011 zip code 19534

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Gristmills in Berks County

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)

Agriculture/Processing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other; gristmill

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone

wood

roof slate

other metal

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Merkel Mill is located along the Maiden Creek south of Lenhartsville in Greenwich Township. The area surrounding the mill is hilly and wooded. The Maiden Creek Furnace was located in this vicinity during the mid 1800's, and the furnace stack is still standing about one-half mile north of the mill. The bed of the former Wannamaker, Kempton and Southern Railroad passes along the road east of the mill. The two historic resources on the property are the watercourses (dam, pond, and races) and one contributing building, a 2 1/2 stories plus basement banked vernacular style mill with a slate gable roof, rebuilt 1875. The resources have few changes that interfere with their ability to depict the significant time period.

The mill measures 40'5" by 50'9" with a 100' frame storage addition and loading platform on the north side. There is a small frame one seat out-house, with a half-moon cut-out on the door at the southwest corner of the building. The front or east elevation has a platform scale in front and a shed-type roof between the entry (first floor) and second floor. The frame brackets on each end holding the shed roof have heart shaped cut-outs outlined in white paint. There is a window on either side of the four paneled Dutch door on the first floor although the window on the right is boarded. The two upper floors have a window on either side of a door, the hoist hood is an extension of the roof ridge. The north side lower level has the stone segmented headrace arch, a door and an entry door made at a later date. A passage-way runs adjacent to the mill under the addition, the first floor has a door and three windows (although one is covered by the addition), this is now the main entrance to the mill, the second floor has four windows. The south elevation has a window and a large door on the lower level and four windows on the two upper floors. The west or rear elevation has a stone, segmented waterwheel bearing arch on the lower or basement level, and two windows on each of the three upper floors, with one window in the attic. The windows in the mill have 6/6 sash. There are brick chimneys on the north and south sides of the building. The building has stone corner quoins and S tie rods.

The hurst frame and two turbines are in place in the basement and wheel pit. The first floor has the office, an Airbanks scale and a Midget Marvel Mill

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manufactured by the Anglo-American Mill Co., Inc. The Midget Marvel is a "self-contained mill" in that practically all the machinery needed to produce white wheat flour is contained within each individual cast iron box. One pair of millstones with their cover and stone crane is in place. This floor also has bins, chutes, pulleys and the control wheel for the turbine and the turbine shafts.

The second level has an apartment for the Kline family. Mr. Kline when remodeling the mill for living quarters retained the open spaces where possible and exposed the original post and beam construction.

The attic of the mill has bins, the holst mechanism, and two receiving separators #301, The S. Howes Co., Eureka Works, Silver Creek, New York. There are two sifters, a corn sheller, and a double wheat scourer, manufactured by the S. Howes Co., and a Garden City brush scalper (a device to clean grain). The posts in the mill have chamfers with lambs tongue stops. The thick stone walls of the window jams are curved toward the sash.

This mill has an exceptionally fine water power system. A large dam across the Malden Creek has a 50' sluice and gate into the 100' headrace. Two more gates near the mill regulate the flow of water into the mill and an overflow back into the creek. The water rushes into the mill on the north side and exits underground on the south side. The water enters the tailrace through a segmented stone arch about 32' feet below the mill, (the remains of a sawmill are located here). The tailrace continues 1/10 of a mile before re-entering the creek. The watercourses all contain water and water is still running into the mill.

With the exception of the changes noted the exterior of the mill has been little altered, it is not known when the 100' loading platform was added, although it appears to be about 100 years old. The second floor of the mill has been remodeled to provide living quarters for the present owner, rooms have been partitioned off, and a bath and kitchen facilities have been added. The owner has maintained as much of the open mill space as possible, and has exposed the original post and beam construction. The changes made on the remaining floors were mainly those necessary to change from the waterwheel to turbines and the millstone technology to the roller technology. Two pair of millstones were removed and one pair retained, and the Midget-Marvel Roller Mill installed. The historic resources retain the essential physical features that enable them to convey their past identity and character and portray the significant time period c 1875 to 1939 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)

Industry
Architecture

Period of Significance

c 1875 to 1939

Significant Dates

c 1875

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 Merkel Mill is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. This mill is important for its association with the county gristmill industry between the years 1875 and 1939, being one of the first mills that used the new roller mill technology. Architecturally, this mill is representative of classic Berks County merchant mills of the period.

The original mill built by George Merkel burned shortly after his death in 1875. The mill was immediately rebuilt by his estate as a merchant type mill. In 1885 the owner Jacob K. Spang extensively remodeled the mill installing modern machinery. Spang installed a new technological innovation that had recently appeared on the Berks milling scene, the roller mill. (As in other conversions a pair of millstones was retained for feed and/or cornmeal production.) This innovation enabled the mill to increase production to twenty-five barrels of flour per day and stay competitive in the wheat flour trade. Research and survey has indicated that Spang was among the first group (1884-1885) of Berks millers to install the roller system.

Architecturally, the merchant mills and the Merkel Mill in particular had features the earlier, smaller custom mills did not possess. By the nature of the business (having to buy wheat in quantity to sustain increases in production) the merchant mill had a requirement for storage capacity that the early custom mills had never faced. An additional floor or two was the solution to the need for space for storage and additional machinery. Another feature of these mills was more and larger windows. This gives the Merkel mill a general feeling of light and space unknown in earlier mills. The Merkel mill like other merchant mills found in the Berks County Gristmill Survey including the Seyfert Mill and the Merkel Mill (Richmond Township) have certain features in common: banked 2 1/2 stories plus basement, large size, rectangular configuration, stone construction, three gable end vertically aligned doors with a hoist hood above. The Merkel mill is a good, solid

See continuation sheet

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Merkel Mill

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building representative of Berks County merchant mills of the period, and is similar to other merchant mills found in the Berks County Gristmill Survey.

Morton Montgomery in his history of 1886, writes "On the Ontelaunee, a short distance below Lenhartsville, George Merkel built a stone mill, which was burned down in 1875. It was rebuilt by the Merkel estate, and remodeled in 1885 by the present owner, Jacob K. Spang. The mill has been supplied with a set of rollers and other modern machinery, enabling the production of twenty-five barrels of superior flour per day." This property, according to Montgomery was also the site of a forge at a very early date, he continues, "Near this mill Nicholas IAeger (Hunter) had a small forge at a very early day, and which was operated by Samuel V.R. Hunter until 1833, when George Merkel became the owner. He carried on the works until his death, in 1875. It was he who, in 1854, built the charcoal furnace known among iron men as Maiden-creek Furnace", and about the same time discontinued working the forge." (Slag found near the mill indicates the forge was nearby.)

The 1850 census shows the owner of the gristmill as being George Merkel with a capital investment of \$7,000, the mill having three pair of stones with a product value of \$6,000. One man operated the mill and ground 12,000 bushels of grain a year and earned \$14 a month. The maps of 1854 and 1862 also show Merkel as owning the property. The map of 1876 (a year after George's death) shows Kaufman, Bare & Company as owning the property. William M. Kaufman a cousin of George's was one of the administrators of his estate.

It is not certain when the original mill was built on this site, although it was probably built by George Merkel between the time he purchased the property in 1833 and 1850. When it burned in 1875 it was immediately rebuilt by his estate.

George Merkel was the great grandson of George Merkel who had an early mill (1749) along the Moselem Creek in Richmond Township. The Merkel family were among the most prominent of the milling families in Berks County, passing the trade down through six generations. It would have been quite predictable, therefore, when George acquired this property in 1833 that he would have constructed a mill.

This mill and the Merkel family history show how families like the Seyfert and Merkel were able through their success in milling to expand into other enterprises, in both these cases, the iron industry. For over 100 years the mills and watercourses on this site have been associated with The Berks County Gristmill Industry supplying flour to the workers in the iron works, and also functioning as a merchant and custom mill. In later years the mill mainly ground animal feed. The last operating miller was Kershner who ceased operating in the 1950's.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Berks County Conservancy Multiple Property Nomination and Survey: Gristmills in Berks County, 1989

Morton L. Montgomery, History of Berks County in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Evert, Peck & Richards, 1886).

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

Acreeage of property Approximately 2.25 acres

UTM References

A	1 8	4 2 5 4 2 0	4 4 9 1 2 7 5
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	4 2 5 5 4 0	4 4 9 1 1 2 0

B	1 8	4 2 5 4 8 5	4 4 9 1 2 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			

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 1990
 street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone 215 - 372-4992
 city or town Wyomissing state PA zip code 19610

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Merkel Mill (Greenwich Township)

Verbal Boundary Description

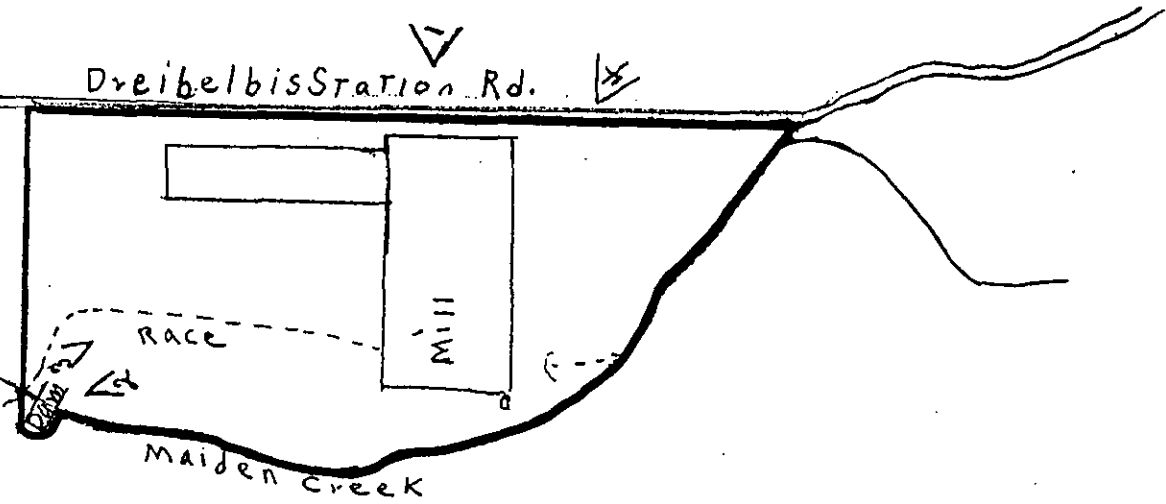
Starting at the southeast corner of the mill building and Dreibelbis Station Road proceed southerly approximately 200' to a point, thence proceed northerly along western side of the the Maiden Creek approximately 750' to the northwest corner of the mill dam, thence easterly approximately 250' to Dreibelbis Station Road, thence southerly along the western edge of the road approximately 300' to place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the mill and its water courses which contribute to the significance of the nominated property. The water power system is fully functional with water flowing through the head race and wheel pit and exiting through the tail race. Excluded are two houses on the opposite side of Dreibelbis Station Road from the mill which are not now associated with the mill property and which have not been specifically identified as having historic associations with the mill.

MERKEL MILL (Greenwich Township)

BERKS COUNTY, PA



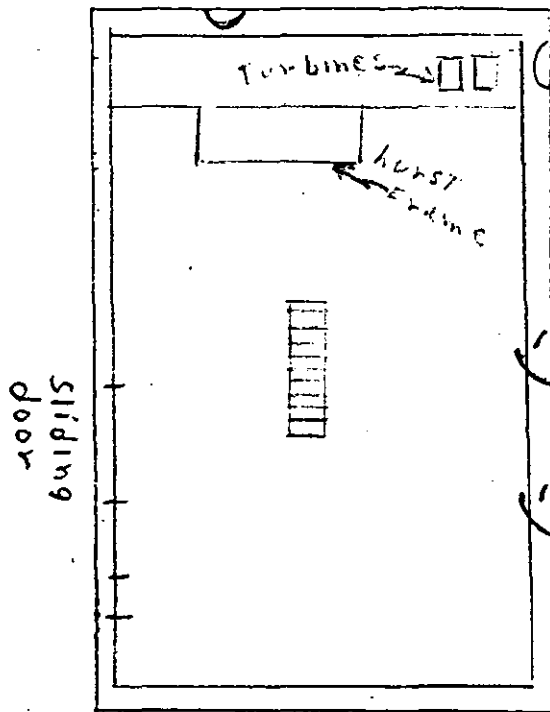
↑ N

Key
Boundary
Photo Direction

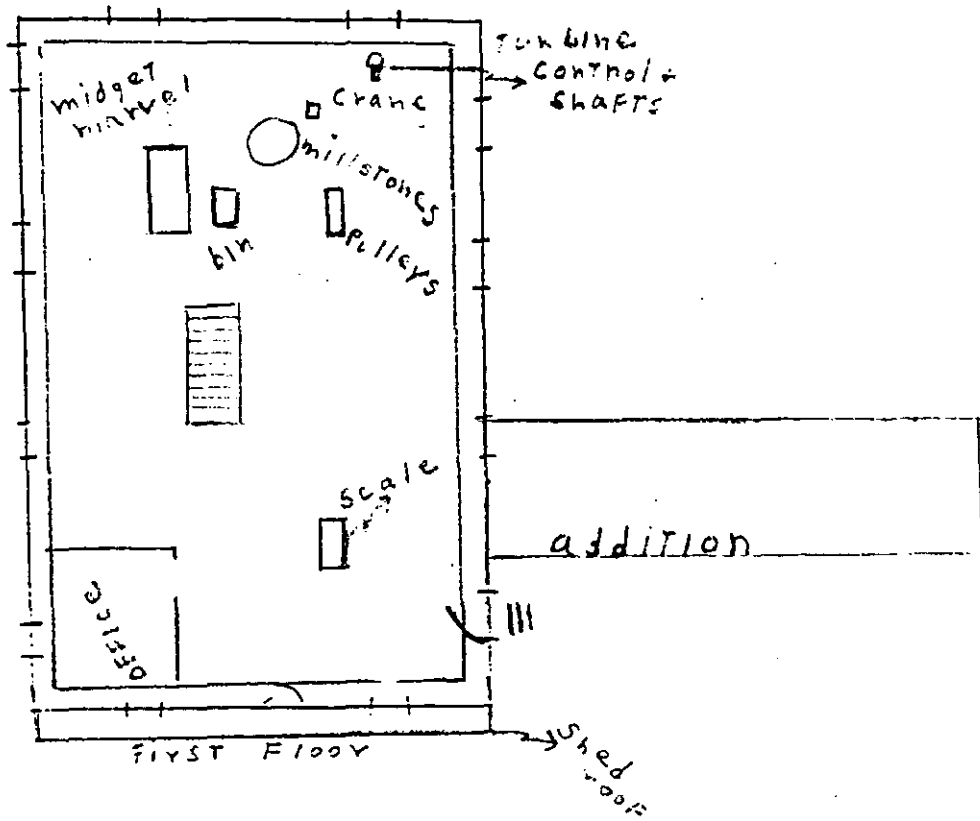
Not to Scale

MERKEL MILL (Greenwich Township)

BERKS COUNTY, PA



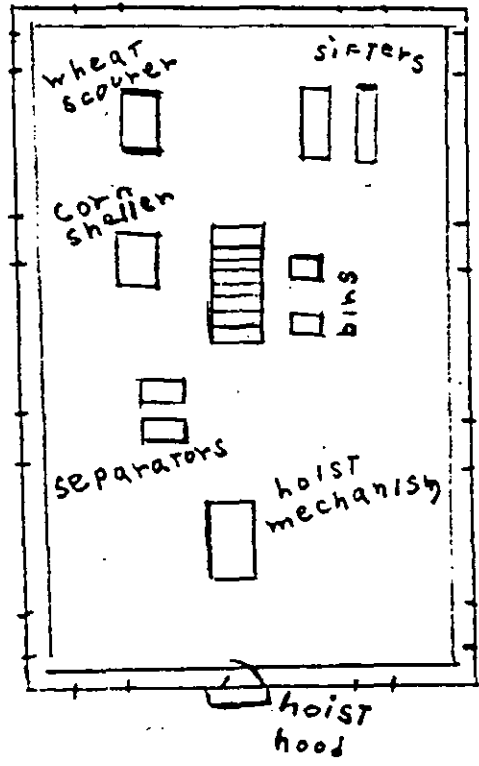
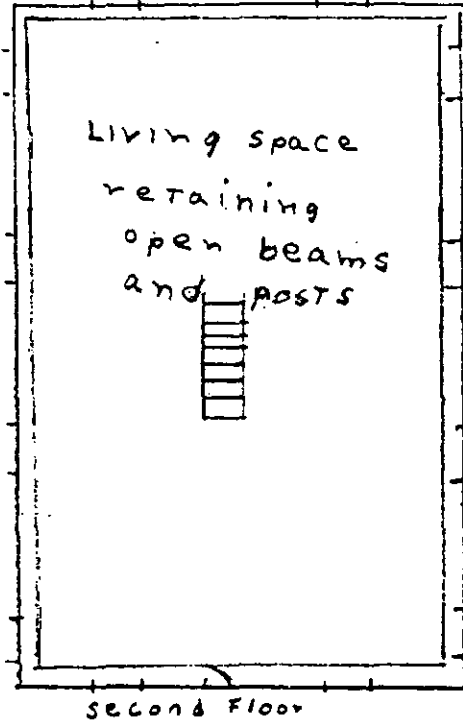
Basement

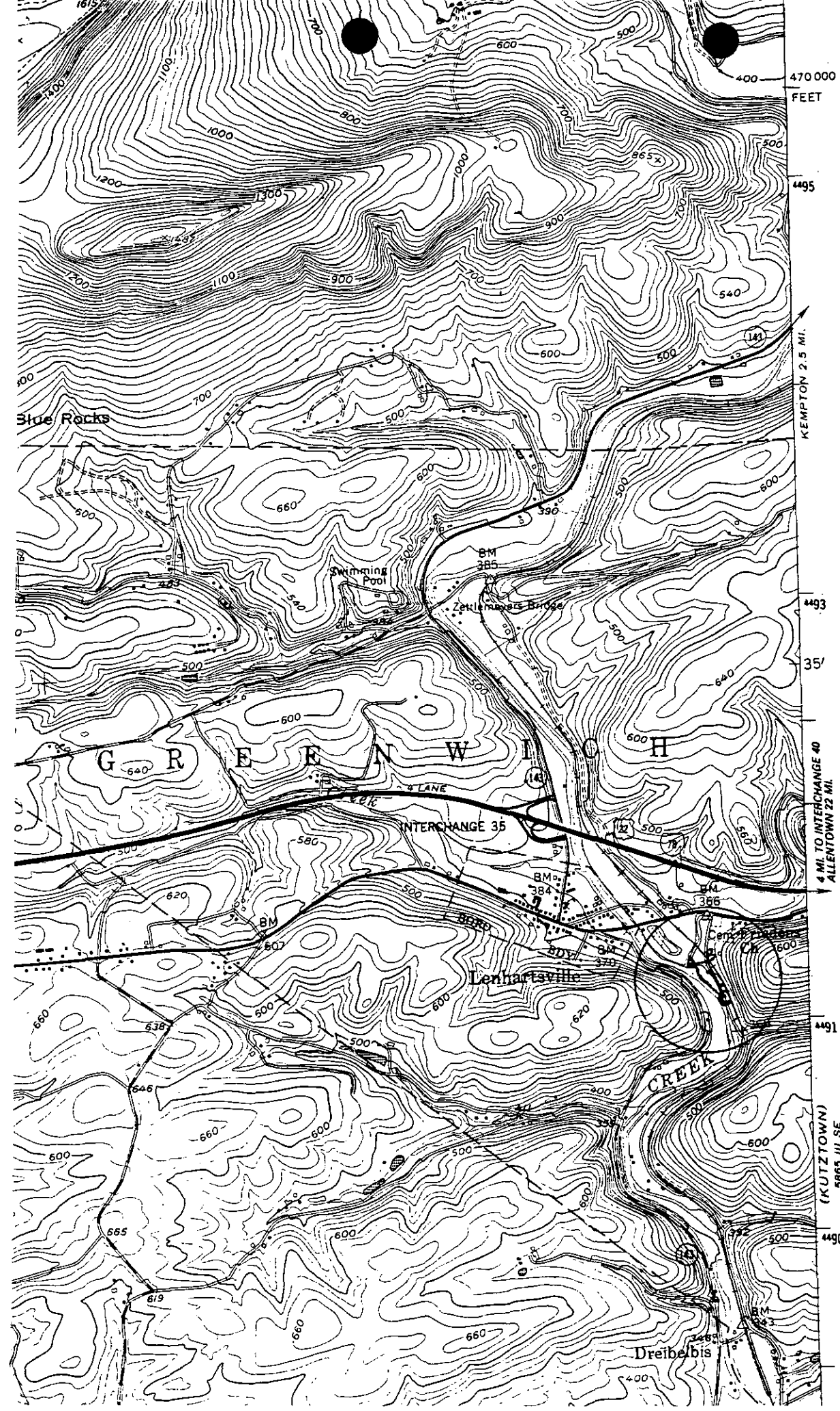


FIRST FLOOR

MERKEL MILL (Greenwich Township)

BERKS COUNTY, PA





Merkel Hill
 Berks County
 Hamburg Twp
 Zone 180
 A425420 4491275
 B425485 4491280
 C425540 4491120