

**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 Yoder Mill
other names/site number Renninger Mill

2. Location

street & number Yoder Road not for publication N/A
city, town Pikeville (Pike Township) vicinity N/A
state Pa code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19547

3. Classification

<p>Ownership of Property</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> public-local</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> public-State</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal</p>	<p>Category of Property</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> district</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> site</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> structure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> object</p>	<p>Number of Resources within Property</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Contributing</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Noncontributing</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>2</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ buildings</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>1</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ structures</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____ objects</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>3</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u> Total</td> </tr> </table>	Contributing	Noncontributing	<u>2</u>	_____ buildings	_____	_____ sites	<u>1</u>	_____ structures	_____	_____ objects	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total
Contributing	Noncontributing													
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings													
_____	_____ sites													
<u>1</u>	_____ structures													
_____	_____ objects													
<u>3</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/processingDomestic/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in useDomestic/single dwelling**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: gristmill

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls woodstoneroof asbestos

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Yoder Mill is located on Yoder Road, at the eastern edge of Pikeville. The setting is a 19th century village that has seen limited 20th century growth. A pond directly west of the mill has been recently reconstructed and is capable of furnishing power to the mill. A head race leads to the pond from Oysterville Creek. A tail race exits the mill on the east side. The nominated property includes two contributing buildings and one contributing structure: a two and one-half story frame gristmill, the water courses associated with the mill, and a stuccoed stone tenant house adjacent to the mill on the north. The mill and house exhibit good integrity and represent late nineteenth century design, overall, both in exterior features, and in the interior works of the mill.

The Yoder Mill measures 41' by 50' and is two and one-half stories plus basement. The basement level is stone, while the upper floors are of frame construction with horizontal "German" wood siding, painted red. The front gable end faces north, and is three bays wide with three vertically aligned mill doors under the hoist hood. The east side has an entrance to the basement level and a large stone arched opening where the tail race exits the wheel pit. The south gable is two bays wide on the first and second floors. The attic has three windows in the upper gable which were added to admit light to a workbench along this wall. This side of the mill faces the present road, although formerly the road passed by the front of the mill. The west side is four bays wide, with six-over-six sashed double hung windows and an entrance door reached by concrete steps to the first floor. An arched opening in the stone foundation accommodates the penstock which carries water into the wheel pit. The gable roof is wood shingle under asbestos. The southeast corner of the roof leaks and the building is generally in need of repair.

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Yoder Mill

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This mill represents several periods in the evolution of milling technology. The deep wheel pit that occupies the southern end of the mill basement reveals that at one time this mill had two vertical water wheels, with a drop of sixteen feet. Later, these wheels were replaced by turbines. In the present configuration, the remaining section of a wide penstock narrows significantly and forces water into a relatively small diameter Pelton turbine. In the gear pit next to the wheel house are located two massive hurst frames, among the largest observed in Berks mills. Each has its own set of wooden gears and large wooden upright shaft. The spur gear on the western side is extremely impressive in scale, at least twelve feet in diameter, while that on the east is perhaps eight feet across. The shaft on the west operated three pairs of millstones, while that on the east was connected to three other stones, now removed. A belt drive mechanism later was introduced on the east side, and used to power the roller mills that replaced the stones.

On the first floor are the three pairs of bedstones, the runner stones, which are French buhrs, and the cranes which are used to remove and sharpen the runner stones. These stones are aligned over the west hurst frame near the center of the building. To the east are the roller mills. The two smaller roller mills are size 12"x 6", one double and one single, manufactured by the Stephens Company in Canada. In addition there is one large "Sectional Roller Mill with Sifter Corrugation", Patent date February 6, 1883, manufactured by the John T. Noye Company of Buffalo, NY. This self-contained unit was used to process rolled oats. It is one full story in height and has an interesting elevator system featuring four side-by-side elevator legs within one boxed wooden shaft. The oats move through four separate pairs of rollers in being processed. This type of machine was not found in the other mills that were included in the Berks County survey. Another unusual piece of equipment in this mill is pair of small stones in the attic that were used to grind gypsum.

This mill has extensive sifting and cleaning apparatus for flour on the second and third floors. Bins, elevators, hoppers and conveyors are also largely in place. Bag hoist apparatus and a workbench with lathes are in the attic. In addition, parts removed from other mills are stored here, including some eighteenth century wooden power transmission equipment.

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The interior architecture of the mill reflects the 1885 period when it was rebuilt after a fire. The mill is well constructed as is necessary to support the demands of a large merchant mill producing flour and grain products. Stairways are located along the north wall, and the mill office is in the northeast corner. This office was heated by a stove. It has narrow vertical tongue and groove board walls. Some features appear to predate the period when the mill was rebuilt, such as the ladder stairs and the major structural components of the basement. The two enormous hurst frames and the wooden spur gears, lantern gears and shafts show no evidence of being burned and apparently escaped damage.

The present water courses of the mill have been improved within the past fifteen years. The head race extends about 2000 feet from Oysterdale Creek to a mill pond of approximately one acre. Water flows continually through the head race and exits the pond through an overflow sluice at the south side. If the mill turbine were operable, the water would enter through a steel pipe or pennstock from the east end of the pond to the wheel pit and on to the tail race which extends from the east side of the mill to the creek, about 500 feet.

North of the mill and east of the pond is located the miller's house or tenant house which roughly dates from the same period as the present mill building. This is a small stone house, covered with stucco, two and one-half stories high, rectangular in shape, three bays wide and two bays deep. It has a gable roof and is basically a solidly constructed, plain featured vernacular rural residence, similar to others in Berks County. At one time the tract was larger and included other farm buildings, but these associations have been discontinued as development patterns have changed.

The mill and the associated tenant house and water courses exhibit good integrity. The mill is not the first on the site, an earlier mill having burned c. 1883. The stone basement level may date from the earlier mill, built about 1796. The early wooden equipment in the gear pit represents this early period of technology. The upper stories of the mill are typical of the late 1880s in construction and milling equipment. Few changes were made subsequently other than extra windows being added to the south attic gable. The tenant house has had its exterior chimney and rear porch added. It retains its basic form and character.

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 _____
 Engineering _____

Period of Significance

c 1796 to 1939

Significant Dates

c 1796

c 1885

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 Yoder Mill is significant under National Register Criteria A, C, and D, in the areas of Industry, Architecture, and Engineering. This mill was a locally important merchant mill from 1885 to 1940. Its site at the northern end of the Oley Valley, a rich farming area, was a good business location. An 1816 map of Berks County shows that the original mill at this site, the Schall Mill, was one of six situated on the Oysterville Creek, a small tributary of the Manatawny. Each stream in the vicinity of the Oley Valley had numerous mill sites. Today, this is the largest of three mills still standing in Pike Township. In nearby Oley Township five gristmills remain as contributing buildings in the Oley Township Historic District. In Pike Township this mill and the Mill at Lobachville are eligible for National Register listing. Both are located in small villages that would in themselves qualify as Historic Districts in other contexts. Technologically, this mill is of interest because of its combination of millstone and roller mill machinery. Its two early hurst frames with wooden gearing are important artifacts that contribute to our understanding of milling history in Berks county. Architecturally, the mill typifies a late nineteenth century frame merchant mill and the associated tenant house complements the mill as a vernacular building of the period.

According to Montgomery's History of Berks County, Pennsylvania, George Schall built a mill on the family homestead at Pikeville in 1796. Schall was a farmer, a blacksmith, and operated a sawmill and gristmill at this site. In 1825 he was elected to the State Senate. His son, David Schall, founded the Dale Iron Forge in Washington Township, Berks County. His daughter, Catharine, married Dr. William Herbst, who became owner of the mill in the 1820s.

See continuation sheet

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Yoder Mill

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In 1850 this mill is listed in the census of manufacturing as having a capital of \$2,000 and processing 10,000 bushels of grain with a product value of \$8,000, making it one of the more productive mills in the township. In 1876, George Renninger ran the gristmill and sawmill here. However the old mill burned about 1883. According to Fegley in Among Some of the Older Mills in Eastern Pennsylvania, the mill was rebuilt and operated by Jonas Leshner in 1885. In the 1930s it was the property of Elias Yoder. Elias and Charles Yoder were the last to operate the mill, closing its doors in 1948.

The Yoder Mill and tenant house illustrate an industrial site of the late 19th century, also the period of significance for the village of Pikeville, when the majority of its houses were built. Pikeville grew as a township commercial center, with the gristmill and sawmill, a store, hotel, post office and shops. The village served the surrounding farm population as did the milling operation. The Yoder Mill is one of the better examples of a mill location which influenced the siting of a village.

The history of the Yoder Mill property, however, predates the history of the village. It was originally the Schall family homestead, established by George and Catharine Schall in 1757. George Schall, Jr. built the original mill c. 1796, another significant date for this site, since part of the foundations and works of the mill are believed to be incorporated in the present building. The mill, water courses, and tenant house were subdivided from the earlier farm or homestead in the twentieth century. Thus, a pattern of land use change and subdivision took place here over two centuries, part of the development pattern that still continues in rural areas.

The Yoder Mill is significant for its architectural form and structure. The frame construction of its upper floors is very unusual in Berks County where nearly all surviving mill buildings are of masonry construction. Only the Kohl Mill in Cumru Township, also built of wood, is similar in its scale, design and exterior material. The Spannuth Mill in Bethel Township is a large frame mill with a Mansard Roof, and pressed metal siding, simulating brick. The Diefenderfer Mill in Bechtelsville and the Thompson Mill near Gibraltar are frame with asphalt shingles. Most of these mills date after 1880, a time when many frame houses were built in rural areas, although stone and brick were favored building materials throughout most of the county.

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Yoder Mill

Section number 8 Page 3

The basement of the Yoder Mill has been noted as having especially heavy supports for the millstone floor with two huge hurst frames and fine sets of wooden spur gears, lantern gears, and heavy upright shafts. In this respect it is similar to the Nicholas Johnson Mill in Colebrookdale Township, whose power transmission machinery is considered the best example of its type in the county.

The combination of millstones and roller milling equipment has been seen in many local mills, where the more efficient flour production machines replaced some, but not all, of the millstones. Often the remaining stones would be used for grinding feed or cornmeal for the area farmers, rather than flour to be sold farther abroad to city residents. The one piece of equipment that was unique to this mill is the Sectional Roller and Sifter which processed rolled oats. With a patent date of 1883, this type of machine dates to the period when the mill was built. None other was noted in the Berks County Mill Survey. The small gypsum mill in the attic was also considered unusual. No equipment has been removed from this mill by its owners of the past twenty-five years. Rather, they have added parts from other mills that were dismantled in hopes of future restoration of this building as a working gristmill.

This mill survives with many others in Pike, Oley, Exeter and Amity Townships to illustrate regional milling history. Both the architectural features and engineering components of this mill, being of excellent integrity, add to our knowledge of milling as it was practiced in the Oley Valley, an important grain milling area in the county and the state.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- F.A. Davis, Illustrated Historical Atlas of Berks County, Pennsylvania 1876 (Reading: Reading Publishing House, 1876).
- L. Fagan, Township Map of Berks County Pennsylvania 1862 (Philadelphia: H.F. Bridgens, 1862).
- H. Winslow Fegley, Among the Older Mills In Eastern Pennsylvania: PA German Society, 1930.
- Morton L. Montgomery, History of Berks County in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Evert, Peck & Richards, 1886).
- Henry M. Richards, Map of Berks County 1816.

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 Approximately 13 acres

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>438670</u>	<u>4471750</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>18</u>	<u>439300</u>	<u>4471800</u>

B	<u>18</u>	<u>438570</u>	<u>4471940</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Phoebe Hopkins, Project Director
 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

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Yoder Mill

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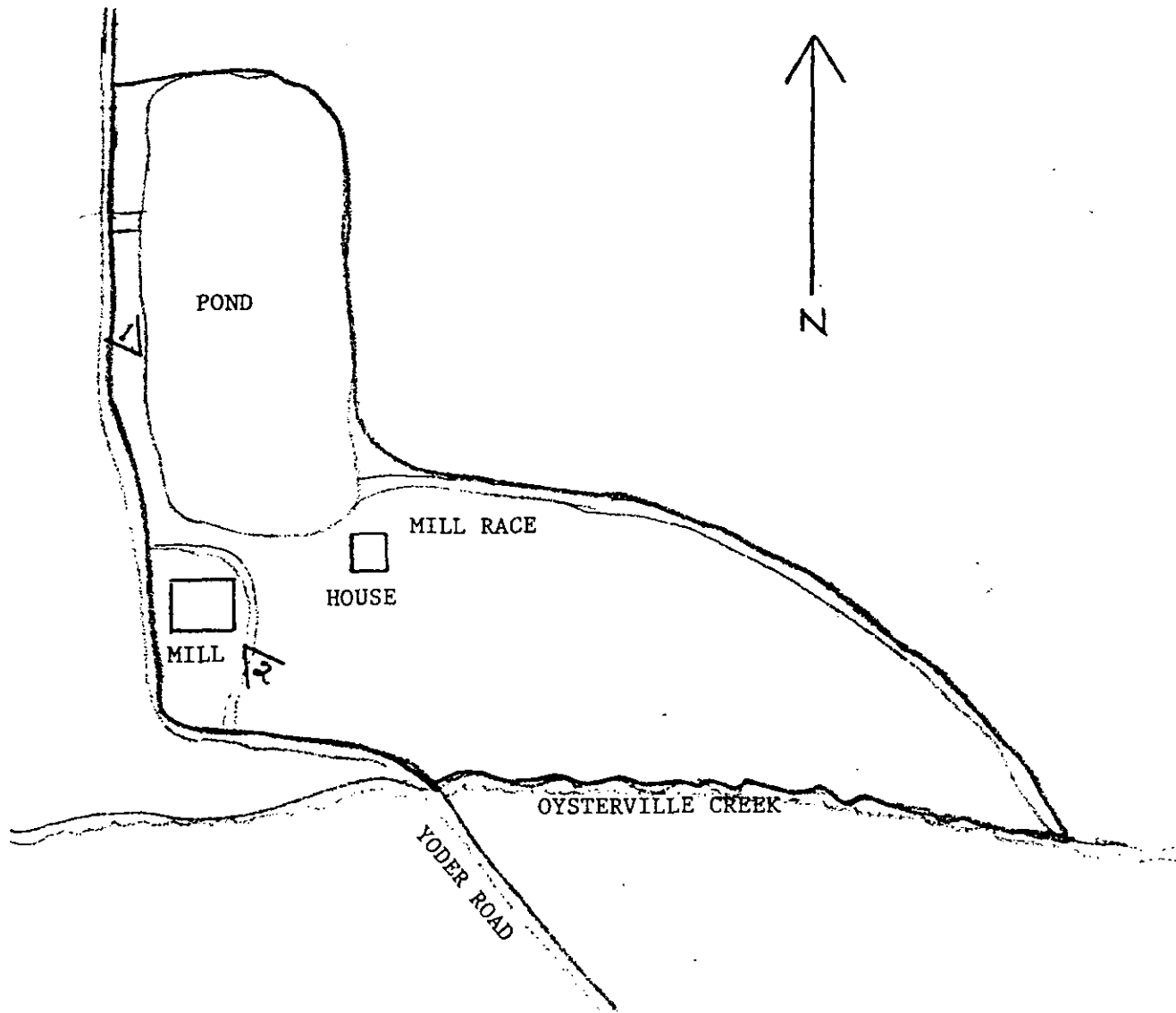
Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northeast corner of the Oysterville Creek bridge on Yoder Road, proceed northwesterly along the north and east side of Yoder Road to the north end of the mill pond, approximately 1,400 feet; thence southeasterly along northern end and east side of the pond and the north side of the head race to the creek, approximately 2,000 feet; thence westerly along the north side of the creek to the place of beginning, approximately 1,100 feet.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries have been drawn to include the two contributing buildings and one contributing structure in this nomination. The tenant house dates from the same period as the present mill and served as the miller's residence. The mill pond and mill race are in operable condition to furnish a water power supply to the mill, and are currently filled with water which exits the pond through the overflow rather than through the mill. Excluded are the farmstead across Yoder Road to the west which is under separate ownership, and the village of Pikeville to the north. The village and the properties along Yoder Road north of Oysterville Creek are considered eligible for National Register listing under another context, and were beyond the scope of the Berks County Gristmill study.

YODER MILL
BERKS COUNTY, PA



BOUNDARY ———
PHOTO VIEW >

YODER MILL
 BERKS COUNTY, PA

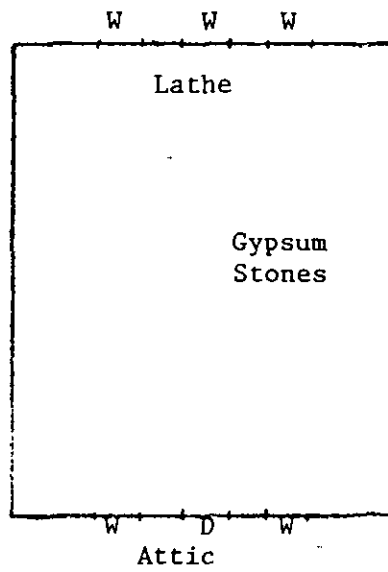
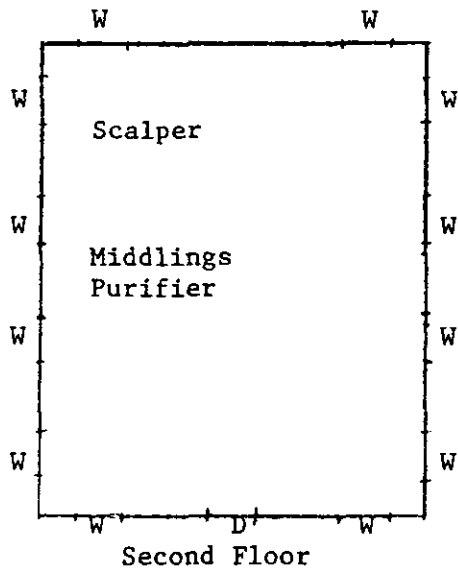
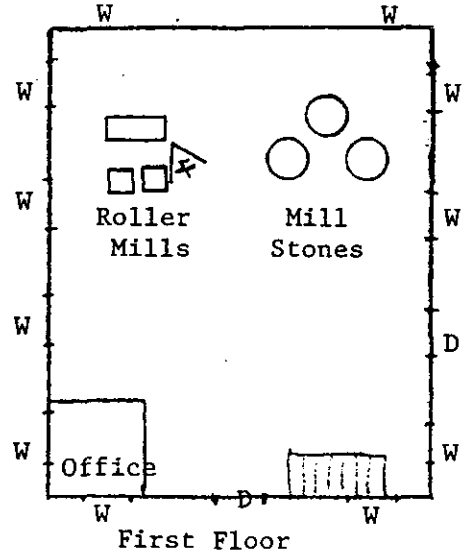
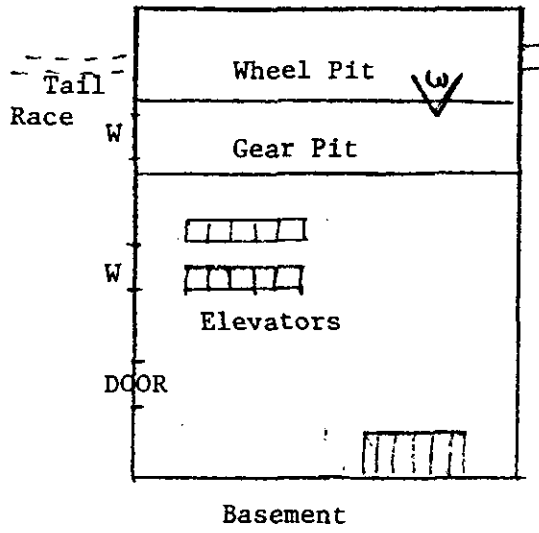


Photo View



The Mill at Lobachsville
Berks County
Manatawny Quad
Zone 18

A 437960 4473340

B 438540 4473870

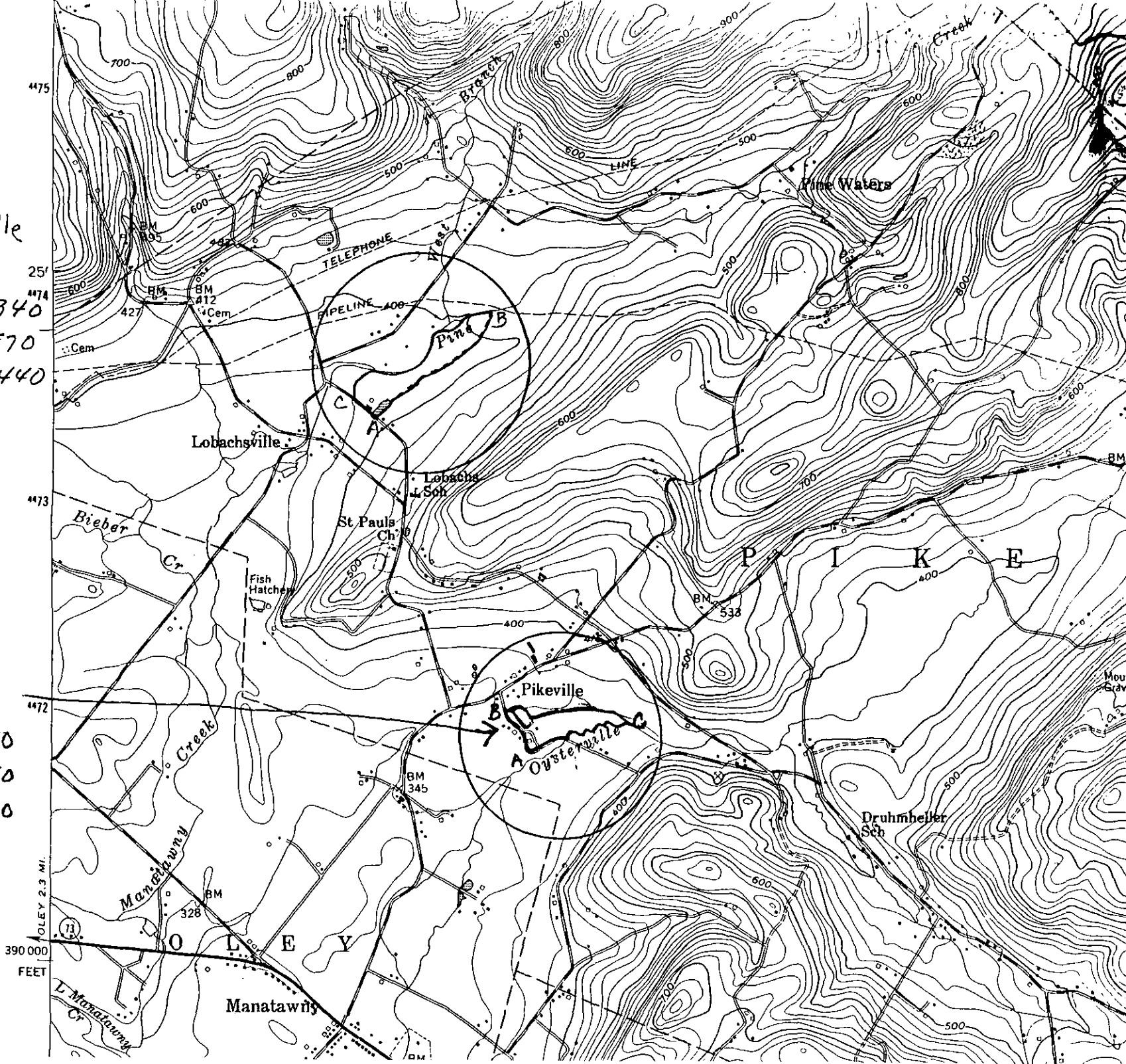
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Yoder Mill
Berks County
Manatawny Quad
Zone 18

● 438670 4471750

B 438570 4471940

C 439360 4471800



SCALE 2.3 MI.
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FEET