

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 Bahr Mill Complex
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Ironstone Drive not for publication N/A
city, town Colebrookdale Township vicinity N/A
state PA code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19512

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>11</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>13</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Cristmills 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/double dwellingAgriculture/out buildings

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

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

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: gristmill

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls stonewoodroof metalother asphaltslate

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bahr Mill and complex are located in a rural built-up area at the western end of the village of Gablesville on gently rolling terrain. The thirteen historic resources on the property include two contributing structures; a c 1850 stone and frame banked chicken house with vertical siding and shed type tin roof, a c 1890 stone and frame pig sty with tin roof, and eleven vernacular style contributing buildings; an 1897 stone, banked 2 story plus basement mill with tin gable roof, a c 1820 2 1/2 story, stucco over stone farmhouse with gable strip shingle roof, a c 1820 1 story, brick smokehouse with frame addition, a c 1820 banked frame sawmill with stone foundation and a tin gable roof, a c 1820 2 story stucco over stone store with a 2 story frame addition and gable strip shingle roof, a c 1890 1 story frame storage shed with a gable strip shingle roof, a c 1890 frame shoemaker's shop with gable strip shingle roof, c 1890 double transverse frame combination wagon shed and corncrib with tin roof, a c 1920 small frame outhouse, a stone bank barn with frame forebay, solid ramp, slate roof, rebuilt c 1880, c 1930 frame garage with four rear windows and shed type tin roof. All of the buildings maintain their integrity having few changes that interfere with their ability to convey the significant time period.

The c 1820 stucco over stone farm house has 2/2 windows having six windows on the upper level of the front facade and five windows and two doors on the entry level. According to the owners the back porch was added at a very early date, the front porch added c 1920. Originally the farmhouse was a single family dwelling but in mid-19th century it was enlarged and is now a two family home for the owners Lawrence and Raymond Bahr. The smokehouse has a large open fireplace with crane containing two large iron kettles.

The c 1820 two story stucco over stone small general store, still in operation, has a door and two windows on the entry level, and two windows on the upper level of the east gable end, the south side of the store has a two story frame addition with two doors on the entry level.

The present mill replaced an earlier oil mill. The mill measures 36'6" x 30'3", and has 6/6 windows. The main entrance to the mill is on the south facade which has two windows on either side of a door on the entry level and four windows on the upper level. The east gable end has two windows and a door on the basement level,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bahr Mill Complex

Section number 7 Page 2

three windows on the first floor and two windows and a door on the second floor, the hoist hood is an extension of the roof ridge. The west facade of the mill has a segmented headrace arch into the wheel pit, three windows and a door on the first floor and three windows on the second. The north facade having two windows on the basement level, four windows and a door on the first floor and three on the upper level. The tin gable roof is topped with a wooden cupola containing the power transmission for the cable drive to the barn.

The headrace from Ironstone Creek entered the mill through a stone entry arch in the west gable end and exited through an arch in the east gable end, flowed under the road and then into the store basement and along the east side of the barn. Dam and race were destroyed during Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Although now operated by tractor, the large wooden waterwheel is in place in the interior wheel pit at the west end of the mill. This waterwheel is in excellent condition and was made to order in the 1920's by millwrights of the Hake Co., Reading replicating the earlier wheel and measures 13' in diameter and 5' wide; it is one of only two remaining in the county.

This mill served a dual purpose being used to grind grain for animal feed and to manufacture wood handles, rakes, hubs and wheel spokes. The remaining milling equipment includes hoppers, chutes, hoist rope mechanism, wooden gears, corn breaker, corn sheller manufactured by S. Penner & Co., Kennett Square, Pa., and corn cob breaker, manufactured by Sprout-Waldren, Muncie, Indiana. The mill originally contained one pair of millstones, but the stones have been removed although the frame millstone cover is in place where the millstones were located. The remaining works of the mill are intact and are used for the production of wooden rakes.

With the exceptions noted the exterior of the buildings in the complex have changed little over the years, although the original windows have been replaced in the house and store. The interior of the house has been extensively remodeled over the years and retains few original details. The store has also been "modernized" to accommodate the changes necessary to carry on the business, these changes include; modern refrigeration cases, new shelving and counter, an addition for storage, etc. However, with its wood flooring, variety of merchandise, including clothing, it retains the atmosphere of a country store. The buildings, excluding the mill, store and house, are now used for storage. The historic resources retain the essential physical features that enable them to convey their past identity and character that of a small family industrial complex. The buildings possess good integrity having no changes that interfere with their ability to portray the significant time period c 1820 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)

Architecture

Industry

Period of Significance

c 1820 to 1939

Significant Dates

1897

c 1820

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 Bahr Mill and complex are eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. This mill is significant for its association with the county gristmill industry as it is one of three farm mills in the Berks County Gristmill Survey. The mill with its stone construction, 6/6 windows, cupola, rectangular configuration, banked 2 stories plus basement and two vertically aligned doors with hoist hood above is a good example of Berks County mill architecture of the late 19th century. The complex is an intact example of a family mill/industrial complex of the late 19th century.

According to the Berks County Gristmill Survey these small family mill groups were fairly common in 19th century Berks County. The grain mill was just one of several enterprises in these complexes which could include sawmills, oil mills, clover mills, tannery, fulling mills, etc. The Bahr Mill Complex is one of the last intact survivors of these mill groups and provides information on one part of the milling industry in Berks County -- the family grain mill. This mill ground grain raised on the family farm into feed for their cattle, as well as providing power for the variety of mechanical aids to farming which were then becoming increasingly widespread. Three farm mills were found in the Survey, the Borneman Mill and the Melcher Mill like the Bahr Mill were built to meet their own feed requirements, transmit power and serve as general auxiliary work buildings.

The mill with its stone construction, 6/6 windows, cupola, banked 2 stories plus basement, two vertically aligned doors with hoist hood above and rectangular configuration is a good example of Berks County mill architecture of the late 19th century. As the exterior of the mill and the remainder of the buildings exhibit very little change from the time of their construction this complex provides a visual record of the architecture, siting, method of construction and type of buildings in these small family mill groups. According to the Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey it is the only family mill complex of its kind in which one family has lived and worked continuously in the same buildings for over 175 years.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetBahr Mill Complex
Section number 8 Page 2

According to family history Abraham Gable acquired this property in 1828. The 1854 map shows the family had an oil mill and store. The 1862 map states they had mills and a store, and in 1876 the map shows a spoke factory and oil mill. County historian Morton Montgomery in 1886 wrote, "Lower down this stream the Gables had, for many years, saw and oil-mills, but converted the latter into a spoke and handle factory, which are still carried on by John Gable."

Abraham Gable passed the property on to his son John, whose daughter married Jacob Bahr. In 1888 Bahr became owner and the property remains in the family, now owned by his two grandsons. The original mill was an oil mill but in 1897, it was replaced by the current building used to grind feed and to manufacture wooden handles and spokes, a business that the present owners Raymond and Lawrence Bahr now in their nineties still continue. These buildings were also part of a working farm which is no longer operated.

The records indicate the store was operated by the Gables as early as 1854, although family tradition states it was much earlier. At present the son and grandson of Raymond operate the store; they open the store at 6 am and close about 7 pm. In the past their days were much longer but in recent years business has fallen off due to the proliferation of convenience stores and shopping malls.

According to author Winslow Fegley, "Another family of millers in Berks County who spread mill knowledge for generations through Pennsylvania and other states is the Gable." The Gable family and this small industrial complex have been serving the residents of Gablesville and the surrounding area for over 175 years: their sawmill provided the local residents with a source of building material, the store located in what was at one time a remote area has, for almost 140 years, provided a convenient place to shop and when cash was short extend credit for groceries or barter goods, the wooden farm rakes Lawrence manufactures were once a necessity on all farms, and were made for and purchased by the local farmers, for many years the family also operated an oil mill, and according to Lawrence there was a shoemaker who worked in one of the buildings for years. However, a new era is approaching and this family tradition and way of life is passing. The grandson unmarried at age 38 is the last of the family, and is not interested in running either the mill or the store when he inherits the property.

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 3 acres

UTM References

A	118	443940	4465300
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	118	444140	4465300

B	118	444100	4465430
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	118	44080	4465260

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Louise Emery Consultant</u>	date	<u>June 1990</u>
organization	<u>Berks County Conservancy</u>	telephone	<u>215-372-4492</u>
street & number	<u>960 Old Mill Road</u>	state	<u>PA</u>
city or town	<u>Wyomissing</u>	zip code	<u>19610</u>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

Bahr Mill

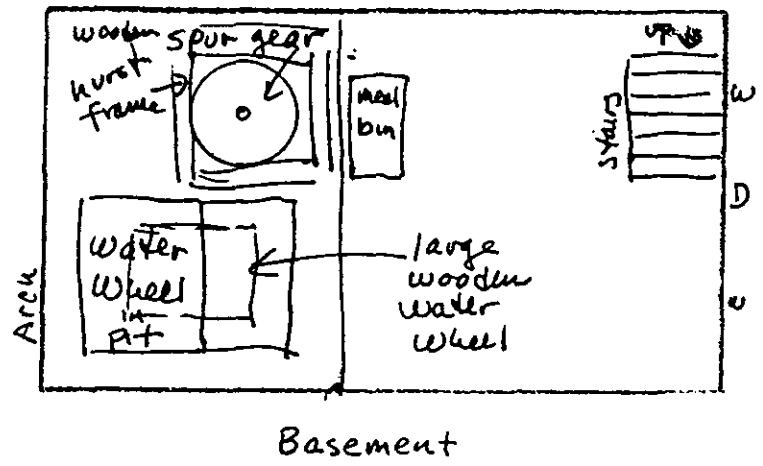
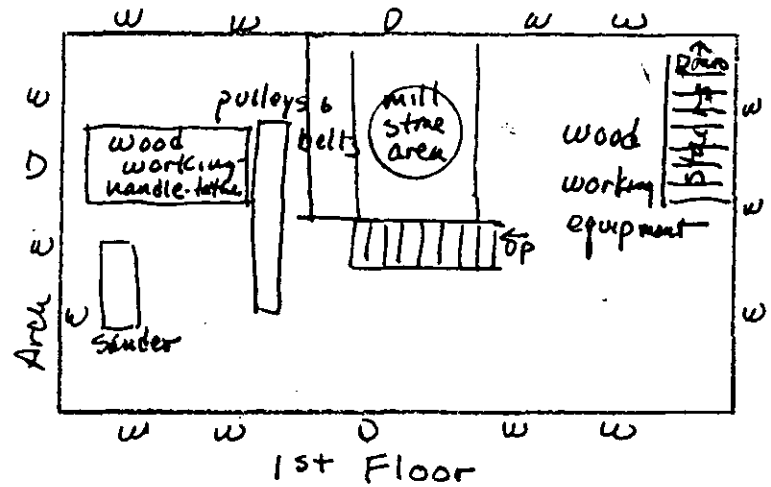
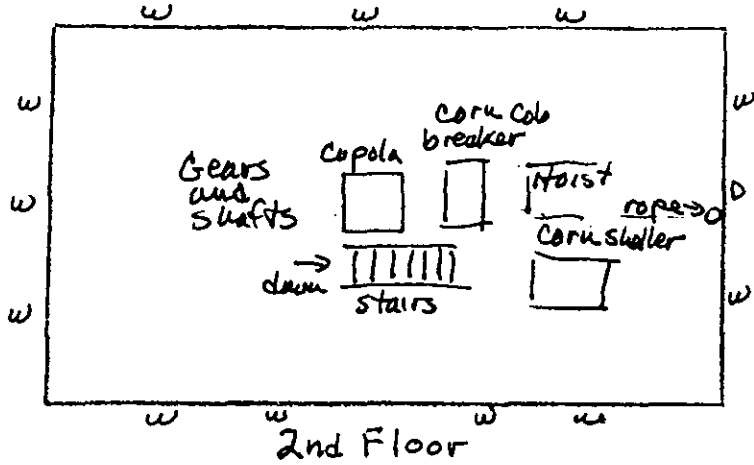
Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the east side of Ironstone Drive 25' south of the barn, proceed easterly approximately 175' to the west side of Ironstone Creek, thence northerly along creek approximately 600', thence southwesterly crossing the roads approximately 600', thence southerly approximately 450' behind buildings, thence northeasterly 50' to road at place of beginning.

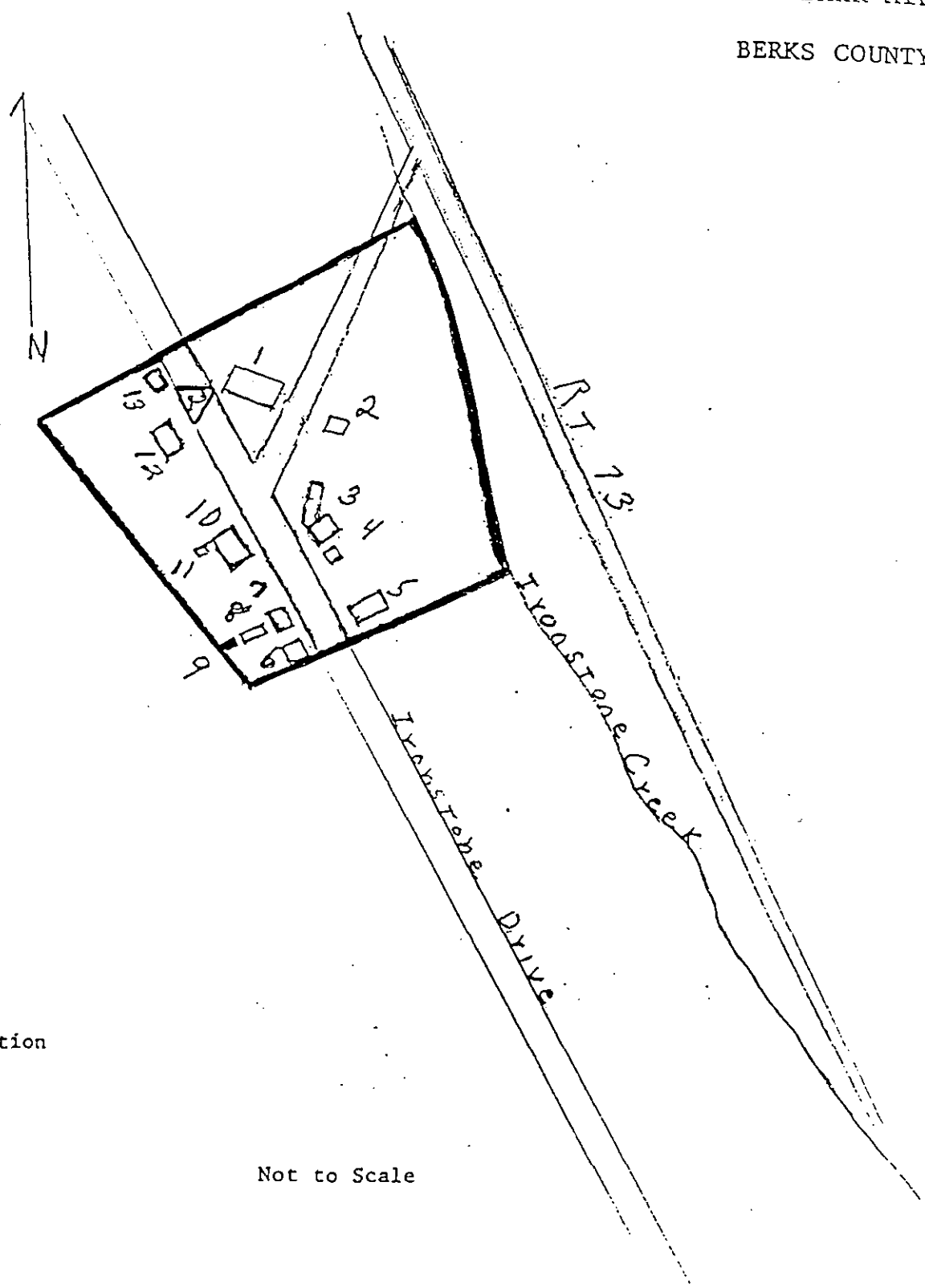
Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include all contributing buildings on the mill property. The starting point can be found by measurement from the corner of the mill. The eastern boundary runs along Ironstone creek. The north, south and west boundaries are straight lines. Noncontributing resources excluded include a village to the east, vacant farm land to the north and west, and scattered development to the south.

BAHR MILL
 BERKS COUNTY, PA



Tail Race - underground

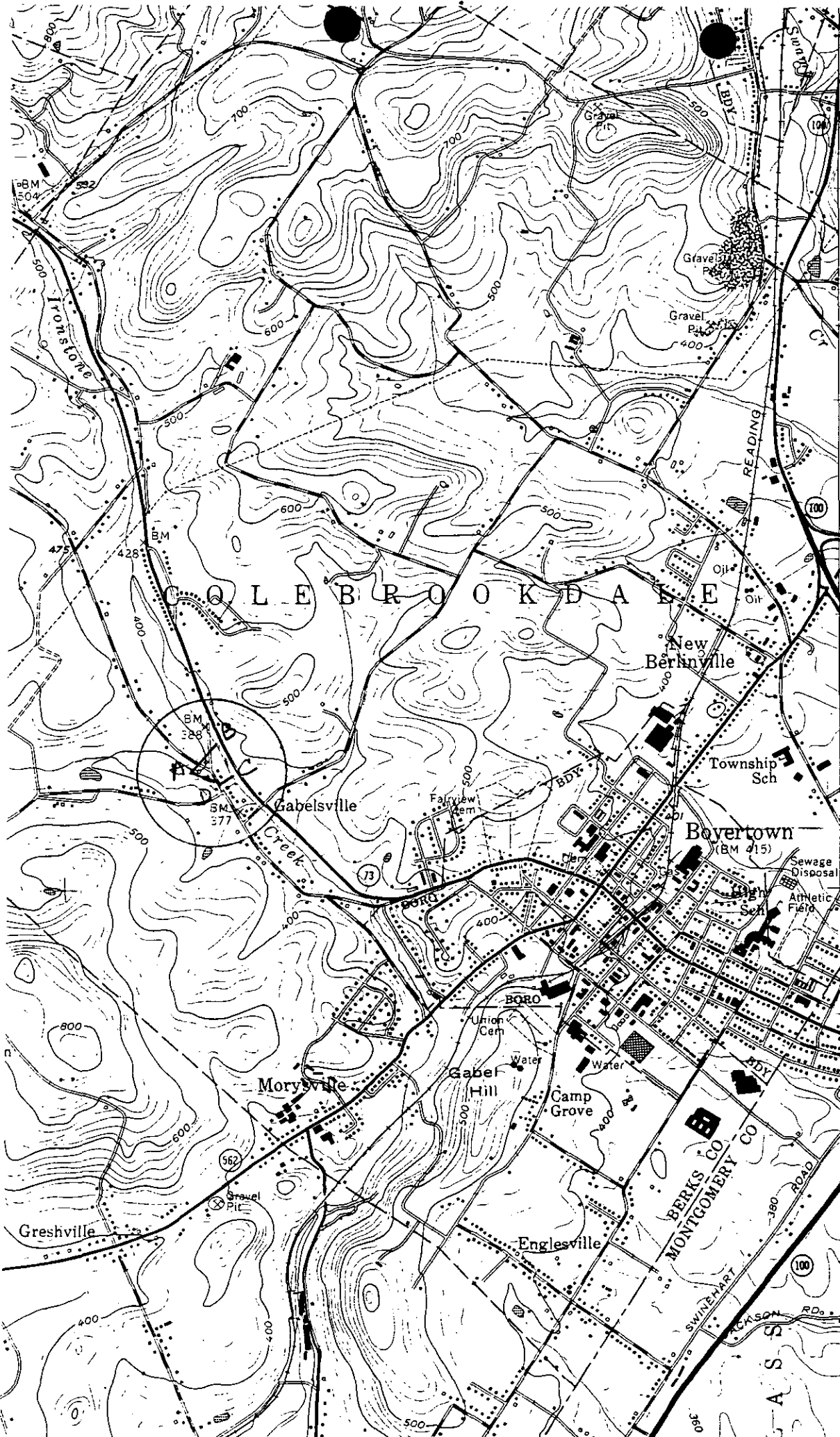


- 1. Mill
- 2. Shoemakers Shop
- 3. Stove with addition
- 4. Shed
- 5. Barn
- 6. Garage
- 7. Wagonshed
- 8. Pig Sty
- 9. Privy
- 10. House
- 11. Smoke House
- 12. Sawmill
- 13. Chicken House

Not to Scale

Key
— Boundry
< Photo Direction

Photo #1 - aerial view



BALLY 2.7 MI.

380 000
FEET

4467

4466

20'

73

GILBERTSVILLE 1 MI.
ZIEGLERSVILLE 9 MI.

4463

SSSAMANSVILLE)
5864 1 SE

Bally
Berks County
Boyertown
Zone 18

<u>A 443940</u>	<u>446530</u>
<u>B 444100</u>	<u>446543</u>
<u>C 444140</u>	<u>446535</u>
<u>D 444080</u>	<u>446526</u>