

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Star Junction Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet

N/A no. for publication

city or town Star Junction (Perry Township)

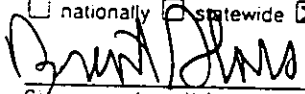
N/A vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Fayette

code 051 zip code 15482

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Dr. B. Glass, Exec. Dir. 9/11/97

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

PA Historical and Museum Commission

State of 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 official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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) _____

Star Junction Historic District

Name of Property

Fayette County, PA

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- XXX private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal
XXX

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
XX district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Bituminous Coal & Coke Resources of PA 1740-1945

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Industry/processing/extraction
extractive facility/processing site
Domestic/multiple dwelling
Religion/religious site
waterworks

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/speciality store
Domestic/single dwelling
Domestic/multiple dwelling
Religion/religious structure
Government/post office
waterworks

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- other: company-built miner's duplex
other: late 19th century vernacular

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation terra cotta/stone
walls wood
roof asphalt shingles
other

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

- XX 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.
XX C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or 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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or 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)

Industry

Community Planning & Development

Architecture

Period of Significance

1892-1945

Significant Dates

1892

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Washington Coal & Coke

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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:

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

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 100 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [17] [60,4 92,0] [4,43 5,7,40]
Zone Easting Northing
2 [17] [60,6 24,0] [4,4 35,7,40]

3 [17] [60,62 4,0] [4,43 4,52,0]
Zone Easting Northing
4 [17] [60,49 40] [4,43 4,50,0]

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 Clinton E. Piper, Preservation Consultant

organization for Terry A. Necciai & John Axtell date July 1997

street & number RD #4, BOX 89A telephone 412.537.2738

city or town Latrobe state PA zip code 15650

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 SHPO or FPC.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 1

The Star Junction Historic District, in Perry Township, Fayette County is located 1.8 miles south of Perryopolis. The district stands at the confluence of Washington Run and two of its tributaries in a valley known as Stickel Hollow. The wide plain where the three streams join forms the geographic focus of the district. Two brick industrial buildings, originally serving the now-obliterated portal to Washington Mine No. 2, stand at the western edge of the plain. To the immediate south of the mine buildings is the commercial and institutional center of the district. To the west and south extend streets known as Tony Row and Church Street, both lined with single and duplex houses, primarily built for Washington Coal and Coke's managers. The district is bisected by Pennsylvania Route 51, a circa 1950 four-lane highway connecting Pittsburgh to U.S. Route 40 (National Road) at Uniontown. Between Perryopolis and Star Junction, Route 51 follows the corridor along Washington Run which was formerly occupied by the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad branch line that connected Star Junction to coal and coke-consuming industries in the Monongahela Valley, Pittsburgh and beyond. The countryside surrounding the district is largely a mixture of woods and farms, with the exception of scattered post World War II commercial development and barren coal waste dump sites to the north and south along Route 51. Most of the resources which comprise the Star Junction Historic District were constructed between 1892 and 1918 by the Washington Coal & Coke Company as a bituminous coal mining community. This property type is described in detail in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania, 1740-1945." The district contains managers' and workers' houses, churches, and mine and coke oven service buildings. The Star Junction Historic District contains 175 buildings, a 1921 concrete highway bridge, and a circa 1892 earthen dam reservoir. One hundred thirty of the 163 contributing buildings are two-story frame duplex workers' houses. Of the remaining contributing houses, twenty two were constructed for mine managers and one for the Methodist parsonage. Additional contributing buildings include: two brick former mine buildings, two churches, a parsonage, two commercial buildings, and a multi-car garage. The two contributing structures are a highway bridge and earthen reservoir. Of the twelve non-contributing resources, five are commercial or institutional buildings (all on or near Route 51), six are dwellings (distributed throughout the district, and including four mobile homes), and one is a garage.

As was the practice in most coal company towns in western Pennsylvania, Star Junction's streets were not formally named; instead, housing units were numbered consecutively, neighborhoods being distinguished by informal names. On the slopes along the southern and northeastern sides of

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 2

the plain stand White Row and Turkey Knob two groups of houses built for the company's miners and coke workers. The plain between White Row and Turkey Row is Star Junction's ballfield and park. On the slopes of a side valley to the northeast of the plain is New Town, a third group of worker's houses. All workers' housing in the district consists of standardized duplex dwellings arranged in uniform rows separated by spacious back yards. A steep hollow to the south of New Town contains the remains of Washington Coal and Coke's reservoir system. The coke works and ovens, in ruins, are physically removed from the district to the north on the west side of Route 51. They are not considered part of this nomination.

Star Junction's housing is the most striking of the surviving features of the district. The area historically known as Tony (i.e., stylish) Row because it housed Washington Coal and Coke's management personnel and their families is nevertheless relatively modest in its building stock, containing only eight single family houses in addition to fourteen duplexes, which are similar in design to the balance of Star Junction's worker housing. (*Photos #6 & #7*) However, Tony Row was distinguished by its site to the west of, and therefore upwind from, Star Junction's coke ovens. With the exception on one later-constructed brick Craftsman Style house on Tony Row, all managers' housing is of two or 2 ½ story wood frame construction. However, in contrast the uniformity of Star Junction's worker's houses, Tony Row's single family houses were built with such individualizing details as cross gables and substantial porches.

The most elaborate of the managers' houses are the three single family dwellings built for the Washington Coal and Coke Company's Superintendent, Fire Boss, and another senior management official. These stand on a hill above the corner of Tony Row and Church Street, commanding a view of the entire community. Church Street, to the south of the commercial and institutional center, contains fourteen wood frame dwellings, seven of which were built as duplexes and seven as single family houses. (*Photo #2*) Several of the single family houses may predate the 1892 construction of Star Junction. It is likely that most houses on Church Street were also built for and occupied by managerial employees of Washington Coal and Coke. Larger management houses, such as those built for the Superintendent and Fire Boss, appear to contain ten or more rooms on three stories. Smaller single family houses appear to contain eight rooms on two stories;

The district's four groups of workers' houses are located on slopes of the eastern portions of the valley, which would have been downwind from the smoke of Washington Coal and Coke's power

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 3

plants and beehive ovens. The typical Star Junction workers' duplex house has the following appearance: it is two stories high, four bays wide and two bays deep, with a gable roof and full width porches on front and rear elevations; two interior chimneys break the ridge line; unaltered exterior walls are sheathed in clapboard; original windows are two-over-two sash. These duplex houses appear to contain four rooms in each unit. Many houses throughout Star Junction are now sided with synthetic materials, have replacement metal or synthetic double-hung windows, replacement wood or metal porch posts, and other minor alterations.

The first group of workers' duplex houses on the southeastern side of the Washington Run valley has historically been called White Row. (*Photos #10-#12*) It consists of eleven buildings on each side of the main east-west street (SR 4036) and four rows of five houses each along two parallel streets south of SR 4036. A small wood-frame retail shop building stands on the corner of the old road to Perryopolis in the middle of the houses along the north side of SR 4036. All of White Row's houses were likely built in 1892 by Washington Coal and Coke. Several houses in White Row and the other residential areas have monochrome lozenge-pattern asphalt shingle siding, believed to have been installed by the Frick Company in the 1930s during its period of ownership. Two or three of the houses in White Row are a little less than two full stories high, with low second story windows above the porch. Otherwise, the White Row houses are uniform in style, shape, window pattern, and other details.

Northeast of White Row, across Star Junction's ballfield, is Turkey Knob, a grouping of about thirty two duplexes, dating from the early 1910s. (*Photo #13 & #20*) The houses are sited along two diagonal streets which parallel the small stream that flows into Washington Run from the east. Most of Turkey Knob's houses are arranged in two tight rows of eleven houses per row, one on each side of the upper street. The lower of the two streets is alley-like, with houses only at the ends of the northeast side of the street, overlooking the ballfield.

East of Turkey Knob is New Town, consisting of forty-six, circa 1918 double houses arranged in rows of fifteen along two north-south streets that follow a gently rising valley. (*Photo #14*) The houses line both sides of the westernmost street, but stand on only the west side of the other street. A few houses are along the road which leads up to New Town from the center of Star Junction (T532). New Town also has alleys behind the houses; several small cross streets connect the streets and alleys.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 4

The district's commercial and institutional area is situated on the level plain of Stickel Hollow, between Tony Row and White Row. It presently comprises two wood frame churches, a parsonage, a house constructed as the residence and office of the company doctor, and three modern buildings: a post office on the site of the district's original post office, service station, and store on Route 51. Running parallel to Route 51 on the west is Church Street, on which Star Junction's two churches, Baptist and Methodist, stand side by side to the south of Tony Row. *(Photo #1)* The wood frame Baptist church has a central tower, the top of which appears to have originally contained a belfry, and the base of which is the vestibule. Above the door is a large rose window. All other windows have Gothic arches, with double sashes. The Methodist church, also wood frame, has a corner tower with an octagonal belfry topped by a steep, octagonal pyramidal roof with slate shingles. The entrance is at the base of the tower, beneath a steep gabled canopy. The center of the facade of this church has a Palladian-inspired tripartite window with stained glass. North of the Methodist Church is the Methodist Parsonage, a large frame house with a front porch, a bay window in the second story, and a front-gable roof. At the northeast corner of Church Street stands a gable roofed, 2 ½ story, five bay, center entrance building, which originally housed the company doctor and his office. To the north of the doctor's house, beyond the circa 1980 Colonial Revival style brick post office, is a row of circa 1925 automobile garages built of hollow clay tile; the now-vacant building's original wooden garage doors have been filled with windows and man doors.

A large vacant lot at the southeast corner of Church Street and Tony Row was the site of the large, two-story wood frame building originally built to house the offices of the Washington Coal and Coke Company and the company store. The long-abandoned building was demolished in 1994. Other commercial and institutional buildings in the immediate area which have been demolished since the cessation of coal and coke operations are: the company-owned theater to the south of the company store site; the Junction House Hotel at the northwest corner of Church Street and Tony Row; and the two-story, brick Star Junction public school across from the theater site. All of these building sites remain vacant. Despite these losses, the district still presents a cohesive statement.

To the north of the commercial and institutional area are the remains of the industrial complex adjacent to the Washington Mine No. 2 portal. The two surviving brick buildings are each long and rectangular in plan, one story high and gable-roofed. *(Photos #3-#5)* Both have round arched door and window openings, simple brick pilasters and corbeled cornices. The southernmost of the two buildings originally served as the mine wash house and machine shop. It now serves as the Perry

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 5

Township garage and office. The building to the north was the mine power house. It is now also owned by part of a salvage yard. Both buildings show evidence that some original door and window openings have been closed and other new doors and windows opened.

The Star Junction Historic District also contains two contributing structures. In the valley to the south of New Town contains the remains of a two tier reservoir measuring approximately 1,800' in length, contained by earthen dams. The smaller, southern dam measuring 200' across is intact and creates a reservoir approximately five acres in extent. The larger northern dam measuring 500' across has been breached; the approximately ten acre bed of the former reservoir is now a pasture. (Photos #15 & #16) The other contributing structure is a reinforced concrete highway bridge carries the old road to Perryopolis, originally Route 51, across the eastern tributary to Washington Run at the western edge of the Star Junction ballfield. The box span bridge is approximately ten feet long and bears the date "1921". (Photo #21) It has rectangular end piers and a paneled parapet.

The district also contains twelve non-contributing resources. These include two one-story houses and four mobile homes distributed throughout the residential area, all dating after 1960. Other non-contributing resources include the circa 1980 brick Colonial Revival style post office, a service station, two small store buildings, a brick building that serves as a bar, and a garage, all located in the historic commercial and institutional area or on Route 51. The non-contributing resources do not detract from the historic grid plan of the district or from the visual uniformity of the town plan. In accordance with the Registration Requirements for mining communities which are set forth in the "Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania" Multiple Property Documentation Form, the Star Junction Historic District retains integrity of design, feeling, location and setting. The essential plan, massing and design of Star Junction retains its identity as a typical mining community. This holds true despite alterations on many buildings to sheathing, windows and porches. The mine resources retain sufficient integrity of feeling, location and setting to convey a clear sense of their historic use and appearance, and thus to warrant designation.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 1

As a well-preserved example of a company-owned bituminous coal mining and coke producing community, the Star Junction Historic District is historically significant under criterion "A" of the National Register in the areas of industry, community planning, and development. From its beginning in 1892 through the winding down of operations in the late 1940s, Star Junction, like similar mining communities in the region, was built and operated by its owners solely for the production of coal and coke. Star Junction was an unusually large coal and coke operation, with three mine shafts and 1,000 beehive coke ovens at its peak of production in the 1910s. The community's design reflects the paternalistic practices of the Washington Coal and Coke Company and its owners, the Cochran family, who built Star Junction and operated it until 1930. Star Junction also possesses architectural significance under criterion "C" of the National Register for its large stock of characteristic Western Pennsylvania miners' houses, which were built in at least three phases between 1892 and 1918 by the Washington Coal and Coke Company. The Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania, 1740-1945" describes Star Junction as the largest and most intact coal mining town in Pennsylvania.

SUMMARY HISTORY

The site of Star Junction was first settled as a farm in 1800 by Thomas Cook as part of a 3,000 acre purchase from the state of Pennsylvania. Shortly thereafter, Cook subdivided and sold his holdings to George Stickle, Patrick Watson, Josiah King, and David Jones, all of whom continued farming the land. The Washington Coal and Coke Company purchased all or a portion of each of the above farms when planning its Star Junction operations in 1892. Thus, despite the company's name, it appears that the Washington Coal and Coke Company developed Star Junction on land just south of the 1,641 acres along Washington Run which George Washington purchased in 1769 as a part of his extensive land speculation in the Ohio Valley region. However, it is possible that the Mine No. 3 portal and coke ovens were on land originally owned by Washington. The origins of the name Star Junction are not known.

The lower Washington Run Valley/Stickle Hollow became the intersection of highways leading from Uniontown and Connellsville to Pittsburgh. By 1872 the Hopkins Fayette County Atlas shows the present day intersection of Tony Row and Church Street as the center of a county hamlet, with a store on the northeast corner, houses on the northwest and southwest corners, and a blacksmith shop, gristmill, and schoolhouse located just south along the Uniontown road which is present day Church Street. None of these buildings are extant.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 2

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

Beginning in about 1870, Stickle Hollow also witnessed the first commercial use of its bituminous coal resources. The Pittsburgh coal seam rises to the surface along the hills above Washington Run. This is due to a long upward fold in the geological strata, the Fayette Anticline. To the east of Star Junction lies a ten mile wide area called the "Barren Measures" by coal operators, where, over geologic time, the Fayette Anticline was eroded down to rock formations lying below the Pittsburgh coal seam. The anticline and Barren Measures divide the Connellsville District, with its extraordinarily low-volatile coking coal, from the remainder of the Pittsburgh coal seam to the west. In Fayette County, the Pittsburgh seam to the west of the Connellsville District came to be known as the Lower Connellsville, or Klondike, District. In the years between 1870 and 1890, a coal mine and coal-fired blacksmith and ax-making forge were operated by Robert Lynch on the Josiah King farm, near the future site of New Town. In 1882, the John H. Patterson farm, just east of Stickle Hollow, was reported by a local historian to contain "a fine vein of coal, which is the eastern outcrop of the Pittsburgh or Monongahela basin." (Ellis, p.713)

The coke industry evolved slowly over several decades in Fayette County, and then grew quickly into a major industry between 1870 and 1880. The Washington Coal and Coke Company was headquartered in nearby Dawson and controlled by the pioneering Connellsville District coke producers, the Cochran family. About 1890 they began to purchase land and coal rights in the Stickle Hollow area, eventually acquiring over 4,000 acres. By 1892, construction had started on Star Junction's mine facilities, coke oven batteries and houses. In 1893, the elderly James Cochran founded the Washington Coal and Coke Company, opening three mine portals at Star Junction (Washington #1, #2, and #3 Mines). Unlike the Dawson area, where the existing housing served the mines and ovens owned by the Cochran family, the size of the mines and the sparse development of Star Junction necessitated the construction of a company town.

The Star Junction complex was handed down through several generations of the Cochran family. It was first built by James "Little Jim" Cochran, who in 1843 had been one of the operators of the coke works at Dawson together with his brother Sample Cochran and his uncle Mordecai Cochran. The brothers James and Sample Cochran were the first to establish an economically-successful coking operation in nearby Dawson, in 1843. In 1894, James Cochran died, and ownership passed to his son Phillip Galley Cochran. Upon Phillip Cochran's death in 1899, the

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 3

administration of the company was taken over by a cousin of Phillip's, Mark Mordecai Cochran, one of the organizers of the company in 1893. Around 1900, Phillip Cochran's young son James became president, but he died in 1901. The controlling interest, however, remained with Sarah Moore Cochran, Phillip's widow.

In conjunction with Connellsville attorney and entrepreneur, Porter S. Newmyer the Cochrans established an unusually large mine complex at Star Junction. At Star Junction, three mines were served by one company town, in effect, one gigantic, contiguous mine complex. The number of coke ovens at Star Junction in 1897 was 320. Fewer than a fourth of the coking complexes in Fayette County ever exceeded that number of ovens at one location. By 1915, the number of ovens had grown to 1,000, half of the ovens at the Mine No. 1 complex and half at Mine No. 2. Although state mine reports indicate at least 1,000 ovens at the site, local tradition holds that the Cochrans stopped building at 999 because of a state tax on batteries of 1,000 or more ovens. This ranked among the largest single concentrations of beehive ovens in Western Pennsylvania and the nation. There were by comparison, about eight complexes in Fayette County with 500 to 650 ovens.

In 1930, the H.C. Frick Coal Company, since 1901, a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, purchased the Star Junction works, and connected it with the adjoining Colonial mines complex to the south. The coke ovens appear to have been abandoned at the time of the buy out (United States Steel by this time produced most of its coke at its by-product coke plant at the Clairton Works, the largest coking complex in the world), but the mines continued to operate until 1954. In 1954, most of the surface land was sold to Mark Sugarman, an investor, who sold the houses to private individuals (sale to an investor who then sold to individuals was a common fate for company housing in the 1940s and 1950s, a nearby example being Whitsett). In the 1950s and 1960s, the former railroad bed became the route of a modern four lane highway, Route 51, whose older two-lane route snaked through the town, crossing at the main railroad crossing, and following Church Street south of the crossing. The rows of coke ovens were visible from the highway until circa 1980, when they were cleared to encourage commercial development of the coke plant area. The majority of this land, however, remains vacant. Subsequent to the United States Steel buy out, the town of Star Junction has dwindled a little in size, but generally has remained unchanged.

The social structure of Star Junction was as significant as its architecture and industrial activities. The Washington Cole and Coke Company (WCCC) was in many ways typical of

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 4

nineteenth century paternalistic employers and landlords. The company apparently discriminated against African Americans. Some blacks worked at the Washington Mine complex, but none ever lived in the town. They lived in nearby mining town of Whitsett, also listed in the National Register. The company was a generous proprietor in other ways. Well known for their support of the churches various Protestant denominations in communities across the region, the company paid for the construction of the Methodist church in Star Junction, and possibly the Baptist church as well. Both were completed in 1898. Prior to the 1904 construction of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Victoria, and the 1915 construction of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Perryopolis, the WCCC permitted the large Catholic population of Star Junction to meet in a company house to hear Mass. The company also permitted employees to miss work on some holy days and provided a house rent free to the piano player at St. John the Baptist. Like many other coal community owners, the Cochrans encouraged workers to tend the yards around their houses, providing some gardening supplies. The WCCC and the Frick Co. also "carried" workers during slow periods, waiving payment on company store accounts until work picked up again.

Community Planning, Development, and Architectural Significance

Though many Fayette County mining towns have rows of single family houses built for bosses, this is an unusually large, orderly, and sophisticated management neighborhood for this region. Allison #2, near Brownsville, for instance, has a row of five bosses' houses, as an insular row at the edge of town, rather than at the center. Nor are they clustered together with the store and Protestant churches, as in Star Junction. Star Junction was one of very few coal and coke communities located along a major road in lush farmland and near established small towns. In other words, while some mining towns were too small and isolated to support such a large management district, and others were located in established cities where larger homes and Protestant churches were readily available, Star Junction is uniquely situated in a small town setting where the development of a large management neighborhood made sense.

Star Junction's worker housing, on the other hand, is architecturally typical in the region, though built on a larger than usual scale. They are all two story frame duplexes, built in perfectly straight rows in grids (or patches), with makeshift streets weaving through in a less formal pattern, secondary to the rigid geometry of the houses themselves. As the town grew, the houses were built incrementally, one grid, or "patch" at a time. Each grid of houses was built on the sloped hillsides surrounding the level floor of Stickel Hollow, which was reserved for rail lines, mine buildings, coke

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 5

ovens and even coal and coke waste piles.

The majority of houses were built in three phases. Across the tracks from Church Street, about thirty double houses were built in a grid pattern in the 1890s to house the original miners. These houses were historically painted white, and the neighborhood was called "White Row." The next phase of construction did not occur until the 1910s, when about twenty five more double houses were added along two long, diagonal roads on the face of a hill to the northeast. This gently-sloped neighborhood was called "Turkey Knob." In 1918, in the third phase, about fifty more double houses were added in a grid in a little valley to the east of Turkey Knob. This neighborhood was called New Town. To the south and north of these neighborhoods, were several smaller neighborhoods, consisting mostly of tenement houses and shanties, built for expedience, probably in the earlier years of the mines. Immediately beyond Star Junction, to the south and north were the smaller mining communities of Echard and Victoria, respectively. Niether community is extant.

The few industrial structures remaining, including machine shop buildings are significant in their own right. The two machine shop buildings are unusual for their length, size, and ornate masonry which incorporates yellow brick drip moldings in the fully rounded arched openings of otherwise red brick buildings. A third Washington Coal and Coke building, built to house a mine ventilation fan, is identical in style and form. It is located about two miles west of Star Junction, along Route 201 in Jefferson Township.

Star Junction incorporates the typical worker housing of Fayette County, as well as a highly organized and well-preserved management district, into an unusually large complex that formerly boasted one of the largest concentration of beehive coke ovens in the region. It is significant not only for its sheer size, but also as the site of the main plant of one of the largest independent coking firms of the coal and coke boom era and for its association with the Cochran family, Fayette County's pioneer family in the beehive coke industry. The development and operation of coal communities in Pennsylvania is described in detail in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), "Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania, 1740-1945." Like many other western Pennsylvania coal communities, Star Junction was built and reached its peak of operation during what the MPDF calls the golden era of coal, coke and steel, from 1880 to 1920. Compared with other coal communities in the Connellsville and Klondike mining districts, Star Junction retains a strong sense of coherence and identity as a planned industrial community, as well as a beautiful natural setting. Star

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 6

Junction compares favorably with such other Fayette County coal and coke company towns as Whitsett in Perry Township, Smock in Franklin Township and Leisenring in Dunbar Township. Leisenring, a Frick Company town in the Connellsville coke district, has a housing stock which is older, smaller and less well-built than Whitsett's; Smock, in the Klondike District, housing is newer, larger and more varied architecturally; Star Junction is contemporary with and comparable to Whitsett in terms of housing design and quality.

The Star Junction Historic District is a preserved example of a late nineteenth and early twentieth century company-owned coal mining and coke producing community. The social history and community planning and development ideas visible in the surviving housing stock provide tangible links to an important era of western Pennsylvania industrial history.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References

Atlas of the County of Fayette and the State of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins & Co., 1872.

Eavenson, Howard N. *The First Century and a Quarter of the American Coal Industry.* Pittsburgh: Privately printed, 1942.

Ellis, Franklin. *History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania.* Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1882.

Heald, Sarah H., ed. *Fayette County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990.

Interview with Betty Graham Palonder, Star Junction native, 2 February 1995.

Keystone Coal Field Directory. Pittsburgh, 1922

Mulrooney, Margaret M. *A Legacy of Coal: The Coal Towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania.* Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, 1989.

Nelson, S.B. *Nelson's Biographical Dictionary and Historical Reference Book of Fayette County, Pennsylvania.* Uniontown, Pa., 1900.

Pennsylvania Department of Mines. *Annual Report: Bituminous Region.* Harrisburg: State Printer of PA, 1890-1950. Title varies.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation. *"Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania, 1740-1945."* 1993 (Unpublished Multiple Property Documentation Form)

Sheppard, Muriel Earley. *Cloud by Day: The Story of Coal and Coke and People.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 9 Page 2

Star Junction Centennial 1892-1992. Star Junction, Pa.: Privately published, 1992.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 10

Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the northeast corner of the intersection of Pennsylvania Route 51 and SR 4036 (Tony Row extension); thence northerly 650' along the east right of way line of Route 51'; thence easterly 400' to the intersection of old Route 51 and the lower Turkey Knob road; thence northerly 400' along the west right of way line of old Route 51 to the intersection with upper Turkey Knob road; thence southeasterly 600' along the south right of way of upper Turkey Knob road to a point opposite the northwesterly lot line of house 143/144 (Resource #115); thence northeasterly 200' to the northwest corner of house lot 143/144 (Resource #15); thence southeasterly 900' along the rear lot lines of houses 143/144 (Resource #15) to house 8-0 (Resource #125) to the intersection with the rear lot line of house 862/863 (Resource #161) on the west New Town road; thence northerly 2500' along the rear lot lines of houses 862/863 (Resource #161) to 890/891 (Resource #175) to the northwest corner of house lot 890/891 (Resource #175); thence southeasterly 200' along the northeasterly lot line of house 890/891 (Resource #125) to its intersection with the west right of way of west New Town road; thence southwesterly 225' along said right of way to its intersection with the southwesterly lot line of house 888/889 (Resource #174); thence southeasterly 350' along the northeasterly lot lines of houses 830/831 (Resource #143) and 832/833 (Resource #144) to their intersection with the west right of way of east New Town road; thence southwesterly 1400' to the intersection of east New Town road and T532; thence southeasterly 2200' along the west right of way of T532 to the south end of the upper reservoir; thence northwesterly 2200' along the westerly shoreline of the upper and lower reservoirs, a line following the extension thereof, and the rear lot lines of houses 206/207 (Resource #71) to 196/197 (Resource #66) to the west right of way line of old Route 51 extension; thence southerly 550' along the west right of way of old Route 51 extension to a point opposite the rear lot line of houses 240 (Resource #91); thence westerly 600' along said rear lot lines and a line following the extension thereof to the west right of way line of Route 51; thence southerly 1100' along the west right of way line of Route 51 to a point; thence westerly 150' to the west right of way line of Church Street; thence northerly 1800' along the west right of way line of Church Street to the southeast corner of the Baptist Church lot (Resource #29); thence northerly 350' along the rear lot line of said lot and those of the Methodist Church and parsonage (Resources #27 & #28) to the northwest corner of said Methodist parsonage lot; thence westerly 750' along the rear lot line of the houses on the south side of Tony Row to the southwest corner of house lot

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 10

Page 2

36/37 (Resource #15); thence northerly 100' to a point opposite the southwesterly corner of house lot 72/73 (Resource #14); thence northerly 175' along the westerly lot line of house lot 72/73 (Resource #14) and its extension to the northwest corner of said house lot; thence 600' along the rear lot line of the houses on the north side of Tony Row to the rear lot line of the former Mine Superintendent's house (Resource #6); thence 200' along the rear lot lines of the former Mine Superintendent's and Fire Boss' houses (Resource #7 & #8) to the northwest corner of the former Fire Boss' house lot (Resource #8); thence easterly 300' along the north lot line of the former Fire Boss' house (Resource #8) and its extension to the west right of way of the Post Office road; thence northerly 500' along said right of way and its extension to a point; thence easterly 300' to the west right of way of Route 51; thence southerly 500' along said right of way to a point; thence southerly 500' to the north right of way of SR 4036 (Tony Row extension); thence easterly 200' along said right of way to the point of beginning.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all residential portions of Star Junction which retain architectural integrity, and all contiguous remaining industrial resources associated with the Washington Coal & Coke Company, including the Mine No. 2 service buildings and the company reservoir. The boundary does not include the ruins of coke ovens physically removed from the district to the north, on the western side of Route 51.

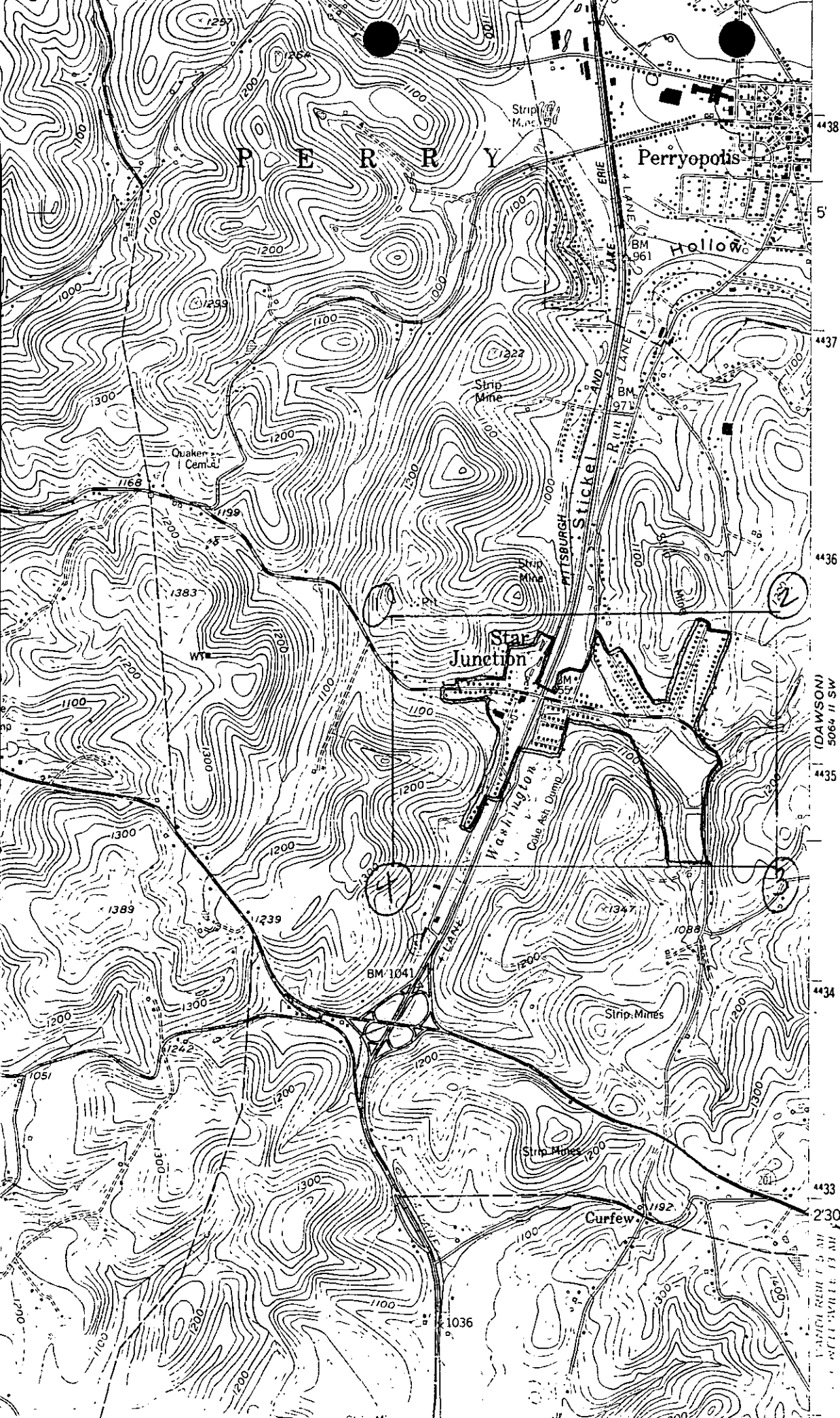
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Star Junction Historic District
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 2 Page 1

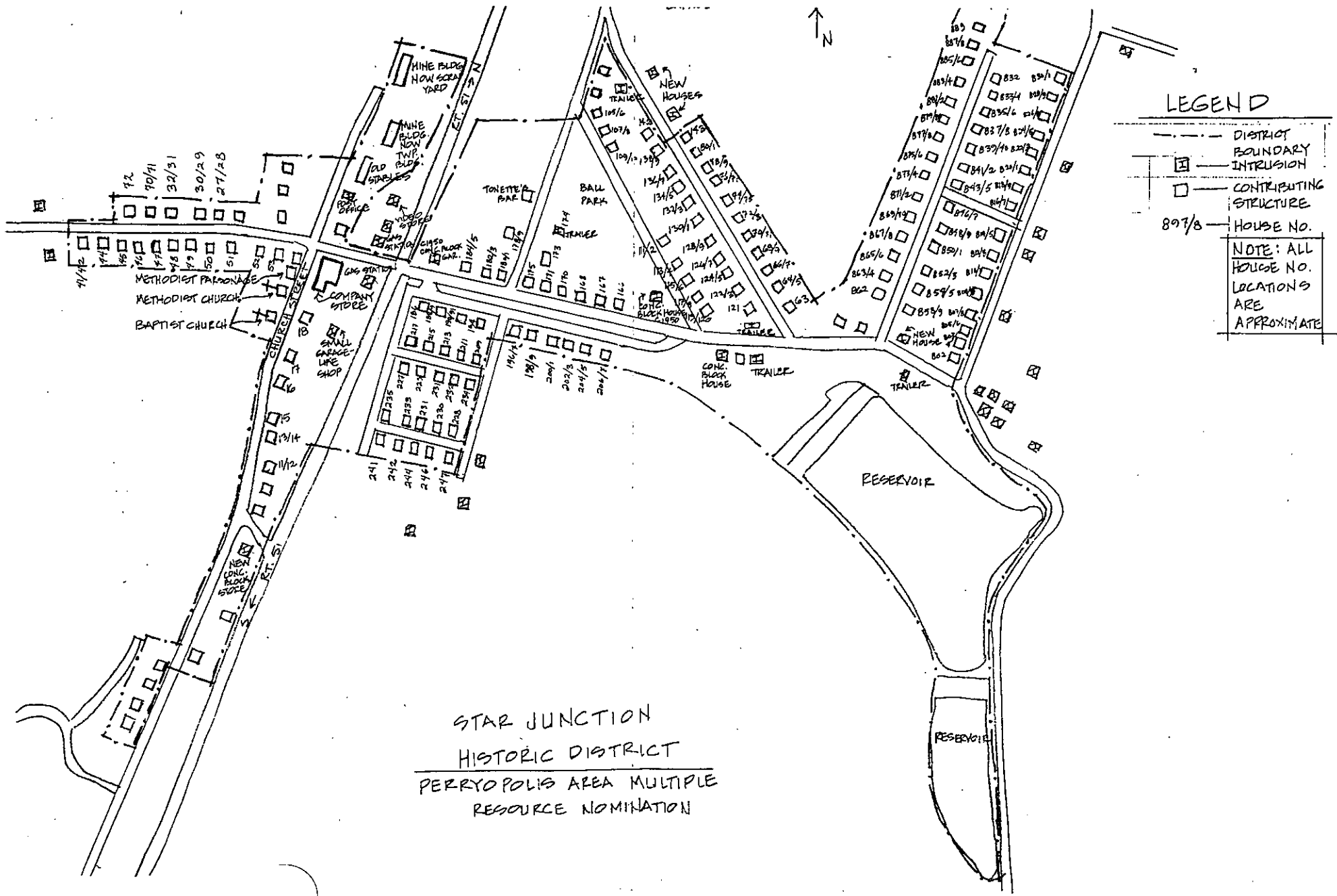
LOCATION: Approximately 1.8 miles south of Perryopolis in Perry Township at the intersection of Route 51 and SR 4036.



Fayette City PA Quad
 Star Junction
 Historic District
 Perry Township
 Fayette County PA

1. 17/604930
4435740
2. 17/606240
4435740
3. 17/606240
4434520
4. 17/604940
4434500

5066 11 SW
 DAWSON
 5066 11 SW
 4435
 4434
 4433
 230
 VANDERBILT 5 AM
 SELLVILLE 13 AM



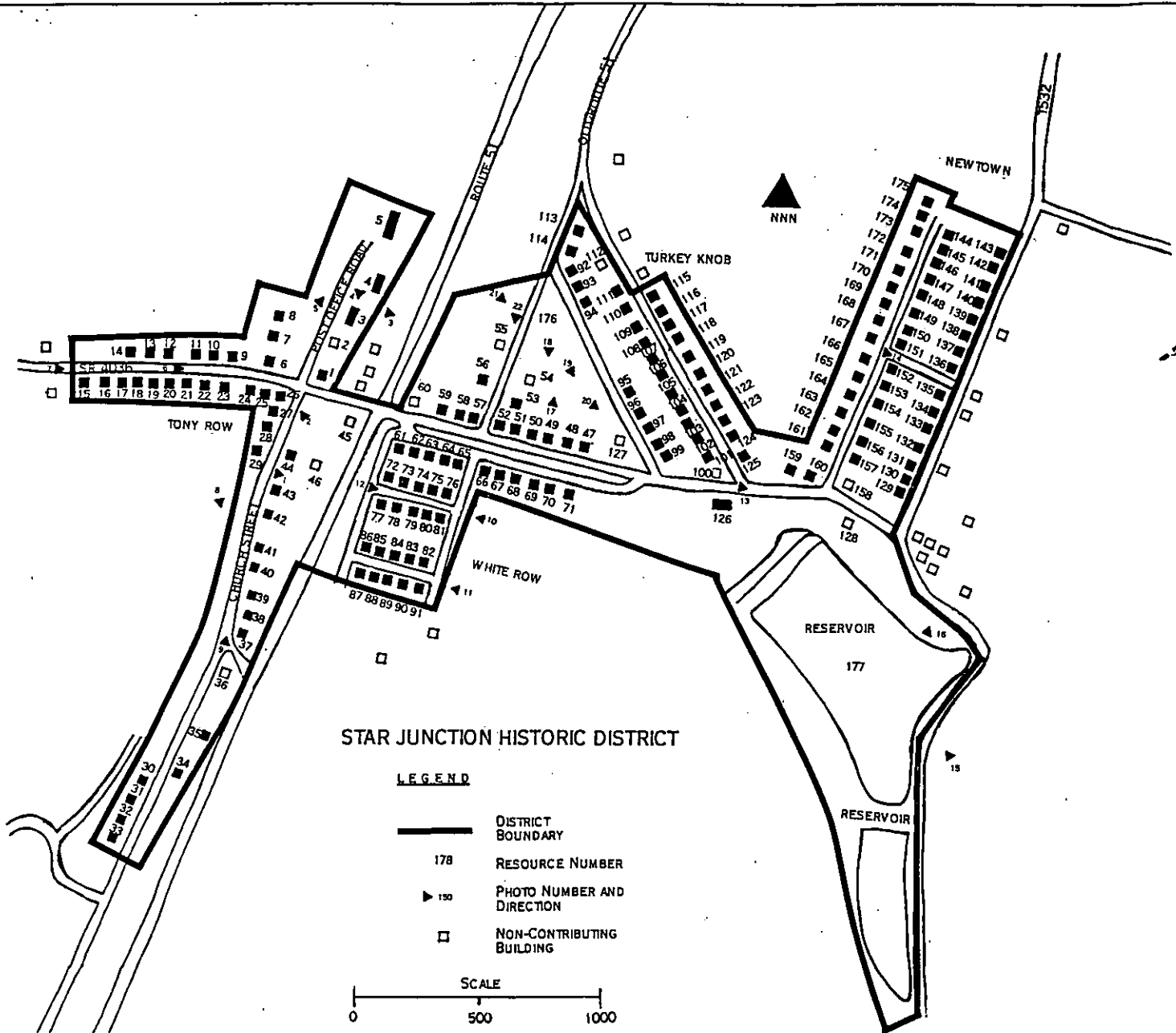
LEGEND

- - - - DISTRICT BOUNDARY
 - ⊠ INTRUSION
 - ⊡ CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE
 - 897/8 - HOUSE NO.
- NOTE: ALL HOUSE NO. LOCATIONS ARE APPROXIMATE

STAR JUNCTION
 HISTORIC DISTRICT
 PERRYOPOLIS AREA MULTIPLE
 RESOURCE NOMINATION

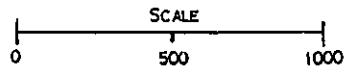
TERRY A NECCAI
HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTING

TITLE: STAR JUNCTION HISTORIC DISTRICT, FAYETTE COUNTY, PA



STAR JUNCTION HISTORIC DISTRICT

- LEGEND**
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
 - 178 RESOURCE NUMBER
 - ▶ 15 PHOTO NUMBER AND DIRECTION
 - NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING



DATE: MARCH 1997
SCALE: SEE ABOVE
DRAWN BY: CBR