

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 Miller's Store
other names/site number Trent House and General Store (historic)
Trenthouse Inn and Country Store (present)

2. Location

street & number Junction of SR 3029 and SR 3033 N/A not for publication
city, town Trent (Middlecreek Township) N/A vicinity
state Pennsylvania code PA county Somerset code III zip code 15557

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>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
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)

Commerce/Trade/specialty store

Domestic/hotel

Government/post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/specialty store

Domestic/hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation sandstone

walls particle board

roof asphalt

other wood (porch trim)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Miller's Store (presently Trenthouse Inn and Country Store) historically represents the nucleus of a small rural community of Trent nestled deep in the Laurel Highlands of southwestern Pennsylvania (Figure 1). Though originally an agricultural area, this heavily forested region today is primarily recreational, with state forest and park lands surrounding much of the store property. The large, two story, Victorian structure, built in 1884 and possibly enlarged in 1895, was designed for the combined use as a general merchandise store/post office and hotel (Figures 2,3), a tradition which still generally continues today. Associated with the building were several support structures including a stable, ice house, warehouse, buggy shed, etc. all of which have disappeared from the landscape. The imposing, U-shaped store/inn fuses elements of rural simplicity and Queen Anne ornamentation to create a form unique to the local area where plain vernacular design predominates. Despite a variety of modern alterations, the structure has retained enough of its original design elements to adequately convey a sense of historical association with its late 19th century beginnings.

The facade, now and originally, consisted of five structural bays with the westernmost bays housing the general store and probably the living quarters of the store proprietor and his family. The eastern section of the building served as the hotel area composed of three structural bays, with a central hall flanked by opposing rooms. Because of its irregular U-shaped design, the building is generally three rooms deep on its eastern and western sides but only two rooms deep in the center. Appended to the rear of the store is a post-1950, single story addition. Ornamenting the corner of the facade is a two-story hexagonal tower with a faceted conical roof and copper finial. A coursed sandstone rubble foundation supports the original portion of the structure although concrete blocks exist under the rear addition, rear porch enclosure (Room 6), and front porch. The wood frame superstructure is covered with beveled weatherboard siding over which painted, lapped particle board siding has more recently been applied (Figures 4-8).

The medium pitch gable roof, covered with asphalt shingles, features a boxed cornice, partial returns, decorative dentil-faced brackets, and similarly bracketed triangular dormers with freize boards (Figure 10). The five brick chimneys associated with early structure have in recent years been removed and only a metal stove pipe occupies the location of one of the original brick stacks. Diagonally beveled boards embellish the gable area on the eastern elevation but were never applied to the western gable (Figure 5). This discontinuity plus a slight variation in the original wood

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siding across the facade (see Figures 2,3) supports the likelihood of two distinct building phases culminating with the addition of the hotel in 1895.

The original access into the store, via the facade and rear west elevation have been removed or concealed by modern wood siding in recent years although the entries into the hotel area remain essentially unaltered. These consist of single (side and rear) or double (facade) entries with four-panel beaded doors, ornate metal knobs, plates, and hinges, and single light transoms. The surround trim is generally plain but for the ornately carved heads (Figure 10). These represent the original moldings, which were slightly truncated during mid-20th century remodeling efforts by the previous owners. Similarly truncated ornate trim accents the many 1/1 pane, double hung sash windows which light the structure; the attic windows feature 2/2 light sashes with valence type hoods. Most of the windows still contain their original cylinder glass panes.

Emblematic of its Queen Anne influence is the long encircling porch which originally spanned the entire facade and most of the east elevation (a small section at the west end has recently been enclosed to enlarge the present store. Except for the replacement of some of the vertical lattice skirting along the facade with concrete blocks and the installation of asphalt roofing, this typically Victorian porch still retains all of its early design qualities, e.g., plain board deck and ceiling and wooden porch posts with decorative brackets. A smaller but similarly ornamented porch accesses the kitchen on the rear east elevation.

The interior plan of the building typically follows the asymmetrical composition of Queen Anne design (Figures 11,12) though a number of interior structural changes have somewhat modified the original appearance. These alterations are mainly confined to the western portion of the building where recent enlargement of the original store has resulted in the removal of several walls and the partitioning of two hotel rooms (see below for more details)(Figures 23, 24).

With the exception of the store area, many of the interior late 19th century design qualities have been preserved and are enhanced by the many antiques which have been used to furnish the present inn. Though some of the floors are covered with linoleum or carpeting, all of the original tongue and groove oak flooring is intact and exposed in several of the rooms. Beaded board ceilings are also exposed in several rooms (Figure 13) but most are covered with plasterboard or acoustical blocks. The horizontal plank walls (which were previously exposed in some areas) are concealed beneath painted or papered dry wall or plywood panelling. In Room 10 (dining room) and 11 (sitting room) beaded wainscoting provides an added sense of formality to these public areas. Baseboards display ornate moldings with beaded caps and quarter-round trim (Figure 14a). In contrast, the original baseboards on the second floor are exclusively plain boards devoid of ornamentation.

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Throughout all areas of the building, except the store, the oak door and window architraves feature block-and-circle corners and intricate moldings (Figures 14c, 15). Interior doors are four-paneled, beaded types with transoms, ornate brass (first floor) or black ceramic (second floor) knobs, and ornate metal plates and hinges. A notable feature of the dining room (Room 10) is the presence of a built-in, six-door cherry cupboard trimmed in oak (Figure 16). When constructed, the single cupboard space was accessed from opposing cupboard doors in Room 10 and 13, but the latter door has since been removed.

The main, double door entrance to the hotel opens into a central stair hall with an oak and walnut stairway featuring a massively carved newell post, turned balusters, and curvilinear stringers (Figures 14b, 17). An enclosed, plain, poplar stairway leads from the second floor to the attic.

Because of the original use of pot bellied stoves for heating purposes, no fireplaces exist in the building. The stoves were replaced with coal and later, oil fueled, central heating. A popular technological feature of the late 19th century is a 500 gallon wooden cistern located in the rear of the attic. Water was piped into the drum-shaped tank with the aid of a windmill located several hundred feet north of the store. The force of gravity then supplied water to the remainder of the building. Also, it is interesting to note that Room 17 located on the second floor above the store was apparently constructed without benefit of an entry, as no doorways were built into this room; only recently were the two present openings added. Further, no trim of any kind was applied to the windows. The reasons for the inaccessibility to this area and its stark simplicity of design relative to other rooms in the building remain a mystery.

Other buildings on the property associated with the early operations of the store/hotel, including an ice house, stable, warehouse, buggy shed, etc., have long since vanished from the landscape. Residual support posts do, however, mark the ice house location on the hillslope overlooking Laurel Hill Creek (Figure 18). Presently, two post-1940 garages are located at the front and rear of the property. Both are small, one story, rectangular structures with asphalt covered gable roofs, concrete foundations, and weatherboard siding (Figure 19, 20). Despite their modern construction neither detract visually from the property's historic appearance. Moreover, the grounds are pleasingly landscaped with a simple flower garden and lawn on the east side and a mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland canopy at the rear, thus preserving the rural mountain ambiance associated with the early store/inn.

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Miller's Store has undergone a variety of some structural and primarily cosmetic changes over the years. Below is an itemized list of these modifications, all of which have occurred between ca. 1945-1986 (see Figures 21, 22 for corresponding locations):

EXTERIOR:

- A. Particle board siding was applied to all exterior walls.
- B. The westernmost portion of the circling porch was enclosed to add space to the present store. Consequently, several of the original doors and windows in this area were removed or replaced.
- C. The first floor door and window west elevation were concealed with the application of the present siding.
- D. All of the original chimneys were removed and an exterior brick chimney was installed on the west elevation.
- E. A one-story stockroom was added to the rear of the store.
- F. A large display window was added to the store on the first floor facade.
- G. Asphalt roofing was installed over the former roofing.
- H. A wooden stairway was added to the west elevation to provide access to a second floor apartment located above the store (originally, the second story hallway [Room 15] spanned the entire building, terminating at its juncture with the hotel stairway [Room 25]).
- I. The vertical lattice porch skirting on the facade was replaced with concrete for greater support.
- J. All wooden porch steps were replaced with concrete steps.

INTERIOR:

- K. The store was extensively modernized with the addition of plywood paneling, dropped acoustical block ceiling, linoleum flooring, and modern windows and doors.
- L. Rooms 10 and 7 were diminished in size to accommodate the enlargement of the store.
- M. One of the original second floor bedrooms was partitioned to create three modern bathrooms (Rooms 22, 23, and 24).
- N. Door openings have been relocated in three rooms: In Room 12 the present doorway was added after the original access from Room 11 was sealed. The original doorway into Room 26 via Room 27 was sealed and a new entry was created in Room 26 from the stair hall. Doorways were created for Room 17.
- O. The first floor rear porch was enclosed creating a modern laundry room (Room 8), office (Room 5), and storage area (Room 6).

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- P. The kitchen (Room 13) was completely modernized, and consequently the adjacent pantry wall was removed to create a breakfast niche.
- Q. The original pot-belly stoves throughout the building were replaced with central, forced air heating.
- R. Plywood panelling and/or dropped ceilings of acoustical blocks have been installed over the original wall and ceiling surfaces in several of the rooms throughout the building (in addition to the store).
- S. Built-in closets with folding doors have been added to several of the second floor bedrooms as well as Rooms 12 and 15.
- T. Room 21, a bathroom was created by closing a portion of the second story hallway (Room 15).

With the exception of the store which has undergone some extensive modifications, the building, in general, has retained much of its architectural integrity. Most of the changes, like the wall and ceiling fabrics and doorway relocations are superficial or even unnoticeable while others, like the partitioning of space to create bathrooms where none existed before and the kitchen modernization, were certainly necessary renovations and were executed with a sensitivity to the architectural theme. Despite all of these changes the building still adequately conveys its overall historic feeling as a late 19th century country store/inn and stands against its rural mountain backdrop as a fine example of local Victorian architecture.

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)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1884-1940

Significant Dates

1884, 1895

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mognet, Newton (builder)

Mognet, W.H. (builder)

Mognet, C.N. (builder)

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

Miller's Store is significant under Criterion "A", as it represents the commercial and social center for one of southwestern Pennsylvania's mountain farming communities during the last decades of the 19th century. In providing the necessary dry goods and farm equipment, postal service, overnight accommodations, and a meeting place for political and social events, Miller's Store became the focal point of nearly all farm related activities within the Trent community of eastern Somerset County. Presently it is the only commercial building of its functional type and vintage still in operation today within the broader Turkeyfoot Valley area of the county. Also under criterion "C" the building is locally significant for two reasons: (1) the retention of many of its 19th century design qualities and landscape features helps to integrate the structure with its historic context, and (2) the relatively massive scale and extensive use of Queen Anne ornamentation architecturally distinguish the building from contemporaneous structures in Middlecreek Township and the Turkeyfoot Valley where smaller scale, utilitarian design dominates almost to the exclusion of other late 19th century architectural forms. Within its geographic area, then, Miller's Store stands out not only as the embodiment of late 19th century rural commerce but also as a rare surviving form of rural architecture, both from a stylistic and functional standpoint.

During the last decades of the 19th century, despite sporadic coal mining and timbering pursuits, ruggedly mountainous Somerset County remained solidly bound to its agricultural roots such that by 1916, seventy-two percent of the landscape was devoted to farmland. This trend was particularly apparent in Middlecreek Township and the Trent area where the 1880-1910 U.S. census and county tax records show a marked dominance of farmers among the low resident population. This strong agrarian tie may have been a reflection of the heavy German presence in Somerset County and the Trent area. The residents of these sparsely inhabited agricultural communities relied heavily on the general merchandise stores which became the local hubs for commercial and social activity in these rural 19th century enclaves. Miller's Store was one such facility, located strategically along Laurel Hill Creek at the intersection of two rural roadways.

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According to the property deed and tax records, Miller's Store was constructed in 1884 for Jacob Miller on 0.5 acres of farm land obtained from John Putnam. His proprietorship ended only three years later, however, when merchant Abraham H. Brugh obtained the property. Nonetheless, the name "Miller's Store" has continued in popular use among area residents even to the present time. As a point of fact, the Trent community was initially referred to as "Miller's Store" but was later changed to its present name after S.V. Trent, a Somerset attorney, made an important speech at the store during a political meeting.

Under Brugh's ownership the property was increased to 2.5 acres (just slightly larger than the nominated property) and in 1895 a "house" and barn/stable were added. The house appears, from early photographs, to represent the hotel portion of the building which was added to the already existing store. No evidence is presently available, however, to confirm or refute this since the walls of the entire building were later covered with new siding material. It was probably in that year that Brugh changed the name to "Trent House and General Store", where he (and his wife, Jane) conducted business until their departure from the area in 1912. Subsequently, over the next 80 year period, the store/inn has changed hands no less than five times.

That Miller's Store was the "lifeblood" of the local agricultural community is documented in the county tax records revealing that during its first thirty years of operation (during which time such data were available), it was the only commercial establishment in the Trent area. Throughout its period of significance from ca. 1884-1940 the property served the local farming area as both its commercial and social center. Besides groceries and other daily necessities, the general merchandise store carried feed and farm supplies and ice, which was made and stored along the creek. The store also provided items such as chop and sugar as well as kettles and copper tubing for the flourishing "moonshine" business. The Trent post office was also housed in the store for many years, and overnight accommodations were available since 1895 and possibly earlier. The attendant stables provided for the quartering of horses, and older residents recall blacksmithing services being offered behind the hotel. In addition, the store was the scene of local political gatherings, one of which provided the impetus for changing the name of the community to Trent.

Despite the periodic change of proprietors over the years, the store/inn continued operating - off and on - throughout the 1900s, and today follows in a similar tradition although economic trends after ca. 1940 changed the historic role of the establishment. Somerset County witnessed a decline in the number of farms and rural farm population by almost two-thirds since 1940 and a concomitant rise, during the last twenty years, in tourism and recreation. As a consequence, Miller's Store (now Trenthouse Inn and Country Store) adaptively shifted its focus to accommodate this change. Today the grocery store and bed-and-breakfast inn still serve the needs of the local population but predominately attract nonlocal, recreation-seeking tourists.

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Alterations to the building, executed mainly during the early 1950s and mid 1980s are admittedly extensive within the general store but are only superficial throughout the remainder of the structure. Given the history of continued use spanning over 100 years and the periodic need to update facilities and services, the nature of these modifications is not entirely unjustified. More importantly, however, is the overall historic feeling that the building still conveys despite these changes. This is apparent in the survival of most of the original exterior features and interior design elements of the hotel section, and in the surrounding landscape which has changed minimally except for the increase in forest land surrounding the property and in the disappearance of the original attendant structures. The garages, though of modern aspect, are generally compatible with architecture of the store/inn and therefore do not detract from the historic appearance of the property. Of interest too, is the 500 gallon attic cistern which reflects a rare surviving example of late 19th century plumbing technology.

In addition to its historic association, Miller's Store is also noteworthy for its local stylistic rarity. As a country store/inn, it attained a level of architectural refinement unprecedented in the rural environs of Middlecreek Township and beyond. Its elaborate moldings and embellishments, corner tower, encircling porch, and massive scale certainly distinguish it from most other local structures which are generally of plain vernacular design. The imposing Queen Anne style edifice was built by the Mognet brothers, resident carpenters of the period locally renowned for their high degree of craftsmanship. They constructed many of the covered bridges in the county (only a few of which survive today) and also repaired several covered bridges in the area including the one formerly next to Miller's Store. When compared against the 73 resources surveyed by Somerset County Planning Commission in the Turkeyfoot Valley (encompassing Middlecreek Township and eight surrounding townships and boroughs) Miller's Store stands out as a unique architectural form on several levels. It is the only existing store/inn surveyed in Middlecreek Township and only one of two of that vintage within the entire Turkeyfoot Valley area. Moreover, it is distinctive as the only Queen Anne style commercial building of the region. One other similarly designed building was included in the county survey (in Rockwood Borough) but it represents the private residence of a locally prominent businessman. Therefore, Miller's Store evokes an elaboration of design nowhere paralleled in Middlecreek Township and only rarely encountered within the entire Turkeyfoot Valley region.

In close concert with the overall historic theme of the property, a final comment is directed toward its potential archaeological importance. While no archaeological testing has previously been conducted here, the archival and photo documentation of several attendant structures, e.g., stable, warehouse, buggy shed, ice house, etc. and the purported general absence of modern disturbance to the landscape may permit potentially informative explorations into the social patterns and evolutionary trends associated with this once important commercial center.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Anonymous

1891 Mercantile Appraisement of Dealers in Merchandise In Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Somerset Standard, April 3, 1991, pg. 83.

Beers, F.W.

1876 County Atlas of Somerset County, Pennsylvania. F.W. Beers and Company, New York, pg. 50.

Gordon, Thomas F.

1833 A Gazetteer of the State of Pennsylvania. T. Belknap, Philadelphia, pg. 423.

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:

Robert and Pamela Schrock (owners)
R.D. 2, Box 140, Rockwood, PA 15557

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.84 acres

UTM References

A 17 650190 4427460
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Refer to Figure 18)

Beginning at a pipe on the north side of SR 55049 and south of Laurel Hill Creek, proceed 178.81 feet N21 -49 E across Laurel Hill Creek to another pipe, then 363.93 feet S61 -36 E to another pipe, then 271.30 feet S23 -15 W to another pipe on the south edge of SR 55049, then 379.31 feet N47 -28 W to the point of origin.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries conform to the present legal boundaries of the Trenthouse Inn property, bordered on the east and west by State park lands, on the south generally by State Route 55049, and on the north by the private residential tract by the Trenthouse property owners. The nominated boundaries closely conform to the 2.5 acre tract as it existed during the period of significance. It encompasses not only the extant store/inn but most, if not all, of the sites of the historically associated structures.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Denise L. Grantz
organization Grantz and Cosgrove Cultural Resource Consultants date August 23, 1991
street & number P.O. Box 18253 telephone (412) 344-2904
city or town Pittsburgh state PA zip code 15236

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National Park Service

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Somerset County

Deed Books 76, 167, 255, 286, 287, 396, 843. Somerset County Court House, Somerset, Pennsylvania.

Sheriff's Deed Books 1, 28. Somerset County Court House, Somerset, Pennsylvania.

Tax assessment Records, 1880-1950, Middlecreek Township, Somerset County Court House, Somerset, Pennsylvania.

Plan Books, Somerset County Court House, Somerset, Pennsylvania

Somerset County Planning and Zoning Commission

1973 Somerset County Economic Study. Somerset County Planning and Zoning Commission, Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

1986 Somerset County Historic Resource Survey. Somerset County Planning and Zoning Commission, Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

United States Department of Census

Census of Population 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910. Middlecreek Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania. United States Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Walker, Edward (publisher)

1860 Map of Somerset County, Edward Walker, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (map located in Somerset County Court House).

Wefley, William H. and E. Howard Blackburn

1906 History of Bedford and Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The Lewis Publishing Company, New York, pg. 648.

Whipkey, V.G.

1986 The Village of Trent History. Laurel Messenger 27(1):201.

INFORMANTS:

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RD 2

Rockwood, PA 15557
(interviewed 9-5-90)

Sanford Henry
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Richard Kimmel
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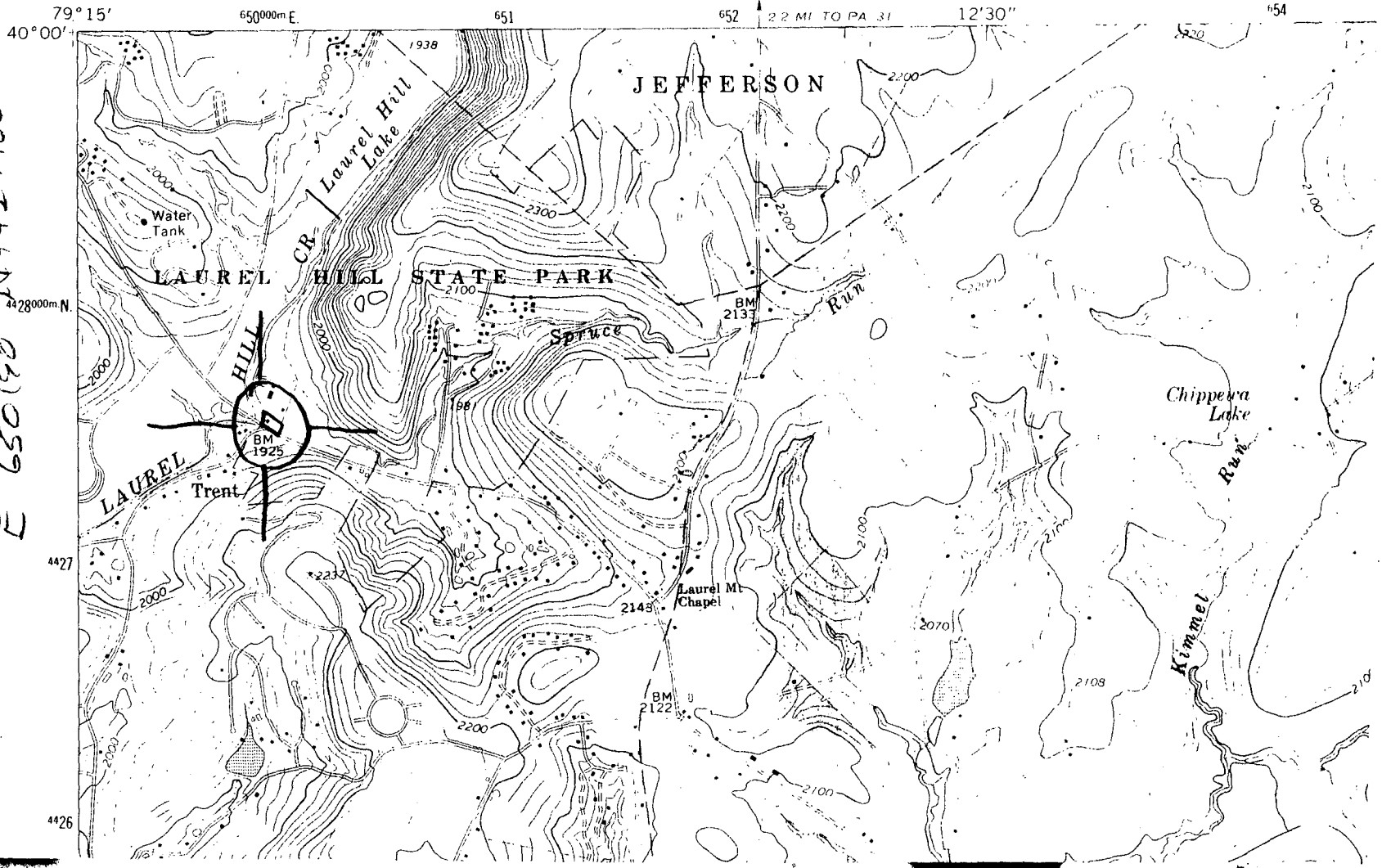
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Jessie Miller
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Rockwood, PA 15557
(interviewed 6-2-87)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5104 11 SE
(SEVEN SPRINGS)



Miller's Store
Somerset County
Reinwood Road
Zone 17
E 650190 N 447742

4428000m N

4427

4426