

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 15). 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 Weidner Mill
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Blacksmith Road not for publication N/A
city, town Amity Township vicinity N/A
state PA code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19518

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>5</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Gristmills in Berks County
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Brent D. Glass 9/18/90
Signature of certifying official Date
Dr. Brent D. Glass, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
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

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Continuation Sheet

Weidner Mill

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The dimensions of the mill are 36'3" by 52', the lower floors are of stone and the second floor and attic are of brick construction and it has a tin channel roof. The mill has an attractive appearance with architectural details of the mid 19th century. It has scalloped bargeboard cornice trim, paneled Dutch doors, 6/6 windows and an open cupola with a gable roof and scalloped trim. Above the cupola is a tin weathervane. The hoist hood is of substantial proportions and carries the same scalloped trim as the cornice. Painted on the front facade is the inscription "MANATAWNY ROLLER MILLS". The stone portion of the mill is believed to be part of an earlier mill which burned, the upper portion having been frame. The original stone section has quoins and large arched openings for the race into the wheel pit.

The most impressive feature of this mill other than its architecture is the water power system. A large dam, 120 feet wide, spans the Manatawny a short distance above the mill. This dam has been maintained and repaired over the years. Originally constructed of logs in the 18th century it now is reinforced with masonry and concrete. A stone headrace runs from the dam to the mill. A working water gate releases water to the headrace and through the mill. Inside the wheel pit an iron penstock 8' in diameter and 30' long carries water to a large turbine installed in the 1880's. The power was transmitted through metal shafts with wooden gears to the milling machinery. The water exited through an arch on the east side of the mill into the tailrace. Owners of the mill have been told this power source would be capable of generating electricity for their needs. The major problem that has prevented this kind of use for the site is its periodic flooding.

Milling at this site ceased in the 1940's. In recent years the mill has been used to store plumbing equipment. The basement has been cleared because it is frequently subject to flooding. The first floor contains the mill office and a Faribanks scale. The only remaining milling equipment is housed in the attic, where a middlings purifier, the hoist mechanism and both upright and horizontal shafts are intact. All floors have chamfered oak posts. Several early doors possibly date to the original mill building.

The resources on this property possess good integrity. The watercourses are intact and capable of delivering water power to the mill. The exterior of the mill building has changed little over the years. Although most of the milling equipment has been removed the basic interior structure of the mill has not been altered and the open mill spaces remain. The interior of the house and the tenant house have been extensively remodeled and modern conveniences installed. The original window sash in both houses have been removed and replaced with 2/2 sash. The changes do not interfere with the essential physical features that enable the historic resources to convey their past identity and character and portray the significant time period c 1820 to 1939 the 50 year cut-off date for National Register eligibility.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

Period of Significance

1820 to 1939

Significant Dates

1855

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 Weidner mill complex is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. Two hundred years ago the water power at this site was first developed and as a result the resources on this property have been associated with milling in Berks County for two centuries. Architecturally, this mill is a fine example of Berks County Victorian style mill architecture.

The configuration of the Weidner mill is standard size and shape for Berks County mills of the period, however, it is the stylistic details -- the scalloped bargeboard cornice trim, the name of the mill painted on the exterior and the open cupola with scalloped trim and weathervane that make this building a fine example of Berks County Victorian style mill architecture. Less than ten of the 104 mills in the Berks County Gristmill Survey used Victorian elements in their architecture. The Spannuth and the Wertz mills, like the Weidner, were two other mills in which the owners chose not to build in the vernacular gristmill design but to emulate modern Victorian innovations.

The Weidner, Greisemer/Brown, Thompson and Geiger mills illustrate an interesting finding of the survey: the majority of early mills surveyed were part of working farms. The building functions on these properties were, therefore, inter-related - the mill, houses and outbuildings serving the mill and farm. The houses in the Weidner complex served as homes of the miller; the tenant house serving as his early residence, and the larger house serving as his home at a later date. Additionally, the buildings have all been part of the property since the last building was constructed 140 years ago. These factors give the buildings historical associations to each other and to the milling industry of the county.

See continuation sheet

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Continuation SheetWeidner Mill
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Although the buildings in this complex were constructed during different periods they form an aesthetically pleasing group: the buildings complement one another in workmanship, setting, style and the use of stone as a construction material.

It surely is no coincidence that the water power was developed and the first mill built on this site during a period of rapid expansion of the wheat trade in Pennsylvania and the county as farmers produced ever greater surpluses for the market. According to the records a gristmill and sawmill on the property are mentioned as early as 1744 in John Sands' will (Berks 2-184). In 1744 Sands is listed as a petitioner who renewed an application to establish Amity Township. John Sands is listed on the 1767 tax list as having a gristmill and sawmill. The Sands mill site is shown on the 1816 map of Berks County.

The 1850 Census of Manufactures lists Rhoads as owner of the mill which had four pair of stones with a capital of \$8,000., processing 19,000 bushels of wheat and rye with a product value of \$12,850. Two men operated the mill each earning \$30.00 a month. The maps of 1854, 1862 and 1876 show the owners of the mill as being Rhoads.

Historian Morton Montgomery in his History of 1886 states, "The old Ose Sands mill -- an old structure with the lower part stone and a frame superstructure. Solomon Rhoads remodeled the mill, which was destroyed by fire July 7, 1855. The present brick mill was built on the site the same year, and as the property of Mahlon Weidner, was supplied with new process machinery in 1884." The last operating miller was James Weidner who operated the mill until the 1940's.

As the water power at this site was utilized from a very early date the dam and races are a good example of water power technology spanning 200 years. The dam originally built in the 18th century of logs has been reinforced with masonry and concrete. The water power system has been well maintained and is still capable of generating power.

The earlier mill at this site c 1744 provided necessary milling services to the pioneer farmers of the area grinding grain into flour for their families and processing feed for their animals. The mill rebuilt in 1855, as a merchant mill and equipped with roller machinery, supplied flour for the market in addition to custom grinding. An excellent power source, keeping abreast of change through expansion and new machinery enabled milling to be carried on at this site for 200 years and play an important role in the long history of milling in Berks County.

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

Acreege of property Approximately 6 acres

UTM References

A	<u>1,8</u>	<u>4,3,8</u>	<u>1,4,0</u>	<u>4,4</u>	<u>6,1</u>	<u>7,4,0</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
C	<u>1,8</u>	<u>4,3,8</u>	<u>3,0,0</u>	<u>4,4</u>	<u>6,1</u>	<u>5,9,0</u>

B	<u>1,8</u>	<u>4,3,8</u>	<u>3,0,0</u>	<u>4,4</u>	<u>6,1</u>	<u>7,4,0</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
D	<u>1,8</u>	<u>4,3,8</u>	<u>1,4,0</u>	<u>4,4</u>	<u>6,1</u>	<u>5,8,0</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Louse Emery, Consultant
organization Berks County Conservancy date June 1990
street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone 215-372-4992
city or town Wyomissing state PA zip code 19610

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Weidner Mill

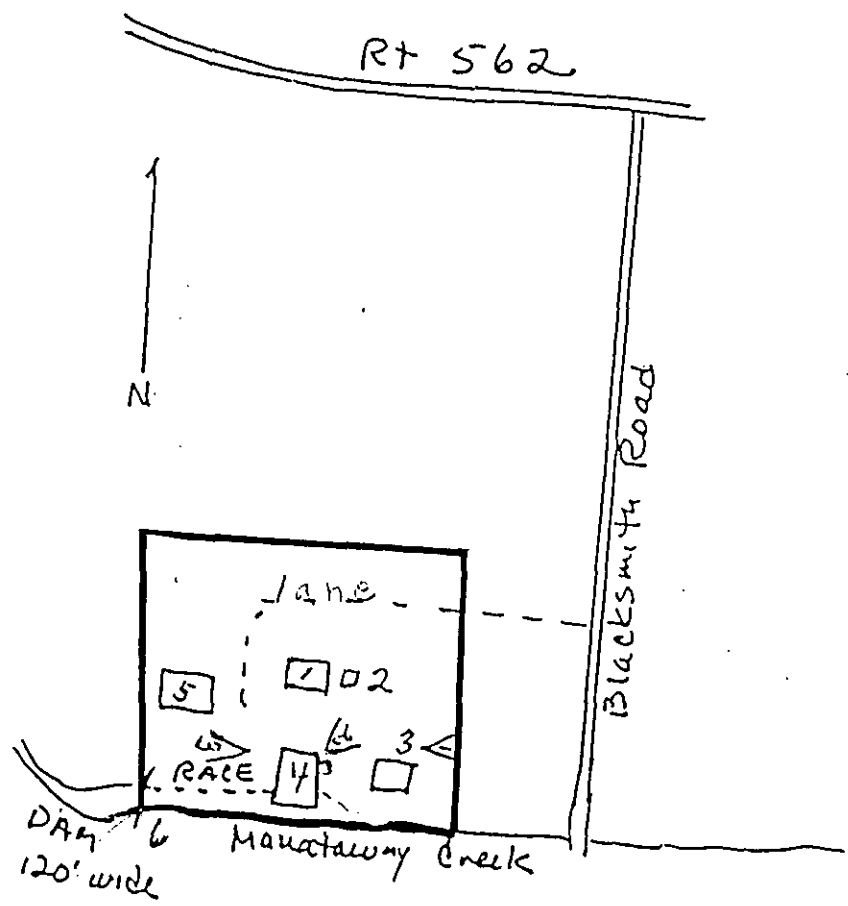
Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at the southwest corner of the dam continue north 500', thence east 500', thence south 500', thence west 500' along the south side of Manatawny Creek to place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the five contributing buildings and one contributing structure, the water power system consisting of dam and mill races. The southern boundary is defined by the Manatawny Creek and the other boundaries are lines of convenience. Excluded is land to the east, north and west which is currently being developed into house lots.

WEIDNER MILL
 BERKS COUNTY, PA

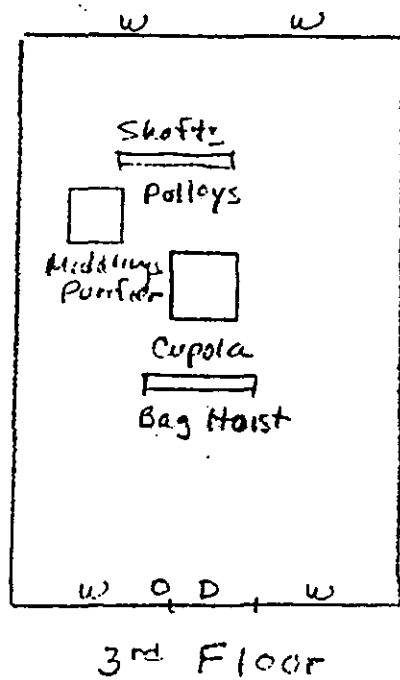
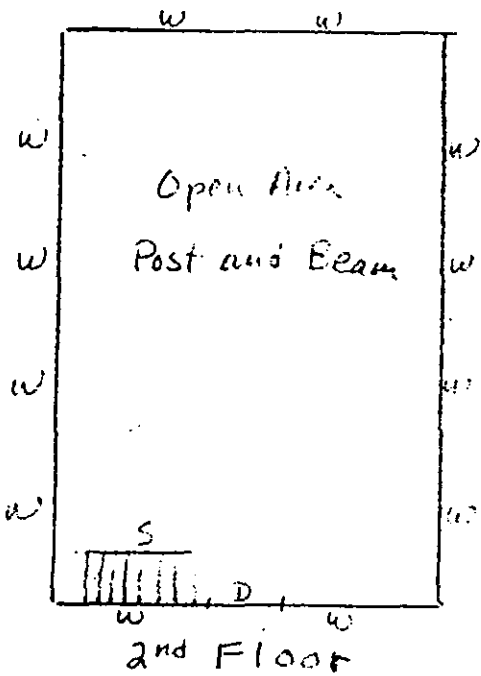
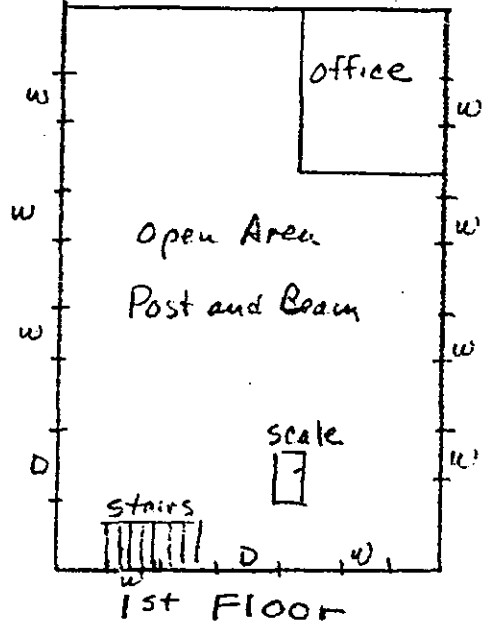
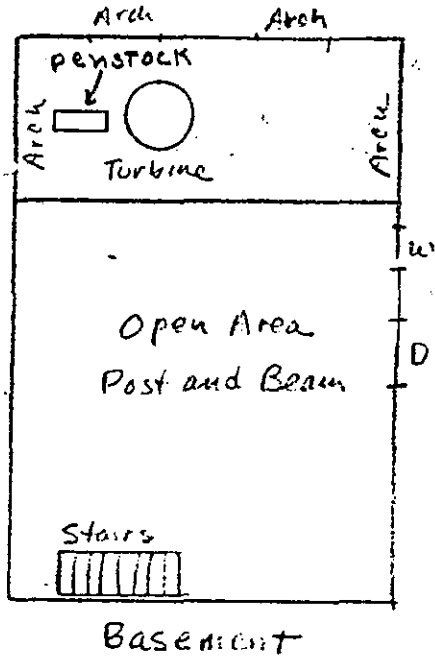


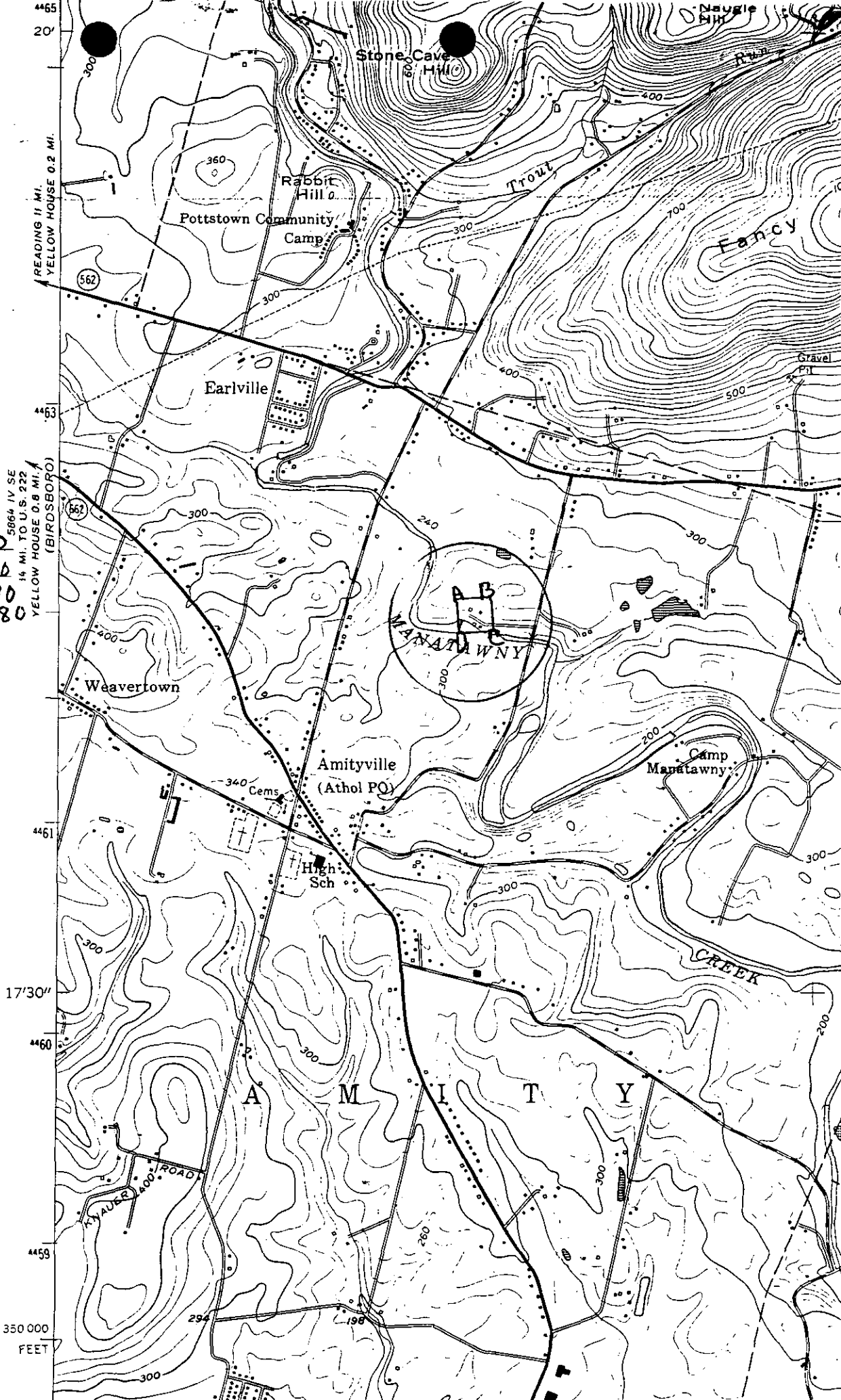
- 1. House
- 2. Spring house/smokehouse
- 3. Tenant
- 4. Mill
- 5. Barn
- 6. Watercourses

Key

————— Boundry
 ◀ Photo Direction
 Not to Scale

WEIDNER MILL
 BERKS COUNTY, PA





Weidner
 Berks County
 Boyertown 2nd
 - Sec 18

438140 4461740
 438300 4461740
 438300 4461590
 438140 4461580

5864 IV SE
 1/4 MI. TO U.S. 222
 YELLOW HOUSE 0.8 MI. N
 (BIRDSBORO)

350 000
 FEET