

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 Huffman Distillery and Chopping Mill  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number LR62155, 2 miles north of Rt. 917  not for publication N/A  
city, town Somerset Twp.  vicinity N/A  
state PA code PA county Washington code 125 zip code 15330

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
		sites
	<u>3</u>	structures
		objects
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Whiskey Rebellion Resources in Southwestern Pa 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)

Industry/manufacturing facility

~~Domestic/single dwelling~~~~Agriculture/animal facility~~~~Domestic/secondary structure~~**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: vernacular

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

Vacant/not in use

Domestic/single dwelling

Agriculture/storage

Vacant/not in use

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Log

Brick

roof Tin

other

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Huffman Distillery and Chopping Mill complex is nestled between two high, round-topped hills typical of southeastern Washington County. The farm consists of 180 acres and is drained by the Center Branch of Pigeon Creek. There are twelve buildings and structures on the property. However, eleven are included within the nominated boundary which was drawn to exclude open space surrounding the buildings and structures. There are four principal buildings on the property: a c. 1810, 2 1/2 story, four bay, brick, main house; a c. 1815 timber frame bank barn; a c. 1790 squat, stone and log distillery; and a c. 1805 timber frame chopping mill. All of these are vernacular in style. These along with the c. 1810 2 1/2 story log smoke/spring house are contributing to this nomination. In addition, there are three noncontributing buildings and three noncontributing structures. These were constructed after the period of significance.

The early 19th century main house rests on a rubblestone foundation with a 1 1/2 story, brick kitchen ell to the rear. The house faces south with its gable end banked into the hillside. The roof has a medium pitch, and the gable end walls of the main block have no fenestration except for one window on first floor of the east gable. Two balanced, interior chimneys emerge from the west gable end, while a single, interior chimney rises on the east gable end. A hip roofed porch was built on the front or south facade in the late 19th/early 20th century. The porch is constructed of square posts, has a balustrade of rectangular spindles interspaced with X's, and the top is lined with turned spindles and curved brackets. A multi-paned transom tops the front door. The window configuration is 6/6 panes on both the first and second floors.

The floor plan of the house exemplifies a transition in building. One in which the forces of tradition are battling the Georgian/Federal high style influence. The plan appears to be a combination of the Continental floor plan and the two thirds Georgian plan. Typically in the Continental plan there were three rooms on the first floor with the front door opening into the hall/kitchen. The two thirds Georgian plan characteristically had a narrow hall along one gable end of the house with entrances into two parlors. The front door of the Huffman House opens into a large square hall containing a partially enclosed stairway with paneled wainscoting. Although there was no cooking fireplace in this room, it is also unlike the traditional hallway of the two thirds Georgian house.

Although a modern kitchen has been added in the kitchen ell and part of the partition has been removed between the rear parlor and the hall, the house retains a high degree of integrity.

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Huffman Distillery and Chopping Mill

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The barn stands on an opposing hill about 500 feet northwest of the house. The barn is a typical early 19th century, frame Sweitzer barn resting on a rubblestone foundation. Facing south, the barn has an asymmetrical roof line with the forebay extending over the front wall. It is sheathed in vertical wood siding. Located southwest of the house, the 1 1/2 story distillery building is constructed of v-notched logs and has a rubblestone foundation. Facing northeast, the distillery retains little of its original exterior stucco covering. Situated just east of the distillery, the chopping mill is a 2 1/2 story, square timber frame building covered with vertical wood sheathing and rests on a rubblestone foundation.

West of the house and north of the distillery stands the two story, v-notch log, spring/smoke house which rests on a rubblestone foundation. A cantilevered roof extends over the north gable end of the building. This building retains some of its original exterior stucco.

The key component in this complex is the distillery building which is nearly square, measuring 27 X 29 feet. All of the building's structural members are hewn, including the common rafters. The first floor log section was plastered both inside and out. Most of the plaster has fallen off of the exterior revealing how the logs as well as chinking were hacked in order to hold the plaster. This plaster and general lack of fenestration seems to indicate this floor was used for storage, possibly for the whiskey. Besides the low squat door and a window above it in the east gable end, there is only one other opening on this floor. This is a narrow ventilator window on the north side of the building. Although the front door is low and the space from the top of the stone foundation to the top of the gable end plate is 5 1/2 feet, the space from the plate to the apex of the roof is 10 feet. Presently, there is no evidence to indicate the need or use of this extensive amount of space above the plate.

This is a banked building with the front or east end having a lower stone wall than the rear which can be entered on the eaves ends at ground level. Besides opposing doors on the eaves ends, there are opposing squat windows as well. In an early 19th century book titled, *The Practical Distiller*, the writer recommended that a distillery have "doors opposite each other, with plenty of windows to afford a draft and recourse of air." This distillery expert also recommended that the lower story be 10 feet high---"this will leave room for the heated or rarefied air to ascend in the summer above the cooler and prevent the unpleasant effect of a too warm air on the mashing hogsheads and the sowering of the stuff in fermentation." There is no evidence of a fireplace on this floor which would have been a necessity for the operation of a stillhouse.

Located southeast of the still house is the chopping mill. Although it appears to be a small barn from the exterior, this building was used to chop and grind the grain of the stilling operation. As with most vernacular commercial/industrial buildings, the building's size and shape was largely dictated by the source of power. In this instance, it was a horse treadmill operation. There was a ramp located at the

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northwest corner which was used by the horses to enter the floor. Although the ramp has been removed, the double doors are still there. There are two doors on the east gable end of the barn, a tall one just above the stone foundation and one near the purlin line. These were probably used to bring sheaves of grain into the building. Inside along the western wall, the floor upon which the horses would have trodden, is composed of thick planks sawn on an up and down sawmill. There is a circular niche in the north foundation wall necessitated by the large wooden wheel, a vital part of the horse power mechanism. This timber frame building has three bents of massive posts and beams and is sheathed with vertical boards. The lower section was converted into cow stables in the late 19th century or early 20th century. The upper level has remained fairly intact and is a rare example of a treadmill milling operation. A 1 1/2 story, cement block, gable roof ell was built onto the south side of mill in the mid to late 20th century. It was used as a milking parlor. Another cement block, shed roof addition was constructed onto the ell about the same time. It was possibly used as a milk house. A metal silo was constructed onto the rear of the mill building in the mid to late 20th century.

Other ancillary house and farm related buildings and structures surround these main buildings. They include a late 20th century, 1 1/2 story, cement block garage which stands east of the main house. An early to mid-19th century, 1 1/2 story, frame summer kitchen/wash house stands just west of the house. An early 20th century, one story, frame chicken house stands southwest of the house. It has a shed roof and rests on a brick and stone foundation. A late 20th century, 1 1/2 story, cement block wagon shed stands just west of the chicken house. Just west of the wagon shed is a late 19th/early 20th century, frame corn crib with a frame shed roof addition to its eastern side. This structure rests on stone piers. These were all built after the period of significance are considered noncontributing to this nomination.

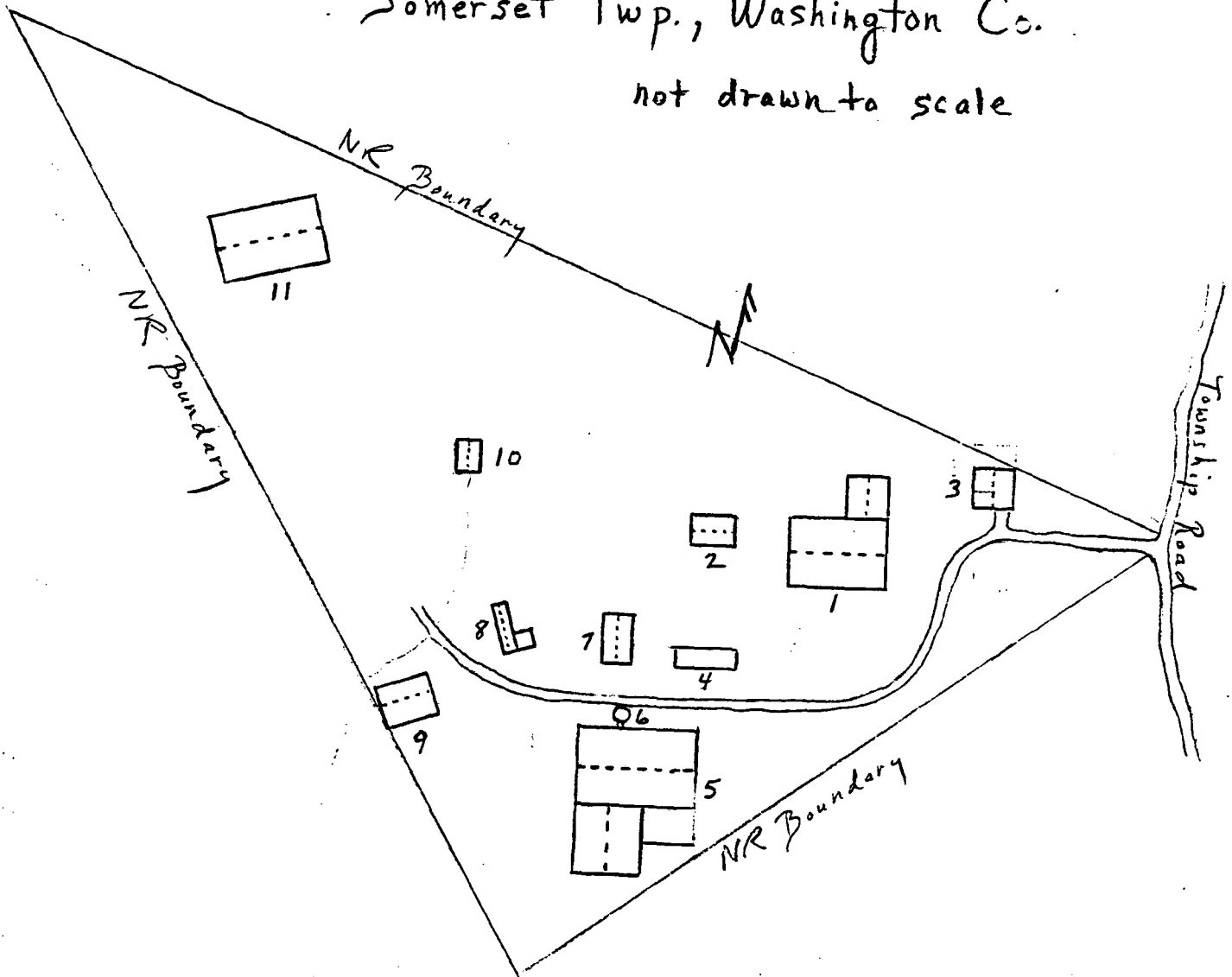
Despite the changes and additions to the house and chopping mill, the buildings are able to portray their use and period of significance. Although there are six noncontributing buildings and structures within the nominated boundary, these are quite typical of the development of late 19th through late 20th century farms in the region and do not detract from the earlier structures.

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Huffman Distillery and Chopping Mill  
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Huffman Distillery and Chopping Mill Complex  
Somerset Twp., Washington Co.  
not drawn to scale



Key

- |                        |                    |                        |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Main House          | 5. Chopping Mill   | 9. Distillery          |
| 2. Summer Kitchen (NC) | 6. Silo (NC)       | 10. Spring/Smoke House |
| 3. Garage (NC)         | 7. Wagon Shed (NC) | 11. Barn               |
| 4. Chicken House (NC)  | 8. Corn Crib (NC)  |                        |

**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)

Politics/Government

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1794-1815

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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 Huffman Distillery and Chopping Mill buildings date to the late 18th/early 19th centuries when the Huffman family were prominent in the area as distillers. The distillery, chopping mill, and associated buildings are significant as rare surviving examples of this early and significant industry among the settlers of Somerset Township and significant in the commercial development of southwestern Pennsylvania. In addition, the Distillery and Chopping Mill typify the very small scale of industrial/commercial enterprises of the late 18th/early 19th centuries. Illustrating local building traditions, the entire complex of buildings is locally significant for its representative vernacular style buildings.

Rudolph Huffman had settled in Somerset Township by 1784 and received a patent in 1787 for 458 acres on the waters of Pigeon Creek. In 1793 he was assessed with 360 acres, a grist mill and a distillery. (The 1876 Atlas of Washington County lists J. J. Huffman with 360 acres.) Huffman wrote his will in 1794, the year in which he died. The will directed that the residue of his estate, both real and personal, be retained by his widow Dorothy until his son Solomon arrived at the age of 21 years. The heirs agreed among themselves that Dorothy, Daniel, Joseph, and Solomon should retain this tract. A deed was issued in 1807 from the Huffman heirs to Joseph Huffman for 156 acres of this tract. Dorothy died in 1813, and she willed her share of the land on which Solomon lived to him. In summary, the original 360 acre tract apparently remained in family ownership, and the land of particular interest to this nomination was deeded to Joseph Huffman.

Inspector of the Collection of Excise Neville's list of stills and stillers for 1796-97 ranks Somerset Township with the highest number of stillers in Washington County. Three Huffmans were listed with stills at that time: John, Dorothy, and Jonathan. By 1804 David Huffman was also listed with a still, and by 1811 he was assessed with two stills. David died in 1819, and in that year Joseph was assessed with a distillery. Joseph Huffman died in 1839, and he willed the "home farm" to his wife during her natural life and after her decease to go to his son Joseph J. Huffman. According to the 1861 map of Washington County, J. J. Huffman is noted with a

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Huffman Distillery and Chopping Mill

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property on the south branch of Pigeon Creek. (The 1861 map also notes a distillery east of this property, but it is unclear whether it is located on another Huffman property or not.)

The Huffman farm has been in the family of the present owners for four generations. According to oral tradition, a Huffman was a wool dealer who overextended himself. He had borrowed money from Jacob Swagler, and the only way to return payment was by devising this farm to him. (The Swagler farm adjoined the Huffman tract to the south. The 1876 Atlas also showed J. J. Huffman with a tract of 190 acres just east of the farm being nominated.) In 1894 Joseph J. Huffman deeded the present farm of 180 acres to Jacob Swagler. The deed states that Swagler paid \$8,000 for the tract. In 1898 Swagler deeded the property to his daughter Levina S. Amos and her husband John Amos. John Amos conveyed the tract in 1946 to his daughter Mildred A. Nichol and her husband Roy Nichol. Roy and Mildred Nichol through a series of legal instruments conveyed the property to their daughter Jane Porter and her husband Don Porter, the present owners, in 1955.

As the context for this multiple property nomination mentioned, two extant distilleries and three ruins of distilleries were found in the region. Of the two extant ones, the Teeter/Manchester distillery is part of the Isaac Manchester National Register property. Slightly smaller than the Huffman Distillery, the Teeter/Manchester distillery appears to date to the early 19th century. No information has been found to associate the Teeter/Manchester distillery with the Whiskey Rebellion. The other remaining one, the Huffman Distillery, is significant as a rare surviving example of an early log distillery. The chopping mill associated with this distillery is the only one known to survive in the region. The vernacular architecture of this pair of buildings represents the traditional forces manifest in the early commercial development of the region. In addition, this complex of late 18th/early 19th century buildings is not only unusual in its number, but in the design of its individual members and its building materials.

The Huffman distillery and chopping mill are significant as rare surviving examples of this early and significant industry among the settlers of Somerset Township and southwestern Pennsylvania. Although relatively common during the Whiskey Rebellion era (7% to 11% of the population owned stills), few have survived due to the to the expanding industrialization of the region which made these small facilities obsolete. Large commercial ventures such as the Overholt Distillery in southern Westmoreland County developed in the mid to late 19th century.

The distiller was a key element in the whiskey excise protest movement, and as already stated Somerset Township had a high concentration of distilling operations. Many distillers were members of the economic, political or social elite of their communities. The excise tax profoundly affected them, and likewise how the distiller responded to the tax influenced the community's response.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Boyd Crumrine, ed., History of Washington County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of many of its Pioneers and Prominent Men (Evansville, IN: Reprint ed., 1975)

Preserving Our Past: Landmark Architecture of Washington County, PA (Marceline, MO.: 1975)

Samuel M'Harry, The Practical Distiller, or, An Introduction to Making Whiskey, etc. (Lancaster, PA.: 1809)

Washington County Court Records, including Wills, Deeds, and Tax Records

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 6½ acres

**UTM References**

A 

1	7
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5	79	5	50
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44	4	15	16	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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--	--	--	--	--

B 

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--	--	--	--	--

Zone      Easting      Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the southernmost point of the intersection of the farm lane and the township road; then going 600 feet southwest to a point just southwest of the chopping mill; then going 750 feet northwest to a point just northwest of the barn; then going 950 feet southeast to the place of beginning.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes all the buildings historically associated with the Huffman Distillery and chopping Mill complex and excludes vacant farmland as well as a late 20th century farm shed.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jerry A. Clouse date July 21, 1992  
 organization Pa. Hist. & Museum Commission telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 street & number P.O. Box 1026 city or town Harrisburg state Pa. zip code 17108



Huffman Distillery & Chopping Mill Complex Zone 17  
Washington Co  
Ellsworth Quad

E 579 550  
N 441 560

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

