

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 Damascus Historic District  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number Routes 371 and 63027 N/A not for publication  
city, town Damascus N/A vicinity  
state Pennsylvania code PA county Wayne code 127 zip code 18415

### 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>36</u>	<u>12</u> buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>2</u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>40</u>	<u>12</u> objects
	<u>12</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley, New York and Pennsylvania

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.

Dr. Brent D. Glass

Signature of certifying official

PA Historical & Museum Commission

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)

domestic / single dwelling  
 commercial / department store  
 education / school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

domestic / single dwelling  
 commercial / specialty store  
 health care / clinic  
 education / school

**7. Description**Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century / Greek Revival  
 Late Victorian / Queen Anne  
 Renaissance

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
 walls weatherboard  
 roof asphalt  
 other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Damascus Historic District parallels the Delaware River and the route of the old Newburgh-Cochecton-Great Bend Turnpike. It is in the shape of a reversed "L" with the River forming the base. Entry to the district from the east is across the mid-twentieth century interstate bridge, the road continuing west as Route 371 (the old Turnpike) or turning left onto River Road (Rte. 63027), just beyond the boating access area adjacent to the bridge. A cluster of buildings near the bridge forms the heart of old Damascus village. From here, Rte. 371 stretches west up a steep hill, with the district ending just beyond the school at the top of the hill. Cash's Creek parallels Route 371, flowing into the Delaware between the boating access and a cemetery to the south.

The center of the District is dominated by the Baptist Church and adjacent Overlook Cemetery, the latter situated on slopes on both sides of River Road as it sweeps around a double curve, and comes back to the river. From the cemetery to the southern boundary of the District the road hugs the river which is to the east. The west side of the road features steeply sloped lawns, mature shade trees and landscape greenery, and houses with varying amounts of set-back from the highway. These are fairly large houses dating from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century. Their architecture -- Tuscan Villa, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival -- is generally more elaborate than the houses along the Turnpike (Route 371), with views of the river, across front lawns and road, dominating their setting. Along with the churches and the Philip O'Reilly House, these are the buildings in the district which are characterized by the highest level of ornamentation and craftsmanship.

Following the unaltered route of the Turnpike, entry to the District from the west along Route 371 offers a dramatic vista from the higher ground near the Galilee Road intersection. There is a steep drop downhill into the river valley, with a view of the cluster of buildings around the Baptist Church to the south and the Delaware River and Cochecton flats in New York State to the east.

Route 371 in Damascus is lined on either side by nineteenth and early twentieth century residences. There is just one post-1942 house in this area. Most of the non-contributing resources are garages positioned behind the houses. On the south side of the road, the houses

 See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7      Page 2

---

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

very close to the highway, so close that at least one lost its front porch when the road was widened for vehicular use many years ago. Behind these houses flows Cash's Creek, with a wooded area and steep drop-off in back of some houses. Across Route 371, houses are set farther back from the road, and less closely clustered. Many of these houses are backed by yards or small fields between buildings and the wooded hillside to the north. Dry laid stone walls and outbuildings of indeterminate age are also found behind many of this residences; only the longer (more than 10 feet) stone walls and large outbuildings such as full-sized barns are individually documented as resources.

Community oriented properties within the District include the churches, cemeteries, and school. The Damascus Academy, one of the most prominent schools in the river valley, was replaced by a two-story brick building in 1929; that building, with its 1962 and 1992 additions at the rear, anchors the western end of the district. At the center and western end of the District, the two churches are well maintained examples Greek Revival and Renaissance Revival architecture. The cemeteries associated with these churches feature modest markers dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

Most of the buildings of the Damascus Historic District single family residences and associated buildings, generally late 19th century in architectural character. With the exception of the masonry school building, all are wood frame structures. Some have had siding applied, but many retain their original clapboard.

During the heyday of Damascus in the nineteenth century, both the Turnpike and River Road were lined by more residences and commercial buildings than exist today. Although a small village even then, it was a busy community with a number of commercial enterprises, including a general store and a blacksmith shop. The only businesses now active in the Historic District are a dentist's office and a decorative tile shop. The Vail Appley Store, once an important, multi-building complex, still stands, but since the 1980s closing as an antique shop on the ground floor, it is used for residential purposes.

Most of the architecture is simple and vernacular in style, with hints of Greek Revival or Queen Anne detailing. Outstanding buildings within the District include 1) the Philip O'Reilly House

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

---

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

(c. 1840), with its classic Greek Revival detailing (roof gable with enclosed pediment, wide frieze band, formal entrance) and complementary Greek Revival outbuilding; 2) the Vail & Appley Store (c. 1860), with its unusual Victorian storefront, incorporating a 2-story bay window with multiple panes of colored glass; 3) the Baptist Church (c. 1832) with its classic spire, elaborately pedimented arched windows, ornate doorway, and pilasters; 4) the picturesque Luther Appley House (c. 1850), the only Tuscan Villa Style building in the river valley, with 3-story corner tower, elongated windows and roofline bracketing; and 5) the Greek Revival Style Methodist Church, with classical pilasters and belfry.

In addition to garages and other outbuildings associated with several residences, non-contributing elements within the District are: 1) two small mid-20th century cottages between the Philip O'Reilly House and the Vail & Appley Store; 2) a contemporary 2-story under construction on the foundation of the Damascus Wagon Shop, across the road from the Vail & Appley Store and across the creek from the Baptist Church; and 3) a one-story contemporary residence on the north side of Route 371.

With the exception of the houses clustered near the bridge and farther along Route 371 just east of the intersection with Galilee Road, the buildings are somewhat irregularly dispersed, partly the result of the uneven topography and partly the result of buildings which have been demolished. Although most of this demolition took place before permits and records were filed, evidence of an 1872 map indicates that at least five buildings then extant along Route 371 are no longer in existence. Where buildings once stood, there are now lawns, small fields, and wooded areas.

The area beyond the boundaries of the historic district, in back of the designated buildings, is forested hillside. Along the River Road, south of the boundary, there are less than a dozen houses, most of them built since 1942. On River Road north of the district, there are no buildings within sight. West of the district, along Route 371, there are less than a half dozen buildings in the village, all post-1942.

Buildings in the district are in variable condition. The more imposing buildings, such as the churches, the Luther Appley House and the Philip O'Reilly House, tend to be in excellent condition with a high level of architectural integrity. Others have lost

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7      Page 4

---

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

some integrity and are only in fair condition. However, all of these buildings retain enough of their historic integrity to identify them with the period of significance (1810-1942).

A coded sketch map of the district, utilizing a county tax map, is attached, along with a chart keyed to the map and inventorying the district's resources.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number: building inventory

Damascus Historic District  
Page 1

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

BUILDING INVENTORY CHART

Site #	Property Name	Photo #	Description
1	O'Reilly, Philip, House 3C Buildings 1C Structure	P1	two-story, c. 1840, frame residence with five-bay center hall configuration; clapboard exterior; Greek Revival details (frieze band, enclosed pediments, formal entrance); two outbuildings with Greek Revival detailing; dry-laid stone walls
2	Takace's Cottages 2NC		non-contributing buildings: two simple, side-by-side, gable-ended buildings, c. 1950; larger one, asphalt shingled; smaller one, clapboard sided
3	Vail & Appley Store 1C	P2	two-story, wood frame, clapboard building, c. 1860; second story bay window with colored glass upper panes, on front facade
4	Sheard House 1C		wood frame, Queen Anne style, clapboard sided house, c. 1890; decorative corner porch with turned posts, millwork balustrade
5	Meckle's House 1NC 1C		non-contributing resource: simple, one-story ranch style residence c. 1960; contributing resource: one-story outbuilding associated with earlier house, c. 1870
6	Stephenson House 1C		one-and-one-half story, frame, clapboard sided residence, c. 1880; two-story rear addition; full front porch with turned posts, millwork balustrade

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number: building inventory

Damascus Historic District  
Page 2

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

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| 7  | White's House<br>1C<br>1NC           | two-story, cross gabled, frame residence, c. 1890; rear addition; corner porch with turned posts, millwork balustrade; non-contributing resource: detached two-car garage  |
| 8  | Olver House<br>2C<br>1NC             | two-and-one-half story, cross gabled, Queen Anne style residence; fish scale shingling, colored glass window within gable; full front porch; non-contributing resource: two-story garage; contributing resource: clapboard sided shed  |
| 9  | Abraham's House<br>1C                | simple, two-story wood frame, asphalt sided residence, with partially enclosed front porch, c. 1900  |
| 10 | Tyler House<br>1C                    | two-story, wood frame, Queen Anne style residence; with two-story tower, c.1800  |
| 11 | Priebe's House<br>3C<br>1C Structure | Queen Anne style, two-story, cross gabled, wood frame residence, c. 1870; corner porch with turned posts, millwork balustrade; one-story bay window; other contributing resources: unpainted, weather-board barn, two-story storage shed, dry-laid stone wall marking west property line |
| 12 | Tyler, Dr., House<br>1C              | two-style Greek Revival, wood frame residence, clapboard sided, with frieze band, c. 1870  |

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number: building inventory

Damascus Historic District  
Page 3

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

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| 13 | Dentist Office<br>1C         |    | one-and-one-half story building, c. 1900; originally a residence, later converted for dentist and undertaker; stuccoed over clapboard, c. 1930   |
| 14 | Damascus School<br>1C        | P4 | two-story, flat roofed, brick building, with dual front entrances; built 1927; one-story extension added 1962; one-story rear addition under construction 1992   |
| 15 | Damascus Methodist<br>1C     | P6 | clapboard sided, wood frame, Greek Revival style church, built 1857; ornamentation includes fully pedimented gable end over matching pilasters at corners and paralleling front entrance; square belfry with pilasters, pyramidal roof |
|    | Hillside Cemetery<br>1C Site |    | established c. 1860, cemetery with modest traditional markers; circular drive; follows contours of hillside terrain, at side and rear of church  |
| 16 | Tegeler House<br>1C          |    | two-story, frame residence; clapboard sided first story, shingled second story; enclosed front porch; c. 1920  |
| 17 | Berry House<br>1C            |    | one-and-one-half story, frame, asphalt sided residence, with front porch; Greek Revival style frieze band; c. 1890   |



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number: building inventory

Damascus Historic District  
Page 4

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

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| 18 | Gries House<br>1C               | P5 | two-story, frame residence, c. 1930; front porch; rear lean-to addition   |
| 19 | Burcher House<br>1C<br>1NC      | P5 | two-story simplified Queen Anne style residence; wood frame, clapboard sided, fish scale shingling in gable ends; full front porch with turned posts, millwork balustrade<br>non-contributing resource: one-story workshop building |
| 20 | Theobald House<br>1C<br>1NC     | P5 | simple vernacular, two-story, frame residence with one-story rear addition, c. 1890; non-contributing resource: two car garage  |
| 21 | Pethick, Tobias,<br>House<br>1C |    | one-and-one-half story, cross gabled residence, c. 1890; tracery ornamentation below roofline; enclosed front porch, side addition  |
| 22 | Early House<br>1C               |    | simple vernacular style, frame, clapboard sided residence, c. 1880  |
| 23 | Pethick, John<br>1C<br>1NC      | P3 | built c. 1870, simple vernacular style, wood frame, clapboard sided residence; non-contributing resource: one car garage  |
| 24 | Bush House<br>1C                |    | small wood frame, shingled residence with side addition; c. 1870  |

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number: building inventory      Damascus Historic District  
Page 5

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

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| 25 | Graby's House<br>1NC                 |          | non-contributing resource: under construction in 1992, two-story wood frame residence with gambrel roof  |
| 26 | Damascus Baptist Church<br>1C<br>1NC | P8<br>P7 | originally built c. 1832; in 1874, remodeled with Renaissance Revival detailing (elaborate pedimented full arched windows, ornate front entrance, pilasters at corners and paralleling entry); steeple; frame, clapboard sided church; non-contributing resource: five-bay modular school building behind the church |
| 27 | Overlook Cemetery<br>1C Site         |          | cemetery established c. 1840, including modest traditional style markers; shaded by mature trees, follows hillside landscape contours; Route 63027 divides upper, lower sections, with oldest markers near river   |
| 28 | Bush, Don, House<br>1C<br>1NC        | P7       | two-story, cross-gabled frame residence with clapboard siding, c. 1900; enclosed front porch; non-contributing resource: garage/workshop, c. 1990  |
| 29 | Turner House<br>1C                   | P7       | one-and-one-half story, gable ended, frame bungalow, c. 1930; full front porch with turned posts and millwork balustrade; centered dormer with gabled roof   |

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number: building inventory

Damascus Historic District  
Page 6

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

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| 30 | Appley, Otto, House<br>1C<br>INC |    | two-and-one-half story, Colonial Revival frame residence, with clapboard siding, c. 1900; wrap around porch with turned posts and millwork balustrade; three gable roofed, pedimented dormers pierce front roof; breeze way connects to side addition; non-contributing resource: one car garage   |
| 31 | Appley, Luther, House<br>3C      | P9 | Tuscan Villa style, frame, clapboard sided residence, c. 1850; two-story building with three-story corner tower; corner porch with turned posts and millwork balustrades on first and second floors; roof line bracketing; one-story bay window; rear/side two-story extension; other contributing resources: three-story clapboard sided barn, two-story workshop |
| 32 | Drake House<br>1C                |    | Greek Revival style residence, c. 1870; wood framed, clapboard sided; older section features gable with enclosed pediment, wide frieze band, pilasters, six-over-six windows; full front porch; south side has one-story bay window  |

**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)

transportation  
architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1810-1942  
1810-1942  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1810  
\_\_\_\_\_

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 Damascus Historic District meets Criterion A for its significant contribution to nineteenth and early twentieth century development of the area, especially for its association with the Newburgh-Cochecton-Great Bend Turnpike. It also meets Criterion C for the distinctive nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture of its buildings. Historically, the Turnpike and other developments related to this highway river crossing link the District to Context 2: Upper Delaware Transportation, 1614-1942.

Damascus holds an unique place in local history because of its location at the point where the Newburgh-Cochecton-Great Bend Turnpike crossed the Delaware into Pennsylvania. The most significant date for the Damascus Historic District, and the beginning of the period of significance, is 1810, when the Turnpike was completed, connecting the village to Newburgh on the Hudson and Great Bend on the Susquehanna.

Begun in 1801 as a link between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers, by 1810 it had been extended through Pennsylvania to the Susquehanna, forming one of the important routes for pioneers moving westward and for farmers bringing goods and stock to eastern markets. Where the Turnpike crossed the Delaware at Damascus, a busy community grew up around it. Only the Baptist Church, built in 1832, and the route of the Turnpike in the district (Route 371) remain as physical reminders of that first spurt of development, when the Turnpike was at its most active. Even when the Turnpike was abandoned as a private road in 1853, with the turnpike company formally dissolving in 1868, the highway continued in public use. A succession of bridges between Damascus and Cochecton (NY), originally associated with the Turnpike, supported the only roads spanning the Delaware for at least 30 miles up and down river until the 1890s. The Vail & Appley Store is the only remaining commercial building of that era, although virtually all the contributing buildings within the District are associated with community development of the period.

See continuation sheet

United State Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 2

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NYS: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

The architecture of the District has a distinctly nineteenth and early twentieth century character. Many of its buildings are simple vernacular residences, with hints of Greek Revival and Queen Anne styling. Greek Revival and Queen Anne are the two most common types of historic architecture in the river valley. Damascus and Equinunk are the two communities with the greatest concentration of those styles. Damascus, in particular, has some unusually fine examples of the classic and Victorian styles, within its boundaries. The more notable of these exhibit outstanding examples of craftsmanship. They include the Greek Revival Philip O'Reilly House, the Renaissance Revival Damascus Baptist Church, the Tuscan Villa Style Luther Appley House, and the Greek Revival Methodist Church.

The physical setting of the village has much to do with its nineteenth century flavor. Earliest settlers nestled their community along Cash's Creek at the point where it flows into the Delaware. The hills were heavily forested, providing wood for local building and for rafting downriver to sell at Trenton, Easton, and Philadelphia. The river remained largely unchanged, but the hills were eventually logged off. Today, second growth timber has reforested the hillsides and the area surrounding the village again looks much as it did in the early nineteenth century. As in Turnpike days, the village is visually dominated by the river and the forested hills beyond.

Although a number of the buildings associated with the Turnpike has been demolished, the spatial arrangement of those remaining--especially along River Road and the south side of Route 371--still evokes the late nineteenth century, when Damascus was a thriving village at an important river crossing. This lack of intrusion by the late twentieth century world is what makes Cohecton unique. Other communities in the valley may have as much late nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture, but it tends to be dispersed among more modern buildings. Here, there are few new buildings and, although older buildings may have been "remodeled," they tend to retain a sense of their original style.

The combination of historical significance, natural environment, unusually concentrated clustering of old and historic buildings, and lack of visual intrusion make Damascus a unique Upper Delaware community.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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:

Resource Management Office, National Park Service, Milanville, PA

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 45

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>

B	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Mary Curtis, Cultural Resources Specialist date 4/22/92  
 organization National Park Service telephone 717-729-7842  
 street & number P.O. Box C city or town Narrowsburg state New York zip code 12764

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9      Page 1

-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

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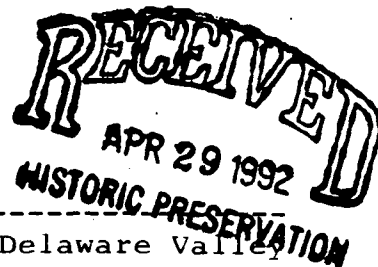
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1



-----  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Upper Delaware Valley  
NY: Delaware, Orange, Sullivan Counties  
PA: Pike, Wayne Counties

10. Geographic Data

UTM References

E.	18	494660	4617460
F.	18	494350	4617780
G.	18	493720	4617340
H.	18	493750	4617300

Verbal Boundary Description

The eastern boundary of the Damascus Historic District is the Delaware River. The northern boundary runs 200 feet north of the northern edge of Route 371, from the river on the east to the eastern edge of Galilee Road (Rte. 63110) on the west. It then follows Galilee Road to Route 371, following the southern boundary of Route 371 west to the northwest corner of Lot #71 (Wayne Co. tax map #207). The boundary then turns south along Lot #71's property line, then east, along the southern boundaries of the school property (Lot #71) and the Methodist cemetery (Lot #15), then proceeding along a line 200 feet from the southerly boundary of Route 371, until it meets the southern arm of the district. Turning south, the western boundary of this section follows a line 200 feet west of River Road (Rte. 63027) until it reaches the district's southern terminus: the southern property line of Lot #78.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes all major historic and architectural resources in the village. Its eastern boundary, the river, forms the edge of the village and the state line. The area beyond the north, west and south boundaries is dominated by non-contributing resources and undeveloped lands. For most of the district, the boundary follows a line 200 feet on either side of Route 371 and 200 feet west of Route 63027; many of these lots are exactly 200 feet deep, and that distance incorporates all contributing resources without involving uneven property lines and large acreages of undeveloped land behind the buildings. The 200-foot depth is not utilized where the property lines of the school and the two cemeteries extend beyond this depth; in these cases, the outward property lines serve as the boundary.

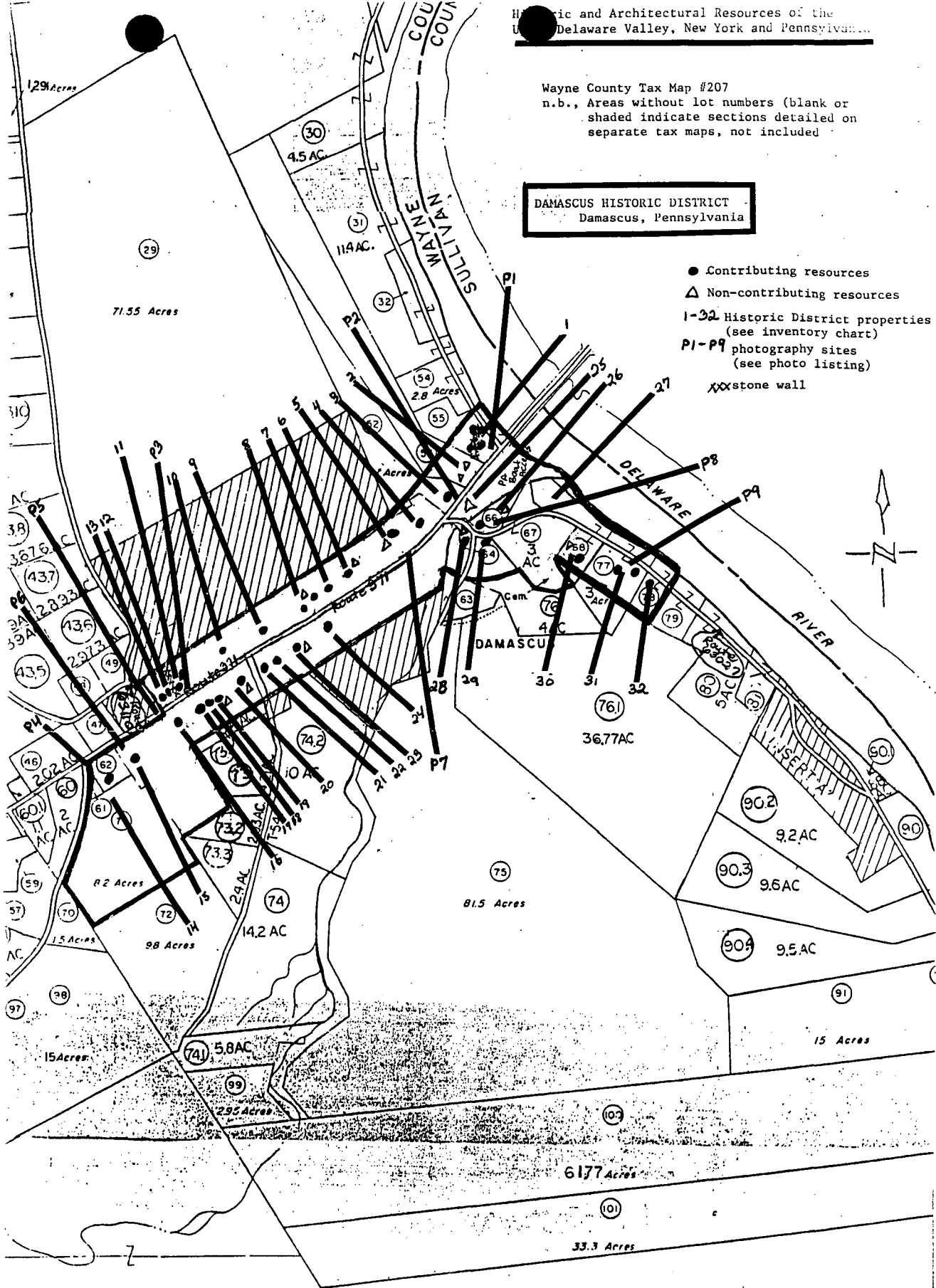


Wayne County Tax Map #207

n.b., Areas without lot numbers (blank or shaded indicate sections detailed on separate tax maps, not included

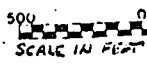
**DAMASCUS HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
Damascus, Pennsylvania

- Contributing resources
- △ Non-contributing resources
- 1-32 Historic District properties (see inventory chart)
- P1-P9 photography sites (see photo listing)
- xxx stone wall



Revisions			
7	12-6-77	13	12-28-84
8	9-19-78	14	11-29-85
9	10-19-79	15	1-13-87
10	9-30-80	16	3-3-88
	10-8-82	17	

KEY MAP	
197	
206	207
217	



Damascus Historic District  
Wayne County  
Zone 18 - Bandours Road

A E 493600 N 461750 UTM 18 48  
B E 494400 N 461750 UTM 18 48

