

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic name Virginville Historic District

Other names/site number N/A

2. Location

Street & number Main Street (SR 143), Second Street, Chapel Drive, First Street, Front Street N/A not for publication

City or town Richmond Township N/A vicinity

State Pennsylvania code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19564

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brent D. Glass

August 7, 2000

Signature of certifying official

Date

Brent D. Glass, Exec. Dir. PA 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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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 Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing Noncontributing

<u>80</u>	<u>22</u>	buildings
—	—	sites
—	—	structures
—	—	objects
<u>80</u>	<u>22</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources

previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: Single Dwelling
- Domestic: Hotel
- Agriculture/Subsistence: Storage
- Industry/Processing: Manufacturing Center
- Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store
- Government: Post Office
- Commerce/trade: General Store
- Religion: Religious Facility
- Agriculture/Subsistence: Animal Facility
- Domestic: Secondary Structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: Single Dwelling
- Commerce/Trade: Tavern
- Domestic: Multi-unit Dwelling
- Social: Meeting Hall
- Government: Post Office
- Religion: Religious Facility
- Domestic: Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late Victorian: Gothic Revival
- Late Victorian: Italianate
- Late Victorian: Queen Anne
- Late Victorian: Second Empire
- Late 19th and 20th Century : Colonial Revival
- Other: American Four Square

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Stone
- walls Brick, Weatherboard, Concrete,
- Asbestos, Vinyl
- roof Metal; Asphalt; Slate
- other _____

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

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1874—c.1930

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person (if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Dreibelbis, Francis Heinly, Seth

Unknown

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

See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Berks County Conservancy

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 17.3 acres

UTM References

	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1	<u>18 426040 4485620</u>	3 <u>18 426040 4486380</u>
2	<u>18 426680 4486000</u>	4 <u>NA</u>

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title April E. Frantz, Cultural Resources Specialist; Cyndie Fuhrer, Independent Consultant

organization Berks County Conservancy date March 13, 2000

street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone 610-372-4992

city or town Wyomissing state PA zip code 19610

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

Virginville Historic District
Berks County, PA

DESCRIPTION

ABSTRACT

The Virginville Historic District contains much of the village of Virginville, located in northern Richmond Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania. The Virginville Historic District is an architecturally intact community of buildings that sprang up following the construction of the Berks and Lehigh Railroad in 1874. Most of the buildings in the district line Main Street (SR 143). The District is comprised of 101 buildings. Thirty-three of these buildings are houses; six are commercial, social, or religious buildings; and the remaining 62 are outbuildings such as garages, sheds, and outhouses. Most of the buildings within the district were built between 1874 and 1930. Seventy-nine of the buildings contribute to the district's significance; 22 do not. The primary buildings are predominantly of brick and frame construction, and display the Gothic Revival and Italianate influences popular in rural Berks County in the late nineteenth century. Other stylistic influences visible in the district include Queen Anne, Second Empire, Colonial Revival, and American Four-square. The area surrounding Virginville remains largely rural and agricultural, although new construction is increasing. Virginville is located just below the confluence of the Maiden and Saucony Creeks and is within the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor. The integrity of the buildings and the village's setting create an opportunity to examine the Virginville Historic District as it appeared before 1930.

THE DISTRICT

Virginville is typical of many small towns and villages in Berks County that developed in the late nineteenth century. Like these other communities, Virginville is very linear, with most of the village's primary buildings flanking Main Street (SR 143). Main Street, a two-lane paved road, is the only road leading into Virginville. The village's other streets (First, Second, and Front Streets and Chapel Drive) are barely more than alleys.

The bulk of the district's resources are located in the properties along Main Street. The remaining resources are east of Main Street, along an unnamed alley and Chapel Drive, both of which run parallel to Main Street. With one notable exception (the Virginville Grange, Resource #5), the primary buildings along Main Street are very close to the roadbed, with little—if any—room for front yards (Photo 1). The typical lot size is 50 feet wide and 180 feet deep. The side yards are generally narrow, as there is not much space between buildings, and the outbuildings are clustered to the rear of the lots. Almost all of the properties in the district have outbuildings. The lots on the west side of Main Street are generally a bit wider than those on the east side. There is no rear alley behind the lots on the west side, so there are driveways alongside the houses—sometimes shared between neighbors—to access garages and rear yards. The alley east of Main Street provides access to the rear yards of the properties on the east side of Main as well as the properties along Chapel Drive.

The facades of virtually all of the primary resources are not obscured by trees, landscaping, or fencing and can easily be viewed from Main Street or Chapel Drive, with the exception of the Creamery (Resource #35, Photo 7), which is only visible from the alley.

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Virginville Historic District
Berks County, PA

THE BUILDINGS

Virginville is an almost entirely residential village, and so is the Virginville Historic District. There are 102 resources—all buildings—within the district. Four of these buildings are major resources, and 34 of those are houses. The remaining primary buildings include: four commercial; one social; and one religious building. Sixty-two of the buildings in the district are ancillary resources (garages, sheds, stables, barns, chicken coops, outhouses, summer kitchens) and are consistently located to the rear of the associated primary resource. Over two-thirds of the district's buildings were constructed between 1874 and 1930. Most of the district's houses appear to have been built between 1885 and 1910.

The majority of the houses are constructed of brick, and almost every builder used local Leiby blue stone for the building foundations. There are many other similarities between the buildings as well. All but one of the houses are 2.5 story. Many are L-shaped with 2 story rear wings, and most of these had 2-story open porches on the south side. Most of the houses are three or four bays wide with off-center doorways. The majority of the houses have a simple side gable roof covered either in slate, metal, or asphalt shingle. Eight of the houses are side-gabled with a centered cross gable on the street façade. These side-gabled houses exhibit a mixture of Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne influences. The other four houses include two semi-detached Dutch Colonial Revival houses with gambrel roofs (Resources #14 and 15); an American Four Square with a hipped roof (Resource #20); and a Second Empire-influenced house with a mansard roof (Resource #29).

The houses in Virginville were all constructed by local builders, including Francis Dreibelbis and Seth Heinly. As in many other small, rural communities, stylistic influences in Virginville were mixed and matched and applied to houses by individual choice, sometimes long after trends had changed elsewhere. This is a vernacular setting, with no high-style architecture in town. The Italianate influence in Virginville's houses can be readily seen in window trim. The houses on the east side of Main Street, for example, from Resource #18 through #22, display windows with elaborate window crowns with hood molds in the shape of an inverted "U" with a medallion-type of ornament at the center of the mold.

The steeply-pitched cross gables on Resources #1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 13, 16, and 30 are indicative of the Gothic Revival style. Resource #1, the Francis Dreibelbis House, was built c.1905 and has the distinctive cross gable (Photo 2), as does Resource #8, the Hein-Werley House, which was built in 1891, over ten years earlier (Photo 4). Both also show Queen Anne influences, such as the roof cresting on Resource #1 and the Queen Anne windows on Resource #8. The fancy turned woodwork on several of the porches in the district can also be linked to the Queen Anne influence. The exceptions to the Gothic Revival/Italianate/Queen Anne influence in the district's houses are the c.1930 Dutch Colonial Revivals (Resources #14 and 15) and the American Four Square (Resource #20) as well as the c.1905 Ethan Heinly House (Resource #29), a Second Empire style.

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Virginville Historic District
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The primary resources that are not houses are widely varied in appearance, with fewer stylistic influences. The three-story Virginville Hotel (Resource #4; Photo 3) has some Italianate influence with its low-pitched roof, bracketed cornice, and distinctive window trim. The hotel, which is immediately recognizable as a late-Victorian period building, has an entirely different appearance from the other commercial buildings in the district. The plain, one-story c.1930 post office (Resource #33) has a false storefront but little ornament. Its next-door neighbor, the former Balthaser's Garage (Resource #34, Photo 6) is a much larger 2.5 story building. Built in 1921, it is obviously a commercial building, although only by looking at the rear south side of the building does it become apparent that it was an automobile garage. With its overhanging hipped roof, perhaps its builder was influenced by the Prairie style.

The Creamery (Resource #35, Photo 7) is one of the oldest buildings in Virginville and is unique in its construction. The entire first floor is built of Leiby stone, while the upper levels are frame. It is a functional building, without much "style." St. Paul's Chapel (Resource #36, Photo 8) is another landmark in Virginville. It is immediately recognizable as a religious building, with its tall, narrow windows, double-door entrance, and bell tower with cross, without having much formal style to characterize it.

During Virginville's period of significance (1874-c.1930), many outbuildings were used by self-employed residents practicing trades like tinsmithing (Resource #28) and blacksmithing (Resource #32 and #33), butchering (Resource #20), shoe-repair (Resource #27), and livestock sales (Resource #8). Some of the houses also had designated rooms for in-house businesses or office areas, including a millinery shop (Resource #11) and a doctor's office (Resource #7). It is not obvious from the exterior appearance of the houses or the outbuildings what commercial purposes they served.

The contributing outbuildings are primarily frame construction, although a few brick summer kitchens or bake ovens remain (Resources #13, 32). Many of the houses have frame, 1.5 story, gable-roof stables in the rear yard that have been converted to serve as garages. Several outhouses remain in the district, including one that features the same decorative trim used on its associated primary resource, the Hein-Werley House (Resource #8). Also included in this property is the largest contributing outbuilding, a c.1900 frame barn (Photo #10) used to house livestock. The c.1900 frame stable behind the post office (Resource #33, Photo #11) was originally a blacksmith's shop and was moved to the rear of the lot when the post office was constructed. Most of the other outbuildings in the district are also located in the rear of the lots. With the exception of the outhouse behind the Hein-Werley House (Photo #9), there is little ornament on any of the outbuildings.

Most of the non-contributing resources in the district are outbuildings, mostly one-story garages built after 1950 and located in the rear of the lots. There are only two non-contributing primary resources in the district. The Virginville Grange (Resource #5) was built in 1956. Its block and

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frame construction encompassed a stable originally used by patrons of the neighboring hotel. Its late construction date and appearance are out of character in the district. The only other primary resource constructed after 1930 is a c.1960 Colonial Revival Cape Cod style house (Resource #12). Its brick construction is consistent with the district, but its style and size (only 1.5 stories) makes it an obvious late addition to the streetscape.

INTEGRITY

The district's architecture is overwhelmingly intact. Few major alterations have been made to the facades of the contributing houses, with the exception of enclosed side porches or replaced front porch materials. These changes do not diminish the architectural character of the district, as the majority of the front porches are intact. The most common change to the district's houses is the replacement of the original slate or metal roofs with modern composition shingles. In a few cases, vinyl or asbestos shingles have covered the original house siding. Even in these cases, the house's current appearance is similar to its original appearance. The scale and massing of the district's houses remains the same, with no major new additions or demolitions of original construction. Alterations to the outbuildings are also minimal. The houses are all currently in good or excellent condition.

The appearances of the other primary contributing resources—the Virginville Hotel (#4), the post office (#33), Balthaser's Garage (#34), the Creamery (#35), and St. Paul's Chapel (#36)—are also largely original. Significant changes to the hotel have been limited to the rear south side wing, where a porch has been enclosed and expanded. The post office's front door and windows were replaced c.1990, and board siding added to the façade under the porch roof. The storefront remains the same. The use of Balthaser's Garage has changed, but its appearance is the same. The Creamery's exterior appearance is also original, although it now serves as storage and residential space. St. Paul's Chapel has had its window trim replaced, based on its original trim, and its appearance is still largely original, with the exception of its asbestos shingle siding.

There has been little post-1930 construction within the district, and equally little demolition of historic resources. The district's boundaries have limited the number of resources with diminished integrity or significance. The non-contributing resources are insufficient to detract from the character of the district. The architectural character of the contributing resources remains largely intact, and the district successfully conveys the appearance of Virginville during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Virginville Historic District
Berks County, PA

SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTION

The Virginville Historic District is significant under Criterion C (Architecture) as an intact linear village typical of Pennsylvania German-influenced rural Berks County. The district features the architectural influences frequently found in the region, including Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, and Italianate. The district's period of significance begins in 1874, with early resources dating to the village's initial growth spurt and ends in 1930. The placement of a railroad stop next to a country store in 1874 provided the impetus for the village's growth, which continued into the early decades of the twentieth century. After c.1930, new construction in the district virtually ceased. Few other places in Berks County contain a cohesive and intact group of buildings that illustrate the appearance of rural Berks County villages in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this clearly.

VIRGINVILLE HISTORY

The village of Virginville straddles State Road 143 (Main Street) at the northern edge of Richmond Township, just below the Perry and Greenwich Township borders. The northern end of the village is marked by the converging Saucony and Maiden Creeks. Several roads intersect near the northern and southern ends of the village. These roads played an important role in the very early settlement of the village. Present-day Virginville started out as farmland owned by the locally-prominent Dreibelbis family, purchased by Jacob Dreibelbis from George Merkel in the mid-1700s. Adjacent to the Dreibelbis farm, at the current intersection of State Road 143 and Gilardone Road, was a log house and hotel built by Jacob Boyer to serve travelers. This was the first of the commercial enterprises in the Virginville area. In 1839, William Dreibelbis purchased the Boyer property and replaced the log building with a stone building known as the "Dreibelbis Hotel." Both the Dreibelbis farm and the Dreibelbis Hotel remain today. Although both are outside the Virginville Historic District boundary, they played a role in the development in the area, as the hotel provided incentive for other businesses, and the farm provided the land. In 1809, Jacob Dreibelbis built a stone 2.5-story general store on a piece of farmland that fronted SR 143, just below the juncture of the Maiden and Saucony Creeks and north of the Boyer property.

The Dreibelbis family continued to own and slowly develop the area around the Dreibelbis Store, the area encompassed by the Virginville Historic District. By 1862, with just a small cluster of buildings, this area was known as "Virginsville." In 1874, the Berks County Railroad (later called the Berks and Lehigh, then the Schuylkill and Lehigh) cut through the Dreibelbis farm and into Virginville. A depot was constructed next to the Dreibelbis Store and the Dreibelbis family began selling more lots in response to the increasing railroad activity. The 1876 township map shows streets and a small group of buildings. By 1886, Virginville had three taverns, a store, a number of "fine" residences, and a church. These buildings included the 1885 Mansion House Hotel

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(Resource #4, Virginville Hotel). Francis Dreibelbis, Jacob's son, opened a feed mill and lumber yard behind the Dreibelbis Store about that time, and the Heinly Wagon Works was operating across the street.

The tavern and hotel business in early Virginville benefited from a local tourist attraction. An 1854 township map of Berks County shows the Dreibelbis Store and Hotel buildings, as well as the "Dragon Cave." The existence of the cave was known before the Dreibelbis family purchased their land. It became an early attraction, bringing visitors into the area from as far away as New York and Philadelphia. In 1871, Crystal Cave was discovered on a farm nearby and overshadowed Dragon Cave's popularity. Crystal Cave is part of the same system as Dragon Cave, but is larger. The owners of the property marketed the site, taking advantage of the new railroad in Virginville. Tourists would come to the Virginville depot and take a carriage from Virginville to Crystal Cave. The taverns, hotels, and stores in Virginville (including Resource #4) not only served their local community and regular patrons of the railroad, but also the many seasonal tourists coming to see the cave.

It appears that many of the houses on the east side of Main Street, from Resource #18 through #28 (excluding #26) were built between c.1875, after the railroad arrived, and c.1890, as they are similar in appearance and share the Italianate influences found on the 1885 Virginville Hotel. The houses with the Gothic Revival-influenced cross gable (Resources #1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 13, 16, 30) appear to have been built after 1885. One of the most stylish of the houses in the district, Resource #8, was built in 1891 and features both Gothic Revival and Queen Anne details. The house was built for Elias and Mary Hein, but is better known as the Tom Werley property. Werley was a livestock trader, known locally as a "cow jockey," who used the railroad to transport animals and housed them in the barn behind the house. The railroad played a vital role in the businesses of Werley and the other Virginville residents.

Francis Dreibelbis, who owned the feed mill and lumberyard, was also one of the primary builders in Virginville. He is credited with building many of the houses along Main Street. He hired carpenter Seth Heinly, who had his own shop, to do much of the finish work and exterior trim on those houses, including his own (Resource #1). Heinly constructed the non-denominational Sunday School building, St. Paul's Chapel, in 1903 (Resource #36). The Methodist Church that was mentioned in the 1886 description of Virginville only functioned for a short time. Following its demolition, no new church was constructed, and the Sunday School became an important part of life in Virginville.

Like other small towns and villages throughout Berks County, Virginville was able to serve most of the needs of its surrounding farming community. A creamery purchased and sold milk for local dairy farmers (Resource #35). Blacksmiths, tinsmiths, shoe makers, butchers and other small businesses sprang up in the backyards of the village. The historic district's resource inventory (see attached) notes the locations of some of these businesses.

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By 1910, most of the houses in the district were constructed, and all new construction in Virginville appears to have slowed. Only five primary buildings in the district were built between c.1910 and c.1930. Balthaser's Garage (Resource #34) was built in 1921 on the site of the Heinly Wagon Works. Next door a small general store building, which also housed the post office, was built c.1930. These two commercial buildings anchor the northern end of the district. The garage was a significant business in the area and also operated as a car dealership. Three houses in the district were constructed c.1930, an American Four Square (Resource #26) and two Dutch Colonial Revivals (Resources #14 and 15).

The way of life in small villages dominated by railroads—including Virginville—changed in the twentieth century as automobiles began replacing passenger and freight cars. Tourists no longer used the railroad to reach Crystal Cave, and high school students were no longer taking the train to Slatington (Lehigh County) to attend classes. Residents began converting stables for use as automobile garages, although they continued to keep chickens and pigs in their backyard coops and pens. The end of the period of significance for the Virginville Historic District, c.1930, was also the end of an era in Virginville. The village was losing its role as a vital railroad stop. The nearby towns of Fleetwood, Hamburg, and Kutztown continued to grow, but growth in Virginville during the 1930s and 1940s was minimal.

The stable next to the Virginville Hotel (Resource #4) served the fire company in the 1940s. The Virginville Grange purchased the building (Resource #5) and renovated it in 1956, sharing it with the fire company until their new building, outside the district, was complete in the 1960s. Most of the small businesses in Virginville closed by 1955. The railroad depot was closed and removed in the mid-1950s when the railroad ceased operation. The Dreibelbis Store was destroyed by fire in 1963 and never rebuilt. Francis Dreibelbis' mill and lumber yard became part of Harvey George's contracting business and the mill is no longer recognizable.

Following World War II, some new houses were constructed in Virginville, mostly along Main Street on the south side of the village, all outside the district. Asbestos siding was added to some of the buildings in the district in the 1950s, and new garages were built. Some of the original slate or metal roofs were replaced with asphalt shingles, but the original roof pitches remained the same. Likewise, when front porches were replaced on a few of the houses, the shape and scale of the original porch was usually retained. These changes to the facades of the buildings generally have little impact on the streetscape or integrity of the district. The only major new construction within the district was the Virginville Grange and a residence (Resource #12).

SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTEXT

The majority of the houses in the district are substantial 2.5 story brick or frame, typically with a gable side roof and an L-shape. The district is made up of vernacular buildings, common types of houses and outbuildings found in southeastern Pennsylvania during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They exhibit stylistic influences usually found in this period, primarily Gothic Revival and Italianate. The district is mostly residential, and its five non-residential primary

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buildings as well as the outbuildings are also vernacular. The properties have overwhelmingly retained their integrity and are in good condition. Individually, many of the buildings in the village are not architecturally exceptional or noteworthy. Their impact as a district, however, is significant. Together, the district's buildings clearly illustrate the appearance of a typical rural Berks County village between 1874 and c.1930.

The Virginville Historic District compares favorably to other historic districts in Berks County. There are no village districts in the immediate vicinity of Virginville, although there are National Register-listed farms (including the adjacent Dreibelbis farm), mills, and a covered bridge nearby. The National Register-listed districts in Womelsdorf and Stouchburg in western Berks County and the village of Oley in the Oley Township District share many similarities with Virginville. All four districts are in villages where most of the buildings line one primary street. The growth of Womelsdorf and Stouchburg, as in Virginville, was also closely linked to transportation, in their cases a canal. All four districts included small, family run businesses that served their rural farming communities. The other districts have periods of significance that begin earlier than Virginville's, but extend to include architectural examples similar to Virginville's from the same period. The integrity of the four villages is also similar, with limited modern construction or changes to streetscapes or facades.

While the Virginville Historic District is similar to Womelsdorf, Stouchburg, and Oley in size and integrity, it differs dramatically from some other small, rural villages. Nearby villages along Route 222 have been decimated by new commercial construction and cannot convey much of their historic roles, settings, or appearances. Villages of a similar size and scale in other parts of Berks County, including Bethel, Rehrersburg, and Gibraltar have much less integrity than Virginville. While they have not suffered as much demolition or new construction, their buildings have a much higher rate of replacement siding and porches and other changes to their exterior. They have many buildings similar to Virginville's in construction and function, but are much less original in appearance.

SUMMARY

The Virginville Historic District is one of the best examples of a linear, late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century village in Berks County. What began as an outgrowth of the Dreibelbis Store became a full-fledged, self-sustaining village following the arrival of the Railroad in 1874. Its architecture and setting have survived largely intact for seventy years, presenting a remarkably original streetscape to passersby. Over two-thirds of the vernacular houses, commercial, and religious buildings with their assorted outbuildings contribute to the significance of the district. Their shapes, sizes, and stylistic influences (predominantly Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne) are all typical of rural Berks County between 1874 and c.1930. The Virginville Historic District, with its limited post-1930 construction and minimal changes to the contributing resources, continues to exhibit the appearance of a typical rural Berks County village between 1874 and c.1930.

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Bibliography

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Additional Sources

Information regarding use of properties, ownership, and construction was obtained in part through conversations with current and former Virginville residents. The two primary sources of information consulted were Lloyd Dreibelbis and Edith Keller. Both individuals possess unpublished documents relating to Virginville's history that are not currently available at any public facility. Notes from these conversations are part of the Virginville Historic District file in the Berks County Conservancy.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1
Virginville Historic District
Berks County, PA

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northwest corner of Property 1, the district boundary travels 172 feet along the northern property line for 112 feet and then continues 60 feet across Main Street. The boundary continues along the east side of Main Street for 200 feet to the point where the road turns due north (at the southwestern corner of Property 34).

The boundary continues along the west property line of Property 34 and 35 for approximately 150 feet to the Saucony Creek. The bank of the Saucony Creek defines the northern edge of the district. The boundary continues along the Saucony Creek to the southeastern property line of Property 35. The boundary continues west along this line for 190 feet and continues across the alley (20 feet) to the eastern property line of Property 31.

Here the boundary continues in a southeasterly direction along the eastern property line of both parcels of Property 31; crosses Front Street; continues along the eastern property lines of Properties 30, 29, and 28; and across Second Street for a total of 360 feet.

At this point, at the northernmost corner of Property 27, the boundary proceeds northeast across the alley and along the northern property line of Property 36 for 188 feet. At the northern corner of Property 36, the boundary turns southeast and continues on the west side of Chapel Drive along Properties 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40 for a distance of 478 feet.

Then, the district boundary follows the southeastern property line of Property 40 for 172 feet along First Street, and crosses the alley (20 feet) to the eastern corner of Property 21. Here, the boundary crosses First Street; and continues along the northeastern property lines of Properties 20, 19, and 18 for a total of 410 feet.

Then the boundary travels in a southwesterly direction along the southeastern property line of Property 18 a distance of 180 feet and crosses Main Street (60 feet) to the west side of Main Street. Here the boundary continues southeasterly along the northeastern property lines of Properties 16 and 17 for 120 feet.

The boundary then follows the southeastern property line of Property 17 a distance of 178 feet. At this most southern vertex of the district, the boundary turns to the northwest and continues along the southwestern property lines of Properties 17, 16, 15, and 14. It continues along the southwestern property line of Property 13 for a distance of 50 feet to the point where the southern property line of Property 10, Tax Parcel 6804, intersects with the Property 13 line.

Here, the boundary follows the southern property line of Property 10 for a distance of 427 feet. At the apex of this triangular plot the boundary turns to the northeast and follows the southwestern property line of several parcels all owned by Property 5.

Here the boundary turns northeast along the northwestern edge of Property 5 for a distance of 41 feet to the southwestern corner of Property 4. The district boundary then follows the southwestern property lines of Properties 4, 3 and 2 in a northwesterly direction for a distance of 92 feet to the northwest corner of Property 2.

Then the boundary turns east following the northern property line of Property 2 for a distance of eight feet to the point where the western property line of Property 1 intersects.

The district boundary continues due north along Property 1 for 120 feet to the beginning point of the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10

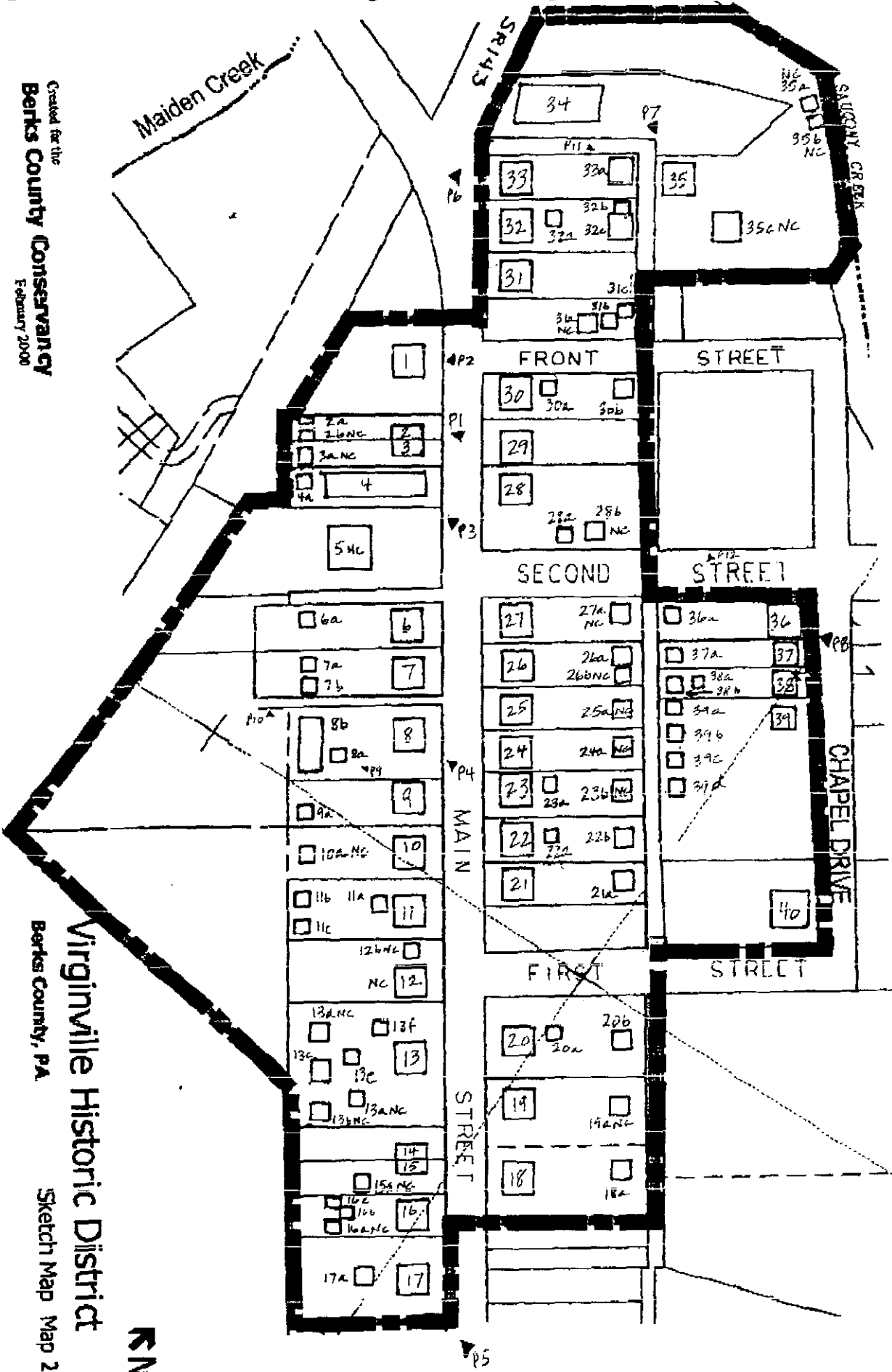
Page 2

Virginville Historic District
Berks County, PA

Boundary Justification

The Virginville Historic District occupies the core of Virginville. The Virginville Historic District boundary generally follows the property lines of the district's resources, with the exception of the northern boundary, which follows the edge of the Saucony Creek. The southern boundary of the district excludes residences lining Main Street that post-date the period of significance as well as two homes (brick, two-story, semi-detached houses with flat roofs) that are not consistent with the character of the district and lack integrity. The eastern boundary was drawn to exclude a factory built in the 1940s and a fire company built in the 1960s; several post-1940 residences; and a residence appropriate to the district but moved from elsewhere in Virginville. At the northern end of the district, on the west side of Main Street north of Property 1, is an open service lot on the site of the Dreibelbis Store and adjacent railroad depot, which is used by the contracting business located on the former Virginville Feed Mill property. The lot is excluded from the district. The former mill building is excluded due to a lack of integrity and its distance from Main Street. The western boundary includes the rear yards and open space associated with the properties lining the west side of Main Street.

Created for the
Berks County Conservancy
February 2000



Virginville Historic District

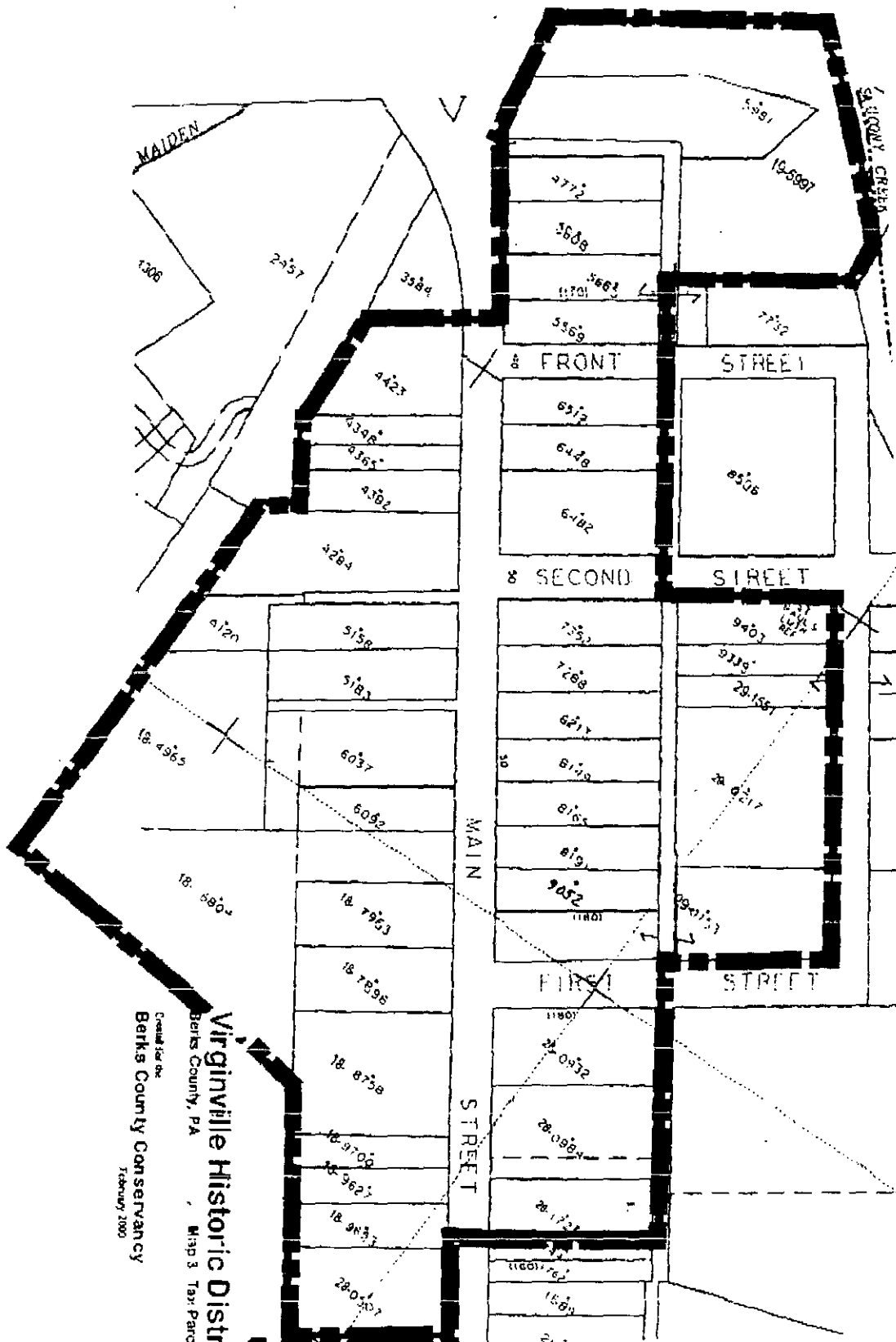
Berks County, PA

Sketch Map Map 2

A P = Photo

NC = Non-Contributory



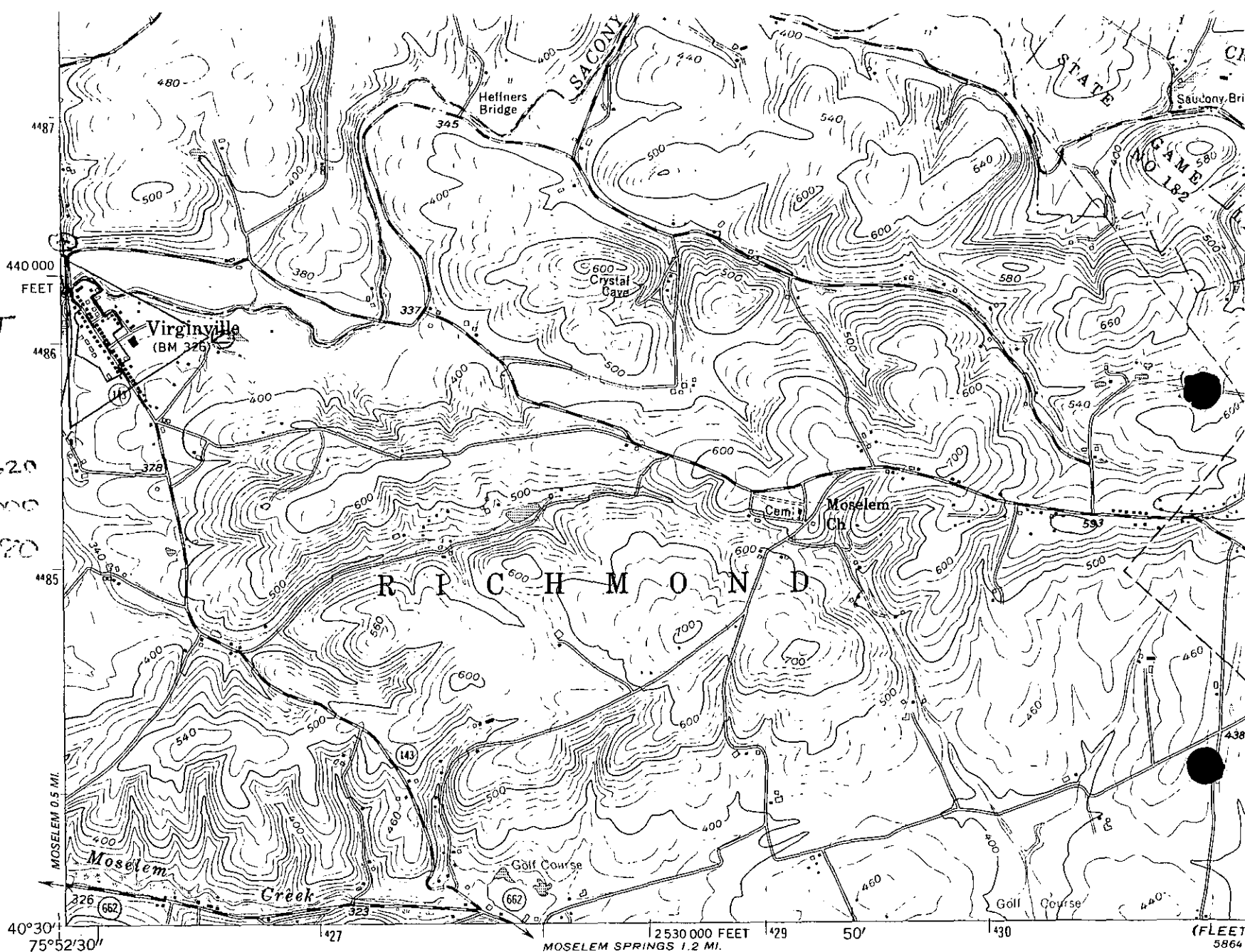


Virginville Historic District
 Berks County, PA
 Map 3 Tax Parcel Map
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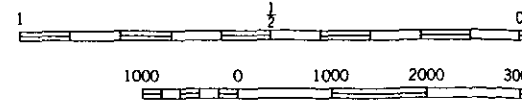
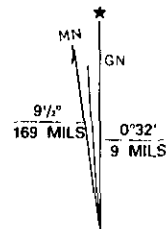
VIRGINVILLE
 HISTORIC DISTRICT
 BERKS Co., PA
 KUTZTOWN QUAD
 ZONE 18

- 1) 426040 4485620
- 2) 426680 4486000
- 3) 426040 4486380



(TEMPLE)
 5864 IV NW

Produced by the U. S. Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
 Topography by multiplex methods from aerial photographs
 taken 1951. Field checked 1956
 Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Pennsylvania coordinate
 system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
 1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)
 North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks



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