

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rex, John, Farm

other names/site number Goodwin/Strickler Farm

2. Location

street & number 1/2 mile east of Jefferson on Route 188 N/A not for publication

city or town Jefferson (Jefferson Township) N/A vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Greene code 59 zip code 15344

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 Glass, Ex. Dir. 3/11/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

PA Historical and Museum Commission
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Rex, John Farm

Greene County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

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

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	1	buildings
		sites
1	0	structures
		objects
6	1	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/secondary structure
- Agriculture/subsistence/storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic/single dwelling
- Domestic/secondary structure
- Agriculture/subsistence/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation stone
- walls wood
- roof asphalt
- other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more 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 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

c. 1865-1910

Significant Dates

c. 1874

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

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:

Rex, John Farm
Name of Property

Greene County, PA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approximately 71 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	580800	4421720
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	17	581540	4421720

3	17	580800	4420800
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	17	581540	4420800

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clinton Piper and Steven Chaitow
organization _____ date January 1998
street & number RR #4, Box 89A telephone 412.537.2738
city or town Latrobe state PA zip code 15650

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Frank Behm
street & number PO BOX 125 telephone 412.883.4978
city or town Jefferson state PA zip code 15344

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 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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 1

The Rex Farm and farmstead comprise nearly seventy-one acres of land in the northeastern corner of Greene County. The property, one half a mile east of Jefferson Borough, borders the eastern and southern banks of Ten Mile Creek and the north side of Route 188. The focal point of the farm is the contributing circa 1874 Gothic Revival-inspired Rex House.¹ The earliest of the contributing frame outbuildings is circa 1865 summer kitchen. The other circa 1870 outbuildings include a barn, carriage house, and smokehouse. A contributing circa 1910 wrought iron fence surrounds the southern edge of the property, near Route 188.² A non-contributing, circa 1990, frame shed completes the complex. The farm landscape is comprised of open fields and mature wood lots. The farm, still in a strongly rural context, has excellent integrity. (*Photos #2 & #10*)

The Rex House and its outbuildings are situated on a large, flat plain. Minor landscape features not included in the resource count are an old wellhead located on the west side of the Rex House, and a modern in-ground pool located behind a picket fence on the northern side of the summer kitchen. A non-contributing man-made pond with a dock is approximately 625' north of the complex. The wrought iron fence separates the complex from the property's approximately 27 acres of working fields. The remainder of the farm is comprised, to the northeast and west, of approximately 44 acres of sloping wooded land adjoining Ten Mile Creek, historically part of the landscape. A railroad line, which follows the path of the creek, passes through the area north of the complex. Historic field patterns are evident in the farm fields surrounding the complex which are used to grow hay. Both in appearance and continued land use, the Rex Farm landscape retains integrity.

The 1 ½ story, frame Rex House originally had an I-shaped footprint consisting of a facade with five openings, centered rear ell, and a one-story, shed-roofed service hall/pantry across the rear of the house. In addition to the front porch, one-story recessed porches originally flanked the rear ell. Original covelap siding with corner boards clads the exterior of the house. The steeply-pitched, gabled roof with wide over-hanging eaves has cross gables and dormers echoing the lines of the main roof. (*Photo #1*)

A hip-roofed porch with six chamfered posts and two engaged posts extends across the facade. (*Photo #3*) Each post rests on a square base and has cut-out brackets at its capital. Above the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 2

posts, at the eaves, are paired brackets. The floor and ceiling of the porch are original painted tongue-and-groove wood. The recessed porch on the west side of the house, built on a wood deck, has two engaged posts and one free-standing post. These posts are chamfered, but are otherwise less elaborate than the ones on the front porch. The one-story, square, rear porch, a 1990 addition, has simple square wood posts on a wood deck. The ceiling of this porch is similar in style to the other porches of the house. In circa 1900, the recessed one-story porch on the east side of the house was enclosed. This aligned the porch with the east wall of the house.³ At the same time the porch was enclosed, an additional second floor room was built. This was accomplished by extending the cross gable to the west creating a shed roof line on the west elevation with a dormer. *(Photo #4)*

The transomed, double front doors have original wood screen doors. In 1990, the owners replaced the screens with glass. *(Photo #13)* The side and rear entrances have similar screened doors. The door surrounds are composed of a wood casing topped with plain cap trim. Each door has an arched, glazed panel above a small recessed panel surrounded with deep molding. The front door also has an original doorbell. On the west elevation of the house the door also has a transom with wood surrounds and cap trim. The door itself has four glazed panels above two recessed wood panels. The door on the rear elevation of the house has no transom or cap trim, but is otherwise the same as the side door.

The second floor of the Rex House originally had a cross gable centered on the facade containing one window flanked by single dormers. In circa 1890 the cross gable was extended over the front porch roof, providing an additional second floor bedroom.⁴ *(Photo #3)* The addition is identical in materials, finish, and detailing to the original house. This projecting cross gable contains two windows on the south elevation. On both the east and west elevations of the cross gable are dormers with paired windows.

The majority of the windows in the Rex House are original, elongated, two-over-two double hung sash. The windows on the first floor have wood sills, plain surrounds, and cap trim across the top. The windows on the second floor addition over the front porch date to circa 1890. Although they appear similar to the double hung sash elsewhere in the house, they pivot as a single unit along a central vertical axis. The kitchen window on the east elevation of the house and the small square window in the first floor bathroom on the north elevation of the house both date to 1990.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 3

The cross gable ends on the east, west, and south elevations of the house have elaborate window surrounds composed of a wood sill, casings with plinths, and segmental hoods with recessed triangular-shaped panels. (*Photos #1 & #3*) The eaves of the hood have scalloped drip molding. The paired windows of the second floor, circa 1890 addition have the same window surround and hood used above the single windows on the east and west gable ends. The six gabled dormers have simply-detailed barge boards and triangular wood panels above the windows. The first floor east and west elevations each have one-story, three-sided, bays. All of the house's windows have been covered with inconspicuous metal storm windows.

Asphalt shingles, dating from 1990, clad the steeply-pitched roof of the Rex House. The original roof material appears to have been wood shingles.⁵ The main portion of the roof has two centered, corbeled brick chimneys. The rear ell has an additional corbeled brick end chimney. The eaves of the roof have simply-detailed barge boards. In the top of each steeply-pitched gable is an air vent installed in 1990.

The house sits on a cut-stone foundation which originally contained only a crawl space. The house was lifted from its original foundation, and the earth underneath was excavated to create a full basement in 1990. The original cut-stone was used to conceal the modern concrete block foundation. The exterior basement entrance is on the east side of the house.

The Rex House has a central hall plan, with a dining room on the east and a parlor on the west. The central hall leads to the family room in the rear ell, and a kitchen to the east. Beyond the family room is a long narrow service hall with a closet to the west and a full bathroom to the east. Throughout the main rooms the original wood floors are intact underneath wall-to-wall carpet. The walls are plaster with walnut trim throughout, including deep walnut baseboards with base shoes and base molding. The window and door surrounds, and the four-paneled doors with original hardware and porcelain knobs, are walnut. In the central hall, parlor, and dining room the door and window openings have pedimented walnut hoods accented with light-colored butternut wood. The family room, and other less formal first floor rooms, simply have walnut cap trim across the top accented with lighter-colored butternut strips of wood.

In the central hall, the open-string walnut stair with wall stringer rises an initial flight to a landing, then turns in a second shorter flight to the second floor hall. (*Photos #14 & #15*) The stair has a

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 4

continuous molded handrail with two turned octagonal balusters per tread. The octagonally-shaped newel post rests on a square base. The paneled spandrel of the stair has a deep base board with molding.

The parlor and dining room both measure 15' 0" x 17'-0." They have three-sided window bays and a fireplace. The fireplaces have simple wood mantels with columns on plinths that echo the surrounds of the walnut doors in the house. In 1990, the fireplaces were equipped with gas fittings. (*Photos #16-#18*)

Doors at the rear of the central hall and dining room open into the family room which measures 15'-6" x 18'-4". On the north end of the room is a fireplace with mantel similar to the two in the front rooms of the house. On the west side of the fireplace is a built-in closet with a simple two-paneled door. Next to the closet door are several steps to a two-paneled walnut door which opens to a closed back stair of winder steps to the bedroom above. Near the door to the porch, in the western corner of the room, is another small storage closet. (*Photo #20*) In 1990, access to the basement was reconfigured from a door at the rear of the central hall to the double, two paneled, walnut doors between the central hall and dining room doors in the family room. Both the basement door and the door to the central hall are considerably shorter than the rest of the doors in the house. A single length of cap trim extends across the tops of both doors. (*Photo #19*) A door on the east side of the family room opens into the kitchen in the circa 1900 addition to the house.

To the east of the fireplace, in the family room, is a door to the rear hall/service area. This long narrow space has a storage closet with double walnut doors on the west end and a second set of closets on the south wall. The crawl space under this portion of the house was used as cold food storage accessible by a trap door in the floor. This storage area was removed during excavation of the new basement. In 1990, a bathroom was built at the east end of the hall.

The second floor of the Rex House contains three bedrooms, a sitting room, two half bathrooms, and one full bathroom. The west and east bedrooms each measure 15'-0 x 17'-0". The north bedroom, measuring 15'-6" x 16'-0", is accessible either by the back stair or a two-paneled, half-height door along one of the knee walls of the east bedroom. In the north bedroom is a door in the south wall providing access to the attic space. (*Photo #23*) Adjacent to the east bedroom is a large closet and full bathroom in the circa 1900 addition. This may have originally served as another

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 5

bedroom. In the mid twentieth century, half bathrooms were built in both the north and west bedrooms.

The finishes on the second floor are similar to those of the first floor, with plaster walls, deep walnut base boards, original wood floors covered with wall-to-wall carpeting, and four-paneled walnut doors. The door surrounds are simpler than the ones on the first floor, lacking both the pediment over the door and contrasting color woods. In the west and east bedrooms the fireplaces, fitted for gas, have simple wood mantels. *(Photo #22)* The sitting room addition has a French door of walnut with fifteen panes of glass and a glazed transom above. Inside, the room measures 6'-8" x 7'-8." It has original horizontal tongue-and-groove wood paneling on the walls and similar paneling on the ceiling. *(Photos #25 & #26)*

The north bedroom is the only room with painted woodwork in the house. The detailing is simpler with plain baseboards. In the northwestern corner of the room, is the open stair with a simple paneled balustrade. *(Photo #24)* The window and door surrounds have cap trim across the top. The closet on the north end of the room appears to have circa 1990 paneled doors.

North of the Rex House is the contributing, circa 1865 summer kitchen. It is a one-story, gable-roofed, building built on a stone foundation. *(Photo #5)* The summer kitchen had two brick end chimneys, one of which remains.⁶ In 1990, the building was moved approximately 20' north of its original location. Of all the outbuildings, this one appears to be the oldest, with distinctive eave returns, corner boards, and a wide frieze below the eaves, elements common to the late Greek Revival style of the 1860s. *(Photo #6)*

Across the facade of the summer kitchen are four openings: two central doors flanked by two windows. Similar to the Rex House, the summer kitchen has two-over-two double hung sash windows, cove lap siding, and an asphalt shingle roof. The gable end walls have no openings, and the north elevation has two windows. The four-paneled doors to the summer kitchen have exterior screen doors to which the present owners have inserted glass. The interior of the summer kitchen was originally two rooms, but it has been converted to one large room. On the east end of the room is a space for the fireplace flanked by a built-in wood cabinet and a closet. *(Photo #7)* The west end of the room retains its fireplace. The interior has original wood floors, simple wood-paneled doors, and window surrounds. Located behind the summer kitchen is a 1990 in-ground

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 7 Page 6

pool.

To the east of the summer kitchen is the contributing, circa 1870 smokehouse. It is a one-story, gabled-roofed building with a lean-to on the north side for wood storage. *(Photo #8)* It is clad in vertical wood siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A wood plank door opens to the interior which retains original metal pegs for hanging meats. *(Photo #9)* Further east of the smokehouse/wood shed is a non-contributing, circa 1990, wood clad, storage shed on a concrete foundation.

Approximately 240'-0" west of the house are a contributing barn and carriage house. The carriage house is clad in vertical wood siding, and it stands upon a stone foundation. *(Photo #10)* The gabled roof has asphalt shingles. The building serves as a car garage with a storage loft above. The modestly-sized barn stands on stone piers. *(Photos #11 & #12)* It has a gabled roof of asphalt shingles and a rain roof on the north elevation. On all elevations are wood ventilators with plain wood surrounds. Inside, the barn has a large drive-through space with a storage loft above. The complex also had a small corn crib, large barn, and a coal house.⁷ The barn burned in the 1970s, while the corn crib and coal house were both removed at an unknown date.⁸

The Rex Farm is composed of an unusually intact grouping of late nineteenth century agricultural and service related outbuildings grouped around a Gothic-Revival inspired house. The farm and farmstead retain excellent integrity, creating an important link to Greene County's rich agricultural past.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 1

The John Rex Farm is significant under criterion "C" for its Gothic Revival style, an adaption of nineteenth-century pattern book architecture popularized by architects Andrew Jackson Davis, Andrew Jackson Downing, and Calvert Vaux. It also has a complex of supporting period outbuildings, typical to Greene County farms. The period of significance begins in circa 1865 with construction of the summer kitchen and continues through 1910, after which the general appearance of the house and outbuildings did not change. The buildings and lands of the Rex Farm are a significant part of and well reflect the common architectural and agricultural history of Greene County.

Family History

The North American origins of the Rex Family can be traced to George Rexworthy. According to genealogist Howard Leckey, Rexworthy was born in the Philadelphia area, probably in Montgomery County, in 1750.⁹ In 1772, he married Margaret Kepler of Bucks County. At some point, Rexworthy shortened his name to Rex. The Rex family moved to Mifflin County where eight of their twelve children were born.¹⁰ In 1796, Rex patented 252 ½ acres of land from William Harrod, called "Drowl," in Jefferson Township, Greene County.¹¹ Rex built a log cabin on the property which became known as the Rex Homestead. George Rex died in 1821, and Margaret died in 1828. The property passed to his son, Charles Rex who had been born on the homestead in 1801. Charles married Mary Hickman of Fayette County. They had seven children, three of which lived to adulthood: Margaret, John, and George. Upon the death of Charles Rex in 1854, his 252 ½ acre property was divided between John and George with each son receiving 125 acres.¹² George Rex received the portion of land on which the log Rex Homestead stood, located south of Route 188, and John received the portion of land to the north.¹³

It is believed that John Rex, not having a house on his portion of property, erected the present summer kitchen in the 1860s as an initial dwelling followed by the present Rex House and surrounding outbuildings circa 1874. When John Rex sold the 125 acre property to William Goodwin in 1877, it was valued at \$6,500. This suggests that a dwelling and outbuildings were erected on the property since the division of property after Charles Rex's death.¹⁴ Subsequently, Goodwin acquired additional tracts of land, bringing his total holdings to nearly 670 acres by 1880.¹⁵ It was during the Goodwin ownership that the house assumed its present appearance with the circa 1890 addition to the second floor of facade for Goodwin's daughter who had tuberculosis.¹⁶ A second circa 1900 addition was made to the east side of the rear ell, in which the porch was enclosed, and another room was added to the second floor.¹⁷ The present wrought iron

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 2

fence was erected in 1910.¹⁸ It was also during the Goodwin ownership that the coal rights to the property were sold.¹⁹ In the early part of the twentieth century, William Goodwin deeded portions of the property to his three daughters: Nancy, Sarah, and Jessie. After dividing the land among his daughters, Goodwin sold the remaining portions of land. Nancy sold her share to Jessie's husband, Randolph J. Strickler in 1918, while the will of Sarah Goodwin gave her share to Randolph J. Strickler. Jessie Goodwin Strickler, willed her share to her only son, Wilbur Strickler. In 1939, Wilbur deeded his share to Randolph Strickler. Upon Randolph's death in 1971, the property was willed back to Wilbur Strickler and Winona, his wife. In 1989, the estate of Winona Strickler sold the 71 acre parcel of the remaining Strickler lands including the house and outbuildings, to Frank and Peggy Behm.²⁰

Beginning in 1990, the Behms restored and upgraded the basic systems of the house. They replaced the crawl space with a full basement of concrete block walls faced in the original cut-stone of the foundation. The Behms also stripped away lead-based paint and repainted the original wood siding of the house. They painted and repaired the outbuildings and converted the summer kitchen into an office.

Agricultural History & General Trends

The trends of Greene County's agricultural economy have been based on subsistence farming and stock raising. As was typical in the county, agricultural pursuits of many local farmers focused initially on subsistence crops of oats, hay, wheat, and corn between Greene County's establishment in 1796, until circa 1850.²¹ By the 1860s, stock raising was found to be a more profitable use of the hilly, well-drained land common to the county. Sheep raising became the primary revenue-producing activity by the 1880s. Greene County sheep were known across the country and abroad for their high quality wool.²²

After the 1881 peak of sheep farming until 1920, there was a gradual decrease in the number of sheep in the county. The decline in wool resulted from competition from less expensive western wool, the repeal of an 1867 tariff on foreign wool imports, and a massive drought in 1894 which caused liquidation of many flocks. Another setback was the increase in coal mining and extraction of oil and natural gas from the surrounding farmlands. Some changes during this period proved to be beneficial to Greene County farmers. Transportation improved in the county, and many new markets became available for the remaining farmers. Mining and extraction of oil and gas also

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 3

brought a number of immigrants to the area with food traditions based on consumption of lamb. Nevertheless, agricultural production and sheep raising in particular, generally declined.²³ A national agricultural depression in the 1920s led to a similar depression in Greene County causing a general farm decline.

While it is not known what crops were grown on the Rex Farm every year, decennial agricultural farm census records provide a glimpse into popular crop trends recorded in Jefferson Township. In 1870, John and George Rex were raising sheep on adjoining farms. Following county trends, John Rex had a combination of livestock and subsistence crops including 330 bushels of corn, 2 tons of hay, and 75 sheep which yielded 300 pounds of wool. He also produced 100 pounds of butter, and made a profit of \$60 from the slaughter of animals. It is likely his limited crops, and their low yields were the result of Rex just coming of age and taking control of the farm. In comparison to his younger brother, George Rex had a more successful farm operation in 1870. He had 111 sheep from which he yielded 500 pounds of wool. His main subsistence crops were wheat with 166 bushels, corn with 600 bushels, 250 bushels of oats, and 10 tons of hay. He also had 20 pounds of potatoes, 300 pounds of butter and \$20 profit from home manufacturing. He received \$70 from the slaughter of animals, and his total farm products were valued at \$1,250. George Rex, a more stable and prosperous farming than his brother, also had paid laborers on his farm.²⁴ ✓

The sheep farming trend continued with subsequent owners. By 1880, William Goodwin had purchased the 125 acre John Rex farm and substantially increased the size of the farm with additional tracts of land totaling 670 acres. It was during the Goodwin ownership that the farm was most productive with the highest yielding crops in the township.²⁵ Goodwin was Jefferson Township's leader in wool production with 458 sheep and 1,832 pounds of wool. The general appearance of the house and outbuildings ceased evolving during Goodwin's ownership. R. J. Strickler, son-in-law of William Goodwin, apparently took over operation of the farm around 1920. Strickler was not exclusively a farmer; his primary occupation was teaching. Over the course of time, three outbuildings have disappeared including the corn crib, coal house, and main barn.²⁶

Significant boundary changes, such as those experienced at the Rex Farm, are common to farms over time. Through divisions of the property among Goodwin's daughters and sale of other lands,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 4

the property had been reduced to 71 acres, its present size, during R. J. Strickler's ownership.²⁷ Presently, second and third growth forest, comprising approximately 44 acres, has grown in on much of the land. The fields of the Rex Farm, comprising approximately 27 acres, continue to be cut through the season for hay.

Architectural Significance

The Rex Farm derives its architectural significance from its distinctive farm house and grouping of outbuildings. As was typical of early farms of the township, the first house erected was log, and it stood on the adjoining George Rex property. After the division of the property between John and George Rex, John built the present frame house and outbuildings. The Rex Farm and supporting outbuildings represent awareness, even in remote rural areas, of nineteenth century pattern book-inspired architectural practices.

The Rex House is a vernacular Gothic Revival style house. Contemporary pattern books from the first half of the nineteenth century authored by Andrew Jackson Davis, Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux, and others appear to have strongly influenced the builder of the Rex House. Examples found in Downing's book, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, such as his design for a symmetrical cross-gabled cottage, share similarities with the Rex House.²⁸ Both the Rex House and the pattern book designs follow a simple central hall plan with a rear kitchen ell. They both use classic Gothic Revival style detailing on the barge boards of the house. The Rex House is slightly more elaborate than the simple cottage in Downing's book; it has bay windows in the two rooms flanking the central hall, a full-length front porch, and porches on the side elevations. Also characteristic of the style is the use of the pointed arch, which is emphasized in the steeply-pitched gables and dormers of the Rex House roof. The house has paired chimneys centered on the roof, another common trait of the style. The Rex House also shares similarities with the "River Cottage" in Downing's, *Victorian Cottage Residences*. The "River Cottage" has a cross gable form with dormers, bay windows, paired chimneys, and decorated barge boards.²⁹ The historic additions to the Rex House also created a more complex house, yet continued to use the same decorative motifs of the original design.

The origins of the Gothic Revival style in the United States can be traced to the 1840s, but it appeared much later in the rural counties of southwestern Pennsylvania. Few other known rural examples of the style have been identified in the county, but they likely exist in much more simple

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 5

forms.³⁰ Many other rural Greene County farm houses share the same floor plan as the Rex House with a central hall, rear kitchen ell, and back stair. These houses are typically Georgian or Greek Revival influenced in style. One example is the circa 1851, 2 ½ story Kent House, located on Laurel Run Road in Franklin Township. It is built of common bond red brick with end chimneys, rear ell, and front door with elaborate sidelights and transom.

Comparable examples of Gothic-Revival style architecture in Greene County are few in number. Farther afield, similarly styled housing is found in Evergreen Hamlet in Ross Township, Allegheny County. Evergreen Hamlet, National Register listed, is one of the earliest planned suburbs comprised of four secluded circa 1852 houses. Attributed to architect Joseph W. Kerr, many of the Evergreen Hamlet houses originated from Andrew Jackson Downing's books.³¹ The Hampton and Sellers Houses are four-square villas, while the Shinn House uses the characteristic board and batten construction technique with heavily decorated barge boards, and a cross gable form similar to the Rex House.³² Also like the Rex House, it has paired chimneys in the center of the roof. The Shinn House has a similar floor plan to the Rex House with a central hall flanked by a parlor and dining room, and it also has an ell to the rear. The original floor plans of the Shinn House indicate a small frame coal house, similar to the one that, according to historic photographs, stood near the Rex House.³³ The Hill House is the most formal of the group with board and batten siding, drip moldings at the windows, and a number of pointed-arch gables.³⁴ The primary difference between Evergreen Hamlet and the Rex House is the setting; Evergreen Hamlet is in a suburban setting and the Rex House is a rural farm.

Another Gothic-Revival style house is located on Route 201 in Fayette City, Fayette County. It is a cross gable form with decorated barge boards and slate roof. Unlike the Rex House and the houses at Evergreen Hamlet, it is constructed of red brick and located at a primary intersection in Fayette City. Another frame example of a Gothic Revival style house is located on West Main Street in Claysville, Washington County. This 1 ½ story, circa 1870, frame house has cross gables, covelap siding, and decorative brackets. The chimneys are also placed toward the center of the roof line like the Rex House. The gables are not as steeply-pitched as the Rex House, but it has decorative gable ends. Other differences between the two houses include the pointed-arch windows of the Claysville house and its small town location, which stands in contrast to the Rex House's square-headed windows and rural location.³⁵

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 8 Page 6

Numerous other extant farms with similar historical developments are found throughout rural Greene and Washington Counties. One example is the previously-mentioned Kent Farm in Franklin Township, Greene County. The center of the farm is a circa 1851 Greek-Revival style house with a small grouping of frame outbuildings. Over the decades, the Kent Farm has retained nearly all of its original farmland. At 213 Linnwood Road in North Strabane Township, Washington County, is the James Thome Farm, also historically associated with sheep farming in the region. The Thome Farm, National Register listed, has an evolutionary stone and frame farm house and a group of outbuildings representative various distinct periods of farm history. This farm's property boundaries have also changed over time.³⁶

The Rex Farm represents agricultural trends in nineteenth and twentieth century Greene County farms. Numerous other farm complexes within Greene County have evolved in acreage, however few retain the integrity of the Rex Farm. The farm has an important example of nineteenth century Gothic Revival-inspired farmhouse architecture. The farmhouse, its outbuildings, and lands are tangible links to prosperous eras of farming history in the county.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 9 Page 1

SOURCES CONSULTED

- Agricultural Schedules, Pennsylvania, Federal Decennial Censuses 1850-1880.* (National Archives Microfilm Publication T 11380), Jefferson Township, Greene County: The National Archives and Records Service General Service Administration, Washington, 1970.
- Bates, Samuel P. *History of Greene County, Pennsylvania.* Chicago: Nelson, Rishforth & Company, 1888.
- Behm, Frank. Rex Farm owner. Interviewed by Clinton Piper and Steve Chaitow, 28 June 1997, notes in author's possession.
- Behm, Frank. Photographic Collection of Rex House and Personal Papers relating to the house and the Goodwin/Strickler Family 1880-1900. Jefferson, Pennsylvania.
- Caldwell's Illustrated Historical Centennial Atlas of Greene County, Pennsylvania.* Condit, Ohio: J. A. Caldwell, 1876.
- Downing, A. J. *The Architecture of Country Houses.* New York: Dover Publications Inc, Reprinted 1969.
- _____. *Victorian Cottage Residences.* New York: Dover Publications Inc, Reprinted 1981.
- Freas, Dan. Executive Director, Meadowcroft Museum of Rural Life. Interviewed by Clinton Piper, 13 January 1998, notes in author's possession.
- Greene County 4-H Clubs. *Land Atlas & Plat Book for Greene County, Pennsylvania.* Kettering, Ohio: Mercury Publishing Company, 1994.
- Greene County Deed Books, Greene County Courthouse, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania.
- Historic Preservation Consulting. *James Thome Farm National Register Nomination.* North Strabane Township, Washington County, November 1996.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 9 Page 2

Horn, W.F. *The Horn Papers: Early Westward Movement on the Monongahela and Upper Ohio 1765-1795*. Volume II & III, Scottdale, Pennsylvania: The Herald Press, 1945.

Huxtable, Ada Louise. "It's Hard to Despise Victorian Houses Anymore," The New York Times, 3 May 1970.

Kidney, Walter C. *Landmark Architecture Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, 1985.

Leckey, Howard L. *The Tenmile Country and Its Pioneer Families: A Genealogical History of the Upper Monongahela Valley*. Knightstown, Indiana: The Bookmark, 1977.

McConnell, J. L. *McConnell's Map of Greene County, Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: Tuttle and Company, 1865.

Rex, Leda Ferrell. *The George Rex Genealogy: The Ancestry and Descendants of George Rex the First of England to Pennsylvania in 1771*. Wichita, Kansas: Franklin Printery, 1933.

Smith, G. Wayne. *History of Greene County Pennsylvania*. Morgantown, West Virginia: Morgantown Printing and Binding, 1996.

Toker, Franklin. *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986.

United States Department of Agriculture Farm Census, Division of Crop Reporting, Jefferson Township Greene County. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Archives, 1924, 1927.

Washington County History and Landmarks Foundation. *Preserving Our Past*. Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1975, reprinted 1996.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

*Rex, John Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

Section Number 10

Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

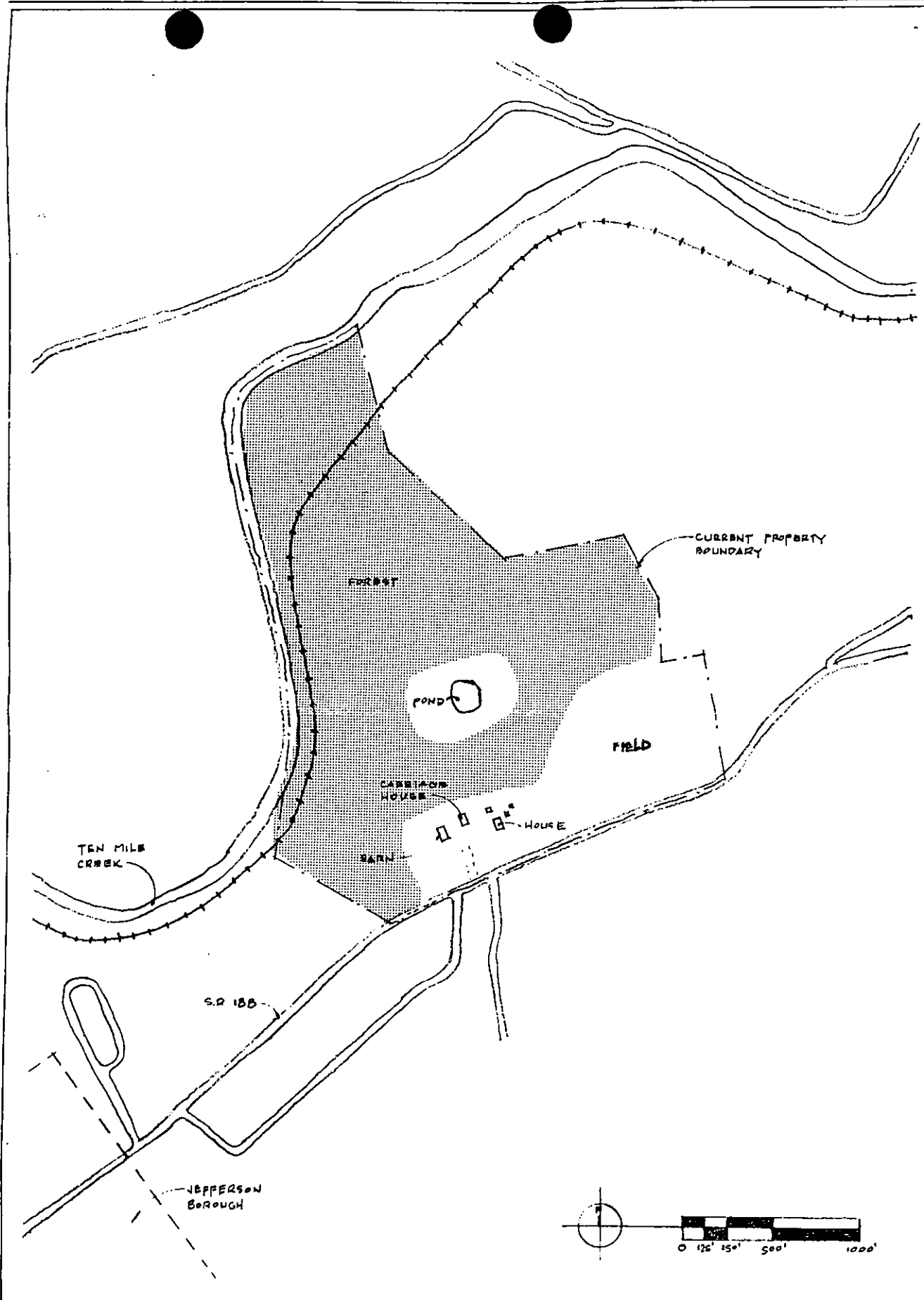
The boundaries for the Rex Farm correspond to the legally recorded boundaries for the parcel listed below.

Beginning at a point in southwest corner of the property, thence northeast 1320 feet to a point; thence northwest 501.6 feet to a point; thence, southeast 198 feet to a point; thence, northeast 198 feet to a point; thence, northwest 268.95 feet to a point; thence northwest 660 feet to a point; thence northwest 594 feet to a point; thence northwest 693 feet to a point; thence southwest 231 feet to a point; thence southwest 297 feet to a point; thence, southwest 231 feet to a point; thence southwest 297 feet to a point; thence, southwest 165 feet to a point; thence, southwest 132 feet to a point; thence southeast 841.5 feet to a point; thence, thence northeast 66 feet to a point; thence, southeast 351.45 feet to a point; thence, southwest 353.1 feet to a point; thence, southwest 211.2 feet to a point; thence, southwest 429 feet to a point; thence, southwest 429 feet to a point; thence southwest 250.8 feet to a point; thence, southeast 719.4 feet to a point; thence, northeast 696.96 feet to a point; thence, northeast 383.95 feet to a point, the place of beginning.

Containing seventy one acres, more or less. Record Book Volume 137 page 170.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the Rex House, historically associated farm outbuildings, sites of outbuildings, and all surrounding farmlands and woodlands belonging to the nominated parcel circa 1910.



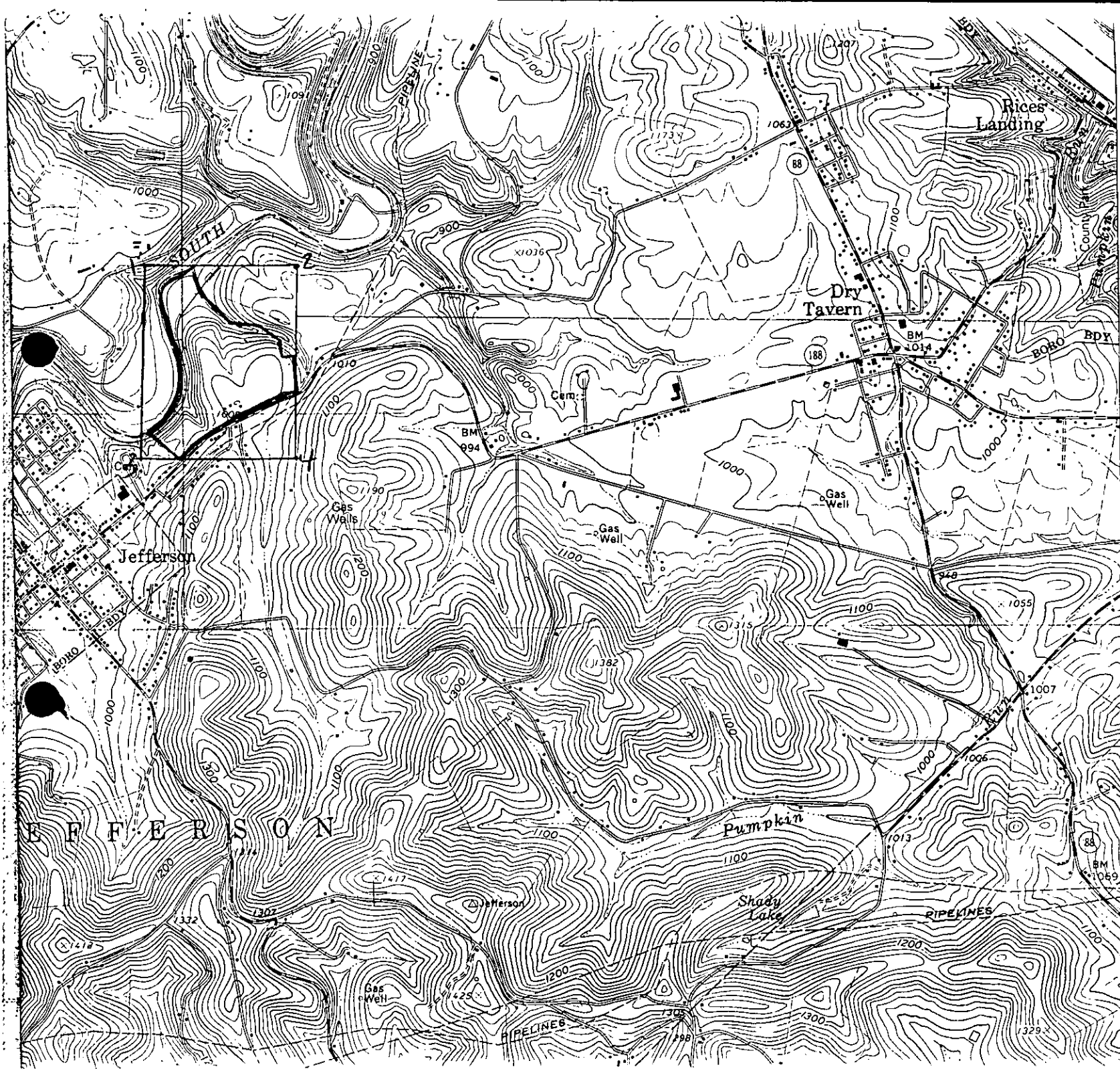
REX FARM PROPERTY BOUNDARIES

REX FARM, JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP
GREENE COUNTY, PA

DATE: DECEMBER 1997

SCALE: SEE VISUAL

DRAWN BY: STEVEN CHAITOW



Rex Farm
 Jefferson
 Township
 Greene County
 Zone 17
 Mather Quad

- 1. 580800
 4421720
- 2. 581410
 4421720
- 3. 580800
 4420800
- 4. 581540
 4420800

4422
 (CARMICHAELS)
 5063 IV NW
 4420
 4419
 55'
 2 MI.
 (CARMICHAELS)
 15 MI.