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Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE:	
PENNSYLVANIA	
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☐ Commercial ☐ III  ☑ Educational ☐ M ☐ Entertainment ☑ M		☐ Park ☐ Private Residence ☐ Religious ☐ Scientific		Transportation Other (Specify)	Comments	_
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When first constructed, the building now known as Harriton was T-shaped, an unusual survival of the Elizabethan house plan. That this T-shaped plan was original, and not the result of a wing added to a simple rectangular building, is proven by the fact that the stone walls conform to the perimeter of the building, and do not cross the intersection.

As first constructed, there were two rooms in the cross-part of the T; the larger room undoubtedly the "common parlour" referred to by Watson; the other room, the parlour and principal bedchamber. The partition between these two rooms was removed in 1926. There was no entrance hall, the main door merely opening into the larger of the two rooms. A door on the Morthwest side of this room opened into a stair hall, located in the T part of the structure. The remainder of this wing, (i.e., the stem of the T), appears to have served originally as the kitchen. During the first half of the 18th century, a new kitchen was constructed adjacent to the earlier one, but accessible only from the exterior. The second floor contained three similar rooms, while the third floor was most likely an unfinished garret.

The Northeast, or principal elevation, is approximately 37' wide by 22' deep. The rear section extended to the Northwest approximately 23', and was 18' in width. The walls are built of field-stone and are laid in a random coursed pattern. Chimneys of stone and brick were constructed at each of the three gable ends. The Noutheast elevation was arranged in a formal manner, the door being centered with pairs of windows on each side. The second floor of this elevation contained only three openings; the center one being a door, the frame of which was found in place during recent architectural investigation. A pent eave extended across the Southeast elevation between the head of the first floor windows and the sill of the second floor windows.

In the interior, the staircase from the first to the third floor certainly dates from the period of original construction. Almost all of the woodwork in the other original first floor rooms dates from the extensive alterations undertaken in the present century. The woodwork of the second floor, however, is quite remarkable. One panelled fireplace wall remains untouched, and a second one only partially altered. The single board and panel partition between these two rooms is also a feature of the original building. Several old doors remain with their foliated edges, which unquestionably date from the first quarter of the 18th century. This floor contains enough of the original fabric of the early 18th century period to enable a most complete and accurate restoration of the first floor rooms.

A few years after the original construction, a one-story lean-to wing was constructed on the Southwest side, its front wall lining with that of the original structure. This is believed to have been built by Richard Harrison as a study for his son. Harrison also added the external brick kitchen at the north corner. Photographs in the collection of George Vaux, taken during the period 1890 - 1920, show some of the changes made during these years, largely in the nature of maintainance and repairs. About 1911 a major rehabilitation of the house was undertaken. Door and window frames, as well as new window sash, were installed. A front stoop was added, and changes apparently were made to the dormer windows. Fortunately, these changes are well recorded in the Vaux photographs. Recently, a piece of an original casement window frame has been found in the attic, nailed to the under side of the roofing.

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HARRITON (continued)

The exact date for the removal of the pent eave is not known. However, the house as shown in a water-color by William Breton, "The Residence of the Late Charles Thompson, Esqr. - taken in 1828 " (collection of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia), reveals that the pent eave had been removed, and that the door on the second floor had been changed to a window. This watercolor also shows that the chimneys had elaborate moulded brick cornices. By 1859, in the earliest known dated photograph, these elaborate cornices had disappeared. Fortunately, the floor plan, the dimensions, and the materials used in construction were very well described in the insurance survey made for Naomi Morris on August 9, 1834, by the Franklin Fire Insurance Co. of Philadelphia.

In 1926, shortly after Harriton was acquired by Ralph L. Colton, major additions were added to the house, and an almost complete change made in the interior. These changes can be seen on the set of drawings entitled "Alterations and additions to Harriton Farm" drawn by Ralph Colton, who was a registered architect. These drawings described as "Comm. No. 131, dated September 3, 1926" are in the files of Lower Merion Township.

Since the acquisition of the building by Lower Merion Township, The Harriton Association has undertaken a program of removing all the work added by Mr. Colton, both interior and exterior. Future plans call for the restoration of the building to the condition in which it stood during the occupancy of Charles Thomson.

Robert L. Raley, A. I. A.

Architect for the Harriton Restoration
Wilmington, Del.



Form 10-300a (July 1969)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Pennsylvania	
COUNTY	
Montgomery	
FOR NPS USE ON	LY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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(Number all entries)

### 7. Description (cont.

Also included on an adjoining property is the Thomas Owen (Rowland Ellis's farmer) house. This house was built in two sections about 1685 one section is a 2½ story log house with a heavy wooden cornice and gable roof. The log structure is three bays across and is constructed of "V"-notched logs. The first floor windows are six over six double hung sash, while the second story windows are much smaller two over two. The log building also has a wooden shingle roof and batten door.

Connected to the log house is a 2½ story random course fieldstone structure. The stone structure is two bays across with six over six double hung sash evident on both levels. This portion also has a gable roof, box cornice and wooden shingle roof.

(supplied by Charles Dunlevey Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 3/15/73)



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Company Number Seven", headed by Richard Davies of Welshpool, was one of several groups formed in Wales to implement William Penn's land promotion by attracting settlers to Pennsylvania. Davies' deed from Penn is dated in 1681. Chief associate and organizer with Davies was Rowland Ellis of "Bryn Mawr", near Dolgelly, Wales, who purchased the largest land holding in the Company. He subscribed for 1100 acres, 800 acres of which were to be laid out in that part of the Welsh Tract then known as Merion. In 1683, Ellis sent his farmer, Thomas Owen, to clear land on his Merion holding and to erect a dwelling. This building, probably constructed about 1685, still stands in much altered form. Ellis himself emigrated from Wales in 1696, and in 1704 he built a larger house, which he called "Bryn Mawr", after his ancestral farm in Wales. With the exception of the small farmhouse, this is the earliest building still standing in this part of Montgomery County.

In 1719, the property was purchased by Richard Harrison, of "Holly Hill", near Herring Creek, Md., who moved his family, slaves and household possessions from Maryland to this property. Changing the name from "Bryn Mawr" to "Harriton", he operated a tobacco plantation in the southern manner for more than thirty years.

Richard Harrison's daughter Hannah, who inherited the property from her father, married Charles Thomson in 1774, shortly before he was called by the first Continental Congress to become its Secretary. Thomson served continupusly as Secretary to successive congresses until he relinquished government office in 1789. In this capacity he attested as Secretary to the Declaration of Independence, kept the Secret Journals of Congress, carried out the duties now assigned to the Secretary of State, and was co-designer, with William Barton, of the Seal of the United States.

Thomson retired from public life in 1789, settling at Harriton, where he resided continuously until his death in 1824. He now devoted himself to his scientific and scholarly interests. A long-time friend of Jefferson, he had corresponded and collaborated with the latter in observations on a host of scientific subjects, including astronomy, geology, and agriculture. An outtanding Greek scholar, he made the first translation of the Bible from an ancient tongue into English ever made in North America. Four separate translations of the whole Bible were made, using the text of the Septuagint for the Old Testament. That this work was done in the back-woods of Pennsylvania, without benefit of vast research libraries or other tools normally available to scholars, makes the work even more remarkable. Its permanent worth is shown by the fact that as recently as 1954 a new edition of the Septuagint bible appeared, wherein the editors state that with few exceptions they have followed verbatim the Thomson translation.

George Vaux

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE Browning, C.H.: Welsh Settlem Eberlein, H.D. & Linningert H	ment of Pe	enna.; Wm. J. Campbe	11,Phila. 1912; 233-2	38,456-
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	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	Pennsylvania county	
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PROTEIN OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER-1



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	PENNSYLVANIA
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM	MONTGOMERY
	FOR NPS USE ONLY
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)	ENTRY NUMBER DAT
1. NAME	JUL 2 1973
COMMON: HARRITON	
2. LOCATION originally named BRYN MAWR by Rowla	and Ellis who built it
STREET AND NUMBER:	
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CITY OR TOWN:	
Bryn Mawr	
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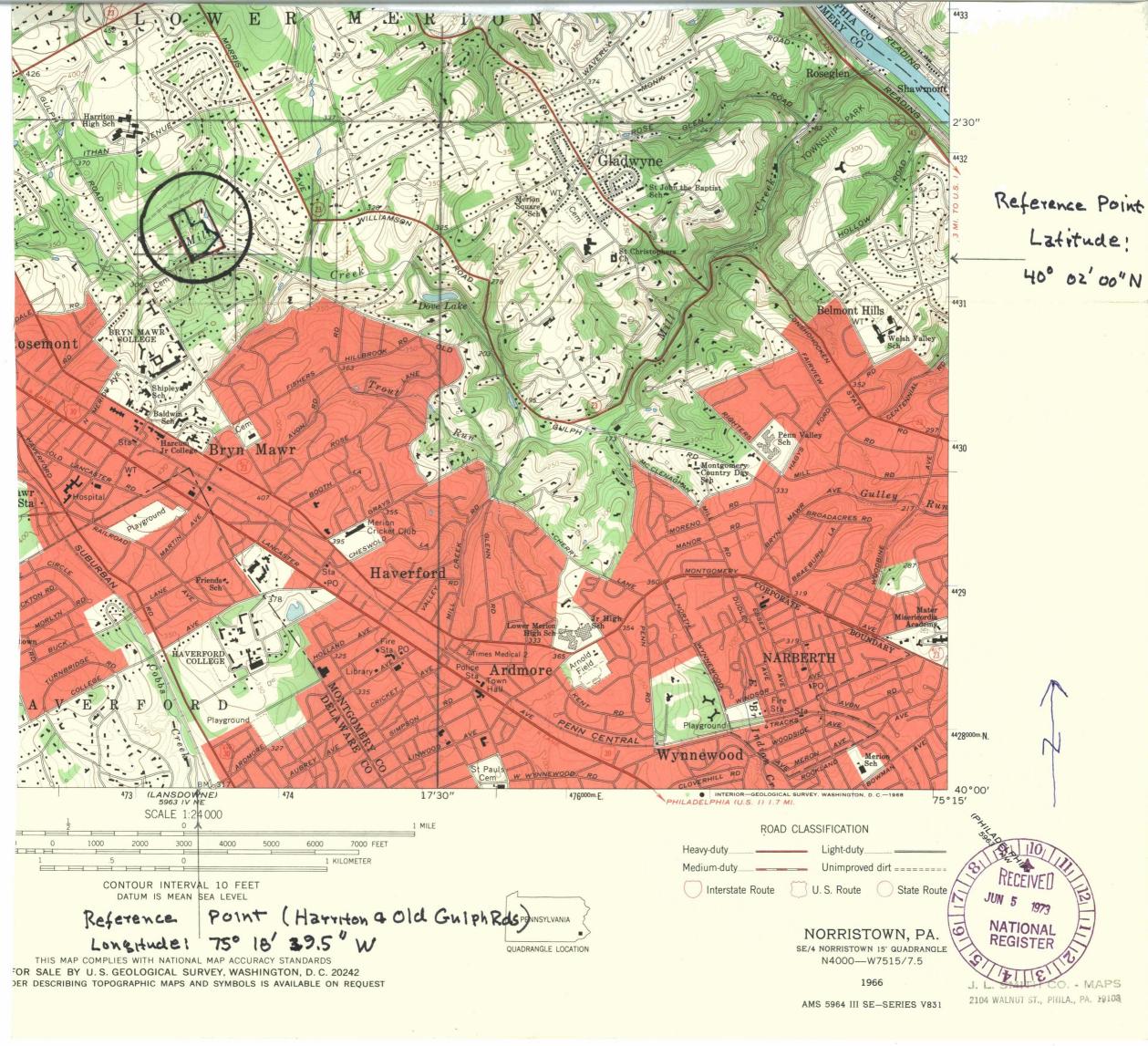
Form 10-301 (July 1968)

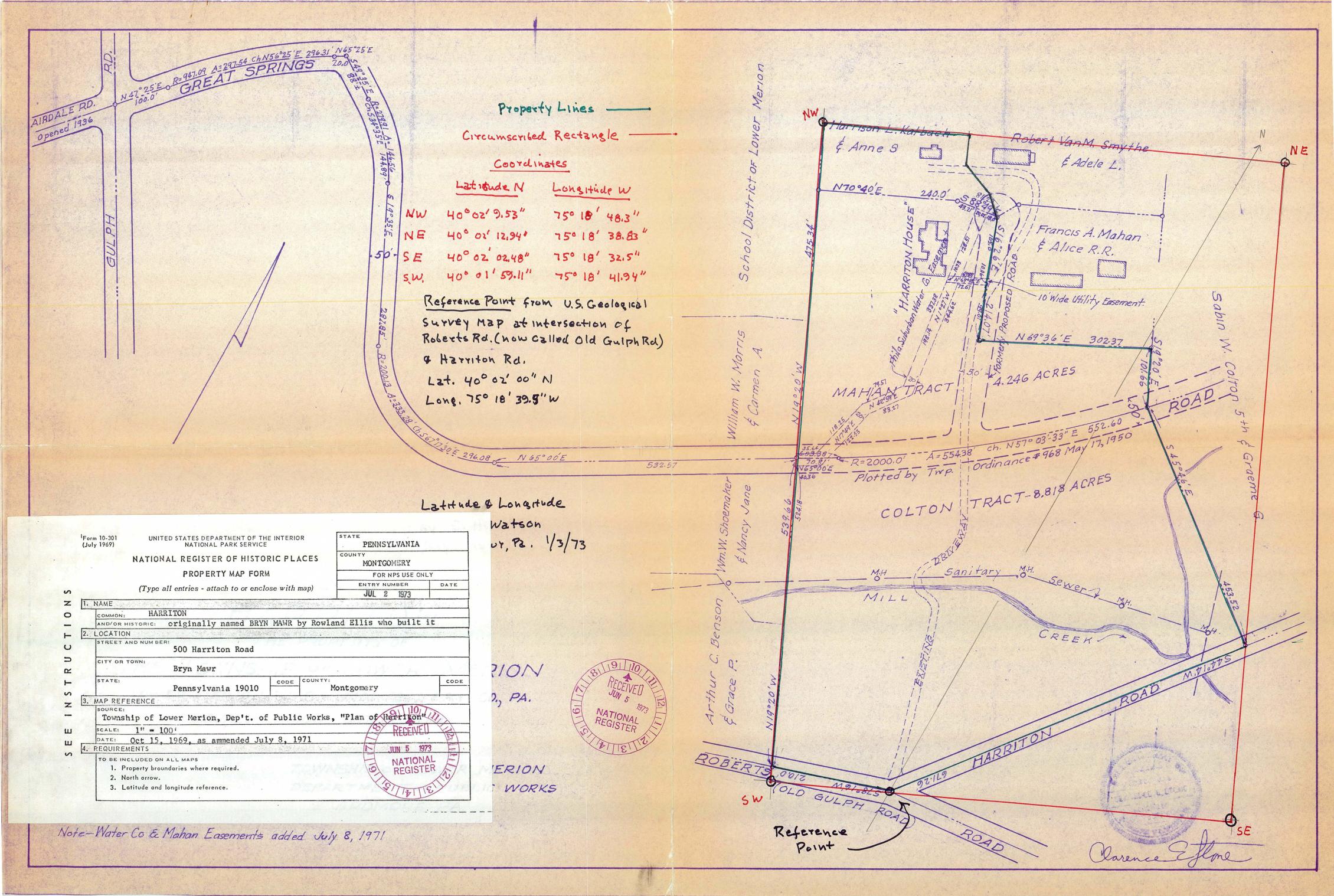
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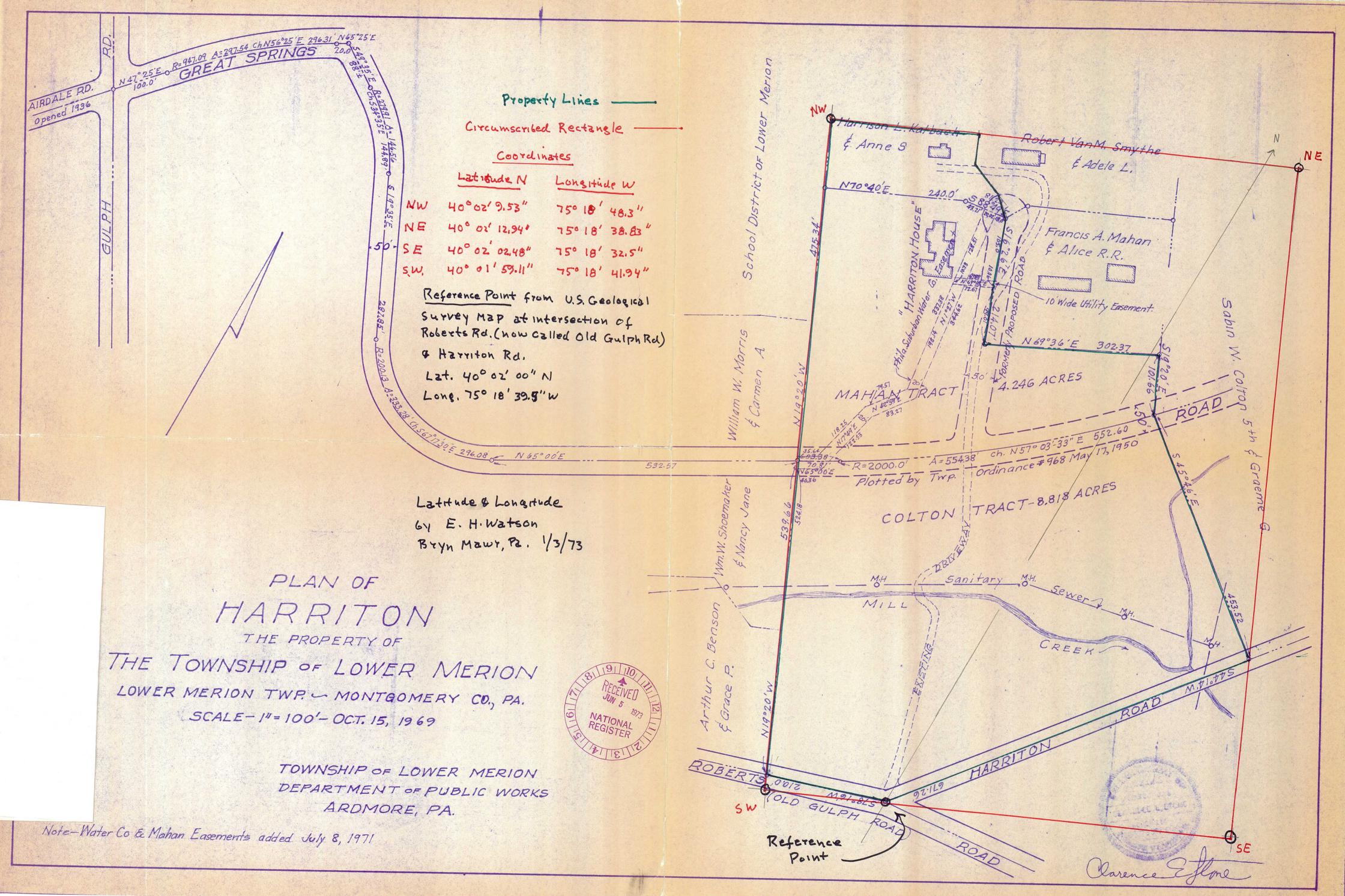
## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type are entires - attach to or enclose with map)			
1. NAME			
Harriton	originally named Bryn Marw by Roland Ellis	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)  JUL 2 1973	÷
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2. LOCATION	COUNTY	Town	
Pennsylvania	Montgomery	Bryn Mawr	
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# COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION P. O. Box 1026, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 23, 1973

The National Register of Historic Places U.S. Department of the Interior National Parks Service 18th and C Sts. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20240



Dear Sir,

Enclosed you will find the nomination for "Harriton". It was returned to us so that we could make an addition to the form. The addition is that of the Thomas Owen House. An addition sheet giving a short description of that property is enclosed. The acreage and the co-ordinates for the boundaries have also been changed. The letter that we received with the additional material is also being sent as well as a picture of the Thomas Owens House.

If there are to be any other changes made, please notify me.

Sincerely yours,

William J. Wewer

## THE HARRITON ASSOCIATION

U/RECTORS AND OFFICERS
President - W. Dallas Saybolt
Honorary Vice Presidents

Mrs. G. Dawson Coleman Lawrence J. Doolin Miss J. Malissa Shupert

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY

### Amendment to Nomination Form for Harriton

The original nomination form, submitted 26 May 1972 covers an area of approximately 13 acres now the property of Lower Merion Township. It contains the Harriton House built by Rowland Ellis in 1704.

In the "Statement of Significance" included on that form, mention is made of the original farmhouse, erected about 1685, by Thomas Owen, Rowland Ellis's farmer. This building stands on 0.778 acre plot adjoining the large property.

Although not at present belonging to Lower Merion Township, approval has been given by the owners, Mr. & Mrs. Harrison L. Kalbach, to include it in the area described in the Nomination. As this is the Earliest building in the area, it seems important to add it to the Inventory.

To this end, we enclose new maps which revise the property lines and the circumscribed rectangle. New latitude and longitude figures are given and a photograph of the original farmhouse is included.

It is requested that the Nomination form be corrected by replacing the maps with this new set, and by changing the geographical figures on the form with those shown in the new maps.

George Vaux, Secretary

The Harriton Association

### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

### STATE PENNSYLVANIA

Date Entered JUL 2 1973

Name

Location

Llevellyn Martin and Roger Little House

Charlestown Township

Chester County

Hillsgrove Covered Bridge

Hillsgrove vicinity

Sullivan County

Brier Hill

Brier Hill

**Fayette County** 

Bryn Mawr (Harriton)

Bryn Mawr

Montgomery County

The Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company Building

Philadelphia

Philadelphia County

### Also Notified

Hon. Hugh Scott Hon. Richard S. Schweiker

State Eistoric Preservation Officer

Hon. John H. Ware, III

Mr. William J. Wever, Executive Director Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

Hon. Daniel J. Flood Hon. Thomas E. Morgan

Box 1026 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

17108

Hon. Robert H. C. Nix

Director, Northeast Region

PHR MMott:jal 7/9/73