

# PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM PHOTO/SITE PLAN SHEET

Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission

Bureau of Historic Preservation

Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026

Survey Code/Tax Parcel/Other No.: 107 / 66 00 06163 00 8 Block-Unit #019-048

County: Montgomery

Municipality: Whitpain Township

Address: 350 Skippack Pike

Historic Name/Other Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## SITE PLAN

## PHOTO INFORMATION



Number	Description of View	Direction of Camera
1	House	
2	House	
3	Barn	
4		
5		
6		

Photographer Name: Robert Wise Date: 1999

Negative Location: Robert Wise Consulting, Station Square 1, Suite 104,  
37 N. Valley Road, Paoli PA 19301

# PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM - DATA SHEET

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

89B

## IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: 107 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66 00 06163 00 8 Block Unit #019-048  
County: 1. Montgomery 091 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Municipality: 1. Whitpain Township 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: 350 Skippack Pike Historic Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Owner Name/Address: Henry F. III & Suzy O'Reilly 350 Skippack Pike Blue Bell PA 19422  
Owner Category: ☒ Private ☐ Public-local ☐ Public-state ☐ Public-federal  
Resource Category: ☒ Building ☐ District ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object  
Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 2  
USGS Quad: 1. Lansdale 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM A. \_\_\_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_\_  
References: B. \_\_\_\_\_ D. \_\_\_\_\_

## HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category: \_\_\_\_\_ Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_ Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
A. Residence 1720 3,797 SF Land 2.37 Acre Dwelling \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_  
C. \_\_\_\_\_  
D. \_\_\_\_\_

Particular Type: A. \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_  
C. \_\_\_\_\_  
D. \_\_\_\_\_

Current Function Category: \_\_\_\_\_ Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_ Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
A. Single Family Residence Dwelling \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_  
C. \_\_\_\_\_  
D. \_\_\_\_\_

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: A. Colonial Revival \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_\_  
D. \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Exterior Materials: Foundation \_\_\_\_\_ Roof asphalt shingles \_\_\_\_\_  
Walls stucco \_\_\_\_\_ Walls \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Structural System: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Width 3 bay / 30 feet Depth 18 feet Stories/Height 2

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: ca. 1720 Additions/Alterations Dates: ca. ca.

Basis for Dating: x Documentary      Physical

### Explain: Tax records

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Associated Individuals: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Associated Events: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Architects/Engineers: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Builders: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

## MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

### EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential:   x   Yes        No Context(s): \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Contributes to Potential District</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>District Name/Status:</u>

**Classification:** House with barn is architecturally significant.

## THREATS

Threats: x 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other

**Explain:**

## SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: Robert Wise Date: 6/16/2000

Project Name: Whitpain Township Historic Resource Survey

Organization: Robert Wise Consulting/Whitpain Township Telephone: (610) 722-5818

Street and No.: Station Square 1, Suite 104, 37 North Valley Road

City, State: Paoli, Pa Zip Code: 19301

Additional Survey Documentation: n/a

Associated Survey Codes: n/a

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE SURVEY FORM  
NARRATIVE SHEET 89C

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Bureau for Historic Preservation

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County: Montgomery 091 Municipality: Whitpain Township  
Address: 350 Skippack Pike  
Historic/Other Name:

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

This large, 3-part additive house, constructed c. 1720, appears to be an example of the Colonial style. It consists of a core, a northern addition, and a rear addition. There is also a restored barn on the rear of the property. The building is largely obscured by vegetation and by a large fence that parallels Skippack Pike.

The main section consists of a 2-story, stucco clad unit with and end gabled, asphalt shingled roof. Large stucco clad chimneys, flush with the end walls, are located on each end. The section is 3-bays wide and fenestration consists of 6x6 sash windows flanked by paneled shutters on the first floor and louvered shutters on the second floor. This section measures approximately 30' x 18'.

The north end addition also has and end gabled asphalt shingled roof, yet the 2-story structure is slightly lower than the main section. A large, exterior, stucco clad chimney is located on the north end. A 1-story, shed roofed extension is located on the north end of the addition, where it also surrounds the chimney. The two bay structure has identical windows to the main section.

A large, 2-story rear addition, with and enclosed, shed roofed porch facing south, extends from the rear of the main section. Like the other sections, it is clad in stucco. Combined, the entire house measures approximately 58' x 45', and is ell-shaped.

**Associated Resource (Barn)** The barn, now rehabilitated for residential use, is a 2-part, 2-story building with and end-gabled, asphalt shingled roof. The older section of the barn, closest to the house, is stucco over stone; the rear section is frame. The building measures approximately 60' x 30'.

**Classification:** Class I: House with barn is architecturally significant.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

# The Home of Ilga and Herbert Winicov

By Agnes Baker Jefferson

The challenge of researching this graceful old dwelling opposite Shady Grove School, is not for lack of information, but to straighten out conflicting dates of its origin, and to sift out what is most appealing.

Its location, so close to "Whitpain Farms" suggest it is very old. Yes, the property is very old (1701) but there were two houses; also, one owner must have had two families. Luckily, with a careful study, it is possible to produce a reasonable explanation even if it is not absolutely certain that it is solid in facts.

In Edward Mathews' Scrapbook, page 53, he writes this excerpt for the *Ambler Gazette*, Aug. 17, 1893, entitled Local History:

"During the last century a considerable tract in Whitpain was owned by the Davis family for three generations . . . It includes a strip along the Skippack Road midway between Blue Bell and Broad Axe and extended back 3/4 of a mile. The surface has a general slope toward the southeast, diversified by a depression through which flows a 'meadow rivulet'.

"The original Davis tract comprised of 200 A. . . . The first settler here was William Davis, a Welsh Quaker. While no deed is on record of whom he bought, it is estimated the time was about 1701, when he bought of John Palmer (who bought from Ann Whitpain McCarty). The boundary of another property showed that he was here in 1704 and 1710.

"His residence was not on Skippack Road, but near the center of the plantation. Here was a spring and the natural place for the habitation of a pioneer . . . Over a spring there yet remains the ruins of a two-story house.

"John Davis was William's son, but very little is accurately known of the successive generations. There is record about the time of William's death before 1750 that 'John Davis built what was then the new house'. In 1768, there was a stone house . . . had two rooms downstairs while a spring flowed through the cellar.

"William Davis, the grandson of the pioneer made a will in 1798, naming five children." Here records are confused. It is difficult to distinguish between the two Williams. There are also records of William Davis, possibly a second marriage, with another set of children, who lived and farmed in the Morris Road - Penllyn Pike area. However, in this case, in the 1800s, the "land was divided and became separate farms" and the Davis family seemed to have disintegrated or moved elsewhere.

At this point, it would be to the reader's advantage to see a list of owners, in order to better understand the story of "Berry Pomeroy." (Named for an English castle which came down through the Allen's ancestors.) A stone at the entrance of the lane still marks the house's name.

Prior to 1701 - Ann W. McCarty and John Palmer

1704 -William Davis

C.1735 - John Davis

C.1768 - Changed hands within the family 1782 or later William Davis (II)

1799 - John Davis (II) state

1818 - John Davis (III)  
1818-1832 - Dr. George Martin (wife-Davis) bought land at Sheriff Sale  
1832 - George Martin and wife sold to Henry Still  
1833 - Widow of Henry Still sold to James Wood (husband of a Booz daughter)  
1846 - James Wood sold to Samuel Streeper  
1874 - Samuel Streeper Estate deeded to John Streeper  
1910 - John Streeper sold to J. Perry Tyson  
1924 - J. Perry Tyson (Jenkintown Bank and Trust Co.) sold to Jesse Cassel  
1924 - Jesse Cassel sold to Phillip Meredith Allen  
1965 - P. M. Allen sold to Seehoff  
1971 - John C. Seehoff sold to Herbert Winicov

One note of explanation of the chart: E. Mathews describes the Streeper Farm on page 54 in the above Scrapbook. He explains in detail the shifting, dividing, reselling, sheriff sales and selling back, which occurred in the 1818-1846 period.

It simplifies matters here if one thinks of three "regimes" so to speak:

Davis - 1701-1833 - 130 years  
Streeper -1846-1910 - 64 years  
Allen - 1924-1965 - 41 years

As for the kinds of people each of these families were how different!

Mathews comments: "In 1760 John Davis was assessed for 200 A. of which only 80 A. was cleared. . . . He had but 2 A. sown in winter grain and was taxed for one horse and two cows indicating pretty poor farming." F. M. further states ". . . the children of William Davis, Nancy, John, Sarah, Hannah, and Tamar were strange ones. John and Hannah seemed to have been carried away by the infatuation of a religious imposter. . . . By the time of their father's death, in 1798, they had both moved to Ontario County, N. Y. with the other followers of Jemima Wilkinson."

As for the Streeper's: The report in the Farm Section of the *Norristown Register* in the 1845-1850 period quotes Mr. Samuel Streeper as living on a farm containing 53 A. An itemized list of products and amounts realized from their sales revealed that his total income for the year was \$1,578.25. From observing the barn at the present, although built in two sections, it would seem that the Streeper's had need of such a structure and they erected it in their time.

On the list of exhibits at the Centennial Celebration of Montgomery County in September, 1884, in the Court House is found these items:

Miss Amanda Streeper; Coffee Pot, very old; Sampler, made by Grandmother Shay in 1805.

Mrs. Samuel Streeper; Silk Badge, worn by a lady when Lafayette entered Philadelphia; Brass Andirons; Chest dated 1767; Linen Towel and apron over 100 years old; Flax grown on farm locally.

But the special story of this house is supplied by the Allen regime. A much more colorful history exists for the last fifty-two years, because of the rather flamboyant Phillip Meredith Allen and his family.

Much of the source of information comes from the *Saturday Evening Post* article in the November 14, 1925 issue, entitled "Furnished in Antiques" by Mr. Allen. His son, Ralph Wheelock Pomeroy Allen II, now living in Worcester, filled in the facts and data from his first-

hand knowledge of having lived on this delightful spot.

The first puzzle Roy helped to solve was that of the "old house." In his time as a youngster, he and his brother, Carl, were intrigued by the rubble of some dilapidated remnants of some kind of building "down in the meadow near the spring." It was overgrown with vines and covered with piles of debris. While rummaging through one day, they found a medal which probably came from a hat. When Roy polished the black piece of what he hoped was a treasure, it turned out to be a railroad insignia. The most exciting conclusion he could come to was that the last occupant of the house obviously worked for a railroad.

When Roy and Carol Blagden anticipated marriage in 1948, Roy's dad, "P.M.," offered the young couple a site and the old stones. With the help of some neighbors and an ancient truck, they moved many loads of stones to a location nearer the Narcissa Road. However, their dream never materialized. The pile of stones is still there and the location of the site of the original cottage is not easy to find.

Beside the information gleaned from reading between the lines in the *Post* article, Roy offered other items of interest. Phillip Meredith Allen was affiliated with Curtis Publishing Company in advertising. His many hobbies included purchasing, collecting, and refinishing antiques, and other historic memorabilia. He was an avid sports-car enthusiast, enjoyed flying, and helped promote aviation. He was active in civic affairs and served on the zoning board that wrote the zoning code for Whitpain Township.

The *Post* article does not entirely agree with Edward Mathews' account as to the dates of origin of the buildings and land ownership. But what can be gathered is that by the time in 1924 when the Allens bought from Jesse Cassel, the house was in such a neglected condition that Mr. Allen hired an architect. The basic direction given was to put the wreckage in a livable condition befitting the likes of Mrs. Allen who had lived all her life in the city. Also, make it suitable for all the antiques "we are planning to collect." Quoting Mr. Allen further, "... Babs looked at me. I don't remember which of us mentioned it first: 'Let's fix this up and live here.' We were fortunate, too, in our selection of a builder. Every man was a craftsman . . . there was careful slow progress . . . with everything done right." For example, the staircase in the dining room, of curly maple wood, is a replica of the stairway in Independence Hall.

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A bit of history traveled from eastern states to the mid-west!

The house itself today is functional, livable, and charming. The wing, which was added in 1925, looks more genuine than the restored parts that were built in perhaps 1720, 1760, or 1840. Even electrical wiring and telephones were hidden to make everything more authentic. The hinges, hardware, mantles and woodwork are expressions of careful, thoughtful restoration.

The Winicov's and their two sons, Eric and Mark, appreciate the setting of the two and a half acres of graceful trees, lawn, and shrubbery. They take pride in the barn, the old well, the dinner bell, and the cannon. What a rich background this beautiful colonial house has!



It's there  
900s Galston  
on cds

350 skip?

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Photography by George S. Peck

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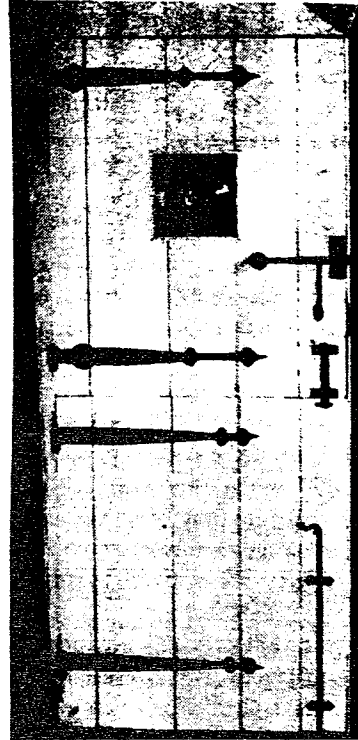
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*Antique Door and Hardware*

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*Revolutionary War Cannon and Cannon Balls*



