

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.: _____

County: Montgomery

Municipality: Whitpain Township

Address: 1102 Morris Road

Historic Name/Other Name: _____

SITE PLAN

PHOTO INFORMATION



Number	Description of View	Direction of Camera
1	Left façade	
2	Right façade	
3	Rear building	
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: 059 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66 00 04222 00 5 Block Unit #024A-105
County: 1. Montgomery 2.
Municipality: 1. Whitpain Township 2.
Address: 137 Morris Road Historic Name:
Other Name:
Owner Name/Address: Susan Jackson Tressider 137 Morris Road Ambler PA 19002
Owner Category: x Private Public-local Public-state Public-federal
Resource Category: x Building District Site Structure Object
Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 1
USGS Quad: 1. Lansdale 2.
UTM A. C.
References: B. D.

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category: Subcategory: Code:

A. Residence 1808 2,790 SF Land 1.04 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. Federal
B. C.
D. Other:

Exterior Materials: Foundation Roof
Walls stucco Walls
Other Other

Structural System: 1. 2.
Width 3 bay Depth Stories/Height 2.5

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: ___ ca. ___ 1808 ___ Additions/Alterations Dates: ___ ca. ___ ca. ___
Basis for Dating: ☒ 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: ___ Yes ___ x ___ No Context(s): ___
Contributes to Potential District ___ Yes ___ No District Name/Status: ___

Classification: This house is in good shape but the many alterations warrant a Class II resource classification.

THREATS

Threats: ☒ 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

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bureau for Historic Preservation

Survey Code: _____ 059 _____ Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66.00 04222.00 5 Block-Unit #024A-105
County: _____ Montgomery _____ 091 _____ Municipality: _____ Whitpain Township
Address: _____ 137 Morris Road
Historic/Other Name:

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

This is an early nineteenth century farmhouse with several additions. The core measures 18 x 25 feet, and is two and a half stories high and three bays wide. It has exterior end chimneys in the gable ends and is clad in yellow stucco. A prominent feature of the façade is the centered gable. The windows on the first and second floor have shutters; those in the attic (gable end windows) do not. There is a two-story addition on the rear of this house running the length of the building. Some of the windows on this addition have shutters, and the roof on this addition is flat. There is also a one story enclosed porch on one end of the house.

Classification: This house is in good shape but the many alterations warrant a Class II resource classification.

At the same time, in 1798, one Andere Bernhard migrated from Switzerland and operated a tavern in Hatfield until 1821. In 1823, he and his son, George Adam Bernhard, purchased a farm in this vicinity. Again, it is difficult to pinpoint which one. Their offspring, Anthony Bernhard, married the daughter of Henry Greenawalt and thus inherited the homestead. Descendants from this union (gathered from 1877 map) are Jacob C. Bernhard, George Bernhard, and William R. Bernhard. Others of this generation are James Bernhard and David Bernhard. Two of the last remaining descendants are Irwin Bernhard, son of David, and Henry Whittock whose mother was Annie Bernhard Whittock.

When and how Jacob Walker entered the picture is not known. His name first appears about 1850. Boehm's Cemetery lists three Jacob Walkers: 1773-1859, 1815-1864, and one that was still living beyond 1897. Somehow the house and farm buildings on the west corner of Morris and Cathcart (Wood) Roads became the fertile and prosperous farm of about 72 acres. In a *Montgomery County Farm Report* about 1860, Jacob Walker, with 68 acres of land and 5 acres of woodland, had an income of approximately \$1,132.00 from the sale of products he raised on his farm near Franklinville. The Jacob Walker in question here is the one who deeded the aforesaid ownership to his son-in-law, David Bernhard, in 1897.

The writer knows that this Jacob Walker and his wife, Rebecca (nee Smith), had eight children: three boys and five girls. Two of the men resided in Philadelphia and the other bought a farm in Bucks County. Two girls also moved to the city, and the three others married and stayed in Whitpain Township. It is significant here to enumerate:

Annie R. Walker married James Bernhard, a Greenawalt descendant. Hannah Walker married David Bernhard and continued in the old homestead. Phoebe Walker married Edward Phipps (once the owner of "Tall Oaks") and had three daughters, Edith, Clara and Letitia.

It was from the first union, Annie and James Bernhard (the maternal grandparents of the writer), that three boys and two girls were born and reared. The one male heir was the well known postmaster and storekeeper, F. Clifford Bernhard. One of the girls, Rebecca W., married Howard L. Baker in December, 1910.

Somehow, the Frantz' and the Riles enter the scene and intermarried with this clan. During the time 1910 to 1940, the Greenawalt Reunion was held each summer and the participants encompassed the descendants of Greenawalt, Bernhard, Walker, Rile and Frantz, but nobody could recite how they were all related.

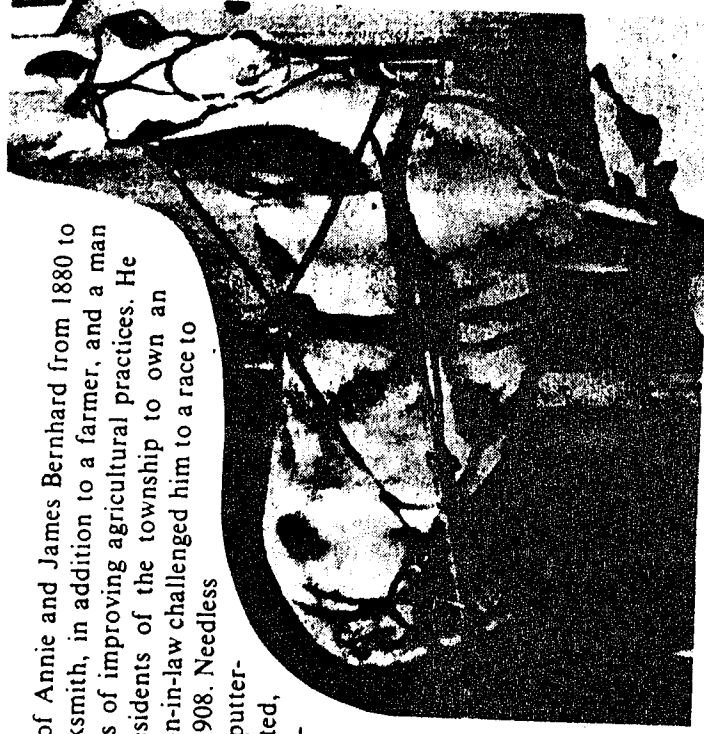
Irwin Bernhard reminds that the back part of the small house on Morris Road, ½ mile from DeKalb, which the College has not razed, is part of a log cabin. (This could be Jonathan Greenawalt's place.) The mansard roof on the former Jacob Walker home belies its age. Part of this structure probably dates to 1790. The main house facing DeKalb Pike was possibly built by Jacob Kurr and dates, circa 1760.

This was the farmstead of Annie and James Bernhard from 1880 to 1910. James was a blacksmith, in addition to a farmer, and a man given to mechanical ways of improving agricultural practices. He was one of the first residents of the township to own an automobile. His future son-in-law challenged him to a race to Rebecca's graduation in 1908. Needless

to say, by the time the sputtering, jerking vehicle started, Howard Baker had already won the race with his spirited, white horse, and well-polished black carriage.

There is a legend about the strange pear tree on the Walker land: The stump of a great oak or maple tree was left standing above the ground. Some ingenious person grafted a pear branch to it and it eventually bore

exceptionally large and delicious fruit. As a connoisseur of exceptional fruit, George Washington is reputed to have plucked a pear from this tree while he was riding in the area. He enjoyed eating the luscious pear and commended the owner for having such a tree. The remarkable part was that the tree stump was calculated to have been about 120 years old at that time.



"DUKE"

In 1910, James and Annie Bernhard sold their farm to a Mr. and Mrs. O. Brown, who improved the land and kept the buildings in good condition. About the same time, in the early 1930's when Mr. Strassburger was buying up the land on the northwest side of DeKalb Pike, a Mr. Alexander D. Thayer (having married Mrs. Strassburger's sister, nee Bourne) started buying up land on the southeast side. All these farms became Gwynllan Farms, and were operated under that name until Montgomery County purchased it for the purpose of building the County College in 1969-1970.

It is gratifying to realize that on this beautiful productive land there now exists a seat of learning. It is a comfortable thought that once again Whitpain Township was chosen as the center of the county and still remains a crossroads . . . from many directions.



