

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.: 145 / 66 00 06715 00 5 Block-Unit #009B-034

County: Montgomery

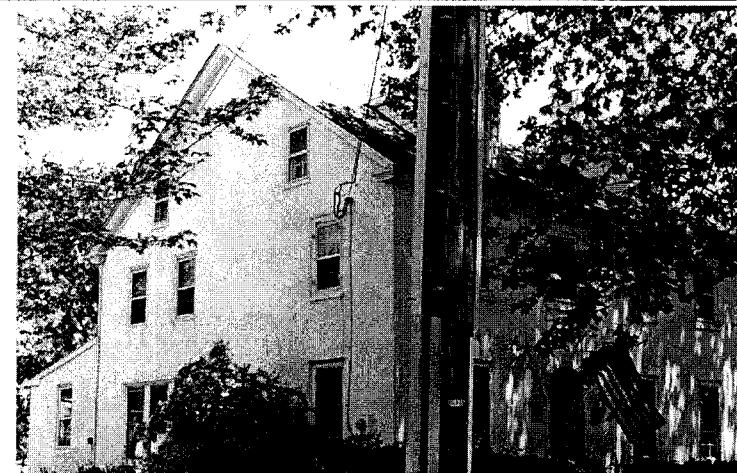
Municipality: Whitpain Township

Address: 1687 Skippack Pike

Historic Name/Other Name: _____

SITE PLAN

PHOTO INFORMATION



Number	Description of View	Direction of Camera
1	House – façade	
2	House (side)	
3		
4		
5		
6		
Photographer Name: <u>Robert Wise</u>		Date: <u>1999</u>
Negative Location: <u>Robert Wise Consulting, Station Square 1, Suite 104, 37 N. Valley Road, Paoli PA 19301</u>		

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM - DATA SHEET

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

89B

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: 145 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66 00 06715 00 5 Block Unit #009B-034

County: 1. Montgomery 091 2.

Municipality: 1. Whitpain Township 2.

Address: 1687 Skippack Pike Historic Name:

Other Name:

Owner Name/Address: James H. & Delphine M. Strohecker 1687 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: 1

USGS Quad: 1. Lansdale 2.

UTM A. _____ C. _____

References: B. _____ D. _____

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category: Subcategory: Code:

A. Residence 1775 3,053 SF Land 0.38 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. _____

Other: _____

Exterior Materials: Foundation _____ Roof _____ asphalt shingles _____

Walls _____ stucco _____ Walls _____

Other _____ Other _____

Structural System: 1. _____ 2. _____

Width 4 bay _____ Depth _____ Stories/Height 2.5 _____

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: ca. 1775 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: Yes x No Context(s): _____

Contributes to Potential District Yes No District Name/Status: _____

Classification: Class II due to alterations.

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

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bureau for Historic Preservation

Survey Code: 145 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66 00 06715 00 5 Block-Unit #009B-034
County: Montgomery 091 Municipality: Whitpain Township
Address: 1687 Skippack Pike
Historic/Other Name:

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The original building may be as old as c. 1775, however it was added to in the Federal-style c. 1800. These two sections have created a large, 2.5-story, 4-bay (40') wide façade with an end-gabled, asphalt shingled roof. The Federal style entrance is on the left side and includes a semi-circular transom over a deeply inset door surrounded by wooded molding. Fenestration consists of 6x6 sash windows resting on protruding sills. The walls are stucco. There are two pedimented dormers, clad in weatherboard, serving the third level. Attached to the rear of the core units is a one-story, frame, shed-roofed addition. The total measurement of the house is 42' x 30.

Classification: Class II due to alterations.

1775 that Weikel persuaded the two congregations to own a house and farm to accommodate the minister. It appears as though the land between the Hurst's and the Hurst's was acquired and a house was built to fulfill that purpose. It is guess work, but fairly reasonable, that a first house was situated farther back from the road; or it could be this same house and the road bed was different or seemed farther away. Nonetheless, this is the property that *nearly* fits the description as indicated on many deeds, and Mrs. Meier's findings.

Rev. Weikel was a controversial man, some saying he was a fanatic and crazy, others saying he was fired with patriotic zeal. One account reports him, on July 23, 1775, as coming home and before he put his horse in the enclosure, he shot a pistol over the animal's head, in an effort to train him, should he be needed in the war.

When the strange man was dismissed, he did not move out of the parsonage. The new minister had to find quarters elsewhere. He dropped out of sight in 1781 and was never heard from again.

Mrs. Meier tells an enlightening sidelight: "In the early 1840's when the parsonage, known as the John Knoll Farm, had fallen into disrepair, the Rev. George Wack purchased the property at public sale (as he did in the case of Erb's Mill), for \$3042.90." He lived here in semi-retirement while he operated the Mill on Township Line Road near Custer Station.

In the period around 1915 to 1930 (personal recollection — not verified), a Quaker family by the name of Sylvester and Eleanor Sharples from the West Chester area, owned and operated a goat farm. Upon their death, their daughter, Vivian Bird, inherited it. Recently, upon her husband's death, their son, Glenn, inherited it. Glenn now lives in California and the property is for sale. At this writing, the possible sale depends on zoning regulations. Who knows what this once fine place will be used for!

If the story of the houses down Skippack Pike is inconclusive, so be it! It is a confusing mixture of interchange, intermarriage, complications, neighborliness, plots and schemes. It is just possible that they were rugged individualists or ordinary people who lived and struggled to keep abreast of the times in the best way they all knew how.

1898 — John Knoll Farm (on map)
1877 — John Knoll Farm (on map)

The name of John Haag appears here. But John Haag (from personal recollection) was married to one of the Knoll daughters. (Verified in St. John's Cemetery) St. John's Cemetery is full of tombstones with markers of a host of Hursts as well as Knoll's.

When or how the property was transferred from the Hurst to the Knoll family is not exactly known. One guess would be that the elder John Knoll married one of the Hurst daughters. That would take time and research to verify.

It would also take time and effort to decipher the next puzzle because part of the land was chopped off to make another farm. It was first labeled the Tyson farm, then the Charles Wood Farm. From the writer's recollections, the next farm to the Rush place was owned by Horace Wood (second generation) and Earl Wood, his son. In the late 1920's, the Ellsworth Ritter family purchased from the Wood's. Amy Ritter Smith was the co-owner who sold the property, in the 1960's, to the developers who built Belfry Meadows.

Vivian and Phillip Bird Estate

The boarded-up, deserted house near old Centre Square School is involved and tied up among the McNaught-Wood-Strassburger properties. Here, by elimination, not by actual research, is an interesting story.

When reading any of the deeds of the above mentioned holdings, one comes to the boundary description of "the lands formerly owned by the Reformed Church." From the Montgomery County Historical Society it was learned that Judith Meier, of East Norriton, last year did a study of "Patriotic German Reformed Pastors." In her report she has a chapter on the Reverend John H. Weikel. This rather flamboyant man was called to serve both Wentz's and Boehm's churches, after John Phillip Boehm retired. It was in



Bird Estate

