

ISAAC A. PACKER FARM
Legislative Route 18011, 2.4 miles
northwest of Jay Street Bridge
Lock Haven Vicinity
Clinton County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5500

HABS
PA
18-LOKHAV
5-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Northeast Field Area
Chesapeake/Allegheny System Support Office
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS
PA
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ISAAC A. PACKER FARM

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Location: Legislative Route 18011, the Farrandsville Road, approximately 2.4 miles northwest of the Jay Street Bridge, Lock Haven Vicinity, Clinton County, Pennsylvania

USGS Lock Haven Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 18. 292770. 4559930

Present Owner: Richard Packer
R.D. #2, Box 163
Lock Haven, PA 17745

Present Occupant: James and Carol Hanna

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: The Isaac A. Packer Farm contains a farm house (HABS No. PA-5500-A), barn (HABS No. PA-5500-B), lime kiln (HABS No. PA-5500-C), and well (HABS No. PA-5500-D). These buildings and structures have retained much of their integrity and represent the nucleus of a late-nineteenth-century/ early-twentieth-century farm complex. At its largest, the farm comprised approximately 212 acres in the late nineteenth century, consisting of both cultivated river flatland and an adjacent mountain. Crops raised included tobacco, wheat, and oats, among other crops. In 1935, the property ceased as an active farm, and remains to this day a residence. Presently, the farm is approximately 178 acres. In many ways, the farm is typical of other farms in the area, however, it is distinguished by the unique residential architecture of the farm house.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Woodward Township is located in Clinton County's ridge and valley system, broken by foothills from the Allegheny High Plateaus. Much of the area now known as Clinton County and Woodward Township was forested at the time white settlers arrived in the 1760s. Monseytown Flats, the flat floodland area of Woodward Township, "located on the level bottom (on the north bank of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River) a short distance above Lockport" was occupied by the Monsey Indians prior to white settlement and was destroyed in 1763 by Col. John Armstrong. A large number of wigwams were demolished, and many acres of corn were destroyed during the raid. Traces of the village were perceptible long after the arrival of the white settlers (*Lock Haven Express* 1942: 251).

The Stanwix Treaty of 1769 between the Indians and the governing Penn family made land along the West Branch, as far as the Lycoming Creek, available in plots of three hundred acres. Upon the issue of the treaty, the bottom land along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River was claimed quickly. However, it was not until 1784 that the Penns made their last purchase from the Indians and that the valley was offered to settlers for sale on the north side of the Susquehanna River in the Monseytown area (*Lock Haven Express* 1942: 251).

The development of the West Branch canal system in 1834 began a move to access the area's massive supply of virgin forest. Woodward Township was organized in 1841 and named for the Honorable George W. Woodward, then President Judge of the District. The township is primarily hilly and forested, except for a few hundred acres along the river that were cleared and cultivated, including the land occupied by the Packer property. The soil along the river was considered favorable for the production of fruit, grass, grain, and potatoes (Linn 1883: 669). In 1844, Clinton County was formed from sections of Lycoming and Centre Counties and included twenty-one townships (including Woodward Township), seven boroughs, and one city--Lock Haven. The county is divided in half by the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, which is its principal drainage system (Hannegan 1986: 1).

Clinton County's agricultural history is somewhat diverse: dairy and beef cattle farms were prevalent in the Bald Eagle, Nittany, Sugar, and Nippenose valleys; high yields of tobacco production were found on the Great Island well into the twentieth century; and vegetables and field corn were prevalent on the farms in Woodward Township along the Susquehanna. A number of the farms in Woodward Township also produced tobacco, from as early as 1860 until well into the twentieth century. From available agricultural census data, it can be determined that over the fifty-year period from 1860 to 1910, tobacco was Clinton County's most important crop. There was a significant increase in the production of tobacco from 36,000 pounds produced in 1870, to 993,401 pounds produced in 1880. At least 77,000 pounds of the county's tobacco crop were produced in Woodward Township in 1880. Cultivation peaked in 1900, with over one million pounds reported. Other large production crops included Indian corn, wheat, oats, and potatoes, although most of these crops declined as tobacco became the crop of choice (U.S. Office of the Census 1850-1910).

The lumber industry greatly affected Woodward Township and the town of Lockport throughout the middle and late nineteenth century. The lumber was taken from northwestern Clinton County, an area situated in the Allegheny Forest Plateau. The first market downriver from the forests was Lock Haven, where the Bald Eagle Cross-Cut Canal, the West Branch Division of the Pennsylvania Canal, and the Dunnstown Dam were located. The canals and dam, established in the 1830s and 1840s, greatly abetted the flow of lumber. In 1849, the West Branch Boom

was built, extending three miles up midstream from Lock Haven. With this improvement, logs did not have to be fastened together but could float freely downstream and be harbored in by the boom, allowing for faster processing and production.

The 1889 flood devastated the lumber industry and the canal system; however, according to the 1890 agricultural census, Clinton County's agricultural production, as a whole, remained relatively steady. Tobacco production took a plunge from about 993,401 pounds produced in 1880, to 510,041 pounds produced in 1890. Tobacco production then increased and reached its peak in Clinton County around 1900, with 1,221,730 pounds reported in the agricultural census. By 1910, however, tobacco production was again on the decline, with only 332,364 pounds cultivated. Other crops, such as corn, oats, wheat, barley, potatoes, and orchard products were the main crops cultivated in the county in the early twentieth century (U.S. Office of the Census 1880-1910).

By 1900, Pennsylvania's agricultural economy was declining, and the trend continued throughout the twentieth century. In 1910, 12.8 percent of those employed in Pennsylvania worked on farms. By 1960, that percentage had dropped to 2.7 percent. Farm employment fell from 320,000 people in 1910 to 120,000 in 1950. From 1900 to 1925, the number of farms in Pennsylvania declined from 225,000 to 146,887. This trend is demonstrated on the Packer farm, as the farm diminished in economic importance during the first half of the twentieth century. Clinton County, in general, turned to industrial development after the damage to the canal system from the 1889 flood and the national economic depression of the 1890s (Stevens 1964).

II. SITE HISTORY

At the time of white settlement in the late eighteenth century, Monseytown was divided into two tracts. The lower was purchased by Col. Cookson Long of Bald Eagle Township and the upper tract, where the Packer property is located, was purchased by one of the first white settlers in the area, William Dunn, who arrived at the Great Island in 1769. In 1795, Dunn became the owner of three hundred acres, beginning at the upper end of Monseytown and extending downriver. In 1797, Dunn sold his "patent" on Monseytown to his son-in-law, Johnson Buckley, who had been living in the area for a number of years. In 1803, Buckley in turn sold the property to Johann W. Bartholemew, who claimed the lower section of the property, and his son-in-law, Adam Smith, Sr., who claimed the upper section of the property. Adam Smith, Sr., bought a share of Bartholemew's property in 1806 and, at his death in 1846, conveyed the extreme section of upper Monseytown to his only son, Adam Smith, Jr. (*Lock Haven Express* 1942: 253).

The Smiths were some of Woodward Township's earliest settlers and farmers. The agricultural census of Clinton County indicates that in 1850, Adam Smith, Jr., owned one hundred acres of improved and ten acres of unimproved land in Woodward Township, and that his farm, valued at \$10,000, was producing wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, potatoes, and butter. This made Smith's property among the most valuable in the township, second only to the property of John Hanna. In 1843, Isaac A. Packer married Adam Smith, Jr.'s daughter, Mary Elizabeth Smith. In 1863, John Smith, Adam Smith, Jr.'s son, bought his father's homestead in Monseytown. In 1865, Packer traded his brick house in Lock Haven to John Smith for a portion of the rural homestead. This was the start of Packer's ownership of the land.

Isaac A. Packer was born in 1818 in Beech Creek, Centre County, approximately ten miles southwest of Lock Haven. Isaac's father established a sawmill on Big Run, a tributary of the West Branch, and Isaac spent his younger years involved in the business. His activities included

burning tar and milling wood. An important step in the sawmill operation was transporting the wood along the river. It is not surprising, then, that Isaac's earliest career endeavor was working on the river as a boatman, which he did up until 1864.

A key factor in Isaac Packer's life was the growth of the Clinton County lumber industry (1830s-1880s). Isaac was very much a witness to this developing industry -- from his time spent milling for his father to his later years as a boatman. Lumber was the catalyst of development in Lock Haven and the surrounding townships. Packer personally recollected when there were "only two houses in Lock Haven" (*Lock Haven Express* 1897); and in 1860 there was a population of more than 3,000.

Packer capitalized upon the growth of Lock Haven by establishing the first warehouse and coal yard enterprises along the canals. In 1850, Packer and his wife moved to the Smith farm in Monseytown. In 1852, John Smith, Packer's brother-in-law, established his own business as proprietor of the "White House", an inn located at the upper end of the Smith farm, apparently not far from the present Packer house. Smith operated the inn for four years, and Packer may have worked there, and possibly been proprietor, for a short period (Hannegan Survey 1986). Packer also served as Lock Haven's assessor and tax collector in the late 1850s and 1860s.

In the late 1850s, while serving as assessor, Packer built a three-story brick residence at 317 E. Main Street, Lock Haven. In 1865, Packer traded this house to John Smith for a portion of the Smith farm. Over a period of eleven years, Packer assembled approximately 212 acres from the Smith, Welsh, and Martin families. He eventually sold a thirty-acre parcel in 1896.

In 1876, Isaac Packer owned 212 acres comprised of river flatland and part of Bear Mountain. Packer farmed the land, growing tobacco, wheat, oats, buckwheat, and potatoes, among other crops. In addition to his agricultural duties, Packer owned a flagstone quarry in Castanea Township. His will also reveals that he owned 150 acres of farmland in Marsh Creek, which he had probably inherited.

In 1885, Isaac Packer erected the present stone residence. This was the fourth dwelling constructed by Packer in his lifetime, but apparently the first erected by him on this property. Packer's residences emulated current architectural fashions -- Greek Revival for the brick dwelling in Lock Haven and Victorian Gothic for the stone farm house dwelling. (Stone was a rarely used building material in lumber-rich Clinton County.)

Packer's principal activity in his later years was managing the farm, which was worked by tenants, as evidenced by an 1895 contract Packer made with John Paul, his tenant farmer. The agreement held that Paul was to get one-third of the produce in return for tending the stock, doing all the extra hauling, and keeping up the repairs on the farm. Packer was to supply the feed and pay all the taxes, except the road tax, which Paul was to pay. Packer varied his crops year to year and grew tobacco, wheat, oats, corn, potatoes, and buckwheat (Packer Personal Ledger). At this time, the farmstead consisted of the new house and various outbuildings. Most notable among the outbuildings was the large bank barn built by Packer in 1870. This structure burned to the ground in 1905.

Upon Isaac's death in 1899, the property was passed on to his son, Kinley D. Packer, who was a subsistence farmer and an avid hunter. Kinley left an indelible stamp on the farmstead that is evident to this day. The existing lime kiln, used to make fertilizer from limestone, was built by Kinley in 1905, as was the present bank barn. The barn has pointed-arch windows and an inscription on its south facade: "K.D. Packer, 1905". Besides the stone house, barn, and lime

kiln, other buildings included a butcher house, carriage house, outhouse, a summer kitchen addition at the rear of the house, as well as a garden. Apparently, the tobacco shed was extant, though it is obscured on a circa 1905 photograph by other buildings. Kinley grew corn, wheat, oats, and potatoes on about the same thirty acres that Isaac farmed, relying upon tenants to help run the farm.

Upon Kinley's death in 1935, the farm passed to his son, Horace I. Packer, who was not a farmer but a railroad worker. A circa 1937 photograph records the state of the farm just after Kinley's death and the 1936 flood. During the three decades of Kinley's tenure, a hog pen, a chicken coop, a brooder house, and a tenant house were constructed in addition to the new barn and lime kiln. With Horace I. Packer's ownership, the property ceased as an active farm, and remains to this day a residence. Though the brooder house was temporarily used later as a children's play house, the farm outbuildings were eventually dismantled. The summer kitchen was removed after World War II, leaving the stone house, barn, and lime kiln. (The kiln subsequently fell into disrepair because of non-use.) Since Richard D. Packer inherited the house and lands in 1969, a modern utility shed has been placed on the property, and after the 1972 flood, a one-story den was added on the house's south facade, where the original porch existed prior to the 1936 flood.

III. SOURCES

A. Architectural drawings:

Isaac A. Packer Farm, Site Plan. Drawn 1992 by Jill Cremer. Original drawing located at Kise Franks & Straw, Inc., 219 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19107.

Isaac A. Packer Farm, 1886 Historic Site Plan. Drawn 1992 by Jill Cremer. Original drawing located at Kise Franks & Straw, Inc., 219 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19107.

B. Historic views: The Packer family retains a personal collection of photographs of the farm. These include the circa 1905 and 1937 views attached to this report. The circa 1905 photograph is labeled as "Mountain View Farm," which is probably a Packer-family term for the farm.

C. Interviews: Mr. Richard Packer, owner, February, 1990.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Benenson, Carol A. and Martin B. Abbot. *Isaac A. Packer Farm National Register Nomination*. Prepared for the Baltimore District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Kise Franks & Straw, 3/31/90, revised 7/30/90.

Clinton County Legal Records. Located at the Clinton County Courthouse, Lock Haven, PA.

Clinton Republican. November 8, 1899. Obituary of Isaac A. Packer.

Daily Democrat, Lock Haven. November 1, 1899. Obituary of Isaac A. Packer.

Lock Haven Express, "An Aged Gentleman Relates Interesting Events During His Life", 1897.

Lock Haven Express, "History of Monseytown, Fertile Farm Flats Above Lockport Area", March 16, 1942.

Goodwin, R. Christopher, and Associates, Inc. *Phase II Intensive Survey of Historic and Prehistoric Archaeological Components at the Packer Site (36CN79), Clinton County, PA*. Draft Report prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, January, 1989.

Hannegan, Susan. *General History and Description of Clinton County, Preliminary Research Report, Clinton County Historic Sites Survey, 1985-86*. Harrisburg, PA: Bureau of Historic Preservation, 1986.

_____. *Isaac A. Packer Farm*. Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form 035-WW-116. Harrisburg, PA: Bureau of Historic Preservation, April 12, 1986.

Packer, Isaac A. Personal Ledger.

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Vento, Frank J., Philip T. Fitzgibbons, Scott D. Heberling, and James Herbstritt. *Phase I Inventory Investigations of Potentially Significant Prehistoric and Historic Period Cultural Resources for the Lock Haven Flood Protection Project, Clinton County, Pennsylvania*. Prepared for the Baltimore District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Vendel Enviro-Industrial Consultants, 1989.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Linn, John Blair. *History of Centre and Clinton Counties*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1883.

Maynard, D.G. *Historical View of Clinton County*. Lock Haven, PA: The Enterprising Printing House, 1875.

Richie and Stranahan. *Map of Lock Haven, Flemington, and Lockport*. Philadelphia: Richie and Stranahan, 1869. Located at the Clinton County Historical Society.

Stevens, Sylvester. *Pennsylvania: Birthplace of a Nation*. New York: Random House, 1964.

Wagner, Dean R. Ed. *Historic Lock Haven: An Architectural Survey*. Lock Haven, PA: Clinton County Historical Society, 1979.

Walling, H.F. *Map of Clinton County, PA*. New York: Way, Palmer, and Company, 1862.

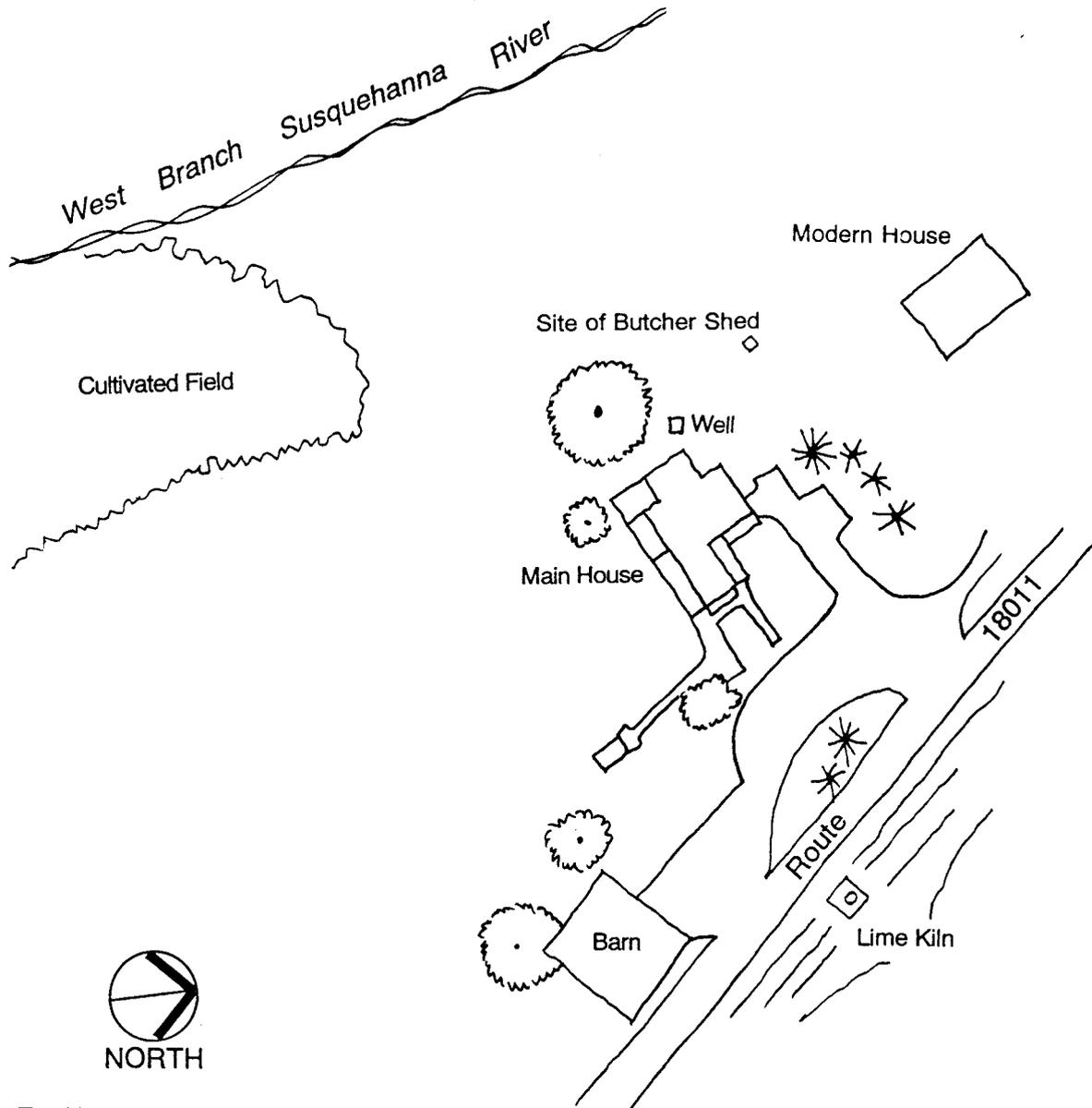
IV. SITE DESCRIPTION

The Isaac A. Packer Farm is located along Farrandsville Road in rural Woodward Township, Clinton County. The farm house faces in a southwesterly direction towards the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, which forms the western edge of the property. The house is surrounded by a yard of mature trees, including a screen of white pines, to the north, two spruces, to the east, and a large maple, to the west. During various periods of the property's history, the agricultural complex was comprised of numerous buildings including two generations of farm houses, a summer kitchen, barn, tobacco barn, tenant house, carriage house, brooder house, chicken house, hog house, butcher house, outhouse, and lime kiln. Currently, the property contains the 1885 Victorian Gothic stone farm house built for Isaac A. Packer (HABS No. PA-5500-A), the 1905 barn erected by his son, Kinley D. Packer (HABS No. PA-5500-B), a lime kiln (HABS No. PA-5500-C), a well (HABS No. PA-5500-D), a modern shed, and a modern house which is located outside the property's National Register boundaries. Also present is a historic archaeological site with various components including a kitchen midden, a butcher shed location, and remains in and above the well.

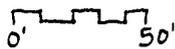
V. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Documentation was undertaken in October and November 1991 in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and the Lock Haven Area Flood Protection Authority. The documentation serves as a mitigative measure for the treatment of historic properties that were identified and evaluated in a series of studies and that would be affected by the proposed Lock Haven flood protection project. The Packer farm house and well head will be elevated as a flood protection measure, and the barn and lime kiln will remain, as is. Documentation was prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, by the Historic Preservation Group of Kise Franks & Straw, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: M. Todd Cleveland, project manager; Susan C. Nabors, historian; Martin B. Abbot, historian; and Jill Cremer, graphics. Robert Tucher provided the documentary photographs.

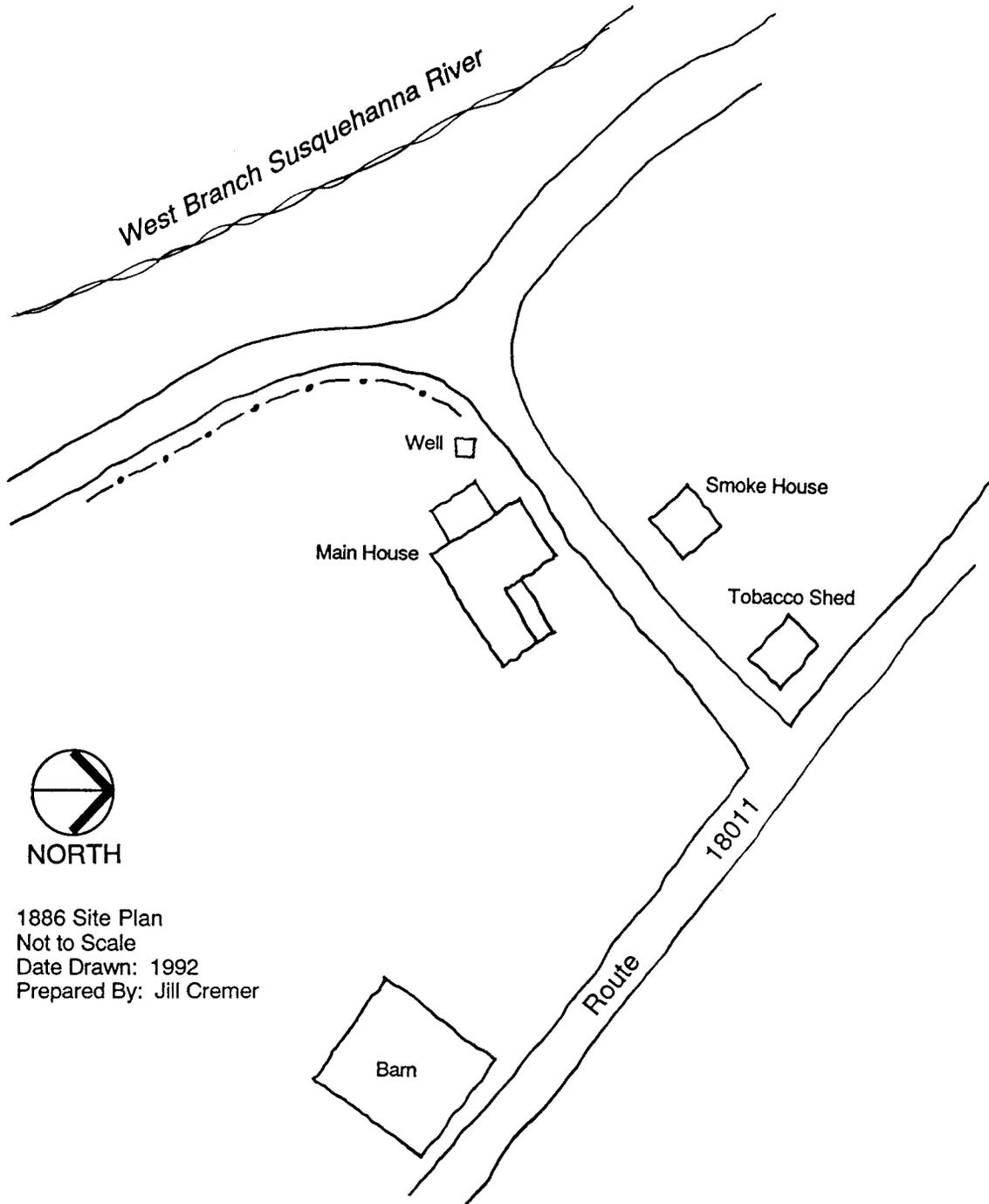
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Total Property = 178 acres



Site Plan
Date Drawn: 1992
Prepared By: Jill Cremer



1886 Site Plan
Not to Scale
Date Drawn: 1992
Prepared By: Jill Cremer

Source: Goodwin, R. Christopher, and Associates, Inc. *Phase II Intensive Survey of Historic and Prehistoric Archeological Components at the Packer Site (36CN79), Clinton County, PA.* Draft Report prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, January, 1989.