

SHEETZ FARM
7161 Camp Hill Road
Fort Washington vicinity
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6666
PA-6666

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PA-6666

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PHILADELPHIA SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Custom House, 3rd Floor
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SCHEETZ FARM

HABS No. PA-6666

- Location: 7161 Camp Hill Road, Fort Washington Vicinity, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania
USGS Ambler and Germantown, PA, Quadrangles.
UTM Coordinates: 18.0482711.4441554
- Present Owner: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
714 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
- Present Use: Vacant. The dwelling on the property is experiencing decay due to neglect. Remnants of a vehicle shed and historic bank barn are anticipated to be demolished in the next few years when improvements are undertaken to S.R. 0309, which borders the property to the northwest.
- Significance: The Scheetz Farm is significant for its architecture and history, showing the evolution of a historic farm property in over two centuries of growth. The vernacular house on the property demonstrates an additive construction history with portions dating to the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. The development of the property, especially the expansion of the house, reveals the agricultural and industrial prosperity of Montgomery County in general and the Scheetz family in particular. The Scheetz family were prominent farmers, paper millers, public officials, and military veterans. The property achieved local prominence as the site of the Scheetz paper mill, built in 1769 and destroyed in 1929. Other significant individuals associated with the property include Nicholas Scull (Jr.), Surveyor General of Pennsylvania from 1748 to 1761, who was born and raised on this land during the period of early settlement. Significant Revolutionary War events also took place on and adjacent to the property during the Whitemarsh Encampment of 1777.

INTRODUCTION

The Scheetz Farm lies within the easternmost corner of Whitemarsh Township, near the borders of Upper Dublin and Springfield Townships (USGS 1983). All three townships lie in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The property occupies a wedge-shaped, 12.33-acre (4.99-hectare) tract of land within the curve of Camp Hill Road to the southeast and southwest, the S.R. 0309 expressway to the northwest, and the SEPTA R5 commuter line to the northeast, beyond which stands the elevation known as Camp Hill. The tax parcel lies mostly in Whitemarsh Township. The southeastern corner of the tract lies in Springfield Township, having been annexed to the property after the northern segment of Valley Green Road was vacated in the early 1930s, at which time Camp Hill Road was also relocated to the south of the property. The town of Fort Washington lies approximately one mile (1.61 kilometers) to the northwest. The village of Whitemarsh lies less than one mile (1.61 kilometers) to the southwest. Just southwest of the property, a branch of the Sandy Run flows west and north toward a confluence with the Wissahickon Creek.

The property contains six partially intact or ruined structures, including a stone house demonstrating a history of additive construction since the eighteenth-century, a frame poultry shed dating to the early twentieth century, a mid-twentieth-century frame garage and storage shed, the stone foundation of a barn complex of which some portions may date to the eighteenth century, and two mid- to late twentieth-century concrete block foundations of unknown purpose (see Sketch Site Plan). The construction date for the oldest portion of the house on the Scheetz Farm is a matter of some speculation, but most evidence points toward its construction—along with other buildings—by Henry Scheetz Sr., shortly after he acquired the property in 1758. The setting for the property has changed considerably since the days of Henry Scheetz Sr., not only through changes to minor roadways, such as Camp Hill Road and Valley Green Road, but with the construction of the North Pennsylvania Railroad in the early 1850s, the destruction of the colonial mill in 1929 and consequent infill of the millrace, and the construction of the S.R. 0309 expressway in the 1950s (compare maps of 1909 and 1956). A large number of mature trees occupy the tract, but since the buildings were vacated in 1997, the parcel has become overgrown with saplings, thorn bushes, poison ivy, and creeping ground cover.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Whitemarsh Township figured among the earliest land grants from William Penn, and the first settlers arrived there before the close of the seventeenth century. The Scheetz Farm was part of a much larger 5,000-acre (2,023.4-hectare) tract of land encompassing more than half of present Whitemarsh Township. This tract was patented in 1683 to Major Jasper Farmar (or Farmer), an officer in the British army and a resident of Cork, Ireland (Bean 1884:1139; Moak 1998:86). In the fall of 1685, Farmar's widow and children, with other relatives and retainers, crossed the Atlantic in the "Bristol Merchant," and arrived in Philadelphia on November 10, 1685. Among those making the passage was the family of Nicholas Scull, who settled almost immediately on land he acquired from Farmar and Penn, including the tract being documented, in what became Whitemarsh Township and Springfield Manor (later Township). These early settlers faced harsh circumstances and uncertain access to Philadelphia. Colonial records, for example, provide a specific account of "Indian disturbances" at the house of Nicholas Scull (Corcoran 1992:251-252; Bean 1884:1139; 1162). The precise location of Scull's house remains unknown, but it may not have been far from the Scheetz buildings. For well over two centuries, the eighteenth-century Scull family cemetery stood within the legal boundary of the Scheetz Farm. The collapsed and overgrown remains of this cemetery, now barely identifiable, lie in Whitemarsh Township less than 900' (274.32 meters) north of the Scheetz house, in the woods on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue.

The land in Whitemarsh and Springfield Townships proved rich in natural resources and favorable for agriculture and water-powered industries. In the late seventeenth century, Edward Farmar, son of Major Farmar, built a mill on the Wissahickon approximately one mile (1.61 kilometers) west of the Scheetz buildings, beginning a long history of productive mill operation in the region. In addition, the Sculls and Farmars were quick to recognize the value of lime in their land, which was steadily in demand by the growing city of Philadelphia, located approximately 15 miles (24.14 kilometers) to the southeast (Buck 1859:63). In his will, prepared in 1703, Scull made special bequests of lime to his Quaker friends, including Daniel Pastorius and Aret Klinekein (Philadelphia County Will Book B:456). At the time of Scull's death later that year, he possessed a "plantation about the Sandy Run" consisting of 400 acres (161.88 hectares) lying partly in Whitemarsh and partly in Springfield townships, comprising parcels that had been warranted and patented between 1686 and 1693 (Philadelphia Warrant and Survey Volume 1:875, 888; Philadelphia Patent Book A5:3).

The long-standing association of the Scull family to the Whitemarsh land is due largely to the historical prominence achieved by Scull's eldest son, Nicholas Scull Jr., who was trained as a surveyor, obtained numerous public offices, became a friend of Benjamin Franklin and other Colonial luminaries, was a witness of the so-called "Walking Purchase" by which the Proprietaries controversially acquired a vast amount of territory from the Lenape (Delaware) Indians, produced several important Colonial maps, and, most remarkably, served as the Surveyor General of Pennsylvania from 1748 until his death in 1761 (Bean 1884:1140; Scull 1876:n.p.; Reed 1980: 93-114). Franklin remembered Scull Jr. as a man of verse, and historians

have given him credit for poetic lines inscribed on his wife's gravestone when she was buried in the old Scull cemetery in 1753, long after the land in which the graveyard stood had been sold out of the family (Scull 1876:19; Buck 1859:115; Bean 1884:1140; Reed 1980:106).

Nicholas Scull Jr., with his five brothers, jointly inherited the elder Scull's plantation on the Sandy Run in 1703, but they disregarded their father's last request when they parceled and sold the land. Through deeds drawn up in 1721 and 1729, a yeoman named Benjamin Charlesworth acquired 280 acres (113.31 hectares) of former Scull land in Whitemarsh Township—a rectangular tract bordering on the Upper Dublin and Springfield Township lines (Philadelphia Deed Book H9:157, 159). Little is known of the Charlesworth family, but its members were apparently Presbyterians of English origin (Mathews, "Upper Dublin," n.d.:100; Philadelphia County Will book O:417). In 1738, Benjamin Charlesworth conveyed the northwestern two-thirds of his property, a square 201-acre (81.34-hectare) tract, to his nephew John Charlesworth (Montgomery County Deed Book 144:1). The family homestead lay on this tract, since the deed contained the following provision for Benjamin's continued residence in the house until his death: "The new room or Parlor [in] the new End of the aforesaid Messuage for the personal use and occupation of him the said Benjamin during the term of his Natural Life only excepted" (Montgomery County Deed Book 144:1). In 1741, Benjamin conveyed the remaining southeastern third of his Whitemarsh land, a rectangular, 80-acre (32.38-hectare) tract touching the corner lines of the Township, together with a contiguous 20-acre (8.09-hectare) tract in Upper Dublin Township, to four joint owners who included his nephew John (Montgomery County Deed Book G4:396). The 80-acre (32.38-hectare) tract encompassed the buildings documented in this report. In 1758, John Charlesworth, with the other joint owners, conveyed this land, together with the Upper Dublin parcel, to Henry Scheetz (Philadelphia County Deed Book H9:109). Scheetz paid £290, almost triple the price that had been paid for the same land seventeen years earlier (£100), suggesting that improvements had been made to the property during that interval. However, although both deeds of 1741 and 1758 refer to a "certain Messuage" on the property, this structure probably predates the oldest part of the extant dwelling and may no longer exist.

The original dwelling on the property, now contained within the much larger structure, consisted of a one-and-one-half-story, stone dwelling measuring approximately 40'-6" (12.34 meters) wide and 20'-6" (6.25 meters) deep. It featured asymmetrical openings and an off-center stack that may have been fronted by a lobby-type entry. A cellar lay underneath half of the house. The interior spaces on either side of the central stack featured an exposed summer beam and heavily beaded ceiling joists, suggesting an interest in aesthetic display. Research has not firmly pinpointed a date of construction for the house, but certain Germanic characteristics, such as the exposed ceiling framing, a built-in-cupboard, the central chimney and half-cellar, further suggest that the house was built by Henry Scheetz, the first property owner of German-speaking ancestry. A more detailed analysis of the construction history of the house and its ethnic attributes can be found in the associated report on the Scheetz Farm, House, HABS No. PA-6666-A.

At the time he acquired the property, Henry Scheetz had been living just across the Springfield Township line, where he operated the Colliday paper mill (Macfarlan n.d.; Magee, *Wissahickon*, 1934:48, 52; Magee, "Sheetz," 1934:1,6). Scheetz's acquisition of the Whitemarsh property may have coincided with his marriage. He would have been about 26 years old in 1758, and his wife, Catherine Rubicam, would have been about 20 (HSMC, Scheetz Name File). The couple soon established a family. A son, also named Henry, was born on the Whitemarsh property in 1764. Additional children born to the Scheetzes included another son, Justus, born in 1768, and six daughters who lived to adulthood but whose dates of birth are unknown (Bean 1884:1142; Scheetz Name File). Members of the Scheetz family occupied the Whitemarsh property for nearly a century. They oversaw the most significant historical evolution of the dwelling and agricultural and industrial development of the property. They prospered economically and became locally prominent, helping to shape the patterns that guided rural life in their corner of Whitemarsh Township and in Montgomery County as a whole.

By moving to Whitemarsh Township, Henry Scheetz became neighbors with John Charlesworth, who still owned the 201-acre (81.34-hectare) tract immediately to the northwest. The two men must have had an amiable relationship, because in 1769, for £16, Charlesworth conveyed to Scheetz a small, 1.75-acre (0.71-hectare) triangular tract of land on Scheetz's northwest border (Philadelphia County Deed Book D4:185). Sandy Run crossed this small parcel and, since a later description of the metes and bounds describes a tail race in this location (Montgomery County Deed Book 365, p. 188), the acquisition evidently enabled Scheetz to construct an outlet onto Sandy Run for the paper mill he erected that same year. The Whitemarsh property had probably appealed to Scheetz because the Sandy Run ran through it, enabling him to plan for the future construction of a paper mill in which to ply his chosen trade. The site he selected for the mill and millrace, on the north side of Sandy Run, may have determined the location of the house, rather than the other way around.

Although the Scheetz family genealogy has not been traced definitively, historians have assumed that Henry came from a family of papermakers and that he was related to Conrad Scheetz, who had established a paper mill on Mill Creek in Lower Merion Township in the second quarter of the eighteenth century (Hocker 1930:247). Both Conrad and Henry are presumed to be connected to other Scheetzes who were among the original settlers of Germantown—now part of the City of Philadelphia (Bean 1884:1142; Hocker 1930:247; HSMC Scheetz name file). Germantown had been the earliest site of papermaking in the American colonies, when William Rittenhouse began operating a paper mill along the Wissahickon Creek in 1690 (Hunter 1947:247). Papermaking became an important industry within the Schuylkill watershed, largely because of the strength and purity of tributary streams, such as the Wissahickon Creek, Sandy Run, and Mill Creek. According to one historian, "In Revolutionary times, there were more paper mills in Philadelphia county—which then included the present Montgomery county—than in all the remainder of the American continent" (Hocker 1930:247).

Henry Scheetz may have continued to operate the Colliday Mill in Springfield Township even after buying the Whitemarsh property, all the while saving money to construct his own

facility. In building his own mill, he assumed control over the means of production and profit in a lucrative and specialized trade. Until it was destroyed by fire in 1929, the stone mill stood immediately southeast of the oldest portion of the dwelling, within the current front yard of the house and possibly within the right-of-way for Camp Hill Road, which was constructed through the property in the early 1930s. The millrace has since been filled and obliterated. The relationship between the millrace, mill, and house can be seen on early twentieth-century maps, produced before the road patterns in the vicinity changed so drastically (Mueller 1909). The millrace that Scheetz constructed was approximately 1800 feet (548.54 meters) long; it lay roughly parallel to the north side of Sandy Run and reportedly ran through the center of the mill (Magee, "Sheetz," 1934:6). The mill bore a datestone in its west gable carved with the year "1769." According to one historian, Scheetz built an addition to the mill shortly afterward for the purpose of grinding grain and other "general country work" (Mathews, "Whitemarsh," n.d.:101).

In 1774, Henry Scheetz was identified in Philadelphia County tax records as one of three papermakers in Whitemarsh Township, and he was assessed for 100 acres (40.47 hectares), 2 horses, 1 cow, and 2 servants. Out of 153 taxables in Whitemarsh Township that year, only ten paid more in taxes than Henry Scheetz, and almost all of these owned some type of mill, either paper, saw, or grist (Egle 1897, Vol. 14, p. 459-462). The "servants" for which Scheetz was assessed may have been either indentured whites or enslaved blacks; both were subject to taxation (Bean 1884:297-298). Evidently successful in his occupation, Scheetz was able, in 1786, to acquire the property across the Springfield Township line where he had operated the Colliday paper mill; some accounts suggest that he built (or perhaps *rebuilt*) the mill on this property (Macfarlan n.d.; Magee, *Wissahickon*, 1934:48, 52; Magee, "Sheetz," 1934:6).

During the Revolutionary War, Henry and Catherine Scheetz, together with their family, found themselves directly in the midst of events shaping the future course of the colonies. From November 2 to December 11, 1777, Continental troops camped in the immediate vicinity and on land that the Scheetz family owned. The five-week stay became known as the "Whitemarsh Encampment," although troops occupied not just Whitemarsh but parts of Springfield and Upper Dublin Townships as well. During the encampment, the Continental Army, numbering about 8000 men, established defenses along the southern brow of a line of hills that later became known as Militia Hill, Fort Hill, and Camp Hill. With their 80 acres in Whitemarsh Township and 20 acres in Upper Dublin Township, the Scheetz family owned much of Camp Hill; their house stood at its southwestern foot. Troops erected log breastworks on Fort Hill and formed an abatis along the entire line by felling trees so that their branches faced south toward the enemy (Thompson 1977:n.p.; Jones 1909:6). Sandy Run, passing along the southern base of these hills, south of the Scheetz house, provided an additional line of defense. General Washington made his headquarters at the house of George Emlen, located on the southeast foot of Camp Hill, barely more than 0.5 miles (0.8 kilometers) from the Scheetz homestead. Although it remains possible, no evidence has indicated that Continental officers occupied the Scheetz homestead during the encampment. The house stood in a vulnerable position just beyond the front lines of the rebel army. Nevertheless, one historian writing in 1909 offered the following general characterization of Revolutionary activity in southeast Pennsylvania:

Through this seat of war the main army marched and countermarched, and sent out detachments hither and thither for various purposes until the inhabitants along nearly all the roads that traversed it became familiar with the sight of its officers and men. The soldiers of the army stopped at their doors on their weary marches and the officers made their quarters in their homes (Jones 1909:4).

Historic accounts indicate that the Continental troops were demoralized and poorly supplied during the Encampment. The November weather was bitterly cold with sleet and snow, and the troops constructed log shelters along the hillsides or dug caves for warmth. They had not been paid since August. Washington made a special plea to Congress and wealthy friends for clothing, blankets, shoes, food, and horse fodder. Grain and other supplies were taken from local farmers who were paid in scrip (Thompson 1977:n.p.; Jones 1909:7; Grossman 1962:n.p.). Because of its location, the Scheetz farm was undoubtedly subject to procurement demands, but unless a gristmill had already been added by this time, the Scheetz paper mill was less useful to the Continental Army than the local gristmills that ground flour for the troops. That Henry Scheetz sympathized with the Revolutionary cause is suggested by accounts of his volunteer service. Tradition holds that Henry Sr. served with the Volunteer Militia of Pennsylvania under General Muhlenberg (Sheetz Name File). The name of "Henry Sheets" also appears in the rolls for the Volunteer Militia of Pennsylvania in Captain Thomas Herbert's Company, Colonel Samuel J. Atlee's Musketry Battalion; it has been assumed that this was Henry Jr., although he was barely a teenager at the start of the Revolution (Scheetz Name File; Linn 1880:246; Hocker, "Fire," 1929:235).

By virtue of their elevated position during the Whitemarsh Encampment, the Continental Army maintained a strong defense throughout a series of skirmishes with British forces under General Howe from December 5-7, 1777. These skirmishes took place in the valley located south of both Camp Hill and the Scheetz homestead, but no major battle occurred in this encounter. Recognizing the superior position of the rebel army, British forces returned to Philadelphia on December 8, and they continued to occupy the city through the winter. One historian writing in 1900 reported that it was common to find "relics, [such] as cannon balls, bayonets, gunflints and musket and rifle bullets" in the areas of the encampment and skirmishes, including along the south slope of Camp Hill (Buck 1900:229). No Revolutionary artifacts were identified on the Scheetz Property during archaeological investigations undertaken there in 1997, but excavations were limited to a narrow required right-of-way strip adjacent to the S.R. 0309 roadway berm (Harral, Lewis, and Basalik 1997:119-121).

Despite the disruptions of the Revolution, life for the Scheetz family soon returned to normal. In 1781, Henry Scheetz Sr. was assessed under the Effective Supply Tax for the County of Philadelphia as a papermaker, with property valued at £1061. Besides Scheetz, only 17 out of 160 taxables in Whitemarsh Township that year had property valued at over £1000 (Egle 1897: Vol. 16, p. 62). By 1783, under the Federal Tax for the County of Philadelphia, Scheetz was taxed for 86 acres (34.80 hectares), 4 horses, 4 cattle, 12 sheep, and 1 negro (Egle 1897, Vol. 16,

p. 722). Following the erection of Montgomery County out of Philadelphia County in 1784, systematic tax records were maintained by the new county (Bean 1884:1). Between 1785, when the first County taxes were levied, and 1793, when he died, Henry Scheetz Sr. was taxed for a dwelling and a mill, his occupation as a papermaker, and three to four horses and a similar number of cattle each year. Overall, his property appreciated from an appraised value of £842 in 1785 to £997 in 1793. The amount of acreage associated with the property decreased from 89 acres (36.02 hectares) in 1785 to 80 acres (32.38 hectares) in 1788, after which it remained constant for three more decades. Totals for Whitemarsh Township provided in 1788 indicate that Scheetz still operated one of three paper mills in the township, and that he owned one of four “riding chairs,” a type of light, two-wheeled, horse-drawn conveyance for which he continued to pay taxes through his death. In addition, Scheetz owned one of thirteen “bound servants” in the Township.

An informal comparison of taxables during these years suggests that Scheetz ranked within the top ten percent of Whitemarsh residents in terms of property value. He had probably also achieved a social standing that corresponded to his comparative wealth. According to one historian, Henry Scheetz Sr. had been a justice of the peace prior to the Revolution and, upon the erection of Montgomery County in 1784, he was commissioned as one of the justices of the Courts of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas (Bean 1884:1142). Henry Scheetz Sr. would have had the economic means and social incentive to construct the first major addition to the dwelling. Consisting of a formalized, two-story, side-passage addition to the southeast gable of the older house, the new part corresponded to a two-thirds Georgian or Federal type of plan and more than doubled the size of the dwelling. However, tax records for the years between 1785 and Henry Sr.’s death in 1793 do not indicate any significant leap in the value of the property, and tax records prior to 1785 do not provide consistent information. Likewise, tax records compiled in the years subsequent to 1793, when the property was owned by Henry Scheetz Jr., do not indicate any increase in property value that could be explained by substantial improvements. The transfer of the property from one generation to another, however, would have been a likely time for new construction. Fluctuations in the appraised tax value of the Scheetz property in any given year appear to correspond to fluctuations in the value of most other taxable properties in Whitemarsh Township, particularly with regard to a near doubling of values between 1798 and 1799, a circumstance which has previously been misconstrued as evidence for construction of the addition.

In his will dated September 12, 1793, Henry Scheetz Sr. set forth specific provisions for the distribution of his property among his wife and eight living children (Montgomery County Archives RW 6039). To his “Beloved Wife Catharine” he gave “all that part of my house I now occupy on my plantation with as much of the Garden as she shall Choose for the Special accommodation of her my said Wife for and During the Continuance of her Widowhood.” The reference to “all that part of my house I now occupy” suggests that the dwelling supported two households, undoubtedly those of both Henry Scheetz Sr. and Henry Scheetz Jr. Of the three plantations which Henry Sr. owned at the time of his death, Henry Jr. inherited the “plantation, paper and Grist Mill, Tenements and Messuage” in Whitemarsh Township, appraised at £2450 in

the estate inventory (Montgomery County Archives RW 6039). Henry Jr. was to respect his mother's right to live in the dwelling and her entitlement to certain other items, including a cow and a heifer. He was also instructed to make annual payments delivered "to her Door" of wood, potatoes, apples, and hay. To his other son, Justus, Henry Sr. bequeathed "all that plantation Mill and Dwelling situate in the township of Springfield manner [*sic*] now occupied by him [Justus]." This property was appraised at £2125. In lieu of farm produce, Justus was to make interest payments to his mother. Henry Sr. devised to two of his sons-in-law a third plantation as well as two 10-acre (4.05-hectare) lots located in Springfield Township. The will directed that the entire estate—real and personal—was to be fairly appraised and all eight children were to inherit eighth parts respective of the specific bequests that had been made; thus the two brothers in particular were instructed to make payments to their six sisters.

To facilitate the execution of his will, Henry Scheetz's estate was inventoried. The inventory provides a running list of goods rather than a room-by-room itemization, and only four specific room denominations are referenced. These rooms include a "Front Chamber" containing "Blankets, Glasses, Dishes &c"; a "Back Chamber" containing "Yarn &c, two beds and bedsteds [*sic*]; a "Kitchen Garret" containing sundries and possibly other items; and finally, the puzzling "Her Room" containing "Beds & Bedsteds [*sic*]" (Montgomery County Archives RW 6039). The references to front and back chambers could be interpreted as evidence for the formalized, side-passage addition. The inventory mentioned a wide variety of other household items including furniture, a clock, and as many as four tenplate stoves (a common German article), but the bulk of the inventory consisted of agricultural goods and tools, such as grain, livestock, wagons, and plows; and materials related to papermaking, such as rags, molds, layboards, and finished and unfinished paper. Other structures specifically noted included two barns, a windmill, and the "New" mill (evidently the one in Springfield township inherited by Justus). The grain, livestock, paper, and bedding constituted the most valuable items on the inventory, but among the next tier of valuable objects was the "Riding Chair" for which Scheetz had yearly paid taxes. A step above riding horseback, the riding chair must have enabled Scheetz to project an air of distinction while conveying himself about his plantations and attending to his duties as a justice of the county.

Missing from the inventory is any obvious mention of the paraphernalia required for butter or cheese making, such as cooling pans, skimmers, skimming dishes, churns, cheese tubs, or cheese presses, although salt and a number of casks were noted (Oakes 1980:202). The question of cheese production arises from the presence, in the half-cellar of the oldest portion of the house, of a large stone trough that has been identified by a food historian as a cheese trough (Gregory 1998). The trough stands approximately 1-0' (0.30 meter) above the cellar floor and measures 3-0' x 10-0' (0.91 x 3.05 meters), with the bottom and sides consisting of heavy individual slabs. A tile pipe with a 5" (12.7-centimeter) diameter drains the trough near one corner. The trough occupies a discrete room whose stone partition walls butt up against the original cellar walls, suggesting that the room was not part of the original construction but added later. The walls of this room were plastered and whitewashed (and likely so was the ceiling although it has since been replaced) to promote the sanitary conditions that would be required in

a space used for dairy purposes. Although an early date has been speculated for the supposed “cheese” trough, tax records do not indicate that the Scheetz family owned sufficient cattle for any significant production or marketing of cheese. Henry Scheetz Sr. owned no more than four cattle. Henry Jr. owned as many as ten cattle during the 1820s, and perhaps the cheese trough, if it was used as such, was installed during that decade.

When Henry Scheetz Jr. inherited the Whitemarsh property from his father, he continued to operate the paper mill. He married Elizabeth Hocker and they had nine children—four sons and five daughters—most of whom were born before 1800. The population census for 1800 noted that Henry Scheetz Jr. had a large household consisting of eighteen individuals, eight of whom were beneath the age of 16. The count included one “free person” not taxed and one slave (United States Bureau of the Census 1800).

In 1795, the Scheetz paper mill was one of ten paper mills then operating in Montgomery County (Bean 1884:2). The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 indicates that the property contained a paper mill measuring 26' x 24' (7.92 x 7.32 meters), a stone barn measuring 25' x 28' (7.62 x 8.53 meters), a wagon house and a hay house. These buildings, together with the tract of 80 acres (32.38 hectares), had an assessed value of \$3400. Although the Federal Direct Tax of 1798 supplies useful information about the outbuildings on the property, it provides confusing data about the character of the dwelling. It appears to suggest that the formalized side-passage addition had not yet been built. In 1798, the dwelling had an assessed value of \$400 and consisted of two 20'-square sections with different heights. When put together the two parts correspond closely to the 20' x 40' (6.10 x 12.19 meters) dimensions of the original house on the property, but the original house stood a uniform one-and-one-half-stories tall. The two parts may have reflected occupation by two separate households, but the original house *together with* the side-passage addition would more obviously be construed as two parts. Henry Sr.'s personal status and the rooms described in his estate inventory could imply that the addition was present as early as 1793. Henry Scheetz Jr.'s acquisition of the property in 1793 would also have presented an opportunity for remodeling and new construction. However, the dimensions provided in the 1798 Direct Tax record are far too small to correspond to the enlarged structure.

The imposition of the Federal Direct Tax in 1798 helped prompt the rebellion of John Fries in 1799. Henry Scheetz Jr.—whose volunteer militia status had evidently not lapsed—was called to action to help put down the rebels. According to various accounts, Henry Jr. had either been the captain of a troop of Light Dragoons since the end of the Revolutionary War, or he was newly assigned the command of a county brigade in response to the Fries Rebellion. The insurrection subsided before he became involved in its suppression (Bean 1884:1142; Hocker, “Fire,” 1929:235). That same year, Henry Jr.—later described as “tall and stoutly built, of dark complexion, but not black hair; dignified and manly in bearing”—followed his father's example and entered into public office, becoming a prominent local figure (Auge 1879:63). He was elected a county commissioner in 1799, and in 1805 he was elected to the State Assembly. In 1807 or 1808, he became a member of the first County poor board, which built the first County almshouse, and in 1811 he became director of the poor. That same year, prior to the outbreak of

war with England, he was commissioned a major general of the Second Division of the Pennsylvania militia, consisting of troops from Montgomery and Bucks Counties. In this capacity, he marched to the camp at Marcus Hook to defend DuPont's powder works near Wilmington, at the time the British captured Washington and threatened Baltimore (Bean 1884:1142; Hocker, "Fire," 1929:235; Auge 1879:62). Following the war, Henry Jr. returned to local affairs, but he was afterward always known as "General Scheetz." In 1817, he was elected one of the directors of the Montgomery Bank, at Norristown, an office he also filled periodically in the 1820s. A member of the Reformed faith, he helped found the Union Church just south of the village of Whitemarsh in 1818. The Union Church stands on Bethlehem Pike less than 1 mile (1.61 kilometers) southwest of the Scheetz property. In 1824 he ran for State Senate but lost by a few votes. In 1837, he was elected a delegate from Montgomery County to the convention held to revise the state constitution. Posthumously, he was remembered as an ardent Democrat who had a strong influence on his party and on county affairs (Bean 1884:1142; Hocker, "Fire," 1929:235; Auge 1879:60-63).

Between 1802 and 1804, the tax books for Whitemarsh Township noted that tax appeals were to be made at the house of Justice Scheetz near the village of Whitemarsh. Given the wealth that Scheetz had inherited from his father and the important civil position he had assumed, it is hard to believe that Township residents were not presenting their appeals in the front room of the formalized side-passage addition, a space that would have emphasized Scheetz's relative authority, his social stature, and the continued prosperity of his family. The new part of the house represented a thorough-going acceptance of fashionable architectural trends based on an English standard. With its symmetrical openings, simulated ashlar façades, tall plaster ceilings, fine moldings, simulated interior wood graining, and formal entrance hall with ornamental staircase, the addition set itself apart from the old-fashioned, traditional German character of the original house. The new addition asserted Scheetz's cultural authority and identification with the rural elite, while the original house simply became the old wing, a reminder of the family's colonial toehold in Whitemarsh Township. Scheetz was not alone in his architectural efforts. Numerous other inhabitants of Montgomery County also built formalized additions against earlier, more traditional houses. Several examples can be seen in the vicinity of the Scheetz house. These enlarged structures established a pattern of evolutionary construction made possible by the agricultural prosperity of the region. Primarily of German descent, these residents may have been inspired by such dwellings as Hope Lodge, a particularly fine example of an English house located less than one mile (1.61 kilometers) to the west, which was built by Samuel Morris in the mid-eighteenth century.

Despite his civic involvement, General Scheetz continued in his occupation as a farmer and papermaker. The population census for 1820 identifies three households in Whitemarsh Township under the name of Henry Scheetz, one of which carried the title Jr. At this date, census returns still provided only ages and not the names of household members, but two of the Scheetz households, including that of Henry Jr., had individuals employed in a manufacturing occupation—presumably the paper mill—in addition to agriculture. One of these entries must have been for the General's household and the second, Henry Jr., must have been his son. The

household presumed to be that of the General contained 10 individuals, all of whom were over the age of 16. The household of Henry Jr. also numbered 10 individuals, seven of whom were under the age of 16 (United States Bureau of the Census, *Population*, 1820). Several of the inhabitants of these households were likely hired agricultural workers or laborers employed in the paper mill. By 1820, the extended dwelling on the Scheetz property probably consisted of not only the old wing and the formalized side-passage addition, but of two more additions: a one-and-one-half-story rear kitchen ell and a full second story built over the original one-and-one-half-story house. The two households probably inhabited separate halves of the enlarged structure.

The Federal Census of Manufactures compiled in 1820 identifies three paper mills operating in Whitmarsh Township, although there were only four census returns recorded for paper mills in Montgomery County as a whole, a circumstance that suggests incomplete data (United States Bureau of the Census, *Manufactures*, 1820). The three returns for paper mills in Whitmarsh Township do not provide the names of their owners, but one establishment may have been that operated by General Scheetz and his family. The three returns are sufficiently similar to characterize moderately-scaled paper making enterprises during that period. The three paper mills consumed an annual quantity of from 15 to 20 tons of rags; they each employed from five to seven individuals, including men, women, boys, and even one girl; the machinery utilized by each included one or two vats, engines, and presses, and one establishment noted the use of two water wheels; the amount of capital invested ranged from \$800 to \$2000 and the amount spent in wages varied from \$500 to \$1000; all three produced Medium Paper ranging in price from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per ream, with an annual market value of from \$3750 to \$6000. All three returns offered similarly bleak observations about the current state of the paper market: "The business not as good by one fourth what it was a few years past;" "The demand and sale dull;" and "Time past business good but present dull" (United States Bureau of the Census, *Manufactures*, 1820).

Despite these gloomy market assessments, the Scheetz paper mill continued for many years to appear on tax records, although a number of changes in the size and management of the mill property evidently took place in the 1820s. As early as 1818, the size of the property was enlarged from 80 acres (32.38 hectares) to 112 acres (45.32 hectares), and it eventually encompassed 128 acres (51.80 hectares) in 1822. Also in the mid-1820s, Scheetz's wealth was revealed on the Whitmarsh tax rolls through the appearance of several of his sons, who were assessed for large tracts of land owned by their father, which he had evidently purchased for their use. In 1828, the size of the mill property decreased to 100 acres (40.47 hectares) and, for the first time, the tax burden for the paper mill shifted from Henry Scheetz (the General) to his son Henry Scheetz Jr., to whom no acreage was yet attributed. The following year, General Scheetz was taxed for only 9 acres, his livestock, and occupation as a farmer, while his son Henry Jr. was taxed for 32 acres, the paper mill, his livestock, and occupation as a papermaker. Historic accounts indicate that in the later years of his life, General Scheetz moved away from the mill homestead and into a house in the village of Valley Green, located along Bethlehem Pike just over one mile (1.61 kilometers) southwest of the mill property (Bean 1884:1142; Mathews, "Whitmarsh," n.d.:101). In 1828, while in his late 60s, General Scheetz may have chosen to

retire from the mill business and devote his spare time to local politics until his death in 1848. His first wife, Elizabeth, had died in 1825, and he subsequently remarried the widow of Peter Dager (Scheetz Name File). He evidently retired to a life of comfort, because in the 1840s he was repeatedly taxed for a pleasure carriage and for large sums of money on which he earned interest.

In the meantime, Henry Scheetz Jr. continued to pay taxes on the mill through 1840; after that year the mill disappeared from the tax lists, an indication that it may have fallen into disuse. Henry Scheetz Jr. himself disappeared from the tax lists, and the use and distribution of the family lands becomes difficult to trace. Beginning in 1843, Margaret Scheetz, the General's daughter, was taxed for a \$2500 dower and for the 9-acre (3.64-hectare) tract. In 1848, the year General Scheetz died, the first detailed map of Montgomery County showing property owners was published (Morris 1848). On the map, the name of Henry Scheetz was associated with a town property along Bethlehem Pike in Valley Green; the Scheetz name was also imposed on farmland on the north side of Sandy Run in Whitemarsh Township; and the "Scheetz Grist Mill," the one inherited by Justus Scheetz in 1793, stood just over the line in Springfield Township.

General Henry Scheetz was buried beside the Union Church near Whitemarsh, which he had helped found. His gravestone was the largest erected to date, consisting of an obelisk mounted on a pedestal, with a total height of about 9' (2.74 meters). In his will dated January 11, 1848, General Scheetz directed that all of his real and personal estate was to be sold at public sale, with the exception of a parcel of 17.41 acres (7.05 hectares) which he bequeathed to his grandson George (Montgomery County Archives RW 6063). George's tract evidently stood on the west side of the Whitemarsh/Springfield Township line and south of the property being documented; its north border followed a "former line" of Scheetz's land. Having outlived two of his sons and three daughters, the General devised discrete sums of money to as many as sixteen grandchildren. He then directed that the remainder of his estate should be divided into fourths and distributed to his four living children: sons Henry, John, and Jacob, and daughter Eliza Acuff. Henry and John, respectively, owed \$4000 and \$5000 to the estate, which was to be deducted from their one-quarter shares; thus it may have been financial misfortune which had caused Henry's lapse from the tax rolls after 1840. Later accounts suggest that after the General's death, Henry moved to Steubenville, Ohio, where he pursued "his craft," presumably paper-making; John continued to practice law in Norristown, the county seat; and Jacob lived on the "famous" Erdenheim Farm, in Springfield Township, which his father had bought for him (Hocker, "General," 1929:236).

In pursuance of the will, an inventory was made of the General's estate, including a list of his property holdings, with measurements provided in acres (A) and perches (ps):

Real Estate inventoried:

Old farm House Mill and 60 A and 6 ps N1	6800.00
New farm House and 68 A and 15 ps N2	7500.00
11 A 66 ps part Wood land N3	1200.00

3 A 31 ps Wood lands N4	600.00
2 A 78 ps do. do. N5	<u>400.00</u>
	\$16500.00

General Scheetz died a very wealthy man. Of his personal estate, \$22,386.27 represented the sum of cash and bank stock, as well as debts, bonds, and interest due to the estate. The belongings inventoried in the house and outbuildings had comparatively less value at \$611.39.

The rooms identified in the inventory describe a two-story, side-passage dwelling with a rear kitchen; further references to a wood house, wagon house, barn, and chicken coop on the property, as well as a large assortment of farm equipment, livestock and produce, suggest that the house inventory was specific to the "Old farm House" and that prior to his death, General Scheetz had reoccupied the formalized side-passage addition of the dwelling on the now 60-acre (24.28-hectare) mill property. Moreover, references in the inventory to cupboards appear to correspond to the side-passage portion of the extant dwelling, including a "Lot of decanters, Glasses and sundries in cupboard" in the "North Room downstairs" and the "contents of two cupboards" in the "Seting Room" (evidently the south, or front room downstairs). Beds, bedding and blankets, all located upstairs, and carpets throughout the house, constituted the most valuable household items on the inventory. But other objects indicative of a refined lifestyle occupied the two first-floor rooms. These items included a relatively valuable "Sopha and Cushion" as well as six chairs, fireplace tools, and mantel contents in the north room, and a cherry table, mahogany dining table, eight-day clock with mahogany case, looking glass, four "Winsor" chairs, and eleven silver tea spoons in the front "Seting Room." The presence of mahogany objects in the front room may have harmonized elegantly with the original simulated mahogany graining of the door from the front room into the hall-passage, which was at that time still exposed to view, having been covered with only one layer of white paint in the early twentieth century. Of the farm livestock enumerated, the estate possessed 2 horses, 2 hogs, 27 chickens, and 2 cows. As in 1793, the presence of only 2 cows fails to suggest significant dairy production, and the 1848 inventory likewise contains no obvious references to dairy paraphernalia.

Of the real estate that was sold at auction, the General's daughter Eliza and her husband William Acuff acquired the "New farm House" and 68-acre tract on which it stood. This property was apparently located south of the "Old farm House Mill" property. Eliza and her husband may have occupied the property before they bought it from the estate, given that it was associated with their last name on the map of 1848 (Morris 1848). As for the old mill property, a tract of 58.16 acres (23.54 hectares), this was formally acquired in 1850 by John Shaffer Jr., a merchant of Philadelphia County, for the price of \$6164.56 (Montgomery County Deed Book 78:59). An advertisement for the sale of General Scheetz's real estate, published October 25, 1848, described the old mill property as

All that Valuable Paper Mill, Plantation and Tract of Land, situate in Whitmarsh township aforesaid, commonly known as Gen. Washington's Camp Ground containing SIXTY ACRES, adjoining lands of Charles R. Wentz and other lands of the deceased.

The improvements consist in part of a large two-story stone Mansion-House, with 5 rooms on the first and 7 rooms on the second floor; stone Barn with stabling for 15 head of cattle, with frame wagon and hay-house attached; large stone Paper Mill 3 stories with all the necessary fixtures. The mill has valuable water power, being propelled by that never-failing stream called Sandy Run, with 7 feet head and fall. The mill-gearing is nearly new, with water-wheel 13 feet high by 8 feet wide. This paper mill could with little expense be converted into a grist mill, and there is one much wanted in the place. There are various other out-buildings. Also a large orchard of choice fruit trees; about 6 acres of land are in meadow bottom, 9 acres thriving Chestnut timber, the remainder is arable in a high state of cultivation, enclosed with good fence and conveniently divided into fields. (Scheetz, Scheetz and Day 1848).

Given the number of rooms identified on the first and second floors, the description encompasses the entire enlarged structure. In addition, the existence of seven rooms on the second floor confirms the presence at least by this date of a rear kitchen ell and a full second story over the eighteenth-century wing. General Scheetz had the financial means to enlarge the house—gradually or quickly—at any time during the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, but documentary research has not yielded more specific dates for these two additions. Judging by their architectural character they appear to have followed closely on the heels of the formalized side-passage addition. In constructing the full second story over the old wing, the builders attempted to disguise the additive character of the extended dwelling by providing window spacing consistent with the side-passage section, and establishing a continuous two-story side-gable roof over the impressive seven-bay-wide main façade. Regardless of when the formalized side-passage section and other additions were built, however, the property had a history of double occupancy by multiple generations of the Scheetz family or their tenants beginning as early as the 1790s. Throughout its subsequent history, after the General's death in 1848, the structure appears to have continued to support double occupancy.

When John Shaffer Jr. formally acquired the property in 1850, he may have already been living in the half of the house not occupied by General Scheetz. Tax records indicate that he lived on property owned by Henry Scheetz as early as 1846, when he was identified as a farmer and taxed for three horses and seven cows. The same number of animals were noted on Shaffer's Agricultural Census return in 1850, when he was reported to have produced 624 lbs of butter, a quantity that was below average for butter producers in Whitmarsh Township (United States Bureau of the Census, *Agriculture*, 1850). The Agricultural Census returns for 1860 indicated that Shaffer had produced only 510 lbs of butter that year (United States Bureau of the Census, *Agriculture*, 1860). In both years he also harvested wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, potatoes, and hay. In neither year was he noted for producing any cheese; for that matter, no resident in Whitmarsh Township had any figures in the column for cheese production. At a distance of approximately 15 miles (24.14 kilometers) from the center of Philadelphia and in the absence of efficient transportation, there may have been little incentive for the market production of cheese in the upper eastern corner of Whitmarsh Township.

However, local changes in transportation had a significant impact on the character of the property during Shaffer's tenure. In 1854, Shaffer sold a narrow, arc-shaped slice of land running through the property, to the North Pennsylvania Railroad Company (Montgomery County Deed Book 95:14). Chartered in 1852, the North Pennsylvania Railroad Company opened a railroad between Philadelphia and Gwynedd Township, Montgomery County in 1855. The railroad carved a path across Shaffer's property about 300 feet (91.44 meters) northeast of the house and farm buildings. By 1857, the line was open as far north as Bethlehem, providing a vital corridor for hauling Lehigh Valley coal and lumber into Philadelphia (Bean 1884:1142; Ruth 1988:37). The line also featured passenger service, providing an opportunity for city residents who could afford the fares to take excursions into the countryside. On one such occasion in 1856, when the line was still single-tracked, a southbound train and a northbound train collided near Camp Hill Station, located at the eastern corner of Shaffer's property near the township line. The southbound train was a regular passenger train and the northbound train was an excursion train carrying a "picnic party" of Sabbath Scholars from St. Michael's Church in Philadelphia. Because of the terrible loss of life and the appalling character of the injuries, the disaster was widely reported, with the requisite narratives of local heroism and sacrifice. Despite the proximity of the accident to his home, Shaffer's name is surprisingly absent from the accounts (Reed 1971:215-216).

After living on the property a few years, Shaffer evidently got the mill up and running again, having converted it to a grist operation. He was first taxed as a miller, rather than a farmer, in 1854. The United States Census of Manufactures for 1860 indicates that Shaffer's mill was powered by water and equipped with "two run of stones." That year he ground 8 tons of wheat flour, 2 tons of rye flour, and 22 tons of corn flour, in addition to performing general "country work." He utilized the labor of one male employee, whom he paid \$12 per month (United States Bureau of the Census, *Manufactures*, 1860). The following year, 1861, marked the last in which Shaffer was taxed as a miller while he owned the property.

In 1864, John Shaffer Jr. conveyed a small 0.16-acre (0.06-hectare) parcel of land adjacent to the railroad to John Shaffer Sr., evidently his father, for use as a turnout for loading lime into railroad cars (Montgomery County Deed Book 136:226). Lime still proved to be a valuable natural resource in Whitmarsh Township, nearly 180 years after it was first exploited by the Sculls and Farmers. The next year John Shaffer Jr. conveyed the entire 58.16-acre (23.54-hectare) mill property to John Gillingham Fell, a wealthy gentleman of the City of Philadelphia (Montgomery County Deed Book 138:277). Fell may have used the property as a summer residence or country retreat, but from this time forward tenant farmers also actively occupied the property (probably living in half of the house). Over the course of a decade or two, Fell eventually acquired numerous contiguous parcels in the vicinity, until he owned nearly all of Camp Hill.

John Shaffer was still listed on the tax rolls for 1865 and 1866, where he was identified as a miller but not assessed for any real estate. J.G. Fell, however, was assessed in 1865 for 56 acres (22.66 hectares) identified as "Shaffers Mill Property," and the following year his Whitmarsh

land holdings had expanded to encompass 94 acres (38.04 hectares). By 1867, another tenant, Daniel Erb, was identified on tax assessments as being "at Fell's." The United States Agricultural Census for 1870 shows that Erb farmed Fell's 94 acres (38.04 hectares), raising winter wheat, Indian corn, oats, and potatoes (United States Bureau of the Census 1870). His livestock included four horses, three swine, two milch (dairy) cows, and eight other cattle. Erb produced only 100 lbs of butter, a very small amount compared to area farmers, and sold no milk or cheese at all. He paid a rather large sum of money, \$1200, for annual wages and board, suggesting that a number of hired agricultural laborers were employed on the property. By 1871, Erb had been replaced by another tenant farmer, Jesse Nice, who stayed on the property for many years. According to the United States Agricultural Census for 1880, Nice doubled the amount of wheat, Indian corn, oats, and potatoes that had been produced by Erb ten years earlier on the same acreage (United States Bureau of the Census 1880). In addition, he managed a large flock of 75 "barnyard poultry" yielding 520 eggs, and he conducted probably the most significant dairy operation that had as yet occurred on the property. Among other livestock, Nice owned 12 milch (dairy) cows that produced 18,600 gallons of milk either sold or sent to butter or cheese factories that year. Nice had the fourth highest milk production noted in the township, being exceeded by only three farmers respectively producing 19,200, 20,000, and 27,000 gallons of milk. He produced no butter himself, although some area farmers produced up to 7,000 lbs of it, and he sold no cheese.

In 1880, as in the previous three census years, no cheese production was recorded in Whitemarsh Township. However, United States Census Bureau reports for the years 1850 through 1880 indicate that Montgomery County was either the first or third highest ranked county in the state for butter production and by 1880 had become the highest ranked county for cheese production (United States Bureau of the Census 1853:197, 1864:123, 1872:774-775, 1884-1884:168). Whitemarsh Township was evidently not a big contributor to the County's preeminent cheese statistics. Documentary research was thus unable to provide a context for interpreting the supposed stone "cheese" trough, located in the cellar of the Scheetz house.

In December of 1881, following J.G. Fell's death, the 58.16-acre (23.54-hectare) parcel containing the old mill property, part of the larger 94 acres (38.04 hectares) that constituted his estate in Whitemarsh Township, was sold by his widow and executors to Henry C. Cochran (Montgomery County Deed Book 365:182). Two days later Cochran again conveyed property to John R. Fell, son of the deceased, for \$20,000 (Montgomery County Deed Book 365:188). In 1884, tax assessments indicate that a 20-acre (8.09 hectares) tract (part of the old mill property) had been set apart, while the remaining 74 acres (29.95 hectares) was still attributed to the J.G. Fell estate. The new 20-acre (8.09-hectare) parcel was attributed to John Fell, son of J.G. Fell, who was taxed as a banker. The newly defined parcel encompassed the crest of Camp Hill, north of the Scheetz buildings, and on this tract John Fell built a large mansion surrounded by woodlands, sloping lawns, and expansive views to the south and west. At about the time the mansion was erected, John Fell, himself a member of Philadelphia's elite, married Sarah Drexel, the daughter of wealthy Philadelphia banker, A.J. Drexel (Hocker, "General," 1929, 236).

When John Fell died in 1895, he bequeathed to his wife a life estate in the property, which was to be held in trust by the Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities, and to be distributed in equal parts to his four children when the youngest, his only son John Gillingham Fell (named for his grandfather), reached age 21 (Montgomery County Will Book 182:338). His three daughters married into the Cassatt, Cadwallader, and Cheston families, solidifying relationships with the social elite of Philadelphia. Fell's widow, Sarah Drexel Fell, soon married Alexander Van Rensselaer, adding another name to the roster of society connections. Reportedly, Sarah Van Rensselaer continued to buy up property around the mansion on Camp Hill, even acquiring Emlen House, where Washington had established his headquarters during the Whitemarsh Encampment of 1777 (Hocker, "General," 1929:236). Despite these acquisitions, an unsentimental regard for local history may be discerned in news articles with titles such as "Riches Can't Shift Tomb" that appeared in local papers in 1904, when the Van Rensselaers tried to remove from their property the colonial cemetery associated with the Scull family. The small 20-0' x 25-0' (6.10 x 7.62 meter) cemetery plot, with its stone walls 4-0' (1.22 meters) tall, interrupted the view down the sloping front lawns of the Camp Hill mansion. Attempts to remove the cemetery were reportedly unsuccessful, but the cemetery has long since fallen into ruin anyway (Reed 1980:94-95). As for the old mill, it continued to operate, grinding feed for the stock on the Fell and subsequently Van Rensselaer farms (Magee, "Sheetz," 1934:6; Hocker, "General," 1929:236). On maps of 1871, 1877, and 1893, the mill was identified as a gristmill on the estate of J.G. Fell (Hopkins 1871; Scott 1877; and Smith 1893).

When John Gillingham Fell (grandson of the first by this name), reached age 21 in 1911, he promptly changed his legal name to John R. Fell, after his father, and conveyed his remaining interest in his father's estate in trust to the Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities, which already held in trust the interests of his three sisters (Montgomery County Deed Book 1628:250). In 1933, following his death, John R. Fell (born John G. Fell) devised his powers of appointment over his estate, including the quarter interest in the Old Mill Property, to the same company. By 1944, the Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities was entitled to sell the Old Mill Property, now constituting a much reduced parcel of 18.42 acres (7.45 hectares), to Irwin R. Hixson and his wife Clyde, for \$13,500 (Montgomery County Deed Book 1628:250). In the intervening years the insurance company had apparently managed and leased the property.

With the construction of the mansion on Camp Hill in 1884, the old Scheetz house had been relegated to the status of a rustic tenant dwelling—with double occupancy—for a period of sixty years. Because of its age and character, however, the house continued to generate local interest, particularly with the growth of Colonial Revival spirit in the early twentieth century. The history of the property was propelled into the forefront of public interest by an unfortunate event that occurred one December night in 1929, when the old mill was destroyed by fire. The Van Rensselaers had permitted Boy Scouts from Philadelphia and elsewhere to utilize the old mill "as a rendezvous and meeting place," and while in their use one night, the structure caught fire (Magee, "Sheetz," 1934:6; Hocker, "Fire," 1929:235). It was an occasion for local historian and

journalist Edward Hocker to comment on the mill property and on changes to the area in general. Hocker noted that for the use of the Boy Scouts the mill had been

built up with bunks, and almost every weekend groups of Scouts would make the mill their headquarters. Thus many a lad gained an insight into old-time milling methods, for some of the machinery remained in the mill. Additional appeal to the imagination of the boys was supplied by the proximity of the mill to the Whitemarsh campground of the American army in the Revolution and the headquarters of General Washington, the mill having stood here at the time of the camp (Hocker, "Fire," 1929:235).

In a subsequent article, Hocker observed nostalgically that before its destruction, "the mill was preserved largely for its picturesque and historic interest." With regret for a passing era, Hocker also remarked that the vicinity had undergone great changes since the days of General Scheetz: "Most of the land has been taken for rural estates of Philadelphia families, for since the Fells and the Van Rensselaers first directed attention to the charms of the Whitemarsh region the land has become too valuable for farming if it expected to make farming pay" (Hocker, "General," 1929:236). The presence of the North Pennsylvania Railroad line and its increasing use by commuters working in Philadelphia also encouraged new suburban settlement, resulting in diminished farm production. Passenger stations had been built along the line as early as the 1870s, including Fellwick Station, which took its name from the Fell family and was located where the railroad crossed the Whitemarsh and Springfield Township line (Toll and Schwager 1983:616).

Specific changes to local roads further altered the landscape around the "Old Mill Farm," as it had been called by the Fells and Van Rensselaers. Sometime between the destruction of the mill in 1929, and John R. Fell's death in 1933, a new road was laid down just to the south of the historic buildings, parallel to the north side of Sandy Run. These changes occurred when the North Pennsylvania Railroad line, north of the historic buildings, was converted to electric and catenary systems. Dreshertown Road, which since colonial times had led northeast from the village of Whitemarsh, past the northwest border of the Scheetz property and across the railroad line to Dreshertown, was cut in two, and the grade crossing was eliminated. The southern leg of Dreshertown Road (renamed Wentz Road, later Lukens Road, and now Camp Hill Road) was diverted sharply southeast at the western corner of the Scheetz mill property, onto a new right-of-way parallel to Sandy Run. After intersecting with Valley Green Road at the township line, the new road continued northeast *underneath* the improved railroad line to a connection with the northern leg of Dreshertown Road, since renamed Pennsylvania Avenue. Valley Green Road, north of Camp Hill Road, was then vacated and the small triangular parcel carved out of Springfield Township by the new roads was annexed to the Old Mill Farm, a fact noted on the real estate inventory for John R. Fell in 1933 (Montgomery County Archives RW 48966).

Despite these changes to the landscape, the charms of the Old Mill Farm made a lasting impression on the mind of a young girl who, between the ages of 10 and 14, lived in the historic house just prior to World War II. Mary Ellen (née Cunningham) Kirk-Sander happened to visit

the property while CHRS preservationists were conducting architectural studies. Mary Ellen remembered the house and grounds from her childhood, when her family lived there as tenants, roughly from 1935 to 1940 (Kirk-Sander, pers. com., November 1, 2000). Wistfully examining the current deterioration of the structure, Mary Ellen remarked that the dwelling had once been “a beautiful, just a beautiful house.” When her family lived there, the structure had been divided into two units. For the first year, she and her parents and two siblings lived in the older, northwestern wing of the house, which at that time had no electricity or plumbing and was lit by oil lamps. An outhouse stood behind the dwelling and a hand-operated water pump was located in a rear shed lean-to. Within a year, the family moved into the larger southeastern section of the house. Here, Mary Ellen recalled, her mother had the front room converted into a kitchen and then used the old rear kitchen ell as a living room, where the family often enjoyed a roaring fire in the large, walk-in fireplace. They used the middle room as a dining room. Mary Ellen recalled that a bathroom had already been installed at the front of the second-floor passage when they moved into this part of the house. The proximity of water pipes for the bathroom likely made the front downstairs room a good location to install new kitchen plumbing. General Scheetz may have rolled in his grave at the prospect of his formal front room being transformed for such mundane purposes. Mary Ellen did not recall a fireplace having ever been in the front room; it was likely covered over before the family took up residence. She also recalled that the small room on the northwest side of the first-floor passage was part of their residential unit, and that she and her siblings used it as a playroom. She reminisced that they kept their toys in the corner cupboard.

It seems probable that the last significant period of interior redecorating to this part of the house was carried out while Mary Ellen’s family resided there. Much of the woodwork, including the stair paneling and the door between the first-floor passage and the front room, has only one layer of primer and white paint applied over the original finish. In the spirit of the Colonial Revival, a unified conversion to white-painted trim was a common occurrence, and this alteration may have occurred earlier in the twentieth century. In addition, the large floral print wallpaper (the uppermost of as many as three layers) suggests a date in the 1930s or 40s. Moreover, pieces of newspaper bearing the year 1940 were tucked as either filler or insulation behind the plaster wall both around the fireplace opening in the second-floor rear room and in the doorway between the first-floor passage and west room, providing a solid date for repairs or alterations.

While Mary Ellen’s family occupied the southeastern part of the house, the northwestern wing was occupied by “Farmer Hixson” (apparently Irwin Hixson), whom Mary Ellen described as a “farmer, contractor and general handyman.” She recalled that he kept two cows and two horses in the “beautiful barn” (the portion that no longer stands), and that he also boarded horses; these may have belonged to some of Philadelphia’s best society families, such as the Van Rensselaers, Cadwaladers, and Ingersolls, who kept country houses in the surrounding area. Before the construction of S.R. 0309, a split rail fence and pasture gate stood just west of the house, entered from a gravel lane now paved with Macadam. The pasture continued west underneath S.R. 0309 to Sandy Run, and Hixson grazed his livestock in this area. He used to

truck his milk out locally to sell. Mary Ellen “adored” Hixson, whom she trailed around the property, sometimes accompanied by his hired man, a black man named Ernest.

Mary Ellen recalled the landscape uses of other areas now overgrown by trees and brush. On the south side of Camp Hill Road, which she knew as Wentz Road, Hixson grew corn, and in a field located east of the house he planted either timothy or wheat. Mary Ellen’s father used to walk northeast across the latter field to a narrow road (an old driveway) parallel to the south side of the railroad tracks, which he would follow east to Fellwick Station. There he would pull down a flag to make the train stop and he would commute into Philadelphia where he worked as an advertiser. Mary Ellen recalled that she used to play touch football in the large front yard, which was an open area between the house and a hedge against Camp Hill Road. She knew that a mill had once stood there and that it had burned before her family arrived. She observed that the large Buttonwood tree in the front yard had been quite damaged by the fire on the side adjacent to the mill, and she pointed to a large cavity in the southwest face of the tree trunk, where scarring is still evident. Pointing west of the house, she remarked that two old millstones used to lie nearby.

Mary Ellen indicated that she had no knowledge of the Scheetz or Scull families, nor any recollection of an old cemetery on the lawns of the Camp Hill mansion, located just to the north. Instead, she observed that the Camp Hill mansion was vacant in those years and occupied only by a caretaker. Once, when she and her comrades were caught by the caretaker while playing in the woods adjacent to the mansion, the kindly fellow helped them to the Van Rensselaer ball courts. Despite her very brief occupancy of the old mill house, Mary Ellen’s nostalgic memory and keen recollection of the property reveal the fascination it held for an imaginative young girl. During the last year in which they lived on the property, her family constructed a house in Erdenheim, where they moved in 1941.

Hixson evidently remained on the property. In 1944, Irwin R. Hixson and his wife, Clyde, bought the 18.42-acre (7.46-hectare) parcel for \$13,500 from the Pennsylvania Company of Insurance on Lives and Granting Annuities, trustee for John R. Fell (Montgomery County Deed Book 1628:250). It was probably the Hixsons who built the one-story northwest gable-end addition, replacing most of the earlier shed lean-tos, and installed a kitchen and a bathroom. These changes appear to date to the 1940s or 1950s. The Hixsons presumably continued to farm the property and to board tenants in whichever side of the house they did not occupy themselves.

In the mid-1950s, the landscape around the property was again dramatically altered, this time with the construction of the S.R. 0309 expressway. As-built drawings dated July 12, 1956 show that the main wing of the barn complex lay in the path of required right-of-way acquisition (PennDOT 1956). A highway berm now rises amidst the rubble foundation remains for this structure. At the same time, the meandering flow of Sandy Run was re-routed into a straightened channel south and west of the property. The as-built plan gives the best indication of the historic character of the barn complex. The barn consisted of two rectangular wings placed at right angles and connected at one corner. The main, two-story, stone wing of the barn lay in the path of S.R. 0309 and had a two-story frame addition to its southwest gable end and a small addition

(probably dairy-related) to its long northwest side. The other wing, which currently exists as a one-story stone wall with a collapsed roof structure and evidence of fire damage, was identified as a one-and-one-half-story barn and garage. This structure was connected to the east corner of the larger wing, and a stone wall ran at an angle between them, forming a triangular south-facing barnyard. The extant chicken coop and the foundation located just to its east were also noted on the plan. The collapsed shed currently located west of the house was not present. The plan of the house reflects its current form and all of the extant additions.

Construction of S.R. 0309 also severed the northwestern corner of the property, and in 1970, when the widow Clyde Hixson sold the property to the Derr Flooring Company for \$175,000, the parcel had been reduced to its present 12.33 acres (4.99 hectares) (Montgomery County Deed Book 3682:190). In 1990, the property was acquired by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), who by then also operated the commuter railroad passing to the north of the historic buildings (Montgomery County Deed Book 4952:919). In 1994, the property was surveyed in connection with the S.R. 0309 Section 100 Roadway Improvement Project, after which it was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Although SEPTA had initially intended to transform the property into a commuter parking lot, tenants continued to occupy the house until 1997. A devastating flood in 1997 rendered the structure uninhabitable. The dwelling was vacated and increasingly vandalized, resulting in the loss of fireplace mantels, doors, cupboard doors, and other elements. SEPTA then cleared all debris and removable objects from the interior of the house and sealed all of the doors and windows with sheets of plywood. The eighteenth-century corner cupboard that had been retrofitted into the house was dismantled and removed. It now lies in storage at the Plymouth Meeting Historical Society. In the summer of 2000, before photographic documentation of the structure had commenced, vandals again struck the house, destroying the newel post and stair balusters within the formalized side-passage portion of the dwelling, which until that time had remained intact for about two centuries. To many who are interested in the local architectural history and folklore of Montgomery County, the house has experienced a sad decline, a decline that induced more than one gasp of dismay from Mary Ellen Kirk-Sander, in whose childhood memories the house still stands pristine, with all the dignity and grace that becomes its lengthy past.

DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Scheetz Farm consists of a wedge-shaped, 12.33-acre (4.99-hectare) parcel lying partly in Whitemarsh and partly in Springfield Townships. The property is bounded by Camp Hill Road to the southwest and southeast, the SEPTA R5 commuter line to the northeast, and the high berm supporting S.R. 0309 to the northwest. A crumbling asphalt driveway leads north from Camp Hill Road toward the dwelling. The property contains six partially intact or ruined structures. These structures include a stone house demonstrating a history of additive construction since the eighteenth century; a frame poultry shed dating to the early twentieth century; a mid-twentieth-century frame garage and storage shed; the stone foundation of a barn complex, portions of which may date to the eighteenth century; and two mid- to late twentieth-century concrete block foundations. A large number of mature trees occupy the tract, but since the buildings were vacated in 1997, the entire parcel has become overgrown with saplings, thorn bushes, poison ivy, and creeping ground cover.

The main building on the property, the historic stone house, faces southwest toward Camp Hill Road. The two-story dwelling features a unified, seven-bay-wide, front façade under a continuous side-gable roof. A shed-roofed porch spans the entire façade. The regularity of the front façade belies the overall complexity of the structure, which actually consists of at least five discreet sections.

The largest section, at the southeast end, consists of a two-story, side-passage, double-pile stone dwelling measuring three bays wide by two bays deep. This section demonstrates the typical plan and formalized arrangement of a two-thirds Georgian or Federal-style dwelling and was likely built ca. 1800. A large brick chimney rises through the ridgeline over the center of this section, venting fireplaces that still exist in the rear room at each level. Part of the rear, or northeast elevation, was later extended in depth, so that the rear room on both the first and second floors was enlarged. The southeast gable and part of the northeast elevation are clad with horizontal wood drop siding, but the remainder of the side-passage section has a stucco exterior.

A one-and-one-half-story, rear kitchen ell with a pointed masonry exterior extends from the northeast, or rear, elevation of the side-passage dwelling. When the side-passage section was partially extended in depth, it cut into the rear ell, giving the ground floor room and garret chamber an L-shaped interior plan. The ell extends three bays deep from the Federal addition. The side-gable roof encompasses an open porch on the southeast elevation. A tall, off-center, brick chimney venting a walk-in, cooking fireplace rises over the northeast gable end of the ell. A one-story frame lean-to clad with horizontal wood siding extends from the northeast gable.

Attached to the northwest elevation of the side-passage dwelling, underneath a continuous two-story roofline, is a long wing, extending four bays in width but only one room in depth. A brick chimney (not original) rises through the ridgeline near the center of the wing. The wing features an asymmetrical arrangement of windows and doors. Structural investigation shows that the lower one-and-one-half-stories of this wing and the half-cellar underneath, were constructed

in the mid-eighteenth century, constituting the earliest part of the extant dwelling. The formalized side-passage block was added next, followed by the rear kitchen ell and a full second story raised over the northwest wing (the original house). A one-story, side-gable, concrete-block addition extends from the northwest gable end of the house. Several one-story, concrete-block shed additions extend from the northeast elevation. A detached, modern, concrete block foundation stands northeast of the rear kitchen ell.

The driveway passes parallel to the southwest elevation of the house and continues northwest toward the outbuildings. A mid-twentieth century frame garage stands northwest of the house. This collapsed structure has a double-wide vehicle bay under a side-gable roof. Two smaller shed additions are attached to its northeast gable end. The driveway turns north at the garage and continues toward a small frame poultry shed. The poultry shed has a shed roof. Two windows occupy the southwest elevation and a door occupies the northwest elevation. Just northeast of the poultry shed is a concrete block foundation of unknown purpose. The ruins of the barn stand north of the poultry shed. The stone barn walls stand to a height of one story. The roof has collapsed and timber framing members bear evidence of a fire. The ruins represent one wing of the former barn complex. The larger wing of the barn was demolished with the construction of S.R. 0309 in the late 1950s. The berm for S.R. 0309 rises amidst the foundation rubble for this section of the barn.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

No historic architectural drawings exist for this vernacular structure.

B. Historic Views:

A historic view of the Scheetz paper mill was published in James F. Magee, Jr., "Sheetz Paper – Fell Grist Mill Constitutes Part of Industrial Plant History," *The Suburban Press*, 8 February 1934, which can be viewed on microfilm at the Free Library of Philadelphia, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The quality of the photograph was not sufficient to reproduce in this document. A historic aerial photograph showing the property was taken by the United States Department of Commerce in 1942. The photograph rests in the collection of the Pennsylvania State Archives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Photographs of the house and its interior taken just prior to vandalization that occurred in the late 1990s are in the possession of Richard Emile Moraux, of the Montgomery County Department of History & Cultural Arts. Photographs of the house and property taken in the late 1930s are in the possession of Mary Ellen Kirk-Sander, of Brookhaven, Pennsylvania.

C. Interviews:

A tenant, Mrs. Van Horn, who had lived in the house for many years, was interviewed in 1995 in conjunction with the historic resources survey for the S.R. 0309, Section 100 Roadway Improvement Project. The tenant provided minimal information that could not be independently verified. Information about the character of the property in the late 1930s was obtained from Mary Ellen Kirk-Sander, now of Brookhaven, Pennsylvania, who lived in the house as a child from 1935 to 1940. She was interviewed in November 2000, when she visited the property.

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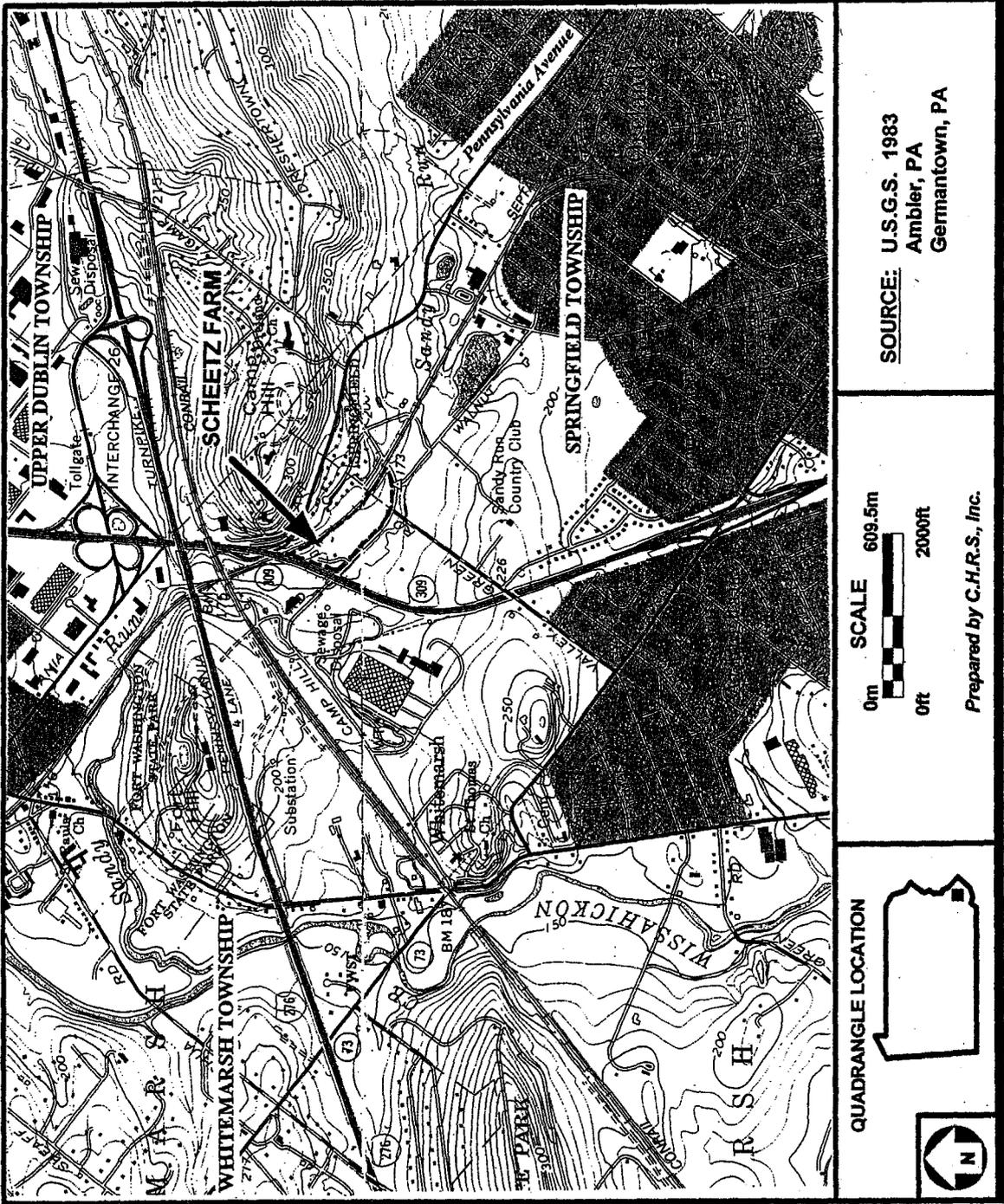
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PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was prepared in order to mitigate an adverse effect to the property that will result from planned improvements to Fort Washington Expressway, S.R. 0309, Section 100 in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The project involves the rehabilitation or reconstruction of the 9-mile (14.5-kilometer) length of the expressway, especially in the interchange areas. The purpose of the project is to improve safety, rehabilitate the structures and pavement, and bring the expressway into conformance with current design standards. Previous reports that addressed the Scheetz Farm include a *Historic Resources Survey and Determination of Eligibility Report* (Czerwinski and Ruth 1995) and a *Criteria of Effects Report* (Czerwinski 1997). Both of these reports misidentified the historic Scheetz Farm as the historic Lukens Property. This work was performed for the U.S. Department of Transportation

Prepared by: Nancy A. Holst
Title: Project Manager
Affiliation: Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc.
Date: April 3, 2001

SCHEETZ FARM
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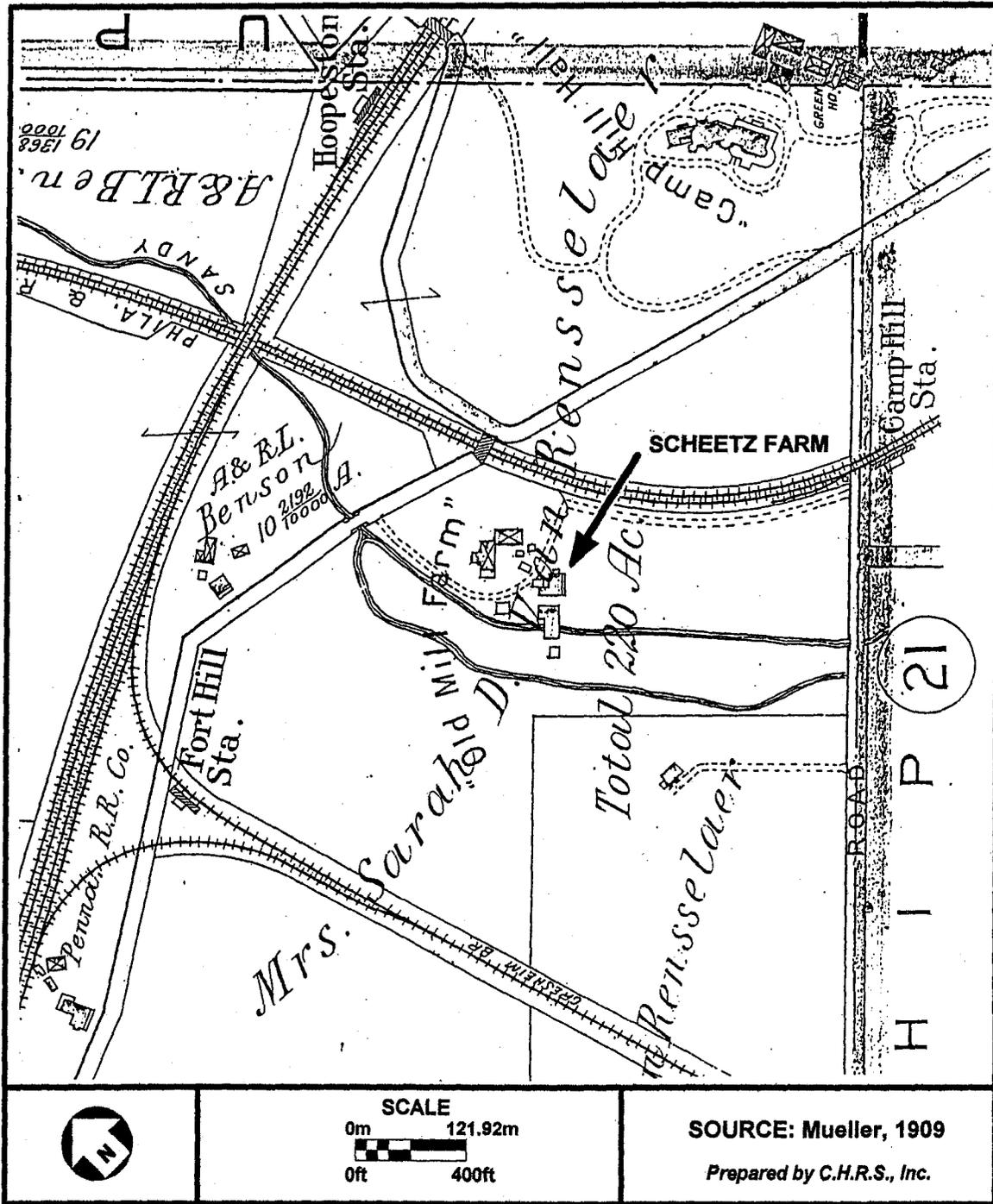
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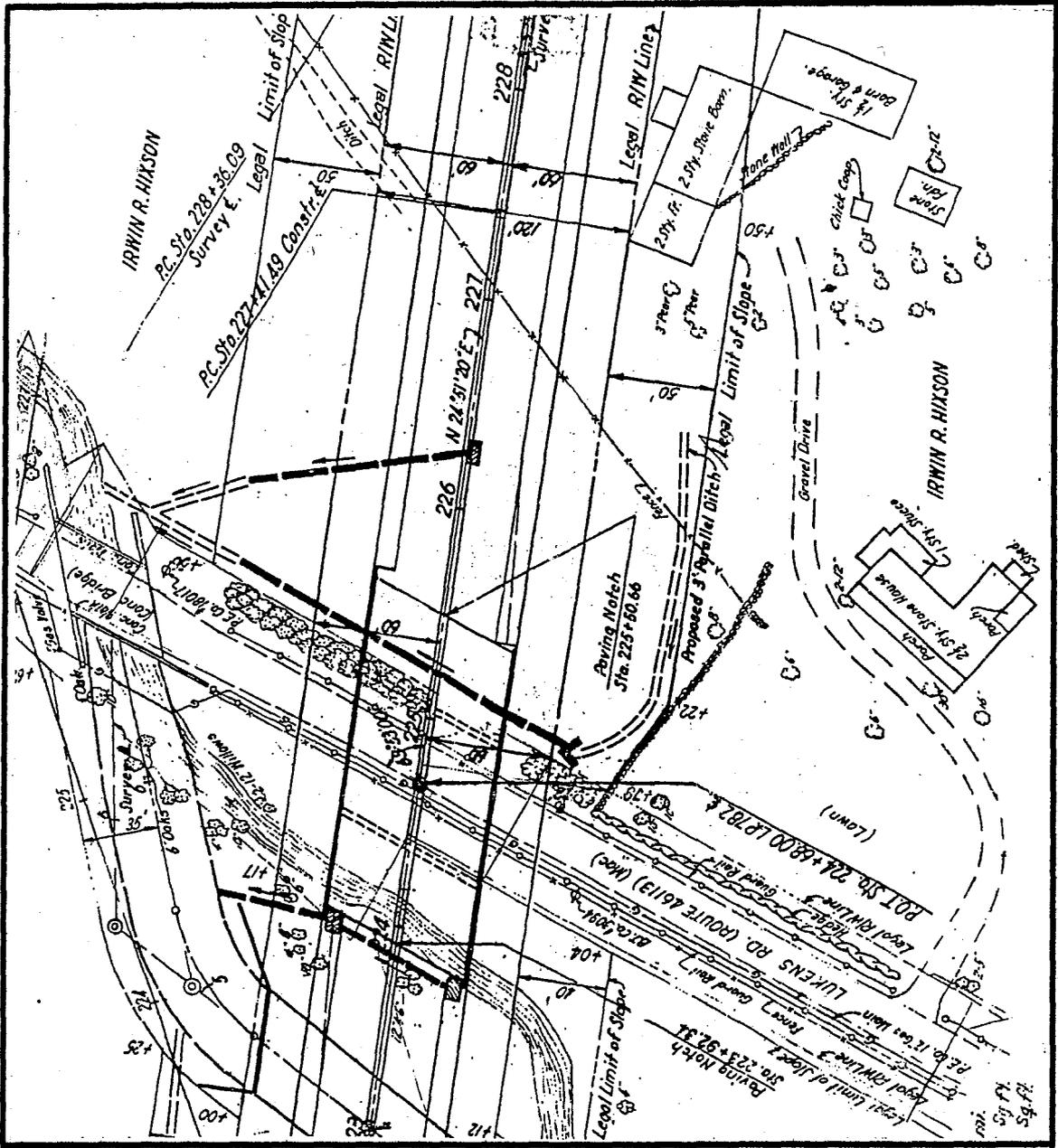


Prepared by C.H.R.S., Inc.

QUADRANGLE LOCATION







	<p>APPROXIMATE SCALE</p> <p>0m 18.29m</p> <p>0ft 60ft</p>	<p>SOURCE: PennDOT 1956</p> <p>Prepared by C.H.R.S., Inc.</p>
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