

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Delaware	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Chester Creek Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION The Chester Creek Historic District encompasses the

STREET AND NUMBER:
floodplains and the bluffs of the West Branch of the Chester Ck.

CITY OR TOWN:
Thornbury Township

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42 COUNTY: Delaware CODE: 045

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Various owners

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Delaware County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Front and South Streets

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
Media Pennsylvania 42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
William Penn Memorial Museum

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
Harrisburg Pennsylvania 42

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Pennsylvania

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ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION*	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

*The condition of the sites within the district varies. The mills, however, with the exception of Locksley Mill, are in ruins. The remainder of the properties of historic merit are in fair to good condition.

The earliest appearance of the Chester Creek Valley is a matter of conjecture. From the number of sawmills constructed along the creek at an early time it is probably quite accurate to say that the area along the stream was well wooded before settlement began. It remained that way for the first seventy-five years of settlement, for the surveys of the area show that a few large land owners held title to the land. These landowners were speculators who were not interested in cultivation. The Isaac and John Taylor surveys of the area indicate roughly where houses were located, but do not indicate the types of material used in construction. Of the pre-1750 houses, about which accounts accounts survive, the buildings were either of log or stone.

Gradually, the large landowners began to parcel out their tracts and houses were built along the Creek. Small industries developed almost simultaneously with the settlement of the area as saw and grist mills capitalized upon water power along the Chester Creek. As early as the end of the seventeenth century, saw and grist mills were operating in the stream valley. The Chester County records show that prior to 1750, John Taylor was operating an iron forge, at the present site of the Village of Glen Mills. At the time of the Revolutionary War, the Chester Creek District contained at least a dozen houses, an iron forge, slitting, grist and saw mills.

The nineteenth century brought the railroad to the Chester Creek Valley. The railroad meant better communication with the outside world and more industry. The Willcox Mills, located on the other branch of the Creek, were one of the first paper mills in the United States. They expanded in the early nineteenth century building a mill on the Creek just above the site of Sarrum Forge and slightly below the present village of Glen Mills. A cluster of workers cottages were built near the mills and along the road which paralleled the Creek. Glen Mills became a small commercial center with a Post Office, railroad station, store, and houses. Edwards Forge operated on the stream just above the village.

Farther upstream was Locksley Station and a small cluster of houses not far from Locksley Mill. Locksley became a stop on the railroad between Westtown and Darlington when an enterprising group of young people petitioned the P.B. & W. Railroad to

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7. Description (continued)

stop at the crossroads.

During the late nineteenth century, the Chester Creek Historic District was a busy area. Gradually, however, industry declined. Today the only industry along the stream is the stone quarry east of Glen Mills. The mills and forges are quiet. Many of them are in ruins. Still, development has not moved in to mar the solitude of the area.

The most important houses and structures within the district are described below. They are illustrated in the photographs appended to this report:

Yarnall Bank House: A small log house with stone additions dating from the eighteenth century. There were two wings added in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The house's greatest value is that it reflects the adaptation of the building to the needs of different owners, while preserving some of its eighteenth century characteristics. The wing to the left on the accompanying photograph was added in the twentieth century. The far wing was added in the nineteenth century. The windows, particularly those on the third story, were probably enlarged when the house was Victorianized.

Locksley Mill and Manor House: There was a mill at Locksley as early as 1710. While the owners maintain that the present mill structure was built in 1704, there is no documentary evidence that this is so. The proportions of the stone mill would suggest that it is the product of post-Revolutionary eighteenth century. The house, which was substantially added to in the 1850s is stucco over stone with a mansard roof. The interior of the ca. 1850 portion of the house remains almost untouched, and is resplendent with ornate woodwork in the Gothic style.

John Edwards House: The random fieldstone structure was built in the early nineteenth century. It is an interesting example of the adaptation of sophisticated urban architectural motifs to a rural setting. The ruins of Edwards' iron works are in the floodplain below the house.

Glen Mills Station: The station building was built in 1882 and is a good example of birch station architecture.

Station House and Store: Built at approximately the same time as the station, this birch structure was originally a store and
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7. Description (continued)

residence. It is good example of the simplification of the more ornate Victorian architecture in a village setting.

Willcox Mills: Immediately below the village of Glen Mills are the ruins of the Willcox Paper Mills. Built in the mid-nineteenth century, the mills are now destroyed, but the workers' cottages and the boarding house are still standing on the slopes above the floodplain.

Workers' Cottages: Dating from around 1830 to 1880, the workers' cottages which were built along the Stony Bank Road below the Mill site are some of the best extant examples of working class domestic architecture of this period. There is no comparable cluster of dwellings in the region. Some of the houses are stone, now stuccoed, others simply whitewashed. The largest cluster are built into the hillside in two parallel rows. They reflect the Philadelphia row-house style, for three or four dwellings are connected together in some instances. There are examples, as well, of nineteenth century duplexes. The enclosed photograph illustrates the largest cluster of these cottages which are now in multiple ownership.

Daniel Broomall House: A stone, early nineteenth century farmhouse, the Broomall residence on Sweetwater Road is a good example of the rural domestic architecture of the Chester Creek region.

Hemphill House: One of the finest Federal style houses in the Township and perhaps the entire region, the main portion of the stone house has a large central hall flanked by two rooms on either side. The oldest portion of the house dates from the eighteenth century. The woodwork and a particularly graceful and elegant stairway add to the architectural value of the house.

There are, in addition to these buildings, two buildings with in the region which date from the eighteenth century but which have been modified extensively. The first of these is a stone bank house located on the tributary of the Chester Creek which enters the stream at Glen Mills. The second is a stone bank house at the intersection of Gradyville and Creek Roads.

Many industrial sites, as well as the house of Persifor Frazier, who was active in Pennsylvania government and commerce and served as an officer in the Continental Army under Washington, are in ruins in the watershed.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chester Creek Historic District derives its significance from several factors, among which are: (1) the residents of the area who have contributed positively to state and national government and commerce (2) the architecture of some of the structures within the region (3) its contribution to the industrial development of Pennsylvania and (4) the blend of natural and historic consciousness of the present residents and their desire to protect and enhance their cultural heritage.

Looking at the Creek Valley today, one is impressed with the passivity of the area. There has been very little twentieth century development within the region. Sarum Forge, which was John Taylor's iron forge (one of the earliest in Pennsylvania) is completely destroyed. The mill pond for Edwards Forge and Mills is visible, but the mills themselves are gone. The Grist Mill at Locksley, has been restored, but the saw mill is in ruins. The Willcox Paper Mills are there--or rather, the foundations of the mill complex are standing. The Creek has once again established its dominance over the area. Although many of the mills have been destroyed, there is still a great deal to be told about the industrial practices of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth, both by the protection of the mill sites for future archeological exploration and by the examination of the wealth of primary material on the area, much of which historians have yet to assess accurately.

John Taylor, the surveyor, was one of the mid-eighteenth century settlers of the region. It was he who surveyed much of Penn's western lands. In addition, Taylor operated the early iron forge at Sarum, on the Creek. His son-in-law, Persifor Frazier, was a delegate to the Provincial Convention convened to discuss the prohibition of slave importation into Pennsylvania in 1775. He was elected a captain in the 4th Battalion of Pennsylvania in the Revolutionary War and was captured at the Battle of Brandywine. From 1781-1784 he was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly. Frazier also cultivated a great

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8. Significance (continued)

deal of land in Thornbury and was deeply involved in the operations at Sarum Forge.

Another notable individual who made his home in the District was John Edwards, an active member of the Delaware County Bar who served in the United States Congress during the 25th and 26th sessions. Edwards also owned and operated iron rolling and slitting mills along the creek.

The architecture of the region is an interesting combination of a variety of styles from different eras. The Yarnall Bank House, for example, is illustrative of a modest eighteenth century dwelling. The two altered stone houses are further examples of this type of architecture despite the degree to which they have been changed. The Locksley Mill dates from the eighteenth century, as do the archeological ruins at Sarum Forge.

Houses such as Locksley Manor and the Hemphill Homestead provide positive evidence of ways in which the simple eighteenth century structure was altered elaborately as family fortunes rose. The Hemphill House, the main portion of which is ca. 1810, is one of the finest houses of its type in the region. Locksley Manor reflects the Victorian influences prevalent when the house was built around 1865.

The Edwards house, built by the Representative for his family, does not reflect a change in the family resources. It is an interesting example, however, of the adaptation of sophisticated styles to a rural setting around 1830. In a similar fashion, the Daniel Broomall House reflects the needs of the early nineteenth century farmer's family.

Late nineteenth architectural styles are represented in the store and railroad station in Glen Mills, as well as by the Glen Mills School which is located immediately adjacent to the Historic District.

The Chester Creek Historic District was one of the cradles of industry in Pennsylvania. Taylor's Sarum Forge is one of the earliest iron works in the province. In addition, the saw mills and grist mills which proliferated within the stream valley throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided lumber and flour--important commodities in an agrarian society. The quarry, which is part of the historic district, has operated since the eighteenth century.

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8. Significance (continued)

The District also boasts of the presence of a whole ash, (Fraxinus americana) the circumference of which measures 24' at 4½', in 1966. The tree stands over 80' tall and has an 82' spread. This tree is the largest white ash in the United States.

The Chester Creek Historic District is a rural area with a wealth of historic sites remaining. The protection of these sites is among the major objectives of the region's residents. It is well that they appreciate their heritage, for there are too few areas with so much visual historical data available who respond to the need to protect it before it is too late.

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9. Major Bibliographical References (continued)

Smith, Benjamin H. Atlas of Delaware County, Pennsylvania..., Philadelphia: H.B. Ashmead, 1886.

Smith George. History of Delaware County from the Discovery of the Territory Included Within Its Limits to the Present Time..., Philadelphia: H.B. Ashmead, 1862.

Thornbury, D.L. Thornbury Township in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Unpublished Manuscript, No Date, Chester County Historical Society

Walton, Joseph S. and G.W. Moore. History and Geography and Government of Chester and Delaware Counties, West Chester: F.S. Hickman, 1893.

Wiley, Samuel T. Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Delaware County (Revised and edited by Winfield Scott Gardner), New York: Gresham Publishing Co., 1894.

Willcox, Joseph. Historical Sketches of Some of the Pioneer Catholics of Philadelphia and Vicinity, N.P., No Date.

_____. Ivy Mills: 1729-1866, Baltimore: Lucas Brothers, 1911.

_____. The Willcox Paper Mill (Ivy Mills), Reprinted from "Records" of the American Catholic Historical Society, Privately printed, 1897.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see enclosed continuation sheet)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	39°	56'	00"	75°	30'	21"			
NE	39°	56'	00"	75°	28'	30"			
SE	39°	54'	48"	75°	28'	30"			
SW	39°	54'	48"	75°	30'	21"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **512 Acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

ORGANIZATION: **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission** DATE: **August, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: **Harrisburg** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **42**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name S. K. Steiner
State Liaison Officer

Executive Director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

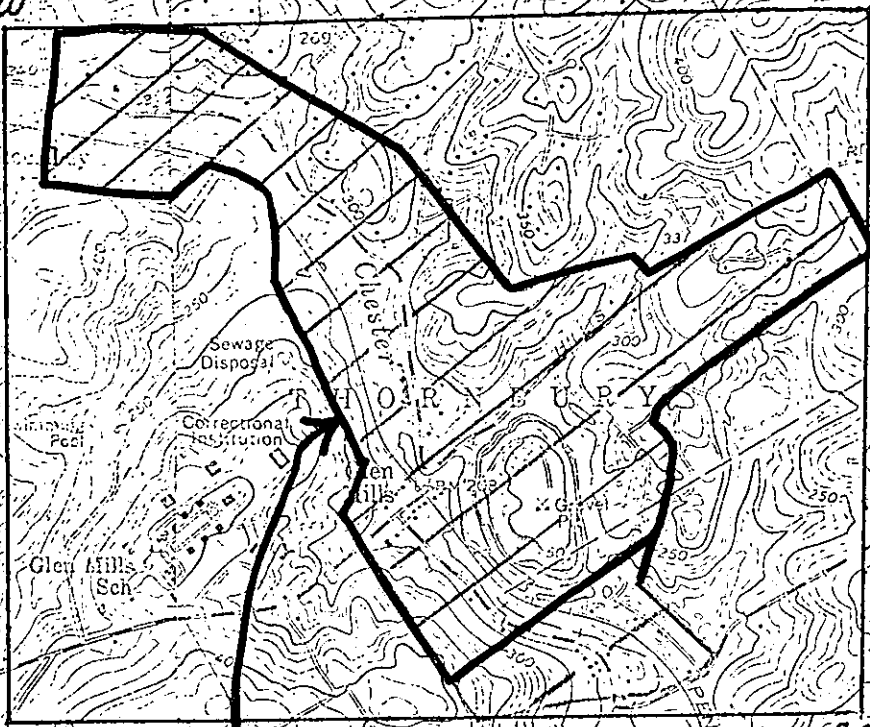
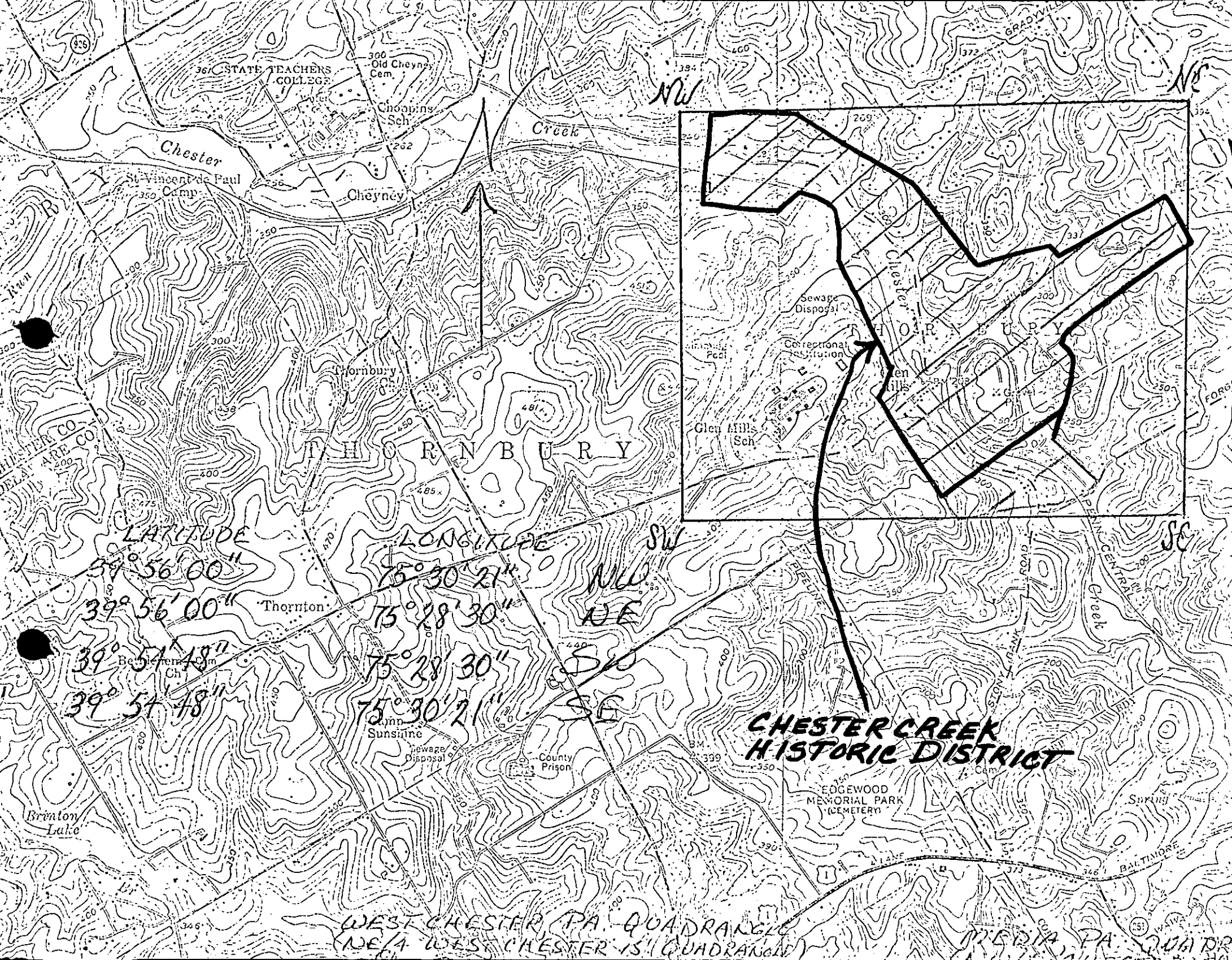
Date _____

ATTESTED _____

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



THORNBURY

CHESTER CREEK HISTORIC DISTRICT

LATITUDE
 39° 56' 00"
 39° 56' 00"
 39° 57' 48"
 39° 57' 48"
 LONGITUDE
 75° 30' 21"
 75° 28' 30"
 75° 28' 30"
 75° 30' 21"
 NW
 NE
 SW
 SE

WEST CHESTER, PA. QUADRANGLE
 (NE 1/4 WEST CHESTER IS. QUADRANGLE)

MEDIA, PA. QUADRANGLE