

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ridge Valley Rural Historic District
other names/site number Sheep Hole Road and Vicinity

2. Location Encompassing all of Sheep Hole Road and parts of Headquarters, Geigel Hill, Red street & number Hill, Tabor and Bunker Hill Roads.

city, town Ottsville (Tinicum Township) not for publication N/A
state Pennsylvania code PA county Bucks vicinity N/A
code 017 zip code 18942

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>44</u>	<u>9</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>7</u>	<u>-</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>67</u>	<u>10</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling
Agriculture / Agricultural Outbuilding
Agriculture / Storage
Agriculture / Agricultural Field

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling
Agriculture / Agricultural Outbuilding
Agriculture / Storage
Agriculture / Agricultural Field

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular Southeast Pennsylvania

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
 walls Stone
Weatherboard
 roof Slate
 other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ridge Valley Rural Historic District contains approximately 575 acres of land in Tincum Township. The setting of this district in a valley is visually interesting. The name "Ridge Valley" is descriptive. Exposed shale, steep slopes, creeks, winding roads, open fields, woods, and historic resources combine to create this area's sense of place. The name for this historic district comes from the 1891 Atlas, in which this area was labeled Ridge Valley School District.

The Ridge Valley Rural Historic District contains a total of 77 resources. Sixty-seven resources are contributing and ten resources are non-contributing. Of the contributing resources there are forty-four buildings, seven sites, fifteen structures, and one object. Of the forty-four buildings, there are fourteen houses, twelve barns, eighteen agricultural or residential outbuildings. Of the seven sites, there are one archaeological farm site, one blacksmith shop site, one barn ruin, one privy foundation, and two fords and one hay barn ell site. Of the fifteen structures there are six bridges, four corn cribs, four chicken coops, and one twentieth century pottery kiln. The object is a kerosene pump.

Of the non-contributing buildings there are three houses, two garages, four buildings associated with horses, and one non-contributing structure, a swimming pool. Not a single noncontributing house is visible from a public right of way. Access to all three noncontributing houses was down long lanes that were posted against trespassing. No other information about these houses was available. Since they are not visible, they have no negative impact on the district's integrity. The two garages are modest frame structures that fit in scale and material with the buildings on those properties. Three horse related buildings, which are only ten to twenty years old, are built of wood in a simple design. They also contribute to the context because they shelter horses, whose presence is an attribute of this area. The other horse related building is a large stable that is an intrusion on the district. On the property that has the swimming pool, the pool and the house are far enough apart that the integrity is not badly compromised.

The historic district consists mostly of farmsteads. The standard Ridge Valley farmhouse is built of red shale, stands 2 1/2 stories, is between two and five bays wide, and is vernacular in style. Most farms retain their bank barns, and

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Ridge Valley Rural Historic District

several farms have fine collections of agricultural outbuildings including wagon houses, pig pens, milk houses, and chicken coops. Another important element of this district is the fine collection of six bridges.

The Ridge Valley Rural Historic District is made up of a group of farms united by Tincum Creek and three of its tributaries which, due to topography, form a region visually and physically distinct from the surrounding landscape. Approximately a mile from the district in most directions the land is gently rolling and sections of road frontage have been recently developed. As the district is approached on Geigel Hill Road, Headquarters Road, and Tabor Road, the topography changes. Suddenly these roads begin to drop downhill at a sharp angle. The roads generally follow streams and much of the scenery is made up of exposed stone ledges and rocks. Beyond this area is densely wooded and until recently, little development had occurred. Near the Tincum Creek, the land becomes flat again and forms the center of the district. This topography helped define which land could be farmed. All the properties within the proposed district are oriented to the south off roads that parallel the waterways.

The Ridge Valley Historic District began to be settled in the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax documents the late eighteenth century appearance of this area. Nearly every house and barn recorded in the tax list was built of log, with the exception of Christian Fretz's stone house. Mr Fretz owned a grist mill located near his house. The mill, which no longer remains, was a major enticement that lured other Scotch-Irish and German farmers to settle here and develop their properties. By the 1830s most log houses and log barns had been replaced by stone houses and stone or stone and frame barns. Today, no log buildings survive. Subsequent changes and additions to buildings in the district, most of which are over fifty years old, have been sympathetic in material and scale with a low impact to architectural integrity.

The resources on Sheep Hole Road retain the highest degree of architectural integrity of the whole district. The road is named for the pool in the creek where farmers used to herd their sheep to wash them before shearing. Historic resources along Sheep Hole Road and resources radiating out around the industrial areas are contained within the district boundary. Although the buildings in this district represents a modest level of prosperity, people who appreciated the seclusion and beauty of this area began to buy up the farms in the 1920s and 1930s as farmers were selling out. Many of these new people were instilled with a strong preservation ethic which has gone far to maintain a high degree of architectural integrity here.

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The district has one remaining industrial area where roads and creeks converge. This site contains a blacksmith shop ruin (burned in 1988), the site of a bank barn ruin, and a long stone building of undetermined use (44-5-33). The stone building was probably powered by water. It is located at the junction of two creeks providing an excellent source for water power. In the twentieth century the stone building was used as an ice house, and later as a slaughter house.

The majority of the buildings in this district were constructed to serve the needs of agriculturalists. Most houses are simple vernacular structures with little or no ornamentation. The integrity is generally good, but a few houses have had substantial additions made in the twentieth century that are reflective of the increased wealth of recent owners. Overall, in the context of this rural setting, the alterations to the buildings are minor. They do not disrupt the historic development pattern.

There are thirteen stone houses and one frame house in the district. Three farmhouses consist of an early nineteenth century main block with an attached rear stone kitchen (44-5-10, 44-5-20 and 44-5-38). One stone bank house, which appears to date to the nineteenth century, was documented (44-14-3-1). The north side of the building stands 2 1/2 stories high. On the south side the basement is fully exposed which makes the house appear to be 3 1/2 stories. Access through a central door leads to a basement kitchen. A majority of the farmhouses are three bay design with a central door and were constructed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century three stone, four bay wide houses were constructed (44-5-6-1, 44-5-34 and 44-14-9). These houses all featured twin front doors. During the period that these houses were being built, a frame addition to one of the earlier stone farmhouses was built which also featured twin front doors (44-11-21-1). A subsequent addition to one of the stone twin front door houses was built in the Victorian style (44-5-6-1).

A majority of the resources in this district are outbuildings. All twelve barns are bank barns. Five barns are built entirely of stone and six barns have stone stabling with frame upper levels above (one of which has been converted into

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residential use). One barn is built of stone with frame gables while the remaining two barns are ruins. Remaining agricultural or residential outbuildings include: one early twentieth century garage, one milk house, one root cellar, one carriage houses, two piggeries, two sheds, two smoke houses, two wagon houses, four chicken coops, four corn cribs, and four privies.

The presence of several creeks in this district strongly influenced the road network. In the northern portion of the district the Rapp Creek and Beaver Creek come together to form the Tincum Creek which flows through the center of the district to its southern boundary. In the southern part of the district Headquarters Run flows west into Tincum Creek. This network of creeks is paralleled by a road network. Tabor Road and Clay Ridge Road parallel Rapp Creek and Beaver Creek. Sheep Hole Road and Red Hill Road parallel the Tincum Creek. Headquarters Road follows the Headquarters Run. With the exception of Red Hill Road which is paved, all north-south roads are dirt, while all east-west roads are paved. There are eight places in the district where a creek intersects with a road. Six areas currently have bridges while two crossings are still forded.

On Geigel Hill Road, at the confluence of Rapp and Beaver Creeks where Tincum Creek is formed, there exists a late nineteenth century deck bridge with stone abutments and concrete walled approaches (adjoins 44-5-33). On Headquarters Road, near the point where the Tincum Creek and Headquarters Run meet, is the second early bridge site (adjoins 44-14-8). The current bridge bears a 1919 datestone and appears to be built on earlier, nineteenth century, bridge supports. Judging from the design of the the stone supports, the older bridge may have been a wooden covered bridge. Geigel Hill Road and Headquarters Road were the primary main roads through the district.

Until the early twentieth century all six remaining crossings were forded. The change from horse drawn transportation to the automobile resulted in the improvement of roads and the construction of bridges. During the period between 1909 to 1936, four bridges were built at previously forded crossings. There are two bridges on Clay Ridge Road. The oldest is built of reinforced cement and is a single arch with a 1909 datestone (adjoins 44-5-20). The second bridge (adjoins 44-5-22) was engineered by A. Oscar Martin, a noted Bucks County architect. Martin who served as county engineer for twenty-five years, was responsible for designing county owned bridges. This bridge bears a 1917 datestone and is constructed of cement with a pipe railing and one mid span support. The remaining two bridges are built of welded steel with concrete decks and were completed in 1936 with WPA funding (adjoins 44-5-7 and adjoins 44-5-8). The two

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surviving fords are located on Tabor Road approximately a quarter mile apart (adjoins 44-5-3 and 44-5-3-1).

The area to the west of Rapp Creek includes a historic archaeological site (44-5-3-1) and a potential site (44-5-3). Both properties had houses, and presumably farm outbuildings, according to the 1891 Bucks County Atlas. On one of the parcels stands the ruin of one of the stone farmhouses. All other above ground traces of these two farms are gone. Other sites not already discussed include a privy foundation, and a hay barn ell.

The Ridge Valley Rural Historic District contains scenic waterways paralleled by man made roads that lead to historic buildings. Individual houses and small farmsteads, obscured from each other by the topography and foliage, are situated between folds in the land. The district is an unusually well preserved example of modest farmsteads that retains outstanding integrity.

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**RIDGE VALLEY RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROPERTY INVENTORY**

44-5-3 (ADJ)

1 C. Site
Bunker Hill Road

This ford remains unchanged since new.

44-5-3-1

1 C. Site
Bunker Hill Road

The 1876 Scott Atlas and the 1891 Noll Atlas of Tincum indicates the existence of buildings on this property. Along an overgrown abandoned farm lane stands the ruins of the nineteenth century farmhouse. Other historic resources on this site are archaeological.

44-5-3-1 ADJ

1 C. Site
Bunker Hill Road

This ford exhibits excellent integrity. After heavy rain fall portions of the ford are deep enough to submerge the exhaust system of automobiles which causes the vehicle to stall out. Care should be taken to know where the shallowest route through the ford is located to ensure safe passage.

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44-5-22

2 C. Buildings & 1 C. Structure

Geigel Hill Road

The farmhouse was built in two sections. The earlier circa 1845 section is built of plastered stone. It stands 2 1/2 stories and is four bays wide. A circa 1885 frame addition was added to the primary elevation of the first section. Built in the Victorian style, this addition has decoratively cut shingles on the front gable and porches extends along three elevations. The bank barn has stone stabling with frame upper levels. The barn was extended on both gable ends with frame additions built on stone foundations. A small early twentieth century chicken coop faces south across the lane from the barn.

44-5-6-1 (ADJ)

1 C. Structure
Geigel Hill Road

This deck bridge is made of steel and it carries Geigel Hill Road over Tinicum Creek. This bridge is threatened with replacement.

44-5-7

4 C. Buildings
2 C. Structures
Sheephole Road

The farmhouse is built of stone and it has been pointed. Standing 2 1/2 stories, this four bay house has 9/6 first floor windows and 6/6 second floor windows. A porch extends along the entire primary elevation. A kitchen added to the southerly elevation in the mid twentieth century was constructed of native red shale which matches the existing main block. The large bank barn is built of stone. Front and rear eaves wall frame extensions were added to the barn. Although the barn has been adapted to a new use, the integrity of the structure remains good. Other related agricultural outbuildings include a frame wagon house, a frame milk house, and two corn cribs.

44-5-7 ADJ

1 C. Structure
Sheephole Road

This steel truss deck bridge was built by the WPA in 1938. It is in good condition and it exhibits excellent integrity.

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44-5-8 ADJ

1 C. Structure
Sheep Hole Road

This steel truss deck bridge was built by the WPA in 1938. It is in good condition and it exhibits excellent integrity.

44-5-10

3 C. Buildings
1 N.C. Building
1 N.C. Structure
Bunker Hill Road

This modest sized farm house remains in good condition and it exhibits good integrity. The original house consists of a 2 1/2 story two bay main block with a rear 1 story kitchen ell. An 1807 datestone is located in the east gable. Additions built of native red shale blend with the original portions of the house. A bank barn ruin was rebuilt as a residence. A frame nineteenth century privy is located on the property. Two resources, a built in swimming pool and a horse stable do not contribute to the historic district.

44-5-12

3 C. Buildings
Bunker Hill Road

This farmstead is in good condition and it exhibits good integrity. The plastered stone house is 2 1/2 stories tall and three bays wide and was constructed circa 1840. In the 1930s a 2 1/2 story frame addition was made to the rear of the main block. The bank barn has stone stabling with frame upper levels. The original vertical wood siding was covered in the 1940s with asbestos shingle siding. A well preserved frame privy retains its slate gable roof.

44-5-20

4 C. Buildings
1 C. Structure
1 N.C. Building

44-5-20-1

Clay Ridge Road

This 2 1/2 story plastered stone farmhouse was built circa 1825. In the mid-nineteenth century stone additions were made that are sympathetic to the main block. Outbuildings include a bank barn, pig pen, garage and a root cellar

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44-5-20 ADJ

1 C. Structure
Clay Ridge Road

The early example of a concrete arch bridge bears a datestone which reads "County Bridge 30 1909." This bridge has an appearance extremely similar to the stone arch bridges which have been constructed in southeastern Pennsylvania since the seventeenth century. The use of concrete as a building material allowed for the continuation of the construction of arched bridges into the twentieth century.

44-5-21

1 N.C. Building
Bunker Hill Road

This house is non-contributing due to age.

44-5-22 ADJ

1 C. Structure
Clay Ridge Road

This concrete deck bridge bears a datestone that reads "County Bridge 1917." The bridge is supported mid-span by a concrete piling. The side railing are constructed of pipes. According to other information on the datestone, A. Oscar Martin, a local architect of note, served as engineer for this project.

44-5-24

2 C. Buildings
Clay Ridge Road

This farmstead is in good condition and it exhibits fair integrity. The farmhouse is built of wood. It stands 2 1/2 stories tall and is three bays wide. A frame addition extends from the north gable. The bank barn has stone stabling with frame above.

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44-5-33

2 C. Sites
1 C. Building
Geigel Hill Road

The ruin of a large blacksmith shop that was recently burned by an arsonist stands astride Geigel Hill Road. Discussion with the owner and on site investigation revealed that this building was designed as a two story shop. The first floor was entered on the street side, while a bank in the rear allowed entry to the second floor. It is possible that in addition to basic blacksmith work, repair or construction of wagons and carriages may have taken place here. Adjoining the ruin is the foundation remains of a bank barn. A mid nineteenth century plastered stone building stands on the bank where the Rapp Creek and Beaver Creek join to form the Tinicum Creek. Historic research did not reveal the original use of this building. It is assumed that based on its location, the building probably utilized the water as a source of power.

44-5-34

4 C. Buildings
1 C. Object
Geigel Hill Road

This property is historically associated with parcel 44-5-33 which stands across the street. The house is built of plastered stone and dates to circa 1850. The double front doors and corinthian porch post capitals subtly reflect a classical influence. A porch extends along the primary elevation and a dormer appears to date to the 1910s. The side porch has been enclosed with window sash. A banked stone smoke house is located behind the house. A one bay early twentieth century garage has been sided with asbestos shingles. A small frame shed and a kerosene pump dating from the first quarter of the twentieth century reflect the change from horse power to gas engine power and the fall of blacksmiths and the rise of mechanics.

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44-5-38

5 C. Buildings
1 C. Site
1 C. Structure

44-5-9

Sheep Hole Road

The circa 1800 stone house is a rare example of a five bay house in this region. The 2 1/2 story building is a remarkably well preserved example of a vernacular farmhouse. A 1 1/2 story stone kitchen extends from the rear of the main block, and according to the current owner, may pre-date the larger five bay section. Inside the house early nineteenth century wallpaper and original paint colors remain intact. The house was purchased in the 1920s by Charles and Lorraine Rudy who reluctantly added modern conveniences in a conservative manner. After living in the house for thirty years an indoor bathroom was installed on the second floor of the kitchen. Mr. Rudy, a well known sculptor, converted the second floor of the large bank barn into a studio and placed a kiln within the foundation remains of a demolished hay barn ell. Other buildings on the property include a carriage house, privy, and a shed.

44-5-39

2 C. Buildings
1 N.C. Building

44-5-8

Sheephole Road

This 2 1/2 story three bay stone house bears a datestone which reads "J & M Rufe 1856." A circa 1940 addition was added to the original section of the house. The main block retains many original features including window sash, first floor shutters, flooring, moldings, and doors. The first floor was originally divided into two rooms, but the partition between the kitchen and parlor was removed. A frame chicken coop and a non-contributing frame garage are located on this property.

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44-5-40
44-5-6-2

4 C. Buildings

Sheephole Road

The original portion of the John Wexley house is a 2 1/2 story three bay stone farmhouse. During the 1930s Wexley added a large addition to the house that doubled the square footage. The new addition was constructed of native red shale and many of the details reflect local building traditions. A small smokehouse stands in front of the house. The bank barn is built of stone with a frame forebay. A one story frame ell with a stone foundation extends from a gable wall of the barn. A frame chicken coop is sited in a pasture several hundred feet from the main house.

44-14-1
44-14-21 C. Building
1 C. Building
2 N.C. Buildings
Headquarters Road

This property was built by Christian Fretz. Although the house bears a 1740 datestone, it does not seem likely that the house was constructed until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Mr. Fretz ran the grist mill that was located across the road from this site (the mill no longer stands). In the 1930s the building was added to in a sympathetic manner utilizing native stone with the detailing consistent with local building traditions. In addition to the house and mill site, a stone bank barn (44-14-2) stands across Headquarters Road. The barn is built of stone and has been sympathetically converted into a residence. A non-contributing horse stable and horse shelter is located on this parcel.

44-14-3

1 N.C. Building
Headquarters Road

This house is non-contributing due to age.

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44-14-3-1

2 C. Buildings
2 C. Structure
1 C. Site
Headquarters Road

This stone house is built of plastered stone and is the only example of a banked house in the district. The building is 2 1/2 stories on one elevation and 3 1/2 stories on the opposing elevation. The house was constructed circa 1790 and the interior features a significant amount of surviving historic fabric. Of note are several fireplace mantels with gouge carving and drill work. Local tradition suggests that an itinerant carver wandered through this area and exchanged these mantels for lodging and food. A bank barn with stone stabling and frame upper levels is sited down from the house along Headquarters Road. The barn was covered with asphalt shingles in the 1930s. Other agricultural outbuildings include a single corn crib and a chicken coop. The concrete foundation of a privy is located near the house.

44 - 14 - 8

1 N.C. Building
Headquarters Road

A non-contributing horse shed is located on this parcel.

44-14-8 (ADJ)

1 C. Structure
Headquarters Rd.

This bridge carries Headquarters Road over Tincum Creek. The deck of the bridge is made of concrete and the side railings were made from pipe. A datestone in one of the terminal post supports reads "No. 286 Rebuilt 1919." The massive stone bridge approaches and middle support suggest that the earlier bridge may have been a wooden covered bridge.

44-14-9

2 C. Buildings
Headquarters Road

The stone farmhouse dates to circa 1850 and features double front doors. A porch extends along the primary elevation. Recently, the stucco was removed from the outside of the house and the red shale was pointed. The bank barn is built of stone and has been adapted into living space. No other outbuildings survive.

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44-14-21-1

5 C. Buildings
1 C. Structure

44-11-43-1

Red Hill Road

The farmhouse consists of a five bay 2 1/2 story stone section that dates to circa 1835 with a wood frame three bay addition that dates to circa 1855. The first floor door openings on the stone section appear to have been changed from the original design, but the window sash, porches, and slate roofs have all survived in good condition. The outbuildings are a good collection of nineteenth century farm buildings. The bank barn is built entirely of stone and it retains an exterior stucco finish. Other outbuildings include a double drive through corn crib, a wagon house, a privy and a piggery that was converted into an apartment.

44-11-43-2

1 N.C. Building
Red Hill Road

This house is non-contributing due to age.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Agriculture

Period of Significance

1790-1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The proposed Ridge Valley Rural Historic District, located in Tinicum Township, Bucks County is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture as an example of farming in small stream valleys in the county. This type of farm forms a distinctive subset of traditional Bucks County agricultural development. It is also eligible under Criterion C for its architecture which is representative of southeast Pennsylvania rural vernacular architecture from the late 18th to the early 20th century. Throughout the Ridge Valley Historic District winding dirt roads, stone farmsteads and outbuildings, fields and meadows are found in visual harmony with the intact and undisturbed wetlands and woodlands. These features provide an outstanding context for the district's architecture. The period of significance is circa 1790 to circa 1940.

Architecturally, the Ridge Valley Rural Historic District contains representative examples of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century vernacular architecture of the region. These represent second generation buildings. No houses from the original settlement period have survived. The earliest houses were small one story log structures which were later replaced by the current stone ones. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax bears this out indicating that many of the original houses and barns in the district were log. After the log houses of the settlement period, stone became the predominant building material and remained so well into the mid nineteenth century. This was probably more due to the availability of easily quarried and easily worked shale than the relative wealth of the builders. Like much of the region, houses in Ridge Valley built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century were usually three bays wide. By the 1850s stone houses with twin front door became common. Post Civil War outbuildings and additions to houses were built of wood frame. The progression from small log houses in the settlement period to stone houses built after the farm was better established, to frame construction after the Civil War is representative of the vernacular Bucks County building tradition.

See continuation sheet

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The generally small size of houses and their lack of ornamentation suggests a more modest income level for this valley's farmers. Although most barns are of typical size, most stone farm houses are two or three bays (for example TMP 44-5-10 and 44-5-40). But a few larger houses were built. The largest house in the district (TMP #44-5-38) is a full five bay vernacular house. [A second five bay house (TMP#44-11-21-1) appears to have been built in two sections]. The only other large house within the district was constructed by Christian Fretz (TMP #44-14-1). Fretz' substantial house seems directly related to his wealth as the area's saw and grist mill owner. This house was considerably enlarged in 1932.

Agricultural outbuildings also contribute to this district's architectural significance. Several properties have well preserved farmsteads consisting of a range of outbuildings in addition to the house and barn (TMP 44-5-20, 44-5-40, 44-5-38, 44-5-7, 44-14-3-1, and 44-14-21-1). The presence of corn cribs, wagon houses, chicken coops, pig pens and privies creates a strong vernacular farmscape in several areas of the district. On a few farms lesser outbuildings that have not been maintained have been taken down.

The topography of the land in this area limited the economic viability of many of these farms in the twentieth century. Farming was successfully pursued in the entire area when the source of power for basic farm machinery was the horse. But as farming became more dependent on machines and less labor intensive, the hillier farms could not successfully compete. The transition to dairy farming and the widespread adoption of the tractor after World War II limited successful farming in this district to those farms with the least hilly ground. The fact that steep slopes were more difficult to cultivate by machinery than flat or gently rolling farm land made these farms less successful.

Evidence of this decline in the number of operating farms takes several forms. In the most hilly parts of the districts are two farms that were abandoned and only remain as archaeological sites and much of the formerly cultivated hilly farm land has grown back into woodlands. During the first quarter of the twentieth century while many Bucks County farms specialized in dairy farming, the bank barns on the moderately hilly farms within the district show no sign of being adapted to milk production. There is no evidence of cow stanchions or the stabling level of bank barns having been whitewashed for sanitary reasons. Unlike much of central Bucks County, these farms lack twentieth century dairying outbuildings such as milk houses attached to the barns or silos.

The region's lack of twentieth century agricultural methods had two distinctive consequences. These farms, without large equipment sheds, modern silos, grain bins, milk houses, pole barns and large dairy additions retain a more

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nineteenth century appearance than the farms in other parts of upper Bucks County that remained in operation through the 1960s. Secondly, few farms weathered the Great Depression, making them ripe for purchase by members of the New York artistic community. The influx of this group, who fell in love of with the rugged beauty of the area, is a major factor in how well preserved the Ridge Valley area is today.

In the late 1920s artist Charles Rudy purchased a farm on Sheep Hole Road. (TMP 44-5-38) Several years later he was joined by screenwriter John Wexley who bought a neighboring farm on Sheep Hole Road (44-5-40). Much of Bucks County attracted artists and entertainment personalities during this period. Tincum boasted actress Miriam Hopkins, song writer Jerome Kern, humorist Dorothy Parker, and playwright S. J. Pearlman.

Rudy converted the bank barn of his farm into a studio. Light for his second floor workspace came from a large slanted dormer he built. During the warm weather he worked under the forebay, when it turned cold he went into the barn. A large hay barn in poor condition was removed and the foundation served as walls for Rudy's kiln. Wexley added a substantial stone addition to his farmhouse circa 1940. The stone matched the existing house, and the addition was faithful to traditional Bucks County architecture. While the individual significance of Rudy and Wexley is not being claimed because most of their accomplishments occurred within the last fifty years, they are representative of a trend in the region's development.

The Ridge Valley Rural Historic District compares well to other Bucks County Rural Historic Districts in terms of integrity and its ability to convey its period of significance. Bucks County has two other rural historic districts: The Upper Aquetong Valley Historic District (which includes portions of the Honey Hollow National Historic Landmark; a rural historic landmark designated prior to the "Rural Historic District" concept) in Solebury Township, and the Gardenville - North Branch Rural Historic District in Plumstead Township.

The Ridge Valley Rural Historic District is an impressive illustration of nineteenth century agricultural growth, and serves as an excellent example of farming in small stream valleys in Bucks County. Ridge Valley represents a more modest level of rural life than that seen in other National Register rural areas in Bucks County. The poorer soils had strong bearing on the built environment.

Comparison of this district to designated districts in Solebury, Plumstead and Tincum Townships reveals three areas of rural development with strong differences and shows how better soils yielded more prosperous farmers who

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were able to build more substantial farm houses. The General Soil Map of Bucks and Philadelphia Counties compiled by the U. S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service notes that the soils in Solebury are nearly level to sloping and moderately well drained. In Gardenville the soils are nearly level and gently sloping, poorly to moderately well drained. In Ridge Valley the soils range from nearly level to moderately steep, poorly drained to well drained soils on uplands. Comparatively, the Solebury soils are excellent, in Gardenville they are good, and in Ridge Valley they are fair. The prosperity of the farms correlates to the size and ornamentation of buildings and undoubtedly influenced the period of settlement. The best lands were settled early. The value of the land for farming was the single most important factor in how these areas developed. Better soils produced higher yields which translated into more profit which allowed for construction of more substantial buildings. The better lands remain as viable farm land to the present day. In the Aquetong Valley a majority of traditionally farmed fields remain in cultivation. In Gardenville there is some continuance of farming, but much formerly cultivated ground has been subdivided from the farmsteads for suburban housing or remains untended. In Ridge Valley there is very little farming. Growing hay and cutting fields to stop reforestation is the major agricultural pursuit.

The Upper Aquetong Valley Historic District and the Honey Hollow National Historic Landmark overlap. Both are both located in Solebury Township, in central Bucks County. The Honey Hollow Landmark's period of significance is the late 1930s. It represents the first small upland watershed to be brought totally under water, soil, and wildlife conservation practices in the United States. The Upper Aquetong Valley, and the historic resources of Honey Hollow, show the mid eighteenth to late nineteenth century Quaker settlement pattern spanning a period of significance of 1750 to 1900.

Solebury was originally settled by English Quakers in the mid eighteenth century. The Ridge Valley area was settled by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in the eighteenth century with a strong influx of Germans at the turn of the nineteenth century. Unlike the Ridge Valley area, the majority of farmsteads in the Solebury districts were large, 100 to 200 acres, and the farmsteads tended to be centered on the property down a lane from the main road. In Ridge Valley the acreage of farms average between 60 and 80 acres and nearly all the farms were near the main road. The Solebury farms were initially developed fifty to seventy five years earlier than the farms in Ridge Valley. The better lands in Solebury created more prosperous farmers than those of Ridge Valley. Aided by the advantages of the limestone belt which passes under the soil in that region, the more prosperous

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farmers built substantial farm houses that were larger and more formal than those in Ridge Valley. In the late 1930s, when many Ridge Valley farmers were selling out their farms to newcomers, farmers in Solebury were pursuing means to enhance and preserve their rich soils.

The Gardenville - North Branch Rural Historic District in Plumstead Township is significant as an example of the convergence of the English and German settlement patterns in Central Bucks County. Despite significant infill and loss of working farms, the district provides insight into nineteenth century agricultural land use. While the Gardenville and Ridge Valley areas share common German ethnicity, the differences in soils and topography has resulted in a level of prosperity higher in Gardenville than Ridge Valley. The prosperity of Solebury was highest of all. The higher level of prosperity resulted in more substantial farm buildings. Unlike Ridge Valley, the gently sloping Gardenville area farms made the transformation into large scale dairy farming in the first half of the twentieth century.

There are few areas in Bucks County that directly compare to Ridge Valley. The Deep Run area along Deep Run Creek in Bedminster Township is an example of a more prosperous group of farms located in a valley along a creek. This area was settled in the mid-eighteenth century by Scotch-Irish. Later, Germans moved in. The farms have substantial stone houses that strongly reflect the Federal style. A grist mill and stone quarry served as local industry. The prosperity here was better than in Ridge Valley. Unlike the Ridge Valley area, this area made the transition into dairy farming and it continues to remain strongly agricultural.

The Cabin Run area of Plumstead and Bedminster developed in a similar pattern. The area was initially settled in the same period. The first owners were English, and the land was tenanted. Dwellings were mostly log cabins which gave the stream its name. By the early nineteenth century, the area had undergone growth and development by a large number of German immigrants. The valley is broader than the Ridge Valley area and consequently the farms were larger and more prosperous.

Since Bucks County remained very strongly agricultural until the mid twentieth century, it is very difficult to find other similar regions. West Rockhill Township, particularly along Tower Road, where most of the land is covered with rocks. Farmable areas are sites where a stream came through and pushed the stones off of a piece of ground large enough to farm. The houses are modest vernacular homes including a stone end log house and several small stone houses. There is no evidence that these farms made it to dairy farming. These

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types of areas have mostly been subdivided and developed, making the Ridge Valley Rural Historic District's preservation more significant.

The Ridge Valley Historic District is a fine collection of historic resources that are important for their architecture and as a well preserved example of farming in small stream valleys.

9. Major Bibliographical References

County of Bucks, Recorder of Deeds Office. Bucks County Deed Books.

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MacReynolds, George. Place Names in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Easton, PA: John S. Correll Publishing Company. 1942.

Noll, E.P. Atlas of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, PA: E.P. Noll & Company, 1891.

Scott, J.D. Combination Atlas Map of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Thomas Hunter, Printer, 1876.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. Soil Survey of Bucks and Philadelphia Counties. 1975.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Specify repository:

Bucks County Conservancy

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 575 acres.

UTM References

A 18 487495 4482120
Zone Easting Northing

B 18 488010 4480880
Zone Easting Northing

C 18 488620 4479080

D 18 487910 4479595

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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date March 10, 1992

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telephone (215) 345-7020

city or town Doylstown

state PA

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The following verbal boundary description is based on current Bucks County Tax Parcel Maps and is for reference use only. Courses and distances are approximate.

BEGINNING at a point in the NE corner of the intersection of Red Hill Road (Route LR 09139) and Frankenfield Road (T427);
Thence along the southerly line of parcel 44-11-43-1 westerly 550' to a corner of parcel 44-11-43;
Thence along the easterly side of parcel 44-11-43 northerly 900' to a corner
Thence by same westerly 600' to a corner;
Thence by parcel 44-11-44 the three following courses and distances N 600', NE 175', N 550';
Thence by parcel 44-11-42 and 44-11-42-1 600' to a corner of parcel 44-11-42-1 and the SE side of Headquarters Road (SR 1012) NW 450'
Thence by 44-1-45-5 and along the SE side of Headquarters Road, NE 500' to a corner;
Thence crossing Headquarters Road and by parcel 44-1-45-1, and 44-1-45-4 NW 800' to a corner
Thence by 44-1-45-4 W 500';
Thence by 44-1-45-4 and 44-1-45 NW 1300' to 44-1-43;
Thence by same NE 350' to a corner;
Thence by same NW 900' to a corner in 44-1-41-10;
Thence by parcels 44-1-41-10, 44-5-5 and 44-5-6 NE 1225';
Thence by parcel 44-5-6 N 500';
Thence by same and 44-5-6-3 and crossing Geigel Hill Road (SR 09138) NE 1100';
Thence along N side of Geigel Hill Road W 200' to 44-5-4-2;
Thence by same in a line curving to the west approximately 800' to 44-5-4-1;
Thence by same N 200' to 44-5-3-2;
Thence by same E 400' to a point where the easterly line of 44-5-3-1, if extended southerly would strike parcel 44-5-3;
Thence by said line if extended to parcel 44-5-3-1 and crossing Tabor Road (T 447) 1400' to a point on the N side of said road;
Thence along same W 250' to parcel 44-5-10-2;
Thence along same N approximately 1000' to 44-5-10-1;
Thence along same the following three courses and distances: E 350', S 500' and E 350';

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Thence along same, 44-5-11-1 and along the SE side of Bunker Hill Road (T 441) NE 1800' and along 44-5-12-2 E 500';
Thence by 44-5-13-1 and 44-5-13 SE 1150' to a corner;
Thence by 44-5-13 NE 300';
Thence by 44-5-19-1 SE 400';
Thence by 44-5-19-1 and 44-5-12-1 S 400';
Thence by 44-5-12-1 NW 200';
Thence by same and crossing Beaver Creek SW 700';
Thence by same SE 300' to the W side of Clay Ridge Road;
Thence along same SW 1200' to a point where the N line of parcel 44-5-24-2 if extended would cross said road;
Thence along said line if extended and 44-5-24-2 SE 450' to 44-5-32-2 ;
Thence along same S 600';
Thence by 44-5-33-2 SW 400',
Thence by same SE 150';
Thence by 44-5-33-1 SW 450' to S side of Geigel Hill Road E 1300' to 44-5-32;
Thence crossing Geigel Hill Road and by 44-5-37 1050' to a corner;
Thence by 44-5-37, 44-14-5-2 and 44-14-5-3 crossing Headquarters Run and crossing Headquarters Road SE 2550';
Thence along N side of Headquarters Road SW 800' to a point on the S line of 44-14-10; if extended across Headquarters Road
Thence along the line between 44-14-10 and 44-14-9 by various courses approximately 3200' to 44-14-11;
Thence by 44-14-11, 44-14-12, 44-14-9-1 SW 800';
Thence by 44-14-9-1 NW 150';
Thence by same SW 700' to 44-14-19;
Thence by same SW 1200' to a corner;
Thence by same along Tincum Creek 450' to a corner;
Thence by same SW 600' to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

Total area is approximately 575 acres.

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Ridge Valley historic District

Section number 10 Page 3**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The core of the Ridge Valley Rural Historic District is the valley cut by the Tincum Creek through which Sheep Hole Road travels. All farmsteads, bridges and significant sites on properties adjoining this road are in the district with their legal property lines serving as the district boundary. The farmland gently rolls from the creek up to the horizon on the east and west sides forming a strong sense of rural seclusion.

South of Sheep Hole Road Headquarters Road begin to climb out of the valley to the east and west. The farmsteads included in this area are located within the valley. Along Red Hill Road one farmstead was included because it forms a strong entry point and because it forms a significant portion of the Tincum Creek viewshed.

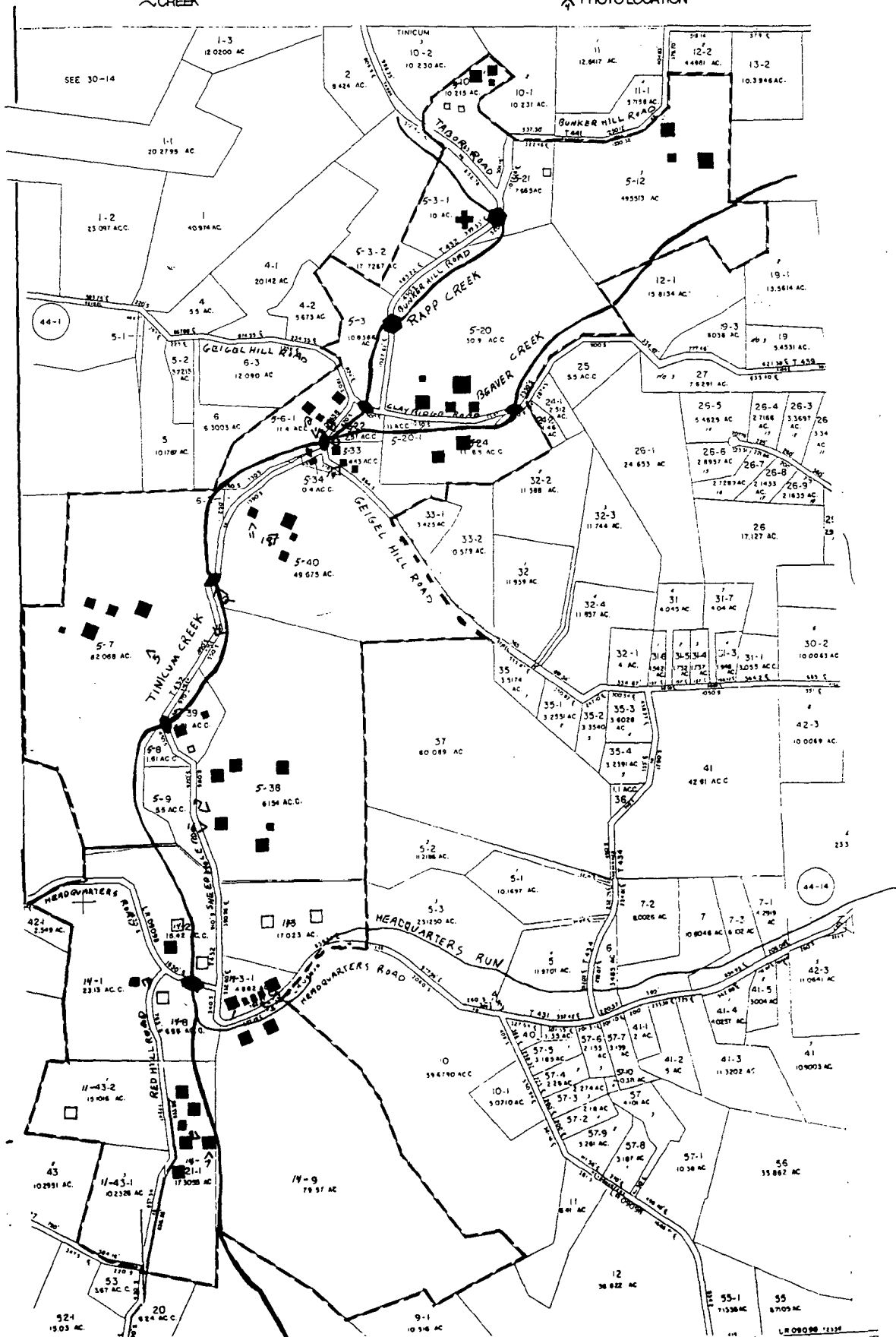
North of Sheep Hole Road Rapp Creek and Beaver Creek combine to form the Tincum Creek. Rapp Creek is followed by Bunker Hill Road. After passing through two fords Rapp Creek turns west and flows outside the district while Bunker Hill Road climbs out of the valley.

On Clay Ridge Road and Red Hill Road the boundary was drawn to cut the district off from development that was not fifty years or older.

RIDGE VALLEY RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
 TINICUM TOWNSHIP
 BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- SIGNIFICANT OR CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE
- NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE
- ~ CREEK

- BRIDGE
- FORD
- ⊕ ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE
- ▲ PHOTO LOCATION



ADMINSTER QUADRANGLE
PENNSYLVANIA—BUCKS CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5965 11 SE
(FRENCHTOWN)

STON 17 MI
RNDALE 2.4 MI. 10' 486

2 300 000 FEET 487

488

489 75°07'30"
40°30'



Ridge Valley Rural Historic District
Bucks County - Zone 12 - Bedminster Road.
A E487495 N1482120 C E480628 N4479080
3E48800 N4480800
0 E487910 N4479585

4479
27'30"
4478

mbach
x46