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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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Franklinville School

Other names/site number: Peter's School

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1701 Morris Road

City or town: Blue Bell State: PA County: Montgomery County

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

<u>Andrew H. Donald</u>	<u>10/30/2014</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Mr. Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

12-29-14
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education - School
Recreation/Culture - Theater
Social – Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation/Culture - Museum

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

no style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: walls – stucco, roof – wood shingle

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Located on a half-acre, rectangular shaped lot, the Franklinville School is a one-story, gable roof, one-room school house built in 1858. In a village formerly known as Franklinville, the school is located on Morris Road near the intersection with DeKalb Pike (US 202) in Whitpain Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Whitpain Township is a suburban community located approximately 20 miles from center city Philadelphia. The Franklinville School is in a low-density residential suburban area. The property contains only the school building, no other buildings or structures are extant on the property. The school is surrounded by a mowed grass yard and trees. The Franklinville School is stucco covered with a wood shingle roof and has a porch across its front façade. The interior features hardwood floors and plaster walls. The Franklinville School is presently in excellent condition and retains its historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

School House Exterior

Built in 1858, the Franklinville School is a typical one-room school house. The front gabled building faces towards Morris Road (southwest). In the gable end there is a date stone with "Public School, AD 1858" engraved on it. (See photos 6, 11.) A late 20th century crushed stone walkway leads to the front door of the school. The main block of the school is rectangular in shape measuring 25 feet wide by 32 feet deep. It has a c.1930 addition on the rear (northeast side) that measures 13 feet wide by 9 feet deep and was likely built as a movie projection room. (See photos 3, 4, 5.) Surrounding the exterior of the rear projection room addition is a brick patio that is in poor condition. The patio is constructed with brick, mortar and concrete. Based on the visible wear and age of the bricks it was added c.1930 to c.1950. It extends approximately 3 feet to 6 feet from the walls of the projection room addition and there is a step built of brick up to the rear door.

The roof is covered with wood shingles that were installed c.1998 replacing former wood shingles. A belfry sits at the southwest gable end of the roof. Around 1998, the belfry was restored with the help of historic images (See photo 11). The belfry was in a deteriorated condition and would not support a bell, therefore the belfry was removed and rebuilt based on the existing historic materials and historic photos of the school. The bell in the belfry is original to the school and was obtained by the Historical Society of Whitpain after they began to be stewards of the property in 1983. The box cornice along the roof line is very simple in design. Walls of the school are stucco covered. Windows are wood, six-over-six double hung sashes, except for small wood four-over-four double hung sashes in the rear addition. (See photos 6, 9, 10). The wood shutters that flank the windows along the depth of the school (southeast and northwest sides) were made after 1998 to replicate deteriorating wood shutters. (See photo 9.) The shutters flanking the windows along the main façade and the single leaf wood shutters on the windows in the rear addition are contemporary to the building. (See photos 8, 10.) There are two entrances to the building, one in the main façade and the other on the rear addition. (See photos 4, 7.) The main façade entrance has a single leaf, six panel door with architrave trim. The rear door is also a single leaf, six panel design with simple trim. Above the rear door is a half lunette ventilator. Across the main façade of the school is an 8 foot deep porch with a metal covered shed roof that is supported by square chamfered posts. (See photos 6, 12.) The porch posts on the school when originally built were turned posts, but these were replaced by Doric style posts after c.1917. Subsequently the current chamfered posts were installed sometime after c.1930, but before 1983, based on a c.1983 photo of the school (See Photo c.1983, Historical Society of Whitpain). The floorboards of the porch were in poor condition, also visible in the c.1983 photo, and these were replaced after c.1983 with wood tongue and groove floor boards.

School House Interior

The interior of the school features plaster walls and hardwood floors. (See photos 13, 14.) The interior walls of the school were re-plastered c.2000 due to deteriorating condition. The ceiling of the building is also covered with plaster and was also re-plastered as part of the c.2000

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project. Hardwood floors currently in the school are modern replacements of original hardwood floors that were in poor and dangerous condition. A pot belly stove that sits near the center of the room was salvaged from a local tavern that was demolished in 1998. The stove is not functioning as there is no chimney for ventilation. Historic photographs of the exterior of the school show that a chimney did exist near the center of the building. However, it appears to have been removed just prior to ca. 1922. There is a slate blackboard and wooden teacher's desk platform in the school both added after 1997. Their location and design are based on research of the school and other one room schools conducted by the historical society. There are several school desks that are original to the school that were salvaged by the Historical Society of Whitpain in 1994. Other desks are reproductions. The window jambs are rounded. (See photo 15.) There is an interior wooden door that leads to the small c.1930 addition. This door is six paneled with a rectangular opening cut in it about 4 feet from the floor. This rectangular opening likely was used for a movie projector. To accommodate a projector, the rectangular hole was cut about 4 feet off the floor in the door (See Photos 16, 17, 18). This allowed the movies to be projected onto a screen set up in the front (Southwest end) of the school. This is physical evidence that in fact, the school was used as a private movie theater during the 1930s for the exclusive use of workers at nearby Normandy Farms during the Great Depression, which local histories support. The projection room currently is used as storage by the historical society. The room features plastered walls and ceiling, and doors and windows have plain trim around them. (See photo 19.)

Historic Integrity

While some changes have occurred to the Franklinville School it retains its historic integrity. It is in the same location as originally built. The setting has been changed by construction of nearby housing developments, a country club, a retirement community and a hotel/conference center. However as recent photographs of the school indicate, it is located on the lot in a way that it is not impacted greatly by the new development and is buffered by trees. The school is now surrounded by an open vinyl fence that helps to separate it from nearby development as well. The setting also once included a privy, a well, a flag pole and a split rail fence, all of which have been removed. Materials have also been changed, however changes to materials on the school were in-kind and match the originals. The School has had a c.1930 addition made to the rear that deviates from the original design. However, this is not a large alteration and was made to put a movie projection room onto the school during the period of significance of the property (1925-1959). The workmanship of the school also remains intact. When at the school one experiences a sense of the former 19th century history of the school, however, more importantly, the early 20th century feeling and association is also present. The changes to the school through its history are minor and do not greatly impact on the location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Period of Significance
ca.1925 to 1959

Significant Dates
1925

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Eli Hoover - builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Franklinville School is a one-room school built in 1858 on a one acre lot on the north side of Morris Road. Franklinville School is significant under National Register Criteria A for its contribution to Social History. The primary significance of the Franklinville School under National Register Criteria A occurred after it was purchased in 1917 by Ralph Beaver Strassburger. Beginning c.1925 and continuing into the mid to late 20th century, the Franklinville School was used as a gathering place for local history celebrations, led by Ralph Strassburger and the Fifty Year Club, a local history organization. The period of significance is 1925 to 1959, which includes the time period of its use as a gathering place for local history celebrations and ending with the death of Ralph Strassburger in 1959, when the celebration events ended.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Background

Whitpain Township is among the oldest townships to be established in what is now Montgomery County, formerly part of Philadelphia County. It is mentioned as a township as early as 1701. The origin of the township is the result of Richard Whitpain of London purchasing a total of 4500 acres from four property owners, who previously bought the land directly from William Penn in the early 1680s. The village of Franklinville is described by Theodore Bean in *History of Montgomery County* (1884) as having "...one inn and seven dwellings. The fine country-seat, farm and summer residence of William M. Singerly, [owner] of the "Philadelphia Record," is located here. Here is to be seen one of the finest herds of "imported Holstein cattle" in Pennsylvania."

In the mid-nineteenth century, the village of Franklinville contained a hotel, a black smith shop and many large farms. There were also a significant number of school age children in the area. Despite this, prior to 1858, the Whitpain Township School Directors chose to rent space in a building from a Franklinville property owner, rather than build a school to serve the area. According to school director meeting minutes, as early as 1857 the Whitpain School Directors were presented with a petition signed by about 30 residents and taxpayers of the area requesting that a school be built in Franklinville. The school directors did not act immediately on the petition citing an inability to find a property owner willing to sell them land for the school. The inaction on the part of the school directors resulted in a face-to-face confrontation between a crowd of residents at a meeting in 1858. Due to the confrontation Whitpain Township school directors entered into an agreement of sale with William and Elizabeth Greger for a one acre parcel of land on the north side of Morris Road in Franklinville for construction of the school. Construction of the Franklinville School was likely completed in late 1858 or possibly early in the year 1859. The school has a date stone with "Public School AD 1858" on it in its southwest

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gable end. Franklinville School served an important role in the education of many children in the Franklinville area from the mid- 19th century into the early 20th century. It was closed in 1916 when a consolidated, graded school was built nearby.

The “fine country-seat, farm and summer residence of William Singerly,” which abutted the Franklinville School, was purchased in 1913 by Ralph Beaver Strassburger and his wife May Bourne Strassburger who named the estate Normandy Farms. Ralph Strassburger was a graduate of Exeter Academy and the U.S. Naval Academy. He served valiantly in the Navy, worked for Babcock and Wilcox Company and served as ambassador to Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia. Ralph’s father was a well-known and respected Norristown attorney. May Bourne was the daughter of Frederick G. Bourne, the extremely wealthy President of the Singer Sewing Machine Company. When the couple were married in 1911, they received a \$4 million wedding gift from Frederick Bourne. With the funds from the wedding gift, Ralph Strassburger and his wife not only purchased William Singerly’s farm in Franklinville, they also gradually purchased many additional farms adjacent to Normandy Farms (totaling possibly as many as 30 farms and 1500 acres). The Strassburgers also owned several estates and residences in France and they often vacationed in Palm Beach, Florida and at the exclusive Jekyll Island Club in Georgia, where Frederick Bourne was the President of the Jekyll Island Club. Ralph Strassburger also bought the Norristown Times and the Norristown Herald and combined the two newspapers into the Norristown Times Herald.

Ralph Strassburger was an avid historian and genealogist focused on his Pennsylvania German heritage. He wrote a voluminous book on his Pennsylvania German genealogy and also wrote a book documenting German immigration to the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries. The titles of his works are the *Strassburger Family and Allied Families of Pennsylvania* (1922) and *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia* (1934). Mr. Strassburger was a member of many historical societies and organizations including serving as the president of the Pennsylvania German Society from c.1930 to c.1940.

Ralph Strassburger also had a strong interest in historic buildings. He and his wife, after having purchased Normandy Farms worked to preserve and restore the existing buildings on the property. They utilized a well-respected Philadelphia historic preservation and Colonial revival architect named G. Edwin Brumbaugh to restore and redesign Normandy Farms’ buildings. Brumbaugh’s records make no direct reference about work done on the Franklinville School. Despite the lack of direct evidence that Brumbaugh did work on the Franklinville School, the business relationship between the Strassburgers and Brumbaugh indicates an overall philosophy of acknowledging the importance of historic buildings. This passion for historic buildings and their preservation was also shared by Mrs. Strassburger, who was an avid collector of antiques in her own right.

While at Normandy Farms, Mrs. Strassburger took trips through the local area in her chauffeur driven car followed by a truck, into which were put the antiques she purchased. She often returned from these trips with the truck entirely full of antiques. Learning of the pending demolition of a house in North Wales that she recognized as being important for its architecture,

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she purchased it and had it moved and reconstructed at Normandy Farms. The house became known as her “antique house” and it was used to store her vast collection of antiques.

By 1916, the historic Franklinville School sat empty and neglected (see historic photo c.1917), but it soon attracted the attention of Mr. and Mrs. Strassburger. In 1917, Ralph Strassburger purchased the Franklinville School and its one acre lot from the Whitpain School Directors for \$800.00. The building was conveniently located along Morris Road right next to Strassburger’s Normandy Farms. It made sense geographically to combine the parcel into his estate. Ralph Strassbuger and his wife likely recognized the historical importance of the building and that buildings like it represented the end of the one-room school house era in the community.

The Strassburgers celebrated the birth of their son Johannes Andreas Peter Strassburger (known as Peter) in 1916. In addition to owning the Franklinville School for purposes of renovating and maintaining the school, another motivation for the Strassburgers purchasing the school in 1917 may have been for it to serve as a location for the private education of their son Peter. In fact, the Strassburgers had a set of color tinted post cards made for Normandy Farms c.1922 that includes two post cards showing the Franklinville School. Both post cards are captioned “Peter’s School”. (See the enclosed post cards of Peter’s School.)

The 1929 Strassburger family Christmas card features the Franklinville School describing it, not as Peter’s School, but as the Old School House (See enclosed photo of the Christmas card). The Christmas card further indicates that level of respect the Strassburgers had for the Franklinville School as they endeared it enough to use it for the family Christmas card.

Social History Significance of the Franklinville School

In the mid-1920s the Norristown Times Herald, under the ownership of Ralph Strassburger, began a marketing campaign which appealed to Ralph Strassburger’s love of history. An application form was placed in the newspaper c.1924 for what was referred to as “the Fifty Year Club.” A criterion for entrance to the “club” was that one must have lived in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania for at least 50 years. The form required that applicants provide information about themselves, including their birthday as proof of criteria for membership, and their address. It is not certain who conceived the idea of the Fifty Year Club, but it was likely Ralph Strassburger, in collaboration with the managers of the newspaper. The club spurred interest in the newspaper because on the event of the birthday of a member of the Fifty Year Club their name was published in the paper and they received a birthday greeting in the mail from the Times Herald and Ralph Strassburger. (See the enclosed Fifty Year Club birthday greetings.) Customers bought the paper to, not only obtain the application form to become a member, but also on their birthday members got to see their name in print. The club highlighted and focused on the rich historical knowledge of those who lived for so long in the region.

On July 28, 1925 the Times Herald announced, on the front page, that the location of the first annual outing of the Fifty Year Club would be the “Historic Franklinville School House on Normandy Farms”. A photo of the Franklinville School accompanied the printed event announcement. The associated headline read “Pupils of Two Generations Ago Will Recall

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School Days on Picnic August 5 – Members of Fifty Year Club as Guests of Times Herald Will Enjoy an Outing at Former Franklinville School House on Normandy Farms”. The article also contained a brief history of schools in Whitpain Township. In addition, the article included the names of former teachers and students. At the picnic meeting of the Fifty Year Club the former teachers and students were scheduled to talk about their nostalgic memories of attending the Franklinville School. On August 7, 1925 the Times Herald reported that at the first annual outing of the Fifty Year Club an estimated crowd of “1,000 Old Residents of Town and County” paraded from the Times Herald building in downtown Norristown to the Franklinville School on Normandy Farms (a distance of about 6 miles).

In 1928 on August 7, the Times Herald announced that membership in the Fifty Year Club had increased to 5,000. On August 14, 1928 a front page article announced “Double Tent Capacity for Fifty Year Club Members at Fourth Annual Meeting”. A subsequent article on August 15, 1928 stated that noted historian and State Librarian Frederic Godcharles was scheduled to deliver a “Patriotic Address” at the Franklinville School on Normandy Farms. Frederic Godcharles was an important guest and highly regarded. He was not only the director of the Pennsylvania State Library and the State Museum at the time, he was also a founding member of the Pennsylvania Archaeological Society. For Godcharles’ speech and the other festivities at the Franklinville School, buses and automobiles would begin transporting attendees from the Times Herald Building on August 16, at 10:00 AM. The article in the Times Herald further stated that “For the convenience of the picknickers, Thursday, at Normandy Farms, a special telephone has been installed in the Franklinville School House by the Bell Telephone Company...” Telephone users who wished to place a call to the phone were told to use the North Wales exchange and ask for the Fifty Year Club picnic. The event was described as “mammoth” in the article and that huge amounts of refreshments had been prepared for the attendees. The program of events, in addition to the oration by Mr. Godcharles would include a flag raising ceremony, a business meeting, live music and a “barn dance” to be held in the big tent.

The following year, 1929, the Fifty Year Club continued to grow into a respected community organization. In a special Fifty Year Club edition of the Times Herald dated August 15, 1929, the club listed its officers and had a newly designed flag that would be raised, that day, on the event of the fifth annual picnic. In addition, the article stated that “A nationally known designer is at work preparing membership badges...” The designer of the badges is unfortunately not identified. However, the designer of the flag, or pennant as it was called in the article, was then 13 year old Peter Strassburger. The flag was raised at the annual meeting of the Fifty Year Club on August 15, 1929 on a flag pole at the Franklinville School. Peter Strassburger’s great aunt, Margaret Strassburger Stauffer who was described as being “...prominent in the Daughters of American Revolution and other patriotic circles...” had the honor of raising the flag. A benefit of membership in the Fifty Year Club was that the Times Herald would provide members with a birthday greeting card. The card that was sent out c.1930 showed a photograph of the 1929 flag raising event at the annual picnic and the crowd gathered around the Franklinville School. (See the enclosed c.1930 birthday greeting card.) The 1929 Fifty Year Club meeting was also marked by a touching telegram sent from Ralph Strassburger, who was in France at the time, which states in part “...today is the fifth outing of this exclusive organization armed of men and women

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who have lived a half century or more within the confines of Montgomery County and founded on imperishable memories, permanent friendships and hallowed sentiment.”

During the 1930s, while the school continued to be used by the Fifty Year Club, it was also converted into a small private movie theater. At the time of the Great Depression the Strassburgers were barely affected by the economic down turn, however some of the workers on their Normandy Farms estate were impacted. The Strassburger gave both financial and moral support to their workers during the Depression. The movie industry thrived during the Great Depression due to a greater amount of leisure time and audiences seeking a distraction from the troubled times. Many entertaining movies were released at this time of increasing popularity for the movie industry. During the 1930s, presumably at the direction of Ralph Strassburger, a small addition was constructed on to the rear (northeast side) of the Franklinville School which served as a projection room. (See Photos 3, 4, 5) Movies were played in the Franklinville School for the workers at Normandy Farms about every other Saturday evening to help promote morale and to show support for the workers at the estate.

The Franklinville School was a meeting place on an annual basis for the club and it likely served as a venue for more frequent meetings of the board of directors of the club as well. Evidence of the longevity of the Fifty Year Club is a birthday greeting to members which appears to be from c.1994. The birthday greeting card sent by the Times Herald includes a drawing and brief history of the Franklinville School. The birthday greeting was issued in memory of the Times Herald's former owners, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Strassburger and Peter Strassburger, all of whom were deceased by 1993. (See the enclosed c.1994 Fifty Year Club birthday greeting.) The club likely went into decline, and the annual meetings at the Franklinville School ceased, sometime after Ralph Strassburger passed away in 1959.

Franklinville School Recent History

Despite Ralph Strassburgers efforts to maintain the Franklinville School and the creative ways he employed to find a use for it, it began to fall into disrepair after his death in 1959. It appears that the Franklinville School was barely used after Ralph Strassburger's death. From 1959 up until the time the Historical Society of Whitpain became the stewards of the Franklinville School in 1983, it declined in condition due to neglect. The only noticeable work done to the Franklinville School from 1959 to 1983 was the changing of the porch posts from Doric style posts to the chamfered posts currently supporting the porch. In general, the Franklinville School was neglected during that time, as Mrs. Strassburger and her son Peter likely lacked the resources, time and energy to devote to the school.

May Bourne Strassburger died in 1975 leaving her son Peter Strassburger with all of the properties and holdings. Peter sold the properties in Europe and began selling off property associated with Normandy Farms as well. He sold property as a source of income and his only occupation was hands-off management of the Norristown Times Herald. In 1983, the Franklinville School was in dilapidated condition and concerned, historic preservation minded, citizens of Whitpain Township began to be worried about the fate of the historic school. They formed the Historical Society of Whitpain that same year. The Historical Society of Whitpain

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began working on the property and fixing it up. They gathered historic photographs and other historic materials about the school which were used, in part, as a display in the Franklinville School. A c.1983 photograph of the Franklinville School (enclosed) taken around the time the school fell under the stewardship of the Historical Society of Whitpain definitely shows the Franklinville School in a sad condition at that time.

The Historical Society of Whitpain managed to gain ownership of the Franklinville School in 1997, when a developer proposed a subdivision of the land adjacent to Franklinville School. The developer agreed to sell the Franklinville School with a one half acre lot (half the size of the original lot) to the historical society. The Franklinville School is currently used by the Historical Society of Whitpain as an occasional meeting place. It is open to the public once a month, and tours are also available by appointment. School children are sometimes bussed to the school for a history lesson in early education.

Comparable Properties

Very few one-room school houses in the local area around the Franklinville School can claim to have been owned by such dedicated historians and historic preservationists. The Franklinville School served as the meeting place for a unique history and nostalgia organization, the Fifty Year Club, making it the focal point for local history and community pride for decades. Other one-room schools in Whitpain Township have experienced a much worse fate. Of the six one-room schools built in Whitpain in the mid-19th century, only two remain; the Center Square School and Sandy Hill School. These schools, while distinctive properties, have been converted to residences, and have lost their historic integrity. Center Square School had a second floor added, and it later served as a high school until a larger school was built in 1895. The Sandy Hill School is difficult to recognize as a school except for its general shape. It had its front porch enclosed and several small additions have been added to it.

While hundreds of one-room school houses were built in rural areas outside of Philadelphia in the mid- to late 19th century, many of them were converted to residences. Many more one-room schools were demolished. Finding comparable historic one-room schools in Montgomery County is difficult. There is no other one-room school in the County which shares a similar preservation/commemorative re-use history as the Franklinville School. Recently, the Shelly School, in adjacent Bucks County, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2011 for its significance in the areas of education and architecture. However, one of the primary themes of the Shelly School's significance was the fact that in the 1950s the Richland Historical Society coalesced around the school to preserve it. The Shelly school became the meeting place for the Richland Historical Society.

Another comparable property to the Franklinville School is the Pleasant Grove School, also known as Mud College, located in Mount Joy Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. While it is located far from the Franklinville School, in central Pennsylvania, the Pleasant Grove School nonetheless is comparable to the Franklinville School because it shares some very similar historical aspects. Built in 1869, the Pleasant Grove School operated as an educational venue until it closed in 1949. The Crouse family, which lived nearby, had 14 children educated at the

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school. In 1951 the school was acquired by 10 siblings of the Crouse Family with the intention of preserving the school as a museum. In 1953 reunions began at the school which lasted for 38 years. It is currently owned by Mount Joy Township and cared for by the Mud College Committee, and was listed in the National Register in 2012.

While not a one-room school, evidence of Ralph Strassburger's love of genealogy and historic buildings can be found in the history of the Hartzel-Strassburger House, in Hilltown Township, Bucks County. Built ca. 1849, it was owned by Ralph's grandfather, Reuben Strassburger. Around 1930 Ralph Strassburger acquired his grandfather's house. Strassburger went on to purchase additional properties that his ancestors owned. Around 1930, he was elected president of the Pennsylvania German Society, and he allowed the Hartzel-Strassburger House to be used by the organization as their headquarters and meeting place until c.1940. The Hartzel-Strassburger House was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. Peter Strassburger, who inherited the house when his mother died in 1975, donated the Hartzel-Strassburger House to the Hilltown Historical Society in 1986. The historical society continues to operate the house as a museum and research center.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Franklinville School
Name of Property

Montgomery County PA
County and State

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Franklinville School
Name of Property

Montgomery County PA
County and State

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Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. Archive and photograph collection. Normandy Farm and Strassburger Family. 1920 to 1946.

Wurzer, Carolyn. Oral history interview. 7/17/2013

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 # HABS PA-6062-F
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Franklinville School
Name of Property

Montgomery County PA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .5 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 40.182899 | Longitude: -75.283096 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Franklinville School
Name of Property

Montgomery County PA
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the Franklinville School property is Montgomery County (PA) Tax Map Parcel number 66010C085 as depicted on the enclosed site plan.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The current tax parcel represents historic parcel dimensions associated with the School before and after its purchase by Ralph Strassburger, and includes resources historically and currently associated with the school building. It is the property conveyed to the Historical Society of Whitpain in 1997.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Kimmerly
organization: Mid-Atlantic Historic Preservation Services LLC
street & number: 1137 Park Ave.
city or town: Lansdale state: PA zip code: 19446
e-mail dkimmerly@midatlantichps.com
telephone: 215-740-1650
date: May 31, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Franklinville School
Name of Property

Montgomery County PA
County and State

Photographs

Please see the enclosed photographs and photograph list.

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Photographs: Franklinville School, Whitpain Township, Montgomery County, PA, Taken September 2013 by David Kimmerly, Mid-Atlantic Historic Preservation Services LLC, 1137 Park Ave. Lansdale, PA 19446.

Photo 1-Franklinville School, lateral view, showing northwest side and main façade (southwest side), camera direction east.

Photo 2-Lateral view of northeast side and main façade (southwest side), camera direction north.

Photo 3-Lateral view of the southeast side, camera direction northwest.

Photo 4-View of back (northeast side) of Franklinville School, camera direction southwest.

Photo 5-Lateral view of northwest side and back (northeast side), camera direction south

Photo 6-View of main façade (southwest side) camera direction northeast.

Photo 7-View of door details of main façade (southwest side), camera direction northeast.

Photo 8-Window and shutter details on main façade (southwest side), camera direction north.

Photo 9-Window and shutter details along northeast side, camera direction north.

Photo 10-Shutter and window details on northwest side of addition, camera direction southeast.

Photo 11-View of belfry and gable roof details, camera direction east.

Photo 12-Porch details, camera direction south southeast.

Photo 13-Interior general view, camera direction northeast.

Photo 14-Interior general view camera direction southwest.

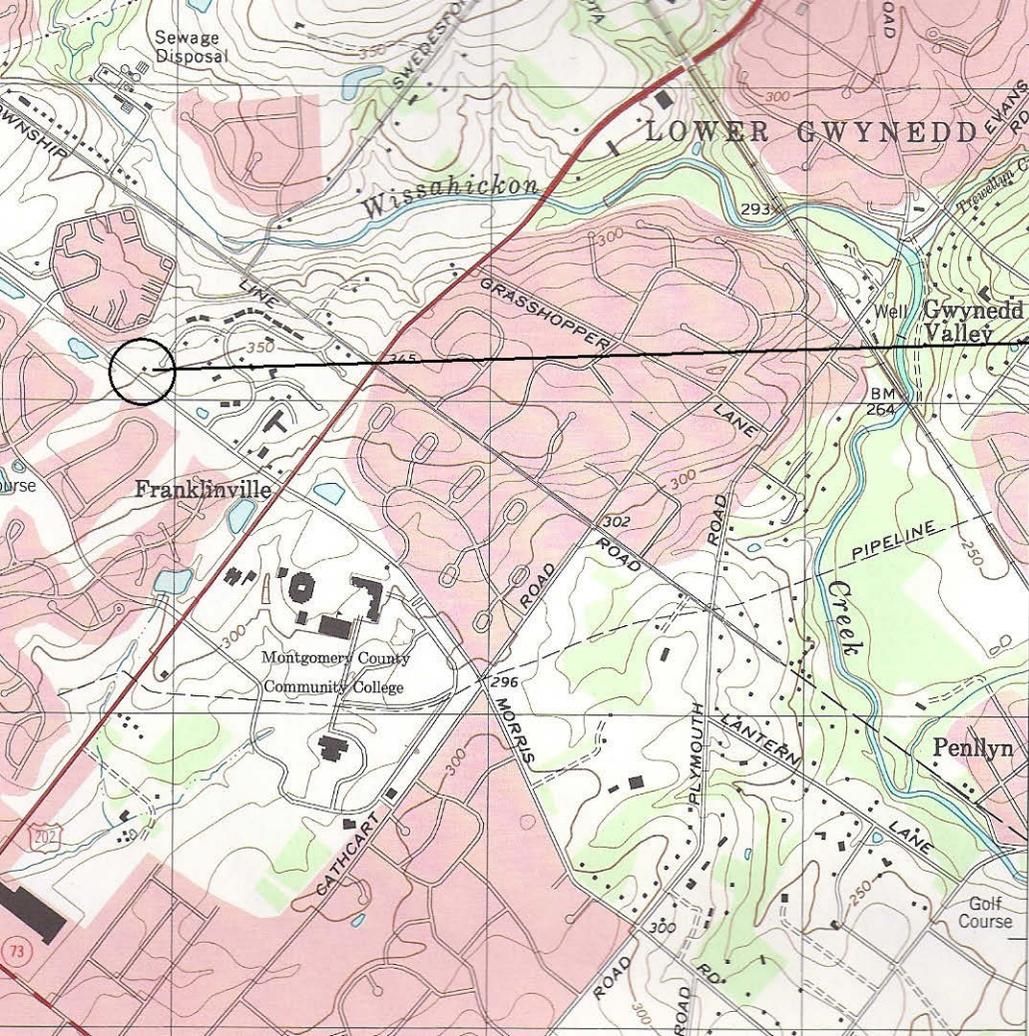
Photo 15-Interior view, camera direction west.

Photo 16-View of interior door, camera direction north northeast.

Photo 17-Detail view of small door in interior door, camera direction north.

Photo 18-View of interior door with small door open, camera direction north.

Photo 19-Interior view of projection room addition, camera direction west.



449

448

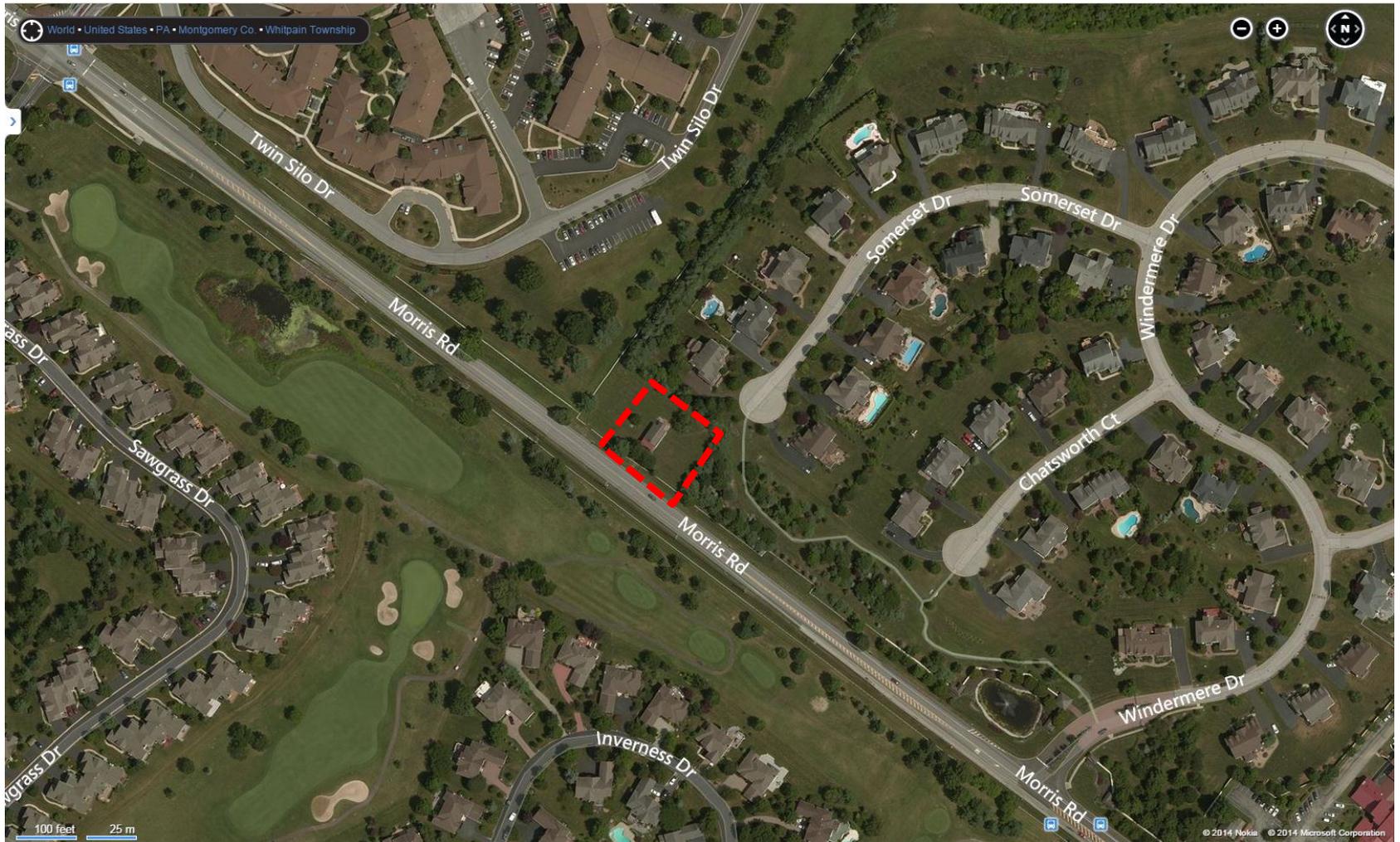
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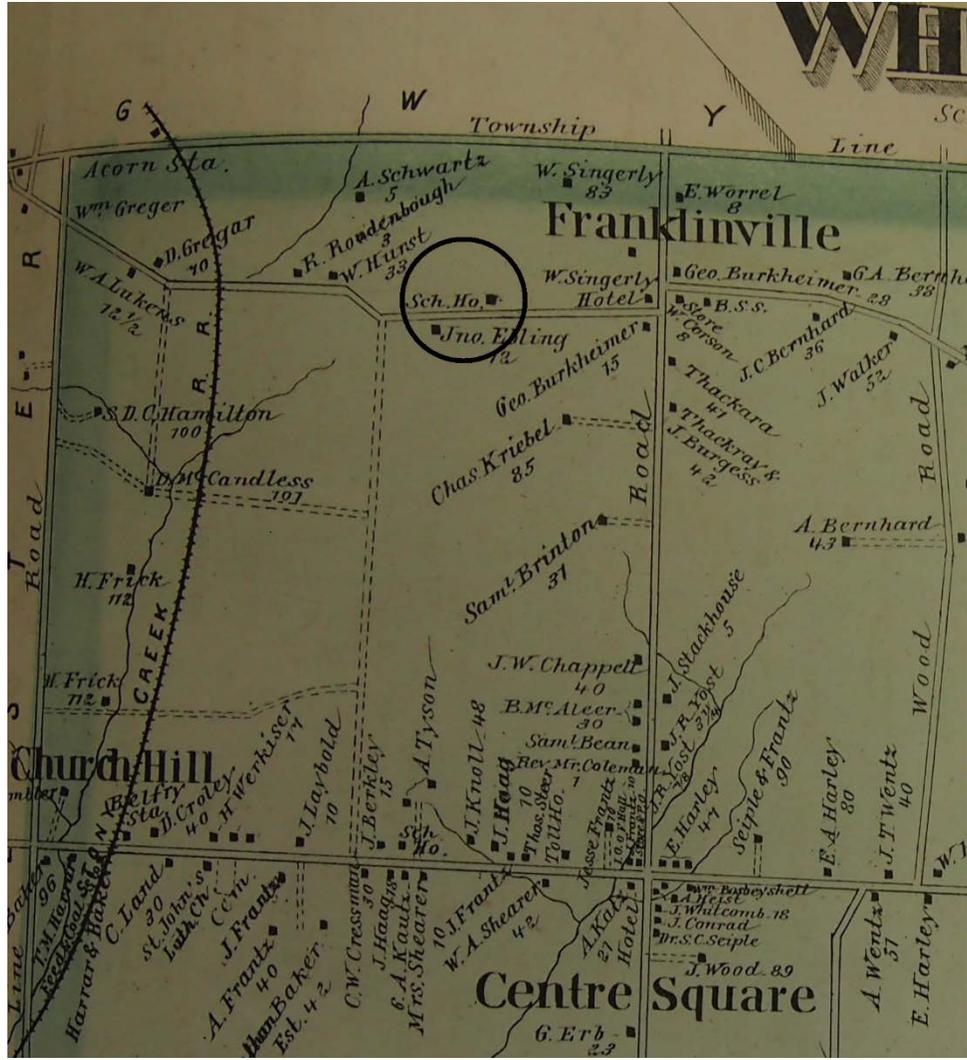
Franklinville School
Whitpain Twp.
Montgomery
County, PA
Lat. 40.182899
Long. -75.283096

Lansdale (PA) Quad

10'



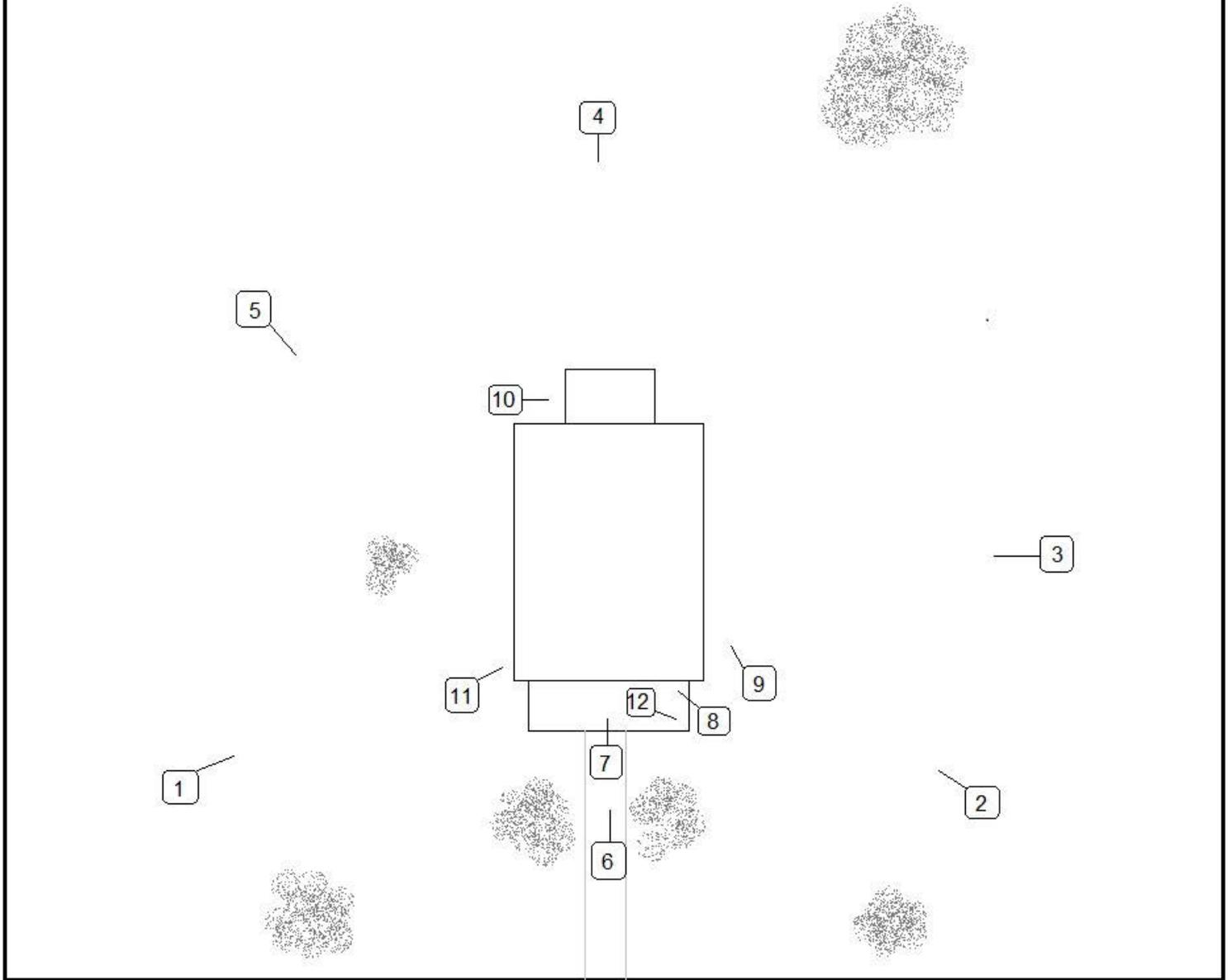
Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA
- National Register Boundary -
Bing Maps aerial photo, 2014



Atlas Map of Montgomery County, Whitpain Township, J.D. Scott, 1877

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA

Montgomery County Tax Map # 66010C085 (Proposed National Register Boundary)



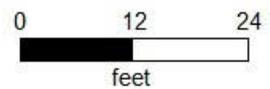
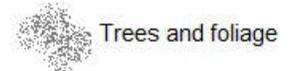
Morris Road

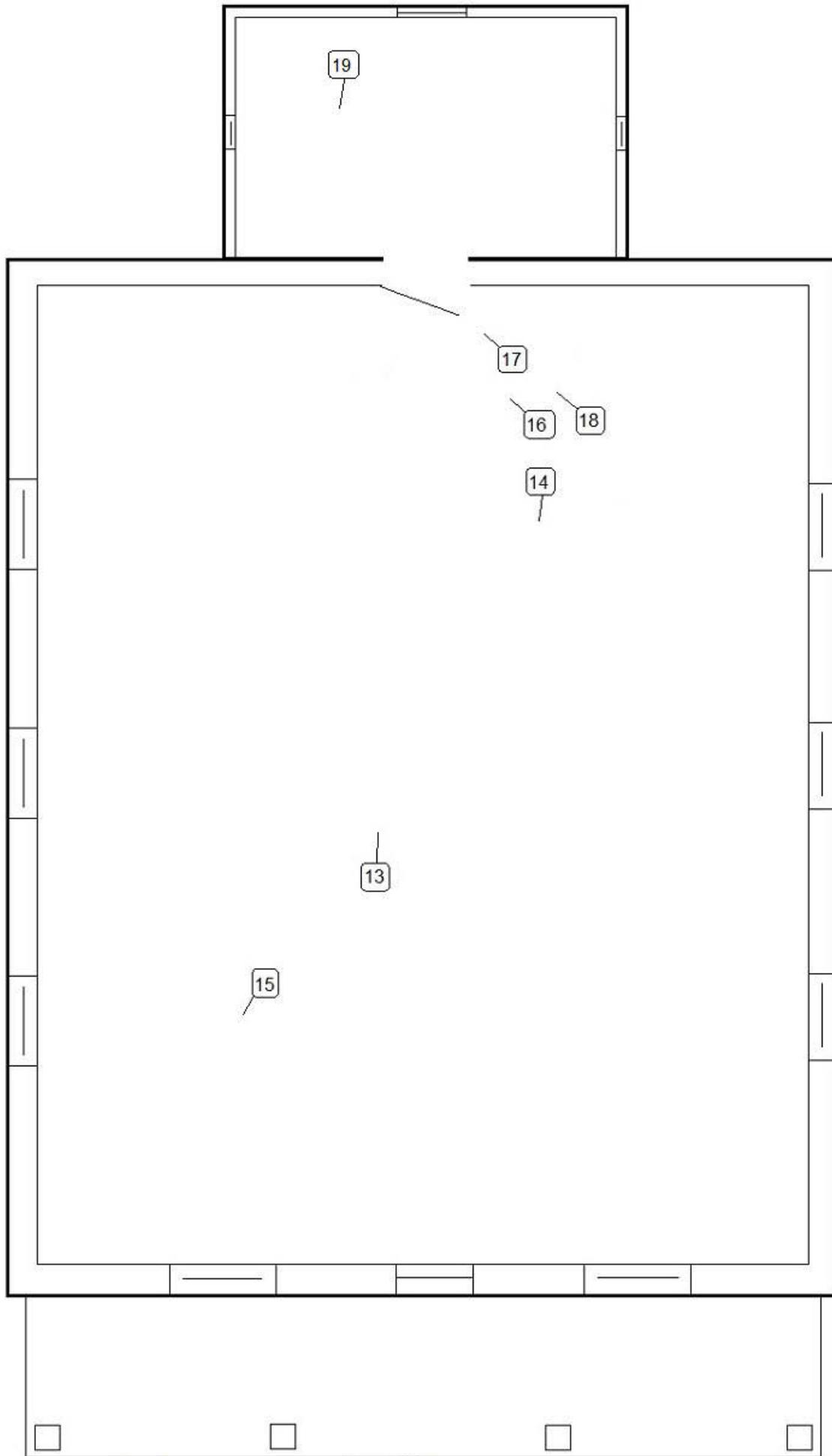
North



Photo location and camera direction

Site Plan
Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA





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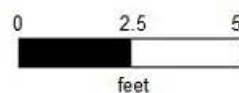
9

Photo location and camera direction

North



Floor Plan
Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA





Historic Photo c.1900
Source: Historical Society of Whitpain

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



Historic Photo c.1905
Source: Historical Society of Whitpain

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



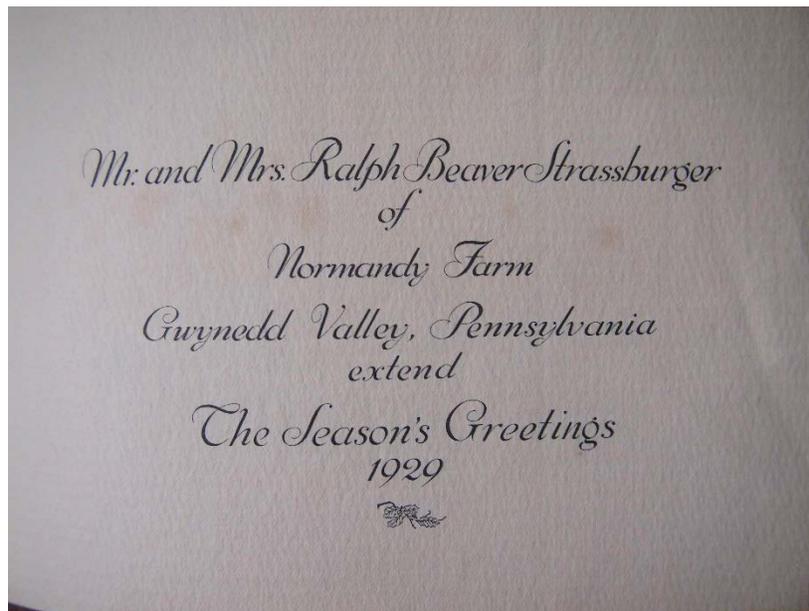
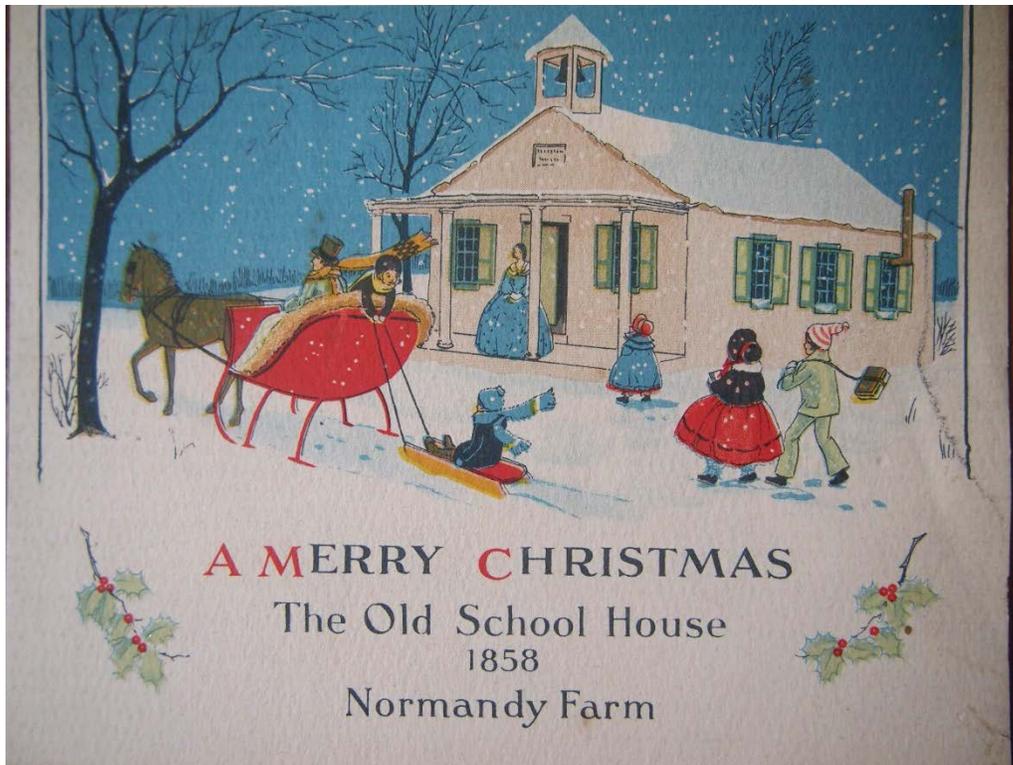
Historic Photo c.1917
Source: Historical Society of Whitpain

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



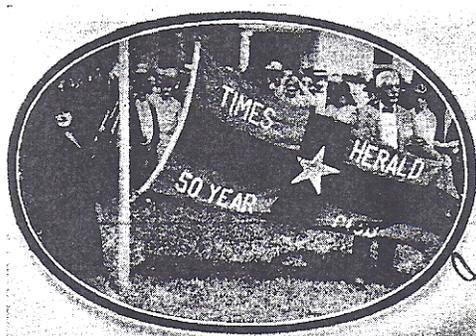
Tinted Posted Cards, Peter's School House, Normandy Farm c.1922
Source: Historical Society of Whitpain

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



Strassburger's Christmas Card 1929
Source: Historical Society of Whitpain

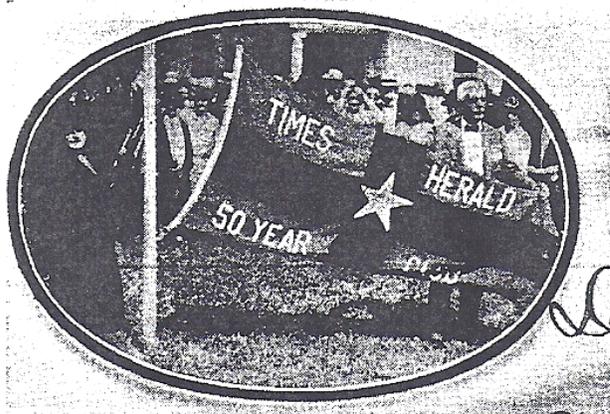
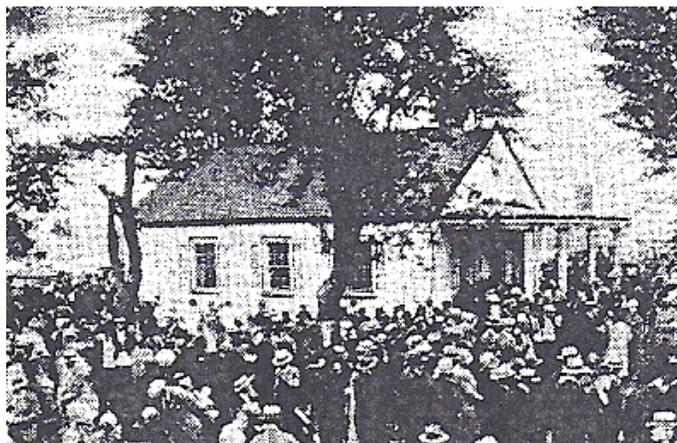
Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



Norristown Times Herald
and the Publisher
Ralph Beaver Strassburger
extend Birthday Greetings to

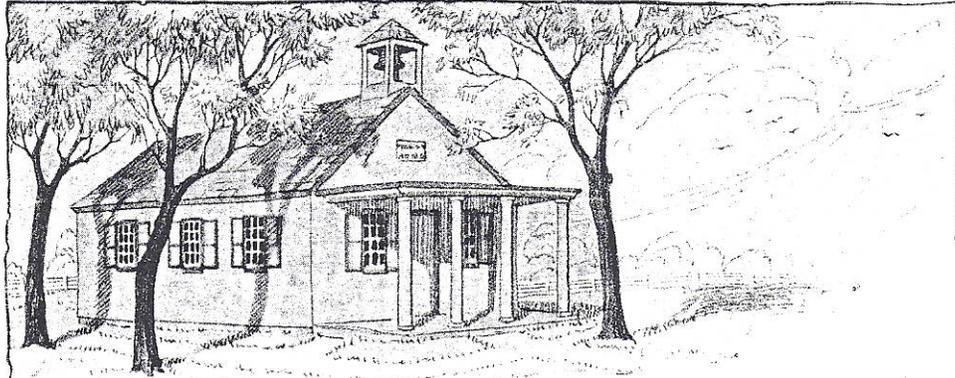
David A. Hutchison

Member of Fifty Year Club of Montgomery County



50 Year Club, Norristown Times Herald Birthday Greeting c.1930
with enlargement of school house and 50 year club banner raising
Source: Historical Society of Montgomery County

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



The
Norristown Times Herald

AND THE PUBLISHER

RALPH BEAVER STRASSBURGER

EXTENDS BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO

William M. Gearhart

MEMBER OF

FIFTY YEAR CLUB OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

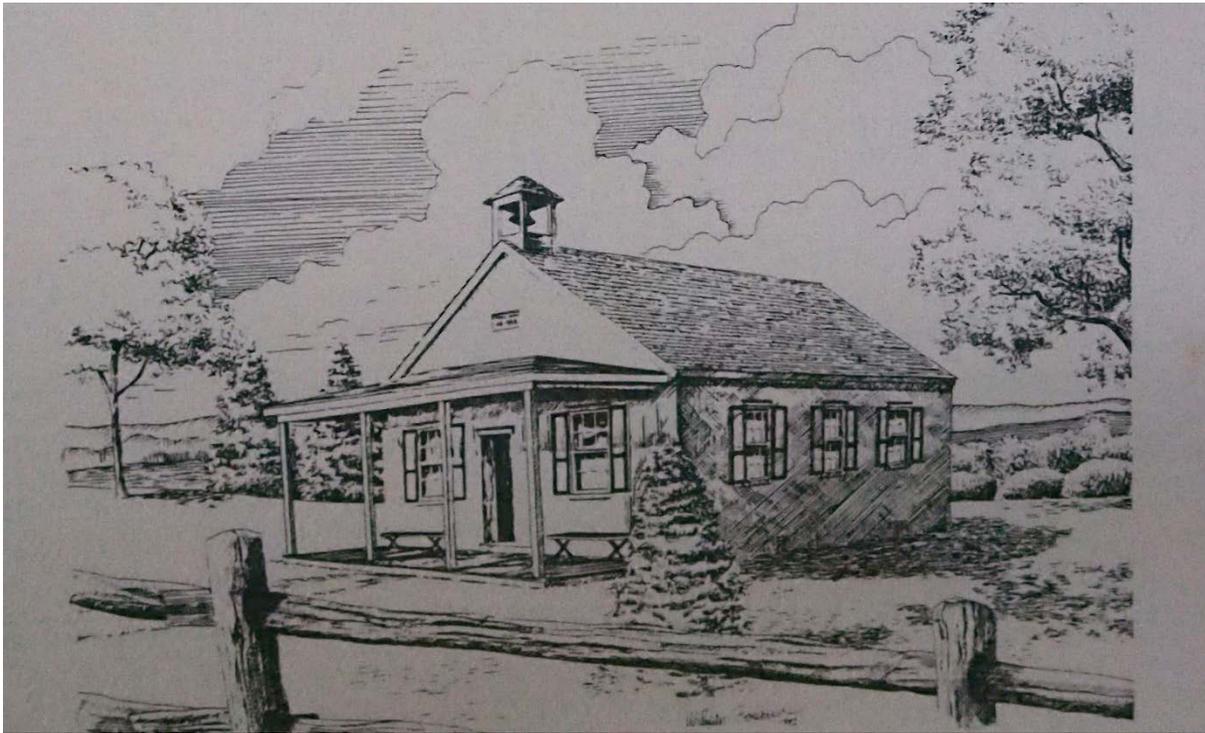
50 Year Club, Norristown Times Herald Birthday Greeting c.1927
Source: Historical Society of Montgomery County

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



Photo c.1983
Source: Historical Society of Whitpain

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



FRANKLINVILLE SCHOOL, GWYNEDD VALLEY, PA

The Franklinville School on Morris Road, Gwynedd Valley, was built in 1858 on one acre of land purchased from William and Elizabeth Greger, and was the last one-room schoolhouse to be built in Whitpain Township. It was operated as a school until 1916. The School property later became part of Normandy Farm, The Ralph Beaver Strassburger estate, and is presently used by the Historical Society of Whitpain Township.

The Society is in the process of restoring the School and will furnish it with an 1850's schoolmaster's desk, student desks and benches and other memorabilia. The Society has also made the Franklinville School available to students and historians interested in local history and in early American education in a farming community.

In Memory of

Mr. Ralph Beaver Strassburger

Mrs. Ralph Beaver Strassburger

and

Mr. J. A. Peter Strassburger

The Times Herald

Extends Birthday Greetings

to You

A Member of the Fifty Year Club

50 Year Club, Norristown Times Herald Birthday Greeting, c.1994
Source: Robert Whittock private collection

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



HABS documentation photo, c.2000
Survey number HABS PA-6062-F

Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



Shelly School, Richland Township, Bucks County, PA

(Source: Shelly School National Register nomination, photo by David Kimmerly 5/23/2008)

Comparable property for the
Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



Pleasant Grove School, Mount Joy Township, Adams County, PA
(Photographed by David Kimmerly, 3/31/2014)

Comparable property for the
Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



Hartzel-Strassburger House, Hilltown Township, Bucks County, PA
(Photographed by David Kimmerly, 3/12/2014)

Comparable property for the
Franklinville School
Whitpain Township
Montgomery County, PA



H.M. SCHOOL
D. 1858



1925
A.D. 1925









PUBLIC SCHOOL.
A.D. 1858.









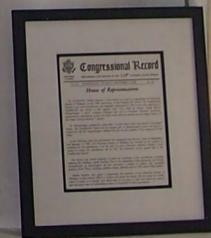


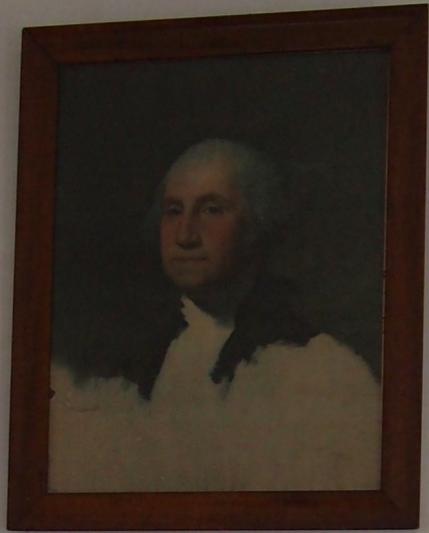
PUBLIC SCHOOL.
A.D. 1858.











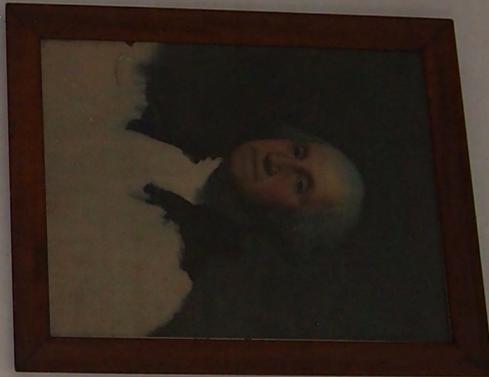
*Please do not enter
For Staff Only!*







From the 1770s
1770s
1770s





SUNDAY OPEN HOUSE

**HISTORIC 1 ROOM
SCHOOL HOUSE**

150

**Proud To
Keep America
Clean**