

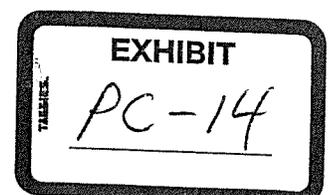
History of the Strode's Mill Crossroads: Strodesville, East Bradford, Chester County, Pennsylvania

The original submission and approval of Strode's Mill National Register District focused on one family's contribution to the evolution of the farming, educational and industrial commerce of the crossroads. In fact, multiple families contributed to the growth of the village and maintained its' integrity for 295 years.. Most importantly, is the silent contribution of the Plum Run that meanders through the area. All structures are key to its path through the land. The mill, built in 1721 is obviously the lightning rod for the crossroads, but the current day Tigie Farm HR#137 is the plantation house of the builder of the mill, John Willis and subsequently the home of the successful Miller Entriiken. The title search has revealed a structure on the site as early as 1721. This resource is still farmed today. As one then travels up Tigie Road to Route 52, one looks up the hill across the stream to Fox Hill Farm HR #136 c.1837, extant farmhouse and tremendous outbuildings. Turning south on Route 52 from Tigie Road, the dam ruin is seen at the confluence of two branches of Plum Run. This dam had provided the power through its race to Strodes Mill for centuries, as well as supporting a 5 acre lake for swimming, recreation and the much enjoyed, Saturday bath.

As one continues through the cross roads, past the Mill there are several structures on, now, four parcels. This area was known as the Passmore Farm and prior to that the Darlington Farm. The Strodes married Darlingtons and Darlingtons married Passmores. The descendants of Isaac Passmore still live in houses on the site. This area, on the west side of Route 52, holds the blacksmith wheelwright shop, four residences and a barn ruin, all contributors to the orchard and later Passmore Greenhouse Industry. Passmore was the largest provider of roses through World War I and II, to the Philadelphia market, and five generations of Passmores worked the land. There was a produce store adjacent to the blacksmith wheelwright shop and Strode's mill later produced some of the best cider in the area, apples being grown just across the street at the Darlington Orchard, also known as the Strode's Orchard. Three of these houses and the barn ruin were omitted from the current district.

Perhaps the grandest omission from the original national reg. listing is Chesterdale Farms. As one enters the house, the log structure is apparent inside the north end of the residence. The log house was built c.1725. The residence/farmstead has grown to become a serpentine manor house with a huge fieldstone bank barn. The Jeffries owned this farm, their landholdings follow the path of the British Troops march, Sept. 11, 1777 to the Battle of the Brandywine, from Jeffries Ford. Now, an eleven acre private residence, it is rumored that the British Troops occupied this farmstead for five days prior to moving into place for the Paoli Massacre. This farmstead is a major contributor to the district.

With these omissions included in the district, a better tale of the Strodesville is told. The integrity and setting is a key resource contributing to the early development of the agriculturally based village that developed and prospered for centuries along the banks of the Plum Run



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The title searched history of this area, existing registered district and proposed expansion area, tell the tale of this historical crossroads. The c 1701 patent map shows absentee landowner, John Willis owning the heart of the crossroads. His son united with George Carter and Samuel Scott, to build the grist mill in 1721. Their miller, George Entriakin, earns enough money to purchase house and land from John Willis (now known as Tigue Farm #137) who is taxed in 1796. In 1760 George Entriakin, is taxed on the mill, as he purchased the mill in 1753 from Carter's share, and a portion in 1735 from John Willis' share. George Entriakin also holds 59 acres of land within the Tigue Farmstead.

The Mill and associated buildings remains in one parcel with the Strode house behind the Strode Barn on Birmingham Rd. The structures north of the barn-Darlington Boarding School and outbuildings, as well as the Millers house and the tenant house on Lenape/Rte 52, all remain together on 93 acres under Strode ownership. In 1926 when Darlington Strode died intestate leaving 6 children who then subdivided the area into parcels. The Strode Sausage and Scrapple Factory then had three owners: A Darlington Strode, Joseph W. Strode and Phillip Price (who was married to Virginia Strode). In 1983 all three sold their interests in the business to Central and Western Industrial Development Authority (to be conveyed to Weaver's Lebanon Bologna Co. In 1988 they sold to Black Rowan who held until East Bradford Township purchased for Open space in 2015. The Boarding School was sold in 1890 at Sheriffs Sale. The Mill was sold out of the family in 1893 but continued to serve the crossroads until 1967. Tax records are vague, no descriptive of positioning of Strode Barn on any records. There is mention of a successful butter business by the Strode family prior to scrapple and sausage. In 1825 an add runs for milling for wheat, rye, Indian corn, and oats. Also advertised is a general assortment of dry goods, hardware, queensware, groceries, liquors, drugs, medicines, paints and window glass as well as Beaties cast steel tools, mowing and cradling scythes: Caleb Strode. They also canned many vegetables and fruits at the site and in 1880 there is reference to a large ice house at the mill that could hold 300 tons of ice to support fruit preservation in 1882. Lewellen Entriaken of East Bradford first sells scrapple and Sausage Sept 22nd 1873, at West Chester market. 1875 the Strodes sold their first scrapple. They began with 3 to 4 hogs a week and soon were bringing in hogs by the train car load-they were herded up Lenape Rd from the Lenni Picnic park train station to the mill. The hogs were also herded through the streets of West Chester to the mill, as hogs came in from the Midwest. In 1900 A. Darlington Strode erected a new room in front of his main building to accommodate a new paddle method to make scrapple-paddles were kept in motion by steam. Again another addition in 1908 in noted in the local news. The scrapple sold for .39 cents a can and was shipped all over the US. In 1920 the dam was closed on the mill race and the mill was supplied by tractor engine power just across the street from the sausage factory.

The barn building does not show up on maps until 1883 (possibly on the 1873 map as well). There is anecdotal references to animals on the site, a house on the site, which may be the Millers house up the hill from the Mill. All would justify a barn structure adjacent to the Mill prior to 1883.

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During the same period, 1777, William Jeffries purchases Chesterdale Farms (HR#59) and by 1798 tax records, has built a stone house, spring house, frame kitchen, log grainery and a shop. Thomas, son of George Carter who died in 1726, is now listed as millwright and has built, with sister Elizabeth, a stone house, 2 log houses, log stable, stone kitchen and log shop on 35 acres. The millers most likely all had a stake in the mill. In 1772 the mill is sold to Emmor Jeffries and wife Elizabeth (sister of Thomas Carter) In the county tax list of 1798 the Jeffries owned Chesterdale Farm, 115 acres, Jacob owned 250 acres, Cheney owned 121 acres and Emmor owned 350 acres, all with improvements.

These findings of fact demonstrate that the farming community surrounding the mill, prior to Strode's Family entering the ownership circle, all had a financial stake in the mill and crossroads. Shops were built and the mill thrived from 1721 until 1784 when the first Strode surfaces in titles/tax records of mill ownership. Thus demonstrating inclusion in this district.

By 1784, Emmor Jeffries sells the mill to a blacksmith, Richard Strode, who owned the blacksmith shop in Sconneltown and an 80 acre farm, brother Joseph owned a 70 acre farm, adjacent, in Sconneltown, just over the hill north west of the mill.

Looking at the datestone on the serpentine portion of the Strode Barn, the date 1875 and initials M R Strode speak of the entrance on the Strode Family at the crossroads, other than the purchase of the Entriken's (Emmor Jeffries) Mill in 1784.

The stage is then set, with a crossroads already in development. All owners were farming the area and involved with the success of the mill and subsequent shops on the Jeffries and Carter's land. George Entrikin sells a parcel to the Paxsons, c 1800 thus establishing Fox Hill Farm (#136)

Next Chapter of history is "Let the Marriages Begin". Strodes marry into the Darlington Family and eventually buy HR#135, a subdivision of HR #136. They purchase land from Strodes (thru marriage) and started the orchard behind the blacksmith and wheelwright shops. In 1887 the first "glass house" was built on the orchard by the Darlington Brothers. Their orchard was the major supplier of apples to the mill for cider production. They were also selling sundries, trees, vegetables and fruit. The orchard goes into bankruptcy with land holders listed as Darlington Brothers, Phoebe Paxson and Dr Elwyn (later owner of Chesterdale Farms). In 1894 Isaac Passmore purchases the land and marries a Darlington and inherits Paxson Farm.

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Three generations of Passmores work the orchard, selling vegetables and fruit. In the early 1900's rose growing was added to the production of the land and the Passmores became the largest seller of roses on the Philadelphia market during the first and second world war. The business was sold in 1958. Three houses were erected on this parcel by the Passmores HR #180 and #157 and #158.

In addition to the famous Strode Family's Scrapple and Grist Mill Commerce, we add the rose growing industry, both evolving out of the agricultural ingenuity of the farming community surrounding these cross roads.

The Strode Family still retains ownership in the district. The Passmore decendants still own land and operate the non-contributing resource, Young's Garage. The Entrikins farmed until the 1930's, and the Tigue Family still operates the original Entrikin Farmstead.

In conclusion, we have the following demonstrated areas of National Register significance noted in the initial application:

Early Agriculture

Early Architecture

Agricultural Commerce

Agricultural Industry

Education

Revolutionary Troop movement and occupation of the district, September 11th 1777

The area is part of the larger agricultural area historically associated with the village. Surrounding farmsteads, Bala Farm to the northwest and Paxon Farm, across Birmingham Rd., also contributed to the crossroads. However, the housing developments that have occurred over the past 10 to 15 years have severely disturbed their settings and integrity, and effectively created a dis-contiguous parcel relationship to the crossroads.

The Scanneltown Blacksmith/Wheelwright shop, site of Townsend's eyewitness account of British Troops marching to the Brandywine Battle, further northwest of the site, is in ruin. To the south of the proposed district on Route 52, is the Gibbons/Bailey mill site. At one time a thriving crossroads, now a schoolhouse and mill, both residences, with some integrity to contribute to the local pre-rev war history of the area.

If you view the aerial photos, enclosed, you will see the encroachment on the district. Further, the University of West Chester's growth is pressuring the proposed resources along Tigue Rd. as well as current Toll Brothers subdivision/land development proposal and plans to potentially widen Tigue Rd and feed into Route 52 will have further detrimental effects on the proposed and existing districts. Also of note, is the 202 corridor expansion, currently under Section 106 review. Our township has conducted a study of the Plum Run, which threads its way through the district. Findings indicate severe

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degradation of the watershed that were ultimately repaired and stabilized. The dam ruin is on the Tigie Farm property.

There are only one or two noncontributing structures in this district. . Additionally, there has been discussion in the township regarding the Path of the British Troops to the Battle of the Brandywine. We feel this path, that enters our township at Jeffries Ford and travels through the center of Strode's Mill Historic District, should be designated historic and somehow amend the current Brandywine Battlefield borders. The British troops path is decorated like a necklace with contributing structures that stood on the day of the battle.

Maps:

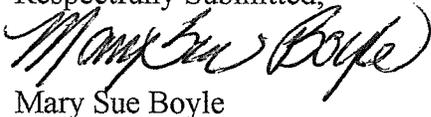
Enclosed are the maps from the layout of the Penn Grants thru to the current aerial photographs of the district. As requested, sections of Breau's and Witmer's Atlases are in the grouping, all demonstrating the evolution of the area.

Keyed Overview of the district view shed:

Barbara Rutz has developed a map with 6-keyed areas within the district. These areas show the existing historic resources. Additionally, Barbara has created the tax parcel maps for each resource in the district and how they have changed over time.

Along with the collection of maps I have included news clippings from the Chester County Historical Society Archives, as well as the 1721 tax register.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary Sue Boyle

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