

NORRIS FARM
(Baker Farm)
.5 mile west of County Road 857 &
.25 mile east of County Road 88/1
Cheat Neck vicinity
Monongalia County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-298

HABS
WVA
31-CHTNK.V,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NORRIS FARM (Baker Farm)

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Location: .5 mile west of County Road 857 & .25 mile east of County Road 88/1, Cheat Neck vicinity, Monongalia County, West Virginia

USGS Lake Lynn, PA-WV Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
17.598550.4392640 (House HABS No. WV-298-A)
17.598630.4392700 (Barn HABS No. WV-298-B)
17.598660.4392690 (Tractor Shed HABS No. WV-298-C)
17.598660.4392690 (Chicken House HABS No. WV-298-D)
17.598820.4392550 (Cemetery HABS No. WV-298-E)

Present Owner: Patricia Baker

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Patented in 1780, the Norris Farm represents broad patterns in our nation's history. The farm illustrates the basic historical trends in the county beginning with early settlement and the granting of land by the colonial government in the late eighteenth century. It then traces the era of agricultural dominance during the nineteenth century, and, finally, this industry's eventual decline throughout the early and mid-twentieth century.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1. **Historical Development:** Note: Since the Norris Farm is not located within the boundaries of a city or town, the farm location is being identified with the nearest town—"Cheat Neck"—with the word "vicinity" after the name. However, the township name "Union District" is often used as a local standard for the address, and for this reason often appears as the location in many reference materials. According to the 1993 *Historic Structures Inventory and Determination of Eligibility Report*, Volume 1 of the Mon/Fayette Transportation Project:

Before the official demarcation of the border between Pennsylvania and Maryland was established by extension of the Mason and Dixon Line in 1784, the territory that now encompasses northeastern West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania was claimed by both Virginia and Pennsylvania. During the first three quarters of the eighteenth century, Virginia claimed the vast lands between the Alleghenies and the Ohio River as part of Augusta County. In 1776 the county was reorganized and the northern half, known as the District of West Augusta, was divided into three counties: Monongalia, Ohio and Yohogania (Core 1974:431-432). This territory gradually grew through annexations over the next several years and by 1780, Monongalia County, Virginia, encompassed the entire northern half of what is now West Virginia.

In an early effort to establish local government, the plantation of Theophilus Phillips, located on Georges Creek in present-day Fayette County [Pennsylvania], was chosen as the first seat of Monongalia County courts. Contrasted with the largely scattered development in the mountainous terrain to the south, the more extensive settlement of northern Monongalia County precipitated the election of Phillip's plantation as county seat. With the ratification of the Mason-Dixon Line by Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland in 1784, the northern portion of Monongalia County fell within the boundaries of Pennsylvania and thus it became necessary to relocate the county seat. Court and county business was carried out at the home of Colonel John Evans until the first county courthouse was built ca. 1785 in the newly incorporated city of Morgantown. . . .

Examination of land patent records for Monongalia County (as it stood until 1783) reveals that most of the prime property along valuable waterways was claimed prior to the start of the Revolutionary War. In Union District, settlers chose tracts along the Cheat River, Ruble's Run, and Morgan's Run (Core 1974).

Upon taking title to these lands, the first settlers tended to fall into three general categories. Some individuals, acting as land agents, purchased a large tract of land for the express purpose of dividing it into smaller parcels and selling to immigrants who traveled west in search of a small piece of land for a homestead and farm. This type of settler would typically retain a relatively small parcel of land for himself to serve as a homestead. A slight variation of this method involved the subdivision and sale of all the original parcel whereby the land agent would move south or west to repeat the process. The third type of settler bought a choice tract of land and established his family as leaders in the agricultural or industrial life of the community. Upon the landowner's death, the property passed down to family members; in some cases a son continued to maintain the land as originally begun; just as commonly, the tract was divided among the heirs and at least a portion of the property would remain in the family through several generations. . . .

Settlers who intended to remain in the region concentrated on first clearing the land they purchased. The first agricultural and industrial products of the region, developed for domestic use, gradually evolved into commercial ventures when a particular area became established as a population center and the need for intensive milling, sawing or tanning arose.

Early agriculture in the Monongalia Valley took the form of subsistence farming whereby settlers grew only what they needed to support the inhabitants of the property. "Not uncommonly, all income, food, clothing, and other essentials were derived from the farm and its byproducts" (Grantz 1984:12). During the last two decades of the eighteenth century, as the region increased in population and diversification and specialization of agriculture and industry became possible, landowners began to concentrate on only one type of crop as a means of income. Beginning in the 1780s, the area became a center for grain farming; principal grains grown in the region included wheat, rye, and oats (Schmoyer 1974:78).

This specialization in grain farming led to the growth of two related industries. Commercial mills were constructed to produce flours that were shipped south and west via the nearby waterways. In 1773, Samuel Ruble erected one of the first grist mills in Monongalia County at Cheat Neck, a pocket of land created by the sharp turns and twists of the meandering Cheat River near the northern end of the county (Schmoyer 1974:78). Other mills were built along both the Cheat River and Deckers Creek in West Virginia about 1800. Many of the early millseats that survived into the early twentieth century were inundated when construction of the State Line Dam by the West Virginia Power and Transmission Company in 1926 flooded the area (Moreland 1940:43).

Distilleries were also established throughout the . . . area during this period. Converting local grains, especially rye, into whiskey, the distilleries enabled easier transportation and distribution of cash crops to eastern markets. Demand for spirits made the expensive journey over the mountains to eastern towns profitable. In 1791, the federal government passed an act to enforce the collection of an excise tax on whiskey production. This news created an uproar among the smaller distillers in the west and a resistance group was organized to drive the tax collectors out of the region. The federal government responded by sending troops to confront the [rebels] and this military presence successfully quashed the rebellion in 1794. . . . a strong likelihood exists that commercial and home distilleries served Monongalia County's agricultural population. Nearly every farm that produced grain, as well as some strictly domestic properties, had a still of some size near a spring or other source of water (Van Voorhis 1893:14).

Another industry that developed in the late eighteenth century involved the manufacture of iron. The abundance of natural resources in Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia contributed to the tremendous growth of iron, and later steel, manufacturing throughout the nineteenth century and established the Monongahela Valley as a leader in this industry. . . .

The largest ironworks in the valley was established near the Cheat River in Monongalia County in 1808. Known as alternately as Jackson's Iron Works, Cheat Iron Works or Laurel Run Iron Works, the furnace complex evolved in a larger ironmaking community that included several smaller furnaces, a nail factory, rolling mills, a foundry, and blacksmith shops, and employed as many as 1200 men during its peak of operation in the mid-nineteenth century (Schmoyer 1974:71). The economic depression that enveloped the United States in the mid-nineteenth century caused the close of many of these early iron furnaces throughout . . . Monongalia [C]ount[y].

Other types of manufacturing began around the beginning of the nineteenth century in response to extensive settlement of the Monongahela Valley. Glass factories and coal mines were established to accommodate the needs of the early settlers and eventually more industries developed into prosperous businesses across the valley.

. . .

By 1800, the total population of Monongalia County was 8,540 with 163 slaves. . . Showing a dramatic increase by 1810, Monongalia County included 12,793 people, including 351 slaves. . . .

In terms of population growth, by 1810 . . . Union District had entered a situation of

near stasis that would persist almost to the close of the nineteenth century. In the early nineteenth century, with the landscape thoroughly settled for the purposes of charcoal ironmaking and dispersed, extensive farming, the project area became a place that new settlers from Europe or the eastern United State passed by. The great majority of the maturing children in local families presumably opted to migrate to more desirable agricultural areas in the Old Northwest, or later, to growing industrial cities such as Pittsburgh. Census returns indicate that the ethnic character of the population remained predominately English, Scotch-Irish and German through most of the century. . . .

Despite the prominence of the iron industry in the economic life of the project area, agriculture provided the means of living for most of the inhabitants. The earliest readily available documentary information on local agriculture is found in the U.S. Census Schedule of Agriculture for 1850. These census figures indicate that the farmers of the area took a comfortable subsistence from their land by means of a system of mixed farming, but tended to raise less of a marketable surplus than did farmers in more prosperous, earlier settled agricultural regions of mixed farming, such as south-central Pennsylvania and central Maryland. . . .

The. . . area was home to the kinds of relatively small scale industrial concerns which provided necessary services for farmers and others, and refined agricultural products. . . . The Eastern District of Monongalia County, an area much larger than the current Union District and that included Morgantown, had six gristmills, six sawmills, four tanneries, three shoemakers' shops, two saddlers' shops, two hatters' shops, a cabinetmaker's shop, a chairmaker's shop and a pottery, as well as a linseed oil factory, a paper mill and a marble quarry (U.S. Bureau of the Census: 1850c).

The *Historic Structures Inventory and Determination of Eligibility Report* continues with a description of the Agricultural Landscape Era (ca. 1860-ca. 1893) . . .

. . . . Although agricultural practices followed the same basic pattern as in preceding decades the decline of local ironmaking allowed agriculture to become the predominant economic activity in the project area during this era. The 1870 agricultural census indicates that the local agricultural system remained one of mixed farming with the raising of limited surpluses for commerce. Some change did occur between 1850 and 1870 however. Apples and sorghum molasses joined the list of commercial commodities, produced in marketable but not massive quantities on many farms throughout the project area. The 1870 figures indicate that farmers in a large part of Union District produced butter for market, probably for consumption in nearby Morgantown. . . .

. . .by the beginning of the twentieth century, a slow decline in agriculture had manifest itself. Although only two-thirds of the acreage consisted of improved land, in 1900 Monongalia County's 2,259 farms composed nearly 95 percent of the county's 229,120 acres. Ten years later, only 71 percent of the county's surface was actively farmed. By 1920, a little over 50 percent of the county's land contained agricultural establishments. In 1940, Monongalia contained only 1,479 farms.

Corn became the principal grain raised during this period and farming practices shifted toward the production of beef and dairy products. In 1900 annual production of corn amounted to 298,170 bushels. Ten years later, when over 2,000 less acres of farmland was under cultivation, 40,000 more bushels of corn were raised. During the same period, wheat production decreased from over 125,000 bushels to under 40,000 bushels. Cattle raising, both for dairying and beef, became increasingly important parts of West Virginia farms. In 1910, nearly 20,000 head of cattle, consisting of 5,227 dairy cows and 14,531 beeves, were raised on Monongalia farms (Core 1976, 1983).

The transformation to less labor intensive agricultural practices, such as beef and dairy cattle, mirrored downward trends in Union District's population during the first two decades of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, Union District contained over 1,600 persons. By 1910 the district's population had decreased slightly to 1,551 people. Indicative, perhaps, of the widespread movement of rural peoples to urban and suburban areas, Union District's population fell drastically in 1920 to 1,119 residents. Although the district's population began to rise to over 2,000 people in 1930 and over 3,000 on the eve of World War II, agriculture failed to employ significant numbers of the population on a fulltime basis. In fact many farmers were forced to supplement their farm income with other part time jobs (Core 1983:128). . . .

Though agriculture was one of the region's most important industries during the nineteenth century, the competition with Midwestern farms at the turn of the century caused many local farmers to sell their land or attempt to market another type of product. After World War II, farming began to decline rapidly, and by the early 1980s those who chose to remain in the agriculture industry had shifted their focus to dairy farming, which currently remains the dominant practice (Basilik, et al., 1992:217). In response to the reduced demand for local products, many land owners subdivided their tracts and sold parcels to both individual purchasers and residential developers. This practice has led to the establishment of scattered villages and suburban developments in the midst of previously isolated rural areas.

Determination of Eligibility Report, Volume 1 of the Mon/Fayette Transportation Project states that:

The first white contact with the Monongahela Valley came through European explorers and traders who ventured into the region during the 1730s. The French entered the region from the north down the valleys of the Allegheny, while the English traveled through Pennsylvania by way of the Juniata [River], as well as across the mountains from Virginia and Maryland (Nelson 1900:136). Most of these explorers found their way west by following. . . Indian paths through the dense forests that characterized much of the landscape in the eighteenth century. The majority of the European traders and explorers did not travel west expressly to settle permanently in one specific place. Rather, in their pursuit of trade with various Indian tribes, these nomadic businessmen came to the area to trade their wares, and eventually they moved on, following their clients to outposts beyond the Monongahela Valley. As explorers and contacts, these first pioneers performed a valuable service in that they opened up trails for later settlers to follow and prepared the native peoples for the eventual arrival of permanent European settlers (Core 1974:130-131).

With the possibility of a profitable market across the Allegheny Mountains, several trading and speculating companies were organized by the middle of the eighteenth century. These companies were comprised mainly of East Coast businessmen who invested money and supplies, and adventurers who preferred to explore the territory and establish permanent posts. Although written accounts place the lands granted to these associations nearer present-day Pittsburgh, the records of their explorations and the fact that organized groups supported the opening up of western lands reveal important insights into the development of the Monongahela Valley. . . .

Independent of the organized companies, a few groups of settlers located in the Monongahela Valley by the early 1750s. Most historians agree that these early pioneers included Wendell Brown and his sons, Manus, Adam and Thomas in 1751, and two years later, William Stewart, a trader named Dunlap and Hugh Crawford. Other original settlers included traders who remained in the area to engage in agricultural pursuits and members of the military who either stayed behind at the conclusion of a battle or returned after completing their service in another area. The ethnic background of these settlers was predominantly English and Scotch-Irish, however, Germans, French, Welsh, Scotch and Irish were also represented in successive waves of immigrants to the west. . . .

Though widespread exploitation of the natural resources abundant in the region did not occur until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the early settlers

were most certainly aware of the coal and iron deposits that lay just beneath the surface of the land. The location of settlements near water sources, necessary for agricultural as well as drinking purposes, enabled the development of tanneries, mills and forges to occur during the next era without requiring movement from established property.

What few settlers the trading and speculating companies managed to entice to the Monongahela Valley, and those independent pioneers who took advantage of the vast, available lands in the region during these early years, were challenged by native populations. In addition, the advent of the French and Indian War in 1754 drove many families out of the region. Though the victory of the French and their allies forced the early English pioneers from the area and resulted in the destruction of established settlements, the advance of troops westward induced some development as military roads were built and camps and forts were constructed in the region (Core 1974:138-139). This progress was tempered, however, by a temporary reduction of trade in the area between 1755 and 1758 due to more frequent and intense battles among the English, the French and the Indians. . . .

Within its larger territory of 1780, Monongalia County, West Virginia [sic], contained the majority of the forts along the western frontier; even the county's present boundaries encompassed a great number of these military outposts, perhaps the most of any county in the country (Core 1974:343). Though the necessity of these forts indicated the dangers inherent in pioneer settlement, early strategists, such as Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie and George Washington, viewed the building of such fortifications as a way to both entice settlers away from the Atlantic coast and help protect the colonies' western frontier. In their minds, the "Ohio Valley [was] the key to the possession of North America" (Core 1974:334). . . .

. . . . Various historical accounts place the number of settlers in the region in 1768 between 500 and 700 (Nelson 1900:137; Veech 1858-1892:98-99). The abundance of game, the fertility of the land, the fine springs and water-courses, and the easy access of Braddock's Road all contributed to the lure of the Monongahela Valley and established nearly the whole of white settlement there in what is now southwestern Pennsylvania:

The documentary history of 1765, '66, '67, and indeed all of that decade, speaks of no other settlements in Western Pennsylvania, or the West generally, than those within or immediately bordering upon the Monongahela, upon Cheat, upon the Yough, the Turkey Foot, and Redstone, the first and last being the most prominent, and the last the most extensive, covering all the interior settlements about Uniontown. Georges Creek settlers

were referred to Cheat, those about Gist's to the Yough, while turkey Foot took in all the mountain districts (Veech 1858-1892:85). . . .

Though early pioneer attempts at establishing settlements west of the Allegheny Mountains were plagued by resistance from native peoples, traders and governmental interference, the tenacity of these first settlers resulted in the opening of the western frontier. The resolution of territorial disputes between Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland served to divide the region into distinct areas with separate though similar identities. The period of intensive settlement that took place during the last decades of the eighteenth century was characterized by the rapid distribution of valuable lands, the development of key agricultural areas and the establishment of early industries which would later shape the identity of the Monongahela Valley.

[During the Settlement Era (ca. 1770 to ca. 1810), land grants in the area were increasing at substantial rates.] Prior to the government-sanctioned opening of the western frontier with the establishment of Land Offices in 1769, the early pioneers, known sometimes as "squatters," claimed their land solely by occupation. This method was generally acknowledged by later settlers and applications to the Land Office reflected a respect for these previously claimed tracts of land (Ellis 1882:64). Through the next decade land grants were distributed in great volume. Between 1769 and 1776, settlers submitted approximately 25 applications for land patents in Union District, Monongalia county (Core 1974:163-232). Illustrative of the quickening settlement occurring in the region during the late eighteenth century, 22 applications were submitted for land grants in Monongalia County in 1777 (Core 1976:16). By ca. 1780, most of the valuable parcels in the region were patented to individual settlers.

The rapid pace at which the area developed is evident in this statistic from Veech's mid-nineteenth century account of the "Monongahela Country," a region encompassing southwestern Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, and most likely parts of the Ohio Valley as well: in 1768, the area boasted 150 families, or approximately 700 persons; in 1790, the population had burgeoned to 12,995 free whites and 282 slaves (Veech 1858-1892:98-99). . . .

Ferries crossing the larger water bodies were established almost immediately upon intensive settlement of the project area. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, eleven ferries operated in Monongalia County (Schmoyer 1974:58). Established in 1785, the county's first ferry traversed the Cheat River at Ice's Ferry. This location is currently spanned by the Cheat River Bridge. Clelland's Ferry, organized in 1792, crossed the Cheat River north of Ice's Ferry (Schmoyer 1974:59).

River travel developed into an important means of transportation during this period. Local agricultural produce, most notably rye and other grains in the form of whiskey and flour, were shipped to the south and west by ways of the Monongahela River to the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers. For a short time, the heavily-timbered Monongahela Valley also served as a center of ship-building for both ocean-bound and interior river vessels (Basalik et al 1992:167). . . .

The local iron industry formed the preeminent element in the . . . area's economy for most of the decades 1810-1860, although it declined toward the end of the period, finally crashing to a near total halt in the late 1850s. The technology of the ore-smelting, cast iron-producing furnace, the wrought iron-refining forge, and the rolling mill continued essentially what it had been during the preceding period, despite improvement or attempted improvements, such as the use of coke and hot-blast. Hence the ironmaking "plantation" or village of 1850 looked much the same as that of 1790. . . .

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the main concentration of ironmaking and milling activity in the project area centered along the Cheat River. In 1820 the U.S. Census of Manufactures noted the existence in that vicinity of three ironworking concerns, one consisting of a furnace alone, another including a forge as well as a furnace, and a third composed of a forge, a rolling mill and a nail factory. . . .

Thirty years later the census returns for manufactures showed that the Cheat Valley remained the heart of industry in the . . . area, with three furnaces, a forge, a nail factory and an "iron, copper and sheet works." . . .

First mentioned in historical records dating to 1794, the Morgantown-Uniontown Turnpike stands as one physical vestige of the development the ironworking communities that once dotted the Cheat Neck area. Joining Morgantown, West Virginia, and Uniontown, Pennsylvania, the Turnpike also connected the area with two other major east-west roads, the National Road, completed in 1820 between western Maryland and Pittsburgh, and the Northwest Turnpike linking western Maryland with Clarksburg, West Virginia and the Ohio River. Used primarily as a stage and mail route during the early nineteenth century, the Turnpike became more vital to development in Union District during the mid-1800s as the Cheat River industries grew and prospered. By 1840 the Cheat Neck ironworks supported several large villages and post offices were established to serve the workers and their families. In addition to serving the iron-industry related villages, the Turnpike also provided an outlet for the distribution of agricultural goods to local communities. [In

Union District the Turnpike is now known as C.R. 857 (Fairchance Road).]

The system of mixed farming for subsistence followed by farmers of the . . . area in 1850 combined cultivation of wheat and Indian corn (the latter probably in large part for animal feed), raising of livestock, and tending of small orchards, home gardens, potato fields and flax patches. Home manufacturing, perhaps largely of clothing given the ubiquity of sheep flocks and flax patches, was an integral element of local agricultural life. Oat cultivation (for feed), dairying, maple sugaring and sheep raising for wool were also elements in this mixed farming system throughout the project area, but the census figures indicate that these were the commodities which many farmers of 1850 chose to produce in quantities adequate for commerce. . . .

The creation of the State of West Virginia and its municipalities in 1863 remains one of the most apparent effects of the Civil War on the . . . area. The reorganization of Monongalia County into townships, redesignated "districts" in 1873, was one aspect of the predominantly Unionist county's joining its neighbors in breaking away from Confederate Virginia. Union Township, created in 1863, first appeared as a census district in 1870 with a population of 1,619. Redesignated Union District in 1873, the district's population stood at 1,749 persons in 1880. . . .

Following the peak of coal and coke production during World War I, the great Mon Valley entered a period of relative instability and transition exacerbated by the Depression of the 1930s. Even a short spurt of industrial activity precipitated by the Second World War, however, could not reverse the iron and steel industry's dwindling reliance and use of Connellsville coke. The demise of the coal and coke industries in the project area severely limited the area's economic health and development during the mid-twentieth century (Basalik et al. 1992).

Over the past five decades, the Monongahela Valley experienced a significant reduction in population due in large part to the decline of the industries that had precipitated the dramatic growth of . . . Monongalia County during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The modern era has been characterized by the exit of several industries from the area, a return to general subsistence agriculture, as well as a shift to dairy farming, the expansion of transportation networks, and the development of suburbs. . . .

The region regressed into a less industrialized economy as the businesses which had formed company towns and contributed large, sprawling factory complexes to the landscape began to either move out of the area or shut down operations entirely. The coal and coke industry had peaked by the end of World War II, and as an energy source, was supplanted by petroleum products which provided more energy with

greater efficiency. Increased mechanization made the process of extracting coal easier and faster, but resulted in a sharp reduction in required manpower (Basalik, et al. 1992:63). . . .strip mining began to flourish in Monongalia County, and continues to be a leading industry in the county.

Although the subdivision of land that occurred throughout the twentieth century contributed greatly to the rise of suburbanization in the region, it was the advent of the automobile era that fueled the development of these areas. First trolley lines and then cars allowed workers to commute to their jobs and eventually residential locations became separated from urban areas. Commercial centers typically remained "downtown" until strip shopping centers and malls began to blur the distinction between town and country during the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition to the rise of the automobile as an important form of personal transportation, use of the extensive rail lines and river networks developed over the past two centuries continued at a steady pace. Passenger service on regional railroads, as well as across the country as a whole, declined in the early 1960s, but demand for the transport of goods by way of rail remained steady. Local products, such as iron, steel, coal and coke, were shipped out of the valley via the region's rivers at a fairly high volume. The widespread industry decline in the second half of the twentieth century, however, caused a similar decline in the use of regional rivers for transportation (Basalik, et al., 1992:188).

Currently, the Monongahela Valley appears to be in a state of stagnation. Beyond the creation of recreational amenities, including golf courses and aquatic sports facilities, along Cheat Lake little economic development has occurred within the project area since the decline of intensive industry and agriculture began in the mid-twentieth century. Prospects for similar large-scale economic boosters that spurred the rapid development of the region during its boom periods seem unlikely in the near future. Due to this lack of modernization and stalled development, some of the physical resources which convey the history of the area will likely remain as reminders of the valley's beginnings.

B. SPECIFIC HISTORY OF THE SITE:

1. **Initial Planning and Development:** According to the "West Virginia Historic Property Inventory Form" of the Norris/Baker/Simpson Farm in Volume II of the *Historic Structures Inventory and Determination of Eligibility Report* for the Mon/Fayette Transportation Project:

A large parcel of land, 400 acres, was conveyed to William Norris by the State

(Commonwealth) of Virginia on 27 April 1781 for the consideration of two pounds sterling. Deeds indicate that his tract adjoined lands of Francis Warman, Bartholomew Jenkins and John Scott, all of whom appear frequently in discussion of the county's early history. Both Bartholomew Jenkins and Francis Warman, who were related by marriage, themselves owned large farms in the area. Personal Property Tax Lists for 1786 include a "William Norriss" who was charged tax for himself as well as for two white males over the age of 21, seven horses and sixteen cattle (Schreiner-Yantis and Love 1987). Since Norris had no sons it is possible that the two men listed in the tax enumeration may have been hired hands or indentured servants, indicating that the farm was likely of a substantial size. The 1788 Tax listed Norris, three blacks over the age of sixteen and eight horses (Schreiner-Yantis and Love 1987).

Though the patent was not recorded until 1781, it is believed that Norris settled on the land earlier, possibly in the early 1770s. Local historians place Norris' patent in 1772 (Butcher 1912:1084). As part of the Department of Agriculture's program for recognizing historic farms 200 years or older, the subject property was designated a "Bicentennial Farm" in 1976. This recognition is based on the assumption that the farm was established at least by 1776 and the current owner believes that the log portion of the house was built ca. 1773-1774. Because land patents were often conveyed after actual settlement had occurred, the house may have been constructed in the decade before the recorded land grant. The estimated date, ca. 1780, used here takes into account both the historic farm designation and the patent and deed records.

2. **Changes in Plan and Site:** The original log house was constructed ca. 1780 with additions added throughout the next 150 years (HABS No. WV-298-A). Outbuildings were added to the homestead as follows:

ca. 1810	Earliest dated stone in cemetery (HABS No. WV-298-E)
ca. 1860	Forebay barn constructed (HABS No. WV-298-B)
ca. 1900	Tractor shed/combine barn constructed (HABS No. WV-298-C)
ca. 1946	Chicken house constructed (HABS No. WV-298-D)

3. **Individuals Associated With The Site:**

The first owner of the property was William Norris who had come from central Maryland, where he had owned a parcel on which Washington, DC now stands (Black 1961:16).

William Norris' son-in-law, George Baker, was born in 1762 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Butcher 1912:1083). He served in the First Pennsylvania Regiment during the last years of the Revolution (Black 1961:18). By trade he was a gunsmith, and after the

war, he settled at Cheat Neck in Monongalia County. Soon after he married Elizabeth Norris. In 1857 he died at the age of 86 years (Butcher 1912:1083-4).

John N. Baker was the son of George and Elizabeth (Norris) Baker and was born in 1801. Although he had very little formal education (a total of six weeks), he served several terms as justice of the peace (Butcher 1912:1084).

The Honorable George Coleman Baker was the grandson of John N. Baker and was born in 1862 on the homestead. In 1863 after the death of his father, his mother and he moved to Morgantown. He attended the University of West Virginia graduating in 1883 with a Bachelor of Arts. Afterward, he studied the law and opened his own practice in 1889. He also served as prosecuting attorney during the 1890s and was elected to the state Supreme Court in 1905. In 1909 he was appointed judge advocate for the state of West Virginia by the governor (Butcher 1912:1085-6).

4. **Historical Events or Developments Associated With The Site:** The Inventory Form on the farm continues that:

In 1802, [William] Norris conveyed 104 acres of the property to his son-in-law, George Baker who had married Elizabeth Norris in 1789. Local histories recount that George Baker, the son of Peter Becker, was born in West Cocalico Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1762, and that he emigrated to Monongalia County, West Virginia, probably in the 1780s. A gunsmith by trade, he became acquainted with Norris and eventually married one of Norris' five daughters. The land sold to Baker in 1802 may have only been cropland and it is possible that he acquired the house through inheritance. George Baker also bought land, 76 acres, from Bartholomew and Susanah Jenkins in 1802.

George Baker died in 1844; in his will he bequeathed the homestead and farm property to his son, John Norris Baker. Under John N. Baker, the farm became very productive as evidenced by United States Agricultural Census tables from 1850 through 1880. The value of the farm increased from \$3,500 in 1850 to \$4,000 in 1860, \$4,180 in 1870 and \$6,000 in 1880; acreage was at a high of 225 in 1860 and a low of 120 in 1880. The principal crops raised on Baker's farm included wheat, rye, Indian corn and oats. Large amounts of cheese and butter were produced, perhaps for sale to the city dwellers in Morgantown to the south. Baker also had a large stock of cows, about six or seven for milk and dairy products, and twice as many other cattle and oxen. Sheep, swine, chickens and a large orchard and vineyards rounded out the Baker Farm during the mid-nineteenth century. The large yields from the farm as well as the variety of products indicates that in addition to providing sustenance to his family, John Baker also made his living off the land.

John Baker married Nancy Norris in 1823 and they had 10 children. Through the age of 79, John Norris Baker is listed in the United States Population Census as a farmer; he lived to be 93 years old.

Upon his death, John Norris Baker bequeathed the farm property to his son John Henry Baker. In the will dated 1894, John N. specified that the plot of land, five rods square, set aside as a cemetery is to be maintained as such with more ground added as needed. East of the house, the cemetery contains between 75 and 100 gravestones dating from William Norris' 1810 marker though the present and some of the earliest settlers of the area.

John H. Baker continued to farm the land but at a reduced capacity. In 1910, John H. Baker willed the farm to his wife Melissa and his heirs. The property at this point contained 188.07 acres (Will Book).

The property was sold for the first time since 1804 to John N. Simpson, Sr. for the consideration of \$8,000 in 1930. Mr. Simpson's daughter, Patricia Baker, is the current owner and the widow of a Baker descendent who died in 1946. Mr. Simpson, Sr., was employed by the Medical School at the university and upon his death in 1947, the property passed to his children: son, John N. Simpson, Jr., and daughter, Patricia Baker. Patricia Baker acquired title to the lands in 1957 when her brother passed away (Deeds).

The farm now contains about 49 acres designated as the "Homestead" plus two other parcels of farm land of approximately 3 acres each. During the 1970s, Mrs. Baker sold small parcels of the land and in 1982, she conveyed a 100-acre tract to two tenant farmers. [Until the mid-1990s, Mrs. Baker farmed the land at a subsistence level with several acres each of wheat and corn, pasture land for the cows. She also maintained a large garden and some fruit trees. Mrs. Baker no longer resides full-time at the farm. She returns occasionally with her daughter for weekend visits.]

[Mrs. Baker believed] that the remnants of a slave cemetery are located near her garden northwest of the house, but other than the few slaves listed in the late eighteenth century tax records, there is no documentary evidence of the Bakers owning any slaves. Also, a tenant house situated down the hill south of the house is no longer extant.

PART II. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

A. PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE SITE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

- 1. Physical Description of the Site:** The Norris Farm contains approximately 49 acres of land located from of C. R. 857 near Cheat Lake, Monongalia County. The site is set among gentle rolling hills with pasture lands and a small pond. Clusters of trees are found southwest of the house where a small cliff falls into a growth of underbrush. A wooded area that is partially logged is located on the southeast corner of the property.

Approaching the property off of C. R. 857, one turns onto a winding gravel drive and crosses Coles Run. A small property unrelated to the farm is located off of the drive on the left. The small woods that is presently being removed is located to the right. Continuing north on the drive is a cemetery (HABS No. WV-298-E) located to the left. The 82 remaining stones are situated on a hill with a few shrubs and small conifers interspersed. The stones are a mixture of marble, limestone, granite, and sandstone. The earliest stone dates to 1810, while the latest dates to 1992. To the northeast is a frame bank barn (HABS No. WV-298-B) that is used to store hay, but no longer for animals. It stands on an open field with the southeast end banked into a small hill.

A two-story concrete block chicken house (HABS No. WV-298-D) is located to the northeast of the house. It is situated just off the drive and is used for storage. It is bordered on the south and west sides with small trees and overgrown bushes that mark a small cliff. Curving around the drive is the tractor shed (HABS No. WV-298-C) that sits between the main house (HABS No. WV-298-A) and the chicken house. A non-contributing modern cow shed is located to the northwest of the tractor shed.

Two small vineyards that are poorly kept remain on the property. One is located between the cowshed and house while the other is located to the west of the chicken house. Branches of this latter vineyard have grown and can be found on the walls of the chicken house. Other small shrubs are located in the yard near the dwelling. Small trees partially line the gravel drive.

Pasture land is located to the north and west of the main dwelling. Gentle rolling grasses stretch toward the mountains in the background. A group of conifers hides a small pond that is located in this pasture. Remains of a wire fence are located along the perimeter of the pasture.

2. **Surrounding Environment:** The Norris Farm is situated in a rural section of Monongalia County. It is approximately ten miles from the city of Morgantown. Fastfood restaurants and gas stations have been constructed in the area. Other small local businesses (some located in converted homes) are found along C. R. 857. Residences that date from the mid-nineteenth century to the late twentieth century are found along C. R. 857 as well. The farm is situated approximately 1,000 feet from C.R. 857. In the distance are forested mountains.

B. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPLEX:

1. **According to the Original Plan:** The original log house, now part of the present house, was located on the 400 acre tract of land that the state of Virginia patented to William Norris in 1781. It is believed that the patent was filed after the settlement of the land and that the house actually dates to ca. 1780.
2. **Changes Over Time:** Through the approximately 220 years of the farms existence, several changes have occurred including the construction of the forebay (bank) barn, the cemetery, a tenant house (that is no longer standing), the tractor shed/combine barn, and the chicken house. The 400 tract has also decreased in size to its present 149.15 acres.
3. **Current Features and Appearance:** The remaining structures on the farm include the house (HABS No. WV-298-A), the forebay (bank) barn (HABS No. WV-298-B), the tractor shed/combine barn (HABS No. WV-298-C), the chicken house (HABS No. WV-298-D), and the cemetery (HABS No. WV-298-E). A non-contributing cowshed is located to the north of the house.

The property is no longer being farmed. Presently, the dwelling is unoccupied. The condition of the main house is very good. Neighbors are assisting with the upkeep of the property. However, the outbuildings, especially the bank barn and the tractor shed, are in disrepair.

Although the landscape continues to be groomed, many of the small bushes are overgrown. The two small vineyards have begun to shrivel. The vegetable garden to the north of the house is overgrown.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS:** Not located.

B. GENERAL DEPOSITORIES:

West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, West Virginia
Wise Library

West Virginia Regional History Collection

West Virginia State Archives, Charleston, West Virginia

Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the National Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

C. EARLY VIEWS: None located.

D. INTERVIEWS: Patricia Baker, present owner of Norris Farm. Norris Farm. August 1992.

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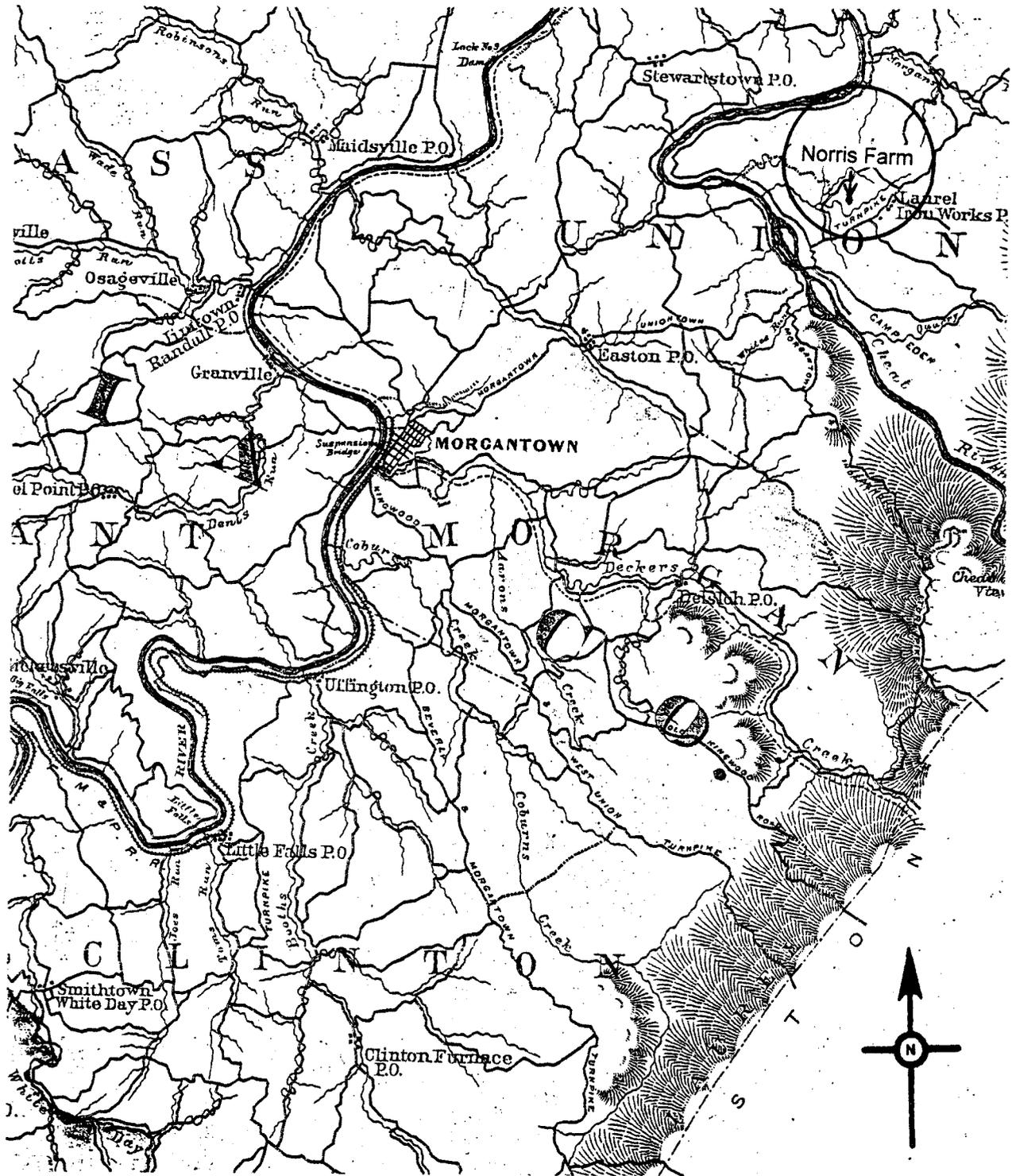
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Genealogical societies

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recordation satisfies the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Regarding Implementation of the I-68 to SR 6119 Mon/Fayette Transportation Project Monongalia County, West Virginia and Fayette County, Pennsylvania," dated April 22, 1994.

Preliminary engineering plans indicate that while the landscapes of these properties will be affected, no buildings on the properties will be physically altered or removed.

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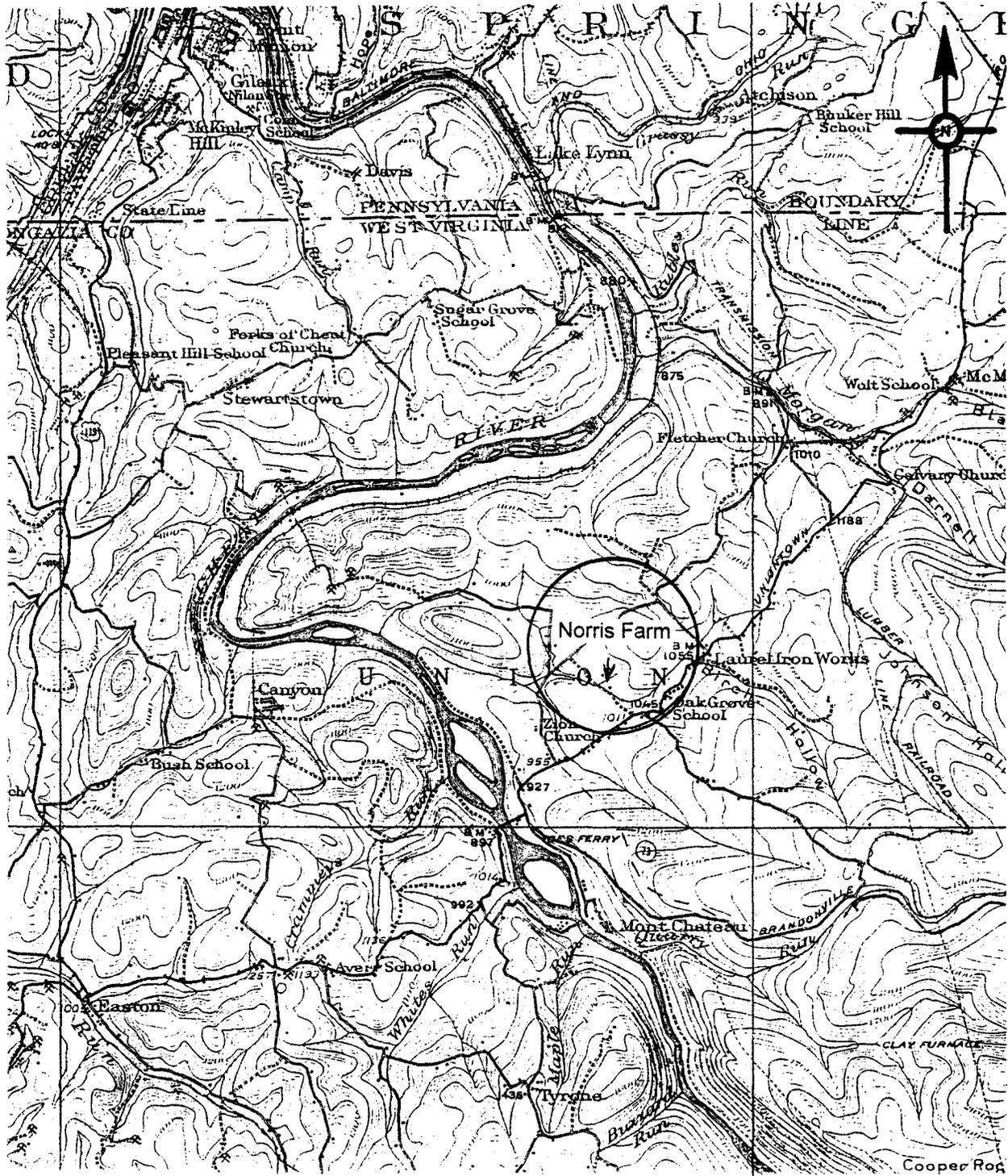
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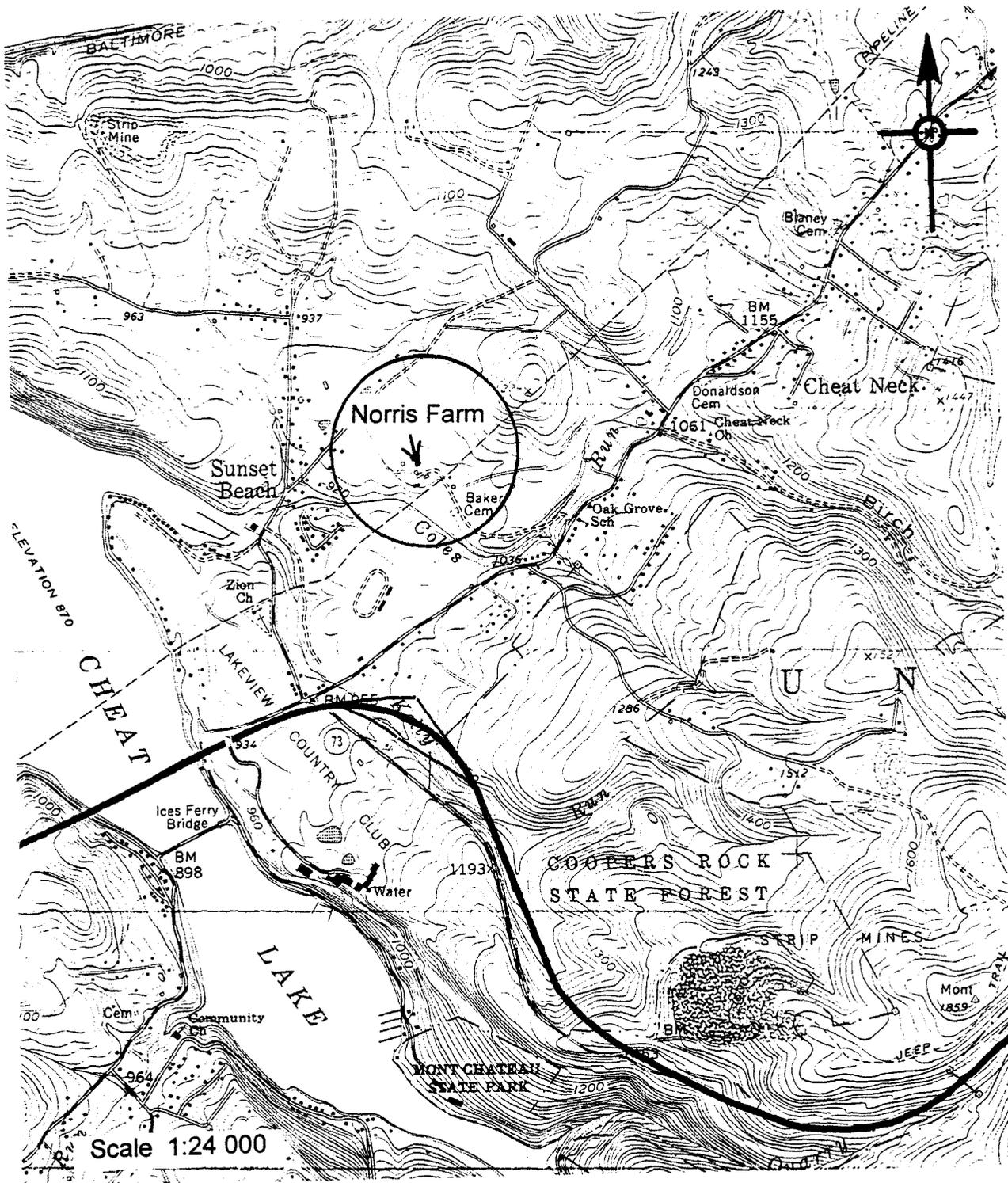
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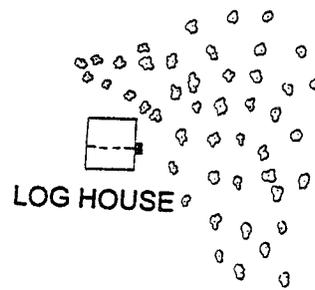
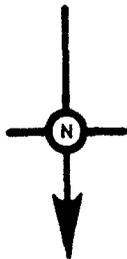
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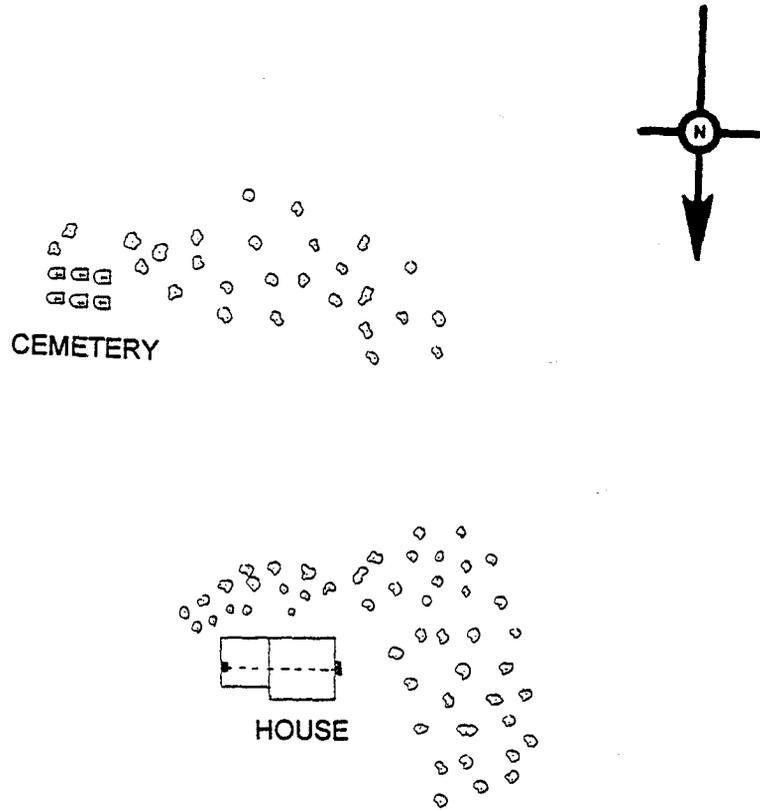
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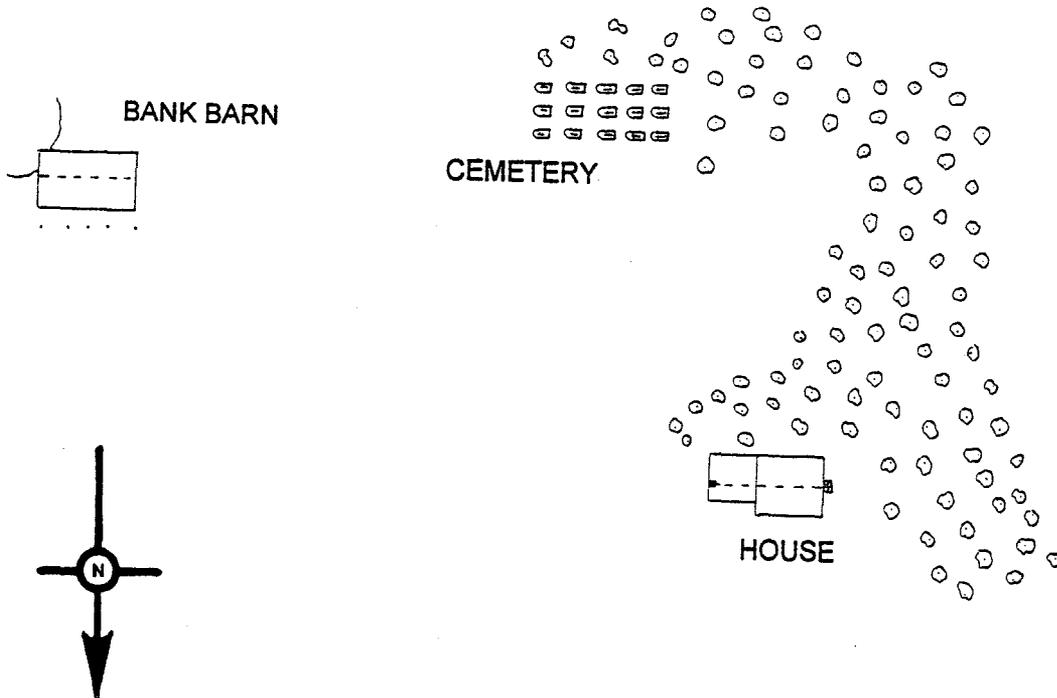


NORRIS FARM—CIRCA 1780

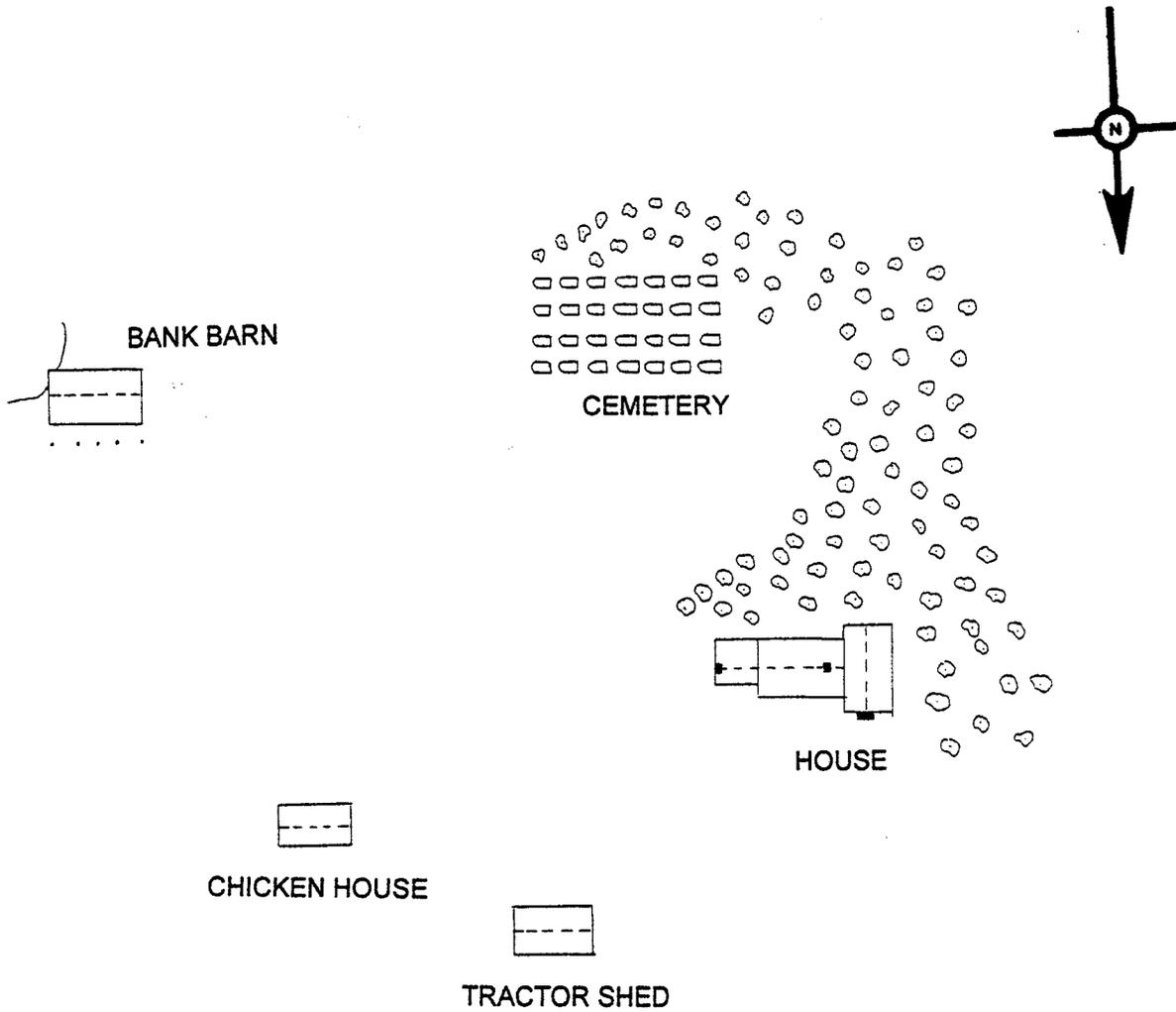


NORRIS FARM—1830

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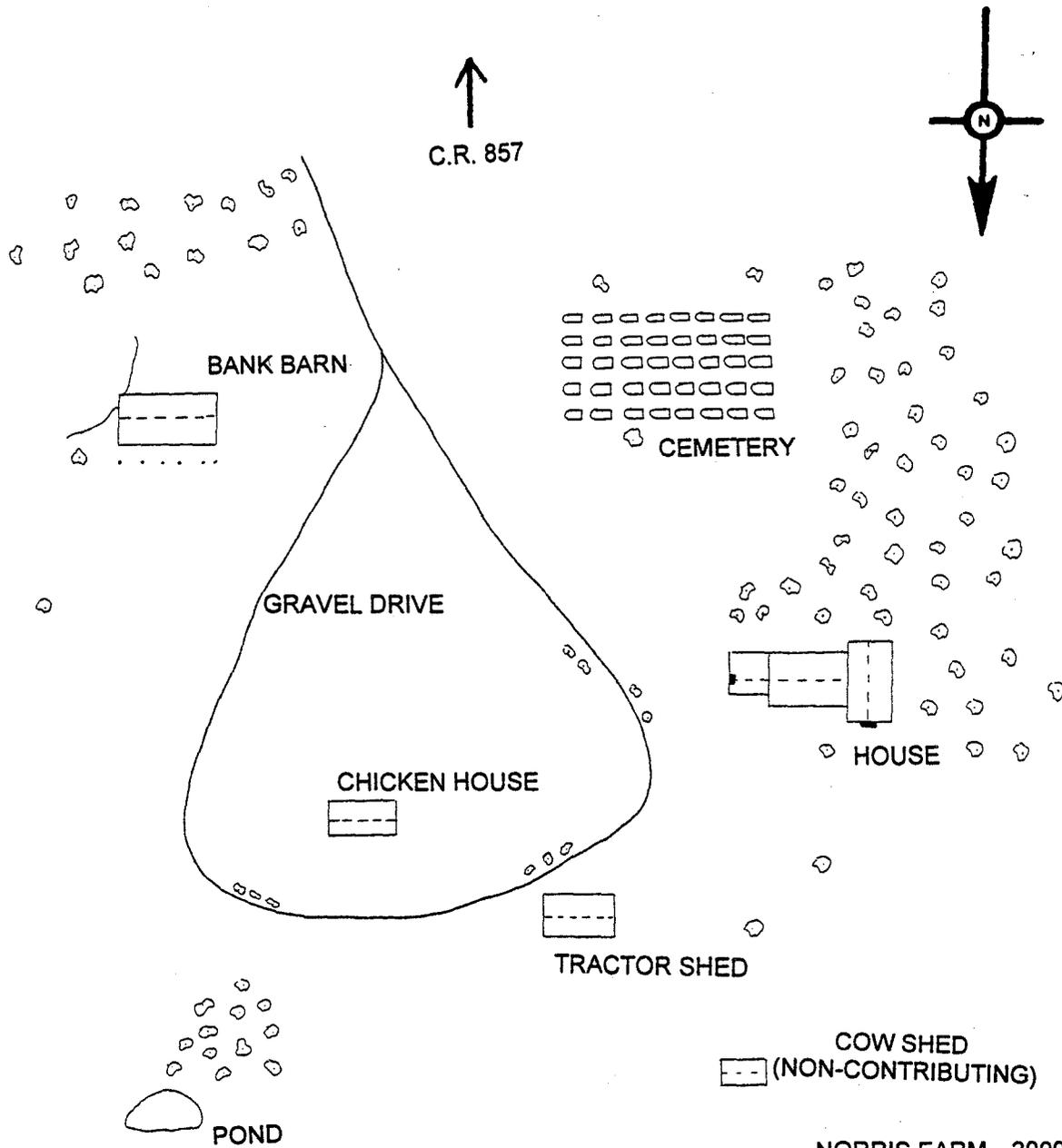


NORRIS FARM—CIRCA 1860



NORRIS FARM—CIRCA 1950

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