

THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST

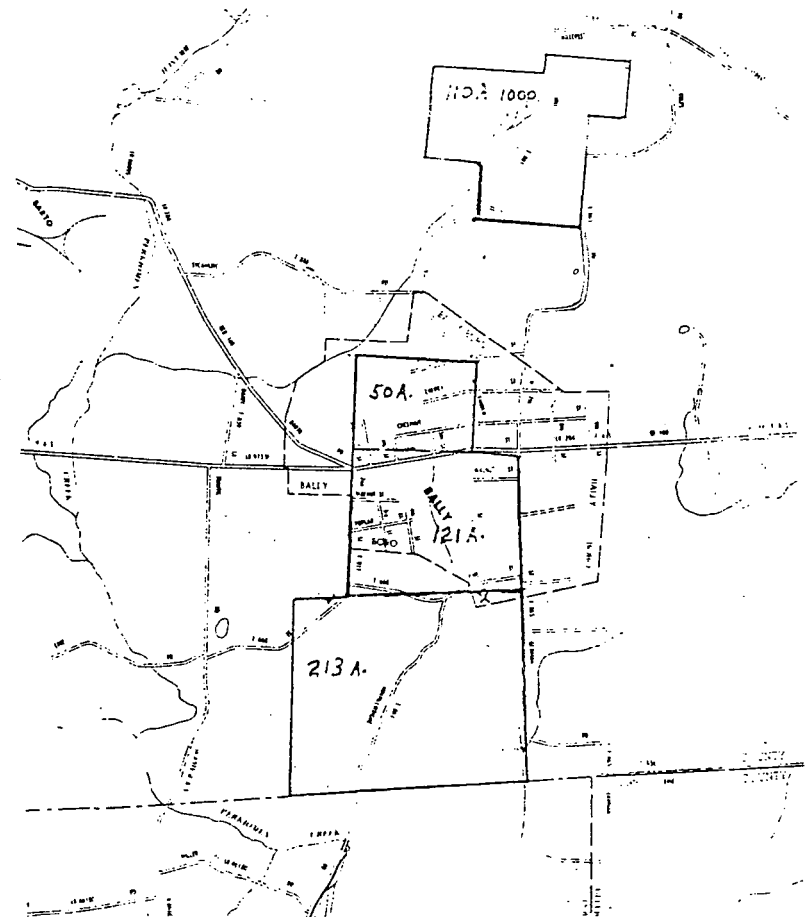
Both Bally and Bechtelsville have a long and interesting history. While Bally had its beginning in 1741 when a 500-acre Jesuit mission started there, Bechtelsville began about the same time when the Bechtel Family settled in that area of Berks County. A sense of history exists as you travel throughout both boroughs today.

BALLY

The Borough of Bally had its beginning in 1742 when the Jesuit Order purchased about 500 acres of rich farmland to establish a mission named Goshenhoppen--an Indian name meaning "meeting place." This section of Pennsylvania was settled by friendly Indians and by German pioneers who were mostly Mennonites. The Reverend Theodore Schneider was Goshenhoppen's first resident priest who ministered to people living in the territory of present day Bucks, Montgomery, Berks, Lehigh, Northampton counties and part of Chester County as well as Philadelphia and parts of New Jersey and New York.

Because the Mennonites already had their own church in this small community, some wondered whether Reverend Schneider would find enough interest to establish a Catholic Church. As history will show, two religious communities worked together in peace and harmony as the settlement grew and prospered. In fact, the Jesuits and the Mennonites worked side by side to build the Chapel of Saint Paul in 1743--only the third Catholic church built in Pennsylvania. The people of the community

were so pleased that their small town could have two churches within its boundary that they changed its name from Goshenhoppen to Churchville.



Plot of the original Goshenhoppen Mission property outlined on a current map of the Bally Area.

Six other priests followed Reverend Schneider before Reverend Augustin J. Bally came to Churchville in 1837, where he served the Blessed Sacrament Church for 45 years. Because of the wonderful work that Father Bally accomplished, his successor went to the post office authorities in Philadelphia and requested that a post office be established in Churchville with the name of "Bally" in memory of the popular priest. The request was granted in August 1883. The name of the village was then changed to correspond with that of the new post office.

The authorities of the Jesuit Order periodically sold portions of the original 500 acres which had formed the property of the Goshenhoppen mission. The purchasers generally bought and built on small lots, resulting in the gradual evolution of a little village about a quarter of a mile from the Chapel of Saint Paul (now the rear part of the Most Blessed Sacrament Church). Between the hamlet and the church a lane was constructed (now South Seventh Street) that intersected Main Street at what was known as the business centre.

While the genesis of Bally is a 500-acre Jesuit mission, development gradually spread out from the hamlet mostly along Main Street (Route 100); development also located along North and South Church Street.

Bally has gradually evolved into an attractive community with a variety of businesses (retail, personal services and industry), primarily single family homes, a wide range of community services and facilities, and a strong historic character.

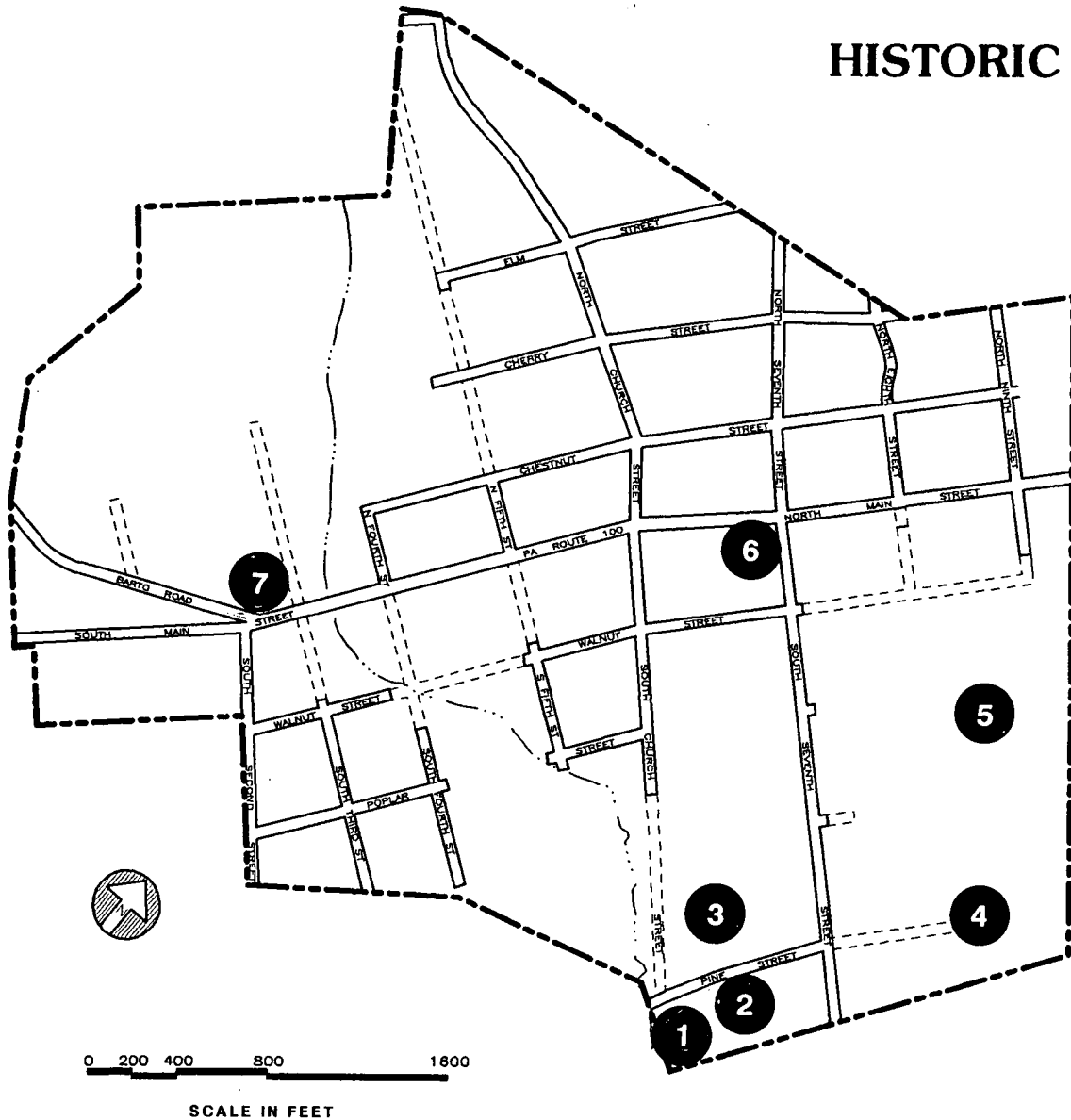
BECHTELSVILLE

The Bechtel Family, which came to this country from Weinheim, Germany in 1728, chose to settle in what would later become Bechtelsville. History shows that the house which Isaac Bechtel lived in, the son in the immigrant family, was built prior to the American Revolution in the 1770s.

The village that would grow and become incorporated as Bechtelsville in September 1890 began with only a few homes and quite a few mills: a grist mill, saw mill, oil mill and a lead mill. The accompanying sketch shows the prevalence of businesses that existed in what was still a village during the early to mid 1800s. The Bechtelsville Post Office was established in 1852, 31 years before Bally's.

The Colebrookdale Railroad was extended three miles north of Boyertown to the tiny hamlet of Barto in 1869. This other means of transportation to and from what would become Bechtelsville prompted new businesses and families to locate in the village during that time. A large iron furnace, which reportedly employed "many workers", was built in the village in 1875. Smaller businesses were numerous in the late 1800s and early 1900s: harness shop, bakery, butcher, blacksmith, tinsmith, printer, hotel, general store, a creamery and other businesses. There were also enough children living in the Borough in the late 1880s to justify building a two-room school house in 1890.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



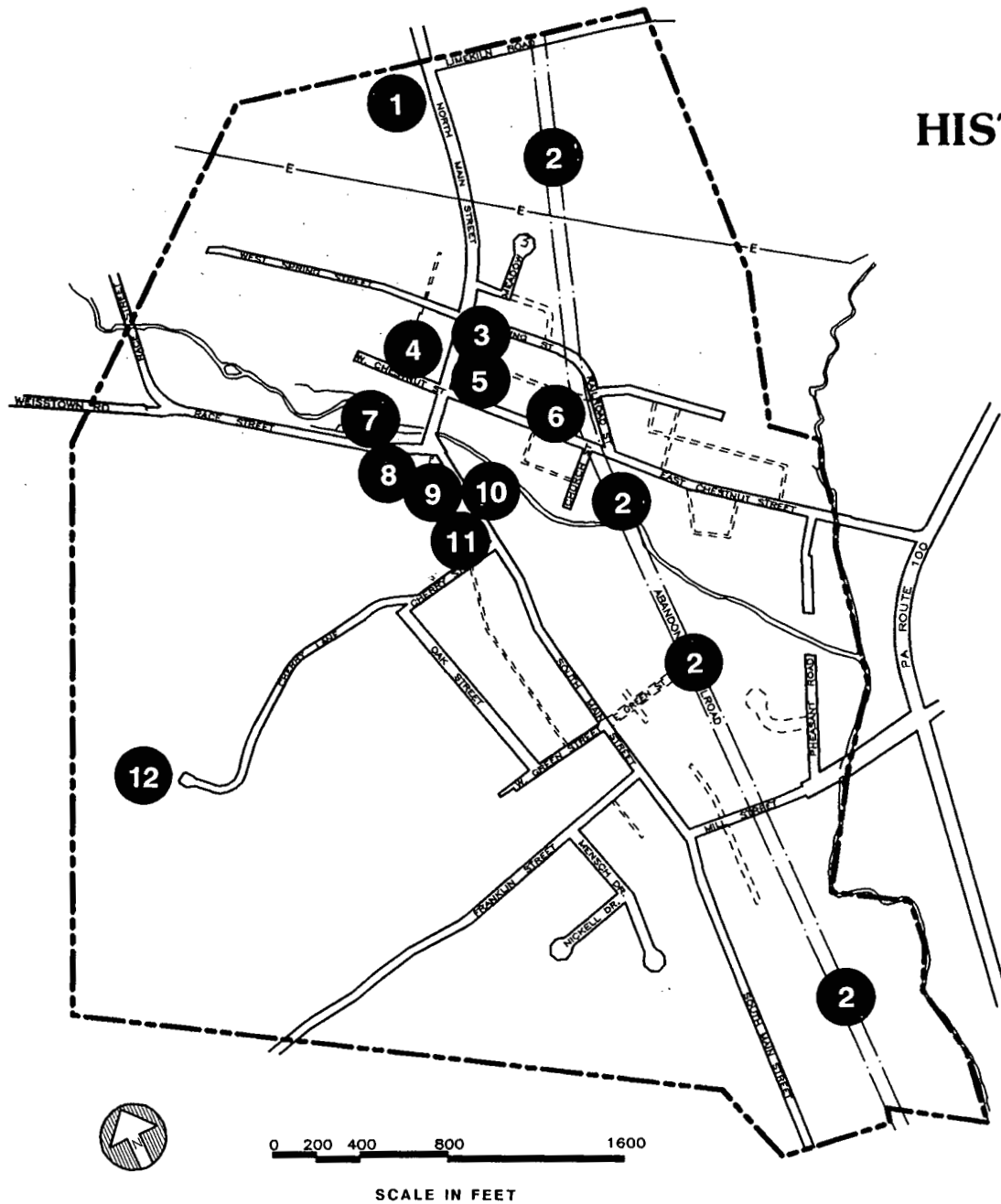
- 1 MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH/CHAPEL OF SAINT PAUL/MUSEUM
- 2 ALTE SCHULE
- 3 GEHRINGER FARMSTEAD
- 4 MOSER FARMSTEAD
- 5 QUIGLEY FARMSTEAD
- 6 BALLY HOTEL
- 7 "OLD" BALLY MENNONITE CHURCH

BALLY/BECHTELSVILLE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 Borough of Bally – Berks County, Pennsylvania



Landscape Architects . Engineers . Planning Consultants
 Urban Research & Development Corporation
 28 Bethlehem Plaza . Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



- 1 FARMSTEAD
- 2 COLEBROOKDALE RAILROAD
- 3 MILLER HOTEL
- 4 STONE MILL HOUSE
- 5 LATSHAW'S GENERAL STORE
- 6 BECHTELSVILLE TRAIN STATION
- 7 "OLD" BOROUGH HALL
- 8 BECHTELSVILLE HOTEL
- 9 BITTENBENDER'S GENERAL STORE
- 10 KUTZ KNITTING MILL
- 11 PATRIOTIC ORDER OF SONS
- 12 FARMSTEAD

