

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Chester	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
General Frederick William Augustus von Steuben's Headquarters

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 23

CITY OR TOWN:
Valley Forge State Park, Valley Forge

STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: COUNTY: **Chester** CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: **Mr. Horace Willicox, Superintendent, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Valley Forge State Park Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Valley Forge** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **19481**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **West Chester** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Von Steuben's Headquarters is a rectangular, two-story stone building with gable roof, two end chimneys in the east wall and a large chimney in the west end wall. A pent roof extends across the front (south) elevation of the house at the second floor level. The modest sized structure is four-bays wide and has the entrance set in the second bay from the left corner. The four rooms on each floor are arranged into two tiers.

The von Steuben Headquarters was restored in 1965 and is open to visitors during the summer months as a part of Valley Forge State Park.

Note: Valley Forge State Park is a national historic landmark. The von Steuben Headquarters is located within the limits of the landmark but the structure itself has never before been considered for landmark status.

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SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **February 23, 1778 - June 19, 1778**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built as a tavern, used as a camp hospital, this structure served as the quarters of Major General von Steuben, inspector general and "drill master" of the Continental Army, during the period February-June 1778, when Steuben made his greatest contribution to the American cause-the remodelling and training of the Continental Army.

History

Frederick William Augustus von Steuben (nee Friedrich Wilhem Ludolf Gerhard Augustin Steuben) was born in the fortress of Magdeburg, Germany, in 1730, where his father was stationed as a lieutenant of engineers in the army of King Frederick William I of Prussia. He spent his early childhood in Russia, where his father served for several years in the Russian Army. At the age of 10 he returned to Germany with his father and received his education in the Jesuit schools in Breslau.

At 17 Steuben entered the officer corps of the Prussian army and served therein with credit throughout the Seven Years' War, first as a regimental officer of infantry and then as a staff officer. In 1761, after active service on the staffs of General von Mayer and von Hulsen he became a general staff officer and soon thereafter was promoted to the grade of captain. In 1762 he served at the Royal Headquarters as a general staff officer and as one of the aides-de-camp to Frederick the Great. It was this specific training for and experience in the duties of the general staff, an agency then little known outside of Prussia, that so peculiarly equipped Steuben for his invaluable later services to the cause of American independence. He brought to Washington's staff a technical training and equipment that was unknown in either the British or French armies at that time.

Steuben was still a captain when he was discharged from the Prussian army shortly after the Peace of Hubertusburg in the spring of 1763. In 1764 he was appointed chamberlain at the Court of Hohenzollern-Hechingen. While at Hechingen he attained the rank of baron and became a knight of the Margrave of Baden's Order of Fidelity. In 1771 Steuben accompanied his patron, the Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, to France, where they resided incognito, because of financial embarrassment. In 1775 the

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pennsylvania, A Guide to the Keystone State (American Guide Series) (New York, 1940), 408-409.

Dictionary of American Biography, XVII, 601-604.

John M. Palmer, General Von Steuben (New Haven, Conn., 1937).

Christopher Ward, The War of the Revolution (2 vols., New York, 1952), 550-554, 582, 610, 748, 777-79, 782, 868, 870-71, 873-75, 886, 890.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		40° 05' 56"	75° 28' 13"	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2,255 acres in State Park**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service**

DATE

3/6/72

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE

D.C.

CODE

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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General Frederick William Augustus
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8. Significance (Continued)

Prince returned to Germany, leaving Steuben, who was always improvident, seriously in debt. While looking for employment in Baden Steuben met a friend and correspondent of Benjamin Franklin who drew his attention to the American war as a field for his talents. Accordingly, early in the summer of 1777, Steuben set out for Paris with letters to Franklin and others.

Fortunately for Steuben, his high professional reputation as a trained Prussian staff officer had long been known to Count de St. Germain, the French minister of war. St. Germain therefore commended Steuben to Beaumarchais, who was giving secret aid to the American colonies through the commercial corporation, Hortalez and Company, which he had formed with the connivance of the French government. Beaumarchais, Franklin, and Silas Deane recognized Steuben's merits and the importance of securing his service, but at first the negotiations failed because the American commissioners were not empowered to assure him adequate rank and pay or to make any contract with him in behalf of the Continental Congress. Later, however, it was decided that Hortalez and Company should advance the expenses of the trip and that the Baron should go purely as a distinguished volunteer and trust to fortune for a suitable opening for his recognized talents after his arrival in America. As his actual military rank of captain did not carry sufficient prestige to assure the success of this role, it was decided that he should assume the glamor of high rank. He was accordingly given letters from Franklin, Deane, and Beaumarchais to Washington, Henry Laurens, Robert Morris, and others in which he was introduced as a lieutenant general in the King of Prussia's service. There could be no higher military prestige in the last quarters of the 18th century.

The new "lieutenant general," accompanied by a military secretary and an aid-de-camp, sailed from Marseilles on September 26, 1777, and arrived at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on December 1, 1777. He then made the overland journey to York, Pennsylvania, the temporary seat of the Continental government, where he arrived on February 5, 1778. He was received with high honors by the Congress. When a special committee waited upon him to ascertain his aims, he waived all claim to rank or pay and asked only that his expenses should be paid while acting as a volunteer with the army. He proposed that if his services should contribute to the eventual success of the American cause, he would then expect compensation for his sacrifices in leaving Europe and such reward as Congress might be pleased to grant, but if cause should fail, or if his services should not prove beneficial, he would make no claim whatever. This proposal to stake his fortunes upon the success

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8. Significance (Continued)

of the cause made a deep impression upon Congress. His services were accepted and he was directed to report to Washington at Valley Forge where he arrived on February 23, 1778.

Steuben made a profound impression upon the officers and men of the Continental Army. A man of middle height, solidly built, heavy featured, with high forehead, his professional reputation, so well advertised by his exalted rank, was supported by his martial bearing, his adaptability, and his picturesque personality. Washington was so favorably impressed by his practical knowledge and experience that he prevailed upon him to serve as acting inspector general and to undertake the training of the army. This involved serious difficulties as the Baron spoke no English and was required to act through interpreters. There was no time for the preparation and publication of a complete new drill manual. Steuben therefore prepared his drill instructions in brief installments in French. These were translated into English by his aide and then polished by John Laurens and Alexander Hamilton and issued to the regiments from time to time as the drills, based on the Prussian system, progressed. Fortunately, he had the tact to rely upon the power of example. He formed a model company of 100 selected men and undertook its drill in person. The rapid progress of this company under his skilled instruction made an immediate appeal to the imagination of the whole army. Beginning on March 24 drill became the fashion and within a few weeks, imparted day by day to the model company, had spread throughout the army. This is perhaps one of the most remarkable achievements in rapid military training in the history of the world. The Baron's success was so speedy that on April 30 Washington recommended his appointment as inspector general with the rank of major general. On May 5, 1778, the appointment was confirmed by the Continental Congress. The value of Steuben's instruction was soon manifested on the battlefield of Monmouth, June 28, 1778. There and thereafter throughout the war the Continental Army proved itself, battalion for battalion, the equal in discipline and skill of the best British regular. Immediately before Monmouth Steuben served Washington as a general staff officer. He reconnoitered the enemy's position near Allentown and was first to report that his objective was Monmouth Court House. After the retreat of Charles Lee, in the ensuing battle, Steuben reformed Lee's disordered troops and led them back to the battlefield.

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8. Significance (Continued)

During the winter of 1778-79, Steuben prepared his Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. This manual of drill and field service regulations contained the essentials of military instruction and procedure adapted to the needs of the American citizen soldier. It was popularly known as the "blue book" and became the military bible of the Continental Army. The Baron first wrote each passage in his practical but inelegant French, one of his staff officers then transposed it into literary French. Another translated it literally into English and a third then transposed it into correct and simple English. During most of 1779 and 1780 Steuben was busy with his duties as inspector general, perfecting the training and discipline of the army and developing his system of property accountability that went far to check the waste of public property which had formerly prevailed in the American army.

The most important lesson the American army learned from von Steuben was to march in compact masses with steadiness and without losing distance. Until then they had generally marched in Indian file, so that their column reached four times the distance needed for columns of fours, making it impossible to enforce discipline and prevent straggling as well as lengthening the time needed to form in line and front the enemy. Popular with the army and gaining Washington's confidence, von Steuben was consulted upon all questions of strategic and administrative policy and performed all the essential functions of a modern general staff. During the winter of 1779-80 he was Washington's representative with the Continental Congress in the efforts to reorganize the army.

In the autumn of 1780, when Nathanael Greene was sent South to replace Horatio Gates after the disastrous defeat at Camden in August, Washington sent Steuben with the new commander to assist in reorganizing the Southern army. Upon their arrival at Richmond, Greene realized that most of his replacements and supplies must come from Virginia. He therefore left Steuben in command in that state. Steuben immediately took comprehensive measures to make Virginia a base of supply for Greene's army. In April 1781 Steuben was able to send 400 new Continental recruits to Virginia. But his efforts were thwarted to a large extent by the invading British forces, about 2,500 men, under Benedict Arnold and William Phillips which were effectively supported by British ships in the James River. With his limited forces of 200 Continentals and ill-armed militia, Steuben could offer but limited resistance to the invaders. Many of his stores were captured and many more were dispersed and wasted by the successive draft of ill-disciplined short--service milita. On April 29, 1781, Lafayette arrived

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8. significance (Continued)

at Richmond with 1,200 Continentals and took command in Virginia and Steuben served under his orders during Cornwallis's invasion. When Washington's army was assembled before Yorktown, Steuben was assigned to the command of one of the three divisions, about 1,900 men, and served in that capacity until after the surrender. As one of the few American officers who had had experience in sieges, Steuben was also busy with advice as to the best methods of defending the approaches being dug against British sorties.

In the interval between the surrender of Cornwallis and the final conclusion of peace Steuben continued his duties as inspector general. In the spring of 1783 he assisted Washington in the preparation of a plan for the future defense of the United States and in the arrangements for demobilizing the Continental Army. This was published as A Letter on the Subject of an Established Militia (1784). At the same time he took a leading part in forming the Society of Cincinnati. In August, Washington sent him to Canada to receive the frontier posts from the British, but his mission was unsuccessful as the British commander, General Haldimand, had not been authorized to treat with him. When Washington relinquished command of the army, December 23, 1783, he made it his last official act to write a letter to the Baron commending his invaluable services to the United States during the War for Independence. Steuben was honorably discharged from the army on April 15, 1784. He became an American citizen, by act of the New York legislature in July 1786.

After Steuben's retirement from the army he made his residence in New York and became one of the most popular figures in the social life of the city and State. He was the president of the German Society and of the New York branch of the Cincinnati. In 1787 he was elected one of the regents of the University of the State of New York. Always careless in his business affairs and extravagant in his charities and hospitalities, he went heavily in debt in anticipation of the grant of about \$60,000 for his military services which he claimed from Congress. In 1786 the State of New York granted him 16,000 acres of wild land near the present town of Remsen, north of Utica, in Oneida County. In June 1790 the new Federal Government granted him a pension of \$2,500 per year instead of the lump sum which he had expected. Later in the year, through a friendly mortgage of his New York lands, Alexander Hamilton and other influential friends were able to settle the Baron's debts and to relieve him from bankruptcy. During the remaining years of his life he spent his winters in New York City and his summers on his estate about 15 miles north of Utica. There, in his two room log cabin, he finally died of apoplexy on November 28, 1794, and as he requested, was

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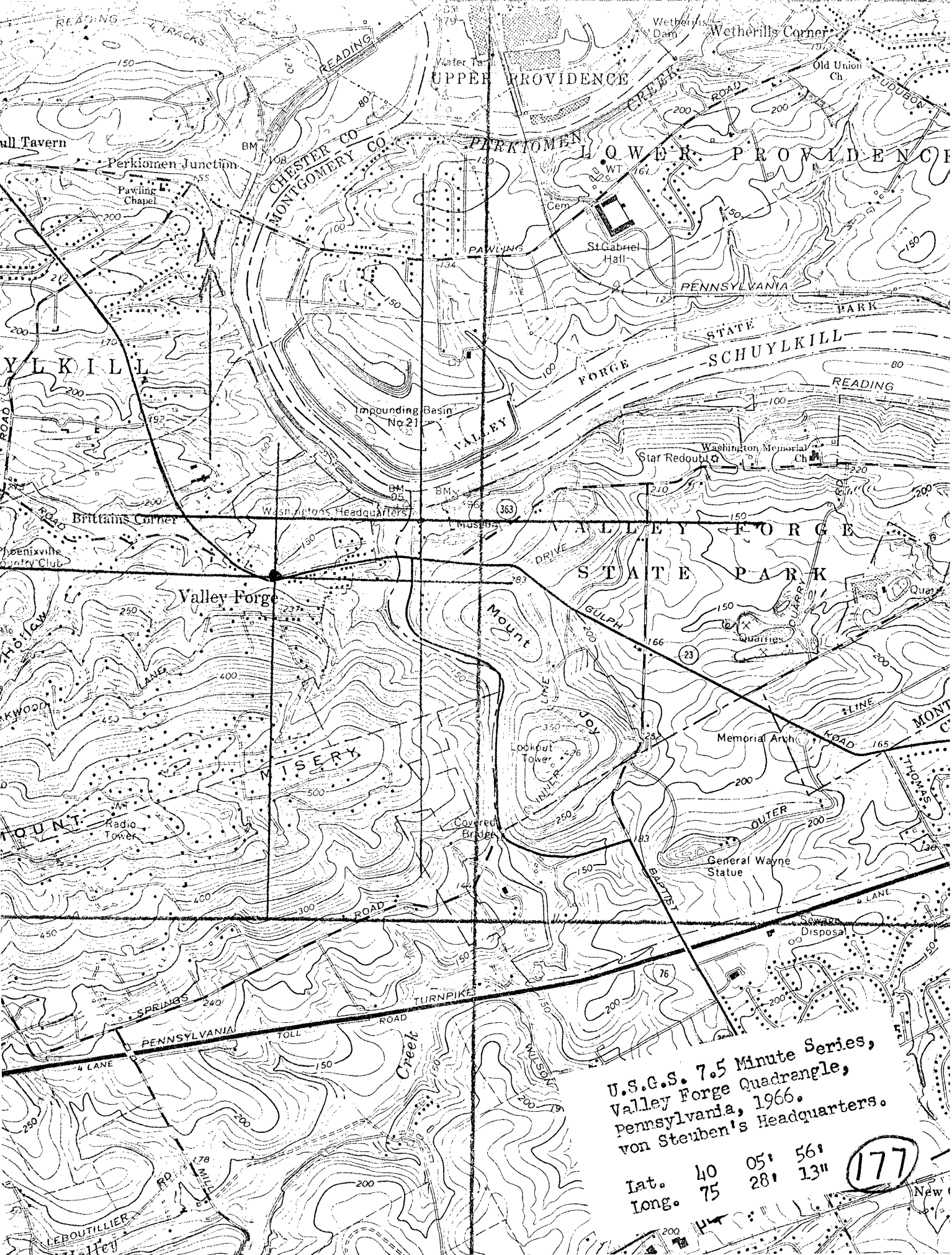
(Number all entries)

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8. Significance (Continued)

buried in an unmarked grave. Some years later his remains were transferred to a five-acre wooded tract, where a plain, massive monument was erected.

Steuben never married. In his will he left his estates in America to his former aides-de-camp, William North and Benjamin Walker.



U.S.G.S. 7.5 Minute Series,
 Valley Forge Quadrangle,
 Pennsylvania, 1966.
 von Steuben's Headquarters.

Lat. 40° 05' 56"
 Long. 75° 28' 13" **(177)**