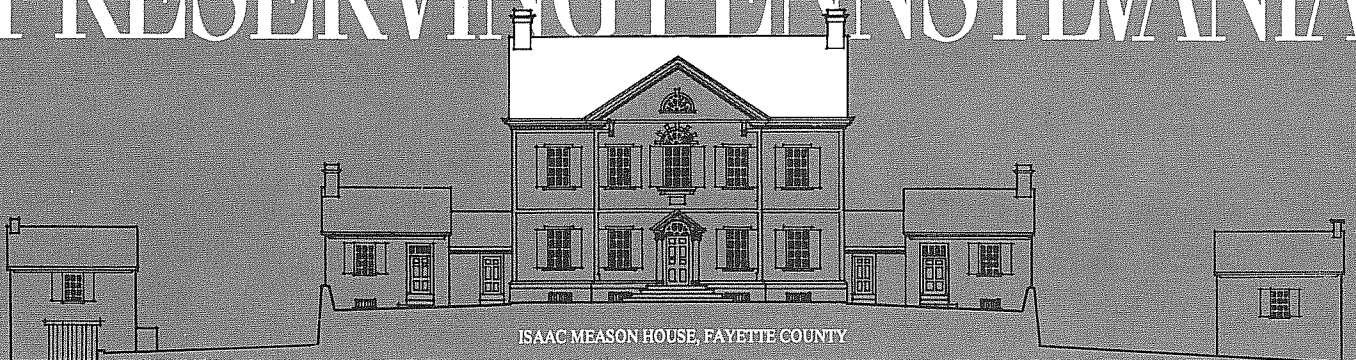


PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA



ISAAC MEASON HOUSE, FAYETTE COUNTY

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1993

PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK 1993

This special issue of *Preserving Pennsylvania* marks the second annual listing of Pennsylvania's most endangered properties. Last year, the roster of seventeen buildings and sites, representing a range of resources from prehistoric archeological remains in Erie County to the Neoclassical grandeur of Lynnewood Hall near Philadelphia, generated significant interest in the plight of these important places. This interest has, we hope, played some part in increasing a broader awareness of both the variety and richness of Pennsylvania's heritage and the types and severity of threats faced by that heritage every day.

Some of the properties listed in 1992 have been lost. Some have been saved or are on the way to a successful preservation solution. We continue to monitor all the properties identified as at risk in last year's special issue and in subsequent regular newsletter issues. Updates on previously listed properties are included at the end of this issue.

Preservation Pennsylvania's newest entries on the most endangered list again present a representative sampling of properties facing a variety of threats. Each poses a challenge to preservationists to find creative and workable solutions that will allow us to preserve the best of our heritage within a changing environment.



1992 demolition of the Lackawanna Avenue Historic District, Scranton
Photo: John G. Carling

Pennsylvania at Risk will continue to be updated and expanded as we follow the fate of these and other representative properties across the Commonwealth. We encourage you to tell us about threatened resources in your community and to work with us in preserving Pennsylvania's heritage.

Victory Building, Philadelphia

The Victory Building, constructed for the New York Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1873, is, with City Hall, one of Philadelphia's earliest and finest examples of the Second Empire style. Designed by Henry Fernbach as a three-story building plus mansard story, it was significantly altered in the 1890s by architect Phillip Roos who removed the mansard, added three additional stories and then re-capped the building with the original mansard. This granite-clad Center City landmark was listed in the National Register in 1980.



Victory Building

A 1982 fire closed the Victory Building, and it has been vacant ever since. The owner was granted permission to demolish the building if a buyer is not found. To date, potential buyers have rejected a variety of reuse schemes. Deterioration of the structure was temporarily halted through a recently completed \$20,000 sealing procedure financed with a grant from Preservation Pennsylvania's Philadelphia Intervention Fund. The property is, however, still threatened with possible demolition should the owner decide to exercise that option.

Colonial Theater, Lebanon

The Colonial Theater in downtown Lebanon is a fine example of the movie palaces of its day. Built in 1923, the twelve-hundred-seat theater has hosted vaudeville and legitimate productions and silent and modern films. The highly intact auditorium is complemented by a second floor ballroom. An anchor of a prominent downtown intersection, the exterior displays reserved Spanish Mission Revival detailing. The building is part of a district determined eligible for the National Register.



Palace Hotel

Palace Hotel, Windber, Somerset County

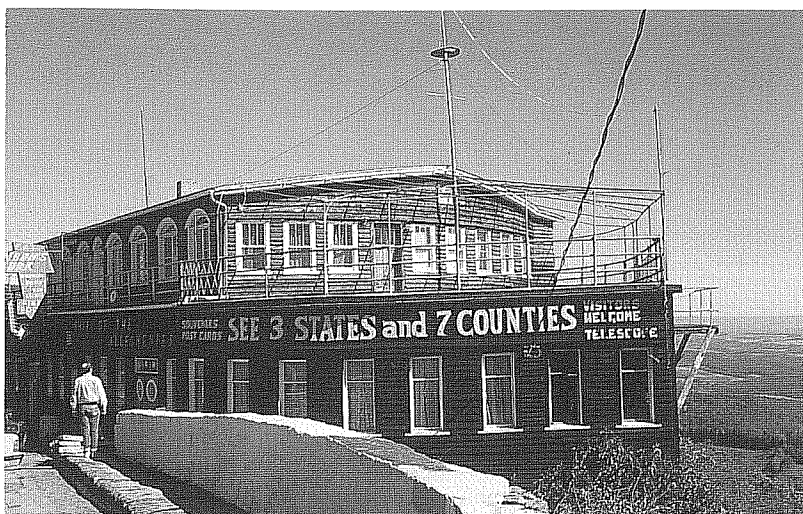
Historically one of Windber's better hotels, the Palace is an anchor building in the Windber Historic District, which was listed in the National Register in 1991. The Berwind-White Coal Mining Company laid out Windber in 1897 as a regional headquarters town. Tapping the rich Windber area mines enabled Berwind-White to become the nation's largest independent coal producer. Being a headquarters town set Windber apart from surrounding coal patch communities and brought a need for downtown services such as the Palace Hotel. Well-furnished rooms and full-course meals could be taken at the yellow brick Palace, located a short walk from the coal company's headquarters building.

Although rehabilitation of the Palace has been one of the identified goals of a town revitalization plan sponsored by America's Industrial Heritage Project, the building is endangered by probable demolition for new commercial development.



Colonial Theater

Friends of the Colonial Theater formed in 1991 to undertake rehabilitation and reuse of the building. The group has launched a campaign to raise funds to buy the building and rehabilitate it for use as a multi-purpose arts center for Lebanon and the surrounding area. The future of the building currently rests on community support for the theater's revitalization and success of fundraising efforts.



*S.S. Grand View Point
Hotel*

S.S Grand View Point Hotel, Bedford County

The S.S. Grand View is an outstanding example of whimsical early twentieth century roadside architecture, designed to take commercial advantage of the advent of motor touring. Known variously as the Ship of the Alleghennies, Noah's Ark, and the S.S. Grand View, the ship-like structure perched on the side of a cliff near Schellsburg has attracted the adventurous and curious traveler since it opened on Memorial Day, 1932. The unusual

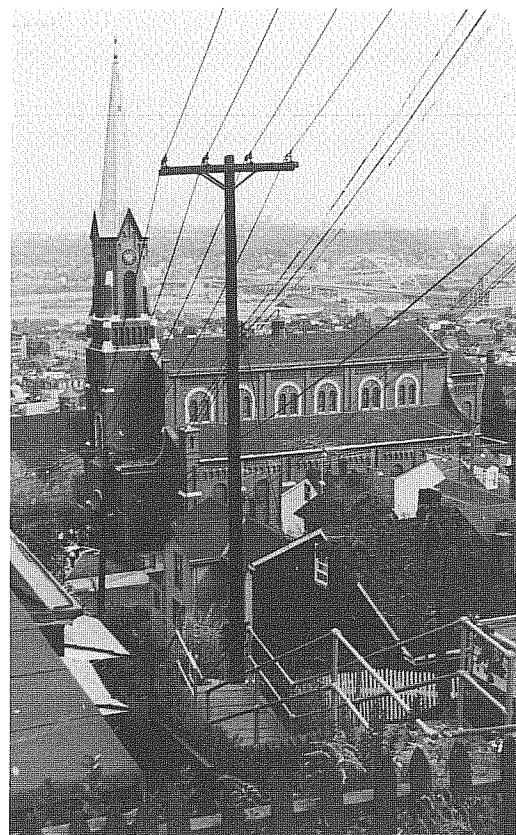
hotel, with its panoramic view of 3 states and 7 counties, was a popular stopping point on this section of the Lincoln Highway, America's first transcontinental road system for the automobile, until the opening of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in 1940 diverted much of the non-local traffic away from this section of Route 30.

Although not yet listed in the National Register, the ship is expected to be included in a multiple property listing on this section of the Lincoln Highway undertaken by Bedford County with a grant from America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP). The building is no longer open to the public; and, although it still appears to be structurally sound, years of deferred maintenance and deterioration make the future of the ship uncertain.

Church of St. Michael the Archangel, Pittsburgh

One of the most visually prominent features on the slopes of Pittsburgh's South Side and one of the oldest religious buildings in the city, the Church of St. Michael the Archangel was begun in 1855 to serve the largest congregation of German Catholics in western Pennsylvania. By 1900 the St. Michael's complex included the church, a rectory, two school buildings, a casino, and a large building between the schools and casino which served as both an orphanage and convent. The imposing and architecturally significant brick structures played an important part in the life of this working class community throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth century. In 1988 the property was determined eligible for the National Register based both on its architectural significance and on its importance in the social and religious history of the city.

Since 1988, however, the schools and convent have been sold, each to a different entity. In July, 1992, the Diocese of Pittsburgh announced an October closing of the church and the rectory as part of a reorganization affecting parishes throughout the Diocese. The future of St. Michael's and the complex as a whole is in doubt, as is the fate of other churches in the Pittsburgh Diocese and in other denominations faced with a decrease in the size of their congregations.



*Church of St. Michael the Archangel
View from above, looking toward river and South Side.*

Mountain Springs Hotel, Ephrata

The Mountain Springs Hotel in northern Lancaster County was one of the most popular mineral springs resorts in eastern Pennsylvania during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The rambling complex of stone and frame structures is an excellent example of the spas of the period, and its buildings illustrate the Mountain Springs' development from an 18th century farmstead to a four hundred room hotel by 1860. A series of turn-of-the-century recreational improvements maintained the resort's popularity until the Great Depression. At its height, the hotel drew important guests including nineteenth century presidents and numerous other figures of national and statewide influence. The hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

The Mountain Springs was still occupied in the 1980s, but by the end of decade the building was vacant and physical deterioration was increasing. The contents of the hotel were sold at auction in 1991. Over the past five years a number of reuse proposals have been considered and



Mountain Springs Hotel

rejected. A July 1992 proposal planned to subdivide 8.3 acres of the property for development, to reuse the frame hotel building, but to demolish some of the oldest structures on the property. To date, no action has been taken on the proposal and the property continues to deteriorate.



Memorial Park Archeological Site

Memorial Park, Lock Haven

The archeological site at Memorial Park in Lock Haven, Clinton County, is one of the Commonwealth's most important and threatened archeological sites. The site was listed in the National Register in 1980 on the strength of significant remains of a large Late Woodland Period (circa 1000 A.D.) village encountered just beneath the topsoil in the park. Since 1980, additional archeological testing has documented a series of buried Native American occupations below the Late Woodland levels that extend more than ten feet below the surface, making the site one of the deepest and most significant archeological sites in the Middle Atlantic states.

Inappropriate field methods led to severe damage to the Late Woodland remains during a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers archeological excavation in May of 1991. Subsequent excavation damaged the deeper occupations at the site as well. Ongoing negotiations are underway among the Corps, the Bureau for Historic Preservation, the Clinton County Historical Society, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service to prevent further compromising of the undamaged portions of the site during construction of a levee associated with flood control in the Lock Haven and Lock Port area.

Mission Statement

Preservation Pennsylvania, through creative partnerships, targeted educational and advocacy programs, advisory assistance, and special projects, assists Pennsylvania communities to protect and utilize the historic resources they want to preserve for the future.

King of Prussia Inn, Montgomery County

Named for Frederick the Great of Prussia, the King of Prussia Inn is an excellent example of an eighteenth century public house at an early crossroads that gave rise to a community which still bears its name. The inn was first constructed in 1719 by a Welsh family. It was enlarged to its present appearance in 1769 and operated as an inn or tavern for over 200 years. Through the efforts of the King of Prussia Historical Society, the inn was listed in the National Register in 1975.

Isolation of the inn on the median strip of U.S. Route 202 poses the greatest challenge to preservation efforts, and there is consensus that the building should be moved. A buyer sensitive to preservation who would move and rehabilitate the building is needed. In the meantime, PennDOT has undertaken a complete historic structures report on the inn as mandated by the Bureau for Historic Preservation, which holds a covenant on the building.



*King of Prussia Inn
Views from each side
of Route 202*



Borg Warner Complex, buildings along Roosevelt Avenue

Borg Warner Complex, York

The sprawling Borg Warner complex is one of the most massive industrial facilities in the city of York. Begun as a general foundry in the 1890s, the York Manufacturing Company is best known for its production of ice-making machinery and, later, the manufacture of refrigeration equipment. The rapidly rising success of the company resulted in a dramatic expansion of the facility in the first two decades of the twentieth century and an increase in employees from fifty in the late 1890s to fifteen hundred by 1910. The company patented many refrigeration improvements and shipped

equipment around the world. Borg Warner Corporation acquired the company in 1956 and sold the complex in 1960. The entire building complex is located within the National Register-listed York Historic District.

Since 1960, the buildings have changed ownership numerous times and several development plans have been proposed and abandoned. The vacant buildings are deteriorating from the ongoing effects of deferred maintenance and vandalism. A proposed industrial plaza includes plans for selective demolition and rehabilitation of the existing structures. While the proposal awaits approval of federal funding, which would at a minimum insure recording of the buildings, the complex continues to deteriorate.

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Grace Gary.....Executive Director
Susan Shearer.....Editor

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Delaware Canal

The Delaware Canal and its structures and setting today constitute the most intact towpath canal in the nation. Historically, as part of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company system, the canal carried immense quantities of anthracite coal to urban and industrial centers, bringing mineral fuel to fire the Industrial Revolution. Most heavily used during the era from the 1830s through the 1860s, the Delaware Canal is estimated to have carried thirty-three million tons of coal over its entire period of use, which ended in 1931. The entire sixty mile length of the canal, stretching from Bristol to Easton, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976.

Presently, as a large and complex linear resource, the Delaware Canal and its stewards face a host of threats. The canal has been a state park since 1940 and was designated part of the Delaware and Lehigh Navigation Canal National Heritage Corridor in 1988. A commission, established by the heritage corridor legislation, and many local partners representing the communities along the canal are cooperating to tackle formidable problems. These include



Delaware Canal

deterioration of the canal's structure and features, encroaching modern development, and detracting adjacent land uses.

Path Valley Turnpike Rest Stop, Franklin County

The Path Valley stop is one of the last, intact, original Pennsylvania Turnpike rest stops. Travelling eastbound, it is located just past the Tuscarora Tunnel. Path Valley was opened in 1940 as one of ten service plazas on the one hundred sixty miles of four-lane limited-access highway that inaugurated a new era in travel for Americans and their automobiles. Not as large as some of the other stone buildings constructed with funds from Standard Oil, the original Turnpike concessionaire, Path Valley did boast a large picnic area popular with turnpike travelers. The stop has been determined eligible for the National Register.

A number of the original rest stops have been closed, and some of these have found new, if not always sympathetic, uses. Path Valley stands vacant with its future uncertain. Turnpike enthusiasts have suggested that Path Valley might make an excellent interpretation center for the history of the highway.



*Path Valley Turnpike Rest Stop.
Photograph courtesy of Mitchell Dakelman*



Erie City and County Library

Erie City and County Library

This Beaux Arts library building is one of the oldest and grandest public buildings to survive in Erie. It was designed in 1880 by the Pittsburgh architectural firm of Alden and Harlow to serve as the Erie City Library and ultimately became the headquarters for the Erie County Library system. The building's architectural importance is defined largely by the Neoclassical exterior design elements, which included a marble portico on the main facade, a white terracotta roof balustrade, and extensive terracotta detailing.

As the main library for both the city and the county, the building could no longer meet the space needs of the institution, and it has recently been vacated for a new facility four-times its size. The precarious condition of the deteriorated exterior has necessitated the removal and storage of the portico, balustrade and other architectural elements. Use of the building for expansion of federal judicial offices is currently being explored in what preservationists fear may be a last hope for saving the building.

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Searights Tollhouse

Searights Tollhouse, Fayette County

Searights Tollhouse was one of six nineteenth century tollhouses constructed along the Pennsylvania section of the National Road. Including Searights, only two of the tollhouses still survive. The cost of maintaining the National Road, which was authorized by the federal government in 1806 in response to the need to connect the country with a national transportation system, led to an agreement whereby the individual states would administer their portions of the highway. Pennsylvania assumed that responsibility in 1835, after which the six tollhouses were built. Tolls were collected until 1905. The advent of the automobile in the early twentieth century rescued the road from disrepair and the route eventually became part of U.S. Route 40.

Searights Tollhouse was restored and partially reconstructed in the early 1960s. It was listed in the National Register in 1972 and is also recognized as a National Historic Landmark. Owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it is operated as a museum by the Fayette County Historical Society. The principal threat to the property comes from an open pit mine that surrounds the building on three sides.

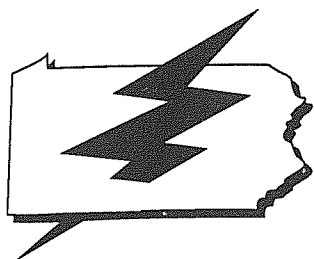
Glassworks and Greensboro, Greene County, and New Geneva, Fayette County

Linked historically by early industry and their shared location on a bend in the Monongahela River, the towns of Glassworks, Greensboro, and New Geneva reflect the relative prosperity of nineteenth century craft-based manufacturing. Albert Gallatin, noted financier and statesman, recognized and promoted the natural resources and potential for commerce in the area. His investment in glassworks in the region initiated some of the earliest settlements, which continued to grow and prosper through later successful pottery and boatbuilding enterprises. The survival of late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth century buildings in these three communities distinguish them from the later bituminous patch towns that surround them. Two districts and several individual properties in the three towns have been determined eligible for the National Register and all will be included in a multiple resource nomination.

Replacement of a downstream lock and dam at Grays Landing by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers threatens to redefine the area flood plain and endanger this long-inhabited bend in the Monongahela. A number of significant properties have been prematurely vacated through the exercise of eminent domain; and, although historic structures are being marketed for resale, many are at risk of extended or permanent abandonment and demolition.





Neighborhood in floodplain area, Greensboro





UPDATES


We offer the following updated information on properties previously listed as *Pennsylvania at Risk*.


 **Native American Ossuary, North East, Erie County.** The area has been substantially excavated to the satisfaction of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.


 **Star Barn, Lower Swatara Township, near Harrisburg.** The Central Pennsylvania Conservancy has a six-month option, with two additional six-month options possible, to purchase the property which includes thirty acres and the complex of agricultural buildings. The group has undertaken a feasibility study on raising the funds necessary to purchase and restore the barn and its related structures.


 **Lynnewood Hall, Cheltenham Township, Montgomery Co.** In an unexpected move, owners of Lynnewood Hall offered the entire building, in full or in parts, for sale in the January issue of *The Magazine Antiques*. Preservationists obtained an injunction to halt any sale of the building and its features pending a hearing originally scheduled for March 26. At this writing, the hearing is postponed and no new date has been set.

 **Stegmaier Brewery, Wilkes-Barre.** The city has petitioned for the building to be removed from the National Register. Plans call for substantial demolition and reuse of the structure.

 **Meason House, Dunbar Township, Fayette Co.** To add to the continued problems of this nationally significant property, the water line serving the house ruptured in December; and the residents have been without an adequate water supply ever since. Repair of the line has been denied by the mine owner through whose property the line runs. This latest challenge continues to point to the urgent need for a creative solution to preserving the property.

 **East Broadtop Railroad, Rockhill Furnace, Huntingdon County.** A proposed power line would cross and recross the property in five places, severely undermining the integrity of the site. The Friends of East Broadtop have filed suit to stop construction of the line.

 **United States Naval Home, Philadelphia.** The property continues to deteriorate. Recently, a large section of wall collapsed, and, to date, no move has been made to undertake repairs.

 **Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia.** Proposals have been reviewed and a consultant selected for a comprehensive historic structures report on the entire complex. In a separate proposal, recording of the administration building and a feasibility study on its reuse are also underway.

Other properties listed to date:

Deshong Estate, Chester

Danville West Market Street Historic District, Danville

Legionville Campground, Harmony Township, Beaver County

Highway Routes 23 & 30 expansion projects, Lancaster County

Astor Theater, Reading

Bedford Springs Hotel, Bedford

Brith Salom Synagogue, Easton, Northampton County

Selma, Norristown, Montgomery County

Carrie Furnaces, Swissvale, Allegheny County

Park Home, Williamsport

Knowlton, Philadelphia

St. Severin Church, Drifting, Clearfield County

We welcome any information you may have on changes in the status of any of these important sites and buildings.

Special thanks to Bruce Bomberger and Joe Baker of the Bureau for Historic Preservation for their help with this issue.