

preservation PENNSYLVANIA 1982-2012

30 Years of Preserving the Past

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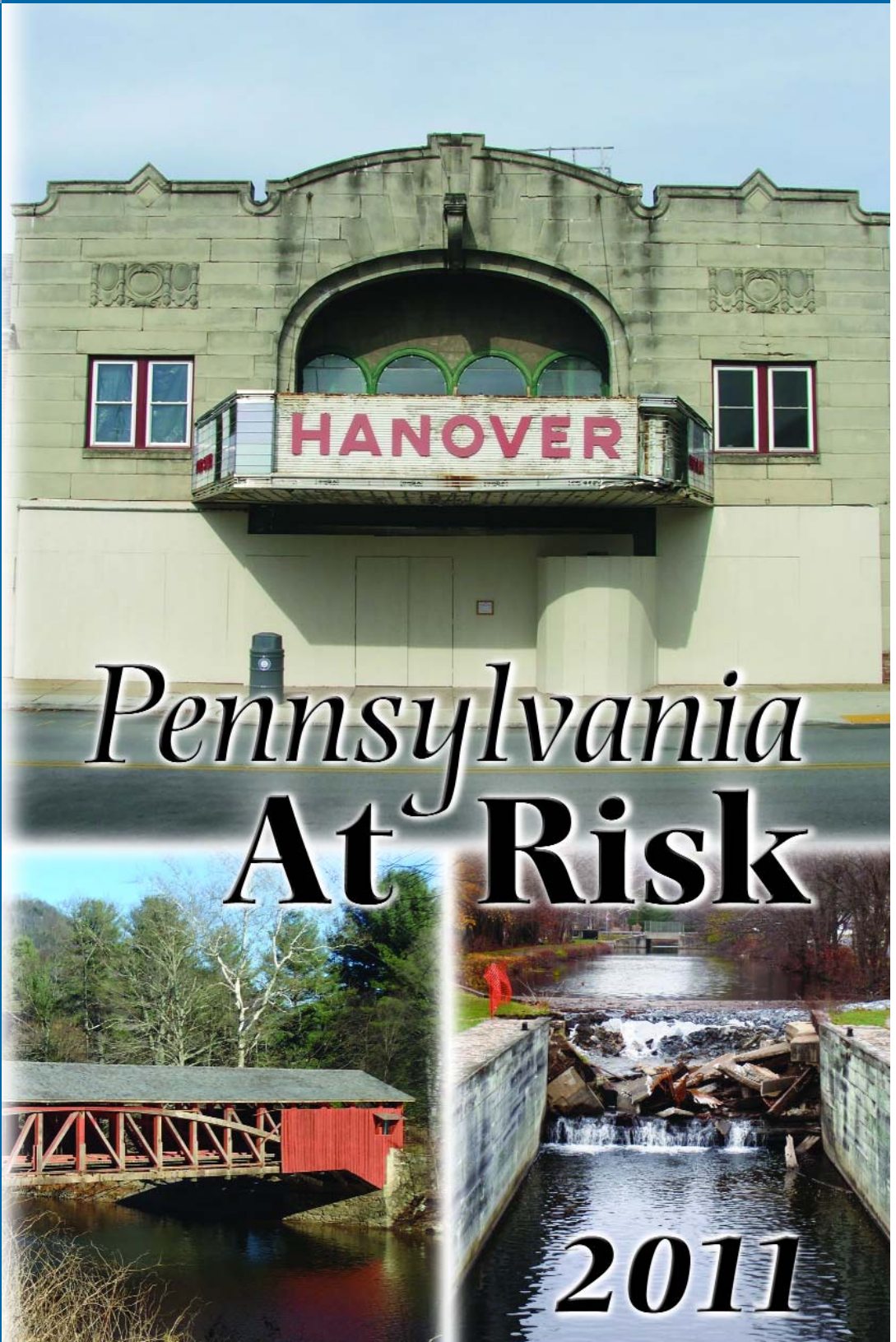
# The Newsletter Dedicated to Preserving Pennsylvania's Historic Places

# Preserving

P E N N S Y L V A N I A

VOLUME 25 ■ ISSUE 1 ■ Winter 2011-2012

Sonestown and Hillsgrove, Sullivan County • Walnutport, Northampton County • Bucks County Playhouse (Parry's Grist Mill) • Hanover Theater  
Trinity United Methodist Church • Villa Chapel • Keystone Markers • Lehigh Valley Railroad Depot • Highland Hall • 1000 Block of North 6th Street  
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## Pennsylvania At Risk

2011

Photo courtesy of Matt Hamel, PennDOT.

Photo courtesy of Everett Kaul, Walnutport Canal Association.

Photo courtesy of Dave Leske.

**ABOUT US** Preservation Pennsylvania is the Commonwealth's only statewide, private nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the protection of historically and architecturally significant properties. Our organization was created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1982 as the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania, a statewide revolving fund to assist in the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic properties. Since we were incorporated, the organization has grown in capacity and now annually sponsors the Statewide Conference on Heritage, the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards, educational programs and advocacy initiatives. We also offer free, on-site technical assistance to individuals, organizations, municipalities and corporations in all regions of the Commonwealth.

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**On the cover:** Hanover Theater,  
Hillsgrove Covered Bridge, Lehigh Canal



*Executive Director  
Mindy Crawford*

## A Message from Mindy

Announcing our annual Pennsylvania At Risk list fills me with a mix of emotions. It is sad to see the deteriorated state of resources that appear to have little potential for a new use. Yet, it is also exciting to think of the possibilities that calling attention to these resources might bring forward.

Preservation Pennsylvania began this listing of the Commonwealth's most endangered properties in 1992, and 200 resources are currently included. Given the size of Pennsylvania, this list may seem rather short after 19 years but many of the resources listed represent entire communities or are the "poster child" for a larger theme or category of threats. The good news is that many of these 200 At Risk listings are success stories – resources that have been preserved by the efforts of many. If the listing of a resource on Preservation Pennsylvania's At Risk has helped that "save" happen, we are doing something right.

Our decision to release the 2011 list in early 2012 gave us a chance to reflect on a year that has been challenging for our Commonwealth's historic resources — natural disasters, decreasing federal, state and local funding as well as the typical threats of demolition by neglect, encroaching development and a lack of understanding of the importance of protecting our precious heritage. With our 2011 list in place, we can set our agenda for 2012 and focus our efforts where they are most needed.

Will every resource be saved? Sadly, no. But we know from almost 20 years of experience that calling attention to properties that are "at risk" does make a difference. It has the potential to bring forward the right party to take on the task of rehabilitating a building or bolsters a local group's efforts to prevent the demolition of an important place. The most exciting outcome for me is when we see a former At Risk property receive a Historic Preservation Award, sometimes many years later. For a resource to go from the verge of being lost to becoming a fully rehabilitated building with a successful new use is the very best reason for this program to continue.

As you review this year's list, think about the possibilities. Do you know someone who might be interested in helping some of these resources? Would you like to get involved with a resource in your community? Preservation happens when small groups of dedicated people care about a place and work to protect it. To quote Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Buildings and other sites are saved by local folks who believe they matter to them, their neighborhood, their community or maybe their entire state.

We look forward to working with you and other like-minded individuals during 2012 as we focus on these At Risk properties and other issues that are important in protecting Pennsylvania's heritage.

*Mindy*

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**FLOOD  
DAMAGED  
HISTORIC  
RESOURCES**

This year will long be remembered for its record-setting rainfall in portions of Pennsylvania that pushed rivers and creeks to historic crests, claimed lives, flooded communities, displaced homeowners and damaged historic resources. Beginning with spring flooding, and culminating with damage wrought by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in late summer, many historic places in Pennsylvania are now in danger. Historic properties such as the Bucks County Playhouse

in New Hope, a section of the Lehigh Canal in Walnutport, and covered bridges in Sonestown and Hillsgrove, as well as many others, were damaged by the floods, and may not be able to be rehabilitated. It is important that we work to save these endangered resources, and also learn from these disasters and continue to talk about steps that can be taken to prepare for future weather events to minimize or mitigate damage to historic properties and make recovery as effective as possible.

**PREPARING FOR A DISASTER**

We all like to think that disasters won't happen. But the truth is, our earth and environment are changing, and we need to adapt along with it in order to protect and preserve the places that matter to us. Taking steps to ensure that your community has a current historic resource inventory in place, as well as a Flood Ordinance that includes the required Hazard Mitigation Plan, preferably exercising the ability to grant variances to historic properties, are keys to making the best of a bad situation that may arise in the future.

More than 600 homes were substantially damaged this year in Bloomsburg, Columbia County. Code Enforcement Officer Ed Fegley reported that no notable historic buildings were damaged – but that a lot of old stock housing and several businesses that have been operating in the community for many years sustained significant damage. Most will be able to be repaired and re-occupied, but many will be razed. While government programs sometimes provide money to help restore owner-occupied residences and municipal buildings, many businesses and rental housing are not covered by these emergency funding programs. So now, more than three months after the storm, places like Bloomsburg are still struggling to recover from the floods.

As was the case in Bloomsburg, the buildings and neighborhoods that are hit hardest by flooding are often modest and are considered by the community to be “not historic, just old.” While it may be true that these buildings lack architectural details that make them appear to be significant, they are an important part of the story of the community. Whether they are worker housing located on less desirable low land, industrial facilities sited along creeks and rivers, or rural agricultural outbuildings, they should be considered as economic and cultural assets that also contribute to the community's sense of place. We recommend that communities develop a plan to conduct a historic resource inventory (or update their existing survey) in order to be sure they understand the whole history of the place, and know what resources reflect that history.

It is also important that communities understand the various forms of mitigation available, and create a plan that best suits their own needs. Acquisition and demolition are commonly the choice of community Hazard Mitigation Plans and FEMA, but these alternatives have the potential to adversely impact communities in many ways. Of course, buildings are lost. If those are historic (or even “just old”) buildings, part of the cultural fabric of the community is lost. But just as importantly, this “old” housing stock is often workforce housing and is taxable property. Removal of this housing will force residents to live elsewhere and will eliminate the value upon which the property is taxed, thus reducing tax revenues in the community. *(continued)*

# Pennsylvania At Risk



*Aerial shot of Bloomsburg during the September flooding.*

Photo courtesy of Ed Fegley, Town of Bloomsburg.

**CRITERIA FOR LISTING**

Pennsylvania At Risk serves as a representative sampling of the Commonwealth's most endangered historic resources. For the purpose of the list, endangerment is defined as a threat of demolition, significant deterioration, vandalism, alteration, and/or loss of its historic setting. It is our belief that publishing this list draws statewide attention to the plight of Pennsylvania's historic resources, promotes local action to protect resources, and encourages additional state funding for historic sites.

This list is compiled from recommendations made by our members, local heritage organizations, the board and staff of Preservation Pennsylvania, and the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

**Criteria for Listing**

- The property is listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or
- The property is considered a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District, or
- The property is designated historic by local government, and
- The property is faced with imminent, recognized endangerment either from overt action, neglect, incompatible use, or loss of context.

*Preservation Pennsylvania welcomes your comments on this year's list, your updates on the status of past entries, and your suggestions for future listings.*

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Relocation and elevation are two alternatives to demolition. Relocation offers the advantage of preserving the existing building and not generating unnecessary waste, but can still disrupt neighborhood cohesion and erode the tax base as buildings are moved out of their original location. Elevation keeps the building on its original site, and simply lifts it up out of the floodplain and places it on a new, higher foundation. This does alter the historic character of the property and neighborhood to some extent, but retains the building in its original location, thus maintaining the historic context and preserving housing opportunities and the tax base.

# Pennsylvania At Risk

While elevation, relocation and demolition are the three standard means of mitigation, the National Flood Insurance Program does allow the Hazard Mitigation Plans in flood ordinances to include a variance for historic properties – allowing them to receive FEMA funds for substantial improvements even if they are not mitigated (i.e./ elevated, relocated or demolished). This variance is defined and administered locally, and allows for a great deal of flexibility at the local level.

Although mitigation may not be required for historic properties, careful consideration should be given to mitigating anyway. If mitigation can be done in a manner that is less harmful to the historic resource than another flood event, mitigation may be desirable. Often, when mitigation that does adversely impact historic properties or districts is done, a Memorandum of Agreement can be created to use some FEMA funds to help do preservation work to offset the harmful impacts. For instance, for each building adversely impacted by mitigation projects, money could be dedicated to other preservation activities in the community, such as completion of National Register nominations or establishment of a revolving loan fund.

Unfortunately, the weather events we experienced in Pennsylvania in 2011 are likely to happen again in the future. In order to protect the historic places that matter to us, we need to understand what we have and plan to minimize, mitigate, or respond to these events as best we can.

## Covered Bridges

*Sonestown and Hillsgrove, Sullivan County*



*Sonestown Covered Bridge and closeup of flood damaged siding.*



*Hillsgrove Covered Bridge in need of repair.*



### Significance

Two of the three covered bridges in Sullivan County were damaged by floods in August and September, and may not be able to be restored. These rare remaining examples of covered bridges are both listed in the National Register of Historic Places. They are an important link to and record of the transportation history of Sullivan County and are assets that help draw visitors to the area.

Both of the bridges were built circa 1850. The Sonestown Covered Bridge is 99 feet long, and was built across Muncy Creek to provide access to Johnny Hazen's gristmill. Built by Sadler Rogers, the Hillsgrove Covered Bridge is 171 feet long, carrying traffic over Loyalsock Creek. Both structures use Burr Arch trusses, and have vertical siding with openings near the eaves to admit light. The Sonestown Covered Bridge was rehabilitated several years ago, and the county has been diligent about continuing to maintain the bridge, which they recognize as an asset in the county and a draw for heritage tourists. Rehabilitation of the Hillsgrove Covered Bridge was completed in 2010.

### Threat

Both the Sonestown and Hillsgrove Covered Bridges were severely damaged as a result of both Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Following the flood, the bridges were inspected, and they remain closed today. The siding on the two bridges was severely damaged by high water and objects impacting their sides. In some places, it appears that the structure – including both the abutments and the trusses themselves – were damaged as well. Although the detailed reports on their condition and estimates of

the cost to repair the bridges and make them operable again have not been received, it is anticipated that it will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars for each bridge.

Sullivan County, who owns the two covered bridges, has made application for emergency funds to rehabilitate the bridges. If they are able to get the funding necessary to rehabilitate the structures, they believe they will be able to re-open the Hillsgrove Bridge to vehicular traffic. However, preliminary reports indicate that even with significant funding, the Sonestown Bridge will be re-opened as a pedestrian bridge, and will not be able to accommodate vehicular traffic in the future. With priority placed on restoring people's homes and getting roads and essential bridges open, Sullivan County Commissioners are not optimistic that they will receive the funding necessary to re-open the bridges.

And Sullivan County is not alone. Historic bridges throughout Pennsylvania were damaged by floods this year. Some communities, such as Lancaster County, have prioritized covered bridges in their disaster plans and have worked hard to find ways to ensure that these unique and greatly appreciated historic resources are rehabilitated. Others are working just as hard, yet struggling to overcome obstacles (mostly financial) that may stand in the way of preserving these important historic resources.



# Lehigh Canal

*Walnutport,  
Northampton County*



*Fall gate at Lock #23 of the Lehigh Canal at Walnutport before (above) and after (below) it sustained significant damage as a result of a tropical storm in late August 2011.*



Photos courtesy of Everett Kaul, Walnutport Canal Association.

## **Significance**

The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, under the leadership of Canvass White, constructed the Lehigh Canal from 1827 through its completion in 1829. Measuring 46 miles in length, the Lehigh Canal started just above Mauch Chunk (Jim Thorpe) and continued south to Easton where it joined the Delaware Canal. To compensate for the difference in elevation, 52 locks were incorporated into the canal's design — including Lock 23 in Walnutport. The canal's main purpose was to transport coal downriver from the coal mines of northeastern Pennsylvania and bring goods upriver from the ports of Philadelphia.

The canal was used for transportation by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company from 1829 until 1931. During its 102 years of operation, the Lehigh Canal helped to form and develop the industry and settlements along the Lehigh River. Starting with the early canal builders, people began settling along the canal and soon small towns and villages began to develop. Canal boat builders, industries that manufactured canal support products, industries that relied on coal for operations, and those that needed the water power created by the canal also started in the area. The town of Walnutport is one example of a community that ties its founding to the canal; it once hosted an extensive canal boat building and repair industry and was a familiar stopping point for the boat crews and their families.

The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company stopped shipping coal via the Lehigh Canal in 1931. The canal ceased to operate altogether in 1942 after it was severely damaged by a flood. By 1952, much of the canal was neglected; it was breached and empty in most places. In an attempt to improve fishing in the area, a group of local fishermen worked with the Blue Ridge Rod and Gun Club to restore the canal. The restored Walnutport section of the Lehigh Canal is 4.5 miles long, beginning at Lehigh Gap and ending at Bertch Creek, just below Walnutport. Lock 23 was restored by the Walnutport Canal Association in 1998. The original wooden floor was intact and all sediment was removed. In addition to the restored canal and lock, the lock tender's house at Lock 23, named Kelchner's Lock House for the last active, full-time lock tender who lived there, has been restored and now operates as a museum.

## **Threat**

This restored canal section and lock house are an asset in Walnutport. It is used by locals for fishing, walking and biking, and attracts visitors from elsewhere. Much of the Delaware and Lehigh Canal has been redeveloped as a recreational and economic asset, based on the model provided by Walnutport.

Unfortunately, the canal at Walnutport sustained significant damage as a result of a tropical storm in late August 2011. In response to this disaster, an engineering assessment of the structure was conducted, and repairs were estimated at \$350,000-\$400,000. This money would be used to dredge the canal basin and lock to remove the sediment and debris that have filled the prism, and to repair the fall gate. These repairs will help to limit erosion to the banks, which is currently causing additional damage to this important historic resource. Application for relief funding has been made to FEMA and PEMA. But if not enough funding is available to cover the cost of rehabilitation, it will likely not be completed. Neither the Borough of Walnutport nor the Walnutport Canal Association has the funds necessary for the repairs. If the Lehigh Canal at Walnutport cannot be stabilized, this important historic and economic asset that the community has worked so hard to preserve for nearly sixty years will be significantly compromised.

# Bucks County Playhouse (Parry's Grist Mill)

70 South Main Street,  
New Hope, Bucks County



Photo courtesy of Kevin Joy, New Hope HARB.

*The Bucks County Playhouse, which has been vacant since 2010 and is in foreclosure, was damaged by flooding in 2011.*

## Significance

The building now commonly known as the Bucks County Playhouse was originally built as a gristmill in the 18th century. After Hope Mills burned in 1790, Benjamin Parry rebuilt the mill as the New Hope Mills, and the town around it came to be known as New Hope. In the early 1800s, New Hope grew and prospered, developing as a hub at the center of the Delaware and Lehigh Canal system. Railroads began to replace the canal following the Civil War, and in 1931 the last commercial canal boat passed through New Hope. Businesses like Parry's gristmill slowly declined.

New Hope Mills was out of service and threatened by demolition by 1938, when a group that included playwright Moss Hart purchased it and began converting it into a theater. Containing 450 red seats, the theater opened on July 1, 1939, playing *Springtime for Henry* featuring Edward Everett Horton. The Bucks County Playhouse became a popular summer theater, serving as a venue where many Broadway plays were previewed. Many notable actors played at the theater, which served as a cultural outlet for the local community and important draw for visitors. Designated a State Theater of Pennsylvania, the Bucks County Playhouse is at the heart of a National Register listed and locally regulated historic district, and is a landmark in the community.

## Threat

In December of 2010, the Bucks County Playhouse was closed when Stonebridge Bank took possession of the property through foreclosure. The property's owner of 35 years was no longer able to make the necessary payments on his \$2 million mortgage. Several groups and individuals are interested in acquiring the property and returning it to a community theater, but none have been able to reach an agreement with the bank and offer a price that they are willing to accept.

In addition to the challenge of raising enough money to purchase the Playhouse, the new owner will have to make a substantial investment to renovate the building to satisfy current building codes. Work required includes installation of a fire detection and suppression system, and accommodations to make the property more accessible to persons with disabilities. Because the Bucks County Playhouse is designated as historic, the project may be able to utilize the historic sections of the building code, which allow for greater flexibility in the rehabilitation project. This could potentially result in some cost savings, and help to retain the character defining features of the historic property.

The Bucks County Playhouse has been impacted by flood events during the year it has been closed. The building stands along the Delaware River where a significant creek flows into it. A dam on the creek forms a waterfall that used to generate power for the mill. While attractive, this feature serves as a dam for water backing up from the Delaware River in flood events, and the peninsula on which the Playhouse stands floods severely. A floodwall was built along part of the property facing the Delaware River, but that wall collapsed in floods associated with Irene and Lee in the fall of 2011. In addition to other improvements, the Bucks County Playhouse needs work to repair damage done by the flood. Like the building codes, flood regulations can allow for variances for historic buildings. New Hope's Zoning Ordinance specifies that structures included in the National Register of Historic Places or Borough Inventory are not required to comply with floodplain provisions, provided the construction will not impact recognition by federal, state or local agencies of the structure's historic significance. Thus, mitigation may not be required in this case. However, since this location is likely to flood periodically, the new owner may want to consider taking steps to protect the property from unnecessary future flood damage.

There is a strong interest in preserving the Bucks County Playhouse in the community and beyond. The sooner a deal can be reached with the bank, the more likely it is that the new owner will be able to get into the building and address any deterioration before it reaches a point where doing so would not be economically feasible.

# Hanover Theater

37-41 Frederick Street,  
Hanover, York County



Photo courtesy of Dave Leslie.

*The downtown Hanover Theater opened its doors over 80 years ago and has helped distinguish Hanover's Historic District.*

## Significance

Originally known as the State Theater, the Hanover Theater began its 58-year run as a movie and live performance venue on September 21, 1928. The building was designed by architect William Harold Lee, who was involved in the design of over 80 theaters. He designed the Theater using elements of the Spanish Colonial Revival and Moderne styles which were popular for buildings of the day. It was built of brick with a limestone façade, extensive ornamental plasterwork on the interior, and had 973 seats at its opening. The interior was designed by Arthur Brounet, who was known for his extravagant murals and paintings. It is one of only three complete Brounet decorated theaters still standing, and one of those will be lost to redevelopment in the next few months. While it is not known if any of Brounet's murals exist beneath paint added during renovations, he did design the elaborate plaster details that adorn the theater's elegant interior.

The theater is very well known in the community and sits in the heart of downtown along one of Hanover's main streets. Many of the town's residents — past and present — have attended movies and performances in this building, creating memories that connect them to this special place. The Hanover Theater is a contributing element of the National Register listed Hanover Historic District.

## Threat

The State Theater's name was changed to the Hanover Theater in 1960, after the building was renovated. Its use as a theater continued until 1986, when owner Fox Brothers sold the theater to an antiques dealer who intended to turn it into an antiques mall. That plan was abandoned in 1991, however, and the Hanover Theater was instead used as a warehouse. Shortly thereafter, the building was neglected and fell into disrepair.

In 2007, members of an organization called Casual Arts, which assists in the restoration of theaters as part of downtown revitalizations, discovered the ailing theater. When they learned that it has a Brounet interior, they immediately took steps to preserve it. A group of committed individuals formed a holding company called Historic Hanover Theater, LLC and provided \$500,000 to purchase and stabilize the building, with the understanding that Casual Arts would work to raise funds to purchase the theater within two years and begin rehabilitation of the mothballed structure. Unfortunately, Casual Arts decided that the restoration project should be postponed until the revitalization of downtown Hanover was further along, indicating at the end of the two year period in 2009 that they would not be taking over the theater as planned. Historic Hanover Theater, LLC

considered keeping the building and undertaking the rehabilitation themselves, but decided that they did not have the means to do so. Instead, they attempted in 2010 and 2011 to sell it to an organization that intended to restore the unique venue.

By June of 2011, no interested parties stepped forward to acquire the theater and restore it. Thus, Historic Hanover Theater, LLC is now forced to consider offers from any interested parties, including those that may alter the building in an inappropriate manner, or even demolish it. With parking at a premium and a common community perception that the building is unattractive or even unstable due to the deterioration of the façade, many are calling for the demolition of this historic downtown theater. This negative view is exacerbated by ongoing deterioration, which is being accelerated by vandalism. From 2007 through 2011, the Hanover Theater had a live-in caretaker who helped to prevent vandalism and kept deterioration to a minimum. That caretaker is no longer living on site, and the property is now vacant and unsupervised. If a party interested in preserving the building does step forward, the size and location of the Hanover Theater make it vulnerable to conversion to apartments, retail, or other uses that would not allow for the retention of the theater's character-defining features.

While many Hanover residents support the idea of restoring or rehabilitating the Hanover Theater and have stated that the project would be a great benefit to downtown, no individual or organization has mobilized to do so. Historic Hanover Theater, LLC does not have the funds to maintain the building and they will sell it to the first serious buyer, regardless of whether they intend to preserve it or not. If they do not find a buyer soon, deferred maintenance will lead to further deterioration, and may result in the community calling for its demolition. Immediate action is needed to find or create an organization that will preserve the Hanover Theater.

Historic theaters can be tremendous assets to downtowns, and are often key elements in their revitalization or continued vitality. They provide a downtown destination and often serve as an anchor in traditional communities. All over Pennsylvania, historic theaters are underutilized and some are being lost. These irreplaceable buildings should be viewed as community assets — both cultural and economic — and preserved or rehabilitated whenever possible.

# Trinity United Methodist Church

241 East King Street,  
York, York County

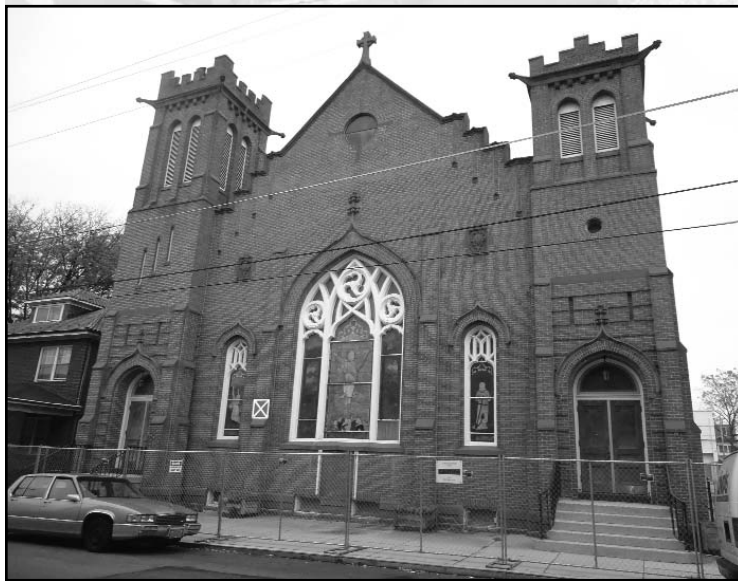


Photo courtesy of Erin Hammersmith, Preservation Pennsylvania.

*York's Trinity Church is on an extremely tight deadline to make all of their repairs.*

## Significance

Trinity United Methodist Church was established in York in 1871, as English-speaking members withdrew from a German-speaking Evangelical church. They built a small chapel on East King Street that year, but replaced it with this building, designed by architect Harry E. Yessler, in 1897. The church has brick bearing walls, and its slate roof is supported by a series of timber scissor trusses. The sanctuary was expanded, and an addition that houses classrooms and other accessory activities was also added to the rear of the 1897 church. Trinity Church features elaborate stained glass and woodwork, an ornate ceiling in the sanctuary and a series of religious murals. It is a historically significant architectural landmark in downtown York and is a contributing element in two historic districts, the National Register-listed York Historic District and the locally regulated Historic York district.

## Threat

Despite the church's historic and architectural significance, York City's Fire Department has ordered its demolition as a result of structural deficiencies. The congregation hired an engineering firm to study the building in 2010, and learned that many of the trusses are overloaded and severely bowed. As a result of this deflection, many members have become detached, causing the remaining truss members to carry even greater loads. With many of the trusses already stressed well beyond acceptable limits, the separation and bowing and leaning of members will continue to get worse if corrective measures are not taken, and may result in the collapse of all or a portion of the sanctuary roof. A cost estimate of approximately \$400,000 was given for the necessary repairs.

Like so many others, the congregation at Trinity Church is dwindling. In January 2011, they voted to merge with another congregation, and in February 2011, they vacated the historic building after it was condemned by the City of York because of the failing truss system. At the suggestion of the community, the congregation requested an extension for the deadline to repair or demolish the church, and put the large historic church and school complex on the market for sale. There has been some interest in the property, but none have found it feasible to pay the \$225,000 purchase price plus invest in the necessary repairs.

Unfortunately, the condition of the building is getting worse. Pennsylvania experienced a rare seismic event on August 23, 2011. While additional movement from this earthquake was not very significant, an engineering assessment of the building just days afterwards indicated that a masonry crack had grown, and that another truss had come detached from the roof since the most recent inspection in May 2011. Because of the worsening conditions, the City of York revoked the extension of time to repair or demolish Trinity United Methodist Church, and in October ordered that it be demolished immediately. Trinity responded by filing a demolition permit application and submitting an application to the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Historic York, Inc. and the HARB have been working with Trinity United Methodist Church and the City to come up with alternatives that will avoid demolition of the whole building, instead removing and replacing or rehabilitating only those features that are compromised. In order to get the church to consider taking the steps to stabilize the building rather than demolish it, donated cash, goods and services are needed to close that gap between the price of demolition and the price of stabilization. Historic York, Inc. is working hard to try to make this happen. They have found roofing contractors who will remove the heavy slate pro bono and cover the roof with architectural shingles, thereby eliminating much of the weight on the trusses and providing a solid roof for any new buyer. They are now looking for people to donate necessary services, like dumpster use and removal and crane operations, so that the congregation can move forward. The goal of Historic York's efforts is to have Trinity Church's congregation stabilize the building using the same amount of money they would have used to demolish it. It appears they have been successful, because on December 21, the church announced that they do plan to repair rather than demolish the building. If they follow through, the building will be out of immediate jeopardy. Once stabilized, the property will be a more financially feasible undertaking for a new owner with plans to rehabilitate it. The next challenge to ensure its preservation will be to find a new owner to occupy the building and commit to completing the rehabilitation of this historic building and maintaining it in good repair.

Trinity United Methodist Church in York is certainly not alone in its struggle to preserve an historic sacred space. Across the Commonwealth, many churches located in traditional communities are struggling with dwindling congregations and soaring maintenance and utility costs. It is important that stewards of these significant resources understand and communicate their value in the community. They are not just places where a small, select group of people go for a couple of hours on Sunday morning. Church buildings are often significant cultural assets that contribute to the economic stability of the neighborhood. Churches provide services to the community, whether by offering food or shelter to the needy, housing a day care, or just providing a watchful eye. If churches inform community members when they are facing financial challenges — before deciding to abandon their building — they may be able to find other congregations, organizations or services with an interest in sharing the space as well as the burden of caring for these important historic properties, in order to perpetuate the positive qualities that an active church can impart on a neighborhood or community.



# 1000 Block of North 6th Street

*Harrisburg,  
Dauphin County*



Photo courtesy of Jean Heratner, Preservation Pennsylvania.

*Overview showing 1000 to 1006 North 6th Street in Harrisburg. This underutilized block, which is historically significant and is an important end-cap to the Fox Ridge neighborhood, may face development pressure in the near future.*

## **Significance**

The 1000 Block of North 6th Street in Harrisburg, including even numbered buildings from 1000 to 1006, is a contributing part of the National Register eligible and locally regulated Fox Ridge Historic District. The block is flanked by two significant historic properties.

At the south end of the block is 1000 North 6th Street, commonly referred to as Swallow Mansion, which was built for Dr. Swallow in 1896 by the architectural firm Warren O. Weaver and Son. This brick Queen Anne mansion later served as the Curtis Funeral Home, a prominent Black-owned business, and also was used for a time as the parsonage for the Ridge Avenue Methodist Church. Now vacant, the building was recently a proposed site for Harrisburg's African American Museum, which never came to fruition.

The former Jackson Rooming House at 1006 North 6th Street comprises the northern end of the block. Originally built as a residence for dry goods merchant Frank Hess and his wife Eleanor, this brick Second Empire style building was erected in 1884. German Jackson, an African-American who worked as head doorman at the Penn Harris Hotel, later acquired the house. Jackson allowed many African Americans, including Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, to stay here in the era of segregation when blacks were not welcome in Harrisburg's hotels. Thus, the building is often referred to as the Jackson Rooming House.

The brick buildings in the middle of the block are currently occupied by a combination of commercial and residential uses. This block provides an important transition, serving as a gateway to the historic Fox Ridge neighborhood, screening it from the developing area on the east side of 6th Street.

## **Threat**

This historic block in Harrisburg is at risk due to the underutilization and deferred maintenance of its cornerstones. A new Federal Courthouse is planned on the opposite side of North 6th Street, just a few blocks from this resource. Commonly, large-scale investments in development like this require that the surrounding area be "cleaned up" to provide a safe and attractive environment for the new construction. But with the federal courthouse project bringing new investment and growing interest in this neighborhood, the cost of acquiring these properties as a first step in revitalizing this block may increase, making their rehabilitation even more challenging.

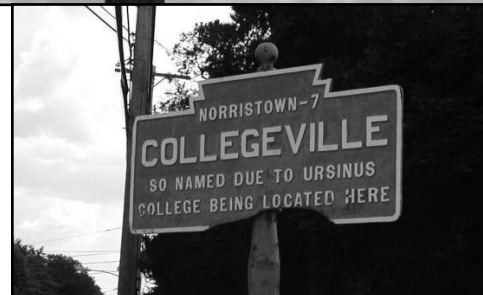
The 1000 Block of North 6th Street forms an important transition between the large-scale public buildings to the east and the dense, traditional residential neighborhood of Fox Ridge. The brick buildings have tremendous potential for re-use but require a developer to invest in their rehabilitation — before they are considered threats to the new construction — thereby protecting their history and the historic block from demolition.

# Keystone Markers

Statewide, throughout Pennsylvania



To date, 65 Keystone Markers have been restored throughout the state but many more are still in need of repair.



Photos courtesy of Nathaniel Guest, Keystone Marker Trust

## Significance

Once ubiquitous icons on the Pennsylvania landscape, these blue-and-gold, cast-iron monuments helped to solidify Pennsylvania's reputation as the Keystone State. Arguably, no other symbol before or since has been so iconographically aligned with Pennsylvania during the time when it was the keystone in the arch of American progress. The markers were part of a statewide program instituted during the Good Roads movement that swept the nation just prior to the First World War. Pennsylvania led the movement, which opened up highway travel to the masses. Pennsylvania's state highway department was the second in the nation and its signature project—the Keystone Markers—served not only as wayfinding devices but also welcoming signs for tourists arriving by car. The markers came in several varieties and could be found at all Pennsylvania river and creek crossings, as well as at town and borough gateways and trail heads.

As the primary road sign type of the Department of Highways, 1,359 Keystone Markers were installed in Pennsylvania in 1928 and thousands more were installed throughout the Commonwealth over the course of the next several decades. While the cast iron signs sometimes posted information such as speed limits and parking restrictions, markers identifying towns and streams are most commonly found today. Town name markers were typically one-sided signs installed at the entrance to a community along a state highway to welcome residents and travelers and provide information about the name of the town, the derivation of the town's name, the date the town was founded, and the distance to the next closest town. Stream name signs were installed along state highways approaching bridges, and were typically two-sided signs that simply stated the name of the river, creek or stream on both sides.

“We believe re-invigorating our communities through the markers not only provides an opportunity for civic responsibility and teaching state history through the act of restoration, it addresses an important need to establish a good first impression at the gateways to our special places.”

Nathaniel C. Guest,  
President, Keystone Marker Trust

## Threat

Initially at least two, if not more, Keystone Markers were installed in most towns along state highways. Today, some 85 years after their introduction, it is rare for a town to have more than one, or for a stream to be marked by any at all. Because they were installed by Pennsylvania's Department of Highways (predecessor of today's Pennsylvania Department of Transportation), Keystone Markers were placed within the highway right-of-way. As a result, many have deteriorated due to salt and weather over the decades, or have been damaged by vehicle impacts. Others have been removed or relocated as original state highways have been bypassed or rerouted, roads have been widened, and the rural landscape has evolved to accommodate modern development.

A group of individuals have organized the Keystone Marker Trust (KMT) in order to preserve, interpret and re-create these proud symbols of our past. PennDOT is technically the owner of these markers, and while maintaining them has not been a high priority for the department, PennDOT does encourage their Engineering Districts to enter into agreements with local civic groups to maintain these markers. This is not a pro-active effort on PennDOT's part and has only been minimally successful. The KMT urges PennDOT, local municipalities, and other interested parties to recognize the Keystone Markers as historic artifacts reflective of the Commonwealth's transportation history, and work together with the Keystone Marker Trust to develop a plan to maintain and preserve them.

Thanks to the efforts of the KMT and its partners, 65 Keystone Markers across the state have been restored, and the group has also made available historically-accurate reproduction markers and marker parts for the first time in 70 years. Collegeville, Greensboro, Seyfert, and the Hay Creek Watershed are currently planning for new marker installations in 2012.



Photo courtesy of Erin Hammerstedt, Preservation Pennsylvania.

# Lehigh Valley Railroad Depot

*Stull Road,  
Noxen, Wyoming County*

*Overview of the LVRR depot at Noxen in 2011.  
The building has been stabilized, but additional work is needed  
to make the depot occupiable and ensure its long-term preservation.*

## **Significance**

The Lehigh Valley Railroad (LVRR) Station in Noxen is a one-story wood-frame building with a hipped roof that was built in 1893. Constructed according to the standard LVRR mainline station plan, this three-room building contains a passenger waiting area to the south, a stationmaster's office with a projecting central bay facing the tracks in the center, and a baggage room to the north. The depot's characteristic deep bracketed overhanging roof extends over the remains of a frame platform, which runs along the track side of the depot and wraps around the north end of the building. The building has board and batten siding on the lower half and weatherboard above, all painted in the LVRR standard medium gray body with dark gray trim. The station's original nine-over-nine windows are in poor condition and require reconstruction. The Noxen station is believed to be the only example of standard 1890s Lehigh Valley mainline depot design extant in Pennsylvania today.

Located in the Bowman's Creek area of the Endless Mountains Heritage Region, the LVRR station at Noxen is significant for its relation to the lumber, tanning and ice industries, as well as for its design. Originally a small lumber town, the village of Noxen grew rapidly after 1891 when a tannery opened because of the availability of hemlock bark and other necessary resources. Presence of new and thriving lumber, tanning and ice-cutting industries in the area along Bowman's Creek prompted the LVRR to partner with existing logging railroads and acquire a new right-of-way in order to establish their winding 78+ mile Bowman's Creek Branch. Work on the Bowman's Creek Branch of the LVRR began in 1891. By April 1892, the track was completed to Noxen, and by July 1893 the line was open from Wilkes Barre to Towanda, with the mainline station in Noxen. Today, the depot serves as a reminder of the role that the railroad and its partners played in tapping the resources of this rugged region, moving resources to market and creating a community.

## **Threat**

The LVRR vacated the Noxen station in 1963 after the industries it served began to wane and passenger traffic declined. Having denuded the hillsides, the lumber industry declined in the first decades of the twentieth century, and by 1914 the lumber towns of Ricketts and Stull were ghost towns. The ice business and passenger service began to decline a decade later, as automobiles and mechanical refrigeration became popular. In 1961, the tannery in Noxen closed; the LVRR followed in its footsteps in 1963. The tannery complex was abandoned and eventually demolished, and the depot was sold to a private owner who used it for storage and as a small machine shop. Unfortunately, the property owner was not able to maintain it, and due to the building's remote location, it was a prime target for vandals. The building's roof deteriorated and walls collapsed under snow loads.

In an attempt to preserve the depot, the owner donated the station and the 1/2-acre parcel it stands on to the non-profit North Branch Land Trust. Owning and rehabilitating historic buildings is outside of the core mission of the Land Trust, but recognizing the depot's importance to the community, they accepted the donation and began working to preserve it. With the aid of grants from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, as well as financial and in-kind support from private individuals, the structure was stabilized. From 2003 to 2007, the North Branch Land Trust rebuilt the exterior walls that had collapsed under heavy snow loads, replaced the roof, secured all of the window and door openings, and insulated and enclosed the interior walls. However, the North Branch Land Trust does not have the funds necessary for the next phase of rehabilitation, which would rebuild and replace the windows and doors and install heating, plumbing and electrical systems necessary for the building to be occupied. Having a tenant or tenants in the building would help prevent further vandalism and ensure the building's ongoing maintenance and preservation.

Noxen is a gateway to the Endless Mountains, and the depot has the potential to serve as a destination for rail-trail users, sportsmen and others traveling in the area. The community would like to see the depot's waiting room rehabilitated as a community meeting space, and the baggage room house a museum to interpret local, regional and railroad history. Unfortunately, the small, rural community does not have the funds to do this on their own. They are currently looking for others to make donations to the North Branch Land Trust for the Noxen Depot Rehabilitation project, or non-profit organizations to come forward to commit to rehabilitating and occupying the buildings.



# Highland Hall

509 Walnut Street  
Hollidaysburg, Blair County



Photo courtesy of Ethan Imhoff.

Overview of Highland Hall, which stands on four acres in the heart of historic Hollidaysburg, and is in need of an economically viable new use.



Photo courtesy of the Borough of Hollidaysburg.

William Howard Taft, who was President of the United States from 1909-1913, visited Highland Hall and posed for this photograph with students and staff of the girls' school in Hollidaysburg.



Photo courtesy of Ethan Imhoff.

The back of Highland Hall showing the extent of deterioration and damage in 2011.

## Significance

Designed by Samuel Sloan and built by master builder Daniel Reamy in 1867-1869, Highland Hall is one of Hollidaysburg's most significant historic properties. This large, T-shaped 3-story Italianate building was constructed of limestone quarried onsite. The main block has a pedimented gable roof, an octagonal cupola, bracketed cornice, and arched windows with decorative hoods. It is flanked by two wings, which have been enlarged over time, but continue important architectural features from the main block.

Highland Hall was originally built as the Hollidaysburg Female Seminary, which was chartered in 1866 and opened in this building in 1869. A stone plaque reads, "Highland Hall 1867-1922," but the building continued to be used as a girls' school through 1940. In 1942, it was leased to the U.S. Army for use as a radio school. After World War II, the Franciscan Order of the Roman Catholic Church purchased the building and used it as a school for young men. Blair County Commissioners then acquired Highland Hall in the 1960s and used it as a county office building until they completed an addition to the Blair County Courthouse and moved their offices there, vacating the historic building. The present owner RADD Development Corporation (Ralph Albarano and Don Devorris) purchased it at auction in January 2000.

This architecturally and historically significant building stands on four acres near downtown Hollidaysburg and is an important feature of the Hollidaysburg historic district. The property serves as an oasis of green space in a dense residential neighborhood. Among the open space and mature trees are several notable landscape features, including a circular driveway defined by stones commemorating graduating classes from the girls' school, a "moon tree" that was grown on site from seeds taken to the moon and back, and a statue erected by the County.

## Threat

Highland Hall has been vacant since the Blair County offices formerly located in this building were relocated to a new addition at the Courthouse in 2000. The community has been working with the current owner to try to find a new use for the property that retains the landmark's character defining features. Recognizing the importance of this property, Hollidaysburg has included a Highland Hall Special District in their zoning ordinance, which allows for this property to be used as government administrative offices with accessory uses, or by special exception, as business or professional offices, an educational facility, a multi-family residence, an inn or hotel, or a nursing or personal care home in the midst of the surrounding residential neighborhood. With support from the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Borough of Hollidaysburg, a feasibility study was conducted for Highland Hall in 2004 in order to evaluate alternatives and consider consequences of potential redevelopment scenarios. This study concluded that feasible re-use options do exist, but with estimated rehabilitation costs in the \$4.5 to \$5 million range. Preliminary financing proposals indicated that there would be a gap in financing of between \$800,000 and \$900,000. This gap could be closed by owner equity or public programs, but would result in a relatively low (3% to 11%) return on investment, making development of the site unattractive, especially in the current economy. The property's owners would like to complete the project, but have not yet been able to find an economically viable re-use.

Having sat vacant for more than ten years, Highland Hall is suffering from neglect and vandalism. Many of the original stained glass windows have been broken out and boarded up, and the grand interior staircase has been severely damaged. As the property continues to deteriorate, the cost of rehabilitation is increasing and the financing gap is widening. If action is not taken soon, this important local landmark may be lost.

# Villa Chapel

*Corner of 9th and Plum Streets,  
Erie, Erie County*



Photo courtesy of Erin Hammerstett, Preservation Pennsylvania.

*Overview of Villa Chapel in February, 2011.*

## **Significance**

The Villa Chapel is part of the Villa Maria Academy, a Roman Catholic complex that includes a convent, school, chapel, and gardens occupying an entire city block in the heart of Erie. Construction of this rare urban ecclesiastical compound began in 1892, with wings and buildings being added as the work of the Sisters of Saint Joseph grew. The Chapel and adjacent Gannon Hall, designed by the architecture firm of Fuller and Stickle and constructed by Kirschner Brothers, were the final additions to this complex in 1925. These last buildings were needed to accommodate a college curriculum at the Academy.

The brick chapel is the most elaborately finished space in the complex. The nave is characterized by a high slate covered gable roof, with exposed decorative trusses, lancet windows with wooden tracery and non-representational stained glass, and plaster walls scored and finished to simulate stone. The narthex and choir loft at the east end of the building are balanced by the ornate domed sanctuary to the west. A priest's apartment wraps the sanctuary on the second level, and a large dining room and kitchen occupy the chapel basement.

The Academy survives as one of Erie's most cohesive collections of architect-designed buildings retaining the distinctive characteristics that represent the Late Victorian, Late Victorian Gothic and Late Gothic Revival architectural styles. In addition to its architectural significance, the Villa Maria Academy and Villa Chapel are important for their association with education. At the time of its construction, Villa Maria was one of the largest schools in Erie and was the only school in the city designed with the intent of instructing women. The Sisters of Saint Joseph continue to be a powerful force in the community, ministering to the sick, the elderly and orphaned, and serving in a wide range of ministries.

## **Threat**

During the 1990s, the Sisters of Saint Joseph decided to vacate Villa Maria Academy, relocating their educational mission to a new complex on West 8th Street in Erie. In the wake of this move, they partnered with two other organizations to rehabilitate the former convent and school buildings into age- and income-restricted apartments. Now known as Villa Maria Apartments, the complex—including the chapel—is now owned jointly by three organizations: Penrose Properties, LLC owns 80%, while the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the Erie Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS) each own a 10% interest. The chapel was not included in the Villa Maria Apartments rehabilitation project and has remained unused since the 1990s. While the apartment rehabilitation was largely successful and won a variety of awards, the chapel now sits vacant, neglected and deteriorating. Preservationists fear that if this building continues to deteriorate, it will eventually be razed for parking as the income restrictions expire and the apartments go market rate.

The chapel's owners have not identified an economically viable reuse for the chapel. Because it is not in use, they have little incentive to invest in the building's maintenance. The Erie Center for Design and Preservation (ECDP) and others in the community are concerned about the deterioration of Villa Chapel. Recognizing its potential as an economic and cultural asset, the group is attempting to work with the property owners to have the building stabilized and to identify a feasible re-use option that will ensure its long term preservation.

Atlantic Engineering Services conducted a condition assessment of the building in March 2010 and concluded that despite the deterioration of many of the interior finishes as a result of water infiltration, the shell and structural framing of the building are sound. A tour of the building in September 2011 confirmed that the condition of the chapel's interior is deteriorating rapidly, but architects, engineers and preservationists all agree that the building could easily be renovated once the breaches in the exterior envelope have been repaired.

In an attempt to demonstrate that rehabilitation of the chapel is feasible, the ECDP hosted a charrette this September, where many members of the community worked with architects to develop possible re-use scenarios for the building. As a result of the charrette, three re-use alternatives were presented by architect Jeff Kidder at a public gathering held at the Watson-Curtze Mansion on November 6, 2011. One proposal, which would require alterations to the interior space and some exterior modifications, would create 19 single occupancy residential apartments. A second option retains the character and volume of the chapel space, creating a restaurant in the chapel, with additional dining room in the choir loft, and potentially the basement. The third re-use alternative proposed features a day-care on the ground floor, which would subsidize use of the main chapel space as a multi-use center housing social and cultural events such as wakes for mourners from a nearby funeral home, film screenings, dance recitals, exhibitions, lectures, weddings and off-site meeting spaces for the Erie Convention Center. The group will soon share these potential re-use options with the property owners, and will continue to work with them in an attempt to convince them to rehabilitate the Chapel or to lease or sell the chapel to an interested individual or organization that will do so.

Despite the fact that majority owner Penrose Properties says they have no intention of demolishing the chapel and that it is thus not at risk, unless they commit to maintaining the building, it will continue to deteriorate. Eventually, rehabilitation will no longer be feasible. In order to have the chapel serve as an economic asset for its owner, and a cultural and economic asset for the community, Villa Chapel needs to be rehabilitated and put back into use before it is lost forever.

# Pennsylvania **At Risk** Updates

Historic properties that are included in *Pennsylvania At Risk* are a top priority for Preservation Pennsylvania's staff and Board of Directors. As a result, a significant amount of our time each year goes to working with these important, endangered resources. In 2011, we worked especially hard with our partners and local organizations and individuals to try to protect the places that matter to them. And by doing so, we made a lot of great progress! Here are some of the highlights:

## **Cyclorama, Gettysburg, Adams County (1996)**

Although it was determined in 1999 that the Cyclorama would be demolished to restore a portion of the battlefield at Gettysburg, the efforts to preserve this building, which was determined by the Keeper of the National Register to have "exceptional" significance, continue. A lawsuit filed by the Recent Past Preservation Network in 2006 has resulted in a judge ordering the National Park Service to take another look at alternatives to demolition. That report is expected to be released in January 2012. Preservation Pennsylvania will continue to advocate for the retention of the building in place or moving it to a new location rather than demolition.

## **Camp Security, Springettsbury Township, York County (2000)**

On June 1, 2011, Springettsbury Township took ownership of a large portion of the Camp Security property after the owners of the property sold it to The Conservation Fund. A coalition of groups, including the Friends of Camp Security, Preservation Pennsylvania and others, have been working to acquire as much of the Camp Security property as possible. This land purchase was made possible thanks to funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' *Growing Greener* program, Springettsbury Township, the County of York, and private donations. This property is now safely in the hands of the Township. The coalition, led by the Conservation Fund, is still working to acquire the remaining acreage associated with the site.

## **Hotel Sterling, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County (2001)**

The Hotel Sterling in Wilkes-Barre still stands today, but will almost certainly be demolished in early 2012. Despite more than a decade of working to prepare this historic property for rehabilitation, Luzerne County Commissioners voted on November 17, 2011 to proceed with the demolition of this local landmark and have the funds necessary to do so.

Opened in 1897, the Hotel Sterling is a contributing element of the River Street Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. Together with an adjacent 14-story tower constructed in 1922 as the Plaza Tower hotel (which was incorporated into the Hotel Sterling in 1927) and an annex that connected the two hotel buildings in 1949, the Sterling operated as a hotel into the 1970s, when the buildings were converted for use as apartments. The buildings were condemned by the City of Wilkes-Barre and vacated in 1998, and further damaged by a fire in 2000.

The Hotel Sterling was listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 2001. At that time, the vacant property was deteriorating from deferred maintenance, while taxing bodies who were owed large sums of money fought with the property's owner. The city took control of the property and transferred it to CityVest, a non-profit developer who they charged with preparing the property for development and partnering with a private developer to rehabilitate the Hotel Sterling as a mixed-use facility in 2002. CityVest set to work to try to prepare the property for redevelopment, securing the building from intrusions

and floods, conducting hazard (asbestos) abatement, demolishing the connecting building and adjacent hotel tower and acquiring an adjacent lot for parking, among other tasks, so that the property could be marketed to developers. Following the demolition of the Plaza Tower hotel building in 2007, the property was considered to be ready for re-development and was being actively marketed by 2008. Several developers showed an interest in the Hotel Sterling. However, by 2010, none were able to come up with an economically viable plan for the building's re-use. Because the roof was not sufficiently repaired as part of CityVest's pre-development work, water continued to infiltrate the building and its condition continued to deteriorate. As a result, CityVest and the County determined earlier this year that demolition was the only option remaining.

Because this stabilization and pre-development work used public funds, including county, state and federal sources, consultation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) began in 2000. Although CityVest owns the Hotel Sterling, the County is responsible for consultation. The purpose of this consultation was to meet the requirements in state and federal historic preservation laws, which require that agencies using public funds or requiring government permits take into consideration the impacts of those projects on historic resources. Those laws do not prohibit impacts to historic properties, but require that alternatives be considered and efforts be made to minimize or mitigate adverse effects that will not be avoided.

Luzerne County has engaged in the required review process and has done so in a public forum. In spite of the unfortunate outcome, state environmental reviewers feel that the County has done an adequate job of: 1) attempting to find a rehabilitation option; and 2) demonstrating that there is not a feasible re-use for the Hotel Sterling because of its severely deteriorated condition.

Luzerne County is in the process of negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that outlines what steps will be taken in order to mitigate the impacts of the demolition of this significant historic hotel. This agreement will almost certainly require that the PHMC has an opportunity to review the proposed new construction to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding historic district.

Many will mourn the loss of the Hotel Sterling. It is important that we all learn from this demolition, and use it as a reminder that **keeping up with property maintenance is essential to building preservation**. When buildings are neglected and allowed to deteriorate for extended periods of time, they eventually reach a point where rehabilitation is no longer a feasible option.



Photo courtesy of Erin Hammerstedt, Preservation Pennsylvania.



### **Lazaretto, Tinicum Township, Delaware County (2001)**

The Lazaretto Preservation Association of Tinicum Township (LPATT) reports that solid progress was made in 2011 towards the ultimate goal of restoring and re-using the historic but long-vacant 1799 Lazaretto building. The township has secured funding to dredge the shore line and restore the sea wall along the Delaware Riverfront. Piles of abandoned materials and trash are also in the process of being cleared from the site.

University of Pennsylvania graduate students, studying Historic Preservation with John Milner of John Milner Architects, have selected the Lazaretto for their project this coming semester. The class will document the building's evolution and identify original features, among other tasks.

During 2011 LPATT, in partnership with Preservation Pennsylvania, also obtained a \$25,000 Keystone Grant for the purposes of conducting a needed Historic Structures Report.

Finally, Tinicum Township is considering relocating their administrative and police facilities into the Lazaretto, which could finally bring about the restoration of the building. A new slate of township supervisors will take office in 2012 and they are apparently very interested in making this project happen. While some state funds are already available to help underwrite the costs of renovation, an estimated \$1.5 million in additional funds will have to be identified to fund this project.

As a result of all of this progress, LPATT enters 2012 with considerable optimism that the long delayed restoration of the Lazaretto will take place in the not too distant future.

### **Civic Arena (Mellon Arena), Pittsburgh, Allegheny County (2002)**

After a long, hard-fought battle to prevent demolition of this "modern" historic landmark, demolition of the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh began in September 2011. Rather than being imploded, the building is being taken apart in stages. This is allowing parts of the building to be salvaged and sold to Pittsburgh Penguins fans and collectors. Thus, demolition is expected to be ongoing through May 2012.

The Sports & Exhibition Authority now owns the Civic Arena. They plan is to use the 28-acre site as extra parking space before turning it into retail and residential development.

### **The Eagles Building, Altoona, Blair County (2003)**

In 2011, the Eagles Building in Altoona was demolished. After years standing vacant and deteriorating, the building was removed and this corner property is currently a vacant gravel lot.

### **Gettysburg National Military Park, Gettysburg, Adams County (2006)**

No Casino Gettysburg and partner organizations—Preservation Pennsylvania, the Civil War Trust, the National Parks Conservation Association and the National Trust for Historic Preservation—were successful for the second time in keeping a casino license from being awarded in Gettysburg. Currently, these groups are working with legislators to pass a bill that will place a buffer zone around Gettysburg to prevent future attempts to place a casino near the park.



Photo courtesy of Karen Arnold, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation.

### **Gruber Wagon Works, Reading, Berks County (2006)**

After nearly a year of construction, restoration of the Gruber Wagon Works was finished in August, 2011. The 1882 wagon works was listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 2006, and was recognized by the National Park Service as a threatened National Historic Landmark in 2008. Utilizing funds from the

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission as well as other sources, the Berks County Board of Commissioners and the Berks County Parks and Recreation Department worked together to invest nearly \$650,000 to restore this National Historic Landmark, which is now open to the public for tours on the weekends.

### **Braemar Cottage, Cresson Township, Cambria County (2009)**

After years of teetering on the edge of demise, Braemar Cottage (also known as the Benjamin Franklin Jones Cottage) in Cresson still stands. The Cresson Area Historical Association realized in 2010 that they would not be able to come up with the financial resources necessary to rehabilitate the building before it was torn down, and made the difficult decision to sell the property. The historic house was transferred to a family who is in the process of rehabilitating it. A new roof was put on the building this fall, stalling weather damage so that the building can be rehabilitated in 2012.

### **Manchester-Farms (Plantation Plenty), Independence Township, Washington County (2010)**

After listing the Isaac Manchester Farm in *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 2010, Preservation Pennsylvania successfully nominated the historic farm to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's *America's 11 Most Endangered Places*



Photo courtesy of Erin Hammett, Preservation Pennsylvania.

list in 2011. Since then, Preservation Pennsylvania and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have been working with the Manchester Family, the Citizens Coal Council, the Center for Coalfield Justice and others to protect the property from damage associated with longwall coal mining. Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation is also taking steps to try to use preservation easements as a tool to help protect the historic farm. This fall, additional coverage of the property and its plight was featured in *Organic Matters*, the quarterly magazine of Pennsylvania Certified Organics and the farmstead was added to the Miniature Railroad and Village at the Carnegie Science Center this year.

Preservation Pennsylvania is part of a team that is working diligently to monitor applications by Alliance Resources to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and will continue to comment throughout the process to ensure that DEP acknowledges the presence of this important historic property and considers it when they review the permit applications. DEP is currently conducting technical review of the permit application for the associated coal processing plant, which will be located adjacent to Manchester-Farms. It is likely that Alliance Resources will submit the application for underground mining once the processing plant permit has been approved, almost certainly in 2012. Alliance Resources has indicated that they will not longwall mine under Manchester-Farms, and DEP has stated that they will not approve a permit to longwall mine in the vicinity of the farm. However, until those statements are reflected in the permits issued, Preservation Pennsylvania will continue to work to help protect this important historic farm.

### **Schuylkill School, Schuylkill Township, Chester County (2010)**

The Schuylkill School was demolished in 2011. Portions of the building, including the bell tower and cupola, were saved and will be used to construct a memorial to the building in the new parking lot.

*A searchable database of Pennsylvania At Risk properties can be found on our website at [www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org).*

*We will continue to work to protect our At Risk properties in 2012.*

*If you know of a property that could use our help, or have an update on the status of an endangered property, please send your information to [info@preservationpa.org](mailto:info@preservationpa.org).*



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## SAVE THE DATE!

## STATEWIDE CONFERENCE on HERITAGE:

New Location,  
New Dates,  
New Planning Partners

The annual **Statewide Conference on Heritage** will be held **July 15th-18th, 2012** at the **Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square in Downtown Lancaster, PA.**

This year the Statewide Conference on Heritage will partner with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) ADC50 Committee on Historic and Archaeological Preservation to host a joint gathering with shared sessions and tours. Please go to [www.pennbyways.org](http://www.pennbyways.org) for additional details or contact Jennifer Horn at [jhorn@preservationpa.org](mailto:jhorn@preservationpa.org).

## JOIN US!

Your support through membership is important to all of Preservation Pennsylvania's statewide historic preservation efforts; individuals, nonprofit organizations, municipalities and corporations are invited to join us. Please visit our website at [www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org) for more information or contact us by phone at (717) 234-2310.

