

History and Significance (Item 39)

This iron-making operation involved the integrated functioning of forges and a rolling mill. The general operation of forges is described as follows:

Such forges usually consisted of two charcoal-heated hearths, a “finery,” [or “refinery”], and a “chafery.” The process of forging pig [iron] into wrought iron began with [iron] pigs from the furnace being “softened” [reheated] in the finery heath with a strong oxidizing air blast. This burned out source of the carbon, silicon, and other impurities. A skilled “finer” using a long iron bar would then work the semi-molten iron into a lump called a “half-bloom.” Placed on a large anvil, the half-bloom would next be pounded by a massive power driven hammer until it cooled. Half-blooms were repeatedly heated and pounded until they became flat, thick bars of wrought iron, (called “anconies”), which had knobs on each end.

...By the early nineteenth century, forges produced not only...bar iron, but also larger slabs called “blooms” that went to rolling mills for still further processing.²⁵

It is apparent that the Colemanville-Forge and Rolling Mill was of this interpreted type of iron-making operation of its time. Rolling Mills can be briefly described as an industrial operation in which, “the final stage involved sending the resulting [iron] bars to the appropriate trains of heavy metal rollers to be fashioned into plates, rods, nail stock, rails, and the like.”²⁶

In both locations of these iron-making operations two rural industrial village communities developed, one at the Village of Safe Harbor along the Conestoga River, the other at the Village of Colemanville on the Pequea Creek. At Colemanville today, many of the 19th-century homes of iron workers and varied historic buildings still survive, along with the historic archaeological industrial sites of these iron-making operations, all contributing to the historic integrity of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

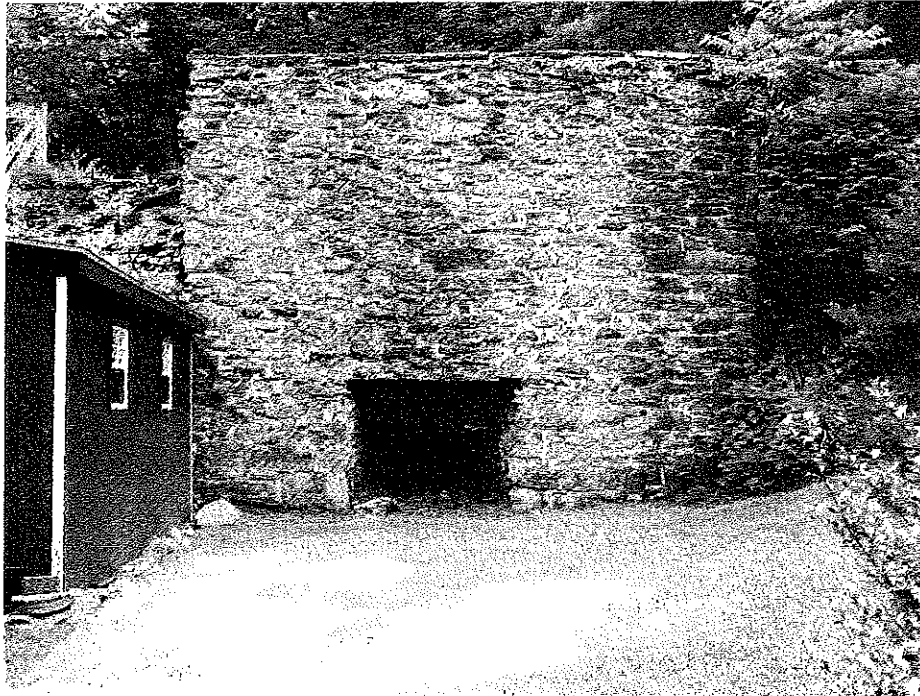
In relation to iron mining operations within Conestoga Township, at present only the following documented history can be found:

Pequea Iron Company was first organized under the name of the Pequea Magnetic Iron Mining Company, on the 23d of January, 1881, for the purpose of concentration magnetic iron ore, being the first corporation attempting to concentrate magnetic ore in the United States. The first officers were John J. Zeigler, president; William Hart Carr, secretary; and John F. Kelly, treasurer. Present officers are John J. Zeigler, president; Samuel Wilson, secretary; and F. F. Bernadon, treasurer, all of Philadelphia. The company owns large and extensive magnetic mines of a low grade, running from sixteen to fifty per cent, which is concentrated up to seventy per cent grade, making it fit for all uses of a high grade magnetic ore.

The main building is thirty-five feet by one hundred and fifty feet, with an L thirty-five feet by fifty feet, containing a Fontaine & Abbot engine of eighty horse power, three Foster Crushers, with a capacity of one hundred and fifty tons per day of twenty-four hours, and three concentrating tables. There is connected with the mines a steam-pump capable of throwing 14,800 gallons per hour, and a reservoir with a capacity of 135,000 gallons. Mr. Charles Douglass is the superintendent.

History and Significance (Item 39)

This mining operation was located upon the earlier Reeves & Sons Ore Banks and the Dil. Eschleman Ore Bank, once located due east of Shenks Ferry Road. Today its operations are in a historic industrial archaeological context. But the potential historic importance of the Pequea Iron Company established in 1881 is that it was the first corporation in the United States of America to attempt to concentrate magnetic iron ore in America. As such, this operation is of national historic industrial importance and worth further investigation. This historic resource contributes to the diverse meaning and integrity of the rural industrial history within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.



This recent photo looks onto the probably-surviving remains of one of the early 19th-century iron-making forge heaths of the Colemanville Forge and Rolling Mill Complex, located along Pequea Boulevard, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. This structure may have been built by 1828, and when fully confirmed, would be the most substantive surviving above-ground historic structures associated with Conestoga Township's rural iron-making history.

History and Significance (Item 39)

Rural Cigar Manufacturing in Conestoga Township

Conestoga Township was once heavily involved in the tobacco industry, which involved farmers who grew the tobacco and the manufacturers of high quality cigars. In and around 1825-1830, the farmers of Lancaster County began to experiment with and then very successfully grow crops of high-quality leaf tobacco. By 1830, the level of annual tobacco crop production fostered the first stage of an individual tobacco-cigar production. In 1830, a Mr. John S. Gable in Lancaster City began what has been claimed the first regular tobacco packer in Lancaster County, which historians have regarded as the beginning of the industrial phase of the highly profitable tobacco industry in Lancaster County. But a single undertaking in Conestoga Township, also in the year 1830, takes this first phase more fully. At the Village of Conestoga centre, a Mr. J. R. Yentzer established Lancaster County's first cigar manufactory and is described as follows:

Cigar Manufactories- The leading cigar manufacturer of Conestoga township is J. R. Yentzer, who resides in Conestoga Centre. The business was first started by Mr. Yentzer's father in 1830, and by him carried on until 1862, when J. R. began and still continues. Mr. Yentzer employs an average of fifteen persons, and makes upwards of one million cigars annually, which he sells at wholesale and retail. He ships many of his cigars to nearly all the Western and Middle States.

[And further, a] Maris Good began in May, 1882, with one hand and increased during the year to five. There was manufactured at his factory during the year over two hundred and fifty thousand cigars. At present he is manufacturing over fifty thousand per month, and has in his employ at present (July, 1883) 12 persons.²⁷

By 1883, the tobacco growing, warehousing and packing, and manufacture of cigar tobacco product(s) had become the most profitable single crop in Lancaster County, and produced much wealth and job creation. "In one form or another, the tobacco industry employs more persons than any other of the numerous agricultural interests of the county and must therefore to that extent and in that way be regarded as the most generally beneficial."²⁸

At present, historic field survey work conducted has not been able to discern if the Cigar Manufactory building of the J. R. Yentzer still stands and survives in the Village of Conestoga Centre. If found and confirmed, this potential historic resource would be important to not only Conestoga Township's agricultural heritage, but to Lancaster County as well. Today the health issues involving the use of tobacco in American society are of great concern; here in Lancaster County, the wealth produced by tobacco growing, its processing and products is an integral part to understanding the agricultural history and prominence Lancaster held in the 19th and early 20th century(s).

Other Documented 19th Century Rural Industries of Conestoga Township

There are other documented rural industries that once were significant employers within Conestoga Township from the early 19th century to mid 19th century and toward 1900; these were the following:

Myers Tannery was started in operation in October, 1812, owned by Samuel Myers, and operated by Socrates Myers, afterwards operated by Samuel Myers & Son (Rudolph) to 1839, then by Rudolph Myers from 1839 to 1876, and by Abraham Myers (Rudolph's son)

History and Significance (Item 39)

from 1876 to the present time. He tans from eight hundred to one thousand hides and from five hundred calf-skins per annum. He uses horse-power for grinding the bark.

The Myers Tannery once stood on Kendig Road in the northern area of Conestoga, along a branch of Stehman Run. Any Tannery was once an important rural industry in rural Pennsylvania:

The leather used was of many kinds, from the hides of steers, calves, pigs and sheep. Sheep skin leather was used for pads, such as required for collars, breaching, lining and where leather was apt to chafe the horses. Sheep leather being soft and pliable, was also used for making little pads to be stuffed with cotton pump pads, nose pads, saddle pads, and other such like purposes. Pig's leather was used for collars, on account of its durability. Raw hide was used for plaited traces, also for hame-straps, belt lacers and for other parts where strength was required. The main kind of leather was used for cow or steer hide.

[The tanner also provided leather for] ...shoes and general footwear...Different animals' hides when tanned were used for different parts of the shoes. Leather from cows and steers was used for the soles of the shoes, as this leather was thicker, longer lasting and more durable for the heavy use shoes get in contact with rock and road. Sheep skins were used for uppers, the top side of the shoes; this leather was thin and pliable, suitable to the bending of the foot... the tanner also sold various articles to persons in somewhat related work areas. He sold hair to felt makers, hat makers, plasterers and brick makers, and workers who made upholstery. He sold horns and hoofs to gluemakers. He sold the fat to soap and candle makers. Size, made from the trimmings, he also sold to the glue maker. Not only did this sort of procedure make for the profit of the tanner, but it also meant that there was no waste in his business, nothing thrown away, as each little bit had a usefulness needed by the tanner's fellow workers in the commercial complex of the community.²⁹

The process of tanning involved the following four basic steps:

...preliminary washing, which took about 30 hours to clean the skins; second, the longer processing to loosen the hair, soaking and scraping the skin, lasting a year, (in cases where the hide or skin was unusually thick); third, the tanning by immersing the dehaired hides in a bath of oak bark; and finally, the drying and finishing of them to perfect the quality and appearance of the leather.³⁰

We might say here at the start that the whole business was none too pleasant or savory for both tanner and for his neighbors. Various writings from the period mention the smell arising from the putrefaction of the flesh which adhered to the skins; perhaps because of this factor, we come close to the reason that there is nostalgia for the blacksmith and miller today and almost none for the tanner, though his was a basic industry.³¹

History and Significance (Item 39)



The Myers Tannery that once stood in Conestoga Township is now an historic industrial archaeological site. The Myers Tannery operated for many years and was one of the essential basic rural industries of the township. The historic woodcut above portrays the tanner removing the coarse hair on the seasoned hide, an operation of exhausting hand labor in challenging, foul conditions.

Historic maps of the period clearly show that the Myers Tannery was located well away from the Villages and Hamlets of Rockville, Petersville and Slackwater, in Conestoga Township. This important rural industry lasted through most of the 19th century from 1812 into the early first decade of the 20th century. The historic industrial archaeological site of the Myers Tannery is extant along Kendig Road and contributes to the integrity of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

The remaining documented significant rural industrial operation in Conestoga Township during the 19th century was the Slackwater Paper Mills that once made high-quality rag content paper for books and publications. It is described as follows:

The Slackwater Paper-Mills- These mills are owned and operated by John A. Shober, of Lancaster. They are located in the north end of the township, on the Conestoga River, from which it receives its supply of water. The mill is used for the manufacture of book and news paper from rags, under the management of the proprietor. Up to the spring of 1866 part of the buildings were used as a grist mill, at which time it was purchased by Emanuel Shober, father of the present owner, and converted into a paper-mill; extensive extensions were made to accommodate the business, and in November of the same year the mill was put in operation. The buildings are in the form of a hollow square, the open face towards the public road leading from Slackwater to Millersville. The front building is three stories high. Upon entering the building we come into the finishing-room, where the paper is made ready for shipment, to the left of which are two twenty horse-power steam boilers, used for generating the steam used for drying the paper and cooking the rags and paper stock, heating the

buildings, etc; passing from this room we next enter the paper-making machine- room, which is one hundred and forty feet long by thirty feet wide, wherein is a sixty-six-inch Fourdrinier paper machine, having a capacity of five tons of paper per day of twenty-four hours, and is driven by a twenty-three-inch Leffell turbine water wheel; turning to the left, we next enter the pulping-room, which is forty by eighty feet, in which are four beating-rag engines and one Jordan pulping-engine, which are used to reduce the half-stuff into pulp preparatory to going on to the paper-machine; then turning again to the left, we enter the rag-boiling room, in which are one large rotary rag-boiler, twenty feet long and six feet in diameter, in which the rags are boiled in alkali under a pressure of sixty pounds, with a capacity of boiling five tons of [sic] in twenty-four hours, and also iron vats used in boiling, sizing, etc. The second floor front is used for millwright and machine-shops, rag-sorting, rag-cutting, dusting, etc. The third floor front is used for storing rags and all kinds of paper stock. Passing from the pulping-room to the right, we enter a room wherein are three washing-engines, used in washing the rags and reducing them to half-stuff preparatory to using them on the pulping-engines, to the right of which is another rotary boiler, twenty feet long and five feet in diameter, used in boiling stock, also several large iron tanks used for dissolving chloride of lime (bleaching salts) for the purpose of bleaching the rags and other stock used in the manufacture of paper. The second floor of this part of the building is used for storing and assorting. From this part of the building we next enter a room parallel to the face of the main building, one hundred and twenty feet long and thirty feet wide, which is intended for a machine-room, in which another sixty-six inch Fourdrinier paper-machine will be placed during the year. The whole machinery of the mill is driven by five Leffell turbine water-wheels. There are forty persons employed by Mr. Shober. the product during last year. (1882) was four tons of paper per day, and will for this year (1883) be six tons per day. All the stock used in this mill in the manufacture of paper is gathered in Lancaster and adjoining counties.³²

The site of the Slackwater Paper Mills was located in the Slackwater Burr Grist Mill, erected in 1805. This grist mill and the paper mill complex were impacted by the construction of the current highway bridge over the Conestoga River in the latter 20th century. This grist mill and paper mill were torn down at that point in time. Given this, the historic and archaeological integrity of its site has been compromised but where remains and features survive, these contribute to the integrity of the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

History and Significance (Item 39 continued)**The Levels of Agricultural Production in Conestoga Township by 1850**

The first detailed agricultural census for Conestoga Township was in 1850. The following chart portrays its agricultural production profile township-wide, and as compared countywide.

1850 Agricultural Census

1850	Improved Land	Unimproved Land	Value of Machinery	Horses	Cattle	Swine	Wheat (bu.)
Conestoga Twp	12,342	3086	26,180	528	2155	1847	49,820
Avg. per farm	N/A	N/A	177	4	15	12	337
Lancaster Co.	11481-71	3436	28459-172/farm	4/farm	1583-10/farm	1583-10/farm	37182-235/farm
PA	55avg./farm	N/A	113/farm	3/farm	8/farm	8/farm	120/farm

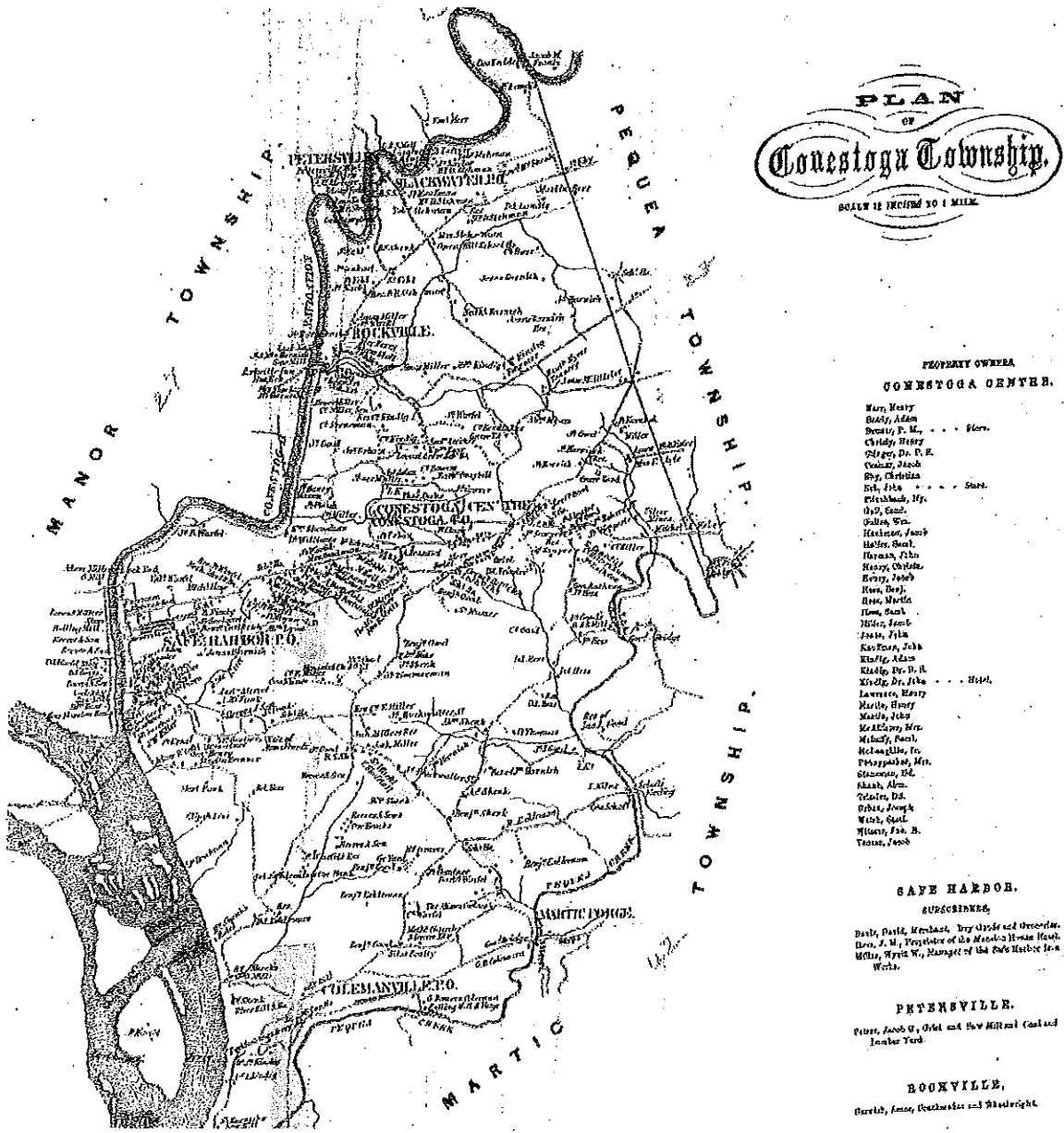
1850	Rye (bu.)	Corn (bu.)	Oats (bu.)	Potatoes (bu.)	Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	Butter (lbs.)	Hay (tons)
Conestoga Twp	4175	67,608	41,234	5650	N/A	64,080	3605
Avg. per farm	28	457	279	38	N/A	433	24
Lancaster Co.	4090-26/farm	47698-301/farm	45364-258/farm	5814-36/farm	N/A	53013-326/farm	2761-18/farm
PA	38/farm	155/farm	170/farm	47/farm	N/A	312/farm	13/farm

The 1850 agricultural census shows that Conestoga Township had an above-average acreage of Improved Land for a rural farming municipality, and a little below-average acreage of Unimproved Land. The value of farm machinery per farm was close to above-average in Conestoga Township as compared throughout Lancaster County, per farm. The number of horses was average, while Conestoga Township farmers had an above-average number of cattle per farm. This indicates both larger dairy and meat stock herds per farm. This may in part explain why the Myers Tannery was established in Conestoga Township, since farmers here could supply more kids for processing to the early rural industry. Farmers in this township also had a little more swine per farm than the county average for meat and increased levels of hide supply to the Myers Tannery.

By far, the farmers of Conestoga Township in 1850 grew significantly more bushels of wheat per farm than other farms of rural townships in Lancaster County. This was also true for bushels of corn, oats, and even potatoes. The average per farm for annual butter production was 433 pounds in Conestoga Township, as compared to the county-wide average per farm of 312 pounds of butter that year. So farmers in Conestoga Township concentrated more, and were successful at, the profitable sale of butter. In closing, the average tons of hay per farm was 18 tons in Conestoga Township, as compared to the county-wide average of 13 tons per farm. The overall statistics portray that the farms in Conestoga Township were in a high mature state of cultivation and husbandry, very often above the average per-farm in Lancaster County at that time. As such, Conestoga Township should be viewed as one of the more economically-successful agrarian communities in Lancaster County prior to the Civil War.

The following historic map of Conestoga Township was issued in 1864 in Bridgen's Atlas of Lancaster Co., Penna. This historic map records the varied features of this township's rural farm landscape and varied villages, hamlets, churches, meetings, rural industries, etc., at mid-19th century. A great number of the properties recorded on this historic map still stand today within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

This historic map of Conestoga Township dates from 1864 and is from Bridgen's Atlas of Lancaster Co., Penna. To a great extent, it appears that many of the existing features on this map, such as farms and their farmstead building complexes, meeting houses, churches, schools, grist mills, taverns, homes, and stores and business buildings in a village context still survive. The historic network of rural roads survives today almost totally unaltered and with a high number of individual Family Burial Grounds.



History and Significance (Item 39 continued)**Conestoga Township Post-Civil War Period into the Early 20th Century to 1960**

The agricultural census for Conestoga Township, although not complete, does provide us with some informed agricultural production data that profiles the activities of the farmers in the township during the latter Victorian Period.

1880 Agricultural Census

1880	Permanent Meadow, Vineyard, Orchard	Wood Lands	Value of Machinery	Hay (tons)	Horses	Cattle
Conestoga Twp	27	49	3950	182	29	123
Avg. per farm	N/A	N/A	304	14	2	9

1880	Butter (lbs.)	Cheese (lbs.)	Swine	Poultry	Eggs (doz.)	Corn (bu.)	Oats (bu.)
Conestoga Twp	7535	500	107	742	3740	8295	1230
Avg. per farm	580	18	8	57	N/A	638	95

1880	Rye (bu.)	Wheat (bu.)	Potatoes (bu.)	Sweet Potatoes (bu.)	Tobacco (lbs.)	Apples (trees)	Wood (cords)	Value of Forest
Conestoga Twp	85	3544	426	N/A	101,033	298	74	202
Avg. per farm	7	273	33	N/A	N/A	156	N/A	N/A

This 1880 agricultural census indicates that the farmers in Conestoga Township had significantly shifted their agricultural production to the cultivation and curing of tobacco. In 1880, 101,033 pounds of tobacco was produced in Conestoga Township. This indicates that there was a very high level of tilled fields within this township devoted to tobacco cultivation. Tobacco was the leading cash crop and highly profitable, but also labor-intensive. This factor caused a drop in production of other diversified crops. The annual yields for wheat, rye, potatoes, corn and oats were low. Butter and cheese production per farm was at moderate levels, and only 27 acres were devoted to orchards, containing only 298 apple trees throughout the township.

Tobacco would continue to be the primary agricultural product in Conestoga Township through the latter decades of the 19th century, toward World War II. But other events and developments continued to change and remake Conestoga Township's rural industrial production.

Change at the Village of Safe Harbor

The Village of Safe Harbor always remained vulnerable to flooding and equally to ice jams, both of which would devastate and lead to significant changes. But through all this, the water power provided by the Susquehanna River, and in part the Conestoga River, would remain a main feature in Conestoga Township's history and into the present.

Through the Civil War, the Safe Harbor Iron Works provided employment for residents of the community. Built in the late 1840s following the discovery of iron ore in the area, the Safe Harbor Iron Works produced iron rails for the railways then being built across Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic region. The floods that periodically ravaged the Susquehanna Valley dictated the course of events at Safe Harbor. Devastating floods in 1865 closed the Iron Works and destroyed the dam crossing the Susquehanna. Destruction was so complete that the owners did not reopen the Iron Works until the 1879 completion of a mile-long railroad spur to connect with the Columbia and Port Deposit Railroad. The Panic of 1893 caused further disruption at the Iron Works, although by 1895, the region had recovered enough that a new match factory had opened in an abandoned iron rolling mill. But once again, weather proved to be the deciding factor in determining the future of Safe Harbor and the Conestoga Valley. In the spring of 1904, a massive ice jam worked its way down the Susquehanna. The ice ridges pushed higher and higher as ice and water continued to inch downriver. Conestoga Creek proved to be a perfect vent for the miles-long ice jam. Ice rose ever higher in Conestoga Creek, and the floes took out the Columbia and Port Deposit Railroad bridge across the creek. The match factory was washed away, and dozens of houses were crushed by the ice. For all intents and purposes, the community of Safe Harbor ceased to exist.³³

In the late 1920's, strangers appeared in the area with offers to buy property. Rumors quickly spread that some sort of project was in the offing. Newspaper announcements stated that a huge hydroelectric dam was to be built across the Susquehanna at Safe Harbor.

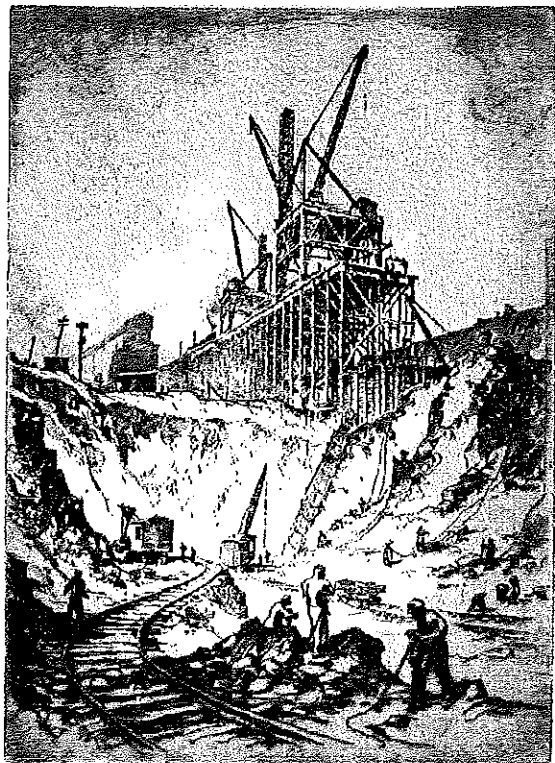
The decision to proceed promptly with the project was a fortunate one for Lancaster and York Counties. The much needed jobs and the large order for material were a boost to the Depression Era. Safe Harbor reached its greatest population with 4,000 workers at the height of construction. Residents of Safe Harbor sent a petition to the district attorney charging "bootleg whiskey is being sold openly and freely and that gambling is rampant." This exciting period came to an end with the completion of the hydro project....³⁴

All of this activity was the over \$30 million investment that was made to construct the Safe Harbor Hydroelectric Dam.

As the nation slid into the Great Depression, President Herbert Hoover, a former engineer himself, summoned the nation's utility executives to Washington, D.C., in the winter of 1930. The New York Stock Exchange had collapsed just weeks earlier, and President Hoover wanted utility executives to accelerate capital investment programs in order to jump-start the ailing U.S. economy. One of those projects was the construction of the Safe Harbor hydroelectric facility on the Susquehanna above Holtwood and Lake Aldred. Safe Harbor, at the conjunction of the Susquehanna River and Conestoga Creek.³⁵

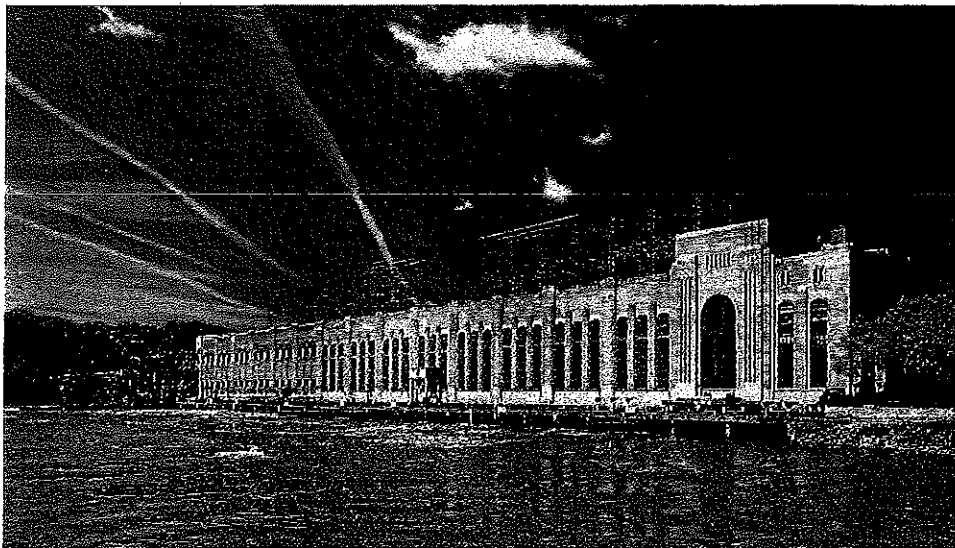
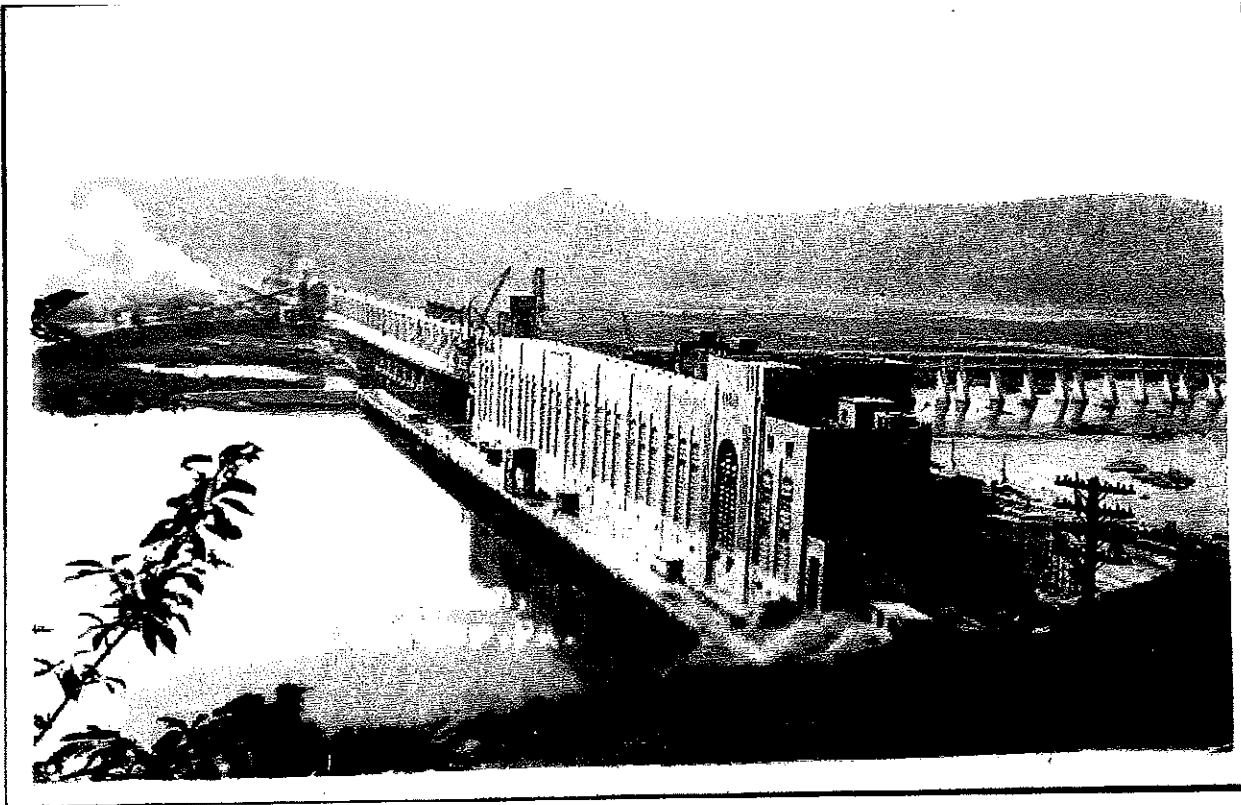


During construction, early 1930s



The above photo was taken during the construction of the carefully-planned Tudor Revival Style Village of Safe Harbor, built to house workers and managers, and to provide offices for the Safe Harbor Hydroelectric Dam. The Village of Safe Harbor is still standing and in a high state of historic integrity (source: www.safeharborvillage.com/history).

The lower artistic etching is of the Safe Harbor Dam Construction created by Otto Kuhler, (1894-1976), artist, in 1930, titled, "Harnessing the Susquehanna at Safe Harbor, Pennsylvania"

History and Significance (Item 39)

The above black and white postcard is of the safe Harbor Dam as it neared completion by 1932.
(source: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com)

The lower color photo is a recent view of Safe Harbor Dam Hydroelectric Generation Plant on the Susquehanna River in Manor Township, immediately due northwest of the Village of Safe Harbor in Conestoga Township (source: hrowman.photoshelter.com, photographer Henry Rowan, taken 2011).

History and Significance (Item 39)

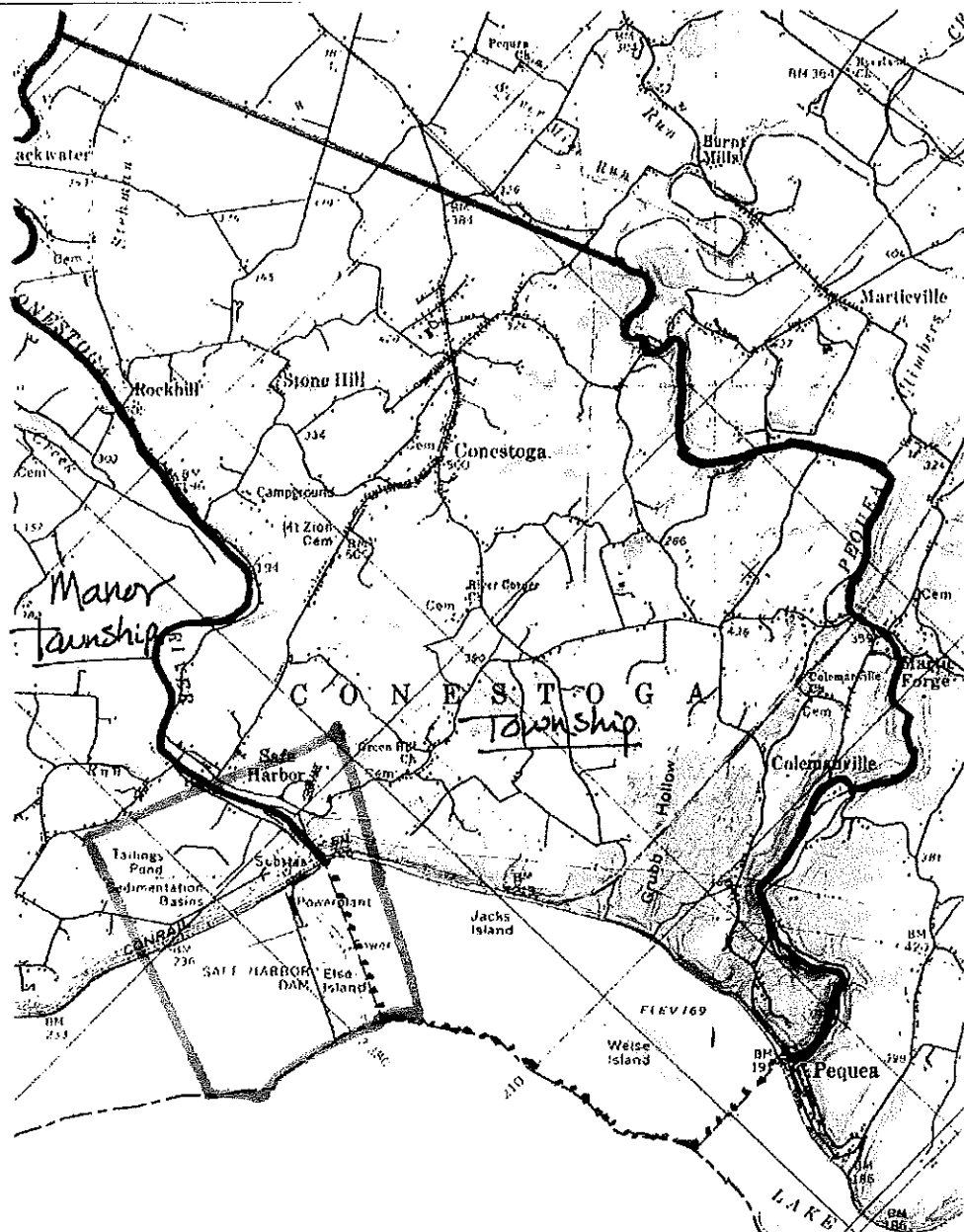
Selection of Safe Harbor as the site for a massive new hydroelectric facility in early 1930 was the culmination of nearly 15 years of study by Pennsylvania Water & Power Co. But instead of undertaking the project on its own, Penn Water went to its Baltimore neighbor and best customer, Consolidated Gas & Electric. Consolidated, the predecessor of Baltimore Gas & Electric, had been buying wholesale electric power from Holtwood since shortly after the hydroelectric facility began in 1910. In 1927, Penn Water and Consolidated had signed a 43-year contract, which included provisions for coordinating generation and transmission procedures of the two companies.

In January 1930, Consolidated and Penn Water formed the Safe Harbor Water Power Corp. as the outgrowth of two predecessor companies that had been formed as part of the October 1927 agreement between the two companies. Under the terms of the 1930 contract, Consolidated was to receive two-thirds of the power generated by the new hydroelectric facility; Pennsylvania Water & Power Co. was to receive one-third of the generating capacity.

The \$30 million Safe Harbor project was designed and constructed under the supervision of engineers from both Penn Water and Consolidated. Work on the dam and powerhouse began in the spring of 1930, and up to 4,000 men—many of them unemployed—were put to work building the Safe Harbor project.³⁶

Within Conestoga Township, the Village of Safe Harbor was almost totally transformed into a model, well-planned community based in major part on design precedents set during the building of industrial communities during World War I, under the “War Emergency Construction (Housing War Workers) Program.” This housing program was administered by United States Department of Labor, United States Housing Corporation. A signature tenet of its village/town planning design aesthetics is expressed as follows:

First in seeking a unified effect, the designer should not make all the houses and lots so much part of one set and formal design that they look like a penal or charitable institution. Second in seeking interest and picturesqueness, he should not make all the houses so different, and each so unusual, with so much done evidently for effect, that the whole looks like a village on the stage. . . . The relation of one house to another in appearance is therefore especially important in this kind of development, and there is an evident advantage from the point of view of appearance in planning a development not scattered among existing homes but all in one piece, so as not to have small houses dwarfed by large ones, or decent houses spoiled by shabby ones, and the whole spirit of the new work frittered away and lost by being mixed with buildings of another kind.³⁷



This map portrays the general location and extent (outlined in orange) of the historic Safe Harbor Dam Hydroelectric Plant Complex, located within Manor Township, Lancaster County, and its adjacent historic Village of Safe Harbor, built in the Tudor Revival Style in the late 1920s to 1931. This historic water power complex is shared by both the Manor Township Rural Historic District and the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. The construction of this massive hydro-power electric-generating dam and plant completed a main regional electric power-generating grid by 1933. Its capacity for electric power generation provided the final stage of generating capacity to support urban and rural electric needs. In rural areas, farmers in both Manor and Conestoga Townships and the counties of south central Pennsylvania could then hook up to consistent electric service for farm production and domestic needs. This almost totally removed the need for individual on-the-farm gasoline-fueled generators. This major event lowered electric power costs and would be a foundation upon which the region would advance to increased overall agricultural production at lower energy costs, and increased profits for every connected single-family farm.

History and Significance (Item 39)

The architects and planners of the renewal Village of Safe Harbor are not yet known at present. But what they designed and built was, (and remains), is a village community 21 Tudor Revival-style brick homes and two office buildings for workers, offices and administrative headquarters in association with the Safe Harbor Dam and Electric Power Plant.

Work on this project began in 1929; most aspects were completed by 1932. The village consists of an orderly arrangement of brick and half-timber houses designed by architects commissioned by the Safe Harbor Power Corporation.

The condition and original design of Safe Harbor Village is immaculate. This is considered one of the more unusual projects of a "planned community" built in Lancaster County in the first half of the 20th century.³⁸

Although the Village of Safe Harbor, as rebuilt by the early 1930s, seems to be quite different from the rural historic district context of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District, it is actually integral to the transformation of rural farm operations within the township and throughout south central Pennsylvania. After the completion of the Safe Harbor Dam, the Pennsylvania Power & Light Company began a very proactive and highly successful rural electrification program within the farming community of the adjacent townships, Lancaster County, and throughout the counties in south central Pennsylvania. This important energy transition briefly described as follows:

In rural areas, the district representative was supplied with a panel truck painted in the usual red and black PP&L color scheme and inscribed with the district representative's name below the company logo. Inside the truck were compartments to carry small appliances, lamp bulbs and repair parts. Lug nuts on the floor of the truck locked a range and refrigerator in place, ready for the district representative to display and exhibit to rural customers.

At the beginning of 1926, PP&L service territory had less than 1,000 miles of rural lines. In the latter 1920s and 1930s, PP&L built some 7,600 miles of rural lines in its service territory, half of all the distribution line construction the utility undertook during the era and approximately 30 percent of the total rural lines existing in the state by 1939. By the time the state farm census was conducted in 1935, PP&L was serving 25,500 farm customers. Those farm customers made up approximately 57 percent of the total number of farms in the company's service territory.³⁹

The farms in Conestoga Township hooked up to the electric power to supply the energy to transform their poultry, cattle and dairy operations. One of these technical innovations was the electricity to power milking machines and operate them to meet state-required high sanitary standards. Without electricity, the increase of Lancaster County's significant Fluid Dairy production would have very likely been much slower to evolve. The workers, technicians, mechanics and managers housed at the Tudor Revival-style Village of Safe Harbor were at the center of the "new" delivery of electric power to rural farmers and continue this role into today, within Conestoga Township and the region.

There is no recorded agricultural census data for Conestoga Township in 1927, so it is not feasible to assess and analyze in detail how the rural farming community conducted agricultural production toward the mid-20th century. But one thing that is clear about Conestoga Township's agricultural production has been the significant decline of the cultivation and curing of tobacco.

History and Significance (Item 39)

During the 20th century the cultural attributes of the Amish and Mennonite tobacco farmers have remained unchanged but intrusive factors from outside the area have tended to cause a sharp decline in tobacco acreage. Tobacco acreage in Lancaster County has declined from a high of 32,783 acres in 1910 to 11,960 acres in 1977. Between 1950-1975, there was a drop of 18,620 acres. While Amish and Mennonites with their tradition of family labor continue to grow tobacco, other farmers have abandoned it. The difficulties of finding adequate labor and the resistance of tobacco to mechanization have led farmers without large families to turn to corn, soybeans, poultry, dairying, hog raising, and steer feeding which can be mechanized.⁴⁰

This is probably the biggest change in the diversified crop profile of Conestoga Township during its period of historic significance up to 1960. The farmers in Conestoga Township after 1950 began to shift more towards fluid dairy operations and profitable egg production. These changes are at places visible in vacant Tobacco Barns, conversions of earlier barns to adapt to high Sanitary Fluid Dairy operations, and even a few barns' being converted into a full chicken house. Often, earlier agricultural outbuildings became converted to chicken houses, before the rapid adoption of the prefabricated Hen Laying House. This phase of rural agricultural building type begins by 1960 both here and nationally. So, within Conestoga Township, this last phase of diversified agricultural production on these single-family farms represents the decline of tobacco production, the expansion of Fluid Dairy operations, and the rapid acceleration of poultry operations.

The historic farming community within Conestoga Township Rural Historic District went on to be resilient in terms of deeded farmland preservation. In the past 20 years, 1,486 acres of its prime agricultural land is protected in perpetuity under covenants agreed to within the Lancaster County Farmland Trust. In addition, the overwhelming majority of Conestoga Township is zoned for solely agricultural use. All of these conserved and zoned areas are within the recommended Conestoga Township Rural Historic District, which appears to be one of the larger definable rural historic districts in Pennsylvania.

History and Significance (Item 39)

Statement of Significance

At present, the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District appears to meet Criteria A, B, C and D of the National Register of Historic Places. Present research indicates that the following factors relate to the application of each NRHP Criteria as follows:

Criterion A: The Conestoga Township Rural Historic District is the location of one of the older continuous Swiss- and Germanic-origin Mennonite communities within Pennsylvania and the United States of America. This Mennonite settlement began possibly as early as 1718 to 1720. The Mennonites who settled here brought, and then highly developed, farming and soil management practices and techniques that directly contributed to the rapid expansion of agriculture in colonial Pennsylvania and its economic success. Today, this historic rural Mennonite community is highly intact, with many farms and varied properties being owned and operated by direct descendants of many of the original Swiss and Germanic settlement families of the 18th century.

Criterion B: The Conestoga Township Rural Historic District is the location of a major length of the Conestoga Navigation Canal. The Conestoga Navigation Canal as completed was designed by Edward F. Gay, chief civil engineer. After completing the Conestoga Navigation Canal System, Gay went on to be the chief engineer of the Pennsylvania Canal, and then after this the chief engineer of the Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, and to the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal. These public improvements had a major impact on Pennsylvania's entry into the Industrial Revolution, as it evolved in America. So Edward F. Gay's participation and presence in these three systems of transport is of historic significance. In relation to the Conestoga Navigation Canal, it should be viewed as the first example of Edward F. Gay's civil engineered/designed works of transport, although it was beset by the challenges of nature's freshets and the increasing dominance of railroads as a means of transport.

Criterion C: The Conestoga Township Rural Historic District is an assemblage of numerous well-preserved examples of rural and village-context vernacular architecture. This involves a large inventory of 18th-, 19th- and early 20th-century agrarian, residential, commercial, institutional and rural industrial buildings and their associated rural, cultural landscape features.

Some outstanding singular buildings and properties are: The Benedict and Anna Eschleman Farm and its circa-1759 Main Dwelling, the second Benedict Eschleman Farm and its circa-1764 Main Dwelling, the Shenk Barn, circa 1786, the very well-preserved Pequea Roller (Grist Mill), early 19th century, (1820s), with its almost totally-intact mill machinery, the "Sign of the Conestoga: and the "Sign of the American Coat of Arms," early 19th-century taverns, the Lock No. 6 of the Conestoga Navigation Canal, circa 1830s, the well-preserved rural late 18th-century and 19th-century Lime Kilns, the Colemanville Covered Bridge, circa 1856, already listed onto the National Register of Historic Places, the Village of Colemanville, with its surviving early 19th-century iron workers' housing, adjacent to the Colemanville Covered Bridge, the Village of Safe Harbor, a very well-preserved, planned workers' community of Tudor Revival-style homes and offices, circa early 1930s, built in association with the construction of Safe Harbor Dam. All of these historic resources present an initial profile of the noted examples of rural Vernacular and formally-designed architecture.

Criterion D: The Conestoga Township Rural Historic District contains a variety of documented and undisturbed historic archaeological sites which are the following:

- The site of Postlethwait's Tavern, the location of Lancaster County's Courthouse in 1729
- Myers Tannery, an important basic rural industry that operated for almost 100 years since the beginnings of the 19th century. The Myers Tannery that once stood in Conestoga Township is now

History and Significance (Item 39)

an historic industrial archaeological site. The Myers Tannery operated for many years and was one of the essential basic rural industries of the township.

- The historic industrial archaeological site of the Colemanville Forge and Rolling Mill, circa 1820s. This location contains the surviving remains of one of the early 19th-century iron-making forge hearths of the Colemanville Forge and Rolling Mill Complex, located along Pequea Boulevard, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

It is also well-documented that there are 11 known historic individual Family Burial Grounds located within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. These historic resources exist in a variety of physical conditions. Some are well-preserved, others in varied stages of decay, and a number in an obscured archaeological condition. Together this high concentration of 11 individual Family Burial Grounds contributes under Criterion D to the significance of the rural historic district.

In association with the meeting of the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District appears to manifest the following Areas of Significance for Rural Landscapes:

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Archaeology
- Community Planning and Development
- Exploration and Settlement
- Landscape Architecture

Context and Comparisons

To date, there has been little advancement within Pennsylvania and by the Bureau for Historic Preservation of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission in seeking to address, identify and confirm Rural Historic Districts. A great deal of effort has been conducted to identify and confirm urban-context historic districts and isolated singular historic properties of paramount historic and architectural significance. This is, in part, understandable in view of the fact of the significant challenge and costs to survey and identify the inherent complex relationships of cohesive historic resources and cultural landscape features in a large, rural physical context. Additionally, rural municipalities rarely have the financial resources, the unified civic concern and the will to undertake such a consideration. This is an economic paradox, since farms are commercial properties, therefore, all identified historic farms would be able to take advantage of the historic preservation tax credits that could assist their commercial agricultural buildings' preservation and maintenance. If the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District became recognized, it would provide a means and incentive to preserve a farm's historic barn(s), agricultural outbuilding(s), historic grist mills, and even the individual historic Family Burial Grounds, of which there are 11 in this rural historic district with Conestoga Township.

In terms of comparison, in view of physical scale, there are only two current rural historic districts in Pennsylvania that are of a similar character to the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District; these being the:

- Tulpehocken Creek Historic District in Berks County; and the
- Oley Township Historic District, also in Berks County.

These two rural historic districts are briefly described as follows.

History and Significance (Item 39)

Tulpehocken Creek Historic District is a national historic district located in North Heidelberg Township and Lower Heidelberg Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania. The district encompasses 152 contributing buildings, one contributing site, and four contributing structures related to development along upper Tulpehocken Creek. They include log cabins from the early settlement period, 1723-1750; Reed's Cemetery (1723), Christ Lutheran Church (1786), and Christ Little Tulpehocken Church (1809); 18th and 19th century farm complexes; the Charming Forge community (1749-1895); and buildings related to the development and operation of the Union Canal. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Oley Township Historic District: The Oley Valley is located in eastern Berks County, Pennsylvania. Rolling hills to the north and east surround the valley. To the south and west are the Monocacy and Schuylkill Rivers. The Manatawny Creek runs through the center of the valley....

The Oley Valley has long been recognized as an exceptional historical area. It is characterized by a unique concentration of eighteenth century stone homesteads preserved in a scenic setting of rich, productive farmland. The valley has a deep European heritage with its first inhabitants being Swedes, Germans, Swiss, English, Calvinists, and Huguenots. Many of these inhabitants came to the New World in order to escape religious persecution. The earliest known inhabitants were Swedes who settled in present-day Amity Township.

The Manatawny Creek was the economic focal point of the valley. There were three cast iron smelting furnaces located in Oley, Spangsville and Spring. In fact, the Oley Furnace was so important that a nearby tributary of the Manatawny Creek was named Furnace Creek. There were also numerous saw, grist, and flax mills located along the Manatawny Creek. Many farms used the water from the Manatawny Creek for irrigating the fields, feeding their livestock, and as running water for their homesteads. Rural land use patterns have not changed a great deal since the early eighteenth century. Agriculture continues to be a major influence in the local economy. The heritage of almost three hundred years continues to live today.

This historical inertial is due in large part to the diligent work of several local volunteer organizations in preserving the valley. In 1980, due to these organizations' efforts, Oley Township was chosen to be one of two demonstration communities for the Rural Project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The National Trust needed real places to test its theories concerning rural conservation and Oley Township had the two key ingredients: exceptional historic, agricultural, and scenic resources and potential threats and pressures affecting these resources.

In March of 1983, the entire Township of Oley was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This represented a first-of-its-kind designation, because of the valley's size and the diverse collection of rural historic buildings. Indeed, the valley's 15,000 acres comprise the largest rural historic district in the United States [by 1995]. Volunteer organizations worked with the National Trust to create the Oley Township Historic District. Eventually, the Oley Valley Heritage Association was established to maintain the integrity of the newly formed historic district.⁴¹

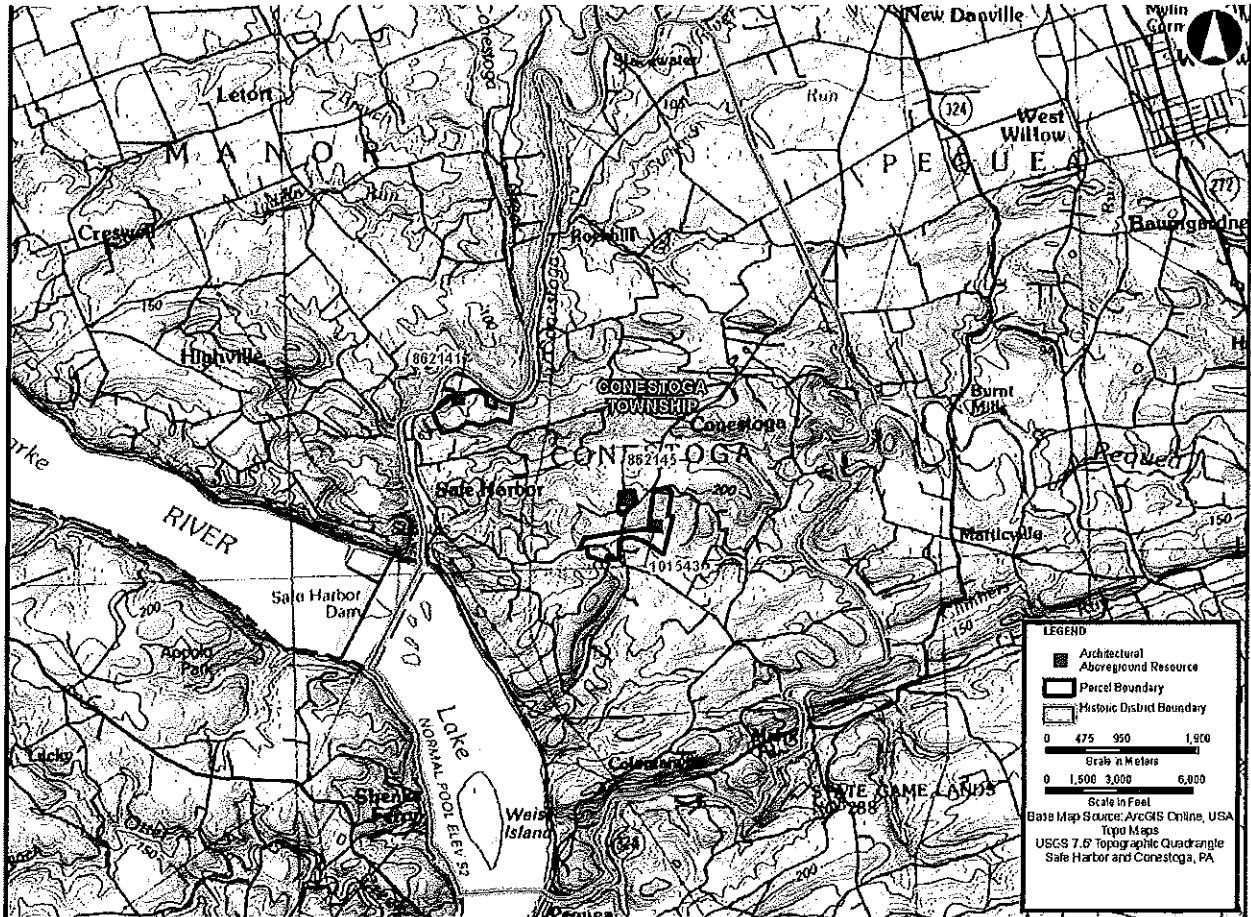
By physical comparison, the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District would become one of the larger rural historic districts in Pennsylvania. The Conestoga Township Rural Historic District retains a heritage of mixed rural agricultural, village context, and a distinct rural industrial heritage sites involving ironmaking, iron mining, tobacco production and water power development. The initial research work conducted here strongly indicates that within the proposed boundaries of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District, there is the essential cohesiveness of historic resources that parallel those within the recognized Tulpehocken Creek Historic District and the Oley Township Historic District.

History and Significance (Item 39)

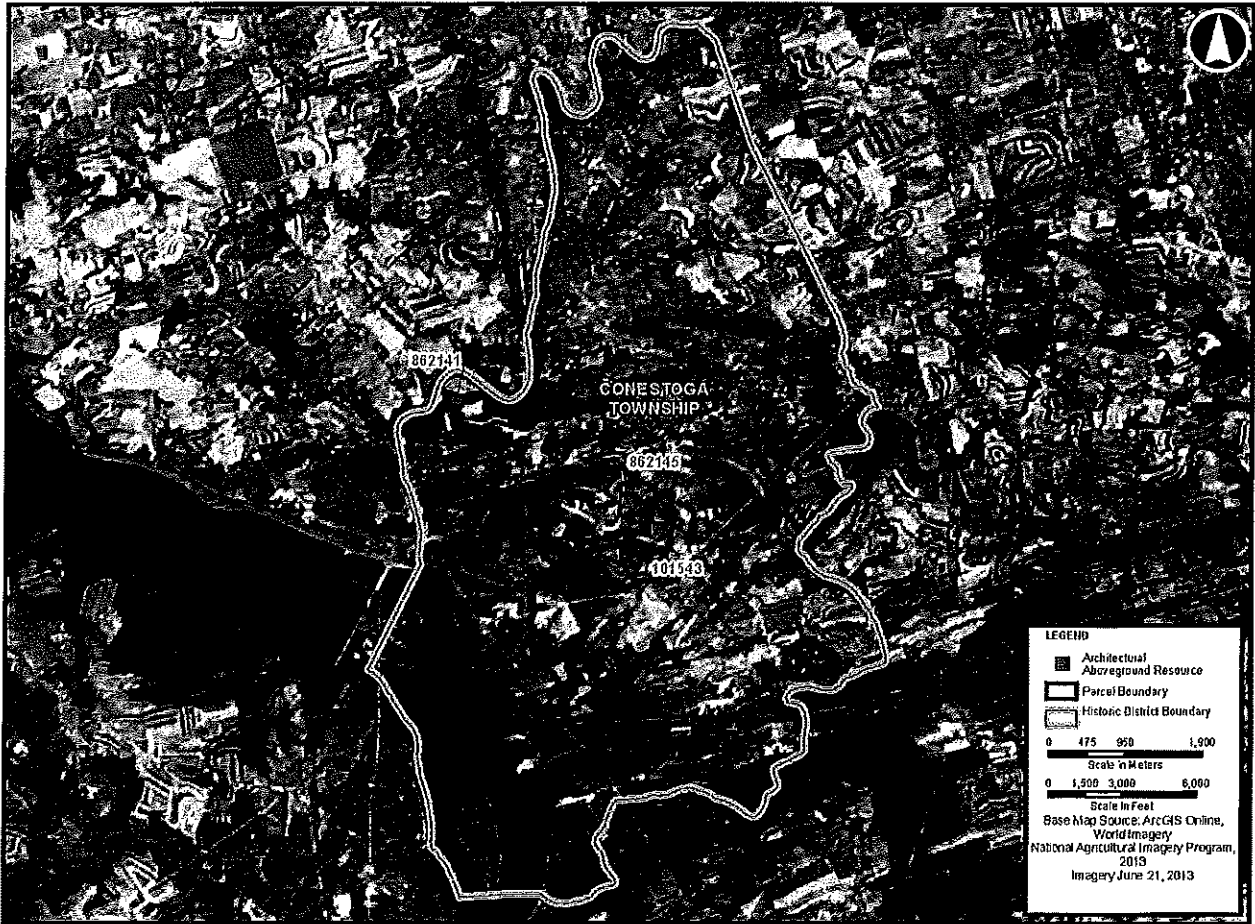
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ER#	2014-0935-042

The initial primary evidence of this is the significant level of farm acreage already committed to be a "Preserved Farm" within the program of the Lancaster County Farmland Trust and Conestoga Township's strong commitment to agricultural zoning under its Comprehensive Plan and ordinances.

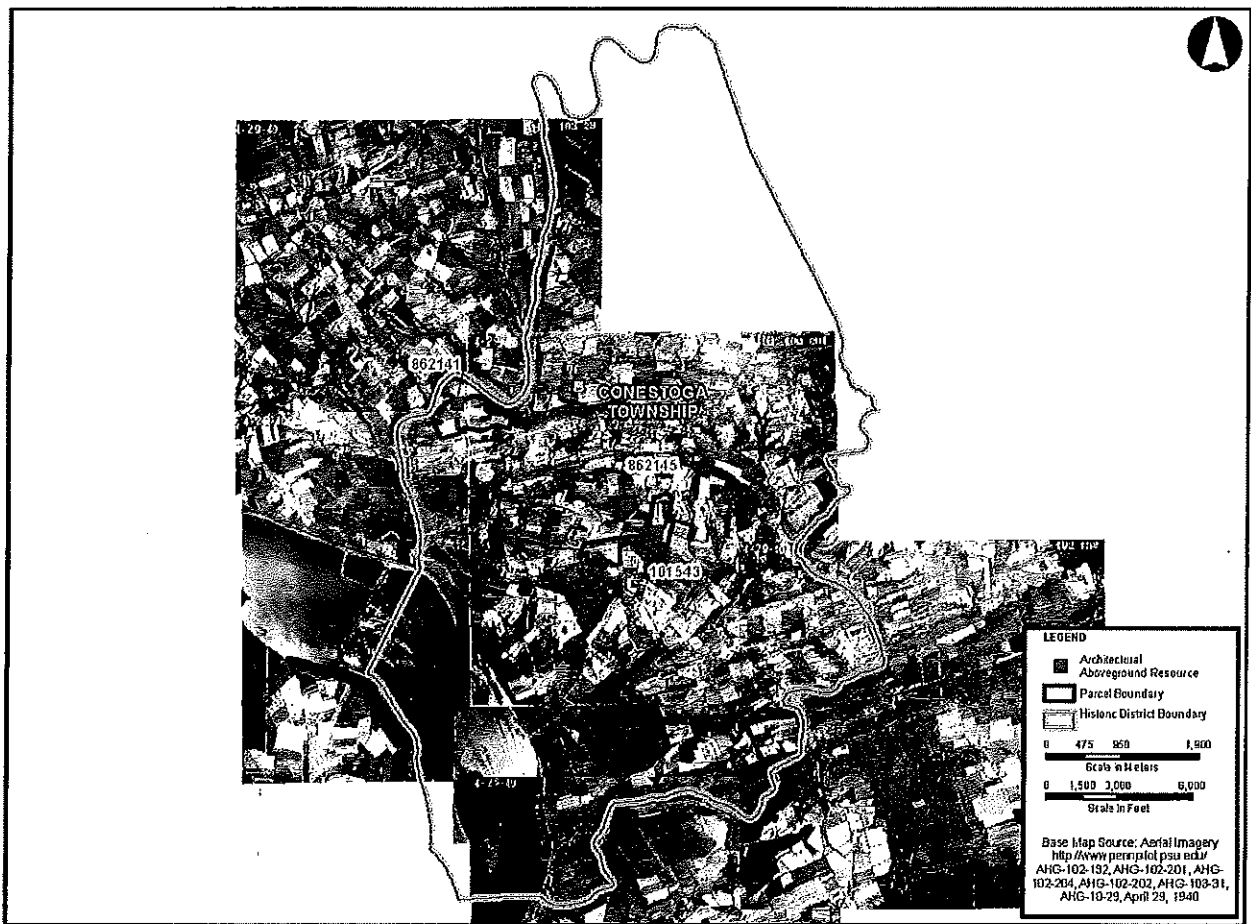
In closing, in relation to the "Lancaster Plain, 1730-1960," historic agricultural context created by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission Bureau for Historic Preservation, there is no precedent to date of a similar recognized rural historic district within Lancaster County. The conclusive confirmation of the extent and historic integrity of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District would begin to address the preservation of the Lancaster Plain's rural agricultural community heritage.



USGS map showing the location of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District and contributing properties within the APE



Current aerial showing the location of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District and contributing properties within the APE



1939 aerial showing the location of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District and contributing properties within the APE

History and Significance (Item 39)

Key #	862230
ER#	2014-0935-042

Function (continued)

Historic Function	Subcategory	Particular Type
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Tobacco Barn</u>
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Processing</u>	<u>Mill</u>
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Animal Facility</u>
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Agricultural Outbuilding</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single Dwelling</u>	<u>Farmhouse</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Hotel</u>	<u>Tavern</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Store</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Rural Craft Shop</u>
<u>Industry/Processing/Extractive</u>	<u>Extractive Facility</u>	<u>Iron Ore Mine or Pit</u>
<u>Industry/Processing/Extractive</u>	<u>Manufacturing Facility</u>	<u>Iron Furnace & Rolling Mill</u>
<u>Industry/Processing/Extractive</u>	<u>Manufacturing Facility</u>	<u>Tannery</u>
<u>Industry/Processing/Extractive</u>	<u>Manufacturing Facility</u>	<u>Paper Mill</u>
<u>Industry/Processing/Extractive</u>	<u>Manufacturing Facility</u>	<u>Cigar Factory</u>
<u>Religion</u>	<u>Religious Structure</u>	<u>Church or Meeting House</u>
<u>Religion</u>	<u>Church School</u>	_____
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>	<u>Family Burial Grounds</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>Meeting Hall</u>	_____
<u>Government</u>	<u>Post Office</u>	_____
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Water-related</u>	<u>Canal</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Rail-related</u>	<u>Railroad</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Road-related</u>	_____
Current Function	Subcategory	Particular Type
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Tobacco Barn</u>
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Animal Facility</u>
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Agricultural Outbuilding</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single Dwelling</u>	<u>Farmhouse</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Multiple Dwelling</u>	<u>Apartment House</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single Dwelling</u>	<u>Home/Residence</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Store</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Tavern/Bar</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Restaurant</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Roadside Stand</u>
<u>Religion</u>	<u>Religious Structure</u>	<u>Church or Meeting House</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>	<u>Family Burial Grounds</u>
<u>Government</u>	<u>Post Office</u>	_____
<u>Government</u>	<u>Fire Station</u>	_____
<u>Government</u>	<u>Governmental Office</u>	<u>Township Building</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>Meeting Hall</u>	_____
<u>Recreation/Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>Park</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Road-related</u>	_____

Architectural/Property Information (continued)

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION

<u>Colonial</u>	<u>English Vernacular</u>
<u>Early Republican</u>	<u>Federal Vernacular</u>
<u>Mid 19th Century</u>	<u>Greek Revival Vernacular</u>
<u>Late Victorian</u>	<u>Italianate Vernacular</u>
<u>Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals</u>	<u>Tudor Revival</u>

Submission Information (continued)

Threats Although large areas within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District are zoned for agriculture, there are some limited areas of suburban-style division development and pressure. The extant historic building stock has, to a moderate extent, been recognized and appreciated by individual property owners and is, in some places, carefully restored. However, the existing historic agricultural building, such as barns and outbuildings, are under pressure due to higher cost of maintenance and continuing demands to adapt and incorporate changing modern agricultural equipment and practices.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, "Soil Survey of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania," pub. 1982, pg. 45

² Ruth, pg. 1038

³ Ruth, pg. 1038

⁴ River Corner Mennonite Church – History of Our Meeting House, <http://www.rivercornermc.org/rc-history/> Accessed May 13, 2015.

⁵ Deed Book "Y"7, pg. 463

⁶ Pennsylvania Agricultural Project, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/barn_types/21170/tobacco_barn/1260152 Accessed May 13, 2015

⁷ Lord, Arthur C., "Water Powered Grist Mills, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania," pub. 1996, pp. 24-25

⁸ Janzen, John M., "Anabaptist Mennonite Spaces and Places of Worship," pub. April 1999, the Mennonite Quarterly Review

⁹ MacMaster, pg. 22

¹⁰ MacMaster, pg. 62

¹¹ Ellis, Franklin and Everetts, Michael, eds., "History of Lancaster County," pub. 1883

¹² The Conestoga Area Historical Society website

¹³ Theibault, John C., "German Villages in Crisis: Rural Life in Hesse-Kassel and the Thirty Years War, 1580-1720," pub. 1995

¹⁴ The Conestoga Area Historical Society website

¹⁵ The Conestoga Area Historical Society website

¹⁶ Ellis & Everetts

¹⁷ The Conestoga Area Historical Society website

¹⁸ Ellis & Everetts

¹⁹ Ellis & Everetts

²⁰ Ellis & Everetts

²¹ Ellis & Everetts, pp. 308-309

²² Ellis & Everetts, pp. 744-745

²³ Eggert, Gerald G., "The Iron Industry in Pennsylvania," pub. 1994, pg. 49

²⁴ Ellis & Everetts, pg. 308

²⁵ Eggert, pg. 12

