

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

18  
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received

date entered

**1. Name**

historic TROXELL-STECKEL HOUSE

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 4229 Reliance House \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Egypt \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 15

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Lehigh code 077

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> park</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> religious</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> scientific</span>
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</span>
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> other:</span>

**4. Owner of Property**

name Lehigh County Historical Society

street & number Old Courthouse, 5th and Hamilton Streets

city, town Allentown \_\_\_ vicinity of state Pennsylvania

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lehigh County Courthouse

street & number 5th and Hamilton Streets

city, town Allentown state Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

date 1973 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The house is a fine example of colonial Pennsylvania German architecture. Constructed with fieldstone and deep gables, it measures 48' in length and 35' in width. The house is a 2½ story structure. There are 5 windows on the second story west facade and 4 windows and a door on the first story Northwest facade. There are two large windows and one small window on the Northeast facade of the building. On the Southwest facade, there are two large windows and one small window. The Southeast facade contains 4 windows and a door on the first floor and 3 windows on the second floor. The doors are arched and the headers limed with stucco. At either end of the building, great chimneys rise to accommodate two large kitchen fire places. There is evidence that bake ovens originally existed in both fireplaces, but these have not been restored as of this date. On the west facade of the building, between and third and fourth windows on the second story, is a home blessing which reads as follows:

Gott behu et dis haus  
fur aller gefahr, fuer  
Unser Seel ins Himmel's Saal  
Johan Peter Trachsel  
und Maria Magdalena

God keep this house from  
all danger and lead our souls  
into Heaven's fold  
John Peter Troxell  
and Maria Magdalena

The house has a high pitched wood shingled roof and a sharply sloping pent roof between the first and second floors.

There are four large rooms on both the first and second floors. In addition to the two large fireplaces on the ground floor, there are two smaller ones on the second floor. Provision was made for 5 plate stoves for heating the 2 rooms adjoining the 2 large kitchens on the first floor. The interior walls were all "joined" -- half timbered -- and the spaces filled with masonry and buttered with a clay and lime plaster. Upstairs, the 2 great chambers have plain arched corner fireplaces and inner walls panelled with the widest pine boarding which they were able to dress and mold. Behind these two large rooms are 2 very plain rooms without fireplaces and having one window apiece. The great chimneys of the kitchens below take up the shole side of each of these rooms. The majority of the floors are of pine with the rest being poplar. The large interior ceiling beams are of oak.

The house was purchased by a descendant of Peter Steckel and was presented to the Lehigh Co. Historical Society in 1942. Restoration was begun in 1943 to return the house to its 18th century appearance. There is a stone spring house on the property, with good water. In 1758, a stone barn was built. This large structure, measuring 85' by 37', was torn down in 1874, at which time a new barn was constructed. This barn now serves as an exhibit facility for early farm implements as well as the antique collection of carriages and sleighs of the Lehigh County Historical Society.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates**      1756      **Builder/Architect**      Builder: Peter Troxell

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Troxell-Steckel house is significant architecturally. It was built in 1756 by John Peter Troxell and is an unusual example of Pa. German colonial architecture. Outside of the oldest Moravian buildings in Bethlehem, the cloisters at Ephrata and a few scattered houses in Bucks and Berks counties, this latter day offspring of the Medieval, gothic builders is unique. The interior partition walls are mortised and pegged in the best half-timber tradition.

The thick walls and small, deep arch-headed windows which splay inward and have no wood trim to conceal the masonry of the walls, are an echo of the stout construction of a day which required a building to be half fortress and half dwelling.

The Troxell-Steckel house was one of the first houses to be built in the upper parts of Northampton County (now Lehigh). Save for the communal buildings at Bethlehem, this was one of the first and largest homesteads in this previously unsettled frontier region.

It is known that Indian attacks in this area were frequent, but it is not sure if this house was ever used as a fortress against Indian attack. On New Years Eve of 1756, the missionary settlement at Gnadenhutten was attacked and the sturdy little band of Moravians were killed and the houses put to the torch. When the Pennsylvania Assembly finally ordered the militia to act against the Indians, they marched into northern Northampton County. On their way north, the militia stopped and acquired 2 teams of horses and one wagon from John Peter Troxell before proceeding to Gnadenhutten to bury the dead and reconstruct the stockade there.

The house also has significance in a religious sense. Regular services of worship for the Egypt Reformed Church were held at the Troxell-Steckel house prior to the construction of a Union Church in 1764.

John Troxell came to America from Germany in 1737 accompanied by his 18 year old son, John Peter. On October 28, 1737, he purchased 250 acres of land near the present town of Egypt. John Troxell's wife died in 1749 and, after a very brief mourning period, he remarried in 1750 and moved from the Lehigh Valley area. The son, John Peter, continued to farm the land near Egypt. In 1756, he erected this large stone house on the property. John Peter continued to expand his holdings in the area and, on May 20, 1768, he sold his home and property (410 acres) to Peter Steckel. The new owner had lived in the area since 1738 and was acknowledged as one of the most progressive farmers of the day--in fact, he had developed an Archimedes' screw arrangement whereby he was able to lift water to higher

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TROXELL-STECKEL HOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

ground on his land in order to irrigate it. Peter Steckel died in 1784, but his descendants continued to occupy the house until 1904 when it was sold. The house was purchased in 1942 by a great-great-grandson of Peter Steckel and was presented to the Lehigh County Historical Society. It was restored in 1943 and is presently a museum exhibiting furnishings and crafts of the early settlers of this area of Pennsylvania.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.206

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Starting at a point on Reliance St. moving east 192.57', then southwest 55.15' then southeast 109' then southwest 383.46' then northeast 149.15' then northeast 120.2' to starting point.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James C. Dotterer

organization Lehigh County Historical Society date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number Old Courthouse 5th & Hamilton Street telephone 215-435-1074

city or town Allentown state Pennsylvania 18101

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

ED WEINTRAUB, Director date \_\_\_\_\_  
title Office of Historic Preservation

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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TROXELL-STECKEL HOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

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