

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS-USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

17

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Hendel Brothers, Sons and Company Hat Factory

AND/OR COMMON

"The Hat Factory"

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

517-539 South Fifth Street

--NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Reading

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

COUNTY

Berks

CODE

011

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Redevelopment Authority of the City of Reading

STREET & NUMBER

510 Penn Square Center, 601 Penn Street

CITY, TOWN

Reading

VICINITY OF

Pennsylvania

STATE

19601

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Berks County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Sixth and Court Streets

CITY, TOWN

Reading

STATE

Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

6/18/79

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

PHMC

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"The Hat Factory" building is located near "The Hardware", on the east side of South Fifth Street between Laurel and Willow Streets. This building can be traced back to the 1850's, being originally used as a woolen mill. Sharing many construction features in common with "The Hardware", this building has a main central wing of 62 feet by 130 feet, three stories in height over a crawl space. Smaller wings at either end were possibly added somewhat later. The wing at the north end is three stories, but of lower story height than the central part. The wing at the south end is two stories in height matching the central wing in floor-to-floor height (about 15 feet). A small two-story wing on the west (street) side served as main entrance and, on the second floor, supervisors' offices. The building formerly connected to several smaller structures on the east side which extended to Pearl Street, including a boiler house. These buildings have been recently demolished.

Exterior

Regularly spaced large double hung windows are found on all exterior walls of "The Hat Factory" except the north wall. The exterior bearing walls are of three wythes of brick masonry, with shallow brick arches forming the tops of all original windows and other openings. The masonry is in generally good condition, although some walls need pointing and the repair of deteriorated brick. Corbeled string courses of brick at the eave line add a decorative element around the main part of the building, the remainder being very plain and straightforward.

The structure of "The Hat Factory" is a variation of heavy timber mill construction. Girders spaced about 10 feet on centers span between exterior masonry bearing walls and two rows of interior wood columns, in the main part of the building. Girders in the end wings span from wall to wall. The floor system is of heavy planks laid flat and spanning between girders, with a finish wood floor laid on top of the planks in the opposite direction. The roof, although pitched, is supported by girders on posts with cross-tie bracing, rather than being trussed as in "The Hardware".

The window sash in the exterior walls are large to admit light and ventilation, and are wood double hung sash, generally 9 lights over nine. An interesting arched door-way occurs on the east side, and cast iron stars on the east and west walls are used as end-plates for the tie-rods which extend across the main part of the building. Several first floor openings have been added or modified over the years but, for the most part, the building is in its original state.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

"The Hat Factory"
Berks County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Interior

The central part of the building provides three stories of work space about 62 feet by 130 feet. A masonry fire division wall divides this laterally about 29 feet from the north end, and two rows of columns are the only interior obstruction. The main stairway for employees is at the center on the west side, toilets being located under the stair on the first floor. The end wings add workspace to each floor. The north end is subdivided by a fire wall, another stair, and an elevator, and the floors are not on the same level due to varying story heights.

The interior of the exterior brick walls are exposed and uninsulated, and the entire floor and roof structure is exposed to view. Although not in as good condition as "The Hardware", the structure is an even older and interesting example of factory mill construction of the 19th century, one of the few remaining in Reading

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1850

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hendel Brothers, Sons & Company at 517-539 South Fifth Street was at one time Reading's leading hat manufacturer and one of the most productive hat making establishments in the nation. Hat making, Reading's oldest, prominent industry was indeed in a flourishing condition when the borough was first erected in the 1750's. By 1795, Reading and Berks County hatters were producing 2,200 fur hats and 54,000 wool hats. The success of Reading's wool hat manufacturing industry is illustrated in the fact that the wool hat was commonly referred to as the "Reading Hat". In 1824, there were six master hatters in 100 taxables that produced 150,000 hats employing 450 journeyman and apprentices, and annually worked up twenty tons of wool and made 150,000 hats. The hats were hand-made and men produced about eight per day. These hats weighed ten to twelve ounces each, 4½" to 6" high, 3½" to 4" brim, were 1/8" to 3/8" thick, and would easily sustain the weight of a two hundred pound man without breaking. The colors were either black or white.

In 1840 in Reading alone, there were fourteen hat factories and they produced 55,000 dozen hats from wool. There were also eight fine hat factories all doing a large business. In 1847 the first soft wool hats were produced, and also color was introduced. By 1852, most hatters began to use hat making machinery.

The Hendel family spanned four generations of hat makers. The patriarch was Levi Hendel who apprenticed at the age of fourteen under Phillip Fichthorn of Adamstown before starting his own business. In 1860, Levi formed a partnership with his two sons, John and George. In 1864, the brothers felt a change of location would be advantageous, but the father was reluctant to move from the scenes of his life long activity, so the partnership was dissolved, and John and George moved to St. Lawrence. For three years, the brothers worked out of the St. Lawrence factory, and the steady growth of the business gave them a sound financial base, certain assurance of their own ability, and confidence in themselves and their future as an industrial organization. With the need for more spacious quarters in a better location, the brothers felt a wider opportunity of growth could be obtained in a community of larger population, so in 1867, they built a factory on Maple Street, south of Chestnut Street in the City of Reading.

Three years of operation at the Maple Street factory carried the interests to definite importance, all of which determined the brothers upon going forward each as an individual operator. Thus, wholly in an amicable way, they dissolved their partnership and the factory was sold.

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

"The Hat Factory"
Berks County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

John then purchased a factory at Eleventh and Spruce Streets where for one year he went forward independently along the same general line of manufacture. His activities gained him wide recognition in the hat trade, and in 1871, he again joined with George, and with his other brother Henry B., in order to purchase the Wyomissing Woolen Mills on South Fifth Street, below Laurel Street, and trade as John Hendel & Brothers.

The firm of John Hendel & Brothers thoroughly remodeled the buildings and equipped them with the most modern machinery for the manufacture of wool hats, and thereby placed it in leading rank in the state in this industry, and indeed developed a business of such magnitude as to command wide and favorable attention throughout the east. In 1879, John's three sons, Levi H., Daniel J., and James M. were admitted to the firm and the name changed to Hendel Brothers, Sons & Company, as it traded until 1895 when John retired as head of the company.

Concurrent with the South Fifth Street factory's development, in 1878 George Hendel also built a factory for the manufacture of wool hats on the Wyomissing Creek near Shillington. Then, in partnership with his brother John, under the name Hendel Brothers conducted a parallel interest, building another large factory in 1886 on the Cacoosing Creek at Montello. The Wyomissing Creek factory at Shillington traded as Hendel Brothers manufacturing fur felt hats, and the Cacoosing Creek factory at Motello traded as the Hendel Hat Factory manufacturing wool hats. In 1895, George acquired John's interests in both factories and received his sons, John R. and William H., into partnership under the firm of George Hendel & Sons. In 1901, the Cacoosing Creek factory was moved to a modern plant at Tenth and Spruce Streets, where George continued at the head of these interests until his death in February, 1924 at the age of eighty-eight years. At that time, George's son William identified with fur felt hats, manufacturing under the name William H. Hendel out of the factory at Shillington.

With the retirement of John Hendel in 1895, and with George Hendel's primary interest being with his two county operations, John's sons Daniel, Harrison P. and Edwin F. assumed control of the South Fifth Street factory trading as John Hendel's Sons. All three sons had entered their father's factory at an early age familiarizing themselves with the business in every department, so with the reorganization the three filled the large responsibility for the factory's operations.

Through the counsel of Daniel, the manufacture of wool hats was abandoned in December, 1897, for he was confident that wider opportunities lay in the production of soft fur hats of medium quality. As a result, the entire factory was remodeled, and a complete equipment of new

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

"The Hat Factory"
Berks County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

machinery of a different type than formerly used was installed. The results were gratifying. While the interests had extended over a considerable area in the past, the sales of the new product extended to all parts of the United States and Canada. Sales to New York, Chicago, and all principal cities of this country, also to Canadian business centers, and the distribution of the product even reached the export trade of Europe.

An interesting side light to this new product trade is that a fourth son of John Hendwl, Charles W., embarked in business independent from his brothers, actually pioneering the fur hat manufacturing in a building he purchased and remodeled on South Third Street, below Pine, in 1890. Charles' venture was also successful, for he later rebuilt and enlarged the capacity of the factory, continuing as head of the C.W. Hendel Hat Factory until 1918, when he sold the factory to his son Paul B. Hendel.

After 1915, the Fifth Street hat factory continued under the leadership of George Stanley Hendel, Daniel's son. At its peak, one hundred and seventy workers were employed who produced fifty dozen hats daily. The firm averaged \$225,000 of business annually with most of the business being handled by their own New York commission house of Hawley, Hendel and Mohn.

Around 1930, the production activities at the Fifth Street hat factory were phased out, with many employees moving to the Third Street hat factory, which was now vastly superior in production techniques; as a result of improvements made after a 1926 fire. Until December of 1941, when the Fifth Street hat factory was sold to George H. Dunn, it was used solely for warehousing purposes. George H. Dunn used the property briefly as a trucking terminal for the Reading Brewery. In June, 1943 the property was sold to Walter E. Heutch who utilized the property for warehousing purposes. On September 9, 1960, Esther B. Heutch, widow of Walter E., sold the property to Thomas H. Weiner who also used the building for warehousing in relation to his auto parts distribution business. The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Reading acquired the property November 24, 1976 as part of their activities for the Model Cities One Urban Renewal Project.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 57

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	4, 2, 1, 3, 0, 6	4, 4, 6, 4, 1, 0, 2	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Redevelopment Authority of the City of Reading

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

510 Penn Square Center, 601 Penn Street

TELEPHONE

215-375-4291

CITY OR TOWN

Reading

STATE

Pennsylvania

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Ed Weintraub, Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

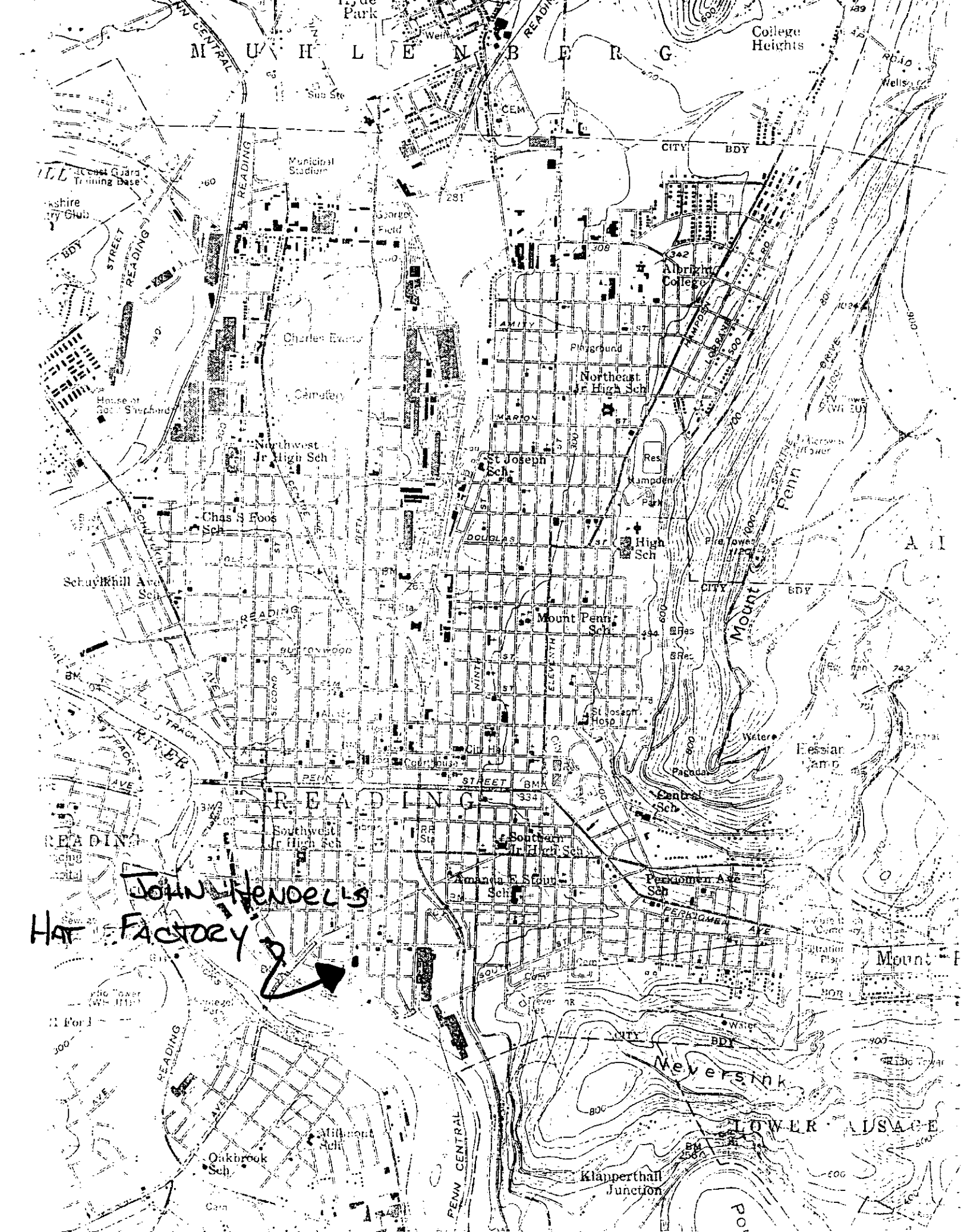
DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Verbal Boundary Description - "The Hat Factory"

ALL THAT CERTAIN two and three-story brick warehouse building, brick garage and other improvements, together with the tract or piece of land upon which the same are erected, situate along the Easterly side of South Fifth Street and extending to Pearl Street, between Laurel Street and Willow Street, in the City of Reading, County of Berks and State of Pennsylvania, more fully bounded and described in accordance with a survey made by Frankhouser Associates, Inc. of Reading, Pa., in August, 1960, as follows, to wit:

BEGINNING at a point of the Easterly building line of South Fifth Street (eighty feet wide as shown on the topographical survey of the City of Reading) Southwardly a distance of one hundred fifty-six and fifty-seven hundredths (156.57) feet from the intersection of said Easterly building line of South Fifth Street with the Southerly building line of Laurel Street (sixty feet wide as shown on the aforesaid topographical survey); thence extending in an Easterly direction along House No. 515 South Fifth Street, the property now or late of Emerson Turman and Ruby May Turman, his wife, forming a right angle with the Easterly building line of South Fifth Street, a distance of one hundred nineteen and seventy-seven hundredths (119.77) feet to a point; thence extending in a Southerly direction along the rear of House No. 518 Pearl Street, the property now or late of John W. Wentzel and Elmira L. Wentzel, his wife, and along the rear of House No. 520 Pearl Street, the property now or late of Minnie M. Grycminski, forming an interior angle of ninety (90) degrees one (1) minute fifty (50) seconds, with the last described line, a distance of thirty-six and forty-two hundredths (36.42) feet to a point; thence extending in an Easterly direction along House No. 520 Pearl Street, forming an interior angle of two hundred seventy (270) degrees two (2) minutes thirty-four (34) seconds with the last described line, a distance of one hundred five and sixty-two hundredths (105.62) feet to a point on the Westerly building line of Pearl Street (thirty feet wide as shown on the aforesaid topographical survey); thence extending in a Southerly direction along the Westerly building line of Pearl Street, forming an interior angle of eighty-nine (89) degrees fifty-seven (57) minutes twenty-six (26) seconds with the last described line, a distance of twenty-six and eighty-nine hundredths (26.89) feet to a point; thence extending along property now or late of Esther B. Huetsch, widow, the two (2) following directions and distances: (1) in a Westerly direction forming a right angle with the Westerly building line of Pearl Street, a distance of one hundred thirty and eighty hundredths (130.80) feet to a point; (2) in a Southerly direction forming a right angle with the last described line, a distance of one hundred fifty-four and sixty-eight hundredths (154.68) feet to a point; thence extending in a Westerly direction along House No. 541 South Fifth Street, the property now or late of Joseph Iezzi, forming an interior angle of ninety (90) degrees twenty-four (24) minutes four (4) seconds with the last described line, a distance of ninety-four and seventy-one hundredths (94.71) feet to a point on the Easterly building line of South Fifth Street; thence extending in a Northerly direction along the Easterly building line of South Fifth Street, forming an interior angle of eighty-nine (89) degrees thirty-four (34) minutes six (6) seconds with the last described line, a distance of two hundred eighteen and sixty-three hundredths (218.63) feet to the place of beginning.



MOUNT PENN

College Heights

Shire Club

Municipal Stadium

CEM

CITY BDY

STREET READING

READING

George Field

281

Albright College

Charles Evans

Playground

Northeast High Sch

Northwest Jr High Sch

St Joseph Sch

Res

Chas S Foos Sch

Schuykill Ave Sch

Mount Penn Sch

Mount Penn

READING

DOUGLAS

High Sch

Penn

READING

READING

READING

READING

READING

READING

READING

Southwest Jr High Sch

RR Sta

Southam Jr High Sch

Central Sch

JOHN HENDALLS

HAT FACTORY



Amanda E Scout Sch

Pendomen Ave Sch

READING

Mount

Neversink

LOWER MERISAGE

Oakbrook Sch

Milton Sch

Klappertail Junction

POINT