

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 02 1979
DATE ENTERED NOV 20 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Wright's Ferry Mansion
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 38 S. Second Street
CITY, TOWN Columbia
STATE Pa. CODE 42 COUNTY Lancaster CODE 071
VICINITY OF NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 16

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
The Louise Steinman von Hess Foundation
STREET & NUMBER
38 South Second Street
CITY, TOWN Columbia VICINITY OF STATE Pennsylvania 17512

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Lancaster County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
50 North Duke Street
CITY, TOWN Lancaster STATE Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places
DATE
5/1/79
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
PHMC
CITY, TOWN Harrisburg STATE Pennsylvania

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1738 of native limestone, Wright's Ferry Mansion is 2½ story house built on a long horizontal axis one room deep. A pent eave encircles the house between the first and second stories. There is a plaster coved cornice across the upper part of the gable. White oak side-lapped shingles, made like original ones found in the attic, cover the pedimented roof. On each side of the house north, south, east, and west there is a massive door, framed and sheathed in oak and divided horizontally. Double transoms surmount the east and west doors, which open into the entry hall. The windows are very elongated; and the panes are nine over nine throughout, except for the first floor windows facing the river which are twelve over twelve and two very narrow windows in the kitchen, the panes arranged in pairs six over six. On each of the gabled ends of the house there is a chimney, as well as one in the very center of the building. On the south side, off the kitchen, there is a squirrel tail oven.

The floor plan of this elongated rectangle is very simple. The entry hall is slightly off the center of the rectangle, with front and back door directly across from each other. From the hall, stairs lead to the cellar and to the second floor. If one enters from the original front of the house, the parlor is to the left and the dining room is to the right. Adjacent to the dining room and one step down is the kitchen. A small staircase leads up from the kitchen to the servant's room which has a ladder to the attic. Beside this is another servant's room which adjoins a small storage area. This opens into the secondary bedroom. From here one enters the upper hall which is linked with the entry hall directly beneath by means of a magnificent staircase. This long upper hall has two other rooms opening onto it; a small work room and the best bedroom, which is directly above the parlor. Fireplaces are in all rooms except the work room, one servant's room and the halls.

There are a myriad of significant interior features. Perhaps the most dramatic is the marvelous staircase of blackcherry with its bold vase and ring turnings, which reflect the very early style carried throughout the hall. The floor of this room is brick supported by a bed of flagstones which, in turn, is upheld by massive beams. The inspiration for this floor could well have been a similar example at Stenton, where the original owner visited in 1738. Another early feature found in the hall and throughout the house is the fine line of the corner reed incised in the plaster surrounding the windows. The massive, oak frame and sheathed doors with their horizontal division-"Dutch" doors-are an impressive early feature.

Paneled room ends of poplar are found in the parlor, the dining room, the best bedroom, and the secondary bedroom. The academic quality of the paneling in the parlor, with its elongated, vertical panels and the balanced placement of the two arched doors with their central keystone feature, suggests that it may have been made in Philadelphia for this house. One of these doors opens into a small vestibule leading to an exterior door on the north side of the house. The other door opens into a shallow closet. In the dining room a very unusual and inventive cupboard opens through to the cellar steps, thus enabling such things as fruit, vegetables, and wine to be easily handed

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

SPECIFIC DATES

1738

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wright's Ferry Mansion is significant architecturally and historically, enjoying a remarkably high degree of its original integrity. With its architectural melange of English and Germanic elements, the house visibly mirrors the influx of English Quakers into a Germanically dominated area. Built for an English Quakeress in 1738. Constructed on a long horizontal axis, the house is only one room deep. The squirrel tail oven, the encircling pent eave, and the side-lapped shingles are Germanic details. The entry hall with its brick floor; its squarish shape; the two massive, oak-framed and sheathed doors at either end; and the magnificent black-cherry staircase with its bold vase and ring turned bannisters is distinctly seventeenth century in style. This temporal and cultural mingling brings an added dimension to the architecture by visibly embodying a fascinating point in time. Very few examples of this early period have survived; and rarely are they restored with the meticulous care which The Louise Steinman von Hess Foundation has demanded.

For exploration and settlement, the house is illustrative of the strong rooting into this area by English Quakers coming from Chester and Darby, Pennsylvania. In 1726 a small group came to this area then called "Shannah town on Susquehanna" to land they had purchased. Susanna Wright had purchased one hundred acres at this time; and it was on this tract that, once the settlement had established a strong foothold, the Mansion was built for her. The importance of Susanna Wright's coming to this wilderness was recognized by the prominent Isaac Norris, the Philadelphia Quaker merchant who was compiling with others an early history of Pennsylvania. In a letter of 1728, he states that he would be certain to mention her in his history with a great regard, for 'to propagate Moral Justice, and erect a Church In a Land till then Barbarous is a revolution of some Importance and may make some future Age Inquisitive into the truest motives of such Change'.

Besides this important attempt by Susanna Wright to implant Christianity, both she and her family strengthened the rooting of the settlement by their assiduous efforts in their occupation, in government, and in the quality of their own lives. The ferry established by the Wrights was so important in trade and settlement that it was known as "the gateway to the West". Neighbor to the Wrights was a surveyor, Samuel Blunston, who helped to precisely delineate and maintain the border between Pa. and Maryland. Both Blunston and John Wright, Susanna's father, protected Pennsylvania from the encroachments by Thomas Cresap on the part of Maryland. John Wright was instrumental in the establishment of Lancaster County as an entity separate from Chester County. Samuel Wright, Susanna's nephew and heir to her mansion and land, divided to expand the small settlement. He called the resulting town Columbia. This enlarged settlement proved so successful that it was considered as a possible capital for the young nation.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .82

UTM REFERENCES

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1	1	8
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3	7	1	7	3	0
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4	4	3	1	9	1	0
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 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

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 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Starting at a point on the northwest side of Bank Ave. moving east along lands of Anna L. Demey for 195.79' to westside of S. Second St., then southeast along S. Second Street for 154' then west along lands of E.R. & R.E. Pennell for 218.74 feet then northwest along Bank Avenue for 157.3 feet to starting point.

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: Elizabeth Meg Schaefer, Assistant Curator

ORGANIZATION: Louise Steinman von Hess Foundation DATE: _____

STREET & NUMBER: 38 South Second Street TELEPHONE: 717-684-4325

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia STATE: Pennsylvania ZIP: 17512

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: [Signature]

TITLE: Ed Weintraub, Office of Historic Preservation DATE: 9/25/79

Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature] DATE: 11-20-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: [Signature] DATE: Nov. 20, 1979

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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up through the opening from storage in the cool cellar. This cupboard was restored according to dimensions determined by marks in the original plaster and on the floor.

The house enjoys a high degree of its original integrity. All later accretions were removed to restore the house to its original appearance. With accuracy as the foremost tenet, the restoration was done for The Louise Steinman von Hess Foundation by G. Edwin Brumbaugh. The major structural change was the repositioning of the interior wall between the dining room and the kitchen, since it had been moved at one time to enlarge the dining room. The entire paneling on this wall had to be replaced; and the form of the cornice was determined by the outline of the original in the plaster.

A staircase to the cellar from the kitchen was removed since it was a later addition. The original level of the kitchen floor was restored, since it had been raised at a later date to be on the same height as the dining room floor. This later wooden floor was replaced with brick, which was used there originally. The brick floors of the hall and the cellar have also been restored. Throughout the rest of the house the floors are the original soft pine, except for the two servant's rooms and the secondary bedroom where they had to be replaced.

Since it had been removed entirely, the built-in cupboard in the dining room had to be restored completely. In the parlor all the paneling is original except for the door on the left which was removed to convert the closet to an open cupboard at one time. All but a very small patch above the closet door in the best bedroom is original; and in the secondary bedroom, one third of the paneling had to be replaced. The collection moldings around the fireplaces had to be restored, since the plaster on the ceilings had to be replaced, seventy five percent of the plaster on the walls is original.

To the south west of the Mansion and in keeping with its style, a frame and stone building was constructed by E. Brumbaugh and serves as the administrative headquarters for the Louise Steinman von Hess Foundation. The entire property has been beautifully landscaped with, predominately, boxwood, rhododendron, and conifers. The Mansion faces the Susquehann River, whereas the administrative building is perpendicular and closer to the river.

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As a settlement, its strong links with Philadelphia were strengthened by the Wrights. This is clearly evidenced by a large quantity of correspondence between the Wrights and their Philadelphia friends which included Benjamin Franklin, the Norrises, James Logan, Anthony Benezet, and Dr. Lloyd Zachary. Susanna, in particular, was not only a delightful and talented correspondent but was also a very skilled writer of poetry - so much so that her writings were collected and copied. The major collection of these is in the Commonplace Book of Milcah Martha Moore in the Quaker collection at Haverford College.

Susanna Wright's love of literature led her to have a rather considerable library for the place and time. This collecting of books was a very tangible means by which European literature, thought, the arts and sciences could be transplanted to the primeval soil of the new country. Research is now being done by the Foundation in order to reconstruct the contents of her library.

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1

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