

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania
COUNTY: Cumberland
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Old Courthouse, Shippensburg Civic Club

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Widow Piper's Tavern

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
SW Corner, Intersection of King and Queen Streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Shippensburg

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Ninth

STATE Pennsylvania	CODE 42	COUNTY: Cumberland	CODE 041
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Shippensburg Civic Club

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Corner of King and Queen Streets (352 East King Street)

CITY OR TOWN:  
Shippensburg

STATE:  
Pennsylvania

CODE:  
42

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Deed Book 10 V 204, Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
High and Hanover Streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Carlisle

STATE:  
Pennsylvania

CODE:  
42

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
None

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
STATE:  
CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Courthouse, a two-and-one-half story, irregular stone structure with one-story kitchen wing attached, was erected ca. 1735. The building, which served concurrently for a brief time as tavern and Cumberland County Courthouse, was probably the earliest stone building in Shippensburg, the second oldest town west of the Susquehanna River.

The house is three bays in width. Fenestration is nine-over-nine sash on all windows. The panelled front door has a three-light transom above. Both the two-and-one-half story and one-story sections have single end chimneys. The proportions of the present building are unchanged from the original, with the exception of a sunporch added to the rear at the first floor level.

On the interior, as was customary, plaster was applied directly to the stone walls. Alterations on the first floor include the removal of a partition to create a single large meeting room and the installation of modern kitchen appliances. On the second floor, a door was added at the top of the stairs to comply with safety regulations. The entire house has been refurnished with period pieces.

The county court met in a second floor room at the front of the house. To the rear of the court room is a bedroom furnished in a style appropriate to an eighteenth century tavern. Adjoining the court room is a small museum of local memorabilia and relics. Original features in the house include the chair rail in all rooms, the original panelling on the fireplace wall of the court room, and the hand rail of the stairway.

Late in the nineteenth century, the stone walls of the house were stuccoed, but by the early 1920s, this had badly deteriorated, exposing the stone masonry in various places. In 1961, the front wall of the house was noticeably bowed toward King Street. A stone mason was contracted to remove the wall, install a new foundation and rebuild the wall with its original trim. At that time, the remaining stucco was probably removed.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian,       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)      ca. 1735

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic            | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy                                       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Courthouse, or Widow Piper's Tavern, is probably the oldest stone building in the town of Shippensburg and is important for the function of public meeting place which it performed.

The building was erected ca. 1735, five years after the founding of Shippensburg. At that time, the town was little more than a collection of log dwellings--eighteen as of May, 1733. The location of the house, at the intersection of King and Queen Streets, placed it at the center of old Shippensburg. King Street was, from an earlier period, an Indian path through the Cumberland Valley and became part of the Forbes Road, built to supply British and Colonial troops in their struggle with the French in western Pennsylvania. Lucinda Piper, known in the area as the Widow Piper, purchased the building some time before 1750.

In 1750, public attention was drawn to the tavern when it became the site of the First Court of General Sessions of the Peace in newly incorporated Cumberland County. Four terms of the Court were held in the Shippensburg courthouse between July 1750 and April 1751. In 1751, responding to complaints from residents of the eastern half of the county who were reluctant to travel to Shippensburg to transact legal business, the court was removed to Carlisle, chosen by the proprietors as county seat.

The house continued to serve as a site of public meetings for a period after the courthouse was removed. Travelers through Shippensburg frequented the tavern and local residents gathered there for news of the outside world. Accomodations for more affluent travelers were found upstairs while drivers and others of more modest means laid pallets near the fireplace downstairs.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Pennsylvania	
COUNTY Cumberland	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Significance

Old Courthouse

After 1750, the house changed hands and found its primary use as a private residence. In the 1930s the Civic Club of Shippensburg received the building as a donation from a group of private citizens. The club undertook to restore and furnish the house. Today it serves as a well-known tourist attraction in the town and as a meeting place for the Civic Club.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Material from the files of the Shippensburg Civic Club.  
 Burkhart, William H., ed. The Shippensburg Story, 1730-1970. Shippensburg: The News Chronicle Company, 1970.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40° 03' 16"	77° 30' 49"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Harvey Freedenberg, Student Aide

ORGANIZATION: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission DATE: July, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: Harrisburg STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name William J. Wewer

Title Executive Director, Penna. Historical and Museum Commission

Date 10/20/73

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

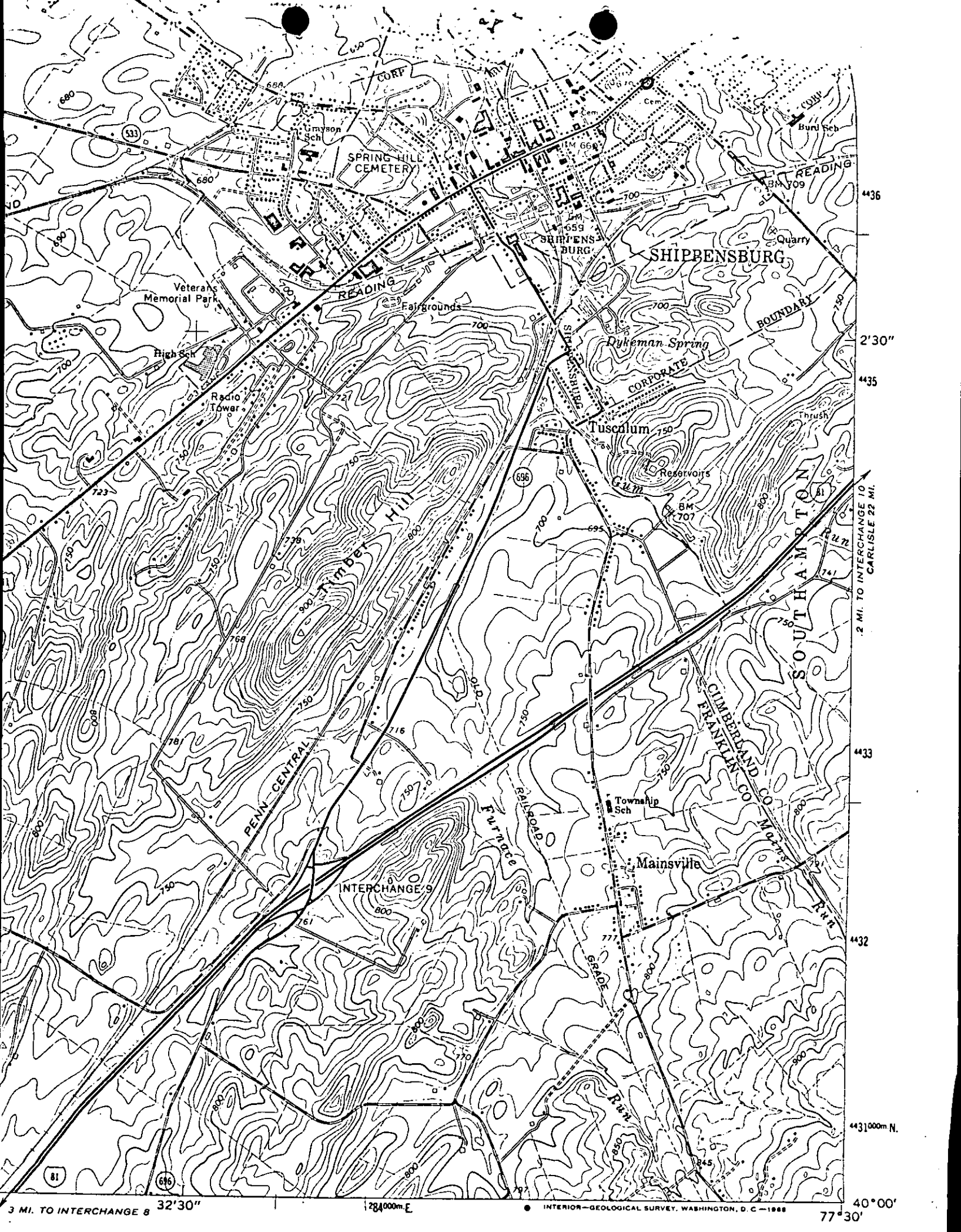
Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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3 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 8 32'30"

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INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. - 1968

77° 30'

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4435

2 MI. TO INTERCHANGE TO CARLISLE 22 MI.

4433

4432

4431000m N.

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17°30'49" - Longitude

40°03'16" - Latitude