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
MEADOWCROFT ROCKSHELTER

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
48.27 air km Pittsburgh, 4.02 surface
km Avella, North bank of Cross Creek
CITY, TOWN
Avella
STATE
Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
22nd
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CODER
42
COUNTY
Washington
CORE
045

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

X SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

BEING CONSIDERED

INDUSTRIAL

NO

MILITARY

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SCIENTIFIC

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
The Meadowcroft Foundation

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Avella

VICINITY OF

STATE
Pennsylvania
15312

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Washington County

STATE
Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Archaeological Site Number 36WH297

DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Center for Prehistoric and Historic Site Archaeology

CITY, TOWN
California

STATE
Pennsylvania
15419
**DESCRIPTION**

<table>
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<th>CONDITION</th>
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<td><em>EXEMPLARY</em></td>
<td><em>UNALTERED</em></td>
<td><em>ORIGINAL SITE</em></td>
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<td><em>GOOD</em></td>
<td><em>ALTERED</em></td>
<td><em>MOVED</em></td>
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<td><em>FAIR</em></td>
<td><em>EXPOSED</em></td>
<td><em>DATE</em></td>
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DESCRIPT THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

**General Setting - Location and General Geology**

Meadowcroft Rockshelter (36WH297) is a stratified, multi-component site located 48.27 air kilometers (78.84 km via road) southwest of Pittsburgh and 4.02 surface kilometers northwest of Avella in Washington County, Pennsylvania. The site is situated on the north bank of Cross Creek, a small tributary of the Ohio which lies some 12.16 km to the west. The exact location of the site is 40°01'12" N, 80°29'0" W (USGS Avella, Pennsylvania 7.5' Quadrangle).

Meadowcroft Rockshelter is oriented roughly east-west with a southern exposure and stands some 15.06m above Cross Creek and 244.92m above sea level. The area protected by the extent overhang is ca. 65m2 while the overhang itself is some 13m above the modern surface of the site. In addition to the water potentially available form Cross Creek, springs are abundant in the immediate vicinity of the shelter. The prevailing wind is west to east across the mouth of the shelter providing almost continuous ventilation and ready egress for smoke and insects.

Geologically, Meadowcroft is located in the unglaciated portion of the Appalachian or Allegheny Plateau, west of the valley and ridge province of the Appalachian Mountains, and northwest of the Appalachian Basin. The surface rocks of this region are layered sedimentary rocks of Middle to Upper Pennsylvanian Age (Casselman Formation). The predominant lithologies are shale, quartz, sandstone, limestone, and coal in decreasing order of abundance. Deformation is very mild with a regional dip of 30° to 50° to the southeast.

Physiographically, the region within which Meadowcroft is located is maturely dissected. More than 50 o/o of the area is in valley slopes with upland and valley bottom areas in the minority. The stream pattern is dendritic with drainage running northwest to westward toward the West Virginia-Ohio border and the Ohio River. Present topography was probably generated during the Pleistocene when increased precipitation and runoff caused extensive downcutting. Since the Wisconsin Glacial boundary only extends southward to northern Beaver County (some 40 odd km north), the Cross Creek Valley and Meadowcroft Rockshelter probably existed in nearly their present configuration well before the close of the Wisconsin, ca. 11,000 B.P.

Geology of Site - Meadowcroft Rockshelter is formed beneath a cliff of Morgantown-Connellsville sandstone; the Morgantown-Connellsville is a thick fluvial or channel sandstone within the Casselman Formation (Upper Conemaugh) of the Pennsylvania Period. This sandstone varies from a sub-graywacke to protoquartzite in composition. It is an immature sandstone composed predominantly of quartz grains with minor amounts of mica, feldspar, and rock fragments.
The rock unit immediately underlying the Morgantown-Connellsville sandstone was not observed in the field but is undoubtedly a less resistant lithology, most probably a shale. Thus, a re-entrant is formed beneath the sandstone cliff. The ceiling of this re-entrant or rockshelter is gradually migrating upward and cliff-ward as erosion occurs both on the rockshelter ceiling and the cliff face. Within the face of the shelter excavation, the recession of the drip line representing the cliff edge position, can be plainly seen. Most typically, erosion results in the dislodgement of individual sand grains. More rarely, rock fragments up to the size of a small house have fallen.

1 - Abstract, Excavations Meadowcroft Rockshelter, 1973-74, Pennsylvania Archaeology
Meadowcroft Rockshelter is a deeply stratified, multi-component site in Washington County, Pennsylvania. The 11 well-defined stratigraphic units isolated at the site span some 15,000 years of intermittent occupation by groups representing all of the major cultural stages/periods now recognized in northeastern North America. Throughout the sequence the site served as a locus for hunting, collecting, and food processing activities which involved the seasonal exploitation of the immediately adjacent Cross Creek Valley and the contiguous uplands.

Occupation and utilization of Meadowcroft was initiated circa 13,000 B.C. by a population who possessed a relatively sophisticated lithic technology which included the production of prismatic blades, unifacial scrapers, bifaces and delicately fluted knives. From these early Paleo-Indian occupations, eleven occupational strata have been identified by radiocarbon dating.

Excavation and research indicates that Meadowcroft Rockshelter was more or less continuously utilized as a center for hunting, collecting and food processing from at least the late 14th millennium B.C. to the Historic Period. As such it represents not only the oldest well-dated site in eastern North America but also one of the longest stratified occupational sequences in the northern hemisphere of the New World.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Excavations of Meadowcroft Rockshelters, 1973-74: A Progress Report
J. M. Adovasio, J. D. Gunn, J. Donahue, R. Stuckenrath, Pennsylvania

"Meadowcroft", Thomas Burns, Science Digest, March, 1976, pp. 41-45

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES
A 1.7 5143 220 45 9
ZONE EASTING NORThING
C ____________________________ ____________________________
D ____________________________ ____________________________

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Donald L. Tuttle

ORGANIZATION
Meadowcroft Village

STREET & NUMBER
TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN
Avella
STATE Pennsylvania

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
TITLE WILLIAM J. WEVER, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
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

GPO 892-453


*Clues to America's Past* by Jeffrey P. Brain, et al., The National Geographic Society, pp. 2237, 48, 56, 57, 58, 59.

Description of incident involving John Mark Scott, Jr., professor of Russian Language and Literature, Washington & Jefferson College, Washington, PA and tour guide in Leningrad, Russia

News Release from University of Pittsburgh, Department of News and Publications, "Pitt's Meadowcroft Dig Yields Earliest Eastern Corn/Project Receives Additional National Geographic Grant; Earlier Report of Recovery of Extinct Animal Found In Error", dated May 19, 1977

Article from Science News of the Week, Vol. 106, "Ice Age people in eastern America", dated August 10, 1974

Front page article from the August 5, 1974 edition of *The Washington Post*, "Ice Age Man Trod Pa. Area"

Topographical Map of Meadowcroft Rockshelter, 36WH297

"The Avella Discovery", Columbia Today, 1975

Site Location Map of Meadowcroft Rockshelter, 36WH297

"Archeologists Finding Ancient Man Evidence", article from June 20, 1976 edition of *Greensburg Tribune Review*

"Inside/Outside" by Lee Gutkind, *Pittsburgh Magazine*, March 1977


March, 1976 edition of Science Digest
April, 1976 edition of Pennsylvania Game News
September, 1975 edition of the Pennsylvania Archaeologist