

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

29

 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

HISTORIC

RIVERSIDE HOTEL

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1 Fountain Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge Springs

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

24th

STATE

Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF

CODE

42

COUNTY

Crawford

CODE

039

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

 DISTRICT  
 BUILDING(S)  
 STRUCTURE  
 SITE  
 OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC  
 PRIVATE  
 BOTH  
 PUBLIC ACQUISITION  
 IN PROCESS  
 BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

 OCCUPIED  
 UNOCCUPIED  
 WORK IN PROGRESS  
 ACCESSIBLE  
 YES: RESTRICTED  
 YES: UNRESTRICTED  
 NO

## PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE  
 COMMERCIAL  
 EDUCATIONAL  
 ENTERTAINMENT  
 GOVERNMENT  
 INDUSTRIAL  
 MILITARY  
 MUSEUM  
 PARK  
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 RELIGIOUS  
 SCIENTIFIC  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 OTHER:
**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Riverside Enterprises, Inc.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1 Fountain Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge Springs

STATE

Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Crawford County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Diamond Park

CITY, TOWN

Meadville

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

4/10/78

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical &amp; 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

Situated on French Creek, the Riverside Hotel is a three-story building of wood - frame construction, consisting of a number of rectangular sections. The gabled roof is shingled and in good condition. Large, plain brackets support the wide overhanging eaves. The frieze is constructed of vertical clapboard. The main and north-western wings of the hotel are finished in horizontal clapboard.

Fenestration throughout the hotel is irregular. While all the windows have plain frames the lights vary from two over two sash to one pane pivoted. Located at the outside corner of the main and north-western wings is a three story, hipped roof tower. Verandas supported by bracketed poles line the western side of the main and northwestern wings.

The southeastern side of the hotel, the Casino, is a two and one-half story gable roof structure constructed in the shingle style.

The interior of the hotel is dominated by a gracious lobby. In the center of the lobby is the grand staircase. Located in the north-west corner of the lobby is the original reception desk. The dining room, adjoining the lobby on the north, is furnished with a hardwood floor and wainscoating; a unique feature in the dining room is a 42 foot, curved, leaded cut glass window. There is a large Second-Empire style fireplace in the main hallway extending east from the lobby.

Directly north of the hotel is a large gable roofed, board and batten barn. This barn has two large inset gables, a pent roof at the first floor level and two cupolas. Another major feature of the resort grounds is a long, elevated boardwalk some 2000 feet long that leads to the mineral spring house. The present mineral spring house is a one story stuccoed building with classical details and twelve over twelve light windows. This fifty feet by thirty feet building was constructed in 1940 and is the third spring house on the site.

Also located on the property is a three story frame water tower. This hipped roof tower has hooded rectangular openings on each story.

# 18 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 checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1888

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1888, the Riverside Hotel was the first health resort hotel built in Cambridge Springs Borough. It is significant to Crawford County in the following ways:

Commercially - It exemplifies the mineral water craze which swept the country during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was the first hotel built in the county designed to provide the full range of services necessary to "Taking the cure."

Culturally - It is an example of the health resort hotel, a popular cultural and social phenomenon known as "the mineral springs resorts."

The mineral water spring which turned Cambridgeboro into Cambridge Springs Borough, a health resort "boom town", was discovered in 1859 by Dr. John H. Gray while looking for oil. In 1859, Colonel Edwin Drake discovered oil in nearby Titusville. In Dr. Gray's words: "While meditatively leaning on a iron probing rod I suddenly become aware that my staff was disappearing into the earth. Upon withdrawing the rod a jet of water sprang into the air." He placed a penstock into the aperture, and the water was used freely for many years by anybody and everybody without any special knowledge of its "medicinal" properties. In 1884 on examining the water at Hot Springs, Arkansas, Dr. Gray came to the conclusion that his spring contained equal curative powers. Subsequent tests of the curative powers of his spring proved, at least to his own satisfaction, that the mineral water cured dyspepsia, rheumatism, gout, constipation, malaria, nervous prostration, diabetes, catarrhal conditions of the bladder and kidneys and bilious derangements.

On August 5, 1884, Dr. Gray and other stockholders formed Gray's Mineral Fountain Company and contracted H. B. Wilbur to build a large sanitarium. The Meadville Daily Tribune of August 31, 1884 described it as "one of the finest hotel sanitariums in the state containing over 100 rooms of all sizes from 9' x 15' to 30' x 40' and heated by steam throughout with bathrooms and closets on every floor. There is to be built also a large bathhouse 30' x 50' where all kinds of treatment is to take place." Delays in construction postponed the official opening until July 1, 1888. Optimism was soon to fade as the property ran into financial problems. The Kelly Bank of Cambridge Springs held the property in receivership while a con-

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

RIVERSIDE HOTEL - Crawford County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Significance: (continued)

siderable amount of litigation ensued.

In January of 1895 William Baird, only recently retired from a very active business life, visited Cambridgeboro seeking a resort for his ailing wife. He learned that the hotel was for sale, and he bought it that same month. The Baird's thereafter moved to Crawford County and Mr. Baird thoroughly enjoyed a second career developing and managing profitably a growing mineral springs resort until his death in 1921.

The Journal of the American Medical Association in 1918 stated that "mineral waters possess no mysterious or occult virtues in the treatment of disease." Using authority embodied in the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1907 the American Medical Association brought pressure against the mineral springs resorts. This in addition to instances of poor management caused many resorts to close, particularly through the 1920's. Today there are very few left. Although the Riverside Hotel of today no longer stresses the health aspect, it is still noted for its graceful elegance, fine food, and superb golf course and is a living monument to a more leisurely and innocent period of our history.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Baird himself is of interest. A naturalized citizen, he became construction superintendent for Andrew Carnegie's Keystone Bridge Company. Later he and his brother, Andrew, formed their own company for the construction of inclines, bridges and railroads. They built the Southern Railroad and its bridges from Henderson, Kentucky to New Orleans, including the miles of tressel across Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana; and also in 1888 they built at Poughkeepsie, New York, the first bridge to span the Hudson - some 313 feet high from mean tide and considered to be an outstanding engineering achievement. Two of Baird's works are historic landmarks; The Poughkeepsie Bridge and the Kinzua Railroad Bridge in McKean County, Pennsylvania. In 1893, following the death of his brother, William sold the company and retired, though he was then only 46.

The Riverside Hotel is a fine example of 19th century resort complex architecture.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 47 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Cambridge Springs, Pa.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1,7	57,934,0	4,62,87,6,0
-----	----------	-------------

B 

1,7	57,934,0	4,62,86,2,0
-----	----------	-------------

C 

1,7	57,88,9,0	4,62,84,4,0
-----	-----------	-------------

D 

1,7	57,85,4,0	4,62,83,0,0
-----	-----------	-------------

E 

1,7	57,85,9,0	4,62,86,0,0
-----	-----------	-------------

F 

1,7	57,88,3,0	4,62,89,0,0
-----	-----------	-------------

G 

--	--	--

H 

--	--	--

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

John P. Davis

ORGANIZATION

Crawford County Planning Commission

DATE

March, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

903 Diamond Park, Crawford County Courthouse

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Meadville

STATE

Pennsylvania

## 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

*Ed Weintraub* 6-21-78

TITLE ED WEINTRAUB

DATE

State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

RIVERSIDE HOTEL - Crawford County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Bibliographical References:

Bates, Samuel P. Our County and Its People. (Chicago: W. A. Ferguson and Co., 1899), pp. 495-497.

Cambridge News, August 5, 1884.

Enterprise Publishing Company, Cambridge Springs and Vicinity (Cambridge Springs, Pa.,: The Enterprise Publishing Co., 1899), pp. 20-25.

Lederick, Edward D. Evolution of a Borough: The History of Cambridge Springs. (Cambridge Springs, Pa.,: Cambridge Springs Historical Society, Unpublished).

Wiss, Harry B., and Howard R. Kembel. They Took To The Waters: The Forgotten Mineral Springs Resorts of New Jersey and Nearby Pennsylvania and Delaware. (Trenton, N.J.: Past Times Press, 1962), pp. 213-219.

Meadville Daily Tribune, August 13, 1884.

Meadville Daily Tribune, August 27, 1884.

Meadville Daily Tribune, August 31, 1884.

Meadville Tribune Republican, January 30, 1895.

Meadville Tribune Republican, March 28, 1895.

MEADVILLE Tribune Republican, August 6, 1895.

# AREA OF RIVERSIDE INN

CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS BOROUGH &  
CAMBRIDGE TOWNSHIP  
CRAWFORD COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA  
SCALE 1" = 2000'

DR. GRAY'S MINERAL  
SPRING HOUSE

RIVERSIDE HOTEL

Cambridge Springs

CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS, P.A.  
U.S.G.S. QUAD 1968 PHOTOREVISED 1975

