

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Fort Robordeau

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
the Lead Mine Fort

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
the Sinking Valley region of Tyrone Township, approx. 1.65 mi. west

CITY OR TOWN: of Culp and approx. .375  
mi. north of township rts. 573

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
5th

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: COUNTY: Blair CODE: 073

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) none at present

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
County of Blair

STREET AND NUMBER:  
423 Allegheny Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hollidaysburg STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Register and Recorder's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
423 Allegheny Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hollidaysburg STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Fort Robordeau Site

DATE OF SURVEY: June 1973  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Register and Recorder's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
423 Allegheny Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hollidaysburg STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

STATE:

COUNTY:

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

(Check One)

CONDITION

 Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

(Check One)

 Altered     Unaltered     Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The location of the Fort is in the Sinking Valley region on the slope of Brush Mountain. The site is in an area of dense growth--trees, shrubs, weeds--recently removed by concerned citizens. Removal of the vegetation revealed a concrete foundation outlining the fort, poured between 1939-1941 for the purpose of reconstructing the site. Impetus for reconstruction was begun by concerned local agencies with National Youth Administration workers doing the physical labor. This was based upon the work of Eugene Cadzow, State Archaeologist, who uncovered the original stone and brick foundation. The only remains above ground surface were the powder magazine walls of stone and brick and a square of masonry work, probably part of a smelting plant. Reconstruction efforts were discontinued in 1941 with the advent of World War II.

Few descriptions are available on the Fort's original appearance. The Columbian Magazine (September 1788) notes the erection of "a large fort of logs." Africa (1883) mentions the log fort upon which were mounted two small cannon, possessing a good armament, and manned by a regular garrison of 10-40 men. He also makes note of a smelting furnace. A sketch appearing in The Columbian Magazine of Fort Roberdeau (December 1788) shows a wall of what appears to be horizontal logs with a gate in the center and various out-buildings outside the wall. Craine (1941) notes the accompanying wording, "a timber fort, used for the same purpose as a blockhouse, but designed to accommodate a greater number of persons. Such a structure was generally made in the shape of a hollow square with various buildings and a watchtower within showing the line of loopholes at shoulder height." Craine notes that the stockade logs were horizontal rather than the customary vertical or up-right position because of the out-cropping of limestone which made it difficult to excavate deeply enough to place the logs in a vertical position.

The Fort site presently comprises 1.978 acres. The outline of the fort itself reveals a square structure with blockhouse-type protusions on each of the four corners.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Donald P.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) c. 1777-1781

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

With the advent of the Revolutionary War, lead for the Continental Army became of great importance. Lead deposits were discovered in what was then the Sinking Spring Valley region, presently Sinking Valley, in Central Pennsylvania. General Daniel Roberdeau, a prominent Philadelphia merchant, an Associator, and a member of the Committee of Safety, was assigned the task of supervising mining operations in the area. Roberdeau, in order to house the miners of the area and to protect them from both Indians and Tories, erected the Fort in 1777-1778 near the lead deposits in what is today Blair County. Eugene Craine, citing an original Roberdeau letter, states that he probably set up some kind of fort on an initial visit during 1777 and strengthened it on a second visit in 1778 by building a stockade.

The amount of lead derived from local mines is unknown. The enterprise was apparently abandoned by 1779 due to lack of assistance and expenses involved in mining operations. However, The Columbian Magazine (September, 1788) notes that the miners were from the old country, unused to the frontier life, and that the "whole undertaking fell to the ground." The Fort nevertheless remained standing even after its abandonment by garrison troops and continued to serve as a refuge for the local settlers. Craine notes that the Fort was occupied at least through 1781.

Fort Roberdeau was one of five frontier forts <sup>in</sup> Blair County in the 1777-1778 time-period. However, the other four were built by private enterprise, of the block-house type. Fort Roberdeau, commonly known as the Lead Mine Fort, appears to have been the only fort in Blair County built and manned by soldiers of the Continental Army.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Africa, J. Simpson, History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania, "Blair County," (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883).  
 The Columbian Magazine, September and December, 1788, (Philadelphia: W. Spotswood).  
 Craine, Eugene R., The Story of Fort Roberdeau, 1777 to 1783, (Altoona: The Tourist & Publicity Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce, The City of Altoona, 1941).  
 Davis, Tarring S., ed., A History of Blair County, Pennsylvania, Vol. 1, (Harrisburg: National Historical Association, Inc., 1931).  
Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania, Vol. 1, (Clarence M. Busch, State Printer, 1896).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	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	0 . .	0 . .		40° 34' 58"	78° 16' 26"	
NE	0 . .	0 . .				
SE	0 . .	0 . .				
SW	0 . .	0 . .				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.978 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES none

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
David M. Berman, Curator, Historic Site Survey

ORGANIZATION: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission DATE: 15 Oct 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:  
William Penn Memorial Museum

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, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Date: 4/5/74

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: \_\_\_\_\_

M O U N T A I N

BELLWOOD ROAD

