

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Reading Railroad Passenger Station, Tamaqua

and or common

USE THIS COPY
FOR DUPLICATING

2. Location

street & number Off West Broad Street (Route 209) Between Railroad and Berwick Street N/A not for publication

city, town Tamaqua N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Schuylkill code 107

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Borough of Tamaqua

street & number 320 East Broad Street

city, town Tamaqua N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Schuylkill County Courthouse, Recorder of Deeds

street & number Second and Laurel Boulevard

city, town Pottsville state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A (Reading Railroad Station, HUD, December 17, 1979)
has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state N/A

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 <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Reading Railroad Station, Tamaqua is an Italianate style brick building, essentially one story with T-shaped plan, red sandstone foundation, regular fenestration, bracketed cornice low hip roof. Although the building includes an original depot section (1874) and two principal additions (1880, 1885) the station is unified in design and materials. It is located on the edge of Tamaqua's downtown business district.

The earliest section of the station consisted of a one and one-half story central pavilion (concourse) flanked symmetrically by one story three bay wings (ladies' and mens' waiting rooms). In 1880 the building was given a T-shaped plan by the addition of a one story, four bay section to the rear (west) of the concourse followed by a smaller two bay extension. (An early 1880s glass plate negative at the Tamaqua Historical Society shows the rear of the building at this phase of the development as well as a magnificent roundhouse which no longer survives). Plan dimensions for these portions of the station are approximately 80' x 22' for the original building and 60' x 22' for the rear addition.

In 1885 a freight-house section was added to the northern end of the depot extending the main elevation by five bays to a total length of 131 feet. The roof of the freight house is slightly lower than the depot and has broad projecting eaves supported on arched braces. This projecting shelter was continued along the eastern elevation of the original depot. Later the overhang at the rear of the freight-house was enclosed with wood construction creating additional office and storage space.

Stylistically the station bears hallmarks of the Italianate style of architecture including low hip roof, bracketed cornice and regular fenestration with architrave lintels and bracketed sills. When first constructed the building was a symmetrical composition. Although later additions disrupted this symmetry, the building remained unified in design through repetition of bay units and basic forms established in the original design.

Exterior walls of the original building and two additions are compartmentalized by the use of projected brick courses suggesting a high base, pilasters separating bays and frieze. Wall openings include large four over four sash windows with dip cap stone architraves and bracketed sills, and tall panelled doors with transoms.

The building has metal roofing on 70% of its roof surface and tar paper roofing covering the remaining area.

The interior of the station features hardwood floors in most sections (floor of the freight-house is concrete), wainscoting and plastered walls. Originally the station had piped gas for lighting. This was replaced by electricity but the piping is still visible. The building was originally heated by fireplaces but these were discontinued and eight original chimnies were taken down in the 1920s when the building was converted to steam heat.

A fire several years ago of suspicious origin fortunately was isolated to the area known as the men's waiting room. Destroyed were two original doors, five windows, the wainscoting and wood trim, as well as the plastered walls and ceiling. The floor is quite sturdy and intact except for a few char marks. The overhead beams and roof supports are charred and blackened but still strong, and the beams need only minor repairs at their eastern ends for reinforcement and nailing surface. Blackened were the walls and ceiling of the adjoining concourse plus some wood trim and about 8 feet of wainscoting burned. Outside the fire damaged six overhanging arches and the roof area above. These arches are still functional and strong, except for their charred appearance. A professional plasterman and wood-worker indicate no problem in restoring this damaged area to original specifications. The Tamaqua Historical Society, Inc. has been working on the Station to make it once again a showplace of the community.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1874, 1880, 1885 **Builder Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Reading Railroad Passenger Station in downtown Tamaqua played a significant role in local transportation. This station was the point of origin for passenger trains travelling from Tamaqua to cities throughout eastern Pennsylvania. It was also an important way station in the Reading Railroad system providing the meal stop-over on the line between Philadelphia and Williamsport. The Tamaqua station was one of six intermediate size stations constructed by the Reading Railroad between 1872 and 1876 (only the Tamaqua and the Topton Stations survive). Architecturally the Italianate style building depicts the functional requirements and handsome styling of small town railroad stations of the Victorian period.

The Reading Railroad built the Tamaqua station in 1874 to replace an earlier, smaller station that had burned to the ground. Construction of this station was also part of the Reading Railroad's plan to expand its holdings in the anthracite coal fields. When it built the Tamaqua Station in 1874, the Reading Railroad built a cone-shaped, large-stall engine house close to the station. The railroad company similarly spent enormous sums of money on holdings throughout the anthracite region.

The new Tamaqua Station became an important center in local transportation. One of the station's primary roles was providing local residents with a direct rail line to cities in eastern Pennsylvania. Passenger trains ran from Tamaqua to such cities as Philadelphia, Reading, Mauch Chunk, and Williamsport. Judging from the number of passenger trains leaving Tamaqua, the station handled a significant volume of passengers. In 1874 22 trains or 11 round trips originated daily from Tamaqua. At the high point of passenger traffic in 1904, passenger service from Tamaqua numbered 34 trains or 17 round trips daily.

The Tamaqua Station also played an important role on the Reading Railroad's Philadelphia to Williamsport run. As far back as 1877 the station had a restaurant to serve passengers. By 1884 the station and restaurant provided the meal stop-over for through service between Philadelphia and Williamsport. Only a few of the larger stations in eastern Pennsylvania had such restaurants. For instance, even the passenger station in Mauch Chunk, which was an important railroad transportation center in northeastern Pennsylvania, had no restaurant facilities.

The Tamaqua Station also served other important functions in local transportation. The freight-house section of the station handled shipments of goods for local residents. The freight-house was operated initially by the Reading Railroad and later by the American Express Agency and the Railway Express Agency. The station also provided a collection and shipping point for United States Post Office mail. The East Penn Traction Company opened an office in a back portion of the freight-house when it began a Lansford-Tamaqua-Pottsville trolley car run at the turn of the century. Thus the Tamaqua station played various roles in local transportation.

The station's importance in local transportation gradually declined after the turn of the century. Competition from trolleys, buses, and automobiles grew after the peak in passenger traffic in 1904. Because of this competition, the Williamsporter, which ran between Philadelphia and Williamsport, was withdrawn in 1949. The last passenger train left Tamaqua station in 1963. The railroad used the station for administrative purposes between 1963 and 1980, and then sold the station to the Borough of Tamaqua.

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Continuation sheet Reading Railroad Passenger Station number 8

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Since 1980 the station has been vacant. It has received minor maintenance and repairs but stands in need of more extensive rehabilitation or restoration.

The building rests on land which has been advertised for development; therefore its future is uncertain.

The Tamaqua Railroad Station recalls the significant role of railroads in local life and commerce. It also shows the ability of rail companies, such as the Reading, to provide distinctive and stylish facilities to handle an expanding volume of business.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hudson Coal Company. The Story of Anthracite. Scranton, PA: Coal Company
Print, 1932
Lewis, Edward A. Reading's Victorian Station. Strasburg, PA: Baggage Car Publishing, 1976
(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 1.59 Acres
Quadrangle name Tamaqua Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>450540</u>	<u>7602490</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Boundary follows a walkway from W. Broad Street, extending north 587.41 feet. Then circles the base of the mountainside west for 449.22 feet to Berwick Street following a walkway south for 244.19 feet to West Broad Street, east 116.66 feet. Boundary then goes north around the Bell Telephone property for 176.97 feet & east for 118.11 feet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Havrischak, President
organization Tamaqua Historical Society, Inc. date August 17, 1985
street & number c/o 18 West Water Street telephone (717) 645-4404
city or town Coaldale 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

title Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Reading Railroad Passenger Station, Tamaqua, Schuylkill County

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

Munsell, W.W. The History of Schuylkill County. New York, Munsell & Co.,
1881

National Railway publication Co. Traveler's Official Railway Guide.
New York, July 1874, February 1884, November 1894, January 1905,
May 1914, January 1925, July 1934, June 1944, May 1954, and
November 1964. Research books found in the Archives of the
Pennsylvania State Railroad Museum at Strasburg, Pa.

Scherer, Paul "Excerpts from Tamaqua's Past, Tamaqua, Pa., Private Print
by Author, Volume I, No. 7, 1980, Found in Tamaqua Historical
Society, Inc. Files

Interviews and Research by Consultant to the Tamaqua Historical Society, Inc.,
George Hart of Jim Thorpe, Pa. (Former Railroad Curator of The
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

Interviews and Research by Consultant to the Tamaqua Historical Society, Inc.,
John Gunsser of Jim Thorpe, Pa. (Curator and Authority on Victorian
Architecture, Asa Packer Mansion at Jim Thorpe, Pa.)

Reading RR
Schuykill Co.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hudson Coal Company. The Story of Anthracite. Scranton, PA: Coal Company Print, 1932
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10. Geographical Data

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	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

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List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries east for 118.11 feet.

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

11. Form Prepared By


name/title Michael Havrischak, President
organization Tamaqua Historical Society, Inc. date August 17, 1985
street & number c/o 18 West Water Street telephone (717) 645-4404
city or town Coaldale 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 
title Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 11/19/85

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date _____

Keeper of the National Register
date _____

Attest:
Chief of Registration
date _____

READING RAILROAD STATION,
TAMAQUA
Schuylkill County
Tamaqua Quadrangle
Zone 18
E450540 N7602490

530 000 FEET
(SOUTH)

