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34

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

UNIONVILLE (FLEMING) HISTORIC DISTRICT

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Unionville (Fleming)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

23

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

COUNTY

Centre

CODE

027

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input 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

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

--- VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Centre County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

High Street

CITY, TOWN

Bellefonte

STATE

Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

8/16/78

--- FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

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

The Unionville (Fleming) Historic District contains approximately 105 principal structures, 83 out-buildings, 2 barns, and 4 barn-related out-buildings. Among this group of buildings, 50 can be considered to have major historical significance, while 21 others must be considered intrusive to the historic character of the district. Among the intrusions, 15 are mobile homes, while only 6 are permanent buildings. Of the 6, 5 are residences built in the 1950's and 1960's and 1 is an auto repair garage, none of which detracts radically from the visual character of the older buildings. There are 3 sites within the district that once contained structures or objects of historical importance. Except for the intrusions, all other buildings within the district retain the scale, color, rhythm, style, and method of construction found in the district's major historical buildings. Two bridge structures also add to the historic character of the district.

Visually, the district retains a sense of time and place through the concentration and spacing of homes and other buildings built before World War I. In addition, a concentration of simple four-bay, vernacular Georgian style I-houses, built with the rare and unusual plank construction method, dominate the oldest part of the village and correspond closely to the buildings and streets on the 1860 map of Unionville.

Intrusions in the form of mobile homes are the most visually disturbing element to the historic appearance of the district. Since there is no zoning in the Borough, this trend could go on unabated until the district's ambiance is destroyed. This may prove to be the greatest threat to the district once a sewer system is installed.

The physical condition of buildings within the district ranges from very poor and deteriorated to extremely well maintained. Given the quality and craftsmanship in most of the residences, it would be possible to make economical repairs that would restore each building to its original condition, and adapt it to modern use. There are several examples of buildings being brought up to good repair with paint and traditional materials. In most cases this is not due to any "preservation consciousness" in the cosmopolitan sense of the term, but rather, it is due to local pride and appreciation of traditional design values. Some lack of appreciation is evident in the several homes that have been sided with asphalt or aluminum. These buildings still retain their basic integrity, however, and have the potential to be restored.

Land use within the district can be described as residential in character, interspersed with a small number of public buildings such as churches, a community center, and a few meeting halls. Only two active commercial uses remain in the district: a post office/convenience store and an automobile repair garage. These uses are both located on Union Street (U.S. 220) across from the small triangular area that serves as the village "diamond."

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Centre County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

No building in the district is over three stories in height. Most were constructed as single family residences, but several have been converted to multi-family use.

Large shade trees line most of the streets and several concrete sidewalks have been installed in the 20th century. The sidewalks lack curbing and are rough and casual in appearance, contributing to the small town atmosphere.

Houses and other buildings are spaced according to the original 60 foot lot frontages found in the original subdivision and subsequent extensions. The alleyways also contribute to the regular spacing of both the principal buildings and outbuildings.

Major open spaces in the district include areas along the two streams (Bald Eagle Creek and Dewitts Run), and along the Conrail Right of Way which traverses the village. Larger border lots contain trees and open meadow areas, which lend a rural quality and which serve to define the transformation that takes place along the edge of the district.

Streets and alleyways are generally quiet and serene. Allegheny St. (Pa 504) is lightly travelled and is more like a country road. Union St. (U.S. 220) is a major truck route and highway, and is the one major detraction from the village's quiet atmosphere.

The entire village is located in a valley setting and is bound visually on the south by Bald Eagle Ridge, and on the north by the foothills of the Allegheny Front. The district spans the entire floor of Bald eagle Valley plus a small portion of the valley formed by Dewitts Run. Bald Eagle Valley is an area of lightly populated farmland in Centre County, and contrasts sharply with even a small settlement. Old photographs indicate that this pattern has changed very little in the Unionville vicinity, the exception being that the orchard on the east side of town is no longer standing.

The removal of the grist mill and the railroad station constitute the major architectural losses of the post-war period. A church was taken down on Main Street, with its bell being preserved at the site.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Centre County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

Occasionally, old houses are torn down rather than repaired. Historical maps and postcard photographs from the early 20th century indicate that these building losses are the major difference between present day Unionville and the appearance of the village at the time of its major period of development.

The district in general is an excellent example of a village environment which retains the essential characteristics of the 19th century small town. While the industry that was responsible for the success of Unionville has long since passed from the scene, the village still "wears an air of thrift and substance ..."

The architectural significance of Unionville Historic District lies not in classic examples of architectural styles but rather in the high concentration of vernacular or folk house types and vernacular interpretations of popular national styles. The architectural development in the village can be broken down into two basic periods. The early period begins just before the founding of the village in 1848 and ends after the Civil War in 1865. This period saw the construction of many small houses with the common "I" (or two-over two) vernacular Georgian floor plans utilizing a rather rare construction method known locally as "plank." Apparently planks (rough sawn timber about two inches thick) were cheap and available locally since they were used at this time for the construction of roads. Much like log was used in the early 1800's to construct most of the buildings in places like Aaronsburg and Rebersburg in Centre County, plank proved to be the most practical material for houses in this district.

Only a few non-residential buildings can be strictly associated with this early period of settlement. These exceptions are two tavern buildings (2 and 45) and a house that appears as if it once was a mill building. (7)

The period after 1865 reflects architecturally the growing interdependence of Unionville's economy with the state and nation. The national styles of the Italianate, Greek Revival and Gothic find expression on both residences and public buildings. Except in the case of two larger residences (8 and 15), these features on houses take the form of changed proportions in openings, decorative brackets, sawn porch details and fancy lintels on ordinary "I" houses. The larger houses reflect the prosperity of local entrepreneurs and show stylistic pretension.

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UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Centre County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 4

Among the residences built before 1865, the plank houses clearly dominate, and can be best typified by the L. C. Peters House (1), the B. F. Leathers House (30), the McEwen House (9) and the Taylor House (40).

The L. C. Peters House presaged most of the other plank houses that were built in the district being four bays wide, a full two stories, and one room deep. It possesses the double doorways found in many folk houses with English roots, but in this particular case has an unusual window-door-window-door pattern. Unusual also in the large cooking fireplace on the south wall of the house that was no doubt used before the one-and-one half story kitchen wing addition was built to the rear. Simple, straightforward window detailing, door moldings and gables characterize the local builders' treatment of these houses. The construction of the walls are two vertical layers of two inch thick planks that utilize their sheer mass to support the roof and floors. Little framing is used except that necessary to support cross members. Thus the walls along with the plain horizontal lap siding are nearly five inches of solid wood. The Peters House is in excellent condition and demonstrates that the construction method, though cumbersome, is sound and durable.

Similar to the Peters House in many ways, the B. F. Leathers House is more typical of the plank houses built during the most vigorous period of development: the 1850's and early 60's. It too employs the four bay "I" (one room deep) plan and double doorways. Each door employs a very plain frame and simple four light transom. The house also has a one and one half story rear kitchen addition with side porch. The front porch may be original since it shows no sign of the Victorian woodwork so common on later porches. The house is a handsome and well preserved example of the plank type that was built by Leathers on several Unionville lots.

The T. J. Geary House (41) is another example of the four bay two story plank type. The porch must have been repaired or replaced since it has the Victorian type brackets. An upstairs window has been covered over, a common occurrence when bathrooms and closets were added. The doorway on the left has been boarded up but is still visible. Lap siding has been covered over with asphalt fake brick which no doubt required removing the lintel and sill details and moldings.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Centre County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

The McEwen House (9) on Main Street is also a plank I house but has had 19th century alterations that enhance its beauty. The porch has been removed in favor of a stoop and one of the doorways has been covered over with siding. Above the remaining door is a small roof supported by heavy decorated brackets. The decorated shingle gable ends (along with a steeper roof pitch) indicate that the house was remodeled some-time after it was built. The house next door, the Mary Thompson House (10), is very similar but retains the original roof pitch and front porch and lacks the side porch and rear additions that the McEwen House acquired at some unknown later date.

Two tavern houses built before 1865 still stand in the district, the Mason-Taylor Tavern (2) and the Peters Temperance House (45). The Mason Taylor Tavern has been altered in the 20th century for use as a multi-family apartment house. Similar to it and well preserved as a private farm residence is the Temperance House once owned by Jacob Peters. This imposing five bay structure is distinguished from the residences in town by the Greek Revival doorway and the extensive rear addition that produces an unusual roof line when seen from the front facade. The doorway is set back into the wall and is grandly framed by two large pediments that extend above the doorway and transom to a narrow entablature. The transom window is set very deep and features a delicate 18-light pattern. The door itself is framed by two smaller pediments and ten light sidelights that extend two-thirds of the way to the door sill. Contrasting the elaborate doorway, the window sills and lintels are finished in the plain molding typical of the smaller residence. The large rear addition is a full two stories and extends back from the south end wall of the main house.

One unusual house from this early period of settlement is the Isaac Hickler House (7) on a bank above the floodplain of DeWitt's Run. This house is built of brick (the only one from the pre-1865 period) and has the gable end facing the street, a most unusual feature. In addition, on its first two stories and on its third half story the central bay has door length openings. This pattern is repeated on the south wall as well. One can only assume that this building was once designed as a mill building and converted to a residential use (possibly never being used for mill purpose). The front door frame consisting of pilasters, transom, sidelights, and dentiled cornice indicates that the conversion was probably carried out before 1860 and done by a wealthy individual.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Centre County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 6

The largest house built before 1865 seems to be, fittingly, the William Underwood house. This is an unusual two and one half story, five bay I house built of plank with a sizeable two story rear addition. It has an unusual board and batten-appearance on the end wall that expresses the verticality of the plank construction. The doorway has the sidelights and transom of stylish buildings but otherwise has the rather plain details of the small plank homes in the district.

After 1865, the architecture becomes more varied in stylistic influence, materials, and size but never becomes very elaborate.

The Emerick House (27) is typical of the more ordinary houses built after 1865. This three bay design was much more popular than the four bay, two front door folk house design common to the plank houses. However, the floor plan, and the one room deep I design has the same heritage in the Georgian tradition. The elongated windows and fancy porch woodwork are clearly concessions to the Victorian styles.

Another modest yet unusual structure is the Stover House (53) on Apple Street. This house is one of the few pre-1900 brick buildings in the district and is distinguished by an unusual four bay facade with segmental arch windows, a gable end with two Romanesque arched windows, Italianate bracketing, and sawn and lathed porch decoration that features a sunburst design on a small gable that extends from the porch.

Church buildings seem to favor classical treatment in Unionville Historic District. An early example is the Union Church (4), built sometime in the late 1860's, that shows no sign of the Victorian popular in commercial and public buildings. The Methodist Church (c.1860), is fully pedimented and displays a good sized entablature and classical roof pitch. The building also has a modest steeple that is likewise pedimented at the corners.

The Smith House (15) was built by the miller who bought out William Underwood's interests in this business in the 1860's. This house is one of the few brick houses built in the town before 1900 and has an extremely large floor plan and rear wing. The building is designed in the high Victorian Italianate style with the typical stilted segmental arch lintels, heavy bracketing and quoins.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Centre County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 7

The Daniel Hall House (8) reflects the Gothic Revival made popular through the writings and designs of A.J. Downing. This influence can be best seen in the bargeboard treatment of the eaves and dormers, the truss work under the eaves and in the pointed lintel of the third floor windows.

The Benjamin Rich House (13) does not reflect any national style but is built in the more elaborate vernacular mode known as the four-over-four popular with Pennsylvania farmers in the southeast part of the state.

Public and commercial buildings in Unionville were in most cases finished in a simplified Italianate mode. The Unionville school (3) is one example. This structure is a very plain meeting hall type building with tall windows that once lit a high ceilinged room. The building was very similar to the Union Church building next to it (4) that had utilized proportions and details associated with the classical mode of design. However, the windows, doorways, and tower details and proportions show Italianate influence.

The Griest Store (5) also displays a simplified interpretation of the Italianate style so popular for commercial buildings in places like Bellefonte and other large commercial centers. The characteristic bracketing and window proportions show the influence that outside style trends had locally. The Union Grange Hall (51) is an additional example of the extremely simplified expression of national styles that took place in rural areas. Here nothing more than the lintels and the tall windows give away the structure's architectural influences.

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"/> 500-1599	<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/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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Unionville Historic District is significant as a record of American settlement history because of its integrity and visual architectural unity. The history of Unionville is evident in the various portions of the district. (see Description and Boundary Justification)

The settlement history of Unionville can be traced to its situation on a transportation node and its site in Bald Eagle Valley. This valley became an important lumbering district in the early 19th century. Lumber was to be the most important factor in the establishment of a permanent settlement in the period before the Civil War. The site along the juncture of the Bald Eagle Creek and DeWitt's Run provided the motive power for small scale industry that included a saw mill, tannery, and grist mill. The settlement history was also effected by the introduction of two successive transportation innovations: first, the Plank Road was opened in 1850 which spurred economic growth, land speculation, industrial development and immigration. Later, near the end of the Civil War years, the Tyrone and Lock Haven Railroad was completed and ushered in a new era of development. Unionville became a regional shipping point for agricultural and manufactured products.

The pattern of settlement is expressed within the district by the residences built by personalities who shaped Unionville's economic and social development and by the variety of other buildings (houses, churches, commercial) still extant. The English cultural heritage of most early settlers is apparent in the vernacular house types built by local builders. The character of the village may have something to do with the fact that this is one of only two places in Centre County that was strongly influenced by Quakers. William Underwood, a Quaker, is the most important single personality associated with the settlement.

The village was a node in the regional transportation network in the 19th century, being situated at the intersection of the "Rattlesnake Pike" and the Plank Road. Many buildings in the district can trace their existence to the locational factor of being at this intersection. Among these are tavern, school, church and store buildings. The early success of the village is strongly associated with the Plank Road movement of the 1840's.

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UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Centre County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The architectural significance of the district depends on its high concentration of vernacular or folk house types and vernacular interpretations of popular national styles. One construction method, the "plank house," is particularly well represented and is significantly related to Unionville's commercial and transportation history.

Because of its historic significance, the district is worthy of preservation as a record of the 19th century.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 120

QUADRANGLE NAME Bear Knob & Bellefonte

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 | 2,5,7 | 1,8,5 | 4,5 | 3,2 | 2,8,5

B 1,8 | 2,5,7 | 3,2,5 | 4,5 | 3,2 | 5,2,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,8 | 2,5,8 | 1,6,0 | 4,5 | 3,2 | 3,6,5

D 1,8 | 2,5,8 | 0,4,5 | 4,5 | 3,1 | 5,0,0

E | | | | |

F | | | | |

G | | | | |

H | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

William L. McLaughlin / Nancy Reade

ORGANIZATION

Historic Registration Project

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

203 North Allegheny Street

TELEPHONE

814-355-3249

CITY OR TOWN

Bellefonte

STATE

Pennsylvania

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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, Director

TITLE

Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

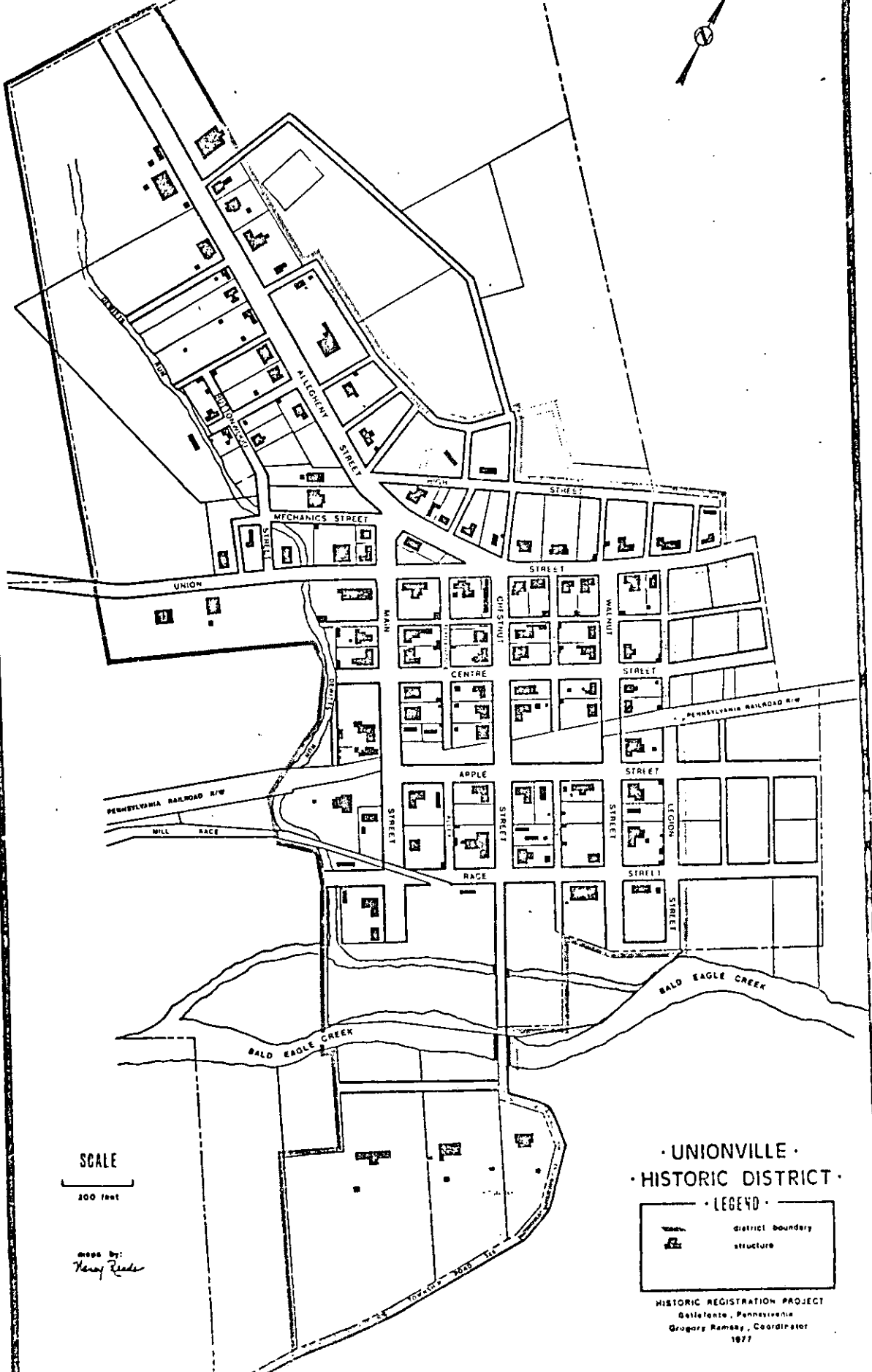
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNIONVILLE



SCALE

200 feet

made by:
Nancy Leeds

UNIONVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

LEGEND

	district boundary
	structure

HISTORIC REGISTRATION PROJECT
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Gregory Ramsey, Coordinator
1977

