

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

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 Teller Cigar Factory

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 340 North Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Sellersville N/A vicinity of

state PA code 42 county Bucks code 17

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Teller's Mill Associates

street & number Box 28 Creek Road

city, town Bedminster N/A vicinity of state PA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bucks County Administration Building

street & number Court Street

city, town Doylestown state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date N/A

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Teller Cigar Factory is situated in the Borough of Sellersville on a 21,795 square foot lot of land located along the former North Pennsylvania Railroad line between Main Street and Washington Avenue. It is a simple, vernacular, industrial building comprised of two, gable roof, rectangular, plastered, sections. The overall structure is ten bays wide and four bays deep. There is almost no exterior or interior ornamentation.

The first section of the building, erected in circa 1866 as a cigar factory, is of stone construction. In 1895 a brick addition to the factory was constructed on the northwest gable end of the stone section. Both sections are two-and-one-half stories high surmounting a partially above grade basement. The entire building is plastered. The northwest slope of the original building section retains its original slate roof. The three remaining slopes are asphalt shingle. The southwest slope is punctured by a solitary double window shed dormer. Both sections have the same roofline; however, the roof of the original section has a steeper slope than the newer section. The original section has a cladded boxed cornice with heavy returns on the gable while the newer section has simple boxed rafter ends and a collar brace on the gable end. The shallower slope of the brick addition allows for the introduction of a single, centrally located, 2/2 window on the main facade of the third story, as well as a full size 2/2 window in the gable end. The main service doors of the building are located on the southwest elevation of the original section. The second story door is original while the first story door has been replaced by a modern flexible metal door. The main entrance to the building is on the northeast facade of the newer section. It is protected by a simple shed hood. The main entrance to the original section was probably in the central bay of the northeast facade which is currently plastered over. This appears to have been done when the building was plastered at the time of construction of the newer wing.

In keeping with contemporary building tradition, the original section of the building presents a more horizontal appearance than the later addition. This appearance is due to several factors. While both sections have a five bay fenestration, the older section is the longer of the two sections. The windows of this section are slightly smaller and have 4/4 sash rather than the Victorian 2/2 windows of the brick addition. The 4/4 sash windows of the original section are encased in simple frames. Windows on the northeast and southeast facades display wooden, paneled, shutters. A second floor entrance door on the southeast gable of this section suggests the

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presence of an exterior stairway that has been removed at some unknown date. The brick section has larger 2/2 Victorian windows with elliptical window heads.

On the interior, each floor of the building is divided into two principal spaces that correspond with the building's construction in two units. Approximately 75% of the first floor of the brick addition has been partitioned into a large commercial space with a small office. The partition walls are paneled and the area has a drop ceiling. A small portion of the first floor of the original section has also been partitioned with unfinished wallboard; the remainder of the space is open with large square wooden support columns. The floor beams from the upper floor are exposed. The second floors of both sections exhibit summer beams supported by square posts. The second floor interior walls of the new section are exposed brick. All walls of the original section are plastered. The original exterior stonework of the first section is visible in the upper story of the gable end of the new section. The third floor of the new section exhibits a planked over ceiling while on the third floor of the original section all roof support timbers are visible including those of the dormer. The floors of both sections are clad with wood planks.

The Teller Cigar Factory has maintained its overall integrity. The original mass and scale of the building is unchanged. Although no surviving fabric is visible on the first floor interior of the new section, the balance of the building's interior retains its original appearance. The exterior of the building only shows minor changes. A new service door on the ground floor, a new entrance door, and new sheathing on the roof do nothing to mask the building's original function as a factory.

NPS counting purposes: The nominated property contains one contributing building.

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** c. 1866, 1895      **Builder/Architect** A.L. Clymer, builder of 1895 addition

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Teller Cigar Factory is significant for its association with Sellersville's cigar industry. Constructed in the mid 1860's, it was the first full scale cigar factory in the borough and, as such, represents the transformation of the cigar industry from that of a cottage industry to a major economic force in the upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties. The oldest cigar factory building extant in Sellersville, it served as a major employer of residents of the borough and outlying areas for over five decades. With the construction of an addition in 1895, the building gained the distinction of being the largest factory in the heyday of Sellersville's cigar making industry.

Tobacco growing and cigar making were small scale industries in upper Bucks County throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The opening of the North Pennsylvania Railroad in 1856 provided the initial impetus for the growth of the cigar making industry in the region. Railroad stop towns such as Sellersville, Perkasio, and Quakertown with their Pennsylvania German populations as a potential workforce attracted both local and Philadelphia cigar makers. By 1876, cigar making was the principal industry of both Sellersville and nearby Perkasio and one of the major industries of Quakertown, the region's largest town, as well as smaller villages such as Trumbauersville and Spinnerstown. Walter E. Baum, local historian, wrote in Two Hundred Years, a history of Sellersville published in 1938, that in Sellersville nearly every family made cigars at home, "and almost every man, woman, and child was dependent, in some way, upon the industry." The industrialization of the cigar making process, necessitated by the stringent regulations of the Revenue Law governing home production of cigars, resulted in the growth of cigar factory buildings in the 1880's and 1890's throughout upper Bucks County and the Upper Perkiomen Valley in Montgomery County. With the modernization of the cigar making process, the increased manufacturing capacity and the availability of a workforce, the industry became a major economic force in both areas. The increased demand for American-grown tobacco and tobacco products from Lancaster County that resulted from the devastation of the Cuban tobacco plantations during the Spanish American War also fostered the growth of the industry during the late 1890s.

As in other towns, the early cigar industry in Sellersville was a small scale cottage industry. Tramp cigar makers traveled from farm to farm to process the owner's small crop. Later it became common for cigar makers to open small shops in their

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Continuation sheet

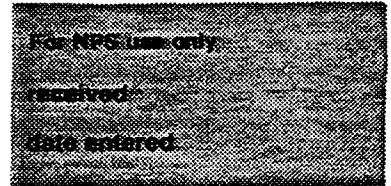
Significance

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homes. Numerous such small establishments can be found in maps and directories of Bucks County from the second half of the nineteenth century. The Teller Cigar Factory, constructed by Jessias Reller in the mid 1860's to house his cigar making operation, was Sellersville's first large factory. As such, it represents an important step in the transformation of the cigar making process in the region. Reller's operation preceded the large scale cigar making boom in Sellersville by a quarter of a century. In 1879, Reller's factory was sold at a sheriff's sale to David Haring who leased it to the Frank Teller Cigar Company. The latter became a major employer in the town and is the basis of the building's common name, "Teller Cigar Factory". In 1895, the firm employed 120 cigar makers in addition to numerous packers and other employees in a town which had a population of 794 in 1890.

In the late 1880's and throughout the 1890's, the prosperity of the cigar making industry in Sellersville, as in other areas, led to the formation of building associations and the erection of new cigar manufacturing facilities by local investors. During this period, the Progressive Real Estate Company and the Sellersville Improvement Company purchased real estate and provided capital for several Sellersville cigar factories. During the 1890's the two corporations constructed or expanded and leased cigar factories to the H.C. Nolan Cigar Company, the Otto Eisenlohr Cigar Company, and the A.R. Cressman Cigar Factory. In 1895, the Progressive Real Estate Company purchased the Teller Cigar Factory. An addition erected that year doubled the factory's capacity, making it the largest cigar factory in Sellersville at the time. With the growth in the cigar industry, the population of Sellersville increased to 1,247 by 1900. Of the workforce in that year, approximately fifty-six percent was employed in the cigar industry.

Competition and the mechanization of the cigar manufacturing process contributed to the demise of the industry in Bucks and Montgomery Counties in the 1920's. The Eisenlohr factory closed in 1923 and was soon followed by other firms. It has not yet been discovered when the Teller Cigar Factory closed. In recent years it has been used as a warehouse by a plumbing and heating supply company and a tile and floor covering company. While other cigar factory buildings survive in Sellersville, they represent either the home shop phase or the 1890's and later large scale factory phase. With its circa 1860 stone section, the Teller Cigar Factory building is the sole representative in Sellersville of the early transition from cigar shops in homes to large brick manufacturing facilities.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .5004 acre

Quadrangle name Telford, PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	8	4	7	3	4	0	0	4	4	6	7	7	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey L. Marshall: Director of Historic Programs

organization Bucks County Conservancy

date August 22, 1986

street & number 11 North Main Street

telephone (215) 345-8966

city or town Doylestown

state PA 18901

# 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

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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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Davis, W. W. H. The History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania , Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged by Warren S. Ely and John W. Jordan, Volume I (pages 443 and 448) and Volume II (pages 29 to 33). Lewis Publishing Co., New York, 1905.

Doylestown Democrat Newspaper August 12, 1979.

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Scheerz, Greer "Tobacco and Its Culture In Bucks County", Bucks County Historical Society Journal, Volume V (pages 612-615), Published by the Society, 1926.

\_\_\_\_\_. 100th Anniversary of the Incorporation of Sellersville, 1874- 1974, Perkasie Herald News, Perkasie, PA, 1974 (no page numbers).

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E. P. Noll Atlas of Bucks County, Pennsylvania (Sellersville map) 1891.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point in the west right of way of the North Pennsylvania Railroad, being the corner of lands of Sellersville Borough and 154.62 feet north of a corner of the railroad right of way; thence along the lands of Sellersville Borough, North 39 degrees 37 minutes West 105.85 feet to a corner; thence South 50 degrees 23 minutes West 30 feet to a corner in the north side of a 20 foot wide alley; thence along the same North 39 degrees 37 minutes West 33.62 feet to an angle in the alley; thence along the north side of the alley and parallel with the center line of Washington Avenue North 50 degrees 45 minutes West 56 feet to a corner of lands of Wm. M. Hill; thence along the same the next three courses and distances, North 45 degrees 09 minutes East 130.02 feet to a corner; thence South 48 degrees 20 minutes East 39.50 feet to a corner; thence North 56 degrees East 60 feet to a corner in the line of lands now or late the Sellersville National Bank; thence along the same and across the driveway leading from this property to old Main Street South 48 degrees 20 minutes East 29.60 feet to a point in the west right of way line of the North Pennsylvania Railroad; thence by same South 11 degrees 29 minutes West 158.70 feet to a corner in the line of the railroad; thence still along the same South 07 degrees 44 minutes West 47.98 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated property are based on the current property boundaries. These boundaries were established in 1945 when the property was subdivided by the Progressive Real Estate Company. The boundaries contain the nominated building and the remaining historically associated land.



Teller Cigar Factory  
Bucks County  
Zone 18  
Telford Quadrangle  
E473400 N4467760

TELFORD QUADRANGLE  
PENNSYLVANIA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5864 1 NW  
(BEDMINSTE)

