

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kurtz, T. M., House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 312 West Mahoning Street not for publication n/a
city, town Punxsutawney vicinity n/a
state Pennsylvania code PA county Jefferson code 065 zip code 15767

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>one</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Dr. Brent Glass, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other: (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic—single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic—hotel**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals—Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls brickroof asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The T. M. Kurtz House is a 1904 Colonial Revival dwelling, three stories in height, and executed in brick. All features of the house exude a rather grand appearance, from the broad veranda and bow-front bays on the exterior to the stair hall and array of art glass inside. Basically L-shaped in plan, the Kurtz House has been little changed since the time of its construction, and rivals any property in the county for its unaltered character and high degree of architectural integrity. The resource is located in a neighborhood originally characterized by substantial detached middle and upper class homes, approximately two blocks from Punxsutawney's central business district. The area has changed greatly, and most of these former showplaces have been modified for apartment or office uses. The nominated property contains one contributing building.

This is a substantial and extremely well preserved property, set on a stone foundation and capped with a hipped roof. The bricks for the residence are "Bradford reds," produced in the brick plants at Bradford, Pennsylvania. They are laid with buttered joints and are trimmed in slate and limestone. The most highly articulated elevation is the 3-bay facade, which fronts directly onto Mahoning Street. The main entry is centered on the facade and extends about four feet away from the main portion of the house. The entry is distinguished by an imposing semi-elliptical arched opening with a transom and sidelights of art glass, all set within paneled jambs and trimmed with side pilasters of wood. A full veranda extends across the facade and is supported by Tuscan wood columns set in pairs and in threes. A delicate wood balustrade adds a lacy character to this feature of the property; originally a balustrade extended along the roofline of the veranda. Flanking either side of the doorway is a bow-front bay, three stories in height and capped with a gable roof. These bays have three flat-topped windows each on the first and second floor; those in the center have a large lower sash and an art glass transom and are flanked on either side by conventional two-over-two sash. The gable roof on each bay extends well beyond the plane of the bays themselves. In the pediment of each gable is set an elliptical window with tracery. Except for the elliptical windows and the transom over the main door, all windows are flat-topped, capped with massive limestone lintels finished with a rock-faced profile. There are no fewer than fifty art glass windows in the Kurtz House, ranging from the rather simple upper sash of the roof dormers to the intricately-detailed leaded plate glass found in the transom and sidelights of the entryway.

The right side of the property has a porte-cochere which extends away from

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKURTZ, T.M., HOUSE
Punxsutawney, Jefferson Co., Pa.Section number 7 Page 2

the building approximately ten feet, crossing a driveway and shielding a side porch which opens into the parlor of the home. The porte-cochere is supported by Tuscan columns set on limestone piers and, like the veranda, is trimmed with dentils and modillions along the roofline. The single door which opens from the porte-cochere into the front parlor is generally unadorned; judging from this feature, it appears that guests were to enter through the front door into the grand foyer. Windows along this side are flat-topped, trimmed with stone sills and lintels.

There is a gable-roofed ell which extends from the left rear corner of the house and contains the kitchen on the first story and a servant's quarters on the second. In the angle of the ell is a one-story open porch elevated approximately four feet above grade. This back porch has a flat roof, supported by Tuscan columns and trimmed with a dentil band and simple modillions along the fascia. A single door opens from this porch into the kitchen. The windows on the ell are flat-topped, and trimmed in rock-faced stone. The roof of the ell has a single dormer, a modillioned fascia, and a rear pediment ornamented very simply compared to the principal elevation on the front. A single interior chimney rises from the rear of the ell.

The left side of the house is highlighted by a bow-front bay which rises two stories and is capped at attic level with a gable roof. On the first story, this bay opens into the dining room and contains three double-hung windows, each with art glass upper sash and plate glass lower sash. On the second story, this element is part of a bedroom and has but two plain glass windows. The attic level portion of this bay consists of a wood frame gable, trimmed with stylized sunburst ornament and having a pair of diamond-pane casement windows in the pediment. The bow-front bay is the chief decorative feature of the left side of the house. There is a trio of single-hung art glass windows along this side opening into the left front parlor. The windows in the kitchen and in the servants' bedrooms above are of simple design and are not remarkable.

The main roof and that of the ell are pierced by three tall chimneys of paneled brick, original and unaltered. Breaking the main roofline are three dormers: gable dormers on the two side slopes of the roof, and a well-articulated five-sided dormer on the facade. A wood cornice extends around all sides of the house. It is trimmed with dentil bands, modillions, consoles, and bent wood (in the case of the bow-front bays)—every element crafted with an obvious painstaking attention to detail.

Like the exterior, the interior of the Kurtz House was designed to reflect the finest in residential design of the era. The main entry is through a vestibule richly ornamented with art glass, which leads into a broad central foyer. The foyer is dominated by an open double-run stair with slender balusters, substantial handrails, and large newel posts with finials. There is paneled oak wainscoting throughout the stair hall. On the first floor, the two front parlors are entered from either side of the stair hall through archways trimmed with

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKURTZ, T. M., HOUSE
Punxsutawney, Jefferson Co., Pa.Section number 7 Page 3

Tuscan columns set in antis atop knee walls. The interior features natural woodwork as well as hardwood parquet floors, resulting in a subdued polychrome effect throughout. Some ceilings are trimmed with simple crown moulding. Several downstairs ceilings originally had borders of moulded plaster; only one remains with this decoration. The principal rooms downstairs include the two parlors, the library, and the diningroom, all with original fireplaces highlighted by wood mantles with tile fronts. These major spaces are trimmed in naturally-finished hard woods such as golden oak and burlled beech. The diningroom, located behind the left front parlor, is the most ornate room in the house and has a beamed ceiling studded with original incandescent light fixtures, paneled wainscot, and an art glass china cupboard. Behind the right front parlor is the library. As noted above, the craftsmanship of the mouldings and the parquetry are reflected through the prisms of more than fifty art glass windows, upstairs and down. There is also a kitchen downstairs as well as a half bath and several closets.

The second story is designed around a similar plan as is the first, except that Kurtz family's bedrooms and bath replace the parlors, the diningroom, and the library, while secondary bedrooms and baths are over the kitchen at the rear of the house. At the top of the stairs is a generous alcove situated over the main entry, containing a window seat lit by natural light through three art glass windows. There are five bedrooms, most of which retain their natural wood trim; very little woodwork has been painted anywhere in this house. There are two full baths on the second story, one of which still is ornamented with a long tile wainscot and retains the original tub and pedestal sink.

The present condition of the Kurtz House is testimony to the fact the dwelling was constructed using only the very finest materials and the most up-to-date construction techniques of the early twentieth century. It was designed and built with running water, bathrooms, and electricity, and thus has not required the sort of unsympathetic alterations which arise from the advance of technology. It has undergone no substantive changes and retains essentially the same character and flavor of the decade in which it was built. The principal alterations which have occurred are the removal of the balustrades from the veranda and the porte-cochere and the loss of moulded plasterwork on several downstairs ceilings.

3. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
architecture
commerce
politics/government

Period of Significance
1904-19 38

Significant Dates
1904

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
Kurtz, Theodore M.

Architect/Builder
Park, H. C., architect
Harl, McKean, builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The T. M. Kurtz House is nominated for its association with a prominent local businessman and politician and as an outstanding local example of the Colonial Revival style of architecture. Important as the work of a noted regional architect, H. C. Park, the resource stands also as the product of a local master builder, McKean Harl, and is one of Punxsutawney's most faithfully preserved large-scale turn-of-the-century residences.

Historically, the house is significant for its association with Hon. T. M. Kurtz, a figure of considerable political importance in the county for well over twenty years. Born in rural Jefferson County in 1868, Theodore M. Kurtz spent his early years on the family farm. At the age of twenty-one he moved into Punxsutawney, the largest community in the county, and associated himself with T. C. Zeitler in the flour and feed business. Not content to live the life of a miller, he found an enterprise which would afford him additional time in the public eye. Kurtz and W. O. Smith purchased the local newspaper, the Punxsutawney "Spirit", in 1892, when Kurtz was but twenty-four. By the time Kurtz and Smith entered partnership, the latter was already in his third term in the State Legislature; undoubtedly Smith's influence on his young protege had an effect on Kurtz' later political aspirations.

In 1897 Kurtz disposed of his interest in the newspaper, and began the business of purchasing and operating coal-producing properties. He entered partnership with his brother-in-law, Samuel A. Rinn, the area's largest coal producer. The firm of Kurtz and Rinn became leaders in the production of coal in

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Pioneer History of Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, W. J. McKnight (Chicago, L. H. Beers, 1917), pp. 627-629.

"Ridgway Record," October 21, 1920, p. 1.

"Ridgway Advocate," August 19, 1900, p. 4.

Souvenir Centennial Program (Ridgway, Pennsylvania, 1924), n. p.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

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6	7	0	6	4	0
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4	5	3	4	2	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point 550 feet west of the northwest corner of the intersection of West Mahoning Street and Rt. 119 on the north line of West Mahoning Street; then west 69 feet to a point; then north 154 feet to the south side of Cranberry Alley; then east along Cranberry Alley 53 feet to a point; then 154 feet south to the place of beginning. Containing only that lot upon which the resource sits.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundary reflects the legally recorded boundary lines for the single lot upon which the resource sits. The boundary contains the nominated building and all historically associated land.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Taylor date March 29, 1988

organization _____ telephone 814-849-5321

street & number 9 Walnut Street state PA zip code 15825

city or town Brookville

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKURTZ, T. M., HOUSE
Punxsutawney, Jefferson Co., Pa.Section number 8 Page 2

this region, extracting in the neighborhood of 3,000 tons per day--in an age long predating the highly mechanized mining of natural resources. From the time he turned twenty-one, Kurtz had become immersed in Republican politics in Jefferson County. Before reaching thirty, he was elected burgess (corresponding roughly to the position of mayor) of the borough of Punxsutawney. Soon thereafter he became the chairman of the Republican Party of the county, a position which he held for four successive terms, and in 1898 he was elected a delegate to the Republican state convention.

As his business interests and political aspirations grew, he apparently saw the need for a more fitting residence from which to operate, and in 1904 erected his elegant Mahoning Street home. Four years after completing the new dwelling and as a young man of not yet forty-one, Kurtz stood for election to his first time for state office, and was chosen to represent the 37th District in the Pennsylvania Senate. He ran successfully again in 1912 and completed his Senate service, as one biographer noted, "with eight years of efficient legislative service to his credit" [McKnight, p. 82].

Kurtz was the first Punxsutawney resident to be elected to the State Senate and only the second Jefferson County Senator to serve more than one term in the upper house since the creation of the 37th District in 1857. Of all the major industrialists in Punxsutawney during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--including figures such as B. M. Clark of the Rochester & Pittsburgh Coal Co., Daniel H. Clark of the Punxsutawney Street Passenger Railway Co., and the other principal of Kurtz and Rinn, Kurtz's brother-in-law, Samuel Rinn--T. M. Kurtz alone rose to this level of political success. He remained active in local politics all his life, although after his second Senate term he dealt predominantly in coal and lumber operations. He lived in his Mahoning Street residence for forty-one years, and died there in 1945.

Architecturally, Henry C. Park selected the Colonial Revival mode, a style relatively new to rural northwestern Pennsylvania, for coalman Kurtz. In doing so he created what remains one of the finest period homes in the county. Even during its construction, it was recognized as something out of the ordinary. The Punxsutawney "Spirit" hailed the dwelling as, "the most modern conception of the Colonial style of architecture," suggesting that the design of the Kurtz residence was a significant departure from the architectural norm of the community. The near-complete survey of Jefferson County architectural resources demonstrates that the Colonial Revival style was not often employed in the design of local residences during this period. Brookville, the county seat, has a wealth of Victorian residential architecture but a dearth of buildings in the Colonial mode. Brockway and Reynoldsville, the county's other two larger boroughs, are essentially Victorian communities as well. Punxsutawney, on the other hand, was the most industrialized community in Jefferson County by the turn of the century; it follows that popular contemporary styles such as the Colonial Revival would appear in this town. In the very early 1900s, Mahoning Street became the most fashionable address in town and many community leaders erected substantial homes

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKURTZ, T. M., HOUSE
Punxsutawney, Jefferson Co., Pa.Section number 8 Page 3

along this thoroughfare. For the most part these new residences were built in the Colonial Revival style, but none rivaled the Kurtz House in appointments and none rivals the Kurtz House today in its state of preservation and unimpaired character and integrity. Other homes of similar style include the following: 300 West Mahoning, a yellow brick residential structure vaguely Georgian in character, but without the high degree of high-style ornament and with a seriously altered veranda; 306 West Mahoning, a brick structure painted white, with round dormers and some Palladian influences evident, but which also has non-original shutters added and has been converted for office use; and 308 West Mahoning, a yellow brick with a double-pitch roof harkening somewhat to the Dutch Colonial mode. This last example is generally unaltered on the exterior but has been converted for apartment use. All of these are roughly comparable to the Kurtz House in scale, massing, date of construction, and architectural style, but all have been compromised to a degree through change in usage or by physical alteration. The Kurtz House alone stands as an important link in the now-fragile chain of grand residences nestled along this once-affluent street and is this community's finest and least altered example of the Colonial Revival style.

The property conveys much of the sense of the Colonial Revival, including its formal and symmetrical arrangement, complete with the striking bow-front bays, its attenuated columns and baluster design, the use of delicate oval windows at several points, and the semi-elliptical form of the main entryway. As noted in the description, the interior is also significant for its unaltered character including the lavish woodwork, parquetry, and the overall feeling of master craftsmanship including no less than fifty art glass windows.

Finally, the T. M. Kurtz House represents the work of a prominent regional architect. At about the same time that Theodore Kurtz began his rise to prominence, there came to Punxsutawney a young architect, Henry C. Park. Born in Waverly, New York in 1849, Park arrived in neighboring Clearfield County, Pennsylvania as a young man. According to a brief note in an 1891 DuBois, Pennsylvania, newspaper, he began his career as an architect in Punxsutawney in 1891. He remained in Jefferson County for only three years, settling in Ridgway, the seat of Elk County, in 1894. He became the resident architect for the Hyde-Murphy Company, a phenomenal Ridgway millwork producer and building contractor. Hyde-Murphy had been established ten years before Park came to Ridgway, under the ownership of Walter Murphy and J. S. Hyde. The firm became noted manufacturers of all manner of building material, including trimwork, mantles, stairs, grillwork, and art glass. The more than fifty specimens of art glass in the Kurtz House were likely the work of architect Parks' associates at Hyde-Murphy. As their architect, Park was at the center of a frenzy of activity throughout this part of Pennsylvania, while his own practice flourished and his reputation spread. In 1900 the Ridgway "Advocate" reported that Park was well known as, "a noted and busy architect." He designed the Jefferson County Home, the Ridgway High School, and the Elk County Hospital (all built by Hyde-Murphy), as well as the Jones House, (a Clarion, Pennsylvania, hotel), the Blaisdell residence in St. Mary's, the F. Hohne residence in DuBois, the Ridgway Country Club, the Jefferson County Exposition Hall in Brookville (1915), the Brookville Methodist Episcopal Parsonage (1903), and Punxsutawney's 1905 Jefferson Theatre (N. R.,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

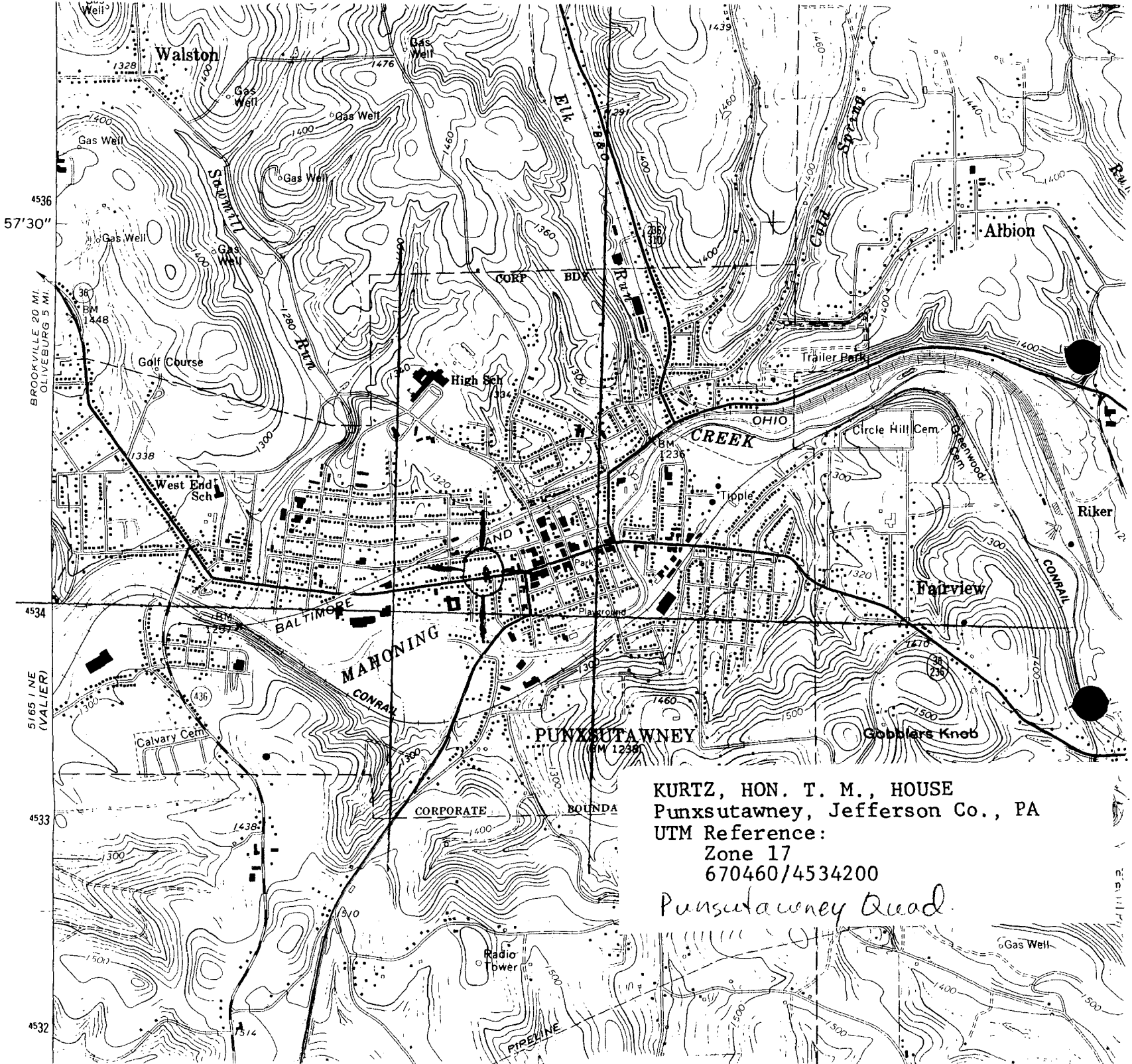
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

KURTZ, T. M., HOUSE
Punxsutawney, Jefferson Co., Pa.

Section number 8 Page 4

5/1/85). No building inventory has ever been compiled for H. C. Park; however, when he died in 1920, he was eulogized as the architect of "beautiful homes." The Kurtz House is surely one of the finest.

Kurtz chose as his builder McKean Harl, widely respected for the high quality of his workmanship in and around Punxsutawney. Harl was a local planing mill owner-contractor who erected numerous commercial buildings as well as private residences and churches in the area. Among other contemporary works by Harl are the aforementioned Jefferson Theatre (also from Park's designs), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Punxsutawney and Reynoldsville's Methodist Church, both of 1904.



KURTZ, HON. T. M., HOUSE
Punxsutawney, Jefferson Co., PA
UTM Reference:
Zone 17
670460/4534200
Punxsutawney Quad.