

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ridgway Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Refer to Continuation Sheet not for publication N/A

city or town Ridgway vicinity N/A

state Pennsylvania code PA county Elk code 047 zip code 16701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brent A. Dlab 9/4/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)		Category of Property (Check only one box)		Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously-listed resources in the count)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private	<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district	726	73	buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public-State	<input type="checkbox"/>	site			sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/>	structure	1		structures
		<input type="checkbox"/>	object	2		objects
				729	73	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
one

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/business
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/hotel
RELIGION/church
EDUCATION/library
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
SOCIAL/meeting hall
DEFENSE/arms storage
GOVERNMENT/court house
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
RELIGION/church-related residence
LANDSCAPE/park
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/business
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
RELIGION/church
EDUCATION/library
DEFENSE/arms storage
SOCIAL/meeting hall
GOVERNMENT/city hall
RELIGION/church-related residence
LANDSCAPE/park
GOVERNMENT/court house
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate
LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque Revival
LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival
LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Classical Revival
MID-19th CENTURY/Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
 foundation STONE/sandstone; BRICK
 walls BRICK; STONE; WOOD/weatherboard
 roof ASPHALT; SLATE; CERAMIC TILE; METAL
 other METAL; TERRA COTTA

Refer to Continuation Sheet

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Refer to Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
INDUSTRY
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

c. 1850-1952

Significant Dates

1881

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Criteria Considerations

Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

- Hyde-Murphy & Co., builders
Johnson, Charles F., builder
Marston, J. P., architect and builder
Minor, W. H., builder
Newburg, S. A., builder
Park, H. C., architect
Van Etten, M. V., builder
Wetmore, James A., architect
Johnson W. W., architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other state agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 252 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	689540	4588220	4	17	690660	4587200
2	17	690280	4588400	5	17	689080	4587120
3	17	690840	4587200	6	17	689080	4587340

N/A See continuation sheet.**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title David L. Taylor, Principalorganization Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc.date December, 2001street & number 9 Walnut Streettelephone 814-849-4900city or town Brookvillestate PA zip code 15825**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____

telephone _____

city or town _____

state _____

zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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2. Location, continued

Street & Number: Roughly bounded by the Borough line on the south, Hyde Avenue Extension, East Main Street, and Sherman Avenue on the east, Erie Alley, Race Street, Main Street and Elm Street on the north, North Broad Street, State Street , and Water Street on the west.

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7. Description

Architectural Classification, continued

MID 19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

MID 19TH CENTURY/Italian Villa

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Tudor Revival

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Bungalow

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/American Foursquare

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

NO STYLE

Narrative Description

The Ridgway Historic District is a mixed-use residential/commercial/institutional historic district of 252 acres which encompasses the traditional core of the downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods within the Borough of Ridgway, the county seat of Elk County, which is located in north-central Pennsylvania. The Ridgway Historic District contains a total of 802 unlisted resources and one property previously listed in the National Register (the Ridgway Armory, NR 1989; Resource No. 218); this property appears on the district map and within the Resource Inventory which accompany the nomination, but it is not included in the tabulation which appears in Section 5. Of the 802 counted resources, 729 (91 %) contribute to the character of the district and 73 (9%) are non-contributing. Most non-contributing resources are buildings erected following the c. 1850-1952 Period of Significance of the district; the extent of alteration of several properties has resulted in a loss of historic architectural integrity and their resulting treatment as non-contributing resources. Of the 802 unlisted resources in the district, 799 are buildings, two (both Civil War-era cannons installed on the Court House lawn in the 1890s [Resource Nos. 209 and 210]) are contributing objects, and one bridge (Resource No.793) is a contributing structure. Approximately twenty percent of the resources in the district pre-date 1890, approximately seventy-five percent of the resources were constructed between 1890 and 1930, and the remaining approximately five percent post-date 1930. In addition to the domestic and commercial architecture of the district, the institutional growth and maturity of the

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community is represented by several large churches, schools, and secular institutional buildings. One railroad station, the Pennsylvania Railroad Passenger Depot of 1907 (Resource No. 794) represents the transportation-related growth of the district and of the community. The architecture of the Ridgway Historic District varies from modest vernacular residences¹ and commercial buildings to spacious and highly detailed homes and business blocks, and a diverse collection of churches, governmental buildings, and schools. The presence of numerous strong examples of period styling are found throughout the district in its domestic, commercial, and institutional architecture. Most domestic architecture is of wood, while the district's commercial and institutional architecture is executed primarily in brick; a small number of stone buildings exist in the district as well. Many of the homes retain spacious verandas and historic dependencies. Larger dependencies (carriage houses, barns, etc.) are included in the resource count, while smaller outbuildings (sheds, small automobile garages, etc.) are treated as small-scale features and are not represented in the count. Two large barns on Hyde Avenue Extension, at the south east corner of the district (Resource Nos. 776 and 777) were associated with the significant holdings of the Hyde family. The Ridgway Historic District is a concentrated district, in that, unlike many other county seats and larger communities, this district it is principally defined by resources which exist without significant development outside its perimeters. In addition to its stylistic definition, the district is defined by its topography, which includes steep valleys necessitating the later growth of the community to occur in areas removed from the district which was essentially built out by the 1930s. The district retains integrity in each of the seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Ridgway Historic District is located on either side of Main Street, which is the community's principal historic commercial thoroughfare and runs in a southwest-to-northeast direction not far from the district's northern boundary (Fig. 1, 2). The community's other historic commercial street, Broad Street, intersects Main Street and leads northward out of the district. The Elk County Court House and its attached Jail (Resource No. 208) is a dominant visual feature on a portion of Main Street between Court Street and Broad Street. A large residential neighborhood is located south of Main Street and a considerably smaller residential area lies north of the downtown.

The Ridgway Historic District is arranged in a grid of streets. Moving southward from the

¹The term, "vernacular," when used in this context, conforms to the definition which appears in Ward Bucher's **Dictionary of Building Preservation**: a building built without being designed by an architect or someone with similar formal training; often based on traditional or regional forms."

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northern boundary of the district are Race Street and Erie Alley, Allenhurst Avenue, Main, Center, South, Metoxet, Charles, Lincoln, and Cardott and East Cardott Streets. From the district's northeast boundary moving southwest are George Street, Kearsarge, Little, East, Earley, Baker, Sherman, Sheridan, McClellan, and Grant Avenues, Depot, Spring Garden, and South Broad Streets, Cook, Court, Jackson, South Mill, Grove, Euclid, Vine, Elk, Emmett, and Johnson Avenues, Spruce Street, and Monterey, Vernon, and Irving Avenues. Most alleys in the district are unnamed; Long Alley is an exception. In addition to the traditional street names (Main, Broad, Mill, etc.) within the district, several streets were named for early settlers in the community.²

All streets in the district are paved. Some historic brick sidewalks are extant and enhance the overall historic character of the district. Sidewalks are found on both sides of most streets and parking is permitted in nearly all areas of the district. Street lighting employs modern cobra-head fixtures powered by overhead lines throughout the district and traffic signals are found in the downtown.

In the central business district portion of the Ridgway Historic District, most buildings occupy their entire lots, with no front or side lot setbacks. Some commercial properties have paved parking areas along the rear of their lots. Institutional buildings, including the Court House, Post Office, and several churches and schools, typically have setbacks on all sides and may include lawns, planting areas, or paved parking. Landscaping throughout the district includes residential lawns both large and small, many streets with mature shade trees, and ornamental street trees planted along Main Street.

Among the significant natural features of the district are Elk Creek, which forms a portion of the district's northern boundary, and Gallagher Creek, which is largely culvertized in the district and empties into Elk Creek near the foot of North Mill Avenue. The Clarion River--very small in scale in Ridgway compared to its eventual size farther south--lies immediately outside the district on the west. One bridge (Resource No.793) is found in the district; it is a single span masonry structure which carries North Broad Street across Elk Creek, immediately south of the Pennsylvania Railroad Depot,

²Horace Little, the town surveyor, named several of the streets, including Kearsarge, referring to a mountain near his own original home in Boscawen County, New Hampshire and Little Street, which he named in his own honor; Earley Avenue honors Dr. Charles Earley, a pioneer doctor and school superintendent, and Spring Garden Street leads from Jacob Ridgway's private spring which was the community's first public water supply.

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at the northeast corner of the district.

The buildings in the district are of a conventional rectilinear form; some churches and private residences exhibit rounded bays. Frontages of the individual buildings range upward from approximately twenty feet. The commercial buildings are generally flat-roofed or have shed roofs which slope gently from front to back. Some historic chimneys have been retained, but most have been removed in the course of retrofitting heating systems and replacing roofs. Most of the buildings in the district rest on substantial foundations of ashlar sandstone; a smaller proportion of foundations are of brick. Rock-faced and smooth-dressed concrete block and structural tile were employed for the foundations of some buildings built after the beginning of the twentieth century. Most residential buildings in the district are gabled-, pyramidal-, hipped-, and gambrel-roofed; the few French Second Empire-style buildings in the district exhibit the Mansard roof which is characteristic of the style. Institutional architecture employs flat, shed, hipped, and gabled roofs, and in the case of the Court House (Resource No. 208), a Mansard roof. Due to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century character of much of the district, most buildings are punctuated by tall and narrow patterns of fenestration. Art glass, both religious and secular, is found throughout the district; many examples of this decorative feature were produced locally by the Hyde-Murphy Company, whose significance is described in detail in Section 8. Art glass includes both lavish and modest residential examples, prism-glass transoms on commercial buildings, and religious art glass in the district's several churches.

The architectural styles represented in the Ridgway Historic District include most of the design modes popular during the district's long Period of Significance. The vast majority of the community's vernacular settlement architecture was replaced by significantly more substantial architecture as the community matured. The district's earliest extant buildings date from the second quarter of the nineteenth century and are Greek Revival and Italianate in style; these were followed by buildings built in the French Second Empire, Gothic, and Late Gothic Revival, Italian Villa, Romanesque Revival, Neo-Classical and Colonial Revival styles. The former Opera House/Strand Theater (209 Main Street; Resource No. 167) incorporates an Art Deco-style marquee, likely installed when the hall was converted for use as a movie house. Many buildings in the district are derived from no formal architectural style, but rather reflect the vernacular building traditions of this community throughout the Period of Significance. These vernacular buildings contribute significantly to the broad-based architectural character of the district as a whole.

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The Greek Revival style is represented in the buildings at 429 and 417 East Main Street, (Resource Nos. 152 and 159), and at 21 and 129 East Avenue, 125 South broad Street and 15 South Mill Street (Resource Nos. 293, 302, 304, and 647, respectively). Italianate-style domestic architecture is seen in the house at 304 Metoxet Street and at 339 and 108 Center Street (Resource Nos. 46, 234, and 266, respectively). The Italian Villa style is seen in the c. 1865 Jerome Powell House (Resource No. 84) at 330 South Street. Romanesque Revival-style buildings in the district include the First Presbyterian Church (Resource No. 258), while the Gothic Revival style appears in the design of the Swedish Evangelical Bethlehem Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Grace Episcopal Church, and the Christian Missionary Alliance Church (Resource Nos. 94, 85, 231, 247, and 649, respectively). Gothic Revival-style domestic architecture is seen in the modest home at 449 East Main Street (Resource No. 144).

Italianate commercial design appears throughout the commercial area of the Ridgway Historic District (Fig. 3). Examples include 325, 331, 249, 239-241 Main Street, and the Grand Central Block at 245 Main Street (Resource Nos. 165, 164, 169, 172, and 172, respectively).

The French Second Empire style is represented in the district in the homes at 101 and 314 South Street (Resource Nos 119 and 88, respectively), in the Elk County Court House (Resource No. 208), and in the Mercer Bros. Commercial building at 207 Main Street (Resource No. 178).

The Queen Anne style is not common in the Ridgway Historic District; Queen Anne-era art glass, however, is evident in homes which incorporate multi-light colored glass windows which are typical of this late nineteenth-century design mode. Queen Anne-style design appears in the homes at 130 Center Street, 306 Little Street, 239 Spring Garden Street, 220 Cook Avenue, and 254 Euclid Avenue (Resource Nos. 254, 438, 456, 463, and 529, respectively). The Neo-Classical Revival style is represented by the homes at 506 Hyde Street, 310 and 307 Metoxet Street, 431 Hyde Street, 210 South Street, and the U. S. Post Office (Resource Nos. 10, 39, 40, 74, 106, and 251, respectively).

Colonial Revival-style architecture in the district includes the home on Hyde Street Extension known as "Rough & Ready," (Resource No. 1), 545 Hyde Street (Resource No. 3), 522 Hyde Street (Resource No. 6), 113 and 115 Metoxet Street (Resource Nos. 57 and 55), one of the Hyde barns (Resource No. 777) on Hyde Avenue Extension, and the Pennsylvania Railroad Station on North Broad Street (Resource No. 794).

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The Dutch Colonial Revival, with its characteristic gambrel roof, appears in the homes at 429 Hyde Street (Resource No. 75), 108 South Street (Resource No. 117), 220 Center Street (Resource No. 245), and 428 and 342 Allenhurst Avenue, 313 Jackson Avenue, 227 Irving Avenue and 56 East Cardott Street (Resource Nos. 313, 329, 482, 621, and 770, respectively).

Tudor Revival domestic architecture was popular in the district during the second and third decades of the twentieth century. In the Ridgway district, this style appears in masonry and wood and incorporates a partial exterior surface treatment executed in half-timbering. Tudor Revival-style homes in the Ridgway Historic District include the properties at 528, 515, and 500 Hyde Street (Resource Nos. 2, 8, and 11, respectively).

The ubiquitous American Foursquare, essentially square in plan and usually incorporating a dormered pyramidal or hipped roof and a hipped-roof front porch, is found on nearly every residential street in the district. Foursquares in the district appear both in masonry and in wood and in some cases employ a first story of masonry and a second story of wood. Representative examples of this style include the properties at 313 and 123 Center Street, 222 Race Street, 439 Allenhurst Avenue, 28 Morgan Street, 319 Little Avenue, 315 Earley Avenue, 219 Cook Avenue and 315 Jackson Street (Resource Nos. 242, 255, 289, 307, 354, 431, 443, 464, and 484, respectively).

Bungalows became a popular middle class design between the pre-World War One years and the 1940s. One-and-one-half stories in height, Ridgway Bungalows are gable roofed with a laterally-oriented roofline and often include a large dormer on the roof and a front porch recessed beneath the slope of the main roof. Within the district, the following properties represent the Bungalow style: 511, 515, and 526 Kearsarge, 340 and 338 Metoxet Street, 300 South Street, 107 Center Street, 110 and 112 East Avenue and 216 Little Avenue (Resource Nos. 18, 20, 24, 33, 34, 93, 267, 295, 296, and 428, respectively).

Post-World War Two design includes the ranch-style house, represented in the 1949 William Blauser House at 101 East Avenue (Resource No. 308).

As noted in the introductory paragraph, the Ridgway Historic District retains historic and architectural integrity. The overall character of the district is intact and represents the community

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throughout its century-long Period of Significance. Some demolition has occurred in the business district and newer buildings, including banks and convenience stores, appear on corners which formerly contained historic commercial architecture. Alterations to buildings within the Ridgway Historic District include storefront renovations in the downtown area along with the application of non-historic siding and the installation of replacement windows in the most portions of the district. Some homes reflect the removal of historic porches. These alterations are widely dispersed throughout the district and do not detract significantly from the ability of the nominated area to reflect its appearance throughout the Period of Significance. Mitigating the effect of the loss of historic buildings is the fact that a significant level of sensitive residential and commercial rehabilitation activity has occurred throughout the district, largely spurred by the Ridgway Heritage Council, a local nonprofit preservation organization.

Viewed in its entirety, the Ridgway Historic District is an architecturally-cohesive residential and commercial area which is situated on a grid of streets in this rural north-central Pennsylvania small-town county seat. The nominated area contains seven hundred substantial historic buildings of residential, commercial, and institutional character and retains integrity.

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8. Statement of Significance

The Ridgway Historic District is significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with *industry* and *politics/government* and under Criterion C for *architecture*. With reference to Criterion A, the district contains interconnected Elk County Court House and jail, and served as the seat of county government throughout the Period of Significance of the district. Also with reference to Criterion A, the district's links to the patterns on industrial development are clearly represented in its close association with the Hyde-Murphy Company, evident in the presence in the district of the Hyde-Murphy Office Building, homes of the Hydes and Murphys, and many homes, institutional buildings, and commercial architecture erected by this prolific firm. Under Criterion C, the district's more than seven hundred fifty buildings represent the range of architectural design popular during the Period of Significance, which begins c. 1850, the approximate date of construction of the district's earliest extant buildings, and ends in 1952, corresponding both to the 50-year guideline for National Register eligibility and to the approximate date of construction of the latest of the district's historic resources. The district contains locally-distinctive examples of many of the styles of architecture popular from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. Among these are the Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, French Second Empire, Romanesque Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Late Gothic Revival, Bungalow, American Foursquare, and Art Deco styles. Along with formally-designed homes are vernacular adaptations of many of the individual design modes as well as examples of purely vernacular architecture, which, although executed without reference to formal design tenets, are nonetheless the significant manifestations of local building traditions in Elk County. With additional reference to Criterion C, the district contains the work of regionally-prominent architects and builders such as the aforementioned Hyde-Murphy Company, manufacturers of building materials and building contractors in their own right. Ridgway's significance is inextricably tied to the heritage of Hyde-Murphy, since this single firm was responsible for so much of the distinguished architecture which characterizes this community; their work is seen in entire buildings as well as porches, window sash, and exterior trim, along with a full complement of interior finishes. In addition, Hyde-Murphy's in-house architect, H. C. Park, was a leading regional designer for more than a quarter-century and is well represented in the district. The Ridgway Historic District clearly retains the integrity necessary to reflect its physical appearance during its one hundred-year Period of Significance.

In the mid-1820s, James W. Gallagher entered the area that was to become Ridgway; Gallagher

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Run, within the district, bears his name. Ridgway was platted as an unincorporated village in 1833 and was named for Philadelphia Quaker Jacob Ridgway. The elder Ridgway (1768-1843) was a New Jersey native who worked variously as a cabin boy, ship chandler, and merchant, and became a skilled a shrewd manipulator of the foreign exchange in Antwerp and Paris. He was among Philadelphia's wealthiest citizens and was regarded as being of comparable stature to Stephen Girard.³ While Jacob Ridgway's early biography is disputed by local historians, it is known that he owned in excess of 100,000 acres in McKean County and in the region which eventually became Elk County. At the time of his death, he bequeathed his Ridgway-area holdings to his son, John Jacob.

The pioneer settlement of Ridgway lay in Jefferson County until 1843 when a new county was erected from portions of Jefferson, McKean, and Clearfield Counties. The new political subdivision was christened Elk County, in recognition of the animals who frequented the area. The village of Ridgway was named the new county's seat of government. The community remained unincorporated until February 15, 1881, when it was formally organized as a borough.⁴ Elk County was long known as a major producer of lumber, oil, gas, and fire clay, and the county seat developed both as an important local political hub and as a regional manufacturing center. The historic cultural landscape of the community was dotted with large tanneries, factories producing machine tools, bedding, cigars, axes, wagons, and sleighs, a producer of railroad cars and railroad snowplows, an electric motor manufacturer, and the Hyde-Murphy Company, internationally-recognized producers of architectural millwork and art glass, and leading building contractors in their own right.

The success of the lumber industry in the region was most directly responsible for the growth of the community of Ridgway during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Writing in 1902 in the *Pittsburgh Times*, Bion H. Butler noted

³Frederick, Paul. "A Look at Charming Towns in the Forest: Ridgway." www.allegheny-online.com/towns-ridgway.html.

⁴Most of the historical information pertaining to Ridgway's settlement, growth, and development is drawn from local histories by Harry Hill [**The Story of Ridgway** (Ridgway: Ridgway Publishing Co., 1964)], Ruth W. Hill [**Random Ridgway Recollections** (n. p. 1968)], and Alice L. Wessman [**A History of Elk County, Pennsylvania** (Ridgway: Elk County Historical Society, 1982)]. Other sources are cited specifically.