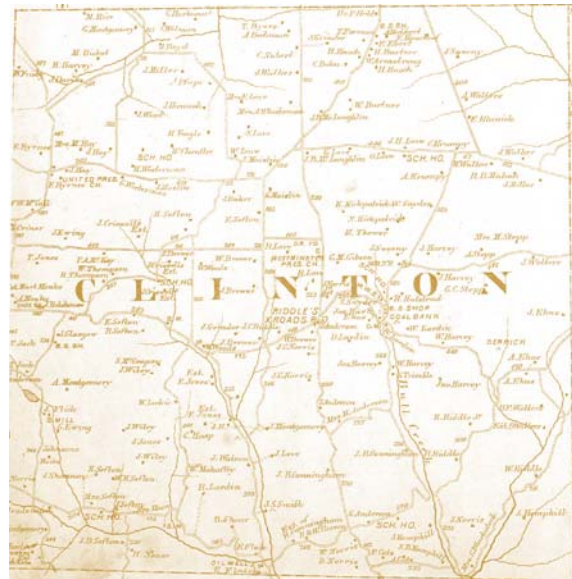


# Inventory of Historic Structures

*“Clinton contains no villages, but is a quiet, orderly, rural community, peopled by men of thrift and intelligence.”*

*“No part of Butler County has more picturesque natural beauty than Buffalo Township.”*

*1883 History of Butler County*



The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (PaMPC) recognizes the value of historic resources for aesthetic, patriotic, and educational purposes. Section 301(5) of the Code requires a plan for the “protection of natural and historic resources to the extent not preempted by federal or state laws.” Section 603(g)(2) of the Code further states that zoning ordinances must make provisions to protect historic features and resources. It is important for the plan to detail known and possible historic resources for this reason.

As the PaMPC alludes, there are instances of federal and state pre-emption. In accord with the Historic District Act of 1966, and reflected in other federal law, each state appoints a State Historic Preservation Officer, and that officer maintains National Register of Historic Places files for that state. The National Register of Historic Places serves as the nation’s principle historic preservation planning tool by identifying and maintaining information on historic resources. Properties that are listed on the register, or eligible for listing, receive protection from adverse impacts if federal funds are involved. For example, if a highway project was routed through a historic structure, mitigation might involve either relocating the project or a photographic documentation or measured drawings before demolition of a building. Because such mitigation can be costly, a major purpose of the register is to facilitate location of resources for planning purposes. For this reason, records are generally kept by the State Historic Preservation office of structures listed on the Register, and those eligible for listing. Nationwide, there are about seventy-three thousand (73,000) listed properties. There are an unknown number of eligible properties, but in Butler County there are forty-four (44) known, but eligible listings with only nine (9) formal listings. Clinton Township has one (1) known eligible property - the Ivywood Stations of the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad (which burned after eligibility determination). The original Buffalo Elementary School is the only known eligible property in Buffalo Township. There are likely more.

To understand potential eligibility, it can be helpful to understand what constitutes eligibility for listing on the National Register. Qualifications for the National Register are based upon significance to national, state or local history. Properties may be sites (like a battlefield, or prehistoric village), buildings (such as a home, barn or commercial building), structures (like a bridge or oil derrick), and occasionally, objects (like a ship or bell). Significance can be based on architectural merit, the fact a great event happened there, or broad association with the past. It is normally more difficult to justify the significance of cemeteries, churches, structures that have been moved, buildings that have been substantially altered on the exterior, or buildings less than fifty (50) years old.

It is possible that the two Townships could have a wealth of resources related to their history and development. These can be divided into three (3) broad periods: Native American occupation (12,000 - 20,000 years ago to about 1790); Settlement and Early Development (1790 to 1860); Oil Boom, Industrial Revolution (1860-1950). There are possibly eligible properties from each period in both Townships.

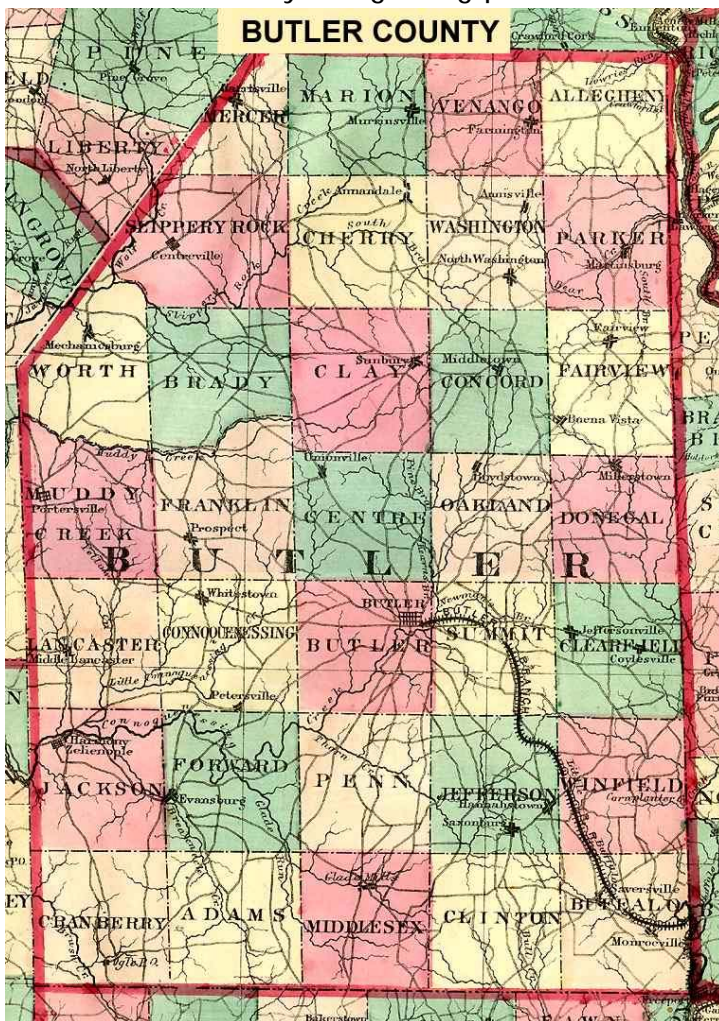
While archeological sites can be found anywhere, certain environmental conditions make some areas more archeologically sensitive than others. Particularly sensitive areas include steep slope areas with rock outcroppings, rock shelters, or caves which could serve as shelter. Floodplains with a large enough shelf for agricultural activity are also common sites. Areas where different environments converge, such as the confluence of two (2) streams, or where a stream enters a wetland can also be sensitive. Upland areas away from water tend to be less sensitive.

Settlement of the area by European Americans began in the 1790s. According to early County histories, 1792 is the year credited with initial settlement. The first actual settler in what is now Clinton Township is credited as Patrick Harvey in 1794. Settlement of Buffalo Township is credited to George Bell in 1795. Perhaps the most notable event of this early period was the capture and escape of Massy Harbison by Indians in 1792. Massy was a young mother whose husband had some

prominence as a scout and Indian fighter. Her captors led her through what is now Buffalo Township (after killing two of her children). She escaped near the present site of the Morgan II Management Building on Route 422).

Her escape was a protracted ordeal as she trudged barefoot through the wilderness of what is now the Butler area to the present location of Fox Chapel, PA. Her ordeal has been described in a number of publications over the years, most recently Escape authored by a Buffalo Township resident. Overall, while there are sites remaining where significant events may have happened, there are few extent buildings. Few pre-1840 structures remain in Butler County.

Political organization did begin at the same time as initial settlement. The County was organized as an independent unit of local government in 1800. The southeastern boundary's beginning point was described as "A locust tree on the south



side of Buffalo Creek: Thence along the Allegheny County line." Initially, the entire County was divided into only four (4) Townships: Buffalo in the southeast, Middlesex in the southwest (including part of the present boundary of Clinton Township), Connoquenessing Township, and Slippery Rock. Jurisdictional divides were changes as population grew and citizens petitioned the court to create a new Township. Finally, in 1854, a commission was created to address the number of Townships on a Countywide basis. The plan



recommended creating thirty-three (33) nearly square Townships, from which Clinton Township was created. Two (2) years later, a proposal was raised in the Pennsylvania Legislature to detach Clinton and Buffalo Townships and form them with parts of Armstrong and Westmoreland Counties into a new County to be called Madison.



*Original Buffalo Township Elementary School*

The settlement pattern of Buffalo and Clinton Townships was fairly typical of Western Pennsylvania. Most residents lived on farms of 60-300 acres in size. About every 5-10 miles, a small village was established with basic services of milling, blacksmithing, a church, or a store. By 1874,

Buffalo Township had two such villages, Monroeville in the south and Sarversville in the north. Ekastown was a village near the border of both communities. Clinton Township had small hamlet-like settlements, called Lardintown, Flick, and Riddles' Crossroads. Many of these survive as road names. Possible significant structures from this period might include farmhouses and outbuildings of architectural significance.

The oil boom and industrialization changed Butler County significantly, including rural areas such as Clinton and Buffalo Townships.

Railroad service became available in both communities in the mid-to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. After the Civil War, the scale of coal mining expanded from a part-time activity by farmers to large mines employing many workers. Some of these early industrial resources may have historic significance. In spite of a rich history, very few historic resources have been documented in Clinton or Buffalo Township. Across Butler County, there are three (3) National Register Districts (in Butler City, Harmony

Borough, and Saxonburg Borough), forty-four (44) individual properties eligible for National Register listing, and nine (9) formally listed. Of these, each Township has one (1) eligible property. In Buffalo Township the former Buffalo Township Elementary School at 500 Sarver Road, was determined eligible on November 15, 2000. The



*Memorial in Front of School*

Ivywood Station of the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad was determined to be eligible for the National Register on January 27, 1998. However, this structure has since been destroyed, though it still appears on the Pennsylvania National Register of Historic places database. This lack of eligible properties does not necessarily mean a lack of potential resources, as the foregoing history should prove. Parts of historic resources surveys in parts of neighboring Townships (Middlesex and Adams) have yielded 4-67 eligible properties per community. The lack of known resources is more likely indicative of the lack of a formal survey.

The Guidebook to Historic Western Pennsylvania, by Helena Smith and George Swetnam, (Pittsburgh, 1991) also lists some significant properties in Butler County. It makes a reference to Todd Sanctuary for not just natural significance as an early sanctuary founded by a prominent conservationist, E.E. Clyde Todd in 1942.

In summary, there are few identified resources. There are likely a wealth of archeological sites, particularly in the Buffalo Creek watershed. It is also possible a number of farm structures of local architectural and historic significance are present, including barns, farmhouses, and outbuildings. With an understanding of the resources, it is easy to understand possible threats.

It would appear that in Buffalo and Clinton Townships the most

archeologically sensitive areas may be the least developable as well. Many major developments have located in upland areas away from streams. However, residential development could be a threat to older farm structures, which are routinely demolished in the course of development. The Township could encourage the preservation of sound, historic farm structures through local zoning and subdivision and land development regulations. Some communities have created “adaptive reuse codes” which allow more options within a district for the reuse of historic structures, over new construction. Others allow adaptive reuse of historic structures within Planned Residential Developments. For example, a historic barn might be retrofitted as a retail store or restaurant. A few municipalities have required special approval processes for the demolition of structures. The two (2) Townships could thus amend their regulatory structure to either encourage or require consideration of historic structures in the development process. This will be discussed in the context of Plan Implementation.