

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Venango	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Pithole City

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
off Route 227 near LR 60049

CITY OR TOWN:  
Cornplanter Township

STATE Pennsylvania	CODE 42	COUNTY: Venango	CODE 121
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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 (Specify) _____ _____
			Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
administered by Penna. Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: Harrisburg      STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Venango County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Franklin      STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 1972       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: Harrisburg      STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
ENTRY NUMBER	
DATE	

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

 Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

(Check One)

 Altered     Unaltered     Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

## PAST:

Pithole City, when plotted in May of 1865, had five-hundred building lots and twenty-two streets. The major streets of the city were Holmden, running north and south, and First, which ran east and west and intersected Holmden. As the population increased many wooden structures were quickly built to accommodate the influx. Nearly all the structures were of wood which proved a hazard when a series of fires broke out later in the year.

At its height there were two banks, two telegraph offices, a daily paper, a water works, fire company, two churches, many boarding houses, grocery stores, hardware stores, machine shops, saloons, and brothels.

## PRESENT:

Today Pithole City is a series of streets, cellar holes, and guide markers describing the features of the former community. It is located on a slope above the Pithole Creek north of Plumer and about ten miles southeast of Titusville.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1865-1870

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pithole City was a short-lived oil boom town with 10,000 or more inhabitants at its pinnacle. It sprang to life overnight in the Pennsylvania oil country, six years after the oil rush had begun. On January 7, 1865 I. N. Frazier and James Faulkner drilled the Frazier well on the Holmden farm on Pithole Creek. This well became the most productive one in this section. Soon another productive well, the Homestead, began producing.

Excitement ran high for this was a new oil field, unforeseen, several miles in the wilderness, and it looked promising. People flocked to the area in crowds. The Civil War had just ended and many men sought employment.

In May of 1865 five-hundred building lots and twenty-two streets were laid out on <sup>the</sup> slopes above the Pithole Creek. As more wells were sunk and the people flocked in, the town began to fill up with quickly built wooden structures.

Pithole City's greatest claim to fame is the oil pipeline, the first of its kind, which Samuel Van Syckel built five and a half miles to the closest railroad. The pipeline could carry oil much more cheaply than the teamsters could.

The decline and eventual end for the boom town came about almost as rapidly as its rise. Trouble appeared as early as August, 1865 when the Homestead well suddenly stopped flowing and had to be pumped. A series of diastrous fires swept through the oil fields during the next months and gutted many of the town's buildings. In November the Frazier well played out. In January, 1866 production declined sharply. And so it went. Operators, speculators, businessmen, and others began to depart and by the end of the year the great delusion had been lived out. By 1870 only a handful of people remained in Pithole City.

In 1955 interest in the site was renewed. The overgrown plot was cleared and guideposts set up for visitors. Pithole City is now owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a landmark in the history of the development of Pennsylvania industry.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Drake Well Park," Pennsylvania Trail of History.  
 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	41°	31'	16"	79°	35'	24"	°	'	"
NE	41°	31'	16"	79°	35'	05"	°	'	"
SE	41°	31'	08"	79°	35'	05"	°	'	"
SW	41°	31'	08"	79°	35'	24"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 84.729

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

ORGANIZATION

Penna. Historical and Museum Commission

DATE

Feb. 24, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:

Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN:

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name

[Signature]  
 State Liaison Officer

Title Deputy Executive Director

Pa. Historical and Museum Commission

Date

4/17/72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

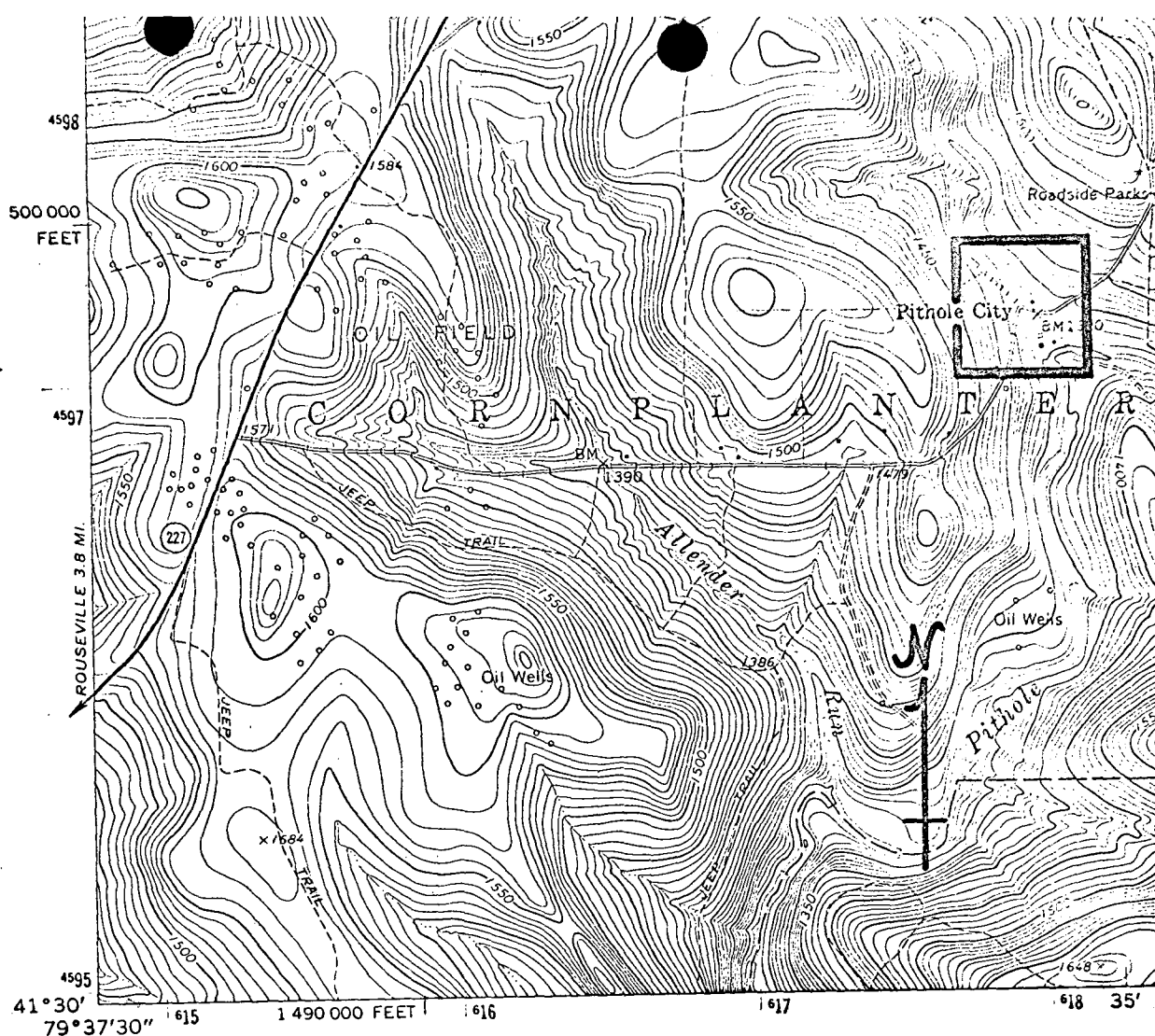
ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

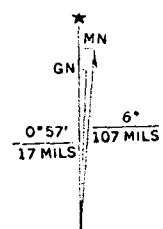
SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Pithole City  
Venango County  
Pennsylvania



(OIL CITY)  
5066 / NW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, north zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 17, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Only selected wells shown in oil fields. Numerous wells omitted



UTM GRID AND 1967 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Pleasantville, Pennsylvania  
SE/4 Titusville 15' Quadrangle  
N4130 - W7930 / 7.5  
1967  
Ams 5067 II SE - Series V831

	latitude:	longitude:
NW	41° 31' 16"	79° 35' 24"
NE	41° 31' 16"	79° 35' 05"
SE	41° 31' 08"	79° 35' 05"
SW	41° 31' 08"	79° 35' 24"