

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-02)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Summit Hotel

Other Name/Site Number: Summit Inn; Mount Summit Inn

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 101 Skyline Drive, Farmington

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: North Union, South Union and Wharton Townships

Vicinity: N/A

State: PA County: Fayette Code: 051

Zip Code: 15437

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered:

Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

- Private:
- Public-Local:
- Public-State:
- Public-Federal:

Category of Property

- Building(s):
- District:
- Site:
- Structure:
- Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

- 8
- 0
- 3
- 0
- 11

Noncontributing

- 5 buildings
- 0 sites
- 1 structures
- 0 objects
- 6 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Domestic	Sub:	Hotel
	Domestic		Secondary structure
	Recreation & culture		Recreation/sports facility
	Domestic		Single dwelling
	Industry/Processing/Extraction		Water tower
	Domestic		Multiple dwelling
	Agriculture/subsistence		Animal facility
Current:	Domestic	Sub:	Hotel
	Domestic		Secondary structure
	Recreation & culture		Recreation/sports facility
	Domestic		Single dwelling
	Industry/Processing/Extraction		Water tower
	Domestic		Multiple dwelling
	Agriculture /subsistence		Storage
	Vacant/not in use		

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Craftsman/Mission

Materials:

Foundation: sandstone

Walls: wood

Roof: asphalt

Other: stucco

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B C X D

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

Areas of Significance: Commerce, Recreation, and Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1907-1954

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Significant Dates: 1907, 1923

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Keirn, J. Edward

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

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 (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: approximately 50 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	17	614660	4411600
2.	17	614660	4412310
3.	17	615000	4412310
4.	17	615000	4411600

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Mr. Clinton Piper, Preservation Consultant

Address: RR #4, Box 89A
Latrobe, Pennsylvania 15650

Telephone: 724.537.2738

Date: October 2004

Property Owner

Name: Karen and Randall Harris

Address: c/o Summit Inn
101 Skyline Drive
Farmington, PA 15437

Telephone: 724.438.8594

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The Summit Hotel complex is six miles east of Uniontown, Fayette County near the summit of Chestnut Ridge, the westernmost ridge of the Allegheny Mountains. The hotel is near U.S. Route 40's (the National Road) intersection with Laurel Caverns Road (SR 2001) to the south and Jumonville Road (SR 2021) to the north. The nomination includes 50 acres in North Union, South Union and Wharton Townships, the northernmost part of the nearly 800 acre property. It is comprised of the hotel, its support buildings and recreational facilities. The 1907 Mission and Craftsman-inspired three-story hotel building is constructed of stone and stucco clad wood framing. The central block has a parapeted gable and two square, four story hip-roofed towers. Flanking the towers are hipped roof wings extending east and west with a circa 1923 wing extending to the south. *(Photo #1)* In addition to the hotel there are five contributing buildings erected contemporaneously with the hotel: a carriage house, staff dormitory, stable/garage, and two cottages. Also on the property are three contributing structures, a circa 1923 Olympic-sized pool and a pair of circa 1907 circular steel water storage tanks. The pool has two associated contributing buildings: a circa 1923 pool house, and a circa 1923 pavilion/concession stand. Less than fifty years old is one non-contributing structure, a post 1960 set of tennis courts counted as one non-contributing resource. The property also has five non-contributing buildings consisting of two wood frame cottages near the hotel built in 1907 that were subsequently remodeled, the circa 1907 Manager's house which also has been remodeled, a single dwelling erected in 1986, and a circa 1998 house trailer located on the site of the former tennis court. The property includes minor landscape features not included in the resource count: a stone barbecue grille, a stone wall once used as a bar in the summer, both are located in a flat area southwest of the pool. On the north side of U.S. Route 40 are two additional minor landscape features: a natural spring with cut stone surrounds and the site of the former gas station and office. This nomination does not include the adjoining 9-hole golf course directly south whose present appearance and layout is different than the course layout published in 1930, nor the remainder of the largely wooded acres south of the course. While the Summit Hotel complex has evolved over the years to meet traveler's changing expectations, it retains integrity and the feel of a turn-of-the-century roadside hotel, a function it continues to serve today.

The property's buildings are clustered in the northern portion of the rolling ridgetop tract flanking the U.S. Route 40 corridor. The contributing Summit Hotel building (Resource #1 on corresponding site plan) stands on a terraced site of an otherwise forested western slope of Chestnut Ridge. The building's shape follows a natural curve in the landscape with panoramic views of surrounding counties at an elevation of roughly 2500 feet. Within the hotel's curtilage on the south side of U.S. Route 40 are the former carriage house (Resource #2), cottages #1, #2, and #3 (Resources #3, #4 and #5), recreation areas including the pool (Resource #14), pool house (Resource #13), pavilion/concession stand (Resource #15) and tennis courts (Resource #16). On the hillside to the south of the hotel is the circa 1907 contributing water tank (Resource #6). On the north side of U.S. Route 40 are the Manager's House (Resource #11), a house trailer (Resource #10), staff dormitory (Resource #8), cottage #4 (Resource #9), and a stable/garage (Resource #7). North of the Manager's House, at the top of the ridge is water tank #2 (Resource #12) and a circa 1986 house built for the owner's daughter (Resource #17).

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The primary building of the complex is the hotel, its foundation and first floor constructed of Pocono sandstone quarried on the site. The upper levels of the building are wood frame finished with stucco, now covered with modern cladding materials. The building has a three-story central block measuring 105'-0" by 85'-0" with a parapeted Mission style gable roof and two flanking four story square towers with low hip roofs and wide eaves marking the center and main entrance of the hotel. A 105'-0" long western wing extends at an angle of approximately 35 degrees back from the central block and a 153'-0" eastern wing extends back 25 degrees (*Photos #2 & #3*). The building is roughly 85'-0" deep. A three story rectangular wing measuring 40'-0" by 52'-0" was added to the south of the central block circa 1923; it matches the detailing of the main building. The hotel's fenestration pattern consists of symmetrically-placed openings. Of particular note are the original, arched double hung sash windows located on the top level of the two square towers.

Distinctive to the hotel is the 15'-0" deep porch extending across the building's primary facade and following the outline of the eastern and western wings. The porch has Pocono sandstone piers topped with simple paired or grouped wood columns. Decorative wood railings extend between the stone porch piers. The narrow board interior ceiling of the porch remains intact. (*Photo #8*) A circa 1960 porte-cochere also built on stone piers, extends from the central block over the entrance driveway with the roof of the porte-cochere serving as an observation area. Steps from the porte-cochere lead to the front door, which consists of a single glazed door with sidelights (*Photo #9*). Portions of the porch have been enclosed to expand the floorspace of the first floor public rooms including the present Wunder Bar and the Thomas Edison Dining Room. The Thomas Edison Dining Room originally was a smaller space used as an open-air dining pavilion before the eastern portion of the porch was enclosed after 1963.

According to photographs, the addition to the third level of the hotel's east and west wings was completed after 1964, when the present owner's family purchased the property. This addition created a third floor on the northern side of the building fronting the views, and it gives the appearance that the towers have been truncated. The hotel's complex roof is comprised of several hip roofs with shed dormers located on the east, west and south elevations clad with asphalt shingles. The building has two Pocono sandstone chimneys, one on the western square tower and a second on the rear of the eastern wing.

Inside, the 94-room hotel has an expansive central lobby measuring 50'-0" by 55'-0" with access to the first floor guest rooms to the west and the public rooms and service facilities to the east (*Photo #10 & #11*). At the rear eastern corner of the lobby is the original main desk and office. The circa 1923 south wing is directly accessible from the first landing of the main stair.

The main stair features an initial set of ten-foot wide steps to a large landing with three stained-glass windows. It divides and continues in a second shorter flight both east and west. The second flights terminate at another landing and then continue in final flights to the second floor gallery. The closed string stair features large square newel posts placed at angles and smaller square landing newel posts. It has a molded railing with a series of balusters creating a distinctive cross pattern. (*Photo #13*) An open stair to the basement level is located east of the main stair.

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The other notable details of the lobby include a 14'-0" wide cut-stone fireplace that extends to the ceiling on the eastern side of the space. It has a stone hearth and mantel shelf. (*Photo #11*) The lobby has wood columns, pilasters, and exposed beams dividing the entrance spaces from the seating spaces. Much of the hotel's first floor retains original grained cypress woodwork, stained a dark brown. The walls feature original wainscoting while the floor treatments and light fixtures are modern.

The Summit Dining Room is located in the first floor of the east wing. Similar in finish to the lobby, the room has a paneled ceiling with exposed beams supported with pilasters and columns. It has paneled wainscoting and a large cut-stone fireplace that extends to the ceiling with a stone hearth and mantel shelf. The original dining room was reduced in size after 1963 to provide a hallway and stair to the basement level. Adjacent to the Summit Dining Room is the Thomas Edison Dining Room and the service areas of the hotel including kitchens, laundry facilities, and storage (*Photo #14*) South of the Summit Dining Room is the Harvey Firestone Room, a meeting space formerly used as a sitting room.

The first floor of the western wing contains the Braddock Room, a former sitting room/lounge, a central corridor flanked with guest rooms, and adjoining bathrooms. The corridors retain original wainscoting, doors and trim (*Photo #16*). Near the end of the corridor is a secondary stairway to the upper level. The guest rooms, varying in size, retain original crown molding, wainscoting and doors. They are furnished with modern furniture and lighting. (*Photos #18-#24*) Other first floor guest rooms are located in the rear wing, just behind the lobby. The second floor has corridors opening from the gallery to the main stair to the east, west and annex or rear wing areas. The rooms are detailed in the same fashion as those on the first floor. Secondary stairways are located near the end of each corridor. The third floor has rooms only along the northern side of the building, which are detailed much like those on the first two floors.

The basement level of the hotel contains the Henry Ford Room, an additional dining or banquet room, Barron Bar, a game room and storage areas. Some original detailing remains intact in these lower level areas. After 1963, an indoor heated swimming pool was built in an excavated area under the first floor western portion of the porch. It is accessible from the basement level near the game room.

Several of the contributing outbuildings are constructed of the same sandstone used for the hotel. This includes the two story, rectangular carriage house (Resource #2) with hipped roof. Built into the hillside, the lower portion of the building has four arched open-air storage bays. (*Photo #5*) The upper level has four sets of paired double hung sash windows. It is presently used for storage.

Slightly southeast of the hotel are three circa 1907 one-story cottages (Resources #3, #4, #5) of frame construction with hip and gable roofs. Two cottages are non-contributing because they have been altered (Resources #3 and #4), but one cottage is intact and retains integrity (Resource #5). On the hillside south of the hotel is a circa 1907 functioning circular water tank #1. It is of steel construction with a conical roof and a 44,000 gallon capacity (Resource #6). To the east of the hotel is a contributing structure, the Olympic-sized pool (Resource #14) and adjacent contributing gable

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roofed pool house (Resource #13) and pavilion/concession stand (Resource #15) (*Photo #4*) Near the pool are two regulation size clay non-contributing tennis courts (counted as one non-contributing structure) (Resource #16), which are less than fifty years old.

Across U.S. Route 40 from the hotel are two more stone buildings and a frame cottage. One of the stone buildings was used a staff/servant dormitory (originally called Tumble Inn), (Resource #8) and the other was used as a stable/garage, originally containing a bowling alley for guest use. (Resource #7) (*Photos #6 & #7*). Both buildings now serve as storage facilities. The one story dormitory has a gable roof and paired double hung sash windows. The one story stable/garage has a hipped roof. The one story frame cottage #4, now vacant has a hipped roof, wood siding, and a central brick chimney (Resource #9). Also on the north side of U.S. Route 40 is a circa 1998 non-contributing house trailer located on the site of the original tennis court (Resource #10), a non-contributing circa 1907 one story house (used by the hotel manager) with a two car attached garage (Resource #11), a two story circa 1986 non-contributing house (Resource #17), and another functional circular steel circa 1907 water tank with a flat roof and a 105,000 gallon capacity (Resource #12).

The Summit Hotel complex is the only remaining rural resort hotel along the Pennsylvania portion of U.S. Route 40 retaining original support buildings, and swimming pool. It continues to serve its original function as a place for travelers to stop and experience dramatic mountain vistas along the historic U.S. Route 40 corridor. The Summit Hotel stands as an architecturally important Mission and Craftsman inspired resort hotel with its rambling profile, expansive porches and mountaintop setting intact.

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The Summit Hotel complex is significant under National Register Criterion A for commerce and recreation as an excellent example of early twentieth century commercial roadside architecture built during the National Road's period of rebirth (1901-1945).¹ The hotel is also significant under Criterion C as a distinctive example of early twentieth century Mission and Craftsman-inspired recreational resort architecture. The 1907-1954 period of significance begins with the hotel's construction and concludes in 1954, the National Register's fifty-year guide for establishing significance. Although the hotel complex has evolved over time, the changes have not diminished its integrity or ability to reflect its commercial, recreational and architectural significance.

SUMMARY HISTORY

The hotel's commanding location is one that was home to mountain retreats as early as 1850. The first establishment was composed of small clustered wood frame cabins later replaced with larger house-sized buildings on the north side of the highway opposite the present hotel building.² The Summit House, erected by Colonel Samuel Evans, was one of the large buildings, which according to historic images, was two stories with a wide porch extending across the façade.³ After its destruction by fire in early 1900, local business and social leaders saw an opportunity to replace the Summit House with a luxury hotel at one of the highest points in the mountains.⁴

In 1906, a group of regional business and social leaders seeking to build a year round mountain resort complex to serve travelers established the Summit Hotel Company with \$100,000 by Pennsylvania charter.⁵ There were 100 shares of stock in the company valued at \$1,000 per share with each of the 100 stockholders owning a share. The Summit Hotel Company acquired the Summit House site and two tracts of mainly wooded land along the summit of Chestnut Ridge to construct the hotel.⁶ The group included nine locally and regionally prominent directors: Morgan H. Bowman, Frank M. Semans, Jr., George M. Bailey, Frank Rosboro, James C. Work, Benjamin B. Howell, Robert Playford, John G. Bennett, and William W. Ramsey and twenty-one stockholders. Among the latter group were Richard B. Mellon and Henry Clay Frick.⁷

Architect J. Edward Keirn of Pittsburgh designed the hotel. His notable designs included the Mesta Machine Company buildings of circa 1899 and the demolished Phipps-Braun House of 1903, both of which were located in Pittsburgh.⁸ The building's contractor was Hugh Burchinal of Burchinal and Frankenberry with Millard Coburn as superintendent. According to local newspaper accounts,

¹ R. Ann Safley, Gerald M. Kuncio and Jerry A. Clouse, *Historic Resources of the National Road In Pennsylvania*, Multiple Property Documentation Form (June 1995), Section E Page 14.

² Denise L. Grantz, *Historic Resource Survey for Hotel Summit Inn*, 10 February 1987.

³ John K. Gates, *In Other Years: Uniontown and Southern Fayette County* (Uniontown, Pennsylvania: Photographit, 1979), 22-23.

⁴ "Summit Hotel A Fine Building," *Uniontown Daily News Standard*, 4 November 1907.

⁵ *The Summit Hotel on the Old National Pike near Uniontown* (n.p. circa 1908), 1.

⁶ "Summit Hotel A Fine Building," *Ibid.*

⁷ *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to Summit Hotel Company* (Fayette County Charter Book #3, October 1906) 442-444.

⁸ "Review of Building Operations for the Year 1907," *Uniontown Morning Herald*, 3 January 1908.

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construction began on the hotel in September of 1906 with stone quarried from the site.⁹ The hotel originally contained 66 bedrooms and 28 bathrooms and cost \$100,000.¹⁰ It opened in early 1908 as a year-round resort with the Uniontown newspaper headlines declaring it as “one of the area’s best buildings.”¹¹ The Summit Hotel Company’s own promotional materials acclaimed the hotel to be “unequaled anywhere on the National Pike between Washington City and St. Louis.”¹²

Following its initial decade of operation and several buyouts among the original stockholders and investors, the hotel and property was sold to Julia Hotchkiss of Norwalk, Connecticut in 1917, and then to Gertrude Hotchkiss Heyn.¹³ Due to the Heyns effective management and reputation of hospitality, the hotel received such notable guests as Warren Harding, Henry Ford, General Pershing, Thomas Edison, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., John Burroughs, and Vice-President Marshall. Roman and Leo Heyn were well-known as the managers. Leo Heyn was formerly a manager of the Hotel Schenley in Pittsburgh and the Evian-les-Bains, in France.¹⁴

Under the Heyn’s management the hotel continued to prosper. In 1922, newspapers reported that after June 1, the hotel was booked nearly every night indicating the need for expansion.¹⁵ In 1923, newspapers reported that \$100,000 dollars worth of upgrades made the Summit Hotel the most magnificent summer resort between St. Louis, Missouri and New York.¹⁶ These improvements included a 50-room addition with each room having a private bathroom. The architect of the addition is not known.¹⁷ Also reported for 1923 was construction of a pool.¹⁸ The Olympic-sized all-steel swimming pool by the Pittsburgh Des Moines Steel Company was built west of the hotel together with a series of cabanas, which have since been removed. Heyn also employed a gardener, George Harding.¹⁹

In the late 1930s there was a concerted effort to offer winter recreational activities. Pittsburgh Press newspaper clippings of December 10, 1939, tout the construction of a ski tow with floodlights. Other activities included sleigh rides, ski-joring (winter sport in which person wearing skis is drawn over snow or ice by horse or vehicle), cross country skiing, a toboggan run, and ice-skating. Gas rationing of the 1940s reduced overall automobile travel and especially leisure travel, resulting in a decline in hotel business. During this time the winter sports were discontinued as part of cutbacks at the hotel.

⁹ “Summit Hotel A Fine Building,” Uniontown Daily News Standard, 4 November 1907.

¹⁰ “Summit Hotel A Fine Building.”

¹¹ “Review of Building Operations.”

¹² *The Summit Hotel on the Old National Pike near Uniontown* (n.p., circa 1908), 1.

¹³ Fayette County Deed Book, Fayette County Courthouse, Main Street, Uniontown, Pennsylvania, Book 371 page 84.

¹⁴ “Now Open Your Home in the Mountains: The Summit Hotel,” The Pittsburg Sunday Leader 16 May 1920, 21.

¹⁵ “Summit Hotel to Open Tomorrow,” Uniontown Daily News Standard 11 April 1923.

¹⁶ “A Cordial Invitation,” Uniontown Daily News Standard, 10 April 1923.

¹⁷ Historic Postcard: *Aeroplane View of Summit Hotel and Surroundings, Uniontown, Pa.* Circa 1923. Collection of Clinton Piper, Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

¹⁸ “Summit is to Open on Thursday,” Uniontown Morning Herald 7 April 1923.

¹⁹ “Leo L. Heyn Claims Best Pie Baker,” Uniontown Morning Herald 11 April 1923.

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The hotel was sold in 1946 to Maxwell Abbell and Sol Rich, and it subsequently entered into a period of slow decline.²⁰ Abbell was a prominent businessman from Chicago, who owned several hotels across the country including the Travis-Stacy hotel in Trenton, New Jersey. Abbell died in 1957 and his wife Fannie sold the hotel to Eunice and Donald Shoemaker in May of 1964.²¹ Donald Shoemaker worked previously as general manager at the Bedford Springs Hotel in Bedford County before purchasing the Summit Hotel.

In an effort to effectively compete with other establishments, Shoemaker made a number of improvements including construction of a ski lodge and snow making equipment just south of the hotel to take advantage of the sloping terrain. With winter sports opportunities Shoemaker was hoping to attract winter season guests, but the lodge burned after its fifth season and was not rebuilt. Also during the Shoemaker ownership tennis courts, new bathrooms, new banquet facilities, third floor guest rooms were constructed. Shoemaker also remodeled the Summit Dining Room and installed an indoor pool.²² In 1993, Shoemaker's daughter Karen took over operation of the hotel and has continued to make improvements. Today, the Summit Hotel operates seasonally from April until November and is now popular in a region that has many tourist attractions, but few chain hotels.²³

NATIONAL ROAD SUMMARY HISTORY

Development of the National Road corridor mirrors the overall evolution of road transportation in the United States. Construction of the National Road created a crucial artery for commerce and migration between east and west. Between 1818 and 1853 the construction of inns, taverns, and bridges stimulated the founding of new towns and the growth of existing towns. The National Road declined in importance after 1860, due to increased railroad competition. The explosive growth of the number of automobiles between 1901 and 1945 helped to restore the National Road to a position of prominence in the nation's transportation system, first as part of the National Old Trails Road and soon after as U.S. Highway 40, one of the few transcontinental routes in the U.S. highway system. The towns along the National Road corridor enjoyed a reprise of their former glory as part of the new automobile culture. Initially the road served an elite clientele and gradually a more middle class clientele as automobiles became less expensive and available to a larger percentage of the population.²⁴

²⁰ Fayette County Deed Book, Fayette County Courthouse, Main Street Uniontown, Pennsylvania, Deed Book 631 p. 62.

²¹ Fayette County Deed Book, Fayette County Courthouse, Main Street Uniontown, Pennsylvania, Deed Book 991 p. 477.

²² "A Last Resort," Herald Standard 16 June 1996.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Leroy Renninger, National Park Service Staff at Fort Necessity, Fayette County, PA. Historic Context statement for Summit Hotel, May 2002.

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During the early decades of the twentieth century there was an increasing support for improved road systems. The widespread availability of the automobile triggered one of the farthest-reaching social and cultural revolutions in the country's history as business owners recognized the economic benefits to be derived from providing services to motorists. As the early road culture had spurred the development of inns, taverns, towns and livery stables, the renewed activity along U.S. 40 spawned the construction of cabin camps, motor courts and motels, truck stops, gas stations and garages, roadside diners, and hotels built to accommodate the motor tourist. The Summit Hotel is one of two remaining rural resort hotels (the other is Gorley's Lake Hotel a few miles east of Summit Hotel) constructed along the Pennsylvania section of U.S. 40 as part of the support for the boom of the individual transportation system during the early 20th century.²⁵ With the construction of the multiple lanes of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the 1940s and subsequently Interstate 70 in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the National Road once again entered a period of decline. In 1976, the National Road was designated a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. Today, the National Road serves as part of the southwestern Pennsylvania regional transportation network and tourists seeking more leisurely travel alternatives.²⁶

COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Summit Hotel stands as the only remaining resort hotel in southwestern Pennsylvania that has its setting, support buildings, and recreational features intact and in use. From the beginning the hotel's management touted it as "a new and perfectly equipped summer and winter resort on the crest of Chestnut Ridge, center of a romantic and historical region." The hotel was strategically located as a convenient overnight stop for the then primarily upper middle class and wealthy westbound carriage travelers from the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore areas. It was a middle point for those traveling westward to Columbus, Ohio and beyond. To serve business patrons, "ample telegraph and long distance telephone facilities," were available. The towers of the building were fitted as observation pavilions where guests could enjoy the mountain air and the scenic views.²⁷ Being somewhat isolated from Uniontown to the west, a staff dormitory (called Tumble Inn) was part of the complex as were staff/management cottages, a carriage house and stable barn. With the advent of the automobile, the barn was converted to a garage with gasoline pumps, but the gas pumps and office are no longer extant. Among the amenities the building boasted were: "piping for gas, heated with steam, lighted electrically with handsome fixtures. . . . telephone service to all points." It was also promoted as being constructed of stone with a stuccoed frame, and therefore nearly fireproof.²⁸

Advertising was critical to the Summit Hotel's success. Popular motor guides of the 1920s, one of the places where the hotel advertised, listed single room rates as two to four dollars and double rooms as three to seven dollars.²⁹ As automobile travel became more attainable to middle class

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Denise L. Grantz, *The National Road: A Cultural Resource Survey Somerset, Fayette, and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania* (University of Pittsburgh Graduate Thesis, 1994), p. 34.

²⁷ *The Summit Hotel on the Old National Pike*.

²⁸ "Summit Hotel A Fine Building."

²⁹ Karl Raitz, ed. *A Guide to the National Road* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 93-93.

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Americans, the hotel's clientele shifted from wealthy patrons to more middle class travelers. A marketing article of May 1920 claimed that guests "who have not slept well for ten years sleep soundly at the hotel."³⁰ The Automobile Club of Maryland's circa 1930 *Tours for Motorists* listing for the hotel included an advertisement for the hotel with or without bathrooms starting at \$2.50. Also included in the advertisement is the hotel's season of April 15 through November 15, a shift from the original owners notion of it being a year round resort. Amenities noted were the attractive lobby and verandas, excellent dining room, the honeymoon suite, and a garage. The swimming pool with cabanas was a popular attraction. The management's winter sports advertisements, led to skiing at the hotel, and management dubbing it the St. Moritz of Pennsylvania.³¹

During the Abbell/Rich ownership the hotel was marketed again as being open year round, under Sam Stewart's management. In the post World War II era, brochures touted the hotel as being "Above the clouds of Pennsylvania atop Mount Summit" implying that the hotel was a place of escape from the pressures of smoke, grime, and city life. The same brochure promotes honeymoon suites with notable furnishings from American celebrities John Gilbert, John Barrymore and Lupe Velez. These celebrity furnishings still survive in the hotel today. The honeymoon suites were available at special discounts to all members of the armed forces in uniform. Advertising also claimed "freedom from hay fever, asthma and insomnia." The hotel advertised its location as convenient to buses of the Blue Ridge Line as well as to train passengers traveling either by the B & O to Connellsville or the PRR to Uniontown. The hotel offered the Summit Station Wagon to meet trains and transport guests to the hotel at no charge. The same brochure highlights sporting opportunities including swimming, tennis, horseback riding, and hiking. Meals were available from a "woman chef and women cooks . . . as only women can." Other amenities listed include the proximity to French and Indian War attractions like Fort Necessity, Friendship Hill, Braddock's Grave and Jumonville Battlefield. The brochure highlights convention facilities. Room rates at this time were listed as singles from \$5.00 and doubles from \$8.00.³² Ten years later, in a late 1960s brochure, the hotel becomes known as the "Mount Summit Inn." Marketing during this period targeted such cities as Cleveland, Ohio, only a three and a half hour drive from the hotel.³³

Also beginning in the 1960s, the Summit Hotel became part of a region in southwestern Pennsylvania whose various recreational opportunities, natural features, historic sites, festivals, resorts, state parks, and shopping areas were collectively promoted and marketed as the Laurel Highlands, roughly a 2,000 square mile area including Pennsylvania's highest point at Mount Davis in Somerset county. The region is composed roughly of Fayette, Westmoreland, and Somerset counties and features seasonal activities such as biking, skiing, whitewater rafting, hiking, and golf. Promotion of this area continues today and includes major tourism anchors like Frank Lloyd

³⁰ Louise Landis. "Snifter of Mountain Air As Poured Out at Summit Hotel is Nature's Cure-All" The Pittsburg Sunday Leader, 30 May 1920.

³¹ Historic Postcard: *The St. Moritz of Pennsylvania*, circa 1940. Collection of Clinton Piper, Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

³² Summit Hotel Brochure circa 1950.

³³ Mount Summit Inn Brochure circa 1960.

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Wright's-Fallingwater and Kentuck Knob, Nemaquin Woodlands Resort, Fort Necessity National Battlefield, and rafting at Ohiopyle State Park. This promotion of the region is credited with being the source of the Summit Hotel's guests today.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Summit Hotel, together with its original support buildings, was built to accommodate in grand fashion the elite motor tourists then traveling the National Road. It was designed with Mission and Craftsman Arts exterior elements, a style popular in rural areas where natural materials such as native stone and heavy timbers were utilized to create a rustic feeling. Details characteristic of the style include the stone first floor, the cement upper levels consisting of parapeted central gable and flanking square towers. The building also features an expansive porch with beautiful views of the region. Inside, Mission and Craftsman features include an original massive stone fireplace, grand staircase, and original front desk. The hotel's notable design, and location along U.S. Route 40 have long made it a convenient and desirable stopping point for the automobile tourist.

The Summit Hotel is one of only two examples of a mountain resort hotel erected along the historic National Road corridor between 1901-1945, a period of rebirth spawned by the increased use of the automobile for leisure travel. The other example is Gorley's Lake Hotel a circa 1922 in Wharton Township, Fayette County, just east on U.S. Route 40 of the Summit Hotel. Both buildings share a similar design with long sprawling profiles and simple detailing. Both provided not only overnight accommodation, but also recreational and social opportunities.³⁴ Gorley's featured a huge, man-made lake. The four-story vernacular brick and frame building rests on a stone foundation and has a gabled roof with dormers. It contained 88 guest rooms, 44 bathrooms, dining room, club dining room, sandwich room, swimming pool, garage, boating and fishing opportunities. As with the Summit Hotel, Gorley's had various support buildings. The hotel rooms were smaller than those of the Summit Hotel and catered to a more middle class traveler. Gorley's was advertised in the circa 1930 Automobile Club of Maryland's *Tours for Motorists*. Room rates were comparable with a single costing \$1.50 to \$2.50. A single room with bathroom was \$2.50 to \$4.00 while a double room with bathroom was \$4.00 to \$6.00. Gorley's was purchased in 1957 by the Hutterian Brethren and converted to private use at which time the lake was drained. While the building and its support structures still stand as a landmark along U.S. Route 40, its lakeside landscape and function has changed.

Other hotels built along the National Road were in urban centers and include the White Swan Hotel of 1925 in Uniontown, Fayette County and the George Washington Hotel of 1921-1923 in Washington, Washington County. Even among this group only the Summit Hotel continues to serve its original function. Located on West Main Street in Uniontown, the U-shaped, Colonial Revival-inspired White Swan Hotel was built in 1925. The multiple story brick building, unlike the Summit Hotel and Gorley's Lake Hotel, was an urban hotel. It has subsequently been converted to an apartment building for senior citizens, so it no longer serves its original function, but its exterior appearance is intact. The ten-story George Washington Hotel at the corner of Main and Cherry streets in Washington, Washington County in also an urban hotel. With 210 rooms and private

³⁴ Denise L. Grantz, *The National Road: A Cultural Resource Survey Somerset, Fayette, and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania* (University of Pittsburgh Graduate Thesis, 1994), 110.

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bathrooms, this was the National Road's largest hotel in Pennsylvania. It was built especially to cater to motor tourists when it was completed in 1923. Like the White Swan Hotel, it is a Colonial Revival-influenced design. The lower level public spaces of the hotel are intact, as is majority of the building's exterior. The upper floor guest rooms are now apartments.

Early twentieth century resort hotels built along other historic highways in western Pennsylvania include the vernacular Mt. View Inn in Greensburg, Westmoreland County, located along the Lincoln Highway, or Route 30. As with the Summit Hotel, Mt. View Inn was constructed to serve as a stop for the ever-increasing motor tourist traffic along a major east-west corridor. Built in 1924, the three story white frame building featured large porches with views toward Chestnut Ridge to the east. Like the Summit Hotel, Mt. View featured recreational and social opportunities including a large pool. In more recent years this original pool was removed and replaced with a smaller modern pool. The property is not as expansive as the Summit Hotel. Its interior spaces are reminiscent of the Summit Hotel due to similar stone fireplaces. Mt. View Inn, like the Summit Hotel, has expanded over the years to maintain pace with the needs of modern travelers. A number of additions have been made to the original building, but it still maintains a historic feel and continues to serve the traveling public in much the same way as the Summit Hotel.

Another resort hotel, which survives with a number of support buildings, is Bedford Springs Hotel, which is older and was not built to serve road travelers. This hotel in Bedford County (National Historic Landmark, 1991) is where Donald Shoemaker got his start prior to purchasing the Summit Hotel. The building, while large and sprawling like the Summit Hotel, actually evolved over a longer period of time (between 1806-1903) and contains elements of Colonial and Greek Revival architecture. Bedford Springs was most famous for its springs and spa in the 19th and 20th centuries. In terms of the hotel complex, it is similar to the Summit Hotel, with 21 resources. The property also features a small man-made lake on a roughly 300-acre tract in a narrow valley of the Allegheny Mountains. The fate of the Bedford Springs Hotel remains uncertain, as the buildings have been vacant for many years.³⁵

The Summit Hotel is a distinctive, locally important example of early twentieth century Mission and Craftsman-influenced resort architecture built on mountain location that was a stop along US Route 40 as early as the middle nineteenth century. The hotel complex also has its original support buildings and recreational facilities including a swimming pool, carriage house, garage, and dormitory. It stands as the only resort hotel in the region that exhibits elements of a particular style. The building's dramatic rambling roofline with twin towers, its central block with a parapeted gable, expansive porches, and prominent setting make it the region's most notable hotels of its era.

³⁵Gerald M. Kuncio, *Bedford Springs Hotel Historic District National Historic Landmark Nomination*, Bedford County, Pennsylvania, February 1991.

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Historic Postcard: *Aeroplane View of Summit Hotel and Surrounding*, Uniontown, Pa, circa 1923.
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Continuation Sheet Photographs Page 1**SUMMIT HOTEL PHOTOGRAPHS***Information for numbers 1-5 is the same for all images.*

1. *Summit Hotel*
2. *North Union, South Union and Wharton Townships, Fayette County, Pennsylvania*
3. *Clinton Piper*
4. *November 2001*
5. *RR #4, Box 89A, Latrobe, Pennsylvania 15650*

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	DIRECTION
#1	Façade	S
#2	East elevation	SW
#3	Façade and west elevation	SE
#4	Pool	SW
#5	Carriage House	SE
#6	Staff Dormitory	N
#7	stable/garage	N
#8	Main Porch	W
#9	Main entrance	S
#10	Lobby with fireplace	S
#11	Detail of fireplace	W
#12	Lobby	N
#13	Main Stair	SE
#14	Thomas Edison Dining Room	E
#15	Wunder Bar	NW
#16	Typical Hall, second floor	W
#17	Typical Door detail	E
#18	Room #102	E
#19	Room #102	W
#20	Room #117	NE
#21	Room #117 bathroom	E
#22	Room #138	N
#23	Room #142	SW
#24	Room #142 bathroom	S

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Continuation Sheet Section 10 Page 1**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Beginning at a point roughly 600 feet west and 500 feet south of the SW corner of the Summit Hotel; thence north 2050 feet to a point; thence east 1000 feet to a point; thence southeast 600 feet to a point; thence south 2000 feet to a point; thence 1025 feet to the point of the beginning. Containing approximately 50 acres more or less.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes only the northernmost 50-acre (more or less) portion of the nearly 800-acre tract. This smaller portion contains the hotel and historically associated support buildings and recreational facilities that flank the U.S. Route 40 corridor. It does not include the nine-hole golf course, which was altered at an unknown date, and remaining tract of wooded mountaintop land that lies south of the hotel. It also excludes two adjoining parcels of land the present owners purchased in 1985 to the east of the Summit Hotel tract.

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Continuation Sheet Resource Inventory Page 1**SUMMIT HOTEL RESOURCE INVENTORY
NORTH UNION, SOUTH UNION, AND WHARTON TOWNSHIPS
FAYETTE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA****1. Summit Hotel (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)**

Historic Function: domestic/hotel

Present Function: domestic/hotel

Description: Three story building with central block, parapeted gable flanked with square, four story hip-roofed towers. Hipped roof wings extend to the east and west from the central block.

Date of Construction: 1907

Resource type: building

Contributing

2. Carriage House (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)

Historic Function: domestic/secondary structure

Present Function: domestic/secondary structure

Description: Two-story rectangular stone building with hipped roof and four arched open-air storage bays underneath.

Date of Construction: 1907

Resource type: building

Contributing

3. Cottage #1 (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)

Historic Function: domestic/single dwelling

Present Function: domestic single dwelling

Description: One story frame caretaker's cottage with hip and gable roof. Few original materials; remodeled.

Date of Construction: circa 1907

Resource type: building

Non-contributing

4. Cottage #2 (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)

Historic Function: domestic/single dwelling

Present Function: domestic/single dwelling

Description: One story frame caretaker's cottage with hip and gable roof. Few original materials; remodeled.

Date of Construction: circa 1907

Resource type: building

Non-contributing

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Continuation Sheet Resource Inventory Page 2**5. Cottage #3 (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)**

Historic Function: domestic/secondary structure

Present Function: domestic/secondary structure

Description: One story rectangular frame building with gable roof.

Date of Construction: circa 1907

Resource type: building

Contributing

6. Water Tank #1 (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)

Historic Function: Industry/processing/extraction

Present Function: Industry/processing/extraction

Description: Circular steel structure with conical roof and 44,000 gallon capacity

Date of Construction: circa 1907

Resource type: structure

Contributing

7. Stable/Garage (Tax Parcel Number: 25-57-0001)

Historic Function: domestic/secondary structure

Present Function: storage

Description: One story rectangular stone building with gable and hip roof clad in asphalt shingles. It has garage bays with wood doors along the west elevation. Rear elevation has hip roofed dormer.

Date of Construction: 1907

Resource type: building

Contributing

8. Dormitory/Tumble Inn (Tax Parcel Number: 25-57-0001)

Historic Function: domestic/multiple dwelling

Present Function: storage

Description: One story rectangular stone building with gable and hip roof and stone chimney. Tarpaper roof.

Date of Construction: 1907

Resource type: building

Contributing

9. Cottage #4 (Tax Parcel Number: 25-57-0001)

Historic Function: domestic/single dwelling

Present Function: vacant

Description: One story frame building with hip roof and central brick chimney.

Date of Construction: circa 1907

Resource type: building

Contributing

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Continuation Sheet Resource Inventory Page 3**10. House Trailer** (Tax Parcel Number: 25-57-0001)

Historic Function: N/A

Present Function: single dwelling

Description: One story doublewide trailer.

Date of Construction: circa 1998

Resource type: building

Non-contributing

11. Manager's House (Tax Parcel Number: 25-57-0001)

Historic Function: single dwelling

Present Function: single dwelling

Description: One story house with two car attached garage; remodeled.

Date of Construction: circa 1907

Resource type: building

Non-contributing

12. Water Tank #2 (Tax Parcel Number: 25-57-0001)

Historic Function: Industry/processing/extraction

Present Function: Industry/processing/extraction

Description: Circular steel structure with 105,000 gallon capacity

Date of Construction: circa 1907

Resource type: structure

Contributing

13. Pool House (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)

Historic Function: domestic/secondary structure

Present Function: domestic/secondary structure

Description: One story rectangular frame building with shingled siding and gable roof clad in metal.

Date of Construction: circa 1923

Resource type: building

Contributing

14. Swimming Pool (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)

Historic Function: Recreation& culture/recreation/sports facility

Present Function: Recreation& culture/recreation/sports facility

Description: Olympic-sized (45 feet by 90 feet) all-steel in-ground swimming pool with diving board.

Date of Construction: circa 1923

Resource type: structure

Contributing

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Continuation Sheet Resource Inventory Page 4**15. Pavilion/concession stand (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)**

Historic Function: domestic/secondary structure

Present Function: domestic/secondary structure

Description: One story frame building with low-pitch gable roof clad in metal.

Date of Construction: circa 1923

Resource type: building

Contributing

16. Tennis Courts (Tax Parcel Number: 34-43-0001)

Historic Function: Recreation & culture/recreation/sports facility

Present Function: Recreation & culture/recreation/sports facility

Description: Two regulation size clay tennis courts (counted as one resource)

Date of Construction: 1964

Resource type: structure

Non-contributing

17. Single Dwelling (Tax Parcel Number: 25-53-0132)

Historic Function: N/A

Present Function: single dwelling

Description: Two story wood frame dwelling with wood deck.

Date of Construction: circa 1986

Resource type: building

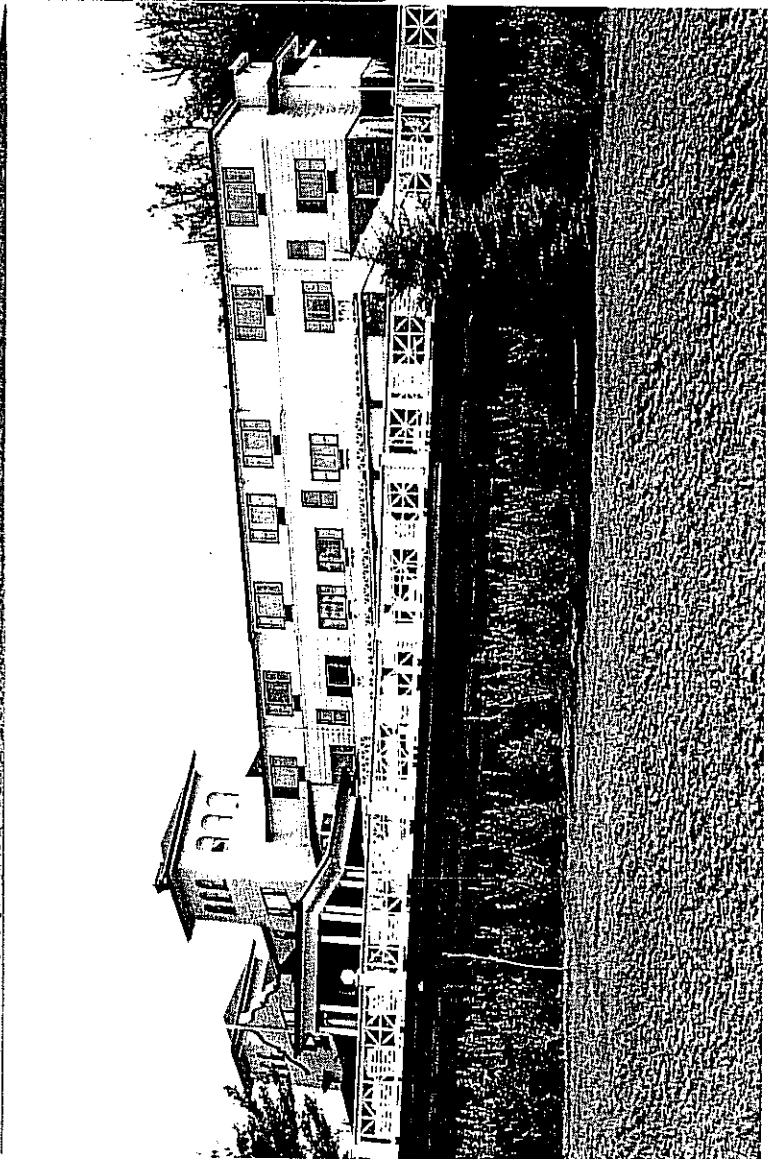
Non-contributing



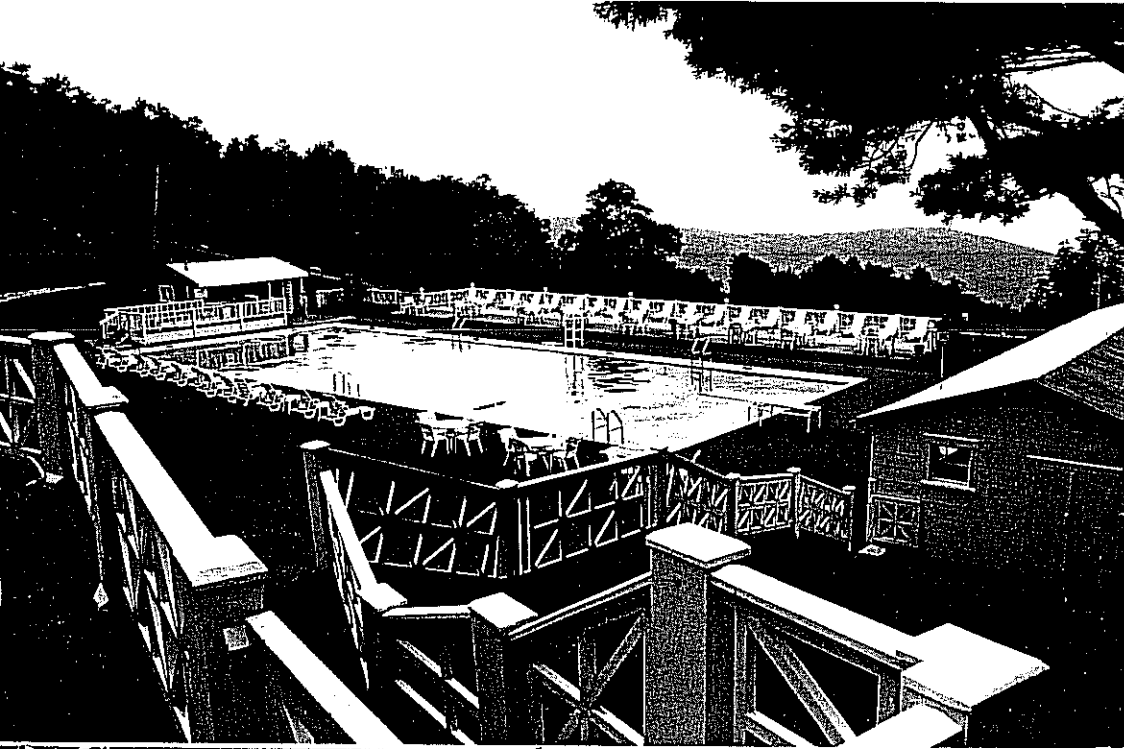
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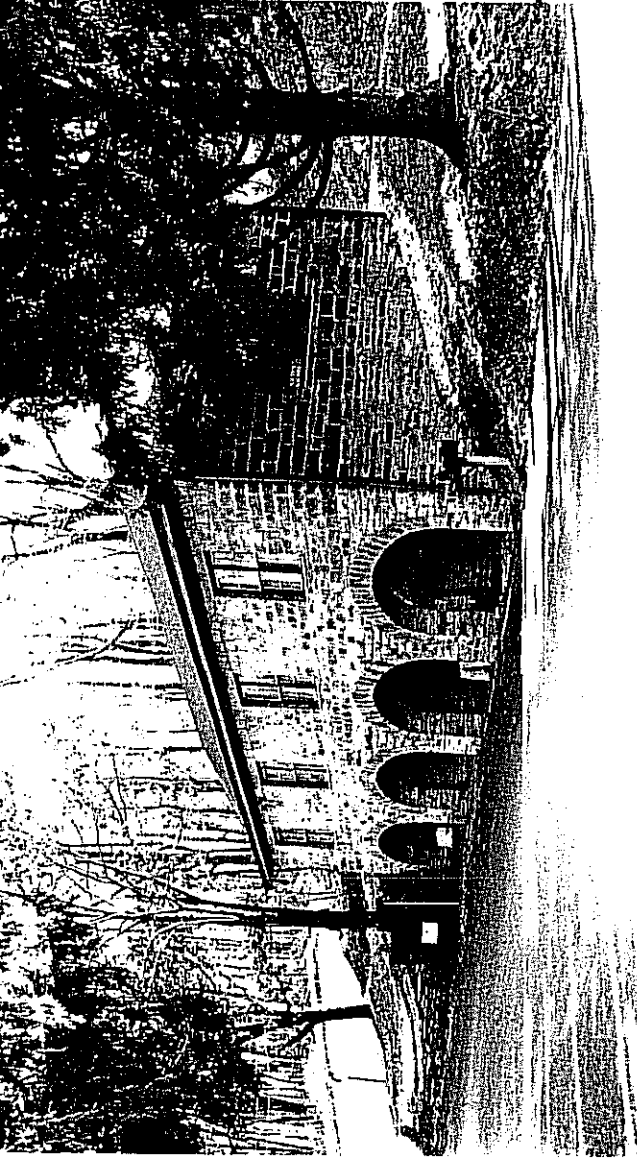
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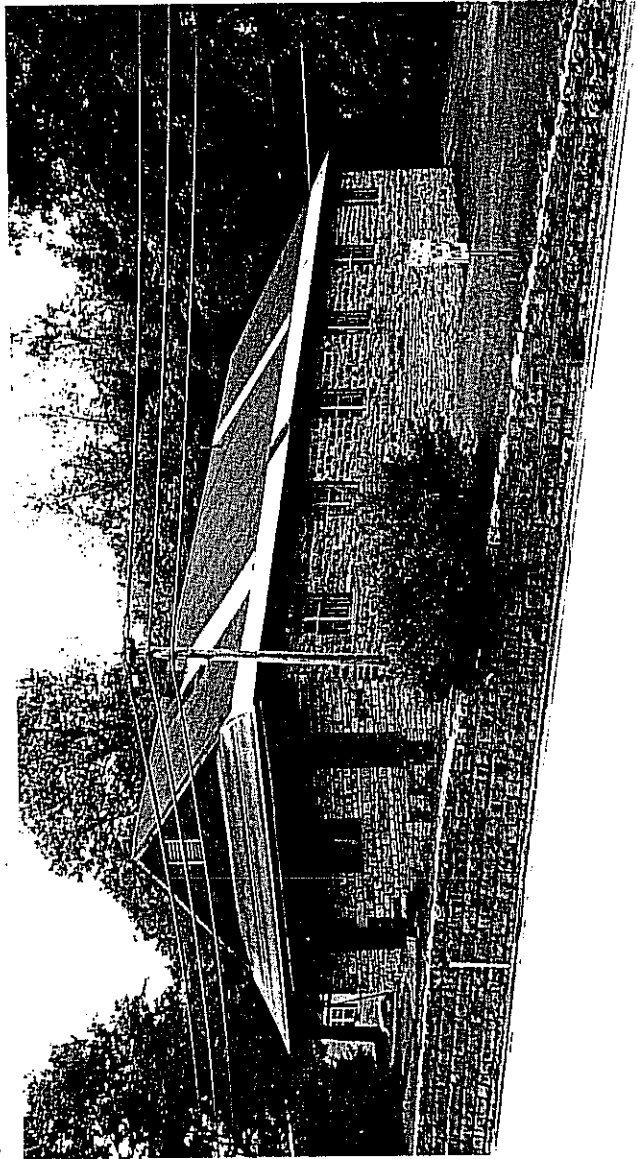
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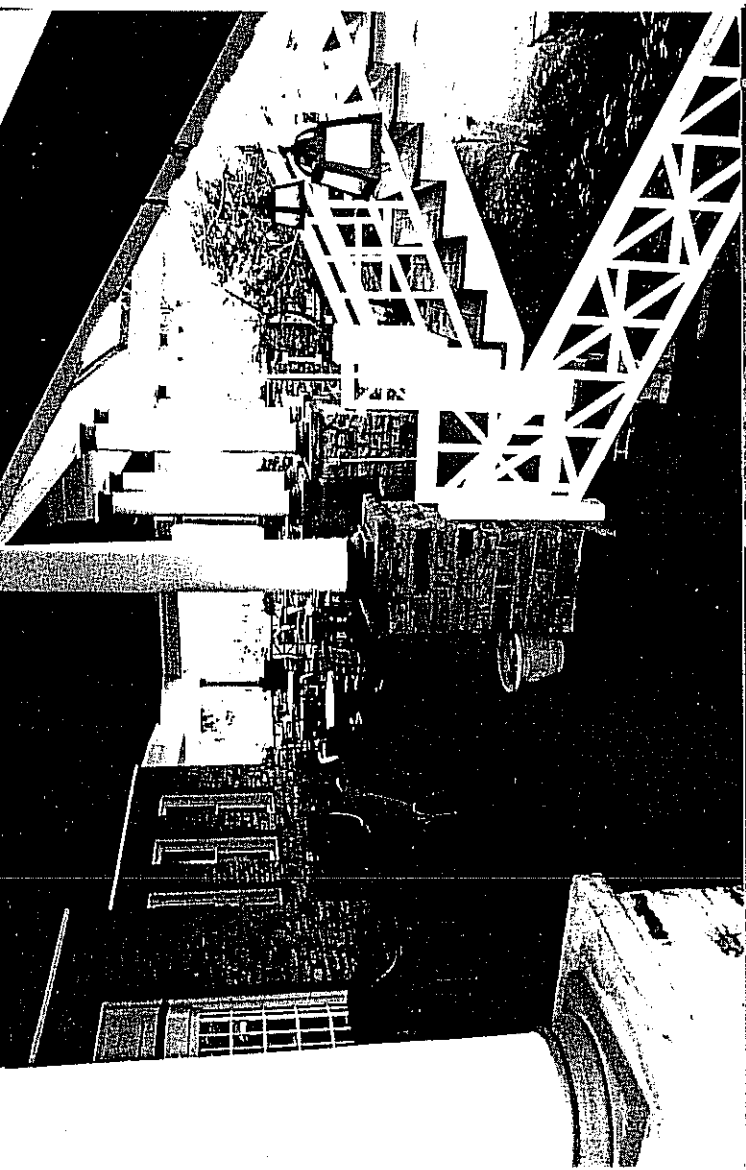


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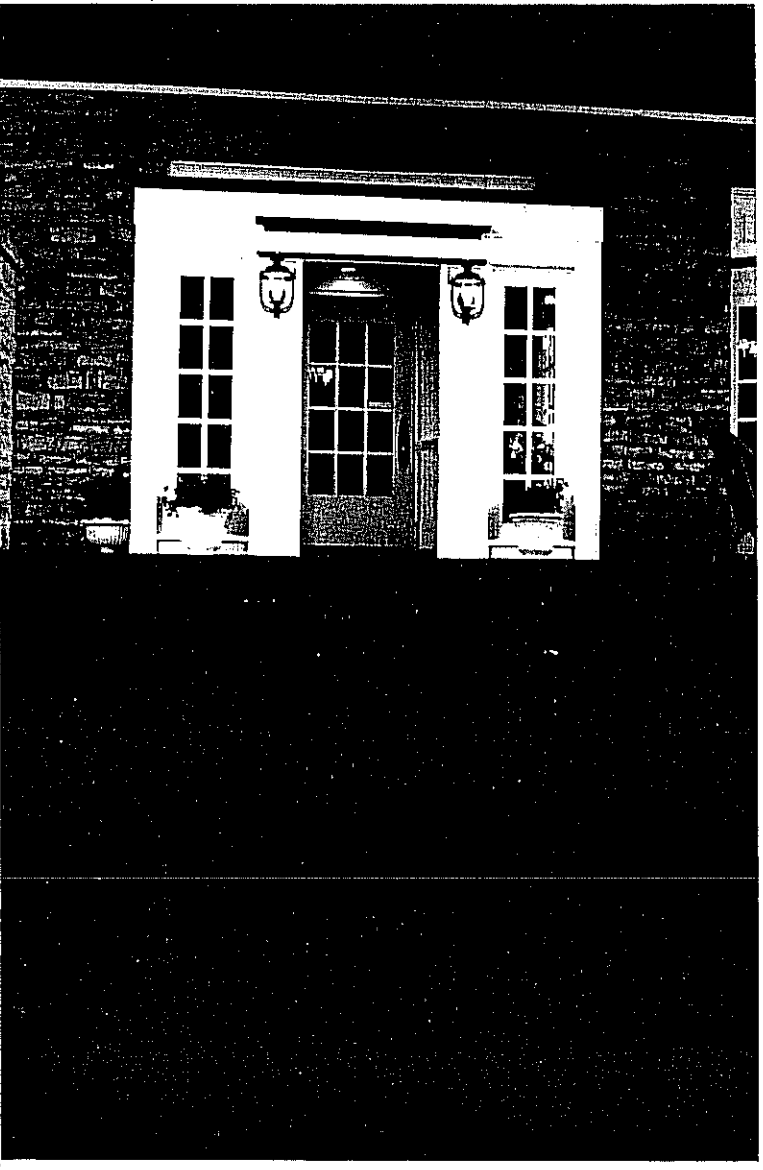


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