

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Nam	ne			.			
astoric Nicho	lson House and I	nn					
and or common							
2. Loca	ation					•	
street & number	. 4838 West Ridge	Road				N/A not for publication	
city. town Eric		·	N/A vicir	nity of			
	lvania	code	042	county E	rie	code ⁰⁴⁹	
	sification				·		
Category district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being consider	- - - A	itatus X occupie unoccup work in pacessible yes: res yes: unr	pied progress - tricted	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainmer government industrial military	museum park x private residence religious scientific transportation other:	,
4. Own	er of Pro	erty	/				
name Mr. & M	rs George E. Nic	holson		<u> </u>	· - · -		
- +	4838 West Ridge						_
city, town Erie			vicii	nity of	st	rate Pennsylvania	_
	ation of Lo	egal				•	
	stry of deeds, etc. Er				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
			. <u> </u>			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
street & number	Erie	 -	<u> </u>			Daniel Inches	
6. Rep	resentatio	n in	Fyie	tina S		ate Pennsylvania	
	escillation			9	diveys		
title None			h	as this prop	erty been determine	ed eligible?yes	no
date					federal	state county loc	:al
depository for su	urvey records	<u> </u>				- <u> </u>	
city, town					st	tate	

7. Desc	ription			· · · · -	
Condition X excellent	deteriorated	Check one unaltered _X altered	Check one X original site moved date	%/.;	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

unexposed

fair

The Nicholson House is a rare existing example of the early Pennsylvania Inn and Tavern and Stage Stop. The Federal architectural style of "four over four", and the simple yet elegant style of the rooms and the lovely open staircase are rare in Erie County. It is a fine example of the local craftsmen of the day.

The basic structure of the Nicholson House and Tavern consists of stone foundation walls topped with courses of brick on which the hewn log form beams rest. The logs are planed on top to provide a level base for the floor boards.

The walls of the house are of brick, having been made from clay found on the premises. The masonry is of Flemish bond and rises two floors with an attic extending the entire width of 52 feet. The interior wall surfaces are covered with plaster for partitioning walls. Framing members are approximately 3½" thick and varied in depth, generally set on 20" centers. The flooring, all original, consists of one layer of tongue and groove, hardwood baords 1" thick and of varied widths.

The cornice is of simple design. It is made up of a narrow face board running against the ends of the extended rafters and a wide return board under the overhang, which meets a frieze board of moderate width which drops over the brick. A matching cornice and frieze run up the rake of the roof on the west and east sides. The overhang is supported by decorative brackets mounted equidistantly against the frieze and return.

The roof has a slope of about 30 degrees. The original roof covering of wood shingles was replaced by galvanized tin shingles (date unknown) and later replaced by the present asphalt shingles.

In all except the Tavern Room, doors and window trim consist of fluted architrave and blocks with bullseye turnings at the top. The base-boards are nailed directly on the wood lath (or brick) and the walls plastered to the baseboard.

The present chair rail is to be replaced. The original style matched the contour of the window sill edge and stool. In the tavern rooms, the trim is of mixed styles—some similar to the main part of the house and the remainder being plain. The bar (restored) is of the design of the day. Its location was determined by mortise and tenon marks in the floor.

The house contains seven fireplaces, of which five are being used. Contemporary firebrick, flues and dampers have been installed for energy conservation and to satisfy local fire codes. The largest fireplace was used for cooking as well as heat. It contains the original crane, although shortened because of the addition of the firebrick line.

The mantels are of simple Federal style with hand-gouged carvings made by John Pherrical artishan of the time, and are in good condition. All of the mantels are of different design. The wall of the room containing the cooking fireplace has been paneled as is believed to have covered a portion of the fireplace, which contained a baking oven.

The interior wooden doors are original and are of the type with style and rails and raised panels—two small panels above four larger panels. The hardware is all face—latch with slide—lock type. False graining has been preserved on one door(they were all finished with false graining, but the date of application is unknown). There are three exterior doors of approximate design, although none is original.

8. Significanc

prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 X 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture artX commerce communications	community planning landscape architecture religion conservation law science economics literature sculpture education military social/ engineering music humanitarian x exploration/settlement philosophy theater industry politics/government transportation invention cother (specify)
	1827	Builder/Architect William & James Hoskinson/John Pherrin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Nicholson House is a well-preserved, early Erie County inn and examplifies the important contribution of this type of structure to the social and economic development of communities in northwestern Pennsylvania. The house is also important as the home of one of the first settlers in the region - John Nicholson.

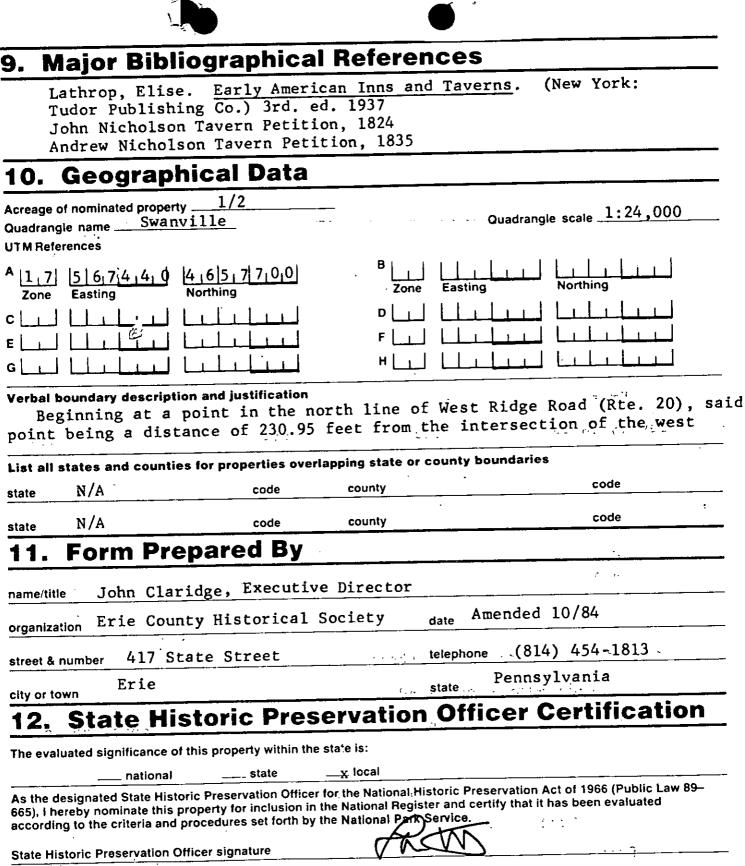
The John Nicholson House is an accurate reflection of that indispensable component in America's westward expansion in the early decades of the nineteenth century — the stagecoach stop or inn. A major purpose of such a building was to facilitate travel and commerce. The Nicholson House was strategically located between the Ridge Road (the main east—west route of the time) and the Erie Extension Canal which conveyed people and goods from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. During the 1840's and 1850's in particular, the volume of immigrant traffic down the lake from Buffalo to Erie, and from there to new homes in the Ohio valley increased rapidly. The Nicholson House was a logical place for such individuals to stop for food and rest.

Beyond its service as an inn and tavern, the Nicholson House was also used as a post station from 1842 to 1857. In 1876, following the closing of the Erie Extension Canal, the structure was converted to a farm supply and general store called the Asbury Place. Later, the site would serve as a stop on the electrified Buffalo & Conneaut trolley line. Of the many stagecoach stops/inns that sprang up in the first half of the nineteenth century to accommodate the travelling public through Erie County, only the Nicholson House remains in any sense approaching its original condition and appearance.

The John Nicholson House possesses further significance in its association with one of Erie County's more important pioneers. John Nicholson was sent by Governor Thomas Mifflin in 1795 to lay out roads at Presque Isle (later to become Erie). He returned the following year to obtain a grant of 400 acres of land in what is now Millcree Township. Among Nicholson's many projects to develop this region of the state was his influence in the organization and development of the earliest Erie County community on the banks of Lake Erie called Manchester. Located at the mouth of Walnut Creek, with paper mills and saw mills, it was envisioned that this community would one day become an important manufacturing and farm products distribution center. It was Nicholson who determined that commerce from Manchester to Erie should travel along the Ridge Road rather than the Lake Road, saving many miles of difficult transport. At Manchester he spearheaded the establishment of a school, a church meeting house, and a family mill. His first inn/tavern was opened in 1809 and proved successful. By 1850 the Nicholsons had become the largest single holders and developers of agricultural land, their holdings numbering some 3000 acres. These farms supplied the rapidly expanding city of Erie with its needed farm products.

Following the death of John Nicholson, the family enterprises were carried on by his widow Isabella, a remarkable woman who lived to be 93 and raise eight productive children. She is the only pioneer woman to be pictured in any Erie County History book. The old Nicholson Inn has remained in the Nicholson family until the present day, and is occupied as a home by descendants.

The vital contribution of John Nicholson and his descendants to the Erie area is recognized by the several place-names in Erie such as Nicholson Hill, Nicholson Heights, and Nicholson Street in the southern section of the city.



State Historic Preservation Officer V

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date /2/31/84

For NPS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register date

Keeper of the National Register date

Attest: date







United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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Verbal Boundary Description

and Justification Continuation sheet

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line of Tract 313 with the north line of West Ridge Road; thence north 54° 52' east along the north line of West Ridge Road 130.95 feet to a point in the east line of the Nicholson Estate; thence north 24° 54' west along the east line of Nicholson Estate 225 feet to a point; thence south 54° 52' west by residue of Nicholson Estate 131.55 feet to a point; thence south 250 4' east by residue of Nicholson Estate 225 feet to place of beginning.

