

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Peter Tarr Furnace Site

AND/OR COMMON Peter Tarr Furnace

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Along Kings Creek Road about 1 1/2 miles east of W.Va. Route 2

CITY, TOWN Weirton

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

STATE West Virginia

CODE
54

COUNTY Hancock

CODE
029

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Historic Site

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Hancock County (Court) Commissioners

STREET & NUMBER Hancock County Courthouse, Ridge Avenue

CITY, TOWN New Cumberland VICINITY OF

STATE West Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hancock County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Ridge Avenue

CITY, TOWN New Cumberland

STATE West Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Peter Tarr Furnace Site is located along Kings Creek, a tributary of the Ohio River, just north of Weirton, West Virginia. The area gently rises from the creek bed, and behind the furnace is a knoll from which was extended a pathway by which ore was dumped into the stack. Below ground, the foundation and salamander (the compartment into which was placed the ore and fire) were intact in 1968 when a likeness of what was believed to be the original furnace was constructed. This foundation, circular in dimension with an oval-shaped salamander within, was not disturbed.

After the furnace had ceased production, it was allowed to fall into ruin. The walls, originally dry laid, collapsed and buried the salamander and foundation. This mass filled with soil and eventually formed a mound which acted as a protection for the outline below ground. Evidence of construction methods and material are eminently available in the buried portions and in the stone which in part formed the mound.

The current reconstruction, if not wholly accurate, helps to protect the area from further deterioration and misuse. The potential for excavation and study of the remnants of the Peter Tarr Furnace are excellent, for much of the original building materials are at the site and the below-ground elements have not been disturbed.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Peter Tarr Furnace on Kings Creek near the present Weirton, West Virginia, was first built and operated during the decade of the 1790s by an obscure man named Grant. Improved by Tarr's company, the structure--with its unusual frustum-shaped stack--was quite possibly the first iron furnace in operation west of the Alleghenies and helped influence settlement and commercial patterns. During its thirty or so years of service, the furnace was the focal point of the making and sale of skillets, kettles, grates and other household utensils. In time of need, the operation also produced cannon balls of small diameter, some of which were said to have been used by Commodore Perry's fleet at the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

As settlers pushed over the mountains in ever increasing numbers after the Revolutionary War, a need arose for some fundamental industries to supply what otherwise had to be transported from the east or roughly manufactured at home. Iron products of all types were in greater demand than the supply could fulfill. Not too far from the Ohio River near what is now Weirton, West Virginia, an attempt was made to help alleviate the shortage. A man named Grant made an agreement to build an iron furnace sometime between 1790 and 1794, and the land on which it was constructed was deeded by James Campbell and his wife to Peter Tarr and James Rankin in 1801. Indications are that Grant's furnace was the first built west of the Allegheny mountains; Tarr and company made it a going and growing concern.

Using timber from the surrounding hills, the small group of workers could produce no more than about 2 tons of iron per day. Much of the metal was formed into household utensils and sold on the premises or sent to Wellsburg or Pittsburgh. Such production helped spur commerce and settlement in the area, and it is only fitting that it is today still a center of the iron and steel industry.

The Tarr furnace has an unusual design. Although the area in which fire and ore mixed to form the molten material from which articles were made was similar to others, its oval salamander is interesting. Of greater interest is the fact that the chimney, or stack, is circular in dimension. Most other furnaces of the period and area had square or rectangular chimneys.

Before ending its production of iron materials sometime after 1815, the furnace helped the infant United States' war effort during the War of 1812 by producing small-diameter cannon balls for use by the navy. It is believed that some of these were delivered to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's fleet at Lake Erie and were used during his famous battle on that inland body of water.

The uniquely constructed Peter Tarr Furnace, then, played an important role in early industrial and commercial development of the upper Ohio valley region and helped spur settlement west of the Allegheny mountains. In its own small way, it also contributed to the continuing defense of American independence. Continued archeological work at the furnace site is possible, for the original foundation and salamander are basically intact below ground level. In addition, much of the stone used in the 1968 reconstruction of the furnace was from the site.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Blatnik, Thais. "Tarr's Original Blast Furnace to be Rebuilt." Wheeling (W.Va.) Intelligencer, July 7, 1966, p. 4.
- Bowman, Mary Campbell. "Early Panhandle History." Pamphlet on the dedication of the reconstructed Peter Tarr Furnace, Nov. 16, 1968. (Copy on File with the West Virginia Antiquities Commission).
- Eley, Joseph J. "Iron and Steel Industry in West Virginia." West Virginia Review, XXIV (July 1947), 7-11.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 1/2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 7	5, 3, 6	2, 1, 0	4, 4	7, 6	2, 0, 0	B								
	ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING		
C							D								

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James E. Harding, Research Analyst

ORGANIZATION

West Virginia Antiquities Commission

DATE

December 4, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 630

TELEPHONE

(304) 296-1791

CITY OR TOWN

Morgantown

STATE

West Virginia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Leonard M. Lewis

TITLE West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

12-6-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

- Interview with Mr. Frank D. Bowman, Parliamentarian, Hancock County Historical Society, March 19 and 22, 1974. Information on file with the West Virginia Antiquities Commission, P.O. Box 630, Morgantown, W.Va.
- Mr. Frank D. Bowman to James E. Harding, January 8, 1975. Information on file with the West Virginia Antiquities Commission, P.O. Box 630, Morgantown, W.Va.
- Welch, Jack. History of Hancock County, Virginia and West Virginia. Wheeling, W.Va.: The Wheeling News Printing and Litho Co., 1963. (pp. 31-32)



