

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 13 1980
DATE ENTERED	JUL 4 1980

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Chautauqua Tower

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Glen Echo Park

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Glen Echo

VICINITY OF

8th

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Montgomery

CODE

031

**2 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (if applicable)

National Capital Region, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C. 20242

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE National Park Service List of Classified Structures

DATE

1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Historic Resource Services Division  
National Capital Region, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1891-92, the Chautauqua tower is a circular structure of rough native stone, approximately 34 feet in diameter and three stories high, capped by an 11-sided roof of steep pitch with a flagpole rising from its peak.

The stone wall at the first floor level is broken by an entrance door on the south, four double casement windows on the south and west, and four single casement windows on the north and east. The double casements have 15 panes three abreast per sash; the narrow single casements have 20 smaller panes two abreast. The second floor is lighted on the south and west by four double casements having 20 panes four abreast per sash, one double casement of the first floor type over the door, and four single casements matching those below on the north and east. The third floor has nine double casements of 20 panes four abreast per sash circling the tower. Each of these paired third story sash meet at an angle directly beneath a corresponding angle of the overhanging roof cornice. The exterior stonework of the third story between the windows curves inward as it rises to the cornice. The cedar-shingled roof makes a similar curve as it splays out just above the cornice in its descent from the peak.

A square chimney of matching stone projects from the northwest side of the tower at its juncture with an adjoining frame building and rises approximately six feet above the cornice line. Another stone projection rises from the top of the tower wall to the left of the chimney, and a gabled, shingled belfry roof runs between them. The chimney is connected to a fireplace on the second floor and a stovepipe opening on the third floor.

The first floor of the tower is undivided except for an enclosed stair curving against the east wall. It is unknown whether this space may once have been partitioned. The second floor, now open, displays evidence of having been divided into two rooms of unequal size. The third floor retains its original interior walls forming three rooms. A central post concealed at the juncture of these walls is the tower's only interior supporting member. The stair, which appears to be original, continues in the second and third stories to the attic.

The exterior appearance of the tower is little changed. A 1914 fire destroyed the original wood-shingled roof, which was then replaced by a tin-covered roof. This had seriously deteriorated by 1975, when a new roof closely matching the original was installed. Crude wooden blocks suggestive of brackets beneath the eaves were not replaced in this restoration. Most of the wood-framed casement sash are original; others are accurate reproductions. The bells installed in the belfry have long been absent. The mortar between the stones has been repointed and the chimney has been rendered nonfunctional by a cement cap. The ferrous stone quarried nearby, originally a dark gray, has oxidized redder and lighter over the years.

Remnants of flashing on the interior walls at the third floor level suggest that the third floor windows were once unglazed, requiring the floor to be covered with protective roofing.

(continued)

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The most significant alterations have been to the tower's architectural context. Until 1919 a stone arch extended from over the entrance door on the south side to another circular stone structure, framing an entrance gate to the Chautauqua grounds. A 1940 moderne flat roof on cylindrical posts now attaches to the tower in the same location. Opposite this feature, a 1-1/2-story stone building joined the tower on the northwest. This burned in the 1914 fire and was replaced by the taller frame structure standing today, which retains some of the original stonework in its northeast wall. Doors on the first and second floors of the tower connect with this building, as they did with its predecessor. Both of these later additions are clear departures from the original rustic Chautauqua architecture, and although the frame building is not unattractive, neither possesses particular historical or architectural merit. For these reasons, they are excluded from this National Register nomination. All other Chautauqua structures in Glen Echo Park have been removed except for a portion of a stone caretaker's cottage, which lacks sufficient integrity for inclusion in this nomination. Given the nearly total alteration in the tower's context, the National Register boundary is limited to the perimeter of the tower.

(The nearby carousel, a significant remnant of the later Glen Echo Amusement Park, is the subject of a separate National Register nomination. The Clara Barton house adjoining Glen Echo Park, built contemporary with the Chautauqua, is on the Register as the Clara Barton National Historic Site.)

# 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891-92

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Victor Mindelof

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chautauqua tower is significant as the sole intact physical remnant of the late-19th-century Chautauqua movement at Glen Echo, Maryland, and as a local specimen of late-Victorian rustic architecture.

The Chautauqua movement, so called from the first assembly of its adherents on the shore of Lake Chautauqua, New York, in 1874, was an effort to democratize learning within an ecumenical Protestant religious framework by bringing the culture of the well-to-do to the masses. By 1891 the movement had expanded from its permanent home base to 52 more modest assemblies conducting two-week summer programs of educational lectures, classes, and entertainments in tents. The idea caught hold in Washington, D.C., where several groups formed a Chautauqua Union to plan programs for the area.

Coinciding with this local flowering of the Chautauqua movement were the plans of Edwin Baltzley, a Philadelphia real estate promoter, and his brother Edward of Washington for a residential and resort development to be known as Glen Echo-on-the-Potomac. By 1889 they had acquired some 1300 acres on the Maryland bank of the Potomac between Cabin John Creek and Sycamore Island, northwest of Washington. Stone for houses like that built by Edward Baltzley overlooking Sycamore Island (still standing outside Glen Echo) would be provided property owners from quarries onsite. An elaborate rustic resort "cafe" of rough cedar logs, the "Pawtawomeck," was opened to the public in July 1890 but succumbed to fire that November. A giant stone hotel evocative of a Rhineland castle was promised in Glen Echo publicity but was never realized.

Seeing the Chautauqua idea as a potential enhancement of their development, the Baltzleys on March 24, 1891, deeded 80 acres to the "National Chautauqua of Glen Echo." The National Chautauqua was incorporated by 43 prominent citizens including John Wesley Powell, George Peters, Arthur B. Cropley, and the Baltzleys themselves "to promote liberal and practical education, especially among the masses of the people; to teach the sciences, arts, languages, and literature; to prepare its patrons for their several pursuits and professions in life, and to fit them for the duties which devolve upon them as members of society."

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Richard Cook. Interviews, March 10 and 28, 1980.  
Benjamin Levy. "Glen Echo Chautauqua on the Potomac." National Park Service  
Division of History, 1967.

## UTM NOT VERIFIED

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

## ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .09

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	314740	4319000	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The National Register boundary follows the exterior perimeter of the tower.  
(See Section 7 for justification.)

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

Barry Mackintosh, Regional Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Capital Region, National Park Service

DATE

March 28, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

TELEPHONE

(202)426-6660

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20242

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

*J. Little* 4-9-80

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*J. B. Hollander*

TITLE

*Asst. Dir., Cultural Resources*

DATE

*5-8-80*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Bruce M. Dwyer*

DATE

*7-4-80*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*Emma Jane Sage*

DATE

*7-1-80*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Regional Coordinator*

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Construction began quickly on two principal structures--the Amphitheater and the Hall of Philosophy--and on the stone tower, archway, and adjoining buildings forming the gateway to the campus. The Amphitheater and Hall of Philosophy were designed in rustic style by Theophilus Parsons Chandler of Philadelphia, architect of the Baltzley house and the cafe. The tower, the subject of the present nomination, housed administrative offices and mounted bells from the McShane foundry of Baltimore. It was designed by Victor Mindelef, a local architect.

Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, became president of the Woman's Executive Committee of the National Chautauqua of Glen Echo, formed to foster the "advancement of woman, improving and enlarging her scope of usefulness." Miss Barton herself acquired adjoining property at Glen Echo in 1891 and built what would later become her residence and American Red Cross headquarters. Its original rough stone facade, removed in 1897 except for corner towers, matched the character of the Chautauqua buildings nearby.

The assembly opened in June 1891 with the buildings still unfinished, although the Amphitheater was sufficiently complete to accommodate the large dedication crowd. The array of Chautauqua programs was well attended by several hundred persons until August. But this first successful season proved to be the last. In late August Dr. Henry Spencer, head of the Chautauqua's business school, died of pneumonia. Rumor spread that he had contracted malaria, making people reluctant to visit the area. This dampened residential lot sales and cut the cash flow necessary to support expansion. With the area's image thus tainted, the National Chautauqua of Glen Echo was doomed. (Except for the original assembly, which remains active on Lake Chautauqua to this day, the Chautauqua movement evolved to a long-popular traveling format.)

In 1899 the National Chautauqua property was leased to the Glen Echo Company, an amusement park venture. The Amphitheater eventually became a midway, and a roller coaster and numerous other structures significantly altered the character of the area. The midway was demolished in 1956, by which time the amusement park had passed its prime. The property was ultimately acquired by the Federal Government in 1971 for administration by the National Park Service. The majority of Glen Echo Park structures now present date from the amusement park era; only the stone entrance tower remains intact from the Chautauqua development.

Despite the loss of its architectural context, the Chautauqua tower stands as a highly picturesque Glen Echo landmark and as a reminder of a significant aspect of the modern community's origins.