

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED AUG 6 1979
DATE ENTERED OCT 10 1979

**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 George Inness House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 313 Convery Boulevard

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Perth Amboy

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
15th

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

023

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Eugene R. and William Ebner, c/o Ebner's Garage

STREET & NUMBER

313 Convery Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

Perth Amboy

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey 08861

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Middlesex County Administration Building

STREET & NUMBER

John F. Kennedy Square

CITY, TOWN

New Brunswick

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Middlesex County Inventory of Historic and Architectural Resources

DATE

1979

__FEDERAL __STATE COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

841 Georges Road, North Brunswick

STATE

New Jersey

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Inness House is a bulky story-and-a-half building with a half mansard roof and half heavy stone ground floor. Apparently an individual interpretation of the Second Empire style, the house today exhibits little of the ornament or ostentation associated with that mode. Altered, deteriorated and used for storage of auto parts, it is surrounded by a sea of junked cars and trucks in a largely commercial and industrial area of Perth Amboy.

The building is a symmetrical, T-shaped structure with a central hall plan. The main block is three bays wide, 41 feet by 36 feet, with a rear wing 23 feet by 26 feet. A wooden porch with shed roof and square posts surrounds three sides of the front block, and shed-roofed dormers with segmental arched 2/2 sash break the mansard roof. Simple scalloped fascias over these dormer windows are the only ornament on an otherwise plain building. French windows with segmental arched transoms connect the first floor rooms to the surrounding porch. The two interior chimneys and an interior end chimney on the wing have been altered or rebuilt.

Other than the enormous roof itself -- now covered with asbestos shingles -- the dominant feature of this house is its hefty stone walls. These are composed of a brown stone laid up as random rubble. Crude stone voussoirs span the openings.

The interior retains the basic spaces of the original building, the most important of which was the studio. This room comprises the entire upper level of the rear wing and features a vaulted ceiling, expressing the lines of the mansard roof on the interior. The room gains extra volume from the split-level arrangement of the house and wing, for the studio is on the level of the stair landing of the main block. A large dormer window, now boarded over, brought north light into the studio, while a regular sized window on the south would have afforded a view of the Raritan Bay.

Much of the material in the house dates from its renovation as a roadhouse in the 1930's. New floors and built-in benches were installed and the walls were replastered. Gold stars now glitter from a blue vault in the dark empty space of the studio, converted to a dance hall for the "saloon."

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 type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 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 Inness House was the home of American landscape painter George Inness from 1864 until 1867. These years were important to Inness both personally and professionally, and it was here that he painted some of his better-known works.

The brownstone house which Inness and his family occupied beginning early in 1864 (or perhaps late the preceding year -- records are not precise) was built for the painter by Marcus Spring on his estate, Eagleswood. Spring was the founder of the perfectionist community known as the Raritan Bay Union which was created in 1853 as a splinter group of the North American Phalanx. The Union had been dissolved by the time Inness arrived in Perth Amboy, but its radical sentiments survived into the 1860s, with a shift of emphasis from social to artistic concerns. In a much more informal manner than had been true earlier, Eagleswood and its environs became the place where a number of artists lived and worked. One critic has seen the connection between the earlier period at Eagleswood and Inness' interest by observing that the painter's religious and abolitionist sympathies and "...his later interest in the theories of Henry Gage indicates his sensitivity to social problems. Therefore, his concerns would seem to coincide with those that flourished at Eagleswood, thereby making it a most congenial place for him to live."

Whatever Inness' social and religious beliefs at the time he came to Eagleswood, his relationship with Spring was put on a practical footing almost immediately: in partial payment for the house, he gave Spring the subsequently famous painting "Peace and Plenty," completed in 1865, and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In addition to pursuing his own work, Inness taught during the Eagleswood years; his most noted pupil was Louis Comfort Tiffany. Just as he influenced others, he was in turn influenced by the prominent portraitist and historical painter William Page, who lived nearby. Contemporary critics commented on the influence of Page's work on that of Inness, and Page introduced his fellow artist to the writings of Swedenborg, finally ending Inness' search for a satisfying religious doctrine. It was during this time also that

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See full footnote citations following SIGNIFICANCE

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1

QUADRANGLE NAME Perth Amboy

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES
A 18 560340 4484840

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

F

E

H

G

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property lies at the Northeast corner of Convery Boulevard and Smith Street, and occupies municipal Tax Block 90, Lot 5.

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 Robert Guter, Associate Director
Gary Wolfe, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Heritage Studies, Inc.

DATE February, 1979

STREET & NUMBER RD #4, Box 864, Mapleton Road

TELEPHONE 609-452-1754

CITY OR TOWN Princeton

STATE New Jersey 08540

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.

Deputy Letty Wilson

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

7-21-79

TITLE Deputy Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Case Shull
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 10-10-79

ATTEST: [Signature]
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

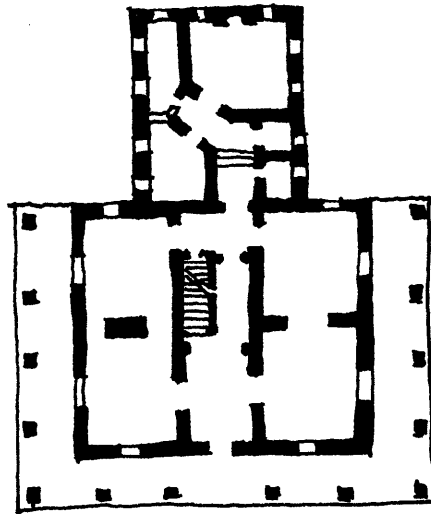
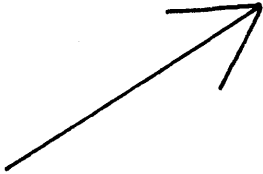
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George Inness House
Middlesex County, New Jersey

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Inness may have met Reverend Henry Ward Beecher. Beecher owned one painting by Inness as early as 1860, and five by the time of his death in 1887. The two are known to have been acquainted by the 1870^s. Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., suggests that friendship with Beecher may have brought about the introduction in Inness' paintings of a sense of "...divine immanence and transcendent meaning."²

While it may be impossible to draw specific connections between Inness' friends and the tenor of his work, it is plain that the decade of the 1860^s was one of overtly allegorical landscapes. Before that time he had mastered technique and assimilated the influence of the old masters and the Barbizon School. "In the 1860^s the emphasis shifted from form to content, as he explored the meaningfulness of his art."³ As well as being a period of intellectual ferment, it was a period of sheer physical productivity. During the four years he stayed in Perth Amboy, he completed at least 145 canvases.⁴ Three bear Eagleswood's titles, and even paintings executed after 1867 utilize Eagleswood's surroundings as subjects. In addition to "Peace and Plenty" and a number of other works which were to become highly regarded, Inness was commissioned by a "syndicate of gentlemen" to paint a series of large pictures.⁵ He chose as his subject Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

On the authority of Inness' son, we know that the Eagleswood phase was deeply significant in terms of "spiritual unfolding." His association with a community of artists and pupils gave him the freedom to experiment with his own work, so that after 1867, his refusal to deal in the categories of "American" landscape art espoused by such members of the Hudson River School as Cole and Durand did not escape even the dullest critics. In short, the Eagleswood years saw the melding of technique with philosophical or religious content to create a kind of landscape art new to America.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 George Inness, Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., Praeger, New York, 1971,
p. 34
- 2 Cikovsky, p. 35
- 3 Cikovsky, p. 35
- 4 The Works of George Inness, An Illustrated Catalogue Raisonne,
Leroy Ireland, Univ. of Texas Press, Austin, 1956
- 5 Life, Art and Letters of George Inness, George Inness, Jr.,
The Century Co., New York, 1917, p. 68