

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Saint Mark's Episcopal Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Race and Susquehanna Streets

not for publication

city, town Jim Thorpe

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania 18229

code

county

Carbon

code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" 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. Owner of Property

name Saint Mark's Episcopal Church

street & number Race and Susquehanna Streets

city, town Jim Thorpe

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carbon County Court House

street & number Broadway and Susquehanna Streets

city, town Jim Thorpe

state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date July 26, 1977

federal state county local

depository for survey records National Park Service, 1100 L Street, NW

city, town Washington

state DC

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The town of Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania (formerly Mauch Chunk) lies in a narrow valley on the Lehigh River. This picturesque town is situated in the rich anthracite coal fields. It was the terminus for the Lehigh Canal from which the mined coal was shipped by boat to Easton, Pennsylvania. Prosperity increased with the building of the Jersey Central Railroad and the greatest benefactor became Asa Packer, one of the millionaires whose fortune was made in Mauch Chunk.

Packer was the chief benefactor of St. Mark's, the second church to be constructed on a shelf of rock blasted from the side of a hill. Perched on the hillside, where several valleys intersect, the land originally belonged to the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company under a charter from the state legislature. To build a church on this unusual site, the vestry commissioned the most famous church architect of the day, Richard Upjohn. The late Gothic Revival church (1869) that evolved is one of the most beautifully finished of all of his churches. The walls are rusticated native gray stone with a contrasting red stone in the copings, mouldings, window sills, and frames. A square crenellated bell tower rises where the nave and transept intersect and an octagonal stair-turret rises above the tower.

Three flights of covered stairs built of rusticated stone make up the main entrance. The church is built in tiers, stepping up the mountain from the solid ledge on which the lowest foundation wall occurs. To reach this level it was necessary to excavate into the platform on which the previous structure had perched. Thus, as you enter the church, at the lowest level, there is a cold sensation of being low in the ground. Doors opening out of the vestibule and the small chapel (formerly a coal bin) on this level, open directly into rooms with stone floors and ledge walls. As you go up the stairway or the elevator, (a vintage 1912 Otis model in mint condition), there are several smaller rooms at an intermediate level, one being used as a small but beautifully appointed chapel.

Rising up one more level, you come to the main church and the Great Hall. After this dark close ascent, the church and Great Hall open up as great airy spaces with a great deal of stained glass and gleaming brass fixtures. The church is in the form of a Latin cross with the peak of the roof 58 feet above the floor. All of the fittings of the church are opulent and of the finest quality. The floors of Minton Tile are from England, the pews of Honduras mahogany; lighting fixtures, lecterns, and altar rail of finely worked brass; the stained glass was by Louis Tiffany and other great glass workers; and the altar and baptismal font are of fine Italian white marble.

Archaeological ornament is agreeably subdued, but there are recognizable features of the very popular English Decorated style in the broad window openings filled with geometrically patterned tracery particularly in the great chancel window.

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 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 1865, 1867, 1869 **Builder/Architect** Richard Upjohn (1802–1878)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Mark's was commissioned and designed late in Richard Upjohn's career between 1865 and 1867. The cornerstone was laid in 1867 and consecrated November 25, 1869. The cost was \$68,000, a handsome sum for that time and for the size of the small mining town the church graces. One of Upjohn's most unusual designs, St. Mark's in Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania), is one of the architect's best expressions of the mid-19th century style that replaced the Greek and Roman forms that had grown obsolete and crumbled away. As an industrialized society progressed and became more complex, the relationship between man and nature was profoundly altered. The "nature disciplined" concept of the white classical temple gave way to reasoned compromise with the chaos of the natural world. Architects would give order to elements drawn from nature, molding and creating visual effects with irregular lines, turrets, crenellated roofs, massed chimneys, and all the filigree of the Gothic church, making a broken silhouette against the sky. Gardens were encouraged to be "natural," thus allowing a new harmony between man and nature. In the long run, the practitioners of Gothic preferred the suburban villa away from the burgeoning city slums, a world that appealed to the "Romantic." This strain of 19th century Americanism was best represented in their several ways by Thoreau, William Cullen Bryant, Washington Irving, Walt Whitman, Thomas Cole, and the Hudson River painters,

The career of Richard Upjohn was in itself a textbook example of the transition from Greek-Revival to early pure Gothic to finally those picturesque asymmetrical compositions with turrets and battlements of the late church style. It is said that Upjohn was so doctrinaire that he even refused a commission for a Unitarian church on the grounds his strict Episcopal convictions would make him too unsympathetic towards the required symbolism. It is quite fitting that Upjohn should have been engaged to design a High Church by one of the wealthiest men in America at that time, to be built in a small "Swiss Village" in Pennsylvania coal country.

The history of the town and of Asa Packer, the local philanthropist, are very closely linked. Anthracite coal was discovered in the area at the end of the eighteenth century. By 1820, the port of Mauch Chunk was functioning on the Lehigh River and in 1827 the Lehigh Canal between Mauch Chunk and Easton was begun. In 1827 the first railroad was built to Summit Hill, a gravity railroad, later known as the Switchback Railroad, 18 miles in length. It was used until 1877 to transport coal from the mines to Mauch Chunk for shipping. Gravity brought the coal cars to the river, then mules hauled the cars back up to the coal fields. Steam engines later increased the yield.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Lehighton Quad.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	3	7	7	0	0	4	5	2	3	5	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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 Carolyn Pitts, Historian

organization National Park Service, History Division date

street & number 1100 L Street, NW telephone (202) 343-8165

city or town Washington state DC 20013-7127

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

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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There are single, double and triple lancet windows as well as a great rose or wheel window filled with glass made in Czechoslovakia. The transept window is today partly obscured by a large reredos commissioned by the Packer family in 1880. Cut from Caen stone, it is a replica of a reredos at Windsor Castle chapel in England.

A great hall adjoins the main church on this upper level; it is smaller than the main church but can be enlarged by moving wooden partition walls and has the use of a balcony. It has a wood beamed and paneled ceiling so that it presents excellent accoustical properties for the occasional musical events presented here.

The church furnishings are also the work of the best artisans of the day - gold and silver chalices, elaborate candelabrum and plates for collection. A small descriptive program printed on the occasion of the pulpit's and lectern's dedication indicates the lavishness of the appointments:

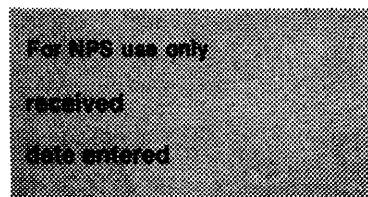
The Pulpit is octagonal in shape, and made of polished brass and gray Champlain marble. From a large stone base rises a central shaft of marble with a richly carved capital, and six brass columns with foliated capitals, which combine to support the marble floor of the pulpit. The pulpit proper, is formed by polished brass shafts connected by richly wrought panels of tracery, and surmounted by an oak top moulding. In the central panel there is wrought in repousse the winged Lion as the symbol of St. Mark. Above this rises the manuscript desk resting on a universal joint, and a hooded light arranged to protect the eyes of speaker and congregation. The Pulpit stands on the floor of the nave, and is entered from the choir by a brass staircase. The memorial inscription reads as follows:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF ROBERT ASA PACKER; BORN NOVEMBER 19, 1842; DIED FEBRUARY 20, 1883; PRESENTED BY HIS SISTER MARY H., AND BY HIS BROTHER HARRY E. PACKER.

The Lectern is a massive piece of work, eagle pattern, of richly chased polished brass. The base is in the form of a Greek cross, and rests on four Lions, symbolizing strength, fortitude, and the resurrection. From this base spring buttressed brackets which strengthen the cluster columns surrounding the shaft. These columns support the central post on which are handsomely chased the four Evangelical symbols. Above these are four Angels in standing position, holding scrolls with the names of the Evangelists, and acting as supporters to the central shaft. The shaft terminates in a richly carved capital, upon which, just below the crown, is engraved the inscription. The Lectern is surmounted by a finely chased Eagle - the bird of inspiration - which, with out-stretched wings, supports

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the Holy Bible. The whole rests upon a polished marble base, which raises it from the floor sufficiently to give dignity to the work, and cause it to appear to good advantage. The inscription reads as follows:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD, AND IN MEMORY OF SARAH M. PACKER, A.D. 1889,
BORN MARCH 12, 1807; DIED NOVEMBER 17, 1882; THE GIFT OF HER CHILDREN
MARY H. AND HARRY E. PACKER.¹

In the northeast corner of the church, rising above the stone stairs is the prominent tower holding the twelve-bell chimes. This massive bell tower rises 135 feet above the foundation.

The original organ has been completely renovated and the heating system modernized.

At the west end of the structure a rectangular office building was added to the church by Addison Hutton in 1890. It uses the same stone and meets the church cornice line at the west end. In effect, it merely elongates the church at one end without in any way tampering with Upjohn's basic structure or form.

An annex, the Sarah Packer Memorial Building, was added in 1887. The general exterior materials and style of the annex are similar to those of the main church. Varicolored stonework is used on moldings and copings. The interior woodwork is lighter (pine) and the rooms are decorated in Queen Anne style reflecting changing tastes. The annex houses Sunday school facilities, library, choir room, corporation room, and kitchen. A small chantry in the building was redone in a Florentine motif in 1955. Some other interior changes have been made, the most important being the conversion of a storage area to a meeting room.

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Asa Packer first started his career making canal boats for coal transport to the Easton market and thence to Philadelphia. He made subsequent heavy investments in the Lehigh Valley Railroad and as his fortune grew, so did his influence and reputation: He was a Pennsylvania state legislator, a member of Congress, and he ran for governor. President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Packer as a commissioner of the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. After the Civil War, he founded and endowed Lehigh University (1866). He was also a great contributor to the Episcopal Church and its charities. St. Mark's was his richest church bequest, one of the finest examples of the late Gothic-revival style in America.

A brief history of the founding of the church is outlined in the October 5, 1907 issue of The Church Standard:

The site (of St. Mark's) in early days belonged to the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, as did all the lands in this region, as well as the Lehigh River itself, under the terms of a charter which was granted by the Legislature with remarkable generosity. But to the mind of those who lived beyond the mountains, "Sunday then came only as far as Lehigh Gap," and the rough region northward was considered of little or no value.

Upon the shoulder of the mountain south of the village of Mauch Chunk, in 1835, the Navigation Company had a powder magazine. The Presbyterians, wishing to build a church, had made application for that plot of ground and the company had agreed to sell it to them for fifty dollars. The Roman Catholics also wished to obtain the same lot for a chapel, but the Presbyterians having obtained a location farther uptown, withdrew their application, and thus it was made possible for the vestry of St. Mark's Church to secure the commanding site. The parish had lately been organized, on May 17, 1835, the Methodist Society alone antedating it. The first vestry elected consisted of Messrs. William H. Sayre and Asa Packer, wardens, and S. Holland, J. Ruddle, Dr. McConnell, and A. L. Foster. Mr. Sayre had removed from Columbia county in 1829 and had settled with his family in Mauch Chunk. Having been reared in Old Christ Church, Philadelphia, under the rectorship of Bishop White, it was natural that he should be possessed of strong faith, unquestioned piety, and aggressive missionary zeal....

The present St. Mark's is the second church edifice which has occupied the same site. The first was begun in 1840, completed in 1845, and consecrated during the rectorship of the Rev. Peter Russell in 1852.

During the rectorship of the Rev. Leighton Coleman this proved to be too small for the congregation, which had increased largely in numbers, as well as in wealth, and steps were taken to erect the present building. It is one of the creations of the late Richard Upjohn, who succeeded in

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accomplishing a work which required real genius. The corner-stone was laid by Bishop Stevens on St. Matthew's Day, 1867, who also officiated at the consecration of the church on November 25, 1869.²

Mauch Chunk in its hey day could boast over a dozen millionaires as the railroads expanded and coal and steel built Pennsylvania fortunes. One of the Packer-Blakeslee tomb stones, that of James Irwin Blakeslee IV, unblushingly reads "Thanks for everything." By the end of the 19th century Mauch Chunk's and East Mauch Chunk's fortunes began to wane. By 1954, the area was economically depressed and the two boroughs were combined and renamed Jim Thorpe for the famous American athlete when his widow asked that a memorial be erected there.

Today, the town remains, small and little changed, a picturesque Victorian enclave, set in the ravine cut by the Lehigh river in the foothills of the Poconos.

Footnotes

¹Small original program. Dedication of Memorial Pulpit and Lectern. St. Mark's Church, All Saints' Day 1883. Collection of John Gunsser.

²The Church Standard. St. Mark's Parish, Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania. Vol. XXXI, No. 24, pp. 719-20.

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Verbal Boundary

All that certain Lot or piece of ground situate on the Southwardly side of Race Street, in the Borough of Mauch Chunk aforesaid numbered in the Plan or Plot thereof one (1) containing in front or breadth on said Race Street, thirty feet, and extending thence Southwardly, of that width between paralalled lines, at right angles with the said Race Street, in length or depth one hundred and fifty feet. Bounded Northwardly by Race Street aforesaid; Eastwardly by ground of the said Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of St. Mark's Church and by other ground of the said the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, Southwardly by lands of said company, and Westerly by Lot No. 2. Being part of a tract of land called the "Mauch Chunk Tract," which by sundry good conveyances and as assurances in the law now vested in the said surviving Trustees of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company.