

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Pennsylvania	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XVIII, Travel and Communication
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Allegheny Portage Railroad	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 900 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Between Johnstown and Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Lemon House is owned by Byron Roberts; other owners are the Pennsylvania Railroad, Bethlehem Steel, etc.	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant) <p>The Allegheny Portage Railroad was built 1831-34 to link the eastern and western sections of the Pennsylvania Canal. Constructed in 1826-34, at the height of the "canal era" of our history, the latter was the State of Pennsylvania's answer to the Erie Canal, completed in 1825. With the Allegheny Mountains seemingly an insuperable barrier in the western part of the route of this "main line of public works" from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, the unique Portage Railroad was devised, an engineering accomplishment, which Edward Stevenson, a noted English engineer of the time, compared favorably with European engineering feats at the Simplon Pass and Mount Cenis.</p> <p>Thirty-six miles long when completed, the Portage Railroad consisted of ten inclined planes with level track sections between--one of these, the so-called "long-level"--13 miles in length. Five planes overcame the nearly 1400-foot rise from Hollidaysburg to the Allegheny summit at Blair's Gap; five more--and a 900-foot tunnel, perhaps the first railroad tunnel in America--overcame the nearly 1200-foot drop to Johnstown. The planes varied in length from 1480 feet to over 3000 feet; the height thereby overcome ranged from 150 to 307 feet. At the head of each inclined plane were two stationary engines of about 3500 horsepower each which moved the endless rope to which the railroad cars were attached. Four cars, each capable of handling a 7000 pound load, were drawn up at once and as many let down at the same time; this operation could be performed from six to ten times in one hour. During the early years of the railroad operation, passengers had to transfer from the canal boats to the railroad cars, then transfer successively at each plane and each level of the railroad; on the levels between the planes the cars were first moved by horses; later steam locomotives were used. Soon, however, enterprising young John Dougherty had worked out an ingenious sectional boat system, by which sections of canal boats could be loaded on railroad flat cars for transport over the mountains--then, joined together, again floated down the remainder of the canal to the final destination. Under the Dougherty system passengers could travel the entire route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh without changing.</p>	
8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works) Edward Stevenson, <u>A Sketch of the Civil Engineering of North America</u>, quoted in William Bender Wilson's "The Evolution, Decadence, and Abandonment of the Allegheny Portage Railroad," in Part IV of the <u>Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1899</u> (Harrisburg, 1900), p. xii.	
9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.) Jesse L. Hartman, "John Dougherty and the Rise of the Section Boat System," in <u>Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography</u>, October 1945, pp. 294-314.	
10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION Excellent
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Frank Barnes	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Bethlehem Steel has a water pipe running through tunnel; rest not used.
15. TITLE Regional Historian	13. DATE OF VISIT July 5 & 6, 1962
16. DATE 12/5/62	

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/4 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplementary Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE Pennsylvania	NAME(S) OF SITE Allegheny Portage Railroad
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7. Importance and Description (cont'd.)

The most noteworthy of those sections of the railroad that remain extant today are: (1) the tunnel and its approach road, (2) the summit level, with the Lemon House, (3) the upper or western part of Inclined Plane No. 6, immediately adjacent to the summit level on the east, (4) portion of Inclined Plane No. 8 with presumed stone foundation remains of the engine house, (5) portion of Inclined Plane No. 2, outside Lilly. Of these remains, the first two are the most suitable for Park development. The balance of the Portage route is now built over by roads and/or modern railroads--most notably busy four-lane U. S. Route 22, which overshadows the entire length of its eastern half. That section of highway is cut through a very scenic section of forested mountainside.

Undergirding the Lilly-Portage Road at various points are several solidly-built stone culverts built originally for the planes and levels of the railroad--most notably a fine double-arched culvert at Lilly, crossing Bear Rack Creek.