CHAPTER 22

HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The collection of resources used to compile information on the history of the region include: Amity Township 2001 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan; articles and photographs from the "Reading Weekly Eagle"; St. Lawrence 1965 Comprehensive Plan Part Two: Development Proposals; National Register Listed & Eligible Properties (Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation); Exeter Township Comprehensive Plan Part One: Development Patterns (1965); Amity Township 1990 Comprehensive Plan; Exeter...the forgotten corner 225th Anniversary (collection of historic articles and accounts); and Amity First in Berks 250th Anniversary 1719-1969 (collection of historic articles and accounts)..

EXETER TOWNSHIP

One of the first European settlements in Berks County was made in the rich Oley Valley in the early 1700's because of the good soils, plentiful streams, and abundance of lumber. Most of these early settlers in the area were French Huguenots, Germans and English. In 1741, when the boundaries of Oley Township were established, it was discovered that over 50 families had been excluded. Many of these families grouped together and petitioned that they be able to establish their own Township. On December 7, 1741, this petition was approved, and the Township of Exeter was established.

Several famous people were born or had a homestead in the Township. There were several Boone families, however, the most well known Boone was Daniel Boone. Daniel Boone was born in the Township in 1734 and later became a famous pioneer. His homestead is now the property of the State.

Exeter is also the home of Abraham Lincoln's great-great-grandfather, Mordecai Lincoln. He had a homestead built in 1733, which is still standing on Heister's Creek.

The Manatawny section of Berks County, in which Exeter is located, was for many years active in iron production, but in the last half of the 19th century this industry died out almost completely. The change can be attributed to the trend in the late 1800's to localize iron industries at relatively few points near the source of raw materials.

Education and religion were closely connected in early Berks County history. A Quaker Meeting House was built in Exeter in 1725, but the denominations most prevalent were the Lutheran and Reformed churches, established by the Germans. The two German religions were very similar; in many cases a community built one church building which

both shared. These were called Union Churches. In Exeter, the Schwartzwald's Union Church was built 1747, and the Baumstown, Lorane, St. Lawrence and Stonersville Chapels were located in Stonetown, Neversink and Reiffton, respectively.

The German churches were supporters of education, which is why most of the original church schools were taught using the German language. They were semi-private schools; each pupil was required to pay a few cents per day tuition. This system continued long after the 1834 Common School Law was passed. However, because Exeter had a larger Friends population than many of the other Berks County communities, it was one of the first to establish English schools.

After 1900, Exeter's population has steadily increased. Between 1900 and 1960 the population increased from 2,503 to 8,488 persons. This growth can be attributed to suburban growth from Reading rather than local industries or agriculture. Reiffton, one of the first suburban communities, was developed shortly before and after the first World War. The town was named for the Reiff family, prominent in Berks County at the time. Suburban growth was at first limited to public transportation; however, the use of the automobile changed that trend. Its use for commuting purposes has led to further residential development. In 1927 the borough of St. Lawrence was incorporated from the western section of Exeter.

The village of Lorane was first established on land first purchased in 1835 by Isaac Kass from the Lincolns, who in those days owned a large portion of the Township. Seidel's Forge, a well-known landmark in the area, and was first owned and operated by H.C. Seidel, of Gibraltar, in 1870.

In the early days of the P. & R. Railway, patrons could board a train to go to Reading or Birdsboro, and in 1860 the railroad company built a station. The station was first known as Exeter Station. Petitions began to circulate proposing to change the name on account of a place in Luzerne County by the name of Exeter. Freight and mail were often sent to the wrong place. In 1900 both the post office and the railroad station was changed to Lorane, after Alsace-Lorraine in Europe, from which section a number of Exeter's early settlers came.

There were many successful industries that helped to shape the growth in the area. These included: Washington Kissinger's store, hotel in 1860, and first distillery; H.B. Levan opened a creamery in 1881, and a grove for a picnic area in 1892; James Toole operated a broom factory; in 1883 Henry Graeff built a dwelling and large poultry plant on Neversink street; in 1892, John H. Close and A.H. Kretz (operated by the name of Kretz & Close) built a distillery and a warehouse No. 1 having a capacity of 12,000 barrels, and in 1893, warehouse No. 2 having a capacity of 25,000 barrels (in 1894 the name was changed to Neversink Distilling Co., Ltd).

Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission:
Bureau for Historic Preservation
National Register Listed Properties
Exeter Township, Berks County

Historic Resource Site	Listed	Status Date	Address	Historic Importance
Daniel Boone Homestead Site & Bertolet Cabin	Listed	03/24/1972	2 mile North of Birdsboro	Famous pioneer and hunter Daniel Boone's homestead. Daniel Boone pioneered from Berks County to Missouri
John Bishop House	Listed	06/27/1985	L.R. 06110 & T-434	Georgian Style single dwelling home; played a significant role in Commerce

Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission:
Bureau for Historic Preservation
National Register Listed Properties
Exeter Township, Berks County Continued...

Historic Resource Site	Listed	Status Date	Address	Historic Importance
Boonecroft	Listed	07/26/1982	Oley Line Road. On (T-465)	George Boone Log house site; Erected 1720; Father of Daniel Boone the-Kentucky Pioneer-this Colonial Stone house built 1733.
Mordacai Lincoln House	Listed	11/30/1988	Lincoln Rd.	This House is a rare example of a stone settler's cabin as a primitive stone dwelling of the settlement period. One of the oldest houses in Berks County (built in 1733).
Mill Tract Farm	Listed	09/22/1977	Mill Rd. T-461, South of Limekiln Rd., Northeast Corner of Stonerville	This is an excellent example of an 18th cn. farm-mill complex. The great majority of the buildings date from the mid or late 18th cn. with a gristmill built in 1728; the Georgian section of the farmhouse was built by his son James who was uncle of Daniel Boone and remained in the Boone family until 1790.
Snyder Mill	Listed	11/08/1990	Oley Line Rd. at Monocacy Circle.	This mill is significant for its association with the county grist milling industry as it is representative of eighteen century custom mills

Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission:
Bureau for Historic Preservation
National Register Eligible Properties
Exeter Township, Berks County

Historic Resource Site	Eligible	Status Date	Address/ Location
Bishop-Tyson House	Eligible	06/14/1989	Rte. 422, Opposite Reading Country Club
Oley Line Hotel	Eligible	07/07/2000	800 Limekiln Rd.
Exeter Friends Meetinghouse	Eligible	04/14/1982	Boone Rd. T-465

Historical Marker's
PHMC Historical Marker Program

Marker Name:	Daniel Boone
County:	Berks
Date Dedicated:	1957
Marker Type:	Roadside
Location:	US 422, 2 miles SE of Baumstown
Category:	Misc.
	Marker Text: Greatest of American pioneers and wilderness scouts. Born on Nov. 2, 1734. Spent the first 16 years of his life on the Boone Homestead three miles to the north. This property is a State historical shrine and is dedicated to American youth.

Marker Name:	Daniel Boone
County:	Berks
Date Dedicated:	1947/4/1
Marker Type:	Roadside
Location:	US 422 westbound at SR 2041 just E of Baumstown; US 422 eastbound at Baumstown Union Sunday School
Category:	Misc.
	Marker Text: Greatest American pioneer and wilderness scout. Born Nov. 2, 1734. Spent the first 16 years of his life on the Boone Homestead a few miles north. Now a State historical shrine dedicated to American youth.

Marker Name:	Daniel Boone Homestead
County:	Berks
Date Dedicated:	1948
Marker Type:	Roadside
Location:	SR 2041 N of Baumstown
Category:	Misc.
	Marker Text: Here on Nov. 2, 1734, Daniel Boone was born and lived until 1750.

Marker Name:	Exeter Friends Meeting
County:	Berks
Date Dedicated:	19795/7
Marker Type:	Roadside
Location:	Meetinghouse Road, .5 mile S of PA 562 & 2 mile W of Yellow House
Category:	Religious
	Marker Text: Established 1725 as Oley; name changed to Exeter, 1742. Present stone meeting house built 1759 near site of two previous log structures. Buried here are members of the Boone, Ellis, Hughes, Lee, and Lincoln families. Meetings discontinued 1899; building reopened for worship in 1949.

Marker Name: Hopewell Village
County: Berks
Date Dedicated: 1947/3/29
Marker Type: Roadside
Location: US 422 east & westbound at PA 82, Baumstown
Category: Business & Industry

Marker Text: Hopewell Forge, 1744, and Furnace, 1770, were seven miles south. The furnace and the remains of an ironmaking community of the era are administered by the National Park Service, with recreation areas.

Marker Name: Lincoln Homestead
County: Berks
Date Dedicated: 1947/3/29
Marker Type: Roadside
Location: US 422 at twp. Road E of Mount Penn
Category:

Marker Text: Abraham Lincoln once wrote, "My ancestors were Quakers from Berks County, Pennsylvania." The stone house built in 1733 by his great-great grandfather is just south of here. It is still standing.

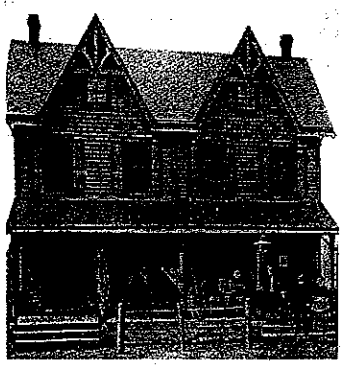
ST. LAWRENCE BOROUGH

Black Bear Inn, Rte. 42 2(Perkiomen Ave.) and Oley Turnpike Rd, in St. Lawrence/Exeter (established in the late 1700's); one of the best -known hotels in the county, rebuilt by F.P. Esterly in the late 1880's. This was made famous when the Thomas Edison film Company made a motion picture around "Black Bear Hill". The movie stars made the Inn their headquarters. In addition to a huge dance hall, it once had a picnic grove and a small zoo.. During the late 1930's, it was a night club that featured the liked of Jackie Gleason

According to Mr. Elmer H. Adams's historical collections and accounts, written in August, 1994, St. Lawrence was a small village, first called "Esterly" (named after a predominant land owner), which straddles the 1870 Oley Turnpike Road. Bordered by forest, field and stream, it was a self-sustaining village of tightly-knit families. Here stores like the Charles H. Adams' General Store, located next to the 1898 two-story, four room, brick schoolhouse, thrived because, prior to the automobile, the only available public transportation to the City of Reading was by the Reading to Birdsboro trolley line boarded at the Black Bear Inn, or by the Reading to Boyertown trolley of the Oley Valley Railway Company. The daily social life of the village revolved around the centrally located combination of schoolhouse and store.

St. Lawrence differed from neighboring villages because of the employment opportunities and the scope of personal services offered. St. Lawrence began around the location of the largest employers, which were the two woolen mills (the A.J. Brumbach Woolen Mill and the Esterly Woolen Mill), both established well before 1900. They were followed by the St. Lawrence Dairy, founded in 1888, which also employed many, the John F. Lutz Furniture and Undertaking business, founded 1884, and maintained a steady work force. The Behm Butcher Shop and the Adams Store employed local help as well, and all these companies had their employees located near their jobs. In the village, one could find the services of a family doctor, a veterinarian, a painter, a cabinetmaker, a plumber, and carpenters. A shoe repairman and a blacksmith were nearby at Jacksonwald.

From these beginnings followed the residential development of St. Lawrence. By the middle of 1890's, after the success of a popular brand of woolen goods manufactured at the mill, known as "St. Lawrence" woolens, villagers petitioned for a post office to be named "St. Lawrence." However, since there was an existing Post Office named "St. Lawrence" in Pennsylvania, the name "Esterly"



Charles H. Adams' General Merchandise store, 3550 Lawrence Ave. (Rte. 562), St. Lawrence Borough as it appeared in 1910. Erected in 1900 by William H. Adams

was assigned. St. Lawrence was incorporated as a borough in 1927, being separated from Exeter Township. In this manner, necessary improvements could be provided, including recreational facilities through acquisition of vacant land when the Oley Valley Railway Company discontinued service.

Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission:
Bureau for Historic Preservation
National Register Listed Properties
St. Lawrence Borough, Berks County

Historic Resource Site	Listed	Status Date	Address	Historic Importance
LeVan Farm	Listed	12/19/1978	Pa 562	The LeVan Family was an old French family who has owned this land for 246. The collection of farm structures helps to make the LeVan farm a good example of a working, self-sufficient farm; built 1837.
John F. Lutz Furniture Co. & Funerary	Listed	02/16/1996	3559 and 3561 St. Lawrence Ave.	This property contains three contributing 19th century resources: a combination house/shop, a warehouse/showroom, and a carriage house. It contains three buildings tightly arranged on a T-shaped, hillside lot. Historic functions: Domestic, single family dwelling; Industry/Manufacturing; Commerce/Trade; Specialty Store; Funerary

AMITY TOWNSHIP

Amity Township is the oldest incorporated Township in Berks County. The oldest structure, the Mouns Jones House is located in the Township. St. Gabriel's Church was the first congregation to be organized in Berks County.

The location of the Township influenced its history and development in various respects. Its location along the Schuylkill River made access possible, by both water and roads, to the eastern portion of William Penn's new colony. The accessibility to a great extent explains the settling of various nationalities in Amity Township.

The Swedes were the first people to settle within the present boundaries of Amity Township. In 1701 William Penn granted land for the settlement, known as the "Swedes Tract". This settlement, at Douglassville, called Morlatton by the early inhabitants of the region, is unique in the history of the County. It was not an extension of the frontier, cabin by cabin, as was the case in much of the westward movement in our Country. This

settlement was made by a group of Swedish people who had formerly resided along the Delaware River. A young Swedish pastor, Reverend Andrew Rudman, was the leader of this band of settlers. William Penn offered this tract to the Reverend.

By 1719, the settlement had progressed to the point that a need for the establishment of a local government was felt. According to the application that was presented to the court in Philadelphia, a request to form a Township to be called "Amity," from the Swedes Tract, which had an area of 10,500 areas, was officially presented. There was an actively functioning government in Amity Township during the period between its incorporation in 1719 and the validation of this action by the Court of Philadelphia County. Furthermore, the new municipality of Amity was recognized by the inhabitants of surrounding areas and by the officials of Philadelphia County. In addition to the Swedes, the English, Irish and Germans migrated into Amity Township. The fertility of the soils made Amity an attractive place for settlement. The population of Amity Township increased steadily during the eighteenth century.

HISTORIC SITES

There are many visible reminders in Amity of the Township's rich history. Homes of historic vintage, Pennsylvania Dutch bank barns, old churches and other structures are living evidence of Amity's formative social, agricultural and commercial development. The National Register of Historic Places includes five structures located in Amity Township and six eligible properties. Below are the tables that identify these resources.

Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission: Bureau for Historic Preservation
National Register Listed Properties
Amity Township, Berks County

Historic Resource Site	Listed	Status Date	Address	Historic Importance
Griesemer/Brown Mill Complex	Listed	11/08/1990	Browns Mill Rd. T-465, 2250ft. West of Limekiln Rd.	This complex is important for its association with the county gristmill industry, as it is representative of a pattern of mills that were part of family farms. Architecturally, this mill is a good representative of a country custom mill of the mid 19th century.
Old Swede's/ Mouns Jones House	Listed	01/21/1974	Old Philadelphia Pike	Small 2-½ story, stone house built in 1716 by one of the early settlers and is the oldest surviving house in Berks County. Mouns Jones, who, in 1701, along with fourteen other Swedes, took up 10,000 acres in what is now Amity Township, built the house. Mouns Jones had an excellent rapport with the local Indians and would serve as an agent from them in their dealings with the provincial government.

Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission: Bureau for Historic Preservation
National Register Listed Properties
Amity Township, Berks County Continued...

	Old Saint Gabriel's Episcopal Church	Listed	03/08/1978	Intersection of Rte. 422 & L.R. 06180	In 1801, Old St. Gabriel's was built to accommodate a parish that is believed to have been the first church in the county. The founding of St. Gabriel's was in 1720 in the first log church.
	Weidner Mill	Listed	11/08/1990	Blacksmith Rd. at Manatawny	Built in 1885, Two hundred years ago the waterpower at this site was first developed and as a result the resources on this property have been associated with milling in Berks County for Two centuries. Architecturally, this mill is a fine example of Berks County Victorian Style mill architecture.
	White Horse Tavern	Listed	04/21/1975	509 Old Philadelphia Pk.	2-1/2 story red sandstone structure in the Georgina style, originally constructed in 1765 located in present day Douglassville. This was the first permanent settlement within the bounds of what is now Berks County. It was a mustering and training site for Revolutionary War soldiers.

Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission: Bureau for Historic Preservation
National Eligible Listed Properties
Amity Township, Berks County

Eligible Historic Resource Site	Status Date	Address
Ben Franklin Inn	05/26/1992	Rte. 422 at Monocacy Creek Rd.
George Douglass House	05/18/2000	Old Philadelphia Pk.
Irey Mansion	05/18/1998	Rte. 422 (North side), 1000ft. West of Old Swede Rd.
Moyer's School	05/08/1990	Monocracy Creek Rd. L.R. 06179 at Junction with Rte. 422.
T.B. Charles Property	05/18/1991	Junction Rte. 562 & Rte. 662, Southeast Corner
Perkiomen Turnpike Milestone	05/08/1990	North Side of Rte. 422

Marker Name: De Benneville House
County: Berks
Date Dedicated: 1948/12/4
Marker Type: Roadside
Location: PA 622, 1.5 miles N of Yellow House
Category: Religious

Marker Text:

Built 1745 by Dr. George de Benneville, preacher in this area 1743-55, and founder of Universalism in America. He died in Philadelphia in 1793. The house is 2.25 miles away on a side road.

Marker Name: Fisher House

County: Berks

Date Dedicated: 1948/8/28

Marker Type: Roadside

Location: PA 622, 1.4 miles N of Yellow House

Category: Misc.

Marker Text:

This home, built 1801 by Henry Fisher, is a fine example of late Georgian architecture. Brought from the British Isles, this style is reflected in old homes of eastern and southern Pennsylvania.

Exeter, Amity, and St. Lawrence Joint Comprehensive Plan: Identification of Historic Resources

Exeter Township List of Historic Resources

Number	Historic Resource
1	Hill Mill; Wanner's Mill
2	Schofer Sawmill
3	Breiner Paper Mill; Rifle Boring
4	Moyer Tilt-Hammer; Seidel
5	Boyertown Trolley Bridge
6	Carsonia Park Area
7	Carsonia Inn
19	Trolley Bridge
23	Bechtel Grist Mill
24	Keim Clover Mill & Forge
25	Moyer & Yocum Forges; Althouse; Feed Mill; Police Home; Ice House
26	Exeter Tilt Hammer
27	Troxel Property
28	Dam & Race to Bishop Mill
29	Bishop Grist Mill; Wamsher's Mill
30	Bishop Mansion
31	Blacksmith Shop
32	Lincoln Sawmill
33	Seidel Steam Forge
34	#3 Furnace of E & G Brooke Iron Co.
35	Limekiln-Toll Gate #2, Oley Turnpike Road; Creamery; Eight-Cornered School; P.O.S.. of A. Hall; Snyder General Store; Post Office; Oley Line Hotel
36	Gehr Fulling Mill
37	Snyder Grist Mill
38	George Boone, Sr. Log Cabin 1720
39	George Boone, Sr. Stone House and Tannery 1733
40	Judah Boone Tilt-Hammer Forge 1824
41	James Boone Mine
42	Moses Boone Wheelwright Shop
43	George Boone, Jr. Grist Mill; 1st Mill in Town
44	Judah Boone Grist Mill; Bechtel Mill
45	James Boone Sawmill
46	Friends Meeting House, School and Cemetery
47	Christian Link Pottery
48	Mahlon Guldin Pottery
49	Daniel Boone Homestead
50	Toll Gate #1, Oley Turnpike
51	Jacksonwald Hotel
52	Hans Martin Gerische House 1741
53	Schwarzwald Lutheran Church
54	Schwarzwald U.C.C. Church; Stone School; Cemetery
55	Ritter Tavern

Exeter Township List of Historic Resources Continued	
Number	**Historic Resource**
56	Capt. Gechter's Washington Hotel; Bertie's Inn
57	Stonersville Hotel; Post Office
58	Stonersville Sunday School
59	Pet Cemetery
60	Jung-Young Private Cemetery
61	Ritter Private Cemetery
62	Heckler-Esterly Private Cemetery
63	DeTurck Private Cemetery
64	Monocacy U.B. Church
65	Perkiomen Turnpike Milestone
66	Old Baumstown Store; Post Office
67	Perkiomen Turnpike Toll House
68	Baumstown Sunday School; Former Cemetery
69	Dr. Baum's Hospital; "Strawberry Mansion"
70	Perkiomen Turnpike Milestone
71	King George Inn; Red Lion Inn
72	Exeter Bible Church
73	First Baptist Church
74	Greater First Baptist Church
75	Birdsboro Depot; Covered Bridge
76	Mordecai Lincoln House 1733
77	Yeich Family Cemetery
78	Perkiomen Turnpike Milestone
79	Lorane Distillery
80	Exeter Station' Lorane Station; Store; Post Office; Hotel
81	Lorane Chapel
82	Forest Hills memorial Park
83	Klapperthal Pavilion; Neversink mountain Gravity Railroad; Klapperthal Station
84	Perkiomen Turnpike 1/50 Milestone
85	Reformation Lutheran Church
90	Fairview Chapel Sunday School
92	Jacksonwald Building
93	Messerschmidt Private Cemetery
100	Baumstown One-Room Brick School
101	Fairview One-Room Brick School
102	2nd Fairview Brick School
103	Baumstown School; Flag Factory
104	Jacksonwald Stone School
105	Jacksonwald One-Room Brick School
106	Friends One-Room Brick School
107	Stonersville One-Room Brick School
108	Snydersville Stone School
109	Snydersville One-Room Brick School
110	Hill One-Room Brick School
111	Antietam One-Room Brick School
113	Allsort or Neversink One-Room Brick School; Neversink Sunday School

Exeter Township List of Historic Resources Continued	
Number	**Historic Resource**
114	Neversink 2-Room School; Bully Lyons Restaurant
115	Greentree or Suckertown One-Room Brick School
116	Centre or Stonetown One-Room Brick School; Stonetown Sunday School
117	Buttertown or Woodville One-Room Brick School
118	Lorane One-Room Brick School
119	Lorane Elementary School
120	Reiffton Elementary School' School Administration Building
122	Jacksonwald Elementary School
123	Exeter Junior High School
124	Exeter Senior High School
125	Exeter Township Building
126	Exeter Ambulance Association
127	Reiffton Fire Company
129	Stonersville Fire Company
St. Lawrence Borough List of Historic Resources	
Number	**Historic Resource**
8	Ideal Camp
9	Custer Fulling Mill
10	Brumbach Woolen Mill
11	Keller Paper Mill
12	Brumbach Oil Mill
13	DeHart Hat Factory
14	Breiner Oil Mill
15	Johnson Foundry; Griesemer Grist
16	Guldin Carding Mill; Hat Factory
17	LeVan Glue Factory, Ahrens Fertilizer Factory
18	Brumbach Woolen Mill; Esterly Woolen Mill
20	A.J. Brumbach St. Lawrence Woolen Mill
21	P.O.S. of A. Hall & Boarding House
22	LeVan Sawmill & Homestead
86	Black Bear Inn
87	Lutz Furniture Store
88	St. Lawrence Chapel; Community Hall
89	St. Lawrence Community U.C.C. Church
91	Esterly Post Office
112	Brumbach Stone School and St. Lawrence Brick School
121	St. Lawrence Elementary School
128	Lausch Elementary School
Amity Township Historic Resources	
Number	**Historic Resource**
130	Weidner Gristmill
131	Griesmer-Brown Mill Complex
132	St. Gabriel's Church & Chapel
133	White Horse Inn
134	George Douglass Mansion
135	Mouns Jones House
136	Covered-Bridge Keeper's House