

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

April 21, 2009

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PHMC APPROVES 21 NEW STATE HISTORICAL MARKERS
*NFL Films in Philadelphia, First Commercial Nuclear Generation Facility in
Beaver County Among New Markers*

Harrisburg – – The birthplace of NFL Films in Philadelphia and the site of the first commercial nuclear power generation facility in Shippingport, Beaver County, are among the 21 new state historical markers that have been approved by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

The new markers will be added to the nearly 2,200 familiar signs that dot roads and streets across the state that tell the story of people and events in Pennsylvania.

“State historical markers serve to inform people of the fascinating history of our state,” said PHMC Executive Director Barbara Franco. “Travelers seek out the markers and often use them as an opportunity to learn more about the subjects they cover.”

Existing markers tell the stories of Betsy Ross’ contribution to the Revolutionary War effort; the man who was one of the world’s foremost experts on Antarctica and inventor of the “Wind Chill Index;” a labor strike that led to legislation limiting work hours and prohibiting child labor; and an amusement park and recreational haven serving coal miners.

The signs are nominated by the general public and approved by the commission on an annual basis. Once approved, local communities plan public ceremonies to unveil the markers. For more information about the Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program, visit www.phmc.state.pa.us. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is the official history agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a list of the newly approved state historical markers, listed by county:

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

John M. Phillips, Pittsburgh, founder, board member and president of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. An engineer and industrialist, he became one of the most prominent names in conservation in the state. He also helped start the first Boy Scout troop in Pennsylvania.

Westinghouse Air Brake Co., Pittsburgh. Before the success of his electric company, George Westinghouse developed the air brake for railroads. It was an innovative engineering feat that revolutionized rail transportation, enabling trains to be longer, heavier, and faster, while also being safer.

Westinghouse Atom Smasher, Forest Hills. The nation's first industrial Van de Graaf nuclear generator was developed to seek out the secrets of nuclear energy as a source of practical power. The unusual pear-shaped structure has been designated an Electrical Engineering Milestone.

BEAVER COUNTY

Shippingport Atomic Power Station, Shippingport. The first commercial nuclear facility in the nation created specifically for generating electricity. Development was part of President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" plan.

BERKS COUNTY

Boyertown Burial Casket Co., Boyertown. Once the 2nd largest casket company in the world and one of the first publicly traded on the New York and Philadelphia stock exchanges, it was

an innovator in casket design and marketing. Many recognizable people throughout the world have been interred in Boyertown caskets.

BUCKS COUNTY

George Nakashima, Solebury Township. Considered one of the initiators of the American Craft Movement, he designed and built furniture in a unique style that combined Japanese craftsmanship, modernist aesthetic and appreciation of natural wood.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Pennsylvania's Largest Arrest for Civil War Draft Opposition, Bloomsburg. In response to opposition to the draft in Columbia County, 800 troops were sent to suppress the resistance. Forty four were arrested and imprisoned. The U.S. Supreme Court declared such arrests unconstitutional two years later.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Byron D. Benson, Titusville, was among the founders of the Tidewater Pipe Co. Their pipeline used a larger pipe and pumped oil a greater distance and to higher elevation than ever before, revolutionizing the transportation of crude oil.

John William Heisman, Titusville, legendary college football coach. The namesake of the coveted college football trophy, Heisman revolutionized the sport with the center snap, the hidden-ball play, the Heisman shift, and by promoting the legalization of the forward pass and other safety improvements.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Junkin Tent, site of the first Covenanter (Reformed Presbyterian) communion in the New World, New Kingstown. The event, presided over by John Cuthbertson, the first Covenanter minister in the United States, drew hundreds from the surrounding region.

ERIE COUNTY

Corry State Fish Hatchery, Corry, is referred to by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission as “the pioneer PA trout hatchery.” It is one of the earliest and longest continuously operating fish hatcheries in the state. In addition to supporting recreational fishing, it is instrumental in restoring species to native waters.

Oil Creek Railroad, Corry, revolutionized the transportation of oil from the surrounding oil region by rendering obsolete wasteful and dangerous pond freshets and time and labor intensive horse drawn wagons.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Mercersburg Members of the 54th Mass Regiment, Mercersburg. Mercersburg contributed the third highest per capita recruitment to the 54th Mass. Regiment - the most famous African American unit of the Civil War. It was second only to Philadelphia in Pennsylvania in volunteers.

LEHIGH COUNTY

Lock Ridge Iron Furnace, Alburdis, was the last furnace in the United States to use anthracite coal exclusively as fuel. Its partially restored ruins are some of last remaining evidence of the Lehigh Valley’s importance to the iron industry.

LYCOMING COUNTY

Julia C. Collins, Williamsport, a unique figure in American literary history, she is likely the first African American female novelist. The themes in several published essays (1864-1865) address black self-improvement, education, morality, and racial uplift at the possibility of freedom.

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia, in operation for more than 100 years, the company was the largest manufacturer of locomotives in the United States, producing locomotives for railroads across the nation and throughout the world.

Birthplace of NFL Films, Philadelphia. Beginning in 1962, NFL Films brought football into the forefront of popularity of American sports. Considered “one of the most effective propaganda organs in the history of corporate America,” its thorough documentation of NFL football is second only to that of World War II.

The Solitude, Philadelphia, country home of John Penn, William Penn’s grandson. An early example of neo-classical architecture, it incorporates many of the characteristics of the “Adam Style.”

Thomas E. Cahill, Philadelphia, founded Roman Catholic high school, the first free diocesan high school in the U.S. It served as a model for many Catholic and parochial schools across the nation.

Thomas Ustick Walter, Philadelphia. Architect of the Capitol dome in Washington DC, Walter was a successful neo-classical Philadelphia architect. He founded the American Institute of Architects and was instrumental in developing professional standards of architectural practice.

Wills Eye Institute, Philadelphia. The oldest facility in the United States for exclusively treating diseases of the eye, it has been consistently ranked among the finest in the nation. Many innovative treatments and procedures were developed there and its research has led to important discoveries.