United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Clemuel Ricketts Mansion

2. Location
street & number Rt. 210, Ganoga Lake

city, town Colley Township

3. Classification
Category
X building(s)

Ownership
X private

X X occupied

X unoccupied

X work in progress

X present use

Agriculture

Commercial

Educational

Entertainment

Government

Industrial

Museum

Park

Private residence

Religious

Scientific

Transportation

Military

Other:

4. Owner of Property
name Ganoga Lake Association, c/o Freda Shipley, President

5. Location of Legal Description
courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sullivan County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

6. Representation in Existing Surveys
title Historic American Bldg. Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date 1/21/35 PA.-210

X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington

state D.C.
Located in the wilderness, far removed from other facilities of comparable value and use, Rickett's Mansion was dubbed "Rickett's Folly" at the time of its construction. Nevertheless, the house is a stunning example of Georgian vernacular architecture. This L-shaped structure is built of field sandstone and measures 60' x 38'. The Rickett's Residence is two and one-half stories high with a gable roof and boxed cornices with returns. Three hooded dormers are located on the front facade roof. The main section is five bays by two bays with six over six, double hung sash windows. The first story windows have panelled shutters, and the second story has louvered shutters. A one-story full-length porch supported by paired square pillars lines the front facade. The elaborate Federal main entrance way has a spider-web like fanlight and sidelights.

To the rear of the main section is a two story, gable-roofed ell. Two story porches are located on the inner angle of the ell.

In 1913, a 40' by 26' addition was added to the right side of the main section. This addition is also two and one-half stories with a gable roof and pedimented dormers. Windows in this section are twelve over eight on the second floor and six over six on the first floor.

The interior of the residence retains its original woodwork and hardware. Total rooms are twenty-eight. The only alterations to the structure since 1913 have been to update its plumbing and to add electricity.

Also located on the property are a large frame barn and a one and one-half story stuccoed brick utility building.
8. Significance

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Specific dates 1852

Builder/Architect

Clemuel Ricketts

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in a very remote section of Pennsylvania, the Clemuel Ricketts Mansion is an outstanding example of late Georgian vernacular architecture. A monument to the tenacity and vision of its builder, Clemuel Ricketts, the mansion was one of the first resorts in a region of the state that is now known for such establishments.

An avid sportsman, Clemuel Ricketts in 1850 purchased 5000 acres of land surrounding Long Pond (now Ganoga Lake) with hopes of building his own hunting and fishing lodge. Well traveled and very knowledgeable of architectural style, Ricketts designed his mansion and began construction in 1851. Throughout its construction, the mansion was ridiculed as "Ricketts' Folly" because of the apparent difficulties of building in such an untamed area. However, when completed in 1852, the mansion was admired as a remarkable achievement.

When finished, Ricketts Mansion looked much as it does today. Built of field sandstone, the residence was two and one-half stories high, had a low pitched gable roof and was five bays by two bays. Rather than a folly, the mansion stood as a fine example of civilization amidst the wilds of rural Pennsylvania.

Following its completion in 1852, the mansion was operated as a tavern and residence. After the Civil War, Colonel Robert Bruce Ricketts, son of Clemuel, purchased the residence and accompanying 5000 acres. By 1872 the Colonel had gained control of almost 60,000 additional acres (the acreage is now part of Ricketts Glen State Park) and established a lumber business on the property near the house. A year later, using lumber cut in his mill, Ricketts erected a three story hotel adjacent to the mansion. For thirty years the hotel, called the North Mountain House, attracted a steady flow of seasonal guests, many of whom were friends and relatives of the Colonel. Some of the regular visitors came from as far away as New York and Philadelphia. Despite profits, Ricketts became disenchanted with the hotel business and closed his hotel in 1903. A short time later the building was razed and replaced by an expansive garden.

In 1876, three years after the North Mountain House opened, a summer camp for boys, one of the first of its kind, was established on Ricketts' property. The camp offered summer instruction in aquatic sports, fishing, rowing, hiking, drawing and painting. Though the camp existed for only two years it was among the earliest summer camps ever established.

In 1913 the mansion underwent a number of alterations. Dormers were added to the original roof, a chimney was replaced and a second story porch was restored. A new 40' x 26' wing was also added to the northeast side of the main building. The only other changes to the structure since 1913 have been modern plumbing and electrical facilities.

The 1935 Historical American Buildings Survey selected Rickett's Mansion as an outstanding architectural structure and included it in that year's survey. Detailed architectural plans delineate elevations, floor plans, and architectural details and materials. The plans reveal the fine qualities that have been preserved since the erection of the mansion in the 1850's.
Overlooking Ganago Lake in Sullivan County, Ricketts's Mansion is a fine example of late Georgian vernacular architecture. One of the first mountain resorts in north central Pennsylvania, the mansion ultimately represents the manifestations of one man's architectural dream preserved within the wilderness for over a century.
9. Major Bibliographical References
Ricketts, Clemuel. Notes of Travel in Europe, Egypt and the Holy Land including a visit
to the city of Constantinople in 1841 and 1842. (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, Printer, 1844.)
Ricketts, William R. Text from HABS Study, 1935

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.15
Quadrangle name Red Rock, PA

UTM References

A _ 18 _ 3819 600 415 718 51710
Zone Easting Northing

B _ 118 _ 3819 5160 415 718 41210
Zone Easting Northing

C _ 18 _ 3819 41610 415 718 5100

D
E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification
The area within the surrounding Drives: starting at a point on the eastside of Drive
moving NE 500', then SW along Drive 500', then NW along Drive 375'.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Teresa B. McDonald
organization Ganoga Lake Association
date 1980

street & number 216 Church St.
telephone N/A

city or town Kingston
state Pa.

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state X 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

Larry E. Tise, State Historic
Preservation Officer
date 4/14/93

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