

Tips & Tricks for a Successful Historical Marker Application

PA State Historic Preservation Office
September 2020



Welcome!

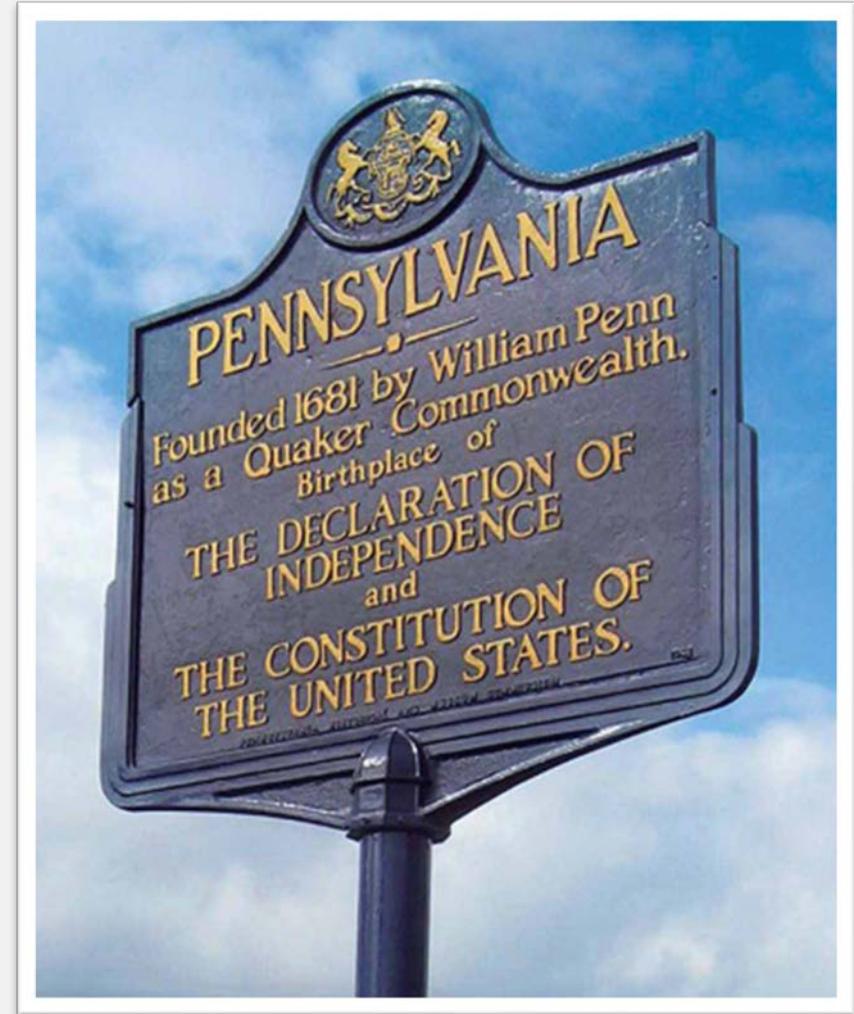
Purpose

1. Overview of Pennsylvania's Historical Marker program & application
2. Review some common pitfalls and misunderstanding and examples of good subjects
3. Tips for a successful application



PA's State Historic Preservation Office

- Official historic preservation agency for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- A bureau within the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC)
- Administers federal historic preservation programs in PA and state programs authorized by the State History Code



Historical Marker Program

- Established in 1913 to capture the memory of people, places, events, and innovations that have affected the lives of Pennsylvanians throughout history
- Bronze plaques erected on boulders or stone monuments - first dedicated in 1914
- ~ 150 plaques erected through the 1930s.



Historical Marker Program

- PHMC created in 1945
- First roadside marker dedicated in September 1946



Early Markers told stories primarily about...

- Native Americans
- European Settlers
- Government and Politics
- Military

Historical Marker Program

Today, close to 2,500 markers and plaques

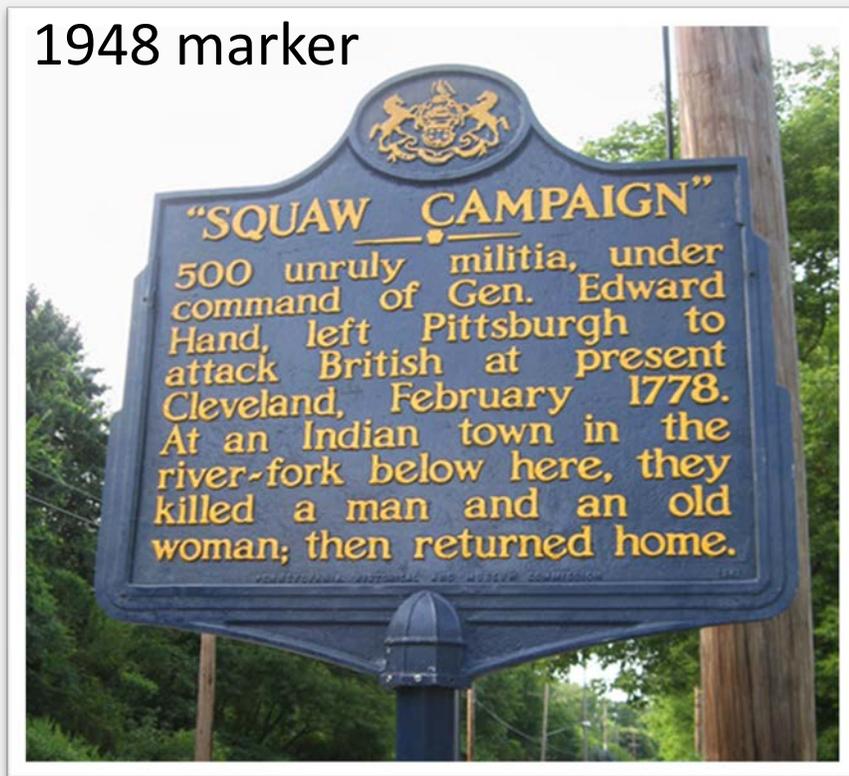


As the program evolved, marker topics expanded to stories about...

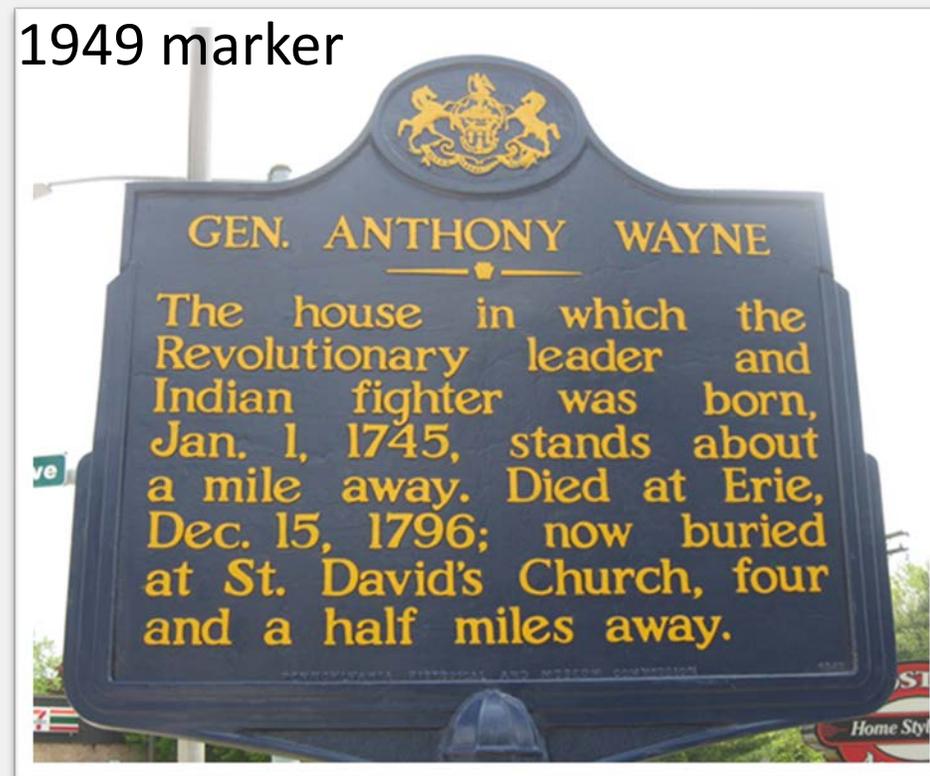
- Athletes
- Entertainers
- Artists,
- Civil Rights
- Scientific advancements
- Industry
- And much more!

Marker Text Evaluation

1948 marker



1949 marker



PHMC's Plan to Evaluate Historical Markers:

pahistoricpreservation.com/phmcs-plan-evaluate-historical-markers/

Application Basics

Annual deadline for submitting nominations is **December 1!**

Nominations for historical markers may be submitted by any person or organization.



Application Basics



12 complete application packets – nomination form & supporting materials – required.



Forms available online @ www.pahistoricalmarkers.com

OR email kgalle@pa.gov



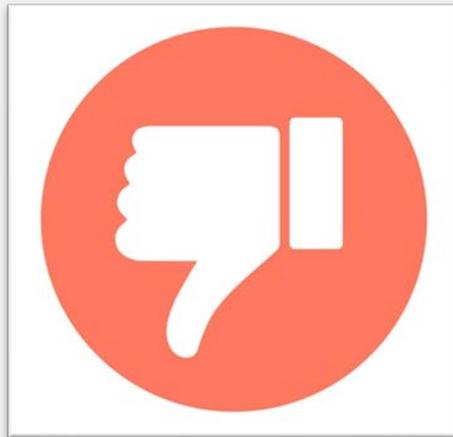
Submissions must be postmarked by December 1, 2020 to be considered in 2021.

Application Basics

- Nominations reviewed by PHMC staff and independent panel members December through early February.
 - Nominations evaluated on their individual merit – do they meet the Approval Criteria?
 - Criteria for Evaluation & Guidelines available with forms.
- Commission votes on panel's recommendations usually in March.



11 Criteria for Approval



Highlights:

- ✓ Nomination is clear and organized; facts claimed are documented & verified
- ✓ Significant impact on its times with statewide and/or national historical significance.
- ✓ Substantial connection to Pennsylvania.
- ✓ Places of Worship and cemeteries/burial places are generally not approved

Approved Markers

- Nominators responsible for costs of marker
- PHMC assumes ownership & maintenance after dedication



Marker Dedications

- Coordinator works with local organizers to:
 - Develop a text
 - Arrange for manufacture
 - Coordinate installation
- Most dedicated at public events

Each dedication presents opportunities for Pennsylvanians to celebrate and understand their heritage!



PHMC's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access Initiative

- ✓ Committed to covering costs for under-represented subjects and counties in the state
 - African American, LGBTQ, and Women's history outside of Philadelphia
 - Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander
 - Counties with less than 15 markers – many in the Northern Tier or rural counties
- ✓ Nominate little-known subjects to bring greater awareness
- ✓ Highlight varied perspectives



Underrepresented Topics & Places



Questions?



Common Pitfalls: Applications



- Adequate documentation is not provided
- Subject's significance does not rise to the statewide or national level
- Pennsylvania connection is not sufficient
- Subject is not unique - numerous similar subjects exist throughout the state

Common Pitfalls: Subjects

- Military heroes and political figures that served in state and/or federal offices may not be good candidates
- National Register properties are not guaranteed a marker
- Being the oldest in existence does not automatically make the subject significant

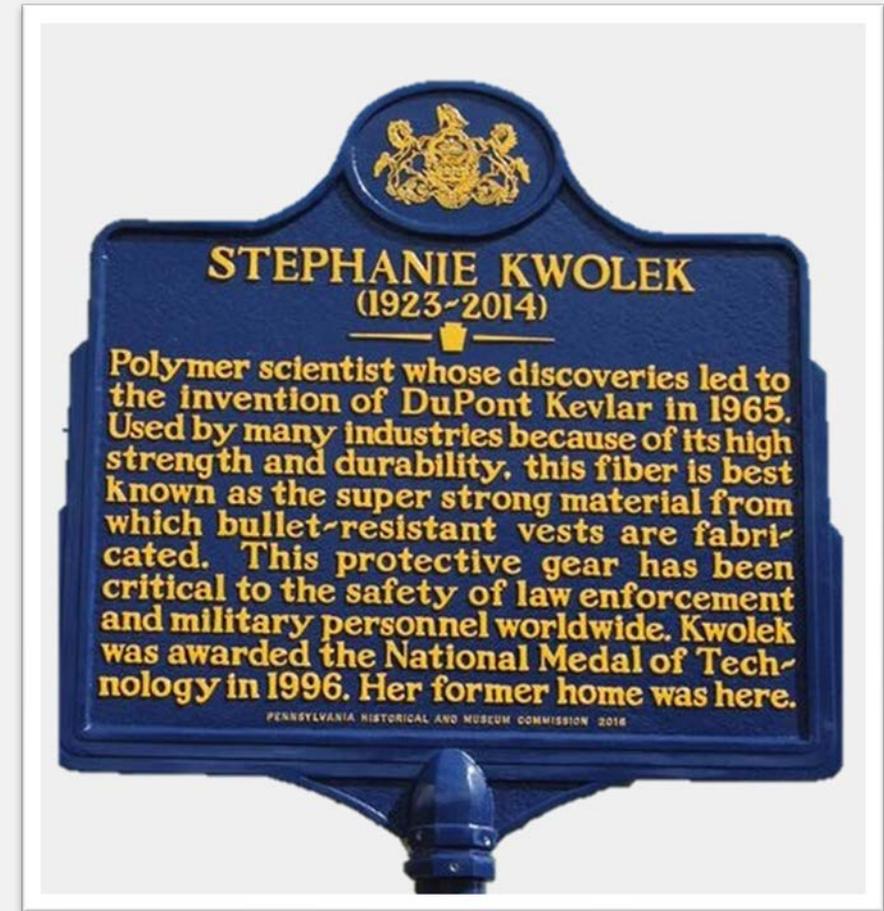
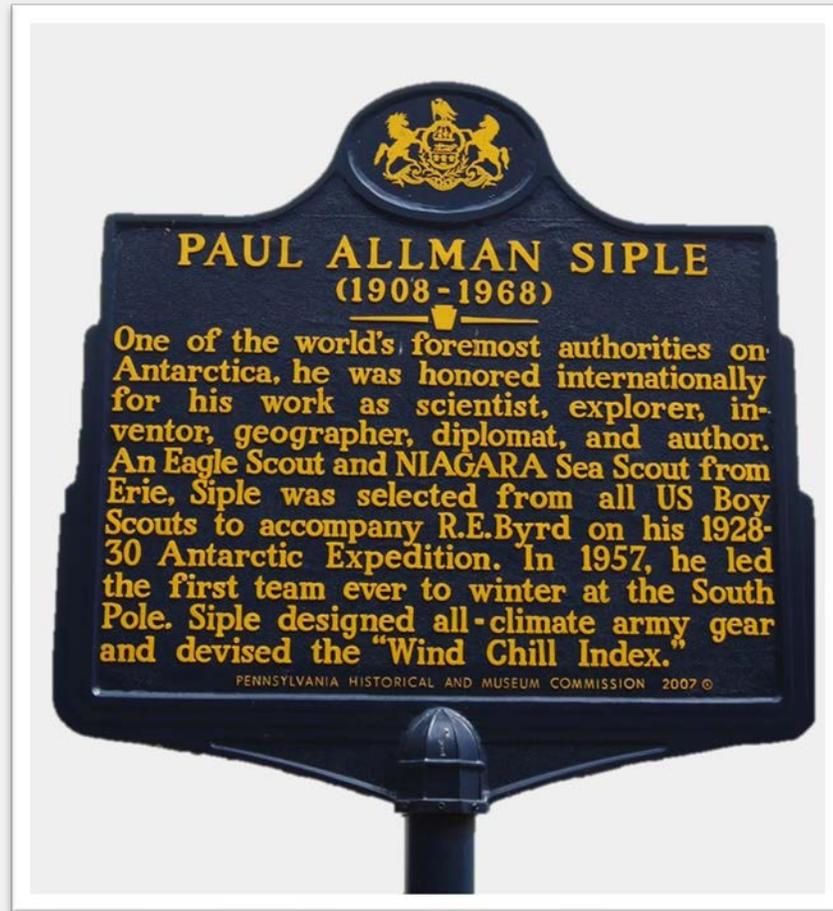


To Increase Chances for Approval:



- ✓ Read and understand the Approval Criteria and Guidelines provided with the nomination form.
- ✓ Focus nomination on the subject's broad significance – must have had impact on the entire state or nation.
- ✓ Consider preparing a draft nomination for staff review to get feedback prior to submitting final nomination.

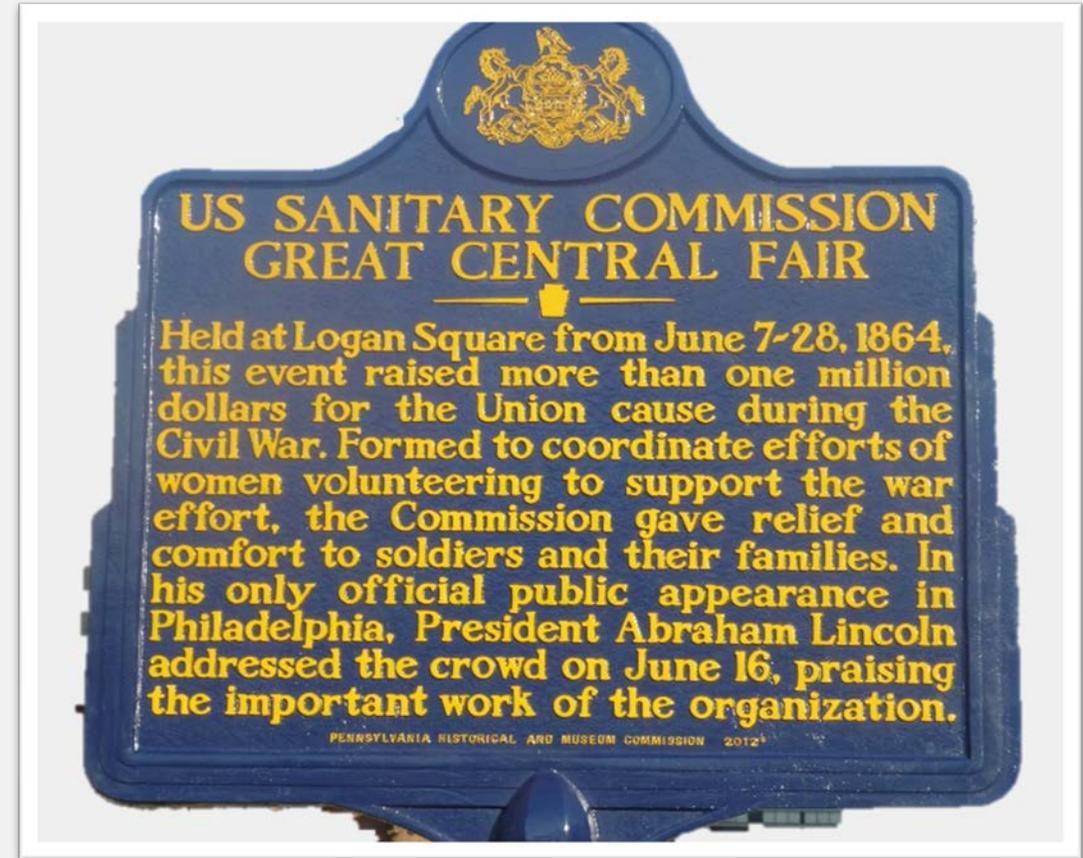
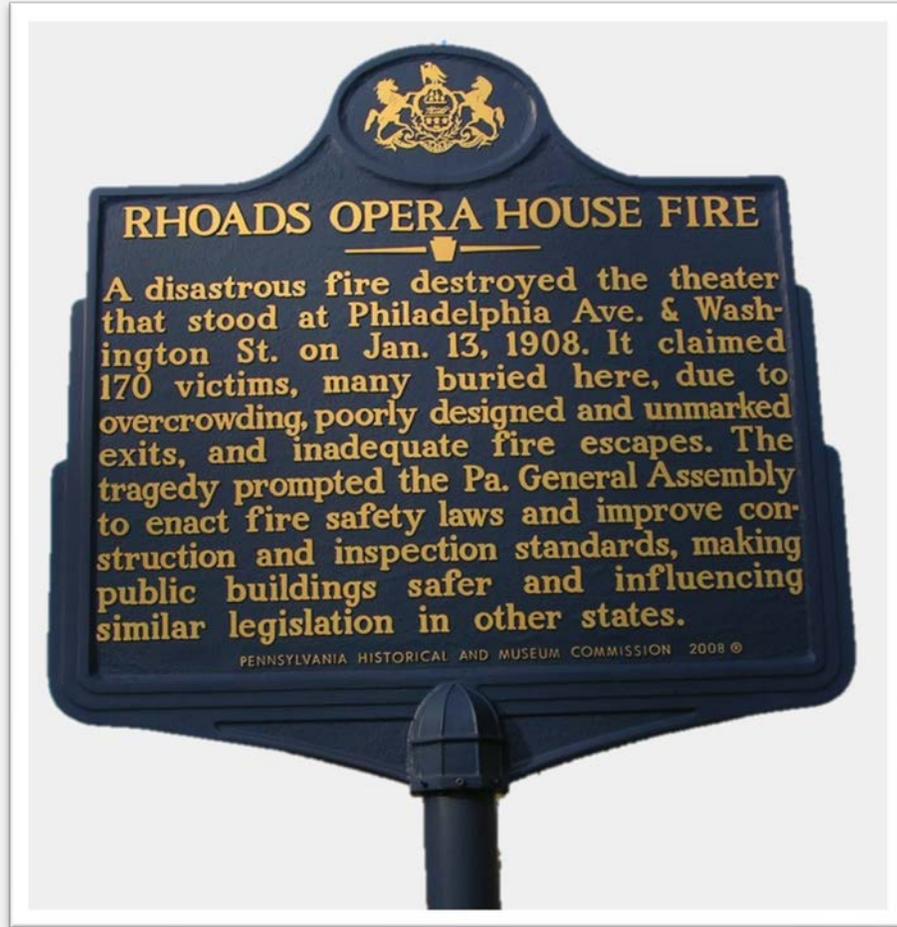
Marker Examples: People



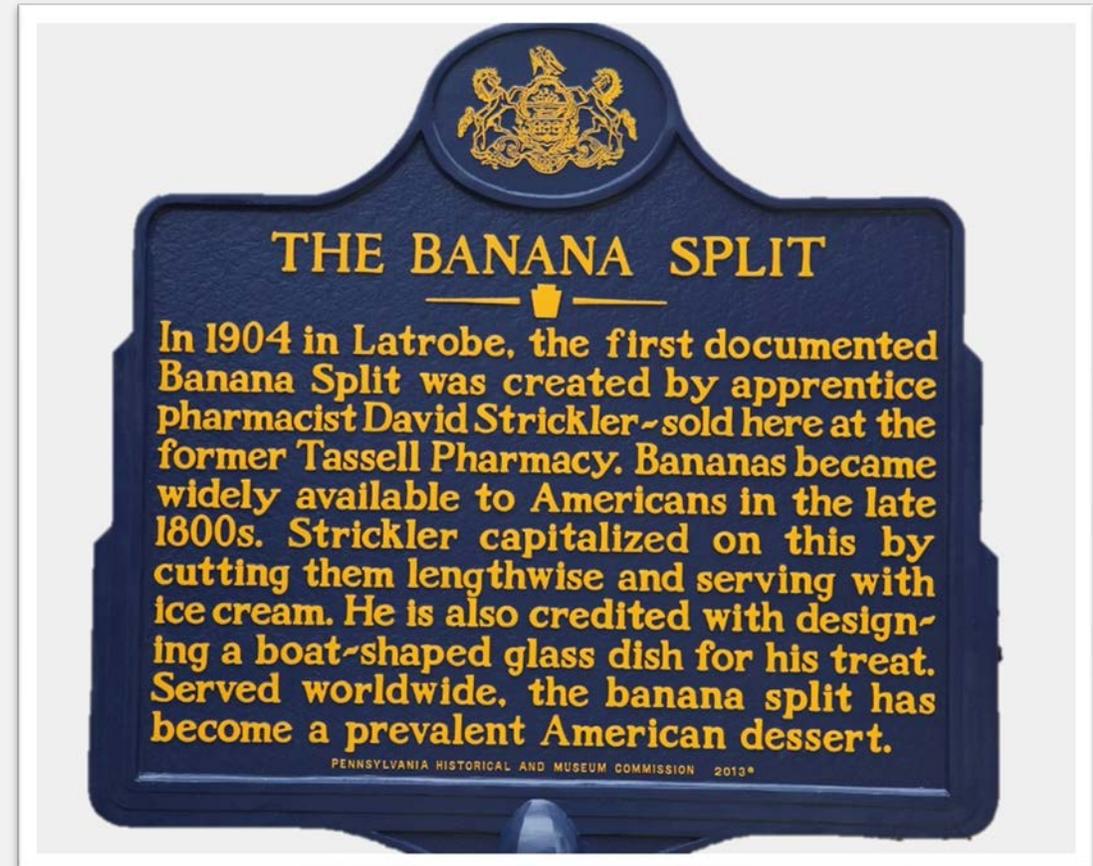
Marker Examples: Place



Marker Examples: Event

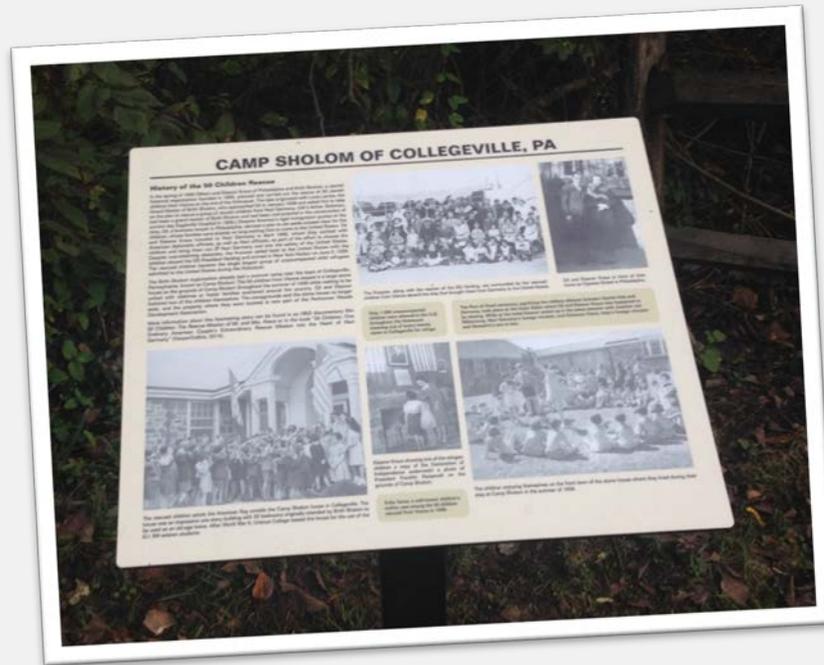


Marker Examples: Innovation



Key Take-Aways

- Review the Approval Criteria and Nomination Guidelines
- Consult with marker staff
- Consider erecting your own local markers



Questions?

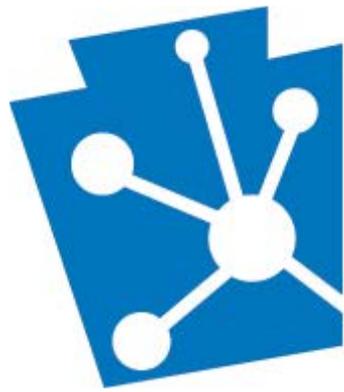


For More Information



www.pahistoricalmarkers.com

- History of Marker Program
- Calendar of Marker Dedications
- Marker Nomination Forms
- Searchable Database of PHMC Markers
- Additional Resources
- Markers Approved in Recent Years



PA-SHARE

PA's State Historic & Archaeological Resource Exchange



Integrated on-line database management system and spatially-enabled application with GIS technology that will be the primary interface for all program areas within the SHPO



4 REASONS TO MAKE PA-SHARE PART OF YOUR PLANS.

Convenience

PA-SHARE is an innovative platform designed to streamline every project.

Connections

PA-SHARE unites PA SHPO information and will make it easier for you to track submissions in real time.

Efficiency

PA-SHARE eliminates the need for paper submissions and responses & introduces Surveyor.

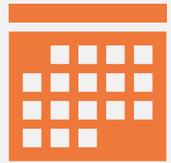
Options

PA-SHARE will include four levels of access to accommodate user needs for interacting with PA SHPO.

What You Need to Know



Current system, CRGIS, will go “read-only” in December 2020



Expecting deployment in January 2021

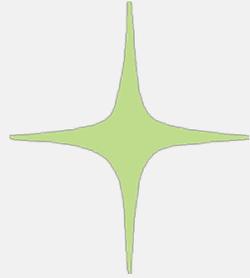


PA SHPO will offer in person, on-line, and on-demand training and help desks



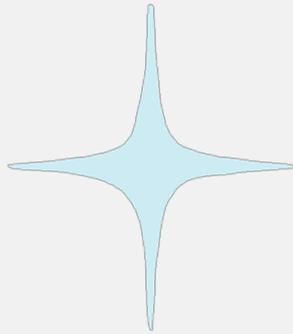
Sign up for PA-SHARE newsletter to stay informed @ pahistoricpreservation.com/countdown-share

Stay Connected!



PA SHPO Blog

pahistoricpreservation.com



PA SHPO newsletters

[Keystone Preservation Post](#)

[Keystone Preservation Bulletin](#)

[Historic Metal Truss Bridge Newsletter](#)

[PA-SHARE](#)

Contact Information

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Thank You for
Joining Us!