

# Spanning the Gap

## Designated Historic



What makes a building, site, district, or landscape historic? Who makes these designations? What does it mean? These questions are often asked, but the answers are typically

confusing and complicated. Within the recreation area and throughout the United States, there are scores of properties which carry a historical designation of one type or another in order to identify and protect the property.

A building, site, district, structure, or object may not be considered "historic" just because it is old. Often, other factors that give the property significance are more important than age alone. Factors may include historical events, architectural style, site development or archeology. Of these, the level of significance may vary from local or state significance to national or even world significance. The federal government and each state, as well as many local governments, maintain lists of historic properties that have been recognized as important elements from our past.

Receiving a historic designation for a property is the result of what can be a lengthy process. An individual with knowledge of history or a government agency historian assesses the significance of the property and determines that it should be identified as historic and *preserved*. The individual or agency researches the property and completes a historic



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The farmhouse at Broadhead Farm (Heller's Farm), called "Wheat Plains" PA.



Jacob Shoemaker House PA.



Famhouse at Silver Spray Farm (Houck Farm) NJ.

listing nomination form provided by the local, state, or federal government. The appropriate agency will evaluate the nomination and determine if the property meets the criteria for designation. Finally, if the property meets the criteria, it is then designated historically significant. If designation is denied at one level, such as the national level, it may still be designated historic at a state or local level. It should be noted that while a property may be designated at a state or national level, many local governments are just beginning to identify historic properties and are not prepared to make official designations.



Fanlight over the front door, Richard Layton House ("1812 House") NJ.

*(Above, left)* The springhouse at Cold Spring Farm PA.