

Archaeological and Historical Consultants, Inc.

**Expanded Historic Context
Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District**

**City of Butler
Butler County, Pennsylvania**

E.R. # 92-2959-019

**Prepared for:
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Engineering District 10-0**

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The Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District encompasses a group of nineteenth and twentieth century industries that contributed to the economic growth of Butler and the surrounding region. The historic district extends along the valley of Connoquenessing Creek as it passes through the City of Butler, extending beyond the City limits to both the northeast and southwest. Background research showed the relationship between these industries and the overall growth of Butler. A historic context was developed for the Industrial Corridor, describing the trends reflected in the development of each Zone within the historic district and the histories of the individual industries. The potential for further research was also assessed. The potential for archaeological research was found to be limited to a few locations where information is most likely to have been preserved. However, historic research was shown to have the potential to yield significant information relating to research issues, through both documentary research and oral history interviews.

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1.1 Purpose and Need

The Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District was identified during Section 106 consultation for the proposed Wayne Street Bridge replacement project (SR 0356, Section 250), in the City of Butler, Butler County, Pennsylvania (Figure 1). The proposed project would replace the deteriorating bridge, a viaduct built in 1914 to carry Wayne Street over Connoquenessing Creek and three sets of railroad lines on the floodplain. In compliance with historic preservation statutes and regulations, a historic structure inventory and determination of eligibility study identified above-ground historic resources subject to potential impacts from the project and evaluated their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (Miller et al. 1993). Although not identified in the initial study, the Butler Industrial Corridor was identified as an historic district in subsequent consultation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). In a Determination of Effect study (Rue 2002), the project was identified as having an adverse effect on the historic district.

A geomorphological survey was conducted to assess the potential for intact archaeological resources in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) of the bridge replacement project (Rue 2002). The results indicated that most of the APE was disturbed and had no archaeological potential. However, one small area revealed the presence of intact alluvial soils beneath deep fill. The intact soils had the potential to contain both precontact and historic archaeological resources. This area of intact soils was associated with the proposed placement of a pier, located in an active railroad yard. Due to the presence of deep fill overlying this deposit and its location within the rail yard, archaeological testing of the intact soils was not considered feasible.

The study presented herein was proposed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as mitigation of the adverse effect to the Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District, in accordance with this project's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Additionally, this study is one component of an alternative to archaeological investigation within the APE, together with a geomorphological survey of the valley of Connoquenessing Creek. The current study synthesizes information on Butler's historic industries. It includes a historic context, with a narrative description and identification of property types, followed by an assessment of research issues.

1.2 Project Description

The proposed Wayne Street bridge replacement project would involve replacement of the existing two-lane bridge with a new two-lane structure on a new alignment to the south of the existing alignment. The construction project would impact the Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District, which was determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The project area is located in the Pittsburgh Plateaus section of the Appalachian Plateaus physiographic province of western Pennsylvania (Socolow 1980). The Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District lies in a valley drained by Connoquenessing Creek and its tributaries. The creek

flows southwest through Butler, then west to join Slippery Rock Creek in Ellwood City. Four miles below this confluence, the Connoquenessing flows into the Beaver River, which in turn flows into the Ohio River at the town of Beaver. The terrain of the area is generally characterized by rolling hills and narrow valleys in a generally dendritic drainage pattern. In the vicinity of Butler, the valley of Connoquenessing Creek is narrow where it is constricted by adjacent hills, alternating with broader areas of floodplain on one or both sides of the creek where the valley is wider.

The Butler Industrial Corridor generally follows the contours of the valley floor through the narrower and wider areas, only extending onto the adjacent hill slopes in a few locations (Figure 2). In the central part of Butler, the Industrial Corridor is bounded to the north by the Butler Historic District and to the south by the South Butler Historic District, each of which extends over the hills adjacent to the valley floor. To the northeast and southwest, the Butler Industrial Corridor extends beyond the limits of the Borough of Butler. To facilitate detailed discussion of the Industrial Corridor, it has been divided into seven geographic zones, which are identified in order of historical development (Figure 1).

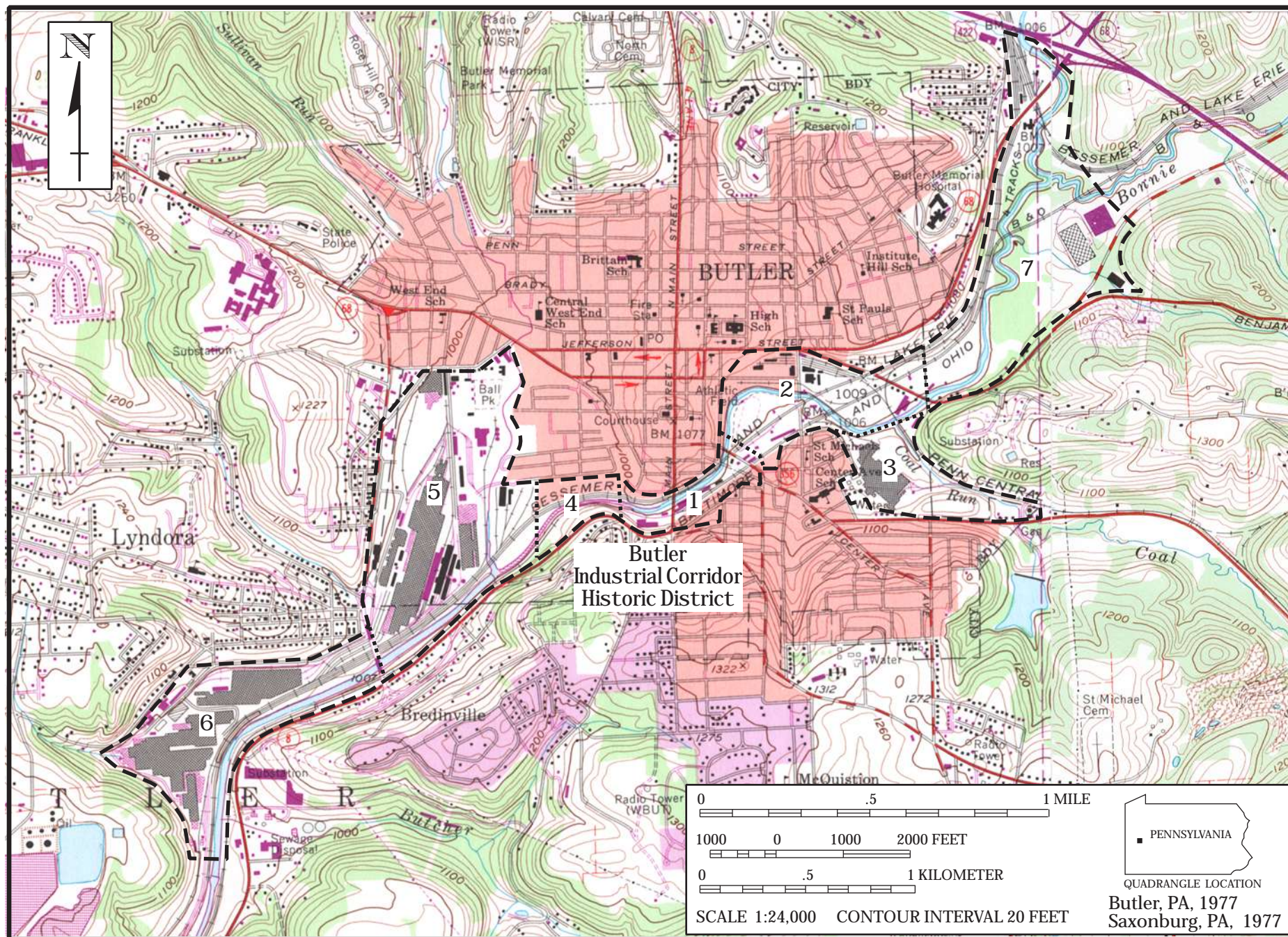


Figure 1 Butler Industrial Corridor, Keymap of Zones Within the Historic District (USGS 1977 a, b)

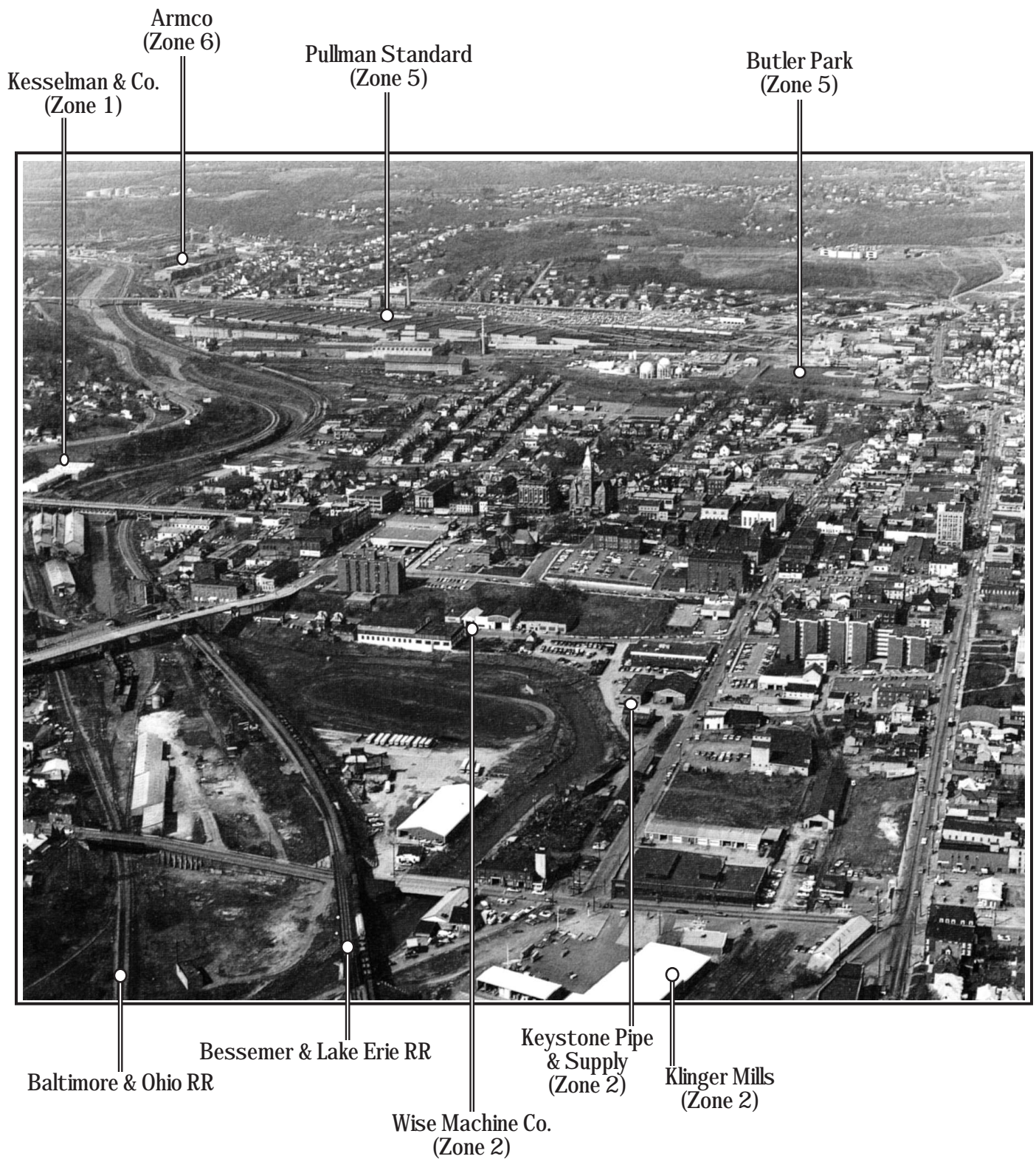


Figure 2 Aerial View of Butler, Looking West c. 1977 (Pozar and Purvis 1994:170)

2.1 Background Research Methods

Background research was undertaken both to develop a general social and economic history of the region and to investigate the history of specific industrial resources within the Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District. Background research included a review of the collections at Pattee and Paterno Libraries of the Pennsylvania State University at University Park, the genealogy collection at the Butler County Free Library in Butler, and the collection at the Butler County Historical Society in Butler.

Background research included a non-comprehensive review of primary sources such as county tax records and deed books, to determine the date of construction and ownership of historic resources. A literature review included examination of county and regional histories, pictorial histories, and histories of individual companies or industries. Historic maps and atlases were also examined, including several undated, hand-drawn maps at the Butler County Historical Society. The collection of Sanborn Insurance Company maps available on microfilm at the Pennsylvania State University was examined in detail for information on the identification of industries and their period of operation. Detailed information about specific resources in the Butler Industrial Corridor was entered into a dataset, which could be sorted by date or by zone within the historic district. Although some details about businesses were derived from older county histories, most of this information was drawn from Goldinger's two histories of Butler (Goldinger & Feters 1994; Goldinger 1999) and from a collection of newspaper articles (Butler Eagle 2001). However, compilation of this information revealed numerous inconsistencies in data such as when a business opened or changed its name. Because these differences could not be resolved without extensive further research, the conflicting entries have been included in the dataset, which is included in Section 6.0.

Documentary research was followed by field survey of the historic resources. A detailed survey had already been undertaken for historic resources within the APE for the bridge replacement project (Miller et al. 1993), which included black and white photography and notes on the approximate age, condition, function, and construction of structures. A less comprehensive field survey of the entire Butler industrial Corridor was undertaken for the current project. This included digital photography of individual resources or overviews of parts of the historic district, together with notes on the presence or absence and current condition of historic properties.

Background research resulted in the development of a general history that places the Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District in the broader context of regional social and economic growth, which is presented below in Section 2.2. Background research also contributed to the description of the seven zones that make up the historic district (which are described in Section 3.0) and the identification of general trends for further archaeological or historic research (which are reviewed in Section 4.0).

2.2 Background History

2.2.1 Exploration and Conflict (1635-1794)

In proto-historic times, western Pennsylvania provided agricultural, hunting, and gathering lands for the Erie to the north, and the Monongahela to the south. The Erie inhabited the area south of Lake Erie and west of Chautauqua Lake. The Monongahela occupied the Monongahela River drainage area. Both groups were related culturally and linguistically to the Iroquois of present-day southern New York (White 1978:412).

The fur trade wars (approximately 1630-1680) dramatically altered the distribution of Native American populations in present-day western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. The Five Nations of Iroquois had exclusive access to firearms and ammunition and raided throughout the northeast in search of furs and the European goods bought with furs. Some raids occurred as far west as present-day Illinois and as far south as present-day North Carolina (Hunter 1978:590). The Native Americans in western Pennsylvania were defeated, assimilated, or dispersed early in the wars. The French Jesuit missionaries recorded a climactic defeat of the Erie in 1654 (White 1978:416). The Erie may have originally lived along the shores of Lake Erie, and were forced to withdraw south onto the Allegheny Plateau as the fur trade wars progressed (Hunter 1978:588).

Because no European recorded a visit to either an Erie or a Monongahela village, the evidence for their technology, social organization, and ideology is drawn from second-hand documentation and archaeological evidence. The Monongahela were dispersed or destroyed about 1635 (Johnson 1990:11-12; White 1978:412). The Erie were dispersed by the Seneca, the westernmost of the Five Nations of Iroquois, in the years 1654-1656 (White 1978:415-416).

The Seneca did not settle the areas they conquered; like other Nations of Iroquois, they settled refugees there instead. The Shawnee, who were originally from present-day Ohio and sought refuge in eastern Pennsylvania, were settled along the lower Allegheny River. The Lenape, later called Delaware, were from eastern Pennsylvania and settled along the lower Allegheny and upper Ohio Rivers in the period 1720-1750 (Hunter 1978:590-592). As a result, many of the Native American names for the natural features of western Pennsylvania are Lenape and Shawnee, rather than Erie.

Seneca domination of western Pennsylvania lasted over a century. The Seneca sided with the French during the French and Indian War (1753-1762), and took part in Pontiac's Conspiracy (1763-1764). At the battle of Bushy Run (1763) Colonel Henry Bouquet, with English regular and provincial soldiers, opposed Lenape chief Custaloga and Seneca chief Guyasuta, who led a group of Lenape, Shawnee, and Seneca soldiers. Later, the Seneca reluctantly joined the British during the American Revolution (1775-1783). During that war, Colonel John Brodhead led an American attack on Seneca villages on the upper Allegheny, destroying many of them (Wallace 1987:39-40). Following the Revolution, in 1784 and 1785, the Seneca sold their claim to western Pennsylvania to the new government. Hostilities continued in western Pennsylvania by small groups of displaced Native Americans, including disaffected Seneca, until the defeat of a Native American army by General Anthony Wayne at Fallen Timbers (present-day Toledo) in Ohio in 1794.

Legal claims to the lands of Western Pennsylvania include the first treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, called the New Purchase, between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Pennsylvania provincial government. These lands became United States territory following the Revolutionary War. The second treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1784 (the Last Purchase) ceded territory west of the Allegheny River to the United States (Agnew 1887:13-32). The newly formed Pennsylvania government used portions of these lands as payment for services rendered by veterans in the War. In 1783 Pennsylvania legislators passed several acts allowing large tracts of western Pennsylvania lands to be set aside as 'Donation' lands. These lands were to be distributed by lottery, with the number of tickets drawn or the size of the tract determined by an individual's former military rank. Generally, the higher an individual's former rank, the more tickets or larger parcels to which the veteran was entitled.

Related period legislation allowed the creation of 'Depreciation' lands. These lands were established in hopes of countering some of the economic instability from which the newly formed United States was suffering. Tracts of land could be purchased by transfer of "Certificates of Depreciation" issued by the Commonwealth in place of cash (Brown 1895:38). Settlement of the area was slow due to the Native American unrest, which continued until Wayne's victory and the subsequent 1795 Treaty of Greenville.

Political organization followed the military and diplomatic successes. Prior to 1773 the western frontier of Pennsylvania was included in Bedford County. In 1773 Westmoreland County was established. Initially it included the area of present-day Butler County. Washington County was formed from a portion of Westmoreland in 1781, and Allegheny County was formed from a portion of Washington County in 1788. At that time, Allegheny County contained the land that would later form Butler County (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:40).

2.2.2 Settlement and Early Economic Growth (1796-1863)

European-American settlement of the area proceeded following the expulsion of the Native Americans. David Studbaker and Abraham Snyder are reputed to have been the first permanent settlers of Butler County, arriving in 1790 from Westmoreland County. Following the peace of 1795, settlement dramatically increased. On March 12, 1800, the County of Butler was officially erected by act of the state legislature. The new county was named for General Richard Butler, a decorated Revolutionary War veteran, who was killed with the ill-fated St. Clair expedition of 1791 (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:146).

Butler County initially had four townships: Connoquenessing, Middlesex, Slippery Rock, and Buffalo. In 1804, these original townships were divided into 13 townships, which grew to 19 by 1853. The current 33 townships were established in 1854. Out of these, 23 boroughs were created, the first of which was Butler in 1817. The Borough of Butler became a City in 1892. Currently, Butler County has 33 townships, 23 boroughs, and one city.

The present-day City of Butler was originally the site of a Native American settlement. The ethnic association of the group is unknown, but the inhabitants may have belonged to the Monongahela culture. In the eighteenth century, a Native American path ran through Butler,

from the Lenape settlements of Kittanning to Kuskusky (present-day New Castle; Wallace 1987:82). U.S. Route 422 generally followed this path through town (before the construction of the bypass), which ran near the present site of the courthouse.

The land on which the City of Butler sits consists of plots formerly part of over 70,000 county-wide acres belonging to Robert Morris, a Revolutionary War financier. A convenient tract was laid out, specifically not to exceed five acres, in order to house the public buildings (Waterman, Watkins and Co 1883:146). On this tract are situated the courthouse and diamond. The site was chosen for its central location in the newly formed county, and its location on a major path, which later became a highway (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:146).

The first dwelling constructed in the town was the log home of James Thompson, which was situated near the diamond. Thompson was a blacksmith and located his business near his residence. Construction of other cabins rapidly followed. One of these still stands on Diamond Street. This structure had a kiln in the basement for the production of pottery, and is an example of an early cottage industry in Butler (Miller et al. 1993).

By 1828, the Borough of Butler contained about 500 people. Twenty-one of the structures in town were of brick construction, while the courthouse was built of stone (Watkins, Waterman and Co. 1883:42). Two newspapers served the interests of the people, seven taverns entertained and boarded visitors, 14 stores offered their wares, and seven lawyers established their practices in this county seat. A stage line that carried daily mail had begun in 1826.

The churches of Butler represent the ethnic groups that comprised the community. The first organized church in Butler was Presbyterian and the Scotch-Irish comprised most of its congregation. The congregations of Thorn's Tent, Harmony Salt Spring, and portions of Muddy Creek all united to form one congregation and centered their activities in Butler. The first minister of the congregation, Rev. John McPherrin, arrived in 1805 (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:173). The Presbyterian congregation also was the first to have a permanent structure, a church built of rough stone in 1815. Another early Presbyterian congregation first used a ravine near a spring or the courthouse building for its meetings. St. Peter's Church was established by the Protestant Episcopal community in 1824. The first official church records from the Lutheran congregation date from 1813, but its first structure was not constructed until 1841. The Lutheran church suffered a schism in 1843, when the English Lutherans separated from the German Lutherans.

The first Roman Catholic Church in Butler was St. Peters, a stone chapel located on the eastern edge of town and constructed in 1822. The original congregation consisted of primarily Irish Catholics, but a later influx of German settlers soon outnumbered the original Irish members. A replacement church, the German Catholic Church, was built in 1849. The displaced English-speaking Irish built St. Paul Catholic Church in 1866 and dedicated it in 1867. The earliest cemetery in the community dated from 1806 (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:162-163).

The Butler Academy was the first school to be built in Butler. It was situated on land donated by the Cunninghams, who had built the first mill in Butler. Prior to 1834 and public

school legislation, Butler Academy provided the only formal education in town (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:164).

Local military organizations offered immigrants an opportunity to serve the community as well as a chance to become more quickly accepted into it. Several of the earliest settlers of Butler County were among those who fought in the Revolutionary War. Some received lands or had the opportunity to buy lands for their service. Butler County provided five companies in the War of 1812. These companies were incorporated in the Second Regiment of Infantry, United States Army, commanded by Colonel John Purviance. Fearing attack or invasion of Pennsylvania by the British from Canada, many men joined the Second Regiment from Butler. The Regiment saw service along Lake Erie, and also aided Admiral Perry during his fleet's engagement at Erie (Brandon 1962:47).

The militia units of the nineteenth century provided a social connection as well as a military purpose. Militia organizations included: the Center Greens, the Butler Hornets from Prospect, the Connoquenessing Rifle Company, the Harmony Blues, and the Connoquenessing Rangers. A few years later Captain Abraham Brinker organized the Bonny Brook Artillery. Many of these militia groups held musters at the local public houses and paraded in Butler during Independence Day festivities.

By the mid-1840s militia units had been established throughout Butler County. The Butler Blues, the DeKalb Greys, the Butler Cavalry, the German Guards, the Portersville Volunteer Battalion, the Jackson Volunteer Battalion at Harmony, the Marion Volunteers, the McDonald Volunteers, the Union Volunteers of Harrisville, the First Rifle Battalion of Prospect, the Washington Volunteers, and the Lafayette Volunteers are among the numerous militia units that were organized in the Butler area. Although none of these units were sent as such to the Mexican War, most of the members volunteered for service. In April of 1861 the Butler Blues enlisted as a unit for three months of service; they campaigned in Maryland and Virginia. Most members of the militia re-enlisted in regular army units and the majority of Butler's other militia also enlisted as individuals rather than units. Many served with distinction (Brandon 1962:48).

Butler prospered in the nineteenth century. Prosperity grew from its situation along a major transportation route, its establishment as the county seat, and its development as a local market center. In addition, several creeks suitable for water power ran in the vicinity. The Connoquenessing Creek runs through a small gorge, permitting it to be easily harnessed for power. Several smaller creeks run into the Connoquenessing in the vicinity of Butler, including Sawmill Run, Sullivan Run, Bonnie Brook, and Coal Run. As a result, several mills were constructed in the area in the early part of the nineteenth century.

The advantageous location and diversified local economy of Butler resulted in a large public service sector. One of the first public houses was that of William Brown, located on South Main Street in 1804. In May of 1804 John Moser, Robert Graham, and George Bowers also were granted public house licenses. By 1805, Butler had six taverns (McKee 1909:419).

Adam Funk opened his public house upon receiving a license in 1805. His tavern, built of logs, faced the diamond and housed the early court. The Buck, named for the large stag

pictured on its sign, was another of the early taverns on the diamond. The local militia used the Buck as a muster site; political meetings were also held there. The early taverns and inns prospered; they were replaced later in the nineteenth century by grand hotels. The grandest was the Nixon Hotel, which was five stories high and featured a roof-top garden, 125 rooms with private baths, and steam heat (McKee 1909:422).

The early settlers utilized the streams around Butler for power. The oldest known manufacturing site is in the central section of town, where the Cunningham brothers established a grist mill in 1802 on Connoquenessing Creek (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:146-147). In 1842 a wealthy Philadelphia merchant and land speculator, Archibald McCall constructed a mill about one mile upstream of the Cunningham mill. Later owner George Reiber updated the mill, installing a full roller process and burr system with five runs of stones. Reiber also established a distillery adjacent to the mill. Several other grist and flour mills were located in the area during the nineteenth century. Many of these mills operated into the first decades of the twentieth century (McKee 1909:423-425).

The growing needs of the community for construction materials could not be met simply by the lumber industry alone. In 1823 William Borland established a brickyard in the area where the Standard Steel Car Works would later build its car wheel foundry. Four additional brickyards were constructed in Butler in the next two decades. In 1881 J. George Stamm renovated the Borland works and began brick production. The works had a maximum capacity of 30,000 bricks daily and were the first to employ natural gas in the baking process. When Stamm sold his operation in 1901, his seven-and-three-quarter acres were bought by the Standard Steel Car Company (McKee 1909:436).

Iron and steel works began in the first half of the nineteenth century in Butler. The iron and steel industry contributed extensively to the development, both physically and economically, of the city. Alfred and John McCarnes established the first foundry about 1840, and produced plows, farm implements, and stoves. The McCarnes remained in business until 1847, when they sold an interest in the works to William and James Campbell. Within five years the Campbells were the sole owners of the operation and the Campbell family operated the works into the early decades of the twentieth century. The history of the Campbell works was similar to at least five other foundries in Butler; several survived to compete with U.S. Steel in the twentieth century (McKee 1909:426).

As exterior and interior paint became common in homes, the paint industry began in Butler. A white lead factory was established in Butler prior to 1840 by Campbell E. Purviance. The factory stood on the bank of the Connoquenessing Creek west of downtown Butler (McKee 1909:437).

The clothing industry began in Butler at an early date. As early as 1810 John Negley established a woolen factory and carding works. Another began in 1812. About 1833 O.G. Croy and George Smith opened a woolen mill. This mill did not utilize water power, as the others did, but used a horse on a tread mill to drive the machinery.

The Union Woolen Mill provided an example of the value of industrial sites along the creeks. The mill was constructed by William Ayers in 1842. It was situated on the south side of Connoquenessing Creek across from the heart of Butler. Following a short career in the milling industry, Ayers sold the works to William Mackey, who employed a portion of the works as a grist mill. The mill operated under several owners, primarily as a woolen mill, until it was sold to J.B. Sherman, who converted the works into a machine shop in 1894 (McKee 1909:425).

Other industries in Butler included tanneries; potteries; breweries; a cooperage; a wagon, carriage, and buggy factory; a silk mill; and one of the largest distilleries in the county. Butler exhibited a diverse economy, bolstered by the rich surrounding farmland.

Butler thrived during the first half of the nineteenth century with only roads for transportation. Although the area was surveyed as early as 1836 for a rail connection, no railroads were built until 1871. In 1852 a plank toll road was built to Pittsburgh (present-day PA Route 8), and became the route of the stage line as well as the over-land mail and freight routes. The sections of the toll road that ran through towns were generally paved with flagstones. Rebuilt several times, the plank road existed until the early twentieth century (Pozar and Purvis 1980:55).

2.2.3 Industrial Expansion (1864-1900)

The utilization of oil and natural gas strengthened the already-burgeoning prosperity of Butler. The oil resources of the area had been well-known prior to 1864. During the early French occupation (1749) Captain Jon Caires made note of oil in the area in French dispatches. American soldiers under General Brodhead rubbed the oil on aching limbs during the expedition against the Native Americans in the late 1770's. During the Brodhead expedition, mysterious log-lined and clay-bottomed oil pits were discovered, their origin unknown. Jedidiah Morse mentions the location of Oil Creek and the medicinal uses of the oil in 1789. By 1806, a Mr. Carey was marketing the oil from Oil Creek for medicinal purposes.

By the mid-nineteenth century, oil was in demand. The new array of factory machines required lubricants, and whalers had decimated the whale population, driving the price of whale oil above that of kerosene. Oil continued to be skimmed from places where it seeped naturally from the ground, as no one had successfully drilled for it. The industry rapidly changed after Edwin Drake successfully drilled for oil in 1859. In February of 1860, the Butler County Oil Company organized, followed by the Butler Pioneer Oil Company and the Enterprise Oil Company in 1862; all quickly folded.

In 1864 the Butler Oil Company organized. In the Armstrong or Butler Cross Belt field, mostly in Butler County, well drilling commenced. By 1874 there were 125 active wells. By 1885, the number of wells swelled to over 700, most of which were in Butler County. These wells produced about 14,000 barrels of oil per day (Pozar and Purvis 1980:42-44).

Transporting the crude oil proved difficult. The oil seeped through wooden barrels and about one third was lost in transport. Wooden wagons and barrels became saturated in oil and decayed quickly. The earth roads became a quagmire of greasy mud. Draft animals did not

survive more than a year of the tortuous lifestyle, as the crude oil destroyed the hair on the lower bodies of the animals. In 1872, the Butler Pipe Line Company constructed a line running from the Butler County oil fields to the loading racks at Parkers Landing (on the Allegheny River, near the western border of Butler County).

The Borough of Butler continued to grow in the late nineteenth century. By 1874, the central part of Butler covered not only the hill on which the courthouse was situated, but several hills on the north side of Connoquenessing Creek (Figure 3). A separate community, known as Springdale, was developing on the hills south of the creek. The first industries were developing along the valley floor, attracted by the availability of water power. Similar industries were also located along the creek outside the limits of the Borough (Figure 4).

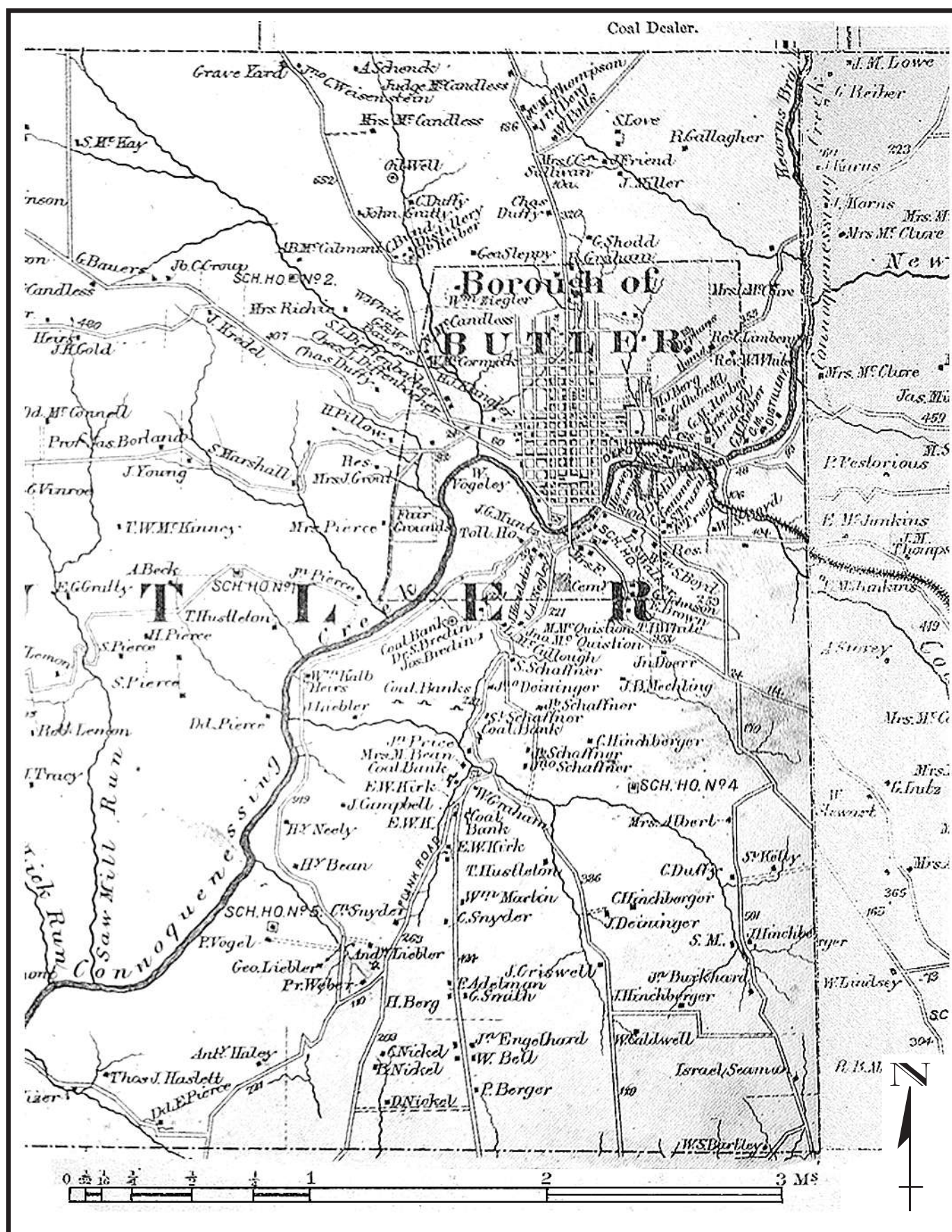
Butler began to develop industries that were directly related to the oil industry, such as the manufacturing of tools and supplies. William Kesselman established shops in Butler about 1881, specializing in the manufacture of drilling and fishing tools,¹ repairing engines, and producing heavy forgings. A number of similar industries were established at this time in Butler. Although some quickly folded, the drilling-tool industry continued into the first half of the twentieth century.

Natural gas, first considered a nuisance in the oil fields, began to be harnessed about 1880. David Kirk, an oil-field worker, recognized the potential of natural gas as a fuel and convinced Pittsburgh-based financiers to contribute their backing. He created a large gas-fired sign saying "Gas, the Fuel of the Future." In 1885 Kirk organized the Home Natural Gas Company, which furnished Butler with natural gas (McKee 1909:410).

The glass industry utilized the clean, even heat furnished by burning natural gas. The first major industry in Butler to use natural gas as a fuel was the Standard Plate Glass Company, which opened in July of 1887. Originally, the plant cast one pot of molten glass into ten plates, nine-sixteenths of an inch thick, six feet wide and twelve feet long. In the first week twenty pots were cast, rolled and tempered. A force of 140 men operated the works, many of whom were skilled workers from France, Belgium, and Germany. By the turn of the century the works went into continual, 24 hour per day production. The proximity of rail lines made transport of finished products and the procurement of materials relatively easy. The company owned its own gas and oil works and had one of the deepest natural gas wells in the county. The most notable product associated with these works was a huge lens for the observatory in Washington D.C. At the time of its production, 1898, it was the largest glass reflecting lens in the world.

Other glass works located in Butler. The Hamilton Glass Works produced flint glass prescription bottles. The American Mirror Works produced household and industrial mirrors

¹ Fishing tools were implements designed to retrieve lost drill bits and shafts. They consisted of a variety of hooks and augers to snare the lost implements. Also used were explosives to blast the lost bits out of the way, or to shatter the rock, forming a cavity in which oil would collect. The explosives were followed by a large, cast-iron plug, called a go-devil. Occasionally the go-devil would be propelled back up the shaft by the explosion, and be launched into the air. Around old oil fields, people still find partially-buried go-devils, some of which weigh as much as a quarter-ton.



(McKee 1909:427-428). There were also smaller glass works that produced bottles for distilleries and breweries.

The iron and steel industry benefited from the inexpensive power provided by local oil and natural gas. The Butler Manufacturing Company, which opened in 1888, produced boilers and engines. F.H. Bole specialized in oil well and fishing tools. The Star Iron Works were known for the production of engines, pumps, casing cutters, fishing tools, and specialty brass. At least six additional firms also manufactured engines and oil-industry tools in Butler.

The growing industrial and residential population of Butler required power and water. In 1865 a coal-gas plant began operations. The streets of Butler were piped to transport the gas to homes, businesses, and streetlights. Butler switched to natural gas in 1885 and the old gas works were abandoned.

The Butler Electric Light and Power Company began in 1885. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the company furnished power to the Butler Passenger Railway Company. The Butler Ice Company utilized the energy produced by the Butler Electric Light and Power plant for ice-making. Incorporated in 1902, the plant was situated adjacent to the electric plant and had a daily ice production capacity of 25 tons (McKee 1909:412).

Ice, of course, could not be produced without water. Prior to 1877 Butler obtained all its water from springs and wells. In that year, the Butler Water Company was established with a plant and a dam on the Connoquenessing Creek, northeast of the Borough. The water was pumped to a hilltop reservoir north of the city (McKee 1909:413-414).

The small gorge in which the Connoquenessing Creek ran proved a barrier to the water pipes. The Mutual Water Company was an independent concern established in South Butler, which was an increasingly popular residential area in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The reservoir for this company was located on the hill south of town; the company operated exclusively on the south side of the creek. Wells, sunk 250 feet deep to obtain fresh water, were the source for the Mutual Water Company (McKee 1909:413-414).

The rapid growth that characterized Butler during the oil boom required extensive construction materials. Several mills utilized the forest resources around Butler. Sawmills were among the early mills constructed. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, planing and furniture mills had been established. The Purvis Planing Mill and Lumber Yard, which opened in 1869, included both planing and lumber work and specialized in doors, blinds, and sashes. William H. Miller established a furniture making business in Butler, specializing in scroll, fancy woodwork, and banister construction (McKee 1909:435).

The lumber industry eventually depleted the local forests. By the beginning of the twentieth century, opportunities in the lumber industry were waning. The Cornelius Lumber Company opened yards on Kittanning Street in 1902 and maintained operations until 1908. The J.C. Thorn Lumber Company and Planing Mill attempted to enter the field with a large brick mill located on Negley Avenue. The business was abandoned in 1907, one year after opening. An

indication of changing methods of construction, the Butler Concrete Manufacturing Company took over the location (McKee 1909:434-436).

Although Butler prospered, roads provided the only transportation until the 1870s. Railroads were accessible only by road, in New Castle and Pittsburgh, both 25 miles distant. On January 12, 1871 the first rail line to Butler opened for travel. This line ran from Freeport, on the Allegheny River above Pittsburgh, to Butler. In 1880, a branch of the Pittsburgh, New Castle and Lake Erie Narrow Gauge Railroad ran from Callery Junction (now Callery, three miles southeast of Evans City) to Butler. The next railroad to enter the town was the Shenango and Allegheny line. This rail line was incorporated into the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad. It ran from Branchton (five miles east of Slippery Rock) to Butler and opened in 1882. In 1899 the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railroad connected Butler to Punxsutawney (McKee 1909:415).

The Butler Passenger Railway Company, running electric trolleys, organized in October of 1899. By August of 1900 the trolley cars began to run in Butler. Five miles of track were eventually laid within the city. An electric railway, the Pittsburgh and Butler Street Railway Company, offered service in 1907. By 1908 service to New Castle began. The Butler trolleys ceased to run in 1941 (Pozar and Purvis 1980).

Communications developed as the population grew. In 1861 the first telegraph office was opened in Butler, offering the town virtually instant communication with other areas. The Postal Telegraph Cable Company, with trans-Atlantic capability, established an office in Butler in 1884. The Bell Telephone Company established an exchange in Butler in 1888. The People Telephone Company established operations in Butler in 1893 (McKee 1909:416).

Reflecting Butler's ongoing demographic and economic growth, additional churches formed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Baptist congregation of the area organized in 1876. The Reformed Church of the United States held meetings in 1877 and purchased a building the following year. Other churches and forms of organized religion also came to Butler, especially with the influx of southern and eastern European immigrants around the turn of the century. St. Andrews Russian Orthodox Greek Church, St. Johns Byzantine Catholic Church, Congregation Bnai Abraham, and St. Stanislaus Roman Catholic Church all reflect the origins of the members of their individual parishes. These immigrants augmented the growing industrial work force in Butler.

In 1860 education was suspended at the Butler Academy, and three other schools, the Witherspoon Academy, the Sunbury Academy, and the Zelienople Academy opened. In 1867 the St. Paul's Orphan's Home was dedicated and the first superintendent was selected. This home provided for the parentless children of Civil War Veterans in accordance with Commonwealth legislation.

Like the militia, firefighting groups and their firehouses became social gathering points for men in Butler. There, newly arriving immigrants could meet people and serve the community. The most famous fire fought in Butler occurred in 1903 at the Park Theater and the Armory Building. The building was constructed in 1891 as a replacement for the old opera

house (which had burned to its foundation) and was designed to accommodate an armory and a public theater. Though fought by all local fire companies, the Park Theater burned to the ground (McKee 1909:418). Municipal records that had been stored in the Armory were lost in the fire.

Business groups also organized in Butler. The Butler Board of Trade first met in December of 1896 for the promotion of advertising, manufacturing, and other community interests. In 1906 the local businessmen organized their own group. By 1908 the Businessmen's Association of Butler Borough was incorporated, charged with the promotion of business interests in the town and community. The Grocers Association organized in 1899 with members from both Butler and Lyndora, and was successful in regulating (or monopolizing) prices in the region. The Butler Chamber of Commerce started in 1908, augmenting the Board of Trade (McKee 1909:416-418).

Fraternal and secret organizations, common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also organized in Butler. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows started in December of 1847. The Masons chartered their Butler Lodge Number 272 in March of 1853. The United and Ancient Order of Workmen, a workers' support group (rather than a union), started in 1876. The order provided a library for the members and its families. The Knights of Honor first organized in Butler in 1876. In May of 1880 the Royal Arcanum, Butler Council, Lodge formed. The American Legion of Honor organized in Butler in 1881. Other groups, including the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the Loyal Order of Moose, and the Eagles also hold Butler charters (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1883:168).

By the end of the century, Butler was a prosperous city. A bird's eye view of the city in 1896 showed the growth of business and residential communities on both the north and south sides of the creek (Fowler 1896; Figure 5). It also showed the beginnings of the industrial corridor. Although a few industries, such as the Oriental Roller Mill, were located in town, most of the larger industries were located on the valley floor, where they had direct access to one or more railroad lines.

2.2.4 Consolidation and Diversity (1900-present)

The growth of commerce and industry in Butler continued in the early twentieth century. However, the economic events paled in comparison to an incident that captured the attention of the nation -- the Biddles Brothers incident. At the turn of the century, the name of Biddle had become as infamous as that of Simon Girty of the early frontier days. Jack and Edward Biddle were brothers who terrorized Pittsburgh and its surrounding region. Their crimes included bank robbery and murder. The unfortunate citizens of Butler would later find that the Biddles used their city as their hideout. In 1901 the Biddles were apprehended and imprisoned in Pittsburgh. While in prison, the warden's wife, Mrs. Soffel, gave the Biddles guns and keys and escaped with them. The trio headed back to Butler, where their crimes continued. The Biddles were located by authorities, and in a raging snowstorm an ambush was sprung. One of the brothers was killed outright, the other was mortally wounded and died in custody. Mrs. Soffel was wounded and carried to the hospital that still stands along the southern approach to the Main Street Bridge, and was treated (McKee 1909:418).



1. PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2. COURT HOUSE
3. JAIL
4. OPERA HOUSE
5. ST. PAUL'S ORPHAN HOME
6. SACRED HEART CONVENT
7. ST. MARGARET'S
8. HOTEL LOWRY
9. ARINGTON HOTEL
10. HOTEL BUTLER

12. PARK HOTEL
13. STANDARD HOTEL
14. PLANING MILL
15. BUILDING WORKS
16. THE BUTLER CO.
17. SUGAR ROY
18. DRILLING, FISHING TOOLS, & PACKERS

BUTLER,

BUTLER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA;
1896.

24. ORIENTAL ROLLER MILLS
25. WEST PENN. LUMBER CO.
26. BUTLER BRICK YARD
27. ST. WILLIAM
28. P. & W. R. STATION
29. CHURCHES
30. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
31. CHURCH OF GOD
32. FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

CHURCHES.
D. GRACE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
E. ST. MARK'S GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
F. FREE METHODIST CHURCH
G. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
H. ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
I. ST. PETER'S REFORMED CHURCH
J. ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
K. UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

43824
B4A3
1896
Fh

Figure 5 Bird's Eye View of Butler in 1896 (Fowler 1896)

The economy of Butler received a major boost in January of 1902 with the establishment of the Standard Steel Car Company. By April of that year the company purchased a large tract of land in Butler's third ward, including the old Butler Fairgrounds and the old Butler pickle plant. Ground was broken in April and the first cars rolled out on October 1 of that year.

The Standard Steel Car complex dominated the southwestern side of Butler. David Winters and Sons of Pittsburgh performed the excavation for the project while Hugh Ferguson undertook the foundation work. The structural iron work was completed by the McClintock Marshall Company, also of Pittsburgh. The initial structure was 1600' long and 400' wide. There were machine shops, paint shops, and an office complex associated with the works. The early capacity was 50 to 60 cars daily and the company employed about 2500 workers. In late summer of 1902, the company constructed 100 workers houses, in three rows, each with a new shower and privy. Many of the employees of Standard Steel Car were eastern European immigrants, including Poles, Croats, Serbs, Russians, Slovaks, and Czechs. As a result, ethnic parishes were concentrated along the western part of town.

Within a year the Standard Steel Car Company expanded and the capacity doubled. The enlarged complex employed about 4000 workers from Butler and its environs while at full-time capacity. The Company constructed additional plants in Butler as well as in New Castle and Hammond, Indiana. The recession of 1908 adversely affected the plant; it switched from the construction of cars to the manufacture of automobile parts. The Standard Steel Car Company never fully recovered. Fierce competition with other automobile manufacturers continued throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1930 the Pullman Car Manufacturing Corporation came to Butler and merged with the Standard Steel Car Company. Thus the Pullman Standard Company was created. The small company town of Lyndora, a suburb of Butler, grew around these works.

Several other heavy industries located in Butler. The Forged Steel Wheel Company constructed a plant south of Lyndora, near Standard Steel. This plant was initially experimental, producing forged steel wheels, which proved practical. The Butler Bolt and Rivet Company, a subsidiary of the Standard Steel Car Company, incorporated in late June of 1906. Another subsidiary of the Standard Steel Car Company, the Butler Car Wheel Foundry erected its plant in the same year. The works adjoined those of the Bolt and Rivet factory. The plant had a daily capacity of 800 cast car wheels. When running at full capacity the plant employed about 300 workmen (McKee 1909:431).

With the increase in industrial and commercial activity, the increased population and traffic exceeded the capacity of the existing bridges across the Connoquenessing Creek. By 1910 three locations were proposed for new viaducts. Soon, however, legal disputes slowed the project. The railroads initiated legal action against the Butler Passenger Railway Company to prevent the Company from elevating their tracks above the railroad right-of-way. The City also took legal action against the Butler Passenger Railway Company, in order to keep the passenger trolleys running.

Eventually, in 1914 the City accepted bids for the new bridges. F.M. Harper was the low bidder for the foundations, abutments and approaches of the Wayne Street Bridge. The Fort

Pittsburgh Bridge Works was the lowest bidder for the superstructure. On Christmas day of 1915, the Wayne Street Viaduct opened. The Viaduct was 1060' long and 50' wide. The superstructure contained 1125 tons of steel, and 1500 cubic yards of concrete formed the abutments, wing walls, and footers for the pedestals. The pedestals themselves required 1272 cubic yards of concrete (Pozar and Purvis 1980:121).

As the early twentieth century progressed, other businesses came to Butler. In 1909 J.M. Muntz and M.A. Haley established the Butler Auto Supply and Repair Company, which sold the Interstate Auto, a type of car. The company's building, which now stands abandoned, was located at the south end of the Main Street Bridge. The same year, the Valvoline Oil Company located to East Butler (Pozar and Purvis 1980:132).

By the second decade of the twentieth century, Butler had increased in both population and physical area. South Butler, in particular, had grown into a large residential suburb. The Main Street Bridge had become inadequate to carry the increased automobile traffic. A new elevated and extended bridge was completed and opened to the public in 1921.

In August of 1927, the American Rolling Mill Company (ARMCO) of Middletown, Ohio, purchased the plants of the Columbia Steel Company in Butler. ARMCO became a major employer in Butler and continues as such today (Pozar and Purvis 1980:131).

In 1930 the American Austin Car Company, a subsidiary of the British Austin Company, located in Butler. Production of the American model began on May 21, 1930. The Great Depression reduced sales and the American Austin, although a quality vehicle, never gained the popularity needed to survive in the American automobile market. The last Austin rolled out of the Butler factory in December of 1934 (Pozar and Purvis 1980:138).

The American Bantam Car Company occupied the deserted plant of the American Austin Company in 1936. That company designed a small, economical vehicle, and began production in 1938. World War II began in 1939, and in 1940, the Army entertained bids for the design of a new four-wheel-drive vehicle. Bantam submitted a proposal in July of that year, and by September the company had built the first General Purpose vehicle, popularly called the GP or Jeep. The Bantam works could only produce thirty jeeps per day, which was not enough to fill the growing needs of the military. Ford and Willeys were also awarded contracts for Army jeep production. In 1941 Willeys underbid the Bantam Company, and the creator of the Jeep then lost the contract for its production (Pozar and Purvis 1980:140).

When the United States became involved actively in World War II, those companies that had not already done so quickly geared their operations toward war production. The Bantam Company switched from jeep to jeep trailer production. It also made aerial torpedo engines and hydraulic equipment for aircraft. Pullman Standard made ammunition, forging over six and three quarter million artillery shells, in addition to rockets and 500 pound bombs. Air raid posts surrounded the city, and were staffed around the clock. Most companies went to twenty-four-hour production schedules; ARMCO was one of the first U.S. plants to hire women on the assembly line (Pozar and Purvis 1980:146).

Following the boom of production during World War II, many of the smaller plants in Butler either closed or sold to larger, national firms. Local factors contributed; the Butler and Bovard oil fields had become depleted. In addition, the steel industry, which contributed both directly and indirectly to the economy of Butler, declined. The American Bantam Car Company was one of the casualties, closing its doors in 1956. The competition from the major automotive manufacturers put smaller operations out of business (Pozar and Purvis 1980:140).

In 1954 a major flood caused by Hurricane Hazel struck Butler, encouraging members of the community to campaign for flood control action. In 1961 the Pennsylvania legislature appropriated funds for a flood control project, primarily to straighten the course of Connoquenessing Creek through Butler. Prior to the flood control project, the course of Connoquenessing Creek formed a large loop around the floodplain on the west side of town. In 1963-1964, the creek and the adjacent railroad were moved, cutting off this loop and its troublesome bend at the western end of the narrows.

Many of the early-twentieth-century industries have left Butler, although there are a variety of employers in the area today. The Pullman Standard plant is closed and undergoing demolition, although the ARMCO plant, now AK Steel, continues to be a major employer. Several other specialty-tool and machine companies remain. However, the collapse of the steel industry brought stagnation to the physical development of Butler, as it did to much of western Pennsylvania. As the mills hired fewer laborers each year, people were less likely to invest in major renovations to their homes and businesses. Thus, a by-product of the economic decline was the preservation of much historic architecture in a relatively unaltered form.

3.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Butler Industrial Corridor Historic District extends along both sides of Connequenessing Creek as it flows through the City of Butler. It encompasses commercial, industrial, manufacturing, and transportation related structures that grew up along Connequenessing Creek and covers an area of approximately 223 ha (550 acres). These businesses employed most of the work force that lived in Butler and its suburbs and established the city as a major industrial center in the region.

The Butler Industrial Corridor grew from a few scattered industries that were located along the creek in the early nineteenth century, to a continuous band of industries extending approximately 3.4 miles (5.5 km) along the valley. In general, the Industrial Corridor expanded both upstream and downstream from an historic core in the center of Butler, finally extending beyond the City limits to both the northeast and southwest. To facilitate description of the Industrial Corridor and its resources, it has been divided into seven geographic zones, which have been numbered in order of historic growth (Figure 1). These zones are described in detail below. Sanborn Insurance Company maps have been included to show the extent of historic resources during the early twentieth century peak of industrial development (Sanborn 1930; Figure 6 Maps a-f).

3.1 Zone 1, The Commons

Zone 1 is located along the narrowest part of the Connequenessing Creek valley, between the Main Street commercial district in the heart of Butler and the residential areas of Butler's south side (Figure 7). To the north, Zone 1 includes the tracks of the Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad, which run on the north side of the creek (Figure 6a). It borders the Butler Historic District, which included the downtown shopping district and adjacent residential areas. To the south, Zone 1 extends beyond the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, which runs along Etna Street. The limits of Zone 1 extend along Brugh Avenue east of Main Street and along Roosevelt Boulevard to the west, bordering the South Butler Historic District. To the east, Zone 1 extends to the Wayne Street viaduct, where it adjoins Zone 2. To the west, Zone 1 extends to a major bend in Connequenessing Creek, where it adjoins Zone 4.

Three bridges cross Connequenessing Creek in Zone 1 to link the north and south sides of Butler, at Main Street, Centre Avenue, and Wayne Street. Main Street extended south from the original plan of Butler, crossing the creek to connect with the road south to Pittsburgh. This road was improved as a plank road and later a turnpike. Eventually, it was designated PA Route 8. By the late nineteenth century, there was an iron bridge to carry traffic over the creek, with at-grade crossings on both railroad lines. By 1921, the old Main Street Bridge had been replaced by an elevated bridge or viaduct, which carried traffic over the two railroad lines and the Industrial Corridor, as well as the creek. This reduced the steep climb in and out of the stream valley. In the late nineteenth century, Springdale's Centre Avenue was carried over the creek on an arched wooden bridge, to connect with the streets of Butler. The 1896 Sanborn map showed that the bridge was in the process of being replaced with a wider iron bridge on a slightly new alignment. This required the relocation or removal of several of the businesses that lined both sides of the street near the bridge. Today, the bridge on Centre Avenue remains a relatively low

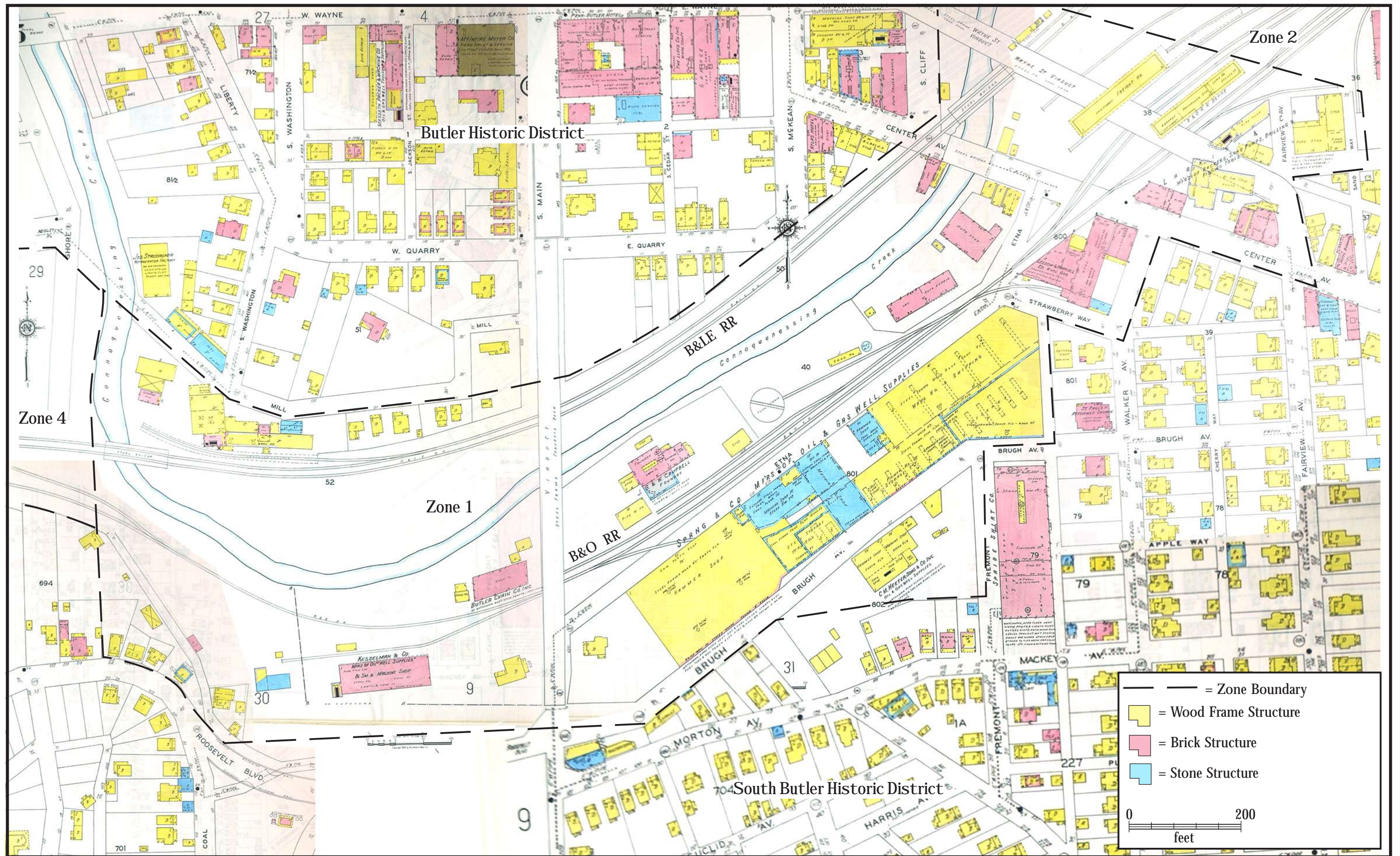


Figure 6a Sanborn Map of Butler in 1930, Zone 1

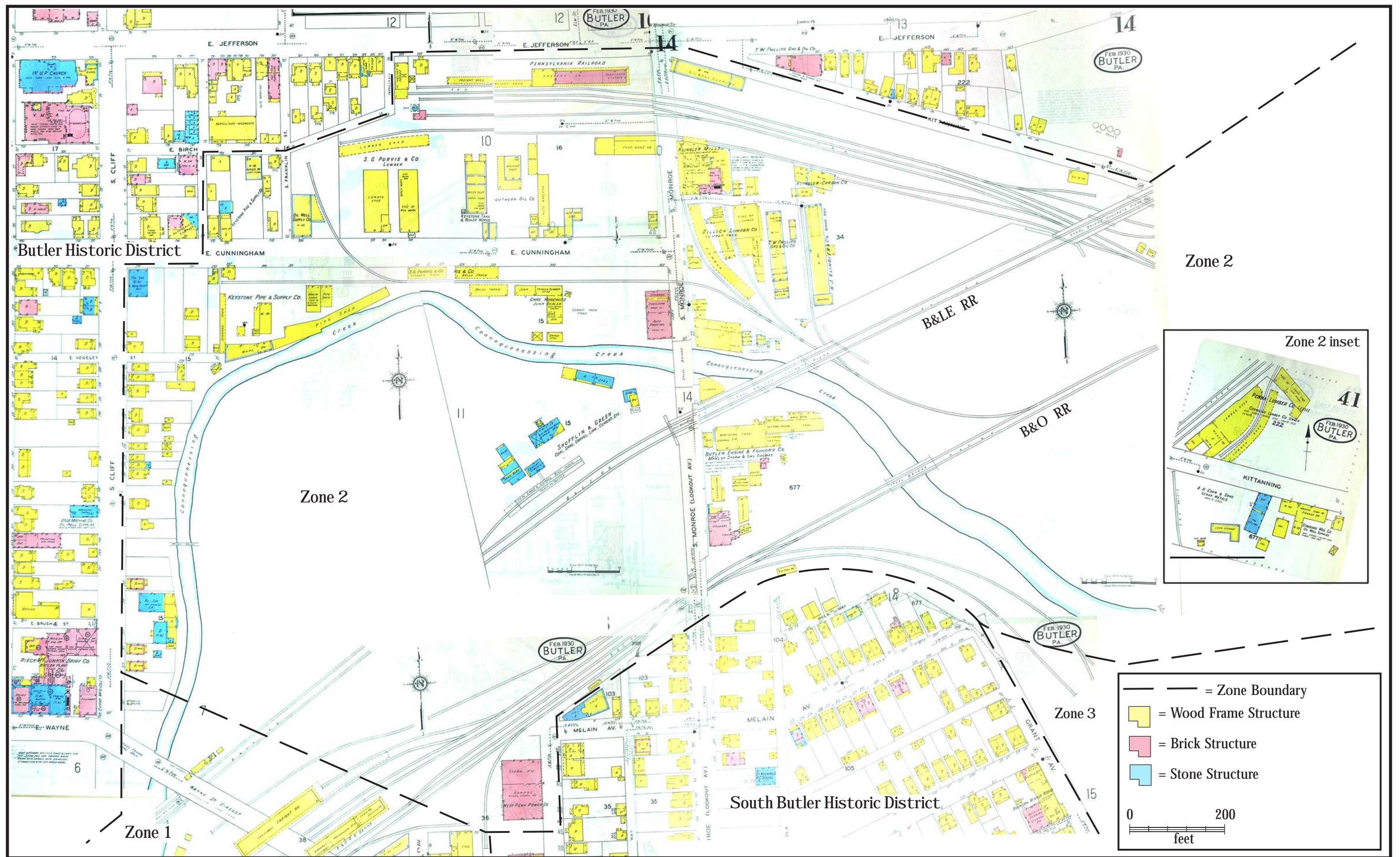


Figure 6b Sanborn Map of Butler in 1930, Zone 2

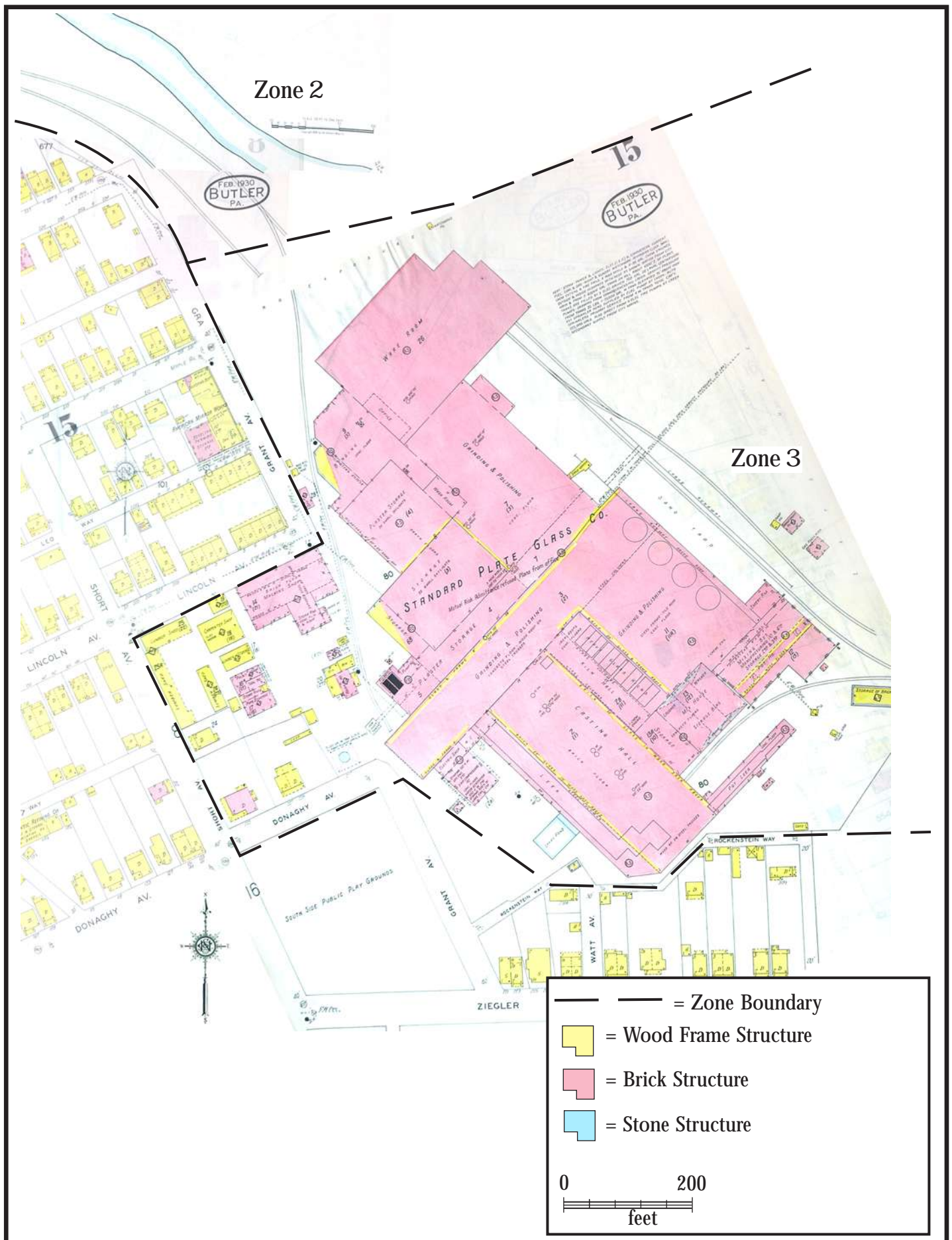


Figure 6c Sanborn Map of Butler in 1930, Zone 3