



# Foundation Document Overview

## Friendship Hill National Historic Site

Pennsylvania



### Contact Information

For more information about the *Friendship Hill National Historic Site Foundation Document*, contact: <http://www.nps.gov/frhi> or (814) 893-6322 or write to:

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## Purpose



*FRIENDSHIP HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE commemorates the life of Albert Gallatin, an accomplished statesman and scholar in the decades following the creation of the United States, through the preservation of his pastoral estate.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Friendship Hill National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- As secretary of the treasury of the young nation, Albert Gallatin had significant influence on the direction of the United States, playing important roles in funding the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the National Road, and other federal projects.
- The Friendship Hill estate and the founding of the Pennsylvania community of New Geneva represent Albert Gallatin's ideals of returning to the land, westward expansion, and economic independence, which he promoted and fostered through his various roles in U.S. history.
- As one of the most influential and persuasive congressmen under President John Adams, Albert Gallatin created the Ways and Means Committee to define budget policy, which remains a powerful committee in Congress today.
- After serving as secretary of the treasury, Albert Gallatin became a respected diplomat and was an integral member of the delegation that ended the War of 1812 by negotiating peace between the United States and Great Britain through the Treaty of Ghent.
- Albert Gallatin founded the American Ethnological Society, which remains an active professional organization today. Through his work cataloguing native languages, he influenced the ways early anthropologists regarded American Indians.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **The Original Gallatin House.** The portions of the house built before 1832.
- **The Friendship Hill Estate.** The pastoral estate of Albert Gallatin, including the knoll on which the house was built, the scenic vistas of and from the knoll, the meadows, the wooded areas, the historic roads, and other Gallatin-era structures.
- **Sophia's Grave.** The site commemorating Sophia Gallatin, Albert Gallatin's first wife.
- **Albert Gallatin's Letters and Writings.** Letters and reports written by Gallatin that provide historical documentation of his life and motivations, his ethnographic research, and the Friendship Hill estate.
- **The Gallatin Collection.** Tangible artifacts associated with Albert Gallatin and his immediate family, including personal effects and the products related to his development of industry in New Geneva.

## Other Important Resources & Values

Friendship Hill National Historic Site may contain other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Trail System.** The network of trails on the estate that provide beautiful and serene places for visitors to recreate and reconnect with the outdoors.
- **Thomas Clare Cemetery.** The cemetery where Thomas Clare (a neighbor of the Friendship Hill estate during Albert Gallatin's ownership) and his slaves are buried.
- **Post-Gallatin Structures.** Structures in the National Register of Historic Places, including the post-Gallatin portions of the house, gazebo, well, barn, cistern, and posts.

## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Albert Gallatin, secretary of the treasury in the Jefferson and Madison administrations (1801–1814), set high standards for fiscal accountability, integrity, and economic independence to build a firm financial foundation for the United States.
- Albert Gallatin's career in public service reflected compromise and conscientiousness that shaped the direction and growth of the young United States—especially in seminal issues relating to fiscal policy, the role of government (debt, commerce, investment in infrastructure), and exploration that encouraged immigration and westward expansion.
- Albert Gallatin chose the frontier of western Pennsylvania for his family home, Friendship Hill, based on an affinity for the area and a belief that investment in the frontier was an investment in the future of the United States.



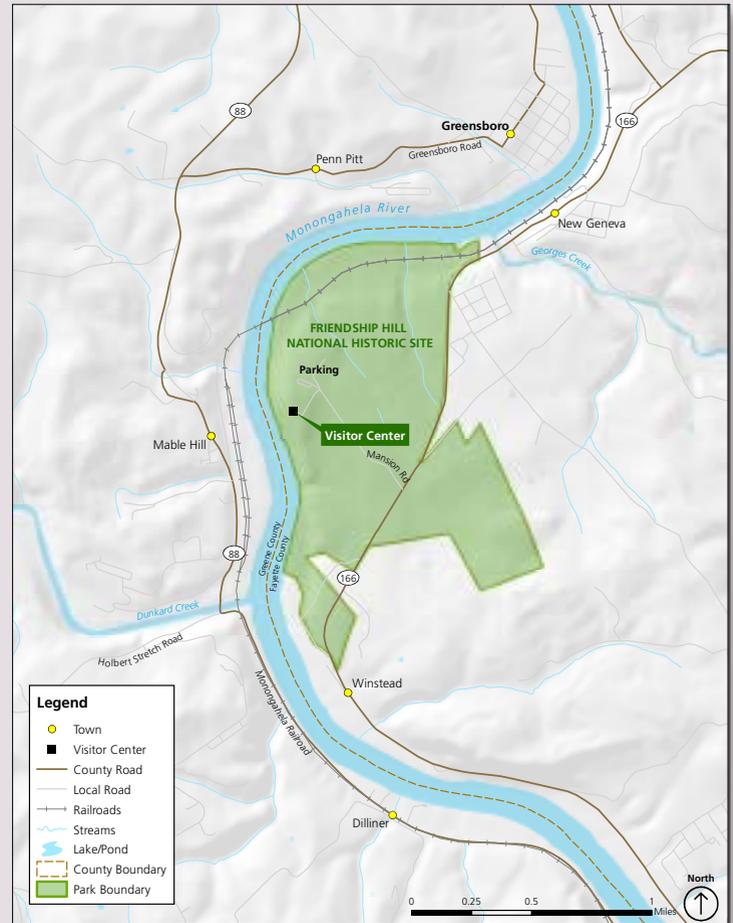
## Description

Friendship Hill National Historic Site was established by Congress in November 1978 for the purpose of commemorating the life of Albert Gallatin, a prominent Jeffersonian-era statesman, public servant, and entrepreneur. The historic site is in Fayette County in southwestern Pennsylvania on a knoll overlooking the Monongahela River. Three major highways—Interstate 79, Interstate 68, and historic U.S. 40 (the National Road)—pass within 20 miles of the historic site. Access from these routes to the historic site is provided by U.S. 119 and Pennsylvania 21, 88, and especially 166, which passes through the park.

The main house and grounds in the historic core are a testimonial to Albert Gallatin and his outstanding contributions to the United States concerning Jeffersonian-era politics, fiscal management, westward expansion, diplomacy, and scholarship. In recognition of these contributions, Friendship Hill was designated a national historic landmark in 1965 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places a year later. According to the national register nomination, “a major figure in the formative years of the United States, Albert Gallatin owned this structure during the most brilliant years of his career. This isolated estate near the Monongahela River was the bucolic retreat he had long desired.”

Gallatin, a Swiss immigrant, bought Friendship Hill in 1786. Despite a great deal of research into his public career, relatively little is known about his life there. Within a few years of purchase, he had constructed a substantial two and one-half story brick house on the property. He brought his bride, Sophia Allegra, to this frontier estate in 1789, but she died shortly after their arrival. Gallatin married again in 1793 to Hannah Nicholson; together they would have two sons and a daughter reach adulthood. In 1798 Gallatin expanded his home, adding two more rooms, and then in 1823 Gallatin’s son completed a large three-story stone addition to the main house. Gallatin never spent more than a cumulative total of two or three years at the estate, but over the course of history the property came to be commonly recognized as his residence.

When Gallatin sold the property in 1832, he had long since moved to New York, where he lived until his death in 1849. Subsequent owners added to the brick, half-timbered, and stone portions of the main house, altered the grounds, and constructed a number of ancillary buildings to house agrarian enterprises. Later occupants during the 19th and 20th centuries—the most important of which were four-term congressman John Littleton Dawson, Charles Edward Speer, and Josiah Van Kirk Thompson—increased the size of the property until it totaled more than 700 acres by the 1970s. Coal mining and lumbering occurred at Friendship Hill in



the 1940s. Dairy farming was initiated around the same time and continued through the 1950s. The last private owner of the property sold about 30 acres to the local school district and a nearby coal loading company.

In addition to Gallatin’s modified residence, the site contains a later-period gazebo, a wood frame barn to the northwest of the main house, the ruins of the gardener’s cottage, a well, and a stone cistern, all sited atop the knoll. In the lower barn area are the remains of a 1950s dairy barn and silo, another wood frame barn, and the caretaker residence. Scattered over the property, away from these other structures, are a gravesite purported to be that of Sophia Allegra; a cemetery containing Gallatin’s neighbor, Thomas Clare; a brick silo; three sets of pillars; and the foundation of what may have been a tenant’s house near the river.

