



1772 Hopewell
Stove Plate.



\$99 a ton. From 1870 to 1883, the entire Furnace output of pig iron went to a Philadelphia carwheel manufacturer. It is probable, therefore, that Hopewell iron has rolled over several of the Nation's transcontinental railroads.

After 1883, when the making of cold-blast charcoal iron ceased to be profitable and the works closed down, the adjoining woodland continued to yield good returns in marketable charcoal for several years. The active days at Hopewell were over, however, leaving but a memory of its colorful and useful past.

Hopewell Village Today

Years of inactivity and neglect have left their mark on Hopewell Village, but enough of it survived to justify the establishment of Hopewell Village National Historic Site in 1938. The area contains 848 acres and many of the old structures are preserved. These include the furnace stack, a large charcoal house, the blacksmith shop, some of the old tenant houses, the water raceways, and the Ironmaster's Mansion with several of its outbuildings.

How To Reach the Site

Hopewell Village National Historic Site is 5 miles southeast of Birdsboro, Pa., and is reached from the north by U. S. 422, State Route 82, and a hard-surfaced county road. From the south it is reached over State Route 23 and a hard-surfaced county road. It is

close to the Morgantown Interchange of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. There is a station of the Reading Railroad at Birdsboro.

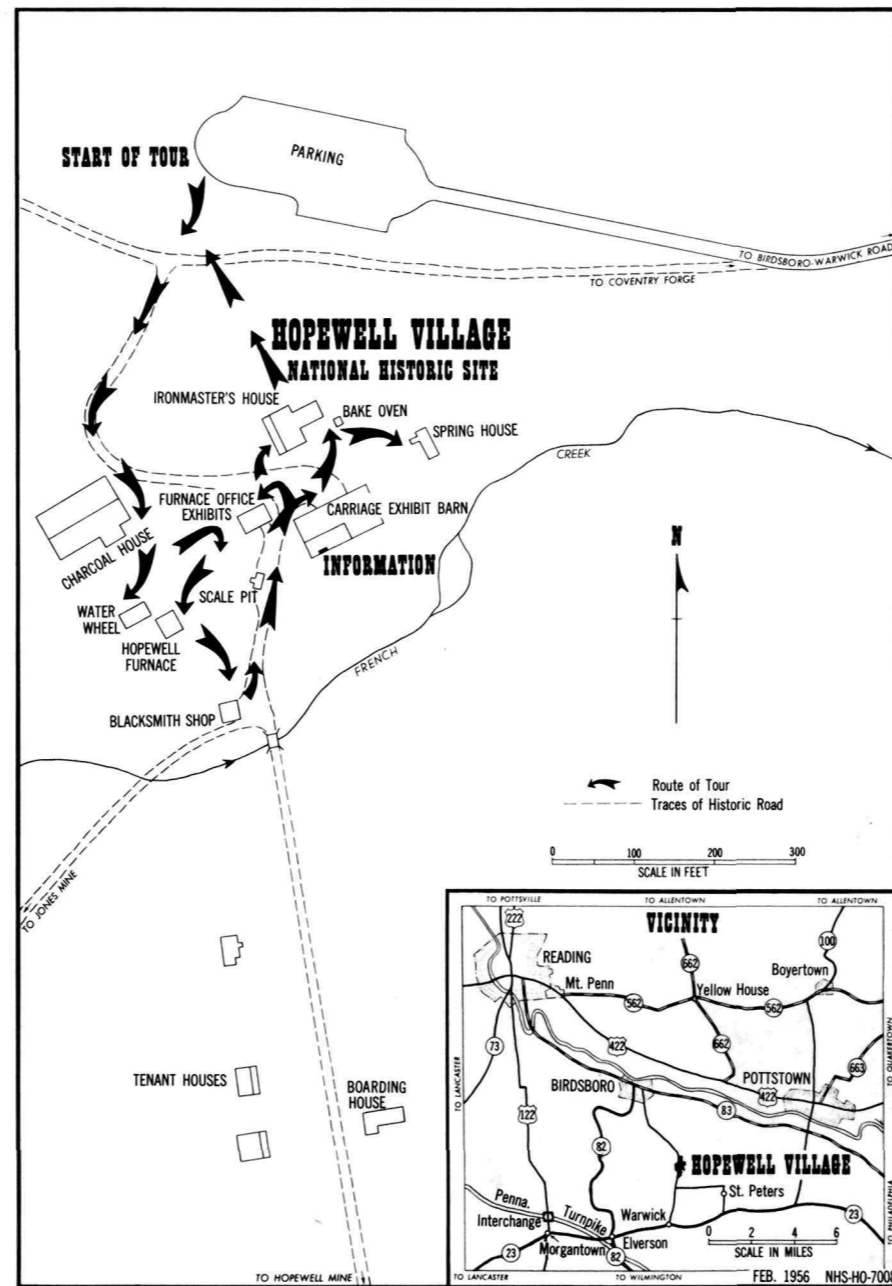
About Your Visit

You may obtain further information about this and other areas of the National Park System from members of the staff on duty. You will find Hopewell Village open daily from 9:30 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. (On Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, from July 4 through Labor Day the site remains open until 7:30 p. m.). Be sure to visit the old furnace office, near the center of the village, where you will see unusual exhibits. These include original iron castings produced at Hopewell Furnace and objects and tools used in the operation of a cold-blast charcoal furnace in the 1700's and 1800's. In the adjacent barn, examples of historic carriages are on display.

Those who plan to visit the area in a group may receive special service if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent. Adjoining the area is French Creek State Park, where you may picnic and swim in season.

Administration

Hopewell Village National Historic Site is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Hopewell Village National Historic Site, R. D. No. 1, Elverson, Pa., is in immediate charge.

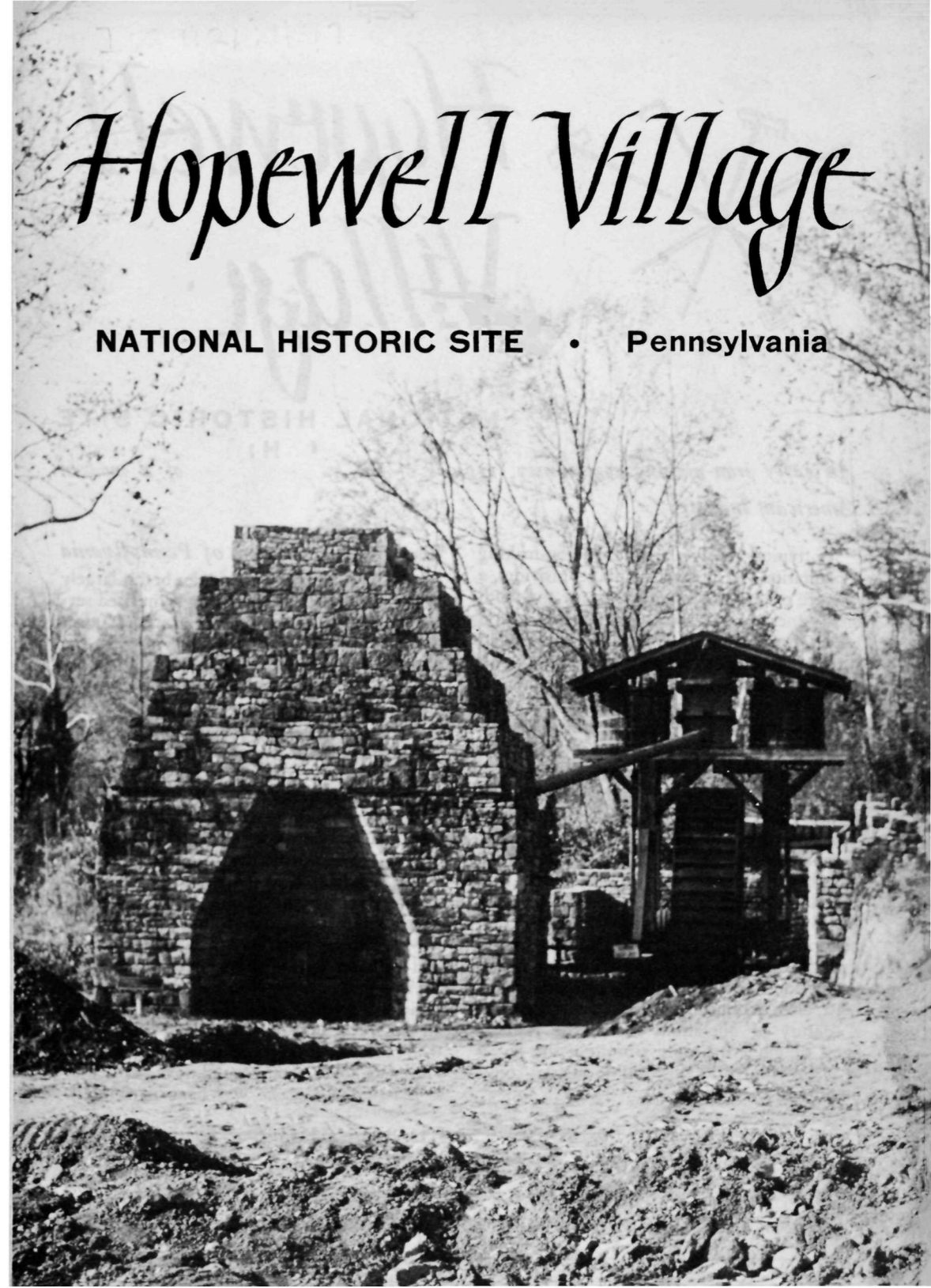


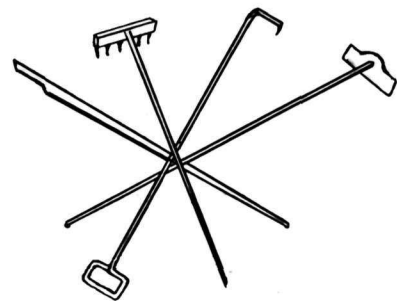
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Secretary of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Conrad L. Wirth, Director



Hopewell Village

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE • Pennsylvania





Hopewell Village

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

An early iron-making community, typical of the humble origins of a modern American industry

A typical early American iron-making "plantation," Hopewell Village provides a picture of the small beginnings of the modern American industrial giant of iron and steel. Its picturesque buildings, clustered about the furnace like the self-sufficient village of a medieval manor, recall an almost forgotten way of life as significant of colonial and early America as a Southern plantation or a New England farm.

Operating from 1770 to 1883, Hopewell Furnace was not the first iron smelter to be built by that adventurous breed of industrial pioneers, the Pennsylvania ironmasters. It is, however, one of the oldest now standing anywhere in the country, and with the surrounding village is the best preserved example of this important phase of American historical development. Unlike the many early ironworks which were rebuilt for steam power and coke, it remained a primitive cold-blast, charcoal-burning furnace for more than a century of operation. Then the restless hand of modern progress brought the quiet of abandonment to this busy industrial community of another era.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

Early Iron Industry of Pennsylvania

The iron industry in America began largely on "plantations," which often comprised several thousand acres of woodland and farmland. One of its early centers was the Schuylkill Valley of Pennsylvania. Here extensive resources of limestone, iron ore, waterpower, and timber for the making of charcoal (all necessary in the cold-blast process of iron manufacture) were found within easy reach of navigable rivers and streams. In this region near Pottstown, Pennsylvania's first bloomery forge (making "blooms," or bars of wrought iron) was built in 1716. About 4 years later the first blast furnace, Colebrookdale, began operations. Thomas Rutter and Thomas Potts led the way in these enterprises, soon followed by others. By 1771 there were more than 50 iron forges and furnaces operating in Pennsylvania.

Among the foreseeing men whose imaginations were fired with the idea of building an American iron empire was William Bird, who came to Pennsylvania in the early 1700's. His exact antecedents are unknown, although it is believed that he was born in Raritan,

N. J., in 1703. Working as a woodchopper for Rutter in 1733, he saved his money and finally went into business for himself. It was in 1740 that he started the construction of his first forge near the mouth of Hay Creek, now the center of modern, industrial Birdsboro. Within a few years, William Bird had acquired holdings of about 3,000 acres along Hay Creek. In the hills west of the Schuylkill he had built the mansion which still stands in Birdsboro and had put three forges into operation. One of these he called Hopewell Forge, the first known use of the name in this immediate vicinity. By 1756 his position as an important figure in the social, political, and economic life of eastern Pennsylvania was secure.

Establishment of Hopewell Furnace

When William Bird died in 1761, his son Mark inherited the family business, which he soon expanded. The following year Mark Bird went into partnership with George Ross, a prominent Lancaster lawyer, and together they built Mary Ann Furnace, the first iron furnace west of the Susquehanna River. Probably as a consequence of the discovery of a convenient deposit of iron ore not far from French Creek, Bird erected Hopewell Furnace on that stream in 1770-71, close to a road which led from near Reading to Coventry Forge, now Coventryville.

The new furnace became the nucleus of Hopewell Village, a small almost manorial settlement of furnacemen, moulders, colliers, teamsters, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, and woodchoppers and their families. Most of these employees lived in small tenant houses built at the ironmaster's expense, while Bird or his manager at Hopewell occupied a mansion overlooking the furnace. A village general store, tenant gardens, and nearby farms operated by the Bird family supplied all ordinary economic wants. Wagons and other equipment were constructed or repaired in the Hopewell shops, and the farm animals and mules used for hauling purposes were stabled in the barns.

The workmen were largely of Anglo-Saxon stock; many were servants "bound" for a period of years. There were a few Negro slaves. Life was hard and the men literally lived at their jobs. Education, at first, was limited to the children of the ironmaster, who employed a tutor or schoolmaster. Later, a school was built for the village children. Itinerant preachers provided religious instructions.

Nearly all of the early Pennsylvania furnaces, Hopewell included, cast stoves and hollow ware, such as pots and kettles, directly from the furnace, and in addition manufactured pig iron. The first stove castings were flat plates of iron with decorations of tulips,

hearts, Biblical figures, and mottoes. Old stoves, marked "Hopewell Furnace," castings, tools, and furnishings of that period are now on display at the site.

The Furnace During the Revolutionary War

With the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, peacetime manufacturing at Hopewell gave way to the production of war materials. Mark Bird himself rendered active military service in the patriot cause. In August 1776, he outfitted at his own expense about 300 men of the Second Battalion, Berks County militia. Later he went to Washington's aid after the Battle of Brandywine, September 11, 1777. Papers of the Continental Congress show that he also supplied large quantities of food and Hopewell iron to the Confederation, and that in so doing he went heavily into debt. Bird's efforts to collect even part payment were apparently fruitless. A flood on Hay Creek in Birdsboro nearly ruined this property, and currency depreciation struck a final blow. Hopewell Furnace was advertised for sheriff's sale in April 1788, at about the same time Bird moved to North Carolina. He died there in comparative poverty.

In the 1790's during the brief ownership of James Old who succeeded Bird, Hopewell Furnace recovered somewhat from the eco-

nomical effects of the war. Castings, especially stoves which then were coming into great demand, brought better prices. In 1800, Thomas Brooke, his brother, Matthew, and his brother-in-law, Daniel Buckley, acquired the furnace lands. It was under the energetic direction of Thomas Brooke that Hopewell Furnace entered on its era of greatest prosperity.

The Last Years of Hopewell Furnace

By 1821, twenty-three types of stoves, besides a variety of other castings as well as pig iron, were manufactured at Hopewell. In the record blast of 1836 (lasting 14 months and 24 days), with well over 150 workmen employed, 720 tons of castings and 459 tons of pig iron were produced. Hopewell Furnace remained in operation until 1883, when it was "blow'd out" for the last time. The furnace was never converted to the hot-blast process, which came into general use in America after 1850 and which inaugurated a new era in the iron industry. Castings were made at the Village until about 1845. After this, under the management of Dr. C. M. Clingan, a physician, nearly all Hopewell pig iron went into various forges in Pennsylvania, bringing prices ranging from \$28 to \$45 a ton. In 1864, when demand for it, brought about by the Civil War, skyrocketed the price, this pig iron went to



Blacksmith Shop. Finch Photo.



"Big House," Furnace Office, and Furnace. Finch Photo.



"Big House," Ironmaster's Residence. Hallman Photo.



Tenant House. Hallman Photo.