

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL ASSESSMENT FORM

Type of Memorial (check all applicable)

☐ Monument ☐ with Sculpture ☐ without Sculpture ☒ with Cannon ☐ standalone Cannon
☐ Historical Marker ☐ Plaque ☒ Other (flag pole, G.A.R. buildings, stained glass windows, etc.)

Note: try to record items separately. Cannons near monuments should be recorded & photographed separately, etc. Thank you.

Affiliation

☐ GAR ☐ MOLLUS ☐ SUVCW ☐ WRC ☐ ASUVCW
☐ LGAR ☐ DUVCW ☒ Other

If known, record name and number of post, camp, corps, auxiliary, tent, circle or appropriate information of other groups:

Phoenixville Lions Club, Phoenix Steel Corp.

Original Dedication Date 11 May 1963

Please consult any/all newspaper archives for a local paper's article that would have information on the *first* dedication ceremony and/or other facts on the memorial. Please submit a copy of your findings with full identification of the paper & date of publication. Thank you.

Location

SW corner of Reeves Park

The Memorial is *currently* located at:

Street/Road address or site location

Intersection of S Main St. and 3rd Ave.

GPS Coordinates N 40.12792 W 75.51398

City/Village &/or Township Phoenixville

County Chester

State Pennsylvania

Zip Code 19460

The front of the Memorial faces: ☐ North ☒ South ☐ East ☐ West

Government Body, Agency, or Individual Owner

Name Borough o Phoenixville

Dept./Div. Parks and Recreation

Street Address 351 Bridge Street

City Phoenixville

State Pennsylvania

Zip Code 19460

Contact Person Melissa Gibbons

Telephone (610) 933-7728

ext

Is Memorial on the National Register of Historic Places ☐ Yes ☒ No ID # if known

For Monuments with/without sculpture:

Physical Details

Material of Monument or base under a Sculpture or Cannon = ☐ Stone ☐ Concrete ☐ Metal ☐ Other

If known, name specific material (color of granite, marble, etc.)

Material of the Sculpture ☐ Stone ☐ Concrete ☐ Metal ☐ Other Is it hollow or solid?

If known, name specific material (color of granite, marble, etc.)

For Historic Marker or Plaque:

Material of Plaque or Historical Marker / Tablet = _____

For Cannons with/without monument:

Griffen

Material of Cannon = _____ Bronze ☒ Iron _____ Type of Cannon (if known) _____Rifled ☒ Yes _____ No _____

Markings: Muzzle _____ Base Ring/Breech _____

Left Trunion _____ Right Trunion _____

Is inert ammunition a part of the Memorial? ☒ Yes _____ No _____

[For camp/department monuments officer's use: Cannon on list of known ordnance] _____ Yes _____ No _____

For Other Memorials: (flag pole, G.A.R. buildings, stained glass windows, etc.)What best describes the memorial Building holding the Griffen cannon on caisson, signage, and muralMaterials of the Memorial Stone, glass, wood**Complete for All Memorials****Approximate Dimensions** (indicate unit of measure) - taken from tallest / widest points10' Height 12 1/2' Width 12 1/2' Depth or _____ Diameter _____

For Memorials with multiple Sculptures, please record this information on a separate sheet of paper for each statue (service, pose, etc) and attach to this form. Please describe the "pose" of each statue and any weapons/implements involved (in case your photos become separated from this form). Thank you!

Markings/Inscriptions (on stone-work / metal-work of monument, base, sculpture)

Maker or Fabricator mark / name? If so, give name & location found

Please attach legible photographs of all text &/or Record the text in the space below. Please use the addendum – narrative sheet if necessary.

{sign to left of cannon describing mural behind the cannon}

MY BROTHERS

Walking over this hill leaving the past be- / hind us and now begin our journey forward, look- / ing toward the future.

I walk between my brothers. One has been loyal to / the South, the other the North. I stand a little closer / to my brother in gray because to me he is a little tall- / er in his defeat. Looking toward him is my broth- / er in blue. He does not wear the gloating smile of a / victor, but shows instead the warm, understanding / smile of a loving brother.

As we walk homeward, we pass by a damaged tree. In the / next few years it will grow sparingly, then die. In its stead / a new sprout will be given birth from the roots of the old, and / in place of the damaged tree a young, vibrant one will live to / grow tall and strong. Also, the war-ravaged farmhouse, which / once was useful and proud, will be rebuilt by the hands of the / hopeful.

And so, life goes on and time heals. As tomorrow be- / comes yesterday and the future becomes the past, / our family also will heal.

These things I know, because these are my brothers.

Mural Painted by Joseph C. Hennesy

Environmental Setting

(The general vicinity and immediate locale surrounding a memorial can play a major role in its overall condition.)

Type of Location

☐ Cemetery ☒ Park ☐ Plaza/Courtyard ☐ "Town Square" ☐ Post Office
☐ School ☐ Municipal Building ☐ State Capitol ☐ Courthouse ☐ College Campus
☐ Traffic Circle ☐ Library Other: _____

General Vicinity

☐ Rural (low population, open land) ☐ Suburban (residential, near city) ☒ Town ☐ Urban / Metropolitan

Immediate Locale (check as many as may apply)

☐ Industrial ☐ Commercial ☐ Street/Roadside within 20 feet ☒ Tree Covered (overhanging branches)
☒ Protected from the elements (canopy or enclosure, indoors) ☒ Protected from the public (fence or other barrier)

Any other significant environmental factor _____

[To detail the condition of a monument used the addendum form for *Monument's Condition*]

Submission of this form requires at least one type of identification so that you may be contacted regarding the information on this form. This information will most likely be in the public domain. Your name is required; please include one (or more) pieces of contact information.

1. If a member of an Allied Order, the name of your camp, auxiliary, tent, circle or corps; along with your department;
2. Physical Address;
3. Phone Number
4. E-Mail address.

By submitting this, you are allowing the posting of this information on the internet.

Inspector Identification _____ Date of On-site Survey 20 June A. D. 2025
 Your Name Sumner Gary Hunnewell
 Address 2030 San Pedro Drive
 City Arnold State MO Zip Code 63010
 Telephone () _____ E-Mail _____

Are you a member of the Allied Orders of the G.A.R.? If so, which one?

SUVCW

Supplemental Background Information

In addition to your on-site survey, any additional information you can provide on the described Memorial will be welcomed. Please label each account with its source (author, title, publisher, date, pages). Topics include any reference to the points listed on this questionnaire, plus any previous conservation treatments - or efforts to raise money for treatment. Photographs & GPS Co-ordinates are very much desired.

Pages 4 & 5 attached to this electronic file are the Monument's Condition and the Narrative forms. Only the Monument's Condition form is required if you are requesting grant money using form CWM-62 *SUVCW Memorial Grant Application Form and Instructions*.

Please mail (or e-mail pdf, and picture files) to:

Walt Busch, PDC, Chair, 1240 Konert Valley Dr., Fenton, MO 63026, cwmemorials@suvchw.org (314) 630-8407

Thank you for your help, and attention to detail.

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War - Civil War Memorials Committee.

>This form may be photocopied.<

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SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL ASSESSMENT FORM
ADDENDUM – MONUMENT'S CONDITION

Completion of this form is required when requesting grant money using form CWM-62 *SUVCW Memorial Grant Application Form and Instructions*.

Condition Information

Structural Condition (check as many as may apply)

The following section applies to Monuments with Sculpture, and Monuments without Sculpture including the base for Monuments with Cannon. Instability in the sculpture and its base can be detected by a number of factors. Indicators may be obvious or subtle. Visually examine the sculpture and its base.

	Sculpture	Base
If hollow, is the internal support unstable/exposed? (Look for signs of exterior rust)	_____	_____
Any evidence of structural instability? (Look for cracked joints, missing mortar or caulking or plant growth)	_____	_____
Any broken or missing parts? (Look for elements (i.e., sword, musket, hands, arms, etc. - missing due to vandalism, fluctuating weather conditions, etc.)	_____	_____
Any cracks, splits, breaks or holes? (Also look for signs of uneven stress & weakness in the material)	_____	_____

Surface Appearance (check as many as may apply)

	Sculpture	Base
Black crusting	_____	_____
White crusting	_____	_____
Etched, pitted, or otherwise corroded (on metal)	_____	_____
Metallic staining (run-off from copper, iron, etc.)	_____	_____
Organic growth (moss, algae, lichen or vines)	_____	_____
Chalky or powdery stone	_____	_____
Granular eroding of stone	_____	_____
Spalling of stone (surface splitting off)	_____	_____
Droppings (bird, animal, insect remains)	_____	_____
Other (e.g., spray paint graffiti) - Please describe...	_____	_____

Does water collect in recessed areas of the Memorial? ____ Yes ____ No ____ Unable to tell

Surface Coating

Does there appear to be a coating? ____ Yes ____ No ____ Unable to determine

If known, identify type of coating.

____ Gilded ____ Painted ____ Varnished ____ Waxed ____ Unable to determine

Is the coating in good condition? ____ Yes ____ No ____ Unable to determine

Basic Surface Condition Assessment (check one)

In your opinion, what is the general appearance or condition of the Memorial?

____ Well maintained ☒ Would benefit from treatment ____ In urgent need of treatment ____ Unable to determine

Briefly describe the Memorial (affiliation / overall condition & any concern not already touched on) .

Roof and stonework looks solid. Wood could use a scraping and repainting.

Inspector's Name Sumner Gary Hunnewell Date 1 July A. D. 2025

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL ASSESSMENT FORM
ADDENDUM – NARRATIVE

[Generally used to record the text of monuments, but may be used for any other useful information, such as if the monument has been moved or if you have information about the day of dedication. May repeat use of page as often as necessary.]

The Memorial is *currently* located at: SW corner of Reeves Park

Street/Road address or site location _____

Intersection of S Main St. and 3rd Ave. GPS Coordinates N 40.12792 W 75.51398

City/Village and/or Township Phoenixville

County Chester State Pennsylvania Zip Code 19460

TEXT

{bronze plaque in front of cannon}

THE GRIFFEN CANNON

ONE OF 1400 GUNS MADE AT PHOENIX / IRON COMPANY SHOPS BETWEEN 1860 / AND 1865.

INVENTED BY JOHN GRIFFEN

THESE 3 INCH WROUGHT IRON RIFLED / FIELD PIECES SERVED THE UNION / FORCES WITH GREAT MERIT
DURING / THE CIVIL WAR.

{sign to the right of the cannon}

GRIFFEN GUN MEMORIAL

Dedicated As / PHOENIXVILLE'S / CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL / Celebration / MAY 11, 1963

This building was erected and given / to the Borough of Phoenixville by / the Phoenixville Lions Club.

The Griffen Gun was given to the / Borough by the Phoenix Steel Corp.

Many other donations were re- / ceived from various organizations and individuals.

COMMITTEE ON ARRANGEMENTS

Albert Hoffman, Chairman

{first column}

Robert D. Shaffner / Thomas Boyce / John V. Norris / John Stauffer, Jr. / Maj. Charles Hennesy

{second column}

Joseph Hennesy / Paul M. Pfau / H. Madison Ale / Frances W. Pennypacker / Phoebe H. Oilkyson

Inspector's Name Sumner Gary Hunnewell Date 1 July A. D. 2025

Did Phoenixville weapon win the Civil War?

By Daniel Kaufman
Special to The Inquirer

July 1863.

Confederate troops have advanced into Pennsylvania as far east as the Susquehanna River and plan to march toward the Philadelphia area. On their way, they hope to knock out the Phoenix Iron Works in Phoenixville, one of the biggest producers of field weapons for the Union.

The Confederates never got the chance. At the Battle of Gettysburg, Union forces drove the Rebels back into northern Virginia and, many say, turned the tide of the Civil War in the North's favor. While the North was aided by more than 100 soldiers from Phoenixville, the presence of an iron company product — the Griffen gun — may have played the most important role in the battle, which claimed about 40,000 casualties.

"The Griffen cannon is reputedly responsible for winning the Battle of Gettysburg," said Bob Shaffner, a town historian and a director of the Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area, which runs the borough's historical museum at the corner of Main and Church Streets. "They [the Confederate army] were headed toward here and Philly and likely would have won the war."

An exhibit commemorating the role of the Griffen gun in the Civil War is currently one of a dozen or so displays at the small museum, which also houses photographs of burning bridges, turquoise majolica earthenware once made by a company in town and the long-ago minutes of iron company meetings.

"We're covering a lot of different subjects in just that small museum," said Laura Robb, chairwoman of the Historical Society.

Since November 1980, the museum has occupied the two-floor, turn-of-the-century stone building with Gothic windows, formerly a Mennonite church. Its archives office is open Wednesdays and Fridays, and the exhibits downstairs are available for public viewing on the first Sunday of every month.

The Historical Society would like to extend the museum's visiting hours and expand its exhibit space. But Connie Bretz, another director, said money is not the main hurdle — the organization has some large private donors and 331 dues-paying members from Phoenixville, Charlestown, East Pikeland, Mont Clair and Schuylkill.

"The big problem is understaffing. There are no paid positions. It's really done for the love of it," Bretz said.

"There are so many things that haven't been catalogued or filed. And we don't have enough help to change the exhibits more than twice a year," added Lois Donovan, one of six volunteers who work upstairs in the archives and assist visitors from out of town who are trying to do historical research or trace their genealogy.

Bretz said many of the items in the archives were either on loan or donated by private citizens.

"People find something in their attic or basement which is historically important and need a place to put it," she said.

Shaffner, who worked for 40 years for the

(See FOUNDRY on Page 18)



Special to The Inquirer / BARBARA JOHNSTON

Historian Bob Shaffner stands in front of Griffen gun built in Phoenixville.

Clipped By:
jccarpenter3
Jul 1, 2025

Griffen gun credited in battle

FOUNDRY, from Page 6
Iron Works and its successor, the now-defunct Phoenix Steel Corp., said he first learned of the Griffen cannon in 1960 while uprooting a floor in a building on the site.

"I ran into an old cannon barrel and asked one of the old-timers there. He remembered or knew people here around the time of the Civil War," he said.

The trail Shaffner followed led to the late John Griffen, an inventor hired by the iron company in 1855 to design the gun. Weighing 620 pounds, Griffen's first model was tested and approved by the government in 1856. The guns went on sale for \$320 shortly thereafter.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Phoenix Iron Works became one of a dozen manufacturers producing about 90 percent of the Union's artil-

lery. At its peak times in the late 1800s and the two World Wars, the iron works employed between 1,500 and 2,000 workers, Shaffner said, and turned Phoenixville into a thriving industrial town.

Hundreds of the 3-inch diameter cannon bores were used by the North at Gettysburg. From 1861 to 1865, Phoenixville churned out 1,400 of them. Crafted from wrought iron instead of the traditional bronze, the charcoal black barrels were lighter and more accurate and were considered the most effective weapons of modern warfare.

Whether the Griffen cannon single-handedly won the battle of Gettysburg for the North is questionable. Bob Prosperi, a historian for the National Park Service in Gettysburg, said the Southern forces also utilized a smaller number of similar

wrought-iron rifle barrels, in addition to the 3-inch models they had captured from Union forces before.

But Prosperi acknowledged that the North "better handled" its artillery, which he said played a big role in its victory over the South.

One of the iron cannons is encased in a stone and glass building in Reeves Park in Phoenixville at the corner of Main Street and Third Avenue. Seventy-five Griffen guns still stand in their battery positions on the memorial Battlefield of Gettysburg, and the one that reportedly fired the first shot in the fight stands in its same spot west of town.

For more information on the Griffen gun or the museum, call 933-8145 or 933-0669.

Clipped By:
jccarpenter3
Jul 1, 2025





GRIPPEN GUN MEMORIAL
Dedicated As
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CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL
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MAY 11, 1963

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	Phoebe H. Gilkyson

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