

INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS



THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL MEMORIAL

PENNSYLVANIA

1996

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial was established by Public Law 92-524 on October 21, 1972 to "provide for the development of a suitable memorial to General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, great Polish patriot and hero of the American Revolution" The memorial opened to the public in February 1976.

PURPOSE

To commemorate and interpret the significant contributions of Polish patriot and military engineer, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, to the American Revolutionary War and to the cause of liberty and freedom in his native Poland.

SIGNIFICANCE

Born in Poland and educated in Poland and France, Thaddeus Kosciuszko was one of the first foreign nationals to seek and receive a commission in the Continental Army. His skill in military engineering was a decisive factor in the Battle of Saratoga—the Continental Army's first major victory and a victory which led to France's recognition of American independence. Colonel Kosciuszko designed fortifications along the Delaware River and the fortifications at West Point on the Hudson River. His knowledge of military logistics contributed to General Nathanael Greene's masterful retreat from Cornwallis in the south. At the end of the war Congress promoted Colonel Kosciuszko to Brigadier General. Returning to Poland after the war, Kosciuszko won international fame in his attempts to bring liberty and independence to Poland.

THE RESOURCE

The Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial is located at the corner of South Third and Pine Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and consists of two 18th century row houses (301 South Pine Street and 340 South Third Street) on .02 acres of land. This location is four blocks south of Independence National Historical Park and within the historic Society Hill section of the city.

The two, three and one-half story brick row houses share a common center wall and were constructed in 1775 by Joseph Few, who sold them the next year to William Allison. Allison bought the homes as investment property. In the 1790s, Mrs. Ann Relf leased the 301 South Pine Street house from William Allison's widow and operated a boarding house there. Thaddeus Kosciuszko, his close friend-Julian Niemcewicz, and a servant-Stanislaw Dombrowski rented rooms in Mrs. Relf's boarding house from November 1797 to May 1798. There is no documentation of which rooms in the house were used by Kosciuszko, but what is known of his physical condition at the time, his social status, and the building's layout have led to academic speculation that his room was located on the west side of the second floor. Kosciuszko's stay at 301 Pine Street represents his longest term private residence in the United States.

The exteriors of both buildings have been restored to their 1797 appearance. A room on the second floor has been refurnished with furniture and other objects to reflect the 1797 time period, Kosciuszko's interests,

and his documented possessions during his stay in Philadelphia. No other attempt has been made to restore the interiors of the two buildings. The 340 South Third Street house has no historic connection to Kosciuszko, but is included in the National Memorial to provide additional interpretive and visitor services space.

THE VISITORS

Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial had less than 5,000 visitors in 1993. There has never been a demographic study of the memorial's visitors, but the memorial's staff provided a general visitor profile. More than 50% of the visitors are either Polish or Polish-American. Only 10% of the visitors come as result of a referral from Independence National Historical Park which is located four blocks north of the memorial. Visitors from other Kosciuszko sites, formal tours, Revolutionary War buffs, and impulse visitors make up the balance of the visitation. Visitors without a Polish affiliation want to know who Kosciuszko was and why he was significant enough to warrant a National Memorial. Polish and Polish-American visitors are aware of Kosciuszko and his role in the American Revolution, but also expect information on his significance in Polish history.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

Visitors will:

- Be able to easily find and identify Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial.
- Identify Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial as a unit of the National Park Service.
- Understand that the site is composed of two row houses, only one of which has a historical connection to Kosciuszko.
- Have the opportunity to learn who Thaddeus Kosciuszko was and what contributions he made to the American Revolution.
- Have the opportunity to learn about Thaddeus Kosciuszko's role in the history of Poland.
- Have the opportunity to appreciate Thaddeus Kosciuszko's commitment to the liberty of all people through his provisions for American slaves in his American will.
- Gain an appreciation for Kosciuszko's experience as a boarder at Mrs. Relf's boarding house, including the status accorded him by the many distinguished visitors he received there.
- Receive interpretive messages in both English and Polish.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

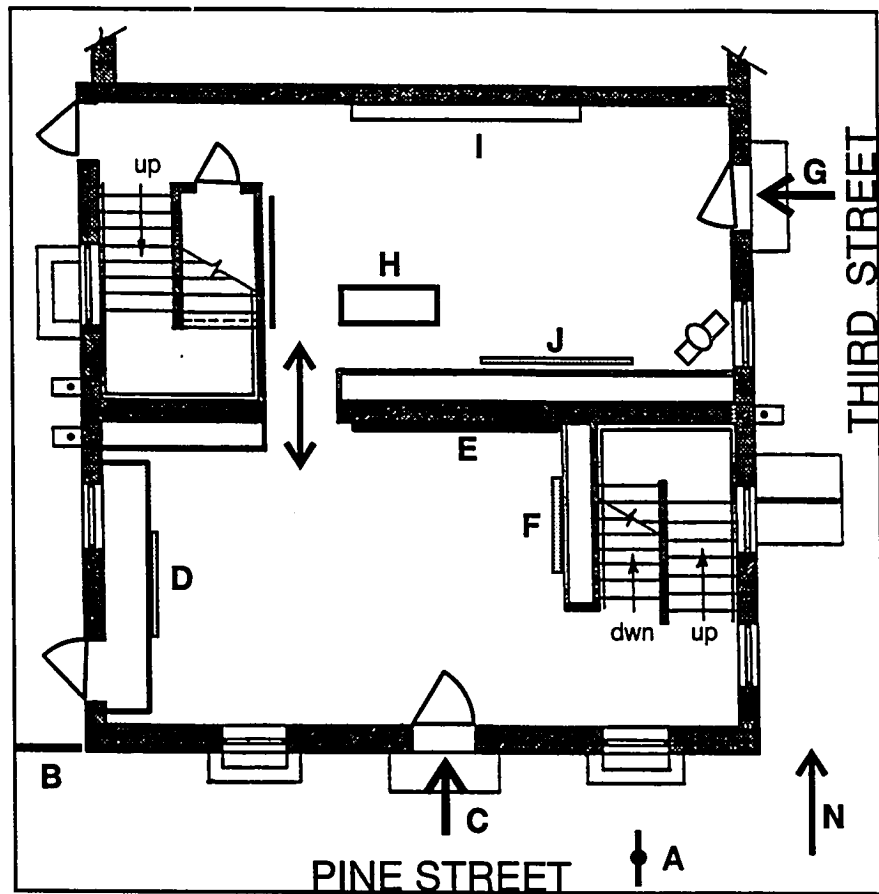
1. *A graduate of a French military academy with a degree in engineering and artillery, Polish-born Thaddeus Kosciuszko made significant contributions to the American Revolutionary War as a Colonel of Engineers in the Continental Army.*

Born in Poland and educated in Poland and France, Kosciuszko was one of the first foreign nationals to seek and receive a commission in the Continental Army. Even before he received his commission, he designed fortifications of the Delaware River for the Pennsylvania Committee of Defense. Kosciuszko's placement and construction of fortifications at Saratoga were credited by General Horatio Gates as a major factor in the Continental Army's decisive victory there—the first major victory of the war and one which led to France's recognition of American Independence. Kosciuszko spent 28 months designing and overseeing the construction of the fortifications at West Point on the Hudson River. In 1780, he became the only engineer officer in the Southern Department of the Continental Army under General Nathanael Greene and helped facilitate Greene's masterful retreat in the South, which allowed Greene to arrive at Yorktown with his forces intact to help defeat Cornwallis' army. Late in the war, Kosciuszko saw his only action as a field officer when he led a small detachment of infantry in the attack on Charleston, South Carolina.

2. *Thaddeus Kosciuszko's commitment to liberty and human rights went beyond his experience in the American Revolution to his lifelong fight for Polish independence, to his eventual freeing of the serfs on his former Polish estate, and to his interest in the freeing of American slaves.*

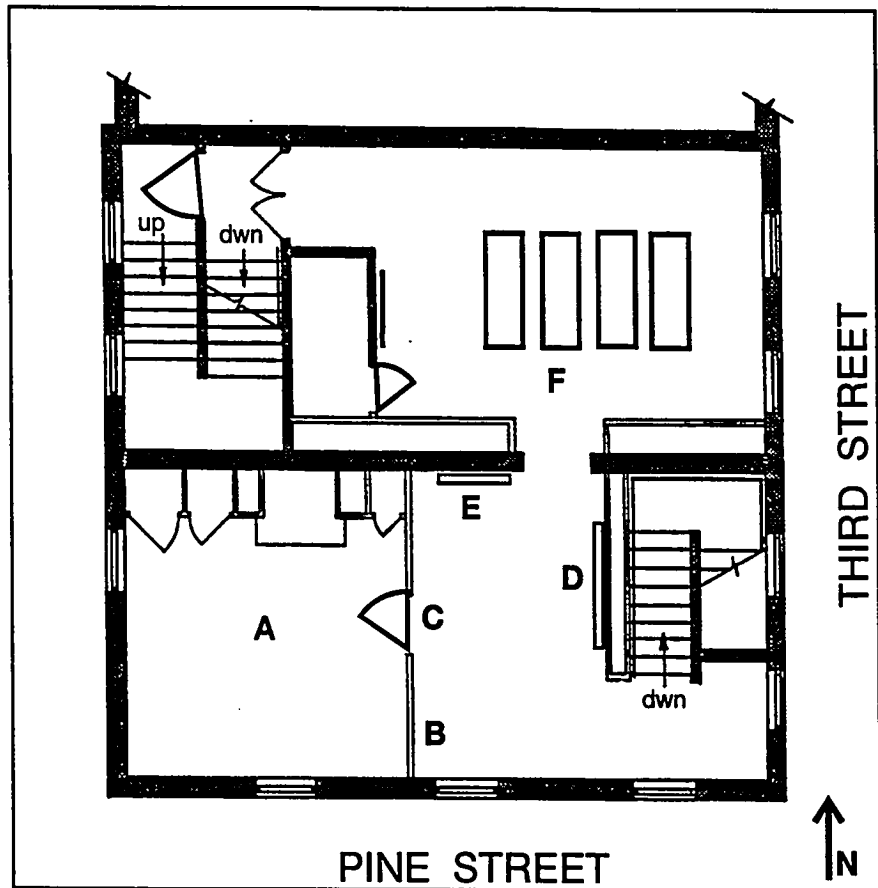
Kosciuszko was well versed in the writings of Rousseau, Montesquieu, Locke, and Hume, and his American Revolution experience was an opportunity to see the practical translation of these philosophies into a frame of government. In the 10 years following his return to Poland after the American Revolution, Kosciuszko participated in two military efforts to bring independence to Poland. During the second effort, the Polish Insurrection, Kosciuszko was named commander of the people's army and temporary dictator of the state. The Insurrection ended in failure with Kosciuszko severely wounded and a prisoner of Russia. After his release from prison, Kosciuszko returned to the United States for a brief nine month stay, during which he developed a close relationship with Thomas Jefferson. Working with Jefferson, he wrote a will that outlined how his American assets were to be used to purchase the freedom of slaves and to provide for their assimilation into society as productive citizens. After his American sojourn, Kosciuszko returned to Europe where he worked the rest of his life in an unsuccessful effort to secure Poland's independence. He was, however, able to free the serfs on his former estate in Poland and give them the lands they had farmed.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



THE EXTERIOR AND THE FIRST FLOOR

- A. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Plaque
- B. NPS Wayside Exhibit
- C. Pine Street Entrance
- D. Kosciuszko Portrait
- E. "Heroes of the Revolution" Engraving
- F. Grouping of Kosciuszko Portraits
- G. Third Street Entry
- H. Information Desk
- I. Kosciuszko Memorials Exhibit
- J. Kosciuszko Memorials Exhibit



THE SECOND FLOOR

- A. Historically Furnished Room
- B. Audio Message Buttons
- C. Solid Door in Glass Wall
- D. Drawings by Kosciuszko and a Newspaper Account of His Arrival
- E. Exhibit of Kosciuszko's American Wills
- F. Theater with Audiovisual Presentation

The Society Hill section of Philadelphia where Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial is located contains a large number of restored or reconstructed 18th and early 19th-century houses. Directly across Pine Street from the memorial is St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church which was built in 1761 and is where Ann Relf is buried. Nearby, are Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church and Head House Market, both of which date from the 18th century.

In the context of this historical streetscape, the two brick row houses at the corner of Third and Pine Streets are quite inconspicuous. The Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial is marked on Pine Street by a blue metal memorial plaque erected by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and a National Park Service wayside exhibit panel attached to the board fence adjoining the memorial. The memorial plaque, which stands about eight feet above the sidewalk and out of the normal sight line of pedestrians, identifies the house's connection to Kosciuszko but because the plaque was erected before the National Memorial was established, no mention is made of the site's national status. The wayside exhibit is flat-mounted on the fence, parallel to the sidewalk and is very inconspicuous. There are no wayside exhibits on Third Street, but a four foot sign indentifying the entrance to Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial is placed on the sidewalk each day. Both entry doors have signs identifying them as entrances to "Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial", these signs are mounted low on the doors and inconspicuous. Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial is hard to find.

Visitors entering the Pine Street entrance find themselves in a room of Thaddeus Kosciuszko portraits. Nothing in the room welcomes visitors to the memorial or explains who Kosciuszko is or why he is significant. Sparse label copy identifies the man in the portraits as Thaddeus Kosciuszko. On the east side of the room are stairs which lead to the second floor, but there is nothing to indicate to visitors that they should continue their visit on the second floor. A door on the north wall connects to the Third Street exhibit space.

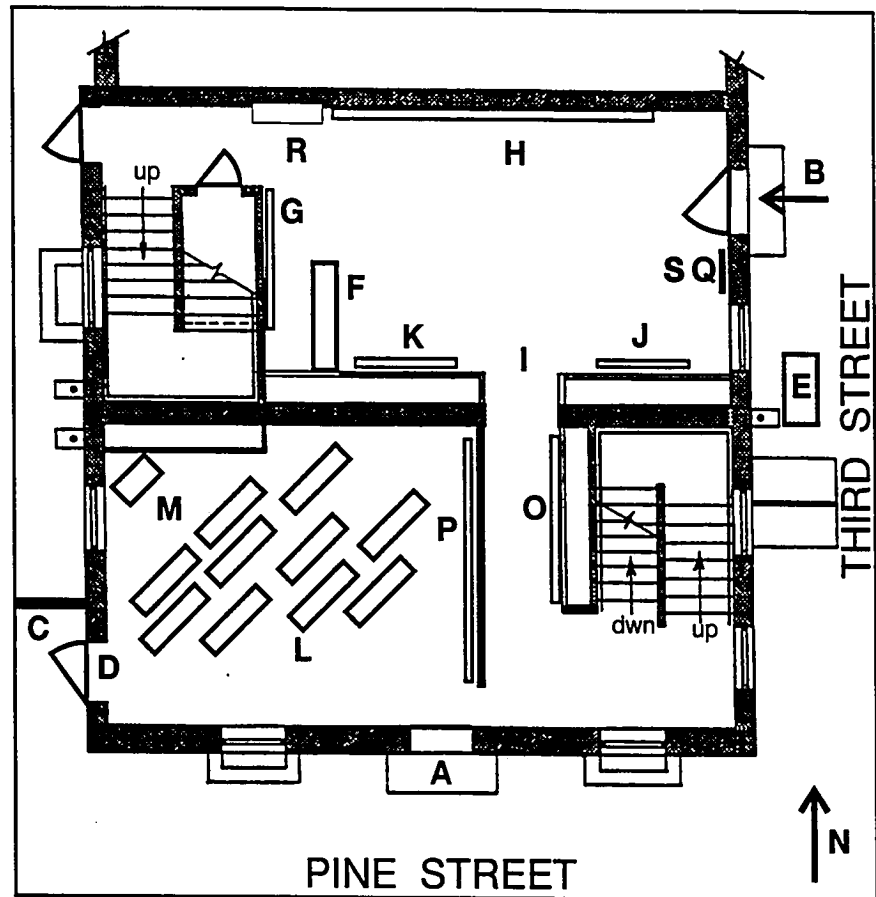
Visitors entering the Third Street entrance find an attended information desk. The interpreter at the desk welcomes visitors, tells them about the memorial and how it is organized, and answers their questions about Thaddeus Kosciuszko. The exhibits in this room display photographs of other memorials to Kosciuszko in the United States, Poland and other countries. None of the exhibits on the first floor explain the significant accomplishments of Thaddeus Kosciuszko during the American Revolutionary War, and these are the only exhibit spaces available to mobility impaired visitors.

The second floor is designed to be entered via the stairs coming from the first floor Pine Street exhibit space. At the top of the stairs visitors find a room whose west wall is glass down to the wainscoting with a solid wooden door at its center. Peering through the glass visitors see a room furnished much like Kosciuszko's room would have been. The objects in the room tell a lot about who Kosciuszko was and what his interests were. Visitors can depress one of two buttons on the top of the wainscoting and hear a short audio message in English or Polish about Kosciuszko and his time in Philadelphia at Mrs. Relf's boarding house. On

the east wall are a series of graphics—drawings by Kosciuszko and a newspaper account of his return to Philadelphia. An exhibit on the north wall displays Kosciuszko's "American" will and a copy of Kosciuszko's letter to Jefferson explaining his intentions for his American assets. To the right of this exhibit is the door to the theater.

The theater seats about 15 people on short wooden benches. The 35mm slide/tape program tells the story of Thaddeus Kosciuszko's achievements as a Colonel of Engineers in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. The program is less than 10 minutes long and can be heard in English or Polish (upon request). The theater exits out a door in the west wall onto stairs which take visitors downstairs to the Third Street exhibit space where the interpreter answers any questions visitors have after their tour of the memorial.

THE PLAN



THE EXTERIOR AND FIRST FLOOR

- A. Pine Street Entrance Closed—Emergency Exit
- B. Third Street Entrance
- C. Fence Moved Back
- D. Emergency Exit for new Theater
- E. Entrance Wayside Exhibit
- F. Information Desk
- G. Thomas Jefferson's Quote
- H. Kosciuszko and the American Revolution Exhibit
- I. New Hallway
- J. Kosciuszko Trail Map
- K. Kosciuszko Portrait
- L. New Theater
- M. New Audiovisual Presentation
- O. Mrs. Relf's Boarding House Exhibit
- P. "Heroes of the Revolution" Engraving
- Q. Piszek Commemorative Plaque
- R. Book Sales Area
- S. Guest Register

THE EXTERIOR

Because it is difficult to find and identify Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial, several changes will be made to the memorial's exterior to facilitate visitor recognition and to promote a consistent experience upon arrival inside the memorial. The Pine Street entrance will be closed and the brass sign removed from the door. All visitors will enter through the Third Street entrance. The wayside exhibit on the Pine Street fence will be removed and the fence moved back to allow the use of the exit on the southwest corner of the building as an emergency exit. On Third Street, a new wayside will be installed on the sidewalk between the entrance door and the bulkhead. This wayside will identify the building as the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial and direct visitors to the entrance door on the right. The wayside will be in a standard low-profile frame and installed at a height to allow its use by wheelchair bound visitors. An angled flagpole will be installed just below the second floor window located above the Third Street entrance door. The United States flag will be displayed here. The flag will become a visual focal point for pedestrians and draw them to the wayside exhibit and the entrance door. The brass sign on the Third Street entrance door will be replaced with a sign which is aesthetically pleasing, but which is more eye-catching and legible.

THE FIRST FLOOR

The first floor of the memorial is the only area which is accessible to mobility impaired visitors. Therefore, it is very important that the interpretive media on this floor give the visitor the opportunity to understand what Kosciuszko's contributions were to the American Revolutionary War, the significance of which has led to the establishment of this National Memorial.

The Third Street entrance will bring visitors into a space which will welcome them to the memorial and introduce Kosciuszko's role in the American Revolution. The information desk will be relocated to the west wall so that the attending interpreter is facing the entrance door and can greet visitors as they enter. A National Park Service arrowhead emblem will be displayed on the front of the desk; the desk will be redesigned to accommodate visitors in wheelchairs; and the desktop will be enlarged to allow use of a large map for visitor orientation.

On the wall behind the information desk in as large a type as possible will be Thomas Jefferson's quote about Kosciuszko, "...as pure a son of liberty, as I have ever known...." This quote will be both in English and Polish. The long north wall will display an exhibit which summarizes Kosciuszko's accomplishments during the American Revolutionary War.

The south wall will be reconfigured to allow for changes in the Pine Street first floor space. The current doorway will be moved to a position directly adjacent to the stairwell wall in the Pine Street room (contingent on the feasibility of changing the

mechanical systems in the wall). On the wall to the left of this doorway will be an enlarged version of the Kosciuszko Trail map which chronicles Kosciuszko's involvement in the American Revolutionary War geographically. On the wall to the right side of the doorway centered in the space between the doorway and the information desk will be the large portrait of Thaddeus Kosciuszko which currently hangs on the west wall of the Pine Street first floor room.

The Pine Street first floor space will be rearranged to accommodate a theater space. The theater will be enclosed by constructing an interior wall perpendicular to the room's north wall and to the left of the new doorway. The theater will accommodate seating for 20 to 25 visitors. The seating will be portable and easily rearranged to accommodate the theater's use for school groups or other interpretive programming. A new seven to ten minute laser disc audiovisual presentation with updated graphics will tell the story of Kosciuszko's military career during the American Revolutionary War. To provide alternative accessibility to the second floor for mobility impaired visitors, a video tour of Kosciuszko's refurnished room and the second floor exhibits could be produced on laser disc and shown upon request. The audiovisual equipment for the theater will consist of a laser disc player and large screen monitor. The interpreter will be able to activate the laser disc programs from either the theater or the information desk and the theater lights will be on an automatic dimming circuit. The exit door in the southwest corner of the theater will be an emergency exit, equipped with a panic bar and lighted

exit signs. The current Pine Street entrance door will be locked and covered by curtains to prevent visitor use of this exit. The "Heroes of the Revolution" graphic will be moved to the east wall of the theater.

The hallway created by the new theater wall will be used as a small exhibit space. On the east wall will be an exhibit on Mrs. Relf's boarding house and Kosciuszko's tenancy there. This exhibit will introduce visitors to the house and invite them to see the furnished room on the second floor.

THE SECOND FLOOR

On the second floor, the furnished room will remain unchanged. The audio track will have minor changes in the script to correct inaccuracies. The lighting of the furnished room will be managed to reduce glare on the glass wall and improve visibility. This will include installing venetian blinds in the windows as recommended in the 1976 furnishing plan. The blinds will be kept closed, lowering the light level in the hall outside the furnished room. Because the objects in the furnished room give visitors insight into Kosciuszko as a person—his hobbies, leisure activities, reading interests, etc., a site bulletin will be produced with a diagram of the room's contents, important objects will be keyed to the bulletin's text and interpret their relationship to Kosciuszko. To distribute the site bulletins, there will be a brochure holder on the wainscoting near the audio switch buttons. On the east wall opposite the furnished room will be a large reproduction of the Benjamin West painting of Kosciuszko which West painted in London just prior to

Kosciuszko's return trip to the United States. This painting will foster a sense of Kosciuszko's presence in the room as it reflects his physical condition at the time he was resident at 301 Pine Street and the room in the painting is similar in its appointments to the refurnished room visitors are viewing.

The former theater will become an exhibit space. A freestanding, two-sided panel in the center of the room will discuss the people who visited Kosciuszko at Mrs. Relf's boarding house. The stature of these visitors and their written accounts of their visits will give the park visitor a sense of Kosciuszko's status in the United States at the time. Special attention should be given to his relationship with Thomas Jefferson, then Vice-President of the United States. Along the east and north walls, exhibits would chronicle, in a time line fashion, Kosciuszko's life and his efforts on behalf of liberty and human rights in America, Poland, and in his own personal life. An exhibit on the west wall will tell the story of Kosciuszko's American wills, the ideas of human rights they expressed, and their final disposition. On the south wall will be a selection of photographs of the many memorials to Kosciuszko in the United States, Poland, and other countries. Visitors will exit via the stairs in the northwest corner of the exhibit space and return to the book sales area adjacent to the information desk on the first floor. Here, the interpreter will answer any final questions about Kosciuszko.

PERSONAL SERVICES

The memorial currently has only one interpreter on duty during its hours of operation. The interpreter is tied to the information desk and the book sales area and this prevents him/her from providing interpretive services in other areas of the memorial, such as introducing the audiovisual presentation or conducting interpretive programs in the furnished room. For the efficient delivery of interpretive and visitor services two interpreters need to be on duty when the memorial is open. This will allow one interpreter to work the information desk while the other is helping visitors in the theater or on the second floor. The exhibits planned for the memorial will give visitors the information they need to begin to understand the importance of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, but the interpretation provided by trained interpreters will provide visitors with the opportunity to understand Kosciuszko as a person.

COMPLIANCE

A number of recommendations in this plan may trigger compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. **Appendix A contains a detailed evaluation of those compliance issues.**

APPENDIX A

Evaluation of Effects Section 106 Compliance Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial Interpretive Prospectus

Evaluation of Effects for Section 106 Compliance

Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial Interpretive Prospectus

I have reviewed this document. I feel that the physical changes proposed by the Harpers Ferry Center in this document will be acceptable. When we address the compliance process, I'm confident that these changes will have no adverse effect on the cultural resource. Of course, we should be involved in planning these changes, just as we are with the Utility Improvement Project with the Denver Service Center.

The major potential effect would be opening a new doorway between the first floor north and south spaces. This involves blocking up a door opening through the party wall and cutting a new door opening in another location. However, this will not effect historic fabric since the historic party wall was removed in the 1975 rehabilitation of the building and replaced with concrete block.

The second potential effect would be moving the fence back about 7-10 feet from the Pine Street property line. Since the fence is a conjectural reconstruction of an 18th century fence, I feel that we have some latitude in its placement. A historic landscape architect should be consulted on the details of this relocation.

A related potential effect is opening the southwest door as an emergency exit from the new first floor AV theater. This has the positive effect of reestablishing a historic door to its original use. The door exists, but is blocked up on the inside. The interior blocking would be removed and the door returned to use.

Deciding to block the Pine Street doorway is acceptable as long as the door remains in place. The approach described

concealing the door with a curtain seems fine. I do object to the justification given for this action. It has more to do with circulation patterns within the building than with interpretations of historic data about which address was the location of Mrs. Relf's boarding house. The statement that "...there is no contemporary evidence that there was an entrance to Relf's boarding house on Pine Street during the 1790s" ignores the fact that the building has a historic doorway in the center of the Pine Street elevation. This is a case of using a historic fact out of context to justify a change in the circulation patterns in the building, when in fact the logic of controlling circulation patterns is clear and strong and the change has an acceptable impact on the cultural resource. I recommend that this statement on page 14 be deleted.

While I'm not overjoyed at the idea of a permanent flag pole mounted on the second floor window sill, I'm sure it can be installed with minimal impact on historic fabric. I do understand the need to make the site more visible to visitors.

Other interior alterations would be similar to those in the 1975 rehabilitation and should not effect historic fabric.

Prepared by:

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Cultural Resources Management Division
Independence National Historical Park

Date: September 29, 1995

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PLANNING TEAM

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