

"They stand at the corner of Eberhart Road and Highland Avenue - the 2 looming pillars. They are gates to nowhere - an entranceway to a mansion never built. Yet behind those familiar gates is a land of mystery and nature - trails to be explored, landscape to be enjoyed, and trees not to be found anywhere else in Pennsylvania."

-Anthony Stagno, Township Resident



Need more information? To download a trail map; a map of Sawmill Run Park; learn about upcoming events; or to arrange a tour, visit www.Butlertwp.org or call 724-283-3430.



Butler Township would like to express their sincere thanks & appreciation for the following:

Text by: Anthony Stagno

Map by: Beverley Evans

Photos by: Roger Druschel

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PRESTON PARK Donation Information

Butler Township Park Development Fund

Butler Township's parks are available at no cost to all visitors. If you have enjoyed your visit today, please share your experience and make a **tax deductible donation** to improve, maintain, and enhance our parks for today and for the future. **All funds are for the development of Butler Township parks.**

Your donation can:

- Honor or memorialize a family member;
- Celebrate a special occasion;
- Honor someone who has made a positive impact on your life;
- Pass on your love of nature to future generations as your legacy.

____ **Please keep my donation anonymous.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

\$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____

\$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____

Other _____

**Mail to: Butler Township
290 S. Duffy Rd.
Butler, PA 16001**

PRESTON PARK BUTLER TOWNSHIP, PA



Welcome to Preston Park, an 88-acre English garden woodland created by Dr. Frank and Mrs. Jane Preston as a place to live, work, and enjoy nature. Donated to Butler Township in 2008, and open seven days a week from dawn to dusk, the park offers outdoor activities for all visitors. From hiking, fishing, and birdwatching, to observing wildlife in their natural habitat, photographing nature's beauty, or simply enjoying solitude in the environment, it awaits you at Preston Park.

Dr. Frank Preston desired to make the grounds of his estate attractive through landscaping and design based on the estates and gardens of old England. Springtime brings a burst of color to Preston Park as the rhododendron and wild flowers emerge from their dormant winter. Near the flagpole, the wisteria, an invasive thick vine-like plant, creates a wall of "purple haze" for visitors to enjoy. Summer's hot humid days are easier to endure in the shade of the park's many trees. Western Pennsylvania's fall colors are spectacular as the park presents a contrast between the green of its many evergreens and fall's oranges, yellows, and reds. Winter offers cross-country skiing on gently sloping well-marked trails and sledding on the lawn.

Known to the Prestons as 'The Frith', the Park features unique vegetation, fields of well-maintained prairie grass, ponds, an abundance of wildlife, two pedestrian bridges, an arboretum of different species of pine trees, several recognized (2004) state champion trees and 50 acres of second-generation forest. Tree-shaded picnic tables, gently sloped, well-marked trails, and a dog-friendly trail await you. Other points of interest – the Geography Lesson, the Hacienda, the Iron Gates, and the Coppices - have a story to tell and must be seen to be appreciated.

Enjoy your visit & "Let Nature Surround You"

PRESTON PARK

Dr. Preston & the Preston Laboratories

This was a glass science research laboratory, nature retreat, and the residence of the Prestons. From 1936 to Dr. Preston's retirement in 1959, approximately 30 Ph.D. scientists and workers were employed here studying the characteristics of glass and glass breakage. They were the only known people specializing in the field. It would later become American Glass Research (AGR) now an international glass research operation. Preston Laboratories was without peer and was known worldwide during the years 1936-1959.

Dr. Preston was recognized as a problem solver in the glass industry and an important contributor to both history and science. He is responsible for what is currently understood about glass fractures, glass strength, and glass containers. Many of his methods and equipment for glass handling are still in use today.

Preston was invited by the United States government to observe an atomic bomb test at Bikini Atoll in 1947, invented an oven leading to Corelle glassware, consulted on ceramic heat shields for the U.S. space program, and served as a consultant to the glass industry. Later, he explored other scientific interests, becoming involved in ornithological research, ecology, conservation, and geology. Through his efforts the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Moraine State Park were created.

Following his death, Jane Preston continued to live in the building and remained active on the grounds until her death in 2008. She remained active in organic gardening and vegetarian education. Jane bequeathed Preston Laboratories to Butler Township for use as a public recreational space.

In December, 2012 it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as Preston Laboratories.

PRESTON PARK

Structural Points of Interest

CARNEGIE BUILDING / MAINTENANCE BUILDING

Originally constructed to house collections from the Carnegie Museum's Taxidermy and Archeology Departments, today this building serves as the Maintenance Building for Preston Park.

GEOGRAPHY LESSON



Chosen and calculated by Dr. Preston in 1936, these original plaques indicate the distance and location of faraway places.

HARMONY LINE TRESTLE

The trestle located below the dam is a remnant of the Harmony Short Line. In the early 1900's, this broad-gauge interurban streetcar line connected Pittsburgh to Butler. This line originally traversed the property through what became known as Loch Carrie.

INSTRUMENT BUILDING AND THE TIN TEMPLE

Approximately 30 employees worked at the Preston Laboratories offices and the Machine Shop, also referred to as the "Tin Temple".

IRON GATES



The large ornamental iron gates were relocated from a large Ohio estate, "Stover's Field", in the early 1950's. The estate was located along the Maumee River. The property had become derelict and also stood in the pathway of the new Ohio Turnpike, so Dr. Preston was able to purchase the gates, as he wrote in his diary, "for a song". The gates were intended to open to a mansion that was never constructed as Jane opposed the extravagance. Gates like these were commonly found on English estates.

PERKINS BRIDGE

This uniquely designed narrow bridge was constructed by Dr. Preston to withstand a deluge or overflow from the dam. The bridge is named after Hayes Perkins, a former consultant and valued caretaker who had come to Preston from the Hearst Estate in California.

JANE'S HACIENDA

Frank and Jane Preston often slept here on hot summer evenings because the residence had no air conditioning. This was Jane's retreat.

PRESTON RESIDENCE & LABORATORY

Constructed in 1937, the second story has a three-room apartment originally built for resident caretaker, Hayes Perkins, and later used from 1937-1947 to house several groundskeepers. In 1947, the Prestons moved into the apartment for the remainder of their lives. Dr. Preston's library, office, and laboratory are located on the main floor.

PRESTON PARK Natural Points of Interest

DRUID'S CIRCLE

In 1937, Dr. Preston planted wild rhododendron to create a "circuit court" outside of the Druid's Circle. From May to June the rhododendrons are in a spectacular bloom and offer a wonderful backdrop for photographs. For visitors, walking eight times around the circle equals one mile.

ARBORETUM

Dr. Preston planted multiple species of evergreens in this large, carefully planned oval. It was intended to be an area of tranquility and one of the most complete assemblies of diverse evergreens east of the Mississippi River.

LOCH CARRIE

With a fishing license and following the catch-and-release policy, visitors are able to fish for bass, catfish, sunfish and blue gill in this pond. The lake is named after Jim Carrie, Dr. Preston's best friend and longtime assistant.

COPPICES



Dr. Preston replicated circular planting structures found in England known as coppices - called "spinneys" in Preston's boyhood home of Leicestershire. They had native trees for nuts, seeds or berries in the center and around these would be a tight row of evergreens such as spruce to create a winter windbreak. Outside of that would be a row of low evergreens to provide cover for quail, pheasants, rabbits and other creatures. In "Old England" these groves of trees would provide a shady spot for serfs working in the king's fields.

FAR MEADOW

A walk across the "Long Bridge" will take you to the Far Meadow. Here, Dr. Preston planted a crescent-shaped line of dogwood trees which combine with Lilac Pass to provide a colorful stroll in the spring.

LILAC PASS

Located at the lower end of the Fairways, this variety of lilacs creates a lane of color and fragrance. Several of these were genetically developed and given to Jane in the 1950's by a Butler Garden Club friend.

APPLE ORCHARD



Located beside the garage, this has become a favorite grazing spot for deer. The yews bordering the orchard are a variety of the species used by the British to create the English longbow.

FAIRWAYS

Dr. Preston planned "avenues of trees" that would act as pleasant walkways and lanes to allow wildlife to travel from tree to tree. His assistants did the manual work, set out the guiding lines and insisted on planting a number of hemlocks because it was felt that the grouse would flourish there.

HYBRID OAK or LEANA OAK



This oak tree was naturally cross-pollinated and propagated between a Shingle Oak and a Black Oak. Hybrids contain genetic characteristics of both parents. They may have the trunk and leaves of one species, but the acorns may resemble the other species. Dr. Preston created the etched glass marker at the base to showcase the tree.

METASEQUOIA or DAWN REDWOOD



This Deciduous coniferous tree was thought to be extinct until one was rediscovered in China in 1944. The Metasequoia, also known as the Dawn Redwood, loses its soft needles through the fall and winter and has an estimated growth rate of 2' to 4' per year. Deciduous coniferous trees are rare and include the **European larch (*Larix decidua*)** which is also found in Preston Park.

PRAIRIE CONSERVATION AREAS

Planted by Dr. Preston, these prairies are significant examples of Wisconsin Prairie Grass which is unique to the area. Carefully managed for preservation, it is also the home of many wildflowers.

SERBIAN SPRUCE



Tall and slender with graceful upswept branches, the Serbian Spruce is an elegant evergreen tree. It has glossy dark green needles with streaks of white and distinctive purple cones. It is a threatened species in its native Serbia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina where only a few patches of habitat remain; however they are found thriving throughout Preston Park.