

Pagoda - Reading, PA



Artist: Timothy G. Cock, Assoc. AIA

In the early 1900s it occurred to Reading quarry owner William Abbot Witman, Sr. that his stone excavations were permanently scarring the slopes of Mount Penn, which overlooked the city. Witman decided to balance his yin with his yang by putting a stop to the quarrying and conjuring something beautiful for the mountain. His inspiration was found on a postcard from the Philippines.

In 1908 he completed the Pagoda, a 72-ft. tall Japanese-style brick and tile structure on Mount Penn's southwest slope. Witman dreamed that it would be Reading's most glamorous luxury hotel -- 886 feet above the city.