

Redsecker Residence: 244 South Market Street; Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania



Abstract:

The Redsecker Residence, was designed by George Redsecker and built in 1763. This dwelling is Georgian style with elements of American Colonial style. There are two doors in the center of the building, and windows on either side. Above the door displays a Palladian dormer. George Redsecker owned many properties on Market Street. Redsecker was the owner of the Black Bear Tavern, at the time he built this dwelling for his family. His children sold the property to Samuel Eby, who opened the First Farmers Bank in Elizabethtown, in 1879. The Bank closed six years later, and then Abraham Heisey purchased the property. Heisey operated a creamery, and a tobacco warehouse from the residence. Heisey then passed this building through his family until 2004. Currently, it is operated as a Dream Bath and Kitchen company.

Property Details:

The Redsecker Residence, a multi-residence was built in 1763 by George Redsecker, lies on 244 South Market Street in Elizabethtown. Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds cites the measurements for the perimeter at 56.3 ft. x 198 ft. The lot contains 10,454 square feet.¹

Deed Search:

The current community of Elizabethtown is situated between the Conoy Creek and the Conwego Creek along the Susquehanna River. In 1534 French King Francis, I (1494-1547) colonized North America establishing New France with Jacques Cartier (1491-1557) as Viceroy in Quebec.² As early as 1615 Étienne Brûlé (1592-1633) explored the Susquehanna River and its tributaries in Lancaster County.³ Pennsylvania was claimed by Sweden in 1638 and then by the Dutch in 1655. The British claimed the former Dutch holdings in 1674.⁴ British King Charles, II (1630-1685) granted William Penn (1644-1718) the Province of Pennsylvania

¹Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, Parcel: 2507807900000, <http://lancasterpa.devnetwedge.com/parcel/view/2507807900000/2017>.

²Robert Jean Knecht, *Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 333-343.

³Consul Willshire Butterfield, *History of Brulé's Discoveries and Explorations, 1610-1626 Being a Narrative of the Discovery by Stephen Brulé of Lakes Huron, Ontario and Superior, and of his Explorations of Pennsylvania and western New York: Also of the Province of Ontario* (Cleveland, OH: Herman-Taylor, 1898), 49-51.

⁴Randall M. Miller, ed., *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2002), 50-60.

in 1681.⁵ The French and British disputed control of Pennsylvania between 1688-1763.⁶ During this time in 1707 French fur trader Peter Bezaillon (1662-1742) established a settlement between the Conoy and Conwego Creeks along the Susquehanna River.⁷ In 1719 Peter Bezaillon invited the Piscataway Indians to move from Maryland and settle with him along the Cony Creek and Susquehanna River.⁸ Captain Thomas Harris (1695-1801) settled in Pennsylvania in 1726. In 1730, he builds a log cabin along the Conoy Creek and in 1741 he legally receives the warrant to the land.⁹ Then, in 1745 he builds the Sign of the Bear Tavern, which is the first permanent structure in Elizabethtown.¹⁰

Thomas Harris (November 12, 1746 – April 17 1747),¹¹ Lazarus Lowrey (-),¹² Isaac Reain (January 1 1795 -),¹³ Jacob Gish (December 13 1840 -),¹⁴ Abraham Redsecker (December 13 1840 – March 26 1879),¹⁵ Samuel Eby (March 26 1879 – December 14 1885),¹⁶ A.G Heisey (December 14 1885 – September 28 1944),¹⁷ A. Lewis Heisey (September 28 1944 – July 21 1993),¹⁸ Sidney T. Sellers (July 21 1993 – May 27 2004),¹⁹ David Heisey (May 27 2004 – September 21 2004),²⁰ and currently George Vekios.²¹

Architectural Style:

This property was used as a bank space and as a dwelling in one building. On the left side, is the commercial space and on the right, is residential. This was common throughout Elizabethtown and is still commonly seen today.²² The roof is considered cat slide because, the roof extends to an extension on a single story.²³ The chimney is an external chimneystack, as it lies against the house on the outside.²⁴ American Colonial Dwelling is the architectural style.²⁵ The brick is considered running style.²⁶ The building has Georgian style windows and door positioning.²⁷ There is a fanlight over the doors which represents clearly the Georgian style.²⁸

Historical Context and Purpose:

The George Redsecker Residence was used as a home for the owner of the Black Horse Tavern. Currently, the property is used for commercial purposes.²⁹ Thomas Harris was a Scotch-Irishman who was

⁵ Jean R. Soderlund, William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684: A Documentary History (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1983), 39-50.

⁶⁶ Henry Meclchior Muhlenberg Richards, The Pennsylvania-Germans in the French and Indian War: A Historical Sketch Prepared at the Request of the Pennsylvania-German Society (Lancaster: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1905), 16-22.

⁷ David L. Martin, A Clash of Cultures: Native Americans and Colonialism in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Morgantown, PA: Masthof Press, 2010), 21-23.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Richard K. MacMaster, Elizabethtown: The First Three Centuries (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown Historical Scoeity, 1999), 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹¹ Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds, Search Online Records, Infodex, Book: T, Volume: 6, Page Number: 42, accessed April 25, 2017, <https://www.searchiqs.com/palan/InfodexMainMP.aspx>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Book: G, Volume: 14, Page Number: 196.

¹⁷ Book: O, Volume: 12, Page Number: 551.

¹⁸ Book: Y, Volume: 36, Page Number: 327.

¹⁹ Book: 3981, Page Number: 153.

²⁰ Instrument Number: 5298656.

²¹ Instrument Number: 5360552.

²² Carol Davidson Cragoe, How to Read Buildings: A crash course in architecture styles, (Rizzoli 2008), 21.

²³ Ibid., 103.

²⁴ Ibid., 219.

²⁵ Will Jones, How to Read Houses: A crash course in architecture styles, (Rizzoli 2014), 19.

²⁶ Ibid., 26.

²⁷ Ibid., 114.

²⁸ Ibid., 127.

²⁹ Jean-Paul Benowitz, Historic Elizabethtown Pennsylvania a Walking Tour, (Elizabethtown 2015), 22.

involved in Indian trade. He came from Raphoe, County Donegal and settled in American in 1726 by boat. While on the journey, he traveled along with a family named McKinney. After both families settled in Lancaster County, Thomas Harris married Mary McKinney. They both moved to Conoy Creek and settled in Elizabethtown on a 230-acre tract. On the land, Harris built a log house close to the creek. In August of 1736, petitioned to have a license to sell cider and beer. The court allowed him to also keep a public house.³⁰ Thomas Harris built the Black Bear Tavern in 1745.³¹ In 1751, the Harris family sold the tavern and a 252-acre tract. Harris owned other lands boarding the Bear Tavern and two other tracts on the east bank of Conewago Creek around Samuel Smith's mills. Smith sold 305 acres on the east of Conewago Creek, along with houses, buildings, grist mill and sawmill. Since Smith was appointed to Justice of the Court of Common Pleas of Cumberland County, it is believed he sold or leased his mills to Harris. The Harris family lived on the Conewago Creek in the mills. By this time, the Harris children were completing college and getting married.³² Harris and his Robert, shared 200,00 acres in Nova Scotia as members of a syndicate called the Philadelphia Company. Mary McKinney Harris died in 1770, Harris was seventy-five years old. Although, the death of his wife did not slow him down. He continued to buy land and develop a grist mill, sawmill, and distillery in Doyle's Mill, Juniata County, Pennsylvania. Thomas Harris died at the age of one-hundred and six years old in 1801 at Doyle's Mill.³³

Barnabus Hughes became the new owner of the Black Bear Tavern. He and his wife, Elizabeth Hughes, emigrated from County Donegal in 1748. The Hughes family lived in Lancaster in 1749 and bought a house. Hughes had business associates, and purchased a building and a lot in Lancaster, in 1750. It is believed Hughes represented Samuel Wharton in the Indian Trail.³⁴ Hughes leased the Bear Tavern to Thomas Black, which a public house would be held. When Black lost his licenses in 1765 or 1766, Abraham Holmes rented the tavern and the Hughes farm.³⁵ Elizabethtown was created in a time after the French and Indian War. Hughes, the founder, made his money being an army contractor and left his tavern to become a merchant and iron manufacturer.³⁶

Elizabeth Hughes was the wife of Barnabus Hughes.³⁷ Many writers believe Hughes names Elizabethtown after his wife, in 1753. The first-time Hughes used Elizabethtown town in deeds was in 1763, on the earliest recorded sale in Elizabethtown.³⁸

Samuel Hughes was the second son of Barnabus and Elizabeth Hughes. He had a successful start to his business career at a young age. At the age of twenty, he acquired half of his father's iron furnace located in Washington County, Maryland. He often made trips to London to try and raise capital for manufacturing iron. Samuel bought two tracts of land from Daniel, John, and Barnabus Hughes. The Bear Tavern including 252-acre tract and adjacent 145 acres in Elizabethtown. Samuel acquired four deeds and followed his father footsteps and leases out lots. The Black Bear Tavern was also leased out. In 1790, Samuel decided to sell his Elizabethtown lots, as freeholds, giving the new owners a clear title to the properties. Alexander Boggs bought the Black Bear Tavern and all the tract bordering Elizabethtown on the Northwest. Samuel has sold all of his land in Donegal and Mount Joy townships.³⁹

³⁰ MacMasters, 5.

³¹ Ibid., 6.

³² Ibid., 7.

³³ Ibid., 18.

³⁴ Ibid., 19.

³⁵ Ibid., 30.

³⁶ Ibid., 36.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 29.

³⁹ Ibid., 47-49.

Alexander Boggs became the owner of Black Bear Tavern, buying the property from Samuel Hughes. In addition, he bought all the tract bordering Elizabethtown on the Northwest.⁴⁰ Boggs took part in a petition requesting a public road to begin at the end of a Road which leads from Fredericks Mills to Rankin's Ferry. In 1791, the course of the road was said to begin at the end of a road which leads from Fredrick's Mill and on Market Street in Elizabethtown along the center of High Street.⁴¹ George Wealand bought the Bear Tavern in 1809 and 238 acres from Boggs. A short five years later in 1816, Wealand died, and John Redsecker bought the Bear Tavern and took over his operations including his 132 acres from Wealand's heirs.⁴²

George Wealand bought the Bear Tavern and 238 acres of land from Alexander Boggs. Wealand had the property until 1816, selling the tavern and his 132 acres to John Redsecker.⁴³ Wealand was buried in a commentary at 130 North Market Street.

Samuel Eby, a Mennonite, was the owner of this building for a time. Samuel Eby was elected the president of Friendship Fire Company in 1876-1862.⁴⁴ In 1860, Eby taught children of Elizabethtown.⁴⁵ Eby organized the first Farmers' Bank in 1879 after moving from Upper Leacock township to teach children. He had his own business as a surveyor, drafting deeds, and other legal papers. Eby was raised in a Mennonite church. In September of 1862, Eby served in the 16th Pennsylvania Militia. He married the daughter of Abraham Collins a wealthy man, Elizabeth. The farmers bank opened in 1879, Abraham Collins served as the first President, Samuel Eby as cashier, and John Hertzler as clerk. The Bank consist of the office and the Eby family home located as 244 South Market Street. The Farmer's Bank of Elizabethtown closed in December of 1885. The community of Elizabethtown was shocked. Eby had lost \$26,399.01 in Northern Pacific and Philadelphia and Reading Railroad stocks. The failure of the bank cost peoples saving and people lost large amounts of money. Abraham G. Heisey then bought this location.⁴⁶ Eby served as the Justices of the Peace in 1864, and then reappointed in 1875.⁴⁷

Abraham G. Heisey operated the Elizabethtown Creamery in 1890. Heisey bought the location Samuel Eby's Bank after Eby had failed in business. Heisey owned a tobacco warehouse, which was destroyed in a fire in 1880. In 1894, the Elizabethtown Water Company was incorporated, Heisey was the treasure of the company. The location of the offices of the company resided in Elizabethtown Exchange Bank Building at 244 South Market Street. The Elizabethtown Exchange Bank was in the building at 244 South Market Street, until March of 1917 when a new building was built. Heisey owned a building at Bainbridge and South Market Street.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ MacMaster, 49.

⁴¹ Ibid., 51.

⁴² Ibid., 60.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 143.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 117.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 121.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 300.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 144-145.

Appendix Current Photos:

