

Wagner-Martin Building: 3 South Market Street; Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania



Abstract:

The Wagner-Martin building carries a rich history in Elizabethtown. The property today encompasses a Post-Modern type of architecture, as the brick was covered by stucco. In the late 1800's, when the property was under ownership of shoe manufacturer George Wagner, it had a beautiful Italianate style. The architectural design was defined by its red brick, narrow windows, low pitch roof, and widely overhanging eaves. In 1892, a fire destroyed the property, however when the building was erected, the Italianate style was preserved. George Wagner would later sell his property to famous retailer D.H. Martin in 1904. Martin was famous for his 'Store for Plain Folks' and was in business for over 100 years. The property today still stands as a retail store and continues to attract many customers.

Property Details:

The Wagner-Martin Building is located at 3 South Market Street Elizabethtown, PA 17022. The year of the first construction on the property is unknown. According to the Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, the lot contains 5,227 square feet.¹

Deed Search Report:

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. As early as 1615 Étienne Brûlé (1592-1633) explored the Susquehanna River and its tributaries in Lancaster County. Pennsylvania was claimed by Sweden in 1638 and then by the Dutch in 1655. The British claimed the former Dutch holdings in 1674. British King Charles, II (1630-1685) granted William Penn (1644-1718) the Province of Pennsylvania in 1681. The French and British disputed control of Pennsylvania between 1688-1763. 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. In 1719 Peter Bezaillon invited the Piscataway Indians to move from Maryland and settle with him along the Conoy Creek and Susquehanna River. Captain Thomas Harris (1695-1801) settled in Pennsylvania in 1726. In 1730, Harris built a log cabin along the Conoy Creek. Harris legally acquired the land in 1741 and built the stone house in 1745. The chain of command is as follows: Lazarus Lowry (15 July 1751 – 13 June 1753),² Barnabus Hughes (13 June 1753 – 10 June 1786),³ Samuel Hughes (10

¹ Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, Parcel: 250446890000, accessed April 11th, 2017.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

June 1786 – 28 October 1790),⁴ Alexander Boggs (28 October 1790 – 21 February 1809),⁵ George Wealand (21 February 1809 – 10 April 1809),⁶ John George (10 April 1809 – 31 March 1830),⁷ In 1817, the accessor of the Bear Tavern credited George Redsecker with two lots and two houses in Elizabethtown, an inn, a tanning yard, and 85 acres of farmland.⁸ On 28 June 1853, George Redsecker, Sr. left Abraham his lots on “the southeast corner of the Diamond Square” in his will.⁹ On 20 March 1867, Abraham sold the property to George Wagner, a popular shoe manufacturer in Elizabethtown.¹⁰ George used the property as his home and shoe store. On 15 April 1904, Wagner sold his property to both Charles M. Wormley and David H. Martin.¹¹ Martin converted the property into a retail store for plain clothes. Wormley would later sell to J. Harvey Hornafius on 29 May 1923.¹² The property was later sold to Mabel Wenger on 25 March 1942.¹³ Wenger only owned the lot for one year before selling to his relative Clyde M. Wenger on 2 September 1943.¹⁴ On 1 May 1946, Wenger sold to Martin and Carol Lindemuth.¹⁵ They owned the property for twenty years before selling to David Martin Stores, Inc on 24 October 1969.¹⁶ After David Martin Stores, Inc. closed, John D. Martin took ownership of the property on 20 December 1999 and converted it into a coffee house.¹⁷ On 1 June 2007, Martin sold to Kada Group LLC,¹⁸ who only owned the property for one year before selling to the current owner, Mardan Group on 3 September 2008.¹⁹

Architectural Style Report:

The lot is 5,227 Square feet. The first structure of the property is 3,500 square feet, and the second structure is 868 square feet.²⁰ In February of 1892 a fire destroyed the property. The cause of the fire was said to be because of an overheated stove in Dr. C.G. Gabel’s new dental office on the second floor.²¹ The photo above is the building prior to the fire. The structure to the left of the building is a great illustration of how the other buildings on the square were just log cabins. This photo also helps identify the fact, after the fire, the buildings were re-built with their original style. When the building was reconstructed it had the Italianate style it currently has.²² The Italianate style was prominent from 1840-1870. The narrow windows, low pitch roof, and widely overhanging eaves express this Italianate style.²³ The property today encompasses a Post-Modern style because of the stucco added over the brick.

Historical Context and Purpose:

The property is located on the corner of Market Square, a very popular spot for retail back in the day and continues to be a very busy area in the Elizabethtown borough. At one point in time, Market street was the only route to get from the Port of Philly to Harrisburg. Since it was the only route, the many stores and taverns on Market street were widely exposed to the traffic, resulting in many customers. From 1867-1904, the property was home and the store of George Wagner. Wagner was one of the earliest shoe manufacturers in

⁴ Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, Parcel: 250446890000, accessed April 11th, 2017.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Book: 1, Page Number: 120.

⁷ Book: Q, Volume: 5, Page Number: 53.

⁸ MacMaster, Richard K., Elizabethtown, The First Three Centuries. (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown Historical Society, 2000) 60.

⁹ Ibid., 91.

¹⁰ Book: M, Volume: 17, Page Number: 440.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Book: D, Volume: 26, Page Number: 408.

¹³ Book: O, Volume: 35, Page Number: 595.

¹⁴ Book: I, Volume: 36, Page Number: 356.

¹⁵ Book: A, Volume: 38, Page Number: 229.

¹⁶ Book: L, Volume: 59, Page Number: 409.

¹⁷ Book: 6486, Page Number: 00413.

¹⁸ Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, Parcel: 250446890000, accessed April 11th, 2017.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ MacMaster, 141.

²² Jean-Paul Benowitz, “Elizabethtown Store Was Longtime Regional Leader in Clothing for Plain-Dress Religions” *The Elizabethtown Advocate*, Volume 8 No. 2, January 12th 2017.

²³ “Italianate,” *Architectural Styles of America and Europe*, accessed April 17, 2017, <https://architecturestyles.org/italianate/>.

Elizabethtown. In 1904, Wagner sold his property to Charles M. Wormley and David H. Martin. It is believed that Martin eventually expanded into Wormley's property. Due to the popularity of the location of the property, the David Martin Stores attracted many customers. In 1911, after expanding his property next door on South Market Street, Martin was widely known for selling "men's and boys' ready-made, clothing, shoes, and furnishings."²⁴ Martin extended into the Lindemuth property in 1970.²⁵ Martin's store was known as "The Store for Plain Folks", because of the wide range of inventory.²⁶ He set himself apart from other plain clothed stores through his ample inventory of coverings and bonnets.²⁷ David H. Martin was a member of the Brethren in Christ Church, which attracted many Brethren members to his stores because of his developed relationships. David Martin Stores closed in 1996 after 101 years in business.²⁸ In 1998, John D. Martin converted the store into a coffee house.²⁹ In 2007, the Kada Group LLC took over the property until they sold it to the Mardan Group in 2008.

Many of the people associated with this property were significant figures in the history of Elizabethtown. David H. Martin was the brother of Rev. John Martin.³⁰ He was also very important in bringing the Christian Light Bookstore to Elizabethtown in 1942.³¹ At one point, D.H Martin's clothing store, "The Store for Plain Folks", was the region's largest retailer for plain clothes.³² David H. Martin was not only a famous retailer, but was involved in the church as well. He was a descendent of the Swiss Mennonite immigrant David Martin (1691-1784). In 1727, David Martin came from Zurich to Philadelphia until he settled in East Earl.³³ His son Christian H. Martin later moved from East Earl to Elizabethtown.³⁴ D.H. Martin's Great Grandfather was Joseph Martin, and his Grandfather was David M. Martin.³⁵ David M. Martin was a Mennonite who joined the Brethren Christ Denomination.³⁶ In 1895, D.H. Martin owned a store at 2 North Market Street.³⁷ Martin would eventually purchase the Southeast corner of the square on Market Street, the former home and store of George Wagner before the fire burned the property down.

George F. Wagner was one of the earliest shoe manufacturers in Elizabethtown. He was one of six shoemakers in town.³⁸ He employed three workers and used two machines to make the shoes.³⁹ In December of 1869, Stuart McCord and John G. Westafer came into town to take over Benjamin Lehman's property.⁴⁰ Lehman was the publisher of the Elizabethtown Trumpet.⁴¹ Lehman eventually changed the name to the Elizabethtown Gazette.⁴² Until 1871, Wagner housed McCord and Westafer, the two publishers of the Elizabethtown Chronicle.⁴³

Abraham Redsecker was the person who sold the property to George Wagner. Abraham was the son of George Redsecker Sr. George Redsecker, Sr. left Abraham his houses and lots on "the southeast corner of the Diamond Square" in his will.⁴⁴ Abraham attended the Young Men's Democratic Convention on July 4th, 1838.⁴⁵

²⁴ Benowitz.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ MacMaster, 203.

³¹ Ibid., 264.

³² Benowitz.

³³ Benowitz.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ MacMaster, 131.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 119.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 98.

George Redsecker was married to Susanna Ream Redsecker.⁴⁶ He and his wife resided in a brick house on South Market Street at 244 South Market Street.⁴⁷ He paid taxes as an innkeeper in 1806 and 1807 and was second of the name to run the Black Horse tavern.⁴⁸ The assessor of the tavern credited him with two lots and two houses in Elizabethtown, an inn, a tanning yard, and 85 acres of farmland in 1817.⁴⁹ In 1835, George deeded the old Black Horse Tavern to his other son Jacob Redsecker.⁵⁰ George Redsecker would later pass away on May 16th, 1838.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Book: E, Volume: 8, Page Number: 612.

⁴⁷ MacMaster, 91.

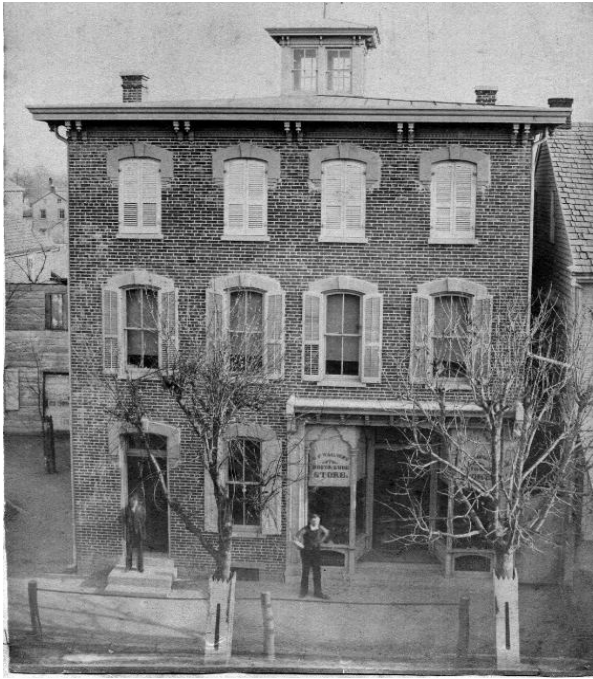
⁴⁸ Ibid, 60.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

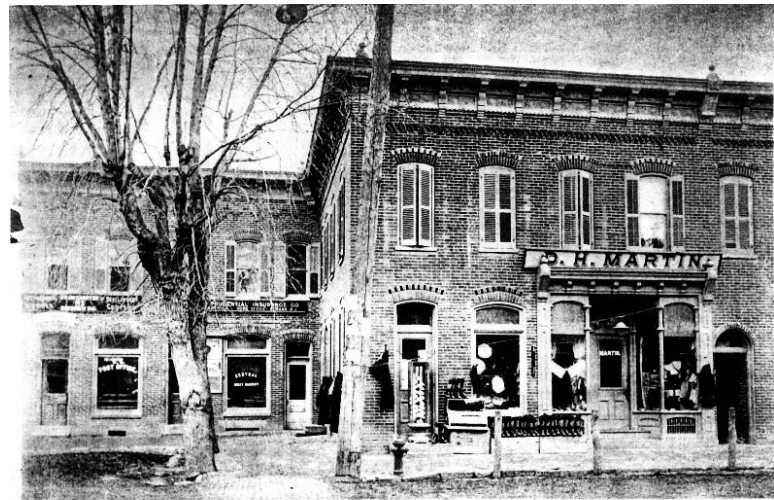
⁵⁰ Ibid, 91.

⁵¹ Book: E, Volume: 8, Page Number: 612.

Appendix Historical Photos:



Dear friend I wish you were here. Your friend
 S. E. CORNER CENTRE SQUARE, ELIZABETHTOWN, PA. PUB. BY G. N. FALKENSTEIN. *Landis*
from E. Chestnut 122



THE DAVID MARTIN CLOTHING STORE
 Center Square, Elizabethtown, 1906

Appendix Current Photos:

