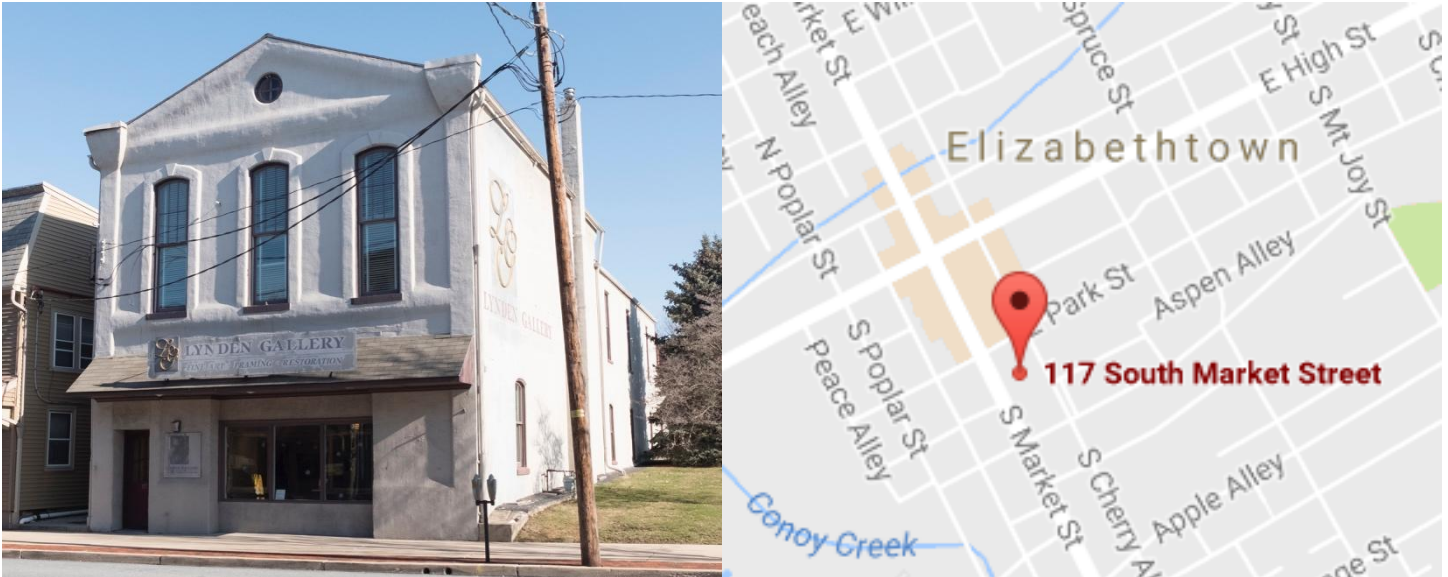


Friendship Fire Company: 117 South Market Street; Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania



Abstract:

The Friendship Fire Company building, located at 117 South Market Street in Elizabethtown, PA, was originally used as a firehouse. It was built in 1884, on land willed to Mary Breneman by Elizabeth Redsecker, who inherited it from her father George. The Friendship Fire Company building was a larger and more centralized location for The Friendship Fire Engine and Hose Co. No. 1 of Elizabethtown, which was founded in 1836 and previously housed on Poplar Street. The building was decommissioned by the fire department in 1976, and is currently a gallery and frame shop. The original Victorian brick facade was covered over with the current stucco in the 1920s. There was a wood-frame structure on the property in the 1840s when it was sold to Jacob Gish, which before that was operated as a hotel.

Property Details:

The Friendship Fire Company building is located at 117 South Market Street in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania 17022 Lancaster County.¹ The current structure, which was constructed in 1884 by Benjamin G. Groff,² is situated on a 33 by 196 foot lot (approximately 6,534 square feet).³ There was previously a structure which was operated as a hotel on this lot.⁴

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.⁵ As early as 1615 Étienne

¹ Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, Parcel: 2507127200000, accessed 7 May 2017, <http://lancasterpa.devnetwedge.com/parcel/view/2507127200000/2017>.

² Jean-Paul Benowitz, *Elizabethtown*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 121.

³ Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds, Search Public Records, Instrument Number: 5705966, accessed 5 February 2017, <http://www.lancasterdeeds.com>.

⁴ "Borough of Elizabethtown," 500 feet to 1 Inch, (Lancaster, PA: D.S. Bare & Bridgens, 1864), <http://www.historicmapworks.com>, accessed 1 March 2017.

⁵ Robert Jean Knecht, *Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 333-343.

Brûlé (1592-1633) explored the Susquehanna River and its tributaries in Lancaster County.⁶ Pennsylvania was claimed by Sweden in 1638 and then by the Dutch in 1655. The British claimed the former Dutch holdings in 1674.⁷ British King Charles, II (1630-1685) granted William Penn (1644-1718) the Province of Pennsylvania in 1681.⁸ The French and British disputed control of Pennsylvania between 1688-1763.⁹ 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.¹⁰ In 1719 Peter Bezaillon invited the Piscataway Indians to move from Maryland and settle with him along the Conoy Creek and Susquehanna River.¹¹ Captain Thomas Harris (1695-1801) settled in Pennsylvania in 1726. In 1730, he built a log cabin along the Conoy Creek and in 1741 he legally received the warrant to the land.¹² Then, in 1745 he built the Sign of the Bear Tavern, which was the first permanent structure in Elizabethtown.¹³

Thomas Harris sold a tract of land containing the lot at 117 South Market Street to Lazarus Lowry on 15 July 1751.¹⁴ Lazarus Lowry owned it until 13 June 1753, when he sold it to Barnabus Hughes.¹⁵ Daniel, John, and Samuel Hughes inherited the property from their father, Barnabus on 10 June 1786.¹⁶ Daniel and John sold their share of the property to Samuel on 20 June 1786.¹⁷ George Redsecker bought the property containing 117 South Market Street from Samuel Hughes on 10 April 1790.¹⁸ Elizabeth Merow bought the property from George Redsecker and upon her death, it passed to her husband Jacob on 11 October 1822.¹⁹ Jacob Merow sold 177 South Market Street to Thomas Eagan on 1 April 1824.²⁰ George Redsecker Sr., the son of the original George Redsecker, bought the property back from Thomas Eagan on 23 Aug 1824.²¹ Elizabeth Redsecker received the property upon her father George Sr.'s death, and sold it and an adjacent lot, then known as then known as 30 and 31 South Market Street, to Jacob Gish on 31 December 1840.²² Jacob Gish sold the property back to Elizabeth Redsecker on 1 April 1843.²³ The Friendship Fire Engine and Hose Co. No. 1 of Elizabethtown bought the property at 117 South Market for 500 dollars on 16 May 1884 from Mary Breneman, who was willed the property by Elizabeth Redsecker upon her death in January of 1884.²⁴ After the Friendship Fire Engine and Hose Company No. 1 of Elizabethtown decommissioned the building, it was sold on 6 November 1976 to Jones & Zink, Inc.²⁵ Robert Y. Grosh and Kathryn L. Grosh bought the building from Jones & Zink, Inc. on 21 December 1978.²⁶ On 27 October 1995, Shane Mrakovich and Andrea C. Mrakovich bought

⁶ Consul 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.

⁷ Randall 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ David L. Martin, A Clash of Cultures: Native Americans and Colonialism in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Morgantown, PA: Masthof Press, 2010), 21-23.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Richard K. MacMaster, Elizabethtown: The First Three Centuries (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown Historical Socieity, 1999), 5.

¹³ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴ Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds, Search Online Records, Infodex, Book: T, Volume: 6, Page Number: 56, accessed 5 February 2017, <http://www.searchiqs.com/palan/InfodexMainMP.aspx>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Book: E, Volume: 12, Page Number: 409.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Book: M, Volume: 69, Page Number: 458.

²⁶ Book: A, Volume: 76, Page Number: 181.

117 South Market from Robert Y. Grosh and Kathryn L. Grosh.²⁷ Shane Mrakovich and Andrea C. Mrakovich sold the property to Carl J. Bedenbaugh and Lisa Hollinger Bedenbaugh on 7 June 2000.²⁸ On 14 February 2003, 117 South Market was transferred from Carl J. Bedenbaugh and Lisa Hollinger Bedenbaugh to Marialice M. Hollinger and Lisa H. Bedenbaugh.²⁹ They transferred the property to David S. Clemens and Lisa H.B. Clemens, the current owners of the property, on 12 May 2008.³⁰

Architectural Style:

117 South Market Street has 28 feet of frontage on Market Street and is 144 feet deep, with a total square footage of 8,167.³¹ This includes the retail space (2,644 square feet), basement (1,064 square feet), 2nd floor residence (2,644 square feet), and the added storage warehouse in the rear (1,824 square feet). 117 South Market Street was built in the Industrial Victorian style by Benjamin G. Groff.³² Victorian architecture was most prevalent between 1860 and 1900, so the Friendship Fire Company building, which was built in 1885, fits nicely within that period.³³

The building has been altered fairly drastically from its original 1885 appearance. The original red brick facade was covered with stucco and chicken wire sometime between 1914 and 1934, which lends a southwestern adobe feel to the current facade of the building. This most likely occurred in the early 1920's given that the neighboring (now demolished) International Order of Odd Fellows building was given a similar treatment in 1925.³⁴ A brick addition was added to the rear of the building in 1890 and a cinder-block extension was added onto that 1956.³⁵

By comparison to most Victorian buildings, 117 South Market Street is relatively utilitarian and plain in its ornamentation, leading to its classification as Industrial Victorian. Identifying Victorian features of the building are its asymmetrical design, patterns incorporated into the brick facade, and the ornate decoration in the bell tower.³⁶ The asymmetrical facade, with the door placed to the left rather than center, is a feature of Victorian architecture which differentiates it from Georgian and Palladian designs.³⁷ The brickwork on the Friendship Fire Company building is laid in a Flemish pattern, with arched details above the windows and doors.³⁸ It also features an ornate brick cornice designed into the facade.³⁹ Both the Flemish pattern and the ornate detailing are elements frequently found in brickwork on Victorian Structures.⁴⁰ The bell tower of the firehouse, is once again a simplified version of Victorian styling. It features gingerbread details in the arches and railings, as well as corbels which echo the design of the brickwork.⁴¹

Two unusual characteristics of the design of 117 South Market Street are the low pitch of the roof and the circular window at the top of the structure. The low pitch of the roof is notable because Victorian designs are known for their loftiness and vertical presence which is a result of exaggerated roof pitches drawn from Gothic design.⁴² The low angle of the roof is most likely due to its use as an industrial structure or its relationship to the surrounding buildings. The circular window, which is derived from Gothic windows originating in Medieval Europe, is another indicator that the Friendship Fire Building is Victorian style.⁴³

²⁷ Book: 4785, Page Number: 455.

²⁸ Book: 6671, Page Number: 149.

²⁹ Instrument No. 5160397.

³⁰ Instrument No. 5705966.

³¹ Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, Parcel: 2507127200000.

³² Benowitz, Elizabethtown, 121.

³³ Will Jones, How to Read Houses: A Crash Course in Domestic Architecture (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2014), 152.

³⁴ MacMaster, 209.

³⁵ Lancaster Property Tax Inquiry, Parcel: 2507127200000.

³⁶ Jones, 152.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 27.

³⁹ Ibid., 165.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁴¹ Ibid., 165.

⁴² Ibid., 153.

⁴³ Carol Davidson Cragoe, How to Read Buildings: A Crash Course in Architectural Styles (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2008), 182.

There was previously a log structure on the property, at least until the 1860s, however little information or documentation on this building exists.⁴⁴

Historical Context and Purpose:

In the 1860s, the log home on the property was operated as a hotel.⁴⁵ From 1885 to 1976, the building was used as a fire house.⁴⁶ Its central location on Market Street in Elizabethtown was ideal for the use, since it gave rapid access to the surrounding community. From 1976 to 1978, it was owned by a real estate brokerage firm, who had their offices there.⁴⁷ From 1978 to 1995, it was used as retail space for a furniture store.⁴⁸ From 1995 to 2000, it was a hardware store.⁴⁹ In 2000, the retail space was converted for use as an art gallery and frame shop. The second floor of the building is residential apartments. Neighboring buildings are currently other commercial retail properties, and a vacant lot/parking lot. Previously, the neighboring properties were a private residence and a fraternity hall for the Independent order of Odd Fellows.⁵⁰ In the 1840s there was a blacksmith shop nearby.⁵¹

Thomas Harris was a Scotch-Irish immigrant who settled in Pennsylvania in 1726, and built a log cabin along the Conoy Creek with his wife Mary McKinney in 1730.⁵² He was drawn to the area by the Indian trade, and set up popular local trading post, where he traded with the Conoy and Paxton Indians.⁵³ Harris opened up the pre-revolutionary Elizabethtown area to commerce and development by petitioning the state to build a road from Lancaster to Harrisburg.⁵⁴ This road would later become Route 230, or Market Street in Elizabethtown.⁵⁵ In 1738, Harris received a license from the County Court to operate a tavern.⁵⁶ This was the precursor to the Sign of the Bear Tavern, which he built in 1745, and was the first permanent structure in Elizabethtown.⁵⁷

Lazarus Lowry purchased the Sign of the Bear Tavern in 1751, during the lead up to the French and Indian War.⁵⁸ Lowry was another Irish immigrant who settled in Pennsylvania in 1729, and made his money as a licensed Indian trader.⁵⁹ Lowry worked primarily in Ohio, where he competed with French influence over the area.⁶⁰ Lowry never occupied the Sign of the Bear Tavern, but rather rented it to Barnabus Hughes and his wife Elizabeth, who bought it from him in 1753.⁶¹

Barnabus Hughes was another Indian trader, who partnered with Quaker merchant Issac Whitelock to open a store in Lancaster in 1750.⁶² He also represented the Philadelphia firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan in the Indian trade.⁶³ Hughes had emigrated from Ireland in 1748, initially settled in Lancaster before buying the Sign of the Bear Tavern.⁶⁴ Hughes was instrumental in assembling soldiers and supplies at the start of the French and Indian war, using the Tavern as a point of origin for westward shipments.⁶⁵ Before moving to Baltimore in 1761, Hughes subdivided 300 acres and laid out the town of Elizabeth which he named for his

⁴⁴ MacMaster, 91.

⁴⁵ "Borough of Elizabethtown," <http://www.historicmapworks.com>.

⁴⁶ Benowitz, Elizabethtown, 121.

⁴⁷ Book: M, Volume: 69, Page Number: 458.

⁴⁸ "Obituary of Robert Y. Grosh, Sr." Lancaster Online, 25 June 2009, <http://lancasteronline.com>, accessed 15 May 2017.

⁴⁹ MacMaster, 143.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 209.

⁵¹ Ibid., 91.

⁵² Ibid., 5.

⁵³ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁴ Jean-Paul Benowitz, Historic Elizabethtown Pennsylvania: A Walking Tour, (Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA), 2015, 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁸ Benowitz, Historic Elizabethtown Pennsylvania: A Walking Tour, 5.

⁵⁹ MacMaster, 5.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Benowitz, Historic Elizabethtown Pennsylvania: A Walking Tour, 5.

⁶² MacMaster, 19.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

wife.⁶⁶ He is responsible for naming the diamond-shaped Center Square; Market Street; High Street; and Cherry, Peach, and Rose alleys.⁶⁷

Samuel Hughes, Barnabus second son, made a name for himself in the iron industry and as politician.⁶⁸ He inherited a share of his father's estate, including property in Elizabethtown and an iron furnace in Washington County, Maryland.⁶⁹ Samuel served as a delegate to the Maryland Convention in 1776, a member of the House of Delegates (1777-1779), and later as Maryland state senator (1781-1790).⁷⁰ Leveraging his political position to win the contract, Hughes used the iron furnace to cast cannon for the Revolutionary War.⁷¹ Profits from this endeavor allowed him to purchase his brothers' shares of the Elizabethtown property, and in 1790 he began selling individual lots in Elizabethtown.⁷²

George Redsecker came to Elizabethtown in 1757 with his wife Susanna and opened the Black Horse Tavern where the parking lot of the Church of God Bethel is now.⁷³ The tavern catered to the German-speaking members of the community, and was the first structure on the West side of South Market Street.⁷⁴ Redsecker bought more property, including the lot at 117 South Market Street from Samuel Hughes in 1790 and erected a log structure on the property, which he rented out.⁷⁵ Jacob Merow was the brother of Peter Merow, who briefly operated a tavern on Center Square at the Northwest corner of Market and High streets.⁷⁶

Thomas Eagan was a businessman who owned and ran a general store on the Southwest corner of Center Square in Elizabethtown until 1838.⁷⁷ He was a Major in the local company of the state militia, and ran for auditor in 1913.⁷⁸ In retirement, he taught at the school attached to St. Peter's Catholic Church.⁷⁹

George Redsecker Sr., son of the original George Redsecker, also owned and ran the Black Horse Tavern. He was a local leader who helped influence the development of Elizabethtown in the early 1800s. Redsecker was a shareholder and supporter of Lancaster, Elizabethtown, and Middletown Turnpike, and sold shares in it the from the tavern.⁸⁰ In 1834, he chaired a meeting arguing against James Mackey's renewed proposal to form a new county with Elizabethtown as the county seat.⁸¹

Elizabeth Redsecker received the property at 117 South Market Street upon her father's George Sr.'s death.⁸² She sold it to Jacob Gish, and then bought it back two years later.⁸³ Her husband was Philip Fisher, who served on the Elizabethtown Borough Council from 1860 to 1862.⁸⁴

Jacob Gish bought a mill on the Conoy Creek from Abraham Nissley in 1799, and in 1807 was chosen as a manager of the Lancaster, Elizabethtown, and Middletown Turnpike Company.⁸⁵ By 1813, Jacob Gish had moved on to selling stock subscriptions for the Bank of Swatara.⁸⁶ From 1824 to 1825, Gish served in the Pennsylvania Legislature.⁸⁷ He was the first to propose the formation of a new county carved out of Lancaster, Dauphin, and Lebanon counties, with Elizabethtown as the county seat.⁸⁸

⁶⁶ Benowitz, Historic Elizabethtown Pennsylvania: A Walking Tour, 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ MacMaster, 47.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 48.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Benowitz, Historic Elizabethtown Pennsylvania: A Walking Tour, 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid.; MacMaster, 37.

⁷⁵ MacMaster, 51.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 62, 92.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 73-74.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 92.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 59.

⁸¹ Ibid., 84.

⁸² Book: E, Volume: 12, Page Number: 409.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ MacMaster, 303-334.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 50, 67.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁷ MacMaster, 84.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

The first major fire in the history of Elizabethtown occurred in 1836, when a misunderstanding between Irish railway workers and Elizabethtown residents resulted in the barn behind Jacob Redsecker's Black Horse Tavern being burned to the ground.⁸⁹ Following the fire, the Union Fire Company was founded at a meeting on 26 January 1836.⁹⁰ It was a volunteer company, which took possession of a 1749 British built pumping engine already owned by the borough.⁹¹ They immediately began fundraising for a new engine, and obtaining replacement parts to repair the old one.⁹² Enough money was never raised for the purchase of the new engine.⁹³ The Union Fire Company was reorganized in 1843 and again in 1858, that time as the Friendship Fire Company.⁹⁴ At a meeting following the reorganization on 16 April 1858, Colonel Abraham Greenawalt was selected as president of the company and tasked with finding a second hand engine to replace the original one with.⁹⁵ This resulted in the purchase of an engine from the Friendship Fire Company of Baltimore in March of 1859, and the construction of new firehouse on Poplar Street.⁹⁶ The company briefly disappeared during the Civil War before being reorganized in 1867.⁹⁷

The Friendship Fire Company was reorganized again in 1878, and obtained a loan from the city council for the purchase of a Rogers steam engine from Clapp & Jones of Hudson, New York, which was delivered in 1879.⁹⁸ On 12 February 1892, most of South Market street was destroyed by a fire started by an overheated stove in C. G. Gabel's dental office.⁹⁹ The Rogers engine, having been overworked to keep the raging fire in check, blew a cylinder head, leaving only a citizens bucket-brigade to fight the fire.¹⁰⁰ By the time a backup engine arrived from Lancaster, most of downtown Elizabethtown had been reduced to ash.¹⁰¹ The Rogers engine was repaired and remained in use until 1921.¹⁰²

In 1882, the Friendship Fire and Hose Co. No. 1 of Elizabethtown began fundraising for a new firehouse, and by 1884 had collected enough money to buy 117 South Market Street from Mennonite Mary Breneman and hire Church of the Brethren member Benjamin G. Groff to construct the firehouse.¹⁰³ Benjamin G. Groff would later be contracted to build Alpha Hall on Elizabethtown College's campus.¹⁰⁴ In 1974, the Friendship Fire Engine and Hose Co. No. 1 of Elizabethtown had outgrown their space at 117 South Market Street, and in 1976 moved to their current headquarters on South Mount Joy Street.¹⁰⁵

Jones & Zink, Inc. was an Elizabethtown based real estate brokerage firm.¹⁰⁶

Robert Y. Grosh and Kathryn L. Grosh were the owners and operators of Grosh Furniture Store.¹⁰⁷

Shane Mrakovich and Andrea C. Mrakovich operated a hardware store at 117 South Market Street.¹⁰⁸

David S. Clemens and Lisa H.B. Clemens, the current owners, are operators of the Lynden Gallery, an art gallery and frame shop.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 87.

⁹¹ Ibid., 87-8.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 89.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 113.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 143.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 141.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 143.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Benowitz, Elizabethtown, 121.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 80.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 275.

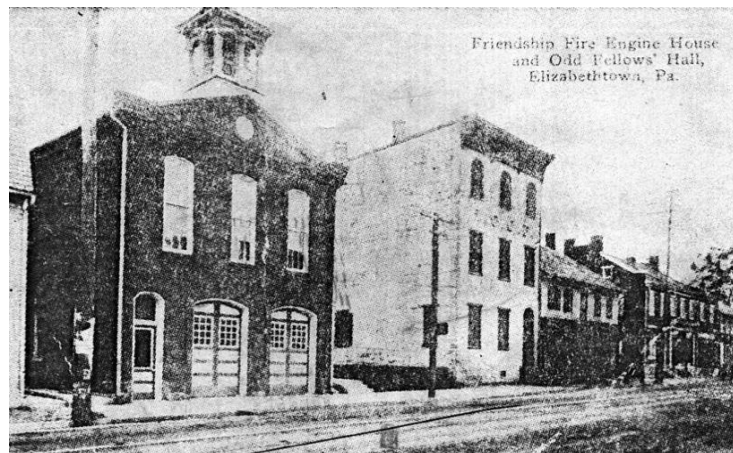
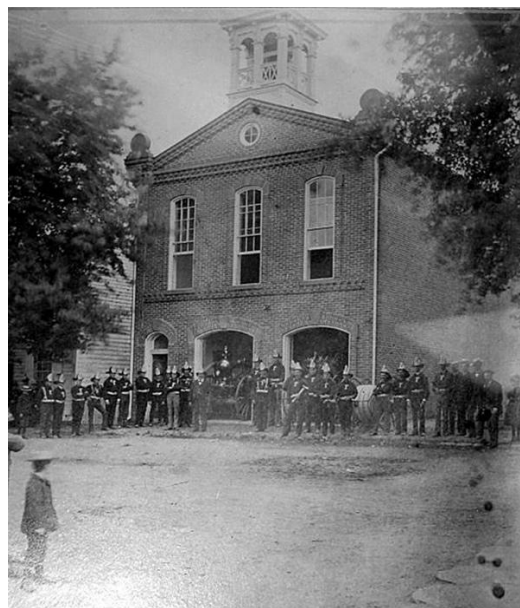
¹⁰⁶ Book: M, Volume: 69, Page Number: 458.

¹⁰⁷ "Obituary of Robert Y. Grosh, Sr."

¹⁰⁸ MacMaster, 143.

117 South Market Street holds a special place in the history of Elizabethtown. The property itself has deep ties to the Redseckers, an important family in the early development of Elizabethtown. As a firehouse, it has stood by throughout some of the most trying times the community of Elizabethtown has faced. Just as the rebuilding of the town after the fire of 1892 demonstrated the resilience of Elizabethtown, the firehouse's later use as a series of successful small retail ventures demonstrates the its resilience amid troubling economic times.

Appendix Historical Photos:



Appendix Current Photos:

