

Former Hertzler Brothers Department Store Has Been Retail Spot for Nearly 200 Years

By Jean-Paul Benowitz

December is here and so commences the holiday shopping season. Our Elizabethtown "busy sidewalks are dressed in holiday style and shoppers rush home with their treasures" to quote Bing Crosby (1903-1977). Let us reflect upon one of the oldest continual retail spaces in Elizabethtown, the former Hertzler Brothers Department Store on the Square.

The Federal Style building on the corner of North Market and East High Streets, which was the Grateful Bean Coffee Shop (2001) and is currently Folklore Coffee & Company (2009) was first owned in the 1820s by the clockmaker Jacob Gorgas (1795-1874). He was the eldest son of clockmaker Joseph Gorgas (1770-1841) who moved to Elizabethtown from Ephrata. They were descendants of the Mennonite immigrant from the Netherlands John Gorgas (1686-1741) who was married to Sijten Sophia Rittenhouse (1693-1748) of Philadelphia. The original lot on the Square in Elizabethtown contained a two-story clapboard house, warehouse and stable. Robert McClure rented the house and operated a general store in it from 1822-1829. The property was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1829 to settle a debt between Jacob Gorgas and John Bender (1788-1833). Since 1827 John Bender was the proprietor of the Sign of the Bear Tavern on the corner of North Market and Hummelstown streets.

The Jacob Gorgas property was sold to Adams Campbell (1800-1840) who razed the original house and erected the current building still standing on the Square at 1 North Market Street. In 1840 Adams Campbell, member of Donegal Presbyterian Church (1732), sold his property on the Square and was in the process of moving to Carlisle when he died unexpectedly. The property was sold to Abraham Neff Breneman (1805-1883), the brother of Major Michael Breneman (1796-1826) who owned the Breneman Inn on the northwest corner of the Square (presently Moose Lodge No. 596). Abraham Breneman was married to Anna Maria Redsecker (1805-1886) the granddaughter of John George Redsecker (1735-1788) proprietor of the Black Horse Tavern (1766-1985) and daughter of John George Redsecker, II (1764-1838). In 1885 the First Church of God (1829) razed the Black Horse Tavern (after a fire) to build a parking lot on South Market Street.

In the 1870s the Breneman General Store on the Square became the home of Lewin's General Store. In 1884 the brothers Isaac Hertzler (1850-1930) and Aaron Hertzler (1851-1935) members of the Spring Creek Church of the Brethren (1848) in Hershey, bought the Lewin's General Store. Hertzler Brothers sold dry goods, groceries and "queen-ware," which is ceramic earthenware designed by Josiah



Illustration by SHANISE MARSHALL

The former Hertzler Brothers Department Store on the northeast corner of Center Square, which is now the home of Folklore Coffee & Company, has been a retail space since the 1820s.

Wedgwood (1730-1795) named in honor of his patroness Queen Charlotte (1744-1818) for whom Queen Street is named in Lancaster City. In 1890, the Hertzlers added a line of boots, shoes, and ready-to-wear clothes. In 1891 Aaron Hertzler left the company and moved to Lancaster to open a furniture store. A younger brother Samuel H. Hertzler (1853-1936) joined the family firm. Samuel Hertzler studied at Albright College (1856) in Reading. For 12 years he was a teacher in the public schools around Elizabethtown before joining Hertzler Brothers.

Jacob N. Olweiler (1869-1964) worked for Hertzler Brothers. In 1891 Olweiler graduated from the Eastman Business School in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (1859-1931). He returned to Elizabethtown in 1893 and opened a men's clothing store at 10 S. Market St. (currently Knock Knock Boutique and until recently Flowers in the Kitchen) introducing "ready-made or made to measure suits and overcoats." He was a member of the Elizabethtown Business Men's Association. In 1915 he was responsible for bringing the Liberty Bell to Elizabethtown. The Liberty Bell (1752) was transported from Philadelphia to San Francisco for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. On July 4, 1915 the train carrying the Liberty Bell stopped at the railroad station in Elizabethtown where 8,000 people gathered. In September 1919, Olweiler served on the Welcome Home Celebration Committee honoring First World War veterans with festivities. In 1920 he purchased the Peach Alley Schoolhouse (1860s) leasing it to the school board in 1923 for 7th and 8th graders and where the Elizabethtown Boy Scout Troop No. 1 (1914) held meetings. He served on the Community Relief Association founded in 1927. He was president of the Chamber of Commerce in the 1930s.

In 1897, Samuel Hertzler was ordained a minister in the

Chiques Church of the Brethren (1856) in Manheim. In 1904 he was appointed minister of the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren (1874). He served as the assistant moderator from 1904-1912 and moderator from 1912-1928 in the Church of the Brethren Eastern District of Pennsylvania. In 1902, when the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren was formally established as a separate congregation, no longer sponsored by their mother congregation Chiques Church of the Brethren, they celebrated communion and held a love feast with dishes and table coverings purchased from Samuel Hertzler.

Known within the Church of the Brethren as "Uncle Sam," Samuel Hertzler was instrumental in the establishment of Elizabethtown College (1899). Hertzler hosted in his home a series of meetings between church and community leaders where the location of the college was chosen, the constitution was drafted, and the by-laws were established. He is chiefly responsible for locating the college in Elizabethtown. He is listed among the incorporators on the charter obtained from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to establish Elizabethtown College. He served as the first treasurer of the board of trustees and by 1901 he was the business manager for the college. After the death of his first wife Annie Shank (1852-1912), he married his second wife Mary C. Ziegler (1871-1955) who was the sister of Jesse C. Ziegler (1856-1918), the first chairman of the college's board of trustees.

In 1908 Hertzler Brothers built the three story Hertzler Building on 15-23 East High Street directly behind the original Adams Campbell property. In the same year the U. S. Post Office moved into the Hertzler Building from the Fisher Building on the southeast corner of the Square.

In 1929 Isaac Hertzler's son

Allen took over management of the store. Allen Hertzler (1883-1957) was treasurer of the Crescent Club (1916) a men's social club committed to civic engagement and community service. Isaac Hertzler's daughter Sara Ann (1877-1955) married Jacob Hoffman Stern (1872-1957) a partner in Hertzler Brothers and in the 1920s established the first dress making factory in Elizabethtown. In 1925 Stern Manufacturing was located at the corner of Park and Spruce Streets before moving to North Hanover Street.

In 1938, David Roy Moose (1894-1951) and Effie Adair Moose (1892-1972) opened a Ben Franklin 5 & 10 store, part of the Ben Franklin Retail franchise (1927), in the old Hertzler Brothers store. His son William R. Moose (1926-1984) continued the family business as Moose's 5 & 10 until his death in 1984. His sister was Martha Moose Geibe (1922-2014) a well-known teacher at Mill Road Elementary School (1955) in Elizabethtown for over 25 years. Throughout the 1990s this business was the General Store on the Square in Elizabethtown and continues to be a vital part of the local economy as a community coffee house.

So while you are out and about shopping for the holidays and see "children laughing, people passing, meeting smile after smile" and you find yourself on the Square in Elizabethtown, when you see the old Hertzler Brothers Department Store/Moose 5 & 10 on our "street corner" remember people have been continuously shopping at 1 N. Market St. since the 1820s.

This monthly column on historic structures in the Elizabethtown area is written by Jean-Paul Benowitz, a historian who is also the director of student transition programs and assistant director of academic advising at Elizabethtown College. It is illustrated by Shanise Marshall, a 2015 graduate of Elizabethtown College.

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High School Basketball About to Start

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