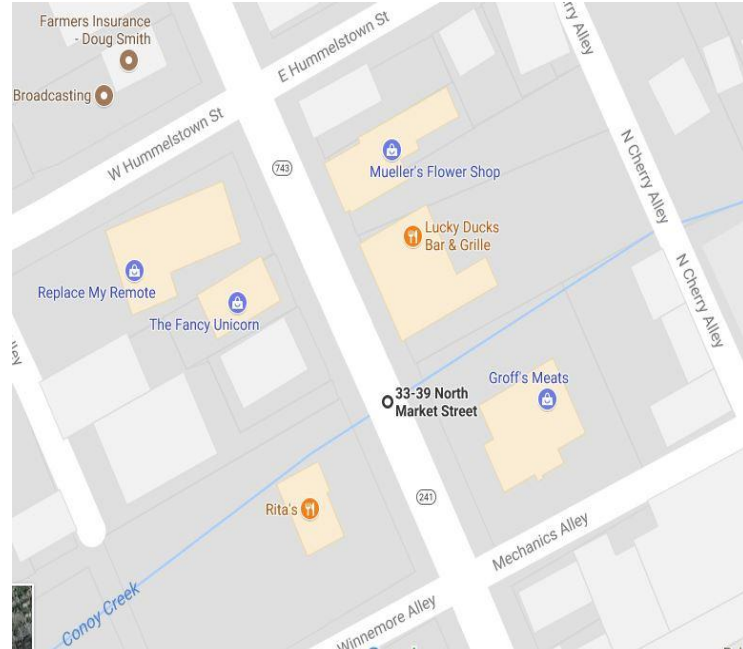


State Road 230 Market Street Bridge Over Conoy Creek; Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania



Abstract:

In 1729 the western part of Chester County became Lancaster County. In 1732 the Lancaster County Court conducted a study on building a road linking Lancaster to Elizabethtown. In 1734 John Harris of Paxtang proposed building a road linking his ferry to Lancaster. Between 1736 and 1738 "The Great Road" from Harris Ferry to Lancaster was opened. In 1796, this would become a turnpike when The Lancaster, Elizabethtown, and Middletown Turnpike Company was incorporated. In 1926, this road became U.S. Rt. 230 with the creation of the U.S. Highway System. Known as Market Street in Elizabethtown, the Conoy Creek was first forded, then crossed with a wooden plank road, and then a stone arched bridge was constructed and was replaced in 1911 with this T-beam bridge. This road has played a significant role in the history of westward expansion and the Elizabethtown community.

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

¹ Robert Yahara audited this class and Robert Pavlik is a student at Elizabethtown College. Ramon R. Rios III edited the report.

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

³ 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.

1674.⁴ British King Charles, II (1630-1685) granted William Penn (1644-1718) the Province of Pennsylvania 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 Conoy 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 owned the land until it was sold to Lazarus Lowery in 1751. The ownership of the land passed in succession from after Lazarus Lowery to Barnabas Hughes (July 1753-2 January 1765), Samuel Hughes (2 January 1765-28 October 1790), Alexander Boggs (28 October 1790-21 February 1809)¹¹, George Wealand (21 February 1809-unknown),¹² John Bender (unknown-1843),¹³ Thomas Winnemore (1834-1844),¹⁴ Henry Gingrich (1844-1855),¹⁵ Andrew Wade (1855-14 April 1857),¹⁶ Henry A Wade (14 April 1857-2 April 1884), and¹⁷ Martin G. Keller (2 April 1884-1 April 1905).¹⁸

Architectural Style:

The original stone arched bridge over the Conoy Creek was replaced by the current bridge in 1910. The length of the bridge is 28ft and has a width of 60ft. The bridge is a simple early T beam bridge with no noted changes. The bridge is supported by concrete abutments contiguous. Later there were retaining walls built to help channelize the creek and has concrete parapets as a finish. Southeast of the bridge was a gas station which is currently Groff Meats Inc which contains a stone wall next to the bridge which was part of the foundation from a nineteenth century brick building. Southwest of the bridge was Dissinger, Garman, and Scheetz blacksmith shop, then Clarence E. Lutz gas station, and is now Rita's Italian Ice. Northeast of the bridge was the former Boll's Brew House, then Sheetze Tavern which is now Lucky Ducks Bar and Grille. Northwest of the bridge is the former R. H. Forney Chrysler dealership which is now an Ray Bowers auto furniture upholstery shop. Market street was opened in 1738 by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania so it would be rational to conclude the bridges spanning the creek were built by the Commonwealth as well. The bridge located on North Market St. is one of 2,300 T beam bridges in the state of Pennsylvania, but this is part of the few bridges part of the 12 oldest bridges built before 1912. This bridge is one of the few early simple T beam bridge designs, which became popular in the 1910s and used throughout the 1950s.

⁴ 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.

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.

⁶ Henry Melchior 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 Socieity, 1999), 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹¹ Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds, Search Online Records, Infodex, Document, Book: LL, Page Number: 545, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.searchiqs.com/palan/InfodexMainMP.aspx>.

¹² Book: I, Page: 120, Accessed April 25, 2017.

¹³ Book: Q Volume: 5, Page: 53, Accessed April 25, 2017.

¹⁴ Book: Q Volume: 5, Page: 55, Accessed April 25, 2017.

¹⁵ Book: D Volume: 6, Page: 45, Accessed April 25, 2017.

¹⁶ Book: Y Volume: 6, Page: 386, Accessed April 25, 2017.

¹⁷ Book: I Volume: 8, Page: 262, Accessed April 25, 2017.

¹⁸ Book: A Volume: 9, Page: 34, Accessed April 25, 2017.

Historical Context and Purpose:

In 1708 Peter Bezaillon, a French fur trader developed one of the first trails which connected what would become Lancaster County to Paxtang.¹⁹ In 1729 the western part of Chester County became Lancaster County.²⁰ In 1732 the Lancaster County Court conducted a study on building a road linking Lancaster to Elizabethtown.²¹ To improve the trade routes, settlers from Paxtang wanted to expand the roadways from John Harris' Ferry to Lancaster. In 1734 John Harris of Paxtang proposed building a road linking his ferry to Lancaster. Between 1736 and 1738 "The Great Road" from Harris Ferry to Lancaster was opened.²² The men appointed by Lancaster County Court chose to have the road directed to Thomas Harris's house, which was situated close to the Conoy Creek and built several years prior to the planning and finished construction of "The Great Road," known today as Harrisburg Pike, Rt. 230, and the small section that runs through Elizabethtown as Market Street.²³ Thomas Harris's cabin marked the halfway point from Lancaster to Harrisburg. With this new road in place settlers and traders came to the Port of Philadelphia and traveled to Lancaster County. From there they would have take the new road and stopped at Thomas Harris's log cabin to rest and resupply before going up to Harris' Ferry. It was not until after this road was built that Thomas Harris was able to afford to build his large stone house in 1745, known as the Sign of the Bear Tavern. Market Street in Elizabethtown, crosses over the Conoy Creek, but before a bridge was built, the creek was first forded, then crossed with a wooden plank road.

During this time, cities and towns were growing and wanted to expand economic opportunities through trade and used turnpikes, bridges, and canals to expand the trading areas.²⁴ Settlers and travelers wanted more of these tools, but the United States did not have enough capital to support all of the public projects. The private sector was the primary facilitator in building roads, bridges, and canals. These companies relied on investors who would purchase stock in the company for voting rights related to the projects that the company was working on, and a dividend if the company was profitable from the tolls then placed on the finished projects.²⁵

In 1796, "The Great Road" became a turnpike when The Lancaster, Elizabethtown, and Middletown Turnpike Company was incorporated. The company, however, did not start to expand the road way or make any improvements to "The Great Road." Over time, the economic hub of the United States began to shift from the Port of Philadelphia, to the larger port of Baltimore. Merchants from Baltimore would use the water ways to travel as far as York, Carlisle, and Lancaster, but depended heavily on the turnpikes to go further inland.

In 1804 the state legislature provided a new charter to the Lancaster, Elizabethtown, and Middletown Turnpike Company.²⁶ George Redsecker represented Elizabethtown and worked with several other managers from Lancaster and Middletown.²⁷ In order to raise funds for the new turnpike, companies like the Lancaster , Elizabethtown, and Middletown Turnpike Company would sell shares in the company. Investors would be granted voting rights in project decisions and would be given a dividend when the turnpike became profitable from the tolls. In May of 1804, George Redsecker began to sell shares from his home for \$100 a share, but would only have to pay \$10 upfront.²⁸ This process took a very long time to raise sufficient funds for the project. It was not until May of 1806 that the project was underway, but by September of 1808 the company did not have enough funds to finish the project. The company began charging tolls from Lancaster, up until the completed section to that point in Little Chiques Creek.²⁹

In January 1807 the company began accepting bids from contractors to add five miles of roadways and bridges over Big and Little Chiques Creek to the turnpike. This next phase of the project was completed in several months, being finished in early 1807. By May of 1807 the company began plans to expand the turnpike

¹⁹ MacMaster, 2.

²⁰ Ibid., 6.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 5,7.

²⁴ Ibid., 65.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 66.

²⁹ Ibid.

through Elizabethtown to Conewago Creek.³⁰ Construction of this phase went until the end of the summer. In 1808 the company was electing new officers and receive bids from contactors to finish the rest of the turnpike. Stockholders attended the meeting which was held at Michael Coble's tavern in Elizabethtown to vote on the new officers. By the end of 1808 the turnpike reached Middletown, but was still incomplete because stockholders not paying their installments. Each mile of the turnpike cost \$4,506. Thirteen percent of the project was funded through The State of Pennsylvania's shares, while over eighty-seven percent was funded through private investors.³¹ Jacob Kauffman, Jacob Gish, George Wolfley, and Joseph Gorgas, all from Elizabethtown were selected by stockholders to be managers of the turnpike company.³² To help travelers on the finished turnpike, milestones were erected to show the distance between Lancaster and Middletown while on the turnpike. In 1926, this road became U.S. Rt. 230 with the creation of the U.S. Highway System. Eventually, the wooden plank road on Market Street was replaced by a stone arched bridge, which in 1911 was replaced with this T-beam bridge.

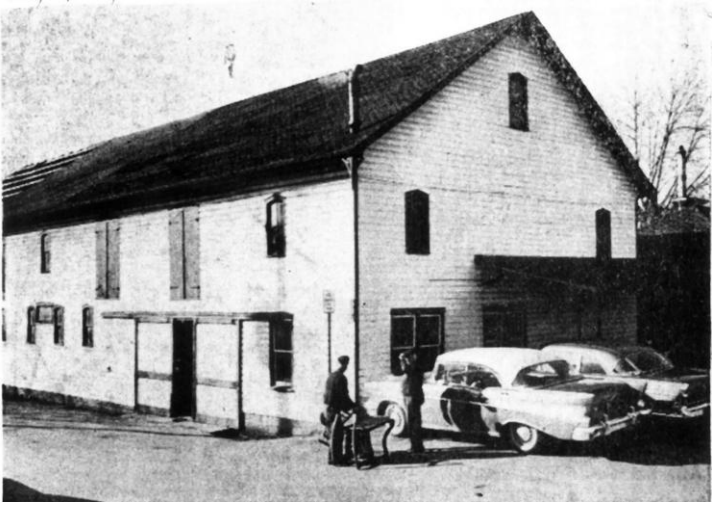
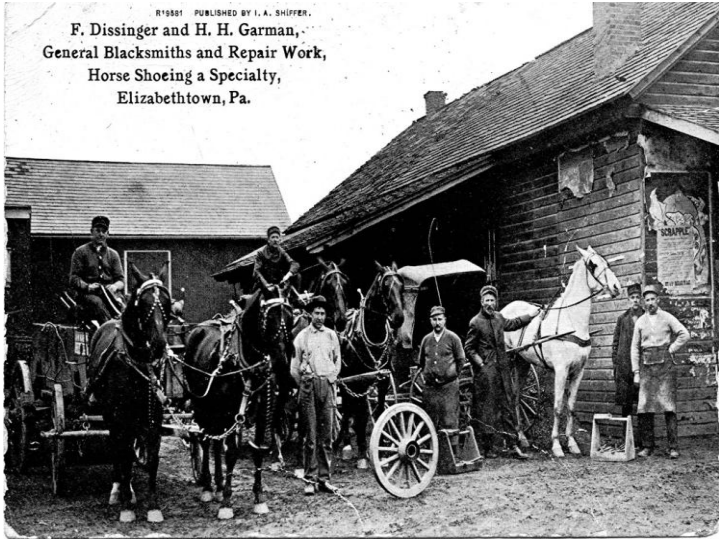
³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 67.

Appendix Historical Photos:







Appendix Current Photos:

