

Honors 170: Elizabethtown History: Campus and Community

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Wilke, Charleroy, Kurtz Residence: 248 College Ave; Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania



Abstract:

This stone English Cottage style (1889 - 1929) house was built in the 1930s by Fritz Wilke proprietor of the Elizabethtown Hosiery Company. In the 1940s, Louis Charleroy proprietor of Elizabethtown's Lancaster Shoe Company owned the house until it was purchased by John Wenger proprietor of Wenger Feed Mill (Rheems) and Wenger Brothers self-service grocery (on the Square in Elizabethtown). Earl and Esther Kurtz, members of the Church of the Brethren, purchased the home in the 1950s. The Reverend Earl Kurtz, Elizabethtown College Class of 1935, was treasurer of the College (1958 - 1978).

Property Details:

The Wilke-Charleroy, a single-family dwelling-built ca. 1939 by Fritz Wilke, lies on 248 East College Avenue in Elizabethtown. The Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds cites the measurements for the perimeter at 104 ft. x 190 ft. Then, the lot contains 19,760 square feet.²

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.³ As early as 1615, Étienne Brûlé (1592-1633) explored the Susquehanna River and its tributaries in Lancaster County.⁴ Pennsylvania was claimed by Sweden in 1638 and then by the Dutch in 1655. The British claimed the former Dutch holdings in 1674.⁵ British

¹ Preliminary research conducted by Benjamin Errickson.

² Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds, Search Online Records, Infodex, Document, Instrument Number: 6382257, accessed April 27, 2018, <https://www.searchiqs.com/palan/InfodexMainMP.aspx>.

³ Robert Jean Knecht, *Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 333-343.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

King Charles, II (1630-1685) granted William Penn (1644-1718) the Province of Pennsylvania in 1681.⁶ The French and British disputed control of Pennsylvania between 1688-1763.⁷ 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.⁸ In 1719, Peter Bezaillon invited the Piscataway Indians to move from Maryland and settle with him along the Cony Creek and Susquehanna River.⁹ Captain Thomas Harris (1695- 1801) settled in Pennsylvania in 1726. In 1730, he builds a log cabin along the Conoy Creek. In 1741, he legally owns the land, and he builds a stone house in 1745.¹⁰ Then, in 1745, he builds the Sign of the Bear Tavern, which is the first permanent structure in Elizabethtown.

Deeds to the property date all the way back to John Sample, who possessed the lot from 10 June 1754 until 12 December 1809.¹¹ The chain of ownership since includes Leonard Negley (12 December 1809 – 31 March 1837),¹² Jacob Gamber (31 March 1837 – 2 March 1844),¹³ Henry Myers (2 March 1844 – 6 January 1847),¹⁴ Joseph Boyer (6 January 1847 – 2 April 1891),¹⁵ John Alwine (2 April 1891 – 1 May 1909),¹⁶ J. Harvey Buch (1 May 1909 - 22 March 1923),¹⁷ Elizabeth Hose (22 March 1923 – 29 October 1937),¹⁸ Fritz Wilke (29 October 1937 – 4 February 1941),¹⁹ Louis Charleroy (4 February 1941 – 16 March 1946),²⁰ John H. Wenger (16 March 1946 – 3 July 1956),²¹ Esther M. Kurtz (3 July 1956 – 24 June 2009),²² Douglas R. Hunter (24 June 2009 – 27 January 2017),²³ and most recently Carol A. Hunter.²⁴

Architectural Style:

Cottage Style architecture has similar elements to large Tudor-style country residences which were built around the late nineteenth century and these nineteenth century buildings were a push to revival various aspects of medieval English styles. First introduced in England around 1889, Cottage style architecture is a quaint style of houses were common for peasant farmers, also called “cotters.” This style was used until 1929.²⁵ “Storybook or fairytale style,” is an architectural style, which seems to derive from in bungalow, English Cottage, and Tudor Revival styles. These kinds of houses are relatively easy to locate with their unique characteristics which would

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ David L. Martin, A Clash of Cultures: Native Americans and Colonialism in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Morgantown, PA: MasthofPress, 2010), 21-23.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Richard K. MacMaster, Elizabethtown: The First Three Centuries (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown Historical Society, 1999), 5.

¹¹ PA State Archives, RG-17, Patent Index Images, Main Interface, 1809-1823, Page 258, Accessed February 22, 2018.

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17PatentIndexes/r17-PatentIndexMainInterface.htm>.

¹² Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds, Search Online Records, Infodex, Document, Book: Y, Volume: 6, Page Number: 570, accessed February 22, 2018, <https://www.searchiqs.com/palan/InfodexMainMP.aspx>.

¹³ Book: H, Volume: 6, Page Number: 29.

¹⁴ Book: D, Volume: 7, Page Number: 440.

¹⁵ Book: W, Volume: 12, Page Number: 102.

¹⁶ Book: O, Volume: 19, Page Number: 321.

¹⁷ Book: A, Volume: 30, Page Number: 200.

¹⁸ Book: H, Volume: 33, Page Number: 266.

¹⁹ Book: A, Volume: 35, Page Number: 38.

²⁰ Book: S, Volume: 37, Page Number: 352.

²¹ Book: X, Volume: 45, Page Number: 87.

²² Instrument Number: 5793002.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Instrument Number: 6382257.

²⁵ Audra Bellmore, “English Cottage Style Homes in America: Expressions of Architectural, Technological and Social Innovation” PhD Diss., Loyota University Chicago, 2014.

be something seen out of a fantasy story which can be seen in a story such as the Seven Dwarves or even the Hobbit.²⁶

Often most times than not, the houses tend to be smaller and feature either stone or wood facades and tend to have gabled roofs.²⁷ Furthermore, Cottage Style houses have designed arched entryways and brick walkways.²⁸ One of the several characteristics in particular is large stone chimneys. Several of the other elements seen in this structure, which relates to Cottage style architecture is the structure is 1-2 stories tall, asymmetrical, and holds irregularly-shaped rooms.²⁹ Many of these dwellings tend to have very decorative gardens located in the front of the structure. This supports the storytelling style architecture where many homeowners usually plant a variety of flowers and greenery to bring out a 'fairy tale' element embedded in cottage-style homes.³⁰

Historical Context and Purpose:

Most of the context and purpose described in this report will focus majorly on the owners of the land before the completed construction of the building later known as 248 College Avenue. The house was built in the late 1930s, locating historical information regarding the historical significance of the architect as well as the original owners of the home itself was difficult to obtain. Since the William Penn Charter, however, several distinguished individuals within the Elizabethtown community have owned the land on which the property lies.

On the upper reaches of Conoy creek, which is located in the western part of Elizabethtown, several German families soon became the first early settlers of Elizabethtown. On the eastern and southern parts of Elizabethtown, other German families settled in these lands as well. Leonard Negely was one of those families who located in the eastern and southern part of Elizabethtown. He and a group of other families launched an expansion for German settlement in lands, which were once Scotch-Irish territory. Prior to the German expansion, the Scotch-Irish discovered expansion was a profitable source so many of them sold their property and purchased land located in Cumberland County, which is just across the Susquehanna River.³¹ Many of the farms located within two or Swiss or German born families owned three miles of the Bear Tavern. In May 1751, a Scotch-Irish property owner named John Wilson sold 307 acres, which conjoined with the land where the Bear Tavern was located, to Leonard and Jacob Negely. These kinds of land transfers between Scotch-Irish landowners to German Families was ongoing for over the twenty years. In February 1759, the Lancaster County court acquired a petition from the "Inhabitants of the Township of Donigal" who requested the township, in which the townspeople lived, in be divided. This led to a proposal, which supported the creation of a certain road, which would run from Lancaster to Harris' Ferry, and this would serve as a line divider. The proposed road would split the township into two parts, north and south, where the north side starting at Chickies Creek, which is in Donegal, and stop to a certain run of water, which crosses, at the property of Leonard Negely. The south side of the proposed road would run from the property of Leonard Negely, which was in Mount Joy, to the Conewaga Creek.³² Leonard Negely was just one of several members of the Blaser's Reformed Church.³³ Leonard Negely was a lay leader of the Blaser's Reformed Church congregation, who earned the position of treasurer, and served from 1779 to 1782.³⁴ In October 1790, Samuel Hughes sold 139 acres to Leonard Negely, which was adjacent to land owned by John Black and David Chambers. Samuel Hughes sold all of his land by selling various tracts of land to other individuals in Donegal and Mount Joy Townships, which neighbors Elizabethtown on the west, northeast, and

²⁶ "English Cottage Style - 1920 to 1940." American Vintage House Styles - A Brief History of Middle-class American Residential Architecture from 1900 to 1960. Accessed July 09, 2018. <http://www.antiquehomestyle.com/styles/english.htm>.

²⁷ Will Jones, How to Read Houses: A Crash Course in Architectural Styles. (NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 2008), 176.

²⁸ "English Cottage Style - 1920 to 1940."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ MacMaster, 9.

³² Ibid., 19.

³³ Ibid., 32.

³⁴ Ibid., 47.

east sides.³⁵ The sons of the farmers who lived in the bordering areas began to move into Elizabethtown. Encompassing the farm of Leonard Negely was the length of Negely's Run and was located on the opposite side of Elizabethtown. Where the Christ United Church of Christ is now located is land which was a part of Negely's Farm and he donated the plot of land to the present congregation in which is still currently on.³⁶ Leonard Negely and George Redsecker built the Reformed Church in Elizabethtown.³⁷ Leonard Negely was a Shoemaker.³⁸

Henry Myers' lands bounded four lots, on the west side, which overlooked West High Street in 1808. These lots were owned by Owen Gorman so had previously bought them from Andrew Kerricher.³⁹ In July 1808, Henry Myers and several other individuals served as trustees of the Elizabethtown Catholic Church.⁴⁰ In 1897, Joseph Boyer bought two tracts of land from Henry Myers and his wife Elizabeth. The first tract of land was 159 acres and the second tract of land was 64 acres, which comes to a total of 223 acres. The resulting price for these two tracts of land was \$10,000. This combining of these two tracts of land led to the establishment of one large plantation, which was located between Washington Street and Ridge Road, Market Street on the west, and Chestnut Street and other lands on the east.⁴¹

Joseph Boyer was a Coachmaker.⁴² In August 1840, Elizabethtown convened a rally for General William Henry Harrison and John Tyler and erected a 100-foot pole which had a banner attached and labelled "The people's candidate." He and several other individuals withdrew to John Foltz's Tavern, where the Whig supporters generated a high level of eagerness for the winning of the Whig ticket.⁴³

During the year following the death of Joseph Boyer's father, which occurred in April of 1890, he and his brother John, who were the executors of their father's estate, sold the last remaining 103 acre to John Alwine, a leading livestock broker in northern Lancaster county, who was associated with M. G. Keller for a long period of time. John Alwine bought Joseph Boyer's 103-acre farm in 1891. He established multiple building lots and sold these plots, which fronted on the south side of College Avenue. This process of striping a selective piece of land reduced the 103 acres of the Alwine property to 94 acres.⁴⁴ Alwine owned this 103-acre farm until November 7, 1903, when he died. All of John Alwine's holdings went to his widow and son, H. K. Alwine, who owned the property title until March 30, 1909. Control of the farm went to J. Harvey Buch, who placed to be the high bidder at the bankruptcy sale, on December 19, 1908. Due to some miscalculations and error, the legal transfer of the land completed in March 1909. Soon to be discovered the land instead of having 103 acres was actually only 94 acres, due to the selling of multiple small tracts fronting on College Avenue.

H. K. Alwine is the son of John Alwine. In 1909, the borough of Elizabethtown annexed a 94-acre farm from Mount Joy Township. The Boyer farm bordered Elizabethtown on the southeast and had been the H. K. Alwine farm. These 94 acres of land extended from College Avenue to Ridge Road and from South Market Street to the Elizabethtown College campus and B.G. Groff farm.⁴⁵ On December 19, 1908, a sale of the real estate of the late H. K. Alwine was held on December 19, 1908, took place. During this auction, five tracts of land sold by John S. Longenecker who was the trustee in bankruptcy in the estate of H. K. Alwine.⁴⁶

³⁵ Ibid., 49.

³⁶ Ibid., 70.

³⁷ Ibid., 80.

³⁸ Ibid., 89.

³⁹ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁴¹ H. E. Reem, Sr. *Elizabethtown Chronicle*, January 14, 1960.

⁴² Ibid., 89.

⁴³ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁴ MacMaster, 177.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ H. E. Reem, Sr. *Elizabethtown Chronicle*, January 14, 1960.

J. Harvey Buch served as a board member for the Elizabethtown Exchange Bank, which was newly built and first, opened on March 8, 1887 and was located on 244 South Market Street. Before the erecting of the bank, 244 South Market Street was once the office of the Farmer's Bank.⁴⁷ J. Harvey Buch purchased the Alwine Farm at an auction sale on December 19, 1908, for \$18,400. Buch wasted no time in developing the Alwine Farm.⁴⁸ Isaac W. Hoffman and J. Harvey Buch initiated the Buch-Hoffman Realty Company for this purpose.⁴⁹ Buch received the title to the farm on March 1909 and instantly spoke with borough council about his plan to annex the ninety-four acres of the Alwine farm and create a subdivision with 440 building lots, streets, and alleys. Buch lived long enough to witness the last lot in his development be sold. During the land surveying in 1909, 220 houses, an apartment house, and the Menmonite and Brethren in Christ churches was constructed on these lots.⁵⁰ In May 1926, J. Harvey Buch introduced another subdivision within Elizabethtown, which would be sixty building lots along East Bainbridge Street between South Spruce and South Chestnut Streets. Another subdivision in Elizabethtown would not be established until 1946. This was due to a national decline of building trades and their suppliers, which began in 1926. When the great Depression hit in 1929, the real estate and home building economy froze until the end of the Second World War when the economy was in better condition.⁵¹ In 1906, citizens of Elizabethtown attempted to introduce a sewer system and J. Harvey Buch served as a passionate advocate for the adoption of this new system. However, the plan was turned down and failed in both 1906 and in 1916. The reform was not adopted until December of 1925 which the entire project costed a half of a million dollars.⁵² Serving as a Councilman in Elizabethtown, J. Harvey Buch convinced the founders of both Elizabethtown College and the Masonic Village to locate their businesses in Elizabethtown. He stated the location of the town was ideal since "eighteen miles from Harrisburg, eighteen miles from Lancaster, eighteen miles from Lebanon, eighteen miles from York, six miles from the Susquehanna River and on the Pennsylvania Railroad."⁵³ Once J. Harvey Buch received the sale of the Alwine Farm, he established a reality company called the Buch-Hoffman Company. Surveyor H. K. Ober was approached to survey and plot a section of land, which began, from College Avenue and south to Plum Street. He then estimated this first plot of land could be divided up into 265 lots with the dimension of 30 feet front and 150 feet deep. The 94-acre farm was purchased by the late J. Harvey Buch at the sale Saturday, December 19, 1908 for \$18,400- almost \$200 per acre with was considered a fair price for farmland. He and several citizens provided "free gratis" which was necessary for the officials to follow through with the proposed idea the institution originally created. The section where the college is built now was once farmland.⁵⁴ College officials started developing on the tract of land donated by J. Harvey Buch and alpha hall was completed. This launched the development of a survey by the "College Heights Development Company." This led to the creation of six streets and the planning of 265 lots, which was completed under the control of H. K. Ober who, at the time, was conducting substantial engineering projects within the borough. In 1909, a survey was made, as lots began to sell immediately with lot number one, which was located, the south corner of Cherry Alley and College Avenue. Thirty-two lots were established which fronted on College Avenue, between Cherry Alley and Mount Joy street. J. Harvey. Buch was one of the supported the progress of this work and continued supporting the cause by approaching the borough council to accept this territory between College Avenue and Ridge Road. The accepted area was then plotted between Mount Joy and Market Streets to the Ridge Road thus creating 460 lots. The majority of what was once the Boyer and Groff farms now served as a residential section.⁵⁵

In 1922, W. A. Withers pronounced to be involved in the production of manufacturing baby shoes in order for him to avoid competing with A. S. Kreider's specialty. The company was able to assemble 1,000 pairs of shoes per day. In 1923, W.A. Withers Shoe Company decided to eliminate all ties with A. S. Kreiders Company

⁴⁷ MacMaster, 139-140.

⁴⁸ MacMaster, 177-179.

⁴⁹ Jean-Paul Benowitz, *Images of America: Elizabethtown*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 41.

⁵⁰ MacMaster, 177-179.

⁵¹ MacMaster, 207.

⁵² MacMaster, 213-214.

⁵³ Benowitz, *Images of America: Elizabethtown*, 71.

⁵⁴ H. E. Reem, Sr. *Elizabethtown Chronicle*, January 14, 1960

⁵⁵ H. E. Reem, Sr. "Elizabethtown 125 Years Old Sunday," *Elizabethtown Chronicle*, April 11th, 1952

and introduce their own line of shoes for children. In 1926, William A. Withers announced his retirement and declared Louis Charleroy, who was previously working with Kinney Shoes, and Galen B. Horner, who has been involved with the business from the company's inception, the new owners of management for the company. Louis Charleroy was a resident in Elizabethtown and was able to manage operations.⁵⁶ Charleroy and Horner immediately after gaining control of the company dissolved all connections with manufacturing and a policy was established to only create Goodyear Welt Shoes for children and to sell these shoes through regular channels. This reorganization of the company bought rapid progression and massive amount of fame. This allowed the company to employ individuals for many years and resulted in the company received the attention of from Mr. Frank Payne who was interested in other shoe manufacturing enterprises in the state of Pennsylvania. In 1928, Louis Charleroy, Galen B. Horner, and Frank N. Payne changed the name of the company from W. A. Withers Shoe Company to Lancaster Shoe Company. Charleroy served as the president of the company, Horner become the vice president, and Payne was granted the positions of secretary and treasurer.⁵⁷ Savoy Shoe Company, another local shoe manufacturing company, produced shoes for women. Louis Charleroy, the president of the Lancaster Shoe Company, was corresponding with Savoy and decided to risk profit by supporting the growth of the company. Their original manufacturing plant was a one-story brick building located on West High Street where the Pennsylvania Railroad was. In 1936, the Savoy Shoe factory caught fire, which damaged the structure of the building. Charleroy enlarged the size of the building to the present condition, which is now the Savoy Townhouse Apartment.⁵⁸

John H. Wenger and his brother owned a self-service food store in 1940 that was located in the Horst Building, which was on Center Square.⁵⁹ Finally, John H. Wenger served as a member for the education board in 1955.⁶⁰ In 1956, John H. Wenger was a member of the Elizabethtown Lion's Club.⁶¹

The individual who is credited for establishing the dwelling that would be known as 248 College Ave is Fritz Wilke. He was a manufacturer for the Elizabethtown Hosiery Factory. His wife, Zilla M. Wilke, died in September of 1940 due to a rash, that she received at a neighbor's garden, from flower pollen which later led to blood poisoning.⁶² Zilla M. Wilke was born in Germany and she was the daughter to Minna and Linius Clauss. She has one brother, his name was Guido Clauss, and three sisters, Flora Hermann, Frieda Scharschmidt, and Louisa Ficker.⁶³

Esther Kurtz was married to Earl Kurtz. Earl Kurtz served as treasurer for Elizabethtown College in the 1960s.⁶⁴ 239: Earl Kurtz was the son of a former Trustee of the College and he graduated from Elizabethtown College in 1935 with a degree in Education. He taught at New Cumberland High School where he taught history, English, and a variety of business courses. He further pursued in receiving an education and was able to get his master's degree in business administration from New York University in 1938. Afterwards, he later took a position working at Brethren Publishing House where he served as Manager for seventeen years.⁶⁵ He became treasurer at Elizabethtown College in 1958. He also served as an ordained minister at the Church of the Brethren.⁶⁶ On April 25, 1964, Earl Kurtz suggested that the Board of Trustee apply for a loan to establish another dormitory

⁵⁶ MacMaster, 172.

⁵⁷ *Lancaster New Era*, June 22, 1929.

⁵⁸ MacMaster, 221.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁶² "Blood Poisoning Fatal." *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, September 4, 1940.

⁶³ "Mrs. Zilla M. Wilke." *Elizabethtown Chronicle*, September 6, 1940.

⁶⁴ Ralph W. Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College 1899 – 1970*, Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College, 1971), 200.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 240.

for women.⁶⁷ 294 In 1968, Earl Kurtz served as a member for the Board of Trustees.⁶⁸ 299: Earl Kurtz was extremely successful in his ability to get loans and grants from the Federal Government.⁶⁹

Appendix Historical Photos:



⁶⁷ Ibid., 257.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 294.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 299.

Appendix Current Photos:





