

NEW HOLLAND

Area Historical Society



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Widening Railroad Avenue

Submitted by Brian Frankhouser

One of the most frequently asked questions by visitors at the museum when traffic patterns are discussed is “why doesn’t Railroad Avenue align very well when crossing Main Street?” The answer stretches across over 200 years of the town’s history.

When Michael Diffenderfer laid out 25 lots on Main Street from Brimmer Avenue to Custer Avenue around 1750, the streets and alleys were only one perch (16.5 feet) wide. There was an alley between the western border of lot #7 (what is now the west wall of the Kauffman building) and the eastern border of lot #8 (what was the eastern wall of the store that was last occupied by Harris Brothers). The alley extended to the south across Main Street (named the “Horseshoe Road” at that time), but that section was a privately owned lane. For more than 120 years, these two alleys were perfectly aligned at the intersection of Main Street.

In 1876, the railroad extended from Waynesburg (Honey Brook) to New Holland, and the town quickly transformed from an isolated farming community to one that had easier access to many goods and services. The railroad depot was located in Rutter’s warehouse (the site now occupied by the feed mill office). There was also a large tobacco warehouse (built in 1878 and burned down in 1898) that was soon to be built and expected to do a brisk business, located on the west side of the alley on the site now occupied by the ABC Groff building. It was necessary to convert the narrow lane, that served primarily as a driveway to the carriagemakers’ business since the early 19th century, into a wider public street to accommodate all the new traffic. There was only one option to widen the street because the infamous Styer House (became Rubinson’s store in 1922) was located on the west side at Main Street. The hotel stable property east of the alley would have to sacrifice a strip of land to the street. In the Spring of 1877, after months of negotiations with property owner, Levi Sensenig, the land was purchased. An old frame building on Sensenig’s lot that was used as a blacksmith and wheelwright shop was razed, and a stone wall was removed to make room for the wider street. The narrow alley was widened to the EAST.

The alley running north of Main Street that led to Hinkletown was officially established as a road in 1795. It was supposed to be two perches (33 feet) wide, but was much narrower for the

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the New Holland Area Historical Society is to collect, organize, and preserve information and historical materials that give insight to understanding the life and times of the New Holland area and to share these findings with others through Museum exhibits, lectures, and educational outreach programs.

last 50 feet near New Holland's main street (Horseshoe Road) because there were stores built on each side of the road. It was named "Luther Avenue" when the town was incorporated as a borough in 1895, but was renamed "North Railroad Avenue" in 1918. For many years, this one-way street was considered the most dangerous intersection in town where it met the Main Street. The progress of the events leading to the widening of the street is shown in the photos accompanying this article. Note that the narrow street was widened to the WEST. So, you see, the original alleys survive and are still perfectly aligned across Main Street, but Railroad Avenue was widened in different directions on each side of Main Street to accommodate the commercial buildings that were vital to the commerce of New Holland.



Photo from 1958 showing left to right, the New Holland House, Harris Brothers store, one-way street (North Railroad Avenue), and Clyde Kauffman's hardware store. The window display sign on the right side of Harris Brother's store reads "All good things must come to an end - After 45 years we must close our doors". Harris Brothers occupied this building for 36 years. From 1911 until 1922, Solomon Harris' store was located at 140 East Main Street (it's where Sam Rubinson got his start in New Holland as an employee).



Another photo taken in 1958 near the time of completion of the razing of the Harris Brothers store.

Note that not all the furniture was removed from the second floor of the New Holland House. Also, note that there was a doorway on the west side of the old store building near Main Street. This door was probably from the time of Peter and Elizabeth Diller during the late 18th century and early 19th century when they owned the store and lived in the old New Holland House (that was razed and rebuilt in 1913). More information about the Dillers will be presented in a new museum exhibit coming in 2022.



The new two-way street and the new east wall of the New Holland House is shown. Gone is the old store that was built by Peter Diller prior to 1795.

Some of the early merchants that sold their wares here were Daniel and Lewis Richwine, Amos and Jeremiah Rutter, Christian Musser, Hull and Rettew, L. F. Shirk, J. L. Shiffer, C. H. Eaton, J. F. Seldomridge, Eli Hess, Harry and Chauncey Rutter, and Solomon and Max Harris.

NEW HOLLAND BOROUGH 1895 – A NEW ERA BEGINS

Submitted by Don Horning

In 1895 much was happening in our town. The town was newly incorporated giving it official inclusion in state government. The New Holland Machine Company had just opened for business. Several years later local businessmen looking to provide places of employment for our citizenry, opened the Storb Knitting Mill which later became the Ix Silk Mill. In 1897 a new business by the name of Stauffer's Drug Store opened. This business, about to celebrate 125 years is still being run by ancestors of the founder, William M. Stauffer. William was not only a druggist but also an avid photographer who captured scenes of this busy era.

To recognize the importance of this era, Main Hall in the Museum has been transformed to provide a glimpse of life as the town began claiming prominence in Eastern Lancaster County. Featured is a pop-up Victorian Room and two display cases depicting life in these times. A 125th Anniversary tribute to Stauffer's Drug Store is interwoven with a large photo montage of life in New Holland as captured by William M. Stauffer. A very rare, fancy dress from this period will be displayed for the first time. Also, for the first time, a captivating and grand portrait of Elizabeth Diller is being unveiled. Mrs. Diller and her husband built the building that now houses Stauffer's Drug Store. You will want to visit this exhibit, the first major change for Main Hall since the Museum's opening nearly 10 years ago.

Museum Hours are Thursday and Saturday 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM or by appointment.

STRENGTHENING OUR SOCIETY

Chief Docent – CAROL BUNCIE has taken the reins as Chief Docent of the NHAHS effective September 18, 2021. We welcome her leadership in this key position!

Board of Trustees – At our annual membership meeting on September 16, 2021 MIKE GOOD, STEVE GOOD and JOSH STAUFFER were elected as new Board Members of NHAHS. We eagerly anticipate the contributions they will bring to the organization.

What Do You Think?

Submitted by Bill Gable

The New Holland Area Historical Society (NHAHS) is committed to providing our members and supporters with historical information that you find to be both important and interesting. It seems appropriate to give you the opportunity to pass along your thoughts for articles for the Newsletter, programs for our public meetings, and exhibits to display at the Museum.

If you have suggestions for any of these mediums, please send us an email detailing your ideas to razztenor@gmail.com

In some cases, we may not be able to deliver on your wishes but be assured that we will do our best. We may struggle to find an individual or organization to provide a program at a public meeting or be challenged to locate sufficient artifacts to create an exhibit. But it is always valuable to know your thoughts when planning our newsletter, programs, and exhibits.



Thanks for your willingness to participate in this effort!

A huge thank you to the following donors listed below!

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Filming is taking place in New Holland for a major motion picture. *Brave the Dark* tells the story of a homeless teen struggling to find his purpose and the courage to confront the darkness of his past. When popular drama teacher, Stan Deen, takes on a troubled kid, Nate, no one quite prepared him for the journey he was undertaking or the dark secrets Nate is hiding.

Co-produced by [MAKE/FILMS](#) and Inspiring Films, *Brave the Dark* is an inspirational and shocking true story starring acclaimed actor Jared Harris and rising star Nicholas Hamilton, directed by Damian Harris.

The capital campaign has reached 94% of the \$250,000 goal!

The Museum is open on Thursday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Also, off-hours private tours can be arranged by calling Don Horning at (717) 538-3079, or Wilbur Horning at (717) 575-3148. 207 E. Main St. in the former Kauffman's Hardware Building, second floor. The entrance is in the rear of the building and there is an elevator for those who need it. 207 E. Main St..

Historical Society meetings 2021 Meetings are held in the chapel at Garden Spot Village on the third Thursday of the month, 7 PM. Programs are free and open to everyone

October 21, 2021 - A conversation with Benjamin Franklin, Patriot and Diplomat

November, December no program