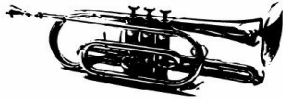
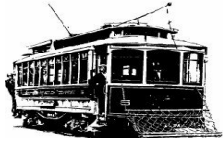


NEW HOLLAND

Area Historical Society



Volume 19 Issue 3

Summer 2023

The Michael Diffenderfer House

Submitted by Brian Frankhouser

Michael Diffenderfer (1783-1868) was the great-grandson of the first settler in the vicinity of New Holland, the grandson of the man who turned it into a town, and the son of the last surviving local veteran who served in the Revolutionary War. One of his childrens' enduring contributions to our community was the donation of the most beautiful stained-glass window in the St. Stephen Reformed Church. A likeness of "Christ in Gethsemane" by Heinrich Hoffmann, located on the east side of the sanctuary. In 1860, Michael undertook a project that very few men at his age would be willing to do, he built a new house!

Michael Diffenderfer's father, David, purchased land and building lots on the north side of the Horseshoe Road (now Main Street) and at the west end of "New Design" from Leonard and George Stone in the 1780's (this real estate was located adjacent and east of what is now Custer Avenue). David, who was a wagon maker, transferred this property to his sons, John and Michael, in 1833. John received the eastern portion (where the Groff High Eckenroth Funeral Home now stands and to the east), and Michael received the western portion. Michael, like his father, was a wagon maker. He married Mary Esterle in 1820 and lived on the west side of the lot until 1860, when the new house was completed. Michael died in 1868, but Mary, who was 16 years younger, continued to live in the house until her death in 1880.

In 1887, Rachel Sprecher purchased the home from the Diffenderfer estate for \$3,000. She still lived at this site in 1907 when house numbers were assigned to each property in town. This address became 149 West Main Street. Rachel died in 1915 and the property was purchased by recently retired farmer, Addison Sheaffer, the following year. Sheaffer's hand was amputated when he was 15 years old after a shooting accident. He suffered from ill health for a long time before his death in 1922. The estate of Addison Sheaffer sold the home to Levi B. Weaver in 1923 for \$3,700. Levi was moving to New Holland from the Elverson area because he was involved in the formation and organization of the Stauffer Sales Company (now called the New Holland Sales Stables). He died in 1936, and in 1943, his estate sold the property at auction to Horace Mellinger for \$6,500. Mellinger immediately transferred it to Paul Esbenschade.

OFFICERS 2023

President
Steve Loewen

Vice President
Mitch Dissinger

Secretary
Susen Leary

Treasurer
Bill Gable

Newsletter
Steve Loewen

Chairman of Trustees
Mike Ressler

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.

Esbenshade rented two apartment units in the building for many years before razing the house in 1963. The lot is now occupied by the funeral home sign.

Most likely shown on the porch are the occupants of the house in 1911, from left to right: Frances Varns Diffenderfer (wife of W. Scott Diffenderfer), Annie Diffenderfer (daughter of W. Scott Diffenderfer who later married J. Paul Kochel), and Rachel Sprecher.



149 West Main Street circa 1958. Note the many changes to the house since 1911, including an addition to the rear and a renovated front porch. There were even more changes to the house next door that was built by George Bair in 1905 and converted to a funeral home by Paul Espenshade in 1937.



This photo shows the beginning of demolition in 1963. Custer Ave looking east.

A Day to Remember and Give Thanks

Submitted by Mike Ressler

Over the past three years, the New Holland Area Historical Society has lost six dear friends who made significant contributions to the society. The Board of Trustees, along with many other society volunteers, gathered at the Museum on Main on Sunday afternoon, February 19 to remember and honor these dear departed friends. Family members of those being remembered were invited to attend and hear board members offer appreciations of the contributions of each one. The family was then invited to share their own memories of their loved one. Throughout the afternoon there were many tears and much laughter as memories of the society were blended with those of the families. Photographs provided by the families were on display for all to enjoy. Former board members that were honored included three founding members: Don Welsh, George Dissinger, and Bill Seitzinger. Two additional board members included longtime treasurer Bill Snyder, and Connie Greer, the society's first head docent. Also remembered was Allan Shirk, educator and author who wrote two books published and distributed by the society. Following the formal program, everyone enjoyed light refreshments and continued to share treasured memories.



Board member Mitch Dissinger, [Left] along with his brother Mark, [Right] tell stories about their father, charter member of the Historical Society, George Dissinger.



Bill Seitzinger's family share memories with all who gathered for the "Day of Remembrance."

“NOW SHOWING”- THE HARNER (RITZ) THEATER EXHIBIT

Drop by and see our newest exhibit, a modest example of the early days of Theater in New Holland. Included are the original blue-print, period movie posters, memorabilia and of course the completely re-furbished “Ticket Shredder”.

“HISTORY LIVES HERE”

This is the theme that you see over our Museum entrance door. But - To keep that promise, it takes dedicated and interested volunteers. Please consider joining our volunteer staff. Let us know your interest, your skill or allow us to discuss with you how you could be of service to NHAHS and to our community. Contact any Board Member, Volunteer or contact us at NhHistorical.com to discuss how you could help.

SHAUN A. SEYMOUR’S “LAST BUILD”

Submitted by Don Horning

Shaun was known around New Holland as the volunteer facilitator, foreman or builder of many community projects. The New Holland Community Park Pool, the Tennis Courts and the Timber Playground. Add the Elanco Library, Boy Scout projects and others. The last such project and where I got to know more deeply “the real” Shaun Seymour, was when he was invited by Don Welsh to join an exploratory committee to discuss turning the former Kauffman Hardware Building into the home of the New Holland Area Historical and Museum. When the go-ahead decision was made, Shaun “kicked into gear” one last time. He led the project from inception, through the architectural phase, the bidding processes but most noteworthy, by organizing volunteer labor of which he was the “Master Volunteer”. I was one of those volunteers.

While possessing some “skills” (loosely defined), I saw myself as being there to do odd jobs and help where I could. Not long after construction commenced he said he would “get me a key” to the building so I could come and go as I wished. I protested that I didn’t need a key and would just come and help when he was there. I soon had a key! Only recently did I find out why that might have happened! Going back to 1956 when he arrived at New Holland Machine Co, he was asked by George Delp if he could “work with his hands” and did he like to “volunteer”?

Answering in the affirmative he began employment at NHMC. Recently I found a quote from an interview of Shaun by author Allen Shirk. Shaun stated that shortly after he started in the engineering department he was “volunteered” to work at the NHMC Picnic with Bob Ressler. The quotes suggest that his first “volunteering” job was a “command performance”! I now see why I “got the key”! I was being “volunteered”! Willingly, I would add. So a basic skill and gift of Shaun’s was revealed, his ability to engage others to join him in these worthy community projects that so energized him! This trait was not limited to volunteer labor but also to financial involvement as well. He once told me of “milk shake meetings” he had at Charlies Cut-Rate. They were with a potentially large donor. He somehow found out this person had a “sweet tooth” for the frosty treat and these meetings eventually led to a large donation for a project. He was not only a consummate craftsman but had a gift of engaging others in the project be it with their sweat or their checkbook!

Back to being “volunteered”. As a skilled craftsman, one might assume that Shaun would expect

high-quality work. With many whom he engaged, quality work was a given. But, when you take all comers, quality is sometimes lacking. When that occurred in my case and as I apologized for my shoddy work, his reply was always “Oh if it’s a little off that “adds character”! How could you not want to work with a foreman like that! He even coined a descriptor for those of us unskilled volunteers, his “Neophytes”. Look it up! Not a derogatory name but one of affection to him. He, of engineering and craft proficiency was allowing, no encouraging, those with lesser skills to join him in these “betterment of our Community” efforts. Being a master craftsman, Shaun possessed what I believe was two of every tool known to mankind! And he shared them willingly. He once brought me a gun-like device that shoots fasteners into concrete block walls. He left it with me with few instructions (something to the effect of “You’ll figure it out). I couldn’t wait to finish that job and return it before “adding more character” to the building! The “volunteering” of his tools was just another example of his “let’s get this done” approach.

As I look back at how the New Holland Area Historical Building came to be what it is today, I truly don’t know how or maybe even if it would have occurred without Shaun Seymour.

As an organization we are deeply indebted to Shaun Seymour for accepting our project as his “Last Build”!

Don Horning (for the volunteers in ‘Shaun’s Neophytes work teams)



Shaun A. Seymour

NEW HOLLAND AREA HISTORICAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Type of membership requested (please check one)

_____ Annual Personal/Household (\$20) _____ Partner (\$100-\$500)

_____ Legacy Partner (\$500-\$999) _____ Heritage Partner (\$1000 and up)

"Partner memberships" – Your name will appear in the newsletter for four consecutive editions regardless of when the membership is received. You may remain anonymous.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

Please make check payable to NHAHS and mail with this application to:
New Holland Area Historical Society PO Box 464 New Holland PA 17557

NHAHS Supporters "What Sustains us"

HERITAGE PARTNERS [\$1,000 and above]

Brian & Ruth Frankhouser R. Douglas & Linda Good

Wilbur & Bert Horning Garden Spot Village

Fred & Robin Groff Gene & Mary Lowry New Holland Kiwanis Club

LEGACY PARTNERS [\$500 TO \$999]

Chester Cty.Solid Waste Auth. New Holland Business Assoc.

Wild Bill’s Welding Fabrication Robert & Christine Quinlivan

New Holland Lions Club East Earl Township Supervisors

PARTNERS [\$100 TO \$499]

Ron and Renee Frederick Goodville Mutual Casualty Company

Kathleen Kreider Thomas Wentz III Barbara Weaver

Good & Harris LLP Robert Johnson New Holland HVAC Inc.

NEW HOLLAND

Area Historical Society



PO Box 464
New Holland PA 17557
www.NhHistorical.com



Picture identification.

Anybody remember this guy, year and location?

If so, send a message to the Newsletter Editor
loewen58@yahoo.com with your answer

The New Holland Area Historical Society Museum
201 E. Main St. is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-2

The following programs are planned for 2023:

Held in the Chapel at Garden Spot Village
433 S. Kinzer Ave. New Holland PA

September 21st

Lancaster Medical Heritage Museum

Presented by Kim Jovinelli, Executive Director

October 19th

“A Look into History: The Lancaster & York County Connection”
presented by CoryVan Brookhaven and Dominish Miller.

November December – No Program