

Hellertown

"Healthful — Prosperous — Growing"



The Walking Tour of Hellertown

Past and Present

**Presented by the Hellertown Historical
Society**

Borough of Hellertown “Walking Tour”

Welcome to the “Walking Tour” of the Borough of Hellertown. This tour will visit and review some of the Borough’s historic homes, buildings and other historic sites/items that are part of the fabric that were significant in the formation of the Borough of Hellertown as early as the mid 1700’s through the 1940’s. Try to imagine you are walking through the past where the streets are paved with dirt, the main transportation mode is horse and wagon. Even trolley service didn’t begin until November 13, 1897. ***Current buildings on this tour are privately owned by residents or businesses; pedestrians should not trespass on these properties.*** Please enjoy learning a little of the history of Hellertown while also enjoying a leisurely walk through the Borough.

*****CAUTION: Please, for your personal safety, utilize permanent sidewalks and trails as well as designated crosswalks and traffic signals at all times, especially when crossing Main Street/PA Route 412.***

Preface – The Borough of Hellertown was founded in 1742 by Christopher Heller and his son Simon Heller, aged 17. They arrived in the United States in Philadelphia from Rotterdam, Netherlands on the ship “Winter Galley” arriving September 5, 1738. There is no mention of Christopher’s other family members – his wife and five other sons. Though it is likely they too made the journey as it was customary to only list male passengers who were over age 16. The Hellers settled in the area along the Saucon Creek on land purchased from the sons of William Penn who had acquired it from the Lenni-Lenape native American tribe through the deceptive Walking Purchase agreement, part of a 1500-acre purchase which would later become Hellertown.

A small group of these immigrants, Heller included, bought large tracts of land from William Penn. Christopher Heller bought fifteen hundred acres. Another immigrant, the Reverend John Phillip Boehm, bought two hundred acres on the Saucon. His son, Anthony, built the Boehm house, which you will see later on this walking tour.

The earliest inhabitants of the Saucon Valley were the Lenni-Lenape Indians, who were very peaceful in nature. The word “Saucon” of “Sakunk” is an Indian word meaning “a place where a small stream enters a larger one”. The Saucon Creek’s name originated from this term.

Walking Tour Details – Walking Tour directions are provided between map key items. Each map key item is identified with an alpha-numeric identification, name/description and street address if available. The map key identifier is keyed to the street maps provided with this booklet to help visitors locate items. Keys are shown on the street maps enclosed in rectangles with arrows leading to their street locations. For example...

Listing on the walking tour directions appears as.... “18 – John Doe Home, 123 Any Street” The corresponding map key location appears on the provided street map as....



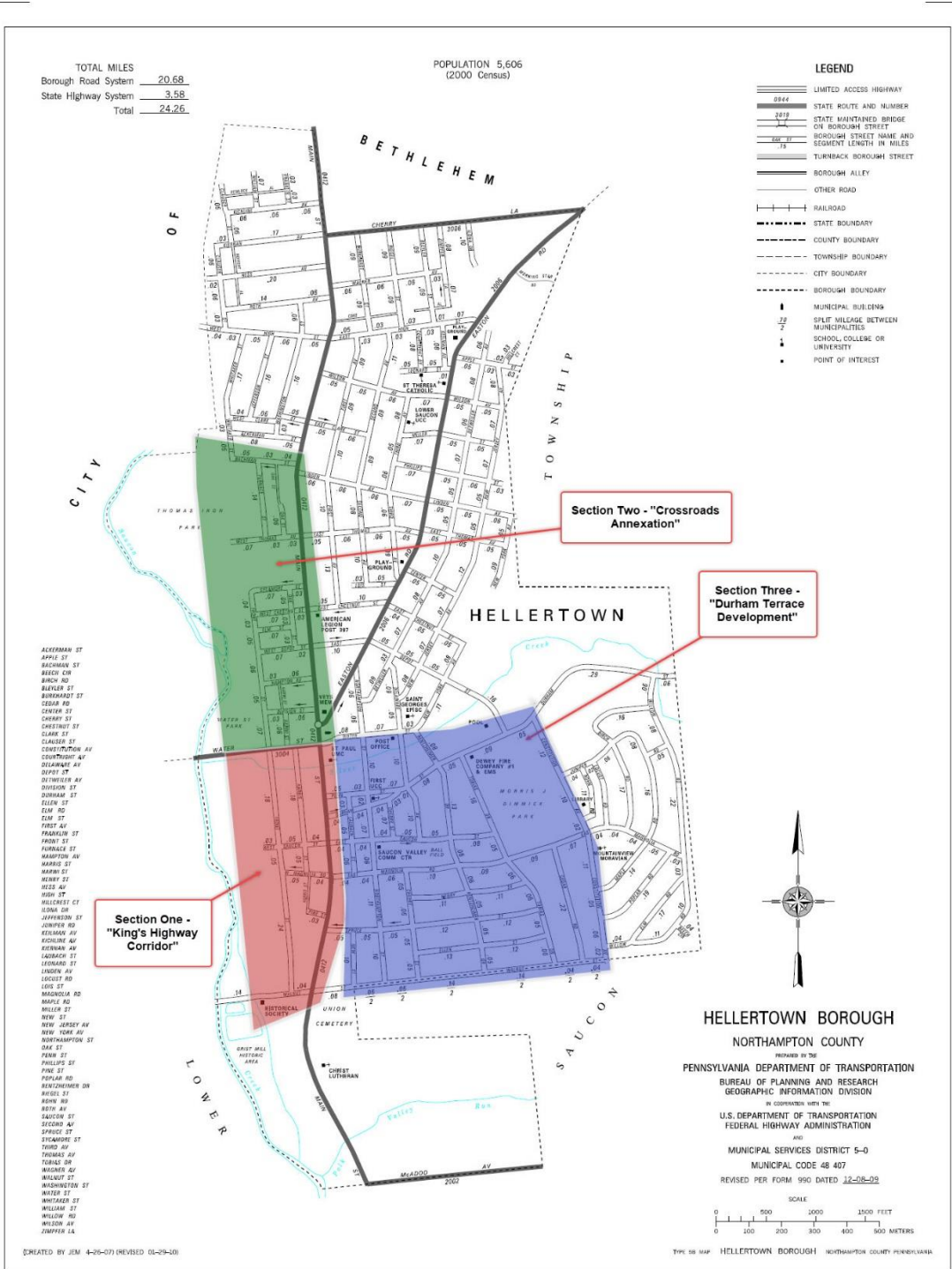
Smart devices equipped with GPS technology are also encouraged for additional directional assistance.



Use a smart device to scan this QR Code for an interactive Walking Tour Map

So as to distinguish descriptive text with walking directions, each walking direction is preceded by the word “TOUR”.

This tour has been separated into three separate sections. See the shaded areas on the large map of Hellertown (next page) which signifies each section of this Walking Tour. Each section or “loop” begins and ends at a convenient parking area so that you may walk each “loop” returning to your vehicle at the original start point.



This map references the Three Sections of Hellertown currently covered by this Tour.⁽²⁾

©2022 by Hellertown Historical Society

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage or retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher.

Table of Contents

Section 1 – “King’s Highway Corridor” – Total Length Approximately 1.3 Miles (Pink Shading) - Page 5

This first loop named after the former 18th century name for Main Street (PA Route 412) through Hellertown, will lead visitors on a tour of many early buildings in Hellertown that feature period architecture of the mid to late 1800’s through the early 1900’s. Much of the architecture remains intact, although some buildings have been renovated or even destroyed over time. However, photos of these structures are provided where available so you may compare them with the existing structures or, if gone, visualize how they appeared on the sites you are visiting. It should come as no surprise to visitors that this was the most populous and busiest sections of Hellertown’s early history.

Section 2 – “Crossroads Annexation” – Total Length Approximately 1.4 Miles (Green Shading) – Page 35

This second section of the tour is named for the large annexation of land and property that the Borough of Hellertown added from Lower Saucon Township in July, 1919. This area makes up roughly half of the entire current Hellertown Borough and increased the population nearly four times the current number at the time.

Section 3 – “Durham Terrace Development” – Total Length Approximately 1.4 Miles (Blue Shading) – Page 67

This third “loop” is named for the area of land that this tour encompasses and provides pedestrians with an overall concept of the immense size the original Rentzheimer farm was and how much of it was later developed into a family-friendly housing area.

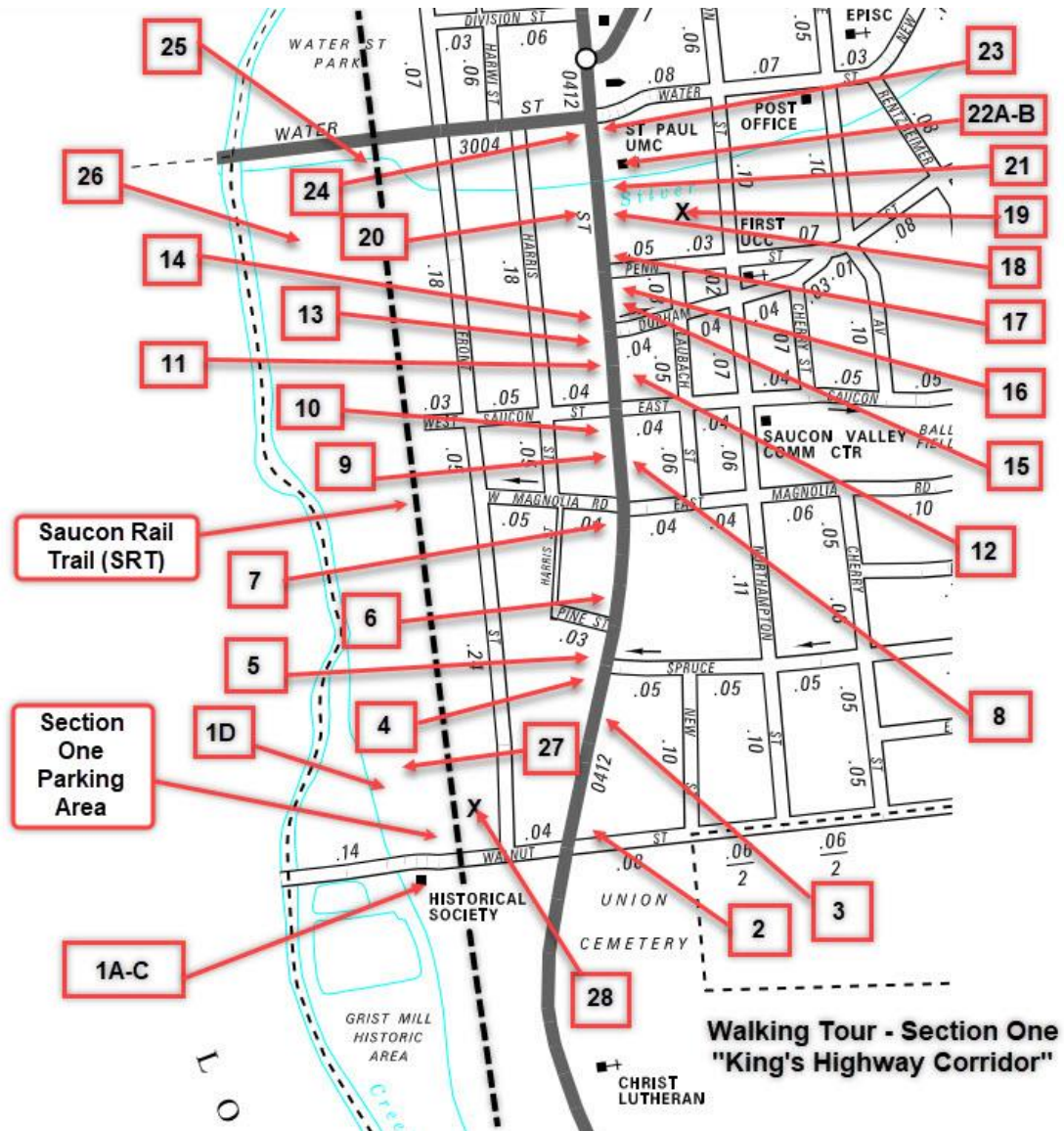
This tour was designed to permit accessing at any point the visitor feels convenient with directions to traverse it from that point. However, please note for each of the three tours, landmarks are arranged in order from a particular starting point and the order will not apply if you start at an alternate location. You are free to determine how you wish to negotiate each tour as to the length you are capable of achieving. There are few parking areas available to use other than on-street parking that might be found along the tour routes. In addition, each route was designed to be negotiated using proper areas for crossing streets and using public sidewalks and traffic signals for safety and convenience. Deviating from these routes may not provide the same maximum safety. Therefore, please participate at your own risk. For your safety and convenience, it is urged you use available free, off-street parking as specified on each “loop”.



The Hellertown Historical Society Grist Mill Complex

Section One - "King's Highway Corridor"

1.3 Miles Long



Use this Map for Below Key Locations on this Tour Loop

KEY	NAME	ADDRESS	KEY	NAME	ADDRESS
1A	Heller-Wagner Grist Mill	150 W. Walnut St.	14	Dr. William H. Rentzheimer Home	502 Main St.
1B	Millers House	150 W. Walnut St.	15	George Weisel Marble and Granite Works	Between 505 & 511 Main St. ⁽²⁾
1C	Wash House	150 W. Walnut St.	16	John A. Laubach Home	519 Main St.
1D	Walnut St. "Pony" Bridge	150 W. Walnut St.	17	The Pennsylvania Hotel	605 Main St.
2	Joseph Fischl Home	103 Main St.	18	Dr. H.D. Heller Home	631 Main St.
3	HHS Historic Home	173 Main St.	19	Hellertown's First Jail	631 Main St. (Rear)
4	Rev. Samuel Hess Home	186 Main St.	20	I.O.O.F. Hall	634 Main St.
5	Jeremiah S. Hess Home	194 Main St.	21	Laubach's Carriage House	637-643 Main St.
6	First High School	202 Main St.	22A	Hellertown's First School	645 Main St.
7	A.M. Leith Carriage Shop	246 Main St.	22B	St. Paul's Evangelical Church	645 Main St.
8	Attorney R.C. Mauch Home	315 Main St.	23	Hellertown's First Post Office	Near 659 Main St.
9	P.A. Bergstesser Home	326 Main St.	24	George Deemer's Market	662 Main St.
10	Attorney V.J. Abel Home	338 Main St.	25	Silver Creek Overpass	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)
11	A.J. Welker Home	410 Main St.	26	Hellertown Wetlands	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)
12	Dr. E.J. Deibert Home	411 Main St.	27	Hellertown Soccer Fields	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)
13	Eagle Hotel	428-430 Main St.	28	N.P.R.R. Block Signal	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)

It is recommended this tour begin at the parking area designated as 150 W. Walnut Street – Hellertown Historical Society (Across the Street). Please refer to the photo description below of this parking area for location and directions.



TOUR – This section of the Walking Tour begins at the Hellertown Historical Society’s Grist Mill Site where the first few map key locations are located.

1A – The Heller-Wagner Grist Mill, 150 W. Walnut Street

The grist mill was built by Simon Heller, one of Christopher Heller’s sons, around 1765 or so. There are no records to determine the exact date, though records indicate a land grant dated October 4, 1746. This land was obtained from William Penn’s sons, Thomas and Richard Penn which was part of the “Walking Purchase” agreement. The mill was first used as a sawmill. Later, Simon added another section to the original mill in order to mill grain. In 1771, after several transfers, the mill and adjacent land was sold to Christopher Wagner who operated it for many years thereafter. In July 1806, the mill was turned over to Christopher’s grandson, Jacob Wagner.

It was rumored there was a Tavern in or near the grist mill. While no documentation has confirmed the existence, the Hellertown Historical Society renovated and opened the lower level of the grist mill as a very popular venue, called the “Tavern Room”, offered for patrons to hold various events as a fundraising tool for the organization. It’s rumored that Marquis de Lafayette visited this tavern after the Battle of Brandywine Creek, on September 11, 1777, when he suffered a leg wound and sought a month’s convalescence at the Sun Inn in Bethlehem.



**Hellertown
Historical Society
Volunteers
Performing Stone
Work on the Grist
Mill in the Early to
Mid 1980's**

**Today the Grist Mill Looks as
it Did in the 1700's**



1B – The Millers House, 150 W.Walnut Street

The home adjacent to the grist mill was the home for the grist miller and his family. Though it has occupied this area for a long time, its exact age is unknown. It was built well after the grist mill and other structures on this site. Best estimate is perhaps around 1800. It now serves as the business office for Hellertown Historical Society.

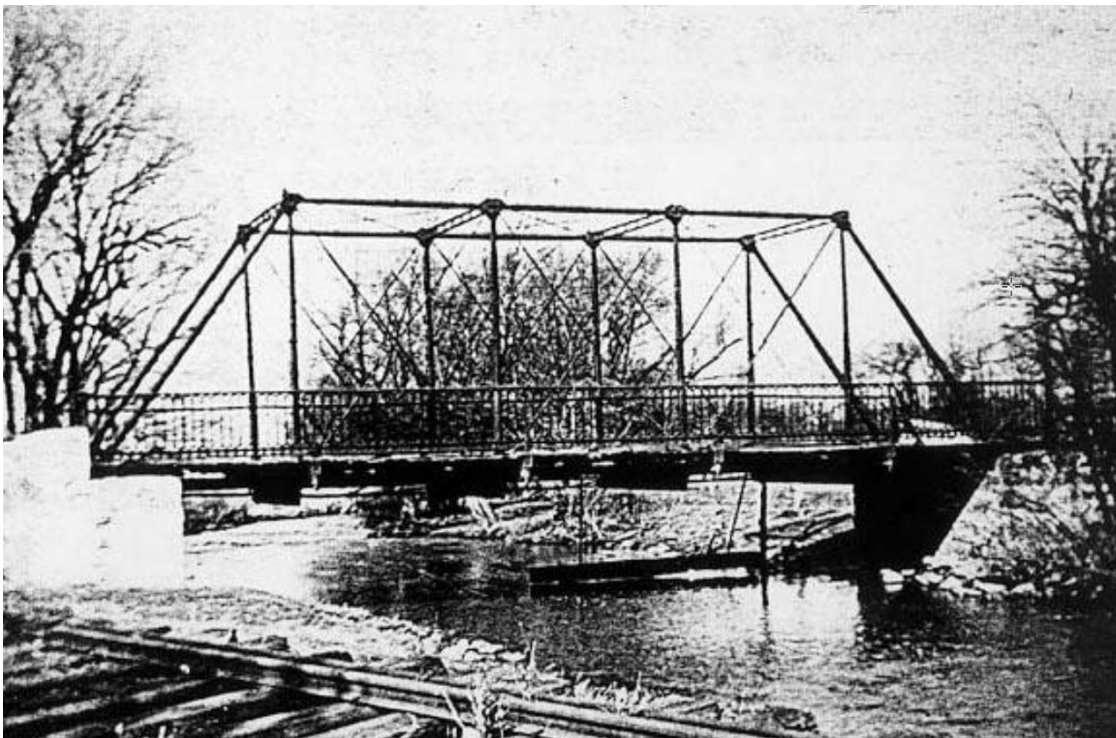
1C – The Wash House, 150 W. Walnut Street

The wash house, as it is known today, was also built near the time of the grist mill, possibly 1755. It is unknown what the exact purpose for this structure was. However, with the loft on the second floor, it may have been used as a home for the grist miller and his family. Perhaps later, it might have been used as a kitchen which are often housed in a single building away from the others during this period. But it is known that the family performed laundry duties in this building, obtaining power from the mill via belt drive to the wheel mounted on the exterior. This is how the “wash house” earned its current name!

1D – The Walnut Street “Pony” Bridge, 150 W. Walnut Street (Across Walnut Street)

The Walnut Street “Pony” Bridge was erected in 1860 originally spanning the Saucon Creek as part of Walnut Street. The bridge has been named a historic item due to its type of design and construction. It is a Pratt truss design using components made from wrought and cast iron. It uses Francis C. Lowthorp’s patented cast lower chord connection design. It is the last known existing high-truss span built by the Beckel Iron Foundry and Machine Shop once located on Sand Island in Bethlehem.

When Northampton County decided to replace the bridge for heavier traffic use in the late 1960’s, the Borough of Hellertown was successful in obtaining the bridge and having it stored nearby. In 1994, a joint project began with Hellertown Historical Society members and Lehigh University graduate students, the bridge was inspected, disassembled, pieces cataloged, repaired or replaced. The bridge was then rebuilt and erected over the mill raceway where it empties back into the Saucon Creek. New paint, stone masonry and wood decking were added to finish the project and the bridge reopened to pedestrian traffic in June 2000.



Walnut Street Bridge - 1915



Walnut Street Bridge, 1970



Walnut Street Bridge, 2000

TOUR - Continue the walking tour by exiting the Hellertown Historical Society/Heller-Wagner Grist Mill site by heading East on Walnut Street toward Main Street. Use caution as there are no permanent walkways until after crossing Saucon Rail Trail. **CAREFULLY** cross Main Street at the traffic light, then turn left to head North along the East side of Main Street.

Hellertown Historical Society Fact :

Main Street is Pennsylvania Route 412. In 1737, it was part of the “King’s Highway”. This road was the only direct link from Philadelphia to Bethlehem, Allentown and Boston. This route saw much activity during the Revolutionary War. General George Washington traversed through Hellertown on the way to Bethlehem on July 25, 1782 and Marquis De Lafayette also traversed this road to Bethlehem in September 1777, to receive medical aid from the Moravian women for his leg injury suffered at the Battle of Brandywine.

In September, 1777, Colonel Flower of the American Army commandeered the empty farm wagon of John Jacob Mickley and Frederick Leaser, two farmers from Lehigh County, as they left the Philadelphia Market after unloading their grain. The objective was to take the Liberty Bell and other church bells north to Allentown so they would not fall into the hands of the British. A number of days later the wagons, loaded with the bells and escorted by several hundred soldiers passed through Hellertown on their way to Bethlehem. While in Bethlehem, the rear wheel of the Mickley wagon, bearing the Liberty Bell, gave way. Leaser’s load of bells was unloaded and the Liberty Bell transferred to his wagon, which took it to Allentown. There it was hidden under the floor of the Zion Reformed Church, located on Church and Hamilton Streets. It remained there for almost a year before it was returned to Philadelphia. Today a beautiful shrine at Zion Reformed Church commemorates the visit of the Liberty Bell to Allentown.

The photo on the next page is Liberty Hall at 1237 West Broad Street in Quakertown built in 1772. According to historical records, the Liberty Bell was hidden here overnight during its secret transfer to Allentown. Although unconfirmed, it is likely this was the last secret hiding place used before it was brought North through Hellertown on its trek to Allentown. This building still stands today and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



TOUR - The corner of Main and Walnut Streets, where you should be located now, is the location of the next map key item...

2 – Joseph Fischl Home, 103 Main Street

Directly across Main Street from the Rite Aid pharmacy, was the home of Joseph Fischl, a prominent Hellertown contractor, now a private residence. Note the period architecture of the structure. Below is an older image of how the home once appeared...



(Courtesy Hellertown Images)

TOUR - The next few map key items along Main Street feature homes and other structures with period architecture. They are private residences and only included as part of this tour for their historic period architecture and previous ownership. They are not open for tours and visitors shall not trespass onto these properties.

TOUR - Continue North along the East side of Main Street for the next map key item...

3 – HHS Historic Plaque, 173 Main Street, Features Walk-In Fireplace/Beehive Oven (Private Residence)

This home, built in 1778, still features the original walk-in fireplace in the kitchen where the family once prepared their meals. It also retains the original beehive oven that was popular in those early years. The walk-in fireplace offered a variety of methods for cooking. Using swing-out hanging rods and hooks, pots could be placed inside the fireplace suspended above the fire to cook food. Burning coals could be piled on the fireplace floor where a pan could be placed over for cooking eggs, meat and other such food.

The beehive oven, which has been used since the Middle Ages in Europe, features a somewhat cylindrical or oval dome-shaped interior of brick with a flat floor also made of brick and mortar. A fire is built inside the oven which is allowed to burn for a specific time until the oven reaches its highest temperature necessary for baking. Once this occurred, most of the coals were removed to the adjacent fireplace and the rest were pushed to the interior walls. The floor of the oven is then “wet-swept” to clean all the ash. The items requiring the highest baking temperature were then placed inside for baking. When finished, the next items using lower temperatures were added for baking and so on, until all baking for the next couple of weeks was complete. A plaque sponsored by Hellertown Historical Society was erected to the exterior in 1992 to recognize the historic significance of the interior fireplace and oven.

These are actual photos of the fireplace and beehive oven from this private home...



TOUR - Continue North along the East side of Main Street and cross Spruce Street. At the NE corner of Main and Spruce Streets you will cross Main Street to the West side, PLEASE UTILIZE THE MARKED CROSSWALK – EXTREME CAUTION IS URGED! The next map key item is right here...

4 – HHS Historic Plaque, Rev. Samuel Hess Home, 186 Main Street

This was the original home of the Reverend Samuel Hess and his sons Milton and Jeremiah, built in 1822. Both sons were prominent businessmen and Chief Burgesses of the Borough, Jeremiah serving 1874-1876 and Milton serving 1884-1893. The plaque was mounted on the home in 1992 to recognize the historic contribution this family made to early Hellertown.



The Hess Home as it appeared in the 1920s

TOUR - Continue along the West side of Main Street to the next map key item...

5 – Jeremiah S. Hess Home, 194 Main Street

Currently a private residence, this was once the home of the Honorable Jeremiah S. Hess, the third Chief Burgess of Hellertown, 1874-1876, and son of Rev. Samuel Hess. A photo of the home from 1925 is shown on next page...



194 Main Street Circa 1925 (Looking Northwest)

TOUR - Continue North along the West side of Main Street crossing Pine Street to the next map key item...

6 – Hellertown’s First High School, 202 Main Street

This one-room school house was Hellertown’s first high school built in 1896, chiefly through the efforts of Alvin Joslin (A.J.) Reinhard. Mr. Reinhard was named the first principal of the schools in 1908.

*FIRST HIGH SCHOOL,
1896 - 1909. First gradu-
ating class consisted of 3
pupils. Used many years
afterward as lumber yard
office on Main Street.*



26

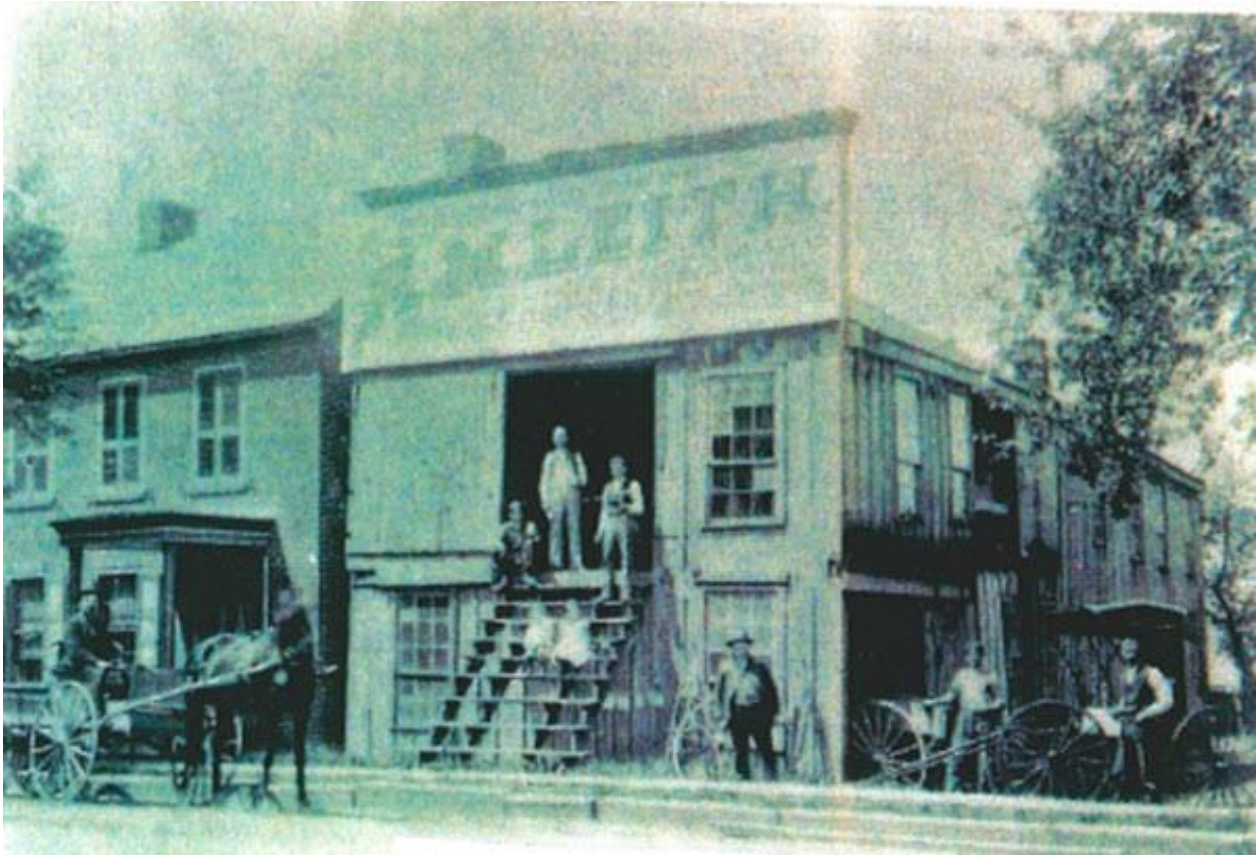


The High School Graduating Class of 1900 w/A.J. Reinhard

TOUR - Continue along the West side of Main Street to the Magnolia Road intersection...

7 – A.M. Leith Carriage Shop, 246 Main Street (Empty Lot)

The empty lot on the SW corner of Main Street and Magnolia Road, next to 244 Main Street, was once occupied by the A.M. Leith Carriage Shop, which was a carriage painter and dealer. Try to visualize how the building shown below in this 1890 photo might appear, the adjacent home in the photo still stands today...



TOUR - Continue North along the West side of Main Street to the next map key item...

8 – Attorney R. C. Mauch Home, 315 Main Street

As you traverse the West side of Main Street, look across to the East side at the home next to the automatic car wash business. This is another example of the beautiful period architecture of early Hellertown. This was the home of Attorney R.C. Mauch, who was a District Attorney and one-time Borough of Hellertown Solicitor. It is now a private residence. The home as it once appeared in 1925 is shown on next page...



TOUR - Continue to walk North on the West side of Main Street to the next map key item...

9 – P. A. Bergstresser Home, 326 Main Street

Currently the Heintzelman Funeral Home, this was once the home of Pliny A. Bergstresser who, coincidentally, was also a Mortician by trade. This home's architecture remains nearly intact from the early years of Hellertown. The photo of the home on the next page is from 1925 and it's likely that is Mr. Bergstresser seated out front and his dog Rex on the front porch...



TOUR - Continue North to the next home...

10 – Attorney V. J. Abel Home, 338 Main Street

Another example of the period architecture of early Hellertown, this was once home to Attorney V. J. Abel, who once served as the Borough of Hellertown Secretary. It is now a private residence. The home as it appeared in 1925 is shown on the next page...



TOUR - Continue North along the West side of Main Street, cross Saucon Street to reach the next map key item.

11 – A. J. Welker Home, 410 Main Street

This private residence was once the home of Ambrose J. Welker, Chief Burgess of Hellertown, 1923-1926. Mr. Welker also was the owner of an insurance agency since 1914. Here is the home as it appeared in 1925...



12 – Dr. E. J. Deibert Home, 411 Main Street

Directly across Main Street from the last map key location, Mr. Welker's home, is the private residence that was once the home of Dr. E. J. Deibert. This home features extensive artistic architecture from the early days of Hellertown history. Dr. Deibert sat on the Board of Directors of the former Saucon Valley Trust Company which was established in the Borough April 3, 1920. The SV Trust Company was eventually acquired by The First National Bank of Allentown, now Wells Fargo.



Dr. Deibert Home Circa 1925

TOUR - Continue North on the West side of Main Street to the next map key item.

13 – Eagle Hotel, 428-430 Main Street

The Braveheart Highland Pub today was originally the Eagle Hotel in the early 1920's, owned and operated by Louie Vargo. This popular watering spot, built in 1902, was patronized by many Bethlehem Steel employees after their shift ended, catching the trolley from Bethlehem directly to this establishment. Years later, renamed the Hellertown Hotel, it found new ownership with the Matey Family who, at the time, also operated the Crossroads Hotel at the North end of Hellertown, famous for pizza and cheesesteaks. In time, the Matey Family sold the hotel and it underwent extensive renovations both inside and out, to become Braveheart Highland Pub.

This establishment now offers pub food and surroundings which feature rich Scottish heritage. There are rumors that the Pub is haunted. Employees have seen featureless figures in and around the building, heard sounds and their names called when they are alone. So far nothing substantial has developed, but this might tend to explain the continued popularity of the pub.

The photo on the next page from around 1920 shows owner Louie Vargo standing out front...



The Eagle Hotel Circa 1920

TOUR - Continue North on the West side of Main Street to the next map key item.

14 – Dr. William H. Rentzheimer Home, 502 Main Street

Immediately next to the Braveheart Highland Pub, is the private residence which was once the home of Dr. William H. Rentzheimer. Dr. Rentzheimer was the great-grandson of Carl Rentzheimer who immigrated to America from Germany in 1774. Carl and his son Tobias Rentzheimer settled in Hellertown and began farming the land which remained in the family for three generations. William Rentzheimer chose a different path studying medicine to become a doctor and set up practice at this home. Dr. Rentzheimer served as Secretary of the School Board and Borough of Hellertown Treasurer. When William Rentzheimer died on December 7, 1944, the 45 acres of farmland his family owned for generations was sold to a developer later becoming the Durham Terrace area of Hellertown, which is the subject for Section Three of this Tour. Single family homes were constructed on this land for the recent post-World War II housing boom and became home to many families that were employed at the nearby Bethlehem Steel Company. Again, notice the incredible period architecture, similar to many other homes along this section of Hellertown. It is now a private residence. The same home is shown on the next page from around 1925...



TOUR - Look across Main Street to the East side for your next map key item.

15 – George Weisel Marble and Granite Works, Between 505 and 511 Main Street⁽²⁾

Looking across Main Street to the East side from your current location, there is an empty, grassy space between two homes, 505 Main Street and 511 Main Street. This space was once occupied by the Weisel Marble and Granite Works, owned and operated by George Weisel. The business specialized in tombstones, cement, sand and slate. Try to visualize the business on this site from the photo on the next page taken in 1886. The business ceased operation in 1903.



TOUR - Continue North along the West side of Main Street to the intersection at Penn Street. Use the traffic pedestrian signal and FIRST/NEAREST crosswalk to SAFELY cross Main Street to the SE corner on the East side of Main Street. You will now be facing the next map key item.

16 – John A. Laubach Home, 519 Main Street

This private residence was once the home of prominent Hellertown Businessman John A. Laubach. Mr. Laubach was the son of Thomas R. Laubach, the first Chief Burgess of Hellertown, 1872-1873. John Laubach was owner of a print shop and stationery store. He also started and maintained a newspaper route and operated a hardware store on Main Street for twelve years before retiring. His grandson, Howard Hess, took over the business upon John's retirement. John Laubach died August 11, 1930. His home appears on the next page...



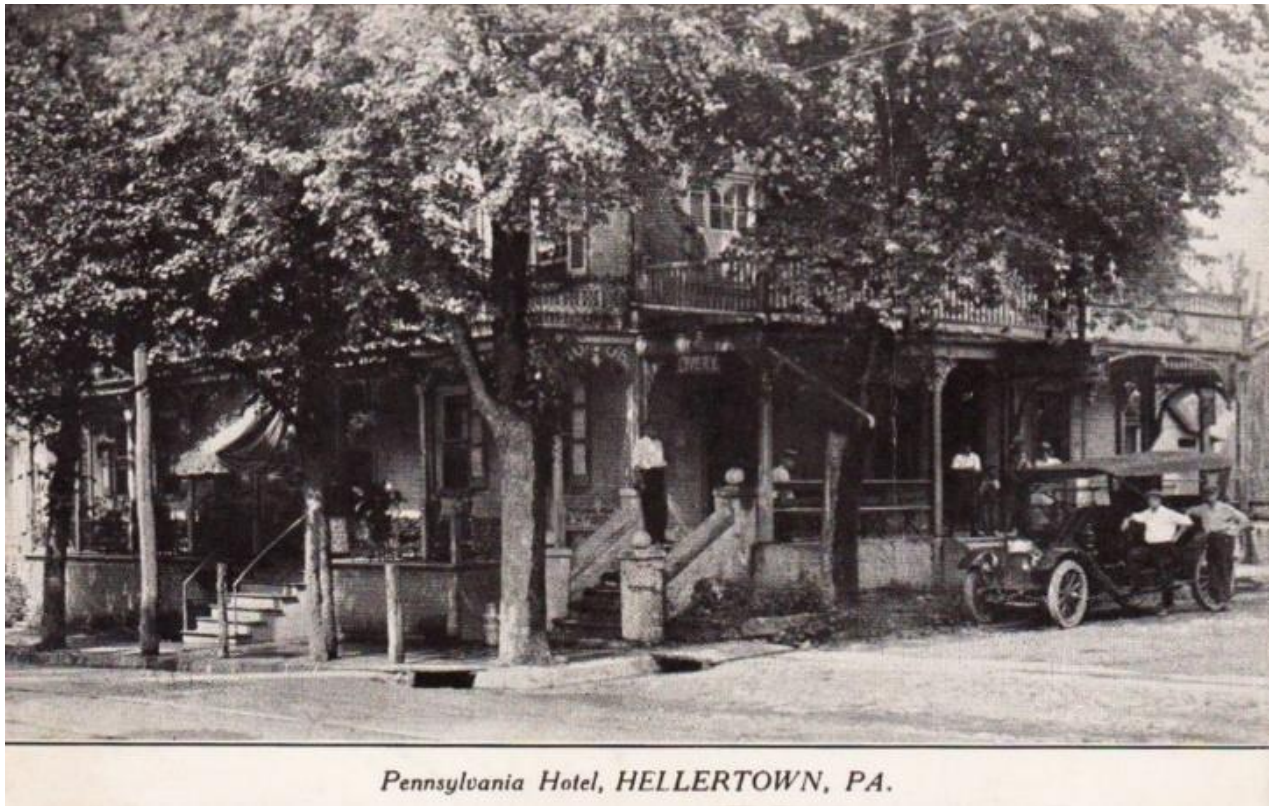
John A. Laubach Home Circa 1925

TOUR - Continue heading North along the East side of Main Street by crossing over Penn Street to the NE corner of the intersection. The next map key item is here.

17 – The Pennsylvania Hotel, 605 Main Street

Now a restaurant, this establishment was once a thriving hotel built by Frederick School between the years 1741 and 1760. Throughout the years it was passed on to the Heller Family who changed the name to the Tavern House. Later it was sold to John Rentzheimer who later sold it to Thomas R. Laubach. Thomas Laubach changed the name back to the Pennsylvania Hotel. In 1872, the first elections were held here with Thomas Laubach being elected the first Chief Burgess of Hellertown serving from 1872-1873.

The Pennsylvania Hotel was later acquired by Quintus Fritchman in 1913, possibly the man in white shirt leaning against the post, about the time of this photo...



Hellertown Historical Society Fact :

Famous for its use during the Revolutionary War, the Pennsylvania Rifle (a.k.a. The Kentucky Rifle) outshot British rifles with superior velocity, range and accuracy. The British dubbed it “The Widow Maker of the Revolution” due to its effectiveness. These rifles were manufactured by the Moll Family from 1764-1889. History indicates that a gun shop was located on the West side of Main Street directly across from the Pennsylvania Hotel. This shop was owned and operated by Moll Brothers – John and Peter – as early as 1810. The Moll brothers manufactured these rifles, later referred to as “Moll Rifles”. Often the breech was inscribed with Peter Moll’s name. Some of the guns were inscribed with “Hellerstown” (no, that is not a misspelling). Hellertown Historical Society possesses an original Moll Rifle in its collection of artifacts. Interested visitors are welcome to view it and tour our museum during regular business hours.

**Use a Smart Device to Scan this QR Code for More Information
on the Moll Gunsmiths/Rifles -**



TOUR – Continue walking North along the East side of Main Street to the next map key location.

18 – Dr. H.D. Heller Home, 631 Main Street

Dr. H. D. Heller, a prominent physician and highly respected citizen of Hellertown, was apparently a direct descendant of Simon Heller. Dr. Heller was the grandson of Dr. Henry Detwiller, the pioneer of homeopathy in PA. He was also a descendant of Captain Jacob Heller of Revolutionary days. This private home is shown in the photo on the next page from around the early 1900’s...



TOUR - For the next map key location, turn Right to travel East on the alley next to Dr. Heller's home. At the end, approximately 240 feet, the alley turns to the right, becoming Laubach Street, and continues on to join Penn Street. You will turn Right and walk about 40 feet in that direction. At this point, on the East side of Laubach Street (the alley), the next map key item is found.

19 - Hellertown's First Jail, 631 Main Street-Rear

This was the first jail in Hellertown, built in 1872. In 1981, it was given to the Hellertown Historical Society by then owner, Mrs. Howard Hess. The Historical Society has since raised funding to refurbish the jail and open it periodically for visitors to enjoy its historic significance.





Jail Interior

TOUR - Please reverse your path and return to Main street where you entered this area. At Main Street, look across the street to the West side for the next map key item.

20 – Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Building, 634 Main Street

From the “Road Celebration/Old Home Day” souvenir book, dated 1925...”*The Saucona Lodge No. 606 as it was called then, was instituted September 21, 1867. The first officers of the Lodge were Amos J. Harris, Noble Grand; Levi T. Weaver, Vice-Grand; Joshua K. Hess, Secretary; Wilson H. Werst, Assistant Secretary; Moses Henninger, Treasurer.*

The Lodge is the oldest fraternal organization in the Borough, beginning with a charter membership of twenty-five which has grown to membership of two hundred and fourteen.

The Lodge erected their present hall in 1876 and today this building is the center of all fraternal and community activities in the Borough.

During the existence of the Lodge, many of the town’s most prominent men were among the members and its fundamental principles of Friendship, Love and Truth, as practiced by its membership have aided materially in the upbuilding and betterment of this community.

Its present officers are Harry J. Rau, Noble Grand; James Strawn, Vice-Grand; Herbert S. Weisel, Recording Secretary; Charles E. Fluck, Financial Secretary; J.A. Huttel, Treasurer; Howard A Riegel, Titus Frey, Alfred Boehm, Trustees.”

Indeed, this Hall did serve as a central hub for many community activities. The Hall, for example, was graciously offered to the members of Christ Union Church after their church building was destroyed by fire.



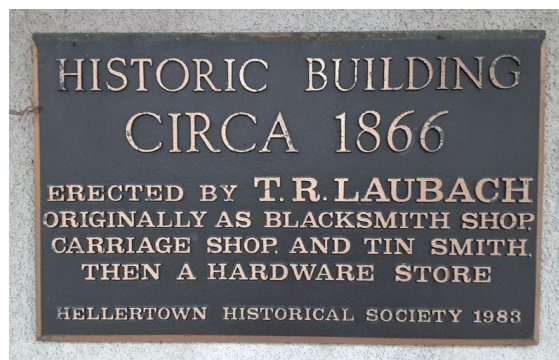
I. O. O. F. Hall, HELLERTOWN, PA.

Independent Odd Fellow Hall Circa late 1800's

TOUR - Continuing from your current location on the East side of Main Street, the next building is the next map key location.

21 – Laubach’s Carriage House, 637-643 Main Street

This building first served as a carriage shop built in 1866 owned by Thomas R. Laubach, Hellertown’s first Chief Burgess. Here three businesses thrived. The two-story section to the North housed a carriage-builder, Harrison Klein who also served three terms as Borough Chief Burgess, to supply the “horse and buggy” needs of the Borough and surrounding area. In the one-story center section, was a blacksmith, William Heffner. He not only shod horses, but created a variety of forged items such as bolts, axle springs, axes, pot hooks and other implements. In the Southern most two-story section was tinsmith, Francis Fehr, on the first floor and a large storage and meeting area on the second floor. The tinsmith created a variety of household utensils, funnels, coffee pots, cookie cutters and stove pipes.



The unusual aspect of this structure is the aqueduct-stone and brick arches at the base permitting the Silver Creek to flow under the building to its confluence at the Saucon Creek, approximately 0.2 miles to the West. During the early 1900’s, the upper floor of the building served as a meeting place for the St. George’s Church group.

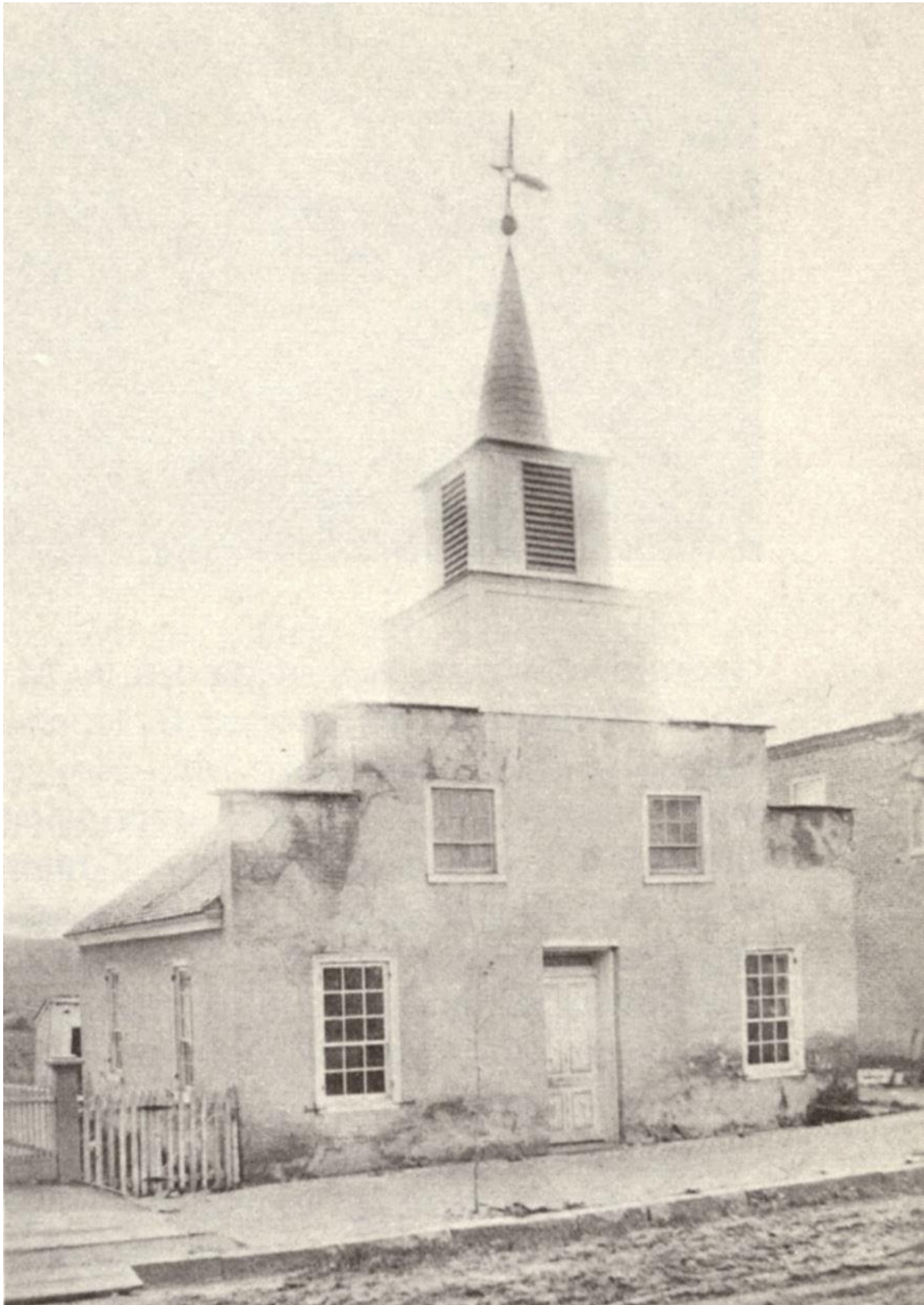


Arches Beneath Rear of Building – Silver Creek Flows West Toward Saucon Creek

TOUR - Continuing North along the East side of Main Street, you will cross Church Alley. The next map key item is here.

22A – Hellertown’s First School, 645 Main Street

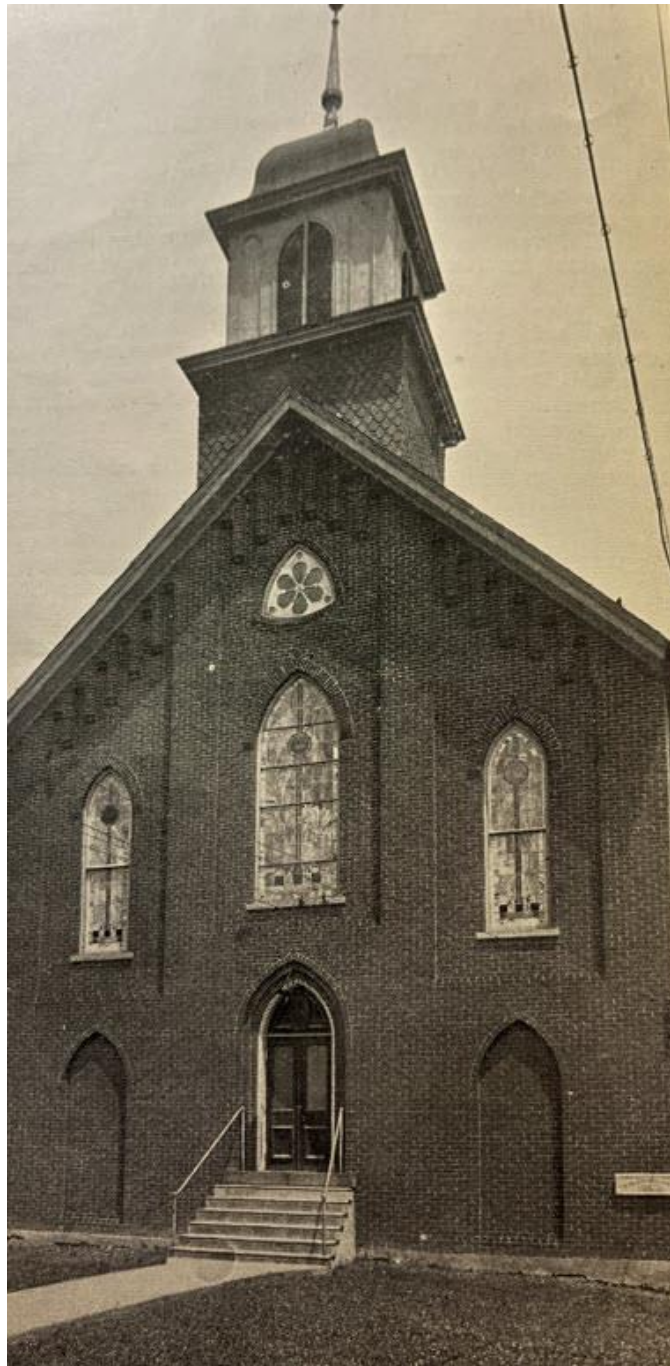
Hellertown’s first school house was constructed on this site in 1839. It was used until a lot on Northampton Street was donated by Tilghman Eisenhart for the purpose of building a new school house. The existing school building was then occupied by the St. Paul Evangelical Church where services were held. In 1882, the old school house was demolished to make way for a new church building on the same site.



Hellertown's First School House Circa 1839

22B St. Paul's Evangelical Church, 645 Main Street

As mentioned in the last map key location, the former Hellertown School house was used by St. Paul Evangelical Church when a new school site became available. In 1882, a more modern church building was constructed on the same site and dedicated in 1883.



23 – Hellertown's First Post Office, 659 Main Street

Hellertown's first "official" post office was located adjacent to this site actually on what is now Water Street. The word "official" is used here because at one time a stone building slightly North of this location at the current site of Detwiller Plaza, was once used as an early post office. Franklin Sutton was Postmaster at the time and later elected Chief Burgess of Hellertown serving 1918-1922. The photos on the next page should help visualize how the first post office appeared in 1908, note a portion of the Central Hotel can be seen on the Left side of the photo...

PHOTO BY CALVIN BERGSTRESSER, HELLETTOWN, PA.



Postcard Photo of the Hellertown Post Office Circa 1908



Rural Carrier Service Wagons to Pick Up Mail for Delivery

TOUR - From this point, please cross Main Street from the East side to the West side utilizing the nearest crosswalk and traffic signals crossing from the SE corner to the SW corner of this intersection. PLEASE USE EXTREME CAUTION WHILE DOING SO! You will now be in front of the next map key item.

24 – George Deemer’s Market, 662 Main Street

Currently a law office, this building was originally George Deemer’s American Store, a true ‘Mom and Pop’ store in the early 1900’s. Later it became Leo Stern’s Market. Notice how the building’s original architecture has remained intact compared to how it appeared in the early 1900’s...



TOUR - Continue West on Water Street. The next map key items will be found along the Saucon Rail Trail (SRT). In approximately 460 feet, you will arrive at Front Street. Please carefully cross this street continuing West toward the SRT approximately another 175 feet ahead. PLEASE USE CAUTION AS THERE IS NO CONTINUOUS WALKWAY!

TOUR OPTION - When you arrive at the Saucon Rail Trail access, you may continue this tour by entering and turning Left to head South toward the next map key items. Or, you may choose to start the Second Section – “Crossroads Annexation” Tour beginning on page 35, which is about 1.4 miles in length, starting here and will return to this site at its end. If you select this option, you may finish Section One at the conclusion of Section Two.

The SRT uses a unique system of the original surveyed North Pennsylvania Railroad mile marker posts that originate from the Union Station in Philadelphia. Each marker is separated by one-half mile. The nearest marker from your current location is 52.5 miles, approximately 900 feet North of your entry point.

25 – Silver Creek Overpass, SRT

Silver Creek is a tributary of the Saucon Creek which begins at Swoveberg Hill, West of Lower Saucon Road in Lower Saucon Township, North of the Hellertown Reservoirs. It travels approximately 3.2 miles through Lower Saucon Township and Hellertown until it reaches its confluence at the Saucon Creek only about 450 feet West of the SRT. This is the same waterway that passes under the building at **Laubach’s Carriage House**, map key item #20 earlier in this tour.

TOUR - Continue traveling South along the SRT for the next few map key locations.

26 – Hellertown Wetlands, SRT

From the geological map on the SRT website... *“The Hellertown marsh is a remnant of a much larger wetland that once filled the valley bottom of Saucon Creek, and probably representative of similar wetlands that filled the valley bottoms of most mid-Atlantic streams prior to colonization, farming, and damming of the rivers for water power. The marsh sits atop ~ 1m of legacy sediments like those viewed at STOP 1. A core that has been pushed through these sediments pushed down through the former pre-colonial wetland, that black layer visible at STOP 1. The base of the core has been radiocarbon dated to 3540+/-30 ybp (UGAMS# 6125; Nov, 2009). The interpretive sign at this stop speaks of the marsh sitting on top of glacial deposits ~850 ka. That is generally true, although those deposits are unevenly distributed and because of poor exposures in the Saucon Valley, we are inferring an age from regional stratigraphic relationships. We do know that a pre-Illinoian ice sheet advanced from the NE to SE passing over this part of the Saucon Valley, building a terminus at what is now Emmaus, PA. At that location on the other side of South Mountain, a kame delta is exposed in a former gravel pit. That delta fed a proglacial lake that resulted from the damming of the Little Lehigh River and Saucon Creek. Silty sediments exposed in that kame ~ 4 m below the surface are paleomagnetically reversed, meaning that the pre-Illinoian ice must be older than 780 ka.”*

27 – Hellertown Soccer Fields, SRT

Approximately 0.2 miles from your entry onto the SRT at Water Street, you will find the Hellertown soccer fields on the Right side of the trail. These are part of the much larger “green land” that differs the Borough of Hellertown from most any other community. Hellertown is famous for the large ratio of park area versus residential/business area, approximately 24% of Hellertown’s area is “green land”. This is a welcoming characteristic for those who wish to relocate to a family-friendly area offering much in recreational opportunities.

28 – North Pennsylvania Railroad Signal, SRT

From the SRT website... *“The signal, which was manufactured by the General Railway Signal Company, was installed by the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad between 1910-1920. It served as a northbound signal to alert engineers about the main track conditions and the upcoming siding which may have diverted trains to the former Thomas Iron Works site or to the Hellertown Rail Station that was located near Depot Street.*

Volunteers from the Saucon Rail Trail Oversight Commission disassembled and removed the individual parts of the signal. Each part was photographed, measured, and analyzed to determine if it could be refurbished or needed to be replaced. This information was shared with experts who provided advice and direction on the fabrication, sanding and repainting of the signal equipment.”

**Before – After Photo of
Refurbished Signal
(Courtesy SRT Website)**

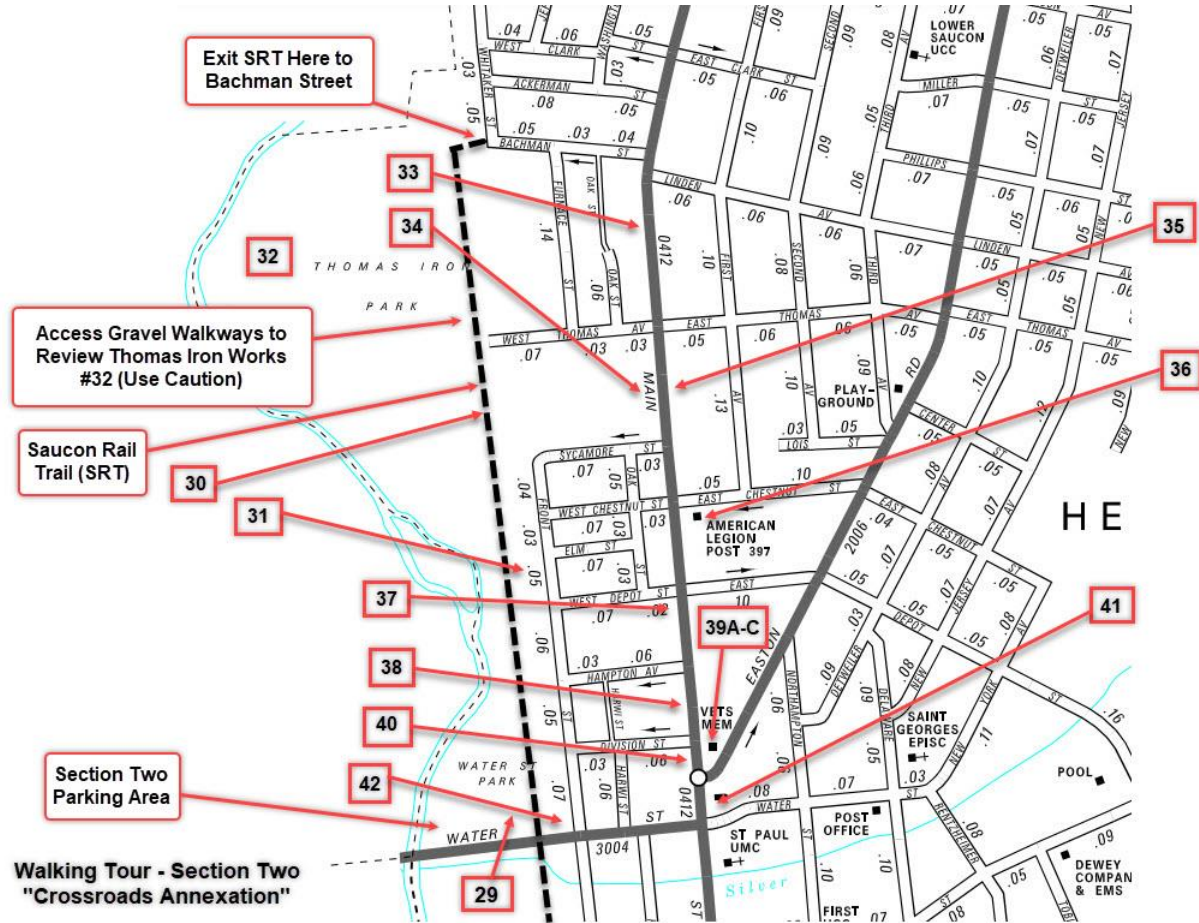
**Use a Smart Device to Scan the QR Code
for More Information About This
Refurbishing Project**



TOUR - Continue to the parking area across from the Hellertown Historical Society where this section of the tour began. This concludes Section One - “King’s Highway Corridor”. Please continue the Walking Tour with the other sections.

Section Two - "Crossroads Annexation"

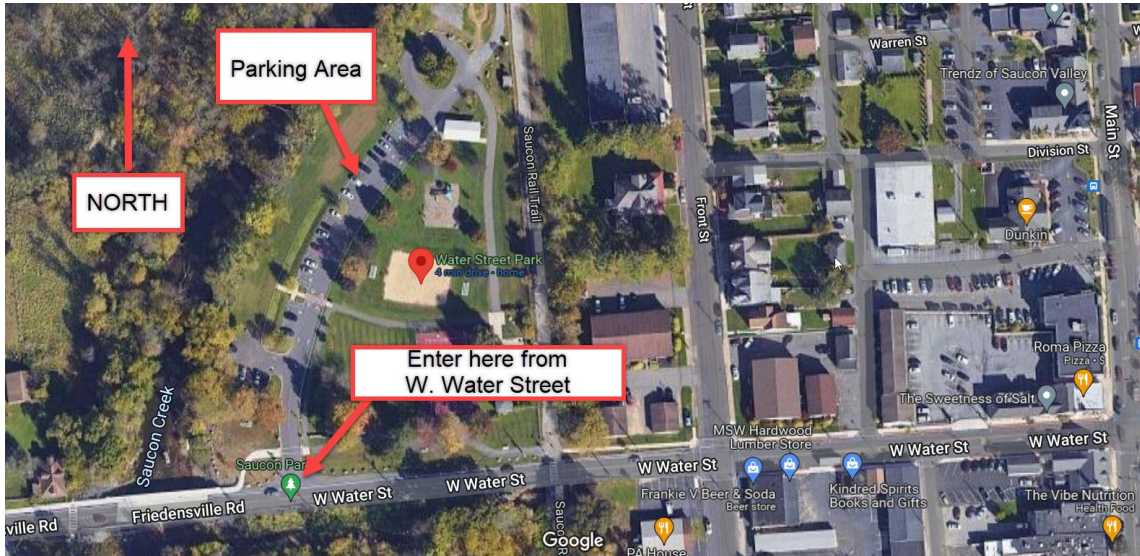
1.4 Miles Long



Use this Map for Below Key Locations on this Tour Loop

KEY	NAME	ADDRESS	KEY	NAME	ADDRESS
29	Water Street Park Boulders	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)	37	Prosser's Drug Store	834 Main St.
30	North Pennsylvania Railroad (NPRR-SRT)	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)	38	Anthony Boehm Home	766 Main St.
31	Hellertown Railroad Station	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)	39A	Detwiller Plaza/Fountain	701 Main St.
32	Saucon Iron Company/Thomas Iron Works	Saucon Rail Trail (SRT)	39B	Detwiller Plaza Clock Tower	701 Main St.
33	Sauconia Movie Theater	1152 Main St.	39C	Detwiller Plaza Time Capsule	701 Main St.
34	Hellertown-Lower Saucon High School	1050 Main St.	40	Park Hotel	730 Main St.
35	Postmaster William H. Scholl Home	1049 Main St.	41	Dr. Henry Detwiller Home/Borough Hall	685 Main St.
36	Edward H. Ackerman American Legion Post	935 Main St.	42	Lerch Dairy/Brookfield Dairy	702 Front St.

It is recommended to begin this tour at the parking area designated as 90 W. Water Street – Water Street Park. Please refer to the photo description below of this parking area for location and directions.



By 1880, the population of Hellertown was about 550 people. Despite Hellertown being well-established at its Southern end with flourishing businesses, the Borough still suffered a 30-year period of relatively slow growth. On July 1, 1919, Hellertown annexed a section of Lower Saucon Township known as “The Crossroads”. This addition to the Borough increased the population from 915 people, per the 1910 census, to nearly 3500. In addition to the population increase, additional buildings and resources added more homes, more businesses, and unfortunately, more problems for municipal and school services. Large changes to address these concerns began earnestly going forward.

**Shaded Area
Represents the
Approximate Area of
the Crossroads
Annexation – Roughly
Depot Street North to
Cherry Lane**



TOUR - From the parking area at Water Street Park, proceed to the Water Street crossing of the Saucon Rail Trail (SRT). Turn Left and head North on the SRT to begin this section of the tour. Map key location numbering will begin from the last point on the previous tour.

29 – Water Street Park Boulders, SRT Information

The Water Street Park boulder formations in this area portray particular interest to geologists. From the SRT website... *“The purpose of this stop is to observe the sedimentary structures, namely mudcracks and wave ripples, that are well-preserved on boulders of Allentown Dolostone. Not all boulders are dolostone and here and throughout Water Street Park, there are examples of many of the rocks exposed from South Mountain to the Newark Basin. A paleocurrent analysis of the wave ripples shows that they were created at ~0.5 m water depths, by waves that were ~ 2 to 10 cm high.”* The included info board offers more detail...

Natural History of Water Street Park Boulders

Mudcracks
A warm shallow sea once covered Hellertown where you are now standing. Evidence of that sea and dramatic environmental change can be observed in the mudcracks, wave ripples, and fossilized stromatolites preserved in and on the boulders arranged here. These boulders were locally quarried and moved to the park. They are made of a Late Cambrian Period (515-500 million years ago) dolostone that was deposited on the floor of a shallow, warm ocean dotted by islands, resembling the setting of the modern-day Bahamas. This ocean flooded North America during a time of high atmospheric CO₂, warm climate, and high sea level. The background image of this sign by artist C. P. B. van Kempen depicts some of the fantastic creatures that lived in that ocean, including stromatolites. See if you can find the wave ripples, mudcracks, and stromatolites on the numbered boulders. Use the weblink to learn more.

Mudcracks are formed when sea level falls and exposes muddy sediment. The mud dries and contracts to form polygonal shapes. When sea level rises, the mudcracks are buried by new sediment and preserved.

Rock 8 contains mudcracks.

Ripples
Ripple are sedimentary structures formed by water or wind currents. Symmetric ripples, like those preserved on the boulders here, are formed by the back and forth motion of waves. Geologists can use ripple height, ripple spacing, and limestone grain size to tell us that the water depth of the ancient shallow sea here was between 1 and 3 meters.

Rocks 1, 6, 9, 11, 13, and 14 contain wave ripples.

Fossils
Fossils are the remains of ancient organisms preserved in sedimentary rocks. The fossils here are cyano-bacteria ecosystems called stromatolites. They trap sediment and grow upwards from the seafloor.

Rocks 4, 7, and 11 contain stromatolites

scan this to learn more

A student service learning project by: **LEHIGH UNIVERSITY**

with financial support provided by: **AMC**, **pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION RESOURCES**, and additional support by: **Lehigh Valley**, **Lehigh Valley Rail Trail**, **Trail Value**

scan this to learn more

Use a Smart Device to Scan the QR Code in this Photo for More Information Online (Courtesy SRT)

30 – SRT/North Pennsylvania Railroad

The Saucon Rail Trail was constructed on the old North Pennsylvania Railroad track bed that once provided train transportation from Allentown, Bethlehem and additional Lehigh Valley points South to Philadelphia.

Construction of this line began June, 1853 by the North Pennsylvania RR Company to connect Philadelphia with the Lehigh Valley. The first train made the trip from Philadelphia through Hellertown to Shimersville, where it connected to the Lehigh Valley Railroad in December, 1856. Regular passenger service began January 1, 1857 when the trains ran from Philadelphia to Shimersville and Easton as two daily trains ran over the route. In July, 1857, rail service on the Shimersville branch was ended and new trackage was routed to South Bethlehem. Passengers now could travel directly to Bethlehem or Philadelphia.



#813 Central New Jersey Steam Engine/Train Heading South Through Hellertown – August 28, 1949

TOUR - This former railroad bed and adjacent industrial areas offer historic significance to the Borough of Hellertown which will be outlined in the next few map keys. Continue traveling North along SRT. Approximately 0.2 miles from entering the SRT, you arrive at the next map key location.

31 – Hellertown/North Pennsylvania Railroad Company Station, 1090 Front Street

As you continue North on the Saucon Rail Trail, you will approach the site where the former Hellertown Railroad Station once occupied. This station was razed and a senior care facility built in its place along adjacent Front Street. When you reach the former railroad station site, you will see this senior facility from the rear.

Railroad service in Hellertown began in December 1856 when the first train ran from Hellertown to Shimersville where it connected to the Lehigh Valley Railroad line. The first regular passenger train from Philadelphia to Hellertown arrived January 1, 1857, thus starting regular passenger service with two trains daily.

A group of investors from Philadelphia attempted to cash in on the new railroad arrival by purchasing Geissinger farm North of what was Hellertown at the time, the area now known as Depot Street, laid out lots and built a small railroad station on the tract, calling the new area 'Hampton'. The real estate enterprise was a failure with only one home being built on it after many years. Hampton was eventually abandoned and the land was resold back to the original owner.

In 1868, a new brick structure was built as the new railroad station. Soon a coal and lumber yard in the southern portion of town was added. Fruit shipments were made to Philadelphia and passenger excursions were made by Saucon Valley residents. The railroad industry in Hellertown began to flourish.



Hellertown Railroad Station Early 1900's

From the SRT website...*"Before the Saucon Rail Trail had become what it is today, 5 miles of beautiful trail, it was a railroad called the North Pennsylvania Railroad (N.P.R.R.). Through the years, the railroad name was transformed, merged, consolidated and transferred through many railroad companies. Historically, the North Pennsylvania Railroad was used for our local economic development in our four municipalities: Lower Saucon Township, Hellertown, Upper Saucon Township and Coopersburg. Local industries and products were supported by the railroad; such as, anthracite coal, farming, commuter transportation, iron ore, mail services, dry goods/groceries and grains. It was a powerful mode of transport. (N.P.R.R.) linked Philadelphia to Bethlehem and to coal regions north. Before the railroad, the route took 8 hours to travel by stagecoach, or several days by canal boat. It took only 3 hours by railcar. Listed below are some landmark dates in the rich history of the Saucon Rail Trail.*

1855: On July 2nd, 1855, the construction of the North Pennsylvania Railroad began in Philadelphia, PA.

1857: Opens from Philadelphia to Freemansburg and Easton, PA

1858: (N.P.R.R.) was completed through Bethlehem, PA

1879: On May 15, 1879, the (N.P.R.R.) was leased to Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company (later changed to Reading Line).

1917: Peak of coal productions and Reading Railroad was the railroad that transported it in the area.

1920: Changed from Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company to Reading Line because of government legislation to abolish railroad monopolies.

1952: Reading Line transferred from Steam to Diesel Locomotives for freight trains.

1963: Last Steam Train on line. Three to Four Steam Trains were used for only excursion/leisure rides.

1976: ConRail (Consolidated Railroad) was created by government because Penn Central Transportation and other lines, such as, Lehigh Hudson Railroad, Lehigh Valley Railroads were going through bankruptcy. The Reading Railroad became part of ConRail at this time. Then, in the same year, ConRail was transferred to SEPTA.

1981: July 26, 1981 SEPTA commuter lines terminated to Bethlehem (ending 124 years of service).

1984: Last train on line."

Auto and plane service became the chief means of transportation. The nation faced a dramatic drop in passenger rail service. Even mail service was no longer using the railroad. While this industry saw multiple changes over the years from steam locomotives to diesel power, eventually the rail service in Hellertown ceased.



Photo of the Railroad Station Looking North in the early 1970's



Budd Car Train at Hellertown Station Before Service Ceased Circa Early 1970's

Over the years of non-use and maintenance, the station deteriorated and became more of a liability problem for the railroad. Despite attempts by local citizens and Hellertown Historical Society to save it, the station was razed December 6, 1982. Hellertown Historical Society was able to retrieve some artifacts from the station before it was destroyed and have these on display in our museum.

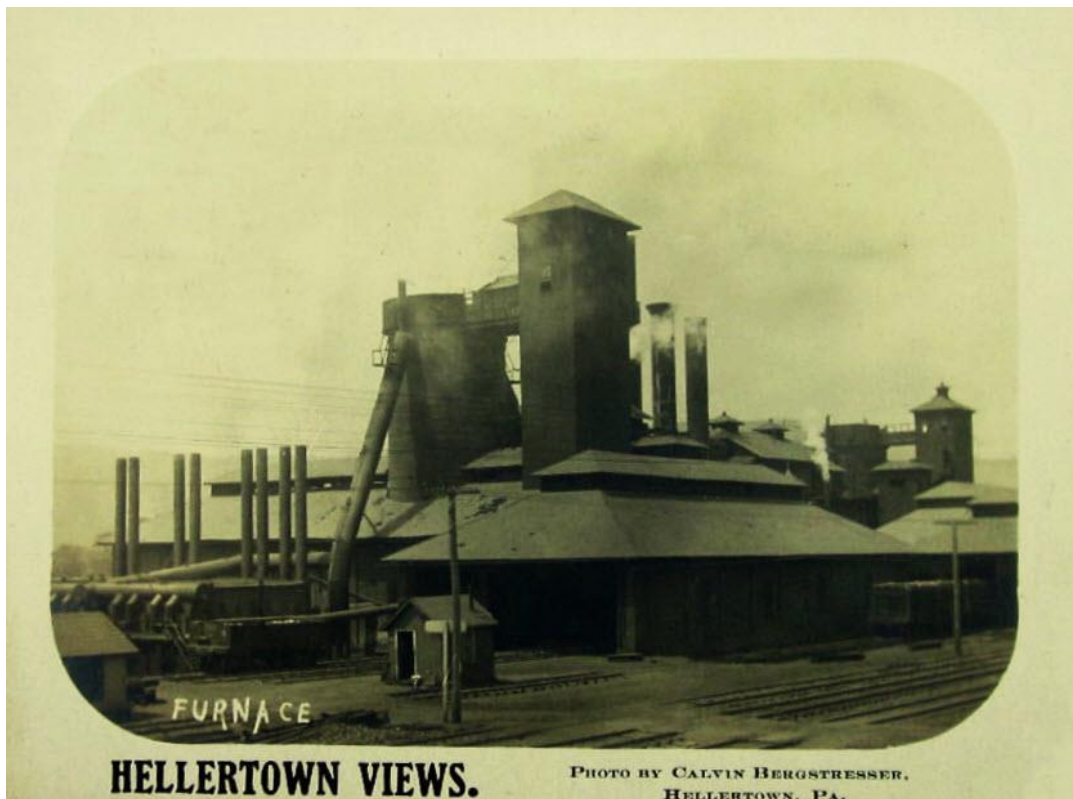
TOUR - Continue walking North along the SRT for the next map key item.

32 – Saucon Iron Company/Thomas Iron Works

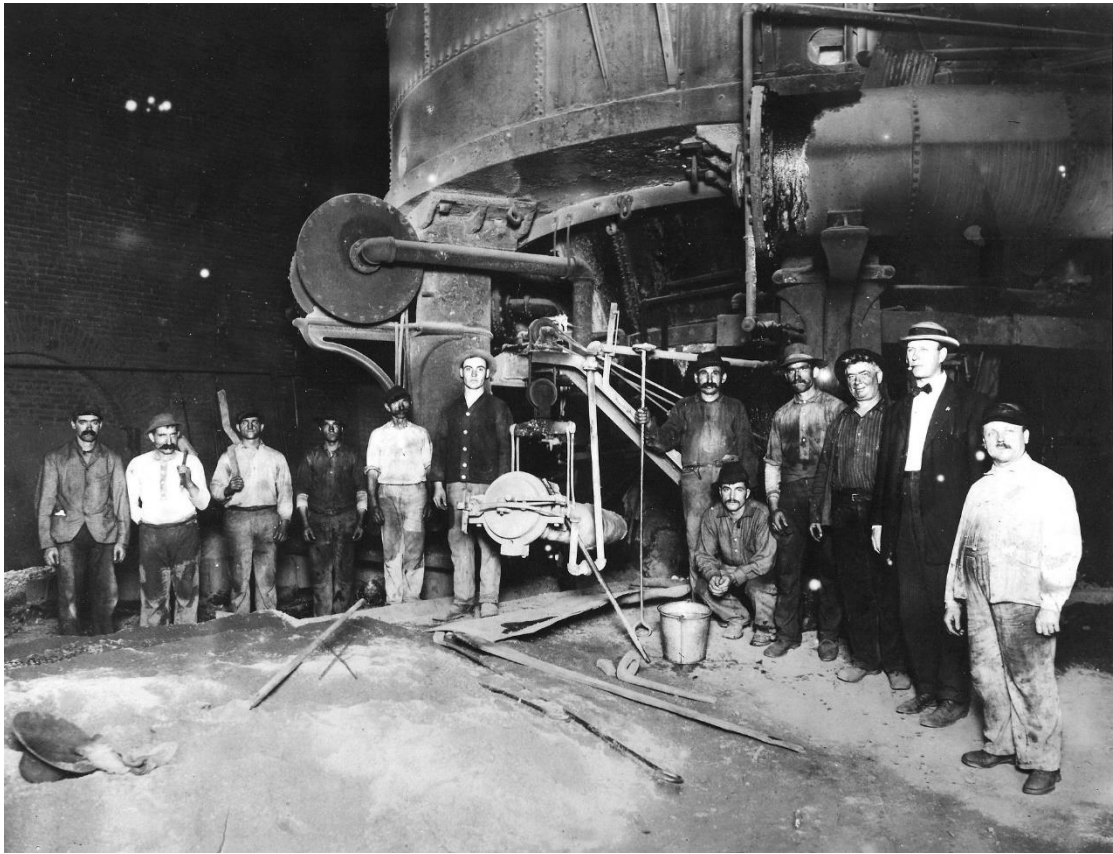
While on the Saucon Rail Trail heading North, the remnants of the Thomas Iron Works and concrete foundations of the furnaces can be seen directly West (Left) of your location. While it may not be visible due to trees and brush, the Thomas Iron Works was a large industrial area which produced pig iron for rolling mills and other manufacturers. Gravel trails crisscross the area into and around the former iron-making site. Visitors can access these trails to visit the former site, however caution should be observed as these trails are not regularly maintained.

From the SRT website...*"The concrete foundations of the Thomas Iron works preserved here, are a testament to the long and early history of iron mining and steel production in the Saucon and Lehigh Valleys. These iron works were established in 1866 by Jacob Riegel of the Saucon Iron Company, and purchased by the Thomas Iron Company in 1884. Over 350 people were employed when the furnaces were in full blast. The iron ore came from many local, low grade, residual and bog iron sources, the most important of which were located in the Polk Valley watershed SE of Hellertown. The iron ore here is residual in nature, part of a deep saprolite that formed at the structural contact between Precambrian crystalline rocks and the Leithsville Fm. Acidic ground water carrying dissolved iron from the crystalline rocks is buffered by the dolostone in the Leithsville Fm, changes pH, and precipitates the dissolved iron into masses of goethite and hematite. The saprolite hosting these ironstone ores is surprisingly deep, exceeding 200 m in the axis of Polk Valley (known from water wells), and speaks to the degree of chemical weathering in the pre-Quaternary Pennsylvania landscape. The Wharton mine was the major producer in the Saucon valley, opening in 1872 and worked until 1910. Over its life, it produced about 200,000 tons of ore that was on average, 43% iron, 19% silica, 4.2% alumina, 2% manganese, 0.4% phosphorus, and 7% moisture. Pig iron was produced from this ore at this site until 1920, and the buildings were demolished in 1924. Slag piles remain on the site as hills dumped on the Saucon floodplain."*

While it may be hard to imagine today, try to visualize this once busy industrial area from the next few photos...

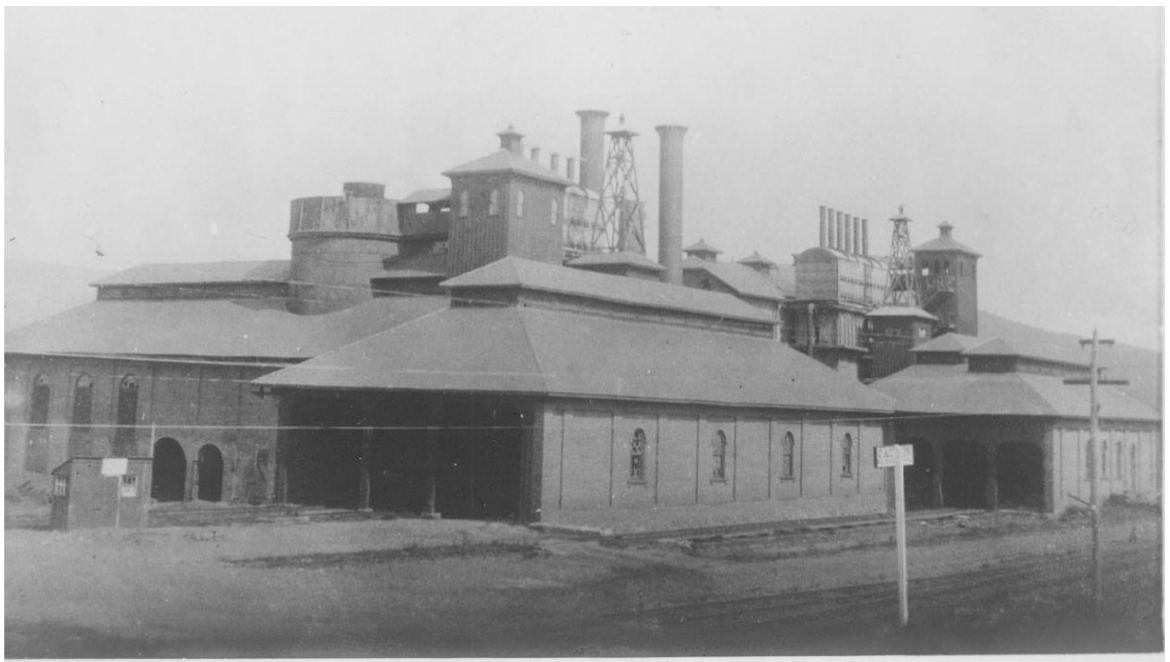


Saucon Iron Company Furnaces Circa 1863



Interior View of Thomas Iron Works

Saucon Iron Company Plant – Circa 1910





Wharton Mining Operation (Courtesy SRT Website)

TOUR - After reviewing the former Thomas Iron Company Site, please return to the SRT. Continue North on SRT until reaching the Northern most end of the SRT. Here you will exit toward the Right to the West End of Bachman Street. Walk East on Bachman Street toward Main Street, approximately 0.1 mile. Once arriving at Main Street, turn Right and walk South along the West side of Main Street and the next map key location on the tour

33 – The Sauconia Theater/The Movies, 1152 Main Street

In 1940, John Kofler built an art-deco theater so the Community would enjoy films and on-stage shows. Mr. Kofler held a contest to name the theater and “The Sauconia” was the winning entry. The interior featured velvet covered seats and period wall sconces. A variety of films and shows were presented at this venue over many years becoming a very popular attraction for Hellertown. Until then, feature movies were shown on the second floor inside the American Legion on Main Street to much enthusiasm.

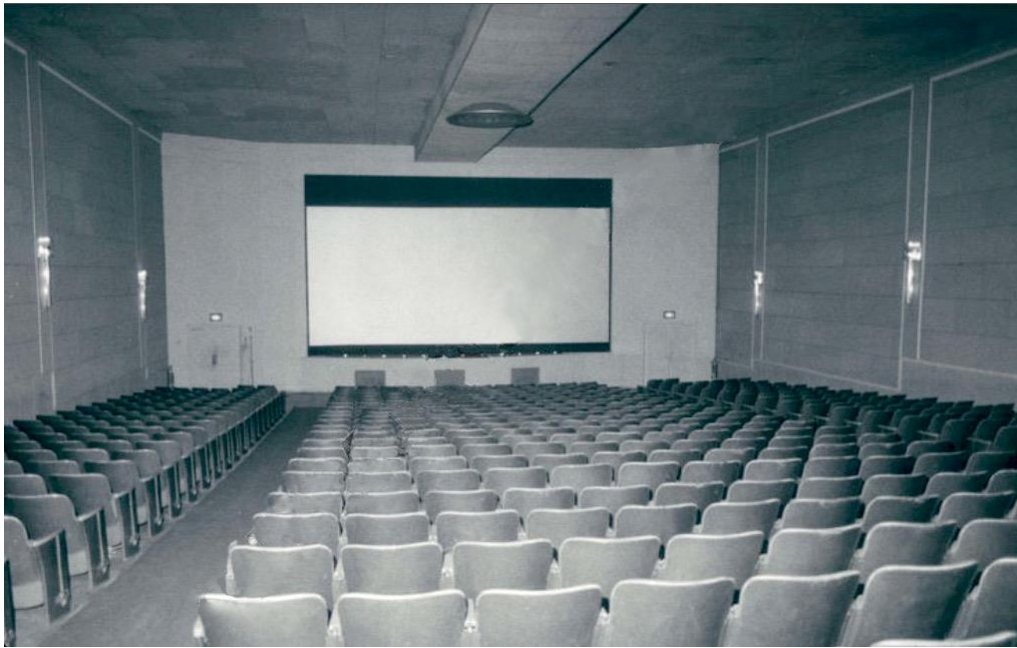


Banner Advertises Movies Shown on the Second Floor at The American Legion



The Sauconia – Circa Early 1940's

Interior of 'The Sauconia'- Note the Period Wall Décor (Courtesy Dan Ruth)



Some of the Entertainment Offered at 'The Sauconia' (Courtesy Dan Ruth)

Sauconia Theatre
The Showplace of Hellertown

EXTRA - Something For The Family - EXTRA
 "BIG RADIO SHOW"
Mon. and Tues., May 28-29, '45
 EVENINGS AT 8:00 AND 10:30
 ON OUR STAGE IN PERSON
WILLIS MYERS
 AND HIS
"BAR X RANCH BOYS"
 OUTSTANDING RADIO STARS
 .. FEATURING ..
 CURLEY GIBSON - - - WIRARD OF STRINGS
 EDDIE - - - ON THE ACCORDIAN
 WAYNE - - - SINGER OF SONGS
 HINEY - - - WELL KNOWN COMEDIAN
 .. AND ..
 "RAY MYERS"--ARMLESS WONDER OF THE WORLD
 LATE WITH RIPLEY--BELIEVE IT OR NOT ODDITIES
 .. SPECIAL ADDED ON OUR SCREEN ..
 AT 6:30 AND 9:00 P. M.
 ROY ROGER'S, KING OF THE COWBOYS IN
"COWBOY AND THE SENORITA"
 WITH DALE EVANS--JANET MARTIN--GRANT WITHERS and THE SONS OF THE PIONEERS
 AT OUR REGULAR ADMISSION PRICES



In 1968, Mr. Kofler's daughter Ellie bought the theater and renamed it "The Movies" where it once again provided the town with a venue for feature films. Though, over time, with larger corporate cinemas being built in the area and the theater requiring much repair, it soon closed due to low attendance and lack of funding.

After Ellie's death in 2002, the building was auctioned and soon renovated to its current appearance housing a few businesses.



The Movies Circa 1968

**A Dickens
of a package for this holiday season.**

WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS' **THE RESCUERS**

TECHNICOLOR®
RE-RELEASED BY BUENA VISTA
DISTRIBUTION CO. INC.
© MCMXXVII
WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

G

WALT DISNEY PICTURES PRESENTS
**MICKEY'S
CHRISTMAS
CAROL**
AN ALL NEW ANIMATED FEATURETTE

**ALL
SEATS
\$2.50**

SAT.:
1:00,
7:00 & 9:00

SUN.:
2:00 & 7:00

**THE
MOVIES
HELLERTOWN
838-0505**

The Globe-Times/Saturday, December 17, 1983

One of the Last Feature Films Shown Before 'The Movies' Closed its Doors
(Courtesy Dan Ruth)

TOUR - Continue South along the West side of Main Street approximately 0.1 miles to the next map key destination.

34 – Hellertown-Lower Saucon/Saucon Valley High School, 1050 Main Street

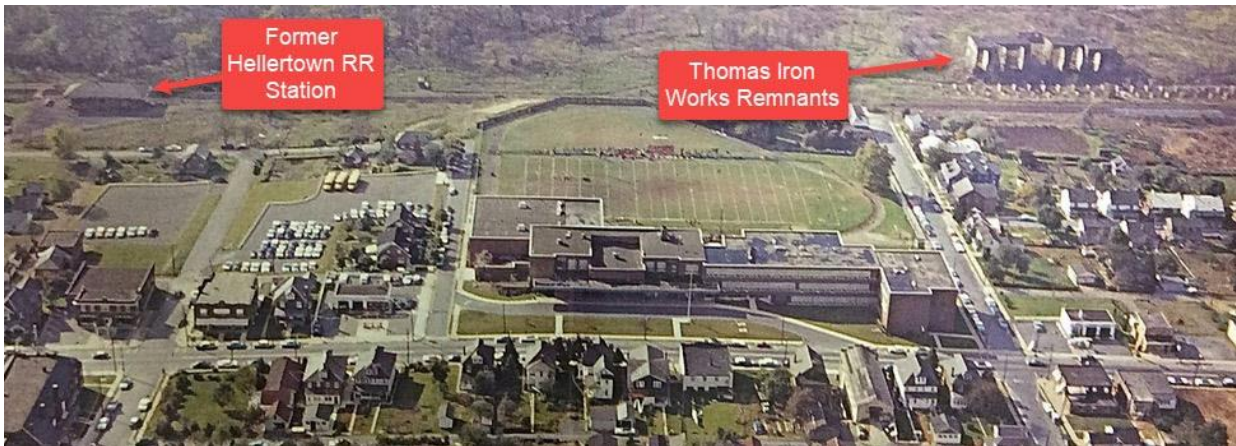
Upon the annexation of the Crossroads Area, the Borough acquired three additional schools. Of these, the former Wolf School on East High Street became the Hellertown High School.

The current Supervising Principal, R.N. Taylor resigned June 30, 1928 and Mr. M. E. Illick, who was the current Hellertown High School Principal at the time, was elected to fill the vacancy. Mr. Illick served in that position until 1953, then served as the Superintendent of the Hellertown-Lower Saucon Joint School System from 1953-1963.

The overcrowding conditions through the late 1920's prompted the School Board to purchase several acres of land on Main Street between Thomas Avenue and Sycamore Street. In November, 1929, voters approved another bond issue for \$100,000 providing the funds necessary to construct a new high school building on this land.

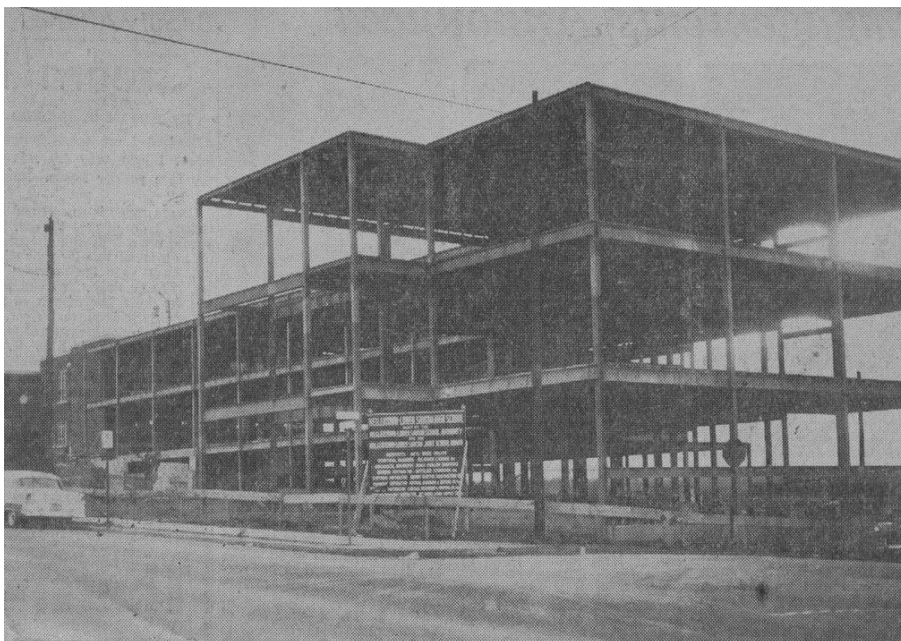
The building was finished and occupied January 1931. From a recommendation by Mr. Illick, the School Board authorized adding a 12th grade level to the curriculum. Twelfth grade students previously attended Liberty High School in Bethlehem. Since 1923, a senior class has been graduating annually from a regular four-year high school course.

Now an assisted care home, the original school building had many changes over the years to accommodate the continued growth of students in the Borough and Lower Saucon Township. These photos show the school at various times and the construction...



This Aerial Photo was Taken 1962 – Looking West at the High School

Note the Thomas Iron Works and the Hellertown RR Station in the Background (Courtesy Dan Ruth)



Construction of An Addition to the Original High School The Original Building Can Be Seen at the Far Left (Courtesy Hellertown Images)



Overall View of the Entire School Building After Additions – Looking Northwest

TOUR – The next map key item is directly across the street from your location. (DO NOT cross Main Street)

35 – Postmaster William H. Scholl Home, 1049 Main Street

As seen in Section One “King’s Highway Corridor” Tour, homes with the same exquisite period architecture can also be found in the Crossroads Annexation area. This is one example.

William H. Scholl was the Postmaster for the Hellertown Post Office in 1920 filling the vacancy after F. C. Harwi resigned. Mr. Scholl continued as Postmaster until at least 1930. Compare the photo below with the current home today to visualize the ornate period architecture...





From 1925 to 1932, William Scholl served in the Hellertown post office, which was then part of Prosser's Drugstore, at 834 Main Street.

(Courtesy Hellertown Images)

TOUR - Continue South along the West side of Main Street, crossing Sycamore Street. Continue to the next intersection at Chestnut Street. Cross Chestnut Street to the Southwest corner of this intersection. Using the crosswalk and pedestrian walking signals, PLEASE CAPEFULLY CROSS Main Street to the East side. The next map key item is here.

36 – Edward H. Ackerman American Legion Post #397, 935 Main Street

The Edward H. Ackerman American Legion Post #397 was named after the first Hellertown casualty killed in action during World War I, Corporal Edward H. Ackerman. Ackerman was born in Bethlehem July 12, 1896, moved to Hellertown in 1914 and was employed at Hess Lumber and Coal before entering the service. He was killed on October 8, 1918 when struck by shrapnel from a German shell. The American Legion Post conducted his military funeral with interment in Hellertown Union Cemetery.

Seeing the need for a headquarters in which to operate as well as provide the community with additional services, the Post members obtained the land for the sum of \$1300 then underwent the task of funding new construction. After securing funds through the sale of bonds and a mortgage obtained, the ground-breaking ceremony was held April 22, 1926. On September 19, 1927, the first regular meeting was held in the new building where plans were outlined for the grand opening held on October 1, 1927.



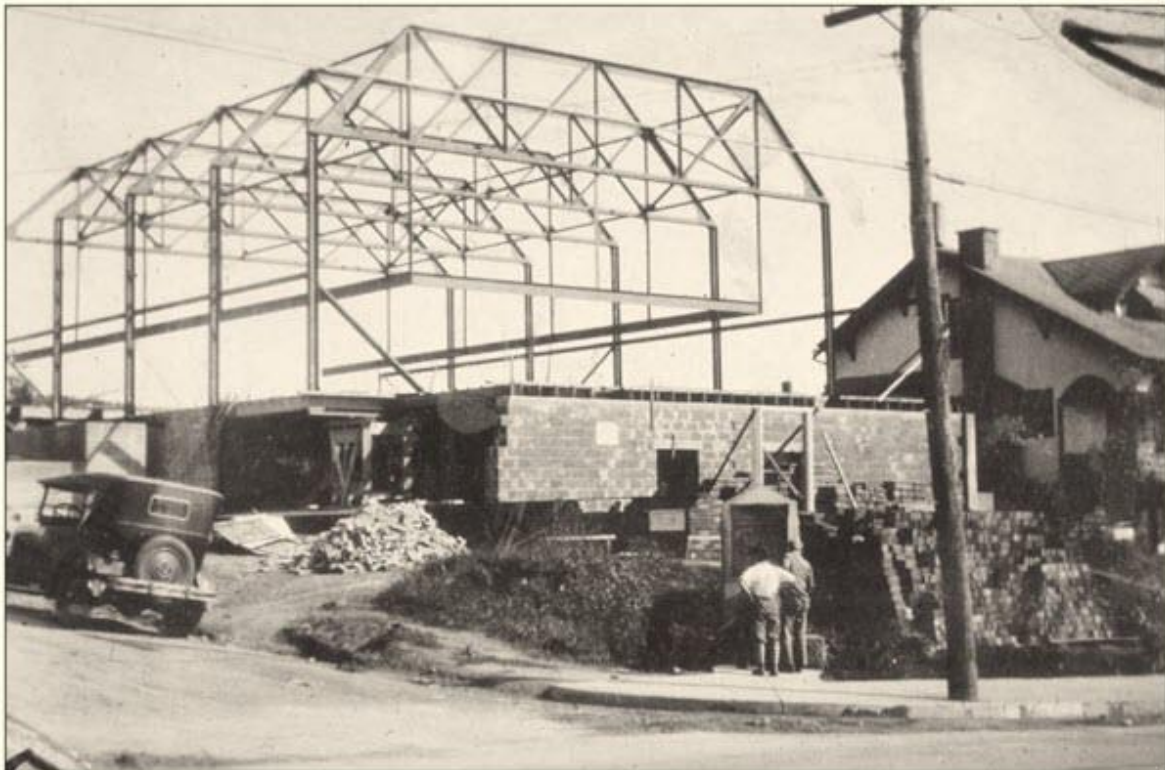
Postcard Photo Displaying the Proposed Legion Building



Ground-Breaking for the Legion Building April 22, 1926



**World War I Memorial Dedication
Memorial Fountain Presented to the Legion by The Betsy Ross Club June 21, 1924**



The Edward H. Ackerman Post 397 American Legion building was constructed on this site, at Main and Chestnut Streets, beginning in 1924. It opened in 1927 and served as a place for various community functions. Despite a five-year closure due to financial hardships, this post reopened in 2013 and is once again a respite for patriots and veterans.

(Courtesy Hellertown Images)



The Edward H Ackerman Post #397 American Legion Celebrated Their 100th Anniversary in 2019

TOUR - Continue South along the East side of Main Street until you reach the intersection of Depot Street. CAREFULLY cross Depot Street to continue this tour. At this point look across Main Street to the building on the Southwest corner of this intersection.

37 – Prosser’s Drug Store, 834 Main Street

Currently occupied by an optometrist, this building once housed Prosser’s Drug Store. Prosser’s Drug Store was an extremely popular and prominent business in the Borough as were the owners. William Prosser began the business in the early 1900’s. The store not only satisfied customers seeking medications, but also offered snacks, soft drinks and more. Over the years, a soda fountain and bar were added which became a popular stop, a nostalgic past relic rarely seen today. Kids and adults both loved the mixed sodas, floats, ice cream sundaes and so much more that was offered. Eventually, William resigned the business to his children who continued the business for many years thereafter. The business closed in 1995 and the building sold to its current owner.



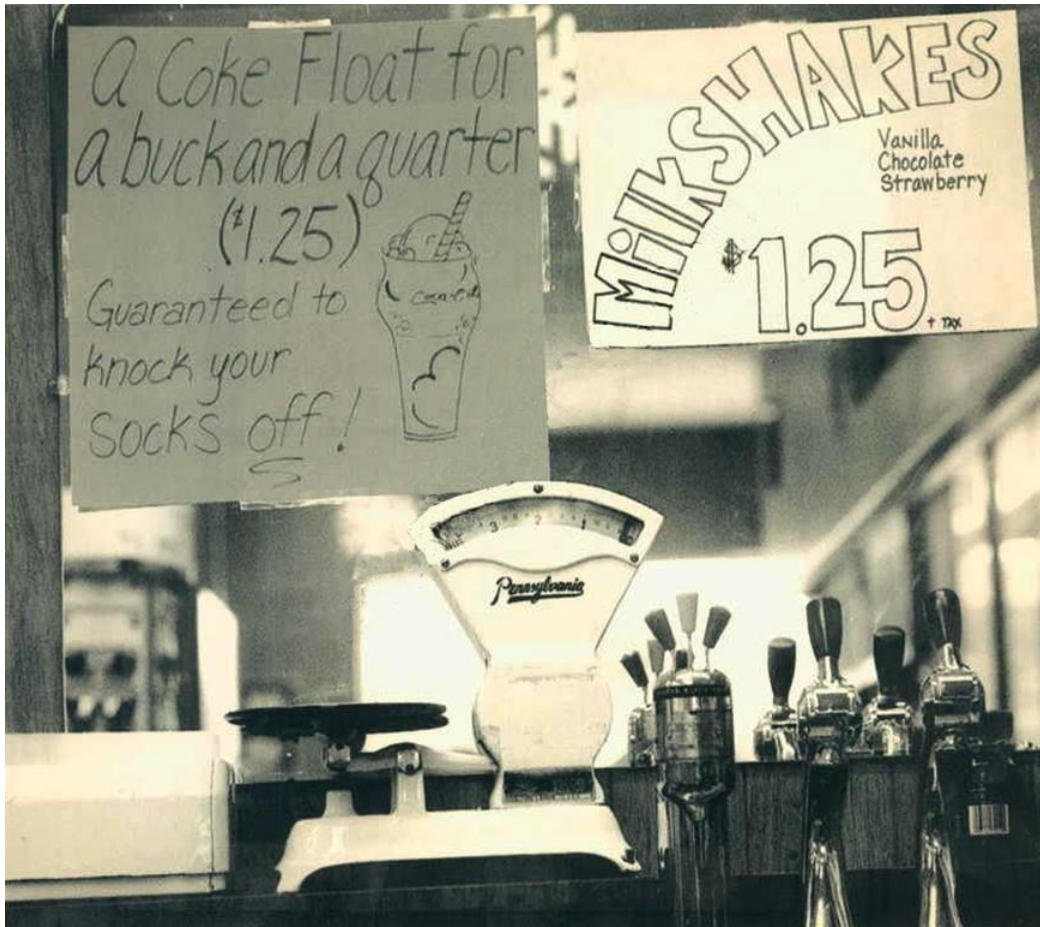
PROSSER'S
MAIN AND DEPOT STREETS
DRUG SUNDRIES

Prosser's Drug Store – Circa 1920



Vera Prosser, One of Ten Prosser Children, Stands in Front of the Store – Circa 1925

The Handwritten Signs Were Standard at Prossers

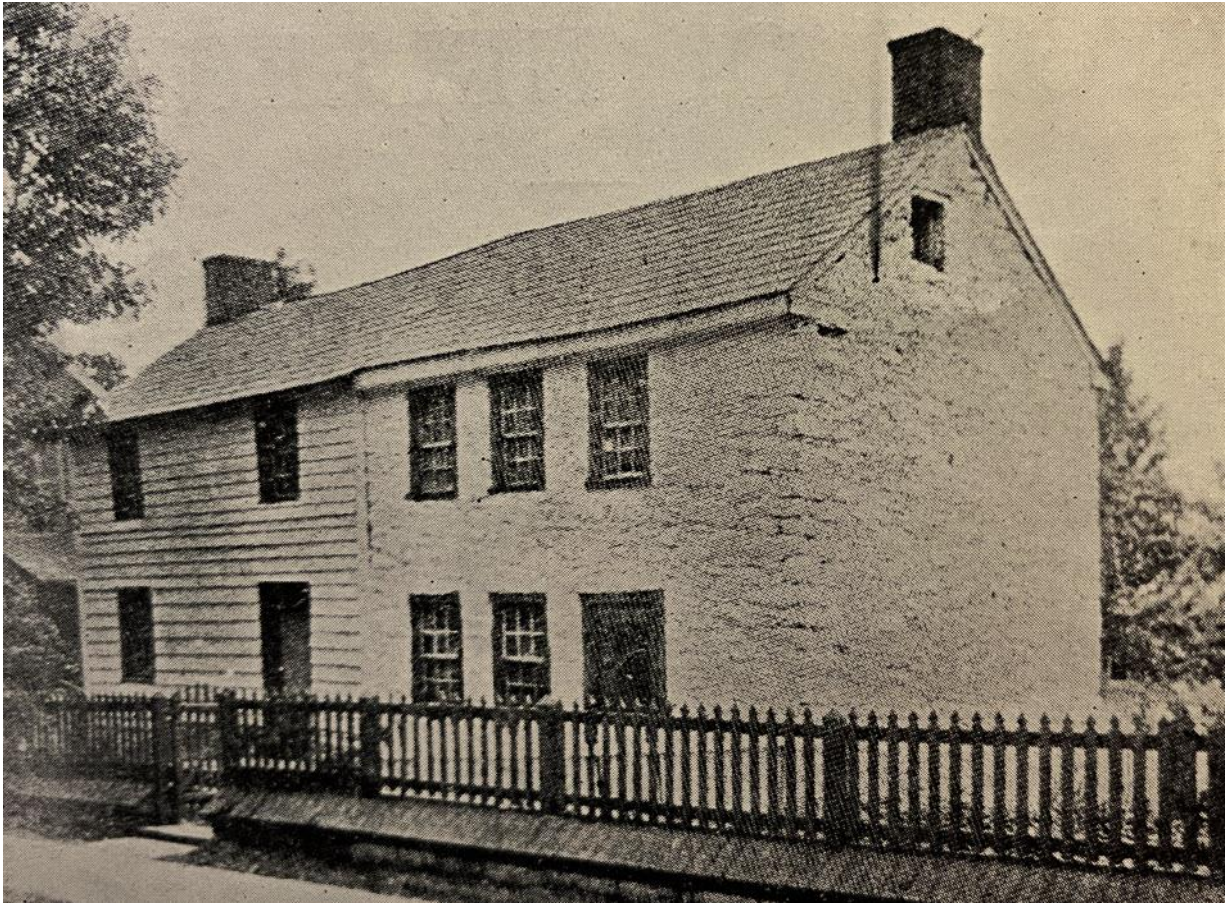


TOUR - Continue South along the East side of Main Street for approximately 450 feet. You should be adjacent to the nearby bank parking lot at the corner of Main Street and Warren Alley, the gasoline station should be just ahead. Look across the street for your next map key item. DO NOT CROSS Main Street.

38 – Anthony Boehm Home, 766 Main Street

In approximately 1747, Anthony Boehm, son of the Rev. John Philip Boehm, the first Reformed minister in PA, built the original log structure on this site. In 1797, the son-in-law to Anthony, Philip Boehm III, built the stone portion added to it. Later the Betsy Ross Club held ownership for some years. During the Second World War, it was considered a potential building for a memorial library to those who served in the wars. That project never materialized and the club sold the building.

It is now occupied by several prominent local businesses. Although the outer structure has changed considerably over the years, much of the interior still remains. Some of the outer stone construction is still visible.



Anthony Boehm Home Circa 1800

TOUR - Continue walking South along the East side of Main Street approximately 250 feet to the next series of map key items on this tour.

39A – Detwiller Plaza/Fountain, 701 Main Street

Upon Dr. William F. Detwiller's death in 1907, this area was bequeathed to another nephew, Dr. Albert Knecht Detwiller of Bell Harbor, Long Island. He, in turn, donated the area to the Borough of Hellertown for public use and a memorial to his distinguished grandfather, Dr. Henry Detwiller.

Prior to this, the area was occupied by two structures – one a stone building facing Main Street which served as a post office for short time, the other building which stood for nearly a half century was the Edward Weisel Harness and Saddle Shop. The latter was frequented quite often by the local townsfolk for its country store.



Weisel Harness Shop - Circa 1940



Demolition of Weisel's Harness Shop - Circa 1940

This project was federally funded through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), part of President Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" program of the late 1930's. Dedicated in 1940, the Plaza fountain, pool and base of the flagpole were constructed from stone originating from the razed buildings and flagstones which were formerly sidewalks on Main Street and Easton Road. The water is circulated by a turbine from a spring which was located in the cellar of the old stone building. The submerged lighting illuminating the pool were used in the General Electric's display at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City.

Today this site serves as the welcoming, signature attraction of the Borough during both warmer and colder months when ice formations add luster to the photographic experience.



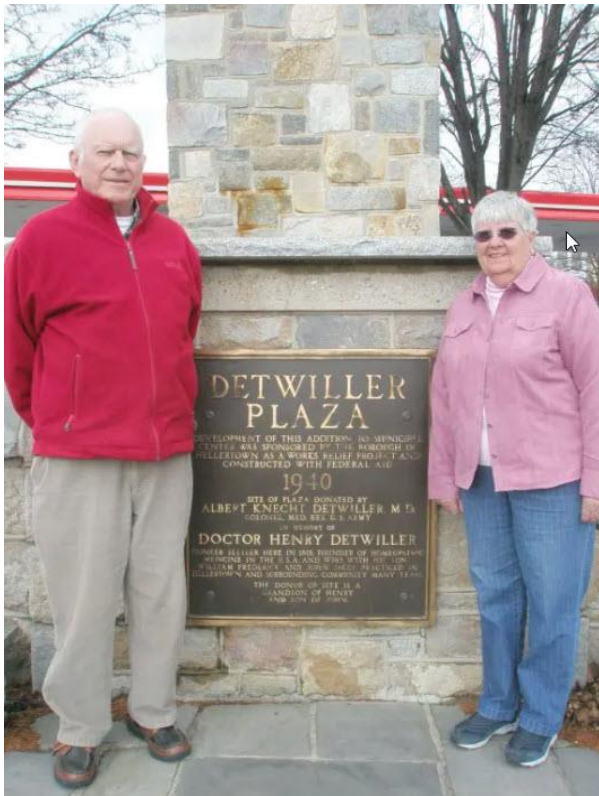
This Fountain, to the Rear of Hellertown Borough Authority's Office, is Dedicated to Joseph Delfoe⁽²⁾ (Courtesy Thomas Rieger)

39B – Detwiler Plaza Clock Tower, 701 Main Street

Built in 1987 on Detwiler Plaza and dedicated in 1988, the clock itself was donated to Dr. William F. Detwiler by the American Savings Bank of New York. Dr. Detwiler later gave the clock to the Borough of Hellertown. Through the effort by local citizens, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Delfoe and many concerned volunteers, the Hellertown Plaza Clock Association was formed. After numerous fund-raising events and dedicated work by volunteers, we reap the benefits of their hard work as the clock tower is a significant feature within the Borough. The beautiful clock chimes every quarter hour and on the hour during daytime, 9AM-9PM, thanks to the generous contribution made by respected citizens Walter and Addie Frey. Although the original chimes have been replaced with electronic ones, the charm is not lost as they continue to chime every quarter hour, as well as play various tunes related to certain seasons and holidays throughout the year. The wonderful stone work adorning the clock tower was donated by local stone layer, Jeff King, as this was something he wanted to show his grandchildren.



Jeff King at Work



Joe and Eleanor Delfoe

**Joseph "Joe" Delfoe
November 21, 1932 - February 17, 2022**



39C – Detwiller Plaza Time Capsule, 701 Main Street

A one-ton time capsule, donated by the David Heintzelman Family, was buried in Detwiller Plaza at the dedication ceremony in 1988. Among the items included were coin proof sets, newspaper articles, video and audio tapes, baseball/football cards, a band uniform, crayons and child's scooter. The time capsule is scheduled to be removed and opened in 50 years or 2038. You have to wonder if the capability to play audio and video tapes will still exist?



TOUR - Directly across on the West side of Main Street at the donut shop, once stood the next map key item.

40 – Park Hotel, 730 Main Street

Originally known as the Hellertown Hotel, this structure was built in the late 1800's. In 1860, the hotel was operated by O.H. Desh. Shortly after 1885, the name was changed to The Park Hotel. Concrete pools fed by local springs, were nearby the hotel where trout were raised.



Front of the Park Hotel Shown with the Latest Mode of Transportation – Circa 1880-1890



This is one section of the Park Hotel bar, which was removed and disassembled before the hotel was razed. The bar was recently sold by Steve and Ann Mesko of Bethlehem to Robert Duda of Andover, New Jersey.

(Courtesy Hellertown Images)



Park Hotel – Circa 1908



Picture Postcard of the Park Hotel – Notice the Vintage Vehicles



In the foreground can be seen the Geyer Auto Company during the late 1920s or early 1930s. The Park Hotel is in the background. Early touring cars are parked there, and the hotel's livery stable later became obsolete. Near the hotel were large cement pools where trout were raised. Children would stop by the hotel in the evening to watch the quoit competition.

(Courtesy Hellertown Images)

**Concrete Trout Hatchery Behind Park Hotel
(Courtesy Hellertown Images)**



Eventually progress brought change and the Park Hotel soon faced its demise. In 1973, it was demolished.



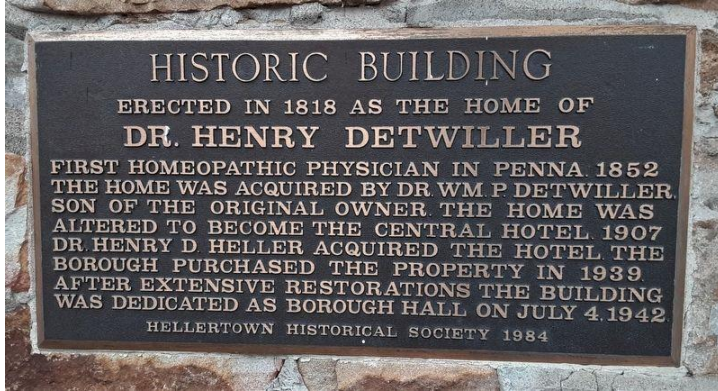
Demolition Photos (Courtesy Dan Ruth)



TOUR - Continue South on the East side of Main Street to the next map key item.

41 – Dr. Henry Detwiler Home/Hellertown Borough Hall, 685 Main Street

This structure, built in 1818, first served as the home of Dr. Henry Detwiler, the first homeopathic physician in PA. The property was later acquired by his son, Dr. William F. Detwiler, in 1852. Additions were made to the original building over the years under William Detwiler as well as the purchase of adjacent properties which included the current Detwiler Plaza.



**Bronze Marker Courtesy
Hellertown Historical Society**

Upon William’s death in 1907, the property then became the Central Hotel under his nephew, Dr. Henry D. Heller, proprietor. Henry continued to maintain the premises as a hotel until prohibition became effective in 1918 and it ceased as a hotel.



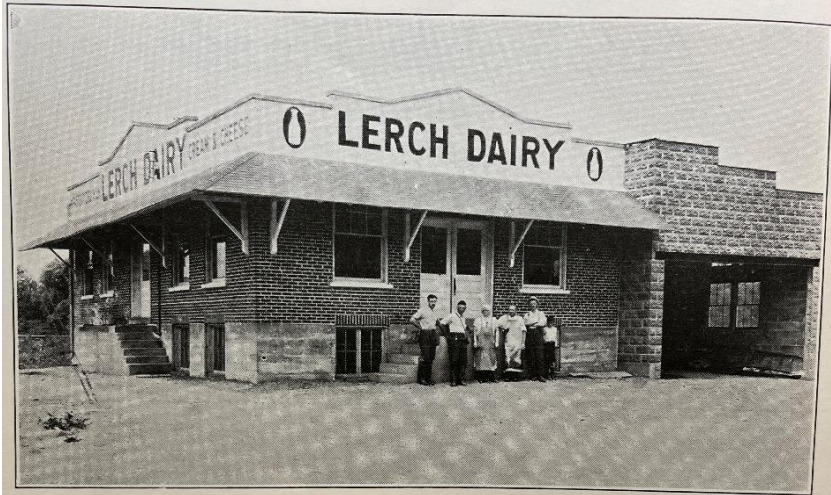
The property was then used as an A&P grocery store for a short time. The Borough of Hellertown then purchased the property from the widow of Dr. Heller in 1939 and it became the current Borough Hall with much of the original architecture still intact.

TOUR - Continue South on the East side of Main Street to the Water Street intersection. Here you will turn Right to cross Main Street to the West side. PLEASE UTILIZE THE CROSSWALK AND PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS

FOR UTMOST SAFETY! Continue West on Water Street toward the Saucon Rail Trail (SRT) for your next map key item. At the intersection of Front Street and Water Street, cross Front Street safely to the West side.

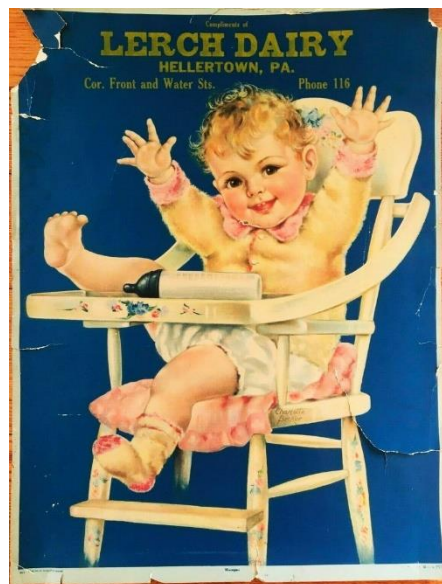
42 – Lerch Dairy/Brookfield Dairy, 702 Front Street

The apartment building and garages on the Right were once the site of an active dairy providing numerous products to not only Saucon Valley homes, but to the numerous schools within the Saucon Valley area. Lerch Dairy started about 1920 and continued for many years before being sold to Howard Kemp around 1950, who renamed it Brookfield Dairy. The dairy distributed a variety of products from this site, mainly milk products which were delivered to the local schools for lunch programs as well as to residents in the area. The signature series “baby-faced” bottles became iconic with the Brookfield Dairy. It continued business as usual until the 1970’s when the dairy was razed to construct the current apartments/storage garages.



**Lerch Dairy as it
Appeared in the
1920's**

LERCH DAIRY, H. K. LERCH
MILK PASTEURIZED IN GLASS, BOTTLES FILLED THE SANITARY WAY,
ALL BOTTLES WASHED AND STERILIZED DAILY.
MILK DELIVERED IN HELLERTOWN THE SAME DAY THAT IT IS
PASTEURIZED.
WRITE, CALL, OR PHONE 40-R-3 FRONT AND WATER STREETS



Early Lerch Dairy Ad



Located on West Water Street, the Brookfield Dairy had a fleet of trucks that delivered a variety of dairy products to Hellertown homes in the early morning. Customers would choose the night before and display the products desired on colored cardboard marking fingers.

(Courtesy Hellertown Images)



Lerch Dairy Bottle



Brookfield Dairy Signature 'Babyface' Bottle (Courtesy Dan Ruth)

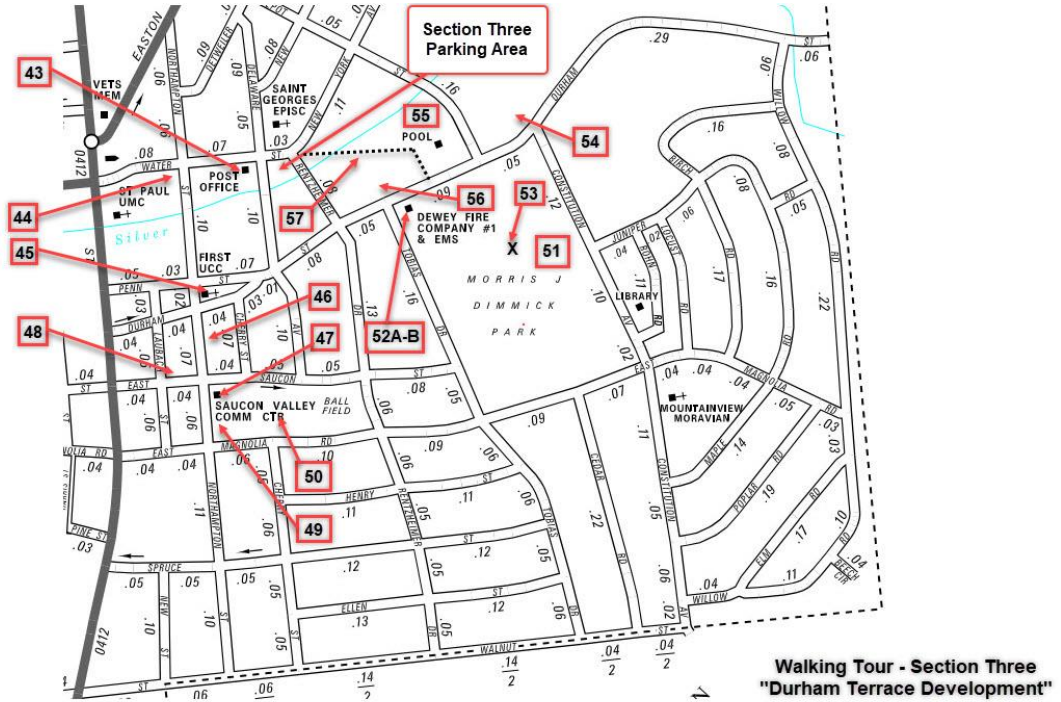


Brookfield Dairy – Looking West at Front Street

TOUR - Continue walking West along Water Street, crossing the Saucon Rail Trail (SRT) to the parking area in Water Street Park where this section of the tour began. This concludes Section Two - "Crossroads Annexation". Please continue the Walking Tour with the other sections.

Section Three - "Durham Terrace Development"

1.4 Miles Long



Use this Map for Below Key Locations on this Tour Loop

KEY	NAME	ADDRESS	KEY	NAME	ADDRESS
43	Hellertown Post Office	660 Delaware Ave.	51	Morris J. Dimmick Park	570 Durham St.
44	Saucon Manor	650 Northampton St.	52A	Current Dewey Fire Company	502 Durham St.
45	First United Church of Christ	501 Northampton St.	52B	Dewey Fire Company Bell	502 Durham St.
46	Judd's Superette	445 Northampton St.	53	Morris J. Dimmick Park Time Capsule	570 Durham St.
47	Christ Union Church	323 Northampton St.	54	Carl Rentzheimer Home	621 Durham St.
48	Original Dewey Fire Company	35 E.Saucon St.	55	Hellertown Municipal Pool	575 Durham St.
49	Reinhard Elementary School Site	319 Northampton St.	56	Tobias Rentzheimer Home	501 Durham St.
50	Reinhard Elementary School Playground	319 Northampton St. (Rear)	57	Borough Authority Park, Walkway, Fountain	501 Durham St. (Rear)

It is recommended this tour begins at the parking area designated as 660 Delaware Avenue US Post Office (Across Street). Please refer to the photo description below of this parking area for location and directions.



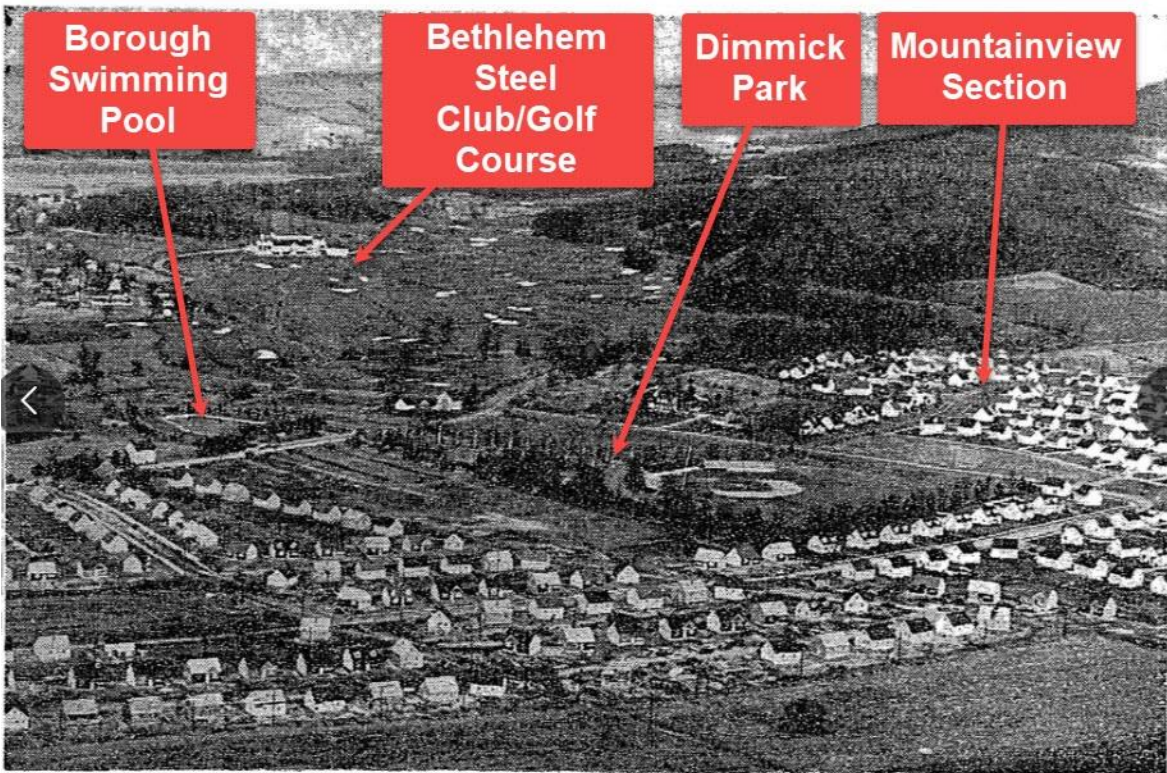
In 1944, Congress passed the GI Bill providing low interest home loans to returning WWII servicemen. The war ending in 1945 provided an economic boom in the United States. New construction began everywhere with new bridges, roadways, skyscrapers and much more. Jobs became plentiful and many were available at nearby Bethlehem Steel Company which provided tons of steel for these projects.

When the 1950's arrived the "Baby Boom" was in full swing and housing was becoming a necessity for these families. With Hellertown right near the Bethlehem Steel Plant, it was a logical place to develop single family neighborhoods for these middle-class workers.

The nearby "Mountainview" Section of Hellertown started development in 1940 and homes were being added to expand its size through the 1940's and 1950's. When the Rentzheimer Farm was sold in 1950, a new development in addition to Mountainview was begun and named "Durham Terrace".

The Durham Terrace neighborhoods with modest, single-family homes are similar in appearance to the Mountainview homes and both areas benefit from the nearby recreational facilities that helped attract families to live in Hellertown. The 'Durham Terrace' area occupies the area from roughly Northampton Street on the West side to Constitution Avenue on the East Side, and Durham Street as the North border to the Southern border of Hellertown at Walnut Street.

NEW COMMUNITY BEING CREATED NEAR PENNSYLVANIA STEEL CENTER



This is Durham Terrace, new development of steel workers' homes in Hellertown, south of the Bethlehem industrial area. Irving Sanders and Howard Bernstein, New Jersey builders, have completed two sections for 105 families and have started work on a new group of sixty-nine two-bedroom homes priced at \$9,500. Financing was arranged with Franklin Mortgage and Title Insurance Company, Newark.

Aerial View Looking Northeast – Durham Terrace is in the Foreground



Typical Single-Family Home Found in Durham Terrace and Mountainview

Dr. William H. Rentzheimer, great-grandson of Carl Rentzheimer, rejected farming to become a doctor in Hellertown. His home office is featured in Section One of this Tour. In August 1880, he married Ellen E. Beidleman, and they had two daughters, May Irene and Stille Agnew. It was after William died on Dec. 7, 1944, that the 45-acre farm property that had been in his family for generations was sold to developer Guerber Associates of Newark, New Jersey.

In 1950, Mr. Peck, an officer of Guerber Associates, contacted the Hellertown Borough Authority chairman and advised him that his firm planned to build several hundred homes for which they would require public water. Peck inquired as to what portion of the project's expense the authority would assume. It was at that time agreed that the authority would construct, at its own expense, additional water storage facilities to furnish water to the proposed development, and that Guerber Associates would furnish and install, at its expense, all water mains, valves, fire hydrants and connections.

Thus, began a series of requests and complaints on the part of the developer to have the Hellertown Borough Authority fund the construction of water mains, in spite of their agreement to take care of this expense themselves. Guerber Associates pleaded with Hellertown Borough Council, the Hellertown Borough Authority, and finally before Judge Barthold of Northampton County Court, to be relieved of this obligation. In 1957, Barthold dismissed Guerber's complaint and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the decision in 1959.

Meanwhile, the 154 houses, constructed between 1951 and 1954, were sold to families for amounts ranging from \$9,450 to \$10,300. The three-bedroom Cape Cods had everything a family would need, except unfortunately, water.

The homes themselves were designed by architect Erwin Gerber (1903-1983), who was well known for his designs for apartment buildings and middle-class housing developments. New Jersey builders Howard Bernstein and Irving Sanders built the one-and-a-half story homes of Durham Terrace with gabled roofs, and even received publicity for the project from the New York Times. Inside each home's front door, a central staircase led to a small upper level, which consisted of two bedrooms. The lower floor of each home consisted of a central hall, living room, kitchen, bath and a master bedroom.

TOUR - From the parking area across from the Post Office, proceed West along New York Avenue toward the Post Office and cross Delaware Avenue. At this point, New York Avenue ends and becomes Water Street. The Hellertown Post Office begins this section of the tour. Map key locations will begin from the last point on the previous tour.

43 – Hellertown Post Office, 660 Delaware Avenue

Since its beginning in 1823, the Hellertown Post Office has had a lot of homes throughout its existence in Hellertown. Beginning in 1823, it was a stone building shared on the same lot with Weisel's Harness Shop at what is now Detwiller Plaza. It later found a home South of there, near 659 Main Street in the early 1900's which is now Water Street. It once shared the roof with Prosser's Drug Store around the mid 1920's before finally finding a permanent home at 1000 Main Street. Some of these buildings are featured in the previous sections of this tour. However, the brick structure at 1000 Main Street served well until the early 1970's. This building became too small for the service the USPS provided and a new, more modern structure was built at this current location.



The Hellertown Post Office Celebrates 50 Years at this Facility in 2022 by Displaying the Original Sign from the First Post Office Building



Brick Post Office Building at 1000 Main Street

TOUR - Continue walking West along Water Street. At the next intersection, Northampton Street, turn Left to head South. The next map key location is across Northampton Street on the corner.

44 – Saucon Manor, 650 Northampton Street

Saucon Manor is low-cost apartment facility offering amenities such as 24-hour emergency maintenance, nurse call stations and ADA access. This building is the first federal housing building constructed in Hellertown. The certificate of occupancy was issued on August 31, 1979.

This is the first such “high-rise” building in the Borough of Hellertown and, at the time of construction, elevated the concern with Dewey Fire Company officials. The current ladder truck in the fleet was a 1940 85’ American LaFrance purchased used from the City of Bethlehem. This truck was deteriorating from age and was determined unfit for service for such a structure and an investigation to find a replacement truck suitable of reaching the roof of Saucon Manor began. In May 1981, a 1966 Maxim 100’ Aerial Truck was purchased used from a town in New York to satisfy the concern.

TOUR - Continue South along the East side of Northampton Street toward the next map key location. Continue South by crossing Penn Street.

45 – First United Church of Christ, 501 Northampton Street

While there is vast history on this particular denomination, this tour will focus on the building itself. Much of this information is acquired from the church website...

“Rev. George B. Hamm became pastor of the church in September, 1917. The congregation continued to grow. Greater interest was cultivated among the lay people in the mission of the Church, and many projects were promoted involving the young people of the Church. Under the guidance of Rev. Hamm, and the able assistance of his wife, the membership of the congregation increased and its influence widened, resulting in a definite need to provide for better facilities to carry on the work of the Church.

During the 1920s and 30s, a very active Ladies Missionary Society met once a month in a small wooden building on Penn Street [across the street from our current church building], now part of the home of Mr. & Mrs. Merle Reiss. Miss Mary Hess was a dedicated leader of the Society.

In 1936, a Building Committee, consisting of George Deemer, John Deemer and Elmer Eckert began working. Soon ground-breaking ceremonies for a new social hall were held at Penn and Northampton Streets, across the street from the old “Social Hall” which stood on the land now occupied by the home of Mr. & Mrs. Merle Reiss. Wielding the shovels were lady church members – among them Mrs. Judd, Bachman, Lerch, Boehm, Grubb, Deemer, Hine, etc.

The new Social Hall for the Reformed Wing of the Union Church (which replaced the original social hall across the street) was constructed at Penn and Northampton Streets, on land gifted by the Deemer Family. The George Deemers donated the excavation work. They also donated all of the stone for the foundation walls from their quarry on what is now part of the Silver Creek Golf Course. Many other members donated money, time and talents to the project. The basement excavation was accomplished using horses pulling large scoops. The Social Hall had a large area with a stage on the main floor, and a kitchen and banquet hall in the basement.

Upon completion of the Social Hall, thoughts rapidly turned to the possibility of using the new building as a church building. Modifications were quickly made to the Social Hall, consisting mainly of an extension to the east, to house the Altar, Pulpit and Lectern. Pews and the first church organ were graciously donated by the John Deemer Family. Many other items that were required to make this building a church were quickly provided by many families.

On Sunday, December 5, 1937 our beautiful stone church at Penn and Northampton Streets was dedicated during two-day services, one at 10:15 and one at 2:15.”

**Photo of First United
Church of Christ
Shown in 1937**





Artist's Rendering of the Proposed Sunday School Addition to the Main Church Building – Circa 1922

TOUR - Continue walking South along the East side of Northampton Street, approximately 200 feet ahead is the next map key.

46 – Judd's Superette, 445 Northampton Street

This apartment building was once a thriving "Mom and Pop" small convenience grocery store. Local residents nearby could easily walk to pick up the essentials, milk, bread, etc. The most popular attraction for this store was the enormous supply and variation of penny candy. Children would take their allowance to buy small paper bags of assorted penny candies to enjoy at their leisure. A little of this, a little of that, ten minutes and ten cents later, a child would be enjoying his/her assorted stash. If you were lucky, a quarter could buy that same assortment of candies and still have enough left for a 3-pack Tastykake treat. Just finding a penny on the ground was treated like gold at this store. Nostalgic treats like gummy worms, candy cigarettes, licorice whips, chocolate coins, Mary Janes, Bit O Honey, wax lips, 'soda' bottles, jawbreakers, bubble gum and so much more kept children coming back and smiling for more!



TOUR - Continue walking South on Northampton Street, crossing Saucon Street and on to the next map key item.

47 – Christ Union Church, 323 Northampton Street

Now the Saucon Valley Community Center, this former church has a very storied history and played a large influence on very major changes within the Borough of Hellertown.

From early records, on April 14, 1870 the current site was chosen to build a new church and a building committee formed. Serving on the Committee were : Thomas R. Laubach, President; Dr. P. B. Breining, Treasurer; Jeremiah S. Hess, Secretary; and members William Riegel, William Lambert, Rev. Samuel Hess, and Peter Harris.

On July 30/31, 1870 the corner stone was laid and construction begun. The new church was consecrated on May 28/29, 1874.

On July 17, 1890, a cyclone struck Hellertown and raised the church's steeple into the air and laid it by the side of the church. The steeple and a new church bell were purchased and replaced. Tragedy struck again April 17, 1896 when the church was struck by lightning starting a fire burning the church completely. The only remnants saved were carpet, some lamps, organ chairs, reading desks and some of the pews in the Sunday School room.

A joint congregational meeting was held on May 5, 1896 at the I.O.O.F Hall on Main Street where it was decided to rebuild the church. While rebuilding occurred, the I.O.O.F. Lodge #606 offered the use of their Hall as the place of worship until the new church was finished. The new church was consecrated on May 2, 1897.

This disaster was the catalyst that began discussions on organizing a Fire Department within the Borough. The result was the birth of Dewey Fire Company on January 18, 1898. The history of the Dewey Fire Company appears later in this section of the tour.



Christ Union Church Postcard



Remnants of Christ Union Church Post-Fire – Circa 1896

TOUR - At the corner in front of the Christ Union Church, turn West and cross Northampton Street. Head West on Saucon Street approximately 175 feet. Across Saucon Street at this location is the next map key item.

48 – Original Fire Company Headquarters, 35 E. Saucon Street

Discovering the need to establish a fire brigade for the Borough, the Dewey Fire Company was formed and chartered in 1898. Their first headquarters was located in this building, built sometime between 1900 and 1920, which also served as the police department and Borough Hall. The Dewey Fire Company operated from this building until more space was needed and a new headquarters was built on Durham Street at Tobias Drive and occupied by the fire company in 1955.



First motorized firefighting vehicle with crew – March 1920



**Postcard of the Dewey Fire Station
Page | 76**

TOUR - Reverse path and walk East on Saucon Street to return to the intersection at Northampton Street. Cross Northampton Street to return to the East side. Continue walking South along the East side of Northampton Street. Approximately 150 feet beyond the Christ Union Church is the site of two former school buildings, one of which was the original Reinhard School.

49 – Reinhard Elementary School Site, 319 Northampton Street

After the school outlived its usefulness to the Saucon Valley School District, the site was provided to the Borough of Hellertown and the site is now home to the Public Works Maintenance Building/Garage.

Hellertown’s first school was built in 1839 located at 645 Main Street. It was later used by St. Paul Evangelical Church until their new church was constructed. The school was then razed. A new two-room school was built in 1870 on this Northampton Street site with the land donated by Tilghman Eisenhart. Later another room was added.



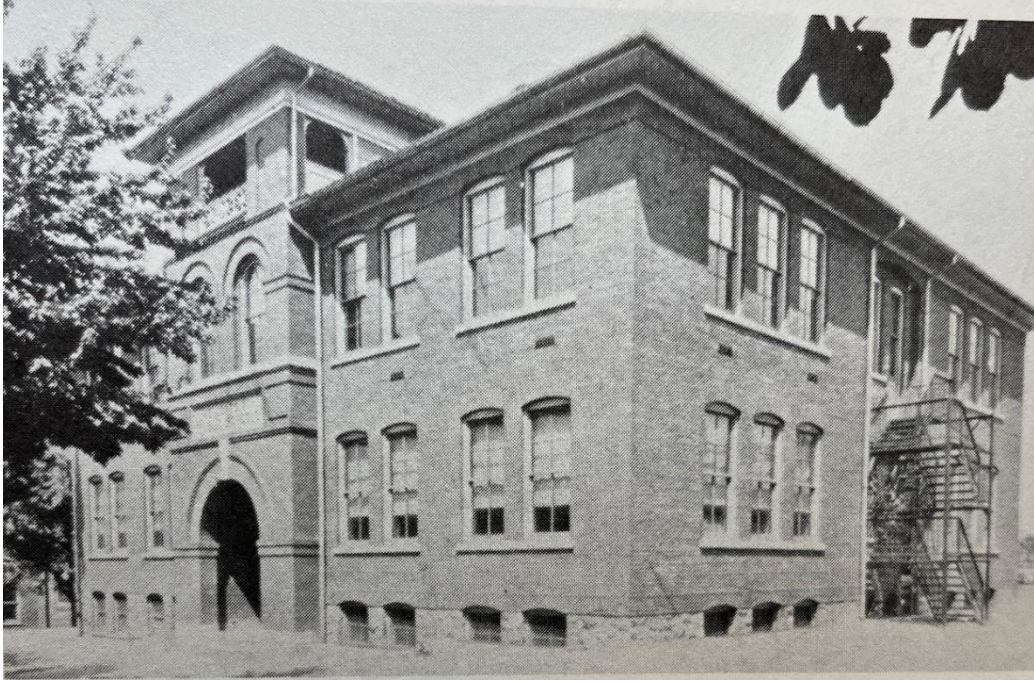
FORMER SCHOOL BUILDING
on Northampton Street



Group of Former School Teachers
MARY L. HESS, HARRY J. HARWI,
FLORENCE ABEL, A. I. REINHARD

In 1910, a new building was constructed on this site replacing the old building. For Mr. Reinhard's dedication and compassion to Hellertown's Education System, the new school was named in his honor. This new building consisted of seven classrooms, an auditorium and accommodated all 142 Borough students. This building served as both an elementary school and high school until 1920. The annexation of the Crossroads Area in 1919, added more schools into the district.

Reinhard School Circa 1920



Additions over time expanded the school to keep up with the rising school population. In the late 1960's, the Saucon Valley School District purchased land south of Hellertown in Lower Saucon Township at the intersection of Constitution Avenue and Walnut Street. There, new school buildings were constructed to accommodate all Hellertown and Lower Saucon Township students for all grades, satisfying not only the current needs, but with enough space for future expansion.

Reinhard School Just Before Razing (Courtesy Google Earth)



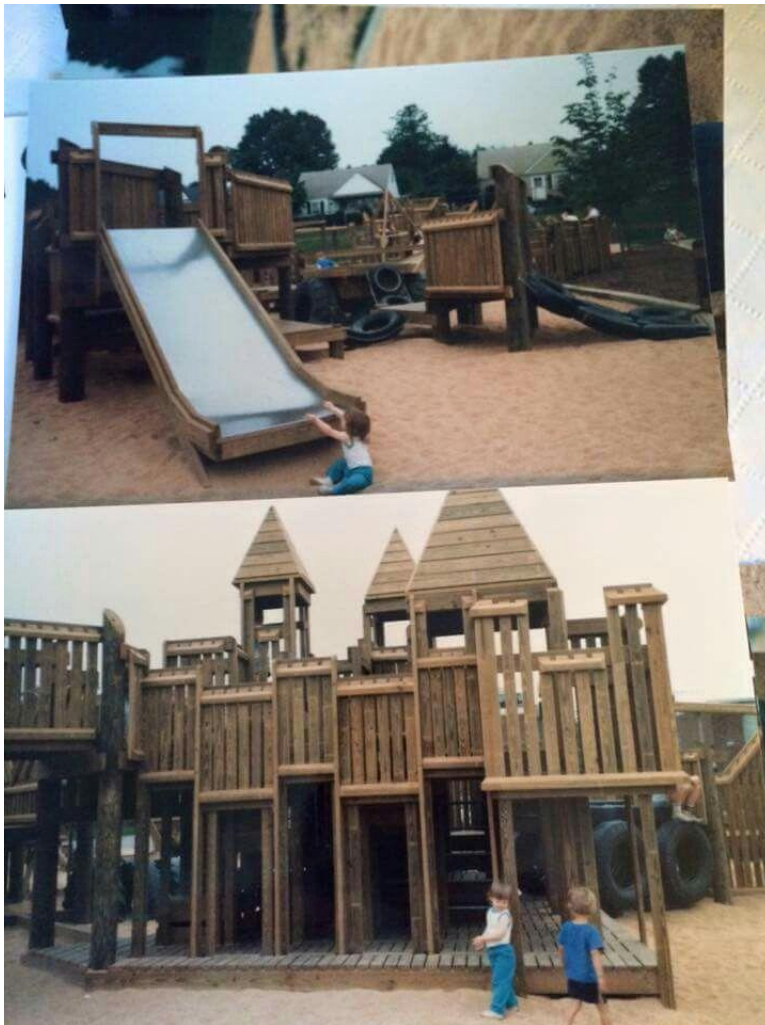
TOUR - Continue South on Northampton Street to Magnolia Road ahead. Turn Left and head East on Magnolia Road. In about 400 feet, the site behind the former Reinhard School is the next map key item.

50 – Reinhard Elementary School Playground (Behind the Former School Site)

While not necessarily historic to the formation of the Borough, this playground project was an example of parents and volunteers banding together to provide a place of recreation and exercise for the elementary school students.

The playground and other recreational equipment at the Reinhard Elementary School was outdated and considered dangerous. Most of the equipment was placed on macadam and rusting as well as insufficient for the number of students.

A project was started to replace the playground with a new one that included many ideas provided as a “wish-list” from the students themselves. The list included a fun house maze, castle, ship, space tunnel and dinosaur and was provided to the architect, Robert Leathers of Ithaca, New York. Once Mr. Leathers finished the plans, the project received support through donations of both money and materials. A project outline was created and the call went out for volunteers to provide manpower to build the playground. In April 1986, the project got underway with many volunteers wielding hammers, saws, shovels and wheel barrows. The utility poles used to support sections were donated as was food for all the volunteers. The base provided was a soft material to prevent injury should anyone fall to minimize injury. Four days later, the playground was finished and opened to exciting fanfare, including the burying of a time capsule.



The Playground Project Caught the Attention of Producers from a Children’s Television Show Based in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton and Sent a Film Crew to Cover the Grand Opening

Sadly, over time, the wood and other materials deteriorated and the School District’s insurer recommended it be removed. In 2000, the playground was removed and the time capsule currently remains in the School District Business Office safe, unopened as of August 2022.⁽¹⁾

TOUR - Continue walking East on Magnolia Drive for approximately 0.2 miles arriving at Tobias Drive. Cross Tobias Drive to the East side of the intersection and turn Left to head North on Tobias Drive. Continue walking North along Tobias Drive, the expanse of land to the right is the next map key item.

51 – Morris J. Dimmick Park, 570 Durham Street

Hellertown is fortunate over many other communities in that it offers a large recreational land area ratio within its town limits. This beautiful recreational area and park is only one of many within the Borough.

Dimmick Park was an example of WPA (Works Progress Administration) funding through President Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal” plan. Constructed in 1940, this park is named after Morris J. Dimmick, son of Jacob and Elmira Dimmick, who was an active member of the Community and served as Chief Burgess of Hellertown 1926-1946. It was under his forward-thinking and leadership that the WPA funding was obtained to construct both the park and adjacent public pool. This project, using Federal funding in this manner, was the first such project in the United States. The park, constructed on land originally obtained from the Bethlehem Steel Company for \$1.00, serves the Borough with continued activities year-round including baseball, softball, football, sledding, picnicking and various Community events. The 18.5-acre park also boasts a centralized, covered pavilion which is often used during many of those Community events and is available for rental to host parties, cookouts, etc. Over the years many improvements and additions have transformed this area to be one of the most beautiful and multi-use facilities in the area. It is a legacy to the man who was instrumental in the history of so many of the WPA programs.



**Aerial View Looking Southwest at Dimmick Park Represented in the Shaded Area.
(Yellow Arrows Represent Your Current Route/Location)**

TOUR - Continuing North along Tobias Drive, the next two map key locations are directly ahead at the intersection of Durham Road.

52A – Dewey Fire Company Headquarters, 502 Durham Street

Built in 1955 at the cost of \$120,000.00, this more modern, well-equipped, functional building served the needs of the growing fire company. It provided the much-needed space that was unavailable at the original fire company building on East Saucon Street. This building has been expanding over the years to continue to address the needs of the growing community. Today both fire and EMS personnel and equipment are stored here ready to answer any emergency 24/7. The totally volunteer fire company and paid EMS service both continue to serve the needs of the Borough of Hellertown and surrounding areas with their well-trained dedication and hard work.



Ground-Breaking Ceremony for the New Fire Station – 1954



Dewey Fire Company Equipment – Circa Mid 1950's (Courtesy Dan Ruth)



American-Columbia paper at Dewey Fire Co. No. 1, Helleston, Pa.

Sheet Steel to the Rescue!

Who doesn't thrill to the flashing color and competent power of a modern fire engine roaring by on its errand of mercy?

Hard-working trucks like these need husky steel to safely haul their cargo of men and fire-fighting machinery. Bethlehem supplies hot-rolled and

cold-rolled sheets to most of the makers of fire apparatus and fire-protection equipment.

If your product involves sheet metal, steel is the material with which to design and work. You can always count on Bethlehem sheet steel for top quality. Our engineers will be glad to work with you.



For strength
... economy
... versatility

BETHLEHEM STEEL COMPANY, BETHLEHEM, PA.
Export Distributor: Bethlehem Steel Export Corporation

BETHLEHEM STEEL



Old Bethlehem Steel Company Ad Featuring a Dewey Fire Company Truck at the Station



In the Late 1970's a Building Expansion Project Added Three More Garages as Additional Equipment Became a Necessity – October 1979

52B – Dewey Fire Company Bell, 502 Durham Street

The bell that stands at the front of the fire company building near the corner of Durham Street and Tobias Avenue, is the original bell used in the old Saucon Street fire company headquarters belfry in 1905. From the attached plaque, “...it was used to signal volunteers to report for calls to duty within the Borough for 51 years. It was removed from the old fire house building in 1956 and erected on this spot in 1957 as a memorial to members who have answered their last call.”

Today the fire and EMS services are electronically dispatched through receivers each staff member is provided. The dispatch service, headquartered in the Northampton County Emergency Management Center in Nazareth, handles dispatch services for all Northampton County Fire/EMS and many police department services.

TOUR - At the corner of Tobias and Durham Streets, turn Right and head East along the South side of Durham Street. When you reach the entrance to Dimmick Park, turn to enter and walk into the park along the service road. The next map key item is located ahead. Refer to the photo below for directions.



53 – Morris J. Dimmick Park Time Capsule, 570 Durham Street

In 1972, the 100th Anniversary of the Borough’s incorporation, a time capsule was buried at the foot of the flagpole in the center of the park. It is to be opened one hundred years later in 2072. A concrete marker is displayed at the burial site.



**Time Capsule Marker
at the Base of the
Flagpole in the Center
of Dimmick Park**

TOUR - Reverse direction and return to the Dimmick Park entrance at Durham Street. Once there, Turn Right and walk to the next corner which will be Durham Street at Constitution Avenue. The next map key item is across the street from here (DO NOT CROSS THE STREET).

54 – Carl Rentzheimer Home, 621 Durham Street

Carl Rentzheimer arrived in America from Germany in October 1770. After serving during the Revolutionary War, he settled here in Hellertown to pursue farming. It is on this site that Carl built this stone home and did his farming. Note the period structure of this private residence.

TOUR – Reverse direction and proceed back to the Dimmick Park entrance. One there use the crosswalk to cross Durham Street to arrive at the Northwest corner of the intersection. The next map key item is here.

55 – The Hellertown Pool, 575 Durham Street

Built between 1938-1939, with the help of Works Progress Administration (WPA) funding from the Federal Government through President Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal” plan and additional funding of \$168,000.00, this public pool became a reality for recreational use in the Borough of Hellertown. The pool was dedicated on July 1, 1939.

Shortly after Hellertown Historical Society was formed, they sponsored occasional pool parties from 7-10PM. Admission was \$1.00pp and music was supplied by records. The first day that schools reopened after the Summer break, was traditionally named “Mother’s Day” when moms could pack a picnic lunch and enjoy the pool without any children. As you might imagine, this became a very popular event.

Through the years, many renovations and improvements have taken place to keep the pool in good condition and continue to serve the surrounding community with this traditional Summertime recreational facility.



Postcard
Photo of
the Pool –
Circa 1940



The Hellertown Municipal Swimming Pool Circa 1939

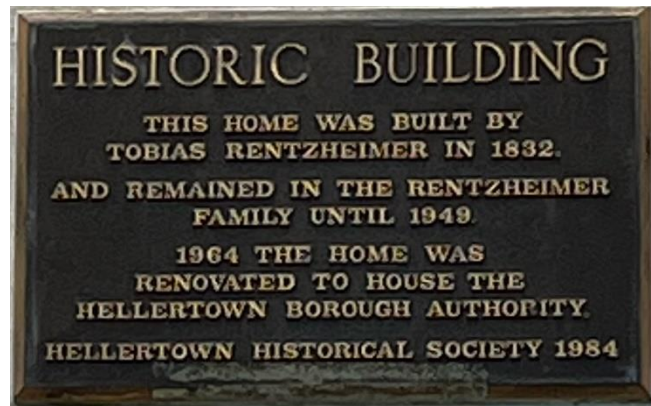
TOUR - Walk West along Durham Street past the Hellertown Pool to the next map key destination.

56 – Tobias Rentzheimer Home, 501 Durham Street

This home was built in 1832 and owned by Tobias Rentzheimer, son of Carl Rentzheimer who was mentioned in map key #54.

Later, the Hellertown Borough Water Authority purchased the property and now use it as their business office. The property includes an out building in the rear which once served as a smoke house for preserving meats and a bakery that produced goods for about a century.

Hellertown Historical Society Recognized the Historic Significance of this Building in 1984 with a Bronze Plaque Displayed on the Building

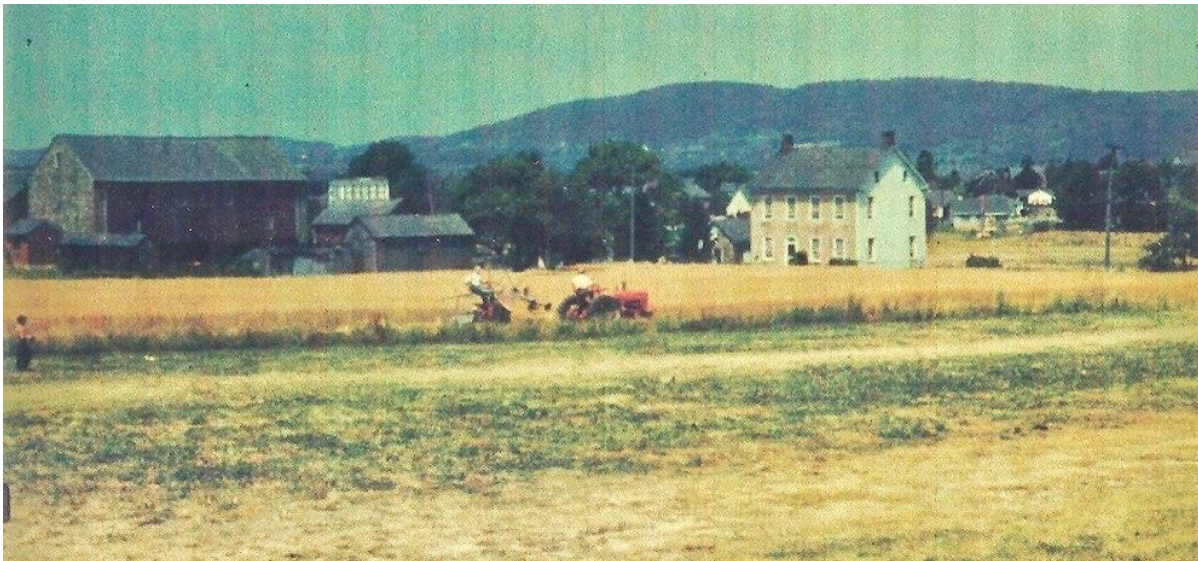


TOUR - Reverse direction and travel back toward the pool, travel approximately 150 feet to the small walkway on the Left and enter it. Travel along the path of this walkway to visit the rear park area behind the Tobias Home.

57 – Park/Fountain, 501 Durham Street-Rear

Previously this property was the Rentzheimer Farm, picturesque with orchards and farm land years ago. The creek used to wind through the area. Today it runs a nearly straight path. After this property was given to the Hellertown Borough Authority, they realized the need for a family recreational area. It was then graded and planted with several hundred trees and added the fountain. Today it features a walking path and pedestrian bridge over the Silver Creek.

**Rentzheimer Farm Before the Fountain/Walking Path were Added
(Note the Rear of the Rentzheimer Home in Background)**

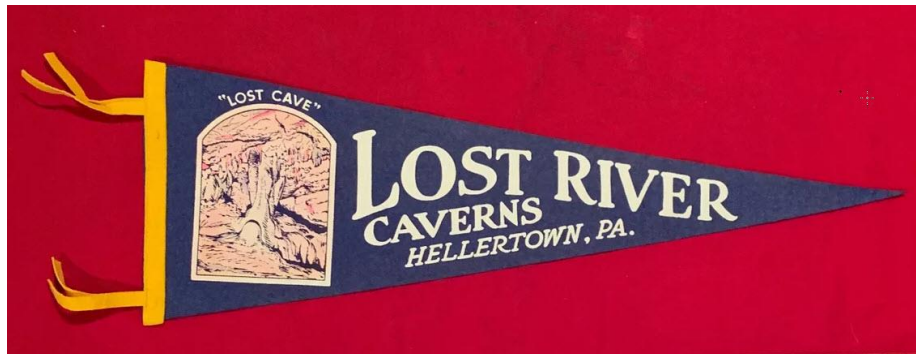


TOUR - Continue the path along the walkway to exit the park area at the West end. You are now at the corner of New York Avenue and Rentzheimer Drive. The parking area at the Post Office where this tour started is directly across the intersection. This concludes Section Three – “Durham Terrace Development”. Please continue the Walking Tour with the other sections.

There is still much more to Hellertown's History and Heritage that was unable to be included on this Walking Tour at this time. Some of these items are located where it is deemed unsafe for pedestrians. Here is a list of a few of these locations that may be reviewed at visitors' convenience :

Lost River Caverns, 726 Durham Street

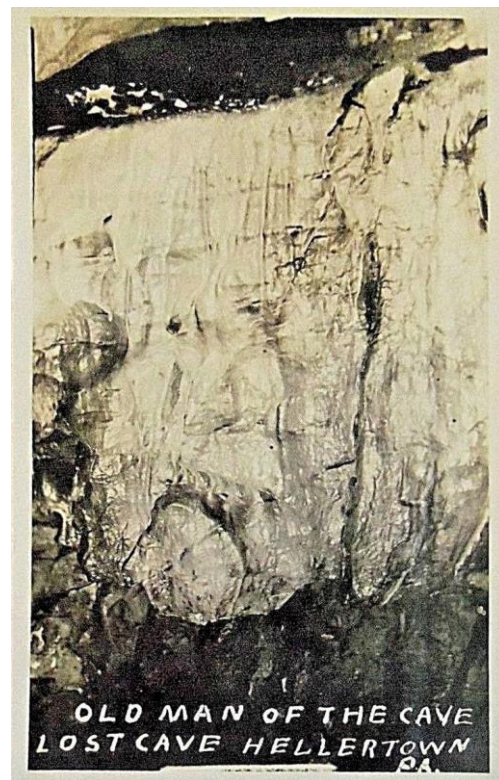
In 1883, a cave was discovered on the Rentzheimer Farm. Men who were searching for limestone came upon a small entrance. It was not fully explored until later years. Inside is a river with no knowledge of its source nor where it flows. Tests and other investigative procedures have been attempted to ascertain the source of the water as well as where it flows but to this day remains a mystery. Because of this phenomenon, the cave was named "*The Lost River Caverns*" and has become a national tourist attraction and educational treasure.



Lost River Caverns Pennant (Courtesy eBay)



Interior View of Lost River Caverns



Postcard of "Old Man" Rock Face

Since 1930, Lost River Caverns and 'Gilman's At The Cave' continue to offer daily tours of the underground caverns where it is a constant 52 degrees year-round. They also offer a wide variety of items in their gift shop featuring rocks, stones, minerals and jewelry making supplies and tools. On site features include a nature trail, picnic pavilion and off-street parking.

Union Cemetery, 89 Main Street

The Union Cemetery was incorporated May 4, 1874. Land purchased for the cemetery from Jacob Rentzheimer and Charles Roth consisted of approximately 2-1/2 acres. The first burial was that of Caroline Rentzheimer.

As time went on and more land being required, the Cemetery Association purchased many more acres as the need warranted. Without a formal entrance until 1992, the cemetery now boasts a beautiful gateway to its grounds. It was designed by Richard E. Ackerman, a member of the Board of Directors to the Cemetery Association, who died before it was completed. During the 1992 ceremonies, the entrance was dedicated to Mr. Ackerman who was also the grandfather of the creator/author of the original Walking Tour booklet.



Union Cemetery Entrance

War Memorials, Union Cemetery, 89 Main Street

Just inside the entrance to the Union Cemetery are monuments honoring those from Hellertown who paid the ultimate sacrifice defending America's freedoms. There are currently five monuments – the first (Memorial Stone-A) honors all veterans who served in all branches of the US Armed Forces in all wars. The second monument (Memorial Stone-B) honors those veterans who served in the years 1917-1918. The third monument (Memorial Stone-C) honors those veterans who served in the years 1941-1945. The fourth monument (Memorial Stone-D) honors additional veterans who served in the years 1941-1945. The fifth monument (Memorial Stone-E) honors those veterans who served in conflicts after World War II, including Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq and Afghanistan.



**War Memorials at
Union Cemetery**

Saucon Valley Veterans Memorial, Union Cemetery, 89 Main Street

Dedicated by the Saucon Valley Veterans Memorial Committee May 24, 1987, the Memorial honors those veterans from the Saucon Valley Area who served in America’s 20th Century conflicts, including those that occurred from the Persian Gulf and beyond after the Memorial’s dedication.



Marcella Dimmick Home, 1528 Main Street

Marcella Dimmick was a founding member of Hellertown Historical Society serving on the Board of Directors and extremely active with the organization’s mission. Marcella was the daughter of Morris J. Dimmick, Chief Burgess of Hellertown 1926-1946 and predominant leader in the Community for many other groups and improvements. Ms. Dimmick, a school teacher and guidance counselor for Saucon Valley School District for 42 years, was extremely proud of her father’s service to the Borough of Hellertown, she dedicated her life to its history and heritage. Her family home is a great example of early 1900’s architecture. Marcella’s mention is included in this tour as a testament to her dedicated service to the Hellertown Historical Society.



Marcella Dimmick Family Home (Courtesy Google Earth)

Hellertown Area Library, 409 Constitution Avenue

The Hellertown Area Library creation was a community effort of a small group of citizens that began as a “good books collection”. A few months and 3000 books later, the Hellertown Area Library Association was born. Residents from Hellertown and surrounding areas joined the effort. Volunteers and local civic groups began the effort toward a permanent library. Book shelves were built, supplies gathered and funds raised to be used for space to open a library. August 11, 1990, a temporary home at 528 Main Street became that home.

When the PA Department of Education granted \$50,000 toward a new building, the Borough of Hellertown offered to lease the current site to the library. On August 4, 1992, 250 citizens joined together to break ground for the building. The new library opened in the Summer of 1993.



**People Crowd
the Interior of
the New Library
Opening
Ceremony –
November 1993**

The Hellertown Historical Society was established for the collection and preservation of all historical documents, photographs, artifacts and other items that educate and tell the story of Hellertown's early history. We welcome others to volunteer their time who have the same passion and desire to share and educate others about our wonderful town. Please call 610-838-1770 or visit our website or Facebook Page and consider joining with us and donating some time to become a valuable member of our mission.

The following was provided by the author/creator of the original Walking Tour, Nathan Bruce Yonney, who designed and completed the tour in the mid 1990's as a project to attain rank of his Eagle Scout. We wish to include it here as a tribute to his dedication and love of our Community.

"Sometime between the years 1921 and 1940, the Hellertown Business Association coined the motto...

***"Hellertown
Healthful – Growing – Prosperous"***

After many months of researching for this project and interviewing members of the community, I find that this motto still rings true. It is a community of young and old, of sharing and caring and that is a healthy community. It is a community that is growing with businesses and new families and that is a prosperous community. It is a community that is open for change and always looking ahead to the future and that is a growing community.

There are many people who have helped make this book possible. I would like to mention them: my family, leaders and scouts from Boy Scout Troop 349, Mr. David Harte, Mr. David Heintzelman, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Boos, Mr. Albert Hoppes and members of the Hellertown Historical Society, citizens of the Borough of Hellertown and the 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee of Hellertown. I am thankful to them all.

***I dedicate this booklet to my grandfather, Richard E. Ackerman,
who shared with me, his love for living and his love for his Community. I will be forever grateful."***

Edited/Reissued July 15, 2022
(1) Revised August 25, 2022 – P.79
(2) Revised November 17, 2022 – P. 3, 5, 22, 57