



HERITAGE
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Map

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Schaefferstown

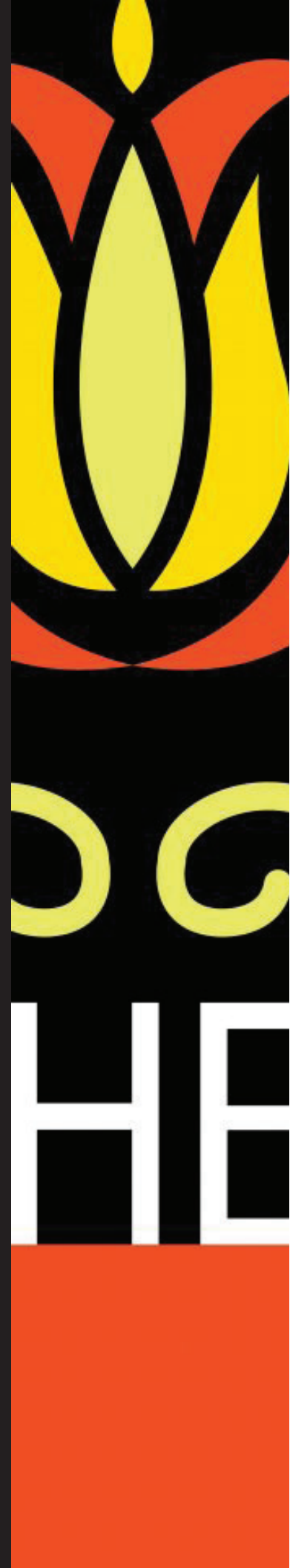
Welcome to historic Schaefferstown, one of the oldest settlements in Lebanon County. As you tour the historic buildings of Schaefferstown, imagine what it might have been like in the 1700s.

Alexander Schaeffer and his family arrived in Philadelphia from Germany in 1738 and settled here when he was 26 years old. This entrepreneur prospered with his general store and real estate purchases. Within 20 years, he purchased 700 acres. Keeping about 90 acres for a plantation now known as the Alexander Schaeffer Farm, he laid out lots on the remaining land that were each large enough for a house, stable or barn, and a kitchen garden. He sold them for five shillings each, plus a yearly ground rent of between two and three shillings. His lots were based around the town's square, at the intersection of Market Street and Main Street (now Heidelberg Avenue). Schaeffer kept one of the best lots on the square for his large limestone general store and a tavern. It remains a tavern and restaurant today.

Alexander named the town Heidelberg, but locals used its eventual name of Schaeffer's Town. The town flourished as ironworkers, merchants, farmers, travelers, and area residents frequented its churches, taverns, craftsmen's shops, and stores selling local produce.

Schaeffer installed one of the first gravitational water conveyance systems in the colonies, bringing water from a local spring through 1,300 feet of wooden pipes to his tavern and two large troughs providing water for residents and domestic animals. In 1763, Schaeffer deeded the spring and reservoir (now known as Fountain Park) and the water system itself to the residents of Market Street. Today's homeowners on that street are automatic members of the Schaefferstown Water Company, and they maintain the park and the two troughs or "fountains."

On this walking tour, you will pass many of the 18th and 19th century homes of log, half-timber or limestone with red clay tile or wood shingled roofs. Most are now covered with modern-day siding, but you will be able to identify the homes by their steep roofs and small windows.





1 Abraham Rex Store, 101 S. Market St.

Abraham Rex, who was married to Alexander Schaeffer's daughter, Elizabeth, built a store and residence with native limestone around 1815. This store replaced the previous wooden tavern and store. Tunnels connecting the property to neighboring structures during colonial times were later used for the underground railroad. The building was a general store until 1988, and in recent years has operated as an antique shop with upstairs residence.

2 Frank Zerbe Home, 105 S. Market St.

This was the home of Dr. B. Frank Zerbe who practiced medicine along with his brother, Thomas (who lived across the street). In 1883, the brothers began manufacturing cigars with locally-raised tobacco. Men and women were employed to process and roll the tobacco into cigars.

3 John Smith Home, 113 S. Market St.

Built in the late 18th century, this home, with its gable roof, was built in two log sections. It was once the home of John Smith, a noted coverlet weaver.

4 Nathan-Simon Store/Mock Home 117-119 S. Market St.

This building was built mid-18th century (south side) and 19th century (north side). It served as a store, tavern, post office, and is now a private residence.

5 Fountain Park, S. Market St.

Alexander Schaeffer deeded this land in 1763 to the residents of Market Street who have cared for it ever since. The enclosed spring feeds the two "fountains" along Market St. In 1845, the wooden pipes were replaced with cast iron and The Schaefferstown Water Company, Inc., became the first chartered water company in the U.S.

Sections of the original pipe are displayed at the Brendle Museum. Baron Stiegel's Tower, built in 1769, once stood just south of the Park on 'Tower Hill.'

6 Phillip Erpff House, 200 S. Market St.

German-born Philip Erpff and his wife came to America as indentured servants. After paying off their passage, the Erpffs built this gable-roofed limestone house and inn about 1750. It has been a private home since his death in 1801. Many original interior features are still intact. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

7 Granite Basin, S. Market St.

In 1936, the granite basin replaced the wooden water trough that was removed from the south side of the square in the early 1800s.

8 George T. Lauser Home 108 S. Market St.

This Victorian-era house was built in the late 1800s and was the home of George Lauser, a prominent justice of the peace, and his wife. Neither of their two daughters ever married and both remained in the house until the mid-1980s. The present resident is only the second owner of this property.

9 J.A. Zerbe Home, 104 S. Market St.

The red sandstone for this 1880s home came from quarries owned by Jonathan Zerbe, father of the builder, Dr. Thomas Zerbe. Dr. Zerbe practiced medicine along with his brother Frank, who lived across the street. The brothers' cigar business was so successful that they eventually gave up medicine.

10 Lauser's Store Complex 100 S. Market Street

George F. Miller, who owned the clapboard house on the north side, built this stone structure on the

south side in 1847 for a store. Joseph Lauser, who became a Lebanon County judge, purchased the property for a store in 1850. His son George, ran the store until 1928. The building continued as a store until the 1950s.

11 Jeremiah Ream Home 1451 Heidelberg Ave.

Jeremiah Ream served as the village postmaster in 1885. The post office occupied a small summer house behind the main building.

12 Mrs. Loose Home, 1455 Heidelberg Ave.

This 19th century log house, now sided, is typical in size and layout of the early houses in Schaefferstown. The dormer windows and end chimney are modern additions.

13 B. Mays Home, 1468 Heidelberg Ave.

Originally this structure was one-story and served as the Lutheran school house in the early 1800s.

14 John Hauser Home 1460 Heidelberg Ave.

Built circa 1800, this house is a typical center-chimney log house, except it has four rooms on the first floor instead of the usual three. The extra room may have been a shop or office.

15 St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church E. Heidelberg Ave. and Church St.

Built in 1765 of native limestone with sandstone trim, this building was used as a hospital after the Battle of Brandywine during the Revolutionary War. As the congregation's needs grew, the west gable end was extended 16', and the steeple was moved to the east end of the church in 1884. Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, who became the first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, served as an early assistant pastor of this church. Rev. Muhlenberg stood to the left of President George Washington at Washington's first inauguration.

16 Schaefferstown Cemetery Church St.

The town's churches have always shared this burial ground. The original sections contain many 18th-century stones with German inscriptions, including those of the Schaeffer family. A modern bronze plaque on the right-hand side of the street identifies Alexander Schaeffer's grave. Some early tombstones contain a form of folk art carvings.

17 Stiegel Home 200 N. Market St.

Henry William "Baron" Stiegel was 21 when he emigrated from Germany in 1750 with his widowed mother and younger brother. He moved to Schaefferstown to train as an ironmaster. Stiegel and three partners purchased two furnaces then bought land that became Manheim, PA. Many American museums display Stiegel's hand-blown glass. In 1774 he was in debtors' prison in Philadelphia briefly due to his lavish life-style and over expansion of his business. Stiegel then returned to this house, where his brother lived, and became a teacher. Under the exterior is one of few remaining 18th century, half-timbered, log houses.

18 Gemberling-Rex House 106 N. Market St.

Built in 1729 by tavern keeper Paul Gemberling, it operated until 1802 when storekeepers Samuel and Mary Rex made it their home. It remained in the Rex family until 1974. Many original tavern features remain, including part of a bar cage used to secure liquor, a Franklin fireplace, wall stenciling, and a unique hand-carved handrail. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and is open for tours during the summer.

19 Thomas R. Brendle Museum 111 N. Market St.

Built in 1909 for the Patriotic Order Sons of America, the main floor has been used for community concerts, silent movies, plays, fairs, dances, and high-school graduations. In 1947, the building housed a small tobacco processing plant. Now a museum, it contains work of local craftsmen, as well as local cultural artifacts. It is named for native Rev. Thomas Royce Brendle who compiled a large Pennsylvania German folklore collection. It is open for tours during the summer.

20 First National Bank of Schaefferstown 103 N. Market St.

Built of sandstone in 1910, it belonged to the Lebanon Valley National Bank of Schaefferstown before it closed as a commercial building. It is now a private residence.

21 Granite Fountain

A trough north of the square was replaced in 1910 with a granite fountain, donated by Matilda Zimmerman in memory of Mary Rex Zimmerman, her mother and great-granddaughter of Alexander Schaeffer.

22 Schaeffer's Tavern & Restaurant 101 N. Market St.

Alexander Schaeffer built this limestone structure, now the Franklin House, as a store and tavern in the mid-1700s. It has operated almost

continuously as a bar and restaurant since then. Legend says that early settlers hid in the large, arched Germanic-style cellar when fearing Indian raids. The mansard roof was added in 1884 when a third story was added for use by overnight guests and as a meeting room.

23 C.M. Krall Store, 1354 Heidelberg Ave.

Built for a store circa 1840, it was a cigar factory by 1900, and by the mid-20th century it had been converted to apartments. The building was badly damaged by fire but was rebuilt.

24 Schaefferstown School 301 N. Carpenter St.

The limestone school was built in 1936 serving students from grades one to twelve. In 1963, it became Schaefferstown Elementary School serving students from kindergarten to grade six. The building now houses the Schaefferstown Mennonite High School.

25 Schaefferstown Academy 201 N. Carpenter St.

Local residents seeking a better education for children than was offered by public schools established the Schaefferstown Academy. Built in 1857, this structure was used as a school for only three years when it closed because of financial difficulties.

26 St. Paul's United Church of Christ 1304 Heidelberg Ave.

The original structure was built of logs in the 1730s. Alexander Schaeffer's family was active in the German Reformed Church (now United Church of Christ). The log church was replaced in 1795 with a stone building. This third building replaced the structurally failing second church in 1858.

27 Beamesderfer Tinsmith 1282 Heidelberg Ave.

John Beamesderfer began his stove and tinsmith business here in 1875 and sold it to his brother Solomon in 1897. Beamesderfer sold potbellied and kitchen wood stoves, pans and tin ware, and did tin roofing and spouting. The large window displayed merchandise to passersby and brightened the inside for workers.

28 Wittle/Smith Home & Bakery 1278 Heidelberg Ave.

This 2-door stone farmhouse with end chimneys was built circa 1830. To the left of the private residence stands a wood-frame bakery built circa 1890 by baker Samuel Wittle. The bakery is an example of a 19th century commercial building and still contains the original double-access bake oven said to hold 100 loaves of bread. Baker William Smith bought and enlarged the property in 1908, operating the bakery into the 1930s. Much of the exterior woodwork and roof was replaced in early 2000s, and the building was used as a retail folkart gallery. The structure is now a pottery studio for the owners.

29 Zion United Methodist Church 1279 Heidelberg Ave.

The Zion United Methodist Church, formerly the Zion United Brethren Church in Christ Church, was rebuilt using the same exterior stone walls after a fire in 1919.

30 Alexander Schaeffer Farm (Brendle Farms) 213 S. Carpenter St.

This farm, once known as Brendle Farms, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Archaeological research from 2004 to 2007, and in 2010, revealed evidence about colonial German farm life. The thousands of artifacts collected gave clues to periods of farmhouse renovation, the diet of early settlers, elements of dress, hygiene and health as well as Schaeffer family purchases from local shopkeepers.

Since the 1960s, this 90-acre farm has become a center of revived folk-life activities, including an annual Cherry Fair & Early American Craft Show in June and Harvest Fair in September. In 2014, Rt. 501 bypass development reduced total acreage to 85 acres.

31 Schaeffer Farm Barn

The upper section was rebuilt in 1890 due to fire, but the lower part is original to the 1700s.

32 Schaeffer Farm Springhouse

Located over the Schaeffer Farm spring, this log springhouse was relocated from a nearby farm in 1980.

33 Alexander Schaeffer House

Possibly the Nation's only surviving Weinbauernhaus (a combination distillery/residence), the building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2011. It combined a residence with industrial space. Schaeffer built this house of native limestone about 1750. His tavern on the town square was supplied apple whiskey by local men hired to distill apples from his farm in a copper still in the basement. In 1775, Alexander's son Henry remodeled and enlarged the existing farmhouse and added a second still. The foundations of two brick-and-tile fireboxes that would have held the 50- to 100-gallon copper stills were uncovered during archaeological digs. The house is open for tours during the annual Cherry Fair, Harvest Fair, or by appointment.

34 Schaeffer Farm Smokehouse

This was used to preserve and smoke hams and other meats for the winter months.

35 Schaeffer Farm 4 Square Garden

As seen in the monastery gardens of their homeland, each of these four beds measures 16' square and contains only heirloom plants. The herbs grown here would have been used for medicinal and culinary purposes by the Schaeffer family. A yucca plant in the center of the garden denotes that the family was Protestant.

A rosemary plant would indicate a Catholic family.

36 Weigley Mansion 1373 Heidelberg Ave.

Prosperous businessman William M. Weigley was a public-spirited man, starting the first Sunday school in town, and establishing Schaefferstown Academy. He built this brown sandstone mansion with mansard roof in 1883 for \$30,000, using stone from his own quarry. Godey's Ladies Book, a popular 19th-century fashion magazine, published the mansion's floor plan of 22 rooms and a ballroom on the third floor.