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Strasburg Heritage

Journal of the Strasburg Heritage Society



The Sandstone House
The *Historic Strasburg* Project

Naval Flag
Springerle Cookies

A message from the Editor

Joe Deery



This issue is a little different. It includes an article about events that took place “only” 50 years ago. Although there are some who recall the controversies surrounding the *Historic Strasburg* tourist attraction, most residents don’t remember it.

An important part of the story is the way the community struggled to define what was important. People had to figure out how to set limits to hold onto the things they valued, in the face of progress and economic growth. It was not an easy process. There was competition and maneuvering. They had no crystal ball to predict their how actions might play out. People who spoke up influenced the outcome.

This story is relevant to us today. The pressures of development, commercialization, and social changes continue to drive change in our town and the surrounding area. With so much going on around us, taking time to think about what we value is something we might “put on the back burner.” We can easily overlook the changes happening around us, only to notice one day that something has been lost.

In his book[†] about cultural changes in 1960s America, Charles Reich gave an interesting list of some of the elements that that contribute to a whole and satisfying living environment:

“The landscape, the natural environment, history and tradition, the amenities and civilities, the privacy and spaciousness of life, beauty, and the fragile, slow-growing social structures that bind us together ...”

I would argue that with respect to each of these, Strasburg is blessed. They are rather intangible values that might not fit well into political or economic decision making. However, if we are to retain the character of our town, it’s important that we guard and nurture each of them. That can happen as we interact with neighbors and visitors, as we participate in community affairs, and as we care for and enhance our natural and built environments.

[†] Charles Reich, *The Greening of America*, 1970



The Heritage Society is run completely by volunteers. There is a great need for increased participation, if the Heritage Society is to continue its work—like producing this magazine! Please help us to enrich life in Strasburg by checking out the volunteer opportunities at:

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From the collection—1903 Naval Flag

by Laura Deevy

The Strasburg Heritage Society's Collection includes an American flag, which Strasburg native John Ross Martin kept as a memento of his long career as U.S. Naval officer. Learn about the flag and some highlights of Mr. Martin's life, as he might have related the stories.



J. Deevy

This naval flag is very meaningful to me as a memento of my life's work in the Pay Service of the U.S. Navy. Flags flown on naval ships are properly referred to as naval ensigns. They are flown in a place of prominence at the rear of the vessel to enable the nationality of the ship to be easily identified. The need for an identifying flag on naval ships was the main reason for the creation of the first American flag in 1777, and few flags were made for any other purpose until the 1840's. At that time, they began to be carried by the U.S. Army and eventually to be used by commercial establishments and individuals.

Naval ensigns in the 19th century were very large, up to 19 by 36 feet, so that they could be seen clearly from a distance. American flags used on smaller vessels were called boat flags. This flag is a boat flag, and measures 5.1 by 9.8 feet. On these smaller flags, it was difficult to clearly see a field containing many stars, so it became tradition to use only thirteen stars on boat flags. The pattern of the stars varied early on, but by the time of my service, a standard

3-2-3-2-3 pattern had been settled upon. This is called the Hopkinson pattern, named after the man whom many scholars believe actually designed the first American flag, instead of Betsy Ross. The use of boat flags was discontinued around World War I.

My flag was constructed in 1903, a few years after the Spanish-American War in 1898. By the end of the 19th century, naval flags and ensigns were being manufactured at several different Navy Yards, and by the early 1900's, their sizes had been standardized and were referred to by number. All of this manufacturing information can be found on my flag's hoist (the edge that runs along the flagpole). It is size No. 7, made at the New York Navy Yard in July of 1903. Naval flags such as mine are made of high-quality wool bunting, which can hold up to the harsh conditions experienced by ships at sea. The wool is moisture-resistant, which allows the flag to unfurl fully even in wet conditions. The stars are individually sewn on with a zig-zag stitch.



You may be wondering who I am, and how I came to own a 1903 Naval flag. Well, I am a native of Strasburg, born in 1856 to Dr. Josiah A. Martin and Jane Black Martin, who represent two of the oldest families in the area. My father, a dental surgeon, moved to Strasburg from the surrounding area in his early adulthood. He purchased property on the southwest corner of the center square, where he set up a dental practice and lived for the rest of his life. When I was thirteen, my father became Burgess (mayor) of Strasburg, and he was well-respected in our town. I spent my early years in the Strasburg public schools. Following that, I attended Union Academy in Coleridge under Professor Andrews, and I completed my education at Delaware College in Newark.

I have many fond memories of my life in Strasburg, where I lived until the early 1900s. I still spend much time there when I visit my dear sister, Miss Agnes Martin, who now owns the property. My brother, Dr. E. M. Martin, also became a dentist, and later moved to Key West Florida, where he began a new career as a banker.

My naval career began in 1878 when I was fortunate to receive an appointment as Pay Clerk. I rose rapidly in the Pay Service, being promoted to Paymaster in 1894. I continued on in my career, serving on dozens of ships and visiting almost every country in the world as the years passed. In 1896, I received the title of Commodore.

Although this rank was later removed from the naval roster, I was allowed to maintain it as an honorary title. I have a great many friends in both the Navy and the Army, and they often refer to me as Commodore John.

One of the most exciting days of my career occurred in 1898, while I was Paymaster on the Cruiser Boston in the Philippines, part of the Asiatic Squadron commanded by George Dewey (who had not yet been made Admiral). It was May 1st, the Spanish-American War had just begun, and we had engaged the Spanish fleet in what would be called the battle of Manila Bay. After several hours of hard fighting, we took a short respite to assess damage to ourselves and our enemy. As one of the non-combatants on-board, I left my cabin to help serve the men sandwiches and coffee to sustain them. Later, I returned to find that a shell had exploded in my cabin, destroying almost everything and embedding fragments a foot deep in the wall! I was extremely fortunate to have left when I did.

After a mere six hours in all, the battle was won decisively, with the entire Spanish fleet either sunk or captured. Although the Boston sustained several hits, the whole U.S. fleet lost only one man. It was one of the most successful battles in our country's naval history, and I was proud to have been part of it.

I married Miss Katherine Parker of Elkton, Maryland, and after more than 30 years at sea, I was made a Resident Paymaster and posted to Washington, D.C., where we made our new home. I have always had a great interest in collecting mementos from my career, and my home has always been filled with precious curios and relics from my journeys. In 1915, I attained the highest post in the Pay Service, Pay Director, with the rank of Captain, and was stationed at Annapolis Naval Academy. I

finally retired recently, in 1920, after 42 years in the Navy. I will miss that life, but I look forward to having much more time to golf, hike, and pursue the many outdoor sports I love. Although we now live in Philadelphia, I visit my family back home in Strasburg quite often, and can think of no better place to pursue my favorite outdoor activities than along the shores of the Susquehanna River!



JOHN R. MARTIN.

When I retired, The Lancaster Examiner was kind enough to do a short piece about me. They asked me, out of all of the recollections of my busy life, which one I valued most. I immediately told them that my most cherished memory was of a banquet given in

my honor in Strasburg when I returned from Manila. Apparently, when the news of that great battle reached my hometown, many of my fellow townsmen were concerned for my safe return. They were also quite curious to hear about my experiences. They began to make plans for a dinner to welcome me home, and it eventually turned into quite an elaborate event!

On July 18th, 1899, I was immensely honored to attend a reception at the Washington House, followed by a banquet in the auditorium of historic Massasoit Hall. The large room was completely covered with patriotic decorations, including streamers, bunting, and flags. Two of the most interesting flags were ones that I had brought back myself – a captured Spanish flag, and the tattered and stained flag flown on the Boston during the Battle of Manila, an almost priceless trophy to me! Four large tables were elaborately festooned and set in the shape of an E, with seating for the nearly one hundred guests who had come not only from

Strasburg, but from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, and beyond. Even my brother was there, all the way from Key West.

To make the occasion even more marvelous, that same night was chosen for the introduction of electric lighting in Strasburg. A temporary power station was rigged up near the center of town and incandescent bulbs were strung along the streets outside Massasoit Hall, as well as inside the auditorium. As the Lancaster Intelligencer later wrote, "They burned brilliantly and not only attracted much attention, but marked the introduction into the borough of improved illumination."

My cousin George W. Hensel, who is cashier of Strasburg National Bank, presided at the event. I was humbled by the profusive cheers I received when he escorted me into the hall, and by the eloquent speech he gave to introduce me. The food was magnificent. It included almost a dozen different types of seafood and many other delicious dishes. After almost two hours, Toastmaster Dr. Ross B. Rowe began the toasts. I had the wonderful opportunity of sharing my story with this company of rapt and enthusiastic listeners, who were kind enough to respond with several rounds of applause. The evening continued with many more toasts, which prompted eloquent speeches by many of our prominent citizens. Songs were sung in abundance, beautifully performed with wholehearted group participation. Massasoit Hall has never seen such a wonderful night! I was filled with sincere appreciation for all who planned, prepared, and attended this event, and for the great honor conferred on me that evening! Not only was it one of the highlights of my own life, but it was later written that "It was a red-letter event in the town's history," and the event was "universally conceded to have been one of the most successful of its kind ever given in the town."

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the Sandstone House

by Joe Deery

Working on a July afternoon for a customer of his landscaping business, Brad Botchlet paused to answer the phone. It was his realtor. Confident in his newest find, the realtor told Brad,

“A house just came on the market. I scheduled a showing, and we’re going to go see it this evening.”

“Where is it?”

“Strasburg.”

“Well, I’m in Honeybrook so I’ll be driving right through Strasburg on the way home. What’s the address?”

“It’s at 27 East Main Street.”

On the drive home, Brad wondered what he would find. He and wife Heather had been looking at houses without much luck. Finding a house was somewhat of an emergency, as they had moved out of their home in Conestoga, and were living temporarily in an apartment with their 12 year old son Seth. And it was a seller’s market. But emergency and seller’s market notwithstanding, they knew what they wanted.

The three of them had put their heads together to compose a list of “must-haves.” Unlike Brad, Heather had grown up in an old house. She knew that was the kind of house she wanted. Their historic dream home would have original random-width wood floors, at least two fireplaces, old wavy glass windows, and so on. So far,



M. Koski

the houses that they had seen had left most of the must-have boxes unchecked.

Brad drove slowly along East Main Street toward the center of Strasburg, counting down the house numbers: 101, ... 47, ... 33, ... As he pulled up in front of 27, he could not believe his eyes.

“No way! No way at all this is... Wow!”

It was unfathomable to him that he and Heather were going to see this house and perhaps have the opportunity to buy it! He pulled out his camera and took a photo, then hurried home to show her what was on offer.

That evening, they toured the house and were thrilled by its beauty and integrity. Maintaining composure, they went dutifully back to their car and pulled out the checklist, as they had done after every previous house showing. This property checked all of the boxes except one. The house sat only a few feet from the street, instead of set back from the street as they had hoped. But the deep and private 1.1 acre lot in the heart of town mitigated that shortcoming.

They submitted an offer the next day. Their realtor wrote a beautifully worded letter to sellers Joe and Shirley Simon assuring them that the Botchlets would be the perfect caretakers to appreciate and preserve the property for the next generation. Their offer was accepted, and the Botchlet family began their chapter in the history of Strasburg’s “Sandstone House” on August 14, 2002.

Brad recalls arriving home a week or two later at the end of a workday. As he walked across the lawn, he looked up at the house and stopped in wonder. He felt astonished and incredulous that this house, so gorgeous inside and out and steeped in history, was his family’s home. He realized how incredibly lucky they were to have stepped into this opportunity at just the right time for it to become a reality.

Heather loves the character and personality of the house. She loves to imagine the stories that it has to tell, of the lives that have played out there. People have been born and have died. They have worked and celebrated. They have enjoyed the company of family and visitors, and spent time in solitude.

The *Strasburg Heritage Society* thanks Heather and Brad Botchlet for opening their home so we could present this article. We hope that the readers appreciate this glimpse inside their amazing house. Remember that the Sandstone House is a private residence, and is not open for public viewing. *Please respect the Botchlet’s privacy.*

It can be difficult to uncover the names and stories of those earlier residents. Names, personalities, and events that were once familiar fade from memory and from oral traditions. Even tracing the history of land ownership is difficult. Property transactions may have been recorded in deeds, but they might be hidden in wills and estate settlements, judicial proceedings, informal means, or not recorded at all.

As a result, our understanding of the history of the Sandstone House is evolving. As new information comes to light, some details that were previously accepted as fact have been updated. The outline that follows comprises the current best understanding of the Sandstone House's history. There are still gaps in the record that will hopefully be filled by future researchers.

The story begins with Jacob Pfautz, who was born into a strongly Lutheran family in 1717 in Rohrbach, in the southwest of Germany. His father was an innkeeper-farmer and his grandfather had been mayor. In 1727, Jacob's parents boarded the ship "William and Sarah" with their six children, bound for America. They arrived in Philadelphia in September, finally settling around Strasburg. In 1748, Jacob married Eva Elizabeth Eckman, and they had five children.

Jacob purchased a lot of ten acres in 1754. Four years later, in 1758, he built the Sandstone House. The house's provenance is established by Jacob's will, where he described the area "where the Sand Stone house, shade [shed?] and still house stands and was by me rected and built." A date stone engraved with "1758" has been found between the upstairs windows, above the front door. The worn numerals are normally almost

completely hidden behind opened shutters.



Date stone, located between the upstairs windows. (photo by T. Lainhoff)

Jacob subsequently added to his land holdings until they had grown to 28 acres, roughly including the properties that today are numbered 27 through 109 on the north side of East Main Street. A 1759 tax record lists Jacob as a shopkeeper, holding 25 acres of land with 10 acres cleared, and three acres rented.

Jacob apparently found a local deposit of sandstone to quarry for his new home. The relative ease of working sandstone permitted squaring the stones he used for the facade to give it a fine formal look. However, the cut stones are interrupted by a band of irregularly shaped rubble stone between the first and second stories. This inconsistency is the clue that tells us that the house originally sported a pent roof across its width, between the two stories. A one-story kitchen on the back of the house was probably added shortly after the initial construction, as it too is made of sandstone.

Only two other stone houses were built in Strasburg in the 18th

century, and both were built by members of the Pfautz family. Jacob's brother John built the limestone house at 122 West Main Street, and operated an inn there. Another limestone house at 33 East Main Street was probably built by Jacob's son, also named Jacob. The elder Jacob lived in the house at 33 East Main late in his life. In 1789, he sold it along with seven acres to his son Martin for "love and affection" and 200 pounds cash. Martin, in turn, signed an agreement that his father could spend the rest of his days there. In 1798, Jacob sold the Sandstone House with 18 acres to his eldest son Michael.

Jacob was instrumental in establishing the Lutheran congregation in Strasburg. The nascent congregation worshiped in a small log church southeast of Strasburg, but evidently hoped for a more convenient permanent home. In 1760, early landowner Edward Dougherty donated an acre of land in Strasburg for use as a burying ground, in consideration for five shillings paid by Jacob Pfautz and Jacob Klyng. The Lutheran Church on East Main Street was eventually built on the site. Jacob passed away in November of 1800, and his mortal remains rest in that churchyard.

Michael Pfautz and his heirs continued to live in the Sandstone House. In January of 1828, the property was sold at a Sheriff's sale to settle family debts. The high bidder and new owner was John Steacy.

	Land	Cleared	Rented
Bethel Housen			
Jacob Fouts shopkeeper	25	10	
Georg Grese on Jacob Fouts lands			3

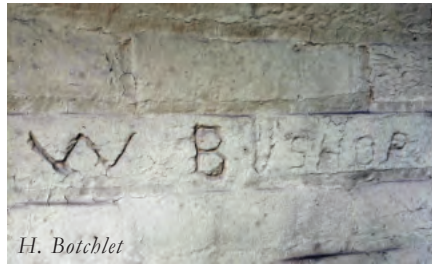
A 1759 Strasburg Township tax list shows Jacob "Fouts" (a spelling variation of Pfautz) as a shopkeeper with 25 acres, 10 of them cleared, and 3 acres rented. The village name "Bethel Housen" translates to "Beggar Houses." The real meaning is unknown. It was eventually renamed as "Strasburg."

John Steacy had been born in County Wexford, Ireland in 1776. He and wife, Sarah, emigrated to the newly founded United States of America in the spring of 1815 and settled in Strasburg. They had eight children. As the Pfautz family helped to establish Strasburg's Lutheran church, the Steacy family were pioneers of Methodism in Strasburg.

Ownership of the Sandstone House and property eventually went to the Steacys' son, William; county records indicate deed transfers in 1840 and 1843. William had been born in Ireland in 1808, and from boyhood, he "exhibited unusual habits of industry." William also had a talent in matters of business, and while he made his life as a farmer, he also acquired considerable property. Records of Lancaster county deeds show his name on at least 18 different real estate transactions. Through William's generosity, a new Methodist church was built in 1839 on West Main Street,

replacing the original Meeting House on South Decatur Street. The 1839 building was replaced in 1894 by the Wesley United Methodist Church that still stands today.

Some important changes were made to the Sandstone House and property during William's ownership. A second story brick room with porch was added above the original sandstone kitchen at the back of the house. The work was performed by William's brother-in-law William Bishop, who took the time to etch his name on his work so that we can recognize it today.



H. Botchlet

William Bishop signed his work on the addition.

Steacy also had a large new barn built, measuring 65 by 90 feet, and probably replacing an older stone barn. It stood to the northeast of the house, and Steacy farmed the land on which the *Charter Homes Heritage Strasburg* development stands today.

William Steacy died in 1878. His will specified that the Sandstone House & farm was to be passed to his sister, Sarah Steacy Atmore. His will further stipulated that after her death, the farm should go to his niece Emily Bishop Musselman and her husband Edward C. Musselman. It seems unlikely that Sarah Atmore ever lived in the house. Emily and Edward Musselman lived there as tenants and worked the farm. They had three children.

On a still summer evening on Wednesday August 11, 1886, disaster struck. Neighbor John Hagans was outside of his livery stable when he saw flames tearing a hole in the roof

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*Sandstone House and rebuilt barn (highlighted). Center Square is in the top right corner.
From "Birds Eye View of Strasburg" by T. M. Fowler, 1903*

of the barn next door! He quickly sounded the alarm, but soon the barn was engulfed in flames. In the dark, people from the whole village and surrounding countryside could see the terrifying flames. They understood what was at stake. In mid-August, the barn would be full of hay and crops. Animals would be in the stalls below. Hagans' stables and many other buildings stood nearby. The whole northeast corner of the town could

be in ashes by morning!

Every able-bodied person converged on the barn and formed a bucket brigade to fight the fire. Imagine the futility of fighting such a fire with buckets! All that could be done was to continuously douse the nearby buildings with water to prevent the inferno from spreading. Two tiny, rickety, hand-powered pump engines – optimistically named "Hope" and "Perseverance"

– were brought in from the outskirts of town to join the effort, but were found to be of little use. The barn was nearly surrounded by large locust trees, and these, along with the still air, gave the hard-working firefighters hope. When the flames finally subsided, the barn and a few adjoining outbuildings were gone.

In the morning light, the loss was complete. Some horses that were being boarded in the barn were rescued, but one was not. Two calves and a dog were lost. Other losses included many tons of hay, wheat crops from Musselman's and two other farms, most of Musselman's farm implements, and two buggies. The building and the crops had been insured separately, but the insurance was not sufficient to cover the losses.

By Friday morning, a horrible suspicion had grown that a man named T. Alexander may have perished in the fire. He had last been seen in town, very drunk, about a half hour before the fire. His hat had been found near the barn, but he had not been seen since the fire. The thought was that he may have gone into the barn to sleep and inadvertently started the fire with a cigar or lantern. The worst fears were realized when a committee investigating the ruins found human remains, which were presumed to be those of Mr. Alexander.

The Musselmans rebuilt the barn and went on with their life. Their daughter, Dorinda, married well known Strasburg physician Dr. William S. Tinney, and they lived in the limestone house (number 33) next door.

Around 1915, Emily and Edward separated, and the house was sold at a sheriff's sale. It was purchased by their daughter, Mary married Joseph Girvin in 1916. They relocated to Strasburg Township, and later to Landisville. She lived to age 95.

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The Sandstone House in 1907, as the Musselman family home

When Emily died in 1934, the Sandstone House was 176 years old, and had been owned by only two families. In 1935, it was sold to John J. and Emma Messner. John Messner operated a grocery store on the northwest corner of the square in Strasburg (now *The Creamery*) until his retirement in 1937. The Messners may have rented the Sandstone House rather than lived in it. They made a significant addition to the property in 1935, building the farmhouse at 6 Kinder Lane to house a tenant who worked the farm.

In 1946, the Messners sold the Sandstone House to Harry B. and S. Emma Shenk. The couple had farmed in Manheim Township and then in Chester County for years prior to moving to Strasburg. Harry worked the farm in Strasburg. The Shenks had begun to purchase properties in Strasburg, when Harry passed away in 1956. Now alone, Emma began to direct all of her energies toward real estate development.

At a time when Strasburg had no zoning laws and few restrictions on real estate development, she saw opportunity, and began to buy properties. She purchased many of the houses within view of the Sandstone House. She took every

opportunity to purchase undeveloped land in the southeast section of Strasburg, both within the borough and in Strasburg Township. She began a successful campaign of petitioning to have her properties in Strasburg township annexed to the borough. Doing so had the advantage that it allowed access to the borough's public water system, thereby facilitating the construction of new homes.

In 1956, Mrs. Shenk began the process of building a new street through land that she had acquired. The new Shenk Avenue would open onto East Main Street directly across from the front door of her Sandstone House. By November of 1957, road construction was underway, and soon thereafter, new houses were being built. The expansion of housing around Shenk Avenue and adjoining streets is one of Emma Shenk's legacies. By annexing her farmland to the borough, she also set the stage for its future development.

In her last years, Mrs. Shenk moved to Landis Homes senior living community south of Lititz. The Sandstone House was apparently rented by Ovia and Mary Koski. Interviews of the aging Mary (Musselman) Girvin by the Koski's son Eric helped to preserve knowledge of the house's history.

Mrs. Shenk passed away in 1969 at age 92. The Shenk property was sold to Don Denlinger, who had plans to develop it as the *Historic Strasburg* project (see the related article in this issue).

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Mr. Denlinger envisioned Kinder Lane as a link between the town of Strasburg and the new attractions that he planned to build on the Shenks' former farmland. The Sandstone House would become a gift shop, and the face on Main Street for his enterprise.

"The Sandstone Gift Shop" was the first phase of "Historic Strasburg" to be completed, opening to the public on August 8, 1971. Renovations were made to freshen the house inside and out. Missing shutters were replaced and painted "putty gold." The double front door was replaced with a more authentic single door. The upstairs porch received repairs, and a new wood shingled roof was installed. Inside, the gift shop occupied the six rooms on the first floor, with each room featuring a specialty: glass, wood, brass, pewter, wrought iron, and candles. The interior décor was accented with antique items, some of which were offered for sale.

Ultimately, *Historic Strasburg* reevaluated their business strategy, and decided to sell their properties along East Main Street. In mid 1974, they relocated the gift shop to their newly-built restaurant, and the Sandstone House was put up for sale.

The new owners, Robert and Sharon Cook, converted the Sandstone House back to a residence. Before moving in, they invested plenty of hard labor in repairing walls, refinishing floors, painting, and decorating. They had plumbing and electrical repairs completed. While renovating the kitchen in the old wood-framed addition at the rear of the house, they uncovered a fireplace with a built-in oven. They were thrilled to move into the house with their two young daughters in June of 1975.

While living in the Sandstone House, Mr. Cook, a banker, took over direction of the *Historic Strasburg* project. He would also go on to launch *The Creamery* and *The Village Inn* businesses on center square in 1984. But by 1979, the Cooks had sold the Sandstone House, after having lived there for only four years. In February of 1979, Joseph and Shirley Simon became the next new owners.

The Simons lived in the Sandstone House for 23 years, and raised four daughters there. They shared a



Come have coffee in one of the oldest houses in the Commonwealth.

Our gift house was started in 1739. It's still not completed. Work on it probably won't ever stop.

In the meantime, though, we've stocked the famous "Sandstone House" with antiques and gifts that will set your imagination on fire. Things like kitchen utensils used by early settlers, and marble-topped wash stands, genuine "Cucumber Bubble Bath" (It's pure, that's sure), and complete antique room settings.

But most of all, we've tried

to maintain our history, tastefully and elegantly.

Please come and visit with us. We'll be introducing our second-floor of complete antique room settings on Saturday, November 13th, and will be serving coffee on Sunday, the 14th, from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM, and we'll be glad to discuss anything from antiques and gifts to the entire Historic Strasburg project.

At Historic Strasburg, we try to make our American heritage come alive.

The Sandstone Gift House

Historic Strasburg, Inc.
27 E. Main St.

This November 1971 newspaper ad for Historic Strasburg Inc.'s "Sandstone Gift House" repeats the 1739 construction date now known to be in error.

passion for antiques, so their attraction to the historic house seems natural. The Strasburg Heritage Society was also a good fit for them, and they were active members for many years. Shirley was a former chair of the Ways and Means Committee. Joe served as President, chaired the annual Antique & Craft show, and chaired the Restoration Committee for the Society's Shroy House.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Simon took an interest in the affairs of the town and were regular fixtures at Strasburg Borough Council meetings. Mr. Simon eventually served on the Council.

In 1998, the old barn was becoming a problem. The wood shingled roof had deteriorated, leading to concerns about safety and the survival of the structure. Finding the cost to repair the roof to be prohibitive, the Simons sought to sell

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the barn for salvage. One effort to have the barn disassembled, moved, and rebuilt did not materialize. Ultimately the barn was dismantled and sold off in parts. The main timbers went to a project in Connecticut. Flooring was sold for reuse, with some of it utilized in the buildings of the *Historic Strasburg* business.

The most recent chapter of the Sandstone House's history commenced in 2002, when the Simons sold their beloved home to the Botchlet family. From the start, Heather and Brad understood that the key to the house's charm and historical significance was its many surviving original features. Maintenance was needed, and while they have decorated to suit their tastes, they have been vigilant in preserving the house's historical elements.

Old houses are still with us in part because they were built to last. Many architectural elements were built with repair in mind instead of replacement. Still, the best plan is to keep up with maintenance. Brad and Heather have found that the maintenance is more manageable if it's broken down into smaller projects. For example, every few years they hire a painter to renew just part of the house, perhaps one just side.

In decorating the home's interior, Heather has confidently brought together her favorite elements for a delightful effect. Pervasive themes are her fondness for classic French styles and for all things natural. None of the rooms are recreations of a historic period, but are decorated with an eye for beauty and their intended purpose. The timeworn backdrop of the house unifies the composition of each room, which blend heirloom and contemporary pieces.

J. Deery



Living Room



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Library

The living room is designed for living, with comfortable seating and an original corner fireplace. A graceful 18th century French buffet brings an old-world grace.

The library/music room has a striking color pallet of strong green hues. The colors were inspired by the bold choices used by Vincent van Gogh, and they create a relaxing atmosphere conducive to reading or playing a musical instrument.

Heather's office is full of touches of nature that have found their way indoors. A pretty door with two arch-topped windows leads to the side yard.

The dining room was recently redecorated in a casually formal French style. Early in the house's history, this room had served as a kitchen. A door opens to the side porch.

Adjoining the dining room, the kitchen is found at the rear of the house in an old wood-framed addition of uncertain age. This room rests on the foundations of an earlier structure, and its history remains a mystery. It features an old fireplace with a built-in bake oven. The kitchen is well equipped to support Heather's energetic pursuit of the culinary arts. The kitchen includes yet another door which opens to the back yard.



Office



Dining Room

J. Deery (office & dining room)



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The Botchlets are as enthusiastic about the landscape as they are about the house. Although the property had many mature trees and shrubs when they took ownership, it was also littered with debris left over from the previous owner's removal of the barn. They worked hard to restore the grounds, then went far beyond.

Heather is a particularly adventurous gardener, full of visions for gardening projects and an eye for unusual plants. The Botchlets put in a huge vegetable garden, a hydrangea bed, a formal herb garden, a container patio garden, a perennial garden, and a blue garden—with a blue-painted wall for a backdrop—that would be quite at home in the south of France. An orchard includes sour cherry, peach, sweet cherry, and apricot trees. The Botchlets grow black raspberries, red raspberries, strawberries, asparagus, rhubarb, elderberries, and—Heather's pride and joy—figs.

Brad and Heather consider the remaining stone foundation of the old barn to be an asset. Those walls provide intimate private garden spaces to enjoy. The stone of one south-facing corner retains heat and provides protection, creating a warm micro-climate. In that space, plants that normally would not survive a Pennsylvania winter—figs, jasmine, and others—can thrive.



Kitchen



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H. Botchlet (canning & garden)

H. Botchlet (all garden photos)



Born almost 300 years after Jacob Pfautz, Brad and Heather's youngest son Jack now adds his experiences to the lore of the old Sandstone House. Looking out of his bedroom window in the winter, he sees the same sparkling landscape that Jacob had seen so many years ago.

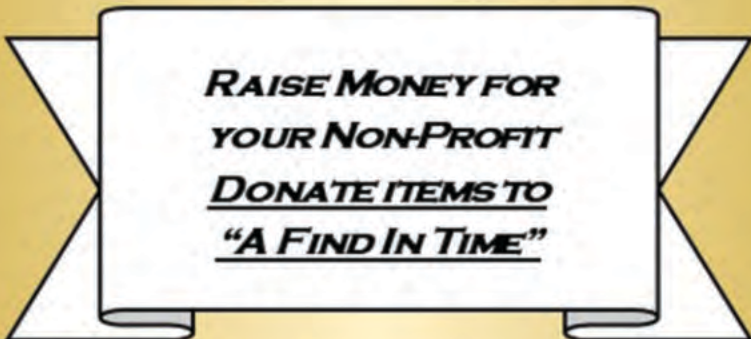


Exploring outside in the summer, he's likely to discover a relic of the past at any time. And when he grabs a piece of fruit in the orchard, he can know that Jacob had kept orchards and enjoyed their fruit too. It's a rare and wonderful legacy that, for now, is uniquely his to experience.



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Charting a Course

The Historic Strasburg Project, and Coming to Terms with Development & Tourism by Joshua Stauffer



Strasburg has a charm that is unique in our contemporary world. This small town, built around a historic center square, and populated by buildings that have been in place for centuries, is home to residents that live and work and play contentedly in its midst. Planted amongst rolling farmlands worked by both modern and Amish farmers, it retains the look and feel of a time when culture and commerce moved more deliberately. If its character is not exactly "old world," much of it at least has the feel of a time from before the Second World War.

The end of World War II precipitated a time of rapid social, commercial and cultural change in American life. Families and communities during the latter half of the 20th century were faced with questions and debates that tended to set tradition and progress in opposition. Because so much felt like it was changing, the answers being formulated carried a heavy load: they would help shape a fast-approaching future.

Strasburg faced questions of its own during this time. Questions regarding its historic buildings—whether it was more worthwhile to rehabilitate and revive existing structures, or to tear down and build afresh. Questions regarding its commerce—how much business activity was acceptable within the borough limits, and where was it allowed to happen? And questions regarding its citizens—what kind of town did they want to live in, and what were they willing to do (or not do) to make that vision a reality?

These questions—and tensions—can be well seen in a series of events that occurred in town starting in the early 1970s. They polarized the community, drawing large, opinionated crowds to public meetings and garnering front page coverage in local newspaper reporting. The stakes seemed high. The fight was about Strasburg's future character. Would it be able to retain its historically authentic built environment—an ingredient that contributed to so much of its charm? Or would it be sullied by quick commercial interests and tacky, pseudo-historic development? What follows is the story of the events that put Strasburg, and its quest for democratic self-determination, in the public spotlight like never before.

The news publicly broke on September 9th, 1970: the farm of the late Harry and Emma Shenk had been sold, and speculation was that a Holiday Inn would be built on the property. The Shenk farm occupied a 67.7-acre parcel just north of East Main Street inside the borough. Included in the sale were the "Sandstone House" and its barn at 27 East Main Street, a farmhouse at 6 Kinder Lane, and what was then known as the Dr. Tinney House (now the Limestone Inn) at 33 East Main. The following day, the *Intelligencer Journal* rounded out some more details, but the story left unanswered questions. While American Motor Inns, Inc.—owner of the Holiday Inn chain—was ruled out as the buyer, the purchaser remained an "undisclosed party" whose intentions for the property had not yet been fully revealed. However, the headline "Strasburg Farm Sold for Tourist Business" made one thing clear: the property was not to remain a farm, and a major change to the land use of the site was being planned.

This news had the potential to be significant to the area for a variety of interrelated reasons. Strasburg at the time was in the midst of working on a couple projects that would help guide the town's future development. The first was the creation of a Historic District that would facilitate preservation of the many buildings that had withstood the test of time. Enabled by the enactment of Pennsylvania's Historical District Act of 1961 and energized in particular by a growing number of garish and unsightly signs, Borough Council had begun to explore, beginning in the early months of 1970, how they might exert some control over the aesthetics of the town. The second was the development of zoning laws that would help guide new development in the future. Borough Council had begun the process of creating a zoning plan for the town, but by mid-1970 did not yet have anything official on the books.

Another reason that this situation would be closely watched by many residents was revealed by the September 10th headline: Tourism. Lancaster County after World War II was increasingly the destination of folks curious about a more rural way of life. People were particularly interested in the Amish who remained steadfast in their traditional patterns of life as the rest of the country rapidly modernized through the second half of the 20th century.

While the burgeoning tourist industry brought undeniable economic benefit to the county, there were some who began to question some of the other side effects including the increased traffic, the perceived disrespect of Plain customs, the commercialization of their religion, and the proliferation of tourist-focused businesses that seemed out of touch with the character of the county.

Strasburg had to wait a couple months to find out exactly who the buyer was and what they had in mind for the site. On January 1st, 1971 the *Intelligencer Journal* finally reported that it was a corporation to be known as Historic Strasburg, Inc., and headed by a man named Donald M. Denlinger. He was an entrepreneur and developer from the Soudersburg area and had made a name for himself as the operator of the Mill-Bridge Craft Village and Campgrounds in Soudersburg and the Red Caboose Lodge in Strasburg. Historic Strasburg had announced plans to develop the site into "something on the order of Williamsburg, Va." Denlinger said that the area was "ripe for development," and that a local person (himself) should take the opportunity to craft a historically sensitive project before "ruthless outsiders" come in and do otherwise. Under his leadership, the group would waste no time moving forward. Ralph Mirarchi, the organization's lawyer, foresaw that if all went according to plan, the project could be well



Donald Denlinger

underway "before the 1971 tourist season," just a few short months away. In getting a quick start, he said, they would attempt to "beat the zoning" ordinance that Council was formulating.

Opinions were immediately voiced by many locals. On the one hand were residents who strongly disliked the idea. Upon the initial announcement, then president of the Historic District Committee Fred A. Williams took an early stand in opposition to the plan. He was concerned that it would negatively affect the "aesthetic appearance" of the town, and about public safety due to increased traffic. On the other hand were those who took a wait and see approach. Borough Council President Rodney Mayhew was hesitant to make a decision before getting more details but clarified that he "wanted something good for the spot. We don't want a rowdy tourist attraction."

On January 25th a delegation from Historic Strasburg Inc. attended a special meeting with Borough Council to publicly present the details of their plan. Held at Strasburg Elementary School, about 500 people attended the standing-room-only meeting where Don Denlinger made his pitch. Structures planned included a 100-unit motel-restaurant in Victorian style; a \$1 million building containing a \$500,000 collection of antique vehicles, and a toy museum. The Sandstone House was to be restored and turned into a gift shop. The Dr. Tinney house was slated to have its Permastone exterior removed to reveal the original stonework, and would hold a collection of antique musical instruments. Denlinger presented this with a map of the complex and sketches of the proposed buildings, none of which looked particularly attractive or historic.

Jest For Today

It's amazing how many things a woman manages to do without until she sees them on sale.

Intelligencer Journal.

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(Details on Back Page)

177th YEAR.—NO. 191.

CITY EDITION

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Intelligencer Journal Photo by Richard K. Reinbold

Donald Denlinger Presents Plans For Tourist Village As More Than 500 Strasburg Residents Listen

Front page news: Interested Strasburg residents packed the Strasburg Elementary School auditorium on January 25th, 1971, to hear Don Denlinger present his development plans at a special meeting of the Strasburg Borough Council.

Numerous residents spoke at the meeting, most of whom questioned the plan critically or just disapproved outright. Residents along North Decatur Street and East Main Street were worried about how their properties would be affected by the new neighbor in their backyard. Some fretted over increased traffic. The status of the town's zoning ordinance came up, but it was still in development, and would not be ready for a Council vote until the end of June. S. Dale Kauffman, a local architect, noted that if the development were to happen, a quarter of the land area of the Borough would be dedicated to tourism. He perhaps spoke most strongly against the plan and said that every legal option should be used to stop the plan from materializing—which is exactly what a group of locals decided to pursue.

Within days a group of "concerned residents" began contributing money towards a "war chest" to retain the legal counsel of a lawyer named William Mann. He was to explore routes to stop Historic Strasburg. Harriet Miller led an effort that collected 409 signatures on a petition urging Borough Council to prevent the development. Up until this point, Don Denlinger's public demeanor had been genial and positive, but it didn't take long for a low-level exasperation to emerge in response to this public backlash. Talking about local opposition and the state of his plans, he said that he had received harassing

phone calls from some of the "elite of Strasburg", but he remained undeterred. "We are going to have the attraction so the people should stop their bickering and get behind it ... It could be the greatest and most charming tourist attraction in Lancaster County."

In the weeks that followed residents continued to wrestle with the prospect of the pending development. The events encouraged them to think about the reasons that they loved Strasburg and chose to live there. You can see this in the Letters to the Editor of local newspapers. Mr. and Mrs. E. James Landis wrote to the Strasburg Weekly News stating that they moved to Strasburg because of its "quaint, historic nature." They had bought a house on Main Street and wanted to work to help it continue as "a fine, charming, and historical town in which to live." Laura Yule penned a letter to the Lancaster New Era saying that Strasburg was unique in the modern world. In it the "past had significance, the beauty of nature still had relevance and the acquisition of wealth, though important, was not paramount." "Wherever such towns as Strasburg remain," she said, "it is necessary that their distinctive qualities be preserved."

Things moved slowly into the spring and through the summer of 1971. Historic Strasburg began the work renovating the buildings that were acquired with the sale but did not begin any new construction, as no permits had yet been issued. Meanwhile, Strasburg borough worked toward enactment of a zoning ordinance. The new ordinance would define the types of permits that could be issued for the Historic Strasburg project.

At the county level, the Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC) had been formed to help guide land development. LCPC recommendations were summarized in a "Comprehensive Plan," but this document carried no regulatory authority. That power rested with individual municipal governments, who could enact zoning ordinances. The Strasburg Borough Planning Commission (SBPC) was formed to adapt the LCPC plan to Strasburg's particular needs. Strasburg's new zoning ordinance—the law that would say what could be built and where—would then be derived from Strasburg's own Comprehensive Plan.

In May, Borough Council held a vote to preapprove the Comprehensive Plan. Two options were on the table. Early versions of the Plan had called for the Shenk farm tract to be zoned residential, but newer amendments would change the zoning to commercial, potentially clearing the way for a tourist business on the site. At their meeting on May 3rd, Council voted 7-2 to reject the amendments, and retained the residential zoning intent. This was the first semi-official strike against the Historic Strasburg development.

Thank you for making today the day that makes a world of difference.



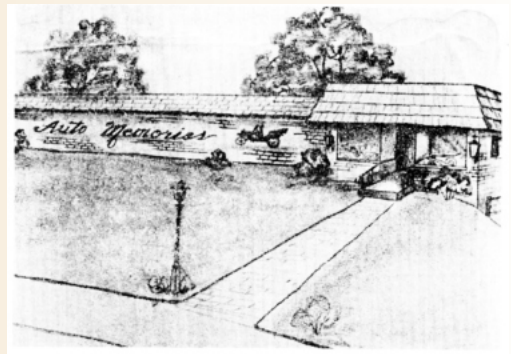
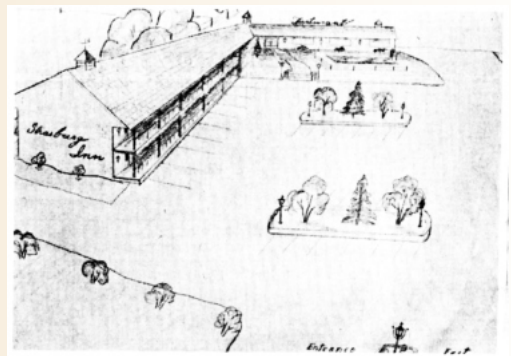
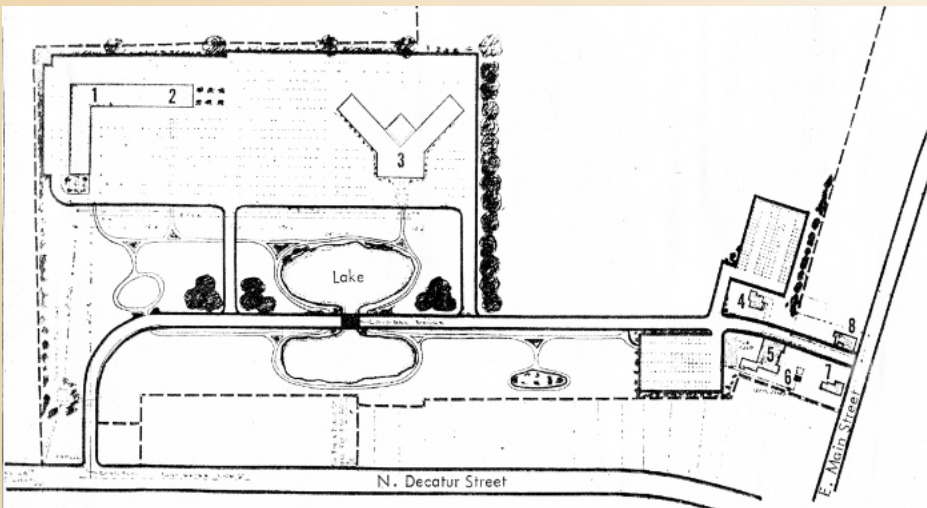
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HISTORIC STRASBURG

Top right: These artist's concepts were drawn on roll-up window shades and presented at the January 1971 public meeting.

Top left: The January, 1971 plan had a limited scope. Key: (1, 2) 100-unit motel and restaurant, (3) auto museum, (4) toy museum in the farmhouse on Kinder Lane, (5) surrey museum in the barn, (6) restrooms, (7) Sandstone house gift/antique shop, (8) music museum in the Limestone house.

Middle left: By September 1971, the tourist attraction had grown in scope to include 90 buildings, spanning 4 phases and 5-7 years of construction.

Below: By December 1972, the building designs had converged on a unified colonial period motif.



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The vote came with political consequences for one of the two councilmen who voted for the plan that favored Historic Strasburg's development. On May 18th, primary elections were held for Strasburg Borough's Second Ward. Incumbent councilman, George Groff, lost his reelection bid in a surprise upset. An organized group—by then known as the Concerned Citizens of Strasburg—had taken note of Groff's recent vote and proceeded to campaign against him. A newspaper article profiling him at the time put the loss into perspective: "there's an old adage that if you're a Republican and a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Strasburg, you can't lose. Groff is both Republican and Presbyterian and lost. Apparently a new requirement is that you also be against Historic Strasburg."

In September, Historic Strasburg revealed that they were expanding their vision for the project. It was now forecasted to cost \$8 to \$10 million, would comprise 90 buildings and employ up to 300 people. In addition to what had been announced earlier in the year, there would now be a 56-unit townhouse residential complex, a shopping village complex with restaurants, a farmers market with approximately 25 small shops, and a proposed village that would include a church, a town hall, a village green and a variety of craft museums. A road tentatively being called "Historic Drive" was also

being planned that would travel through the property and connect North Decatur Street with East Main Street on the eastern end of town. This new announcement seemed to confirm some resident's earlier suspicions that Historic Strasburg had not been fully forthcoming in their initial presentation, and had had larger aspirations from the start.

As fall approached, Borough Council was working toward a final vote on the adoption of a zoning ordinance for town. By October the SBPC brought another reworked version of the Comprehensive Plan to Council that was something of a compromise between the two versions earlier voted on in May. At the request of Historic Strasburg Inc., the new version would change proposed zoning of the property from residential to a mix of commercial, residential, and open space. A vote of preapproval was held on the modified plan with results that represented a shift in tide and sentiment on the project. Council voted 5-4 to accept this revision. At the same meeting it also voted 5-4 to accept Historic Strasburg's Preliminary Subdivision and Land Development Plans which had also already been approved by both the LCPC and the SBPC in September.

Finally, on November 26th, a special Borough Council meeting was held for a final vote on the adoption of the approved Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. This action would be the last step in giving Council legal authority over land use within the town. Held in the Strasburg Elementary School with about 80 residents in attendance, Council first considered the final adoption of the amended Comprehensive plan. As the secretary counted the votes, 5 in favor and 4 opposed, Strasburg Mayor Richard Rohrer spoke to veto the results, an unanticipated move. Next up was the question of the Zoning Ordinance. A motion was made to accept, incorporating the changes requested by Historic Strasburg. Again, the secretary counted 5 in favor and 4 opposed. And again, Mayor Rohrer vetoed the vote results. At the time he said that he was not willing to share his rationale for the vetoes but would do so at the upcoming council meeting on January 3rd in the new year. Up to this point Rohrer had not publicly said much about Historic Strasburg, but he had made clear that he was opposed to any "unrestrained expansion of commercialism in the borough." It was also clear that as a result of expiring terms limits and of the recent election, four new members would be joining Borough Council in January. Rohrer was seen to be kicking the can to the new Council in hopes of an alternative outcome.

The vetoes meant that, for the time being, the issue of zoning was left unresolved. Clyde Horst, now Historic Strasburg's builder and one of its principal

spokesmen, pointed out that in the absence of a zoning ordinance there was little the borough could do to prevent the project from beginning. As such Historic Strasburg planned to move ahead. With the zoning ordinance in limbo, in December, Council issued three building permits to Historic Strasburg for the construction of the apartment complex, of the 100-unit motel and of the restaurant. This decisive moment would have repercussions for Council in the coming months.

The first Council meeting of January 1972 saw the newly elected members sworn in and the President, Rodney Mayhew, ousted in favor of J. Franklin Miller. Council immediately proceeded to adopt the original version of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance making the Historic Strasburg plot residential. Then in keeping with the new zoning ordinance, council rescinded the building permits that had been issued to Historic Strasburg a month prior. All these matters were decided by a 7-2 voting pattern. The actions were a decisive “no” to the project on the part of the newly reorganized Council. M. Elvin Byler, Historic Strasburg’s attorney, immediately threatened to take the issue to court. Since the permits had been issued in December, construction had already begun. Historic Strasburg had spent a large sum of money to get to this point, he said, and would not be able to turn a profit on that expense with a residential-only development.

On January 19th, Historic Strasburg, Inc. filed suit in the Court of Common Pleas against Strasburg Borough charging the council with “trickery”, “bad faith”, and “malice” in their January 3rd revocation of land development approvals. On January 22nd, they filed a second suit asking Court for the reinstatement of the permits that had been approved and granted to them by the borough. At the same time a group of citizens was growing weary of the drama and alarmed by the prospect of taxpayer funds being used to fight this potential legal battle. A group calling themselves the “Strasburg Taxpayers Association” was formed with the intent of making the case to Council that they did not have the money or the argument to rein in the development. By February 7th they had gathered the signatures of 514 residents on a petition urging council to retract its action blocking Historic Strasburg from building saying, “we will not pay for the fight council has gotten us into.”

Council would not be swayed, however, and remained steadfast in their decision to continue to block Historic Strasburg. In April they formally decided to proceed with legal action by contesting the charges being brought against them. About \$1200 dollars were said to have been donated by residents to help offset legal fees incurred in the fight, revealing a persisting division in public opinion. In May the case first went to court and by August a decision had been made: Judge W. Hensel Brown ordered

Strasburg to reissue the building permits and allow construction to move forward. At their meeting in September, Council voted unanimously to accept the judge’s ruling, ending a nearly two-year controversy, and clearing the way for Historic Strasburg to continue as planned.

December of 1972 saw a chilly and rainy groundbreaking for the first phase of the project that was attended by local dignitaries and about 50 people. It was now known that the restaurant to be built was to be modeled on the Washington House, a historic building that had stood on Strasburg’s center square and that had been demolished 8 years earlier. Both the motel and restaurant buildings were to be constructed of old-styled brick and clapboard, with period-inspired dormers throughout. Construction continued apace through the spring of 1973 and by early July a grand opening was set. While a couple of the buildings remained unfinished, the restaurant and first building of the inn complex—named the Hoffman House—were ready for business. The completed buildings showed an earnest attention to historic detail, both outside and in. The first advertisements for the establishment which began to appear in local newspapers showed a continued confidence that it would become the pièce de resistance of the county’s growing tourist industry.



Open for business. Historic Strasburg opened with a tone of optimism and welcomed local patrons

The site quickly became a much-used venue, not only for tourists, but also local patrons looking for a family meal or a space to gather as a group. It became a popular spot for businesses and organizations to host luncheons and events. In October of that year George H. W. Bush, then the Republican National Chairman, spoke to 800 people at a GOP fundraising dinner at the restaurant in what may have been the most significant gathering ever held there.

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The buildings that Historic Strasburg did create can reasonably be said to hold true to their original vision of historic recreation. The dimensions, materials and design are convincing, and to walk into the Fireside Tavern (the current occupant of Historic Strasburg's Washington House) today gives the impression of entering a different time.

The residents and politicians of Strasburg were given an opportunity to participate in the local governing process to determine the character and fate of their town. It would be an interesting question to ask whether, in retrospect, their vision to prevent commercial tourist-driven development was worth all the effort. The answer given, of course, would vary depending on the respondent. Questions about the kind of place that we call home continue to be important for many of us. The desire to live in a place that not only provides shelter and safety but also a sense of beauty and integrity continues. More broadly, issues of development and land use regularly show up as front-page news in media outlets such as LNP. These are issues that will persist, and are opportunities for residents to have a voice.

For a variety of reasons, our built environment matters. Not only the character of individual buildings, but also the ways in which those structures function, interrelate and provide a sense of place for their residents. The reason why some places can be said to have charm and meaning, and others not, often comes back to design features of towns and cities that have been fleshed out over time, in history. Perhaps this was one of the things that the residents of Strasburg were trying to understand and pursue during the early years of the 1970s. They recognized, as Laura Yule wrote to the New Era, that Strasburg's character had a "distinctive grace" that would only remain through intentional choices in both development and conservation. For those of us now who also desire to live in places that have meaning, we might do well to follow their lead, and work hard towards good answers for the questions that remain today.

After only a couple years of operation, however, signs of trouble begin to appear. In July of 1975, Frank H. Kopfinger who was executive director, general manager and secretary of Historic Strasburg Inc. left his position in the company. While he stated that business was up by 42 percent from a year prior, by the end of that year eleven undeveloped acres and the Sandstone House were subdivided from the original tract and sold for undisclosed reasons. By the middle of 1976, Historic Strasburg was looking for a buyer and later that year began defaulting on regularly scheduled payments for a loan they had obtained from the Lancaster Industrial Development Authority.

Two years later, in August 1978, it was announced that Historic Strasburg Inc. was being sold to a group headed by a local man named Robert Cook who had hopes that the business could be saved. In a sullen meeting of the invested stockholders on August 3 the eight-member board of directors was dissolved, and full control of the corporation was handed over solely to Cook. In the end, Historic Strasburg Inc. was only able to complete one phase of their original plan. They had traveled a rocky road attempting to get their project started, and those early labors and costs were what they said was the cause of their eventual failure. Bob Cook ultimately had difficulties of his own and the property and business changed hands and plans multiple times over the subsequent decades.



The Historic Strasburg
Restaurant and Motor Inn

Strasburg, Pa. 17579



1974 postcard

BAKING TRADITIONAL SPRINGERLE COOKIES



Who doesn't love the smell of cookies baking? As winter approaches, Heather Botchlet spends her days surrounded by the aromas of fresh springerle cookies. Heather is a 4th generation springerle cookie baker, continuing a 170 year family tradition of baking these unique & beautiful cookies.

For over a thousand years in Europe, hand-carved molds have been used to imprint "picture cookies." These cookies have been historically used as betrothal tokens, tellers of tales, and to celebrate daily life. Springerle molds first came to Lancaster County around 1710 among the most treasured possessions of the German immigrants to Pennsylvania. German bakeries that once sold the cookies in Lancaster and Philadelphia have long since closed, but Heather is helping to keep the springerle tradition alive.

Heather's business - The Springerle House – first opened in

1998 at Lancaster Central Market. After moving to Strasburg, in 2003 she opened The Springerle House Tea & Cookie Café. The shop had a central focus on springerle cookies, while also offering specialty teas and a café menu.

Heather started an online shop that operates year-round, shipping cookies anywhere in the world. Her cookies are still made by hand, even though demand reaches about 800 cookies per day during the "high season" of November and December! The success of the online business necessitated the closing of the little shop in 2015, but now Heather focuses on what she does best – springerle cookies. You can see what she has to offer at springerlehouse.com.

From the very beginning, Heather decided to share her springerle recipe, as a way to help preserve the knowledge and tradition of springerle baking. Her recipe appears below, so that our readers can try it for themselves. Bon appétit, or perhaps Guten Appetit!

SPRINGERLE COOKIES

- 3 whole eggs
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- ½ stick butter, softened
- ½ tsp. flavoring (use flavoring OIL, not extract)
- ¼ tsp. baking powder (or baker's ammonia, dissolved in 2 tbsp. milk)
- ¾ - 1 lbs. flour (Heather uses cake flour)
- *optional: grated rind of lemon (nice w/anise or lemon springerle)

Preparing the dough:

Beat eggs in a mixing bowl till they thicken a bit and turn lemon-colored (about 5 minutes). Meanwhile, measure out 3 cups of sugar into another bowl. Add gradually to beaten eggs. Mix well: add ½ stick of softened butter. Mix well, add flavoring of your choice, including citrus peel, if desired. Mix well. Gradually add flour until well incorporated. This is your springerle dough—it should be not too dry, not too sticky. The best way to learn this is by repetition! It should stick to your fingers, but not too much. When you've reached the right consistency, you can roll it out, rub a bit of flour into the surface, and it feels pretty smooth. Roll out to about 1/4 - 3/8 inch thick, depending upon how thick you want your cookies and how deep your mold is! Press your mold into the dough. Cut each cookie out after molding it. Put cookies on a greased or lined baking sheet.

Baking springerle:

Let the cookies sit for at least 12 hours before baking: 24 hours work best. After this resting period, bake springerle cookies in a 225 - 325 °F oven for about 10 - 25 minutes, depending upon temperature used. Let cookies cool slightly, and remove them to cooling racks until completely cooled. Then tin them and enjoy! They'll be soft for 2 - 3 weeks, and gradually harden from the outside in until they're as hard as biscotti! Rock hard is the traditional way to eat them... they last for months.

Yield: 4 dozen with average-sized mold.





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An undated colorized photo shows the protected cruiser USS Boston during the Spanish-American War. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command/Released)

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Sandstone House, circa 1960s, prior to renovations by "Historic Strasburg, Inc." Photographer unknown

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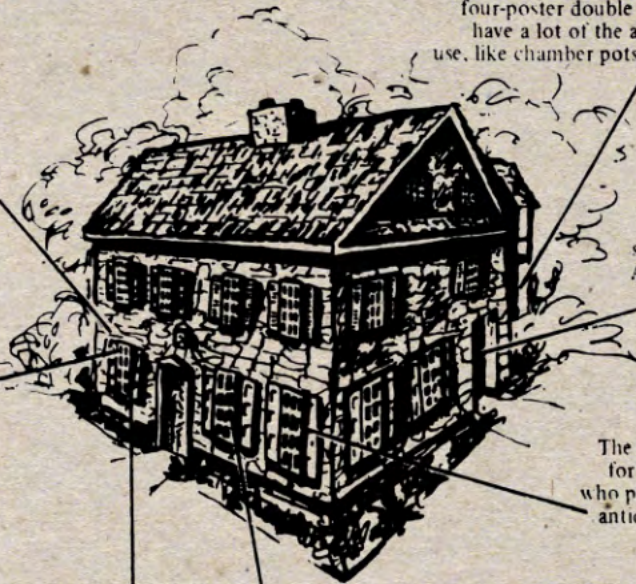
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Browse for Yuletide antiques and gifts in our 1739 house.

The Gettysburg Address room: Named for some mail addressed to Gettysburg that wound up here. We saved it, along with holly wreaths, antique reproductions and conversation pieces. From \$1.50.

The Mad Anthony Wayne room: It was his wife's cooking that made Anthony mad. We've got the china she might have served it on. And the rugged old dining room furniture like that which he overturned. From \$12.50.

The Fast room: Located in the north part of the house. It's where we keep our pewter mugs and tankards, fine old flatware, hollow-ware and trifles like the unique little taper tipper. From \$1.20.



The George Washington room: So named because George never slept here. In it is a huge, four-poster double that sells for \$54. We also have a lot of the antique furniture he didn't use, like chamber pots, vanities and wash tables. From \$15.

The Ben Franklin room: A dubious title because if Ben hadn't started messing around with electricity, we might be selling a whole lot more candles. As it is, we've got 1,843 of them in scents like bayberry, sandalwood and honeysuckle. And in every imaginable shape and color. From \$1.00.

The Betsy Ross room: Named for Ross Betsy, the craftsman who probably didn't fashion our antique spinning wheel. It sells for \$360.

The reception room: So named because it's our reception room. Relax here and talk with our friendly sales people about anything from Old Historic Strasburg to gift ideas for Christmas.

The Olde Sandstone Gift House

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