

Historic Walking Tour – New Bethlehem

I. Identification of Properties with short description:

Starting in the 200 Block of Broad Street –

217-211 Broad - Village Pizza Building – Built 1893 with unique architecture.



Original Andrews Department Store (formerly the Markel Building rental housing)



231 Broad St. Andrews Theater –
Arcadia Theater – Laurel Eye–
Now Lifeway Services and Canyon
Coffee.



243 Broad Street – The Dinger Building was originally the Andrews Building and at one time housed an A&P grocery store.



246 Broad Street. Founded by Charles E. Andrews in 1872 in another building as New Bethlehem Savings Bank, it became First National Bank in 1894. The bank then moved again, diagonally across the street to a new building in 1929 at 301 Broad Street. The first building served as the Masonic Hall, Post Office, Public Library, the Clarion-Jefferson County Head Start and a Day Care program.

The 1929 building at 301 Broad St. was modeled as a traditional American “town meeting hall” of the Georgian Colonial Period, and according to the bank’s literature: “a bit of old Independence Hall in Philadelphia, blended with numerous details inspired by the finest edifices of similar type in the Original Colonies.”¹⁰

107 tons of steel were used in its construction. The exterior is Georgian Colonial red brick, with white Vermont marble trim. Three shades of brick are skillfully blended in the creation of a pleasing mottled effect. “Herringbone” red brick sidewalks



were used along the two front streets, with a ribbon of grass separating the walk from the walls of the bank on the longer frontage. At the intersection of Broad and Lafayette, a white post supported an ornamental hanging sign publishing the bank's name in Colonial style. A clock tower, 107 feet high, rises from the southeast corner of the building. The white marble entrance, surmounted by a classic urn, would have seemed familiar to the signers of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. In all four sides of the building, arched windows rise after the style of the window in Independence Hall's tower. A two thousand pound bell situated in the great clock tower, originally chimed on the hour and half hour. This "Memorial Bell" dedicated on Armistice day, 1929, bears on the inside rim the inscription: "this bell commemorates the patriotism, resolution and zeal of the men of this community who served our country during the World War, 1917-1919." At the rear of the building, is a shrubbery and formerly a flower garden, formerly surrounded by an old-fashioned garden fence of red brick and wood pickets painted white. From the enclosure is visible the "World Window" in the rear bank wall - a reproduction of a church window, more than a century old in 1929, in New Haven, Connecticut.

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First Baptist Church – Corner of Lafayette and Broad – Built 1910, replacing an older wood frame structure at the same location.

Turn left on Lafayette St. - Mateer Home, 209 Lafayette Street, left 3-story side built in 1897 as the home of The Vindicator Newspaper, became the Mateer Funeral Home in 1929, Herbert home at right was purchased and a one-story lobby was built to connect the two in 1962. In 2001, a major renovation added a second middle story, the morgue at back was removed, and rooms were added. The total renovation was completed in July 2002.

Municipal Building, 210 Lafayette Street, built in 1903 to house municipal offices, Police department, jail and fire department. Now serves as Street Department office and garage.

Return to Broad Street.

363 Broad St., New Bethlehem Trust Company, built circa 1932, now Bish Chiropractic, built by Anderson, replacing the building at 401 Broad Street.



401 Broad Street, NE corner of Broad and Wood Sts. Dougherty Building and now owned by the Little family, built as the New Bethlehem Trust Company in 1872, with an opera house on the second floor. Now serves as a day care and rental apartments.

SW Corner of Wood and Broad, was the former site of the Commercial Hotel, which was torn down in 2009.



Heading North on Wood Street. To the left of the First United Bank was the location of the freight and passenger rail stations and water tower. The last train went through on November 5, 2007 having served the community, the coal and lumber industries since 1873.

Right on Penn Street to 418 Vine Street. Home built by the Andrews family. Served for many years as a chiropractor's office. Recently renovated and restored as a single-family home.



Lower (pr. Lauer) Home made of New Bethlehem hollow brick tile at 427 Penn Street. The tile plant was located near mile 19 on the trail one mile to the west of New Bethlehem.

541 Penn Street – Former Leach home, now Andrews/Rosendahl, built in 1920.

Proceed to the 700 block, which overlooks the Smuckers Peanut Butter Factory, built in early 1900s as a brewery, then operated as a dairy during Prohibition, then as the HB DeVinny Peanut Butter Factory. 4 local businessmen went to Washington D.C. in about 1942 and secured a contract for making peanut butter for the troops in WWII. It is now our community's largest employer. The plant was sold to J.M. Smucker in 1964. It manufactures the company's natural peanut butter and Goobers varieties. An historic marker located below the plant on the trail tells the history of the building with photos.



Return west to 407 Penn Street, Presbyterian Manse (Minister's Home), built in 1904, served as a hospital in 1918 for the Spanish Influenza. Mrs. F.L. Andrews led the effort to care for the sick during the epidemic.

New Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, 403 Penn Street. Built in 1923 replacing a wood frame church at the same location that was built in 1870 ¹. Handicapped accessibility added in 2000-1.

Behind the church and to the right where the houses on Washington Street and the parking lot now stands was the site of the 3 story New Bethlehem high school built in 1893. It was demolished after the “new” jr./sr. high school was built on the 900 block of Broad Street in 1958-1960.



509 Block of Wood Street on West side, Christian Himes’ home, one of the first homesteads in New Bethlehem dating to about 1758, later the home of his daughter, De Rose Campbell, a beloved teacher.

NW Corner of Penn and Wood Streets. Site of the original New Bethlehem cemetery.

321 Penn Street. The Boartz home, now Moore. Built by the Andrews family and still retains much of its original wood.

318 Penn Street. The second Andrews home built by Charles E. Andrews, Sr. in 1885. It has been renovated and expanded several times as shown in the above picture to right. The Estate includes the home and gardens on the lower block. At the far end of the garden was a private rail stop for passenger service to Pittsburgh. Businessmen were brought to the estate to meet with Charles Andrews, Sr. The house is listed on the Clarion County Historic Register.



316 Penn Street. Vacant lot at SE corner of Lafayette Street. Site of the first Andrews family home built in mid-1800s and pictured at left in above picture.

234 Penn Street, corner of Lafayette. First United Methodist Church, second church on the site. A rectory was located in the parking lot behind the church.

Walk north on Lafayette, to left on Washington, 1 block to St. Charles Catholic Church, the original church was organized in 1872.

Walk South on Liberty to Liberty and Hunter Street. The Red Bank Mills has been in operation for many years and continues to operate, providing feed, milling and supplies for area farmers and pet owners.

Between Hunter and Broad on Liberty to the right is the new water plant, replacing a water plant built in the late 1910's, which was demolished in 2011. The old water plant was one of the oldest in the country.

Proceed South on Liberty across Broad to dam.

The Water Street area was devastated by a flood in 1996 that reached Broad Street. A monument including part of the old bridge is located in the park on the right.

The original dam was built in 1903 and renovated in 2009-10. The Red Bank Creek was used to float logs downstream in the late 1800's from the Andrews Lumber Mill which was located along Red Bank Creek on Water Street in the area where Gumtown Park is now located. In the 1950's the community had a "beach" along the Creek above the dam. A scout hall, several homes and buildings were demolished by the 1996 flood and landed against the old bridge. The flood resulted from several inches of rain in a couple of hours upstream that caused a dam to break. A new historic marker remembering in the Scout Hall will be installed in 2020.

Proceed along Water Street to the Gumtown Park pavilion. The park was purchased by Norma Reichard, a beloved local resident for the community's use. The Andrews' lumber mill and operation, the largest sawmill on Red Bank Creek, was built in 1855, located along Water Street. The main office was at the lower end at 121 Lafayette Street. The building was renovated as a home. A lumber company building was located at the lot at the NE corner of Water and Lafayette until the late 1950's.

II. Detailed histories.

209 Lafayette Street - This house was originally 2 separate houses. The exterior is decorated in a Williamsburg style.

On January 19, 1870, William and Savina Kelly, of New Bethlehem sold property for \$200 to Mary Anne O'Donnel of New Bethlehem. Mary's son, Edward F. Cummings and his wife Mary sold a portion of this property to J. C. Rairigh of New Bethlehem for \$450 on 14 June 1897. This was the original 209 Lafayette Street lot which was 30 feet wide on Lafayette and 92 feet on Hunter Way.

A month and a half later The New Bethlehem Vindicator reported on July 30, 1897, that "The Vindicator building is up and under roof. The first floor will be used for an office, composing room and press rooms, and the second and third floors as living apartments." J.C. Rairigh had purchased the New Bethlehem Vindicator in about 1887 from John Shick. The composing and press rooms were located where the TV and game rooms are now located. Mr. Rairigh sold the business when he retired in 1908 to Harry A. Reed. Reed sold to Walter A. Scott who then sold in 1911 to W. Edgar Himes. Himes continued as publisher until 1929 when he sold the paper to L.O. Hepler, publisher of The Leader, an area newspaper since 1892, who consolidated the papers as The Leader-Vindicator and operated out of the paper's current Broad Street location, which was erected in 1923.



On August 16, 1929, The Vindicator Printing Company sold the Lafayette St. property to W. Edgar Himes. The Mateer Funeral Home, founded in 1906, moved to 209 Lafayette in 1929 from a location on Wood Street. Robert F. Mateer, Jr. joined the business in 1932 at age 22 and took over management from his father in 1939. The Estate of W. Edgar Himes sold the property to Robert and Alice Reed Mateer on September 4, 1943. Mateer Funeral Home operated for 68 years at this location until Dec. 1997, after son John Mateer, funeral director, died on Nov. 7th.

Maude L. Kroh owned the property at 211 Lafayette, the 2-story portion of the house, before July 31, 1948, when she sold it to Charles and Helen Herbert, owners of Herbert's Market, now occupied by Evermoore' Restaurant on Broad Street. On December 26, 1957, the Herberts sold the property to Robert and Alice Mateer for \$9,000. In 1962, the Mateers connected the two buildings at 209 and 211 with a one-story addition and remodeled the second floor. The entire first floor of the resulting combined structure was devoted to the funeral home and the upstairs to living space.

In February 1991, the Mateers sold the property to their son Terry. After Terry retired in 2001, he and his wife Sandy completed renovated the property, with the help of Shreckengost Building, and began permanent residence in 2002. Among other work, stairs and walls were relocated, doors were removed, rooms combined, a second story was added over the one story lobby, an elevator, 3 gas fireplaces and a pool room were added.

The 3rd floor and stairs were redone to accommodate the elevator. After the Baptist Church manse on the south side of Hunter Street was demolished in Nov. 2002, a chimney and 2 small windows were removed in the sitting room and replaced by larger windows to enjoy the view of Beautiful Lookout. The front bedroom, woodwork and hardware remain unchanged. Electric lights reminiscent of the original 1897 gas lights were installed. Light switches are of the original push button style.

The garage occupies the area where the morgue and casket room originally stood. Both were demolished when renovations began in July 2001. In 2008, a roof was added over the second floor balcony, reminiscent of the porch that existed on the 3-story home in the 1940's and a stained glass window from the Costan house which occupied the lot to the north was added to the pool room.

The property immediately north of this lot, 219 Lafayette Street, was acquired from the Estate of Ruth V. Costan on November 5, 2004. The deteriorated house was torn down and the lot landscaped in 2006 to its current style.

427 Penn Street - This home is pictured on the Nevin DeLacour print of New Bethlehem. It was originally built as one of the Lower homes. It was built of the local New Bethlehem Tile, a hollow brick building block that was manufactured here near the Red Bank Creek just east of New Bethlehem. The clay was taken from the hillside above the factory. It is a good example of the arts and crafts style of the early 1900's. The home was built in 1912. It features leaded, beveled windows and oak woodwork. The pocket doors on the first floor are of particular

interest because they are 10 feet wide. It was purchased by the current owners in about 2005 and a great amount of work has been done on it.

The home was previously owned by Don Harmon who lived there and ran a bed and breakfast for several years. Part of the home was also rented as an apartment for some time. It is now occupied as a grand single-family home.

Ira Ellsworth Lower was connected with the tile industry from 1890, when his father and uncle bought a small tile plant in Louisville Ohio, until his death in 1941, beginning work in Ohio. The family moved from Ohio and the Canton Hollow Tile plant was built in New Bethlehem in 1898-9 because of the quality of clay and availability of gas in the area. His 3 sons, Clarence George Lower, Harold Jesse Lower and Lloyd Curtiss Lower, operated as the New Bethlehem Tile Company. They were also involved in the New Bethlehem Garage, a large storage and super service garage, the gas industry, local churches, politics and fraternal organizations. Ira and Clarence oversaw the construction of the Bostonia Country Club in about 1922.¹⁰

The tile company achieved some important inventions which were emulated by practically every other tile and brick plant in the country. They were first to use the process of drying the green ware with waste heat reclaimed from the hot kilns. It was the only company in the world to continuously manufacture the original 8x8-16” salt glazed, rock faced building tile for more than 50 years.¹⁰ An historic marker near mile 19.1 of the trail includes photos and some of the history of the plant and buildings that were built of the tile.

541 Penn Street - This home was built in 1920 by Walter Leach, son of Alonzo Leach. The Leaches are believed to have been involved in the New Bethlehem Fabric Manufacturing Company which manufactured gloves for the New Bethlehem Glass Factory and which later became the Brookville Glove Company.¹⁰ The house was purchased by the parents of Tom Andrews and then became the home of the late Tom and Bobbie Andrews.

The house has 6 bedrooms, with 4 on the second floor and 2 on the third. The house has been remodeled several times. It originally had a wrap around porch around the entire house. The rear sun room was added later. It originally had steps that went down in front of the house directly to Penn Street. The steps were removed and the entrance walk was moved to the side street.

A highlight of this home is the 1885 mural-sized picture of New Bethlehem located in the sunroom. The photograph in the mural was taken from Beautiful Lookout. It was enlarged and given to Tom Andrews, former editor of The Leader-Vindicator, as a gift from his wife, Bobbie.

318 Penn Street – This grand home was built in 1885 by Firman Lafayette Andrews (the eldest of 5 children, born Aug. 8, 1885). Firman was in the hardwood lumber, mercantile, and real estate business, as was his father, Charles E. Andrews, Sr. (Oct. 9, 1828 - 1897) who founded the Andrews Lumber Company in New Bethlehem in 1855. Charles E. Andrews, Sr. founded the First National Bank in 1872 and was President for 25 years. Firman served as President of the Bank from 1897 until his death on March



15, 1927. He also served on the town council and school board in the 1880's and 1890's and with many other community organizations. A March 1927 news article said of Firman L. Andrews: "To write the history of the Andrews family is to write the history of the evolution of an ordinary country town into one of the most modern and progressive towns in Western Pennsylvania. The name of Andrews has spelled "progress" and the personality of the family has been written large in this community." Charles, Jr. built a new building for the First National Bank in what is now the Northwest Savings Bank building, in 1929. ¹⁰

Firman married Agnes Blanche Craig on May 25, 1880. Firman, Agnes and their son Charles E. Jr. (June 22, 1881 - Oct. 14, 1958) were the original residents in 1885. Plans for a major renovation were drawn up in 1906, and executed in 1920. The red fireplace marble is an Italian Breccia marble from a town near Venice, Italy. The green fireplace tile on the second floor is from the Greuby Faience Tile Company in Boston. It was a very popular tile company during the Arts and Crafts era. The Greuby tile is in the typical green color so prevalent in their crafted pieces.

Charles, Jr., a 1904 Harvard graduate in Economics, married Marjorie Eddinger on Aug. 13, 1928, and they took up residence with Mrs. F.L. Andrews. The house was remodeled again in early 1935 and in the late 1980's or early 1990's. The house was occupied by the Andrews until Marjorie passed away in 1980, concluding 95 years of occupancy by the Andrews family.

The architecture of the house is Victorian Shingle. It was a very distinctive American style used in New York, Boston and New England for a short time (1880 - 1900). This shingle style was more free-form than the Queen Anne style so popular at the time. It was primarily a high-fashion, architect's style. The inside is typical of the Victorian Shingle style with simple Federal style elements and classic moldings. It is built with local hardwoods, the exception being the dining room and entry halls which are of a northern birch. Floors are of cherry, maple and red and white oak.

Venetian and Spanish marble face the fireplaces. The home features 9 bathrooms and 10 fireplaces.

The Estate includes the Carriage House at the corner of Spruce and Lafayette Street. A small gardener's home at the southwest corner was removed in 2009.

The home was renovated and restored by Keith and Toni Stahlman and is now the private residence of Lisa Kerle and her family. In addition to the earlier additions and renovations, the home, fountain and gardens were restored in 2005 to 2007 with all new plumbing and electrical work, roofing, and a restored outdoor terrace in the back.



The New Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, 403 Penn Street began with Sunday School in area homes on July 13, 1845. The church officially organized on September 21, 1850. In the fall of 1876, construction began on a wooden church at the current location. Services began in the basement in the Fall of 1877. The Rev. Joseph M. Mateer, D.D., a veteran clergyman of the Civil War served as

pastor from 1865 until his death in October, 1883. He was the only pastor to die in service to the church.

The town's original high school was built in 1893 where the church's extended parking lot is currently located.

The brick manse (parsonage) next door at 407 Penn St. was completed in November 1904. A Nov. 1, 1918 news article reported that the manse was used as an emergency hospital for the worldwide flu epidemic that had sickened over 1000 people in the area. The churches and Red Cross, with Mrs. F.L. Andrews as Chairwoman of the local branch, joined together to care for the ill. It opened on Oct. 27, 1918, at the height of the epidemic with 7, housed more than 12 at times and served over 20 people. One death, that of John Shaffer, occurred before it was closed in about March 1919.²



On Feb. 8, 1920, the congregation realized that the building was no longer adequate and voted to build a new church. After a fundraising campaign and other delays, arrangements were made to dismantle and sell the building for construction elsewhere. That work began on April 5, 1923. The congregation moved temporarily to the Andrews Theatre on Broad St.

The cornerstone of the present building was laid July 22, 1923. A box was set in the cornerstone with a Bible, newspaper articles, bulletins and other mementos. The Building Committee included H.C. McEwen, W.P. Todd, James L. Graham, George W. Leach, J. Clyde Miller and Dr. C.V. Hepler. Plans were procured from J.C. Fulton and Son, Architects of Uniontown, PA.³ The cost of construction was \$108,000.⁴ The current building was dedicated July 27, 1924.

At the dedication service, Rev. Maxwell Cornelius gave this description of the church: The design is simple Gothic. The exterior walls are of Persian red tapestry brick, laid with black mortar and raked joints, and trimmed with Hummelstown brown stone. The building is finished throughout in selected white oak and yellow pine, with a rubber pumice finish. Behind the sanctuary are the Sunday School classrooms which are separated by accordion and sliding doors so that each may be made a separate room. When opened into one large room, the church will seat between 500 and 600 persons, all within sight and sound of the speaker.⁵



The stained-glass windows in the church are the gift of Mr. and Mrs. F.L. Bush in memory of their daughter, Mrs. Maude McEwen. The window above the pulpit is based on the work of Bernhard Plockhorst and is entitled "The Annunciation of the Shepherds." Plockhorst (1825-1907) was born in Brunswick, Germany, studied in Munich and Paris, became a professor at the Weimar Art School, and devoted a large part of his life to portrait work in connection with religious art. His art was printed in Bibles of the 1890's. The window is particularly beautiful in late afternoon when the sun illuminates it.

The stadium style seats are in memory of Mary Todd and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Todd, Sr. by Robert and William Todd. The pulpit furniture is the gift of R.F. Mateer, Mrs. Jennie McDowell, Fannie C. and Westanna Mateer in memory of their parents, Rev. Dr. Joseph M. and Mrs. Eleanor Junkin Mateer. The Moller organ is the gift of the Ladies' Organ Committee. The famous Deagan Organ Chimes are the gift of Dr. and Mrs. C.V. Hepler. The Tower Chimes were dedicated to the memory of W.C. McEwen by Lettie McEwen and Harry C. McEwen. The Baptismal Font was presented by Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Wiant. The lights throughout the church are gifts of Mr. and Mrs. H.C. McEwen. The original outside bulletin board was the gift of Class No. 19, W.J. Kurtz, teacher. The current bulletin board is in memory of the Harry S. Armagost family.

¹History unless otherwise noted from 125th Anniversary Program of the N.B. Presbyterian Church, 1975,² The Vindicator or Leader, March 1919,³ Last Sermon in old church April 4, 1923 by Rev. Maxwell Cornelius,⁴ The Leader -Vindicator Aug. 5, 1953,⁵ The Leader or Vindicator, July 1924.

234 Broad Street. This building was the home of William and Blanche Kurtz until 1972. They were the head usher/teacher and organist at the Presbyterian Church for many years. They operated a hardware store in the building where The Flower Shoppe is now located. This building served as an electronics store in the 1970s, a decorating shop, an upscale hunters' bed and breakfast, Natural Therapy shop and now is a private home. The upstairs has been redecorated several times, but maintains beautiful woodwork and charm. The large 2nd floor apartment overlooks Guntown Park. It served briefly as the home of local historian Bill Ross, who with Tom Ray, served as co-chair of the 125th year New Bethlehem Birthday celebration June 30 - July 4, 1978.

First United Methodist Church, 234 Penn Street. The first Methodist services in the area were held in the log cabin of Phillip S. Hoffman in 1838, which was located on Broad St. where the Shepherd's Inn is now located. The Methodist was the first church to organize, in 1848.

Christian Himes built a log house near the spring above the town in 1808. His second son Joseph and his wife Abigail Ann Space built one of the first homes within the Borough limits at 509 Wood St., which was the home of their granddaughter, beloved teacher DeRose Campbell, for many years. Joseph was a member of the town's first council. In 1853, a building committee of Joseph Himes, Sr., Perry Webster and Henry Girts purchased the lot on which the church now



sits for \$75 from George Space and began construction. On Feb. 19, 1854, the First Methodist Church was dedicated. The first church, a plain wooden structure, served the congregation for 42 years and stood near the location of the parsonage, where the parking lot is now. In 1890, plans to build a new church began. Benjamin D. Price of Philadelphia was engaged to draw the architectural plans.⁶ On Aug. 23, 1892, the cornerstone of the present structure was laid and building was completed in 1896 at a cost of \$8600.^{7, 8} It was dedicated April 19, 1896. The parsonage was built in 1900.

In July 1926, the Board voted to build an addition for Sunday school classes and to install a pipe organ in the main auditorium. The addition at the south side of the church extended almost the

entire width of the building toward the parsonage, and extended back 28 feet.⁷ A contract was awarded in August 1926 to the C.E. Andrews Lumber Co. for the \$30,000 addition. The addition was 2-story frame construction with a basement and a veneer of Bradford red pressed brick. 4 classrooms were added on each floor to house the largest Sunday School in the County at the time. Other modifications were made for the organ.⁸ After worshiping for 2 months at the Andrews Theatre while the addition was constructed, the congregation moved back into the Church on February 13, 1927. The new organ was to be installed by March 27, 1927.⁹ The steeple and the Cross and Flame were added in 1993. The double bulletin board was added in 1998.

⁶The Leader-Vindicator Sept. 1932. ⁷Vindicator or Leader July 1926.

⁸Vindicator or Leader Aug. 1926. ⁹Vindicator or Leader March 1927.

¹⁰ Some information was obtained from the History of Northwestern Pennsylvania by Joseph Riesenman, Jr., Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., (1943 New York).