

LIGONIER VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
invites you to take a
Walking Tour of East Main Street

In 1817 General James Ramsey bought a piece of land that was known as the Ligonier Tract, some 672 acres. He laid out the lots for the town which was called Ramseytown. A later descendant, John then conveyed the land to his son also named John who changed the name to Ligonier Borough which was incorporated in 1834. His plan was based on constructing the town around a diamond (public square) so that a court house could be built if Ligonier would be chosen as a county seat. This never happened however.

The Lincoln Highway arrived in Ligonier in 1919 as a paved road. Known as Route 30, now East Main Street, is the oldest part of the borough and it gives a nostalgic air to the old town. East Main Street is filled with picturesque old buildings, a vivid reminder of a bygone era.



Take a stroll back in time on East Main Street. Imagine unpaved roads and streets: the sound of clippity clop horse drawn wagons and carriages, neighbors greeting neighbors, the sound of a foot pedal lathe shaping a fishing pole or making your shoes, the blacksmith in his shop shoeing a horse, the hammering of nails making the furniture and the sweet smell of fresh bread baking. All these sounds bring to mind the hardships and the good times of our past families.

Please enjoy your walk down memory lane and be reminded of our legacy from the past.

149 E. Main St. – The National Hotel was built on this site in the mid 1800s. Hotel rates were \$1.50 per day, with free transportation to and from the train station located on the west side of town. In 1918, Roy Sibel purchased the property and used it for his furniture store, undertaking business and residence. When he went out of the furniture business in the 1930s, Sibel rented out the space for Pon's Family Restaurant. In 1955, Sibel sold the property to the VFW Home Association.

201 E. Main St. – The interior of this structure has much of the original wood-work. It served as a residence for Noah M. Marker, prominent merchant, Pennsylvania legislator and civic leader in the mid 1800s. This house later became the home and office of one of the town's early physicians, Dr. E. E. McAdoo. In the mid 1960s, the residence was converted into a restaurant. A large dining room was later added on to the east side of the building. This addition was eventually converted into a retail shop.

209 E. Main St. – Built around 1820 or 1830 as a large residence, the unusual feature of this building is the facade. It appears to be painted stone or brick, but it is wood. The smaller attached building, at 211 E. Main, was added, along with a third floor, in the early 1900s. The small addition was used by Adrian Marozzi as a shoemaker's shop. A door was cut into the basement of the main building to give access to his residence.

219 E. Main St. - This 1880-1890 structure was originally a six room residence. Indented in the newel post at the foot of the original stairway is a glass ball, which according to Victorian lore, was placed there when the mortgage was paid. In the 1930s and 1940s, Marion Horner operated Horner's Tourist Rooms, popular with Pittsburghers spending their summers in Ligonier. In the early 1970s, it became a retail shop and a large addition built at the rear. Over the years, tenants have related sighting Horner's spirit on the stairway or peering out of the attic window.

223 E. Main St. – Built in 1921 by Earl McCune of McKeesport PA, this two and a half story, buff brick structure was constructed from tile-backed brick. It housed the McCune family and the Jackson Barber Shop. In 1950, the building was sold to the Ligonier Valley Library Association. It remained a library until 1968. The building then became the Fern Museum of Clocks. Various professional offices have occupied the structure since 1972.

233 E. Main St. – Built in 1888, this building was constructed of wood siding and tin ceilings by John W. Crawford, who operated it as the Crawford Sheet Metal Shop. John's son, Frank W., purchased the building, in 1918, and it became the Crawford Sheet Metal and Roofing Shop. The original windows and the tin ceilings remain there today, however, the ceilings were covered over during remodeling.

235 E. Main St. – The lot on which this building stands, along with the two adjoining lots, on the eastern side, were purchased by a Weimer family from Somerset County. This two story structure was built, around 1813, using plank and clapboard. It was framed with seven inch square white oak hand-hewn timbers held in place with wooden pins. The second floor did not have any flooring only hand hewn joists for the overhead storing of lumber to be used in the making of cabinets and caskets. In the mid 1950s, it became Don Robb's workshop for the custom manufacturing of specialty rods and other tackles for patrons from all over the U.S.

237 E. Main St. – This building was also constructed by the Weimer family. Items made in the carpentry shop at 235 E. Main were brought here for painting, varnishing and storing. The building originally faced on to E. Main, but was turned 90 degrees enlarging the adjoining lot on the east and facing a wide door on the second floor to the street. This allowed for caskets stored there to be slid down onto wagons. The brick addition to the rear was built in the 1990s.

324 E. Main St. – This Gothic style brick structure was built in 1882 and dedicated the following year as the Albright Evangelical Church. The outline of the church windows are still visible on the west side of the building. The corner stone laid on Sept. 10, 1882 contained a document written by the pastor D.P.K. Lavan, stating he had solicited over \$1,000 of subscriptions to build the church. The concrete block section on the east side of the building was added when the facility became a school bus garage.

304 & 306 E. Main St. – C.A. Lowry operated an undertaking and furniture making business in the smaller building and resided in the adjacent building in 1871. In 1936, Ford F. Kinsey purchased the property. His family resided in the house and operated a service station in the smaller building. The stone wall was built after the street surface was lowered. In the 1940s two millstones were placed at each side of the stone wall and the cement pineapple added.

230 E. Main St. – This plank house was built by William Ashcom in 1780 and used as a family home. A room for a cobbler's shop, with its own entrance, was added around 1799 at the east side of the building. The planks used for this dwelling, as well as for others built prior to 1840, were probably made at a local sawmill. This is believed to be the oldest home in Ligonier Borough.

228 E. Main St. – This brick house was the residence of Colonel John Ramsey, who laid out the town lots in 1817. Like most houses of the late Federal period, this one was originally two rooms down and two up with a center entry hall and staircase. Eventually, more rooms were added to the rear as well as a sunroom (now enclosed), a side porch and a garage in the back of the lot.

224 E. Main St. – The architecture of this Victorian residence indicates it was built in the late 1800s. The original entry area is dominated by a carved oak staircase, as well as other oak woodwork, and a stained glass window. The current exterior color is copied from San Francisco Victorian homes where they are known as “Painted Ladies.” The garage was built in the 1970s and the iron fence was installed in the 1980s.

216 E. Main St. – Built in the late 1820s as a four room residence, this structure was constructed of handmade bricks with Loyalhanna Creek stones used to form the front steps. Noted gunsmith John Fry occupied the house from 1854 to 1864. His gunsmith shop was at the rear of the property. Charles Clifford bought the property at auction in 1894. He added the front porch and rebuilt a stable at the rear of the property. In 1997, the 100 year old box elder tree, also located at the rear of the property, was declared a Tree of Distinction by Westmoreland County.

212 E. Main St. – This residence was built in the 1850s. The dining room fireplace still stands, the pine floors are still unchanged. The wide windows with stained glass trim in the front rooms would indicate some changes were made, possibly in the 1890s or early 1900s. The stable to the rear, now used as a garage, was built in 1894

204 E. Main St. – It is believed that bricks for both buildings, at this location, came from the Robb brick works, which was located near the present entrance to Ligonier Valley Cemetery on Route 711 south. In 1870 Bales McColly (McCauley), a former Westmoreland County Prothonotary, purchased the property for his residence and used the smaller building for his saddle and harness shop.

144 E. Main St. – This two story building became the home of Dr. Jacob T. Ambrose, a veteran of the Civil War, in 1883. The smaller building, located at 140 E. Main, was used for his physician's office. Dr. Ambrose traveled on horseback to his patients for the first 26 years of his 50 year practice. Funeral Director Roy Sibel. opened his funeral home at this location in the early 1900s. It remained a funeral home through the turn of the century.

136 & 138 E. Main St. – This property was purchased by trustees of Ligonier Lodge #964 IOOF in 1920. The original structure, was torn down and replaced by a brick building with two double front store rooms and a meeting room on the second floor. In 1946, the property was purchased by the owner of Mary Jane's Restaurant, located at 138 E. Main. She rented out the store front at 136 E. Main to the Sylvester family for a grocery store called the Market Spot. The second floor was converted to apartments. When Mary Jane's closed in the mid 1960s, the dividing wall was torn down and the Market Spot occupied the entire first floor. After the grocery store relocated in 1979, the wall was restored.

The Ligonier Valley Historical Society would like to thank volunteers
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