



WELCOME TO THE CLINTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HEISEY MUSEUM!

Welcome, we take great pleasure in guiding you through this brief virtual tour of the Heisey Museum. We are proud of the our mid-nineteen century house restored as it would have appeared when the Fearons and Balls lived here. We hope you enjoy your tour and visit us in person in the near future.

The house was constructed around 1831 by Dr. John Henderson. A man named Fleming operated it as a tavern as early as 1832. In 1833 Jerry Church, the founder of Lock Haven, purchased the farm and building from Dr. Henderson and sold the building immediately to the Devling brothers, John and Walter. It was operated as a popular tavern until the middle 1840's. After the Devlings failed to pay their mortgage to Dr. Henderson, turned it over to Dr. William Henderson in 1852. The East Parlor below is restored to represent the Henderson's family occupancy. It is here the Henderson's held many lavish parties. Dr. Henderson died in 1854 and the next owner William Fearon, Jr., purchased the property. During Fearon's occupancy the house was remodeled and the windows were replaced with the present two over two sashes. William Fearon, Jr., was economically and politically prominent during the period just before the Civil War and is an example of the speculative financiers who reigned king of the new republic. He eventually went bankrupt. The Ball family was the next to occupy the property and undertook major restyling of the building. The Ball family lived in the home until the death of Mrs. Ball in 1911. In 1911 the house passed to the Mann family of the Mill Hall Axe Factory Manns. The Manns daughter, Jean became the wife of Samuel Heisey. It was his second wife, Cora who bequeathed the house to the Clinton County Historical Society in 1962.

FULL GUIDED TOURS ARE AVAILABLE FROM MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.
BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR GEO-CASHE

The Fearon Family

Dr. William Henderson died in 1854 and the next owner was William Fearon, Jr. a descendant of the pioneer Fearon family of the Beech Creek area. Evidence appears to indicate that it was during Fearon's occupancy that the two story frame well behind the present East Parlor was removed and the brick additions were erected on the west side rear. In all probability during this time the architecturally interesting ice house was also constructed as well as other buildings. During this remodeling the windows were enlarged and replaced with the present two over two sashes. The original sashes were recycled to the rear most wall of the building where they can be seen today. It is believed the present front porch was added at this time. William Fearon, Jr., was economically and politically prominent during the period just before the Civil War, and is an example of the speculative financiers who reigned king of the new republic in the period of the 1850's. He met the same fate as well when by 1860 all of his numerous properties has been sold at sheriff sales.

The Ball Family

It was at this time that the S.D. Ball family acquired the property and after the flood in 1865 Seymour D. Ball undertook a major restyling of the building, adding the four large gables and roof with bergs-board (decorative trim at the edge of the roof). S.D. Ball was a rising young lawyer with a robust family. Mr. Ball became one of the most prominent civic leaders and prospered along with this area during the lumber boom. The Ball family made this dwelling their home until the death of Mrs. Ball in 1911, when the Mann and later the Heisey families lived here.

The Tavern

About 1831, Dr. John Henderson had a substantial brick dwelling constructed on this site. It is known that a man named Fleming operated in a tavern in this first brick building as early as 1832. The earliest outline of this building contained the front rectangular section plus a frame well behind what is now the East Polar.

In 1833 Jerry Church purchased the farm from Dr. John Henderson to develop a new town he named Lock Haven, the name being taken from the Canal Lock at the head of navigation and the safe haven across the river at this point. Jerry Church only owned this particular site but for a few moments since it was sold back to Dr. Henderson and then sold to the Devling brothers, John and Walter. The Devlings operated a popular tavern in this brick building until the middle 1840's. By that time several more commodious lodgings were available closer to the Canal and so upon the death of John Devling in 1843 its use as a tavern did not continue long.

Brief History

In 1921, a small group of concerned citizens, dedicated to preserving local history for future generations, founded the Clinton County Historical Society. In the ensuing 75 plus years, the society has grown tremendously with the true goal of preserving the county's treasures. In addition to the Society's home base at the Heisey Museum, the group has acquired numerous possessions throughout the county for the public to learn about, explore, and reminisce. Such treasures include: the Barton Street School, the Farrandville Iron Furnace, the Castanea Railroad Station and a stop gate lock on the West Branch Division of the Pennsylvania Canal.

The Clinton County Historical Society has not only committed itself to the preservation of local history but to educating the public, as well. The Society is proud of its school programs that continue to thrive year round, its monthly program for the public, and the dozens of tours given throughout the Heisey Museum and other sites each month. The Society's office can be found at the Heisey Museum, 362 E. Water St., Lock Haven, PA 17745.

The Clinton County Historical Society's main attraction is located in the heart of Lock Haven. The spectacular eight room Victorian home, known at the Heisey Museum, is fully restored to the mid 1800's. This house has served as a farmhouse, tavern, doctor's home, and home to several other locally prominent families. First constructed as a Federal style building, circa 1830, it acquired its Gothic character in a major remodeling, circa 1865. The property was deeded to the Society by Mrs. Cora Frey Heisey in 1962 in memory of her husband, Samuel Morse Heisey. The home must be maintained in its present state to be used as a museum and to display the Victorian era collections in room settings which reflect life as it was in Lock Haven 175 years ago. The Heisey Museum has served as the home to the Clinton County Historical Society.

The Historical Society

In 1962 the widow of Mr. Samuel Heisey gave this property to the Clinton County Historical Society for use as a museum. The Society had been without permanent headquarters since its inception in 1921. Mr. Heisey had been a long time member of the organization and fully realize the historic importance of this site. After the June 1972 flood the Board of Trustees reaffirmed the Society's commitment to the preservation of its most significant artifact the Heisey House. Funds from various sources, public and private, have been employed since 1972 to restore this site as a period setting. During the time that Americans are awakening to their Victorian heritage, the Society's objective is to re-establish the external appearance of this Gothic Revival house during the early part of its occupancy by the Ball family. It is intended that the rooms forward of the kitchens reflect a setting similar to that enjoyed by the Balls (1860-1911). The kitchens and the dining room attempt to recapture the environment of those spaces during the time the Fearon family lived here (1854-1860). This site has lived through all the significant periods in the life of the Lock Haven area; first, when the pioneers carved an existence from the wilderness, the canal era as a tavern, the pre-Civil War speculative period, the railroad and lumbering booms, and the paper mill era of post 1900.

Heisey Museum

The Heisey Museum is part of a brick Federal farmhouse built about 1831 by Dr. John Henderson of Huntington County who married a daughter of John Fleming, a local landowner. Jerry Church, the founder of Lock Haven lived here when the building was used as a tavern, run by John and Walter Develing. Although Church and the Devlings both owned the property, the dwelling reverted back to the Hendersons in 1852 when Dr. William J. Henderson practiced medicine here.

William Fearon, Jr. of Beech Creek bought the house in 1854 and enlarged the building with brick additions in the rear. Seymour D. Ball became the next owner and in 1865 the house was extensively remodeled to its present state of Victorian Gothic Revival. Gables and verge board (decorative trim at edge of roof) and porches were added and windows enlarged and partitions removed. Mr. Ball was a lawyer and his family resided here until 1911.

Mrs. Thomas Mann of the Mill Hall Axe Factory Manns was the next owner and her daughter Jean became the first wife of Samuel Heisey. Cora Frey Heisey, the second wife of Mr. Heisey, gave the house to the Clinton County Historical Society for use a Museum in 1962. After the flood of 1972, the Society decided to restore the Museum as a mid-nineteenth century house as it would have appeared when the Fearons and Balls lived here.

The first step at restoration was a selection of wallpapers similar to those of the period. Floor coverings, window treatments and furniture are compromises of limited resources, donations and volunteer's efforts.

The Society incorporated in 1921, found a permanent headquarters in this building in 1962 when Mrs. Cora Fry Heisey bequeathed the home to them.

After the flood of 1972 the Society restored the house as a museum showing the Gothic revival dwelling as it might have appeared after the Civil War when Lock Haven was a booming lumber town. It was a Federal Style red brick farm house having a center hall, two rooms with fireplaces on each side on both floors. The following are other similar Clinton County Farm Houses:

Locust Lane Farm in Beech Creek
Sullenberger Farm above Mill Hall
Furst Farm along the Jacksonville Road

The museum had a plain pitched roof and small Moline windows, one of which is still in the back kitchen. The home appears like this in an oil painting done by an itinerant painter from across the river about 1850. A companion painting to this work hangs in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Early History

It is certain that in the thousands of years of human history that Indians passed through this small plot along the banks of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. The first dwelling on the 200 acre farm was a crude cabin occupied by Roger Devling and his family. The location of the building was the front yard of the Beardsley House two doors east of the museum building. The Devlings were tenant farmers for Dr. John Henderson of Huntington County, who had come into ownership of this tract through his marriage to a daughter of John Fleming. The Flemings once owned a large part of what is now Lock Haven.

