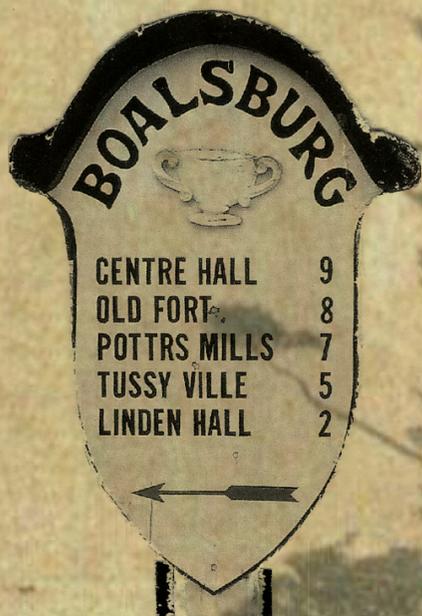


A
History
of



Boalsburg, Pennsylvania

The Growth of an
American Village

1770-1975

By
H. Randolph Thomas



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DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to my mother and high school history teacher,
Virginia Thomas,
who taught me the importance and joy of history at an early age.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*The author would like to acknowledge the help of these people: Mike Casper,
Sharon Manno, Janice McElhoe, Johanna Sedgwick, Stan Smith, and Lee Stout.
Without their contributions, this book could not have been completed.*

H. R. T.

PREFACE

This book is intended for the casual reader who wants to learn more about the history of the Village of Boalsburg in Centre County, Pennsylvania. Unlike some other writings, this history is written chronologically so that the reader can visualize the evolution of Boalsburg and the context in which certain local events happened. Additionally, national and international happenings that affected the development of Boalsburg are briefly described. It is almost impossible to understand why the region developed the way it did without knowing what was happening at that time in America and elsewhere. For instance, during 1855-1875 many of the small businesses in the area went out of business. Why? What effect did the railroad and the Spanish Influenza have on the development of the area? These and other issues are explored.

This book covers the timeframe 1759-1975. The text, covering approximately a 200-year time period, is divided into seven distinct periods of growth. In each period, the events signifying growth, with particular emphasis on schools, churches, and post offices, are recounted. During each period, external events that affected local growth are also described. For instance, two events of national import that negatively affected the growth of Boalsburg were the coming of the railroad and the Industrial Revolution. These events caused the stagecoach to go out of business and most of the mills

along Spring Creek in Oak Hall to close. Both events seriously eroded wagon traffic through Boalsburg. Additionally, there are three general chapters covering prominent citizens, early roads, and notable houses.

Many of the dates when earlier events occurred are not known with certainty. Additionally, various writers often cite conflicting dates. So, dates often have to be estimated. The estimated timeline is made consistent with other events where the dates are known. For instance, the end of the stagecoach operation, an unknown date, is said to have occurred when the horseshoe curve was put into service, which is a known date.

This book has been fact-checked against History of Centre and Clinton Counties by J. Linn and, Centre County: from its earliest settlement to the year 1915 by T. Mitchell.

PROMINENT CITIZENS

Some of the more prominent citizens of Boalsburg are briefly chronicled below. There were many other citizens of Boalsburg whose silent deeds and works went unrecorded and are unknown. The importance of their contribution to the growth of Boalsburg is acknowledged.

David Boal, Sr. was born in 1764 in Antrim, Ireland and died in 1837 in Boalsburg, PA. He served the American cause as a captain in the Revolutionary War.

It was the practice at that time for the States to repay soldiers for their service during the Revolutionary War by granting them land rather than paying them money. The state limited warrants to around 300 acres. Land speculators and those who wanted to build large holdings of land had to work the system to build a holding as large as 4,000 acres. This was likely how Cpt. Boal acquired ownership of 4,000 acres of land in the Springfield area.

In 1789, Cpt. Boal settled in Centre County, Pennsylvania, on his 4,000-acre tract of land and was one of the early residents of the area. There, he built the initial portion of the Boal Mansion although he never lived in the mansion. (Regarding the date of construction, the author assessed the reliability of various sources because two dates are cited as when the Boal Mansion was initially

built: 1789 and 1809. The source that cites 1809 is viewed from past experience as being unreliable. That source also provides confusing and erroneous information about Theodore Boal and fails to recognize that there was a David Boal Sr. and Jr.. Both were involved with construction of parts of the Mansion. For these reasons, it is stated herein that the first part of the Mansion was most likely built in 1789.)

David Boal, Jr. emigrated to Springfield from Ireland in 1798, and added onto the Boal Mansion, where he resided. He also built the first tavern in the eastern end of Springfield (Boalsburg) in 1804, calling it the Boal Tavern.

George Boal, David Jr.'s son, was born in Antrim, Ireland, in 1796 and was a Boalsburg farmer, as well as a practicing attorney in Iowa and Colorado. Upon returning to Boalsburg, he was elected to the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1840. Later, he served as an associate judge of Centre County.

George Boal was a very influential resident of Centre County. He was a founding member of the Centre County Agricultural Society. His lobbying in Harrisburg was part of the reason the state located the Farmers' High School (now Penn State) in the nearby area in 1855. In 1853, he was one of the founders of the Boalsburg Academy.

Theodore Boal was the son of George Boal and great-grandson of David Boal, Sr. He was an American army officer and architect. During World War I, Theodore Boal and his son volunteered in France before the United States was engaged in the war. In 1916, Boal returned to the United States and established the "Boal Troop," a horse-mounted machine gun unit. He was made a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for valor and the Croix de Guerre in recognition of his service in France.



Theodore Boal

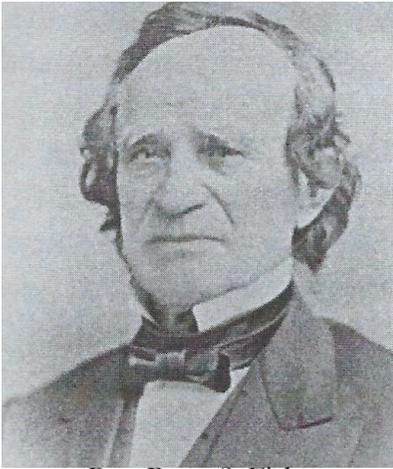
When his wife's aunt died, his wife inherited the Christopher Columbus family castle in Asturias, Spain. To make his wife feel at home in Boalsburg, he built a stone structure near the Boal Mansion, and after the war, he had the entire contents of the family castle in Spain packed into boxes, shipped across the Atlantic, and set up in Boalsburg exactly the same way it had been set

up in Spain. Today, the stone structure is known as the Columbus Chapel.

The chapel contents date from the 15th century and feature centuries worth of Columbus family history. One of the highlights is a sea chest that was owned by Christopher Columbus himself. While it's not known specifically if this chest was with him on his most famous voyage, it's still amazing that artifacts tied to Christopher Columbus can be found in the small community of Boalsburg.



The Columbus Chapel.



Rev. Peter S. Fisher

Peter S. Fisher was the pastor of St. John's German Reformed Church on Miller Street in Boalsburg from 1832 until 1857. He was very liberal-minded and was committed deeply to missionary work. As such, he was active in the underground railroad. Rev. Fisher was one of the founders of the Boalsburg Academy in 1853.

Reuben Hunter (1814 -1864), one of fourteen children, was a doctor in the Boalsburg area. Reuben's daughter, **Emma Eliza Hunter** (1848-1935), married James T. Stuart in 1875. Reuben Hunter served in the Civil War as an assistant surgeon and died from typhoid fever in 1864. His daughter, **Emma Hunter**, and **Sophie Keller** are credited with starting Memorial Day.

George Jack was one of founders of the Boalsburg Academy.

John Jacob Keller was a long-time resident of Centre County and the Boalsburg area. He was born in 1803. For most of his life, he was a farmer. He died in 1848. One of the stained glass windows in St. John's United Church of Christ on Miller Street (N. Church Street) is dedicated to Jacob and his wife, Mary.



Reuben Hunter

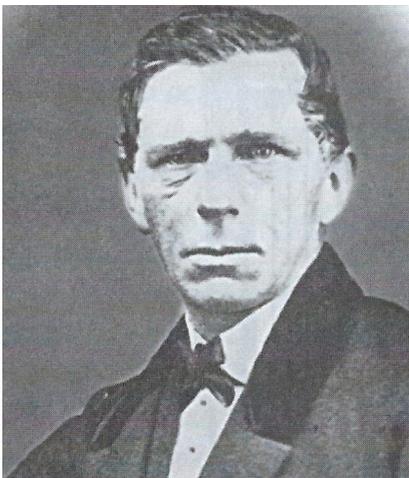
David Keller, the son of Jacob and Mary, was born in 1818 in Cedar Springs, PA. When David was still a youngster, around 1830-1835, his parents moved to the vicinity of Red Mill in Potter Township. David later bought a farm between Pleasant Gap and Bellefonte and farmed it for 15 years. When that farm was sold, David moved to the old Shinnebarger Farm near Boalsburg. During his life, David farmed, taught school, was a cabinet maker, and traded horses. He later moved to Oak Hall where his brother Henry operated a foundry. After his experience at the foundry, he bought another farm. David died in Boalsburg in 1904. He is buried in the Boalsburg cemetery. David Keller was a long-time member of the German Reformed Church in Boalsburg.

Sophie Keller Hall is credited along with **Emma Hunter** as starting Memorial Day in 1864. Sophie Keller was a long-time and active member of the German Reformed Church.



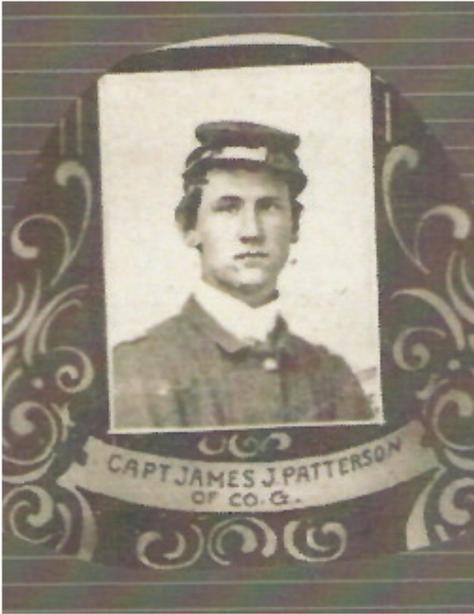
Sophie Keller Hall

Joseph Meyer was a member of St. John's German Reformed Church in Boalsburg. He was an accomplished musician and was probably the first organist of the church.



Joseph Meyer

He was largely responsible for the Dürner pipe organ being installed in the St. John's German Reformed Church in 1868. It was the first pipe organ installed in Centre County. Mr. Meyer died while playing the organ the day before the organ was to be dedicated. He is buried in the Boalsburg cem-



Capt. James J. Patterson

etery.

Capt. James Patterson served as a captain during the Civil War. Prior to the war, he was a school teacher at the Boalsburg Academy. When President Lincoln in 1862 called for 300,000 more volunteers, Patterson appealed to his class. They met on August 5, 1862, at the Old Stone Church and formed Company G of the 148th Pennsylvania Volunteers. Cpt. Patterson survived the war.

David A. Stuart, son of William and Ester, was a farmer in the Boalsburg area, who married Martha Johnston. Together, they had six children.

James T. Stuart, one of David's and Martha's children, clerked for his uncle George W. Johnston at Monroe Furnace. He also taught school, and later enlisted in the Union Army in April of 1861. He survived the war, including the bloody battles at Antietam, Gettysburg, and Spotsylvania.

William Stuart (1759-1848) was another prominent resident of Boalsburg. He grew up near Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and emigrated to America in 1776. William received theological degrees in the 1790s and was ordained as a Presbyterian minister. He was married to Ester Alexander (1774-1848).

EARLY ROADS

Roads were essential to the development of Boalsburg. By 1785, all the Indians had left Centre County and roads began to be built to connect the various hamlets and villages. Commerce began to emerge in the 1790s.

EARLY ROAD NETWORK

After the Revolution, roads began to be built west of Harrisburg. At first, most of the roads built in early America were built along Indian paths and trails, were privately financed, and were often toll roads. The very early roads in Centre County were built mainly for safety purposes. They went from one farmhouse to another or to a fort.

By about 1790, settlers in began producing whiskey, grain, and iron ore products for markets along the eastern seaboard. This activity required road improvements and roads to the exit points from the county. The primary exit points from the county in the early years were Coburn and Potters Mills.

As the production of whiskey waned, gristmills and blacksmith shops were built in and around Boalsburg. Gradually, Coburn was no longer a viable exit point. Paths were improved to accommodate wagon traffic, and roads began to evolve to support commerce. Hamlets grew into villages. Roads began to connect hamlets and villages.

In 1792, Centre Furnace became the earliest major business in Centre County. Boalsburg became a crossroad of activity. An early road from Lewisburg traversed to Millheim, through Boalsburg to Pine Grove Mills and on to Spruce Creek. Another connected the eastern seaboard cities to Potters Mills and onward to Spruce Creek. A third route connected Bellefonte to Potters Mills. This road passed through Oak Hall and Boalsburg. Thus, one can see, that Boalsburg was an important crossroad hub in eastern Centre County.

THE NATURE OF EARLY TRAVEL

Myrtle Magargel described the early road network in Centre County circa 1800 as follows:

... one (road) from Great Island up Bald Eagle Creek to Milesburg; second, from Howard through its gap in the Bald Eagle Mountain across Nittany Valley and over Nittany Mountain at Hecla to the Sunbury Road in Pennsvalley ; a third, from Antes (now Curtin) through its gap in the mountains to the south, up what is now Jacksonville road, to Bellefonte, from there through the ridge west of the old toll gate house to Rick Forge, thence through Houserville to Centre Furnaces and southward to Tussey Mountain at Pine Grove Mills; fourth, connecting with the last road running past "Blue" spring and thence around the end of Nittany Mountain through Lemont and Oak Hall to the Sunbury road in Pennsvalley; a fifth, up Buffalo Run from Bellefonte, passing to the north of State College (possibly Gen. Benner's Road), to the headwaters of Spruce Creek near Balleyville; a sixth, running from the Old Fort southward from the Sunbury road, through Potters Mills over the Seven Mountains to Kishacoquillas Valley; and the seventh, which was the first road to be built in the entire region, from the "Great Plains of Penns Valley at the Old Fort, eastward to Sunbury (likely the Haines Road).

and by circa 1810:

At the time the main post road from Sunbury ran west along Penns Valley through the village of Hubler (now Woodward), Aaronsburg, Millheim and Spring Mills, past Old Fort to Earlysville, which then consisted of a tavern and a few small cottages, and thence around the western end of Nittany Mountain, through Linden Hall, Oak Hall and Lemont, down the Mountain's northern side to Dunlap's Tavern at the Big Spring and from there past Logan Furnace to Bellefonte. This highway was the main artery of travel to and from this section from the east, and was so much in use that a post office was established in Earlysville, which was later transferred to Old Fort.

Travel in the early 1800s was both arduous and slow. It took two to three days to go from Milesburg to Aaronsburg. For a trip from Bellefonte to Philadelphia, if a wagon was used, it took from ten days to two weeks.

According to T. Mitchell, a band of highway robbers known as the "Lewis and Connelly Gang" reached the height of their activities in the early 1820s. They had their headquarters in the Seven Mountains area which was wild and unsettled at the time, with only one road through the area. Repeated robberies induced authorities to intervene. A large posse from Centre and Mifflin Counties was formed to hunt these highwaymen. They were finally captured.

With the "Lewis and Connelly Gang" no longer a menace, plans were made for a turnpike between Lewistown and Bellefonte. If this road had passed through Boalsburg, it would have greatly enhanced wagon traffic through Boalsburg and Oak Hall.

LOWER PENNS VALLEY

Reuben Haines of Millheim cut a narrow road from Fort Augusta in Union County through Penns Valley to Spring Mills and

on to Potters Mills (often called the Haines Road). With the exception of scattered Indian trails, this was the first road to be cut west of the Susquehanna River through central Pennsylvania. This early road was followed in 1787 by an improved road following a parallel route, and in 1810 by a turnpike known as the Buffalo and Penns Valley Turnpike.

Another early road went from the west branch of the Susquehanna River (probably near Lock Haven) through Brush Valley to the Mifflin County line. This road may have passed close to Old Fort en route to Potters Mills and on to the east. The exact date this road was built is unknown.

UPPER PENNS VALLEY

An important early road in upper Penns Valley was the Earlystown Road. It was an extension of Haines Road. As written by D. Riker, it traversed past Old Fort and on to Earlystown, Linden Hall, and Oak Hall, around Nittany Mountain, and then connected to General Benner's Road and on to Bellefonte. The exact date this road was built is unknown.

Another important road in the upper Penns Valley was Peru Road. This road connected Linden Hall and Peru through McBrides Gap and then on to Bellefonte. The date this road was constructed is unknown.

Another roadway of importance to the upper Penns Valley was the Boalsburg Pike. This relatively short road connected Springfield (Boalsburg) to what is now Lemont through Oak Hall. (There is some question about the name of the Oak Hall-Lemont segment of this road, Earlystown Road or Boalsburg Pike as it is called herein. Most early roads probably had no formal name and what they were called evolved over time. Often, a road was likely called different names by different people.) Dates of construction would be helpful, but these usually are unavailable. The importance of Boalsburg Pike is that it provided farmers in the western and northern parts of the county with relatively ready access to Potters Mills, Harrisburg, and beyond.

TOLL ROADS

Toll roads were very common in early America. An advantage of toll roads was that they were likely better maintained than non-toll roads. Toll rates varied according to the weight and wheel width. Centre County was no exception to toll roads.

A toll road of local significance was built in all probability from Lewistown to Potters Mills. The only remains of this toll road are the stone toll house, which is on the grounds of Hartman Center, the United Church of Christ summer camp, in Milroy, PA. There was also a toll road from Potters Mills to Springfield.

With the opening of the Springfield-Potters Mills toll road, in circa 1800, an alternate route to Potters Mills was created. The Oak Hall-Springfield-Potters Mills route was more direct and shorter than the Oak Hall-Linden Hall-Earlystown-Old Fort-Potters Mills route.

The 1861 map of Centre County by Tilden shows a toll house on Boalsburg Pike between Oak Hall and Lemont. There was also a toll house in what was to become Lemont. Little is written about these roads.

TOLL RATES	
Forevery score of Sheep or Hogs.	6cents
Forevery score of Cattle.	12cents
Forevery Horse and Rider.	4cents
Forevery led or driven Horse, Mule or Ass.	3cents
Forevery Sleigh or Sled drawn by one horse or pair of Oxen.	3cents
Forevery Horse or pair of Oxen in Addition.	3cents
Forevery Dearborn, Sulky, Chair or Chaise with one horse.	6cents
Forevery Horse in Addition.	3cents
Forevery Chariot, Coach, Cochee, Stage, Phaeton or Chaise with two Horses and four wheels.	12 cents
Forevery Carriage of pleasure by whatever be it called the same according to the number of wheels and horses drawing the same.	
Forevery Cart or Wagon whose wheels do not exceed three inches in breadth, drawn by horse or pair of Oxen.	4cents
Forevery Cart or wagon whose wheels exceed three inches and does not exceed four inches in breadth for every horse or pair of oxen drawing the same.	4 cents
Wheels exceeding four and not exceeding six inches.	3cents
Wheels exceeding six and not exceeding eight inches.	2cents
All Carts or Wagons whose wheels exceed eight inches in breadth. Free.	

DAVID T. SHRIVER, Supt.

SOURCES

The narrative about early roads is complicated by materials that do not contain dates and tend to be incomplete, imprecise, and contradictory. The principal references relied upon to develop this narrative are Linden Hall Roller Mills (circa 1980), the Whiteside map (1822), the writings of Horner (2019), Magargel (1938), Mitchell (1915), and www.livingplaces.com/PA/Centre_County/Millheim_Borough/Millheim_Historic_District.html.

HISTORIC HOUSES IN BOALSBURG

In the early years, the eastern part of the village was called Springfield; the western part was called Boalsburg. The northern and southern parts were divided by Pitt Street, which is now called Main Street. The eastern and western parts of the village were divided by Miller Street, now called Church Street.

With economic stability and confidence in governmental institutions in circa 1790, settlers gradually began moving to Boalsburg.

EARLY RESIDENCES

The oldest house still standing in Boalsburg is the Boal Mansion. It was originally built in 1789 when David Boal, Sr. emigrated to the region from Ireland. He never lived in the mansion. The mansion has been added on to several times.. The Boal Mansion is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

In 1798, David Boal, Jr. emigrated to Boalsburg from Ireland. He added onto the mansion and lived in it as a residence.

The second oldest residence in the village of Boalsburg/Springfield was part of the Harmony Plantation tract conveyed by deed from Benjamin Poultney to Reuben Haines and in 1801 deeded to Thomas and Mary Clemson. It was sold the next year to John and Catherine Miller. The Millers built what is today called the Tanner's House in 1802. It was originally a small log house, as were many of



The Boal Mansion



The Tanner's House

the early houses in Springfield and Boalsburg. It has since been extensively remodeled.

Another vintage residence built in the Boalsburg section of the village is a stone house built by George Stroup in circa 1810-1820. This house is likely the best example of Georgian architecture still remaining in Boalsburg.



The Stroup House

Another early residence is the Col. Johnson house, built in circa 1811-1815. It is among the first residences built in the village of Springfield. Like most structures in the village, it has been extensively remodeled.

The Gingrich property on West Pitt (Main) Street was a log house and was built there circa 1800 by Isaac Womer. Mr. Womer was a saddler whose shop was located across Pitt Street from his residence. Mr. Womer made hand-cut and hand-sewn harnesses of leather he purchased from the tannery located at the eastern end of Springfield. He later sold the log house to Christian Gingrich. A barn and ice house are still on the property.

OTHER RESIDENCES

The Sweet House was built in 1825. The lot is thought to have been originally owned by John and Catherine Miller and sold to Michael Jack



Col. Johnston House



The Womer House



The Sweet House

in 1804. He dug the tannery vats before selling the lot to William Murray, whose tannery was located at the top of Mt. Nittany in 1801.

While William Murray had his Springfield tannery on the

property, other structures on his property included a large barn, a log house, and a large plank house that is today called the Sweet House. The house originally had three fireplaces. The heavy roof beams exposed in the attic show the large size of the wooden pegs used to join the planks. Today, the Sweet House is the home of the Boalsburg Heritage Museum.

The Hess House is an early brick house built by John Hess in 1830 on the southwest corner of Pitt (Main) Street and Morrison (Academy) Street. The bricks were fired in the back yard. Many of the fine features of the original house have been preserved.

The Hill House, built in 1830 at the base of Tussey Mountain by Col. James Johnston (builder of the Boalsburg Tavern), is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. This house has



The Hess House

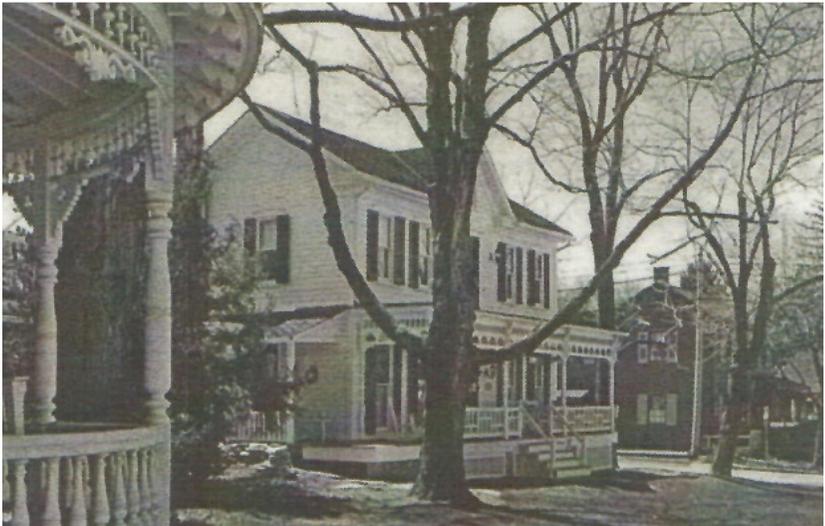
numerous fine architectural features.

The Stuart House is located on the southeast corner of Pitt (Main) Street and Miller (Church) Street. It was built in the late Victorian style by the Stuart family (probably James T. Stuart) in about 1880. George Jack, an early settler, is known to have had a house here in 1837.

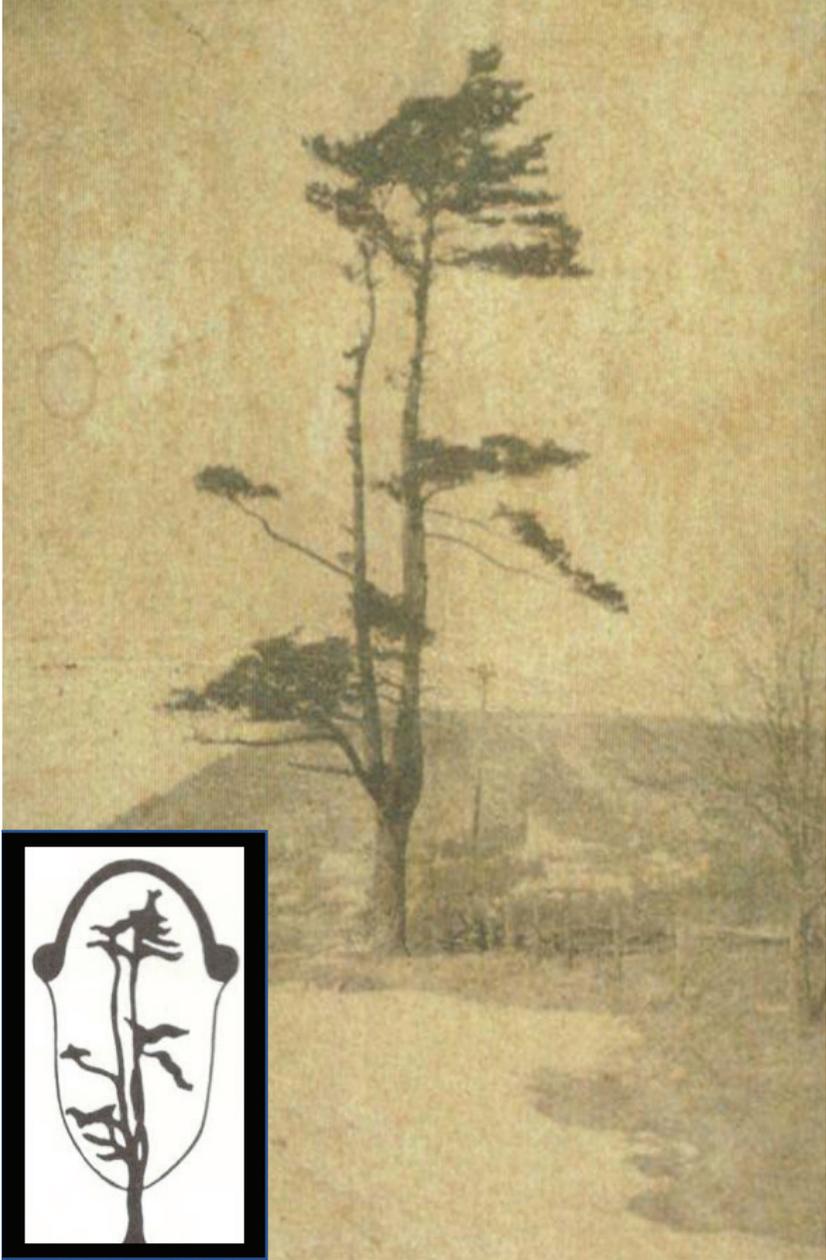


The Hill House

A resident of the earlier house was Peter Fisher. Emma Hunter lived here after 1880.



The Stuart House



IN THE BEGINNING: 1759-1790

From the beginning, Boalsburg was a divided community. The eastern end of the village was known as Springfield; the western end was called Boalsburg. The village of Springfield was named after the spring that rises on the north side of Loop Road, across from the entrance to the Springfield Commons housing development. The spring flows along Loop Road behind the First National Bank.

EARLY EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT

Following rivers, creeks, and the paths that had been established by Native Americans, the earliest settlers moved from the east coast westward into the valleys. General James Potter was the first to record his exploration of the area that would later become Centre County. He followed the West Branch of the Susquehanna River from Sunbury to Bald Eagle Creek in 1764. At the junction of Bald Eagle Creek and Spring Creek, Potter headed south, reaching the approximate location where Bellefonte is today. There he headed east. He continued along an Indian trail, perhaps paralleling Logan Branch, to the base of Nittany Mountain and crossed over the mountain, perhaps at Black Hawk Gap east of Pleasant Gap. When he overlooked Penns Valley for the first time, he is reported to have said to his traveling companion,

“My Heavens, Thompson, I have discovered an empire.” Through an accumulation of warrants and grants, he acquired that empire.

In 1765, the provincial land office opened, and a large tract of land was acquired in 1766 by Thomas Poultney. The first permanent white settler in Centre County was Andrew Boggs, who settled in 1769 in present day Milesburg, only ten years after the area was first explored by Gen. Potter. The earliest settlements in Centre County were along Bald Eagle Creek and Penn’s Creek. Harmony Plantation, adjacent to Springfield, was warranted or surveyed in 1766 by Thomas Poultney, and in 1774 Benjamin Poultney built a log home there just southeast of what is now the Boalsburg Heritage Museum, and just east of what would become known as Springfield, later renamed Boalsburg. Benjamin Poultney is the earliest known settler of Springfield. A fortified log home near Old Fort was built by Gen. James Potter in 1774. Potter’s Fort was built in 1777 by Gen. Potter as a refuge for the settlers of the valley region.

After the Revolutionary War, more settlers began to migrate westward to Centre County, especially Irish and German settlers. David Boal, Sr., emigrated to Springfield in 1789, 15 years after Benjamin Poultney settled there. In 1792, Centre Furnace was established as the first charcoal iron furnace in the area. The early growth of Centre County is signified when in 1794 the first Lutheran Church in the County was built in Aaronsburg. The first church congregation in Boalsburg was organized in 1822.

“THE PINE TREE”

Sometime prior to 1820, the mail was delivered to a distinctive pine tree atop a hill to the north overlooking Springfield. Simply called “the pine tree,” legend has it that it was used as a trading post by the Shawnee Indians and as a meeting place by local residents. This pine tree has since become an iconic symbol of the strength and durability of Boalsburg. It is thought the pine tree survived from circa the mid-18th century to around 1940.

FACTORS AFFECTING EARLY GROWTH

During the period 1775-1820 there are four important events that stimulated the growth of the Springfield and the Boalsburg area. These were the economic crisis of the 1780s, the beginning of the iron industry, the recovery of the farming industry, and the coming of the stagecoach.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS OF THE 1780s

The decade of the 1780s was a time of experimentation on how to govern the new country. The decade began with a federation of 13 individual states operating under the Articles of Confederation. The federal government had little power to exercise any control over the states. In reality, the 13 states acted as 13 separate countries. By the end of the decade, there would be a strong central government and a president with unthinkable powers operating under the Constitution of the United States of America.

The economic problems in the early 1780s facing the new nation deeply touched the lives of most Americans. The Revolutionary War had disrupted much of the American economy. On the high seas the British Navy had destroyed most American ships, crippling the flow of trade. On land, where both armies regularly stole from local farms in order to find food, farmers suffered tremendously from the theft and pilferage.

As the Revolutionary War ended in 1781, the economy was in shambles. Exports to Britain were restricted by the Crown. Thus, a major source of colonial era commerce was eliminated. A flood of cheap British manufactured imports that sold cheaper than comparable American-made goods made the post-war economic slump worse. Finally, the high level of debt taken on by the states to fund the war effort added to the distress. Inflation rose to over 60% by the end of the decade. To exacerbate the situation, states printed their own currency and levied import taxes on goods from other states.

There was a collapse in credit, as ordinary American farmers borrowed heavily to establish farms or homes and were unable to

meet repayments due to the slumping agricultural markets. Creditors saw their wealth evaporate.

America may have emerged from the Revolutionary War victorious, but economically it was in dire straits. Both the new national government and the states were left with massive war debts. There was a shortage of hard currency. American governments had attempted to fund the war through excessive printing of paper money. By 1781, a paper Continental dollar was worth about five per cent of a silver dollar. The country and its states were bankrupt and in considerable debt.

SHAYS' REBELLION

Shays' Rebellion was a series of violent attacks on courthouses, armories, and other government properties in Massachusetts during 1786 and 1787. It was organized by a group of American farmers who objected to the way state and local tax collections were being enforced. While skirmishes broke out from New Hampshire to South Carolina, the most serious acts of the rebellion occurred in Massachusetts, where years of poor harvests had depressed commodity prices, and high taxes had left many farmers facing foreclosure. The rebellion is named for its leader, Revolutionary War veteran Daniel Shays.

Although it never posed a serious threat to the still loosely organized post-war American governments, Shays' Rebellion drew lawmakers' attention to serious weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation, and Shays rebellion was frequently cited in debates leading to the framing and ratification of the U. S. Constitution. The threat posed by Shays' Rebellion helped persuade retired General George Washington to reenter public service, leading to his two terms as the first President of the United States.

The end of the Revolutionary War found farmers in rural areas living a sparse subsistence lifestyle with few assets aside from their farms. It was difficult and prohibitively expensive to obtain credit so they were forced to trade with one another for goods or services.

When they did find currency, which remained in short supply, it was almost worthless due to inflation. Unusually high tax rates in Massachusetts added to the financial woes of farmers.

By December 1786, the growing conflict between the farmers, their creditors, and state tax collectors drove Massachusetts Governor Bowdoin to mobilize a special army of 1,200 militiamen to quash the rebellion.

ADOPTION OF THE U. S. CONSTITUTION

Shays' Rebellion focused attention on serious weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation that prevented the national government from effectively managing the country's finances. The need for reforms led to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the replacement of the Articles of Confederation with the U. S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Shays' Rebellion contributed to the establishment of a strong central government capable of providing for the economic, financial, and political needs of a growing nation.

The economic crisis of the 1780s was not alleviated until the U. S. Constitution was ratified in 1788. The federal government was given the power through the Constitution to levy taxes and given the exclusive power to print currency, levy import/export taxes, and much more. With the adoption of the U. S. Constitution, the era of states acting autonomously ended. Many of the powers and duties that had been reserved for the states were now the responsibility of the federal government. Feelings of confidence and certainty began to emerge.

The decade of the 1780s was a tumultuous one, and little in the way of growth occurred in frontier farming communities like Springfield/Boalsburg.

On the frontier, the principle means of commerce during this time was the barter system. Barter was the ancient practice of commerce where one traded something of value, say a sack of grain, for goods or services. Barter was dominant before money became available.

Some persons may have migrated to Springfield hoping to escape the deteriorating economic situation, but commerce between eastern Centre County and the eastern seaboard was likely nil, since money was scarce and Continental currency was nearly worthless. It is not surprising that little in the way of growth occurred in Springfield during the decade of the 1780s.

THE EARLY GROWTH OF COMMERCE: 1791-1819

With a strong federal government, there became more certainty in daily life which allowed citizens to take advantage of business opportunities. States could no longer levy import/export taxes or print currency. Eventually, there would be a national bank and a small national army. There became more certainty in daily life. Circa 1790, the pace of migration to Centre County began to accelerate,

The first “flexing of the muscles” of the federal government occurred in the mid 1790s. Congress had passed a tax on the production of whiskey. But, many producers in western Pennsylvania refused to pay the tax. President Washington sent a militia force there to force payment. This uprising is known as the Whiskey Rebellion.

OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING EARLY GROWTH

BEGINNINGS OF THE IRON INDUSTRY

In 1792, Centre Furnace opened as the first major business in Centre County. This was soon followed by a number of smaller furnaces scattered throughout the central part of Centre County. In 1797, the Milesburg Iron Works opened, and in 1810, the Curtin Iron Works opened. These businesses led to the growth and prosperity of Bellefonte.



Centre Furnace (Centre County Historical Society 2020)

Boalsburg began to prosper too. Wagons carrying pig iron may have passed through Boalsburg, although the price received in Pittsburgh was more than in Baltimore. Nevertheless, consumer products probably flowed from the east coast through Boalsburg to Bellefonte.

RECOVERY OF FARMING

The primary means of eking a living in the early years was farming and making whiskey. After circa 1795, whiskey was made only in small amounts and only for personal consumption.

As the strengthening of the federal government began to take hold, farming began to recover. The farming recovery brought with it increased wagon traffic passing through Boalsburg in route to eastern markets.

The first settlers in Penns Valley would have had to take their grain to mills in Lewisburg or Sunbury, which involved a trip of several days' duration, and soon the demand for sawmills and more convenient gristmills (flourmills) rose. Gristmills sprang up in Dale's Mills, Oak Hall, Boalsburg, Linden Hall, Milleim, and perhaps other locals. Sawmills became common place.



Typical Mode of Transportation in the Early to Mid-1800s

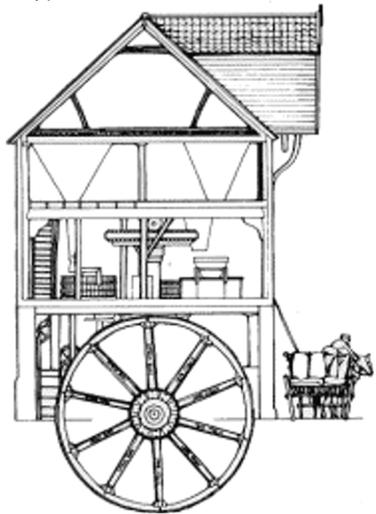
George McCormick is known to local history as a miller who was the first settler of Spring Mills before 1800. McCormick's name appears in the Ferguson Township assessments of 1801 as owner of a gristmill and a sawmill in Oak Hall. It was likely the first gristmill in the vicinity of Boalsburg.

In 1820 Jacob Johnstonbaugh purchased property in Oak Hall, and was assessed by the township for a gristmill and a sawmill.

Typical Configuration of an Early Colonial Gristmill.

Another early gristmill in the area was built by Christian and Felix Dale in Dale's Mills around the turn of the 19th century.

Another gristmill in close proximity to Boalsburg was built by J. H. Hanll and S. Wilson. It was located about a ½ mile east of the village. The remnants of this gristmill are still visible across US 322 from the PADOT maintenance facility.



Typical Configuration of an Early Colonial Gristmill

In 1808, John Irvin built a gristmill in Linden Hall on Cedar Creek.

These mills in the vicinity of Boalsburg led to more wagon traffic passing through the village.



Remnants of Hanil and Wilson Flour Mill

THE STAGECOACH ERA

As written by Cathy Horner, one of the earliest stagecoach routes into Centre County was from Lewisburg through Aaronsburg and Earlystown and on to Springfield. From there, it went through Boalsburg, Shingletown and Pine Grove Mills and on to Spruce Creek. Another stage route went from Northumberland to Bellefonte, passing through Linden Hall and along Earlystown Road. T. Mitchell further elaborated on the Northumberland-Bellefonte route:

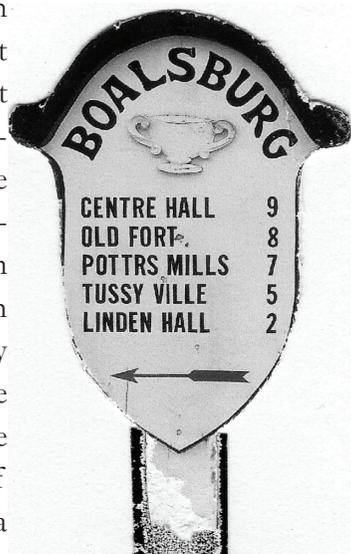
The stage left there (Northumberland) at 5:00 o'clock in the morning and was scheduled to reach Aaronsburg by way of the Woodward Narrows, at 6:00 the same evening. It left Aaronsburg at 6:00 the next morning to arrive at Earlysville at noon, reaching John Rankin's tavern in Bellefonte, at the southeast corner of High and Spring Streets, at about 4:00 the same evening.

Local stagecoach travel in the early 1800s is best described by Magargel:

The first ones (stagecoaches) seem to have veered south of Boalsburg, taking in Huntingdon on highways already well trodden, but as soon as the multiplying population of Penns Valley made feasible the shorter route (from Harrisburg to) Lewisburg and Spruce Creek, it was laid out and traffic began to flow between the east and the west, stopping at the inns that punctuated the way. There were two stage routes to go through Boalsburg. One called the Brush Valley route travelled from Millheim to Spring Mills to Centre Hall to Linden Hall to Boalsburg, thence to Pine Grove past the Pine Stump School house.

The second way from Centre Hall back to Old Fort, then to Boalsburg through Earhystown and over the road past Whiskey Hollow school house. All roads were dangerous when first laid out and for years afterward. Panthers sometimes sprang from trees upon the travellers and wildcats prowled the woods, hungry and vicious, especially in winter. No less to be feared were the robbers that infested the highways. Men were held up and robbed in broad daylight . . .

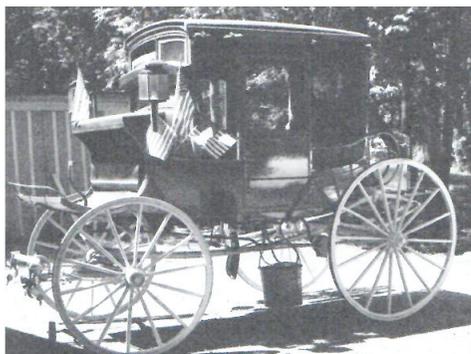
The date when local stagecoach travel through Springfield began is not known with certainty, but it is thought to have been prior to 1804. Further improvements to the Huntingdon path, the Boalsburg spur, and beyond made expanded stagecoach travel possible. Soon travelers would be able to travel from the eastern seaboard to Centre County and points westward. Travel from the eastern seaboard by 1804 would have probably coincided with the opening of the Boal Tavern and the building of a Springfield-Potters Mills toll road.



Early Boalsburg road sign

The cross-state Philadelphia-Pittsburgh stagecoach route was built piecemeal and came later. On the March 4, 1807, an act in the PA legislature was passed incorporating a company to construct a turnpike from Harrisburg through Lewistown and Huntingdon to Pittsburgh. A supplement to this act was passed in 1810 incorporating a company to construct the Huntingdon, Cambria, and Indiana Turnpike. The main stagecoach route would have left Philadelphia and traversed over the Lancaster Turnpike in route to Harrisburg. From there, it would have crossed Clark's Ferry, gone up the Huntingdon path, traversed over the Huntingdon, Cambria, Indiana Turnpike, and then on to Pittsburgh. The Springfield spur would have intersected this route at Lewistown and maybe at Water Street. It was unlikely this Springfield route would have been heavily used by through travelers. Through travel to and from Pittsburgh was not likely possible for several years after 1810. The activities of the "Lewis and Connelly gang" may have also discouraged the use the Lewisburg-Potter's Mills-Springfield-Spruce Creek route. A parallel road was also constructed during this same time frame from Ebensburg to Philipsburg, in Centre County. The implication to Springfield of this timing is that cross-state travel via stagecoach between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh may have not been possible until around 1812-1815.

Springfield and Boalsburg were at the intersection of several major roadways, was a gateway to the east, and provided ready access to Lewisburg and Northumberland, Lewistown, Harrisburg, Bellefonte,



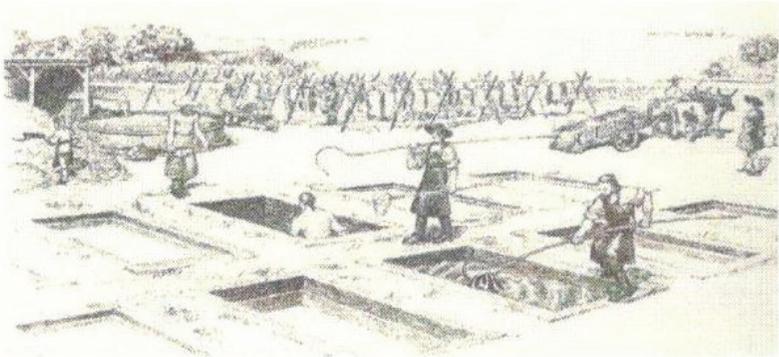
Early Stagecoach used for long journeys (Horner 2019)

and Spruce Creek. Thus, the villages of Springfield and Boalsburg became an important hub for local stagecoach travelers, traffic to the eastern seaboard, and later for cross-state travel. An added bonus was that overnight lodging was available.

INCREASED WAGON TRAFFIC LEADS TO SMALL BUSINESSES

The combination of farm traffic and the stagecoach led to business opportunities in Boalsburg because there was now a great demand to build and repair wagons and stagecoaches.

As early as 1801, a tannery was believed to have been operating on the top of Mt. Nittany. The operator was William Murray, son of Levi Murray. In 1804, Michael Jack had purchased property at the eastern end of Springfield. He dug tankard vats, and subsequently sold the property to William Murray. William Murray moved his tannery operation from Mt. Nittany to Springfield circa 1804.



Typical Configuration of an Early Colonial Tannery

In 1837, the tannery operation was purchased by Jonathan Mosser who operated the tannery until around the end of the century. Mr. Mosser owned considerable mountain land from which he harvested timber for the tanning process. He got water from a nearby spring via wooden pipes. Water was discharged into four 10' x 10' x 8' vats. After the hide was scraped and cleaned, it was put into a solution of ground bark. Oak bark made white leather, and hemlock bark made red leather. The power to grind the bark was supplied by a white horse named Charlie. Mr. Mosser hitched Charlie to a long arm that turned a grinding mill as Charlie walked in a circle.

Blacksmith shops opened during the early years of Springfield. Among the early shops was one located near the eastern end of Pitt Street and a second was located on Morris Street next to Mr.



A Blacksmith at Work

J. Logue's carriage shop on Morris (Academy) Street. Both were operated by Mr. Logue.

Blacksmiths were among the earliest craftsmen operating in Boalsburg. They were in high demand.

The skilled craftsman in a carriage shop was the wheelwright. Various names are associated with wheelwrights, such as wagonmaker, cartwright, and coachmaker. In

Colonial times, almost everything a man could not carry on his back or on a horse was moved on wheels via wagons. Therefore, wheelwrights were in very high demand. A carriage shop is closely associated with blacksmithing, and carriage shops were often located near blacksmith shops. The first carriage shop in Springfield was opened by James Loupe and was located on Morrison (Academy) Street. Soon thereafter, several other carriage shops opened.



A Wheelwright at Work

A principal early business catering to travelers was the tavern. Here travelers could get food and drink. An added plus was the luxury of overnight accommodations. While



Boal Tavern

all locales in the area had taverns, only Springfield and Boalsburg offered overnight accommodations. The Boal tavern opened 1804. In 1819, the Boalsburg Tavern opened. Both accommodated overnight travelers and had

barns for the horses. Springfield and Boalsburg became a favored overnight stop for both local and long-distance stagecoach travelers.

The establishment of businesses and road improvements led to increased wagon traffic through the village. More wagon traffic justified the establishment of businesses that catered specifically to the needs of the waggoners and travelers. These businesses were scattered throughout Springfield by 1804, signifying the growth of the region and Centre County.

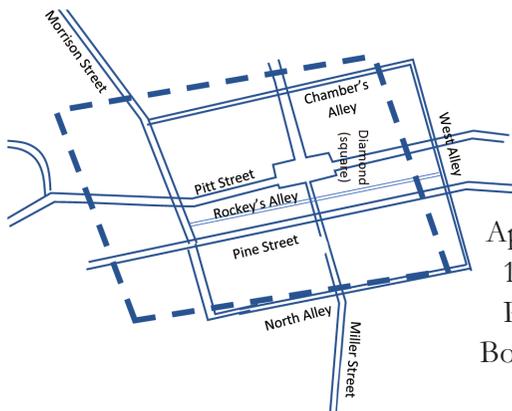
Probably after the stagecoach began operating, a number of small businesses emerged which would have catered to travelers from out-of-town. The items offered were more in the category of “luxury” items of the day. The artisans were a seamstress, boot makers, a gunsmith, a tinsmith, and more.

OTHER SIGNS OF GROWTH

The villages of Springfield and Boalsburg continued to grow as more traffic passed through the villages. One can often observe signs of growth by the opening of schools, establishing of post offices, and the building of churches.

Village Layout

In circa 1809 Andrew Stroup of Mifflin County purchased a sizeable tract of land in the area. He used this tract to layout portions of the villages of Springfield and Boalsburg. His layout consisted of ¼ acre lots which he sold for \$11+. The layout included a town square.



— — Approximate boundary of Andrew Stroup's 1809 layout

Approximate Layout of the 1809 Andrew Stroup Site Plan of Springfield and Boalsburg and Early Street Names of Boalsburg

First School

The first one-room school in Springfield opened in 1810. It was located on the western corner of Pitt (Main) Street and Loop Road across from the Boal Tavern.



First Boalsburg School



Boalsburg Tavern

EARLY HOUSING DENSITY

The early appearance of the village, in 1811 has been written was, “one house on the site of George B. Jack’s store, one situated where the academy building is now, one near to where Stover’s store is, and a tavern.” The tannery may have limited the density in the Springfield area due to its foul odor.

BIRTH OF EASTERN CENTRE COUNTY INDUSTRY

Before the War of 1812, the primary economic activity in the new nation involved the exportation of raw materials to factories

Europe where consumer products were produced. These products were then shipped back to America.

After the War of 1812, with the encouragement of the federal government, consumer and raw products began to be produced for consumption in America. Thus, the industry in eastern Centre County was born.

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Likely, one of the earliest cottage industries to emerge in Boalsburg was the production of flax. Flax plants were grown locally and then spun into fibers. The fibers of the flax plant were used for rope, twine, matting, cloth, and numerous other uses. Producing flax was very labor intensive and gradually, with the growth of slavery in the south and the widespread use of the cotton gin, cotton replaced flax for many uses. The industrial revolution further contributed to the demise of the flax cottage industry.



Cottage Industry

THE PROSPEROUS YEARS: 1820-1835

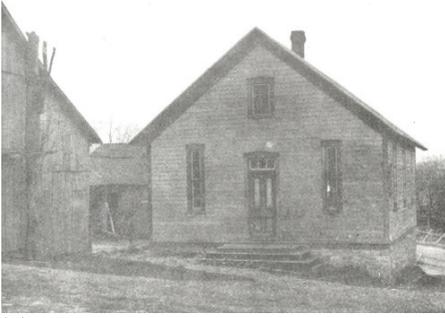
Beginning in 1790, there followed almost 50 years of growth and prosperity for the Boalsburg community. A key to this prosperity would seem to be the infusion of outside monies into the local economy. These monies supported local craftsmen and artisans.

The businesses and activities that brought in outside monies to Boalsburg were the wagon traffic passing through the village, the stagecoach traffic, the mills in Oak Hall that hired Boalsburg workers, farming, and to a lesser extent, loggers clear-cutting Tussey Mountain. Various furnaces in the area contributed a minor amount.

FIRST POST OFFICE

In 1820, the U.S. Postal Service decided to establish a post office in the Springfield/Boalsburg area. When the post office was established in 1820, the postal address of the town became officially known as Boalsburg, by vote of the citizens of the two villages. Because of the Postal Service, the two villages became one. It is not known if the village was named after David Boal, Sr. or David Boal, Jr. or just the Boal family.

The first Boalsburg postmaster was Col. John Hassen. He was appointed in 1820. Initially, a mail drop location was at the discretion of the Postmaster. Legend has it that the first drop off point was a hollow tree, but this point cannot be confirmed. Later, the mail drop



The Upper Schoolhouse in Oak Hall

may have been moved to the Boalsburg Tavern. This point cannot be confirmed either. It was later moved to a room in the Sarah Johnson home. Sometime later, the drop off point was moved to a narrow brick building, built in 1835.

This building is immediately east of what is known today as Duffy's Tavern. The move may have been made in 1847 or 1848. With this move, Boalsburg finally had a Post Office building.

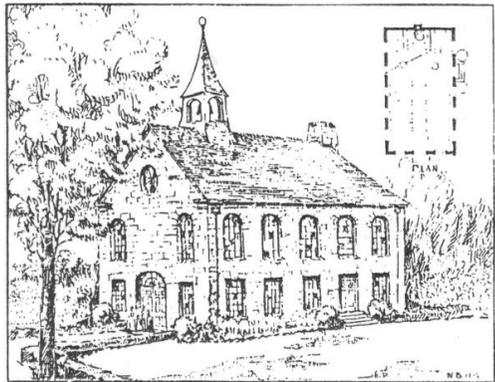
THE TWO VILLAGES BECOME ONE

In 1820, the postal address of the two villages became officially known as Boalsburg. With one postal address, the two villages became one.

CHURCHES

Around circa 1820, two church congregations began meeting in the upper schoolhouse in Oak Hall. The two congregations were a St. John's German Reformed Congregation and a Lutheran Congregation. In 1822, the St. John's German Reformed Congregation became recognized as an official Church. A year later, the Lutheran Congregation followed suit. The two churches continued to meet in the schoolhouse for the next 4-5 years.

In 1825, the two churches decided to jointly construct a church building in Boalsburg. It was dedicated in 1827 as



The Old Stone Church

the Zion Union Church. It soon became known as the “Old Stone Church.” The accompanying sketch differs somewhat from the written descriptions of the Zion Union Church, but it is the only pictorial description of the Church. The artist and date are unknown.

The opening of the Boalsburg cemetery is thought to have coincided approximately with the dedication of the “Old Stone Church,” in 1827.



Possible Remains of the
“Old Stone Church”

the number of Methodists. They were firmly opposed to the sale of whiskey. At the time there were numerous distilleries in the area, and public drunkardness among all classes was problematic in Boalsburg. The second factor leading to temperance organizations was an awakening of public opinion against the evils of drinking.

In 1832, a temperance society was founded in the village. It is thought to be the first formal organization of its type in Boalsburg. There were two factors leading to the establishment of the temperance organization. The first factor was the growth nationally in



Oldest Part of Boalsburg Cemetery

In 1833, a Methodist church was built on Pine Street near the present-day Fire Hall. This congregation was small and became inactive circa 1872. The Church and building no longer exist.

SCHOOLS

Sometime prior to 1860, the school on Pitt Street was moved to Pine Street just east of the Methodist Church building. The new school building was supposedly a one story, brick structure that was remodeled into a two story, frame structure.



The Boalsburg School on Pine Street

OAK HALL MILLS

The development of Boalsburg was led by the opening of various mills and small businesses that sprang up in the Oak Hall-Dale's Mills area during the decade of the 1820s. There were two woolen mills, a hemp mill, a clover mill, several sawmills, two gristmills, a brick mill, and several blacksmith shops. James Irwin built a brick mill in



The Croft Kettle Mill,
Lower Merion Township

1822 and called it the Irwin mill. John Irwin of Linden Hall, James' father, built many of these mills. These mills employed numerous workers from Boalsburg and the surrounding area. The importance of these mills should not be overlooked. Outside money flowed into Oak Hall, and subsequently, into Boalsburg in the form of employee wages.

Boalsburg did not develop mills, but instead was content in providing a workforce for the mills in Oak Hall. The outside monies resulting from the Oak Hall Mills, the stagecoach, and wagon traffic, fueled the growth in the number of craftsmen and artisans in Boalsburg.

By the mid 1830s the Coxey family from Lancaster County, had developed the Irwin brick mill into a woolen mill. The earliest reference to the Irwin brick mill as a woolen mill dates to 1836.

Most farmers in the area raised sheep and sold or bartered their wool to the mill. The mill also had wool suppliers from as far away as Clearfield.

The Irwin woolen mill was a three story facility. On the first floor, the wool was finished. On the second floor, the wool was cleaned, carded, and spun, and on the third floor, the wool was woven into cloth and blankets.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

By the mid 1830s, Boalsburg had three Church Congregations: St. John's German Reformed, Zion Lutheran, and Methodist. The first Methodist Church was organized in 1832, and the Methodist church building was erected in Boalsburg in 1833. Because of the vastness of the Methodist charge and the fact that circuit ministers visited rather infrequently, the Methodist Church in Boalsburg never became very large.

By 1830, Boalsburg was an important transportation hub between Bellefonte, Old Fort and Centre Hall, Linden Hall, and probably other locations. Boalsburg was strategically located on the way to Potters Mills, an entry/exit point to all locations to the east. Boalsburg was a funnel point for much of the local wagon traffic seeking access to the east via seven mountains. There would have been much wagon traffic passing through Boalsburg.

Boalsburg had a school, a post office, and three churches. Additionally, there were two taverns, numerous small businesses, and stagecoach service to many locales.

But by the mid-1830s, other competitive stagecoach lines had opened to the west, particularly routes in the southern part of the state, and the route through Boalsburg began a slow, steady decline. One of the disadvantages of the Boalsburg route was having to negotiate seven mountains. Any monopoly Boalsburg may have had on very early stagecoach travel between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh was short-lived.

A river-canal-rail system between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh opened in 1834. This system included the Allegheny Portage Railroad, and it further eroded stagecoach traffic on all Pennsylvania turnpikes. Travelers could now journey between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia on the river-canal-rail system in three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half days.

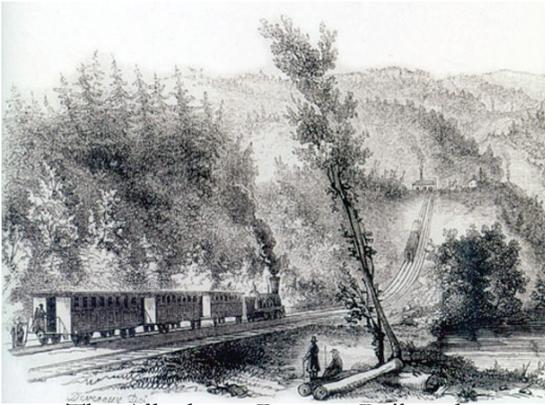
In 1835, Harris Township was established. It was named after James Harris who was a founder of Bellefonte, as well as its first postmaster (1798) and its first state senator.

A STRONG ECONOMY

By 1835, Boalsburg was a thriving village. It was able to produce products and sell materials to bring in sufficient outside monies to sustain the economy. Three businesses led the way in the move towards a stable and sustaining economy. These were the mills between Oak Hall and Lemont, logging on Tussey mountain, and the various small iron ore operations around the region.

THE COMING OF THE IRON HORSE

One of the more significant and early developments of the industrial revolution was the railroad. Railroads in America can be traced back to 1815 when Col. John Stevens acquired the first charter in North America for the New Jersey Railroad (NJRR) Company. The Camden and Amboy Railroad line, as it was later called, was not constructed until 1832. The NJRR later became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad's sprawling network. Col. Stevens is recognized by many as the father of American railroads.



The Allegheny-Portage Railroad

The coming of an all-rail Pennsylvania Railroad route between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh over the horseshoe curve in Altoona in 1854 shredded cross-state travel time to 13 hours and also cut the fare from \$9.50 to

\$8.00. Within a decade, Pennsylvanians could travel to almost any location in the state in a single day.

The coming of the railroad had a profound effect on the Boalsburg and the surrounding region. As the Pennsylvania Railroad expanded into small communities throughout the state, Boalsburg and many other communities became isolated. Wagon traffic down Boalsburg Pike began to diminish as more and more freight was transported via rail.



Railroads isolated many small communities like Boalsburg, Oak Hall, and Linden Hall

STORM CLOUDS BREWING: 1836-1860

The period 1836-1860 was an unsettling time in America. The founding fathers had passed and were replaced by a new group of statesmen, whose vision for the country was different than before. Slavery and regional differences were topics of the day. The Louisiana Purchase had provided vast territory for America to expand.

Throughout this period, the topic that was on everyone's mind was slavery. It was fiercely debated. Whenever a state applied for statehood, the question was always whether the state would be a slave state or free. But in 1848 when California applied for statehood, their application posed a unique problem. The dividing line between slave state and free state established by the Missouri Compromise of 1820 passed through the middle of California. A fierce battle in Congress ensued.

The Industrial Revolution was bringing about vast changes in America. America had greatly changed in 50 short years and would continue to change throughout the remainder of the century.

THE PANIC OF 1837

The Panic of 1837 was a financial crisis in the United States that touched off a major recession that lasted until circa 1848. Profits, prices, and wages went down while unemployment went

up. Pessimism abounded during the time. During the “Panic,” banks collapsed, businesses failed, prices declined, and thousands of workers lost their jobs. Unemployment may have been as high as 25% in some locales. The years 1837 to 1844 were generally speaking years of deflation in wages and prices.

Those producing pig iron and operating furnaces were hit particularly hard. The price received per ton for pig iron declined by about 40% or more. In Pennsylvania more than half of the furnaces failed. Also, a third of the forges and 18% of its rolling mills failed. In Centre County, five of the nine larger ironworks failed.

There were many causes. Among them were new, cost-efficient technologies used by English iron producing competitors and a reduction in American tariff rates. Tariff rates had been fiercely debated in the U.S. Congress for about 40 years. The consequences of the “Panic” and the coming of the railroad were harbingers of things to come that would plague Boalsburg for years. The Panic of 1837 signified the end of an extended period of prosperity for Boalsburg.

CHANGES IN POSTAL SERVICE

In 1847, the U. S. Postmaster General issued the first two U. S. postage stamps bearing the likenesses of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, the country’s first Postmaster General. It cost 5 cents to mail a letter weighing less than 1 oz that was going 300 miles or less. In Boalsburg, it may have been about this time that the postal drop off point in Boalsburg was moved to the narrow,



First U. S. Postage Stamps, 1847

two story brick building next to the Boalsburg Tavern, because a more secure facility was needed than a simple drop off point. The exact date of this move is unknown.

THE HORSESHOE CURVE

In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Railroad was formed in 1847. By 1854, the horseshoe curve near Altoona was completed, and an all-rail link between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh was established. This link significantly reduced cross-state travel time and fares. As a result, the Allegheny Portage Railroad ceased operation in 1855.

Pennsylvania Railroad route between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh over the horseshoe curve shredded cross-state travel time to 13 hours and also cut the fare from \$9.50 to \$8.00. Within a decade, Pennsylvanians could travel to almost any location in the state in a single day.

THE END OF THE STAGECOACH

By around 1855 came the end of long distance stagecoach travel through Boalsburg. Some local traffic may have lasted a brief time longer. This was a significant blow to the local Boalsburg economy as much of the local economy was based on travelers passing through the village. With the end of stagecoach service, growth of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the closing of the many smaller iron furnaces Boalsburg became a sleepy, little, isolated farming community.

By 1850, many of the lots in the original Andrew Stroup layout had been sold, including most on the eastern end of the village, and in 1853, the Boalsburg Academy on Morris (Academy) Street was established. It was established through the hard work of Rev. Peter Fisher (St. John's German Reformed Church), Honorable George Boal, Henry Keller, and George Jack. It was largely established for the liberal citizens of the town and vicinity. Money for the project was raised by selling stock at \$25 per share. A two story frame building was erected in 1853. The first floor of the Academy building was used for worship by a new Presbyterian Congregation, and the Academy occupied the second floor.



Farmers' High School circa 1860, State College, PA

THE COMING OF PENN STATE

The promotion of agriculture and the sharing of information was the impetus for the call by the Agricultural Society of Pennsylvania for a new Farmers' High School. In 1855, James Irvin of Oak Hall and Moses Thompson offered 200-250 acres of Centre Furnace land to establish the Farmers' High School, the forerunner of The Pennsylvania State University. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania chartered the school as one of the nation's first colleges of agricultural sciences with a goal to apply scientific principles to farming.

THE LOGGING INDUSTRY

The Central Pennsylvania logging industry had its beginnings in the early 19th century and became a major enterprise around the middle part of the 19th century. In the early part of the 19th century, logs were transported to collecting locations like Williamsport and then floated down the Susquehanna River. The introduction of the steam train to the mountains of Pennsylvania brought about significant changes in Pennsylvania's timber industry. The white pine forests had been largely harvested by about 1840, and lumbermen now sought access to the vast stands of hemlock.



Early 19th Century Logging

Railroad companies like the Jersey Shore, Pine Creek and Buffalo Railway opened and built tracks into parts of the mountains that had been previously impossible or too difficult to access. The railroads were

able to remove and transport more trees faster than the old system of floating logs down creeks and rivers. As a result, the decline of the old growth forests accelerated. In addition to rapidly removing the timber, sparks and embers tossed out by the passing steam engines set off forest fires that devastated the saplings that had risen up to take the place of the old growth forests. With the introduction of steam, the Pennsylvania logging industry began a slow, steady decline.

By 1855, Tussey Mountain and Nittany Mountain were largely bare. Since reforestation practices were poor or nil, it would take decades for the green forest we enjoy today to return to Happy Valley.

THE VILLAGE'S ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The village as originally laid out by Andrew Stroup in 1809 was a rectangular grid configuration of $\frac{1}{4}$ acre lots. This layout was developed primarily between the years 1809 and 1850 and reflects the village's earliest architectural, spatial, and cultural history during its growth to prominence as a major village in the early horse and wagon transit system. The structures within the original layout strongly suggests a strong European-British influence in urban planning which is characterized by the use of such elements as the rectangular grid arrangement of streets, a public diamond or market area, narrow street widths, and the rather small, but closely

situated spatial arrangement of houses. Within the main grid two architectural types of structures evolved during its major growth period (1809-1850). The first is the log cabin style and the second is the Georgian style.

During the village's early historic period perhaps the most important establishments were log structures. Many still survive although the log character of most is hidden by exterior siding. The earliest structure that still exists in Boalsburg is the Boal Mansion. David Boal, Sr. built what is now the kitchen area in 1789. The second oldest structure still existing in Boalsburg was originally a log structure built by the Millers on Harmony Plantation. This structure was built in 1802, and today, it is called "The Tanner House." Another early log structure was the David Boal, Jr. Boal Tavern built in 1804. This inn was in operation for 30 years and a portion of the original structure remains. The Tait farmhouse was built in 1837 just east of the village. The log part of the house rests on a foundation of stone and timber. The Wolf' Tavern is a two story, five bay, log structure which was built 1834. Many structures built before 1835 were log structures.

The second architectural style evident from early Boalsburg is Georgian. The earliest example of Georgian architecture is the Stroup house, which is built of native limestone. Another structure from this period is the John Hess House, a two story, three bay, brick structure built in 1826 using the traditional-Georgian side hall plan.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The ironworks at Centre Furnace had opened for business in 1792. But due to deaths in the ownership and changes in management, the ironworks ceased operation in 1809. In 1826, the ironworks at Centre Furnace was purchased and reopened. It continued production until 1858. In 1858, Centre Furnace closed permanently.

The first band in Boalsburg, The Boal Band, was organized before the Civil War. At its height, there were 24 members. Their

uniforms were grey with black facings. They had brass buttons. Each band member had an instrument, purchased by the Boal family, possibly George. The band was awarded prizes in public contests, one of these being at Bellefonte.

In Boalsburg village, the Congregation of the St. John's German Reformed Church built a parsonage for Rev. William H. Groh on Morris Street (now Academy Street) in 1857.



Academy Street Parsonage.

In 1857, the U. S. Supreme Court issued its decision in the Dred Scott case. In 1834, Dred Scott, a slave, had been taken from Missouri, a slave state, to Illinois, a free state, and then to Wisconsin territory, where the Missouri Compromise of 1820 prohibited slavery. Scott lived in Wisconsin with his master, Dr. John Emerson, for several years before returning to Missouri, a slave state. In 1846, after Emerson died, Scott sued his master's widow for his freedom on the grounds that he had lived as a resident of a free state and territory.

Dred Scott won his freedom in a lower court, but the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision. In the U. S. Supreme Court,



Dred Scott

rendered by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court's verdict further inflamed the irrepressible differences in America over the issue of slavery.

three of the southern justices ruled that African Americans who were slaves or whose ancestors were slaves were not entitled to the rights of federal citizen and therefore had no standing in court.

These rulings confirmed that, in the view of the nation's highest court, under no condition did Dred Scott have the legal right to request his freedom. Today, the Dred Scott decision is considered by many to be the worst decision ever

ECONOMIC DECLINE

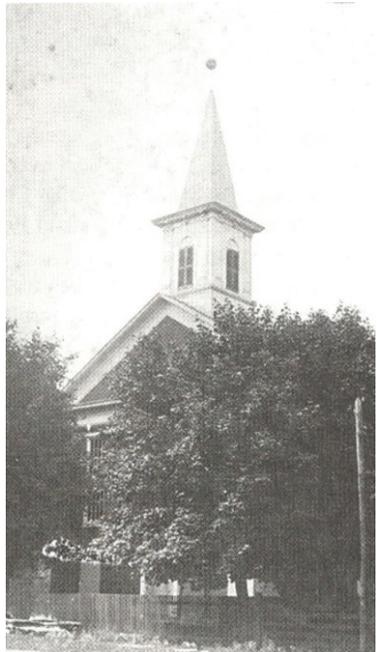
The stagecoach line through Boalsburg had ceased operation by 1860; although the exact date is unknown. This left the economy of Boalsburg dependent on wagon traffic and on various mills and businesses along Spring Creek at Oak Hall. Fortunately, Boalsburg was still a funnel point for much of the local wagon traffic seeking access to the east via seven mountains. Unfortunately, the Oak Hall mills and logging were at the beginning of a state of decline.

THE CIVIL WAR ERA: 1861-1875

In 1861, many southern states succeeded from the union. Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, was bombarded, and the Civil War began.

CHURCHES

In 1860, the St. John's German Reformed Church sold their interest in the Old Stone Church to the Zion Lutheran Church for \$3.50 and began building a new church of their own on Miller Street (Church) Street. It was the third church building built in Boalsburg. The first was the Old Stone Church building erected in 1827. The second was the Methodist Church built in 1833. A fourth church was built in 1892 by a Presbyterian Congregation on the site of the original Boalsburg Academy. Nothing is known about what happened to this congregation.



St. John's German Reformed Church, Circa 1870

The new St. John's German Reformed Church was dedicated in May, 1862. The construction of a new church is indicative of the past growth of Boalsburg.

In 1868, the Zion Union Church (Old Stone Church) was torn down due to structural deficiencies and the Zion Lutheran Church was built on the same site.

In that same year, the St. John's German Reformed Church installed a new pipe organ. It was the first pipe organ in Centre County. The organ was built by Charles F. Dürner of Quakertown, PA. Today, Mr. Dürner is recognized as one of the finest American organ makers of the 19th century.

COMPANY G, 148TH PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS

When President Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteers to serve in the Army of the Potomac in 1862, 127 men from Boalsburg answered the call.

Enrollment at the Boalsburg Academy was interrupted by the Civil War as about 75% of its male students joined the army. The class met in the "Old Stone Church" in August 1862 and formed Company G of the 148th Pennsylvania Volunteers.

The battle of Gettysburg is thought to have been particularly impactful to Boalsburg. In total, 55 young men from Boalsburg fought in the Civil War and are buried in the Boalsburg cemetery. Those killed in action were a significant loss for a community the size of Boalsburg. One of the soldiers that died was Dr. Reuben Hunter. Dr. Hunter was an Assistant Surgeon, and he died from typhoid fever in September 1864.

DECORATION (MEMORIAL) DAY

In October, 1864, several ladies from Boalsburg gathered at the Boalsburg Cemetery to decorate the grave of Dr. Hunter. One of the ladies was Emma Hunter Reuben's daughter. Accompanying her were Sophie Keller and Elizabeth Meyer. There is some disagreement in the written accounts of this event. Some writings

say there were three participants; other accounts say there were two. While decorating Dr. Hunter's grave, it was suggested that it would be appropriate to decorate the graves of every soldier buried there, particularly members of the 148th Pennsylvania Volunteers, of which there were many. Thus, the tradition of decorating the graves of Civil War soldiers began.



The Memorial Day Statue in the Boalsburg Cemetery

During the first few years, decorating the graves became an annual tradition that seemed to occur each July 4. The celebration in the early years was more like a prayer meeting than a patriotic service. Eventually, the march to the cemetery became a community event, a practice that continues today. First came the drum corps, with Jonathan Cramer playing the fife (small flute). Next came the women and girls carrying flowers, and finally the line of returned soldiers.

On May 8, 1868 General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic issued a proclamation to honor those who died “in defense of their country during the late rebellion” by decorating the soldier's graves. Known to some as “Decoration Day,” mourners honored the Civil War dead by decorating their graves with flowers.

On the first Decoration Day, May 30, 1868, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, after which 5,000 participants helped to decorate the graves of the more than

20,000 Civil War soldiers who were buried in the cemetery. The first organized celebration of Decoration Day in Boalsburg occurred on May 30, 1869.

After WWI, the federal government declared the last Monday in May to be called Memorial Day as a day to honor all Americans who have died in military service for the United States.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

In 1794, Eli Whitney had invented the cotton gin, which made the separation of cotton seed from the fiber much faster. The South increased its cotton production, sending raw cotton north to be used in the New England textile industry. The cotton gin revolutionized the cotton industry in the United States, but also had led to the growth of slavery in the South as the demand for cotton workers rapidly increased. Thus, this invention has been identified as an inadvertent factor contributing to the Civil War.

Francis C. Lowell increased the efficiency in cloth manufacturing by bringing the spinning and weaving processes together into one factory. This led to the dominance of the textile industry throughout New England.

All of these factors contributed to the urbanization of America as new industries lured people from the farm to the city. Labor would also change, particularly in the first decades of the 20th century, as workers gained new economic and political power with major unions like the American Federation of Labor, founded in 1886.

Boalsburg was affected in not so obvious ways. The Panic of 1837 had caused many hardships to the Boalsburg workforce and farmers. As a result, the population of Boalsburg and the County began migrating to the cities and industrial centers. With the coming of the Civil War, there was a demand for large amounts of war materials. Large factories, especially textile mills, were built in New England. These mills were much larger and more efficient than the small mills located along Spring Creek. The Oak Hall mills could not compete, and by the mid 1870s, most of the mills in Oak Hall



Typical New England Textile Mill

were out-of-business. The Oak Hall mills may have lost lucrative government contracts because they could not supply the quantity required.

RECONSTRUCTION

The Union victory in the Civil War in 1865 may have given some four million slaves their freedom, but the process of rebuilding the South during the Reconstruction period (1865-1876) introduced significant challenges. During the administration of President Andrew Johnson, in 1865 and 1866, new southern state legislatures passed restrictive “black codes” to control the labor and behavior of African Americans. Outrage in the North over these codes eroded support for the approach known as Presidential Reconstruction and led to the triumph of a more radical wing of the Republican Party. During Radical Reconstruction, which began in 1867, newly enfranchised blacks gained a voice in government for the first time in American history, winning election to southern state legislatures and even to the U.S. Congress. In less than a decade, however, reactionary forces—such as the Ku Klux Klan—would reverse the advances made during Radical Reconstruction in a violent backlash that restored white supremacy in much of the South.

The violence was mainly limited to the South and border states, especially Missouri. A few local KKK organizations emerged in southern Pennsylvania. Boalsburg seemed to escape the violence.

TRANSITION TO MOTORIZED TRAVEL: 1876-1914

The Industrial Revolution accelerated after the Panic of 1837 and transformed the nation during the last half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The technological advancements made during this period changed lives, made vast fortunes for a few, and positioned the nation for its rise as a global superpower. The industrial revolution had its biggest impact in three key areas: transportation, industry, and electrification.

Probably the first major development of the industrial revolution was in the area of transportation via the railroad. By the start of the Civil War, railroads had already linked the most important Midwestern cities with the Atlantic coast. With the construction of the transcontinental railroad beginning in 1869 and the standardization of rail gauges in the 1880s, the railroad quickly became the dominant form of transit for both people and freight.

By the last half of the 19th century (1800s), many of the Boalsburg businesses from the early years were either gone or in decline. Four primary factors seem to have led to their demise. These were: the industrial revolution, the disappearance of the stagecoach travel, depletion of natural resources, and the coming of the railroad.

The Irvin mill survived as a grist mill until 1948. With the closing of most or all of the mills in Oak Hall, the closing of most

local iron ore furnaces, the Centre Furnace closing, the stagecoach out of business, and the railroad having isolated the village, difficult times were ahead for Boalsburg. All that was left to fuel the local economy was logging. But logging too was in a serious state of decline due to over logging and poor or no reforestation practices. The economic prosperity that Boalsburg had enjoyed during 1820 to 1835 had changed.

THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Railroad was formed in 1847. By 1854, the horseshoe curve was completed and an all rail link between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh was established. By 1876 Pennsylvanians could travel to almost any location in the state in a single day.

Part of the Philadelphia-Pittsburgh link followed the Juniata River, thereby by-passing Boalsburg. The stagecoach could not compete and had gone out of business. Boalsburg had become largely isolated, as were many other villages and towns.

In 1884, a railroad was built from Bellefonte to Centre Hall and on to Lewisburg. A depot was built at Oak Hall, and the village became known as Oak Hall Station.

As the nation expanded, so too did the railroads. By 1916, there would be more than 230,000 miles of rails in the U.S., and passenger traffic would continue to grow until the end of World War II, when the car and the airplane became dominate.

PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION INVENTIONS

In 1885, Karl Benz, a German engineer, developed a gasoline-powered automobile. This is considered to be the first “production” vehicle as Benz made several other identical copies. The automobile was powered by a single cylinder four-stroke engine.

Early automobiles were very expensive and beyond the reach of ordinary Americans. After the turn of the century, Henry Ford’s assembly line processes made automobiles affordable to a large



Ford Model T Roadster

portion of the population. It seems everyone needed a Model T, or Tin Lizzie. Ford produced the Model T from 1908 through 1927.

Many cars of that era were open, and if you wanted a roof, you had to have one

custom made. In Boalsburg, some carriage makers began shifting from making wagons and carriages to customizing automobiles.

Gottlieb Daimler developed what he called Vehicle no. 42 in 1896. This automobile provided the first truck concept as a horseless wagon with a 4-hp, 2-cylinder engine. Vehicle no. 42 was advertised to pull 3,300 pounds.



Vehicle no. 42 revolutionized farming practices

Mack Trucks, Inc. was founded in 1900 in Brooklyn, New York by Jack and Gus Mack. It was originally known as the Mack Brothers Company. The British government purchased and employed the Mack AC model to transport food and equipment to its troops during World War I. The extensive use of standardized parts all but eliminated the need for blacksmiths. Truck traffic on Boalsburg Pike began to replace wagon traffic.

REGIONAL INDUSTRY-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

The water supply in eastern Centre County was insufficient to support heavy industry. But in 1881, industrialist Andrew Carnegie bought 400 acres of land and took a 99-year lease on about 300 more acres from Moses Thompson four miles west of State College in the area known as the Pine Barrens. His interest in the area was focused on iron ore. He used this naturally occurring mineral to make steel in his mills in Pittsburgh. The area where his mine was

once located is now the Scotia Shooting Range which the PA Game Commission maintains for public use.

Initially, the closest rail station to the mine at Scotia was in Julian, and the first several thousand tons of iron ore were carted over rough roads to the rail line in Julian by mule driven carts. Due to its proximity to the Pennsylvania Railroad, the mine got off to a good start. Later, Carnegie built a railroad from the mine to Julian. This railroad was eventually connected to the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and it took 250 tons daily of Patton Township iron ore to the steel mills in Pittsburgh.

Sometime about 1890, Andrew Carnegie saw that the iron ore from the Scotia mine was quickly being depleted and he lost interest in the area. Carnegie sold the Scotia mining operation in 1899 to the Bellefonte Furnace Company which operated it until 1909.

The town of Scotia was built by Carnegie and was named for Carnegie's homeland of Scotland. Scotia was a bustling mining town of some 400 people complete with a school, a church, and even a civic center that housed a small library. The town grew from humble roots into a fine place to live. On summer nights, the town's baseball team would provide recreation for the people, and the town's band, the Forest Cornet Band, would provide entertainment. But by 1911, Scotia was a ghost town. The town has long since suffered the same fate as many other small logging and mining towns that once dotted central Pennsylvania.

ELECTRICITY COMES TO THE BOALSBURG

Thomas Edison patented the world's first practical incandescent lightbulb in 1879. He quickly began promoting the development of an electrical grid in New York City to power his invention. Electricity would not come to Boalsburg until 1914.

With the coming of electricity, electric motors, lathes, etc., more and more items were made using standardized parts and components. Standardization made assembly lines practical. On the local level, standardization and mass production meant there was a



Power House of the Boalsburg
Electric Company

greatly decreased demand for carriage shops and blacksmith shops.

In July 1914, the Boalsburg Electric Company was formed. Thus, Boalsburg became a part of the surge in America that had begun to utilize technology to generate electricity. It was recog-

nized by villagers in Boalsburg that small-scale hydropower systems could capture the energy in flowing water and convert it into cheap, clean electricity. Following successful litigation with the State College Water Company over water rights, a small hydroelectric plant was constructed in close proximity to where the tannery had been located and just east of the Boalsburg Heritage Museum. The power generated was limited. Electricity was turned on around dusk and tuned off about 10:00 p.m.

28TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The 28th infantry division is a unit of the Army National Guard and is the oldest division-sized unit in the armed forces of the United States. Some of the units of the division can trace their lineage to Benjamin Franklin's battalion, The Pennsylvania Associators (1747-1777). The division was officially established in 1879 and was later designated as the 28th Division in 1917, after the entry of America into the First World War. The "Boal Troop", a horse-mounted machine gun unit, was part of the 28th Division.

The 28th Division is today part of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, Maryland Army National Guard, Ohio Army National Guard, and New Jersey Army National Guard.

The Division was originally nicknamed the "Keystone Division," as it was formed from units of the Pennsylvania Army National

Guard. During World War II, it acquired the nickname the “Bloody Bucket” division by German forces due to its red insignia. But today the 28th infantry division goes by the name given to it by General Pershing during World War I: the “Iron Division.” The 28th is one of the most decorated infantry divisions in the United States Army.

OTHER BOALSBURG DEVELOPMENTS

Of the various fraternal organizations, the oldest in Boalsburg is the I.O.O. F. No. 894. It was organized in 1874. In 1903, the Maccabees were organized. In 1910, the Knights of Malta were organized. The Woman’s Civic Club was another organization. It was organized in 1911. Among their notable activities, they assumed a debt of \$117.93 for the street lamps in the village. Additionally, they held festivals on the evening of Decoration Day.

Boalsburg could not support four churches, and probably in the 1870s, members of the Boal family bought the old Methodist Church which was not being used at the time. They offered it to the town to be used as a library, reading room, and town hall. It eventually became a vocational school and then the fire hall. The original Church building may have been demolished or remodeled to accommodate its newer usages.



Hand Truck Owned by the Boalsburg Fire Company

In 1892, the Boalsburg Fire Company was established. Col. Theodore Boal is given credit for its organization. A hand truck was purchased from the State College Fire Company. The fire company was supported periodically by the Woman’s Civic Club of Boalsburg.

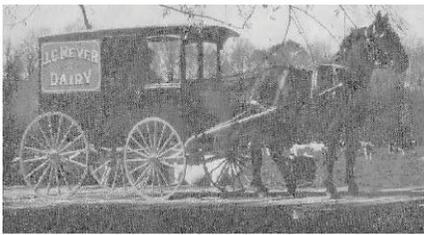
The Boalsburg Academy was permanently closed in the 1880s. The last class at the Academy had only 24 students. The closing of the Academy was possibly a sign of the declining population in the region.

At the time the Academy closed, the area on the second floor of the building occupied by the Academy was taken over by the Harris Township School Board who used it as a high school. The building was eventually deemed unsafe in 1892. The building and lot were purchased by the Presbyterian Congregation in 1892. They demolished the original structure, and built a new house of worship in 1892. This second structure still stands on Morris (Academy) Street.

In 1893, the stock market crashed, and the country was thrust into a great depression. Nationally, some 600 banks failed. The economic downturn likely had a devastating effect on any remaining mills along Spring Creek in Oak Hall. There was likely little outside money flowing into Boalsburg. The stock market crash likely accelerated the demise of the Pennsylvania logging industry. There was no more timber in the Boalsburg area.

The first water company in Boalsburg was organized in 1897. Water was obtained from a spring on Murray Mountain. It sufficed until the citizenry decided they wanted to add baths to their homes.

In 1910, Meyer Dairy Farm commissioned Wheeland Bros. Carriage Shop in Boalsburg to build a horse-drawn milk wagon.



The Meyer Dairy carriage, 1910

It was probably one of the last such carriages built by a carriage shop in Boalsburg. It can still be seen in the Meyer Dairy store between State College and Boalsburg on US 322.

By the turn of the century, Boalsburg's prosperous economy was largely gone. The economy was mainly reliant on agriculture. The tannery was closed. The tannery was one of the last links to the beginnings of Boalsburg. Centre Furnace was closed, the stagecoach was no longer operational, and most of the craftsmen and artisans, like coopers, tinsmiths, and hatters were either gone or no longer in business. Most of the businesses in Oak Hall were out of business.

DIFFICULT TIMES: 1915-1975

Generally speaking, the 20th century was a quiet one for the community of Boalsburg. The economy of Boalsburg, which for a hundred years or more had been largely based on horse-drawn traffic, was now replaced by motorized traffic. The consequences were that businesses closed, and there was a declining population. From 1918 to 1921, the region had to cope with the devastating effects of the Spanish Influenza pandemic. Little of significance happened in the village.

The 20th century was largely dominated by national and international events rather than local ones. The country was engaged in four wars fought entirely on foreign soil. Meanwhile, nationally the country had to endure a decade-long economic depression. World War II interrupted plans for growth as the United States switched to a war-time economy. For example, Chrysler and Ford became leading producers of planes and tanks. As the country left the Great Depression in the past, it was faced with the Cold War. There was the constant menace of communism and threat of nuclear war. As the population began to expand in the 1950s, there were few jobs available in the rural United States.

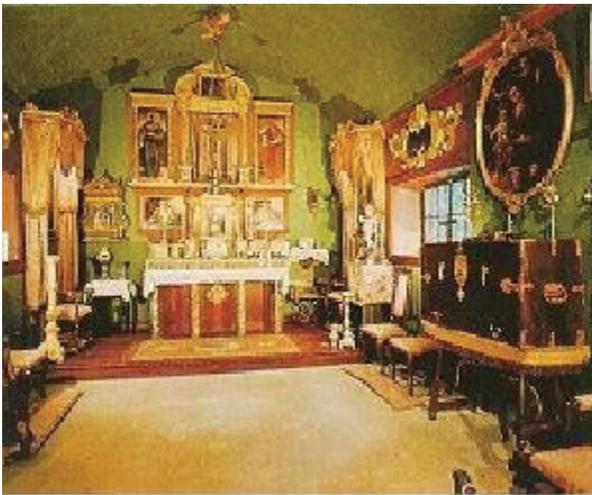
WORLD WAR I (THE GREAT WAR)

The First World War lasted from August 1914 until the final Armistice with Germany on November 11, 1918. Twenty-one veterans of WWI are buried in the Boalsburg cemetery. As in the Civil War, the village of Boalsburg and surrounding villages suffered a comparatively large number of casualties. The high number of casualties in the region highlighted the Army's draftee assignment policy. A draftee was allowed to enlist with his hometown pals and be assigned to the same unit together. If that unit became engaged in a heavy firefight, a large number of casualties from the same locale could occur. This policy was changed before World War II.

The Boal Machine Gun troop was part of the 28th division and served during the war.

THE INFLUENCE OF THEODORE BOAL

Col. Theodore Boal was involved in companies that brought water, electricity, fire, telephone and public transportation service to the region. His wife was a distant relative of Christopher Columbus. She inherited artifacts of Christopher Columbus, and in 1919 Theodore Boal brought these artifacts from Spain to Boalsburg and opened the Columbus Chapel.



The Columbus Chapel

SPANISH INFLUENZA

About half the battlefield deaths in the Great War were from diseases rather than battlefield wounds. The trenches were a highly susceptible environment for the spread of disease, and army medicine and hospitals were primitive compared to modern standards.

Diseases were not limited to soldiers. Before the Great War ended in Nov. 1918, the Spanish Influenza pandemic had already begun. By 1921 the pandemic had infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide—about one-third of the planet's population—and killed an estimated 20-50 million victims, including some 675,000 Americans. In Boalsburg area, there was an unknown number of deaths. A rough estimate of the deaths in Centre County is over 200.

During the pandemic, there was little interaction among the citizens for fear of contracting the deadly disease. Streets were deserted most of the time. Churches ceased to function in their normally accustomed manner.

In 1930, West Penn Power Co. purchased the Boalsburg Electric Co. and began delivering reliable 24-hour electric service to the region. Soon the entire region was able to listen to “fireside chats” on their new-fangled, electric-powered radio.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In 1917, as the United States entered World War I, President Woodrow Wilson instituted a temporary wartime prohibition on the production of alcoholic beverages in order to save grain for food. That same year, Congress submitted the 18th amendment to the Constitution to the states for ratification. The proposed amendment banned the manufacture, transportation and sale of intoxicating liquors. The amendment was ratified on January 29, 1919 and went into effect a year later. Homemade whiskey was made in utmost secrecy, as violators of the 18th amendment were put in jail.

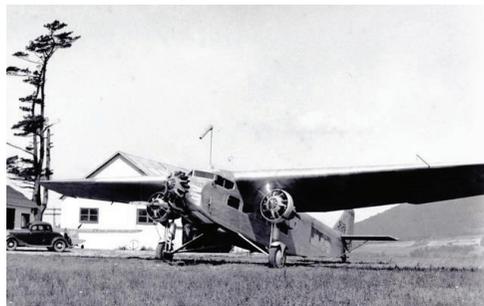
The high price of bootleg liquor meant that the nation's working class and poor were impacted far more during Prohibition than middle- or upper-class Americans. As the cost for law enforcement rose and as the jail and prison populations spiraled upward, support for Prohibition waned in the 1920s. In 1933, the 21st amendment to the Constitution was ratified, repealing the 18th amendment.

In October 1929, the stock market crashed and plunged the nation into a deep recession. Fortunes were lost. The recession quickly spread to other industrialized countries and led to the Great Depression. It lasted until about 1939. It was the longest and most severe economic depression ever experienced by the industrialized countries of the Western world. The Great Depression was particularly impactful on farming communities like the Boalsburg that were dependently almost entirely on agriculture for their economic survival. The economic situation was exacerbated by the disastrous farming policies of the Roosevelt administration. The U.S. economy in the 1920s had experienced rapid economic growth and financial excesses. It became clear that there had been serious overproduction in agriculture, leading to falling prices and a rising debt among farmers.

As banks struggled for survival, many banks began to foreclose on small family farms. Many farmers quit farming and moved to industrial centers in search of a job. The Boalsburg community was not immune to this situation.

In 1929, Sherm Lutz opened an airfield in Boalsburg atop the hill between Boalsburg and Oak Hall where “the pine tree” stood. The end of the runway is still visible from Nittany View Park where Mary Elizabeth Street intersects with Boalsburg Pike. He was the first to deliver the mail via air in 1938.

On Valentine's Day in 1934, the Boalsburg



Boalsburg Air Depot
(Centre County Historical Society)

Tavern burned. The entire second floor and much of the first floor was destroyed. It was later determined that the cause of the fire was a defective flue. The burned out building stood dormant for three years. The building was eventually sold for \$500 and restored by Ms. Billy Winsor. It was reopened in 1938.

Construction of the Pennsylvania Turnpike also began in 1938. The Turnpike was built in sections, and it was not until 1956, with the completion of the Delaware River Bridge, that one could travel from New Jersey to Ohio completely on the Turnpike. But from the outset, cross-state traffic began to migrate to this southern route, and soon there would be few cross-state travelers passing through Boalsburg.

WORLD WAR II

World War II proved to be the most devastating international conflict in history, taking the lives of some 35 to 60 million people, including 6 million Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis. Millions more were injured, and still more lost their homes and property.

Fifty veterans of WWII from the area are buried in the Boalsburg cemetery. The cemetery has veterans from every war the United States has ever fought, through the Vietnam War.

KOREAN WAR

On June 25, 1950, the Korean War began when some 75,000 soldiers from the North Korean People's Army poured across the 38th parallel, the boundary between the Soviet-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the north and the pro-Western Republic of Korea to the south. This invasion was the first bona fide military action of the Cold War. By July 1950, American troops had entered the war on South Korea's behalf. As far as American officials were concerned, it was a war against the forces of international communism. In July 1953, the Korean War came to an end. In all, some 5 million soldiers and civilians lost their lives during the war. Four Korea War veterans are buried in the Boalsburg cemetery.

VIETNAM WAR

The Vietnam War was an undeclared war in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from 1 November 1955 to the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975. It was officially fought between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. North Vietnam was supported by the Soviet Union, China, and other communist allies. South Vietnam was supported by the United States, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Thailand, and other anti-communist allies. It lasted some 19 years, with direct U.S. involvement ending in 1973 following the Paris Peace Accords, and included the Laotian Civil War and the Cambodian Civil War, resulting in all three countries becoming communist states in 1975.

The war exacted a huge human cost in terms of fatalities. Estimates of the number of Vietnamese soldiers and civilians killed vary from 966,000 to 3.8 million. Some 275,000–310,000 Cambodians, 20,000–62,000 Laotians, and 58,220 U.S. service members also died in the conflict, and a further 1,626 remain missing in action.

Within the United States the war gave rise to what was referred to as Vietnam Syndrome, an aversion to American overseas military involvement, which together with Watergate contributed to the crisis of confidence that affected America throughout the 1970s.

THE STATE COLLEGE BYPASS

In 1968, disaster struck the village of Oak Hall. The Pennsylvania Department of Highways took the upper third of the village to construct the State College bypass. Today, the upper third of the village is a traffic interchange. Buildings were destroyed and Spring Creek was rerouted.

RESURGENCE

By the early 1970s, Boalsburg had suffered through a lengthy period where there had been minimal sources of outside income coming into the village. There were few shops and stores, no

industries, or few businesses. Many residences were in need of repair with limited funds available. It was a relatively low period in the history of Boalsburg.

It was at this time that The Pennsylvania State University decided that the future direction of the university was as a world-class teaching and research institution. The university expansion that followed led to a new era of growth in and around State College. Increased business opportunities brought more residents to the area. University expansion brought in more faculty and staff. Many settled in the Boalsburg vicinity, creating more business opportunities and began revitalizing the village. A few artisans began to return.

LOOKING BACKWARD AND LOOKING FORWARD

During the 200-plus year history of Boalsburg there have been many prominent leaders that were largely responsible for the growth and development of Boalsburg. Among these are members of the Boal, Keller, and Stuart families. Some served in the State legislature and the U.S. Congress. Additionally, Boalsburg is home to three U.S. ambassadors. The first Ambassador was William Irvin, son of John Irvin of Linden Hall and brother of General James Irwin of Oak Hall. He was Ambassador to Amboy (now called China) in 1864. The next Ambassador was Cyrus E. Woods who served as Ambassador to Japan around 1900. Pierre de Lagarde Boal, son of Theodore Boal, was Ambassador to Bolivia and Nicaragua. He earlier held diplomatic posts in Canada, Mexico, Yugoslavia, Poland, Switzerland, and Peru. Also, there have been many other individuals who have contributed mightily to the health and well-being of the Boalsburg.

After the economic crisis of the 1780s, Boalsburg began a period of steady growth. Cottage industries grew into numerous mills that were built in Oak Hall along Spring Creek. Some mills produced finished goods like woolen garments and hemp rope, while other mills produced raw products. The surrounding area supported gristmills and flour mills, iron furnaces, iron ore pits, and quarries. The outside income made the villages very prosperous. The road

network made Boalsburg a gateway to Potter's Mills, down Seven Mountains, and on to eastern markets. The volume of wagon traffic through Boalsburg led to many small businesses that catered to waggoneers and travelers. Here waggoneers could get their wagons repaired, their horses fed and watered, or, if needed, entirely new wagons could be made. The small businesses included blacksmiths, tanners, carriage shops, and taverns/inns where one could get food, drink, and overnight accommodations. These services attracted local and cross-state stagecoach business. The stagecoach business further attracted tinsmiths, hatters, seamstresses, boot makers, and more that catered specifically to travelers. Boalsburg became an important center of commerce and likely a favored overnight stagecoach stop. To a lesser extent, logging also contributed to the local economy. The high-water mark for Boalsburg, economically speaking, was around 1830-1835.

By the end of the 19th century, the situation had changed dramatically. The stagecoach had ceased operation about 1855, and Centre Furnace closed in 1858. The mills in Oak Hall closed around 1850-1875. The wagon traffic through Boalsburg had been significantly reduced, and the railroad had isolated the village. Many of the craftsmen and artisans had either died, were out of business, or had gone elsewhere. The tannery closed around the end of the century, and carriage shops and blacksmith shops would survive only a short time into the 20th century. The only thing that remained from the first half of the 19th century was agriculture. The primary culprits for the region's eventual decline is attributed to the Industrial Revolution and the coming of the railroad.

From 1861 to 1975, the region experienced six wars. Throughout this time, the residents of Boalsburg and Harris Township always supported the military, despite having 133 of its young men who were war veterans buried in the Boalsburg cemetery. The cemetery contains war veterans from every war the United States has ever fought through the Vietnam War.

The 115 years from 1861 to 1975 were turbulent ones. The area was increasingly influenced by national and international events. Additional distress was caused by the Industrial Revolution, the Spanish Influenza pandemic, two stock market crashes, and the Great Depression. The leaders of Boalsburg and Harris Township had few opportunities to focus on growth or development issues. The region has had to rely almost exclusively on an agricultural economy.

The evolution of Boalsburg can generally be traced by tracking the growth of churches and schoolhouses. The lack of activity in Boalsburg in these two measures coincides with the full effect of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 19th century and the distressful national and international events throughout the 20th century.

The economic decline of Boalsburg began with the “Panic of 1837” and accelerated during the Civil War. There were further indications of economic distress late in the 19th century. In the 20th century, the main causes were the numerous wars and the Great Depression. Citizens migrated to the industrial centers, the oil fields of NW Pennsylvania, various cities, and the territories of the Louisiana Purchase.

The future looks promising for the Boalsburg community. Today it has evolved into prosperous bedroom community for State College and Penn State University. The economy has changed from one based on small industry and small business to one largely based on agriculture. Additional income also comes in as a result of tourism.

The Boal Mansion and Columbus Chapel are being revitalized and continue to attract visitors from out of town. The PA Military Museum also draws people to the area. The Memorial Day celebration, People’s Choice Festival, and Hometown Christmas celebrations bring in many visitors that provide valuable support for local small businesses. Many other visitors contribute to the local economy during the Penn State football season. Harris Township is one of the fastest-growing townships in the region.

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