

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
Engineering District 8-0  
2140 Herr Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17103-1699



## HISTORIC LIVERPOOL

The canal circa late  
nineteenth century.

### *Liverpool and Preservation...*

**L**iverpool was identified as a historic district during the cultural resources studies for improvement to Route 11/15. The district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an example of a nineteenth-century canal town.

**O**ur federal and state governments are committed to the understanding and protection of historic properties. The National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on such properties, and the

Pennsylvania History Code includes a similar mandate for state agencies. This commitment means that places from the past are available to help future generations understand and appreciate our heritage.

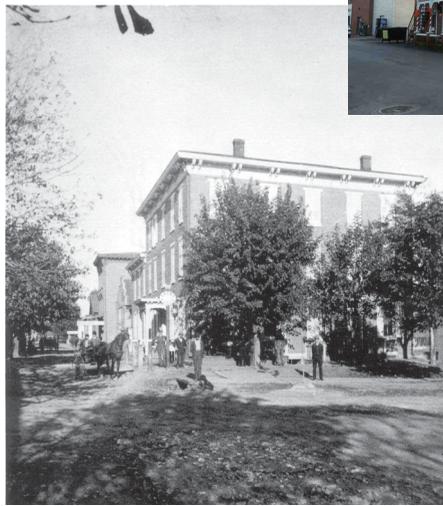
**T**he Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is proud of our role of providing a highway system that meets present and future needs while protecting our Commonwealth's past. We invite you to learn about Liverpool and visit some of the places that evoke its history.



Historic photos graciously provided by Brad Lowe of Lowe's Diner, Liverpool

**A**long the bustling roadways of Route 11/15, the quiet community of Liverpool is nestled between the winding Susquehanna River and the climbing mountains in Perry County. In the nineteenth century, Liverpool was a bustling market town on the Susquehanna Division of the Pennsylvania Canal.

The rich heritage and abundant history of Liverpool can be absorbed by strolling the avenues of the former canal town.



**L**ong before the establishment of Liverpool, Native Americans lived along the Susquehanna River. Mobile hunters, known as Paleoindians, the earliest inhabitants, arrived 12,000 years ago or more. At that time, glaciers covered much of what is now northern Pennsylvania; the climate was cool and wet,

and the Susquehanna was a torrent carrying boulders and debris from the ice sheets. All knowledge of Paleoindians is from archaeological sites. One such site,

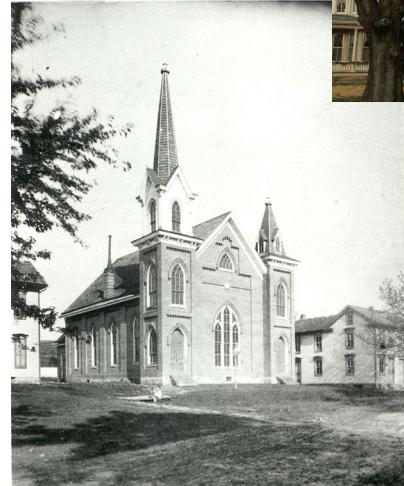


Owens Hotel  
(No. 5 on the map)

used by Paleoindians and subsequent Native American groups, was excavated at the south end of Liverpool as part of the studies for the improvements to Routes 11/15. Information from this site will contribute to our understanding of the prehistory of Pennsylvania and the Northeast United States.

**I**n 1682, William Penn founded the colony of Pennsylvania. Gradually, European settlement spread westward. By 1800, the state contained 25 counties and the number of towns and villages in the state continued to increase at a rapid pace.

**J**ohn Huggins purchased 121 acres along the western bank of the Susquehanna River in 1808. There he laid out the town of Liverpool. Before drawing any lots for houses or businesses in planning the new community, land for a graveyard, a school, and a church was reserved. The original village of Liverpool was bound on the southwest by Strawberry Street and on the northeast by North Alley. With later additions, Liverpool grew to include what is now Liberty Street and the land immediately north of Liberty Street.



Methodist Episcopal Church  
(No. 14 on the map)

**D**uring the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, heavy traffic along the river hauled lumber, coal, and grain downstream. On the return trip, these boars carried finished goods. Because the river level was too low in the summer and autumn for large river-craft, goods were transported mostly in the spring. During these early years, a two-mile long row of rafts moored on the river was not an uncommon sight in Liverpool. An alternate form of transportation that would decrease congestion on the

river and allow goods to be carried more months of the year was needed. Because of the local landscape, a road would not have been suitable, thus legis-



lators decided to build a new canal parallel to the Susquehanna River.

**C**anals in Pennsylvania were increasing in importance during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In 1824, ground was broken for the Pennsylvania Canal that would connect Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. In 1831, the Susquehanna Division of the Pennsylvania Canal was completed and stretched 39 miles from the point where the Juniata and Susquehanna Rivers met to Northumberland, located approximately 24 miles north of Liverpool. This canal not only served local and regional needs, but by connecting to the main canal line, could carry goods to and from faraway destinations.

The canal generated new economic opportunities in Liverpool for teamsters, boat-builders, boatmen, and longshoremen. The village grew and was incorporated as a borough in 1832. In 1840, the population of Liverpool was 451. Twenty years later, the population had grown to 662. Walking down the street, one could see new buildings everywhere. S. Shuler operated a dry-goods and grocery store on Front Street while J. Holman had a store on the corner of Race and Market Streets. The Owens Hotel and John Shanks Hotel were constructed along Front Street. Dr. T. D. Morris had a practice on Front Street while John Monroe was employed as a portrait painter on Market Street. Other services were provided by P. Williamson, a carpenter, and by George Snyder, the local tanner. Homes and churches,



such as the United Brethren Church and the German Reformed Church, both on Pine Street, and the Methodist Church on



Second Empire House  
(No. 2 on the map)

Market Street, were quickly growing in number. Liverpool had become a boom town.

Notable residents of Liverpool included the Shuler brothers. The three brothers, Joseph, John, and Samuel, created a name for themselves locally by designing their own long, single-barrel rifle. Today, Shuler rifles are difficult to find and are prized by collectors. Another prominent resident, Dr. Elizabeth Reifsnyder, was a pioneer medical Missionary in China for 30 years before returning to Liverpool where she died in 1922.

Canals that had been bringing goods to the region were soon threatened by the development of railroads. In 1858, the Sunbury and Erie Railroad bought the Susquehanna Division of the Canal and continued to operate it, since early trains were not strong enough to move heavy cargo such as coal. As technology improved and trains could carry heavier loads, canals gradually fell out of favor as the preferred mode of transportation. The Susquehanna Canal ceased operations at the turn of the century.



With the closing of the canal, jobs directly and indirectly related to the canal declined in Liverpool and Perry County. Some of these jobs were in the lumber industry that supplied the wood for canal boats. Agriculture in the region also declined because it became more expensive for goods to be sent to market. In 1880, the population of Liverpool numbered 838; however, by 1920, the borough's population had fallen to 586. In the 1950's,

Route 11/15 was constructed over the canal. With new jobs related to the service industries along the highway, the population of Liverpool began to grow. Today the borough has about 1,000 residents.



Trinity Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
(No. 9 on the map)

opment was closely tied to the Susquehanna Division of the Pennsylvania Canal for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the physical vestiges of the canal structure are now under the road, the history of Liverpool is witnessed through the buildings in the borough that continue to evoke the feeling of a canal town. On the reverse side is a suggested walking tour that will lead you through historic Liverpool.

Liverpool  
growth  
and  
devel-

The following takes you on a walking tour of present-day Liverpool. Because of the canal, Liverpool was full of businesses, homes, churches, and schools. In the 1870s and 1880s, the town appeared geographically much the same as it does today. Although the canal is no longer present, many of the buildings constructed during its peak are still standing.

- 1.) This stable was constructed during the canal period and would have been located on the bank of the canal. At one time, it might have been associated with a store that was on the same property.
- 2.) The residence is an example of a Second Empire (1855-1885) house, characterized by the Mansard roof and hooded windows.
- 3.) The Carman Funeral Home is an outstanding example of Queen Anne (1880-1910) architecture with its asymmetrical plan and tower.
- 4.) The frame mill was conveniently located along the canal and now serves as an antique mall.

- 5.) The Owens Hotel is an example of Italianate (1840-1885) architecture, characterized by the long windows and the brackets under the eaves of the roof. The hotel is now an apartment building.
- 6.) These attached Greek Revival (1825-1860) residences are defined by their six-over-six windows and frieze windows at the top.
- 7.) This residence is in the Federal style (1780-1820). The fanlight is one of its defining features. It is one of Liverpool's oldest buildings.
- 8.) This building was at one time Joseph and Samuel Shuler's shop which was established in 1842. The Shulers' shop has been enlarged and today contains an antique mall and framing shop.

- 9.) The Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church was constructed in 1882, replacing an earlier structure at another location in town. The church is now Landmark Apartments.
- 10.) This Italianate residence was the home of Dr. Reifsnnyder. Although the brackets are no longer present, traces of them can be seen under the eaves. The ornate window hoods are another characteristic of the Italianate style.
- 11.) The Evangelical Church, constructed in 1867, is Greek Revival in style (noted by the heavy entablature just under the roof) and once has a steeple. Today, it is a duplex residence.
- 12.) This residence has Queen Anne features, including a wraparound porch and two-story bay window.

- 13.) Across the street is a large Italianate structure that served as J. Holman's store on the corner of Rece and Market Streets. The cupola on the roof is another characteristic of the Italianate style. Today, it serves as a residence.
- 14.) This Gothic Revival structure is the Methodist Episcopal Church constructed in 1877. This building replaced an earlier church that was built on this site in 1858.
- 15.) The high school was constructed in 1876, and is a combination of Italianate and Gothic Revival with its bracketed eaves and cross-gable roof.
- 16.) This cemetery was established in 1827 for Irish Catholics working on the canal.
- 17.) This cemetery was associated with a Lutheran Church which stood at this location prior to the construction of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1882.

