

Bridges span Honesdale's history

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By Peter Becker

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Honesdale, Pa.

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The opening of the Church Street Bridge accompanying the new one-way traffic pattern on October 4, 2009, is the latest of many spans connecting us as a community and helping us move through. Their story tells much of our story as a community.

Covered Bridge at 4th Street

The newly widened 4th Street Bridge replaces several versions that worked well for their time. A wooden, covered bridge was approved by the County Commissioners in 1846 and was built with white pine at a cost of \$1,400. Charles Jamison, who also built the first courthouse in Honesdale in 1841, was the bridge contractor. The first teams crossed this bridge in June 1847.

A tornado picked up the covered bridge on May 31, 1866. The bridge landed in a lengthwise heap just up stream. One piece landed in a kitchen on Church Street, and another in a garden on 6th Street. That autumn, another bridge was built to replace it, at a cost of \$6,924. Thomas Brown was the contractor. A roof and sides were added the next year, for another \$1,000.

Originally one span, it was later thought safer to add a stone pier in the center and iron rods inserted underneath.

In those days, Honesdale Borough ended on the east side at the Lackawaxen River, and bridges were built with agreements made with Texas Township.

The covered bridge stood until 1901 when a steel truss bridge replaced it. This bridge, which carried the first motor vehicles in the area, was among several that were wiped out in the flood of May 22, 1942.

The span at 4th Street is one of a few that have been named after people who made history in Honesdale. It is known as the Philip Hone Bridge, after the first president of the D&H; Canal Company whose name was given to the town in the 1820's. Previously known as Herrman's Bridge (Michael Herrman had a carriage factory on the east end), the new concrete bridge put up after the flood cost \$101,030.

The Pa. Department of Transportation spent in excess of \$1.4 million to rebuild bridges and roads in Wayne County after the 1942 flood.

Main Street Bridge

The Main Street span was named after Washington Irving, famed author of Rip Van Winkle and many other works. A friend of Hone, he visited Honesdale in 1841. Hone named the cliff, well seen from this bridge, in his honor.

The first bridge erected at this point, necessary to connect the still developing village of Honesdale, was constructed in October, 1827. The abutments and middle pier were made of logs. This was known as Forbes' Crossing, after Charles Forbes who operated the first public house in Honesdale, where Hotel Wayne now stands at Park and Main. Research by the late County Historian Dr. Vernon Leslie showed there appears to have been nine bridges through the years at this crossing.