



McCoy House Museum
17 N. Main Street, Lewistown, PA

Open every Sunday 1:30 to 4 p.m.
May to early December
or by special tour

Call the MCHS office to make arrangements for special tours.



A publication of the
**Mifflin County
Historical Society**
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Lewistown, PA 17044
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*Mifflin County's
TRAIL OF
HISTORY*



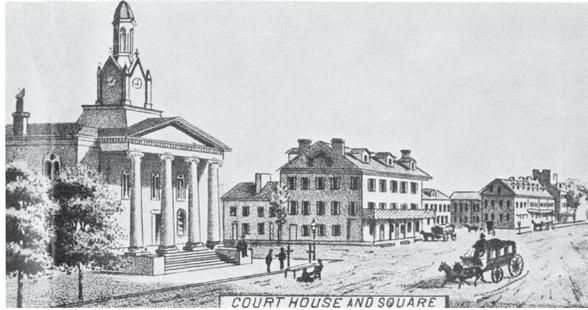
The Town Square

Site of Mifflin County's 2nd
Courthouse and the 1906
Soldiers' & Sailors' Monument

Mifflin County's
Trail of History
Pamphlet No. 4

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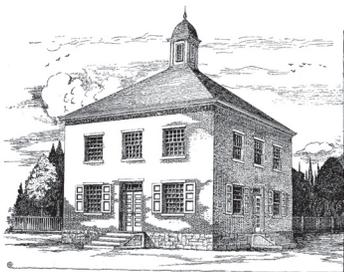
HISTORY OF THE TOWN SQUARE

A town square is an open area usually found in the heart of a traditional town used for community gatherings. In Pennsylvania a town square typically consists of a park or central plaza in front of the original county courthouse or town hall. Other names for a town square include market square, public common, public square, plaza, and piazza. In Lewistown, this central location is known today as Monument Square.

Records show that an early use for Lewistown's square was commerce, where farmers and tradesmen sold their produce or wares through market houses built nearby. People also picnicked there or children used the open space for games. Mifflin County's first football game is to have occurred in the Town Square in 1861.

A description of the square appeared in print in 1925, explaining, "By the original survey our County Town was laid out so that the two principal streets, Market and Main both centered in a square-shaped space with an approximate measurement of 188 by 325 feet, designated as a radiating point dividing the town east and west and north and south. This square lacked a definite name for 123 years after the first survey was made, hence in the absence of any official designation our citizens dubiously bestowed upon it titles of their own choice."

Various names for this location include:



MIFFLIN COUNTY'S SECOND COURTHOUSE, 1798 - The second hall of county justice was built on the site of the present Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the Town Square in the later 1790s. This courthouse remained for more than forty years, until it was replaced and eventually demolished in the early 1840s. Illustration from *Historic Souvenir of Lewistown* - 1925 - MCHS image



TOWN SQUARE GATHERING - A crowd in the late 1800s is shown in front of the 1843 courthouse, just out of view to the right. The buildings or businesses on the south side of West Market Street from the left are an insurance office, Col. Elder's law office, Fetterolf's, George Rarick's store, Dr. Myers' office, Harry Jackson, Coleman Hotel, Nolte's Restaurant, Dr. Moses Thompson's dental office, and Espby Bakery. - MCHS image

"Centre of Lewis Town," 1793; "the Diamond," 1803; "Court House Diamond," 1810; "Court House Square," and "Public Square," 1812; the "Diamond," 1826; "Market Square," 1833; "Centre Square," 1832; "Public Diamond," 1840; and "Diamond Square," 1845. At one point, a fountain was suggested for the location, which would have prompted the name, "Fountain Square."

In 1795 the "Public Square" was selected by the trustees charged with setting up the county seat as a site for the second courthouse. The Mifflin County Commissioners advertised for proposals. John Norris and James Alexander got the contract for the building. It was probably begun in 1797 and finished in 1798, court being held in it that year.

The second courthouse stood in the center of the square, was built of brick, two stories high, exactly square, with a cupola crowning the center of the roof, in which hung a bell. Doors opened



THE BEAUTIFIED TOWN SQUARE - Bicyclists circle the Town Square prior to 1906. Referred to as "the Diamond" in old articles and accounts, this was the location of the county's second courthouse prior to construction of the Historic Courthouse in 1843. Local boys would play football, farmers sold their produce, people picnicked and meetings were held at this location. - MCHS image



LEWISTOWN'S TOWN SQUARE PRIOR TO 1906 - The view looks toward West Market Street. Note the trolley tracks on each side of the oval. A town beautification movement improved this central section of the town by adding plantings and a fence. Eventually a monument honoring Civil War soldiers and sailors would be erected here. - MCHS image

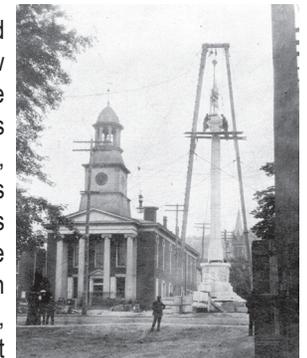
from two sides, South Main and East Market Streets. A large market shed was located near the courthouse.

Lewistown's second market house was located on the square, west of the Historic Courthouse and stood end-wise toward West Market Street, so that vehicles approaching from the west passed to the right or left. The building had a wide brick-laid center, with meat and vegetable stands fitted up on either side. One source indicates that this building was over 50 feet long and its interior ample for the trade demand of that time. The market was finished in 1843, when the second courthouse in the center of the square and the earlier market shed were both removed.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a town beautification movement pushed to improve the square. Plantings and a fence were added to the satisfaction of many.

Many businesses operated around the square. Just a very few include: Laskaris Restaurant, the Taft Hotel, Mur Jewellers, Yocum's Barber Shop, the Orphium Theatre, G. C. Murphy Co., Hoffman's News, Rialto Theatre, Dughi's Ice Cream Shop, White's Bicycle Shop, Bowsman Pool Hall, Furman & Oles Plumbing and Heating, Healy's Studio, Pallas Restaurant and Heading's Drug Store.

In 1906, a monument honoring Civil War soldiers and sailors was erected here. Ever since, this center of Lewistown has had a lasting name - Monument Square.



TOWN SQUARE IN 1906 - The final touches are being added to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the Square in June 1906. The historic courthouse and monument have been paired as a Mifflin County landmark ever since. - MCHS image