

722-724 Main Street: Update # 8, November 2022



Rehabilitation Update: All paint removal and brick repair and repointing on the front and alley sides have been completed by Big Foot Restoration. Rust Belt Restoration will work on window and bracket rebuilding over the winter, with front and alley side painting to occur in the spring, after the mortar cures. An Ivory Silk Lilac tree has been planted, replacing the failing tree that had stood in front of the duplex.

Phase 3 work will follow – interior floor and party wall rebuilding and water and sewer line connections – funded through a \$40K matching grant received from the State Historic Preservation Office. In preparation for the bid process, video footage was taken to determine the condition of the existing ground water and wastewater lines. Although some of those lines appear to be salvageable, it seems to make the most sense to replace them all now, before floors are installed.

Three additional grant proposals have been submitted, but awards have yet to be made.

History Update: The first Update in this series included a biography of John Hughes, the first resident of 724 Main. It was his father, **Thomas Hughes, Sr.**, (1789-1849) who had purchased the property in 1846. Although no image of Thomas has been found, we do know a good bit about his life. Born in nearby Greene County, PA, Thomas was a grandson of a religious-freedom-seeking, Irish immigrant who served in the Revolutionary War, and a nephew of an active participant in western Pennsylvania's Whiskey Rebellion. Thomas's father, James Hughes (born 1750), moved westward, becoming one of the first white settlers in Greene County, PA, and eventually owning land in Virginia, Kentucky, and what is now Indiana and raising a family of five daughters and three sons, one of whom was Thomas Hughes, Sr.

Thomas married Mary Odenbaugh in 1815, and the couple moved still further west to Wheeling, where they raised a family of 10 children. He served under General Harrison during the war of 1812. Quite an active man, Thomas served on City Council for 32 years, was an early Treasurer of the City, and served as president of the Wheeling Savings Bank, president of the Wheeling Fire Insurance Company, and director of the Northwestern Bank. He also was a member of the Wheeling & Belmont Bridge Company, which built the Wheeling Suspension Bridge.

Professionally, Thomas was involved in steam boating and lumbering and was a gunsmith. Some of his work survives - a great, great grandson, also named Thomas Hughes, a resident of Baltimore and Easton, Maryland, sent a photo of one of his ancestor's pistols. And local collector, Frank Provance, owns one of his rifles.

