
OUR HERITAGE

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The Ultimate Stiegel Glass Display Case

In Chapter Four of George L. Heiges' book, "Henry William Stiegel and His Associates", we read that the Stiegel Office, which at one time stood on a corner of Market Square in Manheim, was built sometime in 1763 or 1764. Pictured below is how it looked circa 1910, just before it was demolished to provide a spot for a modern home. What a tragic loss! Imagine the important colonials who might have met with Henry William Stiegel in his office.



Stiegel Office Building

The title of this article is based on the fact that the original door and transom from the office still exist and that they are being carefully used in constructing a simulation of the entranceway to Stiegel's office. The door, some times referred to as an Indian Door, has an upper movable panel that can be lowered to expose a window of nine lights (panes). The combination of the door, transom and the reproduced surrounding trim will form a display case in which specimens of Stiegel items can be displayed. The display case could provide a feeling of peering in a window of the office and seeing specimens of the wonderful glassware created by Henry Wm. Stiegel.

Now to facts concerning how the door and transom still exist:

Miles Keiffer, at the age of 8, in 1910, when the Stiegel Office was being demolished, managed to get possession of the door and transom and transport the items to his family home on South Charlotte Street, south of Railroad Ave. However, his elation over acquiring the treasures was short-lived. When Miles' father Frank saw the items, Miles was not allowed to keep them, and Mr. Danner got the information.

The door and transom then went into the possession of George Danner for his museum on the third floor of his general merchandise store on Market Square. At the time, the wrought iron lock and the turtle-shaped escutcheon were still on the door. Mr. Danner removed the lock and escutcheon and the door and lock were left in storage and not placed on exhibit in the museum display area.

When Milton Hershey purchased Mr. Danner's museum collection, in 1935, there were many items in a storage area that were not included as part of the museum collection and these items were sold at auction in 1944.

The 1944 auction sale for the Geo. H. Danner Estate Trust was held on the second floor of the George Danner building. There were many wonderful early items sold at the auction. The writer of this article attended the sale with his father and he saw music boxes, tall-case clocks, a high poster bed, and just a lot of fascinating things.

It was at the 1944 auction sale that Miles Keiffer once again obtained the original door from the Stiegel Office building. As previously mentioned, the lock and escutcheon were removed by Mr.

Danner, and, since they were never reattached to the door, Miles did not purchase the same complete door/hardware combination as he had in his possession in 1910.

Charles Heffner, a Reading, PA antiques dealer, purchased miscellaneous iron items at the auction and one was discovered to be the lock missing from the door. Miles and Mr. Heffner did a comparison of the mounting holes in the iron lock and the holes in the door to help determine this. The lock was offered to Miles and to others in Manheim, but, for some reason, they passed on the purchase. Mr. Heffner was astonished that Miles or someone else in Manheim didn't purchase the lock and keep it in the town of Manheim. The writer of this article remembers, as a teenager, seeing the lock exhibited in the window of the Roy G. Myers Jewelry Store. Mr. Heffner also acquired the bell from the original 1772 Manheim Zion Lutheran Church at this same 1944 auction.

Miles exhibited the original Stiegel door in the window of Harry Smith's Appliance Store, Market Square, at the same time the lock was in the window of the jewelry store. In 1971 Miles sold the door to a collector, and now with the existence of HMPF, the collector has decided to create the Stiegel Office door exhibit case and eventually place it on loan to HMPF.

The office door lock was sold to a Delaware collector who later donated it to the William Penn Museum. We are hoping that we will be able to have it placed on loan with HMPF and displayed in the showcase. It is pictured with this article.

It is believed that the turtle-shaped escutcheon became part of Mr. Danner's museum exhibits and may therefore eventually be available on loan from the Hershey Story Museum.



Pictured is the large wrought iron lock from the Stiegel Office door with a brass knob on the inside handle and the outside handle.



Exterior

Interior

Footnotes: The writer of this article was fortunate to have had conversations with Mrs. David (Minnie) Missemer, Miles Keiffer, Charles Heffner and Titus Geesey, concerning the door and lock.

Mrs. Missemer, as a child, was so fascinated by the large brass knob on the office door lock that whenever she walked past the office building she had to lay her little hand on the brass knob.

Charles Heffner, beside once owning the 1772 church bell and the office lock, had owned the 1769 Elizabeth (Holtz) Stiegel bible. The bell and bible have found their way back to Manheim. See the publication: **Henry William Stiegel and his brother Anthony Stiegel**, for more information on the bell and the bible. The publication is available at www.manheim1762.org, "Bookstore".

Miles Keiffer, because of his deep interest in Manheim's early history and his family history and heritage, left a wealth of information, written and oral, that now benefits HMPF and the readers of OUR HERITAGE.



Silhouette of escutcheon from the impression on the door stile. Only two legs, to allow panel to pass.