

The following was presented by a Board Member at the Hall of Distinction Induction Ceremony of the Dover Historical Society, April 2014.

Christian Deardorff

Christian Deardorff was born in York County, Pennsylvania in 1781. Perhaps no man in Dover's history has done more to shape the community than Deardorff. In 1802, at the age of 21, Deardorff and his brother-in-law Jesse Slingluff, set out for the Ohio frontier to scout out the area. In 1806 the two men agreed to purchase 2,175 acres from Colonel James Morrison of Lexington, Kentucky. Morrison had acquired the land in exchange for his military service during the Revolutionary War.

After the sale was final, Deardorff moved to the area, filing a plat map at Zanesville in 1807. Deardorff's original plat map showed great vision. It included many of the current downtown Dover streets, 256 lots, and a grand public square at the site of the present Dover square.

Deardorff constructed a bachelor's cabin on the banks of the Sugar Creek. He utilized this water source to construct the area's first grist mill. He would eventually become a man of many firsts. He was responsible for the area's first bank, post office, first bridge to cross the Tuscarawas River, and the first store which he kept in his home.

He lived alone in his bachelor cabin for 11 years until 1817 when he married Margaret Butt, the daughter of another area pioneer. In those early years of his marriage, he served as a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and later as a State Representative in 1825-1826.

Despite everything that Deardorff accomplished, perhaps nothing was more important than the role he played in securing that the Ohio and Erie Canal would pass through Dover. This forever changed the prospects of the sleepy little town on the banks of the Tuscarawas River. Christian Deardorff died at his residence on N. Wooster Avenue in 1851.