



**Heiss' Original Coachworks in Mifflinburg, PA**

### **The History of Mifflinburg's Buggy Industry**

Once upon a time...Mifflinburg was a hub of business in the 1800's.

A turnpike joined Mifflinburg east to Lewisburg and Northumberland, and west to Aaronsburg and Bellefonte in 1825. The first railroad from Lewisburg to Mifflinburg was built in 1871. The Lewisburg Center and Spruce Railroad Company, by 1885, ran to Laurelton, Spring Mills and Lemont where it connected with the Bellefonte and Tyrone Railroad.

As was the case in other towns in central PA, residents came and went in Mifflinburg. Older families' children moved west to the new territories. Newcomers, and new occupations, joined the population.

Buggy manufacturing began in Mifflinburg in the 1840's and soon became an important industry, eventually supporting a large portion of the population at the shops of the Berry Bro's, F. Brown, the Gutelius's, J. Hoover, A. Hopp, W. Hursh, D. Miller, D. Moss, and the Taylors. The skills of woodworkers, blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, tanners, painters, upholsterers and many others were needed to make a buggy, carriage or sleigh.

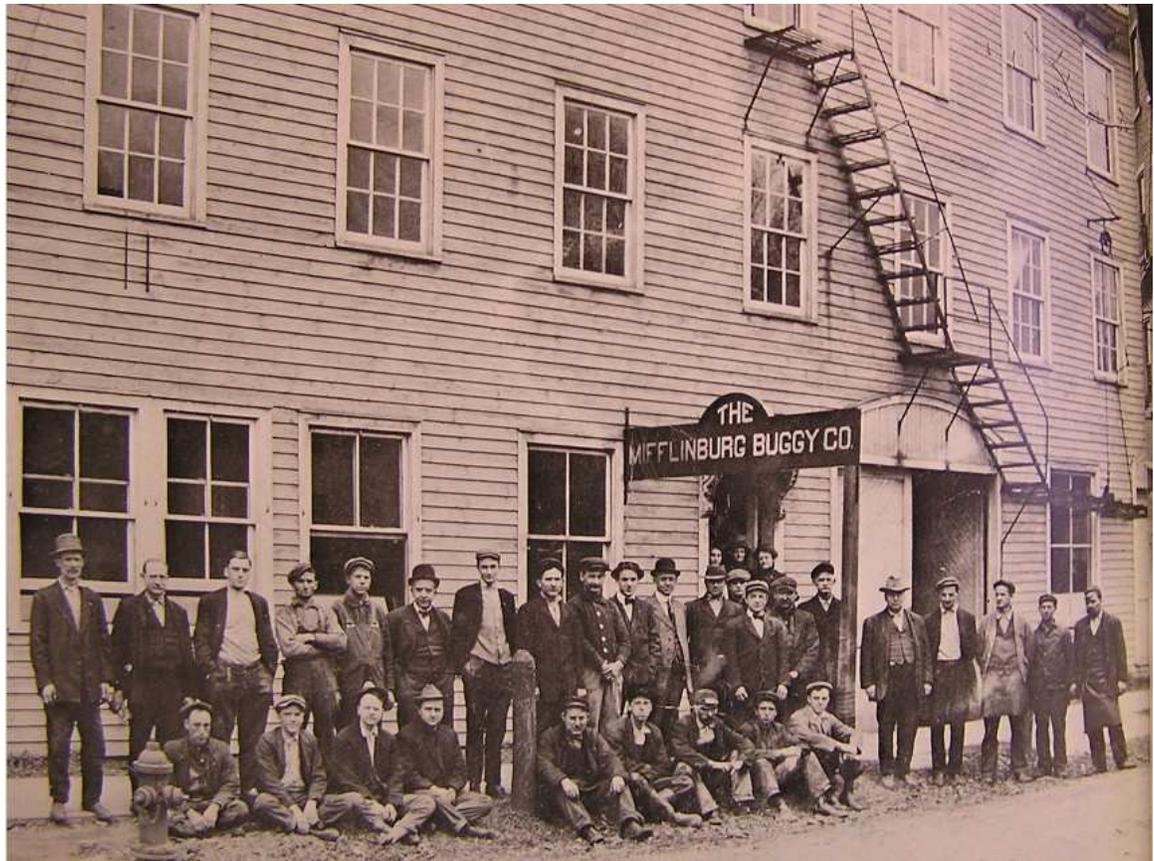
Quality work, imaginative and aggressive salesmen, and customer service (making to order and for the needs of specific communities) influenced Mifflinburg's buggy-making success. Buggies were driven by horses to many area towns and later on

sent via rail to distant states. In 1899, the various buggy works made over 2000 buggies, carriages and sleighs, which were sold all across the US. The community thrived.

But this success was not to last. The automobile was soon to become the vehicle of choice. With the advent of the auto industry in the early 1900's, some buggy manufacturers turned to the production of wooden auto bodies, which sustained them into the 1920's.

The history of Mifflinburg's buggy works is presented by the Mifflinburg Buggy Museum, which preserves and interprets the original William Heiss coachworks building, buggies, and tools associated with the trade. Visit [www.buggymuseum.org](http://www.buggymuseum.org) for schedule of events.

Learn more about Mifflinburg's history at the Herr Memorial Library in Mifflinburg and at the Union County Historical Society in Lewisburg. Read detailed articles on Union County history on our website [www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org).



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