

Herr House Happenings

Amos Herr House Foundation and Historical Society

www.herrhomestead.org

Spring 2017

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Rohrerstown

As remembered by two "Forever Friends," Eileen Bender and Shirley Sigman

Growing up across Wood St., or Back St., as it was once called, from each other in the early 1940's, gives us much to reminisce about. Our mothers were a good source of our information about the events that happened before we were born. Our mothers were both born Brubaker girls of different Brubaker ancestors. How fortunate we were that they both lived to be over 90 years old.

The fire at Bushong & Graybill (aka Miller & Bushong) in 1941 was one story that our moms remembered as being a very tragic event in our small town. Mom Bender's father was the fire chief, so she was called on to assist wherever she could. At ages 6 & 4, we read details that were printed in the Lancaster New Era. Almost everyone in town had a copy somewhere in their personal archives.

As adults, we experienced another major fire in 1982. It occurred right outside the front windows of my home on Marietta Ave. at the J. H. Brubaker Inc. Lumber Co. My great uncle, Jacob H. Brubaker, around the year 1900, founded the company. "Jake" slowly drove a spotless shiny black Packard twice a day to the post office uptown. In his younger days, he was mostly known for his skills at using and maintaining his Peerless threshing machine that was later donated to the Landis Valley Museum. – *EB (continued on pg. 3- "Forever Friends remember Rohrerstown")*

Gardeners

The Amos Herr gardeners are an enthusiastic group who enjoy meeting every 2nd Friday of the month from April through October. They work together on the beautiful gardens around the house. They pull weeds, prune shrubs, plant seeds and spread lots of mulch. The garden is home to many native plants with flowers designed to attract a wide array of pollinating insects. Every year, the gardeners plant tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, potatoes and lots of other tasty edibles in the raised vegetable beds behind the Herr House. The gardeners would love to have new volunteers for the coming season. If you are interested, please call Louise Brewer at (717) 898-0991 or email her at lsbrewer@gmail.com.

Docent Training

Cindy Zimmerman will be conducting a docent training session for new and returning docents on Saturday, March 18th at 2pm at the Herr House. In case of snow, the session will be held on Saturday, March 25th at 2pm. If you or someone you know are interested in history and enjoy dressing in period clothing, please plan to attend this event. Docents usually volunteer 3 weekend hours every 4 weeks.

House Opens

April 1st marks the opening day of 2017. Tours are conducted every Saturday and Sunday (except Easter Sunday) beginning at 1pm. The last daily tour begins at 3:15pm. Tours last approximately one hour.

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2016-Year End Reports

Collections	Service Hours (April – October)	Visitors (April – October)	Membership
<i>Total Donors</i> 3	<i>Docents and Receptionists</i> 22 people volunteered 263 hours	Total visitors 282	Total members 206
Total items donated 7	<i>Gardeners</i> 14 people volunteered 240 hours	Visitors' donations \$416.00	
Collection Total 2,774	<i>Volunteers</i> 10 people volunteered 360 hours		

Welcome New Members

Marilyn Beardslee

Mrs. Joanne Ellis

Angie Fox

Harvey Mumma

Beverly B. Wagaman

Recent Donations

Margaret Wolf donated 1 wooden 27"x 38" sign

Jack Parke donated 3 replacement glass chimneys for oil wall scones

Bill Snavely donated records of basketball games and Hall of Fame events

Notes From Emma's Diary

Saturday, March 29, 1941

"My Birthday—what now. I bake a cake & dust my dining room & clean oilcloth & get ready for Lanc. I go to market—get meat & lots of groceries. Fixed my hot bed for lettuce. Later it gets colder & snows a bit all PM. Amos carries Hams in attic."

-Emma Herr

Forever Friends remember Rohrerstown (from pg. 1)

Together we can remember only one train wreck. A few cars jumped the tracks for some unknown reason, east of the town square. On another day coming home from high school, on the bus at the railroad tracks, we saw a covered body between the tracks with police surrounding it. Later, we discovered that the train killed old Eddie Fenstermacher.

The small town was carved out of land from the farm to the south in 1812. John Rohrer purchased one hundred fifty acres from the John Kauffman farm for his son Christian, who divided it into 89 lots that were distributed by a lottery. The irregular shape of the land resembled a sleigh-- the runners were the railroad tracks. The square was formed by Marietta Ave., or the Waterford Turnpike and Elizabeth St., not the busy Rohrerstown road and Marietta Ave. that we travel today. The Rohrerstown Road formed the eastern most boundary of the tiny town with only 4 named streets. As the lots were sold off, houses with barns and gardens began to appear between the most important alleys in the village, first named Hempfield Village--soon thereafter the name changed to Rohrerstown.

Farmland surrounded the mini village; some were on the map as early as 1717 when Hans Brubaker and Christian Hershey purchased 1000 acres from William Penn's sons. We will be celebrating the 300th anniversary of that purchase in 2017. What a thrill to be descended from Brubakers, as we are!

Our grandparents, being close-by farmers, called upon their families to help with summer chores such as planting things in their fields and huckstering produce throughout the town. Corn was a very good seller that was sold from the trunk of the HUDSON. An evening treat for a job well done might be an ice cream cone from Goods Dairy. A car was necessary as Goods farm was not within the walking boundaries of our small town.

Rohrerstown is a town of many churches. Early ones were the Church of God (1873), Mennonite (1791) and Lutheran and Reformed (1825). Lutheran is now separate and the Reformed is now Salem United Church of Christ. Churches that came later were St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, Church of the Apostles UCC, Grace Baptist and Grace Brethren. A few of the churches have cemeteries associated with them; at times you will find genealogists checking for important dates to try to connect local families. It occurred to us that is how we learned to know many of our community residents and most of their families, younger and older. The church that we attended for many summer evenings was the Mennonite Bible School. We lived so close that you could hear the singing, as you were getting ready to join your friends. 🎵Come to Bible School 🎵 Today, the very old Church of God building is still standing after being moved back to make way for the new and improved bridge over the railroad tracks. Everyone learning to drive avoided the narrow old hump bridge because you were sure you would meet the Conestoga Transportation Company bus coming the other way.

Our school (first floor built in 1898) still remains, but has a new use today. Our children's elementary has already been demolished. Some things that existed at our 2 story 4-room school that are no more are: oiled floors, a cinder pile, and a cloakroom. Such is progress...

While learning to smoke cigarettes, we got caught in the little entrance room to the school cellar puffing away so hard that grandfather, out for an evening walk, thought the building was on fire. He flung open the door to find 2 very green young girls. One of us had learned our lesson and the other didn't.

Over time, each town had a general store, corner store, penny candy store, and a grocery store. The first one that we were able to make purchases without our parents was Ringwalt & Stehman on the Marietta Pike--our backyards were just on the other side of the alley. No hazardous roads to cross to get mom the missing item for supper. It was amazing how the fragile bag of chips always seemed to tear on the way back home.

Did you ever buy molasses from a barrel? If so, I, as an employee there, probably filled your container by pumping from the barrel; which could be found in the dimly lit cellar. The name Ringwalt was very familiar to all persons in town, not only as the storekeeper, but also as 2 generations of doctors. Martin and his son John David Ringwalt were the earliest doctors we remember. --S.S

Notes From Amos' Diary

Saturday, January 30, 1960

“Warm—Help Dave strip tobacco—To Lancaster 10-12:00—gray trousers—collect rent for last time. Millers move to apartment at Walnut & Pine. Study S. School lesson and read. Do the report cards.”

Board Members

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