

Herr House Happenings



Where did Henry come from?

An introduction to the Henry R. Herr article

By Eileen Bender Johns

something constructive, such as getting rid of some paper files. Since “Amos” is at the head of the alphabet, and one of the largest files, it was a no-brainer. After determining that I had scanned most of the files, it was time to shred the duplicates. Mission accomplished.

I had not talked to my Herr House friend, Faye, for a while, so I called her to make sure she was safe, well and AT HOME. After getting her, I mentioned what I had just finished... so I thought. It was really just the beginning of an intense week of research. The question that really got the ball rolling was, “where did Henry come from anyway?”

The article within this newsletter is not an easy read, rather a series of information that can be used by different folks, for different reasons, at different times. For future use, add this information to your digital or paper files, whichever you prefer.

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided it was high time that I should get busy doing

Special Thanks

Special thanks to AHHF member, Phil Metzler, who donated a new phone system for the house. Thank you to AHHF board members, Ron Cooper and Bob Wildasin who installed the system.

Special thanks to our AHHF gardeners who faithfully worked during these very hot summer days. Louise Brewer, who is in charge of the gardeners, made the decision to change the gardening work schedule from one day to shorter hours on two days. One of our members, Naomi Wiederrecht, who lives close by, helps with the gardening more often than scheduled. We sincerely appreciate the dedication of our gardeners and the hard work they do!

Notes from Emma’s Diary

Monday, July 1, 1918

“Cloudy yet but did not rain much — I get busy hunt things for dinner & then sew (once) I cut Boy a pair of pajamas & make pant part. Eve I do my last weeks mending. Men cultivate tobacco.”

HENRY ROHRER HERR, 1815– 1863

Information gathered & compiled by Eileen Bender Johns May 2020; explaining the connection between Shenks Lane in Millersville and the 1852 Herr Family Homestead in Landisville.

Henry Rohrer Herr was born to Emanuel (1774-1840) and Mary Musselman Rohrer Herr of Manor Township, Lancaster County in 1815.

Henry was surrounded by family members named Emanuel. His grandfather was Emanuel Hershey Herr (1745- 1828,) possibly of Lancaster Township; his brother also carried the name Emanuel Rohrer Herr (1806-1881). This Emanuel had a son, Emanuel Musselman Herr (1852-1894). Henry also had a son that he named Emanuel Breneman Herr (1845-1898).

After searching for Henry R. Herr's place of birth, I discovered that he and his parents and siblings lived on 2 of the 3 farms on Shenks Lane off of West Frederick St. in Millersville Borough, site of present-day Millersville University.

Farm #1: Currently there is no evidence of a farm at West Frederick St. & Shenks Lane. During the 1930's, the farm was owned by John Peifer and Mabel M. Neff Heisey and their 6 children. According to the 1899 atlas, the 89 acre farm was owned by Christian E. Herr (of no relation to Henry R. Herr). According to the 1875 atlas, the farm was shown as 120 acres and the residence of J.K. Shenk (brother-in-law of Henry R. Herr). The 1864 atlas stated the farm was owned by J.K. Shenk (brother-in-law of Henry R. Herr).

Farm #2: Is currently the Crossgates Golf Course. During the 1930's, the 112 acre farm was owned by Rudolph G. & Fannie Herr and their 11 children. According to the 1899 atlas, the farm was 114.5 acres and owned by Rudolph L. Herr (father of Rudolph G. Herr). The 1875 atlas indicated the property was 2 separate farms owned by Rudolph Herr and Rud Herr . The 1864 atlas indicated the farm was owned by Rud Herr and Rud Herr (also shows 2 separate farms).

Farm #3: Currently the house, barn, and outbuildings are still standing, but the residents are unknown. The nearest address is the Wastewater Treatment Plant at 500 Murrycross Way, Millersville Borough, at the Conestoga River. During the 1930's the farm was owned by Amos H. (1897-1971) & wife, Susie G. Charles Charles. The 1899 atlas indicated the 145 acre farm was owned by Willis & Lizzie Charles (parents of Amos H. Charles). The 1875 and 1864 atlases indicate the farm was 115 acres and owned by Emanuel Rohrer Herr (1806- 1881), brother of Henry Rohrer Herr.

Before 1864, farm #3 was likely owned by Emanuel (1774-1840) & Maria Rohrer Herr. They were the parents of 4 children: Christian Rohrer Herr (1804-1879) Emanuel Rohrer Herr (1806-1881), Mary Rohrer Herr (1812-1888) wife of Jacob K. Shenk, and the subject of this work, Henry Rohrer Herr (1815-1863).

Henry Rohrer Herr married Elizabeth (1822-1913), daughter of Jacob B. & Elizabeth H. Miller Breneman of Manor Township, on October 29, 1844. They purchased a 92 acre farm in Landisville that became known as the 1852 Herr Family Homestead on April 1, 1845 from Daniel W. & Mary Rohrer. Information from the 1850 census of East Hempfield relates that Daniel W. and Mary Roh-

rer had built a house and barn dated 1839 on Junction Road nearby.

Henry and Elizabeth had been residents of the 92 acre farm that they bought in 1845. Since the new house was not completed until 1852; as the date stone on the west side of the house facing the barn reveals, their early living arrangements are unknown. An estimated time on the standing barn is about 1830 and was possibly built by Daniel W. Rohrer.

Six Herr children grew up on the farm; one daughter and five sons: Magdalena, Emanuel, Jacob, Henry, Benjamin and Amos.

Henry R. was killed on the railroad that ran along the northern border of the farm on Thursday, April 9, 1863. Some of his pigs escaped their pen and wandered onto the railroad. As he was trying to retrieve them, he did not hear the approaching train. From the Lancaster Newspaper, "The bumper of the engine struck him as he was about stepping off the track, killing him instantly." Since Henry died at such an early age, and his children were merely in their teens and under, they and their mother Elizabeth had to master how to be good farmers very quickly.

Magdalena B. Herr, who married John R. Stauffer, was Henry R. and Elizabeth's third child and only daughter; born in 1851. She died in an automobile accident in 1915.

Henry & Elizabeth's first son, Emanuel B. Herr, preceded his mother Elizabeth in death. Born in 1845, he was a soldier in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was married to the former Emma Phillips; they had no children. He started a creamery in Chester Co. and died in 1898 at age 53 in Glenroy, Chester Co. PA.

Their second son, Jacob B. Herr, was born August 2, 1847 and died at age 69 in the year 1917 in Goshen, Fulton Township. He and his wife Elizabeth Herr of Creswell, Lancaster Co. PA, had no children.

The third son, Henry B. Herr, was born in 1853. He also left the homestead and lived on the "Moon Farm" in East Drumore Township. His death occurred while visiting his son Ervin in 1932. Henry's marriage to Levina Graybill also produced a daughter, Olive.

Benjamin B. Herr was the fourth son born on the homestead in 1855. He purchased the "Morgan Farm" located next to his brother, Henry B Herr. Benjamin and his wife, the former Elizabeth Witwer, raised eight children on their farm in East Drumore Township, Lancaster Co. PA. He died in 1934.

Amos B. Herr, the fifth and last son was only 4 years old when his father Henry R. Herr died on the railroad in 1863. His skill at farming was learned from his four brothers, his sister Magdalena and his mother Elizabeth. Before his mother died in 1913, Amos B. Herr had married Emma Susan Rohrer in 1902 and together they had a son, Amos Rohrer Herr (1907-1987). At Elizabeth's death in 1913, her living sons, Jacob, Henry & Benjamin relinquished their share of their inheritance of the 92 acre homestead farm in Landisville to their brother Amos B. Herr. Amos Breneman Herr took his own life at the family homestead February 18, 1926. He was 66 years old.

His son, Amos Rohrer Herr, died instantly in an automobile accident on a very foggy day in November 1987. Having no children of their own, Amos R. and his wife Ethel Stauffer Herr made provisions before her death in 1974 to offer the entire remaining 55 acre farm to East Hempfield Township, to be used as a park or recreation area. In their lifetime they had donated, sold, and/or lost [to highway projects] a total of 37 acres. Amos R. Herr was recognized by his fellow citizens as an excellent teacher and coach in the East Hempfield School District as well as great spiritual leader in his church, the Landisville Church of God.

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letter Editor



Amos R. Herr



Amos Herr House Foundation &
Historical Society
1756 Nissley Road
P.O. Box 52
Landisville, PA 17538

A NOTE ABOUT THE CONNECTION

-Eileen Bender Johns

My Uncle Rudy G. Herr and Aunt Fannie Brubaker Herr were the owners of Farm #2 on Shenks Lane in Millersville in the 1930's and lived there with my 11 cousins. (My mother and Aunt Fannie were Brubaker sisters.)

Amos R. Herr shared the same space in the East Hempfield High School with me; he as a history teacher and I as a student. Amos would be amazed to discover that I volunteer at the museum founded in his honor, still trying to get extra credits to graduate with the class of 1955.



One last note about the connection. Have you ever noticed a small dark green 1952 Chevy pickup truck while at an event at the 1852 Herr Family Homestead? It was purchased and refurbished by our president, John Houston in 1972 from a guy who was the son of an old farmer in Millersville. As it turns out, the old farmer was my uncle Rudolph G. Herr (1896-1975) of Farm #2 on Shenks Lane in Millersville.

NOTES FROM AMOS' DIARY

Saturday, April 1, 1967

“First daffodil — Crocus in full bloom for more than a week. 6:30 Clear & spring like. Chores. Plant dahlias and sunflower seeds. Broadcast wheat on the lower lot. Rake leaves in lawn. Heavy mail — checks & business letters. Groceries. Jinx cavorts in the lawn while I was working. PM— weeded flower beds. Dave came for instructions and the equipment to plow back garden and his own lots. 70 degrees + by early afternoon. Children are exploring the meadows & “jungle.” Ethel visited her mother. Jinx was chased again into hiding by Minerva. No Jinx by bedtime. Ethel busy with her lesson. Visited the Brandts, pleasant hour talking about travel, tobacco, school, etc. Study. Thermometer still in 60's. Rescued Jinx from Minerva; Jinx was hiding in the field in front of the house.”