

EDUCATION

135 Years of Union County History

From conflict on the Pennsylvania frontier in 1755 to prosperous Buggy production in 1890

During the 2014-2015 school year, there was a concerted effort to provide a series of robust, supplemental educational programs and enriching hands-on activities for students. The Union County Historical Society sponsored Union County bus tours for nearly 280 students from public and private schools, and sponsored an activity called "Old Town Mifflinburg in 5 Stations" for approximately 175 fourth graders. These programs help bring history to life and foster a life-long interest in students.

The county tours and "Old Town Mifflinburg" events examine our local history with a focus on government/ law, education, religion, industry/ jobs, and family life. Students are introduced to over a century of events and important sites in Union County. The earliest is the LeRoy Massacre site, where the Native Americans of the valley attacked settlers in an effort to save their disappearing way of life. On Old Town Mifflinburg Day, students visit the 1889 Buggy Museum which drives home the importance of the buggy industry to the students. There are 12 additional sites featured in the two events.

The county tour and the 5-station events are possible only because of the hard work and collaboration of many dedicated organizations and individuals. There are eight museums and six private property owners who work with UCHS to make their sites accessible to students. There were also over 40 volunteers in addition to all the teachers, administrators, and parents, who assist in making these events successful. The Union County Historical Society is grateful to all those who help to make these learning activities a success.

~Sharon Lynch, Education Committee



Gutelius House
*observing roof shingles being made,
and spinning and weaving*



Henry Gast House
*learnig about locally
crafted chairs in
blacksmith's shop.*



Elias Church
learning about architecture



**Mifflinburg Buggy Museum
Buggy Factory**



Red Bank School
an 1886 lesson



COLLECTIONS



Archives and Museum Committee

Each person has a story, but what will happen to that story in the future? Each person carries with them a collection of family stories and history that is significant and important to better understanding and interpreting history on a larger scale. If you were born in or lived in Union County for a long time, had or have family here or just enjoy local history, you possess information that for a researcher or the Society's Museum and Archives Committee could be a missing piece of a larger puzzle that will help better understand a person, location, event or business. If these stories are never shared, we lose a piece of the puzzle that can never be restored. Short of writing down everything you know about local history or writing an ACCOUNTS article (which are really interesting reading!), there are less obvious ways that your stories can be shared.

As a child, I remember hearing and learning about my ancestors' legal battle with the heirs of Ludwig Derr over much of the land south of Lewisburg that sent them packing to Ohio and possibly sparked my interest in law. I recall stories about my grandfathers' ownership or operation of businesses in the county – some of which are not published or known by others. These stories shape us as people but beyond stories from and about people in our lives, we often end up with family heirlooms that tell stories, as well. Recently, the Society has received gifts that keep giving new leads to willing researchers and students of history.

Photographs and Chairs

Interesting bequests or gifts have come to the Society in 2015. Since March we received five Pursley family pictures mounted in period-correct frames. The pictures reflect the unique family history of the Laurelton family that starts with a young engaged couple taken just before the Civil War, and through to the couple with their children and grand children in the summer of 1911. The donor, Joan Muyskens Pursley, was carrying out the wishes of Joan's husband, the late David Pursley (d. 2000), a son of Mildred Gommer Pursley (d. 2000) and David Neil Pursley (d. early 1950s).



Pontius chair

Shortly afterward, a hand-made 19th-century chair and Pontius family photo arrived from Maine. The chair was a bequest from the estate of Mrs. Ralph Erskine, whose family once lived in Union County. Imagine the surprise one morning to find a large box in the office containing one carefully packed chair and accompanying photo.

Both donations were motivated by making a gift or bequest of documented family photographs and family-made objects brought or sent back to Union County after much thought and care.

A similar gift is being offered from a Shields family member in Ohio. The Shields family had lived in Lewisburg and Taylorville (on Colonel John Kelly Road quite near the 1793 Dale House). The chairs being offered were made by James Shields (b. 1804) who was one of two sons of William Shields, Sr., born in Ireland in 1776 and who married Mary Thomson. James Shields apprenticed as a blacksmith, gunsmith, finally a chair maker which he was listed as being in the 1850 census. His sister, Ellen Shields, became a professional photographer and the only local woman known to have followed that profession. She had a studio on Market Street, Lewisburg — a precursor to the Ross Studio. Rounded out by a fortunate, concurrent purchase of a rare Lewisburg street view by Ellen, the Shields gift nicely fits into place with other puzzle pieces of the Shields family and is yet another instance of early Union County material coming home.



A set of country chairs built by James Shields of Taylorville, Union County, prior to 1860: six regular-size chairs and one "slipper" chair.



Pontius family

We also accepted some additional items and made many exciting purchases.

~ Jeff Spotts

Gifts

- Bucknell University: Lewisburg Civic Club Minutes, etc.
- Carol Manbeck: Colonial Candlecrafter advertising bag
- Curt Rothermel: miscellaneous tickets from the 1950s
- Lewisburg Builders Supply: advertising yard stick and advertising carpenter pencil
- Hartley Township Community Center: framed photos, announcements, programs
- Buffalo Valley Antique Machinery Association: a wagon body lift
- Lewisburg Junior Civic Club: a "1976" applique quilt
- Diane Lengle: advertising blotters from Mifflinburg businesses and a number of postcards
- Karen Gardner: items from the Donehower estate auction
- Others: a variety of recent political and business advertising items.

Purchases

Real photo postcards: Dead Gamers in 1911 in Allenwood, Cowan church and Cowan general store, Stone Villa Haven, aerial view Devitt's Camp near Allenwood, and terrific snow scene on Market Street in New Berlin, Vicksburg aerial view, Lewisburg parades, speaker at RR station, IOOF parade on Market Street with bunting, octagon house from East Lewisburg, White Deer Drum Corps, Mifflinburg scenes, Presbyterian church collage, and a cabinet photo of New Columbia snow scene and family;

Advertising: Hopp, and Mifflinburg Body Company catalogs and price lists; Reptiland early felt pennant, 1911 Lewisburg Fair Ruby glass souvenir, Sunset Village and Betty's Coffeepot business card and post card, early 1900s Harry Hoffman (Lewisburg) druggist pill boxes; glass druggist bottles from Schaffales Pharmacy (Lewisburg), Mohn Druggist, Glover (Laurelton), and E A Earle (New Berlin); advertising fans, invoice of White Deer Mill; and advertising thermometer from Watson Motors; Rare Shields Cabinet Photo of early tractors and Baker House in Lewisburg; and Rand, Swengle, and Union Township school commencement programs from 1908.

Lastly, we very successfully acquired at auction rare photo post cards from the "Tight" (West) End of the county, including images from Millmont, Laurelton, Hartleton and Swengle. These items, which were in the Delphia Shirk collection, are a needed addition to the Society's post card collection.

Thanks go out to Mike Manbeck and Jeannette Lasansky for developing a strategy and price structure that Tony Shively and Jeff Spotts implemented with a bit of an eleventh hour twist resulting from renumbering. We had a great time on a very soggy day in Mifflinburg under a tent, that will help preserve stories from the West End and our county's history .

Selected items new to the collection are currently on display at the UCHS office. Another display is at the Union County Government Center, N. 15th St., Lewisburg. Come see a sampling of what's in the society collection!

The Dale 1804 Library grows through designated gifts

This year, the **Russell Dennis Memorial Gift**, totaling over one thousand dollars, was expended by the purchase of David Ramsey's *History the American Revolution*, two volumes in one, printed in 1789 in Philadelphia, secured from a book seller in Madrid. There were also six large volumes of Nathaniel Hooke's *Roman History* printed in 1766-1767 in London. The major donor was Russell's widow, Cathy Dennis.

Another purchase was William Robertson's *History of Ancient Greece* printed in 1793 in Edinborough, sponsored by William & Jeannette Lasansky.

These new donations join dozens of others made since 2005. Some of the books are original editions and books of an age that Samuel Dale could have owned. Another group are editions published after 1804 or are facsimiles of earlier originals. The Society now has well over 100 of these books, all recorded as being in the house in 1804 when Samuel Dale, a prolific reader, died. The gifts are all recorded in special donor books.

Those interested in donating for this special collection project please contact the UCHS office or Jeannette Lasansky (lasansky@bucknell.edu).



RESEARCH LIBRARY

Recent Genealogy Searches and Requests

If you have information to share, please contact the office or the researcher.

HEFLICH: Eric Shanower, 5995 Dendridge Lane, San Diego, CA 92115
RANCK: Valerie Bieber, 1225 Snyder Rd. Milton, PA 17847
KOCH / WERTZ / HAGEY: James Robison, 324 N. Franklin St., Allentown, PA 18102
FREDERICK: Arielle Haslem, 1719 N. Hills Dr., Norristown, PA 19401
SCHULTZ / STRAUB / WELLER: Christine Langdon, 736 Merkhill Dr., Sewerville, TN 37862
CROUSE / WOODLEY / FISHER: Grant Fisher, 168 Fruit Farm Rd., Lewisburg, PA 17837
OLIPHANT: John Barrett, 7 Prospect St., Dover, NH 03820
SHANNON GARMAN: Vicki Garinger, 6167 Col. John Kelly Rd., Lewisburg, PA 17837
KNIPE: Dave Leidacker, 30 Limestone Rd., Danville, PA 17821
HOUSEL: Gerald Smith, 2716 Westward Lane, York, PA 17404
HACKENBERG: Galen Castlebury, 314 Cinnaber Land, Bel Air, MD 21025
DERR/ FLICKINGER: Gloria Snyder, 104 Chris Ron Lane, Northumberland, PA 17857
DIXON/BROWN: Chris Rainbolt, PO Box 642, Tilden, TX 78072
RINE: Audrey Rhine Maxymuk, 1663 Comanche Ave., Point Pleasant, NJ 08742
and Maria Rhine Johnson, 653 Pawn Ave., Quincy IL 62305
WILLOW, Godfrey Willow b. c. 1780, Peter Willow, John Willow, Perry Twp 1820: any others in that time frame. weidenbaum@yahoo.com
SMITH, Reuben & MATTERN, Mary Ann: Peter Weseloh, 1015 Eucalyptus Rd., Oceanside, CA 92054
KEISTER/SWARTZ: Kimberly Morgan, 3102 N. 10th St., Coeur D'Alene, ID 83815
WALKER: Terry Hill, 6362 San Martin Way. Buena Park, CA 90620
RITZMAN: Lorilee Atkinson, 2529 7th Ave. #8, Grand Forks, ND 58201
TEMPLETON: Marg Gaglairdi, 286 Harbor Dr., Macon, NC 27551
GUNDY/VAN GUNDY: Jeannette Campbell, 1060 Stein Lane, Lewisburg, PA 17837
VICKSBURG: Robert Blankenship, 6548 Old Tpke. Rd., Mifflinburg, PA 17844
UNION TOWNSHIP: Kathy Swope, 48 Oakwood Dr.; Phyllis Dyer, 146 State Rte 304, Winfield, PA 17889,
for the Union Township Bicentennial Celebration in August 2015.



Research Services

Genealogical research ranges from the search for a single document (such as a will or obituary) to a complete family history. Fees are \$5 plus copying charge of \$.50/page (single document) to \$50 and up (full search) depending on complexity. The Society has access to ancestry.com including military and European sources. Please inquire via email or letter before sending fee; we will advise. **Deed search** fee is \$200 and up (higher for research extending to Northumberland County) to trace property to earliest county record available. Includes maps of property. Deed searches are negotiated on an individual basis. Send queries to the society office.

Doing your own research? The Society staff will help members and visitors do their own research in the UCHS office and courthouse: M - F 8:30 - 4:30 (our office closed noon to 1). Members may use the library for free; non-members are asked for a \$5 donation. Copies are \$.50/page. Check the *Primary Source Materials* list and *Chronology of PA Records* on our website to see the documents and data available. Also see the *List of Family Names* for genealogies that have been given to the society. **Donations:** The Society accepts Union County family histories as printed or digital files for the society's genealogical library.

Research Library Update

Added to our family books and newsletters:

Kricks and Eidems from Violet Road, Buffalo Twp., Union County: Story and Documents, and *Kricks and Eidems: Trees with Sources*, donated by the researcher/author Ray L. Moyer

Added to the library:

The Chronicle, Journal of the Historical Society of the Susquehanna Conference of the Union Methodist Church, Spring 2015 issue

Wertman Lines: Newsletter of The Wertman Family Association, issues to date.

Union County Times 2014 issues



Microfilming makes the earliest Union County newspaper available



The Union

published in New Berlin, Pennsylvania

In 2013, the Union County Historical Society received the gift of an 1816 New Berlin newspaper, *The Union*, which was in readable but fragile condition. With support specifically to our microfilm/scanning fund, we have both found a permanent home for the original run of nearly a year and made it available on film for researchers or just the curious. The ads alone are great to read.

Giving to this fund allows the Society to care for, and make available printed items such as this newspaper. These are sometimes conflicting demands made of our earliest objects. In this case, though the paper was made of rags and tough, it was so old and obviously had been in some conditions that threatened its very existence.

Sponsors are sought

We have ongoing newspaper projects and phone books that we would like to film or scan. A sponsorship of \$75 to \$100 for a year's worth of papers or books allows projects to move forward.

GRANTS AND GIFTS

The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) offers general operating support grants to designated county historical societies such as ours, to help maintain and preserve our history. The UCHS has participated in these grants since the 1980s, matching County Commissioners' support to that of the state. From the 1980s to 2007, the Society received grant monies from PHMC in increasing amounts until the Society hit the maximum amount allowed from the PHMC (\$10,000).

In 2008, the country suffered an economic crisis and grant monies disappeared. Over the last two years, the PHMC has offered these grants once again. We applied forthwith and this year, we have received \$4,000. This money allows us to do things which we may not have been able to do otherwise. This year, monies are allocated as follows:

\$1450 for the Dale/Engle/Walker House Tour Coordinator and the Summer Interns

\$515 for the upkeep (maintenance) of the Dale/Engle/Walker House

\$500 for summer/fall programming

\$200 is slated for the Red Bank School Programs

\$660 is slated for displays and advertising.

~ Linda Rhoades-Swartz, Administrative Manager

The Emerald Ash Borer and a New Bridge on Strawbridge Road Bring Change to the Dale/Engle/Property

It never rains but it pours is a saying — not always accurate meteorologically-speaking but might have an accurate ring — for those who worked at our Dale/Engle/Walker farm site in the spring/summer of 2015. Indeed, it was a spring with lots of decision making.

It started with hundreds of dead and dying ash trees beside the house and all along the Dale's Ridge Trail. It took roughly a month after Doug Hovey, Mark Holman, William Lasansky, and Eric Wagner first noticed and assessed the problem to get started. We asked that the Dale's Ridge Trail (DRT) be closed in the interim and then had a plan of action drawn up by forestry experts Mark Holman and Martin Melville and coordinated with the Merrill W. Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy. It then took weeks of work cutting the felled trees on a slope near the house and clearing off the top debris. Heading that effort was Doug Hovey with great assist from neighbors Stan and Lori Bullard, then Beth Hackenberg and Karen Hovey. It was an enormous task. The Linn Conservancy worked on the 2-mile DRT. In the end, we felt we had made the property safe for our many visitors. A walk/talk scheduled for Saturday, August 27th, and mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter, is designed to bring participants through the territory that was most affected. This situation is prevalent throughout the county and these dying ash are hazard trees.

Next were the repeated sighting of a large mother black bear and three cubs. Their debut was in our farm's south field and was seen from the house porch by the Plein Air's participants in late April, later by trail users. These bear or others were sighted along Route 192 in our vicinity. This marks several years of sighting bear at the top of the slope behind the house and near the switch back. The trail was posted.

Then came late May with the approach of the bridge replacement over Buffalo Creek. The construction effort eliminates access to all but Lloyd Zimmerman, our long-time farmer. The Linn Conservancy quickly removed the split rail fencing by the trail parking and we removed the six native cedar trees in anticipation of the construction. We all braced ourselves for another period of adjustment. So the other cliché that applies: never a dull moment.

In closing, thanks for all who worked on the site. In addition to the names already mentioned are: assistant property managers Eric Imgrund and neighbor Fred Swanger; past assistant property manager Bill Deitrick, and director for Union County Planning Shawn McLaughlin — both UCHS members; Archives and Museum Committee members: Steve Wilver, Jeff Spotts, and Mike Manbeck, who did spring cleaning at the wagon shed; Linda-Rhoades Swartz the new UCHS Administrative Manager, contractor Fred Wert, and David Goehring who both have been helping consistently for 15 years; spring clean up day participants: Geoff Goodenow and four Bucknell students, and throughout the summer months, the UCHS interns: Nicholas Misretta, Daniel Bower, and Alicia Pucci who learned the variety of tasks it takes to keep an historic property looking good. ~ *Jeannette Lasansky*



Photo of the farmer's stream-crossing during bridge construction taken by Doug Hovey on June 22.

RURAL HERITAGE DAY July 11, 2015

The weather was blessedly sunny and breezy, and visitors with real interest in history turned out for the beautiful day. *Rural Heritage Day* offered many unique opportunities: excellent demonstrations of coopering, shingle making, rake making, Windsor chair making and basket making, all done with wood and hand tools; rifling a muzzle loader barrel with an 18th century wooden machine, tinwork, horn work, blacksmithing, bees wax candle dipping, making and molding butter, spinning and weaving and more. Plus a rare exhibit of original 18th and 19th century Union County rifles and a chance to actually hold and fire a Muzzleloading rifle!!

Heartfelt thanks to Ed Smeltz, Rich Nornhold, the Union County Muzzle Loaders, Mark Wehr, Cliff and Janet Bowersox and the Good Times 4-H Club, Eric Ingram, Lloyd Zimmerman and Jim Ulmer. And Thank You to the skilled, devoted demonstrators and hard-working committee members who pulled together to make *Rural Heritage Day* happen!! Anyone interested in helping make living history happen, please consider joining our committee: contact Deb at 570-966-2304.



PEOPLE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Summer Student Interns

are a tremendous help during the busy summer months; we appreciate their work and their energy

Alicia Pucci, of Mifflinburg, is a graduate of Bloomsburg University. She has been an intern at the Society for the past three summers. Alicia will pursue graduate studies in Art History at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University beginning this fall.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to return to the Historical Society for a third summer. It is always refreshing to work with such knowledgeable, driven, and enthusiastic individuals who are able to inspire an enduring passion and appreciation for history in those around them. During my time here, my experiences have not only instilled in me the importance of preserving the remnants of human culture, but have proved to me that this field has no limits. Whether on a local or international level, as historians we never stop seeking, questioning, and educating others. As I take the next step towards becoming a professor of Art History, I hope to kindle this undaunted attitude and awareness of the past to my contemporaries and future students."

Dan Bower, of Milton, is a student at Gettysburg College. This is his first year as an intern for the Society. He is studying History and Political Science. Dan participates in re-enactments in the WWII Venturing Crew 1941.

"It has been wonderful working for the Union County Historical Society. I have been able to meet a lot of different people with a variety of backgrounds. Through different tasks that I have been asked to do, I have learned so much information on Union County history and read/heard many stories about the different people who lived here. Working as an intern for the UCHS, I have been able to further develop my communication and researching skills. I plan to use what I have learned here to help further advance my education and deepen my passion for local history."

Nick Mistretta, of New Columbia, is a student at Juniata College, studying Education and History. He plans to teach at the high school level.

Nick worked on a variety of tasks with Alicia and Dan, including research and office library organization. All three interns spent time at the Dale/Engle/Walker House maintaining the grounds and the buildings.

Summer Internships at UCHS are open to students who live in Northumberland, Snyder or Union counties, attend a Pennsylvania college or university, are eligible for state education grant, and would benefit from a career-related work experience. Applications are processed by PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency). Applicants should consult their school financial aid office in the spring semester in order to be considered for a summer internship.

For information on interning at UCHS: 570-523-8666 or info@unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org.

OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

Friday office volunteers enable our research library and office to be open five days per week. We appreciate the time and work of: Judith Blair, Kathy Brady, Jack Fisher, David Goehring, Tom Greaves, Beth Hackenberg, Doug Hovey, Marj Kastner, Dan & Gloria McDavitt, Glenda Sheaffer, Susan Waggoner, and Ardith Wilkins. Dan & Gloria have contributed articles to "Once Upon a Time." Glenda, Jack, and Mary Belle Lontz also help with genealogy and land research.

Are you interested in volunteering in the office on Fridays? Most Friday volunteers work one morning or afternoon per month. Would you like to help with research? Training is provided. Call (570) 524-8666 or visit the office.



The President's Message

UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2015 OFFICERS & BOARD

Jeannette Lasansky, President
M. Lois Huffines, Vice President
Kim Ranck, Treasurer
Bruce Teeple, Secretary
Kathy Taylor Brady,
Beth Hackenberg, Doug Hovey,
Marj Kastner, Sharon Lynch,
Mary Jo Spangler, Jeffrey Spotts,
Eric Wagner and Ardith Koch Wilkins

Welcome New Members who have joined since

Robert & Lisa Black, Selinsgrove
Susan Chlebowski, New Berlin
Dale Fisher, Allenwood
Robert Franks, Danville
Lake Hartman, West Milton
Chuck & Donna Kahle, Selinsgrove
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William Becker, Mareta Digan,
Pete & Nancy Mackey,
Diane & Ted Meixell, Jean Shakelford,
and David Robinson, all of Lewisburg,
and new Life member
John Bravman, Lewisburg

Thank you

to Wm Becker for unrestricted donation;
to Lois Huffines for donations for the
West End Fair booth fee and digitizing
the new *1937 Lewisburg* DVD;
to the Lasanskys for donation for
microfilming *The Union* newspaper
published in New Berlin in 1816, and for
underwriting the reproduction of the
Herald Angels CD;
to David Beckley, Beth Hackenberg,
Tullio Lasansky, Diane Lenge, Diane
Meixell, Darren Rhyne, Jean
Shackelford, and Mary Jo Spangler for
donating to UCHS during the 2015
Raise the Region campaign; and
to the Paul & Catherine Ernst Fund for
grant received in 2015.

Where's the red meat? I am not asking directions to a butcher shop but rather the location of historical resource material that makes the historian or genealogist in us salivate—original documents called primary source materials. This includes a wide range of materials: diaries, business ledgers, a school commencement program or an intact family photograph album with titled pictures—names, places and dates. Some of these written or visual items, also, objects like a favorite writing desk, may be stored in an attic or found framed hanging on a wall at home. They are usually there because of family connections and saved often by not moving frequently since each move tends to prompt the call to assess the “importance” of items—what to keep or not to keep. Each move can mean the shedding of parts of life or of various lives from their context.

Other primary source material, called by some “the red meat” of historical research, is stored in county courthouses: original deeds, wills, estate papers of families such as estate inventories and estate auctions (“*vendues*”) as well as court documents that were recorded, were part of a family’s legal record. These records are sometimes in their original paper state but increasingly these records are microfilmed, scanned or otherwise made accessible as new technologies make duplication and access by others easier as well as addressing space constraints.

What technological advances allow they also take away. Holding and viewing a primary source document quickens the pulse when hand held—the iron in the penned ink dry but the path of the ink on the original sheepskin deed or rag newspaper carries the immediacy of human action and thought that microfilm only hints at. Likened to a good grilled steak, original material is “red meat” on several levels: the fact that it still exists, has been found, and ready for the historian to interpret along with a body of other documents in assessing an event, a place, people or a culture.

Since 1963 the Union County Historical Society has been the recipient of much primary source material, and it seeks to gather even more since it is our primary mission to gather, care for, interpret and disseminate Union County material. Original and fragile documents sometimes are microfilmed or duplicated in other ways, allowing for wider use while we still care for the original. It is a thrill twice experienced to be able to retrieve or be given from families. Treasures come back to the source, all bits and pieces of Union County’s history, and then, pulled together—in a Heritage volume, a new book, an ACCOUNTS article, a film, an exhibit small or large, or a living history event.

Be part of this process with others—in the finding, the collecting, the interpretation, and the enjoyment of primary source material: “the red meat” of the historical process.

Jeannette Lasansky, President